

THE FALLACY OF THE WILLING VICTIM*

Abstract: Following the lead of Walter Burkert, scholars have believed that the ancient Greeks required that sacrificial animals assent to being killed, or at least appear to assent. The literary evidence for this view, however, is weak, being confined mostly to dramatic scholia and Pythagorean sources, and ample visual evidence suggests an alternate view: the Greeks required that sacrificial animals make some display of vitality that would show that they were fit to present to a god. The Greek practice of inspecting sacrificial animals supports this alternate view.

FOLLOWING a lead given by earlier scholars, Walter Burkert in 1966 argued that the ancient Greeks thought that sacrificial animals assent to being sacrificed.¹ Since then, some scholars have expressed reservations, but more have concurred, and no critique has appeared, nor any alternative view. Yet the evidence on which Burkert and others have relied needs reinterpretation, and recently republished visual evidence needs more attention than it has received. The Greeks cared about the vitality, the *psychê*, of a sacrificial animal, not about the animal's attitude towards its fate. To gauge vitality, they inspected animals, but they did not seek any animal's permission for them to carry out the slaughter that was an indispensable part of the act of sacrifice.

Burkert's predecessors begin with early twentieth-century commentators on Aristophanes. Some fifty years later, Eduard Fraenkel anticipated Burkert in his commentary on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.² These scholars, however, did not include willing victims in any general account of sacrifice. In his article on 'Opfer' in the Pauly-Wissowa, Ludwig Ziehen did offer such an account, but he spoke only of a 'tradition' ('Überlieferung') about willing victims, and of an introductory ritual that was 'probably' involved.³ A generation later, Burkert's *Doktorvater*, Karl Meuli, included willing victims in an essay on sacrifice that remains comparatively little known.⁴ In these circumstances, it fell to Burkert to explain that after the sacrificial victim had been brought to the altar and sprinkled with water, it lowered its head in a gesture that the Greeks saw as a nod of assent. In Burkert's words, '... the animal was supposed to express its assent by bowing its head'.⁵ Burkert also supplied a motive for this gesture. He said that it absolved those slaughtering the animal from any responsibility for killing it. In *Homo Necans*, Burkert went further, arguing that this same wish to be absolved from responsibility for killing animals animated early hunters. Burkert thought that Greek worshippers inherited this wish from these hunters.⁶

Scholars of Greek religion and Greek tragedy have agreed with Burkert about the nod in assent, or at least agreed about assent, if not about the nod in particular, but they have not always agreed about the motive of avoiding responsibility. Jean-Pierre Vernant agreed about assent but conceived the Greeks as deprecating violence rather than avoiding responsibility. Robert Parker implicitly agreed about assent and guilt both, but in a different way, which was to cite ancient writers who compared sacrifice to cannibalism.⁷ Various other scholars might be cited to similar

* Edward Harris referred me to some of the visual evidence for this topic, and Jan Bremmer and Christopher Faraone have criticized versions of this essay, as have audiences at the University of Chicago, Durham University and New College, Oxford, but none of these scholars should become the unwilling victims of any errors that it contains.

¹ 'Greek tragedy and sacrificial ritual', *GRBS* 7 (1966) 87-121, revised as *Savage Energies. Lessons of Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Eng. trans. P. Bing) (Chicago 2001) 1-21.

² Aristophanes: Zacher *ad Ar. Pax* 960-1, in light of a scholion to these verses, followed by Platnauer and Sommerstein *ad loc.* Fraenkel: *ad Aesch. Ag.* 1297.

³ *RE* 18.1.579-627 at 612: 'Es war das wohl ein Teil des χερνίπτεσθαι'.

⁴ 'Griechische Opferbräuche', in *Phyllobolia, für P. von der Mühl zum 60. Geburtstag am 1. August 1945* (Basel 1946) 185-288 at 266-7 reprinted at 2.998-9 in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Basel 1975) 2.907-1021. Neither Burkert nor Meuli cite a similar view expressed by W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (2nd edn, London 1914) 303-6.

⁵ Burkert (n.1) 107.

⁶ *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Eng. trans. P. Bing) (Berkeley 1983) ch.1.

⁷ J.-P. Vernant, 'Théorie générale du sacrifice et mise à mort dans la thusia grecque', in *Sacrifice dans l'antiquité (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 27, Geneva 1981) 1-21*, esp. 7 = 'A general theory of sacrifice and the slaying of the victims in Greek *thusia*', in F.I. Zeitlin

effect.⁸ Outside of the field of Greek religion, scholars including Oliver Taplin made no comment about the attitude of the victim, but observed that, in Taplin's words, 'for a sacrificial victim, everything must be just right', a view compatible with Burkert's.⁹ Also compatible with Burkert was the widespread view that sacrifices occurring in tragedy were perverted because the sacrificial victims (especially human victims) did not nod or otherwise assent.¹⁰

A few scholars have voiced stronger reservations. F.T. Van Straten questioned whether nodding was possible. 'It [was] quite common', he observed, 'for sacrificial animals to be restrained by ropes tied to their feet and legs', and added, 'the Greeks did not shy away from showing that the voluntary cooperation of the victims had better not be taken for granted'. Van Straten thus agreed that the animal nodded but warned that the nod was 'likely ... no more than a formality'.¹¹ *Per litteras* Jan Bremmer has questioned the nod, too, and in print he has doubted any Greek wish to avoid responsibility for killing animals, noting that there are 'virtually no testimonies of actual fear and guilt among the Greeks'.¹² Both Bremmer and Van Straten imply that Burkert's notion of a nod that assuaged guilt might be viable if revised so as to give some other role to the sacrificial animal. Meuli and Burkert themselves said that the animal might approach the altar willingly.¹³ Like a nod, this act would assuage guilt.¹⁴ Again like the nod, the willing approach was an idea resting on literary evidence. To quote Burkert, 'Many legends tell how the victims have pressed forward willingly to the sacrifice'. Burkert did not cite visual evidence for this idea; his article includes only one relevant illustration, and that is for nodding.¹⁵

Yet the literary evidence is problematic, and so is the neglect of the visual evidence. Far from showing that sacrificial animals nod in assent, the literary evidence shows that they move their heads or make other gestures that display the vitality that makes them acceptable to the god to whom they are to be immolated. The same theme of vitality appears in Van Straten's volume, one to which this essay will often refer. As for the alternative that the animal approaches willingly, it does not reckon with literary, artistic and architectural evidence showing that animals

(ed.), *Mortals and Immortals. Collected Essays* (Princeton 1991) 290-303. R. Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford 1983) 305, though he disagrees with Vernant.

⁸ Mention: H. Foley, *Ritual Irony. Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Ithaca 1985) 29. Allusion: R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual. Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford 1994) 287, 'the victim ... must submit to being killed'.

