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# Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200

Maria-Zoe Petropoulou



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## *Preface*

As a Greek born in Athens, during my childhood I often came across the spectacle of tourists, who were swarming around the temples of Attica in order to admire the artistic miracles of ancient Greece. At the same time, being born a Christian in a big modern city, I had the experience of a cult that had nothing to do with animal sacrifice. My knowledge of animal sacrifice at that time was limited to stories from the Old Testament, which, as I was taught, referred to an old cultic reality finally outdated by Christianity. Furthermore, mentions of a ‘temple’ other than a ‘church’ in narrations belonging to the New Testament always constituted a puzzle to me, because I had stayed with the impression that anything pertaining to a temple other than a Christian church ‘ought to’ belong to the Old Testament. It took me much time to realize that, in the early years of Christianity, the successor to Solomon’s Temple was still standing in Jerusalem, and much more time to think of that temple as an area where animal sacrifices were performed. Due to my romantic view of Greek marble temples, I was also late in accepting that, much to my disappointment, what is left from Greek shrines today is far removed from their functional profile: in fact, the smell of animals—dead or approaching their death—was what mainly reigned in the sacred areas of ancient Greece. These late realizations are directly connected with the questions from which the present book has stemmed.

I wanted to explore the fact that Christianity is known as a religion with no altars for slaughter, in combination with the historical fact that early Christians came from religious environments where animal sacrifice was practised. Did the absence of sacrificial interest on the part of Christians come about suddenly and abruptly? Or was it a gradual development? In order to study this issue, I have chosen to start from a date when Greek and Jewish animal sacrifice was still practised (100 BC), but Christianity had not yet appeared. I have chosen to stop before the better-documented third century, but at a date when Christianity had already expanded in the Mediterranean as a religion without altars for slaughter (AD 200). At that point Greek animal sacrifice was still practised, whereas official Jewish animal sacrifice had stopped long before (AD 70).

The area of my study is the Greek-speaking East and Jerusalem. By the term ‘Greek-speaking East’, I mean—roughly—mainland Greece, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, and any area of Greek settlement where Christians

came or could come into contact with Greek pagans.<sup>1</sup> Egypt is not considered, given the differences in the Greek material coming from an area with a very distinctive local religious culture.<sup>2</sup> In the book, I shall not deal with Roman ritual, but rather with Greek ritual in an area and a period of Roman influence. The main reason for this limitation is that the first encounter of Christianity with paganism took place in Greek-speaking areas, so it would be extremely important to envisage this cultural encounter in its original form.

Readers must have noticed that I have so far avoided choosing the following as the main question: 'why did Christians not offer animal sacrifices?' In the course of the book, it will become obvious that such a question might be misleading, and only partly legitimate. However, acknowledging that the question will progressively arise in the reader's mind, I have ventured to express an answer to the question of 'why' in the last section of the book (Epilogue). This answer constitutes the counterpoint to Section 2 of Chapter 1, where my suggestion on the way in which the issue of sacrifice can be studied is presented.

In the remaining chapters the issue of animal sacrifice is studied both from the point of view of Greeks and Jews separately, and in combination with Christians. Thus, Chapter 2, on Greek animal sacrifice, can function in itself as the first systematic approach to Greek sacrifice in the Roman period, but it mainly points to the problems possibly generated within Greek communities by the emergence of Christianity. Similarly, Chapter 4, on Jewish animal sacrifice, focuses on some aspects which have not been emphasized in the bibliography on late Second Temple Judaism, but it also emphasizes the multifarious character of the Jewish context, which formed the background to Christianity. Finally, Chapter 6, on early Christians and animal sacrifice, shows that the implication of unity contained in the term 'Christianity' is in fact misleading, since the different religious backgrounds of the groups which this religion encompassed resulted in a wide spectrum of responsiveness to the new message.

Chapters 3 and 5 are 'bridges', which help the reader understand the fundamental differences between the Greek and Jewish sacrificial systems, and make more obvious the contrast between, on the one hand, two religions in the context of which animal sacrifice took place, and, on the other hand, the religion of Christianity, which called the practice of animal sacrifice into question.

<sup>1</sup> On pagan cities in Palestine, see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 2.I, pp. 85–183. More recently, Belayche (2001).

<sup>2</sup> The most recent description of the multifold Egyptian religious world is Frankfurter (1998).

In seeking to draw conclusions on animal sacrifice for each of the three religions studied here, I have come to realize that one cannot help utilizing sources from within the specific religious context. However, a few cases do not follow this pattern (for instance, Pliny on Christians, or Paul on tables laden with meat).

In order to make clear the scope of the study, I should specify that by ‘animal sacrifice’ I mean the ritual slaughter of an animal for various religious purposes. In my treatment of religious animal slaughter, I include both alimentary and non-alimentary slaughter.<sup>3</sup>

In this book, priority is given to the sacrificial use of animals, and not of other sorts of organic or non-organic matter. Since there is also evidence for non-animal offerings in the period 100 BC–AD 200, I acknowledge that my disregarding this evidence might be criticized by readers. As a response to this supposed criticism, I must stress that, first, the sacrificial status of non-animal offerings is still disputed among scholars,<sup>4</sup> and as such these cannot constitute a safe basis for a comparative study. Second, the prominence given to animal offerings characterizes both Greek religion and Judaism, as I will specify in the course of the book. Third, I chose to focus on animal sacrifice because, among all the other types of sacrifice, animal sacrifice is the one most often mentioned or alluded to in Greek pagan, Jewish, and Christian texts, so I see it as the basic common ground between the three religions.

Finally, I have to warn readers of what they will *not* find in this book, despite their reasonable expectations.

This book does not deal with human sacrifice. Even if the authors used in our study talk about the issue, the relevant discussion would be beyond the scope of this book. My study focuses on everyday Greek and Jewish ritual reality, and human sacrifice cannot be considered as such. Furthermore, the fact that reports on human sacrifice were actually influenced by conceptual categories such as Greeks–Jews, Greeks–barbarians, myth–history, reality–

<sup>3</sup> By contrast with that of J.-P. Vernant, my study is not limited to the alimentary character of sacrifice. Vernant himself, being aware of the fact that *θύω* designates different rites, chooses to talk only about ‘sacrifice sanglant de consommation alimentaire’. See the ‘Discussion’ following Vernant’s paper in Rudhardt–Reverdin (1981), 29–30.

<sup>4</sup> This was made obvious in a Table Ronde on sacrifice, which I attended in Paris, entitled ‘Sacrifice animal et offrande végétale dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne’ (organizers: Centre Gustave Glotz (CNRS-UMR 8585), École Pratique des Hautes Études, Collège de France, 24–6 June 2001). There the category of non-animal offerings caused a major problem as regards the definition of the term ‘sacrifice’, and this difficulty dominated the discussion until the very end of the seminar. See Georgoudi–Koch Piettre–Schmidt (eds.) (2005).



subconscious (in the case of dreams), would necessitate a discussion of these categories, which would lengthen the book unnecessarily.

The book does not contain a section specially dedicated to the Roman imperial cult. Admittedly, the phenomenon of animal sacrifice in this context has been thoroughly studied from various, even contrasting, angles,<sup>5</sup> but the inclusion of these issues in the book would not change the main lines of the argument. Even from the point of view of Christianity, it has been proved that the role of the imperial cult was secondary in the persecutions of Christians.<sup>6</sup>

Categories of evidence such as iconography, animal remains, and cultic edifices will not be used in this book. The systematic presentation of depictions of sacrifice would require a study of the conventions used to represent animals, participants, and paraphernalia in a sacrificial ritual. Furthermore, it can be easily understood that an archaeological study of animal-sacrificial remains would require not only the undertaking of systematic excavation projects covering all Greece and Asia Minor, but that these excavations should regard sacrificial remains as a principal object of the project and not as accidental finds. As long as this condition is not fulfilled, it has to be accepted that the record of sacrificial remains does not contribute significantly to the building of a theory. What is more, studies on the functional aspect of cultic edifices are missing, and such studies cannot be undertaken here without a contribution from other fields of research, namely archaeology and, particularly, temple architecture, in which the writer of this book is not a specialist.

The issue of abstinence is also absent from this book, since abstinence had a great variety of meanings: it could be abstinence from ritual, but it could also be abstinence from meat in general, or from certain animal species, or from certain parts of the animal's body, or from certain varieties of plants. Philosophical or other spiritual trends must have played their role in such instances of abstinence, and influenced individual worshippers and cult founders. But the overall picture drawn from our literary texts and inscriptions cannot support any claim that, due to theoretical objections, the practice of animal sacrifice was forsaken by worshippers *en masse*.

From the Christian context, I have decided to leave out liturgical texts, since the stylistic conventions of this genre make it deserve a special study.

This book would not have been written if it were not for the support of my family, mainly my parents, both classicists. I thank them for their patience with my nervousness until the final submission to the Press.

<sup>5</sup> Price (1984*b*), Friesen (1993), most recently Gradel (2002).

<sup>6</sup> Millar (1973).

The greatest bulk of the present book has actually resulted from my doctoral work. I am extremely lucky to have been one of Professor Fergus Millar's supervisees during the years I was writing my doctoral thesis. My personal interest in the comparative study of religions fitted well with Fergus Millar's way of looking at the Roman Empire as a whole: he is a scholar who has been always insisting on the importance of comparing and contrasting the various cultures constituting the Empire. Fergus Millar is the person who encouraged me to publish my thesis, and has been advising me until the last stage before publication. I take here the opportunity to express my great gratitude for his constant kindness, help, and concern.

The origin of this book then obliges me gratefully to mention here those people whom I met and with whom I worked during my years as a graduate, both in Oxford and elsewhere. I especially thank Professor Robert Parker and Dr Charles Crowther, who helped me in my early steps as a postgraduate. I also had the chance to learn a great deal from Professor Martin Goodman and Dr Simon Price. The aforementioned scholars were more than willing to help me find my way in Greek epigraphy, Greek religion, Judaism, and Christianity. I will always remember my academic discussions with them, at various stages of my DPhil. work.

I am also happy to have made the acquaintance of visiting scholars, who enlightened Oxford, and to have gone to other countries in order to attend seminars related to my thesis. Here, I first have to thank Professor John Scheid, who, during his stay in Oxford in Trinity 2001, spent not a little time discussing sacrifice with me. It was he who invited me to the *Table Ronde* in Paris, entitled 'Sacrifice animal et offrande végétale dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne', organized in 24–6 June 2001 (now in Georgoudi, Koch Piettre, and Schmidt (eds.), 2005). In the same seminar in Paris I also had the opportunity for discussions with Professors Guy Berthiaume, Stella Georgoudi, Francis Schmidt, and Gilles Dorival, among others. I thank them all for their ingenious and thorough comments on sacrifice, and for their willingness to continue their contact with me, even after the seminar (through e-mails).

A further seminar, which made me realize how strong a scholar has to be in order to convince others, was the one I attended in Princeton (January 9–11, 2002), entitled 'The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', and organized in the frame of the Oxford–Princeton Research Project 'Culture and Religions of the Eastern Mediterranean'. During it I met and talked with several distinguished scholars. I especially thank Professors Fritz Graf and Elaine Pagels for their interest in my work even after the seminar.

Because of my dealing with three religions, I had to be aware of the latest 'trends' in Classics, Oriental Studies (Judaism), and Theology (New Testament, Early Patristics). I am most grateful to Professor Chris Rowland for his advice at an early stage of my dealing with Christianity. His invitation to attend the New Testament graduate seminar in Oxford made me academically richer.

I would also like to mention with thanks the names of those scholars who discussed sacrifice with me during lunch (not a particularly appetizing experience!), and those with whom I talked after attending their papers—among the latter I mention the name of Professor Jean-Pierre Vernant with great respect—and finally, those scholars who read and kindly replied to my long e-mails of questions without having met me. The following names also betray my shy attempts at exploring the fields of art depictions, zooarchaeology, and meat trade, although the results of these attempts have not been made public: Professor Gerhard Forstenpointner, Professor Judith Lieu, Professor Robin Osborne, Professor Bert Smith, Dr Valerie Huet, Dr Teresa Morgan, Professor Andrew Wilson, and Dr Rolf Schneider. I also thank a lovely zooarchaeologist for her company, optimism, and good sense of humour, namely Priscilla Lange, Professor Millar's secretary; apart from typing Fergus Millar's comments all these years, she has been a very good friend.

Finally, I have to thank the Onassis Foundation for its financial help in the period from October 1998 to January 2002. Without its contribution, my stay in Oxford would not have been easy. A part-time assistance to Dr Crowther in the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (2000–2) was both a financial help and a great experience!

In closing, I would like to stress that what I write in this thesis might arouse the objections of those whose names I have mentioned. This does not make their help less constructive, because it is by understanding their different views that I have better defined mine, and, more importantly, all these people have taught me the importance of choosing my own method.

M.–Z. P.

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## Approaching the Issue of Sacrifice

### 1. SCHOLARLY APPROACHES TO SACRIFICE

Since the nineteenth century both anthropological and historical work has been carried out with reference to sacrifice in ancient religions. So it would be useful to start with a general overview of the most important scholarly theories on sacrifice. In these theories, scholars have talked about ‘sacrifice’ without strictly delineating the term, or distinguishing animal victims from non-animal offerings. In presenting their theories, I will also keep to this tactic.

#### Anthropological Theories

##### *Sacrifice in general*

Sacrifice belongs to the sphere of religious practices, and as such it initially concerned those scholars who first dealt with religion, namely anthropologists. The first anthropologists were nineteenth-century Europeans who were dealing with non-European cultures: colonial expansion was a great stimulus for the erudite who were interested in exploring the particularities of the foreign societies they came across. In theory, anthropologists were not supposed to be exclusively engaged in the study of one civilization. In reality, though, most of them were better acquainted with one civilization, and, on the basis of their study of the society known to them, they formed general theories without paying attention to the particularities of other civilizations. Theories about sacrifice were incorporated in the earliest anthropological theories, and as such they were influenced by

the trends of thought which shaped the latter. Only recently have scholars become aware of the fact that: 'L'époque n'est plus où l'on croyait pouvoir élaborer une théorie du sacrifice englobant tous les millénaires et toutes les civilisations.'<sup>1</sup>

### **E. B. Tylor on sacrifice**

E. B. Tylor, one of the leading figures in the field of nineteenth-century anthropology, apparently did not share this view, expressed by J. Rudhardt and O. Reverdin. In his main work, *Primitive Culture* (1871),<sup>2</sup> he used a great variety of ethnographic material (including Greek material), and presented sacrifice as a ritual whose main purpose was as a gift to the gods. He thus categorized sacrifices according to their manner of reception by the deity, and according to the motives of the sacrificer. In the first category, one finds cases of sacrifice where the deity consumes (a) the offerings themselves ('substantial transmission', in Tylor's terms), (b) their essence ('essential transmission'), and (c) the soul of the offering ('spiritual transmission'). In the second category, Tylor traces the evolution in the notion of sacrifice from a gift-offering to an homage-offering and to an offering of abnegation on the part of the worshipper.

Tylor's analysis was shaped by the theory of evolution, which explains everything in terms of development and progress through time; as Darwin did in the biological field, so anthropologists regarded all early human practices and beliefs as simpler than, and inferior to, those coming next (and above all to those prevailing in the scholar's own times). Evolutionist anthropologists applied this principle to the peoples whom they studied and whom they called 'primitive', a term implying a programmatic expectation of something coming *second* and thus being better. One of the obvious evolutionist biases applied to the field of religion is the supposition that earlier religions could be interpreted by means of pragmatic explanations, in contrast with the 'higher religions' (i.e. Christianity), which were of a spiritual character.<sup>3</sup> Even the very act of sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> The first sentence in the preface of the volume by Rudhardt-Reverdin (1981).

<sup>2</sup> The year indicated next to each work is that of the first edition, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Tylor (1903<sup>4</sup>), ii. 375: 'theologians, having particularly turned their attention to sacrifice as it appears in the higher religions, have been apt to gloss

was condemned as belonging to 'barbaric ages', to the 'lower phases' of religion, which are 'explanatory of the higher'.<sup>4</sup> Evolutionist methods stress the diachronic aspect in human history and try to find causal threads connecting the past with the present.<sup>5</sup>

### W. Robertson Smith on sacrifice

W. Robertson Smith was among the English scholars who took up the tradition of evolutionism. He was a very distinguished Semitic scholar, who studied the Old Testament from the anthropological point of view. His theory of sacrifice depends on the Bible, but moves in a wider area than that of Jewish ritual, and is to be found in his work *The Religion of the Semites* (1889). Using the Old Testament evidence, Robertson Smith concentrated on the sacrificial type where the victim is eaten, and saw in it 'an act of social fellowship between the deity and his worshippers'.<sup>6</sup> The animal victim is the sacred symbol of the clan, *totem* as it is called. By sharing its flesh and blood, men partake of its divine vitality, and affirm their common links to the *totem* and to each other.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Robertson Smith stressed the character of the sacrificial meal as a ritual of *communion* and tried to prove that any further meanings—such as gift or atonement or eucharist—developed later, in the frame of higher social structures.

Robertson Smith's theory was correctly criticized<sup>8</sup> for projecting onto ancient societies the Christian experience of the Eucharist, where Christ's body is supposed to be shared by the faithful.

Robertson Smith belonged to that subcategory of the evolutionist trend in England, which is known as the 'Cambridge School'. Other

over with mysticism ceremonies which, when traced ethnographically up from their savage forms, seem open to simply rational interpretation.'

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 363–4.

<sup>5</sup> Tylor's most famous contributions to evolutionism are the technical terms *animism*, which designates an earlier faith-stage than the belief in gods, and *survival*, which designates what has come down from the past to the later generations, who can no longer explain it.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson Smith (1927<sup>3</sup>), 224.

<sup>7</sup> The belief in the link between the clan and the animal is the so-called *totemic* belief.

<sup>8</sup> Mainly by M. Mauss, whose work on sacrifice (Hubert and Mauss 1899) is discussed below.



prominent members of it were Jane E. Harrison and James Frazer. The distinctive characteristic of this school was the attention it paid to ritual rather than to myth. Before this change in perspective, the tradition of Romanticism had led scholars to pay attention only to the myths of different peoples and to collect them by means of the methods of historical criticism.

### **J. G. Frazer on sacrifice**

The anthropologist James Frazer, in his work *The Golden Bough* (1890), did not set out a general theory covering all cases of sacrifice. However, a long section of his work (entitled 'The Dying God') was dedicated to cases similar to the ritual of Diana Nemorensis, as described by Strabo (5.3.12–13); according to Frazer, the priestly king of that ritual (and of its parallels) was the embodiment of the spirit of fertility. Frazer interpreted the king's ritual murder as an attempt to protect the spirit from the king's weakness. Thus, to Frazer the purpose of sacrifice is to liberate an immortal spirit from the mortal body it inhabits. However, Frazer also described other sacrificial rites, such as offerings to the ancestral gods or killings of animals for the fertility of the crops or for the cure of cattle from disease.

Frazer has been criticized for the evolutionist positivistic model he proposed, namely that mankind proceeded from magic to religion to science. But besides this conviction, Frazer's theory suffered from methodological deficiencies. The terms which he used did not always have the same meaning, and the distinctions and analogies were not clearly drawn. Just like Tylor, Frazer also used a great variety of ethnographic and historical material, but where his approach was methodologically wrong was in his uncritical selection of this material in order to support his argument (as is obvious from Frazer's obsession with fertility).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A very sound criticism of this method was offered by E. E. Evans-Pritchard: in the last century anthropologists used a particular sort of comparative method by 'selecting from a vast mass of data, uneven and often poor in quality, whatever phenomena appeared to belong to the same type... The qualities which were different in each instance were neglected. This is a perfectly sound method of scientific analysis, so long as conclusions are restricted to the particular quality abstracted and it is not then assumed that because phenomena are alike in respect to this single quality that they are alike in other respects which have not been subject to critical comparative analysis.' In Singer (1981), 145–6.

### H. Hubert and M. Mauss on sacrifice

A different anthropological approach was the work by H. Hubert and M. Mauss, 'Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice', in *L'Année Sociologique* (1899). As the title of the series where this essay was published makes obvious, the writers brought sociological tools into the field. Sociology had been conspicuously promoted in France by É. Durkheim (Mauss' uncle and teacher), whose work influenced a whole generation of scholars, including Hubert and Mauss. To Durkheim, the notion of society was the main tool of explanation, and this was even applied to the religious field.<sup>10</sup> Despite the fact that his approach offered new possibilities to the study of religion, it has been remarked that Durkheim went further than he should and made 'society' a sort of autonomous entity. What Mauss contributed to the study of religion was his supersession of such theoretical abstractions, and his attachment to concrete evidence.<sup>11</sup>

Durkheim still belonged to the evolutionist tradition.<sup>12</sup> However, the essay on sacrifice by Hubert and Mauss drew attention not to the genetically prior, but to the 'types' contained in a sacrificial act. This was a first step away from evolutionism, but not a step towards total rejection of it, since the two authors still believed that the worshippers did not understand the origin and motive of their actions. Leaving aside—but not completely—the evidence for Greek sacrifice, on the excuse that it consists of piecemeal sources, Hubert and Mauss concentrated on Jewish and Hindu texts. They regarded sacrifice as a means of communication between the human and the divine, and distinguished the different stages in this communication, those of *sacralization* and *desacralization*. The first case represents the movement from a profane to a sacred state, the second the opposite movement. While the victim becomes sacred, the person who offers the sacrifice loses his sacred character, which he acquires again after the victim has been killed and has lost its sacred character. The highest point of sacredness is the moment of the animal's killing.

<sup>10</sup> His representative work here being *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris, 1912). For criticism, see the review by Malinowski (1913), esp. 527–9.

<sup>11</sup> Evans-Pritchard, in Singer (1981), 190.

<sup>12</sup> His belief in totemism as a primary form of religion is characteristic of this approach.

I personally think that the essay of Hubert and Mauss is a kind of proto-structuralist<sup>13</sup> analysis, preceding the sort of approach of which Vernant was to be the main representative (see below). But, as has been rightly pointed out,<sup>14</sup> these writers were restricted, and thus misled, by their material: that is, in contrast with Hindu rites, in Greek sacrifice the areas between sacred and profane were not separated by a ritual marking the transition from the one state to the other; for instance, there was nothing separating the sacred moment of killing from the secular moment of butchering.

### E. E. Evans-Pritchard on sacrifice

The last anthropological theory on sacrifice which we shall examine is that of Evans-Pritchard. He lived through the so-called Malinowskian revolution—Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) was Evans-Pritchard's teacher—namely, the replacement of evolutionism by functionalism. Anthropologists started to think at a synchronic level and tried to find out how societies *functioned*, rather than how they emerged. The present was to be explained by the present and not by the past.<sup>15</sup> The new school of methodology stressed the importance of fieldwork, and introduced the principle of *Internal Relations* or *Interdependence*, which was to explain how societies were perpetuated. What went wrong with the new approach was that society was thus considered as something stable and unchangeable through time: 'unless there is equilibrium, it is difficult to give 'functional' accounts of institutions, for these amount to showing how persistence of a society is furthered by each institution and hence such stability must be assumed to exist if the specification of the factors furthering it are (*sic*) to be the very paradigms of explanation.'<sup>16</sup>

Evans-Pritchard mainly used the evidence he collected during his personal fieldwork among African peoples. His theory on sacrifice is

<sup>13</sup> My term might imply a sort of evolutionism in methodology! Leach (1976), 4–5, called the method of Hubert and Mauss 'empiricist structuralism', as distinct from the 'rationalist structuralism' of Lévi-Strauss.

<sup>14</sup> Kirk (1981), 68–70. Also Rudhardt (1958), 295–6.

<sup>15</sup> Evans-Pritchard himself was not in favour of a mere empiricist method, and he preferred a combination of evolutionism with functionalism. He thought that his teacher was unable to make abstractions, which would facilitate the use of comparative method.

<sup>16</sup> Gellner (1981), p. xix.

to be found in *Nuer Religion* (1956), and it only refers to these peoples. Evans-Pritchard rejected the theory of Robertson Smith, that sacrifice is a meal of communion with a god, and stressed instead the piacular character of the sacrificial offering: the victim is a substitute for the person who offers the sacrifice. However, as has been correctly stated, Evans-Pritchard did not justify his interpretation of sacrifice as substitution.<sup>17</sup>

Leaving the field of anthropology, let us now pass on to some theories exclusively concerned with either Greek or Jewish sacrifice, starting with the first. It is useful to point out that the scholars who dealt with the Greek evidence were aware of all the aforementioned theories.

### *Greek sacrifice*

#### **K. Meuli on Greek sacrifice**

K. Meuli's article 'Griechische Opferbräuche', in *Phyllobolia für P. Von der Mühl* (1946), constitutes a genuinely new approach to Greek sacrifice, especially animal sacrifice. Meuli concentrated on the type of sacrifice where the kill precedes a feast. He was the first to have claimed that the ritual behaviour involved in a Greek sacrifice derived from that of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunters. Meuli first coined the term *Unschuldskomödie* (comedy of innocence); this is a kind of 'staging' during the sacrificial ritual, by which worshippers try to hide and deny the slaughter of the victim.

From that point onwards, theories on Greek sacrifice have reached the highest point in scholarly sophistication, and have exerted an influence which is still felt by scholars today; that is why I shall give more space to their exposition.

#### **W. Burkert on Greek sacrifice**

The scholar who, in making the most of Meuli's theory, has gone further than he did, is W. Burkert. He continues the tradition of those scholars who pay attention to the ritual form of religion rather than to its myths. Burkert justifies this attitude by means of physiology: myth requires the development of articulate human speech,

<sup>17</sup> See Kirk (1981), 47–50, and, more extensively, de Heusch (1985).

whereas ritual goes back even to animals. This last remark provided the main basis for Burkert's theory, since what he is best known for is the application of ethology (the study of behaviour) to the analysis of religious phenomena. His most famous work, *Homo Necans* (1972), in which his theory of sacrifice is to be found, is an excellent sample of this method. A further field which contributed to shaping Burkert's theory is phenomenology. The reason why he has actually adopted phenomenology is to counterbalance the use of ethology, in other words, to avoid being accused of reductionism (the reduction of an event to a basic external cause). Through phenomenology, the scholar approaches the events from inside.<sup>18</sup> However, Burkert specifies again that an exaggerated phenomenological approach might deprive the scholar of the ability to stand at a distance from his subject, and thus lead him to the neglect of further important aspects. Burkert is only partly in favour of the theory that religion is a system of signs, i.e. of the structuralist approach: for him, the scholar must also try to keep in contact with history. But, again, Burkert does not rely on history in an evolutionist way: he is against the evolutionist views of 'primitive' and 'rational' ways of thinking or of a 'primary' feeling underlying the ritual. Functionalism has also partly influenced Burkert, in the sense that he seeks only to place the behavioural signs of the ritual in their social context; according to Burkert, mere functionalism might be misleading, since it supposes the stability of society, an assumption which, he claims, derived from modern expectations of stability in the world.

With all these methodological tools, Burkert created a sacrificial theory which continued the paradigm of Meuli. Burkert considers sacrifice to be a remnant of the society of Palaeolithic hunters: those men ritualized their collective ferocious action of killing in order to strengthen the sense of community *vis-à-vis* its external enemies. Being influenced by the work of R. Otto, *Das Heilige* (1917), where the author regards the 'sacred' as the tool for a phenomenological approach to religion, Burkert reinterprets the categories of the sacred

<sup>18</sup> Burkert gives a beautiful explanation of what the phenomenological approach to religion is: 'Religion erschliesse sich nur von innen her, für den Gläubigen, so wie die Kirchenfenster nur für den in vollen Farben strahlen, der im Innern der Kirche ist.' Burkert (1981), 99.

on a behaviouristic basis.<sup>19</sup> The behaviouristic terms have been borrowed from K. Lorenz, who, in his book *On Aggression* (1963), talked about the progressive institutionalization of violence in human societies.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Burkert's Palaeolithic hunters are violent killers; but, at the same time, these killers are aware of their aggressive instincts; they almost feel guilty, and here is where the 'comedy of innocence' comes into play.

After the exposition of the aforementioned theory, Burkert dedicates the rest of his book to the application of his general principles to various Greek rites. Basing himself on literary and epigraphic evidence, Burkert mainly focuses on Greek religion as depicted in myth and as practised in the Classical period. However, despite the fact that the immense amount of philological and archaeological data collected by Burkert is sometimes later than the Classical period, it is never used by him as evidence for the period covered in our book.

Using the notion of anxiety, Burkert manages to comprehend all kinds of sacrifice: more specifically, he reduces *θυσία*, *σφάγια*, *ἀποπομπή*, and *δῶρον* to combinations of four different terms. These are, on the one hand, 'death' and 'gift' and, on the other hand, 'eating' and 'dispensing with'.

### Criticism of Burkert's theory on Greek sacrifice

Burkert's book remains a classic. But it has given rise to criticism, both in terms of its theory and of its method.

As regards Burkert's theory, recent discoveries have struck *Homo Necans* at its very core. The first scholar to have proved Burkert's approach misleading was A. E. Jensen, who showed that, in primitive societies, the ritual killing of a wild animal was not of a 'sacrificial' character; sacrifice took place later, in agricultural societies, and the victim was a domestic, not a wild, animal.<sup>21</sup> A more elaborate exposition of this criticism has been offered by the historian of religions J. Z. Smith, who, going even further than Jensen, has

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.: The three elements of the sacred, namely 'tremendum', 'fascinans', and 'augustum', become 'Angst', 'Beseligung', and 'Rangordnung'. The way of reinterpretation raised objections among the scholars' audience, as one can see in the discussion following the paper.

<sup>20</sup> Burkert himself admits that these books were his sources. See his chapter in Hamerton-Kelly (1987).

<sup>21</sup> Jensen (1963).

pointed out that it is wrong to place the origins of ritual killing in pre-agrarian societies ('The Domestication of Sacrifice', in *Violent Origins*, 1987).

Smith provides us with an ingenious analysis of the importance of domestication for the understanding of sacrifice. Domestication is the result of the sedentary way of living, which in turn presupposes the concepts of future and planning: these are not 'primitive' concepts. The notions involved in the religious meaning of sacrifice are not 'primitive' either: for instance, terms used of pollution and its removal presuppose mental categories of a high level. Smith also stresses that the selection of an animal for sacrifice is a secondary level of selection after that of selective breeding. This selective kill has nothing to do with the fortuitous kill carried out by a hunter. As for the terrible emotions usually attributed to the 'primitive hunter', these derive from the reinterpreted reality of hunt. This reinterpretation, which consists in a mythologization of the past, is effected within agrarian societies, and still persists in modern bibliography. For Smith, ritual is not a remote *tremendum* fact, but has its roots in the intellection of culture, and it simply emphasizes and exaggerates the breakthroughs of the 'civilized' way of living. Sacrifice is the ritual act which stresses the striving for perfection of the animal species.

Smith focuses on facts, and not on the motives of human action, and he is against any kind of psychological explanation. In my opinion, this is generally acceptable, as long as it does not go too far. But I think that Smith's approach tends towards the opposite direction of interpretation: that of 'demystifying the ritual'.<sup>22</sup> A scholar dealing with religion should also take into account internal psychological factors, which lead to the adoption of a religious practice; after all, this is what gives religion its particular character.

Despite his attempts to differentiate his own methodology from that of scholars attached to evolutionist models, Burkert has not even escaped criticism from this point of view. Thus, his work has been regarded as continuing the evolutionist tradition.<sup>23</sup> What is to be rejected, according to this criticism, is the evolutionist assumption

<sup>22</sup> The expression is used by B. Mack (1987), 50.

<sup>23</sup> A very good point made by an archaeologist, Sarah Peirce (1993); see esp. her n. 18 and p. 224.

that the phenomena-‘remnants’ under study have their origin in the remote past, and the risky attempt to reconstruct the psychological condition of people in that remote past. Burkert does resort to reductionism, even if he does not admit it: that is, ethological explanations are used to interpret the whole setting of a religious rite.

However, what is especially obvious in Burkert’s work is his insistence on the morbid aspect of sacrifice. Maybe it has not been noticed by scholars, but this insistence derives from Burkert’s personal pessimism about his own times:

Some overstatements [in Lorenz’s book] no doubt have been corrected, but some of the criticism and subsequent neglect may be viewed as part of the schizophrenia of our world, which pursues the ideal of an ever more human, more easygoing life amid growing insecurity and uncontrolled violence. . . . The thrust of *Homo Necans* runs counter to these trends. It attempts to show that things were different in the formative period of our civilization; it argues that solidarity was achieved through a sacred crime with due reparation. And while it has no intention of thwarting modern optimism, it tries to warn against ignoring what was formerly the case.<sup>24</sup>

And *Homo Necans* closes with a truly sombre prophecy:

The modern world, whose pride is in the full emancipation of the individual, has gradually allowed the ritual tradition to break down. At the same time, it has relegated death to the fringes of existence and thought. As the idealistic tradition deteriorates, however, secret societies, ecstatic behavior, love of violence and death spring up all the more wildly and destructively amid seemingly rational orders. Ritual cannot be produced artificially, much less its transcendent orientation, which is no longer shrouded in superstition and secrets. The ideal of a new, non-violent man is a protest of hope against the tradition of violence and anxiety. But it is hard to foresee how the individual, egocentric intelligence can be subordinated to the collective need in order to make possible the continuance of mankind over the breach between the generations. In the end, societal forms in which man’s archaic psyche will be granted its rights will presumably assert themselves. We can only hope that primitivism and violence will not be released unbridled. In any case, our knowledge of the traditions that proved themselves in the past and thus survived in the various experiments of human development should not be lost as we proceed, by trial and error, toward an uncertain future.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Burkert (1983), p. xiv.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 297.



Burkert finds remnants of primitive violence even in protest demonstrations against the war in Vietnam: ‘... confronting the authorities and the police, youngsters still experience the sacred shivers of awe.’<sup>26</sup> I think that this projection of Burkert’s personal pessimism onto ancient societies is what above all exposes him to criticism. However, Burkert, without denouncing his theory of sacrifice, has recently conceded on the centrality of aggression in human society.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps one of the weaknesses that remains unchangeable in Burkert’s book is that his obsession with origins deprives him of the opportunity to apply his theory to historical periods later than the Classical period. So, it is difficult to imagine what Burkert would have to say about the issue of the encounter between paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, with the latter finally becoming a religion with no altars.

#### R. Girard on Greek sacrifice

In the same year as *Homo Necans*, another book of similar character was published. It was *La Violence et le sacré* (1972), written by the literary critic R. Girard. He too attributes sacrificial killing to violent feelings; but he considers these feelings to stem from the very heart of society and not from a remote stage in the past. According to Girard, violence is repeated mimetically from generation to generation, and religion provides the means to legitimize it; thus, violence reaches its climax in the ritual killing of a victim selected at random. To prove his theory, Girard uses a huge amount of literature taken from every period, Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the twentieth century. This, I think, constitutes the main fault of his approach. Even Burkert notes that Girard’s approach is based on literature and not on ritual, and finds the theory incompatible with Mediterranean cult.

Where Burkert concentrates his criticism of Girard is on the notion of violence. Burkert admits that many controversial evolutionist ideas found in *Homo Necans* are corrected by Girard, but he thinks that violence is not the key to the explanation of all kinds of sacrifice. For Burkert, only the notion of anxiety would help to interpret all sacrificial acts, including those not followed by feasts.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In Hamerton-Kelly (1987), 159–60.

<sup>27</sup> Burkert (1997), 333 ff.

<sup>28</sup> The criticism of Burkert is to be found in his papers in Rudhardt–Reverdin (1981) and Hamerton-Kelly (1987).

In my view, Girard's theory is an accumulation of various data, which somehow predetermine the end at the cost of ignoring the particularities of each context or period. Recently, however, scholars of Christianity have used Girard's work as a tool to approach Paul's sacrificial terminology in his letters.<sup>29</sup>

### Greek sacrifice according to the Vernant school

After Burkert, the second most influential theory on Greek sacrifice is represented by a whole school. Its adherents are influenced by the social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who first applied structuralism to the social sciences. This is the French structuralist school of J.-P. Vernant, M. Detienne, J.-L. Durand, and others. The main books which are representative of this trend are: M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds.), *La Cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (1979), G. Berthiaume, *Les Rôles du Mageiros* (1982), and J.-L. Durand, *Sacrifice et labour en Grèce ancienne* (1986). Burkert provides us with a very clear explanation of structuralism: 'In a more specific way, structuralism is termed the science of signs, to coincide with "semiology", while at the same time the concept of "sign" and "language" has been expanded to cover nearly every aspect of civilization.'<sup>30</sup>

The Paris school concentrates on the type of sacrifice which is followed by a feast (see Preface, n. 3). In this view, sacrifice is an act of meat-eating, legitimately constructed around the effort of the sacrificers to hide and deny the violent act of killing an animal. In this regard, the French school totally denies that the notion of 'murder' is the central aspect in a sacrifice: 'Précisément, la cérémonie du sacrifice pourrait se définir comme l'ensemble des procédures permettant d'abattre un animal dans des conditions telles que la violence en apparaisse exclue et que la mise à mort revête sans équivoque un caractère la distinguant nettement du meurtre, la situant dans une autre catégorie, à l'écart de ce que les Grecs entendent par crime de sang, *phonos*.'<sup>31</sup> Starting from the ritual of the Bouphonia, where the animal is pushed to nod assent, the French school adopt the notion of a 'comedy of innocence'; but they claim that sacrifice contains this comedy in order for the guilt of killing to

<sup>29</sup> Hamerton-Kelly (1985), (1990a and b).

<sup>30</sup> Burkert (1979), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Vernant (1981), 7.

be resolved. Bouphonia also serves as an illustration of the fact that the Greeks were aware that they sacrificed an animal which helped them in their agricultural labour.

The French school totally rejects the separation of Hubert and Mauss between sacred and secular. Instead, they insist on the communal and secular character of the feast, which, however, takes place in a religious context: according to them, Greek meat-eating always took place during a ritual occasion; also, the sharing of the meat between men and gods represented the *Weltanschauung* of the Greek citizen.

As its adherents are structuralists, the French school does not examine sacrifice over time.<sup>32</sup> They rather belong to the trend which Burkert calls 'ahistorical structuralism concerned with formal models'.<sup>33</sup>

In my opinion, the main error of the structuralist approach is the following: this school tried to construct a theory of sacrifice based on a motif of non-violence, on the basis of one ritual, namely the Bouphonia. So, not only did this school choose to study one particular kind of sacrifice, namely that which was followed by a feast, but it chose one specific example of this kind as a proof of the whole theory. In my view, this selectivity tends to distort the evidence.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the criticism it might arouse, one has to admit that the French structuralist approach placed sacrifice for the first time in the secular context of the Greek Classical *polis*, without resorting to psychological or biological reductionism. The new method allowed scholars to deal with aspects which had been neglected, such as women and sacrifice, the symbolisms included in the stages of the sacrificial procedure, and similar issues.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Georgoudi's chapter in Detienne–Vernant (1989) is one of the exceptions that prove the rule.

<sup>33</sup> Burkert (1985), 4. Notice the comment made by John Ma (1994) about the structuralist method: 'The ultimate end, rather than conviction through pure demonstration, is an effect of admirable elegance achieved through structure and balance' (p. 75).

<sup>34</sup> A long time after I reached this conclusion, Stella Georgoudi gave a paper criticizing the approach of the book *La Cuisine du sacrifice*. It is now published in Georgoudi–Koch Piettre–Schmidt (eds.) (2005), 115–47.

<sup>35</sup> Detienne's and Durand's chapters in Detienne–Vernant (1989).

### Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum

A very important step toward the systematization of all scholarly approaches to sacrifice is the article in the *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (*ThesCRA*).<sup>36</sup> Although neither a study of historical evolution nor any mention of early Christianity is contained in this article, it must be the most systematic recent treatment of Greek sacrifice. From another point of view, it seems that this article corroborates the importance of the present book: the writers emphasize the privileging of Archaic and Classical sources made so far in the research on sacrifice, and, consequently, the need for the study of evidence from the Imperial period,<sup>37</sup> something which in this book is attempted for the first time.

However, despite the promising attitude adopted by its writers, the article itself rather focuses on Archaic and Classical evidence. Moreover, the remark on the need for the study of later evidence incorporates reservations about the reliability of such evidence. For instance, quite old-fashionedly, the evidence from Pausanias is not considered to be very important, since, according to the writers, Pausanias is interested in ritual because it falls out of the norm.<sup>38</sup>

The article also stresses the tendency which will probably be the dominant one in the near future, and this is multidisciplinary studies.<sup>39</sup> As a proof of this tendency, the writers have provided us with a rich bibliography including an zooarchaeological section. Apart from this section, the bibliography also contains some very interesting recent studies, like the article in which Fritz Graf views Greek sacrifice as a system of signs calling us to interpret them.<sup>40</sup>

### *Jewish sacrifice*

#### M. Douglas and F. Schmidt

A scholar who, even though an anthropologist, has been specifically concerned with Jewish sacrifice is Mary Douglas. Her recent work on Leviticus, *Leviticus as Literature* (1999), is a very good analysis of the conceptual structures underlying a text dealing with animals. As

<sup>36</sup> *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (*ThesCRA*), vol. 1 (Los Angeles, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 132.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 134.

<sup>40</sup> Here cited as Graf (2002).

such, it is extremely valuable for the student of animal sacrifice, especially when used in parallel with the French school's analysis of similar concepts in Greek sacrifice.<sup>41</sup> What is lacking from Douglas's approach is the insertion of her study into the historical context of Jewish religion. This insertion has begun to be effected in the work of F. Schmidt, who has applied the structuralist models used by Mary Douglas to late Judaism.

Schmidt, in *La Pensée du Temple* (1994), has mainly stressed the importance of a certain vision of the Jerusalem Temple in the thought of the sectarian Judaism found at Qumran. Since the central motif in his study is the Jerusalem Temple, Schmidt has also dealt with sacrifice, but unfortunately he has not fully exploited his method in the study of mainstream Judaism, which is the subject of this book.<sup>42</sup>

Structuralism is a good example of a method which, even though widely followed, has not managed to influence all areas of a particular field. Thus, if, in Greek religion, structuralism has helped scholars to see sacrifice in its context, by disentangling it from theories on the origins of the practice, a similar tendency has not yet been noted in the bibliography on Jewish religion, with the exception of the anthropologist Mary Douglas. Instead, the existing studies on Jewish sacrifice, still haunted by the evolutionist model, mainly deal with its origins, and do not talk about the role of sacrifice in Jewish society, especially that of the late Second Temple period.

Apart from a special reference to the very original book by Klavans, below, only a general outline of the theories on Jewish sacrifice is given here, since, independently of my inclusion of Judaism in the study of sacrifice, my overall approach to the subject is primarily that of a classicist.

### **Main scholarly approaches to Jewish sacrifice**

Some of the theories on Jewish sacrifice can be regarded as the equivalent of Evans-Pritchard's approach, as they focus on the *substitutory* character of the victim; the latter is supposed to be immolated in the

<sup>41</sup> See Durand (1979a).

<sup>42</sup> An exception is his contribution to the volume by Georgoudi–Koch Piettre–Schmidt (eds.) (2005), 177–96.

place of the offerer. As a result of the scholarly obsession with origins, evidence for this particular interpretation was even sought in Babylonian religion.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from the two aforementioned drawbacks, that of seeing Jewish sacrifice from the point of view of its origins, and that of studying it independently of Jewish social history, scholarly approaches to Jewish sacrifice suffer from a further disadvantage: the influence of Christian theology. Thus, certain of the theories stressing the substitutory function of Jewish sacrifice consider the Old Testament sacrificial ritual as *prefiguring Jesus's death*, the latter having been interpreted as an atoning substitutory sacrifice for man's sake.<sup>44</sup>

Before Tylor talked about the primary aspect of sacrifice as being that of gift, scholars studying Near Eastern cults had stressed that Jewish sacrifice is predominantly a present to God.<sup>45</sup> In its theological variation, this *gift theory* made sacrifice a projection of the offerer's desire to dedicate himself to God as a gift.<sup>46</sup>

G. L. Bauer was the first to express clearly the view that the gift offered to the Jewish God in a sacrifice was a *meal*. In the twentieth century his theory made its reappearance in an evolutionist guise, where the concept of feeding the deity is underplayed by scholars as a 'primitive' element in Jewish cult, or as a Canaanite influence.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, other modern scholars do not deny that the concept of God being offered a meal is intrinsic in Jewish sacrifice.<sup>48</sup>

Along the same lines, but with its emphasis on the *unifying role of the meal*, there ran Robertson Smith's theory on Jewish (and, by extension, Semitic) sacrifice: as we have seen above, according to his evolutionist interpretation, at the heart of Jewish sacrificial ritual one finds the belief in the natural links uniting the *totem* with those partaking of its flesh and blood, as well as the worshippers with each other.

I have pointed out the defects in Robertson Smith's theory: evolutionism, and dependence on the Christian concept of Eucharistic

<sup>43</sup> See Michaelis (1753), Jahn (1805), Dussaud (1921), Blome (1934).

<sup>44</sup> See Rivière (1952).

<sup>45</sup> See Bauer (1805), Gramberg (1829, 1830), Lagrange (1905).

<sup>46</sup> See Bahr (1837, 1839), Gese (1977).

<sup>47</sup> Thus, de Vaux (1964), 39–40 and (1973), 449–50.

<sup>48</sup> Wendel (1927), Gaster (1962).

sacrifice. A further deficiency which should be mentioned here, in the context of theories on Jewish sacrifice, is Robertson Smith's insistence on the consumption of the victim's blood. How can we reconcile this with the fact that Jewish religion is known for its taboo on blood? Consumption of blood is strictly prohibited in the Bible (Lev. 17: 10–14). Of course, one could say that the adoption of higher social forms caused the Jewish belief in the consanguinity between *totem* and humans to be superseded by more 'spiritual' motifs. However, this hypothetical evolutionist suggestion cannot sufficiently explain how the element which had been the kernel of sacrifice according to Robertson Smith, namely consumption of blood, did not even remain as a *survival* in Jewish ritual.

It would be unfair to underestimate the fact that Robertson Smith's theory emphasized the connecting character of the sacrificial meal, both in the direction of man and the divine, and within the framework of the community. In fact, recently, scholars have again stressed the aspect of the common meal in Jewish sacrifice.<sup>49</sup>

In the end, scholars have generally come to admit that *expiatory killing (based on the substitutory role of the victim), gift, and meal are all essential aspects of Jewish sacrifice*. These aspects are not mutually exclusive; instead, the different types of Jewish sacrifice allow for the effective representation of all these functions.<sup>50</sup>

### Jonathan Klawans

A very original and challenging analysis of Jewish sacrifice is the study by J. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple* (2006). The main aim of Klawans' fluently written book is to refute scholarly approaches which distort the phenomenon of Jewish sacrifice. Some distorting approaches place Jewish sacrifice at an allegedly 'inferior' religious stage, which was either to be replaced by other, 'better' forms of worship, like prayer and other eirenic cultic acts, or to be superseded by Jesus' death and the Eucharist. Some other distorting approaches see Jewish sacrifice as a development over primitive rituals. Both tendencies deprive sacrifice of any symbolic meaning which it might have incorporated, and take it to be a

<sup>49</sup> Marx, in Schenker (1992).

<sup>50</sup> See Hartley (1992), pp. lxxvii–lxxii. The presentation above owes much to the paper presented by A. Marx in the seminar mentioned in n. 4 of the Preface here.

purely 'material' procedure. Klawans states from the beginning that his book questions the distorting scholarly views on Jewish sacrifice. He stresses and analyses the symbolism which is inherent in the Temple and in Jewish sacrifice, and which he closely connects to purity. This symbolism, according to Klawans, is based on two theological ideas: *imitatio Dei*, and attracting God's presence in the sanctuary.

According to Klawans, modern biases have made scholars take Old Testament prophecies, rabbinic writings, and Qumranic texts to be radically critical of the Temple, but the author's aim is to prove that this is not the case. The whole book is thus written by Klawans with the aim to prove that the anti-Temple criticism allegedly found in some sources is no more than the result of modern scholarly projections. That is why the author asserts: 'There are any number of reasons why Jewish, Christian, or even secularist moderns may wish to believe that cult sites and animal sacrifice ought to remain things of the past. But scholarship that attempts to prove that point, or that simply rests on it, becomes a tool of theology or politics.'<sup>51</sup>

Despite his originality and critical stance, it seems that Klawans is too obsessed with his own symbolic system. Believing sacrifice to be a stage in the procedure of *imitatio Dei*, he makes all the evidence fit this scheme. In other words, Klawans does what he accuses other scholars of doing, namely, he projects his own biases onto the evidence. Klawans' pro-sacrificial stance, on which his whole book is based,<sup>52</sup> alerts one as to the objectivity of the study.

However, in the framework of citing arguments against those who consider the so-called 'cleansing of the Temple' and the Last Supper as rejections of the Temple and sacrifice, Klawans is the only scholar who pays attention to the issue of sacrificial metaphor. Klawans' treatment of sacrificial metaphors in the framework of Jesus' words at the Last Supper will concern us in Chapter 6.

<sup>51</sup> Klawans (2006), 254.

<sup>52</sup> As Klawans characteristically claims: 'Had the history of religion turned out differently from the way it did, perhaps someone would have to write a book about the fact that scholars denigrate prayer more than they should.' Ibid. 10.



### Historical Approaches

*P. Stengel and M. Nilsson on Greek sacrifice. The importance of Nilsson's work for the purposes of this book*

In the bibliography on religions, there are also some predominantly historical approaches, but these do not have sacrifice as their main subject, nor do they provide a theoretical interpretation of it. In some of these approaches, however, one can find references to, or sections on, animal sacrifice in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, which is the time-span of the present book.

P. Stengel and M. Nilsson were the main representatives of the shift towards ritual in German scholarship on religion, as this had been represented first by the Cambridge School in England. Stengel and Nilsson were classicists concerned with Greek religion, but neither of them avoided the pitfall of evolutionism. They too tried to find 'primitive' ideas, antecedent meanings and purposes hidden under rituals, with the supposition that the peoples practising rituals could no longer understand their initial meaning.<sup>53</sup>

In his work *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer* (1890), Stengel dedicated a section of the chapter on cult to sacrifice. The section is a detailed description of all types of Greek offerings. In his presentation, Stengel for the first time distinguished between bloody and unbloody sacrifices, as he dealt separately with them. Contrary to Nilsson, who treated purificatory sacrifices separately on the grounds of their ritual peculiarity, to Stengel all sorts of offerings, including sacrifices to chthonian deities, expiatory sacrifices, and human sacrifices, were included in the vast category of 'sacrifice'. Stengel's work *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (1910) is mostly useful for its arrangement on the basis of Greek terms (e.g. *θύειν*, *σφάγια*, *καρποῦν*).

Apart from his attachment to an approach to religion on the basis of ritual, Nilsson had an unsurpassed knowledge of Classical Antiquity. One of his teachers was the German classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the founder of the method which is known in classics as Hermeneutics. Nilsson was mainly a historian of

<sup>53</sup> For the criticism of these theories, see Burkert (1981), 93–5. Also Burkert (1983: 27–9).

religion, ‘perhaps the greatest of all modern scholars in the field of Greek religion’,<sup>54</sup> but as such he also exploited his qualities as a philologist, an archaeologist, and a historian.

To the modern scholar of religion, many of Nilsson’s interpretations and categorizations might seem arbitrary and old-fashioned. For instance, the Swedish author often distinguished the religion of the ‘educated’ (*die Gebildeten*) from the religious beliefs of the ‘people’, the ‘simple folk’ (*die Massen*);<sup>55</sup> or, even, the religion of the city-states from cults in the country. The latter distinction is perhaps due to Nilsson’s rural background (his parents were peasants).<sup>56</sup> Despite these and other questionable aspects, Nilsson’s works represent what is still the most thorough and systematic attempt to characterize Greek religion, from Mycenaean times down to the Roman Imperial period. His most representative book, entitled *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (1940), is very well organized and shows a vast knowledge of the evidence.

Nilsson integrates the issue of sacrifice into his general comments on Greek cult. Thus, generic sacrificial terms are discussed in his works introductory to religion.<sup>57</sup> Nilsson even provides us with a short account of Robertson Smith’s theory on the totemistic character of animal sacrifice, which he rejects as regards Greeks and ‘other Indo-European peoples’.<sup>58</sup> Otherwise, sacrifice is mainly mentioned by Nilsson in the context of Classical civic religion.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Mejer (1990), 335.

<sup>55</sup> See Wide–Nilsson (1931), 38–9. See also the title of ch. 8 in Nilsson (1925), 263: ‘The religion of the cultured classes and the religion of the peasants’, and Nilsson (1951<sup>2</sup>), 676 (‘die Volksreligion’), 700 (‘Leuten’ vs. ‘gebildeten Leuten’), 701 (‘höher’-‘Erlesen’ vs. ‘nieder’); in *ibid.* 681 Nilsson attributes the success of Christianity to the simplicity of the people.

<sup>56</sup> In fact, in Nilsson’s work there is an underlying link between the distinctions educated–folk and city–country. See mainly Nilsson (1940), 20–1. Also Nilsson (1951<sup>2</sup>), 699.

<sup>57</sup> Nilsson (1967<sup>3</sup>), 70–1, 77–9, and on the various types of sacrifice, 79–80, 94–7, 122–4, 129–135. Wide–Nilsson (1931), 18–20.

<sup>58</sup> Nilsson (1940), 74–5. See also (1967<sup>3</sup>), 36.

<sup>59</sup> Thus, cases where sacrifice is discussed by Nilsson include the following: sacrificial perquisites in the sale of priesthods: Nilsson (1925), 247, (1948), 68; funerary sacrificial cults of aristocratic families: Nilsson (1925), 248. Nilsson also discusses festivals, (a) in their agricultural context: Nilsson (1940), 24, 26; (b) as a sign of state power—Nilsson says that these were the only opportunities for meat-eating: Nilsson (1925), 254–6, where there is a short discussion on prices. See also

As regards Nilsson's treatment of later periods, it is easy to see that the Swedish scholar tries to harmonize whatever evidence there is for animal sacrifice with his view of the *decline* of Greek religion in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It is worth dwelling for a moment on Nilsson's treatment of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Nilsson talks about the 'Hellenistic-Roman time' as *one* period (*hellenistische-römische Zeit*),<sup>60</sup> and notes a reduced interest of the Greeks in Greek religion during this period. According to Nilsson, this lack of interest was the result of the decline of Greek city-states, to which religion ('patriotic religion', in Nilsson's terms) had hitherto been attached.<sup>61</sup> From the Hellenistic period onwards, says Nilsson, individualism replaced patriotism:<sup>62</sup> religion was a personal, not a civic, matter,<sup>63</sup> since Greek cities were lost in the wider context of the Hellenistic kingdoms and the Roman Empire.<sup>64</sup> The educated turned to philosophy, and the great mass of people to superstition, mysteries, and foreign cults. From the Greek cults, only those of Asklepios and Hecate retained great popularity.<sup>65</sup>

The same scholar thinks that the interest of Hellenistic poets and historians in Greek religion was due only to an intellectual romanticism, which culminated in Pausanias' text, representing the second-century archaism fostered by Hadrian. This romanticism was exactly symptomatic of the decline of Greek religion.<sup>66</sup>

Nilsson (1948), 66–7, 68, (1940), 87, 94; and (c) as an opportunity for the establishment of interstate relations; Nilsson (1925), 256–7, where the following cases are discussed: colonies sending sacrificial animals to the metropolis (with an emphasis on the Athenian procession of victims—see also Nilsson (1948), 68), a colonist's sacrifice in the mother-city, and a common sacrifice of two Cretan cities.

Nilsson also refers to the differences between sacrificial cults; men vs. heroes: 'The forms of the cult of living men were in general not those of the cult of heroes; sacrifices of blood (*σφάγια*) were not offered to the former, but altars were raised and burnt-offerings made upon them just as to the gods' (Nilsson (1925), 286). Gods vs. heroes and the dead: morning for the cult of the gods, night for the heroes and the dead; sacrifice on altars for the gods, use of *ἑσχαρᾶι* for the heroes and the dead (ibid. 295).

<sup>60</sup> Nilsson (1951<sup>2</sup>), 1–5.

<sup>61</sup> Nilsson (1948), 67–91.

<sup>62</sup> Wide–Nilsson (1931), 33, 68.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>64</sup> Nilsson (1951<sup>2</sup>), 695. However, Nilsson accepts the partial survival of the old state religions in the form of local patriotism: ibid. and Nilsson (1948), 177, 187.

<sup>65</sup> Nilsson (1925), 263–93, (1948), 171.

<sup>66</sup> Wide–Nilsson (1931), 41–2; Nilsson (1925), 295–9.

To Nilsson, the reduced interest in Greek religion was a reality already detectable in philosophical teachings of the early Hellenistic period, when, among other symptoms, people were influenced by Theophrastus' objections to animal sacrifice.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Greek inscriptions talking about a pure heart are explained as a result of Theophrastus' wider appeal,<sup>68</sup> and Plutarch's text (with no references) as corroboration of the increased tendency to magic.<sup>69</sup>

All this negative disposition towards later Greek religion underlies an article written by Nilsson in 1945, in which he deals with animal sacrifice more extensively,<sup>70</sup> and argues for its decline in the Roman period. In this article, Nilsson first argues that in pre-Hellenistic Greek religion, sacrifice was an expensive cultic act, taking place once a year or on special family occasions. And he adds: 'In Greek religion there was also a monthly cult, especially the cult of Apollo and the house cult; yet as far as is known animal sacrifice did not occur in this, rather offerings of a less pretentious kind. It might seem to the Greeks that they venerated their gods too rarely, bringing offerings to them generally once a year, less frequently once a month, and more often at irregular occasions.'<sup>71</sup> Nilsson goes on to say that, at the beginning of the Hellenistic period, we come across the first daily offerings. Passing on to the time of Pausanias, he says that daily service continued to be practised, but 'animal sacrifice was not the dominating rite.'<sup>72</sup> Strikingly enough, Pausanias' references to daily offerings as quoted by Nilsson do not support this view.<sup>73</sup>

A long section of the article is dedicated to examples of cultic use of incense, lamps, hymns, and speeches, as evidence for the fact that animal sacrifice was rejected not only by Christians but by pagans, too. Among these examples, several belong to the Roman period or come from Asia Minor. The final section of the article is about the cult of Asklepios, and an inscription from Epidauros, where the word

<sup>67</sup> Nilsson (1925), 275–6, 281–2; (1948), 89–90.

<sup>68</sup> Nilsson (1948), 90, with no references.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 163.

<sup>70</sup> Nilsson (1945).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 64.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 65. Nilsson can easily go on to talk about the Roman period, since he believes in the continuity of the Roman period with the Hellenistic one (see n. 60 above).

<sup>73</sup> Pausanias, *Elis I*, XIII.10, *Achaia*, XXIII.11.

*πυρφόρος* is brought forward by Nilsson as evidence for incense-offering (the inscription is LSS 25, 2nd or 3rd c. AD): ‘... a fire-bearer went round the altars, probably to burn incense (any other sacrifice is hardly thinkable).’<sup>74</sup> Nilsson bases his argument on this mutilated inscription in order to restore the sequence of a ritual not based on animal sacrifice. This ritual ‘impressed people and seemed to them to be a more appropriate veneration of the gods than animal sacrifice which took place but rarely and at irregular intervals.’<sup>75</sup> So, in Nilsson’s view, Greeks showed an increasing lack of interest in animal sacrifice, because they began to realize that this practice was inappropriate to worship, and favoured other cultic forms instead.

In recent standard works on Greek religion, even that of the later period, the refutation of Nilsson’s argument is not among the aims of the authors.<sup>76</sup> In fact, to the extent that the second chapter of this book (on Greek animal sacrifice) can be read independently of its connection with the chapter on Christianity, it is structured so as to serve the following aim: to establish the thesis of continuity in animal sacrificial practice by means of which it is proven that there is no sufficient evidence to support Nilsson’s claim that animal sacrifice was in decline in the period we are studying. One could be sceptical about my choice to disprove Nilsson’s outdated views. However, Nilsson’s work is still pivotal in the study of Greek religion, and modern scholars still cite it, sometimes without making clear to the reader which aspects of the section cited are still valid and which not.<sup>77</sup> Nilsson’s still overwhelming figure, and the fact that he is the only classicist who saw Greek religion—and, thus, sacrifice—diachronically, provide a legitimate framework in which we can set out the evidence.

### Further historical approaches

Among modern scholars, only R. Lane Fox has challenged Nilsson’s view on the decline of animal sacrificial cult.<sup>78</sup> He has insisted on the

<sup>74</sup> Nilsson (1945), 69.      <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Martin (1987), Price (1999*b*).

<sup>77</sup> See e.g. Beard–North–Price (1998), i, 342, n. 78, where the reader would expect the writers to keep their distance from the Nilsonian clichés contained in the pages cited.

<sup>78</sup> Lane Fox (1986), 69, mainly 70–2.

fact that bloodless cult was not a new way of worship, starting in the Hellenistic period. He has correctly advocated the view in favour of which this book argues, namely that whenever animal sacrifice was not offered, this was due more to financial reasons than to moral hesitation. Unfortunately, his point is not accompanied by references proving it: 'The bloodless alternative to sacrifice owed something to ease and economy, but nothing to growing scruples about shedding animals' blood. When pagans could pay for it, they did, and the scruples of a few philosophers made no impact.'<sup>79</sup> However, sacrifice does not constitute the main theme in Lane Fox's book, so there is no systematic refutation of Nilsson's theory. Lane Fox's examples of animal sacrifice come from Miletus (2nd c. AD), Astypalaia (2nd or 1st c. BC), Pisidia (Imperial period), Asklepios' shrine at Pergamum (apparently 2nd c. AD), and Lydia. Quite strikingly, most of these examples refer to Asia Minor and not mainland Greece, where one can also find numerous instances of animal sacrifice.

Finally, a few other works on religion, which deal with the issue of sacrifice, should be mentioned here. A very original approach to sacrifice from the point of view of the Roman imperial cult is that by S. R. F. Price in *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial cult in Asia Minor* (1984). Apart from an analysis of the dynamics of the imperial cult, Price has also stressed the importance of two issues: that of the exact recipient in the sacrifices of the imperial cult and that of the divine (or not) status of the emperor. In this regard, Price's book touches the area of anthropology, and it is the combination of history and anthropology that certainly constitutes its originality.

As regards Jewish sacrifice, two authors should be mentioned, even if they have not provided us with a satisfactory interpretation of the issue. E. P. Sanders's book *Judaism; Practice and Belief: 63 BCE–66 CE* (1992) could be regarded as the only one which acknowledges the importance of animal sacrifice in the Temple of the Roman period; it contains very vivid descriptions of the sacrificial activities in the Temple.

I should also mention R. K. Yerkes' *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* (1952), even if it does not deal with the period covered by this book. Despite its ambitious title, the work leaves

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 71.

out the most crucial phenomenon in the relation of Judaism to Christianity: the coexistence of the two before AD 70.

The survey above has not included *all* the monographs or parts of monographs which deal with special aspects of the subject.<sup>80</sup> What I have rather tried to present here is a 'history' of the most influential schools of thought concerned with sacrifice, a sort of common background from which every scholar has to start. I have presented the inauguration, use, and handing down of methodological tools, which were used selectively according to each scholar's personal preferences. What remains for the inheritor of this tradition is the awareness that he/she uses models which others have used, and accordingly the impulse to specify the meanings and limits of his/her own methods.

## 2. CONCLUSION: THIS BOOK'S THEORETICAL APPROACH TO SACRIFICE

It is evident that the anthropological theories presented above are based on sources of the Classical–early Hellenistic periods as regards Greek religion, and on the Bible (that is the First and early Second Temple periods) as regards Judaism. What is more, even this historical background is used as foundation for the formation of anthropological theories on the *origins* of sacrifice, for which, actually, we have no evidence. So, as regards chronological limits and intent, these theories can contribute very little to the aims of the present book. Methodologically, however, anthropological theories such as the ones above can be used as a basis for a discussion on sacrifice. Thus, one notices that anthropological theories on sacrifice move along two lines, the one *vertical*, the other *horizontal*. The vertical line concerns the relation between the offerer of sacrifice and its recipient,

<sup>80</sup> See e.g. on choice and cost of animals, Jameson (1988). Or on military sacrifices, Pritchett (1979), 83–90. Sarah Peirce (1993) denies even the smallest evidence of guilt during Greek sacrifice, and instead reinterprets the old theory of sacrifice as a gift. The idea of sacrificial guilt is also criticized by A. Henrichs (1998). For a further sacrificial theory based on the idea of violence, see Bloch (1992), 24–45.

a relation which is expressed in the beliefs of the worshippers, by means of a theological or metaphysical language. The horizontal refers to the relation of the offerer with the reality in which he/she belongs, that is, the members of his/her society, the principles and the materials within it.

Some theories have their focus on the vertical line (Tylor, Hubert and Mauss, Evans-Pritchard), others on the horizontal one (Meuli, Burkert, Smith, Girard), others on both lines (Robertson Smith, Frazer, Vernant, and, even though not an anthropologist, Price), but this does not mean that there can be an absolute distinction between the theories according to their focus. It is also worth noticing that most anthropological theories on Jewish sacrifice focus on the vertical line, that is, the offerer's relation to the Jewish God.

As regards the historical approaches to sacrifice presented above, one could clearly state that historical theories on sacrifice are missing (that is why, in this case, I have used the term 'approach' instead of 'theory'). In other words, there is no such thing as a 'history' of sacrificial practice through time. The only historical approach to Greek religion, that of M. Nilsson, does not have sacrifice as its focus, and even when it does (for instance, in Nilsson's article of 1945), it is influenced by Nilsson's evolutionist idealization of the Classical period, and his underlying view that monotheism came as an answer to the already reduced interest in Greek religion.

Of course, as we shall see in this book, not much changed through time as regards practices and modes of animal killing, mainly in Greek religion (in Judaism one notices minor differences through time). So, a diachronic study of Greek religion or Judaism in isolation is not very appropriate, since the two religious systems remained more or less the same. However, something must have changed when Christianity, a new religious system, entered their field. It is obvious that the missing aspect of all the historical presentations is that none of them tries to study the impact which the attested coexistence of Greek religion and Judaism with Christianity had on animal sacrificial practice. This point is the main question addressed by the present book.

The theories presented above either look for the origins of animal sacrifice or just take it for granted. I rather focus on the events triggering the cessation of animal sacrifice—even if the term 'cessation'



is itself relative, as will be shown. Obviously, a theory explaining the cessation of animal sacrifice would presuppose a systematic study of the circumstances under which this cessation took place. This book is primarily a first attempt to look into these circumstances by demonstrating the centrality which animal sacrifice continued to have in Greek religion and Judaism when Christianity appeared.<sup>81</sup> Only at the end is a more personal view on the cessation of the practice expressed.

It is now time that I presented a few points about the view taken in this book as regards animal sacrifice. (I have stated from the beginning that, in this chapter, I continue to use the term 'sacrifice' with no further specification, because most scholars whose theories I have presented have done so. Yet it has been evident that, in forming their theories, all these scholars mainly had animal sacrifice in mind.)

Having been influenced by the methodology of the anthropologists whose work I have studied, I think that the act of sacrifice is a composite of beliefs, gestures, objects, and materials, which are defined by both the *vertical* and *horizontal* lines, as these have been described above: that is, *vertical* is the line linking offerer and recipient, and *horizontal* is the one linking the offerer with objective reality. Both the vertical and horizontal lines are characterized by the use of codes.

In my view, sacrifice is a way for the offerer to approach the recipient (either divine or not). I do not use the phrase 'communicate with' the recipient, because the response of the recipient is not always obvious to the external observer. This approach is effected along what I have called the vertical line, which includes every belief, wish, or intention which the offerer bears in mind when performing the act of sacrifice. The codes of the vertical line through which the offerer

<sup>81</sup> Actually, while my book was in the process of being published, Guy Stroumsa made a similar attempt: Stroumsa (2005). The promising title of his book (*La Fin du sacrifice*) creates expectations in the reader. Despite admitting the writer's knowledge of a rich recent bibliography, in fact one has to be satisfied with a general, and at times simplistic, overview of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. Furthermore, Stroumsa tends to focus on Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries. However, it is worth retaining Stroumsa's comparison of the cessation of sacrifice to a 'change of paradigm'—in Thomas Kuhn's terms; I would not agree, though, with his view that this change consists in an 'intérieurisation de la religion': see Stroumsa (2005), 24–5.

approaches the recipient are, for instance, those of metaphysics, theology, or religious art. Furthermore, the code of language is an intrinsic component of the vertical line, because it is through language that all other codes are communicated, so language is common to the whole vertical line.

On the other hand, the *horizontal* line of the sacrificial procedure represents man's reality in the strict sense: the members of the society to which the offerer belongs, their principles, and the practicalities available within the framework of this society. We could imagine this line as consisting of many sections, each representing a particular realm of reality: the realm of cultic space and instruments, the realm of offerings (including animals, or parts of their bodies, plants, and even non-organic objects), the realm of human activities (modes of killing people/animals or of dying), the realm of values (justice, purity), the realm of lifestyles (continenence)—and others, which, if listed, would produce an endless series. Each of these realms functions through a code (buildings, images), but, as in the case of the vertical line, apart from their own codes, the meaning of all these realms is further communicated by the common code of language, that is, words. Words do not constitute a particular realm, but move along the whole horizontal line (see Figs. A to C, where language has been depicted in italics).

This book mainly deals with the *horizontal* line, the line of reality. Moreover, despite the fact that reality is detectable through a great deal of evidence other than textual, this book is mainly written on the basis of texts.

If we were to draw only a part of the horizontal line, characterizing each section of it ('space + instruments', etc.), we would have Fig. A, in which it is clear that language ('lang.')

— space + instruments (*lang.*) — offerings (*lang.*) — activities (*lang.*) — values (*lang.*) — lifestyles (*lang.*) —

Fig A. The horizontal line of sacrificial procedure (a section thereof)

If we provide indicatively some of the respective linguistic terms in italics ('*open altar*', '*ox*', etc.) underneath each section of the horizontal line, this gives us Fig. B.



Fig B. The horizontal line with associated linguistic terms

Of course, these are specific terms used for the separate elements in an animal sacrifice. The more general terms used for the notion of 'sacrifice' in Greek and Jewish religion (see pp. 33–7 and 173, respectively) cover more than one section of the line. This is to be expected, since sacrifice is a whole procedure for the activation of which the offerer selects objects and beings from many domains of the real world around him or her. Thus, in the case of Greek and Jewish religion, Fig. B could be changed as shown in Fig. C (with the reader always bearing in mind that this is only a part of the line).

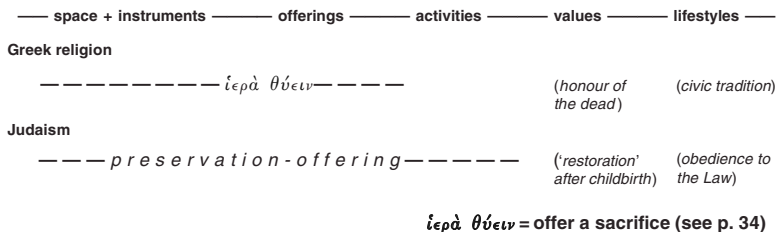


Fig C. The horizontal line with generic sacrificial terms

As we shall see in the relevant section, Fig. C will help us understand the mechanism of metaphor used in Christian texts. By means of metaphor the terms normally applied to a section of the line move towards other sections of it.

I have to stress that the *horizontal* line, that is, the one linking the offerer with objective reality, directly depends on the *vertical* line. In other words, the relation of the offerer to the recipient is what defines the materials and gestures evident in a sacrificial act. For instance, if a group of worshippers believe that their recipient has human needs, this will result in a succession of sacrificial acts involving the offering of a portion of meat to the particular god.

So, whereas both lines are open to a structuralist study on the basis of semiotics, I believe that the horizontal line is more easily accessible, if we want to embark on the study of radical religious changes. By accepting the interdependence of the two lines, we shall be able to recognize that an obvious change in the horizontal line signifies that a fundamental change in the whole system has taken place. This is because, when a worshipper starts thinking differently of his/her relation to the object of sacrificial worship (vertical line), this results in the use of different codes in the everyday reality of worship (horizontal line). In other words, a change in the vertical line results in changes in the horizontal line, even if the modern observer first spots the changes in the latter.

Minor changes in ritual (for instance, the quantity of animals sacrificed) should not be regarded as stemming from a change in religious beliefs (vertical line), but rather as a variety in the horizontal line of the sacrificial system.

It must have become evident that the writer of this book has a preference for structuralist approaches to the issue of sacrifice, although her main method is the traditional hermeneutic one, which consists in the close reading of texts. But, as we shall see in the book's final section (Epilogue), a thorough study of the relevant textual sources provides us with the necessary historical background to make the search for *signs* a fruitful one.

## Greek Animal Sacrifice in the Period 100 BC–AD 200

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter functions in two ways; in the one it can be read independently of the chapter on Christianity, and in the other it constitutes the ritual background against which the problem of the form of worship adopted by Gentile Christians is set. The two ways represent two different approaches to what I have chosen to call the *horizontal* line of the sacrificial system (Chapter 1, section 2), that is the line corresponding to man's reality, from which the particulars for an animal sacrifice are drawn. This line corresponds to the aspects of space, instruments, animal or other offerings, and human activities and values.

As regards Greek animal sacrifice itself, the presentation of the material has been influenced by Nilsson's view of animal sacrifice, which has been presented in the first chapter, and against which I argue. More specifically, I argue in favour of the continued importance of animal sacrifice in Greek religion, by citing evidence for the vitality of Greek animal sacrificial practice in the period 100 BC–AD 200. Sections B.i to B.iii below serve this purpose.

As regards Greek animal sacrifice and Christianity, I present cases where sacrifice was obligatory among members of a pagan community or was felt as a personal need by some pagans (section B.iv). In these cases, sacrifice could be a source of dissension, either within a pagan community, because some (Christian) members did not comply with its rules, or within a group of Gentile Christian converts, because some of them would be uncertain about the 'correct', sacrificial or non-sacrificial, form which their religious expression should take.

The two different ways of approaching Greek sacrifice, in itself and in relation to Christianity, constitute the axes of construction of this chapter, and render my presentation different from other studies on Greek sacrifice. The difference does not consist in bringing new evidence to light, but in bringing into relief new elements in the evidence already known—or else in stressing things which are usually taken for granted.

Preparing the reader to realize the cultic revolution finally brought about by the religious system of Christianity, where animal sacrifice did not constitute the focus of worship, I insist on the centrality of the unit ‘animal’ in Greek paganism. The animal remained the primary sign in the codes defining the reality (horizontal line) of Greek sacrifice: the ritual code, the dietary code, and, of course, the linguistic code. That is why I stress the insistence of various communities on religiously expressing themselves by means of an animal sacrifice, and show that euergetism was not always the channel of this religious expression. To prove this, I leave behind the scholarly view of Pausanias as a nostalgic antiquarian, and instead follow his text as a guide to genuine expressions of religious vitality, in his own time. More importantly, I question what is usually referred to as ‘lack of directive’ in Greek religion, by pointing at cases where ritual conformity in the form of an animal sacrifice was, if not explicitly required of members of the community, nonetheless imposed on them by a social convention, or else traditionally conceived by members of the community as the only way to express personal religious needs. I finally present a further aspect of the semi-otic importance of animals in Greek religion, their role in defining the future by means of the art of divination.

#### A1. LIMITS OF THE NOTION ‘SACRIFICE’ IN ITS GREEK CONTEXT

#### **Greek Terms Used of Animal Sacrifice—Categories of Animal Sacrifice**

The Greek vocabulary used of sacrifices in the period 100 BC–AD 200 does not generally contain terms different from those used in earlier periods. In Greek religion, animal sacrifices could have the following

functions: offering, divination, purification, propitiation, sealing of an oath. Apparently, these types were not definitely separate, and the offering-type was almost omnipresent, since even sacrifices performed for reasons such as propitiation,<sup>1</sup> or divination,<sup>2</sup> were *offered* to deities.

It is necessary to specify that, in the period covered by the book, most of the Greek evidence for religious animal slaughter concerns cases of the offering-type, or, at least, cases whose prevailing character is that of the *offering*. Animal sacrifice of the offering-type is usually denoted by the Greek terms *θυσία*—*θύειν*,<sup>3</sup> more generally by the term *ιερά* (*θύειν*), and, less frequently, by the terms *ἐναγίζειν/καθαγίζειν*. The verb *περιθύω* is used in cases where a preliminary sacrifice is required before the main one, but it does not exclusively refer to animal offerings.<sup>4</sup> Especially in the case of *θυσία*—*θύειν*, the beginning of the sacrificial act is designated by the verb *κατάρχεσθαι*, which already in Homer and Classical sources denotes the throwing of barley grains onto the animal victim,<sup>5</sup> or the shearing of a few hairs from the victim's brow.<sup>6</sup> Finally, when in the sources terms like *ὄλοκαυτεῖν* and cognates are used, one may assume that the victim was wholly burnt.

Because of the frequency of its occurrence, and the particular importance given to it in modern bibliography, it is necessary to dwell a moment longer on the sacrificial term *ἐναγίζειν*. The definition of the term pertains to the issue of the distinction between 'Olympian' and 'Chthonian'/'heroic' sacrifice. This issue has come to constitute a standing puzzle for scholars: the well-known passage from Herodotus,<sup>7</sup> and in particular some passages from later sources including Pausanias,<sup>8</sup> initially led scholars to believe that sacrifices

<sup>1</sup> See Pausanias, *Corinth*, XXXV.11, *Laconia*, XIII.5.

<sup>2</sup> See Plutarch, *Cimon* 18.4.

<sup>3</sup> *βουθυτεῖν*, in the case of bulls slaughtered.

<sup>4</sup> See Lupu (2005), 60–3, with regard to a Pergamene inscription from the Asclepium inscribed in the 2nd c. AD, and rather constituting a compilation of older regulations prevailing at the sanctuary.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* 3.445.

<sup>6</sup> Euripides, *Alcestis* 74, as confirmed by the following verses (75–6), and as taken, at least, by ΣVB (where V and B are MSS of the Greek text and Σ the scholia to them). See Dale (1954), 57–8 and xxxiii.

<sup>7</sup> Herod. 2.44: *καὶ δοκέουσι δέ μοι οὗτοι ὀρθότατα Ἑλλήνων ποιέειν, οἱ διὰ Ἡράκλεια ἰδρυσάμενοι ἐκτρηται, καὶ τῷ μὲν ὡς ἀθανάτῳ, Ὀλυμπίῳ δὲ ἐπωνυμίην θύουσι, τῷ δὲ ἑτέρῳ ὡς ἥρωι ἐναγίζουσι*. On the same distinction with regard to Herakles, see Paus. *Corinth*, X.1, and Diod. 4.39.1.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Paus. *Corinth*, XI.7, *Arcadia*, IV.11, Philostratus, *Heroicus* 53.8–14.

whose recipient is explicitly stated to be a hero or a deceased person, and which are usually designated by the term *ἐναγίζειν*, were not followed by a meal. Thus, sacrifices designated by the term *ἐναγίζειν* were initially taken as belonging to the so-called ‘chthonian’, or else ‘heroic’, type of sacrifice, with no meal involved, and, along with holocausts, were considered as the opposite of the ‘Olympian’ sacrifice, which was followed by a meal and in the sources is designated by *θύειν*.<sup>9</sup> However, A. D. Nock<sup>10</sup> argued in favour of the existence of meals in sacrifices to heroes, and this is the view adopted by most scholars today. Since then, the interpretation of the ‘ἐναγίζειν’ sacrifices as offerings involving no meal has been questioned by scholars.<sup>11</sup>

However, what scholars seem to have reluctantly retained from the old-fashioned distinction between ‘Olympian’ and ‘chthonian’—or ‘heroic’—sacrifices are some differences in their ritual details. These ritual particularities are mostly drawn from sources later than the Classical period. It should be stressed that the relevant passages describe sacrifices to heroes, and nowhere mention the term *χθόνιος*. In any case, elements contained in these descriptions led to the formulation of a ‘classic’ type of *chthonian* sacrifice in modern bibliography, defined as follows:

- the victims were black;<sup>12</sup>
- they were slaughtered at night, with their head pressed downwards;<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The distinction between Olympian and chthonian sacrifice has been a scholarly *topos* since the early 19th century (see Henrichs (2005), 47), and is found in all classic manuals of Greek religion. See e.g. Stengel (1920<sup>3</sup>), where the presentation of Greek sacrifice includes many sections, among which are these on sacrifices to chthonian deities (§ 72), the cult of heroes (§ 79), and the cult of the dead (§ 80). In Stengel (1910) chthonian cults and cults of the dead are studied in the same section (XVI), but they belong to a section other than that on Greek sacrifice in general (XV).

In fact, the distinction made in Classical sources (expressed by the verbs *θύειν* and *ἐναγίζειν*) designates the difference between offerings to the gods, on the one hand, and offerings to heroes and the dead, on the other. The notion of the *chthonian* (*χθόνιος*) was only introduced by the scholiasts of the Roman period. See Parker (2005), 37–8.

<sup>10</sup> Nock (1944), repr. in Stewart (1972).

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Ekroth (2002), and the recently published Hägg–Alroth (eds.) (2005), which is the proceedings of a seminar on the issue, conducted in 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Philostratus, *Heroicus* 53.8–14.

<sup>13</sup> ΣL Apoll. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.587; Paus. *Corinth*, XI.7, *Arcadia*, IV.11.



