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A COGNITIVE-INFORMED APPROACH TO 'SACRIFICE' IN ANCIENT GREECE

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**A COGNITIVE-INFORMED APPROACH TO ‘SACRIFICE’
IN ANCIENT GREECE**

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**Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Classics)**

Abstract

My thesis presents a significant new understanding of 'sacrifice' and demonstrates the applicability of a cognitive-informed approach. I begin by outlining my methodology and then discuss how 'sacrifice' has been approached by scholars up until the present day. I demonstrate the emergence of the term 'sacrifice' in a particular cultural milieu that is not reflective of ancient experience. I then address the issue of 'sacrifice' through the lens of the 'other', focusing specifically on Herodotus and the range of issues he does, or does not, show interest in when discussing 'barbarian' practices. I then continue to deconstruct the modern category of 'sacrifice' in my next two chapters, where I analyse the evidence for the main range of practices involving the ritual killing of animals as well as so-called 'bloodless offerings'. I demonstrate, for example, the way 'sacrifice' can be broken down into smaller elements, how difficult it is to draw simple lines between different kinds of ritual activity and how the same or similar elements are used in different contexts. I then dedicate a chapter in turn to my two main approaches: an approach based on sensory analysis and an approach based on cognitive ritual theories. These correspond to emic (insider) and etic (outsider/modern scholar) perspectives and are used to supplement each other's conclusions and mitigate each other's weaknesses. The emic perspective emphasises the largely conscious, culture-specific, sensory and purposeful whereas the etic approach highlights the mainly unconscious, cross-cultural and automatic. In both instances, however, the emphasis is on the experiential nature of 'sacrifice'. I show that 'sacrifice' is far more complicated than has been generally understood and multiple interpretations are necessary, both traditional and cognitive. Although an appreciation of cognitive experience, emotion and sensory perception is necessary to explain 'sacrifice', these aspects have been largely neglected by modern scholars.

Table of contents

Table of figures	4
Chapter I: Methodology and preliminary observations	5
Chapter II: 'Animal sacrifice' in ancient Greece	40
Chapter III: Looking through the lens of the 'other'	62
Chapter IV: Deconstructing 'sacrifice' I: Killing and eating animals	81
Chapter V: Deconstructing 'sacrifice' II: Bloodless practices	109
Chapter VI: New approaches I: Sensory analysis	137
Chapter VII: New approaches II: Cognitive ritual theories	171
Chapter VIII: Conclusion	257
Appendix 1	262
Appendix 2	265
Appendix 3	266
Bibliography	272

Table of figures

1.	The ritual form hypothesis shown three-dimensionally	20
2.	Attic black figure votive krater from the Acropolis (neck fragment)	60
3.	Bell-krater in Agrigento of about 425 BC	84
4.	Attic red figure stamnos dated 450/425 BC	85
5.	Attic red figure oinochoe of the late 5th century BC	92
6	Attic red figure amphora (500/475 BC)	95
7.	Attic red figure kylix of the first quarter of the 5th century BC	97
8.	Red figure Attic stamnos (450-440 BC) now in the British Museum	117
9.	A relief from the Athenian Asklepieion (4th century BC)	124
10.	Vase painting by the Triptolemos Painter dated to around 470 BC	201

Chapter I

Methodology and preliminary observations

This thesis argues that experience has been overlooked in approaches to ‘sacrifice’ in ancient Greece in general. It offers a new focus on cognitive experience, emotion and sensory perception in unlocking the importance of such activity in classical Athens. It thus deprivileges an emphasis on any alleged underlying meaning, and draws on two key branches of cognitive scholarship concerned with ritual form and transmission on the one hand and perceived sensory experience on the other.

In essence, I will argue that ‘sacrifice’ is an experiential based phenomena (perceived sensory, emotional and unconscious) determined by different contexts. These contexts generate intuitions, pleasures, excitements and anxieties along with experiential-based motivations and understandings. There are also different modalities and sensory channels involved in different situations and in different aspects of these situations and there is no single ‘meaning’ or ‘purpose’ for such behaviour. There is also no uniform or essential type or form of ‘sacrifice’, while a concern with origins is misguided. ‘Sacrifice’ can, in fact, only be said to denote a number of loosely related different rituals that can be used singly, or in various different combinations, in a number of divergent ways. I will build on existing scholarship and present a new cognitive-informed perspective on ‘sacrifice’ that brings together both ancient and modern scientific insights.

Definition of key terms

It is necessary at this point to outline the meaning of key terms utilised in this thesis. All of these terms are contentious and problematic and thus it is necessary to be clear from the outset as to how they are specifically used in this analysis. My definition of ‘meaning’ will change according to whether a sensory or cognitive ritual theory-based approach is being emphasised. These are the new perspectives that I apply to the evidence in Chapters VI and VII while the general methodology used is outlined in this chapter below. In both cases, however, the emphasis is on ‘meaning’ in experiential terms, although what this denotes differs significantly. In the case of the former, ‘meaning’ will apply to the full sensory (or inter-sensorial) experience and perception of that experience in terms of both cross-cultural and culturally specific significances and impact. In the latter case, it will refer to

the largely unconscious and universal factors motivating actions (for example the hazard-precaution system, bioregulatory mechanisms, etc discussed below) and making them pleasurable, exciting, appropriate, satisfying and so on.

I argue that there is no need to abandon the term 'sacrifice', despite a recent call for this in modern scholarship.¹ Bell notes, crucially, that many attempts to re-define a phenomena like ritual and produce a paradigm shift 'end up simply repackaging older problems in new jargon' and also undermines consideration of 'how and why the term has become problematic'.² Indeed, this will be explored in the case of 'sacrifice' in the next chapter where consideration will be given to the emergence of the term and its popularity as a subject of analysis in the context of a specific cultural milieu seeking the origins of religion from a Christianising perspective. As already noted, 'sacrifice' will not be regarded in this thesis as a distinct and uniform category. I minimally define 'animal sacrifice' as encompassing a range of inter-related activities focused on eating and/or killing (or destruction) and associated with the gods or the divine on some level (the ways this can happen will be shown to be diverse and meaningful). The term 'sacrifice' on the other hand can incorporate a broader range of activities (including libation and the use of incense) as I will show. It is, in fact, impossible to draw simple lines between different kinds of ritual activity and the same elements can also be seen to be used in different contexts.

'Belief' is another complex and controversial term. Bell points to the 'ambiguous, unstable and inconsistent nature of belief systems', while Humphrey and Laidlaw have explored how practitioners of the Jain rite of worship in India exhibit inconsistent, inaccurate, or even entirely absent, explanations of their own complex ritual activity.³ However, while the connection between a ritual and an alleged 'purpose' or 'meaning' is often unclear, ritual acts still take place and are often performed with great enthusiasm and commitment. They thus make cognitive sense (whether unconscious, bioregulatory, emotional, sensorial etc) with or without a clear or consistent conscious explanation or, indeed, any explanation at all. I use the term 'belief' here, in the first instance, to refer to this feeling of rightness and appropriateness which activities like 'sacrifice' engender in those who perform them, rather than a more specific aim or intention that might be offered by the participant or implied by the context. At the same time, I in no way deny the importance of context in

¹ Frankfurter 2011: 87.

² Bell 1992: 7.

³ Bell 1992: 186; Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 264.

understanding the nature of the activity performed. In fact, this is of key significance to my approach as I have already outlined. Belief in the gods, on the other hand, can be seen as part of a lived reality which was largely taken for granted as intuitively plausible and instinctively compelling. A cognitive-informed approach helps shed much light on these issues and locates belief not as a separate category, but in terms of a broad pattern of thought and behaviour.

Many competing definitions have been offered for 'ritual' in modern scholarship and it is not my intention here to try to add in any way to such an enterprise.⁴ Greek culture in general did not analyse ritual as a specific category of religious activity. The closest equivalent is *teletē*, a term that could often, however, be 'used in a much narrower sense for specific rituals of an exceptional nature, like those of the mystery cults'.⁵ Here I use a minimal definition of 'ritual' as referring to 'matters related to the gods'. Ritualised behaviour, on the other hand, is defined here as 'a specific way of organising the flow of behaviour' characterised by compulsion, rigidity, redundancy and goal demotion.⁶ Anxiety refers in this context not to conscious emotion, but to the nonconscious workings of neurocognitive systems in particular situations, resulting in heightened attention focused on particular objects, as well as the compulsion to engage in particular courses of action.⁷ My use of the term 'purpose' is conventional in referring to the range of modern terms normatively used to interpret activity like 'sacrifice' in terms of interactions with the gods and involving reciprocal relations of some kind. In other words 'purpose' refers to the, often assumed, conscious and explicit reasons given for a 'sacrifice' whether propitiation, thanksgiving, fulfilment of a vow, supplication, etc.

I expand here the use of the term 'cultural producers' to refer, not only to literary sources, but producers of all forms of cultural material, including iconographic evidence of all types. Each and every genre, whether artistic or literary, has its own audience, conventions and expectations and these must always be borne in mind when assessing each type of evidence and making conclusions on a particular presentation of 'sacrifice' found in each of them. I note here, for example, the patronising Platonic view of 'sacrifice' as automatic reciprocity (e.g. *Laws* 4.716e-7a, *Republic* 364b, 366b, 390e), a view likely to unfairly

⁴ E.g. Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, Rappaport 1999, etc.

⁵ Graf 2003: 1318-9.

⁶ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 815.

⁷ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 820-1.

represent the expectations of many actual performers of such activity.⁸ Some literary 'cultural producers' express views much closer to what might be crudely understood as everyday sentiment than others, but this is still highly problematic (comedy distorts, just as much as it reflects, popular sentiment, for example). I also discuss below the possibility that archaeological evidence can in some ways balance the over-reliance on evidence from 'cultural producers', many of whom are from elite backgrounds. In addition, the evidence of vase paintings in particular, is an important form of material from a widely available and often very affordable medium that might be said to reflect more closely popular attitudes and sentiments. Also, epigraphic evidence presents the more official view of 'sacrifice' of the *polis*, or its subdivisions, as I will show. It is thus another corrective to the dependence on elite intellectuals and another type of 'cultural producer' that needs to be understood in terms of its own particular priorities, aims and intentions.

Ancient evidence

The evidence comes in the form of literary sources, inscriptions, iconography and archaeological material, such as faunal remains and evidence for dining rooms. Each category of material poses its own problems. The literary sources, in the main, contain allusions to 'sacrifice', sometimes described with - what appear to be - conflicting terminology and spread out both chronologically and geographically.⁹ They make only partial allusions to 'sacrifice', taking for granted the knowledge of their audience. There are also problems of interpretation posed by the genre of the texts whether epic, historic, legal, tragic or comic, and how to discern genuine practice from the literary creations that we are presented with.

I will show that while in tragedy 'perverted sacrifice' is the norm and human and animal 'sacrifice' can be seen to become confused, in comedy the emphasis is more on 'sacrifice' as an occasion of festivity and celebration. These sources also, on the whole, provide far more evidence for the sacrificial practices of women and for individuals from non-elite backgrounds. As regards historical sources, 'sacrifice' can again perform important narrative, thematic and explanatory roles that might distort the realities of actual practice. In the epic literature, the scene is equally removed from the everyday and ordinary and it is often difficult or impossible to distinguish archaic from current (or even actual) practices.

⁸ Ullucci 2011: 64-5; see also Ullucci 2009 and 2012.

⁹ Parker 2003a: 1344.

Occasional references to sacrificial practice in the legal speeches can be equally distorted by the agenda and clever intentions of the author. There are also more subtle problems of genre. For example, when studying the sensory relevance of a particularly striking literary description should such features be interpreted as representing the viewpoint of the audience or that of the characters? It is argued here that such distinctions are often impossible to determine but that what is of importance is that the powerfully experiential nature of sacrificial practice is time and again reflected in our varied literary source material.

Inscriptions, on the other hand, were set up primarily to assign financial and official responsibilities, rather than as providing information on sacrificial procedure.¹⁰ In addition, it is only in the 4th century BC that such documents begin to show an interest in what one influential scholar dubs: 'Staging and explicit emotional arousal'. He explains that decrees and laws of the archaic and classical periods 'never refer to aspects of worship related to aesthetics and staging'.¹¹ The earliest example to detail such concerns is a *lex sacra* from late-4th century BC Cos which is analysed in Chapter VII and included in Appendix 3.

Bone assemblages are an increasing form of evidence, but to be of use they must have been carefully excavated and analysed and published in great detail. It is also important to distinguish between material deriving from activity at the altar, consumption debris and butchery refuse.¹² Bones from both butchery and associated sacrificial contexts are to be analysed and assessed and patterns of behaviour delineated.

Evidence from a range of archaeological sites will need to be explored due to the limitations of the available evidence and the impossibility of making any kind of firm conclusion based solely on the data from classical Athens. The range of animals 'sacrificed' is also very important. Questions include, but are not limited to, what kind of values can be seen to be placed on these animals and on particular parts of their anatomy? When these animals are not among the more traditional victims but include wild animals, for example, it is asked what factors may have motivated this. Is the value and tastiness of the meat of prime importance or more pertinent cultic concerns, for example? The context of the findings is also important. If 'animal sacrifice' is particularly associated with prestigious or

¹⁰ Jameson 1965: 156.

¹¹ Chaniotis 2013:179-80.

¹² Ekroth 2009: 135.

celebrated temple contexts, how does this add to the cognitive interpretation and experience of the rituals for an ordinary worshiper? Also, how is this opposed to ritual or sacrificial activity in more quotidian contexts?

The iconographic evidence again poses difficulties of interpretation, of chronology and of dissemination. Two main types of material are vase paintings and votive reliefs, but there are a number of different categories of interest. As already indicated, the different classes of evidence are spread unevenly chronologically, with mostly vase paintings surviving from the 6th and 5th centuries BC and largely votive reliefs from the 4th century BC. Each type of evidence, furthermore, consists of an iconographically distinct category, making it unsafe to draw inferences as to developments in cult practices from differences between them.¹³ An influential scholar argues that one major flaw in the evidence is that ‘sacrifices’ in which nothing was eaten are rarely represented.¹⁴ I will argue, however, that in many cases we cannot be sure that consumption of animal victims did not take place. Again, it is necessary to try and ‘reconstruct the frame of reference of the ancient audience in order to arrive at a maximal interpretation’ and remember that many of these stock and, often, stereotyped images show how the Greeks ‘liked to see themselves performing the sacrificial rites’.¹⁵

Classical Athens or beyond?

The emphasis in this thesis is on classical Athenian activity, as the evidence is at its fullest for this time and place, but it should already be clear that many of my findings may have a more universal relevance. This does not mean that I am in any way undermining the role and significance of a particular cultural context. Indeed, my emphasis on classical Athens surely precludes such an assumption. Even in the case of classical Athens, however, it is necessary to include evidence from other contexts in order to attempt to complete any reconstruction of their sacrificial experience. In this thesis, I will consistently make clear such distinctions.

The main claim, however, is that while universal cognitive structures can be seen to be at work, the exact forms and perceived significances activities like ‘sacrifice’ embody are eminently culture specific. Thus, although the sensory-based evidence supplements and

¹³ Van Straten 1995: 2-3.

¹⁴ Van Straten 1995: 3.

¹⁵ Van Straten 1995: 2, 9.

contrasts to some extent the evidence of the cognitive ritual theories-based chapter in being more clearly culture specific, both chapters in fact contain evidence and conclusions pertaining to both classical Athens and more cross-cultural contexts. In other words, there is no simple dichotomy in this thesis between the two approaches. Indeed Griffiths, who argues convincingly against the notion of innateness, maintains that most emotion-eliciting stimuli are learned but, at the same time, available evidence strongly suggests that the learning mechanism is biased. In other words, although there may be no preconceived map of what is emotionally significant, human beings do emerge with 'some preconceptions about what is likely to be emotionally significant'.¹⁶ Also, Sørensen argues: 'Only the underlying mechanisms and processes are universal, whereas the emergence of a specific phenomenon at a particular time and place depends on other, contextual factors'.¹⁷

As a consequence, most of the evidence cited in this thesis will have been produced in classical Athens. However, other key material will also be used where more universal behavioural characteristics might be said to be at work, or alternatively, to bring into sharper focus contrasting features evidenced in classical Athens. I will thus use cautiously literary sources from Homer to Theophrastus, making full use of the invaluable experiential evidence they often contain. At the same time, I will not conclude that specific ritual features, for example, remain the same throughout these periods and for the different contexts they were performed in, nor that genre conventions are non-problematic concerning such issues. Homeric performances in classical Athens, for example, must however, have made a kind of intuitive (as well as more explicit) sense to most of those who experienced such regular events and it is these kind of features that I shall often be focussing on. At the same time, other ritual elements may have remained a regular feature of sacrificial practice for classical Athenians.

A key area I must address in this context is also a good case study for many such concerns. Chapter III of this thesis is dedicated to a single source, Herodotus, and while discussion of much of the relevance of this approach must wait until I introduce that particular discussion, such reliance on a non-Athenian source needs justification. It had earlier been assumed that many intellectuals of the period, including Herodotus, were forced to migrate to Athens to pursue their objectives, but such Athenocentric assumptions have been

¹⁶ Griffiths 1997: 89.

¹⁷ Sørensen 2005: 469.

successfully challenged by Thomas.¹⁸ She argues that such thinkers from East Greece travelled extensively and that ‘even our relatively slight evidence indicates that Athens was only one of several stops made by some of these men, thus that they had not needed Athens exclusively to support their activities’.¹⁹ Athens was, in fact, only the most powerful of many cities visited while many such intellectuals from East Greece were part of an Ionian tradition that continued to flourish.²⁰ Thomas shows that ‘in many respects the *Histories* are a part of this Ionian intellectual world of the 5th century, a world which has to look towards Athens as the economic and cultural centre of the Aegean, and which is politically dependent upon Athens, but which has by no means lost its cultural independence’.²¹ Thus, I remain justified in citing Herodotus so extensively in this thesis, but I am also aware that the relationship of his world-view to that imagined for a classical Athenian was complicated and part of a wider climate of cultural and political activity.

In terms of iconographic evidence, on the other hand, only evidence from classical Athens will be used, a preferable approach made possible by the reality that the Athenian *polis* is so overrepresented in terms of the visual evidence. Again, with the epigraphic evidence there is abundant evidence from classical Athens, including four key sacrificial calendars discussed extensively in subsequent chapters. However, use will also be made of epigraphic evidence from other areas from the 5th and 4th centuries BC, including the vital sacrificial regulation from Cos alluded to above. This latter document is invaluable for the detail it provides about sacrificial practice but it is certainly not my contention that exactly the same (or similar) ritual actions were performed in classical Athens. In contrast, I will emphasise the diversity of such practices, although I will also point to pan-cultural behavioural concerns underlying such varied activity.

‘Sacrifice’ as an ‘impure subject’

It is argued here that ‘sacrifice’, like ‘religion’ is an ‘impure subject’ (in a chemical and not moral sense) and should therefore be approached not as a fixed, stable and uniform phenomenon, but through the notion of a ‘family resemblance’; this latter term was

¹⁸ Thomas 2000; cf. Emlyn-Jones 1980: 170, Cook 1961, Wells 1923, etc.

¹⁹ Thomas 2000: 11.

²⁰ Thomas 2000: 12.

²¹ Thomas 2000: 16.

originally formulated by Wittgenstein and is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.²² Boyer shows that the term 'religion' does not denote objects with distinctive causal properties and therefore is not the domain of a proper scientific theory. In the same way, he explains how neither giraffes nor mountains constitute proper scientific objects, only particular aspects of these phenomena which they share with non-mountains and non-giraffes. Boyer concludes there is 'no privileged "method" or "theory" in the study of religion as such, although there may be particularly adequate theories and methods in the study of specific aspects of religious ideas or practices'.²³

I argue in this thesis that 'sacrifice' cannot be properly analysed by a single approach and that multiple perspectives are necessary to understand this type of activity. As Sørensen notes in his study of magic, magic is also an 'impure or synthetic object constituted by several independent structures and mechanisms, each explicable on separate descriptive levels. These structures and mechanisms can only be explained on their own level of analysis, even while they interact with the other levels to produce observable phenomena that we classify as magic. This entails that it is impossible to make an explanatory theory of magic as such, as only the underlying mechanisms and structures constituting the phenomena can be the objects of causal explanations. Therefore, usage of the synthetic term "magic" to describe observable phenomena will not necessarily entail that all of the structures described in this analysis are found in each case'. The result is a category based on 'family resemblance' depending on 'which other structures the observable phenomena are related to'.²⁴ Indeed a similar claim, made without a cognitive basis, has recently been associated with 'sacrifice' by Parker.²⁵ In this thesis, the diverse forms of sacrificial practice are explained on their own terms and not as part of allegedly distinct phenomena. I also dedicate my main two chapters to two new approaches to 'sacrifice' that build significantly on existing scholarship. In particular, the overwhelmingly experiential nature of much of this activity will be emphasised.

²² Wittgenstein 1953: 65-77; Boyer 1996.

²³ Boyer 1996: 212.

²⁴ Sørensen 2007: 32.

²⁵ Parker 2011: 154.

Emic and etic perspectives

As already discussed, I present in this thesis two new perspectives on ‘sacrifice’ emphasising sensory interpretations on the one hand and cognitive ritual theory-based analysis on the other hand. These two strands in my approach – emic and etic – represent two contrasting ways of analysing human societies. I will emphasise the culturally and temporally specific by focusing on classical Athens and on the cross-culturally relevant by utilising cognitive and scientific studies. Additionally, I will focus on largely conscious sensory experience and its perceived significance on the one hand, and on largely unconscious biological and neural activity on the other hand, with its often automatic responses. Thus, I reconstruct the significance of ‘sacrifice’ in terms relevant to an ancient Athenian but I also address the significance of these phenomena from the perspective of a modern scholar and modern scientific knowledge.

This dual emphasis owes its debt to the groundbreaking methodology developed for the study of linguistics and extended to anthropology, pioneered by Pike. Pike distinguished an emic and etic approach. In an etic approach an author is ‘primarily concerned with generalised statements about the data’ utilising ‘a system which has been created by the analyst before studying the particular culture within which the new data had been found’. An emic approach, by contrast, is valid for only one culture at a time: ‘It is an attempt to discover and to describe the pattern of that particular language or culture in reference to the ways in which the various elements of that culture are related to each other in the functioning of that particular pattern, rather than an attempt to describe them in reference to a generalised classification devised in advance of the study of that particular culture’.²⁶ An emic approach is categorised as ‘internal’ or ‘domestic’, while an etic approach is ‘external’ or ‘alien’ but crucially they ‘do not constitute a rigid dichotomy of bits of data, but often present the same data from two points of view’.²⁷

Many subsequent scholars have attempted to build on this groundbreaking methodology and defend its applicability, while others still have championed ways of utilising both approaches.²⁸ Other scholars alternatively have pointed to problems with the emic/etic

²⁶ Pike 1954: 8.

²⁷ Pike 1954: 10-12.

²⁸ E.g. Goodenough 1970, Harris 1976.

model.²⁹ More positive studies have shown how emic and etic approaches can stimulate each other's progress and partly counteract one another's weaknesses.³⁰

Pike himself has noted that many of the ways his concepts have been applied are 'useful, even some that diverge somewhat from what I originally anticipated'.³¹ The approach taken here recognises the strengths and limitations of either an entirely etic or emic approach and combines them in a way that draws attention to aspects that can only be satisfactorily explained by either the one or the other. Crucially, such an approach recognises the dual importance of cultural and biological factors in the analysis of cross-cultural phenomena such as 'sacrifice' that none the less display powerful and striking culturally specific idiosyncrasies and relevances. This is also related to my view of 'sacrifice' as (like 'religion') an 'impure subject'.

Cognitive ritual theories (etic) perspective

This etic approach, based on cognitive ritual theories, aims to understand phenomena such as 'sacrifice' in terms of the structures and modalities of human psychology. It thus emphasises potentially universal cognitive experience as vital in understanding such activity. Boyer stresses that ritual and belief emerge as a by-product of the way our minds have evolved and Barrett stresses the 'naturalness' of religious belief.³² Both cite the operation of numerous mental tools, operating largely below conscious awareness, along with the ability of belief and ritual to activate many of these mental tools in various important situations, making them compelling and intuitively plausible. Thus, in a ground-breaking study, Boyer demonstrated that a proper 'theory of ritual' should also give 'a general account of the processes, cognitive and otherwise, whereby the ritual mode is triggered and directs action or interaction'.³³

In a more recent study, Boyer notes that the 'general ideology of sacrifice, the justification for its performance, is almost invariably the notion that misfortune can be kept away, as well as prosperity, or health, or social order maintained, if the participants and the gods

²⁹ E.g. Feleppa 1986 and 1986: 243; Marano 1982.

³⁰ E.g. Morris et al 1999, Berry 1989.

³¹ Peterson and Pike 2002: 6.

³² Boyer 2001; Barrett 2004.

³³ Boyer 1994: 190.

enter into some mutually beneficial exchange relation'.³⁴ Such inferences are provided by some of the aforementioned mental tools, specifically our social mind systems and, in particular, our social exchange system. However, Boyer notes that as an exchange procedure 'sacrifice' is paradoxical.³⁵ This is because although it is often presented as giving away some resources in exchange for protection, the 'brutal fact remains' that the animal victims are generally consumed by the participants. He adds that in many instances people 'find some clever way of finessing this conceptual difficulty' such as the idea that the gods crave the smell of meat, an idea more subtly represented in the ancient Greek evidence, as I will show. Boyer explains that this is because people have the intuition that the outcome of their agricultural and hunting operations, for example, mainly result from their own actions and hard work: In other words, 'the ways in which the gods actually confer benefits are not really described or even thought about'.³⁶ Boyer adds that 'in such situations then, people give resources to the ancestors but the part that the ancestors receive is not obvious, or not visible, or not material. In exchange people receive protection, but this is not obvious, or not visible'. There may well be then an intuitive correspondence between what people think they give away (and perhaps the ways in which they give it away) and what they think they receive.

In addition, Boyer argues that another reason why ceremonies such as 'sacrifice' make intuitive sense is that, in many cases, attention is focussed not so much on the 'potential exchange with invisible partners, as on the actual exchange or distribution of resources among the actual participants'.³⁷ Sacrificial rituals are often, for example, performed in the spirit of unconditional sharing, in contrast with ordinary social exchange. Indeed, this feature has been identified by scholars concerned with the evidence from ancient Greece, as discussed in my next chapter. In addition, in many sacrificial rituals, people pay great attention to the way the animal is divided up and, again, this is a feature that has been identified in the Greek evidence. It is important to note that the form of the rituals surrounding the killing of the victim emphasise different cognitive aspects to these activities, which concern the meat following the killing. In either context, however, the powerfully experiential operation of cognitive mechanisms will be demonstrated in this thesis.

³⁴ Boyer 2001: 277.

³⁵ Boyer 2001: 277.

³⁶ Boyer 2001: 277-8.

³⁷ Boyer 2001: 278.

Crucially, Boyer argues that rituals do not create social effects but only the illusion they do – rituals such as ‘sacrifice’ then are more relevant to people’s ‘thoughts’ about social processes, ‘thoughts’ that are themselves deeply experiential. Controversially, he argues that once you understand what gods are doing in a ritual, you can see that they are ‘an add-on to a human activity that does not really require them’. ³⁸ He explains that because people have the ‘thought’ that such a ritual creates some social effect and have some intuitions that the actions themselves are not the whole explanation, they feel that something else must be involved. As a consequence, this ‘empty slot’ can and often is filled by a god or other supernatural figure. This is explained by Boyer with reference to our ‘naïve sociology’, a flawed attempt to make sense of our intuitions about the social world around us where our ‘accessible, explicit concepts lag far behind the intuitions they are supposed to explain’. ³⁹ This thesis, however, recognises the fundamental importance of the gods to understanding the experience of ‘sacrifice’. At the same time, however, I emphasise the significance of human activity and experience from an etic perspective.

Stowers applies the findings of Boyer and Barrett to develop his theory of four modes of ancient Mediterranean religion. ⁴⁰ His approach is very different to mine (which emphasises experiential factors) but aspects of his methodology have been adapted in this thesis. The first mode in his model is that of everyday social exchange in which people interact with the gods as if they were persons via practices of generalised reciprocity. The dominant mood of these interactions is uncertainty about how and when the gods act and about their moods and desires. ⁴¹

The second mode is the religion of the literate ‘cultural producer’, a small minority literate enough to produce, and authoritatively interpret, complex written texts. Within this mode there are two poles locked in creative tension. At one end there were specialists who were not very entrepreneurial and relied, for example, on public patronage. They held a position which was a lot less radical than that of specialists at the other end of the spectrum, who had no position by inheritance or bestowal, and could only gain legitimacy by outdoing other specialists in displaying disinterest and novelty. In the case of classical Athens, the

³⁸ Boyer 2001: 270.

³⁹ Boyer 2001: 291-6.

⁴⁰ Stowers 2011.

⁴¹ Stowers 2011: 38-43.

poets were the literate specialists who stood closest to everyday and civic religion, while the opposing pole was occupied by philosophers of various sorts, independent religious entrepreneurs and traditions such as Orphism.⁴²

There were also two additional modes that developed from the above. The third mode was the religion of political power and ideology. The religion of the Greek city, for example, presupposed, built on and extended the religion of everyday social exchange. The fourth mode, on the other hand, based itself upon the religion of literate specialists and found its most clear example in the Christian churches.⁴³ Stower's ultimate view on 'animal sacrifice' is provocative but incomplete. It only refers to some sacrificial practices, while I would also question the dominance of the category of reciprocity in his model overall. He argues that the overwhelmingly dominant forms of 'sacrifice' were ritualised versions of festive food preparation and eating practices with very special guests. He adds: 'How did the death of the animal fit these activities? If you have ever tried to eat a live and uncooked animal, then you know the answer'.⁴⁴ In this thesis, however, I will show that sometimes important emotional and cognitive experiential factors surround activities like killing an animal and these are, in fact, important in understanding much sacrificial activity.

In addition, cognitive scientists have pointed to similarities between ritual behaviour and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and this points to an important way forward in explaining why 'sacrifice' takes the forms it does. Fiske and Haslam argue that OCD is a pathology of the human disposition to perform culturally meaningful social rituals.⁴⁵ Both are characterised by a desire to produce order, regularity, boundaries and clearly demarcated categories. In both conditions, 'people simplify and sharpen distinctions, focusing attention on the significance of one, or two, or a very few aspects of the world'. They maintain that while the world is 'multi-faceted, complex, ambiguous, messy and indefinite', OCD patients and ritual worshipers seek 'the essential features, aiming at simplicity, clarity, neatness, definition and certainty'.

Common features centre on a category of pollution and purification, other anti-contamination measures, concern for pollutants, categories of items focused on

⁴² Stowers 2011: 43-50.

⁴³ Stowers 2011: 50.

⁴⁴ Stowers 2011: 40.

⁴⁵ Fiske and Haslam 1997.

boundaries, concern with symmetry or exactness, ordering or arranging things, special colours, concern with rules or morality, making (repetitious) nonsense sounds, repeating special words and telling, asking or confessing.⁴⁶ Many of these features are clearly discernible in our evidence for 'animal sacrifice', as will be made clear.

Boyer and Liénard have built on the findings of Fiske and Haslam but argue, instead, for a neuro-cognitive model of the recurrent features of ritualised behaviour and the recurrent themes of collective ritual.⁴⁷ They describe a hazard-precaution system specialised in the detection of, and response to, potential threats to 'fitness'. This system is specially focused on recurrent hazards such as predation, intrusion by strangers, contamination, contagion, social offence and harm to offspring. The system also includes rudimentary descriptions of possible precautions which are triggered by ritualised behaviour.⁴⁸ Collective rituals are culturally successful to the extent that they activate or trigger these information-processing and motivation systems, thereby becoming attention grabbing and compelling to worshipers.⁴⁹ I will demonstrate in Chapter VII that such profoundly experiential systems can be shown to have been activated in much sacrificial activity in classical Athens and beyond.

Lawson and McCauley have developed a theory of ritual competence describing ritual intuitions relating to judgements of ritual efficacy and this forms another important strand of my argument (see Figure 1 below).⁵⁰ Again, the emphasis is on cognitive experience and the way activities like 'sacrifice' are cognitively experienced and understood. Lawson and McCauley argue that rituals are a special kind of action. Controversially, they explain the special nature of 'religious rituals' (thus these rituals are treated as a distinct category) with reference to the presence of superhuman agents somewhere in the action structure of any given ritual.

'Special agent' rituals are religious rituals in which the superhuman agent ('culturally postulated superhuman agent' - CPS-agent), is considered to be acting on human participants. 'Special patient' rituals are cases where the CPS-agent is considered the

⁴⁶ Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

⁴⁷ Boyer and Liénard 2006.

⁴⁸ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 820-1.

⁴⁹ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 822.

⁵⁰ Lawson and McCauley 1990.

‘recipient’ of the action while ‘special instrument’ rituals involve the use of something that is, or has been, acted on by the CPS-agent.⁵¹

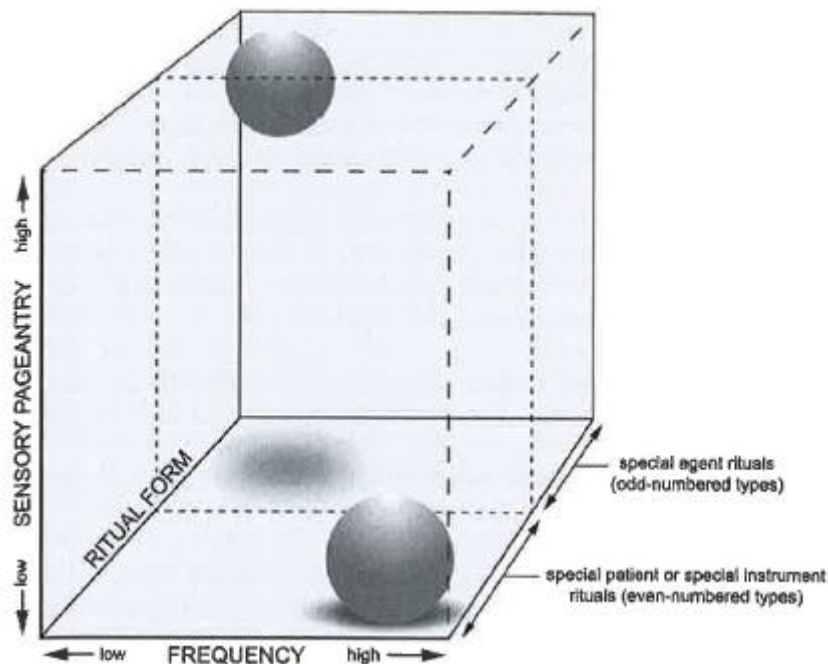


Figure 1 – The ritual form hypothesis shown three-dimensionally with the possible ritual arrangements bifurcated into two regions⁵²

This has important consequences relating to my analysis of sacrificial practices on a number of levels and predicts the ways they are cognitively experienced. In addition, there are powerful sensory and emotional ramifications. ‘Special agent’ rituals turn up the emotional volume in terms of high sensory pageantry relative to ‘special patient/instrument’ rituals in the same religious system.⁵³ It should be understood that Whitehouse has developed a different model distinguishing between a low frequency, high arousal imagistic mode and a high frequency, low arousal doctrinal mode.⁵⁴ He argues, however, that aspects of Lawson and McCauley’s model are most persuasive when taken as a set of predictions concerning people’s tacit, intuitive judgements about rituals and that this model potentially

⁵¹ Lawson and McCauley 2007: 10-19.

⁵² McCauley and Lawson 2002: 139.

⁵³ McCauley and Lawson 2002.

⁵⁴ E.g. Whitehouse 2004.

complements his own in some respects. He distinguishes, for example, between a 'cognitive optimal position' and people's reflective and largely explicit ideas about rituals.⁵⁵

Following the model of Lawson and McCauley, various aspects of sacrificial practice in ancient Greece can be understood as either 'special agent', 'special patient' or 'special instrument' rituals. They themselves define 'sacrifice' as a prime example of a 'special patient' ritual, in which the gods are passive 'recipients' of the 'sacrifices' and this is borne out by some features of the evidence available.⁵⁶ They also describe divination as a classic example of a 'special instrument' ritual and this is also reflected in some of the evidence. In any case, in activity of this type the notion of 'recipient' is not usually emphasised and other experiential factors are at work.

Divination is generally seen as a key element of many forms of 'sacrifice' and it might be said by some scholars that its significance could either be dominant, or be secondary, in the sense that the primary 'purpose' of the ritual was to make a so-called 'offering' to the deity. Alternatively, its relevance could appear to be secondary only as a consequence of the particular intentions and emphases of the authorial source involved. The argument made in this study, which is supported by the aforementioned approach (and others discussed below), is that what we term 'sacrifice' consisted not of one distinctive ritual, or set of distinctive rituals, but a number of loosely related different rituals that could occur in different contexts and be applied in different ways or, sometimes, not at all. All these rituals were also individually experienced on a number of different levels, including the cognitive and sensory. The various forms of sacrificial divination to be identified in Chapter IV were thus experienced differently to sacrificial activity where the notion of 'recipient' might be emphasised, even where part of the same overall sacrificial process. In addition, I will build on this model in Chapter VII to show that even the same, or similar forms of sacrificial activity, could be experienced and interpreted in strikingly different ways while very different rituals could be experienced in markedly similar ways. The framework of Lawson and McCauley thus presents a useful model that can be brought to bear on 'animal sacrifice' and that can explain and predict key features.

⁵⁵ Whitehouse 2004: 154.

⁵⁶ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 134.

I will also build on the model of Lawson and McCauley by adding specific contexts to their decontextualised and highly abstract model.⁵⁷ It is my contention that context is a key feature contributing to the cognitive representation of a ritual and to tacit understandings of ritual form and relative ritual intensity. This emphasis on context is not original but is approached here from a new cognitive perspective. Bell has argued convincingly, for example, that human activity is both situational and inherently strategic.⁵⁸

Pyysiäinen discusses the ritual transmission theories of Whitehouse and Lawson and McCauley and adds many nuances that are critical to my argument, particularly with regard to the importance of context. While he agrees that the presence of CPS-agents provokes strong emotions,⁵⁹ he argues that in many circumstances it is not the ritual form that makes the event emotional, but contextual factors such as illness, famine or painful memories.⁶⁰ In other words, CPS-agents are ‘summoned’ because the event is in some way important and emotional (thus high intensity) – their role and presence is a consequence of the event itself. This focus on context is a key part of my discussion as already made clear, from a modern etic reconstruction.

In addition, Pyysiäinen argues that it is not so much the specific mode of behaviour that provokes emotions but the nature of the religious representations. It is the degree of intimacy with the CPS-agent that is central, not the actual rituals per se when it comes to emotion.⁶¹ This will be particularly important when it comes to my discussion of rituals, such as battle-line *sphagia*, which do not appear to be distinctive compared to the same, or similar, elements in more festive contexts of ‘sacrifice’.

Thus, it is important to note in the evidence from ancient Greece that quite often the rituals themselves do not increase in intensity regardless of how compelling the situation may be. Here, again, context is key to the cognitive interpretation of the activity involved. On the other hand, sometimes, other ritual elements increase the overall intensity of the ceremony. On other occasions, the rituals were more clearly high intensity in nature (e.g. some rare but dramatic holocausts where entire victims were destroyed as initially discussed in Chapter IV) and thus do not undergo any change from their traditional forms.

⁵⁷ See Liénard and Lawson 2008 for a different way of building on this model.

⁵⁸ Bell 1992: 81-2.

⁵⁹ Pyysiäinen 2003: 85.

⁶⁰ Pyysiäinen 2003: 92-3.

⁶¹ Pyysiäinen 2003: 92-7.

Finally, on other rarer (and sometimes unlikely or clearly fictitious) occasions, a case might be made for a complete transformation (alleged or imagined ‘human sacrifices’ for instance). I will argue, following the insights of Lawson and McCauley, that ‘special patient/instrument’ rituals such as sacrificial practices were variable and flexible and could be adapted in light of extreme or unusual situations as well as other less compelling ones.

Importantly, it is easy to forget that our lived realities are a product of relatively recent developments which are far from universal even today.⁶² Reed maintains that scholarly self-awareness is particularly pressing for the study of ancient cultures in which ‘sanctified ritualised animal slaughter was a familiar feature of social, religious and civic life’. She adds that in many pre-modern Eurasian cultures, for example, ‘lived realities related to meat were nearly the opposite of ours: meat was relatively rare and the act of killing animals was closely connected with cooking and eating’.⁶³ ‘Meat’ was not abstracted from ‘animal’ in ancient Greece and ‘animal sacrifice’ was a customary and conspicuous feature of everyday life closely related to the pleasures, sensations and activities of eating, cooking and food preparation. This point also introduces my sensory emic analysis.

Sensory (emic) perspective

A second and interconnected aspect of my methodology is to relate sacrificial practices to the emerging field of sensory analysis. This emic perspective aims to reconstruct the perceived significance of sensory values relevant to such activity. As already discussed, this approach does not draw attention to cross-cultural or universal characteristics but rather focuses on a specific social and cultural context. As a result, the vast majority of evidence used – most of which is literary - relates specifically to classical Athens although some other key evidence (particularly Homeric) is also cited for reasons discussed previously in this chapter. I will only discuss sacrificial activity related clearly and uncontroversially to the consumption of an animal victim in order to make the discussion more focussed and the range of evidence and discussion points more manageable. I will do so on a sense by sense basis although pointing to the importance of recognising intersensoriality, or the combination of sensory channels in real experience, as discussed below.

⁶² Reed 2014: 11.

⁶³ Reed 2014: 11.

My key aim is to show that ancient literary ‘cultural producers’ emphasise the overwhelming sensory nature of such activity over – or at least as much as – other characteristics more often emphasised by modern scholars, such as ‘purpose’, piety, etc. I also aim to show that the senses of smell and hearing, in particular, are absolutely vital to any understanding of such behaviour and that an emphasis on purely visual aspects has clouded this importance. In addition, I reconstruct the sensory significance of practices and accoutrements associated with ‘sacrifice’ as well as their relationship to such activity. Thus, I again point to the importance of experience in unlocking the ‘meaning’ of ‘sacrifice’, but this time from an emic – and not etic – perspective.

It is necessary here to place my analysis in terms of the recent emergence of sensory studies and to show how my approach builds on this exciting field of modern scholarship. Howes argues that it has taken a ‘sensorial revolution’ to begin to recover a ‘full bodied understanding of culture and experience’.⁶⁴ He argues that perception is not only a matter of biology, psychology or personal history, but cultural formation. Sensory channels may not be modelled after linguistics, but they are loaded with social significance.⁶⁵ He also stresses the importance of addressing ‘intersensoriality’ or ‘the multi-directional interaction of the senses and of sensory ideologies whether considered in relation to a society, an individual or a work’.⁶⁶ This will be attempted in my analysis but the relevance of individual sensory modalities will also be emphasised (as already indicated) because they, too, form a coherent cultural system, albeit part of a larger inter-connected whole.

A number of key approaches, while stressing intersensoriality, emphasise a single particular sense such as smell or touch, in opposition to the modern insistence on the preeminent place of vision. Classen et al note that an ‘olfactory gulf lies between our own deodorised modern life and the richly scented lives of our forbears’.⁶⁷ They also note that certain parts of an ancient city bore the characteristic scent of the activities that were carried out there. So, for example, the agoras, gymnasiums and shrines all had their own distinctive odours.⁶⁸ Many of our sources refer, for example, to the altars for the gods at Troy (Euripides, *Trojan Women* 1060-5, *Andromache* 1025) and Mycenae (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1313) constantly burning with incense and the temple of Delphi is described in similar terms

⁶⁴ Howes 2005: 1-2.

⁶⁵ Howes 2005: 3-4.

⁶⁶ Howes 2005: 9.

⁶⁷ Classen et al 1994: 13.

⁶⁸ Classen et al 1994: 17-8.

(Euripides, *Ion* 510 in general terms and in association with a 'perverted sacrifice' at *Andromache* 1156-7). Sophocles (*Oedipus Tyrannus* 1-5) also described the air in the city of Thebes as being thick with the smell of incense.

To this would also be mingled the smell of burned victims from 'animal sacrifice'. In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (85-91), we find, for example, Clytaemestra commanding that 'sacrifices' be made at the altars throughout the city:

τί δ' ἐπαισθομένη,
τίνος ἀγγελίας
πειθοῖ περίπεμπτα θυοσκεῖς;
πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων,
ὑπάτων, χθονίων,
τῶν τ' οὐρανίων τῶν τ' ἀγοραίων,
βωμοὶ δῶροισι φλέγονται.

This gives a good impression of how the smell of burned victims permeated city life and how the odours of burned victims were familiar throughout a city's arteries and centres. Although these examples are from mythical times, they must have been comprehensible to their tragic audience. In a similar vein, Drobnick explores what he describes as 'volatile effects', or the olfactory dimensions of art and architecture.⁶⁹ This can also help explain the way structures or areas of the city could have been 'literally fragrant, pungent or reeking'.⁷⁰ However, it is important not to over-stress the sensory impact this is likely to have had. Bartosiewicz, for example, distinguishes between acute or dynamic smells (that carry new information and influence human decisions) and chronic or static smells (a constant and unavoidable part of the landscape).⁷¹ The majority of smells associated with 'animal sacrifice' would have been of this latter familiar type. Some of the grander festivals in Athens may, however, have been significantly more dynamic.

Classen et al also note that olfactory values are social values and that what was considered fragrant or foul smelling varies dramatically from culture to culture.⁷² The smell of burned victims would have been understood in a radically different way by an ancient Athenian

⁶⁹ Drobnick 2005.

⁷⁰ Drobnick 2005: 265.

⁷¹ Bartosiewicz 2003: 188.

⁷² Classen et al 1994: 104.

than by anyone from the west today, for example. The gods themselves were both fragrant and fragrance loving and took pleasure in the same delights as human beings.⁷³ Zeus describes the savour of burned victims as part of the *geras* or portion of honour that the gods are due (*Iliad* 4.49). The gods are here attracted by this smell as they were by other more familiar pleasing fragrances. It is clear that this savour was not the same thing as the smoke itself (at *Iliad* 1.317 we are told that it is carried by the smoke: κνίση δ' οὐρανὸν ἵκεν ἐλίσσομένη περὶ καπνῶ) and the smoke itself could be considered unpleasant or unbearable (e.g. Aristophanes, *Wealth* 820-2, an admittedly comic passage and likely to be hyperbolic in meaning).

An important text to consider here before proceeding is the *Homeric Hymn of Hermes* (105-37) where the god is described as performing what appears to be a unique and unparalleled form of 'sacrifice'. When the god has prepared and cooked the meat of the victims, he is almost overcome with desire for the savour of the sacrificial meat (130-3):

ἐνθ' ὁσίης κρεάων ἠράσσατο κύδιμος Ἑρμῆς:
ὁδμή γάρ μιν ἔτειρε καὶ ἀθάνατόν περ ἔόντα
ἦδεῖ: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς οἱ ἐπείθετο θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ,
καὶ τε μάλ' ἰμείροντι, περὶν ἱερῆς κατὰ δειρῆς.

Larson points to the Near Eastern tradition to explain elements of this hymn, citing similarities in many of its features.⁷⁴ Versnel points out that as a god Hermes realises he must be content with the savour instead of the substance of 'sacrifice'.⁷⁵ Failure to do this would result in him forfeiting his divine status. However, this 'ritual' is neither 'sacrifice' nor feast, although it contains elements of both. This hymn is more concerned with the personality and character of Hermes, a god who consistently veers towards the human.⁷⁶ It is interesting, none the less, that it is the savour, i.e. the smell, of the meat that nearly overcomes the god. One of the fragrance loving gods is here, once again, attracted by a pleasing smell.

On one level, then, smell or, in particular, fragrant or pleasing smell, was a key medium in the relations between men and gods during 'sacrifice'. In addition, as noted, such fragrant

⁷³ Classen et al 1994: 45-8.

⁷⁴ Larson 2005: 4-6.

⁷⁵ Versnel 2011: 322.

⁷⁶ Versnel 2011: 372.

smells characterised the gods themselves. In an important study, Gell notes that smell is distinguished by formlessness, indefinability and a lack of clear articulation.⁷⁷ This ephemeral nature makes smell a perfect vehicle for understandings of, and interactions with, the divine and as a 'model for the ideal which hovers on the edge of actualisation'.⁷⁸ He adds that 'the olfactory exchange between the gross and the spirit worlds can be understood not only in the sense of the subtle sacrificial portion ascending skywards, but also in the other direction, as the presentation, in the vehicle of an impalpable but distinctly perceptible odour of an ideal order which could be real'.

On a contrasting level, the smell of cooked meat (and thus of sacrificial cooking and cooked meat) triggers physiological reactions and, as a consequence, some of the impact of these smells are universal rather than culturally determined. Wrangham argues that many animals, including humans, are pre-adapted to appreciate the smells, tastes and textures of cooked food and that such a spontaneous preference for cooked food implies an innate mechanism for recognising high energy foods.⁷⁹ There is thus some overlap, at least, with issues raised in my etic analysis.

In terms of other avenues within which to explore the role of smell in 'sacrifice', Classen et al note that an integrative power is usually attributed to smell.⁸⁰ Scent is a good means of uniting people in a ritual 'who will breathe in and are enveloped by the same aroma'. Smell, as I will show, thus adds a new dimension to the scholarly emphasis on the social and integrative role of 'sacrifice' in general. They also note the boundary crossing nature of smell.⁸¹ Such boundary crossing was also a characteristic of conceptions of the Greek gods who often crossed the boundary between the human and divine worlds and could express themselves by diverse means during the course of a ritual or through phenomena in the vicinity or thereabouts (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.371-3 where the disguised Athena transforms from human shape into a vulture). In addition, smelling of 'sacrifice' would likely have been a commonplace aspect of interpersonal sensory recognition within the human realm replete with social and cultural implications. The smells of 'sacrifice' could also carry from the place of its execution. In the example of Aristophanes, *Peace* 1045-50, we have the comic

⁷⁷ Gell 2006: 402-3.

⁷⁸ Gell 2006: 404.

⁷⁹ Wrangham 2009: 91. See also Wobber et al 2008 on great apes.

⁸⁰ Classen et al 1994: 123.

⁸¹ Classen et al 1994: 123.

image of the oracle-monger, Hierocles, being drawn to the 'sacrifice' by the smell and trying to gatecrash the ritual and enjoy the *splanchna*.

In terms of taste, Lupton points out that phenomena such as hunger, taste and food preferences are often understood to be largely biological but, in fact, are also products of a socio-cultural environment.⁸² Food consumption habits serve to 'mark boundaries between social classes, geographic regions, nations, cultures, genders, lifestyle stages, religions and occupations, to distinguish rituals, traditions, festivals, seasons and times of day'.⁸³ Similarly, Visser notes that at festivals and feasts 'we are eating cultural history and value as well as family memories'.⁸⁴

This discussion again points to the crucial aspect of eating and feasting in 'animal sacrifice'. However, such emotional 'meanings' cannot be separated from the symbolic nature of food and 'these meanings are constructed by acculturation into a culture, by learning the rules around which types of food are considered pleasurable and which revolting but also through personal experience, including the unconscious'.⁸⁵ It should also be noted that recent cognitive-based research on disgust has found that 'core disgust' is a food related emotion that is rooted in evolution but, most importantly, it also is a cultural product.⁸⁶

The despatching of a piece of the meat from a sacrificial victim to friends and acquaintances is well known and the wrong attitude to this is lampooned by Theophrastus (*Characters, Gripping* 17.2). Sharing sacrificial meat and 'sacrificing' together helped maintain and cement reciprocal relations in the ancient city, as did other practices such as pouring libations together (e.g. Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 3.52 on 'sacrificing' and pouring libations together) and attending festivals together (e.g. Isocrates, *Aegineticus* 19.10 on 'sacrificing' and attending festivals together). Some foods, I will tentatively suggest, were also capable of removing the individual from the everyday, mundane world. In popular western culture, chocolate is often seen in this sort of light.⁸⁷ Food and cooking practices can also be the cause of revulsion and xenophobia and Herodotus (as I will show

⁸² Lupton 2005: 317-8. See also Khare 2005: 156-7, Buitelaar 2005: 178.

⁸³ Lupton 2005: 319.

⁸⁴ Visser 1991: 30.

⁸⁵ Lupton 2005: 319.

⁸⁶ Haidt et al 1997: 121-7.

⁸⁷ Lupton 2005: 323-4.

in Chapter III) clearly uses aspects of sacrificial practice to distinguish 'barbarian' customs and behaviour from those of Greece.⁸⁸

Much recent scholarship points to people learning a 'mother touch' as well as a 'mother tongue'.⁸⁹ In other words, we learn what to touch, how to touch and what significance to give to different kinds of touch. With the immediacy of touch, however, there is a move away from the idea of a vocabulary or grammar of touch and an insistence that 'touch precedes, informs and overwhelms language'.⁹⁰ Finnegan explores the communicative nature of touch noting, for example, the role of tactile communication at crucial ritual junctures such as the kissing and joining of hands at a wedding.⁹¹ A number of the prominent features of sacrificial and related practices discussed in my thesis demonstrate this communicative function of touch, although often their precise significance is unclear today. 'Complimentary, but integrated, actions between competitors, dancers, even talkers' also has such a communicative tactile basis and this, again, can be extended to the participants in an 'animal sacrifice'.⁹²

Studies show that the experience of touch is central to group bonding but while also expressing rank and hierarchy.⁹³ The social, integrative and formative role of 'animal sacrifice' has been stressed since Robertson Smith in 1894 as I will outline in my next chapter.⁹⁴ In addition, as I will also discuss there, scholars are now stressing that hierarchy was the principal operating factor governing access to (and therefore touching and tasting) meat rather than equality.⁹⁵

The nature of female sensory sacrificial experience is a complicated and controversial issue. A number of studies on women's touch have changed the direction of the argument from 'how does it affect men?' to 'how has it been creatively employed by women?'⁹⁶ A fruitful way forward is thus to look at how participation in 'animal sacrifice' could on various levels be creatively employed by women as part of 'women's tactics' and also how it might be

⁸⁸ Lupton 2005: 322 on xenophobia; Hartog 1989 on Herodotus.

⁸⁹ Classen 2005a: 13.

⁹⁰ Classen 2005a: 13.

⁹¹ Finnegan 2005: 21.

⁹² Finnegan 2005: 23.

⁹³ E.g. Classen 2005b: 155, Gregor 2005: 163-5.

⁹⁴ Robertson Smith 1894.

⁹⁵ Naiden 2012; cf. e.g. Schmitt Pantel 1990.

⁹⁶ E.g. Briggs 2005, Ping 2005, Classen 2005d. The question is posed in this way by Classen 2005c: 203.

understood by the women themselves. I will only be able to touch on such matters in this thesis, in order to keep my aims manageable. Women can, in fact, be seen performing a number of roles that are largely particular to them, some of which are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters (e.g. the ritual cry, acting as a *kanephoros* in a festival, etc.). The rules, conventions and intricacies of such roles may have been passed down, promoted and understood primarily by women.

Sound and its reception are likewise infused with cultural values and this is central to my discussion of the evidence for 'animal sacrifice'. In other words, 'sounds are embedded with both cultural and personal meanings; sounds do not come out at us merely raw'.⁹⁷ Auditory space is also a space in which multiple registers can co-exist simultaneously.⁹⁸ Music during a 'sacrifice', for instance, can co-exist with the sounds of the victims, the instructions of the officiant, etc. In addition, historical and anthropological studies show, for example, how sound can define a territorial identity and also how different social constructions can have 'distinct and meaningful aural components'.⁹⁹ In Chapter III, I will note how the construction of the 'other' in the ethnographies of Herodotus often had a distinct aural component, for instance, in conventions associated with prayer.

Recent studies also emphasise the role of music in group bonding and this aspect will also be emphasised in my analysis of the ancient evidence. Filmer, for example, discusses the prominent view that music involves a 'mutual tuning-in relationship' where the 'I' or 'you' are experienced as a vividly present 'we'.¹⁰⁰ McClary similarly notes the ability of music to invoke and bring into being a temporary community.¹⁰¹ In terms of the auditory aspects of 'animal sacrifice' as a whole, cult music was not likely to be the only aspect (as already suggested) and the auditory channel was certainly not just operating skywards. Unlike prayer, cult music was not indispensable to 'sacrifice' (as examples discussed in later chapters will demonstrate), but it was hugely important to such experience whenever present. I will reconstruct the sensory significance of associated sacrificial features such as cult music and prayer, as well as their relationship to 'sacrifice' in general.

⁹⁷ Bull and Back 2003: 9.

⁹⁸ Bull and Back 2003: 15.

⁹⁹ E.g. Corbin 2003, Smith 2003: 158.

¹⁰⁰ Filmer 2003: 96.

¹⁰¹ McClary 2003: 431.

Corbin notes that the most apparent difficulty in studying the organisation and balance of the senses for a historian is the transience of the evidence.¹⁰² Although it might be possible, to some extent at least, to approximately reconstruct the sensory environment of the period under study, the more problematic issue concerns ‘the use of the senses, their lived hierarchy and their perceived significance’. He suggests looking towards the ‘dominant scientific convictions’ of the period under scrutiny as a key form of evidence.¹⁰³ Although this is useful in the thesis undertaken here, it is a deeply problematic starting point. It is questionable to what extent the writings of intellectuals, such as Aristotle and Plato represented ordinary, everyday beliefs and experiences.

Aristotle posed a hierarchical order of the senses from most to least valuable: vision – hearing – smell – taste – touch.¹⁰⁴ He considered touch (and as a result taste) the basest and lowest of the senses as it is shared by all animals (e.g. *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.10.11). As we have seen already, however, smell was central to the experience of what many scholars term ‘animal sacrifice’, while touch was also important and as will be discussed in Chapter VI, helped facilitate receiving messages from the gods. Taste was also perhaps the primary value of many forms of ‘animal sacrifice’ as I will show.

Emotions (emic and etic)

One key discussion point both unites and contrasts my emic and etic approaches and their differing methodologies most clearly - emotions. I will emphasise in this thesis that while most, if not all emotions, have very strong and undeniable cultural aspects (even in some contexts emotions surrounding danger) at the same time, some emotional experience (intimately linked to emotion-inducing situations) have cross-cultural relevance and are rooted in a universal biological basis.¹⁰⁵ As a consequence, my aim will be to draw attention to both cross-cultural and culturally specific instantiations of emotion in the evidence.

Before embarking any further I must discuss the prevailing views of modern scholars on this problematic and highly contentious issue and where the approach taken in this thesis

¹⁰² Corbin 2005: 131.

¹⁰³ Corbin 2005: 134.

¹⁰⁴ Stewart 2005: 61.

¹⁰⁵ Lutz 1998: 183-208 discusses ‘the cultural construction of danger’ among the Ifaluk in the Southwest Pacific.

stands in relation to this state of affairs. It must be noted from the outset that there is 'no interdisciplinary consensus as to what emotion is' while 'the terminology is not in agreement either: the terms feelings, sentiments and affects are used instead of emotion even by researchers within the same fields'.¹⁰⁶ The concept of emotion is itself not universal as there are languages in which the word is absent while the emotional categorisations made in each language are inevitably culture bound.¹⁰⁷ The battleground often appears to be between evolutionary approaches, originating in Darwin's view of emotions and influenced by neuroscience and psychology and social constructionist views championed largely in anthropology.¹⁰⁸ In fact, most scholars now forge a middle ground between these extremes, although they tend to lean more towards one side than the other. Theodoropoulou points out that the central issue is, in fact, the 'focus which each side emphasises, something which also becomes obvious in what it chooses to define as its field of investigation'.¹⁰⁹ In other words, the views of these scholars are not necessarily as opposed as they might appear.

It is critical to my etic approach that at least some emotional experience, associated intimately with certain recognisable situations that can potentially trigger such experience, have a universal biological basis. Damasio argues that we 'are wired to respond with an emotion, in preorganised fashion, when certain features of stimuli in the world or in our bodies are perceived, alone or in combination' and he distinguishes between innate primary emotions, social secondary emotions and background emotions.¹¹⁰ In a more recent publication, he explains that the primary, or universal emotions, are happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise or disgust. Secondary, or social emotions, include embarrassment, jealousy, guilt or pride. So-called background emotions include wellbeing or malaise, calm or tension. A shared biological core underlies all these phenomena. Indeed, emotions 'are biologically determined processes depending on innately set brain devices laid down by a long evolutionary history'. Thus, 'emotions are part of the bioregulatory devices with which we come equipped to survive' and these devices 'can be engaged automatically, without conscious deliberation'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Theodoropoulou 2012: 434.

¹⁰⁷ The classical Greek term for emotion is conventionally understood to be *pathê* but this is far from unproblematic - Konstan 2006: 3-40; Theodoropoulou 2012: 434.

¹⁰⁸ See Konstan 2006: 3-40, Wilce 2009: 67-83, etc. Darwin 1872.

¹⁰⁹ Theodoropoulou 2012: 435.

¹¹⁰ Damasio 1994: 131-8.

¹¹¹ Damasio 2000: 50-6.

In addition, LeDoux argues that the various classes of emotion are mediated by separate neural systems that have evolved for differing reasons and that these brain systems are highly conserved through many levels of evolutionary history. He adds that emotional responses are generally generated unconsciously and that the conscious feelings we often associate with emotion are a kind of 'red herring' in their scientific study. He explains that 'the system that detects danger is the fundamental mechanism of fear and the behavioural, physiological and conscious manifestations are the surface responses it orchestrates'.¹¹² Focusing largely on fear, he maintains that the 'brain is programmed to detect dangers, both those that were routinely experienced by our ancestors and those learned about by each of us as individuals and to produce protective responses that are most effective for our particular body type, and for the ancient environmental conditions under which the responses were selected'.¹¹³ In trying to abandon the concept of emotion, Griffiths divides this category into socially sustained pretences, affect programme responses and higher cognitive states. He maintains that the 'affect programme states are phylogenetically ancient, informationally encapsulated, reflexlike responses which seem to be insensitive to culture' while the 'other emotions are aspects of higher cognition which differ across cultures due to the role of culture in psychological development'.¹¹⁴

None of these important perspectives rules out the strong influence of cultural factors and in this thesis, as already outlined, powerful cultural influences as well as more universal aspects will be emphasised. Other scholars stress cultural factors much more than the views previously discussed but still recognise the important influence of a shared biological basis.¹¹⁵ The battleground was initially more extreme and the previous discussion must be placed within this context. Averill argued that 'most standard emotional reactions are social constructions'.¹¹⁶ Ekman, on the other hand, follows Darwin in finding proof of the alleged universality of facial expressions and thus of the innateness of what he terms basic emotions.¹¹⁷ He, however, also allows cultural aspects to intrude on this universal basis with his notion of culturally specific display rules (the 'conventions, norms and habits that develop regarding the management of emotional responses').¹¹⁸

¹¹² LeDoux 1998: 16-20.

¹¹³ LeDoux 1998: 174-5.

¹¹⁴ Griffiths 1997: 14-7.

¹¹⁵ E.g. Theodoropoulou 2012: 441, Kövecses 2005:293, Wilce 2009: 183, Wierzbicka 1999: 34-8.

¹¹⁶ Averill 1974: 182; see also Lutz 1998: 209.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Ekman 1977, 1984, 1994a, 1994b, 1998.

¹¹⁸ Ekman 1977: 62.

In terms of approaches to emotion found in studies of ancient Greece, Konstan represents the dominant social constructionist position. He argues that the Greeks in general understood emotions 'as responses not to events but to actions, or situations resulting from actions, that entail consequences for one's own or others' relative social standing. As a result, some sentiments that typically count as emotions in English fall outside the category of *pathê* in classical Greek'.¹¹⁹ Konstan has been criticised for sometimes 'assuming the English lexicon as a norm and in seeing English concepts as monoliths, using accounts that are too prescriptive'.¹²⁰ Cairns adds that 'magnification of minor differences and excessive focus on the specific is a typical constructionist method'.¹²¹ Cairns also provides a welcome exception to the social constructionist approaches of two recent volumes largely dedicated to emotion in ancient Greece in his study of the Greek term for shudders.¹²² He points out that *phrike* is an experiential concept and that 'there are substantial aspects of emotional experience that depend on the biological heritage of our species and are deeply rooted in basic mechanisms of bodily regulation that human beings share with other animals. Where such aspects are prominent in cultures' concepts of emotions we cannot expect the history of those concepts or the history of emotion itself to be one of unconstrained conceptual and cultural variation'.¹²³

Chaniotis has explored emotion in the ancient world in many insightful and productive articles. He discusses, for example, the emotional basis of inscriptions, emotional theatricality and illusion in ritual, emotional ritual communities and inter-personal relations and tensions involved in such emotional rituals.¹²⁴ He argues: 'Fear and hope dominate every encounter of humans with the gods, during a ritual and beyond that'.¹²⁵ My approach differs from his in focusing on sensorially culture specific emotional experience on the one hand and cross-cultural aspects of emotion on the other. In terms of the latter, I focus not on a social constructionist view of fear and hope, but biologically based emotional responses in specific situations.

¹¹⁹ Konstan 2006: 40.

¹²⁰ Cairns 2008: 51.

¹²¹ Cairns 2008: 56.

¹²² The agenda is set by Chaniotis 2012b and Chaniotis and Ducrey 2013.

¹²³ Cairns 2013: 87.

¹²⁴ Chaniotis 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012a, 2012c, 2012d, 2013.

¹²⁵ Chaniotis 2013: 171.

Predictions and key claims

My thesis has a number of key claims which are introduced here and then validated in subsequent chapters by testing them against the evidence. My emic approach predicts that 'sacrifice' will be consistently presented in the source material as an overwhelmingly sensory experience, perhaps even primarily so in the presentation of some cultural producers (particularly the literary source material). I should also be able to demonstrate that various sensory elements and properties held distinct and recognisable experiential 'meanings' and that these were a significant and important part of how 'sacrifice' was understood. In addition, this sensorially rich experience included profound, perceived sensations of the gods' involvement or, at the very least, interest. However, having said this, it will also become clear that our literary sources emphasise sensory aspects of these experiences over any other aspect, although the absence of theological elaboration, for example, is characteristic of Greek religion as a whole.¹²⁶

My etic approach is twofold and based on two complementary approaches. The model of Lawson and McCauley is used to show that 'sacrifice' could be experienced and interpreted in strikingly divergent ways according to the nature of divine involvement and that this remains true for similar and related practices. In addition, not only could the same or similar rituals be interpreted differently but very different rituals could be experienced in profoundly similar ways. The model of Boyer and Liénard is used to demonstrate that activities like 'sacrifice' are felt to be intuitively appropriate and emotionally compelling because of the by-product triggering and activation of evolved cognitive architecture shared by all human beings. Therefore, while the gods are central to the first approach they are irrelevant to the interpretation offered by the second, which focuses on, and explains, different but related aspects of cognition and behaviour. Both theories demonstrate that people perform such activity because it is pleasurable, exciting, reassuring or just feels like the right thing to do without a need for any shared, consistent or even conscious rationale.

The predictions that follow are various. I predict that the ancient source material should exhibit no shared understanding of what 'sacrifice' was, what it did or what it was for. In fact, what should matter in most cases is not the actual form of 'offering' but the experiential context, whether a celebratory feast, drinking party, or impending battle, etc and not clear-cut definitions and clearly demarcated practices. In addition, there should be

¹²⁶ Parker 2011: 32 notes 'all that was firm and established and secure, all therefore that it made sense to regulate, was the ritual act'.

considerable overlap between various forms of sacrificial activity, whether vegetal, animal, incense or liquid (including on the linguistic and practical levels) and it should prove difficult to draw simple lines between different kinds of ritual activity. There should also be distinct cognitive and emotional operations involved in differing sacrificial activities and in various stages of these operations and thus no single 'meaning' or interpretation. Also, while the role of the gods is central to the experience of 'sacrifice' it is predicted that there should be a surprising lack of clarity about how the gods actually benefited from this kind of behaviour and little sign that this was ever even considered a problem. Related to this, there should prove to be a much greater lack of uniformity than has generally been recognised by modern scholars regarding what part of a 'sacrifice' was actually due to the gods. Finally, it is predicted that overlooked experiential, emotional and situational factors should be important to making sense of sacrificial terminology.

My main two approaches, emic and etic, will be shown to be complementary, each adding aspects to my thesis that utilising only one of these in my investigation would overlook. The balance can crudely be seen as between sensory, conscious, culturally specific and purposive activity and unconscious, cross-cultural, automatic and experiential activity although there is overlap and no simple dichotomy.

The modular approach to cognition taken here also predicts distinct mental and emotional operations involved in distinct sacrificial activities, i.e. the cognitive processes involved in the preparation and consumption of the victim will differ from those involved in the rituals surrounding the actual killing. Whenever multiple systems are involved, as in many forms of 'sacrifice' followed by dining, distinct mental processes can be seen to operate at distinct times involving distinct actions. Thus 'sacrifice' is the product of the operation of multiple diverse systems and related actions and it is predicted that this modular nature will be reflected in the way sacrificial practice is carried out, performed and experienced. In other words, it is not a seamless whole, but an interrelated set of diverse activities differentially interpreted, experienced and understood. It is hoped that this final prediction will add to nascent cognitive literature on the relation between cognitive structures and action discussed below. It is also tenuously suggested that particularly intense situations increase the likelihood that only one cognitive system is engaged and fully activated, heightening attention on this particular activity and experience (e.g. during battle-line *sphagia*).

Potential counter arguments

There are a number of potential counter arguments to my etic approach in particular and, at this point, I should explain that I am not refuting many of these arguments or their relevance to the subject under scrutiny. My purpose in this thesis is to ask specific questions of the evidence for specific reasons and with specific aims and methodologies. It is not to perfectly and comprehensively describe or explain complex behaviour such as 'sacrifice'. As I have already suggested, I do not believe that such an undertaking is possible. However, strong potential criticism remains and will be explored in my thesis, although at times I will show that it is possible to integrate some of these findings into my approach without distorting their meaning.

Critics might point to the apparently often conspicuous interest in the distribution to, and involvement of, the gods in sacrificial rituals such as is suggested by related practices such as *theoxenia* or the widespread use of cult tables discussed in subsequent chapters.¹²⁷ They might also point to the shaky evidence for the thoroughly modern construct of the Olympian/Chthonian distinction discussed in my next chapter. According to this view, the idea of how the gods benefited is central, as concern is allegedly expressed for the 'offering' being of an appropriate form for a particular type of god.¹²⁸ There is also evidence for interaction with the gods in various ways, within which sacrificial activity is often seen as an important and related part. Indeed, Parker has argued that if you remove the 'ideal of reciprocity the whole explicit rationale of Greek cult practice disappears'.¹²⁹ Naiden has also drawn attention to the anguish often felt over potentially 'rejected sacrifice'.¹³⁰ However, I am interested in my cognitive rituals theories-based chapter on unconscious mechanisms and emotions and not explicit rationalisations like reciprocity.

Again, in respect of these legitimate arguments I re-emphasise that this thesis does not deny the importance of the gods. Instead, the role of the gods is in fact central to the model of Lawson and McCauley although I will demonstrate that the nature of their involvement could be experienced in fundamentally different ways even when performing the same or similar rites. Thus, not all such sacrificial rituals were 'special patient' in nature

¹²⁷ *Theoxenia* is authoritatively discussed by Jameson 1994. Gill 1991 presents much of the evidence for cult tables. Both of these phenomena will be analysed in this thesis.

¹²⁸ A revised defence of this distinction is championed by Scullion 1994.

¹²⁹ Parker 1998: 105.

¹³⁰ Naiden 2006.

with the gods acting merely as recipients of these activities. The second and complementary model, on the other hand, explains different aspects and is not concerned with any notion of divine involvement. My approach then, aims to shed new light on sacrificial activity generally, from both a cross-cultural and culturally specific perspective. It does not intend to dismantle other approaches but point to deficiencies in any approach that fails to recognise its limitations and the potential of cognitive analysis. Such an approach casts its interpretations and models as unproblematic and sets aside, or ignores as unimportant, the many inconsistencies and contradictions in the actual evidence, as I will demonstrate. My approach aims to add a new layer of cognitive-based understanding, not to diminish or dismantle the contribution of earlier views.

Criticism of cognitive approaches

In terms of criticism of cognitive approaches generally, a major concern is the neglect of the causal effects of culture in many studies (exemplified most strongly by the approach of Boyer).¹³¹ However, cognitive scholars are now recognising the depth of this limitation and my own approach puts culture in the foreground (Sørensen has recently, in fact, proposed ‘an immunology of cultural systems’).¹³² One religious scholar attacks Boyer and Pyysiäinen for ‘their grandiose generalisations and simplistic denunciations of religion’.¹³³ Other scholars are, however, far more positive. McCauley and Lawson’s *Bringing Ritual to Mind* is said to offer a ‘paradigmatic example of attentiveness to both theoretical and empirical issues in the cognitive study of religion’.¹³⁴

At the same time, however, Engler points out many approaches are based on an ‘armchair scientific method’. In other words, many cognitive scholars do not generate and test hypothesis but research texts – mainly scientific ones – ‘retrieving explanatory and interpretive tools and applying these to religious phenomena’.¹³⁵ Other criticisms are more specific. Platvoet, for example, disputes the fact that a prayer is not designated as a ritual in the original model of Lawson and McCauley. It can, however, be a central religious ritual in many religious contexts, including those of Christianity.¹³⁶ Geertz notes instead that

¹³¹ E.g. Geertz and Markússon 2010: 159 and Sørensen 2005: 479 both make this criticism.

¹³² Sørensen 2004: 62.

¹³³ Bulkeley 2003: 671 discussing Boyer 2001 and Pyysiäinen 2001.

¹³⁴ Engler 2004: 357 discussing McCauley and Lawson 2002.

¹³⁵ Engler 2004: 358.

¹³⁶ Platvoet 1993: 191 discussing Lawson and McCauley 1990.

much of the evidence 'is experimental, but much is still hypothetical and in some cases highly speculative'.¹³⁷ He also points to recent psychological evidence that questions some of Whitehouse's conclusions concerning the characteristics of semantic and episodic memory and flashbulb effects.¹³⁸

Sørensen points out that there is disagreement among cognitive scholars about the impact of cognitive mechanisms on actual behaviour and that there is little cognitive study of religious behaviour. Indeed, one of the aims of my thesis is an attempt to answer this absence of material to some extent. It also recognises the 'growing realisation that different types of behaviour have different cognitive underpinnings and effects and therefore must be explained by different theories'.¹³⁹

It is clear that much work remains to be done in cognitive scholarship, but this should not stop anyone from utilising these approaches. I believe that by doing so I can offer a new and scientifically informed lens under which to examine the evidence and pose new ways of asking old questions. It is not denied that the approaches cited here could be subject to revision, reformulation or improvement in general, but I maintain that together they offer a promising new avenue of enquiry that can address key questions in new and relevant ways. In utilising many of these approaches together, I try to draw out shared perspectives and commonalities between them rather than emphasising disagreements. Together, I will show that they provide preliminary building blocks to a cognitively-informed study of 'sacrifice'.

Having now identified the key issues that this study will be addressing, and the state of the modern scholarship related to them, it is time to turn to the history of debate surrounding 'sacrifice'.

¹³⁷ Geertz 2004: 348.

¹³⁸ Geertz 2004: 384-5.

¹³⁹ Sørensen 2005: 482.

Chapter II

'Animal sacrifice' in ancient Greece

This chapter explores the historiography of 'animal sacrifice', tracing the progression and significance of scholarly interest in the subject from the 19th century until the present day. It draws attention to the factors that helped shape past theories and that still influence present discussion. It also points to the dangers of not recognising when assumptions are being made and of the pitfalls of theoretical endeavour in general. In discussing other views, I will also clearly demonstrate how my own approach both differs from, and builds on, the work of other theorists.

