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0521855292 - Sanctified Violence in Homeric Society: Oath-Making Rituals and Narratives in the Iliad

Margo Kitts

Excerpt

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INTRODUCTION

WHY ANOTHER TREATMENT
OF GREEK SACRIFICE?

GREEK SACRIFICE HAS RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION OVER the past century, particularly over the last three decades. Nearly the entire corpus of Greek literature, archaeology, and art history has been surveyed for the meanings possibly attributed to sacrifice, from Mycenaean archeology through Classical texts and artifacts to early Christian complaints about the inaccessibility of meat that was not the product of pagan sacrifice (1 Corinthians 8:10). The curious relationship between *thusia* (commensal sacrifice) and *phonē* (murder or slaughter) practically dominated Classical scholarship in Italy and France during the 1970s and 1980s, for instance.¹ Yet, with a few exceptions,² sacrifice in the context

¹ Classic treatments include J.-P. Vernant's and M. Detienne, eds, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, trans. Paul Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1989), Detienne's *Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities 1977), Walter Burkert's *Homo Necans*, trans. Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California Press 1983), René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1977), Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter; Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, trans. Andrew Szegedy-Mazak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1986), Luc deHeusch, *Sacrifice in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985), Cristiano Grottanelli and N. F. Parese, eds., *Sacrificio nel societa' nel mondo antico* (Roma: Laterza 1988).

² Among them Paul Stengel's short comments on oath-sacrifice (*Die Griechischen Kultusaltertumer* (Munich: Oskar Beck: 1920, 136–38), Michael H. Jameson's work on significant cultural acts ("Sacrifice and Ritual: Greece," in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean* (ed. Michael Grant 1988), 959–79, n.b. 972–75, E. J. Bickerman's "Couper une alliance," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Vol. I* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1976) 1–32, Chris Faraone's "Molten Wax, Spilt Wine and Mutilated Animals: Sympathetic Magic in Near Eastern and Early Greek Oath Ceremonies," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* cxiii, 1993, 60–80, and, in passing, Moshe Weinfeld's "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JOAS* 90, 1970, 184–203.

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of Homeric oaths has been given scant attention. More often it is treated peripherally in wider studies of Greek treaty-making, promising, reciprocity, and friendship.³ While these studies shed much light on their respective topics, they tend to eclipse the sacrifice in oath-making for the end results, and more often than not the persuasive strategies of ritualized violence are not fully addressed.

Yet violence is a conspicuous theme in Homeric oath-making. Oath-sacrifices are striking dramatizations of ritualized violence, and oaths without sacrifices commonly invoke analogies that are symbolically violent, for instance, Achilles swearing by his own life (1.88), or Odysseus swearing by his life and also by his fatherhood of Telemachos, as if to stake his identity as a generator of life (2.257–64).⁴ The relative neglect of the subject is surprising when one considers how comparable are the rhetoric and symbolic actions of oath-sacrifice with the rhetoric and symbolic actions of religious terrorism, recently described as cosmic dramatizations on a world stage.⁵ Dramatic, too, are the imagined consequences of violated oaths: cosmic vengeance on oath-violators, administered by gods, often on the battlefield, in both Homeric and Near Eastern literature. It is not quite enough to attribute oath-making violence to analogical thinking⁶ or to a theological substitute for the lack of international treaty sanctions.⁷ Both explanations certainly have merit, but the rhetoric of divine vengeance for oath-violation is so emphatic that it forces one to ponder also the wider issues of ritually configured commitments and the idea of cosmic responsiveness to amplified registers

³ See the excellent *Promise-Giving and Treaty-Making*, by Peter Karavites (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1992), *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City*, by Gabriel Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), *The Stranger's Welcome*, by Steve Reece (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1993), and "The Common Heritage of Covenantal Traditions in the Ancient World," by Moshe Weinfeld, in *I Trattati nel mondo antico, forma, ideologica, funzione*, eds. Luciano Canfora, Mario Liverani, Carlo Zaccagnini (Rome: L'Erinna di Bretschneider 1990) 175–91.