- they were slaughtered on an ἐσχάρα or in a pit;<sup>14</sup>
- their blood was poured into the ground;<sup>15</sup>
- libations were sober, not of wine.<sup>16</sup>

In this book, whenever I refer to chthonian sacrifices I mean sacrifices following the pattern just outlined.

In the *military* context, the prevailing character of animal sacrifice was not that of the offering, but would serve other purposes, like divination and purification; in these cases, sacrifice was not followed by a feast. The most common term used of military sacrifices not followed by a feast is σφάγια(ἐντέμνειν)/σφαγιαῖζειν, which denotes religious slaughter of a divinatory-propitiatory character before battle. Because of its vagueness, the more general term ἱερά could also be used in a military context. The military sacrifices denoted by the terms ἱερά and σφάγια have been studied comparatively. For instance, W. K. Pritchett has tried to analyse the differences between ἱερά and σφάγια, which preceded the battle.<sup>17</sup> Like most scholars, Pritchett, too, sees a fundamental difference between these two types of sacrifice; this difference concerns their divinatory function, and consists in the method used for interpreting the omens deriving from them: in the case of ἱερά, the divinatory method used was extispicy; whereas in σφάγια, omens were taken from the pouring of the victim's blood, and the animal was neither burnt nor eaten.<sup>18</sup> We should also note that, contrary to Nilsson's claim,<sup>19</sup> σφάγια too were offered to named deities, but this was not their main function.

Less often, we come across expressions used of sacrifices of a *propitiatory* or *apotropaic* character, like θυσίαις ἰλάσκεσθαι (or ἀποτρέπειν). In this period, we also have a few references to (*non-military*) *purificatory* sacrifices, denoted by καθάρσια or ἀγνισμοί, and to *oath-sacrifices*, denoted by the expression κατόμνυσθαι ἐπὶ τομίων.

<sup>14</sup> FGtH 84 F 7; Paus. *Boeotia*, XXXIX.6.      <sup>15</sup> Paus. *Phocis*, IV.10.

<sup>16</sup> See Graf (1980).      <sup>17</sup> Pritchett (1979), 73 ff.

<sup>18</sup> R. Parker has recently argued for the scarce presence of pre-battle sacrifice, and even for the absence of σφάγια, in post-Xenophontic sources. But, whereas the author of this article is well aware of the historiographic differences between Classical and Hellenistic historians, he does not differentiate between the issue of the Hellenistic or Roman historian writing about the past, and the issue of that historian's text as evidence for his own time. Parker (2000).

<sup>19</sup> Nilsson (1967<sup>3</sup>), 123.

From now on, all of the above sacrificial types will be comprehensively denoted by the expression ‘animal sacrifice’, except when otherwise specified.

### The Prominent Character of Animal Sacrifice in Greek Religion

As I have stated, I am dealing with religious acts involving the use of animals, and not other kinds of material. The limitation of my research to animal sacrifice means that, in the case of Greek religion, I shall not deal systematically with libations or vegetable offerings, so I first have to justify the marginal treatment of these two areas of non-animal offerings.

*Libation*, that is the ritual pouring of a liquid (usually wine), seems to be the most problematic of Greek non-animal offerings, for the following reasons:<sup>20</sup>

- A self-evident, but quite important, point is that libation was an act not covered by any of the Greek terms denoting ‘sacrifice’ (see above), but was designated by a distinct term, *σπονδή*.
- Both literary and epigraphic evidence shows that animal sacrifice offered on an altar was always accompanied by a libation, but not always by other non-animal offerings.
- Libations could be also offered alone, independently of animal sacrifices, on special occasions: truces, banquets, and the cult of the dead (where they took the special form of *χοαί*, that is, libations not exclusively of wine, but of other liquids as well, like honey).
- Relevant to the latter characteristic is the fact that a libation did not require the existence of an altar or a *τράπεζα*, but could be offered anywhere.
- As regards Greek iconography, the evidence comes from the Classical period, but it shows the particularity of libations:

<sup>20</sup> The following characteristics do not fully cover the issue of libations, but they are selected to make clear the comparison with animal sacrifice. The most recent account of Greek libations is Graf (1980), with bibliography. The article mainly deals with the semiotics of the constituents of libations.

namely, vase paintings show gods pouring libations but not sacrificing animals.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, whereas Greek ritual killing was inextricably bound up with the offering of a libation, the latter was also considered a quite distinct and autonomous sort of offering.

Despite admitting the importance of libations in Greek religion, I have decided to deal with them only marginally,<sup>22</sup> because of two characteristic features: (a) they were a complementary ritual element to animal sacrifice; and (b) even if they were offered alone, as an alternative, they never came as a general rule to substitute for the practice of killing an animal.<sup>23</sup>

The latter characteristics apply even more to the rest of the non-animal offerings (e.g. incense, cakes etc.), since these were not as autonomous as libations. Even Lucian, in his ironical treatment of sacrifice, contained in his treatise *Περὶ θυσιαῶν*, mainly aims at animal sacrifice, whose procedure he presents in detail.<sup>24</sup> So, for instance,

<sup>21</sup> See Himmelmann (1998), 120–9 (also few paintings of gods offering non-animal sacrifices); I owe this remark on the iconographic difference between animal sacrifice and libation to Prof. R. Osborne.

<sup>22</sup> The context where I shall deal with libations rather more extensively in this book is Christian persecutions, where it seems that the offering of a libation by the accused Christian played quite an important role; but it was another type of reason which demanded the particular offering (on which see Ch. 6).

<sup>23</sup> Independently of the omission or not of libations from the book, it would be an omission of gratitude not to thank the scholars who have spent their time on discussing (or electronically corresponding) with me on libations: Prof. R. C. T. Parker, Dr S. R. F. Price, Prof. R. Osborne, Prof. J. Scheid, Prof. G. Berthiaume, Dr V. Huet. The Table Ronde on sacrifice (see Preface, n. 4), which I attended thanks to Prof. Scheid's invitation, made me realize the difficulty in setting limits to the term 'sacrifice'. I am solely responsible for the final choice of limits as far as this book is concerned.

<sup>24</sup> Louise Bruit-Zaidman has pointed out the perfect compatibility between animal and non-animal offerings in Greek religion, by citing many examples of the coexistence of animal and non-animal sacrifice in the same cult, and, at a certain point, by stressing Lucian's equalizing enumeration of animal and non-animal offerings in *On sacrifices* 12 (see below, in the main text). She has insisted that the exaltation of non-animal offerings above animal offerings was mainly an argument of philosophical/vegetarian circles. See Bruit-Zaidman (2005). From my point of view, Bruit-Zaidman's emphasis on coexistence of animal and non-animal offerings exactly proves the non-autonomous character of non-animal sacrifice.

Pausanias uses *θύω* only for animal offerings (despite his admission of the archaic use of the term for non-animal offerings: *Elis I*, XV.10), but uses *καθαγίζω* for both animal and non-animal offerings (*Corinth*, X.5, *Elis II*, XX.3, *Arcadia*, II.3, *Boeotia*, III.8).

in the aforementioned treatise (*On Sacrifices* 12), immediately after citing on a par the *θύσσαι* of an ox, a lamb, a goat, incense, and a cake, Lucian goes on to ridicule those who sacrifice (*ἀλλ' οἳ γε θύοντες*), by ironically describing in detail only the procedure for an animal, not vegetable, sacrifice. To me, this passage suggests that, at the religious level, animal offerings were at the centre of discussions and criticisms of sacrifice, as, at the linguistic level, the verb *θύω* mainly alluded to animal offerings.<sup>25</sup> Generally, the examples which Lucian chooses in order to ridicule sacrificial practice in the aforementioned treatise all derive from scenes of animal offerings.

For the aforementioned reasons, in this book, I shall deal only marginally with examples of non-animal offerings apart from libations.<sup>26</sup>

Some scholars of Graeco-Roman religion (see n. 24 on Louise Bruit-Zaidman) have come to regard libations and other sorts of non-animal offerings as having an equal status to animal sacrifice. Yet, it is possible to cite some further reasons proving that animal sacrifice occupied the pre-eminent position in Greek religion.

If we are to look for some fixed element which persists through the diverse components of Greek sacrificial practice, I would suggest that this is most convincingly identified as the conceptual category of the animal's body.<sup>27</sup> This proposition makes animal sacrifice the primary offering in Greek religion. Indeed, Greek sacred laws show that the body parts of the sacrificial victim (independently of the species concerned) had a more or less standardized correspondence to those partaking of the victim's body: gods, priests, worshippers, and, among the latter, men and women. This was not the case with other sorts of offerings, where not only would a single unit (e.g. a plant, a cake) remain undivided, but also a great variety of plants and ingredients was involved.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Admittedly *περιθύω* could probably be used of both animals and cakes, see n. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Such a case is the offering of incense mentioned by Pliny (*Ep.* X.96).

<sup>27</sup> That by the term 'animal' we mainly have the quadruped animal in mind is rightly pointed out by Poplin (1989), 15. Despite the ingenuity of the particular comments, I would regard this article as a bad example of the French school of thought: in the article, evidence is gathered unsystematically from various times, places, and disciplines.

<sup>28</sup> See the epigraphic collections by Sokolowski, *passim*.

Apart from its character as an offering, animal sacrifice served further ritual purposes, such as purification and divination. Vegetables, cakes, or libations did not have functional roles of this sort, except in Pythagorean circles, where divination based on vegetables was adopted as a deliberate reaction to common practice.<sup>29</sup>

In Greece, animal sacrifice did not cease to be practised until at least the second century AD. The argument from cheapness in interpreting the occasional preference for libations over animal sacrifice is contradicted by evidence for the persistence of animal offerings in many Greek locations (including poor ones), a phenomenon constituting the focus of this chapter. This cultic persistence is indicative of the character of Greek ritual, and should not be underestimated.

From a macroscopic point of view, this willingness on the part of the Greeks to expend financial resources on sacrificial animals proves the importance that animal sacrifice had for Greek cities. As I shall show in this chapter, the richer a Greek community was, the more splendidly it tried to celebrate its festivals by increasing its expenditure on sacrificial animals.

The limits to the definition of sacrifice presented above have determined my use of the sources: I have given priority to references to animal sacrifice.

### A Typical Description of Greek Animal Sacrifice from Our Period

An important gap in our evidence for the period 100 BC–AD 200 is that nowhere are we provided with a detailed description of the sacrificial procedure, similar to the Homeric descriptions. The only passage referring to the order followed in the sacrificial procedure comes from a critic of animal sacrifices, namely Lucian. This passage has concerned us earlier, but in a different context (pp. 38–9 above). To make his sarcasm at the sacrificial scene more acute, Lucian made use of a colourful realism. In the passage below (*On Sacrifices* 12–13), I have highlighted the terms corresponding to stages in the sacrificial ritual:

<sup>29</sup> See Bouché-Leclerq (1975), vol. 1, pp. 181–2.

When they have established *altars* and *formulae* and *lustral rites*, they present their sacrifices, the farmer an ox from the plough, the shepherd a lamb, the goatherd a goat, someone else incense or a cake;[ . . . ] But those who offer *victims*—to come back to them—deck the animal with *garlands*, after finding out far in advance whether it is *perfect or not*, in order that they may not kill something that is of no use to them; then they *bring it to the altar and slaughter it* under the god's eyes, while it bellows plaintively—making, we must suppose, auspicious sounds, and fluting low music to accompany the sacrifice! Who would not suppose that the gods like to see all this? And although the notice says that no one is to be allowed within the holy-water who has not clean hands, the *priest* himself stands there all bloody, just like the Cyclops of old, *cutting up the victim, removing the entrails, plucking out the heart, pouring the blood about the altar*, and doing everything possible in the way of piety. To crown it all, *he lights a fire and puts upon it the goat, skin and all*, and the sheep, wool and all; and the smoke, divine and holy, mounts upward and gradually dissipates into Heaven itself. (Loeb tr.)

In Lucian's description, the victim's skin is supposedly burnt on the altar. This is the only element which does not agree with earlier epigraphic evidence, where the skin is a prerequisite for the priest; otherwise, the 'setting' of an animal sacrifice, according to the description above, is the following:

1. An altar and a victim are necessary before the ritual starts; in particular the victim must have been chosen as being unblemished.
2. Prayers are said and lustral rites are performed, presumably for the offerer (and the priest?).
3. The victim is garlanded and escorted to the altar.
4. The victim is slaughtered (probably by the priest), and the priest pours the blood around the altar, and carves up the victim so as to extract its entrails. (We are not told that the entrails are extracted in order to be eaten *in situ*, but there does not seem to be any other reason for the priest to distinguish the entrails from the rest of the victim.)
5. The rest of the victim is burnt on the altar-fire.

Unfortunately, no information about meat-sharing is given by Lucian or any other Greek writer in the period we are studying. Even with the limitations which are evident in this passage, though, Lucian's unique

description of an animal sacrifice is the closest to completeness. So far as it goes, it shows no differences from the Homeric descriptions.

## A2. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

### Sources

As regards the literary evidence, our sources are the major Greek prose texts of the period: Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Plutarch, Pausanias, Appian, Lucian. Here, it is useful to give an account of the contexts in which references to sacrifice are made by each author.

In the *Bibliotheca Historica* of Diodorus, animal sacrifice mainly occupies a place in the myths he narrates. However, several times a mythical event is invoked to account for cultic particularities in the author's time. Diodorus' history also contains scenes which elucidate the phenomenon of animal sacrifice and the conceptions which surrounded it, even when they refer to the past.<sup>30</sup>

Dionysius of Halicarnassus sought to assert the Greek character of Roman religion, by describing contemporary examples of Roman sacrifice conducted in the Greek way, and to some extent these can be used by us as indirect evidence for Greek ritual. Like Diodorus, Dionysius finds the evidence for the past in the present, but for different reasons. The text of Dionysius shows that Greeks and Romans could communicate by means of a language consisting in sacrificial semiotics.

In the *Geography* of Strabo animal sacrifice mainly belongs to the strange and exotic, but some examples concern Greek animal sacrifice supposed to be conducted in Strabo's time, or are detailed descriptions of other people's sacrificial rites. Furthermore, comments inserted in the text,<sup>31</sup> or sacrificial terms used, can equally constitute reliable material for the modern scholar.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. his description of the Egyptian sacrificial ritual, in Diodorus 1.70.4–5, or his comment on the offering of sacrifice during the rise of the Dog Star, in 4.82.2.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Strabo 7.3.4 on the close relation of women to sacrifice.

The authors whose texts contain most references to sacrifice, and are used as the main sources in this book, belong to the later first and second centuries AD.

In Plutarch's *Lives*, references to religious practice necessarily concern the past, both Greek and Roman, but these can be used cautiously as evidence for Plutarch's awareness of cultic change between the past and his own time. In the *Moralia* the evidence for animal sacrifice comes from Plutarch's time, and here, whenever Plutarch deals with religion, he shows great artistic skill.<sup>32</sup> Not only does he inform us about the existence of animal sacrificial cults in several places around Greece (and Rome), but he also provides us with descriptions of sacrificial scenes, and an account of the mentalities surrounding animal sacrifice conducted in Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Judaea.

Along with Plutarch's *Moralia*, the *Description of Greece* (*Ἑλλάδος Περιήγησις*) of Pausanias can be used as a source for the creation of a 'cultic map of Greece', filled not only with names and sites, but also with the religious conceptions and tendencies in the second century AD.<sup>33</sup> Only a few of the cults referred to by Pausanias belong to the remote past; thus, his text will constitute the main literary source in this chapter, since Pausanias describes in detail many different sacrificial cults in mainland Greece of the second century AD. Here, I stress not only Pausanias' interest in sacrifice, but also the similarity of his perspective to that of Greek sacred laws.

A marginal reference to Appian's *De bello civili* will be made in the context of sacrificial obligations imposed on individuals.

One of the satires of Lucian (*On Sacrifices*) has already concerned us, as a source of description of ritual.

As will have become obvious, Greek treatises specifically addressing animal sacrifice are lacking from the period studied in this book, when Christianity encountered the pre-existent practice of animal sacrifice. The exception to this rule might be Pausanias, who describes many Greek sacrificial cults in detail, but here again these

<sup>32</sup> This is admitted by Russell (1968), 133.

<sup>33</sup> The only book to have stressed Pausanias' value as a source for his contemporary Greece is Arafat (1996): Pausanias 'kept an open mind, looking at both ancient and modern, but the stress on the local adds an extra dimension to the study of the contemporary...' (p. 12). The same view is held by Price (1999b), 8.



descriptions are not accompanied by any sort of analysis regarding the significance of the cult. It is important to stress that Porphyry's treatise *De abstinentia* (Gr. *Περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων*), in which a long section criticizes animal sacrifice, is later (second half of the third century AD).<sup>34</sup>

Along with the literary evidence, the backbone of this chapter is the evidence for sacrifice contained in inscriptions. Those studied in this book come from the well-known *corpora* of Greek inscriptions, complemented by epigraphic publications in periodicals.<sup>35</sup> From the epigraphic evidence, I have only included direct evidence for animal sacrifice, namely inscriptions which explicitly refer either to animal sacrifice or posts related to sacrificial cult.

Direct epigraphic evidence includes not only cultic regulations and sales of priesthoods, but also decrees and dedications. The collections of sacred regulations (such as the ones made by Sokolowski) are not fully representative of the various cultic issues. The classification of certain inscriptions under the heading 'sacred laws'<sup>36</sup> is no guarantee that religious issues are not contained in other epigraphic categories. Thus, a number of honorific decrees can contain much more substantial material as regards sacrifice (for instance, recording that the person honoured made distributions of sacrificial meat) than the inscriptions traditionally classified as sacred laws from the same area.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Of course, this treatise incorporates long sections from Theophrastus' criticism of animal sacrifice (4th–3rd c. BC).

<sup>35</sup> See the Bibliography, section 2. When use of specific epigraphic publications is made, references are given in the footnotes.

<sup>36</sup> For the most recent—and, I think, most successful—attempt at a definition of the (usually) vague term 'sacred law', see Lupu (2005), 4–8. Lupu has collected and republished a great number of 'sacred laws' published after Sokolowski's last volume (1969).

<sup>37</sup> An example: the sacred law from Stratonikeia contained in *LSA*, no. 69, contains only the verb *θύω* as regards sacrifice. However, if one looks at the stelai honouring the priests of Zeus Panamaros, important references are made to the distribution of sacrificial meat by the priests (*IStratonikeia*, nos. 202, 203).

For this period, one can find many more epigraphic references to sacrifice by looking through Jeanne and Louis Robert's various works and articles, rather than through epigraphic collections; but, again, the lack of a consistent index to the Roberts' work deprives the student of any certainty about the completeness of such a search. Moreover, the datings given by L. Robert are often of a general character, and consequently one cannot draw safe conclusions from the material.

The reason for excluding indirect epigraphic references to animal sacrifice from the book is that these can be very problematic. Indeed, within the indirect epigraphic evidence for animal sacrifice, one of the most embarrassing items proves to be dedications containing the terms *εὐχγή* and (*εὐ*)*χαριστήριον*.<sup>38</sup> Problems are also encountered in the case of altars bearing the inscription of their dedication (e.g. *βωμὸν ἀνατίθημι*).<sup>39</sup>

The case of grave-altars is especially problematic, because the existence of an altar may imply feasts in honour of the dead. That one could place objects on such grave-altars is almost certain, since we find curses of the sort: *ὁ . . . ἐπιθείς τι τῷ βωμῷ ἔστω ἐπάρατος* (*IK*, vol. *Arai* 402).

Even the direct epigraphic attestations of animal sacrifice included here constitute puzzling evidence. The characteristic dispersion of inscriptions in time and space deters us from forming either a synchronic view of sacrificial practice all around Greece, or a diachronic view of sacrificial practice in one place. Moreover, simple attestation of the practice does not mean a 'description' of it. Thus, in cases where we only have a mention of animal sacrifice, there is no way for us to know the exact ritual procedure followed at the time. A further problem which we are faced with in the study of inscriptions is that

<sup>38</sup> The terms themselves do not allude to sacrifice; however, in some cases they are combined with a sacrificial context. For instance, the word *εὐχγή* is found on stelai depicting a sacrifice (*IPrusa ad Olympum* 40 and 46). The word *εὐχαριστήριον* is found on a relief depicting a libation and fire on the altar (*IAlexandria Troas* 78). On the other hand, we find stelai and reliefs with depictions of animal sacrifice, but without any allusion to it in the text (*IApameia Bithynien und Pylai* 33 and 35). On *χαριστήριον*, see *OGIS* 699, n. 6 and 835.

<sup>39</sup> Altars are dedicated to gods (*OGIS* 423, *IEphesos* 1266, where there is also a relief depicting a sacrificial fire), to kings (*OGIS* 175), to the emperor (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 814), even to important men (*IKnidus* 59: Artemidorus is to become *σύνναος* with Artemis and to be honoured with sacrifices and games). Altars are also related to the remembrance of the dead (e.g. *IBithynia* III 6: a *βωμός* is dedicated *μνήμης χάριν*).

Such altars might just have been bases (see Hellmann 1992, 74), although the explicit reference to the dedication of the altar (and not of both the altar *and* what it supports) rather excludes this possibility. But, apart from that, it is not certain whether the dedication concerns the altar as an *anathēma*, or implies also the offering of a sacrifice, either at the moment of the dedication or at regular intervals. Thus, in the case where the dedicator is a priestess (*IKyme* 38), it is very likely that a sacrifice took place, but, quite often, even if the remains of an altar are archaeologically visible, the text has no reference to a *βωμός* (*INikaia* 1035, 1055, 1067), so a sacrifice is not necessarily implied.

the so-called 'epigraphic habit' has been studied systematically only in relation to the impact that Roman dominion had on social mobility in the West.<sup>40</sup> The epigraphic reaction of mainland Greece to Roman rule has not been specifically studied as such, and there is no comparative study of epigraphic production as between mainland Greece and Asia Minor, including religious inscriptions. Finally, another puzzle concerns chronology: the evidence does not always agree with the limitations set by the student. Fortunately, this problem has been easily solved here by a slight modification of our time-limits.<sup>41</sup>

In conclusion, it is crucial to emphasize that the evidence for animal sacrifice in mainland Greece and Asia Minor is obstinately scanty and discontinuous as regards the period we are concerned with. On the one hand, epigraphic sources are scarce, both chronologically and spatially—with the exception of Athens, Rhodes, Delos, and Ephesus. On the other, the literary evidence is characterized by two problems: either it deals with sacrificial rites which are mythical or earlier than our period, or, in the best case, it deals only with sacrificial rites of the second century AD.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See MacMullen (1982); Woolf (1996).

<sup>41</sup> Thus, our chronological framework of inclusion of inscriptions is the following:

- Not all inscriptions are exactly dated, so I have decided to extend the initial chronological limits by 10 years on each side, i.e. the final limits are 110 BC and AD 210.
- Datings of the sort 'before X', 'after X', or 'around X' are included only when they are congruent with these limits, i.e. the earliest date is 'after 110 BC' and the latest one 'before AD 210'.
- Texts dating 'around AD 210' or 'around 110 BC' are also included.
- I have not included texts with the following datings: 'uncertain'; 'within 2nd c. BC'; 'within 3rd c. AD';
- whereas I have included texts dating: 'end of 2nd c. BC'; 'beginning of 3rd c. AD'; '2nd/1st c. BC'; 'within 1st c. BC'; 'within 1st c. AD'; 'within 2nd c. AD'; '2nd/3rd c. AD'.
- From datings of a general character, I have included: texts of 'Roman times', or of the 'Imperial period'.
- Texts generally dating to the reign of an emperor are included, up to those dating to the time of Septimius Severus.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. books 1–4 of Diodorus, which deal with Greek and foreign sacrifices of the mythical, prehistoric, and early historical past. In bk. 5 one can find references to contemporary animal sacrifices, which Diodorus cites in order to corroborate their early (mythical or historical) *aition*.

As a result, important attestations of animal sacrifice from this period consist in isolated instances as regards epigraphy and in second-century instances as regards literature.

## Special Methodological Remarks

### *Literature*

An obvious problem, when using literary evidence in order to collect references to a specific theme, is the context to which these references belong. The researcher must be able to separate the wider argument which the specific reference serves from the reference itself, and to determine the degree to which the reference was distorted for the purposes of the author's argument.

A further problem is whether one should include terms not denoting animal sacrifice, but which, however, are related to animal sacrifice. References to temples have not been used in this book, as they do not explicitly concern animal sacrifice, even if they constitute implicit evidence for the existence of cult, which could not be other than sacrificial. Whenever a reference to a feast is made by any of our sources, the reference has been included *only* when it is accompanied by the specification that the feast follows a sacrifice (*θυσία*), as in the following passage from Strabo (10.5.11):<sup>43</sup> 'Tenos has no large city, but it has the temple of Poseidon, a great temple in a sacred precinct outside the city, a spectacle worth seeing. In it have been built great banquet-halls (*hestiatoria*)—an indication of the multitude of neighbours who offer sacrifice together there (*synthyontes*) and take part with the inhabitants of Tenos in celebrating the Poseidonian festival (Loeb tr. modified, my emphasis).' In fact, such references to feasts serve as confirmation of the fact that, when we come across the Greek term *θυσία* alone, animal sacrifice is implied.

Sometimes we may not come across the term *θυσία*, but it is certain that the sacrifice mentioned is that of an animal; such cases are the following: distinct reference to divine or heroic honours, because we have no evidence that this distinction could function in a

<sup>43</sup> This method of mine might result in an overlap with the texts studied by Pauline Schmitt-Pantel. But hers is a different way of reading the texts, since she *only* focuses on the occurrence of words denoting feasts, independently of a connection with sacrifices, which certainly exists, as she implies in Schmitt-Pantel (1992), 6–11.

non-animal sacrifice. Heroic honours are denoted either by the specification *τιμᾶν ὡς ἥρωα* or by *ἐναγίζειν/ἐναγισμός*;<sup>44</sup> the occurrence of the verb *κατάρχομαι*, because, as we have seen (section A1), this verb is used in connection with an animal sacrifice in earlier sources.

### *Epigraphy*

In most of the direct epigraphic evidence we are studying here, we come across the term *θύω*, which I generally take as denoting animal sacrifice, unless there is a special reason for supposing otherwise.

Many epigraphic references only concern the feasts which followed the sacrifices. As in the case of literary references to feasts, such epigraphic references have been included only when they accompany the mention of the term *θυσία*.

## B. THEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR GREEK SACRIFICE IN THE PERIOD COVERED

As I have said, two main axes form the background of this chapter: the refutation of Nilsson's view that people abandoned the practice of animal sacrifice because they thought it to be inappropriate; and the aim to make more conspicuous the uneasy encounter of pagans with Christianity.

Given the fact that there is no perfect way to divide up the evidence, I have deliberately chosen to approach the question of Greek animal sacrifice in a way which both smooths the gaps in the evidence, and provides the setting which shows a vigorous paganism as the environment in which Christianity developed.

Thus, the nature of the evidence and the need to meet the initial aims of this chapter oblige us to follow two stages in this study. At the

<sup>44</sup> Unlike *ἐναγίζω*, the verb *καθαγίζω* is used more broadly of both animal and vegetable offerings. See e.g. Paus. *Corinth*, X.5, *Elis II*, XX.3, *Arcadia*, II.3, *Boeotia*, III.8 (*bis*).

first stage (section i), we need to prove that animal sacrificial practice was characterized by continuity, even if its presence in the sources is detected at different points in time. So, at the second stage, I shall present evidence showing the great vitality of animal sacrifice (section ii), extending from absolute harmony (section iii) to possible dissension (section iv), the latter being the case when conformity to community rules or to an established practice is questioned by a new religion entering the field. In no way is the evidence in each section intended to be complete, but is rather chosen as being explicit, and bearing fruitfully on the question.

For the original version of the Greek passages which in the main text are quoted in English, the reader may consult Appendix II (hereafter App. II + number of passage).

### **i. Animal Sacrifice in Our Period: Past and Present**

In this section I shall verify whether writers in our period saw any difference between their contemporary and earlier (or much earlier, or mythical) animal sacrificial rites. I shall also compare attestations of animal sacrifice coming from different dates. Having demonstrated that the discontinuous character of our evidence does not imply discontinuity in Greek sacrificial practice in our period, it is easier to move onto further aspects of our theme.

I shall first present the relation between the author's past and his present (i.a). The link is mostly made by means of the ritual itself, namely, when the author says that a sacrificial rite established in the mythical or Classical past is still practised in his own lifetime. This is the case where the author is most prone to comment on any differences between 'past' and 'present', since, in the case of ritual, conspicuous characteristics are at issue.

At a second stage (i.b), I shall consider the way in which omens taken from animal sacrifice practised in the past are presented by Greek authors in our period. If animal sacrifice, or some aspects of it, was something extremely alien to the reader whom the author addressed, I suggest that the author, when talking about the past, could either have omitted the relevant section, or have inserted some comments warning the reader about the difference.

A further point to make concerns animal sacrifice practised in oracles (i.c). I suggest that the much-quoted decline of the Delphic oracle should not make us assume that animal sacrifice ceased to accompany oracular consultation. Finally, we shall discuss the issue of continuity in Greek religion in general (i.d).

### i.a. *Explicit evidence for the continuation of animal sacrifices*

Some of the Greek authors studied in this book clearly refer to ritual links between their present and their past. These are Diodorus, Plutarch, and Pausanias.

Diodorus likes presenting the myths of the places he talks about as the *aitia* of cultic particularities in these places. These cultic particularities consist in specific characteristics of old-established rituals of animal sacrifice, which survived up to his time. Thus, a myth about a place, narrated by Diodorus, can at the same time be the *aition* for the sacrificial rite practised at this place.

Plutarch does not hesitate to interrupt his narration about the past in the *Lives* in order to talk about rituals of animal sacrifice, which were established in what was to Plutarch the remote past, and which continued to survive down to his own time.

Pausanias is the author who, rather than interrupting his narration of the past with flashes onto the present, most explicitly starts from the present and goes back in time in order to give us the link to the past. Observing an animal sacrifice alive in his time, he either records the *aition* of this practice, or talks about a change having occurred through time. When only the *aition* is recorded, I presume that no change has taken place, except if the author says so.

In all of the examples below, I focus on instances where the verb used denotes animal sacrifice.

### Cases where no change has occurred

#### *General comments*

(1) Sacrifices are offered to Hera Teleia before weddings (Diodorus, 5.73.2).

(2) In Samothrace, the inhabitants still use some forms of their ancient language during their sacrifices (Diodorus, 5.47.3).

*The islands*

(1) In Samothrace, there are still altars on the summits of the mountains, on which the inhabitants sacrifice in memory of their salvation from the flood (Diodorus, 5.47.5).

(2) In Rhodes, there is the habit of laying the victims on the altar before they light the fire (Diodorus, 5.56.5–7).

(3) In the Rhodian Peraia, no one is to eat pork before coming to the shrine of Hemithea to offer a sacrifice (Diodorus, 5.62.5–5.63.1).<sup>45</sup>

(4) The Cretans offer sacrifices to Idomeneus and Mērionēs (Diodorus, 5.79.4).

(5) In Knossos, each year the inhabitants celebrate the wedding of Zeus and Hera by sacrifices (Diodorus, 5.72.4).

(6) Even in Pausanias' time, the inhabitants of the island of Thera offer annual sacrifices (*ἐναγίζουσι*) to Theras as to the founder of the colony. The *aition* goes back to the mythical past (Paus. *Laconia*, I.5–8).

*Mainland Greece, the Peloponnese*

(1) In the sanctuary of the Cabeiroi in Boeotia, Pelargē and Isthmiades refounded the cult, and according to an oracle from Dodona, a sacrifice (*θυσία*) of a pregnant victim was established in honour of Pelargē (Paus. *Boeotia*, XXV.5–8).

(2) The city of Delphi offers sacrifices (*ἐναγίζουσι*) to the son of Achilles, ever since the time when his appearance caused fear to the Galatian raiders, in the third century BC (Paus. *Attica*, IV.4).

(3) In the temple of Artemis at Aulis, all victims are permissible; the *aition* goes back to the Trojan War: on seeing a favourable wind, each Greek sacrificed to Artemis whatever he had at hand (Paus. *Boeotia*, XIX.6–7).

(4) Plutarch informs us that, until his own time (*μέχρι νῦν*), the Athenians still offered a ram to Konidas, Theseus' tutor; this happened one day before the festival of the *Theseia* (Plutarch, *Theseus* 4). Plutarch uses the term *ἐναγίζουσι*. This passage is among the few examples where Plutarch specifies the kind of animal offered.

(5) Referring to the festival of the Oschophoria, Plutarch relates that the distribution of sacrificial meat (*κοινωνοῦσι τῆς θυσίας*) taking place

<sup>45</sup> On the specific cult of Hemithea, see Débord (1982), 41 ff.



during the festival was a commemoration of what the mothers of those sent to Crete had done: namely, they offered bread and meat to their children (Plutarch, *Theseus* 23.3).<sup>46</sup>

(6) In the city of Patrai, an annual sacrifice is offered to Eurypylus (ἐναγίζουσιν) at the time of the festival of Dionysus. The *aition* goes back to mythical times, when Eurypylus stopped human sacrifice (Paus. *Achaia*, XIX.6–10).

(7) Heroic honours (*timai*) are still paid (καὶ νῦν ἔτι) to the Messenian war hero Aristomenes (Paus. *Messenia*, XIV. 7).

(8) In the land of the Pheneatai, an annual nocturnal sacrifice (ἐναγίζουσιν) is offered to Myrtilus. The *aition* goes back to the mythical past (Paus. *Arcadia*, XIV.10–11).

(9) The most famous example of survival of sacrificial ritual down to Plutarch's time is the one conducted in Plataia, which Plutarch describes in *Aristides* 21.2–5. The Plataians undertook to make annual offerings (21.2, ἐναγίζειν καθ' ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτόν) to the Greeks who had fallen in the battle of Plataia and had been buried there. The offerings were made on the 16th of Maimakterion, up to Plutarch's own time (21.5, ἔτι καὶ νῦν). After the detailed description of the splendid procession, Plutarch goes on to describe the sacrificial killing carried out by the *archon* of the Plataians:

*Aristides* 21.5

App. II (1)

...he slaughters the bull at the funeral pyre, and, with prayers to Zeus and Hermes Chthonios, summons the brave men who died for Greece to come to the banquet and its copious draughts of blood; next he mixes a mixer of wine, drinks, and then pours a libation from it, saying these words: 'I drink to the men who died for the freedom of the Greeks.' These rites, I say, are observed by the Plataians down to this very day. (Loeb tr., slightly modified)

As is shown in Appendix I to this chapter, the description above is that of a 'chthonian' ritual, which is different from the 'Olympian' ritual of the Eleutheria, the latter just mentioned in the same passage but not described by Plutarch. Consequently, in this Plutarchan example on Plataia, we have evidence for the survival of *two* animal sacrificial rituals of distinct types.

<sup>46</sup> Plutarch says that the δειπνοφόροι partake of the sacrificial meat *in imitation* of the mothers of those sent to Crete (23.3). The comparison is not very accurate, since the mothers are not said to have partaken themselves of the food they gave to their children.

In none of the aforementioned cases of sacrificial rituals surviving down to their time do the authors talk about any change in the way of sacrificing an animal. They assume that the nature and performance of animal sacrifice was essentially the same in the Archaic or Classical period as in their own day. By contrast, in the following examples of survival of animal sacrifice, the authors do comment on changes which had occurred through time.

### Allusions to change or explicit statements about change

(1) The inhabitants of Tenedos ‘have continued to perform down to modern times’ sacrifices to Tennes (Diod. 5.83.3, Loeb tr.). In this passage from Diodorus, we do not come across the usual expression ‘up to now’ (μέχρι τοῦ νῦν), so we are probably to conclude that these sacrifices were not performed at the time of Diodorus, though we are not told the reason for this (possible) change.

(2) A passage about a ritual originating in the past, but in which the author points out a change, comes from the *Moralia* (527D). Plutarch compares the Dionysia of the past with those conducted in his own time. In this context, the ‘decadence’ consists in the elaboration of the original ritual rather than in its fading out. As we have pointed out in section A2 of this chapter (under ‘Methodology’), one should always be aware of the rhetorical context in which sacrifice is placed. Here, for example, the passage on the Dionysia belongs to the treatise *Περὶ φιλοπλουτίας*. It is not surprising, then, that what the author wants to condemn in the modern version of the Dionysia is the display of wealth, shown, for instance, in the procession of pairs of victims instead of a single ram as in the old days.

Plutarch, *Moralia* 527D

App. II (2)

Our traditional festival of the Dionysia was in former times a homely and merry procession. First came a jug of wine and a vine branch, then one celebrant dragged a he-goat along, another followed with a basket of dry figs, and the phallos-bearer came last. But all this is nowadays unregarded and vanished, what with vessels of gold carried past, rich apparel, carriages riding by, and masks: so has what is necessary and useful in wealth been buried under what is useless and superfluous. (Loeb tr.)

(3) In the next example, Pausanias leaves open the possibility that a change could indeed have taken place as regards the disposal of the

victim after sacrifice (*Elis I*, XXIV.9–11). In the Elean Altis, before the statue of Zeus Horkios in the *bouleutērion*, an oath is taken by the athletes and many others, that they will not offend against the Olympic Games. The oath is taken upon the flesh of a boar (ἐπὶ κάπρου κατόμνυσθαι τομίων, *ibid.* XXIV.9). Pausanias admits that he forgot to ask about a specific ritual detail: what do they do with the boar after the oath? He merely cites evidence from Homer to prove that ‘the ancient custom about victims was that no human being might eat of that on which an oath had been sworn’ (*ibid.* XXIV.10, Loeb tr.).

(4) A further sacrificial ritual originating in the past but varying through time is recorded in Plutarch’s life of *Aratus* (53.4–5). The Sicyonians had moved Aratus’ tomb to their city (from Aegion). The tomb was still called Arateion in Plutarch’s day, and two sacrifices were offered at it (θύουσι): the one was called Σωτήρια, and was offered on the 5th of Daesios, in commemoration of the city’s deliverance by Aratus. The other sacrifice was offered on Aratus’ birthday. Aratus was the recipient of both sacrifices, but only in the second did he have a personal priest carrying out (κατήρχετο) the sacrifice. The use of the Greek verb leaves no doubt that the sacrifice offered on the birthday of Aratus involved the killing of an animal.

Plutarch focuses more particularly on the birthday rite, which was characterized by the participation of various groups of citizens. In his description he uses the imperfect, and the reason for this tense is given at the end of the account: only a few elements of the splendid procession described were still in use in Plutarch’s time. Time and other circumstances, which Plutarch does not analyse, meant that only a very basic ceremony was still observed at the time when he wrote:

Plutarch, *Aratus* 53.4–5

App. II (3)

The first of these sacrifices was performed by the priest of Zeus the Saviour; the second by the priest of Aratus, who wore a headband, not pure white but purple and white, and hymns with accompaniment of lyre were sung by the artists of Dionysus, and the gymnasiarch took part in the procession, at the head of the boys and young men of military age; then followed the councilors wearing garlands, and all other citizens who desired. Of these ceremonial rites the Sicyonians still preserve slight traces, celebrated on the same days of the year, but most of them, owing to the passage of time and the pressure of other matters, have lapsed. (Loeb tr.)

(5) In Sicyon again, Pausanias records that annual sacrifices (*θυσίαι*) are offered to Medea's children. This instance goes back to the mythical and historical past, as is obvious in the *aition* cited by the author. There is no reference to the kind of the sacrifices offered, but in all probability (although not certainly) these were animal sacrifices, because in other cases Pausanias likes to specify the kind of non-animal offerings.<sup>47</sup> The passage concerns us here because it constitutes one of the observable cases where a historical change is explicitly pointed out by the author. The change is attributed to the foundation of the *colonia* in Corinth:<sup>48</sup>

Pausanias, *Corinth* III.7

App. II (4)

But after Corinth was laid waste by the Romans and the old Corinthians were wiped out, those sacrifices to the sons of Medea were not carried out by the new settlers any more, nor do their children cut their hair for them or wear black clothes. (Loeb tr. modified)

But how did Plutarch and Pausanias know about the change in rituals through time, in case they did not themselves witness the ancient form of them? I presume they could find information in their sources,<sup>49</sup> but the possibility of oral testimony should not be underestimated, as Pausanias' remark on his questioning the inhabitants proves. Both Plutarch and Pausanias might have recorded comments made by elderly people in their environment.

Plutarch likes to stress that certain sacrificial rituals fostered in the mythical or historical past were still being kept in the old way (as in the examples of the Oschophoria and of the sacrifice at Plataia), and, as an indirect proof of this, he, a Greek of the second century AD, is consistent in using the same variety of sacrificial terms as those used in the Classical period (*θύειν, ἐναγίζειν, κατάρχεσθαι*). However, we have seen two instances where Plutarch acknowledges a change between past and present (the cases of the Dionysia, and of Aratus). Plutarch's comments on these ritual changes concern the scale rather than the nature of the rites (for instance, the number of participants

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. Paus. *Laconia*, XXIII.8 (*ἐμβάλλουσιν ἀλφίτων μάζας*), *Elis* II, XX.2 (*μάζας κατατίθησιν . . . μεγαγμένας μέλιτι*), *Arcadia*, II.3 (*πέμματα καθήγισεν*).

<sup>48</sup> See Strabo, 8.6.23, Appian, *Pun.* 136, Plut., *Caesar* 57.

<sup>49</sup> According to the note in the Loeb edition: 'M. P. Nilsson (*Studia de Dionysiis Atticis*, Lund, 1900, p. 91) believes that Plutarch is comparing the Attic festival, known to him through his reading, with the festival as celebrated in great cities in his own time.'

and victims, and not, say, the method of slaughter). Since, in all the instances above, Plutarch

- (a) is still quite keen to draw distinctions between sacrificial rites, by using different terms for them;
- (b) does not insert any explanatory comments on their conduct as it was *in the past*; and
- (c) does not point to any difference in sacrificial technique between the Classical past and his present,

we can say that neither he nor his readers were aware of any significant change through time in the way an animal sacrifice was performed.

Just like Plutarch, Pausanias apparently assumed in general that sacrificial rituals fostered in the past stayed the same in his time, as his use of distinct sacrificial terms (*θύω, ἐναγίζω, τόμια*) and his lack of explanatory comments prove. Two cases where he indicated a change are the exception, but in these two cases the reasons for change, although not explicitly stated, seem to be similar to those given by Plutarch: in the case of the Olympic oath, Pausanias' emphasis on what *used to happen* (*ἐπεὶ τοῖς γε ἀρχαιοτέροις*) seems to imply that the passage of time, and not a specific human choice, changed the ritual. Again, the reason for which the sacrifices to Medea's children had ceased was discontinuity in the occupation of the place.<sup>50</sup>

The four (or, possibly, five, along with Diodorus') instances of sacrificial change studied in this section do not in any way constitute indications of extensive decay, abandonment, substantial alteration or scaling-down of animal sacrificial cult: one of these instances (the Dionysia) shows that the sacrifice became more elaborate, whereas the case of Aratus concerns lack of splendour and not the cessation of sacrifice. Only two (or three) instances are worth considering, and of these only the case of Corinth records a total eclipse of sacrifice—if it was an animal sacrifice; the other refers to a possible, but not certain, difference in the disposal of the victim (the Olympic oath), whereas it is very doubtful whether the case of Diodorus alludes to the cessation of sacrifice.

<sup>50</sup> Misleadingly, the Loeb translation implies that the Romans *deliberately* stopped the Greek sacrificial practice ('... the new settlers broke the custom of offering those sacrifices...').

i.b. *Greek sacrificial omens as a further sign of continuity*

Plutarch narrates events from the past, but in none of the instances of divinatory animal sacrifice contained in the Greek *Lives* does he give the impression that he is talking about an obsolete practice. Here are some Plutarchan examples of divination from animal sacrifice:

Plutarch tries to justify the unexpected approach of Aratus to Antigonus Doseon (c.224 BC) by giving the evidence for a sacrifice predicting this approach (*Aratus* 43.4–5). In a sacrifice offered by Aratus, the *mantis* found the liver to have two gall bladders enclosed in a single foil of fat. The omen meant that Aratus would enter into friendship with the person he most hated.<sup>51</sup>

In *Cimon* 18.4 the reader is prepared to expect Cimon's death; the following omens appeared in the sacrifice offered by Cimon before he set out on his expedition to Cyprus (c.450 BC):

- (a) as the *mantis* cut the victim, ants started gathering round its dried blood, and they brought it next to Cimon's toe where they started moulding it;
- (b) the lobe of the animal's liver had no head (λοβὸν οὐκ ἔχοντα κεφαλήν).

The usual Greek expression used of the latter omen in Greek literature is *ἰερά ἄλοβα*,<sup>52</sup> a very bad omen deriving from the fact that the appendix attached to the upper lobe of the liver was missing. In scientific nomenclature, this appendix is called *processus pyramidalis*, but in Greek the term used of it was *λοβός*.<sup>53</sup>

The passage about Cimon shows that, apart from extispicy, other signs accompanying the sacrifice could be used as a basis for divination, too (ants, blood).

The following are examples where sacrificial divination is not based on extispicy:

<sup>51</sup> Friendship must have been inferred by the fact that two identical organs were contained in the same area (just like the cover in which both Antigonus Doseon and Aratus are wrapped: *Aratus* 43.5). And hatred must have been inferred from the fact that these organs were gall bladders (*χολαί*).

<sup>52</sup> On the uncommon expression used in *Cimon*, see the reference in Pritchett (1979), 76, n. 121.

<sup>53</sup> For these clarifications, see *ibid.* 74–6.

The first example prepares the reader for the quarrel between Alexander and Cleitus (328 BC, *Alexander* 50.2–3): Alexander called Cleitus while the latter was offering a sacrifice. Obeying the king, Cleitus left his sacrifice unfinished and walked toward Alexander. As he started walking, three of the sheep which he had sprinkled with water followed him. Alexander was notified about the event, and learnt that the sign was ominous.

The second example of sacrificial omens not deriving from extispicy is *Pyrrhus* 6.4–5. Pyrrhus planned to come to terms with both Ptolemy and Lysimachus, so the three kings came together for the sacrifice marking the treaty (c.296 BC). A bull, a boar, and a ram were brought for the sacrifice, but the ram died at once before the sacrifice took place. The *mantis* Theodotus prevented Pyrrhus from participating in the treaty, because the sign meant that one of the three kings would die. Thus, Pyrrhus refrained from making peace (we do not know whether the animal had already been consecrated).

The third example shows that omens could be obtained from the dead animal, but not necessarily from its entrails: as Pyrrhus offered bull-sacrifices in honour of his dead son (272 BC), the tongues of the beheaded bulls were seen to come out of their heads and taste the blood; this was a bad omen (*Pyrrhus* 31.3).

To sum up, the following omens derive from animal sacrifice as reported by Plutarch (in order of sacrificial stages):

1. one of the animals for sacrifice dies before the sacrifice takes place;
2. some of the consecrated animals follow the offerer;
3. the sacrificial blood is tasted or used by other animals (e.g. insects) or by the victim itself;
4. the liver has no *processus pyramidalis*;
5. the liver has two gall bladders enclosed in a single foil of fat.

Only in two cases (3 and 4) does Plutarch expect his readers to know that the omen was bad. Admittedly, in the other three cases Plutarch does interpret the omens. But he does not feel obliged to explain to his readers what extispicy is. This practice is taken for granted, and Plutarch simply cites several cases of it. The details given in Plutarch's accounts might have been added by his intermediate sources, but this is a further proof of the fact that neither Plutarch, nor apparently any intermediate writers on whom he depended, saw anything systematically different, or alien, in the religious practice of the Classical or Hellenistic period.

So, since a decision on the continuity in the practice of sacrifice can be reached only on the basis of the way in which the author puts across the image of cultic life in the past, I suggest the following:

- (a) it is unlikely, if not impossible, that Plutarch was not aware of sacrificial extispicy or various sacrificial terms from his own experience, and that he just reproduced what he found in his sources;<sup>54</sup>
- (b) if Plutarch just projected onto the past the practices of his own time, it means that the latter were still current;
- (c) Plutarch nowhere offers a radical explanation of the different sacrificial practices and terms he uses, which would be the case if he had decided to ‘reconstruct’ a forgotten sacrificial reality (he never says, for instance, ‘people in those days used to take omens from entrails’ or ‘they used to offer σφάγια’).

Plutarch does not feel the need to justify the use of a supposedly obsolete practice. Though we can never be sure about changes through time, what Plutarch read about sacrificial omens in his sources evidently seemed entirely familiar to him and his readers.

This conclusion generally applies to all instances of animal sacrifice from the mythical or Classical past contained in Plutarch’s *Lives*. Plutarch uses various words for animal sacrifice (ιερά/θυσία, βουθυτεῖν, ἐναγισμός, (ἐντεμεῖν) σφάγια) without clarification.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> This can be argued more strongly in the case of the Roman *Lives*, where Plutarch obviously channels his own experience as a Greek into the description of Roman sacrificial rituals. For instance, he is keen to differentiate between sacrifices to gods and those to the dead by using different verbs:

- *Numa* 19.5: (In February, the Romans) τοῖς φθιτοῖς ἐναγίζουσι.
- *M. Cato* 15.3: ταῦτα χρῆ τοῖς γονεύσιν ἐναγίζεω, οὐκ ἄρνας οὐδ’ ἐρίφους, ἀλλ’ ἐχθρῶν δάκρυα καὶ καταδίκας.
- *Brutus* 45.5: (Poplius Cascas) Οὐ καλῶς, ἔφη, τεθνηκότι Κασσῶ παίζοντες καὶ γελωποιοῦντες ἐναγίζομεν. . .
- *Galba* 22.1–2: (sacrifices to/for? Vindex) . . . ᾧ μόνῳ τὸν Γάλβαν χάριν εἰδέναι καὶ τιμᾶν τεθνηκότα καὶ γεραίρειν δημοσίοις ἐναγισμοῖς, . . .

But see the interesting use of θύω in connection with chthonian gods in *Romulus* 22.3: τὸν δ’ ἀποδόμενον γυναικα θύεσθαι χθονίοις θεοῖς.

<sup>55</sup> *Eirenic sacrifices*. Mythical: *Theseus* 14.1.—Explicitly connected with providing a meal: *Themistocles* 26.2, *Dion* 23.3–4, *Pyrrhus* 5.6–7.—Chthonian: *Alexander* 72.2–3, *Pyrrhus* 23.1.—Before voluntary death: *Lycurgus* 29.3–4.—Before sailing off: *Timoleon* 8.2.—At the occasion of a public celebration, even if this could clash with circumstances in private life: *Demosthenes* 22.3–4.



Even if we do not know whether all the sacrificial occasions described in Plutarch's *Lives* could find parallels in his own time, it is almost certain that Plutarch's way of presentation of animal sacrifices cannot support the deduction that in his time the various types of animal sacrifices were in decline.

### i.c. *Animal sacrifice in oracles*

Coropa, a small city in Magnesia, has provided us with a decree concerning the neighbouring oracle of Apollo (LGS 83, c.100 BC). The decree regulates the procedure of consultation to be followed; this procedure included a sacrifice from the magistrates. We are not told about any sacrifice from the visitor.

LGS 83, vv. 18–35

App. II (5)

The council and people decided that, on the occasion of consultation of the oracle, the priest of Apollo, the one elected by the city, should proceed, and, (along with him, should proceed) one from each magistrature of the *stratēgoi* and the *nomophylakes*, and one *prytanis*, and (one) *tamias*, and the *grammateus* of the god and the *prophētēs*; if anyone of the aforementioned is ill or on a journey, let (the city) send another one; and let the *stratēgoi* and the *nomophylakes* also enlist *rabdouchoi* from among the citizens, three men (not) younger than 30 years old... when the aforementioned reach the oracle, and offer the sacrifice according to the custom, and take good omens, let the *grammateus* of the god, after the sacrifice, receive the written questions from those who want to consult the oracle... (my tr.)

More than two centuries later we come across the testimonies of Plutarch and Pausanias, who inform us that animal sacrifice continued to be important for oracular procedure. In Plutarch's and Pausanias' cases, the sacrifice is not offered by the magistrates of the city, but by the visitor himself. Noticing this crucial difference, we can see that the example from Coropa, along with those by Plutarch and Pausanias below, do however show a line of continuity in that they depict the gods of the oracles as recipients of animal offerings.

From Plutarch's treatise *De defectu oraculorum* (*Moralia* 409 ff.), we know that an animal sacrifice always preceded the consultation of the

Citizens were not only asked to give money for a sacrifice (*Phocion* 9.1), but could also take the responsibility for conducting a public sacrifice, thus satisfying their desire for display and gaining in social prestige (*Nicias* 3.4–6).

*Military sacrifices* (mostly σφάγια). *Theseus* 27.2, *Alexander* 31.4, *Solon* 9.1 ff., *Aristides* 11.3 ff., *Themistocles* 13.2, *Dion* 27.2.

oracle at Delphi (see esp. *Mor.* 437 f.). Indeed, in the Plutarchan *Lives* sacrifice is often connected to a visit to Delphi (*θύσας*, *Lycurgus* 5.3, 29.3, *ἔθυσσε*, *Timoleon* 8.2), Plutarch's examples do not belong to his time, but at least show the author's familiarity with the practice. Doubtful is the dating of regulations contained in a Pergamene inscription from the Asclepieum (*I.Perg* III 161), inscribed in the second century AD, and probably incorporating older rules.<sup>56</sup> In the inscription a procedure of successive animal sacrifices (*προθύεσθω χοῖρον*, 16, 17), and food-offerings (*ἐπιβαλλέ[σ]θω πόπανα*, 9, *προθύεσθω*...[*πόπ*] *αρον*, 19–20) is prescribed, culminating in the worshipper's goal, consultation through incubation. Further evidence for pre-divinatory sacrifices comes from Pausanias, when he talks about the oracles of Amphiaraos and Trophonios:

*Attica*, XXXIV.5

App. II (6)

One who has come to consult Amphiaraus is wont first to purify himself. The mode of purification is to sacrifice to the god, and they sacrifice not only to him but also to all those whose names are on the altar. And when all these things have been first done, they sacrifice a ram, and, spreading the skin under them, go to sleep and await enlightenment in a dream. (Loeb tr.)

*Boeotia*, XXXIX.5

App. II (7)

Meat he has in plenty from the sacrifices, for he who descends sacrifices to Trophonius himself and to the children of Trophonius, to Apollo also and Cronus, to Zeus surnamed King, to Hera Charioteer, and to Demeter whom they surname Europa and say was the nurse of Trophonius. (Loeb tr.)

Sceptical readers of this book might attribute these sacrifices described by Pausanias to a revival of cults. This issue may await the analysis conducted in section B.ii of this chapter.

### i.d. *A note about the past from the perspective of Dionysius*

So far, apart from the author's allusions to or explicit statements of change in cult, we have studied instances where it is supposed, or explicitly stated, that the Greek past survived into the author's present. Where the relation between past and present becomes more complex is in the work of Dionysius. He advocates more strongly than anyone else the Greek origin of the Romans, and supports his view by citing

<sup>56</sup> Translated and discussed in Lupu (2005), 61–3.

evidence from ritual. Thus, when he attributes certain Roman sacrifices to the Arcadians who had come to Italy, his proofs are the ritual similarities between Greek and Roman sacrifices, which are evident in his own times (*Ant. Rom.* 1.32.5–33.3). Plutarch must have been aware of Dionysius' claims, since he mentions the theory about the Arcadian origins of the Carmentalia and the Lupercalia (*Romulus* 21).

A passage from Dionysius is of particular importance for our study of the continuity of sacrificial rites. Dionysius presents religious continuity as a deliberate human choice, and even gives a reason for this choice:

ταῦτα (religious practices) γὰρ ἐπὶ μῆκιστον χρόνον διὰ φυλακῆς ἔχει Ἑλλάς τε καὶ βάρβαρος χώρα, καὶ οὐθὲν ἀξιοῖ καινοτομεῖν εἰς αὐτὰ ὑπὸ δειμάτος κρατουμένη μηνιμάτων δαιμονίων. (*Ant. Rom.* 7.70.3).

These both the Greeks and barbarian world have preserved for the greatest length of time and have never thought fit to make any innovation in them, being restricted from doing so by their fear of the divine anger. (Loeb tr.)

Divine wrath is an issue discussed both in the ancient sources and in modern scholarly studies. Ancient authors believed that Greek gods made their wrath manifest when mortals neglected their religious duties.<sup>57</sup> Modern scholars talk about 'gods' appeasable anger,<sup>58</sup> and the fear felt by their worshippers.<sup>59</sup> What is original in the passage from Dionysius is that he refers to the *way* in which gods were worshipped, and not just to the omission of worship. Thus, with regard to our subject, gods would be pleased not only if they were offered sacrifices regularly, but also if the 'technique' of sacrifice remained the same.<sup>60</sup> A change in technique would concern, for instance, the materials offered to deities: animals might cease to be slaughtered, and only plants offered in their place. No changes of this sort are alluded to in any of our sources.

However, in the examples which we have studied, whenever a cultic change is recognized by the author to have occurred, there is no hint at any discomfort felt by the worshippers. How could one explain this?

<sup>57</sup> See Paus. *Arcadia*, XLII.5–6. The probably spurious essay in the *Moralia* called *Parallela Graeca et Romana* also contains stories about omissions of sacrifices.

<sup>58</sup> Lane Fox (1986), 95.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 98.

<sup>60</sup> Talking about the Egyptians, Diodorus also refers to their concern to keep the same religious officiants, who would honour the gods in the same way (1.73.3).

In the examples where there is an explicit statement of change, the author attributes it to time (Plutarch also adds the general factor *πράγματα*, 'circumstances'), or to discontinuity of occupation. It seems that the sort of 'change' which disturbed Greeks was any *deliberate* attempt to alter the way in which gods were worshipped.<sup>61</sup> Change through time is not deliberate, and is the only one for which gods would not be displeased.

This section is fundamental for the rest of our study of Greek animal sacrifice, because it proves that the discontinuity in the attestation of animal sacrifice in the sources does not mean discontinuity in the cultic practice itself. Even if unevenly distributed in time, literary evidence from our period points to the authors' assumption about continuity in animal sacrifice, and the only cultic changes attested constitute rather marginal cases in the history of Greek animal sacrifice. Besides, two of the main aspects of Greek religiosity, namely divination and oracular consultation, seem not to have discontinued incorporating animal sacrifices in their procedures. Finally, a passage from Dionysius has shown that animal sacrifice was preserved because of the religious conservatism of Greeks, who thought that keeping to tradition without changing it would please the gods. As has been correctly pointed out, Christians sought to change the traditional way of worship, and this was what aroused the anger of contemporary pagans.<sup>62</sup>

## ii. Vitality and Local Variety of Greek Animal Sacrifice: Pausanias and the Similarity of his Perspective to that of the *leges sacrae*

Having proved the continuity in Greek religious experience (sec. i), in this section I shall seek to demonstrate that the predominance of evidence for animal sacrifice in second-century texts does not necessarily

<sup>61</sup> Deliberate alteration of rites is implied in a further argument of Dionysius, in his attempt to prove that the Romans are not barbarians (*Ant. Rom.* 7.70.4–5). In the complicated argument Dionysius says that, if the Romans were barbarians, they would have changed Greek religious practices. This did not happen, so, as Dionysius says, the Romans are not barbarians.

<sup>62</sup> Lane Fox (1986), 95.

point to a sudden revival of cult in the second century, but rather to a continuous attachment of the Greeks to local rituals, which were many and multifarious. Animal sacrifice was not performed in a single temple, as was the case in Judaism, but there were many variations in local practice within the framework which is broadly defined as 'pagan sacrificial practice'. In the course of this section my specific focus will be the text of Pausanias, which I use with fewer reservations than other scholars (I give reasons for this choice), and which I compare to epigraphic evidence.

The multifarious character of Greek religion is mainly attested in a very peculiar kind of epigraphic evidence, which could be considered as the closest parallel to a sacred book. This consists in regulations concerning individual cults. These regulations are usually called by scholars 'sacred laws' (*leges sacrae*). Strictly speaking, a sacred law is a written regulation on the cultic procedure to be followed by worshippers in a specific sacred place. Sacred laws concern both public and private sacred places, so they can be issued by a city,<sup>63</sup> a group of people,<sup>64</sup> or even by an individual.<sup>65</sup> Quite often, the authority issuing the law is not stated.

Admittedly, many examples of sacrificial regulations contain references to non-animal offerings. There are even instances where an explicit prohibition of animal sacrifice is made in the law.<sup>66</sup> In other cases non-animal offerings prevail in the inscription, but references to sacrificial victims are not completely missing.<sup>67</sup> In general, though, animal slaughter is present throughout the period we are studying, mainly in documents from cities, whose 'official' conception of an offering was that of an animal slaughtered on the altar.<sup>68</sup>

In order better to illustrate what a 'sacred law' is, I selectively present the law from Andania:

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. *LGS* 65, 92 BC.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 1104, 37/6 BC.

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. *LGS* 55, 2nd c. AD.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. *IHadrianoi* 36, 1st c. BC–1st c. AD.

<sup>67</sup> See e.g. *LGS* 52, 1st c. AD.

<sup>68</sup> As we shall see, in the latter case the purpose of an animal sacrifice is usually alimentary. Even so, it is important to stress that, whenever a city is officially represented in a sacred law, and the references to the offerings are explicit, the law is about animal offerings.

*The sacred law from Andania*

The city's willingness to honour the gods by animal sacrifice is characteristically depicted in the Messenian regulation from Andania (LGS 65, 92 BC). It includes sections concerning the victims which should be offered either after the main festal procession or on other occasions related to the festival, as the following two passages show:

(a) (vv. 33–4)

ἀγέσθω δὲ ἐν τῷ πομπῶν καὶ τὰ θύματα, καὶ θυσάντω τῷ μὲν Δάματρι σὺν ἐπίτοκα, Ἑρμῶν κριόν, Μεγάλους θεοῖς δάμαλιν σὺν, Ἀπόλλωνι Καρνεῖω κάπρον, Ἄγναι οἶν.

Let also the victims be led along during the procession, and let a pregnant swine be sacrificed to Demeter, a ram to Hermes, a female swine to the Great Gods, a boar to Apollo Karneios, a sheep to Hagna. (my tr.)

(b) (vv. 64–73)

θυμάτων παροχᾶς. οἱ ἱεροὶ μετὰ τὸ κατασταθῆμεν προκαρύξαντες ἐγδόντω τὴν παροχὴν τῶν θυμάτων ὧν δεῖ θύεσθαι καὶ παρίστασθαι ἐν τοῖς μυστηρίοις καὶ τὰ εἰς τοὺς καθαρμούς, ἐγδιδόντες ἂν τε δοκεῖ συμφέρον εἶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πάντα τὰ θύματα, ἂν τε κατὰ μέρος, τῷ τὸ ἐλάχιστον ὕφισταμένω λάμψεσθαι διάφορον. ἔστι δὲ ἃ δεῖ παρέχειν πρὸ τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι τῶν μυστηρίων. ἄρνας δύο λευκοὺς, ἐπὶ τοῦ καθαρμοῦ κριὸν εὐχρον, καὶ ὅταν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ καθαίρει, χοιρίσκους τρεῖς, ὑπὲρ τοὺς πρωτομύστας ἄρνας ἑκατόν, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πομπῶν Δάματρι σὺν ἐπίτοκα, τοῖς δὲ Μεγάλους θεοῖς δάμαλιν διαιτῆ σὺν, Ἑρμῶν κριόν, Ἀπόλλωνι Καρνεῖω κάπρον, Ἄγναι οἶν. ὁ δὲ ἐγδεξάμενος κατεγγνεύσας ποτὶ τοὺς ἱερούς λαβέτω τὰ διάφορα καὶ παριστάτω τὰ θύματα εὐτέρα καθαρὰ ὀλόκλαρα, καὶ ἐπιδειξάτω τοῖς ἱεροῖς πρὸ ἡμερῶν δέκα τῶν μυστηρίων. τοῖς δὲ δοκιμασθέντοις σαμεῖον ἐπιβαλόντω οἱ ἱεροί, καὶ τὰ σαμειωθέντα παριστάτω ὁ ἐγδεξάμενος. ἂν δὲ μὴ παριστᾶι ἐπὶ τὴν δοκιμασίαν, πρᾶσσόντω οἱ ἱεροὶ τοὺς ἐγγύους αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ ἥμισυ, τὰ δὲ θύματα αὐτοὶ παρεχόντω καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πραχθέντων διαφόρων κομισάσθωσαν τὴν γενομένην δαπάναν εἰς τὰ θύματα.

On the supply of victims: after their appointment, let the *hieroi* proclaim the sale of the right to supply the victims, which must be sacrificed and presented<sup>69</sup> in the mysteries and those (victims fit) for the purifications; they (the *hieroi*) should either contract out, if it seems beneficial, all the

<sup>69</sup> I am fully aware of Robert's analysis of the expression ΠΑΡΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΙΕΡΩΝ (= to provide an individual with a victim for sacrifice), *Hellenica*, 11–12 (1960), 126–31. According to the context here, I either use the term 'present' or 'furnish'.

victims to the same source, or alternatively item by item, to the contractor who undertakes to take the smallest fee. These are the victims which must be provided before the beginning of the mysteries: two white rams, a well-coloured ram in the purification, and, when he purifies in the theatre, three piglets, in the name of the *protomystai*<sup>70</sup> a hundred rams, in the procession a pregnant swine to Demeter, a two-year-old female swine to the Great Gods, a ram to Hermes, a boar to Apollo Karneios, a sheep to Hagna. Let the contractor, after having presented guarantors to the *hieroi*, take his money, and present the victims, holy, clean, unblemished, and let him show (them) to the *hieroi* ten days before the mysteries. On the tested victims, let the *hieroi* put a mark, and let the contractor furnish (the shrine with) the marked ones. If he does not present the victims for the test, let the *hieroi* exact 1½ times the sum paid from the guarantors, and let the *hieroi* themselves supply the victims, and from the amount of the exactions cover the expenditure for the victims. (my tr.)

Not only does this sacred law show the redactor's awareness of the financial profit that the cult may involve, but it also displays the religious conscientiousness of the Messenians in detail: in case the victims did not pass the test of fitness, the *hieroi* should themselves find another way to provide victims for the cult, after having fined the irresponsible contractor. Indeed, one might conclude that the main reason for which the religious personnel went through this procedure was their concern for cultic correctness.

This interest in religious precision is also shown in the rule about those misbehaving in the mysteries—*ἀκοσμοῦντες* (vv. 39–41): during the sacrifices everyone should avoid inauspicious words (*εὐφραμεῖν*). Whoever would not abide by the rule of decency would be scourged and expelled from the mysteries. In Roman religion custom required absolute concentration during ritual; such was the obsession of the Romans with punctiliousness that, in case an event regarded as a bad omen took place during a sacrifice, the sacrifice should be repeated.<sup>71</sup> Of course, as regards Greek religion we do not happen to know similarly extreme examples.

Apart from the passages cited above, the law from Andania contains passages concerning the distribution of the portions of sacrificial meat

<sup>70</sup> This translation of *ὑπέρ* + acc. is the one given by Daux (1935).

<sup>71</sup> See Plutarch, *Numa* XIV.2, *Moralia* 270C, mainly *Coriolanus* 25, where it is said that a sacrifice was repeated 30 times!

(vv. 95–9). The meat would come from the sacrifice of the victims led in the procession. After the extraction of the gods' portions, perquisites would be given to the *hieroi* and the *hierai* (the latter comprising both married women and young girls), to the priests, to the reformer of the mysteries, named Mnasistratus,<sup>72</sup> to his wife and children, to the musicians playing at the sacrifices and mysteries, and to other assistants. It seems that the *mystai* did not participate in the sacrificial meal following the procession. Thus, except for the purificatory ram and pigs (κριὸν εὐχρουν, χοιρίσκους τρεῖς, vv. 67–8), which were probably not allowed to be eaten,<sup>73</sup> the only victims presumably eaten by and shared among the *mystai* would come from the one hundred rams sacrificed before the procession (ὑπὲρ τοὺς πρωτομύστας ἄρνας ἑκατόν, v. 68). It is not clear what would be done with the other two rams, also sacrificed before the procession and mentioned separately (ἄρνας δύο λευκούς, v. 67).

### *The evidence from Pausanias*

In the time of Pausanias, Andania lay in ruins.<sup>74</sup> The decline of certain communities might be one reason why inscriptions like this, in which the text exclusively deals with ritual, become rarer in the Late Hellenistic and Imperial period. This decrease in sacred laws was emphasized by Nilsson.<sup>75</sup> Since Nilsson's time, thanks to systematic epigraphic collections, the number of inscriptions strictly defined

<sup>72</sup> On the role of Mnasistratus as reformer of the mysteries, see SIG<sup>3</sup>, no. 735 with notes, and note 9 to no. 736.

<sup>73</sup> The inedibility of purificatory sacrifices is generally assumed to be the rule in Greek religion, but it is surprising that the relevant evidence is so meagre. See the references in Parker (1983), 283, n. 11.

<sup>74</sup> Paus. *Messenia*, XXXIII.6.

<sup>75</sup> Nilsson (1951<sup>2</sup>), 354, counts no more than 10 instances from the Imperial period. Nilsson (*ibid.* 66–75) dedicates only a section to early Hellenistic sacred laws, and inserts those of the Roman period in the footnotes of the same section. He considers the sacred laws of the Hellenistic and Roman periods as a reaction against the new wave of cults: these laws, says Nilsson, make obvious the need of the old religion, which feels threatened, to protect itself by listing its characteristics (*ibid.* p. 66). However, this does not agree with Nilsson's admission that the evidence for sacred laws in the Imperial period is quite scanty (*ibid.* p. 354). If we follow Nilsson and accept that these laws supposedly embodied the reaction to new cults, they should have been increasingly more frequent.



as 'sacred laws' has, of course, become larger, but still not as large as the number of sacred laws from the Classical period.<sup>76</sup> However, apart from sacred laws, rich evidence for the importance of animal sacrifice is provided by: (a) inscriptions not usually defined as 'sacred laws', which we shall study in section iii; (b) the literary evidence of the second century AD. Prominent within this evidence is the text of Pausanias, with which we are concerned in the present section. Pausanias not only recorded the existence of cults, but described their characteristics. Details concerning local cultic variations often constitute the gist of his reports, and in this light the focus of his reports is similar to that of the inscriptions called 'sacred laws'.

In the latest studies Pausanias has been examined in four cultural contexts: the Second Sophistic and the archaism involved in it,<sup>77</sup> religious experience,<sup>78</sup> the archaeology of Roman Greece,<sup>79</sup> and sacrificial cults of local heroes.<sup>80</sup> The two former approaches are rather theoretical. But it is important to note that they are taken into account by the two latter approaches, which are more practical. However, all these studies miss a central point in the text of Pausanias. What we should emphasize here is that Pausanias repeatedly talked about *worship*, and that this worship was centered on acts of *offering*, among which was prominent the act of *animal sacrifice*.<sup>81</sup>

I must note that Ekroth's book is the only one which studies Pausanias from the cultic point of view. However, since she deals with hero-cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic periods, her use of Pausanias' text as a source for his own time is secondary to her wider aims.

A crucial section at which Pausanias enters Ekroth's book is her study of the term *ἐναγίζευ*, whose meaning she considers to be

<sup>76</sup> Thanks to collections such as those by Sokolowski, Segré, and more recently, Lupu (2005). In the collection by Lupu alone, apart from nos. 23 and (perhaps) 24, which he is publishing, in App. B there are listed about 20 instances of sacred laws (not all of them dealing with animal sacrifice), dating from the 1st c. BC to the 2nd c. AD.

<sup>77</sup> Bowie (1974).

<sup>78</sup> Elsner (1992).

<sup>79</sup> Alcock (1993).

<sup>80</sup> Ekroth (2002) and (1999).

<sup>81</sup> Of course, next to the act of 'offering/slaughtering' an animal, Pausanias provides us with evidence for the act of 'offering/dedicating' an object. The categories of dedicated objects reported by Pausanias can vary, but prominent among these are statues.

different from that of *θύειν*,<sup>82</sup> but which she does not completely clarify. With reference to the author we focus on here, namely Pausanias, the conclusion that one could draw from Ekroth's presentation regarding the occurrence of *ἐναγίλλειν* in the sources,<sup>83</sup> is that she questions Pausanias' use of the term *ἐναγίλλειν*, both as regards periods earlier than his and as regards his own time. Especially with regard to the time of Pausanias, which mainly concerns us here, Ekroth does not make it clear whether the frequent use of the term *ἐναγίλλειν* proves an augmentation of *ἐναγίλλειν* rituals or an augmentation of the use of the term, but in both cases she attributes the large frequency (in the presence of *ἐναγίλλειν* rituals or in the use of the term) to the second-century archaism. In either case, I disagree with Ekroth's diagnosis of archaism in this context.

Since Ekroth herself admits that 'the bulk of the evidence for *ἐναγίλλειν* sacrifices is found in Pausanias',<sup>84</sup> why not admit that these second-century rituals seem widespread to the modern reader simply because a writer recorded them very conscientiously for the first time? Pausanias lived in a period in which intellectuals showed a deep love for the Greek past. But it is his description of rituals which resulted from this love, and not the rituals themselves. Generally, even if Roman Greece was romantically obsessed with her past to a certain degree, I cannot imagine that the geographical extent which the sacrificial rituals recorded in Pausanias attest can be attributed to archaism (let alone an archaism fostered by the Romans). Let us think of cases where the sacrifice (*θύσῖα*) took place on an isolated altar,<sup>85</sup> or on a remote summit,<sup>86</sup> or even among the remains of a temple.<sup>87</sup> There is no special reason to suppose that in these cases the sacrifice was not that of an animal, because Pausanias would have specified the material offered instead, and would have used a term more appropriate to the offering, as he did elsewhere.<sup>88</sup> So, these might be cases where the cultic contexts

<sup>82</sup> Ekroth (2002), 74–5, 126.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. esp. 121–8.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 125.

<sup>85</sup> Such altars abound in the text of Pausanias. See *Attica*, XIX.3, XXXI.1, 4, 6, XXXII.2.

<sup>86</sup> *Elis II*, XX.1 (*θύουσι*), *Arcadia*, XXXVIII.7 (*θύουσι*).

<sup>87</sup> *Elis II*, XX.6 (*θύουσι*).

<sup>88</sup> See no. 47 above.

are difficult or impossible to trace archaeologically, but where animal sacrifices took place nonetheless, apparently by local Greek initiative (it would be difficult to see how Roman fashion would impose the revival of animal sacrifice in these non-urban areas).

How are we, then, to explain such a wide survival of sacrificial ritual? The reasons usually cited as explanations concern the survival of sacred places,<sup>89</sup> and scholars tend to forget that, even where no shrines are visible to them, ritual might nonetheless have survived. I believe that it is time we focused on worship, and the main reason for the survival of worship seems to have been the spontaneous desire for cultic expression. This desire, whose existence is proved by the inaccessibility of the places where it was fulfilled, is unlikely to have been fostered by archaism, nor did it depend on abundance in financial resources.

An allegedly archaistic and unreliable use of the term *ἐναγίζειν* by Pausanias can also be explained along the same lines. The text of Pausanias is not the earliest in our period to attest the geographical extent of Greek animal sacrificial practice. Plutarch's works are quite rich in evidence for animal sacrifice in many places in Greece,<sup>90</sup> and in fact Plutarch is also aware of a distinction between the worship of divine and the worship of heroic figures.<sup>91</sup> The fact that Pausanias uses the term *ἐναγίζειν* more frequently can simply result from his conscientiousness in describing every cult in detail. Our trust in Pausanias does not mean

<sup>89</sup> Alcock gives three reasons for the survival of rural sanctuaries (not just ritual) in Roman Greece: archaism, territorial self-definition, and the taking over of sacred places by wealthy communities. Alcock (1993), 200–10.

<sup>90</sup> The following examples explicitly refer to animal sacrifice, according to the methodological premises I have set (see sec. A2 in this chapter). *Moralia*, fr. 106 is cited because it is reasonable to read it in connection with Plutarch's discussion of castration of animals in the same passage. Plutarch often accompanies the sacrificial rite described by an *aition*.

*Aegina: Moralia* 301F. *Phocis: Mor.* 1099E–F. *Boeotia: Mor.* 655E, 693E–F, fr. 54. *West Aitolia: Mor.* 294C. *Eretria: Mor.* 298B. *Cos: Mor.* 304C and E. *Lampsakos: Mor.* 255E. *Greece in general: Mor.*, fr. 106.

Even if written as consolation to an exile, the following passage could apply to non-exiled Greeks as well: crowds of worshippers included not only people from the area where the specific festival was held, but also visitors from other places in Greece. Surely, one of the activities of these visitors must have been their offering of sacrifices: 'Surely the exile too is free to sojourn in Eleusis during the Mysteries, to keep holiday at the Dionysia, and to visit Delphi for the Pythian and Corinth for the Isthmian games, if he is fond of spectacles'... (*Mor.* 604C, Loeb tr.).

<sup>91</sup> See *Mor.* 255E.

that we read his text at face value, but that what we regard as archaism is his ‘interest’ in the past, and not his supposed insistence on archaic terms.

So, despite the context of ‘cultural revival’ in which Pausanias is usually placed by scholars, and which, on the other hand, cannot be denied, his text itself provides us with evidence for the fact that vitality in animal sacrifice did not start, but *continued* to characterize Greek religion well into the second century. Thus, the work of Pausanias can very naturally constitute evidence for the assumption that, in the period when the number of sacred laws diminishes, animal sacrifice did not cease to be important, even if some communities had declined.

Indeed, the sacrificial themes found in the text of Pausanias show a great similarity to sacred laws as we know them from inscriptions. Pausanias describes many sacrificial rites as practised in different places in Greece, and conscientiously defines their characteristics, often by evoking an *aition* for them.

One such definition of sacrificial characteristics pertains to the issue already touched on, namely the *enagizein* sacrifice. Quite strikingly, in the following passage the description of the *ἐναγίζειν* ritual corresponds to the old-fashioned interpretation of the term, according to which no meal followed the slaughter:<sup>92</sup>

*Corinth*, X.1

... Φαῖστον ἐν Σικυωνία λέγουσιν ἐλθόντα καταλαβεῖν Ἡρακλεῖ σφᾶς ὡς ἥρωι ἐναγίζοντας· οὐκ οὖν ἡξίου δρᾶν οὐδὲν ὁ Φαῖστος τῶν αὐτῶν, ἀλλ’ ὡς θεῷ θύειν. καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἄρνα οἱ Σικυώνιοι σφάζαντες καὶ τοὺς μηροὺς ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ καύσαντες τὰ μὲν ἐσθίουσιν ὡς ἀπὸ ἱερείου, τὰ δὲ ὡς ἥρωι τῶν κρεῶν ἐναγίζουσι.

The story is that on coming to the Sicyonian land Phaestus found the people giving offerings to Heracles as to a hero. Phaestus then refused to do anything of the kind, but insisted on sacrificing to him as to a god. Even at the present day the Sicyonians, after slaying a lamb and burning the thighs upon the altar, eat some of the meat as part of a victim given to a god, while the rest they offer as to a hero. (Loeb tr.)

<sup>92</sup> (Regarding the Classical period): ‘where heroic sacrifices are mentioned that certainly led to a feast, the verb used is *θύειν* or another, never *ἐναγίζειν*.’ Parker (2005), 40. This does not necessarily mean that *ἐναγίζειν* implies the absence of meal, but it shows that the occurrence of the term *ἐναγίζειν* should alert us to many possibilities.

The next passage from Pausanias brings us to a recently studied aspect of animal sacrifice, namely the restriction which, in sacred laws, is usually expressed by *οὐ φορά*, and which means that the sacrificial meat must be eaten within the boundaries of the shrine.<sup>93</sup> The *οὐ φορά* of the epigraphic evidence here corresponds to Pausanias' expression *ἀναλώσαι τὰ κρέα αὐτόθι*.

*Phocis*, XXXVIII.8

... βωμὸς θεῶν Μειλιχίων ἐστὶ νυκτεριναὶ δὲ αἱ θυσίαι θεοῖς τοῖς Μειλιχίοις εἰσὶ καὶ ἀναλώσαι τὰ κρέα αὐτόθι πρὶν ἢ ἥλιον ἐπισχεῖν νομίζουσι.

... an altar of the Gracious Gods. The sacrifices to the Gracious Gods are offered at night, and their rule is to consume the meat on the spot before sunrise. (Loeb tr.)<sup>94</sup>

Thanks to Pausanias, we are informed that the practice of *οὐ φορά* was also followed in Epidaurus, where the meat from the sacrifice was to be consumed within the boundaries of the shrine:

*Corinth*, XXVII.1

App. II (8)

All the offerings, whether the offerer be one of the Epidaurians themselves or a stranger, are entirely consumed within the bounds. (Loeb tr.)

Other passages from Pausanias could be also read as if they were 'sacred laws': not only do they deal with the species of the victim offered, but they further specify in detail the way of burning the animal, and eating the meat, especially when the sacrificial practice is outside of the normal.

For instance, it seems that Asklepios of Epidaurus was honoured with more than the standard god's portion of thigh-bones:<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> See also the expression *μὴ φέρεσθαι* in LGS 54, 1st c. AD. The *οὐ φορά* regulation appears verbatim in the sacred law from the Attic deme of Erchia. On the Erchian sacred law, see Daux (1963), Dow (1965), Jameson (1965).