Early theories

'Sacrifice' was central to the debate that began in the late 19th century concerning the origins and essence of religion.¹⁴⁰ Two key perspectives made their appearance towards the close of this period. The idea of 'sacrifice' as a 'gift' was first proposed by Tylor in 1874 although the idea of 'sacrifice' as a system of exchange was initially expanded by Westermarck early last century.¹⁴¹ Then later, in 1894, Robertson Smith adopted the now disregarded notion of totemism to maintain that 'sacrifice' originally produced a 'mystical unity' between worshiper and god by consuming the flesh of an animal victim representing, in some respects, both the god and the tribe.¹⁴²

In his recent book on 'sacrifice', Naiden has provided a survey of the early scholarship, beginning with Robertson Smith.¹⁴³ He notes that Robertson Smith rendered much earlier scholarship apparently obsolete while putting meals, solidarity and bloodshed to the fore. He explains: 'Before him, the sacrificial offering, whether animal or otherwise, had been more important than the sacrificial meal. By the same token, the purpose of the sacrifice, such as expiation or thanksgiving, had been more important than the effect.'¹⁴⁴

Robertson Smith had begun his career as a professor of theology in the Free Church of Scotland and the influence of the ritual of the Christian Eucharist has often been detected

¹⁴⁰ Parker 2011: 124.

¹⁴¹ Tylor 1874; Westermarck 1912.

¹⁴² Detienne 1989a: 14 described the notion of totemism as an 'illusion'; Robertson Smith 1894: 312-14.

¹⁴³ Naiden 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Naiden 2013: 5-6.

in his perspective although his writings did not appeal to the Free Church.¹⁴⁵ Crucially, he balanced two key aspects of 'sacrifice', the psychological and the sociological: 'By reaffirming community, the sacred meal affected both the emotions of the worshippers and their social ties'.¹⁴⁶ Naiden explains that this latent opposition becomes patent in later views with psychological perspectives championed largely by German and Swiss Protestants and sociological perspectives by Francophone Jews.¹⁴⁷

Naiden also notes that the solidarity perspective of Robertson Smith reappeared in the work of the French sociologist Durkheim a few decades later, along with Durkheim's followers Hubert and Mauss (also in a modified form) prior to this in 1899. These latter scholars lacked his emphasis on bloodshed, however, while the notion of 'sacrifice' as a 'gift' made a come-back.¹⁴⁸ Hubert and Mauss argued that 'sacrifice' established a means of communication between the sacred and the profane worlds through the mediation of an animal victim. The purpose of this 'consecration' was that the two worlds that were present could inter-penetrate and yet remain distinct, and this approach emphasises the immense, yet destructive, power of the sacred. They divided sacrificial ritual into a fundamental dichotomy – rights of sacralisation and desacralisation, elements that are closely inter-dependent and cannot exist independently.¹⁴⁹ De Heusch argued, instead, that these two categories should be replaced with the conjunction and disjunction of spaces, human and non-human.¹⁵⁰ This has been used by anthropologists to distinguish between conjunctive and disjunctive rites, rites establishing or maintaining communication and rites breaking or removing communication.¹⁵¹

The still influential views of Burkert, Vernant and Detienne reached back into this Victorian era. Like the Swiss scholar Meuli, who in 1946 associated the origins of 'sacrifice' with a hunter's alleged feeling of guilt, Burkert - and also Girard - stress the psychological aspects of 'sacrifice', while Burkert adds the insights of natural science.¹⁵² Vernant, Detienne and the French School, on the other hand, stress the sociological instead, where the killing of an animal mattered less than the sacrificial meal that followed. Indeed, in this alimentary

¹⁴⁵ Naiden 2013: 5; e.g. Parker 2011: 139.

¹⁴⁶ Naiden 2013: 6.

¹⁴⁷ Naiden 2013: 6.

¹⁴⁸ Naiden 2013: 6-7; Hubert and Mauss 1899; Durkheim 1912.

¹⁴⁹ Hubert and Mauss 1899: 95-103.

¹⁵⁰ De Heusch 1985: 213.

¹⁵¹ Beattie 1980: 38-39.

¹⁵² Naiden 2013: 4-15; Meuli 1946; Burkert 1983 and 1985; e.g. Girard 1987.

context, they 'discovered a civic, Greek version of the solidarity first described by Robertson Smith and Durkheim'.¹⁵³ All these views – which developed in tandem – also presented a normative view of *thysia* as animal sacrifice before a meal, giving little attention to other forms of 'offering', for example.¹⁵⁴

Killing: Burkert and Girard

Burkert and Girard have both propounded influential theories focusing on the alleged power of violence and killing to create and maintain cohesion and community. Burkert locates the origin of 'sacrifice' in Palaeolithic hunting and argues that aggression between men is re-directed via 'sacrifice' onto the animal victim.¹⁵⁵ He utilises Meuli's 'comedy of innocence' but subverts it, claiming that 'sacrifice' does not remove or settle tensions surrounding feelings of fear and guilt but, on the contrary, purposely heightens them.¹⁵⁶ Girard used an ingenious analysis of myth to discern a pattern of 'generative scapegoating' employing concepts of 'mimetic rivalry' and guilt. He maintained that behind many myths lies a collective murder that puts an end to intra-specific fighting and allows society to flourish. 'Sacrifice' re-enacts a pattern of community disintegration and regeneration through a re-enactment of this 'unanimous victimage'.¹⁵⁷ In a similar vein to Burkert, Vernant also employed Meuli's 'comedy of innocence', but applied it more faithfully. He argued that 'sacrifice' allowed the slaughter of the victim in such a way that violence appears to be excluded, whilst unequivocally taking on a nature that separates it from murder.¹⁵⁸

Eating: French School

Detienne notes that the first characteristic that justifies the central place of 'animal sacrifice' in ancient Greece is the 'absolute coincidence of meat eating and sacrificial practice'. He argues that all meat consumed by the Greeks came via the medium of 'sacrifice'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Naiden 2013: 12; Detienne and Vernant 1989.

¹⁵⁴ Naiden 2013: 14.

¹⁵⁵ Burkert 1983: 42.

¹⁵⁶ Burkert 1983: 21; Meuli 1946: 282.

¹⁵⁷ Girard 1987: 121.

¹⁵⁸ Vernant 1991a: 294; the observation on faithfulness is made by Parker 2011: 160.

¹⁵⁹ Detienne 1989a: 3.

The importance of eating was thus clearly central to the theories of Detienne, Vernant and the French School. Vernant also presented an inspired 'theology' of 'sacrifice' based on a structuralist interpretation of the Promethean myth in Hesiod (*Theogony* 507-616 and *Works and Days* 45-105) explaining the origins of *thysia*. He argued that there was an insurmountable distance that separated gods and men, with mankind situated between the savagery of animals and the immortal gods who were free of hunger, pain and death. Whilst the gods were content with the fumes from 'sacrifice', men ate cooked meat through the medium of 'sacrifice' as opposed to animals that ate raw flesh.¹⁶⁰ 'Animal sacrifice' was also the battleground on which marginal groups expressed their opposition to society. The Orphics and some Pythagoreans achieved this through vegetarianism while the Bacchants allegedly practiced *omophagia*, the eating of raw flesh.¹⁶¹

Retrospection and criticism

Kirk had recognised a number of failings in the work of the earlier great theorists that are also related to the development of the study of Athenian sacrificial practice in particular. Citing the persistent joking in comedy that the gods are cheated in 'sacrifice' by being given only inedible parts (e.g. Menander, *Dyskolos* 451-4, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 7.30.3 citing Pherekrates, a 5th century BC Attic poet), he rightly argued that this should not be taken seriously as a real dilemma for the worshipper. He explained: 'The special genre characteristics and consequent probable truth-value of a well-defined class of literary evidence have not been properly considered and assessed'.¹⁶² He also noted that Homeric and post-Homeric evidence cannot be amalgamated into a 'glorified "classical" amalgam' and that divergences in the material must be recognised.¹⁶³

Detienne had also already mounted a resounding criticism of earlier approaches and their legacy, which he said survived up to the present day. He argued that 'sacrifice' was an 'artificial' creation, bringing together disparate elements from diverse contexts and environments and forcefully maintained that many of these perspectives were undermined by a fundamental evolutionism and ethnocentric Christian bent.¹⁶⁴ The dangers of assumption and the familiar theoretical pitfalls remained however in the output of the

¹⁶⁰ Vernant 1991a: 297-301.

¹⁶¹ Vernant 1991a: 296.

¹⁶² Kirk 1981: 61-2.

¹⁶³ Kirk 1981: 62.

¹⁶⁴ Detienne 1989a: 13-20.

French School whose work, like structuralist approaches in general, often relied too heavily on intuition or inspiration without specifying the underlying principles behind their analysis.¹⁶⁵

Smith notes that out of the multitude of possible rituals to focus on, 'sacrifice', New Year rituals and initiation have been emphasised by scholars 'and each has a characteristic form of data associated with it, and each seems to involve one in a characteristic stance'.¹⁶⁶

Both the French School and Burkert largely disregarded the fruitful epigraphic evidence, for example.¹⁶⁷

Carter concludes his anthology of influential views of 'sacrifice' by noting that one of the main controversies surrounding such theories concerns the selection and emphasis of a single aspect of sacrificial phenomena and the building from this of an explanation of 'sacrifice' in its entirety.¹⁶⁸ He argues: 'The problem of scale, the issue of how much to generalise, lies at the heart of every theoretical endeavour'.¹⁶⁹ Similarly, Bremmer notes on the prevailing theories of 'sacrifice': 'Rather striking in these modern explanations is the "secular" reductionist approach, which does not take into account the explicit aims of the Greeks and tries to reduce sacrifice to one clear formula'.¹⁷⁰

A number of recent studies have also placed the great theories on 'sacrifice' in their social and cultural contexts and have revealed some of the anxieties and concerns underlying them, along with the climates of intellectual interest, that helped shape them. Lincoln describes how thinkers as different as Hubert and Mauss and Meuli, for instance, were in their own way dedicated to resisting other 'theories – and theorists – committed to causes of the extreme right: Aryan triumphalism, reactionary anti-Semitism, fascism and racism'.¹⁷¹ Graf notes the contrasting academic environments in which the theories of Burkert, Girard and Vernant emerged (with each following 'its own historicist and evolutionary patterns') as well as relevant biographical factors from each of their lives.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 173 make this general criticism of structuralism.

¹⁶⁶ Smith 1987: 208.

¹⁶⁷ Naiden 2013: 13 makes this point.

¹⁶⁸ Carter 2003: 450.

¹⁶⁹ Carter 2003: 451.

¹⁷⁰ Bremmer 2007a: 143-4.

¹⁷¹ Lincoln 2012: 31.

¹⁷² Graf 2012: 33-42.

He thus explores the 'limitations and flaws of the existing grand theories' but also argues that cross-cultural approaches are now rare, although they may well be rewarding.¹⁷³

Naiden shows how many ideas that have shaped opinions on Greek 'sacrifice' (e.g. the willing victim, redemption through bloodshed and the sacred meal) were not originally about Greek 'sacrifice' at all, and their origins can largely be traced back to the theological activity of Saint Paul.¹⁷⁴

Some issues are largely uncontested however. No scholar would dispute the link between the majority of sacrificial activity and food or consumption. Boyer, meanwhile, lends support to the notion that hunting, killing and predation may underlie religious thought, but is critical of approaches attempting to discover the origins of religion.¹⁷⁵ Graf argues on the basis of new excavations: 'The idea that sacrifice is a Neolithic invention among pastoralists and agriculturalists, who adapted hunting techniques for symbolic use, is becoming more and more plausible'.¹⁷⁶ This again indicates the significance of activities concerning killing in understanding sacrificial practice. Graf adds that the 'matter-of-factness' associated with killing an animal by recent scholars should not be overplayed. He cites late evidence in Ovid (*Fasti* 1.337-456) and Porphyry (*On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.10), the latter likely traceable back to Theophrastus and, likewise, demonstrating unease over this issue.¹⁷⁷ He concludes, however, that this might 'well attest to growing squeamishness inside Greek culture, not to the persistence of inborn guilt'.¹⁷⁸

Other influential approaches

A number of other important approaches are not discussed by Naiden and are addressed here. Van Baal noted many problems with the 'gift' model of 'sacrifice'. He argued persuasively for a 'fundamental misconception of the proper nature of the gift' and the failure to recognise such behaviour as aimed 'at the other one's person' rather than as in trade, for example, at the other one's goods.¹⁷⁹ He also noted, however, that in high intensity situations such as illness, epidemics or calamities in general: 'The schema of gift-

¹⁷³ Graf 2012: 51.

¹⁷⁴ Naiden 2013: 277.

¹⁷⁵ Boyer 2001: 166, 269.

¹⁷⁶ Graf 2012: 49.

¹⁷⁷ Graf 2012: 46, n.41.

¹⁷⁸ Graf 2012: 47.

¹⁷⁹ Van Baal 1976: 162, 167.

exchange is affected by other considerations to such an extent that it has to give way to wholly different forms such as those pertinent to penitence and expiation, or to communication with the gods by identification with their mythical activities'.¹⁸⁰

Plato referred to 'animal sacrifice' explicitly in terms of a gift to the gods (*Euthyphro* 14C) and it has recently been argued that this was very likely the viewpoint of most ancient Greeks.¹⁸¹ The idea of 'sacrifice' representing a gift is also found in Theophrastus where people are said to 'sacrifice' for three reasons: to give honour, to show gratitude or because of one's need of good things (*On Piety* frag. 12 Pötscher 42-4). The model for understanding the system of exchange between men and gods in the period under scrutiny is generally regarded as reciprocity. Parker notes, for example, that the language of *kharris* sustains and creates the fiction that the relationship between human and god can be assimilated to that between human beings and so belong within a comprehensible pattern, i.e. reciprocity.¹⁸²

While van Baal's development of the categories of low and high intensity rituals is extremely useful, it can be shown that the 'gift' model has a great many further weaknesses. Van Baal concluded by objecting 'against the use of the term sacrifice for rituals in which every element of the gift or of atonement is utterly absent'.¹⁸³ Yet Johnston has noted that a fragment of Porphyry from the imperial era (*fr.* 314 Smith) concerning an oracular consultation is 'the first straightforward attestation' of an interest in understanding the proper means of worshipping different gods.¹⁸⁴

Another useful approach that focuses on the importance of meat distribution and feasting should also be noted. Berthiaume explores the literary, epigraphic and iconographic evidence for the *mageiros* – a professional sacrificer, butcher and cook – that emerged by the beginning of the 5th century BC.¹⁸⁵ His key role was the preparation of 'la viande dont la consommation était licite' whether in a public or private context.¹⁸⁶ Berthiaume stresses that it was impossible to separate butchery and 'sacrifice' in ancient Greece although he does argue that some animals were killed differently to 'sacrifice' proper and that their

¹⁸⁰ Van Baal 1976: 171.

¹⁸¹ Parker 2011: 136.

¹⁸² Parker 1998: 120.

¹⁸³ Van Baal 1976: 177.

¹⁸⁴ Johnston 2010: 120.

¹⁸⁵ Berthiaume 1982.

¹⁸⁶ Berthiaume 1982: 79.

meat was destined to be sold in the markets (he cites the Eumaeus 'sacrifice' discussed below – *Odyssey* 14.425-48).¹⁸⁷

Schmitt-Pantel argued that 'la participation au banquet est synonyme de participation à la citoyenneté'. She added that 'la description de ces festins permet d'imaginer une Athènes fréquemment envahie par les odeurs du sang des hécatombs et des grillades' while concluding 'les repas sont une étape du rituel sacrificiel'.¹⁸⁸ This important study shows once again the close links between eating and 'sacrifice', although her conclusions are contested to some extent by Naiden (see below).

Rosivach, in contrast to Berthiaume, argued that usually the only meat sold at the market in 4th century BC Athens was meat leftover from religious 'sacrifice'.¹⁸⁹ He also argued that from 'sacrifices' performed on all levels of the *polis*, the average 4th century BC Athenian would have had the opportunity to receive a portion of meat on an average of once every eight or nine days.¹⁹⁰

While these latter theories demonstrate the thumb-prints of the French School, Georgoudi has recently joined other French scholars in a reconsideration of the merits of their major publication *The Cuisine of Sacrifice*, noting some of its failings.¹⁹¹ She concludes on the basis of progress in the fields of archaeology, epigraphy and iconography: 'We may say that, owing to the variety of sacrificial forms in the Greek cities, there is almost no general statement about Greek sacrifice that cannot be modified and even refuted by a contrary example'.¹⁹² She also concedes that the alleged 'concealment of violence' was not an essential aspect of Greek 'sacrifice' and that the theory of the 'consenting victim' was not an important element either.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Berthiaume 1982: 80, 64-7.

¹⁸⁸ Schmitt-Pantel 1992: 485, 486, 489.

¹⁸⁹ Rosivach 1994: 85-8.

¹⁹⁰ Rosivach 1994: 66.

¹⁹¹ Georgoudi 2010; Detienne and Vernant 1989.

¹⁹² Georgoudi 2010: 95.

¹⁹³ Georgoudi 2010: 96-7 and 2005 on the 'concealment of violence' and 2008 on the theory of the 'willing victim'.

New perspectives

There are also a number of crucial new perspectives not addressed by Naiden. Ekroth has published a number of important studies, utilising the increasing bone evidence in particular. She argues, for example, for different kinds of rituals at the killing of an animal: 'The elaborate full-scale *thysia*, as well as more scaled down rituals, which were both simpler and quicker and which may have been used at the additional killings in the sanctuary as well as in the domestic context or market'.¹⁹⁴

An important clue from the literary sources is found in Herodotus (8.19.2) where Themistocles orders the hasty slaughter/'sacrifice' of the Euboean herds so that the Persians could not benefit from them. The term used is *katathyein*, which according to Ekroth, could mean either 'to slaughter' or 'to sacrifice' or actually both at the same time, 'presumably indicating a ritual killing of a large number of animals with the purpose of transforming them into food'. She adds that 'the principal aim seems to have been to get at the meat, not to contact the gods, though some kind of recognition of the divine was certainly made'.¹⁹⁵ She concludes that the ritual actions performed on such occasions probably included libations, cutting hair from the animal's head, prayer and sprinkling its blood.¹⁹⁶

Ekroth has also demonstrated how complicated a procedure meat distribution could be, citing epigraphic evidence. This evidence indicates that distributions of meat portions of various kinds could sometimes be kept apart, and that not all the participants in a 'sacrifice' would be given meat at the same time. She suggests that practical considerations, such as available space and the quality of different cuts of meat, may have been among the driving factors.¹⁹⁷

Returning again to the bone evidence, she notes the scarcity of pig bones in altar deposits, in contrast to their presence in consumption debris and adds that although pigs may have been eaten in sanctuaries they may have been 'sacrificed' in a different manner. She cites, for support, the Eumaeus 'sacrifice' (*Odyssey* 14.410-440) of a pig which involves the

¹⁹⁴ Ekroth 2007: 268.

¹⁹⁵ Ekroth 2007: 270.

¹⁹⁶ Ekroth 2007: 270.

¹⁹⁷ Ekroth 2008b: 277-280.

burning of hair and meat as well as the 'offering' of cooked meat portions, but no cutting out of thigh bones or tails.¹⁹⁸ Petropoulou had interpreted the uniqueness of this 'sacrifice' in Homer in terms of its 'primarily secular intention' with the 'animal sacrifice' in honour not of any god, but of the guest (i.e. Odysseus) being received in his shelter.¹⁹⁹ The bone evidence, however, tends to suggest that pigs may have been a distinct category of victim and the case for this will be bolstered when discussing the animals commonly used for extispicy in my next chapter.

Parker has recently drawn attention to the variety and diversity of sacrificial practice in ancient Greece.²⁰⁰ He discusses 'the double aspect of Greek alimentary sacrifice' where 'it cannot readily be said that one function is more basic than the other: a means of honouring the gods, and the most basic form of human sociability, are combined in an indissoluble new unity'.²⁰¹ He adds that the 'sacrifices' of this type were all but 'omni-functional' but also that 'the whole Greek conceptualisation of the relation between gods and men becomes incomprehensible if one denies that a sacrifice was a gift that would ideally call forth a counter gift'.²⁰²

In addition, Parker discusses the range of so-called 'destruction sacrifices' where victims could be burned whole, abandoned or more meat from the victim destroyed than was allegedly usual and describes them as 'variations on a theme'. He explains: 'In its commonest form, an alimentary sacrifice is a combination of food offering to a deity and feast. Sometimes the element of "food offering" is nominal only, and what predominates is the feast. Occasionally the feast (among humans) is suppressed completely, and only the recipient dines. But sacrifice plus feast (accompanied by libations of wine) is certainly the dominant and normative form'.²⁰³

Parker himself also discusses what he calls 'slaughter-sacrifices' and concludes that 'these various rites almost explain themselves. The power resides in the killing itself'.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ Ekroth 2009: 144.

¹⁹⁹ Petropoulou 1987: 146.

²⁰⁰ Parker 2011: 124-170.

²⁰¹ Parker 2011: 136.

²⁰² Parker 2011: 136-7.

²⁰³ Parker 2011: 145.

²⁰⁴ Parker 2011: 159.

Finally, Parker crucially notes the overlaps in terminology, form and practice between diverse rites often lumped together under the rubric of 'sacrifice'. He adds that similar uncertainties and problems of unity occur widely in the anthropological literature. He concludes: 'We are faced with an array of practices that resemble one another in varying degrees and again, in varying degrees, are described in similar terms'. He adds that in our inability to answer the question of what 'sacrifice' exactly is 'we follow (but with anxiety, whereas they felt no need to know) the Greeks'.²⁰⁵

It could be said that Parker endorses to some extent the French School approach while offering his own important contribution.

In addition, Naiden has produced a number of important recent studies. He builds for example on the findings of Grottanelli and other Italian scholars who had questioned whether the distribution of sacrificial meat was indeed as egalitarian as proposed by the French School.²⁰⁶ Naiden has re-evaluated all the evidence and argues that this data reveals, instead, that there was too little meat to feed the people of Athens or, indeed, any other large group.²⁰⁷ There was enough, however, to feed those conducting the 'sacrifice' (i.e. priests, magistrates, etc), their assistants, and honoured persons. He argues that there was a system of hierarchy in place governing access to sacrificial meat defined by the values of reciprocity, deference and piety.²⁰⁸

Naiden's main aim, however, in his recent book is to 'take the gods seriously', arguing that scholars have neglected their importance in understanding sacrificial practice.²⁰⁹ He explores how the gods might be pleased or displeased explaining, for instance, how the worshiper might take care to make an 'offering' attractive, try to gain the gods attention via various means, and to present himself or herself favourably.²¹⁰ He champions the term 'offering' over 'sacrifice' and deprivileges 'animal sacrifice' over other forms of interaction with the divine.²¹¹ His approach is important although it deals almost entirely with forms of sacrificial practice and evidence for such practice where the gods appear to loom large, while neglecting other forms where their role appears negligible or even entirely absent.

²⁰⁵ Parker 2011: 155.

²⁰⁶ Grottanelli et al: 1988; Naiden 2012; Naiden 2013: 232-76.

²⁰⁷ Naiden 2012: 55.

²⁰⁸ Naiden 2012: 81-2.

²⁰⁹ Naiden 2013.

²¹⁰ Naiden 2013: 39-182.

²¹¹ Naiden 2013: 330.

Thus Naiden offers one important alternative to an emphasis on violence and feasting – the positions of Burkert and the French School respectively – whilst I, in contrast, focus on the experience of the participants.

It should be noted, however, that Naiden also challenges to some extent the close link between ‘sacrifice’ and consumption. Naiden argues, for example, that ‘the rule that all meat taken from livestock must derive from an act of sacrifice was not a rule but a preference’.²¹² He also maintains, however: ‘The Spartan messes were not secular. When the butcher killed his pigs, he may have said a prayer over them. At table, the messmates may have poured libation. Yet this milieu differed from that of a sacrifice – for example, from the sacrifices of the phratries, the best known small groups of Athens’.²¹³ He thus champions a particular normative view of what ‘sacrifice’ was.

Terminology

Major studies: Stengel, Eitrem, Rudhardt and Casabona

Naiden includes no discussion of the history of debate concerning sacrificial terminology in his recent survey of earlier scholarship. Thus, in this section, I discuss what the Greeks actually meant when they used the words modern scholars understand as sacrificial. As has been noted, it would seem most advantageous to discuss ‘sacrifice’, and indeed ritual in general, utilising the ancient Greek terminology. This, however, is deeply problematic because we are not familiar with the precise meaning of these terms and the subject is highly controversial and complex.²¹⁴ Context is key to my approach for reasons I will continuously make clear but here I discuss the views of the four major contributors to this subject in the last century, followed by an appraisal of the current consensus existing today.

The first major scholar in this field was Stengel who wrote an authoritative analysis of sacrificial vocabulary in 1910.²¹⁵ In this treatise he created the foundation for future scholars to build on, isolating the range of terminology used and discussing the significance

²¹² Naiden 2013: 240.

²¹³ Naiden 2013: 257.

²¹⁴ Van Straten 2005: 16.

²¹⁵ Stengel 1910.

of the varying vocabulary. Stengel defined *hiereuein* as either ‘slaughter’ (‘schlachten’) or ‘sacrifice’ (‘opfertier’) with the former meaning more prevalent.²¹⁶ *Hiera*, on the other hand, often meant cuts of sacrificial meat, in particular the entrails from which divination took place.²¹⁷ *Thysia* was defined as a ‘food offering’, often involving animal victims or a feast (‘*thysia* bedeuten Speiseopfer, oft Opfer- oder Festschmaus’). This was the most common form of ‘sacrifice’ in which the god would receive a share.²¹⁸

Stengel distinguished between the meanings of *thuein* and *thuesthai* and argued that the former was used almost without exception in the epigraphic corpus whereas the latter is dominant in the literary sources. He argued that when the Greeks said *thuein* they ‘sacrificed’ for the sake of a god (i.e. to honour him, her or them) whilst when they said *thuesthai* they ‘sacrificed’ for the sake of human concerns (i.e. turning to a deity with a question or request).²¹⁹ Thus in all cases, he argued, *thuesthai* was used to stress the importance of ‘for his sake, sacrificing for himself’ (‘*thuesthai* steht aber ferner auch in allen Fällen, wo die Bedeutung “um seinetwillen, für sich opfern” hervortritt’).²²⁰

In addition, Stengel crucially distinguished between *sphagia* and *thysia*, the former indicating ‘sacrifice’ where the meat was not used as food but destroyed.²²¹ *Sphagia* was defined as ‘blood sacrifice’ where the blood of the victim was the most important element, or indeed the only ‘offering’ (‘*sphagia* heißt nichts anderes als “Blutopfer”; die Beschränkung des Ausdrucks auf die genannten Opfer hat ihren Grund offenbar darin, daß hier das Blut des Tieres die wichtigste oder wohl richtiger die einzige Darbringung war’). The verbs used for this activity were *sphagiazesthai* or *sphazein*, and never *thuein*, as *thysia* indicated a ‘food offering’ as already mentioned.²²² This form of ‘sacrifice’ was initially directed at the dreaded gods or demons while later on divination came to the fore.²²³ *Sphageion*, meanwhile, could designate either the animal victim or the special receptacle in which the victim’s blood was collected.²²⁴

²¹⁶ Stengel 1910: 1.

²¹⁷ Stengel 1910: 96.

²¹⁸ Stengel 1910: 92.

²¹⁹ Stengel 1910: 12.

²²⁰ Stengel 1910: 11.

²²¹ Stengel 1910: 92.

²²² Stengel 1910: 92.

²²³ Stengel 1910: 101.

²²⁴ Stengel 1910: 102.

In contrast, Eitrem understood the practices of sacrificial activity as originating in the worship of the dead. He built his findings, however, on the work of Stengel and his important contribution was published only five years later. He focused differently on preliminary procedures such as ritual circling, the use of water, fire, smoke and barley, the throwing of stones, the erection of cairns and the significance of offering-basket, salt, hair and blood.²²⁵ Like Stengel, he found an independent 'meaning' in so-called 'blood sacrifice' and, in particular, the use of blood as originating in funerary worship.²²⁶ Blood was used to feed and give nourishment to the dead and contexts for such activity include pre-battle 'sacrifice' and purification of the agora, temples and theatre.²²⁷ In alimentary 'sacrifice', the bloodying of the altar was for the benefit of the demons of the locality while the steam and smell of burned meat belonged to the gods.²²⁸ In addition, according to Eitrem, holocaust 'sacrifice' could involve either sacrificial cakes or animal victims and originated in the funerary burning of human corpses.²²⁹

The final two major contributions come from France and not Germany and were published in the second half of the last century. There is much fine-tuning of earlier views and a greater emphasis on changes of meaning over time, elaboration and diversity. Rudhardt described the indefinite variety that 'sacrifices' designated by the term *thysia* could take according to different locales, contexts and functions (whether divinatory, cathartic etc).²³⁰ He also noted the diverse forms that rites allegedly designated by *sphagia* could take and added: 'C'est essentiellement une mise à mort et une offrande de sang'.²³¹

Rudhardt further distinguished the verbs *thuesthai* and *sphagiazesthai* and argued that they correspond to *hiera kala* and *sphagia kala*. He explained that although these terms appeared in closely related contexts they are not synonymous, citing Xenophon (*Anabasis* 1.8.15 and 6.5.21) for evidence of the two types being distinguished in two separate military pre-battle contexts.²³² Both terms in fact referred to various rites, the former more developed and learned, the latter simpler and faster and likely reduced to simple slaughter, but both occurring in similar circumstances and filling similar functions. Indeed Herodotus

²²⁵ Eitrem 1915.

²²⁶ Eitrem 1915: 416.

²²⁷ Eitrem 1915: 463, 429.

²²⁸ Eitrem 1915: 434.

²²⁹ Eitrem 1915: 474.

²³⁰ Rudhardt 1958: 257-72.

²³¹ Rudhardt 1958: 281.

²³² Rudhardt 1958: 272.

(9.62) could be seen to use both verbs together indifferently and this indicated, he argued, not opposing roles but simply that they belonged to different ethnic and local traditions.²³³ However, *hiera* referred to omens taken from the entrails of an animal victim, whereas *sphagia*, in opposition to Stengel, referred to the flow of the blood as a favourable or unfavourable sign.²³⁴

Rudhardt also argued that *enagizein* referred to sacrificial ritual directed at the heroes or the dead and involving destruction by fire. It habitually involved the 'sacrifice' of an animal in the case of heroes but was increasingly replaced by bloodless forms of 'offering' in funeral cult.²³⁵ He further noted, for example, that the distinguishing characteristic of a holocaust 'sacrifice' was the total combustion by fire of the victim.²³⁶

The final major contributor was Casabona in 1966. Casabona noted that *hiera* 'est, chez Homère, un terme très général; il en est de même à l'époque classique'.²³⁷ He concluded that *hiereion* was the general term for a victim 'offered' in an 'animal sacrifice' and that the word evoked both a 'sacrifice' and a meal, although it was not always essential for meals to be included.²³⁸ Against Stengel, he maintained that *hiereuō* and *hiereion* referred to both 'sacrifice' and slaughter and proved that there was normally a 'sacrifice' whenever a beast was slaughtered for consumption.²³⁹

Casabona also maintained that *thyō* in Homer described an 'offering' to the gods by burning of foodstuffs (e.g., meat, cheese, etc) but that its meaning significantly enlarged in the classical period. It became the general term that encompassed not only 'sacrifices' from which worshippers ate, but also other forms of the ritual killing of animals.²⁴⁰ Thus, in opposition to Stengel, he concludes that *thyō* 'est indifférent, en lui-même, au genre de sacrifice', and that, likewise, *thysia* 's'applique à des offrandes de toute nature'.²⁴¹ *Sphagia*, meanwhile, according to Casabona, 'est donc un terme technique des sacrifices où

²³³ Rudhardt 1958: 275-6.

²³⁴ Rudhardt 1958: 275; Stengel 1910: 97-8.

²³⁵ Rudhardt 1958: 238-9.

²³⁶ Rudhardt 1958: 287.

²³⁷ Casabona 1966: 34.

²³⁸ Casabona 1966: 38.

²³⁹ Casabona 1966: 29-30; Stengel 1910: 1.

²⁴⁰ Casabona 1966: 69-85.

²⁴¹ Stengel 1910: 92; Casabona 1966: 84, 127.

le sang joue le rôle essentiel, et qui ne sont normalement pas accompagnés de banquet'.²⁴²
 In addition, *temnesthai* (another sacrificial term associated with powerful - high intensity – actions) is discussed by the four main scholars and carefully analysed by Casabona.²⁴³
 Casabona noted: 'Le sens est clair: couper, séparer en coupant'.²⁴⁴

Current debate

In common orthodoxy, *thysia* is currently considered to have a 'marked' use which indicates specifically 'sacrifices' from which participants ate, and an 'unmarked' use for a wider range of ritual killings.²⁴⁵ It should be recalled, however, that the same verb (*thyō*) is used for the burning of vegetal 'offerings' as well as the 'sacrifice' of animal victims. In ancient Greek there is, in fact, no equivalent word for 'sacrifice', only a number of overlapping terms, of which *thysia* is generally considered the norm.²⁴⁶ In this study, I will constantly be emphasising such overlaps and the lack of clearly determinable boundaries when considering sacrificial practices. The lack of apparent distinction in much of the ancient terminology is, in fact, another aspect of my argument undermining the notion of any agreed understanding of 'sacrifice'.

Contexts for the use of the term *sphagia* include situations such as oath-taking, some types of purification, certain rites for the dead and for heroes, the assuaging of winds, crossing of rivers and on the battle-line.²⁴⁷ It should be noted that 'human sacrifice', while in form understood today as an example of *sphagia*, can be referred to as *thysia* and an altar (*bomos*) is also sometimes specified (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 150,232; Sophocles, *Electra* 576; Euripides, *Hecuba* 223 and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 358, 530f, 1555). In these cases, it is apparent that the terms reflected the needs of the playwright, often revealing the tensions and conflicts faced by the characters who might, or might not, have reason to play down the violent nature of the act (see also below).²⁴⁸ In addition, as Parker notes, Herodotus (9.62.1) 'blithely' applies the verb *thuō* to a *sphagion* 'offering' in a passage already discussed.²⁴⁹ Although Harrison devotes a whole chapter of a book to the lack of clear

²⁴² Casabona 1966: 187.

²⁴³ Jameson 1991: 209 relates its nature as a powerful action to *sphagia*.

²⁴⁴ Casabona 1966: 211.

²⁴⁵ Noted by Parker 2011: 154.

²⁴⁶ Parker 2003a: 1344.

²⁴⁷ E.g. Jameson 1991: 201.

²⁴⁸ Following Bremmer 2005: 61 commenting on *Hecuba* 223.

²⁴⁹ Parker 2011: 154.

patterns or distinctions in this source's terminology and thought regarding the divine, this may reflect a more general lack of distinctiveness.²⁵⁰

The lack of a clear-cut distinction is also apparent in the relationship between *hiera* and *sphagia*. *Hiera*, in a sacrificial context, is understood to be used both in a general sense, 'rites', and for more restricted meanings, especially for parts of the victim burned on the altar or examined for signs, and for the signs that emerged from such an examination. The general sense covers a range of practices, including *sphagia*. The noun *sphagia* itself is cognate with the verb, *sphazein* (or *sphattein*) 'to pierce the throat', the way almost all sacrificial victims are killed.²⁵¹ It is also cognate, for example, with *sphageion*, which as already noted refers to the bowl used for catching the blood of a sacrificial victim.²⁵² Indeed, all the words that are formed from this root 'make one think of blood', an observation that continues to be made by scholars.²⁵³ Words formed from this root are, however, rare in inscriptions.²⁵⁴ This suggests that such terminology allowed ancient literary sources to emphasise the bloody and high intensity nature of certain circumstances and their associated emotional states, rather than referring to a distinctive set of practices.

Ekroth argues that *enagizein*, *enagisma* and *enagismos* were above all used for 'destruction sacrifices' to dead recipients, either the ordinary dead or heroes.²⁵⁵ In the latter case the dead status of the hero is often underlined by the mention of the grave, the manner of death, or by a contrast with the altars and sanctuaries of the immortal gods. Likewise, Parker argues that with the exception of a small number of scholia, writers describing specific rituals with a concrete context in mind always present the recipient of an *enagisma* as a hero (whose 'quondam mortality is thus stressed') or a dead person.²⁵⁶ He argues that where rituals of the type designated by *enagizein* were performed for the gods a different if, in part, related vocabulary was used: *holokautein*, *karpoun*, *hagizein* and *kathagizein*.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ Harrison 2000: 158-181.

²⁵¹ Jameson 1991: 200-203.

²⁵² The term *sphageion* is found, for instance, in various temple inventories: e.g. IG II² 1541.11, 1542.18 and 1543 col III.10.

²⁵³ E.g. Jameson 1991: 201 and above.

²⁵⁴ As is made clear by a search on the Packard Humanities Institute Greek epigraphical database.

²⁵⁵ Ekroth 2002: 233-5.

²⁵⁶ Parker 2005: 38.

²⁵⁷ Parker 2005: 38 n.3.

Nock instead distinguished two types of holocaust – ‘offerings’ to persons who have lived and died and need real sustenance and nourishment and *heilige Handlungen*, in proceedings intended to create ‘direct and efficacious influence upon divine persons or forces of nature’. In this second category he included *sphagia*, oath taking, purifications and the deposition of pigs in pits in the cult of Demeter.²⁵⁸ Jameson developed this idea to argue that there is, on the one hand, the normal type of ‘sacrifice’, often referred to as *thysia*, and on the other a variety of powerful actions which were either substituted for *thysia*, or combined with *thysia*.²⁵⁹

There are also ‘sacrifices’ in which more than the thigh bones and tails were burned on the altar for which the term ‘moirocaust’ has been coined by a modern scholar.²⁶⁰ In terms of the other forms of ritual killing we find the term *deipna* (‘dinners’) for Hecate, *katharmos* for purifications, *tomia* (the entrails or, more cautiously, the severed parts – any parts – of a dead or dying animal) and *kathiemi* (‘let down’, ‘drop’) as a ritual term denoting a submersion ‘sacrifice’.²⁶¹ Also, the Homeric sacrificial term *ōmotheteō* should be noted, which expresses an action consisting of placing pieces of raw meat from a sacrificial victim on an altar to be burned.²⁶²

In addition, the debate over the applicability of the modern Olympian/chthonian distinction continues to divide modern scholars. Burkert argues that they represent ‘a polarity in which one pole cannot exist without the other and in which each pole only receives its full meaning from the other’.²⁶³ The most notable defendant of the distinction is the revised position of Scullion, who argues for modifications of chthonian ritual incorporating *ou phora* (‘no carrying away’) commands and ‘moirocausts’.²⁶⁴ Scullion attempts to save the distinction from the many exceptions and discrepancies. He argues, for example, that many divine recipients (most prominently Herakles and Asklepios, but also numerous others) cross the Olympian-chthonian boundary and can thus be offered both forms of cult on different occasions according to which aspect is being emphasised or even in single

²⁵⁸ Nock 1944: 590.

²⁵⁹ Jameson 1965: 162-3.

²⁶⁰ Scullion 2009: 165.

²⁶¹ Berti 2006: 193 and Farione 1993: 68 n.37 on *tomia*; Robertson 2005: 86 on submersion ‘sacrifice’.

²⁶² Lupu 2003: 74.

²⁶³ Burkert 1985: 202.

²⁶⁴ E.g. Scullion 2009: 167.

ritual sequences.²⁶⁵ He also admits similarities between alleged features of these rites and aspects of *heilige Handlungen*, the former distinguished by being a part of regular worship to named recipients.²⁶⁶

Boyer, however, notes that many people seem to feel no need for a general theoretically consistent explanation of the qualities and powers of supernatural agents. However, what they always have, he argues, are precise descriptions of how these agents can influence their lives and what to do about this.²⁶⁷ Johnston argues: 'The perceived antithesis between Olympian and chthonian may have survived – even thrived – as much because of the radical swings of fashion in scholarship from one side to the other as because of anything else'. She cites in explanation both the emergence of, and reaction to, the Cambridge Ritualists, who exaggerated their case for Greek religion being divided in half to help 'justify their pursuit of what otherwise might have been perceived by some of their colleagues as an aberrant, or at least unimportant, course of study'.²⁶⁸

Terminology conclusion

This discussion of terminology highlights above all the lack of consistency and clarity surrounding sacrificial practice. It furthermore emphasises the degree of overlap and lack of boundaries surrounding such activity. In addition, it seems to indicate that this was not perceived as any kind of controversy among ancient practitioners. There is thus little evidence of a shared understanding underlying sacrificial practice based on a study of terminology. I will argue, however, that a distinctive set of circumstances, along with the corresponding cognitive states of the participants (generally high intensity in nature) – as opposed to a distinctive set of rituals – make a rite *sphagia* rather than *thysia*. Indeed, I will show that the term *sphagia* could be used, even when the ritual may have been otherwise identical to *thysia*, which implies that the term had a particular resonance among ancient writers (where it mostly appears). Again, I question the notion of a normative type of 'sacrifice' designated by *thysia* but I do recognise a very loose and undefined degree of relatedness (to a greater or lesser extent) between diverse phenomena that generally (but crucially need not) include the slaughter of animal victims.

²⁶⁵ Scullion 1994: 99.

²⁶⁶ Scullion 1994: 98, 112.

²⁶⁷ Boyer 2001: 159.

²⁶⁸ Johnston 2010: 129.

Visual evidence

The French School and Burkert made little use of visual material. One noteworthy exception, however, was Durand although his views and perspectives were strongly influenced by the structuralist assumptions of this movement.²⁶⁹

Peirce, focusing on the iconographic evidence, importantly argued that *thysia* was associated with feasting, revelry and joy and not with any dark underpinnings implied by Burkert and Girard's theories (see Figure 2 below).²⁷⁰

Van Straten has produced a number of important studies and a major book on the visual evidence for Greek 'sacrifice'. He pointed to the lack of interest in iconography in depicting the moment of killing, and argued that this part of the rite may not have been considered so important (other considerations are possible, however, as I will show).²⁷¹ He also pointed to clear evidence for restraints and other controlling measures that challenge the importance or reality of the alleged 'consenting victim', a concern which he argued was a 'formality'.²⁷² In addition, he notes that one major flaw in the evidence is that 'sacrifices' in which nothing was eaten are rarely represented, although again, other interpretations are possible.²⁷³ Van Straten argues that the 'neat' separation, already present in Homer, between the sacrificial practice up to and including the consumption of the *splanchna* and the ensuing banquet, seems to be taken further in the visual evidence for the classical period. The banquet or symposium scenes (symposium scenes forming the majority) are interpreted as rarely hinting at any connection whatsoever with the sacrificial ritual.²⁷⁴

In a more recent discussion, Carpenter notes that most sacrificial scenes are generalised so it is seldom possible to know to which deity a 'sacrifice' is 'offered'.²⁷⁵ In addition, in an important study, Neer has argued that art historians have rarely taken the centrality of 'animal sacrifice' for granted and that one of the main reasons for this is that the ritual leaves relatively little in the way of material remains.²⁷⁶ In a thoughtful study, he also

²⁶⁹ Durand 1989a and 1989b; point made by Georgoudi 2010: 95.

²⁷⁰ Peirce 1993: 259.

²⁷¹ Van Straten 1995: 188.

²⁷² Van Straten 1995: 100-102.

²⁷³ Van Straten 1995: 3.

²⁷⁴ Van Straten 1995: 25-6.

²⁷⁵ Carpenter 2007: 409.

²⁷⁶ Neer 2012: 99.

points to exciting ways forward in evaluating stone sculpture, looking at the way, for example, an object may 'act out' its relation to 'animal sacrifice'.²⁷⁷

On an Attic black figure votive krater from the Acropolis (neck fragment) we see satyrs and women dancing, one woman with meat on a spit, a satyr drawing wine from a *dinos* on a stand, two men at work over a *lebes* on a tripod stand over a fire, and a man cutting meat and skewering pieces on spits (see Figure 2 below).²⁷⁸ The preparation of meat on spits and the work focused around the *lebes* here allude to the sacrificial ritual, while women on this vase also have a significant role in the action. The majority of vase paintings of this type, however, merely depict men working or handling meat and contain no apparent explicit reference to sacrificial ritual.²⁷⁹ I have selected this playful image to give an example and visualisation of the less serious aspect of this part of the various proceedings, where the tactile code was more relaxed, the main concerns being more pragmatic and where the feast is about to ensue but the 'sacrifice' is still indicated and significant. As such, this kind of vase provides an important balance to the more serious descriptions I have been discussing. I will follow other scholars in showing that 'sacrifice' was primarily a joyful and festive occasion associated with feasting and fraternity.



Figure 2: Playful Attic black figure votive krater from the Acropolis (neck fragment) showing satyrs and women dancing, one woman with meat on a spit, a satyr drawing wine from a *dinos* on a stand, two men at work over a *lebes* on a tripod stand over a fire, and a man cutting meat and skewering pieces on spits²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Neer 2012: 104.

²⁷⁸ Van Straten 1995: 148.

²⁷⁹ Van Straten 1995: 152.

²⁸⁰ Van Straten 1995: Figure 154 = Athens, NM Akr 654.

Next Steps

This thesis raises a different concern surrounding the debate on 'sacrifice' through its emphasis on cognitive perspectives and its recognition of the failure by modern scholarship to fully utilise this form of approach. I have addressed in this chapter many of the issues that I will return to in subsequent ones, in particular the normative view of *thysia* as 'animal sacrifice' followed by a sacrificial meal.

I will argue that experience and emotion are central to unlocking the significance of sacrificial behaviour. In my approach, I aim to avoid my own cultural-based assumptions and prejudices by distinguishing between an emic and etic approach and thus by recognising the pitfalls of not distinguishing modern scholarly and ancient perspectives. This thesis also critically aims to draw attention to cross-cultural patterns and, at the same time, to culturally specific interpretations while recognising the limits of a monolithic approach. The methodology utilised here is to ask specific questions of the evidence and to test their viability and not to offer a unified theory of 'sacrifice'. Indeed, as I will consistently show, there was in fact no such thing as 'sacrifice' as an agreed phenomenon in the period in question and no consensus on what it was for or meant. Again, this thesis acknowledges the insights of Jonathan Z. Smith and will utilise diverse ancient data as well as ethnographic and modern scientific material. It also recognises the dangers of privileging any phenomena and of the need to be conscious of the intellectual and cultural context in which it is being produced.

Chapter III

Looking through the lens of the 'other'

This chapter will delineate a cognitive-informed and sensory analysis of descriptions of 'barbarian sacrifice' in Herodotus. It will draw attention to elements within these descriptions that shed light on Greek practices, such as an emphasis on the absence of apparently characteristic ritual features. My main aim is to address head-on the question of whether or not the modern category of 'sacrifice' can be defended as Herodotus has been seen by many to be working on the basis of a common understanding that such a practice existed. I will begin by outlining my methodology before moving on to discussion of the texts themselves.

Methodology

A major influence on my approach is the analysis of Hartog who analyses the evidence for 'barbarian' sacrificial practices in Herodotus, in particular those of the Scythians, through the lens of 'the other'.²⁸¹ In other words, he is not concerned with the 'real' Scythians but with the assumption that 'this or that Scythian practice may be interpreted in relation to its homologue in the Greek world' by a process of 'systematic differentiation'.²⁸² Although his groundbreaking approach has been criticised as being exaggerated in many respects and evidence has emerged corroborating many of Herodotus' descriptions of Scythian culture, it is clear that an implicit understanding and conception of Greek sacrificial practices does underlie his treatment of 'barbarian peoples' religious customs.²⁸³ Another key contribution is provided by Vidal-Naquet and is two-fold. Firstly, he finds that the characteristic features 'arable land, cooking, sacrifice, sexual and family life within the *oikos* – even at one extreme political life – form a complex, no element of which can be separated from the others'.²⁸⁴ This 'Greek' manner of 'sacrifice' is thus integrated in a wider nexus of cultural and social conventions. Secondly, his analysis of the 'sacrifice' of

²⁸¹ Hartog 1988: 173-93.

²⁸² Hartog 1988: 7-8.

²⁸³ Pritchett launched a scathing attack on the so-called 'liar school of Herodotus', citing increasing archaeological evidence and targeting Hartog most of all. Pritchett 1993: 207: 'Herodotus clearly has not produced a fancy narrative which has no relation to the facts'.

²⁸⁴ Vidal-Naquet 1981: 81-2.

the herds of the sun in *Odyssey* (12.343-96) describes it as an 'anti-sacrifice' noting its deviant and unacceptable features in contrast to an apparently widely familiar norm.²⁸⁵

While I argue that the modern category of 'sacrifice' does not reflect ancient experience (and that the term must be used cautiously and with an understanding of its own history), it is clear that there were familiar ritual sequences, characteristics and elements that were widely recognised and understood and this will be borne out in my discussion. It could even be argued, albeit tentatively, that the very fact Herodotus can seek comparisons and contrasts with such a range of diverse and confusing 'barbarian' sacrificial customs, points to the very variability and lack of uniformity and typicality in such practices among the Greeks. In other words, it could be argued that he was already prepared for such variability by his own cultural expectations surrounding sacrificial practices. There were, however, common expectations and a 'model' of sorts from which he recognised divergences. This is also clear, for example, by the way that he often divides his ethnographic material by 'heading' (signalled by a flag-word such as *θυσιή*), with one chapter clearly given over to practices modern scholars would term sacrificial or 'sacrifice'; this method by 'headings' is typical of the ancient ethnographic tradition.²⁸⁶

I have noted previously, how taste, food preferences and appetite are not merely physiological but cultural and that eating and cooking practices can become a means of self/group definition and, in extreme cases, also of xenophobia.²⁸⁷ Thus questions such as how, to what extent and in what ways feasting is associated with 'barbarian' sacrificial practices in Herodotus will be a major part of my discussion. Recent cognitive-based research on disgust has already been discussed which has found that this also is a cultural product.²⁸⁸ This will be clearly relevant to aspects of the descriptions we find in Herodotus, many of which would have been deeply horrific and even scandalous in the minds of many ancient Greeks, despite Herodotus' apparent tolerance in no small number of instances (3.38.1 expresses clearly his view that all religious customs need to be respected).

Harrison adds that behind Herodotus' writing lies the assumption 'that different peoples mean the same by sacrifice, oaths or divination even if they perform them differently'.

²⁸⁵ Vidal-Naquet 1981: 88.

²⁸⁶ Corcella 2007: 623.

²⁸⁷ E.g. Buitelaar 2005, Lupton 2005, etc.

²⁸⁸ Haidt et al 1997: 121-7.

The reader is also reminded of these underlying similarities on those rare occasions (discussed below) when Herodotus points out deviant assumptions.²⁸⁹ In addition, institutions, customs and laws (*nomoi*) which include sacrificial practices, are fully part of Herodotus' analysis of 'ethnic' character and play a major part in historical explanation in his work.²⁹⁰ Thomas argues that elements of his ethnography may 'have been transformed or translated via his interest in debates about *nomoi*' and that much of his ethnography 'may have been influenced by or filtered through these preoccupations, which is why they seem to bear the marks of such ideas'. One aspect of this is an interest in Sophistic moral relativism.²⁹¹ At the same time some of Herodotus' ethnography 'may be closely related to contemporary Greek ideas about ideal societies or impossible or highly primitive societies'.²⁹² This discussion by Thomas provides an important way forward in relating the concerns, interests and viewpoints of Herodotus to the wider Greek world and with contemporary Greek ideas and convictions.

Here I will provide an analysis of Herodotus' descriptions of the 'barbarian' sacrificial practices of three key peoples – the Persians, Egyptians and Scythians. I will note, in each case that involves the slaughter of victims, whether animal or human in a ritual setting, the terminology used and its character. I will focus on issues that include the accuracy (wherever possible) of his description and the features Herodotus himself draws attention to, or the features whose absence he emphasises. I will also draw attention to the many features that might be understood as central to Greek sacrificial practice, whose absence he makes no reference to at all. Some of these might be surprising if there was such a thing as a uniform and stable category of 'sacrifice' in the Greek world. Throughout, I will apply cognitive-informed and sensory methodologies discussed in Chapter I and build on still influential explanatory models of Greek 'sacrifice'.

Persian 'sacrifice'

The Persian ethnography occupies books 1.131-140 with 1.131, 1.132 and 1.33 of greatest significance here. This description includes a 'mixture of objective data, curiosities and

²⁸⁹ Harrison 2000: 221.

²⁹⁰ Thomas 2000: 112.

²⁹¹ Thomas 2000: 129-30.

²⁹² Thomas 2000: 129-30.

idealised information, which Herodotus sometimes personally approves'.²⁹³ Artistic representations of Persian 'sacrifices', such as the famous bas-relief at Dascylium, were available for inspection, as well as the existing written accounts in Greek *Persika* or *Magika*. A significant amount of information could also have come from bilingual guides and Greek interpreters.²⁹⁴ Herodotus himself distinguishes the things he apparently feels he knows for certain and other aspects which are deemed secret (1.140).

Herodotus says that it is not Persian custom to make and set up statues and temples and altars and this immediately sets up a contrast with Greek practice at the start of his discussion at 1.131 (Appendix 1: 1). The lack of a clearly delineated sacred space would contradict the model of Boyer and Liénard where this is a central and recurrent feature.²⁹⁵ Interestingly, Herodotus himself feels the need to rationalise this observation by saying that he supposes this is because the Persians do not believe (like the Greeks) that the gods have anthropomorphic forms. In fact, although the Persians did not have temples with statues of the Greek type, they did have sanctuaries of different types: square towers with a raised chamber where the sacred fire burned, and open air altars. It is possible that there were no images of Persian deities that exhibited similarities to the standard Greek practice at this time however.²⁹⁶ Herodotus also draws attention to the paucity of gods worshipped: Zeus (the Persian name is not given), the sun, moon, earth, fire, water and winds and the later addition of 'Heavenly Aphrodite' taken from the Assyrians and Arabians. This paucity of divine figures will be a recurrent theme in my discussion.²⁹⁷

Following this, Herodotus moves on to discussing sacrificial rites (1.132 – Appendix 1: 2). It appears clear here and elsewhere that he recognises a category of religious customs with a workable terminology and with familiar features and elements (using the flag-word *θυοίη*). This category of customs is understood by most scholars today under the heading 'sacrificial practices', although many of the rituals involved appear too unrelated, distinct or varied to sit comfortably together in this way.²⁹⁸ This issue is discussed further in my conclusion.

²⁹³ Asheri 2007: 165.

²⁹⁴ Asheri 2007: 166.

²⁹⁵ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 816-7; see also Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

²⁹⁶ Asheri 2007: 166.

²⁹⁷ Following Hartog 1988: 173-93.

²⁹⁸ As emphasised by Frankfurter 2011: 87.

Herodotus does not explain in any way how the gods benefited from the practices he describes and this will become a recurrent theme in my discussion. With no altars there also could not be a portion burned on the altar as in many Greek practices. These burned 'portions' are commonly understood as the gods' 'part' of the 'sacrifice' as I will discuss further in the next chapter. However, Herodotus feels no need to mention this or, indeed, the absence of any kind of equivalent that might be said to be 'belonging' to the gods. He does, however, draw attention to the absence of familiar ritual paraphernalia: altars, fire, libations, music, fillets and barley meal. Not only is there a paucity of gods worshipped, but the 'sacrifice' itself seems stripped of much of the sensory appeal of many forms of Greek practice. We are also told that this ritual is the same to 'whosoever of the gods a man will sacrifice'. Likewise, this implies paucity in the range and variability of the practices that were available.

We are told that the sacrificiant leads the victim to an open space (i.e. not clearly set off from the mundane as in Greek practice) and calls on the god. Clearly sound is important in this re-creation of Persian 'sacrifice', just as it is in Greek understanding (as I will discuss more fully in Chapter VI). The sacrificiant makes his prayer wearing a Persian tiara with a wreath, preferably made of myrtle. His prayer itself is another anomaly, clearly noted as such by Herodotus: he does not pray for himself but for the king and all Persians – and this is, in fact, a legal requirement. Thus, the construction of 'otherness' here has a significant aural component. He then cuts the victim limb from limb into portions and boils the flesh. We are thus not told clearly how the victim was killed. Did Herodotus not see this as important or is this because it didn't deviate from Greek practice? In other cases discussed below, the method of killing is described in some detail, although not in a manner suggesting that it was more important than other aspects. Whatever the case, this might seem to undermine the 'killing' emphasis in Burkert's theory of 'sacrifice' and other evidence discussed here will strengthen this impression. Some of the blood of the victim is certainly not poured over an altar, as in much Greek practice. Clearly, blood does not have the same role here while there is also evidence in Herodotus, and elsewhere, that shed blood could be auspicious, or the reverse, in ancient Greece (see Chapter IV). One of the Magi then draws near and chants over the meat a theogony, a Greek equivalent of which is preserved in Hesiod (*Theogony*), for example. This is a second key auditory aspect of the ritual and we are told, furthermore, that no 'sacrifice' can take place without one of the Magi. This importance of the Magi reminds the reader that in Greece there was, in fact, no

such required figure and that priests themselves were not indispensable, as I will be demonstrating. The sacrificiant can then carry away the flesh and use it as he pleases. This is all we are told. The emphasis is, thus, not on the feasting aspect of 'sacrifice', but on the ritual.

The next chapter describes the birthday meal of a Persian and lacks sacrificial language (1.133.1 – Appendix 1: 3). The animals slaughtered are oxen or horses or camels or asses for the rich, roasted whole in ovens, and lesser kinds of victim for the poor. They thus appear to be killed, or at least prepared in a different manner to the victims discussed above. The link to sacrificial practice is clear, however, with this discussion of eating practices following naturally from the description of meat-related preparatory (i.e. sacrificial) ceremony. I would argue that this is not necessarily evidence against an 'absolute coincidence of meat-eating and sacrificial practice' as proposed by the French School for the Greek evidence, only that of a uniform and stable category of 'sacrifice'.²⁹⁹

It should also be noted that there are no divination methods associated with Herodotus' description of Persian 'sacrifice', despite their importance in Greece at many stages of the rituals performed as I will show. Also, just as there is a lack of an emphasis on heat and burning in contrast to the Greek evidence, there is also a lack of emphasis on characteristic elements of touch, such as the careful and controlled arrangement of victim/victims and personnel around the altar, careful arrangement of firewood etc (see Chapter VI). The meat, however, is laid on a little heap of the 'softest' (ἀπαλωτάτην) grass available, preferably clover, a clearly significant sensory emphasis relating to the field of touch and parallel perhaps to the requirement for a wreath, usually myrtle, which may also relate to softness (this is the implication of Euripides, *Electra* 778 where the term *τερεινής* is used), as well as fragrance. Many scholars stress the olfactory significance of garlands, on the other hand, as discussed in more detail in Chapter VI.³⁰⁰ It seems possible that there is a suggestion of effeminacy at work in this description of Persian customs, however.³⁰¹ The concern with ordering or arranging things is also consistent with the model of Boyer and

²⁹⁹ Detienne 1989a: 3.

³⁰⁰ Classen et al 1994: 14. Dalby 2003: 362 notes that 'careful and very detailed rules were stated for their choice at dinners and drinking parties, a choice that would depend on the circumstances and on the wearer's health and constitution (citing Athenaeus 15.8-34).

³⁰¹ Dalby 2003: 202 notes the common scholarly view that the Persians were believed by classical Athenians to have become soft through luxury.

Liénard, while goal demotion plays an important role (see Chapter VII).³⁰² There is also, as noted, emphasis on the importance of sound (prayer and hymn/theogony) as in Greece.

Egyptian 'sacrifice'

Lloyd comments that 'on Egyptian culture Herodotus knew a great deal'.³⁰³ He adds that 'on the cult of the gods, his statements are, in the main, consistent with Egyptian evidence and even when confirmation is lacking, the Egyptologist does not normally find his comments startling'. He continues: 'However, Herodotus' determination to identify Greek and Egyptian gods produces an entirely unhistorical view of the relationship between Greek and Egyptian religions and, at times, he also falls victim to his besetting sin of oversimplification'. He concludes: 'All in all, Egyptian culture is perceived against a background of Greek culture; it is pre-eminently points of similarity or difference with the Greek world that attracts his attention'.³⁰⁴ In terms of source material, Egyptian priests are the most frequent and important, generally those of Thebes, Memphis and Heliopolis. It is argued that it is not unlikely that Herodotus had access to high ranking priests, although 'Egyptian priests were certainly not as well informed as we are inclined to think' accounting sometimes for the distorted and confused nature of some of the information he imparts.³⁰⁵

In terms of access to sacrificial rites (and thus control of the field of touch relevant here) Herodotus tells us that no woman is dedicated to the service of any god or goddess (2.35.4). It has been corroborated that no Egyptian woman performed the divine cult or occupied a position that made her a priestess (at least) in the Greek sense; they could instead, however, serve as assistants to the priests and thus still had access to the rites, albeit in a secondary manner.³⁰⁶ Herodotus gives examples of requirements for ritual cleanliness and adds that the religious observances of the priests are innumerable (2.37). All of these highly regulated and, seemingly, all encompassing requirements are explicable via the model of Boyer and Liénard in terms of concern for purification, anti-contamination measures, etc.³⁰⁷ He also refers to benefits for the priests, including sacred food that is cooked for them (2.37.4) and they did in fact receive a regular stipend in kind from the

³⁰² Boyer and Leinard 2006: 816-7; goal demotion is described by Boyer and Liénard 2006: 823. See also Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

³⁰³ Lloyd 2007: 237.

³⁰⁴ Lloyd 2007: 238.

³⁰⁵ Lloyd 2007: 231.

³⁰⁶ Lloyd 2007: 263.

³⁰⁷ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 820; see also Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

temple estates and ‘offerings’ made in the temple, apart from incidental perquisites and private earnings.³⁰⁸ This finds a parallel in our Greek evidence where in inscriptions, for example, there is great concern with stipulating the priest’s share of a ‘sacrifice’ and very little in that of the gods.³⁰⁹

Herodotus (2.38) also refers to inspections of bulls to be ‘sacrificed’ to Epaphus (the Egyptian name Apis is not given) and, again, there are parallels with the Greek evidence, including the use of the same verb in sacred laws (*dokimazō*).³¹⁰ Lupu argues that as regards the Greek evidence ‘one way or another, the inclusion of the stipulation that inspection be held seems to point to the importance of the sacrifice’. He adds that inspection and selection of victims for ‘public sacrifice’ is commonly implied even when it is not prescribed, by adjectives such as ‘full grown’, ‘pregnant’ etc or by clauses specifying the age and physical attributes (colour, gender, etc) or generally the quality of the victims.³¹¹ Such inspected victims are often marked or branded, as is the case here in Herodotus.³¹²

The ‘sacrifice’ of a bull (2.39 – Appendix 1: 4) is described by Herodotus. This description includes many characteristically Greek features: fire, altar, libation, prayer and the cutting of the throat of the victim. The head, however, is removed and curses invoked upon it – a major deviation from Greek practices – and the head is then sold to Greeks at the market or thrown into the river. This is another example where we find that the construction of ‘otherness’ has a significant intersensorial component. It should also be recalled that taste, food preferences and appetite are not merely physiological but cultural and that eating and cooking practices can become a means of self and group definition and, in extreme cases, also of xenophobia. Herodotus tells us that in respect of the heads of ‘sacrificed’ beasts, and the libation of wine, the practice of all Egypt is the same in all ‘sacrifices’. He then informs us, however, that regarding the disembowelling and burning of the victims there is a different way for each ‘sacrifice’ (2.40.1 – Appendix 1: 5). Here again then there are parallels with Greek practices with characteristic features that are prominent in most of the evidence (prayer, libation and altars in particular), while there is also great variability in the range of procedures. This presents a radically different picture to the paucity of sacrificial

³⁰⁸ Lloyd 2007: 265.

³⁰⁹ Hitch 2009: 23. This is discussed more fully in subsequent chapters.

³¹⁰ Following Lupu 2009: 355 and SEG XXX.1119.31-2, LSCG 65.70-2, LSCG 98.14-5, LSCG 78.14-5.

³¹¹ Lupu 2009: 355-7.

³¹² Lupu 2009: 99-100, n.518.

practices in other cultures described by him. In terms of accuracy, it is certain that differences existed between cults in Egypt but detailed confirmation is impossible.³¹³

Herodotus begins with the cult of Isis (2.40 – Appendix 1: 5). He says that after the ox is flayed and prayer made, they take out the whole stomach leaving the entrails in the carcass, together with the fat, and then cut off the legs, the end of the loin, the shoulders and the neck. They then fill what remains of the carcass with pure bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and other kinds of incense and then burn it, pouring lots of oil over it. He adds that they fast before the ‘sacrifice’ and while it is burning they all strike themselves (τύπτονται) and when this is completed they set out a meal of what is left of the victim. This wonderfully vivid and magnificent description was completely alien in many respects to Greek practice, although the key division of burned ‘portion’ (to the gods?) and meal for the participants is a major aspect of many Greek versions of such rituals. The richness of the burned portion is remarkable compared to the often commented meagreness of the god’s ‘share’ in Greek ‘sacrifice’ (e.g. Pherekrates *fr.*28 Kassel-Austin=23 Kock, Menander, *The Bad-Tempered Man* 447-53) and would clearly amount to a major olfactory amplification of the ritual. This massively surpasses the Greek evidence where frankincense could often be employed in a supplemental role, as discussed in Chapter VI.³¹⁴

Here the entrails are not consumed by the worshipers but burned – another major deviation – as consumption of the *splanchna* was a major ritual and sensory foci of many forms of Greek practice (in fact the heart was frequently extracted in Egyptian ‘sacrifice’).³¹⁵ As will be argued in Chapter VI, the consumption of the entrails should be considered both in terms of the enjoyment and sensory indulgence of the worshipers as well as in relation to a feeling of ‘communion’ with a deity. The act of striking themselves is also not found in Greek evidence and adds another rich sensory element to the experience of the ritual and one that distinguishes the worshipers from other peoples. Alternatively, it might be said to have some relation to the ritual cry of the women in terms of sensory impact although on an increased scale and associated here with lamentation. All in all, the image is one of immense sensory significance.

³¹³ Lloyd 2007: 266.

³¹⁴ Detienne 1994: 48-9 explores the different perceived significances of burned animal part ‘offering’ and incense.

³¹⁵ Lloyd 2007: 266.

Herodotus (2.41.1) tells us that the Egyptians would not 'sacrifice' cows and it becomes clear that eating and cooking practices (including sacrificial ones) were in Egypt, as in Greece, a major form of distinguishing native from foreigner, as well as one group, locale or cult, from another. Herodotus (2.41.3) informs that because of this prohibition (cow 'sacrifices' are rare and always early in the evidence for ancient Egypt) no Egyptian man or woman will kiss a Greek man or use a knife, spit or cauldron belonging to a Greek, or taste the flesh of an unblemished ox that has been cut up with a Greek knife.³¹⁶ In Thebes and the cult of Zeus (the Egyptian name of the god is not given, but the identification of Amon-re, 'king of the gods' with Zeus was standard classical practice) they will 'sacrifice' goats but not touch sheep (2.42.1).³¹⁷ In the Mendesian province and the cult of Mendes (the Egyptian name is not given once again) they would 'sacrifice' sheep but, instead, not touch goats (2.42.2).

In addition, Herodotus also refutes a tradition accusing the Egyptians of trying to 'offer' Herakles in a 'human sacrifice', saying that it is incompatible with Egyptian character and impossible in its implications (2.45). 'Human sacrifice', as I will show, was likewise alien to Greek character. There is, in fact, no unequivocal evidence of 'human sacrifice' in Egypt after the 1st Dynasty, although Herodotus' reaction also reveals the depth of his admiration for Egyptian culture and his belief that Greek religion originated there (2.50-1).³¹⁸

The normal prohibition on 'sacrificing' swine (believed to be unclean and thus explicable in terms of anti-contamination measures) to any god but the Moon or Dionysus (again the Egyptian names are not given at 2.47.1) also makes sense in terms of the previous discussion. Such 'sacrifices' take place only at the same time and in the same season of full moon, for reasons Herodotus will not give out of religious scruple. The method of 'sacrifice' to the Moon (2.47.3) is described by Herodotus. Here after the victim is killed, in an unspecified way, the Egyptians put together the tip of the tail, the spleen and the caul, cover them all with fat found in the belly and burn them. The rest of the meat is consumed on the same day, and not later. Again we have here the key division of burned 'portion' and the greater part of the victim for human consumption. In addition, the feasting element is once again prominent in the evidence. This example also demonstrates once

³¹⁶ Lloyd 2007: 267 on the evidence for cow 'sacrifice'.

³¹⁷ Lloyd 2007: 268 discusses the identification of the cult of Zeus.

³¹⁸ Lloyd 2007: 270 on 'human sacrifice'.

more the range of sacrificial practices in Egypt. Furthermore, people with less means make models of pigs out of dough which they bake and 'sacrifice' (θύουσι) instead. This again can be paralleled in ancient Greece where such bloodless practices were often a more modest and affordable alternative to animal victims as I will show.³¹⁹ On the eve of the festival of Dionysus, however, everyone 'sacrifices' a pig before the door of his house and when the animal is slaughtered it is given back to the swineherd from whom it was procured (2.48.1). These forms of 'sacrifice' demonstrate, once again, the key role of cooking and consumption conventions (including 'sacrifice') in defining group and social identity.

In all of the discussion of Egyptian sacrificial practices, there is, once again, no indication of how the gods benefit, nor any sign that this is, in fact, an issue. At the same time, however, the importance of the gods in Egypt is never in doubt and this remains true for all the other peoples whose customs he describes. There are 'sacrifices' performed that are particular to various deities but no real sense in which they are represented as 'gifts' to the gods. As I will show with the Greek evidence, they make more sense in terms of defining the identity of the worshipers and the nature of their particular cult. Also, the rich sensorial nature of their practices suggests that, as with the Greek evidence discussed in Chapter VI, the emphasis is on the experience and sensory indulgence of the worshipers. There is, likewise, no real emphasis on killing although, at times, it seems to play an important contributory role. Eating and feasting is, however, prominent, as is the elaborate ritual behaviour and paraphernalia. There is also a pronounced emphasis on variety and variability, both throughout Egypt and by cult or region. Herodotus seems to assume that Egyptian sacrificial ritual is similar to the Greek 'model' but with the volume turned up to maximum.

Scythian 'sacrifice'

In order to address Herodotus' assumptions concerning Scythian 'sacrifice' it is again, first of all, imperative to note the pantheon that he ascribes to them (4.59 – Appendix 1: 6). The only gods whom they 'propitiate' are Hestia, foremost, secondly Zeus and Earth and then Apollo, Heavenly Aphrodite, Herakles and Ares. He gives the Scythian names for all

³¹⁹ Kearns 2011: 101-3.

these gods except Herakles and Ares which may be due to a lacuna.³²⁰ For Hartog the pantheon is defined by both paucity and confusion with Hestia, for example, seemingly given the role of primordial deity.³²¹ It is important to note that Herodotus' process of *interpretatio Graeca* supplies an indication of the nature of Scythian gods, but also runs the risk of distorting it. Attempts to identify the various divinities in representations of Graeco-Scythian art have also given uncertain results.³²²

Herodotus says that it is the Scythian practice to make images and altars and shrines for Ares but for no other god (4.59.2), and this marks a fundamental deviation from the offset from Greek practice. Hartog argues that the fact that Ares (a marginal god in the Greek world in many respects) is the only god recognised in anything like a familiar Greek fashion is also suggestive of further aberration.³²³ The statement of Herodotus is, in fact, in many respects 'fundamentally true' as regards the lack of images, altars and shrines. It has been argued that 'although some traces of "sanctuaries" can be discerned and between the Danube and the Don rough anthropomorphic *cippi* are attested dating also from the 6th and 5th centuries BC there were no places reserved for sacrifices which displayed the cultic association typical in Greece'.³²⁴

Scythian 'sacrifice' is clearly and emphatically contrasted with a Greek 'model' of some sort (4.60 – Appendix 1: 7). According to Herodotus, the sacrificiant lights no fire, makes no preliminary rites (*katarchesthai*) nor offers any libation (4.60.2).³²⁵ These elements are then fundamental in some respects to Herodotus' understanding of Greek practice. The victim itself is killed in a way that is also a striking deviation from Greek cultural norms (4.60.1). The victim stands with its forefeet 'shackled' (ἐμπεποδισμένον) together. The sacrificiant stands behind the victim and 'throws it down' (καταβάλλει) by plucking the end of a rope. As the victim falls the deity is invoked. The sacrificiant then 'throws' (ἐβαλε) a noose around the victim's neck, 'thrusts' (ἐμβάλων) in a stick and 'strangles' (ἀποπνίγει) it. Hartog assembles an impressive amount of ancient testimony to demonstrate that in

³²⁰ Corcella 2007: 623.

³²¹ Hartog 1988: 174.

³²² Corcella 2007: 623.

³²³ Hartog 1988: 192.

³²⁴ Corcella 2007: 626.

³²⁵ Corcella 2007: 626 argues that *katarchesthai* refers to 'consecration' of the victim but there is much dispute among scholars as to what this term denotes. Jim 2011: 52 argues that 'it seems reasonable to conclude that the word *katarchesthai* involves no fixed action, and that the preliminary ritual procedure(s) can vary in different sacrificial contexts' – there would thus be no norm.

ancient Greece strangulation was seen as a particularly violent, brutal and shocking way to kill or die (e.g. *Odyssey* 22.471-3, Euripides, *Andromache* 412, Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1374).³²⁶ The method of suffocation in indigenous terms must also have aimed at avoiding the shedding of blood – a practice fundamental to most Greek sacrificial activity but which was a taboo for many Altaic peoples.³²⁷

Blood, however, is shed – a small and symbolic amount – in Scythian oath-taking, according to Herodotus (4.70) – not blood of an animal victim (as often in Greek oath-rituals discussed in the next chapter) but of the oath-makers themselves. Large scale strangulations of human and animal victims also take place at the burial of Scythian kings according to Herodotus (4.71-2). Many elements of this report have, in fact, found confirmation from several of the richest burials dating between the 7th and 4th centuries BC scattered in the steppe and in the pre-Caucasian region.³²⁸ The key sensory elements so far in this description of sacrificial practices are auditory (the prayer) and touch, the tactile symbolic code defined by domination, control, force and taboo with the avoidance of shedding of blood.

Herodotus (4.60.1) says in all their sacred services they follow the same method of ‘sacrifice’ pointing again, as with other examples he discusses, to paucity in the range of sacrificial practices in contrast to Greece and Egypt. Hartog finds further aberration in the next phase of the ‘sacrifice’ (4.61 – Appendix 1: 8).³²⁹ As the land is bare of wood when they have flayed the victims and stripped the flesh from the bones, they cook it using the bones as fuel. Here again there is no separation between a burned portion and parts consumed by the worshipers while the bones (often considered the parts ‘reserved’ for the gods in modern scholarship, in particular the thigh bones) are used as fuel. Herodotus then describes an impossible sounding sacrificial procedure where an ox or indeed any other victim, ‘serves to cook itself’: all the flesh is placed in the victim’s stomach and then cooked. Again, cooking practices, including sacrificial ones, are used to help create a construct of ‘otherness’. In actual fact, bones do not burn easily and it is instead desiccated dung that has always been used in the steppes in the absence of wood. In addition, ‘it is possible that the burning of bones and the cooking of meat in the entrails, explained

³²⁶ Hartog 1988: 181.

³²⁷ Corcella 2007: 626.

³²⁸ Corcella 2007: 632.

