

## CHAPTER 4

### Body, Blood, Sacrifice and Communion

#### 4.1. Introduction

The search for an answer to why religious meals were eaten begins with a practical question: what kind of food was eaten? When this is examined, it can be seen that meals did not stand in isolation, but were usually connected to other rituals. These rituals might include prayers over food, and, in some cases, the ritual preparation of the elements. In meals which included meat these preparatory rites took the form of sacrifices, in which a victim was prepared and slaughtered for the meal that followed: this practice underlies the controversy in 1 Cor 8 and 10. Sacrificial rituals were clearly seen in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman cults. It is with these that our search begins before turning to the question: why sacrifice?

A connection between the Supper Narratives and sacrifice may not be apparent. This impression is as old as the texts themselves. In many ways, Christian rite and practice did not conform to ancient patterns of sacrifice:

Known early Christian groups did not look very much like religious groups because they were almost entirely missing this whole set of practices related to sacrifice, intergenerational continuity and productivity.

(Stowers 2001, 86, cf. Meeks 1983, 140)<sup>1</sup>

If there is any convergence, it centres rather on the role of sacrifice and the language used to describe it. It is on these that we will focus rather than a comparison of rites and practices.

Of course, a key text connecting all these ideas is 1 Cor 5:7, which connects Christ with Passover and sacrifice. Furthermore, elements involved in the institution narratives such as bread and wine, body and blood may also have sacrificial connotations. Whilst sacrifice appears to begin with the taking of life and use death to maintain life (Malina 1996, 27), it extends itself to include rituals and ceremonies in which grain or wine offerings are made. In all such rituals the offering cannot be retrieved (39). On such grounds, inedible items like incense may also be sacrificed: the destruction of the offering is what

matters (Parker 1983, 329). This provides a broader platform for a consideration of sacrificial practice.

Further, sacrifice is located within two social systems: kinship and politics. Kinship focuses on family groups or fictive families (groups which invent themselves a nexus of relationships similar to those of a family). Politics focuses on the well-being of the *polis*, city or state (Malina 1996, 28-9). Sacrifice becomes a religious component in maintaining the kinship or political group. The differences come in describing *how* sacrifice assists this aim. To this end, sacrifice is now examined under the three headings: Jewish, Graeco-Roman and Christian. This will lead to an examination of concepts and terms connected with sacrificial practice in the different cultures.

## **4.2. Sacrifice: Jewish Understandings**

The quantity of text devoted to sacrificial matters in the Pentateuch, and the many references to the sacrificial rites of the Temple throughout the Hebrew Scriptures indicate that sacrifice occupied a prominent role in Judaism of different periods. The Temple provided the locus for political rites, the family for kinship (e.g., Passover). These two cannot be viewed as distinct. It is also possible to identify two purity systems: the “ritual” and the “moral” (Klawans 2001, 135, fn.1).

### ***4.2.1. Kinship & Political Sacrifices***

In different eras, the balance shifted from kinship to political forms: the Levitical tradition put the emphasis on political worship (Malina 1996, 33-5)<sup>2</sup>. This tendency can also be seen in the Passover. Presented in terms of its origins as a kinship feast, it was eaten by household (Exod 12:46). The feast became increasingly politicised as its locus shifted to the Temple after the reforms of Josiah (De Vaux 1976, 488). Throughout these changes, some elements, such as the fostering of a group identity, remained constant. How did sacrifice assist this?

Malina suggests that kinship and political sacrifice were different in type. Kinship sacrifice (e.g., Lev 3) “celebrates the enhancement of life with a sharing offering”, whilst political sacrifices (e.g., Lev 4 and 5) “alleviate a life-labile condition with a burnt –offering” (Malina 1996, 36). Gen 31:53-4 records a kinship sacrifice, but the details are minimal. By Malina’s criteria, the offering of Melchizedek<sup>3</sup> (Gen 14:18) would also more fit the pattern of a kinship ceremony. In this passage Melchizedek, both priest and king, brings an offering of bread and wine which he uses to bless Abraham. The elements serve to remind Abraham, laden down with the spoils of war, that God is the source of all sustenance (Brichto 1998, 198).

The ritual signifies Lev 1-7 give examples of two types of political sacrifice: the *šēlamim* and the *’olah*. The Lev texts are important for building up a picture of what Chilton has called ‘the understanding of “classic” Israel’. However, care needs to be taken in distinguishing the different strata (J, E, P, D) within the accounts (Chilton 1992, 54-5). Further, different emphases appear in the Old Testament, stressing a number of aspects of sacrificial activity. Thus Ezek focusses on the sanctifying of the Temple as a holy place, Lev on the setting aside of Israel as a pure, holy people for God, and Deut on the gathering together of the people (66-7).

#### 4.2.2. *Šēlamim* (Communion Meals) & *’Olah* (Burnt Offerings)

Two types of sacrifice recur in the Hebrew Scriptures: the *šēlamim* which was followed with a meal in which portions of the victim were eaten, and the *’olah*, in which the carcase of the victim was burned. In the *šēlamim*, the animal is divided into three. The fat, part of the kidneys and liver were burned to Yahweh, the meat for the worshippers, and the blood for the altar. In the *’olah*, the fat and meat go to Yahweh (by burning), and the blood to the altar. No meat was put aside for human consumption (Hendel 1989, 382-3). Lev 3:1-16 describes sacrifices for peace offerings, 4:1-5:13 a variety of sin offerings, and 5:14-26 guilt offerings. The associated priestly rituals are outlined in Lev 6-7. The primary purpose of all such rituals was not to atone for sin, but rather to take away the impurity which it caused (NAB:1999, 163). Different rituals

accomplished this in different ways. Purification offerings focus on cleansing or washing: sin offerings work by a “representative giving-up-of-life” (Bell 2002, 3, fn. 17, quoting Janowski).

The *šelamim* rituals of Lev 3 are also described as “peace-offerings” (Ringgren 1962, 23). Accounts in 1 Sam 9:12-13, 16:3; Zeph 1:7 associate sacrifice with a meal. The meal serves to establish some kind of communion between God and those who partake of it. Eating and drinking with the deity is reminiscent of the common Ancient Near Eastern tradition of banquet of the gods: such rituals would affirm the covenant, and thus the kingship of Yahweh with his people<sup>4</sup>. Some accounts imply that God is present (Exod 18:12; 24:9-11; Deut 12:5-7,18; 14:23,26; 15:20; 27:7; 1 Sam 9:11-14 – cf. Ringgren 1962, 25; Wainwright 2003, 23). Other passages suggest that eating together also unites those people who eat with each other (Gen 26:28-31; 31:54; Josh 9:14-19). Commensality, table-fellowship, or communion, is thus connected to sacrifice. Even burnt-offerings, in which there is no shared meal, may be offered primarily so that God is close to his people (see further p.155, fn.6). Their significance is in the cost which they represent to the offerer, not in the destruction of the victim (Hicks 1959, 40).

In Josephus, *Ant.* 3.224-8 the “sacrifice with a meal” is identified as a thank-offering, but affinities to the other rituals are noted<sup>5</sup>. Sacrificial rites help to ensure God remains close to his people, even, in some cases, through a symbolic ritual table-fellowship.

Sacrificial rites included a number of gestures or roles. It should not be assumed that sacrifice was always the work of a priest. In some rituals, the person bringing the gift performed the sacrifice. Lang’s conclusion, that practice varied, should be heeded (2002, 201, esp. fn. 30)<sup>6</sup>.

#### 4.2.3. *In Imitation of God: Sacrifice & Purity*

There a number of key factors which lie behind such commensality. First is the idea of purity. Death and sex provide common denominators of ritual purity (Milgrom 1992, 1002; Klawans 2001, 142). Ritual purity demanded a separation from sin and death in order to be like God (*Imitatio Dei*, cf.

Klawans 2001, 144)<sup>7</sup>. This *Imitatio Dei* explains a paradox: why rituals involving death (i.e., sacrifice) should be used as the means of negating the effects of death and sex. It is because the power over life and death is essentially divine (1 Sam 2:6; Deut 32:39). *Imitatio Dei* offers explanations of how the sacrifice is selected [compare the actions of the Israelites in Exod 12:6 with those of God in 12:42], dissected [inasmuch as God is imagined δοκιμάζων νεφρούς καὶ καρδίας (Jer [LXX] 11:20), “examining the kidneys and hearts”], and even burned [for God is often described as a “consuming fire” when sacrifices are described (Exod 24:17)]:

Briefly stated the typical ancient Israelite sacrificial process involves the performance by Israelite laypeople and their priests of a number of activities which can well be understood in light of the concern to imitate God...

The selection, dissection and consumption of sacrificial animals also have analogues in the divine realm. God, too, selects, kills, looks inside things and appears on earth as a consuming fire. Sacrifice then ought to be understood metaphorically--and I use the term advisedly. An analogy lies at the heart of sacrifice. The offerer and priest play the part of God, and the domesticated animals from the herd and the flock play the part of the people (and particularly Israel).

(Klawans 2001, 151)

Note that sacrificial processes were not restricted to the priesthood. Usually, it was the offerer who killed the victim (Hicks 1959, 12).

#### 4.2.4. *The Atonement*

The *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) rituals described in Lev 16 provide a further way of understanding how the gap between God and his people was apparently reduced through ritual activity. They appear to follow the pattern of burnt offerings, inasmuch as blood is taken to the sanctuary. Thus, the meat should not be consumed by the people (cf. Lev 6:17-23, esp. 23 for sin offering regulations). Three beasts are involved: the bull (Lev 16:6), a goat “for the Lord” which is sacrificed (16:9) and a goat “for Azazel” which is driven into the wilderness (16:10). The priest kills the victim, unlike in many rituals, thus

identifying himself as one of the sinners on whose behalf the victim is offered (Hicks 1959, 12).

#### 4.2.4.1. The Scapegoat as Sacrifice

Is the scapegoat, the beast driven into the wilderness, counted as a sacrificial offering? If it is argued that blood must be shed as a part of sacrificial ritual, it would appear not. However, if it is rather that the victim *cannot be retrieved* (Malina 1996, 39) it can be argued that the scapegoat, too, may be sacrificial. Chenderlin, too, prefers a wider definition of sacrifice than one restricted to blood rituals:

...the manipulation of the blood is merely a specific instance of the kind of memorial treatment that for the Hebrews made the offering a thing holy to God- that "*sacrum fecit*" ("sacri-ficium") so that the essence of sacrifice should rather be identified with such a generic action.

(1982, 119)

In his view the role of blood is less important than the sacrificial action it exemplifies. There is more to sacrifice than the shedding of blood. That the victim cannot be retrieved may explain how a text like *Hebrews* could conflate the sacrificial and scapegoat elements in describing Jesus (see below, pp. 167-70, ¶ 4.4.3).

Other explanations are also possible. The Mishnah (*m. Yoma* 6:1)<sup>8</sup> suggests the two goats had to be identical: this implies that, at some stage, the goats were viewed as inseparable aspects of one ritual (Barker 2003, 51)<sup>9</sup>. Reflections on the identity of Azazel in light of *1 En.* and Origen suggest that if one goat "was" Azazel, the other was not just "for the Lord", but "was" the Lord (44; 51). Supporting evidence comes from *1 En.* 47 which matches the "Son of Man" with the Servant of Isa 53 (53). Further that Servant imagery may have been inspired by the Day of Atonement ritual: the Servant "sprinkles" many nations (Isa 52:15)<sup>10</sup>, "carries" their sickness/weakness (Isa 53:4), is wounded (i.e., pierced or defiled), brings wholeness, and offers his life as a sin-offering:

All this suggests that the Servant figure was modelled on the one who performed the atonement rites in the first temple.

(Barker 2003, 54)

If Barker's connection of texts and images, which is open to debate<sup>11</sup>, holds any truth, it would appear that the Atonement rituals included a specific *Imitatio Dei*, through the identification of one victim with the Lord. It adds a fresh twist, for God is being identified with the victim, not just with the offerer and the priest. If this is the case, it would appear that the roles identified by God in sacrificial ritual might vary.

#### 4.2.4.2 Yom Kippur in the Qumran/Essene Nexus

*Yom Kippur* practices can be seen in groups which had distanced themselves from the Temple cult. Charlesworth holds that 1QS 1-2 shows that the Qumran/Essenes linked their *Yom Kippur* celebrations with Atonement, and described it using the imagery of a covenant (1992, 12). Thus the rituals are part of the way in which God and his people are united in a covenant relationship. There is an agreement between them. God promises life, or salvation, that they will be his people. The people, for their part, agree to follow his religious and ethical prescriptions. These are often defined in terms of obedience to a way of life enjoined by a particular sect, basing its claims on the Scriptures. Such a pattern is seen both in the Torah (Deut 29-30), the historical writings (Neh 1) and the prophets (Jer 31:31-4). God promises that he will not desert his people, that is, leave them prey to destruction, physically or spiritually. The people choose to follow God, to choose life rather than death (Deut 30:15-20).

11QMelch provides further reflections on the Atonement Rituals (Vermes:1995, 360-2). These are now associated with Melchizedek, the shadowy figure of Gen 14. In the Qumran writings he is increasingly identified as the Messiah or a heavenly figure (Barker 2003, 26, 31; Brown 1999, 293, esp. fn. 47; Duling & Perrin 1982, 227; for Melchizedek in the *pesharim*, Schiffman 1994, 231, 343). The combination suggests that this heavenly high priest brings salvation to the faithful through a performance of Atonement ritual (Barker 2003, 71).

#### *4.2.5. The Mechanics of Atonement*

Atonement describes the repairing of the relationship between God and His people which allows the people to inherit the promises of God.

##### 4.2.5.1. Expiation and Propitiation: The Right Terms?

Modern commentators have used the language of expiation and/or propitiation to describe how this activity takes place. The writers of the Pentateuch seem to have used other ways of describing how Atonement takes place which include mention of “turning away the wrath of God” using ritual activity (Num 8:19; 16:47; 25:10-13).

Modern readers may not be comfortable with such language. The modern world is more comfortable with language of expiation than propitiation and appeasement (Moffatt 1986, xxxv). Yet, it must be asked whether this distinction really applies to the ancient world. The same terminology can be used to describe what modern commentators variously describe as expiatory or propitiatory rites: they may even be conflated (Caprinelli 1999, 82)<sup>12</sup>. This surely prompts the question of whether or not the modern distinction of two different kinds of rites is an anachronism. Modern religious sensibilities may serve only to complicate the meaning of ancient texts and rites by the introduction of an irrelevant distinction. The distinction may even hide an ideological agenda, using unpalatable terminology to subtly influence the analysis of such rituals and thus predispose the reader towards a particular conclusion. There is also the danger that the use of a term such as expiation may drive the interpretation of sacrifice. It is more useful to look for ideas and imagery which emerge from the texts themselves than to import terminology of dubious value (Klawans 2001, 156).

##### 4.2.5.2. Atonement as “Renewal”

Thus, Douglas prefers a different approach based on the accounts of atonement in Lev:

Terms derived from cleansing, washing and purging have imported into biblical scholarship distractions which have occluded Leviticus’ own very specific and clear description of atonement. According to the illustrative cases from Leviticus, to atone means to cover or recover, cover again, to



repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering. As a noun, what is translated atonement, expiation or purgation means integument made good; conversely, the examples in the book indicate that defilement means integument torn. Atonement does not mean covering a sin so as to hide it from the sight of God; it means making good an outer layer which has rotted or been pierced.

(1994, 117)

However, the language of cleaning and renewal need not be as exclusive as Douglas would appear to suggest. Douglas appears to equate cleansing and purgation with “covering”, when “removal” would appear more accurate. If cleansing is seen only as the removal of stains it might still appear inappropriate. However, it is also possible to understand cleansing as a process which renews an original condition that has been altered for the worse. There is nothing to preclude “cleansing” or “purging” as “renewing”. From this viewpoint, cleansing and making good are not so far apart. Douglas has subsequently become more equivocal in her description of atonement<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4.2.5.3. Atonement: Repairing the Covenant

The technical terms, expiation and the like, depend on the idea making good of what has become rotten. The object of repair was the covenant: the promises made between God and his people. Covenant was not a term invented by the Old Testament writers: it developed from the understanding and experience of vassal treaties in the region (Barr 1991, 183-4). The understanding of covenant (Gk-διαθήκη) can be described as follows:

The eternal covenant was the system of bonds which established and maintained the creation, ordering and binding the forces of chaos. There are several places in the Old Testament where this older view of the creation is implied at e.g. Job 38.8-10: ‘Who shut in the sea with doors and prescribed bounds for it?’; or Jeremiah 5.22: ‘I placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, the eternal rule which it may not transgress’; or Psalm 104.9: ‘You set a boundary that (the waters) should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth’. The eternal covenant is more prominent in the non-canonical texts such as 1 Enoch, which describes how this covenant was broken and then restored. The restoration of the covenant is described in terms we recognise as the Day of the Lord, the Judgement, as we shall see later. When the statutes and laws of the eternal covenant were broken, the

fabric of the creation began to collapse and chaos set in. Total disregard for the statutes resulted in the return to chaos described in e.g. Isaiah 24.5: 'The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.' Or Jeremiah 4.23: 'I looked to the earth and lo it was waste and void; and to the heavens and they had no light'. Jeremiah sees the world returned to its pre-creation state. When the covenant was restored, the creation was renewed and returned to its original condition of *salom* and *sedaqah/dikkaiaosune*

(Barker 1996, 3; also 2003, 45)

#### 4.2.5.4 Repairing the Covenant: The Temple & Blood

This repair work, as witnessed in the Atonement rituals, involved two elements: the Temple and blood.

Exod 24:8 locates the repair work in Temple ritual. The Hebrew Scriptures provide the aetiology for later ritual. The role of a meal in this process is then brought out by Exod 24:9-11.

Blood and covenant are intimately linked in the phraseology of Exod 24: 8, τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης [the blood of the covenant]. The sprinkling of the people with blood signifies their participation in the blessings of the covenant .Elsewhere, Zech 9:11 makes the same connection, interpreted variously as a reference to the Passover lamb, or the blood of circumcision (Taylor:1966, 545, fn. 24).

Exod 24:9-11 follows the sprinkling with the description of a meal. Eating with God signifies the restoration of the people to a covenant relationship with God, symbolised by their eating together.

#### 4.2.5.5. Blood as Detergent

Lev 17:11 reveals thought patterns which may explain the Hebrew understanding of Atonement through the symbolic use of blood:

For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement.

(NRSV)

What is exactly the role of blood in this process? It appears to be the particular medium through which the act of sacrifice is effective. The association of blood with life makes it effective. Its effectiveness is associated with the death of the victim, in which its life is given up. Often blood is associated with purity. It may contaminate (pollutant) or clean (detergent). Used wrongly in ritual it can contaminate rather than clean (Hanson 1993, 5). The dual role of blood can also be seen when it is used in eating. If an animal is not killed properly (i.e., by draining its blood), eating it is commonly considered a cause of contamination (Lev 17:12-16). This seems to be because

blood belongs to God for purgation, and not to humans (Gen 9:6).

(Hanson 1993, 5; cf. Chilton 1992, 62 for blood belonging to God)

Thus blood may be used (e.g., by sprinkling or pouring, cf. Hicks 1959, 12), but it must not be ingested: this is a distinctive feature of Jewish sacrificial meals<sup>14</sup>. There may be additional nuances.

Janowski considers that blood has a different function in atonement rituals:

Obviously the cultic atonement is also a removal of sins; but this is not because the sanctuary is “ritually cleansed” or “washed” but because through the application of the חַטָּאת - blood on the altar and sanctuary a representative giving-up-of-life is carried out through which the sin-calamity-connection is abolished...

(Janowski, trans. Bell 2002, 3, fn. 17)

The Atonement rituals may throw up a further puzzle. While it is commonly held that Judaism proscribed the drinking or eating of blood (above), a prophecy quoted in the *Letter of Barnabas* 7 says that priests may eat unwashed parts of the sacrifice offered on the Day of Atonement<sup>15</sup>. A similar practice, although criticised, is also found in the description of the “Babylonians” in the Mishnah (*m. Menahoth* 11.7). Such a practice would appear to condone, at least in some Jewish circles, consumption of blood as a legitimate part of sacrificial ritual (Barker 2003, 300, quoted below, Ch. 7, p. 323, ¶ 7.3.3.6.).