⁹ O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley 1978) 5.9.2; so also N. Loraux, *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme* (Paris 1985) 63.

¹⁰ Perverse rituals: F. Zeitlin, 'The motif of the corrupted sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *TAPA* 96 (1965) 463-508. Questionable if not perverse rituals: S. Goldhill, 'The Great Dionysia and civic ideology', *JHS* 107 (1987) 58-76 at 74, reprinted at 127 in J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (eds), *Nothing to Do with Dionysus? Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton 1990) 97-130.

¹¹ F.T. Van Straten, *Hiera Kala. Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Religions in the Greco-Roman World 127, Leiden 1995) 101-2, cited at nn.43-52, 62-3, 68 and 78 below. Van Straten wrote in the same vein in 'Greek sacrificial representations: livestock prices and religious mentality', in T. Linders and G. Nordquist (eds), *Gifts to the Gods* (Uppsala 1987) 159-70 at 170. For an earlier examination of artistic evidence

leading to the same conclusion, see Ziehen (n.3) 611; for the same conclusion, but based on a smaller body of evidence, see S. Peirce, 'Death, revelry, and *thusia*', *CA* 12 (1993) 219-66 at 255-6. Tentative objections: S. Georgoudi, "'L'occultation de la violence" dans le sacrifice grec: données anciennes, discours modernes', in S. Georgoudi, R. Koch Piettre and F. Schmidt (eds), *La cuisine et l'autel. Les sacrifices en question dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne* (Turnhout 2005) 2.1. For the conclusion that the assent was a formality, see Platnauer, Sommerstein and Fraenkel (n.2). Loraux (n.9) is similar.

¹² In print: *Greek Religion* (Oxford 1994) 41. Another objection of Bremmer's: the variability of sacrifice according to place and period, in 'Religion, ritual and the opposition "sacred vs. profane": notes towards a terminological "genealogy"', in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart 1998) 9-32 at 24. Similar: S. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge 2001) 17.

¹³ Burkert (n.1) 106.

¹⁴ As in J. Bremmer, 'Scapegoat rituals in ancient Greece', *HSCP* 87 (1983) 299-320 at 307-8, reprinted at 279 in R. Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford 1990) 271-94.

¹⁵ Burkert (n.1) 114 pl. 5, fig. 5, a Cretan hydria showing a bull with a lowered head.

must often be fetched or even dragged to the place of sacrifice. Far from being unwelcome, the resistance of these animals is another sign of vitality. Plutarch sets forth this idea of vitality in his dialogue *The Decline of Oracles*, a text that Burkert and others cite only in passing.

The first part of this paper reviews each of the dozen or so sources cited by Burkert and others in defence of the sacrificial animal's nod of assent. The second part criticizes the alternative idea of the sacrificial animal's willing approach to the altar. The third part examines the overlooked Plutarch passage about the quality of vitality and cites Greek sacrificial regulations showing that sacrificial animals were tested for this quality, the same as for other qualities such as colour and physical integrity. The motive that Burkert assigned to the nod, and that Bremmer and Burkert both might assign to a voluntary approach – the motive of avoiding responsibility – is not relevant to these parts of the essay, which concern behaviour, but it is relevant to the topic of sacrifice, and so it is the subject of a brief concluding remark.

1. NODS IN ASSENT

Almost all the evidence for the assenting nod, a total of 16 sources, appears in two footnotes in Burkert's 1966 article. In *Homo Necans* he adds only one additional source, and in later works he refers to the article and to *Homo Necans*.¹⁶ To this writer's knowledge, other scholars have adduced only one passage, from Menander.¹⁷ Just one passage has escaped notice, and it is an explanatory remark in Athenaeus.¹⁸ Although Burkert and others do not say so, this body of evidence falls into several categories: animal behaviour during ordinary acts of sacrifice, animal behaviour during extraordinary or miraculous acts of sacrifice, and animal behaviour during acts reported because they are aetiological. The most important evidence concerns the behaviour of animals during ordinary acts; it includes diverse literary sources and one inscription. Within this category, passages in authors or inscriptions serve as guides for interpreting mostly shorter passages in scholia. Less important is animal behaviour during extraordinary acts such as *thaumata* and *mirabilia*. This behaviour deserves notice because it contrasts with behaviour in ordinary acts. The sources for this category are exclusively literary. Least important is behaviour under the circumstances of an *aetion*. A handful of passages from Porphyry and Plutarch fall into this category. This section will begin with and emphasize behaviour during ordinary acts, and ask two questions. First, does the animal nod? Second, does it assent? The answers to these questions depend partly on choice of words. Several words, including *seiô* and *diaseiô*, sometimes mean 'nod', but they mainly mean some other movement, and they never mean 'assent'. Another word, *epineuô*, does mean mainly 'nod', but it does not always mean 'assent'. Yet another word, *kataneuô*, means 'nod' and 'assent' as well.¹⁹

The oldest description of animal behaviour in an ordinary act of sacrifice appears in Aristophanes' *Peace*. As he prepares a sacrifice to the goddess of peace, Trygaeus instructs his slave. They are standing at an altar with a sacrificial sheep:

¹⁶ Burkert (n.1) 107 nn.43, 45. Ten sources in n.43, given in Burkert's order: Ael. *NA* 10.50, 11.4; Apoll. *Mir.* 13; Arist. *Mir.* 844a no.137; Plut. *Pel.* 22, *Luc.* 24.6-7; Porph. *Abst.* 1.25; Philostr. *Her.* 329, 294 ed. Kayser; Plin. *NH* 32.17. Six sources in n.45, also in Burkert's order: Porph. *Abst.* 2.9; schol. Ar. *Pax* 960; schol. A.R. 1.425; Plut. *Q. conv.* 729f, *Defec. orac.* 435b-c, 437a; *Syll.*³ 1025.20. Burkert (n.1) 106 quotes Aesch. *Ag.* 1297 and Burkert (n.1) 107 quotes Ar. *Pax* 960. Burkert (n.6)

4 n.13 adds schol. *Il.* 1.449, but this passage is interpretive, not descriptive. Other works: *Greek Religion* (Eng. trans. J. Raffan) (Cambridge, MA 1985) 369 n.6, and the reprint of Burkert (n.1).

¹⁷ Men. *Dysc.* 393-8, brought to my attention by Bremmer, deals not with a sacrifice but with an attempted but incomplete sacrifice; it is discussed below.

¹⁸ *Deip.* 9.409b.

¹⁹ LSJ *ss.* vv.

T: Come on! Get the basket and the water and go around the altar to the right.

Slave: OK. Anything else? I've gone round.