³²⁹ Hartog 1988: 185-7.

rationalistically by Herodotus, constituted a special ritual which finds some parallels in Mongolian customs'.³³⁰

When the flesh is cooked, the sacrificiant takes the first-fruits of the flesh and entrails and casts it before him and again there is something crude about the manner in which this is characterised by Herodotus. The *splanchna* are also not consumed separately as a key sensory focus of the ritual, as in many Greek practices. It should be noted that the language of the passage emphasises the lack of separation in the animal parts: e.g. 'they strip the flesh from the bones and cast it into the cauldrons', 'they cast all the flesh into the victim's stomach', etc. There is no emphasis on care, distinction, separation or subtlety in this description. We are also left in doubt about the meal that follows as noted by Hartog.³³¹ Again the interest is in the ritual more than the alimentary aspects of 'sacrifice' in this discussion. We are also told that the Scythians chiefly 'sacrificed' horses, horse 'sacrifice' being extremely rare in Greece (not eaten 'except in emergencies and catastrophic food shortages') but occurring in examples discussed by Herodotus of 'barbarian' customs (e.g. Massagetae 1.216, Persians 1.133).³³²

However, Herodotus adds that 'sacrifices' associated with Ares are the exception to the practices he has described so far (4.62 – Appendix 1: 9). Every district in each of the governments has a structure sacred to Ares: a pile of fagots of sticks with a flattened four sided surface which can be ascended on one side. In every year one hundred and fifty wagon loads of sticks are heaped upon this structure as the winter storms make them sink down. In other words, great care and attention is given to this sacred place and to its continual maintenance. Such a clear separation of ritual space is a key aspect of the model of Boyer and Liénard, as is the concern with exactness and for ordering and arranging things, as we have seen. On top of the heap is a scimitar of iron (*akinakes*), their 'image of Ares' and yearly 'sacrifices' are made of sheep, goats and horses. Of captured enemies in addition, one in every hundred taken is 'sacrificed' but according to a different method than the animal victims. They pour wine on the men's heads and cut their throats over a vessel. They then carry the blood up to the top of the structure and pour it on the scimitar. Also, below the structure they cut off all the slain men's right arms and hands and throw

³³⁰ Corcella 2007: 626.

³³¹ Hartog 1988: 185-6.

³³² Dalby 2003: 180 on horse 'sacrifice' in ancient Greece.

them into the air. The arm lies where it has fallen and the body apart from it – in other words, they are left to rot – a deeply scandalous idea to an ancient Greek.

In terms of interpretation of this ‘human sacrifice’, ‘the cult of Ares was closer to the Greek model; the heap could be viewed as a temple and the sword as a representation of the god, while the human sacrifice involved libation and the shedding of blood’.³³³ It can be added that the *akinakes* was ‘an idol of the god of war, but it may also have had the function of “axis of the world”; and the ritual may have aimed at consecrating the military supremacy over the subjugated enemy and the conquered territories’. The mutilation of the corpse similarly ‘constitutes the ultimate humiliation for the vanquished and immolated enemy’.³³⁴ The careful collection of blood in a vessel and its transportation up the structure to the sacred idol has parallels in Greek practice where the *sphageion* can be used in the bleeding of the altar.³³⁵

The ritual is also far more sensorially rich than the strangulations discussed previously. The pouring of wine on the head followed by the cutting of the victim’s throat and the careful conveyance of the blood up the heap to the scimitar might be said also to involve a transfer of sensible qualities (from wine to victim to blood). In addition, the cutting off of the right arm has an analogical aspect, a key aspect of the success of ritual transmission according to Whitehouse.³³⁶ It relates to the powerlessness and utter defeat of the enemy as without a right arm they cannot fight. Archaeology has provided partial confirmation. Apart from the findings of weapons stuck in the ground in several burials and the representation of a sword on a late Scythian Crimean stele, an *akinakes* on the summit of a mound has been found at Nosaki, in the area of Zaporozh’e.³³⁷

Herodotus concludes with a note that the Scythians do not ‘sacrifice’ pigs (pigs were certainly not to be found among the nomadic Scythians, but a small number of pig bones have been found in the vicinity of their agricultural settlements) nor are they willing for the most part to rear them in their country (4.63).³³⁸ A similar prohibition was discussed above concerning Egypt and it should be noted that pigs were considered a separate category of

³³³ Corcella 2007: 627.

³³⁴ Corcella 2007: 627.

³³⁵ Corcella 2007: 628.

³³⁶ E.g. Whitehouse 2004: 114-5.

³³⁷ Corcella 2007: 627.

³³⁸ Corcella 2007: 688 discusses the pig bone evidence.

victim in ancient Greece, 'sacrificed' in a different manner to other victims, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Scythian 'sacrifice' then is marked by a paucity of divine figures and practices, a lack of 'soft' elements that will later be identified in Greek (and also Persian – see above) practices, an emphasis on domination, brutality and control, a lack of separation and division, a concern over taboo and the absence of a number of sensorial subtleties, emphases and high points identified in other cultures. There is, again, no clear idea of how the gods benefit from any of these rituals, nor in the case of the strangulations in particular, of any idea of their portion or equivalent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have discussed the sacrificial practices of three key peoples described by Herodotus in relation to 'barbarian' behaviour. I have also applied an analysis utilising cognitive-informed and sensory based methodologies. In addition I have considered the accuracy of these reports as well as some of the ideas (and sometimes prejudices) underlying the assumptions made, as well as the influences on Herodotus and his work. My key aim has been to address what can be said about Greek 'sacrifice' on the basis of his assumptions concerning 'barbarian' practices. It also seems clear to me, however, that sensory values and judgements form another theme running through Herodotus' work that has not been properly understood or identified by modern scholarship. Sensorially speaking, Egypt is emblematically rich, as befits its status in Herodotus' thinking and its perceived ancient pedigree. The Scythians, meanwhile, who say they are the youngest of all nations (Herodotus 4.5), are in sensory terms, crude and undeveloped (at least this is the way Herodotus characterises them). The evidence of ancient Greece, that I will discuss next, perhaps places it at a midpoint between the sensory sophistication of Egypt's sacrificial practices and the sensorially 'primitive' (but no less engaging in their own terms) practices of many, if not all, of the other peoples he discusses.

These peoples are also, unlike Egypt and Greece, characterised by an insufficient pantheon and a meagre range of sacrificial practices. In all cases the importance of sound in 'sacrifice' seems to be emphasised, particularly in regards to the indispensable role of prayer. In Persian 'sacrifice', sound is also associated with loyalty to the king and with the

crucial presence of the Magi, powerful figures associated with sorcery and enchantments in the Greek imagination. Smell was central to Egyptian 'sacrifice' (as in Greek practice) but negligible in the descriptions of other 'barbarian' practices. Aspects of touch range from the subtle 'soft' nuances of Persian 'sacrifice' to the brutal and dominating tactile symbolic code of Scythian 'sacrifice'. Taste played important socio-cultural roles in the practices of all the peoples discussed.

Herodotus mentions a number of features throughout these digressions that are characteristic, in one way or another, and to a greater or lesser extent, of what we understand as Greek procedure: libation, first-fruits, altars, music, fillets, preliminary rites (including the scattering of barley grain and sprinkling of lustral water), etc. It is my contention that these features do not merit us talking of a stable and uniform category of 'sacrifice' incorporating all these ritual elements. They can, instead, be understood as readily familiar to Herodotus' audience and as characteristic of a loosely related range of practices in certain recurring contexts. It should also be noted that none of these features are indispensable. Battle-line 'sacrifice', as I will show in the next chapter, contained none of these features but concentrated purely on the slaughter of the victim and often on omens taken from the flow of the blood.³³⁹

Equally significant to my discussion, however, are those features which Herodotus does not draw attention to. There is no mention, or indeed interest in, how the gods benefit from the 'barbarian sacrifices' he describes. This is consistent with our evidence for Greek 'sacrifice' as a whole but in this case we do not even seem to have an equivalent of the 'gods' portion' in many instances. This is the element emphasised by most modern scholars as the key operating factor in relations between men and gods in Greek practice, as I will discuss more fully in the next chapter. The argument that 'sacrifice' was simply a 'gift' to the gods thus seems untenable in this analysis, a conclusion made in subsequent chapters also. However, this is certainly not to say the gods are ignored by Herodotus who clearly closely links ritual in general, and sacrificial practices in particular, with the gods.

All the descriptions of 'barbarian sacrifice' by Herodotus (as is the case with Greek practice in general as I will demonstrate) are intelligible from an etic perspective as operating according to 'assumed' socio-cultural sensory values and significances, while engaging the

³³⁹ This is explored by Dillon 2008.

worshippers via various sensory means and triggering cognitive structures such as the hazard-precaution system, thereby becoming attention grabbing and intuitively compelling. This is predictably clearest when enough information is provided by Herodotus, as is the case with the three main examples discussed here, but is also indicated in those cases where he provides only a sparse commentary of their customs (e.g. the Massagetae 1.215-6). In addition, most of the situations discussed where these 'sacrifices' occur do so (like many Greek examples) in association with profound social effects (e.g. festivals, birthdays, special celebrations). Boyer argues that these social effects appear mysterious to human beings because of our 'naïve sociology'.³⁴⁰ In other words, rituals do not create these social effects, but only the illusion that they do.³⁴¹ In short, the accounts of 'barbarian sacrifice' in Herodotus emphasise the sensory and experiential nature of them, not any theological aspects. This would be surprising if they were meant only as 'gifts' to the gods. At the same time, however, the importance of the gods to 'sacrifice' is uncontested and fundamental (they are not just an add-on, as argued by Boyer).³⁴²

In addition, Herodotus does not appear especially interested in killing. Sometimes he makes no mention of killing at all, while at other times it is but one of a number of features that distinguishes Greek from 'barbarian' practice and that helps give a clear picture of their practices as a whole. There is certainly nothing that would give credence to Burkert's notion of killing as providing the essential explanatory model of 'sacrifice'. As in the Greek evidence it seems in general no more or less important than many other aspects, although it could take on heightened significance in some contexts as I will show. In terms of the model of the French School, feasting and eating is often emphasised and of central importance. Herodotus appears particularly interested, moreover, in the ritual aspects of 'sacrifice', which is perhaps not surprising given his general interest in religious matters. However, it is clear that 'sacrifice' is not just about eating and that the ritual aspects should not be overlooked or considered unimportant. Although feasting and eating are often emphasised in his descriptions, sometimes they are barely mentioned or indicated and sometimes not at all. There is nothing that contradicts the importance of eating and feasting in 'sacrifice', however, and the strength of the association underlies the disgust that might be expected among his readers at descriptions of cannibalistic feasts combined

³⁴⁰ Boyer 2001: 287-91.

³⁴¹ Boyer 2001: 292.

³⁴² Boyer 2001: 293.

with sacrificial terminology where the emphasis is very definitely on the eating (e.g. Massagetae 1.216, Padaei 3.99, Issedones 4.26).

It should also be noted that the very fact that Herodotus can discuss such a diverse and seemingly unrelated number of practices in terms of an implicit 'model' of some sort (based on elements, sequences and characteristics familiar and recognisable to his Greek audience) and a workable terminology might suggest the validity of the term 'sacrifice' in modern scholarship. Greek sacrificial practices were varied and the relationships between different rituals not at all clear as I show. They also included and overlapped with other ritual practices that appear even less related to modern eyes. However, a certain pattern, or patterns of behaviour, was identifiable to Herodotus and available as a source of contrast and comparison. Thus, there is no reason to abandon the term, only the way it is conventionally applied.

As discussed by Parker, Wittgenstein formulated the term 'family resemblances' for phenomena like games that are related to one another in different ways but have no one essential feature in common.³⁴³ He also pointed to the difficulty of drawing boundaries where none are needed. If this is attempted for a special purpose, the kinship between conceptions of such phenomena would be 'just as undeniable as the difference'.³⁴⁴ This appears to be what we find in Herodotus, who is seeking to relate common but not indispensable features in diverse Greek sacrificial practices (in a perhaps idiosyncratic way), to a complex range of ritual phenomena associated with the 'barbarian' world. I would also agree with Versnel that an overly anxious fear of imposing Christianising assumptions can be taken too far and that, in this case, the evidence should not lead to a need for the term 'sacrifice' being abandoned as long as caution is used.³⁴⁵ In fact, Herodotus himself had been behaving not too differently.

³⁴³ Wittgenstein 1953: 65-77; Parker 2011: 154.

³⁴⁴ Wittgenstein 1953: 76.

³⁴⁵ Versnel 2011: 553-4 where his comments refer to the notion of 'belief'.

Chapter IV

Deconstructing 'sacrifice' I: Killing and eating animals

This chapter will discuss the main range of practices involving the ritual killing of animal victims, often subsumed under the heading of 'sacrifice'. In each case I will identify key elements and discussion points. Factors focused on will include the nature of the participants, animals slaughtered, recipient (if any is specified), 'purpose', procedure, intensity and ritual paraphernalia. Wherever possible, I will use evidence from 5th and 4th century BC Athens, but other material from different periods and contexts will cautiously be used to substantiate my argument and compare and contrast key elements, while broadening the relevance of this thesis. It will become clear that these practices conform to the model of 'family resemblances' discussed previously and, furthermore, varied greatly within themselves as well as in comparison to one another.

A typical 'sacrifice'?

'Sacrifice' followed by dining is generally seen as the most familiar and common form of sacrificial practice (the marked use of *thysia*) and one that was performed in nearly all contexts.³⁴⁶ However, the exact form, or specifically forms, it took is far from clear and there seems to be no such thing as a typical 'sacrifice'. Our main accounts of 'sacrifice' are far from comprehensive and these descriptions either lack, or are seemingly at variance with, details in other sources such as iconography, ancient commentaries and lexica. Graf attempts to identify an ideal type, but acknowledges that many variations were most likely possible, determined not least by context and scale.³⁴⁷ It is clear that such activity 'was not a one man's job' and at a minimum in vase paintings, for example, 'sacrifice' could be performed by two people, an officiant and an assistant.³⁴⁸ I delineate here some of the main features identified by both our ancient sources and modern scholars as in some contexts characteristic of sacrificial activity followed by dining.

Such a 'sacrifice' often began with the animal being led to the altar, usually by procession. Whether on a modest private scale or part of a major festival, Graf notes that in both

³⁴⁶ Parker 2011: 136, Ekroth 2002, etc.

³⁴⁷ Graf 2002: 117.

³⁴⁸ Van Straten 1995: 168.

instances the function is similar: the participants display themselves in front of men and gods.³⁴⁹ Burkert adds the key element that the *pompe* is the fundamental medium of group formation.³⁵⁰ The participants would then often circle around the altar (*Peace* 956) while a basin (*chérnips*) of lustral water could be used for washing the hands and a basket (*kanoûn*) would be brought forward (*Peace* 956-7, 948-50; *Birds* 850, 958) containing barley grain (*olaî*), fillet (*stemma*) and the sacrificial knife (*máchaira*). Iconographic evidence clearly shows the participants garlanded and the animal adorned with fillets (*stemmata*).³⁵¹

Water could be sprinkled on the animal (sometimes probably via a torch which is first dipped in the water of the *chérnips* and then dripped over the victim, cf. Euripides, *Heracles* 929, Aristophanes, *Peace* 959-60) so that it allegedly ‘nodded’ in response. Scholars had assumed this suggested a requirement of consent, but this has recently been explained as a concern for the vitality of the sacrificial animal.³⁵² According to Naiden, if it does represent anxiety, it is not to do with human guilt over the animal’s suffering, but to ensure that communication with the gods remains open.³⁵³

The presiding sacrificiant (this need not be a priest, as will be made clear) could cut a tuft of hair from the victim and throw it into the fire of the altar (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.444-7, *Electra* 810-15). A prayer would then often be made stating the ‘purpose’ of the ‘sacrifice’ (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.445-6, *Birds* 903, *Peace* 972-3, and *Electra* 805-10). Before this, however, the barley grains might have been scattered (*Odyssey* 3.447) and thrown on the altar (*Electra* 803-4). The victim’s throat was cut with a knife, (*Electra* 810-5) or struck first with a blow from an axe (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.447-55 where the victim is a bull, i.e. a large animal). Women would often utter the sacrificial cry (*ololugê* – e.g. *Odyssey* 3.450). Iconography presents clear evidence for the bloodying of altars and this could be done, either by directly holding the animal over the altar as it is killed, or by first collecting the blood in a bowl (the already discussed *sphageion* – as in *Odyssey* 3.444, although here a different term is used – *amnion*).³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ Graf 1996: 59.

³⁵⁰ Burkert 1985: 99.

³⁵¹ Van Stratten 1995: 161-2. Animals adorned or being adorned: e.g. London F 66, Laon 37. 1044, London E 284 = van Straten 1995: Figures 43-5.

³⁵² Detienne 1989a: 9 emphasises this alleged consent.

³⁵³ Naiden 2007: 72.

³⁵⁴ Van Straten 1995: 104-5. Blood-stained altars: e.g. New York 41.162.4, Frankfurt B 413 = van Straten 1995: Figures 125-6.

Finally, the gods' 'portion' was very often burned on the altar, which (as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter VII) is conventionally seen as consisting of thigh bones and the tail or *osphus* (e.g. *Peace* 1039-40, 1053-5) despite an apparent lack of a consistent view of what counts as the god's portion.³⁵⁵ Van Straten convincingly surveys the ancient medical and anatomical literature and lexica (e.g. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 493a 22, Pollux, *Onomasticon* II 178) to demonstrate that the term *osphus* denoted 'the sacrum plus one or more parts of the skeleton attached to it' and in our literary sources likely referred to mainly the tail and sacrum.³⁵⁶ *Omentum*, on the other hand, was the particular fat (e.g. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 677b 15) in which the bones burned for the gods could be wrapped (e.g. Aristophanes, *Birds* 190-3, 1230-3).³⁵⁷

A libation was also poured at this point (*Peace* 1102) and as I will clearly show, additional portions could be 'offered' to the gods by being placed on cult tables (*trapezomata*) or presented in table hospitality rituals (*theoxenia*), and would form part of the perquisites of the priest.³⁵⁸ In addition, the entrails were roasted on skewers and shared among the participants (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.460-4, *Peace* 1115-6). The entrails and the tail were also used for divinatory 'purposes', as discussed below. Barley meal (*thulémata*) was also often burned at this stage (e.g. *Peace* 1040). While in Homer most of the meat seems to have been roasted (e.g. *Iliad* 1.465-7, *Odyssey* 3.460-3), in classical Athens the majority would have been boiled in cauldrons (*lebes* - e.g. Euripides, *Electra* 801-2).³⁵⁹ In addition, the meat and skin of a sacrificial animal could be sold.³⁶⁰

This evidence is often supplemented with the iconographic material. In terms of evidence for the procession, the vase evidence can be divided into scenes where a female figure (*kanephoros*) carries the *kanoûn*, or scenes denoting more modest 'sacrifice', where a male carries the *kanoûn* while also leading the animal victim.³⁶¹ Figure 3 (below) shows subsequent preliminary ritual at the altar and is also analysed from a sensory basis here. On this Attic red figure bell-krater in Agrigento of about 425 BC hierarchy is clearly

³⁵⁵ Ekroth 2009: 149 supports the more conventional view but with qualifications.

³⁵⁶ Van Straten 1995: 128-9.

³⁵⁷ Van Straten 1995: 125-8.

³⁵⁸ Gill 1991: 15.

³⁵⁹ Van Straten 1995: 147.

³⁶⁰ Lupu 2009: 71-2. Meat: e.g. LSCG 10 C.17-22, LSAM 54, SEG XXXIII.147.Front.9, 11, 26, etc. Skins: e.g. LSS 61.63, LSAM 72.44-5, SEG XLV 1508.13-4.

³⁶¹ Van Straten 1995: 13-4. *Kanephoros*: e.g. Athens NM Akr 2298, London 1905.7-11.1= van Straten 1995: Figures 3 and 8.

represented by the bearded nature of the officiant, who dips his hands in the lustral water. This tactile, communicative symbol is at the centre of the image. All the other communicative aspects of touch featured in the image, via the representation of the actions of the other participants, facilitate the successful completion of the ritual under his supervision. The piper provides an important suggestion of an auditory dimension and, likewise, helps to create the impression of a successful outcome. All the participants are wreathed and the water may well have been fragrant. All the participants are also focused on the central, symbolic act.

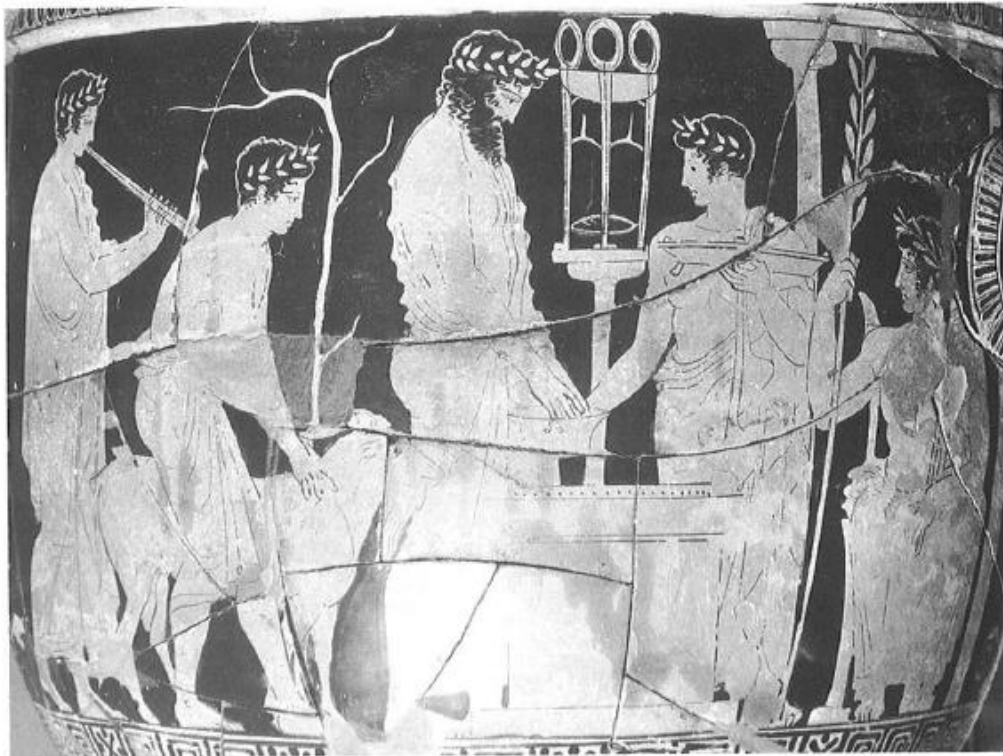


Figure 3: Bell-krater in Agrigento of about 425 BC showing *kanoûn* and *chérnips*³⁶²

A second image shows the roasting of the *splanchna*, a central element of many forms of 'sacrifice' preceding a feast, as already discussed. This example (see Figure 4 below) is an Attic red figure stamnos (attributed to Polygnotos) and includes the tail being burnt on carefully arranged firewood.³⁶³ Carefully arranged firewood is, in fact, a common feature of vase paintings depicting sacrificial scenes and some of the reasons for its importance will

³⁶² Van Straten 1995: Figure 30 = Museo Archeologico Regionale 4688.

³⁶³ Van Straten 1995: 134.

be discussed in Chapter VI.³⁶⁴ It also depicts the key elements of libation and prayer, the latter conveyed by the upturned communicative gesture of the bearded man, the probable officiant.³⁶⁵ In the case of the libation, mixed wine (this was the most common practice but it is not certain in this case - see Chapter V) replaces water as the symbolic sensible media. A piper is also present.

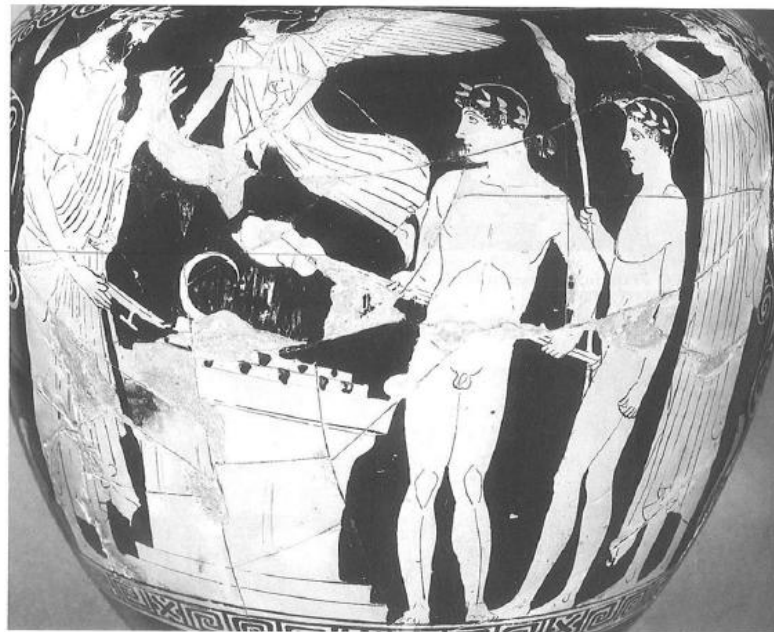


Figure 4: Attic red figure stamnos dated 450/425 BC showing *splanchna* being roasted while the tail is burnt on carefully arranged firewood³⁶⁶

From a review of the recent scholarship on ‘sacrifice’ discussed in Chapter II, and additional evidence discussed below, it becomes clear that the material available cannot easily be assimilated to a single typical model. Rather than an ‘ideal’ or ‘typical sacrifice’, a case should be made for a loosely related range of overlapping rituals that occurred in a number of contexts and that varied themselves. Common features include familiar ritual sequences (e.g. sprinkling, circling etc) and individual ritual elements (e.g. libation, prayer, burning of hair), slaughter of a victim, emphasis on blood, divinatory procedures, burning of the god’s ‘portion’ and special cooking practices (e.g. roasting of the *splanchna*), food division and apportionment, etc. Many of these rituals occur either singly, or in combination, in a range of contexts both in other forms of the ritual killing of animals and in contexts completely

³⁶⁴ Van Straten 1995: 167. Firewood: e.g. New York 41.162.4, Frankfurt B 413 = van Straten 1995: Figures 125-6.

³⁶⁵ Van Straten 1995: 134.

³⁶⁶ Van Straten 1995: Figure 130 = London E 455.

beyond and outside this domain. They are also intimately related to everyday behaviour and experience in this period such as eating and drinking, sharing and cooking, killing and consulting. Their flexibility and variability can thus be understood as one consequence of their intrinsic nature: sacrificial practices operated as extensions of ordinary human behaviour and such behaviour and experience was not fixed or simple.

In what follows I divide the evidence into sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals, killing rituals and consulting rituals. These rituals, furthermore, overlap with one another in different ways and contexts and with different experiential emphases.

Sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals

I have already explored how most scholars would likely agree that a primary ‘purpose’ of most forms of ‘sacrifice’ was the provision of a meat feast, even while recognising the variability of its nature (see my previous discussion of the history of scholarship). However, as already suggested in Chapter II, meat distribution, for example, could be a complicated and protracted process and so there was often a significant dislocation for many between the timing of the ritual and the occasion of the feasting. In addition, as argued below, some forms of ‘sacrifice’ not often considered by scholars (such as battle-line *sphagia*) may also have resulted in an important meal at some later juncture. Here, therefore, I replace the concept of ‘sacrifice followed by dining’ with sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals. These rituals are, furthermore, only one aspect of the ritual complex as a whole, although often the most dominant. At this stage, however, I can only make preliminary observations and identify key issues and talking points.

The need for occasional *ou phora* (‘no carrying away’) commands implies that carrying away the meat to eat at home following a ‘sacrifice’ may have been common.³⁶⁷ These prohibitions have been interpreted in a variety of ways, including as a modification of chthonian cult.³⁶⁸ Jameson argues that the prohibition stemmed from a desire to have the participants more vividly involved in the celebration, which created a unity out of *thysia* and the meal that followed it, adding that social benefits would have accrued also.³⁶⁹ Parker argues that while such restrictions are found in divine cults and cannot count as an

³⁶⁷ Parker 2011: 152. E.g. LSCG 69.31-2, LSCG 151 A.45, 58, etc, SEG XXVIII 750.4, SEG XLI 744.A.11.

³⁶⁸ Scullion 1994: 99.

³⁶⁹ Jameson 1994: 55.

exclusive marker of heroic 'sacrifice', they may have been an invariable marker of it.³⁷⁰

Lupu argues that the basic underlying factors must be religious and likely had something to do with the notion of eating in a 'holy place' and with the character of the respective cult. He adds, however, that he is not convinced a single explanation can successfully account for all occurrences and that several factors may be operative in particular cases.³⁷¹ For my purposes, such commands clearly emphasise the ritualised nature of eating in a sanctuary and that the primary emphasis was on human activity and commensality in a sacred and emotionally significant context, specifically eating together in a markedly different way to ordinary and mundane social exchange and interaction.

The most common animals 'sacrificed' were sheep, goats, pigs and cattle.³⁷² Choice of animal depended largely on factors such as cost and seasonal supply, although there were specific requirements for some cults that have been dubbed 'impractical'.³⁷³ Discussing some of these 'sacrifices' and their associated cults in terms of 'abnormality' (via a structuralist methodology) loses sight of the fact that these traditional rituals would have been seen as anything but abnormal by the worshipers and that there was no such thing as 'normal' practice as I will show.³⁷⁴

Ekroth cites increasing osteological evidence for a range of wild animals sometimes being 'sacrificed' and eaten (not only domestic animals therefore but also wild fauna such as deer, roe and boar), as well as dogs.³⁷⁵ Fish and fowl were also 'offered' in some cults.³⁷⁶ Again, the range of animals 'sacrificed', both domestic and wild, emphasises the importance of the alimentary side of such practices. Most of these animals were valued for their high quality and pleasant tasting meat although dog (*kyon*) 'was not a food of which one boasted' in classical Greece and by the second century AD it is believed that Greeks in general no longer ate them.³⁷⁷ This suggests that a way forward would be to contrast ordinary preparation and cooking practices and rituals with sacrificial preparation, cooking

³⁷⁰ Parker 2005: 42.

³⁷¹ Lupu 2009: 276.

³⁷² Parker 2003a: 1344.

³⁷³ Van Straten 1987: 167 on cost; Jameson 1998: 100 on seasonal supply and the 'impractical'.

³⁷⁴ Eg. Bremmer 2005: 156-63 discusses cults in terms of 'abnormality' although this is required by his particular focus.

³⁷⁵ Ekroth 2008b: 276.

³⁷⁶ Parker 2003a: 1344. Durand 1989b: 127-8, for example, discusses an olpe in Berlin (Olpe AFN Berlin, Staatliche Museen, 1915) showing the 'sacrifice' of a tuna.

³⁷⁷ Dalby 1996: 60. See Dalby 2003 for an analysis of the cultural values placed on the meats from all the various animals 'sacrificed'.

and eating rituals where the inclusion of more valued meat went hand-in-hand with greater divine involvement, or at least interest.

Another key issue concerns participation. As noted in Chapter II, despite the often presumed (but misleading and overstated) official ideology in Athens, Naiden argues that there was a system of hierarchy in place governing access to sacrificial meat defined by the values of reciprocity, deference and piety.³⁷⁸ Thus, while the type of sharing that took place in such rituals was markedly different from that operating in ordinary exchange it did not seem to demand equal access to meat for all. This conforms again to the cognitive studies discussed in Chapter I while adding subtle cultural detail.

The issue is different, however, with women. Jay argues that it was a common feature of unrelated traditions that only adult males could perform 'sacrifice'.³⁷⁹ Detienne argues that just as women were without the political rights reserved for male citizens, they were kept apart from the altars, meat and blood.³⁸⁰ Burkert argues instead that women were only excluded from the circle of participants in exceptional circumstances.³⁸¹ Osborne argues convincingly that although women took no part in the actual killing, they performed a number of roles in 'sacrifices' and in normal circumstances shared access to the meat with the men.³⁸² Two key inscriptions from Athens are central to the debate here, a sacrificial calendar from the deme of Erchia prescribing 'sacrifices' to Dionysos and Semele the meat of which must be consumed by women on the spot and a third century BC decree of some *orgeones* found in the Agora which specifies shares of meat for free women, daughters and wives (the wife's share is to be given to the husband).³⁸³ Parker adds that men would have had more opportunities to 'sacrifice' and eat meat in actual practice but it is apparent that women were not in principle excluded and their contribution could be significant (see also my sensory analysis of their ritual cry – the *ololugê* – in Chapter VI).³⁸⁴ Thus women had access to sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals which may have presented special opportunities for them and may have been particularly emotional in some contexts.

³⁷⁸ Naiden 2012: 81-2.

³⁷⁹ Jay 1992: xxiii, xxiiin.2.

³⁸⁰ Detienne 1989b: 131.

³⁸¹ Burkert 1985: 254.

³⁸² Osborne 1993: 403.

³⁸³ SEG 21.541.144-51 and 433-40; LSS 20.17-23.

³⁸⁴ Parker 2011: 241.

The evidence thus presents sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals as removed from the quotidian and everyday and presenting special opportunities and emotional experiences involving the gods in certain ways.

‘Destruction sacrifices’?

It is argued here that so-called ‘destruction sacrifices’ were in fact only variations of sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals. The burning of thigh bones (in what many scholars see as conventional practice) was one of many preparation, cooking and consumption rituals associated with sacrificial practices that in some way acted to acknowledge or include the gods. Such burning was specifically an extension of the cooking and consumption of the *splanchna* by the human participants (which it parallels in a compelling way by involving incineration rather than merely cooking). Here I stress a continuum between the burning of thigh bones and the burning of more significant amounts of the animal victim, including whole victims. Such whole victims, were usually piglets (which could be burned easily) and crucially, were often burned as a preliminary to ‘sacrifice followed by dining’. Such rituals were also comparatively rare.

Enagizein, *enagisma* and *enagismos* refer to ‘sacrifices’ at which no dining took place either in hero cult or the cult of the dead. At an *enagizein* ‘sacrifice’ the so-called ‘offering’ was completely consecrated, usually by burning, with nothing left to those who performed the ‘sacrifice’. Although the contents of these ‘sacrifices’ are rarely specified, they usually seem to have comprised animal victims. The contents in the cult of the dead, however, comprised cakes, fruit, prepared food, flowers, wreaths and libations.³⁸⁵

In terms of evidence, none of the above terms is documented in the epigraphic record in connection with heroes before the late 2nd century BC, while in the literary sources dating to before 300 BC *enagizein* and *enagisma* are used only four times in connection with ‘sacrifice’ to heroes.³⁸⁶ The ‘recipients’ are killed Phokaians (Herodotus 1.167), Herakles (Herodotus 2.44), the Atreidai, Tydeidai, Aiakidai and Laertiadai (Ps.-Aristotle, *On Marvellous Things Heard* 840a) and Harmodios and Aristogeiton (Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 58.1). In none of these examples is it specified what was ‘sacrificed’, although in the first instance these practices are presented as extravagant and accompanied athletic

³⁸⁵ Ekroth 2002: 233-4.

³⁸⁶ Ekroth 2002: 82.

games and horse racing. It is thus safe to conclude in the case of the killed Phokaians, at the least, that such rituals accompanied feasting on a significant scale.³⁸⁷

In the sources after 300 BC heroes are 'recipients' of these 'sacrifices' in a total of seventy-two Greek contexts and victims include bulls, oxen, sheep, rams, lambs and goats.³⁸⁸

Eschara have been connected with holocaust 'sacrifice' to heroes but according to Ekroth can rarely be connected with hero cult before the Hellenistic period, which is in accordance also with the lack of evidence for such 'sacrifices'. She argues that in the archaic and classical periods the term was used as a synonym for *bomos* and specifically for the separate upper part of the *bomos* which was often of a different material to protect the stone surface of the rest of the altar.³⁸⁹

For Ekroth, *holokaustos* was a more neutral term meaning 'to burn completely' for the same kind of ritual killing. These types of 'sacrifice' were, in general, rare and often a cheap victim was used, such as a piglet. They are also often performed as a preliminary to *thysia*.³⁹⁰ In addition the victim was likely skinned and cut into pieces before being burned.³⁹¹

The main 'recipients' are Zeus and Herakles but there were a handful of other 'recipients'.³⁹² Xenophon (*Anabasis* 7.8.4-5), for example, records his 'sacrifice' of a holocaust of piglets to Zeus Meilichios while Zeus Epopetes receives the holocaust of a piglet in the Erchia sacrificial calendar from Athens (370-50 B.C.) on the 25th of Metageitnion.³⁹³ Zeus Polieus receives a holocaust of a bought piglet in the sacrificial calendar of the deme of Thorikos.³⁹⁴ This takes place in association with two other 'sacrifices' to the god of a choice sheep and choice piglet (these latter two 'sacrifices' were probably eaten and not completely destroyed).³⁹⁵ In addition, in the calendar of the deme of Erchia, Epops is honoured with two separate holocausts on the same day (both piglets)

³⁸⁷ Following Ekroth 2002: 83.

³⁸⁸ Ekroth 2002: 89 and 128 sums up the evidence.

³⁸⁹ Ekroth 2002: 308.

³⁹⁰ Ekroth 2008a: 89-90.

³⁹¹ Scullion 2009: 167.

³⁹² Ekroth 2002: 217.

³⁹³ LSCG 18.col III.20-5.

³⁹⁴ Lupu 2009: 1.13-5 = SEG XXXIII.147.13-5.

³⁹⁵ Lupu 2009: 133.

while Basile receives the holocaust of a white female lamb.³⁹⁶ Also, in the sacrificial calendar of the *genos* of the Salaminioi (363/2 B.C.), Ioleos receives a holocaust of a sheep which the editor of the text believes to be part of the celebration of the *Herakleia* among a total of nine listed ‘sacrifices’ (the remaining ‘sacrifices’ are not designated as holocausts).³⁹⁷

A holocaust of a larger animal was an even rarer practice. One example is the alleged holocaust to Boubrostis (‘the ravenous hunger’) attested for the Smyrnaeans by Plutarch (*Table-Talk* 694a-b) possibly citing the 4th century BC philosopher, Metrodoros.³⁹⁸ This describes a black bull cut into pieces and burned with the skin significantly left intact. Many of the features of so-called ‘sacrifice followed by dining’ can be identified in association with such rituals, (e.g. altar, prayer, libation – the latter sometimes in a modified form, etc) but there was no divination in *enagizein* and holocaust ‘sacrifices’, as the victim was completely destroyed.³⁹⁹ However, there could be omens taken from sacrificial victims associated with the holocaust rituals that were not completely destroyed.⁴⁰⁰ In addition, following Stengel, Scullion has suggested that the *splanchna* of holocaust victims might have been removed before burning, possibly to be eaten by the participants as was a common feature of much sacrificial practice.⁴⁰¹ This is based on evidence for a holocaust in the Cos sacrificial calendar, where the *splanchna* of a pig is to be removed and then burned, implying a deviation from familiar practice.⁴⁰²

‘Sacrifices’ followed by a banquet, along with holocaust and *enagizein* ‘sacrifices’ have been seen as variations on a theme. They are all essentially food practices, with the accompanying feast among worshipers emphasised, completely suppressed or significantly reduced.⁴⁰³ *Holokausta* are all but absent in the Greek iconographic material. There is one ‘good example’ in the form of an Attic red figure oinochoe of the late 5th century BC (see Figure 5 below). This shows a low altar at the front of a tree on which lies a bovine skull and possibly a second animal skull. A man in an elaborate sacerdotal robe pours a libation

³⁹⁶ Epops - LSCG 18.col IV.20-3 and col V.5-12; Basile - LSCG 18.col II.16-20; see also Dow 1965: 189 and 202.

³⁹⁷ LSS 19.84; Ferguson 1938: 22.

³⁹⁸ Ekroth 2002: 224 on Metrodoros.

³⁹⁹ i.e. the four holocausts in the sacrificial calendar from Erchia are all designated ‘wineless’: LSCG 18.col II.19-20, col III.24-5, col IV.23, col V.14-5.

⁴⁰⁰ Ekroth 2002: 224.

⁴⁰¹ Stengel 1910: 90 n.2; Scullion 2009: 158, n.16.

⁴⁰² RO 62A.32-5 (Appendix 3).

⁴⁰³ Parker 2011: 145.

onto the altar while a youth holds an oinochoe. Herakles stands on the right as the 'recipient' of the holocaust. Van Straten argues that the nature of the 'sacrifice' is clearly indicated, as the head of an animal victim does not 'usually' belong among the gods' part of the so-called 'offering'.⁴⁰⁴ However, I will argue in Chapter VII that there are grounds to dispute the notion of a shared and consistent understanding of what was due to the gods.



Figure 5: Attic red figure oinochoe of the late 5th century BC showing a 'destruction sacrifice'⁴⁰⁵

The practice of 'ninth part sacrifice' (i.e. burning as much as one-ninth of the animal victim) is attested in the *lex sacra* from Selinous from the first half of the fifth century B.C., a sacrificial calendar of c.200 BC from Mykonos and two, or possibly three, Thasian inscriptions.⁴⁰⁶ This may well be a feature of some heroic cults. For Scullion these so-called 'moirocausts' are modifications of chthonian ritual, but this modern distinction between Olympian and Chthonian ritual has justifiably come under fire in recent scholarship (as discussed in Chapter II) and great care is needed.⁴⁰⁷ As already mentioned, Boyer argues convincingly that many people seem to feel no need for a general theoretically consistent explanation of the qualities and powers of supernatural agents. However, what they always have, he argues, are precise descriptions of how these agents can influence their

⁴⁰⁴ Van Straten 1995: 157-8.

⁴⁰⁵ Van Straten 1995: Figure 168 = Kiel, Antikensammlung Kunsthalle B 55.

⁴⁰⁶ Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1992: A 9-12 on Selinous; LSCG 96.23-4 on Mykonos; Bergquist 2005 discusses the Thasian evidence.

⁴⁰⁷ E.g. Scullion 2009: 167; cf. e.g. Ekroth 2002.

lives and what to do about this.⁴⁰⁸ In addition, the view presented here is that the practice of 'ninth part sacrifice' is further evidence for the lack of uniformity of sacrificial practice and for the absence of a consistent and shared understanding of what was due to the gods.

So-called 'destruction sacrifices' are therefore variations of sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals and took various forms. Usually the amount surrendered was not particularly significant and human feasting was also often involved in some way, even if only in relation to other acts of 'sacrifice' carried out at the same time.

Sacrificial consulting rituals

There were many forms of sacrificial divination which are here classed as sacrificial consulting rituals. Like other forms of divination, they involved consulting the gods in one way or another. It is argued here that to be properly understood, such rituals need to be understood as an extension of ordinary human consultation and enquiry in the mundane world. Burkert argues that 'to observe signs and to react to them is an absolutely normal behaviour, in fact a strategy of life in general'. He adds: 'The question is, and always has been, how to judge the relevance and meaning of particular signs, how to distinguish regular sequences from pure coincidence, how to sort out what is meaningful within the vague and poorly delimited sphere of concomitant perceptions'.⁴⁰⁹ Reading entrails was often performed by a professional seer (*mantis*) although anyone could do it that had the experience and knowledge (e.g. Aegisthus in Euripides, *Electra* 825-30) and Xenophon, for example, clearly considered understanding omens and sacrificial signs an important skill of any cavalry commander (*On the Cavalry Commander* 9.8-9).⁴¹⁰

Delphi was the best known of many oracles, but extispicy was a ubiquitous form of small-scale divinatory practice. Often only the interpretation derived from the absence of the liver's *lobos* (caput) is mentioned as important in our sources and this was a presage of disaster (e.g. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.15, 4.7.7, etc., cf. Euripides, *Electra* 827-8, which makes a vague reference to other abnormalities or defects).⁴¹¹ In common with the near Eastern evidence, the main animals whose entrails and livers were examined were oxen,

⁴⁰⁸ Boyer 2001: 159.

⁴⁰⁹ Burkert 2005: 31-2.

⁴¹⁰ Collins 2008: 320-1.

⁴¹¹ Collins 2008: 319-20; Pritchett III 1979: 75.

sheep and goats.⁴¹² The absence of evidence for divination using pigs' livers again supports the contention that pigs were different from other common victims.

Collins argues that Greek extispicy depended on a skilful integration of meaning from a set of more or less fixed 'objective' points of reference (head or lobe of liver) and those that were more fluid and contingent (e.g. colouration and texture). As already mentioned, if the liver's head or lobe was missing, this was automatically a bad sign, but short of this there were likely many gradations.⁴¹³ The most important context was while on military campaign and it is clear that consultations could be repeated.⁴¹⁴ Xenophon (*Anabasis* 6.4.15-6 and 19) could be read to suggest that this was limited to three times a day, but this may well not have been standard practice.⁴¹⁵ For Parker the repeated nature of such consultations was the key element.⁴¹⁶ However, his notion of 'working the system' seems to be an inaccurate reflection of the way such rituals were used and understood and in Chapters VI and VII, I approach this from experiential perspectives, sensory and cognitive ritual theory-based respectively.

In terms of depictions of such rituals, in an Attic red figure amphora by the Kleophrades Painter (500/475 BC) a boy presents a liver for inspection to a warrior who also holds up something (gall bladder?) in his right hand (see Figure 6 below). On the left there is a Scythian archer and on the right a woman holding a *phiale*.⁴¹⁷ Van Straten suggests that scenes such as this show a warrior consulting the entrails before going on a campaign. In the case of eighteen vase paintings a gesticulating old man is present who may, in most cases, be an experienced *mantis* relaying the meaning of the signs.⁴¹⁸ The importance of both touch and vision is clear. In such examples, the hierarchy involved in terms of who (warrior or *mantis*) 'reads' the entrails, and who assists, is also apparent.

⁴¹² Collins 2008: 320.

⁴¹³ Collins 2008: 343.

⁴¹⁴ Collins 2008: 320.

⁴¹⁵ Collins 2008: 336.

⁴¹⁶ Parker 2009: 306-7.

⁴¹⁷ Van Straten 1995: 156-7.

⁴¹⁸ Van Straten 1995: 157. E.g. Copenhagen NM 3241 shows an old man inspecting the entrails himself.



Figure 6: Attic red figure amphora (500/475 BC) showing a boy presenting a liver for inspection to a warrior⁴¹⁹

As suggested earlier, the tail (*osphus*) also had a divinatory function and a whole series of vase paintings is defined by the common element of a thin elongated object on the altar curling upwards in the fire and mostly associated with the roasting of the *splanchna*.⁴²⁰ One example discussed earlier (see Figure 4 above) was painted perhaps ten or twenty years before Aristophanes, *Peace* which was produced at the City Dionysia in 421 BC.⁴²¹ This popular and pleasing image would have indicated to the ancient Athenian a well received and successful 'sacrifice'.⁴²² Significance may also have been read into the particular curve that appeared.⁴²³ Ekroth notes that while pigs are scarce in the altar deposits, pig vertebrae and *sacra* are almost completely absent.⁴²⁴

In Sophocles' *Antigone* (1005-22), Teiresias graphically describes a failed 'sacrifice' in which, among other unpropitious omens, the bile from a gall bladder is scattered in the air. This incident clearly demonstrates divine displeasure. Jameson interpreted a red figure

⁴¹⁹ Van Straten 1995: Figure 165 = Würzburg, Martin von Wagner-Museum 507.

⁴²⁰ Van Straten 1995: 133-4 sums up the evidence from more than 30 examples.

⁴²¹ Van Straten 1995: 134.

⁴²² Van Straten 1988: 60.

⁴²³ Jameson 1986: 61.

⁴²⁴ Ekroth 2009: 143.

kalyx crater by the Kleophon Painter in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad as depicting this scene.⁴²⁵ He had used modern experimentation to show that an ox's gall bladder, when squeezed, can be directed in a thin stream and when directed on a burning fire appears purplish and greenish.⁴²⁶ Clearly Sophocles is describing an inauspicious result.

Divination from the flow of blood of an animal victim is also discussed below.

Such consulting rituals could either be primary or secondary in importance depending on the 'purpose' of the 'sacrifice' and, possibly, depending on the interests of the person describing it. Thucydides rarely mentions pre-battle 'sacrifice' and only once the divinatory aspects of it (4.92.7), while Xenophon (e.g. *Hellenica* 4.2.18 and *Anabasis* 1.8.15) does refer repeatedly to divination in these contexts (see also my discussion of battle-line 'sacrifice' below). They also took various forms and were treated extremely seriously, particularly in dangerous or uncertain situations.

Sacrificial killing rituals

'Sacrifice' before battle, or battle-line *sphagia* as it is commonly known, is here seen as a killing ritual and as an extension of the act of killing that it directly precedes. In other words, such 'sacrifice' makes intuitive sense because attention is focused on the impending warfare and killing. 'Sacrifice' before battle was, in fact, the ultimate stage of an accumulation of 'sacrifices', involving divination in one form or another in many cases (e.g. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 13.2-3). Many of these 'sacrifices' may well have varied a great deal themselves, while I will show that battle-line rites were also far from fixed and stable in form. Battle-line 'sacrifice', as noted, directly preceded conflict. For the Spartans, we are told by Xenophon that the 'sacrifice' before battle took place when the enemy was close enough to be seen (*Constitution of the Spartans* 138) but in another instance when the enemy was a stade away (*Hellenica* 4.2.20). In one case the 'sacrifice' was performed fifteen stades away but the enemy was cavalry (*Anabasis* 6.5.8).⁴²⁷

The evidence from our literary sources can be supplemented with visual evidence. The tondo of an Attic red figure kylix of the first quarter of the 5th century BC (see Figure 7

⁴²⁵ Jameson 1986; inventory number B-1658.

⁴²⁶ Jameson 1986: 61.

⁴²⁷ As noted by Dillon 2008: 243.

below) shows a warrior complete with helmet and armour bestriding a ram. He draws the animal's head back with one hand, while with the other his sword pierces the ram's throat. The flow of blood is explicitly indicated by added red and is clearly of importance to the painter.⁴²⁸ Here the blood is directed at the ground rather than, as previously discussed, towards an altar, either directly or via a special receptacle. In these 'sacrifices' there was no divination from entrails and no wreaths or ribbons for the victim. There was no altar and it is often assumed that the animals were not skinned or dismembered with parts set aside for the gods or divided among the worshipers. Dillon also argues that the animal was not burned, nor was it eaten but, presumably, left on the battlefield.⁴²⁹ There is, however, no definitive evidence to support the contention that these victims were never eaten and, in some cases, the complete abandonment of a valuable and rich source of meat seems unlikely (see my discussion below of *Anabasis* 6.5.25-7). Henrichs overstates the scale of such 'sacrifices' presenting the image of a battlefield strewn with victims.⁴³⁰ In fact, the evidence suggests that each army 'sacrificed' normally only one victim.⁴³¹ For Sparta the victim was a goat (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.2.20), but iconographic evidence (see below) attests to the use of rams, while in desperate situations even a bullock yoked to a wagon could be used (*Anabasis* 6.5.25-7).



Figure 7: Attic red figure kylix of the first quarter of the 5th century BC showing a warrior perform *sphagia*⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Van Straten 1995: 106.

⁴²⁹ Dillon 2008: 241, Pritchett III 1979: 87.

⁴³⁰ Henrichs 1980: 215-6.

⁴³¹ This point is made by Dillon 2008: 242.

⁴³² Van Straten 1995: Figure 112 = Cleveland, Museum of Art 26.242.

The Spartans performed this form of ‘sacrifice’ in association with Artemis Agrotera (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.2.20, *Constitution of the Spartans* 13.8) but it is not clear that this was the case for Athens.⁴³³ Pritchett believes that *sphagia* were directed at ‘infernal deities’ but Jameson notes that the ‘recipients’ of these practices are rarely mentioned in our sources nor are addressees clear.⁴³⁴ Crucially, for him the important element is the action and this is understood in relation to the human activity associated with it – immanent loss of life and bloody conflict. As noted, Boyer argues that gods are ‘parasitic’ or ‘not indispensable to ritual’ and that the emphasis is on human activity and experience.⁴³⁵ However, although I also stress experiential factors in this thesis the gods remain fundamentally important to the perspective I present. The emphasis does appear to be centred on action and not on ‘recipient’, unlike ‘special patient’ rituals, but I will show that the involvement and intervention of the gods is critical to understanding the ancient experience of these rituals.

Pritchett plays down the divinatory aspect of these rituals, but Jameson concludes that propitiation and divination were important in battle-line *sphagia* as in ‘normal sacrifice followed by dining’.⁴³⁶ He argues that battle-line *sphagia* are not distinctive but that everything gives way to the stark act of killing, ‘not softened or veiled by the forms of normal sacrifice in a communal or familial environment’.⁴³⁷ Divination was most likely taken by the flow of blood and Herodotus’ description of the Spartan *sphagia* at the Battle of Plataea (9.61.2-3) makes clear that these rituals could be unpropitious and were not a mere formality.⁴³⁸ However, in a contrasting passage in *Anabasis* (6.4.9-27) the crisis ends following Xenophon seemingly ‘improvising’ with a quick *sphagia* performed before mounting an immediate rescue operation.⁴³⁹ This passage not only rules out any divinatory aspect to this particular killing ritual (the mercenaries had been held up for three days by unfavourable omens), but also at the same time points to the variability of sacrificial practices generally. The victim in this case – a bullock yoked to a wagon – was such a costly animal and so rich in meat that it is unlikely it would have been discarded and not eaten at some later point by the retreating mercenaries.

⁴³³ Parker 2009: 309 contrary to Dillon 2008: 251.

⁴³⁴ Pritchett III 1979: 87-8; Jameson 1991: 221.

⁴³⁵ Boyer 2001: 231, 293-302.

⁴³⁶ Pritchett I 1979: 109-13 which is adjusted slightly in III 1979: 87.

⁴³⁷ Jameson 1991: 219-21.

⁴³⁸ Dillon 2008: 245.

⁴³⁹ Parker 2004: 135 who terms it as an ‘improvised sacrifice’.

Killing rituals were a necessary part of most forms of 'sacrifice' and were not in themselves high intensity or distinctive. It was often the situation that was high intensity and not necessarily the rituals.

'Sacrifice' to the sea, rivers and the wind can also be classed as killing rituals operating in a similar way. The focus again seems to be on action, not 'recipient', while the contexts are often associated with danger, fear and uncertainty. In Chapter VII, however, I will show that this is only one side of the story and that the gods remain central to these practices but in a different way to 'special patient' rituals. Robertson maintains that 'sacrifices' to the sea were originally based on principles of sympathetic magic (the application of this term is not substantiated in the ancient record) but that the old custom came to be increasingly assimilated to the later 'normative modes of sacrifice' such as *sphagia*.⁴⁴⁰ He distinguishes between horses and bulls apparently 'offered' during festivals or at the start of long journeys (cf. Athenaeus 6.79, Pausanias 8.7.2; horses and bulls are also said to be 'offered' to the mighty river Scamander in *Iliad* 21.131, while horses are probably 'offered' by the royal family of Macedon to a river in Herodotus 3.138.1-2, etc.) and lesser victims taken on board merchant vessels and 'sacrificed' as need arose (such as if a storm emerged).⁴⁴¹ A speech of Antiphon (*On the Murder of Herodes* 29) records blood on the deck of such a ship that was from animals being 'sacrificed'. These animals were presumably 'sacrificed' whenever a sufficient level of danger was felt. These victims were usually male lambs but occasionally full grown sheep were 'sacrificed'.

While the bulls and horses were usually 'sacrificed' to Poseidon the lambs and sheep could be slaughtered, in the literary sources, for example, to the eponymous spirit of Lake Tritonis 'i.e. to the water itself' (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.1597-9) or to the Dioscouri (*Homeric Hymn* 33.9-10) who were known to appear as St Elmo's Fire (*Homeric Hymn* 33.16).⁴⁴² These were on one level powerful actions carried out in high intensity liminal situations. In Euripides, *Helen* a bull is 'sacrificed' to Poseidon at sea. This takes place as part of a ruse to enable the escape of Helen and Menelaus from Egypt. When Menelaus reveals he is alive and well, instead of an alleged funeral practice, this ritual apparently becomes a 'sacrifice' for a successful voyage home. He slits the animal's throat, as he does so uttering a prayer and the spurting of the blood is explicitly taken as a good

⁴⁴⁰ Robertson 2005: 85; see the scholarly reaction in Robertson 2005: 96-8.

⁴⁴¹ Robertson 2005: 91.

⁴⁴² Robertson 2005: 91-2.

omen (1583-97). We are not told what was done with the carcass, this information being superfluous to the playwright. There was no altar or other paraphernalia.

In terms of river crossing rites, there is only a single instance of a deity being named (Herodotus 6.76) but river gods were not 'shadowy figures' as Jameson points out.⁴⁴³ As with 'sacrifices' to the sea, there seems to be a distinctive mode of recognition focused on blood-letting. Jameson argues that '*sphagia* at rivers or the sea focused on the killing and the flowing of blood, liquid into liquid'. These rituals, he argues, were a more concentrated and limited version of 'normal sacrifice'.⁴⁴⁴ He adds that there was nothing about the nature of river deities in particular that prevented 'normal sacrifice'. Xenophon (*Anabasis* 4.3.17-9) describes the crossing of a river by the 10,000 while making their perilous retreat. Here the mercenaries put wreaths on their heads while the *manteis* slaughtered the victims with the blood flowing into the river. We are told that the *sphagia* were *kala* (i.e. propitious) and the women *sunololuzon*. As van Straten notes, this sacrificial cry takes place not at the moment the animals were killed, but when the omens proved favourable.⁴⁴⁵ This again suggests the importance of the divinatory aspect of some forms of killing rituals. In the passage under discussion attention had by this time shifted away from the 'sacrifice' to the impending conflict with the mercenaries raising the paeon at the same time as the women uttered their cry.

Again, it must be stressed that there is no reason to doubt that many of the animal victims of such killing rites were eaten at some point. It is often merely that the emphasis in our sources is on the killing. As I have shown, these rituals were not distinctive although they could often take place in extreme or desperate situations in contrast to more festive ones. They also lacked much of the elaboration and ritual paraphernalia of such celebratory (or primarily alimentary) contexts. In addition, they varied in terms of 'purpose' although being similar in form.

'Human sacrifice'

In a key study Hughes reassessed the literary and archaeological evidence for 'human sacrifice' in ancient Greece and expressed scepticism in the majority of cases, while also

⁴⁴³ Jameson 1991: 203.

⁴⁴⁴ Jameson 1991: 202-4.

⁴⁴⁵ Van Straten 2005: 20.

noting that myths of 'human sacrifice' and cannibalism 'served to answer the needs of the culture which invented them'.⁴⁴⁶ Bonnechere points to the symbolic value of stories of 'human sacrifice' and argues that they reflected a need for a mythical and ritual dramatisation of key events in the collective and individual life-stages of the ancient Greeks. 'Human sacrifice' was also conceptually understood as the absolute reverse of 'animal sacrifice' as it reverses the natural order of things.⁴⁴⁷ Bremmer notes that excavation at the altar of Zeus Lykaeos did not record a single human bone, although he argues that excavations of a century ago were not as systematic as today. He maintains that 'we must keep open the possibility of a real human sacrifice' although, again, he acknowledges the limitations of the sources.⁴⁴⁸ Myths of 'human sacrifice' also began to take on a life of their own in tragedy and it is largely here that part of their significance is made clear as a product of the social imagination confronting issues of killing and bloodshed. They are related to sacrificial killing rites but only in the sense of their absolute 'perversion', as will be made clear.

In a seminal study, Burkert argued that tragedy developed from an original goat 'sacrifice', linking tragedy fundamentally to 'animal sacrifice' in origin.⁴⁴⁹ Modern scholars, however, are justifiably more interested in how ritual is embedded and dramatised in the surviving tragedies themselves rather than the hypothetical ritual antecedents of Greek tragedy.⁴⁵⁰ Burkert found substantial material for his theory of 'sacrifice' in tragedy, along with his notion of intra-specific human aggression refocused on an animal victim. He argues that 'human sacrifice is a possibility which as a horrible threat stands behind every sacrifice' and maintains that in such practices 'sacrificer and victim are so correlated as to be nearly identical'.⁴⁵¹ This notion of substitution is a common theme in anthropology but Parker notes that oaths are one of the few forms of Greek ritual killing in which there may occur a symbolic identification between animal and human.⁴⁵²

Henrichs points out that in tragedy the tragedians undermine, subvert and manipulate the ritual conventions of 'animal sacrifice' to the point where, in their plays, 'sacrifices' become seriously flawed, fail or human victims are substituted for animal ones. Crucially he argues

⁴⁴⁶ Hughes 1991: 189.

⁴⁴⁷ Bonnechere 1994: 311-8; see also e.g. Bonnechere 2013.

⁴⁴⁸ Bremmer 2007b: 78.

⁴⁴⁹ Burkert 1966.

⁴⁵⁰ Henrichs 2012: 181.

⁴⁵¹ Burkert 1966: 111-2.

⁴⁵² E.g. Beattie 1980: 30; Parker 2011: 157.

that in tragedy 'the abnormal sacrifice is the ritual and dramatic norm' and sees in 'human sacrifice' the definition of a 'perverted sacrifice'.⁴⁵³ Commenting on his article, Ando argues that the illicit killing of humans was a source of cultural anxiety that demanded a solution in the religious sphere, hence the popularity of the theme of 'human sacrifice' in tragedy.⁴⁵⁴ Faraone and Naiden point out that 'sacrifice' adheres to norms that need questioning, not just affirming and that 'sacrifice' was a 'cultural artefact, not just a social practice'.⁴⁵⁵

As regards terminology, *thuein* and *sphazein* are used, the latter 'marked' term relating to the cutting of the animal's throat and evoking connotations of violence and bloodshed exploited by all three tragedians.⁴⁵⁶ In these cases, it is apparent that the terms reflected the needs of the playwright, often revealing the tensions and conflicts faced by the characters that might, or might not, have reason to play down the violent nature of the act.⁴⁵⁷ Importantly, the comic view of 'sacrifice', discussed in Chapter VII, is very different, emphasising life and not violence. Crucially, Henrichs notes that human victims in Greek religion are primarily an ideal construct of the imagination. They are reserved as a last resort in times of national crises, particularly during war and victims were either children or foreigners, i.e. social groups that were dispensable and unprotected by law.⁴⁵⁸ In tragedy the 'recipient' can be a god (e.g. Artemis in *Agamemnon*, Ares in *Phoenician Women*, Persephone in *Children of Herakles*), or a hero (Achilles in *Hecuba/Women of Troy*). The victims are usually young and female (e.g. Iphigenia, Polyxena, Macaria) but sometimes young and male (e.g. Menoeceus) and always virgins. An altar is occasionally present (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 150, 232; Sophocles, *Electra* 576; Euripides, *Hecuba* 223 and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1555).

The evidence therefore demonstrates that stories of 'human sacrifice' tell us more about the ancient imagination than actual behaviour. However, due to the increasing blurring of reality and fantasy in tragedy these descriptions can be useful as indications of correct and current practice involving 'animal sacrifice' as well as giving certain kinds of insights into

⁴⁵³ Henrichs 2012: 184.

⁴⁵⁴ Ando 2012: 196.

⁴⁵⁵ Faraone and Naiden 2012: 10.

⁴⁵⁶ Henrichs 2012: 186.

⁴⁵⁷ Following Bremmer 2005: 61 commenting on *Hecuba* 223.

⁴⁵⁸ Henrichs 1980: 233.

the cultural, conceptual and creative debates sacrificial behaviour generated in some mediums and in some contexts.

Ritual killing of animals in oath-rituals

Oath-taking rituals can include the ritual killing of animals and often contain elements that have been taken by scholars as sacrificial. The terms *horkia temno* ('cutting an oath'), *sphagia* and *tomia* are frequently attested (see below and Chapter II). Kitts examines 'Homeric oath-sacrificing' narratives as ritual performances which enable the metaphorical transformations of oath-making witnesses to holy defenders of oaths, of perjurers to sacrificial victims and of casualties of war to casualties of 'sacrifice'.⁴⁵⁹ Faraone explains sacrificial elements in Greek oaths in terms of sympathetic magic while Berti concludes that Greek oath-ritual was polycentric involving many elements which could all be present, or only in part, depending on the differing contexts and on the differing variants of oath-rituals being celebrated.⁴⁶⁰ Berti argues that recurring elements include a self-curse, a dramatisation of that curse and touching.⁴⁶¹

The self-curse is vividly represented in the main oath-ritual scene in the *Iliad* (3.298-301):

'Zeus, most glorious, most great, and ye other immortal gods, which host soever of the twain shall be first to work harm in defiance of the oaths, may their brains be thus poured forth upon the ground even as this wine, theirs and their children's; and may their wives be made slaves to others'.⁴⁶²

The dramatisation element implies a 'sacrifice or sacrifice-like procedure' – animals could be slaughtered but, alternatively, blood or wine libated or wax melted.⁴⁶³ An Athenian treaty dated c.453 BC on Erythrai records an oath that is to be sworn as the animal victims' burn.⁴⁶⁴ The emphasis here was not on what was 'sacrificed' but rather how. In other words, there might or might not be killing rituals but if there were, they differed

⁴⁵⁹ Kitts 2003: 18.

⁴⁶⁰ Faraone 1993: 61; Berti 2006: 208.

⁴⁶¹ Berti 2006: 208-9.

⁴⁶² 'Ζεῦ κύδιστε μέγιστε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι/ὀππότεροι πρότεροι ὑπὲρ ὄρκια πημήνεια/ ὦδέ σφ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέει ὡς ὅδε οἶνος/αὐτῶν καὶ τεκέων, ἄλοχοι δ' ἄλλοισι δαμεῖν'. Translation by A.T. Murray.

⁴⁶³ Berti 2006: 208. Oaths are sworn over burning wax effigies in SEG IX.3.44-52.

⁴⁶⁴ IG I³ 14A.18, B.18 and Berti 2006: 195.

significantly from those discussed above, where the emphasis was usually on the blood, which was sometimes considered auspicious. The dramatisation was essentially a performance of the spoken self-curse. It should be noted, however, that according to Bickerman, the dramatised self-curse was an optional feature also.⁴⁶⁵ It does, however, appear prominently in the evidence when enough information is preserved or available. The final element is touching.⁴⁶⁶ Prosecutors in the Areopagus, for example, take their oaths while touching the *tomia* (Demosthenes 23.67-8) while the Seven in Aeschylus (*Seven Against Thebes* 43-53) slaughter a bull on a shield and make their oath while touching the blood. For Berti touching is an accessory element which makes the ritual stronger.⁴⁶⁷

These rituals are again powerful actions on one level. The choice of animal victim, if indeed an animal victim was preferred, appears secondary. In the afore-mentioned 'Homeric oath-ritual' the victims were three lambs (3.103-4). This scene also includes many features that have been identified as occurring in sacrificial contexts. The oath-takers purify themselves with water (3.270). There is also the shearing of a tuft of a victim's hair (3.271-4), although here used for a different 'purpose' than as a so-called 'preliminary offering' during an 'animal sacrifice' (see the next chapter for discussion of these rituals).⁴⁶⁸ A libation also accompanies the ritual killing as already noted and is central to the dramatised self-curse. In my previous analysis, these actions were often associated with consumption and with preparation, cooking and eating rituals. Here, however, they are put to a very different use. At the same time, there is no mention of altars, permanent cult structures or priests participating in the 'sacrifice'. Although part of the reason may perhaps be the nature of the particular situation, it might be argued that such elements were not thought indispensable. Oaths could, however, take place in the vicinity of a sacred place, sanctuary or altar.⁴⁶⁹

In the Homeric passage, the gods were invoked as witnesses. In other words, they were not the 'recipients' of any 'sacrifice' made. The witnesses are Zeus, Helios and Ge (103-7). Calling upon a triad of gods was, in fact, common in formal oaths with ordinarily gods

⁴⁶⁵ Bickerman 2007: 18.

⁴⁶⁶ Berti 2006: 208.

⁴⁶⁷ Berti 2006: 208.

⁴⁶⁸ Berti 2006: 187.

⁴⁶⁹ Berti 2006: 207. Altars: e.g. SEG X.24.17; temples: e.g. IG I³ 118.26-7; Acropolis: e.g. IG I³ 37.C35-41 with Fornara no. 99C.

representing the sky, earth and sea but virtually any deity could be invoked as a witness.⁴⁷⁰ Faraone insists that some important oaths (e.g. the Cyrenean foundation oath) employ formulae that make no mention of the gods.⁴⁷¹ Again, it is the action that appears to be important but I will demonstrate that the participation of the gods is nonetheless essential. Such rituals were also often associated with the ‘thought’ of profound social effects binding entire communities (e.g. foundation oaths, peace treaties, etc. alluded to above). The victims of oaths were not necessarily not eaten – our only evidence for this is late and unclear (Pausanias 5.24.11).

Oath-rituals then sometimes included the ritual killing of animals, or on other occasions, closely alluded to sacrificial-type activity. They also included familiar sacrificial elements but while carrying different implications. The relationship of the gods to these rituals was also very different while often the situations involved were highly emotional and significant.

Ritual killing of an animal in purifications

The ritual killing of an animal could sometimes function as a purification and, again, there are overlaps with practices described as sacrificial. Other techniques included washing or sprinkling, fumigation (usually using sulphur) and ‘rubbing off’ with mud or bran.⁴⁷² In Athens, lexicographical sources record special officials known as *peristiarchoi* who at the start of every meeting of the assembly carried around a purificatory piglet. The theatre, public buildings, ‘the city’ and meeting places could be purified in the same way (Suda s.v. *peristiarchoi*; Harpocration s.v. *katharsion*; scholia to Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 44). Temples too could sometimes be cleansed (see below). The remains of at least some of these purifications were disposed of at crossroads (Demosthenes 54.39). In many cases, however, it is not clear how such remains were disposed of. Parker argues that purifications mark off sacred places from profane, create special occasions, unite individuals and groups and organise and articulate the perception of time.⁴⁷³ The unifying factor is perhaps most apparent in the purifying of an army attested by Xenophon

⁴⁷⁰ Mikalson 2003: 1057. E.g. IG I³ 37.51 = Fornara 99 (Zeus, Apollo and Demeter), women taking oath by Artemis IC IV 72.col.III.5-9, etc.

⁴⁷¹ Faraone 1993: 77; e.g. SEG IX.3.25-41 (Cyrenean foundation oath), SEG XXI 519 = RO 88.21-51 (‘oath of Plataea’), etc.

⁴⁷² Parker 2003b: 1280.

⁴⁷³ Parker 1983: 23.

(*Anabasis* 5.7.13-35), for example. At a later period, the Macedonian army each spring marched between the two halves of a 'sacrificed' dog (Livy 40.6) and it has been argued that Xenophon referred to a similar ritual.⁴⁷⁴ In the example from Xenophon, the purification took place in conjunction with disciplinary measures and helped restore loyalty and order.

Although the exact procedure is not clear, purification of individuals by the actual sprinkling of the victim's blood was not limited to the purification of murderers (this is discussed in Chapter VII). Parker also argues that 'the original source of power is the contact with blood, a repugnant polluting substance in a controlled ritual context that renders the threat tolerable'.⁴⁷⁵ Our best sources for the purification of murderers are Aeschylus, *Eumenides* and Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*. In *Argonautica*, Zeus of Purification is invoked by Circe (685-717) but is clearly not the 'recipient' of any 'sacrifice' and there is no mention of any altar. In *Eumenides* (278-81) Apollo carries out the purificatory slaying of the animal but out of obligation rather than part of his supernatural portfolio. Parker argues that these sources present evidence of a 'rite of passage' with the re-acceptance of the killer into social and religious life (including, presumably, the ability to once again take part in, and perform 'sacrifice').⁴⁷⁶

Clinton suggests a three part typology in contrast to Parker.⁴⁷⁷ Circling an area with a slaughtered animal was used for purifying groups of people whether political assemblies or the entire population of a city or territory. Immolation of victims was employed for polluted places. Individuals, on the other hand, were purified of serious pollutions such as blood-guilt by having the blood of piglets poured on them, usually their hands (e.g. *Argonautica* 4.710-1). For him, the operative notion in each case was that the purification was absorbed either by the victim, which was then disposed of, or by the victim's blood.

The most common victim was a piglet but other animals could also be used.⁴⁷⁸ In the case of the sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandemos at Athens a dove was used to purify the sanctuary, the goddess's preferred sacrificial victim.⁴⁷⁹ Parker notes that here we see an overlap, not

⁴⁷⁴ Parker 1983: 22.

⁴⁷⁵ Parker 1983: 372-3.

⁴⁷⁶ Parker 1983: 373-4.

⁴⁷⁷ Clinton 2005: 173-4.

⁴⁷⁸ Clinton 2005: 167.

⁴⁷⁹ LSCG 39.23-4.

merely of language, but of practice.⁴⁸⁰ These rituals, however, were not addressed to a specific deity and the familiar components and accompaniments of many forms of sacrificial practice were not present. Ekroth places regular purifications of the assembly, for example, in a mid-intensity 'modified ritual' category. Other purifications, however, and particularly those for individuals, are said to be high intensity rites.⁴⁸¹

These killing rituals are again different in character to other killing rites discussed in this thesis. Altars were not used for the immolations and did not feature in the literary accounts of purifications of murderers as might be expected.⁴⁸² It is not known whether there were any clear social conventions prohibiting, or allowing, the consumption of the animal victims. Despite the apparent ubiquity of these rituals, there is not a single representation of a contemporary real purification involving the ritual killing of a pig. In fact, only mythical purifications are occasionally depicted on south Italian vases of the 4th century BC. It could be argued that scenes of such ritual killings (along with all others where dining was absent) gave less scope to the painter, but there is also the possibility that such paintings were made in small numbers and have not survived.⁴⁸³

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have raised serious doubts about the applicability of a fixed, stable and uniform category of 'sacrifice'. There may well have been no such thing as a 'typical' form of 'sacrifice' while the term 'sacrifice' itself is highly inappropriate if not used with care. The evidence in question must be analysed on its own terms and not with regard to an alleged universal category. Rather than abandon the category of 'sacrifice' completely, however, as some scholars have proposed, I feel the best way forward is to focus on what has been learned and to apply this to the ancient data.⁴⁸⁴

I have proposed that a loosely related range of practices might together, in various forms ranging from simple to complex, be termed sacrificial. These rituals occur in other contexts, both involving the slaughter of animal victims and seemingly outside of such areas of life. They are extremely flexible and adaptable. I have broken some of these down and

⁴⁸⁰ Parker 2011: 155.

⁴⁸¹ Ekroth 2002: 329.

⁴⁸² Following Clinton 2005: 171.

⁴⁸³ Van Straten 1995: 4-5. See e.g. Paris Louvre K 710, Paestum 4794, Syracuse 47038, etc.

⁴⁸⁴ Frankfurter 2011: 87 argues that the category should be abandoned.

provisionally adopted as an initial step the categories of sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals, killing rituals and consulting rituals. Crucially, these are all to be understood as extensions of ordinary human behaviour and experience.

As I have suggested, there is a close link between consumption and sacrificial practice. However, similar rituals can be found in a range of ritual killings of animals that I have discussed. There is an overlap in terminology, ritual form and practice but in many instances, however, they performed different functions and bore different implications. I argue that such rituals are to be distinguished by the human activities and experiences they are associated with which are markedly different in character than those I have dubbed sacrificial. In this respect, the fact that pigs, for example, were ritually killed in different ways to other commonly eaten victims is significant in many ways but still belongs in the category of preparation, cooking and eating rituals. However, when a pig is killed in a purification ceremony this carries markedly different associations, although it is possible that consumption might sometimes take place later on, but as a secondary element. The model used for understanding the similarities in my study is that of 'family resemblances' discussed previously. That there are such similarities between diverse rituals discussed in this chapter further undermines any unproblematic and simplistic model of 'sacrifice'.

There is also the question of to what extent, or in what ways, the gods, or heroes, are essential to some forms of the ritual killing of animals and variants of sacrificial practice in general. The importance of action over 'recipient' is often emphasised but this is only one aspect of this, however, as will be made clear. I will demonstrate that the activity of the gods is fundamental to all these rituals although this involvement is experienced and understood in diverse ways.

Chapter V

Deconstructing 'sacrifice' II: Bloodless practices

I focus here specifically on libations, sacrificial cakes, incense and some first-fruit rituals, but other types of so-called 'offering' will also be included to reinforce my argument. I argue here that 'bloodless sacrifice' belongs on a continuum with other forms of 'sacrifice' discussed previously. These forms of practice are likewise extensions of ordinary human behaviour and experience. While cultural producers often characterise the circumstances of these practices in terms that clearly trigger our social mind systems (specifically our social exchange system) and deep piety may well often be involved, there is (at least from an etic perspective) surprisingly only a very vague sense in which the gods benefit from them. These practices also have, in many cases, strong links to consumption (or originally or conceptually did so) and sensory experience.