Blood does not always work in the same way. The function of blood varies in purification and sin offerings. It acts as a detergent in purification offerings, but

effects removal of sin in atonement by “place-taking” (Gese, trans. Bell 2002, 3, fn. 19). This removal of sin covers both sinful actions and ontological sin, that is, sinful existence (Bell 2002, 7).

Used properly, blood becomes a means of restoring fellowship with God. This is exemplified by sin-offerings distinguished by the laying on of hands:

The point of the blood rite is that the blood is taken into contact with the holy. The Israelite through the laying on of hands is identified with the sacrificial animal to such an extent that the death of the animal is the death of the Israelite and by passing through this judgement of death, the Israelite is able, via the blood rite, to have fellowship with God.

(Bell 2002, 4)

#### *4.2.6. Beyond the Temple: Covenantal Purity in the Second Temple Period*

Thus far, it seems that purity issues are connected with cultic ritual. Yet, there were apparently groups for whom purity depended on activities outside the cultus. In the Second Temple period, other expressions of purity were being practised, and some of these shared a focus on eating:

Dining is also a daily activity that is associated with some degree of sanctity. Since food is God’s own creation and property it also symbolizes His power, authority and religious demands from humans, it has a [sic] intrinsic religious value. Indeed food was always a charged issue, and religious and social groups defined themselves by their dietary regulations. It seems that this perception underlies the observation of the purity of ordinary food and the cleanness of those who eat it, as mentioned in rabbinic regulations and in the Gospels...

(Regev 2000, 187)

The changes in thinking about purity are mirrored in the role of the Temple and its associated rituals. Symbolic and analogical understandings of the Temple meant that its literal focus as the place of worship began to shift. Both the Pharisees and the Qumran /Essene sectarians carried out non-sacrificial liturgical worship in a state of purity:

In an active effort to draw and to draw upon comparisons between what is explicitly sacrificial ( temple service) and what is not (e.g. meals and prayer).

(Klawans 2002, 14)

This process did not start as a reaction to the destruction of the Temple by the Roman authorities in 70 CE: traces of the process can be seen in the Hasmonean period, particularly in the Qumran/Essene nexus and their withdrawal from the Temple cultus as then constituted.

#### 4.2.6.1. "Replacing" the Temple: Pharisaism

Understandings of selfhood and identity connected to the body lay behind the development of purity systems outside the Temple cult (Regev 2000, 192, 201). It became possible to envision the replace of cultic purity with other alternatives:

J. Z. Smith has already asserted, following Brown, that this phenomenon already began in the second century BCE, and suggested that the rabbi and the synagogue parallel the magician (and his domestic cult in the late Hellenistic period) and the Temple. It seems that our reconstruction demonstrates this theory: the pharisaic sages tried to acquire reputation as holy and pure individuals while confronting the priests, whose qualities were obtained from descent and position in the Temple rite. In contrast to the priests, the source of pharisaic authority was outside the Temple realm.

(199)

The systems share a common set of principles: eating as a sign of covenant relationship demands some basis in purity. However, purity was not the sole determinant of practice: Pharisaic fellowships (*haverim*) used their alternative purity code for social benefits such as status and influence (193-7).

The sacrificial dimension was neither neglected nor abolished, but modified. Three strategies within Second Temple Judaism, and its antecedents, came into play through which sacrificial obligations could be satisfied, and contributed to the shape of Pharisaism. First is participation and pilgrimage in the Jerusalem cultus: this, practically, restricted attendance. Second is by the priestly caste acting on behalf of the people as a whole. The people unable to attend in person participate by reading, thinking and praying about the actions performed by their representatives. Third, the "acts of Temple worship were performed in a liturgical setting of prayer and praise" (Hicks 1959, 106). Thus an extended and spiritualised form of worship fulfils sacrificial commitments.

These same factors explained how Judaism, though not in all its manifestations, could survive the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE: its adherents could consider the rituals themselves to be suspended, but not abolished, and their obligations effected through participation in alternative forms of worship, often performed in the synagogues (107).

#### 4.2.6.2. Beyond the Temple: the Qumran/Essene Nexus

It is not certain whether this expression of identity demanded that the meals be sacral in nature, that is, effectively replacing the sacrificial Temple rituals. Whilst the role of the priest might point towards such a sacral identification, they equally might reflect old-established customs which rather indicate respect (Schiffmann 1994, 336). For the Qumran/Essene group, or at least, some within it, sacrifice was identified with the community, and interpreted symbolically (1 QS 8, cf. Vermes 1987, 50-1; on the priestly identification of the community, Betz 1992, 93-5)<sup>16</sup>.

Within the Qumran/Essene nexus, this process seems to have its historical roots in a dispute between the original group members and the Temple priesthood which led to their withdrawal from the practice of the cult in the Temple. This does not signify an abandonment of cult values but rather their re-interpretation. The sectarians appear to have developed alternative strategies to fulfil their cult obligations. There is a marked difference here from Pharisaism which augmented the cultus with additional regulations about purity.

The *Temple Scroll* first equates the purity of the holy people of God with that demanded of the priesthood (Mamfredis 2000, 197). Language traditionally used for Temple and cult is used to identify the community, a practice based on the fact that covenant and cult were not viewed as distinct (205-8). Sanctity, purity and “covenant responsibility” (209-10) are more important than a physical building, which will, nonetheless, become a part of the eschatological landscape (235-6).

#### 4.2.6.3. Beyond the Temple: The Deaths of the Martyrs

Sacrificial language more usually associated with the Temple cult also came to be used of other occasions in which a victim was killed. In the Second

Temple period, martyrs' deaths were considered to have a powerful effect. They both negated the effect of violence inflicted on the Jewish people by foreign regimes, and effected purification (4 Macc 17:20-2, cf. Schottroff 2000, 58). More controversially, it is suggested that both the Messiah (O'Neill 2000, 70-1) and the Teacher of Righteousness (O'Neill 1995b, 68-73) could be interpreted as suffering sacrificial deaths, but such interpretations are likely to remain minority views (Goodacre 1997)<sup>17</sup>.

Such beliefs should not however be construed as indicating that the deaths of the martyrs replaced the cultus. Rather, they seemed to give another means of reaching the same goals.

#### 4.2.7. *Anamnesis: Sacrifice as "Remembering"*

Covenant thinking included an element of "memorial" or "remembering"<sup>18</sup>. This is a religious act, encountered in prayer, oblation and the rites of the Temple, often with a focus on the "saving acts" of God (Chenderlin 1982, 111-2). Covenant and memorial are linked in the acts remembered. They also have a cultic dimension (Ezek 20:24) seen most clearly in the "covenant of salt" (Lev 2:13, cf. Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5). The linkage here is between covenant and friendship, both symbolised by the sharing of salt. Thus memorial, covenant and sacrifice all interconnect.

The Passover rituals involved a specific understanding of "remembering" seen in the *Haggadah*. In this, the events are made contemporary by

Projecting the reality of the "world" of the Passover and drawing participants of later generations into it, then transferring the Passover into the present in a process of reenactment, although these two intersecting worlds inevitably both cross boundaries of time.

(Thiselton 2000, 879)

This view suggests that "remembering" is something done by humanity. Yet memorial oblations<sup>19</sup> are not just a human activity; God involved in the act of remembering:

[God is] reminded of the whole of the offering and of course through that of the offerer and his intentionality...

(Chenderlin 1982, 116, cf. Thurian 1960, 23)

This “memorial” aspect is developed further in the apocryphal writings, where it becomes evident that this is an activity that is not restricted to one party, to Israel or to God:

*Memorial thinking and terminology is likely to occur when there is a cluster of ideas like God, Israel, cult, covenant, promise, law, sin, petition, thanksgiving, sacrifice or other oblation, faithful servants of God. In such cases, “reminding-God” or “God-remembering” terminology is as likely to appear as is “reminding-Israel” or “Israel-remembering” terminology. But whichever appears, the other is always possible in context; if Israel is reminded, it is usually God who directly or indirectly reminds her- which of course presumes that God himself “remembers”. And it is always Israel or some member of it that reminds God, or takes note of his remembering. In other words, whichever terminology appears, the thinking related to the other terminology is implicit. This is especially evident in cultic contexts.*

(Chenderlin 1982, 127)

These conclusions have not been universally accepted as implying the priority of “reminding-God” or that the two memorial acts are of equal importance. They provide a valuable antidote to the tendency to interpret “memorial” using modern anachronistic terminology, but this may only imply that “God-reminding” language is derivative (Thiselton 2000, 881)<sup>20</sup>.

Blood functions as part of the memorial in the cultus. Indeed, this is the natural basis for the understanding of common memorial usage that has been criticised in Heb 10:3-4 (Chenderlin 1982, 117)<sup>21</sup>.

#### 4.2.8. *Sacrifice and Sacramentals*

Thus far, the focus has been on the sacrificial aspects of ritual. Sacrifice appears to be part of a complex of ideas and activities (covenant, remembering, blood, and eating). The activity of eating gains a particular focus in *Jos.Asen*. Eating is part of Aseneth’s conversion, which is understood as a kind of “new birth”, symbolised by her being fed with honey, which was often fed to the new-born in antiquity (Hubbard 1997, 105).



#### 4.2.8.1. Spiritual Food

The eating tradition recorded in *Jos.Asen.* is important. The bread, cup and ointment impart spiritual gifts (πνεῦμα ζωῆς) in *Jos.Asen.* 16:14: the foods taken by Aseneth are compared to manna (Portier Young 2005, 142-3). She alone partakes of the manna: others who are righteous (θεοσσεβής) are given the three gifts of bread, cup and ointment as substitutes for it. These gifts bestow two benefits. First, they convey eternal life to the righteous who partake of them (Standhartinger 2001, 487; Chesnutt 2005, 117-8). Second, they give the believers a hope for the future:

... the blessed bread, cup, and ointment are what ordinary people receive as a substitute for the manna to sustain them as perfectly as possible under earthly circumstances and as a guarantee that they will eat the real thing in heaven.

(Burchard 1987b, 116)

#### 4.2.8.2. Is Spiritual Food Sacramental?

The way in which these meals work is sometimes described as sacramental. Care must be taken in the use of this term, which has taken on precise colouring in Christian use.

We are used to the definition of the Eucharist as consisting of an outward and visible sign and an inward and spiritual grace, as the description of a sacrament. As we saw in the first lecture, this notion is as old as Augustine but no older. The Bible does not know it.

(Kilpatrick 1983, 57)

Whilst Kilpatrick focusses on sacrifice rather than sacrament as defining the eucharist, this does not mean that sacramental language has to be abandoned completely. However, the precise later Christian theological understanding must be put aside.

#### 4.2.8.3. *Sacramentals*, not Sacraments

Talk should be of *sacramentals* rather than sacraments. Burchard elegantly differentiates these two terms in describing the operation of the bread, cup and ointment:

- A special way of using ordinary items is intended.
- This special way uses benedictions, blessings, of the items, according to Jewish usage.
- The benedictions appear to give the items the spirit of life.
- The benedictions do not work unless used by someone whom God has gifted with life, wisdom and truth.
- This way of working must be protected (by not participating in pagan rites).
- Blessed food can be given to non-Jews, after conversion, and thus, attaining purity. These practices may have a universal application (Burchard 1987b, 117).

Thus, talk of *sacramentals* implies the use of ordinary items to a “heavenly” purpose, without resort to an anachronism, the imparting of grace. Sacramental meals demand that ordinary elements gain a supernatural saving effect because of the way in which a ritual shapes them. This saving effect is linked somehow to the presence of the deity which can take place in three forms: social presence (e.g., the community is identified with the deity), causal presence (the deity gives them their power) and real presence (the deity is present in the elements, cf. Theissen & Merz 1998, 406). Note that, in this Jewish understanding, sacramentals have both an ethical (linked to behaviour) and exclusivist (the participant should not be involved with other religious systems) flavour: this is markedly different from what are identified as sacramentals in more syncretistic Graeco-Roman religious thought (below, pp. 159-60, ¶ 4.3.5.).

#### 4.2.9. *Sacrifice, “Spiritualisation” and “Sacrificialisation”*

Later Jewish writings also show evidence of a trajectory which Milavec calls the “spiritualization” (sic) of sacrifice (2003)<sup>22</sup>: signs of it have been seen in the search for alternatives to the Temple cult. However, this may not be the best term to use. “Spiritualisation” runs the risk of suggesting that the new alternative strategies added a spiritual depth which was somehow lacking in the rites they replaced or augmented. Such spiritualisation might involve a

rejection of cultus, but this was not necessarily so. The Qumran/Essene sectarians appear to have rejected the cultus, but the Pharisees did not. In neither case should criticism imply a rejection of the aims and values of the Temple cult. The prophetic criticism of sacrifice (e.g., Isa 1:11,15-17) did not necessarily imply a rejection of participation in the cult, but it did demand a rethinking of practice:

Isaiah, speaking for the Lord, did not intend to abolish them but to drive home the fact that (whatever may have been the case earlier) God was no longer pleased with offering sacrifices unless the one approaching the altar was both ritually and morally pure and uptight of heart.

(Milavec 2003, np)<sup>23</sup>

Such thinking continued to find expression in a variety of Jewish thinkers and writers. Philo, for example, thought that purity was more important than the offering of a gift. A pure offering could be made with no sacrificial victim. Thus, a properly lived (moral) life, described as a sacrifice, provided a means of being holy without dependence on sacrificial victims<sup>24</sup>. This tendency went beyond Philo, and was surely represented in those strands of Judaism that survived the destruction of cult and Temple in 70 CE: we have noted its presence in both Pharisaism and the Qumran/Essene nexus too. It has been used to describe how the Qumran/Essene sectarians moved towards views of purity centred on the identity of the community (Betz 1992, 94; Mamfredis 2000, 258): polemic was not directed against the Temple cult *per se*, but those who controlled it. Thus, trends within Judaism allow “victim-free” activities to be considered sacrificial. Neusner, indeed, considers this to be a theme common within Second Temple Judaism:

Every important sect had to define its relationship to the Temple, and one predominant question concerned actually keeping or not keeping the purity laws, making them into a metaphor for the ethical life, or otherwise re-interpreting them.

(Neusner 1973, 21)

For these reasons, Klawans suggests that spiritualisation is not the best the term to describe the process, but prefers “sacrificialization”, as more accurately reflecting the process in which sacrificial import was given to non-

sacrificial forms of worship (2002, 14), particularly through the use of metaphor (6).

Early Christianity appears to be part of this overall movement, and also heads towards metaphorical readings of the law, expressed in ethics and intention (Mamfredis 2000, 264). Pharisaism, on the other hand, took a different turn: its adherents were expected to conform to the ideals of cultic, priestly purity. Their conclusions may have been different, but the guiding principles of both parties both affirmed the centrality of the Temple and its values (265).

#### *4.2.10. Jewish Understandings of Sacrifice: A Summary*

What does all this suggest for our future examination of the Last Supper narratives? The outline of Jewish sacrificial practice outlined above has thrown up a number of key ideas: covenant, memorial, life, blood, sacramentals, purity and the like. It also suggests that particular scholars may favour or emphasise a particular dimension in their research. Yet these ideas are not exclusive. This is, in part, due to the complexity of the rituals and texts which describe them: Judaism was, and is, pluriform (Price 2002, 319-20). So were the rituals associated with meals and sacrifice (Klawans 2001, 135, fn.1).

The variations already visible in the Hebrew Scriptures became wider in the Second Temple period, including patterns which allowed for the aims to be attained through non-sacrificial media (sacrificialisation). There is no need, as Schweitzer did, to insist on one element as uniquely definitive. Better to view Jewish sacrificial ritual, practice and theory as a melange or amalgam, and be aware of the potential of any of these particular elements to be adopted and adapted by theologians using elements of these traditions.

### **4.3. Sacrifice: Graeco-Roman Understandings**

Whilst animal sacrifice appears to have been a common phenomenon within both Greek and Roman society<sup>25</sup>, full accounts of sacrifice are difficult to come across. That said, it is possible to note a number of motifs recurring in

writers as diverse as Homer (*Iliad*, 1.447-74; 7.312-322; *Odyssey* 14.425-37), Herodotus 4.188.1, Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1565-69, and Aristophanes, *Peace*, 956-60 [noting that the last may be a parody]<sup>26</sup>:

...although it may be argued that Bronze Age sacrifices (say, on a beach at Pylos) or family sacrifices differ experientially from the impersonally grand state sacrifices of the polis, the basic tri-partite structure endures- ritual preparation, the act of killing itself and the conclusion which usually involves the sharing of a meat meal.

(Lambert 1993,294)<sup>27</sup>.

The definition of sacrifice needs, however, to be widened: offerings of grain and libations might also be considered sacrificial (Cato, *On Agriculture*, 134; cf. Burkert 1983, 41-2; 273-4)<sup>28</sup>. Incense offerings might replace sacrificial victims (Price 1998, 208; 228). Libations could also be offered (Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21.1)<sup>29</sup>. Libations might be offered to deities or at gravesites, and need to be distinguished:

All libations denote a sacrifice to the deity, but the one in the meal-context denotes a sharing with the god as all partake of the same drinking of wine.

(Cahill 2002, np)

Wine and blood were easily associated: the drinking of wine gained more than metaphorical associations with patterns of sacrifice (Burkert 1983, 224, but not automatically, cf. Onians 1954, 218, fn.1). The two could even be mixed. A technical Latin term *assaratum*<sup>30</sup> is described by the 2nd century CE, grammarian, Festus. The practice predates the term and is mentioned, for example, in Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 22 which describes such mixed offerings as commonplace<sup>31</sup>. We might infer from Sallust that such rituals enhanced the communion between those who partook. A major difference can be seen here between Greek and Jewish practice. Both admitted the use of blood. Yet the consumption, by drinking, of blood was acceptable in Greek practice in a way opposed to much Jewish custom.

In certain circumstances, even hymns were viewed as sacrificial offerings (Hewitt 1914, 88). There was considerable difference about which parts of the sacrifice were assigned to deity, priests, and participants<sup>32</sup>. Rituals for purification might precede sacrifice. Participants at Eleusis cleansed

themselves by washing in the sea whilst carrying a pig. The purifying powers of seawater are described in Euripides' *Iphigenia Among the Tauri*. The pig appears to have been sacrificed<sup>33</sup>. Additional functions accrued to sacrifice: by the time of the late Roman Republic, sacrificial victims were read for prophecies and prognoses (Potter 1999, 157).

#### 4.3.1. *Sacrifice and Holocaust*

Greek and Roman sacrifices can also be differentiated as kinship or political. Political sacrifices appear close to Semitic practice. The verbs, with a shared field of meaning, refer to a sacrificial action (Kilpatrick 1983, 49; 52). The θυσία (see Ch. 3, p. 79-80, ¶ 3.2.5.) is very similar in performance to the *šelamim* (Bergquist 1993, 13, 17), whilst the ἐναγισμός (holocaust) matched the *'olah* (Malina 1996, 32). The deities involved in the rituals appear to differ. The θυσία appears to be primarily directed to the Olympian deities, the ἐναγισμός to the chthonic gods of the earth and the underworld. However, holocausts were not directed only to the chthonic powers (Graf 1991, 195). Kilpatrick (1983, 49) notes that covenant sacrifice was part of Roman tradition, evidenced by the Latin expressions, *icere*, *fecire pactum* (to strike an agreement). Care must be taken not to oversimplify. Ancient religion was capable of subtle nuance.