⁴ The speech of Odysseus is not called an oath explicitly, but clearly his speech act denotes an oath as well as a threat when he says to Thersites, "But I tell you and this shall be completed. If I come across you still as mindless as you are now, then no longer will the head of Odysseus remain on his shoulders, and let me no longer be called the father of Telemachus, if I do not take you and strip from you your clothes, your cloak and tunic, which hide your shame, and I send you to the swift ships crying, driving you from the agora with vicious blows."

⁵ See for instance, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2000).

⁶ See P. Stengel 1920: 136–38, C. Faraone 1993: 65.

⁷ P. Karavites 1992: 98.

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of speech and gesture. Nor can oath-making violence be explained adequately by regional and historical idiosyncracies. E. J. Bickerman, focusing on the ancient Mediterranean in particular, has demonstrated that, far beyond the Mediterranean in geography and in history, oath-making is linked with symbolic acts that are deemed sealing and often life-risking at their core.⁸ But even if the *Iliad's* ritualized killing of animals and the threat of death to seal oaths were strictly regional or somehow primitive, it still would be worthwhile to ponder the violence in oath-making for at least four reasons.

The first is that there are more than two dozen references to oath-making and cursing customs and two precise oath-sacrificing rituals in the *Iliad*, evidence enough that oath-making was understood as a foundational institution in Homeric society and surely penetrated the ancient world beyond the epic.⁹ Second, in its emphasis on the death of a sacrificial victim, oath-sacrifice stands at the very opposite end of the dramatic spectrum from the commensal sacrifices in the *Iliad*, which never mention the animal's blood, collapse, last gasps, or even that it is dead before being slaughtered. (I am taking funeral feasts as falling under a different *topos*.) In contrast, the narrative of oath-sacrifice in *Iliad* 3 is powerful enough that the ominous tone generated by its symbolic actions and curses persists through four books after the sacrifice. The ritual's violation is referred to at least six times in the subsequent four books (4.67, 4.72, 4.155–65, 4.236, 4.271, 7.351–52), which helps to establish a ritual leitmotif for the devastation of the Trojans as a consequence of their violating a divinely witnessed oath. Third, and more profoundly, the subject is worthy of attention because a handful of human killings and dyings on the battlefield are rendered in such a way as to elicit comparisons with the killing and dying of the animal victims of oath-sacrifice in Books 3 and 19, insinuating a figurative equation of killing in war with killing in sacrifice. The same figurative equation is clear in the biblical traditions of *herem*¹⁰ and in the records of Neo-Assyrian kings, whose treaty curses and war rhetoric often attribute the slaughter of enemies precisely to divine retribution for violated oaths.¹¹ Fourth, this pan-Mediterranean theme

⁸ E. J. Bickerman 1976: 1–32.

⁹ This is an unstated assumption in most treatments of cultural conventions in Homer. See, for instance, the scholars cited in footnote 2, and Gabriel Herman 1987.

¹⁰ Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press 1993).

¹¹ See, for instance, the inscriptions of Sargon (section 155), Esarhaddon (sections 503, 509, 596), and Ashurbanipal (sections 773, 828) in Daniel David Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria, Vol. II, Historical Records of Assyria, From Sargon to the End* (New

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is supported obliquely by myriad examples of deities marching in battles to show divine favor or discontent. Not only the Homeric familiars (such as Ares, Athena, Apollo, and Poseidon) but also the sun goddess of Arinna, Ashur, Shamash, Marduk, Nergal, Enlil, Ninlil, Ishtar of Arbela, Yahweh, and other gods from the Levant to Mesopotamia march in front of their favorites in war. Indeed, envisioning battlefield slaughter as a religious spectacle on a cosmic stage is an enduring motif in Western war literature, from early Mesopotamian poetry right into our own time.¹² In short, oath-sacrificing rhetoric in the *Iliad* is tied to a multiplicity of themes having to do with cosmic punishment for perjury and with the notion of sanctified violence in war. For all of these reasons, it is important to examine oath-making rituals and oath-making violence in the *Iliad*. This book will explore these themes.