Recent scholarship on bloodless practices

Scholarship has long stressed the centrality of 'animal sacrifice' (see Chapter II) in the religious world of ancient Greece, but there has been a movement growing in impetus emphasising the importance of other forms of interaction with the divine. As noted previously, Stowers has developed a model describing four modes of ancient Mediterranean religion, the first being the religion of everyday social exchange in which the main focus was on both plant and animal 'offerings'.⁴⁸⁵ Jim in her analysis of the vocabulary of 'animal sacrifice', so-called 'offerings' of food and drink and dedications, argues that in most cases the form of 'offering' had no direct correlation with the 'purpose' for which it was made and, thus, treats them together without differentiation.⁴⁸⁶

Naiden has recently argued that when 'vegetal offerings came before the gods nothing changed save for the lack of bloodshed and entrails'.⁴⁸⁷ He also discusses inherent biases in the source material: In Homer too few women and slaves 'sacrifice', whereas inscriptions, because they are mostly municipal, report 'sacrifices by a rich collective worshiper, the *polis*, rather than sacrifices by poor individuals'. He concludes that so-called vegetal

⁴⁸⁵ Stowers 2011.

⁴⁸⁶ Jim 2012: 312.

⁴⁸⁷ Naiden 2013: 70.

‘offerings’ may, in fact, have been more frequent if the evidence was more representative of the Greek world as a whole.⁴⁸⁸

Methodology

I will now discuss the various types of practice in turn followed by an analysis of recent relevant scholarship. In our sources, overlapping modes of interaction with the gods are stressed such as propitiation, honouring, expiation, purification, invocation as witnesses or helpers and a kind of preliminary attention grabbing (so-called preliminary ‘offerings’), as well as perhaps a divinatory aspect (in the sense of the gods either being understood as rejecting or accepting these interactions). On one level, the overlap with the forms of ritual killings of animals is clear where these modes can likewise be seen to be in effect. These overlaps thus locate previously discussed sacrificial practices, involving the slaughter of an animal, within a complex continuum of behaviour where they may, nonetheless, have been endowed with some form of primacy and privilege, at least in some contexts. This, however, is only one side of the story.

However, at least from an etic perspective, the ways in which the gods are actually understood to benefit from these bloodless practices is inconsistent and often vague and this is a pattern that can also be shown to be operating in ‘animal sacrifice’. In the previous chapter, for example, it was noted that in many practices involving the ritual killing of animals, the action of killing seems to be emphasised rather than any notion of addressee. Although in many contexts this may seem perplexing and contradictory, it will be explained in Chapter VII in terms of the diverse ways the gods could be interpreted and experienced as being involved in such rituals.

In this chapter, I focus mainly on literary evidence from classical Athens but many of my findings have broader relevance for ancient Greece as a whole where the same kind of concerns and expectations can be seen to be in effect.

⁴⁸⁸ Naiden 2013: 76-81.

Libation

My discussion begins with libation which took a number of forms and could be performed in a diverse range of situations. Four key technical terms characterise these rituals, with their use depending on their composition and religious context – *loibai*, *choai*, *spondai* and *nephalia*.⁴⁸⁹ *Loibē* is a poetic word virtually unused in inscriptions, where it is replaced by *spondē*. *Spondai* and *choai* are the two most frequent forms of libation. *Spondai* were often poured out in short drops with the remainder consumed entirely, whereas *choai* were poured out entirely, corresponding with holocaust ‘sacrifices’.⁴⁹⁰

Before looking at the modes of interaction at work in relation with the divine, it is necessary to place libation (like ‘animal sacrifice’) in its social and everyday context in the lives of the ancient Athenians. This is central to understanding such practices as extensions of everyday behaviour and experience. Like ‘sacrificing’ together, pouring libations was a central activity forming and shaping relations among humans. This is fundamental to understanding the further role of libations as an extension of this bond to supernatural powers. Aeschines (e.g. *On the Embassy* 2.55, 2.183; *Against Ctesiphon* 3.224) refers repeatedly to drinking, breaking bread together and pouring libations together as aspects that define a proper relationship among citizens. The same orator refers to (animal?) ‘sacrificing’ and pouring libations together in the same light (*Against Ctesiphon* 3.52). Demosthenes (*Against Leptines* 20.158: χέρνιβος εἴργεσθαι τὸν ἀνδροφόνον, σπονδῶν, κρατήρων, ἱερῶν, ἀγορᾶς) notes that Draco passed the law that those guilty of homicide were barred from the lustral water, libations, *hiera* and the marketplace. In Homer libation vessels are a common gift exchanged in reciprocal relations between mortals (e.g. *Odyssey* 4.590-2, 8.430-3) while Achilles has a special goblet from which he makes libations solely to Zeus (*Iliad* 16.225-48).

Our source material often stresses the importance of libation, even making such practices equivalent to animal victims. Pindar (*Nemean* 11.6) notes in the case of worship of Hestia in Tenedos that she is worshipped, first of the gods, with libations and often with the savour of burned ‘sacrifice’. Zeus counts libation, along with the savour of ‘animal sacrifice’, as the *geras* or portion of honour that the gods are due (*Iliad* 4.49). In both of these examples libations are a major part of the honour that is due to the gods. Danaus in

⁴⁸⁹ Patton 2009: 33.

⁴⁹⁰ Patton 2009: 33-5.

Aeschylus's *Suppliant Women* (980-2: ὦ παῖδες, Ἀργείοισιν εὐχεσθαι χρεών,/ θύειν τε λείβειν θ', ὡς θεοῖς, Ὀλυμπίοις,/ σπονδάς, ἐπεὶ σωτῆρες οὐ διχορρόπως) in addition, for example, tells his daughters that it is right to offer prayers to the Argives and to *thuein* and pour libations to them as Olympian gods in return for their protection.

Furthermore, many sources stress that libation belongs within a continuum of behaviour in some ways related to the divine sphere. Hesiod (*Works and Days* 724-6: μηδέ ποτ' ἐξ ἡοῦς Διὶ λειβόμεν αἶθοπα οἶνον/χερσὶν ἀνίπτοισιν μηδ' ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισιν:/οὐ γὰρ τοί γε κλύουσιν, ἀποπτύουσι δέ τ' ἀράς) speaks of propitiating the gods in the morning and evening with libations and incense alongside other occasions that call for the 'sacrifice' of animals. Phoenix tells Achilles that libations and 'animal sacrifice' (or specifically the smoke from burned 'sacrificed' animal bones), as well as incense can sway the gods and protect mortals from divine wrath (*Iliad* 9.499-501: καὶ μὲν τοὺς θυέεσσι καὶ εὐχολῆς ἀγανῆσι/λοιβῇ τε κνίσῃ τε παρατρῶπῳς' ἄνθρωποι/λίσσόμενοι, ὅτε κέν τις ὑπερβῇ καὶ ἀμάρτη). This text stresses a mode of supplication that offended Plato (e.g. *Laws* 4.716e-7a, *Republic* 364b, 366b, 390e) and that caused him to combat what he perceived as a championing of a kind of automatic reciprocity lacking any moral dimension.⁴⁹¹ In Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* (479-88) Orestes and Electra call on the spirit of Agamemnon to help them. Orestes refers to the rich and savoury burnt practices made to the earth he would otherwise do without – his portion of honour. Electra similarly refers to the libations he would otherwise not receive at her wedding. Here again the emphasis is on honour due to the supernatural, in this case a dead hero, with the type of practice involved seemingly determined on gender grounds.

In addition, in Euripides's *Helen* (1667-70) we are told that the deified titular character will share libations with the Dioscuri and receive 'gifts' from men with the other gods. In Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1030-5), Philoctetes asks how they could continue to burn 'sacrifices' to the gods or make libations if he returned to the Greek army. He had been abandoned on an island due to the disturbance caused to worship by his paralysing and festering wound. A passage in Aristophanes' *Clouds* has Strepsiades say that he will no longer 'sacrifice', pour libations nor burn incense to any other gods (425-6: οὐδ' ἂν διαλεχθῇν γ' ἀτεχνῶς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐδ' ἂν ἀπαντῶν:/οὐδ' ἂν θύσαιμ', οὐδ' ἂν σπεύσαιμ', οὐδ' ἐπιθείην λιβανωτόν).

⁴⁹¹ Following Ullucci 2009: 95.

In terms of the other modes of interaction, the gods are invoked as witnesses during peace libations (e.g. Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 2.84). On the other hand, the Furies are honoured by Clytaemestra with wineless libations where they have been invoked as helpers (*Eumenides* 107: *χοάς τ' αἰνέουσιν, νηφάλια μαιλίσματα*). The gods are honoured by libations at the symposium (this practice is referred to, for example, in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 245 and Pindar, *Isthmian* 6.1-9) and here they have a propitiatory function. The example already noted from *Libation Bearers* (479-88) also had a propitiatory and supplicatory function and, interestingly, Iphigenia is unsure of the correct words to use in her initial prayer (84-100). It seems apparent here that only the right words and the right prayer – in conjunction here, at least, with the bloodless sacrificial practice – can invoke the helpful intervention of her dead heroic father. Clytaemestra (510-40), we learn, has on the other hand, poured the libations to her murdered husband following an ominous nightmare and here the mode of interaction has a clearly apotropaic function.

Atossa offers a libation of milk, honey, water, unmixed wine and oil to Darius (*Persians* 609-18). Here the mode is one of invocation and honouring in order to propitiate and call on his spirit. Libations are also offered before a sea voyage and this behaviour clearly had a propitiatory function (e.g. Antiphon, *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning* 1.18, *Odyssey* 2.429-34, 15.256-9). It has already been noted that animal victims were also kept on board in case a storm arose and further propitiation was necessary (Antiphon, *On the Murder of Herodes* 5.29). In Aristophanes' *Wasps* (864-5) libation, alongside vows, ('animal sacrifice' is, likewise, often associated with vows e.g. *Iliad* 6.305-11) signal an end to bickering and strife. In addition, in the same play, the leader of the chorus speaks for the playwright as swearing by Dionysus while making a libation that no one has ever heard better comic verses (1046-50). Here the god is invoked again as a witness.

Libations are also poured as so-called 'thanks-offerings' like 'animal sacrifice' (e.g. Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* 19.128 where they are performed by Philip, and Herodotus 7.192.2 where they are poured by the Greeks to Poseidon, possibly in conjunction with 'submersion sacrifice', even though this is not mentioned).⁴⁹² As indicated, libations were part of regular funeral cult and the honours due to the dead, often in conjunction with other items such as a lock of hair (e.g. Euripides, *Orestes* 110-25,

⁴⁹² Robertson 2005: 90.

Sophocles, *Electra* 449-55). Also, in tragedy, a lock of hair could be presented along with a libation of blood from a 'sacrificed' animal (Euripides, *Electra* 90-5). In addition, pouring libations and performing 'sacrifices' at a man's tomb was the duty of a legitimate heir (Isaeus, *Philoctemon* 6.51, 6.65). Libations were also made by the Athenian navy with great aplomb before setting sail on the disastrous Sicilian expedition (Thucydides 6.32).

Finally, an act of expiation and purification involving libation provides our best evidence from literary sources for wineless libation in the classical period.⁴⁹³ Oedipus is told by the people of Colonus to make amends to the *Semnai* for trespassing on their sacred ground by making a special libation. He is to make a libation of water in a special vessel, with the brim and handle covered by lamb's wool newly shorn, while facing the dawn. A third libation is also to be made of honey and water which is to be emptied whole. The rite should conclude with a prayer and the spraying of olive (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 469-506).

The libation poured by Atossa discussed above might be compared to the act of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 11.23-6) performed to the dead in the underworld of a libation of honey and milk, sweet wine and water. This preliminary libation is then followed by the ritual killing of an animal and a libation of blood with a necromantic function which allows him to converse with Teiresias and others from among the dead. This scene in Homer appears, however, to be exceptional. As for libation to heroes (other than in problematic funerary contexts in tragedy), these are rarely mentioned in our sources but need not have differed from those to the gods. Henrichs, however, argues that heroes were usually 'offered' the same libations as in the cult of the dead.⁴⁹⁴ Pindar (*Olympian* 1.90-5) mentions blood libation in association with the tomb of Pelops in Olympia.

It should also be stressed that there was what might be termed a divinatory aspect to libation (and other forms of interactions discussed below) as is the case with 'animal sacrifice'. Naiden emphasises that a god could accept or reject any so-called 'offering', not only 'animal sacrifice' (I would prefer to term this failed or unsuccessful 'sacrifice' to take the emphasis away from the notion of 'sacrifice' as simply a 'gift'). He argues that vegetal interactions might meet with ill omens like 'animal sacrifice'. The ill omen accompanying a

⁴⁹³ As noted by Henrichs 1983: 90.

⁴⁹⁴ Henrichs 1983: 99.

libation, for example, would need to occur somewhere in the vicinity of the act, or at about the same time.⁴⁹⁵

An interesting example, although admittedly relating to the notoriously superstitious Spartans, comes from Xenophon's *Hellenica* (4.7.1-6) when immediately after the after-dinner libations there is an earthquake while the army is on campaign. As a result, the soldiers expect to withdraw due in part to the past behaviour of their king, Agis, but he instead interprets this omen as Poseidon urging them on. Naiden argues that even Thucydides (6.32 with 6.27.3) alludes to the potentially rejected and omen laden nature of libation in the case of those made before embarking on the Sicilian expedition mentioned above. He argues that this historian provided information by way of rumours and speeches, in this case when people talk of the ill omen of the vandalising of the herms.⁴⁹⁶

Libation also plays a key role in the full range of ritual killing of animals. In 'sacrifice' of the types followed by a meal, where a division of parts between men and gods often takes place, libation initiated the act itself (although it probably performed this role in most forms of 'sacrifice').⁴⁹⁷ Further libation might then take place while the *splanchna* were roasting on the altar (*Peace* 1039) and also might mark the conclusion of the ritual (Euripides, *Ion* 1032-3). Wineless libations could take place in conjunction with some pre-battle 'animal sacrifices' (e.g. Euripides, *Erechtheus*) and also took the form of cementing oaths (e.g. Thucydides 5.19.2) often in conjunction with 'sacrifice'. As with the destruction of an animal victim, a libation can also form part of the dramatised self-curse invoked in oath-rituals (e.g. *Iliad* 3.267-75 where animal victims and wine are used conjunctively).⁴⁹⁸

Libations which are poured to start off meals (e.g. Euripides, *Ion* 1032-3 as above) were a gesture of propitiation like the first-fruits rituals in some forms of 'animal sacrifice' (and here we see another overlap with a form of bloodless practice discussed below) such as the burning of hairs cut from the animal victim's head, and the throwing of grains onto the altar.⁴⁹⁹ Libations also accompanied 'submersion sacrifices' to Poseidon (Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.11.6, 6.19.5 is the best evidence but Herodotus alludes to the practice although he does not mention animal victims: 7.192.2) and are also associated with 'perverted sacrifice' in

⁴⁹⁵ Naiden 2013: 139.

⁴⁹⁶ Naiden 2013: 171.

⁴⁹⁷ Patton 2009: 42 based on Aristophanes, *Peace* 433.

⁴⁹⁸ Following Berti 2006: 204.

⁴⁹⁹ Zaidman and Pantel 1989: 39.

the form of 'human sacrifice' (e.g. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 860-1, 1190 and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 675).⁵⁰⁰

Libation practices, both associated with 'animal sacrifice' and on their own, were also ritual features that attracted the attention of Herodotus (e.g. 1.132) in his treatment of 'barbarian' peoples. Libation interested Herodotus, just as did the ritual killing of animal victims.⁵⁰¹ In Homer we find an 'anti-sacrifice' in the ritual killing and consumption of the cattle of the sun (*Odyssey* 12.352-66) and libations are made of water here – one of many features marking its unacceptable and ominous nature.⁵⁰² It is clear that there was a code as to what was appropriate, and in what ways in various circumstances, although there were regional and local differences.

In terms of epigraphic evidence, libations are rarely treated in sacred laws without specific reference to 'animal sacrifice'. As an accessory to 'sacrifice' it is mentioned as needed when a ritual calls for libation that is not ordinary. A libation of wine is the most common type and 'it is ordinarily prohibited where it is not desirable rather than prescribed where it is; libation of other liquids is prescribed when desirable'.⁵⁰³ The 4th century BC (375-350 BC) sacrificial calendar of Erchia prescribes four wineless 'sacrifices' to Zeus Meilichios, Basile, Zeus Epopetes and Epops, 'sacrifices' to the latter three all being holocausts.⁵⁰⁴ The 'purpose' of these regular annual 'sacrifices' appears to be primarily that of honouring the 'recipients' according to ancestral custom in the prescribed fashion. An inscription from Athens dating to the 4th century BC also mentions wineless libations in association with, for example, the 'sacrifice' of honey cakes (another overlap with a form of behaviour discussed below) to Helios and Mnemosyne.⁵⁰⁵

A number of vase scenes show libation in relation to 'animal sacrifice' (e.g. see Figure 4 above). Here, however, I will focus on a common motif in vase painting scenes: the departed warrior. A scene on a red figure Attic stamnos attributed to the Achilles Painter (450-440 BC) now in the British Museum (see Figure 8 below) shows an armed hoplite grasping the hand of a bearded figure in a gesture of farewell while a woman holds the

⁵⁰⁰ Robertson 2005: 90-1 on libation and 'submersion sacrifice'.

⁵⁰¹ Following Hartog 1989: 173.

⁵⁰² Following Vernant 1989b: 165-6.

⁵⁰³ Lupu 2009: 73.

⁵⁰⁴ LSCG 18.col I.41-3; LSCG 18.col II.16-20; LSCG 18.col III.23-4; LSCG 18.col IV.20-3, col V.12-5.

⁵⁰⁵ IG II² 4962B.

implements of libation with which she is performing the ritual. Lissarrague notes that 'the performance of this libation, which combines offering and sharing, marks the bonds linking each member of the group to the others and affirms the relationship that unites this group with the gods'.⁵⁰⁶ The key role of libation, as an extension of normal behaviour, experience and interaction, is clear in this example along with its association with perceived social effects.



Figure 8: A departed warrior scene on a red figure Attic stamnos (450-40 BC) now in the British Museum showing libation⁵⁰⁷

All of these modes of interaction are detectable in the evidence for sacrificial practices involving the slaughter of animal victims. There is a clear overlap between representations of these forms of behaviour which can also be discerned in the other forms of 'bloodless sacrifice' discussed below.

In terms of modern scholarship on libation, Patton argues that the act of pouring or drinking a liquid 'offering' is one of the 'oldest, most ubiquitous and least understood forms of religious action in the world'. She adds that libations of 'wine, pure or mixed, of honey, milk, water or blood itself cascaded in and punctuated virtually every private prayer and every public sacrifice in ancient Greece'.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Lissarrague 1989: 45.

⁵⁰⁷ Lissarrague 1989: 44 Figure 61 = London 1843, 1103.1.

⁵⁰⁸ Patton 2009: 31.

According to the modern Olympian and chthonian distinction, Patton points out that *spondai* are 'assumed to be offerings to Olympian gods, *choai* to appease the deities of the underworld, or to summon the dead from their grim slumber'.⁵⁰⁹ She, however, acknowledges that *spondai* can be directed to the dead (Euripides, *Electra* 511-2), to the *agathos daimōn* (Aristophanes, *Knights* 105-6) and to the winds (*Iliad* 23.195-7).⁵¹⁰ Henrichs argues that 'in most cases there is no way of telling why a particular god or hero is offered *nephelia* (wineless libations, frequently of milk, honey, gruel and oil, the main ingredients in funeral cult) rather than wine, or perhaps both on different occasions'.⁵¹¹ A similar state-of-affairs can be detected for the sacrificial practices discussed in the previous chapter, as was anticipated in Chapter II. There it was emphasised that religion is primarily practical, rather than contemplative, and concerned with actual situations of interaction and not theoretically consistent expressions of the qualities and powers of various gods.

Pirenne-Delforge shows convincingly how even wineless libations were used in a variety of contexts and how the same type of ritual action can carry different significations in different contexts. She discusses their implications in terms of their appropriateness as means of delivering a specific message and correctly identifying the divine addressee.⁵¹²

In terms of explanation, Burkert argues that 'the element of giving away what cannot be taken back must not be underrated'.⁵¹³ This is also the case in many forms of sacrificial practice involving the slaughter of animals, although often the amount actually surrendered is small (which is also the case in most forms of libation). Burkert adds that the 'communicative action of leaving marks, establishing centres or borders, especially in the case of pouring oil on stones, is not negligible either'.⁵¹⁴ In a later publication he points out, in addition, that invocation and prayer are inseparable from libation. In other words, 'in order to supplicate the gods aright at all, a libation is therefore required'.⁵¹⁵

Lissarrague notes that libation marks the beginning or end of an action (e.g. departure or return) but can also be included as a single element in a complex set of rituals (e.g.

⁵⁰⁹ Patton 2009: 33.

⁵¹⁰ Patton 2009: 33 n.35.

⁵¹¹ Henrichs 1983: 97.

⁵¹² Pirenne-Delforge 2011: 144-6.

⁵¹³ Burkert 1979: 42.

⁵¹⁴ Burkert 1979: 42.

⁵¹⁵ Burkert 1985: 71.

‘sacrifice’, prayer, dedication).⁵¹⁶ Rather than possessing a single or essential ‘meaning’ then, it can be used in different ways and in different contexts. In the symposium, the libation is the prologue to the consumption of a krater of mixed wine, with typically the first krater dedicated to Zeus and the Olympian gods, the second to the heroes and the third to Zeus Soter (cf. Pindar, *Isthmian* 6.1-9, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 2.3.1). It should also be noted that libation played an important role in the solemn acts that were the direct concern of the civic community, such as the opening of the assembly at Athens (where purificatory ‘sacrifices’ also took place as I have discussed) and the conclusion of treaties of peace or alliance between Greek states (again ‘sacrifice’ often performed a role here). In fact, the word *spondai* was ‘used by synecdoche to mean “truce” or “treaty”’.⁵¹⁷

Crucially, Rudhardt argues that nothing indicates that libations are poured as ‘offerings’ to the gods and that the gods were not themselves directly interested in the poured substances (citing Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.3.13-4, *Cyropaedia* 4.1.6-7, etc.). Instead, libations created a situation favourable to the efficacy and success of prayer directed to the deities.⁵¹⁸ For Patton, however, libation is both ‘sacrifice’ and ‘gift’. She argues: ‘Ancient Greek libation of any sort is performed not in a vacuum, but for the sake of divine powers to importune or appease them. Libation, when poured, belongs to the gods. It thus should be considered as part of the larger sphere of ancient Greek religious action of sacrifice’.⁵¹⁹

From an etic perspective, many contexts and features of libation can be understood to activate or trigger the hazard-precaution system and indeed the practice is marked by a concern for purity and anti-contamination measures (e.g. Hesiod, *Work and Days* 724-6 where the gods are said to spit back your prayers if you fail to wash your hands before performing libation). Also, as noted, the consequences of many of these rituals for social interaction (bearing in mind the way human minds understand and, often, misunderstand the web of social relations around them) is very relevant. Furthermore, there are the cases identified by Rudhardt where a divine ‘recipient’ can be safely ruled out while there is also no clear sense of how the gods could actually ‘receive’ or furthermore benefit from the rituals anyway. In fact, this does not even appear to have been a cause for speculation. Certainly the argument that libation is simply a ‘gift’ to the gods is very weak.

⁵¹⁶ Lissarrague 1990: 25-6.

⁵¹⁷ Zaidman and Pantel 1990: 26.

⁵¹⁸ Rudhardt 1992: 242-5.

⁵¹⁹ Patton 2009: 56.

It could be argued that there is also (again from an etic perspective), as is true for sacrificial practices discussed previously, an intuitive correspondence between what people think they are giving away (and the ways in which they do it) and what they think they receive - both marked by a kind of vagueness and lack of clarity. Also, libation is closely related to consumption and to human activities and experiences (including sacrificial ones) involving the satisfying of the appetite. Thus its presence as part of preparation, cooking and eating rituals outlined earlier can be easily accounted for. It also makes intuitive sense as attention is primarily focused on the kind of unconditional sharing (or sharing that is markedly different from ordinary social exchange) among humans often associated with it. To pour a libation might be seen, in simple terms, as an extension of sharing a drink in such an environment and one which marks its special character. To pour more than a few drops, is moreover, on some levels merely an elaboration of this, much in the manner of a holocaust 'sacrifice', as already discussed.

However, I will show in Chapter VII that libation, like the other bloodless practices discussed in this chapter, is a complex form of activity and that multiple interpretations are necessary. I will also show how even the same or similar forms of libation can be interpreted and experienced in different ways according to the nature of divine involvement. Thus, in the etic perspective I champion the gods remain fundamental to my analysis and for any understanding of the ancient experience of these rituals.

Sacrificial cakes

The Greeks had a vast number of different cakes (flour based sweetmeats or fancy breads) and several monographs were written on the subject (the evidence is in Athanaeus 3.109b-16a, 14.643e-48c and Pollux 6.72-9). Most were regarded as a 'luxurious delicacy' to be eaten with fruit after the main course of a 'special meal'. Alongside this non-cultic use, cakes were commonly used in 'sacrifice' either as a peripheral accompaniment to the animal victim, or as part of an independent ritual. Sacrificial cakes often had a special form, such as the Attic *amphiphōn* stuck with lights and 'sacrificed' to Artemis on the full moon

day (Athenaeus 14.53).⁵²⁰ They could be referred to generally (*pemmata* is common), or specifically, varying in shape and size.⁵²¹

As I will discuss in Chapter VII, Redfield argues that in comedy ‘animal sacrifice’ is about eating and the joys of satisfying our appetites and a somewhat similar argument might be made about the role of cakes in Aristophanes.⁵²² Cakes likewise refer to the joys and pleasures of satisfying the appetite (e.g. *Knights* 54-60, 1190) and are also associated with marriage feasts (e.g. *Peace* 1195) and peace (e.g. *Acharnians* 1095-1142 where Dicaeopolis and Lamachus are contrasted with the latter arming for military action and the former set to enjoy a feast and relishing the prospect of luxurious cakes).

In terms of modes of interaction, an apotropaic function is clear from the ritual performed by Atossa when she wakes from a vision and drawing near to an altar carries incense in one hand and a cake in the other (*Persians* 200-5). The dual character of this ritual to the deities that avert evil again stresses a continuum and inter-relation between these two substances in certain contexts. Atossa also ‘sacrifices’ a sacrificial cake as an alleged ‘gift’ to the earth and the dead with an honouring, propitiatory and necromantic function as mentioned earlier, this time in association with a libation (*Persians* 523-5). In Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusae* (284-9) Mnesilochus performs a ‘sacrifice’ of a cake to the two goddesses with a prayer that she will be able to make many further ‘sacrifices’ in the future. The reciprocal logic here clearly belongs in the same nexus of relations as are associated with animal victims in some contexts. Here, however, we have a ‘sacrifice’ by someone who, as a woman, would have less direct access to animal victims.

In Aristophanes’ *Wealth*, Chremylus tells Plutus that if he did not wish it, neither an ox, a cake nor anything else could be burned to the gods (137-8: ὅτι οὐδ’ ἄν εἷς θύσειεν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι, / οὐ βούν’ ἄν, οὐχὶ ψαιστόν, οὐκ ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ ἔν, / μὴ βουλομένου σοῦ). Later, in the same play, Hermes complains that since Plutus has recovered his sight there have been no ‘sacrifices’ for the gods – not incense, laurels, cakes or animal victims (1113-6: ἀφ’ οὗ γὰρ ἤρξατ’ ἐξ ἀρχῆς βλέπειν / ὁ Πλοῦτος, οὐδεὶς οὐ λιβανωτόν, οὐ δάφνην, / οὐ ψαιστόν, οὐχ ἱερεῖον, οὐκ ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ ἔν / ἡμῖν ἔτι θύει τοῖς θεοῖς). These two passages from the same play again place sacrificial cakes within a broad continuum of

⁵²⁰ Kearns 2003: 272.

⁵²¹ Lupu 2009: 334.

⁵²² Redfield 2012: 172.

activity and experience. One text seems to give sacrificial cakes a kind of primacy by specifying these substances alongside other 'sacrifice' in general that were not possible as a result of the grief of Demeter following the loss of her daughter Kore (Euripides, *Helen* 1333-4: οὐδ' ἦσαν θεῶν θυσίαι, / βωμοῖς δ' ἄφλεκτοι πέλανοι).

Also, in *Wealth* (660-5) a cake is placed on the altar at the sanctuary of Asklepios on behalf of Plutus in a mode of interaction stressing propitiation and appeasement. Also, the 'sacrifice' of a honey cake at the cave of Trophonius, alluded to in *Clouds* (507-8), is an appeasement action. In Euripides's *Ion* (226-30), a honey cake is prescribed as a preliminary ritual at the oracle of Delphi. We are, in fact, told that it is not possible to approach the recesses of the temple until such a propitiatory 'sacrifice' has been made as well as the 'sacrifice' of a sheep. A curious tale in Herodotus (8.41) relates the Athenian practice of monthly 'sacrificing' cakes to a snake that is believed to live in the sacred precinct guarding the acropolis. Here the mode is clearly one of honouring and propitiation. The story continues that with the onset of the Persian invasion, the honey cake was left untouched for the first time, making the Athenians even more eager to abandon the city. Again this hints at a rejected, or perhaps, divinatory mode of interaction.

Cakes also form part of the 'sacrifices' in great Athenian festivals, such as the rural Dionysia. In Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (241-6) a cake is 'sacrificed' as a culmination of a phallic procession in honour of the god. As with the 'sacrifice' of animal victims, failing to make appropriate 'sacrifice' of such cakes can also arouse the anger of the gods. The Chorus in Euripides's *Hippolytus* (147) suggest that the Cretan Dictynna may be angry with Phaedra for failing to 'sacrifice' cakes that are due to the goddess. Like 'animal sacrifice' and libation, cakes and sacrificial cakes are discussed with fascination by Herodotus (e.g. 1.160, 4.23) in his discussion of 'barbarian' customs.

Although cakes do not appear in the various sacrificial calendars of Attica this does not indicate their absence from cult.⁵²³ For example, the 'sacrifice' of cakes may have presented no divergences that needed clarifying, or may have fallen outside the financial responsibilities of the accountable officials.

⁵²³ Kearns 1994: 66-7.

The preliminary ‘sacrifice’ of cakes is quite a frequent procedure, particularly well attested epigraphically, for the subordinate deities associated with Asklepios.⁵²⁴ According to the ‘evaluation system’ of Kearns, cakes were seen as good things, but less valuable than meat and, hence, make appropriate preliminary ‘sacrifices’. An inscription from the Piraeus Asklepieion bears different texts inscribed on four sides of a single block (A,B,C,D) at different times during the 4th century BC.⁵²⁵ Side A dates to the early 4th century BC and prescribes preliminary ‘sacrifices’ (*prothuesthai*) of *popana* to deities associated with the healing god: (Apollo) Maleates, Hermes, Iaso, Akeso, Panakeia (daughters of Asklepios), The Dogs and The Dog-Leaders. Lines 11-17, added later, record an addition by Euthydemus of Eleusis, a priest of Asclepius that consisted of now lost steles showing representations of these cakes placed near the altars where they would have been ‘sacrificed’. As Kearns notes, this stresses the importance attached by the administrators of the cult to the correct cakes being used.⁵²⁶ It is unclear whether these preliminary rituals preceded ‘animal sacrifice’ and/or incubation.⁵²⁷ Side B records a propitiatory ‘sacrifice’ of a cake (*arester*) to Helios and Mnemosyne. Jim notes that a common occasion for performing propitiatory rituals was upon making alterations of sacred property. They were probably meant to placate the gods and to divert any potential danger that might result from any alteration.⁵²⁸

In terms of visual evidence, van Straten notes that reliefs showing maids carrying a *kiste* but no sacrificial animal probably refer to occasions on which the god had only been presented with ‘bloodless sacrifice’, as the *kiste* contained sacrificial cakes.⁵²⁹ He adds that cakes were not necessarily the equivalent of a ‘poor man’s offering’. A relief from the Athenian Asklepieion (4th century BC) shows Asklepios, Hygieia and a snake and in front of the deities a sacred table. At the table stand worshipers who load it with various types of cake, one of whom has been identified by an inscription on the relief as Mnesimachos of Acharnai. This man, together with his father, was victorious *choregos* for the tribe, Oineis in about 350 BC (see Figure 9 below).⁵³⁰

⁵²⁴ Kearns 2011: 98.

⁵²⁵ IG II² 4962 with Lupu 2009: 63-4.

⁵²⁶ Kearns 1994: 68.

⁵²⁷ Lupu 2009: 64.

⁵²⁸ Jim 2012: 329.

⁵²⁹ Van Straten 1995: 69. E.g. van Straten 1995: Figure 69 (Berlin 685).

⁵³⁰ Van Straten 1995: 70.



Figure 9: A relief from the Athenian Asklepieion (4th century BC) showing Asklepios, Hygieia and a snake along with a sacred table being loaded with various cakes⁵³¹

Excavations at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth have brought to light numerous miniature clay *likna*, or winnowing baskets, filled with cakes. These votive items provide evidence for the ritual use of cakes which can be roughly divided into as many as seven different types.⁵³² It has also been argued that they provide valuable comparative evidence for the use of sacrificial cakes in the worship of Demeter elsewhere. They were dedicated at the sanctuary from at least the early 6th century BC until the 2nd century BC and were associated with the ‘sacrifices’ and sacred meals there, very possibly by women alone. The votive cakes were likely dedicated as a memorial of the ceremony in which real cakes were ‘sacrificed’ to the goddesses.⁵³³ It should be noted that not all cakes were burned on the altar, although they were surrendered by the worshiper.⁵³⁴ In Aristophanes’ *Wealth* (676-81) we are presented with the comic image of a priest surreptitiously lapping up cakes and dried figs from the sacred table and making off with *popana* from the altars.

⁵³¹ Van Straten 1995: Figure 70 = Athens, NM 1335.

⁵³² Bromfield 1997: 149.

⁵³³ Bromfield 1997: 158-9.

⁵³⁴ Following Lupu 2009: 334.

In addition, Kearns argues that the role of distinctive cakes helped to define deities or (particularly) cult.⁵³⁵ In a more recent paper, she argues that the use of sacrificial cakes as an accessory to ‘animal sacrifice’ shows that ‘the god is offered a meal of the type most humans prefer, centred around high quality meat, accompanied by bread or perhaps more often, cereal confections of a finer quality than the everyday’. She adds: ‘However important and central the meat is, the meal is incomplete without cereal accompaniments’ which act to ‘contribute to the composition of the meal as far removed from the ordinary and add to its special quality’.⁵³⁶ In the case of a *Bous* cake ‘sacrifice’, probably to Apollo Pythios in Athens (3rd/2nd century BC) – in other words a cake representing an ox and alluding to this type of sacrificial victim – in this particular case, this might indicate that it is a substitute for the real thing or, alternatively, a ‘theoretical willingness to offer a more expensive cow’ rather than a sheep or goat victim.⁵³⁷ In fact, she argues, that a particular distinctive cake can potentially, at least, operate on numerous levels of ‘meaning’ simultaneously – nature of deity, relationship between deities and relationship between deity and worshiper.⁵³⁸

Kearns concludes by suggesting that within the category of ‘bloodless sacrifice’, cakes and cereals occupy a position of primacy coming to typify a whole style of activity, in some ways symbolically opposed to the ‘sacrifice’ of animals. She notes, however, that such cakes are commonly given to deities who, in other circumstances or at other times, would ‘accept animal sacrifice’. She argues that the significance of ‘bloodless sacrifice’ for a worshiper – as opposed perhaps to a cultural producer – was often lack of funds or the fact that the occasion was not a particularly unusual one.⁵³⁹ Plato (*Laws* 6.782c) refers to mythology surrounding a primeval time characterised by ‘bloodless sacrifice’ and principally cakes, when people lived according to the principles of an ‘Orphic life’ in opposition to ‘animal sacrifice’. By the 4th century BC we find the growing sentiment reflected in Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.3.3 where Socrates quotes Hesiod, *Works and Days* 336) of ‘sacrificing’ according to your means and the notion that a ‘bloodless sacrifice’ is morally superior as both more modest and reflective of a ‘more thoughtful piety’.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Kearns 1994: 69-70.

⁵³⁶ Kearns 2011: 93.

⁵³⁷ IG II² 4987 and LSCG 25; Kearns 2011: 95.

⁵³⁸ Kearns 2011: 97.

⁵³⁹ Kearns 2011: 101.

⁵⁴⁰ Kearns 2011: 103.

As with the 'sacrifice' of animal victims, sacrificial cakes appear to be closely related to consumption and their ritual use can be understood as an extension of everyday behaviour and experience. Key questions, however, remain and uncertainty persists. Dalby notes that we have few answers to such important questions as to what extent sacrificial cakes were eaten by participants, or were in some cases edible at all, as well as how closely they resembled more mundane and ordinary cakes in many circumstances.⁵⁴¹

In addition, as with forms of 'animal sacrifice', such practices carry no essential 'meaning' although they can be associated with particular ideas and arguments championed by cultural producers. I will show in Chapter VII that they could be interpreted and understood in extremely diverse ways and no single conclusion is possible. As with libation and other practices discussed in this chapter, they could be performed in a wide range of contexts like the different activities involving the ritual killing of animals discussed previously. They could also match the importance of animal victims in some contexts.

Incense

Incense could also be employed in a range of contexts where similarly diverse forms of interaction with the gods could be stressed. As mentioned above, following an ominous vision, Atossa performed an apotropaic ritual at an altar to the deities that avert evil with incense in one hand and sacrificial cake in the other (*Persians* 200-5). Dionysus makes a simple 'sacrifice' of incense in conjunction with a prayer before the poetry contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in the underworld in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (871-4). Here the supernatural is called on as witness and helper. The gods are also invoked via incense in a similar way before the mock domestic trial in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (860) where the family dog stands accused. Incense is associated with supplication and propitiation at the start of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1-5) where the city is said to reek with incense during the onset of the plague. Later Jocasta visits the shrines of the gods bearing incense and a wreathed branch (911-23).

Incense is associated with libation following the thanksgiving banquet in Euripides's *Ion* (1175) where, again, it has a propitiatory function. As noted above, Hesiod (*Works and Days* 724-6) refers to daily rituals of propitiation involving libation and incense on top of

⁵⁴¹ Dalby 2003: 69.

less frequent acts of 'animal sacrifice'. Burning incense, along with pouring libations and 'animal sacrifice', can assuage the anger of the gods according to Phoenix in *Iliad* (9.497-501). Frankincense, libation and 'sacrifice' will no longer be accorded to the gods by Strepsiades, following his conversion in *Clouds* in the afore-quoted passage in Aristophanes (393-4).

Libation and incense are used to secure the favour of heaven (i.e. propitiation) in Antiphon (*Against the Stepmother for Poisoning* 1.18) as one friend is 'sacrificing' to Zeus Ctesius and entertaining the other, while the other friend was about to embark on a sea voyage.

Frankincense is among the matchless 'gifts' Hector will honour the fallen Rhesus with at his tomb in Troy (Euripides, *Rhesus* 952-61). Here again, as with libation and 'animal sacrifice', we see an overlap with funeral ritual. Troy is commonly imagined as having possessed altars continually burning with rich incense (e.g. Euripides's *Trojan Women* 1060-5) and the palace of Agamemnon is described in a similar way (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1313). The implication here is one of continuous honouring of the gods by these great royal families in a way that emphasises the tragic reversals in fortune that both suffer.

Powerful fragrances of incense are also associated with Delphi (Euripides, *Ion* 510). Also, incense, like sacrificial cakes, libation and the ritual killing of animals, features in the description of 'barbarian' customs described by Herodotus (e.g. 1.198, 2.40.3, 2.130, 6.97).

It is argued that incense was 'widely burned as a religious offering in the ancient world, as an accompaniment to acts of divination, on the occurrence of a burial and as a gesture of homage'.⁵⁴² It was also used for fumigation, as well as for perfumes and ointments in what Detienne describes as its 'erotic' function.⁵⁴³ Myrrh and frankincense were the most common to Greek religion, probably imported from southern Arabia since the 8th century BC via Phoenicia and Cyprus and retaining their Semitic names. Granules of incense were thrown directly onto the altar, or burned separately in special braziers.⁵⁴⁴ The same verb *thuein* is used for the burning of incense as for the 'sacrifice' of animal and vegetal 'offerings'. Indeed, the burning of incense has been understood to denote the original application of this verb (see Chapter II).⁵⁴⁵ Incense is particularly associated with Aphrodite

⁵⁴² Potts 2003: 752-3.

⁵⁴³ Naiden 2013: 75; Detienne 1994: 60.

⁵⁴⁴ Malkin 2003: 753.

⁵⁴⁵ Parker 2011: 135-6.

and a vivid fragment by Sappho (*Lobel-Page 2* – Appendix 2) invokes an epiphany of the goddess making rich use of the image of incense burning on altars to the goddess (see Chapter VII for discussion of this text).

Burkert argues that the sacred is experienced as an atmosphere of fragrance.⁵⁴⁶ Divine epiphanies are closely associated with incense and from comedy we have the image of Pisthetaerus at the end of Aristophanes' *Birds* (1715-6) appearing with thunderbolt in hand and wafting incense and sweet fragrances. Burkert argues that to strew a granule of frankincense in the flames is 'the most widespread, simplest and also cheapest act of offering'.⁵⁴⁷ The fantastical tales told about its fictitious 'gathering' in Arabia by Herodotus (e.g. 3.107, 3.110) reflect as Detienne notes the mythical and religious value placed on incense.⁵⁴⁸ Incense also attracted the moralising concerns of Plato (e.g. *Republic* 2.373a, 9.573a, *Laws* 8.847b-c) and in Plato we also find it associated with Persia (*Alcibiades 1* 1.122c). Detienne argues that its 'purpose' in 'sacrifice' is to attract the gods and establish a line of communication with the divine sphere.⁵⁴⁹ He also points to the significance of myrrh and frankincense in Pythagorean thinking as substances that were able to unite men and gods in rediscovered fellowship.⁵⁵⁰ Incense thus seems to have the power to invoke the gods in some contexts.

Malkin argues that the 'purpose' of incense was threefold: to neutralise the unpleasant odours of burning 'sacrificed' flesh, hair, hoofs, horns etc, to generate appropriate mood and ambience and metaphorically as an expression of 'the intangible and yet distinctly felt presence of the divine as well as the "rising" to heaven of either prayers or souls of the dead'.⁵⁵¹ Elaborate censers might be dedicated to a god while simple censers were common in homes. The worshiper could also burn incense, not only in shrines and at the home, but during a procession.⁵⁵² Naiden argues that it counted as a so-called 'offering' in its own right. He adds: 'It may also have appealed to them (the Greeks) because it was handier than animal sacrifice. Because it was a holocaust it left nothing behind. Because it

⁵⁴⁶ Burkert 1985: 62.

⁵⁴⁷ Burkert 1985: 62.

⁵⁴⁸ Detienne 1994: 17.

⁵⁴⁹ Detienne 1994: 38.

⁵⁵⁰ Detienne 1994: 58.

⁵⁵¹ Malkin 2003: 753.

⁵⁵² Naiden 2013: 71-3.

was blendable it could be diluted. Because it clung to some surfaces, it would keep pleasing the god after the worshipers had departed'.⁵⁵³

Although a form of 'sacrifice' and located on a continuum with other practices discussed here, incense is not however linked with consumption (apart from among the Pythagoreans where it was seen as a kind of 'super food', as discussed by Detienne).⁵⁵⁴ Its perceived significance is to be found primarily in symbolic and experiential sensory terms as a means of invoking the gods. Its range of uses, however, demonstrates that it had no one single, or essential, 'meaning' and it appears in diverse and widespread contexts. In fact, I will show in Chapter VII that it could be experienced and interpreted in a number of different ways according to the nature of divine involvement.

First-fruits

Similarly diverse means of interacting with (and potentially having profound experiences of) the gods are found associated with some first-fruit rituals. Key terms include *aparchai* (usually translated as 'first-fruits'), *dekate* ('tithe') and *akrothinia* whose uses overlap and can often appear to operate according to a similar principle.⁵⁵⁵ Rouse, for example, argued that the origin of *dekate* was associated with the development of commuting first-fruit 'offerings' for their value although he noted that this term and *aparchai* are often used in votive practices side by side.⁵⁵⁶

Regarding the relevant main evidence for human and divine interaction, Athena placates the Eumenides (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 830-5) by telling them that they will be honoured forever by first-fruit rituals (ἀκροθίνια) performed on behalf of children and marriage rites. The role is clearly one of honouring and propitiating the divine. The danger of not performing expected first-fruit rituals (as with other practices discussed above and 'animal sacrifice') is clear from the example of Oeneus in Homer (*Iliad* 533-7) who angered Artemis by not recognising her with the first-fruits of the harvest (θαλύσια) from his rich orchard.

⁵⁵³ Naiden 2013: 75.

⁵⁵⁴ Detienne 1994: 49.

⁵⁵⁵ Jim 2011: 40 argues, however, that etymologically speaking *aparche* (*ap-arche*) expresses 'a preliminary offering from a greater whole'. I would disagree here with the use of the term 'offering' in some cases; LSJ defines *akrothinion* (usually plural) as 'the topmost part of a heap, the choice part, first-fruits, taken as an offering to the gods'.

⁵⁵⁶ Rouse 1902: 55.

Comparable human-divine interactions are emphasised by other sources. Isaeus (*Dicaeogenes* 5.42) refers to first-fruits (ἀπαρχάς) of wealth on the Athenian Acropolis in the form of bronze and marble statues. Isocrates (*Archidamus* 6.96) refers to the potential horror of seeing slaves, bringing from land bequeathed to citizens, first-fruits of the harvest (ἀπαρχάς) and 'sacrifices' greater than their own. Here again there is an equivalence between first-fruit rituals and 'sacrifice' which places them within a continuum of behaviour. Croesus dedicates at Delphi and the shrine of Amphiaraus first-fruits of his wealth (Herodotus 1.92: ἀπαρχήν). Thucydides (3.58.4) refers also to first-fruits (ἀπαρχάς) of the earth associated with the war dead at Plataea and, here again, we see a form of practice that extends into other areas of behaviour and cult. Xenophon praises the life of a farmer as no other profession yields more seemly first-fruits for the gods (*Economics* 5.10: ἀπαρχάς). First-fruits were also made in association with vows (e.g. Demosthenes, *Letters* 1.16: καὶ κατὰ τῶν νικητηρίων ἅπασιν αὐτοῖς εὐξάμενοι), as is the case with many forms of 'animal sacrifice' and other related practices.

First-fruits are also commonly associated with war and with human-divine relations in this context. After the victory at Salamis against the Persians, the Greeks set apart for the gods first-fruits (ἀκροθίνια), including three Phoenician triremes (Herodotus 8.121). When they sent the first-fruits to Delphi they made enquiry on behalf of all Greece whether these were acceptable and Apollo responded (presumably via the Pythia) that he was content with what he had 'received' from all the Greeks except the Aeginetans. This then prompted the said Aeginetans to present a further prize (Herodotus 8.122) and this famous story illustrates well the interactive nature of Greek relations with the divine in which activities of various kinds could be seen as extending from mediums of exchange utilised by mortals.

Similarly in tragedy, first-fruits can refer to a conquered enemy general (e.g. Euripides, *Children of Herakles* 860-3: ἀκροθίνιον), slaves taken as plunder (Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 280-5: ἀκροθίνιον) or spoils to be chosen for the gods (Euripides, *Rhesus* 470: ἀκροθίνι). Teiresias received a golden crown as first-fruits reward for his role in a military engagement (Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 858-9: ἀπαρχάς). This latter example shows the operation of the idea in human interaction.

In contrast to this evidence, the terminology of first-fruits can also be used in a metaphorical sense, for example, by Plato (*Protagoras* 343b: ἀπαρχὴν) who uses it for the maxims of wise men and, in a humorous scene in Aristophanes, (*Assemblywomen* 720) reference is made to the first-fruits of young men (although ritual terminology is absent here). As with the other forms of behaviour discussed in this chapter, Herodotus (e.g. 3.24.4, 4.60.2, 4.61.2, 4.71.4) was also fascinated by ‘barbarian’ practices involving first-fruit rituals.

Moreover, in terms of links with sacrificial practices involving the slaughter of animals, the already noted burning of hairs cut from the head of the animal victim and the throwing of grain on the altar in some ‘sacrifices’, are first-fruit rituals. The ‘sacrifice’ of Eumaeus (*Odyssey* 14.419-38) is a key text here. Petropoulou argues that in this ‘sacrifice’ the *argmata* are first-fruits of the portions of cooked meat distributed by Eumaeus to his companions and himself and that the first-fruits of the animal’s raw meat are consecrated in place of the thigh bones while, finally, that the portion for the nymphs and Hermes is a first-fruit consecrated on the house table.⁵⁵⁷ Following Parker, Lupu associates the burning of pieces of raw flesh from all the limbs with other ‘Homeric sacrifices’ (e.g. *Iliad* 1.460-2) and a sacrificial regulation, admittedly fragmentary, from the Attic deme of Phrearrhioi (circa 300-250 BC) where pieces cut from the shoulders are to be burned to the gods, along with the thigh bones and half the head.⁵⁵⁸ Ekroth sees the Eumaeus ‘sacrifice’ as a literary description of the ‘sacrifice’ of a pig which she sees as a distinct victim that was ritually killed in a different way to other animal victims.⁵⁵⁹ In another paper, she also relates the cooked portion set aside for the nymphs and Hermes to *theoxenia* ritual.⁵⁶⁰ Her argument is convincing as it is based on the increasing evidence of bone deposits at sanctuaries, but is not necessarily at odds with an explanation integrating a first-fruits function into the heart of this ritual complex.

In an important passage from Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (5.3.7-13), we find the recording of the construction of a temple and altar to Artemis at Scillus following the acquisition of a portion of land for the purpose. From the seasonal produce of the land and nearby river, and from the ample hunting opportunities, he would each year take a ‘tithe’ (δεκατεύων –

⁵⁵⁷ Petropoulou 1987: 136.

⁵⁵⁸ Parker 1984: 138; Lupu 2003 and Lupu 2009: 166-8; SEG XXX.113.16-7.

⁵⁵⁹ Ekroth 2009: 144.

⁵⁶⁰ Ekroth 2011: 20.

5.3.9) of the profits and perform 'sacrifice' to the goddess in which all the inhabitants locally would take part. This passage combines hunting, 'animal sacrifice' and first-fruit rituals and shows clearly the continuum within which such behaviour and experience operated.

A key epigraphic document is an Athenian decree regulating the performing of first-fruit rituals at Eleusis (c.435 BC).⁵⁶¹ First-fruits of harvested grain (ἀπαρχεσθαι, ἀπαρχῆς, etc.) are to be collected deme by deme in Athens while grain is also to be collected from the allies and potential fines for non-compliance or delay are specified. A proclamation is also to be sent to other cities urging them to likewise perform first-fruits. From the profits of these donations, for example, 'sacrifices' of animals and a *pelanos* were to take place, again revealing the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of these activities.⁵⁶²

Rouse, at the beginning of the last century, argued that first-fruit rituals essentially made it lawful to enjoy the gifts of the earth. They were partly an act of propitiation and partly an act of gratitude and hope.⁵⁶³ Besides private celebrations in the countryside and on the shore, there were also public state ceremonies by which the state sought to express gratitude and avert dearth (see Chapter VII for more discussion).⁵⁶⁴ Originally associated with the fruits of the earth and the sea, this form of ritual was increasingly extended, however, into other spheres of life and experience and, at the same time, first-fruits could take practically any form.⁵⁶⁵ Jim argues, instead, that 'we can no longer trace whether *aparchai* and *dekatai* originated from agrarian practices, but agricultural first-fruits doubtless constituted the most basic and simplest kind of all first offerings'.⁵⁶⁶

Jim demonstrates via a semantic survey of the use of *aparchai*, *aparchesthai* and related terms that the 'vocabulary of "first portion" could be used in relation to sacrifice, dedications, hair-offerings from humans and sacred finance'. She notes that the word *aparchesthai* can apply to both sacrificial and dedicatory practices 'to denote two seemingly different acts: the act of offering sacrificial portions and of bringing first offerings as dedications to the gods'. She maintains that 'both acts set aside a portion as a symbolic

⁵⁶¹ IG I³ 78 and Cavanaugh 1996: 92-3 on the date.

⁵⁶² IG I³ 78A.36-40.

⁵⁶³ Rouse 1902: 41.

⁵⁶⁴ Rouse 1902: 52.

⁵⁶⁵ Rouse 1902: 54-5.

⁵⁶⁶ Jim 2014: 97.

offering, both express the precedence accorded to the gods over men' and yet the word is used with different emphases in either context. Thus, 'in animal sacrifice the act of *aparchesthai*, whether applied to the hair or the flesh, anticipates the offering of the whole animal to the gods' whereas in dedicatory practices '*aparchesthai* and *aparchai* refer to the portions assigned to the gods and the rest is retained for human utilisation'. She concludes that the vocabularies 'of "first offerings" relate, intersect with and diverge from each other in different contexts' while the notion of *aparchesthai* 'is sufficiently fluid to allow the Greeks to use the word with varying emphases in different contexts'. As a consequence, she discusses the way Theophrastus (Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.24.1, 2.27.1, 2.32.1) uses *aparchasthai* seemingly interchangeably with *thuein* 'deliberately blurring the distinction between the two in his attempt to elevate bloodless offerings above animal sacrifice'.⁵⁶⁷ While I follow closely her views on the fluidity of the terminology under discussion and the lack of clear-cut separation between first-fruit practices and sacrificial activity, I disagree with her sole emphasis on the notions of 'offering' and on the alleged 'recipients' in trying to understand this behaviour.

Burkert argues misleadingly but revealingly that this form of 'sacrifice' is an elemental form of 'gift giving'. He explains: 'The Greeks speak of *aparchai*, beginnings taken from the whole, for the gods come first. How exactly something of this portion may come to a higher being is, of course, of little importance. Such gifts may be set down in a sacred spot where they are left to other men or animals, they may be sunk in springs and rivers, fen and sea, or they may be burned; gift sacrifice turns into sacrifice through destruction'.⁵⁶⁸ Many of these forms of destruction can be found in the evidence for the ritual killing of animals, along with the destruction of other substances discussed in this chapter. Burkert adds: 'It is possible, of course, that the gifts may even come to benefit man again via the organisation of temple economy and priesthood; but in the first instance at least, the act of renunciation demonstrably recognises a higher order beyond the desire to fill ones belly'.⁵⁶⁹

Again, there is a similarity in this controlled and, often, mild and moderate form of surrender with many forms of 'animal sacrifice' and the other rituals discussed in this chapter. In an earlier publication Burkert notes that it is 'astonishing to see that it is quite irrelevant to whom and how the offerings are made. In Greece they may be made to any

⁵⁶⁷ Jim 2011: 55-6. See also Jim 2014: 55-8.

⁵⁶⁸ Burkert 1985: 66.

⁵⁶⁹ Burkert 1985: 66.

god'.⁵⁷⁰ Again, this is a feature that can be seen in the evidence for the ritual killing of animals and other rituals discussed here.

First-fruit rituals could be interpreted and understood in diverse ways, as I will show. From an etic perspective, there is no real sense in which the gods could be understood to benefit from these rituals, no consistency in how they were often 'offered' and no identifiable link with any genuine expectations surrounding the notion of a 'recipient'. Such rituals were extensions of ordinary everyday behaviour and experience, initially linked closely with consumption and profound social effects and later additionally incorporated quite comfortably into other areas of life. The gods remain central to these rituals, however, even from an etic perspective as I will show in Chapter VII.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a number of patterns in the evidence have emerged time and time again. Libation, incense, first-fruit rituals, sacrificial cakes and the ritual killing of animals in some contexts all belong in a continuum. All these practices involve items valued by both humans and gods and their extension into the field of the supernatural is explicable and closely related to their use in the mortal sphere. They can be used independently, or together, or in association with one, or more, of the other forms. They also display great variety themselves in their own procedures, forms and 'purposes'. It is in this context that the nature of the continuum defined by 'sacrifice' should be understood. The findings of this chapter thus further undermine the modern category 'sacrifice' if used unproblematically as denoting a stable and uniform type of activity.

Practice might on occasion be determined by the context, by cost, by need, by ancestral custom and 'purpose', among other factors. No clear pattern of relationship between the type, and often form of ritual and the specific nature of the 'recipient' (if a particular 'recipient' is clearly or at all specified) is clear. However, the ritual killing of an animal within this continuum did seem to possess a primacy in some contexts (as cakes seem to have done among vegetal substances). This was perhaps a result, in part, of the paramount importance of meat to the diet and also, sometimes, the power of blood and killing.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Burkert 1979: 52.

⁵⁷¹ As suggested by Parker 2011: 164 in a different respect and made with due caution.

However, as noted, not all the contexts in which some of these rituals occurred were sacrificial.

Although these rituals could trigger our social mind systems, principally our social exchange system, they should not be understood simply as 'gifts' or 'offerings'. From an etic perspective, there is only a vague sense in which they can be understood as for the benefit of the gods and yet this seems to have not caused much speculation. I will argue in Chapter VII that this is because they could be understood in extremely diverse ways according to the nature of divine involvement. In fact, rituals where the gods were the actual 'object' of such practices (i.e. 'special patient' rituals) formed only one of three possible types of experience. In addition, some features of such practices can be interpreted without need of the gods at all in terms of evolved and universal cognitive structures operating in specific and predictable ways in certain contexts. Again, this thesis emphasises the need for multiple interpretations and perspectives, cognitive and traditional and emic and etic.

Overall conclusion

I will here only briefly raise some key points for investigation which will be analysed in more detail in the next two chapters. The problematic nature of the modern category of 'sacrifice' has become increasingly clear in my discussion. I have shown, for example, how such alleged practice can be broken down into smaller elements and also how difficult it is to draw simple lines between different types of ritual activity. I have also shown how the same elements can be used in markedly different contexts – e.g. funerary, sacrificial, divinatory, etc.

As one illustrative example, the cognitive characteristics of battle-line *sphagia* would have been unmistakeably different from those surrounding the similar slaughter of an animal in many forms of alimentary-centred practice. At the same time, the character of alimentary-centred contexts could differ significantly despite being lumped together under one term by modern scholars. Consider, for example, the difference between alimentary 'sacrifice' in a public festival context and in a funerary context. The former would be defined by coming together with friends and family and enjoying the sights and sounds of a state-wide celebration. In terms of the latter by contrast, in discussing interpretations of funerary reliefs, Dalby notes the view that a dead man was himself regarded as the 'host' of his own

funeral banquet – in other words, very different emotional and experiential aspects were involved. In addition, in what appear to be analogous memorials to women, a woman is pictured seated at her own tomb, a female attendant bearing food on a platter.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷² Dalby 1996: 15. E.g. Male: Athens NM 1501, 1509, 15245, etc.; female: Athens NM 1055, B32, etc.

Chapter VI

New approaches I: Sensory analysis

This chapter aims to complement approaches used in my next chapter by applying an emic methodology focusing on a sensory analysis of 'animal sacrifice'. I will assess how 'animal sacrifice' was experienced in terms of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Here I discuss evidence for 'animal sacrifice' where the feasting element was undeniably a central, or prominent, aspect of the rites. Rather than 'sacrifice' possessing any inherent 'meaning', or 'meanings', I will stress a number of different, sometimes seemingly contradictory, experiential lenses with which to draw the significance of the rituals more clearly into view.

I will utilise the sensory approaches discussed in Chapter I on a sense by sense basis, although I recognise the need to consider the way the senses interact and inter-relate in human experiences. In addition, I will use the initial discussion of 'sight' in 'sacrifice' to introduce the main talking points.

In what follows, I will use as a point of departure a recent PhD dissertation by Candice Weddle which focuses on both Greek and Roman 'sacrifice'. She argues that the smell of so-called 'offerings' served first to summon the gods to the proceedings but also that specific odours were intended to induce a certain state of mind in the worshipers.⁵⁷³ In terms of sounds, communication was achieved with the gods through choral and instrumental music and prayer but sounds also played roles in setting the appropriate stage and in signalling and influencing 'proper attitudes and behaviour on behalf of both the human worshipers and the deities and other supernatural figures who were variously propitiated and guarded against during the course of sacrifice'.⁵⁷⁴ She adds that rather than providing a means of communication with the gods, as did odours and sounds, touch functioned instead as a ritual divider between mortals and immortals. Touch is not shared with the gods as a line of communication but was rather a sense that was exercised in the

⁵⁷³ Weddle 2011: 54-5.

⁵⁷⁴ Weddle 2011: 121-2.

human realm either to signify clearly the role of an object utilised in ritual or to remove something from the divine realm and situate it in the realm of men.⁵⁷⁵

My approach, on the other hand, offers a narrower and sharper focus, discusses additional and important elements and presents conflicting ideas. I focus on the main literary descriptions of such activity available to modern scholars from Homer and classical Athens. I also draw out differences between these descriptions that emphasise the variability of actual practice and which are demonstrably not down, solely, to authorial emphases, genre constraints, etc. It becomes clear in my discussion that literary sources emphasise the apparently overwhelmingly sensory nature of 'sacrifice' over other elements, such as any theological speculation or discussion (although this is characteristic of Greek religion as a whole, at least as it is presented to us).

I also demonstrate that various sensory elements and properties held distinct and recognisable experiential 'meanings' and that these were a significant and important part of how 'sacrifice' was understood. In addition, this sensorially rich experience included profound, perceived sensations of the gods' involvement or, at the very least, interest. The gods themselves were often felt to take pleasure in 'sacrifice' much like guests and give feedback via divinatory procedures or via phenomena in the immediate vicinity. Such phenomena made clear their intentions and feelings towards the human world. I also focus on sensory themes more relevant to purely human concerns such as pleasure, the setting apart from the mundane and everyday, the creation of solidarity, the clear articulation (as well as ranking according to familiar categories of social experience) of roles and the opportunities this might have given, as well as the emotional aspect of the rituals.

My main aim therefore, like Candice Weddle, is to attempt to define the perceived significance of the senses in 'animal sacrifice', stressing the importance of some aspects of smell, sound, touch and taste, as well as the more recognised value of sight. Taste and touch might be particularly associated with the feasting following 'sacrifice' and with the procedures preparing the victim for the feast which was markedly less ritualised. However, eating the *splanchna* while not involving literal 'table fellowship' with the gods, was removed from the everyday and mundane in a dramatic way and brought the worshiper to the emotional and, perhaps, cultic heart of the rituals.⁵⁷⁶ Temperature, i.e. heat (one aspect of tactility), a particular kind of skilled handling, some smells (e.g. incense, the

⁵⁷⁵ Weddle 2011: 135.

⁵⁷⁶ The absence of any 'table fellowship' was emphasised in the case of 'sacrifice' generally by Nock 1944: 582.

burned parts of the victim) and some sounds (principally music and prayer) are more clearly associated with interaction with the divine sphere, but also operated in important ways in terms of the sensory experience of a 'sacrifice' in general.

Sight

It will become clear that a sensory code of values operated as part of the way 'sacrifice' was experienced and understood. One way of revealing its nature and function is by considering two vivid descriptions of 'rejected sacrifice'. These not only provide an insight into the rich sensory and inter-sensorial nature of 'rejected sacrifice' but conversely, at the same time, hint at the profound sensorial nature of 'successful sacrifice', versions of which I discuss below.

The first graphic image of 'failed sacrifice' is described by Teiresias in Sophocles, *Antigone*. Teiresias is compelled to 'sacrifice' and test the gods' will following an ominous bird omen (998-1005). This preceding omen, an auditory channel formed of the sounds of birds in vicious combat, suggests an implication of divine displeasure that is confirmed by 'sacrifice'. Teiresias is blind and so an acolyte relays to him the results which, although primarily visual, and vividly so, contain numerous allusions to an auditory dimension, while tactile and olfactory aspects are implied (1006-11). In this description: 'There was no answering flame, only rank juice oozed from the flesh and dripped among the ashes, smouldering and spluttering, the gall vanished in a puff, and the fat ran down and left the haunches bare'.⁵⁷⁷

A similar kind of 'perversion' of a sacrificial code of sensory values is demonstrated by the 'anti-sacrifice' of the cattle of the sun in *Odyssey* (12.395-6) which is again graphically described and is also richly inter-sensorial: 'The hides began to crawl about; the meat, roast and raw, bellowed on the spits; and the sounds as of lowing cattle could be heard'.⁵⁷⁸ I will draw out the auditory, olfactory and tactile significance of both this description and the one above under the relevant side headings in this chapter.

⁵⁷⁷ ἐκ δὲ θυμάτων/Ἥφαιστος οὐκ ἔλαμπεν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σποδῶ/μυδῶσα κηκὶς μηρίων ἐτήκετο/κᾶτυφε κἀνέπτυνε, καὶ μετάρσιοι/χολαὶ διεσπείροντο, καὶ καταρρνεῖς/μηροὶ καλυπτῆς ἐξέκειντο πιμελῆς. Translation by E.F. Watling.

⁵⁷⁸ εἶρπον μὲν ῥινοί, κρέα δ' ἄμφ' ὀβελοῖσι μεμύκει,/ὀπταλέα τε καὶ ὠμά, βοῶν δ' ὥς γίγνεται φωνή. Translation by D.C.H. Rieu.

It is clear that Homer recognised as important the visual and intersensorial nature of 'sacrifice' and of specific sensory values associated with it. In the first passage I will discuss from *Iliad*, the Greeks begin by setting the victims in a carefully arranged order around a well built altar (1.447-8). Chryses subsequently lifts his hands to pray (1.450), a type of gesture often represented in vase paintings showing sacrificial scenes (see Figure 4 above) although very often only one hand is raised.⁵⁷⁹ The libations are of 'gleaming wine' (αἴθοπα 1.462), a clearly visual reference. Pulleyn argues that when applied to wine, this term probably describes the reflection of light from the surface of the wine in a cup.⁵⁸⁰ Further libation (1.470) then follows the end of the meal as well as acting as a prelude to music and dancing in honour of the god. The mixing bowls are filled to the brim with wine (ἐπεστέψαντο ποτοῖο 1.470), a striking visual metaphor. Pulleyn points out that just as a crown adorns the highest point on a human being, so the splendour of the wine is apparent at the top of the bowl.⁵⁸¹

A similar 'sacrifice', but without the important auditory elements of music and dancing, is described in Book 2 (402-30), but this time of a bull to Zeus. There are also a few additional nuances, such as the burning of the raw meat and thigh bones on carefully prepared billets of wood stripped of leaves. In Book 7 (7.313-22) a further 'sacrifice' takes place of a bull to Zeus. Here many of the ritual aspects of the 'sacrifice' seem to be elided and there is no mention of the god's portion. Homer's interest here, however, is mainly on the human participants. Specifically, Agamemnon honours Aias by awarding him the whole length of the chine of the victim (7.321-2) – this is awarded publicly and in view of all the heroes with no little ceremony.

The importance of certain visual and intersensorial values is also evident in the descriptions of 'sacrifice' in *Odyssey*. Book 3 presents a striking visual image where we are told that there were nine seated companies, with five hundred men in each and each company had nine bulls to 'sacrifice' (3.7-9). The reception of visitors is a typical scene in Homer (e.g. 4.21-68) and in what follows the role of *xenia* relations is clear.⁵⁸² The libation cup offered to the disguised Athena is specified as gold, two-handled and filled with wine, while the wine itself is described as 'honey-sweet' (μελιηδέος 3.46), i.e. in terms of taste. The bulls

⁵⁷⁹ Pulleyn 1997: 189.

⁵⁸⁰ Pulleyn 2000: 238.

⁵⁸¹ Pulleyn 2000: 240.

⁵⁸² Following Heubeck et al 1988: 159.

‘sacrificed’ are black (5-6). Later in the book, Nestor gives initial sacrificial instructions from his judgement seat which has been anointed to mark its sanctity.⁵⁸³ It is described as ‘smooth’ (ξεστοῖσι 406), ‘gleaming’ (ἀποστίλβοντες 408) and ‘polished’ (ἀλείφατος 408) and lies in front of the ‘lofty’ (ὑψηλάων 407) doors of his palace.

This later ‘sacrifice’ presents an exceptionally sophisticated and punctilious sensory code and Athena is even said to come to accept it (3.435-6), following her previous epiphany (referred to as *enargēs* by Nestor at 3.420). The victim is a heifer with horns gilded in gold and is described as an *agalma* that is pleasing to the goddess’s eye (3.436-8). This seems to be a reference to the pleasing visual quality of the victim and the ‘sacrifice’. I would suggest that it is this pleasing visual quality that is being stressed, not the notion of the ‘sacrifice’ as a literal ‘gift’ to Athena. This ‘sacrifice’ is hard to parallel and is, in fact, unique in Homer (see also the next chapter for an etic analysis). It is also the only ‘sacrifice’ in my discussion (and in the relevant ancient evidence) where a god comes to ‘accept’ the ‘sacrifice’. In a key discussion, Loraux cites this passage and describes the problems of interpretation it has fostered in terms of what it means to meet the gaze of the gods. She explains that *enargēs* is ‘a divine means of appearing’ and concludes: ‘Etymologically, this word speaks of the white brilliance of lightning, but Homer’s commentators readily saw in it (e.g. Eustathius) – too readily, perhaps – the corporeal presence of the god’.⁵⁸⁴ Constandinidou argues that Homer is indicating that ‘divine power or nature becomes clear, evident, and this is a privilege for the pious and favourites’.⁵⁸⁵ Hitch has recently made the interesting suggestion that there is an essential connection in this passage between the gilding and the ‘presence of Athena’ – they are mentioned together and the flash of the gold might symbolise the goddess’s presence.⁵⁸⁶

In terms of important parallels, Diomedes vows to ‘sacrifice’ a heifer gilded with golden horns to Athena if she assists him in his night raid with Odysseus (*Iliad* 10.284-94). Significantly, Odysseus also prays to the goddess but makes mention of no incentives for her aid of any kind, including ‘sacrifice’ (*Iliad* 10.277-82). Diomedes appears to be trying here to establish reciprocal relations with the goddess (something Odysseus has no need to do with his strong personal relationship with Athena) and reinforces his prayer with

⁵⁸³ Heubeck et al 1988: 185.

⁵⁸⁴ Loraux 1995: 213, n.11.

⁵⁸⁵ Constandinidou 2010: 104 n.39.

⁵⁸⁶ This observation was made at an Approaches to Greek religion: current debates and where to next? seminar on November 22, 2012 at Senate House, London.

reference to the interest the goddess showed in his father.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, Athena's 'presence' here at Pylos may be due to the establishment of relations between her and Nestor, something that Nestor clearly reveals to be his intention (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.379-83, which is the most explicit example). In addition, when Polyxena is 'sacrificed' to Achilles in Euripides, *Hecuba*, once she gives her assent and offers herself to the sword by tearing her robe, she is described as like the 'loveliest of statues', i.e. like an *agalma* (κάπεϊ τόδ' εἰσήκουσε δεσποτῶν ἔπος, / λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος / ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ' ὀμφαλόν, / μαστοῦς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὡς ἀγάλματος / κάλλιστα 557-61). Here again, the visual quality of the victim is stressed in a strikingly vivid description. This 'sacrifice' is also about establishing relations with the dead hero Achilles, who is preventing the departure of the victorious Greeks and demanding to be honoured in his new status by his former comrades.

Returning to the 'sacrifice' in Pylos, other important visual and intersensorial elements are stressed. A *pompe* seems to be implied, although this is by no means certain (it has been argued that *pompe* are absent in Homer).⁵⁸⁸ The anaphora of ἐλθὲ (430, 431, 432, 435) may, however, mark a kind of procession.⁵⁸⁹ A number of male figures (sons of Nestor) have a specific and prominent role to play in the ritual (440-1). Stratius and Echephron lead the heifer, Aretus carries vital ritual equipment, Thrasymedes holds an axe ready to strike and Perseus holds a bowl to collect the blood.

Homer draws attention to the sensory significance of the killing of the victim and the importance of the blood. He describes how the victim's throat is cut (3.455) in a manner indicating the highly visual strain of the narrative, with blood pouring out to be carefully collected in a *sphageion/amnion*. The axe is described as 'sharp' (ὀξὺν 3.433) while the blood is 'dark' and gushes out as life leaves the victim's body (τῆς δ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ μέλαν αἷμα ῥύη, λίπε δ' ὅστέα θυμός 3.455), a vivid visual image. As already noted, the importance of this flow of blood is made clear by vase paintings showing a bloodied altar. In terms of literary references, Aeschylus (*Seven against Thebes* αἰμάσσοντας 275) refers to altars reddened with blood while Euripides (*Iphigenia in Aulis* ἥς αἵματι βωμὸς ἐραίνεται ἄρδην τῆς θεοῦ 1589) refers to a 'thoroughly drenched' altar. This strongly visual element was also divinatory as already discussed—it could be propitious (e.g. Euripides, *Helen* 1583-97)

⁵⁸⁷ Following Hitch 2009: 115-7.

⁵⁸⁸ Hitch 2009: 71-2.

⁵⁸⁹ Heubeck et al 1988: 186.

or the opposite. The thigh bones are then wrapped in fat with raw meat over them and burned (3.456-8) and the *splanchna* consumed (3.461). The co-ordinated work then continues in a seemingly less ritualised fashion with the dismemberment of the rest of the carcass (3.462-4, 470-2). As this continues, Polycaste, the king's youngest daughter, is given prominence as she bathes, anoints and freshly clothes Telemachus so that he 'looks like an immortal god' (δέμας ἀθανάτοισιν ὁμοῖος 3.469).

The final 'sacrifice' I will discuss in *Odyssey* (14.418-38) once again shows the operation of a code of sensory values but here applied in a much more modest and humble setting. This is Eumaeus's 'sacrifice' of a pig while hosting the disguised Odysseus. A number of elements recur but they are outnumbered by the significant differences. A tuft of hair from the victim's head is burned (14.422-3), for example, although in the fire and not on an altar. In addition, while the hog does have its throat cut, this is after having been struck with a plank of oak (14.425-6). Then, however, as already discussed, pieces from all the limbs are burned (14.427-9), seven portions are carved from the victim, with one set aside for the nymphs and Hermes (14.435) and a further sacrificial practice is performed, involving burning (14.446). I have already noted the view that pigs were a distinct category of victim 'sacrificed' in a different way to other victims. Here I will only note the care and diligence with which this 'sacrifice' is prepared, performed and distributed. Odysseus himself is honoured with the pig's long chine (14.437-8). There is no implication in the narrative that this 'sacrifice' is being 'offered' to any god, but 'the gods' clearly figure (they are mentioned three times at 14.423, 14.435 and 14.446) in its execution and performance and are in no way ignored.

Turning to Athens, it is clear that Aristophanes also recognised as important the visual and intersensorial nature of 'sacrifice' and of specific sensory values inherent in such activity. In *Peace*, we find for the first time detailed description of preliminary ritual around the altar (introduced at 942). Either Trygaeus brings a portable altar onto the stage or, more likely, he comically 'discovers' the probable permanent altar somewhere in the stage area, most likely in the orchestra.⁵⁹⁰ The ritual paraphernalia is familiar: basket, barley meal, garland and knife (948). The victim is a lamb and the 'sacrifice' is made to Peace (949). Peace is primarily symbolic in the play and the cult of Peace was only, in fact, established in Athens in 374 BC. Furthermore, this cult also featured 'blood sacrifice' despite the concerns

⁵⁹⁰ Olson 1998: 250.

expressed at 1019-20 that the goddess is offended by blood.⁵⁹¹ The idea that Peace ‘accepts’ (δέξαι θυσίαν τὴν ἡμετέραν 977) the ‘sacrifice’ (this idea is expressed in the prayer of Trygaeus and is discussed below) is to be understood symbolically in terms of the restoration of peace in the world at large with the end of hostilities.