This is seen clearly in the imperial cults. Originating in the Hellenistic world, ruler cults appear to be one way in which city-states reconciled themselves with monarchical concepts. The ruler's power was represented in forms used for the gods. The imperial cults of the early Roman Empire permitted the continuation of such rituals, but only in forms agreeable to the Roman authorities. A simplistic view of the imperial cults suggests that the emperors were treated like gods. This included their role in sacrificial rites. However, the evidence is much more nuanced. The majority of evidence points to sacrifice being offered *on behalf of* the emperor rather than *to* the emperor (Price 1998, 215). Secondly, direct identification with either the Olympian gods or chthonic deities was obscured by the choice of sacrificial animals. Regulations clearly determined which kinds and colours of animals might be offered to which

deity. White animals were offered to the Olympians, dark to the chthonian powers. The offering of speckled animals to the emperor, as evidenced by the August cult on Mytilene, suggests that he was neither (217-8). Such subtleties would not have been lost on ancient observers.

A further change can be noted. These sacrificial rituals included two elements: sacrifice and communal meal. Initially, the stress seems to lie on the sacrifice. Yet increasingly the meal becomes dominant. However, to argue that this means a loss of significance is dangerous:

...to argue that sacrifices receded in importance in comparison with feasts is to create a false problem. Modern scholars wrongly tend to divide what was a single Greek semantic field into two, and to distinguish between religious and secular aspects...The changes in sacrifice that did take place show the way in which the institution reflected changes in society, such as the widening definition of membership of the community and the increasing sphere of public action allowed to individuals vis-à-vis the city. Sacrifice, rather than being moribund, was integrated into the life of the city.

(Price 1998, 231)

A common understanding of sacrifice was that the god(s) were asked to join in the meal (Potter 1999, 153). It is precisely because the whiff of sacrifice surrounds the meals and markets in Corinth that Paul has to address the issues of idol-meats (1 Cor 8:4-13; 10:14-22, further below, pp.177-8, ¶ 4.4.10.).

#### 4.3.2. *The Purposes of Sacrifice*

There are few definitions of the purposes of ancient Greek or Roman sacrifice. The sole account (Price 1998, 219) comes from Porphyry, drawing on Theophrastus. People sacrifice to the gods to give honour (διὰ τιμὴν), to give thanks (διὰ χάριν) or to get something, usually beneficial (διὰ χρεῖαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν). The bulk of inscriptions point to sacrifices of the first and third kinds. The *Lectisternium* was used as both a thanksgiving and avertive rite (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44, see Ch.3, p.102, fn.16). The genre of thank-offerings (σωτήρια) appears to have developed after the Homeric period by the time of Xenophon. It appears to originate in rites connected with cults of the dead,

propitiatory or avertive rites, or the payment of vows (Hewitt 1912, 101-5). Thank-offerings often had civic associations and are more likely to originate in public worship. However, the line between private and public might be blurred:

Here and there the word δημοσίᾳ is used, or we are told that an offering takes place on behalf of the senate or the people; but even in such cases the ceremony was sometimes performed by private individuals out of their own resources.

(Hewitt 1914, 85)

Thank-offerings were invariably followed by a feast, unlike the propitiatory rites which followed the model of the holocaust, and in which, logically, the victim was offered to the deity (89).

Sacrifice might also be linked to ideas of purity, purification and the anger of the gods, but their exact correlation is difficult to ascertain:

In theory sacrifice and purification may seem to be distinct operations, the one intended to appease a deity and the other to efface an impersonal pollution. In practice, what is spoken of as a purification often takes the form of a sacrifice,<sup>42</sup> while the effects of divine anger, at least when it manifests itself as a disease, can sometimes be washed away.<sup>43</sup>

As a result, it becomes extraordinarily hard to draw lines of demarcation between pollution and the consequences of divine anger.

(Parker 1983, 10)

It is also difficult to separate purifying actions and sacrificial, yet purification often appears to be a precursor of sacrifice (19-20). There is one common feature: rites of purification always precede Olympian sacrifice, only in some Mystery cults is there a need for “desacralisation” when the rituals are complete (180).

Impurity was not just a religious concern but might have social or political dimensions summed up as damaging to reputation or disgrace (17), separating the sacred and profane, creating special occasions, forging individuals into groups and marking the passage of time (23-4) .



#### 4.3.3. *Sacrifice as Communion*

Modern analysts find other meanings for sacrifice. The difference of eating or not eating, of whether a sacrifice is a θυσία or an ἐναγισμός is key. In the θυσία, some kind of fellowship is made through the act of eating together. Hewitt suggests that sacrificial meals were more commonly a sign of a thank offering than of propitiatory rites, where the whole offering was burned as a gift to the deity (1914, 88). In the ἐναγισμός, purposes other than propitiation can also be seen. The burning of the entire sacrificial victim might also be apotropaic: it wards off evil or danger (Jay 1992, 22-23). This still presumably involves group identity, as it will stipulate those who have been protected.

There is more controversy about the eating fellowship. It raises a number of questions about the nature of the community. The focus of this is the implication of “eating together”. Are the participants eating to gain fellowship with the deity, or to express their (human) solidarity? The *Lectisternium* would appear to show that unity with the gods was intended, symbolised by the presence of their statues in the postures traditionally assumed by guests at a meal, particularly in times of crisis.

#### 4.3.4. *Sacrifice and the Mystery Religions*

Mystery religions stress fellowship with the deity. These meals created a bond between the initiate or participant, and the deity of the cult. It is sometimes claimed that such meals meant, “eating the deity”:

In the mystery religions this personal relationship with the deity was also attained by the initiate through a sacred meal. The initiate ate "holy food," and it was as though he ate the deity and thereby became a deity. The chief ritual in the mysteries of Dionysus, Attis, Isis, Mithra, and Orphism was this sacred meal. The meal was shared "in association."

(Benson 1997, np)

However, such interpretations are denied by Willis, who finds no firm evidence for the views that any cult meal, with the possible exception of that of Dionysus, entertained notions of “eating the deity” (Willis 1985, 46-7, cf.

Fotopoulos 2003, 22). Yet, even this identification may be difficult to sustain (below, pp. 156-7, ¶ 4.3.4.3.).

#### 4.3.4.1. The Mysteries: Sarapis/Osiris/Isis

Tacitus and Plutarch both give accounts of the cult of Sarapis and its origins<sup>34</sup>. This developed from Osiris and Isis cults drawing on elements from Egyptian and Hellenistic culture to attract adherents from both<sup>35</sup>. The accounts of the origins of the cult have a strong mythic element, but it appears that the development of the cult was part of Ptolemy's plan to fuse the Egyptian and Hellenic elements of his kingdom together. The net result of this was a number of popular cults focussed on different deities, but with common myths and rituals. The most detailed description is found in Apuleius, whose *Metamorphoses* 11 contains an account of Lucius' reception into the Mysteries of Isis<sup>36</sup>. The rituals included fasts, lustral rites, dressing in robes, and concluded with a banquet. The details, in keeping with the nature of the ancient mysteries, are never fully revealed. However, the main point appears to have been an imitation of the celestial journey which it was believed that the soul should travel through the different *realms* of the cosmos. It is not, however, clear whether the meals are an important aspect of the whole ritual. The extended account in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 11, one of the most detailed accounts, pays far more attention to the lustral rites, fastings and robing in ceremonial clothing (Graves 1980, 231-242). The meals are only mentioned in passing, and may well stand for a celebration of what has already been accomplished in the other rites than an effective part of the rituals themselves<sup>37</sup>. It is even possible that viewing the meal as a distinct rite may be erroneous. It is not inconceivable, given the description in Apuleius, that the meal rather was considered part of the rites of initiation, analogous to role of the Mithraic meal (see above, Ch.3, p. 85, ¶ 3.2.8.3). We must also note that Apuleius' initiation was not identical to Christian practice:

For one thing, the hero, Lucius, had to pay a fortune to undergo *his* initiation. And as Wagner correctly observes: "Isis does not promise the *mystes* immortality, but only henceforth that he shall live under her protection, and that when at length he goes down to the realm of the dead he shall adore her..."

(Yamauchi 1974, np)

#### 4.3.4.2. The Mysteries: Eleusis

The Eleusinian mysteries, like those of Sarapis, also held out hope for life after death. Participation in the rituals was held to guarantee post-mortem existence (See further Ch. 5, p. 212, ¶ 5.3.3.1.). However, the full meaning of the Eleusinian mysteries is unknown:

Cicero succinctly described them, when, after his initiation he stated that Athens has given nothing more excellent or divine to the world than the Eleusinian mysteries: “we recognize in them the true principles of life” and have learned from them “how to live in happiness and how to die with a better hope”.

(Tripolitis 2002, 21)<sup>38</sup>

Watson argues that the Hymn of Demeter (although not a cult document) sheds light on the Eleusinian rites and carries two different layers of meaning:

the first of which operates through image and metaphor, implicitly evoking a matristic world of cyclic, agricultural ritual. The second works on the linear narrative level, and tells the story of patriarchal domination...

(Watson 1992, 44)

The Eleusinian mysteries are means to attaining the truths illuminated in the myth:

The ultimate goal of the Mysteries is not the acceptance of the natural cycles of death and rebirth figured in agriculture, but rather, the overcoming of this cyclic pattern and the attainment of a permanent afterlife.

(49)

This was achieved primarily through initiation in a process which can either be interpreted as violent (following Kerenyi) or a more gentle transformation (49; 54-5; 56 fn. 22).

The rituals of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were agricultural in origin, may have held sacramental significance. However, the cult’s primary significance was in “revelations” about the goddesses. Any sacraments were “half-forgotten” and “had lost their original meaning” in the Hellenistic period (Eliade 1979, 300). Metzger notes that the *κυκεών* was neither an expression of table-fellowship, nor was it repeated regularly (1968, 15).

The specific sacrifice of a pig (Ch.3, p.70, ¶ 3.2.8.1.) may have performed some kind of purifying function (Parker 1983, 283, fn. 11).

#### 4.3.4.3. The Mysteries: Dionysus/Bacchus

In the Dionysiac, or Bacchic, cults, rituals, some of which involved wine, were claimed to give unity with the god:

Related to the Eleusinian mysteries were the cults of Dionysus (the Greek god of fertility) and the Orphics. In the Dionysiac mystery the initiates would go into a temporary sacred madness and their soul would wing its way to unite with the god Dionysus. The soul would be "with god" or "in god." The initiates became "ἐν θεοῖς" (entheî) [sic], that is, they dwelled "in god."

(Benson 1997, np)

Thus drunkenness was associated with an ecstatic state, heightened awareness, or even possession by the god. This ritual "signified an immediate partaking by the pious of life in its essence as embodied by the god". (Martin 1987, 94).

The Dionysiac spring ritual focussed on wine:

Wine emerged as the dominant Dionysian emblem for the fullness of life (Diod. Sic. III, 2-74 passim). As Dionysus was transformed into immortality, so wine is the enduring, transformed essence of the grape; it is of the same blood-red hue as the essence of animal life. These aspects of Dionysus were ritualized in the spring festival associated with the drinking of wine. The presence of wine represented the presence of the god.

(Martin 1987, 94)

Burkert puts it another way:

The Greeks tended to equate Dionysus and wine already in classical times. Consequently the drinker of the wine would be drinking the god himself...

(1983, 225)<sup>39</sup>

However, care must be taken when poetic texts are used to support such arguments. Thus Wick argues that Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.488 ("et Bacchus in auro ponitur" – "and wine is placed in a golden [goblet]") has a sacramental meaning (2004, 191). "Bacchus" certainly stands as a metaphor for wine, but there is no guarantee that a common poetic metaphor, in which the name of the God is substituted for an element identified with her/him, need signify a

cultic or sacramental meaning. It may only be a common literary trope. LSJ identifies some such uses as the Appellative. Thus, examples can be found, among others, for ἄρης (239a), and ἄφροδίτη (293b). Elsewhere, it is used in metonymy, e.g., ἡφαίστος for fire (780a). Latin yields similar results<sup>40</sup>.

Care, too, must be taken that activities described in poetic texts are not confused with the rituals of the cult. Much has been made of the Dionysiac ὠμωφασία, a ritual in which the female followers of Dionysus (maenads) were purported to eat raw flesh in some kind of communion with the god. The similarities with the eucharist appear many. Yet, such pictures may be misleading. They often assume that Dionysiac ritual was a literal re-enactment of the cult myth, as exemplified in Euripides' *Bacchae*<sup>41</sup>. This need not have been the case. In the play, the female followers of Bacchus are depicted savagely eating raw flesh. Detailed examination of the sources raises major questions about who actually "consumed" the ὠμωφασία. Heinrichs argues that the offering was "consumed" by Dionysus, not the human participants in the ritual (1978, 150-2). This would make the Dionysiac ritual more akin to a holocaust than a meal rite. Even here the similarities break down: the meat is not cooked or burned, but apparently offered raw. The characteristics shared with the eucharist are greatly reduced. If the ὠμωφασία is put aside, similarities between Christian and Dionysiac ritual are more likely to come from the use of libations, which occurred both within and outside the Mystery traditions.

Such similarities did not go unnoticed in the ancient world: they focus on the use of wine. Justin Martyr was to claim that this was a Satanic imitation of Christian ritual and Old Testament prophecy. The argument implies seems to be a common theology underpinning both Christian and Dionysiac rituals: the Dionysiac rites are Satanic rituals based on the prophecies of the Old Testament. Such an argument assumes a shared theology of which, in Justin's view, the Christian practice is correct, and the Dionysiac a Satanic parody<sup>42</sup>.

#### 4.3.4.4. The Mysteries: Mithras

Justin also claimed the Mithraic ritual (bread and water) imitated Christian ritual, albeit in the context of initiation (above, Ch.3, p. 85, ¶ 3.2.8.3.)<sup>43</sup>. Subsequent scholarship has queried whether the Mithraic meal did involve ingesting the deity (Bultmann 1971, 224, fn.2). It is worth noting, however, that the Mithraic rite certainly did not depend on a “dying and rising” God:

The ‘unconquered’ Mithras, however, does not die and therefore does not rise again; so Mithraic ‘salvation’, whether locative or utopian, cannot rest on a story of this sort, nor can its rituals express that type of myth or realize that type of salvation.

(Beck 2000, 174-5)<sup>44</sup>.

#### 4.3.4.5. The Mysteries: Cybele

The interpretation of the rites of Cybele raises a different set of issues. Whilst the cult is often grouped with mystery religions, this is open to debate:

The March rituals, as developed and practised by the Romans, show no evidence of any mystery rites as found in the mystery cults. Rather, they are rituals commemorating the annual alternation of the seasons, the withering of the earth’s vegetation in the winter and its return in the spring. There is no indication of a dying or rising god, of an initiation or purification rite of the worshippers, participation in the life of the deity, or hope of immortality. A cult initiation rite is not attested until the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.

(Tripolitis 2002, 34-5)

Thus it appears that the Cybele cult evolved, later adding elements from mystery practice and concepts. A communion meal has been suggested. Details are few and disputed: milk, rather than bread and wine is likely to have been the medium of choice<sup>45</sup>. Rites such as the *taurobolium* or *criobolium* became part of the cultic practice in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE<sup>46</sup>. However, their late appearance prompts caution in using such rituals as analogies with Christian practice described in the New Testament. The meals of the Attis cult, associated with the rites of Cybele, may have held some significance, but it remains shrouded in obscurity (Metzger 1968, 15).

#### 4.3.4.6. The Mysteries: Orphism

In the Orphic cults, eating brought unity with the god of the cult. Meat was rarely eaten, and eggs and beans forbidden (Moore 1916, 56; Parker 1983, 362, 370). Orphic rituals had a number of aims:

Through the mystery of communion, the Orphics became one with their god.

...

The Orphics spread the idea that the world under the power of evil and that the body is a burden and a bondage for the soul, whose destiny is to escape this bondage and arrive at eternal and blessed life. They also promoted the belief that man's efforts to win salvation were powerless without divine assistance.

(Benson 1997, np)

Metzger sees no sacramental significance in Orphic meals (1968, 14). Their rituals would also have avoided blood-sacrifices: Orphic adherents did not take part in the regular blood sacrifices of their cities. The prohibitions appear to have had an eschatological function, freeing the individual from personal and inherited guilt (Parker 1983, 300)

This avoidance of sacrifice is also true of Pythagoreanism and seems to be an extension of ritual purity demanded of priests to the whole community (297). Pythagoreanism may however be more concerned with general rules of harmony rather than eschatological issues (300).

The origins of Orphism and Pythagoreanism, the philosophy considered closest to it, add a further puzzle. Some of their core ideas are not Hellenistic, but could, arguably, originate in Hebraic thought, possibly as a result of Pythagoras' travels in the Ancient Near East (cf. Ch.1, p.28, fn. 14). However, care needs to be taken: Jaeger is critical of descriptions of Orphism which are either projections of the early Christian church, or assume that dogmatism is exclusively a sign of an Oriental, rather than a Hellenistic, mindset (1947, 61-3).

#### 4.3.5. *The Mysteries: Sacramental Rites?*

This survey of the mystery cults has shown that a number of comparisons can be drawn between them and emerging Christianity. They also show that the mystery beliefs represent a wide spectrum of beliefs. It is possible for some of these meals and rituals to be described as sacramental:

Things were done in the mysteries which necessarily and indispensably effected the desired results. There was an acted symbol, and the acted symbol conveyed what it represented. When the light shone in the Mithraic cell the initiate was illuminated. The psychological effect was no doubt in most cases such that he also *felt* illuminated; but to the Mithraist, the feeling was not all.

In this sense the Hellenistic world had its sacraments...Where it [sacramentalism] existed, it existed sometimes in the crudest form, in a rite that was spiritually effective provided that it was carried through in a mechanically correct way; sometimes it was recognised that the physically correct action had to be accompanied by a spiritually correct attitude; sometimes sacramental action was viewed as no more than an image of a non-sacramental event or truth, that is that the sacrament became a symbol, an image and nothing more.

(Barrett 1982b, 82-3)<sup>47</sup>

So far, however, only the mystery cults have been described. A final verdict cannot be given until other myths and rituals which shaped the context of emerging Christianity have been examined. However, Eliade's remarks provoke a further cautionary remark: sacramental significance may wax and wane as happened in the Eleusinian Mysteries (above, pp. 154-5, ¶ 4.3.4.2). The question of whether such thinking remained "live" in periods when it might have influenced emerging Christianity also must be examined.

#### 4.3.6. *The Greek "Scapegoat"*

A scapegoat ritual is also found in Graeco-Roman tradition as well as in the Old Testament. A poem of Hipponax gives a detailed description of such a rite<sup>48</sup>. Burkert gives a more detailed analysis of the rite, claiming that it originated with a human sacrifice (2000, 82-4). Variants of the ritual involving animals are found in Greek and Ancient Near Eastern cultures. At first glance,



such rituals described as καθαρμοί seem to imply that a weak person, often a cripple, stranger or outcast, becomes symbolic of the dirt and filth of the community which is being cleansed away. Yet, in some cases, the scapegoat was not such a person, but could be the king, a particularly beautiful or handsome person, or youths. Burkert suggests that such scapegoat rituals rather signify a process in which:

The purifying separation leads on to a re-incorporation which allows the old order to continue.

(2000, 84)

Thus the process of expulsion and purification are not ends in themselves, but a means to an end. The fact that the scapegoat is (implicitly) slaughtered, the body burned and the ashes scattered, show that this is no an exact parallel of the *Yom Kippur* rituals. There do, however, appear to be overlaps in the significance of the ritual. It appeases the gods, and it purifies the offerers so that they may grow close again to their god, and thus maintain the continuity of their society.

A further example of purification is found in the meals of Hekate: food set out for the goddess effected purification and ensured that evil would be taken away<sup>49</sup>. Purity is here again associated with expulsion and aversion. (Parker 1983, 30; 307; 347).

#### 4.3.7. *Meals for the Dead*

Meals for the dead and their associated sacrifices raise different issues. Burkert gives the following summary of the hero cults, equally applicable to meals for the dead:

The hero cult, like the cult of the dead, is conceived as a chthonic counterpart to the worship of the gods, and is attended by blood sacrifices, food offerings, and libations; the preparation of a bath is often found, and weeping and lamentation are frequently attested. The main event, however, is the cultic feast in the company of, and in honour of, the hero. Accordingly, the hero is often shown recumbent at the feast, and in the Tetrapolis calendar, each hero is accorded his heroine. As a rule the hero receives his *enagismata* once a year on the day appointed in the festal calendar.

(2000, 205)<sup>50</sup>

Some memorial meals had specific functions: they might be viewed as a way of giving sustenance to the dead. They might be used to honour, or humour the dead (Wright 2003, 61): eulogies featured in the Imperial Mysteries (Brent 1999, 95; 97). In certain circumstances, they were used to get the dead to exercise special powers on behalf of the living (Chenderlin 1982, 144). However, the central problem is not *what* is eaten, or why, but the social consequences of not taking part in such activities. Such meals were important social events: they were markers of the continuity and solidarity of tribe or family (Wright:2003, 61). Those who did not take part became isolated from the wider communities in which they lived. This was a major problem for the Corinthian congregation, for whom the issue of participation in such ceremonies was highly contentious (below, pp. 177-8, ¶ 4.4.10.).

#### 4.3.8. Magic

Alienation from the society has long been seen as a characteristic of practitioners of magic. Greek magic has sometimes been dissociated from Greek religion by academics (Graf 1991, 188). However, it too sheds some light on the sacrificial rituals of the Graeco-Roman world. Magic can be defined as a two-stage process:

It includes both ritual activity (formal, repetitive, and required behavior) and performance utterance and/or gesture (words or gestures that accomplish desired ends). The desired goal is the control of supernatural forces achieved through the ritual.

(Walz 2004, 168, cf. King 2001, 31)

Three basic types of magic can be identified: *θεουργία* (Holy men, and later with philosophical and religious schools), *μαγεία* (originally associated with Zoroastrianism from Persia<sup>51</sup> for astrology and divination), and *γοητεία* for spells, potions and curses (Walz 2004, 170). Magic was not universally accepted, and occasionally criticised (Horace, *Epodes*, 5)<sup>52</sup> or prohibited (Plato, *Laws*, 10.909)<sup>53</sup>. By the first century CE, the Romans distinguished acceptable religious practice (*religio*) from the unacceptable (*superstitio*). *Superstitio* was frequently based on foreign origins or associations, and the

degree of secrecy observed by its practitioners. Emerging Christianity, for both reasons, was placed in this group by its critics (Walz 2004, 170).

Some magical texts have sacrificial associations. Some suggest that sacrifices could have atoning powers, but also that some crimes could not be atoned for. Impiety (ἄσεβεια), such as the desecration of a grave, might leave the criminal effectively barred from taking part in the sacrificial rites able to bring atonement (Strubbe 1991, 43; 56, n.106).

Magical rites associated with the gathering of herbs or the ingredients of spells might include libations or offerings:

Among the Egyptians herbs are always obtained like this: the herbalist first purifies his own body, then sprinkles with natron and fumigates the herb with resin from a pine tree after carrying it around the place 3 times. Then after burning κῦφι and pouring the libation of milk as he prays, he pulls up the plant while invoking by name the daimon to whom the herb is being dedicated and calling upon him to be more effective for the use for which it is being acquired.

(*PMG IV.2967-75* from Betz 1986, 1:95)

The magic rites themselves also share similarities with Greek religious practice. Prayers used in a magical context might be accompanied by a sacrifice (θυμιάμα, Graf 1991, 191). They could be accompanied by libations of milk, wine or honey as well as animal sacrifices (195). Yet there were also important differences:

Animal sacrifice occurs, as far as I can see, in the form of a holocaust (as in a religious ritual) or strangulation- but never in the most usual and widespread form of the Olympian sacrifice, the killing of an animal followed by a common meal of the sacrificing group. In the cases where the animal or parts of it are eaten, the magician appears to be alone, in marked contrast to the ordinary sacrificial meal. The difference is important: the community, which finds its identity and its feeling of *communitas* in the Olympian sacrifice and the ensuing meal, is absent from the magical praxis.

(195)

Magic rituals thus appear to oppose the practice of the Olympian, civic rituals. The magical practice of offering unmixed libations appears also to be out of the ordinary. However, both the practices of mixed libations and holocausts

are found in “religious” ritual, too. There are similarities between the forms and practices of religion and magic. The core difference is the function of the rituals:

The rituals of the magician put him in opposition to ordinary, “religious” ritual and isolate him from his fellow man. The distinction, then, lies rather in social than in psychological factors. This, of course, would fit perfectly the social differentiation that made the magician an outsider and the outsider a potential magician.

(196)

One magical text appears to have an almost sacramental feel to it. In *PMG* 7. 643-51, the incantations in a love spell transform the wine in a cup into the “head of Athene” and “guts of Osiris”:

**Cup spell**, quite remarkable: Say the spell that is spoken to the cup 7 times:  
“You are wine; you are not wine but the head of Athena. You are wine; you are not wine, but the guts of Osiris the guts of IAO PAKERBETH SEMESILAM OOO E PATACHNA IAAA” (for *the spell of compulsion*:  
“ABLANATHANALBA AKRAMMACHAMAREI EEE, who has been stationed over necessity, IAKOUB IA IAO SABAOTH ADONAI ABRASAX”)

“At whatever hour/ you descend into the guts of her, NN, let her love me, NN, [for] all the time of her life”

(Betz 1986, 1.136)<sup>54</sup>

Amidst such understandings of magic, it is not surprising that the rituals of the Christians might be considered magical. Their relative secrecy bolstered this suspicion. Christians and magicians alike appear to have faced a common experience: alienation from their communities because of their ritual practice, or refusal to take part in civic ritual.

#### 4.3.9. *A Summary of Graeco-Roman Sacrifice*

Graeco-Roman sacrifices might operate in both family and civic arenas. Civic sacrifice and participation in its rituals marked the participant and non-participant as insider and outsider. Inclusion and exclusion feature as key elements in the significance of meals and rituals. Rituals might serve a

number of purposes: initiation (as a component of larger rituals), aversion, thanksgiving and a kind of sacramentalism.

Sacramentalism has most commonly been associated with the Mystery religions, but sometimes the evidence is not sufficient to support such conclusions. In any case, such sacramentalism was different to the sacramentalism found in Judaism with its stronger ethical component.

Further, sacrificial rituals were seen as giving some kind of benefit. Such benefits could either be “locative”, contributing something to the quality of life in this world (e.g., enhancement of social ties), or “utopian”, promising some blessing in a transformed existence (e.g., immortality) or new realm (Beck 2000, 174).

#### **4.4. Christian Understandings of Sacrifice**

As might be expected early Christian understandings of sacrifice share much with Jewish ideas. Chilton’s description of six eucharistic types remains useful, even if some of the details are disputed (cf. Ch.3, p.109, ¶ 3.4.). It reveals a widespread use of sacrificial imagery. Sacrificial themes intrude in all the patterns which he has identified: in the first, since Israel gives its produce to God in the context of purity, in the second, via the cultus, in the third, as a domestication of sacrifice (i.e., its change in location away from the Temple to the family group), in the fourth through the sacrificial associations of the *Seder*, and in the sixth through Jesus’ sacrificial self-reference.

This common theme suggests that the language of sacrifice is worth investigation as part of the Christian context of the Supper Narratives. This includes reference not only to ritual actions, but also to the death of Christ since that too became associated with sacrifice in the context of the meal. The death of Christ was explained in sacrificial terms, and much of this terminology was Hebraic. Much that follows will show how the use of such understandings permeates Christian reflection. However, what follows is not limited to sacrificial imagery from a Jewish context: that would skew the research. Possible associations with Graeco-Roman rituals and concepts also need to be explored.

#### 4.4.1. *The “Sin Offering”*

The “sin offering” influenced Paul’s atonement theology (Bell 2002, 14; 22, fn. 115). Temple terminology also was used. Rom 3:25-26 uses the image of the ἱλαστήριον (mercy seat) for Christ:

It is a mercy seat which, as opposed to the mercy seat of the Holy of Holies, is ‘publicly set forth’ on Golgotha. Such an understanding is much better than the frequently found translations of ‘propitiation’ (AV) or ‘expiation’ (RSV) where we have to read something like ἱλαστήριον θύμα, meaning expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice. ‘Propitiation’ can be refuted on linguistic grounds and the idea is not only lacking in levitical sacrifices but also contradicts Paul’s basic thinking on reconciliation. As regards expiation it must be stressed that, in view of Paul’s ontological view of sin, expiation is inadequate.

(Bell 2002, 19-20)

This supports the view expressed earlier that both “propitiation” and “expiation” are inadequate terms (above, p. 136, ¶ 4.2.5.1.). There were a number of attempts to link Christian understandings of sacrifice with the Passover. 1 Cor 5:7 is perhaps the most basic of these, linking Christ, Passover and sacrifice, but never really developing these ideas<sup>55</sup>.

The connection of the Lord’s Supper and Last Supper to the Passover stems from both the calendar details and descriptions of Jesus’ last meal (see further Ch.6. *passim*). A connection to concepts such as sacrifice is not seen so immediately.

If there is any convergence, it centres rather on the role of sacrifice and the language used to describe it. The categories described by Stowers (see above, p.129, ¶ 4.1) do not exhaust the meaning(s) of sacrifice. Notwithstanding that, the theologians of the early church specifically tried, in various ways, to connect Jesus with sacrifice.

#### 4.4.2. *The Passover Sacrifice*

Within the Johannine tradition, Jesus’ crucifixion is explicitly connected to the slaughter of the paschal lambs (John 19:31). The Synoptic accounts attempt

the same connection through the Passover date of the meal (Mk 14:1, 12 and parallels). Margaret Barker is critical of such attempts:

The Eucharist has frequently been linked to the Passover, for the very obvious reason that the Last Supper is linked to that festival, and Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed' (1.Cor.5.7). But there are immediate and obvious problems trying to link the Eucharist with Passover to as we recognise it: **the Passover was the only sacrifice not offered by a priest** (m.Pesahim 5.5ff on Exod 12.6), and the essential element was that the offering was whole, (Exod 12.46), whereas the words of institution in their various forms all emphasise that the bread/body was broken.

(Barker 2003, 75-6)

No matter how correct her assumptions, they only provide evidence that this approach, however wrong-headed it appears to the modern critic, was adopted by a number of early Christian writers.

1 Cor 10:16 describes the eucharistic cup as τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας, "the cup of blessing". It is generally agreed that this is a Semitic expression. Many scholars would specifically see it as a reference to the Passover meal, either to the third or fourth cup offered (Ch.6, p. 290, ¶ 6.7 3.). Such conclusions are not guaranteed: they hinge, to an extent, on the reconstruction of the Semitic precursors of the Greek recorded (see Ch.7, p.309, ¶ 7.2.3). Even if the grammatical link is uncertain, and the identification of the cup in this way cannot be proved conclusively, there remain wider thematic connections to Passover and beyond. The focus is not just on the Passover meal: the allusion to covenantal blood suggests that the emphasis is more on the covenant (Thiselton 2000, 756-60).

#### *4.4.3. The Letter to the Hebrews*

Whilst Heb appears to be highly critical of the Temple cult, it nonetheless contains imagery which identifies Jesus with sacrifice and ritual. Both the identifications of Christ with the scapegoat and with Melchizedek suggest engagement with the language of cult and priesthood.

#### 4.4.3.1. The Atonement

The attempt to link the sacrifice of Christ with the Atonement, that is the ritual of *Yom Kippur*, is seen clearly in Heb (Barker 1996b, 67, see also Lindars 1991, 84-98). Here, the chain of thought starts with Atonement. This is developed into a discussion of the new covenant (Heb 8:8-12, quoting Jer 31:31-4, and 10:16-17). The new covenant removes sins and re-establishes the relationship of God and his people. The establishment of the new covenant is linked to the death of Jesus. Do these passages have any bearing on understandings of the eucharist? Heb never makes an explicit connection between Christ's sacrifice and the eucharist. If there is any such connection it is to be found in those which its readers might make between atonement, the new covenant and the eucharist (Lindars 1991, 96).

Brege (2002) finds such associations in several places. He suggests that Heb 9:20 alters the wording of Exod 24:8 to conform to the Narrative of Institution (62), "sprinkled blood" (ἐρράντισεν/ ῥάντισμοῦ - Heb 9:20-1;12:24 respectively) refers to eucharistic drinking (63-4), and "drawing near" (προσερχώμεθα - Heb 10:22) compares the entrance to the Holy of Holies to reception of the eucharist (cf. *Did.* 10:6): the priestly action has now been extended to all (69-71). It must be admitted that these arguments are far from conclusive.

In regard to Heb 12:24, much depends on whether Brege can validly draw associations between sprinkling and drinking. His argument is severely compromised by his editing of the text: he makes no mention of the blood as that of Abel. This cropping of the text is disingenuous to say the least. Attridge would rather see a reference to the blood of Abel as having an atoning effect (1989, 377). Such a reading is disputed by Moffatt on the grounds that the blood of Abel was never considered efficacious like the blood of the martyrs (1986, 219; above pp. 142-3, ¶ 4.2.6.3.). Neither draws any significance from the action of "sprinkling", and ritual significance is surely diminished by the reference to Abel, who has no cultic associations.

Brege's argument depends rather on "draws near" (προσερχώμεθα). This word, it must be admitted, did have strong cultic associations, particularly in



Heb and 1 Pet (Schneider 1964, 684). However, despite this, Brege's argument is compromised by the inexactitude of the parallel he cites: *Did.* 10:6 does not use προσερχώμεθα, but ἐρχέσθω for the participant coming to receive the elements. His arguments for eucharistic significance in Heb 12 are not as strong as they initially appear.

Brege appears on stronger ground when dealing with Heb 9:20. Whilst a number of commentators are prepared to admit the possible influence of Mk 14:22 (Attridge 1989, 258; Moffatt 1986, 130) or local liturgical tradition (Lane 1991, 245) on the rewording of Heb 9:20, they are more cautious in seeing any eucharistic significance. Attridge, however, records a considerable body of support for this thesis whilst not holding it himself (1989, 258, fn. 52). The reason which lies behind his thinking may be found in his p. 258, fn. 53 where, in turn, he cites Moffatt (1986, 128). Eucharistic significance is lacking here because the eucharist, it is claimed, is connected to the Passover. This was a non-priestly rite, and as such, irrelevant to the immediate concerns of the writer of Heb. This begs the question of whether or not the Passover is the sole key which may be used to interpret the eucharist. If such a thesis is suspended, and, as will be argued in our later analysis, other typologies are at work in the Supper Narratives, the potential for eucharistic significance becomes stronger, and it cannot be put aside so peremptorily. If, and it remains a big if, there is a eucharistic reference in Heb 9, there is a possibility that sprinkling is equated with drinking.

Imagery centred on the scapegoat is equally elusive. De Roo notes that the explicit connection of Jesus with the scapegoat comes later in the Christian tradition (*Ep. Barnabas* and Tertullian) and cannot be found in the New Testament (2000, 239-40). Certainly, there is no explicit identification. However, her fn. 31, mentioning Heb 9:28 and its identification of Jesus as the one taking away sin may point in this direction. So too may some of the more picturesque descriptions of Jesus' death. However, it is possible that such descriptions may be informed by the Suffering Servant passages from Isa 53 (Lindars 1991, 93).

#### 4.4.3.2. Melchizedek

Heb 7:1-14 makes an identification with Melchizedek, the mysterious priest of Gen 14:17-24 (Sandmel 1956, 229). The argument is primarily genealogical: Melchizedek as a type of Christ has unknown origins and does not die. This marks his superiority to the Levitical priesthood (Hood 1961, 14; Wilson 1987, 131-2). Whilst the account in Gen mentions a ritual involving the offering of bread and wine, and a blessing, the account in Heb initially appears unconcerned with such details: the primary significance of Melchizedek lies in his birth and death, or rather, lack of it (Manson 1966, 112). This lack of interest suggests that limited value is placed on such typology for an understanding of ritual: the concerns here are primarily christological. However, the figure of Melchizedek used genealogically cannot be isolated from the descriptions of priesthood used ritually. Melchizedek is introduced as a type of a priesthood which surpasses the levitical priesthood of the Temple cult. Jesus functions as a superior priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 7:17), and implies the offering of a gift (Buchanan 1976, 134), even if this remains unspecified. Fitzmyer goes further. Whilst admitting that Hebrews does not attach sacrificial importance to the gifts of bread and wine, and the lack of such details in other traditions such as 11QMelch (1997b)<sup>56</sup>, Josephus or the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1997a, 241), he concludes:

Nonetheless the bringing out of "bread and wine" by the priest Melchizedek does prefigure the loving care of the high priest Christ who provides food to still the spiritual hunger of his chosen warriors in their earthly campaign.

(242)

Such inferences are, however, secondary at best. Christ's priestly role is achieved through his sacrifice of himself (Heb 7:27). It is developed through reflections on the covenant, described by extended reference to the Exod narrative (Heb 9, cf. Exod 25:10-40). The subtle changes found in Heb 9:20 give the smallest indication that ritual considerations intruded into the writer's thinking at this point. The writer has in mind either a local liturgy or words associated with Jesus at the Last Supper. Both involve bread and wine. Jesus' activity therefore, according to the writer, does have a potential parallel with the priestly activity of Melchizedek: a ritual utilising bread and wine. An

interest in the ritual activity of Melchizedek becomes possible, even if it is slight and not immediately apparent.

Such a ritual interest might have an additional benefit. It would provide an ancient precedent for the ritual activity of the early church, and clothe it with the respectability of *antiquitas* (Ch.2, p. 50, ¶ 2.4.1.) Christian ritual would not be a novelty, but an old-established pattern of worship, with precedents as old as Melchizedek, and older even than the Temple cultus.

#### 4.4.4. *The Use of Blood*

Blood also makes an appearance in the New Testament. It is used symbolically of the death of Jesus (Rev 7:14 and 12:11). This symbolic use differs from the literal use of blood in Temple ritual and points to a different system of faith:

Instead of an Aaronide priesthood who must ritually manipulate animal blood in the sanctuary, the lamb's blood accomplished redemption for all and created a new community in which all members are symbolically "priests".

(Hanson 1993, 9)

This changes the composition of those who are included and excluded:

The "in-group" is thus diverse and scattered; and one of the implications of this is that there is no central control mechanism. And since all are "priests", no clear social hierarchy is in place within the group; no select group of official cultic personnel is required to perform the rituals.

(9)

It also changes what happens when blood is splashed. In Levitical ritual, the splashed blood became a contaminant (Lev 6:27). In Rev 7:14<sup>57</sup> and 19:13 blood symbolises purification.

#### 4.4.5. *Manna*

The symbolism of Manna also occurs in the early Christian writings. 1 Cor 10:3 describes the manna and water drunk by the Israelites in the wilderness as "spiritual" (πνευματικός). This interpretation of the verse is debated, but

would seem to be supported by 1 Cor 12:3 (Wainwright 2003, 124). Similarly, *John* 6 is an exposition of the same imagery (Lindars 1972, 234)<sup>58</sup>. We have noted (p.145, ¶ 4.2.8.1.) that *Jos.Asen.* uses bread, cup and ointment as substitutes for the manna eaten by Aseneth. Schnackenburg notes that *Jos.Asen.* provides the closest parallel to John, much closer than alternatives proposed from manna texts, Philo, Gnostic and Mandaean literature (1980, 43-4). There are basic similarities between both John and *Jos.Asen.*: both contain aetiologies of a foodstuff which gives eternal life (Burchard 1987b, 119). Both describe a food which comes from heaven as a substitute for people on earth. In both, the food is a gift handed on by a heavenly envoy to historical people. Both gifts as continue to have an effect after their institution: giving life to the righteous.

There are, however, differences between the two traditions. In *Jos.Asen.*, the bread, cup and ointment are *like* Aseneth's honey. In John, the bread and wine *are* Jesus' flesh and blood. Manna develops the theme of "flesh and blood" from Exod 24:8 (John 6:53-5; cf. Brown 1988, 282). In John 6, feeding *on* Christ supplants feeding *with* Christ, and suggests a greater intimacy (Wainwright 2003, 132). It is unthinkable that this feeding should not have a eucharistic dimension (132). For John, manna is qualitatively different from the new Bread from heaven: manna did not bring life, but Jesus does (John 6: 30-33; 49-51; 58). Whilst it may not be possible to establish an exact relationship between *Jos.Asen.* and John, a common sacramental theme can be noticed.