T: Let me see. I'll take this torch and dip it in the water. [To the sheep as he waves the dripping torch] Give a shake (σειῶ) and don't dawdle. [To the slave] Reach out for some barley. (956-60)²⁰

As the sheep shakes off the water, Trygaeus badgers his slave about the barley to be tossed at those attending the sacrifice. As Athenaeus explains, Trygaeus also waves the dripping torch at the worshippers.²¹ Making a humorous comparison between the worshippers and the sheep, the slave says, 'We've poured all this water on them, yet they are standing there, stock still!' (971-2). This comparison confirms that the purpose of waving the torch over the animal was to make it shake off the water: it was not to make it nod its head nor to make it give assent. A nod is possible, but since the word in question is a form of *seiō*, 'to shake', this movement is incidental. As for the second question to be asked, *seiō* implies agitation or distress. At *Lysistrata* 1312, for example, dancers' hair shakes like a Bacchant's; at *Clouds* 1276, Strepsiades says that a sick man's head shakes.

Another description of animal behaviour, Plutarch's, echoes Aristophanes. While arguing that oracles do not prophesy under the influence of atmospheric conditions but instead prophesy according to conditions set by shrines, one of the speakers mentions sacrificial animals:

'What are the libations poured on the animals for? Why is it permissible to prophesy only if the sacrificial animal trembles down to its ankles and gives a start when a libation is poured over it?' (ἐὰν μὴ τὸ ἱερεῖον ὄλον ἐξ ἄκρων σφυρῶν ὑπότρομον γένηται καὶ κραδανθῆι κατασπενδόμενον) (*Defec. orac.* 435b-c)

Like *seiō*, the term in Aristophanes, the two terms in this passage, *tremō* and *kradainō*, do not mean nod, and so any such gesture is incidental. As for assent, it is even harder to envision here than in the previous passage. *Tremō* and *kradainō* imply shock, not assent.²² The speaker now turns to the subject of the behaviour of the animal during sacrifices at places other than Delphi. His point is that at these places the animal need not move as much. At Delphi, he explains, 'It isn't enough for the animals to give a good shake (διασειῶσαι) of its head as at other sacrifices. It must quiver and twitch all over with a tremulous sound' (*ibid.*). The term here, *diaseiō*, means almost the same as *seiō*, and so the upshot is more of the same: some movement other than a nod, although the animal may nod incidentally, and no assent.

An inscription from Cos has less to say, but is similar. According to this third-century *lex sacra*, a bull may be sacrificed to Zeus only if the animal 'bows down' (ὑπο[κύ]ψει) before the altar.²³ Here for the first time a movement that is not only elicited but apparently required: without this movement, the inscription implies, the sacrifice will be forbidden. But this distinction, one due to the character of the document, does not lead to any new conclusions. The term found in the law, *hypokypō*, does not mean 'nod', although it does not make nodding impossible, and it does not mean assent. One meaning, 'to bow in supplication', concerns the god of the sacrifice, just as assent would, but differs greatly from nodding: a suppliant makes a request but does not give permission. Another meaning, 'to bow in obeisance' by passing under a yoke, is similar. It concerns a monarch, however, not a god, and the purpose of the act is to submit, not to assent.²⁴

²⁰ Disputes about the order of the lines have no bearing on the animal's gesture unless, with Blaydes *ad loc.*, the 'shaking' is attributed to Trygaeus and 960 is emended accordingly. For 'shaking' in the middle voice meaning 'shake something off', here water, see LSJ s.v. σειῶ III.

²¹ 9.409b.

²² LSJ ss. vv.

²³ *Syll.*³ 1025.20

²⁴ LSJ s.v., citing this inscription in the sense of 'supplicate'.

In assessing animal behaviour, these passages should prevail over two other, shorter passages, both of them scholia. One of them, a scholion to line 960 of *Peace*, says that the animal ‘will shake its head and seem to nod in assent to the sacrifice’ (σειση τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ ἐπινεύειν τοῖς ἱερείοις δοκῆι). This statement would appear to support Burkert, but it is questionable on two grounds. First, it glosses *seiō*, ‘to shake’, as *epineuō*, ‘to nod’, thus reducing a movement of the body to a movement of the head. It misrepresents the play, in which the animal ‘gives a shake’ to throw off water. Second, the scholion fails to acknowledge the animal’s likely agitation and distress. Instead the scholion imputes apparent assent to the animal.²⁵ The other scholion, one to Apollonius of Rhodes, is questionable on the same grounds. It says that water is poured on a sacrificial animal so that it will nod (ἐπινεύειν).²⁶ Aristophanes says that pouring water on an animal makes it shake, and Plutarch says that pouring water on an animal makes it tremble. These actions, to repeat, do not imply assent.²⁷

Aristophanes, Plutarch, the Cos inscription and the two scholia form the sum of the evidence adduced by Burkert and other writers in support of the view that the sacrificial animal nods in assent under ordinary circumstances. In these sources there is much movement, less nodding, and some arguable assent. If we turn to sources for extraordinary acts, we are no longer dealing with behaviour expected during a ritual.²⁸ Instead the behaviour of the animal is unexpected, and may occur prior to a ritual. This behaviour shows that some special event, some *thauma* or *mirabile*, is occurring, but not that the animal is playing its part in the routine of sacrifice. None of these animals in these sources nod. Nor do they consent except insofar as they lend themselves to some divine purpose.

In the oldest passage, in Aeschylus, ‘a god-driven bull’ steps up to the altar; the passage says nothing of the animal’s consenting.²⁹ In Aelian, the miracle is much the same: the goddess Aphrodite ‘leads’ the sacrificial animals to her altar at Eryx.³⁰ In Philostratus’ *On Heroes*, wild animals come forward to an altar of the hero Rhesus, and their action counts as an omen showing that the god is in the vicinity, hunting. In another passage in the same work, domesticated animals go to the altar willingly by way of an omen from Achilles, the hero to whom they will be sacrificed.³¹ In Plutarch’s *Lucullus*, the animal’s behaviour is again the same, and the meaning of this behaviour is too: coming forward is a good omen.³² In three other sources cited by Burkert – Aelian’s *Natural History*, Plutarch’s *Pelopidas* and Pliny’s *Natural History* – animals of good omen do not even come forward all the way to the altar. Instead they come part way, and must be led the rest. In yet other sources, the animal travels a great distance.³³ In Aristotle, a goat leads a procession for 70 stades. This, too, is a good omen.³⁴

Unlike the passages about ordinary sacrifice, these passages sometimes describe remote places.³⁵ They often count as *legomena*.³⁶ And they are more or less miraculous. All these features point to the conclusion drawn by Ziehen about the passage in Aeschylus: the sources regard miraculous behaviour as rare.³⁷ This conclusion implicitly confirms the primacy of the sources for ordinary acts of sacrifice.

²⁵ A further difficulty: LSJ *s.v.* ἐπινεύω gives only one instance of this verb with any dative other than the dative of means or the indirect object, from a second-century AD papyrus in which the nod is given to a request, not an act (*P.Giss.* I.4 II 9).

