It is a pleasure to be here today and provide a response to Kathryn McClymond’s presentation on the relation between sacrifice and space in Leviticus. Right at the outset I need to admit that this will not be much of a critical rejoinder as I agree with most of Kathryn’s overall approach and argument. I will therefore try to highlight some of her points and contribute further observations, all of which corroborate Kathryn’s main thesis that, in modern scholarly theorizing, sacrificial rituals should not be reduced to one ritual action, which is that of killing. Kathryn rightly notes: Such a view of sacrifice, which is unfortunately rather frequent, fails to perceive that sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible appears as a complex sequence of actions that feature inner dynamics.

Approaching sacrifice instead with a polythetic perspective provides a more holistic view of sacrificial rituals and their dynamics. Approaching sacrifice with a polythetic perspective opens the eyes of modern scholars to recognize its complexity and diversity. The ritual dynamics of sacrifice have to do with the concept and the quality of sacred space. More precisely, sacrificial rituals are inscribed into sacred space; they progress from the profane area on to the margins of sacred space and finally to the center of sacred space.

In my response, I shall go along Kathryn’s presentation; I will therefore start with comments on sacrificial rituals and proceed to reflections on sacred space.
1. Sacred Practice at Israel’s Sanctuary

Israel’s sacred rituals were part of its temple worship. They were inscribed into the sacred space of the sanctuary. This applies to all five types of sacrifice that KATHRYN mentioned earlier. She rightly criticizes that one particular type of sacrifice, the מִנְחָה, is usually neglected in modern theorizing on the topic of sacrifice. There seems to be a presupposition that sacrifice involves killing; hence the מִנְחָה which is made from grains supposedly cannot count as a ‘sacrifice.’ I have shown elsewhere that this kind of opinion rests on a misguided modern definition of sacrifice that is not applicable to the priestly texts of the Hebrew Bible.¹

One question I would like to ask KATHRYN, however, is this: In your enumeration of the five types of sacrifice, you start with the עֹלָה or burnt offering because it “ranks first in importance.” You then mention the חַטָּאת which you translate as “transgression offering.” You submit that it “is ranked as the second most important sacrificial rite.” You then describe the אָשָׁם or guilt offering, then the זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים or “well-being ritual,” and finally the מִנְחָה or “grain offering.” I was surprised about this order and the hierarchy you propose. At least P never talks explicitly about the importance of specific types of sacrifice or their hierarchy. The only passage that perhaps conveys something like a hierarchy is the one on the sacrificial rituals in Lev 1 – 7. There, however, the חַטָּאת or “transgression offering” does not rank second; it is number four in the list. The second place is the one of the מִנְחָה, the grain offering, and it ranks right behind the עֹלָה or burnt offering, which holds indeed pride of place.

When we adopt the polythetic perspective on sacrifice that KATHRYN recommends, which means when we pay attention to the diversity of ritual activities of a given sacrificial ritual, then we come to realize its dynamic movement from the profane world towards the center of holiness. This movement starts with the process of selecting the appropriate substance for a specific type of sacrifice, as mentioned by KATHRYN. According to P, whether the material of a sacrifice consisted of an animal or of cereals, it was normally selected at the home of the offerer and subsequently brought to the

sanctuary. There this movement continued. Animals had to be slaughtered first; this took place in the outer areas of the courtyard.\(^2\) The substance was then brought to the altar of burnt offering, which was considered most holy. It was placed on top of the altar; that means, it was burnt in the fire on the altar. I would consider this the final stage of the dynamic movement of the sacrificial ritual.\(^3\)

We should, by the way, refrain from construing the burning rite simply as destruction. This would be a purely materialistic assessment of this act and misses its theological implications entirely. According to the priestly conception, the fire on the altar did not annihilate material substance; it rather transformed it so that it attained a non-material, ethereal quality. The substance originally offered by humans could then rise, in the form of sacrificial smoke, up to God. At that point, the movement of the sacrificial ritual was complete.

The Hebrew cult terminology itself gives away the dynamic quality of the process. Much of this terminology references movement that is conceptually oriented within space. At this point, given the limited time for this response, I can only highlight a few aspects. The dynamic quality of the process of sacrificial rituals is manifest in specific words for types of sacrifice:

- The Hebrew term עֹלָה means “that which rises up.” This spatial aspect is lost in our traditional and modern renderings such as LXX ὀλοκαύτωμα, which means ‘burnt entirely,’ or our English “burnt offering.” Both of these renderings are not really literal translations of the Hebrew term; they are rather functional interpretations.

- קָרְבָּן is the generic term for sacrifice used by P. It is a nominal derivative from the root קָרַב – ‘to draw near, to bring near.’ Its literal meaning, therefore, is ‘that which is brought near.’\(^4\) The standard English translation of קָרְבָּן is, once more,
rather a functional interpretation: ‘offering.’ It is perhaps based on its LXX rendering δῶρον – ‘offering, present.’ Such a קָרְבָּן is always a קָרְבָּן לַיהוָה – an ‘offering for Adonai.’ It captures the dynamic movement of sacrificial material toward the sanctuary and ultimately toward the God of Israel who, according to the priestly concepts, resides there. These ritual dynamics are also conveyed through multiple occurrences of the verb קָרְבַּה hiphil – ‘to bring near’ alongside our nominal derivative קָרְבָּן. It is accompanied by equivalents such as בָּא hiphil and נָגֵשׁ hiphil, both of which mean ‘to bring near.’