Aristophanes also comically alludes to other significant sensory elements. Barley grains (962) are thrown at the audience – in reality likely reflecting the standard theatrical procedure in this period of throwing food (probably nuts here) to the audience.⁵⁹² Lustral water is also sprinkled on the chorus (969). There is also a comic concern to ‘slaughter’ the animal like a *mageiros* or ‘master slaughterer’ (1017-8), although this action would not be presented on stage. The firewood is to be carefully arranged in a *mantic* fashion (1023-6). These proceedings also have important tactile dimensions discussed below. Following the off-stage ‘slaughter’, the action continues and the thigh bones are removed (1039-40 – only the thigh bones and not any raw meat, in contrast to above) and the *splanchna* (1041-2) prepared for roasting while the greedy Hierocles, an oracle monger, opportunistically appears wearing a laurel crown (1043-4). Reference is made to the tail burning nicely on the altar (1053-6), another divinatory and highly visual feature.

Birds by the same playwright, presents a ‘sacrifice’ with additional evidence for a sensory code and many similarities to the procedures attested to above, but also with striking divergences and/or omissions. A priest is invited (848-50) and then comically dismissed (889-94) and this is the first priest to be mentioned in my discussion other than Chryses. In fact, Chryses played a significant role in that ‘sacrifice’, not only uttering aloud his prayer (*Iliad* 1.450-6) but also burning the god’s portion and pouring libations (*Iliad* 1.463-4). The role of the priest is, however, apparently not obligatory while we also have here the first explicit mention in the texts selected here of a *pompe* (849). There is also present the familiar ritual paraphernalia (850). After a series of unwelcome visitors, the ‘sacrifice’ takes place indoors until the officiant, Pisthetaerus, returns to the stage saying that the ritual was auspicious (1118). This is the first and only divinatory aspect mentioned and it is unclear by what manner this auspiciousness was demonstrated.

The same prominence of sensory values can be found in the work of Euripides and his particular presentation of ‘sacrifice’. In *Electra*, we have the final detailed description of a

⁵⁹¹ Olson 1998: 264.

⁵⁹² Olson 1998: 254.

‘sacrifice’ from the classical period, which again has similarities and divergences from those discussed above. These cannot simply be accounted for in terms of genre or narrative needs or a particular playwright’s preferences. The messenger recounts that Orestes approached Aegisthus while the latter was making a garland for his head (777-8). He is apparently ‘sacrificing’ a bull as a ‘thanks-offering’ to the nymphs and a major feast is planned (785-6). He leads Orestes by the hand in a symbolic, tactile gesture of *xenia* relations as previously discussed (778-96). The young bull is lifted shoulder high by the servants to have its throat cut by their master (813-4). Orestes is invited to demonstrate his skill at dismembering a carcass and skilfully flays and then opens the guts of the victim (815-26).

The next stage of the ‘sacrifice’ is equally loaded with sensory significance for the play’s audience, although here (unlike in the examples of Aristophanes) the royal and mythic context is elevated and almost wholly outside ordinary experience. Aegisthus reads the entrails – the first mention of this prominent small-scale divinatory procedure in ‘animal sacrifice’ in my discussion in this chapter. The emphasis is clearly on the visual aspects of this procedure and the ominous appearance of the entrails, although a tactile dimension is discussed below (838-9). It will be made clear throughout this discussion that aspects of touch can perform an important divinatory role in many forms of ‘sacrifice’, both in facilitating and receiving messages from the gods.

It is clear from a review of our main literary descriptions of ‘animal sacrifice’ from Homer and classical Athens that sensory values were important and that specific visual sensory values were significant at different times and in different ways. Important differences between these descriptions have also been noted. In some cases, these can be seen as down to genre considerations or a particular authorial emphasis, but overall the evidence suggests overwhelmingly the complexity, flexibility and variability of sacrificial behaviour and the lack of a uniform and stable concept of such activity. Having said this, these authors might emphasise much more familiar and everyday aspects of current practice (e.g. Aristophanes), or more imaginary, rare or prestigious aspects (e.g. Euripides) to suit their own agendas. Either way, however, they must have made sense to their audience and been equally intelligible in terms of a code of sensory values operating in specifically sacrificial contexts.

Sound

Auditory values were an equally important part of the way 'sacrifice' was experienced and understood and this is reflected in our literary sources. Again, this remains true for 'perverted' forms of these practices.

In the preceding discussion of examples of 'rejected sacrifice' it was made clear that they contained significant auditory dimensions. In *Antigone* the breakdown of relations with the gods is initially signalled to the admittedly blind Teiresias by an auditory omen – the unusual and ominous sounds of birds in conflict (998-1005). The 'sacrifice' that follows to test the will of the gods contains many auditory aspects with terms such as μυδῶσα (1008), κηκῖς (1008), κᾶτυφε (1009) and κἀνέπτυνε (1009) etc. These sounds appear to represent an inversion of the auspicious sounds of 'successful sacrifice' familiar to the audience. In the second example, the 'sacrifice' of the cattle of the sun in *Odyssey*, the meat itself, both raw and cooked, 'bellows' (μεμύκει 13.395) on the spits and the 'sounds as of lowing cattle' (βοῶν δ' ὥς γίγνεται φωνή 13.396) can be heard. Here, the slaughtered victims themselves make the sounds in this 'sacrifice' as opposed to the worshipers – an auditory indication of the perverted nature of the ritual, as well as the unusual divine status of the victims, who continue to be heard after death. Instead of the ritual cry of the women, the prayers of the officiant and the accompanying music of the ritual as a whole, the only sounds are those of the animal victims that due to their special status should never have been 'sacrificed'. It is, in fact, unusual that our sources make reference to any sound at all made by the victims in normal circumstances.

Homer also presents auditory values as central to the experience of 'sacrifice', both from the perspective of the characters performing these rituals and in terms of the understanding of his audience. At the start of the 'sacrifice' in *Iliad* Book I discussed above, Chryses lifts his hands to pray (1.450) for the second time in the epic. The prayer (1.451-6) is a central auditory feature of this 'sacrifice' and Apollo is explicitly said to hear his priest's request once again (1.457). The Greeks then offer their own supplementary prayers (1.459). Our sources commonly mention these supplementary prayers which might be made by spectators as well as participants in a 'sacrifice' (e.g. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.4.19). Such actions also helped to integrate them more directly into the proceedings. As

they prayed they also sprinkled the barley grains – an auditory act combined with a tactile communicative symbol.

Prayer is clearly fundamental to ‘sacrifice’ in many ways and the most significant auditory element overall.⁵⁹³ The two prayers of Chryses are phrased almost identically, but there are important differences.⁵⁹⁴ The first prayer (1.37-42) makes reference to past ‘sacrifices’ performed in association with worship of Apollo (along with other honours paid to the god), while the second prayer makes no reference to ‘sacrifice’ of any kind, including the one that is being prepared at this time.⁵⁹⁵ In other words, prayer and ‘sacrifice’ seem sometimes to be dislocated and this is a pattern that will consistently emerge in my discussion. It should also be noted that in both instances Chryses prays out aloud. This is so in the first instance, even though he is alone on the beach where only the god can hear him.

Music and dancing then follow in honour of the god and music is the next most significant auditory element of ‘sacrifice’ and one closely related to prayer.⁵⁹⁶ In ancient Greece, participating in choruses for the gods ‘was part of community life, a way of learning a city-state’s religious traditions and expressing one’s devotion to the recognised gods’.⁵⁹⁷ Hymns also had a remarkable similarity to prayers. Indeed, for Bremer a hymn was a ‘sung prayer’ but Pulleyn argues for a difference in function between the two where a hymn is ‘clearly seen as a gift or offering, an *agalma* for the god’.⁵⁹⁸

In the present example, Apollo is said to delight in the music, the music forming the second main auditory feature of this part of the narrative (1.472-4). The apparent implication of the text is that the music is being performed for the purpose of appeasement and that music could certainly serve this purpose, in particular perhaps when it comes to music-loving Apollo. The music goes on all day long and should also be thought of as delighting its audience and repairing fractured nerves and fissures in loyalty following the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles. In Chapter I, the ability of music to create a temporary

⁵⁹³ See Ausfeld 1903, Bremer 1981, Versnel 1981, Pulleyn 1997, etc.

⁵⁹⁴ Pulleyn 2000: 21.

⁵⁹⁵ Hitch 2009: 114.

⁵⁹⁶ See Quasten 1973, Furley 1995, Furley and Bremer 2001, etc.

⁵⁹⁷ Furley and Bremer 2001: 21.

⁵⁹⁸ Bremer 1981: 193; Pulleyn 1997: 49.

community and a 'mutual tuning-in relationship' was discussed.⁵⁹⁹ In this context, it also provided a forum for display for the young soldiers who performed it.

Again, it is important to note that Apollo appears to be appeased by, and to take delight in, the music and dancing and not the 'sacrifice'. There is no mention of his attitude to the 'sacrifice'. It is the music that interests him and this is perhaps not unique to this particular god. To this should be contrasted, however, those cult hymns that have been termed by modern scholars 'self referential', i.e. they contain vivid allusions to rituals such as 'sacrifices' performed in association with them.⁶⁰⁰ Here, at least, the issue appears to be different and it should be remembered that 'sacrifice' had no underlying 'meaning' and that different interpretations are always possible in line with the variation and variability of its forms (see my next chapter for more discussion).

A similar apparent dislocation between 'sacrifice' and prayer is found slightly later in the poem. In the 'sacrifice' to Zeus in Book 2 (2.402-30), we are told that Zeus 'took' (i.e. receives) the 'sacrifice' but would not yet grant the prayer for victory, as he wanted to bring about suffering for the Greek troops (ὥς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἄρα πῶ οἱ ἐπεκράϊαινε Κρονίων,/ ἄλλ' ὃ γε δέκτο μὲν ἱρά, πόνον δ' ἀμέγαρτον ὄφελλεν *Iliad* 2.419-20). It is not at all clear what it means by saying that he 'took', or 'received', the 'sacrifice' and, indeed, there is no clarification of what this might mean in our sources in general. I would suggest that it merely means that the 'sacrifice' is acceptable rather than being rejected and signalling a breakdown in relations with the gods as illustrated above. Zeus is not present to receive the 'sacrifice' and the 'sacrifice' is not presented in terms of a literal 'gift'. 'Sacrifices', however, can be favourable or unfavourable, successful or unsuccessful and this is a constant concern in our sources as already indicated in previous chapters. Kirk has pointed out that δέκτο is 'a very vague term' and I discuss below more examples of this lack of clarity when it comes to in what ways the gods were felt to actually benefit from 'sacrifice'.⁶⁰¹ Also, as noted, Hitch argues that Agamemnon's prayer 'is not bolstered by reference to the sacrifice, nor does the god feel obliged to honour it, even if he receives the offering: the two aspects of the ceremony are seemingly disengaged'.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ See Filmer 2003: 96, McClary 2003: 431.

⁶⁰⁰ Furley 1995: 36; Furley and Bremer 2001: 32 with nos. 1.1.9-10 and 6.1.34-5.

⁶⁰¹ Kirk 1990: 11.

⁶⁰² Hitch 2009: 123-4.

Homer draws attention to similar auditory aspects of 'sacrifice' in *Odyssey*. During the latter 'sacrifice' in Pylos, for example, barley grains are sprinkled and prayers made both by Nestor and the other participants (3.447). As the household head, it is Nestor's prayer, however, that is primary.⁶⁰³

In addition, other important auditory elements are emphasised. When the victim is struck with the axe (3.448-9), the women make their ritual cry (the *ololugê* 3.450-2). This latter auditory aspect is a high point of the ritual and, significantly, the identity of the women is explicitly spelled out and given prominence for the first and, in some cases, only time. In fact, these three lines dedicated to the women appear almost as a counterpoint to those dedicated to the activity of the males, i.e. Nestor's sons. We learn from Herodotus (4.189) that the ritual cry had an aesthetic quality and could be considered beautiful. It was thus an opportunity for women to present themselves positively and creatively in public and to engage on a significant footing with the men in important undertakings. It is also a ritual activity associated exclusively with women, perhaps providing opportunity to practice and perform together and pass down their own traditions. It may well also have varied from household to household as well as city to city.

The ritual cry is raised here when the victim is struck and not when blood is shed. It is the former moment that the women draw attention to, and heighten awareness of, among the other worshipers. As already discussed, in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.3.16), however, the ritual cry is raised when the blood of the animal victim is declared auspicious and at the same time the men raised the paeon and the war shout. The context can thus determine the suitable moment and there appears to be no fixed rule. In terms of the Homeric evidence, the ritual cry is mentioned in several non-sacrificial contexts which give unusual temporary prominence to women (e.g. *Odyssey* 4.767 and *Iliad* 6.297-311 although in the latter case it is in association with an imminent vow of 'sacrifice').

The main auditory element in the Eumaeus 'sacrifice' is an exchange between Odysseus and Eumaeus and not a prayer (14.440-5). The exchange reinforces the sense of Eumaeus's piety and forms a break in the narrative between the main description of the 'sacrifice' and the feasting which is itself preceded by a libation (14.447). However, a prayer had been made by Eumaeus reported in indirect speech and calling for his master's successful

⁶⁰³ This is discussed by Pulleyn 1997: 172-3.

homecoming (14.423-4). According to Hitch, this prayer, along with other gestures towards the gods, renders this a 'sacrifice' in contrast to an earlier non-sacrificial slaughter and meal (14.72-9).⁶⁰⁴ Clearly prayer does play a significant part in how 'sacrifice' was understood and may well have been indispensable, but its precise relationship is complicated and varied.

Aristophanes often emphasises similar auditory values to Homer as important. In *Peace*, for example, the chorus warn that the notorious pipe and lyre player, Chairis (950-5), may spot them and try to perform for the 'sacrifice', pointing to the not absolutely indispensable role of music in 'sacrifice'. This example also reveals that such musicians were professionals performing for a fee.

This source, also however, presents other significant auditory aspects. During the 'sacrifice' in *Peace*, instructions are passed from the master and officiant, Trygaeus, to his slave (e.g. 1053). Although this is clearly necessary for narrative purposes, it might be held to suggest that such instruction was not unheard of in the minds of the audience. A prayer (974-7) is also made here after a joke is formed around the proper response to a formula pronounced before a libation (and by implication, some 'sacrifices') intended to allow those who were ritually impure to abstain themselves (969).⁶⁰⁵ Denniston links this reference with the concern expressed by Aegisthus that Orestes washes his hands before joining the 'sacrifice' in Euripides, *Electra* (791). This request is nothing to do with the lustral bowl (for the preparations are still being made), but is a further precaution when dealing with strangers.⁶⁰⁶

Trygaeus also shows an occasional concern for silence (e.g. *Peace* 1053), heightening attention to certain key moments of the ritual. The ritualised formula *sponde sponde* (1110) also forms a key auditory moment, signalling the significance of this point of the ritual and drawing it to the attention of the participants. In terms of the auditory code during 'sacrifice', it is noticeable that the changed nature of Heracles in the eponymous play by Euripides (930) is signalled first of all by him stopping without a word during the ritual. At the point at which he is subsequently completely overcome, he then speaks with

⁶⁰⁴ Hitch 2009: 46.

⁶⁰⁵ Olson 1998: 255.

⁶⁰⁶ Denniston 1939: 148.

a madman's laugh before slaughtering his wife and children. It is noteworthy that it is a subtle auditory cue that first signals the perverted nature of the 'sacrifice'.

Similar themes are emphasised by Aristophanes in *Birds*. The priest, for example, is comically dismissed following his hyperbolic and ridiculously elaborate prayer (864-88). A piper costumed as a raven is also comically silenced (859). The strong link between cult hymns and 'sacrifice' in securing the god's favour seems to be suggested by the enthusiasm of the chorus to break out into song (851-4). However, the fact that the accompanying piper is silenced points to its not indispensable role and that 'sacrifice' and cult hymns were not linked in any straightforward way.

Auditory values are also emphasised by Euripides and there are again broad similarities and some additional clues surrounding more subtle aspects. In *Electra*, the house is described as full of noise and movement with the co-ordinated and inter-connected work taking place in preparation for the 'sacrifice'. Much of this work is done by the slaves, with Aegisthus acting as officiant: some hold baskets, some light fires and bring pots to boil, while a *sphageion* is also mentioned (800-2). This reminds us that there were many background sounds associated with the preparations for, and performance of, 'sacrifice' that are often not clear from our source material, presumably often because they were considered unimportant.

Two important prayers are contrasted with one another in this description (805-10). One is made aloud by Aegisthus which disguises his true criminal nature and deeds. The other is made under his breath by Orestes which expresses his just desire to reclaim his father's house. The fact that the just prayer is uttered quietly inverts the usual expectations about non-audible prayer being suspicious, but is here required principally by the context.⁶⁰⁷

There is another important auditory dimension at work in this 'sacrifice'. Aegisthus is 'sacrificed' without any inauspicious sounds or crying out. This is in contrast to his death in Aeschylus's *Choephoroi* (870) where he does cry out, but not in a sacrificial context. When we come to Clytemnestra, however, the situation becomes different. Denniston points out that Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides all treat the killing of Aegisthus as, without question, right and proper. On the murder of Clytemnestra, however, they differ. For

⁶⁰⁷ Versnel 1981: 25-6 argues that 'the connection between silent prayer and evil became a topos in literature'.

Euripides, however inhuman and repulsive she may be, Clytemnestra is still the mother of Orestes and Apollo himself is 'arraigned *in absentia* in the epilogue' of the play for his leading role in the murder.⁶⁰⁸ In all the treatments of her death, she screams and/or protests loudly (Sophocles, *Electra* 1404-16, Aeschylus, *Choephoroi* 895-934) but in the version of Euripides this takes place in a sacrificial context, a fictitious birth ritual of purification (first mentioned at 651-2). Euripides is the only playwright to place her murder in such a context (at 1165-7 we hear her death cries) and it seems to be counterposed to the murder of Aegisthus. The murder of Aegisthus in a sacrificial context elicits feelings of triumph and optimism among the chorus (859-80) and is considered auspicious, whereas the murder of Clytemnestra in a similar context imposes feelings of dread and despair and prefigures disaster (1168-77).

As already indicated, the relationship of prayer to 'sacrifice' was complicated and multiple interpretations are necessary. I will argue in my next chapter that many 'sacrifices', despite being similar in form to others, were not felt as being 'offered' to the gods (i.e. they were not 'special patient' rituals) and that other understandings were both current and fundamental. Pulleyn notes that we never find the verb ἐλθεῖν in any of the prayers which are said to accompany 'animal or human sacrifice' in the 5th century BC literature. The only apparent exception is Euripides, *Hecuba* (536) where Achilles is urged to 'come' to the 'sacrifice' of Polyxena.⁶⁰⁹ Pulleyn argues that this is due to his heroic, as opposed to divine, status: a god does not need to be summoned whereas a dead hero does. He also argues that parallel language characterises prayers to both heroes and gods.⁶¹⁰ In *Hecuba* (535) Achilles is also asked to 'receive' (δέξαι) the 'sacrifice'. In the same playwright's *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1572), Artemis is likewise asked to 'receive' (δέξαι) the 'sacrifice'.

There are further examples of the use of imperatives of δέχομαι in the context of the relevant 5th century BC literature which further demonstrate the complexity of the relationship of prayer and 'sacrifice'. The titular goddess is asked to 'accept' the 'sacrifice' in Aristophanes' *Peace* (977) which has already been discussed in terms of its symbolic role. It also occurs in comic contexts by the same playwright in a mock sacrificial oath-ritual (*Lysistrata* 204) where a bowl is to 'receive' the mock 'sacrifice' and again in a symbolic role (in *Wasps* 876 Bdelycleon asks Apollo to soften his father's heart just as he is given soothing honey) in a bloodless sacrificial context. In Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (8.7.3) Cyrus

⁶⁰⁸ Denniston 1939: xxv-xxxvi.

⁶⁰⁹ Pulleyn 1997: 142.

⁶¹⁰ Pulleyn 1997: 144.

asks the gods to accept his 'sacrifices' as tokens of gratitude for his many successes. The context is clearly extraordinary and idealised and occurs at the end of Cyrus's legendary life. In Pindar's 12th *Pythian* (12.5) the verb 'receive' is again used in a symbolic sense but this time in relation to a victory garland. The only other example, Euripides's *fragment 912* (Nauck), concerns a 'bloodless sacrifice' in a highly philosophical passage (and is thus unlikely to represent everyday practice) in which Zeus is given the same name as Hades.

There are indications that the blow inflicted on a victim during a 'sacrifice' was understood to have a significant aural component. This is suggested by Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* (θαῦμα δ' ἦν αἴφνης ὀρᾶν./πληγῆς κτύπον γὰρ πᾶς τις ἥσθετ' ἄν σαφῶς,/τὴν παρθένον δ' οὐκ εἶδεν οὐ γῆς εἰσέδου 1581-3) where the messenger recalls hearing such a familiar sound when the eyes of all the worshipers are fixed on the ground, not knowing that a substitution of victims by Artemis had taken place.

Sound was thus crucial to any experience of 'sacrifice' and this was true not only for classical Athens but ancient Greece in general. Prayer and music were of principal importance in relations with the gods although sound was also important on a purely human level in terms of the presiding official (magistrate, priest, head of household, etc) giving instructions and the heightening of attention by moments of prescribed silence. Music would be effective for the mutually 'tuning-in' of participants both together and with the gods while prayer could invoke, please or interest generally the gods as well offering potential performative opportunities for priests and dignitaries. In addition, the ritual cry helped incorporate female members more emotionally into the heart of the rituals performed and could have markedly aesthetic qualities that would vary from place to place and perhaps household to household.

Smell

Olfactory values were also fundamental to the way 'sacrifice' was experienced and understood despite being almost entirely overlooked by modern scholars. One of the central sensory values of many forms of sacrificial activity concerns the portion of the animal victim burned for the god. It appears that this important value was experienced and understood in sensory terms, rather than there being any clear and consistent idea of why (or how) the gods would benefit from it.

Homer clearly saw the burning of the god's portion as a vital element of 'sacrifice' involving an olfactory interaction between men and gods, but there are many problems with this view nonetheless. In *Iliad* there are a couple of vague references to the 'savour' of 'sacrifice' rising to heaven or up into the sky (1.318, 8.549). There is no real explanation anywhere, however, in Homer of how the gods benefited from, or in what ways enjoyed this presumably pleasing smell. There is one apparent exception. We are told on one occasion that it was a 'sweet savour', but that the gods did not 'partake' of the savour of 'sacrifices' of hecatombs made by the Trojans because of their absolute hatred of them (8.550-2). The passage is strange, in the first instance, in that all the gods are said to hate the Trojans and not just the pro-Greek ones. According to Kirk, these verses are, in fact, quoted by the pseudo-Platonic author of the *Second Alcibiades* and are an unsuccessful supplement, making use of language that Homer seems to have chosen to avoid.⁶¹¹ They thus do not reflect the worldview of Homer, or that of the great majority of his audience, even if such perspectives could be shown to be popular in philosophical circles in later periods.

There are also many references to the burning of thigh bones during 'sacrifice' and Zeus pities Hector recalling that he burned the thigh bones of many oxen, apparently on his behalf (22.170-1). As already noted, Zeus also speaks of the 'savour' of 'sacrifice' as part of the *geras* or 'portion' of honour that the gods are entitled to (4.49). In another difficult passage (7.446-53), Poseidon states clearly that the gods demand 'sacrifice' (but he does not reveal why or in what ways they benefit from such activity) when he complains to Zeus that the Greeks have built a defensive wall but not offered hecatombs to the gods. It is also claimed (however unlikely this may seem) that the fame of this wall will eclipse that of the wall built by himself and Apollo. Hitch argues: 'Poseidon's anger implies that the gods want sacrifice, but that the relationship between men and gods has broken down or is dysfunctional'.⁶¹²

Similarly, *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* states that 'all men will give you hecatombs and gather here (at Delos) and incessant savour of rich sacrifice will always arise' (ἄνθρωποι τοὶ πάντες ἀγνίησουσ' ἐκατόμβας/ἐνθάδ' ἀγειρόμενοι, κνίσση δέ τοι ἄσπετος αἰεὶ 57-8). Pindar in *Nemean* 11 also refers, for example, to the 'savour of burnt sacrifice' (κνίσσῃ 7).

⁶¹¹ Kirk 1990: 11.

⁶¹² Hitch 2009: 137.

However, from an early point in our evidence a variant pattern is insistent. In *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, for example, it is ‘honour’ that the gods are denied when mankind ceases to ‘sacrifice’ due to the famine caused by Demeter’s grief (καί νύ κε πάμπαν ὄλεσσε γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων/λιμοῦ ὑπ’ ἀργαλῆς, γεράων τ’ ἐρικυδέα τιμὴν/καὶ θυσιαῶν ἤμερσεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντας,/εἰ μὴ Ζεὺς ἐνόησεν ἔῳ τ’ ἐφράσσατο θυμῷ 310-3).

There are also troubling passages in Homer where it is implied that the gods literally feast on ‘sacrifices’, much like humans. This is alleged by the Phaeacians (*Odyssey* 7.201-3) who claim to enjoy commensality with the gods, although in the actual narrative of the poem no gods feast with them. Iris (*Iliad* 23.205-7) also states to Achilles that she is in a hurry because she wants to enjoy ‘hecatomb sacrifices’ with the Ethiopians (two other less explicit references to gods dining with the Ethiopians are *Odyssey* 1.25-6 and *Iliad* 1.423-4). Hitch argues that this passage continues the negative presentation of reciprocity often found in ‘embedded sacrifices’ (i.e. those presented through a secondary voice, either by the ‘complex narrator’ or in character speech) with the notion here that the gods are too preoccupied to hear prayers.⁶¹³ It should be noted that both these instances refer to fabled peoples enjoying a kind of semi-divine status on the margins of the ‘real world’. The most explicit example, however, is found in the speech of Phoinix during the embassy to Achilles where the gods are said to have had ‘dined’ on hecatombs (ἄλλοι δὲ θεοὶ δαίνυνθ’ ἑκατόμβας 9.535). In Hesiod (*Theogony* 507-616) we also find implied the idea that before the decisive action of Prometheus gods and men ate together on at least some occasions and enjoyed the same food (i.e. meat).

Griffin argues that Homer normally avoids saying that the gods ‘eat the offerings made by men’, preferring such expressions as ‘the goddess came to meet the offering’ or ‘Zeus received the offering’ in examples already discussed.⁶¹⁴ However, as we have seen these expressions are also rare in Homer and just as vague and problematic, if not more so. Griffin argues that it is not made clear why the gods insist on receiving these ‘sacrifices’. He adds that in the context of the embassy passage, ‘this uncomplicated assertion is put in the mouth of Phoinix, not that of the poet himself and refers to the past’.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹³ Hitch 2009: 132.

⁶¹⁴ Griffin 1995: 137.

⁶¹⁵ Griffin 1995: 137.

Kirk elaborated on the inconsistencies in our evidence. Crucially, in his discussion of *Iliad* 1.315-7 he argued that ‘what is not said is that the god sniffed, or even relished the savour, let alone that his hunger was allayed by it. In short, all the detail is lavished on the human end of sacrifice, the burning of fat-encased thigh bones on the altars down below’.⁶¹⁶ He added that ‘at all costs the vision had to be avoided of anything resembling that gruesome Mesopotamian scene in the eleventh tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh in which when sacrifices are restored the hungry gods smell the sweet savour and crowd round the sacrificer like flies’.⁶¹⁷ Here he constructed a historical model starting with the Neolithic period and the idea of commending the remains of the victim to the god (here he follows Karl Meuli – see Chapter II) which was then overlaid by the Mesopotamian idea of the gods as a group feeding on the smoke of ‘sacrifice’ that reached Greece in the Late Bronze Age. He added that subsequently the ‘special Greek idea’ of gods descending to dine with men, associated with the idea of a golden age, was developed and ‘replaced in turn by the Homeric view’ of the Olympians as nourished on ambrosia and nectar and thus ‘reducing the whole “shared ox” to a mere token of honour and entitlement’.⁶¹⁸

While I would agree with Kirk on the inconsistencies of the evidence and also that the emphasis is often on the ‘human’ side of ‘sacrifice’ I disagree that his historical model is even necessary. The evidence may in part be simply due to confusion over how the gods benefited from ‘sacrifice’ along with the evolving, innovating and competing claims of cultural producers from various fields speculating and performing on the themes of cult and religion. There may simply have never been any clear idea of how the gods were interested in ‘sacrifice’ as opposed to a need to play down any perceived ‘carnal’ elements. Furthermore, this does not seem to have aroused much concern in ancient Greece in general as I will demonstrate. This argument is borne out further by my etic cognitive ritual theories-based analysis in the next chapter. There I argue that that the same or similar acts of ‘sacrifice’ could be interpreted and experienced in diverse ways according to the nature of divine involvement. In addition, some features of ‘sacrifice’ can be explained without recourse to the gods in terms of the activation and triggering of universal evolved cognitive structures in certain predictable and recurring contexts.

⁶¹⁶ Kirk 1990: 11.

⁶¹⁷ Kirk 1990: 12.

⁶¹⁸ Kirk 1990: 12.

It should be added, however, that in Aristophanes, *Birds*, we have the comic image of the gods starved into submission by a bird blockade that robs them of sustenance from sacrificial smoke (190-3 and 1516-20):

ὅταν θύσωσιν ἄνθρωποι θεοῖς,
ἦν μὴ φόρον φέρωσιν οἱ ὑμῖν οἱ θεοί,
διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους
τῶν μηρίων τὴν κνῖσαν οὐ διαφρήσετε

and

θύει γὰρ οὐδείς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι
θεοῖσιν, οὐδὲ κνῖσα μηρίων ἄπο
ἀνῆλθεν ὡς ἡμᾶς ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου,
ἀλλ' ὥσπερ εἰ Θεσμοφορίοις νηστεύομεν
ἄνευ θυηλῶν.

Again, this is the creation of a cultural producer working within the expectations and conventions of the comic genre. The close link between 'sacrifice' and the pleasures of feasting and appetite in comedy in general has been noted by scholars and is clearly relevant here.⁶¹⁹ This creation of Aristophanes should surely not be taken as reflective of actual belief on the part of the average 5th century BC Athenian. It should be noted that in the same play the notorious glutton, Heracles, is almost overcome with desire to actually eat bird meat being cooked by Peisetaerus (e.g. 1689-1693). In other words, Aristophanes himself is deliberately not being consistent or serious.

All this can also be contrasted with the view presented within the work of another (but very different) cultural producer, Plato. In *Euthyphro*, the eponymous character is to some extent presented as reflecting conventional piety (although this is in some senses problematic) and when pressed by Socrates he implies that it is obvious (in other words clear to anyone) that the gods do not actually need 'sacrifice'.⁶²⁰ Furthermore when pressed yet again he argues that the 'purpose' of 'sacrifice' is to 'honour' the gods and to give them tokens of esteem and gratification (15a). It is only under the philosophical

⁶¹⁹ E.g. Redfield 2012: 172.

⁶²⁰ Parker 1998: 121-2 on *Euthyphro* as a representative of traditional piety.

onslaught of Socrates and, after some reflection, that he comes to the considered conclusion he gives us as to the ‘meaning’ of ‘sacrifice’ (this is discussed further in my next chapter). As argued throughout this thesis, ‘sacrifice’ can be seen to have no essential underlying ‘meaning’, and can be experienced and understood in remarkably diverse ways.

The smell of burned portions could also mingle with the smell of incense during ‘animal sacrifice’, the two becoming almost inseparable. The relationship between incense and ‘sacrifice’ in a domestic context is clear, for example, from a reference in Antiphon (*Against the Stepmother for Poisoning* 1.18) where it is used in connection with a sacrificial meal put on by a host for his friend who is about to travel by sea. It should be noted, in addition, that numerous temple inventories report *thumiatēria*, or censers, for incense such as for the Delian Artemisium.⁶²¹ Small altars might also serve in lieu of a censer and, like bigger altars, were often garlanded and sometimes had the head of an ox attached to the side, or an ox skull, clear evidence of their complementary nature to ‘sacrifice’.⁶²²

It is likely, however, that they carried radically different significances. Detienne notes the fictitious and fantastic tales about the ‘gathering’ of incense in Arabia (e.g. Herodotus 3.107, 3.110).⁶²³ He also describes the association with the dry, the hot and the incorruptibility of fragrant smells (such as incense), versus the associations of putrid smells with the wet, the cold and with corruption.⁶²⁴ However, he argues that the smell of burned victims emphasised the distance that separates men from gods and recalled and maintained the original allocation of shares masterminded by Prometheus (Hesiod, *Theogony* 507-616, *Works and Days* 45-105) when men and gods were first set apart. Incense, however, was the surest means of rediscovered commensality and communication between men and gods.⁶²⁵ I have already argued that incense could be felt to actually invoke the divine and this is clearly different to the burning of victims that signalled more the pleasure of men and gods.

A systematic review of scientific experimentation has found credible evidence that odours – in particular incense and similar types of scent – can affect mood, physiology and

⁶²¹ Naiden 2013: 71 and e.g. *ID* 104.17.4 (gold censers).

⁶²² Naiden 2013: 75.

⁶²³ Detienne 1994: 17.

⁶²⁴ Detienne 1994: 11.

⁶²⁵ Detienne 1994: 48-9.

behaviour.⁶²⁶ This kind of research is critical for understanding the role of incense in ancient Greece in experiential terms. Powerful odours, like incense, exert their effects through emotional learning, conscious perception and belief/expectation.⁶²⁷ Odours are thus highly associable and emotionally evocative, while key findings also illustrate ‘that the chemical nature of the odourant itself plays a secondary role in the emotional and subjective changes that occur in the presence of an odour and that it is the “meaning” of the aroma that induces the consequent psychological and/or physiological responses’.⁶²⁸ As odour perception is mediated by learned associations, culture provides a substantial framework upon which these learnings take place.⁶²⁹

A key text here in our evidence from ancient Greece is a fragmentary kletic hymn by Sappho to Aphrodite that is discussed in more detail in my next chapter. This hymn creates a magical and powerful multi-sensory environment (*Lobel-Page 2 – Appendix 2*) which includes smoking altars of frankincense and is meant to benefit and ‘receive’ the goddess. The scene is clearly emotional and uplifting, while also encoding cultural associations particular to ancient Greece, including a strong link to Aphrodite herself as I will show.

Another common olfactory element of ‘sacrifice’ was the wreaths formed of fragrant flowers or leaves. According to Classen et al, garlands and floral crowns were thought to make fitting ‘offerings’ to the gods and to bestow on their wearers an essence of divinity when worn by mortals.⁶³⁰ These were a common feature of apparel in vase paintings (see the examples in this thesis), but were not exclusive to ‘animal sacrifice’ and occurred in other ritual and celebratory contexts.⁶³¹ Garlands of flowers are also often mentioned in the literary sources (e.g. Aristophanes, *Wealth* 819-20). As fragrant sensory elements, they also helped to attract the fragrance loving gods. It should be noted that even water was believed to have strong aromatic qualities in the ancient world and it could also have fragrance added to it.⁶³² In *Odyssey*, for example, there is mention of lustral water which is specifically described as ‘flowered’ (χέρνιβα δέ σφ’ Ἄρητος ἐν ἀνθεμόεντι λέβητι/ἤλυθεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο φέρων 3.440-1), another aromatic aspect to this ‘sacrifice’ and, by implication, many others.

⁶²⁶ Herz 2009.

⁶²⁷ Herz 2009: 276.

⁶²⁸ Herz 2009: 276-8.

⁶²⁹ Herz 2009: 282.

⁶³⁰ Classen et al 1994: 14.

⁶³¹ Van Straten 1995: 161.

⁶³² See Classen et al 1994: 25 for a discussion of the evidence.

Not all the smells of ‘sacrifice’, however, were likely felt to attract the gods. Scholars rarely tackle the issue of manure, for instance.⁶³³ The smell of manure might have been prodigious in the case of large animals or festival contexts involving large-scale slaughter and there are occasional literary references to dung from sacrificial victims (e.g. *Iliad* 23.777). Regulations concerning manure, mainly prohibitions against dumping it on sanctuary grounds, are quite common in the epigraphic record and this would have included waste from sacrificial animals.⁶³⁴ A late 5th to early 4th century BC inscription from the sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea assigns responsibilities concerning manure to a specific official, the *demiourgos*, who faced fines for failure to carry out his responsibilities.⁶³⁵ Dillon, however, argues that manure could have been invaluable to a sanctuary (as an agricultural commodity that could be sold) and a law of the Delphic Amphictyony of 380 BC is cited in this context.⁶³⁶ This law forbade the removal of manure from the ‘sacred land’ belonging to the sanctuary of Apollo that was located in the plain below, on the border with Amphissa. The law emphasises that the land must be left uncultivated so that, although cattle are allowed to graze there, nothing can be taken from the land that might suggest it is being used productively.

Smell, therefore, as I have shown, was central in experiences of, and interaction with, the gods. Incense could actually invoke the gods and was believed to possess divine and magical qualities. At the same time, burning portions of meat and thigh bones gave an unexplained pleasure to the gods although it is not clear in what ways this benefited them, if at all. Indeed, there is confusion and inconsistency in terms of how the gods are nourished in our source material from Homer onwards. There is also inconsistency regarding in what ways, if at all in some cases (where only prayer gains their attention and not what follows, etc.), ‘sacrifice’ actually interests them.

Touch

Tactile values were also important to ‘sacrifice’ in a number of different ways. Again, one way to approach this is via ‘perverted’ or ‘rejected sacrifice’. The example discussed above from *Antigone* includes reference to the divinatory squeezing of a gall-bladder when held over the altar flames (καὶ μετάρσιοι/χολαὶ διεσπείροντο 1009-10). In this reference from

⁶³³ An exception is Dillon 1997.

⁶³⁴ Lupu 2009: 28.

⁶³⁵ LSCG 67.27-30.

⁶³⁶ E.g. Dillon 1997: 126; LSCG 78.

Sophocles we have another example of the link between small-scale divinatory practice and the field of touch, but this time in an inauspicious context. In addition, one of the deviant features at the ‘sacrifice’ of the cattle of the sun in *Odyssey* was the use of leaves from an oak tree instead of barley grains (12.357-8). These leaves are also explicitly referred to as ‘soft’, (τέρενα 12.357 i.e. in contrast to the usually coarse barley grains), a more subtle tactile indication of their unacceptable nature. The deviant use of water instead of mixed wine for the libation should also be noted (12.362-3). There was a code concerning the acceptable sensible qualities of the mediums used at specific points in various rituals associated with ‘sacrifice’. Water was acceptable for preliminary purifications but not for libation and mixed wine was acceptable for libation (although some were wine-less) but not for preliminary purification.

The careful, controlled, expert and thorough tactility of the preparations for ‘sacrifice’ will be a recurrent theme in this discussion, as will be the symbolic and communicative role of touch (although often the ‘meanings’ involved are irretrievable). At the ‘sacrifice’ to Apollo in *Iliad* the Greeks begin by setting the victims in proper order around the well built altar (1.447-8). They then wash their hands and take up the barley grains (1.449). From a sensorial perspective the washing of hands (or sprinkling with water) can be said to transfer the sensorial qualities of the water (i.e. freshness, purity etc) to the participants.⁶³⁷ Chryses then lifts his hands to pray (1.450), a key form of tactile communication and symbolism.

In *Odyssey*, the role of touch in *xenia* relations is clear as Peisistratus, the first to reach the visitors, takes them by the hand, gives them places to sit at the banquet near his brother and father, offers them part of the *splanchna* and pours a libation before speaking (3.36-41). Peisistratus is Nestor’s youngest son and unmarried and as the most junior of those providing hospitality he goes to welcome the newcomers; similarly at *Iliad* 11.765-79 when Nestor and Odysseus are said to have visited Peleus, they were greeted by Achilles.⁶³⁸ In addition, from an intersensorial perspective, Visser notes that in many cultures ‘two people do not feel they can talk in a friendly way with each other unless they have first eaten together – it is an equivalent of being “properly introduced”’.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁷ Following Kondo 2005: 206.

⁶³⁸ Following Heubeck et al 1988: 162.

⁶³⁹ Visser 1991: 87.

As already noted, the sons of Nestor each have a specific and prominent role to play in the later 'sacrifice' at the end of the book (440-1) – an aspect of tactile inter-connectedness. A tuft of hair is cut from the head of the victim and burned on the altar (3.446). This visual and tactile symbol (a first-fruits rite as discussed previously) can be compared to Euripides, *Alcestis* (73-6) where the human victim is said to be dedicated to the gods below when Thanatos has cut off a lock of her hair.⁶⁴⁰ Barley grain is also sprinkled (3.447). The terminology generally associated with the barley meal in our sources ('throw' προβάλοντο *Iliad* 1.458, 'take-up' ἀνέλονται *Iliad* 2.410, 'hurl' ῥίπτει Aristophanes, *Peace* 962, etc) places its significance primarily in the tactile symbolic sphere and it is one of many tactile gestures aimed at facilitating communication with the gods. Slightly later on, Telemachus is bathed (3.464-8). In Homer, a woman normally helps with the bath (e.g. 4.46-51), although this episode was perhaps devised to foreshadow the union of Telemachus and Polycaste (according to the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* fr. 221 Polycaste bore him a son, Persepolis).⁶⁴¹

In addition, the piety and good character of Eumaeus is manifest in his use of touch in the course of his 'sacrifice' in *Odyssey* (14.410-40). Tactile values thus form one of the ways in which the poet characterises this noble servant to his audience. Here also, there is the usual emphasis on burning (i.e. temperature) at certain points in the ritual (14.427-9, 14.422, 14.447).

Aristophanes also emphasises tactile values of various kinds. In *Birds*, the familiar ritual paraphernalia (656-957) plays a key communicative, tactile role in the ritual. In *Peace*, on the other hand, there is also a clear division of roles and responsibility throughout the 'sacrifice' with Trygaeus (as head of household) overseeing the ritual and dictating its performance (see above for examples). There is thus a clear hierarchy involved in this highly tactile environment. The slave also makes a quick anti-clockwise circuit of the altar (957) marking the removal of the ritual activity from the everyday and mundane world. A brand is probably dipped in the *chérnips* and sprinkled on the victim so that it responds appropriately (959-60). This is also referred to in Euripides, *Herakles* (928-9). On one level this is a key act of tactile symbolism and it is discussed further in my next chapter.

⁶⁴⁰ Following Heubeck et al 1988: 187-8.

⁶⁴¹ Heubeck et al 1988: 189.

There are many further tactile values expressed in this play. While barley meal (948-9) and washing of hands (961) are again present, here lustral water is sprinkled on the chorus (969), an integrative as well as purificatory action in a real cultic setting. As noted, there is also a comic concern to slaughter the animal like a *mageiros* or 'master slaughterer' (1017-8) while the firewood is being carefully arranged in a *mantic* fashion (1026). This latter careful, tactile preparation refers to one of the most basic methods of divination, whereby the *mantis* examines the way in which the 'god's portion' of the 'sacrifice' is burned.⁶⁴² It is performed here by Trygaeus and significantly not the slave. In addition, following the off-stage 'slaughter', reference is made to the tail burning nicely on the altar (1054-5), another divinatory and highly visual feature. Also, however, Trygaeus expresses a concern that it not be touched (1053 - as well as a concern for silence) an important tactile prohibition, contravention of which would prevent successful communication with the divine.⁶⁴³

Additional tactile values are emphasised as important by Euripides and likewise show the variability and complexity of their nature and function. The messenger recounts in *Electra*, that Orestes approached Aegisthus while the latter was cutting 'soft' (τερείνης) young myrtle leaves to make a garland for his head (777-8). He leads Orestes by the hand in a symbolic, tactile gesture of *xenia* relations (778). In the house, there is the previously discussed co-ordinated and inter-connected work taking place in preparation for the 'sacrifice'. After praying (805-8) Aegisthus cuts a tuft of hair from the victim's head and burns it on the altar (810-2). The use of the right hand for placing the tuft of hair on the altar's flame seems to point to a ritual detail, as noted by Denniston.⁶⁴⁴ This is because it would have been natural to use the left hand as the right had just been used for the cutting.

The act of slaughter also involves a significant tactile value in this play. The young bull is lifted shoulder high by the servants to have its throat cut by their master (813-4) – an important and symbolic tactile feat of strength. Other examples are Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (235-7), where the victim is human and compared to a young goat and Euripides, *Helen* (ἀναρπάσαντες Ἑλλήνων νόμῳ/νεανίαις ὥμοισι ταύρειον δέμας 1561-2), where lifting a bull in a sacrificial context is described as 'the way in Hellas'. This can be compared with similar tactile symbolism in previously discussed 'sacrifices' also involving

⁶⁴² Olson 1998: 226.

⁶⁴³ This follows the reconstruction of van Straten 1995: 122.

⁶⁴⁴ Denniston 1939: 150.

feats of strength. For example, Nestor delegates to his sons the strenuous undertaking necessary for slaughtering the victim after it is stunned (*Odyssey* 3.453). The forequarters of the bull are raised off the ground and the beast's head drawn back; its throat is thus exposed and the victim's head is turned upwards 'towards the gods in whose honour it is being slain'.⁶⁴⁵ Orestes is also, as noted above, invited to demonstrate his skill at dismembering a carcass and skilfully flays and then opens the guts of the victim (815-26). Visser refers to the mystique often attached to the art of carving and adds that 'a carver, where meat is ceremonially divided before the company, is the focus of everyone's attention'.⁶⁴⁶

As noted above, touch is also an important part of the process when Aegisthus reads the entrails. It is specified twice that Aegisthus touches or takes hold of them (827-30 and 838-9). It has been clear throughout this discussion that aspects of touch can perform an important divinatory role in many forms of 'sacrifice', both in facilitating and receiving messages from the gods.

In terms of the link between touch and male bonding, Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 2.12) tells us, for example, that the way to obtain an invitation to another's 'sacrifices' was to invite them to one of your own. In Plato's *Laws* (5.738d) we see also the link between 'sacrifice' and social intimacy (he says people may fraternise with one another at 'sacrifices' and thereby gain knowledge and intimacy) and a key aspect of this would be mediated via some of the tactile codes and symbols discussed above. A man's wife could join him in prayers and in 'sacrifices' (e.g. Xenophon, *Economics* 7.7-9, where they are apparently 'offered' so that the wife might prove useful) but the man is very much in control of the proceedings and dictates their actions and 'purposes'.

Regarding the control of touch, we are told that adulteresses were barred from 'public sacrifices' while slaves and alien women could attend (e.g. Demosthenes, *Against Neaera* 59.85). Murderers were also barred (e.g. Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 20.158). Fears are also expressed about deserters (Lysias, *Against Leocrates* 142) and men who reject their parents (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.2) in the context of 'public sacrifices' and about the acceptability of those in charge of these various 'sacrifices' on behalf of the city (e.g. Lysias, *Against Andocides* 6.4). Bad character and bad behaviour is associated with failed

⁶⁴⁵ Following Heubeck et al 1988: 188.

⁶⁴⁶ Visser 234-5, 237.

and 'rejected sacrifices' (e.g. Antiphon, *On the Murder of Herodes* 5.82, 5.84). In other words, there is a 'moral' dimension to touch in 'sacrifice'. In line with this, there is also a marked concern about 'sacrificing' contrary to ancestral custom (e.g. Demosthenes, *Against Neaera* 59.116). In addition, we find the allegation that fellow prisoners refused to share fire, meals or 'sacrifices' with a fellow inmate because of his behaviour (Dinarchus, *Against Aristogiton* 2.9).

'Sacrifice' was also fundamental to social identity and recognition by one's peers. Isaeus (*Philoctemon* 6.22) records an instance when the sacrificial victim was removed in the context of rituals marking admission to a ward and the question of identity was thus subsequently deferred. Isaeus (*Ciron* 8.15) also refers to 'sacrificing' together as a key proof of social identity and parentage. The central role of the head of household has also already been noted. The instruments of this form of touch, sacrificial utensils for example, were not thought to be imbued with powers or associated with feelings of reverence or awe. In Euripides, *Andromache* (ἀμφώβολοι/σφαγῆς ἐχώρουν βουπόροι 1133-4), double-pointed ox-piercing spits are, in fact, 'snatched from the slaughter of victims' and used as weapons during a battle fought over and around an altar.

Tactile values are thus an important dimension of how 'sacrifice' was experienced and understood. Touch was heavily controlled and hierarchical and was also important as a skilled and technical means of interacting with the gods via diverse forms of divination. It also played a key symbolic and communicative role, although often the 'meanings' involved cannot be satisfactorily explained in the present day.

Taste

Although a primary 'purpose' of most of the 'sacrifice' in ancient Greece was the feast that concluded it, and although the main texts discussed here in some ways outline preliminaries to the primary act of eating, the actual feasting part of 'sacrifice' is rarely described in much detail. In Homer, for example, the meal is consistently treated in a perfunctory manner in striking contrast to the sometimes lengthy descriptions of the preliminaries beforehand (e.g. *Iliad* 1.468-9, *Odyssey* 3.470-2).⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁷ As noted, for example, by Heubeck et al 1989: 225.

In terms of evidence for the ancient Athenian or, indeed, Greek in general, conception of sacrificial food a number of distinctions and subtleties are however evident, although our evidence is partial at best. In the first instance there was the distinction between victims 'sacrificed' or ritually killed in different ways according to species type as was discussed in Chapters II and IV. There was also the distinction between the *splanchna* consumed by the inner circle of participants and the wider circulation, inclusion and consumption heralded by the remainder and greater part of the victim. Sharing in the *splanchna*, in particular, was far more removed from the everyday and mundane and far more intimate and immediate (and perhaps in many cases, prestigious) than the consumption of the portion of a victim whether consumed in a sanctuary or taken home to eat. Some scholars connect consuming the *splanchna* with the notion of 'communion' with the gods, in some ways an overtly Christianising notion, but the experience may nonetheless have been profound and emotional.⁶⁴⁸ It should also be noted that on arrival at Pylos, Telemachus and a disguised Athena are offered the *splanchna* (*Odyssey* 3.39-40), a particular honour.⁶⁴⁹

An associated cut of meat, the tongue also had a special value and significance and could be set aside and burned, as in Homer (*Odyssey* 3.341), or in the classical period, according to some scholars (based on *Peace* 1056) reserved for the priest. Olson argues that such behaviour was directed towards the gods – the meat was burned for the god or the priest served as proxy for the god, respectively - but his latter point is deeply unconvincing (there is no real evidence for priests assuming such a role, for example).⁶⁵⁰ All these different types of meat could have held distinctly different significances for the worshiper. In addition, some cuts of meat from the rest of the animal victim were of more value and significance than others. For example, as already discussed, the chine is often singled out as an honorific portion (*Iliad* 7.321-2, *Odyssey* 14.437-8) and this part of the victim was reserved for the Spartan kings in the classical period (Herodotus 6.56).

It is clear therefore that there were different values placed on different classes of sacrificial meat and, in these instances, the emotional and socio-cultural aspect of eating and appetite in 'sacrifice' are clear.

⁶⁴⁸ E.g. van Straten 2005: 23.

⁶⁴⁹ As noted by Heubeck et al 1988: 162.

⁶⁵⁰ Olson 1998: 271. Jim 2011: 49-50 argues that *Peace* 1056 in fact dramatises the greed of seers and that both *aparchesthai* and *apargmata* here refer to the god's share which should never go to religious officials. Priestly perquisites, meanwhile, had a different terminology.

There is also evidence for the role of taste in constructing notions of identity and difference in ancient Greece. King Cleomenes, for example, is prohibited (unsuccessfully) by a priest from 'sacrificing' at the altar of Hera in Argos because it is unlawful for a foreigner to do so (Herodotus 6.81). Here, sacrificial practices that would have included feasting as an important element incorporate a recognisable social marker. In addition, in a remarkably highly politicised context the 'sacrifice' of Agesilaus at Aulis is interrupted while actually underway, with the victims cast out while being 'sacrificed' (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4 ὥς δ' ἐκεῖ ἐγένετο, πυθόμενοι οἱ βοιωτάρχαι ὅτι θύοι, πέμψαντες ἱππέας τοῦ τε λοιποῦ εἶπαν μὴ θύειν καὶ οἷς ἐνέτυχον ἱεροῖς τεθυμένοις διέρριψαν ἀπὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ). These examples also relate to the field of control of touch discussed above. We also find in the evidence from the oratory sphere the notion that 'barbarians' have no respect for 'sacrifice' and related rituals (Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 2.183).

Before concluding, an important description of a post-sacrificial feast is provided by Euripides's *Ion* (1122-229). This particular 'sacrifice' seems to be understood to be made to Apollo (another 'sacrifice' is apparently made by Xuthus to the gods of birth) and takes place at Delphi after Ion has been adopted by his alleged 'father', Xuthus. A huge tent is erected complete with richly woven tapestries vividly described (1132-65). A herald makes a proclamation inviting Delphians to the feast (1166-8), striking a very different auditory note to those discussed above. Garlands are worn and following the feast incense is burned, libations are made and then, finally, music and general drinking follow (1169-76). Classen et al note that 'ancient banquets were carefully organised so as to provide for the pleasure, and indeed surfeit, of all the senses'.⁶⁵¹ Similarly, Dalby cites the wealth of evidence preserved in Athenaeus (e.g. 6.95, 15.33, 3.59), arguing that: 'Dinner parties for men were all-round entertainments designed to please every fleshly sense. With the taste of food and wine came the scents of perfumes and wreaths, the sounds of song and music and the sight of musicians and dancers; and the performers, and others of low status, were in general not untouchable'.⁶⁵²

It is clear that the main event of the 'sacrifice' alluded to in *Ion* is the banquet that follows and this is surely not merely down to the narrative needs of the playwright, but represents a very real emphasis for the audience. The feast is primary and the 'sacrifice' a secondary aspect that facilitates a special and memorable feast in many contexts.

⁶⁵¹ Classen et al 1994: 24.

⁶⁵² Dalby 1996: 119.

Taste, therefore, is undoubtedly of major importance to 'sacrifice' although the feasting element is not often emphasised in our sources from the periods discussed. However, indications of its significance remain in both purely alimentary (choice cuts apportioned as a form of honour during the feast) and cultic contexts (the ritual preparation and consumption of the *splanchna*).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has aimed to give a 'full bodied' analysis of 'animal sacrifice' of the types where the feasting element is clearly primary or prominent. I have aimed to replace the idea of a 'meaning' behind 'sacrifice' with an emphasis on the 'experience' of 'sacrifice' understood in largely sensory terms. This 'full bodied' or sensory perspective adds another layer of analysis to important 'readings' of 'sacrifice' that can be provided by other approaches. The rich sensorial nature of 'sacrifice' surrounded an experience that was set off from the mundane and everyday, afforded certain opportunities but was also organised according to familiar social hierarchies, was associated largely with pleasure and festivity, imbued with and expressive of social values, and the focus of good memories and powerful emotions. It was also an experience shared on some level with the gods who, at the least, were felt to take pleasure in the proceedings. The gods could be invoked in the course of the 'sacrifice' by various sensible media (e.g. incense) and would respond to divinatory proddings of a range of types.

I have also continued to suggest the inapplicability of a stable and uniform category of 'sacrifice'. There are significant differences in the 'sacrifices' described that cannot be accounted for in terms of the usual arguments such as consequences of genre, authorial emphasis etc. In particular, the range of possible divinatory techniques is telling. Surely not all of these were applied in the course of one single ritual. It seems that there were familiar forms and patterns but considerable variety was possible and variation between more simple and more elaborate sacrificial complexes. This variety and variability can be seen within the Athenian evidence on its own merits as well as between the Athenian and Homeric evidence and within only the Homeric evidence.

I have stressed the inter-sensorial nature of 'sacrifice' but smell, in particular, needs emphasising as it is a sense often overlooked in modern studies. It was clear that this was an important vehicle and medium in relations with, and conceptions of, the divine. It is also apparent that 'sacrifice' could not operate without an understanding and appreciation of the olfactory domain and of perceived olfactory significance. Heat (i.e. temperature) was also important, as was a skilful, disciplined and regulated form of touch, while the auditory and visual fields have also been discussed. It is also clear that not all aspects of a particular sensory sphere were privileged. Although sound and smell were more intimately related to the divine sphere than taste and touch, not all aspects were considered so. Only some aspects of sound (prayer and music in particular) were emphasised in interactions with the divine and only some aspects of smell (incense, savour of sacrificial smoke etc).

Quite often the other sounds and smells (ritual instructions, smell of animals, sound of preparation etc) are difficult to retrieve from our source material, probably because they were considered unimportant. It is, however, necessary to consider all the sensory evidence as they relate to human experience and interaction. Philosophy and etymology give a partial and fragmentary insight into the possible significance of some sensory phenomena (see Chapters I and II), but this must be used with caution when considering everyday people and practices. At the same time 'sacrifice' represented a kind of inter-sensorial aesthetic that was pleasing to both gods and men.

Finally, from a sensory perspective, it appears that certain elements considered to be key features of 'sacrifice' by most scholars (chiefly prayer and music) may not have been necessarily related to 'sacrifice' in any clear, consistent or obvious way. In fact, there often seems, for example, to be a dislocation between a 'sacrifice' and a prayer said in accompaniment or between a 'sacrifice' and a cult hymn seemingly sung in association with it. In the literature, the gods often also seem to only acknowledge, or indeed be at all interested in, such prayers or music. They often seem not to regard the 'sacrifice' in the same way.

As already discussed, 'sacrifice' is a term designating a loosely related set of rituals and not any fixed or concrete category or practice. Also, cultural producers (playwrights, poets etc) toy with the idea that the gods 'need sacrifice' in various ways, but this should be distinguished from the actual beliefs operating in everyday religion. Here I have aimed to

analyse 'sacrifice' on its own terms and on the basis of an attempted reconstruction of its perceived sensory values. At the same time, there is a distinction that must be drawn between the not contradictory notions that 'sacrifices' were overwhelmingly sensory experiences and that accounts of 'sacrifices' emphasise the sensory nature of them, over any possible theological aspects. It must always be borne cautiously in mind that it is ancient writers (thus cultural producers) who determine how much we are told about the intentions of the participants.

It is clear, however, that 'sacrifice' and related rituals were fundamentally sensory and that accounts of them by ancient writers draw attention to this. Thus, experience and sensation are as important to any discussion of these activities as any notion, or expectation of, 'meaning' or 'purpose'.

Chapter VII

New approaches II: Cognitive ritual theories

This chapter will apply new cognitive ritual theories to sacrificial practice in classical Athens. It will touch on the main range of ritual killing of animals as well as the bloodless practices identified and discussed in Chapters IV and V. I aim to focus on the experience of the participants of a 'sacrifice' in cognitive terms. Specifically I will re-categorise the various sacrificial elements in terms of the experience of the participants so as to give a new window onto their 'purpose' and function. Whilst the preceding chapter emphasised sensory aspects over 'meaning', here I will emphasise experiential aspects such as emotion and anxiety, cognitively understood.

Rather than reflecting on what 'sacrifice' actually is (an approach I regard as misguided), I will instead ask how it is variously interpreted and experienced. The results will show that multiple interpretations are possible and thus no single conclusion regarding 'sacrifice' is possible.

My aim is to present a new cognitive-informed approach to sacrificial practice in general that builds on existing scholarship and asks new and pertinent questions of the evidence. In this chapter, I emphasise an outsider's etic (modern, scholarly and scientific) perspective, drawing out unconscious, biological and automatic aspects of emotion and experience in contrast to the previous chapter's insider emic (ancient perceived, sensory and explicit) perspective. At the same time, I argue that there is no simple dichotomy between these approaches and consideration of both perspectives, and their combination (or even opposition), affords an exciting new lens from which to understand the evidence.

Methodology

As I outlined in Chapter I, certain aspects of human experience can be seen to be biologically-based and to likely result in similarities of emotional and cognitive behaviour in a number of recurrent situations faced by the human species as a whole. At the same time, no approach can minimize or down-play the importance of purely cultural factors that can even be seen in some cases to apparently over-rule predicted biological reactions. Thus, as

explained in my methodology chapter, my approach here is to ask a number of key questions of the evidence and to test their validity. I do not pretend to offer a complete theory of 'sacrifice', nor do I believe that such an approach is possible. I do, however, argue that a new emphasis on experience is needed to properly understand sacrificial activity and that such an emphasis is lacking in modern accounts. I also maintain that an optimal understanding of such experience is best achieved from both cognitive ritual theory-based and sensory perspectives.

This approach explains why activities like 'sacrifice' are successfully transmitted from one generation to the next and why they take the forms we find in the evidence, whilst also recognising cultural variability and distinctiveness. It argues that such activities are successful because they are intuitively plausible and compelling, exciting, pleasurable, or just simply feel like the right thing to do. As a corollary of this, it is also predicted that the evidence will indicate no shared understanding in classical Athens (or indeed in ancient Greece in general) of what 'sacrifice' actually was or what it did or was for. At the same time, the gods are not excluded from even my etic approach, but rather become a vital additional factor that must be cognitively accounted for and that helps improve understanding. It should be noted that the approach utilised in this chapter is particularly relevant to a society like classical Athens (or again ancient Greece in general) where there were no sacred books or explanatory doctrines, but instead an emphasis on customary ritual behaviour.

In this chapter, I will therefore apply two major approaches to the evidence that focus on the centrality of cognitive experience to any understanding of diverse rituals such as 'sacrifice'. These are the theory of ritual form of Lawson and McCauley and the cultural selection of ritualised behaviour model of Boyer and Liénard. In each section, I will begin with a detailed description of each theory, the precise predictions it makes and the scientific and scholarly foundations for its usefulness. I will then apply each theory to the ancient evidence, focusing largely on literary sources in the first instance and epigraphic data in the second. Thus, in each section I will focus largely on different sets of data as well as asking different questions of the evidence. Finally, in my third section I will outline the implications of my findings.

Theory of ritual form (Lawson and McCauley)

The ritual form theory of Lawson and McCauley can provide a new way of interpreting 'sacrifice' from the perspective of cognitive experience. It offers a compelling explanation and interpretation of why some rituals are one-off attention grabbing events, whereas others are part of normal daily life and are commonplace. Their initial model was outlined in their 1990 publication *Rethinking Religion* which presented a theory of religious ritual competence.⁶⁵³ Competence theories were initially proposed in the study of languages and concern the universal constraints on the form of natural languages and the various cognitive processes and structures which inform language use. As Lawson and McCauley explain: 'Speakers' mastery of such a system offers an explanation for both their creative use of language and their ability to make immediate judgements about a wide range of features of sentences they have never previously encountered. A theory of linguistic competence, then, is a theory of a speaker's (often unconscious) grammatical knowledge'.⁶⁵⁴ Chomsky had argued strongly for the inapplicability of competence theory as a means of understanding cognitive systems other than those constraining the form of natural languages.⁶⁵⁵ Lawson and McCauley, however, persuasively point to similarities between speaker-listeners' knowledge of their respective languages and the knowledge of their religious ritual systems demonstrated by ritual practitioners and participants. They identify the processes underlying an intuitive and experiential knowledge that is part of a universally valid cognitive system. This system contributes to a new way of assessing and understanding sacrificial behaviour.

Lawson and McCauley have thus developed a theory of ritual competence which describes ritual intuitions relating to judgements of ritual efficacy and this forms an important strand of my argument. Again, the emphasis is on cognitive experience and the way activities like 'sacrifice' are cognitively experienced and understood, and this will also help answer why they are successful as forms of behaviour and transmitted through the generations. The theory of ritual competence holds that the same system responsible for the representation of ritual form is also utilised for the representation of action in general. In others words, only ordinary cognition is involved. Crucially, understanding any form of behaviour as an action turns on recognising agents. Also, religious rituals – as opposed to the more

⁶⁵³ Lawson and McCauley 1990.

⁶⁵⁴ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 66-7.

⁶⁵⁵ E.g. Chomsky 1986: xxvi.

inclusive category of rituals generally – pre-suppose the roles of ‘culturally postulated superhuman agents’ (CPS-agents), i.e. gods, heroes, ancestors etc.⁶⁵⁶ Human beings are strongly biased to infer agent causality when forming explanations of significant social events and inferences concerning powerful agents such as CPS-agents explain otherwise inexplicable affairs or occurrences. This can, for example, be the result of mental tools such as the survival-based ‘better safe than sorry’ strategy of perception in an ambiguous world (termed the ‘hypersensitive agent detection device’ by some cognitive scientists), the reading minds onto people, places, events and other phenomena device, Theory of Mind (ToM), or our ‘naive sociology’, when trying to account for complex social events.⁶⁵⁷ Lawson and McCauley hold that ritual practitioners believe CPS-agents possess the power to act definitively in ritual because they are already predisposed to credit them with the power to intervene in, and significantly influence, life generally.⁶⁵⁸

Lawson and McCauley also hold that most of the general features of the intuitive ritual knowledge they identify are not based on conscious reflection and can, and often do, operate without reference to any interpretation or meaning.⁶⁵⁹ In religious ritual contexts (unlike action in general) all action, they argue, involves agents acting upon patients and thus the standard description of a religious rite involves three ordered slots representing the three fundamental roles – its agent, the act involved (by means of an instrument) and its patient. By this definition, religious rituals differ from religious action generally, such as prayer. Although religious actions such as prayer may form part of religious rituals in which CPS-agents play a role, crucially they do not normally involve a change in the religious world (either temporary or permanent).⁶⁶⁰

Religious rituals like ‘sacrifice’ can be interpreted and experienced in different ways, as I will show. According to the model of Lawson and McCauley, ‘special agent’ rituals are religious rituals in which the CPS-agent is considered to be acting on human participants. ‘Special patient’ rituals are cases where the CPS-agent is considered the ‘recipient’ of the action while ‘special instrument’ rituals involve the use of something that is, or has been, acted on by the CPS-agent. The principle of superhuman agency (PSA) concerns the character of the CPS-agent’s involvement in the ritual, whereas the principle of

⁶⁵⁶ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 87-95.

⁶⁵⁷ Guthrie 1993, 2002, etc; Barrett 2004: 31-44 on HADD; Boyer 2001: 287-96; Bering 2011.

⁶⁵⁸ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 123-5.

⁶⁵⁹ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 6-31; McCauley and Lawson 2002: 36-7.

⁶⁶⁰ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 125.

superhuman immediacy (PSI) states that the number of enabling rituals necessary to equate some elements in a ritual with an entry for a CPS-agent determines that entry's proximity to the current ritual.⁶⁶¹ Lawson and McCauley divide 'special agent' rituals into odd numbered rituals and 'special patient/instrument' rituals into even numbered ones and build an initial five type model, according to the relative centrality of these types of ritual to their religious systems.⁶⁶² 'Type one' rituals are rituals in which a CPS-agent appears in the structural description as the agent, whereas 'type two' rituals are rituals in which a CPS-agent appears in a structural description in some other role. The remaining three types describe rituals in which the CPS-agent appears in an 'embedded' capacity.

This has important consequences relating to my analysis of sacrificial practices on a number of levels and predicts the ways they are cognitively experienced. Individuals serve as the patients of 'special agent' rituals only once, while participants typically perform 'special patient/instrument' rituals repeatedly. The consequences of 'special agent' rituals are permanent ('when the gods do things, they are done once and for all') whereas the consequences of 'special patient/instrument' rituals are only temporary. The latter also display greater latitude about their instruments, patients and procedures because nothing religiously indispensable turns on any of their performances.⁶⁶³

This model was further developed in 2002s *Bringing Ritual to Mind* which offers a much greater experiential explanation for approaching ritual phenomena. Here, Lawson and McCauley analyse processes of ritual transmission and the complex relationships between ritual form, performance frequency, memory, motivation and emotional arousal, as well as the sensory pageantry in rituals that powerfully evoke such emotion. 'Special agent' rituals are understood to turn up the emotional volume in terms of high sensory pageantry relative to 'special patient/instrument' rituals in the same religious system.⁶⁶⁴ It should be understood that Whitehouse has developed a different model distinguishing between a low frequency, high arousal imagistic mode and a high frequency, low arousal doctrinal mode.⁶⁶⁵ Lawson and McCauley, however, significantly build on and improve the ground work that was laid out by this theory and argue persuasively for the superiority of their model based on more recent research on memory (see below), as well as other problems

⁶⁶¹ E.g. Lawson and McCauley 2007: 10-19.

⁶⁶² Lawson and McCauley 1990: 123-36.

⁶⁶³ E.g. Lawson and McCauley 2007: 20.

⁶⁶⁴ McCauley and Lawson 2002.

⁶⁶⁵ E.g. Whitehouse 2004.

such as issues of performance frequency. In the model of Whitehouse, for example, there is no means to clearly distinguish practitioners who regularly perform a rite and participants who are only patients of such rites on one occasion.⁶⁶⁶ Pyysiäinen also offers a slightly different model that can be used to modify the approach of Lawson and McCauley. He agrees that the experience of CPS-agents is an emotional one but adds that contextual factors are often central when it comes to interpreting the significance of a ritual. In addition, often the precise nature of the actual ritual activity employed is of secondary importance in such contexts.⁶⁶⁷ His views significantly add to the model of Lawson and McCauley, without upsetting its general applicability.

Thus, the first attractor position in Figure 1 (see Chapter I) involves frequently performed rituals with comparatively low levels of emotional intensity or arousal. According to Lawson and McCauley, participants develop scripts for these rituals which 'specify an extensive series of connected actions' and once in possession of such scripts, participants 'usually perform these sequences of actions automatically, without much conscious reflection'. In addition, 'although their repeated performances may not be perfect copies, participants' retention levels are often quite remarkable, even by the standards of technologically sophisticated, literate cultures. Transmitting these rituals seems to rely on little else'.⁶⁶⁸ Psychological research on extraordinary recall for specific episodes (in episodic memory) on the other hand, helps illuminate the second attractor position, describing one-off highly emotional rituals. Lawson and McCauley discuss some of the prominent variables that contribute to extraordinary memory, citing research in so-called flashbulb memory, for example.⁶⁶⁹ Whitehouse argues, for example, that some memories are so vivid and detailed that 'it is almost as if a camera has gone off in one's head, illuminating the scene, and preserving it forever in memory'. He also explains that it appears to be 'a combination of episodic distinctiveness, emotionality and consequentiality that together result in lasting autobiographical memories'.⁶⁷⁰ Lawson and McCauley, however, cite evidence which indicates that many such memories 'are not accurate and that abrupt arousal of emotion is not necessary to produce ones that are'. In contrast to Whitehouse, they champion a so-called 'cognitive alarm hypothesis' which suggests that 'high emotion tends both to marshal and to focus cognitive resources on its apparent

⁶⁶⁶ McCauley and Lawson 2002: 126-7.

⁶⁶⁷ Pyysiäinen 2003: 84-97.

⁶⁶⁸ McCauley and Lawson 2002: 55.

⁶⁶⁹ McCauley and Lawson 2002: 57-88.

⁶⁷⁰ Whitehouse 2004: 70-1.

causes, which, if vindicated by subsequent developments, marks the events as especially memorable'.⁶⁷¹ In addition, 'the comparatively high emotion such rituals instigate helps to persuade at least some of the participants involved not only that they have undergone fundamental changes but also that the CPS-agents, who are ultimately responsible for the changes, are vitally important to them and, often, to their community as well'. Thus, 'special agent' rituals are critical in terms of motivating transmission of the ritual system, as opposed to the more modest role 'special patient/instrument' rituals play in this respect within a cultural system.⁶⁷²

Following the model of Lawson and McCauley, the same or similar aspects of sacrificial practice in ancient Greece can be understood as either 'special agent', 'special patient' or 'special instrument' rituals. The Promethean myth of the origin of 'sacrifice' in Hesiod (*Theogony* 507-616 and *Works and Days* 45-105) can be understood as representing a 'type one' ritual complex, i.e. a hypothetical ritual, most often found at the start of a religious tradition, where a divine figure initiates a central ritual.⁶⁷³ Lawson and McCauley explain that hypothetical rituals 'are actions attributed to the gods to which humans appeal in the course of carrying out their own rituals'; i.e. 'participants appeal to such "rituals" as acts enabling their own religious practices'.⁶⁷⁴ This model, therefore, explains in cognitive terms the centrality of 'animal sacrifice' in the period under examination. As I discussed in Chapter II, Vernant presented a 'theology of sacrifice' based on a structuralist interpretation of this myth.⁶⁷⁵

Lawson and McCauley themselves define 'sacrifice' as a prime example of a 'type two special patient' ritual, in which the gods are passive 'recipients' of the 'sacrifices' and this is borne out by some features of the evidence available.⁶⁷⁶ They also describe divination as a classic example of a 'type two special instrument' ritual. Thus, in activity of this type the notion of 'recipient' is not usually emphasised and other experiential factors are at work.

⁶⁷¹ McCauley and Lawson 2002: 113.

⁶⁷² McCauley and Lawson 2002: 123.

⁶⁷³ Lawson and McCauley 1990: 127.

⁶⁷⁴ McCauley and Lawson 2002: 23.

⁶⁷⁵ Vernant 1991a: 297-301.

⁶⁷⁶ E.g. Lawson and McCauley 1990: 134.

Experience of ritual

Sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals

Understanding 'sacrifice' as a 'special patient' ritual (i.e. high frequency and involving low emotional arousal) is borne out by much of the evidence for classical Athens, in particular the highly regulated, fixed and rigid practices listed in the various sacrificial calendars.⁶⁷⁷ Here particular 'sacrifices' (and related practices such as *theoxenia*) are assigned to particular gods at specific days in the calendar, along with fixed types of victim, sometimes with very precise specifications such as gender and age. Here nothing is left to chance and all citizens would have felt assured by the very public and legal nature of the monument bearing the inscription that the gods were being kept satisfied and there was no danger of upsetting them. The emphasis was on punctiliousness, predicatability and stability and not on any great emotional excitement or unexpectedness. There could, however, for example, be great concern about the moral character of those conducting such 'sacrifices' (e.g. Lysias, *Against Andocides* 6.4), attending them (e.g. Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 20.158) or the inappropriate use of sacrificial equipment (e.g. Andocides, *Against Alcibiades* 4.29).

Looking at 'sacrifice' this way is also important when assessing the experiential realities underlying references to such behaviour in *Characters* by Theophrastus. Here my approach differs from Bowden's analysis of the Superstitious Man (16 - *deisidaimonia*) where he uses cognitive perspectives to demonstrate multiple correlations with more than ten features of OCD behaviour identified by Fiske and Haslam.⁶⁷⁸ I emphasise instead that this material focuses largely on the alimentary side of sacrificial practice (often through disapproving references to meanness – e.g. 9.2, 15.5, 17.2) and helps demonstrate why such behaviour made so much intuitive sense. I also place this behaviour in its particular social context.⁶⁷⁹ Concerns over proper and due distribution of meat are shown to be of heightened emotional significance in this valuable text but they are far from exceptional and extraordinary. Barrett notes that the more mental tools with which an idea fits the more likely it is to be successfully transmitted. The complex social world with which sacrificial behaviour is entwined in *Characters* is a good example of how such relevance can be

⁶⁷⁷ E.g. the four Attic sacrificial calendars (Thorikos, SEG XXXIII.147, Marathon, LSS 20, Erchia, LSCG 18, *genos* of Salaminioi, LSS 19) and the calendar from Cos in Appendix 3 (LSCG 151 = RO 62).

⁶⁷⁸ Bowden 2008: 66-9; Fiske and Haslam 1997.

⁶⁷⁹ See Rusten and Cunningham 2002, Lane Fox 1996, Diggle 2004 and Millett 2007.

generated, as I show below. Although Barrett refers to ritual activity only as subserving reflected belief in this context, the everyday but also omni-contextual nature of such sacrificial activity could also have its importance galvanised by the many mental tools operating in such diverse social contexts.⁶⁸⁰

Here I discuss the references to 'sacrifice' in terms of their social consequences and explore what sacrifice meant in terms of everyday experience and exchange. To begin my discussion, the Sponging Man (9.2 - *Anaischynton*), after performing a 'sacrifice', salts and stores away the meat and goes to dine at someone else's house. He also makes a show of feasting his slave from the table of his host, without asking the host's permission. Here we see how meat eating and 'sacrifice' were interwoven with the experience of social relations and obligations. In the case of Grouchiness (15.5 - *Authadeus*), we have a man who, if honoured by acquaintances sending him food on a festival day, tells them to expect nothing in return. Again, we have a comic insight into how 'sacrifice' might have defined relationships, as well as proper conduct. Under Griping (17.2 - *Mempsimoiros*), we have a man who when sent part of the meat of a 'sacrifice' by a friend, says that by not inviting him to the dinner, he has cheated him out of the soup and wine. For Petty Ambition (21.7 - *Mikrophilotemos*) we find a man who, having 'sacrificed' an ox, nails up its skull facing his front door and wreathes it with large garlands so that people coming in can see what he has 'sacrificed'. Here we have 'sacrifice' as a means of conspicuous display and consumption and perhaps even individual ostentation. There is possibly even a sense here of the modern notion of 'getting one over on the Jones's'. An ox, it should be remembered, was too expensive an item to be 'sacrificed' ordinarily by a private person.⁶⁸¹

Other references also point to the experiential realities of such high frequency, low emotion sacrificial behaviour. They also suggest the subtle emotional variations within such activity that are not revealed by the model of Lawson and McCauley. For Lack of Generosity (22.3 - *Aneleutheros*), we have a man who, when marrying off his daughter, sells the meat from the 'sacrifice' except for the priest's share, and hires staff for the wedding feast who must bring their own dinners. Here the implication is again, the importance of meat eating and 'sacrifice' in the experience of social obligations. Under Chiseling (30.4 - *Aischrokerdes*), a man distributing shares (*meridas* – the meaning can imply shares of sacrificial meat as well as other connotations) says that it is fair for a double share to be

⁶⁸⁰ Barrett 2004: 32.

⁶⁸¹ Diggle 2004: 408.

given to the distributor and awards it to himself immediately.⁶⁸² Again, we see how ‘sacrifice’ is interwoven with social relations at all levels of daily life experience. Finally, for *Bad Timing* (12.11 - *Akairia*), we have a man who when people are enjoying a ‘sacrifice’, comes to ask for interest on his loan. Millett notes that sacrifice, ‘ostensibly an opportunity for confirming solidarity, tends to bring out the worst in the *Characters*’.⁶⁸³ Read in the right light, *Characters* gives us key insights into how ‘sacrifice’ was understood in the real lives of worshipers as they went about their everyday lives. The location of ‘sacrifice’ within a complex experiential nexus of reciprocal relations is also explicitly clear.

As discussed in Chapter I, ritual is both situational and strategic and what this means in low intensity contexts is illuminated very well by this material. Bell notes that ‘human activity is situational, which is to say that much of what is important to it cannot be grasped outside of the specific context in which it occurs’. Thus, ‘when abstracted from its immediate context, an activity is not quite the same activity’.⁶⁸⁴ Ritual, as a form of human activity, is also ‘inherently strategic, manipulative and expedient’ and is therefore ‘a ceaseless play of situationally effective schemes, tactics and strategies’ that pushes intellectualist type logic to the margins.⁶⁸⁵

In important literary descriptions, however, interpreting sacrificial experience in this way initially looks problematic for Lawson and McCauley’s model. Further analysis shows, however, not only its usefulness as an analytical tool, but also its general validity. I will demonstrate how the ancient Greek evidence can be illuminated by this particular cognitive approach while at the same time offering slight modifications to the model to help account for the particular cultural environment it presents.

The first two passages to be discussed are the two near consecutive descriptions of ‘sacrifice’ in *Odyssey*. The first occurs when Telemachus, alongside Athena disguised as guest friend Mentor, arrive in Pylos as a great ‘sacrifice’ of bulls is taking place to Poseidon at the start of Book 3 (3.3-3.69). The implication of this text is that this is a ‘special patient’ ritual with the focus on the ensuing feast. Boyer argues that rituals like ‘animal sacrifice’ made much more intuitive sense because attention is focused, not so much on the

⁶⁸² Rusten and Cunningham 2002: 139 n.1 on *meridas*.

⁶⁸³ Millett 2007: 90.

⁶⁸⁴ Bell 1992: 81.

⁶⁸⁵ Bell 1992: 82.

exchange with invisible partners, as on the actual exchange or distribution among participants.⁶⁸⁶

However, it is clear right from the start that the emotional tone of the occasion changes dramatically as the visitors arrive and throughout the narrative the importance of the literal presence of Athena is emphasised. The goddess is pleased by what she encounters and literally grants prayers that are spoken both by others (only Telemachus is explicitly mentioned but other prayers are implied) and by herself on their behalf (3.43-65). Nestor's predominantly sad tales of the fate of the Greek heroes returning from Troy also heightens the emotional intensity of the affair (3.101-328) and at one point Athena intervenes to stress the power of the gods and their desire to rescue those humans they love from disaster (implying the salvation of Odysseus as a consequence of Athena's well-known regard for him – 3.229-38). At the end of the tales, the disguised Athena herself directs the sacrificial activity (3.330-9) and this is emphatically emphasised by the poet (3.338-9). Finally, when once again pleased by the piety and good conduct of Nestor she reveals herself by metamorphosing into a vulture and stunning the participants (3.371-3). As a consequence, Nestor prays to the goddess seeking to initiate a personal relationship between her and his family. He vows a spectacular 'sacrifice' and we are told that the goddess hears his prayer (3.379-84).

In other words, this narrative is replete with the direct activity of the goddess who is literally present at the 'sacrifice'. Constandinidou argues that this type of manifestation (alluded to at 3.420 as *enargês*) refers to moments when 'divine power or nature becomes clear, evident, and this is a privilege for the pious and favourites', although it can also (not here) refer to the appearance of a god in undisguised form (7.201).⁶⁸⁷ It thus fits all the requirements of a one-off and intensely emotional ritual in which a divine figure acts through the performers. The goddess acts both to ensure good fortune for those present and to initiate the return of Odysseus to his family. Thus, we see how the 'meaning' of a ritual can be transformed by contextual or other factors, such as the experience of divine presence. This experience is also unpredictable, a point I will consistently point to in the evidence.

⁶⁸⁶ Boyer 2011: 278-9.

⁶⁸⁷ Constandinidou 2010: 104-5 n.39.

The result of this epiphany then is the organisation of a further ‘sacrifice’ for the following day, with the victim ‘offered’ being a heifer with specially gilded gold horns (3.417-472). As discussed in my previous chapter, much has been made of the statement that the goddess ‘came’ to accept the ‘sacrifice’ (3.435-6: ἤλθε δ’ Ἀθήνη ἱρῶν ἀντιόωσα). It was argued that the goddess was not literally present at this ‘sacrifice’ and that the remark should be seen in the context of the blacksmith’s activity working on the gilded horns which may have glistened in the sunlight (3.430-5). Regardless, it is clear that the poet is much more discreet in this instance and no direct intervention or involvement of the goddess is referred to in any way. Athena is also marked out explicitly as the recipient of the ‘sacrifice’ and the whole context of its performance is framed in the values of reciprocity (3.379-83). This act by Nestor has been described as a demonstration of ‘hyperpiety’ and although it appears elaborate it does not begin to reach the emotional intensity of the previous day’s sacrificial activity.⁶⁸⁸ It is instead a further marker in this book of the piety and good governance of Nestor and his kingdom and is defined by punctilious and harmonious performance by the various members of the royal family (particularly at 3.447-64). It is thus a ‘special patient’ ritual and as a consequence would be interpreted and experienced differently to the sacrificial activity which prompted it.

Next I will consider the already discussed two key passages from Aristophanes that present some of our best evidence for ‘sacrifice’ in classical Athens. I argue that Aristophanes here unconsciously plays with the audience’s intuitions about ritual form and that an understanding of this dynamic allows a greater appreciation of the texts and increases our understanding of the phenomenon in question. It is crucial also to remember the transgressive nature of Aristophanes’ comedy and the way in which it is characterised by an invasion of limits.⁶⁸⁹

In both *Birds* and *Peace* new world orders are envisaged as the result of sacrificial activity. In *Birds* (845-66), Pisthetaerus offers a ‘sacrifice’ to the ‘new gods’, the birds, after ordering that a new city be built in the air between Olympus and the Earth that will ultimately involve a transfer of divine power. This would appear then to be a ‘special patient’ ritual. The situation is, however, high intensity and completely extraordinary. For a start, the ‘sacrifice’ precedes and anticipates the building of a new city. Also, Pisthetaerus is effectively founding a new cult, and one that is significantly different from existing models

⁶⁸⁸ Redfield 2012: 170 n.7 on ‘hyperpiety’.

⁶⁸⁹ Redfield 2012: 179.

and, at the end of the play, he himself is seen bearing the thunderbolt of Zeus and is married to the goddess Sovereignty. In addition, the high sensory pageantry is at least suggested by the chorus's parody of the cries of ecstatic worshippers (855-60), while the 'sacrifice' is followed by the arrival of both human and divine messengers (including Heracles and Poseidon). The ritual itself, however, is low intensity and ordinary and the victim is a mere goat and ridiculed as such by Pisthetaerus (889-95). Thus situation is more important than the actual ritual behaviour employed to understanding this particular 'sacrifice', and this was predicted for some instances at the start of this chapter. This ritual is in fact 'special agent' in character as it involves major divine activity and intervention on a number of levels. In addition, Aristophanes comically contrasts the mundane ritual and unimpressive victim with the emotional power this 'sacrifice' generates and the huge changes it creates.

The second passage comes from *Peace* and again appears at first sight to be a 'special patient' ritual despite its extreme levels of emotional excitement. Trygaeus has returned from Olympus straddled on a giant beetle having restored relations with the goddess, Peace, crucially with the helpful intervention of Hermes. After delivering the goddess Festival to the Assembly, he 'sacrifices' to Peace before beginning his marriage feast to celebrate his new bride, the goddess, Harmony. As a result of his actions, peace has been secured. The presence of Harmony, the new divinely sanctioned peace and the context of a wedding ceremony, point to the high sensory pageantry and extraordinary nature of the occasion. The atmosphere is a corresponding one of celebration and goodwill. However, the sacrifice itself is again low intensity and conventional (e.g. 948-73, 1017-8, 1023-6, 1053-6). However, the sacrificial activity had in fact begun on Olympus when Trygaeus succeeded in enlisting the aid of Hermes to rescue Peace. It is at this point that libation is made at the command of Hermes proclaiming the traditional sacrificial formula beginning much of such activity (433: *sponde, sponde!*). As Patton notes, this is in fact the only literary instance of a libation made by a god.⁶⁹⁰ Trygaeus has succeeded in restoring proper relations with the goddess Peace and thus ensured a peaceful new world order, through sacrificial activity instigated and powered by the god Hermes. Hermes himself is to be given a new enhanced status in this perfected world (416-24).

⁶⁹⁰ Patton 2009: 18, n.77.

To demonstrate the positive emotional ‘meaning’ of these practices even when conducted in quite extreme circumstances, the sacrificial activity in *Iliad* following the onslaught of the plague in Book 1 is a key text. It is also another initially problematic description for the model proposed by Lawson and McCauley. Here a ‘hecatomb’ is ‘sacrificed’ to Apollo following the return of the daughter of one of his priests, Chryses (1.435-80). This is on one level understood to appease Apollo who had started the plague following the prayer of his priest who had been badly treated and ignored by Agamemnon. This view was challenged in the previous chapter where it was suggested that Apollo had little interest in the actual ‘sacrifice’. For here it should only be noted that the ‘sacrifice’ initially seems to be a ‘special patient’ ritual in that Apollo appears to be the recipient. The rituals employed also seem to be conventional (1.458-73) but a ‘hecatomb’ (1.447) could in fact refer to a hundred victims here, despite the term’s sometimes nominal useage (see below).⁶⁹¹

The ritual is also, however, highly emotional and concludes with all day-long music and dancing which is explicitly said to delight the god (1.473-5). Thus, the god is certainly interested in the music and dancing which form a crucial part of the ‘sacrifice’ (if not the ritual itself). This entire activity in fact restores communication to and from the divine realm, removing the threat of annihilation. This is signalled finally by the god sending a favourable wind for the sacrificial embassy to return back to camp speedily and safely (1.479). As a consequence, this is in fact a one-off highly emotional ‘special agent’ ritual defined by the direct activity and involvement of the god. Once again, however, it appears that although the situation is extraordinary, the ritual is not as unique as might be expected. At the same time, it is certainly more intense than what was found in the examples from Aristophanes. I would suggest that in terms of the evidence for ancient Greece, instead of frequency/infrequency as a key variable of ritual form, degree of predictability/unpredictability is much more accurate. It is the degree of unpredictability of a ritual that correlates with one-off highly emotional experiences of divine intimacy or intensity. This will also be borne out by the evidence for other sacrificial practices or related behaviours.

In terms of sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals, however, a distinction has to be drawn between more usual contexts and contexts such as the Great Panathenaea where

⁶⁹¹ Naiden 2013: 256 n.130 points out the term can be merely nominal.

at least a hundred cows were ‘sacrificed’ at the altar of Athena Polias.⁶⁹² Even in more modest contexts, there is a significant cognitive difference between the ‘sacrifice’ of an expensive and valuable animal such as a cow and the ‘sacrifice’ of a pig. There are thus many distinctions at work in the interpretation of a ritual as regards its given intensity and personal significance. These are often largely subtle, however. Even at the Great Panathenaea, the only major difference surrounding these ‘sacrifices’ concerned relative scale. The rituals themselves were largely familiar and everyday and even in this celebratory context the sensory pageantry was far from extraordinary. They would probably not have induced any experience of divine intimacy and the focus may well have been more alimentary than anything else (thus an Athenian law and decree on the Little Panathenaea (c.335 BC) assigns five portions of meat to the *prytaneis* and three to the nine archons and one to the treasurers of Athena, one to the *hieropoioi*, three to the generals and taxiarchs and ‘the usual distribution to the Athenians who were part of the procession and to the *kanephoroi*’ while ‘they are to divide the rest of the meat into portions for the Athenians’).⁶⁹³ Stability of relations with the gods and between citizens was most likely what was desired in this kind of regular (or fairly frequent) festival context, in a similar way to what was discussed concerning the sacrificial calendars above. In other words, any kind of unpredictability was exactly what the officials were trying to rule out.

Ethnographic evidence indicates that much experiential ‘meaning’ can be affected by the nature of the occasion, level of personal involvement, the importance of sacrificial activity to an event overall as well as the fact that certain parts of the ceremony may have held greater emotional significance than others.⁶⁹⁴ This can be accounted for by the model of Lawson and McCauley in that in ‘special agent’ rituals the patient of the ritual can only serve in this role once. Thus, for some practitioners such ritual may be regular and routine (‘special patient’) whereas, for others, it may be one-off and highly emotional. Thus, ‘sacrifice’ to introduce a legitimate son into the religious institution of the phratry could be intensely emotional for the father or adopted son (e.g. Demosthenes, *Against Macartatus* 43.14 where the context is political, however), but not unusual for most others. Menander (*Girl from Samos*) describes preparations for a marriage where ‘sacrifice’ is only one element of proceedings for some but paramount for others.

⁶⁹² Deacy 2007: 230. IG I³ 375.5-7 (410/9 BC) refers to a hecatomb which in theory refers to 100 cows. The term may, however, be nominal only as already discussed: Naiden 2013: 256 n.130.

⁶⁹³ RO 81.5-10.

⁶⁹⁴ E.g. Evans-Pritchard 1956: 199, 207; Bott 1987: 188-9; Lienhardt 1961: 87-8; Gell 1975: 193.

Theoxenia can be analysed in a similar way and operating independently were ‘special patient’ (‘type two’) rituals. The idea of gods as *xenia* activates our social mind inference systems, as discussed in Chapter I, and could therefore be intuitively compelling and plausible. The gods here are ‘special guests’ with the preparation of a couch and the ‘use of the language and furniture of hospitality’ to express this relationship.⁶⁹⁵ Jameson argued for the simpler, less expensive, character of this ritual which was more available to those of modest means, and was more substantial and effective than vegetal ‘offerings’.⁶⁹⁶ It was not especially emotional although it most likely could be deeply pious. Such activity, however, was also often combined with ‘animal sacrifice’ in different ways. In the Thorikos sacrificial calendar, for example, there are six *theoxenia* mentioned and they are all for heroines. In addition, five of these were performed in association with a *thysia* to a male hero.⁶⁹⁷ Jameson argued that combined with ‘animal sacrifice’ to the same god, such practices allowed the elaboration of a relatively simple act while accompanying ‘sacrifice’ to a different god, it expanded the range of figures honoured without adding much to the cost. He also compares the practice to the deposition of raw meat from sacrificial victims on cult tables (*trapezomata*) and argues that neither practice should be seen as contradictory or inconsistent but as alternative modes for ‘expressing human respect for the divine.’ Combined with ‘animal sacrifice’, either practice could also help make the rite more powerful and effective.⁶⁹⁸ Similarly, Ekroth sees *theoxenia* and *trapezomata* as ways to modify *thysia* by ‘diversifying and increasing the range of offerings and enhancing the power and efficiency of the ritual’.⁶⁹⁹

Thus these rituals remain ‘special patient’ in character but represent a human capacity to manipulate an intuitive understanding of ritual form to enhance their experience and effectiveness. By making the rites a little more emotional they represent a slightly more intimate experience of the divine in line with the predications of Lawson and McCauley. They do not come close, however, to the extraordinary experiences of divine activity associated with ‘special agent’ rituals, as I will continue to demonstrate. What they do

⁶⁹⁵ Jameson 1994. An inventory from the Athenian Agora lists as belonging to ‘the hero’ a double-headed couch, mattress, bedspread, smooth rug, four multi-coloured pillows, cloths and silver vessels: SEG XXIX 146 (after 328/27 BC) and Jameson 1994: 50.

⁶⁹⁶ Jameson 1994: 53-7.

⁶⁹⁷ SEG 33.147.17, 19, 30, 49, 51 and the exception 44-5 in association with a ‘sacrifice’ to Demeter; following Ekroth 2002: 159.

⁶⁹⁸ Jameson 1994: 56.

⁶⁹⁹ Ekroth 2008a: 103.

represent is that the model of Lawson and McCauley does, however, have to be modified slightly to account for the ancient evidence presented here.

In conclusion, sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals can be interpreted and experienced in radically different ways even if they take the same, or very similar, forms. Quite often contextual factors are very important to the experience of the ritual and how it is understood. Specifically, these rituals can be either 'special patient' or 'special agent' in form: in other words they can be highly emotional and involve an intense or intimate experience of the divine, or they can be largely unemotional and routine and involve no such divine intimacy or intensity. Such rituals can, however, also be 'special instrument' in form, as I will show below.

Sacrificial consulting rituals

Consulting rituals were 'special instrument' or 'special agent' rituals that could either be primary or secondary in importance depending on the 'purpose' of the 'sacrifice' (or the intentions of the author) and could vary in intensity.

Such rites, in particular extispicy, were often independent in cognitive terms from other parts of a 'sacrifice', even if not practically or (seemingly) ritually so. They are distinct from and separate from other sacrificial elements that might be employed (in a similar way to libation), although ultimately part of a sequence of actions and behaviour otherwise more concerned – in the case of extispicy in particular – with the experiences of preparation, cooking and eating. They are a focus of intense attention in themselves and belong on a continuum with other consultation rites (such as oracles, bird omens etc, along with broader patterns of consultation and revelation discussed below) more than with a festive dining context in the first instance. The importance of this experiential independence (at least in cognitive terms) is clear in Euripides, *Electra* where such rites become a powerful and ominous focus of the attention of Aegisthus (827-30 and 838-9) and one of the major reasons for the performance of his 'sacrifice'. Indeed, his foreboding concentration on the animal omens precipitates his own destruction and 'sacrifice'.

Although I focus here specifically on sacrificial divination, as indicated this is only one aspect of the phenomena in question. Indeed, as Bonnechere argues, 'divination is one

form of access to divine revelation amongst many others. In Greece, knowledge, feelings and, in fact, every natural or cultural efflorescence were inspired by the gods'.⁷⁰⁰ Here I compare three accounts of sacrificial divination from two very contrasting contexts to illustrate some broad themes and to present a manageable focus for enquiry. Indeed, these contexts might be said to represent two poles within which many occasions for sacrificial divination were possible. These are consulting rituals associated with preparation, cooking and eating rituals and some forms of sacrificial divination before battle and on campaign.

Aristophanes's, *Peace* is a key text for the experience of divinatory practices associated with preparation, cooking and eating sacrificial rituals. I have already noted in previous chapters the features of many of these aspects: the burning of the tail (1054-5) signified a 'successful sacrifice', the preparation of the firewood was to be done like a *mantis* (1026), etc. According to the model of Lawson and McCauley these are frequent, low intensity 'special instrument' rituals with only temporary effects. Indeed, they refer only to the precise situational context and imply no personal relationship or object. In the context of preparation, cooking and eating rites, they might, perhaps, be cognitively interpreted more fruitfully by a modern parallel. Just as today we check the oven is ready, that food is properly cooked, and that we have the right ingredients and utensils etc, so we find here ritualised extensions of such behavioural concerns and experiences. This extension of cooking practices entails the mutually enforcing and emotionally satisfying characteristics of successful preparation and cooking with approving and consenting gods.

A key passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (6.4.9-25) gives a revealing insight into the experience of sacrificial divination while on a military campaign. Here sacrificial divination must be located within the context of a series of varied sacrificial rites that were a constant feature of military life. The passage begins with favourable signs followed by burial of war dead but over the next three days multiple 'sacrifices' take place (including three times in one day and also three victims at once: 6.4.15-16 and 19) all proving unfavourable. While the army is hence stranded and dissent occurs, at no stage are the results of the divinatory procedures considered false. Instead, the motives of Xenophon come under question and the 'sacrifices' occur increasingly publicly with as many soothsayers as can be present.

⁷⁰⁰ Bonnechere 2007: 145-6.

In the first instance, the cognitive experiences underlying such practices are explicable in terms of the perspectives of Bering and Guthrie (introduced earlier in this chapter) concerning the filtering of natural events and phenomena through ToM or the over attribution of meaning as a result of a general perceptual and cognitive strategy. A cognitive analysis also provides further key insights into this passage. By virtue of minimally counter-intuitive properties (e.g. being invisible) the idea of gods becomes attention grabbing and salient.⁷⁰¹ It also leads to the idea that they possess ‘strategic knowledge’, knowledge of all information relevant to social interaction in a given situation.⁷⁰² This, in turn, generates a number of inferences. Barrett argues that ‘strategic knowledge’ typically relates, in one way or another, to knowledge necessary for ‘reproduction and survival’ and, as a result, gods have the potential to be thought of as important allies or dangerous enemies.⁷⁰³

Thus, while on campaign particularly close relationships are sought with the gods and much of this relationship is experienced through the medium of ‘sacrifice’ (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 13.2-5, also expresses this clearly in the case of Sparta). This becomes intuitively plausible via the operation of our social-mind inference systems, in particular the important system relating to social exchange (crucially this remains so, even though – as indicated in Chapter I – ‘sacrifice’ is paradoxical in that the emphasis is on human activity and experience).⁷⁰⁴ A study by Bowden shows how such cognitive insights can be brought in line with more traditional approaches to Xenophon’s writings. Bowden argues that in his writings Xenophon addresses the problems of human ignorance of the gods and the nature of divine behaviour through a strong emphasis on the value of divination.⁷⁰⁵ The gods are omniscient but there is no implication that they would give help to mortals beyond providing information. ‘Sacrifice’ will not change events, but via regular ‘sacrifice’ (i.e. through a system of exchange explicable via cognitive analysis) the gods are made more likely to communicate clearly when necessary. Bowden argues that Xenophon interprets divination in his writing (at least) as a form of military intelligence, the gods almost acting as scouts and strategic advisors.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰¹ Barrett 2004: 54.

⁷⁰² Boyer 2001: 177-8.

⁷⁰³ Barrett 2004: 49.

⁷⁰⁴ As explained by Boyer 2001: 277.

⁷⁰⁵ Bowden 2004: 232-3.

⁷⁰⁶ Bowden 2004: 233.

This is the way 'sacrifice' is presented in an idealised fashion by a particular cultural producer. It is unlikely to have reflected the actual realities experienced at this critical time. The narrative shows the author in a suitably favourable light and draws attention to his piety, prudence, endurance and blamelessness, but it also reflects the emotional and instinctive underpinnings of a world that was clearly explicable to his 5th century BC audience. It is these underpinnings, rather than any actual reality, that a cognitive-informed approach can shed most light on here. These 'sacrifices' are primarily 'special instrument' rituals, reflecting an ongoing relationship with the divine defined through regular 'special patient' sacrificial practice and experience.

There are similarities and divergences when we look at the description of the Battle of Plataea in Herodotus and the experience of sacrificial divination in such a momentous and high intensity context. Many Greeks clearly believed that the gods were present and active at such significant moments. This is certainly reflected in some of Herodotus's famous anecdotes about gods actually taking part in the fighting or being directly involved in some other way during battles with the Persians.⁷⁰⁷ In terms of sacrificial divination at Plataea, we find two prominent figures. These are Tisamenus on the Greek side, from the famous *mantic* clan of the Iamidae and Hegesistratus of Elis, the best known member of the nearly as famous *mantic* clan of the Telliadae, on the side of the Persians who crucially make 'use of the Greek ritual' here to get their omens (καὶ γὰρ οὗτος Ἑλληνικοῖσι ἱεροῖσι ἐχρᾶτο 9.37.1). The omens prove favourable for defence but unfavourable if, in eagerness, either side attacks (9.33-8). This is the outcome of the omens taken by both these elite and prominent Greek diviners. In other words, both men get the same results using the same Greek method of divination. Such sacrificial divination was a low intensity 'special instrument' ritual, the results of which although temporary, remain the same for many days following successive daily 'sacrifices'. As a result no clearly personalised divine figure is understood on any level as the object of such rites, and they are thus cognitively experienced differently than 'special patient' rituals. The god thus will not 'accept' or 'reject' but only give signs based on correct ritual procedure (i.e. Greek). Successful sacrificial divination would also imply (as discussed above), however, an emotional history of good relations with the divine sphere through regular 'special patient' sacrificial practice as, indeed, most elite Greeks could no doubt have claimed to possess (e.g. Xenophon, *On the Cavalry Commander* 1.1).

⁷⁰⁷ E.g. 6.105 (Pan and Pheidippides during the battle of Marathon), 6.117 (a giant phantom at Marathon), 9.143.2 (Reward for Ajax after Salamis), 9.65 (Demeter at Plataea).

Finally, a frustrated Mardonius ignores the signs and attacks but, before his defeat is clearly sealed, a famous incident is recorded (Herodotus 9.61-3) which dramatically changes the nature and experience of the divinatory ritual for the Spartan forces. Even while under attack and losing men, the Spartans do not act as the omens continue to be unfavourable. At the last moment, however, the legendary Pausanias turns his eyes to the temple of Hera and prays for success. At the same time, the Tegeans spring forward to lead the attack and a moment later the omens prove favourable and the Spartans attack. The fantastic and, probably, retrospective (at least in part) quality of this account is not in doubt but, again, a cognitive-informed approach makes explicable the reasons why it made such sense to its many listeners and readers.

The reference to Hera introduces a more personal quality and emphasises emotionally-based and instinctive relations with a powerful goddess in a situation of anxiety and danger. This relation to Hera is based here on proximity – Hera’s temple can be seen by Pausanias and his prayer might be thought to be in some respects in her earshot. Hera is thus seen in an anthropomorphic (or person-like) sense as many key cognitive approaches emphasise.⁷⁰⁸ It might be argued that these successful omens seem conditional on the action of the Tegeans – the revelation of the god is a consequence of human action, just as the relationship with the divine is an extension of ordinary human action and experience in most sacrificial contexts. In other words, a very similar cognitive process and understanding is at work here. On the other hand, the goddess is understood to be intervening more directly and forcefully. Here the highly intense and emotional situation corresponds intuitively with the believed immediacy of the goddess Hera, and pushes this rite into a ‘special agent’ model where the gods are felt to be acting through participants. Thus a ‘special instrument’ ritual is transformed into a ‘special agent’ ritual with the corresponding features of powerful emotionality and believed divine intimacy. The actual rituals employed, however, between these two contrasting types are the same and yet are experienced and interpreted in radically different ways.

In addition, it must be understood that a variety of often (seemingly) conflicting terminology is used in this account and no clear cut distinctions seems possible.⁷⁰⁹ Far more important to accounts such as these appears to be emotionality and context as

⁷⁰⁸ E.g. Guthrie 1993; Barrett 2004.

⁷⁰⁹ In particular τὰ σφάγια θυομένοισι at 9.62.

delineated in this chapter. We also see in these examples how ‘sacrifice’ – specifically sacrificial divination – was a key aspect of the instinctive and emotional representation and (retrospective) construction of events. A cognitive-informed approach allows a window into this process that illuminates the mentality involved.

In conclusion, sacrificial consulting rites could be ‘special instrument’ or ‘special agent’ in form depending on how they were experienced and understood. They could also be a part of sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating ‘special patient’ rituals and, again, have a very different experiential character. Similar to such rituals, as already discussed, they could thus be interpreted in a number of diverse ways and should not be understood as having only one function or alleged ‘meaning’. It is already clear that sacrificial rites in general were far more complicated in nature than has been assumed by modern scholars. They could also potentially involve as powerful an experience of divine intimacy as any other ritual addressed in this chapter or beyond its scope.

‘Destruction sacrifices’

‘Destruction sacrifices’ could be flexible variations of ‘special patient’ rituals (i.e., preparation, cooking and eating rituals), or ‘special agent’ rituals normally associated (where there is enough evidence) with high intensity situations. The holocaust of a larger animal was an even rarer practice and, perhaps, only alleged, e.g. the holocaust to Boubrostis, ‘ravenous hunger’ (Plutarch, *Table-Talk* 694a-b). This would be a ‘special agent’ ritual where the ritual itself is significantly more high intensity in nature associated with an extremely high intensity situation (i.e. famine). Holocausts and ‘moirocausts’ together with *thysia* (understood in this instance as a conventional form of ‘sacrifice’ following by dining) have been seen as variations of a theme.⁷¹⁰ A key text will help reveal the cognitive underpinnings of such rituals.

A passage from Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (7.8.4) describes a holocaust performed in a situation of anxiety. Ekroth argues that other forms of ‘sacrifice’ were also performed as good omens are mentioned.⁷¹¹ There are no ‘special instrument’ rituals associated directly with ‘destruction sacrifices’. The alimentary side of such practices is, however, not only still present but central as other victims are often available, as is the case here. This passage

⁷¹⁰ Parker 2011: 145.

⁷¹¹ Ekroth 2002: 224.

reveals in exemplary fashion Xenophon's closeness and intimacy with the god (although charging him with slight neglect) and the legitimacy and correctness of his (ancestral) religious practices, principally sacrificial ones. It is not a record of the actual reality of his experience which probably differed a great deal from his presentation of it. Nevertheless, it reveals an important cognitive expectation that his readers must have shared at some level. The passage could be coupled by some with the argument of Burkert and the perspective of van Baal concerning high intensity situations. According to Ekroth in high intensity situations 'the principle at work seems to be that of renunciation: If a part is given up the rest could be saved'.⁷¹² This ties in with Burkert's biologically influenced argument of a *pars pro toto* principle at work in situations of pursuit, threat or anxiety.⁷¹³ In support of this argument, he marshalled an array of evidence from diverse periods and sources, as well as, more controversially, evidence from zoology. However, the model of Lawson and McCauley indicates that as with sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals generally (and their association with *trapezomata* and *theoxenia* as discussed above) tacit knowledge and experience of ritual form can be manipulated. Specifically, it can be unconsciously utilised to draw on, create, and sometimes repair, intimate relations with the gods by making the rite slightly more intense and emotional. It should be noted that the so-called principle of renunciation was identified many times in my discussion of the range of sacrificial practices, both animal based and bloodless. It does not seem to have been a powerful principle operating on any kind of unconscious level, however, as most cases involved a very modest and controlled surrender of resources. In the case of 'destruction sacrifices' it most often involved minor portions or piglets, the latter as in the case of Xenophon here.⁷¹⁴ This form of sacrificial activity was also of marginal importance generally and often associated clearly with alimentary 'sacrifice', as discussed in Chapter IV.

Ekroth argues that it is possible to link 'destruction sacrifices' to both the character of the recipient and the situation when the 'sacrifice' was performed but that 'one of these approaches is not more obvious than the other and no distinct conclusion can be reached'. In terms of situations, she refers to instances when an individual or community is faced with danger or uncertainty. In addition, some 'destruction sacrifices' on sacrificial

⁷¹² Ekroth 2002: 307-10.

⁷¹³ Burkert 1996: 41.

⁷¹⁴ Piglets, e.g. SEG 33.147.13-5 – a holocaust of a piglet in association with two 'non-destruction sacrifices'; RO 62.A.32-4 holocaust of a pig followed by alimentary 'sacrifice' the next day and B.10-21 a pig destroyed in advance of further 'sacrifice'.

calendars or part of festive contexts, for example, may commemorate some such past experiences.⁷¹⁵

As regards the gods, Xenophon's already discussed 'sacrifice' to Zeus Meilichios (*Anabasis* 7.8.4-5) and the alleged holocaust to Boubrostis ('the ravenous hunger') referred to by Plutarch (*Table-Talk* 694a-b), citing an earlier source, refer to such a situation. In the epigraphic evidence, for example, holocausts of piglets offered at Cos and Thorikos to Zeus Polieus may relate to the prosperity of the crops and the community while the destruction of the skin of a goat at Cos in an oath ceremony and the 'destruction sacrifices' to Zeus Meilichios and the Tritopatores in the Selinous sacred law may also relate to high intensity situations according to some interpretations.⁷¹⁶ In terms of heroes, a link with the hero's death and with the 'sacrifice' interpreted as a kind of appeasement (Herodotus 1.167, Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians* 58.1) or with their mortality in contrast to the immortal gods (Herodotus 2.44, Ps Aristotle, *On Marvellous Things Heard* 840a) are evident in all cases from the literary sources dating to before 300 BC using the terms *enagizein* and *enagismata*.⁷¹⁷ There is thus a strong (but not comprehensive) link with situations of danger or contexts of mortality in the evidence and some corroboration of such activity emerging inevitably as an unconscious behavioural response in association with tacit knowledge of ritual form, as I argue below. In ancient Greece this would inevitably be connected with specific gods or heroes and specific (again culture-based) forms of ritual behaviour on a more explicit and conscious level. One of the passages in Herodotus alluded to, describing propitiation 'sacrifices' to slaughtered Phokaians is particularly significant here (Herodotus 1.167). Herodotus describes the connection between a particular threat to the community and a particular crime against prisoners-of-war which ultimately leads to consultation of Apollo at Delphi and rituals of sacrificial propitiation.

As already discussed, cognitive studies have shown how a kind of intentional agency or anthropomorphism is often interpreted as behind potentially any event or natural phenomenon. The divine is understood to be at work in the world in general and in high intensity situations in particular, especially major conflicts or personal crises, they might be

⁷¹⁵ Ekroth 2002: 227-8.

⁷¹⁶ Holocausts: Cos LSCG 151A.32-4, Thorikos SEG XXXIII.147.13-5; oath ceremony at Cos: LSCG 151D.16-7; Tritopatores and Zeus Meilichios: Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: A.9-12 and A.17-8. Following Ekroth 2002: 225-8. On interpretation of the complex sacred law from Selinous, for example, see Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993, cf. Clinton 1996, and below.

⁷¹⁷ Following Ekroth 2002: 82-6.

felt to take an even greater interest. Thus, the gods are already felt (or believed to be) more present than in normal circumstances. In other words, as already indicated from a different perspective, the situation itself draws the gods into the world. On one level, modifying 'special patient' rituals such as sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals by transforming them into holocausts might be seen as an additional and human-controlled way of drawing the gods into the world. It does this by making the rituals more intense and emotional, pushing them slightly more toward the features of a 'special agent' type ritual. Ritual form is thus manipulated so as to provide assurance and reduce anxiety in a way that makes a familiarly vague kind of sense. It makes this sense through the workings of our social mind system, in particular our social exchange system: the gods are given more (or alternatively, greater attention, piety and dedication are expressed) and so more might be expected in return. However, certain (high intensity) situations or contexts of high emotion involving significant changes in the human-religious world involve belief in the powerful experience of divine intimacy or activity and lead to 'special agent' ritual experiences. An association between 'destruction sacrifices' and high intensity situations is also clear from the ethnographic evidence.⁷¹⁸

In conclusion, 'destruction sacrifices' could again be experienced in different ways like the other forms of sacrificial behaviour already discussed. The picture is thus one of increasing complexity on an emotional and experiential level, despite often mild changes in the nature of the rituals employed themselves. 'Destruction sacrifices' were not 'special instrument' in form, although divinatory procedures could be used on other 'sacrifices' performed at the same time. They could, however, be either 'special patient' or 'special agent' in nature and thus involve only partial increases in divine intimacy and emotion or extreme ones where the gods would literally be felt to act through the performers of the 'sacrifice' to make changes in the world, such as end famine. Unfortunately, our evidence is often partial for the nature of such experiences and so the model of Lawson and McCauley is even more important as a means of understanding such behaviour and how it was interpreted.

Sacrificial killing rituals

In terms of battle-line *sphagia*, I have already discussed Herodotus's description of the Battle of Plataea. Such killing rituals, as with some 'sacrifice' to rivers, the sea and the

⁷¹⁸ Evans-Pritchard 1956: 219; Lienhardt 1961: 284-5; Barth 1975: 90, 150; De Heusch 1985: 41-3, 51-2, 60, 62.

wind, can be analysed in a similar way. In terms of the model of Lawson and McCauley, killing rituals could be either 'special patient', 'special instrument' or 'special agent' rituals, with the latter often performed in demonstrably high intensity and extremely emotional situations. Killing rituals were a necessary part of most forms of 'sacrifice' and were not in themselves high intensity or distinctive. It was often the situation that was high intensity and not necessarily the rituals. However, as discussed, the situation is a vital part of the cognitive experience of the ritual. In the aforementioned battle, the massive significance of this particular event for the futures and well-being of all concerned would correspond to the fact that the gods were especially interested in the result. As a result, the eventually successful divinatory *sphagia* (9.61-2) took on a 'special agent' quality. This, however, is not always the case with such rituals.

Battle-line rituals could thus be experienced in a wide variety of ways like other sacrificial rituals. Some were mainly, perhaps entirely, divinatory and thus 'special instrument' in character (e.g. Herodotus 6.112.6, 7.219.1, Thucydides 4.92.7, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.1.17, 4.2.18, 7.2.20-1). Sometimes certainty is not possible, but this kind of primary function is implied by the narrative (e.g. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.2.16, 3.4.23). In the example from *Anabasis* of the *sphagia* of a transport or working ox (6.5.25-7), however, a divinatory function is ruled out by the narrative. Here the context is the desperate need to take action followed by three days of unfavourable omens for action, as already discussed. This ritual is performed in a situation of duress where there is little time to spare. We find here a simple killing ritual with no elaboration. The blood is not considered portentous nor is a 'recipient' or prayer mentioned. The ritual is also not distinctive although the situation is high intensity. This incident, although unique, is one of the main pieces of counter-evidence against the notion of a uniform concept of 'sacrifice'. I also argue that this ritual, like much battle-line 'sacrifice', was 'special agent' in character.

To understand the 'special agent' quality of many such sacrificial rites and their particular interpretation by those who experienced them, it is necessary to understand the role of the *mantis* while on a military campaign. Ancient seers had many roles in society but their activity in war was arguably their most significant and important. Flower argues that 'the advice of seers was essential to the efficient running of the *polis* in peace and in war, as well as to the solving of personal problems in the private sphere'. Indeed, 'no general would leave camp or begin battle without first consulting his seer'. In fact, 'in the Greek

world seers were the most authoritative experts in all matters pertaining to religion'.⁷¹⁹ The seer was thus a specialist concerning interactions with the gods and could conceivably behave as a representative through whom the gods could act in highly emotional, one-off 'special agent' rituals. At the same time, as the representative of the gods and not the patient of the ritual (this role would be taken by the soldiers in his army) he himself could experience such rites multiple times. Another key issue here, however, is also the question of whether the gods were invoked in such rituals and were thus more clearly acting as agents. It is not possible to answer this conclusively, as a consequence of the inadequacy of the evidence in this matter. In terms of parallels, Near Eastern divinatory practice conventionally involved invocation but it was much more extensive in form and differed in many significant ways from Greek practice.⁷²⁰ A frieze in a Lycian tomb of the first half of the 4th century B.C., however, shows battle-line 'sacrifice' performed by a seer while his commander raises his right hand in prayer.⁷²¹ I would suggest that it is very reasonable to assume, given the seer's prominent role and status, that he was thought of as representing and enacting the power of the gods in certain contexts, and that invocation was involved.

Similar experiences could be involved in sacrificial activity in extreme situations involving the sea, rivers and the wind. A good example of this type of highly emotional one-off experience is in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.3.19-20) where the army needs to cross a river while under attack. They halt before crossing, the Spartan general Cheirisophus puts a wreath on his head and prepares for battle with his soldiers, while the seers offer *sphagia*. The portentous flow of blood then leads to the soldiers striking up the paeon and the women utter their ritual cry. This 'sacrifice' is not, however, 'special instrument' in form despite the importance of the omens as the primary link between the ritual and the gods is through the activity of the seers acting on their behalf. The omens do, however, confirm the success of the ritual and the direct favour of the gods.

In Sparta, on the other hand, battle-line 'sacrifice' was 'offered' to Artemis Agrotera (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.2.20) and such ritual was characterised by the joyful, distinguished appearance of those present (*Constitution of the Spartans* 13.8). We seem to have here a 'special patient' ritual (as opposed to a 'special instrument' or 'special agent' ritual) which has the joyful characteristics more typical of a dining context. It might appear that, in this

⁷¹⁹ Flower 2008: 240-1.

⁷²⁰ Cryer 1994: 210.

⁷²¹ Heroon von Trysa, Stadtbefestigung. ANSA I 462, 463, 464 and Flower 2008: 164.

instance, the nature of the deity is, in some respects, more important for an understanding of the rite than the situation, as argued by Vernant.⁷²² However, this may be more about Spartan ideals, discipline and the image they wish to present to their enemies. We also see here a case of a particular ritual embodiment manipulating emotional and mental states.⁷²³ The young men, for instance, comb their hair and look cheerful while everyone polishes their weapons. Thus the particular embodiment we find reflects the distinctive Spartan ideology and the way they wish to be seen by themselves and others. Such embodiment, however, also manipulates their own emotional mental states in line with these expectations.

I have already discussed evidence for battle-line *sphagia* that entails very different cognitive and experiential dimensions, demonstrating that such ritual was far from stable and uniform. Parker identifies three theories that are often used to explain such rituals.⁷²⁴ The first is that the sacrificial victim in such rituals represents the enemy ('We kill. May we kill'), the second is that the animal victim's death, in some sense, represents and replaces those of the human worshipers and the third is that the ritual was purely divinatory.⁷²⁵ That such rituals were purely divinatory has already been ruled out but all three variants might be possible in different situations. The idea of a single victim replacing the human community is a familiar theme in Euripides and his depictions of 'human sacrifice'. The idea of such 'patriotic heroes' may be said to refer to a different context than a more regular battle however. In a number of Euripides's plays (*Children of Herakles*, *Phoenician Women* and *Erechtheus*) the entire community is in danger. This is markedly more intense than the situation of an ordinary battle where battle-line *sphagia* would also customarily be performed. The issue once again then is that the degree of predictability or unpredictability of a ritual seems to be a better variable determining ritual form in the ancient Greek evidence than frequency or infrequency.

It should thus be borne in mind that killing and military conflict was a regular part of life for most adult ancient Greeks. As with meat and animal slaughter, we should not confuse our own modern experience with that of the ancients. Battle-line *sphagia* may have been

⁷²² Vernant 1991b: 252.

⁷²³ See Geertz 2010: 307, Barsalou et al 2005: 43.

⁷²⁴ Parker 2013: 151.

⁷²⁵ The first theory is argued forcefully by Jameson 1991: 221; Parker 2009: 309 suggests that 'pre-battle sacrifice is an act both of aggression against an enemy and a kind of precautionary self-maiming'; Dillon 2008: 246 emphasises divination.

particularly high intensity when first seen or experienced but may well have become routine (and not so different from the many other ‘sacrifices’ carried out while on campaign) in the military career of an average experienced hoplite. Indeed, many would no doubt have not been able to see the ritual performed in most battle contexts (there may well, however, have been an established means of spreading the news of the omens – e.g. the instructions of Cyrus to Xenophon to pass on word of favourable pre-battle sacrificial omens at *Anabasis* 1.8.15-7). Some battles, as already indicated, however, were far more significant and intense and felt to be particularly likely to attract divine intervention. They were thus extremely unpredictable, highly emotional and one-off type events in which the gods were felt to act through the army’s seers in extraordinary ‘special agent’ rites.

Sometimes the experience of rituals, such as battle-line *sphagia*, might have led to especially intense, spontaneous exegetical reflection (SER), essentially a process of analogical reasoning, in association with the activation of ‘flashbulb memory’ (FM).⁷²⁶ FM is a term already discussed that was originally coined to describe a type of episodic memory in which images of photograph-like vividness are ‘printed’ in memory, apparently due (in part at least) to the unique and emotional character of the event.⁷²⁷ In some battle-line rites, here the link to impending killing and bloodshed, along with the focus of the ritual entirely on the slaughter of the victim (carried out with a sword and not a sacrificial knife) would surely have triggered analogical thinking of an unusual kind in such unpredictable contexts and circumstances. According to Whitehouse, such idiosyncratic, rich and revelatory religious experience makes every protagonist a potential exegete and authority. However, such knowledge ‘may never be verbally transmitted, or is communicated piecemeal in highly opaque, cryptic allusions and mythological narratives’.⁷²⁸

Thus conflation in our evidence of battle-line *sphagia* and ‘human sacrifice’ (identified initially in Chapter IV and see also below) may be down to a particular emotional response to an extreme type of situation. These conflation happens in various ways in cultural media such as vase paintings and tragedy. The fact that the basis and substance of these associations are never clearly spelled out and are often confusing might be more down to

⁷²⁶ Whitehouse 2004: 114-8.

⁷²⁷ Whitehouse 2004: 106.

⁷²⁸ Whitehouse 2000: 117.

the actual experience of being in a battle-line context as opposed to the creative quality of their authors and artists, as is generally thought. Bowden has argued in his previously discussed study of mystery cults that we should think of *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* itself 'as an exegetical reflection on the experience of being initiated, rather than simply using it as a key to work out what happened in Eleusis'.⁷²⁹ Again, this follows from the non-verbal nature of imagistic religious experience where, in this case, 'each initiate would have to think about their own experience and develop their own understanding of what they had been through' in the absence of any authoritative texts or any mechanism to effectively instruct them on what the rites meant.⁷³⁰ Likewise, the link between fictive 'human sacrifice' and actual sacrificial practice can be understood in terms of exegetical reflection stemming from a high-intensity traumatic experience. In terms of such analogical links, as already indicated, a sword is used both in battle-line *sphagia* and many accounts of 'human sacrifice' (e.g. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1578, *Hecuba* 543) as opposed to the more usual sacrificial knife, for example.

One piece of evidence that could reflect such emotional reflection on the experience of traumatic and unpredictable warfare is a vase painting by the Triptolemos Painter (see Figure 10 below). This shows Aias and Hektor preparing to duel with the corpse of a ram situated between them, labelled (according to a reconstruction) Patroclus. Griffiths argues that this artist is not 'given to conceptual originality or to wild flights of iconographic invention' and the image should be thought of as one familiar to most Athenians. He believes that Aeschylus's *Achilles* trilogy may be the inspiration (the majority of this artist's work has been dated to around 470 BC) and that it shows a substitution of the body of Patroclus with the ram by a god. He cannot answer why the victim is a ram, however, a victim, in his own words, 'associated with sacrifice rather than heroic fighting'.⁷³¹ Ekroth concludes that 'though the bleeding ram may be connected with representations of sacrifice, primarily those of battle-line *sphagia*, it is perhaps better linked to a general context of war and of those killed in battle, a setting in which blood is more frequently rendered'.⁷³² Thus, although varying interpretations are possible and nothing conclusive can be maintained, a link with the experience of battle, and battle-line ritual in particular, is persuasive.

⁷²⁹ Bowden 2010: 46.

⁷³⁰ Bowden 2010: 46.

⁷³¹ Griffiths 1985 and Griffiths 1989.

⁷³² Ekroth 2005: 13.



Figure 10: Vase painting by the Triptolemos Painter dated to around 470 BC⁷³³

In terms of ‘sacrifice’ to the winds, two texts (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.5.4 and Herodotus, 7.189) can be usefully and revealingly compared and contrasted to illuminate the range of such experience. In the example given by Xenophon, a ‘special agent’ ritual is offered in a high intensity situation to an unknown powerful force of wind. The emphasis is on the abatement of the wind’s fury through the medium of the seer performing ‘sacrifice’ of appeasement. The nature of the situation, if nothing else, precludes the use of an altar and many other familiar features of many forms of sacrificial practice. As with *sphagia*-related language generally, the nature of the terms used (σφαγιάσασθαι, σφαγιάζεται) suggests the importance and significance of the blood of the victim.⁷³⁴ The second ‘sacrifice’ in Herodotus may well have been not too dissimilar but *thysia*-related language is used (ἐθύοντό). This was also a ‘special agent’ ritual in a high intensity situation but to a well delineated divine figure, emphasising a close ancestral bond between this god and the city and calling for aid on a familiar reciprocal basis. At least, this is how it is remembered and presented by the Athenians. It thus appears from these two texts that a personalised relationship is preferable but not indispensable to the success of such a ritual. Whatever the case, in these high intensity situations, a god (whether clearly identifiable or not) was understood to be felt to be present and ‘sacrifice’ was performed. ‘Sacrifice’ is here, once

⁷³³ Griffiths 1985.

⁷³⁴ Jameson 1991: 201.

again, an instinctive and emotional consequence of a desperate and dangerous high intensity situation. Here again, however, in the latter case it is the nature of the 'recipient' and the relationship involved that is drawn out in the narrative. Such factors are very often of equal (or greater) importance to the situation and must also be borne in mind when trying to reconstruct the cognitive states of the worshipers. They may, however, sometimes be retrospective.

In conclusion, killing rituals were again much more complex than is recognised in modern scholarship and the model of Lawson and McCauley is very valuable in pointing to this complexity. Such rituals could be interpreted and experienced in a number of different ways and no single explanation or definition can suffice. They could range from low levels of emotionality to extreme emotional (and even traumatic) states and involve differing types of experience of the gods. It also emerges here most clearly that the degree of predictability of a ritual is a more important variable than frequency when considering the Greek evidence determining ritual form. It is also possible to use both Lawson and McCauley and Whitehouse's use of research on memory to try to glimpse reflections of traumatic and extreme emotional (ritual) experience in various cultural media that has survived.

'Human sacrifice'

'Human sacrifice' is high intensity, extreme and highly emotional in nature. As discussed in Chapter IV, an altar is occasionally present and gods are often felt to be the objects in some sense of such rites (see also below). They are thus 'special patient' in form and yet have the experiential profile of 'special agent' rites. As such they seem to contradict the model of Lawson and McCauley. However, such rites are either entirely fictive (as in classical Athens) or, at the very most, extremely rare and marginal, as discussed in Chapter IV. We have already discussed cryptic and vague allusions to battle-line rites in these descriptions. Gagné notes that Herodotus mentions fourteen cases of execution that can be described as 'human sacrifices' modelled on the ritual killing of animals (1.116, 2.119, 2.45, 2.63, 3.35, 4.62, 4.71-2, 4.94, 4.102-3, 5.5, 7.114, 7.180, 7.197, 9.119). He adds that 'these play a notable role in the works mirror-play of cultural inversion – twelve of these cases concern

the acts of non-Greek peoples' (and only 7.197 concerns a story performed by Greeks in Greece).⁷³⁵

Many of the contexts where we find stories or depictions of 'human sacrifice' show once again the common pattern of misfortune interpreted and experienced in social terms. This goes hand in hand with the particular Greek (historic and mythic) response to such misfortune. There is generally the idea that a crime has been committed in the recent or distant past and that a god is angry.⁷³⁶ Such accounts, however, as discussed in Chapter IV, tell us more about the Greek imagination than anything else.

Euripides presents a number of good case studies for assessing the experiential relevance of dramas featuring 'human sacrifice' to their Athenian audience (e.g. *Electra* 774-843, cf. *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1540-1612 where substitution takes place). At the start of *Hecuba*, the ghost of Polydorus informs us that the Greeks were about to sail home from Troy when Achilles appeared to them above his tomb and demanded the 'sacrifice' of Polyxena, Hecuba's daughter, as a gift of honour for his tomb (35-45). One of the questions explored in the tragedy is the notion of honouring those who died for their country and that, sometimes, this has a high cost that has to be paid.⁷³⁷ Odysseus himself clearly expresses the view that Achilles must be honoured above all in death as he was in life (309-312). Hecuba herself had previously asked the hero why it was necessary to spurn the more appropriate 'offering' of a bull (*bouthytein*) and instead perform 'human sacrifice' (*anthrôposphagein*) at his grave (260-1). Bremmer notes that the sacrificial terminology throughout the play is virtually only words connected with *sphazein*, 'cutting the throat' and clearly this is an abnormally brutal 'sacrifice'.⁷³⁸

This 'sacrifice' is an abnormal 'special patient sacrifice' to Achilles and the description of the act by the herald, Talthebius, presents the familiar scene of a ritually prescribed, ordered environment (518-82). Here Polyxena heroically accepts her fate and is honoured by the Greeks following her death. The theme of girls dying voluntarily for their community – a popular motif of Euripides (e.g. *Children of Herakles*, *Erechtheus*) – is here perverted in the

⁷³⁵ Gagné 2013: 101.

⁷³⁶ For example, in *Children of Herakles* (403-410) a maiden of royal blood must be 'sacrificed' to Demeter according to old oracles – no more detail is given; in *Phoenician Women* (930-5) Creon's son must die to appease the ancient anger of Ares over the actions of Cadmus.

⁷³⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 342.

⁷³⁸ Bremmer 2007b: 60.

sense that Polyxena is dying voluntarily not for her own people (her own city had just been destroyed) but for the benefit of her enemies. Sourvinou-Inwood noted that ritual was one of the main foci of the play and argued that the 'perverted echo of real life ritual practices would have connected the world of the play to that of the audience through contrast, which distanced the human sacrifice and the world in which it took part from the audience's realities'.⁷³⁹ She added that the fate of Polyxena was a 'case limit of horror'.⁷⁴⁰

In conclusion, 'human sacrifice' does not contradict the model of Lawson and McCauley but, on the contrary, is fully accounted for by it. Their model predicts that such behaviour will be marginal and extremely rare at best and this is what is reflected in the ancient Greek evidence. It is also explicable as a means of negatively characterising foreign cultures and practices.

Intensity of ritual and intimacy of deity

Instead of the low-modified-high intensity schema of Ekroth (which emphasises the importance of the form of ritual employed), I would propose a model of level of emotionality/level of divine intimacy (or immediacy) based on the insights of Lawson and McCauley and Pyysiäinen.⁷⁴¹ The key principle is how involved are the gods and to what extent they are drawn into the human world or successfully 'summoned'. Furthermore, this level of intensity or intimacy with the divine reflects the mental states of the participants and reveals their emotional being. Such an approach thus gives a key insight into the emotional and experiential aspects of a range of sacrificial practices, an aspect not usually explored by scholars. It is not, however, intended as a comprehensive model but one of a number of potential approaches that can help shed light on ancient experience and sacrificial practice.

The association of the gods with situations of misfortune, as well as with intense and highly significant events such as major battles, has been discussed, as well as various attempts to appease the gods or the divine in situations of need or uncertainty. The association of the divine with good fortune and situations of good tidings is also clear from the evidence and particularly clear in the retrospective low intensity nature of first-fruit rituals discussed

⁷³⁹ Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 339.

⁷⁴⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 342.

⁷⁴¹ Ekroth 2002: 326-30; see also Chapter I for discussion of my general methodology.

further below, as well as 'thank-offerings' in general. The gods were a very real part of ancient Greek life and there was a strong association between the level of emotion, memorability and predicatability of various rituals and the degree of divine immediacy believed, felt and experienced to be involved. This related much less to the form of the rituals themselves, although these may also be significant in some cases (e.g. some holocausts).

This approach therefore stresses experiential rather than purely ritual aspects in order to try and unlock the significance of sacrificial activity. Put crudely, the more involved the gods are in a particular proceeding, the more intense the experience of the actual rituals in many cases. The involvement of the gods is often from an etic perspective contingent on human experience and the contexts of human activity, behaviour and circumstance. The actions of 'sacrifice' are thus an experiential phenomenon where the form of the rituals are less significant than the experience itself from which they often result. The 'meaning' of the ritual (as I will argue once again when it comes to bloodless practices below) is transformed by the context of human experience, irrelevant of the actual form or nature of the precise rituals employed in many cases. However, at the same time, certain ritual features (i.e. wineless 'sacrifices', on-the-spot 'sacrifice', etc identified in Chapters IV and V) are also important and can help shape significantly the 'meaning' of such ritual. Thus, once again, there is a degree of overlap between the unconscious and automatic and the conscious, explicit and perceived emotional experience in 'sacrifice'.

Other ritual killing of animals

Other kinds of behaviour involving the ritual killing of animals can be analysed in a similar way and show similar features and characteristics. They were also more complicated than generally understood by modern scholars and could be understood and experienced on a number of different levels and in diverse ways. This corresponds to my treatment of the relationship of such forms of behaviour with 'sacrifice' in terms of Wittgenstein's model of 'family resemblances' and of my identification of 'sacrifice' itself as an 'impure subject', as introduced in Chapter I.

Ritual killing of animals in oath-rituals

Oath-rituals employed powerful, deeply memorable and emotive sensory symbols and stimuli. In the model of Lawson and McCauley these were 'special instrument' or 'special agent' rituals that could thus vary in emotionality and intensity. In particular, elements such as touching, adding gods as witnesses, ritually killing animals in powerfully expressive ways, a dramatised self-curse and the level of community involvement could make the rite more intense in nature.⁷⁴² In addition, oaths could be sworn in the vicinity of altars and inscribed and set up in public places such as temples and on the Acropolis, heightening their exposure and importance.⁷⁴³ The seriousness, significance and momentousness of the occasion could also affect the intensity of the ritual and (as discussed) involve a belief that it accrued greater divine attention and interest than everyday events. Thus the occasion itself and any events or phenomena associated with it could take on much weightier significance in the minds and emotional states of those involved. The level of intensity could also, however, be associated with profoundly political elements. Athens, for example, imposed a penalty on all Chalcidian adults who refused to swear an oath stipulated by the assembly. Those who failed to comply would be stripped of both citizen rights and property while Olympian Zeus would receive a tithe of the latter.⁷⁴⁴

As an illustrative example, a much debated and contentious mid 4th century BC inscription from the Athenian deme of Acharnae preserves the ephebic oath and the 'oath of Plataea'.⁷⁴⁵ The historicity of this document is a contentious question and no certainty currently appears possible, in particular with regard to the latter 'oath' (cf. Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 76-8 and 80-2).⁷⁴⁶ However, it is not essential to my methodology to ascertain the absolute accuracy of this document, but rather, to demonstrate the emotional and cognitive underpinnings that supported its relevance and 'meaning' to the lives and experiences of Athenians of this period. Crucially, the word 'gods' is inscribed on

⁷⁴² Touching: e.g. Demosthenes 23.67-8, Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 43-53, LSCG 151D.5-20; adding gods as witnesses: e.g. IG I³ 9, 37.51, 14.A16 and B17, *Iliad* 3.103-7; no gods as witnesses: e.g. IG I³ 39, 53, 54, 118; ritually killing animals in dramatic ways: e.g. IG I³ 14.A18 and B19 where the oaths are sworn over burning sacrificial victims; in contrast SEG IX.3.44-52 has an oath sworn over burning wax effigies; dramatised self-curse: the best literary example is *Iliad* 3.298-301 which involves libation (for epigraphic versions, see the previous two examples).

⁷⁴³ Altars: e.g. SEG X.24.17; temples: e.g. IG I³ 118.26-7; Acropolis: e.g. IG I³ 37.C35-41 with Fornara no. 99C.

⁷⁴⁴ IG I³ 39.32-9.

⁷⁴⁵ SEG 21.519 = RO 88.

⁷⁴⁶ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 449.

the cornice of the prediment of the *stèle*, in a manner familiar from decrees, although this is a dedication by a priest of the cult of Ares and Athena Areia at Acharnae.⁷⁴⁷ It thus has similar legal expectations.

Under this divine-human relationship legalistic heading, the ephebic oath employs powerful emotional and symbolic symbols from the familiar and lived experience of the young men who swore it. The oath itself is said to be ancestral (5) while it refers to honouring the ancestral religion (15) and calls as witnesses local crops and the land as well as eleven deities, many of whose relevance is uncertain (16-9). However, Rhodes and Osborne note the prominence given to Aglaurus, the daughter of Cecrops, who threw herself from the Acropolis to save the city. This local goddess heads the list and it was at her sanctuary on the slope below the east end of the Acropolis that the ephebes, likewise called upon to save the city, took their oath (Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* 19.303).⁷⁴⁸ This was a 'special agent' oath-ritual that included witnesses of particular significance to the young men, where identifiable, while it was ultimately made truly manifest in those who swore it by all the gods of the city. It was a matter of concern to all who defended and loved their city, human and divine, and was a one-off experience of high emotion and significance, both personal and civic.

In a very different context but under the same legal umbrella in this particular document, the 'oath of Plataea' includes a powerful and evocative dramatised self-curse calling sickness, destruction, famine and monstrous children on those who might prove to swear falsely (39-45). This oath also includes sacrificial victims utilised in a dramatic and emotionally compelling experience replete with analogical and symbolic 'meaning'. As they swear their oath, the hoplites protect the sacrificial victims with their shields and at the sound of a trumpet – another strikingly emotive and sensorial focus – they made their collective curse upon themselves should they falter on their sworn word (46-51). Interestingly, in this oath no gods are explicitly included as witnesses despite the extreme significance of the occasion. I would suggest that this 'oath' was deemed already powerful enough and that the explicit inclusion of deities would have been in some key respects felt to be superfluous. This was, after all, a 'special agent' ritual of particular significance and momentousness in which the power and influence of the gods was strikingly felt.

⁷⁴⁷ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 442.

⁷⁴⁸ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 446.

In conclusion, oath-rituals could be interpreted and experienced in different ways in a similar way to the sacrificial activities already discussed. They could be ‘special agent’ or ‘special instrument’ in form but not ‘special patient’, however. There were many ways to increase the emotional volume of an oath, although context was once again a very significant factor. Ritual features were thus important to the experience of an oath, but not necessarily pivotal. Political aspects could also be central. Some oaths may also have been more intense to some than others. For some serving as a prosecutor in the Areopagus, for example, swearing an oath while touching the *tomia* (Demosthenes 23.67-8) may have been routine and ‘special instrument’ in nature, but for others a one-off highly emotional ‘special agent’ ritual.

Ritual killing of an animal in purifications

In terms of the model of Lawson and McCauley these killing rituals were also ‘special instrument’ or ‘special agent’ rituals. Again, the level of intensity and emotion varies with situation. Regular purifications of the assembly or of particular sanctuaries, for example, would be low intensity in character and perhaps a regular feature of the social and ritual landscape of a major city.⁷⁴⁹ They were thus ‘special instrument’ in character. Purification of a murderer (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 278-81, Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.685-717), however, operated according to a different cognitive basis, although the rituals involved were not too dissimilar. These rituals were ‘special agent’ in nature and were very rarely performed. They were deemed to have permanent effects and were expected to be performed at most only once in such a person’s lifetime.

Two further points, however, need making which flesh out the emotional and experiential status of such high intensity rituals. The first point is that a popular theme in the literary sources associates such rituals with wanderings and suffering and this forms part of the way they are cognitively interpreted. In other words, this adds to their intensity and also to the level of divine agency that was believed to be involved. These wanderings and sufferings can be divinely ordained (Zeus comes close to playing the role of ‘the hostile god’ in *Argonautica* following the murder of Medea’s brother – 4.557-61 expresses this clearly) or brought about by divine forces (e.g. the Furies in Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*) while the Selinous inscription refers to fearful experiences of supernatural vengeful forces in the

⁷⁴⁹ Assembly, etc: Suda s.v. *peristiarchos*, Harpocration s.v. *katharsion*, Scholia to Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 44, discussed by Clinton 2005: 168-70. Temples, e.g. LSCG 39.23-4.

context of grave homicides (Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 1.9, also refers to feelings of irrational dread surrounding the act of homicide).⁷⁵⁰ Gods can also help bring this period of suffering to an end. Apollo himself carries out the purificatory rites for Orestes in *Eumenides* (282-3 - just as he advises on correct purificatory procedure from his oracle in Delphi) while Zeus is invoked in his role as protector of supplicants by Circe during the purification of Jason (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.707-9).⁷⁵¹ In addition, it should be noted here that cognitive and ethnographic studies have shown that the act of murder is commonly believed to inherently involve high levels of pollution and impurity and thus to entail ritual remedies.⁷⁵²

I should also note here the evidence for the detailed and elaborate operation of a 'placebo effect', as this is key to the cognitive interpretation of such rituals. Studies have shown that 'performative efficacy' in alternative medicine 'relies on the power of belief, imagination, symbols, meaning, expectation, persuasion and self-relationship'.⁷⁵³ In addition, 'experimentally manipulated expectations not only affect the perception of pain or emotion, but can have a more general influence on how we experience the world, as evidenced by a striking effect of expectations on the content of visual awareness'.⁷⁵⁴ Such manipulations and dramas are characteristic of the evidence for the purification of murderers. This is true, not only of the epigraphic evidence discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter, but also of the vivid purifications by pig's blood found only in the literary sources which nonetheless share some features.⁷⁵⁵ Whatever the status of the colourful literary accounts, it is clear that 'sacrifice' on some level (even if only betokening reacceptance in the community) was a significant part of murder purification and its 'performative efficacy'. The entire complex of actions and behaviours, along with hardships, travel and exile, and other key features, need to be considered alongside the 'sacrifice' itself. It is only then that the full emotional force, complexity and cognitive status of such rare 'special agent' rituals can be understood.

The uncertain and threatened status of a citizen in Athens accused of homicide is thus central to understanding some of the experiential aspects of these rituals. It should be

⁷⁵⁰ Hunter 1993: 80 on 'the hostile god'; SEG XLIII.630B.7-9 following the reconstruction of Clinton 1996.

⁷⁵¹ Dyer 1969:42-3 points to the Delphic connection in his role here.

⁷⁵² E.g. Dulaney and Fiske 1994: 255; Evans-Pritchard 1956: 179-80; Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 133, 318.

⁷⁵³ Kaptchuk 2002: 817-8.

⁷⁵⁴ Sterzer et al 2006: R698.

⁷⁵⁵ As noted by Lupu 2009:281.

stressed that in the case of homicide, pollution had to be made public in order to come into existence. In Athens the mechanism by which this was done was the *prorrhēsis*.⁷⁵⁶ A public proclamation against the killer was thus made in the agora by relatives of the victim which forbade the murderer from public places and religious ceremonies (Demosthenes, *Against Macartatus* 43.57). The public quality of such potential impurity and its associated stigma, obligations and restrictions is a significant aspect contributing to the intensity of such rites. It should also be noted that in Athens a special court, The Delphinion, made judgements on homicides claimed to be lawful (Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 57.3) while it has been argued that Plato (*Laws*, e.g. 9.865c-d on prescribing purification in cases of unintentional homicide) partly derives his ideas of purification in his ideal city from the practices of the Pythochrestoi in Athens.⁷⁵⁷

In conclusion, sacrificial-like purificatory rituals could vary from regular, unemotional purifications of public places to highly emotional rituals that concerned issues which on some level were felt to threaten individuals and even communities. Nonetheless, they took very similar forms with the powerful role of blood being the central element. Thus, these rituals could also be interpreted and experienced in different ways like the other practices discussed so far. They could be ‘special instrument’ and involve the everyday use of a victim’s blood in diverse contexts for purificatory purposes, or ‘special agent’ and involve the direct activity and involvement of the gods along with one-off extraordinary experiences that were the culmination of an intense period of uncertainty and often danger.

Main conclusion

The rituals described in this section are ‘special instrument’ or ‘special agent’ rituals and thus do not imply that a deity is felt to be ‘offered’ to in any way, in contrast to many of the sacrificial practices discussed previously. The emphasis is instead on the manipulation of divine energy for customary purposes, or the invocation of the gods themselves, often involving a kind of drama of some form (dramatised self-curses in oath-rituals, ‘placebo effect’ in the purification of homicides, etc). These experiences of the divine can often be understood in real terms with regards to powerful sensory symbolism and other experiential processes.

⁷⁵⁶ Bendlin 2007: 185-6.

⁷⁵⁷ Dyer 1969: 47-51.

The ritual killing of animals in these contexts appears often to be merely a constituent element of such dramas and not necessarily an essential one (wax figurines and libations, for example, can replace animal victims in oath-rituals, while the epigraphic evidence does not tally with the literary sources when it comes to the use of pig blood in murder purification – see also my next section below). These situations in general, however, are often ultimately overseen, governed, approved, or even, guided by the gods themselves, i.e. the gods punish oath-breakers and perjurers (*Iliad* 3.298-301, 7.345-54, 7.400-11, 10.329-32, 19.258-65), Zeus is a god of purification associated with protecting suppliants and murder purificatory rites (*Argonautica* 4.707-9), etc. Thus, the gods are indispensable to the cognitive interpretation of these rituals in ancient Greece, whatever form they might take. These rituals are also highly emotional and memorable for those who are their object. I conclude that they are best approached on an experiential basis, which the model of Lawson and McCauley exemplifies.

Bloodless practices

The range of bloodless practices can again be analysed in the same way and with very similar results. It emerges that they too are more complicated than generally recognised by modern scholars and could be experienced and interpreted in different ways. It is also clear that it is impossible to draw simple lines between different types of ritual activity and that very different types of ritual can play markedly similar roles in some contexts. Once more, this relates to the view of the relationship between sacrificial activity and related practices as one of ‘family resemblances’ and of ‘sacrifice’ itself as an impure subject.

Libation

Libation could be either a ‘special patient’, ‘special instrument’ or ‘special agent’ ritual, high frequency - although crucially both form and context could vary tremendously (as identified in Chapter IV) - but varying in predictability and emotional intensity, as I will show. Thus, sometimes libation can be clearly seen to be directed at the gods. For example, in Xenophon’s *Hiero* (4.2) he refers to the tyrant having to employ people to taste his wine first, thus instead of these first drops of wine going to the gods they are drunk by mortals. In addition, Theophrastus in his *Drinking* (Athenaeus 11.30) said that libations

were originally what were given to the gods. The type of libation is also sometimes clearly associated with a particular deity (and the nature of this deity) and this, again, indicates a 'special patient' aspect to the emotions and experience involved. For example, according to the 3rd century BC historian, Phylarchus (Athenaeus 15.48) those of the Greeks who 'sacrificed' to the sun poured libations of honey, because the god who keeps the entire universe in order should not be associated with drunkenness. Libations were also poured mockingly in relation to the hubristic Menecrates who had taken on the airs of a god and thus was ridiculed by King Philip (Athenaeus 7.34). Visser compares performing ancient libations to the gods to toasting – “‘drinking to’ people was, and remains in some respects, similar to pouring libations’”.⁷⁵⁸

At other times Greek writers show no interest in identifying any possible 'recipient' or revealing any sense that this is at all important or essential (e.g. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.7.4., Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1216-7, Sophocles, *Electra* 270, *Iliad* 4.159). In addition, (following Rudhardt) there seems, at times, to be a clear distinction between the act of performing libation and the accompanying prayer to the gods, with the gods seemingly only interested in the latter (e.g. Xenophon *Anabasis* 4.3.13-4, *Cyropaedia* 4.1.6-7).⁷⁵⁹ I have made a similar point about the relationship between 'animal sacrifice' and prayer.

Thus, not only can libations be felt to have an object (i.e. deity) in mind – and thus to involve an emotional relationship, they can also serve an instrumental function, in some cases, in drawing the gods into the world, often in association with prayer and other ritual actions. In addition, quite often the distinction between the 'special patient' and 'special instrument' operation of these rituals is unclear and undetermined. They can also act as one of a set of loosely related rituals that constitute a larger 'special patient', 'special instrument' or 'special agent' ritual complex such as many forms of sacrificial practice involving animal victims, in which the libation is all but indispensable. Indeed, libation forms a concentrated focus of interest and attention during much – indeed almost all – sacrificial preparation, cooking and eating rituals and would likely be experienced in different ways each time. It not only inaugurates such rituals but also occurs at stages throughout the entire sequence (e.g. Aristophanes, *Peace* 1039, Euripides, *Ion* 1032-3) as

⁷⁵⁸ Visser 1991: 255.

⁷⁵⁹ Rudhardt 1992: 242, n.12-3.

well as during the eating and drinking that follows (e.g. Euripides, *Ion* 1169-76).⁷⁶⁰ These were all mainly high frequency rituals that were low in emotional intensity.

Libation could also be a 'special agent' ritual, however, and here context is again often more important than the type of libation employed (i.e. 'wineless', etc). Thucydides (6.32) provides a very good example of a highly intense and emotional libation when the ships depart from Athens for the doomed Sicilian expedition. The narrative building up to this point emphasises the momentousness of the occasion and the excitement, anxiety, fear and uncertainty of the population who turn out in force to see the splendour and pomp of the departure. Silence is commanded at the sound of the trumpet and customary prayers made by all the sailors together following the words of the herald. The whole army then performs libation from cups of gold and silver. The crowd also join in the prayers while hymns are also sung. There is no doubting the high intensity nature of these libations and the extent to which their 'meaning' differs from more everyday social and cultic contexts. It is interesting that Thucydides feels no need to mention animal victims and is happy to focus purely on libation at this momentous moment. Indeed, he is generally uninterested in such ritual behaviour in general so it is doubly relevant that he focuses so heavily on libation, a bloodless practice. Naiden even argues that Thucydides alludes to the fact that the gods were felt to 'reject' these libations through his account of the discovery and reaction to the destruction of the herms.⁷⁶¹ This was a one-off and highly emotional ritual that was believed to (inevitably) involve the direct activity and interest of the gods of the city. It was also once again fundamentally unpredictable in nature.

In conclusion, libation could be experienced in a number of diverse ways, much like the other practices already discussed. This can even be demonstrated without recourse to assessing the numerous different forms such behaviour could actually take. It could also play a remarkably similar role to 'animal sacrifice' in some contexts and could be judged to be of equal importance. In addition, libation could be as unpredictable a ritual as any other practice performed by the ancient Greeks.

⁷⁶⁰ Patton 2009: 42 argues that libation inaugurated 'sacrifice' based on Aristophanes, *Peace* 433 where Hermes utters the cry *sponde, sponde!*; in addition, Athenaeus 14.659d quotes Menander *Kolax* where libations are poured immediately before the *splanchna* are consumed.

⁷⁶¹ Naiden 2013: 171.

Sacrificial cakes

Sacrificial cakes burned independently could be ‘special patient’ or ‘special agent’ rituals, high frequency but, again, varying in context, form, predictability and emotional intensity. As an accompaniment to forms of ‘animal sacrifice’, they are one of the elements defining a larger ‘special patient’ ritual complex adding to the pageantry of the ritual and lifting it in emotional significance and stature. They could not be ‘special instrument’ in nature, however.