Scholars who would explore oath-sacrifice as ritual killing in the *Iliad* have the immense task of integrating oral poetic studies, ritual theories, and the oath-making rituals and rhetoric to be found in the evidence from surrounding cultures. This book is a step in that direction. It begins in Chapter 1 by discussing the intersection of epic, anthropological, and oral traditional theory in the study of Homeric rituals. The epic genre all by itself permits discussion of a full range of literary devices that might color battlefield killings as ritual killings, but the *Iliad* is also reputedly an oral poetic epic, and its origins in oral traditional performance require another set of considerations regarding ritual scenes in the poem as they may have resonated orally with audiences. Given the millennia that stand between us and the Homeric audiences for whom the poem was cast, one of the first methodological considerations will be the extent to which we can grasp the cultural repercussions of oath-sacrificing rituals through their reflections in the text. It should be noted that this approach is somewhat anthropological (enlisting Rappaport, Tambiah, Bloch, and Valeri), and hermeneutic (enlisting Gadamer, Ricoeur, Jakobson, and Johnson and Turner). It is not in any formal sense archeological or historical-linguistic. This approach to the study of Homeric rituals relies in fact on an intertextual theory, presuming the existence of symbolic dimensions in

York: Greenwood Press 1968). All references to Luckenbill henceforth are to Volume II.

¹² A few of the contemporary authors who recognize some kind of religious fervor to war would include John Glen Gray, *The Warriors, Reflections on Men in Battle* (New York: Harper & Row 1959, 1970), Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Random House 2002), and Oliver McTernan, *Violence in God's Name* (New York: Orbis Books 2003).

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oath-making ritual practices as well as in oath-making scenes in Homeric poetry. I believe the semantic spheres of these symbolic performances and poetic scenes must interpenetrate in the way that semantic spheres in texts may be said to interpenetrate. That is, both ritual performances in cult and ritual scenes in epic poetry may be regarded as symbolic modes of communication that produce a kind of text, and the ancient audience's experience of the sticky interface between the actual ritual performance and the poetic ritual scene, however elusively rendered in the fixed text we have today, is also where semantic tensions between ritual killing and battlefield killing must have originated.

The primary means for grasping this intertextuality will be through an examination of the anthropology of the oath-making ritual qua ritual as communication. It is a fair charge that epic cannot be treated as anthropology, but the interactive nature of oral traditional performance nonetheless permits exploring ritual scenes for the far-reaching symbolic matrices those scenes may have attracted to the text from actual cultural practices in antiquity.¹³ Of course there is a degree of ambiguity deriving from the presentation of a ritual embedded within a ritual, that is, from an oath-making ritual performance narrated as part of an oral-poetic ritual of composition in performance. But both layers of ritualization serve the communicative ends that anthropologists Tambiah, Rappaport, Bloch, and Valeri ascribe to rituals in general. Yet, as will be argued, the communicative efficacy of ritual differs qualitatively from the communicative efficacy of ordinary speech, due in large part to the formalized and paradigmatic nature of ritual communication.

A related consideration will be the fixity of features in the oath-sacrificing ritual scene. Contemporary scholars of traditional verse tend to emphasize the fluidity of the oral traditional poet in composing verse, and envision the poetic use of typical scenes, motifs, formulae, single words – an array of differently conceived lexical items – as a much more creative process than they did some 80 years ago, when the study of oral traditional verse was emerging as a recognized field of study. Valuable as are these more contemporary approaches for probing poetic signification and for discovering the deep structures beneath the surface manifestations of certain scene types, it so happens that the typical scene for oath-sacrificing

¹³ Most Classical scholars simply assume this point. Peter Karavites unabashedly asserts the historical significance of Homeric poetry and in particular the promising conventions represented within it, pointing out that “such poetry derives its themes from reality, from which it forms a new synthesis” (1992: 3).