²⁶ 1.415.

²⁷ Cf. Van Herwerden *ad loc.*: ‘absurdum loci deprauati interpretandi conamen’. Ziehen (n.3) 612 prefers to base the ‘tradition’ about assent on Plutarch.

²⁸ *Thaumata* vel sim.: Ael. *NA* 11.4, Aesch. *Ag.* 1297-8, Arist. *Mir.* 844b no.137, Apoll. *Mir.* 13, Philostr. *Her.* 294, 329, Plin. *NH* 32.17, Plut. *Luc.* 24.7, *Pel.* 22. Similar is *idion*: Ael. *NA* 10.50.

²⁹ Aesch. *Ag.* 1297-8.

³⁰ Ael. *NA* 10.50, ἄγει.

³¹ Philostr. *Her.* 294, 329.

³² Plut. *Luc.* 24.7.

³³ Ael. *NA* 11.4, Plut. *Pel.* 22, Plin. *NH* 32.17.

³⁴ Arist. *Mir.* 844b no.137; so also Apoll. *Mir.* 13.

³⁵ Plut. *Luc.* 24.7, Philostr. *Her.* 294, 329.

³⁶ Ael. *NA* 11.4, Philostr. *Her.* 294, Arist. *Mir.* 844b no.137. Similar later report: Apoll. *Mir.* 13.

³⁷ Ziehen (n.3) 611.

There remains one category to consider, animal behaviour in *aetia*. There are only four such passages, three in Porphyry's *On Abstinence* and one in Plutarch's essay *Why Pythagoreans Avoid Fish More Than Meat*. In *On Abstinence* 1.25, Porphyry says that sacrifice began so that a vegetarian mankind would not starve. The first animals to be sacrificed do not nod and when presenting themselves at the altar carry out a god's wishes, the same as the bull in Aeschylus. As in the *thaumata*, the animal's act is one of good omen. It is far removed from ordinary sacrifice. In *On Abstinence* 2.10 (only 2.9 being cited by Burkert) Porphyry summarizes more *aetia* in which sacrifice begins so that mankind may eat. Only one is relevant. In this story, about the cult of Zeus *Polieus* at Athens, there is once again no nod and there is no assent. According to Porphyry, the first animal to be slaughtered for this cult supposedly deserves his fate on account of tasting a sacred cake, but Porphyry rejects this explanation as unfair, saying that the animal's behaviour was an accident, not a crime. Cited by Burkert and others as evidence for Greek guilt at the killing of sacrificial animals, Porphyry and the other sources imply that the animal might well protest against its fate. Rather than be a willing victim, it might be an unwilling one.³⁸

Yet another *aetion*, this one recounted in 2.9, differs from the preceding ones in providing a nod in assent. In this story, one Episcopus, an Eretrian who wishes to institute the sacrifice of sheep, consults Delphic Apollo, who makes two statements on the subject. The first statement is that it is not right, or *themis*, to kill sheep; the second is that if the animal nods when sprinkled with water, (or perhaps when presented with water to drink) and nods willingly (κατανεύσῃ ἐκούσιον), Delphi will give the opposite judgement, and declare the sacrifice proper.³⁹ Here for the first time the evidence tallies with Burkert. Yet this *aetion* is also one more instance of the Aeschylean pattern. Although the animal is willing, so is Apollo, who uses the oracle to give his own assent to the sacrifice. He, not the animal, declares the sacrifice proper. The explanation for the pairing of nod and assent is not because the animal accepts its fate, as Burkert would have it, but because the god has intervened.

Like Porphyry in *On Abstinence*, Plutarch sets forth an *aetion* of wrongdoing by animals. When humans respond to the animals' depredations by killing and sacrificing them, they are unsure whether they have acted justly, and Plutarch adds that worshippers still prefer that animals nod in assent. Here again, the evidence tallies with Burkert. Plutarch, however, is reporting ancient *logoi* and calls his notion of human guilt an inference, using *eikazein*.⁴⁰ Inference aside, Plutarch's account suffers from the same bias as Porphyry's. Both are Pythagorean, and both argue that the practice of sacrifice attests to a decline in human morals. As Dirk Obbink observed in his essay on Theophrastus, this decline amounts to an admission that most Greeks do not share Pythagorean scruples. For them, sacrifice is not a wrong to be explained.⁴¹

If these literary sources are to be supplemented by artistic sources, a much larger body of evidence presents itself. Van Straten, the main compilation, includes 140 vase paintings of the stage of an act of sacrifice preceding the killing of the animal. These are pictures that refocus attention on ordinary acts of sacrifice, as in Aristophanes, and they echo these sources by showing much movement but little nodding and no assent. They also echo a theme in many of the sources for *thaumata* and *mirabilia*. These sources note that animals that come forward willingly are atypical. Most animals must be led, even forced. In his *Lucullus*, for example, Plutarch says that

³⁸ Ael. *VH* 8.3 and Paus. 1.28.10 accordingly report a subsequent trial of the axe with which the animal was slain. Recent literature: A. Henrichs s.v. *Bouphonia*, *OCD*³ 258. Some hunted animals protest by supplicating at an altar, but sacrificial victims do not; see F. Naiden, *Ancient Supplication* (Oxford 2006) Appendix 6.

³⁹ οὐ σε θέμις κτείνειν ὅων γένος ἐστὶ βέβαιον, ἔγγονε Θειοπρόπων· ὃ δ' ἐκούσιον ἄν κατανεύσῃ χέρνιβ' ἐπιθύειν τὸ δ', Ἐπίσκοπε, φημὶ δικαίως.

Valentinus: βιαίως, justifying Delphi's change of front, but challenging Burkert's (and Porphyry's) assumption that the animal deserves general or absolute protection against violence.

⁴⁰ *Q. conviv.* 729e-f.