<sup>94</sup> Scullion (1994) has argued quite convincingly that the restriction *οὐ φορά* pertained to the 'chthonian' type of sacrifice, along with holocausts. Ekroth (2002, 313–25) considers the restriction *οὐ φορά* a reinforcement of the already existing practice of feasting on sacrificial meat. Generally, Ekroth (ibid. 325–30) tries to undermine Scullion's model, which focuses on the recipient's *character*, by stressing the *ritual* aspect instead (= the circumstances under which a sacrifice was performed), but in the end she admits that her category called 'modified ritual' is 'a means of recognizing in ritual the character of the recipient or a particular side of the recipient's character' (ibid. 329).

<sup>95</sup> For a 'standard' description of an 'Olympian' sacrifice, see Burkert (1983), 3–7. Also Durand (1979a).

*Corinth*, XI.7

App. II (9)

While to the god are being sacrificed a bull, a lamb, and a pig, they remove Coronis to the sanctuary of Athena and honour her there. The parts of the victims which they offer as a burnt sacrifice, and they are not content with cutting out the thighs, they burn on the ground, except the birds, which they burn on the altar. (Loeb tr.)

Sometimes Pausanias merely insists on the variations in species from place to place:

*Laconia*, XV.9

App. II (10)

The Lacedaemonians are the only Greeks who surname Hera Goat-eater, and sacrifice goats to the goddess. (Loeb tr.)

*Phocis*, XXXII.12

App. II (11)

It is usual to sacrifice to the god (*sc.* Asclepius Archagetas) any animal except the goat. (Loeb tr.)

*Messenia*, XXXI.9

App. II (12)

... a hall of the Curetes, where they make burnt offerings of every kind of living creature, thrusting into the flames not only cattle and goats, but finally birds as well. (Loeb tr.)

In the following Pausanian ‘sacred law’, what is peculiar is the distribution of meat. In the Elean Altis the right to partake of the sacrifice to Pelops belonged not to the person attached to the cult of Pelops there (the soothsayer), but to an official from the priestly hierarchy of the cult of Zeus. It seems that this was the only relation allowed between the cult of Zeus and that of Pelops. Otherwise there was a cultic separation, evident in the way one should approach the shrines. The heroic shrine of Pelops was not at the same level of purity as the temple of Zeus. That is why a person should not eat from the victim dedicated to Pelops, if he<sup>96</sup> was intending to visit the temple of Zeus.<sup>97</sup>

Even more valuable is the fact that this passage also informs us about a similar hierarchy between god and hero in Pergamon. But the regulation from Asia Minor concerns bathing, and not sacrifice. So the reader is probably to assume that both rules, that from Elis

<sup>96</sup> The weak pronoun *οί* can also be used of a woman, but see the noteworthy expression *ἀνδρὶ ἐδιώτην* in the same passage.

<sup>97</sup> An excellent study on the relation between heroic and divine shrines, also expressed in architecture, is Kearns (1989).

and that from Pergamon, concern purity: meat coming from an heroic sacrifice constituted an impure element in the sanctity of a god's temple.

*Elis I*, XIII.2–3

App. II (13)

Right down to the present day the magistrates of the year sacrifice to him (*sc.* Pelops), and the victim is a black ram. No portion of this sacrifice goes to the soothsayer, only the neck of the ram it is usual to give to the 'woodman', as he is called. The woodman is one of the servants of Zeus, and the task assigned to him is to supply cities and private individuals with wood for sacrifices at a fixed rate, wood of the white poplar, but of no other tree, being allowed. If anybody, whether Elean or stranger, eats of the meat of the victim sacrificed to Pelops, he may not enter the temple of Zeus. The same rule applies to those who sacrifice to Telephus at Pergamus on the river Caicus; these too may not go up to the temple of Asclepius before they have bathed. (Loeb tr.)

The text of Pausanias provides us with many other passages relating to the act of sacrifice, both animal and non-animal, which prove that he consistently paid attention to local religious traditions.<sup>98</sup>

But how did Pausanias acquire the information needed, when he wanted to describe cultic acts around Greece? It is almost certain that the inhabitants of the places which Pausanias visited informed him about local traditions, either myths or cults. And it is impressive that, even after a city ceased to exist, its sacred tradition could be preserved in the memories of its experts. This was the case with the cultic centre of Andania, which lay in ruins when Pausanias visited the place (*Messenia*, XXXIII.6): Pausanias could still meet experts in the traditions of Andania, the so-called *ἐξηγηταί*,<sup>99</sup> and ask them for information on the name of the city. And we have already seen an example of preservation of contemporary (not lost) tradition in the

<sup>98</sup> Further descriptions of sacrifice by Pausanias: *Corinth*, X.5 (plant burnt with the victim), XI.4 (pregnant victims offered with libation containing honey), XXVI.9 (Cyreneans: goats to Asklepios/Epidaurians: no goats to Asklepios); *Laconia*, XIV.9 (dogs sacrificed), XX.4 (horses sacrificed); *Arcadia*, XXXVII.8 (all animal species sacrificed, special way of slaughter), XXXVIII.8 ('on the spot' restriction); *Boeotia*, III.5–8 (*xoana* burnt with the victims), XII.1 (sacrifice of the labour-ox—*aition*), XIX.7 (all animal species sacrificed—*aition*); *Phocis*, IV.10 ('chthonian' rite), XXXII.14–17 (description of the festival of Isis).

<sup>99</sup> On the groups of the *exegetai*, see Garland (1984), 114–15; Bloch (1953); Oliver (1950), 24–52, 122 ff.; Jacoby (1949), ch. 1.

passage on the Olympic oath; in this, Pausanias admits that he forgot to ask about a specific ritual detail (*οὐκ ἐμνημόνευσα ἐπερέσθαι*, *Elis I*, XXIV.10). The reference by Pausanias to the action of questioning presupposes that he expected locals to know the cultic traditions of the place.

On the other hand, the fact that the locals could give information about ritual details suggests that these were well inscribed on people's minds, and did not result from a superficial archaism externally imposed.

Consequently, the text of Pausanias proves that, well into the second century, animal sacrifice continued to be practised even in the most remote places, as a result of the religious needs of the inhabitants. Independently of the longevity of communities, the ritual of animal sacrifice continued to incorporate many variations: in the animal species used in sacrifice, in the method of slaughter, in the form of consumption of sacrificial meat. We have to bear in mind that, however empirical these details sound to the modern reader, they were essential to Greek religion: by forgetting or underplaying them, we are in danger of explaining sacrifice without taking full account of what 'sacrifice' actually was. Since all these details depended on the traditional local character of the recipients, animal sacrifice might be a good means of illustrating the proposition that 'Greek paganism' is a term for a whole set of practices differing from place to place.

### iii. The Prominent Individual and the Community: Sacrificial Cult in the Cities

So far, vitality and variety in sacrificial practice have been assumed to characterize the whole of our period, even if one main literary source proving it, namely Pausanias, belongs to the second century. Epigraphic sources also attest to this vitality, but in the present section I use them specifically as evidence for the omnipresence of animal sacrifice in the Greek ritual dialogue between community and individual. In this dialogue, animal sacrifice was a standard means of communication. The present section is dedicated to the positive aspect of the ritual dialogue through sacrifice, whereas section B.iv below treats the problematic aspect of it.



The importance of animal sacrifice in the exchange of honours (and food) between community and individual is probably the reason why the majority of epigraphic references to animal sacrifice in this period comes from civic decrees, dedications, and commemorative inscriptions, by which *Greek cities bestowed honours* on individuals, but also from inscriptions commemorating *private donations made by individuals to the community*. In these inscriptions, sacrifice can be found in two contexts: the individual offered sacrifices or paid for them, or included animal sacrifice in the conditions of his/her donation (below iii.a); animal sacrifice is associated with the honours bestowed on an individual (below iii.b).

These contexts of animal sacrifice will make it obvious that animal sacrifice, or the honour of participating in it, or the gift of a sacrificial victim, are elements of a code of interaction between city and individual. Of course, I should specify that my designation of the individuals honoured as ‘prominent’, either donors or honorands, is relative: prominence might not have been objectively recognized by the city, but sought by family members of the deceased.<sup>100</sup> Or, prominence might have been so limited that the reasons for it were never recorded.<sup>101</sup> Or, the name of the prominent citizen might never be known to us because of fragmentary evidence.<sup>102</sup> Bearing this in mind, for reasons of clarity I now present cases where the evidence is not characterized by such limitations.

### iii.a. *Sacrifice by a prominent individual*

The epigraphic texts of this section illuminate the fact that the offering of a sacrifice was considered an honourable act on the part of a citizen, something which was acknowledged by the city by means of a decree.

Thus, in a decree from Delphi (SIG<sup>3</sup> 734—App. II (14)), dating to 94 BC, the city of Delphi honours the Athenian Ammonius with a crown.

<sup>100</sup> As is probably the case with Philonides of Synnada (2nd c. BC), where we do not have any mention of sacrifices, but the number of honours bestowed is disproportionate to his ‘prominence’. See BCH 7 (1883), 300, no. 24.

<sup>101</sup> See the simple epitaph of a citizen honoured with *enhagismos* (c.100 BC): SEG XVI.418.

<sup>102</sup> On the same stone as that of Philonides (see n. 100), another citizen was honoured with a statue *synbō[mo]n* to the city(?). But we do not have the upper part of the inscription.

This decree connects the bull-sacrifice offered by the honorand with the feast following the ritual act. In other decrees<sup>103</sup> many words or lines are dedicated to the feasts which the honorands gave for their city, and which followed their sacrifices. Elsewhere, the existence of feasts after a sacrifice is implied by fewer words.<sup>104</sup>

Either explicitly or implicitly mentioned, sacrificial feasts make these texts extremely problematic for scholars because of the following question: is the emphasis of these documents laid on the meal accompanying the sacrifice or on religious observance?<sup>105</sup> More specifically, is the honorand praised for his generosity or for his religious conscientiousness? Especially in documents related to imperial cult, the alimentary purpose is very obvious, as the following inscription from the Macedonian city of Kalindoia, dating to AD 1, proves.<sup>106</sup>

The honorand Apollonios voluntarily became priest of Zeus, Rome, and Augustus, and undertook the expenses of the monthly celebrations:

[Sismanides] vv. 13–20<sup>107</sup>

ὥστε μηδεμίαν ὑπερβολὴν καταλιπεῖν τῶν εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ τὴν πατρίδα  
δαπανημάτων, τὰς τε γὰρ παρ' ὄλον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως κατὰ μῆνα  
γενομένας Διὶ καὶ Καίσαρι Σεβαστῶι θυσίας ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου παριστάς καὶ τοῖς  
θεοῖς τὰς τειμὰς πολυτελεῖς προσηγέγκατο καὶ τοῖς πολίταις τὴν ἐστίασιν  
καὶ εὐωχίαν μεγαλομερῆ παρέσχετο καὶ λαϊκῶς πανδημεὶ δειπνίζων καὶ  
κατὰ τρίκλεινον ... (my emphasis)

so as to omit no excess of expenditure on the gods and his native city, providing from his own resources throughout the year the sacrifices offered monthly by the city to Zeus and Caesar Augustus; and has also offered all

<sup>103</sup> See e.g. SIG<sup>3</sup> 762 (48 BC), or the decree from Akraiphia for Epameidondas: IG VII, 2712, under Caligula or Claudius. See also the decree from the Aeolian Kyme: [Hodot], dating to 2 BC–2 AD, along with BE 1983, 323, Merkelbach (1983), and SEG XXXII.1243. Also the inscription from Kalindoia, n. 106 below.

<sup>104</sup> Like λαμπρότατα καὶ πολυμερές[τατ]α, which accompany the word θύων in SIG<sup>3</sup> 795 B (AD 23 or 27 or 31), vv. 10–11.

<sup>105</sup> Most recently, P. Veyne has shown that the notions 'sacrifice' and 'sacrificial feast' are so closely attached in the ancient sources that it is difficult for the student to distinguish between them. See Veyne (2000). Despite its title, the article is mainly based on instances taken from the Roman context.

<sup>106</sup> [Sismanides], along with BE 1987, 688, and SEG XXXV.744. See also the inscription from the Aeolian Kyme, n. 103 above.

<sup>107</sup> The text reproduced here is that of the *editio princeps*: [Sismanides].

manner of honours to the gods, and provided for the citizens feasting and lavish entertainment, similarly dining the whole populace, both en masse and by *triklinia*... (tr. Millar, my emphasis)<sup>108</sup>

Commenting on some other honorific decrees, from Akraiphia, L. Robert stressed the nutritive importance of the sacrifices offered on the occasion of the local festival called Ptoia,<sup>109</sup> and the main motif in the book by Pauline Schmitt-Pantel<sup>110</sup> is the nutritive and political importance of feasts. However, we should not underplay the fact that such sacrificial meals took place in a religious context. Even Schmitt-Pantel admits:

Chaque cité a son calendrier culturel, son système complexe de célébrations des divinités tour à tour. ... Aucun de nos évergètes ne s'est placé en dehors de ce cadre pour inviter au banquet. Du III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle après J. C. ils ont régalié le peuple lors des fêtes sacrificielles. En dresser la liste n'aurait pas de sens, mais l'oublier serait méconnaître le rôle des évergètes, ferments de vie sociale, mais tributaires de la forme traditionnelle de l'expression collective dans la cité: la vie culturelle.<sup>111</sup>

I suggest that, if Greeks had wanted to dissociate sacrifices from the meals attached to them, they could easily have done so; but it seems that they did not want to. At home, they would probably not always eat meat coming from a sacrifice. But, in the religious environment of the temple or the city, meat-eating depended on sacrifice, and sacrifice was an important part of the ceremony. Of course, we should take into consideration special circumstances, especially cases of famine, as in Akraiphia. But it is significant that the *εὐεργέται* wanted to link their names first with piety, and then with the common good.<sup>112</sup>

In another group of inscriptions the realms of sacred and secular duties, or, in other words, piety and feast, are connected by definition,

<sup>108</sup> The translation of the text is included in Millar (1993a), 248–9.

<sup>109</sup> The honorands are the reformer of the Ptoia Epameinondas (*JG* VII, 2712), and, a few years later, under Claudius, Demetrios and Empedon. Robert, 'Décrets d'Akraiphia', *OMS* I, 279–93. 'Si les citoyens tiennent à ce que les sacrifices ne soient pas omis, c'est qu'ils ne veulent pas perdre une occasion de bien manger' (ibid. 284, n. 5).

<sup>110</sup> Schmitt-Pantel (1992).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. 380.

<sup>112</sup> See the characteristic *εὐσεβῶς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς—φιλοτίμως πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*, found in *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 783 (27 BC), on the occasion of the building of a *deipnistērion* attached to a temple by husband and wife.

because the honorand is a priest, either occasionally (like the politician Acornion, who had also been a priest, SIG<sup>3</sup> 762, 48 BC), or for life. The latter case is represented by a corpus of honorific inscriptions from Stratonikeia, referring to a family whose members served as priests in the temple of Zeus Panamaros.<sup>113</sup>

One of these inscriptions (*IStratonikeia* 202) honours a couple, a priest and a priestess, who lived in the reign of Antoninus Pius.<sup>114</sup> Tiberius Flavius Aeneas and Flavia Paulina are honoured for their piety and philanthropy.<sup>115</sup> The piety concerns their appropriate priestly service, the philanthropy the fact that they arranged sacrificial feasts for the worshippers. Both forms of praise are common among the inscriptions from Panamara, and probably not unexpected.

The priestly couple of our inscription refused their sacrificial perquisites (*IStrat.* 202—App. II (15)). In many others of these inscriptions written in honour of priests, the honorands are praised for their voluntary renunciation of the priestly sacrificial perquisites, as in the inscriptions honouring the priestly couple Myonides Damylas (or Menekles) and Tryphaina (or Drakontis), from the period AD 166–9 (*IStratonikeia* 255–7).<sup>116</sup>

Despite the fact that the animal species used for sacrifice are not always mentioned in inscriptions put up in honour of prominent individuals, we have some exceptions, such as the reference to a bull provided by the aforementioned Ammonius (App. II (14)).<sup>117</sup> The species ‘bull’ is often mentioned in the context of civic sacrificial feasts, and this shows the concern of Greek cities for large-scale distributions of meat to the citizens.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>113</sup> For a very good account of the cult, see Laumonier (1958), 234 ff.

<sup>114</sup> See *ibid.*, the table inserted between pp. 260–1.

<sup>115</sup> Here, we find again the *εὐσεβῶς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς—φιλοτείμως* (*sic*) *πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους* (*IStrat.* 202, vv. 6–9). See n. 112 above.

<sup>116</sup> See e.g. *τὰ ἱερά ἐδωρήσαντο* in *IStratonikeia* 256.

<sup>117</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 734, v. 8 (*βουθυτέων*).

<sup>118</sup> Thus, from *Naxos*: *IG XII* 5, 38, vv. 5–6 (*ἐβουθύτησεν*). For the dating of this Naxian inscription to the 1st c. BC, see Robert, ‘Trois inscriptions de l’Archipel’, *OMS I*, 530–542, 54. From *Messene* (reign of Augustus): *SEG XXIII*.207, vv. 12–14. See *BE* 1966.200. From *Priene*: *I. von Priene*, 108, v. 259 (*βουθυτήσας*), end of the 2nd c. BC (see Robert (1937), 38). From *Mylasa*: *IMylasa*, App., p. 269, vv. 5 and 9 (*ταυραφέτης, τά τε κρέατα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐρεθιζομένου ταύρου διένειμεν*), 2nd/1st c. BC. See also the inscriptions from *Kyme* (v. 42: *βουθυτήσας* (*sic*)) and *Kalindoia* (v. 30: *βουθυτήσας*)—references in n. 103 and 106 above.

The examples studied above imply that the honorand gave money for a sacrifice. Similar are the cases where citizens dedicate to the city a financial resource for the perpetual performance of an animal sacrifice after their death.<sup>119</sup> Since a sacrificial feast is usually included among the terms of these donations, one could make a strong case for the nutritive function of animal sacrifice, starting from these instances. My view, as stated above, is that, without denying this dimension, we should not underestimate the religious aspect of sacrificial rituals.

The following dedication from Ephesos (*IEphesos* 690) is a good example of a donation, although the main content of it is the honour bestowed by the city upon C. Iulius Favius Pontianus *because of* his donation. It dates to Hadrian's or Antoninus Pius' reign, and explicitly mentions that the honorand subsidized the offering of a sacrifice. It is not clearly said whether this sacrifice was animal or not. In all probability, though, it must have been an animal sacrifice, since it is said to be offered for the public good (*δημοσία θυσία*). So, we are told that the council and the people set up a statue of C. Iulius Favius Pontianus because:

*IEphesos* 690, vv. 16–28

App. II (16)

He, at his own expenses (which he acquired) from his father, had the statues of the gods and the altar constructed, and decorated the Museum, and consecrated (money) to the council, so that every year, on the 9th of the month Maimaktēr, after the end of the sacrifice to the gods, 524(?) councillors and priests receive one denar each, and he further consecrated the expenditure for the public sacrifice from his own money.<sup>120</sup> (my tr.)

It is important to note that the *εὐεργέτης* Pontianus offered money for the performance of a sacrifice offered on the part of the community. Another honorand's money in Messenia was also used for a sacrifice to the historical figure Aristomenes, honoured as a local

<sup>119</sup> Conventionally, such cases are known as 'foundations', and, as such, they are studied, for instance, by Schmitt-Pantel (1992), 295–303, and by Débord (1982), 202–7. I have preferred to keep the term 'foundations' only for donations related to the cult of the dead.

<sup>120</sup> An analogous example is *IEphesos* 859A, but the inscription is very fragmentary. There is no mention of a civic body, but we have a reference to the *synodos*, so I think the text rather concerns a private association (here without all the restorations of the editors): *Γάιον Ἰούλιον Καίσαρος ἀπελε[ύθερον...]* τὸν τῶν Ῥωμαίων καθιερώσαν[τα...] τῇ συνόδῳ εἰς τὴν ἐπιτελεσθ[ησομένην...] τῇ θεῶι θυσίαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἱεῶς ε[...] κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν Ἐφεσίοις.

hero.<sup>121</sup> So, it is worth remembering that some collective religious identities owed their perpetuation to private initiative.

The following examples are inscriptions exclusively set up as announcements of the promise of a perpetual sacrificial donation made by the citizen, and explicitly connect sacrifice and feast. We have two examples of donations made by members of the same family in Perge. Both donations rather belong to the *genre* of a testament and concern a sacrifice on behalf of the community. It is worth noticing that, like the text from Ephesos (*IEphesos* 690), none of these donations explicitly mentions that a sacrifice will be offered by the community *to* or *for* the donor who made the donation; however, we come across the mention of contests (*ἀγῶνες*) in the name of the dead donor, a feast in his honour (*εὐωχία*), and a commemoration of him (*ἀπομνημόνευσις*):

(a) In the reign of Hadrian, Mouas leaves his mother a piece of land with olive trees, on the condition that, after her death, the income from the estate should be spent on a sacrifice and a feast:

*IPerge* 77, vv. 4–9

App. II (17)

... Don the condition that the yearly elected *komarchai* see that the aforementioned estate be leased and that the income from it be used for sacrifices to Apollo, and for the purchase of wine and bread, so that each year a day of contests is celebrated in my name on the third of the ninth month, and that, on this day, when all the inhabitants of the *kome* enjoy the feast, they remember me, and my brother Kotes, the son of Stasias, and my mother Kille, the daughter of Mouas ... (my tr.)

Donations of land, of which the income is used for a purpose stated by the donor, are common in the Imperial period.<sup>122</sup> But the dedication of land to a shrine is even older, and dates back to the time of Nicias, who, probably, was the first to initiate this practice.<sup>123</sup> Our inscription from Perge disproves Veyne's claim that, unlike Nicias, in the Hellenistic period the donor intended sacrifices to be offered to him rather than to the gods.<sup>124</sup> Mouas is just as 'modest' as Veyne's Nicias was. The same can be argued about Menneas:

<sup>121</sup> See *SEG* XXIII.207, under Augustus, vv. 12–14 (Kraton), along with *BE* 1966.200; cf. Paus. *Mess.*, XIV.7.

<sup>122</sup> See Robert, *Rev. Phil.* LIII (1927), 100, n. 2, where he lists examples similar to the decree on Barcaeus of Cyrene (*SEG* IX.4, 16–15 BC), which he comments on.

<sup>123</sup> See Veyne (1992), 114.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* 114–15.

(b) Menneas was the son of Mouas' stepbrother, and he also made a donation, which his sister Les executed:

*IPerge* 78, vv. 1–6

App. II (18)

Concerning the 1500 (*denarii*), which are left by Menneas, the son of Timotheos, the son of Menneas, so that a piece of land will be purchased for god Apollo of the village, in order that the income from it be used each year by the *komarchai* for sacrifices of the god and for a feast of the adults living in the village, on the twentieth day of the first month, and also (in order) that a commemoration of Menneas take place. Les, the daughter of Timotheos, the sister and heir of Menneas, set apart (for the village) . . . (my tr.)

Apart from these two donations from Perge, the very important, and the most recently published,<sup>125</sup> inscription recording a donation is that of C. Iulius Demosthenes from Oenoanda. Like the donations previously presented, this text does not refer to communal sacrifices which would honour the donor. Demosthenes belonged to an indigenous family, but served under Hadrian as an equestrian official, and on his retirement founded for his home city a quadrennial festival bearing his name (*Demostheneia*). What has reached us regarding his donation is a full epigraphic dossier including: (a) Hadrian's letter to the Termessians of Oenoanda approving the establishment of the festival; (b) the formal promise (*ἐπαγγελία*) made by Demosthenes about the festival; (c) the preliminary proposal (*προβουλευσίμων*) made by three council members for the details of the festival; (d) the formal decision of the Termessians of Oenoanda on the festival; and (e) the Roman governor's letter of approval. The latter part of the dossier, the governor's rescript, dates to AD 125. Historians have often stressed the importance of this long inscription.<sup>126</sup> However, the aspect usually emphasized is that of the contests established by the founder. What has not been sufficiently stressed so far is the inclusion of splendid animal sacrifices in these celebrations—even if not offered *for/to* the donor. The following long section concerning sacrifice is included in the preliminary proposal, but there are references elsewhere also.

<sup>125</sup> By Wörrle (1988), here abbr. as [Wörrle].

<sup>126</sup> See Mitchell (1990), who provides an English translation of the Greek inscription. Millar (1993a), 251–3. Most recently, Mitchell (2000), 130–1.

[Wörrle], vv. 68–89

App. II (19)

The following will process through the theatre and will sacrifice together during the days of the festival, according to the way the agonothete gives written instructions for each communal sacrifice: The agonothete himself, one bull; the civic priest of the emperors and the priestess of the emperors, one bull; the priest of Zeus, one bull; the three panegyriarchs, one bull; the secretary of the council and the five prytaneis, two bulls; the two market supervisors of the city, one bull; the two gymnasiarchs, one bull; the four treasurers (ταμίαι), one bull; the two παραφύλακες [rural police-officers], one bull; the ephebarch, one bull; the paidonomos, one bull; the supervisor of the public buildings, one bull; of the villages, Thersenos with Armadu, Arissos, Merlakanda, Mega Oros, . . . lai, Kirbu, Euporoi, Oroata, .. rake, Valo, and Yskapha, with their associated farmsteads (μοναγρίαί), two bulls; Orpenna Sielia with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Ogarsan . . . ake with Lakistaunda and Kakasboi Killu and their associated farmsteads, . . . bull(s); . yrnea with its associated farmsteads, one bull; Elbessos with its associated farmsteads, one bull; Nigrassos with its associated farmsteads, one bull; Vauta Marakanda with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Milgeipotamos Vedasa with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Prino-lithos Kolabe . . . with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Kerdebota Palangeimanake with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Minaunda Pan..syera with their associated farmsteads, one bull; Ornessos, Aetu nossia, Korapsa with their associated farmsteads, one bull; . . . a Sapondoanda with their associated farmsteads, one bull; and no one has the authority to exact a tax for these sacrifices. The demarchs and the archidecanoi, in villages where there are archidecanoi, should assume supervision of the village sacrifices, with the agonothete; *the latter should make provision in the year before the festival that demarchs<sup>127</sup> are chosen for the year of the agonothesia; and, from those who take part in the common sacrifice, he should also indicate for each village one man,<sup>128</sup> who must make provision for the sacrifice.* If any of those previously mentioned does not take part in the common sacrifice he will pay a fine to the city of 300 drachmas as though he had received a judicial sentence, with the agonothete making public the names of those who participate in the common sacrifice and join the procession, and of those who do not participate in the sacrifice, so that those who ought to have payment extracted from them by the city are conspicuous. The sacrifices which are sent by other cities, these too should also be escorted in procession through the theatre and announced at the time that they are sent, and the decrees which are sent by

<sup>127</sup> 'and archidecanoi': Mitchell's addition (!)

<sup>128</sup> The italicized section is my emendation.



the cities should be lodged in the archives by the incumbent magistrates, and the agonothete should write a reply to the cities concerning their participation in the sacrifice. And those who have already served as agonothetes should sit in the front row in the festival with the agonothete. There should be no taxes imposed on any of the purchases sold, sacrificed, imported, introduced or exported during all the days of the festival. (tr. Mitchell)

In his formal promise (*ἐπαγγελία*), Demosthenes had mentioned only that two sacrifices were to be offered to ancestral Apollo (*πατρῶος Ἀπόλλων*), on the 12th and on the 15th of the month (Artemisios).<sup>129</sup> In their preliminary proposal (*προβουλευσίμων*), the three members of the council made additions concerning the ceremonial details of the festival, and among these are listed the sacrifices by city officials, and the exact contributions of cattle for sacrifice, due from the villages in the territory of Oenoanda (vv. 68–89). So, just as the editor has remarked, the contributions for sacrifice are not listed by the founder himself, but they are a further arrangement made by the city.<sup>130</sup> (What is not clear in the description above is whether the arrangement regarding the contribution of victims applies to both sacrifices, on the twelfth and fifteenth days of Artemisios.<sup>131</sup>) The Termessians of Oenoanda express their gratitude not by means of a simple honorific dedication (or a statue), but by materially contributing to the expenses of the ritual. Here, sacrifice is a gift both to the city, and by the city. The city's largesse is also made obvious in the regulations forbidding taxation, either on the sacrifices themselves or on other financial transactions on the festival days.

The text from Oenoanda is, thus, representative of the interaction between city and individual. Indeed, it helps us to link the two mechanisms I describe in this section:

<sup>129</sup> 'the 12th, a sacrifice for ancestral Apollo;' (v. 42). Also: 'the 15th, the second sacrifice for ancestral Apollo;' (v. 43), (tr. Mitchell).

<sup>130</sup> [Wörle], 255–6.

<sup>131</sup> We might also wonder about the details of some other sacrificial rituals, which do not constitute part of the Demostheneia, and which are implicitly referred to in the text, like the following: [Wörle]: vv. 56–8) 'The agonothete should wear the previously mentioned gold crown and a purple robe, and at the beginning of the New Year should make the ceremonial entrance, performing the pious ritual (*ἐπιτελοῦντα . . . τὰς εὐσεβείας*) for the emperor and the gods of the home land on the Augustus day of the month Dios [1 January] and processing in company with the other magistrates . . .' (tr. Mitchell).

- individual citizens give the city money for the offering of a sacrifice (even if, in the case of Demosthenes, there is no visible capital!<sup>132</sup>);
- the city expresses its gratitude for the donation of the citizen by seeing to the offering of a sacrifice (below iii.b).

The editor of the inscription sees an opportunity for an act of ‘showing off’ on the part of the families of the city officials, whereas he leaves open the question of the willingness of the villages to bring animals for sacrifice.<sup>133</sup> Much as I agree with these statements, my personal view is that we should also be open to an inversion of them: probably not all city officials were enthusiastic about spending on a sacrifice, and local village leaders might have long wanted for an opportunity to participate in a city festival. In any case, this sacrificial obligation imposed on the villages will concern us in the next section (B.iv).

In the description above, at least twenty-seven bulls were sacrificed,<sup>134</sup> thirteen on behalf of the city officials,<sup>135</sup> and fourteen on behalf of the *chora* of Oenoanda, apart from those contributed by other cities. Such a great number of animals was undoubtedly the main source of meat for the feast which followed.<sup>135</sup> However, I have often stressed in the course of this study that the aspect of ritual in itself should not be underplayed. The first impression created by a ritual celebration, and shared by the worshippers, is visual. At the same time, since ostentatiousness went along with an *euergesia*, spectacle was the best way for an *euergetes* to attract attention. So, the organizers of religious festivals invested a lot in the visual aspect: a sacrificial procession, with all the civic and priestly authorities participating in hierarchical order, and the garlanded sacrificial victims led along, was an imposingly magnificent spectacle. So much so indeed, that the much expected sacrifice (because of the feast which followed) could often be delayed in favour of the procession.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> On this point, see [Wörrle], 151 ff.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 256.

<sup>134</sup> We cannot be sure about the exact number of victims because of the need for restorations.

<sup>135</sup> See [Wörrle], 254–5.

<sup>136</sup> That is why a sacred law from Astypalaia puts a limit to the period of delay. The law (LSS 83) dates to the 2nd or 1st c. bc. See also the comments on sacrificial processions made by Robert in *Hellenica* XI–XII, 120–3. Lane Fox (1986), 80–2, also lays emphasis on processions, but does not stress the presence of animals in them.

I suggest that the wide-ranging sacrificial ritual described in the long inscription from Oenoanda calls into question Louis Robert's claims about non-sacrificial tendencies in the area. More specifically, Robert discovered that an oracle, engraved on the wall of Oenoanda in the second century AD, can be attributed to Apollo's oracle at Claros.<sup>137</sup> This Clarian text copied in Oenoanda declares Ether as the appropriate god, and recommends the prayer to him as the appropriate ritual. It does not require animal sacrifices. This text was taken by Robert as representing a movement 'vers le monothéisme',<sup>138</sup> where the pure ritual of *prayer* was to replace animal and non-animal offerings,<sup>139</sup> and which was brought from the oracle of Claros as a means of conciliation between pagans and Christians in Oenoanda.<sup>140</sup> Independently of whether Robert's hypothesis is sustainable in its context, in the donation of Demosthenes the strong religious identity of pagan locals is displayed in the long description of the sacrificial procession without the inclusion of any hint at conflicts between pagans and Christians in the area.

To sum up, when a Greek wanted to seek prominence, he saw to it that his public image would be first that of 'pious man', and then that of 'generous man'. 'Piety' means being in accordance with the religious identity of a city, and so with its gods and festivals. A sacrifice to the gods of the city was both a proof of such piety, and an occasion to regale the city's inhabitants by means of a *εὐεργεσία*. When a citizen respected both the religious and the communal character of a festival, the city was always willing to acknowledge it, as we shall see next.

### iii.b. *Sacrifice to a prominent individual, and sacrificial meat given to a prominent individual*

The focus of this section is not on civic sacrifices subsidized by an individual, but on civic sacrifices offered by the city *for* or, usually, *to* an individual.

<sup>137</sup> Robert (1971*b*) OMS v. 617–39. For the insertion of this text in the context of the cult of Theos Hypsistos, see Mitchell (1999), 81–92.

<sup>138</sup> Robert (1971*b*), 610.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. 615–17.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. 618. Despite this theory, Robert was aware of other inscriptions from Oenoanda, 'sur les fêtes et les concours' of the city (ibid. 599).

From a dedicatory inscription dating to the reign of Augustus, we learn that the Knidian Artemidorus, a priest of Artemis for life, was to be honoured with sacrifices offered to him (*IKnidos* 59). Among the honours bestowed on Artemidorus and listed in the text are numerous statues of him, made of precious material. Most importantly, Artemidorus was to be buried in the *gymnasion* and be offered sacrifices like those offered to gods; undoubtedly, this must mean that the sacrifices offered to him would not be just of the ‘chthonian’ (or ‘heroic’) type:

(I Knidos 59, v. 15–19)

... καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρυσάμενος [sc. ὁ δῆμος] καὶ θυσίας καὶ πομπὰν καὶ γυμνικὸν ἀγῶνα πενταετηρικὸν ψαφ[ι]ξάμενος Ἀρτεμιδώρεια τετιμάκει αὐτὸν τιμαῖς ἰσοθείοις.

... and (the people), having erected an altar and having decreed sacrifices and a procession and a gymnastic contest every five years—called Artemidoreia—has honoured him with divine honours. (my tr.)

The reasons for which Artemidorus is honoured are not stated (or preserved). Actually, Artemidorus is among the Roman citizens named *Caii Iulii* whose case was studied by Robert: basing themselves on their friendship with the Roman authorities of the Late Republic, these citizens had helped their city in politically hard times, and that is why they were given great honours, among which are found burial in the *gymnasion*, and, occasionally, a sacrificial cult.<sup>141</sup> These were individual cults, and as such they are explained in the context of the cultic shift occurring in the first century BC, when the collective cult of benefactors was superseded by the cult of individuals (which was soon to be superseded by the divine cult of the emperor).<sup>142</sup> Scholars usually assume that, from the reign of Augustus onwards, such individuals were mostly offered ‘chthonian’ (or else ‘heroic’) and not divine sacrifices.<sup>143</sup>

In any case, sacrificial honours for individual citizens were a common characteristic of the period before or during the reign of Augustus.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> See Robert, *OMS* VI, 42–7, *EA* 49–50, *Hellenica* VIII, 95–96.

<sup>142</sup> Price (1984*b*), 47–52.

<sup>143</sup> Thus *ibid.* 49–51. There is no hint that such prominent citizens would be honoured with other than animal sacrifices. My discussion of the *gymnasion* below contains explicit evidence for animal sacrifices.

<sup>144</sup> Divine sacrifices to Barcaeus of Cyrene (16/15 BC: *SEG* IX.4) are the last divine sacrifices offered to individuals, along with the divine sacrifices to Artemidorus.

Even Roman officials were not debarred from sacrificial honours on the part of Greeks.<sup>145</sup>

Here, I would like to dwell for a moment on the relation of the Greek citizens honoured to the space of the *gymnasion*. Presumably, since prominent individuals of the first century BC were buried in the *gymnasion*, one would think that the sacrifices decreed in their honour took place there too. However, the *gymnasion* might not have been the exclusive place where such individuals were honoured,<sup>146</sup> since the ceremonial duties assigned to the *epheboi* of a *gymnasion* covered the whole city-space.

The rituals performed by the *epheboi* were incorporated in civic religious life,<sup>147</sup> and this is illustrated in an honorific inscription from Athens (SIG<sup>3</sup> 717, 100/99 BC): in it, the *epheboi* were honoured because of the proper performance of their cultic duties. The *epheboi* offered sacrifices (ἤρναντο τοὺς βούς, ἐβουθύτησαν, ἔθυσαν ταύρον/βούην) in the *prytaneion*, in Eleusis, in Piraeus, also during the Dionysia and the Diogeneia. They even sailed to Mounichia and Salamis in order to offer sacrifices. One can see that all the aforementioned sacrifices are performed during festivals of the city, and not just in the framework of the *gymnasion*. Furthermore, the many references to bulls as sacrificial victims in this inscription imply that these sacrifices were followed by lavish feasts shared by all citizens.

The divine sacrifices to Diodoros Paspáros have only been recently placed in the context of the Mithridatic Wars, so in the 1st c. BC, by Jones (1974), esp. 197–8, and, more recently, Jones (2000). This dating is also adopted by S. Price, who gives a very good summary of the honours to Diodoros. See Price (1984b), 48.

<sup>145</sup> See Price (1984a), 51. For the proconsul Munatius Plancus, there is only Robert's provisional statement in *Hellenica* VIII, 84.

<sup>146</sup> In the same way, there is no need to suppose that the inscriptions honouring prominent individuals were placed near a *gymnasion*, as was supposed for example in the case of Artemidorus. See the comment on vv. 9–11 of the inscription in *IKnidos*, p. 50.

<sup>147</sup> Robert talked of the *gymnasion* as a 'new agora', but unfortunately this important remark is restricted to a promise made in a footnote: *OMS* VI, 46 and n. 7 on the same page. The whole of this footnote is dedicated to the revision of some cases in Delorme (1960); as Robert proves, in all these cases Delorme misleadingly linked the special honours of benefactors to their relation with the *gymnasion*. Lack of insistence on the wider role of the *gymnasion* within Greek civic religion also characterizes the book by Gauthier (1985).

Among the sacrifices performed by the Athenian *epheboi* of this inscription were those offered to civic benefactors.<sup>148</sup> We are not told where these sacrifices took place, but the clear reference to the *cosmētēs* and the *didaskaloi* makes the *gymnasion* the most probable place; on the basis of this inscription, one could similarly presume that sacrifices to prominent individuals of the first century BC, studied in this section, took place in the *gymnasion* too.

This presumption is not unreasonable. However, given the role of the *epheboi* in the religious life of a Greek city, as described above, other civic areas might equally well come to mind instead of, or along with, the *gymnasion*. The cult of prominent people was decreed by the city, and the honours offered to them expressed the city's gratitude, so these sacrifices must have had a broader impact than just changing the rituals in the *gymnasia*. The whole civic space would be open to accommodate the ritual of the benefactors. The celebration was for the whole city, and not just for the *epheboi*. Wherever these sacrifices took place, their connection to the *epheboi* of the *gymnasion* in civic cultic matters would always guarantee a wide participation of citizens.<sup>149</sup>

Apart from the offering of animal sacrifices, other kinds of honours bestowed on prominent citizens were closely associated with the mechanism of animal sacrifice, but in a different way: that is, the honorands were provided with victims or sacrificial meat. Such

<sup>148</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 717 (100/99 BC), vv. 32–3: ἔθυσαν μετὰ τε τοῦ κοσμητοῦ καὶ τῶν διδασκάλων τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τοῖς εὐεργέταις τοῦ δήμου... For other examples, see Robert, OMS I, 63–4.

<sup>149</sup> The much-quoted text from Amorgos (Nock (1944), 148; Delorme (1960), 354–5; Schmitt-Pantel (1992), 298) about the heroic cult established by Kritolaos for his dead son Aleximachos (LSS 61) might date earlier than the period studied here, but certainly serves to prove my point about the role of the *gymnasion* in the religious life of the city: according to the text, the *epheboi* go on procession through the city: ὠ[ν]ησάσθωσαν βοῦν ἄρσena μῆ νεώτερον ἑτῶν δύο καὶ θυσάτωσαν ἐν τεῖ Καλλιστράτου... οἰ[κ]ίαι· πομπευέτωσαν δὲ τὸν βοῦν ἐκ τοῦ πρυτανείου [οἰ] πρῆτ [άνει]ς καὶ [δ] γυμνασίαρχος [κ]αὶ οἱ ἔφηβοι... (LSS 61, vv. 43–7. I have underlined the places from where the procession passes.) Although the feast in honour of the heroized dead Aleximachos takes place in the *gymnasion* (ἡ δὲ δημοθουσία [γ]ενέσθω ἐν πῶ γυμνασίῳ ἐπάναγκες· (LSS 61, vv. 59–60)), it is open to the wider body of the citizens, including women, and even to Romans and foreigners. So this text makes evident that an animal sacrifice connected to the *epheboi* and the *gymnasion*, even when the relevant feast takes place in the area of the *gymnasion* itself, could be an occasion for celebrations in the city as a whole.

is the case of Polygnota, a Theban χοροψάλτρια (harpist), who, on the grounds of her performance in 86 BC,<sup>150</sup> was honoured by the city of Delphi with the free supply of a sacrificial victim (SIG<sup>3</sup> 738, vv. 17–18): ‘and also to give her a victim (to sacrifice) to Apollo’<sup>151</sup> (παραστᾶσα[ι] δὲ αὐτᾶ[ι] καὶ ἱερεῖον<sup>152</sup> τῶι Ἀπό[λ]λωνι).

A different honour had to do with portions of sacrificial meat given to the person honoured. Thus, in the aforementioned decree of Delphi in honour of the Athenian Ammonius (SIG<sup>3</sup> 734), it is stated that he is entitled to ξένια, which will be sent to him.<sup>153</sup> Ξένια were meat-portions of the communal sacrifices, and partaking of them was a special privilege given by a community to distinguished foreigners. When *xenia* were sent, they were either μέγιστα (ἐκ τῶν νόμων) (SIG<sup>3</sup> 734, 737) or simply ἐκ τοῦ νόμου (IAdramytteion 16). This issue has been dealt with by P. Schmitt-Pantel,<sup>154</sup> and will not concern us in this book, because, as I have said in section A2 of this chapter, I am concerned only with sacrificial meals, when there is explicit reference to sacrifices.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Polygnota had actually come to compete in the Pythia, but the contest did not take place because of the turmoil of the Mithridatic War; so she gave a recital instead. See Robert, OMS I, 247–52.

<sup>151</sup> For the interpretation of *παριστάναι* in this context, see Robert, *Παράστασις ἱερῶν*, *Hellenica* XI–XII, 126–31, esp. 127–8: ‘conférer un honneur spécial que d’offrir à un personnage, citoyen ou étranger, au nom de la ville (ou d’une autre communauté), une victime qu’à son tour il offrira à la divinité pour le sacrifice.’ By mistake, Robert makes Polygnota ‘une χοροψάλτρια de Kyme’ (p. 128).

<sup>152</sup> After *ἱερεῖον*, Robert’s copy has *θύσαι*; *ibid.* 248–9.

<sup>153</sup> *πέμψαι δὲ αὐτῶι καὶ ξένια τὰ μέγιστα ἐκ τῶν νόμων.* (vv. 16–17).

<sup>154</sup> Schmitt-Pantel (1992), 163–8, where two privileges of the honorand, partaking of the *xenia* and the ‘invitation to the *prytaneion*’, are examined by her in the case of Athens (for a period earlier than mine). With regard to Schmitt-Pantel’s study, a few points are worth making here: the author has differentiated the invitation to *xenia* in the *prytaneion* from the invitation to *deipnon* in the *prytaneion*: The first, she remarks, is a privilege given to foreigners, whereas the second is given to citizens. However, in our material one can see the following differences as far as the two privileges are concerned: (a) as we have seen in the case of Ammonius, *xenia* can be sent to the foreign honorand; (b) either being honoured with *xenia* (SIG<sup>3</sup> 737, 740) or not (SIG<sup>3</sup> 738, 739), a foreigner could be invited to the *prytaneion*, but in this case, the invitation is not to a ‘*deipnon* in the *prytaneion*’, but to ‘the *prytaneion* on the common *hestia* (of the city (SIG<sup>3</sup> 737, 738), or simply on the common *hestia* (SIG<sup>3</sup> 739, 740). See also IAdramytteion 16, I: invitation to ‘*xenismos* in the *prytaneion* on the *boulaia Hestia*’, along with the sending of *xenia*.

<sup>155</sup> For references to the privilege of partaking of sacrificial meat, see Robert, OMS I, 92–3, II, 1052–3, 1078–9.

Such an explicit reference can be found in the honorific inscription for Agathes (*Illion* 12, 1st c. BC). The cult of Athena Ilias gathered many cities in Asia Minor in an annual 'federal' celebration.<sup>156</sup> In the framework of this festival, Agathes served as ἀγωνοθέτης, as an ἀγορανόμος, and as an organizer of the contest of ταυροβόλια:

*Illion* 12, vv. 1–8

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The citizens of Ilion and the cities participating in the sacrifice, the contest, and the festival, honoured Agathes, the son of Menophilos, from Ilion, with this statue, with an invitation to the sacrifices and to the presidential seats, him and his descendants, with partaking of the common sacrifices each year... (my tr.)

The privilege given to Agathes and his posterity is not only to participate in the sacrificial ceremonies, but also to partake of the meat from the sacrifice in honour of Athena Ilias. Here, the honour bestowed by the city on a good citizen is not a sacrifice for him, or to him, but the participation by him in the city's sacrifice and meal.

In sum, each element of an animal sacrifice seems to have been considered very significant. Only in this way can we explain the fact that different aspects of it are present in the honours conferred by cities to individuals: the act of offering could be a means to worship a prominent person; the honorand's participation in the sacrificial ceremony was an honour given by the city, a living victim was a special gift to the honorand, and even the meat from the slaughtered victim was a sign of the city's gratitude to him/her.

To sum up this section on animal sacrifice at the level of interaction between city and individual: I would not totally deny that in the period 100 BC–AD 200 the individual is more prominent in inscriptions than was the case earlier. Inscriptions usually called *leges sacrae* are not so prominent epigraphically, and one notices instead an augmentation of inscriptions recording honorary decrees passed by cities, and donations made by individuals; religious issues do appear in these, indeed many related to animal sacrifice, which is our subject here, but only as a background against which the individual stands out. Despite this change in the character of epigraphic documents, I do not suggest

<sup>156</sup> The designation follows Robert (1966), 38.



that religious feeling in itself changed. It is rather that, in this period, different aspects of it were made public. The individual became more conspicuous, but not to the detriment of his city: traditional gods and rituals were preserved, celebrations involved the whole civic space, but now people were explicitly named in texts; not only the donors, but all the inhabitants of a city, or all the villages around a city. Though the attestation of specific movements towards a non-sacrificial monotheism within the Greek culture of this period cannot be denied,<sup>157</sup> the evidence for the increased role of individuals in contributing to local sacrificial cults suggests that civic religion had room for further enrichment.

#### iv. Occasions on Which Sacrifice on the Part of the Individuals Was Seen as an Externally Imposed Obligation or as a Personal Duty

Keeping to the context of ritual dialogue between community and individual, here I present the opposite pole of the harmonious vitality of animal sacrifice presented in section iii: here, animal sacrifice could become a contentious activity, in the case where some members of the community, such as recent converts to Christianity, abstained from it, or in the case where some recent converts were puzzled as to how they could express their need for communication with the divine element if not by a sacrifice.

Here I will, first, deal with sacrifices whose offering was an externally imposed obligation, either because a relevant item of legislation so ordained, or because a sacrifice was conventionally expected to be offered on important occasions in private life. In this respect, epigraphic evidence proves to be especially illuminating. I will, second, present evidence for the fact that animal sacrifice could be a personal need felt by the pagan worshipper, a duty which was imposed on him/her only by his or her conscience.

The question whether *all* the sacrifices with which we are concerned here, and which are denoted by *θυσία*, are animal or not can be left aside for the moment, because what is of interest is rather the

<sup>157</sup> See Mitchell (1999).

mechanisms of political and social obligation to participation in sacrifice.

Animal sacrifice as an obligation officially imposed by the city on private individuals was a Coan peculiarity par excellence, as Coan epigraphic texts attest:<sup>158</sup> one (perhaps the most famous) among these contains a long list of groups charged with sacrificial obligations (*LGS* 168); it dates to the first century BC, and the groups are designated on the basis of financial terminology. Thus, the first half of the inscription obliges various leaseholders of public revenues, including cult revenues, to offer sacrifices. The second half (vv. 17 ff.) imposes sacrificial obligations on professionals such as ship-hauliers or captains. A further characteristic of the second half of the inscription is that it specifies the type and price of the victims required.<sup>159</sup> Here are two passages from this inscription:

(a) *LGS* 168, vv. 9–13 App. II (21)  
 and let the purchasers of the income of public tuna-traps<sup>160</sup> sacrifice, and pitch a tent; and let also the leaseholder of the other tuna-trap, which is on the Nautilion, sacrifice and pitch a tent; and let the purchaser of the income of the Mousai<sup>161</sup> sacrifice, and pitch a tent on the same terms; and on the same terms let the purchaser of the income of the Aphrodeision (*sic*)<sup>162</sup> sacrifice, and pitch a tent; ... (my tr.)

(b) *LGS* 168, vv. 23–5 App. II (22)  
 and let the *nauarchos* sacrifice to Poseidon a ewe of 30 drachmae, and to Cos a ewe of 30 drachmae, and to Rhodes a ewe of 30 drachmae; ... (my tr.)

But what was the purpose of such a document requiring obligatory sacrifices? J. Toepffer attributed the Coan law to an attempt on the part of the state to unite the different national identities of the island's

<sup>158</sup> For the most recent discussion on these Coan *ῥυόντω* regulations, see Parker–Obbink (2000), 427–9. In some cases, instead of a sacrifice a sum could be paid to the relevant priest(ess), equivalent to the value of the perquisites given to the priest if the sacrifice had been made. See the Coan regulation dated around 125 BC in *ibid.* (the commentary on pp. 432 ff., esp. p. 436 on v. 8).

<sup>159</sup> For a detailed commentary of the inscription, see Toepffer (1891).

<sup>160</sup> I follow the interpretation of *σκοπά* given by Toepffer (1891), 423–6. See also Robert, *Hellenica* IX, 96, n. 2.

<sup>161</sup> According to Toepffer (1891), 426–7, this must either designate a priesthood of the *Mousai*, or the leasing of taxes for the public sacrifices offered to them.

<sup>162</sup> Again, Toepffer (*ibid.* 427) thinks of a leasing concerning either public sacrifices or a temple income.

inhabitants.<sup>163</sup> More pragmatic explanations integrate this law, and its other Coan parallels requiring obligatory sacrifices, in the state policy of increasing public religious income and promoting Coan religion.<sup>164</sup>

Apart from the strengthening of local identity, which we cannot deny in this type of regulation, different reasons seem to have inspired the three prominent local legislators of the inscription from Dereköy, which dates to AD 138,<sup>165</sup> and also concerns an official obligation of sacrifice. The Lycian document stipulates a partial reform of the cult of Lycian Zeus, mainly as regards the contributions of the inhabitants to the common sacrifice. A long section of the document (BI.1 to BII.22) lists the contributions (*συμβολαί*) made by the villages (*χωρία*) of each of the five regions (*ὁμοურίαι*). Each village contributes a different amount, but each region is required to pay for a total of 20 *συμβολαί*, so the fair distribution of the total of 100 *συμβολαί* must have been the aim of the reformation,<sup>166</sup> as is implied by the comment which follows the list of contributions:

[Dereköy] vv. BII.23–36

App. II (23)

Because there are some sacrifices requiring more expenses, and it is fair that all the regions should play an equal part both in the expenditure of the sacrifices and in the care for them, we considered it reasonable that (only) then should the same region offer again the same sacrifice, when all the regions have offered all the sacrifices in turn, and so that this endures and is made clear, (namely) that every five years the same region has to offer the same sacrifice, the priest of Zeus on the summit, after all sacrifices falling in the period of his priesthood have been offered, shall declare by public documents in the month Panemos which sacrifices were offered by each region. (my tr.)

In the case of Oenoanda (see section B.iii.a in this chapter), we have seen that a sacrificial obligation similar to that at Dereköy was imposed on the villagers. The civic legislators of Oenoanda were much stricter: only one person from each *κώμη* was responsible for the contribution to the sacrifice, and, in case he did not carry out his

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 412–13. This would be the opposite function of that of the Panionian sacrifice in the shrine of Poseidon Heliconios in Priene in the time of Strabo (Strabo, 8.7.2).

<sup>164</sup> Parker–Obbink (2000), 428; Sokolowski: *LGS*, 294.

<sup>165</sup> Wörrle–Wurster (1997), abbr. here as [Dereköy]. On the date, see *ibid.* 410–12. On the question of who issued this religious regulation, see *ibid.* 413–18 (and 430).

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* 418–22.

sacrificial duty, he was required to pay 300 drachmas, ‘as though he had received a judicial sentence’ (Mitchell tr.). In order for the city to extract the fines more easily, the names of those who did not participate would be made public. These issues were under the personal care of the *agonothetes* [Wörrle], vv. 80–5).

A similar punishment is illustrated in another document, namely the long Ephesian inscription on the donation of Vibius Salutaris (*IEphesos* 27, AD 104). Among the terms of the donation was the offering of natal sacrifices (apparently animal) to Artemis, by men appointed by lot for this issue. The redactor of the inscription specifies that, if those to whom the sacrificial duty has been allotted fail to carry out what they are obliged to, they will owe Artemis a fine of 5 denarii each (vv. 492–4, 528–31).

More evidence for obligatory sacrifices imposed by the authorities comes from literary texts. To contextualize the latter sort of evidence, it is worth mentioning a passage from Plutarch’s *Life of Aratus* (*Aratus* 45.1–2), concerning the sacrificial honours paid to Antigonos Doson (*θυσίας . . . Ἀντιγόνῳ συνετέλουν*). These were fostered by Aratus, whose policy was criticized by the anti-Macedonian Peloponnesians. In this passage Plutarch is rather supportive and non-critical: he presents Aratus as being in a position not allowing him to oppose Antigonos Doson (*ibid.* 45.2–3).

The sacrifices to Antigonos did not survive up to Plutarch’s time. But the passage makes it obvious that in the Greek world sacrifice could be suddenly introduced to the already existing traditional calendar as a result of decisions made by leaders or for leaders; it can be taken that Plutarch’s readers would understand this.

The following event took place in 43 BC, and it is similar to that referred to by Plutarch, in that it concerns a sacrifice ordered by a leader. Appian records an order of the triumvir Lepidus, which resembles the decrees later issued by Roman emperors:

Appian, *De bello civili* 4.5.31

App. II (24)

While these events were taking place Lepidus enjoyed a triumph for his exploits in Spain, and an edict was displayed in the following terms: ‘May Fortune favour us. Let it be proclaimed to all men and women that they should celebrate this day with sacrifices and feasting. Whoever shall fail to do so shall be put on the list of the proscribed.’ Lepidus led the triumphal procession to the Capitol, accompanied by all the citizens, who showed the external appearance of joy, but were sad at heart. (Loeb tr.)

Appian does not say anything about the geographical area to which Lepidus' order was meant to be applied; however, from the reference to popular participation in the triumph, it seems that all the inhabitants of Rome were implicitly meant to conform.

The cases of sacrifices introduced by Aratus and Lepidus show that, at times, a Greek or a Roman leader could oblige all the inhabitants of an area to follow his whims. Failing to do so could have consequences for their lives, finances, and, possibly, for their reputation among fellow citizens.

Another context of literary evidence where obligatory sacrifices are inserted concerns 'customary', not officially imposed, sacrifices. Such is the case of sacrifices performed in the frame of athletic competitions. All ancient games were performed in connection with the shrine of a god or goddess; the Olympic Games were connected to Zeus and Hera. To participate in them was to accept the religious identity of the Elean grove, and to comply with the cults of the area. Thus, before the games began, an oath-sacrifice was offered to Zeus Horkios in the *bouleuterion*, not only by male athletes, but also by their fathers, brothers, and trainers (Paus. *Elis I*, XXIV.9).<sup>167</sup> Before each athletic competition it seems that the relevant participants offered a sacrifice, as the following passage implies:<sup>168</sup>

Paus. *Elis I*, IX.3 App. II (25)

The order of the games in our own day, which places the sacrifices to the god for the pentathlon and chariot-races second, and those for the other competitions first, was fixed at the seventy-seventh Festival. (Loeb tr.)

Those girls and women who won in the foot-games in honour of Hera were given portions of the cow sacrificed to the goddess (*Elis I*, XVI.2–3).

A further category of 'customary', that is, conventionally offered, sacrifices concerned important occasions in private life, for example marriage.<sup>169</sup> Plutarch inserts an item of information about nuptial

<sup>167</sup> The examiners of the participants took an oath too (*Elis I*, XXIV.10), but it is not clear whether a sacrifice was also involved. His wondering about the boar is not helpful in this respect because it refers to 'the oath of athletes' (*ibid.*).

<sup>168</sup> In this passage, as the following lines also show, a change through time is noted by Pausanias, but it concerns only the order in which sacrifices were offered.

<sup>169</sup> With the exception of Cos, where sacrifices related to weddings were required by the state: Segré, *ED* 89, vv. 1–2, dated by Segré in the 1st c. BC, where a sacrifice is officially required from those married in the shrine of Nike.

sacrifices in his description of the cults at Plataia (*Aristides* 20.6): in every *agora*, he says, there is an altar of Artemis Eukleia and a statue in her honour, where brides and bridegrooms (mentioned in this order!) offer sacrifices before marriage.<sup>170</sup> It seems that such a marital sacrifice could be accompanied by symbolic gestures, as in the case of the marital sacrifice to Hera: the couple used to drop the gall bladder of the victim from the altar. This meant the expulsion of bitterness or anger from the marriage (Plut. *Mor.* 141E–F).

A Greek wedding was not only preceded by, but also consisted in, a sacrificial offering. In this case, sacrifice would be offered in the framework of a ceremony, a sort of a party in which a number of friends participated; the god who was offered the sacrifice was also regarded as being present and well disposed at the event (Plut. *Amatorius* 771D–E).

Sacrifice could also be offered by women before their second marriage, or even by the mothers of the future brides. The verbs used by Pausanias in these cases (*καθέστηκεν, νενομίκασι*) characteristically allude to a degree of social obligation:

Paus. *Corinth*, XXXIV.12

App. II (26)

There is also another temple of Aphrodite. Among the honours paid her by the Hermionians is this custom: maidens, and widows about to remarry, all sacrifice to her before wedding. (Loeb tr.)

Paus. *Laconia*, XIII.9

App. II (27)

An old wooden image they call that of Aphrodite Hera. A mother is wont to sacrifice to the goddess when a daughter is married. (Loeb tr.)

The joy at the birth of a child was accompanied by sacrificial offerings, as Plutarch indicates when talking about the love of parents for their children (*Moralia* 497A).<sup>171</sup>

<sup>170</sup> βωμὸς γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ ἄγαλμα κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀγορὰν ἴδρυται, καὶ προθύουσιν αἱ τε γαμούμεναι καὶ οἱ γαμοῦντες (*Aristides* 20.6). See also Paus. *Attica*, XLIII.4, where girls are said to offer *choai* and hair to Iphinoe's tomb before their wedding. In a non-Plutarchan essay contained in the *Moralia*, the so-called *Amatoriae narrationes*, there is also evidence for the *προτέλεια* offered by girls before their wedding (772B–C).

<sup>171</sup> γελοῖον γάρ, εἴ τις οἴεται τοὺς πλουσίους θύειν καὶ χαίρειν γενομένων αὐτοῖς τέκνων, ὅτι τοὺς θρέψοντας ἔξουσι καὶ τοὺς θάψοντας.

Sacrifice could be a *rite de passage*, when a boy reached the age of adulthood:

Paus. *Laconia*, XIV.6

App. II (28)

(you see) also an old image of Heracles, to whom sacrifice is paid by the *Sphaereis*. These are those who are just passing from youth to manhood. (Loeb tr.)

Nocturnal sacrifices resembling the type of *σφάγια* (see section A1) were also customarily offered by the *epheboi* in the Phoebaeum in Sparta (notice the verb *καθεστήκασιν* used to denote the obligation):

Paus. *Laconia*, XIV.9

App. II (29)

Here each company of youths sacrifices a puppy to Enyalios, holding that the most valiant of tame animals is an acceptable victim to the most valiant of the gods . . . Both the sacrifice of the Colophonians and that of the youths at Sparta are appointed to take place at night. (Loeb tr.)<sup>172</sup>

Finally, conventional sacrifices were not only connected to the birth–marriage–death cycle of life, but also to crucial moments in life. Sacrifices of this kind were offered, for instance, by those acquitted in the Areopagus.<sup>173</sup>

So far we have examined cases where political or social convention obliged the worshipper to offer a sacrifice. But along with these, there are cases where the worshipper himself or herself felt the need to offer a sacrifice, in an attempt to approach the gods after a personal crisis.

In some of the *Lives* of Plutarch, sacrifice is connected to the decisive moment before death. Even if earlier than the period under study, the fact that the following evidence is cited by Plutarch means that he expected his readers to find common elements between his narration and their experiences: Lycurgus offered a sacrifice to the Delphic god as an act of piety before his voluntary death (*Lycurgus* 29.4). Similarly, Themistocles offered a sacrifice before his suicide. Unlike Lycurgus, Themistocles must have given a sacrificial feast before his death (*τὸν φίλους δεξιωσάμενος*, *Themistocles* 31.5).

<sup>172</sup> See also Paus. *Laconia*, XX.2: sacrifice by the *epeheboi* to Enyalios (no description); XX.8: sacrifice by the *epeheboi* before a contest (no description).

<sup>173</sup> Paus. *Attica*, XXVIII.6.

A touching example of a crisis in interpersonal relations is presented in the following example, where Plutarch's mother felt the need to offer a sacrifice to Eros after a parental dispute:

Plutarch, *Moralia* 749B

Ὁ γὰρ πατήρ, ἐπεὶ πάλαι, πρὶν ἡμᾶς γενέσθαι, τὴν μητέρα νεωστὶ κεκομισμένος ἐκ τῆς γενομένης τοῖς γονεῦσιν αὐτῶν διαφορᾶς καὶ στάσεως ἀφίκετο τῷ Ἐρωτι θύσων, ἐπὶ τὴν ἑορτὴν ἤγε τὴν μητέρα· καὶ γὰρ ἦν ἐκείνης ἡ εὐχὴ καὶ ἡ θυσία.

A long time ago, before I was born, when my father had only recently married my mother, he rescued her from a dispute that had broken out between their parents and was so hotly contested that my father came here to sacrifice to Eros and brought my mother to the festival; in fact she herself was to make the prayer and the sacrifice. (Loeb tr.)

Here, the sacrifice is not imposed upon the woman because of any social custom or rule, but is a personal necessity.

The examples above are particularly indicative of two things: first, the influence that the society of the city or the village could exert on an individual; thus, for instance, a bride's absence from the local shrine, where she was supposed to offer a sacrifice with her friends, would have immediately been noticed and condemned. Second, the problems which could potentially arise in the minds of some Gentile Christian converts, when the latter, having been used to express their (pagan) religious needs by means of a sacrifice, would have difficulty in being accustomed to new ways of (Christian) religious expression.

Potentially, then, non-compliance with local cults or with someone's old religious practices could constitute the ground for disputes between pagan and Christian members of the pagan community, or the reason for cultic puzzles within early groups of Gentile converts to Christianity.

A few comments are needed to sum up the evidence considered in this section (iv). J. B. Rives, studying the importance of the edict of Decius on sacrifice,<sup>174</sup> makes the following remark:

The Greek tradition tended to involve a higher<sup>175</sup> level of participation on the part of its citizens, but more as representatives of the citizen body than as individuals; groups representing various population groups were particularly

<sup>174</sup> Rives (1999); the quotation is from pp. 145–6.

<sup>175</sup> (sc.) 'than in the Roman context'.



common in religious processions. But although the mass of citizens often took part in civic festivals, cult regulations generally neither stipulate nor even mention their participation. In both the Greek and the Roman traditions, then, public religion was primarily a collective phenomenon, in which the participation of individual citizens was traditional but not essential.

In the light of the evidence examined, which, except for Lepidus' decree, concerns the Greek world, it seems that Rives' point is not entirely valid. The Coan inscription in particular seems to undermine his position, because it is precisely an example of a state imposing a certain cultic act, possibly for reasons of unification (the two Lycian inscriptions seem rather more concerned with financial issues). Furthermore, one should not think that traditional cult was not marked by obligation; it comprised a sort of social expectation or personal need for participation, which ended up being felt as a duty. So, the points made in the passage from Rives' article need some modification:

- (a) 'Participation of groups' is a notion which can easily be used by the historian; one should not forget, however, that a group consists of smaller units, and that these units are defined by internal relations between individuals. Thus, for instance, the neighbourhoods of a Greek city would participate in the city festival as groups, but, in each neighbourhood, the participation or not of a family<sup>176</sup> in the feast would be quite a noteworthy issue for discussion. So, to the historian, the participants in a cult might look like a 'mass' of citizens, but in fact, the 'mass' itself consisted of mutually related individuals.
- (b) Cult regulations do mention the participation of individuals, and make it obligatory by the imposition of fines, and even the

<sup>176</sup> I use the term 'family' to designate both 'individual' and 'household'; Rives (1999) uses the term 'individual' to cover both (p. 145, n. 59).

<sup>177</sup> For a further example of obligatory participation, this time concerning the procession, see LSS 61 (donation in Aigiale), vv. 45–9: *πομπευέτωσαν δὲ τὸν βοῦν ἐκ τοῦ πρυτανείου [οἱ] πρυτ[άνει]ς καὶ [ὁ] γυμνασίαρχος [καὶ] οἱ ἔφηβοι, ἀκολουθείτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ νεώτεροι πάντες, εἰ δὲ μὴ, τοὺς μὴ ἀκολουθοῦντας ἐπαναγκ[α]ζέτω [ὁ] γυμ[να]σίαρχος τρόπῳ ὅτῳ ἂν δύνη[τ]αι* (One does not need a lot of imagination to think of possible ways in which children would be called to discipline!)

<sup>178</sup> Commenting on the Roman context, Rives (1999) says: '... while many factors encouraged popular involvement, nothing suggests that it was mandatory' (p. 145).

publication of the deviants' names.<sup>177</sup> The same could possibly have been the case in the Roman context (Lepidus' order).<sup>178</sup>

- (c) 'Traditional but not essential' are two terms not mutually exclusive. Individual participation in public religion was essential. First, because 'traditional' implies the notion of expectations as to what was normal. And these expectations generate a sort of obligation. Second, and more importantly, the smallest unit of the group, namely the individual, would give a 'traditional' form of expression to a personal need, by offering a sacrifice. So this was a further sort of obligation, not imposed by the city upon an individual, but by the conscience of an individual upon himself/herself.

In fact, our last example, concerning Plutarch's mother, makes obvious that, what might seem a mere group of worshippers to the modern researcher was in fact a polymorphous assemblage consisting of people having different needs and reasons to participate in a festival. We should keep this in mind when studying the notion of 'collective' in Greek religion; participation in a public Greek ritual could acquire a personal character, since some people might have defined their participation in festivals on the basis of their personal needs and not at all on the basis of their relation to a city. Even if this woman would externally have seemed to participate in the festival of the god Eros just to share the joy of the feast, in fact she knew that she had joined the group of participants for a personal reason, an internal demand which could not be obvious to fellow worshippers—let alone the modern student of Greek religion, if it were not for Plutarch. The case of Plutarch's mother could be representative of an important number of cases, since we know that many worshippers would come from afar only to participate in a religious festival of a city which was not their own (see n. 90).

Compliance or non-compliance with Greek sacrificial rules, customs, or personal habits must have been among the most prominent

<sup>179</sup> This is also pointed out by Mitchell (1993), vol. 1, mainly with reference to the dominating ruler cult: 'it was not a change of heart that might win a Christian convert back to paganism, but the overwhelming pressure to conform imposed by the institutions of his city and the activities of his neighbours' (p. 10). One could add: *and also imposed by his tendency to worship in the way he had been used to do for years.*

instances of the importance which individual religious choices had for the city.<sup>179</sup> Apart from the large-scale prosecutions taking place during local or general persecutions of Christians, specific cases of Christian non-compliance, either with community rules or with personal pagan 'ancient habits', are not attested. The case of the Corinthians implied in the ICor. concerned Christian conformity with the sacrificial feasts in honour of pagan gods, and not a puzzle about whether a sacrificial feast could take place within the Christian community. Even so, I suggest that it is entirely valid for historians to attempt to imagine the significance of individual compliance or differentiation in the framework of a local pagan community, or within a group of Gentile converts to Christianity.

## CONCLUSION

Bearing in mind the model analysed in section 2 of Chapter 1, we could say that the *vertical* line of the Greek sacrificial system, the one which comprises all sorts of wishes and beliefs which the offerers of sacrifice have in relation to the recipient of sacrifice, remained unchanged. The reason for this is stated in the passage from Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 7.70.3), where the author attributes the religious conservatism of the Greeks to their fear of divine wrath. So, since the vertical line of Greek sacrificial system remained the same, it is natural to expect nothing more than local variations in the *horizontal* line. Indeed, this chapter proves this to be the case by a detailed study of the realms of reality where animal sacrifice played a role: that is, historical conscience, local religious identity, the relation of cities and citizens, and social relations within the community.

More specifically, this chapter has been structured with two main intentions: to show that animal sacrifice was a vital factor of Greek religious life in the Late Hellenistic and Imperial period (sections B.i–iii); and to highlight specific instances where animal sacrifice was an act required of the Greek pagan, or felt as a necessity by him/her (section B.iv). The one intention has served as a counter-argument to Nilsson, while the other has made more manifest to the reader the potential problems that the encounter of pagans and Christians would cause.

In the frame of this chapter's first intention, we have seen that evidence for animal sacrifice—both literary and epigraphic—abounds in the second century AD, but it would be misleading to suppose that animal sacrifice was not vivid in previous periods. Apart from the text of Pausanias, even in the earlier texts of Diodorus and Plutarch there is an overall presumption of continuity, both in general and in detail, and the few instances where change is specifically referred to are quite marginal. These authors present several kinds of sacrifices, which took place in the mythical or historical past, either by not making comments on the ritual mode used in each case, or by explicitly witnessing their continuous performance up to their own times.

The text of Pausanias is the most detailed guide to animal sacrifice for our period. Yet, this author is mainly referred to in modern studies as an important representative of second-century archaism. Does, then, this archaism cover cases of revival of animal sacrifice in some places around Greece? Though we cannot exclude the notion of cultic revival altogether, it is necessary to make the following comments regarding the continuity of the practice of animal sacrifice in our period of study:

- (a) In the countryside of mainland Greece animal sacrifice was a crucially differentiating factor of religious identity, as the text of Pausanias shows.<sup>180</sup> It is more reasonable to consider the many local varieties, not as a programmed nostalgic return to the past,<sup>181</sup> but as resulting from the need of inhabitants to preserve their religious identity.
- (b) Since Pausanias does not hesitate to point out a change in cult, as the example from Roman Corinth shows (*Corinth*, III.6–7), it would be easy for him to point out a renaissance in local cults, if that were the case. Pausanias rather affirmed the already existent identity of mainland Greece by stressing local religious characteristics.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>180</sup> The factor of identity has very often been stressed in recent scholarship, either from the point of view of monumental writing or from the religious point of view. On the first, see Woolf (1996), 32. On the second, see Alcock (1993), 216; Lane Fox (1986), 91–2. Especially on Pausanias' interest in Greek identity, see Arafat (1996), 10.

<sup>181</sup> Nor could one consider the local varieties as a reaction to decline. Nilsson did so ((1951<sup>2</sup>), 66). See n. 75 above.

<sup>182</sup> See the quotation from Arafat (1996) in n. 33 above.

- (c) Nor did the several sacrificial cults described by Pausanias constitute empty remnants of the traditional religion in the countryside. Nowhere does Pausanias present them as the last representatives of a dying religious tradition. The reader is rather to see these cults as genuine samples of a still-living Greek religion, which was omnipresent, *even* in the countryside.

In sum, 'lists' of cults might have resulted from an archaism fostered by Hadrian, but the cults themselves were not 'archaic'. The increased religious interest of Pausanias was symptomatic of a similarly increased interest in matters religious on the part of second-century scholars, and not on the part of worshippers. Despite the decrease in the population of mainland Greece detected by archaeology, Greek sacrificial cult remained alive, even if it was not always splendid.<sup>183</sup> In other words, lack of material means cannot be regarded as having brought about a change in the nature of Greek cult.

Having proved that, despite their chronological dispersion, literary texts of our period demonstrate an implicit sense of continuity, I have used the second-century evidence from Pausanias in order to prove that animal sacrifice continued to be performed by Greeks during the whole period of this study, even in the smallest communities, even outside the lavish context of civic euergetism. Also, having accepted Pausanias as a meticulous witness to the still-thriving Greek cults, I have used his text as complementary to the scanty epigraphic examples of 'sacred laws' from this period; in fact, I have noted similarities between the two.

It is true that 'sacred laws' (inscriptions exclusively dealing with religious rules) are few in this period, especially if we take into account the augmentation in inscriptions noticed in the first and second centuries AD—the so-called 'epigraphic habit'. Leaving aside the inherent problems which the term 'epigraphic habit' involves,<sup>184</sup> I have shown the term 'sacred law' in itself to be relative, since evidence for animal sacrifice can be equally well contained in literary

<sup>183</sup> See Alcock (1993). She has shown that the decrease in rural population in mainland Greece in the early Imperial period is partly confirmed by the evidence, but this does not mean that the level of religious activity in the countryside was lower.

<sup>184</sup> This failure has already been noted by scholars. See G. Woolf's attempt at a criticism of the notion 'epigraphic habit', in Woolf (1996), 24, 30, 38.

passages resembling 'sacred laws', and in inscriptions of honorific decrees and donations, that is, types of texts which are not usually classified as 'sacred laws'. Especially in the case of decrees and donations, it is indeed surprising to see that two different genres of epigraphic record, namely rules on animal sacrifice, and representations of careers showing the financial and social prominence of Roman citizens, were regarded by Greeks as subjects equally worth recording. Of course, there are cases, such as that of Oenoanda, where the two kinds of record coexist in a particularly exuberant way: individuals and sacrificial animals are mentioned in the same document, and people and cities acquire prestige because of their conducting processions of animals. It is the insistence on the epigraphic attestation of sacrificial cult which we should rather stress, and not the dwindling number of inscriptions exclusively dealing with sacrificial laws (which, in the end, might also be attributed to the variety of techniques in monumentalization).

The vitality of Greek religion was partly owed to individual initiatives. Thus cities could honour individuals by animal sacrifices or the provision of sacrificial victims. Individuals could subsidize civic cults and festivals, or bequeath money for the performance of a new ritual. Animal sacrifice was of course the core of this two-way process, which rendered the Greek city the centre of a rich cultic life. Against the view of Nilsson, who saw the Empire as having devoured the Greek city, our epigraphic evidence shows that the Greek cities continued to be living historical entities in the Roman Empire, and civic religion to be vigorous. In fact, a point of importance which has arisen in our study is the spatial interaction between the city and the *gymnasion*: because of its structure as an educational centre, the *gymnasion* contributed to the revitalization of the whole religious life of the city.

In view of all the above, any suggestion of decline in Greek religious life in this period (cf. Nilsson's thesis) is wrongly based on the scantiness of epigraphic and literary evidence before the second century AD.

From within the vitality and variety presented, and in the frame of the second intention of this chapter, I have focused on the extreme case of non-compliance with the cults of the city or with someone's customary need for religious expression, both requiring the offering of a sacrifice. The civic obligation could either take the form of an

obligation explicitly legislated for by a Greek city, or an expectation traditionally expected to be fulfilled in the framework of a local community. The personal need could be felt as a duty to communicate with god after a crisis in life.

Not having evidence for the possible problems stemming from non-compliance, here I have only hinted at them, by collecting as many specific cases as possible: for instance, in the case of civic or just social obligations for sacrifice, a bride's absence from a customary sacrificial celebration before the wedding would become conspicuous and, potentially, subject to condemnation. In the case of a personal need for approaching the divine, a Gentile convert to Christianity, who had been previously used to offer sacrifices to his pagan gods, would feel somehow puzzled before worshipping his new—Christian—god. The puzzle as to what form the approach to god the Christian should take would create problems within groups of Gentile converts.

In Greek religion animal sacrifice did not cease to be the means of religious expression even in places far away from the cities, where archaism and money could not have played such an important role. The animal remained a unit of exchange between city and individual. This, along with the fact that animal sacrifice had priority over every other type of sacrifice, demonstrates that the animal was the main sign in the codes of the *horizontal* line, that is, in the several realms of man's practical reality. We ought to keep this in mind when approaching other Mediterranean cults. That is why, before passing on to the preaching of the Christian apologists against sacrifices, it will be useful to study animal sacrifice in the context of another Mediterranean religion in the same period, namely late Second Temple Judaism, in order to see whether the animal had the same, or a similar, place in the horizontal line of the Jewish sacrificial system.

## APPENDIX I

Plutarch, *Aristides* 19.7–21.5

(19).7.—*Ταύτην τὴν μάχην ἐμαχέσαντο τῇ τετράδι τοῦ Βοηδρομιῶνος ἰσταμένου κατ' Ἀθηναίους, κατὰ δὲ Βοιωτοὺς τετράδι τοῦ Πανέμου φθίνοντος, ἧ καὶ νῦν ἔτι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς ἀθροίζεται συνέδριον καὶ θύουσι τῷ ἐλευθερίῳ Διὶ Πλαταιεῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς νίκης. τὴν δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνωμαλίαν οὐ θαυμαστόν, ὅπου καὶ νῦν διηκριβωμένων τῶν ἐν ἀστρολογίᾳ μᾶλλον ἄλλην ἄλλοι μηνὸς ἀρχὴν καὶ τελευτὴν ἄγουσιν.*

20.1. Ἐκ τούτου τῶν Ἀθηναίων τὸ ἀριστεῖον οὐ παραδιδόντων τοῖς Σπαρτιάταις οὐδὲ τρόπαιον ἰσάνασι συγχωρούντων ἐκείνοις, παρ' οὐδὲν ἂν ἦλθεν ἀπολέσθαι τὰ πράγματα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις διαστάντων, εἰ μὴ πολλὰ παρηγορῶν καὶ διδάσκων τοὺς συστρατήγους ὁ Ἀριστείδης, μάλιστα δὲ Λεωκράτη καὶ Μυρωνίδην, ἔσχε καὶ συνέπεισε τὴν κρίσιν ἐφέιναι τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν. 2. ἐνταῦθα βουλευομένων τῶν Ἑλλήνων Θεογεΐτων μὲν ὁ Μεγαρεὺς εἶπεν, ὡς ἐτέρᾳ πόλει δοτέον εἶη τὸ ἀριστεῖον, εἰ μὴ βούλονται συνταράξαι πόλεμον ἐμφύλιον· ἐπὶ τούτῳ δ' ἀναστὰς Κλεόκριτος ὁ Κορίνθιος δόξαν μὲν παρέσχεν ὡς Κορινθίοις αἰτήσων τὸ ἀριστεῖον· ἦν γὰρ ἐν ἀξιώματι μεγίστῳ μετὰ τὴν Σπάρτην καὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἡ Κόρινθος· εἶπε δὲ πᾶσιν ἀρέσαντα καὶ θαυμαστὸν λόγον ὑπὲρ Πλαταιέων, καὶ συνεβούλευσε τὴν φιλονεικίαν ἀνελεῖν ἐκείνοις τὸ ἀριστεῖον ἀποδόντας, οἷς οὐδετέρους τιμωμένοις ἄχθεσθαι. 3. ῥηθέντων δὲ τούτων πρῶτος μὲν Ἀριστείδης συνεχώρησεν ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, ἔπειτα Πausanίας ὑπὲρ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων. οὕτω δὲ διαλλαγέντες ἐξείλον ὀγδοήκοντα τάλαντα τοῖς Πλαταιεῦσιν, ἀφ' ὧν τὸ τῆς Ἀθηναίων ἀνωκοδόμησαν ἱερὸν καὶ τὸ ἔδος ἔστησαν καὶ γραφαῖς τὸν νεῶν διεκόσμησαν, αἷ μέχρι νῦν ἀκμάζουσαι διαμένουσιν, ἔστησαν δὲ τρόπαιον ἰδίᾳ μὲν Λακεδαιμόνιοι, χωρὶς δ' Ἀθηναῖοι. 4. Περὶ δὲ θυσίας ἐρομένοις αὐτοῖς ἀνεῖλεν ὁ Πύθιος Διὸς ἐλευθερίου βωμὸν ἰδρύσασθαι, θῦσαι δὲ μὴ πρότερον ἢ τὸ κατὰ τὴν χώραν πῦρ ἀποσβέσαντας ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων μεμιασμένον ἐναύσασθαι καθαρὸν ἐκ Δελφῶν ἀπὸ τῆς κοινῆς ἐστίας. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄρχοντες τῶν Ἑλλήνων περιόντες εὐθὺς ἠνάγκαζον ἀποσβεννύναι τὰ πυρὰ πάντα τοὺς χρωμένους, ἐκ δὲ Πλαταιέων Εὐχίδας ὑποσχόμενος ὡς ἐνδέχεται τάχιστα κομιεῖν τὸ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πῦρ ἦκεν εἰς Δελφούς. 5. ἀγνίσας δὲ τὸ σῶμα καὶ περιρρανάμενος ἐστεφανώσατο δάφνη· καὶ λαβὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ τὸ πῦρ δρόμῳ πάλιν εἰς τὰς Πλαταιαῖς ἐχώρει καὶ πρὸ ἡλίου δυσμῶν ἐπανῆλθε τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας χιλίουσιν σταδίοις κατανύσας. ἀσπασάμενος δὲ τοὺς πολίτας καὶ τὸ πῦρ παραδούς εὐθὺς ἔπεσε καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν ἐξέπνευσε. ἀγάμενοι δ' αὐτὸν οἱ Πλαταιεῖς ἔθαψαν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς Εὐκλείας Ἀρτέμιδος, ἐπιγράψαντες τόδε τὸ τετράμετρον.