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rituals is the most fixed in the entire *Iliad*, with whole verses repeated in precisely the same sequences and featuring a predictable vocabulary of seemingly marked words. My own perspective is that this ritual scene is neither an empty shell nor a grouping of individually meaningful words but instead a semantically weighty phrase and idea-cluster reflective of a ritual form deemed by the audience to be encoded largely by forces other than the human ritual participants. Because of oath-sacrifices' formality as "liturgical orders" (Roy Rappaport's phrase¹⁴), oath-sacrificing scenes in the *Iliad* arguably preserve ritual gestures and idea clusters from cultural contexts beyond the epic. They reflect patterns of behavior and thought regarded as immutable and perduring ("canonical," as Rappaport would see it) by the poet and his audience. The fixity of their elements arguably makes the ritual scenes more semantically weighty, and not merely rote. Notably, some ritual paradigms that emerge through oath-making scenes in the *Iliad* are reflected in ancient literature beyond the Homeric epic, in Hittite, Neo-Assyrian, and Biblical oaths. Such reflections speak to the perduring nature of some ritual forms outside of the Homeric context.

Chapter 2 will explore the cultural foundations of Homeric oath-making. An oath will be regarded as the ritualized configuration of a relationship between two or more individuals – a configuration specified by solemn utterances, gestures, and sometimes artifacts – that may be sealed by a symbolic act. It will be shown that oaths often entail the overcoming of estrangements between individuals and may involve a ritualized act of violence that fixes the new relationship in place. Chapter 2 is *not* dedicated to a dissection of linguistic elements involved in oath-making: It will not focus on, for instance, the finer distinctions among *horkos*, *horkion*, *omnymi*, *pistoō* and *horkon temnein*. Such terms have been discussed by Karavites and others and I will make use of the rich literature on the figures of speech connected to oath-making patterns across Near Eastern and Mediterranean languages. However, the primary focus of Chapter 2 is not the precise terminology but the underlying ritual patterns to which that terminology is attached. Moshe Weinfeld and E. J. Bickerman, among others, have demonstrated cross-Mediterranean patterns for oath-making rituals and rhetoric, and a number of the features they describe are manifest in a handful of speeches and narratives

¹⁴ Most fully explained in *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999).

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in the *Iliad*. I aim to investigate the oath-making references in the *Iliad* that shed light on underlying cultural assumptions and ritual logic and, where applicable, to examine those assumptions and practices for shared assumptions and practices with ancient Anatolian, Assyrian, and biblical oaths as revealed by texts.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the cultural premises on which Homeric oath-making is based, examining their inverse prefigurations in narratives that portray warriors in the heat of battle, oblivious to cultural constraints such as oaths. Then it proceeds to a discussion of *poinë* as a ritual leitmotif that barely shapes and configures behavior, in particular the behavior of Achilles. The discussion of *poinë* aims to demonstrate the power of Homeric ritual leitmotifs to suggest an engagement of individuals in common conventions and to portray an overcoming of antipathy to common cultural forms. This discussion is based on the ritual theory outlined in the Chapter 1. Finally, Chapter 2 examines ritual principles and Near Eastern comparisons for Homeric oath-making gestures and themes, beginning with the features outlined by Rappaport as constituting liturgical orders and proceeding through an array of different features of Homeric oaths.

It should be pointed out that Near Eastern materials are used in this study only for loose comparisons, largely to contextualize the Homeric material. The lines of historical transmission for particular features of Near Eastern and Homeric diplomatic and religious traditions have been much discussed,¹⁵ but are problematized by the historical and cultural parameters of the Near Eastern traditions involved.¹⁶ The Hebrew Bible, for instance, describes at least three broad phases in religious-political history and presents glimpses into a variety of ideologies and cultural practices that vary in clarity from the conspicuous ideology of the religious elite to the

¹⁵ See, for instance, Ann C. Gunter, "Models of the Orient in the Art History of the Orientalizing Period," in *Achaemenid History V: The Roots of the European Tradition*, ed. S. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor Het Nabije Oosten, 1990) 131–47, and Sarah Morris, "The Sacrifice of Astyanax: Near Eastern Contributions to the Siege of Troy," in *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule*, eds. Jane B. Carter and Sarah P. Morris (Austin: University of Texas 1995) 221–44. For a short summary of the field, see also Morris's "Homer and the Near East," in *A New Companion to Homer*, ed. Ian Morris and Barry Powell (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1997) 599–623.