#### 4.4.6. *Sacramentals and John*

The text of John 6 has been hotly debated. Some commentators view it as a unitary text. Others consider it a composition incorporating a number of earlier traditions or sources (Barrett 1982b, 37-9)<sup>59</sup>. Whilst the bulk of the evidence appears to support the unitary theory, this is not a necessary presupposition for the remarks that follow. For the presence of traces of sacramentalism either in a unitary or a composite text are equally indicative of such thought existing somewhere within emerging Christianity. The question of who exactly

might have held those beliefs, whether John or an unspecified redactor, is not our prime concern. The arguments that follow are, however, stronger if based on a unitary composition.

The unity of the miracle and the actions points to a eucharistic reference. The importation of references to blood in the later discourse, when such a theme is not found in the miracle also indicates this (cf. Sanders & Mastin 1968, 196). In the feeding miracle, Jesus' actions are described using terminology which has a strong similarity to the Supper Narratives (ἐλάβεν, εὐχαριστήσας, διέδωκεν- John 6:11. See Brown 1988, 237-44; Sanders and Mastin 1968, 178-9 for similarities with the Synoptic literature). Even elements peculiar to John may reflect eucharistic traditions from elsewhere in emerging Christianity: the notion of "gathering" elements echoes the eucharistic practice of the *Did.* 10:1 (Brown 1988, 248; Moloney 1998, 198). even if the explicit lack of an action "breaking" is not found and suggests an obstacle to a eucharistic interpretation (Haenchen 1984, 275), the action is nonetheless implied in the gathering together of the κλασμάτα (John 6:12).

The fact that John sets the miracle near Passover may or may not be symbolic<sup>60</sup>. Whilst Bultmann argues that the Passover themes are not developed in the events and dialogue which follow (1971, 212, fn.2), Brown suggests that the Passover colouring reflects an original setting combined with the material of vv.16-21 (potentially a reference to the Crossing of the Red Sea), 31 (manna in the desert), and 51-9 (1988, 245-6; 278-80). The last includes a comparison of the relative values of the two types of bread, that of the desert and the body of Jesus. There appears to be an overlap between the symbolism of manna and of the Passover (on the latter, Morris 1995, 303, esp. fn.12). On these grounds, the thematic links between the different sections of John 6 appear strong.

The teaching that follows is commonly considered to have two themes<sup>61</sup>. One of these is "sapiential" which manifests itself in Jesus' identification of himself as the "bread of life" (John 6:35). The sapiential traditions already had included eating imagery, e.g., Prov 9:5, though this does not imply that there was a "wisdom meal" ritual. Even if the "I am" form is Johannine, the teaching about bread yielding eternal life is a Jewish concept (Blomberg 2001, 124).

Lindars sees a “veiled allusion” to the wine of the eucharist in the sapiential tradition: a sign that the sapiential and eucharistic traditions are not distinct (1972, 259). Other signs of the combination are found in Isa 54 and the notion that “Wisdom gives food to all who seek” (Brown 1988, 274). The sapiential theme leads in turn to Messianic associations. The “eucharistic” dimension becomes more prominent in vv. 51-8 where Jesus *is* the bread of life, and images of hunger, thirst and manna predominate (274). This is not unparalleled. A similar conflation of meals and Wisdom traditions is found in a less explicit form in the *Did.* (Betz 1996, 256-8).

One of the main objections to a unitary composition came from Bultmann, who argued that John 6:51c-58 was a subsequent interpolation. Further, vv. 25-6 was an artificial link which showed that the miracle and the dialogue did not originally form a single unit. Bultmann points out that there are no stylistic differences from the writing of “John” because the redactor has adopted a similar style (see also Brown for the contrary argument, that similarities may imply a shared author [1988, 285-6]). However, it is worth noting that Bultmann, despite his misgivings about the composition of John 6, says that:

[the] miracle [is] a symbolic picture for the main idea of the revelation discourse  
(1971, 218)

We have noted some of the thematic arguments above. Bultmann’s main objection is theological. The passage is similar to Ignatius, *Ephesians* 20 which describes the eucharist as φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, ἀντιδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν<sup>62</sup>. These verses, continues Bultmann, suggest a magical or quasi-magical understanding of sacraments, very close to the pattern of some Greek Mysteries. It is debatable whether this was actually Ignatius’ view, given the role he placed upon certain spiritual conditions such as belief and right relationship with the bishop (Barrett 1982b, 85). It is also questionable whether Bultmann’s criticism, based on Ignatius, is really applicable. For John 6:58 makes a distinction between eating of this kind and merely physical eating (without completely separating the material and the spiritual, see Ch. 7, pp.331-4, ¶ 7.3.5.), and 6:54 points more to resurrection on the last day than immortality (85). These arguments may be semantic. More debatable is the

implication that John's thought is identical with that of Ignatius (Morris 1995, 332, fn. 125): there are no grounds for this, and indeed such an analogy may be "superficial" (Barrett 1982b, 43).

This debate, nonetheless, sounds a cautionary note. It highlights the problems of seeing John 6 as devoid of all mention of the sacraments, or as referring to nothing else. The answer lies somewhere between the two, with a eucharistic, sacramental dimension being given to the believer's relationship with Christ (Morris 1995, 311-4). John's sacramental theology is being shaped against a backdrop of wider themes: unbelief and faith (Hoskyns & Davey 1947, 288).

#### *4.4.7. Sacramentalism in Paul*

Traces of sacramentalism may also be seen in Paul's writings. The precise meaning of the meal, and Paul's interpretation, will be examined in Ch. 8.

The New Testament documents also show evidence of a social aspect to the ceremonial meal: it is an expression of unity. This is clearly shown in 1 Cor 10:16-17. Paul stresses this unity through the identification of "one bread" with the "one body" of Christ. This is different from other eucharistic passages which stress unity by reference to the cup. The verses that follow further show that this is a unity with Christ, not just a social bond for the members of the community. Sharing in the cup has a "God-ward" dimension: sharing in Christ is contrasted with sharing the cup of demons (see below, pp.177-8, ¶ 4.4.10).

The meaning of "communion" cannot be presumed. It is often interpreted as a kind of sharing: community is expressed through worship and Christian service (Yao 2004, 31). Yet, Paul (1 Cor 10:16) considers it more than "fellowship" or "sharing":

For 10:12 is also designed to show that the cult meal sets the partakers in a dangerous field of force. The related concept of *κοινωνία* which is to be found there is introduced to convey the sense of falling into a sphere of domination; our translations 'participation' or even 'fellowship' are thus much too weak, because the concept is intended to describe the experience of forcible seizure, of the overwhelming power of superior forces.

(Käsemann 1964, 124)

The ritual meal becomes the time when those who partake come under the authority of the Lord, and are liable to salvation or judgment (124-7; see further Ch.8, pp. 394-7, ¶ 8.5.3.)<sup>63</sup>.

#### 4.4.8. *A Christian Meal for the Dead?*

We have already noted the important role of meals for the dead in Graeco-Roman society. Issues of “communion” impinge on the discussion of Graeco-Roman cult meals in 1 Cor 10. These might refer to any of the Olympians, the mysteries, heroes, or the dead.

There are ways in which Christian depictions of Jesus echo the hero cults. Thompson suggests, for example, that John depicts Jesus as a “hero with a human past” (2000, 693)<sup>64</sup>. That said, John’s portrayal is no mere mimicry, but a modified version of such myths and rituals (703). The fact that the early Christian meals focussed on eating with a dead “hero” could easily have influenced the ways in which they were perceived. However, the early Christians themselves did not define themselves using terminology usually associated with sodalities or funeral clubs of this kind (θίασος, ὀργεῶν), but called themselves an ἐκκλησία, a primarily political designation (Koester 1998, 348). Given this possible cultural context, it could be assumed that the eucharist was a Christian example of a meal for the dead. Key differences emerge. The first is the frequency of such meals: Graeco-Roman meals tended to be anniversary events. The second is that Christians did not define themselves in terms of such rituals. Thirdly, the eucharist does not commemorate the dead, but proclaims the death of Jesus (Chenderlin 1982, 143).

#### 4.4.9. Anamnesis

The Hebraic understanding of “memorial” can also be seen in early Christian literature<sup>65</sup>. It appears to be used specifically of the eucharist in the *Did.* 10:5 (cf. 4:1):

Since this is the only memorial terminology in the section on the Eucharist, it may represent a traditional interpretation of memorial material related to that



which appears in Paul in the nominal form. Be that as it may, it shows the strength of reminding-God thinking even in the face of notable Hellenistic influence.

(Chenderlin 1982, 161)

It is this rather than Graeco-Roman thought and practices that appears to drive Christian rituals.

#### *4.4.10. Idolatry*

The central issue was not, however, perceptions of these kinds about the nature of “memorial”. Graeco-Roman meals for the dead raised particular problems for the emerging Christian groups:

The act of eating in the circumstances of funeral banquets or memorial meals involves the acknowledgment of the existence of the spirits of the dead in whose honor the food is offered. The Christian is forbidden to participate in this “idolatry” of a Roman funeral, not only because it involves the decorating of images of the deceased, but also because of the sacramental aspect of sharing food with the dead.

(Kennedy 1987, 235)

Similar conclusions hold good for the other types of cultic eating which might take place either in temples or private homes. The conclusion that the main problem is as much participating in rituals as the foodstuffs themselves, holds good (Fotopoulos 2003, 252;258). Indeed Paul appears to make more allowances over the foodstuffs than over participation in rituals (262-3). Barrett’s analysis of idol-meats in the context of idolatry points in this direction:

To worship a demon is to deny God his due; more, it is to throw in one’s lot with the defeated, anti-God forces of the universe, to embrace the ultimately lost cause and to perish with it. But precisely because the cause of the demons is lost, they have no power to infest or infect a piece of meat. Hence (conscientious scruples permitting) the Christian may freely use εἰδωλόθυτα and eat with unbelieving friends. To take part in idolatrous ritual is another matter. To do this is to place oneself in the context of worship in which the demons still exercise power. This cannot be dismissed as a merely mythological statement. We may borrow the words of Billerbeck quoted

above, and say that the demons are 'nothings' who become lords precisely in that men (in worship) treat them as lords, or as Paul puts the matter elsewhere, οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ᾧ παριστάνετε ἑαυτοὺς δούλους εἰς ὑπακοήν, δοῦλοι ἐστε ᾧ ὑπακούετε; (*Rom* 6:16)

(Barrett 1982, 52)

This understanding matches Käsemann's reading of κοινωνία (quoted on p. 175, ¶ 4.4.7.). Neither eating with friends nor food *per se*, is the problem in either interpretation. What matters is the participation in a ritual activity. For eating either with demons or the dead brings the participant into contact with them and their influence. Such concerns may even have shaped the content of the Christian ritual meal:

...the foods of the Christian meal best known and attested, the eating of bread and drinking of wine, could be understood as a compromise with or oblique response to the cuisine of sacrifice. Meat was tainted with the associations of idolatry even for Paul, the apostle of the clear culinary conscience, and so could not easily have been employed in the meals of Christian communities, even if there had been a ritual tradition encouraging such use. Wine, while free of such direct sacrificial associations, was still capable of being viewed in the light of festive and religious custom, Jewish as well as Gentile, and could therefore readily be used in a meal which, for Paul, clearly came to have overtones which were sacrificial in nature.

(McGowan 1999, 66)

Yet such an argument must be tempered by the fact that libations, whilst perhaps free of direct sacrificial notions, were not neutral religious acts<sup>66</sup>:

Libations of wine offered to the gods followed by hymns to various deities were a standard element of formal meals, whether sacrificial food was served or not...The avoidance of libations offered to the *daimon* Dionysus and to other pagan deities, which Paul considered to be wicked demons (1 *Cor* 10:20) would have been even more difficult for the Corinthian Christians than the avoidance of sacrificial food at formal meals. The complete avoidance of wine libations offered to pagan deities would have necessitated the avoidance of practically all invitations to meals extended by pagans (cf. 1 *Cor*. 5:9-10).

(Fotopoulos 2003, 258)

Sacral eating and drinking were full of pitfalls for the young Christian community. Participating in rituals was dangerous, so was the consumption of

food or wine which might be associated with them. Yet the cost for not participating, for not becoming compromised, was alienation from the society in which they lived.

#### 4.4.11. *The Didache: Sacrifice and "Sacrificialisation"*

The *Did.* provokes a number of questions with which it is fitting to close this chapter. Firstly, it seems to provide an early Christian example of the phenomenon of "sacrificialisation". Two other phenomena back this up. First is the equation of sacrifice with ritual meals: eating could assume sacrificial connotations. Second is the hope of offering a "pure sacrifice" rather than a holocaust<sup>67</sup>. The *Did.* attempts this by restricting admission to those who are baptised (9:5) and ensuring that confessions were held before its celebration on the Lord's Day (14:1-2):

To insure a "pure sacrifice", the DIDACHE community was set up with two distinct safeguards: no unbaptised or unreconciled was admitted (DIDACHE 9:5) and the confession of failings was to be held prior to the Eucharist on the Lord's Day (DIDACHE 14:1). These had the effect of enforcing the standards of holiness cherished by the community members.

(Milavec 2003, np)

The emphasis in the meal itself is not on confession, or becoming purified, since that is a precondition of participation, but on a sacrifice of praise and service. Similar patterns can be seen in Heb 13. Exclusion also points to the ontic character of the elements of the meal. Those excluded are not able to share in the benefits, the gifts of salvation, which the elements mediate to those who eat (Betz 1996, 268). Thus the understanding of eucharist in the *Did.* is sacrificial, and is connected to ethics and morality. This approach to sacrifice has similarities to Philo, but places a different stress on the communal aspect:

(B)oth the framers of the DIDACHE and Philo presume that the suitability of a person's sacrifice is directly proportional to his/her holiness of life. For the DIDACHE, however, the focus is decidedly communal. Only "one sacrifice" is offered, and one would suspect that the suitability of this sacrifice might be directly proportional to the striving for perfection and the deepening of

interpersonal bonding within the community. Philo, of course, would not exclude such elements; yet his metaphors reveal his emphasis. Sacrifice, for Philo, is first and foremost an individual affair dependent upon achieved perfection of life. Sacrifice, for the framers of the DIDACHE, is first and foremost a communal affair dependent upon interdependent forms of mutual support and bonding.

(Milavec 2003, np)

#### 4.4.12. *The Didache and Eschatology*

The *Did.*'s accounts of the eucharist contain a strong eschatological thrust: these themes will be discussed more fully in the next chapter (Ch.5, p. 237, ¶ 5.4.11.). However, it also raises an interesting feature about memory for what it records apparently makes no reference to the actions and words which we often call the "narrative of institution". This is an act of remembering which does not appear to include an account of what is remembered.

How can this be explained? It is possible that Jesus' example is not central to the *Did.*'s eucharistic theology, but such a view is undermined by the specific references to Jesus by name. Jesus the person is important, even if attention is not drawn to any specific event or *exemplum*. It is inconceivable that "Jesus" should be a term devoid of meanings and associations. The question is then to identify them. References to *Matt* (above, Ch. 3, p. 116, ¶ 3.4.4.4) suggest that ideas present there may well be implicit: similar implicit thoughts have also been seen in our analysis of *Heb* (above, pp.167-70, ¶ 4.4.3.). Why, then, have these not been included in the *Did.*? It is possible that the writer saw no point in re-iterating what was shared and agreed upon. In such a case the writer would only be drawing attention to matters which had been neglected, or needed specific emphasis. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a similar approach lies behind Paul's account of the eucharist in 1 Cor. None of the texts under examination gives an *exhaustive* description of early eucharistic practice. The writer of the *Did.* is being selective, choosing to re-iterate the themes of thanksgiving, of eschatology, and of sacrifice, against a commonly held background.

#### *4.4.13. Sacrifice and Related Terms in Early Christianity: A Summary*

Whilst Early Christianity may, at first glance, give the impression of breaking with sacrificial tradition, such language and imagery intrudes at a number of points. The language of sacrifice and blood is associated with the death of Christ. This is further explicated using sacrificial mechanisms from Judaism such as covenant, and anamnesis. Symbolism is also adopted, e.g., manna. Given the link between sacrifice and eating, concepts associated with eating can also be discerned, notably, sacramentalism. Not only that, but Early Christianity appears to share the dynamic of sacrificialisation which was also at work in Second Temple Judaism.

Whilst these terms seem to indicate stronger connections with Judaism than Graeco-Roman culture, the latter also intrudes. There is a lively debate about idolatry, prompted by engagement with social and religious practice. There also appears to be an opening out of language and conceptuality in such a way that themes which may appear to have closer associations with Judaism may also engage with Graeco-Roman thought and practice (e.g., communion, sacramentalism).

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

The connection of meals and sacrifice is found across all three groups we have examined: Jewish, Graeco-Roman and Christian. The fact that meals are connected with sacrifice suggests that the eucharist might be more associated with “sacrifices” rather than holocausts, with rituals in which the worshippers partook of the victim rather than those in which the victim was immolated. However, this does not mean that rituals in which eating did not take place are necessarily redundant. That said, the imagery of sacrifice appears stronger than that of the holocaust.

All three admit the possibility of eating, or somehow sharing, with the deity. All three show specific examples of sacramental thought: *Jos.Asen.* in Judaism, the Mysteries in the Graeco-Roman, and John 6 in the Christian tradition, to name three examples. Yet these different sacramental systems are not

identical. Rather they show what Beck calls “a *shared sacramental mentality*, a propensity for expressing myth in ritual” (Beck 2000, 175).

Where meal and sacrifice coalesce, there appear especially to be strong similarities between the theology of Judaism and emerging Christianity: memorial, communion, covenant and blood are important in both. Graeco-Roman traditions also share common features: community and communion. The links to Mystery cults are more problematic, principally because of their complex historical development.

In conclusion we can suggest that whilst there are apparent similarities between the general appearance of the eucharist and the Mysteries (i.e., meals connecting the believers to a god, who might be classed as “dying-and-rising”), these do not hold up under close scrutiny: there are differences both in the fine points of their ritual meals and myths. There would appear to be more mileage in considering the similarities which arise in general concepts such as sacramentalism than in the identifications of the myths and rituals themselves.

In all three traditions, participation in sacrificial meals may lead to benefits. These might be extended to the participants as a community or as individuals, or both. Jewish sacrifice and participation in the meals showed the purity of the believer, and a right relationship with God. Within Graeco-Roman practice, participation was often linked to politics: the well-being of the *polis* or state. Individual benefits were more obvious in the Mysteries: participation in the rites guaranteed various benefits for the participant. Similarly, participation in the Eucharist was, for early Christians, a sign of being in a right relationship with God.

The mention of benefits, however, raises a number of issues. Ancient cults may be described as “locative” or “utopian”. “Locative” theologies hope for a confirmation of their hopes in the here and now, whilst their “utopian” counterparts look for resolution in and to another realm (Beck 2000, 174). The two terms, are not however mutually exclusive: a cult might manifest benefits of both kinds. It will be helpful to consider this further dimension in the following chapter, under the umbrella of eschatological hopes.

## Notes

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1 Cf. Templeton:

The bread and wine of 1 Cor 11 are components of a cultic meal. The meal, it is true, is profane in the technical sense, as eaten outside the temple area of God's house, and what is eaten is profane in as far as bread and wine belong equally well to 'unbound' as well as 'craft bound' actions.

(1988, 116)

2 Purity became more of a concern as the Jewish people lost control over their political and religious life. Purity became more of a concern at the time of the Babylonian exile and in the rabbinic period (Hanson 1993, 2). We might consider this to be the transfer of political systems into a kinship system because the political arena was no longer available.

3 On the identity of Melchizedek and his identification as both priest and king, see Freehof 1938, 318-20; Mowinckel 1954, 72, 75; Sandmel 1956, 229; Von Rad 1972, 179-80.