⁴¹ D. Obbink, 'The origin of Greek sacrifice: Theophrastus on religion and cultural history', in W. Fortenbaugh and R. Sharples (eds), *Theophrastean Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ 1988) 272-96 at 283-6.

the animal in this case did not need to be tied with rope, like others.⁴²

In Van Straten, animals kneel, buck, run away or hang upside down.⁴³ Only three of Van Straten's pictures show the bent head that would indicate a nod.⁴⁴ This is not to say that some of the animals on the vases catalogued by Van Straten might not happen to make this gesture. The 63 vases that show the animal being driven or led are all compatible with it.⁴⁵ These animals may be thought to nod as they move along. The remaining element in Burkert's conception, assent, is easier to assess. Thirteen paintings show a worshipper laying one or both hands on the horns or shoulders. This action implies compulsion, the opposite of assent.⁴⁶ Van Straten fig. 34 presents such a scene.⁴⁷

Also incompatible with assent are the 26 vases of Van Straten's that show animals restrained by the ropes that Plutarch would lead one to expect. Several are goats and one is a fawn.⁴⁸ The biggest animal, the bull, is roped around the legs as well as or instead of the horns. There are three such unlucky creatures in Van Straten – as many as lower their heads.⁴⁹ On ten other vases, the smallest animals, cocks, pigs and hares, are carried under the arm, dragged by a hind leg, or hoisted over a shoulder.⁵⁰ Then there is the pig that is about to get away. In response, a boy catches it by the hind legs.⁵¹ Some of these images are perhaps compatible with assent. An animal roped only by the horns and accompanied by a worshipper who walks alongside, not in front, may be assenting. But other animals are so recalcitrant as to put assent out of the question. In Van Straten fig. 54, one worshipper has a bull by the horns, another has it by the tail, and a third ropes the creature, which responds to their efforts by rearing.⁵²

Relevant images also appear in other media. On the north frieze of the Parthenon, a sacrificial animal raises its head and legs.⁵³ A votive tablet also from Athens, and antedating the frieze by only a decade or so, shows a bucking steer.⁵⁴ In these better-known sources, worshippers once again restrain animals with ropes. Assent is once again out of the question, nodding incidental. In ordinary circumstances, that is normal. An animal may or may not nod, but it does not assent.

Burkert's view, in sum, rests mainly on scholia and Pythagorean sources. It does not square with the scene in Aristophanes' *Peace*, with Plutarch on Delphi, with Plutarch's remark on the common use of ropes, or with the vases. It concerns Greek intellectual history, not Greek impressions of animal behaviour. Nor does the evidence square with the alternative view that a nod is a formality. When a worshipper totes or drags the victim, there is no formality of any kind. To make room for it, the Greeks would have had to suppose that the worshipper would first tote or drag the animal, and then pause for a moment in which the animal would make or would supposedly make a gesture at odds with its own conduct. Rather than resist, it would yield, undergoing a deathbed conversion. But there is no evidence that the Greeks believed this about their animals, any more than they believed it about themselves.

⁴² Plut. *Luc.* 24.7, ὡς περ αἱ δεσμῶν κατατεινόμεναι; Arist. *Mir.* 844b no.137.

⁴³ Kneel: Van Straten (n.11) no.370 in the catalogue of paintings at 194-274, plus 101 n.307; N. Himmelmann, *Tieropfer in Griechischen Kunst* (Cleveland 1997) fig. 30. Buck: Van Straten (n.11) no.91 in the same catalogue. Run away: no.71. Hang upside down: no.64.

⁴⁴ Nos.90, 129, 370.

⁴⁵ Nos.5, 6, 8-9, 11-13, 16-17, 19, 21, 25, 30, 31, 35-6, 38-9, 41, 43-4, 49, 50-2, 54-5, 58, 60-1, 62, 67-9, 72, 74-6, 78, 80, 82, 84-6, 89, 91, 96, 98, 106, 108, 112-15, 118, 121, 123-4, 126-8, 130-1, all identified as such by Van Straten (n.11), who describes the animal as 'driven' or 'led' in his catalogue.

⁴⁶ Nos.38, 42, 65, 69, 107 (bottom), 121, 127, 128, 130, 131, 135, 136, 140.

⁴⁷ The Hague Gemeentemus. OC (ant) 5-71, Attic red-figure bell krater = Van Straten (n.12) fig. 34 and no.136.

⁴⁸ Goat: no.16, 36, 118. Fawn: no.139.

⁴⁹ Nos.21 (top), 107 (top), 123. Others: nos.9, 28, 39, 41, 43, 55, 68, 72-4, 76, 78-9, 85, 89, 91, 98, 107, 115.

⁵⁰ Carried under arm: no.77. By leg: nos.22, 83, 92, 94, 100, 103, 104, 139. On shoulder: no.64 (with a pole).

⁵¹ No.71.

⁵² NY Met 56.171.149, Attic red-figure bell krater, Kekrops Ptr., *ARI*² 1347/3 = Van Straten (n.11) fig. 54 and no.91.

⁵³ Himmelmann (n.43), figs 22, 23, reproducing Carey's drawing of pieces 1-3.

⁵⁴ Himmelmann (n.43) fig. 40.

2. WILLING APPROACHES

The alternative role for the sacrificial animal, that of going willingly to the altar, is attractive not only because it makes a more modest demand on the animal but because it runs parallel to acts of human sacrifice in which the victim does the same. As Burkert says in his 1966 article, many 'legends' report an animal's willing approach. But there is considerable evidence other than the *thaumata* to which Burkert refers. As before, some comes from vase paintings and other media. With regard to public altars, some evidence is architectural.

Unlike a nod, a willing approach to an altar places the animal in a setting, and this setting suggests the first objection to the willing approach: some acts of sacrifice do not occur at altars. In these acts, the animal might follow the worshipper, but this would not be the same as approaching either an altar or any other fixed location. Some sacrifices performed to solemnize oaths fall into this class. In *Iliad* 19, Talthibius stands beside the oath-swearer, Agamemnon, 'holding' a boar; evidently it followed along.⁵⁵ The same is true of most if not all sacrifices performed before battle. When a Spartan king made the customary pre-battle sacrifice to Artemis *Agrotera*, he did not have time to find or build an altar. The enemy was opposite. He sacrificed any goat at hand.⁵⁶ Or the worshippers in these cases picked up the animal and carried it to the place of sacrifice, which might be a hearth as opposed to an altar. Typical is the act of sacrifice performed by Odysseus' slave, the swineherd Eumaeus, in *Odyssey* 14. When Odysseus arrives at Eumaeus' hut, his host 'went to the sties, where the race of pigs was penned. He picked out two, brought (ἔνεικε) them, and sacrificed the pair of them.'⁵⁷ This act occurred in the country, where most slaves lived, and the animal, small enough for a slave to afford, is also small enough to carry. In lieu of a priest, Eumaeus, an overseer of other slaves, takes charge. Laertes' slave Dolius might do the same on behalf of his own sons. The weight to be given to sacrifice of this kind depends on how many Greeks were slaves, helots and the like. The sacrifice by Eumaeus happens to be the only sacrifice by a slave to be described in any detail.⁵⁸

If there is an altar, the worshipper may tote the animal. The important passage from Aristophanes' *Peace* begins with the slave going off stage and 'fetching' a lamb.⁵⁹ Other visual media present more impressive and familiar evidence. The approximately life-size statue of Rhombos bearing a calf, one of the best known from the Athenian Acropolis, portrays a worshipper carrying an offering over his shoulder as he goes to an altar in a sanctuary.⁶⁰ The same holds true for the well-known ram-bearer from Thasos, twice life-size, that like the statue of Rhombos appears in Boardman's standard work on Greek Archaic sculpture.⁶¹ Evidence of this kind is abundant. At Mt Lycaon in Arcadia, four votive statuettes of worshippers carrying animals to sacrifice have survived.⁶² Even more than the vases, these objects represent many others that have not survived or not yet been recovered. Nor should this evidence be omitted on the grounds that these worshippers are carrying the animals to some place other than a sacrificial altar. The votive character of the statues militates against any other interpretation.⁶³

If the animal is too big to carry, the worshippers will 'drive' it, the term used in the inscription from Cos.⁶⁴ Very nearly the same language appears in an *Odyssey* passage at the opposite

⁵⁵ 19.251. 'Holding': ἔχων.