¹⁶ Hence, Robert Mondi's emphasis on tracing themes rather than precise features, in "Greek Mythic Thought in the Light of the Near East," in *Approaches to Greek Myth*, ed. Lowell Edmunds (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1990) 142–98.

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mented cultural practices of, say, outlying peasants.¹⁷ The bits and pieces of biblical prose used to highlight Homeric materials are, therefore, just that, and should not be taken as representing any monolithic biblical religious tradition. The biblical materials instead are cited as suggestive for broad, shared traditions represented in classical literatures from the Western and Eastern sides of the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, Hittite texts present a daunting maze of traditions, deities, ritual personae, genres, and theological notions, and this intricate web does little to facilitate the task of reconstructing lines of influence with Homeric texts. Although collected primarily from the ancient Hittite capital of Hattusa in Bogazkoy, the Hittite texts are written in languages from all over ancient Anatolia – Hittite (more properly Nesite), Luvian, Hattian, and Hurrian – and seem to reflect cultic behaviors from a variety of ethnic and geographical pockets whose populations may have enjoyed some degree of religious and cultural autonomy. Some, such as the rebellious Kaska people, put up continuous resistance to overarching Hittite control.¹⁸ The outcome of this profusion of Anatolian languages and cultural practices is that whereas Hittite diplomatic texts, royal apologies, and some prayers display consistent structures and phrasing, ritual texts appear remarkably promiscuous as to form, language, ritual personae, and even performance compulsions.¹⁹ For instance, an elaborate recipe of ritual procedures may begin with a disclaimer such as the one that introduces the 16th day of the 38-day AN.TAH.SUM festival: “If there is a wish to the king, he does the following. Nothing at all is in force.”²⁰ With their thousand gods of Hatti and their permissiveness regarding ritual forms, the populations who made up Hittite Anatolia in the second millennium BCE apparently did not suffer from a narrow theological perspective!²¹ Generalizations

¹⁷ See, for instance, Norman Gottwald, “Proto-Globalization and Proto-Secularization in Ancient Israel,” forthcoming in *Out of the Cloister: a Festschrift in Honor of William G. Dever*, eds. S. Gifin J. E. Wright, and J. P. Dessel (Winonalake, MD: Eisenbrauns) (in press).

¹⁸ For a summary of some of the problems, see Ruggero Stefanini, “Toward a Diachronic Reconstruction of the Linguistic Map of Ancient Anatolia,” in *Anatolia Antica 11: Studi in Memoria di Fiorella Imparati* (Florence: LoGisma 2002) 783–806, and Theo van den Hout, “Another View of Hittite Literature,” from the same volume, 857–78.

¹⁹ See the encyclopedia of ritual personae collected by Pecchioli-Daddi, *Mestieri, professioni e dignita' nell'Anatolia ittita* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo 1982).

²⁰ GÌM-an LUGAL-i ZI-za, nu QA-TAM-MA i-iq-zi U-UL ku-it-ki du-uq-qa-ri. Kbo.IV 9 I:8–10.

²¹ On the playful nature of Hittite religion generally, see Ahmet Unal, “Hittite Architect and A Rope-Climbing Ritual,” *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten* LII:205 (1988b) 1469–1503.

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about Hittite ritual practices therefore are problematic and we proceed with an awareness that there is no monolithic Hittite religious tradition, either. The Assyrian and particularly Neo-Assyrian evidence presents virtually the opposite set of problems, as one gets the impression from the royal annals between the time of Tiglath Pileser I to the end (1114 to 610 BCE), presumably a period of relevance for the Homeric texts, of an imperialistic propagandizing machine that suffocated much evidence of private cultic behaviors.²² The royal reports seem strikingly formulaic in their religious, war-mongering, and avenging language, and it is precisely the formulaic nature of the Assyrian royal rhetoric that lends itself to comparison with Homeric material. Ann Gunter has argued persuasively for the plausibility of a Greek and Neo-Assyrian interchange in imagery for the visual arts, and a rhetorical interchange would seem just as plausible.²³ At any rate, conspicuously similar theophanic motifs are evident in the *Iliad* and in the annals of the Assyrian kings. (Assyrian rhetorical traditions will be germane mostly to Chapter 4.)