*Εὐχίδας Πυθῶδε θρέξας ἦλθε τᾷδ' αὐθημερόν.*

6. Τὴν δ' Εὐκλείαν οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ καὶ καλοῦσι καὶ νομίζουσιν Ἄρτεμιν, ἔνιοι δέ φασιν Ἡρακλέους μὲν θυγατέρα καὶ Μυρτοῦς γενέσθαι, τῆς Μεινοτίου μὲν θυγατρὸς, Πατρόκλου δ' ἀδελφῆς, τελευτήσασαν δὲ παρθένον ἔχειν παρά τε Βοιωτοῖς καὶ Λοκροῖς τιμάς. βωμὸς γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ ἄγαλμα παρά πάσαν ἀγορὰν ἴδρυται, καὶ προθύουσιν αἷ τε γαμοῦμεναι καὶ οἱ γαμοῦντες.

21.1. Ἐκ τούτου γενομένης ἐκκλησίας κοινῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἔγραψεν Ἀριστείδης ψήφισμα συνίεναι μὲν εἰς Πλαταιὰς καθ' ἕκαστον ἑνιαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος προβούλους καὶ θεωροὺς, ἄγεσθαι δὲ πενταετηρικὸν ἀγῶνα τῶν ἐλευθερίων. εἶναι δὲ σύνταξιν Ἑλληνικὴν μυρίας μὲν ἀσπίδας, χιλίους δὲ ἵππους, ναῦς δ' ἕκατον ἐπὶ τὸν πρὸς βαρβάρους πόλεμον, Πλαταιεῖς δ' ἀσύλους καὶ ἱεροὺς ἀφείσθαι τῷ θεῷ θύοντας ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος. 2. Κυρωθέντων δὲ τούτων οἱ Πλαταιεῖς ὑπέδεξαντο τοῖς πεσοῦσι καὶ κειμένοις αὐτόθι τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐναγίζεω καθ' ἕκαστον ἑνιαυτόν. καὶ τοῦτο μέχρι νῦν δρῶσι τόνδε τὸν τρόπον· τοῦ Μαιμακτηριῶνος μηνός, ὅς ἐστι παρὰ Βοιωτοῖς Ἀλαλκομένιος, τῇ ἕκτῃ ἐπὶ δέκα πέμπουσι πομπήν, ἧς προηγείται μὲν ἅμ' ἡμέρα σαλπικτῆς ἐγκελευόμενος τὸ πολεμικόν, 3. ἔπονται δ' ἅμαξαι μυρρίνης μεστὰι καὶ στεφανωμάτων καὶ μέλας ταῦρος καὶ χοὰς οἴνου καὶ γάλακτος ἐν ἀμφορεύσιν ἐλαίου τε καὶ μύρου κρωσσοὺς νεανίσκοι κομίζοντες ἐλεύθεροι· δούλω γὰρ οὐδενὸς ἕξεστι τῶν περὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἐκείνην προσάψασθαι διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας. 4. ἐπὶ πάσι δὲ τῶν Πλαταιέων ὁ ἄρχων, ᾧ τὸν ἄλλον χρόνον οὔτε σιδήρου θιγεῖν ἕξεστιν οὐθ' ἑτέραν ἐσθῆτα πλὴν λευκῆς ἀναλαβεῖν, τότε χιτῶνα φοινικοῦν ἐνδεδυκὼς ἀράμενός τε ὑδρίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ γραμματοφυλακίου ξιφῆρης ἐπὶ τοὺς τάφους προάγει διὰ μέσης τῆς πόλεως. 5. εἶτα λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπὸ τῆς κρήνης αὐτὸς ἀπολούει τε τὰς στήλας καὶ μύρω χρίει, καὶ τὸν ταῦρον εἰς τὴν πυρὰν σφάξας καὶ κατευξάμενος Διὶ καὶ Ἐρμῇ χθονίω παρακαλεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀποθανόντας ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον καὶ τὴν αἰμοκουρίαν. ἔπειτα κρατήρα κεράσας οἴνου καὶ χεάμενος ἐπιλέγει· «Προπίνω τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀποθανούσι.» ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαφυλάττουσιν οἱ Πλαταιεῖς (sic).

In the common assembly of the Greeks after the battle at Plataia, described by Plutarch in *Aristides* 21.1, Aristides proposed a decree that every year representatives from all over Greece should gather at Plataia, and that every five years the *agon* of the Eleutheria should be celebrated there; also that a force should be levied against the Persians, and that the Plataians should be left inviolable and holy so that they could sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios on behalf of Greece (τῷ θεῷ θύοντας ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος). Many scholars, without noticing the different terms used by Plutarch in 21.1 and 21.2 (θύοντας and ἐναγίζεω, respectively), have supposed that the description of sacrifice in 21.5 concerns one sacrifice, that

referred to by Aristides in 21.1, and, presumably, celebrated during the Eleutheria.<sup>1</sup> But it is quite obvious that the name ‘Eleutherios’ is absent from Plutarch’s description of the ritual.

The problem is solved if one looks carefully at *Aristides* 19.7: there, it is said that the battle at Plataia took place on the fourth of the month Boedromion, *on which* the Greeks still (καὶ νῦν ἔτι) gather at Plataia in order to celebrate the sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios offered by the Plataians for the victory. However, the ritual described in *Arist.* 21.5 is said to have taken place every year on the sixteenth of the month Maimakterion.

In consequence of all this, I would suggest that the ritual described in *Arist.* 21.5 is that of the offerings to the dead, and is different from the sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios referred to in 21.1. The prayer to Zeus made by the archon during his offerings to the dead should not confuse us, because the archon also summons Hermes Chthonios. If this suggestion is correct, it means that the annual offerings to the dead were a further initiative taken by the Plataians, and that this custom existed alongside the sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios proposed by Aristides and ratified by the Greeks. The meaning of the first sentence in *Arist.* 21.2 would be: ‘after the ratification of the proposal of Aristides, the Plataians took the further initiative to make annual offerings to the dead.’ Thus, in Plutarch’s time, *two* annual festivals survived: that of Zeus Eleutherios on the fourth of Boedromion, and that of the offerings to the dead of Plataia on the sixteenth of Maimakterion.

The arguments in favour of the existence of two sacrificial rites are both internal and external: Plutarch uses the words *θύω/θυσία* when he refers to the sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios (19.7, 20.4, 21.1), and the word *ἐναγίζειν* when he refers to the offerings to the dead (21.2). As we have seen in section Bi of Chapter 2, Plutarch is quite cautious with regard to the sacrificial terms he uses: he almost always uses *ἐναγίζειν* to refer to funeral offerings (e.g. in the case of Pyrrhus’ son, *Pyrr.* 23.1).

The gloomy character of the *ἐναγισμός* is obvious in the description given by Plutarch: the terms used (*σφάξας, αἰμοκουρία*), the colour of the victim (black), and the deity involved (Hermes Chthonios), all allude to a ritual with ‘chthonian’ characteristics.<sup>2</sup> We do not know whether a sacrificial meal for the participants followed.

The succession of events narrated by Plutarch fits the argument for the existence of two sacrifices. Thus, in *Arist.* 20 Plutarch describes the procedure

<sup>1</sup> The confusion is evident, for instance, in the description by Burkert (1983), 56–7, who treats ch. 21 in *Aristides* as a whole; his cross reference to the text of Pausanias about the altar of Zeus Eleutherios also proves that he considers the description in Plutarch as related to the cult of Zeus Eleutherios.

<sup>2</sup> The term is used in the sense analysed by Scullion (1994), but see also pp. 35–6 above for further characteristics of ‘chthonian’ sacrifices.

by which the altar to Zeus was consecrated after the instructions given by the Delphic oracle. The proposal by Aristides at the beginning of *Arist.* 21 comes as a conclusion to all this procedure: it would be appropriate to celebrate and consolidate the consecration of the new altar by an annual panhellenic festival comprising a *θυσία*, and by a penteteric *agon*. However, the Plataians wanted to take a further step—possibly for reasons of prestige—by caring for the dead themselves (*Arist.* 21.2): the Plataians then undertook to make offerings to those who fell in battle (*ἐναγίζειν*).

The internal arguments above might require a rearrangement of chapters. Thus the proposal of Aristides (21.1) should possibly go at the end of ch. 20, so that the description of the ritual following it is left unaffected by any allusion to the sacrifice to Zeus and becomes the beginning of ch. 21.

The external arguments cannot be very helpful, but still they do not contradict our interpretation: Pausanias (*Boeotia*, II.5) tells us that there was a common tomb for the Greeks who fell at Plataia, except for the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians, who had separate ones. He mentions an altar of Zeus Eleutherios, something else (*lacunae* in the text) made of bronze, and the fact that the altar of Zeus and his statue were made of white marble. In II.6 he gives brief information about the *agon* of the Eleutheria.

In Thucydides (3.58.4) we have the mentioning of clothes, seasonal fruit, and first-fruits being offered to the dead. Surprisingly, no reference to the ritual killing of a bull is made. In fact, in Thucydides the account of the ritual is put in the mouth of a Plataian, who uses the first person plural to refer to it. As the Plataian is addressing the Spartans, he is using the ritual to argue that the Plataians are benefactors of the Spartans. This particular character of the passage in Thucydides corroborates my suggestion that the offerings to the dead of Plataia were a purely Plataian initiative.<sup>3</sup>

I would venture to suggest that the Plataians of the Persian War period tried to exploit ritually their victorious participation in the war so that they would have a strong political argument in the future.

Plutarch's narrative about the Plataians thus proves to be a very valuable source of information about the cultic life of his own time. According to Plutarch, two distinct rituals of animal sacrifice were kept unchanged from the fifth century BC down to the second century AD. They were both connected with the memory of the glorious battle at Plataia, and it is evident that their celebration pertained to issues of identity, that of Greece in general, and that of Plataians in particular.

<sup>3</sup> The use of first person plural in Thucydides could suggest that the rite was performed without the participation of other Greeks. Nor does Plutarch's narrative of the funerary ritual involve or hint at the presence of other Greeks apart from the Plataians.

## APPENDIX II

- (1) Plutarch, *Aristides* 21.5  
... τὸν ταῦρον εἰς τὴν πυρὰν σφάξας καὶ κατευξάμενος Διὶ καὶ Ἑρμῇ χθονίῳ παρακαλεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀποθανόντας ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον καὶ τὴν αἰμοκουρίαν. ἔπειτα κρατῆρα κεράσας οἴνου καὶ χεάμενος ἐπιλέγει. “Προπίνω τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀποθανούσι.” ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαφυλάττουσιν οἱ Πλαταιεῖς (sic).
- (2) Plutarch, *Moralia* 527D  
Ἡ πάτριος τῶν Διονυσίων ἑορτὴ τὸ παλαιὸν ἐπέμπετο δημοτικῶς καὶ ἰλαρῶς· ἀμφορεὺς οἴνου καὶ κληματίς, εἶτα τράγον τις εἰλκεν, ἄλλος ἰσχάδων ἄρριχον ἠκολούθει κομίζων, ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ ὁ φαλλός. ἀλλὰ νῦν ταῦτα παροράται καὶ ἠφάνισται χρυσωμάτων παραφερομένων καὶ ἱματίων πολυτελῶν καὶ ζευγῶν ἐλαυνομένων καὶ προσωπέων οὕτω τὰ ἀναγκαῖα τοῦ πλούτου καὶ χρήσιμα τοῖς ἀχρήστοις κατακέχωσται καὶ τοῖς περιττοῖς.
- (3) Plutarch, *Aratus* 53.4–5  
τῆς μὲν οὖν προτέρας [(sc. θυσίας)] ὁ τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Σωτήρος κατήρχετο θυηπόλος, τῆς δὲ δευτέρας ὁ τοῦ Ἀράτου, στρόφιον οὐχ ὀλόλευκον, ἀλλὰ μεσοπόρφυρον ἔχων, μέλη δὲ ἤδεδτο πρὸς κιθάραν ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνιτῶν, καὶ συνεπόμευεν ὁ γυμνασίαρχος ἠγούμενος τῶν τε παίδων καὶ τῶν ἐφήβων, εἶτα ἐφείπετο ἡ βουλή στεφανηφοροῦσα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν ὁ βουλόμενος. ὦν ἔτι δείγματα μικρὰ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξοσιούμεοι διαφυλάττουσιν· αἱ δὲ πλείσται τῶν τιμῶν ὑπὸ χρόνου καὶ πραγμάτων ἄλλων ἐκλελοίπασιν.
- (4) Pausanias, *Corinth*, III.7  
Κορίνθου δὲ ἀναστάτου γενομένης ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Κορινθίων τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀπολομένων, οὐκέτι ἐκείναι καθεστήκασιν αὐτοῖς αἱ θυσίαι παρὰ τῶν ἐποίκων οὐδὲ ἀποκείρονται σφισιν οἱ παῖδες οὐδὲ μέλαιναν φοροῦσιν ἐσθήτα.
- (5) LGS 83, vv. 18–35  
δεδοχθαι τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ, ὅταν συντελήται τὸ μαντήιον, πορεύεσθαι τὸν τε ἱερέα τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τὸν εἰρημένον ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τῶν στρατηγῶν καὶ νομοφυλάκων ἀφ’ ἑκατέρας ἀρχῆς ἓνα, καὶ πρύτανιν ἓνα καὶ ταμίαν, καὶ τὸν γραμματέα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸν προφήτην· ἐὰν δέ τις τῶν προγεγραμμένων ἀρρωστῇ ἢ ἐγδημῇ, ἕτερον πεμφάτω καταγραφάτωσαν δὲ οἱ στρατηγοὶ καὶ οἱ νομοφύλακες καὶ ραβδούχους ἐκ τῶν πολιτῶν ἄνδρας τρεῖς (μῆ) νεωτέρους ἑτῶν τριάκοντα, ... ὅταν δὲ παραγένωνται οἱ προειρημένοι ἐπὶ τὸ μαντεῖον καὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἐπιτελέσωσι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια

καὶ καλλιερῆσωσιν, ὁ γραμματεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀποδεξάσθω ἐξ αὐτῆς τὰς ἀπογραφὰς τῶν βουλομένων χρηστηριασθῆναι...

(6) Pausanias, *Attica*, XXXIV.5  
 ...καὶ πρῶτον μὲν καθήρασθαι νομίζουσιν ὅστις ἦλθεν Ἀμφιάρῳ χρῆσόμενος· ἔστι δὲ καθάρισον τῷ θεῷ θύειν, θύουσι δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ πᾶσιν ὅσοις ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῷ βωμῷ τὰ ὀνόματα· προειξεργασμένων δὲ τούτων κριὸν θύσαντες καὶ τὸ δέρμα ὑποστρωσάμενοι καθέδουσιν ἀναμένοντες δῆλωσιν ὀνείρατος.

(7) Pausanias, *Boeotia*, XXXIX.5  
**(the man who goes to consult the oracle of Trophonius)** ... καὶ οἱ καὶ κρέα ἄφθονά ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῶν θυσιῶν, θύει γὰρ δὴ ὁ κατιὼν αὐτῷ τε τῷ Τροφωνίῳ καὶ τοῦ Τροφωνίου τοῖς παισὶ, πρὸς δὲ Ἀπόλλωνι τε καὶ Κρόνῳ καὶ Διὶ ἐπίκλησιν Βασιλεῖ καὶ Ἥρᾳ τε Ἡνιόχῃ καὶ Διήμητρι ἦν ἐπονομάζοντες Εὐρώπην τοῦ Τροφωνίου φασὶν εἶναι τροφόν.

(8) Pausanias, *Corinth*, XXVII.1  
 ...τὰ δὲ θυόμενα, ἦν τέ τις Ἐπιδαυρίων αὐτῶν ἦν τε ξένος ὁ θύων ἦ, καταναλίσκουσιν ἐντὸς τῶν ὄρων...

(9) Pausanias, *Corinth*, XI.7  
 ...θυομένων δὲ τῷ θεῷ (sc. Ἀσκληπιῷ) ταύρου καὶ ἀρνός καὶ υἶος ἐς Ἀθηνᾶς ἱερὸν τὴν Κορωνίδα μετενεγκόντες ἐνταῦθα τιμῶσιν. ὅποσα δὲ τῶν θυομένων καθαγίζουσιν, οὐδὲ ἀποχρᾶ σφισιν ἐκτέμνειν τοὺς μηρούς· χαμαὶ δὲ καίουσι πλὴν τοὺς ὄρνιθας, τούτους δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ.

(10) Pausanias, *Laconia*, XV.9  
 Μόνοις δὲ Ἑλλήνων Λακεδαιμονίοις καθέστηκεν Ἥραν ἐπονομάζειν Αἰγοφάγον καὶ αἶγας τῇ θεῷ θύειν.

(11) Pausanias, *Phocis*, XXXII.12  
 ...θύειν δὲ αὐτῷ (sc. Ἀσκληπιῷ Ἀρχαγέτῃ) τὰ πάντα ὁμοίως νομίζουσι πλὴν αἰγῶν.

(12) Pausanias, *Messenia*, XXXI.9  
 ...Κουρήτων μέγαρον, ἔνθα ζῶα τὰ πάντα ὁμοίως καθαγίζουσιν· ἀρξάμενοι γὰρ ἀπὸ βοῶν τε καὶ αἰγῶν καταβαίνουσιν ἐς τοὺς ὄρνιθας ἀφιέντες ἐς τὴν φλόγα.

(13) Pausanias, *Elis I*, XIII.2–3  
 θύουσι δε αὐτῷ (sc. Πέλοπι) καὶ νῦν ἔτι οἱ κατὰ ἔτος τὰς ἀρχὰς ἔχοντες· τὸ δὲ ἱερεῖόν ἐστι κριὸς μέλας. ἀπὸ ταύτης οὐ γίνεται τῷ μάντει μοῖρα τῆς θυσίας, τράχηλον δὲ μόνον δίδοσθαι τοῦ κριοῦ καθέστηκε τῷ ὀνομαζομένῳ ξυλεῖ. ἔστι δὲ ὁ ξυλεὺς ἐκ τῶν οἰκετῶν τοῦ Διὸς, ἔργον δὲ αὐτῷ πρόσκειται τὰ ἐς τὰς

θυσίας ξύλα τεταγμένου λήμματος καὶ πόλεσι παρέχειν καὶ ἀνδρὶ ιδιώτῃ· τὰ δὲ λεύκης μόνης ξύλα καὶ ἄλλου δένδρου ἐστὶν οὐδενός· ὅς δ' ἂν ἦ αὐτῶν Ἡλείων ἢ ξένων τοῦ θυομένου τῷ Πέλοπι ἱερείου φάγη τῶν κρεῶν, οὐκ ἔστιν οἱ ἐσελθεῖν παρὰ τὸν Δία. τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ Περγάμῃ τῇ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ποταμοῦ Καΐκου πεπόνθασιν οἱ τῷ Τηλέφῳ θύοντες· ἔστι γὰρ δὴ οὐδὲ τούτοις ἀναβῆναι πρὸ λουτροῦ παρὰ τὸν Ἀσκληπιόν.

(14) SIG<sup>3</sup> 734, vv. 5–8  
 ἐπειδὴ Ἀμμώνιος Ἀμμωνίου Ἀθηναῖος ἀνὴρ ἀγα[θὸς ὢν κ]α[ί] διὰ παντὸς πρόνοιαν ποιούμενος τᾶς ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς εὐσεβείας πολλοὺς μὲν καὶ καλοὺς [εἰς τὰ]ς τούτων τιμὰς πλεονάκις διατέθεται λόγους, θέλων δὲ καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων στοιχεῖν αὐτοσαυτῷ[ι πάντα] διώικησε τὰ ποτὶ τὸν θεὸν βουθυτέων τε καὶ μεταδιδοῦς πάντοis τᾶς θυσίας . . .

(15) IStratonikeia 202, vv. 12–18  
 . . . ὑπεδέξαντο δὲ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ἔτου[s] πάντας τοὺς ἀνερχομένους εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, ἀπέδωσαν δὲ τὰ δεῖπνα τοῖς ἀνεένκουσι πᾶσι, ἐχαρίσαντο δὲ τοῖς θύουσι καὶ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ ἱερέως τῶν θυσιῶν ἱερά, . . .

(16) IEphesos 690, vv. 16–28  
 Οἶτος ἰδίῳ ἀναλώματι διὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τὰ ἀγάλματα τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὸν βωμὸν κατεσκεύασεν καὶ τὸ Μουσεῖον ἐκόσμησεν καὶ τῇ βουλῇ καθιέρωσεν, ὥστε κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τῇ θ' ἰστ. μηνὸς Μαμμακτῆρος τῆς θυσίας τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτελουμένης πκδ' βουλευτὰς καὶ ἱερεῖς λαμβάνειν ἀνά (δηνάριον) α', καὶ τὸ εἰς τὴν δημοσίαν δὲ θυσίαν ἀνάλωμα ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων προσκαθιέρωσεν.

(17) IPerge 77, vv. 4–9  
 . . . ἐφ' ᾧ οἱ κατὰ ἔτο[s] αἱρούμενοι κωμάρχαι προνοῶσι[v], ὅπως μισθοῦνται τὰ προδ[η]λο[ύ]με[να], καὶ ἡ ἀπαυτ[ῶν] τὸ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν πρόσσδος χωρῆ εἰς τε θυσίας τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ ἀγορασμὸν οἴνου καὶ ἄ[ρ]των ἰς (sic) τὸ ἀγεσθαί μοι ἡμέραι καὶ ἀγῶνες τὸ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν μηνὶ ἐνάτῳ τρίτῃ εὐχουμένων πάντων τῶν κατοικούντων τὴν κώμην ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἀπομνημονεύεσθ[α]ι ἐμέ τε καὶ Κότῃν Στασίου τὸν ἀδελφόν μου καὶ Κίλλην Μόου τὴν μητέρα μου, . . .

(18) IPerge 78, vv. 1–6  
 [εἰς τὰ δηνάρι]α χεῖλια πεντακόσια τὰ ἀπολειφθέντα ὑπὸ Μεννέου Τειμοθέου Μεννέου εἰς τὸ ἀγορασθῆναι χωρίον θεῶ Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ ἐν τῇ κώμῃ πρὸς τὸ τὴν πρόσσδον αὐτοῦ τὸ καθ' ἔτος (sic) ἀναλοῦσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κωμαρχῶν εἰς τε θυσίας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς εὐωχίαν τῶν κατοικούντων τὴν κώμην ἐνηλικῶν ἐν μηνὶ ἄ' ἐν κ' ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἀπομνημόνευσιν γείνεσθαι τοῦ Μεννέου ἐξεχώρησεν [τῇ κώμῃ]. . . . λ. . . ε. . . Ἀγῆς Τειμοθέου, ἡ ἀδελφὴ καὶ κληρονόμος τοῦ Μεννέου, . . .

(19)

Wörle (1988), vv. 68–89

... Πομπεύσ[ου]σι δὲ διὰ τοῦ θεάτρου καὶ συνθύσουσι ἐν ταῖς τ[ῆς]παν[ηγύ]ρου  
 ἡμέραις, καθὼς ἂν ὁ ἀγωνοθέτης δι' ἀπολόγου ἐκάστην συνθυσίαν τάξῃ, αὐτὸς ὁ  
 ἀγωνοθέτης βοῦν α', ὁ πολειτικὸς ἱερεὺς Σεβαστῶ[ν] καὶ ἡ ἐ[ί]φ[ε]ρια Σεβαστῶν  
 βοῦν α', ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ Διὸς βοῦν α', πανηγυριάρχαι γ' βοῦν α', γραμματεὺς βουλήs  
 κ[αὶ] πρυτάνεις ε' βοῦς β', πολειτικοὶ ἀγορανόμο[ι] β' [βοῦν] α', γυμνασιάρχαι β'  
 βοῦν α', ταμίαι δ' βοῦν α', παραφύλακες β' βοῦν α', ἐφέβ[α]ρχος βοῦν α', παιδονόμος  
 βοῦν α', ἐπιμελητὴς δημοσίων ἔργων [βοῦν] α', τῶν δὲ κωμῶν Θεερσηνὸς σὺν  
 Ἀρμάδου καὶ Ἀρισσῶ καὶ Μερλακάνδοις καὶ Μεγάλῳ Ὅρει καὶ ... λαις καὶ  
 Κίρβου καὶ Εὐπόροις καὶ Ὁροάτοις κ[αὶ]...3]ρακῆ καὶ Οὐάλω καὶ Ὑσκαφοῖς σὺν  
 ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦς β', Ὀρπεινα Σιελια σὺν τα[ίς]  
 ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν α', ΟΓΑΡΣΑΝ... (3) ΑΚΗ σὺν  
 Λακιστανούνδοις καὶ Κακάσβοις Κίλλου καὶ ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις  
 βοῦ... , υρνεαί σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρ[ίαις] βοῦ]ν α', Ἐλβησσοὺς σὺν  
 ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν α', Νιγυρασσοὺς σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθού[σαις]  
 μοναγρίαις βοῦν α', Οναυτα Μαρακῶ[ν] δα σὺ]ν ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις  
 βοῦν α', Μιλγειπόταμος Ουήδασα σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθού[σαις] [μ]οναγρίαις βοῦν  
 α', Πρεινόλιθος ΚΟΛΑΒΗ[...4 σὺν] ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν α',  
 Κερδεβότα Παλαγγειμανακῆ σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθ[ούσαις] μοναγρίαις βοῦν α',  
 Μιναοῦνδα ΠΑΝ... (5) ΣΥΗΡΑ σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν α',  
 Ὀρησσοὺς Ἀετοῦ Νοσσία Κοραφα σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν [α',  
 ...5]α Σαπονδοάνδα σὺν ταῖς ἀκολουθούσαις μοναγρίαις βοῦν α', μηδενοὺς  
 ἔχοντος ἐξ[ου]σίαν πράσσειν τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν θυσιῶν [τούτω]ν. Τὴν δὲ  
 ἐπιμέλειαν τῶν κωμητικῶν θυσιῶν ποιεῖσθαι τοὺς τε δημάρχους καὶ [τοὺς]  
 ἀρχιδεκάνοους, ἐν αἷς κώμαις εἰσὶν ἀρχ[ιδεκάνο]ι, προνοοῦντος τοῦ  
 ἀγωνοθέτου ἐν τῷ πρὸ τῆς πανηγύρεως ἔτει εἰς τὸν τῆς ἀγ[ω]νοθεσίας  
 ἐνιαυτὸν αἰρεῖσθαι δημάρχους [καὶ] ἀποδεικνύντος ἐκ τῶν συνθυόντων ἓνα  
 καθ' ἐκάστην κώμην τὸν ὀφείλοντα προ[νο]εῖν τῆς θυσίας. Ἐὰν δὲ τις μὴ  
 συνθύσῃ τῶν [προ]δηλουμένων, ἐκτείσει τῇ πόλει ὡς ἀπὸ καταδίκης <τ'  
 δηλοῦντος τοῦ ἀγωνοθέτου τ[οῦς] τε συνθύσαντας καὶ τοὺς συνομπεύσαν[τας]  
 κ[αὶ] τοὺς μὴ συνθύσαντας πρὸς τὸ εὐδῆλους εἶναι τοὺς ὀφείλοντας ὑπὸ τῆς  
 πόλεως πραχθῆναι. Ὅσαι δ' ἂν θυσίαι ὑπὸ ἐτέρων πόλεων [πεμφ]θῶσι,  
 ταύτας, ὅταν πεμφθῶσι, καὶ αὐτὰς πομπεύεσθαι διὰ τοῦ θεάτρου καὶ  
 ἀναγορεύεσθαι[ι] καὶ τὰ πεμπόμενα ὑπὸ τῶν πόλεων ψη[φί]σμ[α]τα ἐντάσσεσθαι  
 τοῖς ἀρχεῖοις ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνέδρων ἀρχόντων, ἀντιγράψαι δὲ τὸν ἀγ[ω]νοθετὴν ταῖς  
 πόλεσι περὶ τῆς συνθυσίας. [Καὶ το]ὺς ἡγωνοθετηκότας ἤδη συνπροεδρεύειν τῷ  
 ἀγωνοθέτῃ ἐν τῇ πανηγύρει. Εἴνα[ι] δὲ καὶ ἀτέλειαν διὰ πασῶν τῶν τῆς πα  
 ν[ηγύ]ρε]ως ἡμερῶν τῶν πιπρασκομένων πάντων καὶ θυομένων καὶ εἰσαγομένων  
 καὶ εἰ[σ]φερομένων καὶ ἐξαγομένων ὠνιῶν.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> debuisset ὠνιῶν (ὠνια, τά = commodities). The word ὠνία does not exist.

(20)

Iliion 12, vv. 1–8

[Ι]λιείς καὶ αἱ πόλεις αἱ κοινωνοῦσαι τῆς θυσίας καὶ τοῦ ἀγῶνος καὶ τῆς πανηγύρεως ἐτίμησαν Ἀγαθὴν Μηνοφίλου Ἰλιέα εἰκόνι τῆδε, προσκλήσει (sic) πρὸς τὰ ἱερά καὶ εἰς τὰς προεδρίας αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκγόνους, μετοχῆ τῶν κοινῶν ἱερῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτὸν, . . .

(21)

LGS 168, vv. 9–13

θυόντων[ι δὲ καὶ] σκανοπαγείσθων καὶ τοὶ ἀγοράξαντες τὰν ὠνὰν σκοπὰς δαμοσίας· θυέτω δὲ κ[αὶ σκανο]παγείσθω καὶ ὁ τὰν ἄλ(λ)αν μισθωσάμενος σκοπὰν τὰν ἐπὶ ναυτιλίῳ· θυέτω δ[ὲ κατὰ ταῦ] τὰ καὶ σκανοπαγείσθω καὶ ὁ πριάμενος τὰν ὠνὰν τὰν Μουσᾶν κατὰ ταῦ(τ)ὰ· θ[υέτωι δὲ κα]τὰ ταῦτὰ καὶ σκανοπαγείσθω καὶ ὁ πριάμενος τὰν ὠνὰν τοῦ Ἀφροδεῖσιον· . . .

(22)

LGS 168, vv. 23–5

θυέτωι δὲ καὶ ὁ ναύαρχος τ[ῶι Πο]τειδᾶν οἷν ἀπὸ δραχμῶν τριάκοντα καὶ Κῶι οἷν ἀπὸ δραχμῶν τριάκοντα καὶ Ῥόδωι ο[ἷ]ν ἀπὸ δραχμῶν τριάκοντα· . . .

(23)

[Dereköy] vv. B II.23–36

Ἐπεὶ δὲ τινες εἰσὶν θυσίαι πλείονα ἔχουσαι ἀναλώματα δίκαιον δὲ ἐσ[τ]ιν πάσας τὰς ὁμουρίας τὸ ἴσον ἔχειν εἰς τε τὴν ἐξοδὸν τῶν θυσιῶν καὶ τὴν πρόνοιαν, vac. / εὐλογον ἠγγασάμεθα τότε πάλιν τὴν αὐτὴν ὁμουρίαν τὴν [αὐ]τὴν θῦσαι θυσίαν ὅταν πάσαι αἱ ὁμουρίαι πάσας τὰς θυ[σ]ίας διεξέλθωσιν θύσασαι, vac. / καὶ εἰς τὸ διὰ μένειν τοῦτο καὶ εἶναι δῆλον, ὅτι παρὰ τέσσαρα ἔτη ἢ αὐτὴ ὁμουρία τὴν αὐτὴν θυσίαν ὀφείλει θῦσαι, ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἄκρᾳ Διὸς μετὰ τὸ [π]άσας τὰς ἐν τῇ ἱερωσύνῃ αὐτοῦ ἀπο-/ vac.[τελε]σθῆναι θυσίας ἐν τῷ Πανέμῳ μηνὶ δη-/ vac. λώσει δι' ἀρχαίων, ποίας θυσίας ἐκάστη ἔθν-/ vac. <σ>εν ὁμουρία. vac.

(24)

Appian, *De bello civili* 4.5.31

Γιγνομένων δὲ τούτων Λέπιδος ἐπὶ Ἰβηρῶν ἐθριάμβευε, καὶ προὔτεθη διάγραμμα οὕτως ἔχον· “ἀγαθὴ τύχη προειρήσθω πᾶσι καὶ πάσαις θύειν καὶ εὐχεῖσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν παρούσαν· ὅς δ' ἂν μὴ φαίνεται ταῦτα ποιῶν, ἐν τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις ἔσται.” ὁ μὲν δὲ τὸν θριάμβον ἐς τὰ ἱερά ἀνήγε, παραπεμπόντων αὐτὸν ἀπάντων μετὰ σχήματος ἰλαροῦ καὶ γνώμης δυσμενοῦς·

(25)

Pausanias, *Elis* I, IX.3

Ὁ δὲ κόσμος ὁ περὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα ἐφ' ἡμῶν, ὡς θέσθαι τῷ θεῷ τὰ ἱερεῖα πεντάθλου μὲν καὶ δρόμου τῶν ἵππων ὕστερα, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν πρότερα ἀγωνισμάτων, οὗτος κατέστη σφίσι· ὁ κόσμος ὀλυμπιάδι ἐβδόμη πρὸς ταῖς ἐβδομήκοντα·



(26) Pausanias, *Corinth*, XXXIV.12  
 καὶ ναὸς ἑτερός ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτης· αὕτη καὶ ἄλλας ἔχει παρὰ Ἑρμιονέων τιμὰς,  
 καὶ ταῖς παρθένους καὶ ἦν γυνὴ χηρεύουσα παρὰ ἄνδρα μέλλη φοιτᾶν, ἀπάσαις  
 πρὸ γάμου θύειν καθέστηκεν ἐνταῦθα.

(27) Pausanias, *Laconia*, XIII.9  
 ξόανον δὲ ἀρχαῖον καλοῦσιν Ἀφροδίτης Ἥρας· ἐπὶ δὲ θυγατρὶ γαμουμένη  
νενομίκασι τὰς μητέρας τῆ θεῶ θύειν.

(28) Pausanias, *Laconia*, XIV.6  
 ἔστι δὲ ἄγαλμα ἀρχαῖον Ἡρακλέους, ᾧ θύουσιν οἱ Σφαιρεῖς· οἱ δὲ εἶσιν οἱ ἐκ  
 τῶν ἐφήβων ἐς ἄνδρας ἀρχόμενοι συντελεῖν.

(29) Pausanias, *Laconia*, XIV.9  
 ... ἐνταῦθα ἑκατέρα μοῖρα τῶν ἐφήβων σκύλακα κυνὸς τῷ Ἐνναλίῳ θύουσι,  
 θεῶν τῷ ἀλκιμωτάτῳ κρίνοντες ἱερεῖον κατὰ γνώμην εἶναι τὸ ἀλκιμώτατον  
 ζῶον τῶν ἡμέρων. ... νυκτεριναὶ δὲ ἢ τε Κολοφωνίων θυσία καὶ τῶν ἐν  
 Λακεδαίμονι ἐφήβων καθεστήκασιν.

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## From Greek Religion to Judaism: A Bridge

### A. HOW THE CHARACTER OF JEWISH SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP DIFFERS FROM THAT OF GREEK SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP

Whoever has been used to studying and talking about Greek paganism has great difficulty in accommodating his mode of thinking to the Jewish religious code. This difficulty stems from the differences between the two religious systems. Although in both Greek religion and pre-AD 70 Judaism animal sacrifice was the central cultic act, the context of sacrificial performance in mainstream<sup>1</sup> Judaism had a particular character, not similar at all to the Greek context.

At first, I should make clear to the reader that I do not disagree with the view expressed in recent scholarship on Judaism, namely that the Jewish religion incorporated great varieties of belief. However, I should stress two facts. First, my focus in this book is cult, and, more especially, animal sacrifice. With the exception of sectarian Jews (i.e. those in Qumran), Jewish sacrificial cult could only take place in the Jerusalem Temple. This does not leave much space for us to admit variety in sacrificial practice. Second, in this book I am mainly using evidence dating before the Mishnah was created (c. AD 200). The mishnaic corpus represents various layers of tradition, so we cannot know whether its rules were actually in force in the Temple before its final destruction by the Romans in AD 70 (on which see below). Whereas in the next chapter I demonstrate and admit the variety depicted in the Mishnah, I also stress that its rules cannot

<sup>1</sup> The term is used in the sense of 'non-sectarian'.

be safely used as evidence for an applied practice of sacrificial variety in the pre-AD 70 Temple.<sup>2</sup>

The brief presentation that follows intends to introduce the reader to the special nature of Judaism and the particularities of its sacrificial cult.

To begin with the most evident difference, also applying to the whole of Greek and Jewish culture, Greek religion has left a great number of artefacts and texts, either depicting religious scenes or, at least, inspired by or dealing with religion. This is not the case in Judaism, where we have no depictions nor is there a kind of ‘epigraphic habit’. Even in late Judaism (‘late Second Temple period’, as it is called), with which we are concerned in this book, the impact of Hellenization did not result in the adoption of the custom of recording religious occasions on stone.

Of course, contributory to the lack of any need for recording Jewish celebrations was the simple but fundamental fact that mainstream Judaism had not many sites, but only one, where ritual took place according to well-known regulations, namely the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was founded by King Solomon before the middle of the tenth century BC, but it became the central cultic place of Judaism only after King Josiah’s reform (639–609 BC). Aided by the legendary discovery of the Book of Deuteronomy, Josiah compelled all Jews to offer sacrifices only in the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> From then on the history of Israel became inextricably linked to the history of its Temple—hence the division into the period of Solomon’s Temple (the First Temple), and the Second Temple period.

All sacrifices described in the Pentateuch were made to the One God of Israel. Sacrifices to any other recipient were idolatrous and, thus, to be condemned. All the occasions on which a sacrifice should be offered were ordained in the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books prescribed both animal and vegetable offerings, but, in the overall picture of these prescriptions in their present form, animal victims prevail both in number (even if they are

<sup>2</sup> This stance is the opposite of Klawans (2006), 109, who, in his polemical critique of the English translation of Schmidt (1994), quite happily cites rabbinic and Qumranic evidence in order to prove that the Temple was not as exclusive as one (along with Schmidt) might think.

<sup>3</sup> See de Vaux (1973<sup>3</sup>), 331–9.

accompanied by vegetable offerings) and importance.<sup>4</sup> Especially with regard to libations, these seem to have been merely accompanying elements to animal sacrifices.<sup>5</sup> In this book, when referring to the term 'sacrifice' I mainly mean animal sacrifice, a convention which corresponds to the importance of animal sacrifices in Judaism.

According to the Bible, the occasions on which a sacrifice could be carried out were either defined by the calendar and represented the whole nation, so that on these occasions *public* sacrifices were offered; or were individual obligations and resulted in the offering of *private* sacrifices.

Public Jewish sacrifices were regularly offered every day and, in addition, more lavishly during Jewish festivals. The only group responsible for the offering of public sacrifices was the hereditary priesthood in the Temple. Jewish religious festivities had almost a 'national' character. Jews who went up to Jerusalem to attend Jewish festivals had the opportunity to strengthen their links with religious tradition, and to meet each other around the Temple. Unlike the Greek world, where a general invitation could be explicit, and even include Romans (*Ῥωμαῖοι*) and other foreigners (*ξένοι*), Jewish festivals were mainly for Jews, and no general invitations were issued, even if foreigners were welcome. The gradation of levels of 'Jewishness', which dominated the entrance to the Temple, most obviously illustrated Jewish religious exclusivity.

The individual Jew had no space for initiative during festivals. Biblical regulations on these festivals had the role of 'sacred laws' defining the victim and the priestly perquisites. By means of a tax paid by all Jews in the world, the Temple always had the resources for the prescribed public offerings, and these were always holocausts. So, in no case could an individual Jew pay for the festive offerings, and entertain people, in a way resembling Greek *euergetism*. Besides, since public sacrifices were whole-offerings, that is, holocausts, worshippers could not consume public offerings.

<sup>4</sup> Research has recently shown that sacrificial rules in the Old Testament derive from different sources, which reflect different attitudes towards the pre-eminence or not of vegetable offerings. See Marx (1994).

<sup>5</sup> In the course of the Table Ronde mentioned in the preface, n. 4, at the prompting of a paper by A. Marx, it came to be generally accepted that in Judaism libations and incense-offerings were not autonomous offerings.

If a Jew wanted to participate in a festival in an active way, he/she had to make the God of Israel an offering of his/her own. But a Jew could also visit the Temple and make a private offering at any time, not necessarily during a festival. Whatever the occasion, individual Jewish sacrifices were either a sign of thankfulness, or were made by people in a certain physical or moral condition. In contrast to the case of public offerings, in this case the rules did not always exclude the consumption of sacrificial meat.

The truth is, however, that there is no explicit evidence for Jewish banquets related to religious occasions. Since the Jewish Temple never functioned as a place for the display of inscriptions, we cannot know if there ever were Jews who became prominent because they entertained people with banquets. It seems that any Jewish banquets which followed private sacrifices were given in the framework of an extended family, and could not involve strangers as guests; in these cases, one sacrificed animal usually represented the whole group. This is confirmed by Josephus' testimony for the private feast on the occasion of Passover: he uses the term *φρατρία*, and makes a calculation on the basis of the fact that a Passover victim corresponds to ten people (*BJ* VI.423, 425). Besides, if a kind of *euergetism* was common practice among Jews, I suggest that a parable like the one in Luke 14: 15–24 (a host entertaining poor and handicapped strangers) would not have been worth recording.<sup>6</sup>

The aforementioned difference between the meaning given to the term 'festival' by a Greek and by a Jew is made obvious in the following Philonic passages. In these we can easily see Philo's disdain for Greek religion. As we shall see, Philo was a faithful Jew, and his testimony cannot be regarded as unrepresentative of the way in which a Jew saw Greek religion. Philo admits that religious festivals

<sup>6</sup> The *Protevangelium of James* (c.AD 150) gives a colour of *euergetism* to the scene of joy following the announcement of Mary's birth. On hearing the good news, Joachim says: 'And bring me twelve [tender] calves, and the twelve calves shall be for the priests and the elders, and a hundred kids, and the hundred kids shall be for the whole people' (Hennecke–Schneemelcher (1991), p. 427, my emphasis). See also i. 426: '... Joachim was a very rich (man), and he brought all his gifts for the Lord twofold; for he said in himself: What I bring in excess, shall be for the whole people...' This 'Hellenization' of the scene cannot but be misleading for the reader. Besides, the editor of this apocryphal gospel admits that the author has no knowledge of Jewish customs: *ibid.* 423–4.

are occasions of joy and relaxation, but he is against any sort of transgression taking place during them. Commenting on the sin-offering made after festivals (*De spec. legibus* 1, 190–3), Philo admits that a festival is an occasion for joy, but takes the opportunity to talk with disdain about any behavioural deviations: unmixed wine, combined with lots of food, can lead to unrestricted sexual misbehaviour, which uses the festal occasion as an alibi. These excesses concern pagan festivals, for, in contrast, Jewish Law enjoined participation in the Temple cult, so that, by means of the participation in hymns and sacrifices there, it prevents such phenomena. The whole Jewish ritual makes worshippers constrain desire.

In *De cherubim* Philo dedicates a whole section to the denunciation of pagan festivals (90–7). Two passages are worth quoting because of the sacrificial imagery contained in them, which shows that, at least to a Jew, the main aspect of a Greek festival was the sacrifices offered during it. The first of the two Philonic passages presents the sacrificial victim as offered in vain because of the debauchery reigning in the festival:

And so long as they confine their unseemly doings to houses or unconsecrated places, their sin seems less to me. But when their wickedness like a rushing torrent spreads over every place and invades and violates the most sacred temples, it straightway overturns all that is venerable in them, and as a result come sacrifices unholy (*θυσίας ἀνίεπους*), offerings unmeet (*ἰερεῖα ἄθυστα*), vows unfulfilled . . . (*De cherubim* 94, Loeb tr.)

The second Philonic passage equates the physical blemish on the victim to the defect in the pagan worshipper's soul:

And if an animal be found to be blemished or imperfect, it is driven out of the consecrated precincts and not suffered to approach the altar, though it is through no will of its own that it has any of these bodily defects. But they themselves—their souls are a mass of wounds from the hideous maladies with which the irresistible power of vice has smitten them . . . (*ibid.* 96, Loeb tr.)

One can imagine that, even if many people gathered around the Jerusalem Temple, its sacred character would deter worshippers from misbehaving. What is more, contributory to the lack of transgressions during Jewish festivals was the fact that the distribution of sacrificial meat was kept 'under control', since it was made on a small

scale. So, Philo's comments bring us back to what we have stressed as regards the difference between Greek and Jewish religious festivals: in Greek religion partaking of sacrificial meat concerned a wide public, even the whole community, whereas in Jewish religion it only concerned the companies of the offerers.<sup>7</sup>

Taking again the main difference between Greeks and Jews into consideration, namely the insistence of the Greeks on *recording* (in written, iconographic, or sculpted form), we can go back to our initial theoretical approach to sacrifice (see Chapter 1, section 2), and, on the basis of it, outline the differences between the Greek and Jewish sacrificial systems.

Thus, at first sight, what I have called the *horizontal* line of sacrificial mechanism—that is, the society and the visible reality surrounding the offerer—might seem to prevail in the Greek sacrificial system. However, if we look more carefully, we can deduce that our lack of knowledge about the *vertical* line of Greek sacrifice—the line comprising the wishes and intentions of the offerer—is what makes the latter seem inadequately developed. Whereas we know that Greek sacrifices were of different types (see e.g. Chapter 2, section B.IV on customary sacrifices), the main corpus of evidence which has reached us concerns sacrifices followed by public feasts in the community (εὐωχίαι). Thus, although we know that in general terms the relation of the offerer to the recipient remained the same, we are ignorant of the more intimate factors defining this relation. The uncertainty of scholars regarding the difference between θύειν and ἐναγίζειν proves this limitation: we do not know with certainty the criterion for preferring the one instead of the other. In view of the character of the existing evidence, then, a safer conclusion on Greek sacrifice would be that to the modern student of Greek sacrifice the horizontal line, and mainly the aspect of the worshipper's relation to the community, is more manifest than the vertical line.

<sup>7</sup> Apart from the morbid account contained in the passage which I have quoted earlier (the dead at the end of the Jewish War are counted on the basis of how many Jews usually participated in a Passover festival, *BJ* VI.420–7), Josephus never gives a full description of what exactly happened during Jewish festivals. When referring to the function of sacrifices in Jewish religion, Josephus admits that these were always offered with a feast (εὐωχία) in view (*Ant.* III.254). Elsewhere, though, he attributes this habit to the Greeks (*Apion* II.138), and says that Jewish people did not offer sacrifices in order to get drunk (*ibid.* II.195).

In the case of Judaism, however, we shall see that the existence of a few sacred books (the Pentateuch and, later, the Mishnah) contributed to the detailed listing of sacrificial rules. Despite the stereotyped character of these rules, the uncertainty as to the reliability of the Mishnah, and the dislike of Jews for publicity in the frame of their communities, we have evidence for both the horizontal and the vertical axes. However, the three characteristics just mentioned render our knowledge of the horizontal line more limited, apart from the information that the Jewish religious mechanism did not allow for a centrally organized distribution of sacrificial meat at each of the public offerings. On the other hand, the same sacred books render the vertical line of sacrifice in mainstream Judaism clear to us, since the recipient was always the One God, and the reasons for which one could offer sacrifices were carefully listed.

## B. A GLANCE AT THE HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

The form of Judaism which pagans and the first Christians knew was a monotheistic religion defined by a sacred book and a temple: the Pentateuch, and the Temple in Jerusalem. This is usually called 'mainstream Judaism', a term which does not exclude variety in Jewish beliefs, but which has been used by scholars as a contrast to the Jewish sects, which took exception to at least one of the two elements above (for instance, the Qumran sect and its distancing from the Jerusalem Temple). A basic characteristic of mainstream Judaism is that we cannot easily talk about its 'Hellenization' or 'Romanization'. These terms, when applied to religion in Palestine, rather concern the religion of the coastal cities which had been in contact with Greeks from the Hellenistic period, or the various inland cults *other than* that of mainstream Judaism.<sup>8</sup> The reason is that 'Hellenization' or 'Romanization' presuppose a peaceful and gradual course of influence on a cult, while, whenever Greek,

<sup>8</sup> On pagan cities in Palestine, see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 2.1, pp. 85–183. More recently, Belayche (2001).



Roman, or other foreign influences affected mainstream Judaism, conflicts arose.

This is obvious in every political event in the history of Judaea. Popular reaction there—in the form of revolts—was centred around the Temple, both geographically and ideologically. The chronological period we are concerned with starts while the Second Temple in Jerusalem still stands. The history of the Jewish Temple is a long one, and is marked by struggles against internal and external enemies.

As this is a book written from a classicist's point of view, a brief survey of the circumstances when conflict centred around the Temple is indispensable for the understanding of the place of Jewish sacrifice in the Graeco-Roman context: whatever happened to the Temple had an unavoidable impact on Jewish sacrificial cult.<sup>9</sup>

The first crisis in the history of the Temple was the conquest of the Southern Kingdom (of Judah) by the Babylonians in 587 BC. Solomon's Temple was destroyed,<sup>10</sup> and the Jews were led into exile (the so-called 'Babylonian captivity'). This was brought to an end by the new conqueror Cyrus II, who in 539 BC, allowed the Jews to return to Palestine. Towards the end of the sixth century BC the Second Temple was built in Jerusalem.

In the 160s a second crisis, a conflict between the High Priest Menelaos and his opponents, led to the persecution of Jews by Antiochos IV, who forbade Jews to follow their religion, and, among other atrocities, had the Temple desecrated and its treasures robbed (168 BC).<sup>11</sup> Scholars are divided between those who see in the actions of Antiochos an attempt to promote a different form of monotheism among the Jews, and those who take them as an attempt to impose the Greek pantheon.<sup>12</sup> The latter view seems more

<sup>9</sup> As regards the historical outline of early Palestine, apart from the relevant volumes in *CAH<sup>2</sup>*, namely vols. 3.1, 442–510, 3.2, 371–460, 6, 261–96, see Kuhrt (1995), vol.2, pp. 417–72. For our period, the standard work is Schürer (1973–87), mainly vol. 1, pp. 125–557.

<sup>10</sup> The main narrative is 2 Kings, 25: 8–10.

<sup>11</sup> The main narrative is 1 Macc. 1: 20–64. Though many traditions exist on the issue, and, respectively, many interpretations, the desecration must have consisted in the sacrifice of a pig on the altar (Josephus, *BJ* I.34, *Ant.* XII.253), or in the entry of Antiochos in the Holy of Holies (2 Macc. 5: 15–16), or both.

<sup>12</sup> The latter view has been presented by Millar (1978*b*). With regard to the events preceding the Maccabean revolt, the author is the first to have drawn the distinction

probable (see 2 Macc. 6: 1–9 on the institution of the cult of Olympian Zeus in the Temple, along with the imposition of other cults); but, whichever is the best explanation, the measures of Antiochos gave rise to the revolutionary movement of the Maccabees (named after the leader of the revolt, Mattathias Maccabaeus), and fostered the composition of the Book of Daniel in its present form, and of 1 and 2 Maccabees, which depict the tribulations of the Jews under Antiochos. As has been rightly pointed out, ‘it was in the persecution of the 160s and the resistance to it that Jewish monotheism, its sacrificial cult and the personal observances required of its adherents faced and survived their greatest test’.<sup>13</sup> The son of the leader of the revolt, Judas Maccabeus, rededicated the Temple in 164 BC (*Hanukkah*).

Under the Hasmoneans (successors of the Maccabees), who were both political rulers and High Priests, and after various degrees of dependence on the Seleucids, Judaea became independent in 129 BC. This independence lasted until the Romans started to become involved in Jewish affairs.

The first involvement of the Romans is related to the third crisis in the history of the Temple, brought about by Pompey. In around 63 BC, along with a sacrilegious entry into the Holy of Holies,<sup>14</sup> Pompey put an end to the conflict between the High Priests John Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus. He installed Hyrcanus II as High Priest (not king), and the structure which he left behind created the circumstances leading to the recognition of Herod (later called ‘the Great’) as king of Judaea (37–34 BC). During Herod’s reign a lavish reconstruction of the Second Temple took place.

Judaea was ruled by Herod and his successors until AD 6, and for a short period from AD 41 to 44. In fact, for almost sixty years, until AD 66, Judaea was under the direct rule of Roman governors.

The fourth crisis in the Temple history had the most permanent consequences for the Temple and its sacrificial cult. It marked the end

between Hellenization imposed from above and Hellenization sought internally, and, accordingly, the first to have distinguished two separate phases (one in the 170s, the other in the 160s) of innovations in the life of the Jews in Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Millar (1997), 104.

<sup>14</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* XIV. 71–2, where it is said that this was the first time that the Holy of Holies was entered. This does not agree with Jos. *Apion* II.79–82, 89–96. See also Tacitus, *Histories* 5.9.

of the Jewish revolt against the Romans (AD 66–70). The Roman victory was marked by the total destruction of the Temple, which was never rebuilt. In the next chapter I shall deal more extensively with the issue of the continuation (or not) of sacrifices after AD 70.

The memory of the Temple survived the building itself. During the uprising of Bar Kochba (this is its leader's name in rabbinical sources), which lasted for three years (AD 132–5), the rebels issued coins with legends such as 'for the freedom of Jerusalem'. This symbol can hardly be explained as not alluding to the Temple or, even, its restoration.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the true extent of attempts at the restoration of the Temple might have been, after the suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt, Jews were banished from Jerusalem.

All the periods of crisis briefly outlined above suffice to show how important an institution the Temple was, both as a symbol of Jewish religion, and as a symbol of national pride.

<sup>15</sup> Religious causes have also been suggested with regard to the Diaspora revolt under Trajan (Egypt, AD 115–17), but this contention is more difficult to prove, mainly because Judaea was not involved in this uprising.

# 4

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## Jewish Animal Sacrifice in the Period 100 BC–AD 200

### INTRODUCTION

Although some scholarly views resembling Nilsson's on Greek religion present the sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem Temple as having declined in the late Second Temple period,<sup>1</sup> in this book there is no need to prove the case for a flourishing Jewish sacrificial cult in our period of study. The reasons are the following:

- (a) Any view about decline of Jewish sacrifices would only concern private offerings, since there is no reason to suppose a cessation of public sacrifices in the Temple, as the evidence from Josephus for Pompey's intrusion into the Temple proves (*BJI*.148 = *Ant.* XIV.65–8). Consequently, the Temple did not cease to perform its regular function as a cultic centre for Judaism.
- (b) The studies in favour of an alleged decline are mainly based on assumptions, and have no concrete evidence referring to the decline of Jewish sacrificial cult. Such assumptions are, for instance, that it would be difficult for Diaspora Jews to travel to Jerusalem even for the three times a year prescribed by the Bible (Exod. 23: 17, 34: 23; Deut. 16: 16); or that the spread of Christianity met an already dwindling interest in sacrifice.
- (c) In contrast to the lack of any systematic reaction to Nilsson's view as regards Greek religion, scholarship on Judaism has seen

<sup>1</sup> Yerkes (1953), 119, 198; Rowland (1985), 40, 41.

studies refuting the view of a declining Jewish sacrificial cult in the Second Temple period.<sup>2</sup>

- (d) There is no sort of positive evidence from our period in favour of the one or the other thesis, namely the decline or flourishing of the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem. The combination of different elements is inconclusive,<sup>3</sup> and so no safe conclusion can be reached.

In view of the above, the thesis I adopt regarding Jewish sacrificial cult in the late Second Temple period is as follows: one cannot refute the continued importance of public offerings, and the continuous presence of private offerings, although the diachronic evolution of the latter is not possible to trace even in the later period.

As the previous chapter has made obvious, a study of Jewish sacrifice cannot but be very different from a study of Greek sacrifice. The association of the Jewish worshipper to the one Temple of the one and only God, as well as the existence of the Bible, and later of the Mishnah, two sacred books giving shape to this association, are the reasons for this difference.

This chapter on Jewish sacrifice is divided into two sections, one historical and the other structural. This division is dictated by the nature of our sources, since some of them look at the evidence diachronically, being influenced by the historical books of the Old Testament, while some others achronically, consisting in the interpretation of the Pentateuch.

Initially, a historical presentation (section B1) of the Jewish sacrificial institutions on the basis of sources written in the period we are studying will show the importance which the main sacrificial centre, the Jerusalem Temple, had in Judaism: from where did the Temple acquire its prestige, what was its character as a building in

<sup>2</sup> Goodman (1999), where it is argued that massive pilgrimage to the Temple during religious festivals was fostered by Herod the Great. According to Goodman, Herod had foreseen the profit which would come from Diaspora pilgrimage to the great shrine, and, among other actions promoting his vision, he had the Temple lavishly rebuilt. On the duration of Herod's rebuilding, see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 1, p. 292, n. 12.

<sup>3</sup> So Goodman quite honestly flags the evidence undermining his thesis in the last paragraph of his article (1999, 75), but his final triumphal sentence does not suffice to allay the doubts already raised in the reader's mind.

Jerusalem, what was the Temple's relation to Rome, how were Temple and sacrifice viewed after the destruction of AD 70? Our evidence is mainly drawn from Josephus, but also from Philo and the Mishnah, with the latter being the source for post-AD 70 Judaism.

The second section (B2) is a detailed study of the structure of the Jewish sacrificial system, with the factor of development over time only rarely visible. This achronic part will focus on the ritual institutions themselves: the High Priest, and the rest of the priesthood, the food laws and sacrificial regulations of the Jews. Philo and the Mishnah are the primary sources here, but I shall also use some passages from Josephus.

The novelty of my approach here lies in the way in which the work of Philo and the mishnaic evidence are presented. The categorization applied to Philo's evidence gives shape to his not strictly consistent allegorical analysis, while the emphasis given to the conceptual categories of the mishnaic text makes evident the unexpected degree of variety contained in this formulaic legal text (independently of the degree to which its rules were in force before AD 70). But since this book is written from the historical point of view, the main novelty of the present chapter is that the two kinds of presentation, historical and structural, are not isolated from each other: within the structural presentation I point out elements from which one can infer a development through time (see the section on Josephus in section B2), and, more importantly, ponder the possibilities of a connection between Philo's teaching, the Diaspora, and Jewish Christians (see on Philo in section A, as well as the Prologue and Conclusion to the discussion of Philo in section B2, and the Conclusion to this chapter).

Although removed from everyday reality, it is the texts of Philo and the Mishnah, and not the text of Josephus, which make it possible for us to look both at the *horizontal* and the *vertical* lines of the Jewish sacrificial system. In the Mishnah, a very important factor for its writers is the intention of the offerer, which undoubtedly defines the offerer's relation to God (vertical line). But it is Philo who persistently connects the whole range of the sections of the horizontal line (such as species or gender of animals, values such as justice, etc.) to areas which define the relation between offerer and God, that is to sections of the vertical line (such as the notions of thanking, of expiation, of sacrilege, etc.). If we accept the fact that many Jews of the Diaspora

knew the writings of Philo, then we may accept that through Philo some Jews may have also connected the two lines; in other words, some Jews may have adopted a life attitude in which animal sacrifice was seen as an allegorization of their values in life (horizontal line) and of their relation to God (vertical line).

## A. THE SOURCES

### Josephus

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish writer of the first century AD. He was a priest, who also participated in the politics of his day, having played a central role during the Jewish War against the Romans in AD 66–70. The works of Josephus which will be of interest for us in this book are *The Jewish War*, *The Jewish Antiquities*, and secondarily *Against Apion*. Josephus is also known for his autobiographical *Vita*, but this work does not serve our purposes here.

*The Jewish War* covers the period from the Maccabean revolt up to AD 73, when Masada, the last fortress held by the Jews, fell to the Romans. The work is written from a pro-Roman perspective. *The Jewish Antiquities* is a history of the Jewish people, starting with the Creation and reaching the eve of the war. In *Against Apion* Josephus defends Judaism against anti-Semitic slander.

In the course of his writings Josephus often mentions another work, which he apparently intended to write, entitled 'On Customs and Causes'.<sup>4</sup> This work, he says, would focus on the religious practices of the Jews. If we had it today, we could talk with much greater certainty about the ritual performances in the Temple. Even without this, though, in the existing four works one can find a substantial amount of information about the Second Jewish Temple, that is, the Temple which the Jews built after their return from Babylon in 539 BC, and which continued to exist until the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g. *Ant.* III, 205, 223, and the notes on these paragraphs in the Loeb edition (vol. 4, pp. 414, 424).

We cannot know whether the Temple in the minds of Josephus' Jewish contemporaries represented the same values which it did in Josephus' mind. Josephus was a Jew of priestly descent, who wrote in Greek. He might not have provided a representative sample of the world he belonged to, but his voice is the only testimony for Jerusalem Judaism, and as such it is extremely useful.<sup>5</sup>

Some further remarks are necessary. Josephus' work is historical. His intention was not to interpret the history of the Jews, but to narrate it in a continuous form. It might not be by pure chance that Josephus' claim about the antiquity of the Jewish nation, as he expressed it in *Against Apion*, was excellently served by his *Jewish Antiquities*. Besides, Josephus' preference for history is shown by the fact that he gave priority to his historical works and not to the projected 'On Customs and Causes'.

The history of Josephus is methodologically characterized by the model of *continuity*: as a matter of course, the Jews of his day are considered by him to be the descendants of the Jews of the Old Testament. This line of continuity is obvious in the *Antiquities*, where the history of the Jewish people starts from the very beginning of the world and goes on until the time of the Roman Empire.

What is more interesting is that Josephus managed to integrate both his sources and his personal experiences in this model. In his minimal treatment of Jewish institutions,<sup>6</sup> Josephus' primary source for Jewish history, the Bible, is enriched here and there with details apparently known to him from contemporary Jewish cult.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have already tried to correlate these non-biblical details with later rabbinic traditions.<sup>8</sup> Actually, Josephus never explicitly acknowledges his indebtedness to contemporary sources. So scholarly attempts to combine Josephus with later rabbinic compilations of laws are misleading and insecure.

The pre-eminently historical character of Josephus' work leads us to use his testimony more for issues pertaining to the history of the

<sup>5</sup> Discussion of Josephus, with bibliography, is given in Schürer (1973–87), vol. 1, pp. 43–63. See also Rajak (1984<sup>2</sup>) and Feldman–Hata (1989).

<sup>6</sup> Since he had planned to deal with Jewish customs in his other work, which he never published.

<sup>7</sup> As will be seen, this also applies to the section on Jewish sacrifices.

<sup>8</sup> The commentary by J. Weill, in *Oeuvres complètes de Flavius Josèphe* (Paris, 1900). I was not able to find this book.



Temple, and less for ritual. Apart from the few points where his presentation differs from Scripture, Josephus just re-narrates the Bible. At least in the works whose publication he achieved, Jewish ritual is not interpreted by him. Strikingly, this task had been carried out earlier, by a Jewish writer from the Diaspora, namely Philo.

## Philo

Philo was a Jew of the Diaspora who lived in Alexandria in the first century AD. We do not know the exact dates of his life, apart from the autobiographical detail he gives in the work *De legatione ad Gaium* (1), which is about a Jewish embassy to the emperor Gaius: there, Philo includes himself in a group of old men. Since the embassy took place around AD 39–40,<sup>9</sup> we can conclude that Philo was born in the later decades of the first century BC.

Philo's works consist primarily of treatises on the Pentateuch. The only works which refer to his contemporary reality are *De legatione ad Gaium*, *In Flaccum*, and *De vita contemplativa*. Since Philo's work focuses on the Old Testament, and particularly on the Pentateuch, it does not provide us with a historical account of Judaism, or with a descriptive picture of contemporary Jewish religious life (even if Philo talks of the Bible as if it were the 'general rule').

Because of the special character of Philo's work, it is not easy for the reader to grasp that model of continuity which is so evident in Josephus. Of course, Philo talks about all the elements of Jewish religion which constitute the frame for the offering of sacrifices. The Tent, the Temple, their altars, and their ritual appurtenances, the High Priest and his robes with their adornments, are all present and described. What is lacking is a sort of diachronic connection between these elements; this connection might be implied by Philo, but it is never clearly stated by him. Philo does not write history; he interprets the Jewish Law.

The method which Philo uses when he deals with the Old Testament is *allegory*. That is to say, the material in the Old Testament is not taken literally, but its events and characters are used as symbols of higher

<sup>9</sup> For the chronological implications of the embassy, see the Loeb edition of Philo, vol. 10, pp. xxvii–xxxi.

truths. Philo uses the concrete narrations of the Old Testament as a basis for philosophical discussion on matters theological. He is not the first to have employed allegory; Philo's predecessors in this method came both from the Greek world and from Judaism.<sup>10</sup> The dependence of Philo on each of them still remains a highly debated issue.<sup>11</sup>

The main characteristic in Philo's allegory is that higher meanings are expressed in Greek philosophical terms.<sup>12</sup> However, apart from some fundamental motifs throughout his work,<sup>13</sup> Philo does not have a consistent philosophical system. He rather belongs to the 'school' of eclecticism; this means that his ideas are drawn from a number of Greek philosophical systems: Platonism, Peripateticism, Stoicism, Cynicism, Neo-Pythagoreanism. Philo combines all these systems, with the intention of giving the biblical text a philosophical meaning. Nevertheless, one can discern inconsistencies in his attempt: Scripture is not a literary work devoid of stylistic deficiencies, and since Philo is totally dependent on it, he has to adapt himself to the text, without caring about repetitions, slight shifts from philosophical principles already stated, or even contradictions. Despite these faults, Philo's erudition is admirable, even if his combination of Greek philosophy and Judaism seems too extraordinary to have been the common rule among Jews of the Diaspora.<sup>14</sup>

In my view, Philo can be considered as representative of the Diaspora Jews at a different level from that of the relation between Greek philosophy and Judaism. More specifically, I suggest that his belief in the importance of Jewish ritual might have been quite common among Diaspora Jews. I present my case at the beginning of section

<sup>10</sup> On Greek and Jewish precedents of the method, see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 3.2, pp. 876–7, nn. 20–2.

<sup>11</sup> For a well-balanced account of the relation between Philo and Palestinian Judaism, see Sandmel (1979), 127–34.

<sup>12</sup> 'Philo's basic religious ideas are Jewish, his intuitions Jewish, and his loyalties Jewish, but his explanation of ideas, intuitions, and devotions are invariably Greek.' *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>13</sup> On these omnipresent philosophical concepts in Philo's work, see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 3.2, pp. 880–8.

<sup>14</sup> As Sandmel (1979), 147 says: 'It is not wrong to regard Philo as representing a marginal *viewpoint*. But I have seen no evidence that Philo speaks for a segment of Jewry large enough to be called a *marginal Judaism*.' However, a 'liberal' group of Jews in Alexandria might have adopted Greek habits for the preservation of their way of socializing and their political rights; see Turner (1954), 58.

B2 in this chapter, where I also stress how helpful young students of the Jewish Law might have found Philo's interpretation of the Torah.<sup>15</sup>

The evidence we have at our disposal does not allow us to answer our many questions about Philo. But, compared with Josephus, Philo seems more dependent on the letter of the Law. His treatment of the Pentateuch obliges us to use his text as evidence for the significance of the Temple sacrificial cult, and not for a historical reconstruction of the Jerusalem, or even the Jewish Diaspora, rituals.

The non-historical character of Philo's work must be at least in part the result of his living away from Jerusalem (which he seems to have visited only once<sup>16</sup>). It seems hard to suppose that any other Jew not living in Jerusalem had reliable information on whatever additions—trivial or not—were made to the Temple cult as described in the Pentateuch. Probably, Philo's lack of acquaintance with contemporary Temple ritual must also have characterized most Jews of the Greek-speaking communities in the Diaspora: the puzzles arising from the text of Scripture, to which Palestinian rabbis gave different interpretations, would not have been urgent issues for Greek-speaking Diaspora Jews. The urgency arose after AD 70, and again it was only felt by Palestinian rabbis, who composed the first codification of the Jewish Law.

## The Mishnah

The Mishnah is the oldest extant corpus of Jewish Law, and its redaction is traditionally ascribed to Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, who died at the beginning of the third century AD. We should insist on the fact that this code of law was not the result of a formulation which started and finished at the time of R. Judah ha-Nasi. The rabbis mentioned in the Mishnah belong to several generations of the Tannaim (rabbis of the 1st–2nd c. AD), so we are confronted with a compilation representing a long history of rabbinic legislation. J. Neusner is the first scholar to have classified the legislative material of the Mishnah into three categories, each one representing a stage in rabbinic legislation. Thus the

<sup>15</sup> One might think that Philo's expositions would not be popular, but, judging by the sheer number of his biblical treatises, one can rather suppose the opposite. Sandmel (1979), 13, says that Philo would have bored his congregation in the synagogue.

<sup>16</sup> *De providentia* 64.

first stage is represented by the work of the rabbis before AD 70 ('before the Wars'), the second stage by rabbinic work in the period 70–135 ('between the Wars'), and the third stage by rabbinic work after AD 135 up to the Mishnah's final redaction c.AD 200 ('after the Wars').<sup>17</sup>

Despite the generally admitted fact that various chronological strata of rabbinic legislation are contained in the Mishnah, and that even Josephus might have used material which would later be called *mishnaic*, I cannot with confidence use the Mishnah as evidence for the period before its final redaction. The reason for this is that 'we do not have any significant evidence that a corpus of Mishnah—whether in writing or orally formulated and orally transmitted in exactly the language of the original formulation—lay before Eliezer'<sup>18</sup> (i.e. c.AD 70, Eliezer being the student of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, the founder of the rabbinic 'school' at Yavneh). This statement being the result of Neusner's internal analysis of the Mishnah, I would like to add here a piece of external evidence corroborating his view: neither Philo nor Josephus explicitly refers to any (written or oral) source other than the Bible when they deal with issues related to the Temple. Even if Josephus' report differs from the Bible at some points, we should not assume the existence of a corpus of Law behind these differences. It is more likely that, by the time of Josephus, inconsistencies between practice and the Pentateuchal text had begun to arise. But it would be wrong to attribute these deviations to a programmatic reformation of the biblical Law made by any specific group. In consequence, I think that the Mishnah must be treated as a product of its time, as an attempt at codification of rabbinic teachings in written form, only reliable as a piece of evidence for what Jewish sages c.AD 200 *had to say about* Jewish legal matters.

Of the six divisions of the Mishnah, it is the fifth which will mainly concern us here: it is called *Kodashim*, meaning 'Holy Things', and it mostly deals with Jewish animal sacrifices and the Jewish sanctuary.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Neusner (1981). The second stage is more or less identical with the so-called *Yavnean period*, that is c.AD 70–120 (after the town of Yavneh, the main centre of rabbinic activity at that time). The third stage is more or less identical with the *Ushan period*, i.e. c.AD 140–80 (after the town of Usha, where rabbis worked in that period). For a very good introduction to the issues concerning the compilation of the Mishnah, see Stemberger (1996<sup>2</sup>), 108–48 (with bibliography).

<sup>18</sup> Neusner (1973), ii, 52; quoted by Stemberger (1996<sup>2</sup>), 130.

<sup>19</sup> For a full analysis of the fifth division, see Neusner (1978–80), and, as a summary of this, see his 1979*a*.

The fifth division is not the only one dealing with animal sacrifice, so some passages from other divisions will also be dealt with. I must state from the beginning that I shall approach the Mishnaic text through its English translation.

The fifth division, with its material probably dating to the period AD 70–170,<sup>20</sup> consists of eleven tractates:

- Zebahim*, animal offerings
- Menahoth*, meal offerings
- Hullin*, animals killed for food
- Bekhoroth*, firstlings
- Arakhin*, vows of valuation
- Temurah*, the substituted offering
- Kerithoth*, extirpation
- Meilah*, sacrilege
- Tamid*, the daily whole-offering
- Middoth*, measurements
- Kinnim*, bird-offerings.

The tractates *Menahoth* and *Middoth* will hardly concern us at all, since *Menahoth* only deals with non-animal offerings, and *Middoth* with the dimensions of the Temple.

It is a fact that the Mishnaic text, like that of Philo, is not historic. It might be of historical importance in itself, but the compilers did not talk of Judaism as a historic continuum. Historic references are few and allusive, and so highly ambiguous.

Here I have thought it useful to study the way in which the fifth Mishnaic division views sacrifice, by insisting on the conceptual categories which it contains.<sup>21</sup> So, in accordance with the nature of the text, my use of the Mishnah will be similar to my use of Philo, in that it will mainly focus on the structure of ritual as it was understood by the writers, and not so much on the historical dimension.

<sup>20</sup> See Neusner (1978–80), vi. 49–214.

<sup>21</sup> Although in this attempt I have been inspired by Mary Douglas' work on Leviticus and F. Schmidt's on the Qumran material, I am not going so far as to find symbolisms behind the conceptual categories of the Mishnah. Douglas' most recent book on Leviticus is Douglas (1999). See also her 1993 and 1995; the most famous is Douglas (1966). Along similar lines of thought, see Schmidt (1994). My aim could be regarded as similar to that of Neusner (1991a), but I do not share his obsession with Graeco-Roman philosophy.

## B. THE EVIDENCE

### 1. Historical Presentation

The work of Josephus contains extensive descriptions of the physical appearance of the First and Second Jewish Temples.<sup>22</sup> I shall not describe the architectural structure of the Temple in detail, since it is a very debated issue, even among specialists, and can be studied through recent books on the subject.<sup>23</sup> Apart from these long descriptions, throughout the whole work of Josephus there are numerous references to the Temple. These consist of the writer's comments on Jewish ritual, of comments included in the speeches of his characters, and of simple narrations having to do with piety and its observance or its neglect. One has to collect all these elements in order to acquire a general impression of the significance which the Jewish Temple had in Josephus' mind.

#### *The Temple through Josephus' history: space, people, sacrifices*

##### Space

Josephus accepts that God himself prohibited human sacrifices since the binding of Isaac (*Ant.* I.224–36), and that Moses instructed the Jews to build a Temple as soon as they arrived home (*Ant.* IV.199–201). Consequently, regulations having to do with cult and its place had been handed down long since, and were to be respected. The Temple in Jerusalem was the place where animal sacrifices should be offered in the right way.

Apart from providing the place for the offering of sacrifices, the main role of the Jewish Temple was to shelter the Law of Moses. Until the Temple was built, the Law had been sheltered in an Ark, which

<sup>22</sup> On Solomon's Temple, i.e. the First Temple: *Jos. Ant.* VIII.63–98. On the late Second Temple and the adjoining tower of Antonia: XV.391–402, 410–20, 424, *BJ* I.401–2, V.184–227, 238–47, *Apion* II.102–9. The references to the early Second Temple, which the Jews built after the Exile, are indirect, and mainly have a deprecatory tone relating to its lack of splendour in comparison with Solomon's Temple; they are to be found in *Ant.* XI.79–83, XV.385–6. On Josephus' architectural accounts of the Second Temple, see Levine, in Parente–Sievers (1994).

<sup>23</sup> On the architecture of the Temple, see the standard work by Busink (1970 and 1980). For a good discussion on the architectural appearance of the Second Temple, see Sanders (1992), 54–69.

finally came to Jerusalem under David's command. As regards sacrifices, these had been offered on altars in various sacred places,<sup>24</sup> and finally on an altar in Jerusalem which David built (for both arrangements made by David, see *Ant.* VII.78–9).

Josephus describes how the Ark was brought to the Temple, and he also talks about the two altars, the golden one in the Temple and the bronze one outside it (*Ant.* VIII.99–105).

*Ant.* VIII.104–5

τὴν δὲ λυχνίαν καὶ τὴν τράπεζαν καὶ τὸν βωμὸν τὸν χρύσειον ἔστησαν ἐν τῷ ναῷ πρὸ τοῦ ἀδύτου κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς τόπους, οὓς καὶ τότε ἐν τῇ σκηנῇ κείμενοι κατεῖχον, καὶ τὰς καθημερινὰς θυσίας ἀνέφερον. τὸ δὲ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χάλκεον ἴστησι πρὸ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀντικρὺ τῆς θύρας, ὡς ἀνοιχθείσης αὐτὸ κατὰ πρόσωπον εἶναι καὶ βλέπεσθαι τὰς ἱεροουργίας καὶ τὴν τῶν θυσιῶν πολυτέλειαν.

But the lampstand and the table and the golden altar they placed in the temple before the adytum in the same positions which they had formerly occupied when standing in the tabernacle, and they offered up the daily sacrifices. And the bronze altar he set up before the temple opposite the door, so that when this was opened the altar was before the eyes (of those within the temple), and the sacred ministrations and the splendour of the sacrifices might be seen. (Loeb tr.)

The passage above does not make the difference between the two altars immediately clear, namely that the bronze altar was for animal sacrifices, and the golden one for incense offerings.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, though, Josephus says that the bronze altar was for the burnt offerings (ὄλοκαυτώσεις, *Ant.* VIII.88), or he refers to a large and a small altar (*ibid.* 92), or to the censer inside the Temple (θυμιατήριον, *BJ* V.216–18), and the altar outside it (βωμός, *BJ* V.225).<sup>26</sup>

In the descriptions of the Tent, of Solomon's Temple, and of Herod's Temple, Josephus keeps the division of the interior into the Holy of Holies and the Holy Temple. In the Holy Temple three elements stood: the lampstand, the table, and the golden altar or censer. The Holy of Holies was the place for the Ark both in the Tent and in Solomon's Temple, but it was empty in Herod's Temple. As

<sup>24</sup> For a list of these sanctuaries, see de Vaux (1973<sup>3</sup>), 302–8.

<sup>25</sup> In fact, this lack of clarity might go back to the Hebrew term for the altar of incense-offering. See *ibid.* 410–13.

<sup>26</sup> See also the testimony of Hecataeus from Abdera about the two altars, one, stone-made, outside the Temple, and the other, golden, inside (*Apion* I.198).

regards the altar of animal sacrifices, this was always outside the Tent or Temple (*Ant.* III.122–5, 134–49 on the Tent; VIII.71, 104–5 on Solomon’s Temple; *BJ* V.215–219, *Apion* II.102–4 on Herod’s Temple).

In *Apion* II.80–2 Josephus gives another dimension to this division of the Temple’s interior, and this is a refutation of the slanders of Gentiles. The Temple, Josephus says, was not a place where an ass’s head was worshipped, nor was a Greek fed there in order to be sacrificed. Even Pompey saw the sacred objects in the Temple when he entered it.<sup>27</sup>

The division of the Temple area into zones actually started from the exterior, where successive precincts were differentiated from one another in terms of the admittance of different groups. To start from the outside to the inside, there were: the court where both Jews and Gentiles were admitted, then the court where only Israelites (men and women) were admitted, then the court where only male Israelites were admitted, and finally, the priests’ court, just outside the Holy of Holies. The latter could only be entered by the High Priest. (*Ant.* VIII.95–8 on Solomon’s Temple; *BJ* V.190–200, *Ant.* XV.410–20, and *Apion* II.102–4 on Herod’s Temple).

An example of the observance of this division into zones is given in *BJ* II.340–1, where a Roman (a tribunes of Agrippa, named Neapolitanus) reverts the Temple from where it was allowed for him to do so.

As the main place of Jewish cult, the Temple was liable to pollution. Murder defiling the Temple is a constant theme in Josephus. The murders of worshippers which Archelaus had committed in the Temple during Passover (*Ant.* XVII.213–18, *BJ* II.5–13) were used as an accusation by Antipater (*Ant.* XVII.237, *BJ* II.30) and the Jews (*Ant.* XVII.313, *BJ* II.89–90), in whose speeches the prevailing parallel is that between the blood of the people and their sacrificial victims.<sup>28</sup> To Josephus, the murders committed in the Temple by the terrorist *sicarii* (whom he calls ‘brigands’, *λησται*) were a sign of impiety, which caused the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans (*Ant.* XX.165–6).

Pollution in the Temple could also be caused by any act contravening Jewish ritual regulations. Josephus attributes the death of Antiochus Epiphanes to his defiling of the Temple; Antiochus had sacrificed swine in the Temple and bespattered it with their grease

<sup>27</sup> On Pompey entering the Temple, see also *Ant.* XIV.71–2, *BJ* I.152.

<sup>28</sup> See also *Ant.* IX.151–2, XI.297–301.



(*Ant.* XII.359, and for the defiling XII.246–56, XIII.243, *BJ* I.31–5). During the governorship of Coponius in Judaea another kind of pollution was due to the Samaritans, who scattered human bones in the Temple's porticoes (*Ant.* XVIII.29).

