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RITUAL AND METAPHOR
SACRIFICE IN THE BIBLE

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Edited by
Christian A. Eberhart

Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AP	<i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> Edited by A. Cowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923)
ASoc	Année Sociologique
ASV	American Standard Version
ATD	Altes Testament Deutsch
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>

JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KJV	King James Version
LS	Louvain Studies
NAB	New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NICNT	New International Commentary: New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary: Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum. Supplement Series
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	New Testament Studies
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
PRSt	Perspectives in Religious Studies
REB	Revised English Bible
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBSymS	SBL Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SHAW P-HK	Sitzungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
STW	Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft
<i>TAD</i>	<i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i> , 4 vols. Edited by B. Porten and A. Yardeni (Jerusalem, 1986–99)
<i>ThWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Stuttgart, 1970–
<i>ThWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–79
TNIV	Today's New International Version
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–

<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PREFACE

This volume presents a portion of the academic work of the “Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement” section that convenes once a year at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. As chair of this program unit, I wish to extend my gratefulness to Rhett Wiley (vice-chair), Steve Finlan, Bill Gilders, and Jason Tatlock, the past and present members of the steering committee who have pursued its theme with scholarly rigor and affection over the past years. I owe much to their team spirit, enthusiasm, and critical feedback. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to all of the scholars who shared their research on the topic of this volume first through presentations and now in writing. Special thanks are directed to Cambridge University Press for the kindness of granting permissions to reprint a chapter of the book by James W. Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), that provides a fitting start to the present volume.

I am, furthermore, very thankful to Billie Jean Collins, Leigh C. Andersen, and Bob Buller of the Society of Biblical Literature for their continued interest in this collection of essays and for the pleasant cooperation, and to Tom Thatcher and Susan Ackerman for adopting the present volume into their series Resources for Biblical Study. I gratefully acknowledge that funds from a generous grant of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, administered through Research Services of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, provided financial means for the editorial work on this book and related conference travels, and I owe special expressions of gratitude to Monika Müller who provided editorial assistance, helped with proofreading, and gave much valuable advice.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my wife, Véronique, and my sons, Yanis Emmanuel and Yonas Maximilian, for their patience, love, and support during the times of annual conference attendance and work on the ensuing publication. Words are insufficient to express my gratitude to you for your “sacrifice.”

C. A. E.

INTRODUCTION: SACRIFICE IN THE BIBLE

Christian A. Eberhart

This volume features a selection of presentations delivered at the 2007, 2008, and 2009 Annual Meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature for the “Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement” program unit, a forum for studying the practices, interpretations, and reception history of sacrifice and cult in ancient Judaism, Christianity, and their larger cultural contexts (ancient Near East and Greco-Roman antiquity). This volume lends a voice to scholars representing multiple academic disciplines, different geographical areas, and diverse denominational backgrounds who examine the topic of sacrifice in biblical literature. As chair of the “Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement” program unit, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all of these fine scholars for sharing their research, insights, results, and questions pertaining to this topic first through presentations and now in writing. They explore issues of terminology and reflect upon central festivals of the ancient Israelite and Judean religion. They discuss the importance and ambiguity of multivalent rituals and investigate various aspects and problems related to the study of the origin, development, and reception history of ancient rituals in the matrix of their surrounding religions and cultures. They also scrutinize how sacrifice as a key concept of temple worship was both transcended and transformed through the creative processes of spiritualization and metaphorization.

With these characteristics, all contributions to the present volume deal directly or indirectly with various forms of worship of ancient Israel and Judah and the written traditions that reflect upon it. Eventually centralized at the temple in Jerusalem, this worship consisted mainly of sacrificial rituals that encoded the religious, cultural, and sociopolitical identity of ancient Israel and Judah during different historical eras. Due to their suggestive potential and authoritative character, these rituals continued to be a dominant terminological and conceptual resource within Judaism and Christianity even after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. Hence sacrificial metaphors have pervaded religious conceptions and secular rhetoric throughout the ages, ranging from foundations for ethics and justice to discourses aiming at glorifying victims of military or natural disasters and to much-debated notions of vicarious atonement. With such a spectrum of phenomena, sacrifice has caused fascination and puzzlement alike in religious constituencies and among scholars, thus assuring continued attention to this topic.

The transformation of sacrifice communicates not only its acknowledgment, but also implicit criticism. Despite its authority, the institution of sacrifice was questioned already in biblical times, and since then critics have wondered about the apparent paradox that rituals which involve killing and destruction, including the extreme of human sacrifice, could be situated at the heart of religion. How can metaphors derived from such a conceptual source inscribe themes like reconciliation and salvation into the consciousness of human society? Why did Judaism not readily abandon notions of sacrifice when the actual sacrificial cult in Jerusalem could no longer be performed? Why did nascent Christianity hold on to these concepts as well? Even in modern discourse, sacrifice remains not only a controversial but also a powerful topic. Its elucidation, therefore, is more than an endeavor of historical interest directed at religious phenomena of a distant past; it informs today's religious, cultural, and political rhetoric.