Chapter 3 dissects the oath-sacrificing rituals of Books 3 and 19 into the various steps that comprise the oath-sacrificing ritual, and then attempts to explore the metaphorical movement promoted by the whole ritual performance for the participants in the ritual. The first part of the chapter explores each feature of the oath-sacrificing ritual against the other instances of the same ritual feature elsewhere in the epic and, on

On the integrative feature of Hittite state religion, see Alfonso Archi, who observes that men from rural districts (LÚ.MEŠ.KUR) are included in lists of recipients of food offerings intended for the gods, from which can be inferred the regional participation of villagers in seasonal festivals: “L’elenco mostra come i membri delle comunità (si veda anche gli “uomini della regione”: (LÚ.MEŠ.KUR) partecipino in particolare alla celebrazione delle feste stagionali locali, legate al ripetersi del ciclo agricolo, e dunque direttamente connesse alla vita del villaggio. Sono questi tra i pochissimi elementi attraverso i quali e’ dato provare l’esistenza di tali comunità.” “L’Organizzazione amministrativa ittita e il regime delle offerte cultuali,” *Or An XII* 3 (1973) 209–26, 220.

²² See Steven W. Holloway, *Ashur Is King! Ashur Is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 2002), 80–216, n.b. 80–93. It is interesting, for instance, that according to Assyrian kings’ “letters to Ashur,” the Assyrians never lost a battle.

²³ Gunter’s conclusion: “Reexamination of Near Eastern elements in Greek art of this period suggests instead that Neo-Assyrian royal imagery and narrative traditions were known to, and emulated by, contemporary Greek artists for illustration of both secular and mythological subjects. Neo-Assyrian palace art was a principal source for the Greek visual tradition of aristocratic behavior. A key monument of Orientalizing vase painting serves to illustrate the kinds of images selected and their narrative treatment” (1990: 147).

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a few occasions, against other instances of the same feature in Hittite, Assyrian, and biblical texts. The possible tension between the fixity of actual ritual performances and the fixity of verses in a typical ritual scene is also explored, and various levels of possible audience recognition are analyzed. This is essentially a demonstration of the principles outlined in Chapter 1. The second part of Chapter 3 is more abstract in that it attempts to argue for the emanation of the oath-sacrificing ritual motif beyond the actual sacrifices in Books 3 and 19 into other narratives. This argument relies on an exploration of some of the vocabulary of sacrifice as it filters into battle scenes, and also on a subtle etiology of oath-avenging that seems to permeate some battlefield slaughters after the failed oath of Book 3. On the surface, the failed oath-sacrifice of Book 3 is a facile illustration of James Fernandez's theory of ritual as metaphorical transformation. However, to promote a theory of metaphorical transformation in a poetic text inevitably involves a deeper discussion of metaphor, the basis for which I have drawn primarily from Paul Ricoeur. In Chapter 3, then, I propose a theory of ritual as poetry and examine the oath-making ritual for its poetic texture, its register, and finally the "ritual fictions" created by the oath-sacrificing performance. This is an elaboration of an argument I presented in *Kernos*, in 2003.²⁴

Chapter 4 is a survey of battlefield theophanies in the *Iliad* and in the literary traditions of the Near East. It is a shorter chapter, whose theoretical aim is less ambitious: to show a shared Mediterranean imagination regarding the roles of gods on the battlefield. Principally, I explore literatures on both sides of the Mediterranean for figurations of deities leading battles, arousing fighting spirits, stunning and bewitching warriors on the battlefield, and finally punishing those who violate oaths and other conventions of trust. Common themes in Homeric, biblical, Assyrian, and occasionally Hittite curses and battlefield theophanies will be shown to exist. Some of these themes are the total annihilation of the families of perjurers, the reduction of cities to desolate tells, and the rending of bodies as carrion for wild animals.

²⁴ M. Kitts, "Not Barren Is the Blood of Lambs," *Kernos* 16 (2003) 17–34.