4

The motif of eating and drinking with the deity is related to the idea of the banquet of the gods, a common theme throughout the ancient Near East, where it fulfills not only a religious function but serves political ends as well.<sup>(n24)</sup> In Canaanite mythology the high god El presides over the divine assembly on his sacred mountain "at the source of the rivers and the springs of the double deeps" (KTU 1.2.iii.4-5). Yamm's initial challenge to Baal comes as the assembly of the gods is gathered together at a banquet over which El presides as host (KTU 1.2.i.1-38). After defeating the enemy, Yamm, Baal is hailed as king (KTU 1.2. iv. 25-40). Baal celebrates his victory and his newly won kingship at a lavish banquet on Mount Saphon (KTU 1.1.i.1-20). After the successful completion of his house and the reaffirmation of his kingship, he again hosts a feast on Mount Saphon (KTU 1.4.vi.44-45, 51-52, 54-55), offering his guests honored seats at his table and an abundance of food and wine. The gods and goddesses come together to affirm Baal's kingship by eating and drinking on his royal mountain.

In *Enuma Elish*, the anunnaki implore Marduk to fight Tiamat and rescue them. In return, they promise Marduk kingship over the assembly of the gods. Marduk slays Tiamat and her partisans. As a sign of respect and devotion the gods build Babylon, a city worthy of Marduk, who has vanquished their enemy. The gods then call a feast to celebrate and affirm the kingship of Marduk (*Enuma Elish* 6.70, 73). During the lusty eating and drinking the anunnaki pledge their allegiance to Marduk. The banquet of the gods is a political move that confirms Marduk's kingship. As a result, the order of the universe is reestablished, and the constellations and boundaries of the heavens are set in place.

A similar mythic structure is displayed in 1 Kings 18. The contest between the reigning, enthroned Yahweh, a figure of El, and the upstart Phoenician Baal is acted out on Mount Carmel. When the fire falls from heaven, thus reaffirming Yahweh's sole kingship, events move swiftly to a predictable conclusion. Elijah calls for the seizure of the enemies of Yahweh. They are taken down from the mountain and slaughtered in the waters of the Kishon, at the base of the sacrificial mountain. Finally, in celebration of Yahweh's victory and kingship, the earthly king is sent back up the mountain by the prophet of Yahweh to eat and to drink. It is Yahweh who provides the victory banquet. Thus, the association between Yahweh and Baal, which had become confusing, then threatening, in the minds of the people, is eliminated. Israel is called back to its ancient, premonarchic, tribal associations with Yahweh as the enthroned El.

(Roberts 2000, np)

5

I WILL now, however, make mention of a few of our laws which belong to purifications, and the like sacred offices, since I am accidentally come to this matter of sacrifices. These sacrifices were of two sorts; of those sorts one was offered for private persons, and the other for the people in general; and they are done in two different ways. In the one case, what is slain is burnt, as a whole burnt-offering, whence that name is given to it; but the other is a thank-offering, and is designed for feasting those that sacrifice. I will speak of the former. Suppose a private man offer a burnt-offering, he must slay either a bull, a lamb, or a kid of the goats, and the two latter of the first year, though of bulls he is permitted to sacrifice those of a greater age; but all burnt-offerings are to be of males. When they are slain, the priests sprinkle the blood round about the altar; they then cleanse the bodies, and divide them into parts, and salt them with salt, and lay them upon the altar, while the pieces of wood are piled one upon another, and the fire is burning; they next cleanse the feet of the sacrifices, and the inwards, in an accurate manner and so lay them to the rest to be purged by the fire, while the priests receive the hides. This is the way of offering a burnt-offering.

(2)[228] But those that offer thank-offerings do indeed sacrifice the same creatures, but such as are unblemished, and above a year old; however, they may take either males or females. They also sprinkle the altar with their blood; but they lay upon the altar the kidneys and the caul, and all the fat, and the lobe of the liver, together with the rump of the lamb; then, giving the breast

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and the right shoulder to the priests, the offerers feast upon the remainder of the flesh for two days; and what remains they burn.

(3)[230] The sacrifices for sins are offered in the same manner as is the thank-offering. But those who are unable to purchase complete sacrifices, offer two pigeons, or turtle doves; the one of which is made a burnt-offering to God, the other they give as food to the priests. But we shall treat more accurately about the oblation of these creatures in our discourse concerning sacrifices. But if a person fall into sin by ignorance, he offers an ewe lamb, or a female kid of the goats, of the same age; and the priests sprinkle the blood at the altar, not after the former manner, but at the corners of it. They also bring the kidneys and the rest of the fat, together with the lobe of the liver, to the altar, while the priests bear away the hides and the flesh, and spend it in the holy place, on the same day; 1 for the law does not permit them to leave of it until the morning. But if any one sin, and is conscious of it himself, but hath nobody that can prove it upon him, he offers a ram, the law enjoining him so to do; the flesh of which the priests eat, as before, in the holy place, on the same day. And if the rulers offer sacrifices for their sins, they bring the same oblations that private men do; only they so far differ, that they are to bring for sacrifices a bull or a kid of the goats, both males.

(Whiston (1895). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=J.+AJ+3.224>)

6 Josephus, *Ant.* 3.226-7. On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=J.+AJ+3.224>. Text in fn.5 above.

Lang suggests that Philo, *Special Laws*, 2:145-6 denies that the layman kills the victim, but this does not appear to be borne out by the text he cites, unless it is assumed that the Passover is an exception to regular practice:

(145) And after the feast of the new moon comes the fourth festival, that of the passover, which the Hebrews call pascha, on which the whole people offer sacrifice, beginning at noonday and continuing till evening. (146) And this festival is instituted in remembrance of, and as giving thanks for, their great migration which they made from Egypt, with many myriads of people, in accordance with the commands of God given to them; leaving then, as it seems, a country full of all inhumanity and practising every kind of inhospitality, and (what was worst of all) giving the honour due to God to brute beasts; and, therefore, they sacrificed at that time themselves out of their exceeding joy, without waiting for priests. And what was then done the law enjoined to be repeated once every year, as a memorial of the gratitude due for their deliverance. These things are thus related in accordance with the ancient historic accounts.

(Trans. Yonge (1854-90). On-line at <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book28.html>)

7 Such a process is further witnessed to by the role of the Temple as God's place on earth (Barker1985; Levenson 1985, 142-45 and 1988).

8

MISHNA: It is a merit that the two he-goats for the Day of Atonement should be equal in color, stature, and price, and both (bought) at the same time; but if they are not equal, they may still be used. If one was bought to-day, and the other on the morrow, they are valid. If one of them died, then if this occurs before the lots are drawn, another is purchased to make up the pair; but if later, then a new pair should be acquired. Lots should be drawn again, and this should be said: If the Lord's he-goat has died, "The one on which the lot has fallen for the Lord may substitute him"; and if that of Azazel has died, "The one on which the lot has fallen for Azazel may substitute him." And the remaining one of the previous pair should be allowed to feed (graze) till it chance to get a blemish, when it is sold, and the money goes as a gift-offering, since an animal designed to atone for the congregation is not put to death. R. Jehudah says, it is (put to death). Also said R. Jehudah: If the blood [of the Lord's he-goat, when slaughtered] had already been spilled, the scapegoat should be put to death; if the scapegoat had died, the other one's blood should be poured out [and a new pair purchased].

9 Barker uses this as the basis of Heb's identification of Jesus with both animals.

10 Barker argues that the Hebrew *yazzeh* (often translated "startle" in Isa 52:15) means "sprinkle" in the Atonement ritual (Lev 16:19).

11 Of key interest here is the recurrent problem of the dating of the texts on which she bases her theory. For her theory to hold it is necessary to hold that later texts may contain and maintain earlier traditions. Whilst this cannot necessarily be disproven, neither can it be proven.

12 Both the Hebrew *kpr* and the Greek ἱλάσκομαι are problematic. Barker notes that the etymology of *kpr* is not helpful to the discussion of meaning:

Atonement translates the Hebrew *kpr*, but the meaning of *kpr* in a ritual context is not known. Investigations have uncovered only what actions were used in the rites of atonement, not what that action was believed to effect. The possibilities for its meaning are 'cover' or 'smear' or 'wipe', but these reveal no more than the exact meaning of 'breaking bread' reveals about the



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Christian Eucharist. What these actions were believed to effect in ritual have to be deduced by other means. To understand atonement we have to understand what the faith community believed was happening when the priests smeared and sprinkled blood, and when the high priest took blood into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement and then brought it out again to smear and sprinkle around the holy places.

(Barker 1994, 3)

Ringgren (1962, 28-42) describes the etymology of *kpr* without mentioning propitiation, preferring expiation. De Roo uses propitiation rather than expiation:

The Hebrew word for 'to make atonement' in Lev 16,10 is *rp̄k* (*sic*). Its primary meaning is uncertain. Yet a case can be made that in atonement for sin God's anger is placated, in other words, he is propitiated or appeased. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible making atonement is equated with turning away the wrath of God. In Numbers 16, Moses tells Aaron to make atonement for the sinful Israelites, 'because wrath has gone out from YHWH' in the form of a plague (v. 46). Aaron's act of atonement stops the plague, the expression of God's anger (vv. 47-48). Numbers 25, describing Phinehas's killing of the Israelite and the Midianite woman, also clearly speaks of atonement as a means to appease God's wrath. The mixed couple killed by Phinehas clearly symbolizes evil. In v. 11 God says about Phinehas: 'He has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites'. In v. 13 the same thought is expressed in slightly different terms: 'He [Phinehas] was zealous for his God and made atonement for the Israelites'. Phinehas's zealous act is described as both turning away God's wrath and atoning for the Israelites, showing that atonement is a way to appease God.

(2000, 237)

We can also see this theme in the sacrifice described in 2 Sam 24:18-25. The sacrifice is not a thank-offering that the plague has already been averted from Israel, but "that the plague may be checked among the people" (v. 22).

Chilton, following Gray, suggests that appeasement (דָּפַק Gen. 32:21) is more useful than either expiation or propitiation, but also notes a secondary meaning of "wiping away" wrath (1992, 51, n.18).

Büchsel detects a movement from propitiation towards expiation. Propitiation is used of Greek sacrificial understandings, whilst expiation is used more for Hebrew (1965, 310-7). By the time of the New Testament, the terms could embrace either understanding. The argument cannot be reconciled on the grounds of etymology, given the debate over terms within the etymology itself and the methodological weakness of the "etymological fallacy". Subsequent history sees both terms enlarging their possible range of meanings. It seems wiser to assume that these categories are not reliable, and should not form the focus of any attempt to analyse the meaning of sacrifice. These terms obscure rather than illuminate the matter in hand.

13

Given such telling verbal cross-references, it is not appropriate to try to determine precisely whether atonement is a form of ransoming, an expiation, a purification, or purgation. All these meanings are very close to each other, working by analogy from one context to the next. The word 'ransom' evokes the idea of covenant, a meaning never far beneath the surface in Leviticus. Serious breach of covenant deserves the death penalty; attack on the things belonging to the Lord is such a crime; eating meat with the blood in it is a very grave offence of the same order.

(Douglas 1999, 232)

14

The Jews differed from their neighbors in the degree of care they took to ensure that the blood was completely devoted to God, while the rest of the meat was theirs, to be eaten.

(Cahill 2002, np)

It is possible that the distinction between pouring libations and drinking as (un)acceptable ways of using blood developed later. Note that Hittite religion described a libation in the following way:

The act of libation is usually expressed by the phrase 'the king drinks the deity', and many of the rock and stone monuments of the empire depict the king in precisely this action of pouring a libation.

(Hooke 1958, 106)

which may be interpreted as "gives the god to drink", "drinks in honour of the God" or even, in a mystical sense, "drinks the god" (106, fn.1).

15 The passage reads:

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Let them eat of the goat which is offered for their sins at the fast, and let all the priests, but nobody else eat of it inward parts unwashed and with vinegar.

(Quoted in Barker 2003, 300)

Text can also be found on line at [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-41.htm#P3130\\_520749](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-41.htm#P3130_520749)

16

...the Council of the Community shall be established in truth. It shall be an Everlasting Plantation, a House of Holiness for Israel, an Assembly of Supreme Holiness for Aaron. They shall be witnesses to truth at the Judgement, and shall be the elect of Goodwill who shall atone for the land and pay to the wicked their reward. It shall be that tried wall, that *precious corner-stone*, whose foundations shall be neither rock nor sway in their place (Isa. xxviii, 16). It shall be a Most Holy Dwelling for Aaron, with everlasting knowledge of the Covenant of justice, and offer up sweet fragrance. It shall be a House of perfection and Truth in Israel that they may establish a Covenant according to the everlasting precepts. And they shall be an agreeable offering, atoning for the land and determining the judgement of wickedness, and there shall be no more iniquity.

(1 QS 8 in Vermes 1987, 72-3)

17 On O'Neill 1995b :

...Chapter Four on the Teacher of Righteousness (dies shamefully; was believed to be Messiah; would come again as Son of God / Melchizedek / God) will, I imagine, convince very few...

(Goodacre 1997, np)

18 "Reminding" embraces both *μνημόσυνων* and *ἀνάμνησις*:

The uses of both the "reminding" words are heavily religious, and within the religious area, heavily cultic. There seems to be little difference between the two words in the cultic area. *The idea is that of a symbol – a word or thing or act- that is so said or placed or done as to attract the attention of the one who is meant to read it and thus turn his mind to the matter symbolized.*

(Chenderlin 1982, 116)

Thurian notes that cultic associations with "memorial" were not restricted to sacrifices, but could also include vestments, music, money & beauty (Thurian 1960, 57-9; 62; 70-3; 80-2).

19 Examples include Lev 2:1-2, 9-10,16; 5:11-13; 6:16-18; Isa 57:8, 66:3; Num 5:15, note esp. 5:18ff.

20 Nevertheless, it would seem, on wider theological terms, that the God-reminding aspect cannot be ruled out given that God is involved in a dynamic, not a static, relationship with the world.

21 It must however be noticed that such memorial activities have different functions. Compare the sin offerings of Lev 5:11-13 and the "sacrifice of jealousy" in Num 5:15:

Both types are "memorials", but in the first case the remembering brings forgiveness because the sin, though present, is acknowledged; in the second it brings punishment if the sin is present and is *not* acknowledged. In the first case, God remembers the sin only in remembering that is acknowledged in the cultic act. He remembers it only to forget it. In the second case he remembers it to punish. The question of whether the punishment might have been forthcoming if the sin *were* acknowledged is aside from the point: there is a clear distinction of Divine attitudes towards the two kinds of memorial.

(Chenderlin 1982, 122)

22 For the origins of the trajectory, see Petuchowski:

What emerges from all this is the fact that the religion of the Prophets demands no fewer "works" than does the religion of the Priests. Prophets and Priests might argue about what "works" are really acceptable to God. The Prophets consider a cult, which is unaccompanied by a moral life, to be totally worthless. Among the Priests, on the other hand, there may occasionally have been those who put the cult in first place, even when it remained unaccompanied by a moral life. Here the conflict between Prophet and Priest originated.

But that conflict was not an argument about the duty of serving God, or about the need for faith as a precondition of that service. Nor was it an argument about the fact that one serves God with human "works." The argument, instead, turns on the question of whether the "works" are to be of a cultic or of an ethical kind, or, perhaps, of a combination of both of them. And that means that, even if we were to accept the sharp contrast, posited by nineteenth-century biblical

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criticism, between prophetic and priestly religion, that contrast is in no way identical with any dichotomy between "Faith and Works."

(1990, np)

For a definition of "spiritualization":

We are using the word spiritualization in a much broader sense than simply antimaterialistic. This sense includes all those movements and tendencies within Judaism and Christianity which attempted to emphasize the true meaning of sacrifice, that is, the inner, spiritual, or ethical significance of the cult over against the merely material or merely external understanding of it. We include here such different things as: the effort among pious Jews to make their material sacrifice an expression of an ethically good life; the prophetic criticism of the sacrificial cult; the philosophical influenced doubts about the sense of offering material sacrifice to a spiritual God; the necessity of finding substitutes for material sacrifice when participation in the sacrificial cult of the Jerusalem temple was not possible, as in Qumran, or in the diaspora, or after the destruction of the temple.

(Daly 1978, 7)

23 Hicks notes how interpretations of the prophets as opposed to the Temple cult and its associated worship may stem from the controversies of the Reformation (1959, 57-61). He further suggests that the first criticism of cult worship (i.e., which would completely do away with the practice of cult worship) in Hebrew, Jewish and Christian thought stems from this period; before it is questionable whether such thinking can be found (71).

24 For the importance of morality in offering sacrifice:

(270) Let the man, therefore, who is adorned with these qualities go forth in cheerful confidence to the temple which most nearly belongs to him, the most excellent of all abodes to offer himself as a sacrifice. But let him in whom covetousness and a desire of unjust things dwell and display themselves, cover his head and be silent, checking his shameless folly and his excessive impudence, in those matters in which caution is profitable; for the temple of the truly living God may not be approached by unholy sacrifices. (271) I should say to such a man: My good man, God is not pleased even though a man bring hecatombs [100 oxen] to his altar; for he possesses all things as his own and stands in need of nothing. But he delights in minds which love God and in men who practice holiness, from whom he gladly receives cakes and barley, the very cheapest things, as if they were the most valuable ...

(Philo, *Special Laws*, 1.270-1)

God looks upon even the smallest offering of frankincense by a holy man as more valuable than ten thousand beasts which may be sacrificed by one who is not thoroughly virtuous.... In the eyes of God it is not the number of things sacrificed that is accounted valuable but the purity of the rational spirit of the sacrificer

(Philo, *Special Laws*, 1.275, 277)

For "victim-free" sacrifice:

And even if they [persons who practice holiness] bring nothing else, still when they bring themselves, the most perfect completeness of virtue and excellence, they are offering the most excellent of all sacrifices, honoring God, their Benefactor and Savior, with hymns and thanksgivings

(Philo, *Special Laws*, 1.272)

when they [the righteous] have no longer any materials left in which they can display their piety, they then consecrate and offer up themselves, displaying an unspeakable holiness and a most superabundant excess of a God-loving disposition"

(Philo, *Special Laws*, 1.248)

(All trans. Yonge (1854-90). On-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book27.html>).

25 Theorists of sacrifice may argue that rituals involving human sacrifice were part of sacrificial behaviour in prehistoric times (e.g., Burkert 2000, 31;37;59; for criticism of such views, see Frankfurter 2001, 365-76). It was however a redundant practice within both Greek and Roman cultures long before the New Testament period. From the 6th century BCE onwards, both Greek and Roman society condemned human sacrifice as barbaric, indicating how uncivilised its practitioners were. Human sacrifice could be used as an indication of the uncivilised nature either of a foreign culture, or of a group living within either Greek or Roman cultural boundaries (Rives 1995, 67-74).

They brought forth the hecatomb for Apollo, who strikes from afar, and forth stepped also the daughter of Chryses from the sea-faring ship. Her then did Odysseus of many wiles lead to the altar, [440] and place in the arms of her dear father, saying to him: Chryses, Agamemnon, king of men, sent me forth to bring to you your daughter, and to offer to Phoebus a holy hecatomb on the Danaans' behalf, that therewith we may propitiate the lord, who has now brought upon the Argives woeful lamentation. [445] So saying he placed her in his arms, and he joyfully took his dear child; but they made haste to set in array for the god the holy hecatomb around the well-built altar, and then they washed their hands and took up the barley grains. Then Chryses lifted up his hands, and prayed aloud for them: [450] Hear me, god of the silver bow, who stands over Chryse and holy Cilla, and rules mightily over Tenedos. As before you heard me when I prayed--to me you did honour, and mightily smote the host of the Achaeans--even so now fulfill me this my desire: [455] ward off now from the Danaans the loathly pestilence. So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Then, when they had prayed, and had sprinkled the barley grains, they first drew back the victims' heads, and cut their throats, and flayed them, and cut out the thighs and covered them [460] with a double layer of fat, and laid raw flesh thereon. And the old man burned them on stakes of wood, and made libation over them of gleaming wine; and beside him the young men held in their hands the five-pronged forks. But when the thigh-pieces were wholly burned, and they had tasted the entrails, they cut up the rest and spitted it, [465] and roasted it carefully, and drew all off the spits. Then, when they had ceased from their labour and had made ready the meal, they feasted, nor did their hearts lack anything of the equal feast. But when they had put from them the desire for food and drink, the youths filled the bowls brim full of drink [470] and served out to all, first pouring drops for libation into the cups. So the whole day long they sought to appease the god with song, singing the beautiful paeon, the sons of the Achaeans, hymning the god who works from afar; and his heart was glad, as he heard. But when the sun set and darkness came on.