The contributions to the present volume deal with sacrificial rituals and metaphors in the Bible. The first set of contributions focuses on aspects and problems related to sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. It starts with terminological reflections and proceeds to studies of sacrifice in narrative and prophetic texts.

James W. Watts surveys comparative theories of sacrifice to show that evaluations of particular ritual and nonritual acts as "sacrifices" depend on analogies with stories of sacrifice. Such narrative analogies ground the idea of sacrifice, which is meaningless without them, and they account for the opposite valuations that it can convey. Watts argues, therefore, that *sacrifice* is not a descriptive but an evaluative term; its usefulness for comparative analyses of religious rituals remains questionable.

Christian A. Eberhart explores interpretive aspects of sacrificial rituals that are manifest in comprehensive technical terms for sacrifice. Their individual profile and common implications offer insight into perceptions of early communities which understood sacrifices as dynamic processes of approaching God and as tokens of reverence and reconciliation. Eberhart concludes that these comprehensive technical terms express the importance of the burning rite as a ritual component that allows the incorporation of both animal sacrifices and sacrifices from vegetal substances into modern scholarly theorizing.

Jason Tatlock presents a study of human sacrifice in the Israelite cult. Approaching this topic from its broader context of animal sacrifice, he discovers that almost every Hebrew Bible text of child and adult immolation corresponds to an analogous animal rite. Tatlock maintains that human sacrifice was an integral part of the Israelite cult during the preexilic era.

Göran Eidevall develops new approaches to the study of the role of sacrificial terminology in Hebrew Bible prophetic literature. He outlines aspects of one such approach that relies on rhetorical analysis and metaphor theory to bring sacrificial language into a discourse which primarily deals with some other topic. He illustrates this approach through preliminary analyses of two passages, Isa 66:20 and Ezek 20:40–42, which draw on sacrificial metaphors to depict the return of diaspora communities.

The second set of essays deals with various aspects and problems related to sacrifice and sacrificial metaphors as well as related cult terminology in early Christian literature and its larger cultural context.

Jeffrey S. Siker investigates how the earliest Christians grappled with the problem that Jesus, who had suffered and died at the hands of the Romans, could be proclaimed as a crucified and risen messiah. Surveying a spectrum of christological concepts in the New Testament that articulate the meaning of that death, Siker explains that some of them effectively blend the notion of atonement of Yom Kippur with motifs belonging to the Passover tradition. Through a process of referencing various Judean liturgical ceremonies and recalibrating their meaning, Jesus came to be simultaneously understood as a scapegoat and sacrificial lamb.

Stephen Finlan examines the process of spiritualization of sacrifice in the epistles of Paul and in Hebrews by distinguishing six different levels that have commonly been signified with spiritualization. He considers such language as useful for new social formations since it negotiates continuity within change. Finlan notes that Hebrews, while allegorizing sacrifice at great length, contains more antisacrificial language than any other book in the New Testament.

Tim Wardle observes a reticence in the early Christian community to appropriate the idea of the priesthood, although other cultic terms were readily adopted. He studies Judean temples that were constructed as alternatives to the Second Temple in Jerusalem and argues that they provide a clue for this phenomenon. During the Second Temple period, other temples and systems of sacrifice had developed, yet precedents for alternative priesthoods did not exist.

Dominika Kurek-Chomycz investigates the meaning of a convoluted sacrificial metaphor used by Paul in 2 Cor 2:14–16. She surveys the history of interpretation of this passage, discusses the terminology and role of cultic scents in connection with wisdom, and considers its relationship to incense and sacrifice. Kurek-Chomycz argues that Paul's olfactory metaphor is best understood in connection to the cluster of motifs associated with the figure of personified wisdom.

George P. Heyman explores the function of the early Christian discourse of sacrifice, drawing on the Greek and Roman religious and cultural environment. This rhetoric enabled nascent Christian communities not only to explain the shameful death of Jesus on the cross but also to imagine a corporate identity that empowered them to resist Roman religio-political hegemony. Heyman concludes that the appearance of desert asceticism and of the cult of the martyrs consolidated cultic concepts as a powerful discourse of sacrifice.

The nine contributions to the present volume offer no systematic exposition of sacrifice in biblical literature but address selected aspects of scholarly inquiry. May the approaches, perspectives, arguments, insights, and results featured in the chapters that follow help to better understand the worship that epitomized the religion of ancient Israel and Judah and that became the source of ongoing learned reflections in Rabbinic Judaism and of central soteriological concepts in Christianity. May these chapters help to better understand rituals and metaphors of sacrifice in the Bible.