In the ancient Greek evidence, there is again a strong link between certain sacrificial cakes (of very particular ingredients and forms) and particular deities who would ‘receive’ them. Their variety, complexity, individuality and, indeed, tastiness was a hot topic of discussion among learned circles, as I have already discussed in Chapter V. I have also described how a particular sacrificial cake could add a distinctive character and atmosphere to an occasion, festival or locality. It is necessary here to imagine the excitement or, at the very least, enthusiastic interest generated by a particularly creative and elaborately prepared sacrificial cake such as, for example, the *amphiphon*. As already noted, this was a kind of cheesecake associated with Artemis that had figures of lighted torches around it and that attracted scholarly discussion in antiquity (Athenaeus 14.53). Sacrificial cakes, thus, possessed an inherently special and celebratory aspect. Indeed, Visser notes that: ‘Time taken in the preparation of festival foods is part of the value attributed to them, and focuses attention upon that value’.⁷⁶² These rituals, however, were high frequency and low in emotional intensity although they could be of immense value and significance in ways that the model of Lawson and McCauley does not address.

In addition, as already argued in the case of other related practices in this chapter, the ‘meaning’ of these bloodless practices changes with situation and can take on a ‘special agent’ character. In a most likely, purely literary high intensity context, a sacrificial cake, along with libation, is used to summon the dead – the ghost of the dead Darius (*Persians* 523-5). The situation is highly emotional and unpredictable (at least as it is portrayed here) with news reaching Atossa of the disastrous defeat of the Persian army in Greece. She resolves to try an extreme ritual remedy to turn fortune around in Persia’s favour and crucially this involves invocation of a number of the gods of the underworld (and related

⁷⁶² Visser 1991: 30.

figures) as well as 'gifts' to them (this is made particularly clear by the chorus - 623-32) to allow Darius to temporarily rise from the dead. The ritual is thus 'special agent' in character and although it is likely pure invention it can be analysed in a similar way to other rituals as it shares the same assumptions and inferences concerning ritual form, as identified by Lawson and McCauley. In addition, a cake here replaces the animal victim in Homer (*Odyssey* 10.518-29, 11.23-36) but plays the same role, albeit in a non-Greek context.

In conclusion, sacrificial cakes could be experienced and interpreted in a number of different ways and no single explanation for their use is appropriate. It is clear, however, that experience formed an important part of their 'meaning' and this aspect has not generally been accepted by modern scholars. It is also clear that their significance could vary and that this importance can be recognised and understood in emotional and contextual terms, in line with the predictions of Lawson and McCauley.

Incense

Incense often accompanied 'sacrifice' of various forms – vegetal and animal, adding on one level to the sensory pageantry of such rituals and countering the 'tedium effect' envisaged by the models of Lawson and McCauley and Whitehouse concerning frequently performed and low emotion practices.⁷⁶³

The burning of incense can be seen as a 'special agent', 'special patient', or 'special instrument' ritual. Such practices were high frequency but varying in context, predictability and emotional intensity like libation, the 'sacrifice' of cakes and many forms of ritual killing of animals. The 'special instrument' function of incense includes purification, for example (e.g. Menander, *Ghost* 24-31, *fr.* 237 K-A) while a number of passages also associate such practices with feelings and situations of fear, anxiety and uncertainty which they are to some extent understood to allay (e.g. Aeschylus, *Persians* 200-5, *Iliad* 9.497-501). Indeed, at the start of Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1-5), the city is said to reek of incense during the onset of the plague. Incense could even be used to literally invoke the gods (this is particularly clear in a vivid fragment by Sappho that invokes an epiphany of Aphrodite and is discussed below) and be 'special agent' in nature.

⁷⁶³ E.g. McCauley and Lawson 2002: 184-8; Whitehouse 2004: 97-9.

In terms of its 'special patient' function, it was believed to be pleasing to gods as well as men. Detienne notes the close association in ancient Greece of fragrant smells like incense with the hot, dry and incorruptible and thus with the immortal and sweet-smelling gods.⁷⁶⁴ The fantastic tales told of the 'gathering' of incense in Arabia by Herodotus (e.g. 3.107, 3.110) should be recalled here. Such practices were also closely associated, as already hinted, with the worship of Aphrodite (this is said explicitly, for example, by the 5th century BC pre-Socratic philosopher, Empedocles – Athenaeus 12.2). In addition, along with sacrificial cakes, incense can be described as a so-called 'offering' of true piety (Menander, *Dyskolos* 449-51). The 4th century BC Attic comic poet, Antiphanes in his *Timon* (Athenaeus 7.83) refers to a penny worth of frankincense being burned to the gods and all the goddesses while the heroes are to have sacrificial cakes burned for them. Incense is also served, mockingly, by King Philip to the hubristic Menecrates who has taken on the airs and presumptions of a god (Athenaeus 7.34).

A key text here in our evidence from ancient Greece is an already mentioned fragmentary kletic hymn by Sappho to Aphrodite that creates a magical dream-like environment that befits and 'receives' the goddess (*Lobel-Page* 2 – Appendix 2). Here we find smoking altars of frankincense, pleasing apple-orchards, budding flowers, and a breeze gentle as honey etc, all combining to create a powerful multi-sensory scene. Indeed, it has been argued that the distinctive elements that are found here represent and constitute the goddess Aphrodite in some essential respects.⁷⁶⁵ These elements – which include in a prominent role that of incense – are clearly intensely emotional, euphoric and uplifting, and the goddess is invoked to join the festivities in her honour and herself pour a libation. This ritual is 'special agent' in character and reveals clearly the powerful associations that incense could have in certain contexts.

In conclusion, the evidence for incense increases even more the sense in which emotional and experiential factors increase significantly the 'meaning' of the diverse practices discussed in this chapter. These practices can, however, be analysed fruitfully in a similar way and show similar patterns and characteristics. I have shown that even an allegedly simple activity, such as burning granules of incense, could be interpreted and understood in a number of different ways.

⁷⁶⁴ Detienne 1994: 11.

⁷⁶⁵ Burnett 1983: 263.

First-fruits

First-fruit practices can be 'special patient' or 'special instrument' rituals, are low intensity and high frequency while, like the other forms of ritual discussed in this bloodless section, can either be independent or combined with other elements, including the 'sacrifice' of animal victims. They do not appear to have been 'special agent' in character.

Jim argues that anxiety and uncertainty surrounding human existence in general is a key motivation for such frequent but low emotion rituals, while the constant risks and hazards in agricultural societies generally are discussed by her.⁷⁶⁶ Indeed, the dangers of not giving the gods their share and anxiety about not keeping them satisfied are clear from our source material (e.g. *Iliad* 23.862-5, *Odyssey* 4.51-3, Sophocles, *Ajax* 176-8, Euripides, *Hippolytus* 145-50). The interpretation of success and the availability of good things as down to the gods is also central to the approaches of cognitive theorists such as Bering, who emphasises the subjective interpretation of external events in terms of a person-like agency.⁷⁶⁷ A good example is a first-fruits dedication offered at the end of a period of work or struggle. In the 4th century BC from Athens, for example, Melinna dedicates a first-fruits 'offering' in gratitude for her success bringing up her children singlehandedly from money earned as a craftsman.⁷⁶⁸ These rituals also appear prominently in many communal and festive contexts such as agricultural festivals or new wine festivals (e.g. the Pithoigia: Phanodemus, FGrH 325 F 12 ap. Athanaeus 11.465a and Plutarch, *Table-Talk* 3.7.1, 655e; 'harvest offerings' or *thalusia*: e.g. *Iliad* 9.533-6, Schol. Hom. *Iliad* 9.534 Dindorf, Hesychius s.v. *thalusia*). These festivals, while both important and celebratory, would not be extraordinary in terms of sensory pageantry (and thus generate unusually high emotion), however.

In conclusion, first-fruit rituals could certainly be experienced and interpreted in different ways but this was less marked than was the case with the other practices discussed in this chapter. Specifically, such rituals seem to have been consistently of a high frequency and low emotion character and not associated directly with powerful experiences of divine activity or intervention.

⁷⁶⁶ Jim 2014: 85-9, 111-4.

⁷⁶⁷ Bering 2011.

⁷⁶⁸ IG II² 4334.

Main conclusion

The various bloodless practices show a number of similarities with the other ritual activities discussed in this chapter and can be approached in the same way. In general terms, their interpretation in the ancient world was far more complicated and diverse than is generally understood. Also, in terms of 'special patient' rituals as a whole, the form of so-called 'offering' – whether bloodless or involving an animal – is often irrelevant to the 'purpose' of the 'sacrifice'. This was also established in Chapters IV and V. Thus, the apparent 'gift' element is interchangeable between types of such interaction to some extent. The form of so-called 'gift' is often not important except as an expression of such factors as status, gender and philosophical or moral position on the one hand, and on the other, the nature of some contexts whether alimentary, a symposium, the harvest etc. However, in many contexts a libation can do just as well as an animal victim and a similar point can be made for other bloodless practices. At the same time, these bloodless practices interact with those involving animals. They generally retain their own value and status, intimately linked to their everyday experience, but while sharing a generalised 'gift' function.

A cognitive basis for all this is now available. According to the model of Lawson and McCauley, it should be noted 'special patient' and 'special instrument' rituals allow variation in their instruments, procedures and patients.⁷⁶⁹ We thus see clearly this variation and flexibility. This is not to say, as I have repeatedly emphasised, that these practices are not linked and fundamentally related. Plato, the 5th century BC Attic comic poet in his *The Poet* (Athenaeus 14.51) asks: 'Am I alone to sacrifice without/Having a taste allow'd me of the entrails/Without a cheesecake, without frankincense?'⁷⁷⁰

A final piece of evidence here revealing the interactive nature of different sacrificial elements and practices centres around a tale told of the renowned Pythagorean Empedocles after he had won the horse race at the Olympic Games. As he abstained from meat he instead made an ox image out of incense and spices and distributed portions of this among the spectators and competitors instead of shares of sacrificial meat (Athenaeus 1.5). Although this tale may not be reliable, it does reflect actual ways of thinking that were comprehensible at the time of the story's popularity.

⁷⁶⁹ Lawson and McCauley 2007: 20.

⁷⁷⁰ μόνος δ' ἄγευστος, / ἄσπλαγχνος ἐνιαυτίζομαι, ἀπλάκουντος, ἀλιβάνωτος. Translation by C.D. Yonge.

Overall conclusion

In conclusion, I have applied the model of Lawson and McCauley to the evidence for the main range of sacrificial practices, both animal and bloodless. The implications of these findings will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, which will also address the results of the other major cognitive theory I will utilise in this chapter. A number of conclusions and recurring features have been brought to life by the approach used here. Chiefly, I have pointed to the complexity of such behaviour and the inapplicability of single explanations to account for them. My main conclusion points to evidence for a continuum of practices whose 'meanings' are emotionally and experientially based. What emerges, yet again, is that on an experiential level – as on many other levels addressed in previous chapters – there is no such thing as a typical or normal 'sacrifice'.

Another key finding concerns the way in which the 'meaning' of a 'sacrifice' is greatly influenced by the performative context. By referring to context, I mean not only the actual physical conditions and environment in which the ritual was performed, but the emotional states of the participants involved. I have also shown the ways in which this remains true whether the practices involved are bloodless or involve an animal victim. Indeed, I have found that in many contexts a libation can serve the same role as an animal victim and I have given a cognitive basis for this. I have also proposed one initial model for gauging the emotional and experiential intensity of a sacrificial practice where the actual form of the ritual employed is often secondary to other factors, principally the degree of divine interest and involvement.

Cultural selection theory of ritualised behaviour (Boyer and Liénard)

Boyer and Liénard have advanced a cultural selection theory of ritualised behaviour that can also shed significant new light on the experiential nature of sacrificial ritual from the perspective of cognitive experience.⁷⁷¹ This perspective complements the previously discussed approach of Lawson and McCauley and together they constitute the etic dimension of my analysis, in contrast to the emic sensory dimension of my previous chapter.

⁷⁷¹ Boyer and Liénard 2006, Liénard and Boyer 2006, Boyer and Liénard 2008.

According to the model championed here, people engage in what they term ritualised behaviour as a consequence of specific features of cognitive architecture that makes such activity attention-grabbing, intuitively appropriate and emotionally compelling. By referring exclusively to ritualisation they focus on ‘a specific way of organising the flow of behaviour, characterised by compulsion (one must perform the particular sequence), rigidity (it must be performed the right way), redundancy (the same actions are often repeated inside the ritual) and goal demotion (the actions are divorced from their usual goals)’.⁷⁷² This focus was inspired by Rappaport who called attention to what he described as the ‘obvious’ or surface features of ritual that anthropologists should try and explain.⁷⁷³

Boyer and Liénard emphasise that although ritualised behaviour in the sense they define it can be seen as the ‘hallmark’ of ceremonies commonly described as ‘rituals’, it is not found in all such behaviour and can also occur outside such contexts.⁷⁷⁴ They point to the diverse domains of ritualisation and explain such behaviour in terms of the psychological salience of a particular feature they share. They argue that collective rituals, including sacrificial practice, children’s rituals, OCD and life-stage-relevant intrusive thoughts all exhibit such behaviour and that the psychological underpinnings involved help explain collective ritualisation.⁷⁷⁵ Alan Fiske had already argued that a common psychological mechanism accounted for OCD and collective rituals, and that OCD is a pathology of a human disposition to perform socially meaningful rituals.⁷⁷⁶ Boyer and Liénard convincingly argue, however, that it is difficult to accept such a general capacity for collective ritualised behaviour as the cognitive processes involved can be found in other non-ritual contexts (recipes and other routinised behaviours, for example, make use of similar forms of action).⁷⁷⁷ As a consequence, Boyer and Liénard adapt the model developed by Woody and Szechtman of a security motivation system which evolved to meet the unique adaptive challenges of improbable, uncertain but grave potential dangers in the environment. This system is characterised by a motivational state of anxiety and subsequent measures to achieve its satiety.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷² Liénard and Boyer 2006: 815.

⁷⁷³ Rappaport 1979: 173-222.

⁷⁷⁴ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 815.

⁷⁷⁵ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 819.

⁷⁷⁶ Dulaney and Fiske 1994, Fiske and Haslam 1997.

⁷⁷⁷ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 820.

⁷⁷⁸ Woody and Szechtman 2011 further develops this model.

Combining evidence from evolutionary anthropology, neuropsychology and neuroimaging, Boyer and Liénard explain ritualised behaviour in terms of an evolved precaution system geared to the detection of, and reaction to, inferred threats to human survival. This system is distinct from the fear system geared to respond to actual danger and is concerned with the detection of indirect clues for threats of danger. This hazard-precaution system is, in fact, specifically focussed on such recurrent threats as predation, intrusion by strangers, contamination, contagion, social offence and harm to offspring. It comprises both some specific reactions to potential danger clues and rudimentary descriptions of appropriate precautions. Boyer and Liénard maintain that mimicry of this cognitive system's usual 'input' makes rituals such as 'sacrifice' attention-grabbing and compelling.⁷⁷⁹

Rituals like 'sacrifice', however, also include 'particular constraints on the performance and sequencing of action' that also help explain why such activities are so compelling. Human beings 'parse' their own and the behaviour of others into meaningful units and ritualised behaviours are forms of action of a very particular kind. Experimental studies have distinguished three levels of action representation: simple gestures (sequences of a few seconds), behavioural episodes (longer durations such as 'getting dressed') and scripts (actions that span a much longer time such as 'eating out') and have demonstrated that people spontaneously describe and recall behaviour in terms of the middle level at which goals are associated with behaviours. In contrast, ritualised behaviour involves attentional focus on the lowest level of representation, that of gestures. This creates goal demotion as although there is 'a list of highly specific actions to perform, there is no obvious connection between these details and the overall goal'.⁷⁸⁰ This attentional focus requires high cognitive control during performance and one of the effects of such prescribed, compulsory action sequences is to overload working memory. Boyer and Liénard maintain:

Many ritual prescriptions resemble the tasks designed by cognitive psychologists in the study of working memory. They require focused attention on a set of different stimuli and their arrangement. For instance, a requirement to turn round a ritual pole three times clockwise without ever looking down imposes executive control of two tasks at the same time. Also, the frequent combination of a positive prescription ("do x...") and a negative one ("...while avoiding doing y") would seem

⁷⁷⁹ Boyer and Liénard 2006, Liénard and Boyer 2006, Boyer and Liénard 2008.

⁷⁸⁰ E.g. Boyer and Liénard 2008: 292-3; Zacks and Tversky 2001, Zacks et al 2001a, Zacks et al 2001b.

to engage working memory and executive control in a way that is not usually present in everyday action flow.⁷⁸¹

According to the model championed here, it is this swamping of working memory that typically makes it more difficult for intrusive thoughts to become conscious and thus ritualised behaviour ‘may constitute a spontaneous and moderately effective form’ of thought suppression. As a result, ritualised behaviour is the complete opposite of routinised behaviour which people can accomplish on autopilot (many scholars on the other hand, such as Whitehouse, describing his doctrinal mode, associate ritual precisely with such routinisation).⁷⁸² People engage in ritualised activity, Boyer and Liénard argue, in a highly focused way as inaccurate or incomplete performance can cause anxiety. Studies of voluntary thought suppression and clinical models of OCD also concur in the conclusion that ‘the long-term effects of ritual performance may be the opposite of its short-term results’. Therefore, the salience of the unwanted thoughts that elicit this type of behaviour are heightened, despite their temporary abatement, and lead to increased ritual activity.⁷⁸³

Activities such as ‘sacrifice’ convey information about their performance and generate inferences among participants that excite the hazard-precaution system. This does not require any deliberate or conscious intention of conveying this information, but only that ‘some manifest behaviour (including but not necessarily verbal behaviour) triggers non-random inferences about the behaviour’. Available information about the background situation, such as that non-performance is a dangerous option, or that because of a particular event (illness, birth, death, etc) the ritual must be performed, are particularly relevant here. Also, available information about the required course of action typically involves themes that mimic the usual ‘outputs’ of the hazard-precaution system such as cleaning, washing and checking. Furthermore, details of prior conditions for the ceremony (such as required levels of purity, etc) reinforce activation of the hazard-precaution system. In addition, there is great emphasis on the details of each action which leads to lower level parsing of action, as already discussed. These detailed actions are also, as already indicated, the major source of security-related motifs.⁷⁸⁴ Fiske has identified such motifs as including, for example, the need for a symmetrical or otherwise orderly environment, the

⁷⁸¹ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 606.

⁷⁸² E.g. Boyer and Liénard 2008: 293; contrast e.g. Whitehouse 2004: 65-70.

⁷⁸³ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 821; Wegner and Erskine 2003, Wegner and Schneider 2003, Rachman and de Silva 1978.

⁷⁸⁴ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 822.

compulsion to create and maintain boundaries, etc (see Chapter I for the full list and below).⁷⁸⁵

The hazard-precaution system can be triggered therefore by information concerning the occasion for the ritual, the inferred danger of non-performance and the detailed prescriptions involved. Activation of this system, however, can explain further characteristics of activities such as ‘sacrifice’. Such practices make use of particular ‘tricks’ that makes such actions attention-grabbing. One of these ‘tricks’, the swamping of working memory, has already been discussed. Another involves the forcing of goal demotion, by an emphasis on repetition or by performing a familiar action sequence in a context that makes goal ascription impossible (e.g. washing objects without using water), for example. Liénard and Boyer explain that:

Attention is focused on the low-level, fine-grained description of action, so that sequences of actions are represented without attaching a goal to each behavioural unit, as would be the case in non-ritual contexts. This may be why the phenomenology of collective ritual is sometimes described as analogous to a behavioural ‘tunnel’ in which the only action considered is the one that will follow the present one, but one does not and cannot focus on the motives of each action and especially not on possible alternatives.⁷⁸⁶

According to the model of Liénard and Boyer there is only a weak activation of the hazard-precaution system in most rituals.⁷⁸⁷ By this they mean that the activation is probably less direct and intense than in situations where people actually encounter clues for potential danger. It should be noted, however, that things may well have been very different if the situation in which the ritual was performed was itself high intensity. This would significantly affect the level of anxiety and intensity associated with the ritual and its performance. Indeed, in many parts of my discussion, I explore ways in which different situations can change the ‘meaning’ of the ritual.

In conclusion, ritualised behaviour is explained as a by-product of evolved cognitive architecture and such activity is successfully transmitted as a predictable but indirect

⁷⁸⁵ Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

⁷⁸⁶ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 823.

⁷⁸⁷ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 822-3.

consequence of evolution by natural selection. The rituals themselves ‘combine, repeat and accumulate single behaviours that are appropriate given evolutionary hazards’ and the ‘ritualisation process consists in this special accumulation and distortion of originally appropriate actions’.⁷⁸⁸

The initial peer response to this model was overwhelmingly positive with mainly minor amendments and suggestions offered, although there was confusion in some cases.⁷⁸⁹ Some scholars, however, strongly disagreed emphasising, for example, that ritual as a form of behaviour evolved instead for social communication purposes.⁷⁹⁰ Boyer and Liénard responded convincingly that most rituals ‘do not communicate much or communicate very well, in terms of transmitting unambiguous norms or concepts’.⁷⁹¹ In terms of scholars of ancient history, a major criticism might point to the model’s apparent disregard for the conscious and explicit reasons given for ‘sacrifice’ and for its disinterest in issues such as piety and the undeniable importance of the gods. However, as I will consistently emphasise, the etic approach presented here is only meant as a partial interpretation that asks specific questions of the evidence in order to elucidate and answer specific questions. It explains only certain aspects of sacrificial behaviour and is meant to emphasise the inapplicability of single interpretations and approaches in general when considering complex human behaviour such as sacrificial practice. The importance of the gods is not denied and was, in fact, pivotal to my previous section’s analysis. From an etic perspective, however, other features of sacrificial behaviour can be interpreted as making compelling emotional sense without necessarily implying divine involvement. These elements may only constitute certain features or aspects of a form of sacrificial behaviour when viewed in its totality, but they nonetheless need to be explained and accounted for and, indeed, are critical for understanding the nature of sacrificial experience.

The best evidence for the importance of this particular type of cognitive experience to understanding sacrificial practice comes from outside Athens, but general conclusions can nonetheless be made. These are based not on any dubiously alleged identical ritual features but, rather, the presence of common behavioural concerns. In this section, I test the model of Boyer and Liénard against predominantly epigraphic material, in particular the

⁷⁸⁸ Liénard and Boyer 2006: 825.

⁷⁸⁹ See the open peer commentary in Boyer and Liénard 2006: 613-35 and the authors’ response at 635-41.

⁷⁹⁰ Alcorta and Sosis 2006: 613-4.

⁷⁹¹ Boyer and Liénard 2006: 641.

important and detailed sacred laws of Cos, Cyrene and Selinous. This contrasts and complements my previous section's emphasis on predominantly literary material.

Cos sacred law

A sacrificial calendar from Cos (Appendix 3) from the mid 4th century BC preserves four *stelai* of what must originally have been a set of twelve (one for each month of the year).⁷⁹² It 'reveals nicely the high degree of variation' in sacrificial practice from one area to another and is additional evidence for the inapplicability of the notion of a uniform form of sacrificial behaviour.⁷⁹³ In this document the description of the ritual involved in the 'sacrifice' to Zeus Polieus 'is one of the most explicit in any ancient source'.⁷⁹⁴ According to Rhodes and Osborne some features described 'seem regular, but rarely spelt out', others 'may be regular but we lack the evidence to show this', while 'other features again are unusual'.⁷⁹⁵ However, these striking idiosyncrasies and subtly complex prescriptions make perfect sense as a means (at least in part) of defining a particular social, civic and cult identity and experience. Significantly, probably only festivals that were new or altered following the synoecism of the island in 366 BC are recorded.⁷⁹⁶

This document shows an exceptional concern for procedure, which makes it possible to examine it in terms of the hazard-precaution system, as proposed by Liénard and Boyer. It is remarkable in the detail of its prescriptions and its concern for a highly exact, structured, ordered and specific coordination of action. Many of its stipulated behaviours can be seen to activate the hazard-precaution system and to result in the predicted forms of ritualised concerns and experience outlined above. As already indicated, in this document the most detailed prescriptions concern the festival of Zeus Polieus in which an ox is 'sacrificed' and preliminary rituals carried out the previous evening. Burkert interprets lines A.19-23 to refer not to a separate 'sacrifice' to Hestia but rather a requirement that the victim for Zeus Polieus bows its head towards the state hearth at the market.⁷⁹⁷ As discussed in previous chapters, this does not imply that the animal was required to assent to its own slaughter, but this requirement does overlap with the concerns of the hazard-precaution system.

⁷⁹² LSCG 151=RO 62; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 307.

⁷⁹³ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 309.

⁷⁹⁴ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 309.

⁷⁹⁵ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 309.

⁷⁹⁶ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 307.

⁷⁹⁷ Burkert 1983: 138 n.10.

Literary accounts indicate that during this procedure a torch was first dipped in water and then water from the torch was dripped on the head of the animal so that it moved appropriately in response (cf. Euripides, *Heracles* 929, Aristophanes, *Peace* 959-60). Thus, this activity required focused attention, careful monitoring and checking, as well as an implication of purification and cleansing. The absence of the shaking of the head would imply an unsatisfactory, or incomplete, 'sacrifice' and in a 5th century BC context this might have been so without a conscious explanation required of what it meant.⁷⁹⁸

The model advanced in this section makes explicable powerfully compelling concerns over the purity of those involved in 'sacrifice' by considering them in terms of the activation of the hazard-precaution system. The unusual specification that the slaughterer must abstain from both heterosexual and homosexual relations the night before the 'sacrifice' (A.38-43) marks the solemn dignity of the occasion, as Rhodes and Osborne argue.⁷⁹⁹ This emphasis on the importance of purity also, however, overlaps with the concerns of the hazard-precaution system and concerns over who performed, or were otherwise involved, in public 'sacrifice' in general are clear from our source material (e.g. Lysias, *Against Andocides* 6.4, Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 20.158). In customary practice, which presented no deviation and hence did not need to be prescribed, a ritualised formula (Aristophanes, *Peace* 969) was also commonly uttered, allowing those who were impure to excuse themselves and this is also explicable via the method of analysis here (concern for purity, anti-contamination measures, etc).⁸⁰⁰ In terms of the reference to the slaughter, the sacrificial knife was usually kept concealed in a special basket until it was actually used (cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1565-6, e.g. *Electra* 810-1). This concealment can be interpreted as denoting a fear of harming others on an unconscious level rather than an attempt to hide or deny the violence of the ritual itself, as previously argued.⁸⁰¹

The specified preliminary rituals (A.22-46) involved highly detailed and prescribed behaviours that concentrated attention on the minutiae of every action involved, making them intuitively plausible and compelling. They required focused attention on a set of different stimuli and their arrangement and included the frequent combination of positive

⁷⁹⁸ Visser 1991: 59 discusses when rules become 'internalised' explaining this by noting that once such standards are learned in childhood, people take them for granted and never think about them, unless suddenly confronted with an action that is 'unmannerly'.

⁷⁹⁹ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 310.

⁸⁰⁰ Olson 1998: 225 and Aristophanes, *Peace* 974-7.

⁸⁰¹ E.g. Detienne 1989a: 10.

and negative prescriptions. As already discussed, it is these kind of 'tricks' that make ritualised behaviour so successful and leads to such activity being transmitted. The priest puts a fillet upon the ox and pours a libation of mixed wine specifically in front of the victim (A.28-9). The ox is then led away and reference is made to practices involving a burnt 'offering', seven cakes, honey and a woollen fillet (A.29-30). When the animal is led away, holy silence is called for (A.30-1), once again marking the auspiciousness and gravity of the proceedings and the need for diligent and absolutely correct performance. The ox is untied and actions involving olive and laurel specified (A.31-2). Then follows the holocaust of a pig (A.32-5) but with the negative prescription that the intestines were to be removed, washed, and have libations of honey and milk poured on them, but were then burned on the altar without wine (a further libation and another redundancy) before once again having honey and milk poured on them. These attention-grabbing 'tricks' would force goal demotion and successfully swamp working memory in a complex series of actions involving both familiar and unfamiliar elements within a context of great communal significance, gravity and dignity. A further 'offering' is then made of an unspecified nature (A.36-8). It is also specified by the calendar that these proceedings marking the festival and 'sacrifice' to Zeus Polieus are repeated at special times during the Coan sacred calendrical year (B.10-12).

Other references in the document demonstrate similar themes and concerns which would activate and trigger the hazard-precaution system, but unfortunately provide less detail. Thus, on 12 Carneios the priest 'sacrifices' to Athena Machanis and is sprinkled with sea water (B.23-4). There are also many requirements for on-the-spot consumption of meat from 'sacrifices' (e.g. A.57-8, B.21-7) that relate to the requirement for a sober and orderly environment and also imply the danger of non-performance and of deviation from the requirements of the ritual script involved. In addition, D.5-16 prescribes an apparent oath 'sacrifice' beginning with a priest sprinkling the blood of a victim on an altar specifically three times and then a fourth time on a special stone described as lying in the olives (D.6-9). A concern with specific numbers was identified by Fiske as one of the main similarities between much ritual behaviour and OCD and, as already discussed, his findings echo many of the concerns made explicable by the hazard-precaution system.⁸⁰² In this ritual, however, further minutely specified action is required (D.9-16). An oath is taken involving two sacrificial portions, one of meat and one of entrails, which are placed on the altar.

⁸⁰² Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

Reference is made to customary 'offerings' to Asia, while some of the entrails are to be burned on the altar before those involved touch the stone and take the oath. They then taste the cooked entrails on the altar and those on the stone and finally those from the stone. This highly detailed and prescribed ritual may relate to ephebic oath-taking but its experiential power can to some extent be seen as resulting from the triggering and activation of the hazard-precaution system in an emotionally highly consequential and significant communal and individual context.⁸⁰³

In conclusion, the sacred law from Cos provides important evidence for sacrificial behaviour that is largely inexplicable without recourse to the model of Liénard and Boyer and this pattern will emerge in discussion of the other two main documents analysed below. This model explains why such behaviour made such compelling emotional and intuitive sense to those involved without the need for an explicit, conscious or shared rationale for such behaviour. Nonetheless, this model is limited in that it can only help explain and interpret ritualised behaviour as defined by Boyer and Liénard. Thus, other methods are required to make sense of the remainder of the regulations, such as the many perquisites specified (e.g. A.49-55) and the highly important social and economic considerations that must be explained, for example. However, the model of Boyer and Liénard explains important experiential aspects of sacrificial behaviour that have not thus far received the due attention of modern scholars.

Cyrene sacred law

The detailed sacred law of Cyrene of the late 4th century BC is another key document that can be fruitfully analysed using the model of Boyer and Liénard.⁸⁰⁴ Parker points out that the law 'occupies one face and about two-thirds of another of a quadrangular stele; the third face bears SEG IX.2, a list of the cities that received grain subventions during the famine of 331 to 326, while the fourth was unworked and blank'. He adds that 'of the reason for the stone's publication nothing is known'.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰³ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 311 suggest 'that ephebic initiation of some sort seems a plausible explanation'.

⁸⁰⁴ LSS 115=RO 97.

⁸⁰⁵ Parker 1983: 332.

Rhodes and Osborne note that ‘this important sacred law gives us a glimpse of the daily concerns and anxieties of a classical Greek community and reminds us of how much of the religious practice of Greek cities we have limited understanding’. They argue that the ‘combination of common sense and ritual elaboration is particularly striking’ and that ‘some peculiarities may be a result of local Cyrenaean practices, but the parallels that can be found in very different parts of the Greek world suggest that this factor should not be over-emphasised. Rather, we need to acknowledge the extent of our ignorance of Greek beliefs and practices with regard to purification’.⁸⁰⁶

Robertson maintains that ‘this inscription was of great importance at Cyrene, as shown by its size and the manner of display in Apollo’s sanctuary’. Citing similarities with the sacred law from Selinous discussed below, he adds that ‘high ceremony goes with vulgar magic’, and that ‘both rich and poor are solicited by different means, and also those between’. In addition, certain parts of the law are primarily aimed at Cyrene Libyans who ‘had a greater share in the benefits of city life than natives living next to other Greek colonies’.⁸⁰⁷ This document is ideally suited to the model championed here which offers a new way of interpreting and understanding such complex, recurrent and apparently inexplicable behaviour.

I argue that the model used in this section can help illuminate the sacrificial and ‘sacrifice-like’ purificatory practices described in this document, despite the well known difficulties posed by the material. Rhodes and Osborne emphasise that the ‘structure and organisation of the law are not easy to understand. On side A the lower part consists of a series of clauses about people subject to a tithe, but the topics of the early clauses are very diverse. Side B has clauses about women’s reproductive lives, and about “suppliants”, clearly separated by a heading, but the three categories of suppliant seem quite different’. They add that ‘the lack of clear structure, along with the variations in phrasing and dialect’, might indicate that this inscription simply copied an earlier text in which different clauses had been recorded at different times. On the other hand, they point, for example, to the absence of distinctly archaic words and maintain that this implies ‘at least a degree of 4th century editing’.⁸⁰⁸ Robertson argues that ‘the very language keeps changing because it

⁸⁰⁶ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 500.

⁸⁰⁷ Robertson 2010: 8.

⁸⁰⁸ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 500-1.

refers sometimes to old customs and sometimes to new arrangements. Old customs can be briefly evoked, but new arrangements must be indicated carefully'.⁸⁰⁹

This complex sacred law once again shows features and behavioural concerns that demonstrate the triggering and activation of the hazard-precaution system and involved the attention-grabbing 'tricks' that make such activity so intuitively appropriate and compelling. As already noted, the entire document concerns purification although of a diverse and at times, frankly, bewildering nature (Robertson ultimately accepts that the inscription concerns Cyrene's rules for purification although he maintains that the term it is not 'quite apt' as its central and over-riding concern is the contentious and highly debated tithing rules of A.32-82).⁸¹⁰ 'Sacrifice' is also referred to frequently. However, it is not possible to discuss this document in its entirety due to restrictions of time and space and so I intentionally focus on those sections of the document that are sufficiently detailed to successfully enable the analysis employed in this section.

It is clear throughout this document that the rituals prescribed involve a powerful degree of compulsion and emotional urgency, as predicted by the model of Boyer and Liénard. The dangers of non-performance are emphasised time and again and all the sections include at least some aspect that can be made readily explicable by interpreting them in terms of the operation of the hazard-precaution system. A.4-7 states that if sickness, or famine, or death generally affects the land or city, a red billy goat must be 'sacrificed' in front of the gate, opposite the Shrine of Aversion to Apollo the Averter. Here the occasion for the ritual, its prescribed location at the threshold of the city, and the names given of both the shrine and the god all provide inferential clues that overlap with the concerns and themes of the hazard-precaution system. This prescription also echoes the 'sacrifice' in *Iliad*, Book I (447-74) to Apollo, as an act of appeasement following the onslaught of plague. Parker notes that 'red victims are not often specified in sacred laws and do not seem to have had any fixed significance' but also that goats were considered 'shameless, and red hair too is a mark of shamelessness and evil generally'.⁸¹¹ Robertson adds that 'red hair goes with magic' while 'a he-goat is a traditional offering to Apollo generally'.⁸¹² Fiske noted that a concern with special colours was a feature shared by many rituals and (to a lesser extent,

⁸⁰⁹ Robertson 2010: 8.

⁸¹⁰ Robertson 2010: 259.

⁸¹¹ Parker 1983: 334-5.

⁸¹² Robertson 2010: 282-3; evidence for he-goats association, e.g. SEG 38.786=Lupu 16; Stephanus of Byzantium s. *Tragia*, etc.

however) patients suffering from OCD, but the evidence is insufficient here to make any firm conclusions.⁸¹³

The powerful need for purity and cleanliness surrounding sacrificial and other ritual activity is also prescribed here (as was the case in the sacred law of Cos discussed above) and again shows activation and triggering of the hazard-precaution system. A.11-15 dictates that a man who has had heterosexual intercourse the night before can freely 'sacrifice', whereas if he has done so by day he must first wash himself. Again, the concern with purity and cleanliness is marked to the extent that it must be publically regulated and controlled. This concern is also reflected in the literary sources and other inscriptions, but with variations. Herodotus (2.64), for example, points out that both Egyptians and Greeks are distinguished by their custom of washing themselves after intercourse before entering a sanctuary, while later inscriptions mention additional purity requirements following intercourse with a courtesan or someone else's wife, for example.⁸¹⁴

The dangers of not following the prescribed and minutely regulated behaviour governing many forms of sacrificial behaviour are explicitly stated in this document and are once again one of the many 'tricks' making such activity so compelling. A.26-32 specifically details requirements should someone 'sacrifice' a non-customary victim. In this detailed and highly prescribed series of actions, there is again emphasis on activity involving cleaning, washing and checking, attention to the minute details of each action and the presence of frequent repetition and redundancy. The liable person involved must remove from the altar all the remaining fat and wash it away, must then remove from the sanctuary the entire remainder of the waste and then carry away the ash and the fire from the altar to a pure place. Then, when he has washed himself carefully and thoroughly, and purified the sanctuary he must 'sacrifice', as a penalty, an expensive full-grown victim and do so according to correct custom. I should add that Robertson closely associates this section with the prior one (A.21-5) which he interprets as now allowing anyone to use certain cults for the first time without the assistance of the relevant priestly clans.⁸¹⁵

Side B details ritual activity that includes sacrificial activity punctuating the lifecycle of an ancient Greek female (B.83-106) and shows similar underlying behavioural concerns and

⁸¹³ Fiske and Haslam 1997: 12.

⁸¹⁴ Parker 1983: 74-5, n.4; courtesan: LSA 29.7, LSS 91.18, someone else's wife: LSA 12.5-6.

⁸¹⁵ Robertson 2010: 287-97.

themes that activate and trigger the hazard-precaution system. Parker notes that this section ‘illustrates as effectively as any text the way in which it is through ritual performances that social change is articulated and expressed’.⁸¹⁶ Although this particular feature is of great importance, it is not made explicable by the model of Boyer and Liénard which can, however, answer more specific interpretative problems associated with this document. Rhodes and Osborne explain that the first part of this section involves girls who are about to marry and spend the night in a specially demarcated ‘sleeping room’ in the sanctuary of Artemis (B.83-90) while brides are to go to a *nymphaeion* in the second section (B.91-6), which in the third section expectant mothers are subsequently to revisit (B.97-105).⁸¹⁷ There is thus a pronounced concern for a carefully ordered and structured environment to receive these females at such important moments in their lives and on maintaining boundaries and thresholds. This section also explicitly shows great concern for non-performance of prescribed rites of various kinds and stipulates penalties involved which primarily take the form of ‘sacrifice’ and purification of the sanctuary (e.g. B.103-5).

This section of the document is extremely important both for correcting the gender imbalance of this section of my thesis and for giving a much broader perspective of the relevance of the model being used. These moments in the lifecycles of the women were not only particularly socially significant, but would also involve considerable forms of anxiety and fear that match many of the key themes and concerns of the hazard-precaution system. A reference to giving ‘the bear’ the feet and head and skin of a sacrificial victim (B.98-9) link this behaviour to the maturation rites known from the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron in Attica where young girls played the bear (e.g. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 641-7, Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1446-68), and suggests its widespread relevance.⁸¹⁸ Robertson argues that pregnant brides emotionally and ritually identified with the image of a bear which was perceived as ‘uniquely strong and fertile and protective of its offspring’.⁸¹⁹

Section B.111-41 is headed ‘Suppliants’ (*hikesioi*) and has been variously interpreted but despite the long-standing controversies the model of Boyer and Liénard can be used to show that similar attention-grabbing ‘tricks’ were involved as in the other practices

⁸¹⁶ Parker 1983: 345.

⁸¹⁷ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 504.

⁸¹⁸ Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 504-5.

⁸¹⁹ Robertson 2010: 338-51.

discussed above.⁸²⁰ Here I limit myself to the third and final section (B.132-40) which has been recently interpreted as referring to a homicide seeking purification through the assistance of a host or 'the standard procedure for purifying a suppliant of his pollution'.⁸²¹ The host presents the suppliant to the magistrate and three tribes showing clearly the importance of the proceedings and perhaps the perceived threat of impurity to the community at large. An announcement is made, the suppliant is symbolically set down on the threshold on a white fleece, washed and then anointed. He then walks along a public road in a kind of procession and all who are present remain silent in obedience to a herald who announces the suppliant's polluted presence.

This very public seriousness and the grave emphasis on the impure status of the suppliant (particularly if he is guilty of homicide), along with the attention to boundaries, to washing and anointing, and even the colour of the fleece (the fleece is also related to Zeus and those who were being purified stood on it with their left foot in a prescribed way – Hesychius, s.v. *The fleece of Zeus*) all echo the themes and concerns of the hazard-precaution system and can be compared to side B of the sacred law from Selinous discussed below. In addition, Robertson interprets *autophonos* (the defining word of the sub-heading) as referring not to homicide, as already indicated, but to an unusual requirement for the suppliant to slay the sacrificial animal himself (rather than a priest or *mageiros*, for example, as was more customary) and thus publicly display his worthiness to 'sacrifice'.⁸²² Furthermore, this highly compelling, emotional and instinctively appropriate act may also be central to understanding important aspects of the Selinous inscription.

In conclusion, the sacred law from Cyrene is a complex and controversial document that remains obscure in many ways but the model of Boyer and Liénard can nonetheless be fruitfully applied to the important evidence it presents. This model helps explain the experiential character and power of otherwise often inexplicable and seemingly pointless acts and adds significantly to any interpretation of the 'meaning' of sacrificial activity in general. However, while the emphasis on cognitive experience it provides is significant, the interpretation it offers is only partial and is best used alongside other approaches, both cognitive and more traditional.

⁸²⁰ E.g. Stukeley 1937, Parker 1983: 347-51, Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 505; cf. Lupu 2009: 283-4.

⁸²¹ Parker 1983: 350-1; Robertson 2010: 364-9.

⁸²² Robertson 2010: 364-9.

The sacred law from Selinous is another valuable but controversial document.⁸²³ The original editors point out that ‘because we lack the beginning of column A (which might have pertained only to the lines before the *rasura* of 4-6) the purpose of the *lex sacra* must be inferred from the particular regulations in the text. In the two columns the subjects are distinct but related. They share a concern with purification’. They add that ‘the two columns differ in that A gives instructions for a group or groups – or, rather, an individual acting within his group – whereas B is solely addressed to the individual seeking purification’.⁸²⁴ They also discuss similarities in the procedure described in B with the sacred law from Cyrene discussed above (see also below for more discussion).⁸²⁵ They conclude that ‘we should probably look to a significant event or crisis in the life of the Selinuntines’ as the prompting for the text, in particular, a context of civil strife which was a regular concern for cities of the archaic and classical periods and was commonly accompanied by bloodshed and sacrilege.⁸²⁶ On the basis of letter forms they also confidently date the text to the mid 5th century BC or earlier in the century.⁸²⁷

Clinton, however, argues that the document may well have been much larger and is, in fact, arranged chronologically rather than through a common theme of purification.⁸²⁸ He maintains that the document was actually issued by the city itself and only B is concerned with purification and is thus relegated to the end of the document because it does not fit the chronological scheme. One of the key contentions concerns lines A.7-24 which Clinton interprets as referring specifically to ‘sacrifices’ performed in the Olympian year (i.e. every fourth year) and not every year, as the original editors proposed. Clinton thus argues that there may have been specified annual, biennial and triennial rituals before the surviving lines A.7-24 and its reference to quadrennial rituals.⁸²⁹ Clinton also disagrees that the ‘pure’ and ‘polluted’ Tritopatores, discussed below, are different aspects of the same deities and also that they were worshiped by groups as ancestral deities. He maintains that they were worshiped by the city and should be regarded as separate but related and

⁸²³ SEG XLIII 630=Lupu 27; cf. Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993; Robertson 2010.

⁸²⁴ Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 50-1.

⁸²⁵ Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 55, specifically RO 97 B.111-21.

⁸²⁶ Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 59-60.

⁸²⁷ Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 48.

⁸²⁸ Clinton 1996.

⁸²⁹ Clinton 1996: 161-3; Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 27.

worshiped in two distinct precincts but served by a single altar.⁸³⁰ He also finds a parallel for the procedures described on side B with the sacred law from Cyrene but interprets this as referring to the third 'suppliant' and not the first. Here, in the sacred law from Selinous, *elasteroi* are central to the rituals involved and Clinton compares these figures to the Erinyes who haunt murderers (e.g. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 50-6).⁸³¹ In addition, he argues that although B.1-7 does concern purification from homicide, the remainder of the document refers to purification from more serious offences than simple homicide, such as murder of a guest (or host) or a blood relative, and specifies additionally required sacrificial measures.⁸³²

Lupu notes that 'this document stands out as one of the few cases where rituals are dictated in relatively great detail in a Greek sacred law', making it once again ideal for the type of analyses championed here. He adds that 'the detailed format may be due to the inherently idiosyncratic, complex nature of the rituals, or particularly in B, to their extraordinariness and to the seriousness of the subject matter'.⁸³³ He also adds that the 'two columns do not seem to have much in common with one another', supporting Clinton's reconstruction.⁸³⁴ In addition, he explains how 'basic familiarity with ordinary cult practice' is taken for granted and only 'when deviation from common practice is required or when the procedures are particularly complex' are details given.⁸³⁵

Robertson, however, presents a radically different interpretation of the inscription where the major threat envisaged in both parts of the document is pollution that might threaten crops, persons and livelihoods at particular times of year. He argues that 'the several deities of column A are worshipped at certain moments in the spring and early summer, a critical period when a community renews its resources and hangs on each natural process or event'. The single deity of column B, on the other hand, stands for a recurring natural event (lightning) which was much feared during the other half of the year. In addition, 'in both columns, the deities are chosen, and the ritual is prescribed, because they and it will appeal to everyone, rich and poor alike. In both columns, a leading feature of the ritual is

⁸³⁰ Clinton 1996: 172; Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 107-14.

⁸³¹ Clinton 1996: 174-9; RO 97 B.132-41; Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 55.

⁸³² Clinton 1996: 178-9.

⁸³³ Lupu 2009: 364.

⁸³⁴ Lupu 2009: 366.

⁸³⁵ Lupu 2009: 364.

the many alternatives, more and less costly, which have been designed with great ingenuity'.⁸³⁶

If the original editors' interpretation is correct, this entire document then is concerned with purification of an extremely momentous kind and this would inevitably trigger the hazard-precaution system, as outlined above. If Clinton is correct, on the other hand, then purification from homicide of various kinds is only at issue on side B. As already indicated, however, Robertson departs entirely from this interpretation although anxiety and fear surrounding the threat of pollution is central to his reconstruction. According to any interpretation, background information about the public 'sacrifices' on side A contains a number of elements and themes that would trigger and activate the hazard-precaution system. The detailed prescriptions in themselves imply that non-performance is a potentially dangerous option and that performing these rites must follow the particular and extremely well delineated script provided.

This document contains clear evidence for the relevance of the hazard-precaution system as an explanation of the experiential power and emotionally compelling nature of the practices described. As well as 'sacrifices' to Zeus Eumenes, the Eumenides and Zeus Meilichios (A.8-9) there are detailed prescriptions in column A concerning 'sacrifices' to both the 'polluted' (A.9-13) and 'pure' (A.13-17) Tritopatores as well as two separate *theoxenia* rituals of differing character (A.14-16, 18) and a further 'sacrifice' to Zeus Meilichios, the meat of which must be consumed on the spot (A.17-21). Actions involved mimic the typical 'outputs' of the hazard-precaution system. These include sprinkling (with water? – A.13), ritual anointing or smearing (the altar or floor of the chamber – A.13, 16-17) on two separate occasions, actions reserved for special specific persons meeting prior conditions ('sacrifice' to the 'polluted' Tritopatores is reserved for those specially permitted to perform or oversee this activity – A.12) as well as the implication of constant checking and cross-checking to meet the detailed requirements and the need for an ordered structured environment in which this all takes place.⁸³⁷

There would also have been involved many attention-grabbing 'tricks' not specified in this document. Again, all of these 'sacrifices' would also inevitably include many additional and customary elements identified in previous chapters (this is also true of the evidence from

⁸³⁶ Robertson 2010: 6.

⁸³⁷ Following Lupu 27 and Robertson 2010. Lupu 2009: 377 on A.17-21 and Zeus Meilichios.

Cos and Cyrene discussed above as already alluded to). These would not have deviated from usual practice and so no specifications would have been required. Many of these actions involve repetition and redundancy, such as, for example, libation performed at regular points during the ceremony – at least three times according to some reconstructions.⁸³⁸ These would therefore force goal demotion and involve activation of the hazard-precaution system making such actions attention-grabbing and compelling.

Another attention-grabbing ‘trick’ that would have made these complex rituals compelling and intuitively appropriate is the swamping of working memory, as already discussed. There is in this document focused attention on a set of different stimuli and their arrangement, as well as the frequent combination of positive and negative prescriptions. This is particularly clear in the requirements for the two *theoxenia* rituals as well as the ‘sacrifices’ to the ‘polluted’ and ‘pure’ Tritopatores. The ‘sacrifice’ to the ‘polluted’ Tritopatores (A.9-13) is to be performed as ‘to the heroes’ (A.10 – thus not as would be the case with rituals performed in honour of the gods) and involved pouring wine carefully through the roof of a subterranean chamber (A.10-11) and the burning of one-ninth of the meat available from the victim (A.11-12 – thus significantly more meat was burned than in many alimentary-type rituals although Robertson argues that this was a ‘magical pretence’).⁸³⁹ Those involved then sprinkled the ritual space with water before anointing the altar (A.13 – or according to Robertson, sprinkled the burnt remains with water and smeared the result over the floor of the chamber) and ‘sacrificing’ a full grown victim to the ‘pure’ Tritopatores (A.13-7) ‘as to the gods’ (A.17).⁸⁴⁰ This later ‘sacrifice’, despite being addressed to the gods, involved an ‘offering’ of honey mixture (A.13-4) as opposed to the more usual libation of mixed wine and was followed once again by a *theoxenia* ritual (A.14-6). Further repetition and redundancy characterised these detailed activities with the sampling of firstlings from the table ‘offerings’ which were then burned before yet another anointment (or smearing) ritual and the burning of the cups, presumably on the altar.⁸⁴¹

Side B either concerns purification from several classes of homicide or appeases potentially threatening powers of lightning, as already indicated. Again, much of the appropriateness and power of these rituals can be explained by the triggering and activation of the hazard-

⁸³⁸ E.g. Patton 2009: 18 based on Aristophanes, *Peace* 433, 1039 and Euripides, *Ion* 1032-33.

⁸³⁹ Robertson 2010: 161-2.

⁸⁴⁰ Robertson 2010: 162-4.

⁸⁴¹ Reconstruction following Lupu 2009: 371-7, Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 63-73 and Robertson 2010: 155-66.

precaution system, making them attention-grabbing and compelling. Either a public proclamation is made about the arrival of the homicide or the person being purified announces when, where and in what direction the ritual will take effect and summons the *elasteros* (B.1-3). Both possibilities, however, imply the importance of the subsequent activity and the danger of non-performance. This danger could be of a public or individual nature. According to the former reconstruction, the figure of the *elasteros* which the homicide must purify himself from represented a dangerous polluting figure that clearly overlaps with central themes of the hazard-precaution system. In addition, in the first section of this chapter I discussed the evidence of various ethnographic accounts which indicate that the act of homicide is commonly believed and felt to incur pollution and danger.⁸⁴² The latter reconstruction, however, of the *elasteros* as a threatening force of nature that could strike at any time, also echoes the concerns of the hazard-precaution system.

Following the former reconstruction, the activity of the host again demonstrates behaviour which can be made explicable by the analysis championed here revealing the kind of emotional and cognitive compulsion and understanding involved. He gives to the homicide water to wash himself with, food and salt (B.4). As Lupu notes, ‘the water for washing is obviously provided for purificatory purposes’ while the offering of food and salt ‘at the outset of the process is probably a token of hospitality’.⁸⁴³ A ‘sacrifice’ then follows to mark reintegration into the community (B.5-6) before the specification of further activity if the offence was of a more serious nature (B.7-11). These include the marking of a boundary and ritual sprinkling with a golden vessel (B.11), actions that overlap with the concerns and themes of the hazard-precaution system.⁸⁴⁴ Lupu argues, that as with the sacred law from Cyrene, it is not at all clear that the purification procedure envisaged in this document involved in any way the powerfully compelling use of the blood of a slaughtered piglet, as is colourfully described in literary accounts (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* (4.685-717, Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 278-81).⁸⁴⁵ Robertson, however, argues that this type of sacrificial activity was present in purification ritual generally, especially the standard procedure for purification of suppliants described in the Cyrene inscription above

⁸⁴² E.g. Evans-Pritchard 1956: 179-80, Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 133.

⁸⁴³ Lupu 2009: 383-4.

⁸⁴⁴ Following Lupu 27 B.

⁸⁴⁵ As noted by Lupu 2009: 281.

(it is not mentioned but Robertson cites an excerpt from *The Traditions of the Eupatridae* FGh 356 F I).⁸⁴⁶

According to the alternative interpretation of side B, 'the first and longer part describes a very modest version of table hospitality, descending even to words and gestures (B.1-8),' but this can also be interpreted usefully in terms of the non-conscious operations of the hazard-precaution system. The animal victim is the least possible, a piglet, and the suppliant-host 'sacrifices' it with his own hand, the meaning of the twice repeated key term, *autorektas* (B.9 and also restored in 1) which is synonymous with *autophonos* at Cyrene, discussed above. A place set apart is chosen and the leave-taking involves expressive and intuitively plausible and compelling actions, leaving the scene of the ritual (which may well be remote and solitary) without looking back. The rite is the same whatever the exact type of *elasteros* involved (B.7-8) while lines B.9-13 are an added supplement for wealthier persons that present an elaboration of the previously described procedure.⁸⁴⁷ However, the 'sacrifice' to the *elastoros* (B.12-13) is carried out 'as to the immortals' (a positive prescription) but the victim was slaughtered so that the blood was poured into the earth rather than into a *sphageion* or onto the altar, as in more customary practice (a negative prescription).⁸⁴⁸ Once again, there is thus the combination of negative and positive prescriptions and the requirement of focused attention on different stimuli. These rituals then, together with the anxiety and fear determining their context and explicit 'purpose', are very strong evidence for the relevance of the approach used here for understanding sacrificial behaviour, regardless of the reconstruction favoured. They also help explain why apparently inexplicable actions for which there appears to be no clear rationale, made such a compelling and experiential sense to those involved.

In conclusion, the sacred law from Selinous provides important further evidence for the significance of the model of Boyer and Liénard for understanding sacrificial behaviour in ancient Greece. It helps explain why apparently pointless acts (at least from a modern etic perspective) made such emotionally compelling sense in the ancient world, even in the likely absence of any clearly defined or shared explanation for their relevance. Again, this model does not explain every feature or aspect of these diverse and complex activities.

⁸⁴⁶ Robertson 2010: 367-8.

⁸⁴⁷ Reconstruction follows Robertson 2010: 213-28.

⁸⁴⁸ This has been outlined in Chapter IV; Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1993: 63. See also Lupu 27 A.20-1.

What it does do is isolate specific aspects of these ceremonies which clearly involved ritualised behaviour, as defined by Boyer and Liénard, and helps explain their experiential cognitive ‘meaning’. This model then provides a partial but important insight into the experiential realities of sacrificial activity in Selinous and in ancient Greece in general.

Overall conclusion

In conclusion, the model of Boyer and Liénard explains why complex rituals such as ‘sacrifice’ are successfully transmitted as a by-product of evolved cognitive architecture, involving attention-grabbing ‘tricks’ and a motivational state of anxiety and wariness. It complements my previous section’s emphasis on the theory of Lawson and McCauley and, likewise, emphasises the importance of cognitive experience to understanding and interpreting sacrificial practice in ancient Greece. The model of Boyer and Liénard, in addition, identifies and explains very different aspects of behaviour to those specified by the theory of Lawson and McCauley and has been applied to mainly epigraphic, as opposed to predominantly literary material. Both models together constitute the etic dimension of my approach in contrast to the emic dimension of my previous chapter on sensory analysis. The implications of both these models’ findings are discussed below in my final section of this chapter. The emerging picture is very clearly the complexity of sacrificial behaviour in general and the inapplicability of single interpretations and approaches. The model of Boyer and Liénard only identifies and explains specific aspects of such activity and like the model of Lawson and McCauley, is best used alongside other approaches and interpretations, including those more traditionally offered by modern scholarship. My analysis so far also points, however, to the need for a much greater emphasis on experiential factors when interpreting such behaviour and this is a need that has not often been addressed by modern scholars in general.

Section III: Implications

This chapter has applied new cognitive ritual theories to sacrificial practice in ancient Greece, focusing on classical Athens where possible. It has addressed the main range of ritual killing of animals as well as the bloodless practices identified and discussed in Chapters IV and V. My aim has been to explain the experiential nature of ‘sacrifice’ in cognitive terms and to re-categorise the various sacrificial elements in terms of experience

so as to give a new window onto their 'purpose' and function. This has built on the findings of the preceding chapter which emphasises sensory aspects over 'meaning'. Crucially, I have shown how difficult it is to draw simple lines between different types of ritual activity. I have also shown that very different sacrificial practices can play the same, or very similar, roles in a number of different contexts. In addition, I have demonstrated that the same types of sacrificial activity can also have profoundly different 'meanings' and significances in contrasting settings.

I have applied two very different, but nonetheless complementary, cognitive models to the ancient evidence and to two very contrasting types of evidence, literary and epigraphic. The main finding of both approaches is the complexity of sacrificial behaviour and of the inappropriateness of single interpretations or conclusions. Not only has this complexity been largely unrecognised by modern scholars, but the central importance of cognitive experience has also been downplayed, and even ignored.

A number of implications follow from the conclusions made and are addressed under three subsequent side-headings below. The first is that the ancient evidence should not be expected to present a single, shared or even basic 'theory' or understanding of sacrificial behaviour in general. It is therefore predicted that there will be no agreement demonstrated in classical Athens (or indeed in ancient Greece in general) of what 'sacrifice' actually was or what it did or was for. This is because the same type of activity could be interpreted and experienced as potentially 'special agent', 'special instrument' or 'special patient' in nature. It is also because many of the actions that often characterise such complex behaviour are performed as the result of the successful activation and triggering of evolved cognitive architecture. These forms of ritualised behaviour were felt to be emotionally compelling, intuitively plausible and instinctively appropriate without the need for conscious reflection or understanding of any kind. The second implication follows from the first. It indicates that we should not expect the the ancient evidence to be consistent and clear about how the gods actually benefited from sacrificial activity. In addition, there should also be variation in what was understood to be the so-called share (or portion) for the gods in many forms of such behaviour. Again, this is because only some forms of sacrificial activity (despite being very similar or even identical in actual procedure to that of others), very often taking place in distinct and recurring contexts (e.g. feasts, celebrations, etc), were actually 'special patient' in nature and so involved the critical inference that the

gods were the object in some sense of the rites. However, although this powerful intuition could be present and might be profoundly motivating in such ritual settings, it also does not follow that there was any clearly compelling idea of how the gods actually benefited. In fact, the cognitive theories discussed in this chapter suggest that not only could there be no such plausible and shared explanation, but also there was commonly not felt to be any need for one. In addition, in many of these ritual environments human concerns and priorities often dominate (i.e. concern for due shares of sacrificial meat, etc.). The third and final major implication addressed here concerns ancient terminology and follows naturally from the preceding arguments. It predicts that ancient terminology should also be inconsistent and confusing and that context and experience should be important factors in making sense of the evidence.

I must repeat here that in this chapter, I emphasise an outsider's etic (modern, scholarly and scientific) perspective, drawing out unconscious, biological and automatic aspects of emotion and experience in contrast to the previous chapter's insider emic (ancient perceived, sensory and explicit) perspective. At the same time, I argue that there is no simple dichotomy between these approaches and consideration of both perspectives, and their combination (or even opposition), is paramount. I also do not pretend to offer a complete theory of 'sacrifice', nor do I believe that such an approach is possible for the reasons I have emphasised. I do, however, argue that an appreciation of cognitive experience is needed to properly understand sacrificial activity and that such an emphasis is lacking in modern accounts.

Implication I: Ancient theories of 'sacrifice'

A key argument of this chapter concerns the inherent contradiction in sacrificial behaviour, that this type of activity was considered compelling, necessary and important and yet there was no clearly shared sense or understanding of what it was, why it was done and what it was for. As was indicated in Chapter II and identified by Parker, the anthropological literature reveals similar problems of vocabulary and similar uncertainty as to what is to count as a 'sacrifice' and what not as in ancient Greece.⁸⁴⁹ In addition, in terms of key anthropological examples, a study of the complex Jain ritual in western India has demonstrated that worshippers often expressed inconsistent, inaccurate or even entirely

⁸⁴⁹ Parker 2011: 155; anthropological literature, e.g. de Heusch 1985: 67.

absent explanations of their own ritual actions. Thus, there is no shared ‘meaning’ or interpretation of even their highly demanding and often rigorous ritual behaviour and this is not often, in fact, recognised or deemed problematic.⁸⁵⁰ The evidence from ancient Greece in fact presents a number of divergent, and sometimes even contradictory, perspectives and understandings of sacrificial behaviour. As a consequence, it becomes increasingly clear that no single interpretation or conclusion is possible concerning such activity. The evidence also suggests the importance of experience and contextual factors to many of the views that are presented.

Ullucci has recently argued that philosophers in ancient Greece did not offer critiques of ‘sacrifice’ *per se*, but were engaged in an ongoing debate over the ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ of ‘sacrifice’, recognising himself that such activity contained no intrinsic ‘meaning’.⁸⁵¹ Some philosophers did, however, criticise meat eating. Theophrastus, for example, argued that first-fruits were the original, truest and most honourable ‘sacrifice’ for the gods (*On Piety*, fr. 7.4-10 Pötscher). Thus these ancient thinkers felt that there was something inherently right about sacrificial behaviour, even though for some it was problematic that there was such an intimate link between much sacrificial activity and the experience of dividing up and eating shares of meat. Rives, in contrast to Ullucci, however, argues that only in the Imperial period did philosophers develop a theory of ‘animal sacrifice’, but I think that in some respects this overlooks the ongoing and evolving relationship between cultural producers and their particular cultural media.⁸⁵²

The evidence also presents divergent interpretations of ‘sacrifice’ among various different types of cultural producer, some of which may be considered more relevant to the everyday and familiar environment of a classical Athenian. Also relevant to this issue is the lack of a clear idea of how the gods actually benefited from such behaviour, discussed separately below. Again, this is not to deny the importance of the gods in classical Athens, or indeed in ancient Greece in general, but to point to a telling discrepancy between why people often say they perform such activity and what they in fact do when behaving in this way. It is the contention of this thesis that a number of long-standing contradictions and controversies in our evidence can be adequately and convincingly explained by the methodology used in this chapter.

⁸⁵⁰ Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 264.

⁸⁵¹ E.g. Ullucci 2011: 64-5.

⁸⁵² Rives 2011: 197.

Even within one important literary genre, comedy, two different interpretations of 'sacrifice' are presented in the evidence of the period under scrutiny. However in both, 'animal sacrifice is not about killing but about eating, not about the ambiguities of our condition but about the joys of satisfying our appetites'.⁸⁵³ In Old Comedy, the gods are presented as in need of 'sacrifice' (e.g. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 607-23, *Wealth* 1123, *Birds* 1515-24) whereas in the more naturalistic New Comedy, 'sacrifice' is a key means of producing social harmony and is again (as with Old Comedy) intimately linked to marriage (e.g. the happy conclusions of Menander, *The Bad-Tempered Man* and *The Girl from Samos*).⁸⁵⁴ In tragedy, however, 'the abnormal sacrifice is the ritual and dramatic norm'.⁸⁵⁵ Here the alleged dark underpinnings of such activity are emphasised and there is the suggestion of a blurring of distinctions between human and animal ritual killing.

Other important genres present their own perspectives on 'sacrifice' and likewise suggest the complexity of such behaviour. This complexity is often also, as was the case with comedy discussed above, intimately linked to experiential and emotional factors. In epic sources, anxiety is associated with 'sacrifice' in Hesiod (*Theogony* 507-616 and *Works and Days* 45-105) where it leads to separation between mankind and the gods and the introduction to the world of evil and misery.⁸⁵⁶ Anxiety is also often associated with 'sacrifice' in Homer's *Iliad* (e.g. 2.412-20, 6.311, 15.372-6) where there is constant fear and uncertainty over whether the gods will grant requests and pleas associated with such activity, which are often just or deserving. Here the anxiety surrounds the fragility of human existence and the capricious nature of the gods whose ways are unknowable. 'Sacrifice', is thus presented as an imperfect means of communicating with the gods, fraught with fear and uncertainty. It is also, however, as is often emphasised, a source of rich feasts for the epic heroes (e.g. 1.464-9, 2.427-32) and a means of securing personal honour in the form of the various choice cuts and their apportionment (e.g. 7.313-23).⁸⁵⁷ In *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the 'overall conception of divine power is different' and there is an emphasis on justice. Here 'sacrifice' becomes 'a symbol of cultivation and civilisation, the perversion or absence of which marks the suitors and other groups as excessive and sinister'. Relations between the gods (principally Athena) and their favourite mortals are

⁸⁵³ Redfield 2012: 172.

⁸⁵⁴ Redfield 2012: 172-9.

⁸⁵⁵ Henrichs 2012: 184.

⁸⁵⁶ Redfield 2012: 171; cf. Vernant 1991a: 297-301.

⁸⁵⁷ Hitch 2009: 112.

thus idealised and 'sacrifice' serves to help represent and realise this in the poem (e.g. 3.30-385, 3.435-64).⁸⁵⁸

The epigraphic evidence, on the other hand, in the form of sacred laws, presents a complex system of exchange ultimately overseen, regulated and carefully articulated by the *polis*. In these public documents nothing is left to chance with a strong emphasis on correct procedure, diligence and long-standing, established, stable and uninterrupted relations with the gods.⁸⁵⁹ This is thus an interpretation of sacrificial practice by the state, another cultural producer and in these cases the tone is not only formal, but legalistic. In terms of archaeological evidence, bone analysis reveals the care and precision with which the 'god's portion' was removed in contrast to the more careless treatment of the remainder of the animal carcass meant for consumption.⁸⁶⁰ However, the animals selected, predominantly domestic victims, but also wild animals (as identified in Chapter IV), were intimately associated with meat eating and highly valued as such.⁸⁶¹ Even the occasional 'sacrifice' of dog can be associated with meat eating. Archaeological evidence attests to a sporadic but well established consumption strategy in the ancient Mediterranean of eating canines in certain conditions.⁸⁶²

Vase paintings present popular and pleasing images denoting sacrificial activity and represent another important and divergent interpretation of such behaviour. Van Straten has described the impact of a burning tail curling upwards on a sacrificial altar as denoting to classical Athenians a successful and harmonious 'sacrifice' (see Figure 2).⁸⁶³ As already noted, the gods are generally absent from such source material with the emphasis seemingly more on human experience and human satisfaction.⁸⁶⁴ However, once again this is not to deny that the gods were important nor am I claiming that they were felt to be absent by ancient Greeks enjoying such scenes. Again, as I indicated in Chapter II, I distinguish between belief in the gods and ritual belief, the first largely taken for granted as a highly compelling and lived reality and the other more as an intuitive sense of rightness

⁸⁵⁸ Hitch 2009: 3.

⁸⁵⁹ E.g. the four Attic sacrificial calendars (Thorikos, SEG XXXIII.147, Marathon, LSS 20, Erchia, LSCG 18, *genos* of Salaminioi, LSS 19) and the calendar from Cos in Appendix 3 (LSCG 151 = RO 62).

⁸⁶⁰ Chenal-Velarde and Studer 2003: 218-9.

⁸⁶¹ See the individual entries for the animals discussed in Dalby 2003.

⁸⁶² Snyder and Klippel 2003: 230.

⁸⁶³ Van Straten 1995: 133-4.

⁸⁶⁴ Carpenter 2007: 409-10 notes that Figure 2 (London BM E 455) is one of the few exceptions to the god not being included in sacrificial scenes.

and correctness without necessarily implying any form of explicit or conscious explanation or understanding. At the same time, ritual belief could often include strong and compelling inferences that the activities involved were in some important ways directed at the gods, although without a clear sense of how or why (i.e. in 'special patient' rituals). They could also involve powerful intuitions that the gods were involved in other ways (i.e. 'special agent' and 'special instrument' rituals).

In conclusion, as predicted by the two cognitive models applied to the evidence earlier in this chapter, the ancient evidence presents multiple, and often apparently contradictory, perspectives and understandings of 'sacrifice'. There was no clearly shared consensus on what such activity actually was, or was for, and no apparent recognition that this was problematic. Such behaviour was, however, felt to be strongly compelling and plausible and its importance was taken for granted, even in the context of intellectual criticism of its intimate association (in many forms) with meat-eating. The evidence also suggests the importance of experiential, emotional and contextual factors to any view of 'sacrifice'.

Implication II: Benefit to the gods?

The absence of any clearly shared understanding of 'sacrifice' is inherently linked to the surprising lack of concern surrounding any clear notion of how the gods actually benefited from such behaviour. Again, this is related to the interpretation I have advanced of ritual form (the varied sacrificial practices could be 'special agent', 'special instrument' or 'special patient' in nature even if similar, or even identical, rites were performed) and to much of such activity being felt to be emotionally compelling and intuitively plausible as a consequence of evolved cognitive architecture that operates on an unconscious level without the need for explicit justification. The apparent lack of concern, or at least confusion, over how the gods benefited from sacrificial activity is also a pattern well documented in the anthropological evidence.⁸⁶⁵ In ancient Greece, only in Old Comedy are the gods presented as in need of 'sacrifice' (e.g. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 607-23, *Wealth* 1123, *Birds* 1515-24), a characteristic transgression of limits of the genre in this period and not to be taken too literally.⁸⁶⁶ Also in comedy we find the notion that the gods were defrauded, or in some sense cheated, in 'sacrifice' as the bulk of the animal victim was consumed by the human worshippers (e.g. Pherekrates fr. 28 Kassel-Austin = 23 Kock, Euboulos fr. 127

⁸⁶⁵ E.g. Evans-Pritchard 1956: 212-3, Barth 1975: 11, Tuzin 1980: 211-2.

⁸⁶⁶ Redfield 2012: 179.

Kassel-Austin = 130 Kock, Menander, *The Bad-Tempered Man* 447-53) and this notion can be traced back to Hesiod (*Theogony* 540-1).

Much of the literary evidence, in fact, demonstrates uncertainty over how the gods actually benefited from 'sacrifice', as was discussed in the previous chapter where inconsistencies and confusion were traced from Hesiod and Homer to classical Athens and beyond. As already discussed, Kirk even argued for a progressive deincarnation of the gods from the Neolithic era through to the classical period and onwards.⁸⁶⁷ There is also not only the philosophical (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.3.3. where Socrates quotes Hesiod, *Works and Days* 336), but also comic view (Menander, *The Bad-Tempered Man* 449-51), that intention matters and a pinch of incense or cake could be more preferable to the gods than an 'animal sacrifice'. In addition, I have explored overlaps in terminology and practice between these sacrificial forms and I have developed this further earlier in this chapter. Again, there is no clear sense of what 'sacrifice' was, did or was for.

There was, however, important debate in at least some philosophical circles as to how the gods benefited from 'sacrifice', which some scholars would see as countering the argument presented here. Plato referred to 'animal sacrifice' explicitly in terms of a gift to the gods (*Euthyphro* 14c – οὐκοῦν τὸ θύειν δωρεῖσθαι ἐστὶ τοῖς θεοῖς, τὸ δ' εὐχεσθαι αἰτεῖν τοὺς θεούς). In this influential view, often supported by modern scholars, the gods received honour, tokens of esteem and gratification from mortals performing such activity on their behalf (15a – ἰδὲ οἷε ἄλλο ἢ τιμὴ τε καὶ γέρας καί, ὅπερ ἐγὼ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, χάρις).⁸⁶⁸ They are thus not considered to be dependent on 'sacrifice' and it has recently been argued that this was very likely the viewpoint of most ancient Greeks.⁸⁶⁹ The idea of 'sacrifice' representing a gift is also found in Theophrastus where people are said to 'sacrifice' for three reasons: to give honour, to show gratitude or because of one's need of good things (*On Piety* frag. 12 Pötscher 42-4). Again, as van Straten notes, as explanations of 'sacrifice' these theories are clearly lacking. They do not explain why the majority of meat is consumed by worshippers, nor do they explain sacrificial behaviour in moments of crisis or, indeed, the 'variety of peculiarities' within much sacrificial practice in ancient

⁸⁶⁷ Kirk 1990: 11-2.

⁸⁶⁸ E.g. Jim 2014: 83; Ekroth 2011: 36.

⁸⁶⁹ Parker 2011: 136.

Greece, such as the carrying of the *liknon* or winnow, in completely inappropriate contexts.⁸⁷⁰

Closely related to this lack of clarity and apparent concern as to how the gods actually benefited from 'sacrifice' is the evidence for inconsistency surrounding the god's portion in 'animal sacrifice' followed by a meal. As already noted, the epigraphic evidence is almost entirely silent concerning the 'god's portion' but goes into great detail defining priestly perquisites and precise shares for various public figures.⁸⁷¹ There are possible exceptions, however, such as the fragmentary sacrificial calendar of the Attic deme Phrearrhioi where half the head and *maschalismata* appear to be included.⁸⁷² I argue here that just as there is no clear sense of how the gods actually benefited from 'sacrifice', there is also much more variety and uncertainty than is usually recognised by modern scholars as to what the gods were actually given.

The literary sources present much more variety and confusion (at least to our modern eyes) than is often recognised by scholars when discussing the god's portion. They often emphasise thigh bones (e.g. Aristophanes, *Women Celebrating the Festival of the Thesmophoria* 693, *Birds* 190-3 and 1230-3), or thigh bones together with the tail or *osphus* (e.g. Aristophanes, *Peace* 1039-55, *Acharnians* 784-5), particularly in classical Athens. However, these and other sources also mention unspecified white bones covered in fat (Hesiod, *Theogony* 540-1) but also the gall bladder (Sophocles, *Antigone* 1005-11), *thulemata* (Aristophanes, *Peace* 1040), limbs (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 496) and pieces of raw meat (the already described practice of *omothetein* in many Homeric scenes: e.g. *Iliad* 1.460-3, 2.424, *Odyssey* 3.458, 12.361, 14.427-8). I have also already discussed the evidence for the distinct treatment of pig victims as suggested by the bone evidence and the 'sacrifice' performed by Eumaeus (*Odyssey* 14.410-40). In addition, the *splanchna*, or a share of the *splanchna*, could go to the gods (Aristophanes, *Birds* 1512-22, *Wealth* 1130). Outside Athens, sacred laws refer to *splanchna* in ritual contexts where the meat eventually falls to the priest.⁸⁷³ It has been argued that the *splanchna* were placed into a *phiale* held in the outstretched right hand of many cult images.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁷⁰ Van Straten 1981: 66-8.

⁸⁷¹ Hitch 2009: 23.

⁸⁷² Lupu 2009: 3.16-7 = SEG XXXV.113.16-7 discussed previously.

⁸⁷³ E.g. LSS 129.4-6, 77.6-7.

⁸⁷⁴ Van Straten 1995: 132-3.

In agreement with the perspective presented here, van Straten convincingly argues that cult practice was ‘probably less uniform’ despite the meagreness of the ‘god’s portion’ in much of the literary source material after Homer, particularly in comedy. He concludes that ‘this literary cliché may well have generated a sort of self-fulfilling selectivity’.⁸⁷⁵ Similarly, Redfield notes of the apparent ‘Hesiodic tone’ in Menander (*The Bad-Tempered Man* 447-53) that the gods only get the inedible bits – the end of the spine and the gall – that ‘the speaker is a sourpuss, and not endorsed in the play’. In an earlier play (*Drunkenness*, fr. 224 Kassel-Austin), on the other hand, where the speaker states that if he were a god he would not allow the burning of the tail on the altar without something more significant added (an eel in this case), the context is one where this ‘theme is given a more economic turn’.⁸⁷⁶

Other scholars, however, would cite the increasing evidence of bone assemblages as suggesting that sacrificial practice entailed a much more uniform understanding of what was due to the gods. In terms of the evidence in general, Ekroth has argued that the bone assemblages demonstrate that thigh bones and the tails were the preferred parts to burn, although indicating variations between sanctuaries and between different species type within these sanctuaries.⁸⁷⁷ I argue, however, that some of these discrepancies among the small but steadily increasing quantity of data cannot easily be ignored. Examination of faunal remains from the altar of Aphrodite Ourania in Athens shows that along with the expected large number of sheep and goat femur and caudal vertebra remains, 16% of the burnt bone fragments came from the ribs, 3.3% from the patella (kneecap) and 2.6% from horn core.⁸⁷⁸ Also, Reese notes of much of the evidence that ‘it is quite clear that the bone was burnt “green”, or flesh covered’, but this interpretation is uncertain and problematic.⁸⁷⁹ From the evidence of the Sacred Spring in Corinth, all types of bones from sacrificial animals were found in the ash around four mud altars constructed at the end of the 5th century BC. The excavator notes that to judge from the sample retrieved ‘the whole carcass, with the exception of the skin, and possibly the head, was sacrificed’. Pig and cow bones predominated here but also sheep and probably goat bones.⁸⁸⁰ In addition, bone evidence from ‘sacrifices’ to Poseidon at Isthmia, show that the head and thorax were also

⁸⁷⁵ Van Straten 1995: 126.