⁵⁶ As at Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.20.

⁵⁷ *Od.* 14.73-4.

⁵⁸ To judge from no such description being cited by F. Bömer in his extensive *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom* (*Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei* 14, Wiesbaden 1981).

⁵⁹ Ar. *Pax* 937. 'Fetch': ἄγ' ... λαβών.

⁶⁰ J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture. The Archaic Period. A Handbook* (Oxford 1978) fig. 112.

⁶¹ Boardman (n.60) fig. 69.

⁶² Van Straten (n. 11) 55 n.145.

⁶³ So also Van Straten (n.11) 55-6. He cautiously excluded from his catalogue of vases many images in which a herdsman might be carrying or driving an animal as part of his work, and not to an altar. He included only nos. 1, 3, 4, 20, 57, 88, 93, 125 in his catalogue.

⁶⁴ *Syll.*³ 1025.20-1. 'Drive': ἐπάγειν.

pole from the modest but proper sacrifice made by Eumaeus. When Odysseus' crew sacrifice the bulls of the Sun God in Book 11, they 'herd' the cattle.⁶⁵ Once again the visual evidence is abundant. If the worshipper has roped the animal, he is as good as carrying it or driving it. In the frieze from the Parthenon, one of the youths assigned to drive cows to a sacrifice deals with a recalcitrant beast by planting his foot on a stone and tugging at a rope as his cloak slips off.⁶⁶ Bas-reliefs from the fifth- or fourth-century tomb of a Lycian dynast at Xanthos confirm that the Parthenon scene is not unique. In PLATE 2(a), the worshipper to the left of centre stands in front of the animal, not to the side or behind, and yanks it forward towards the altar.⁶⁷ The long-standing controversy about whether the Athenians sometimes raised bulls and put them on the altar need not be revived in order to show that Greeks sometimes laboured to transport animals to the place of sacrifice.⁶⁸

This labour would be greatest at public altars. The sacred way leading to some of these altars tended to go uphill. The worshippers would have coaxed the victims, as shown on the Parthenon frieze. Many shrines were on mountaintops or on *acropoleis* like those of Athens or Corinth, or in other places with commanding views. In Attica, Sunion affords an example. The long climb might end in a ramp, as may have existed at the altar of Zeus at Pergamum. Here the last 25m of the climb would have been the hardest.⁶⁹ Even if sheep and goats were as easy to handle as elsewhere, cattle would not be. Once these creatures had climbed the sacred way, a second difficulty appears: controlling the large numbers that might mill about. One way was to attach the animals to rings. On the lower level of the altar of Apollo at Claros, for example, stand four rows of embedded stone blocks with attachments for iron rings. One hundred blocks have these attachments, suggesting hecatombs at this location.⁷⁰ At Claros, no rings survive, but PLATE 2(b) a bas-relief from the altar of Domitian at the Artemisium in Ephesus, includes the same kind of ring (although in this image the ring is attached to the altar, not to an embedded stone block).⁷¹ Such attachments and rings must have been common. They have survived at Dium in Macedonia. PLATE 2(c) envisions the scene.⁷² At altars like this, the animals do not make an approach. Instead, the worshippers pen them. Were the soil in Greece less unfavourable to the preservation of metal objects, we would be able to guess how common these arrangements were.

The reason for all this effort appears in several authors: some animals do not go willingly either to altars or anywhere else. Pausanias says that if an animal is unused to the halter it dislikes being led, Plutarch says that even heifers are hard to catch, and Propertius says, with the air of retailing a commonplace, that bulls move as desired only when roped.⁷³ Ziehen cites epigraphical evidence to the same effect.⁷⁴ Every one of the 26 vases in Van Straten's catalogue that shows ropes around an animal says the same thing as well, and so do the hundred rings at Claros. Recalcitrant animals needed restraint.

One might expect some source to say how animals were supposed to react to this regime, and one Greek epigram does address the topic. This anonymous couplet does not, however, take

⁶⁵ *Od.* 12.356-8. 'Herd': περιστήσαντο. Similarly, *Od.* 3.439, ἀγέτην.

⁶⁶ London 39.40, reproduced in Himmelmann (n.43) fig. 25.

⁶⁷ *Atlante dei complessi figurati (Enciclopedia dell'arte antica, classica e medievale* 9, Rome 1973) pl. 286 top = Himmelmann (n.43) fig. 40.

⁶⁸ Evidence for lifting: Van Straten (n.11) 109-13, 'The butchers who laughed at Stengel', referring to the German scholar who accepted several butchers' opinion that a bull or cow was too heavy to lift. See P. Stengel, *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (Berlin 1910) 115.

⁶⁹ F. Queyrel, *L'autel de Pergame. Images et pouvoir en Grèce d'Asie* (Paris 2005) 44.

⁷⁰ J. de la Genière, 'Hécatombes à Claros', in E. Greco (ed.), *Architettura, urbanistica, società. Giornata di studi in ricordo di Roland Martin (Tekmeria 2, Salerno 1998)* 79-84 at 82 with fig. 4, a drawing reproduced in Queyrel (n.69) as fig. 7. Similar but fuller conclusions: J. de la Genière and V. Jolivet, *Cahiers de Claros 2: L'aire des sacrifices* (Paris 2003) 190-1 with pls 38-9.

⁷¹ de la Genière (n.70, 'Hécatombes à Claros') fig.3.

⁷² de la Genière (n.70, 'Hécatombes à Claros') fig.5 with p. 83.

⁷³ Paus. 4.32.3; Plut. *Luc.* 24.6, Prop. 2.34.47-8.

⁷⁴ Ziehen (n.3), citing *Syll.*³ 57.33.

Porphry's hint and compare animals to murder victims. Instead it compares them to gladiators. Speaking to Marcus Aurelius, some sacrificial bulls salute him, as gladiators would, but the comparison goes awry when they fail to say *nos morituri te salutamus*. Instead they say,

οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι χαίρειν·
ἂν πάλι νικήσῃς, ἄμμες ἀπολλύμεθα.⁷⁵

We white bulls salute Marcus Caesar:
if you win once again, we perish.