The presence of statues in the Temple area was forbidden, and that is why the Jews were against Herod's golden eagle (*Ant.* XVII.151–6), also against Pilate's introduction of busts to the Temple (*Ant.* XVIII.55–9), and against Gaius' desire to have his statue placed there (*Ant.* XVIII.261–309, *BJ* II.184–203).<sup>29</sup>

### People

From a very few references in his text, one can see that Josephus follows the biblical tradition according to which the servants of the Jewish cult were traditionally appointed by Moses (*Ant.* III.188–92, Aaron as High Priest; *Ant.* III.197–8, consecration of the priests; *ibid.* 258, consecration of the Levites as assistants).

The High Priesthood in Josephus becomes the national symbol of coherence. Even the keeping of the High Priest's vestments gave authority to the ruler of each period (*Ant.* XV.403–9, XVIII.90–5).

For Josephus, the High Priest, invested with both religious and non-religious duties, is in effect the human who comes first after God (*Apion* II.194). The High Priest directs ceremonies of worldwide significance, and is revered by people from all over the world (*BJ* IV.323–4).<sup>30</sup> Josephus provides us with a brief description of the High-Priestly vestments (*Ant.* III.159–78, *BJ* V.231–6). Giving the details of how these were made, he surprises us with his exaggerated citation of botanical parallels! Josephus does not insist much on symbolisms; however, he briefly cites the allegories attached to the High-Priestly robe (*Ant.* III.184–7).

Josephus considers the lawful succession of High Priests as an important aspect of Jewish history; he presents the succession of High Priests even before the erection of the Temple, and onwards (*Ant.* V.361–2, VII.110, VIII.12, X.151). He appears really concerned

<sup>29</sup> Philo's treatise *De legatione ad Gaium*, which is not dependent on the Pentateuch, is a kind of a chronicle of Gaius' decision to appropriate the sacred area of the Temple for his statue. As Philo says, this decision was to affect not only a Jewish population, but the whole Jewish nation (*De leg.* 184). Philo's statement sufficiently proves that, for both Jerusalem and Diaspora Jews, the religious character of the Temple was incontestable.

<sup>30</sup> A very good account of the High Priesthood in Josephus is given by Thoma (1989).

when the High Priesthood is illegally occupied by unworthy men (*BJ* IV.147–9, 153–7), or when it is not invested with the political power it used to have (*Ant.* XIV.77–8, 491). The fullest enumeration of High Priests is contained in *Ant.* XX.224–51: it starts from Aaron and goes on until the time of Titus, and this is the most representative proof of Josephus' perception of continuity.

During Jewish festivals a large number of private individuals came to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices (*Ant.* IV.203–4 on the three annual pilgrim festivals, XVII.214 on Passover, 254 on Pentecost, *BJ* II.515 on Tabernacles). People could come to Jerusalem independently of the festivals, for instance, for the accomplishment of a personal wish to visit the sacred place. This, for example, was what motivated Helen from Adiabene to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving in the Temple (*Ant.* XX.49). Individuals could offer thanksgiving sacrifices in a military context, as in the case of Judas Maccabaeus, who offered sacrifices to celebrate his victories and the safety of his army (*Ant.* XII.349).

The gathering of people in the wide area of the Temple during religious festivals was not only a chance for Jews to strengthen their faith in the Law; it was also an opportunity for revolt and lynching: Alexander Jannaeus was pelted by the people with citrons as he was about to sacrifice. The people did not remain unpunished (*Ant.* XIII.372–3). Josephus gives a very vivid account of the insidious methods used by the terrorist *sicarii* in the Temple during Jewish festivals (*Ant.* XX.165, *BJ* II.255).

### Sacrifices

Public sacrifices were offered on the basis of the biblical regulations. But they could also be offered for the kings who ruled or controlled the Judaeian territory. Such was the sacrifice offered for the Roman emperor (*Apion* II.76–7, *BJ* II.197, see below). Josephus also refers to the sacrificial offering for the Persian rulers (*Ant.* XI.17, 102).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ant.* XI.17: Cyrus' letter to the satraps in Syria is invented by Josephus; there he talks about the wish accompanying Jewish sacrifices that *the kingdom of Persia may endure*. In *Ant.* XI.102, where Josephus mentions Jewish sacrifices for *the well-being of the king and the Persians*, he somewhat alters the biblical text, which is actually talking about wishes for *the life of the king and his children*. So, are these elements some kind of anachronism having to do with Josephus' personal pro-Roman sentiments, evident throughout the *Jewish War*?

Josephus strongly appreciates the offering of sacrifices during wars, as in the case of Antiochus Sidetes who, during the siege of Jerusalem, sent Hyrcanus I victims and spices as a sacrifice for the feast of Tabernacles (*Ant.* XIII.241–4). Of course, such chivalries could also become an opportunity for deceit, as in the case of the besieged Aristobulus II, who paid for Passover victims which he never received (*Ant.* XIV.25–7).

Public animal sacrifices could continue to be offered even during difficult circumstances, as, for instance, when Pompey captured the Temple: the priests continued to make the daily offerings as if nothing had happened, and they were slaughtered during their ministry (*BJ* I.148–51, *Ant.* XIV.65–8). The offering of public sacrifices would only cease for special reasons. Thus, at the beginning of the Jewish War, the sacrifice on behalf of the Romans and the emperor was rejected following an order—even if, according to Josephus, there were hostile reactions to this decision (*BJ* II.409–10). Josephus also narrates how, during the siege of Jerusalem, Titus learnt that the daily sacrifices had ceased to be offered because of lack of men—or lambs, according to a different reading (*BJ* VI.94).

Throughout the centuries, the selling of sacrificial animals, or other goods of religious character, must have made the Temple into a powerful magnet for merchants.<sup>32</sup>

### *Sacrifice outside the Temple*

In several parts of his work, Josephus describes the building of two temples other than the one in Jerusalem. These are the Samaritan temple, which was allegedly erected with the permission of Alexander the Great (see mainly *Ant.* XI.302–47 on the events surrounding its construction, XIII.254–8 on its destruction), and the Temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, which was built in the second century BC by Onias, a person of priestly origin (see mainly *Ant.* XII.385–8, XIII.62–73 on its construction, *BJ* VII.420–36 on its construction and destruction).

Josephus gives no details about the ritual conducted in those temples, apart from the reference to the priestly personnel at Leontopolis, who, as he says, belonged to the Jerusalem religious personnel (*Ant.* XIII.73).

<sup>32</sup> See Jeremias (1969), 46–9, although he relies largely on rabbinic material. Also Goodman (1999), 73.

The overall impression one gets from these accounts in Josephus is that the two temples represented marginal sects and did not enjoy the honours paid to the Temple in Jerusalem. But, on the other hand, this could be the result of our not having other evidence for the ritual conducted in these temples.

Here it is interesting to cite two mishnaic passages, which show that, even after AD 70, the rabbis were perfectly aware of the existence of other Jewish cultic centres, which they did not think it sacrilegious to mention. Indeed, at some points the text betrays a positive attitude towards them:

The first passage is found at the end of the tractate Zebahim (ch. 14), and is a strange flashback to early Jewish religion, when there was no Temple. At that time, legitimacy of sacrifices of various designations and their consumption followed the legitimacy of the cultic 'high places'.<sup>33</sup>

The second passage of historical importance explicitly refers to the temple at Leontopolis, and, strikingly, belongs to the tractate dealing with meal-offerings (Menahoth):

[If he said] 'I pledge myself to offer a Whole-offering', he must offer it in the Temple. And if he offered it in the House of Onias he has not fulfilled his obligation. [If he said,] 'I will offer it in the House of Onias', he should offer it in the Temple, but if he offered it in the House of Onias he has fulfilled his obligation. R. Simeon says: Such is not accounted a Whole-offering... If priests have ministered in the House of Onias they may not minister in the Temple in Jerusalem; still more does this apply to [priests who have ministered in] that other matter;... they may share and they may eat [of the Holy Things] but they may not offer sacrifice. (Men. 13.10, tr. Danby)

### *Rome and sacrifices in the Jewish Temple*

Philo's treatise *De legatione ad Gaium* narrates the events relating to the Jewish embassy to the emperor Gaius. This embassy took place after Gaius expressed his wish to introduce his statue into the Temple. As already noted, Philo was among the members of the embassy.

In the course of his praise of the reverence which Augustus showed toward the Jewish Temple, Philo refers to the sacrifices which Augustus first ordered to be offered:

<sup>33</sup> On the 'high places', see de Vaux (1973<sup>3</sup>), 284–8.

*De leg.* 157

προστάξας καὶ διαιωνίους ἀνάγεσθαι θυσίας ἐντελεχεῖς ὀλοκαύτους καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων προσόδων ἀπαρχὴν τῷ ὑψίστῳ θεῷ, αἷ καὶ μέχρι νῦν ἐπιτελοῦνται καὶ εἰς ἅπαν ἐπιτελεσθήσονται, μῆνυμα τρόπων ὄντως αὐτοκρατορικῶν.

(sc. Augustus) ordered that for all time continuous sacrifices of whole burnt offerings should be carried out every day at his own expense as a tribute to the most high God. And these sacrifices are maintained to the present day and will be maintained for ever to tell the story of a character truly imperial. (Loeb tr.)

In the same treatise Philo informs us about the nature of these offerings: two lambs and a bull (317, Agrippa's letter). In fact, Philo does not specify for whom the sacrifices were offered, but scholars usually assume that they were offered for the emperor as such, since Augustus paid for them. So, we should stress that only after this assumption is made can we correlate the evidence in Philo with that found in Josephus.

Josephus talks about sacrifices on behalf of the emperor and the Roman people (*περὶ μὲν Καίσαρος καὶ τοῦ δήμου τῶν Ῥωμαίων*), and reports that these were offered twice a day (*BJ* II.197), and were borne financially by the Jewish people (*Apion* II.77).<sup>34</sup> According to the same author, sacrifices paid for by Gentiles, along with that offered on behalf of (*ὑπέρ*) the Romans and the emperor,<sup>35</sup> ceased to be offered at the beginning of the Jewish War (*BJ* II.409–10).

An interesting detail from Philo is the reaction of Gaius to the statement of the Jewish ambassadors that, on three occasions, Jews honoured the emperor with thanksgiving holocausts on his behalf. Gaius would have preferred sacrifices offered *to* him (*De leg.* 355–7).

### *The Temple's resources for the festal animal sacrifices*

According to the pre-Exilic tradition, which is alive in Josephus' mind, the imposition of the annual poll-tax of half-a-shekel on all Jews is attributed to Aaron (*Ant.* III.194–6, see *Exod.* 30: 11–16): 'The sum thus collected was expended upon the needs of the tabernacle'

<sup>34</sup> If Josephus means the same offering, there is an inconsistency with Philo, on which see Schürer (1973–87), vol. 2, p. 312.

<sup>35</sup> Or, according to some MSS, 'on behalf of the Romans, (that is) on behalf of the emperor'.

(*Ant.* III.196, Loeb tr.). Apparently, what is meant by ‘needs’ also includes the sacrifices offered by the community, even if this is not explicitly stated.

Philo’s reference to the half-shekel, which he calls ‘firstfruits’ (*ἀπαρχαί*) and ‘ransom-money’ (*λύτρα*), is not explicitly connected to sacrifices either (*De spec. legibus* 1, 76–8): ‘For it is on these firstfruits, as prescribed by the law, that the hopes of the pious rest’ (*ibid.* 78, Loeb tr.). According to Josephus, since its imposition, the tax became an obligatory contribution to the Temple, paid by all Jews, even those outside Jerusalem (*Ant.* XVIII.312). This tax was an incontestable right of the Jews, and they fought for it strongly, as becomes obvious in the later period (*Ant.* XVI.163, 167, 169, 171).<sup>36</sup> After the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 the same amount would be required by Vespasian to be given to the Capitolium by all Jews (*BJ* VII.218).<sup>37</sup>

A clearer connection between the poll-tax and animal sacrifices is made only in the Mishnah, in the tractate Shekalim (the shekel dues) of the second division *Moed* (set feasts): ‘What did they do with the *Terumah*? They bought therewith the Daily Whole-offerings and the Additional Whole-offerings and their drink-offerings, the Omer and the Two Loaves and the Shewbread, and all [else needful for] the offerings of the congregation’ (Shek.4.1, tr. Danby). *Terumah* (here) = shekels taken at stated times out of the Shekel-chamber in the Temple.

### *The historical dimension of animal sacrifice after AD 70*

The creation of the mishnaic order *Kodashim* in a period when there was no Temple made Neusner wonder about the purpose of the document. I think that his answer to the question misses quite an important point, and this is what I shall argue for here. Some quotations from Neusner are necessary: ‘True, moving out of the locative world of Temple, sanctuary, and sacrifice, and into a frame focused upon community and upon activity possible anywhere (among people of a certain sort), Mishnah by no means presents maps of a world of nonsense. From one perspective, it outlines the

<sup>36</sup> Strikingly, when Josephus exposes the various privileges given to the Jews by Romans in *Ant.* XIV.190 ff., there is no clear reference to this tax. On the contrary, its presence in bk. XVI is very conspicuous.

<sup>37</sup> On this issue, see Goodman (1989).

terrain and the route from cult to community, from cosmology to anthropology.<sup>38</sup> And also: ‘the division also makes certain a temple will not be brought into existence, since it insists upon Jerusalem alone, when there is no Jerusalem. That is the really powerful, anti-contextual datum of our division.’<sup>39</sup> ‘The pretense that nothing has changed in 500 years... and that the ancient system goes forward unaffected by change and by time is the most eloquent apologetic.’<sup>40</sup> The rabbis of the Mishnah ‘do not permit the rebuilding of a cult. But they do everything they can to preserve concrete facts—not merely a generalized memory—about the one which has been destroyed. That must mean they wanted the Temple rebuilt and the cult restored’.<sup>41</sup>

To one who has not read the Mishnah and relies on Neusner’s presentation, the rabbis are depicted as follows: dreamers about a glorious past, so obsessed with it that they pretend that nothing has changed up to the present, and try still to live in the past by recreating its reality.<sup>42</sup> Certainly, this is not the picture coming out of the Mishnah itself. The rabbis are fully aware of the fact that the Temple has been destroyed, and they do not hesitate to say so, even if they confuse things somewhat (here the events of AD 70 with those of AD 135): ‘On the ninth of Ab the decree was made against our forefathers that they should not enter the land, the first Temple and the second [Temple] were destroyed, Betar was taken, and the city was ploughed up...’ (Taanith 4.6, tr. Neusner). In any case, the rabbis know well that their legislation can apply to a period when the Temple is not there. This is obvious even from our division, *Kodashim*: in the tractate Hullin (beginnings of chapters 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12), where the limits of application of certain ritual laws are drawn, a standard phrase about two periods of time has the Temple as an indicator: ‘[The requirement to] cover up the blood applies in the Land and abroad, *in the time of the Temple and not in the time of the Temple...*’ (Hull. 6.1, tr. Neusner, my emphasis).

As we have seen, Neusner has tried to *extract* mishnaic information about whether the rabbis wanted the restoration of the Temple,

<sup>38</sup> Neusner (1979*b*), 110–11.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 119.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 121.

<sup>42</sup> Thus, rabbis sound like F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Great Gatsby, when he asks: “‘Can’t repeat the past?’ he cried incredulously. “Why of course you can!’” (*The Great Gatsby*, ch. 6).

or did not. He need not have looked for it, since it is explicitly stated at the end of the description of the daily sacrifice: 'This is the order of the daily whole offering in the liturgy of the house of our God. May it be [his] will that it be rebuilt, soon, in our own days. Amen' (Tam. 7.3, tr. Neusner). This wish invalidates Neusner's statement about the mishnaic utopia, and its supposed move from 'cult to community'. In other words, Neusner wanted to spiritualize a work which is totally made out of this world, and is based on the hope that the Temple will be rebuilt—sooner or later—and everything will be in order again. With this in mind, we can see the whole Mishnah in a totally different light, as a kind of schedule for the future. Until that future was reached, the rabbis might have thought that Jews should prepare themselves by abiding by the mishnaic rules.

Despite the historical evidence for the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, a quite acute question in modern scholarship has been whether sacrifices continued to be offered after that date, until the banishment of the Jews from the Holy Land in AD 135.<sup>43</sup> Several opinions have been expressed, but the early evidence, either archaeological or literary, is too scanty, and so scholars have used texts dating later than the second century AD, that is, Talmudic extracts. However, even in the Mishnah passages such as the following are quite suggestive: 'R. Joshua said: I have heard that sacrifices may be offered although there is no Temple and that they may eat the Most Holy things although there are no curtains and the Lesser Holy things and the Second Tithe although there is no wall; since its [i.e. the Temple's] first dedication sanctified it both for its own time and for the time to come' (Eduyoth 8.6, tr. Danby).

Among the scholars who have worked on the issue, I agree with some points made by A. Guttman,<sup>44</sup> who drew the distinction between private and public sacrificial offerings. He stressed that passages like the one above give evidence for private offerings, while, at the same time, presuppose the cessation of private sacrificial cult. As regards public offerings, the cessation is explicitly stated. Thus, Taanith 4.6 says that the Tamid ceased on the seventeenth of the month Tammuz (the Greek month Panemos): "Ceased" here

<sup>43</sup> A short account of the scholarship on the subject is given in Clark (1959–60), 270–1.

<sup>44</sup> Guttman (1967).



means that it never was restored, for otherwise this would have been recorded, the Tamid being a very important public sacrifice.<sup>45</sup>

The evidence drawn from Josephus corroborates the cessation of public sacrifices. In *BJ* VI.94, Josephus says about Titus:

ἐπέπυστο γὰρ ἐπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας, Πανέμου δ' ἦν ἑπτακαιδεκάτῃ, τὸν ἐνδεδεχισμὸν καλούμενον ἀνδρῶν/ἀρνῶν ἀπορία διαλελοιπέναι τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἐπὶ τούτῳ δεινῶς ἀθυμεῖν.

Then, having learnt that on that day—it was the seventeenth of Panemus—the so-called continual sacrifice had for lack of men/lambs ceased to be offered to God and that the people were in consequence terribly despondent . . . (Loeb tr.)

If Jewish sacrificial ritual ever started again after the seventeenth of Panemus, Josephus was not obliged to mention it, since he is supposed to narrate the events of the war, up to AD 70. However, I doubt whether the social or financial problems (indicated by the lack of men or lambs, respectively, according to the reading adopted) occurring at the end of the war, and prohibiting the offering of public sacrifices,<sup>46</sup> would have been solved so quickly as to allow the resumption of public sacrificial ritual. So, it is more than likely that Jewish public sacrifices stopped in AD 70.

As Guttman has also stressed, what is more surprising is that there is no rabbinic regulation condemning private offerings. The rabbis are concerned about the legitimacy of the sacrifices offered, and not about the fact that they were offered (see Eduyoth 8.6, quoted above). Consequently, if sacrifices continued to be offered by Jews after AD 70, these were private, and were not considered as illegitimate by the rabbis.

In the case of Greek religion, we have seen that no event similar to the Fall of the Jewish Temple is known, and that, in the period we are studying, continuity in sacrificial practice was just taken for granted. In the case of Judaism, where we do know of an event interrupting the sacrificial procedure, the issue of continuity in sacrificial practice presents the following paradox: Josephus is obsessed with historical

<sup>45</sup> Guttman (1967), 140.

<sup>46</sup> Despite Clark's admission of the general impoverishment after the imposition of the  *Fiscus Judaicus* (*Jos. BJ* VII.218), the author still thinks that public sacrificial ritual 'would have been carried on with only a minimum of restoration of the holy premises, and in less grandeur of ritualistic style'. Clark (1959–60), 273.

continuity, and yet he does not provide us with evidence for sacrificial continuity. He, who delineates the history of the Jews and their Temple in detail, who was a priest and experienced the destruction of the official centre of Jewish sacrificial worship in AD 70, does not feel the need to wonder about the extent to which sacrificial cult was practised by Jews after the fall of the Temple. On the other hand, Jewish authors writing in about AD 200 do not present events in their historical dimension, yet they bear witness to a concept of continuity, since they remain strongly attached to the sacrificial cult in the Temple, and hope for its restoration.

## 2. Structural Presentation

### *Philo*

#### **Prologue: Philo's attachment to animal sacrificial practice and his possible impact**

Most of this presentation is based on Philo. The reason why Philo's work concerns us more in the structural section results, of course, from the fact that a large part of his work deals with Jewish sacrificial ritual, since a large proportion of the Pentateuch does so. Yet, on the other hand, this characteristic serves to illustrate Philo's attachment to the Law from a more specific point of view, namely animal sacrifice. Philo's laborious work on the Pentateuch contains a great number of allegorizations pertaining to Jewish animal sacrifice. These concern the place where animal sacrifice was carried out, its ministers, the individual offerer of animal sacrifices, and, most interestingly, the body of the animal victim itself.

Scholars like Goodenough and Sandmel have emphasized that Philo was a pious Jew, but what is absent from their analysis is the pragmatic element in Philo's thought, the reality of animal sacrifice in all its gory details as Philo read about it in the Bible, or even as he himself experienced it. Much as one would like to present Philo's transcendent philosophical reality, one should not forget that Philo's philosophy is based to a great extent on concrete sacrificial regulations. It is as if scholars have been so influenced by Philo's allegorical method that they too try to avoid any reference to Philo's citation of vivid sacrificial

regulations. The structural presentation in this chapter partly undermines the scholarly idealized image of a Philo who likes the world of ideas more than naturalistic descriptions.<sup>47</sup>

The presentation below sets Philo in the framework of a number of Jews who, although prone to adopt less pragmatic interpretations of the Law, did not regard these as undermining their belief in the value of sacrificial ritual.

The minute details of animal sacrificial ritual contained in the Pentateuch, especially Leviticus, did not deter Philo from interpreting even the smallest elements in it. As we shall see, he did that not only by allegorization, but by giving functional explanations. In fact, this is evident in the most practical aspect of all in the sacrificial procedure, namely consumption of meat, which Philo does not allegorize, but which he explains in a practical way (see e.g. *De spec. legibus* 1, 220). This shows that to Philo animal sacrificial ritual was as important as the rest of the Jewish Law, and acceptable in all its gory details, without any need for sublimation being felt on his part. Although he was a Jew of the Diaspora, and Temple sacrificial practice was not part of his life, Philo considered animal sacrificial ritual to be crucial to his religious conscience.

Philo's allegorizations of the Pentateuch do not indicate any contempt for ritual on his part. To Philo, animal sacrifices are the other side of the gratefulness, the purity, and the holy and true life, which should characterize the offerer.

The most famous example of Philo's opposition to the abolition of cult almost comes as a proclamation. In *De migratione Abrahami* (89–93), Philo blames some people (εἰσὶ γὰρ τινες) who concentrate on the symbolism of the Law and despise its literal meaning (from here onwards, they will be called 'allegorists'). Those people, says Philo, should obey the rules which other, greater men had fixed before them. Sabbath, festivals, and circumcision should be kept, for otherwise, 'we shall be ignoring the rites of the Temple and a thousand other things, if we are going to pay heed to nothing except

<sup>47</sup> An exception to this rule is Klawans (2006), who admits that Philo's allegories do not lead 'to any rejection of sacrifices on the literal, performative level' (p. 117). However, he is also obsessed with superimposing his own scheme onto Philo's allegories by underplaying the variety in Philonic allegorizations (see esp. his last paragraph on p. 121).

what is shewn us by the inner meaning of things' (*De migratione Abrahami* 92, Loeb tr., slightly modified<sup>48</sup>). Philo does not go on to explain why abolition of the Temple ritual would be bad, but it is obvious that for Philo such a thing constitutes the last stage of decay in the life of Jews.<sup>49</sup>

Elsewhere, before describing the offerer's bodily preparation before sacrifice, Philo dedicates a section to the cleansing of the soul (*De spec. legibus* 1, 257–60). He says that, while the offerer's body is to be cleansed through the rite of the red heifer, the soul is to be purified through the observation of the animals offered for sacrifice. On seeing the flawless animal,

you (*sc.* the offerer) will proceed to wash away the sins (*ἀμαρτήματα*) and defilements (*κηλίδας*) with which you have besmeared your whole life, some involuntary and accidental, some due to your own free will. For you will find that all this careful scrutiny of the animal is a symbol representing in a figure the reformation of your own conduct, for the law does not prescribe for unreasoning creatures, but for those who have mind and reason. It is anxious not that the victims (*θύόμενα*) should be without flaw but that those who offer them (*θύοντες*) should not suffer from any corroding passion. (*De spec. legibus* 1, 259–60, Loeb tr.)

This passage is very characteristic of Philo's interpretative technique: according to Philo, the Law's main preoccupation is the soul of the offerer, and not the body of the victim; but the offerer would be reminded of his/her soul only on seeing the concrete offerings, namely the unblemished animal victims.

Philo gives two reasons for the literal, cultic observance of the Law: 'we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols; and besides that we shall not incur the censure of the many and the charges they are sure to bring against us' (*De migratione Abrahami* 93). The second reason might be a hint of the fact that criticism of the many was a serious reason why Philo chose to be attached to cult, although we cannot know if this was his main reason for not abolishing his attachment.

<sup>48</sup> Philo's Loeb edition (vol. 4, p.185) translates the Greek word *ἀγιστεία* by 'sanctity', but I think 'rites' is the correct translation.

<sup>49</sup> For a similar passage, see *De ebrietate* 18.

Despite the fact that Philo can convince his readers of his commitment to animal sacrifice, many passages remain puzzling.<sup>50</sup> For instance, Philo says that, if the offerer is pure, ‘the sacrifice stands firm, though the flesh is consumed, or rather, even if no victim at all is brought to the altar. For the true oblation, what else can it be but the piety of a soul which is dear to God?’ (*De vita Mosis* 2, 108, Loeb tr., slightly modified).<sup>51</sup> A further problem in Philo’s work is the interchange of practical with symbolic explanations. In contexts other than sacrificial, Philo can give functional explanations for the biblical rules, with no aim at finding symbolisms.<sup>52</sup> However, I believe that, having Philo’s clear and explicit statement that he is not against ritual, puzzling passages such as the aforementioned ones should be rather regarded as hyperboles to which Philo’s allegorical zeal led him.

A further point to make concerns the impact of Philo’s teachings on his contemporaries. I suggest that Philo’s writings might have been used for teaching purposes, so his views—and allegorizations—might have been shared by a wider public. I cite the following evidence. At times, Philo is very good at systematically setting out what in the Bible is represented by lengthy and often unclear regulations. Thus, in *De spec. legibus* 1 (168 ff.), Philo makes a very useful presentation of all the different sacrificial types in Jewish cult. I can imagine that this systematic presentation would have been quite helpful for any student of the Law. Moreover, in Philo’s treatment of festal sacrifices in *De spec. legibus* 1, one cannot help noticing that the author presents a synthesis which is different from the biblical one. My overall impression is that Philo rearranged his material in a way which makes it easy to memorize, especially as regards the type and number of animal sacrifices offered at festivals. This is demonstrated by the following facts:

<sup>50</sup> *De spec. legibus* 1, 285–8, 271–2, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* 20–1. In *Questions and Answers on Exodus* (bk. 2, q. 7), Philo places first offerings at the same level as the offerer’s . . . emptiness! Thus he interprets the sentence ‘thou shalt not appear with empty hands before Me’ (Exod. 23: 15c) in two ways: (1) the offerer should come to God with *firstborn and unblemished* offerings; (2) even if materially empty, on approaching God, the worshipper is internally filled with God’s spiritual light.

<sup>51</sup> For the same point, see *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, q. 98. Similar passages in *De spec. legibus* 1, 272, *De plantatione* 108.

<sup>52</sup> Klawans (2006), 117, where he also accepts Philo’s ‘interplay of practical and symbolic explanations’.

- Philo does not strictly follow the biblical succession of festivals;<sup>53</sup>
- he correlates the number of victims offered in a festival with the number of victims of another festival;<sup>54</sup>
- for the same festival, he uses the evidence of Leviticus next to that of Numbers.<sup>55</sup>

I tend to believe that the treatise *De spec. legibus 1* suggests more clearly than any other that Philo taught younger Jews the Law.

In view of the points made above, I think that Philo might have represented the middle way between the allegorists and those believing in the pragmatic value of Jewish rituals, with more inclination to the latter. Also, since Philo's writings were obviously read (or were used for teaching) by other Jews, his whole work on the Pentateuch can be considered to represent a substantial group of Diaspora Jews. It is then important to suggest that a number of Diaspora Jews respected and believed in Jewish ritual, without feeling at odds with an allegorical interpretation of it. Especially the sections on animal sacrifice, which concern us here, show that animal sacrifice continued to have a great importance for Jews living away from Jerusalem.

### 1. The Tent in Philo

To Philo, the Tent is the place for Jewish sacrifices par excellence. Philo's aim is to give a deeper meaning to the text of the Pentateuch, not to the historical books which follow. Consequently, what dominates his work is the Tent and not the Temple, even if there are references to the Temple. What is more, the continuity between Tent and Temple is not so evident in his writings as in Josephus.

<sup>53</sup> Philo presents the festival of Trumpets (*De spec. leg. 1*, 180) before that of Unleavened Bread (*ibid.* 181–2). In the biblical presentation, Trumpets (Lev. 23: 23–5 or Num. 29: 1–6) follows the festival of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23: 6–8 or Num. 28: 17–24).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. his comments on the doubling of the victims offered, in *De spec. leg. 1*, 170 (Sabbath in relation to the daily offering) and 180 (festival of Trumpets in relation to *σουλμνία*).

<sup>55</sup> According to Philo, the victims offered at *Pentecost* are two calves, one ram, and seven lambs. Also two lambs as preservation offerings, which are eaten by the priests (*De spec. leg. 1*, 184). According to Leviticus (23: 15–22), the victims offered at *Pentecost* are one calf, two rams, seven lambs, and two lambs as preservation offerings. According to Numbers (28: 26–31), the victims offered at *Pentecost* are two calves, one ram, and seven lambs. See also *De spec. leg. 1*, 186–8, on the *Day of Atonement*, where Philo combines the accounts in Num. 29: 7–11 and Lev. 16.

To Philo, the Tent is clearly the predecessor of the Temple; the Tent was constructed as a temporary, portable temple, suitable for sacrifices, until the day when the Jews would conquer the land in which a splendid temple would be built (*De vita Mosis* 2, 71–3, *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, q. 83).

Philo's detailed description of the Tent (*De vita Mosis* 2, 76–108) almost recalls the description in Josephus,<sup>56</sup> if the emphasis were not on numbers and allegorization. The elements allegorized by Philo are the colours used for the veils (*ibid.* 84–8), and also the Ark, the Cherubim over it, the candlestick, the table, and the altars for incense and burnt offerings (*ibid.* 94–108).

It is interesting to dwell for a moment on the symbolism of the two altars: the altar of incense symbolizes man's thankfulness for the benefits deriving from earth and water (*ibid.* 101), and that is why it is appropriately (according to Philo) called the vapour-keeper—*θυμια-τήριον* (from *τηρῶ*, *ibid.* 105). In the same way, Philo says, the altar of burnt offerings is called *θυσιασ-τήριον*, because, 'when he thus speaks of the altar which destroys sacrifices as their keeper and guardian he alludes not to the parts and limbs of the victims, whose nature is to be consumed by fire, but to the intention of the offerer' (*De vita Mosis* 2, 106, Loeb tr.).<sup>57</sup>

Elsewhere, emphasizing the social dimension of the table in the Tent, Philo says that it 'indicates a kind of communion among those who receive a common share of salt and sacrifices' (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, q. 69, Loeb tr.).

Dealing with the dimensions of the altar for animal sacrifices, Philo justifies their equality by the equality which the offerings have before God, independently of their quality or quantity; the quadrangular shape of the altar is taken by Philo as a symbol of the sound soul of the offerer (*ibid.* bk. 2, q. 99). The horns of the altar face toward the four sides of the horizon to indicate the duty of every man in the world to bring firstfruits and sacrificial victims to the one altar. On the other hand, the horns are symbols of the non-acceptance of offerings by the impious (*ibid.* q. 101).

<sup>56</sup> Josephus also allegorizes the sacred objects in the Tent or the Temple (*Ant.* III.181–183, *BJ* V.212–14, 217–18), but in a stereotyped way.

<sup>57</sup> The same interpretation of the word *θυσιαστήριον* in *De spec. leg.* 1, 290.

The citations about the Tent prove that Philo recognizes its social character, and stresses the capacity of the one and only Jewish altar, and emphasizes its capacity to create relations among pious offerers, wherever these come from.

## 2. The notion of the 'Temple' in Philo

As I have already stressed, Philo's work concentrates on the Pentateuch. This special characteristic results in the fact that we do not have any detailed description of the Temple, since Philo does not deal with the historical books of the Old Testament.<sup>58</sup> The only place where he gives a short account of the Temple is *De spec. legibus* 1, 66–78, where he mainly emphasizes the social character of the sacred area, as he did when dealing with the Tent.<sup>59</sup>

The Temple, says Philo in this section, is one because God is one, and because God does not approve of the offering of sacrifices at home. God sets a sort of ordeal for the pious: if one is willing to sacrifice, one does not care about distance; consequently, if people are to come to the Temple out of piety and only that, they have to leave their families. To Philo, Jews seem to have succeeded in this ordeal (the building of the Temple was already a proof of their piety), since so many of them come to the festivals every year:

Countless multitudes from countless cities come, some over land, others over sea, from east and west and north and south at every festival. . . . they devote the leisure, as is their bounden duty, to holiness and the honouring of God. Friendships are formed between those who hitherto knew not each other, and the sacrifices and libations are the occasion of reciprocity of feeling and constitute the surest pledges that all are of one mind. (*De spec. legibus* 1, 69–70, Loeb tr.)

<sup>58</sup> The same observation is to be found in the appendix of vol. 7 in the Loeb edition of Philo. Explaining the reason for the inaccuracy of Philo's description of the Temple, the commentator says (p. 619): '...that the description should be slight is natural enough. He is expounding the laws of the Pentateuch and these did not provide for the building which would be needed when the nation was settled in Palestine... but only for a portable sanctuary.' I am not sure about the rest of the comment: 'This last... was fully described... and the omission of any such description here may be due to a feeling that this one part of the law had been definitely suspended.'

<sup>59</sup> To Philo, the holiest temple of God is the world, and only after that does he refer to the Temple: *Τὸ μὲν ἀνωτάτω καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερὸν θεοῦ νομίζειν τὸν σύμπαντα χρῆ κόσμον εἶναι...* (*De spec. leg.* 1, 66). See also *De opificio mundi* 55, where the sky is called *ἱερὸν καθαρώτατον*. The world is also God's perceptible house/temple/city: *De somniis* 1, 185–8 (*οἶκος θεοῦ*), 215 (*ἱερὸν θεοῦ*); *De somniis* 2, 248 (*πόλις θεοῦ*).



Philo does acknowledge the sanctity of the Jerusalem Temple, and its importance for the creation of relationships between Jews from all over the world. Though we cannot know whether he exaggerates in his representation of the multitudes coming to the Temple, it is certain that only if he had witnessed a considerable confluence of worshippers could he have written such a description.

### 3. The High Priest in Philo

Philo's insistence on the role of the High Priest has been noted by scholars.<sup>60</sup> His long expositions relating to the High-Priestly robe<sup>61</sup> suggest that these allegories must have been familiar among Jews.<sup>62</sup> Apart from describing his vestments, Philo very often deals with the regulations on the life and behaviour of the High Priest.<sup>63</sup>

(a) *The role of the High Priest* The High Priest is presented as praying and giving thanks not only on behalf of the Jewish nation, but of the whole human race, and, generally, on behalf of the whole natural world (*De spec. legibus* I, 97).

The High Priest is not only a servant of God, but of his nation as well; this is said by Philo when he explains why the sin offerings<sup>64</sup> required of the people are of the same species and gender as those required of the High Priest (see below, section 5, on the allegorizations of animals): 'But the equality of honour which the high priest enjoys is evidently not so much on his own account as because he is the servant of the nation also, giving thanks in common for all through the holiest of prayers and the purest of sacrifices' (*ibid.* 229, Loeb tr.).

<sup>60</sup> See e.g. Laporte (1991), although he does not employ a clear distinction of categories: 'High Priest', 'ordinary priest', 'Logos', and 'wise man' are all dealt with together.

<sup>61</sup> The most thorough Philonic descriptions of the High Priestly robe are *De vita Mosi* 2, 109–35 and *De spec. leg.* 1, 84–97.

<sup>62</sup> At least this must be our assumption, when we read Josephus' report on the oracular flashing of the stones on the High Priest's robe (indicating God's presence or victory). This flashing, says Josephus, stopped 200 years before he wrote the *Antiquities* (*Ant.* III.214–18).

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. on the regulations concerning his marriage: *De spec. leg.* 1, 101–10, to which Philo gives some explanation of his own; also *De fuga et inventione* 114. On the High Priest's integrity: *De spec. leg.* 1, 80, *De somniis* 2, 185. On his contact with corpses: *De spec. leg.* 1, 112–16, *De fuga et inventione* 113.

<sup>64</sup> On the various kinds of individual offerings, to which 'sin offering' belongs, and on the complications of the terms used, see below, sec. 6.

Changing somewhat the biblical text of Leviticus 4: 3,<sup>65</sup> Philo exalts the purity of the High Priest, who never commits sins deliberately; if the High Priest ever slips, the reason is the nation's fault (*De spec. legibus* 1, 230). And, even in that case, the flesh of the victim representing him is not eaten, but consumed by fire, because (a) there is no other intercessor apart from the High Priest, and (b) the sins of the virtuous are like the righteous acts of the many (ibid. 244–5).<sup>66</sup>

(b) *The High Priest in the Holy of Holies* On the Day of Atonement, one of the greatest Jewish festivals, the High Priest, and only he, was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. The only pragmatic description made by Philo with regard to the Day of Atonement is inaccurate, but at the same time extremely amusing:

For all inside is unseen except by the high priest alone, and indeed he, though charged with the duty of entering once a year, gets no view of anything. For he takes with him a brazier full of lighted coals and incense, and the great quantity of vapour which this naturally gives forth covers everything around it, beclouds the eyesight and prevents it from being able to penetrate to any distance. (*De spec. legibus* 1, 72, Loeb tr.)

Philo considers to be very significant the fact that on the Day of Atonement the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies having taken off his decorated full-length robe. Philo even says that the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies naked (!): 'to pour as a libation the blood of the soul and to offer as incense the whole mind to God our Saviour and Benefactor' (*Legum allegoria* 2, 56, Loeb tr.).

In the treatise *Quis rerum divinarum heres* (82–4), Philo uses the image of the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies as a justification of a tautology in the Bible, namely 'he led him out outside' (ἐξήγαγεν δὲ αὐτὸν ἔξω, Gen. 15: 5). On the day of Atonement the High Priest is at the same time 'in' and 'out': his body might seem to be in the Holy of Holies, but his mind is out of this world. That is why he is not a man 'until he comes out' (ἕως ἂν ἐξέλθῃ, Lev. 16: 17), that is, until his mind is in the heavens.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> In the expression 'if the High Priest sins' (Lev. 4: 3), Philo adds the adverb 'involuntarily' (*De spec. leg. 1*, 230), which he takes from the previous verse. See the Loeb edition, vol. 7, p. 233, note b.

<sup>66</sup> On the High Priest's unsinfulness, see also *De fuga et inventione* 108.

<sup>67</sup> Of course, this is a wrong interpretation of Lev. 16: 17, where the meaning is that nobody can enter the Temple before the priest comes out of it.

(c) *Sacrificial allegorizations* Extremely interesting are the passages where Philo finds parallels between the High-Priestly robe and sacrificial victims. Trying to justify the division of the sacrificial victims, Philo brings forward as corroborative evidence the division into equal parts of many things; among them there is the High-Priestly robe, whose emeralds with the symbols of the tribes of Israel are equally set on the right and on the left side (*Quis rerum div. heres*, 176).

The colours of the animals in Jacob's vision are to be found in the High-Priestly vestments and ritual gestures (*De somniis* 1, 213–17): before sacrificing, the High Priest must purify himself with ashes and water—this corresponds to the ash-sprinkled animals in Jacob's vision. Then, the High Priest is to wear his robe with the variegated breastplate on it—which stands for the variegated animals in the same vision. And, finally, on the Day of Atonement the High Priest is to wear the pure-white linen robe, which corresponds to the pure-white animals in the vision.

Puzzling also is the question about the *petalon* (a part of the High Priest's headgear): its purity is compared with the purity of a lamb! (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, q. 121).

Philo has numerous references to the High Priesthood. He believes that this office is invested with the highest prestige, and only worthy men can have it. The High Priesthood is of cosmic significance, and in it all parts of the world are connected both with one another and with God. The High Priest is not only invested with a cosmic role, but also with a universal one, since he is the mediator between all humans and God.

#### 4. The ordinary Temple staff in Philo

As regards the ordinary Temple staff, here I focus on passages in Philo which mainly concern the relation of the ordinary priests to the procedure of animal sacrifice.

Where the original appointment of the priests by Moses is described, Philo identifies the offering of sacrifices as the task only of those worthy of performing it, and so he gives a special value to the priests: 'the most suitable persons should be chosen as priests, and learn in good time how they should proceed to bring the offerings to the altar and perform the holy rites' (*De vita Mosis* 2, 141, Loeb tr.).<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> The High Priest only exceptionally went up to the altar to offer sacrifices along with the priests (Jos. *BJ* V.230).

According to Philo, sacrifices also define the way in which the priestly garments are made: the clothes which the priest wears consist of a linen tunic and breeches. The tunic allows the priest to move quickly and freely, when he has to carry the victims, the libations, and, in general, everything related to sacrifices. The breeches are needed because, during his ministry before the altar, the priest must have the lower part of his body covered (*De spec. legibus* 1, 83).<sup>69</sup>

Emphasizing the importance of the division of victims, and in general, of everything (*De agricultura* 127–30), Philo provides us with an item of information about priests. He mentions that some people are assigned to carry out the job of scrutinizing the animals, and that these people are called by some *μωμοσκόποι* (flaw-spiers, *ibid.* 130). As this term is not to be found in the Septuagint, it is presumably a term coined by Greek-speaking Jews. Talking elsewhere about flaw-spiers, Philo does not use the term *μωμοσκόποι*, but specifies that these were a very special category of priests, and describes their duties: ‘the most highly approved of the priests, selected as most suitable for the inspection of flaws, examine the victims from the head to the extremities of the feet, both the visible parts and those which are concealed under the belly and thighs, for fear that some small blemish has passed unobserved’ (*De spec. legibus* 1, 166, Loeb tr., slightly modified). After this naturalistic description, Philo seems to recall himself to order by means of an allegorization: ‘The examination is carried out with this excessive minuteness in consideration not of the victims offered but of the innocence of those who offer them’ (*ibid.* 167).

The Law orders that the priest be sober during his ministry (*De ebrietate*, 2).<sup>70</sup> The expression used here by Philo is *νηφάλια θύειν*, which literally refers to the wineless offerings of the priests. The shift from the quality of the victim to that of the offerer is a strange one, and is also to be found in Sophocles and Plutarch.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> On the priestly garments, see also *De vita Mosis* 2, 144, in the context of the original ‘investiture’ of the Levitical tribe. Josephus informs us that the physically defective, and thus non-officiating, priests wore ordinary clothes: *BJ* V.228.

<sup>70</sup> See also *De spec. leg.* 4, 188–92, where Philo explains the regulation ordering the priests’ sobriety by the necessity of their having clear thinking during their making of decisions.

<sup>71</sup> *Oed. Col.* 100, and *Mor.* 464C, 132E, respectively; see the illuminating note in the Loeb edition, vol. 8, p. 436.

Philo identifies the great number of sacrifices as the main reason for the appointment of Temple attendants: ‘Many sacrifices were necessarily brought every day, and particularly at general assemblies and festivals, on behalf both of individuals and all in common, and for a multitude of different reasons. This piety shewn by so populous a nation made it needful to have also a number of temple attendants to help in the sacred services’ (*De vita Mosis* 2, 159, Loeb tr.).

The reason for the appointment of the Levites as Temple attendants, and the historical explanation of the distinction between priests and Temple attendants, is to be found in *De vita Mosis* 2, 159–86. Philo’s narration does not clarify how the term ‘Levites’ could designate both the whole tribe and the Temple attendants only, an issue which goes back to the Pentateuch.<sup>72</sup> However, without insisting on the use of terms, he makes clear the difference between two groups of ministers; it lies in their distance from the altar:

Now the consecrated persons consisted of more than one order (*οὐ μία τάξις τῶν ἱερωμένων*). They included both those who were commissioned to penetrate to the inner shrine and offer the prayers (*εὐχάς*) and sacrifices (*θυσίας*) and the other holy rites (*ἱερουργίας*), and those sometimes called temple attendants (*νεωκόροι*) who had none of these duties but had the care and guarding of the sacred building and its contents by day and night. (ibid. 174, Loeb tr.)

As in the case of Greek religion, animal sacrifices were of financial importance for the priests (but not for the Temple attendants), since, among their revenues, the latter received perquisites consisting in parts of the bodies of sacrificial victims (*De spec. legibus* 1, 145–51).<sup>73</sup>

Despite the fact that Philo lived far from Jerusalem, he was quite familiar with the character of the Temple personnel. He was aware of the distinction between higher and lower personnel in the same ‘priestly’ tribe of Levi, but his lack of clarity on the use of the term ‘Levite’ goes back to the Pentateuch. In any case, the distinguishing characteristic of the hierarchically higher staff in the Temple was their purely ritual duties, namely, the offering of sacrifices and prayers.

<sup>72</sup> See de Vaux (1973<sup>3</sup>), 361–6.

<sup>73</sup> From Josephus (*BJ* V.228) we learn that even the priests who could not officiate because of some physical blemish received their birthright portions (*μερίδες*).

## 5. Philo's treatment of animals: overlap of dietary and sacrificial laws; symbolisms

In only a few passages does Philo talk about living animals, either as part of the natural world or as domesticated flocks and herds. In most other instances animals are referred to as sacrificial victims or as edible matter. In this section my emphasis is mainly on passages dealing with the sacrificial aspect of animals.

One should note here that the animal species offered in Jewish sacrifices were oxen, lambs, kids, rams, pigeons, and turtle-doves.<sup>74</sup> Jews never offered swine (see above, pp. 139–40, on Antiochos defiling the Temple); indeed they abstained from eating pork.<sup>75</sup> Jews were also opposed to excessively large offerings of tame animals.<sup>76</sup>

In a passage conveying a small ecological message (*De providentia* 69–72), Philo shifts the blame for the enjoyment of delicious animals from God to man: God is not to blame for the creation of a variety of species, but man is to blame for his gluttony when he eats them. Man's saving grace is the existence of certain people who abstain from every sort of meat and only live on vegetables. The ecological message drawn from the passage is that the variety in nature should not be exploited by man by all means, because variety exists to give beauty to the natural world.

*Animals as food* What is important to our subject is the fact that Philo insists on the distinction between animals suitable for food and animals suitable for sacrifice.<sup>77</sup> He lists ten kinds of animal, distinguishing them into three suitable for sacrifice (sheep, oxen, and goats) and seven suitable for food (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*,

<sup>74</sup> See Leviticus, *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> See Jos. *Apion* II.137.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 138–9.

<sup>77</sup> Despite his approval of vegetarianism, when Philo allegorizes the curse 'thou shalt eat the grass of the field' (Gen. 3: 17), he gives a different meaning to the word 'grass'. In a deprecatory way, he says that grass symbolizes food, typical of an irrational animal, in contrast with divine foods, typical of a rational creature (*Questions and Answers on Genesis*, bk. 1, q. 50).

His position, though, is ambiguous when (in *ibid.* bk. 2, q. 58) he interprets the verse: 'As the herbs of fodder I have given you all things' (Gen. 9: 3). Philo does not exclude an interpretation allowing for the consumption of meat. But he himself would prefer to think that this verse mainly enjoins vegetarianism. The passage is difficult to understand (unfortunately we do not have it in Greek), but it seems that Philo is not absolute with regard to abstinence from meat; it is impossible that everyone should comply with vegetarianism, he says.

bk. 2, q. 101).<sup>78</sup> In *De spec. legibus 1* (162–7) he adds two kinds of birds suitable for sacrifice, that is the turtle-dove and the pigeon;<sup>79</sup> One wonders whether the species offered in sacrifice could also be eaten in a non-ritual context; probably yes, since elsewhere Philo includes sacrificeable birds and land animals among the edible species, without any further specification (*De spec. legibus 4*, 105, 117).

Philo thoroughly analyses Jewish food laws when he specifies which animals were allowed to be eaten, which not, and why (ibid. 100–18). Here we are concerned with cases in which Jewish food laws also have influence on the treatment of sacrificed animals. These cases usually concern prohibitions on eating certain parts of the victim's body, and are treated below.<sup>80</sup> Striving to give reasons for these prohibitions, Philo reaches the peak of his inventiveness.

*Prohibition of blood and fat—their symbolisms* Discussing the undesirability of strangulation (*De spec. legibus 4*, 122–3), Philo takes the opportunity to talk about the law forbidding consumption of blood and fat (*De spec. legibus 4*, 122–5. See Lev. 3: 17, 7: 22–7, 17: 10–14.) Explaining that blood is the essence of the soul, Philo specifies that the soul which is contained in blood is not the reasonable one, but that which makes the senses function. The source for the reasonable soul is the divine spirit of ethereal nature. Philo is carried away in describing the ethereal spirit, and does not dwell much on blood.

However, in the treatise *Questions and Answers on Genesis* (bk. 2, q. 59) Philo discusses the issue more extensively, this time talking about Gen. 9: 4 ('Flesh in the blood of the soul you shall not eat').<sup>81</sup> He says that the soul consists of three parts, nutritive, sense-perceptive, and rational. Spirit is the source of the rational part, and blood is the source of the two others. To prove that blood is the substance of soul, Philo cites the verses from Lev. 17: 11, (bis) 14 ('the soul of all flesh is its

<sup>78</sup> See Deut. 14: 5. There, no distinction is made between the two groups of animals, but Philo combined this passage with the evidence found in Leviticus, where only certain species are referred to as sacrificial victims.

<sup>79</sup> The evidence is again drawn from Leviticus 1: 14.

<sup>80</sup> Philo presents the whole section on food regulations in *De spec. leg. 4* in order to justify the tenth commandment, which forbids desire of other people's belongings. But see the Loeb edition, vol. 8, pp. ix–x.

<sup>81</sup> Here, I do not follow the Loeb edition (suppl. I, *Questions on Genesis*, pp. 144–5), which translates *psychēs* as 'of life'.

blood'). Philo is too willing to separate things material from things immaterial, and he seizes on details in the biblical text to find arguments for this. Thus, he praises the accuracy of the Levitical expression 'soul of all flesh', which confirms that 'flesh' does not imply mind and reflection. He continues, using the biblical text as a proof of his interpretation, by saying that the expression 'blood of the soul' (from Gen. 9: 4) indicates the different nature of blood and soul, with the soul exclusively consisting of spirit, even if in coexistence with blood.<sup>82</sup> Philo's use of non-sacrificial regulations from Genesis along with sacrificial ones from Leviticus confirms the fact, already known from the Pentateuch, that the blood prohibition applied to both religious and secular slaughter.

At a different level, independent of the blood prohibition, and in the context of the sacrifice marking God's Covenant with Israel (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, qq. 35–6), blood acquires an even more important dimension, as it symbolizes the common links created in the community because of the participation in sacrifices (q. 35): 'the blood is a symbol of family kinship' (ibid. q. 36, Loeb tr.). Philo specifies that this is not natural kinship, but one which has its source in unifying wisdom. He hastens to take exception to the similar conditions reigning in pagan sacrifices. Kinship based on wisdom cannot be found among polytheists, since the latter have diverse opinions, which cause disputes (ibid.).

The overlap between religious and secular is also obvious in Philo's reference to the prohibition on fat. Not referring to sacrifice, Philo says that fat is forbidden, because it is the thickest part in the animal's body; so, abstinence from fat leads man to self-restraint and teaches him to prefer toil to things easily acquired (*De spec. leg.* 4, 124).<sup>83</sup> Just

<sup>82</sup> Philo's laborious attempt to separate the material from the immaterial seems contradictory to his statement in *De spec. leg.* 1, 205, where he deals with the use of blood in the case of a burnt offering: according to the relevant regulation in Leviticus (1: 3 ff.), the blood of the burnt offering must be poured in a circle round the altar. Philo says that this act symbolizes the soul's libation. But how could this be true, since in the aforementioned passages Philo struggled to show that blood and soul are of different nature? The key to the answer may be the statement that blood and soul are mixed in the veins and arteries (q. 59 in bk. 2 of *Questions and Answers on Genesis*).

<sup>83</sup> On food regulations in *De spec. leg.* 4, see n. 80 above. Rules about blood and fat are also dealt with in connection with the prohibitions of mixing leaven and blood, and of consuming the fat the following day (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*, bk. 2, qq. 14–15, see Exod. 23: 18).



after this remark, Philo inserts the prohibition on fat in the context of sacrificial cult: ‘... with every victim these two, the blood and the fat, are set apart as a sort of first fruits and consumed in their entirety’ (ibid. 125, Loeb tr.).

*Special prohibitions: how religious is secular slaughter?* Despite his distinction between just edible animals and sacrificial animals,<sup>84</sup> we shall see that Philo has inherited from the Bible the blurred distinction between religious and secular rules on meat consumption. In other words, the animal slaughter which Jews carried out away from the Temple was not totally deprived of a ritual character.

This is shown, for instance, in the case of strangulation as a method of killing (*De spec. legibus* 4, 122). Philo expresses himself very categorically as to the eating of animals which have been strangled. He attributes this practice to the *Σαρδανάπαλοι*, apparently because he regards it as a barbarous practice. The reason for which strangulation is not indicated as a way of killing, says Philo, is that it does not allow the blood—which embodies the essence of the soul (*οὐσία τῆς ψυχῆς*) of the animal—to run out freely. The expression used in the text is *ἄθυτα παρασκευάζουσιν*, and since in this passage Philo condemns greediness (*ἀβροδίαιτος ἀκρασία*), the term *ἄθυτα* must designate the animals not killed in the right way.<sup>85</sup> The meaning of *ἄθυτα παρασκευάζουσιν* would then be ‘cooking them without having killed them in the right way’.<sup>86</sup> The fact that a Jewish writer uses a Greek root [*θυ-*], which most often designates sacrificial killing, in order to denote a secular slaughter, suggests that the everyday Jewish practice of killing an animal had a degree of sanctity.

As a confirmation to this remark, Philo’s text provides us with instances where biblical rules about sacrifice are also made to apply to the secular context (*a* and *b* below), and biblical rules about sacrifice are further elaborated (*c* below).

- (a) Thus, when Philo cites the injunction of the Law, which forbids the separation of the newborn animal from its mother for a period of seven days (*De virtutibus* 125–30), he extends

<sup>84</sup> See pp. 161–2 above.

<sup>85</sup> In the Greek context, a similar problem as regards the meaning of *θύω* is contained in a Plutarchan passage on Pythagoreans and fish (*Mor.* 729C).

<sup>86</sup> And not the incomprehensible of the Loeb tr. ‘prepare meat unfit for the altar’ (vol. 8, p. 85).

the rule to cover the case of slaughter for eating (πρὸς ἐδωδήν),<sup>87</sup> whereas the regulations in Lev. 22: 27 and in Exod. 22: 29 (here only about the firstborn) only forbid *sacrifice* of the newborn (sheep, goats, and oxen).

- (b) Another biblical regulation, apparently forbidding the *religious* slaughter of mother and offspring animals on the same day (Lev. 22: 28),<sup>88</sup> is analysed by Philo into two prohibitions, one of sacrifice and one of eating (*De virtutibus* 134–6). If it is for sacrifice that such a slaughter occurs, the very meaning of the word ‘sacrifice’ is annulled: ‘for such actions are slaughters (σφάγια), not sacrifices’ (ibid. 135, Loeb tr.). Even the altar would refuse to accept such oblations (ἀνίερα ἱερεῖα), says Philo, and the fire would avoid them and indeed go out, in order to avoid polluting the air. If, on the other hand, it is for a feast that mother and offspring are killed, only abhorrent awe could be felt at such an abnormal gastronomic pleasure! The limbs fixed on the spit would acquire a voice and rebuke the culprit!
- (c) Philo modifies the same regulation to fit the religious context exclusively, and to cover the case of pregnant animals; as a result, he cites a sacrificial prohibition with no parallel in the Bible:<sup>89</sup> ‘But observe that the law also banishes from the sacred precincts all pregnant animals and does not permit them to be sacrificed until they have been delivered (μη ἐπιτρέπων ἄχρις ἂν ἀποτέκη σφαγιάζεσθαι)’ (ibid. 137, Loeb tr.).

My examples above are taken from the Philonic treatise *De virtutibus*, where biblical examples illustrating the importance of several virtues are presented. In this context, the biblical regulations on animals belong to Philo’s exposition of φιλανθρωπία in the Law, and, according to him, constitute an extension of kindness from humans to irrational beings (*De virtutibus* 140: ἄχρι καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων τὸ

<sup>87</sup> See the Loeb edition, vol. 8, p. 240, note *a*.

<sup>88</sup> The verb used in this verse from Leviticus is σφάττω (οὐ σφάξεις), but the whole context is about offerings to God.

<sup>89</sup> See note *a* in vol. 8 of the Loeb edition, p. 246. However, before Philo presents the regulation on mother’s milk, he only mentions the two rules presented under cases *a* and *b* above (*De virtutibus* 142), but not the rule on pregnant animals (case *c* above).

ἐπιεικὲς ἀπέτεινεν).<sup>90</sup> Philo's far-fetched symbolism in this treatise, and his application of laws on animals to human society,<sup>91</sup> might have led him to modify and extend the biblical regulations in order to fit his purpose, and this deprives him of reliability as a source for everyday Jewish practice. However, the ease with which he carries out his alterations shows that, in the minds of Jews, along with a clear distinction between just edible animals and sacrificeable animals,<sup>92</sup> religious and secular slaughter were not mutually exclusive.

Finally, the following remarks on the overlap between religious and secular slaughter in the Jewish context show that this phenomenon is also connected to the issues of biblical interpretation and translation. Let us start from the Deuteronomic regulation itself:

καὶ αὕτη ἡ κρίσις τῶν ἱερέων, τὰ παρὰ τοῦ λαοῦ, παρὰ τῶν θνόντων τὰ θύματα, ἕάν τε μόσχον ἕάν τε πρόβατον· καὶ δώσει τῷ ἱερεὶ τὸν βραχίονα καὶ τὰ σιαγόνια καὶ τὸ ἔνυστρον. (Deut. 18: 3)

This shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the two jaws, and the maw. (NRSV, slightly modified)

Philo specifies that this regulation about the shoulder, the jaws, and the maw as fixed perquisites for the priest, is about 'animals sacrificed away from the altars (τῶν ἔξω τοῦ βωμοῦ θυομένων) as meat for private consumption' (*De spec. legibus* 1, 147, Loeb tr.). So, with reference to Deut. 18: 3, Philo's text contains the term *θύω* and not a Greek verb denoting secular slaughter, yet the biblical passage is interpreted as referring to slaughter conducted outside of the Temple.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Thus, Philo specifies that, although the ox is considered to be clean for use as a sacrificial victim, and the ass unclean, the Law did not despise the unclean animal and cared about it by prohibiting the yoking of an ass along with an ox—the latter being stronger (*De virt.* 146–7). To Philo, this regulation symbolizes the kindness which should be shown towards men of different nations.

<sup>91</sup> Philo refers the regulations on animals back to the sphere of human beings; he condemns infanticide (*De virt.* 131–3), and praises the legislators who see that pregnant mothers condemned to death are detained until childbirth (*ibid.* 139–40).

<sup>92</sup> See pp. 161–2 above.

<sup>93</sup> Talking about perquisites from slaughter conducted outside of the Temple, Josephus also uses the term *θύω* (*Ant.* IV.74): εἶναι δὲ καὶ τοῖς κατ' οἶκον θύουσιν εὐωχίας ἕνεκα τῆς αὐτῶν ἀλλὰ μὴ θρησκείας ἀνάγκην κομίζειν τοῖς ἱερέσιν ἔνυστρον τε καὶ χελώνιον καὶ τὸν δεξιὸν βραχίονα τοῦ θύματος.

Even if the interpreters of the Deuteronomic passage (Philo, Josephus) made *θύω* apply to slaughter outside of the Temple so that there is no disagreement with the Levitical regulation on perquisites (Lev. 7: 31–4),<sup>94</sup> this indicates that, at least to Greek-speaking Jews, it was allowable to regard animal killings outside of the Temple as religious.

We cannot know which of the examples above represented the actual Jewish practice of animal slaughter in Philo's time. At least Philo provides us with evidence for the fact that, in his time, Jews were not unfamiliar with an ancient practice, in which, even when an animal was slaughtered outside of the Temple, a degree of ritual was involved. This practice was to be pointed out much later by the emperor Julian.<sup>95</sup>

### *Symbolism of the victims in Philo*

(a) (firstborn) male—female A further Philonic treatment of animals as sacrificial victims is their symbolism on the basis of their gender, age (firstborn, not dealt with here), species, and body.

The issue of the victim's gender and species is crucial in Philo's discussion of the *individual offerings*, and not in his presentation of the animal sacrifices offered in Jewish festivals, where he mainly deals with the number of victims offered. As I shall deal later with rules specifying which species are suitable for which occasion, here I focus on Philo's discussion of the gender of victims offered by individuals. As we shall see below, individual offerings could be burnt offerings, the so-called preservation offerings, and sin<sup>96</sup> offerings.

Thus in the case of burnt offerings only males are allowed to be offered, because, according to Philo, male is superior to female. In contrast with female, male is complete, dominant, and active. The two constituents of the soul, namely the rational and the irrational part, or else the mind and the senses, are male and female respectively. That is why the burnt offering symbolizes the offering of the superior element, mind, to God (*De spec. legibus* 1, 200–1).

<sup>94</sup> On perquisites from preservation offerings. See also Lev. 7: 8 on perquisites from burnt offerings.

<sup>95</sup> *Against the Galilaeans* 305D–306A.

<sup>96</sup> The term 'sin' is problematic. As I shall explain below (sec. 6), in this book I continue to use Philo's designations, but not without reservations.

In the case of a preservation offering, the Law does not specify the gender of the victim (*ibid.* 212).

In the case of a sin offering, the victim's gender depends on the offerer (i.e. whose the sin is, *ibid.* 228–9, 233):

sins of the High Priest	male
sins of the whole nation	male
sins of the ruler	male
sins of the commoner	female

Philo relates the gender (and species) of the victims to the hierarchical position of the offerers, so, he says, the Law rightly ordains that the private individual make up for his/her sins by offering an inferior victim to that of the ruler (*ibid.* 229).

(b) species As in the case of gender, Philo attributes the difference in animal species to the different (higher or lower) status of each offerer. Philo maintains that the species of sin offerings<sup>97</sup> are rightly classified: (1) according to whose the trespass is (*ibid.* 228–9, 233):

sins of the High Priest	calf (male)
sins of the whole nation	calf (male)
sins of the ruler	goat (male)
sins of the commoner	goat or ewe (females)

(2) according to whether the sin is voluntary or involuntary, and according to against whom or what it is committed (*ibid.* 234, 238):

involuntary sins against men	as above ( <i>ibid.</i> 228–9, 233)
involuntary sins against sacred things	ram
voluntary sins against men	ram

Commenting on the fact that in each of the two latter cases a ram is offered, Philo says: 'For the lawgiver rated the involuntary sin in the sacred sphere as equal to voluntary sin in the human' (*ibid.* 238).

(c) parts of the body In animal sacrifice, the victim's bodily parts are exposed before the worshipper's eyes as a result of its cutting-up. Philo deeply reflects on the body parts of animals in many sacrificial contexts, either those where the offerer is an archetypal biblical

<sup>97</sup> On this kind of offering see below, sec. 6.

character,<sup>98</sup> or those of general Levitical regulations. Here I focus on the latter.

As regards the symbolism of a *burnt offering* in *De spec. legibus* 1, 206–7, the belly stands mainly for desire, but the feet are given a higher meaning: their being washed indicates the injunction to tread the air (*αἰθεροβατεῖν*), like the soul of the lover of God.

Division in the case of the burnt offering is given various meanings (*ibid.* 208–11). It can mean either the unity in substance of all things or their origin from and their return to the One. Furthermore, division symbolizes man's obligation to give thanks for the whole and for each part of it. Thus man should honour God and God's attributes separately; man should thank God for the natural world and each of its constituents; for the human race and each of its genders and nations; for the human person and its primary parts—body and soul, speech, mind, and sense.

The parts of the victim's body are also dealt with when Philo talks about the sacrificial category of the so-called *preservation offerings*<sup>99</sup> (*ibid.* 212–19). Since, in this case, the fat, the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys are to be burnt on the altar, Philo wonders why it is not the mind's residence—heart or brains—which is set on the altar. He ends up with the answer that the mind is the source of injustice and impiety, so it would not be right for it to be offered to God. As for the symbolism of the combustible parts, Philo is not very allegorical this time, but is rather carried away with physiological remarks showing the importance of each part.

The parts of the victim to be burnt in the case of a *sin offering* are the same as those of a preservation offering, and Philo is able to find a justification for this (*ibid.* 232, 239).<sup>100</sup>

Philo sets out the laws regulating the *sacrificial perquisites*, which each priest should be offered (*ibid.* 145–52), but not without inconsistencies: 'It is ordained that with every victim two gifts should be

<sup>98</sup> See on Gen. 15: 9 ff.: *Quis rerum div. heres* 130–236; and on Lev. 7–8: *Legum allegoria* 3, 129–47.

<sup>99</sup> This kind of offering is discussed in sec. 6 below, along with the rest of individual offerings.

<sup>100</sup> The same reflections on the suitability or not of the brains as a burnable part are to be found in *De sacr. Abelis et Caini* 136–9, along with the misleading statement that, in the case of the burnt offering, everything is to be burnt except the excrement and hide. On this mistake made by Philo, see the Loeb edition, vol. 2, p. 492.

presented to the priest from two of its parts, the arm or shoulder from the right side and all the fat from the breast, the former as a symbol of strength and manliness and of all lawful operations in giving and receiving and general activity, the latter of gentle mildness applied to the spirited element' (ibid. 145, Loeb tr.). This exposition is misleading for two reasons. Evidently, the biblical passage to which Philo refers is Lev. 7: 31–4, which only refers to preservation offerings, and not to all kinds of offerings (Philo says 'every victim'). Second, in the same biblical passage it is said that the priest is to be offered the right shoulder and the *breast* of the victim (and not the *fat* of the breast, which is to be burnt on the altar<sup>101</sup>).<sup>102</sup>

The requisite of hides in the case of whole burnt offerings (Lev. 7: 8) is not given a symbolic meaning by Philo, who only refers to their great financial value for the priests (ibid. 151).

As regards the regulation in Deut. 18: 3 on the shoulder, the jaws, and the maw as fixed perquisites for the priest in the case of secular slaughter, the following explanations are given by Philo: the symbolism of the shoulder is the same as that concerning sacrificial slaughter; the jaws belong to the most important part of the body, that is, the head, but they are also a sort of first offering of speech, since speech comes out of them. The maw is an extension of the belly, which is the seat of desire, and that is why its being offered on the altar symbolizes the disdain of food pleasures (ibid. 147–50).

The Philonic allegorizations above have shown that Philo uses the body of the animal as a code whose signs correspond to specific theological, ethical, and physical categories.

To sum up this section on the Philonic treatment of animals: Philo does not seem to have had any sort of ecological concern with regard to the slaughter of animals. He is as friendly to animals as the Law allows him to be. In no case can we imagine him rejecting the sacrificial regulations in the Bible; however, where the Law seems to express ecological concerns, Philo wants to exalt its mercy. As regards the killing of animals itself, Philo seems to share the old Jewish

<sup>101</sup> The discrepancy has been also noticed by the Loeb editors; see vol. 7, p. 182, note *a*.

<sup>102</sup> In the allegorization of Lev. 8: 29 (*Legum allegoria* 3, 129–31), Philo says that fierce spirit is seated in the breast; in the present context, the requisite symbolizing the calming down of the fierce spirit also comes from the breast.

conception of animal slaughter as a ritual procedure, even when it takes place out of the Temple.

Even in the most concrete and practical parts of the Law, such as the regulations about the cutting-up of sacrificial victims, Philo does not cease to use his beloved allegorical method. There are times when, trying to justify a regulation in the Bible, he is carried away by his obsession with finding symbolisms;<sup>103</sup> more importantly, one can easily spot inconsistencies in his allegorizations.<sup>104</sup>

## 6. On the proper behaviour of the individual offerer in Philo

Philo's allegorizations do not concern only the sacrificial victims of sacrifices offered by individuals, but also the individual offerers themselves. In this section I shall deal with Philo's presentation of the behaviour and the emotions of the individual offerer before, during, or after his/her act of offering. The questions will revolve around the following: What are the motives which lead a private individual to offer a sacrifice? What should the offerer's psychological condition be like, when he/she approaches the altar? How should the offerer behave during sacrifice, and what is he/she supposed to do or feel after the victim is offered?

Philo himself does not follow a clear sequence in the presentation of the stages in an animal sacrifice; so it is for the reader to collect the evidence pertaining to each stage.

### (a) *Before sacrifice*

*Purity of body and mind* Before offering an animal sacrifice, the offerer should be pure in body. Otherwise, the Law prescribes a ritual procedure to be followed by the impure individual. The purification preceding an animal sacrifice is effected through the remains of the

<sup>103</sup> For example, the long discussion on division in *Quis rerum div. heres* 133 ff.

<sup>104</sup> See above on sacrificial prerequisites. A further example concerns the regulation in Deut. 18: 3, where it is difficult to understand why Philo presents continence as touching the altar along with the maw. He says: 'But let continence, that pure and stainless virtue which disregards all concerns of food and drink and claims to stand superior to the pleasures of the stomach, *touch the holy altars* and bring with it the appendage of the belly as a reminder that it holds in contempt gluttony and greediness and all that inflames the tendencies to lust' (*De spec. leg.* I, 150, Loeb tr., my emphasis). Here, Philo shows an inconsistency as regards the act of burning on the altar: he takes it to be both an act of consecration of something pure and an act of relinquishment and disdain of something bad.



slaughter of a red heifer (Num. 19). Philo's narrative almost raises the ritual of the red heifer into a general rule, as if all worshippers were required to go through the purification procedure (*De spec. legibus* 1, 261–72).

Philo's account of the purificatory rite does not differ from the biblical one, and he only presents it in order to allegorize it immediately afterwards. Thus, according to Philo, the Lawgiver chose ashes and water as a means of purification in order to remind the offerer of his/her humble origin; in this way, the offerer shall reach a kind of self-knowledge, which will deprive him/her of pride (ibid. 262–6).

For Philo, the purification of the body stands for the cleansing of the soul through wisdom and virtue (ibid. 269). The person who practises these can confidently come to the Temple as to his/her home, to present himself/herself as a sacrificial victim (ἱερεῖον ἐπιδειξόμενος αὐτόν, ibid. 270).

Philo's apposition of bodily purification with internal purity, and not the supersession of the first by the latter, is more explicit in the following passage:

καὶ γὰρ εὐηθες εἰς μὲν τὰ ἱερά μὴ ἐξεῖναι βαδίζειν, ὅς ἂν μὴ πρότερον λουσάμενος φαιδρύνηται τὸ σῶμα, εὐχέσθαι δὲ καὶ θύειν ἐπιχειρεῖν ἔτι κεκκληιδωμένη καὶ πεφυρμένη διανοία.

For it is absurd that a man should be forbidden to enter the temples save after bathing and cleansing his body, and yet should attempt to pray and sacrifice with a heart still soiled and spotted. (*Quod Deus immut. sit* 8, Loeb tr.)

If the worshipper's body, which is mere matter, needs cleansing before his/her praying and sacrificing, so much more does his/her soul. The 'cleansing' of the soul consists not only in not doing wrong (κακόν) in the future, but in showing penitence about previous mistakes (ibid. 8–9).

The worshipper's need for bodily purification through an animal slaughter before entering the Temple is incontestable in the passages above. Philo takes bodily purity for granted, and he goes on to say that *along with it*, and above it, the offerer should have pure mind.

(b) *During sacrifice*

i. *The principles drawn from the case of Abel and Cain: promptitude and first offerings* Offerings should be given to God in the right way. That is to say, the offerer should give his/her offerings *without delay*, and

he/she should give *the first offerings*. These two principles are discussed in the treatise *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, where Philo gives Cain as an example of the bad offerer, who did exactly the opposite of the aforementioned principles (*De sacr. Abelis et Caini* 52 ff.).<sup>105</sup>

*ii. Categories of private sacrifice* Here I shall deal extensively with Philo's presentation of private sacrifice, because, despite some inconsistencies, it is the fullest account of individual animal sacrifice found in any post-biblical Jewish text written before AD 70. This account is to be found in the treatises *De specialibus legibus* 1 (mainly), and *De mutatione nominum*.

To follow Philo's classification, sacrifices can be offered either on the part of the whole nation/mankind (*κοιναί*) or on the part of the individual (*ὑπὲρ ἐκάστου*). In the first case, the sacrifices are all burnt offerings (*όλόκαυτοι*). In the second case, they belong to the following three categories (*De spec. legibus* 1, 194–7):

- whole burnt offering (*όλόκαυτον*, *ibid.* 198–211);
- preservation offering (*σωτήριον*, *ibid.* 212–23); the sub-category of praise offerings belongs here (*τῆς αἰνέσεως*, *ibid.* 224–5);
- sin offering (*περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, *ibid.* 226–46).<sup>106</sup>

The English terms given above,<sup>107</sup> denoting individual sacrifices, are translations of the Greek terms which Philo uses of Jewish individual sacrifices. Philo's Greek terms are generally the same as those used in the Septuagint. The issue of whether these Greek terms

<sup>105</sup> In the same treatise, apart from the principles of promptitude and first offerings, the following statement by Philo comes both as further confirmation of his attachment to animal sacrificial cult, and as an inconsistency with his rhetorical hyperboles about the unimportance of expensive offerings (see p. 152 and n. 50 above): 'Such were the charges brought against Cain who made his offering after many days. But Abel brought other offerings and in other manner. *His offering was living, Cain's was lifeless*. His was first in age and value, Cain's but second. His had strength and superior fatness, Cain's had but weakness' (*De sacr. Abelis et Caini* 88, Loeb tr., my emphasis). I do not think that, by the last passage, Philo accuses Cain—and, by extension, any offerer—of offering fruit and not animals. It is rather Philo's specific purpose in this treatise, namely, to exalt Abel, which pushes him to present animal sacrifice as superior to a vegetable offering. Still, he would not have done this if he had been against animal sacrifice.

<sup>106</sup> Each of these sacrificial types is described in Leviticus; in Philo's terms: burnt offering in Lev. 1 and 6: 1–6, preservation offering in Lev. 3 and 7: 11–36, sin offering in Lev. 4–5, 6: 17–7: 6–7.

<sup>107</sup> These are the terms used in the Loeb edition of Philo.

are correct translations of the Hebrew biblical terms is a different one and does not concern us here. What is of interest for our purposes is that the Septuagint served to define the way in which an unknown number of Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora would refer to their sacrifices when going to the Temple in Jerusalem.

To analyse the difference in the individual offerings above (*ibid.* 194–7), Philo displays here a certain theory on the origins of sacrifice, by saying that the two reasons which prompted men of the earliest times (*πρώτοι ἄνθρωποι*) to offer sacrifices were *honour towards God* (*ἡ πρὸς θεὸν τιμὴ*) and *the benefit of the sacrificers* (*ἡ τῶν θυόντων ὠφέλεια*). The latter reason is twofold: a human being wants either to share in the blessings or to be released of evils. When the legislator, says Philo, classified the individual offerings, he had taken into account all these motives, since:

- a whole burnt offering serves the offerer's motive to honour God, because it is complete, with no elements of self-interest (unlike the other two kinds of offerings, which represent man's personal preoccupations);
- a preservation offering shows the offerer's concern with participation in the benefits of life;
- a sin offering is made by someone who wants to remove evils, namely, errors committed in the past.

What is interesting about Philo's initial remarks on the motives of the earliest offerers of sacrifice is his acceptance of sacrifice as a widespread practice—that is why he talks about 'men' in general, and not about a specific nation. Second, he does not consider sacrifice as the main purpose of worship, but as the means by which men wanted to offer God thanks and prayers:

*εἰ γὰρ βούλοιτό τις ἐξετάζειν ἀκριβῶς τὰς αἰτίας, ὧν ἕνεκα τοῖς πρώτοις ἔδοξεν ἀνθρώποις ἐπὶ τὰς διὰ θυσιῶν εὐχαριστίας ὁμοῦ καὶ λιτὰς ἐλθεῖν...*

For if anyone cares to examine closely the motives which led men of the earliest times to resort to sacrifices as a medium of prayer and thanksgiving... (*ibid.* 195, Loeb tr.)

There is no need to harmonize this statement with the two reasons for sacrifice mentioned earlier. Philo is not consistent in his interpretations.

In other words, he does not employ a general ‘theory’ whenever he refers to sacrifice,<sup>108</sup> so one does not need to raise his comments to a level which he does not seem to have pursued.

Philo describes the procedure to be followed in each of the above types of sacrifice, which are primarily animal sacrifices. His description does not basically differ from that in the Bible. At points Philo’s account is even clearer than the biblical one, for instance when he specifies that the slaughter of the victim is carried out by the priest (ibid. 199). Here, this is said with reference to the burnt offering, but, as we shall see in section 7 below, on Passover, it applied to the rest of individual offerings as well.

After giving the literal description of each sacrifice, Philo goes on to allegorize them: ‘words in their plain sense are symbols of things latent and obscure’ (ibid. 200, Loeb tr.). The symbolisms pertaining to the victims of each of the above sacrifices have been dealt with in the previous sections. Here, I am concerned with the symbolisms and meanings concerning the offerer:

1. The offerer’s laying of hands on the head of the victim in the case of a whole burnt offering symbolizes the offerer’s clear conscience. It is as if the offerer says: ‘These hands have taken no gift to do injustice, nor shared in the proceeds of plunder or overreaching, nor been soiled with innocent blood’ (ibid. 204, Loeb tr.). The circular pouring of the victim’s blood round the altar stands for the mind’s movements before it reaches God (ibid. 205).
2. As regards the preservation offering, Philo does not provide us with any profound explanation concerning its character, but he goes on to give an explanation for the subcategory of the praise offering: this is made by someone who has never come across

<sup>108</sup> In another treatise Philo makes a distinction between gift and sacrifice (*Questions and Answers on Genesis*, bk. 1, q. 62). The distinctive characteristic of sacrifice is that the offerer divides the offering into blood, which is poured round the altar, and flesh, which is taken home. Gift consists in giving everything to God. Cain stands for the divider, the lover of self, whereas Abel stands for the giver, the lover of God.

It seems that we cannot combine this distinction with the analysis in *De spec. leg. 1*, because, if we do, only the burnt offering is appropriate. In *De spec. leg. 1* Philo says explicitly that the other two kinds of sacrifice are for man’s benefit, but he certainly does not disapprove of them as such.

unhappiness or any disaster, and who knows only happiness and prosperity. On such a person falls the obligation to offer God ‘hymns and benedictions and prayers and sacrifices and the other expressions of gratitude’ (ibid. 224).

3. It seems that the category of sin offering involves the greatest complications (ibid. 226 ff.). Scholars have questioned the accuracy of the Greek term ‘sin’ (ἁμαρτία), introduced by the translation of the Septuagint and followed by Philo. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that, this term being taken for granted by Philo, he further used it as a tool for making a distinction. By this distinction he makes two categories out of the different cases of (‘sin’) offerings, which are present in chapters 4 and 5 of Leviticus. Philo takes the first category as pertaining to involuntary sins (ἀκούσια, *De spec. legibus* 1, 226–34), and the second category as pertaining to voluntary sins (ἐκούσια, ibid. 235 ff.). In the Bible there is no sign of such a clear distinction on the basis of man’s will.<sup>109</sup>

In biblical criticism the whole of Lev. 5: 14–26 is considered to describe the same kind of offering (in Hebrew ‘*asham*'). For Philo, however, the distinction between involuntary and voluntary sins is contained exactly in this passage: referring to Lev. 5: 14–26, Philo inserts sins against sacred things (Lev. 5: 14–19) among the involuntary sins along with those of Lev. 4, and only sins against men (Lev. 5:

<sup>109</sup> In the Bible the distinction is rather to be drawn between Lev. 4: 1–5: 13 and Lev. 5: 14–26, in which the Hebrew terms for the offerings corresponding to these sections are *hatta't* and *'asham*, respectively (though they are not mutually exclusive). In the Septuagint the terms mainly used to denote the trespass in each of these sections (though they are not mutually exclusive) are ἁμαρτία and πλημμέλεια, respectively. Milgrom does not agree with the English renderings ‘sin offering’ (pertaining to Lev. 4: 1–5: 13) and ‘guilt offering’ (pertaining to Lev. 5: 14–26), instead of which he uses the terms ‘purification offering’ and ‘reparation offering’, respectively: see Milgrom (1991), 253 f., 339 ff. For the complications between these two kinds of offerings, see de Vaux (1973<sup>3</sup>), 418–21.

Sanders (1992), 108, partly accepts the use of the English term ‘sin’ in the Jewish context. He characterizes Josephus’ distinction of the sin offerings between those for involuntary and those for voluntary sins (*Ant.* III.231–2) as ‘generally correct’.