⁸⁷⁶ Redfield 2012: 177.

⁸⁷⁷ Ekroth 2009: 142-3.

⁸⁷⁸ Reese 1989: 65.

⁸⁷⁹ Reese 1989: 64; cf. Ekroth 2009: 128 n.10.

⁸⁸⁰ Williams 1970: 24-5.

burnt on the altar. The excavators concluded that the forequarters were singled out as the preferred portion for human consumption, while the remainder of the skeleton (probably defleshed for human consumption) was burned on the altar.⁸⁸¹

There are also further compelling indications for a lack of shared understanding as to what was owed to the gods in much sacrificial practice. The evidence for so-called 'moiracausts' has already been noted, including ninth part 'sacrifice' and the occasionally attested practice of burning a whole thigh.⁸⁸² Van Straten notes that lumpy parts often seen in vase paintings depicting sacrificial scenes may be pieces of raw meat or thigh bones wrapped in the fatty *omentum*.⁸⁸³ Recent experimentation with the cut out femora of a sheep wrapped in the animal's *omentum maius*, however, showed 'fairly strong similarities to depictions on Greek vases' and this should be noted.⁸⁸⁴ At the very least, it appears that there was much greater flexibility and variety concerning the 'god's portion' than generally understood and this may be convincingly linked to the lack of a shared understanding as to what 'sacrifice' was and what it was for.

Similar confusion as to how the gods actually benefited from sacrificial behaviour can be seen in the evidence for *theoxenia* and *trapezomata*. This is even though they offer strong and conclusive evidence for the view that human-divine relations were central to practices such as 'sacrifice'. Again, I do not deny the importance of the gods to ancient Greece, nor that there was a powerful (but from a modern etic perspective in some ways a vague) sense in which sacrificial behaviour was felt to be 'offered' to them in many contexts. In *theoxenia* in fact, as already discussed, we see the activation of our social mind systems with the notion of the gods being treated as *xenia* in relations of guest friendship.⁸⁸⁵ However, as with 'animal sacrifice' in general, the gods are included and felt in some way to be present or relevant to the experience, even though there is no clear or shared

⁸⁸¹ Gebhard and Reese 2005: 144-7.

⁸⁸² Ninth-part: Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1992: A.9-12, LSCG 96.23-4, LSS 63, IG XII Suppl. 353; whole thigh: Jameson, Jordan and Kotansky 1992: A.17-20 and LSAM 42. LSAG 165.31 = Fornara 89.31 stipulates that Hera will be given the leg of each victim. See Scullion 2000 and Berquist 2005 for discussion of the evidence and Chapter IV.

⁸⁸³ Van Straten 1995: 127-8.

⁸⁸⁴ Forstenpointer 2003: 210.

⁸⁸⁵ See Chapter I and Boyer 2011 and Barrett 2004 for an introduction to the notion of social mind systems.

understanding of why, or indeed how. As Nock influentially remarked, there was no conscious table fellowship with the gods in ancient Greece and man kept his distance.⁸⁸⁶

Modern scholars have offered their own conflicting views on how the gods were felt to benefit from *theoxenia* and *trapezomata*. Naiden remarks that during *theoxenia* the gods ‘supposedly ate’ and describes this alleged inconsistency as appearing to be ‘aberrant’.⁸⁸⁷ Ekroth, on the contrary, argues that it was honour (*time*) that the gods received through such practices.⁸⁸⁸ It is significant to note that the importance of both *theoxenia* and *trapezomata* may post-date Homer (early forms of such practices can be detected, however – in particular *omothetein* – the burning but not depositing of raw meat *Odyssey* 3.458, 14.425-9, *Iliad* 1.459-61, 2.422-4 and cooked portions of meat laid out for the Nymphs and Hermes *Odyssey* 14.434-6) and thus Kirk’s progressive deincarnation model is in serious doubt.⁸⁸⁹ Once again the apparent lack of consistency shown here is in line with my prediction concerning sacrificial practice in general, where there was no clearly shared idea of how the gods actually benefited from such behaviour, nor any great concern over this. It should also be noted that the raw meat from *trapezomata* and cooked meat from *theoxenia* likely went to the priest following the ritual which again makes compelling cognitive sense and adds to the intuitive plausibility of such behaviour as an extension of normal human activity.⁸⁹⁰ The priest need not be seen as acting as a proxy for the god, but rather a natural and fairly predictable recipient of further choice perquisites from the ‘sacrifice’.⁸⁹¹

In conclusion, in line with the findings of the two important cognitive approaches applied to the ancient evidence earlier in this chapter, there does appear to be a lack of interest, or at the very least confusion, over how the gods actually benefited from ‘sacrifice’. In addition, this can be linked to a much less uniform understanding of what part of an ‘animal sacrifice’ was in fact due to the gods than has generally been accepted by modern

⁸⁸⁶ Nock 1944: 582.

⁸⁸⁷ Naiden 2013: 58.

⁸⁸⁸ Ekroth 2011: 36.

⁸⁸⁹ The evidence from Homer is discussed by Ekroth 2011: 19-21.

⁸⁹⁰ Ekroth 2011: 37 and Jameson 1994: 41 demonstrate that the priest often benefited in this way. Gill 1991: 18 collects and discusses the evidence. The evidence for *trapezomata* going to the priest includes a law from Erythrai dated 380-60BC (LSAM 23A.23-5), a law for the mysteries at Andania of c.90BC (IG V 1.1390.84-9) a law from Pergamon from before 133BC (LSAM 13), a 1st century BC law from Amorgos (IG XII 7.237), a 3rd century BC law from Thebai of Mykale (LSAM 40.4-6) and a law from Miletus c.400BC (LSAM 44.3-8).

⁸⁹¹ Gill 1991: 18 reaches a similar conclusion.

scholars. Again, this is not to deny the importance of the gods in ancient Greece. Indeed, in the model of Lawson and McCauley the role they play in such rituals is critical to reconstructing the nature of the activities performed and their interpretation in terms of cognitive experience. However, the pattern detected in this part of my discussion can be paralleled in much of the ethnographic literature and helps explain aspects of sacrificial behaviour that have perplexed and confused both modern scholars of ancient Greece and anthropologists.

Implication III: Terminology

The third implication of this chapter follows naturally from the preceding two and helps explain inconsistency and confusion in ancient terminology (at least from the perspective of modern scholars) while indicating the importance of experiential, emotional and contextual factors in any analysis of sacrificial terms. One clear outcome of this study is the importance of human experience and human emotion in the choice of vocabulary used. It is this context of human activity that appears to be the primary distinction in the use of *thysia* or *sphagia* related terms in particular. As outlined in Chapter II, *sphagia* has been used by modern scholars to denote a range of so-called 'slaughter sacrifices' found in various contexts, e.g. purification, pre-battle, oath-ritual etc. These ritual practices, however, differ significantly within themselves and between one another. There is, for example, no standard or uniform form of 'oath sacrifice', nor 'purification sacrifice' and while there are degrees of overlap, the differences between these types of ritual and those found immediately before a battle, for example, stand out in high relief. Thus, *sphagia* or related terms, does not denote a distinctive practice or range of practices. 'Oath sacrifice' needs to be understood in the context of oath-rituals and their emotional contexts, 'purification sacrifice' in the context of purification and purificatory emotional experience and so on. The argument that these types of 'sacrifice' were typically not eaten is also unconfirmed in the ancient evidence and in many cases appears unlikely, as already discussed. In fact, this idea seems to pre-suppose the popular anthropological notion of taboo which does not reflect ancient Greek categories of experience.⁸⁹²

Regarding battle-line 'sacrifice' and 'sacrifice' to the winds or the rivers and the sea, there appears to be nothing to distinguish these rituals (as purely decontextualised actions) from

⁸⁹² On taboo see Jim 2014: 1-27 who traces the influence of the idea back to the late 19th century.

types of 'sacrifice' more clearly denoted as *thysia*. Often the use of *sphagia*-related terms indicates only the importance of a favourable flow of blood in the immediate context (e.g. *Anabasis* 4.3.17-9, 4.5.4, Euripides, *Helen* 1583-97), a concern in 'animal sacrifice' in general (one probable indication of this is, for example, the already discussed inclusion of bloodied altars in many sacrificial vase scenes). On other occasions it may relate to the need for a quick and immediate 'sacrifice' (e.g. the many military examples – e.g. Thucydides 6.69, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.23, 4.2.20 – as well as the 'improvised sacrifice' at Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.4.9-27) as opposed to a distinctive ritual and, as noted, such victims may well have been eaten and subject to preparation, cooking and eating rituals at a subsequent juncture. At other times again, the use of these terms may relate to the perspective of a particular historian and there may be confusion in our source's own understanding with contradiction and inconsistency evident in his employment of them (contrast Herodotus 9.62 with Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.8.15 – *thysia* and *sphagia* related terms are either confusedly bandied together or clearly demarcated).

In particular, sources often use *sphagia* terms to indicate the high intensity nature of situations involving ritual killing generally, again often with the importance of blood foremost in their minds (e.g. in oath-rituals, Aeschylus, *Seven of Thebes* 43-53, in purification, Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 278-81, Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.685-717, in 'human sacrifice', Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 933-40) for various reasons. Playwrights may use it to point to the particular brutality of a situation and the ritual surrounding it (e.g. Euripides, *Hecuba* where *sphagia*-related terms are used almost exclusively, e.g. 522, 571, etc) or to play them down (e.g. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* where *thysia*-related terms are often used [e.g. 91, 358, 531] and the human victim is happily substituted for an animal one at the end of the play).⁸⁹³

The lack of *sphagia*-related vocabulary to refer to ritual activity in the epigraphic data was noted in Chapter II and is additional evidence against such terms denoting distinctive practices. As already discussed, rites of this alleged type could also be 'special patient' (river god, Herodotus 6.76, Artemis Agrotera, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.2.20, Poseidon, Euripides, *Helen* 1583-97) 'special agent' (e.g. river and wind, Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.3.17-9 and 4.5.4) and 'special instrument' (e.g. Herodotus 6.112.6, 7.219.1) despite the view of

⁸⁹³ See Bremmer 2005 on Euripides, *Hecuba*.

some modern scholars.⁸⁹⁴ Even when a god is not mentioned – admittedly the majority of cases – this may not reflect at all the feelings of the worshippers at these often extreme moments and invocation may be safely assumed in many cases. Thus the term *thysia* is even broader in meaning than currently understood in modern scholarship and consideration of the importance of blood and human emotional experience must be taken into account in understanding usage of terms.

To sum up, I find that it is this context of human experience and emotion that appears to be the primary distinction within literary sources in the use of *thysia* or *sphagia*-related terms rather than whether or not the rite is followed by a meal. *Sphagia*-related terms are also very rare outside the literary sources where there is less scope for this distinction to be made and the terms therefore bear less relevance. In addition, both earlier in this chapter and in Chapter V, I pointed to overlaps in terminology and behaviour with a range of bloodless practices and I have discussed these aspects and their emotional and cognitive significance. The editors of an important recent volume on ‘sacrifice’, for example, have recently defined *thuein* in their introduction as to ‘make smoke’ and many scholars point to the fundamental importance of burning to this term from a linguistic basis and otherwise.⁸⁹⁵ However, in the classical period a more minimal definition of ‘actions related to the gods’ in an all but unlimited range of human emotional contexts may be preferable.

In conclusion, the findings of the two important cognitive approaches applied to the evidence earlier in this chapter help explain inconsistencies and confusion (at least to modern scholars) in ancient terminology and also point to the importance of hitherto largely neglected experiential, emotional and contextual factors in making sense of sacrificial terms. These findings also have important implications in terms of the long history of debate discussed in Chapter II over the relationship of *sphagia*-related terms to *thysia* ones. It is again clear that ‘sacrifice’ was far more complicated than is generally understood and while no single interpretation is possible, key aspects of ancient experience and context cannot be divorced from any appreciation of the usage of terms.

⁸⁹⁴ Jameson 1991: 221 notes that the ‘recipients’ of these practices are rarely mentioned in our sources nor are addressees clear.

⁸⁹⁵ Faraone and Naiden 2012: 2. Other scholars include Redfield 2012: 173; Vernant 1989a: 26.

Main conclusion

In conclusion, I have applied an approach informed by cognitive ritual theories to the evidence for the main range of sacrificial practices, both animal and bloodless. The models used point convincingly to evidence for a continuum of practices whose 'meanings' are emotionally and experientially based. They demonstrate that on an experiential level there is no such thing as a typical or normal 'sacrifice' and that many factors not usually recognised by scholars must be addressed.

In the first section of this chapter, the model of Lawson and McCauley showed that 'sacrifice' can be interpreted and experienced in a number of different ways. First of all, very different types of sacrificial practice can be interpreted in a similar way in a number of important contexts. Secondly, even very similar or identical sacrificial activities can be experienced in extremely diverse ways. Thirdly, what a 'sacrifice' means can vary from person to person, context to context, group to group and from one part of the overall sacrificial complex to another. As a consequence it is clear that 'sacrifice' is far more complicated than has usually been accepted by modern scholars and no single conclusion is possible. Also, cognitive experience must be recognised as an important factor that should be explained when discussing 'sacrifice'. In addition, while demonstrating the usefulness of the model of Lawson and McCauley I have also modified the theory slightly (and faithfully) to account for the particularities of the ancient evidence. I have demonstrated that the intensity of a situation may affect whether a ritual is seen as 'special agent', 'special patient' or 'special instrument' and thus a theory of 'ritual form' should not necessarily imply that rituals that look the same have the same effect.

The second section of this chapter applied the model of Boyer and Liénard to the ancient evidence and demonstrated the usefulness of considering aspects of sacrificial practice in terms of the triggering and activation of the hazard-precaution system. This discussion also addressed primarily epigraphic data as opposed to the focus largely on literary material in the first section. Nonetheless, the usefulness of this model can also be demonstrated through analysis of the literary evidence and its reference to ritual features that seem puzzling and inexplicable to modern scholars. Common sacrificial actions, such as scattering the grain (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.447, Euripides, *Electra* 803-4) or burning a tuft of hair from the victim in the altar's flame (e.g. *Odyssey* 3.444-7) involved no sense of bewilderment for

those conducting a 'sacrifice' in ancient Greece, however. In addition, although they might attract very occasional comment (e.g. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.6, citing Theophrastus on the use of barley grain) there does not seem to have been felt any need to explain them. Using the model of Boyer and Liénard can help explain why such actions were felt to be emotionally compelling, plausible and intuitively appropriate without any explicit justification or rationale. Such actions, like other forms of behaviour addressed in this section, can be considered as constituting attention-grabbing tricks that forced goal demotion, for example.

Finally, I addressed the implications of my findings for the understanding of sacrificial behaviour generally. Here I focussed on only three key areas to keep my discussion and focus manageable and they were not meant to be considered as exhaustive. I showed that there were multiple interpretations of 'sacrifice' operating in ancient Greece and that many of these could even seem contradictory. There was thus no shared understanding involved but only the powerfully felt compulsion that such behaviour was important and necessary and was intimately related to the gods in various ways. Cultural producers were therefore free to interpret 'sacrifice' in their own way and according to their own agendas and even to compete amongst themselves in creating novelty and inducing interest and debate. I also showed in this section that although the gods were vital to 'sacrifice' there was a surprising lack of clarity about how the gods actually benefited from it. Whilst this might seem surprising to us (although it generated little serious reflection in ancient Greece) this apparent contradiction can be easily explained via the methodology used in this chapter. My final implication concerned terminology and the importance of largely neglected experiential, emotional and contextual factors to any analysis.

I must reiterate that although a focus on cognitive experience is important to considering 'sacrifice' it does not offer a complete explanation or conclusion. This remains true even when this etic approach is considered alongside the emic (sensory, conscious and perceived) emphasis of the preceding chapter. The focus I champion here is important but partial, adding another layer that must be considered and explained. It therefore builds on existing scholarship rather than seeking to replace it.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

This thesis has presented a new perspective on 'sacrifice' which aims to build on existing scholarship and offer new methodologies to improve understanding. It has utilised recent, emerging and important scholarship on the cognitive science of religion and sensory-based analysis, both key areas which have been largely overlooked by modern scholars of Greek religion. It has emphasised the importance of cognitive experience, sensory perception and emotion in unlocking the full significance of a complex form of behaviour such as sacrificial activity. In doing so, it has asked fresh questions of the evidence and stressed the importance of multiple interpretations and understandings as opposed to monolithic theories that fail to recognise the inapplicability of single conclusions and perspectives. It has focused largely on classical Athens where possible but has also recognised the more general relevance of certain findings for ancient Greece generally. This is not based on a claim for the uniformity of sacrificial practice but on the understanding that similar sensory modalities and cognitive structures underlie sacrificial activity as a whole.

I have demonstrated that the modern category of 'sacrifice' does not reflect ancient experience and that the term must be used carefully and with an awareness of its own history. In Chapter III, however, I showed that an implicit understanding and conception of Greek sacrificial practice does seem to underlie Herodotus' description of barbarian customs and he does seem to be working from a 'model' of some sort involving some important features (such as prayer, libation, etc.). However, this does not justify us in claiming that there was a stable and uniform ancient category of 'sacrifice' and the concept of 'family resemblances' fits the evidence better. In trying to find order in the diverse and conflicting practices he describes in his ethnographies and to compare them with an implicit model based on 'family resemblances', Herodotus' mentality and approach is not so dissimilar from many scholars of Greek religion.

Sensory values form another theme running through Herodotus' work and one that has not been recognised by scholars. Sensorially speaking, Greece is placed at a mid-point between the sensory richness of Egyptian 'sacrifice' and the less sophisticated and yet still compelling 'sacrifice' of the Scythians. This befits their status as the most ancient and the youngest nations respectively in Herodotus' thinking.

In Chapter IV, I explained that 'animal sacrifice' varied a great deal and that rather than any consistent form a case should be made for a loosely related range of overlapping rituals that occurred in some contexts, but not others, and that varied within themselves. There are common elements, intimately linked to everyday behaviour and experience such as eating and drinking, sharing and cooking, killing and consulting and their variability is a consequence of their status as extensions of human behaviour which is seldom fixed or simple. 'Destruction sacrifices' and pre-battle 'sacrifice' and 'sacrifice' to the sea, rivers and wind are variants of these practices and consumption remained fundamental to these activities. 'Human sacrifice', however, is a 'perversion' of actual practice that owes more to imagination than reality.

The killing of animals in oath-rituals and purifications shows that similar rituals are to be found in these diverse contexts. However, while there is an overlap in terminology, ritual form and practice (and in general consumption cannot be categorically ruled out), these ritual elements perform characteristically different functions and bore different implications in their different spheres of activity and experience. The importance of action over recipient is often emphasised by scholars as fundamental to some of these rituals but this is only one side of the story and overly simplistic and reductionist.

In Chapter V, I demonstrated that bloodless practices, such as libation, sacrificial cakes, incense and some first-fruit rituals, are likewise linked to 'sacrifice' in terms of 'family resemblance'. They should be placed on a continuum with other forms of 'sacrifice' and they are likewise extensions of human behaviour and experience. These practices could also trigger our social mind systems (specifically our exchange system) in various compelling and powerful ways although there is no clear and consistent idea of how the gods actually benefited or any recognition that this was problematic.

Throughout the ancient evidence for bloodless practices, overlapping modes of interaction with the gods are stressed (such as propitiation, expiation, thanks-giving, honouring, etc) and these same modes are those operating in 'animal sacrifice' of various forms. These practices also often have strong links to consumption (or originally, symbolically or conceptually did so) and sensory experience and also varied greatly within themselves, like the other activities involving the ritual killing of animals. It becomes clear that 'sacrifice' can be broken down into smaller elements and how difficult it is to draw simple lines between different types of activity. At the same time, significant cognitive differences appear to characterise the same or similar types of actual ritual behaviour in different situations.

In Chapter VI, I explained how ‘animal sacrifice’ was experienced in terms of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Rather than ‘sacrifice’ possessing any inherent ‘meaning’, I showed how different overlapping, and sometimes seemingly contradictory, experiential and sensory lenses make clear the significance of these highly emotional rituals in a specifically emic light. Literary sources emphasise the apparently overwhelmingly sensory nature of ‘sacrifice’ over other elements, such as any theological speculation or discussion (although this is characteristic of Greek religion as a whole, at least as it is presented to us). It is evident that a number of sensory and culture-specific values are significant and, at times, unique to ‘sacrifice’.

In Chapter VI, I presented the main new contribution made by this thesis to modern scholarship on the subject of ‘sacrifice’, focusing on etic cognitive ritual theories. I showed that the same, or similar, sacrificial elements could be interpreted and experienced in profoundly different ways according to the manner in which the gods were related to the particular context and ritual practice. In addition, very different sacrificial elements could be interpreted and experienced in strikingly similar ways. ‘Sacrifice’ is far more complicated than has generally been understood by modern scholars and no single conclusion is possible. Even burning a few granules of incense on an altar could, in fact, have been interpreted and understood in extremely diverse ways. In addition, the actual form of ritual employed is of secondary importance, while the degree of divine involvement or interest is central.

The actual form of the so-called ‘gift’ element fundamental in some respects to many of these practices (as one of the three major ways they could be interpreted), is often irrelevant to the ‘purpose’ of a ‘sacrifice’ and in many contexts a libation could serve the same function just as well as an ‘animal sacrifice’. Thus the apparent ‘gift’ element is interchangeable between the type and form of ‘offering’ to some extent. The evidence points to a continuum of practices whose ‘meanings’ are emotionally and experientially based. At the same time, ‘animal sacrifice’ could have a privileged status in some contexts as a consequence of the importance of meat-eating, and less often, the power of killing and bloodshed.

One other explanation of why people engage in ritualised behaviour is that it is a consequence of the by-product triggering and activation of specific features of evolved cognitive architecture that make such activity attention-grabbing, intuitively appropriate and emotionally compelling. The unconscious operations of this system are not available to

conscious inspection and no rationale or explicit reason is needed to justify the particular acts it prompts and makes compelling.

It follows from the evidence of the etic cognitive ritual theories, that the ancient evidence should not be expected to present a single, shared or even basic 'theory' or understanding of sacrificial behaviour in general. There was indeed no agreement demonstrated in classical Athens (or ancient Greece in general) of what 'sacrifice' actually was, or did, or was for. At the same time, however, it was instinctively felt to be important even in the context of criticism of meat-eating which was fundamental to 'sacrifice' in many of its central forms. Cultural producers were, in fact, free to interpret 'sacrifice' in their own ways and according to their own agendas and interests.

The ancient evidence should also not be expected to be consistent and clear about how the gods actually benefited from 'sacrifice'. In addition, there should be variation in what was believed to be the so-called portion (or share) of the gods in many forms of such activity. This is because only some forms of 'sacrifice' (despite being similar or even identical in actual procedure to others), very often taking place in recognisable and regular or semi-regular contexts (such as feasts and celebrations) were understood to be 'offered' to the gods in some key respects. However, even though the intuition that the gods were the ritual object of these rites could be profoundly motivating and deep piety might be involved, it does not follow that there was any clear, consistent, shared or even compelling idea of how the gods actually benefited. Many aspects of these rites could be successfully transmitted without the need for any conscious rationale, while human concerns and priorities could often dominate (concern for due shares of meat, etc.).

Ancient terminology should also be expected to be inconsistent and confusing and context, emotion and experiential factors should be important in making sense of the evidence, despite being largely unrecognised by modern scholars. I showed that it is this context of human experience and emotion that appears to be the primary distinction within literary sources in the use of *thysia* or *sphagia*-related terms rather than whether or not the rite is followed by a meal. In addition, a more minimal and inclusive wider definition of *thysia* in general as 'actions related to the gods' in an all, but unlimited, range of emotional contexts is suggested.

'Sacrifice' is therefore not just about killing (as proposed by Burkert), or predominantly about eating (as championed by the French school,) nor only about pleasing the gods (the

focus of Naiden). Killing and the ritual use of blood were important in some contexts but not others, while in others still these aspects had no presence at all. Similarly, eating was central to many forms of 'sacrifice' as well as related practices (including those not generally recognised by scholars) and was conceptually related to many others, but was not indispensable. The gods were also undeniably fundamental to 'sacrifice' but in diverse ways with the relationships involved being far less straightforward than often seems to be assumed. Experience needs also to be considered and adds another important layer to understanding. Experiential factors should also be taken seriously in other areas of Greek religion, from a cognitive basis.

In conclusion, this thesis champions largely neglected experiential aspects of 'sacrifice' and adds a new approach to supplement the increasing interest in ancient emotion. It also builds on the nascent interest in important sensory aspects and demonstrates the usefulness of cognitive perspectives. Crucially, it recognises the importance of both cultural and biological factors in explaining features of Greek religion and offers new interpretative tools for addressing a range of behaviours documented in our source material. It also shows how cognitive approaches can be nuanced faithfully to represent the particular forms of culture-specific activity and experience found in ancient Greece. Cognitive approaches could offer a vital way forward in asking new questions of the evidence and yet remain largely unexploited.

Appendix 1

Herodotus, Histories. Translated by A. D. Godley. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1920.

1: 1

As to the customs of the Persians, I know them to be these. It is not their custom to make and set up statues and temples and altars, but those who do such things they think foolish, because, I suppose, they have never believed the gods to be like men, as the Greeks do; [2] but they call the whole circuit of heaven Zeus, and to him they sacrifice on the highest peaks of the mountains; they sacrifice also to the sun and moon and earth and fire and water and winds. [3] From the beginning, these are the only gods to whom they have ever sacrificed; they learned later to sacrifice to the "heavenly" Aphrodite from the Assyrians and Arabians. She is called by the Assyrians Mylitta, by the Arabians Alilat, by the Persians Mitra.	Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεωμένους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιουμένους ἰδρῦεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι: [2]οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλότατα τῶν ὀρέων ἀναβαίνοντες θυσίας ἔρδειν, τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες: θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ γῇ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ὕδατι καὶ ἀνέμοισι. [3]τούτοις μὲν δὴ θύουσι μούνοισι ἀρχῇθεν, ἐπιμεμαθήκασι δὲ καὶ τῇ Οὐρανίῃ θύειν, παρὰ τε Ἀσσυρίων μαθόντες καὶ Ἀραβίων. καλέουσι δὲ Ἀσσύριοι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην Μύλιττα, Ἀράβιοι δὲ Ἀλιλάτ, Πέρσαι δὲ Μίτραν.
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1:2

And this is their method of sacrifice to the aforesaid gods: when about to sacrifice, they do not build altars or kindle fire, employ libations, or music, or fillets, or barley meal: when a man wishes to sacrifice to one of the gods, he leads a beast to an open space and then, wearing a wreath on his tiara, of myrtle usually, calls on the god. [2] To pray for blessings for himself alone is not lawful for the sacrificer; rather, he prays that the king and all the Persians be well; for he reckons himself among them. He then cuts the victim limb from limb into portions, and, after boiling the flesh, spreads the softest grass, trefoil usually, and places all of it on this. [3] When he has so arranged it, a Magus comes near and chants over it the song of the birth of the gods, as the Persian tradition relates it; for no sacrifice can be offered without a Magus. Then after a little while the sacrificer carries away the flesh and uses it as he pleases.	θυσίῃ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι περὶ τοὺς εἰρημένους θεοὺς ἥδε κατέστηκε: οὔτε βωμοὺς ποιεῦνται οὔτε πῦρ ἀνακαίουσι μέλλοντες θύειν, οὐ σπονδῇ χρέωνται, οὐκ αὐλῶ, οὐ στέμμασι, οὐκ οὐλῇσι: τῶν δὲ ὥς ἐκάστῳ θύειν θέλῃ, ἐς χῶρον καθαρόν ἀγαγὼν τὸ κτήνος καλεῖ τὸν θεόν, ἑσπεφανωμένον τὸν τιάραν μυρσίνῃ μάλιστα. [2]ἐνωτῶ μὲν δὴ τῷ θύοντι ἰδίῃ μούνῳ οὐ οἱ ἐγγίνεται ἀράσθαι ἀγαθὰ, ὃ δὲ τοῖσι πᾶσι Πέρσῃσι κατεύχεται εὖ γίνεσθαι καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ: ἐν γὰρ δὴ τοῖσι ἅπασι Πέρσῃσι καὶ αὐτὸς γίνεται. ἐπεὰν δὲ διαμιστύλας κατὰ μέλεα τὸ ἱρήιον ἐψήσῃ τὰ κρέα ὑποπάσας ποιήν ὥς ἀπαλωτάτην, μάλιστα δὲ τὸ τρίφυλλον, ἐπὶ ταύτης ἔθηκε ὦν πάντα τὰ κρέα. [3]διαθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ Μάγος ἀνὴρ παρεστὼς ἐπαεῖδει θεογονίην, οἷον δὴ ἐκεῖνοι λέγουσι εἶναι τὴν ἐπαοιδήν: ἄνευ γὰρ δὴ Μάγου οὐ σφί νόμος ἐστὶ θυσίας ποιέεσθαι. ἐπισχῶν δὲ ὀλίγον χρόνον ἀποφέρεται ὁ θύσας τὰ κρέα καὶ χρᾶται ὃ τι μιν λόγος αἰρέει.
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1: 3

The day which every man values most is his own birthday. On this day, he thinks it right to serve a more abundant meal than on other days: oxen or horses or camels or asses, roasted whole in ovens, are set before the rich; the poorer serve the lesser kinds of cattle. [2] Their courses are few, the dainties that follow many, and not all served together. This is why the Persians say of Greeks that they rise from table still hungry, because not much dessert is set before them: were this too given to Greeks (the Persians say) they would never stop eating. [3] They are very partial to wine. No one may vomit or urinate in another's presence: this is prohibited among them. Moreover, it is their custom to deliberate about the gravest matters when they are drunk; [4] and what they approve in their deliberations is proposed to them the next day, when they are sober, by the master of the house where they deliberate; and if, being sober, they still approve it, they act on it, but if not, they drop it. And if they have deliberated about a matter when sober, they decide upon it when they are drunk.	ἡμέρην δὲ ἀπασέων μάλιστα ἐκείνην τιμᾶν νομίζουσι τῇ ἑκάστῳ ἐγένετο. ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ πλέω δαῖτα τῶν ἄλλων δικαιοῦσι προτιθέσθαι: ἐν τῇ οἱ εὐδαίμονες αὐτῶν βούν καὶ ἵππον καὶ κάμηλον καὶ ὄνον προτιθέσθαι ὅλους ὀπτούς ἐν καμίνοισι, οἱ δὲ πένητες αὐτῶν τὰ λεπτὰ τῶν προβάτων προτιθέσθαι. [2]σίτοις δὲ ὀλίγοις χρέωνται, ἐπιφορήμασι δὲ πολλοῖσι καὶ οὐκ ἀλέσι: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φασὶ Πέρσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας αἰτεομένους πεινῶντας παύεσθαι, ὅτι σφί ἀπὸ δείπνου παραφορέεται οὐδὲν λόγου ἄξιον: εἰ δὲ τι παραφέροιτο, ἐσθίοντας ἂν οὐ παύεσθαι. [3]οῖνῳ δὲ κάρτα προσκέσθαι, καὶ σφί οὐκ ἐμέσαι ἔξεστι, οὐκ οὐρῆσαι ἀντίον ἄλλου. ταῦτα μὲν νυν οὕτω φυλάσσεται, μεθυσκόμενοι δὲ ἐώθασι βουλευέσθαι τὰ σπουδαιότατα τῶν πρηγμάτων: [4]τὸ δ' ἂν ἄδη σφί βουλευομένοις, τοῦτο τῇ ὑστεραίῃ νήφουσιπροτιθεῖ ὁ στέγρχος, ἐν τοῦ ἂν ἐόντες βουλευώνται, καὶ ἦν μὲν ἄδη καὶ νήφουσι, χρέωνται αὐτῶ, ἦν δὲ μὴ ἄδη, μετείσι. τὰ δ' ἂν νήφοντες προβουλευώσωνται, μεθυσκόμενοι ἐπιδιαγινώσκουσι.
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1: 4

After leading the marked beast to the altar where they will sacrifice it, they kindle a fire; then they pour wine on the altar over the victim and call upon the god; then they cut its throat, and having done so sever the head from the body. [2] They flay the carcass of the victim, then invoke many curses on its head, which they carry away. Where there is a market, and Greek traders in it, the head is taken to the market and sold; where there are no Greeks, it is thrown into the river. [3] The imprecation which they utter over the heads is that whatever ill threatens those who sacrifice, or the whole of Egypt, fall upon that head. [4] In respect of the heads of sacrificed beasts and the libation of wine, the practice of all Egyptians is the same in all sacrifices; and from this ordinance no Egyptian will taste of the head of anything that had life.	ἀγαγόντες τὸ σεσημασμένον κτήνος πρὸς τὸν βωμὸν ὅκου ἂν θύωσι, πῦρ ἀνακαίουσι, ἔπειτα δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ οἶνον κατὰ τοῦ ἱρήϊου ἐπισπείσαντες καὶ ἐπικαλέσαντες τὸν θεὸν σφάζουσι, σφάζαντες δὲ ἀποτάμνουσι τὴν κεφαλὴν. [2]σῶμα μὲν δὴ τοῦ κτήνεος δείρουσι, κεφαλὴ δὲ κείνη πολλὰ καταρρησάμενοι φέρουσι, τοῖσι μὲν ἂν ἢ ἀγορῇ καὶ Ἑλλησιν ἐφ' ἑωσὶ ἐπιδήμιοι ἔμποροι, οἳ δὲ φέροντες ἐς τὴν ἀγορὴν ἀπ' ὧν ἔδοντο, τοῖσι δὲ ἂν μὴ παρέωσι Ἑλλησιν, οἳ δ' ἐκβάλλουσι ἐς τὸν ποταμόν. [3]καταρῶνται δὲ τὰδε λέγοντες τῇσι κεφαλῇσι, εἴ τι μέλλοι ἢ σφίσι τοῖσι θύουσι ἢ Αἰγύπτῳ τῇ συναπάσῃ κακὸν γενέσθαι, ἐς κεφαλὴν ταύτην τραπέσθαι. [4]κατὰ μὲν νυν τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν θυομένων κτηνῶν καὶ τὴν ἐπίσπεισιν τοῦ οἴνου πάντες Αἰγύπτιοι νόμοις τοῖσι αὐτοῖσι χρέωνται ὁμοίως ἐς πάντα τὰ ἱρά, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ νόμου οὐδὲ ἄλλου οὐδενὸς ἐμψύχου κεφαλῆς γεύσεται Αἰγυπτίων οὐδεὶς.
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1: 5

But in regard to the disembowelling and burning of the victims, there is a different way for each sacrifice. I shall now, however, speak of that goddess whom they consider the greatest, and in whose honor they keep highest festival. [2] After praying in the foregoing way, they take the whole stomach out of the flayed bull, leaving the entrails and the fat in the carcass, and cut off the legs, the end of the loin, the shoulders, and the neck. [3] Having done this, they fill what remains of the carcass with pure bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and other kinds of incense, and then burn it, pouring a lot of oil on it. [4] They fast before the sacrifice, and while it is burning, they all make lamentation; and when their lamentation is over, they set out a meal of what is left of the victim.	ἡ δὲ δὴ ἐξαίρεσις τῶν ἱρῶν καὶ ἡ καὺσις ἄλλη περὶ ἄλλο ἱρόν σφι κατέστηκε: τὴν δ' ὧν μεγίστην τε δαίμονα ἡγνται εἶναι καὶ μεγίστην οἱ ὀρτὴν ἀνάγουσι, ταύτην ἔρχομαι ἐρέων... [2]ἐπεὰν ἀποδείρωσι τὸν βούν, κατευξάμενοι κοιλίην μὲν κείνην πᾶσαν ἐξ ὧν εἶλον, σπλάγχνα δὲ αὐτοῦ λείπουσι ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ τὴν πιμελήν, σκέλεα δὲ ἀποτάμνουσι καὶ τὴν ὀσφύν ἄκρην καὶ τοὺς ὠμούς τε καὶ τὸν τράχηλον. [3]ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντες τὸ ἄλλο σῶμα τοῦ βοὸς πιμπλᾷ ἄρτων καθαρῶν καὶ μέλιτος καὶ ἀσταφίδος καὶ σύκων καὶ λιβανωτοῦ καὶ σμύρνης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θυωμάτων, πλήσαντες δὲ τούτων καταγίζουσι, ἔλαιον ἄφθονον καταχέοντες: [4]προνηστεύσαντες δὲ θύουσι, καιομένων δὲ τῶν ἱρῶν τύπτονται πάντες, ἐπεὰν δὲ ἀποτύψωνται, δαῖτα προτίθενται τὰ ἐλίποντο τῶν ἱρῶν.
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1: 6

The most important things are thus provided them. It remains now to show the customs which are established among them. The only gods whom they propitiate are these: Hestia in particular, and secondly Zeus and Earth, whom they believe to be the wife of Zeus; after these, Apollo, and the Heavenly Aphrodite, and Heracles, and Ares. All the Scythians worship these as gods; the Scythians called Royal sacrifice to Poseidon also. [2] In the Scythian tongue, Hestia is called Tabiti; Zeus (in my judgment most correctly so called) Papaeus; Earth is Apia; Apollo Goetosyrus; the Heavenly Aphrodite Argimpasa; Poseidon Thagimasadas. It is their practice to make images and altars and shrines for Ares, but for no other god.	τὰ μὲν δὴ μέγιστα οὕτω σφι εὐπορα ἐστί, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ νόμια κατὰ τὰδε σφι διακίετται. θεοὺς μὲν μόνους τούσδε ἱλάσκονται, Ἰστίην μὲν μάλιστα, ἐπὶ δὲ Δία καὶ Γῆν, νομίζοντες τὴν Γῆν τοῦ Διὸς εἶναι γυναῖκα, μετὰ δὲ τούτους, Ἀπόλλωνά τε καὶ οὐρανίην Ἀφροδίτην καὶ Ἡρακλέα καὶ Ἄρεα. τούτους μὲν πάντες Σκύθαι νενομίκασι, οἳ δὲ καλεόμενοι βασιλῆιοι Σκύθαι καὶ τῷ Ποσειδέωνι θύουσι. [2]ὀνομάζεται δὲ σκυθιστὶ Ἰστίη μὲν Ταβιτί, Ζεὺς δὲ ὀρθότατα κατὰ γνώμην γε τὴν ἐμὴν καλεόμενος Παπαῖος, Γῆ δὲ Ἀπί. Ἀπόλλων δὲ Γοιτόσυρος, οὐρανίη δὲ Ἀφροδίτη Ἀργίμπασα, Ποσειδέων δὲ Θαγιμασάδας. ἀγάλματα δὲ καὶ βωμοὺς καὶ νηοὺς οὐ νομίζουσι ποιέειν πλὴν Ἀρεί. τούτῳ δὲ νομίζουσι.
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1:7

In all their sacred rites they follow the same method of sacrifice; this is how it is offered. The victim stands with its forefeet shackled together; the sacrificer stands behind the beast, and throws it down by pulling the end of the rope; [2] as the victim falls, he invokes whatever god it is to whom he sacrifices. Then, throwing a noose around the beast's neck, he thrusts in a stick and twists it and so strangles the victim, lighting no fire nor offering the first-fruits, nor pouring any libation; and having strangled and skinned the beast, he sets about cooking it.	θυσίῃ δὲ ἡ αὐτὴ πᾶσι κατέστηκε περὶ πάντα τὰ ἱρά ὁμοίως, ἐρδομένη ὥδε: τὸ μὲν ἱρήϊον αὐτὸ ἐμπεποδισμένον τοὺς ἐμπροσθίους πόδας ἔστηκε, ὃ δὲ θύων ὅπισθε τοῦ κτήνεος ἐστέως σπᾶσας τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ στρόφου καταβάλλει μιν, [2]πίπτοντος δὲ τοῦ ἱρήϊου ἐπικαλεῖ τὸν θεὸν τῷ ἂν θύῃ, καὶ ἔπειτα βρόχῳ περὶ ὧν ἔβαλε τὸν αὐχένα, σκυταλίδᾳ δὲ ἐμβαλὼν περιάγει καὶ ἀποπνίγει, οὔτε πῦρ ἀνακάυσας οὔτε καταρξάμενος οὔτ' ἐπισπείσας: ἀποπνίξας δὲ καὶ ἀποδείρας τρέπεται πρὸς ἔψησιν.
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Now as the Scythian land is quite bare of wood, this is how they contrive to cook the meat. When they have skinned the victims, they strip the meat from the bones and throw it into the cauldrons of the country, if they have them: these are most like Lesbian bowls, except that they are much bigger; they throw the meat into these, then, and cook it by lighting a fire beneath with the bones of the victims. But if they have no cauldron, then they put all the meat into the victims' stomachs, adding water, and make a fire of the bones beneath, [2] which burn nicely; the stomachs easily hold the meat when it is stripped from the bones; thus a steer serves to cook itself, and every other victim does likewise. When the flesh is cooked, the sacrificer takes the first-fruits of the flesh and the entrails and casts them before him. They use all grazing animals for sacrifice, but mainly horses.	τῆς δὲ γῆς τῆς Σκυθικῆς αἰνῶς ἀξύλου ἐούσης ὥδε σφί ἐς τὴν ἔψησιν τῶν κρεῶν ἐξεύρηται: ἐπειδὴν ἀποδείρωσι τὰ ἱρήια, γυμνοῦσι τὰ ὀστέα τῶν κρεῶν, ἔπειτα ἐσβάλλουσι, ἢν μὲν τύχῃσι ἔχοντες, ἐς λέβητας ἐπιχωρίους, μάλιστα Λεσβίοισι κρητῆρσι προσεικέλους, χωρὶς ἢ ὅτι πολλῶ μέζοντας: ἐς τούτους ἐσβάλλοντες ἔψουσι ὑποκαίοντες τὰ ὀστέα τῶν ἱρήϊων. ἦν δὲ μή σφί παρῇ, ὁ λέβης, οἱ δὲ ἐς τὰς γαστέρας τῶν ἱρήϊων ἐσβάλλοντες τὰ κρέα πάντα καὶ παραμίξαντες ὕδωρ ὑποκαίουσι τὰ ὀστέα: [2] τὰ δὲ αἴθεται κάλλιστα, αἱ δὲ γαστέρες χωρέουσι εὐπετέως τὰ κρέα ἐφιλωμένα τῶν ὀστέων: καὶ οὕτω βοῦς τε ἑωυτὸν ἐξέψει καὶ ἅλλα ἱρήια ἑωυτὸ ἕκαστον. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐψηθῇ τὰ κρέα, ὁ θύσας τῶν κρεῶν καὶ τῶν σπλάγχχνων ἀπαρξάμενος ῥίπτει ἐς τὸ ἔμπροσθε. θύουσι δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πρόβατα καὶ ἵππους μάλιστα.
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This is their way of sacrificing to other gods and these are the beasts offered; but their sacrifices to Ares are of this sort. Every district in each of the governments has a structure sacred to Ares; namely, a pile of bundles of sticks three eighths of a mile wide and long, but of a lesser height, on the top of which there is a flattened four-sided surface; three of its sides are sheer, but the fourth can be ascended. [2] Every year a hundred and fifty wagon-loads of sticks are heaped upon this; for the storms of winter always make it sink down. On this sacred pile an ancient scimitar of iron is set for each people: their image of Ares. They bring yearly sacrifice of sheep and goats and horses to this scimitar, offering to these symbols even more than they do to the other gods. [3] Of enemies that they take alive, they sacrifice one man in every hundred, not as they sacrifice sheep and goats, but differently. They pour wine on the men's heads and cut their throats over a bowl; then they carry the blood up on to the pile of sticks and pour it on the scimitar. [4] They carry the blood up above, but down below by the sacred pile they cut off all the slain men's right arms and hands and throw these into the air, and depart when they have sacrificed the rest of the victims; the arm lies where it has fallen, and the body apart from it.	τοῖσι μὲν δὴ ἄλλοις τῶν θεῶν οὕτω θύουσι καὶ ταῦτα τῶν κτηνέων, τῷ δὲ Ἄρει ὧδε. κατὰ νομοὺς ἐκάστους τῶν ἀρχέων ἐσίδρυται σφί Ἄρεος ἱρὸν τοιόνδε φρυγάνων φάκελοι συννεύεσθαι ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ σταδίου τρεῖς μῆκος καὶ εὖρος, ὕψος δὲ ἑλασσόν: ἄνω δὲ τούτου τετραγώνων ἄπεδον πεποιήται, καὶ τὰ μὲν τρία τῶν κώλων ἐστὶ ἀπότομα, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἐν ἐπιβατόν. [2] ἔτεος δὲ ἐκάστου ἀμάξας πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν ἐπινέουσι φρυγάνων: ὑπονοστέει γὰρ δὴ αἰεὶ ὑπὸ τῶν χειμώνων. ἐπὶ τούτου δὴ τοῦ σηκοῦ ἀκινάκης σιδήρεος ἱδρυται ἀρχαῖος ἐκάστοισι, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τοῦ Ἄρεος τὸ ἄγαλμα. τούτῳ δὲ τῷ ἀκινάκι θυσίας ἐπετείους προσάγουσι προβάτων καὶ ἵππων, καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῖσιδ' ἔτι πλέω θύουσι ἢ τοῖσι ἄλλοις θεοῖσι: [3] ὅσους ἂν τῶν πολεμίων ζωγρήσωσι, ἀπὸ τῶν ἑκατὸν ἀνδρῶν ἄνδρα θύουσι τρόπῳ οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ πρόβατα, ἀλλ' ἑτεροίῳ. ἐπεὶ γὰρ οἶνον ἐπισπείωσι κατὰ τῶν κεφαλῶν, ἀποσφάζουσι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐς ἄγγος καὶ ἔπειτα ἀνενείκαντες ἄνω ἐπὶ τὸν ὄγκον τῶν φρυγάνων καταχέουσι τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀκινάκεω. [4] ἄνω μὲν δὴ φορέουσι τοῦτο, κάτω δὲ παρὰ τὸ ἱρὸν ποιεῦσι τάδε: τῶν ἀποσφαγέντων ἀνδρῶν τοὺς δεξιούς ὦμους πάντας ἀποταμώντες σὺν τῇσι χερσὶ ἐς τὸν ἥερα ἰεῖσι, καὶ ἔπειτα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἀπέρξαντες ἱρήια ἀπαλλάσσονται. χεῖρ δὲ τῇ ἂν πέσῃ κέεται, καὶ χωρὶς ὁ νεκρός.
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Appendix 2

Sappho, Fragment of a hymn to Aphrodite (Lobel-Page 2). Translated by Jim Powell. Oxford University Press. 2007.

Come to me from Crete to the sacred recess of this temple: here you will find an apple grove to welcome you and upon the altars frankincense fuming. Here ice water babbles among the apple branches, the musk roses have overshadowed all this ground and out of the flickering leafage settles entrancement. There are meadows, too, where the horses graze knee deep in flowers, yes, and the breezes blow here honey sweet and softer [[] Here, you take a garland now also, Cypris: gracefully in goblets of gold mix nectar with the gladness of our festivities and pour the libation.	...ὄρράνοθεν ...κατίοι[σα δεῦρου μτμ' ἐς Κρητας .π[]ναῦον ἄγνον, ὅππ[αι δὴ] χάριεν μὲν ἄλσος μαλί[αν], βῶμοι †δ' ἐνι θυμιάμε- νοι [λι]βανώτῳ· ἐν δ' ὕδωρ ψυχρον κελάδει δι' ὕσδων μαλίνων, βρόδοιαι δὲ παῖς ὁ χῶρος ἐσκίαστ', αἰθυσσομένων δὲ φύλλων κῶμα †κατέρρ[ει]· ἐν δὲ λείμων ἱππόβοτος τέθαλε ἠρινίοισιν ἄνθεσιν, αἱ δ' ἄνητοι μέλλιχα πνέουσιν [[] ἔλθε δὴ σὺ στέμ[ματ'] ἔλοισα Κύπρι, χρυσίσαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ ὀμ[με]μείχμενον θαλαίαισι νέκταρ οἰνοχόαισον
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Appendix 3

Sacrificial calendar, Cos, mid 4th century BC. Herzog, Heilige Gesetze von Kos [HGK] 1-4 with translation by RO 62.

A (month, Batromios)

— and pray to the gods brought in to the other tribes just as to the other gods. Let the priest and the sacred guardians and the magistrates announce the annual festivals as a feast, and let the *hieropoioi* and the heralds go to each of the *chiliastys*. Let them drive nine oxen, an ox from each Ninth from A — and First Pasthemidai and Nostidai. Let the Pamphyloi drive (their oxen) to the agora first, and in the agora they mix together. Let the priest sit at the table wearing the holy garment, and the *hieropoioi* on each side of the table. Let the Pamphyloi drive in the three finest oxen, to see if one of those may be chosen; if it is not, let the Hylleis drive three, to see if one of those may be chosen; if it is not, let the Dymanes (drive) the three remaining, to see if one of those may be chosen; if it is not, let them drive other oxen to the agora and let them drive them past in the same way, to see if one of them may be chosen. If not let them drive a third (group) in for selection in the same way. If none of those is chosen, let them select an additional ox from each *chiliastys*. When they have driven these, they mix them with the others and make a selection straightaway, pray, and make the announcement. Then they drive the oxen past in the same way.

- 19 It is sacrificed if it bows to Hestia. The kings' share-taker sacrifices and provides offerings and offers in addition a half *hekteus* of offerings. He takes as his share the skin and a leg, and the *hieropoioi* take a leg and the rest of the meat belongs to the city.
- 23 The heralds lead the ox selected for Zeus to the agora. When they are in the agora, the person who owns the ox or another enabler on his behalf calls out: 'I am providing the ox for the Coans; let the Coans give the price to Hestia.' And let the presidents (*prostatai*) take an oath immediately and make a valuation, and when a valuation has been made, let the herald announce how much the valuation was. Then they drive (the ox) to Hestia Hetaireia and sacrifice it. The priest puts a fillet upon the ox and pours a cup of mixed wine as a libation in front of the ox. Then they lead away the ox and the burnt offering and seven cakes and honey and a woollen fillet. As they lead it away they call for holy silence. There they untie the ox and begin the sacrificial ritual with olive and laurel. The heralds burn the pig and the entrails upon the altar, pouring libations of honey and milk on them, and when they have washed the intestines they burn them beside the altar. And once they are burnt without wine, let him pour a libation of honey and milk upon them. Let the herald announce that they are keeping the annual festival as a feast for Zeus Polieus. Let the priest make an additional offering along with the intestines, incense, and cakes, libations, unmixed and mixed, and a woollen fillet. Then let the priest and the herald go to the *hieropoioi* at the public building, and the *hieropoioi* entertain the priest and the herald on this night. When they make libations let the priest choose one of the *hieropoioi* as slaughterer of the ox that is being sacrificed to Zeus Polieus and let him proclaim that the slaughterer shall be pure from woman and man during the night. And let the heralds choose whoever they want of their own number as a slaughterer of the ox and let whoever of them wishes make a proclamation to the person chosen in the same way.
- 44 On the same day: to Dionysus Scyllites, a pig and a kid. The meat of the pig not to be taken away. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. As perquisites he takes skin, leg.
- 46 On the twentieth: the selected ox is sacrificed to Zeus Polieus. What has to be wrapped in the skin is wrapped in the skin. On the hearth is offered a half *hekteus* of barley groats, two half-*hekteus* loaves, one shaped like a cheese, and the things wrapped in skin. And

the priest pours three mixing bowls of wine on these as a libation. Perquisites of the ox: for the priest, skin, and a leg (the priest provides the offerings) and half the breast and half the stomach; for the thurifer the hip-end of the leg given to the *hieropoioi*; for the heralds, a double portion of meat from the back, shoulder meat, a three-spit share of blood meat; for the Nestoridai, a double portion of meat from the back; for the doctors, meat; for the pipe-player, meat; to each of the smiths and potters, the brain. The rest of the meat is the city's. All these are not taken outside the city.

- 55 On the same day: to Athena Polias, a pregnant sheep. The priest sacrifices and provides offerings. As perquisites he takes the skin and a leg.
- 57 On the twenty-first: To Dionysus Scyllites a pig and a kid: The meat of the pig not to be taken away. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. As perquisites he takes skin and a leg.
- 59 On the twenty-third: at Alcida(?) to Demeter a full-grown sheep and a full-grown pregnant ewe. The meat of these not to be taken away. Two new cups are provided. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. Perquisite: ears.
- 61 On the twenty-fourth: To Dionysus Scyllites a pig and a kid: the meat of the pig not to be taken away. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. As perquisite he takes skin, leg. — — —
- (side) What is sacrificed to Leucothea may be taken away to the priestess.
- (side) three and a bowl.

B (month, Carneios)

- 2 — — — As perquisites he takes skin and legs.
- 3 On the same day: to Rhea, a pregnant ewe and the offerings as recorded for Pedageit-nion. None of this may be taken away. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. As perquisites he takes skin.
- 5 On the tenth: to Argive Royal Hera of the Marshes, a choice heifer. Let it be chosen purchased for not less than fifty drachmas. The priest sacrifices and provides the offerings. As perquisites he takes skin and leg. Meat from this animal may be taken away. What has to be wrapped in the skin is wrapped in the skin and what is wrapped in skin is sacrificed on the hearth in the temple and a broad flat cake made from half a *hekteus* of barley. None of these to be taken out of the temple.
- 10 On the eleventh: to Zeus Machaneus, an ox is selected every other year, the year in which the Carneian sacrifice takes place, just as it is selected during Batramios for Zeus Polieus, and a pig is burnt in advance and an advance announcement made as for the Polieus.
- 13 On the twelfth: to Zeus Machaneus, three full-grown sheep and the ox selected every other year, the year in which the Carneian sacrifice takes place, and in the other year three full-grown sheep. The priest of the Twelve Gods sacrifices these and provides the offerings for them. A half *hekteus* of barley groats and a quarter measure of wine, which the Phyleomachidai provide, is first offered at the common altar. As perquisites the Phyleomachidai are given the horns of the ox, the hooves, and the shoulder of the sheep, from which the sacred portion is cut, and the muzzle. As perquisites the priest takes legs and skins.
- 21 On the same day, to Athena Machanis, a selected heifer every other year in which the Carneian sacrifice takes place and in the other year a full grown sheep. The priest sacrifices and is sprinkled with sea water. None of these may be taken away. The following are given to the goddess without burning: four *kotylai* of olive oil, a quarter measure of wine, two new ewers, and three new cups. For the Carneia the city is to buy a heifer for not less than 50 drachmas. This — — —

On the twenty-first: to (gods or heroes) three full-grown sheep. They are sacrificed by tribes, that of the Hylleis beside the sanctuary of Heracles, that of the Dymanes beside the sanctuary of Anaxilas, on behalf of the Pamphyleis at Eitea beside the sanctuary of Demeter. For each of these sacrifices the offerings are: a vessel for the sacred grains, half a *hekteus* of each (sort of grain), three new cups for each and a plate for each. The *hieropoioi* provide these and sacrifice.

- 3 On the same day: a full-grown ewe Leto. The meat from this may be taken away.
The priest provides the offerings. As perquisites the skin.
- 5 On the nineteenth: a goat to the Graces. Whichever priest the *hieropoioi* order sacrifices. The priest sprinkles the blood of this animal thrice on the altar and a fourth time on the stone lying in the olives. They take an oath when they have made two sacrificial portions, one of meat and (one) of entrails, and they place the sacrificial portions on the altar. Where they place the accustomed offerings to Asia, first offering some of the entrails on the altar, they also touch the stone in the olives as they take the oath. They first taste the entrails on the altar and then those on the stone and those from the stone. The extremities, horns, and skin are burnt. The *hieropoioi* provide the offerings.
- 17 On the twentieth: a perfect sheep and perfect ewe to Apollo Karneios and Artemis. The priest of the Twelve Gods sacrifices. The priest provides the offerings. He takes as perquisites skin and leg.

- [— — — — — κα]ι εὐχο[ν]τ[αι] τοῖς ἑσαγμένοις ἐς ἄλλ[α]-
[ς] φυλάς [θ]ε[ο]ῖς ἀρχ[α]γγέτα[ι]ς καθάπερ τοῖς ἅλλ[οι]σι θεοῖς, ἕορ[τᾱ]-
[ν ἐνιαύτια ὥρ]αῖα(?) ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱεροφύλακες καὶ ἀρχεϋό[ν]τ[ε]-
[ε]ς [ἀ]πο[καρ]υσσόγων, ἱεροποιοὶ δὲ καὶ τοὶ κάρυκες ἰόντω κ[α]-
5 [τ]ὰ χ[ιλ]ιαστ[ύ]ας, βοῦς δὲ ἐγγή [ἐ]λᾷντι, βοῦν ἐξ ἐνάτας ἐκάστ[ας],
[ἐ]ξ Α . . . ἔων καὶ Πασθεμιδᾶν πρᾶτων καὶ Ν[οσ]τιδᾶν· ἐς δὲ
[τ]ὰν ἀ[γο]ράν ἐλάντω Πάμφυλοι πρᾶτοι, ἐν ἀγοραὶ δὲ συμμίσ-
[γ]ονται· ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς καθήσθω [παρὰ] τ[ᾶ]ν τράπεζαν ἔχων τὰ[ν σ]-
τολᾶν τὰν ἱεράν, τοὶ δὲ ἱερ[ο]ποιοὶ ἑκατέρω τᾶς τραπέζας· Π[άμ]-
10 [φ]υλοὶ δὲ ἐπελάντω βοῦ[ς] τρεῖς τοῦ[ς] καλλίστους, αἱ μ[έ]γα κα]
τούτωγ κριθῇ τις· αἱ δὲ μ[η], Ὑλλεῖς τρ[εῖς] ἐλάντω, αἱ μέγ[α] κα τ]-
[ο]ύτωγ κριθῇ τις· αἱ δὲ μ[η], Δυνᾶνες τρ[εῖς] τοὺς λοιπούς, αἱ μ[έ]-
γ κα τούτων κριθῇ τις· αἱ [δὲ μῆ, Ἀτέρους] ἐλάντω ἐς τὰν ἀγ[ο]-
[ρ]ὰν καὶ ἐπελάντω κατὰ ταῦτά, αἱ μ[έ]γα κα τούτωγ κριθῇ τ[ις].
15 αἱ δὲ μῆ, τρίτον ἐπελάντω κατὰ ταῦτ[ά]· αἱ δὲ κα τούτωγ κρι[θῇ] ι]
μηδεῖς, ἐπικρινόντω βοῦν ἐκ χιλιαστ[ύ]ος ἐκάστα· ἐλά[σα]-

ντες δὲ τούτους συμμίσγον[ται τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ εὐθὺ κ[ρίν?]-
 οντι καὶ εὐχονται καὶ ἀποκαρῦ[σσο]ντι· ἔπειτα ἐπελάντ[ι αὖ]-
 τις κατὰ ταῦτά· θύεται δέ, αἱ μέγ κα ὑποκύψει, τῇ Ἰστίαι· θύ[ει]
 20 δὲ γερεαφόρος βασιλέων καὶ ἱερὰ παρέχει καὶ ἐπιθύει ἱερὰ ἐξ [ἡ]-
 μίεκτου· γέρη δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ δέρμα καὶ τὸ σκέλος, ἱεροποι[οί]
 δὲ σκέλος, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα κρέα τῆς πόλιος· τὸν δὲ κριθέντα τ[ῶι]
 Ζηνὶ κάρυκες ἄγοντι ἐς ἀγοράν· ἐπεὶ δὲ κα ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἔω[ν]-
 τι, ἀγορεύει οὗ κα ἦι ὁ βοῦς ἢ ἄλλος ὑπὲρ κήνου ἐνδέξιο[ς].
 25 "[Κῶ]ις παρέχω τὸμ βοῦν, Κῶιοι δὲ τιμὰν ἀποδόντω {το} τῇ Ἰστιά[ι]"·
 τιμώντω δὲ προστάται ὁμόσαντες παραχρήμα· ἐπεὶ δὲ κα τι[μα]-
 [θῆ]ι, ἀναγορευέτω ὁ κᾶρυξ ὀπόσσον κα τιμαθῆι· τουτῷ δὲ ἐλάντ[ι πα]-
 [ρ]ᾶ τὰν Ἰστίαν τὰν Ἐταιρείαν καὶ θύοντι(?)· ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς στέπτει καὶ [ἐπι]-
 σπένδει κύλικα οἴνου κεκραμένου πρὸ τοῦ βοός· ἔπειτα ἄγοντι τὸ[μ β]-
 30 [ο]ῦν καὶ τὸν καυτὸν καὶ φθόιας ἐπτὰ καὶ μέλι καὶ στέμμα· ἐξάγο[ντ]-
 [ε]ς δὲ καρύσσοντι εὐφάμιαν· κηγεῖ δὲ ἐκδήσαντες τὸμ βοῦν κα[τ]-
 [ρ]ο[γ] καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ ἐπισπένδοντες μελίκρατον, ἔ[ντ]-
 [ερ]α δὲ ἐκπλύναντες παρὰ τὸ[μ βωμὸν κα]ρπῶντι· ἐπεὶ δὲ κα καρπω[θῆ]ι
 35 ἄποτα, ἐπισπενδέτω μελίκρατον· ὁ δὲ [κᾶρ]υξ καρυσσέτω ἐορτάζε[ν Ζην]-
 ὸς Πολιέως ἐνιαύτια ὥραια ἐορτάν· [ἱερεὺς] δὲ τοῖς ἐντέροις ἐπιθυέ[τω]
 [θ]ύῃ καὶ τοῖς φθόιας καὶ σπονδὰς [ἄκρατο]ν καὶ κεκραμέναν καὶ στέ[μ]-
 μα· τουτῷ δὲ ἰόντω παρ τοὺς ἱεροποιῶς ἐς τὸ οἶκημα τὸ δαμόσιον ἱα[ρ]-
 εὺς καὶ κάρυκες, ἱεροποιοὶ δὲ ξενίζοντι τ[ὸν] ἱερῇ καὶ τὸς κάρυκας τα[ύ]-
 40 [ταν] τὰν νύκτα· ἐπεὶ δὲ κα σπονδὰς π[οιῇ]σ[ω]νται, αἰρέσθω ὁ ἱερεὺς [σ]-
 [φ]αγῇ τῶν ἱεροποιῶν βοὸς τοῦ θυομένου τῷ Ζηνὶ τῷ Πολιῇ καὶ προα[γο]-
 [ρ]εῦέτω ἀγνεύεσθαι γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνδ[ρὸς] ἀντὶ νυκτός· τοῖ δὲ κάρυ[κε]-
 [ς] αἰρέσθω σφαγῇ τοῦ βοός ὃν κα χρήζωντι ἡντῶν καὶ προαγορευέ[τω]
 45 [ὅς] κα δῆ[λ]ηται τῷ αἰρεθέντι κατὰ ταῦτά· τῇ αὐτῇ ἀμέραι· Διονύσῳ [Σκ]-
 υλλίται χοῖρος καὶ ἔριφος· τοῦ χοίρου οὐκ ἀποφορά· θύει δὲ ἱερεὺς κ[αὶ ἱε]-
 [ρ]ᾶ παρέχει· γέρη φέρει δέρμα, σκέλος #⁵⁶ ἰκάδι· βοῦς ὁ κριθεὶς θύεται Ζηνὶ
 [Πο]λυῇ· ἔνδορα ἐνδέρεται· ἐφ' ἐστίαν θύεται ἀλφίτων ἡμίεκτον, ἄρτο[ι]
 [δ]ύο ἐξ ἡμίεκτου, ὁ ἄτερος τυρώδης, καὶ τὰ ἔνδορα· καὶ ἐπισπένδει ὁ ἱε[ρ]-
 εὺς τούτοις οἴνου κρατῆρας τρεῖς· γέρη τοῦ βοός τῷ ἱερῇ δέρμα κ[αὶ σ]-
 50 [κέ]λος ——— ἱερὰ ἱερεὺς παρέχει ——— [·ε] καὶ χέλυσος ἥμισυ καὶ κοιλίας ἥμ[ι]-
 [συ]· θαφύρωι δὲ τοῦ σκέλεος τοῦ τῶν ἱεροποιῶν δίδοται ἀκρίσχιον, [κάρυ]-
 [ξι ν]ώτου δίκρεας, ὑπώμια, αἱματίου ὀβελὸς τρικῶλιος, Νεστορίδα[ς]
 [δὲ] γώτου δίκρεας, ἱατροῖς κρέας, αὐλητῇ κρέας, χαλκῶν καὶ κερα[μέ]-
 [ω]ν ἑκατέρους τὸ κεφάλαιο[ν· τὰ δὲ ἄλ]λα κρέα τῆς πόλιος· ταῦτα πάν[τα]
 55 [οὐκ] ἀποφέρεται ἐκτὸς τῆς π[ό]λιος· τῇ αὐτῇ ἀμέραι· Ἀθαναίαι Πο[λι]-
 ᾶδι οἷς κυέουσα· θύει δὲ ἱε[ρ]εὺς καὶ ἱερὰ παρέχει· γέρη λαμβάνει δέ[ρ]-
 μα καὶ σκέλος #⁵⁶ ἐνάται με[τ' ἱκ]ᾶδα· Διονύσῳ Σκυλλίται χοῖρος [καὶ]
 ἔριφος· τοῦ χοίρου οὐκ ἀποφορά· θύει ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερὰ παρέχει· γέρη [λ]-
 αμβάνει δέρμα καὶ σκέλος #⁵⁶ ἐβδόμαι ἀνομένον· ἐς Ἀλκηίδας Δά[μ]-
 60 [ατρί] οἷς τέλειως καὶ τέλει κυέουσα· τούτων οὐκ ἀποφορά· κύλικες κ[αὶ]-
 [ν]αὶ δύο δίδονται· θύει ἱερεὺς [καὶ ἱε]ρᾶ παρέχει· γέρη δὲ οὐατα· ἔχκτ[αι Δι]-
 ογύσῳ Σκυλλίτα[ι] χοῖρος καὶ ἔριφος· τοῦ χοίρου [ο]ὐκ [ἀποφορά· θύει]
 [ἱ]ε[ρ]ε[υ]ὸς κ[αὶ ἱε]ρὰ παρέχει· γέρη λαμβάνει δέρμα καὶ σκέλος. — — — — —
 [— — — — —]

65
 left edge.1a.1
 τῶν θυομένων
 τῇ Λευκοθῇ
 ἀποφορά ἐς ἱερ-
 εαν.
 5
 1b.1
 τρεῖς καὶ χύτρα.

B

- [— — — — —]Λ#7#7 . . 5 . . I#7I . . 5 . .
 [. . . . 14-15]ει· γέρη λαμβάνει δέρμα καὶ σκέλη : τ[αὶ αὐτ]-
 αὶ ἀμέραι· ῥέαι δις κυεῦσα καὶ ἱερὰ ὅσσαπερ τοῦ Πεδαγειτν[ύο]-
 υ γέγραπται· τούτων οὐκ ἀποφορά· θύει ἱαρεὺς καὶ ἱερὰ παρέχει· [γ]-
 5 ἔρη λαμβάνει δέρμα #⁵⁶ δεκάται· Ἦραι Ἀργεῖαι Ἐλεῖαι Βασιλείαι δάμ-
 αλις κριτά· κρινέσθω δὲ μὴ ἐλάσσονος {ον} ὠνημένα πεντ-
 ήκοντα δραχμῶν· θύει ἱαρεὺς καὶ ἱερὰ παρέχει· γέρη λαμβά[νει]
 δέρμα καὶ σκέλος· ταύτας ἀποφορά· ἔνδορα ἐνδέρεται καὶ θύε[ται]
 ἐπὶ τῇ ἰστίαι ἐν τῷ ναῶι τὰ ἔνδορα καὶ ἐλατήρ ἐξ ἡμῖεκτου [σπ]-
 10 υρῶν· τούτων οὐκ ἐκφορά ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ #⁵⁶ ἐνδεκάται· Ζηνὶ Μαχα-
 νῇ βοῦς κρίνεται τὸ ἄτερον ἔτος ἐφ' οὗ κα ἔωντι Κ[α]ρνεῖαι, κα[θά]-
 περ τοῦ Βατρομίου τῷ Ζηνὶ τῷ Πολιῇ κρίνεται, κ[αί] χοῖρος προ-
 καυτεῦεται, καὶ προκαρύσσεται καθάπερ τῷ Πολιῇ #⁵⁶ δυωδε[κ]-
 άται· Ζηνὶ Μαχανῇ διες τρεῖς τέλεωι καὶ βοῦς ὁ κριθεὶς τὸ
 15 ἄτερον ἔτος ἐφ' οὗ κα ἔωντι Καρνεῖαι, τὸ δὲ ἄτερον ἔτος διες τ-
 ρεῖς τέλεωι· ταῦτα θύει ἱαρεὺς ὁ τῶν Δωδέκα Θεῶν, καὶ ἱερὰ π-
 αρέχει τούτοις· προθύεται πὰρ τὸν κοινόν, ἃ φέροντι Φυλεομ-
 αχίδαὶ ἀλφίτων ἡμῖεκτον, οἶνου τετάρταν· γέρη δὲ Φυλεομ-
 αχίδαις δίδεται τοῦ βοδὸς ὄπλά, ταρσός, τῶν δὲ οἴων τὸ ῥμόν {²⁷ῥμόν?}²⁷,
 20 ἐξ οὗ ἃ θεομοῖρία τάμνεται, καὶ ὁ [β]ρ[ό]νχος(?)· γέρη λαμβάνει ὁ ἱα-
 ρεὺς σκέλη καὶ δέρματα : τῇ αὐτῇ ἀμέραι· Ἀθαναίαι Μαχα[νί]-
 δι δάμαλις κριτὰ τὸ ἄτερον ἔτος, ἐφ' οὗ κα ἔωντι Καρνεῖα[ι, τ]-
 ὁ δὲ ἄτερον ἔτος δις τελέα· θύει ἱαρεὺς καὶ ἀπορραίνεται θαλ-
 άσαι· τούτων οὐκ ἀποφορά· ἄπυρα δίδεται τῇ θεῶι ἐλαί[ο]-
 25 υ τέτορες κοτύλαι, οἶνου τετάρτα, πρόχοι καιναὶ δύο καὶ κύλ[ι]-
 [κες] καιναὶ τρεῖς· τοῖ[ς] δὲ Καρνεῖ[οις] τὰμ πόλιν ὠνεῖσθαι δάμ[α]-
 [λιν μὴ ἐλάσσονος πεντήκοντα] δραχμῶν· ταύταν [— — — — —]

C

- [— — — — —]ι #⁵⁶ ἐνάται ἐξ ἱκάδος·
 [ἥρωσι πᾶ]σιν(?) οἱ[ες] τρεῖς τέλεωι· [θύ]ονται κατὰ φυλ-
 [άς, ὁ] μὲν τῶν Ὑλλέων παρὰ τὸ Ἡράκλειον, ὁ δὲ τῶν Δυμά-
 γων παρὰ τὰ Ἀναξίλεια, ὁ δὲ τῶν Παμφύλεων ἐν Εἰτέαι
 5 παρὰ τὸ Δαμάτριον· [ἐ]πὶ τούτων ἐκάστῳ ἱερὰ οὐλομέτ-
 [ριον], ἡμῖεκτον ἐκατέρων, καὶ κύλικες καιναὶ τρεῖς ἐ-
 [κάσ]τωι καὶ πίναξ ἐκάστῳ· ταῦτα παρέχοντι τοῖ ἱα-
 [ροποιοῖ] καὶ θύονται #⁵⁶ τρίται ἀνομένου· Ἡρακλεῖ ἐς Κο-
 [. . 5 . .]τον ἀρὴν καυτός : τῇ αὐτῇ ἀμέραι· Ἡρακλεῖ
 10 [ἐς . .]σσαλον βοῦς· τοῦτον θύει ὁ ἱαρεὺς· τῷ δὲ
 [θεῶι ἐφ]ῖερα δίδεται κριθᾶν τρία ἡμέδιμνα καὶ σπυ-
 ρῶν τρεῖς τεταρτῆς καὶ μέλιτος τέτορες κοτύλ-
 εαι καὶ τυροὶ ὀῖοι δυώδεκα καὶ ἱπνὸς καινὸς καὶ φρ-
 υγάνων ἄχθος καὶ ξύλων ἄχθος καὶ οἶνου τρία
 15 ἡμίχρα. vacat
 vacat

- [...8.... #⁵⁶ ἐπτ]ακαιδεκάται· Ἀπόλλω[νι Δαλίωι? ὅις]
 [τέλεως· τούτου] ἀποφορά· θύει ἱαρεὺς καὶ ἱερὰ π[αρέ]-
 [χει· γέρη φέρει δ]έρμα καὶ σκέλος : τᾷ αὐτᾷ ἀμέραι·
 [Λατοῖ ὅις τελέα· τα]ύτας ἀποφορά· ἱερὰ ἱαρεὺς παρέ-
 5 [χει· γέρη δέρμα #⁵⁶ ἐν]άται πρὸ [ε] ἱκάδος· Χάρισσιν αἶξ·
 [θύει δὲ ἱαρεὺς ὅ]γ κα κέλονται τοὶ ἱεροποιοί· ταύτ-
 [ας δὲ τὸ αἶμα ποτ]ιρραίνει ἅ ἱερεα τρις μεμ ποτὶ τὸ[ν]
 [βωμόν, τὸ δὲ τέταρ]τον ποτὶ τὸλ λίθον τὸν ἐν ταῖς ἐλ-
 [αίαις κείμενον· δαιν]ύοντι δὲ δύο θυώνας ποιήσαντε-
 10 [ς, τῶν τε κρεῶν μίαν?] καὶ τῶν σπλάγχχνων, καὶ τὰς θυ-
 [ώνας τίθεντι ἐπὶ β]ωμοῦ· ὅπει δὲ τᾷ Ἀσίαι ἐπιτίθεν-
 [τι, τοὶ αἰὶ ἡβῶντες ἐπα]ρξάμενοι καὶ τῶν σπλάγχχνω[ν]
 [τῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ] καὶ τοῦ λίθου τοῦ ἐν ταῖς ἐλα[ίαι]-
 [ς ἀψάμενοι ὄμνυντι· σπ]λαγχνίζεται πράτιστα με[ν]
 15 [τὰ ἐπὶ βωμοῦ, εἴτα τὰ] ἐπὶ τοῦ λίθου καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ λί-
 [θου· τὰ δὲ κρέα καὶ ταὶ σκε]λίδες(?) καὶ τὸ δέρμα ἀγίζετ-
 [αι· ἱερὰ ἱεροποιοὶ παρέ]χοντι #⁵⁶ [ε] ἱκάδι· Ἀπόλλωνι Καρ-
 [νεῖωι καὶ Ἀρτάμιτι ὅι]ς τέλεως καὶ τελέα· θύει ἱερ-
 20 [εὺς ὁ τῶν Δυώδεκα Θε]ῶν· ἱερὰ δὲ ἱερεὺς παρέχει· γέρη
 [λαμβάνει δέρμα κα]ὶ σκέλος. vacat
 vacat

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