These animals make their plaint because they, unlike other gladiators, have no reason for hope. No victory of their own can help them, and a victory of the emperor's will doom them. But the joking second line of the couplet does not apply only to the emperor's bulls. Other sacrificial animals might be imagined to say the same, and Plutarch says as much.⁷⁶ A recent study of American slaughterhouses has confirmed the common rural impression that an animal about to be slaughtered may sense its fate, and that as a result it may struggle, a response that makes it tougher to eat.⁷⁷ In response, slaughterhouses have set about calming and even deceiving animals, a tactic somewhat like fig. 47 in Van Straten, where a worshipper pats the animal with one hand as he controls it with the other, which grasps a horn.⁷⁸ But even here, the animal is not consenting. Instead it is oblivious.

To resume: not every animal went willingly to the altar. As Aristophanes says, some are fetched. A few resist, and some approach under duress. All are lively. In Aristophanes, the sheep shakes its head; in Plutarch, it shakes and quivers from head to foot; at Cos, the oxen bow. Even in the scholia, brief as they are, the animal shakes its head. In Aeschylus it moves readily, and in the *thaumata* and *mirabilia*, it travels 70 stades and then scampers to the altar – no doubt with more energy than the worshipper who follows. In the artistic sources, it may rear or buck, run away or stand pat, keep pace with a single worshipper or resist three. Whether being tugged on the Parthenon frieze or roped in Arcadia, the animal on the verge of death is very much alive. This conclusion sums up the literary and artistic evidence.⁷⁹

3. TESTING FOR VITALITY

What is the significance of an animal's lively movement? In *The Decline of Oracles*, the essay in which Plutarch deals with the behaviour of sacrificial animals at Delphi, he answers this question: 'Priests say that they sacrifice victims and pour libations and observe the victims' movement and trembling in order to obtain a sign from the god as to whether he will prophesy or not.' Plutarch's speaker goes on to set forth the conditions in which the god will indeed prophesy: 'The animal must be pure, whole and undamaged with respect to both its body (σώματι) and its vitality (ψυχῆι). Judging the body is not hard, but to assess vitality, bulls are given grain, billy-goats are given peas. If they do not taste the food, they are thought unsound.'⁸⁰ Some species, then,

⁷⁵ Amm. Marc. 25.4.17.

⁷⁶ Dio 57.4, cited by Georgoudi (n.11) 15.

⁷⁷ Temple Grandin (ed.), *Livestock Handling and Transport* (Cambridge, MA 2000).

⁷⁸ Louvre C 10.754, Attic red-figure stamnos, Eucharides Ptr., *ARV*² 228/32 = Van Straten (n.11) fig. 47 and no.135.

⁷⁹ Cf. Himmelmann (n.43), noticing the 'Wucht' of the animals on the Parthenon frieze. But he accepts Burkert's view, 39.

⁸⁰ Plut. *Defec. orac.* 437a-b, especially: δεῖ γὰρ τὸ θύσιμον τε σώματι καὶ τῆι ψυχῆι καθαρὸν εἶναι καὶ ἀσινὲς καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ... περὶ τὸ σῶμα κατιδεῖν οὐ πάνυ χαλεπὸν ἐστὶ, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν δοκιμάζουσι τοῖς μὲν ταύροις ἄλφιτα τοῖς δὲ κάπροις ἐρεβίνθους παρατιθέντες· τὸ γὰρ μὴ γευσάμενον ὑγιαίνειν οὐκ οἶνται.

must likely nod, but not to show consent. Instead they must nod in order to eat. Others must show whether they respond to water. ‘The nanny goat is tested with cold water. It’s unnatural for an animal with any vitality to remain motionless or unaffected during a dousing.’⁸¹ Species like the nanny goat must give a shake, as in *Peace*. But Plutarch has not mentioned all the behaviour that shows that the god will respond favourably. One possibility is rearing, as at Messenian heroic sacrifices reported in Pausanias.⁸² In this type of sacrifice, the animal must rear or the sacrifice does not proceed. Another is bellowing. According to a scholion to Homer and also to Strabo, the animal must bellow or once again the sacrifice will not proceed.⁸³

Linking all this behaviour – nodding and eating, shaking, rearing, and bellowing – is some positive response on the animal’s part, but not a response that denotes assent. The response denotes good health, a quality that, unlike the appearance of the body, or *sôma*, is not apparent at a glance. But Plutarch’s choice of words, with its quasi-Platonic contrast between the obvious and the elicited, is not the only formula for describing the range of acceptable gestures. The animal must behave in a lively but not indecorous way – one compatible with the conduct of the sacrifice. Otherwise, the worshippers will replace it. In a scene in Menander, they will replace it if it interferes with the sacrifice by eating leaves from ceremonial branches.⁸⁴ Dio implies the replacement of the animal if it struggled too much.⁸⁵

On this view, the animal’s attitude towards the act of sacrifice is irrelevant. Hence nodding, which might indicate some attitude towards it, is no more commonly reported than shaking, which might not, and not much more commonly reported than trembling, which cannot. Hence, too, nodding is almost always reported without any explanation of the purpose of the nod. The nod is probative, not purposeful. The same is true of approaching the altar. It might indicate some favourable attitude towards the sacrifice, but it is not much more commonly reported than being carried, which cannot. There are also reports of the opposite of assent – of recalcitrance – and there are ropes, poles and rings that confirm these reports. Hence approaching, like nodding, is almost always reported without any explanation of the purpose of the approach. At most, the source discloses the purpose of the god of the sacrifice. The approach is probative. The reason for so many probative gestures and acts is that the Greeks sacrificed diverse animals. Small animals would be tested one way; large, dangerous animals like bulls would be tested another. Dull animals would be tested one way; alert animals (again like bulls) would be tested another. The test needed to suit the character of the animal, and it also needed to protect human life and limb.

The testing of sacrificial animals for their liveliness forms part of the common Greek practice of inspecting sacrificial animals.⁸⁶ Literary sources imply or describe those aspects of the practice that are widespread and more or less fixed, whereas shrine regulations describe local, variable aspects. Herodotus’ picture of Egyptian priests inspecting the sacred bulls of Apis implies what other priests did, including Greek priests:

One of the priests ... pulls out the bull’s tongue to see whether it is free of any of the marks that I will describe later. The bull must stand and lie down. The priest checks the hairs of the tail to see whether they are growing normally.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Plut. *Defec. orac.* 437b: τὴν δ’ αἶγα διελέγχειν τὸ ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ· οὐ γὰρ εἶναι ψυχῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐχούσης τὸ πρὸς τὴν κατάσπεισιν ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἀκίνητον. A different view of this passage: M. Detienne, ‘Culinary practices and the spirit of sacrifice’, in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks* (tr. P. Wissing; Chicago 1989) 1-21, esp. 9.

⁸² Paus. 4.32.3. A different view: Georgoudi (n.11) 16.