In *De spec. leg.* 1, Philo draws the distinction between Lev. 4: 1–5: 19 (involuntary sins) and Lev. 5: 20–6 (voluntary sins). He does not consistently use the terms ἁμαρτία and πλημμέλεια. (In this treatise, there is no reference at all to the section Lev. 5: 1–13).

As for the writers of the Mishnah, they follow the biblical terminology. They refer to *hatta't* and *'asham*, which both Danby (1933) and Neusner (1988a) translate as ‘sin offering’ and ‘guilt offering’, respectively.

20–6) among the voluntary sins. Philo inserts the sins of the High Priest among the sins which he considered to be ‘involuntary’.

A further element of originality in Philo’s exposition of ‘voluntary’ sins is his emphasis on the control exercised by the guilty man’s conscience, something which exists in the Bible rather latently (Lev. 5: 20–6).<sup>110</sup>

The biblical passage of Lev. 5: 1–13 is dealt with in *De mutatione nominum* (233–51). Here, Philo allegorizes the biblical regulations about the scale of value of a sin offering in a very thoughtful way.<sup>111</sup> According to the offerer’s means, the Bible prescribes three choices: a sheep, a pair of turtle-doves (or of pigeons), fine flour. From our point of view, the hierarchy in the offerings described in this regulation shows once more that the ‘standard’ sacrifice was that of an animal. But for Philo, these three choices of offerings stand for three different kinds of sin: sin of mind, of word, and of hand respectively.<sup>112</sup> He points out that the worst kind is sinful deeds, and the less dangerous sinful thoughts. However, as thoughts are not always dependent on one’s will, they are the most recalcitrant, and so the most difficult to avoid. Sins of speech are between the two, but they can be avoided by one’s will to keep silent.

Despite the many questions which are raised by a complicated sequence of allegorizations,<sup>113</sup> the passage from *De mutatione nominum* is very original in its conception. Philo feels able to identify different sins

<sup>110</sup> Thus, it is only after an internal struggle that the guilty individual makes a compensation to the person he had offended: ‘if then after having apparently escaped conviction by his accusers he becomes, convicted inwardly by his conscience (*ἐνδὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ συνειδότος ἐλεγχθείς*), his own accuser, reproaches himself for his disavowals and perjuries’ (*De spec. leg. 1*, 235, Loeb tr.). After the compensation made to the offended, the offender must go to the Temple and offer a ram. Even then, says Philo, he must be accompanied by the control exercised by conscience (*τὸν κατὰ ψυχὴν ἔλεγχον*, *De spec. leg. 1*, 237).

<sup>111</sup> Lev. 5: 1–13 is not without problems. See Milgrom (1991), 307 ff. In *Questions and Answers on Genesis* (bk. 4, q. 102), Philo again lays emphasis on the point made in Scripture, that one should offer sacrifices according to one’s means.

<sup>112</sup> Philo justifies the choice of animals: the sheep stands for man’s best part, mind, because it is the noblest among animals; birds look like speech, for they are fast; fine flour is the product of manual toil, and that is why it stands for actions.

<sup>113</sup> First of all, how can Philo equate the different kinds of animal species to sin categories, since it is the worshipper’s financial capacity which defines the choice of species? In any case, why does Philo not allegorize elements like flour, oil, and incense—since he refers to them—as he does elsewhere (*De somniis 2*, 71–4)? As for the one of the two birds: is it the sin itself (= false speech) which needs reformation or the offerer who committed the sin of false speech?

in the area of human experience, and to give advice on their avoidance. Indeed, one cannot help thinking that his advice would be really appreciated, if it were to be given to young Jews. Most important for our subject is the fact that Philo considers sacrifice both as a mechanism for symbolizing sins and as an effective means of expiating them.

Philo deals specifically with a peculiar kind of offering, that of the *Great Vow* (usually known as the ‘Nazirite Vow’, *De spec. legibus* 1, 247–54).<sup>114</sup> According to Philo, this involves the most extreme of offerings, namely the offerer himself, which the worshipper makes after he/she has nothing material left to offer to God. This action, says Philo, shows the utmost holiness and devotion to God, since one’s self is one’s greatest possession. Along with other obligations,<sup>115</sup> the Nazirite, at the end of his/her vow and in order to be released from it, must offer three animal sacrifices, a he-lamb as a whole burnt offering, a ewe-lamb as a sin offering, and a ram as a preservation offering. Philo says that these sacrifices are made in the likeness of the person under the Great Vow: the burnt offering shows his/her self-dedication, the sin offering shows his/her unavoidable human sinfulness, and the preservation offering shows that, in terms of health, he/she is dependent on God. At the beginning of this analysis Philo characterizes the Great Vow as a ‘binder’ (*συναγωγός*) of the three sacrificial types (*ibid.* 247). At the end, he justifies this characterization:

I note, and it is a very striking point, that in the three animals brought for the different sacrifices there is no difference of species. They are all of the same species, a ram, a he-lamb and a ewe-lamb. For the law wishes to show in this way what I mentioned a little before, that the three kinds of sacrifice are sisters of one family, because the penitent is preserved and the person preserved from the maladies of his soul repents, and both of them are pressing forward to that perfect and wholly sound frame of mind of which the whole-burnt-offering is a symbol. (*ibid.* 253, Loeb tr.)

Philo is very careful to point out that the Great Vow does not in any case imply human sacrifice, which would defile the altar. The only part removed from the worshipper without hurting him/her, is the hair, which is burnt along with the preservation offering—a sort of *pars pro toto* offering (*ibid.* 253).

<sup>114</sup> See Num. 6.

<sup>115</sup> These are: abstinence from wine, letting the hair grow unshaven, and avoidance of contact with corpses.

Philo's presentation of individual offerings is both very systematic, as regards its connection with the Bible, and very original as regards Philo's own thoughts. His exposition makes it clear that, in Jewish worship, animal sacrifice is the standard individual offering, except in cases of financial incapacity on the part of the offerer. Philo knows that each sacrificial type performs a specific function as regards the offerer's relation with God. The animal offered can express the greatest honour given to God, the offerer's gratitude to God, or repentance for a trespass. It is quite significant that a Jew of the Diaspora could talk about all these cases and emphasize the different cultic functions represented by animal sacrifices.

At the end of his presentation Philo provides us with a highly original interpretation of the Great Vow: it combines, he says, all types of individual sacrifices. I suspect that this is not so much an interpretation of the Great Vow as an indirect way, on the part of Philo, to teach his readers that all sacrifices prescribed in the Bible are equally necessary.

(c) *After sacrifice* Philo's treatment of the 'after' of sacrifice concerns those passages where he focuses on the worshipper's behaviour towards sacrificial meat. The eating of meat from preservation offerings must be completed in two days (Lev. 19: 5–8). Philo gives several reasons for this (*De spec. legibus* 1, 220–3), one purely practical, in which he sounds familiar with methods of meat preservation: 'It is the nature of stale flesh to decay rapidly, even though seasoned with spices as preservatives' (ibid. 220, Loeb tr.).

Another reason is that the meat should be generously given out to people who need it. Here, we should not think that in the latter Philo includes 'people in general', but only those who offer the sacrifice, as the following sentence shows:

...ὃς εὐεργέτης καὶ φιλόδαρος ὢν κοινωνὸν ἀπέφηνε τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ ὁμοτράπεζον τὸ συμπόσιον τῶν τὴν θυσίαν ἐπιτελούντων...

...He the benefactor, the bountiful, Who has made the convivial company of those who carry out the sacrifices partners of the altar whose board they share. (ibid. 221, Loeb tr., my emphasis)<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup> This is one of a few instances known to me where *συμπόσιον* designates a group of people and not the banquet. This is obvious from the preceding adjective *ὁμοτράπεζον*, which can only refer to people.



So, this sentence makes us see the difference from Greek sacrificial practice, namely, that distribution of meat in Jewish sacrifices only concerned the specific company of those who offered it.

The third reason why consumption of meat from preservation offerings should be completed in two days is of an allegorical sort. Namely, that since the specific offering is made for the preservation of soul and body, one day must be dedicated to each of them; indeed, not surprisingly, Philo gives the soul the first day. The eating of meat on the third day would imply that there is a third element to be preserved; but since there is no such element, the act of eating would be a sacrilege.

As for the praise offering, its meat must be consumed in only one day (Lev. 7: 15), the reason being that those who were so readily bestowed with happiness by God should also quickly repay Him (ibid. 225).

Philo also displays the rules about eating, which apply to the case of sin offerings (ibid. 239–46). Although the parts of the victim to be burnt in the case of a sin offering are the same as those of a preservation offering, sacrificial meat from a sin offering is treated differently from that of the preservation offering, on the basis of three rules, according to Philo:<sup>117</sup> (i) the meat from the sin offering is eaten *in* the Temple;<sup>118</sup> (ii) it is to be eaten by the priests; and (iii) it is consumed in one day. This rule is not found in the Bible, and it is important that a non-biblical regulation is mentioned by Philo.<sup>119</sup> The reasons for these regulations are explained by Philo with reference to the offerer: the meat must remain in the sacred precincts, because it is the sin which must remain confined in the Temple, where its obliteration also takes place.

As regards the regulation about who is to eat the meat from a sin offering, among other points Philo makes the following: it is an honour for the offerers to have the priests as their guests. Moreover,

<sup>117</sup> See Lev. 6: 19 and 7: 6–7. The remark made in the Loeb edition on the non-existence of a deadline for eating is sound, but the numbers of the biblical verses referred to are wrong (vol. 7, p. 238, note *a*).

<sup>118</sup> It could be said that this rule has its parallel in the οὐ φορά regulations of Greek sacred laws.

<sup>119</sup> See the Loeb edition, vol. 7, p. 238, note *a*. The same difference from the Bible is also found in Josephus (*Ant.* III.232).

the fact that the priests themselves condescend to eat the victim's meat shows that the offerer has been given a full pardon for his/her sin.

The rule about consumption of meat in one day shows that man should be prompt when approaching virtue. However, Philo stresses the biblical prescription that sacrificial meat from the High Priest's or the nation's sin offerings is to be burnt, because 'there is no one superior to the high priest or the nation to act as intercessor for the sinners' (ibid. 244, Loeb tr.).

In his explanation of the rules about the consumption of sacrificial meat, Philo even includes elements not taken from the Bible. But, from another point of view, the Philonic interpretation of these rules proves more than anything else that Philo does not reject sacrificial reality. Whereas, in other instances, Philo allegorizes each and every element in the sacrificial procedure, his interpretation of the consumption of sacrificial meat does not consist in allegorizing the act of the consumption itself: in other words, Philo explains *why* meat should be consumed in a specific way, and not *what* the specific rule of consumption *symbolizes*. If it were not for some rhetorical hyperboles against sacrifices in the Philonic corpus, the fact that sacrificial meat, the most realistic sacrificial element of all, is not obliterated from Philo's interpretative picture would uncontestedly prove Philo's respect for and approval of animal sacrifice.

Philo's analysis of animal sacrificial procedure refers to all of its stages. His allegorizations either take for granted the sacrificial procedure, which thus becomes a reminder of spiritual values, or even start to be applied after the concrete reality (sacrificial meat) has been accepted.

## 7. Philo on Jewish festivals

(a) *Definition and character of festivals* In this section I shall deal with Jewish animal sacrifices offered at fixed intervals of time, on the occasion of festivals (ἑορταί). These sacrifices depended not on the offerer's personal wish, but on the Jewish calendar. So, they are those described by Philo as common (κοιναί); as offered on behalf of the Jewish nation (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους) and the whole human race in general (ὑπὲρ ἅπαντος ἀνθρώπων γένους).<sup>120</sup> With the exception of

<sup>120</sup> *De spec. leg.* 1, 168 and 190.

Passover, the biblical instructions about the performance of the sacrificial ritual in each festival were concerned with *one* ritual procedure, conducted on behalf of all Israel, and not with many identical ones conducted on behalf of each household. However, for many Jews the festivals were opportunities for pilgrimage to the Temple, so during them each household could offer its own sacrifices (ὕπερ ἑκάστου<sup>121</sup>), which fell into the categories and procedures described in section 6 above.

In *De spec. legibus* 2 Philo gives an indirect definition of the term ‘festival’ (ἐορτή), which makes it obvious that sacrifice has the crucial role in it. Describing the rite of offering the ‘basket’ (κάρταλος, *ibid.* 215–22), Philo says that this is not a festival, but a ceremonial festivity (ἐορτώδης πανήγυρις)<sup>122</sup> during which landowners bring baskets of firstfruits to the Temple. Philo explains why the basket is not a festival (ἐορτή): ‘For it does not affect the nation as a united whole like each of the others, nor is anything of those things brought or offered<sup>123</sup> sanctified on the altar, given over to be consumed by the unquenchable and sacred fire, nor is there any specified number of days during which the festival is to last’ (*De spec. legibus* 2, 215, Loeb tr., slightly modified).

This negatively phrased description contains most of the characteristics which define a Jewish festival. As we shall see below, Passover is an exceptional case, but it is considered as a festival in the Bible and by Philo. In a festival: (1) the whole nation observes it; (2) burnt offerings are made; and (3) the duration is specified. The second characteristic is the most important, namely, that animals are wholly burnt on the altar. A further characteristic of a festival, which Philo does not mention, but presumably takes for granted, is that the Bible defines the species and the number of the victims offered.

The importance of festivals for Diaspora Jews is shown by a specific remark in the treatise *In Flaccum*. Flaccus, the anti-Jewish prefect of Egypt, was arrested by the Romans in Alexandria during the festival of Tabernacles. Before describing the exultation felt by the Jews at the arrest of Flaccus (121 ff.), Philo highlights the depression

<sup>121</sup> *De spec. leg.* 1, 168.

<sup>122</sup> Deut. 26: 1–11.

<sup>123</sup> I suspect that the term ‘brought’ refers to animal offerings, and the term ‘offered’ to vegetable offerings, but I have no direct evidence for this interpretation (see, however, in the law from Andania: ἀγέσθω δὲ ἐν ταῖς πομπῶν καὶ τὰ θύματα, v. 33).

caused by their sufferings: ‘But nothing at all of the festal proceedings<sup>124</sup> was being carried out. The rulers . . . were still in prison and their misfortunes were regarded by the commoners as shared by the whole nation’ (*In Flaccum* 117, Loeb tr.). This is a sound psychological description, which shows both that, in normal circumstances, gaiety reigned at the Diaspora festivals, and that, in case of emergency, these festivals were not observed.

‘Observance’ of a festival in the Diaspora cannot have concerned animal sacrifices (perhaps with the exception of Passover, on which see below), but certainly all the other cultic actions peculiar to each festival.

(b) *The public animal sacrifices offered during Jewish festivals* Philo’s work contains many long sections on the Jewish festivals (ἑορταί): every day, Sabbath, new month, Passover, Sheaf, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Fast/Day of Atonement, Tabernacles.<sup>125</sup> The section most relevant to festivals is in *De spec. legibus* 1 (168–89), since it focuses on the animal offerings at the Jewish festivals. In fact, though, Philo’s obsession with arithmetical symbolism deprives this section of any valuable information.

Philo’s attempt at finding underlying meanings in the number of victims offered proves once more what I have been stressing about Philo in this book: that he believed in the reality of animal sacrifice. Indeed, as in the case with sacrificial meat, Philo accepts the very act of offering the victims, without allegorizing it. His presentation only aims at justifying the number of victims offered. However, Philo’s dependence on the Bible does not allow us to know how Jews in the Diaspora made up for their distance from the Jewish sacrificial centre in Jerusalem.

(c) *Philo on the Jewish Passover* Referring to the private individual’s burnt offering, Philo says in passing that the slaughter of the victim is carried out by a priest (*De spec. legibus* 1, 199: λαβών τις τῶν ἱερέων καταθύετω). This was true for all kinds of individual offerings, as Philo’s treatment of Passover (called by Philo Πάσχα or διαβατήρια)

<sup>124</sup> Namely, pitching of tents and residence in them.

<sup>125</sup> The sections dealing with festivals are: *De spec. leg.* 1, 168–89 (8 festivals); *De spec. leg.* 2, 41–222 (10 festivals); *De decalogo* 158–61 (7 festivals).

shows. In this treatment, the issue of who slaughters the victims emerges as very important. Following the Bible, Philo includes Passover in his treatment of festivals, so he regards it as such (ἐορτή).<sup>126</sup>

The most detailed Philonic account of the celebration of Passover is in *De spec. legibus* 2 (145–9). In it, the difference between Passover and the rest of the festivals is made explicit:<sup>127</sup> ‘For at other times the priests according to the ordinance of the law carry out both the public sacrifices and those offered by private individuals. But on this occasion the whole nation performs the sacred rites and acts as priest with pure hands and complete immunity’ (ibid. 145, Loeb tr.). In other words, whereas the Jewish priests were normally commissioned to carry out both the public and the private sacrifices, at Passover every Jew was allowed to act as a priest, and so to slaughter the victim. (We can thus understand the reason why the Bible does not specify the number of victims offered: because the number of victims depends on the number of the households observing the festival.<sup>128</sup>)

The reason for such a ritual exception, Philo continues in *De spec. legibus* 2, is that this rite represents a thank-offering for and reminder of the exodus from Egypt. The Jews were so joyful at leaving the land of divinized idols that, after their departure, they slaughtered the sacrificial victims without waiting for the priests.<sup>129</sup> Appealing to history (παλαιὰ ἀρχαιολογία) for these facts, Philo contends that the Law institutionalized the annual repetition of these private offerings.

A scholarly interpretation of the passage above makes it refer to the celebration of Passover *in the Temple and only there*, where the private individual was exceptionally allowed to slaughter the victim.<sup>130</sup> Without excluding the possibility that Passover slaughtering by laymen took place in the Temple,<sup>131</sup> I think that Philo mainly refers to people outside of Jerusalem.<sup>132</sup> Philo’s rhetorical emphasis on the observance of Passover by all Jews is not accompanied by any

<sup>126</sup> *De spec. leg.* 2, 145–9, *De decalogo* 159, *De vita Mosis* 2, 224–32.

<sup>127</sup> Also in *De decalogo* 159, and *De vita Mosis* 2, 224.

<sup>128</sup> See Exod. 12, Lev. 23: 4–5, Deut. 16: 1–8.

<sup>129</sup> The inconsistency with Exod. 12 is correctly pointed out in the Loeb edition, vol. 7, p. 396, note a.

<sup>130</sup> See Sanders (1992), 133, n. 42, and 134, n. 43.

<sup>131</sup> See the ambiguous κατακόπτειν in Jos. *Ant.* XVII.213.

<sup>132</sup> On the different interpretations given, see Sanders (1992), 133–4.

reference to the Temple: 'In this festival, they *all* (πανδημεί) slaughter many myriads of victims from noon till eventide, they, *the whole people* (ὁ λαὸς ἅπας), old and young alike, raised for that particular day to the dignity of the priesthood' (ibid. 145, Loeb tr., slightly modified, my emphasis). Apart from the fact that no reference to the Temple is made here, it is unlikely that Philo would expect *all* Jews to go to the Temple at Passover.

The animal sacrifice of Passover was followed by a festival, which took place in each house: 'On this day every dwelling-house is invested with the outward semblance and dignity of a temple. The victim is slaughtered and dressed for the festal meal which befits the occasion' (ibid. 148, Loeb tr., slightly modified). The account of Passover contained in this treatise shows that Passover was an exceptional festival: first, in that the slaughtering took place outside the Temple, by laymen (that is why the Bible does not specify number of victims); and second, because the sacrifice was not wholly burnt, but was followed by a feast. But, as with the other festivals looked at above, Passover was observed by the whole nation, and its duration was specified in the Bible.

Without knowing to what extent the Jews followed the practice described in Philo's account of Passover, his treatment is the only real-life picture of Jewish sacrificial ritual. In all likelihood, the Temple did not occupy the central place in this ritual.

Philo introduces his reader to the series of Jewish festivals in a synoptic way. His obsession with arithmetic (of days, months, and victims) often helps the reader to memorize the succession of festivals, and it proves how important animal sacrifice was in his understanding of them. However, with the exception of Passover, Philo never gives a detailed description of the Jewish festivals in his time.

As regards Passover, its presentation by Philo makes it obvious that Diaspora Jews were familiar with an animal slaughter and a festival which had been sanctioned by the Bible as sacrificial, even if it took place outside the Temple. Passover is perhaps the case which proves that what made an animal slaughter religious or secular only depended on the circumstances. Unfortunately, however, we do not know how many Diaspora Jews regularly conducted their Passover sacrifice wherever they dwelled.

## Conclusion

The way in which Philo saw Jewish animal sacrifice proves to be all the more important, if we try to use it as a basis for making suggestions about what the rest of the Diaspora Jews might have thought about animal sacrifice. Unfortunately, direct evidence is lacking, and thus we are obliged to envisage all possibilities regarding Philo's impact on Jewish thought.

According to Goodenough, 'if the Book of Acts is to be credited, the synagogues in which Paul preached were fertile ground for the doctrine of emancipation from Jewish law, however much Jewish leaders of the synagogues may have fought it. There must have been many Jews of the sort Philo rebuked.'<sup>133</sup> Phrased as it is, this stance seems to take for granted that, along with the rest of the Law, Paul also preached emancipation from the ritual of Jewish animal sacrifice. As we shall see in the next chapter, this is not stated clearly in Acts, but it cannot be excluded either.<sup>134</sup> In any case, Goodenough's stance gives us a concrete basis from which to start listing the various possibilities regarding Philo's place in Judaism, mainly in the period before the Fall of the Temple in AD 70. I am not so much concerned with Philo's erudition, which must have been exceptional among his contemporaries, but rather with the possible impact of his attachment to the ritual of animal sacrifice:

- (a) If Philo's insistence on the importance of ritual was the exception among his contemporary Jews, and Diaspora synagogues were full of allegorists who influenced the participants, this would mean that faith in Jewish ritual was going through a serious crisis, and Paul's preaching provided an end and a solution to this.

Although we have no direct evidence refuting this view, it sounds very Christianized, and, in any case, we have shown that Philo's works were probably written so as to be read by Jews and to serve to teach Jews. So, at least Philo's audience would have shared his faith in the importance of animal sacrifice, independently of and along with the fact that they also appreciated his allegorical interpretations.

<sup>133</sup> Goodenough (1962), 80.

<sup>134</sup> See Acts 21: 21, where the term *customs* (ἔθνη) is used.

- (b) Thus, we have so far adopted what seems the likeliest possibility, namely, that Philo had followers. Along with them, Philo represented a group who stressed the importance of animal sacrifice, without excluding its symbolic function. So, we presume the existence of a group (let us call them 'Philonians'), who were neither on the side of the pure allegorists (since 'Philonians' respected ritual observance) nor on the side of those exclusively believing in ritual (since 'Philonians' did not exclude allegory). However, this possibility leaves open the question: which was the larger group, that of the allegorists, that of their rivals, or that of the 'Philonians'?
- (c) A quite large number of Diaspora Jews may not have followed either of the groups whose existence I have just assumed. These Diaspora Jews would have just taken the importance of animal sacrifice for granted, independently of their ability to visit the Temple, and independently of the 'war' between allegorists and ritualists.
- (d) Things become more difficult when the issue of the Christianization of Diaspora Jews enters the field, and when we take into consideration the event of the Fall of the Temple in AD 70. Which group might Jews who were converted to Christianity by Paul have belonged to? As we shall also see in the next chapter, the relevant Greek evidence for the period we are studying is silent on this matter.<sup>135</sup>

As has become clear from the examination of the possibilities above, the question of Philo's impact is not an easy one. Since pre-AD 70 evidence is silent as regards the approximate percentage of Jews following Philo or another group, it is impossible to say how large his impact was. What is more, we cannot talk about Philo's impact at a specific time. His influence would have been felt both before and after the expansion of Christianity, both by Jewish Christians and by

<sup>135</sup> I acknowledge that relevant, even if very slight, items of information might be included in sources written in Hebrew, and I would certainly be willing to verify it myself in the future (when my less than elementary knowledge of Hebrew becomes sufficient). However, I am confident that, if a spectacular piece of information existed there, scholars dealing with early Christianity would have made it widely known.



Jews, both before and after the Fall of the Temple. In other words, on the basis of the available evidence, it is not clear whether, after Christianity affected the places where Diaspora Jews lived, Philo's teaching continued to have the same impact on those who had or had not followed it.

### Josephus

#### Non-biblical details in Josephus' report on sacrifices

Josephus' report on sacrifices is contained in his account of the early stages of Jewish history, namely the time of Moses (*Ant.* III.224 ff.). Josephus provides us with details which are not given in the Pentateuch. The usual scholarly assumption is that he borrowed these from oral tradition.<sup>136</sup> In the examples below, the new, non-biblical, element in Josephus' information is italicized. (All quotations are from the Loeb translation, no. 8 slightly modified.)

1. 'An individual who offers a holocaust kills an ox, a lamb, and a kid, *these last being a year old; the slain oxen may be older than this*' (*Ant.* III.226).
2. Josephus used the term 'thank-offering' (*χαριστήριος θυσία*) of the sacrifice which Philo called preservation-offering (*σωτήριον*): 'In the performance of sacrifices of thank-offering, the same beasts are offered, but these must be without blemish, and *may be upwards of a year old*' (*ibid.* 228).
3. Like Philo, Josephus also distinguishes between involuntary and voluntary sins (*ἀμαρτάδες*). He says about the species of the victims offered in the first case: 'A person who through ignorance has fallen into sin brings a lamb *and* a female kid...' (*ibid.* 231).
4. As regards the consumption of the sacrificial meat from sin-offerings, Josephus says the same as Philo, namely, that the meat must be consumed in one day (involuntary): 'but the

<sup>136</sup> Thus, rabbinical parallels are cited in J. Weill, *Oeuvres complètes de Flavius Josèphe*, (Paris, 1900). As I have stated, I have not seen this book, but H. S. J. Thackeray, the editor of Josephus in the Loeb series, followed Weill's work (as he states in vol. 3, pp. xiii, 424–5).

- priests carry off the skins and also the flesh, which *they will consume that same day in the temple*, for the law does not permit it to be left until the morrow' (ibid. 231); (voluntary): 'a ram (so the law ordains), whose flesh is likewise consumed in the temple by the priests *on the selfsame day*' (ibid. 232).
5. Josephus says on the Day of Atonement: 'On the tenth of the same lunar month they fast until evening; on this day they sacrifice a bull, *two rams*, seven lambs, and a kid as sin-offering' (ibid. 240).
  6. Also about the calf sacrificed as the High Priest's sin offering on the Day of Atonement and the kid sacrificed as a sin offering on the same day: 'So soon as this bullock<sup>137</sup> has been slain, he brings into the sanctuary some of its blood, as also of the blood of the kid, and with his finger sprinkles it *toward the ceiling seven times, and likewise on the floor*' (ibid. 242–3).
  7. As for the victims offered at Pentecost, Josephus gives different numbers from those given in the Bible, but they are not the same as Philo's either: 'As whole burnt-offerings they further sacrifice *three calves*, two rams, *fourteen lambs*, with *two kids in atonement for sins*' (ibid. 253).<sup>138</sup>
  8. The following rule belongs to a different account, that of purity laws (*Ant.* III.258 ff.), and applies to cases of prolonged impurity, about which there is no biblical regulation:<sup>139</sup> 'But a person who exceeds this number of days [sc. 7] in a state of defilement *is required to sacrifice two ewe-lambs, of which one must be devoted to the flames and the other is taken by the priests*' (ibid. 262).

<sup>137</sup> The term 'bullock' translates the word *ταῦρος* used by Josephus, whereas, of the same offering, Philo uses the term *μόσχος* (*De spec. leg.* 1, 188, also used in Lev. 16: 3).

<sup>138</sup> Except for the rams, Josephus adds the numbers of victims found in Lev. 23: 15–22, and Num. 28: 26–31.

<sup>139</sup> The Loeb edition of Josephus denies the existence of a biblical parallel (vol. 3, p. 444). However, a similar biblical parallel for a holocaust and a sin offering offered together can be found in Lev. 5: 7–10, though the animal species are different. In fact, Milgrom (1991), 310, thinks that Lev. 5: 1–13 talks about *prolongation* of impurity, but he does not cite Josephus.

*The Mishnah***An approach to the mishnaic sacrificial categories**

As I stated in the first section of this chapter, on Sources, I shall present the mishnaic evidence on animal sacrifice by insisting on the conceptual categories around which rabbinic legislation revolves. In other words, I shall focus on the way in which the rabbis classify the achronic elements of animal sacrificial ritual: these elements are the offerer, the victim, their relation to space and time, the type of sacrifice, and the importance of the various sacrificial types (all these are underlined in each of the categories below).

(a) *Animal and vegetable sacrifices* It is important to begin the presentation of these elements by showing that, independently of my choice to focus on animal sacrifice, the mishnaic redactors seem to treat animal offerings as more important than vegetable offerings.

In a passage from Kerithoth (= extirpation), the rabbis explicitly state the equality between various animal offerings, without even mentioning meal offerings:

R. Simeon says: Everywhere Scripture speaks of sheep before goats. Is it because they are the choicer? But Scripture says, *And if he bring a lamb as his oblation for a Sin-offering*; to teach that both are equal. Everywhere Scripture speaks of turtle-doves before young pigeons. Is it because they are the choicer? But Scripture says, *A young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a Sin-offering*; to teach that both are equal. (Ker. 6.9, tr. Danby)

As the only available proof of the equality between animal offerings and meal offerings, one might use the last sentence of the tractate Menahoth (meal-offerings); however, despite the final pronouncement on equality, the fact is that a meal-offering is generally regarded as *less than* an offering of cattle:

It is said of the Whole-offering of cattle, *a fire offering, an odour of sweet savour*; and of the Bird-offering, *a fire offering, an odour of sweet savour*; and of the Meal-offering, *a fire offering, an odour of sweet savour*: to teach that it is all one whether a man offers much or little, if only he directs his mind towards Heaven (Men. 13.11, tr. Danby, my emphasis).

In contrast to the previous ambiguous rules, the following rule proves more easily for mishnaic Judaism what we tried to prove with

difficulty for the Greek context, namely that animal offerings were considered more important than vegetable offerings: 'The Bird-offerings precede the Meal-offerings since they come within the class of blood [offerings]' (Zeb. 10.4, tr. Danby).

(b) *Types of animal offerings* A quite important issue is the relation of the offerer to the offering. This brings into relief the issue of the *intention* of the offerer, much emphasized by Neusner. The way in which the offerer makes clear his intention depends on the designation used of the offering ('Passover-offering', 'sin-offering', etc., see Zeb. 1), and of the way of making the offering, that is, time, place, or several ritual gestures. For instance: 'no other intention can render the offering invalid save that which concerns [an act] outside the proper time or place, or, if it is a Passover-offering or Sin-offering, slaughtering it under another name' (Zeb. 3.6, tr. Danby). An example where the designation of the offering seems to invalidate the slaughter is Hull. 2.8: if someone slaughters 'in honour of' (or 'for the sake of') mountains or hills, the act is invalid.<sup>140</sup>

But how is the offerer going to make his intention known, if not by speech?<sup>141</sup> The issue of the *oral statement* becomes more prominent in cases where the mishnaic passage shows an exchange between the priest and the offerer, as in the case of women's bird-offerings (Kinnim 3.1, 3.6). Also prominent is the oral statement accompanying acts of sacrificial substitution (Temurah 5).<sup>142</sup>

As is obvious from Zeb. 4.6, only a specified number of potential designations makes animal offerings valid: 'For the sake of six things is the animal offering sacrificed: for the sake of the animal offering, for the sake of the one who sacrifices it, for the sake of the Lord, for

<sup>140</sup> Hullin deals with animals killed for food, but this tractate most clearly illustrates the overlap between religious and secular slaughter.

<sup>141</sup> At the end of Zeb. 4.6, both Danby and Neusner add that the intention must remain unspoken, but they do not specify where this injunction derives from.

<sup>142</sup> The promise of a sacrifice made by the offerer brings once more into relief the issue of the *oral statement* made by the offerer. Men. 13 deals with the offerer's sacrificial obligations, in the case where the initial promise is forgotten. So, the offerer might have promised (and consequently forgotten) the following: a whole-offering, a specific species of animal, a male or female animal of a specific species, an animal of a certain value, one animal out of more, etc.

A question which could arise is whether the promise is personal or is made before another person. The answer to this question will define whether the Law is concerned with the offerer's conscience or his ritual correctness.

the sake of the altar fires, for the sake of the odor, for the sake of the pleasant smell; and as to the sin-offering and the guilt-offering, for the sake of the sin' (tr. Neusner).

(c) *Hierarchical classification of animal offerings* The Mishnah classifies the offerings themselves in a hierarchical order: there are Most Holy Things and Lesser Holy Things (Zeb. 1.2). This hierarchy influences the importance of the offerings, since any designation from among the Most Holy Things counts more than any designation from among the Lesser Holy Things.

Now within each of the two categories of Holiness there are also gradations of importance (Zeb. 10). The Firstling and the Tithe of Cattle are Lesser Holy Things (Zeb. 5.8), but: 'The Firstling precedes the Tithe [of Cattle] since it is holy from the womb' (Zeb. 10.3, tr. Danby); 'Sin-offerings and guilt-offerings are Most Holy Things' (Zeb. 5.1, 3, 5), but 'All sin-offerings enjoined in the Law precede the guilt-offerings, excepting only the guilt-offering of the leper' (Zeb. 10.5, tr. Danby). Thus, the importance of the offerings is mirrored in their precedence. Greater importance can be a result of frequency. Thus, 'What is offered more often than another precedes the other' (Zeb. 10.1, tr. Danby).

Precedence in ritual is related to precedence in the consumption of sacrificial meat (Zeb. 10.6), but there is not always consistency here. Thus, given the fact that sin-offerings and guilt-offerings are Most Holy Things, and peace-offerings are Lesser Holy Things (Zeb. 5.7): "Peace-offerings of yesterday and a sin-offering and a guilt-offering of today—those of yesterday take precedence", the words of R. Meir. And sages say, "the sin-offering takes precedence, because it is Most Holy Things." (Zeb. 10.6, tr. Neusner).

As for the crucial issue of sacrilege, the tractate Meilah (= sacrilege) shows how the designation of each offering and its place in the hierarchy activates different criteria of sacrilege (Meil. 1.3).

(d) *Time and place, gestures, pollution, the victim's body* Further issues of importance are time and place. Thus, Zeb. 2 and 3 deal with the right time (e.g. the next day) and place (e.g. outside the Temple) as regards slaughtering, burning, treatment of blood, and eating of sacrificial portions. The factors of designation, time, and place in different combinations can render the offering valid or invalid (see p. 191 above, the quotation from Zeb. 3.6).

Disorder may be caused by the wrong movement in space, for example, the atoning power of the blood of a sin-offering, which is received in two bowls, is influenced by where the bowls are (Zeb. 8.12). A special space-pattern concerns the movement of offerings in relation to the altar; whichever of the offerings is placed on the altar acquires a special status, which makes it fit or unfit to move down from the altar:

Rabban Gamaliel says: Whatsoever is prescribed as the due of the Altar and goes up to it may not come down again . . . (Zeb. 9.1, tr. Danby)

Like as what goes up may not come down again, so what comes down may not go up again. But if aught went up alive to the top of the Altar, it may come down again. A Whole-offering that went up alive to the top of the Altar may come down again. If it was slaughtered on the top of the Altar it should be flayed and cut up where it lies. (Zeb. 9.4, tr. Danby)

There are distinct terms for ritual gestures, especially as regards the treatment of sacrificial blood: the verbs ‘received’, ‘poured’, ‘conveyed’, ‘tossed/sprinkled’. Thus Zeb. 2.1–3.

The designation of the offering, or its categorization as quadrupeds or birds, results in different ritual gestures. Thus, the Mishnah moves on to an even more specific series of rules. These concern the point of slaughter, the sprinkling of blood, and the method of killing. So, Most Holy Things are slaughtered on the north side of the altar, and their blood requires sprinkling many times (Zeb. 5). In the case of bird-offerings, the point of killing is different, and the method of killing is the wringing of the neck. The procedure of killing and the location of it (‘above’–‘below’) is different each time, depending on the designation of the bird-offering (‘sin-offering’, ‘whole-offering’): Zeb. 6.

The status of the person who keeps the bowl of sacrificial blood (e.g. an uncircumcised person) can affect the validity of the offering (thus, Zeb. 2).

Bird-offerings in particular are exposed to a peculiar category of pollution, the so-called ‘uncleaness of the gullet’. This can be the result of the wrong way of killing or of the bad physical condition of the bird (Zeb. 7).

In general, the Mishnaic legislators define cases of mixing which might invalidate the offerings because of pollution (Zeb. 8). These cases concern mixing between beasts, either when alive or at the level

of body-members and sacrificial meat. Things become complicated when the animal offerings have different designations.

If animal offerings were confused with sin-offerings that had been left to die or with an ox that was to be stoned, though it be but one among ten thousand, all must be left to die. (Zeb. 8.1, tr. Danby)

If pieces of the flesh [of one offering] were confused with pieces of the flesh [of other offerings], the Most Holy Things with Lesser Holy Things, or what must be eaten the same day with what may be eaten during two days... (Zeb. 8.3, tr. Danby)

Since cases of mixing mainly concern kindred substances, for example liquid with liquid, regulations about blood could not be omitted: 'If blood was mixed with water, yet had still the appearance of blood, it remains valid; if it was mixed with wine, the wine is deemed to be but water; if it was mixed with the blood of a beast... ' (Zeb. 8.6, tr. Danby).

Apart from mixing, mere contact with forbidden substances is also to be avoided. This pertains to food contacting the sinew of the hip or flesh contacting milk (Hull. 7 and 8 respectively). In both cases, the portion of sinew or milk, which can make the food forbidden, is empirically specified by the criterion of flavour ('if there was enough to give its flavour...').

Cases of physically unified clean and unclean bodies can be considered as another level of mixing, so another source of pollution, but the reciprocal principle does not apply here:

If a clean beast bore young that was like to an unclean beast it is permitted for food; but if an unclean beast bore young that was like to a clean beast it is forbidden for food, for what issues from an unclean beast is unclean... If an unclean fish swallowed a clean fish this is permitted for food; but if a clean fish swallowed an unclean fish this is forbidden for food, since it was not bred from the other. (Bekh. 1.2, tr. Danby)

Cases of mixing are close to cases of ritual confusion; the latter reach the apogee of impressionism in the tractate Kinnim (= bird-offerings), where the legislators try to solve possible problems of pollution caused by the simultaneous presence of numerous bird-offerings before the altar. To the non-expert, the rabbinic attempt to define the movements of birds in time and space seems absurd:

If one woman had one pair, another two, another three, another four, another five, another six, and another seven, and one [bird] flew from the first to the second, then one from thence to the third, then one from thence to the fourth, then one from thence to the fifth, then one from thence to the sixth, then one from thence to the seventh, and then [one from each] flew back [in like order], each renders one invalid by flying away and one by flying back; thus the first [woman] and the second will have none left [that can validly be offered]; the third will have one pair, the fourth will have two, the fifth will have three, the sixth will have four, while the seventh will have six. (Kinn. 2.3, tr. Danby)

If at the one side were sin-offerings and at the other whole-offerings, and in the middle [birds] yet unassigned, and from the middle one flew to the one side and one to the other, no loss ensues . . . If [one from the side] flew back to the middle, those that are in the middle must be left to die, but those on the one side can still be offered as sin-offerings and those on the other as whole-offerings. If it returned, or if another bird flew from the middle to the sides, then all must be left to die. (Kinn. 2.5, tr. Danby)

At times the rabbinic imagination becomes even more impressionistic, so much so, indeed, that one (especially the non-expert) can read the words of R. Simeon b. Aqashya as a reprimand:

Said R. Joshua, 'This illustrates that which they have said, 'When it [the animal] is alive, its voice is one. When it is dead, its voice is seven'. How is its voice seven? Its two horns become two trumpets, its two leg bones, two flutes, its hide is made into a drum, its innards are used for lyres, and its intestines, for harps. Some say, Also its wool is made into blue [for the high priest's blue pomegranates]. R. Simeon b. Aqashya says 'As the elders of the *am haares* grow old, their understanding is loosened from them, as it is said, *He removes the speech of the trusty and takes away the understanding of the elders*. But sages of the Torah are not that way . . .' (Kinn. 3.6, tr. Neusner)

The references to the animal in this passage are indicative of an area which might constitute an area of common ground between Greek and Jewish sacrifice, namely the topology (using Durand's term) of the animal's body.<sup>143</sup> A striking point in the Mishnah is that such a topology can derive from passages which focus on the moment of the animal's death. Thus, in an attempt to define the

<sup>143</sup> Having dedicated a long section to the same issue in her book on Leviticus (1999), Douglas does not hesitate to acknowledge the help she received from zoologists and butchers.



limits of a valid slaughter, Hullin (= animals killed for food) contains some shocking descriptions of killing, like the following:

If he cut through the gullet but tore open the windpipe, or cut through the windpipe but tore open the gullet, or if he cut through but one of them and waited until the beast died, or if he sank the knife beneath the second [of the tubes] and so severed it . . . (Hull. 2.4, tr. Danby)

If a beast that had not before borne young was in hard travail, the members [of the young] may be cut off one by one and thrown to the dogs . . . (Hull. 4.2, tr. Danby)

If a man slaughtered a beast and found therein an eight months' birth, living or dead, or a dead nine months' birth, he need only sever it and let the blood flow away. (Hull. 4.5, tr. Danby)

Besides the morbid aspect of such passages, one cannot help admiring observations like this: 'If a small beast stretched out its fore-leg but did not withdraw it, it is invalid, since this was but [a token of] its expiring' (Hull. 2.6, tr. Danby).

The tractate Tamid (= the daily whole-offering) contains a chapter (4) regulating the cutting-up of the slaughtered lamb. The body members were given by lot to different priests: one was to hold the head and the right hind-leg, another was to hold the two fore-legs, a third was to hold the rump, the left hind-leg, the lobe of the liver, and the kidneys, another was to hold the breast and the neck, and so on. In the end, they all deposited the members on the altar. The order of actions reminds one of the order of Greek sacrifice depicted on the Ricci vase.<sup>144</sup>

Not only is the body of the animal treated in a special way, but also its blood is given particular importance. Ritual acts show that blood is considered both the source of life, and a sign of it. For instance, in the regulations expanding the biblical law of covering the blood, it is specified that: 'With something in which one grows plants, they cover it up, and with something in which one does not grow plants, they do not cover it up' (Hull. 6.7, tr. Neusner). And concerning the cases where it is not certain whether a beast is pregnant: 'If large cattle discharged a clot of blood this must be buried; and they are exempt from the law of the Firstling' (Bekh. 3.1, tr. Danby).

<sup>144</sup> As analysed in Durand (1979a).

Passages such as the ones quoted above show that the authors were very familiar with the animal body and its functions. Indeed, such an acquaintance on the part of the mishnaic authors with the body and its natural procedures must be the reason why they do not hesitate to cite laws concerning human beings after laws concerning animals. This is the case with the regulations on blemishes of priests (Bekh. 7), which follow the regulations on blemishes of animals (Bekh. 6), and the regulations on firstborn children, which follow the regulations on firstborn animals (Bekh. 8). Both animal and human bodies appear tightly linked in passages related to the offerings of a woman after childbirth or miscarriage. It is striking that such passages were written by male legislators,<sup>145</sup> who wanted to expand the biblical laws on women's offerings:

There are women who bring a [sin] offering [after childbirth], and it is eaten [by the priests], and there are women who bring an offering, and it is not eaten, and there are women who do not bring [an offering].

These [women after childbirth] bring an offering, and it is eaten: 'She who aborts something which is like a beast or a wild animal or a bird', the words of R. Meir. . . .

These bring [an offering], but it is not eaten: She who aborts, and it is not known what it is that she has aborted; . . .

These are those who do not bring [an offering at all]: She who aborts a foetus filled with water, filled with blood, filled with variegated matter . . . (Ker. 1.3–5, tr. Neusner)

A certain gynaecological condition can make the woman herself fit or unfit for the consumption of sacrificial meat: 'If a woman suffered five issues that were in doubt or five miscarriages that were in doubt, she need bring but one offering, and she may then eat of the animal-offerings' (Ker. 1.7, tr. Danby).

To sum up this section on the Mishnah: the attempt of the rabbis strictly to systematize cultic rules in the Mishnah is mainly effected by the listing of all possible cases concerning an issue. This listing is worth studying in itself: groups, or couples, of similar, identical, or opposite elements are combined in order for all cases to be covered. For our purposes, though, it is a further aspect of this systematization

<sup>145</sup> The full rules about women's purity are to be found in the tractate Niddah (= The menstruant) of the division *Tohoroth* (= Purities).

which is important; that is to say, such a classification is by definition structured around basic conceptual categories, like 'time', 'place', 'clean–unclean', 'body' (its members and functions). The insistence of the rabbis on preserving and elaborating such biblical conceptual categories resulted in a new corpus of Law, the Mishnah, which owes its particular character exactly to this process.

From a more historical point of view, however, the Mishnah makes three things obvious: (a) the chronological vagueness and the lack of clarity in the text render the Mishnah unreliable evidence for the meanings actually attached to different forms of sacrifice while the Temple still stood; (b) offerings by private individuals were recognized by the rabbis as an integral part of Jewish sacrificial practice; and (c) despite its legalistic character, the categories contained in the Mishnah make the sacrificial reality described by it (whatever this might have been) look as varied as the Greek equivalent.

### More specific issues in the Mishnah

Some further issues dealt with in the Mishnah are not exactly historical, but they could not have been treated in the section on conceptual categories either. In other words, they contain rules contributing to categorization, but these rules correspond to specific scenes drawn from cultic and everyday experience.

(a) *Participation of the individual in Jewish festivals* The Pentateuch legislates that every male Israelite must appear before the Lord three times a year, at the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and that he must definitely bring an offering on these occasions (Deut. 16: 16–17). However, the Bible does not specify what sort of offering is to be brought by individuals. The information contained in the Mishnah must be extracted from the following passages of the tractate Hagigah (= the festal offering) of the division *Moed* (set feasts):

All are liable for an appearance offering [before the Lord] except for a deaf-mute, an idiot, a minor... (Hag. 1.1, tr. Neusner)

The House of Shammai say, 'The appearance offering must be worth at least two pieces of silver, and the festal offering at least one maah of silver.' (Hag. 1.2, tr. Neusner)

Whole-offerings during mid-festival are brought from...unconsecrated money, and Peace-offerings also from...Tithe... (Hag. 1.3, tr. Danby)

Israelites may fulfil their obligation by bringing vow-offerings and freewill-offerings and Tithe of Cattle; and the priests by bringing Sin-offerings and Guilt-offerings, and Firstlings, and the breast and the shoulder, but not by bringing Bird-offerings or Meal-offerings. (Hag. 1.4, tr. Danby)

From the passages above it is to be understood that the obligation of individual participation in the Jewish festivals was to be fulfilled by two offerings, the so-called ‘appearance offering’ and the ‘festal offering’. As Hag. 1.3 and 1.4 make obvious, the offerings brought during festival days fell into the categories already prescribed in the Bible. The case usually stated by scholars is that the offerings should be a burnt-offering and a peace-offering,<sup>146</sup> but I think this conclusion cannot be drawn from the primary sources, either the Bible or the Mishnah.<sup>147</sup>

(b) *Sacrificial or non-sacrificial slaughter?* A crucial problem emerging from the division *Kodashim* is whether the rabbis make a strict distinction between sacrificial animal slaughter and common animal slaughter. The tractate *Hullin*, which is supposed to lay down the rules for killing animals for food, deals both with slaughter in the Temple and with slaughter outside the Temple, and defines the framework of their validity. This proves what I have also stated with regard to Philo, namely, the overlap of religious and secular slaughter, which, of course, goes back to the Bible.

Mishnaic passages concerning the Passover offering refer to the Temple, or, generally, to a Passover slaughter with no specification of place; the following passages are from the tractate *Pesahim* (= Passover) of the division *Moed* (set feasts):

The Passover-offering was slaughtered . . . in three groups . . . When the first group entered in and the Temple Court was filled, the gates of the Temple Court were closed . . . The priests stood in rows and in their hands were basins of silver and basins of gold. (Pes. 5.5, tr. Danby)

<sup>146</sup> According to Lev. 7: 11–21, vow-offerings and freewill-offerings are sub-categories of the peace-offering.

<sup>147</sup> See e.g. Danby, p. 211, n. 10: ‘On the basis of the combined passages of *Deut.* 16.16 and *Ex.* 23.14 it is deduced that every male Israelite must bring on the first festival-day i) a Whole-offering . . . and ii) a peace-offering . . .’. In fact, one cannot draw this conclusion at all by reading the two biblical passages.

An Israelite slaughtered his [own] offering and the priest caught the blood. The priest passed the bason to his fellow, and he to his fellow . . . (Pes. 5.6, tr. Danby)

If a man said to his slave, 'Go and slaughter the Passover-offering for me', and he slaughtered a kid, the master may eat of it; and if he slaughtered a lamb he may eat of it. If he slaughtered both a kid and a lamb he should eat of the first [that was slaughtered]. (ibid. 8.2, tr. Danby)

If a man said to his sons, 'I will slaughter the Passover-offering for whichever of you shall first come up to Jerusalem', so soon as one has put his head and the greater part of his body inside [Jerusalem] he has gained his portion; and he must grant portions to his brothers also. (ibid. 8.3, tr. Danby)

The passages quoted above may imply that the Passover sacrifice would take place in the Temple, but that the actual act of slaughtering would be the responsibility of the lay person, not the priest. Of course, the questions are: When did this happen? Is it an imaginary reconstruction of a Passover sacrifice, or a representation of what actually happened in the Second Temple period?

Questions about the religious or secular character of the slaughter even arise in a tractate dealing with sacrifices in the Temple: if we are to rely on the title *Zebachim* (= animal offerings), the mention of lay people in the following passage does not make any sense: 'slaughtering is valid if it is done by them that are not priests, or by women or by bondservants or by them that are unclean, even the [slaughtering of the] Most Holy Things, provided that none that is unclean touches the flesh' (*Zeb.* 3.1, tr. Danby).

A factor defining the validity of a slaughter is the tool used for killing the animal. But does this rule apply to a religious slaughter, a secular slaughter, or to both? 'If he slaughtered with a hand-sickle or with a flint or with a reed, what he slaughters is valid. All may slaughter and at any time and with any implement excepting a reaping-sickle or a saw or teeth or the finger-nails . . .' (*Hull.* 1.2, tr. Danby).

Rules about the validity of slaughter depend on the designation of the animal killed, but one wonders why terms normally attached to sacrificial offerings find their place in a tractate about non-sacrificial slaughter, and also what '(in)valid' might mean in this context:

If a man slaughtered [an unconsecrated beast outside the Temple Court] under the name of a Whole-offering or a Peace-offering or a Suspensive Guilt-offering or a Passover-offering or a Thank-offering, what he slaughters is invalid. But

R. Simeon declares it valid. If two took hold of the knife and slaughtered, the one under the name of any of these things, and the other under the name of a thing permitted, what is slaughtered is invalid. If a man slaughtered [an unconsecrated beast outside the Temple] under the name of a Sin-offering or an Unconditional Guilt-offering or as a Firstling or as Tithe [of Cattle] or as a Substitute[-offering], what he slaughters is valid. (Hull. 2.10, tr. Danby)

There are cases where it is obvious from the context that rules concern both sacrificial and non-sacrificial slaughter: ‘By reason of these blemishes they [i.e. the firstlings] may not be slaughtered either in the Temple or in the provinces...’ (Bekh. 6.12, tr. Danby, my emphasis).

Another issue is the relation between animal slaughter and consumption of meat. As the Mishnah was written during a time when the Temple did not exist, we cannot draw conclusions for earlier periods, but, according to Hull. 5.3, Jews would eat meat on the following occasions: Tabernacles, Passover, Pentecost, New Year, and a wedding:<sup>148</sup> ‘At these four times [i.e. the four festivals] they may make the butcher slaughter a beast against his will’ (Hull. 5.4, tr. Danby).

Related to meat consumption of invalid sacrificial victims is the following rule from Bekhorot (= firstlings), which makes it clear that there were ‘ordinary’ markets in non-sacrificial meat: ‘All animal-offerings that have become invalid may [after they have been redeemed] be sold in the market and slaughtered in the market and weighed out by measure, save only the Firstling and Tithe [of Cattle] ...’ (Bekh. 5.1).<sup>149</sup> The profit from these animals falls to the Temple (ibid.).

The passages above depict a great variety in terms of who slaughters, where, and by what instrument; however, we cannot easily reconcile them with what we know about the Temple before AD 70. So it would be safer if we thought of this variety as resulting from the debates of the Jewish sages after AD 70, and not necessarily as being the result of the sacrificial practice in force in the Temple.

<sup>148</sup> On the latter point, see the detail in Ker. 3.7: ‘I asked Rabban Gamaliel and R. Joshua in the market of Emmaus, where they went to buy a beast for the wedding-festival of the son of Rabban Gamaliel ...’

<sup>149</sup> The same rule is found in Temurah (= the substituted offering), 3.5. I do not know where Danby found the information that blemished offerings should not be sold (p. 535, n. 5).

(c) *Jews and pagans* The question of limits as between sacrificial and non-sacrificial slaughter is related to the sacrifices offered by pagans. Rabbis were aware of the similarities in the practice of slaughtering, and alert to the possibility of confusion between Judaism and other religious groups: ‘They do not slaughter [in such a way that the blood falls] into a hole. But one makes a hole in his house, so that the blood will flow down into it. And in the market one may not do so, so that one will not imitate the *minim* [in their ways]’ (Hull. 2.9, tr. Neusner).

It is not always clear if some of the rules about slaughter refer to ‘paganizing’ Jews or pagans: ‘If a man slaughtered a beast and it was found to be *terefah*, or if he slaughtered it in honour of an idol, or if he slaughtered unconsecrated beasts within [the Temple Court] or animal-offerings outside...’ (Hull. 6.2, tr. Danby).<sup>150</sup> However, sometimes the pagan is present in the narrative: ‘It once happened that a quaestor saw an old ram with a long, dangling hair and said, “What manner of thing is this?” They answered, “It is a Firstling which may be slaughtered only if it suffers a blemish”. He took a dagger and slit its ear. The matter came before the Sages and they declared it permitted’ (Bekh. 5.3, tr. Danby).

Passages like the following show that Jews had commercial contacts with Gentiles, but not for reasons of consumption of animal products:

If a man slaughtered a beast for a priest or a gentile, he is exempt from Priests’ Dues... (Hull. 10.3, tr. Danby)

If a man bought the fleeces of a sheep of a gentile he is exempt from the law of *the first of the fleece*. (Hull. 11.2, tr. Danby)

What is slaughtered by a gentile is deemed carrion, and it conveys uncleanness by carrying. (Hull. 1.1, tr. Danby)

[The milk in] the stomach of [a beast that was slaughtered by] a gentile or [in the stomach of] carrion is forbidden. (Hull. 8.5, tr. Danby)

In sum, we see that the mishnaic authors were very careful not to let the Jewish sacrificial variety which their text conveys be misunderstood as an infusion of Jewish with Gentile customs.

<sup>150</sup> Similar phrasing in Hull. 5.3.

## CONCLUSION

The presentation above has helped us to understand how important a role the sacrificial ritual of the Jerusalem Temple had in Jewish consciousness. Even at the time when the Temple had not yet been built, the location of Jewish sacrificial ritual encapsulated values of a religious and national character. For Jews, God had made a covenant with Israel, the ritual part of which consisted in obligations both on the nation as a whole, and on each of its members. Since the Temple was the place for both kinds of sacrificial obligation, the Fall of the Temple in AD 70 cancelled the one part, that of national sacrificial duties. As for the other part, it seems that individuals continued to offer sacrifices after AD 70—and some even went to the ruins of the Temple to do so. However, one can imagine that after AD 70, given the importance of the Temple for each Jew, individual piety was deprived of the highest level of its devotion.

During the Second Temple period, as this is narrated by Josephus, and with the exception of the sectarians at Qumran, all Jews were expected to worship the One God in his one Temple (*Apion* II.193). The Temple emerges from Josephus' work as both a building and a value. Josephus only gives us a short account of the animal sacrifices conducted there (in *Ant.* III), but even this has already provided us with eight differences from the biblical account of sacrifice. These differences cannot but result from Josephus' contact with Jerusalem and its Temple—as a priest, he must have seen and carried out many animal sacrifices—and so constitute reliable evidence for the fact that, in his time, Jewish animal sacrificial cult had incorporated non-biblical elements. Unfortunately for our purposes, Josephus seems to have been more interested in politics than in religion.

Unlike Josephus, Philo was not a historian. His dependence on the Pentateuch results in a lack of references to the Temple, but, on the other hand, this dependence makes him focus on animal sacrificial ritual much more than Josephus (even if Philo himself lived at a distance from the Temple).

Philo does not even inform us about the way in which Jewish festivals were observed in the Diaspora. He only admits that pilgrimage to the Temple at the time of festivals linked the Diaspora Jewish communities



to one another and to Jerusalem. The only exception might be his description of Passover, which, I think, derives from the experiences that he and other Jews (but how many?) had in the Diaspora.

However, even in the depths of Philo's allegorical expositions one can discover elements of historical value, such as, for instance, the overlap of ritual and secular slaughter (evident also in the Passover ritual); or one or two sacrificial rules not found in the Bible. Even if minor, these small details show that Diaspora communities, even if far from the Temple, were familiar not just with the letter of the Law concerning animal sacrifice, but with the practice of animal killing itself.

A further element of historical value has been drawn from Philo's ability to present and analyse biblical regulations in an accessible way (with his lengthy allegorizations being the exception to this accessibility). This ability of Philo has led me to the suggestion that his works may have been used in the context of Law teaching. In all likelihood, such teaching contributed to the understanding of the biblical sacrificial mechanisms by Diaspora Jews, even if, away from the Temple, the latter could not fully practise what they had learnt.

Christianizing interpretations of Philo's religious philosophy present him as looking for a higher meaning under the cruel reality of animal sacrifice; his search—these interpretations run—was to be superseded by Christianity, which annulled animal sacrifice.<sup>151</sup> In fact, instead of this evolutionist thesis, in my presentation I have tried to show that Philo seems to be the founder of a new conceptual scheme. More specifically: in Philo the areas of reality pertaining to the killing of animals (species, mode of slaughter, eating of sacrificial meat) ceased to be autonomous entities. In the sacrificial system of the Temple, as also in the Greek sacrificial system, the procedure of the killing of animals was defined by the occasion (for instance, sin offering or heroic cult), but never acquired the importance that Philo gives to it. Thus, according to my interpretative scheme set out in Chapter 1, Philo connects areas from the *horizontal* and the *vertical* lines of the sacrificial system: to Philo the material animal and the treatment of its blood and body (horizontal line) symbolize values and qualities which man should

<sup>151</sup> This seems to be the underlying assumption in Hamerton-Kelly (1991), when he says (p. 68): 'Philo's deeper meaning merely deepens the deception, while Paul's diagnoses the disease.'

adopt in the social ethics of everyday life (horizontal line), if he wished to have a proper relation to God (vertical line).

In this framework of the thought of Philo, one notices the following two functions in his scheme:

- (a) Philo transforms each and every one of the animal's bodily members into spiritual entities. Isolated examples of this might be known from the Greek religious context;<sup>152</sup> yet, for the Jewish context, this function of Philo's allegorizations would have constituted the most important assertion of ritual, an allegorical method undermining itself by concentrating on the trivial. And it is historically interesting that this assertion of ritual came from the Diaspora. Thus, long before Vernant's analysis of sacrifice, Philo proved that the code of ritual might hide other sorts of truth,<sup>153</sup> and made an attempt to enter the collective unconscious encapsulated in a practice—even if he did not follow a consistent scheme of interpretation.
- (b) To Philo the material aspects of the *horizontal* axis of ritual, that is, animals, blood, slaughter, are not despicable and exist in order to function as means of communication with further sections of the horizontal and the vertical lines (for instance, the values encapsulated in a pious and just life). And, in any case, Philo does not go so far as to allegorize the most concrete aspects of ritual, such as, for instance, the eating of sacrificial meat.

Furthermore, Philo's peculiar philosophy and the indications in his text concerning other 'schools' of interpretation, different from his own, have made us realize that the issue of Philo's influence on Jews becomes more important if connected to a number of other factors, such as: the proportion of Jews who were attracted by Philo's teachings, taking into consideration the existence of Jews who might not have been aware of disagreements between schools of interpretation; the Christianization of Jews; and the Fall of the Temple in AD 70.

<sup>152</sup> See Plutarch, *Mor.* 141E–F.

<sup>153</sup> Klawans (2006), 142, admits that 'Philo's is the most thorough symbolic exposition of sacrificial ritual known from ancient Jewish times', even if he makes Philo's system fit his own, which is based on the assumption that sacrificial ritual belongs to the procedure of *imitatio Dei*.

Having focused on the structure of the Mishnah as an organizing religious text, I have concluded that the main achievement of the authors of the mishnaic corpus was the construction of a highly sophisticated system of sacrificial rules. As in Philo's work, in the Mishnah various concrete sacrificial situations were given complex meanings: what seems to us trivial detail in the procedure of animal sacrifice was represented as of the utmost importance by Jews living after the fall of the Temple.

At the same time, the authors of the Mishnah were perfectly aware of what was going on around them. However, they did not specify if some passages were memories, representations of life at their time, or dreams about the future. The reason for this lack of clarity is, on the one hand, the various strata of tradition in the Mishnah, and on the other, the insistence of rabbis on preserving this tradition. Thus, even if it seems tempting to exploit some passages to draw historical conclusions, we shall never know the exact proportion of the constituent elements of the Mishnah: remembrance (the period before AD 70), reality (the period after AD 70), and hope for the future.

In sum, a common aspect between the horizontal lines of Greek religion and Judaism, which has arisen from this study, is the insistence on the definition of ritual details. This chapter has made us realize that if, by an unexpected stroke of historical luck, we had a Greek text similar to the Mishnah, perhaps we would find that issues about what should be sacrificed, by whom, why, where, and in what way, arose in pagan temples too. Of course, in the case of Greek religion this imaginary text would have to have been composed so as to cover a great variety of local practices, since, due to the fundamental difference between the Greek and the Jewish religions, namely, the concentration of the ritual in the Jerusalem Temple, Jewish sacrifices could not be characterized by local variety.

For the same reason—one Temple and only one—the animal as a sign did not play a major role in the horizontal axis of Judaism. The annual celebration of Passover did not suffice to render the function of the sacrificial victim similar to that in the Greek case, where honorary gifts by or to the city and omens concerning health and death were centred around an animal victim.

## A Bridge Linking Greek Religion and Judaism to Christianity

PAGANS, JEWS, JEWISH SYMPATHIZERS . . .  
AND OTHER CHRISTIANS

Animal sacrifice was the most representative cultic element of pre-Christian Mediterranean religions, either at the collective public level or the private one. Although not lacking in variety of cases of sacrifice, in comparison with Greek religion Judaism lacked both local variety and a further crucial aspect of Greek sacrifice, that of extispicy. To Philo, who is against any form of divination (*μαντική*), including that based on extispicy (*θυτική*),<sup>1</sup> divination is a sign of impiety, because it shows that the person who uses it puts his faith not in the Cause of all, God, but in unstable elements, such as ‘entrails and blood and corpses which deprived of life at once collapse and decompose and in this process exchange their natural properties for others of worse condition’ (*De spec. legibus* 1, 62).

Drawing signs from extispicy would have been one of the most beloved practices which a pagan would abandon if he or she decided to follow Judaism. In fact, there is explicit evidence for pagans who decided to move in the direction of becoming Jews. These are known in the sources as ‘God-fearers’ (*σεβόμενοι*—or *φοβούμενοι*—τὸν *Θεόν*). It is generally accepted by now that this term denotes Jewish sympathizers of Gentile origin, who were attached to synagogues in the Diaspora, but had not yet been fully converted to Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De spec. leg.* 1, 59–63, *De spec. leg.* 4, 48–54.

<sup>2</sup> See Schürer (1973–87), vol. 3.1, pp. 150–76. Also Mitchell (1993), vol. 2, pp. 31–2. In Mitchell (1999), mainly pp. 115–21, the author cites evidence for the equation of the *θεοσεβεῖς* with the worshippers of Theos Hypsistos.

Indeed, the evidence in the Acts of the Apostles often presents Paul's audiences (even the earliest among them) as consisting of people 'who revered (or feared) God'.<sup>3</sup>

It is self-evident that God-fearers would have been familiar with pagan sacrifice. And it is very likely that, by going to the synagogue, pre-AD 70 God-fearers would have learnt about the Temple and the animal sacrificial cult conducted in it. More importantly, God-fearers might have been influenced by those Diaspora Jews who, like Philo's readers, attached deeper religious meanings to biblical passages on animal sacrifice. Consequently, by turning towards another religion, God-fearers would have adopted a totally different way of seeing the *vertical* line of the sacrificial system (see Chapter 1, sec. 2). What was this way? Would they have been attracted by the great majority of Jews, who did not question the worth of animal sacrifice, or by the allegorists, who did not emphasize the importance of ritual? Or by the teachings of Philo, who represented a middle way between the two?

Our knowledge of the category of God-fearers reinforces the scholarly, but not easily proved, assumption about the variety of backgrounds which must have characterized early Christian converts. Each background apparently corresponded to a particular way of seeing man's relation with God (vertical line), so we should expect that Christian attitudes towards animal sacrifice extended from the absolute denunciation of it to the complete adoption of sacrificial worship, either in the Jewish Temple or possibly elsewhere. Neither Christian nor any other evidence gives us a full picture of converts to Christianity, either before or after AD 70. But the issue of conversion itself is not a simple one, and the expectations of each group might have changed after conversion to Christianity.

For instance, it is legitimate to wonder whether Diaspora Jews continued to take the Temple cult for granted after they became Christians. Given that Christianity was born in Palestine, in the period of late Second Temple Judaism, a question likely to arise is whether Jewish Christians living in Jerusalem before AD 70 offered

<sup>3</sup> Acts 10: 2 (Peter's convert Cornelius); 13: 16, 26, 43, 50 (Paul's audience at Antioch); 16: 14 (the dealer Lydia from Thyateira); 17: 4, 17 (Paul at Thessalonica and Athens); 18: 7 (Justus at Corinth).

animal sacrifices in the Temple. In fact, the next chapter shows that Christianity's answer to Jewish ritual is not definite before AD 70. It is also legitimate to ask what sort of ritual God-fearers hoped to follow after becoming Christians, by approaching a new religion for the second time in their life; or with what expectations Jewish Christian converts from the Diaspora approached their new religion in case they had been pure allegorists (not favouring ritual observance), or in case they had been followers of Philo's theories (favouring both ritual and its symbolic significance). Would the allegorists consider their conversion as one more step towards condemnation of animal sacrifice, and the 'Philonians' as another way of believing in its continuation? Furthermore, if most of the Jewish Christian converts had been totally unaffected by philosophical interpretations of the Law, what would have been their own sacrificial attitude? Finally, it would be even more interesting to know the feelings of Jewish Christian converts of different backgrounds after the Fall of the Temple. For the time being, these questions remain unanswered by the available evidence.

Similar questions relate to Gentile Christians. Given that, as we have seen, the offering of, or payment for, animal sacrifices in Greek cities could be imposed on individuals, or be felt as a personal need, how can we be sure that Gentile Christians managed to abstain from pagan sacrificial activities immediately after their conversion? And how could we know whether they did not fulfil a personal need for a sacrifice in honour of their recently adopted God? It is indeed surprising that, although early Christians came from among pagan polytheists and Jewish monotheists, both of whom practised animal sacrifice, Christianity should emerge as a religion in which animal sacrifice did not constitute the central act of the cultic syllabus.

We shall see that, among Christians, the issue of the exact meaning of the term 'participation' in sacrificial cult becomes important in the period after AD 70. It is to be expected that such issues were not disputed among pagans or Jews, who were familiar with the sacrificial procedure, so there was no reason for specification. Questions about the limits of participation came to the foreground only when Christians refused to comply with traditional cults. From what we have seen so far in both the Greek and Jewish evidence for animal sacrifice, it is true that only an indirect definition of the expression

'offer an animal sacrifice' can be safely drawn from the sources: 'offer an animal sacrifice' certainly means either the act of slaughtering, or the presentation of an animal sacrificial victim to the officiating priest. In any other case, the decisive factor which made people say that 'X offered an animal sacrifice' must have been the undertaking of some degree of responsibility for the sacrificial procedure.<sup>4</sup>

Greek pagans, Jerusalem Jews, Diaspora Jews, and Jewish sympathizers constituted the early Christians. Though many questions remain unanswered, and we have no adequate evidence for a whole range of cultic life in Jerusalem before AD 70, we need to study what Christianity had to say about animal sacrifice. The next chapter will prove that conversion (a procedure related to the *vertical* axis of the sacrificial system) is not effected in the same way by everyone, and consequently results in different behaviour (evident in the *horizontal* axis).

<sup>4</sup> Of course, our attempt to specify when an individual is the offerer of an animal sacrifice cannot be without problems: for instance, when a person willing to offer an animal sacrifice gets sick and sends another person in his or her place, how do we know exactly who the offerer is? Was the offering accompanied by an oral explanation on the part of the one who presented it? Or, when someone paid for the victims without presenting the offerings himself (or herself), was he (or she) considered as an offerer, or simply as pious?

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## Christians and Animal Sacrifice in the Period up to AD 200

### INTRODUCTION

The study of Christian attitudes towards animal sacrifice is a very complicated matter. In fact, this chapter will make it clear that Christian writers talk about the categories of Jews and Gentiles in a broad sense, without consideration of the varieties of, and the overlaps between, these two groups. This difficulty, in turn, complicates any attempt at understanding the sacrificial beliefs of converts coming from particular backgrounds. Furthermore, the evidence is so unevenly distributed in the first two centuries AD that we cannot have a continuous view of Christian attitudes.

Coming back to my terminology of the *horizontal* and *vertical* lines in the sacrificial mechanism (Chapter 1, section 2), it is worth noting that this chapter provides the reader with hints of evidence for change in the vertical axis of the sacrificial procedure (relation to God) as seen by—some—Christians, an issue which will be presented as an epilogue to the book.

However, as in the chapters on Greek religion and Judaism, the main part in this chapter will be given to the study of the horizontal line of the sacrificial procedure in Christianity, that is, the axis corresponding to the various realms of reality—for example, ritualistic procedures, but also human practices, life attitudes, and the relevant linguistic terms which denote the above. In this context, I shall study the issues of Jewish and pagan sacrifice separately as seen by Christians up to AD 200. Moreover, the first century will be



studied separately from the second century, since the two periods are of a different nature in this respect.

The first seventy years of the first century are marked by the presence of the Temple, which still stood in the period when the expansion of Christianity had started. The second century is marked by the intense struggle of Christians against pagans and Jews. This confrontation left texts abounding in rhetorical arguments. The confrontation between Christians and pagans is more manifest in the evidence, because the authorities of the Empire were adherents of paganism. In the evidence for this confrontation, a lack of ritual conformity on the part of the Christians is reflected, an issue for which the reader has already been prepared in the second chapter. Therefore, along with the arguments of Christian writers against pagans (in the section below on the Christian apologists against pagan animal sacrifice), I also present two real-life contexts: in the one, Christian lack of conformity to the pagan ritual of sacrifice resulted in conspicuous differentiation among members of the same community, but without violent implications (see the section on Christians as community members); in the other context, the same lack of conformity became a proof in the hands of prosecutors and persecutors of Christians (the section on trials and martyrdoms).

Finally, the role of language should not be underestimated in the formation of Christian religious belief. The adoption of sacrificial imagery in the early catechetical texts was a revolutionary tactic, which cannot have been completely irrelevant to second-century Christian attitudes to sacrifice. Thus, Christian sacrificial metaphors will be one of the major pieces of evidence for the fact that Christian thought had incorporated from its beginning elements which showed a somewhat detached spirit from the reality of animal sacrifice. According to the interpretative scheme I have adopted, and which has been analysed in Chapter 1, these hints at differentiation, concerning the horizontal axis of the Christian sacrificial system, should alert us to a crucial differentiation on the vertical axis. The sole focus of Christians on a different realm of reality (corresponding to a different section of the horizontal axis), that is, the exclusive focus on human actions and life attitudes (focus on cult emerging gradually), must have resulted from a radical change in the vertical line of the sacrificial procedure, the one concerning man's relation to God.

## A. THE CONTEXT AND THE SOURCES

## Christian Sources

*First century and beginning of the second*

The earliest Christian texts which have come down to us through the centuries are the Epistles safely attributed to Paul.<sup>1</sup> In all probability, these were written in the 50s, if we are to rely on the account of Paul's missionary activity as described in the canonical Acts of the Apostles (on which see below).<sup>2</sup> Though admittedly not always agreeing with the evidence found in Acts, Paul's Epistles can inform us about his personal views, and, in this context, they are used in this book as a source for his attitude towards the Law. I also examine Paul's letters from the literary point of view, since they provide us with powerful sacrificial metaphors.

Thus, the written evidence for Jesus and his disciples is chronologically later than Paul's writings, since Mark's gospel, commonly thought to be the earliest of the four canonical gospels, is supposed to have been written around AD 70. The dating of Mark is mostly based on chapter 13 of this gospel, because the description there possibly indicates that the author had witnessed the events of the First Jewish War (AD 66–70).

Few scholars today would deny that Mark was the main source for the gospels of Matthew and Luke. On the basis of their dependence on Mark and their allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the gospels of Matthew and Luke are regarded as having certainly been written after AD 70, with their datings varying between AD 70 and 100.

Because the basic structure in these three gospels is the same, they are called *Synoptic* gospels (from the word *σύνοψις*). The issue of the exact relation of the Synoptic gospels to each other, and the

<sup>1</sup> That is, probably eight of the fourteen epistles traditionally attributed to him (therefore omitting Hebrews, the three Pastoral Epistles, Ephesians, Colossians). Kümmel (1975) has very good expositions of the arguments in favour of or against the authenticity of the canonical epistles.

<sup>2</sup> For a chronology of Paul's activity, based on the external evidence reported in Acts, see Wallace-Williams (1993), 31.

question of their external sources, constitute the so-called 'Synoptic problem'.<sup>3</sup> As regards the external sources of the Synoptics, scholarly critical research has shown that many layers underly these texts, which ultimately might go back to oral tradition. The most famous layer is the hypothetical 'Q source', by which scholars usually denote a collection of sayings.

Nowadays, most scholarly approaches to the Synoptics rather belong to the area of redaction criticism,<sup>4</sup> that is, scholars are not as interested in the sources of each of the canonical gospels, as in the redaction of these gospels as individual entities. This redaction mirrors the historical circumstances experienced by the author of each gospel.

Redaction criticism has also been used in the case of John's gospel, mainly as a basis for its dating: the picture of the Jews and the Christology contained in this gospel point to a date between AD 90 and 110.

Despite the dominance of redaction criticism in New Testament studies in recent years, some scholars have not given up tackling issues relating to the Synoptic problem, mainly because they connect this research with the so-called 'historical Jesus' question. Thus, questions about who Jesus really was, and where the earliest accounts of his life lie, depend on the thesis adopted as regards the proportion of the different sources detectable in the Synoptics, or the exact nature of the Q source. In any case, the Synoptic portrait of Jesus is considered by these scholars as more reliable than that in John's gospel (which is probably later, and very distinctive in relation to the Synoptics). Any difference in the theories regarding the composition of the Synoptics seriously affects the image of the main character (Jesus) represented in them. As a result, the scholarly images of a 'historical Jesus' can be diametrically opposed, starting from Jesus the Cynic<sup>5</sup> and going on to Jesus the Jew.<sup>6</sup>

In this chapter, I do not dwell much on the figure of Jesus as presented in the canonical gospels. Instead of endorsing one or more of the many streams of interpretation stemming from these first-century texts,

<sup>3</sup> See Kümmel (1975), 38 ff. The Synoptic problem may be considered the equivalent to the Homeric problem in Classical studies!

<sup>4</sup> See Perrin (1969).

<sup>5</sup> Crossan (1991 and 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Vermes (1973*a* and 2000).

I have rather adopted a conservative view, focusing on what is presented as happening, but without attempting to interpret it.

The Acts of the Apostles were written by the same author as Luke's gospel,<sup>7</sup> so in the same period (AD 70–100), but, on the basis of the preface of Acts, after the gospel. Paul's mission as depicted in Acts shows the variety of cultural environments which a Christian preacher would have come across. This document is quite indicative of the sort of tensions which must have existed in the lives of early Christians.<sup>8</sup>

From the Epistles traditionally attributed to Paul, but generally accepted as not written by him, I focus on the Epistle to the Hebrews when studying the issue of sacrificial metaphors. The dating of this Epistle is usually placed in the first century, but not with any great certainty.

The outline above is sufficient to prove that our knowledge of the first-century Christian texts and their authors<sup>9</sup> is limited. What is more, despite attempts to locate the datings before or after AD 70, none of these writings directly talks about the Temple and Jewish sacrifice, or about the Fall of the Temple. The image of Jesus himself comes out as the most controversial of all, since it depends on each scholar's personal preoccupations and priorities.

### *Late first and second centuries*

Christian writings of the second century AD were developed either in response to Jews and pagans, from whom Christians differentiated themselves, or for internal purposes, that is, for teaching in Christian communities.

The term commonly used of the Christian writings addressed to non-Christians is apologetics, and the writers are known as apologists. Even if these terms are not strictly generic,<sup>10</sup> it is easy to understand the

<sup>7</sup> The prefaces of both writings are addressed to a certain Theophilus. However, we should also allow for the possibility of a 'proto-Luke' preceding Acts. See Wallace-Williams (1993), 8.

<sup>8</sup> According to the so-called 'Tübingen school', the author of Acts tries to paper over the cracks existing in the early Christian communities between Jewish and Gentile Christians. See Harris (1975).

<sup>9</sup> The evidence drawn from Papias as quoted by Eusebius (*Ecl. Hist.* 3.39.14–16), also from Irenaeus and Clement (quoted in *Ecl. Hist.* 5.8.2 and 6.14.5, respectively), is not very illuminating.

<sup>10</sup> See Young (1999), 82.

reason for their use: in these texts Christians are trying to define and defend their religion against their contemporary pagan and Jewish background, from which they have come, but which they have forsaken. And it is evident that, if Christians had not been accused of forsaking their ancestral religion or of relinquishing the cultic ways of the pagans, *apologetics* would not have existed as a genre. The Christian apologetic writings addressing Jews form the *adversus Judaeos* literature, in which apologetics directed towards Jews take the form of polemics against them. It is worth noting that the characterization *adversus gentes* is not generally used of the Greek apologetic texts addressing pagans, since their criticism of paganism is free of extremes.<sup>11</sup>

### Christians and Jews

Scholars have long ago been puzzled by the polarity which finally characterized the relations between Jews and Christians; that is why they keep proposing various models in which they try to accommodate the different stages of Jewish–Christian relations.<sup>12</sup> However, methodological questions have not ceased to arise.

Although acknowledging the Jewish roots of their religion, second-century Christian writers strongly stressed their distance from Judaism. This undoubtedly constitutes an indicator of tension in the relations between Jewish and Christian communities of the time.<sup>13</sup>

The most representative work produced in this context of Jewish–Christian relations is Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. Justin was born in Flavia Neapolis in Samaria (*I Apol.* 1.1), and grew up in a pagan family (*Dial.* 28.2).<sup>14</sup> After having tried various philosophical schools (*Dial.* 2), he was converted to Christianity. His references to

<sup>11</sup> The title *adversus gentes* would rather fit Tertullian's apologetic writings, which express a hostile and contemptuous attitude towards paganism.

<sup>12</sup> See the Parting-of-the-Ways model in Dunn (1991), its predecessors in *ibid.* 1–16, and its criticism in Lieu (1994).

<sup>13</sup> The evidence drawn from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apostolic Fathers shows that Jewish communities did exist in many places where Christianity flourished. On Jews in Asia Minor, see Trebilco (1991), and Schürer (1973–87), vol. 3, pp.17–36. The interaction between Jews and Christians in Asia Minor is the theme of Lieu (1996). The issue of the reliability or not of Christian sources as regards their representation of the Jews is outside the scope of this book.

<sup>14</sup> On Justin's multicultural identity, see Millar (1993b), 227–8.

Bar-Kochba (*Dial.* 1.3, 9.3) suggest that he was born in about AD 100–10. Eusebius refers to Justin's 'divine martyrdom', and to his struggle against the Cynic philosopher Crescens. He cites Tatian's view that Crescens instigated Justin's martyrdom (*Eccl. Hist.* 4.16).

The dialogue is set in Ephesus (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 4.18.6), between a Christian from Samaria, Justin, and a Jewish fugitive from Palestine, Trypho.<sup>15</sup> Both are supposedly trained in philosophy. The *Dialogue* must have been written in the period AD 150–60, indeed after Justin's *First Apology* (*Dial.* 120.6), but its dramatic setting is the aftermath of the Bar-Kochba revolt (*Dial.* 1.3, 9.3, 16.2, 19.2, 40.2, 46.2).<sup>16</sup>

In Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* one can find the most representative sample of Christian polemics against contemporary Judaism.<sup>17</sup> Pre-Jesus Judaism is accepted and honoured by Justin simply because Old Testament prophecy and ritual, including sacrifice, pointed to Christ. The *Dialogue* is an exposition of the rhetorical techniques of supersession by means of which Christians interpreted pre-Jesus Judaism.

### Christians and pagans

To describe both Greek and Roman polytheists as 'pagans' implies that one perceives the Greek and Roman religious systems as sharing common characteristics. The legitimacy of such an approach might be questioned, but the answer to this question does not influence this study of the Christian attitude towards paganism, since Christians expressed their opposition to both Greek and Roman backgrounds, without any hint at differentiation between the two.<sup>18</sup> What is certain is that Christians distanced themselves from the surrounding

<sup>15</sup> The Trypho of the *Dialogue* was rather 'made up' to fit Justin's arguments. Lieu (1996), 109–13. On the issue of the historicity of the *Dialogue*, see Rajak (1999), 64, n. 17.

<sup>16</sup> For this dating, see Lieu (1996), 103 and Horbury (1998b), 131.

<sup>17</sup> '... there is complete coincidence between author and Christian protagonist.' Rajak (1999), 69.

<sup>18</sup> The common treatment of the two cultures is also adopted by F. Young (1999), 81, n. 1. For a scholarly view of 'tension' between Greek intellectuals of the second Sophistic and Rome, see Swain (1996), esp. 9, where the author questions the characterization 'Graeco-Roman'. However, he draws attention to the fact that cultural opposition (of the Greek elites to Rome) can coexist with submission to political power (pp. 411–12).

Undoubtedly, the problems concerning the relation between Greek and Roman culture become conspicuous in the linguistic field, and indeed even more puzzling when the issue of Christianity gets involved. On the latter, see Millar (1978a).

Graeco-Roman culture, as they did from Judaism. Gradually this resulted in their prosecution before and persecution by pagan authorities. The historical conditions of the rise of Christianity are defined by the relation which Graeco-Roman polytheism (and not any other religious system) had with the web of power.

There has been a scholarly debate over the official form of accusations against Christians before the reign of Decius. As has rightly been pointed out,<sup>19</sup> the researcher has to look at three different levels: that of the provincial population; that of the Roman provincial governors; and that of the emperors. In fact it is at the lowest of the three aforementioned levels that the beginning of anti-Christian actions lies; in other words, public opinion in the provinces was the source of the earliest prosecutions of Christians. In his monumental article, G. E. M. de Ste. Croix has shown that whenever a local persecution was instigated by a provincial governor, it was because the latter had succumbed to local anti-Christian feeling.<sup>20</sup> Until 250, 'the initiative in persecution seems to have come from below'.<sup>21</sup>

T. D. Barnes has collected and studied one by one all the testimonies about pre-Decian legal actions against Christians.<sup>22</sup> His conclusion is that the primary evidence for the first two-and-a-half centuries AD does not give any hint at specific legislation against Christians issued by the Senate or the emperors.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Barnes' exhaustive analysis leads to the same conclusion as the article by de Ste. Croix.<sup>24</sup> Christians were punished just for being Christians, for the *nomen Christianum*.<sup>25</sup>

As a response to their persecution by pagan authorities, second-century Christian apologists developed a genre of defence which does not just oppose idolatry, but all aspects of Graeco-Roman paganism: apart from ritual, on which I focus, the apologists

<sup>19</sup> Millar (1973), 146.

<sup>20</sup> de Ste. Croix (1963), 15–16.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

<sup>22</sup> Barnes (1968a).

<sup>23</sup> However, Barnes expresses some reservations about an imperial order to sacrifice contained in the *Acta* of Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonice, because these *acta* may date to the 2nd century. Barnes (1968a), 45 and 48, (1968b), 514–15.

<sup>24</sup> See the last sentence in Barnes (1968a): 'It is in the minds of men, not in the demands of Roman law, that the roots of the persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire are to be sought' (p. 50).

<sup>25</sup> de Ste. Croix (1963), 9.

disdained or uncompromisingly attacked mythology,<sup>26</sup> philosophy,<sup>27</sup> and various kinds of shows.<sup>28</sup> The fact that this chapter deals with Christian attitudes to animal sacrificial ritual is simply a matter of choice. One could equally study early Christian attitudes towards other aspects of the pagan world, and it is very likely that the same Christian hostility would be found to arise from the texts.<sup>29</sup> In fact, despite the concessions of the apologists to the possible existence of 'pre-Christian Christians',<sup>30</sup> Christian selective deployment of a pagan culture in harmony with Christianity was a later achievement.<sup>31</sup>

Only some of the apologetic works have proved to be useful for the purposes of this study, because of their direct hostile references to the practice of sacrifice. The evidence drawn from Eusebius for two *Apologies* by Justin (*Eccl. Hist.* 4.11.11–4.12, 4.16.1, 4.18.2) is incompatible with the titles of the two *Apologies* which have come down to us as regards the emperors addressed. That is why it is generally contested whether Justin's two *Apologies* were separate or formed parts of the same work.<sup>32</sup> In any case, Justin's apologetic work against the pagans is placed somewhere in the 150s.<sup>33</sup>

In *Eccl. Hist.* 4.29 Eusebius introduces Tatian as Justin's disciple, and informs us of Tatian's foundation of the sect of the Encratites—probably in AD 172 (on the basis of Eusebius' *Χρονικόν*)—and of Tatian's harmonization of the four canonical gospels, called *Τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων*.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Justin, *I Apol.* 54. See also Theophilus' account of inconsistencies in mythology—e.g. the discontinuity of gods' existence, the chronological 'pitfalls' of myths (*Ad Autol.* 2.3–5).

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Justin, *I Apol.* 59, where Moses is presented as the first philosopher. Also Tatian's irony in *Oratio* 25.

<sup>28</sup> Tatian, *Oratio* 23. Tatian's main weapon was sarcasm: he attacked astrology (*Oratio* 8–11), he despised medicine, believing in daemons instead (*ibid.* 16–18), and he ridiculed oracles (*ibid.* 19), theatre (*ibid.* 24), rhetoric (*ibid.* 26), legislation and customs (*ibid.* 28).

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian's *De idololatria* consists of sections concerning several aspects of contact with pagan religious life. These extend over a wide range, starting from arts and professions, covering public and private festivities, and even including various utterances and oaths.

<sup>30</sup> See Justin, *I Apol.* 46, and, for a more moderate view, *II Apol.* 13.

<sup>31</sup> See Jaeger (1962).

<sup>32</sup> See Grant (1988), 54–5. Munier (1994), 152–6 ('Annexe: L'unité de l'Apologie'). In his edition of 1995, Munier also cites the traditional separate numbering of the two *Apologies*.

<sup>33</sup> See Grant (1988), 53; Munier (1994), 20.



Tatian was a Syrian,<sup>34</sup> who, in his well-known work, the oration *Πρὸς Ἑλληνας*, claims that he was first educated in the pagan and then in the Christian way (*Oratio* 42). The oration *Πρὸς Ἑλληνας* probably dates from before Tatian became an Encratite.<sup>35</sup> Throughout this oration, Tatian is aggressive towards pagan culture, whose achievements he attributes to the ‘barbarians’.<sup>36</sup>

According to R. M. Grant, Athenagoras is one of the three apologists who are likely to have presented their petitions to the emperor M. Aurelius during his tour of AD 175–6.<sup>37</sup> It has been shown that the whole structure of Athenagoras’ oration *Προσβεία περὶ χριστιανῶν* (*Legatio*) is designed to contribute to the refutation of various charges directed against the Christians rather than to a systematic exposition of Christian theology.<sup>38</sup>

The *Epistle to Diognetus*, with its datings fluctuating from any time in the second century to the beginning of the third,<sup>39</sup> is an anonymous document addressed to a certain pagan named Diognetus. In comparison to other kinds of apologetic criticism, the author of this Epistle is the only one who condemns both paganism and Judaism by equating them with each other, and contrasting them with Christianity. Despite its apologetic character, this document is usually inserted in the group of catechetical (or pastoral) writings (on which see below).

### Christians addressing Christians

Just like Paul, early Christian Fathers addressed letters to whole Christian communities<sup>40</sup> or individuals.<sup>41</sup> Here, the genre is not

<sup>34</sup> As F. Millar has rightly pointed out, ‘Assyrios’, used in Tatian’s text, was a term used to designate a Syrian. See Millar (1993*b*), 227.

<sup>35</sup> However, Grant (1988), 113–14, thinks that the *Oratio* was written on the occasion of the martyrdoms at Lugdunum (AD 177).

<sup>36</sup> It is in this context that Tatian attributes the invention of sacrifices to the Cyprians (*Oratio* 1.1).

<sup>37</sup> See Grant (1988), 80–2 (on the tour), 85 (on Apollinarius’ apology), 93 (on Melito’s apology), 100 (on Athenagoras’ apology), 110, 202 (on all three of them).

<sup>38</sup> Shoedel (1972), p. xiii; also Young (1999), 86.

<sup>39</sup> Meecham (1949), 19, 37; Quasten (1950–86), vol. 1, pp. 248 ff.; Lieu (1996), 156.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the letters of Ignatius to several communities (Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, etc.). The communities addressed could also be Christian sects who followed a distinguishable Christian doctrine, cf. the letters of Justin to Marcion (Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.* 4.11.8) or of Apollinarius to the Montanists (*ibid.* 5.16.1).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the letter of Ignatius to Polycarp or the *Didache*, which supposedly addresses a Christian catechumen.

apologetics, but rather a pedantic and admonitory kind of literature, of which the terms catechetical or pastoral are often used.<sup>42</sup> In the same category of literature for internal purposes apparently belong the various accounts of Christian trials and martyrdoms,<sup>43</sup> as well as semi-liturgical texts, the latter being a genre deserving a special study and not dealt with in this book.<sup>44</sup>

From the Christian works written for Christians, I only present those used here. A deviation from my commitment to restrict this study to Greek Christian sources is my use of Tertullian's work *De idololatria*, a work which advises Christians on how to avoid the dangers of paganism.<sup>45</sup> The issues with which Tertullian dealt in his writings pertained to the relations of Christians with paganism, specifically the Roman aspect of it, as he experienced it in Carthage.<sup>46</sup> However, especially as regards the circumstances surrounding an animal sacrifice, as these are described in *De idololatria* 16–17.3, Tertullian's comments can be studied independently of any specific reference to places and deities. It is only the basic code of social obligations and ritual gestures surrounding an animal sacrifice which we need to retain here, and Tertullian's description shows that he could equally well have used Greek animal sacrifice as the framework of such a code.<sup>47</sup> The dating of *De idololatria* is quite problematic.<sup>48</sup> A possibly valid dating-range is that between 197 and 208.<sup>49</sup>

From the category of catechetical works known as *Apostolic Fathers*, I mainly use two texts. The First Epistle of Clement is dated by most scholars

<sup>42</sup> In the *Shepherd of Hermas* the genre is rather closer to Apocalyptic literature, even if ample advice is given to Hermas.

<sup>43</sup> For a collection of such martyr-acts, see Musurillo (1972).

<sup>44</sup> Like the treatise *Περὶ Πάσχα* by Melito of Sardis.

<sup>45</sup> However, Tertullian himself wrote some of his treatises in Greek, and he was alluding to Greek Christian writers. See Price (1999a), 115–16.

<sup>46</sup> See Rives (1995). However, we should bear in mind that, at the time when Paul addressed the Corinthians in Greek, the city was a Roman *colonia*.

<sup>47</sup> See the following statement on the ritual side of a Roman animal sacrifice in Beard–North–Price (1998), vol. 2, p. 36: 'In structure, though not in detail, the ritual was closely related to the Greek ritual of sacrifice.'

<sup>48</sup> Waszink–Van Winden (1987), 10–13.

<sup>49</sup> I acknowledge the possible transgression of the chronological limits I have set, but it is not a very serious one, and, besides, I have adopted a certain flexibility in the study of inscriptions as well.

to the end of the first century.<sup>50</sup> The letter was written by Clement, the bishop of Rome, to the church at Corinth; he wanted to give advice to the Corinthian church after an episode of internal strife in their congregation. The concept of 'order' is exalted by Clement into a principle which dominates his letter.<sup>51</sup> Here I use the text as a source for sacrificial imagery. The Epistle of Barnabas contains allusions to historic events, mainly as regards the rebuilding of the Temple, which have led scholars to different datings.<sup>52</sup> The primary concern of this catechetical writing is a warning against influence from Judaism.<sup>53</sup> For my purpose here it is useful mainly for its Christian depiction of Judaism.

The *Acta Martyrum* are the records of the trials, tortures, and deaths of prosecuted and persecuted Christians. T. D. Barnes has successfully shown which pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum* are contemporary with, and accurate reports of, the events they describe.<sup>54</sup> He lists six authentic *Acta*, among which is the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, traditionally inserted in the category 'Apostolic Fathers'.<sup>55</sup>

The non-canonical Gospels and Acts ('Apocrypha') comprise a wide variety of Christian texts, supposedly describing the earliest stage of Christianity both in Jerusalem and in the lands of the Gentiles, a time-span also dealt with in the first-century canonical texts. However, the Apocrypha cannot be more reliable than the canonical Gospels and Acts in this respect, since most of the Apocryphal texts were composed later than the first century.

A further drawback that obliges us to a limited use of the Apocrypha is that most of them are not related to the issue of the relations between Jews or pagans and Christians, but rather to discernible philosophical tenets drawn from Gnosticism, Manichaeism, and similar environments. Furthermore, although invaluable for the history of Christian communities themselves, second-century non-canonical

<sup>50</sup> Quasten (1950–86), vol. 1, pp. 49–50; Altaner (1960), 100; Staniforth (1987), 20.

<sup>51</sup> See von Campenhausen (1969), 87.

<sup>52</sup> See Horbury (1998*b*), 133, Wilson (1995), 142, Lieu (1996), 155, Prigent-Kraft (1971), 27.

<sup>53</sup> Horbury (1998*b*), esp. 136–40.

<sup>54</sup> Barnes (1968*b*).

<sup>55</sup> With regard to the date of Polycarp's martyrdom, I believe that one should be content with the analysis by Lieu (1996), 73. For more references on the subject, see Staniforth (1987), 118.

sources would be unlikely to provide us with reliable information about the attitude of Jesus or the early Christians to the Temple and Graeco-Roman paganism—these matters did not really concern the authors of these works, and were presented by them according to the second-century preoccupations of each community.

The dates of the Apocrypha cited here are always those of the composition of the texts, and not those of the manuscripts.<sup>56</sup> Many of these texts (e.g. the *Gospel of the Ebionites*) have been preserved in later sources, for instance, in the fourth-century treatise of Epiphanius, *Πανάριον* (*Adversus haereses*).

In this chapter passing reference is also made to the following Christian works of which the first two are traditionally inserted in the 'Apostolic Fathers': the *Epistles of Ignatius*, the bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in Rome during Trajan's reign,<sup>57</sup> and, in the course of his journey to Rome, addressed letters to various Christian communities. His advice is mainly an exhortation to unity, and warning against the threat from surrounding religious sects; the *Didache*, whose dating fluctuates greatly.<sup>58</sup> It is a sort of admonition to a Christian, containing advice about moral and liturgical life, and about church organization; the *Epistle to Autolyucus*, written by Theophilus of Antioch. Basing themselves on the theology of this work, scholars have argued that Theophilus may well have been a Jewish Christian.<sup>59</sup> However, one should be cautious about moving from the presence of 'Jewish' ideas in a writer to the idea that the writer was of Jewish origin. The *Ad Autolycum* consists of three books, and, in all likelihood, was written after the death of M. Aurelius in AD 180.<sup>60</sup> The whole setting is that of a response to a pagan (Autolyucus), who had attacked a Christian (Theophilus) for being Christian; and Apocalyptic works, such as that traditionally attributed to John, which is regarded as canonical and is usually placed at the end of the first century.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The passages from the NT Apocrypha and their translations are all taken from Hennecke–Schneemelcher.

<sup>57</sup> On the dating, see the references in Lieu (1996), 52, n. 8.

<sup>58</sup> The datings of this work extend from the early 1st c. to the end of the 2nd: Staniforth (1987), 189.

<sup>59</sup> See the introduction in Grant (ed.) (1970).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> See Kümmel (1975), 469.

## Non-Christian Sources

### *Pliny's correspondence with Trajan*

Pliny was the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in the province of Pontus and Bithynia in AD 109–11.<sup>62</sup> While Pliny was touring his province, he sent the emperor Trajan letters reporting the problems he faced and the solutions he found to them, often seeking the emperor's advice. Trajan sent answers in response to Pliny. In this correspondence, two letters concerning Christians (*Epistulae* X.96–7), written from Pontus towards the end of AD 110,<sup>63</sup> are the most valuable item of information as regards the attitude adopted by Roman governors in the face of the expansion of Christianity.

Along with my use of Tertullian, Pliny's Latin letters constitute a further deviation from the linguistic limits of this study. But the events which Pliny describes take place in the eastern Roman Empire, and their significance derives from the fact that they contain 'the earliest and fullest pagan account of Roman conflict with Christians in the first century of their existence'.<sup>64</sup>

### *Celsus' discourse against Christians*

This work, under the title *Ἀληθῆς Λόγος*, was written in the last quarter of the second century by an opponent of Christianity named Celsus,<sup>65</sup> who had read the now-lost *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*,<sup>66</sup> an exposition of the Christian faith. Knowledge of similar works is probably the reason why Celsus also includes a Jewish *persona* talking against Christianity in his work. *Ἀληθῆς Λόγος* is known to us through the third-century Christian philosopher Origen, who, defending Christianity against pagans in his work *Contra Celsum* (*Κατὰ Κέλσου*, written c. 248),<sup>67</sup> provided long passages from Celsus' work.

<sup>62</sup> Sherwin-White (1985), 81. For other dating not later than AD 113, see Williams (1990), 13.

<sup>63</sup> Sherwin-White (1985), 693 (in relation to p. 81).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 693.

<sup>65</sup> On Celsus' identity see Frede (1997).

<sup>66</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.52.

<sup>67</sup> Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.36.

## B. PRESENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE

## New Testament

*First-century Christians and Jewish sacrifice*

According to the earliest surviving coherent narratives of the life of Jesus, the 'canonical' gospels, Jesus was a Jew, and the religious environment in which he lived and taught was that of Judaism in the late Second Temple period. During that period orthodox Jewish sacrifices took place only in the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>68</sup> 'Heretical' sacrifices were also offered by Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, where there had been a temple before it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus.<sup>69</sup>

In the canonical gospels Jesus does refer to the sacrificial act; however, his sayings can be used selectively according to whether the scholar interpreting them is against or in favour of the act of sacrifice. I list here some indicative examples: after Jesus has healed the leper, he tells him to go and offer the sacrifice that Moses had prescribed for the case, apparently referring to Lev. 14: 2–32, where these sacrifices are specified (Matt. 8: 4, Mark 1: 44, Luke 5: 14). In Matt. 5: 23–4 Jesus advises worshippers not to offer a sacrifice if they do not settle their disputes with their neighbours first. Elsewhere (Matt. 9: 13) Jesus reminds people of Hos. 6: 6 ('I want pity and not sacrifice'), and he approves of the scribe who realized that love is more than holocausts and sacrifices (Mark 12: 33). Some of these cases not definitely constituting criticism of Jewish sacrifice on Jesus' part, canonical tradition lacks any explicit criticism of Jewish sacrificial cult made by Jesus. The only narrations which could be considered as Jesus' criticism of sacrifice describe the so-called 'cleansing of the Temple',<sup>70</sup> but even this episode is not without problems. For one thing, it is only in John's version that Jesus ejects the sacrificial victims from the Temple.

<sup>68</sup> For a depiction of the religious activity around the Temple in that period, see Jeremias (1969) and Sanders (1993).

<sup>69</sup> *Jos. Ant.* XIII.254–6.

<sup>70</sup> The episode is described by the Synoptics as having taken place during the Passover of the crucifixion (Matt. 21: 12–13, Mark 11: 15–17, Luke 19: 45–6). John includes the event in Jesus' first visit for Passover (2: 13–17).

Moreover, if Jesus accompanied his action by words, it is not certain that these were the Old Testament aphorisms attributed to him by the authors of the gospels (Isa. 56: 7, Jer. 7: 11). At a deeper level, too, it is not certain whether these aphorisms contained hints at criticism of the sacrificial cult per se, or of the way in which the sacrificial cult was conducted.

Except for the puzzling episode of the 'cleansing', the rest of Jesus' career is presented in accordance with the assumption that he respected Jewish sacrificial cult. Not taking into account the fact that in the second century this is clearly stated by Celsus (or his Jewish *persona*) in his discourse against Christianity (*Contra Celsum* 2.6), we must cite here the relevant evidence from the New Testament. In fact, most accounts of Jesus' visits to Jerusalem come from John's gospel. For, while the three Synoptics present the adult Jesus as going to Jerusalem only once, that is, for the Passover when the Crucifixion took place, John's gospel gives us four further accounts of Jesus' previous visits to Jerusalem on the occasion of festivals: in chapters 2 (Passover), 5 (Passover or Pentecost), 7 (Tabernacles), and 10 (apparently Hanukkah). The final visit, during which the Crucifixion took place, is described in chapter 12. John's depiction of Jesus repeatedly visiting Jerusalem at festivals has been thought by some to constitute the main element in favour of John's historicity.<sup>71</sup> It is very natural to deduce that Jesus was one of the worshippers during these festivals and, consequently, that he must have participated in the Temple cult and offered animal sacrifices. Jesus' cultic activity is not specifically described by John.<sup>72</sup> Using the *ex silentio* principle, we can deduce rather that it is taken for granted. (Similarly, Josephus' cultic activity is nowhere described in his work, even though he was a priest.)

With regard to the Passion narratives, a number of excellent studies have indeed dealt with the specific problems arising from the Synoptics and John.<sup>73</sup> For our purposes, the following consequences of these

<sup>71</sup> For a splendid account of the historicity of the four gospels, with emphasis on the so-called trial of Jesus, see Millar (1990).

<sup>72</sup> Vermes (2000), 199: 'It is important to note that although the Gospels frequently locate Jesus in synagogues, and during his Passover pilgrimage in the Temple of Jerusalem, they never mention that he prayed there, let alone that he participated in sacrificial worship.'

<sup>73</sup> See Millar (1990), esp. 364, 369, 376–7; also Hooker Morna (1986), 70 ff. Most recently, Vermes (2000), 20–1.

problems are important: as has already been concluded by scholars, the Synoptics present the Last Supper as a Paschal meal eaten on the night of Passover (Matt. 26: 17–29, Mark 14: 12–25, Luke 22: 14–38). However, what John places on the evening of Passover is not the Last Supper but the Crucifixion itself; consequently, the Last Supper for John was not a Paschal meal at which the lamb was eaten, but a meal on the night before (13: 1–17.26). Thus, if one follows the Synoptics, Jesus is undoubtedly presented as eating Jewish sacrificial meat. In John, however, the question of Jesus' participation in a Passover meal does not really arise. As regards Jesus' words at the Last Supper, the so-called eucharistic words,<sup>74</sup> much has been said about their exact meaning. Although Jesus' reference to animal sacrifice in these words is not explicit, there are sacrificial connotations of an atoning or a covenant sacrifice.<sup>75</sup> As we shall see in the section on metaphors, the starting point of the textual Jesus uttering these words was his death and not the reinterpretation of sacrifice; however, by these words sacrifice was certainly given a new meaning.

First-century narrations about Jesus provide strong evidence for the fact that Jesus respected Jewish sacrifice, but weak evidence for his rejection of the Temple cult. The 'cleansing of the Temple' does not constitute incontestable evidence for Jesus' criticism of Jewish sacrificial cult.

As regards the followers of Jesus and animal sacrifice, the author whose texts raise most questions is Luke. He is the only one who gives a description of Jewish sacrificial cult, indeed at the beginning of the gospel (Luke 1: 5–25), and the only one who explicitly presents the early Christians as being present in the Temple (Luke 24: 53, Acts 2: 46, 3: 1). Scholars have not paid much attention to this unique aspect of Luke, namely, that he took the Temple for granted. How are we to explain this characteristic of the author, given that most scholars consider Luke's gospel (and, therefore, Acts) to have been written after AD 70? The question becomes even more puzzling when one considers that, almost certainly, Luke's audience also included Gentile Christians,<sup>76</sup> who cannot have been familiar with the reality of the Temple.

<sup>74</sup> Matt. 26: 26–9, Mark 14: 22–5, Luke 22: 17–20, 1 Cor. 11: 23–6. Cf. John 6: 51–9.

<sup>75</sup> Rowland (1985), 176–7, Klawans (2006), 222.

<sup>76</sup> Stegemann (1991), endorsed by Wilson (1995), mainly 69–70.



Despite Luke's attachment to the Temple, the evidence for Christian attitudes to sacrifice between Jesus' death and AD 70 drawn from Acts is scarce and inconclusive. The reference to the 'ninth hour' in Acts 3: 1, where Peter and John are presented as going to the Temple, is made in connection with the remark that this was the hour for prayer (*ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην*). Even if it is based on the later source of the Mishnah, the scholarly assumption that the ninth hour was that of the evening sacrifice is not to be disbelieved. Just as, at the beginning of Luke's gospel, Jews are recorded as praying during the incense-offering, in the same way the very early Christians are depicted as praying during the evening sacrifice.

The depiction of early Christians in close association with the Temple cannot be irrelevant to the author's attempt to reconcile the old religion with the emerging one. Some scholars, indeed, have regarded Luke's testimony about early Christian cultic life as 'pure fancy'.<sup>77</sup> However, I suggest that it would be wholly unreasonable to accept a sudden detachment of early Christians from the Temple, although there is no explicit mention of their participation in sacrificial worship. As in the case of Jesus, we may deduce that the cultic activity of early Christians is taken for granted by Luke. Besides, in Luke we find a striking coexistence of two early Christian cultic environments, the Temple and gathering in houses (Acts 2: 46), which proves that early Christians were just beginning to create their own cultic code, but without wholly abstaining from the old modes. Instead of assuming that the most common places for Christian gatherings were private houses, something which only the archaeological evidence of the third century confirms,<sup>78</sup> it is indeed worth relying on Luke's testimony, and wondering (perhaps in vain) whether a coexistence of Temple and house-gatherings as depicted in Luke would have continued to prevail in Christian worship if the Temple had not fallen.

According to Luke's depiction, both Christians and Jews used the Temple as a cultic area. But Luke's picture is not idealized. He reports some serious conflicts of Christians with the Temple authorities (Acts 3: 1–4; 7, 5: 17–42), which culminate in the episode of the stoning of

<sup>77</sup> Thus, for instance, Sanders (1993), 123.

<sup>78</sup> See Blue (1998), 474–5. The best-known private house used by Christians in the 3rd c. is, of course, the one found in Dura-Europos: see Kraeling (1967).

Stephen (Acts 6–7). Stephen's speech sounded to the Jews like blasphemy against the Temple and Jewish *customs* (Acts 6: 13–14), and resulted in the expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8: 1).

For our purposes, what should be kept from the record of Stephen's speech is the reference of the text to *customs* (ἔθνη). We are entitled to assume that the term implies everything related to the Mosaic Law, including sacrifices. If this assumption is right, the question of how many Jewish Christians Stephen represented becomes urgent, although it remains unanswered.<sup>79</sup>

From the point of view of source criticism, the text of Acts seems to be more homogeneous than any of the canonical gospels.<sup>80</sup> The author seems to have followed a more or less consistent pattern of narrating the events. In view of this remark, the evolution in the 'story' of the Christian community in Jerusalem is not inconsistent or improbable: the initial compliance of early Christians with the Temple, after some serious conflicts with the Jewish Temple authorities, becomes overt opposition in Stephen's case, and leads to the expulsion of Christians.

Not being able to deduce more than the information that, at a certain point, the relations between Jews and Christians in Jerusalem ceased to be peaceful, we should rather pay attention to the circumstances in which early Christians converted Jews in the Temple. Acts provides us with the following picture: 'And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. Yet more than ever believers were

<sup>79</sup> In Hengel (1983*a*), M. Hengel has argued that Stephen's opinions were representative of the 'Hellenists' (mentioned in Acts 6: 1): according to Hengel, these Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, unlike the Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians, had a more open attitude towards the Temple. The stoning of Stephen resulted in the expulsion of the 'Hellenists' from Jerusalem, which, in turn, promoted the dissemination of their ideas. The whole sequence was the last stage before the Gentiles heard the Christian preaching. Hengel (1983*a*), mainly 23–5. I think that no substantial evidence can be cited for any theories endorsed by the 'Hellenists', but it is rather secure to say that they were Greek-speaking Jewish Christians.

According to Vermes (2000), 144: 'Apart from the diatribe of the Hellenist Stephen against cultic worship, elements of an anti-Temple ideology are completely absent from the outlook of the apostolic group.' Though I cannot exclude it as wrong, this approach seems to me to ignore how literary conventions work in a text.

<sup>80</sup> Despite the unfounded hypothesis of a pre-existing 'we' source. See Wallace-Williams (1993), 14–15.

added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women . . .’ (Acts 5: 12–14, NRSV). Independently of reservations as to the number of those converted, it is more than likely that most of the Jews converted in the Temple by early Christians had come there to present their offerings. One could imagine that some of the Jews carrying their victims to the Temple stopped to listen to the Christians. What would be the impact of the Christian preaching on those Jews? The evidence does not contain any accusation of the kind ‘Christians deter Jews from presenting their offerings’, and in any case, once bought, the victim could not but be offered. But the image of Christians preaching in a Temple full of sacrificial activity is worth considering (even if to some scholars it constitutes pure fancy).

After the expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8: 1), the issue of Christian participation in the Temple cult will only come to the foreground with Paul, after his return from the third missionary journey. The circumstances of Paul’s arrest, described in Acts 21, are the following. James and the elders inform Paul that some rumours concerning his preaching have reached and enraged Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. These Jewish Christians are characterized as ‘zealous for the Law’, and, as the elders report: ‘They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or *observe the customs* (τοῖς ἔθεσι περιπατεῖν)’ (Acts 21: 21, NRSV, emphasis mine). As in Stephen’s case, we can also assume here that the notion of *customs* (ἔθη) includes the sacrifices presented in the Temple.

In view of the situation in the Jerusalem congregation, the elders advise Paul to demonstrate that he is still following the Jewish Law, and to disprove the rumours about his undermining of Jewish customs. It is worth stressing that the elders do not tell Paul to go to the Temple alone, offer a sacrifice, and so prove his Jewishness, but to accompany to the Temple four people under a special form of vow—in other words, ‘Nazirites’. As is specified in Num. 6, people who have taken this vow should not be shaved for a period of seven days, and on the eighth day, at the end of their vow, they should offer certain animal sacrifices (accompanied by non-animal offerings).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> See also Philo’s comments on the Great Vow (= Nazirite vow) on p. 178 above.

According to the elders' advice, Paul should be purified along with the four Nazirites and pay for (*δαπάνησον*) their shaving (*ἵνα ξυρήσωνται*), which would release them from their vow (Acts 21: 24). Indeed, Paul 'took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them' (Acts 21: 26, NRSV).

The above description makes the reader understand that Paul undertook a degree of responsibility for the four Nazirite sacrifices, possibly by paying for them.<sup>82</sup> So, according to my general definition of the expression 'offer a sacrifice' (see Chapter 5), Paul was an offerer. In fact, Paul must have been present in the Temple more than once for the offering of the Nazirite sacrifices at issue, since the passage above implies that the completion of the days was different for each Nazirite.<sup>83</sup> This repeated presence is perhaps what caused Paul to be observed there by those whose actions led to his arrest.

In his defence in front of the procurator Felix, Paul invokes his visit to Jerusalem as an argument for his piety, and he uses the term *προσκυνεῖν*. This verb is also used in John 4, and normally alludes to the offering of sacrifice:

... οὐ πλείους εἰσὶ μοι ἡμέραι δεκαδύο ἀφ' ἧς ἀνέβην προσκυνήσων ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ·

... it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. (Acts 24: 11, NRSV)

Paul is more explicit in Acts 24: 17–18:

δι' ἐτῶν δὲ πλείονων παρεγενόμην ἐλεημοσύνας ποιήσων εἰς τὸ ἔθνος μου καὶ προσφοράς· ἐν οἷς εὐρόν με ἡγνισμένον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ...

<sup>82</sup> On assisting Nazirites in their vow as a proof of piety, see Jos. *Ant.* XIX.29, where the verb used of a Nazirite's release from the vow is *ξυρᾶσθαι*. The question of whether Paul was also a Nazirite who needed to complete his vow has aroused a lively discussion among scholars. The use of the term *ἀγνίζομαι* (Acts 21: 24, 26), in combination with Acts 18: 18, is problematic, but I think that the evidence is inconclusive. See Johnson (1992), 330, 375–7, Bruce (1990), 398, 447–8, Wallace–Williams (1993), 100. For a possible relation between Paul's shaving and a similar pagan practice, see Engels (1990), 105.

<sup>83</sup> See also the puzzling reference to the 'seven days' in Acts 21: 27; these must have to do with the vows of the four Nazirites (perhaps of the last one?).

Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification . . . (NRSV)

The whole alibi of Paul is based on his presence in the Temple during the procedure of an animal sacrifice (see also Acts 28: 17: ‘I had done nothing against . . . the *customs* (ἔθῆσι) of our ancestors . . .’). Paul was an offerer, and to his audience it did not make any difference if his sacrifices were not offered on his own behalf. However, we, who know the whole story, at least as Acts narrates it, should not leave the following facts unnoticed:

(1) Paul (or rather, the elders) chose to follow a procedure where the offering was not made on Paul’s behalf, but on behalf of the Nazirites.

(2) According to the narrative in Acts 21, Paul went to the Temple not by his own initiative, but because he obeyed the elders. There is no evident connection with the narrative in Acts 18, where, at least in some manuscripts, Paul expresses his wish to celebrate in Jerusalem (18: 21). In Acts 21 the elders are those who advised Paul to go to the Temple in order for the Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, to be calmed.

(3) The apposition of the elders’ advice with its purpose implicitly proves that the Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, felt emotionally close to the Temple. According to the author, these Jewish Christians had negative feelings towards Paul, who allegedly taught apostasy from Moses (21: 21).

(4) These Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, in Jerusalem must have formed a distinct group, which was bigger than,<sup>84</sup> and different from, that of the Christian ‘brothers’, who had warmly welcomed and lodged Paul and his companions the previous day (21: 16–17). Otherwise, the fear of the elders that Paul’s arrival would become known soon (21: 22) cannot be justified, since the ‘brothers’ welcoming Paul had been already aware of his coming. Among these ‘brothers’ was Paul’s host, Mnason of Cyprus, ‘an early disciple’

<sup>84</sup> Acts 21: 20 (μυριάδες), 21: 22 (not in all MSS: πλήθος συνελθεῖν).

(ἀρχαίω μαθητῆ). Following the traces of Cypriot Christian believers (or prospective believers) in Acts,<sup>85</sup> one notices that the author mostly presents them as coming from a Jewish background.<sup>86</sup> In particular, the earliest attested Cypriot believers in Acts (and Mnason is ‘an early disciple’) were Jewish, since they belonged to those driven out of Jerusalem after Stephen’s stoning, and they only preached in synagogues (Acts 11: 19–20). Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of Mnason being an even earlier believer, and so of his belonging to the first Jewish groups of Jesus’ followers. In all probability, then, Mnason of Cyprus, who lived in Jerusalem, must have been a Jewish Christian.

However, if this hypothesis is right, it is noticeable that Mnason does not seem to have shared the negative feelings which the Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, had towards Paul. And if some of the ‘brothers’ welcoming Paul were also Jewish Christians, it is very probable that they felt the same as Mnason. The author of Acts would apparently not classify Jewish Christians such as Mnason among those having ‘zeal for the Law’. So, this is a significant hint of evidence for the proposition that what is usually called ‘Jewish Christianity’ in fact consisted of more than one group, and each group’s attachment to the Law had a different character.

(5) In case my previous hypothesis is wrong, then Mnason and the ‘brothers’ welcoming Paul must have been among the earliest Gentile Christians in Jerusalem. In that case, we face the possibility that these people were not just less ‘zealous for the law’ than others, but that they had a less strong attachment to the Law than Jewish Christians, or no attachment to the Law whatsoever.

(6) The four Nazirites appear to have been attached to the elders (21: 23 εἰσὶν ἡμίμ). They might have been Jews. In case they were not Jews, they must have been Jewish Christians, so it is likely that they formed a different group, perhaps somewhere between those ‘zealous for the law’ and those around Mnason (in case the latter were Jewish

<sup>85</sup> Surprisingly enough, Mnason, or any other attempt at tracing Cypriot Christianity, is absent from the detailed study of Meeks (1983). But see Jeremias (1969), 64–5.

<sup>86</sup> Acts 4: 36, 11: 19–20, 13: 5.

Christians). They must have been close to the elders, who tried to keep a balance among Jewish Christians of different groups.

(7) The author of Acts presents the Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, as complaining in the name of Diaspora Jews, who were in danger of being misled by Paul’s preaching (21: 21). And, instead of the Jewish Christians expected (by the reader), the first who, seeing Paul in the Temple, turned against him were Jews from Asia (21: 27). To the author, then, Jews and the majority of Jewish Christians were close allies against Paul. In view of this correspondence, Paul’s going to the Temple is presented more as intended to reassure both Jews and Jewish Christians than Jewish Christians alone. This tone of presentation is strengthened if we assume that the four Nazirites were Jews and not Jewish Christians. Besides, when Paul is in front of Felix, he challenges the Jews from Asia who saw him in the Temple to appear before the governor and make plain their accusations against him (Acts 24: 19).

(8) It is unconvincing to regard Paul as a Christian who chose to offer sacrifices to his God outside of the Jewish sacrificial context, because what remains certain from the text of Acts is that, both before and after his arrest, Paul used the episode in the Temple as an indication of his reverence for the Mosaic Law.

Not forgetting that the text of Luke is filtrated by its author, I think it is clear that Paul faced a situation where several groups of Jews and Christians coexisted in tension. Luke’s personal views just make it more difficult for the modern reader to decide on Paul’s intentions when the latter went to the Temple. Perhaps it would be easier if the author had presented a scene where Paul offered a sacrifice independently of the surrounding situation. On the basis of the present narrative, we cannot know whether, when going to the Temple, Paul considered himself to be a Jew, or a Christian obliged to show that he kept the Law at all costs. Here, it is interesting to consider the third-century piece of evidence from Origen, who admits that Paul offered sacrifices in the Temple (*προσφορὰν προσήνευκεν*: *Contra Celsum* 2.1). Even more interesting is Origen’s explanation—apparently based on Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (9: 20)—which attributes Paul’s sacrificial act to his intention to behave like a Jew in order to convert Jews (*ibid.* 2.1). And it is worth stressing that, as we have

seen, Origen did not provide a similar explanation for refuting Celsus' statement that Jesus offered sacrifices in the Temple (*ibid.* 2.6).

Knowing that the episode described in Acts 21 took place long after Paul's conversion, one finds it hard to fit with Paul's attitude to the Law as passed down to us through his Epistles. In fact, even when considered on its own, the relevant evidence in Paul's letters is not free of contradictions: occasionally, Paul characterizes the Law in positive terms (Rom. 7: 12, *ἅγιος*; 16, *καλός*), whereas, at the same time, he sees the Law in close connection with sin and death (Rom. 7: 5, 8: 2; 2 Cor. 3: 7). It is certain that Paul's contradictory stances derive from his belief in Jesus. To Paul, the reality of Jesus constitutes a line dividing the Old Covenant from the New (2 Cor. 3: 6, 14). In these terms, Paul thinks that the Law should be differently read after Jesus: 'Indeed, to this very day, that same veil stays over the reading of the old covenant, since it is not discovered that in Christ it is set aside; but to this very day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds' (2 Cor. 3: 14–15, NRSV, modified).

It is important to note that Paul avoids synchronizing the Law with Jesus. To Paul, the Law was preparing Man (as a *παιδαγωγός*, Gal. 3: 24) *until* the coming of Jesus. Indeed, to use the language of electricity, whenever Paul accommodates the notions of Law and Jesus in the same time-span, one of the two has to be 'switched off, as if Paul is afraid of an electric overload: 'For Christ is the end of the law...' (Rom. 10: 4, NRSV); 'Stand firm, therefore, to the freedom by which Christ has set us free, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you' (Gal. 5: 1–2, NRSV, modified). Taking these words into account, it is even more difficult to understand the feelings of Paul himself in Acts 21, where he is presented as an offerer in the Temple.

The narration in Acts 21 leaves us in no doubt that, even after the expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem, a large number of Jewish Christians were found there; these were characterized as 'zealous for the law', were devoted to the Temple, and apparently, then, they offered sacrifices. But, following the narrative, we have also discerned Jerusalem Christians, whose devotion to the Law was of a different character. These could have been Jewish Christians, but we must not exclude the possibility of Gentile Christians living in Jerusalem. In



the middle of this situation Paul is presented as assisting the sacrifices of four Nazirites in the Temple. Since, according to Acts, Paul used this assistance as a proof of his reverence for the Mosaic Law, it means that he integrated himself into the Jewish sacrificial context. But it remains difficult to combine Luke's depiction of this integration with Paul's thesis in his Epistles, where he uncompromisingly refuses to combine Jesus and the Law.

To sum up this section on first-century Christians and Jewish sacrifice: in the first-century Christian texts Jesus nowhere refers to Jewish sacrifices explicitly. The image of Jesus stemming from the episode of the 'cleansing of the Temple' described in these texts is not easy to interpret. The description of the event does not contain clear references to sacrifice, and the Old Testament citations contained in this narration are not necessarily those of Jesus. The sacrificial connotations of Jesus' eucharistic words will specifically concern us in the section on metaphors.

As regards the relation of the post-Easter Christians with the sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem Temple, at least we know that, at a certain point, Jews and Christians in Jerusalem were found to be in conflict, which ended in the expulsion of the latter from the city. The reason for this expulsion is connected with Stephen's blasphemy against the Temple, but the events cannot be made clearer to us. However, even after this expulsion, Christians kept coming to Jerusalem. The text of Acts suggests that these pre-AD 70 Jerusalem Christians did not constitute a single group but rather several Christian communities, each having its own way of attachment to the Law. Among these communities we find Jewish Christians who were closely attached to the Law, and others who were different from them. The evidence is not explicit as regards the observance of Jewish sacrificial cult by Jewish Christians, but it is reasonable to assume that those closely attached to the Law observed the Temple cult. Furthermore, the Temple was not used for sacrifices to the Christian God.

### *First-century Christians and pagan sacrifice*

Surprisingly enough, from what one might expect concerning the cultic problems of early Christians, the evidence does not point at all to the question of whether the Christian God could be honoured by animal

sacrifices. As I have noted in Chapter 2 (sec. B.iv), even the evidence for Gentile Christians, who, as pagans, had been used to offering animal sacrifices, is silent on this issue. Only in Acts (14: 8–18) do we have the description of the following event:

At Lystra, a city in the Lycaonian region, after Paul's healing of a lame man, people were ready to sacrifice oxen to Barnabas and Paul, as to Zeus and Hermes respectively.<sup>87</sup> Paul used this event as the starting point of his sermon on the real God, in contrast to the usual 'futile things' (τὰ μάταια, 14: 15) to which sacrifice belonged. The contrast between sacrifice and the real God shows that, according to the author of Acts, Paul objected to the offering of sacrifice altogether, so he would not exhort his hearers to perform a sacrifice to the Christian God. Thus, this is a first proof of the fact that early Christians objected to the practice of sacrifice per se, a tendency which will become clearer in the second century.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from this narration, the issue of animal sacrifice enters the New Testament from the point of view of the participation in pagan celebrations. In fact, it only concerns the final stage of an animal sacrificial procedure, that of meat-eating during a feast.

Here I shall not deal at length with the decree on Gentile Christians, issued by the Jerusalem Council according to Acts 15: 1–35, for two well-known reasons: (1) we have three versions of the terms of the decree in Acts (15: 20, 29, 21: 25). This problem is exacerbated by the differences observed between the various manuscripts, which differ from one another and exhibit both omissions and additions;<sup>89</sup> and (2) a possible attempt to combine the narrative in Acts with that of

<sup>87</sup> For the evidence confirming the connection between Zeus and Hermes, see Mitchell (1993), vol. 2, p. 24.

<sup>88</sup> In the text, the Christian author takes it for granted that animal sacrifice would be the standard Gentile expression of gratitude, independently of the fact that Zeus and Hermes were Greek gods, Lystra was a Roman *colonia*, and the inhabitants greeted Paul and Barnabas in Lycaonian. Modern scholarly studies show that the author's assumption cannot have been so far from reality. See Mitchell (1993), vol. 2, p.30, where the author notes that the traveller in the Roman East 'would always feel comfortable with the similarities, a pattern of worship based on the sacrifice of animals, the burning of offerings, and the dedication of stone monuments.'

<sup>89</sup> For a good study of the variations of the terms in the MSS, see Foakes Jackson-Lake (1920–33), vol. 3 (*The text*), pp.265–9. It may be that the version to be accepted is that of 15: 29, where clear reference is made to the official decree, but this is not certain. See Bruce (1986), 115.

the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 2: 11–14) gives rise to further inconsistencies.<sup>90</sup>

The only certain facts underlying the account of this decree in Acts are the following. First, Christian communities quite early developed a need for delineation of conversion to Christianity, but only as regards Gentile Christians. Such a delineation was not yet made as regards Jewish Christians, and the reference to Jewish Christians, ‘zealous for the law’, in Acts 21 indicates that, at the beginning, the attachment of Jews to Christianity did not automatically mean their exclusion from Jewish cult. Second, an issue of great importance in this delineation concerning Gentile Christians was the abstinence from ‘things sacrificed to idols’ (εἰδωλόθυτον), which must primarily have denoted sacrificial meat rather than other sorts of offerings.

Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 8–10) is a firmer attestation of the problem of eating idol-meat in Christian communities. That Paul refers to this problem is obvious from the terms he uses.<sup>91</sup> But this canonical letter is also full of problems. The best summary of the questions surrounding the text has been offered by D. Newton, who also provides a review of the most recent scholarship on the issue:<sup>92</sup>

Broadly speaking, scholarship on 1 Corinthians 8–10 shares a common consensus regarding such issues as the limited nature of archaeological evidence, the significant social element in many ancient cultic meals and the need for further background research into such areas as continuity/discontinuity between Greek and Roman Corinth,<sup>93</sup> and the types, meanings and perceived significance of sacrifices and meals, plus their relationship to deity. Areas where no consensus exists include the specific identity and

<sup>90</sup> See Bruce (1971–2). Also Barrett (1985).

<sup>91</sup> Contrast between εἶδωλα and Θεός; terms like ‘eating’ (ἐσθίω), ‘table’ (τράπεζα), ‘idol-food’ (εἰδωλόθυτον), and ‘meat-market’ (μάκελλον) fit the sacrificial reality of a pagan feast.

Despite Paul’s dealing with pagan feasts, the word he uses of the altar is θυσιαστήριον (10: 18), which is more often used to designate the Jewish altar. See LXX Leviticus, *passim*. Lieu (1996), 54, n. 49.

<sup>92</sup> For the review, Newton (1998), 26–35.

<sup>93</sup> However, for an attempt at a diachronic account of religion in Greek and Roman Corinth, but not deprived of inconsistencies and unclear points, see Engels (1990), 93 ff.

features of the 'weak' and 'strong', the relative weight of Jewish or Gentile influences on Paul's thought, attitudes and understanding of the idol-food issue,<sup>94</sup> and the long-standing issue of the apparent conflict/inconsistency of Paul's viewpoint between 1 Corinthians 8 on the one hand and 1 Corinthians 10.1–22 on the other.<sup>95</sup>

In any case, the most original element in Paul's letter is that he deters Christians from eating idol-meat on the basis of the conscience of the *other*, that is, either the 'weak' Christian, who hesitates to eat idol-meat (1 Cor. 8), or the pagan, who offers the meat (*ibid.* 10: 25 ff.).<sup>96</sup>

Paul did not talk about any more practical details of the sacrificial procedure. As we shall see, this step was taken by Tertullian, more than a century later, since issues pertaining to idol-meat continued to be discussed by Christian Fathers until very late.<sup>97</sup>

A piece of indirect evidence relating to Christians and pagan sacrifice comes from the account of Paul's visit to Athens contained in Acts (17: 16–34). There, the author presents Paul as being motivated to start his preaching by an altar dedicated to the Unknown God. Independently of the historicity of this scene, E. Bickermann has envisaged the possibility that the altar seen by Paul might have been erected by a God-fearer.<sup>98</sup> According to Bickermann, the need for sacrifice must have been intensely felt by Gentiles, and consequently Jewish doctors of the Law, not opposing it, must have permitted the building of Gentile altars to the Jewish God. Ingenious as Bickermann's view might be, it must remain a speculation.

<sup>94</sup> A recent work stressing the Jewish roots of Paul's uncompromising attitude to idol-food is Cheung (1999), esp. 299–302.

<sup>95</sup> Newton (1998), 35. As regards Paul's inconsistency, Newton himself thinks that 1 Cor. 8 is on consumption of food, whereas 1 Cor. 10: 1–22 concerns one's active involvement in sacrifices: see Newton (1998), 390–1. Though this reading would serve my purposes, it is not very firmly based on the evidence. On the usual solution to the problem, see *ibid.* 387. Cheung (1999), 297, does not see any inconsistency in the two passages. More recently, Fotopoulos (2002) tries to reconcile the two contradictory passages by distinguishing between temple dining context and private dining context.

<sup>96</sup> Horsley (1978) says that what matters to Paul is not one's individual consciousness, but one's relations with others. According to the author, Paul 'does not approach the Corinthian situation with any concept of conscience' (p. 589).

<sup>97</sup> See Augustine's letter to Publicola (*CSEL* 34, letter no. 47, secs. 4 and 6).

<sup>98</sup> Bickermann (1980), 345–6.

To sum up the section on first-century Christians and pagan sacrifice: explicit references to the act of pagan sacrifice as performed by Christians are missing from the evidence. More importantly, cases where Gentile Christians would be puzzled as to what form of worship would befit their God are also missing. The only relevant evidence concerns Christian participation in pagan celebrations. The decree in Acts 15 and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians emphasize the prohibition on eating idol-meat. This must imply that, to some Christians, the problem of participation in pagan feasts had not yet been solved.

*The undermining role of metaphor in Paul and the difference of his language from that of Philo and the allegorists*

Early Christian language, as attested in Paul's letters, incorporated sacrificial images and allusions to animal sacrifice. Of course, here we should make clear that, as a Jewish Christian, Paul is recalling Jewish sacrifice when he talks about the notions of 'sacrifice' and 'temple' (see mainly the terms *ἄζυμοι* and *πάσχα* in 1 Cor. 5: 7–8). But the striking characteristic of this tactic of incorporation which concerns us here is that these sacrificial images and allusions were applied to areas of reality which had not been linked to religion before. Recalling the terminology adopted in my theoretical approach to sacrifice (Ch. 1, sec. 2), where reality has been represented by what I have called the *horizontal* line, it should be stressed once more that the code of language is common to the whole line, that is, words easily move along the whole of it. This can now explain why terms which up to Paul's time corresponded to particular realms of the horizontal line, that is, space, instruments, and offerings, started defining other realms too, like human activities, values, and lifestyles. Without denying the existence of Jewish Christians who observed the Temple cult, we should notice how in Paul's language several linguistic terms along with determining the same entities as before, underwent a shift (*μεταφορά*) towards other realms of reality. Metaphorical language meant that some sections of the line stayed inoperative at the practical level, but kept their functional role at the linguistic level. For instance, from Paul onwards terms such as 'altar' and 'knives' (space and

instruments), or more generic ones such as 'sacrifice', stopped being exclusively linked to something hitherto considered as sacrificial, and were applied to other sections of the horizontal line. These were: (a) a completely new section, which centred on Jesus; and (b) other sections, which had to do mainly with human activities, values, and lifestyles. This is how *Christian metaphorical sacrificial language* came into existence.

Bearing in mind again our indicative depiction of a part of the horizontal line, in the mind of a Christian like Paul reality would be as shown in Fig. D. Of course, the old (non-sacrificial) terms previously applied to the sections on the right were not necessarily lost.

(as if inoperative in metaphorical language)

— space + instruments — offerings — **Jesus** — activities — values — lifestyles —  
 (terms hitherto linked to these sections moved) ▶ ————— *sacrificial terms* —————

Fig D. The horizontal line of sacrificial procedure in Christianity

In the terminology of linguistics, a sacrificial metaphor would consist of the *tenor*, that is, the term which is to be clarified, and the *vehicle*, that is, the subject which is applied to the tenor in order to clarify it.<sup>99</sup> At first sight, in Paul's sacrificial metaphors which we are studying here, the notion of 'sacrifice' stood for the *vehicle*, so, apparently, what the author intended was to explain notions of the new religion (for instance, Jesus) by using the image of sacrifice. However, this way, a semantic turn was effected: sacrificial terms were reinterpreted, simply because what remained stable in these metaphors was not the *tenor* but the *vehicle*. Sacrificial terms steadily occupied the vehicle-part.

I think that by the use of Fig. D above one can give animal sacrifice the primary place in a metaphor, but without distorting the texts in which sacrifice had the secondary place, that of the *vehicle*. Thus we do justice to both our purposes and the evidence. Moreover, by this figure I emphasize the fact that, in the mind of the user of a metaphor, at least during the time of its use, a part of reality stays inoperative, in this case the reality represented in an animal slaughter.

Let us now dwell a little on Paul's sacrificial metaphors. It is beyond doubt that, when Paul assimilates Jesus to a sacrificial victim,

<sup>99</sup> This terminology is the most commonly used and was established by I. A. Richards in his work *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1936).

he must have in mind Isaiah 53: 7. However, Paul goes further than Isaiah 53, and specifies what sort of sacrificial victim Jesus had supposedly been. Thus, in Romans 3: 25 Jesus is assimilated to an expiatory sacrificial victim (*ἱλαστήριον*),<sup>100</sup> whereas in 1 Corinthians 5: 7–8 Jesus is called a Paschal victim (*Πάσχα*), with no clear specification of his religious function as such. Independently of the degree of clarity in these metaphors, it is again worth stressing that, in Paul's text, the above sacrificial terms occupy the place of the vehicle clarifying the notion of 'Jesus'. Paul uses them of Jesus. This is how the linguistic shift towards another part of reality, that of Jesus' life, was effected.

Other shifts, towards other sections of the horizontal line (not necessarily represented in Fig. D), were also effected, as in the case where Paul talked of the human body by using terms hitherto linked to cult. To Paul, the bodies of Christian believers should be living sacrifices (Rom. 12: 1),<sup>101</sup> while elsewhere he calls them the Holy Spirit's temple (1 Cor. 6: 19); the congregation as a whole is also described by him as God's Holy Temple (1 Cor. 3: 16–7, 2 Cor. 6: 16). The following centuries were to see a further expansion of sacrificial terms to areas which had not been traditionally regarded as related to sacrifice,<sup>102</sup> and in fact the use of sacrificial terms in the tenor-part of the metaphor.

Paul was Philo's younger contemporary. We cannot know whether Philo's works were known among Jews in Jerusalem, but, whatever the answer to this question, it is obvious that Paul's method differs from the Philonic allegorization of animal sacrifice. Paul's language results from his adherence to a different *vertical* line from the one

<sup>100</sup> According to E. P. Sanders, this is a pre-Pauline formula, which proves that Jesus' death was seen as an atoning sacrifice by Christians from very early on. But on the other hand, according to Sanders, this metaphor should not lead us to draw the conclusion that Paul is against sacrifices in his letters. See Sanders (1999), 99 and 103, n. 19 (where also *hilastērion* is interpreted). See also Manson (1945). Morris (1983), 152–76, insists that words with this root should be translated by terms of the same root as 'propitiation' and not as 'expiation'.

<sup>101</sup> The same idea allegorically expressed in *De spec. leg.* 1, 270. On the difference between allegory and metaphor, see below.

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. knowledge as a sacrifice in Athenagoras, *Leg.* 13.2: ... ἀλλὰ θυσία αὐτῷ μεγίστη, ἃν γνώσκωμεν τίς ἐξέτεινε καὶ συνεσφαίρωσεν τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὴν γῆν κέντρον δίκην ἠδρασε, τίς συνήγαγεν τὸ ὕδωρ εἰς θαλάσσας καὶ διέκρινεν τὸ φῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότους, τίς ἐκόσμησεν ἄστρους τὸν αἰθέρα καὶ ἐποίησεν πᾶν σπέρμα τὴν γῆν ἀναβάλλειν, τίς ἐποίησεν ζῶα καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἔπλασεν.

defining the Jewish sacrificial system, one which I shall analyse at the conclusion of this study. Here it suffices to say that Jesus is a crucial element in the vertical line connecting Christians to God.

With no apparent intention to reinterpret animal sacrifice itself, Paul reinterpreted instead the figure of Jesus and other areas of reality (for instance, the believer's body) by applying to them terms hitherto linked to animal sacrifice. In contrast to this, Philo took animal sacrifice for granted, explicitly referred to it, and connected all its particular details with meaningful notions taken from both the horizontal and the vertical lines of reality (see e.g. *De spec. leg.* 1, 206–11, here p. 169).

Paul's metaphorical method also differed from that of the rivals of Philo (usually called 'allegorists'), who favoured the symbolic meaning of ritual against its practical observance. The allegorization made by those Jewish scholars consisted in correlating point by point all the individual elements of particular Law regulations to less material meanings. Although the Law is a fundamental component in his thought, Paul does not start from a particular set of regulations so as to prove and emphasize their symbolic meaning. On the contrary, we have seen that, at least in the evidence we have from his letters, Paul speaks comprehensively of the Law as an intermediate stage before Jesus.

By metaphor, the whole setting of a ritualistic animal slaughter is retained as an implicit framework of reference, but sacrifice is given a wholly new meaning. For instance, in Romans 12: 1 (*παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν*), Paul does not describe an animal victim which, when brought to the altar, should make Christians recall their bodies. This technique would be a Philonic allegory. Instead, Paul attributes to the living human body the role of the victim.<sup>103</sup> So, the setting of someone offering something to God remains the same, but the allusion to the sight of an animal and the gesture of the slaughter have been replaced by the allusion to the body. Sacrificial metaphor annuls the materials and objects current in cult in Antiquity, but transmits their role to other areas of reality. It is as if a section of the horizontal line has stopped functioning in favour of other sections or of new ones.

<sup>103</sup> In his attempt to reconcile the body of a living Christian to an animal which after its slaughter would be dead, Paul uses the antithetical expression 'living sacrifice'.



Objectively speaking, by the use of sacrificial metaphors the reality of animal sacrifice is put aside. Even if the recipients of the metaphorical sacrificial message remain familiar with the basic terms of an animal sacrifice, they begin to be alienated from the material world of animals, blemished victims, cultic movements, physical contact, and smells. This ends up as a religious language which undermines animal sacrificial cult—*mutatis mutandis*, this is what Philo argued against (*De migratione Abrahami* 92). I cannot support the view that the use of metaphors was one of the factors leading to the relinquishment of animal sacrifice by Christians. Of course, the use of sacrificial metaphors in Paul's letters, the earliest Christian texts, should alert us to think of metaphor as a very powerful mode of teaching. But in the end, the whole question 'What came first, metaphors, or abandonment of animal sacrifice?' reminds one of the 'chicken and the egg'; the fact is that metaphorical language was perfectly compatible with the relinquishment of animal sacrifice.

#### *A note on Jesus' 'eucharistic' words at the Last Supper*

In recent scholarship, the only work in which the importance of sacrificial metaphors is stressed is the book by Klawans.<sup>104</sup> The author deals with metaphors in connection with the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. For this study I have accepted that, apart from atoning or covenant connotations ('for you', 'for many', 'new covenant'), the words of Jesus at the Last Supper do not explicitly refer to animal sacrifice. Here I should add that Jesus speaks of his body and blood by using sacrificial allusions, but he does not refer to himself as a sacrificial victim. More importantly, Jesus does not seem to give Jewish sacrifice a new meaning (or a further meaning, according to Klawans), but to interpret his death; so, in the underlying metaphor, the death of Jesus is the *tenor* (the subject which is to be clarified) and sacrifice is the *vehicle* (what clarifies the tenor). But, even in this combination, the correlation of the notions 'Jesus' death' and 'sacrifice' resulted in the notion 'sacrifice' having taken on a new meaning.

Klawans asserts that the words of Jesus at the Last Supper must be placed in a Jewish sacrificial context, must be read metaphorically,

<sup>104</sup> Klawans (2006). See above Ch. 1, p. 18.

but in no way should they be considered as a rejection of the Temple cult. To Klawans, sacrificial metaphors, just like allegories and parables (all literary modes well known to Jews), in no way supersede the Temple; they just transfer the sanctity of sacrificial ritual to more areas of life apart from the Temple; and, as Klawans asserts with reference to the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, “‘This too is divine service’ is what, and all, Jesus may have meant.”<sup>105</sup> It is worth dwelling on Klawans’ thesis for a while, simply because he is the only scholar who deals with the issue of metaphors.

Two points should be made regarding Klawans’ views. First, metaphor and allegory must not be placed at the same level. As I have said, Paul’s metaphorical language differed from both Philonic allegorization and the method of the ‘allegorists’. Contrary to the method adopted by Philo, I have said that Paul (just as Jesus is attested to have done on uttering the eucharistic words) does not take animal sacrifice as his starting point. Without dealing in detail with the tangible reality of Jewish ritual, Paul (like the Jesus of the eucharistic words when he talks about his death) uses sacrificial terms to define entities which had not been regarded as sacrificial. And, in a way different from that of the ‘allegorists’, Paul does not aim at a systematic allegorization of particular sacrificial regulations in the Bible. By not dwelling on the sacrificial realities of the sacred text, then, and by not closely following their descriptions in it, Paul uses a mode of expression much more undermining than allegory. Although metaphors do not constitute sufficient evidence for the supersession of cult, at least one cannot deny that metaphors do not focus on the tangible reality of ritual, but go beyond that.

The second point with regard to Klawans’ theory is the following: Klawans claims that: ‘Sacrificial metaphors operate on the assumption of the efficacy and meaning of sacrificial rituals, and hope to appropriate some of that meaning and apply it to something else.’<sup>106</sup> In fact, this thesis does stand when sacrificial terms play the *vehicle* part in a metaphor, as is the case with the (eucharistic) words of Jesus on his death. However, it is not safe to share it, since entirely hypothetically it inserts in Jesus’ words (under the cover of ‘interpretation’) a term

<sup>105</sup> Klawans (2006), 222.

<sup>106</sup> Klawans (2006), 220.

(‘too’), which does not exist in any version of the text handed down to us. Things become more complex if we try to apply the meaning of this term to the Greek text. If written texts have a meaning for historians, it is because historians respect and interpret them on the basis of what is written, and not on the basis of personal likings.

We can conclude that, in general, the New Testament leaves space for many assumptions, but is lacking in clear depictions as regards Jesus, early Christians, and animal sacrifice. More importantly, there is no absolutely clear reference to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 or to the end of Jewish sacrificial cult there, something which leaves open the question about the attitude of first-century Christians towards the event.

No clear doctrine is set out as regards Jewish sacrifice, yet the narrative indicates that pre-AD 70 Christianity consisted of several groups. Among these, a significant number of Jewish Christians were ‘zealous for the Law’, so, presumably, they must have observed the Temple cult. The event at Lystra, as described in Acts 14, shows Paul opposing the practice of animal sacrifice. But, apart from this important event, there is no categorical pronouncement that Gentile, ex-pagan Christians must not sacrifice, either as participants in pagan feasts or as Christian worshippers. Rather, the abstinence of Gentile Christians from pagan sacrificial meat becomes an issue. The leaders of the Christian movement are generally against the consumption of pagan meat, but the application of their advice cannot always have been possible to follow, as Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians shows.

In the first century sacrificial metaphors began to come into use, and this change contributed to the alienation of worshippers from the techniques of animal sacrifice. From then on, the functions once performed by animals would be performed within different realms of reality.

## Second-century Evidence

### *The Christian apologists against pagan animal sacrifice*

In the second century the criticism of the apologists directed against pagan animal sacrifice came to represent an independent teaching on

the practice of offering itself. Christian apologists did not just condemn the fact that pagans worshipped gods different from the Christian God, but they also explicitly objected to a practice of making offerings to their own God, a stance not evident in the first century. By their radical disapproval of pagan cultic modes, Christian apologists emphasized not only the different character of the Christian God, but, more importantly, their distinct way of perceiving the divine. As we shall see later, the stress on this different perception of God also governs second-century Christian polemics against Judaism, and it differentiates Christian teachings from similar Old Testament teachings.

Pagan sacrifice was mainly seen by the apologists as an offering, and that is why their criticism of it did not concern only animal victims, but also other materials, as Justin's reference to wreaths (*I Apol.* 9), incense and liquids (*II Apol.* 5) shows. However, for reasons of rhetoric, Christian apologists preferred to stress the most morbid aspect of paganism, that is, the slaughter of an animal (see below on Tatian, *Or.* 23 and Athenagoras, *Leg.* 27). For Greek-speaking apologists the word *θυσία* was generally used of any offering, but animal sacrifice was usually thought of as the first on a list of *θυσίαι*, as the following extract from Athenagoras shows:

Ἐπει δὲ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐπικαλούντων ἡμῖν τὴν ἀθεότητα οὐδ' ὄναρ τί ἐστι θεὸν ἐγνωκότες, ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀθεώρητοι ὄντες τοῦ φυσικοῦ καὶ θεολογικοῦ λόγου, μετροῦντες τὴν εὐσέβειαν θυσίων νόμῳ, ἐπικαλοῦσιν τὸ μὴ καὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ταῖς πόλεσι θεοὺς ἄγειν, σκέψασθέ μοι, αὐτοκράτορες, ὧδε περὶ ἐκατέρων, καὶ πρῶτόν γε περὶ τοῦ μὴ θύειν.

Ὁ τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς δημιουργὸς καὶ πατὴρ οὐ δεῖται αἵματος οὐδὲ κνίσσης οὐδὲ τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ θυμιαμάτων εὐωδίας, αὐτὸς ὢν ἡ τελεία εὐωδία, ἀνευδεῆς καὶ ἀπροσδεής.

Since the majority of those accusing us of atheism—though they have not even the foggiest notion of the nature of God, are ignorant of scientific or theological doctrine and have no acquaintance with them, and measure piety in terms of sacrifices—since they accuse us of not recognizing the same gods as do the cities, I ask you to take the following into account, my sovereigns, in dealing with both issues. First, concerning our refusal to *sacrifice*.

The Artificer and Father of this universe needs no *blood*, *fat*, or the *fragrance of flowers* and *incense*. He himself is the perfect fragrance and is in need of nothing from within or without. (*Leg.* 13.1–2, tr. W. R. Schoedel, my emphasis)

Most importantly, this passage shows that, from a criticism directed against animal (and other kinds of) sacrifice, Christians came to be disposed against the ritual gesture of offering itself, because, according to their perception of the divine, God is in need of nothing. Thus, according to Tatian, it is offensive to regard God as being in need of gifts:

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὸν ἀνωνόμαστον θεὸν δωροδοκητέον· ὁ γὰρ πάντων ἀνευδέης οὐ διαβλητέος ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὡς ἐνδεής.

Nor even ought the ineffable God to be presented with gifts; for he who is in want of nothing is not to be misconceived of by us as indigent. (Tatian, *Oratio* 4, my trans.)

According to Justin, God is in need of nothing, but God gives people everything (*I Apol.* 10.1). Christians cannot be accused of atheism, since they revere the Creator, whom they regard as being in need of nothing except prayer.<sup>107</sup> Edibles that would be offered to Him are given to the poor instead (*ibid.* 13.1).

The point about Θεός ἀνευδέης (the God who is in need of nothing) is also made by Athenagoras (*Legatio* 13). The apologist claims that the perfect sacrifice to God is to be aware of His power to create the universe, which He governs with wisdom and skill. This would be enough for God, who is not in need of hecatombs and holocausts such as those described by Homer, and ironically quoted by Athenagoras.<sup>108</sup> Man should offer rational worship as a bloodless sacrifice.

<sup>107</sup> Tertullian, explaining why Christians refuse to offer sacrifice for the safety of the emperor, says that there is something more precious to offer, and this is prayer: 'All this I cannot ask of any other but only of Him, from whom I know I shall receive it, since He it is who alone gives and I am one to whom the answer to prayer is due, His servant, who alone worships Him, who for His teaching I am slain, who offer to Him that rich and better sacrifice which He Himself commanded—I mean prayer, proceeding from flesh pure, soul innocent, spirit holy. Not grains of incense worth one halfpenny, tears of an Arabian tree, not two drops of wine, not blood of a worthless ox longing to die, and on top of all sorts of pollution a conscience unclean;—so that I wonder why, when among you victims are being examined by the most vicious of priests, the breasts of the victims rather than of the sacrificers should be inspected' (*Apol.* 30.5–6, Loeb tr.). For the same parallel between an unblemished victim and a pure soul, see Philo, *De spec. leg.* 1, 257–60.

<sup>108</sup> The Homeric passage presents men as offering sacrifices, votive gifts, libations, and fat in order to make gods forgive their trespasses, but the apologist does not make a point on this aspect: καὶ τοὺς μὲν θυσίησι καὶ εὐχολῆς ἀγανῆσι | λοιβῆ τε κνίσση τε παρατρωπῶσ' ἄνθρωποι | λισόμενοι, ὅτε κέν τις ὑπερβαίη καὶ ἀμάρτη (*Iliad* 9.499–501, cf. Plato, *Rep.* 364d).

A common motif among Christian apologists is the equation of what pagans considered as gods to mere daemons. Starting from this assimilation, the apologists easily correlated animal sacrifice to daemonic powers.

Since Justin makes daemons responsible for giving pagan gods their shape (*I Apol.* 9.1), it is to be expected that he would regard daemons as even more effective (*II Apol.* 5.3–5): to Justin, daemonic power is the instigator of pagan ritual. Daemons, being the angels' spurious children, enslaved humankind by teaching them rituals of offering animals, incense, and liquids. They taught men corruption and caused them every sort of grief. Even the poets and mythologists were ignorant of the identity of daemons, and attributed all daemonic actions to divine relatives of one god (Justin apparently means Zeus), to whom they gave names.

Along the same lines, as part of his long exposition on the daemonic nature of pagan gods (*Leg.* 18–30), Athenagoras emphasizes that what makes men come and worship the idols is the power of daemons (*Leg.* 26): the latter absorb the blood of sacrificial victims, and drive men mad by means of terrible actions such as incisions and castrations. To Athenagoras, any powers emanating from statues must also be attributed to the influence of daemons: oracles and healings cannot be the effect of matter. How exactly do these powers come about, then? In *Leg.* 27 Athenagoras gives an explanation which reminds us of Justin's daemonology, but which also alludes to psychology, and sounds like the theories of Plotinus; in this explanation animal sacrifice is the ultimate cause of idolatry: when the soul, says Athenagoras, is closely attached to material things, it has the tendency to create illusions. The daemons take advantage of these illusions and, entering men's thoughts, they direct their illusions in such a way as to make them seem to come from the images. The reason why daemons do this is their greed for the fat and blood of victims, and their desire to deceive men.<sup>109</sup>

Tatian does not correlate daemons to animal sacrifice, but, from another point of view, draws a shocking, morbid parallel:

<sup>109</sup> Tatian also insists that the pagan gods are daemons (*Or.* 12, 14, 18), but, apart from the adjective *λίχνος* (*Or.* 12), which is allusive to animal sacrifice, no connection is made between daemons and sacrifice.

attacking gladiatorial shows, he assimilates the sacrifice of animals to the murder of people in the arena: just as men offer sacrifices in order to eat meat, so they buy murderers of humans in order to feed their soul with the spectacle of bloodshed (*Oratio* 23). The parallel might have sounded even more shocking to the apologist's contemporaries, since it implies that there is nothing pious in a sacrificial offering; there is only one explanation for the existence of sacrifice, and that is practical: meat-supply.

The above selection of passages from the texts of the apologists shows that Christian anti-sacrificial thought came to be an independent theory on sacrificial offerings, and not just a part of Christian opposition to idolatry. According to the Christian apologists: (a) (the real) God is in no need of things material; (b) pagan animal sacrifice was instigated by daemons; and (c) pagan animal sacrifice was just an excuse for meat-supply.

The first point especially, that of a God in need of nothing (*ἀνευδής*), is an original Christian contribution, and constitutes the kernel of the Christian perception of the divine. The principle of *Θεὸς ἀνευδής* had not been made explicit in any of the classic Old Testament anti-sacrificial stances,<sup>110</sup> and, as we shall see, it also underlay second-century Christian hostility to Judaism.

According to Lucian, the same point, namely, that the god (in this case, Athena) is not in need of sacrifices, was made by the Greek philosopher Demonax (Lucian, *Demonax* 11: οὐδὲν γὰρ δεῖσθαι αὐτὴν τῶν παρ' ἐμοῦ θυσίων ὑπελάμβανον). Demonax had been accused of not offering sacrifices, but his argument convinced his audience. None of the Christian apologetic texts, in which the same argument is expressed by Christians, gives us a clue to the pagan reactions to this argument. My overall impression is that the reaction of Greeks to Christian anti-sacrificial preaching would not have been positive. Part of the explanation is to be found in the fact that, at least, people such as Demonax did not doubt the existence of the goddess Athena. In addition, we should take into account the position of a Demonax in Greek society: he was a 'philosopher', with no impact on common

<sup>110</sup> See 1 Sam. 15: 22, Isa. 1: 11–12, Jer. 7: 22–3, Hos. 6: 6, Amos 5: 25, Mic. 6: 6–8. In the Hatch-Redpath *Concordance to the Septuagint* there is not one occurrence of the term *ἀνευδής*.

practice. Christians, on the other hand, were followers of a new religion, dangerously widespread; their lack of claims to a 'past' made them suspected of being mere underminers, having no other intention than that of subverting religious tradition.

In sum, the aforementioned depreciative comments on pagan animal sacrifices make evident a second-century Christian tendency to undermine animal sacrificial worship per se: nowhere do the apologists accuse pagans of offering sacrifices not to the real God, but rather to the pagan gods; criticism was directed at the very heart of pagan cult.

### *Christians as community members: the evidence from Tertullian and Pliny*

This short excursus is offered in order to prove that second-century evidence for Christian attitudes to animal sacrifice is not confined only to rhetoric, but also contains implications relating to concrete situations. I am concerned with the way in which Christian faith could influence the relation of converts to pagan ceremonies involving sacrifices.

#### **Tertullian**

Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians does not give advice on the attitude which Christians should adopt during the sacrificial stages preceding a pagan feast. As we shall now see, this problem did concern the polemical Tertullian (*De idololatria* 16–17.3).

Paul had given advice on the issue of eating idolothytes (food offered to idols), so he had referred to the situation after the accomplishment of a sacrificial slaughter. Tertullian gave advice on the puzzling issue of the boundaries between mere attendance at a pagan sacrifice and actual participation in it, so he dealt with the situation preceding a sacrificial slaughter. By using the term 'conscience' (*συνείδησις*), Paul had referred both to the conscience of the pagan when facing Christians, and to the different tendencies among Christians themselves, the 'weak' and the 'strong'. By 'conscience', Tertullian only referred to the conscience of the Christian when facing pagans (*De idol.* 13.6). Let us now take a closer look at Tertullian's advice.



Tertullian objects to the observance of pagan holidays by Christians, either as an occasion of rejoicing or as an excuse for financial dealings with pagans (*De idolatria*, 13.2–5). But as regards pagan ceremonies taking place within a closer social circle, indeed, the very moment of sacrifice taking place in these occasions, Tertullian recommends the following scheme (ibid. 16–17.1):

- Christians are allowed to attend some rituals, including betrothals, weddings, and name-givings—despite the idolatrous aura surrounding these occasions.<sup>111</sup>
- However, Christians should not attend these ceremonies if the reason for their invitation (*titulus officii*) is the sacrifice being performed. Of course, a Christian should prefer not even to see an idolatrous act, says Tertullian. But, since one cannot avoid living in a pagan world, let Christian presence on these occasions be regarded as a service to the host and not to an idol. (That Tertullian had animal sacrifice in mind is obvious from a reference to sacrificial victims in ibid. 17.3.)<sup>112</sup>
- In the case that a Christian is invited to assist as a priest and perform a sacrifice, he should not go, because otherwise he would clearly render service to an idol. But neither should a Christian provide any other sort of assistance with regard to a sacrifice, either in the form of advice or in the form of money or in any other way. Tertullian gives a brief summary of his advice: ‘If I am invited because of a sacrifice and I attend, I shall take part in idolatry; if a different reason brings me into the presence of a man who is performing a sacrifice, I shall be no more than a spectator of the sacrifice’ (ibid. 16.5, tr. Waszink–Van Winden).
- Tertullian finally deals with the case in which Christian presence at a sacrifice is obligatory, that is, the case of a slave when his master is sacrificing, of a freedman when his patron is sacrificing, and of an official when his superior is sacrificing. The following axiom shows that Tertullian’s attitude is unchange-

<sup>111</sup> *De idol.* 16.1. Waszink–Van Winden (1987), 248, attribute this ‘breath of idolatry’ to the sacrifice which takes place, but Tertullian does not specify this.

<sup>112</sup> Besides, as regards the invitation itself, Tertullian must have in mind cases similar to those where an explicit reference to a sacrificial meal is made (e.g. the invitations of Sarapis with references to a *δεῖπνον*, see Gilliam (1976)).

able: 'But if someone hands the wine to a man who sacrifices, if he even assists by saying a word that is necessary for the sacrifice, he will be regarded as a minister of idolatry' (ibid. 17.1, tr. Waszink–Van Winden).

Tertullian is liberal as regards the presence of Christians at heathen festivals,<sup>113</sup> but very strict as regards the involvement of Christians with animal sacrifice, because he regards as participation even the slightest indirect contribution to a sacrifice (e.g. the utterance of words). To Christians following Tertullian's advice, the limits between mere attendance and participation would be very delicate.

Tertullian also refers to the undertaking of civic functions by Christians (ibid. 17.2). He claims that a Christian may undertake such functions, and he lists some preconditions which would allow him to do so (17.3). Thus, a Christian may exercise a public function as long as:

- he does not offer/preside over sacrifices;
- he does not make contracts concerning the supply of public victims;
- he does not give his authorization for the running of temples;
- he is not in charge of temple taxes;
- he does not fund/organize/preside over games;
- he does not announce festivals;
- he does not take oaths.

(Some rules on how one should exercise power follow.) At least three of these preconditions are direct or indirect prohibitions of involvement with animal sacrifice. The inscription from Oenoanda about the Demostheneia (see Chapter 2, App. n. II, 19) would be a good example where these prohibitions could apply, in the case of Christians having ceremonial duties.

All the aforementioned circumstances dealt with in *De idololatria* would be an everyday reality in provincial cities. In all probability, Paul and Tertullian were not the only sources for Christians to consult when they faced such problems. All Christian congregations must have had their spiritual teachers, who would give basic direc-

<sup>113</sup> In fact, Tertullian's view on this issue has been considered as an item of evidence for the non-Montanist character of the work. See Waszink–Van Winden (1987), 12.

tions as regards the right behaviour of Christians, though we cannot know the degree of strictness or leniency adopted in each case. We can assume that, with the spread of Christianity, the adoption of tactics similar to those contained in Paul's and Tertullian's letters was already changing the character of the Empire, by shaping the financial and religious character of the Roman provinces.

### Pliny

In fact, it seems that this change was conspicuous already before Tertullian: a witness to it was the younger Pliny, who was aware of the implications of Christianization in Pontus. At the end of his letter to the emperor Trajan, in which he sets out his actions concerning the 'problem' of Christians, Pliny is proud to report that his intervention as provincial governor was beneficial for (pagan) religion:

... people have begun to throng the temples which had been almost entirely deserted for a long time; the sacred rites (*sacra sollemnia*) which had been allowed to lapse (*intermissa*) are being performed again, and flesh of sacrificial victims (<*carnem*> *victimarum*)<sup>114</sup> is on sale everywhere, though up till recently scarcely anyone could be found to buy it (X.96.10, Loeb tr.).

The situation alluded to here reminds us of Tertullian's appeal to Christians not to provide for public sacrificial victims, so one would assume that Pliny is reporting a real situation. However, A. N. Sherwin-White does not seem disposed to rely entirely on Pliny's description of the revitalization of cults. According to this scholar, Pliny is reporting the allegations of the accusers, that is, priests and tradesmen, who had been most affected by the increase in the number of Christians. That is why Sherwin-White regards Pliny's report as exaggerated. According to the same scholar, civic ritual would not suffer lack of provision of offerings; only the performance of individual or family rites would have been affected by the rise of the number of Christians. Paul's advice on the origin of meat (Sherwin-White's reference is 1 Cor. 10: 27–9) must have had a very limited influence, he claims.<sup>115</sup>

Actually, Paul does not prohibit the buying of sacrificial meat in the passage from 1 Corinthians to which Sherwin-White refers (he might have intended to refer to 1 Cor. 10: 1–22, but not even there does Paul

<sup>114</sup> The word *carnem* (flesh) is an emendation in the text.

<sup>115</sup> Sherwin-White (1985), 709, 710.

prohibit the buying of sacrificial meat). On the other hand, since Pliny's remark is related to the alleged decrease in the sale of meat because of the number of pagans who were converted to Christianity, and it is impossible for us to know the exact proportion of converted pagans, I think we have no sufficient evidence for either refuting or supporting Pliny's testimony about the impact of Christianity on the sale of sacrificial meat in Pontus.

Instead, the element to which I would like to draw the reader's attention is the problems which Christianity could cause in a community when its members thought it natural to perform, or pay for, animal sacrifices. In other words, it is not the decrease in meat, but the decrease in interest in the ritual of sacrifice itself which the evidence obliges us to take note of (*sollemnia intermissa*, in Pliny's passage). More specifically, the combination of the evidence drawn from Tertullian's *De idololatria* 17.3 and from our study of 'obligatory' sacrifices (Ch. 2, sec. 4), indicates that Christians would be uncertain of how to act before the possibility of participation in pagan sacrifices, and this issue would touch on both the public and the private sphere of their lives.

Thus, at the public level, civic legislation could occasionally require the offering of an animal sacrifice by individuals. In cases where citizens were invested with civic offices, Christians would presumably have had difficulties in performing their duties.<sup>116</sup> The same must have applied to Christian professionals belonging to groups whose members were obliged to offer sacrifices (see the Coan examples).<sup>117</sup> At the private level, conventional rituals in the context of a small community, which were related to important moments in life (e.g. premarital sacrifices), would have raised further difficulties for Christians.

<sup>116</sup> One can cite many examples: first, a Christian presumably could not be a *prytanis*: in Athens the *prytaneis* were supposed to offer sacrifices in the *Θόλος* (Paus. *Attica*, V.1). Then, a Christian could not be a *gymnasiarchos*, among whose duties were sacrifices to local heroes, like the *ἐναγισμός* to Aetolus, in Elis (Paus. *Elis I*, IV.4). Even more, a young Christian could hardly continue to be a member of the *gymnasion*, given the involvement of the *epheboi* in numerous civic sacrificial cults (for examples, see above Ch. 2, sec. B.iii).

<sup>117</sup> One may find the possibility of a Christian athlete rather odd, but a Phrygian inscription of the 3rd c. AD has long been regarded as the first testimony about a Christian athlete. For the evidence, see Robert, *Hellenica XI–XII*, 423–5. This Christian participated both in local and Italian games, and one can only speculate about his involvement in the cultic ceremonies conducted.

The region where the intensity of the confrontation between Christianity and the ritual of animal sacrifice can be most convincingly illustrated is southern Asia Minor. Two examples, drawn from a pagan and a Christian source, show this clearly.

The cases of the Lycian cities of Oenoanda and Dereköy, with which we have dealt in Chapter 2 (see App. II, nos. 19 and 23 respectively), have sufficiently shown that at least financial participation in animal sacrifices could be obligatory. Especially as regards the civic sacrifice of the Demostheneia at Oenoanda, we have seen that possible laxity in financial contribution on the part of a *κώμη* would result in the imposition of a fine on the person who was in charge of the sacrificial offerings required of it. Furthermore, his name was to be made public, presumably along with that of his *κώμη*. It is plausible to imagine that the people of Oenoanda would have considered Christian families especially prone to give occasion for the setting up of such lists because of their refusal to sacrifice!

The event described in Acts 14, about the preparation of a sacrifice which the Lycaonians would offer to Paul and Barnabas, focuses on Paul's unfavourable reaction to animal sacrifice. This is an important indicator of the tension between common ritual practice of the time and the attitude which Christians kept before it.

Maybe, then, Pliny's testimony about the decline in ceremonial activities (*sacra sollemnia diu intermissa*), including animal sacrifices, applies better to southern Asia Minor than to Pontus itself.

In the excursus above, the evidence from Tertullian and Pliny has been combined with other evidence from southern Asia Minor in order to make it clear that the anti-sacrificial preaching of the apologists was not irrelevant to everyday life. Christian behaviour within a pagan community confirmed that the change in the conception of the divine was not restricted to the theoretical argumentation of the apologists, but shaped real life. In what follows, we shall see that the teachings of the apologists about a God in need of nothing, and so about the inutility of sacrifices, governed the attitude which Christians maintained when brought to trial.

*Christians prosecuted or persecuted by pagans:  
trials and martyrdoms*

Although there is plenty of evidence for Christians being brought to trial before pagan authorities, the exact procedure followed by pagan magistrates is not always clear. A common theme in the texts reporting these trials is the exposure of the arrested Christians to the test of (animal?) sacrifice. In this section, I try to reconstruct the succession of events related to sacrifice and trials, and also make some comments on the attitude of Christians under trial.

**The succession of events**

*Trials* Two of the epistles contained in Pliny's correspondence with Trajan (*Ep.* X.96–7), dated toward the end of AD 110, are crucial to our study of the tests to which Christians were exposed. The one, written by Pliny, has been used earlier, because it contains his reference to sacrificial meat. Pliny sent this epistle (X.96) to Trajan in order to consult the emperor with regard to the policy he should adopt when people were accused before him of being Christians. Pliny states that he had never previously taken part in a trial of Christians (X.96.1), but nonetheless he goes on to describe the course of action he followed (X.96.2–6).<sup>118</sup>

Here I am not concerned with all the Christians who were tried by Pliny, but only with those whose names had been on a list in an anonymous *libellus*. From this category, Pliny dismissed those of the accused who denied being or having been Christians, but he first made them: (1) invoke the gods; (2) offer wine and incense (*turba ac vino supplicarent*) before the emperor's statue; and (3) curse Christ.<sup>119</sup>

In his response (X.97), Trajan points out that people who are brought before the governor on the grounds of evidence must be punished, except those who deny Christianity by invoking the gods (*supplicando dis nostris*).<sup>120</sup> In the latter case, past conduct should not be taken into account. Trajan adds that anonymous pamphlets should

<sup>118</sup> This means that Pliny had already acted. Wilken (1984), 22, attributes this inconsistency either to the pressure which local magistrates exercised on Pliny or to Pliny's confidence in the legitimacy of his actions.

<sup>119</sup> *Ep.* X.96.5.

<sup>120</sup> *Ep.* X.97.2.

not count as valid evidence for accusations, or else a bad precedent, not conducive to the good reputation of the age, would be created.

These two letters do not mention animal sacrifice, but make it evident that Pliny obliged *some* Christians to offer a libation of wine and make an incense-offering.<sup>121</sup> These ritual gestures were used by Pliny only for some Christians, as a proof of their apostasy from Christianity, and not as a test for all Christians.<sup>122</sup> Trajan states, too, that recantation should be proved by invocation of the traditional gods. Unfortunately, Trajan is not very specific about the exact form that invocation should take, nor does he say whether Pliny's three steps (invocation—offerings—cursing of Christ) were rightly chosen as a test for the recanting Christians.

The reason why Pliny did not ask for an animal sacrifice from those recanting was not his disregard for it, but the great number of those accused (X.96.9). A series of animal sacrifices with the victims provided by the governor would have been an expensive procedure,<sup>123</sup> messy, and time-consuming! It therefore seems that, for the needs of a trial, libation and incense-offering were chosen by Pliny as substitutes for an animal sacrifice, and not because they were the standard procedure in everyday life. Besides, the fact that to Pliny the main act in cultic life was animal sacrifice is proved by his concluding remark, which, among the representative signs of a flourishing pagan religion, contains a reference to sacrificial meat. Not only that, but Pliny presents animal sacrifice as an important part of the economic life of the provinces, and that is probably why he became interested in the issue of Christians.

Although Pliny is sometimes credited with the 'discovery' of the offering-test described above, we can never be sure about the tactics of his predecessors in his province or of Roman governors else-

<sup>121</sup> This test of Pliny on Christians is usually called a 'sacrifice-test'. See de Ste. Croix (1963), 19. See also Grant (1970), 14: 'the requirement of sacrifice to the gods was introduced by Pliny and confirmed by Trajan'.

<sup>122</sup> As de Ste. Croix (1963), 18, has rightly pointed out. See also Millar (1973), 153. Besides, there was no point in applying the test to all Christians, since, as Pliny admits, 'none of these things . . . any genuine Christian can be induced to do' (*Ep.* X.96.5, Loeb tr.).

<sup>123</sup> Wilken (1984), 26, points out that pouring of wine and dropping of grain over an altar became popular because they were cheap.

where.<sup>124</sup> A similar test had been used by Greeks in the context of a local persecution of Jews at Antioch in AD 67.<sup>125</sup> In any case, Pliny's letter is the first testimony for the application of the offering-test in the context of pagan persecutions of Christians.

In sum, in the trials presided over by Pliny, libation worked as a substitute for animal sacrifice, and it was used only as a proof of the accused's claim that he or she was not a Christian.

*Martyrdoms* I now go on to examine how the requirement of sacrifice is incorporated in the accounts of Christian martyrdoms. References to sacrifice occur in only three of the pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum* dating to our period: the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (c.mid-2nd c.), the *Acts of Justin and his Companions* (c.mid 2nd c.), and the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (c.AD 203).<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately, there is no way for us to know whether the sacrificial terms occurring in these texts allude to animal sacrifice.<sup>127</sup>

In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* two references to sacrifice are worth quoting: the Christian Quintus was convinced by the governor to offer sacrifice (4.1), and Polycarp's friends advised him to perform the sacrifices and be saved (8.2).

The text of the *Acts of Justin and his Companions* has come to us in three recensions, of which the shortest one has been proved by G. Lazzati<sup>128</sup> to be the original account. In this, there is no requirement of sacrifice; however, the prefect's final verdict is: 'Those who

<sup>124</sup> Wilken (1984), 27–8, where there are various suggestions about the 'provenance' of the idea, but again, Pliny is said to have *discovered* an effective way to distinguish Christians from non-Christians.

<sup>125</sup> Jos. BJ VII.46, 50–1.

<sup>126</sup> The *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* dates to after AD 200 (see Barnes (1968b), 522), but, with the flexibility I have adopted in the case of Greek inscriptions and of *De idololatria*, it can be considered to be within our chronological limits.

<sup>127</sup> A possible indication that the sacrificial offering required was not an animal sacrifice is the use of the term ἐπιθύσαι in some of the cases. Ἐπιθύσαι is usually taken as denoting the offering of incense. But in my opinion the latter meaning cannot be verified when the verb is used alone, and not along with θύσαι; for an example of coexistence of ἐπιθύσαι and θύσαι, see the sacred law of Antiochus of Commagene (r. c.69–c.36), as recorded in the inscription from Nemrud Dagi (OGIS 383): ἐπιθύσεις ἀφειδείς λιβανωτοῦ καὶ ἀρωμάτων ἐν βωμοῖς τούτοις ποιείσθω θυσίας τε πολυτελεῖς... (vv. 142–4). Furthermore, in the context of Egyptian cults, see Calvet–Roesch (1966), 316, where it is said that ἐπιθύειν is particularly used of incense-offerings.

<sup>128</sup> Lazzati (1953).



have refused to sacrifice to the gods are to be scourged and executed in accordance with the laws.' (5.6, tr. Musurillo).

In the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (6.3–4) Perpetua is asked to offer sacrifice for the emperors, but she refuses. The interesting point here is that the question pertaining to the *nomen* (i.e. whether Perpetua is a Christian) is asked after her refusal to offer a sacrifice; her answer leads her to the beasts (6.5–6).

The three martyrdoms cited above point to an evolution in the judicial procedure since Pliny's time, that is, since AD 110. They indicate that an offering was required of Christians as Christians, and not of those who had already refused the *nomen* (as in the case of Pliny's trials). In other words, as scholars have pointed out, sacrifice was used by pagan authorities as an opportunity for Christians to recant.<sup>129</sup> The policy adopted by Pliny, who had thought that 'none of these things [*sc.* sacrifice] . . . any genuine Christian can be induced to do' (*Ep.* X. 96.5), was superseded. Perhaps the change towards a more coercive policy was instigated by the increase in the number of prosecutions, which, in turn, had resulted from the increasing absence of Christians from community rituals. If this hypothesis is right, one can even explain the succession of the questions posed to Perpetua. It is as if she is asked: 'We have heard that you don't participate in rituals. Show us if this is true by sacrificing.' Then her refusal to sacrifice is followed by the question: 'Are you a Christian?'

Having shown the role of the 'sacrifice-test' as a means of recantation, we are faced with two possibilities as regards the succession of events related to sacrifice and the trials of Christians:

- (a) The arrest of Christians was preceded by their refusal to offer a sacrifice (there might have been a provincial requirement of sacrifice or just social pressure). After the arrest, the authorities again asked Christians to sacrifice, in order to verify whether the detained had refused to conform with the prevailing customs. It

<sup>129</sup> Grant (1970), 15, says that the sacrifice-test was 'originally introduced for the benefit of pagans or ex-Christians as a means by which they could purge themselves of the charge that they were Christians', whereas later it was used as a means of achieving Christian recantation. On the basis of an unsafe interpretation of the *Acts of Justin and his Companions* made by him, Grant says that this change occurred at the end of the 2nd century.

is likely that animal sacrifice was involved in the first rather than the second denial by Christians.

- (b) The refusal of Christians to sacrifice succeeded their arrest. In this case, the Christians were brought before the governor just for the *nomen*, and were asked to make an offering for the first time during their trial. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that this offering would have been an animal offering.

The lack of evidence for the existence of an official requirement of sacrifice leads me to accept a combination of the two possibilities above. Namely, I mainly accept that up to AD 200 Christians were not brought to the authorities because of their refusal to sacrifice, but for their being Christians (case *b*); however, I have left open the possibility that, after AD 110, because of increased social pressure, Christians were expected to sacrifice (case *a*) and did not succumb, so, consequently, were persecuted for that. In general, I agree with the scholarly consensus that prosecutions before the time of Decius were made for the *nomen*, but I have added a possible reason (social pressure) for the change of the role of the 'sacrifice-test' into a means of verifying accusations, and so into a means of recantation.

*A lost decree?* Despite the admitted lack of attested sacrificial requirements preceding the arrest of Christians in the second century, I am obliged to examine the possibility of some counter-evidence.

The significance of a decree explicitly ordering sacrifice (and not just of a rule of limited application, set out in a letter) has been studied recently by J. B. Rives.<sup>130</sup> According to this scholar, Decius' decision to issue a decree ordering the performance of sacrifice by all inhabitants of the Roman Empire led for the first time to a definition of the religion of the Empire. This religion was not defined by a deity or a dogma, Rives says, but by a specific cultic act: sacrifice.<sup>131</sup> As the

<sup>130</sup> Rives (1999).

<sup>131</sup> In a note (n. 91) in his article, Rives says that in the persecution of Decius 'any deity would do, even the god of the Christians, just so long as a sacrifice was performed'. Rives is basing this on a passage from *Passio Pionii* (19.10): 'do you look to the air? Sacrifice to it.' I would not be so sure about Rives' point. The surviving certificates of the Decian persecution speak of sacrifice to the 'gods' (plural), so this necessarily implies the normal range of named pagan gods. See Knipfing (1923), *passim*. In the example from *Passio Pionii*, the air as a god could

surviving certificates from the Decian persecution prove, the sacrifice required was that of an animal, since in the certificate the offerer states that he or she has tasted of the victims.<sup>132</sup> Consequently, Rives' conclusion is particularly important for the purposes of this study.

There is a possibility that a decree ordering sacrifice by all the inhabitants of the Empire was issued before Decius. This depends on the dating of the *Acts of Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice*.<sup>133</sup> A reference to the emperor's sacrificial decree occurs both in the Greek and the Latin versions of these *Acta*:<sup>134</sup>

ὁ ἀνθύπατος εἶπεν· θύσαιί σε δεῖ· οὕτως γὰρ ἐκέλευσεν ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ. (sec. 11)  
Proconsul dixit: Sacrificate; ita enim iussit imperator. (sec. 2)

However, the *Acta* may belong either to the middle of the second century or to the time of Decius—the second dating seeming more probable.

I would like to suggest that, if the *Acts of Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice* date to the second century, and provided that the sacrificial terms occurring in them denote animal sacrifice, the text might provide us with evidence for the existence of a pre-Decian decree making animal sacrifice the religious act of the Empire par excellence.<sup>135</sup>

### The attitude of Christians in the texts of trials

As regards the attitude of the Christians who were asked to sacrifice during their trial, we can note the following: in none of the recorded cases do Christians state that it is only *to their own* god—and not to

have a name, and its attributes are specific. But the governor would hardly accept a deity with no name, such as the Christian god (Justin, *II Apol.* 6.1–3). A god, even if recently adopted, should be within the limits of a pagan's conception of the divine. See the following section on 'The attitude of Christians'.

<sup>132</sup> For an example, see Rives (1999), 137, n. 13. Note also Cyprian's mention of *thurificati* (*Ep.* 55.2.1); Rives (*ibid.*) is uncertain about the translation of the term (does it denote incense?), and the explanation for the possible difference in the offering.

<sup>133</sup> See Barnes (1968*b*), 514–15, (1968*a*), 45, 48.

<sup>134</sup> Sec. 2 (Latin), secs. 4, 11, 45 (Greek).

<sup>135</sup> Surprisingly, though, Barnes would not share this view: 'The [sc. proconsul's] order to sacrifice because the emperor has commanded it is scarcely more than another mode of urging a return to Roman ways. And, in a sense, the emperor had commanded sacrifice: for he had ordained that an accused Christian who sacrificed should be set free.' Barnes (1968*a*), 48. Here Barnes has in mind Trajan's epistle to Pliny. To what extent, however, would the emperors after Trajan consult his epistles and consider them as a law-source?

any other recipient—that they offer sacrifices. The principle of a god being in need of nothing (*ἀνευδεής*), which we have come across in the apologetic texts, seems to have been applied by Christians even to the most crucial moment, that of a trial.

Similarly, in none of the martyrdoms do governors ask Christians to offer a sacrifice to the Christian God; the Christian God was not like the pagan gods, who had names and attributes and were visible, nor like the Jewish God, who had been recognized long ago as not having the characteristics of the pagan gods. A new god, who forbade his worshippers to attend the rituals of the other gods, was subversive. For the pagan governor, to ask a Christian to worship his or her God would have been to admit the inferiority of the non-Christian gods.

What is more important for the purpose of this study is the fact that the principle of *Θεὸς ἀνευδεής* affected not only the cases where Christians addressed or were tried by pagans, but all the historically recorded range of Christian cultic attitudes. The existing evidence shows that Christians objected altogether to the practice of offering, even with regard to Christian worship itself. The lack of altars in honour of the Christian God was a well-known Christian characteristic, often quoted by pagan observers as a paradox. Thus, Celsus remarks that Christians *βωμοὺς καὶ ἀγάλματα καὶ νεῶς ἰδρύεσθαι φεύγειν*, ‘we avoid the establishing of altars, statues, and temples’ (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.17, my trans.).<sup>136</sup>

It is characteristic that even in later times, when we have evidence for animal-slaughter in the framework of Christian feasts, the offering is made in honour of the local saint and not in honour of the Christian God.<sup>137</sup> The historically recorded cultic attitudes of Christians show that an essential part of the Christian perception of the divine in the history of early Christianity was the principle of *Θεὸς ἀνευδεής*.

In this section I have first tried to form as clear a picture as possible of the exact sequence of judicial and penal actions taken by pagan

<sup>136</sup> See also Min. Felix, *Octavius* 10 (*Cur nullas aras habent?*), and Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* VI, 1.

<sup>137</sup> A narration of three cases of sacred butchery in honour of St Felix (Paulinus of Nola, *carmen* XX, dating to AD 406) has been used by C. Grottanelli as a very indicative example of the problems inherent in the interpretation of such feasts: Grottanelli (2005). For examples drawn from modern Greece: Georgoudi (1979). Also Μυριβήλης (1978), ch. 10, where the slaughter is made in honour of the Virgin.

authorities against Christians. I have concluded that, in this context, refusal to sacrifice was certainly an indicator of anti-conformism on the part of Christians, but not the officially stated cause of their arrest. So, the existing evidence still leaves open the following questions concerning our period of study:

- (a) whether the absence of Christians from animal or any other form of sacrifice was one of the factors which made them conspicuous, and thus led to their arrest; and
- (b) whether compliance or non-compliance in animal or other forms of sacrifice always determined the condemnation of Christians after trial.

Second, the attitude of Christians under trial has been examined. Their refusal to comply even with an offering to their own, Christian God has led me to conclude that the Christian God was apparently by definition perceived as in no need of things material (*Θεὸς ἀνευδρείης*). This conclusion has been confirmed by evidence external to trials and martyrdoms, since the absence of altars from Christian cult was explicitly pointed out by second-century pagans. In sum, the anti-sacrificial teachings of the apologists have been seen to underlie everyday Christian behaviour.

### *The Christian apologists and Fathers on Jewish animal sacrifice*

At the beginning of this section I must emphasize the fact that there is only one surviving second-century Christian text wholly and specifically dedicated to polemics against Jews, namely the *Dialogue with Trypho*, in contrast to the number of surviving second-century Christian apologies against paganism. This is to be expected, since, as was noted in the introductory section to this chapter, the religious system of paganism was intertwined with the dominant web of power which officially put Christians on trial, and this connection contributed to the preservation of more texts from the side of anti-pagan apologetics. But, strikingly enough, Christian texts intended for internal use make up for the absence of Christian anti-Jewish apologetics, since several passages from Christian catechetical texts concern the Christian perception of Judaism.

The second-century Christian apologists are critical of Jewish sacrifices. As in the case of the apologies addressing pagans, the principle of a God in need of nothing is present in Christian anti-Jewish polemics too. But the appeal to this principle is used by Christians as a means to reach another aim: that of making derogatory comments on Jews.

The belief in Jesus as a dividing-line between past and present, which we have seen in Paul, continued to define the relation of second-century Christians to the Law. The clearest exposition of this relation is made in the following extract from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*:

Nor do we consider that we have one God, and you another, but Him only who brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt... nor have we set our hopes on any other (for there is none), but only on Him on whom you also have set yours, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yet our hope is set on Him not by means of Moses nor by means of the Law; for then we should assuredly be doing the same as you.

For in fact I have read, Trypho, that there is to be both a final Law and a Disposition that is superior to all others, which must now be observed by all those who lay claim to the inheritance of God. For the Law given at Horeb is already antiquated and belongs to you alone, but that other belongs to all men absolutely. And a Law set over against a Law has made the one before it to cease, and a Disposition coming into existence afterwards has in like manner limited any former one. And as an eternal and final Law was Christ given to us, and this Disposition is sure, after which there is no law, or ordinance, or command. (*Dial.* 11.1–2, tr. Williams)

To say that the ideas evoked in the text above were conceived after the Fall of the Temple in AD 70 is unnecessary, since we have seen that Christian criticism of the Law and the notion of a 'new testament' go back to Paul. Equally, to say that the passage above does not explicitly refer to sacrifices is also unnecessary, because none of the other components of the Law are explicitly mentioned either (e.g. circumcision or the Sabbath).

Since Jesus changed the perception which Christians had of the Law, Christians had to redefine the role of the Law in history. Paul's belief in Jesus made him see the Law from the perspective of preparation (*παιδαγωγός*, Gal. 3: 24). But the redefinition made by second-century Christians is different from that made by Paul. To the apologists and Church Fathers of the second century, the role of the Law is defined as foretelling the Christian 'story' and as resulting from God's concession to the undisciplined character of the Jews.

Thus, in the framework of the second-century polemical attitude to the Jews, two elements are prominent in Christian criticism of Jewish sacrifices: the emphasis on the prefiguring role of Jewish sacrificial customs; and the promulgation of the notion 'idolatry' in connection with the notion 'Jewish sacrifices', either to make a degrading comparison of Judaism with paganism, or to prove that Jews are by nature prone to idolatry.

These two points were never explicitly made in the prophetic texts of the Old Testament. The assertion about the shadowy substance of the Law, and the mere parallel between idolatry and Jewish sacrifices, could not but have sounded blasphemous to pious Jews. Consequently, both points differentiate second-century Christian teachings from prophetic teachings, and reveal the negative attitude of second-century Christians towards Jewish sacrifices.

There follow some examples illustrating the first point, namely, the prefiguring allegorizations made by Christians in second-century texts. According to Justin, the Paschal lamb was a prefiguration of Christ, and the smearing of the houses with its blood symbolized the smearing of the souls of Christians with Jesus' blood. God also ordained that the Paschal lamb should only be slain in Jerusalem, because Christ was to suffer there, and, after His Passion, Jerusalem was to be captured, and every sacrifice was to cease (*Dial.* 40.1–2). The order for the particular way of roasting the Paschal lamb was a prefiguration of the Cross of the Passion (40.3). Similarly, the procedure for treating the two kids on the Day of Atonement was ordered as a prefiguration of Christ in His two presences, the one when He was rejected, and the other at the time of His future coming to Jerusalem (40.4–5).<sup>138</sup>

Even more detailed allegorizations with reference to sacrificial ritual are contained in the *Epistle of Barnabas*:

What then does he say in the Prophet? 'And let them eat of the goat which is offered in the fast for all their sins.' Attend carefully,—'and let all the priests alone eat the entrails unwashed with vinegar.' Why? Because you are going

<sup>138</sup> One must note that apart from sacrifices Justin allegorizes further elements drawn from the Mosaic Law. See *Dial.* 41.1 on the offering of grain flour (= the bread of communion); 41.4 on the rite of circumcision; 42.1–3 on the twelve bells of the High Priest's robe (= the apostles). In *Dial.* 90.4 and 111 Justin adds some further prefigurations linked to specific historical moments recorded in the Old Testament.

'to give to me gall and vinegar to drink' when I am on the point of offering my flesh for my new people, therefore you alone shall eat, while the people fast and mourn in sackcloth and ashes. To show that he must suffer for them. (*Ep. of Barnabas* VII.4–5, Loeb tr.)<sup>139</sup>

The aforementioned allegories show that each Christian writer created his own range of prefigurations, but this does not seem to have caused any criticism of inconsistency on the part of their audiences. Christian prefigurations were legitimate as long as the Old Testament was the basis from which material was drawn.

The following passages illustrate the second element prominent in Christian criticism of Jewish sacrifices, namely, the apposition of the notions 'Jewish sacrifices' and 'idolatry'. Thus, in the *Epistle to Diognetus* we come across the Christian axiom that God is in need of nothing, which was also the Christian answer to pagan ritual. But this principle is here underplayed by the author's intention to offend the Jews by comparing them to pagans. To the author, Jews are right in their monotheism;<sup>140</sup> where they are wrong is in their insistence on offering sacrifices to God, who is in need of nothing. This obsession makes them no different from pagan polytheists (οὐδέν μοι δοκοῦσι διαφέρειν).

Ἐξῆς δὲ περὶ τοῦ μὴ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ Ἰουδαίοις θεοσεβεῖν αὐτοὺς (sc. Χριστιανούς) οἶμαί σε μάλιστα ποθεῖν ἀκοῦσαι. Ἰουδαῖοι τοίνυν, εἰ μὲν ἀπέχονται ταύτης τῆς προειρημένης λατρείας (sc. paganism), καλῶς θεὸν ἓνα τῶν πάντων σέβειν καὶ δεσπότην ἀξιοῦσι φρονεῖν· εἰ δὲ τοῖς προειρημένοις ὁμοιοτρόπως τὴν θρησκείαν προσάγουσιν αὐτῷ ταύτην, διαμαρτάνουσιν. ἃ γὰρ τοῖς ἀναισθήτοις καὶ κωφοῖς προσφέροντες οἱ Ἕλληγες ἀφροσύνης δεῖγμα παρέχουσι, ταῦθ' οὗτοι καθάπερ προσδεομένῳ τῷ θεῷ λογιζόμενοι παρέχειν μωρίαν εἰκὸς μᾶλλον ἡγοῦντ' ἄν, οὐ θεοσεβείαν. ὁ γὰρ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ πάσιν ἡμῖν χορηγῶν, ὧν προσδεόμεθα, οὐδενὸς ἂν αὐτὸς προσδέοιτο τούτων ὧν τοῖς οἰομένοις διδόναι παρέχει αὐτός. οἱ δὲ γε θυσίας αὐτῷ δι' αἵματος καὶ κνίσης καὶ ὀλοκαυμάτων ἐπιτελεῖν οἰόμενοι καὶ ταύταις ταῖς τιμαῖς αὐτὸν γεραίρειν, οὐδέν μοι δοκοῦσι διαφέρειν τῶν εἰς τὰ κωφὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδεικνυμένων φιλοτιμίαν· τῶν μὲν μὴ δυναμένων τῆς τιμῆς μεταλαμβάνειν, τῶν δὲ δοκούντων παρέχειν τῷ μηδενὸς προσδεομένῳ.

<sup>139</sup> See *Ep. of Barnabas*. VII.3 (on Isaac as a prefiguration of the Passion), VII.6–11 (on the prefigurations involved in the offering of the two kids on the Day of Atonement), VIII.1–6 (on the ritual of the red heifer).

<sup>140</sup> For the Christian admiration and approval of Jewish monotheism, see Tatian, *Or.* 29, Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.34.



In the next place I think that you are especially anxious to hear why the Christians do not worship in the same way as the Jews. The Jews indeed, by abstaining from the religion already discussed (*sc.* paganism), may rightly claim that they worship the one God of the Universe, and regard him as master, but in offering service to him in like manner to those already dealt with they are quite wrong. For just as the Greeks give a proof of foolishness by making offerings to senseless and deaf images, so the Jews ought rather to consider that they are showing foolishness, not reverence, by regarding God, as in need of these things. For ‘He who made heaven and earth and all that is in them,’ and bestows on all of us that which we need, would not himself have need of any of these things which he himself supplies to those who think that they are giving them. For after all, those who think that they are consecrating sacrifices to him by blood and burnt fat, and whole burnt offerings, and that they are reverencing him by these honours, seem to me to be in no way better than those who show the same respect to deaf images. For it seems that the one offer to those who cannot partake of the honour, the others to him who is in need of nothing. (*Ep. to Diognetus* III, Loeb tr.)

What in the fourth century would be used by the emperor Julian as an argument for an alliance between paganism and Judaism against Christianity,<sup>141</sup> in the second century is used by Christians as a basis for a degrading assimilation. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the Jews: *σχεδὸν γὰρ ὡς τὰ ἔθνη ἀφιέρωσαν αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ναῷ* (‘For they consecrated him in the Temple almost like the heathen’, *Ep. of Barn.* XVI. 2, Loeb trans. K. Lake).

In Justin’s mind, Christian observation of Jewish customs would not be totally unthinkable. But in the *Dialogue with Trypho* he writes as follows, in the section where he explains to Trypho why Christians do not observe circumcision, sabbath-keeping, and sacrifices (18–23):<sup>142</sup>

... ἡμεῖς γὰρ καὶ ταύτην ἂν τὴν περιτομὴν τὴν κατὰ σάρκα καὶ τὰ σάββατα καὶ τὰς ἑορτὰς πάσας ἀπλῶς ἐφυλάσσομεν, εἰ μὴ ἐγνωμεν δι’ ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ ὑμῖν προσετάγη, τοῦτ’ ἔστι διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν.

<sup>141</sup> Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 306B: ‘I wished to show that the Jews agree with the Gentiles, except that they believe in only one God. That is indeed peculiar to them and strange to us; since all the rest we have in a manner in common with them—temples, sanctuaries, altars, purifications and certain precepts’ (Loeb tr.).

<sup>142</sup> The term used of the latter is *θυσία*, but sacrifices must also be implied when there are references to ‘feasts’ (*ἑορταί*) or ‘offerings’ (*προσφοραί*).

For we too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they were enjoined you—namely, on account of your transgressions and the hardness of your hearts. (*Dial.* 18. 2, my trans.)

In fact, as the following passages will show, Justin is the one who goes beyond the degrading comparison of Judaism with paganism, and insists instead on the idolatrous nature of Judaism. That Justin tends to offend the Jews by appealing to their supposedly innate negative characteristics is mainly shown by his appeal to what he calls Jewish ‘hard-heartedness’ and ‘ungratefulness’, qualities which relate to character rather than to specific events.<sup>143</sup> Besides, Justin’s belief in innate negative qualities is made obvious in the phrasing he uses in *Dial.* 92.4: *ὡς ἀεὶ φαίνεσθε γεγεννημένοι* (‘as indeed you do always appear to have been’, my trans.).

Apart from his appeal to supposedly innate negative Jewish qualities, Justin tries to refer to facts, but these are not always easy to find, so he generally talks about unspecified ‘sins’ (*ἁμαρτίαι*) of the Jews, and presents them as an explanation for God’s giving of the Law. The only specific events which Justin presents as evidence to illustrate the ‘bad’ Jewish character are the episode of the golden calf, and also child-sacrifices. More specifically, Justin says that sacrifices (and sabbath) were ordered through Moses after the episode of the golden calf, because God wanted to divert Jewish piety (offerings) from idols to Himself. But the Jews continued being idolatrous, and they even offered their children to idols (*Dial.* 19.5–6).

Within this polemical exposition by Justin, we come across the principle that God is in no need of sacrifices:

(a)

In the same way He commanded offerings because of the sins of your people, and because of their idolatries, and not because He was in need of such. (22.1, tr. Williams)

(b)

He ever cries out the same things, because of your hard-heartedness and unthankfulness towards Him; in order that even so you may some time

<sup>143</sup> Recalling that Justin talks on behalf of Gentile Christians (*Dial.* 26–9, 53, 92.4, 117.4), it is easy to understand that the notion of ‘hard-heartedness’ is a ghost which he initially creates in order to interpret why Gentiles turned to Christianity whereas Jews did not (*Dial.* 44.1–2, 68.1), and which he subsequently projects onto the past.

repent and please Him, and may neither sacrifice your children to demons . . . (27.2, tr. Williams)<sup>144</sup>

(c)

In the same way I am putting another question to you, I said; did God charge your fathers to offer offerings and sacrifices because He needed them, or because of the hardness of their hearts, and their inclination to idolatry?

The latter, he said, is likewise what the Scriptures compel us to acknowledge. (67.8, tr. Williams, slightly modified)

Thus even the building of the Jerusalem Temple was reluctantly accepted by God, but only as a means to prevent Jews from idolatry:

He therefore neither receives sacrifices from you, nor commanded you to do them originally as being Himself in need of them, but only because of your sins, for even the temple, which is called the Temple in Jerusalem, He acknowledged as His house or court, not as Himself being in need of it, but that even by paying attention to it you should not commit idolatry. (22.11, tr. Williams, slightly modified)<sup>145</sup>

Extending Paul's teaching on justification by faith (Rom. 4), on the redundancy of the Law after Jesus (Rom. 10: 4), and on the importance of a new testament (2 Cor. 3: 6), Justin demarcates the period in which the Law was valid, namely, after Abraham (circumcision), more fully after Moses (sabbath-keeping, feasts, and sacrifices), but certainly before Jesus. Jewish hard-heartedness was the reason for the Law being temporarily observed, but Jesus is the new law and testament. The second of the following passages comes as a conclusion to Justin's long list of prefigurations contained in the Jewish Law (*Dial.* 40–2); these prefigurations were all made real in the 'Jesus story' and made the Jewish Law invalid since the new law, Jesus, has come:

Now if we do not acknowledge the soundness of these arguments, we shall find ourselves falling into absurd ideas, either that it is not the same God who was in the time of Enoch, and of all the other (saints) who neither had circumcision after the flesh nor kept either sabbaths or the other commands, for it was Moses who ordered these things to be done; or else that He has not desired that all mankind should always practise the same acts of righteousness. And to acknowledge this seems ridiculous and silly. But we must acknowledge that it is because of the fault of sinful men that He who is

<sup>144</sup> See also *Dial.* 46.6.

<sup>145</sup> On the same point, see *Dial.* 92.4.

ever the same has given these and suchlike commandments, and must declare that He loves men, and knows all beforehand, and is in want of nothing, and is righteous and good. Since, if this is not so, answer me, Gentlemen, what you think about the matters under discussion.

And when no one answered I added: Therefore to you, Trypho, and to those who wish to become proselytes (to the true faith), I proclaim the Divine message which I heard from that (old) man (whom I mentioned before). You see that Nature does not idle nor keep sabbath. Abide as ye have been born. For if before Abraham there was no need of circumcision, and before Moses none of keeping the sabbath, and of festivals, and of offerings, neither in like manner is there any need now, after the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has been born according to the will of God without sin by the virgin who was of the seed of Abraham. For Abraham himself when in uncircumcision was justified and received blessing, on account of the faith with which he believed God, as the (passage of) Scripture indicates. (23.1–4, tr. Williams)

As therefore circumcision began with Abraham, and with Moses sabbath and sacrifices and offerings and feasts, and it has been proved that these were appointed because of the hardness of the heart of your people, it was thus requisite that they should cease, in accordance with the will of the Father, at the coming of Him who was born Son of God by means of the Virgin who was of the race of Abraham and the tribe of Judah and David, even Christ, who also was proclaimed as about to come as an everlasting Law and new Disposition for the whole world... (43.1, tr. Williams)

It is important that in both passages Justin stresses the continuity of the new with the old tradition, since Jesus' origin goes back to Abraham through the Virgin from the tribe of Judah and David. This continuity makes it easier for Justin to claim that, just as the divine will (*βουλή*) gave the Law, so was Jesus born by divine will, in order to put an end to the Law.<sup>146</sup>

Thus, the earliest attestation of the Christian claim that sacrifices should stop after Jesus is contained in Justin's work, though we can only imagine whether this statement was the result of Justin's awareness that the Temple had fallen in AD 70. It is not easy to decide when

<sup>146</sup> See also *Dial.* 92.2, where Justin correlates the Law with the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem. At another point Justin places Gentiles along with the righteous Jews; to Justin, both groups are definitely going to gain God's inheritance, even if Gentiles do not observe sabbath-keeping, circumcision, and feasts (*Dial.* 26.1). For this selective Christian 'alliance' with Jews, Justin must have been based on Paul's comment in Rom. 4: 23–4, as is also obvious from *Dial.* 92.3–4.

the claim that Jesus made sacrifices redundant was first expressed by Christians. However, it is all the more striking that it is conspicuously present in second-century Christian literature, though the Temple had been demolished long ago. Thus, according to a fourth-century citation from the second-century apocryphal *Gospel of the Ebionites*, this claim is even projected onto Jesus himself. (The Ebionites were a Jewish-Christian sect whose roots possibly date to the first century.)<sup>147</sup> 'I am come to do away with sacrifices, and if ye cease not from sacrificing, the wrath of God will not cease from you' (in Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.16.5). This Jesus is not only against sacrifices, but also in favour of vegetarianism: '[the disciples:] Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee the passover? ... [Jesus:] Do I desire with desire at this Passover to eat flesh with you?' (ibid. 30.22.4).

The *Epistle of Barnabas* also insists on the futility of sacrifices (ch. 2). To the author, the Old Testament Law ordering sacrifices was abolished: '... in order that the new law of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have its oblation not made by man' (*Ep. of Barn.* II.6, Loeb tr.). The assimilation of the Law to a yoke goes back to Paul (Gal. 5: 1–2), and is also used by Justin (*Dial.* 53.4). Despite modern scholarly attempts to emphasize the financial burden which the Law might have represented to Jews,<sup>148</sup> I think it is not necessary to interpret the term 'yoke' in financial terms only. The words δουλεία and ἀνάγκη, used by Paul and the writer of the *Epistle to Barnabas* respectively, might indicate another kind of burden, rather related to the worshipper's feelings of duty before God than to his or her finances. All in all, we cannot be sure if one of the reasons why Jews were converted to Christianity was their problematic relation to the Law.

Surprisingly enough, along with the second-century Christian opposition to sacrifices, the image of the Temple service is vivid in the minds of Christians. There is an inconsistency between the realization of the loss of the Temple and the strong feeling that it is still there. Justin himself describes the Paschal sacrifice in the present tense 'for when the sheep is being roasted it *is roasted* arranged in fashion like the fashion of the cross, for one spit *is pierced* straight

<sup>147</sup> On this group, see Wilson (1995), 148–52.

<sup>148</sup> Rowland (1985), 40 (on finances), 41 (on obsolescence of the cult in the 1st c.).

from the lower parts to the head, and one again at the back, to which also the paws of the sheep *are fastened*' (*Dial.* 40.3, tr. Williams, my emphasis). Of course, it could be argued that this passage is not a trustworthy proof of the actuality which the issue of Temple sacrifice still had, since it is talking about Paschal sacrifice, which could always take place outside of the Temple.<sup>149</sup> But such an argument is made invalid by the following admission of Trypho, which is remarkably different from Philo's description of Passover: 'for we are aware, as you said, that it is not possible to slay a passover-sheep elsewhere than in Jerusalem, nor to offer the goats that were commanded at the Fast, nor, in short, all the other offerings' (*Dial.* 46.2, tr. Williams). Consequently, we are to conclude that, despite the realization of the Fall of the Temple, the reality of its cult was still etched on both Christian and Jewish minds.

On the other hand, Trypho's admission of the impossibility of animal offerings is not made in a tone of lamentation, something which indicates that some Jews did not think of the loss of the Temple in AD 70 as something permanent (the mishnaic authors would belong here). And a noteworthy reference in the *Epistle of Barnabas* shows that even Christians were aware of a project concerning the rebuilding of the Temple: 'Furthermore he says again, "Lo, they who destroyed this temple shall themselves build it." That is happening now. For owing to the war it was destroyed by the enemy; at present even the servants of the enemy will build it up again' (*Ep. of Barn.* XVI. 3–4, Loeb tr.).<sup>150</sup> Some Jews might have lived with the dream of seeing the Temple rebuilt, but, as we shall see below, Christians had already started seeing sacrifice at another level, namely the metaphorical one.

To sum up the evidence on second-century Christians and Jewish animal sacrifice: the material studied above has shown second-century Christians taking a more clearly hostile attitude towards Jewish sacrifice than in the first century. It is likely, but not provable, that the material reflects the Christian attitude taken after the Fall of

<sup>149</sup> See my analysis of Philo, *De spec. leg.* 2, 145–9, in Chapter 4. Could it be that Justin had in mind Paschal sacrifices taking place out of the Temple or in the Diaspora?

<sup>150</sup> The passage is not without problems, either textual or of meaning. For a short but almost exhaustive survey, see Wilson (1995), 131–6.

the Temple in AD 70, an event clearly referred to in Christian texts. The destruction of the centre of Jewish sacrificial cult must have been seen by Christians as a sign of divine preference, and thus have given Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric a strong argument.

The principle of *Θεὸς ἀνενδεής*, present in Christian texts written against pagans, also defines Christian rhetoric against Jews, but it is now incorporated in the strong anti-Jewish polemics of the second century. In this framework, the Jewish Law is contrasted to Jesus, who is the new Law and the limit between past and present, between the obsolete Judaism and new Christianity. According to the Christian argumentation, the new Law did not ask for animal sacrifices. The old Law had done so in order to prefigure the coming of Jesus, and to prevent the idolatrous Jews from offering sacrifices to idols instead of to God.

Especially the latter point gives the Jerusalem Temple a role of substitute for idolatrous sacrificial institutions. In fact, Christian rhetoric went further and made Jewish sacrifices totally comparable to pagan ones. This contextualization of Jewish with pagan sacrifices is a new addition to the Old Testament criticism of sacrifices.

### *More undermining metaphors*

There is no space here for an exhaustive presentation of the issue of Christian sacrificial metaphors, which continued to be used down to the second century. What I rather seek to stress is that, while Christian rhetoric undermined the material reality of animal sacrifice, it continued to be shaped by the experience of Jewish worship, even if the Temple had long fallen.<sup>151</sup>

The most characteristic use of substitution of Jewish sacrificial images is made in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There, the use of sacrificial allegories based on Jewish ritual reaches its peak, and that is why the inherent symbolisms leave the dating of the document still uncertain.<sup>152</sup> The allegorical interpretation of Jewish sacrificial ritual made in this text laid the foundations on which metaphorical

<sup>151</sup> This was first done by Paul; cf. 1 Cor. 5: 7: τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός. The same image is elaborated in liturgical texts, such as Melito's *Περὶ Πάσχα*.

<sup>152</sup> Wilson (1995), 346, n. 52.

sacrificial language would further develop. In the epistle, Jesus is the real High Priest (4: 14–6: 20; 7: 1–10:18). The writer mainly emphasizes the expiatory function which the death of Jesus the High Priest fulfilled, and which he assimilates to the sacrifice offered on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9: 1–10:18). This sacrifice of Jesus happened once and for all (ἐφάπαξ, 10: 10), and its expiatory function cannot be performed by any other cultic means: ‘For if we wilfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgement, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries’ (Heb. 10: 26–7, NRSV).

Clement of Rome also talks about Jesus as a sacrificer and a victim, a High Priest and a *σωτήριον* (the latter term presumably alluding to Philo’s ‘preservation offering’). Here one notes the shift which renders the sacrificial term (*σωτήριον*) the *tenor* of the metaphor, and ‘Jesus’ the *vehicle* which interprets the tenor:

*Αὕτη ἡ ὁδός, ἀγαπητοί, ἐν ἣ εὖρομεν τὸ σωτήριον ἡμῶν, Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν... (I Cl. XXXVI.1)*

This is the way, beloved, in which we found our *σωτήριον* [= ‘preservation offering’, ‘salvation’] Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings... (Loeb tr., K. Lake, slightly modified)

In some examples, allegory and metaphor cannot be clearly distinguished from one another, as in the following extract from Clement of Rome’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, where Clement’s intention is an appeal to institutional order. Clement strengthens his argument by drawing examples from Jewish cultic life (*I Cl. XL–XLI*). It is a puzzling question how far Clement’s Corinthian readers were acquainted with Jewish cult, but this issue does not seem to have discouraged him. Interestingly enough, he uses the present tense.

Let each one of us, brethren, be well pleasing to God in his own rank, and have a good conscience, not transgressing the appointed rules of his ministration, with all reverence. Not in every place, my brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered or the free-will offerings, or the sin-offerings (*ἁμαρτίας*) and trespass-offerings (*πλημμελείας*), but only in Jerusalem; and there also the offering is not made in every place, but before the shrine, at the altar, and the offering is first inspected by the High Priest... (*I Cl. XLI.1–2*, Loeb tr.)

Clement seems quite well acquainted with the sacrificial procedure in the Temple. Given that the letter was written towards the end of the



first century,<sup>153</sup> could it be likely that Clement had visited the Temple? At least, Eusebius reports that Clement met the apostles (*Eccl. Hist.* V. 6.2).

In no way does Clement's use of Jewish cultic images indicate nostalgia. Even if not in the passages containing the images of Jewish cult, Clement does not forget to stress the Christian principle, which he strengthens by combining it to Old Testament teachings:

*Ἀπροσδεής, ἀδελφοί, ὁ δεσπότης ὑπάρχει τῶν ἀπάντων· οὐδὲν οὐδενὸς χρὸ ἤξει εἰ μὴ τὸ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι αὐτῷ. (I Cl. LII.1)*

The Master, brethren, is in need of nothing; he asks nothing of anyone, save that confession be made to him.

In fact, apart from allegories and metaphors, Christians made extensive use of Old Testament prophetic extracts on the futility of sacrifices. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin quotes at length from Old Testament prophecies and Psalms (*Dial.* 22), in order to justify his insistence on the redundancy of sacrifices.<sup>154</sup>

A completely new realm of reality, to which Christians applied sacrificial terms, is that of the recently born Christian cult. In the second century it seems that an attempt was being made on the part of Christians towards the establishment of purely cultic entities, which would 'replace' those realms that were non-functional to them, those of altars and animals. Thus sacrificial terms were used of the cultic act of communion. The following extract from Justin is one of the few important passages which talk specifically about communion as a sacrificial offering, and in fact with the notion of sacrifice in the tenor part of the metaphor, as is the case in later liturgical texts. Justin refers to Malachi 1: 10–12:

*περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν προσφερομένων αὐτῷ θυσιῶν, τοῦτ' ἔστι τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου ὁμοίως τῆς εὐχαριστίας, προλέγει τότε, εἰπὼν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ δοξάζειν ἡμᾶς, ὑμᾶς δὲ βεβηλοῦν.<sup>155</sup>*

[So] he then speaks beforehand of those sacrifices which in every place are offered to him by us, the Gentiles, i.e. of the bread of the Eucharist, and also

<sup>153</sup> See pp. 221–2 above.

<sup>154</sup> For further uses of Old Testament extracts on sacrifice, see the *Epistle of Barnabas*, II.5–10, XV.8.

<sup>155</sup> On the same extract from Malachi, see also *Dial.* 117.1–3.

the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify his name, and that you profane [it]. (*Dial.* 41. 3, my tr.)

These and other examples drawn from Christian catechetical texts<sup>156</sup> show that, after Paul's letters, metaphors based on the ritual of Jewish animal sacrifice do not suddenly recur in second-century anti-Jewish polemics. Christian metaphorical language relating to sacrifice, deployed from the beginnings of the Christian movement, continued to develop gradually.<sup>157</sup> As I have said with regard to Paul's metaphors, this linguistic phenomenon contributed to the dissociation of audiences and congregations from the material and expiatory connection with animals.

But, most importantly, we have seen that the writers of early catechetical works deployed images drawn from the Temple cult, without thinking them inappropriate. We have seen Clement stressing the principle of *Θεὸς ἀνευδείης*, but, in a different passage, he uses sacrificial metaphors based on Jewish cultic images. In other catechetical texts the language of Christian supersession (explicit and abounding in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*) is less explicitly present.<sup>158</sup> With the evidence as it stands, one can only wonder whether these cases point to a different degree of intensity in Christian criticism of Jewish sacrifice, or only to the confident accommodation of the Jewish cultic code into Christian language. In other words, would these metaphors have been used, if the Temple had still been standing in the second century, and to what degree would the negative disposition toward all kinds of sacrifice be evident?

This question becomes more urgent when we come across some second-century traditions which depict scenes of pre-AD 70 conflict between Jews and Christians because of the attitude of the latter

<sup>156</sup> Ignatius, *Ad Rom.* IV.2: *λιτανεύσατε τὸν Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, ἵνα διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων τούτων θυσία εὔρεθῶ.*

<sup>157</sup> In other words, the Christian discussion of the issue of sacrifice does not present any gap similar to that noted by Judith Lieu, concerning the lack of references to the Jews in the period between John's gospel and Justin's *Dialogue*. Lieu (1996), 4.

<sup>158</sup> *Didache* XIV.1: *Κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε, προεξομολογησάμενοι τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν, ὅπως καθαρὰ ἡ θυσία ὑμῶν ᾗ.* Ign. *Ad Philad.*, IX.1: *Καλοὶ καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς, κρεῖσσον δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ πεπιστευμένος τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων, ὃς μόνος πεπίστευται τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ θεοῦ.*

towards the Temple. Thus, the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* (mid-2nd c.) presents the early Christians as persecuted by the Jews, because the latter considered Christians to be hostile toward the Jewish Temple.<sup>159</sup> ‘But I mourned with my fellows, and being wounded in heart we hid ourselves, for we were sought after by them as evildoers and as persons who wanted to set fire to the Temple. Because of all these things we were fasting and sat mourning and weeping night and day until the sabbath’ (*Gospel of Peter* 7.26–7, on the events after Jesus’ burial). Perhaps it would not be irrelevant to stress here that in none of the works of Christian eschatology is the spatial notion of a Temple for sacrifices present.<sup>160</sup>

To conclude this examination of the second-century evidence, it would seem that, in contrast to the first century, when Christians did not have a clear doctrine regarding Jewish sacrifice, and only referred to idol *meat* but not particularly to pagan *sacrifice*, the second century is richer in evidence for a Christian attitude towards sacrifice.

Christians perceived God as being in need of nothing. This was the main weapon against both their pagan and Jewish adversaries in the second century. That is why, in the first case, Christians did not choose to direct pagan devotion to the real God by suggesting sacrifices to Him, and, in the second, they boldly equated Jewish sacrifices with pagan sacrifices. However, despite the fiery anti-Jewish polemics, the—real or literary—memory of the Temple cult continued to shape the metaphorical sacrificial language of Christians.

The rhetoric deployed in Christian texts has its counterpart in the everyday life of Christians. Second-century pagans stress the absence of altars from Christian cult, and it is certain that problems of Christian participation in pagan rituals did arise in communities,

<sup>159</sup> See also the imaginary setting in the Coptic gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter* (2nd–3rd c.), in Hennecke–Schneemelcher, vol. 2, p.72: ‘But when he [= Jesus] said this, I saw (in a vision) the priests (take counsel) and the people run towards us with stones as if to slay us. And I was afraid that he would die.’

<sup>160</sup> See the final vision in Rev. 21: 1–22: 5. Another Christian Apocalyptic work, dating to Trajan’s reign and classified as apocryphal, *the Book of Elchasai*, despite its topical attachment to prayer in the direction of Jerusalem (Epiph. *Haer.* 19.3.5), contains the following negative stance regarding sacrifices: ‘He rejects sacrifices and priestly rites as being alien to God and never offered to God at all according to the fathers and the law’, *ibid.* 19.3.6 f.

and caused suspicions which led to the prosecution of Christians. The attitude maintained by Christians on trial is also consistent with the anti-sacrificial teachings, although the Christian refusal to offer an animal (or other) sacrifice was probably not the officially stated cause of their arrest. The exact role of sacrifice in the judicial procedure directed by pagan governors remains unclear.

Sacrifices were not offered by Christians, but the notions related to the Jewish sacrificial system were frequently used by them to denote other sections of the horizontal line—for instance, institutional order. More importantly, metaphorical sacrificial language began to be used of the Christian cult itself.

It seems that Christians came to be against the act of offering in itself, even as a sign of honour to a recipient other than God. It is along these lines that Justin remarks that the only concrete accusation brought against Christians is that the latter do not worship the same gods as Greeks, neither do they offer libations and animal sacrifices *to the dead* (*I Apol.* 24). In comparison with the surrounding Mediterranean religions, where the predominant element in cult was that of the offering, the objection to the idea of the offering was indeed a cultic revolution on the part of Christians.

### C. AN ATTEMPT AT A CONCLUSION

Presenting the evidence for pre-AD 70 Christians, it is evident that the opposition of Christians to pagan animal sacrifice and sacrificial meat is explicitly obvious from the first century onwards (Acts 14: 8–18, and 1 Corinthians). The issue of sacrifice offered by Gentile Christians to the Christian God does not really arise in first-century sources.

With regard to the relation of pre-AD 70 Christians to Jewish sacrifice, scholarly interpretations are more difficult. In this book we have come to realize that the place where Christians are presented as having delivered their preaching, namely the Temple, was evidently an area essentially characterized by sacrificial activity. The events leading to the expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem remain unclear to us, although among these Stephen's speech must have been pivotal, since it is presented as taking place just before the

expulsion. Stephen's speech was regarded as directed against the Temple and Jewish customs; in all probability, the notion of 'customs' must have included the customary Jewish sacrifices.

Paul, too, was accused of being against Jewish customs, and his presence in the Temple described in Acts 21 was thought of by the elders as a way to disprove these accusations. But Paul's offering of a sacrifice in the Temple seems very difficult to interpret, in view of the facts that several groups of Christians coexisted in Jerusalem, each regarding the Mosaic Law differently, and that Paul himself consciously avoided synchronizing Jesus and the Law in his letters.

Apart from Paul's case, our evidence for pre-AD 70 Christian participation in the Temple sacrificial cult is based only on an *ex silentio* argument, although, apparently, Jewish Christians 'zealous for the Law' must have offered sacrifices. On the other hand, sacrificial metaphors are present already in Paul's letters, and they are original.<sup>161</sup> Most importantly, the role of sacrificial metaphors cannot but have served to undermine the reality of animal sacrifice, since, in metaphors, some parts of reality having to do with animals were put aside in favour of other parts of reality, or of new ones, such as, for instance, Jesus the man, or a person's life dedicated to God.

In the second century Christian apologists explicitly express their objection to all kinds of sacrifice. The principle that God needs nothing (*Θεὸς ἀνευδότης*), a completely new axiom, is repeatedly stated, and governs the Christian attitude towards both pagans and Jews, whereas pagan observers note the lack of altars in honour of the Christian God. Because of the polemical character that Christian *ad Judaeos* literature exhibited in that period, the principle of *Θεὸς ἀνευδότης* is underplayed in favour of strongly derogatory comments on Jews and their Temple, which, however, was no longer there.

Second-century Christian writers, when addressing their congregations, use images of and allusions to the Jewish Temple. Along with these images, metaphorical sacrificial language keeps being used. In fact, a metaphor by Justin has made us see that, at the same time as the Eucharist was being established as a Christian cultic act, its metaphorical analogy to sacrifice was in the process of being fixed.

<sup>161</sup> With the main one being the Paschal metaphor used of Jesus' death: 1 Cor. 5: 7.

In the following centuries this purely cultic entity would replace the entities of altars and animals.

Second-century references and allusions to the Temple prove that Christian writers do not take into account the Jewish or pagan background of their readers. In fact, when the apologists refer to Judaism they do not differentiate between Jerusalem Jews, Diaspora Jews, and God-fearers, and there is not one mention of writers such as Philo or Josephus. Second-century Christians see Judaism in the same way as they see paganism: as a single unit.

However, the question of background relates not only to the addressees of Christian writers, but also to the writers themselves. Not much is known about the personality of each of the second-century Christian writers, nor do Christian texts help us to draw conclusions on their writers. More importantly, the texts of Christians do not leave space for us to guess anything about the way in which Christians transformed themselves from offerers of animal sacrifice to ardent opponents of it.

In sum, the evidence for the sacrificial beliefs of the groups constituting the early body of Christian believers is as follows:

As regards *Jerusalem and Jewish Christians*: pre-AD 70 evidence is inconclusive as regards their involvement in the Temple cult. All we know is that some Jewish Christians were 'zealous for the Law', and some other Christians constituted a different group from them. Those 'zealous for the Law' must have been closely attached to the Temple and its cult. No specific mention of post-AD 70 Jewish Christians is made in the evidence in this context.

The beliefs of *Diaspora Jewish converts*, and their expectations when they became Christians, remain unclear, either in the pre-AD 70 period or after it.

*Gentile Christians*: in the first century, they are advised by their leaders to avoid eating sacrificial meat. Second-century attestations show that Christians abstained from the whole procedure of sacrifice, both to pagan gods and to their own God. Christian avoidance of offering sacrifice caused problems to the everyday life of Christians in pagan cities, and played an important role in their being condemned by the pagan authorities.

*God-fearers*: the question which still remains unanswered is the way in which God-fearers could move from environments where pagan sacrifices were practised to synagogue environments, where catechesis used examples from Jewish sacrifices (independently of the Temple destruction in AD 70), and from this to Christian environments, with the latter being so multifarious in their composition and attitudes to Judaism.

Assuming that the recipient of a hypothetical Christian animal sacrifice would apparently be the same as the God worshipped in the Jerusalem Temple, the most important question remaining open is why Christianity emerged as a religion with no attachment to any sort of altars, either the Jewish one or others. However, a question such as ‘why did Christians not offer animal sacrifices right from the beginning of their existence as a sect?’ is not valid. Only in the second century is the lack of altars (apparently to the Christian God) pointed out by pagan observers. Besides, the vagueness of the evidence surrounding the relation of pre-AD 70 Christians to the Temple does not allow us to form any idea about the proportion of Christians involved in the Temple cult. Consequently, we can only retrospectively shape our question and ask whether traces of the Christian opposition to sacrifice can be detected in the earliest evidence.

The answer is that these traces do exist. Beginning from the least reliable relevant traces, one could draw the reader’s attention to the testimony of Epiphanius, where, as we have seen, the reported saying of Jesus is ‘I am come to do away with sacrifices’. While acknowledging the many layers of tradition covering this saying, I should stress that this legacy stems from an Ebionite environment, that is, a Jewish-Christian sect whose origins might lie in the first century. As such, it indicates that, in all probability, among the many groups which made up Jewish Christianity there were Christians who expressed doubts about sacrificial cult in the Temple, although we cannot know whether these doubts were expressed before AD 70. It would be even more tempting to wonder whether the aforementioned saying goes back to Jesus—but this question would be posed in vain.

As we have seen, further traces can be drawn from the text of Acts. The example of Christians such as those around Mnason (Acts 21) allows us to assume that, among the multifarious early Jerusalem

Christians, there were those who did not feel as closely attached to the Temple as the so-called 'zealous for the Law'.

Next, we have traces drawn from the Christian response to Judaism, even though not explicitly connected to sacrifice. Thus, we know that some of the early Christians—including Paul—adopted a new way of seeing the Mosaic Law, because they saw the Law through Jesus and his death. The exact path which this reading of the Law followed is not traceable, but I believe that it has its roots in the direct contact of Jesus with his disciples and caused a crucial change to the vertical line of the sacrificial mechanism. It is reasonable to relate this Christian reading of the Law through Jesus and his death to the explicit second-century Christian attitude, that the Jewish Law was temporary and was annulled through Jesus since the time he died. In this context the Law is given the function of prefiguring facts from the 'Jesus story'.

There are traces of a further sphere of discourse, whose clear and continuous presence from the beginning of Christianity makes one suspect that it is not incompatible with opposition to sacrifice. This is the field of sacrificial metaphors, whose use, steadily repeated and expanded from the first to the second century, undermined the very heart of sacrificial experience: by sacrificial metaphors, audiences were led to see a completely different sacrificial reality from the one they had known, and the new reality had nothing to do with animals, their appearance, touch, smell, even their taste (though, in the last case, we cannot know on which scale Christianity influenced meat-eating). Of course, it is not to be denied that in the first century (as we have seen, this applies to the second century as well) any metaphorical allusions to sacrifice derived from the Jewish sacrificial context.

Even if distant and dissimilar, the first-century signs of independence from animal sacrifice should not be underplayed: these must constitute our bridge to the second century, which is characterized by a uniformity as regards the refusal of Christians to offer animal sacrifices.

In Christianity, the final change in ritual which was obvious in the second century amounted to a full-scale transformation. Keeping to our terminology, I would say that it consisted in the practical, but not linguistic, abolition of a section of the *horizontal* line of the sacrificial



system and in the focusing on another section of it. Whereas in the Greek and Jewish systems man's condition and the specific occasion determined—and were expressed through—the choice of victim and the nature of the sacrifice, in Christianity man's condition was communicated to God directly, without a victim being the mediator on the path to God. Before the establishment of the cultic act of Christian communion, the focus of Christianity was on human actions and life attitudes. And it was a feature original to Christianity that the abolition of the animal victim was not necessarily connected to vegetarianism, at least in the form of Christianity which prevailed in the following centuries.

Of course, in the following centuries one sees exceptions to this alienation from animals in religion,<sup>162</sup> but it is important to note that these do not involve the Christian God as a recipient of sacrifices. From another point of view, these exceptional instances should rather cause scholars to ponder on the multiple layers underlying the development of Christianity into a religion with no altars for animal sacrifice.

<sup>162</sup> See n. 137 in this chapter.

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## Conclusions

As promised in Chapter 1, here I shall try to analyse in a rather different way the evidence for Greek, Jewish, and Christian animal sacrifice in the period 100 BC–AD 200. This analysis will be conducted according to the scheme presented in section 2 of Chapter 1: on the basis of it, we shall see whether the meeting of three religions resulted in ritual changes. Thus, the hermeneutic method used in Chapters 2 to 6 has as its counterpoint a search for semiotic changes.

I should remind the reader that, according to the model presented in section 2 of Chapter 1, sacrifice is the worshipper's way to approach the recipient of the sacrifice, and is a mechanism consisting of two lines, one *vertical* and the other *horizontal*. The vertical line concerns the relation between the offerer of sacrifice and its recipient, a relation which is expressed in several codes of beliefs shared by worshippers, theological and philosophical. These beliefs are communicated to people through the code of language.

The code of language is also the main code through which the notions of the *horizontal* line are communicated. The horizontal line concerns the practical realms from which the particulars for an animal sacrifice are drawn: the worshipper's society, the space and the materials, the animal or other offerings, the human activities, values, and lifestyles. Each of the above can be represented in a section of the horizontal line, except for language, which moves along the whole line, and thus makes easy the interchange of words between several realms, a mechanism from which metaphor derives. Any change in the vertical line, that is, in the relation of the worshipper to the recipient of sacrifice, results in radical changes in the horizontal line, that is, in new cultic codes. However, minor changes

can take place in the horizontal line without any change in the vertical line (religious beliefs) preceding them.

Below, we shall see that what caused a ritual revolution on the part of Christianity was a change in the vertical line. However, as regards Greek paganism and Judaism, our survey of the evidence has shown that neither of them went through a change in the vertical line (beliefs).

Especially as regards Greek religion, a passage from Dionysius suggests that, in the few cases where changes occurred in Greek ritual, no deliberate change in religious interests was the cause, but rather the passing of time.

As regards Judaism, the non-biblical details contained in the text of Josephus consisted rather in minor additions to or variations in the biblical cultic rules, and not in the adoption of a different set of beliefs. The same applies to the Mishnah, whose existence did not undermine the Bible, since it consisted of many additions and specifications of the biblical rules. The Mishnah did not foster a new religious system, but better delineated the old one; its compilation was not a change in the vertical line (new beliefs), but an important change in the horizontal line (variation in method) of the Jewish sacrificial system. However, the mishnaic rules were never followed in practice, because the Mishnah was written after AD 70.

Finally, Philo's conceptual scheme by which he connected sacrificial reality with ethical meanings gave a new dimension to the biblical rules, but, as Philo himself stressed, his intention was not to change the Jewish ways of approaching God. Philo's allegorizations simply connected different realms corresponding to both the vertical and the horizontal lines of the sacrificial mechanism. On the basis of the available evidence, we cannot know whether his teaching had a more radical impact on Jews and Jewish Christians, and so whether it affected the very heart of animal sacrificial worship.

As noted in Chapter 1, in this book I have dealt mainly with the horizontal line of animal sacrifice, that is, the objective historical reality of the Greek and Jewish sacrificial cults and, by extension, of Christianity. With regard to the horizontal line of Greek animal sacrifice, we have seen that Greeks adopted many different animal sacrificial practices, which on the one hand depended on local traditions, and on the other, on the Greek peculiarity of differentiating

the victim's properties according to its recipient (god(dess), hero). In civic ritual, animal sacrifice usually served as the central channel of interaction between city and individual, both in its role as a sign of piety and as a means of feeding the population. Along with these aspects, the offering of an animal sacrifice could also be an inner need felt by the worshipper, or an obligation either officially imposed on citizens by state authorities or socially expected to be performed by individuals.

The peculiarity of the horizontal line in the Jewish sacrificial system is that, in the Jerusalem Temple, animal sacrifices—both public and private—were always carried out by priests. However, the occasion of Passover might have given Jews the opportunity to carry out an animal slaughter themselves. The limited variety in Jewish sacrificial practice—that attested before AD 70 and not that of the Mishnah—depended on the offerer's intention (honour, gratitude, deletion of a moral mistake). The example of Philo's teachings has shown that Diaspora Jews were familiar with the concept of sacrifice, and that a considerable number among them would have connected the code of the ritual killing of animals with philosophical and theological meanings. And so long as the evidence is not detailed, we cannot confirm theories which present the distance between Diaspora Jews and the Temple as a factor helping early Christians to form a metaphorical sacrificial vocabulary.<sup>1</sup> By the same token, I reject a similar theory regarding the distance between Temple and Gentile communities as the reason which made Paul oblige Gentile Christians to abandon all forms of sacrifice and choose the Eucharist instead.<sup>2</sup>

Since Christianity started as a Jewish sect in the Graeco-Roman world, its study has been placed in the horizontal line of the Jewish sacrificial system, and thus in the framework of the Temple. But one should also look for possible deviations from this framework—for instance, Christian altars. The first Christian converts, either pagans or Jews, came to Christianity from environments in which people were familiar with the procedure of animal sacrifice; however, in the second century we come across explicit statements, expressed by

<sup>1</sup> Burkert (1983), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Klawans (2006), 221.

both pagans and Christians, that Christians chose not to make offerings to their God, especially not animal sacrifices. While one should admit the multiplicity of early Christian groups and, accordingly, the variety in their cultic practices, there is no point in questioning the fact that, by the second century, Christians were known to have adopted a ritual radically different from the one current at their time. So the horizontal line of the concept of sacrifice in Christianity was very different from the surrounding concepts.

By the second century Christians had radically changed the ritual codes of their times by practically moving away from the sections of the horizontal line corresponding to altars, instruments of slaughter, and animals. They only kept the names of these realities and applied them to other sections of the horizontal line, and to a new one centred on Jesus. In Christianity, the animal and the different parts of its body, along with the symbolisms and portents included in it, ceased to be used in ritual.<sup>3</sup> Gestures and images pertaining to animal sacrifice, of which historical necessity deprived the Jews, and which mishnaic rabbis tried to keep alive, were finally abandoned by Christians as a result of a conscious choice. At the practical—although not at the linguistic—level Christians objected to all forms of sacrifice.

Of course, only the following centuries would witness ritual changes on a major scale, caused by the Christian relinquishment of animal sacrifice: given the pre-eminence of paganism in the Roman Empire, abstinence from the 'standard' ritual of animal sacrifice would be more strongly felt in the Empire as a whole than in places only where Jewish Christians lived. For instance, what was really going to be lost would be the officially maintained festivals and ceremonies in a landscape shaped by Graeco-Roman religious architecture. Altars outside temples or in the open, and roads along which sacrificial processions used to pass, would be replaced by other visual features, which would be used in the framework of a new calendar.

It is worth considering whether the changes brought about by Christianity had serious implications on sections of the horizontal line other than worship alone, that is, on financial and social relations. As regards any financial changes caused by the abandonment

<sup>3</sup> To pagans, the loss would be particularly felt in the field of splanchnoscopy, whose code continued to be understood in the period studied in this book.

of animal sacrifice, I think it is rather unwise to assume that the emergence of Christianity resulted in a crisis in animal husbandry and the economy related to it, as the unique testimony of Pliny might lead us to think. Meat-traders could equally well sell meat other than sacrificial,<sup>4</sup> even if this would mean that, in the chain of exchanges, priests would cease being the intermediaries between traders of animals and meat-traders. My personal impression is that, after a period of 'depression' in the sale of sacrificial meat, butchers would start dealing in meat from animals slaughtered in secular contexts. (The only remaining question concerns the exact profession of those carrying out the slaughter. But, again, this is all hypothetical.) Indeed, it would make more sense to say that abstinence from animal sacrifice reduced the expenses of cities and individuals, and thus, instead of creating a financial crisis, helped people face financial difficulties.<sup>5</sup>

Although one cannot deny the general social changes brought about by the adoption of Christianity, I think it would also be unwise to expect social changes specifically caused by the Christian abandonment of animal sacrifice. In this book I have stressed that the evidence on this specific issue is not direct, and concerns only communities whose Christian members resisted civic legislation on sacrifice or a social ethos of sacrificing, an attitude possibly resulting not only in the social isolation of these members, but also in their punishment by the authorities: I have thus tried to sketch the main lines of a possibly difficult encounter between observant pagans and Christians forsaking ancestral cultic modes.

In the long term, to an external observer, the most easily perceived implication of Christianity in the area of the Mediterranean would not be financial or social changes, but the abrogation of the old cultic ways.

<sup>4</sup> Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, makes us understand that meat placed on a table or sold in a market could have been other than sacrificial. Only then does the word *ἀνακρίνοντες* make sense (1 Cor. 10: 25, 27). Even the letter of Pliny (*Ep.* X.96) does not exclude the possibility that non-sacrificial meat was sold; Pliny just points out that the flesh of *victims* (meaning sacrificial victims) had stopped being available.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell (1999), 127, makes the same remark with regard to the cult of Theos Hypsistos.

EPILOGUE: A SUGGESTION CONCERNING THE REASONS  
FOR THE CESSATION OF ANIMAL SACRIFICE

As I pointed out in the Introduction to this book, and also concluded in the last chapter, the question of 'why', regarding Christian opposition to animal sacrifice, is only partly valid, because (a) explicit evidence for this opposition only concerns the second century; and (b) there are indications that Jewish Christians in Jerusalem did not immediately stop offering sacrifices in the Temple.

The question of 'why' being difficult to answer, some readers of this book may still feel that our historical journey was worth attempting. During it, we have managed to acquire a picture of the variety encompassed in the issue of animal sacrifice in the first and second centuries of Christianity: Gentile Christians might have encountered problems in their social relations, in case they decided to relinquish the pagan code of ritual to which they had adhered; some Diaspora Jewish Christians might have been familiar with Philo's analysis of animal sacrifice, others might have regarded the Christian preaching as a preferable solution to the dilemma between Philo's analysis and that of the allegorists; God-fearers might have been surprised to discover that Christianity was giving space to the relinquishment of Jewish sacrifice, whose details they had just started to learn. This is indeed a great variety, and it could perhaps be proved to have been greater, if we had more evidence.

For all this, demanding readers of this book might not be content with the journey; they will ask for answers. Acknowledging the urgency of the question *why*, if animal sacrifice was of such prime and universal importance, Christians should have rejected this particular practice, I shall here ponder this question in relation to first-century Christianity, since, as we have seen in the last chapter, traces of opposition to sacrifice may date back to the first century.

According to the view I have taken as regards the mechanism in a sacrificial system, and which was analysed in the first chapter, any change in the *vertical* line has results in the *horizontal* one, that is, the line of the offerer's objective reality. Consequently, if we observe a radical change in the horizontal line, we must look for its cause in the

vertical line of the sacrificial procedure, the one linking offerer and recipient. The vertical line will give us the answer to the question of 'why', when they did, Christians abandoned animal sacrifice.

The religion of Christianity did not result from an evolutionary process. Focusing on worship, the most vital part of religion, the present book makes it obvious that neither Greek religion nor Judaism had begun to decline when Jesus appeared. Christianity emerged unexpectedly from the well-functioning Jewish religious environment, and spread rapidly within the well-functioning pagan religious environment. This sudden historical change must have manifested itself in the form of sudden changes experienced in the lives of individuals.

In pagan religion one cannot help acknowledging the historical importance of powerful experiences by which the worshipper feels closer to a god. Such were the experiences of Aelius Aristides, or the Apuleian hero Lucius. Similar experiences in the contexts of Judaism and Christianity should not be considered as the concern only of theologians. I strongly believe that it is time that *historians* started acknowledging the importance of powerful experiences in Judaism and Christianity.

For this reason, here I leave aside the early Christians who came from pagan environments, because (a) theirs was not the first contact with Jesus, (b) even after their conversion to Christianity they seem to have linked concerns about sacrificial practices to their relation with their pagan past rather than to any cultic forms within Christianity. Even second-century Christian evidence points to a consideration of the notion of 'sacrifice' as of a 'paganizing' habit, and also to the abstinence of Christians from offering pagan sacrifices (let alone Christian ones, which are not even mentioned!) So, the attitude of early Gentile Christians could not but have been anti-sacrificial as long as they linked paganism to sacrifice.

Keeping to the Jewish context, then, we notice that the new religion of Christianity offered not a multitude of divine beings but one central figure, Jesus, and this figure had a human shape. The direct relation of the first disciples to Jesus, a man who publicly stated that he had a religious mission, must have constituted a very powerful experience. The variety in the historical records concerning Jesus, independently of the degree of their reliability, at least testifies to



such a powerful experience.<sup>6</sup> This experience concerned what in this book has been called the vertical line of the sacrificial procedure. In other words, Jesus became the person through whom the disciples defined their relation to God, although the impact of this powerful experience on each of the disciples must have been different.

Paul did not see Jesus in person. However, he often insists on his God-sent visions,<sup>7</sup> so he appeals to another kind of powerful experience, that of his 'personal' contact with the divine sphere. To Paul, these visions defined his own vertical line through which he approached God. It is also noticeable that the writer of Acts seeks to connect Paul with the layers of Christian tradition which are closest to Jesus. Thus, Mnason, around whom Paul and a Christian group 'not zealous for the Law' gathered, was an 'early disciple'. Also, the report of Paul's vision in Damascus contains an identification-statement of the voice speaking to Paul as being that of Jesus (not 'God'). It is not, then, improbable that the text of Acts contains hints at a tradition which perceived Paul as having connected his visions with the figure of Jesus.

The powerful experience of Jesus' presence among the twelve disciples, and that of Paul's divine visions, with the possibility of the latter being connected with Jesus by Paul himself, apparently caused a change in the conception of God which these particular Jews had previously possessed. This inner change was brought about by their direct or indirect contact with Jesus, and it was not of the same nature for each one of them. In my own view, it seems very probable that some of the disciples, and Paul also, having experienced this contact, felt an inner change which made them focus on things quite different from their ancestral cultic ways. The emphasis of the evidence on the existence of several Christian groups, with different degrees of attachment to the ancestral Jewish tradition, makes even more trustworthy the possibility of the existence of a Christian group whose members felt that an inner change led them away from Jewish customs. Moreover, the cases of Mnason and Paul, as presented in the text of Acts, leave

<sup>6</sup> H. von Campenhausen has stressed the air of 'authority' emanating from Jesus' presence. See von Campenhausen (1969), 1-11.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 8, 2 Cor. 12: 1-6. See also Acts, 9: 1-7, 22: 17.

space for the hypothesis (expressed here with reservation) that the closer a person was or felt to the presence of Jesus, the easier he found it to detach himself from ancestral modes.

As the differences among the groups of early Christians have led us to assume, the disciples' personal contact with Jesus did not cause the same powerful experience to everyone, and, what is more, when the different powerful experiences were communicated to new Christian proselytes they did not have the same impact on everyone. The figure of Jesus maintained an important role in all streams of the Christian tradition, but this did not solve the problem of the place which the Law would acquire in relation to Jesus. Especially those Christians 'zealous for the Law' must have had great difficulty in considering the Law as a secondary link to God, which is why they wholeheartedly participated in the sacrificial cult.

In sum, I believe that the powerful experience which some Jews had from contact with Jesus, either in his life or in a vision, resulted in a new apprehension of God which, in turn, led to an exceptional change in cultic semiotics, namely, the tendency to abolish ancestral customs. Surprisingly enough, and maybe with the event of the Fall of the Temple having contributed to this, this change in cultic semiotics came to be the rule in the second century, so that in the end Christianity meant the abolition of sacrifice. I must admit, though, that this theory depends on the weight one gives to the step(s) leading from contact with Jesus to the new apprehension of God, something which we can never be clear about.

Two factors must be connected with the crucial change in the apprehension of God felt by some early Christians. The first is the ritual policy of the man Jesus himself. As we have seen, Jesus is reported to have taken the Temple for granted and to have been to the Temple, but is not reported to have praised the Temple and its worship. Thus, just as some Christians could continue the practice of offering sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, others could easily interrupt (or even cease?) this practice. And the respective Christian groups would not come into conflict, unless someone from one group overtly denounced the others. That is why Jerusalem Christians attached to the Temple could peacefully coexist with Christians who were not known as especially attached to it, until the day Paul came to the city (Acts 21).

The second factor is the inconsistency of the metaphorical sacrificial code used by early Christians. In early Christian writings different meanings are given to the term ‘sacrifice’, which extend over many sections of the horizontal line, from the life of Jesus to the activity of preaching<sup>8</sup> and the principle of philanthropy.<sup>9</sup> Even if we accept the existence of Christians who abided by the Jerusalem cult, these differences must have resulted from the various (one might say spasmodic) attempts of early Christians to reconsider, re-evaluate, reinterpret, and, in some cases, replace animal sacrifice.

Christians continued to elaborate—not always consistently—the metaphorical sacrificial vocabulary which they had established before AD 70, and to expand the metaphorical use of the notion ‘sacrifice’ by applying the term to areas of life (that is, sections of the horizontal line) which had not been considered as sacrifices before. This phenomenon was as subversive of the hitherto standard ritual in Judaism and Mediterranean paganism, as it was creative in terms of linguistic possibilities.

On the other hand, the use of sacrificial metaphors might seem a discrepancy subverting the whole cultic transformation which Christianity brought about: for instance, despite the distance from the real sacrificial gestures and particulars, the Christian metaphor of a Lamb symbolizing Jesus continued to be deployed.

Most importantly, despite the uncompromising attack of the second-century apologists on the idea of ‘offering’, at times there was a revival of the ‘lost’ aspects of the horizontal line, and thus we even come across sacrificial feasts in honour of local saints.<sup>10</sup>

Why did Christians continue to use sacrificial language even after their message had been understood and spread? Why did they come back to the ritual code of acts conducted in an animal offering? At first sight, this might show that Christianity started life by claiming

<sup>8</sup> 2 Cor. 2: 14–16: *Τῷ δὲ Θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι’ ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ· ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἔσμεν τῷ Θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις· οἷς μὲν ὁσμὴ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμὴ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν.*

<sup>9</sup> Heb. 13: 16: *τῆς δὲ εὐποιίας καὶ κοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε. τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεός.*

<sup>10</sup> For these feasts, see Ch. 6, n. 137. Not all prominent members of the early Church held the same attitude towards these feasts, and each stance must be seen in its own context, including the context of proselytizing strategies.

originality, but ended up making concessions to the cult of its 'rivals', Graeco-Roman paganism and Judaism of the Temple period. And this would mean that Christians were defeated in their choice to transform ritual.

Looked at in a different way, though, this Christian deployment of sacrificial codes of language might indicate that Christians became more confident, and consequently more open to the tactic of preserving a certain sacrificial code in matters religious as a link with both Greek and Jewish cultic traditions. After all, the metaphor 'Lamb-Jesus' was too conventional to encapsulate the whole previous range of victims and meanings. But if that is the case, when did Christians feel certain that their message had been sufficiently and steadily communicated, so that they could adopt this tactic (i.e. before or after AD 70)?

Perhaps, despite the Christian originality in worship, the concept of a creature put to death for a religious purpose was so strongly etched onto the collective unconscious that Christians did not dare to obliterate it. What remains incontrovertible is that, with the spread of Christianity, animal sacrifice ceased to be considered as the standard ritual practice in the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean.

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