(Homer, *Iliad*, 1.437-74, trans. Murray (1924). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hom.+Il.+1.428>)

And when they were now come to the huts of the son of Atreus, then did the king of men, Agamemnon slay there a bull, [315] a male of five years, for the son of Cronos, supreme in might. This they flayed and dressed, and cut up all the limbs. Then they sliced these cunningly, and spitted them and roasted them carefully and drew all off the spits. But when they had ceased from their labour and had made ready the meal, [320] they feasted, nor did their hearts lack aught of the equal feast.

(Homer, *Iliad*, 7.313-22, trans. Murray (1924). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hom.+Il.+7.313>)

Then he raised himself up, and smote the boar with a billet of oak, which he had left when splitting the wood, and the boar's life left him. And the others cut the boar's throat, and signed him, and quickly cut him up, and the swineherd took as first offerings bits of raw flesh from all the limbs, and laid them in the rich fat. These he cast into the fire, when he had sprinkled them with barley meal, [430] but the rest they cut up and spitted, and roasted it carefully, and drew it all off the spits, and cast it in a heap on platters. Then the swineherd stood up to carve, for well did his heart know what was fair, and he cut up the mess and divided it into seven portions. [435] One with a prayer he set aside for the nymphs and for Hermes, son of Maia, and the rest he distributed to each.

(Homer, *Odyssey*, 14.425-37, trans. Murray (1919). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hom.+Od.+14.401>)

The nomads' way of sacrificing is to cut a piece from the victim's ear for first-fruits and throw it over the house; then they wring the victim's neck. They sacrifice to no gods except the sun and moon; that is, this is the practice of the whole nation; but the dwellers by the Tritonian lake sacrifice to Athena chiefly, and next to Triton and Poseidon.

(Herodotus, 4.188.1, trans. Godley (1920). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hdt.+4.188.1>)

(A)nd Calchas, the seer, drawing a sharp sword from its scabbard laid it in a basket of beaten gold, and crowned the maiden's head. Then the son of Peleus, taking the basket and with it lustral water in his hand, ran round the altar of the goddess [1570] uttering these words: "O Artemis, you child of Zeus, slayer of wild beasts, that wheel your dazzling light amid the gloom, accept this sacrifice which we, the army of the Achaeans and Agamemnon with us, offer to you, pure blood from a beautiful maiden's neck; [1575] and grant us safe sailing for our ships and the sack of Troy's towers by our spears." Meanwhile the sons of Atreus and all the army stood looking on the ground. [But the priest, seizing his knife, offered up a prayer and was closely scanning the maiden's throat to see where he should strike. [1580] It was no slight sorrow filled my heart, as I stood by with bowed head; when there was a sudden miracle! Each one of us distinctly heard the sound of a blow, but none saw the spot where the maiden vanished. The priest cried out, and all the army took up the cry [1585] at the sight of a marvel all unlooked for, due to some god's agency, and passing all belief, although it was seen; for there upon the ground lay a deer of immense size, magnificent to see, gasping out her life, with whose blood the altar of the goddess was thoroughly bedewed.

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(Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, 1565-1589, trans. Coleridge 1891. On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Eur.+IA+1532>)

**Trygaeus**

(to the Servant who has returned with a sheep and a vase of water)

Come, seize the basket and take the lustral water and hurry to circle round the altar to the right.

**Servant**

There! that's done. What is your next bidding?

**Trygaeus**

Wait. I take this fire-brand first and plunge it into the water. [960] Now quick, quick, you sprinkle the altar. Give me some barley-seed, purify yourself and hand me the basin; then scatter the rest of the barley among the audience.

**Servant**

Done.

**Trygaeus**

You have thrown it?

**Servant**

Yes, by Hermes! [965] and all the spectators have had their share.

(Aristophanes, *Peace*, 956-65, trans. O'Neill (1938). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Aristoph.+Peace+956>)

27 Latin terminology describes common domestic sacrifices as having six stages:

*praeparatio* - preparation of the victim at the place of sacrifice: the *focus* (hearth) or *Lararium* (domestic shrine)

*praefatio* - preliminary offerings of incense, cake or wine

*precatio* – a prayer stating the reason for the sacrifice

*immolatio* – sacrifice of living victim, usually an animal

*redditio* - offering of the victim (often only in part) to the deity

*profanatio* – the deconsecration of the remnants of the victim

*epulum* - consumption of remaining elements by human participants in the rite.

The sacrifice of a living animal was not a necessary component of sacrificial rites, and could be replaced by alternatives according to Ovid's account of ancient practice:

It's called the victim because a victorious hand fells it:

And *hostia*, sacrifice, from hostile conquered foes.

Cornmeal, and glittering grains of pure salt,

Were once the means for men to placate the gods.

No foreign ship had yet brought liquid myrrh

Extracted from tree's bark, over the ocean waves:

Euphrates had not sent incense, nor India balm,

And the threads of yellow saffron were unknown.

The altar was happy to fume with Sabine juniper,

And the laurel burned with a loud crackling.

He was rich, whoever could add violets

To garlands woven from meadow flowers.

The knife that bares the entrails of the stricken bull,

Had no role to perform in the sacred rites.

(Ovid, *Fasti*, 1. 337-40. Trans. Kline 2004)

28

Before the harvest the sacrifice of *porca praecidanea* must be offered in this manner: Offer a sow as *porca praecidanea* to Ceres before you harvest spelt, wheat, barley, beans and rape seed. Offer a prayer, with incense and wine, to Janus, Jupiter and Juno, before offering the sow. Offer a pile of cakes (*strues*) to Janus, saying, 'Father Janus, in offering these cakes to thee, I humbly pray that thou wilt be propitious and merciful to me and my children, my house and household.' Then make an offering of a cake (*fertum*) to Jupiter with these words, 'In offering thee this cake, O Jupiter, I humbly pray that thou, pleased with this offering, will be

propitious and merciful to me and my children, to my house and my household.' Then present the wine to Janus, saying: 'Father Janus, as I have prayed humbly in offering thee the cakes, so mayest thou in the same way be honoured by this wine now placed before thee. Then pray to Jupiter thus: 'Jupiter, mayest thou be honoured in accepting this cake; mayest thou be honoured in accepting the wine placed before thee. Then sacrifice the *porca praecidaneae*. When the entrails have been removed, make an offering of cakes to Janus, and pray in the same way you have prayed before. Offer a cake to Jupiter, praying just as before. In the same way offer wine to Janus and offer wine to Jupiter, in the same way as before in offering the pile of cakes, and in the consecration of the cake (*fertum*). Afterward offer the entrails and wine to Ceres.

(Cato, *op.cit.*, in Grant 1957, 34-5)

29

XXI. After this, there was a general assembly of the Hellenes, at which Aristides proposed a decree to the effect that deputies and delegates from all Hellas convene at Plataea every year, and that every fourth year festival games of deliverance be celebrated--the Eleutheria; also that a confederate Hellenic force be levied, consisting of ten thousand shield, one thousand horse, and one hundred ships, to prosecute the war against the Barbarian; also that the Plataeans be set apart as inviolable and consecrate, that they might sacrifice to Zeus the Deliverer in behalf of Hellas.

[2] These propositions were ratified, and the Plataeans undertook to make funeral offerings annually for the Hellenes who had fallen in battle and lay buried there. And this they do yet unto this day, after the following manner. On the sixteenth of the month Maimacterion (which is the Boeotian Alalcomenius), they celebrate a procession. This is led forth at break of day by a trumpeter sounding the signal for battle; [3] wagons follow filled with myrtle-wreaths, then comes a black bull, then free-born youths carrying libations of wine and milk in jars, and pitchers of oil and myrrh (no slave may put hand to any part of that ministration, because the men thus honored died for freedom); [4] and following all, the chief magistrate of Plataea, who may not at other times touch iron or put on any other raiment than white, at this time is robed in a purple tunic, carries on high a water-jar from the city's archive chamber, and proceeds, sword in hand, through the midst of the city to the graves; [5] there he takes water from the sacred spring, washes off with his own hands the gravestones, and anoints them with myrrh; then he slaughters the bull at the funeral pyre, and, with prayers to Zeus and Hermes Terrestrial, summons the brave men who died for Hellas 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 Hellenes." These rites, I say, are observed by the Plataeans down to this very day.

(Plutarch, *Life of Aristides*, 21.1, trans. Perrin (1914-16). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plut.+Arist.+21.1>)

30

**ASSARATUM.** Les anciens nommaient ainsi une sorte de breuvage mêlé de vin et de sang, parce que les anciens Latins désignaient le sang par le mot *assir*.

(Savagner 1846, np)

31

There were some, at that time, who said that Catiline, having ended his speech, and wishing to bind his accomplices in guilt by an oath, handed round among them, in goblets, the blood of a human body mixed with wine; and that when all, after an imprecation, had tasted of it, as is usual in sacred rites, he disclosed his design

(Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 22, from Watson (1899), on-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Sal.+Cat.+22>)

32 Lanciani 1892, Ch.2 quotes an inscription of sacrificial charges which implies a variety of different practices:

D.....

For the blood of \_\_\_\_\_ (perhaps a bull) \_\_\_\_\_

And for its hide \_\_\_\_\_

If the victim be entirely burnt xxv asses

For the blood and skin of a lamb iv asses

If the lamb be entirely burnt vi-1/2 asses

For a cock (entirely burnt) iii-1/2 asses

For blood alone iv asses

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For a wreath	xiii asses
For hot water (per head)	ii asses

The meaning of this tariff will be easily understood if we recall the details of a Graeco-Roman sacrifice, in regard to the apportionment of the victim's flesh. The parts which were the perquisite of the priests differ in different worships; sometimes we hear of legs and skin, sometimes of tongue and shoulder. In the case of private sacrifices the rest of the animal was taken home by the sacrificer, to be used for a meal or sent as a present to friends. This was, of course, impossible in the case of "holocausts," in which the victim was burnt whole on the altar. In the Roman ritual, hides and skins were always the property of the temple. In the above tariff two prices are charged: a smaller one for ordinary sacrifices, when only the intestines were burnt, and the rest of the flesh was taken home by the sacrificer; a larger one for "holocausts," which required a much longer use of the altar, spit, gridiron, and other sacrificial instruments. Four asses are charged for each crown or wreath of flowers, half that amount for hot water.

[On-line at  
[http://www.ukans.edu/history/index/europe/ancient\\_rome/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/.Texts/Lanciani/LANPAC/2\\*.html](http://www.ukans.edu/history/index/europe/ancient_rome/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/.Texts/Lanciani/LANPAC/2*.html)]

33

[1190] But the libations and your sword are not at work?

**Iphigenia**

First I want to wash them, with holy purification.

**Thoas**

In fountain waters, or the drops of the sea?

**Iphigenia**

The sea washes away all men's evils.

**Thoas**

They would certainly be holier victims for the goddess.

**Iphigenia**

[1195] And in this way my plans would succeed better.

(*Iphigenia Among the Tauri*, 1190-1195, trans. in Oates and O'Neill (1938). On-line at  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Eur.+IT+1153>)

Cf.

"There is, first of all," I said, "the greatest lie about the things of greatest concernment, which was no pretty invention of him who told how Uranus did what Hesiod says he did to Cronos, and how Cronos in turn took his revenge; [378a] and then there are the doings and sufferings of Cronos at the hands of his son. Even if they were true I should not think that they ought to be thus lightly told to thoughtless young persons. But the best way would be to bury them in silence, and if there were some necessity for relating them, that only a very small audience should be admitted under pledge of secrecy and after sacrificing, not a pig, but some huge and unprocureable victim, to the end that as few as possible should have heard these tales."

(Plato, *Republic*, 2.377e-78a, trans. Shorey (1969). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plat.+Rep.+2.378a> )

**Trygaeus**

What! must I really and truly die?

**Hermes**

You must.

**Trygaeus**

Well then, lend me three drachmae to buy a young pig; [375] I wish to have myself initiated before I die.

(Aristophanes, *Peace*, 372-4, trans. O'Neill (1938). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Aristoph.+Peace+361>)

34

LXXXIII. The origin of this God Serapis has not hitherto been made generally known by our writers. The Egyptian priests give this account. While Ptolemy, the first Macedonian king who consolidated the power of Egypt, was setting up in the newly-built city of Alexandria fortifications, temples, and rites of worship, there appeared to him in his sleep a youth of singular beauty and more than human stature, who counselled the monarch to send his most

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trusty friends to Pontus, and fetch his effigy from that country. This, he said, would bring prosperity to the realm, and great and illustrious would be the city which gave it a reception. At the same moment he saw the youth ascend to heaven in a blaze of fire. Roused by so significant and strange an appearance, Ptolemy disclosed the vision of the night to the Egyptian priests, whose business it is to understand such matters. As they knew but little of Pontus or of foreign countries, he enquired of Timotheus, an Athenian, one of the family of the Eumolpids, whom he had invited from Eleusis to preside over the sacred rites, what this worship was, and who was the deity. Timotheus, questioning persons who had found their way to Pontus, learnt that there was there a city Sinope, and near it a temple, which, according to an old tradition of the neighbourhood, was sacred to the infernal Jupiter, for there also stood close at hand a female figure, to which many gave the name of Proserpine. Ptolemy, however, with the true disposition of a despot, though prone to alarm, was, when the feeling of security returned, more intent on pleasures than on religious matters; and he began by degrees to neglect the affair, and to turn his thoughts to other concerns, till at length the same apparition, but now more terrible and peremptory, denounced ruin against the king and his realm, unless his bidding were performed. [p. 654] Ptolemy then gave directions that an embassy should be despatched with presents to king Scydrothemis, who at that time ruled the people of Sinope, and instructed them, when they were on the point of sailing, to consult the Pythian Apollo. Their voyage was prosperous, and the response of the oracle was clear. The God bade them go and carry back with them the image of his father, but leave that of his sister behind.

LXXXIV. On their arrival at Sinope, they delivered to Scydrothemis the presents from their king, with his request and message. He wavered in purpose, dreading at one moment the anger of the God, terrified at another by the threats and opposition of the people. Often he was wrought upon by the gifts and promises of the ambassadors. And so three years passed away, while Ptolemy did not cease to urge his zealous solicitations. He continued to increase the dignity of his embassies, the number of his ships, and the weight of his gold. A terrible vision then appeared to Scydrothemis, warning him to thwart no longer the purposes of the God. As he yet hesitated, various disasters, pestilence, and the unmistakeable anger of heaven, which grew heavier from day to day, continued to harass him. He summoned an assembly, and explained to them the bidding of the God, the visions of Ptolemy and himself, and the miseries that were gathering about them. The people turned away angrily from their king, were jealous of Egypt, and, fearing for themselves, thronged around the temple. The story becomes at this point more marvellous, and relates that the God of his own will conveyed himself on board the fleet, which had been brought close to shore, and, wonderful to say, vast as was the extent of sea that they traversed, they arrived at Alexandria on the third day. A temple, proportioned to the grandeur of the city, was erected in a place called Rhacotis, where there had stood a chapel consecrated in old times to Serapis and Isis. Such is the most popular account of the origin and introduction of the God Serapis. I am aware indeed that there are some who say that he was brought from Seleucia, a city of Syria, in the reign of Ptolemy III, while others assert that it was the act of the same king, but that the place from which he was brought was Memphis, once a famous city [p. 655] and the strength of ancient Egypt. The God himself, because he heals the sick, many identified with Æsculapius; others with Osiris, the deity of the highest antiquity among these nations; not a few with Jupiter, as being supreme ruler of all things; but most people with Pluto, arguing from the emblems which may be seen on his statues, or from conjectures of their own.

(Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.83-4, trans. Church (1873). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Tac.+Hist.+4.83>)

Ptolemy Soter saw in a dream the colossal statue of Pluto in Sinopê, not knowing nor having ever seen how it looked, and in his dream the statue bade him convey it with all speed to Alexandria. He had no information and no means of knowing where the statue was situated, but as he related the vision to his friends there was discovered for him a much travelled man by the name of Sosibius, who said that he had seen in Sinopê just such a great statue as the king thought he saw. Ptolemy, therefore, sent Soteles and Dionysius, who, after a considerable time and with great difficulty, and not without the help of divine providence, succeeded in stealing the statue and bringing it away. When it had been conveyed to Egypt and exposed to view, Timotheus, the expositor of sacred law, and Manetho of Sebennytus, and their associates, conjectured that it was the statue of Pluto, basing their conjecture on the Cerberus and the serpent with it, and they convinced Ptolemy that it was the statue of none other of the gods but Serapis. It certainly did not bear this name when it came for Sinope, but, after it had been conveyed to Alexandria, it took to itself the name which Pluto bears among the Egyptians, that of Serapis. Moreover, since Heracleitus the physical philosopher says, "The same are Hades and Dionysus, to honour whom they rage and rave," people are inclined to come to this opinion. In fact, those who insist that the body is called Hades, since the soul is, as it were, deranged and inebriate when it is in the body, are too frivolous in their use of allegory. It is better to identify Osiris with Dionysus and Serapis with Osiris, who received this appellation at the time when he changed his nature. For this reason Serapis is a god of all peoples in common, even as Osiris is; and this they who have participated in the holy rites well know.

(Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 28, text from Babbitt (1936). On-line at [http://www.ukans.edu/history/index/europe/ancient\\_rome/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis\\_and\\_Osiris/B.html](http://www.ukans.edu/history/index/europe/ancient_rome/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis_and_Osiris/B.html))



35

For this purpose nothing was better adapted than a modification of Osirian rites. Through centuries of history the masses of Egyptian people had shown a decided preference for the worship of the god Osiris, so that other Egyptian divinities were forced to include him in their cults. Recognizing their own Osiris in the new god Serapis, the natives of Egypt, as a rule, were ready to give him their adherence. The Greeks, on the other hand, had long since identified Osiris with their own Dionysus and Isis with Demeter. In the rites of the Egyptian divinities and the myths that clustered about them, they found strange correspondences with their own myths and rituals. Osiris had been torn to pieces even as their own Dionysus had been. Isis had mourned for him as Aphrodite had bewailed Adonis or the Great Mother had lamented her Attis, and she had sought for his body even as the sorrowing Mother of Eleusis had sought for her lost daughter. In the finding and restoration of Osiris, the Egyptians rejoiced even as the Eleusinian devotees shared the joy of their goddess in the restoration of Persephone. The resemblances between the Graeco-Oriental mysteries and the Egyptian cult of Osiris were many and salient, and the Egyptian religion easily lent itself to the process of Hellenization.

(Willoughby (1929). On-line at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pr/pr09.htm>)

36

Back of Lucius' figurative language, it is possible to distinguish the main events in the Osirian drama. At the beginning of the ceremony, the initiate approached the bounds of death. In other words, he assumed the role of the dead Osiris over whom the vivifying funeral rites were performed. Osiris, restored to life, had not returned to his earthly kingdom, but had gone to preside over the realm of the dead. So the initiate, having been treated as the dead Osiris and restored to life, "trode the threshold of Proserpine." As Osiris he made an infernal journey and visited the realms of the departed. The admixture of solar imagery in Lucius' (sic) description should not confuse us. According to contemporary cosmology, the sun each night visited the subterranean regions. In the rite of initiation, therefore, the votary as a new Osiris made both the infernal and the celestial journey like the sun. At midnight he saw the sun brightly shine in the realm of the dead, and likewise he mounted up into the heavens and saw the gods celestial as well as the gods infernal. In doing all this he was but playing the part of the dying and rising god Osiris in the salvation drama of the Isis cult.

(Willoughby (1929). On-line at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pr/pr09.htm>)

37

Next I celebrated my birth into the mysteries, a most festive occasion: a delicious banquet and a cheerful party. The third day was also celebrated with a similar ritual: a sacred breakfast and the official conclusion of the initiation...

(Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11.24. Trans. in Hanson 1989, 343)

38

For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilisation; and as the rites are called "initiations" so in very truth have we learned from them the beginnings of life and have gained the power not only to live happily, but to die with a better hope.

(Cicero, *De Legibus*, 2.36. Trans. in Keyes 1966, 415)

39 Behm (1964a, 176) notes a reference to union through eating the sacrificial animal in the Dionysus cult found in a later text: ὡμὰ ἥσθιον κρέα οἱ μούμενοι Διονύσῳ - Schol. on Cl. Al. Protr. 318,5

40 See Lewis & Short (1879) entries for Mars, Venus (on-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3D%2328089> and [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059;query=entry%3D%2350479;layout=;loc=ve\\_nus2](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059;query=entry%3D%2350479;layout=;loc=ve_nus2) respectively). Consider an ancient definition of analogy and metaphor from Aristotle *Poetics* 1457b:

Metaphor by analogy means this: when B is to A as D is to C, then instead of B the poet will say D and B instead of D. And sometimes they add that to which the term supplanted by the metaphor is relative. [20] For instance, a cup is to Dionysus what a shield is to Ares; so he will call the cup "Dionysus's shield" and the shield "Ares' cup." Or old age is to life as evening is to day; so he will call the evening "day's old-age" or use Empedocles' phrase; and old age he will call "the evening of life" or "life's setting sun." Sometimes there is no word for some of the terms of the analogy but the metaphor can be used all the same. For instance, to scatter seed is to sow, but there is no word for the action of the sun in scattering its fire. Yet this has to the

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sunshine the same relation as sowing has to the seed, and so you have the phrase "sowing the god-created fire."

[On-line at <http://perseus.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Aristot.+Poet.+1457b>]

41

[680] I saw three companies of dancing women, one of which Autonoe led, the second your mother Agave, and the third Ino. All were asleep, their bodies relaxed, some resting their backs against pine foliage, [685] others laying their heads at random on the oak leaves, modestly, not as you say drunk with the goblet and the sound of the flute, hunting out Aphrodite through the woods in solitude.

Your mother raised a cry, [690] standing up in the midst of the Bacchae, to wake their bodies from sleep, when she heard the lowing of the horned cattle. And they, casting off refreshing sleep from their eyes, sprang upright, a marvel of orderliness to behold, old, young, and still unmarried virgins. [695] First they let their hair loose over their shoulders, and secured their fawn-skins, as many of them as had released the fastenings of their knots, girding the dappled hides with serpents licking their jaws. And some, holding in their arms a gazelle or wild [700] wolf-pup, gave them white milk, as many as had abandoned their new-born infants and had their breasts still swollen. They put on garlands of ivy, and oak, and flowering yew. One took her thyrsos and struck it against a rock, [705] from which a dewy stream of water sprang forth. Another let her thyrsos strike the ground, and there the god sent forth a fountain of wine. All who desired the white drink scratched the earth with the tips of their fingers and obtained streams of milk; [710] and a sweet flow of honey dripped from their ivy thyrsos; so that, had you been present and seen this, you would have approached with prayers the god whom you now blame....

We fled and escaped [735] from being torn apart by the Bacchae, but they, with unarmed hands, sprang on the heifers browsing the grass. and you might see one rending asunder a fatted lowing calf, while others tore apart cows. [740] You might see ribs or cloven hooves tossed here and there; caught in the trees they dripped, dabbled in gore. Bulls who before were fierce, and showed their fury with their horns, stumbled to the ground, [745] dragged down by countless young hands. The garment of flesh was torn apart faster than you could blink your royal eyes. And like birds raised in their course, they proceeded along the level plains, which by the streams of the Asopus [750] produce the bountiful Theban crop. And falling like soldiers upon Hysiae and Erythrae, towns situated below the rock of Kithairon, they turned everything upside down. They were snatching children from their homes; [755] and whatever they put on their shoulders, whether bronze or iron, was not held on by bonds, nor did it fall to the ground. They carried fire on their locks, but it did not burn them. Some people in rage took up arms, being plundered by the Bacchae, [760] and the sight of this was terrible to behold, lord. For their pointed spears drew no blood, but the women, hurling the thyrsos from their hands, kept wounding them and turned them to flight--women did this to men, not without the help of some god. [765] And they returned where they had come from, to the very fountains which the god had sent forth for them, and washed off the blood, and snakes cleaned the drops from the women's cheeks with their tongues.

Receive this god then, whoever he is, [770] into this city, master. For he is great in other respects, and they say this too of him, as I hear, that he gives to mortals the vine that puts an end to grief. Without wine there is no longer Aphrodite or any other pleasant thing for men.

[and ]

His mother, as priestess, began the slaughter, [1115] and fell upon him. He threw the headband from his head so that the wretched Agave might recognize and not kill him. Touching her cheek, he said: "It is I, mother, your son, Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion. [1120] Pity me, mother, and do not kill me, your child, for my sins."

But she, foaming at the mouth and twisting her eyes all about, not thinking as she ought, was possessed by Bacchus, and he did not persuade her. [1125] Seizing his left arm at the elbow and propping her foot against the unfortunate man's side, she tore out his shoulder, not by her own strength, but the god gave facility to her hands. Ino began to work on the other side, [1130] tearing his flesh, while Autonoe and the whole crowd of the Bacchae pressed on. All were making noise together, he groaning as much as he had life left in him, while they shouted in victory. One of them bore his arm, another a foot, boot and all. His ribs were stripped bare [1135] from their tearings. The whole band, hands bloodied, were playing a game of catch with Pentheus' flesh.

His body lies in different places, part under the rugged rocks, part in the deep foliage of the woods, not easy to be sought. His miserable head, [1140] which his mother happened to take in her hands, she fixed on the end of a thyrsos and carries through the midst of Kithairon like that of a savage lion, leaving her sisters among the Maenads' dances.

(Euripides, *Bacchae*, 680-710; 735-770; 1115-1140. Buckley (1850), on-line at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Eur.+Ba.+677>;

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<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Eur.+Ba.+728> and  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Eur.+Ba.+1114>)

See Heinrichs(1987, 121-3) for the problems of using the *Bacchae* as a source for reconstruction of ritual.

42 Thus, with regard to the Dionysiac cult:

"Be well assured, then, Trypho," I continued, "that I am established in the knowledge of and faith in the Scriptures by those counterfeits which he who is called the devil is said to have performed among the Greeks; just as some were wrought by the Magi in Egypt, and others by the false prophets in Elijah's days. For when they tell that Bacchus, son of Jupiter, was begotten by [Jupiter's] intercourse with Semele, and that he was the discoverer of the vine; and when they relate, that being torn in pieces, and having died, he rose again, and ascended to heaven; and when they introduce wine into his mysteries, do I not perceive that [the devil] has imitated the prophecy announced by the patriarch Jacob, and recorded by Moses?

(Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 69. Trans. Roberts and Donaldson, Vol. 1. On-line at [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-48.htm#P4043\\_787325](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-48.htm#P4043_787325))

Care needs to be taken with Justin's words. Benson, for example, says of it:

The Orphics (and the Dionysians) practiced the mystery of communion long before Jesus. They had sacramental communion with their god, Zagreus-Dionysus, who had suffered, died, and arose. Justin Martyr reported that they used wine and bread in their communion: "*For when they say Dionysus was born of Zeus' union with Semele, and narrate ... that he was torn to pieces and died, he arose again and ascended to heaven, and when they use the wine in his mysteries, is it not evident that the Devil has imitated the previously quoted prophecy ...?*" Justin Martyr acknowledged that the Dionysians were practicing communion before the Christians, but, he explained, they did so because the Devil imitated an ancient prophecy of the Old Testament.

(1997, np)

However, the text itself makes no mention of bread, only of wine. This point is key. Heinrich's critique of ὁμοφαγία suggests that the comparison of two rituals sharing common elements, namely, bread and wine, is much more difficult to sustain. With the removal of bread from the picture it becomes much more difficult to draw parallels between Christian and Dionysiac practice beyond the point made by Justin.

Note, too, that there is a textual difficulty over the use of "wine" in the original text which might further differentiate Christian and Dionysiac ritual:

Or, "an ass." The ass was sacred to Bacchus; and many fluctuate between *oinon* and *onon*.

(Roberts& Donaldson, ANF, Vol. 1, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 69, fn. 260)

For a discussion of popular identifications of Dionysiac and Christian ritual, see Holding: DDD (no date).

43 On Mithraic ritual:

"And when those who record the mysteries of Mithras say that he was begotten of a rock, and call the place where those who believe in him are initiated a cave, do I not perceive here that the utterance of Daniel, that a stone without hands was cut out of a great mountain, has been imitated by them, and that they have attempted likewise to imitate the whole of Isaiah's words? For they contrived that the words of righteousness be quoted also by them. But I must repeat to you the words of Isaiah referred to, in order that from them you may know that these things are so. They are these: 'Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; those that are near shall know my might. The sinners in Zion are removed; trembling shall seize the impious. Who shall announce to you the everlasting place? The man who walks in righteousness, speaks in the right way, hates sin and unrighteousness, and keeps his hands pure from bribes, stops the ears from hearing the unjust judgment of blood closes the eyes from seeing unrighteousness: he shall dwell in the lofty cave of the strong rock. Bread shall be given to him, and his water [shall be] sure. Ye shall see the King with glory, and your eyes shall look far off. Your soul shall pursue diligently the fear of the Lord. Where is the scribe? where are the counsellors? where is he that numbers those who are nourished,-the small and great people? with whom they did not take counsel, nor knew the depth of the voices, so that they heard not. The people who are become depreciated, and there is no understanding in him who hears.' Now it is evident, that in this prophecy [allusion is made] to the bread which our Christ gave us to eat, in remembrance of His being made flesh for the sake of His believers, for whom also He suffered; and to the cup which He gave us to drink, in remembrance of His own blood, with giving of thanks. And this prophecy proves that we shall behold this very King with glory; and the very terms of the prophecy declare loudly, that the people foreknown to believe in Him were foreknown to pursue diligently the fear of the Lord. Moreover, these Scriptures are equally explicit in saying, that those who are reputed to know the writings of the Scriptures, and who hear the prophecies, have no understanding. And when I hear, Trypho," said I, "that Perseus was begotten of a virgin, I understand that the deceiving serpent counterfeited also this.

His *First Apology* is more critical of Mithraic meals:

And this food is called among us *Eucharistia* [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body; "and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood; "and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

(Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 66. Trans Roberts & Donaldson, Vol. 1. On-line at [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-46.htm#P3593\\_620967](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-46.htm#P3593_620967))

44 See also Holding:MMM (no date) and Morse(1999, 38-42) for a wider discussion of the "similarities" between the two cults. Note however, that Morse's view of the meal (1999, 40, n.12) is made redundant by Beck's identification with initiation.

45

Freke and Gandy add, based on a note from Godwin, that initiates of the Mysteries of Attis "had some form of communion" in which they ate from a tambourine and drank from a cymbal, and then say, "What they ate and drank from these sacred instruments is not recorded, but most likely it was bread and wine." [50] Despite the footnote to Godwin's text at the end of this sentence by Freke and Gandy, Godwin makes no such assertion in his text; what Godwin does say is that "what they ate or drank we do not know" -- not a word is said about it being "likely" bread and wine, and Freke and Gandy's footnote is therefore a partial fabrication. Vermaseren, the dean of Attis studies [Verm.CA, 118-9], adds more. Vermaseren confirms the use of the cymbals, and the eating and drinking, but suggests that *milk* was the drink of choice, because wine and bread were forbidden during the Attis festivals -- if wine and bread was the snack of choice, it would have had to have been an exception to this rule. Nevertheless, as usual, this stuff about the snacking habits of Attis' devotees comes from Christian writers -- and at best would reflect the sort of communal meal all ancient societies practiced (being that bread and wine were the key ancient staples).

(Holding: DDD)

46 The *taurobolium* and *criobolium* involved the sacrifice of a bull or goat respectively. They seem initially to have been apotropaic rituals which later gained significance as rites of initiation (Tripolitis 2002, 35-6).

47 Whilst the focus here is on meal rituals, it is worth noting that there is resistance to theories which would identify Christian baptism with the initiation rituals of Greek mysteries: rather, their similarity stems from shared presuppositions, (cf. Oropeza 1999, 73).

48 The poem may be translated thus:

So was the scapegoat an outcast in olden times  
Should some event, by the wrath of God, fall upon the city,  
Such as hunger, or plague or some other harm.  
They led one more misshapen than the rest to sacrifice [πρὸς θυσίαν]  
As a scapegoat and outcast for the stricken city.  
They stood the victim [θυσίαν] in a suitable place  
And put in his hand cheese, barley and dried figs.  
They struck him seven times on the penis  
With wild fig branches and other wild plants.  
At the end, they burned him in the fire of wood from the wild trees  
And scattered his ashes at sea to the winds

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A cleansing of the stricken city, as I said....

(Greek text in West 1980, 96, poem 5)

Note that the sacrifice here is described as a θυσία despite the fact that it involves no eating. Further comment on this fragment of Hipponax, recorded in the writing of the Byzantine scholar, John Tzetzes (*fl.* 1130 AD) can be found in Scarborough (1991, 146-7 and associated footnotes). He points out that the scapegoat ritual here overlaps with practical biology and pharmacology. The squill (σκόλλα) came to be associated with, and was used in, purification rituals. The ideas of "scapegoat" (φαρμακός) and "poisoner, sorcerer, magician" (φάρμακος), differentiated only by their accenting, further coalesce in Greek texts of the Hellenistic period such as the LXX Exod 7.11 and Mal 3.5.

49 The practice is alluded to in Aristophanes' *Wealth* 594-7, but no details are given:

Ask Hekate [595] whether it is better to be rich or starving; she will tell you that the rich send her a meal every month and that the poor make it disappear before it is even served.

50 Burkert also notes that the hero cults tend, unlike their Olympian counterparts, to be tied to specific geographical locations (2000, 206).

51

The first of these teaches him the magian lore of Zoroaster, son of Horomazes; and that is the worship of the gods: he teaches him also what pertains to a king.

(Plato, *Alcibiades*, 1.122a. Lamb 1955, on-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0176;query=section%3D%2393;layout=;loc=Alc.%201.121e>)

52

At this the boy no longer sought to soothe  
the godless hags,  
nor did he know how best to break his silence,  
but uttered these Thyestean prayers:  
'Your magic poisons may change wrong to right and right to  
wrong,  
  
but cannot alter men's deserts.  
With curses I shall harry you. No sacrifice will expiate my bitter hatred,  
  
and when at your command I breathe my last, I'll haunt you as a Fury in the night,  
my ghost will slash your faces with its claws  
--this is within the powers of the gods below--  
and, perching on your restless hearts,  
instead of sleep I'll give you fear.  
With stones the rabble from all sides will batter you  
from street to street, you filthy crones,  
and wolves and carrion vultures of the Esquiline will mangle your unburied limbs.

(Horace, *Epode* 5, trans. West 2000, 9-10)

53

These kinds being thus distinguished, those criminals who suffer from folly, being devoid of evil disposition and character, shall be placed by the judge according to law in the reformatory for a period of not less than five years, during which time no other of the citizens [909a] shall hold intercourse with them, save only those who take part in the nocturnal assembly, and they shall company with them to minister to their souls' salvation by admonition; and when the period of their incarceration has expired, if any of them seems to be reformed, he shall dwell with those who are reformed, but if not, and if he be convicted again on a like charge, he shall be punished by death. But as to all those who have become like ravening beasts, and who, besides holding that the gods are negligent [909b] or open to bribes, despise men, charming the souls of many of the living, and claiming that they charm the souls of the dead, and promising to persuade the gods by bewitching them, as it were, with sacrifices, prayers and incantations, and who try thus to wreck utterly not only individuals, but whole families and States for the sake of money,--if any of these men be pronounced guilty, the court shall order him to be imprisoned according to law in the mid-country jail [909c] and shall order that no free man shall approach such criminals at any time, and that they shall receive from the servants a ration of food as fixed by the Law-wardens.

(Plato, *Laws*, 908e-909c, trans. Bury (1967-8). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plat.+Laws+10.908e>)

54 We can also note that this text appears to have been influenced by a Jewish or Semitic tradition: IAKOUB IA IAO SABAOTH ADONAI would appear to be Semitic words

55 For further discussion, see Ch. 6, pp. 269-70, ¶ 6.3.6..

56 O'Neill seems to consider the actions of Melchizedek as implicit in 11QMelch, but see fn. 17 (above) :

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I think the Qumran sectaries are likely to have believed that the eternal Melchizedek, whose human prototype encountered Abraham to receive gifts of bread and wine, came as man and was known as the Teacher of Righteousness, and that he would be revealed on the day of liberation as judge of all.

(1995b, 72)

57 Aune speculates that this verse alludes to the purification processes described in Num 31: 19-21;24 (1998, 474-5). Blood would thus be a pollutant. Such a view must be tempered by the fact that here blood is being used as the detergent: it is not the pollutant which needs to be removed as in Num.

58 For a further discussion of the homiletic treatment of manna in Judaism, see Lindars 1972, 250-3.

59 McGrath (1997) provides a brief summary of the different theories, and reaches a conclusion similar to that advanced here:

For the purpose of this study it is sufficient if we have found some indication of the origin of the material found here, and in doing so can perhaps detect some of the logic which may have moved the evangelist to finally put this chapter in the form that he did. The miracle which precedes the discourse is clearly traditional, and the discourse material bears the hallmarks of Johannine theology, whether that of the Evangelist or of a redactor. Beyond this it is unnecessary for us to speculate at present.

(On-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/john-food.html>)

60 Edwards suggests that Dodd saw a link between Passover and Easter in the thinking of Christian readers (:2004, 73). However, the cited reference identifies the eucharist rather than Easter (Dodd 1953, 333).

61 Scholars debate the balance between the two themes (Brown 1988, 272).

62

Especially [will I do this] if the Lord make known to me that ye come together man by man in common through grace, individually, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, being both the Son of man and the Son of God, so that ye obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is *the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying*, but [which causes] that we should live for ever in Jesus Christ.

(Translation from Roberts & Donaldson, Vol. 1, italics mine. On-line at [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-16.htm#P1093\\_206499](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-16.htm#P1093_206499))

63 1 Cor 12:12-13 may further show communion through the eucharist, but there is disagreement over whether these verses refer primarily to baptism, eucharist or both. A eucharistic interpretation has been given by Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and Osiander. Much depends on whether ἐποτίσθημεν (v.13) is given a eucharistic or baptismal interpretation (Wainwright 2003, 144). However, it is not necessary to choose one or the other. The linking of baptism and eucharist in 1 Cor 10, their shared focus on the "body of Christ" and their joint function of imparting the Spirit suggest that the later passage may also refer to both.

64 The identification of Jesus with hero-cults has also been investigated in the literary genre of the Gospels. Their comparison with aretalogy has been advocated in Hadas(1965) and Smith (1971).

65 Thus, in Paul, Rom 1:8-10; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Cor 7:15; Gal 2:10; Phil 1:3-5; 1 Thess 2:9.

66 The sacrificial connotations of libations are limited if insistence is placed on an act of ritual killing as the defining point of a sacrifice. If the fact that the gift cannot be recovered is focal, the potential to interpret libations as sacrifices is increased. The overlapping of blood and wine imagery might also point in this direction.

67

The language of the DIDACHE is entirely centered upon "sacrifice"; the term "holocaust" nowhere appears. This is entirely to be expected since "sacrifice" in the ancient world was commonly associated with a fellowship meal (Sered: 136-38). Thus, both Jews and gentiles would have been disposed to regard the eucharistic meal as a kind of "sacrifice" even though (as will be explained later) no animal was ritually killed. The absence of the term "holocaust," signals, at any rate, that both Jews and gentiles would not have been inclined to regard the confession of failings or the discipline of reconciliation as being motivated by the need for the forgiveness of sins or for the atonement of guilt. The key motive is offering a "pure sacrifice" (DIDACHE 14:1f)

(Milavec 2003, np)