⁸³ Schol. *Il.* 20.404, noticed by Burkert (n.1) 107 n.43: βοησάντων μὲν τῶν βοῶν, προσδέχεσθαι τὸ θεῖον

τὴν θυσίαν. σιγόντων δὲ, λυπεῖσθαι καὶ μνηστῆρα νομίζεσθαι. So also Str. 8.384 with schol.

⁸⁴ Men. *Dysc.* 393-8.

⁸⁵ Dio 41.61, cited by Ziehen (n.3).

⁸⁶ Most recently summarized by P. Gauthier, ‘La dokimasia des victimes. Une note sur une inscription d’Entella’, *AnnPisa* 3.14.3 (1984) 845-8 with refs at 846 n.3, to whom I am indebted for some of the sources in this section.

⁸⁷ Hdt. 2.38.

Most striking is the inspection of the tongue, somewhat like extispicy, but the priest makes an overall inspection, too. If the animal is too weak to stand or too diseased for its hair to grow normally, it will meet with rejection, the same as if it has a poor tongue. Inspection of another part of the animal, the front, appears in Aristophanes when Lampito, a new recruit to Lysistrata's sex strike, finds herself vetted by Lysistrata:

Lys.: Your breasts are a fine piece of work.

Lam.: You're poking me like a sacrificial animal.⁸⁸

This passage implies that a scrawny chest and shoulders will meet with rejection. No doubt other parts of the animal are subject to scrutiny, too, as Aristotle explains: 'Nothing mutilated can be brought before the gods, only what is perfect and whole. What is full is perfect.'⁸⁹ But the most important part of inspecting the animal is not checking one feature or another. It is assuring that the animal is lively but not unmanageable.

Communities regulate this practice by means of ordinances commanding priests or others to inspect sacrificial animals, *dokimazein hierieia*, and to reject those that fail to meet various tests.⁹⁰ At Cos, the bull that 'bows' must be judged 'best'.⁹¹ At Athens, the animals must not be *adokima*, 'unsatisfactory', because they are lame.⁹² At Andania, the animals must be *holoklara*, or 'fit', and *euiera*, or 'suitable'.⁹³ The ordinances governing the mysteries at this site go on to list sundry other requirements regarding condition, age and colour.⁹⁴ Lest there be any doubt that they have met with the priests' approval, the priests are to brand them: 'Once they have been inspected, let the priests put a brand on them and let the receiver of the branded animals put them aside'⁹⁵ Though liveliness and the like are missing from these inscriptions and also from others mentioning inspection, the reason is not any indifference to these traits. The traits that the inscriptions do mention are compatible with them, and could not appear without them. An animal that is best or is not unsatisfactory and that is fit and suitable is an animal in good health.

No less common than the practice of inspection is the rationale that Plutarch gives for it, which is that an animal in good fettle is a 'sign'.⁹⁶ This rationale implies that the animal is at the god's disposal, in other words, that the animal is an instrument of the god's. But it does not reduce worshippers to waiting for the sign to appear. Instead they seek it out. To judge from Menander, they do not force it, but they may and do discover it. These efforts bespeak some anxiety not to spare the animal suffering, still less to assuage human guilt, but to ensure that communication with the gods remains open. The inspection of animals confirms – in other words, it creates – a traffic in signs that is no less essential to the community's survival than sacrificial meals are to its social (or, with Vernant, to its political) life. The anxiety that Bremmer posited is very much present, but it has an institutional, regulatory reflex.

The practice of inspecting animals for vitality and similar traits does not mean that the behaviour of sacrificial animals did not interest the Greeks for other reasons. Those influenced by Pythagoreanism will have looked for signs of consent. Animal behaviour, in other words, was not monosemic. Most important, any behaviour was more or less subject to the hurried

⁸⁸ Lys. 83-4; schol. *ad* 84 confirms that this was common practice.

⁸⁹ *Fr.* 101 ed. Rose.

⁹⁰ As at *LSCG* 65.70-2, 92.30-1, and 98.14-5; so also forms of *krinô* as at E. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law* (Leiden 2005) 99-100 and 355-6 with refs.

⁹¹ *SEG* 736.11-14, *καλλίστους*.

⁹² Schol. Dem. 21.171, where the inspection is performed by the *hieropoioi*.

⁹³ *LSCG* 65.70, noticed by Lupu (n.90).

⁹⁴ *LSCG* 65.67-70.

⁹⁵ *LSCG* 65.71.

⁹⁶ For other sources to this effect, see L. Wenger, s.v. *signum RE* Suppl. 2.2364-5.

observer's tendency to reduce it to a routine. The practice of inspecting animals will have strengthened this tendency. Yet this routine should not be misunderstood. It has nothing to do with the attitudes of sacrificial animals. It has to do with physical traits. It concerns the conduct of the ritual, not the impact of the ritual on the psyche.

A CONCLUDING REMARK: SLAUGHTER AND INNOCENCE

So far, this paper has dealt with attitudes towards animal behaviour. It has not dealt with motives for these attitudes, and in particular with the motive of guilt that Burkert attributed to both the Greeks and their ancestors. But the practice of inspecting victims prompts the following remark about any such feeling: it concerns men and animals to the exclusion of (and to the detriment of) the gods who are the third, divine party to the ritual. The vitality of the animal belongs to the god, not to the worshippers, and so they offer it to him as an honour or by way of expiation or thanksgiving. If the god does not receive this honour, the worshippers may feel guilty, but only because they have failed or neglected to perform a sacrifice. If their feeling of guilt inspires compensatory sacrifice, this turn of events is at home in both myth and daily life. The relation between sacrifice and guilt is important, but it is not a relation of cause and effect.⁹⁷

Important as this relation is, it should not crowd out other emotions occasioned by sacrifice. Vernant and others have stressed the importance of solidarity in the act of sacrifice; linked to solidarity is a sense of pride. The worshippers in Van Straten's collection feel evident if unspoken pride in their livestock. This emotion reflects the importance of agriculture in ancient Greece. It also reflects a lack of interest in the Christian or modern theme of the animal, especially the lamb, as an innocent victim. Killing an innocent victim is a dubious act, and so it may be desirable for a victim of this kind to be willing. But in the considerable record for Greek sacrifice, the innocent victim is largely missing. The sacrificer is innocent, not the victim. The sacrificer is willing – not the victim. The sacrificer and the god, not the victim, are the chief participants. The victim's turn in the spotlight comes at other times and places.

F.S. NAIDEN
Tulane University

⁹⁷ Other views of sacrificial guilt: J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago 1987), partly disagreeing with Burkert, and a neglected work of V. Propp, *Die historischen Wurzeln des Zaubermärchens* (German trans. M. Pfeiffer, Munich 1987). Propp anticipated P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir. Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris 1981) in holding that hunting-related ritual was initiatory.