These observations show that nouns and verbs conveying the approach of the sanctuary permeate the regulations on sacrifice in Lev 1 – 7. I said earlier: Such an approach was actualized within a sacrificial ritual. The ritual itself, however, could have been imbedded in yet another approach toward the sanctuary since sacrifice often occurred during pilgrimages and festivals.

One brief comment with regard to KATHRYN’s earlier observations on modern theorizing about sacrifice: It may be mentioned that such terminological choices of the priestly communities and/or the ancient tradents of the Hebrew Bible texts do not convey any negative connotations. They are especially not reduced to the one aspect of slaughter. Instead, further Hebrew Bible texts indicate that specifically the burnt offering, the cereal offering, and the sacrifice of well-being are often associated with a cheerful, merry, and celebratory atmosphere. Good examples are the narrative in 1 Sam 1 about Elkanah’s annual sacrifice לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת at the local sanctuary in Shiloh, or the celebration at the occasion of the restoration of temple worship under King Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29. The text

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vividly and graphically describes a celebration; it mentions cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets. It continues in v. 27-28: “When the burnt offering began, the song to Adonai also began, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of King David of Israel. The whole assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded...” Here ends the reading. This sounds like an SBL/AAR reception a few years ago; that is to say, it does sound like a lot of fun.

The cult itself happens לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, so literally “before” or “to the face of Adonai.” This conveys the fact that everything is oriented toward the divine presence, called shekinah in later Judaism. That is also expressed in the well-known Aaronite blessing (Num 6:24-26):

יְבִיכַר יְהוָה וּישֶׁרֶץ;
יָאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֲלֵיך֒ וִיהָנָך֑ו;
יָשָׁא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֲלֵיך֒ וּיִשְׁמֶךָ לְשָׁלוֹם׃

Thus everything hinges on being seen by God. The offering that humans give, however, occurs with the hope that God will provide divine blessing.

Thus sacrifices are offered within the framework of a reciprocal human-divine relationship. The dynamic movement initiated by humans through sacrifice then goes back into the human community. The movement from the profane toward the holy results in a complementary movement from the holy back to the profane.

2. Sacred Space and Sacred Time

JACOB MILGROM has described the sacred space of Israel’s sanctuary in concentric circles. He notes that the ground plan of the sanctuary according to P differs slightly from that according to Ezekiel. MILGROM explains:

Ezekiel’s temple is divided into three concentric domains of holiness, which correspond to the three classes in Israel: priests, Levites, and laity. The geometric center of the temple complex is the altar... The Priestly Tabernacle is also constructed according to the notion of concentric domains of decreasing holiness, but the gradations are more subtle and the
boundaries allow for blurring. The center is the adytum (in principle, the Ark).\textsuperscript{7}

There are suggestions that the goal of the divine promises in the Pentateuch is the city of Jerusalem and its temple. Thus it is plausible that in the ancient *Song of Moses* in Exodus 15, the reference to “your abode, the sanctuary” (v. 17) specifically means the Jerusalem temple. And if the whole narrative progression is understood with DAVID NOEL FREEDMAN as a unity from Genesis through 2 Kings, then 1 Kings 8 about the dedication of the temple stands at its center as the interpretive pivot.\textsuperscript{8} Moreover, JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP argues that in the Priestly tradition, the parallelism of creation, tabernacle, and land suggests that the “place of presence,” in the purview of the priests, is the goal of all of Israel’s promises.\textsuperscript{9}

The Hebrew Bible, while prohibiting any image of God, is nevertheless at times very specific regarding the precise location of God’s presence. Thus the detailed instructions regarding the construction of the Ark of the Covenant conclude with the statement that God will meet Israel “from between the two cherubim that are on the Ark of the Covenant” (Exod 25:21-22; see also Num 7:89). The God of hosts is enthroned above or between the cherubim and hovers above the כַּפֹּרֶת, the Ark’s golden cover. The

\textsuperscript{7} Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus I-16*: p. 451 (italics original).


utmost sanctity of the innermost chamber of the sanctuary is, therefore, due to the presence of the Holy God of Israel. The special quality of this place is conveyed through the design of the tabernacle: According to P, the furnishings and appurtenances in the tent are, as a rule, either entirely made of gold or overlaid with gold; by contrast, those in the courtyard are made of, or overlaid with, bronze. And according to Elizabeth Bloch-Smith:

The immense cherub throne in the Temple holy of holies (…), 10 cubits high and 10 cubits wide (…), attests to the Israelites’ vision of their god as superhuman in size… Accordingly, the exaggerated size of the structures in the Solomonic Temple courtyard would suggest that they were not intended for human use but belonged to the realm of the divine.¹⁰

In conclusion: I embrace the polythetic approach to sacrificial rituals proposed by Kathryn. I think it opens the way to a more holistic perception of the phenomenon of sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible. Such a holistic view allows the reader of sacrificial texts to observe how these rituals were embedded in, and inscribed into, sacred space. More specifically, such a view allows the reader to discover the ritual dynamics of sacrifice. A sacrifice then emerges as a ritual process that gradually moves from the profane area toward the center of holiness.

Thanks for your attention.

Literatur: