

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEVITICUS

Additional Notes ON Leviticus

IN THE ZONDERVAN EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY
ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SERIES

JAY SKLAR

Jay Sklar's commentary on Leviticus for the ZECOT series is guided by the question, "What is most necessary to know to teach or preach well on this passage?" Any of its technical or in-depth discussions, or interactions with the secondary literature, remain focused on those aspects of the passage most central to its meaning.

This book is guided by the question, "What else might the reader like to know when interacting with the secondary literature, or when looking very in-depth at technical aspects of the Hebrew?" It thus supplements the commentary so that readers wanting to go even further in their study of Leviticus are well equipped to do so.

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on the Old Testament Series



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



When I completed the original manuscript for *Leviticus* in the *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament* series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2023), it was 160,000 words too long. This meant I had to cut out just over one third of it. In doing so, I was guided by the question, “What is *most* necessary to know to teach or preach well on this passage?” As the reader of that commentary will see, this did not mean that I avoided all technical or in–depth discussions, or that I never interacted with the secondary literature. It meant that I chose to focus technical or in–depth discussions, or interaction with the secondary literature, on those aspects of the passage most central to its meaning.

But this also meant that I had many notes on the text that were still of relevance, even if not as central as those that remained in the commentary. Many of those notes are gathered here. If the commentary answered the question, “What do I need to know to teach or preach well on this passage?”, these notes answer the question, “What else might I like to know if I am interacting with the secondary literature, or looking very in–depth at various aspects of the Hebrew?” As such, it supplements the commentary so that readers wanting to go even further in their study of *Leviticus* are well equipped to do so.

In order to help the reader find the relevant place in the commentary being supplemented, the verse references below are **in bold**. In a few places in *Leviticus*, the Hebrew versification differs from the English. Where this occurs, I put the Hebrew versification first and the English verification in parentheses, e.g., 5:26 (6:7).

The notes fall into three main categories. In some cases, they interact more deeply with the secondary literature, usually when I come to different conclusions than those with whom I interact (see on “when” at 1:2). In other cases, they simply provide expanded thoughts on the passage itself without reference to secondary literature (see on “belongs to Aaron and his sons” at 2:3). In yet other cases, they focus on technical aspects of the Hebrew that are related to the passage but not central to understanding its main thrust (see on “herd” at 1:3).

I am very grateful to Vicki Tatko, my former teaching assistant, for going over the entire manuscript, finding many errors, and helping to standardize the format.

ABBREVIATIONS



<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: 1992
<i>AHw</i>	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . W. von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
AS	Assyriological Studies
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BFC	La Bible en Français Courant
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament. Edited by M. Noth and H. W. Wolff
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago, 1956–2010
CAT	Commentaire de l’Ancien Testament
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>DCH</i>	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by D. J. A. Clines. Sheffield, 1993–2008
<i>EMiqr</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Miqra ʾit</i> , 1950–88
ERV	English Revised Version
ESV	English Standard Version

GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d. ed. Oxford, 1910
GNV	Geneva Bible
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, L. W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IBHS</i>	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by G. W. Bromiley. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, 1979–1988
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JE</i>	<i>The Jewish Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by I. Singer. 12 vols. New York, 1925
Joüon	Joüon, P. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. Subsidia biblica 27. Rome, 2006
JPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation (1917)</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint (the Greek OT)
MT	Masoretic Text (of the OT)

NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestinian Exploration Quarterly</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
Syr.	Syriac
TOB	Traduction œcuménique de la Bible
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

ZECOT Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament

ZNW *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde
der älteren Kirche*

Additional Notes on **Leviticus**



1:2–5:26 (6:7). For the order of the offerings in Leviticus 1–5, see Jay Sklar, *Leviticus: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, ZECOT 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 81. Rainey suggests the difference is between offerings that were a “soothing aroma” (Lev 1–3) and those that atoned for specific types of sins (Lev 4:1–5:26 [6:7]) (Anson F. Rainey, “Order of Sacrifices in Old Testament Ritual Texts,” *Bib* 51.4 [1970]: 486–87). This suggestion could explain the second group but not the first, since 4:31 refers to the purification offering as a “soothing aroma.”

1:2. when (כִּי). Milgrom (Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 [New York, NY: Doubleday, 1991], 144) argues that the presence of this particle implies this law is conditional and optional and therefore describes voluntary offerings. Rather, this law, *like any case law*, is conditional in that it only applies when a certain condition exists (which in this instance is presenting a domesticated animal as a whole burnt offering). But this does not mean the law itself is optional. There are clear instances where the condition—presenting a whole burnt offering—is absolutely required (12:6; 14:19–20; etc.).

presents. The Hebrew imperfect in these contexts is typically translated as an English present (for repeated or durative action; see Joüon §113c,d; 167h).

the domesticated animals. Heb. “the domesticated animal”; the context shows the word functions here as a collective noun that refers to a group (cf. Joüon §135b).

1:3. whole burnt offering. For the noun’s form, see Joüon §88Fb. Most English versions translate with “burnt offering” (NRSV, ESV, NIV, etc.); Coverdale’s translation (1535) appears to have been the first to do so in English (noted by N. H. Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, The Century Bible, New Edition [London: Nelson, 1967], 29). Because the Hebrew name of the offering (עֹלָה) is built on a root used to describe “going up” (עָלָה), it could literally be called the

“going up” offering. But since all burnt offerings “go up,” translations have usually tried to be more specific. See further Sklar, *Leviticus*, 88.

herd. The relevant Hebrew terms for animals of the herd are as follows: 1) שׁוֹר (“ox”): a single member of the herd, male or female (cf. Lev 22:21 and 22:23); 2) פָּר (“bull”): an adult male (Lev 23:18); 3) פָּרָה (“cow”): an adult female (1 Sam 6:7); 4) עֵגֶל (“[male] calf”): a young male (Lev 9:3); 5) עֵגְלָה (“[female] calf, heifer”): a young female (Gen 15:9; a calf is technically an animal of the first year, while a heifer is a cow before calving, as in the three-year old “heifer” of Gen 15:3).

male. It has been suggested that a male was required because it was “economically the more expendable, the female being the one to supply milk and offspring” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 147). This is true regarding *young* male animals, which would likely have been culled because herds need far fewer males than females in order to repopulate (see Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* [Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998], 57). But *adult* male animals that had been kept to stud would have in fact been very costly, since they were far fewer in number (see Gen 32:13–15). It thus remains unclear why a male animal is specified. As suggested in the commentary, this might have simply been the existing custom.

they may be favorably accepted. The suffix (“his”) is an objective genitive (cf. Joüon §129e.B): “for his favorable acceptance” = “for him to be the object of favorable acceptance” = “in order that he may be favorably accepted.”

1:4. lean his hand. For the three main approaches to this rite identified by Rendtorff (Rolf Rendtorff, *Leviticus: 1,1–10,20*, vol. 1, BKAT 3 [Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004], 40–45, following J. Licht, “סמיכה,” *EMiqr* 5:1052–1055), see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 90–91. There are other ways of categorizing the different approaches (see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 151; David P. Wright, “The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature,” *JAOS*

106.3 [1986]: 437), but Rendtorff's approach efficiently incorporates the majority of views.

Related to the transference approach, Péter (René Péter, "L'imposition des mains dans l'Ancien Testament," *VT* 27.1 [1977]: 48–55) makes a distinction between one-handed rites and two-handed rites, arguing that transference only occurs when two hands are used (as in Lev 16 :21; Num 27:23; Deut 34:9). This approach breaks down, however, at Numbers 27:18, a one-handed rite whose purpose is transference (cf. v. 20). Péter ("L'imposition," 51) responds by noting that the LXX reads a plural here and suggests that "your hand" (יָדְךָ) in Numbers 27:18 is simply a defective spelling of the plural suffix (cf. Lev 16:21). This is not impossible, though the LXX is the easier reading (and therefore not preferred), and it would be equally possible that sacrificial texts, such as Leviticus 1:4, are also defectively spelled plurals (in which case the distinction between one-handed and two-handed rites again falls apart; see now David Calabro, "A Reexamination of the Ancient Israelite Gesture of Hand Placement," in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity*, eds. Henrietta L. Wiley, Christian A. Eberhart [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017], 99–124, esp. 99–116). But even if there were two different rites, it may finally be noted that the difference in *form* between a one-handed and two-handed rite "does not necessarily imply a difference in the *meaning* of the gesture" (Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function*, JSOTSup 56 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987], 113); it could simply be the two-handed rite adds emphasis (just as a two-handed handshake does in Western countries).

in order to. See Joüon §124l for the infinitive construct expressing purpose.

1:5. The LXX and, in some cases, the SP, have a plural in place of the singular in several places in 1:5–9. This keeps the verb more consistently plural throughout the passage but is the easier reading (and therefore not preferred). Possibly, by the time the LXX and SP translations were made, the priests and

Levites were responsible for these duties (cf. Ezek 44:11; 1 Chr 23:31; 2 Chr 29:34), leading the translators to use plurals (Arie Noordtjij, *The Book of Leviticus*, trans. Raymond Togtman [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982], 35).

member of the herd. The “member of the herd” (v. 5a) is in Hebrew “the son (בֶּן) of the herd.” The word “son” can indicate a young member of a group (see Lev 1:14; 22:28; 1 Sam 6:7; possibly also Gen 18:7, 8; 1 Sam 14:32), but can also simply indicate a “member” of a group (1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5; see BDB 121.7.a and 7.b). The latter is likely here. If our text required a young animal, we might expect this to be stated when the animal is first being described (v. 3), or for the word “calf” (עֵגֶל) to be used (see *herd* at 1:3).

present. The verb “present” (הִקְרִיב) is commonly used to refer to bringing an offering to the tabernacle or altar for the purpose of using it in a ritual (1:3, 10; 2:1; etc.). In this context, the blood is presented for the purpose of being thrown round about on the altar.

[*at*]. The Hebrew does not require a preposition here (see also Exod 29:11; 3:2; 4:7, 18; etc.), but one must be supplied in English.

1:6. *butchered.* This term (נָתַח) is a standard verb for butchering an animal carcass (cf. Exod 29:17; Lev 1:12; etc.)

into. A לְ of product (“into” [BDB 512.4a]) or specification (“with regard to” [BDB 514.5e]).

1:7. *wood.* Plural in the Hebrew (עֵצִים) because there would have been many pieces of it (see Joüon §136b).

1:8. *suet.* As opposed to the general word for “fat” (חֵלֶב; 3:3, 9; 4:8, 9; etc.), the word used here (פֶּדֶר) appears to refer to the fat attached to the entrails or innards of the animal (its “suet”). Note the word “entrails” (v. 9), to which this fat would have been attached, and the Akkadian word *pîtru*, which is linguistically related to פֶּדֶר and which “refers to the loose covering of fat over the liver” (Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus = Va-Yikra: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS*

Translation, The JPS Torah Commentary [Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 7, citing *AHw*).

1:9. *entrails...legs*. The term “legs” (פָּרֵעַ) is used only of animal legs, whether of larger creatures (as here) or smaller ones (11:21).

water. Heb. “the water.” Hebrew can use the article before objects used for some specific purpose; English requires it be omitted (see Joüon §137m.III and m.III.1).

priest then burns everything up in smoke on the altar. The sequence of הַקָּטִיר + subject + direct object + הַמִּזְבֵּחַ is common in Leviticus (1:13; 2:2; 3:5; etc.). The *qāmeṣ–hê* on the end of הַמִּזְבֵּחַ indicates the altar is the place where the offering is made: “on the altar” (cf. 4:10 [עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה] with 4:19 [הַמִּזְבֵּחַ]; see also Joüon §93e).

burns...up in smoke. *Leviticus* prefers a different verb (שָׂרַף) when something is burned but not to be sent up in smoke as a pleasing aroma (Lev 4:12; 8:32; cf. esp. 8:16 with 8:17).

offering by fire. Levine (*Leviticus*, 7–8) notes the form of the word “follows the form of certain adjectives and literally means ‘something fiery’” (see Joüon §87c for the word’s form).

1:10. *sheep*. *Leviticus* uses two closely related words (כֶּבֶשׂ and כֶּשֶׁב). In the Pentateuch, the terms are not fully interchangeable: only כֶּבֶשׂ is used when the animal described is one year old (Exod 12:5; Lev 9:3; etc.), and this age is perhaps assumed in the few instances where it is not specified (Lev 4:32; Num 15:5, 11; perhaps Lev 14:10). כֶּשֶׁב is the term of choice when the animal is described more generally (1:10; 3:7; etc.).

More specific terms are as follows: adult males are identified with the word אֵיל (English “ram”) (Lev 23:18), sometimes in contrast to “sheep” (see Num 28:12–14; the size of accompanying offerings shows that rams were the larger of

the two). Adult females are identified with the word רִחֵל (English “ewe”) (Gen 31:38).

goat. The general term for “goat” (עִז) is used here. More specific terms are as follows: a very young goat is identified as a גִּדִּי (English “kid”) (Gen 27:9) and adult males as a תִּישׁ (Gen 30:35) or עֲתוּד (English “buck”) (Gen 31:10). Adult females are identified with the more general עִז (Gen 31:38).

1:11. *at the north side of the altar.* Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 164) notes that only sheep and goats are explicitly said to be slaughtered here (see also 4:24, 29, 33); herd animals are simply said to be slaughtered “before the LORD” (1:5; 4:4, 15), perhaps because they were larger and harder to control and therefore could be slaughtered any place in the tabernacle courtyard.

1:14. *from the turtledoves or from the young pigeons.* Cansdale (George S. Cansdale, *All the Animals of the Bible Lands* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970], 170) identifies the “turtledove” (תּוֹר) with the genus *Streptopelia* and the “pigeon” (יוֹנָה) with the genus *Columba*, in particular with the “Rock Dove” (*C. livia*).

young pigeons. Why young pigeons? One proposal suggests the meat of older pigeons is tough and thus unsuitable for sacrifice, whereas the meat of turtledoves is not (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 168–169; citing Jacqueline E. Knight, *The Hunter’s Game Cookbook* [New York, NY: Winchester, 1978], 202). Others have suggested “that the turtle doves are easily trapped as adults whereas the larger pigeons are almost impossible to catch except as fledglings in the nest” (Cansdale, *Animals*, 172–173). In either case, it should not surprise us if these, too, had to be at least a few days old before being eligible for sacrifice (cf. Lev 22:27).

1:15. *burn [it].* The direct object is regularly omitted with the verb “to burn” (הִקְטִיר) and is here supplied: “it” (cf. 2:9; 4:31; etc.).

1:16. *crissum.* Most English versions translate with “crop” instead of “crissum,” the “crop” referring to a sac at the lower end of the bird’s neck above the esophagus, where food can be stored for later eating or regurgitated to feed

young. But this leads to “he shall remove its crop with its feathers” (NASB, NKJV), which makes no sense because the crop is internal and has no feathers. Some versions avoid this difficulty by translating “he shall remove its crop and *the* feathers” (RSV, NJB, NIV), though there is no justification for ignoring the suffix on “its feathers.” Others translate “he shall remove the crop with its *contents*” (ESV, NJPS, NRSV), though there is no lexical justification for translating the relevant Hebrew term (נֹצֵר) in this way: it occurs only two other times and, in both instances, clearly refers to “feathers/plumage” (Ezek 17:3, 7). Milgrom’s solution (for which see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:15–17c) avoids all these difficulties and maintains the parallel between cleaning a land animal properly (especially by addressing the issue of excrement and the entrails [see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:9a]) and cleaning a bird properly (by removing the area most closely associated with excrement and the entrails). His linguistic argument on “crissum” (מִרְאָה) is more difficult to prove, though it seems plausible and makes good sense of the text.

by its feathers. With this translation, the idea would be that the priest removes the crissum *by* the feathers of the bird in that area (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 171; for the instrumental use of the preposition בְּ, see BDB 89.III.2.). It may also be translated “*along with* its feathers” (See BDB 89.III.1.), i.e., the feathers in that area. The endpoint is very similar.

2:1. *Now when a person presents a grain offering as an offering.* Since burnt and fellowship offerings are not mentioned here, some have suggested that this chapter is describing grain offerings that are made by themselves (Noordtzi, *Leviticus*, 43; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 196.). But there is no reason to read Leviticus 2 in this way, just as there is no reason to read Leviticus 1 as describing an independent burnt offering, or Leviticus 3 as describing an independent fellowship offering. Each chapter simply describes what the offerer needs to know when presenting their offering (whether independently or with other offerings).

person. Male or female; see BDB 660.4.c.(2). The word is a feminine noun (שֹׁפֵּן), thus explaining why the first verb is feminine. As elsewhere, the verse quickly returns to 3ms forms (see 5:1; 20:6), perhaps simply because this was the most common form for laws to use (cf. GKC §145t).

presents a grain offering as an offering. Heb. “...presents an offering a grain offering to the LORD...” I treat “a grain offering” as an adverbial accusative (“present an offering [*as*] a grain offering”), though it could be a genitive of species (“an offering *that is* a grain offering”) or an apposition of species (“an offering, [*specifically,*] a grain offering”) (cf. Joüon §127d). The endpoint would be the same.

grain offering. Some versions translate with “cereal offering” (RSV, NJB) but in modern English the word “cereal” is typically used to refer to a breakfast food; “grain offering” is clearer.

fine flour. 2 Kings 7:1 contrasts “fine flour” with “barley,” perhaps suggesting that by that time “fine flour” referred to wheat alone. Exodus 29:2, however, specifies “fine *wheat* flour,” an unnecessary clarification if the term “fine flour” referred only to wheat. It is not clear if the flour’s high value was due to a more intensive milling process (thus “fine” in the sense of less coarse) or because the flour was from a particularly valuable part of the grain (thus “fine” in the sense that it was the most desirable part). There is possible cognate support for the latter of these (Arabic *sult* refers to “a kind of barley without husks” [Paul D. Wegner, “חֲלֵט,” *NIDOTTE* 3:269]).

2:2. *Then one [of the priests] must take from it.* Heb. “and he must take from it a fistful...” The 3ms here refers to one/someone (cf. Joüon §155d); other texts make clear this is a priest’s duty (2:9; 5:12; 6:8 [15]). Someone from the priests is to take the lead in performing this rite.

from it. Heb. “from them,” that is, from among the various ingredients. In English, “it” reads more naturally.

a fistful of its fine flour and its oil, along with all its frankincense. The phrase “to take a fistful” is “to take the fullness of his fist” (קָמַץ מִלֵּא קָמָצוֹ); it is parallel elsewhere to the phrase “to fill his palm” (מָלֵא כַף; 9:17).

memorial portion. The form of the word אֶזְכָּרָה appears to refer to bringing about the idea of the root (Joüon §88Lb), in this case, “causing to remember,” that is, serving as a “memorial.” The word occurs seven times in priestly texts: six times it refers to the memorial portion of the grain offering (2:2, 9, 16; 5:12 [technically a “purification offering”]; 6:8 [15]; 24:7; Num 5:26) and once to the frankincense placed on the bread of the presence (and then presumably burnt; 24:7). In each instance, the “memorial portion” was the part burnt up in smoke on the altar.

Most versions translate with “memorial” or “memorial portion” (NASB, ESV, NIV, NET, etc.). The translation “token portion” (NJPS, NRSV) is correct insofar as the part burnt on the altar substituted for the offering as a whole. For example, the “memorial/token portion” of the bread of the presence was the frankincense, which “served as a substitute for the bread” (John W. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, Concordia Commentary [Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2003], 79). At the same time, “memorial portion” appears to capture better the use of the word in these texts (see comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:2b–c).

2:3. rest. A *Niphal* participle used substantively: “the rest, that which remains.” This verse begins with a noun phrase, drawing our attention naturally to the part of the grain offering not burned on the altar and explaining what should be done with it.

belongs to Aaron and his sons. To provide for their needs. Uncooked grain offerings in particular would be shared by the priests (7:10), thus providing an ongoing store of flour to use for making bread.

belongs to. The preposition לְ is often used to indicate possession (BDB 512.5).

thing most holy. “The ‘most holy’ offerings could only be eaten in a ritually ‘holy place’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 109). For the grain offering, see 10:12; the purification offering, 6:19 (26); the guilt offering, 7:6; the bread of the presence, 24:9; the ordination offering, Exod 29:32. The burnt offering was of course not eaten. The tabernacle’s courtyard counted as a “holy place” at which they could be eaten (see at 6:9 [16]).

2:4. *unleavened bread mixed with oil and wafers of unleavened bread spread with oil.* Some translate v. 4b: “...unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil *or* unleavened wafers spread with oil” (RSV, NIV, NASB, NRSV; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 177; John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* WBC 4 [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1992], 26). This translation of the conjunction is possible, especially in case law (BDB 252.1d), but in other contexts where these breads occur together the conjunction appears to mean “and” (cf. Exod 29:2 with 29:23 and Num 6:15 with 6:19; Lev 8:26; so also on these verses RSV, NIV, NASB, NRSV; Lev 7:12 is ambiguous). This shifts the burden of proof to those who translate with “or” (neither Milgrom nor Hartley defend “or” over “and”).

mixed with oil. Heb. “mixed with the oil.” Hebrew often uses the definite article with nouns of materials (Joüon §137ia); English idiom requires the article to be dropped.

spread with oil. The word for “spread” (מָשַׁח) can refer to “anointing” with holy oil (Exod 28:41; 40:9–11) but also to “smearing/spreading” oil on an object (2 Sam 1:21; Isa 21:5).

2:6. *you must break.* The verb “break” (פָּתַח) occurs only here in the Bible, though the root occurs in other Semitic languages with the meaning “to break up, crumble” (BDB 837). It is pointed here as an infinitive absolute, which “is fairly common in laws, where it is equivalent to an injunctive future” (Joüon §123v) and so translated “you must break.” No such command is given for the softer oven and pan breads (vv. 4, 7), which could simply have a handful torn away.

It is a grain offering. Although this phrase seems unnecessary, it was not uncommon to end a law by identifying again the offering it described (cf. 1:13, 17; 4:21).

2:7. *made of fine flour with oil.* The verb translated “made” (עָשָׂה) may also be translated “prepared;” it is frequently used in food preparation contexts to describe the “making” or “preparing” of the meal (BDB 794.II.3).

2:8. The MT has two difficulties. 1. There is an abrupt switch from second person (“you will bring”) to third person (“he will present”); this may be due to a dittography of the direct object marker after the verb (וְהִבִּיא אֹתָהּ → וְהִבִּיא אֹתָהּ; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 185). 2. The verb “will have been made” (יֵעָשֶׂה) is a masculine *Niphal* and refers to the grain offering; this does not fit since “grain offering” takes feminine verbs throughout the passage. (If the MT erred in switching to a 2ms at the verse’s beginning, it may have read a *Niphal* instead of a *Qal* to have “you will bring...it will be made,” which works better than “you will bring...he will have made”.) The LXX avoids both difficulties and is followed in my translation (though using generic third person plural forms). It is true that there is a remaining challenge, insofar as the text switches from second person in 2:4–7 to third person here, but changes between second and third person happen elsewhere in Leviticus as well (cf. 22:18–20; 26:36). In this case, it may somehow be related to going from describing the types of grain offerings in 2:4–7 to the way to present them in 2:8–10.

bring it near to the altar. That is, approaches the altar with it to perform sacrificial rites (Exod 30:20). Only the priests could do this (cf. Num 16:1–17:5 [16:40]).

2:11–12. Verses 11–12 are in the second person plural, vv. 13–15 in the second person singular, perhaps because the priests, who actually burned the offerings on the altar (v. 9), are being addressed in vv. 11–12, while vv. 13–15

return to address the offerer (and thus the singular verb with which they are normally addressed in this chapter; cf. vv. 4–7). Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 188.

2:11. *No grain offering.* Heb. “all of the grain offering,” though the sense is “every grain offering.” Compare “all of the bed” (for “every bed,” 15:4), “all of the saddle” (for “every saddle,” 15:9; see BDB 481.1.b).

[as] leavened bread. Understanding “leavened bread” (מֵצָה) as an adverbial accusative (cf. Joüon §126c).

leavened bread. The word translated “leavened bread” (חֶמֶץ) is used elsewhere in parallel to the word for “unleavened bread” (מֵצָה) (Exod 12:15; Lev 6:9–10 [16–17]; Deut 16:3); it should not be rendered as “leaven/yeast” (RSV, NIV, NASB), for which the verse uses a different word (שָׂאֵר).

you must not burn up in smoke. Heb. “you must not burn up in smoke from it,” that is, “from any part of it” (see BDB 580.3.b.[c]). For English style, “from it” is usually omitted (RSV, NIV, etc.). Since only priests could offer the grain offering on the altar (2:2, 9), 2:11–12 may be addressed to them (so Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 188). If the layman is in view, the sense would be, “Make sure there is never any leaven or honey in a grain offering you present to a priest to be burnt!”

honey. In some contexts, “honey” (דְּבַשׁ) refers to bees’ honey (Judg 14:8; 1 Sam 14:27); in others, it appears among listed agricultural products (Deut 8:8; Ezek 16:13), perhaps suggesting the word refers to the “honey” (that is “nectar”) of fruits such as dates (so Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 189–90).

2:12. *on the altar.* For “on,” note that אֲל can be used where עַל might be expected (BDB 41, Note 2).

2:13. *you must add salt to.* Or “season with salt” (NASB, NIV, RSV), but this has a distinctly culinary connotation that seems to detract from the reason for adding the salt (see further comments on “salt of the covenant of your God” in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:13).

with your grain offering. Heb. “from with”; the “from” is omitted for smoother English (cf. Ps 89:45 [44]). For the meaning “with” for the preposition **עַל**, see BDB 755.4c. It is also possible to translate the preposition **עַל** as “on,” implying the salt was put on top of the grain offering. (Though referring to burnt offerings, cf. Ezek 43:24.)

3:1–17. This is the only offering eaten by priests and lay Israelites. In terms of eating it, it may be noted that fellowship–offering meat appears to have been prepared most commonly by boiling, which is assumed in Numbers 6:19, was true in at least some instances of the purification offering (Lev 6:21 [28]), and appears to have been a major preparation method at a later point in Israel’s history (1 Sam 2:13; for boiling meat, see also Exod 16:3; 29:31; 1 Kgs 19:21).

3:1. *fellowship offering.* The term for “fellowship offering” (**שְׁלָמִים**) is usually plural (86 times; the singular only in Amos 5:22). The plural form can refer to more than one fellowship offering (Exod 24:5; 29:28), but also to a single offering (Num 6:14, 17), which seems to be the case here (note that a single animal is in view). Perhaps the term began as a plural of abstraction: this offering resulted in a state of fellowship (cf. Joüon §136g, h). Certainty on this point is not possible.

3:3–4. *fat.* The laws for the burnt offering use a different word for fat (**פֶּתֶר**) that appears to refer to “suet” in particular (see at 1:8 above). The word here (**חֵלֶב**) is more general, and understandably used in the fellowship–offering laws since they describe the “fat” more broadly (e.g., the kidneys seem to be included here as part of the “fat”; see further comments below). The following description of the fat expands on that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 3:3–4.

The “fat” of a herd animal consisted of three elements:

1. “the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is connected to the entrails.” This may refer to a “large net of fat” that covers the intestines and to “the lumps of fat...between the guts or intestines” (Marcus M. Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament*

with *New Translation: Leviticus, Part 1* [London: Longmans, 1867], 491). The entrails themselves may have been eaten by the offerers (cf. Exod 12:9; many societies to this day eat entrails).

2. “the two kidneys and the fat that is on them that is connected to the loins.” The kidneys were covered in fat (cf. Isa 34:6) (Kalisch, *Leviticus, Part 1*, 491). This fat is further described as that which is connected “to” or “on” the “loins” (כִּלְיֹת) (or possible that is “together with” the loins; cf. Sklar, *Leviticus*, 125 n. 10), which are “the part of a human being or quadruped on each side of the spinal column between the hipbone and the false ribs” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*) and which could grow quite fat (cf. Job 15:27) (Kalisch, *Leviticus, Part 1*, 491).
3. “the lobe of the liver, [which] must be removed with the kidneys.” The liver is divided into several lobes. According to Milgrom, the “lobe” in this case is “the *lobus caudatus* or *processus pyramidalis*, a fingerlike projection from the liver” which “protrudes conspicuously” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 208) and is located “close to the right kidney.” (See also Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 38. The fact that it protrudes could explain the use of the preposition עַל [Heb. “on the liver”], here left untranslated.) If so, this could explain why it is to be removed with the kidneys.

the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is connected to the entrails.

The fuller quote from Kalisch (Marcus M. Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament: Leviticus, Part 1* [London: Longmans, 1867], 491) explains: “‘The fat that covers the [entrails]’ is the large net of fat, which, beginning from the stomach with which it is joined, spreads over the intestines and covers them, serving especially to secure to these parts a proper degree of warmth; while ‘all the fat that is on the [entrails]’ is evidently the lumps of fat which form themselves between the guts or intestines and are easily detached from them.”

loins. More broadly, the term for “loins” could also be translated as “flanks,” which refers to “the side of a quadruped” (Webster) and thus includes the “loins.” The oft-cited suggestion of Held (see M. Held, “Studies in Comparative–Semitic Lexicography,” in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger*, ed. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen [Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1965], 395–406, esp. 401–406) that this word refers in the Old Testament to the “sinews” does not seem to work at 3:4, since sinews (or tendons) are fibrous cords that connect muscles to a bone or other part but have nothing to do with kidneys or fat.

lobe of the liver. Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 208) has noted that the liver was used in divination in the ancient Near East (cf. Ezek 21;26; the practice is known as hepatoscopy). He therefore suggests that the liver’s lobe might have been removed “in order to prevent its use in divination” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 208). This is not impossible, though the text itself links the burning of the lobe to the fact that it was considered as one of the fat pieces.

must be removed. Heb. “he must remove it” (that is, the lobe); resumptive pronouns are not always translated (cf. examples in Joüon §156c).

3:5. *Aaron’s sons.* Verses 11 and 16 refer only to a singular priest, possibly because the fat of the (larger) cow or bull required more than one priest to deal with it (v. 5) whereas the fat of the (smaller) sheep or goat did not (vv. 11, 16).

3:9. *the entire fatty tail.* The adjective here may be explained as an accusative of specification: “the fatty tail *in its entirety*.” In these instances, the adjective has a substantive function and does not need to agree with its corresponding noun in state of definiteness (for examples, see *IBHS* §14.3.3c.16–20).

close to the backbone. The word for “close” (עֲמָה) always occurs in the construct and is usually prefixed with the preposition לְ (which is not always

translated; Exod 28:27; 39:20). The word “backbone” (עֲצָה) occurs only here in the Old Testament and is usually translated as “backbone” or “spine.”

3:16. *belongs to.* This preposition (לְ) is often used to indicate possession (BDB 513.5b).

3:17. *statute.* This word can be either the feminine noun חֻקָּה (Exod 27:21; Lev 3:17; 7:36; etc.) or the masculine noun חֻק (Exod 30:21; Lev 6:11 [18]); these seem to be interchangeable (cf. Exod 28:43 with 30:21). These terms are also used in Leviticus to refer to an “allotment” (6:11 [18]) or to a “custom” (18:3).

4:2. *person.* See at 2:1.

in any. Heb. “from all” (מִכָּל). For the sense “any/one of any/in any,” see also Leviticus 18:26, 29; Num 5:6; BDB 580.3.b.(c), (d).

4:3. *a bull from the herd.* Heb. “a bull a son of a herd.” The term “son” could imply a “young bull of the herd” is in view (so RSV, NIV; see above at 1:14 for this use of “son”). But since there was a different way to refer to a young bull (9:2), it may be preferable to understand the word “son” as simply referring to a member of a group (cf. BDB 121.7.a and 7.b). The sense here would be “a bull, a member of a herd” (or “a bull, a herd–member”), frequently rendered more simply as “a bull of/from the herd” (so NASB, ESV, NRSV). While the qualification “from the herd” seems redundant, it may be present simply to emphasize this bull must come from domesticated animals, not wild ones (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 248; cf. 1:2).

bull. The high priest offered a bull, not a male goat (like the leader, 4:23), nor a female sheep or goat (like the average citizen, 4:28, 32). Why these differences? No explanation is given. It may be that the animals correspond symbolically to the offerer’s position in Israelite society: the bull would have been the Israelites’ most powerful domesticated animal (and thus offered by their chief leader, the high priest), a male goat the most powerful flock animal (and thus offered by the Israelites’ leaders), and a female goat or sheep the most plentiful

flock animal (and thus offered by the everyday citizen, the “flock” of Israel; cf. Num 27:16–17). Whatever the explanation, “it seems reasonable to conclude [that such a costly animal for the high priest] would have communicated the importance of his position and the seriousness of his sin” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 143).

4:5. *some of.* For this use of *לְ*, see BDB 580.3.b.(a) (cf. Lev 18:30; 20:2).

4:6. *in front of.* For this meaning of *אֶת־פָּנָי*, see also Leviticus 10:4 (cf. BDB 816.II.2.b).

4:7. *horns of the altar.* “The horns represented the altar as a whole, so that by placing the blood there, the priest was cleansing the entire altar (cf. 8:15)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 144). Note the comparable situation of placing sacrificial blood on the priests’ right ears, thumbs, and big toes as a way of consecrating their entire bodies (Lev 8:23–24). This is known as *pars pro toto*, that is, a part of a person or object represents that person or object as a whole; what is done to the part thus counts as being done to the whole.

the altar of fragrant incense. Heb. “the altar of the incense of spices,” which were aromatic; thus “the altar of *fragrant* incense” (so RSV, NRSV, NIV, etc.).

4:10. *it is removed.* I understand the imperfect to be used to describe habitual action in the present (cf. Joüon §113c).

4:11. *Now as for.* The main verbal sequence is interrupted, drawing our attention to the remaining pieces of the animal that will have to be collected for the activity of 4:12.

together with. Or “along with.” For translation see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 108 n.14.

legs, entrails. For “legs” and “entrails” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:9a.

refuse. This word is understood to refer to the fecal matter found in the animal’s intestines (BDB 831; cf. RSV, NRSV) or to the animal trimmings that remain after skinning and butchering (the “offal”; so NJB, NKJV). “Refuse” (NASB) allows for either possibility.

4:12. *all [these parts of] the bull.* Heb. “all the bull,” that is, all the parts of the bull just listed in 4:11.

he must have brought outside. Because it is unlikely the priest would carry all these pieces by himself (René Péter–Contesse and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus*, UBS Handbook Series [New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1992], 51), “he must have brought out” makes better sense than “he must bring out.” Alternatively, this is another impersonal 3ms, which is common in sacrificial texts (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:5a).

outside of. Heb. “to (לְ) from outside (חוּץ + לְ) for/with regard to (לְ),” a commonly occurring phrase simply meaning “outside of” (cf. 4:21; 10:4; 14:3; etc.). For *hîrēq* instead of *serē* under the *mēm*, see Joüon §20a.

and it must be burned. Heb. “and he must burn it.” For the passive translation, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:5a, and cf. Num 19:5, which also describes the burning of an animal outside the camp and uses this exact form of the verb impersonally (cf. NASB, NIV, ESV, NJPS). Note further that Numbers 19:5–8 make a distinction between the priest and the one who burns the animal; this could imply the priest in our context also does not burn these pieces outside the camp (and further strengthens the case for a passive translation here).

it must be burned...it must be burned. The first phrase uses a *Qal* (“and he/one must burn”) and the second phrase a *Niphal* (“and it must be burned”). This could be an argument against translating the *Qal* passively in this context: why use different forms if the meaning is the same? But it could also be argued that the parallelism of the phrases suggests the *Qal* and *Niphal* are functioning in a similar way and thus used somewhat interchangeably. In further support, cf. the burial formulas in 1 Kgs 15, which can alternate between an impersonal third person *Qal* in v. 8 (“they/one buried him”) and a passive *Niphal* in v. 24 (“he was buried”) with no apparent difference in meaning (Joüon §155.b and n. 4).

4:13. *something*. “Most versions translate the word ‘something’ (דָּבָר) with ‘the matter’ or ‘the thing’ (so NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, etc.). But the word ‘the’ is not in the Hebrew, and this suggests a translation of ‘a thing’ or ‘something’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 4:13–14a). See also Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *A Study of Ḥāṭṭā’ and Ḥāṭṭā’t in Leviticus 4–5*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 6, and the LXX.

suffer guilt’s consequences. The translation “realizes his guilt” (NJPS; ESV) is close to the mark, though the verb in question (אָשָׁם/אָשָׁם) appears to refer primarily to the *consequences* of the guilt that lead people to realize their sin (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 4:3a). Perhaps it is used in some places with the sense “to realize guilt because of suffering its consequences,” but the idea of “suffering guilt’s consequences” should not be removed.

4:14. The transition from v. 13 to v. 14 is marked by a וְ (“when/and so/and thus”) followed by the verb יָדָע in the *Niphal*: “when it becomes known.” The transition in vv. 22–23 and vv. 27–28 is marked by the particle אוֹ (“or”) followed by the verb יָדָע in the *Hiphil*: “or it is made known.” This difference is well explained by Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 243–44): in the first case, there is no one outside of the congregation to make the sin known (hence the passive: when it becomes known); in the latter cases, someone could inform the individual (hence the active: or it is made known).

in this regard. Heb. “the sin that they have sinned against it/concerning it/in the matter of it (עָלֶיהָ).” The “it” is 3fs and most likely refers to the “commandment” (also feminine) that has just been mentioned. To sin “against” is typically conveyed with the preposition לְ (so Exod 32:33; Deut 9:16; 1 Sam 12:23; etc.); this makes “concerning it/in the matter of it” more likely for עָלֶי (see BDB 754.II.1.f.[g]–[h] for this use), here brought across with “in this regard” (cf. 5:5b; Num 6:11).

bull. Numbers 15:22–24 calls for a different purification offering for the community’s unintentional sin: a goat instead of a bull (and the addition of a bull for a burnt offering). Why? Responses have been surveyed (but not affirmed) by Gane: the type of sin in Numbers 15 is against all the commandments (15:22), not simply one (Lev 4:13), or the change is due to differences in the theology of one text versus the other (Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005], 85 n. 46). One of Gane’s own suggestions is contextual: Numbers 15:22–24 comes immediately after the community’s rebellion in Numbers 14 (including their grumbling against Aaron, the high priest); the Lord thus makes their purification offering lesser than the high priest’s to remind them of their place (cf. Gane, *Cult*, 85; he explains the burnt offering bull as a supplement to make up for the downgrade of the purification offering animal).

4:20. *Thus must be done.* Or: “Thus he (the priest) must do to the bull,” but since “the priest” is reintroduced in the last half of the verse, I understand the 3ms here impersonally.

with. Or “to”; cf. 16:15 for translating לְ as “with”.

just as...the same. Contra some versions (NASB, NET), I understand “just as” (כַּאֲשֶׁר) and “the same/thus” (כֵּן) to introduce two related clauses (so ESV); cf. see Lev 24:19, 20; 27:14; BDB 486.2.c.

and they will be forgiven. Why is this verb always a passive? The text does not explain. Macholz describes this as a “divine passive” (*passivum divinum*) (Christian Macholz, “Das ‘Passivum divinum,’ seine Anfänge im Alten Testament und der ‘Hofstil,’” *ZNW* 81 [1990], 247–53, esp. 248–49, 251–53). He suggests this type of passive was originally a “royal passive” (*passivum regium*), that is, a passive used when speaking of kings and thus also used in speech concerning the deity (the ultimate ruler). This suggestion is theoretically possible but difficult to confirm.

4:22. *If.* “For this use of אָשַׁר see BDB 83.8.d” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 147 n. 47). It is not clear why this verse uses אָשַׁר instead of אִם (cf. vv. 3, 13, 27, 32), though it may be noted that an interchange between אִם and אָשַׁר takes place elsewhere (cf. Deut 11:27 [אָשַׁר] with 11:28 [אִם]). Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 246) suggests that it is meant to highlight that a different type of purification offering is being addressed.

4:23. *or.* Several versions (RSV, NASB, NRSV) avoid this translation because they translate the previous verb (אָשַׁם) with “to be guilty”, and it would not make sense to say “and he is guilty *or* his sin is made known to him.” But since the previous verb most likely means “to suffer guilt’s consequences,” the more common translation of the particle אוֹ (“or”) can be kept (see further Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 2 [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005], 30–31).

4:23–24. *goat.* More woodenly, “a שְׂעִיר [buck? hairy one?] of the goats.” See discussion in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 147 n. 51. It may further be noted that the phrase “of the goats” might seem redundant; it is perhaps used to indicate the animal must be domesticated (cf. above at 4:3, “a bull from the herd”), and is usually left untranslated.

in the place. The word “place” (מָקוֹם) is at times pointed as though it is in construct when it precedes a clause that begins with the particle אָשַׁר (BDB 880.4; see 4:33; 7:2; etc.). It is translated in these instances as though definite.

4:24. *is slaughtered.* Heb. “he slaughters/will slaughter,” an impersonal 3ms translated passively. Contextually, it makes sense to take the imperfect as describing habitual action in the present (cf. Joüon §113c), thus “is slaughtered” and not “will be slaughtered.”

4:26. *on account of his sin.* “[T]hat is, the original inadvertence that the person committed (‘his sin that he has sinned,’ v. 23)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 147–48). This reading is the most straightforward and speaks against that of Milgrom, who

argues that the offerer is forgiven only for the *subsequent* sin of defiling the Tent of Meeting (*Leviticus 1–16*, 256). The Tent of Meeting is indeed cleansed (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 140, “The Occasions and Purpose(s) of a Purification Offering”), but the focus of forgiveness is the original inadvertence.

on account of. For this use of *לְ*, see BDB 579–80.2.e–f (see also 5:6). It is interchangeable in these contexts with *עַל* (cf. 4:26 and 5:10 with 4:35; 5:13).

4:27. *by doing*. Heb. “in her/its doing”; the suffix is feminine because it refers to *שֹׁפֵט*, which is also feminine. The *אֲ* prefix is often used temporally with an infinitive construct (“when”), though it may also be used in a causal sense (“by”; BDB 91.V.2). The endpoint here is the same.

4:31. *is removed*. The perfect can be used for repeated or continuous actions (Joüon §112d).

pleasing aroma. While this is the only time that the phrase “pleasing aroma” occurs with a purification offering, “there is nothing intrinsically jarring [about] a notice that the LORD is pleased with sacrificial expiation” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 252).

4:32. *for a purification offering*. Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 252) suggests translating “for purification purposes,” although this would be the only instance where the word is used in this way. Another possibility is “for sin,” but if this were the case, *עַל הַטָּאֲתוֹ* might be expected (cf. 4:3, 28). The weight of evidence supports the above translation (4:3, 14, 32; 5:6, 7, 8, 11).

4:35. *burn it*. Heb. “burn them,” that is, the pieces of fat (cf. 4:10); English requires “it” in this context.

5:1. *report*. For the use of “report” (*דָּבַר*) in the context of testimony, see Prov 12:17; 29:24.

but they do not report [what they know]. The law does not explain why the witness fails to testify, though possible reasons could be that “they were somehow involved in the crime (Prov 29:24) or were ‘influenced by friendship or shame or

fear’ or ‘indifference’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 160, citing Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 294). Could it be that the witness simply forgot relevant information, as in vv. 2–4? In theory, yes, though if this were the case it seems surprising that v. 1 fails to use the very phrase used in vv. 2–4 to indicate the forgetfulness: “it is hidden from him (וְנִסְתָּר מִמֶּנּוּ).”

bears their punishment. The Hebrew of this phrase is used in three ways. The most common use is to have the sinner as subject of the verb (Lev 5:1, 17; Lev 19:17; 20:20; 22:9). The term for “sin” can be either עָוֹן or חַטָּא, with no apparent difference in meaning; cf. Lev 20:17, 19 (עָוֹן) with Lev 20:20 (חַטָּא). In the second use, the person who is wronged is the subject of the verb, in which case the phrase means ‘to forgive’ (Gen 50:17; Exod 10:17; 1 Sam 15:25). In the third use, a third party—neither the sinner nor the person who is wronged—is the subject of the verb, in which case the phrase means the third party ‘bears away’ or ‘removes’ the sin of the guilty (Lev 10:17). For in-depth discussion, see Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 20–23, 88–99.

5:2. swarming. The sense is not as much on the manner of movement (“moves along the ground” [NIV]) as it is on the speed of reproduction (“swarming/teeming”; see further at 11:10).

5:3. human impurity. Heb. “impurity of a human (זִמְטָא).” For זִמְטָא as a reference to “humans,” whether male or female, see BDB 9.1 (cf. Lev 5:4; 7:21; etc.).

with regard to any such impurity. Heb. “with regard to any of his/its impurity,” that is, of the impurity of a human just mentioned (so Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 299).

with regard to any. See BDB 514.5.e.(d).

with which one can become impure. Heb. “which he will become impure by it.” The imperfect (יִזְמֹט) can be used to indicate potentiality (“can,” Joüon §1131) and the 3ms to refer to an indefinite subject (“one/someone,” Joüon §155e).

5:4. *by speaking rashly.* See Joüon §124o for this use of the infinitive construct.

5:5. *that they must confess in what way they sinned.* Heb. “he must confess that which he sinned concerning it/in the matter of it (עֲלֵיָהּ),” that is, concerning/in the matter of the commandment; cf. at 4:14 above (“in this regard”).

confess. This is the only instance in Leviticus 4–5 where the text requires the sinner to confess his or her wrong. Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 301) states this is because confession is only for deliberate sins, and thus is not required elsewhere in Leviticus 4–5, where most sins are inadvertent. The problem with this explanation is that the sins of 5:2–4 are also inadvertent, a point which Milgrom himself later concedes (*Leviticus 1–16*, 311). A more likely explanation is simply that confession was an assumed part of all sacrifices for sin and thus did not need to be constantly mentioned. Sacrificial texts regularly make these kinds of assumptions: every animal would have to be skinned but only one verse in Leviticus commands it (1:6); every offering would have salt added to it though again only one verse in Leviticus commands it (2:13). Confession may similarly be viewed as an assumed part of sacrificial atonement.

It should not surprise us if the offerer repeated the confession at the tabernacle in order to identify the reason for the offering. This would most likely take place during the hand–leaning rite (see comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:4).

in what way. Heb. “that which”; cf. Lev 26:40 (and see BDB 83.8.a.[β]).

5:7. *that which they sinned.* Heb. “that which he sinned,” an apparent abbreviation for the longer phrase of 5:6: “on account of his sin which he sinned (עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא).”

5:8. *the one that.* The direct object marker (אֵת) can occur on the front of a relative clause that stands in the accusative position (so also 5:16; 9:5; 13:54; etc.).

5:9. *some of.* See at 4:5 above.

the remainder of the blood. The “remainder of x” is often expressed by “נשאר (Niphal participle) + כִּי + x” (25:52; 26:36, 39; etc.).

5:10. [*as*] *a whole burnt offering.* “Whole burnt offering (עֹלָה)” functions here as an adverbial accusative that describes the “state” or “quality” of the direct object: “he must offer [it *as*] a whole burnt offering” (Joüon §126c, g).

5:11. *that which they sinned.* See at 5:7 above.

a tenth of an ephah. Heb. “the tenth of the ephah”; cf. “the fourth of the hin” (Lev 23:13), “the tenth of the homer” (Ezek 45:11). English requires “a” in place of “the” before the unit of measurement.

oil...frankincense. It has been suggested that oil and frankincense were associated with joy and celebration and were therefore inappropriate where atonement for sin was being made (Levine, *Leviticus*, 29–30; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 306; Walter C. Kaiser, “Leviticus,” *NIB*, vol. 1 [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994], 1036; Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC 3A [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000], 120; cf. Ps 45:8 [7]; 1 Sam 10:1). But grain offerings offered the normal way (that is, with oil and frankincense) would have frequently accompanied burnt offerings that atoned for sin (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 107, “The Occasions and Purposes of a Grain Offering”). At the least, the omission of these ingredients would have distinguished this from a regular grain offering; more than that is difficult to say.

5:12. *its.* There is no *mappîq* in the 3fs suffix, though this is not an uncommon phenomenon; see examples in GKC §91e.

5:13. [*in*] *any one of these.* Heb. “from one from these.” “From one” (מֵאֶחָד + הֵן) often means “a single one” or “any one” (BDB 581, 3.b.[d]).

belong to. The Hebrew phrase (לְהֵיחֵל) often indicates possession (BDB 513.5.b).

5:15. *sinned by mistake [by taking] from the holy gifts of the LORD.* Heb. “sins unintentionally from (מִן) the holy gifts of the LORD.” As noted in *IBHS*

§11.4.3d, when a phrase consisting of a verb plus a preposition does not make sense (in this case, “to sin unintentionally from”), it is likely that another verb should be understood to be implicit (cf. GKC §119ff for examples with מִן in particular). In this instance, that verb would be “to take” (לָקַח), as suggested “by the fact that the person has to ‘repay’ (5:16) what they took. Compare Josh 7:11, where Achan ‘takes from’ (לָקַח מִן) the holy items devoted to destruction, an act that is also described as ‘committing treachery (מַעַל מַעַל)’ (7:1; 22:20)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 174 n. 11). It is less likely that this means the person sins “in any” or “with any” of the Lord’s holy gifts (RSV; NIV; ESV; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 320), since in these instances מִן is typically followed by a noun such as “one” or “all” (so 4:2, 22; 5:13, 17) or is preceded by the word “one” (4:27).

holy gifts. For priests: the portions of grain, purification, or reparation offerings not burned on the altar (2:10; 6:18–19, 22 [25–26, 29]; Num 18:9). For their households: the firstfruits of oil, wine and grain (Num 18:12) and various fellowship offering portions (Lev 10:14).

silver shekels. Heb. “silver (of) shekels,” with “shekels” being an attributive accusative, a genitive, or in apposition (cf. Joüon §127d; for these categories see Joüon §127, 129 and 131).

sanctuary. For קֹדֶשׁ as a reference to the tabernacle complex as a whole (“sanctuary”), see Exod 36:1, 3, 6; etc.

5:16. *and add.* A *Hiphil* jussive of יָסַף. This verb is defective: it uses the *Hiphil* for the imperfect and the *Qal* for the perfect (Joüon §85b), with no difference in meaning (cf. 27:27 [*Qal*] with 27:31 [*Hiphil*]).

5:17. *that.* The word “that” (כִּי) is not grammatically necessary but might occur here after “person” (נַפֶּשׁ) in order to tie this law in with the previous one (which also has כִּי נַפֶּשׁ; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 129).

they suffer guilt’s consequences. Milgrom’s [*Leviticus 1–16*, 332–33] translation “feel guilty” does not work here, since the person is unaware what they

are to “feel guilty” about. See further Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 37–38.

they suffer guilt’s consequences and bear their punishment. My translation of this verse understands the phrases “they will bear their sin” and “they will suffer guilt’s consequences” to be parallel ways of describing the general suffering that is brought about by sin (cf. vv. 1–4, which consists of four parallel laws that interchange “they will bear their sin” [5:1] and “they will suffer guilt’s consequences” [5:2–4]). It is also possible to take this phrase as the beginning of the apodosis and translate, “...and they suffer guilt’s consequences, *then they will bear the penalty of their sin and will bring to the priest,*” that is, the person will bear the penalty by bringing the sacrifice. In either case, it is clear that suffering prompts the sinner to bring a reparation offering.

5:21 (6:2). *against the LORD.* The preposition כַּ (kaf) can have the sense “against,” especially with verbs of hostility (see BDB 89.II.4.a; cf. Lev 26:40; Deut 32:51; Josh 22:16; etc.).

acted deceptively...about. For this Hebrew phrase (כַּחֲשׁוֹן) with the meaning “to be deceptive about,” cf. 5:22 (6:3).

deposit...pledge. The precise meaning of these terms in the Hebrew is not clear. Because 5:23d (6:4d) summarizes this part of the law by speaking only of that which is “deposited” into the care of another, the Hebrew terms for “deposit” and “pledge” must be closely related and must refer to “an item of worth entrusted to another, either for safekeeping (cf. Exod 22:6, 9 [7, 10]) or as collateral for a debt or other obligation (cf. Gen 38:17–18; Exod 22:25 [26]; Deut 24:6; Ezek 18:7)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 177). The English words “deposit” and “pledge” cover all of these possibilities.

pledge. The Hebrew phrase is “a putting/placing of a hand” (בְּתִשּׁוּמַת יָד). Since it refers to something being “deposited” (see above comment), the phrase could refer to an object being “put” into the “hand” of another person (cf. “put” +

“hand” in Exod 4:21; 1 Kgs 20:6; Isa 51:23). “Deposit” would be the more general translation to use, but since this is the regular translation for פְּקֻדָּוֹן, I use “pledge”, which complements “deposit” and allows for both words to cover the different reasons why one would place an object into the hand of another (see above comment).

5:22 (6:3). *falsely.* Heb. “on falsehood”; for the adverbial sense of this phrase (“falsely”), see BDB 754.II.f.(e).

in these regards. Heb. “in these things,” that is, in regard to the Lord’s commandments. Alternatively “against these things,” that is, against the Lord’s commandments (for the translation “against” for the preposition, see Gen 42:22; 1 Sam 19:5; Neh 9:29 and cf. BDB 89.II.4.a). The endpoint is the same.

and so has sworn an oath falsely about. The Masoretic accents suggest the start of a new major phrase on “about,” though several modern versions and commentators place the start of the new major phrase as above with “and so has sworn” (cf. NJPS, NRSV, NET; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 337–38; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 128). The latter approach understands that swearing the false oath is what holds all four cases together. For rationale, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 5:21b–22a(6:2b–3a).

5:24 (6:5). *anything.* For this use of מְכַל, see Gen 14:23; Num 6:4; Judg 13:14; see also BDB 580–81.3.b.(c).

falsely. Heb. “to falsehood”; for the adverbial sense of this phrase (“falsely”), see BDB 516.5.i.(b) (cf. Lev 19:12; Jer 5:2; 7:9).

in its entirety. Heb. “repay [it] in its head.” The word “head” (רֹאשׁ) can refer to the entirety of something (BDB 911.7; cf. Exod 30:12; Num 1:2).

one fifth they must add to it. Heb. “and must add its fifths to it.” The form is normally a singular: “its fifth” (5:16; 22:14; 27:13; etc.). Several manuscripts and ancient versions read “and a fifth” or “and its fifth,” though this is the easier reading and therefore less likely. Péter–Contesse (René Péter–Contesse, *Lévitique 1–16*,

CAT 3a [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1993], 92) suggests that the plural is here because the previous verse contains a list of things that were withheld unjustly, and the sense is thus “repay it in its entirety *and in each case* add its fifth” (see also Carl F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 2 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1867–1869], 315). Whatever the solution, it seems clear the law is requiring repayment in full plus twenty percent.

to its owner. Heb. “to whom it is to him,” that is, the one to whom it belongs (“its owner”).

in the day they suffer guilt’s consequences. Heb. “in the day of suffering guilt’s consequences (אֲשַׁמְתּוּ בַיּוֹם אֲשַׁמְתּוּ).” It is debated whether אֲשַׁמְתּוּ is an infinitival form, a noun, or a nominal form with a verbal idea (see overview in Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 24 n. 47), though it is usually agreed it should be translated verbally (ERV; JPS; NJPS; NJB; NRSV; ESV; NET). (Some versions translate as though the word refers to a reparation offering [so RSV, NASB, NIV], but in this instance we might expect to have the word אֲשָׁם instead.) For the translation “suffer guilt’s consequences,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 4:3a.

in the day. This phrase may at times have the weakened sense of “when” (BDB 400.7.d). In either case, the person’s suffering prompts them to bring the offering because it makes clear that the Lord is bringing his justice to bear.

5:25 (6:6). *To the priest.* The words “to the priest” are omitted in the SP and LXX, but the MT is the more difficult reading and thus preferred.

5:26 (6:7). *Thereby.* Heb. “in/by it” (בָּהּ); cf. Hos 13:1 for a similar construction where the preposition has an instrumental sense (“by”). It is also possible to translate “in this regard” (cf. 5:22b [6:3b]).

6:2 (9). *law.* “Leviticus uses the word ‘law’ (תּוֹרָה) to refer to a series of instructions (cf. 6:7 [14]; 7:1; 11:46; 12:7; etc.). Because the teaching or instruction is often obligatory, the word is typically translated with ‘law’ (JPS; RSV; NASB; ESV)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 189). Translating with “law” finds further support in the

fact that **תִּוְרָה** can be used in very close conjunction with words such as “commandment” (**מִצְוָה**; Exod 16:28), “statute” (**חֹק**; Exod 18:16), and “regulation” (**מִשְׁפָּט**; Lev 26:46).

its place of burning. I take this to be a noun (**מוֹקֵד**) with a 3fs suffix that has lost its *mappîq* (so Milgrom [*Leviticus 1–16*, 383–84]; cf. GKC §91e; Joüon §94h). It is built on the root “to burn” (**יָקַד**) in the same way that “place of meeting” (**מוֹעֵד**) is built on the root “to meet” (**יָעַד**).

all night. Heb. “all of the night”; modern English usage calls for “all night.”

must be kept burning. Or simply “must be burning,” though it is evident from context it must continually do so (hence “must be kept burning”; cf. vv. 5–6 [12–13]). The verb’s form (**תִּוְקַד**) is traditionally understood to be a *Hophal* imperfect but could simply be a *Qal* passive (cf. Joüon §58a).

on it. Heb. “in it,” that is, in the altar (see also vv. 5–6 [12–13]), which could suggest that the altar’s top was not level but inset. (It has long been suggested that the altar was actually filled with earth or stones [see Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 3, translated by Johan Rebel and Sierd Woudstra, HCOT [Kampen: Kok, 1993], 444], and it could be that it was not filled to the very top.) It might be best to omit this phrase in translation so as not to cause confusion whether the “it” refers to the altar or to the burnt offering.

6:3 (10). *his linen garment.* The last part of the phrase could be read in three ways: 1. “his garment, linen,” in which case “linen” would be an accusative of specification: “his linen garment” (cf. similar grammatical constructions in 1 Chr 28:15 and Ps 71:7 [*IBHS* §10.2.2e]); 2. the ending (י) on “his garment” (**מִדּוֹ**) could be a paragogic י that indicates the construct state: “a garment of linen” (cf. the examples in Joüon §93r); 3. Several ancient versions here read a plural (**מִדֵּי** instead of **מִדּוֹ**), thus resulting in “garments of linen” (see SP, Syr. and Targums). The end point is more or less the same in each of these cases.

linen. “In Leviticus, this particular word refers only to priests’ clothing, perhaps suggesting a special type of linen” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 190). Outside the Pentateuch, this word is associated with the garments of heavenly beings (Ezek 9:2, 3; 10:2, Dan 10:5; etc.), priests (1 Sam 2:18; 22:18), and the linen ephod David had on when celebrating before the most holy ark (2 Sam 6:14 [= 1 Chr 15:27]).

underclothes. Exactly what these undergarments looked like is difficult to identify, as demonstrated by the wide variety of translations in the English versions: “breeches” (GNV; KJV; JPS), “trousers” (NKJV), “drawers” (NJB), “undergarment(s)” (NIV; NRSV; ESV), “leggings” (NET). (The same variety can be witnessed in the ancient versions; see Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 3, 482.) Houtman believes that the ancient Near Eastern evidence favors “apron” or “skirt” and suggests the term refers to “a garment around the waist covering the abdomen, the behind and the thighs, extending down to the knees” (*Exodus*, 482–83). Whichever translation is adopted, it should make clear that the genitals were covered (Exod 28:42).

reduces. With “fire” as subject, the verb “to eat” (אָכַל) refers to the fire “consuming” an object (such as a sacrifice, 9:24); here, the sense is it “reduces” the burnt offering to ashes (NASB, ESV, NJPS).

place them. Heb. “place it” (3ms); the word “ashes” (אֵשֶׁת) is a collective noun and hence treated as a singular in Hebrew.

6:5 (12). The *wēqātal* sequence is broken here, switching our attention from the ashes to the continual altar fire.

wood. The word for “wood” (עֵצִים) is plural since there would have been several pieces of wood (see also 1:7). For narrative texts that do the same in the context of sacrifice, see Gen 22:7; 1 Kgs 18:23.

morning by morning. Heb. “in the morning in the morning,” that is, “every morning” or “morning by morning” (see Joüon §135d).

fat portions. Heb. “fats,” a plural of composition and thus translated “fat portions” or “pieces of fat” (cf. Joüon §136b).

6:6 (13). *A continual fire.* Heb. “a fire of continuity,” that is, “a continual fire” (cf. Joüon §129f.C.1 for genitives of quality).

6:7 (14). *must present.* The verb ‘present’ (הִקְרִיב) is an infinitive absolute, which ‘is fairly common in laws, where it is equivalent to an injunctive’ (Joüon §123v). Joüon (§123v) further notes that infinitive absolutes can occur “[a]fter the announcement of a law: Lv 6.7 ‘This is the law of oblation: the sons of Aaron *must offer it* (הִקְרִיב)’; Gn 17.10 ‘Here is my covenant which you must keep...: all males among you *must be circumcised* (הִמּוּל)...’ (see also Deut 15:2). For the occurrence of the subject after the inf. abs. see Joüon §123y.

in front of. For this use “in front of” (אֶל־פָּנָיו) see also 9:5; 16:2; Num 17:8 (16:43); 20:10 (BDB 816 II.1.b).

6:8 (15). *from it.* We might expect a 3fs form (מִמֶּנָּה) instead of a 3ms form (מִמֶּנּוּ) (cf. 5:12). It is possible, however, for a masculine suffix to take the place of a feminine one (Joüon §149b; cf. 27:9).

a fistful. Heb. “his fistful,” that is, “the fullness of his fist” (2:2; 5:12); in this context, “a fistful.” There is a preposition on “fistful” (בִּי) that does not need to be translated into English when following the verb “remove” (הָרִים) (Exod 7:20; cf. Exod 7:20 and 14:16).

of the fine flour and oil of the grain offering. Heb. “of the fine flour of the grain offering and of its oil.” If translated word for word, this could communicate that the flour and oil were somehow separate, whereas in reality it appears that they were mixed (7:10; Num 7:13). The above translation helps to make this clearer (cf. NIV; NRSV).

burn them. The direct object is regularly omitted with the verb “to burn up in smoke” (הִקְטִיר) (1:15; 2:9; 4:31; etc.).

on the altar. This is the only instance where “to burn up in smoke” (הִקְטִיר) is followed simply by “the altar” (הַמִּזְבֵּחַ), not “to the altar” (הַמִּזְבֵּחַה, 1:9, 13, 15; etc.), or, more rarely, “on the altar” (עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ; 9:13, 17). The reason for the difference is not clear (GKC [§118g] suggests euphonic reasons), though context and these other verses make clear that the sense is “on the altar.”

6:11 (18). *may eat it.* See Joüon §113l for the permissive use of the imperfect.

from the LORD’S offerings by fire. Heb. “from the offerings by fire of the LORD,” a possessive use of the genitive; since they are offered “to the LORD” (cf. 2:11, 16), they belong to him.

whoever touches them. The imperfect is used here to describe a possible action (cf. *IBHS* §31.4e). English requires a gnomic present in these situations. The verb “to touch” (נָגַח) is regularly followed by the preposition אֶל to introduce the direct object of the touching (BDB 619.1.a). The אֶל is left untranslated in these instances. The plural suffix (“them”) would appear to refer to the Lord’s offerings by fire that are given to the priests, which would also include the meat of the purification offering (6:19–20 [26–27]), the reparation offering (7:6), and the showbread (24:9).

must be holy. In favor of translating “will become holy,” Milgrom notes there is a comparable phrase which is translated “whoever touches [certain objects] will become impure” (Lev 11:24, 26, 27, 31, 36, 39; 15:10, 11, 21, 23). He claims that this is an antonym to our phrase and therefore concludes that our verb must be translated “will become holy” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 446). But since our verb can also be used to say “must be holy” (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 6:11c [18c]), it cannot simply be assumed that it is functioning as an antonym to “will become impure.” In short, it has two different uses (“will become holy” and “must be holy”); the question remains, “Which use is in view here?” For rationale supporting “must be holy,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 6:11c (18c).

6:13 (20). *This is the offering of Aaron and his sons that they are to present to the LORD after he is anointed.* It may be noted that the texts describing the inauguration of the priesthood (Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8) do not mention this sacrifice. This is not terribly significant; those texts are focusing on rites unique to that day whereas this text is focusing on a rite that was done on a daily basis.

are to present. For the imperfect communicating obligation, cf. Joüon §113l, m.

after he is anointed. Heb. “in the day of being anointed, him.” For other passages where the accusative following a passive is translated as the subject in English, see Gen 4:18; Lev 10:18; 16:27; Num 7:10, 84 (see Joüon §128b).

a tenth of an ephah. See above at 5:11b–13.

6:14 (21). *broken pieces.* For the difficulties with the term תִּפְּיָי, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 6:14b (21b). Whatever translation is adopted, the form of this word remains unexplained. (A common approach is to suggest the original word was the verbal form תִּפְּתָנָה, but this is speculative.) This means the word is either built on a root we know but the text has undergone some corruption (or has a unique form of which we are ignorant), or the text is fine and we are simply ignorant of the word’s meaning.

6:15 (22). *a perpetual statute: to the LORD it must be offered up.* The word “statute” (חֹק) can also refer to an “allotment/share” (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 6:11b [18b]). This has led to two different approaches to this verse. Those who go with “law/statute” understand that “to the LORD” (לַיהוָה) belongs with the words that follow it and translate as above (cf. also RSV; NJB; NASB; ESV; NET). Those who go with “allotment/due” understand that “to the LORD” belongs with the words that precede it and translate as follows: “It is the LORD’S perpetual share and is to be burned completely” (NIV; cf. also NRSV). The syntax is of little help in answering this question since the “to” (לְ) before “the LORD” could support either understanding: this offering “will be offered up in smoke *to* the LORD” (cf. לְ).

(הַקָּטִיֹּר) in Exod 30:20; Lev 17:6; 2 Chr 13:11), or this offering will be a “perpetual allotment to the LORD” (cf. לֶךְ + חֶקֶךְ) in Gen 47:22; Exod 29:28; Lev 7:34). More decisive “is the simple fact that the LORD is the one who gives allotments (see Lev 7:34; Num 18:8, 11, 19); nowhere else is he described receiving them (he receives offerings from the people, not ‘allotments’)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 204 n. 7).

an offering entirely burned. It is also possible in v. 15b (22b) to translate it adverbially, which leads to more or less the same meaning: “to the LORD it must be entirely offered up in smoke” (cf. Isa 2:18 for the adverbial use of this word). But since the following verse seems to use this word as a noun, I have kept the same here.

6:18 (25). *in the place where the whole burnt offering is slaughtered.* Leviticus 4 mentions “the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered” only in connection with purification offerings of laity, who bring flock animals (4:24, 29, 33), not the high priest, who brings a larger herd animal (4:3–21; see at 1:11a above for possible rationale). It is thus possible that the mention of “the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered” would have indicated to the original audience that the following verses—at least up to 6:22 (29)—are thinking especially about purification offerings made for the laity. Verse 23 (30) then transitions to discuss purification offerings on behalf of the high priest (see comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 211 at 6:23a [30a]).

is slaughtered. The imperfect may be used to describe habitual action in the present (Joüon §113c).

the purification offering must be slaughtered, before the LORD; it is most holy. Grammatically, it is possible to connect the phrase “it is most holy” with the preceding one: “...the purification offering must be slaughtered before the LORD; it is most holy” (so JPS, NJPS, NASB, NIV, ESV, etc.; the accents of the MT also favor this approach). This in turn implies that the animal is slaughtered at this place because it is a most holy sacrifice, with strong support for this approach found in

7:1–2. It is also possible to connect this phrase with the one following it: “It is most holy: the priest who presents it...must eat it. In a holy place it must be eaten...” This understanding is supported by the fact that the language of “most holy” is used elsewhere in Leviticus 6–7 in conjunction with who may eat the sacrifice and where they eat it, that is, a holy person (a priest) is the only one who can eat a most holy sacrifice and they must do so in a holy place (6:9–11 [16–18]; 7:6; see also Lev 24:9). Moreover, v. 22 (29) of this section connects the “most holy” status of the sacrifice to the holiness of the person who may eat it, thus bringing a perfect inclusio to the passage:

“It is most holy. The priest who presents it as a purification offering must eat it...”

Any male among the priests may eat it; it is most holy” (vv. 18d–19a, 22 [25d–26a, 29]).

Choosing between these two options is difficult, perhaps because it is a false choice: the most holy status of the offering is related to where it is slaughtered (so 7:1–2) and to whom may eat it (so 6:22 [29]). I thus translate as a separate sentence here, allowing it to be taken in both directions (so also NET, NJB, NKJV).

6:20 (27). *and if.* Though rare, the particle **וְאִם** can introduce a conditional sentence (cf. 4:22). It would also be possible to translate the beginning of this phrase as follows: “And that which spatters from its blood onto a garment...” The endpoint is the same.

some. A partitive use of **מִן** (BDB 580.3.b).

spatters. In the *Qal*, the word “spatters” (**נִזְּתָה**) refers to liquid “spattering” on something (cf. 2 Kgs 9:33; Isa 63:3). The subject of the sentence is thus the animal’s blood.

on a garment. The Hebrew reads “on *the* garment”, though “[t]he article may...mark nouns definite in the imagination, designating either a particular person or thing necessarily understood to be present or vividly portraying someone or

something whose identity is not otherwise indicated” (*IBHS* §13.5.1e; emphasis in the original). In these cases, the English may require an indefinite rendering: “So a young man [Heb. “the young man”; הַיָּעָר] ran and told Moses...” (Num 11:27a). See further at *IBHS* §13.5.1e, examples 14–18, and BDB 207.1.d.

that on which it spatters you must wash in a holy place. “The reason it must be washed out is not stated; it could be that the blood was considered holy (or even most holy) and thus had to be washed off before leaving the Holy Place to avoid mixing the holy and the non-holy” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 211; see there for supporting rationale). In a note to this comment, I indicate that “this is perhaps the most common explanation,” but that “a second view is that the blood defiles the garment, which must therefore be washed” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 211 n. 5). This is the position of Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16*, 403–404), who argues in part that the blood has “absorbed the impurity of the sanctum upon which it is sprinkled” and thus “contaminates everything it touches” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 403). But if so, why command the defiled garment be washed in a “holy place” instead of immediately removed from the sanctuary area? To his credit, Milgrom acknowledges his approach leads to an “anomaly” in that the purification offering is both “a source of impurity” and yet “treated as sacred” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 404). He states it “can only be explained by the theory that the Priestly legislators were responsible for the conversion of an impurity-laden ritual detergent into a most sacred offering” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, *Leviticus 1–16*, 404). But the first position above is both contextually feasible and does not end up with an anomaly and is thus preferred.

In terms of further support to his position, Milgrom puts forward the following points: 1) the blood does not make the garment holy, for in that case it would have to be given to the tabernacle (cf. the censers of Korah and his company, which had to be given to the tabernacle after being presented to the Lord [Num 16:38 [17:3]]); 2) the actions required here—laundering garments and breaking

pots—are the same actions required elsewhere to cleanse from ritual impurity (garments: Lev 11:25, 28; 13:6; 14:8; etc.; pots: 11:33); and 3) the fact that these instructions do not take place with other “most holy” offerings demonstrates that there is something unique about the purification offering (namely, that its blood defiles; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 405).

In response, it may be noted: 1) if the blood is holy, it need not be assumed that it made everything it touched holy, and even if it did, it would be completely impractical to require the officiants to give their garments to the tabernacle every time blood was spattered on them (clothing was extremely costly in the ancient Near East). This text would then represent a practical compromise: the garment simply had to be washed in a holy place. Indeed, a similar compromise is found in the law dealing with corpse impurity. This is a major impurity and thus would normally call for a sacrifice to be made (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 22–23 and esp. n. 57). But when one person died, their entire family would often become impure through the mourning process. If everyone in the family were required to offer an offering for this major impurity—as would normally be expected for major impurities—the entire family could be impoverished. Due to this impracticality, a different requirement is made: they can wash with special waters and be pure (Num 19:11–12a). Similarly, instead of dedicating the clothing to the tabernacle, which would be the normal procedure for something that became consecrated (so Korah and the censers), a compromise solution was provided.). 2) While the parallels with other washing texts are interesting, it is well known that the same ritual action can have radically different meanings (see Gane, *Cult*, 4–6). Most importantly, the context of Leviticus 6:20b (27b) is completely different than other washing texts: the focus of Leviticus 6:18d–22 (25d–29) is on treating holy items properly (thus a *holy* person must eat the *holy* sacrifice in a *holy* place and wash any [*holy*] blood off in a *holy* place); the focus of other washing texts is on cleansing *impurity*. It is a mistake to ignore this major contextual difference and simply to read the actions as

having the same meaning in each passage. 3) The requirement of these verses may be viewed as a general rule that applies to other sacrifices as well, just as happens with other requirements for offerings. For example, 2:13 requires offerers to present salt “with every offering (קִרְבָּן) of yours,” which thus includes the “offerings” (קִרְבָּן) described in that chapter 2 (2:1, 4, 5, 7, 12) as well as the “offerings” (קִרְבָּן) of the previous and following chapters (1:3, 10, 14; 3:1, 2; etc.) Milgrom responds that if we are to read this as a general rule, “then the rule should have been stated in the *previous* pericope of the cereal offering (vv. 7–11 [14 – 18]),” since it, too, is most holy (*Leviticus 1–16*, 405). But it cannot be stated there for a simple reason: it is not a blood offering.

on which it spatters. Heb. “which it spatters on it.” The SP corrects עָלֶיהָ to עָלָיו here, no doubt because “garment” is normally masculine. This is unnecessary. The word “garment” is treated as a feminine in at least one other instance (Prov 6:27) and it is possible for the same noun to be treated as either masculine or feminine in Hebrew (Joüon §134m).

you must wash. The verb “to wash” (כָּבַס) is used in Leviticus to describe cleaning cloth or leather materials (11:25; 13:6, 56; 14:8; etc.). It may be translated as “launder,” though to modern English speakers this often brings up connotations of an activity done by professional cleaners.

6:21 (28). *scoured and rinsed.* The verbs “scoured and scrubbed” (וּמָרַק וּשָׂטַף) are traditionally understood to be *Pual* perfects, though it is equally possible they are *Qal* passives. (See the discussion in Joüon §58a on the confusion of *Pual* imperfects and *Qal* passives and note that these verbs occur elsewhere in the *Qal* but not the *Piel*, tipping the scales in favor of a *Qal* passive approach. See also discussion in *IBHS* §22.6; our verse is treated in notes 30 and 31.) In either case, the verbs are to be rendered passively.

In terms of meaning, the verb “to scour” (מָרַק) is used elsewhere to describe bronze that is polished (2 Chr 4:16; Jer 46:4), suggesting an intense scrubbing or

scouring. The verb “to rinse” (רָטַף) is often used to describe overflowing waters (Ps 69:3 [2]; Song 8:7; Isa 8:8), suggesting a thorough rinsing in this context (so also 1 Kgs 22:38; Ezek 16:9).

6:23 (30a). *any.* A partitive use of the ׀ (BDB 580.3).

7:2. *it must be thrown.* Heb. “he must throw”; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 92 at 1:5a for 3ms forms used impersonally and translated passively.

7:3–5. *as for all its fat.* “Because reparation offerings consisted of male sheep (5:15), the list of fat items here is similar to that for the sheep of fellowship offerings” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 216). The one exception is that the earlier passages have “the fat covering the entrails *and all the fat that is connected to the entrails.*” This latter phrase is omitted here, either because it was simply assumed or because it fell out by way of *homoioteleuton*, the scribe’s eye skipping from the first occurrence of “entrails” to the second occurrence and thus leaving out everything in between (cf. the SP and the LXX, both of which have this phrase).

it must be presented. Heb. “he must present from it,” that is, from the animal’s meat (for the passive see at 7:2 above). English requires “from it” to be omitted.

7:6. *may be eaten.* The imperfect can be used to communicate permission (Joüon §113l); context supports this nuance here.

must be eaten. While any priest “may” eat of the offering (7:6a), if they choose to do so, they “must” eat it in a holy place (7:6b; see Joüon §113m for the obligatory imperfect).

7:7. *to him it will belong.* The phrase לְהִיָּהּ often indicates possession (BDB 513.5.b).

7:8. All of the clauses in 7:8–10 begin with nouns; the focus is not sequential action (for which a *wēqātal* sequence would be expected), but on identifying certain sacrificial portions and to whom they belong.

who has presented. The tense of an attributive participle must be determined from context (Joüon §121i). The use of the perfect later on in the verse (“has presented”) suggests a past tense translation here as well.

anyone’s whole burnt offering. There is a definite direct object marker in front of “whole burnt offering,” as sometimes happens when a noun “has a certain logical determination” (Joüon §125h, citing this verse as an example; note that “whole burnt offering” takes the definite article in the next phrase).

anyone’s. Or “a man’s,” although the word “man” (שׂוֹמֵר) can describe “anyone” (BDB 36; cf. Exod 34:3), which fits here since women also presented burnt offerings (Lev 12:6).

that he has presented. That is, the priest, who is the subject of the same verb earlier in the sentence.

will belong to. For הָ indicating possession see BDB 512.5.b.

that priest. Heb. “to the priest”; the definite article can be used for the demonstrative adjective (“that”) when it refers back to something that “has already been mentioned—the so-called anaphoric use” (Joüon §137f[I.3]).

7:9. *prepared.* Pointed as a 3ms perfect, though one might expect the relative particle to proceed it if this were the case (see previous clause). A *Niphal* participle would have the exact same consonants and might fit better grammatically. *Niphal* participles in particular can have an adjectival sense (*IBHS* §37.4d) and this fits well here: “everything *prepared*”.

7:10. *mixed with oil.* Heb. “with the oil”; Hebrew often uses the definite article with nouns of materials (Joüon §137ia); English idiom requires the article to be dropped.

7:11. *presents.* The use of the 3ms/3fs imperfect in the introduction of a law is characteristic of 1:1–5:26 (6:7) (see 1:2, 3; 2:1; 4:2), as is the use of the 3ms suffix (1:3, 10; 2:1; 3:1; see the same in 7:13, 15, 16). Since 1:1–5:26 (6:7) is

addressed to lay Israelites in particular (1:2; 4:2), the use of similar language in 7:11ff. suggests that these verses have lay Israelites in mind as well.

7:12. *on account of.* The preposition עַל often communicates the ground or basis of something (BDB 753.f).

praise. This is often translated as “thanksgiving” or “thankfulness” (KJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, etc.). In English, this approach can be traced back in English to Wycliffe’s translation (14th c.), itself a translation of the Latin Vulgate. Many other versions in other languages, both ancient and modern, use the word “praise” in place of “thanksgiving” (LXX; Luther; TOB; BFC; so also NJB). The LXX most often translates the *Hiphil* of יָדָה with ἐξομολογέω (“to praise, confess, acknowledge”) and it most often translates תְּהִלָּה with αἴνεσις (“praise”), especially when referring to the praise offering (the only exception is Leviticus 22:29, which uses the word χαρμοσύνη [“delight, joyfulness”]). Interestingly, it never uses any words from the “thank” word group (εὐχαριστ–) to translate the verb יָדָה or the noun תְּהִלָּה.

together with. “This meaning of עַל occurs frequently in Lev (Lev 3:4; 4:11; etc.; see BDB 755.4c)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 108 n. 14); “in addition to” is another option (see BDB 755.4.b and 4.c).

loaves of soaked fine flour. Heb. “fine flour soaked, loaves,” which may represent an appositional phrase: soaked fine flour [made into] loaves (after being mixed with oil). Cf. Joüon §131b, c.

7:13. *along with.* For “along with” in this phrase, and “together with” in the next, see BDB 755.4.c.

their fellowship offering sacrifice of praise. Heb. “sacrifice of praise of his fellowship offerings.” At 3:1 above (“fellowship offering”) it was noted: “The term for ‘fellowship offering’ (שְׁלָמִים) is usually plural (86 times; the singular only in Amos 5:22). The plural form can refer to more than one fellowship offering (Exod 24:5; 29:28), but also to a single offering (Num 6:14, 17).” Presumably, the law

assumes a single offering here (which is the typical assumption it makes when describing offerings; cf. Lev 1–5); I thus translate as a singular (“his fellowship offering”) despite the plural noun suffix. (This may be compared to the word “God” [אֱלֹהִים], which is also plural in form and thus also takes plural noun suffixes even when it is singular, e.g., “his God [אֱלֹהָיו]” [Lev 4:22].)

7:14. *And they must present from it.* That is, from the breads mentioned above and described here collectively.

every. The word כָּל can occur before a singular noun that is indefinite with the sense of “every” (Esth 3:8; cf. *HALOT*, 9a).

contribution offering. Older versions tended to translate this as “heave offering” (GNV, KJV, ERV), perhaps because the verb built on the same root (הָרַם) can refer simply to “lifting up” or “raising up” an object, e.g., a hand or foot (Gen 41:44; Exod 17:11) or a staff (Exod 7:20). The offering was thus understood as something that was literally “heaved” or “lifted up” before the Lord (when the GNV and KJV were written, “to heave” meant simply “to lift”, not “to lift with exertion” as we use it today). For “contribution offering,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 229.

7:15. *and as for the meat.* The fronting of the noun helps to signal the contrast in subjects (from “bread” to “meat”).

any of it. A partitive use of the מִן (BDB 580.3).

7:16. *on the day.* While בַּיּוֹם can be used with the general sense of “when” (see at 6:13 [20]), context makes clear that it refers here to the very day on which the sacrifice is presented.

and [if it is] on the next day, then. The conjunction translated “then” seems to introduce an apodosis (BDB 254.5.c.β); I thus supply “if it is” in the previous phrase in order to make clear that it is the protasis.

on the next day. The preposition מִן (“from”) typically precedes the word מָחָרָת (“next day”) with the meaning “on” (19:6; 23:11; etc.).

then that which remains from it may be eaten. The LXX is missing this clause due to an error of *homoioarkton*: both this phrase and v. 17 begin with וְהֵנֹתָר, leading to the omission.

may be eaten. Permissive use of the imperfect (Joüon §113l) fits the context well.

7:17. *And that which [still] remains.* That is, after the second day. I insert “still” in order to make this clear.

on the third day. This could modify what precedes it (“remains...on the third day”) or what follows it (“on the third day must be burned”). The meaning is the same either way.

7:18. *any of the meat.* A partitive use of the מִן (BDB 580.3.b.[c]).

And as for the person who eats any of it, they will bear their punishment. The offender could be the offerer or any friend or family member who happened to eat of the meat on the third day. (Note that this meat was simply to be eaten in a “clean place,” not a “holy place” [see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:3b], and the Israelites most likely took the meat to their tents to eat [cf. 10:12–13 with 10:14].)

7:19. *that might touch any impure thing.* The verb נָגַע is regularly followed by אֵת to introduce the direct object of the touching (BDB 619.1.a). The אֵת is left untranslated in these instances.

any impure thing. A substantive use of the adjective (see also Lev 15:33; 22:4; cf. *IBHS* §14.3.3).

any. See BDB 482.1.e.(b).

anyone. See BDB 482.1.e.(b).

may eat. Imperfect with modal nuance (Joüon §113l).

7:20. *belongs to.* This is a common use of the phrase אֲשֶׁר לְ (BDB 82.7).

while being impure. Heb. “and his impurity is on him,” that is, they have entered into a state of impurity and not yet become pure. The suffixes are 3ms here, though the grammatical subject is a feminine noun (נִפְשׁוֹ). Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–*

16, 423) notes simply that “when [נִפְשׁ] denotes a person it is frequently treated as a masculine (e.g., 5:1–4).”

their people. Heb. “her peoples.” The word עַם (“people”) often takes a plural suffix (7:21, 27; 17:9; 19:8; etc.), though this does not seem to differ from the singular (cf. 17:4 and 17:10 with 17:9). The suffix here is feminine to agree with נִפְשׁ.

7:21. *any.* See BDB 580.3.b.(c).

animal. Or “domesticated animal” (cf. 5:2), though in context it seems any type of animal is in view (cf. the use of the term in Gen 1:26; 6:7, 20; 7:2; Lev 11:2).

7:23. *any fat.* The word “fat” may be understood to govern the following three nouns: “fat of an ox and [fat of] a sheep and [fat of] a goat.” In Hebrew, as in English, it is not necessary to repeat the governing noun (Joüon §129b).

7:24. *may be used.* The modal use of the imperfect (Joüon §113l).

for any other. Heb. “with regard to all/any”; see BDB 514.5.e.(d).

you must certainly not eat it. The emphasis comes from the infinitive absolute.

7:25. *For whoever eats fat from the animals from which an offering by fire may be presented to the LORD.* This is a clear reference to sacrificial animals and could imply that fat from other animals—such as those hunted in game—was permissible to eat (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 428), an implication strengthened by the contrast of vv. 26–27, which specify that the blood of *all* animals, whether domestic or game, is prohibited. If so, it would mean that the prohibition of 3:17 also had sacrificial animals particularly in mind (which is in keeping with the fact the chapter is about the fellowship offering).

For. Some versions take the וְ as introducing a case and translate with “if” (NJPS; NRSV; NET). While this is certainly a possible translation of וְ in case law, this would make v. 25 the only case law in this section. It is perhaps more

natural to read the כִּי as introducing an explanation for that which precedes it. This is exactly how the כִּי functions in syntactically parallel passages (Exod 12:15, 19; 31:14; Neh 6:9; Jer 9:1) and in syntactically similar passages (Lev 18:19; 21:18; 23:29; Num 16:3).

whoever. When followed by a participle, כֹּל can have the sense of “whoever” (Exod 12:15; Lev 17:14; Num 1:3; see BDB 482.1.e.[b]).

animals. A collective use of בְּהֵמָה (cf. Joüon §135b).

may be presented. See Sklar, *Leviticus*, 92 at 1:5a for using the 3ms impersonally and translating it in English passively.

7:26. *of birds or of land animals.* See BDB 514.5.e.[c] for the use of the preposition לְ here. For the collective use of “bird” and “animal,” see Joüon §135b. When used together with עוֹף (“birds”), בְּהֵמָה (“land animals”) refers to land animals as opposed to fish or smaller land creatures that multiply quickly (11:46).

7:27. *any person.* See BDB 482.1.e.(b) for this use of כֹּל. The term נֶפֶשׁ refers to people in general, whether male or female (4:27; 5:1, 15; 7:27; 20:6; etc.).

7:29–30. *presents.* The verse starts with the verb “to present” and switches to the verb “to bring.” This order makes sense: the verb “to present” (הִקְרִיב) can be used more generally to describe the offerer bringing the offering to the tabernacle (as at 2:1), while the verb “to bring” (הֵבִיא) can be used to describe the offerer presenting an offering directly into the hands of the priest (as at 2:2).

their [own] hands must bring. The word “hand” (יָד) is a feminine noun, hence the feminine verb form.

7:30. *together with.* See BDB 755.4.c.

they must bring [as their offering]. Heb. “he must bring it,” a singular, and thus a reference to the word “offering” (קִרְבָּן) in 7:29, where it is also the direct object of the verb “bring”; this offering is thus equated with the “offerings by fire” in 7:30a.

[and] the breast [they must bring] for waving it [as] a wave offering before the LORD. Perhaps it was assumed that the fat would have been waved (cf. 10:15) but the act is not mentioned here because the focus is on the breast, with special attention to the fact that the breast is a wave offering that it is given to the priests (7:31b) instead of being burned like the fat (7:31a).

waving it [as] a wave offering. “The term translated as ‘wave offering’ (תְּנוּפָה) is built on the same root as the verb ‘to wave’ (נָוָה)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 243). In such cases, English typically translates with words built on different roots (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40). In this instance, I have retained the verb “wave” in order to make clear the nature of the ritual action that sets this apart as a wave offering.

wave offering. “Wave offering” is the traditional English translation (KJV; ERV; JPS; RSV; NASB; NIV; ESV; NET). The early rabbis also understood this offering to be one that was moved forward and back before the Lord (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 461, citing *m. Menah.* 5:6; *t. Menah.* 7:13–19; *Sipra*, *Ṣaw* 16:3; *b. Sukk.* 37b; *b. Menah.* 61b–62a; *Midr. Lev. Rab.* 28:5). Milgrom argues that the verb means simply “to lift” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 469–70) and translates תְּנוּפָה with “elevation offering” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 381; 469–70), but he does not address the use of the term in Isaiah 30:28, and argues unconvincingly that Isaiah 13:2 simply refers to the “lifting” of a hand (one does not signal simply by “lifting” the hand [so Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 470], but by “waving” it back and forth so it is clearly seen). Other verses he quotes do not provide enough of a context to determine if the verb refers simply to “raising” or to “waving”: in Isaiah 10:15, the verb is used twice, the first time describing the action that one does with a saw (clearly a back and forth motion), thus allowing the second use of the verb to have a similar sense (“as if a rod should shake back and forth the one who lifts it”); and in Isaiah 11:15 and 19:16 the verb could refer to a “moving back and forth” of the hand, here in a striking motion, as one does with an object for cutting (cf. Exod 20:25).

7:32. *And as for the right thigh.* The noun phrase is fronted, drawing our attention to a switch in subject.

right thigh. Since animals have four legs, it may be asked whether the front thigh or rear thigh is in view. Numbers 6:19–20 distinguishes between the “shoulder” (זֵרֶעַ) and the “thigh” (שׁוֹק). Since the “shoulder” refers to the upper portion of the front leg, this implies either that the “thigh” refers to the upper portion of the back leg, or possibly that it refers to a portion of the front leg somehow distinct from the shoulder. In either case, the thigh was viewed an honored portion of the meat (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 7:32–33).

you must give. A plural verb; all the Israelites are being addressed.

7:33. *as [his] portion.* Heb. “as a portion”; “his” is inserted to make the possessive relationship clear.

7:34. *from the Israelites.* מֵאֶת (“from”) is often used to indicate the person from whom a right or due is taken (BDB 86.4.b; cf. Exod 25:2; 30:16; 35:5; Lev 16:5; 25:36; Num 3:49).

7:35. *This was the portion of Aaron and the portion of his sons from the LORD’S offerings by fire.* There is some question whether this verse refers to all the priestly portions of chapters 6 and 7 or just to the priestly portions of the fellowship offering. Since vv. 35–36 refer specifically to the ordination of the priesthood, and since the ordination texts focus on the priestly portions of the fellowship offering that are set aside at this time (Exod 29:27–28), it is possible that it is the portions of the fellowship offering in particular that are in view here (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 433).

portion. Or “consecrated portion,” if we understand the word to be related to the verb “anoint” (מָשַׁח), which is used in contexts where people or items are consecrated (Exod 30:26–30; 40:9–11), and which by extension might refer to a “consecrated portion.” In favor of simply translating with “portion,” Levine has appealed to Aramaic and Akkadian to argue that מָשַׁח is actually a homonym that

can mean either “to anoint” or “to measure” and that מִשְׁחָה therefore refers simply to a “portion” in this context (i.e., a measured-out amount) (see Levine, *Leviticus*, 47). This is perhaps the simpler explanation of the two and thus preferred.

[starting] from the day [Moses] presented them. Or: “when he presented them”. In the Hebrew, the phrase begins with “in the day” (בַּיּוֹם), which is often used in a more general sense to mean “when” (cf. BDB 400.7.d.[3].[α]; Joüon §129p [A.2]).

to serve as priests. *Piel* verbs based on an original noun can be used to designate a person acting in the capacity of the noun on which they are based (*IBHS* §24.4.g). The noun here is כֹּהֵן (“priest”) and the verb thus has the corresponding meaning “to serve as priest” (see also Exod 28:1; 29:1; Lev 16:32).

7:37. *the laws of.* Or “the laws regarding”; see BDB 514.5.e.(a).

ordination offering. “Curiously, this list mentions the ‘ordination offering,’ which is not described until 8:22–29. This may indicate it was considered a type of fellowship offering and thus natural to mention just before that offering” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 249, citing Richard E. Averbeck, “שְׁלֵם,” *NIDOTTE* 4:139; cf. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 183). Milgrom has suggested that there originally was a law concerning the ordination offering in these chapters but that it was later omitted to avoid repetition with the instructions of chapter 8 (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 437). This, however, would make the retention of “ordination offering” in this verse a rather glaring oversight. (One might also note that Leviticus does not seem to be too concerned about repeating earlier material; cf. Lev 8 with Exod 29.)

7:38. *Mt. Sinai.* Traditionally located in the south of the Sinai Peninsula (see discussion in Roland K. Harrison and James K. Hoffmeier, “Exodus,” *ISBE* 4:525–28).

8:5. *the congregation assembled.* The LXX has Moses as the subject: “he assembled the congregation.” This is the easier reading, since it continues Moses

as the subject (v. 4b) and since it might be expected that Moses is credited with gathering the people (v. 3); it is thus not preferable.

8:7. *clothed him [with] the robe.* הִלְבִּישׁ takes a double direct object, as it does elsewhere (Exod 29:5; 40:13; cf. Joüon §125u); this requires adding “with” in English. So also v. 13.

skillfully woven band. The term חֹשֶׁב occurs only with reference to this part of the ephod. That it is a “band” is suggested by the fact it is used to “gird” the priest with it; that it is skillfully woven is suggested by the related verb חָשַׁב, which can refer to those able to weave fabrics made of different colored materials (Exod 26:1, 31; 28:15).

8:8. There is a marginal note in the Hebrew indicating that 8:8 is the Pentateuch’s middle verse. David N. Freedman, A. Dean Forbes, and Francis I. Andersen have a helpful discussion on this and similar marginal notes (*Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992], 297–318). They note that the Masoretic tradition identified the Pentateuch’s middle verse (Lev 8:8), middle words (“earnestly sought” [דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ], 10:16), and middle letter (the ך in גָּחֹן in Lev 11:42). It also identified the middle verse for the books (for Leviticus, this is 15:7). It is usually assumed that “middle” refers to the middle of all verses/words/letters in the entire Pentateuch. This works for Leviticus 8:8 as the Pentateuch’s middle verse (though depending on how certain verses are divided the middle verse could also be Leviticus 8:9) and for Leviticus 15:7 as the middle verse of Leviticus, but computer analysis shows this does not work for the Pentateuch’s middle words (Lev 10:16) or letter (Lev 11:42; these should be closer to Leviticus 8:15 and 8:29, respectively). How to explain this? Freedman, Forbes, and Andersen note that the Pentateuch is broken down into 167 sections, each of which is known as a *sefer*. The middle *sefer* goes from Leviticus 10:8–20, and with only a slight emendation, the middle words of this *sefer* align with the traditional identification in 10:16. In short, the identified words in 10:16 are not the

middle words of the entire Pentateuch but of the middle *seder* in the Pentateuch. They suggest this could also be the case for the middle letter (traditionally in 11:42), perhaps based on an alternative *seder* tradition of the Pentateuch (316), though this is more speculative.

8:9. *the golden diadem, the holy crown.* Heb. “the diadem of gold, the crown of holiness”. The nouns “gold” and “holiness” are functioning here as adjectives (cf. Joüon §129f.C.1, 5).

8:10–13. In Exodus 40, the anointing of the Tent of Meeting comes before Aaron is clothed (40:9–13), not after, as here (cf. 8:7–9 with 8:10–12). It may be that the account in Exodus is thematically arranged, thus keeping all the actions related to the tabernacle together (40:1–11) before turning to the actions regarding the priests (40:12–15), whereas Leviticus 8 is providing the actual temporal sequence: Aaron is prepared for anointing (8:7–9) and then the anointing of the tabernacle and of Aaron occurs (8:10–12; this actually makes good practical sense as the anointing may now all be done at once). Cf. at 8:25–28 below.

8:10. *the anointing oil.* Heb. “the oil of the anointing,” a genitive of quality, in which the second noun functions adjectivally (cf. Joüon §129f.C.1).

made them holy. A *Piel* with a factitive sense: “to make holy/sanctify/consecrate” (so also Exod 28:3; 29:1; Lev 8:30; 16:19; etc.). The *Piel* of *Qal* intransitive verbs often has a factitive sense; see Joüon §52d; *IBHS* §24.2a, 3.

8:11. *all its utensils.* Each utensil was necessary for the duties connected with the altar; compare the utensils used today by those operating an outdoor grill.

8:12. *poured.* The verb **יָצַק** always drops its first root letter in the *Qal* imperfect (and *wayyiqtol*) (cf. Joüon §77b).

8:13. *girded them [with] sashes.* Or “girded them [each with] a sash.” Heb. “he girded them sash”. The verb **הָגִיר** (“to gird”) can be followed directly by the

adverbial accusative (Exod 29:9; Judg 18:11, 16; 1 Sam 2:18); in this context, “with” must be added in English.

bound them [with] caps. Heb. “bound to them”; the ל indicates the direct object of the verb “to bind” and is typically left untranslated (cf. Ps 147:3; Isa 61:1; Ezek 34:4).

8:14. *Then the bull of the purification offering was brought forward.* “Because the offerer normally brought the sacrificial animal forward, this action was probably done by Aaron and/or some of his sons (cf. 1:2, 3; 3:1, 7 and esp. 4:13, 23)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 265). This also explains why I have taken this verse as another instance of the impersonal 3ms: “Then the bull of the purification offering was brought forward” (so also JPS; NJB). For the impersonal 3ms, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 92 at 1:5a.

Aaron and his sons leaned. Compound subjects (“Aaron and his sons”) can take a singular verb, especially when the verb precedes the subjects (Joüon §150q).

8:15. *cleansed.* In the *Piel*, some verbs are denominatives (based on existing nouns) and have a privative sense, that is, they refer to the removal of whatever would be indicated by the related noun (*IBHS* §24.4f; Joüon §52d; an English example would be the verb “to dust”). In this case, the verb is based on the noun “sin” (חַטָּא) and refers to “removing sin,” usually brought across with the positive expression “to purify/cleanse” (most English versions; see the same use of this verb in Lev 14:49, 52; Num 19:19).

8:17. *[the rest of] the bull.* The pieces remaining after the fat has been burned. Cf. the way Leviticus uses “the blood” when “the rest of the blood” is meant (4:7, 18; 8:15).

its skin and its meat and its refuse. Heb. “and its skin,” an explicative use of the *wāw* (BDB 252.1.b), here left untranslated. See at 4:11–12 for these pieces being equal to “the rest of the bull”.

it was burned with fire outside the camp. This action would have been done by a non-priest for the simple reason that the priests had to remain in the Tent during their ordination (8:33; 10:7).

8:22–29. For similarities between the ordination offering and fellowship offering, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 8:22–29. The ordination offering was also unique from fellowship offerings in several ways: 1. they had to be a ram in particular (v. 22 [cf. 3:1, 6]), perhaps because rams were costly (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 5:15b) and considered especially appropriate on such solemn occasions (cf. Num 6:14); 2. the animal's blood was not only thrown on the altar but also placed on Aaron and his sons (vv. 23, 30), in keeping with the ceremony's goal of making them holy; 3. the priests were to burn the meat portions they would normally receive (vv. 25–28; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 8:25 for possible rationale); and 4. the officiant (Moses) received the breast (8:29) instead of the right thigh (cf. 7:33; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 267 n. 37 for possible rationale).

8:22. *the ram of the ordination offering.* The term מִלְאִים can refer simply to “ordination” (8:33), which would lead here to “the ram of ordination” (most versions), or, by extension, to the ordination offering itself (7:37), which would lead to “the ram of the ordination offering” (cf. NJB; in support, note that v. 18 speaks of “the ram of the whole burnt offering”). The difference is negligible.

8:23–24. While the main goal of the blood rite was to make the priests holy, it may also have had covenantal overtones, as it does in Exodus 24. Just as that chapter describes fellowship offering blood being sprinkled on people and the altar as a sign of the covenant they were entering into with the Lord (vv. 6–8), placing the ordination offering blood on Aaron and his sons and the altar may be a sign of the covenant of the priesthood that they were entering into with the Lord (for the covenant of the priesthood see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 8:22–29).

8:23. *and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.*

Some have suggested symbolic significance to these parts of the body, for example, the ear is anointed because priests must heed the Lord's word. This is very speculative as there are no other pentateuchal texts that make such connections. As suggested in Sklar (*Leviticus*, at 8:23b–24c), it may simply be these three parts were chosen as a way of saying a priest's entire body becomes holy, from top to bottom. In further support, note that the person being cleansed from a ritually defiling skin disease has blood put on the same three parts (14:14), which may also be explained in terms of cleansing their entire body.

8:25–28. The order in Exodus 29 differs. As with Exodus 40 (see above at 8:10–13), it may be that Exodus 29 is thematically arranged, in this case keeping all the anointing actions together (29:20–21) before turning to the wave offering (29:22–24), whereas Leviticus 8 provides the temporal sequence: an initial anointing with the animal's blood takes place (for consecration) (8:23–24), the offering of the animal is completed (wave offering) (8:25–29), then a final anointing with blood and oil takes place (further consecration) (8:30). The temporal order of the ceremony thus emphasizes consecration: it opens and closes with consecrating acts.

8:26. *one unleavened loaf.* Since the following bread is prepared with oil, this bread might simply be prepared with water. The parallel in Exodus 29:23 uses the word כֶּכֶּר, which elsewhere appears to refer to an ordinary loaf of bread (Judg 8:5; 1 Sam 2:36).

one loaf of [unleavened] bread [mixed with] oil. Heb. “loaf of bread of oil,” which seems to be a shortened way of describing a loaf made of dough mixed with oil (perhaps in addition to water). Cf. Exod 29:2 and see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at Lev 2:4 for further details.

on. Or “together with”, a common use of עִל in Leviticus (see Lev 3:4; 4:11; etc.; see BDB 755.4.c).

8:27. *everything.* Heb. “the whole,” here referring to everything just mentioned in this context (BDB 482.2.b.[a]).

upturned hands. Heb. “on the palms.” The word **כַּף** is typically used when the palm is especially in view (BDB 496.1.a; see Lev 14:15); the priests have their hands upturned and the meat and breads are placed on their open palms.

8:28. *on top of.* Or “together with”; see at 8:26 (“on”) above.

as an ordination offering for a pleasing aroma; it was an offering by fire to the LORD. Heb. “They were an ordination offering...it was an offering by fire....” I understand the word “they” to refer to the portions from the second ram on the priests’ hands, not to the whole burnt offering that came from the first ram (note that the word “ordination offering” is used elsewhere in conjunction with the second ram but never the first [Exod 29:22, 26, 27, 31, 34; Lev 8:22, 29]). By switching to the word “it”, the text may simply be referring to these things collectively.

8:29. *it belonged to Moses.* Heb. “to Moses it was”; for use of the phrase **לְמֹשֶׁה** to indicate possession, see BDB 513.5.b.

as [his] portion. Heb. “for a portion”; “his” is inserted to make the possessive relationship clear.

8:30. *the blood that was on the altar.* Referring at the least to fellowship-offering blood, large amounts of which were “thrown” (**קָרַךְ**) on the altar (v. 24; the verb **קָרַךְ** refers to throwing larger amounts of liquid [see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:5b]). Moses simply had to dip his finger into this blood, some of which would have been dripping down the altar, or perhaps even formed pools on its surface.

as well as. Or simply “and.” For “as well as,” see BDB 253.1.g.

8:31. *boil.* This is the verb used in Exodus and Leviticus to refer to cooking food in a pot, that is, “boiling” it (Exod 12:9; 23:19; 34:26; see further at Lev 6:21 [28]).

there you must eat it. The imperfect can be used to communicate obligation (Joüon §113m); this fits the context well here.

as I commanded. This could be repointed as a passive: “As I was commanded” (so the LXX, Syr., and Targums). The overall difference is negligible. For the original command, see Exod 29:31–32.

8:32. *that which remains of.* A *Niphal* participle being used substantively. It is followed by ךְ, which is interchangeable in this context with מִן (cf. 14:18 and 14:29) and has the sense “from/of.”

8:33. [*for*]. “Seven days” is an adverbial accusative of temporal specification (cf. Joüon §126i) and this means a preposition or prepositional phrase needs to be added in the English (“for”, “over a period of”); cf. Exod 13:7; 29:30; Lev 23:6, 41.

seven days. Heb. “a seven of days.” The number “seven” (שֶׁבַע) is a collective substantive that occurs in construct with the noun it modifies. It is feminine here even though “day” (יוֹם) is masculine. Joüon §100d explains: “A most remarkable peculiarity of the numerals 3–10...is that the feminine collective is used with masculine nouns and the masculine collective with feminine nouns.”

As noted in the commentary, “Because the number seven can be a sign of completeness and thoroughness in Leviticus...it is the natural period required to ensure the priests’ ordination was thorough and complete” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 269; for this function of the number seven, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 4:5–7). This also made it a natural amount of time in general to require for periods of transition from one state to another; cf. Gerald A. Klingbeil, “Ritual Time in Leviticus 8 with Special Reference to the Seven Day Period in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 109 (1997): 500–513.

until the day [that] the days of your ordination are complete. Heb. “until the day of the filling/completion of the days of your ordination.” For the above sense, see BDB 570.1.b; cf. Lev 12:4, 6; Num 6:5, 13.

for you will be ordained. “Hebrew ‘he will fill your hand,’ the standard expression for ordination in Hebrew (Exod 29:9, 29, etc.; see esp. 28:41)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 269 n. 41). Why is this particular phrase used to describe ordination? Some have suggested it is used because the “hands” of the priest were “filled” with the various portions of the ordination offering (Keil, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 2, 342; Noordtzi, *Leviticus*, 100), but this is simply a guess and not too much weight should be put on it. Whatever the origin of the phrase, it clearly refers to the process of becoming a priest: “...and you will anoint [Aaron and his sons] and *ordain them* [Heb. fill their hand] and consecrate them, *that they may serve me as priests*” (Exod 28:41).

8:35. *day and night.* The phrase “day and night” (or “by day and by night”) is a way of saying “continually, constantly” (see Josh 1:8; 1 Kgs 8:59; cf. BDB 401.2).

so that. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by means of ׀ followed by an indicative (Joüion §116j).

8:36. *So Aaron and his sons did.* A verb preceding a compound subject (“Aaron and his sons”) can be singular (cf. Joüion §150q).

through. Heb. “by the hand of,” which is simply an expression used to say “through” or “by means of” (BDB 391.5.d; cf. Exod 9:35; Lev 10:11; Num 4:37; 9:23; etc.).

9:1–5. It may be noted that the offerings of the eighth-day ceremony parallel those of the seven-day ceremony: the four same offerings are involved and the overall goal of atonement is the same in both cases (8:34; 9:7; see table below). This might serve to underscore how important it is for all people—priests as well as non-priests—to address their sin and impurity properly before the presence of the Lord.

	<i>Offerings during the seven-day ceremony for priests</i>	<i>Offerings during the eighth-day ceremony for priests and people</i>
Purification	8:14–17	9:8–11, 15b
Whole burnt	8:18–21	9:12–14, 16
Fellowship*	8:22–25, 27–29	9:18–21
Grain	8:26	9:17

* The ordination offering is a type of fellowship offering; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 8:22–29.

9:1. summoned. A verb in the perfect may be used in place of a *wayyiqtol* after a temporal clause (Joüon §176f).

elders. The number of elders is not mentioned here, though Exodus 24:1 calls for 70 elders to act on the Israelites' behalf.

9:2. bull calf. “Normally, a high priest presented a bull for a purification offering (4:3); this is the only time he is required to present a young bull. No reason is stated, but calves appear to have been especially valued for their meat” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 279). Borowski explains: “In general, young calves were considered a culinary delicacy and were prepared for special meals. According to the story, when the three guests came to Abraham to announce the imminent birth of Isaac, he offered them a meal including a young calf (*bēn bāqār*), butter, fresh milk, and baked goods (Gen 18:6–8). Calves, specially selected for fattening (‘*ēgel marbēq*), were served on particular occasions, such as when Saul visited the spiritualist woman at En-Dor (1 Sam 28:24)” (*Every Living Thing*, 77–78).

[both] without blemish. The Hebrew here is plural; it refers to both animals (hence the addition of “both”).

9:3. then to the Israelites you must speak. The more common order is “speak to the Israelites” (1:2; 15:2; 17:2; 18:2; etc.). By putting “to the Israelites” first, the

text highlights the change of focus from Aaron and his sons (vv. 1–2) to the Israelites.

to the Israelites. Some ancient versions have “to the elders of Israel” (LXX, SP), no doubt to harmonize with v. 1. This is to be rejected as the easier reading. It may also be noted that no change is necessary since speaking “to the elders of the people”—who represented Israel—was viewed as speaking “to the Israelites” themselves. See the interchange of “elders” and “people” in Exodus 19:7–8.

for a purification offering. Some contexts require the congregation to bring a bull for a purification offering (Lev 4:14) while other contexts require a male goat (9:3; 16:5); the text does not explain the reason for the difference. The latter two texts share in common that the purification offering is presented with other animal offerings, perhaps suggesting that it was this factor—the number of different offerings presented—that for whatever reason led to a lesser purification offering animal in these contexts.

9:4. to sacrifice. The verb for “sacrifice” (קָרַב) is a general term referring to the performance of a sacrifice in general (see also Exod 3:18; 13:15; Num 22:40; etc.). It differs from the verb “slaughter” (שָׁחַט), which refers more specifically to the actual slaughtering of the animal (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:5a).

grain offering. This was to be burned right after the whole burnt offering (9:16–17), which it normally accompanied (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 107 at “The Occasions and Purposes of a Grain Offering”). Here, it is mentioned last in the list, perhaps simply because it was natural to group all the animal offerings together first. It may also be noted that when whole burnt offerings and fellowship offerings were presented at the same time (as happens here), the grain offering is said to accompany the whole burnt offering (Lev 23:18–19, 37; Num 7:87–88a).

with oil. Heb. “with the oil.” Hebrew often uses the definite article with nouns of materials (Joüon §137ia); English idiom requires the article to be dropped.

today. Heb. “the day”; see BDB 399.7.a.

is appearing. The verb נִרְאָה (“to appear”) is the standard verb used to describe the Lord appearing to people (Gen 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2; etc.). The MT points this as a perfect, which would have to be the so-called prophetic perfect (Joüion §112h) since it describes a future action. Alternatively, it could be repointed as a participle, which can be used for actions that occur in the future, especially the very near future (Joüion §121e). Either way, it is clear that his appearance will happen quite soon (“today”!) (cf. NET margin).

9:6. *This is what the LORD has commanded.* “Hebrew ‘This is the word/matter/thing (הַדְּבָר) that the LORD has commanded,’ a common way to refer to the content of the divine command (Exod 16:16, 32; 35:4; Lev 9:6)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 262 n. 5).

you must do in order that the glory of the LORD may appear to you. Simple *wāw* followed by jussive may be used to indicate purpose (Joüion §116a, e), hence “in order that.”

9:7. *offer.* For עָשָׂה with the sense “to offer,” see also 6:15 (22); 9:7; 14:19; etc. In these contexts, the word appears to refer to doing the entire rite (see esp. 9:16, 22).

and so. Inferential use of the conjunction (BDB 254.4).

make atonement on your behalf. There does not seem to be any real semantic difference between כָּפַר בְּעַד and the more commonly occurring כָּפַר עַל, though there may be a stylistic reason for the choice of one over the other: “‘*al*’ can refer only to persons other than the subject, but when the subject wishes to refer to himself *bē‘ad* must be used (e.g., 16:6, 11, 24; Ezek 45:22)” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 578; he also refers to Job 24:28).

and on behalf of the people. See explanation in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 9:7. The LXX reads “and on behalf of your house,” which avoids a question raised by the MT (why does Aaron’s sacrifice also atone for the people?) and brings the verse into line with 16:6, 11, 17. This is to be rejected as the easier reading.

9:17. *in addition to.* This combination of words (בָּצַד + לְ + מִן) is used to express “besides” (BDB 94.1.e) or “in addition to.” It frequently introduces offerings that are to be made “in addition to” other regularly scheduled offerings (Lev 23:38; Num 28:23, 31; 29:11, 16; etc.).

9:20. *them.* Heb. “the fat portions,” resuming the noun from the previous verse; “them” is more natural in English.

on the breasts. They are perhaps placed on (or “with”) the breasts in particular because of the breasts’ anatomy: “Although most of the ribs [of the breast] do not meet under the animal’s belly, the first several ribs (between the forelegs) do have a gristly sternum connecting them. This part could make a sort of basket which would be big enough to hold the suet, kidneys, etc. of the animal” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 585, citing his student Susan Rattray).

9:21. *The breasts and the right thigh, however, Aaron waved as a wave offering before the LORD.* In 7:30–32, it is only the breast that is presented as a wave offering; the thigh is simply a contribution offering. Why are both here identified as wave offerings? Wave and contribution offerings were similar in that they both consisted of items that were given to the Lord and the service of the tabernacle. The main difference between them appears to be that the “wave offering” goes through an extra ritual action by which it is “waved” before the Lord, thereby making crystal clear that it belongs to him (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 7:30c). The fact that the thigh is regularly called the “thigh of the contribution offering” suggests that it normally did not go through this extra waving rite (Exod 29:27; Lev 7:32, 34; 10:14; Num 6:20). Perhaps it is waved on this day in particular—when Israel is presenting its first fellowship offerings to the Lord—to make abundantly clear that even though it will be given to the officiating priest, it belongs ultimately to the Lord. Or perhaps it was because the offerings of this day were very similar to those of the ordination week, and during that week the right thigh of the fellowship offering was waved (8:25–27). Alternatively, since “waving” an object was a way of dedicating it to the

Lord, it may be that the phrase “to wave as a wave offering” is being used in a general way to indicate that all these pieces were dedicated to him (cf. Sklar, *Leviticus*, 300 n. 66).

9:22. *his hands.* At an earlier stage of Hebrew, “his hand” and “his hands” would both be written as יָדוֹ. As a result, this text could be read as “his hand” (יָדוֹ) (the *ketiv* reading) or as a defective spelling of “his hands” (יָדָיו) (the *qere* reading). The difference between the two has no real impact on the text’s meaning.

having offered. Heb. “from offering (יָדָיו followed by an infinitive construct),” that is, from having done so. See BDB 583.7.c; cf. 1 Chr 8:8; Ps 73:20.

9:23. *Then Moses and Aaron went.* Compound subjects (“Moses and Aaron”) can take a singular verb, especially when the verb precedes the subjects (Joüon §150q). It is not uncommon for any following verbs to be in the plural (as with “came out” [יָצְאוּ]); cf. Gen 9:23; 24:61; 33:7).

9:24. *Shouted out with joy.* This verb (יָדָה) is typically used to describe joyful singing or shouts of joyful praise (Ps 35:27; Isa 24:14; Jer 31:7; etc.). The same is true when the verb occurs in the *Piel* (Pss 33:1; 71:23; 90:14; etc.; for the context of responding with joy to the Lord’s appearance in particular, see esp. 1 Chr 16:33; Pss 98:8–9; 132:7–9). Only rarely does this verb mean “to shout” in a more general way, and even then, never in a context similar to ours (Lam 2:19; Prov 1:20; 8:3).

10:1. *each.* Heb. “a man” (אִישׁ), here with a distributive sense (cf. Gen 9:5; 10:5; etc.; see BDB 36).

unauthorized fire. Possibly, this refers to coals of fire that came from an unauthorized source, that is, coals that did not come from the outer altar but from a profane source (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 598). In that case, however, we might have expected the phrase “that he had not commanded them” to come after the first occurrence of the word “fire”: “Now Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu each took his firepan, and they put fire in them *that the LORD had not commanded them*, and

placed incense on [the fire], and so brought unauthorized fire...” The most likely explanation remains that this phrase refers to an offering presented at an unauthorized time and place (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 10:1).

10:3. *this is what.* Heb. “this/it [is] that which”; cf. BDB 216.6.a.

the LORD declares. “I take this to be a ‘performative’ perfect, which is ‘especially common with verbs of saying’ and is translated as a present (Joüon §112f)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 294 n. 18). In this case, Moses is giving the Lord’s explanative declaration for the first time (cf. Exod 16:23, which uses the same phrase as here to introduce words that Moses appears to be telling the people for the first time). Alternatively, this could be a simple past tense, in which case Moses is referring to unrecorded words of the Lord that he spoke at some point in the past.

those who draw near to me. Heb. “my drawing near ones,” with the suffix “my” being used in place of the prepositional construction “to me” (see *IBHS* §9.5.2f; cf. Ezek 43:19).

in the presence of. For this use of *עַל-פָּנָי*, see Gen 11:28; 32:22; Exod 33:19; 34:6; etc.

10:4. *summoned.* For this translation see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 74 n. 2.

Elzaphan. Also spelled “Elizaphan” (Num 3:30), which various ancient versions maintain in our verse (LXX, SP, Syr.). The original Hebrew of both names would have been spelled the same way (*אֶלְצַפָּן*); it is possible the Masoretes simply mispointed one or the other.

draw near. Milgrom argues the use of this verb, as opposed to the verb “to enter,” “implies that Nadab and Abihu were struck down in the courtyard” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 605). Not at all. The verb *קָרַב* simply means “to draw near” to an object, wherever it happens to be. The rest of the verse makes clear where they have to go: “in front of the [Most] Holy Place.” Milgrom also argues that Nadab and Abihu cannot be in the Holy Place because Levites, such as Mishael and Elzaphan, were not allowed in there (*Leviticus 1–16*, 605). In this case, however, there was a

ritual emergency (dead bodies in the Holy Place) and priests could not address it (if they went into the Tent, they would have become defiled [Num 19:14], which was absolutely forbidden to them during their ordination period [cf. at Lev 10:6–7]); the Levites are therefore given the task as the next logical choice.

from in front of. For this meaning of אֶת־פָּנָי, see also Lev 4:6 (cf. BDB 816.II.2.b).

outside of. See at 4:12 above.

10:6. [*The hair of*] *your heads do not unbind.* “Related to a noun (פָּרַע) that refers to locks of hair (Num 6:5; Ezek 44:20), the verb ‘unbind’ (פָּרַע) is usually understood to refer here to unbinding the hair of the head” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 296 n. 29). Although in a different context, cf. the use of the same verb in Exodus 32:25, which appears to critique Aaron for “letting loose” the people, who then “let loose” in terms of their behavior, acting in a wild manner.

do not unbind...do not tear. The first verb is negated by אַל, which is usually used for more specific prohibitions, and the second by לֹא, which is usually used for more universal prohibitions (Joüon §113m). This distinction is not always maintained, however, and the difference here could simply be for reasons of speech or style (cf. 1 Kgs 13:9, 17 with 13:22; Num 14:42 with Deut 1:42; Lev 10:9 with Ezek 44:21).

so that. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by אַל followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j).

and [so that the LORD] will [not] be angry with the whole congregation. Hebrew “and with all the congregation he will be angry.” I understand this clause to continue the previous purposes clause (‘so that you will not die’) and have added “so that the LORD” and “not” to make the flow of thought clear. Other versions achieve the same result by changing the beginning of the previous clause to “lest” in place of “so that...not”: “...lest you die and anger come upon all the

congregation” (ESV; NJPS; NRSV). I have chosen to make more explicit that the person being angry would be the Lord.

they may mourn. Taking this as a modal use of the imperfect (Joüon §113l): you cannot mourn but they may. A simple future (“they will mourn”) is also possible. In either case, the mourning will be carried out by Israel.

10:9. *[neither] you nor your sons.* Heb. “you or your sons,” though following a negative imperative we translate with “nor” and introduce “neither” to complete the thought in English.

[This is] a perpetual statute throughout your generations. As in our verse, there are other places where this phrase occurs in between an original command and further clarifications related to that command (Lev 23:31–32, 41). In these contexts, it appears to underscore the importance of the command being discussed by emphasizing that it is a command to be followed continually.

10:10. *so that [you may].* “...the infinitive being apersonal, the subject is only indicated by the context. Note that the inf. cst. is often used instead of a finite tense in spite of the ambiguity concerning the subject...” (Joüon §124s).

holy...common...pure...impure. Some have suggested that there is a parallel between the first two terms and the last two, so that “holy” is close in meaning to “pure” and “common” is close in meaning to “impure” (Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, JSOTSup 106 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 44). While not denying the closeness between purity and holiness (see the diagram in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 299), it may also be noted that the use of the word “common” elsewhere suggests it refers simply to that which is not holy, namely, that which is pure or impure (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 10:10). Indeed, throughout Leviticus (and other ritual texts in the Pentateuch), the ritual spectrum that people or objects move between consists simply (and consistently) of three categories: impure, pure and holy (see discussion in Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 105–27). This in fact explains why the word “common” is not found in

any other of these ritual texts: it is not a separate fourth category distinct from the other three, but a general category that consists of that which is pure and impure.

so that [you may] set apart as distinct the holy from the common. Or “so that you may distinguish between the holy and between the common.” For “set apart as distinct,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 10:10. In English, “set apart as distinct” requires מִבֵּין to be translated only once and as “from” not “between.”

common. Some versions translate with “profane” (NJB, NJPS), but this has a negative connotation in English (as in “profane language,” by which we usually mean “bad language”), while the Hebrew term (חֹל) simply refers to that which is not holy and this is better conveyed by the more neutral word “common” (ESV, NIV, NRSV, etc.).

10:12. *remaining sons.* “That these sons ‘remain’ reminds the listener or reader that other sons did not, and raises again the importance of not repeating their mistakes” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 299). There could also be a sad and sober play on words here by describing Eleazar and Ithamar as Aaron’s “remaining” sons. This is the very word used later in this verse to describe the grain offering portion that remained in contrast to the rest that was burned up in fire (see also 2:3, 10); it is as though these two sons are being described the same way: as those that remained in contrast to those that were burned up in fire (10:2).

unleavened bread. Heb. “unleavened breads”, though the English requires a singular here. The Hebrew term (מֵצֵה) occurs frequently in the Bible as a general term for “unleavened bread” (Gen 19:3; Exod 12:8, 15; etc.).

A *wēḡātal* can carry on an earlier imperative (see וְגָתַלְתָּ in v. 12; cf. Joüon §1191).

10:15. *The thigh of the contribution offering and the breast of the wave offering, together with the offerings by fire of the fat portions, [the Israelites] will bring for waving [them as] a wave offering before the LORD.* “Since the thigh was not typically ‘waved’ (cf. 7:30 with 7:32), it may be that the phrase ‘to wave as a

wave offering' (10:15)—which usually refers specifically to an object being dedicated to the LORD by means of waving [see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 7:30c]—is being used in a general way to indicate that all these pieces were dedicated to the LORD" (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 300 n. 66). Alternatively, if the imperfect is understood to communicate repeated action (and thus translated as a present [cf. Joüon §113c.1]), the wave offering phrase could modify the breast and fat portions in particular: "The thigh of the contribution offering, and the breast of the wave offering together with the offerings by fire of the fat portions they [the Israelites] bring for waving [them as] a wave offering before the LORD—they will belong to you and to your children after you as a perpetual allotment, as the LORD has commanded..."

so they will belong to you. In the Hebrew, the phrase reads as a singular ("it will belong to you"), not a plural ("they will belong to you"), but this happens elsewhere when the phrase refers to a plural subject (Gen 47:24; Exod 28:7; 30:4; see Joüon §150l).

10:16. For the marginal note indicating these words to be the middle words of the Pentateuch, see at 8:8 above.

burned up. In terms of form, this could be a *Pual* perfect or a *Qal* passive. Given how common the verb is in the *Qal* (over 90 times) and how rare it is in the *Piel* (only once, Amos 6:10), it is more likely to be a *Qal* passive (cf. Joüon §58a). In either case, a passive translation is required here.

10:17. *and it he has given to you for bearing away the sin of the congregation, for making atonement for them before the LORD.* It is also possible to translate the infinitives in 10:17 as purpose clauses (or as a purpose/result clause followed by an explanatory clause): "and it he has given to you *to bear away* the sin of the congregation, *to make atonement* (or: *by making atonement*) for them before the LORD." In this case, the idea would be, "Why did you not follow proper sacrificial procedure (eating the meat in a holy place), *because this offering was given to you to remove sin*, and thus must be offered properly" (Péter-Contesse,

Lévitique 1–16, 167; Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Traditions- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982], 239 n. 272; Elliger, *Leviticus*, 132; Kiuchi, *Purification Offering*, 46–52). Others who translate the infinitives in this second way argue that the priests bore away the congregation’s sin by eating the meat, which somehow contained the offerer’s sin or impurity (Angel M. Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertations Series 3 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979], 134; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 624–25; Roy E. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004], 194–96; Gane, *Cult*, 91–105). As Kleinig (*Leviticus*, 227) notes, however, “the purification offering was most holy (6:18 [25]; 7:1),” and thus unlikely to be a source of sin or pollution (see also Hartley, *Leviticus*, 61, 136).

10:18. *its blood was not brought.* Heb. “it was not brought, its blood.” For other passages where the accusative following a passive is translated as the subject in English, see Gen 4:18; Lev 6:13 (20); 16:27; Num 7:10, 84 (see Joüon §128b).

you should certainly have eaten. Infinitive absolute for emphasis (cf. Joüon §123e) followed by imperfect with a modal nuance of obligation (Joüon §113m). For another possible instance of an imperfect with modal nuance referring to the past, see Gen 43:7 (interestingly, the imperfect there again follows an infinitive absolute; cf. Joüon §113l).

10:19. *If I had eaten a purification offering today, would it have been good in the LORD’s eyes [to do so]?* For explanation of why the answer is “no,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 10:19. It has also been suggested that people who were mourning could not partake of sacrificial food, with Deuteronomy 26:14 cited as support (Levine, *Leviticus*, 63). That text, however, appears to refer to those who must avoid

sacrificial food because mourning rites have led them to become ritually impure; once again, that is clearly not the case here (see also v. 6).

would it have been good. A “past future” imperfect with a modal sense (cf. Joüon §113b, l).

10:20. *So Moses agreed.* “Cf. the use of שָׁמַע in Gen 37:27 (and see BDB 1034.1.j)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 302 n. 86). Alternatively, the phrase may be elliptical: “And Moses heard [this response] and it was good in his eyes.”

11:2. *These are the creatures.* The word חַיָּה (“creatures”) can be used to refer to any type of animal (cf. Gen 8:17). It is used collectively here and thus translated as a plural (cf. Gen 1:24, 25). This also requires adjusting the pronoun זֶה (Heb. “this”) to a plural (“these”).

you may eat. Modal nuance (Joüon §113l).

from among. Partitive use (BDB 580.3.a).

land animals. A collective use; cf. Gen 6:7; 8:1; etc.

11:3. *anything...that has hoofs.* Heb. “anything hoofing a hoof.” Some translate as though the phrase refers already to “dividing/splitting a hoof” (NASB, NRSV), but the same word for “hoofs” (פְּרָסוֹת) is also used for those of horses (Isa 5:28), whose hoofs are not divided (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 646). It therefore seems best to restrict the sense of “divided hoofs” to the next Hebrew phrase (so also Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*, JSOTSup 140 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 36 n. 1).

hoofs that are divided into [two] hoofs. The word “hoofs” is an accusative of limitation: to make a division *with regard to* hoofs, that is, into hoofs (cf. Joüon §126g).

11:4. *or.* Context demands “or” (cf. BDB 252.1.d) not “and.”

these. The word הֵן (“these”) is singular but may be used with a collective force (BDB 260.1.a; cf. Job 19:19).

11:5. *Likewise.* Or “And also” (BDB 253.1.g).

does not have hooves. The imperfect is used here instead of the participle, but these are often interchangeable (Joüon §121h).

11:6. *hare.* “[T]he name hare is preferred for the larger, long-legged, large-eared types that leap (the genus *Lepus*), while rabbit is reserved for the smaller, short-legged species that run (*Sylvilagus*)” (Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 192, citing Ivan T. Sanderson, *Living Mammals of the World* [Garden City, NJ: Hanover House, 1955], 113).

does not have hooves. Curiously, the verb here is a perfect instead of a participle (v. 4) or imperfect (v. 5). It may be that the verb “to split the hoof,” while active, could also be thought of as a stative (“to split the hoof” → “to have a split hoof”); in the latter case, the perfect would be a normal way to convey the present (Joüon §112a). This would also explain the interchange of the perfect and participle in Deuteronomy 14:7–8.

11:7. *do not chew the cud.* Usually understood to be the verb גָּרַר; it is used in the *Qal* with the meaning “to drag (away)” (Hab 1:15; Prov 21:7) and thus perhaps by extension to dragging food back up. For the *Qal* pointing, see Joüon §82b n. 4. (In terms of form, it could also be a *Niphal* imperfect [so BDB 176], but an active form [*Qal*] fits better here [so *DCH* 377].)

11:8. *any of.* Partitive use (BDB.580.3.b.[c]).

their carcasses. Heb. “their carcass,” that is, “the carcass of [any of] them” and thus “their carcasses” in English.

11:9. *These.* See at v. 4 above.

streams. The word נַחַל could also be translated “river” (cf. Deut 2:37); it is often used to describe *wadis*, that is, valley-like depressions in the ground that may contain a stream or river that swells greatly during rainfall. *Wadis* can dry up for lack of rain (cf. 1 Kgs 17:3–7) but can also be perennial (e.g., the Yarmuk, Jabbok, Arnon and Zered) and therefore contain fish.

11:10. *in the water.* Flying creatures and land creatures could also be classified as “swarming creatures” (vv. 20–23; 29); this phrase makes clear that marine life is still being addressed.

any of the [other] living creatures. הַיָּהִי modifies נֶפֶשׁ; it takes the definite article because לֵל makes the noun definite (cf. Joüon §138d; see also Gen 1:21; 9:10).

detestable things. It seems this word was interchangeable in these contexts with the word “impure” (טָמֵא), as suggested by the parallel passage in Deuteronomy 14:10, which uses the word “impure” in place of “detestable things” with no apparent change in meaning (Houston, *Purity*, 41). If there is a difference, it could be that the word “detestable things” had a stronger negative connotation, thus underscoring in our passage that these items were to be completely rejected as a food source (so also Houston, *Purity*, 41).

11:11. *detestable things they must be to you.* Verse 10b is a noun clause (“detestable things [are] they to you”); v. 11a adds the verb “to be” (הָיָה) in the imperfect, making clear that this view of the animals is to continue into the future (cf. Joüon §154m: the verb הָיָה can be used to “specify the temporal sphere of a nominal clause”). This is either simply to emphasize that this view is to continue into the future (“and detestable things they will remain to you,” RSV, NJPS), or to emphasize that this law will apply in the future when the Israelites again have access to marine life (which is not a current reality while they are camped at Mt. Sinai). In either case, it emphasizes the command. Cf. “impure are they, and impure they must be to you” at 11:35.

you must detest their carcasses. The sense could be that “you must not eat any of their meat,” if caught alive, and if found already dead, the same applies: “you must detest their carcasses” as a food source. Alternatively, this could be parallel to v. 8b, the sense being, “Do not touch their touch their carcasses without

recognizing that they will make you impure and that you will need to address that impurity.”

11:13. *from among.* Partitive use (BDB 580.3.a).

the flying creatures. A collective (cf. Joüon §135b).

11:13b–19. In Hebrew, each term in the list is preceded by “and,” which I have omitted for the sake of English style.

11:15. *every type of raven.* The word כָּל (“every”) makes explicit what the phrase לְמִינֵהוּ (“according to its grouping”) implies: every creature in this grouping is being referred to. Cf. Gen 1:25, which uses the phrase “according to its grouping” without the word “every” two times and with the word “every” one time, with no apparent change in meaning.

11:20. The MT keeps this verse with the previous verses and starts a new section at v. 21. But as the content of v. 20 makes clear—and as all modern versions recognize—it clearly belongs with the verses that follow.

11:21. *these.* See at v. 4 above.

may eat. Modal nuance (Joüon §113l).

from among. Partitive use (BDB 580.3.a).

those that have. “The MT has אֲשֶׁר לֹא (‘those that do not’); the ancient versions and the *qere* read אֲשֶׁר לוֹ (‘those that are to it,’ that is, ‘those that have’; for ‘those’ see BDB 82.1). Context demands the latter” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 327 n. 58). See the same issue regarding לֹא vs. לוֹ in the MT in Exod 21:8; Lev 25:30; Ps 100:3.

higher than their feet. Heb. “from above with regard to their feet,” that is, “above, higher than” (BDB 751.1.b).

11:24. *Now with regard to.* See BDB 512.5.

you will make yourselves impure. *Hithpael* with reflexive sense; see also v. 43. Note as well that v. 43 uses the *Niphal* for the passive sense; this makes a passive translation in our verse less likely (contra NASB, ESV).

whoever touches. כָּל plus a participle can have the sense of “whoever” (Exod 12:15; Lev 17:14; see BDB 482.1.e.[b]).

their carcasses. See at 11:8.

until evening. Heb. “until the evening;” English idiom does not include the definite article.

11:25. *any of.* Partitive use (BDB 580.3.b.[c]). In this case, it could refer either to any *portion* of the carcasses (JPS, NKJV, RSV, ESV) or to any *one* of the carcasses (NASB, NIV, NJB, NLT). Context favors the latter (11:28).

must wash their clothes. At least some texts requiring people to wash their clothes assume they will also bathe their bodies (cf. 11:40 with 17:15; the same could be true here). This assumption is no surprise; it makes good sense that a person should purify their body before putting on clothes that have just been purified.

11:27. *paws.* The word פֶּה can refer to the sole of the foot (human: Deut 11:24; Josh 3:13; animal: Gen 8:9), which in this context would be a “paw”.

11:32. *any of.* Partitive use (BDB 580.3.b.[c]).

whether any. Heb. “from any”; the expression is introducing a list of various objects (BDB 581.3.b.[e]).

any article that is used. Heb. “any article that use is made with them.” The noun for “use” (מְלֶאכָה) is feminine and the verb (יַעֲשֶׂה) masculine; this disagreement is not uncommon (Joüon §150k) and happens elsewhere with the same noun and verb (Exod 12:16; 31:15).

11:34. *may be eaten.* Modal use (Joüon §113l).

11:35. *stove.* This word (פֶּיר) occurs only here, but words built on the same root refer to “furnaces” (בּוֹר) or “[cooking] pots” (פִּיר), suggesting that something similar is in view here.

must be torn down. In this case, the verb is not “to break” (v. 33), which can be done with smaller items, but “to tear down” (נָתַץ), which is required for larger

items such as altars (Exod 34:13), houses (Lev 14:45), or in this case, ovens or stoves. In terms of form, the word could be a *Hophal* imperfect or *Qal* passive; the latter is preferred since the word does not occur in the *Hiphil* but occurs frequently in the *Qal* (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 679; see Joüon §58a).

impure are they, and impure they will be to you. This phrase either conveys continuation (“they will remain impure to you”) or refers to a time in the future (thus implying that Israel is not making use of these larger ovens and stoves as much while they are on their way to Canaan as they will be once they are in it). In either case, it emphasizes the command. Cf. “detestable things they must be to you” at 11:11.

11:36. *cistern of water.* Heb. “a cistern a collection of water”. A “cistern” (בֹּרַ) was a pit dug in the earth or carved into rock whose main purpose was to hold water (Deut 6:11).

11:37. *seed for sowing.* Heb. “seed of sowing”; objective genitive (Joüon §129e).

11:42. *belly.* In many manuscripts, the letter י in the word גִּחְזֹן (“belly”) is extra large. The note in the margin indicates this is the middle letter in the Pentateuch, for which see at 8:8 above.

whatever has many feet. Heb. “any multiplier of feet.” The verb הִרְבֵּה refers to “multiplying” an object, that is, making it many (Gen 26:24; Exod 7:3; BDB 915.1). The word רַגְלִי (“foot”) uses the dual form of the noun for the plural (Joüon §91e).

11:43. *yourselves.* The word נַפְשׁ may be used to refer to one’s self (see 16:29; Deut 4:9). In a context of eating, it is possible this word refers to the throat in particular, with the strongest possible examples being Isaiah 5:14; Ezekiel 4:14; Habakkuk 2:5 (see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 684; the other passages he cites are not as strong). Even in these examples, however, the major English translations do not uniformly translate נַפְשׁ as “throat,” showing the uncertainty that still remains

with “throat” as a valid translation. (It may also be noted that even if “throat” were meant in Lev 11:43, the end result is the same since the next phrase makes clear that the person as a whole is defiled.)

any swarming creatures. Heb. “any swarming creatures that swarm,” which sounds redundant in English.

so that you do not make yourselves impure by them and so become impure by them. Reflexive *Hithpael* followed by passive *Niphal*: those who “make themselves impure” (*Hithpael*) “become impure” (*Niphal*).

by them. The preposition בְּ (“by”) can take two different forms of the 3mp suffix. Both occur in this verse; there is no apparent difference in meaning (Joüon §103e).

become impure. The verb is missing an *’ālēph*; when this letter becomes silent in the middle of a word, it can disappear (GKC §74k).

11:46. *regarding.* Heb. “law of,” a genitive of topic and thus translated “law regarding” or “law concerning” (cf. Joüon §129f[14]).

darts about. The verb שָׂרָץ refers to locomotion, whether of land animals that “creep/scurry about” (v. 44) or marine animals that “dart about.” Perhaps the same verb is used both times because of the similar appearance between the movement of animals that “creep” or “dart about” along the ground and those of fish that “glide” or “dart about” in the water.

12:2b. *produces offspring.* There are three main options for the translation of this term. 1. “Produces offspring” (NASB; NET); Gen 1:11–12 uses the verb this way. 2. “Being with seed,” that is, “becoming pregnant, conceiving” (LXX; ESV; NIV; NRSV). This translation either understands the *Hiphil* to have an “ingressive/intransitive causative” sense (see Joüon §54d and GKC §54d–f for this use of the *Hiphil*) or repoints the verb as a *Niphal* (“be seeded,” that is, “become pregnant” [cf. Num 5:28]; so the SP). 3. “To come to seed,” that is, “to come to full term” (so David N. Freedman in a note to Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 743). This is a

variant understanding of the ingressive/intransitive causative sense of the *Hiphil*. Each of the three is possible and the arguments for and against are very even in each case. I have gone with the first simply because the verb is clearly used this way elsewhere, although the other two are equally possible. In either case, the following phrase makes clear the overall endpoint: the birth of a baby boy.

12:2c. *as [in] the days of her being unwell with menstrual impurity.* Heb. “as [in] the days of the menstrual impurity of her being unwell,” with “menstrual impurity” specifying what is meant by “being unwell” (cf. Joüon §129f.C.3).

12:4. *Then for thirty–three days she must wait to be purified for [her] blood.* Heb. “she must continue in the bloods of [her] purification.” It is possible that the word טְהִרָה (“purification”) was originally טְהִרָה (“her purification”) and that the *mappîq* has dropped out of the final *he* due to the word being in pause, at which time it was repointed as simply “purification” (so Joüon §94h; also in v. 5). In either case, the meaning is unaffected.

blood. Heb. “bloods.” When referring to blood outside the body, Hebrew can use a plural (“bloods”), perhaps simply because the blood often spatters about in several different places (see also Gen 4:10, 11; cf. BDB 196.2.f).

12:6. *whether for a son or for a daughter.* Heb. “with regard to (לְ) a son or with regard to a daughter”; see BDB 514.5.e for this use of לְ.

a one–year–old sheep for a whole burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a purification offering. Though mentioned in this order, texts which actually describe a series of offerings being made (as opposed to listing which offerings to make) often put the purification offering ahead of the burnt offering (cf. 8:14 and 8:18; 9:8 and 9:12). Perhaps the list here is arranged in terms of the size of the animals, going from the largest (the sheep) to the smallest (the bird). This would also explain Leviticus 23:19 and Numbers 28:11–30, which name burnt offerings of bulls before purification offerings of goats.

12:7. *and she will be pure from the flow of her blood.* In this case, the woman's purification is made especially clear. Significantly, this undercuts Milgrom's argument that the purification offering serves only to cleanse the tabernacle, not the offerer (the same problem is noted by Gane, *Cult*, 114; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 254). Indeed, Milgrom later acknowledges the woman is cleansed in this instance by the purification offering (*Leviticus 1–16*, 758); I have been unable to find a place where he reconciles this with his earlier argument.

from the flow of her blood. Heb. “from the fountain of her bloods.” It is possible in some contexts that the word “fountain” (מִקְוֶה) refers to the genitalia (cf. Prov 5:18), though in this context it appears to be used as a metonymy for that which proceeds from the fountain, namely, the *flow* of her blood from which she needs cleansing. For “bloods,” see at 12:4 above.

whether to a male or a female. Heb. “to the male or to the female,” the article perhaps used because “male” and “female” counted as a class or species (cf. Joüon §137i).

12:8. *Now if she is not able to afford.* Heb. “her hand is not able to find sufficient means for.” This verse uses a similar expression to 5:7, the only difference being the interchange of the verb “to find” (מָצָא) for the verb “to reach” (גָּיַר). The sense is the same (see further Sklar, *Leviticus*, 163 n. 30).

13. *Explanation of the Text: The Meaning of Šāra‘at.* The translation “leprosy” seems to be supported by the early Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), which translates *šāra‘at* with the Greek word *lepra*. At the time of that translation, however, the Greek word *lepra* referred to various skin diseases, but not to leprosy, for which the terms *elephas* or *elephantiasis* were used (E. V. Hulse, “The Nature of Biblical Leprosy and the Use of Alternative Medical Terms in Modern Translations of the Bible,” *PEQ* 107 [1975]: 88–89.) It was only much later—as late as the eighth century AD—that people began to use the term *lepra* to refer to leprosy as it is known today (Hulse, “Biblical Leprosy,” 89).

13:2. *has.* Heb. “there will be in (הָיָה בָּ),” a phrase used elsewhere to describe a person “having” a certain physical condition (Lev 21:19).

discoloration. Often translated with “bright spot” (NASB) or “shiny spot/shiny mark/shiny patch” (NIV; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 774; Hartley, *Leviticus*, 171) since it is built on a root which refers to being bright or shiny (so Aramaic, Ethiopic, Arabic). But “since it can be dull (13:39), ‘discoloration’ (NJPS) might be better” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 363 n. 15). A root associated with brightness may have been used because such discolored skin would often be lighter (and in this sense “brighter”) than the surrounding skin.

on the skin of their body. Why not simply say “on their skin” instead of “on the skin of their body”? Perhaps to distinguish these conditions from later cases involving the head or beard in particular (Péter–Contesse, *Lévitique 1–16*, 203, citing v. 43 in support).

becomes. Heb. “it will be...for” (הָיָה לְ); see BDB 226.II.2.e.

13:3. *Now if.* Simple *wāw* can be used to express the protasis (Joüon §167b).

deeper than. A מִן of comparison; see BDB 582.6.

13:5. [*that is,*] *the unhealthy mark has not spread on the skin.* This clause and the preceding may be understood to stand in apposition (suggested by the lack of the conjunction).

spread. The word פָּשַׁח is used consistently in Leviticus 13–14 to refer to an *existing* unhealthy mark that does (or does not) spread on the skin (13:5–8, 22–23, 27–28, 32, 34–36), or to existing fungal infections which do (or do not) spread in cloth or leather (13:51, 53, 55) or homes (14:39, 44, 48). By way of contrast, the word פָּרַח is used to refer to a “breaking out” or “erupting” of a new mark on the skin (13:12, 20, 25, 39) or the head (13:42) or to new fungal infections which break out in cloth or leather (13:57) or in a house (14:43).

13:6. *rash*. Taking מְסִפַּחַת to be more or less synonymous with סִפַּחַת, both of which are built on the same root. For a similar situation with a different root, cf. מְשַׁכֵּרֶת (Gen 31:7) with שֹׁכֵר (Gen 31:8).

13:7. *after they appear*. Heb. “after his appearing.” An infinitive construct following a preposition “is equivalent to a finite tense” (Joüon §124k). The masculine pronoun refers to the person (“his”), not the rash (which is grammatically feminine).

13:12. *But if the ritually defiling skin disease*. While the definite article could be due to the noun צִרְעָתָה describing a class or species (cf. Joüon §137i; see also 14:54, 57), it is also very natural to read it as referring back to something already mentioned in the immediate context. If so, “the ritually defiling skin disease” would be a shorthand way of referring to “the unhealthy mark of the ritually defiling skin disease” in v. 9, which in turn has special reference to the “white raised lesion” (v. 10) (the “quick raw flesh” [v. 10] was an additional element to this lesion). In further support, “the infinitive absolute in a case law can introduce a contrast” with that which precedes (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 364 n. 29) (Joüon §123g, i; so also at 14:48; 15:24). Its use here ties this law together with the preceding one. Finally, since the final result in v. 13 is turning “white,” it makes good sense that the “white” raised lesion of v. 10 is still in view.

13:18. *When the skin of [someone’s] body has a boil, and then is healed*. Heb. “Now as for a body, when there will be in it, in its skin, a boil, and it is healed.” It is likely that “boil” is the subject of the verb “to be healed” (cf. v. 37; 14:3, 48), as opposed to “skin” or “body”. Either way, the endpoint would be the same.

13:19. *bright reddish–white*. “The term אֲדָמָה־בְּלֹחַת is based on the word אָדָם (‘red’), with a repetition of the last two consonants that suggests an intensification of sorts (‘bright/shimmery red’). Cf. the use of the similarly formed יִרְקָרֵק in Ps 68:14 (13), usually understood from context to refer to gold’s bright/shimmery yellow color” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 366 n. 40). Cf. also חֲלֹקֶלֶקוֹת, which is based on

the word “smooth” (קָלִיל), and which refers to something that is “very smooth,” that is, “slippery” (Ps 35:6).

13:29. *man or woman...scalp or...beard.* “The Israelites were sophisticated enough to understand that even though the beginning of the law mentions women in particular, only those parts of the law dealing with the scalp—not the beard—would apply to them” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 367 n. 46). Indeed, it is possible that v. 29 uses the phrase “a man or a woman”—instead of the more general word “person” (אָדָם)—to make clear that the laws concerning a mark on the head still applied to women (even if the laws concerning beards did not) (Robert I. Vasholz, *Leviticus*, A Mentor Commentary [Fearn, Ross-shire, U.K.: Mentor, 2007], 155).

on the scalp or in the beard. Heb. “on a head and on/in a beard.” The definite article is sometimes omitted with parts of the body (cf. v. 45; Deut 33:20).

the beard. There is no clear evidence that the term יָקִין ever refers simply to the “chin” (so NIV), while there is very clear evidence that it does refer to the “beard” (Lev 19:27; 21:5; 2 Sam 10:4; etc.).

13:30. *yellow.* This word (צָהָב) occurs only in this chapter of the Bible. It is contrasted with black hair (vv. 31, 37), which suggests a lighter color, and a word built on the same root refers to bronze that has been polished (Ezra 8:27), suggesting a color in the yellow–orange–red continuum. It is usually translated as “yellow.”

thinned out. The verb built on this root (קָקַץ) can refer to making a solid object into a bunch of tiny pieces (Exod 32:20; 2 Kgs 23:6), which would be an appropriate way to describe a solid head of hair becoming a thinned-out head of hair.

a ritually defiling disease of the head or the beard. Heb. “the ritually defiling skin disease of the head or of the beard.” The definite article is perhaps present because the noun describes a class or species (cf. Joüon §137i; see also

14:54, 57), or because there was only one “ritually defiling skin disease” that afflicted the scalp and beard (thus “*the* ritually defiling...disease”).

13:31. *But if.* We might expect v. 31 to begin with וְאִם, since this case is related to the previous (cf. v. 26), and not וְכִי, which usually indicates the start of a new major law. וְכִי is perhaps here simply because v. 31, though closely related to vv. 29–30, starts a lengthy (and thus significant) section (vv. 31–37).

13:37. If v. 37 is to be understood as following v. 36 chronologically (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 13:37), then it may be that black hair is not mentioned in v. 34 because it is assumed: after two weeks of quarantine, black hair would have begun to sprout if healing had indeed taken place. If it is asked why it would be assumed but not mentioned in one place (v. 34) and yet mentioned in another (v. 37), it may be noted that the same happens with yellow hair: v. 31 does not mention that the priest will look for it, but it must be assumed he does as its mention in vv. 32 and 36 makes clear. (Ritual instructions, like modern-day recipes, are not necessarily consistent in making explicit mention of things because they assume a certain amount of knowledge on the part of the user.) Perhaps the mention of black hair in our verse is a shorthand way to refer to the two-week period of quarantine that would have been required (vv. 31–34), during which the black hair would have grown.

13:40. *bald.* Words built on this term’s root (קרח) are often associated with baldness of one sort or another (Deut 14:1; Isa 3:24; Mic 1:16).

13:42. *But if.* See at v. 31 above.

13:43. *like the appearance of a ritually defiling skin disease [on the] skin of [the] body.* Heb. “like an appearance of a ritually defiling skin disease, skin of body.” The phrases are in apposition (as suggested by their agreement in determination, both being indefinite; cf. Joüon §131a). The second qualifies the first: this mark on the head is like the type that appears elsewhere on the body (cf. Joüon §131b).

13:44. *The priest will certainly declare him impure.* The infinitive absolute underscores the verb's action (cf. Joüon §123.h.4), perhaps simply to emphasize that while baldness itself does not cause impurity (vv. 40–41), baldness with the symptoms of vv. 42–43 does.

13:45. *an unhealthy mark.* Heb. “the unhealthy mark,” namely, one of the ones described in the preceding verses.

13:46. *they must live apart.* Heb. “apartness (בִּדְדָּ) he must live”; the noun בִּדְדָּ is commonly used as an adverbial accusative (BDB 94; cf. Jer 15:17; for substantives as adverbial accusatives, see Joüon §126c).

13:47. *a garment.* Heb. “the garment”; the article is sometimes used when referring to a class or species (Joüon §137i).

13:48. *on the warp or on the woof.* The Hebrew words for “warp” (שֵׁטִי) and “woof” (עֵרֶב) occur only in this chapter, but there is cognate support for translating שֵׁטִי with “warp” (see BDB 1059). As for the word “woof,” a homograph is used elsewhere to refer to a “mixture” (Exod 12:38), which would well apply to the “woof” since its threads are added to make the final “mixture” of the cloth. The LXX also translates “warp” and “woof.”

of linen [fabric] or woolen [fabric]. Heb. “with regard to the linen and the wool,” that is, the linen and wool fabrics with which garments are made.

on anything made from an animal hide. Heb. “in any work of an animal hide,” that is, any item made out of leather (genitive of material; Joüon §129fC5).

13:49. *bright green.* The word for “bright green” (יֶרֶק־קָרֵקֶ) is based on the root יֶרֶק, which could refer broadly to the yellow–green continuum (cf. its use in with words describing gold [Ps 68:14 (13)] as well as plants [Gen 1:30; Exod 10:15]). Since a mold or mildew is being described, and these are often “green,” I have translated accordingly, though any color in the yellow–green continuum could be in view.

it must be shown to the priest. Heb. “it must be shown, the priest.” In the *Hiphil*, the verb “to show” (הִרְאָה) can use the definite object marker to identify the person *to whom* something is being shown (Gen 41:28; Num 8:4); it appears the same happens here in the *Hophal*.

13:51. *a malignant ritually defiling infestation.* Heb. “a ritually defiling infestation being malignant.”

malignant. In its only use outside of Lev, the root מֵאֵר is parallel to “painful” (Ezek 28:24), which does not fit here. In Leviticus 13–14, the context “favors [a meaning of] ‘malignant’ or ‘chronic’ since it describes a ritually defiling infestation that either spreads (13:49–51) or returns after treatment (14:43–44)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 370 n. 74). The LXX heads in this direction with its rendering ἔμμονός (“steadfast,” that is, “chronic”), as does the SP, which appears to read the root מֵרָא (= מֵרָה), “to rebel,” which by extension could have the sense of “being stubborn, chronic, malignant.” I have used “malignant” due to the spreading nature of the infestation.

13:54. *then the priest must give a command and the item which has the unwelcome mark on it must be washed.* Heb. “the priest must give a command and they must wash the item....” For taking this as an impersonal form, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 370 n. 76. In Leviticus 13–14, impersonal third person forms are especially common following the verb צִוָּה; the clause with which the impersonal form begins identifies the content of the command (14:4, 5, 36, 40; cf. Gen 42:25).

13:55. *has been washed.* The subject of a passive verb (“[the item with] the unhealthy mark”) can be indicated with the particle אֵת (cf. Gen 4:18; 21:5; 27:42; *IBHS* §10.3.2).

13:57. *appears.* The verb is feminine in anticipation of the feminine singular participle used for the word “outbreak” (פִּרְחָת).

[then] it is an outbreak. Or “it is breaking out,” though elsewhere in the chapter these diagnostic clauses typically consist of a noun plus a third person

pronoun (vv. 3, 6, 8, 15, 20, etc.), and this favors an approach here which understands the participle to be a substantive. The difference is minimal either way.

with fire you must burn it, [namely,] the item which has the unwelcome mark on it. The pronominal suffix (“it”) and the noun clause which follows are in apposition (Joüon §146e).

13:58. *that you wash.* The imperfect is perhaps used functioning as a past future: “that you will have washed” (on the assumption that the instructions of v. 56 were followed). This might also apply to the following *wěqātal*: “the unwelcome mark will have departed from them.”

14:3. *the person with the ritually defiling skin disease has been healed of the unhealthy mark of the ritually defiling skin disease.* Heb. “the unhealthy mark of the ritually defiling skin disease has been healed from the person with the ritually defiling skin disease.” English requires the diseased person to be healed from the disease, not the disease to be healed from the person.

14:5. *one of the birds.* Heb. “the bird the first,” that is, the first bird used in the rite. In sacrificial texts, the word “one” can be used with a definite article as an ordinal (Exod 29:15 [cf. v. 19], 39), though an English speaker might more naturally say “one of” in this context.

14:6. Verse 6 begins with a noun phrase, perhaps to contrast this action with the previous one (while someone else slaughters the first bird, the priest takes the living bird) and/or because the action is not necessarily sequential (the priest may gather these things into his hands while the slaughtering is being done; cf. Joüon §118f).

14:8. *bathe with water.* Since water was scarce in ancient Israel, the person might not have taken a bath but simply washed using a wet cloth.

afterward. This preposition is perhaps used in place of a simple *wěqātal* in order to emphasize that all the preceding actions must be done before he may go back into the camp. Cf. 14:36.

14:9. *their beard.* Several texts suggest that Israelite men typically wore beards (Lev 19:27; 21:5; 2 Sam 10:4–5; 20:9; Ezra 9:3; Jer 41:5; Ezek 5:1); ancient Egyptian art suggests the same (L. G. Herr, “Shave,” *ISBE* 4:455). Since “all” the hair of the head is to be shaved, it may be assumed that the “beard” included the mustache.

eyebrows. The word עֵינַי can refer to something curved, such as a shield (Job 15:26), or chariot wheel rims (1 Kgs 7:33; Ezek 1:18); here, the “curved things of their eyes,” namely, their “eyebrows.”

14:10. *fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering.* Heb. “fine flour, a grain offering mixed with oil.” The phrase “grain offering mixed with oil” acts as an indirect accusative of “fine flour”; cf. Joüon §126c.

with oil. Heb. “with the oil”; Hebrew often uses the definite article with nouns of materials (Joüon §137ia).

14:11. *Then the priest who is making the declaration of purity.* For the declarative use (common in Lev 13–14), see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 363 n. 24. The verb can also simply mean “to purify” (16:19, 30), in which case it would translate as “the priest who is purifying/performing the purification.” The end result for the person would be the same.

aforementioned items. Heb. “them,” that is, the items mentioned in v. 10.

14:12. *one of the male sheep.* Reparation offerings normally called for a “ram” (5:15), but this is not a normal reparation offering (see comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 14:12–18), so there is no need to expect everything to be the same. Interestingly, the only time that priests are anointed with blood, it comes from a ram (Lev 8:22–24). Could it be that here, when a layperson is anointed with blood (v. 14), it would have seemed inappropriate to use blood from the same type of animal (and thus possibly blur the distinction between layperson and priest)?

the log of oil. Heb. “the log of the oil”; see “with oil” at 14:10 above.

14:13. *are slaughtered.* Imperfect for habitual or repeated action (Joüon §113c.1).

belongs to. See BDB 513.5.b.

14:14. *some of.* See BDB 580.3.b.

the big toe. Hebrew uses the same word (יָדָא) for the hand's thumb and the foot's big toe.

14:15. *and pour [it] into his own left palm.* Heb. “and pour [it] on the left palm of the priest,” making clear he pours it into his own hand, not the one of the person being purified.

14:16. *and sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD.* This is “similar to sprinkling blood ‘seven times before the LORD’ in 4:6” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 385). In Leviticus 4:6, the sprinkling was inside the Tent and before the Most Holy Place; here, it was outside the Tent and before the Holy Place. This difference could be due to the fact that the context of Leviticus 4:6 is the high priest's sin, which was of more serious consequence than the layperson's impurity. See further Sklar, *Leviticus*, 139–40 at “Presenting a Purification Offering.”

14:18. *remains from.* See at 8:32 above.

14:19a. *offer.* See Sklar, *Leviticus*, 163 n. 37.

from their impurity. Or “on account of their impurity” (for this use of יָדָא, see BDB 579–80.2.e–f); the endpoint is the same.

14:19b–20a. *grain offering.* For a sheep, the amount required is usually one-tenth of an ephah (Num 15:4; 28:5), in one case two-tenths (Lev 23:13), but nowhere else three-tenths, which is the amount usually given with bulls (Num 15:9; 28:12). Here, the requirement of three-tenths (14:10) might be to emphasize again the severity of the defilement being cleansed, or it might simply be due to the fact that three different flock animals are being sacrificed.

14:21. *[which must be presented] as a wave offering.* Heb. “a reparation offering, for a wave offering,” that is, a reparation offering that will be presented

as a wave offering (cf. v. 12). Because this section assumes the previous one, it can speak in an abbreviated way.

one-tenth [of an ephah] of fine flour. Heb. “one-tenth of fine flour, one”; numerals such as “one” can occur in apposition to quantify the preceding noun (cf. Joüon §130f). The numeral is not necessary here in the Hebrew; it may be present to emphasize that only one-tenth of an ephah is required, not three-tenths (cf. 14:10).

14:22. *whichever are within their means.* Taking אֲשֶׁר with the sense “whichever” or “whatever” (cf. Gen 32:24; 34:11; and esp. Num 6:21). This might imply that turtledoves and young pigeons were priced differently.

one [for] a purification offering and the other [for] a whole burnt offering. Heb. “and one will be a purification offering and one a burnt offering.” For “one...one” with the sense “the one...the other,” see also 14:31; 15:15, 30; 16:8.

14:29. *[So the priest must do all these things].* As in v. 21, the text is assuming the earlier verses and thus speaking in an abbreviated manner (see at v. 21 above, “[which must be presented] as a wave offering”). This phrase has been added to avoid the appearance that the atonement comes simply from the last action (placing the oil on the head). Cf. comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 385 n. 115.

14:30. *one of.* Partitive use of מֵן; see BDB 580.3.a.

14:31. *along with.* See BDB 755.4.c.

14:32. *on [the day of] their purification.* Heb. “in/on his purification,” that is, at the time of his purification rite. Cf. v. 2: בְּיוֹם טְהֻרָתוֹ.

14:34. *When you go into.* Or “when you go to,” though אֶל often has the sense “into” after the verb “go” (בָּוֹא) (Gen 6:18; Exod 28:29; Lev 9:23; 14:8; etc.).

I am giving. A participle is used, which is perhaps because this was “an imminent action...represented as being already in progress” (Joüon §121e). See also Lev 23:10; 25:2; Num 13:2; 15:2; Deut 1:20.

as. See BDB 512.4.b.

on a house in the land that is your holding. Heb. “on the house of the land of your holding.” “Of the land” is a genitive of place (Joüon §129.f.11) and “of your holding” a subjective genitive expressing possession (the land that you hold) (Joüon §129d; cf. Num 35:28).

on a house. See Joüon §140a for instances where a noun in a definite construct chain is translated as indefinite.

14:35. *the owner of the house.* Heb. “he whom to him is the house”; see BDB 82.7.b.

an unwelcome mark [of a ritually defiling infestation]. Context makes clear that the mark is suspected of being an unwelcome mark “of a ritually defiling infestation,” which I add here for clarity.

has become visible. In the *Niphal*, הֵרָאָה has the sense of “appear,” “be seen” (BDB 908.1.c).

in the house. Or “on the house,” but since the priest must enter the house to see the mark (v. 36), “in” is preferable.

14:36. *so that.* Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by אֵל followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j).

Then afterward. See BDB 29.2.b.

14:37. [*consists of*]. Or simply “[is]” (Heb. often omits the predicate verb); “consists of” is perhaps more natural English in this context.

spots. “This word occurs only here in the Old Testament; its root is debated. It is plural and in context evidently refers to recognizable marks on the wall’s surface” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 387 n. 131). It might be built on a root that refers to making something deep or hollowing it out (קָעַר; so BDB 891; Péter–Contesse, *Lévitique 1–16*, 226; cf. LXX: κοιλάς [“cavity”]), but if so, the noun’s formation remains difficult to explain. (Some have suggested a rare *Shaphel* form [Keith N. Schoville, “שָׁקַעְרוּרָה,” *NIDOTTE* 4:242], though this is only a guess.) Due to this uncertainty, I have gone with the generic term “spots.”

14:41. *he must have [it] scraped.* If the 3ms *Hiphil* pointing is correct, the context would suggest the priest has the house scraped; if a 3cpl *Hiphil* is correct (so LXX, Syr.), the context would suggest various people appointed to the task would do the scraping. (For the alternation between singular and plural, see below at 14:42.) The endpoint is the same.

scraped. This is the only time the verb appears. Words built on the same root (קצע) refer to a tool which is used to shape a block of wood into an idol (מִקְצֵעָה; Isa 44:13) or to a bark that is scraped off a tree and made into a powder (קִצְיֵעָה; Ps 45:9 [8]). These words, along with the current context, suggest the verb refers in some way to “scraping.”

inside. See BDB 110.8.

plaster. This word can refer to loose dirt (BDB 779.1.a) and the powder of pulverized objects (BDB 779.1.d); by extension, it refers to plaster, which could be made by adding water to dirt and chaff (or perhaps some other powder such as chalk). See John S. Holladay, Jr., “House, Israelite,” *ABD* 3:308–309.

scraped off. Verses 41 and 43 are the only times the verb קצה is used in the *Hiphil*. In the *Piel* it has the sense “cut off” (2 Kgs 10:32; Prov 26:6), and the sense here must be similar. Because *Hiphil* קצה (v. 41a) and *Hiphil* קצע (vv. 41b, 43) occur so infrequently, it is difficult to know whether there is any nuance of difference between them. If there is, it may simply be that *Hiphil* קצע refers to “causing an object to be scraped” (cf. *IBHS* §27.2) and *Hiphil* קצה to “scraping” an object (cf. *IBHS* §27.3).

at. See BDB 40.8.

14:42. There is an alteration between impersonal singular and impersonal plural forms in this chapter (cf. “they must tear out” in 14:40 with “he must tear out” in 14:43) and even within this verse (which starts with plural forms and switches to singular forms). There is no discernible reason. It is unlikely the text originally had just one form or the other since there would be no reason to explain

why scribes would depart from this consistency. It may simply be that these forms were readily interchangeable and thus consistency of form was not required.

different stones. Or “other stones,” though “different” works better in English later in the verse (“different plaster”) and is thus used here as well.

different plaster. The clause begins with a noun phrase, either simply to switch our attention to these other objects, or to indicate that this work is not necessarily sequential but could be done at the same time (while someone fixes the stones, another begins plastering; cf. Joüon §118f).

14:43. *after the house has been scraped off.* אַחֲרַי (“after”) is the construct form of אַחֲרֵי and typically used before infinitive constructs (Gen 5:4; 13:14; 14:17; etc.). The verb here is a *Hiphil* infinitive construct with an irregular prefix vowel (cf. Joüon §54c; see the same with a different verb in v. 46).

14:46. *any of the days it is quarantined.* Heb. “all of the days of the quarantining of it,” taking הַקָּיִר to be another instance of a *Hiphil* infinitive construct with an irregular prefix vowel (cf. at v. 43 above). The pointing could also indicate a perfect, though it would be exceedingly rare to have יוֹם in the construct followed by a perfect. (There appear to be only two possible candidates: 1 Sam 25:15 [where הַתְּהַלְכָּנוּ could be pointed as an infinitive construct], and 2 Sam 22:1.) By way of contrast, יוֹם in the construct followed by an infinitive construct is very common (Lev 26:34, 35; Num 6:6; Judg 18:31; 2 Chr 26:5; etc.). Given that v. 43 has already used the irregular form of the *Hiphil* infinitive construct, it is no surprise to find it here as well.

14:49. *cleanse.* For translation, see at 8:15 above. The word is more or less synonymous with the factitive use of טָהַר (“to purify”; see Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 112); it is translated here with “cleanse” to indicate that it is a different Hebrew root. It is perhaps used here in place of טָהַר because the latter is used throughout Leviticus 13–14 with a declarative use (“to pronounce pure”);

using נִטְּף makes clear that this verse is describing “cleansing the house,” not “pronouncing the house pure.”

14:54. *a ritually defiling skin disease.* The Hebrew uses definite articles throughout 14:54–57, perhaps because the nouns describe a class or species (Joüon §137i); English convention requires either “a” or no article at all.

15:2. *When any man is having a discharge—[and] the discharge is from his genitals—he will be impure.* The Masoretic accents divide the verse differently: “When any man is having a discharge from his genitals, his discharge will be impure.” But the parallel with the beginning of v. 19 suggests that the *zāqēp qātôn* should actually be on the word “discharge” (נִפְּץ), with the phrase following it being an explanatory note (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 906). In either case, the endpoint is more or less the same.

having a discharge. Heb. “will be discharging,” brought across more naturally in English as “having a discharge”. So also v. 19.

15:3. *And this will be.* LXX: “This is the law,” an easier reading (cf. 14:54; 15:32), and therefore rejected.

whether. Inserted here in light of the use of “or” (וְ) later in the verse.

secreting. This could be a perfect or a participle; context favors the latter (it is a constant flowing as opposed to being stopped up).

have become blocked. In the *Qal*, the term refers to “sealing (up)” something, such as a spring (Song 4:12). In the *Hiphil*, it occurs only here; context suggests an intransitive causative or ingressive meaning: “to become blocked” (Joüon §54d).

on account of. See BDB 579–80.2.e–f.

this is his impurity in him all the days of the discharge of his genitals, or his genitals being blocked on account of the discharge; this is his impurity [and its effects]. The section from the first “this is” to “on account of the discharge” text has been reconstructed here on the basis of the LXX and 11QpaleoLev. It appears

it fell out of the MT because the phrase “his genitals have become blocked on account of the discharge, this is his impurity” occurs twice in the verse, and a scribe’s eye skipped from the first to the second. The SP, though slightly different, is essentially the same as the LXX and 11QpaleoLev, further supporting the addition of this phrase. For details see K. A. Mathews, “The Leviticus Scroll (11QpaleoLev) and the Text of the Hebrew Bible,” *CBQ* 48 (1986): 177–78, 198).

15:5. *anyone.* Male or female; see BDB 36.

15:6. *sat.* The word “sat” (יָשַׁב) is an imperfect; it could therefore be translated as a past future (“will have sat,” see Joüon §113b), though an English past tense gets the same point across (and is much more commonly used today). The same approach applies to the phrase “that was (יָהָיָה) under him” in v. 10, and “on which she sat (יָשַׁבְתִּי)” in v. 22.

15:7. There is a marginal note in the Hebrew Bible indicating that this is the middle verse of the book; see at 8:8 above.

15:8. *someone who is pure.* Heb. “the pure one,” the sense being any person who is ritually pure.

15:9. *And every item on which the one with the discharge sits while riding.* Heb. “every place of riding (מְרִכָּב) on which the one with the discharge rides.” מְרִכָּב is a noun of place (or instrument), as is common for this type of noun formation (see Joüon §88Ld).

15:10. *whoever.* For כֹּל + a participle with the sense of “whoever,” see Exod 12:15; Lev 17:14; Num 1:3 (see also BDB 482.1.e.[b]).

15:11. *And everyone.* Heb. “all [things/people]”; see BDB 482.2.a. That people are in view is clear from the rest of the verse.

15:12. *a clay vessel.* Heb. “an article of clay,” a genitive of material (Joüon §129f.C[5]).

every wooden article. Heb. “article of wood,” another genitive of material (Joüon §129f.C[5]). Examples of such articles include ax handles (Deut 19:5) and spear shafts (2 Sam 23:7).

15:15. *one [as] a purification offering and the other [as] a whole burnt offering.* See at 14:22 above.

on account of. Causative מִן; see BDB 579–80.2.e–f.

15:16. *all his body.* Because the word for “body” (בָּשָׂר) can also refer to the genitals (see at vv. 2b. 2c), the word “all” (כָּל) might be present to make clear that it is the entire body that is in view.

15:18. *a man has sexual relations with a woman.* Heb. “And as for a woman that a man has sexual relations/lies (שָׁכַב) [with] her (אֹתָהּ).” This phrase (אֹתָהּ שָׁכַב) appears to be interchangeable with the phrase שָׁכַב אֵת followed by a direct object; cf. Lev 19:20: “Now if a man has sexual relations with a woman [and there is] a seminal emission (וְאִישׁ בִּי־יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֵב־זֶרַע).” Some verbs that normally pass the action on to the object by means of a preposition—which for שָׁכַב would be אֵת (19:20) or עִם (Gen 19:32)—can at times do the same simply by using a pronoun (cf. Joüon §125b).

[and there is] a seminal emission. This phrase may be understood as an accusative of limitation (or specification) that gives further details about the results of the man lying with the woman (cf. Joüon §126g).

15:25. *though not at.* See BDB 520.4.a.(b) for בֹּלֵא with the sense “outside of” a certain time, that is, “not at/during” that time.

beyond. See BDB 755.2 (cf. Isa 32:10).

[then] all the days of the discharge that causes her impurity she will remain as [she is in] the days of her menstrual impurity. Lit. “all the days of the discharge of her impurity as the days of her menstrual impurity she will remain...” For הָיָה with the sense “remain” see Exod 24:18; Lev 15:19; 22:27 (BDB 226.III.2).

the discharge that causes her impurity. Heb. “the discharge of her impurity,” understanding “impurity” to be an objective genitive (Joüon §129e). It could also be a genitive of quality: “her impure discharge” (Joüon §129f.C.1). The endpoint is the same.

15:31. *must separate.* Some versions suggest that in place of “you must separate” (וְהִזְרַתֶּם) we should read “you must warn” (וְהִזְהַרְתֶּם), a difference of only one letter in an unpointed text (so SP; Syr.; cf. the LXX, which also seems to have the idea of warning in mind; see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus*, SBLSCS 44 [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997], 238, esp. n. 45). In either case, the endpoint is about the same: the Israelites must be sure to deal properly with their impurities in order to avoid severe consequences.

so that. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is often indicated by לֹא followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j).

on account of. Alternatively, it could be translated “in their impurity,” that is, “so that they will not die in the state of their impurity (by failing to deal with it properly and thus recklessly defiling the tabernacle).” The endpoint is the same.

dwelling. While this term (מִשְׁכָּן) can refer specifically to the interior part of the Tent of Meeting (cf. Exod 36:8–13 with 36:14–19; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 8:10), it can also refer more generally to the Tent of Meeting as a whole (Num 3:23, 29 and esp. 3:38).

making my dwelling that is in their midst impure. In the *Piel*, טָמֵא can be used in a “factitive” sense, that is, “to bring a person/object into a certain state or condition” (Joüon §155d; *IBHS* §24.2b).

15:32. *for the man.* Objective genitive (Joüon §129e).

and the man becoming impure because of a seminal discharge. Heb. “he who there goes out from him a layering of semen to become impure (טָמֵא) by it.” For “he who” (that is, “the man”), see BDB 82.1. טָמֵא is a *Qal* inf. con.; the feminine ending is always found with this form of the verb (Lev 18:20, 23; 19:31;

22:8; Ezek 22:3; 44:25; it is also found with other stative verbs in the *Qal* inf. con. [Joüon §49d]).

15:33. *unwell.* A substantive use of the adjective **דָּוָה** (cf. *IBHS* §14.3.3).

whether male or female. Heb. “with regard to the male or with regard to the female,” the article perhaps used because “male” and “female” counted as a class or species (cf. Joüon §137i). For **לְ** as “with regard to,” see BDB 514.5.e.

16:1–34. It may be noted that this chapter begins with an overview (vv. 1–10) followed by more specific details (vv. 11–28) (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 418 and 426 at “Structure and Literary Form”). Wenham (*Leviticus*, 228) notes that an overview followed by more detailed explanation is a pattern followed elsewhere as well (cf. Deut 27:2–3 with 27:4–8).

16:1. *when they drew near before the LORD.* Several ancient versions have “in their bringing near strange fire before the LORD” (LXX, Targums; cf. Vulg.). This reading is both longer and easier (since it makes this verse closer to the language of 10:1); the MT is therefore retained.

when they drew near. An inf. con. of the form **קָרְבָה** (see also Exod 36:2; 40:32; for the form, see Joüon §49d).

16:2. *Tell Aaron your brother.* See Exod 4:14.

that he must not go. After the imperative “speak/tell” (**דַּבֵּר**), the jussive can indicate what the person who is spoken to is to do (or here, is not to do) (cf. Exod 14:2, 15; 25:2; Lev 22:2).

any. For **כָּל** with the sense “any,” see BDB 482.1.e.

behind. See BDB 110.8.b; DCH 162–63.

lest he die. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by **לֹא־יָמוּת** + an indicative (Joüon §116j; cf. 10:9; 19:29).

for I appear. This is the standard verb to describe the Lord appearing to people (Gen 12:7; 17:1; 26:2; etc.). The imperfect perhaps indicates a customary action: he regularly appears here (cf. Joüon §113c).

16:3. *bull from the herd.* See above at 4:3c–4b.

16:4. *a holy linen tunic.* Heb. “a tunic of linen, holiness,” with the noun “holiness” in apposition describing the tunic (cf. Joüon §131c).

he must gird himself. For חָגַר with a reflexive sense, see Prov 31:17.

and with a linen turban he must wrap [his head]. Heb. “with a linen headdress he must wrap himself,” namely, his head (cf. 8:9).

16:5. *goat for a purification offering.* See above at 9:3.

16:6. *that is his.* A common use of the phrase אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ (BDB 82–83.7). It could also be “that is for him.” In either case, this offering is for him and his household.

16:8. *one...the other.* See at 14:22.

for the ‘azā’ēl goat. (What follows is a longer version of what is found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 16:8.) At least three main approaches may be noted for the word ‘azā’ēl. In the first, ‘azā’ēl is understood as a proper name (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 238; Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, 162; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020–21 [citing also several pre-moderns: 3 *En.* 4:6; *Pirke R. El.* 46; Ibn Ezra; Ramban]; Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 288); this was perhaps a demon of some sort, dwelling in the wilderness. In support, Milgrom speaks for many when he points to “the parallel syntactic structures of this verse by which one goat is designated ‘for the LORD,’ the other ‘for Azazel,’ which imply that Azazel is the personal name of a divine being” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020; see also Hartley, *Leviticus*, 237–238).

While it would be true to say that the parallel structures *allow* for ‘azā’ēl to be a personal name, to say that they *imply* it is a personal name means that this is likely to be the case. But why is this likely? All the parallelism requires is that the first lot is for one thing, the second lot for another, and this parallelism can be maintained without having personal names used both times. This may be seen clearly by considering the translations of the second and third approaches:

“Aaron must assign lots for the two goats, one lot *for* the LORD [i.e., the lot identifies the goat that is to be sacrificed to the LORD], and the other lot *for* the rough place/*for* the departure goat [i.e., the lot identifies the goat that is to be sent away to the rough place, or that is to be the departure goat].”

Unless it can be proved that this verse requires the tightest parallelism possible—and this is the point that seems to be assumed but never established—then the presence of a personal name in the first half of the verse does not imply there must be a personal name in the second.

(Milgrom follows his first point of support with three more [*Leviticus* 1–16, 1020–21]. The first of these is that the wilderness “is the habitation of demons,” but this again simply allows for the possibility that *‘azā’ēl* is a demon; it is just as plausible the goat was sent to the wilderness because it was uninhabited and therefore the best place to dispose of the Israelites’ sin. His next point of support is based on a text so far removed from the time of Leviticus that no real weight can be put on it [*1 En.* 10:4–5], and his final point involves a reconstruction of the name’s origin that is so hypothetical and complex that little to no weight can be put on it either [to his credit, Milgrom introduces the last point with the word “perhaps”].)

More problematic for this approach, however, is that it seems difficult to understand that the Lord would involve a demon in one of the Israelites’ ritual ceremonies. This is especially problematic because we know from the very next chapter that some of the Israelites believed in and worshipped goat demons (17:7). Significantly, when the Lord is trying to eviscerate illicit worship from his people, his usual approach is to tell them to have absolutely nothing to do with false gods (Exod 23:24; 34:13; Deut 12:3)—as he in fact does in the very next chapter (Lev 17:7). In light of this, it seems highly unlikely that the Lord would involve a demon

in a rite here, not only legitimating its existence, but also opening the door for the Israelites to misconstrue this part of the ceremony as some sort of necessary appeasement to such a being. (Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, 234. It is true this is not a sacrifice [Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1021; Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, 163], but it does not have to be for the point above to remain valid.)

For the second and third approaches, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 16:3 – 10.

16:10. *with it.* “Hebrew ‘to make atonement on it,’ the goat being the place of focus for the atoning actions described in 16:21–22. The idea is conveyed more clearly in English using ‘with’ instead of ‘on’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 430 n. 45). Others have taken the 3ms suffix here to refer to Aaron, the sense being that the goat is stationed alive before the Lord “to make atonement for him” (that is, Aaron; so Kiuchi, *Purification Offering*, 150–52; originally followed by Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 96 n. 41). This is grammatically possible but unlikely for the simple reason that Aaron confesses the *Israelites’* sins onto the goat (v. 21), meaning atonement is not simply for him. Indeed, the goat is “from the Israelites” (v. 5) and “bears on itself all their iniquities” (v. 22); this atonement is not Aaron’s alone.

into. Or “to/towards,” though “into” is a possible translation of the *qāmes hē* at the end of the word (cf. Gen 43:17, 30; 1 Kgs 1:15 [Joüon §93c, d]) and better fits the English idiom.

16:12. *a firepan full of coals of fire.* Heb. “the fullness of the firepan, coals of fire,” that is, a firepan full of such coals (for translating with “a” instead of “the,” see Joüon §137m). Cf. the following phrase, “the fullness of his fists, finely ground fragrant incense,” that is, two fistfuls of incense (cf. Eccl 4:6). These are instances where the place of measurement and the contents being measured are put in apposition (see GKC §131d).

16:14. *and must sprinkle [it] with his finger on the atonement lid, on [its] east side, and before the atonement lid, he must sprinkle some of the blood seven*

times with his finger. Most versions translate this verse as consisting of two different actions: a sprinkling on the atonement cover, then a seven-fold sprinkling in front of it. This results in the curious situation of a far less thorough sprinkling on the very object that is undoubtedly more holy (and thus especially important to cleanse thoroughly). It may be noted, however, that there appears to be a mini-chiasm here (see outline in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 421), which allows for the sprinkling actions to be aligned:

A and must sprinkle [it] with his finger
 B on the atonement lid, on [its] east side,
 B' and before the atonement lid
 A' he must sprinkle some of the blood seven times with his finger

Thus he sprinkles seven times on the atonement cover and seven times in front of it.

on the atonement cover, on [its] east side. Heb. “on the surface of the atonement cover eastward,” that is, on the eastern side of the atonement cover.

east side. Cf. the use of the phrase in Exod 27:13; 38:13; Num 3:38.

16:16. *on account of.* See BDB 579–80.2.e–f, and see also the interchange of מן and על in similar contexts (cf. 4:26 and 5:10 with 4:35; 5:13; 19:22).

on account of their transgressions. The word “transgressions” (עֲשׂוֹנוֹת) is “not used in Leviticus for inadvertent sin but is used elsewhere in the Pentateuch for situations where an inferior commits serious sin against a superior (Gen 31:36; 50:17), including one case where the superior is the angel of the LORD (Exod 23:21)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 432). Outside the Pentateuch, see also the use of the verb built on the same root (עָשָׂה) to describe rebellion against human kings (2 Kgs 1:1; 3:5) as well as against the Lord himself (1 Kgs 8:50).

with regard to any of their sins. As argued in Sklar (*Leviticus*, 432), this refers to any type of sin. At first glance, this understanding seems at odds with

Numbers 15:30–31, which states that no sacrificial atonement may be made for apostate (“high-handed”) sin. In context, however, “Numbers 15:30–31 is speaking with reference to individual sacrifices for high-handed sin prompted by the sin itself, not communal sacrifices for sin that are scheduled as fixed rites of the ritual calendar. It is the possibility of the former Numbers 15 is denying, not the latter” (Jay Sklar, “Sin and Atonement: Lessons from the Pentateuch.” *BBR* 22, no. 4 [2012], 476 n. 23; see there for fuller discussion).

likewise. כִּי־כֵן can indicate an action will be done “as has been described or commanded, with ref. to what has preceded” (BDB 485), that is, “likewise.”

16:17. *Now.* The verse begins with a non-verbal phrase, providing important background information.

no one may be in the Tent of Meeting. Heb. “every person may not be in the Tent of Meeting,” brought across more naturally in English as above. For אִשָּׁה as a general referent to a human being see BDB 9.1.

16:18. *the altar that is before the LORD.* The altar of incense can also be described as being “before the LORD” (4:7), but since the priest is already in the Holy Place (see at 16:16b), his “going out” (16:18) must mean he exits it and goes into the courtyard to perform this rite on the burnt offering altar.

16:20. *When he finishes.* כִּי־כֵן plus an infinitive often functions to indicate the finishing of one action that is then followed by another; this is often brought across in English with a temporal clause as above (cf. Gen 17:22; 24:19; 49:33).

making atonement [to purify] the [Most] Holy Place. For this translation, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 433 n. 64. Though English style would not allow it, a translation such as “when he finishes ransom-cleansing the Most Holy Place” would capture the full nuances of כִּפּוּר, since the type of cleansing to which it refers is one that effects ransom at the same time. See further Sklar, *Leviticus*, Introduction, §3.g.iii, and discussion in Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 134–36, 192–93.

16:21. *both his hands.* At an earlier stage in Hebrew, “his hand” and “his hands” would have been written with the same consonants: יָדוֹ. The MT has preserved this earlier spelling in the main body (the *ketiv*); the marginal reading (the *qere*) gives the later spelling. The use of the word “both/two” makes clear “his hands” is the intended reading.

a man appointed for this time. Heb. “a timely (עֲתִי) man.” The word עֲתִי occurs only here; it has an adjectival ending (see Joüon §88Mg) and appears to be built on the noun עֵת (“time, season”). It could refer to someone “ready” for this time (so LXX [ἑτοιμος], NASB, NET, NJB), or, more broadly, someone “appointed” for this time (which could presume they were also “ready”) (so JPS, NIV, NJPS, NRSV). Due to the uncertainty, I have gone with the broader of the two.

into. See at v. 10.

16:22. *a land cut off.* In terms of form, גִּזְרָה could be a feminine adjective (see Joüon §87c), in which case it would simply be “a land cut off.” It could also be a feminine noun (see Joüon §97B.d) and refer “to a land of cutting off,” that is, either a land where one is cut off or a land that is cut off. In either case, the goat ends up in place where it is cut off from the people.

When he has sent the goat away into the wilderness. Like 16:20a, I understand 16:22b to function as a summary and transition (so also Péter–Contesse, *Lévitique 1–16*, 258). Alternatively, it could be more tightly connected to 16:22a and translated, “and he [i.e., the appointed man] must release the goat into the wilderness.” In either case, the goat is released and the ceremony continues in 16:23.

16:25. *burn [it] up in smoke on the altar.* For translation, see at 1:9 above.

16:27. *whose blood was brought.* Heb. “which it was brought their blood.” For other passages where the accusative following a passive is translated as the

subject in English, see Gen 4:18; Lev 6:13 (20); 10:18; Num 7:10, 84 (see Joüon §128b).

he must have [them] brought outside (יוֹצִיא) of the camp and their hides and their meat and their refuse must be burned (וְשָׂרְפוּ) with fire. It may be asked why the verbs in v. 27 switch from the singular (יוֹצִיא) to the plural (וְשָׂרְפוּ). Options include: 1) the first verb has the priest as subject (“he must have [them] brought out”), and is not impersonal, whereas the second verb is meant impersonally, and this difference is indicated by switching to the plural; 2) impersonal 3ms and 3cp verbs could be used fairly interchangeably (cf. 14:40 with 14:43); or 3) there is a scribal error with either verb. The third is the least likely, since the MT preserves a more difficult reading. The second is not impossible, but given the proximity of the two verbs, it seems more natural to conclude a Hebrew speaker would have understood a change in person to be in view: the priest has the pieces brought out by another/others, and “they”—the one(s) bringing the pieces out—burn them in the fire.

16:29. *So this will be a perpetual statute.* Heb. “and it (f.) will be for you for a perpetual statute (f.),” namely, this thing I am about to describe (hence “this,” cf. 16:34).

a Sabbath of complete rest. The noun translated “complete rest” (שַׁבָּתוֹן) is built on the root שָׁבַת (“rest”). This particular noun formation is often used for abstract nouns (see Joüon §88Mb; cf. זִכְרוֹן [“remembrance”]); this suggests a translation such as “resting” or “rest” for שַׁבָּתוֹן. “When preceded by the word ‘Sabbath’ (שַׁבָּת), the term שַׁבָּתוֹן typically refers to a day in which no work at all may be done (Exod 31:14–15; 35:2; Lev 16:31; 23:3, 32; cf. 25:4); many versions thus translate with ‘solemn/complete rest’ (NASB, ESV, NRSV, etc.)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 437 n. 90).

[whether] the native citizen or the resident alien who resides in your midst. For this type of circumstantial clause, see Joüon §159b.

[*whether*] the native citizen or. For “or” see BDB 252.1.d. Translating “or” here requires the insertion of “whether” at the beginning of the clause.

resident alien. “Although of different ethnic heritage (an ‘alien’), [this person was] ‘residing’ at least semi-permanently [in the land] and thus considered a ‘resident alien’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 437). It is perhaps this aspect of residency that distinguishes the “resident alien” (גֵּר) from the “foreigner” (נִכְרִי/בֶן־נִכְרִי; cf. Exod 12:43 with 12:48; see also Deut 14:21). The latter may have simply been passing through the land.

16:30. *for on this day atonement will be made for you to purify you from all your sins; before the LORD you will be pure.* Heb. “he will make atonement for you to purify you from all your sins before the LORD you will be pure.” There are two main approaches to the punctuation of these phrases. One follows the MT accent marks and puts a major break just before “from all your sins”: “he will make atonement for you to purify you; from all your sins before the LORD you will be pure” (see NASB, NIV, ESV, NJB). The second option is to see the major break coming on the phrase “from all your sins,” as in the above (NJPS). I lean slightly towards the latter, as “to purify from” is attested elsewhere in Leviticus (12:7; 14:7, 19; 15:28; cf. Ps 51:4 [2]), whereas “all your sins before the LORD” is not (the closest phrases I have found outside of Leviticus are in Numbers 15:28; 1 Sam 2:17; Jer 2:22; 18:23). Fortunately, in either case, it is clear that atonement results in the Israelites being cleansed of their sin.

16:31. *It must be a Sabbath of complete rest to you and you must humble yourselves.* Or “so that you may humble yourselves” (cf. Joüon §119e). In either case, ceasing from work and humbling themselves were both required.

16:32. *So the priest who is anointed and ordained.* Heb. “which he will anoint him and will fill his hand”; for impersonal 3ms verbs brought across passively, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:5a and cf. 21:10. For the translation of “ordain” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 269 n. 41.

to serve as priest. See at 7:35b.

the holy clothes. Heb. “the clothes of the holiness,” a genitive of quality (Joüion §129f.C.1), resulting in “the holy clothes” (so also Exod 29:29; 31:10; 35:19; etc.).

16:33. *make atonement* “The verb ‘to make atonement’ occurs three times in this verse, drawing attention to the ceremony’s main purpose” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 439). The fact these are not all *wəqāṭals* suggests that the author is not focusing in 16:33 on the temporal progression of the events as much as aligning the related results of this day: the making of atonement for the tabernacle complex, the priests and the people (cf. Péter–Contesse, *Lévitique 1–16*, 262).

16:34. *for making atonement.* Or “to make atonement”; the endpoint is the same.

Canonical and Theological Significance. “...the New Testament looks back to Isa 53 to describe Jesus. This is especially the case in 1 Peter 2:22–25, which ‘include[s] four quotations from, and at least four further allusions to, Isa. 52:13–53:12’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 442, citing D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Greg K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007], 1033). The quotations include Isaiah 53:9 (1 Pet 2:22), Isaiah 53:4 and 12 (1 Pet 2:24); Isaiah 53:5 (1 Pet 2:24); and Isaiah 53:6a (1 Pet 2:25). The allusions are in v. 23: “When he was reviled, *he did not retaliate*, when he suffered *he did not make threats* [Isa. 53:7c–d], but instead *trusted* [Isa. 53:4a, 12] *the one who judges justly* [Isa. 53:8a]” (Carson, “1 Peter,” 1034).

17:4. “Scholars debate whether the passage requires that animals suitable for sacrifice (ox, sheep, goat) always be slaughtered at the tabernacle or whether it requires such animals to be slaughtered there only if they were presented as a sacrifice” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 454). There are two questions to consider: 1. What are

the points in favor of each approach? 2. How does each approach relate to Deuteronomy 12:20–21?

1. In favor of the former (all slaughter of animals suitable for sacrifice must be performed at the tabernacle), it may be noted that the passage itself makes no clear distinction between “sacrificial” and “non–sacrificial” types of slaughter. It simply states that when these animals are slaughtered, it must be done at the Tent and they must be presented as a sacrifice. It thus appears to forbid any slaughter, sacrificial or otherwise, unless it is done at the tabernacle. (Indeed, this reading appears so natural that several commentators do not provide a rationale to support it; see Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 301–302; Bailey, *Leviticus–Numbers*, 208.) But if the Israelites already had a clear–cut distinction in mind between “sacrificial” and “non–sacrificial” slaughter, there would be no need to specify the distinction here; they would have immediately read this passage in light of the distinction and understood that it referred to sacrificial slaughter due to its focus on presenting the animal as an offering at the Tent of Meeting (and would have assumed that non–sacrificial slaughter was still allowed). In favor of the latter (the passage only requires the slaughter of animals suitable for sacrifice to be done at the Tent if they were intended to be a sacrifice), it has been noted that this is a sacrificial context and that in sacrificial contexts the verb “to slaughter” (טָחַטַּח) is used with reference to legitimate sacrificial slaughter (1:5; 3:2; etc.; see references in Hartley, *Leviticus*, 271); the passage must therefore have sacrificial slaughter in mind. This finds further support in 17:7–8, which parallels this passage and which assumes that the person’s goal is to present a sacrifice (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 271). The passage thus emphasizes that sacrificial slaughter must be done at the tabernacle; it does not comment one way or the other on non–sacrificial slaughter.

2. If the former approach is correct (Leviticus 17:3–4 is prohibiting all non–sacrificial slaughter), it seems to be at odds with Deuteronomy 12:20–21, where non–sacrificial slaughter is allowed. While historical–critical approaches might

tend to see this as a direct conflict between two different sources (the H source and the D source), others simply note—in keeping with the emphasis of Deuteronomy 12 itself—that there has been a change in circumstances. “Whereas Leviticus 17 applied to the desert camp, when the Israelites lived close to the Sanctuary, Deuteronomy 12 regulated settled life in the land of Canaan, when they spread out and many of them lived too far from the Sanctuary to come there every time they wanted meat of domestic animals (Deut. 12:20–21). As a concession to this change in practical circumstances, the law of Deuteronomy allows nonsacrificial slaughter” (Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 302). If the latter approach is correct (Leviticus 17:3–4 simply requires that animals intended as sacrifices be slaughtered at the sanctuary), then there is no necessary conflict with Deuteronomy 12:20–21, since nonsacrificial slaughter is not explicitly forbidden here.

brought it. That is, brought it there alive and then had it slaughtered, which is the normal sequence (4:4, 14–15, 23–24; cf. 3:1–2; 5:6, 7–8, 15–16; 12:6–7, etc.). So also Jacob Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3A [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000], 1455, citing Naphtali H. Wessely, “Leviticus,” in *Sefer Netivot Ha-shalom*, vol. 3, ed. M. Mendelssohn, Vienna: von Schmid und Busch, 1846), who notes that if this were an imperfect (“and does not bring it”), it could suggest that people could slaughter the sacrificial animal elsewhere and then bring it to the Tent. The perfect implies that a sacrificial animal is not to be slaughtered unless it “has been brought” to the Tent to be slaughtered there.

to offer it [as] a whole burnt offering or a fellowship offering to the LORD, for your favorable acceptance, for a pleasing aroma, but slaughters it outside. I include here the additional phrases found in the LXX and SP (in italics in the following): “...and to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting has not brought it to offer it [as] a whole burnt offering or a fellowship offering to the LORD, for your favorable acceptance, for a pleasing aroma, but slaughters it outside, and to the

entrance of the Tent of Meeting has not brought it to present it [as] an offering to the LORD...” In favor of this addition, the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch include it, and its omission in the MT can be explained as an instance of *homoiooteleuton* (“like ending”), the scribe’s eye skipping from the end of the first underlined phrase to the end of the second, leaving out everything in between. Against its originality, this speaks of the whole burnt offering and the fellowship offering (whereas the following verse has the fellowship offering in particular in mind, 17:5), and it uses a second person plural (“your favorable acceptance”) where a third person singular might be more natural (cf. surrounding finite verbs) (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1456; he adds a third point, which is accounted for in the explanation of 17:8–9 in Sklar, *Leviticus*). Both observations are true, though not decisive. It may have been that fellowship offerings were the more common illicit offering made in order that a meal of meat could be had (cf. Exod 32:6; Num 25:2), which would explain why fellowship offerings are the particular focus in 17:5. As for the change in person, it may be observed firstly that this does happen elsewhere in Leviticus (cf. 1:2, and esp. 22:18–19), and secondly that it is not common, meaning that this reading is both possible and more difficult and thus to be preferred.

[as] a whole burnt offering. The word “whole burnt offering” functions here as an adverbial accusative (see Joüon §126c); see also 17:5.

17:5. [This is] so that. The phrase לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר introduces the rationale for something (Gen 18:19; Num 17:5), which here requires the addition of “this is.”

they will bring. The verb הֵבִי־אֵ is resumed here from earlier in the verse, perhaps for clarity. Without it, the sentence might read as though the Israelites were sacrificing to the Lord in the field (“so that the Israelites will bring their sacrifices that they are offering on the face of the field to the LORD”). See Joüon §176b, n.2, for further examples of resumptive verbs.

and they will offer them. Normally, “them” (אֹתָם) would come immediately after the verb; it could be displaced here simply because the phrase “sacrifice a sacrifice” was so common that it was more natural to keep the phrase together and postpone the placement of “them” (Gen 46:1; Lev 19:5; 22:29; etc.; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1461).

17:6. *throw the blood on the altar of the LORD.* Leviticus normally says the priest “throws the blood on the altar round about” (1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, 13; 7:2; 8:19, 24; 9:12, 18); this is the only time it uses the phrase “throws the blood *on the altar of the LORD*,” in this way highlighting that it is to him alone that sacrificial blood is presented.

17:7. *goat gods.* The name of these beings suggests they “were thought to resemble goats; aside from this, not much is known about them” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 455). Some argue these are demons, pointing to the occurrence of the same word in Isaiah 13:21 and 34:14 (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1462, citing earlier rabbis as well); the texts in Isaiah, however, could simply be referring to regular goats (note that some of the other terms in these verses are usually taken to refer to regular animals).

with whom they are prostituting themselves. Or “after whom they are whoring,” though in English this could imply they have not yet engaged in illicit activity (they are simply pursuing wrongly after them), whereas in this context it is clear they have already done so (“*no longer* offer their sacrifices to the goat gods”); translating “*with whom* they are prostituting themselves” brings this across more clearly.

17:8. *resident aliens.* A collective singular (cf. Ezek 14:7).

sacrifice. An abbreviated way to refer to the fellowship offering sacrifices mentioned earlier (17:4–5; cf. 23:37; Num 15:3, 5). Why not mention other offerings here as well? Wenham (*Leviticus*, 243) notes: “There would be little likelihood of people bringing cereal offerings, which were basically gifts to the

priesthood, or purification offerings to purify the Tabernacle, anywhere except to the Tabernacle. There would have been no point.” The same is true of reparation offerings, which were for breaches of faith against the Lord himself, and therefore had to be presented before him at the tabernacle.

17:9. *cut off from their people.* Heb. “his peoples”; in Leviticus, when it occurs together with the verb כרת, the word עַם (“people”) takes the suffix of the plural noun (7:21, 27; 19:8; etc.), unless it is preceded by קָרַב, in which cases it takes the suffix of the singular noun (17:4, 10; 18:29; etc.). There is no apparent difference in meaning between the two; this type of linguistic variation is simply common in spoken and written speech.

17:10. *eats any blood.* Heb. “who eats any blood”; the choice to begin the sentence with “if” in English requires the relative particle to be left untranslated here.

set my face against. For “against,” see BDB 89.II.4; for its use in this syntagm elsewhere, see 20:3, 6; 26:17; Ezek 14:8; 15:7.

17:11. *to make atonement for your lives.* In this context, the word נָפֶשׁ appears to have a broader reference than its use earlier in the verse, referring here not simply to the animating feature that distinguishes a live body from a dead one, but to the person as a whole (cf. at 11:43). At the same time, this is a clear play on the earlier use of נָפֶשׁ that is meant to underscore the way in which the נָפֶשׁ of the animal serves to rescue the נָפֶשׁ of the offerer (see the comments on “for it is the blood, by means of the life, [that] makes atonement” in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 17:11).

for it is the blood, by means of the life, [that] makes atonement. This translation represents the most common of three approaches to this phrase (for rationale see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 17:11). The second approach, which is not as common (see references in Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 169 n. 20), understands the preposition to identify the blood as the life, that is, the בְּ is a *bet* of identity (also known as *bet essentiae*), serving to identify the predicate (Joüon

§133c; for examples, see BDB 88.I.7). In this case, the word “life” thus refers again to that of the animal. In support of this approach, it may be noted that the preposition appears to be used in this same way in 17:11a and 17:14b. This makes the approach possible, though whether this support is as strong as that of the first approach is more difficult to say. At the end of the day, however, it does not lead to a different understanding overall since in both approaches the blood is able to atone because of its association with the animal’s life. What is more, both approaches work perfectly well with the understanding of atonement as ransom explained above: the animal’s lifeblood is the ransom that delivers the offerer from punishment.

The third approach, which is the least common (see references in Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 169 n. 19), understands the preposition to have the sense “in exchange for,” that is, the blood of the animal is given in exchange for the life. (This use of the preposition is known technically as the *bet pretii* [the *bet* of price]; see examples in BDB 90.III.3.) In this case, the word “life” refers to that of the offerer, not the animal. In support of this approach, it is noted that Deuteronomy 19:21 states the “life for life” principle by using the same preposition as here and that this understanding fits very well with the ransom understanding in our verse: the animal’s lifeblood is given in exchange for the offerer’s. This is true enough, although the first two approaches work equally well with the ransom understanding of the verse and are able to support their points with reference to other verses within Leviticus itself. (Indeed, in the one instance where Leviticus clearly states the “life for life” principle, it uses a different preposition: “life for [תַּתִּיתָ] life” [Lev 24:18] [Janowski, *Sühne*, 244].) This tilts the evidence in favor of the first two approaches.

for it is the blood. Heb. “for the blood is it”; the pronoun appears to draw attention to the blood (cf. Joüon §146c.1), highlighting its central role in the atonement process (and therefore underscoring why it must not be used for other purposes).

[that] makes atonement. A customary use of the imperfect (see Joüon §113.c[1]).

17:12. *I have said.* Or “I now say.” The perfect is often used with verbs of speaking to indicate an action that, having just been performed, is now considered part of the past (cf. Joüon §112f).

no person among you is to eat blood. Heb. “every person must not eat blood,” which must be brought across in English as here (see BDB 482.1.e.(c)).

among. Partitive use of the **אִתְּ** (BDB 580.3.a).

17:13. *hunts down wild land animals or birds.* Heb. “hunts down game of wild animals or of birds”; the word “game” is a genitive of species (Joüon §129f.C.4; for “birds” being in construct with “game” see Joüon §129b). It is more natural English style to omit it here.

hunts down. Heb. “who hunts down”; see at 17:10, “eats any blood.”

wild land animals or birds. Or “a wild land animal or a bird”; I translate with plurals as these types of nouns often function as collectives (see Joüon §135b).

wild land animals. The sense of “wild animal” is confirmed here by the fact the animals are hunted. I specify “wild *land* animal” because of the contrast with “birds.”

with earth. Heb. “the earth”; it is common in Hebrew to use a definite article with objects that are used for a specific purpose (Joüon §137m.1). The definite article is typically left untranslated in English.

17:14. *for the life of every creature.* “every creature” acts as a definite noun phrase (cf. the use of **כָּל** followed by a noun in Gen 9:5; Num 3:34); this leads to “the life of every creature” (and not “a life of every creature”).

is its life. Several ancient versions do not have the phrase “is its life” (**בְּנַפְשׁוֹ**) (LXX, Syr., Vulg.). In favor of these versions, it could be argued that the text of the MT is longer, a common sign of scribal activity. But it is also “a syntactically difficult phrase” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1483), and more difficult

readings are a common sign of the original text. Tipping the evidence in favor of this phrase, there is no evident reason for a scribe to add it, since it is completely unnecessary (cf. 17:14c, which gets the same point across without it). As for the וְ on the front of the phrase, it functions here as “a *bet* of identity (so also NASB, NJPS, NRSV), the only understanding of the וְ that works well in this context” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 460 n. 62). (If “with” were intended [so Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1483], we might expect “its life is with its blood,” which would be more in keeping with 17:11a, 14c, and not “its blood is with its life”.) Indeed, though this use of the *bet* is well-established (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 17:11), it is not the most common, which could explain why various ancient versions omitted the phrase (since it is hard to understand the phrase without the *bet* of identity in mind). In any case, the phrase appears to be original and functions here to emphasize strongly the connection between the animal’s life and its blood.

I have said. See at 17:12.

whoever eats it must be cut off. When a singular verb follows a plural participle, it may indicate the participle has a distributive sense, that is, “each one who eats it must be cut off” (see GKC §1451; cf. Lev 19:8).

17:15. *or.* Translating “or” here requires the insertion of “whether” at the beginning of the clause.

18:3. *As they do in the land of Egypt.* Heb. “according to the deeds of the land of Egypt,” that is, according to the deeds that those who live in Egypt do. The word “deed” (מַעֲשֵׂה) is used elsewhere to refer to a manner of life (Exod 18:20), a meaning confirmed here by the parallel phrase “live according to their customs.” (For “deed” as a collective noun [thus “deeds”], cf. 2 Chr 17:4; Eccl 8:14.)

you must not conduct yourselves. לִפְנֵי refers here to one’s manner of life, as the surrounding phrases show (“you must/must not do”; see BDB 234.II.3.a; cf. 26:3).

18:5. *by doing which a person will live.* Heb. “which a person will do them and live by them,” that is, “do them and as a result experience life under the LORD’s good pleasure by means of (אֲ) [doing] them.” Alternatively, the אֲ could have a locative sense: “do them and as a result experience life under the LORD’s good pleasure in (אֲ) them,” that is, in keeping them. The endpoint is the same.

18:9. In the Hebrew, this verse begins with “The nakedness of your sister,” describes two different people who qualified as such, and then ends with “their nakedness you must not uncover.” In this regard, the direct object phrase at the beginning of the verse is suspended (*casus pendens*; cf. Joüon §156c); the repetition of “nakedness” toward the end of the verse is needed to resume it. The pronoun is plural (“their”) to indicate “the nakedness of either of them,” that is, either of the women just described. In translation, I have combined the beginning and ending phrases: “You must not commit a shameful act by having sexual relations with your sister” (cf. ESV, NIV).

[*whether*] *kindred [brought up] in the family or kindred [brought up] in another home.* Heb. “kindred (מוֹלָדֵת) of house (בֵּית) or kindred of outside (חוּץ).” The word “kindred” is used elsewhere to refer to relatives (Gen 24:4; 31:3; etc.). The term “house” often refers to a “household” (Gen 7:1; 12:18; etc.), while the term “outside” can refer in family contexts to those who are not part of the household (Deut 25:5; Judg 12:9). As applied to our verse, “kindred of house” refers to a blood sister that was raised in the same household, while “kindred of outside” refers to a blood sister that was not.

[*whether*]. The presence of “or” later in the verse requires “whether” to be inserted here.

18:17. *They are a close relative.* The phrase “could mean ‘they are a close relative (*to you*)’ or ‘they are a close relative (*to her*)’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 485). The second of these is perhaps more likely. Earlier verses describing a woman as a “close relation” simply use שָׂאֵר (18:12, 13), not שָׂאֵרָה, but if a *mappîq* is added

we have שְׂאֵרָה with a 3fs ending: “her [the first woman’s] close relative are they.” In support of this, it may be noted that it is not uncommon for a *mappîq* to fall out (see examples in GKC §91e) and that the term שְׂאֵרָה occurs with pronominal suffixes in 20:19 and 21:2.

18:18. It may be noted that 18:18 has no corresponding penalty in Leviticus 20. This type of law—one that lays out an ethical ideal without a corresponding legal penalty if not kept—is known technically as a *lex imperfecta* and exists in law codes in numerous cultures (see Reuven Yaron, *The Laws of Eshnunna* [Leiden: Brill, 1988], 212; as applied to Lev 18:18, see Hugenberg, *Marriage*, 118). There are many biblical laws that fit into this category, such as laws against lying (Lev 19:11), or coveting (Exod 20:17). The Lord may of course bring justice to bear if these laws are not met but the courts may not; there is no legal penalty to enforce. The prohibition against polygamy in 18:18 is just such a law, and the Old Testament’s treatment of it is comparable to its treatment of divorce (which is no surprise since polygamy and divorce are similar in that both go against God’s intent for marriage). Genesis 2 models the ethical ideal of marriage by which the Israelites are to live: marriage is to be a faithful covenant relationship between a man and a woman (cf. Matt 19:3–6; for Genesis 2 as the ethical ideal, and for the covenantal nature of marriage, see Hugenberg, *Marriage*, 151–67). Divorce goes against this, and while there are laws that regulate divorce (Deut 24:1–4), and laws that prohibit it outright in certain cases (Deut 22:19, 29), there is no *legal* penalty listed when people fail in terms of the ideal. So, too, with polygamy. The ethical ideal modelled by Genesis 2 is also a monogamous marriage. Polygamy goes against this, and while there are laws that regulate it (Deut 21:15–17), and a law that names a specific penalty for the worst forms of it (Lev 20:14), there is no *legal* penalty when people fail in terms of the ideal in most situations. Why does the Bible not do so, either for most cases of polygamy or for divorce in general? We are not told, but whatever the reason, *it does not mean these things are therefore allowable*, any

more than other prohibited actions in this category of law (such as lying or coveting) are allowable. Moreover, although no legal penalty is mentioned, this does not mean no penalty would come since any sinner should expect the Lord to hold them accountable in some manner.

to be a rival. Given the negative dynamics that often exist between two wives of the same man, it is perhaps not surprising that the root on which this verb is built gave rise to a term to describe a “rival wife” (צִרְיָה, 1 Sam 1:6).

18:19. *because of her menstrual impurity.* Heb. “in the menstrual impurity of her [ritual] impurity,” with “menstrual impurity” specifying the type of “ritual impurity” in view (cf. Joüon §129f.C.3).

18:20. *you must not have sexual relations.* Heb. “you must not give your layering with regard to (לְ) seed.” The לְ is used here as a circumlocution for the genitive (“of seed”), which is needed because a noun with a suffix (“your layering”) cannot be directly followed by a genitive (GKC §129e).

and so become impure. For the form of the infinitive see at 15:32 (“and the man becoming impure because of a seminal discharge”).

by [having sex with] her. Heb. “by her,” that is, “by means of involving oneself with her in the way the context addresses.” Cf. 19:31: “Do not turn to mediums or to spiritists...and so become impure by them (לְטַמְּאָה בְּהֵם),” that is, by means of involvement with them.

18:21. *any.* See BDB 580.3.b.(c).

in order that you do not profane. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by means of אֲל followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j).

18:22. *Also, with a male you must not have sexual relations as you do with a woman.* The word “as” is not in the Hebrew, which could be woodenly translated: “And with a male you must not lie the beds/lying downs of a woman.” In the commentary I note: “With most modern versions, I understand the phrase ‘beds/lying downs of a woman’ as an adverbial accusative of manner (for this

grammatical category, see GKC §118m,q, and note that the phrase is indefinite, which is one way to mark this type of phrase [see Joüon §126a(1)]. GKC notes that “such accusatives are most rendered by *in, with, as, in the form or manner of...*” (§118m)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 490 n. 92).

This approach, common in translations today (NRSV, NJB, NJPS, NASB, ESV, NIV, NET, RSV, NKJV), assumes that **מִשְׁכָּב** refers not to a “bed” but to the act of “lying down.” In support, it may be noted that nouns with a **מ** prefix can refer to the action of the verbal root. Of particular interest for Lev 18:22 and 20:13 are examples where the verb takes a noun in the accusative position that is built on the same root (known as the “accusative of the internal object,” JM §125q,r): “they should *not be sold* (**לֹא יִמְכְּרוּ**) the *selling* (**מִמְכָּרָת**) of a slave” (Lev 25:42), that is, as one sells a slave; “your God shall *rejoice* (**יִשְׂשׁ**) over you the *rejoicing* (**מִשְׂשׂוֹ**) of the bridegroom over the bride” (Isa 62:5), that is, as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride. Lev 18:22 and 20:13 would be parallel, e.g., with 18:22: “With a male you shall *not lie down* (**לֹא תִשְׁכַּב**) the *lying down* (**מִשְׁכָּבִי**) of a woman,” that is, as one lies down with a woman. (For understanding “of a woman” as an adverbial as opposed to a subjective genitive, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 491.)

Wells (Bruce Wells, “On the Beds of a Woman: The Leviticus Texts on Same-Sex Relations Reconsidered,” in Hilary Lipka and Bruce Wells [eds.], *Sexuality and Law in the Torah* [LHBOTS 675; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark], 123 – 58) argues instead that the relevant phrases in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 are adverbial accusatives of location and should be translated “on the beds of a woman” (not “as you do with a woman”). He surveys eleven instances, outside of Lev 18:22 and 20:13, where the verb “to lie” occurs “with an adverbial accusative or what is more or less the equivalent thereof” (128). Of these, he classifies eight as adverbial accusatives of location: 2 Sam 4:5; 11:9; 12:16; 13:31; Mic 7:5; Ps 88:6; Ruth 3:8, 14. The remaining three are all in Leviticus and Numbers and are adverbial accusatives of manner: they use the verb “to lie” (**שָׁכַב**) together with the phrase “a

laying down of seed” (שְׁכַבַּת־זָרַע) to refer to a man who lies down with a woman such that there is an emission of seed, i.e., he lies sexually with the woman (Lev 15:18; 19:20; Num 5:13). At this point, Wells makes a two-fold argument: 1. the use of this adverbial accusative of manner in these latter three verses shows that “the priestly authors...already had an expression at hand that they could use to convey the sexual nature of an act, and this expression does not occur in the two texts under discussion,” that is, in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 (129 – 30); and 2. “the surrounding context of [Lev 18:22 and 20:13] plainly relates to sexual pairings, and to specify this particular lying down as sexual in nature would have been superfluous” (130). From this he concludes: “All of this evidence points to the conclusion that the adverbial accusative in Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 is not one of manner but location” (130).

Neither of these arguments is strong. The first seems to assume that Lev 18:22 and 20:13 could only use one expression to indicate the sexual nature of an act, but Leviticus 18 itself already makes clear that more than one such expression was available to use: in vv. 6 – 17, the expression of choice is “uncover the nakedness,” while in vv. 20 and 23 the expression is “to give a layering of seed.” Add to this what is found in 15:18, 19:20 and Num 5:13 (“to lie” with someone “a laying down of seed”), and it becomes clear there were multiple ways to indicate the sexual nature of an act. Lev 18:22 and 20:13 are thus not restricted to use the phrase that Wells highlights. Simply put, if other verses in Leviticus can indicate the sexual nature of an act by using a phrase that differs from the one found in Lev 15:18, 19:20 and Num 5:13, there is no reason why Lev 18:22 and 20:13 cannot as well.

As for the second argument, it is not uncommon for laws to have material that we might deem superfluous for the simple reason that laws aim to be clear. Indeed, Num 5:13, cited by Wells, is obviously talking of a sexual encounter, meaning it would have been enough to say, “And if a man lies with a woman and

it is hidden from the eyes of her husband,” as opposed to what it actually says: “And if a man lies *a layering of seed* with a woman and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband.” The latter, by including what might be described as a “superfluous” phrase, aims to be crystal clear. (Though not a law, see also Judg 21:12: “And they found...400 young virgins who had not known a man *with regard to the bed/lying down of a male*.” Once more, the context is obviously sexual, meaning the phrase “with regard to the bed/lying down of a male”—which is similar to our phrase “the beds/lying downs of a woman”—is unnecessary, yet that did not prevent its inclusion. So also in Lev 18:22 and 20:13.)

But let us assume for the sake of Wells’ argument that the phrase “beds/lying downs of a woman” is an accusative of location. Where does he go from here? He argues that while the *denotation* of the word מִשְׁכָּב is “bed,” the *connotation* of the word is different: it is “an abstract plural that communicates the notion of someone’s lying-down area or zone. We might even say that it stands for an individual’s sexual domain” (140). He will go on to note that the Hebrew form of the word for “beds” can be a form that indicates an abstract plural (141 – 42). But to show that that is the best understanding here, he presents a two-fold argument. First, he appeals to the plural of מִשְׁכָּב in Gen 49:4, where Jacob says to Reuben, “you went up (onto) the beds of your father.” Wells argues: “Does the author want us to imagine that Reuben lay directly on Jacob’s personal bed when he committed this transgression? Although the surface level of the text recounts that Reuben went up onto Jacob’s beds, the deeper meaning is that he ‘went up onto’ one of the women who belonged to Jacob. It is the woman herself who functions as Jacob’s [“beds”] or, at least, falls within that category. The term [“beds”] is being used here to identify women that belong to Jacob such that other men are not allowed to sleep with them. They are Jacob’s ‘beds,’ as it were” (140). Second, noting that the plural for “beds” in Gen 49:4 is in parallel with the singular for “couch,” he states, “It seems much more likely that [“beds”] is meant to convey

a singular idea than that [“couch”] is intended to convey plurality” (140). This leads to his conclusion: “We can now combine these two aspects of how [“beds”] is used: a) that it represents women who belong, sexually speaking, to Jacob and b) that it conveys a singular as opposed to a plural concept. In this way, I arrive at my proposal that [“beds”] is an abstract plural that communicates the notion of someone’s lying-down area or zone. We might even say that it stands for an individual’s sexual domain” (140).

There are three problems here. First Wells argues that מִשְׁכָּב is a word that is a concrete noun (its denotation) and also an abstract plural (its connotation). It must be one or the other. Indeed, he goes on to cite possible examples of abstract plurals (141–42), and in every case the *denotation* of the word is *itself the abstract concept*. Thus a better way to make Wells’ argument is simply to appeal to the common literary device of metonymy, in which one word is used to refer to a reality associated with that word, e.g., to swear loyalty to “the crown” is to swear loyalty to “the monarch (who wears the crown).” In the case of Lev 18:22 and 20:13, it would mean that the term for “beds” is being used by way of metonymy to refer to a concept associated with a bed (“sexual domain” in Wells’ understanding). Indeed, if we insist on מִשְׁכָּב referring to an actual bed (as opposed to the act of lying down), then metonymy would be the best way to explain the phrases—similar to what we have in Lev 18:22 and 20:13—that refer to a woman “knowing *the bed of a man*” (Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12), where “bed” stands for the “sexual experience” that can happen with a man in bed. It may also be pointed out that Wells himself appears to have metonymy in mind when he argues that Gen 49:4 is referring on the “surface level” to beds but whose “deeper meaning” is something else (140). This is classic metonymy: one word being used to refer to something else with which it is associated.

While the above allows for understanding the term “beds” to have reference to something other than the physical object, it also leads to the second problem. In

explaining what the term refers to in Gen 49:4, Wells specifies: “the deeper meaning is that [Reuben] ‘went up onto’ one of the women who belonged to Jacob...The term [“beds”] is being used here to identify women that belong to Jacob such that other men are not allowed to sleep with them. They are Jacob’s ‘beds,’ as it were” (140). But how do we know that “beds” has this level of specificity? The most that can be said with confidence is that “beds” in the phrase “you went up (onto) the beds of your father” is used by way of metonymy to refer to Reuben committing an illicit sexual act with his father’s concubine. To say that it means “sexual domain” in particular is to assume the very thing that Wells is attempting to prove. (The same critique applies equally to his discussion of 1QSa [143], where the same assumption is read onto the text.) Incidentally, this also undercuts the main two-fold argument he presents in favor of understanding “beds” to be an abstract plural in the first place. This is significant because, as noted below (see “as you do with a woman”), the presence of the plural may be explained in different ways, the simplest of which is that the singular and plural were interchangeable, a view that has strong enough support to shift the burden of proof to those who want to maintain that the singular and plural are not interchangeable. With Wells’ main argument for understanding “beds” as an abstract plural being undercut, he has not overcome this burden of proof.

Third, even if the term “beds” is pointing us towards an abstract plural, that has not solved the meaning of the phrase for the simple reason that such an abstraction could mean different things. For example, instead of the phrase “sexual domain” one could just as easily substitute the phrase “experience of sex.” Reuben’s wrong was that he had the “experience of sex” with Jacob’s concubine, an experience that was meant for Jacob to have with her. That sexual experience was only to happen between the concubine and Jacob. As applied to Lev 18:22 and 20:13, these verses could then be forbidding a man to have with a male the “experience of sex of a woman,” that is, the sexual experience that males were

meant to have with a woman. That sexual experience was only to happen between a male and a woman. The point here is not that “experience of sex” is more likely than “sexual domain,” simply that it is equally likely because the category “abstract plural” is broad, and verses like Gen 49:4 do not give us enough information to identify the exact nature of the abstraction in view. This in turn means that even if this is an abstract plural—which, again, is itself not certain—we are no closer to understanding the meaning of the phrase since the abstraction could be understood in different ways leading to very different outcomes. Stated differently, even if one were to grant Wells’ arguments that the phrase “on the beds of a woman” in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 was an accusative of location and that “beds” was an abstract plural, the most one could say is that we remain unclear as to what the phrase means since we lack sufficient information to understand the exact meaning of the abstract plural in this context.

But such agnosticism is not necessary with regard to these verses. As noted above, the initial arguments Wells gives against the approach of most versions today are not strong. That approach understands the phrase “the beds/lying downs of a woman” in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 to refer to the act of lying down and translate it as an accusative of manner: “as you do with a woman.” This understanding is not only linguistically justifiable, it also avoids the complexity inherent in Wells’ approach, thus giving it an attractive simplicity.

as you do with a woman. This phrase “could be woodenly translated, ‘beds/lying downs of a woman’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 491). Why use the plural for the word that could be translated “beds/lying downs” (מְשַׁכְּבִים)? When the verb referring to sexual relations is “to lie with” (שָׁכַב), the word for “bed” (מִשְׁכָּב) is plural (Lev 18:22; 20:13), but when the verb referring to sexual relations is “to know” (יָדַע), the word “bed” (מִשְׁכָּב) is singular (Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12). The reason for this difference is not clear, and solid conclusions are difficult due to the small sample size we are working with, namely, the use of “bed” (מִשְׁכָּב) in this type of

phrase in only four chapters: Lev 18, 20; Num 31; Judg 21. One possibility is that speech patterns already existed in which it was common to use a plural noun with one verb (שָׁכַב [Lev 18, 20]) and a singular noun with the other (יָדַע [Num 31; Judg 21]). A stronger possibility is that the singular and plural were simply interchangeable in these contexts. For example, though it does not use the same phrase as our verse, Genesis 49:4 uses the plural of “bed” (מִשְׁכָּב) in parallel with the singular of “couch” (יְצִיט), “suggesting that the plural/singular interchange involves no more than stylistic alternatives” (Robert A. J. Gagnon, “A Critique of Jacob Milgrom’s Views on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13,” (Jan 2005): 10, <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/homoMilgrom.pdf>). Indeed, while Gen 49:4 uses the singular of “couch” (יְצִיט), 1 Chr 5:1 refers back to this event and uses the plural with apparently no difference in meaning: “when [Reuben] defiled the couches (יְצִיטִי) of his father.” These observations shift the burden of proof to those who hold that the singular and plural are not interchangeable.

One such person is Milgrom. Noting that the plural occurs only in contexts of illicit sex (Gen 49:4; Lev 18:22; 20:13) and the singular in contexts of licit sex (Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12), he concludes that the plural of “bed” (מִשְׁכָּב) refers to illicit sexual relations in particular and, in this context, illicit relations with a near relative (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1569). His latter point would have more weight if this verse occurred in 18:7–17, alongside the other verses involving relations with a near relative. Indeed, “Milgrom himself, in an apparent contradiction to his own argument, states: ‘The final four sexual prohibitions (menstruation, adultery, sodomy, bestiality, vv. 19–20, 22–23) refer to nonrelatives of either party.’ In other words, none of the other prohibitions listed after the incest laws of 18:6–18 are limited to incestuous relationships—including the one against same-sex male intercourse” (Gagnon, “A Critique,” 11; see 10–13 for fuller critique; the Milgrom quote is from *Leviticus 17–22*, 1549 [emphasis added by Gagnon]). As to his former point (the plural refers to illicit sexual relations), this remains an unproved

assumption. It would be correct to say that the plural occurs only in three chapters and each time in the *context* of illicit sexual relations, and that the singular occurs in the *context* of licit sexual relations in Leviticus, Numbers and Judges, but the question remains: Is this because the plural-singular distinction itself communicates illicit vs. licit relations? That is one possible answer but not the only one. As noted above, there are other explanations for the plural here, including the simple fact that singular and plural forms can be used interchangeably with no apparent difference in meaning. Indeed, the phrase in Gen 49:4 (“go up” + “beds”) occurs again in Isa 57:8 to refer to illicit sexual relations—and occurs with the singular of “bed” (“go up” + “bed”). This suggests the singular vs. plural difference itself does not communicate whether the relations are licit or illicit.

18:23. *a woman must not present [herself] before.* Heb. “stand before,” the sense being that she presents herself to the animal for relations (cf. the use of “draws near” in 20:16). For the phrase עָמַד לְפָנַי with the sense “present [oneself] before,” see Gen 43:15; Exod 9:10; cf. BDB 763.1.d).

to mate with it. When used in a context with animals, the *Hiphil* of רָבַע refers to “causing to breed/mate” (Lev 19:19), implying that the *Qal* here means “to breed/mate.” (Indeed, this verb might have been used in particular because of its association with animals.) The sense of “with” is understood from the context (cf. comments on שָׁכַב at 15:18).

perverse act. For the form of the noun, see Joüon §88Lv.

18:24–30. These verses might be paraphrased as follows: “Don’t defile yourselves by any of these practices (18:24a)! When the nations did these things, they defiled themselves and the land, and I am going to cast them out of it as a result! Indeed, the land will vomit them out (18:24–25)! But as for you, you must keep my commands so that you do not do these things (18:26). Remember, the nations did these things and defiled the land (18:27); don’t you realize you will suffer their same fate if you do the same things? The land will vomit you out too

(18:28)! If anyone does these things, they cannot continue in the land among their people; they must be cut off (18:29)! For these reasons, follow my commands, not the nation’s practices, so that you don’t defile yourselves (18:30a–b). And above all, remember: I am the LORD your God, your King and redeemer, the one you are to obey in reverential love as you carry out the mission I’ve given you of filling all the earth—including this particular land—with my good and glorious kingdom (18:30c)!”

18:24. *Do not make yourselves impure.* 18:24 uses לֹא־לִמְעַל for its negative prohibition, whereas the other negative prohibitions in this chapter use לֹא־לִמְעַל; it is not clear, however, that there is a significant difference here. Cf. at 10:6 above, *do not unbind...do not tear*.

casting out. When the context is punishment for sin, the sense of the verb is not simply “send away” but “cast out” (cf. Gen 3:23).

have become impure. Or “made themselves impure,” if the *Niphal* is being used interchangeably with the *Hithpael* (so *IBHS* §23.6.4; cf. Ezek 20:18 [*Hithpael*] with Ezek 20:31 [*Niphal*]); the endpoint is the same.

therefore. For the *wayyiqtol* with logical consequence see Joüon §118h.

18:26. *But as for you.* There is an extra pronoun for emphasis (cf. Joüon §146a). The pronoun normally proceeds the verb, but can also follow it, “apparently without any difference in meaning” (Joüon §146b.3).

any. For מִכֹּל with the sense “one of any”—sometimes best brought across simply as “any”—see also Lev 4:2; 18:29; Num 5:6.

18:27. *the people.* The term עַם often refers to men but can refer to women as well (1 Chr 16:3; cf. Jonah 3:5); since women are included in the laws above, “people” is more natural here.

who have been [in it] before you. Heb. “who are before you.” לְפָנַי can have a temporal sense (BDB 817.II.4.e; cf. Gen 29:26; Num 13:22). This best fits

the context here (cf. 18:30), the sense being “who have been *in the land* before you.”

these. Listed by BDB as a spelling variant of מְלֵא (BDB 41; cf. Gen 19:8; 26:3; Deut 4:42).

18:29. *the people*. See BDB 660.4.c.(2).

18:30. *Therefore*. See at 18:24.

so that you do not do. Heb. “for the not doing of”; the לְ regularly indicates purpose with the infinitive construct (“so that”), and the person (“you”) is evident from the context.

any of the detestable customs. Heb. “from the customs of the detestable acts,” that is, any of the customs of which these detestable acts consist.

any. See BDB 580.3.b.(c).

[in the land]. Cf. 18:27.

so that you do not make. See above at 18:21 (“in order that you do not profane”).

19. Structure and Literary Form. “...the refrain ‘I am the LORD (your God)’ frequently identifies a natural division [within the commands of this chapter], leading to seventeen different sections [among these verses]” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 516). There are three exceptions. The “I am the LORD (your God)” refrain might not be mentioned at 19:5–8 and 19:20–22 because it was not as common to do so in case laws that describe a punishment for the wrong (cf. chapter 20, in which the refrain does not occur in any of the case laws and their attending punishments [20:2–6, 9–21, 27], but only in the apodictic sections of the chapter [20:7–8, 24]). The third exception is 19:19, which seems to be a transition verse, and this role may have in some way contributed to its lack of the refrain.

19:2. “As the chart [at 19:2] shows, [holiness is to manifest itself] in every area of life” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 525). It may also be noted that many of the commands in Leviticus 19 refer explicitly to the Ten Commandments or allude to them.

Hartley (*Leviticus*, 310) plausibly suggests the following correspondences: no molten images (Exod 20:4–6; cf. Lev 19:4a); no vain use of God’s name (Exod 20:7; cf. Lev 19:12); remember the Sabbath (Exod 20:8–12; cf. Lev 19:3b, 30a); honor father and mother (Exod 20:12; cf. Lev 19:3a); no murder (Exod 20:13; cf. Lev 19:16b); no stealing (Exod 20:15; cf. Lev 19:11a, 13, 35–36); no false witness (Exod 20:16; cf. Lev 19:11b, 16a). Hartley also suggests correspondences between the Ten Commandments and Leviticus 19 in terms of the prohibition of adultery (Exod 20:14; cf. Lev 19:20–22, 29) and coveting (Exod 20:17; cf. Lev 19:9–10, 17–18), though these seem less convincing (see explanations in the commentary of the relevant verses).

19:3. *Every person.* The word שֹׂרֵק can have a distributive sense (Gen 10:5; Exod 12:3; BDB 36). The plural verb supports this approach here.

revere. The ten commandments use the related word “honor” (כִּבֵּד) (Exod 20:12), which refers more generally to acts of respect that one pays to another (Num 22:17; 1 Sam 2:29, 30; 15:30; Ps 86:9), though in the context of parent–child relationships this would of course include the obedience and service that is more prominent with the word “revere.”

their mother and their father. There are a few laws where the mother is listed ahead of the father (see also 20:19; 21:2), but since it is not common, various proposals have been given as to why the mother is listed first (see Hartley, *Leviticus*, 313). However, a comparison of 21:2 with 21:11—two laws covering a closely related topic that have “mother” before “father” in one verse (21:2) but the opposite order in the other (21:11)—suggests that it may have been nothing more than a stylistic variation.

19:4. The verse is a chiasm: “Do not turn (A) to idols (B), and gods of cast metal (B’) do not make for yourselves (A’).” So also at 19:14.

Do not turn. See “do not unbind...do not tear” at 10:6.

idols. Heb. “the idols,” the definite article perhaps being used because the reference is to idols that already exist among the nations (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1613).

19:9. For a description of the harvesting process in ancient Israel, see Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 59–61; cf. the diagram in Roland K. Harrison, “Grain,” *ISBE* 2:553–554.

you must not reap. (The following note expands that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:9.) The person switches from the plural to the singular, which happens throughout this passage (19:12, 15, 19, 27, 33, 34) and in other pentateuchal passages as well (for the switch in the second person in particular, see also Exod 23:9, 21, 25; Lev 25:9 [cf. also 25:2 with 25:3; 25:14 with 25:15 with v. 17]; Deut 4:1–8 [primarily plural though singulars occur in 4:1, 3, 5]; Deut 29 [primarily plural but singulars occur in 29:10–12]; etc.). In a study focusing on such switches in Deuteronomy, McConville has suggested that they can be due to rhetorical and theological functions, emphasizing that the individual (singular) is part of the covenant community (plural) and thus must follow the covenant laws (J. Gordon McConville, “Singular Address in the Deuteronomic Law and the Politics of Legal Administration,” *JSOT* 26, no. 3 [2002]: 25–29). At other times, however, he suggests such changes simply reflect “mobility in style” (J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy*, ApOTC [Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 101). In the context of our verse, for example, the switch may be due to the fact that it was more typical to use the plural when referring to “your (pl.) land” (which belonged to all Israel) but the singular when referring to “your (sing.) field” (since these belonged to individuals; see Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1625, citing Jan Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code: An Exegetical Study of the Ideational Framework of the Law in Leviticus 17–26*, VTSup 67 [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 49). In either case, it does seem safe to say that the use of the singular in this verse would make clear to every landowner that this law applied to them.

edge. The word פֶּאֶה can refer to the “side/edge” of an object, such as the tabernacle (Exod 26:20), courtyard (Exod 27:9), or pasturelands (Num 35:5), the latter of which especially favors translating with “edge” in the context of a field.

the gleanings of your harvest you must not gather. It is possible the *Piel* of “gather” (לָקַט) is used in particular since it can have the sense of “gathering every last bit” (cf. Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. and I. Cornelius, “לָקַט,” *NIDOTTE* 2:818), as opposed to the more general sense of “gather” in the *Qal* (cf. Gen 47:14 [*Piel*] with Gen 31:46 [*Qal*]; cf. the “pluralizing” force of the *Piel* in Joüon §52d). It is gathering every last bit that is expressly forbidden here.

19:10. *fallen fruit.* Possible cognate support for this translation is found in an Akkadian verb based on this root (*parātu*) which can mean “to tear/break off,” with similar meanings for the root in postbiblical Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, and Syriac (Robert H. O’Connell, “פָּרַט,” *NIDOTTE* 3:685).

19:11–18. In this section, “none of the...terms for neighbor is repeated in any one verse; instead, as we move from verse to verse—and sometimes from the first half of a verse to the second half (19:17, 18)—the terms are constantly changing, as though to emphasize that these laws must be followed in the context of all the Israelites’ daily relationships” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 529). The words translated “neighbor”—עֶמִית (19:11, 15, 17) and רֵעַ (19:13, 16, 18)—seem to be fairly synonymous ways of referring to fellow locals in general (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:11 and 19:13). The words translated “people” (עַם, 19:16) and “members of your people” (בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ, 19:18) more naturally refer to one’s kin (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:16 and 19:18), while the word translated “fellow countryman” (חָבֵר) most frequently refers to a “brother,” though it often refers to other types of relatives as well (BDB 26.2), and can refer most broadly to fellow Israelites (25:25, 46). What all of these share in common is that they are describing the type of people a regular Israelite would be interacting with in the course of a day. And while some of these terms do not include non-Israelites, that is not

because these laws do not apply to them (as 19:33–34 make very clear); it is more likely because laws are often framed in terms of the most common situation, leaving it to the listener’s good sense to apply them in other situations as well.

19:11. *You must not...deal falsely with your neighbor.* Heb. “you must not deal falsely a man with his neighbor,” the word “man” (אִישׁ) having a distributive sense (“you must not deal falsely, any man [of you] with his neighbor”) and typically omitted in English translation for stylistic reasons.

19:13. *defraud...take [an item] by force.* If there is any difference between the Hebrew terms for “take by force” (לָקַח) and “defraud” (עָשָׂק) it is that “take by force” often has the sense of “seizing” or “taking” the other’s property (to oppress by violence) whereas “defraud” can have the sense of “withholding” that which belongs to another (such as wages) or “defrauding” them in a more general sense (see comments in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:13 and also at 5:21 [6:2]).

must not remain overnight. This verb could be a 2fs *Hiphil* (thus: “you must not cause to remain overnight”) or a 3fs *Qal* (as translated here). In favor of the latter is the use of this verb at the beginning of a syntactically similar clause where it is clearly *Qal* (Exod 23:18; 34:25; note in both instances the same switch as here: second person at very beginning of the verse, third person at beginning of second half of the verse). In either case, the overall endpoint would be the same: wages must be given to the worker by day’s end.

19:14. *deaf person...blind person.* These terms (עֵוֶר, חֵרֵשׁ) are adjectives that can be used substantively to refer to a “deaf person” (Ps 38:14 [13]; Isa 29:18) or a “blind person” (Deut 27:18; Job 29:15) (see Joüon §86a, 87c for this use of the adjective).

in front of a blind person. The phrase is probably fronted here to form a chiasm with the preceding phrase. Cf. at 19:4.

19:15. *unrighteousness.* The word “unrighteousness” (עוֹל) is often used as the opposite of “righteousness” (צִדִּיק) or “righteous” (צַדִּיק) (Lev 19:35–36; Deut

25:15–16; 32:4; Ps 82:2–3; Prov 29:27). It therefore describes actions contrary to those the Lord himself would take.

legal trials. Heb. “the legal trials” (so also 19:35; Num 35:12; Deut 1:17; 17:8), though the definite article is best left off in English (cf. Joüon §137m, o). The term for “legal trials” (מִשְׁפָּט) can refer to a “legal case” (Num 27:5), the event during which a case is heard (a “legal trial”; Num 35:12), or the decision made (a “legal judgment”; Deut 21:22). Either of the last two works well in this context. Legal trials took place before local leaders (Deut 16:18; see Wright, *Ethics*, 302–304), who are exhorted here, as elsewhere, to show no partiality (see also Deut 1:17; 16:19). Christians are exhorted to do the same in the social sphere (Jas 2:1–9).

you must not show partiality to the lowly. Heb. “lift up [the] face of [the] lowly”; the definite article is often left off the adjective or noun following “face” in these contexts, though English requires it (see Lev 19:32; 26:37; Deut 1:17; Job 34:19; Ps 82:2). To “to lift up the face of x” means to show them special favor, especially by granting their request, which can be a positive act (Gen 19:21) but also a negative act (“to show partiality”; Deut 10:17). The latter of these fits the context here. The word “poor” (לָדָל) can refer to those of limited financial means (Lev 14:21), though also more generally to the “lowly, weak, insignificant” (Gen 41:19; Judg 6:15; 2 Sam 3:1). Again, the latter fits the context here, as the contrast is with “the great, significant” (לְגָדָל).

or show partiality to the great. Heb. “honor [the] face of [the] great.” The word “great” (לְגָדָל) refers elsewhere to those of high social standing (Exod 11:3; 2 Sam 5:10; 7:9). To “honor the face of x” can be used positively to speak of the honor rightly due someone (so at 19:32) but also negatively (as here) of undo honor that shows unjust partiality (so also Exod 23:3).

with righteousness. With righteousness” (בְּצִדִּיק) is put ahead of the verb, perhaps for emphasis. This is no surprise. Because the courts were made up of local leaders (Exod 18:25–26; Deut 16:18), being impartial was especially challenging

since the judge might know the parties in the case. Several other texts also emphasize judging with “righteousness” (Deut 16:19; Prov 24:23), that is, in perfect accord with the Lord’s upright and just law (cf. Deut 32:4).

19:16. This verse uses the verbs “walk” and “stand”—two of the most common activities we engage in during the day—in parallel prohibitions (“do not *walk*/act as a slanderer among your people, nor will you *stand*/act against the life of your neighbor”), as though to emphasize that perverting justice must never be a part of any of our daily activities.

as a slanderer. Heb. “you must not act a slanderer,” the noun “slanderer” acting as an accusative of manner (see BDB 940); English idiom requires “act *as* a slanderer.”

19:17. *you may certainly reprove your neighbor.* Or “you must certainly reprove your neighbor” if the imperfect is one of obligation. In either case, the point is that if any action is to be taken by a person who is wronged, that action should be reproof instead of revenge. It may also be noted that a hallmark of the righteous is their delight when others reprove them for wrongdoing, whereas a hallmark of the wicked is the way they scoff at such reproof: “Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you” (Prov 9:8; see also Ps 141:5; Prov 9:7; 15:12). Jesus commands his disciples to reprove one another person to person first (Matt 18:15), and if that fails, to get other believers (18:16) and then the church (18:17). If the person has not listened by then, they are to be regarded as an unbeliever (18:17b). At no point, however, is the follower of God to take matters of retribution into their own hands (see also Rom 12:17–21).

19:18. *maintain hostility against.* The noun built on this root can refer to a “target” (מִטְרָה) and is applied to those who suffer because the Lord treats them as a target at which to aim his anger or wrath (Job 16:12; Lam 3:12).

love your neighbor. The word “neighbor” is preceded by the preposition לְ, which sometimes marks the direct object (*IBHS* §10.4.b; cf. Exod 32:13; Num 12:13).

19:19. As is often the case in Leviticus, the rationale behind the command of this verse is not explicitly stated, and this has led to various suggestions. “Perhaps the most common...is that these verses prohibit various mixtures because this goes against the model set in creation by the LORD, who separated things into their proper categories (הַבְּדִיל, Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18), and calls the Israelites to do the same (הַבְּדִיל, Lev 20:24–26)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 535). Rashbam explains along these lines when he says, “Just as Scripture in the creation story (Gen 1:11) commanded each species to produce fruit ‘according to its own kind (לְמִינוֹ),’ so it commanded that we conduct the affairs of the world in a similar manner when it comes to animals or fields or fruit–trees...” (Martin I. Lockshin, ed. and trans., *Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers: An Annotated Translation* [Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2001], 108). For more recent authors taking a similar approach—at least for some of these prohibitions—see Keil, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 2, 422; Wenham, *Leviticus*, 269; Hartley, *Leviticus*, 318; Sklar, *Leviticus*, 247–48; Derek Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus: Free to Be Holy*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 242–43. Additional authors, ancient and modern, are cited by Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1659.

[As for] your domesticated animals, you must not mate together two different kinds. Israelites would have applied this prohibition within the context of the taxonomy they understood to arise from Genesis 1. At the least, this would mean they should not cross–breed animals such as sheep and goats (since this would be a mixing of clearly distinct categories), though it would not prohibit them from selective breeding among goats (or sheep) in order to strengthen the flock. It is less

clear to me how this would relate to modern taxonomies—such as the Linnaean—which have more divisions than the Israelite one.

domesticated animals. A singular used collectively (cf. Joüon §135b). As noted at 5:2, the word for “animals” (בְּהֵמָה) can refer to domesticated livestock animals in particular (Gen 47:18; Exod 9:19; 22:9), which fits the context here well.

claim for compensation. In the first printing of the commentary (p. 537 n. 115), I point to 19:19 as the place for further discussion of this phrase. The phrase actually occurs in 19:20 and is thus discussed below.

19:20. [*and there is*] *a seminal emission.* The phrase “seminal emission” may be understood as an accusative of limitation (or specification), thereby giving further details about the results of the man lying with the woman (cf. Joüon §126g; see also 15:16).

female servant. Legal texts typically use אִמָּה, not שִׁפְחָה (though the words do seem fairly synonymous; cf. Gen 30:3 with 30:4). The reason for the difference here is not entirely clear. Schwartz (Baruch J. Schwartz, “A Literary Study of the Slave–Girl Pericope—Leviticus 19:20–22,” in *Studies in Bible*, ed. Sara Japhet [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1986], 244) suggests that שִׁפְחָה was chosen because of its similarity in sound to the words for “freedom” (חֲפֻשָּׁה) and “free” (חָפֵשׁ) later in the verse.

but has not yet been released through payment. “Betrothal would often involve payment of a gift” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 536; see Gen 34:12; Exod 22:15–16 (16–17); 1 Sam 18:25; 2 Sam 3:14; Hos 12:12). This is sometimes called a “bride price,” though this gives the mistaken impression that the husband bought the wife like one buys a piece of property, which was not the case. Indeed, the engagement gift would often be returned to the woman as part of her dowry or inheritance, thus providing for her financial well-being. See Hugenberger, *Marriage*, 243–44 and n. 126.

In terms of form, the current pointing of the verbs in this phrase is that of a *Hophal* infinitive absolute followed by a *Niphal* perfect, which is a rare combination. It is possible simply to repoint the infinitive as a *Niphal* (this would require no change of consonants: הִפְּדָהּ). Alternatively, the text as it stands may be correct, and serve as one of a few examples where an infinitive absolute is used with a finite verb in a different (but closely related) stem (for examples see *IBHS* §35.2.1.e). Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1667) citing Schwartz (Baruch J. Schwartz, “A Literary Study of the Slave–Girl Pericope—Leviticus 19:20–22,” in *Studies in Bible*, ed. Sara Japhet [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1986], 346–47 [sic; read 246–47]) provides a possible rationale for the mixing of forms, suggesting the *Hophal* refers to the “owner’s obligation to enable her to be ransomed” (cf. Exod 21:8) and the *Niphal* to “the prospective bridegroom’s obligation to ransom her.” In other words, being allowed to be ransomed (by the master), she was not ransomed (by the prospective bridegroom).

but. “In conditional sentences, the infinitive absolute can introduce a contrast (Joüon §123g; cf. Exod 21:4 with 21:5; 22:9–10 with 22:11; etc.)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 230 n. 11).

freedom. This is the only time the noun “freedom” (הִפְּדוּת) occurs, though the related adjective “free” (חֲפֵשִׁי) occurs frequently to describe a servant that has been freed from servitude (Exod 21:2, 26, 27; Deut 15:12; etc.).

[then] a claim for compensation will occur. (The following note is an expansion of that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:22.) The word translated compensation (בְּקָרָה) occurs only here in the Bible, and there is great debate about its meaning. Four main suggestions now follow.

1. “claim for compensation,” in which case the text is saying that the master will make a “claim for compensation” (to cover any monies he would have received from giving his servant in marriage to the other man). Support for this translation is found in Akkadian *b/paqrū*, defined by *CAD* as “claim” (140), as in a legal claim

which one party makes with regard to their property. This is in turn related to the Akkadian verb *b/paqāru*, which has several uses, including in legal contexts “to claim, raise a claim” (CAD 130). Such a translation is also in keeping with a basic premise of Israelite law, namely, when financial damages occur, those damages must be repaid (cf. Lev 5:20–26 [6:1–7]). It may be noted that some have understood this to refer to “an obligation to pay compensation” (NET; NJB; NLT; Ephraim A. Speiser, *Oriental and Biblical Studies: Collected Writings of E. A. Speiser*. Edited by J. J. Finkelstein and Moshe Greenberg [Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1967], 128–31, followed by Wenham, *Leviticus*, 271–72 and Levine, *Leviticus*, 130), though it is not clear that the Akkadian terms refer to the actual payment as much as the claim for payment (see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1667).

2. “investigation/inquiry,” in which case the text is saying that an “investigation/inquiry” will take place to determine the facts of the case. Support for this translation is found in the Hebrew verb בִּקֵּר, which can have a sense of “seeking” or “examining” or “searching” (cf. Lev 13:36). In this context, it would refer to the inquiry that takes place into the case, as happens in other cases (the verb בִּקֵּר is not used, but cf. Deut 13:14 [15]; 17:4; 19:18; the verb דָּרַשׁ occurs in these verses and it is used elsewhere parallel to בִּקֵּר [Ezek 34:11]). See LXX (a “visitation,” which could have the sense of “punishment” [Num 16:29] but also “investigation” [Job 31:14]); JPS; RSV; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1669–70. This approach is not impossible, though missing here is the declaration of the investigation’s results, as happens in other examples of such investigations (see Deuteronomy passages just listed).

3. “punishment,” in which case the text is emphasizing there must be some form of punishment, but not death. Appeal here is also made to the verb בִּקֵּר (see previous point), though it is argued that what is in view here is not simply the investigation, but the punishment that results from the investigation (Bush,

Leviticus, 207 [who translates ‘scourging’]; Keil, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 2, 422; see also NASB, LXX [see previous note]). This would account for the contrast with the death penalty but is a very speculative extension of the meaning “investigation.”

4. “distinction,” in which case the text is saying a distinction must be made in terms of the outcome (“they will not be put to death,” however, “he must bring his reparation offering”). The approach also appeals to the verb בִּקֵּר (see second approach above), though it is argued that the verb means not only “to seek” but also “to distinguish” (Lev 27:33), and that the related noun here introduces the distinction that follows: “a distinction is to be made: they shall not be put to death (for she was not free), but he must bring his reparation offering” (cf. Schwartz, “Literary Study,” 242; see also ESV). This could explain why there was no *wāw* on the phrase “they will not be put to death”: it is the first option introduced by the previous clause (see translation in previous sentence). At the same time, the lack of a *wāw* on a phrase can simply indicate that the phrase is in some way clarifying the preceding one, as in the translation above, “a claim for compensation [בִּקְרָת] must occur, [but] they will not be put to death” (cf. 1:17a). Phrases not beginning with a conjunction “often provide further detail...on the previous phrase or clause” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 57). Such “phrases or clauses can signal ‘the restatement, clarification, or support of a previous text unit’ (Duane A. Garrett, Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* [Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009], 285)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 57 n. 134; cf. 1:9b with 1:9c; 7:5a with 7:5b). It is also not clear why the phrase “a distinction is to be made” would even be necessary since what follows makes clear there is a distinction between death and the bringing of the offering.

19:22. *and he will be forgiven for his sin that he committed.* Heb. “and it will be forgiven to him from/on account of his sin which he sinned.” The only other time *Leviticus* follows the phrase “it will be forgiven to him” with a prepositional phrase is in 5:26 (6:7), where the preposition עַל is used with the rare sense “with/in

regard to.” In our verse, it is the preposition מִן, which does not attest this meaning elsewhere, but which is interchangeable with עַל in Leviticus in contexts similar to this one (cf. 4:26 and 5:10 with 4:35; 5:13), and which fits the context here. It may be that מִן was used to avoid repeating עַל-חֶטְאָתוֹ from the previous phrase.

19:23. *any tree for food.* Heb. “any tree of food,” the genitive here being either one of species (“food–tree”, cf. “tree of fruit” = “fruit–tree,” Gen 1:11) or purpose (“tree for food”) (cf. Joüon §129f.C4 and 129f.c15).

any. See BDB 482.1.e.(b).

you must treat as forbidden its bud with its fruit. “Since the latter half of the verse states ‘it must be to you as uncircumcision,’ the verb here is often considered to have an estimative sense: ‘you must treat/regard as uncircumcised,’ that is, consider it forbidden, just as being uncircumcised is” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 537 n. 117). (If so, perhaps the verb should be repointed as a *Piel*, which does attest the estimative sense [Joüon §52d]; I am unaware of examples of this sense in the *Qal*.) It has been argued that “treating it as uncircumcised” refers specifically to cutting off the bud with its fruit (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1679), though if this were the case, we might expect the verb “to circumcise/be circumcised” (נִמְוֹל/מוֹל). See esp. those verses where it occurs together with עָרְלָה: Gen 17:11, 14, 23–25; Lev 12:3.

forbidden. The plural could be a plural of abstraction (see Joüon §136g, h).

three years. The clause begins without a *wāw*, and functions to clarify the preceding clause (see discussion in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 58, point #5).

19:24. *be holy.* The noun “holy” (קֹדֶשׁ) is frequently used adjectivally (Exod 40:9; Lev 6:10 [17]; 8:9; etc.).

[given as] an offering of praise to the LORD. The word for “offering of praise” (הֶלֶלִים) is used elsewhere only in Judges 9:27, again in the context of a harvest; it is usually understood to refer to “a festival (of praise)” in that context. Its connection to the idea of “praise” is solidified by the verb built same root (הִלֵּל), which refers frequently to “praising” the Lord (1 Chr 16:4, 36; Pss 22:24 [23]; 69:35

[34]; etc.). In our verse, most versions translate simply “offering of praise,” though in light of the fact that firstfruits were *presented* at the tabernacle (Lev 23:10–11; Deut 26:1–2), I have added the phrase “given as” in the translation above. (For the similarity of this fruit to firstfruits, see discussion in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:24.)

19:25. *you may eat.* Permissive use of the imperfect (see Joüon §113l).

adding. “For the sense of ‘add’ for הוֹסִיף, see also 5:16, 24 [6:5]; 27:31 (see the same with the *qal* in 22:14; 26:21; 27:13, 15, 19, 27)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 538 n. 121). In these cases, it is typically followed by the preposition עַל, not לְ (as here), though instances with לְ are found elsewhere (Gen 30:24; Prov 3:2; 9:11).

19:26. *You must not eat [meat] with the blood.* “Others translate, ‘You must not eat over (עַל) the blood,’ in which case this may refer to a prohibition against eating over blood-collection pits connected with contacting the spirit world” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 539). See Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1685–86); Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 340–41. Their main support is from Grintz (see Y. M. Grintz, “Do Not Eat over the Blood,” *Zion* 31 [1961]: 1–17 [Hebrew]; “Do Not Eat on the Blood: Reconsiderations in Setting and Dating of the Priestly Code,” *ASTI* 8 [1970–1971]: 78–105), whose conclusions were based primarily on Greek practice (see summary in Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1491–92); the evidence from cultures more closely connected to ancient Israel is much less clear (as may be seen by a careful consideration of those listed by Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1492).

19:27–28a. “The Israelites were to avoid certain mourning practices common among the nations in order to set themselves apart” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 540). In terms of Christians being set apart in mourning practices, consider 1 Thess 4:13: “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.” When a Christian dies, their Christian brothers and sisters grieve but grieve with certain hope because Jesus has defeated sin and death. I remember performing the funeral of a Christian co-worker who died relatively young. After the funeral, a

couple approached me who was not used to Christian funerals and said, “This funeral was different; there was a joy and hope here we don’t usually see.”

19:28. *gashes*. The word “gashes” (טָרַח) occurs only here, but its sense is confirmed by the cognate languages: Akkadian *šarāṭu* means “to tear in pieces,” and Arabic *šaraṭa* refers to “making a slit” (as in the ears of a camel). The noun is put ahead of the verb in this prohibition and the next, though the reason is unclear. Perhaps it is simply to bring symmetry to the last four commands: you must not do this, you must not do that; that you must not do, this you must not do. It has been suggested that the nouns are put first to indicate the unit is coming to an end (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1692, citing Meir Paran, “Literary Features of the Priestly Code,” Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1983 [Hebrew], and Baruch J. Schwartz, “Selected Chapters of the Holiness Code: A Literary Study of Leviticus 17–19,” Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1987 [Hebrew]), but the verses cited in support are dissimilar: 19:4b and 19:14aβ are in a chiasm, and 19:19b is part of a small unit in which every clause begins with a noun.

19:29. *profane*. In contexts of sexual immorality, the verb can have the more general meaning “to defile” or “to degrade” (Gen 49:4; 1 Chr 5:1), but this chapter focuses so strongly on Israel being “holy” that it seems justified to translate with “profane” here in order to bring out the contrast (cf. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 400).

by making her a prostitute. The verb זָנָה can refer to sexual immorality in general (see at 17:7), though in the context of this verse it is usually understood to refer to prostitution in particular (cf. Gen 38:24) since it is the aspect of financial gain that explains why a parent would do this.

lest. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by means of לֹא followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j; this might also explain the change from לֹא to לֹא־; cf. 10:9; 16:2).

the land fall into prostitution. Heb. “and the land will not commit prostitution.” In this context, “land” would appear to refer to the people in the land

(BDB 76.2.f; cf. Ezek 14:13), and this sense would be evident to most English readers by means of the above translation.

19:30. *My Sabbaths you must keep, and my sanctuary you must show reverence to; I am the LORD.* The nouns come ahead of the verbs, perhaps for contrastive emphasis: “Don’t do this (19:29); *these things* you must do (19:30)!”

19:31. *You must not turn to mediums or to spiritists; you must not seek [them] out.* Some versions translate: “Do not turn to mediums, and spiritists do not seek out and so become impure by them” (AV, NIV, NJPS). In this case, one would not normally expect spiritists to be preceded by the preposition לְ, which occurs only one other time with the verb בָּקַשׁ (1 Sam 25:26), and even then in a syntactically different construction. I have kept “mediums” and “spiritists” together as objects of “to turn” in keeping with 20:6, understanding the direct object of “seek” to be elided and thus supplying it (“them”; see also NASB, ESV, NRSV).

to mediums or to spiritists. Heb. “to the mediums or to the spiritists”; in Hebrew, the article is often used with a class of people (Joüon §137i), though English often requires it to be omitted.

medium. It has been argued that the word can refer to a pit through which the spirits are contacted (Harry A. Hoffner Jr., “Second millennium antecedents to the Hebrew *’ôḇ*,” *JBL* 86.4 [1967]: 385–401), which might have been its use in some contexts, though in the context of Leviticus it seems most clearly to refer to a departed spirit who speaks through a person. Cf. 20:27: “And a man or a woman that will be *in them* (בְּהֶם) a spirit of the dead (אִיֹב) or a spirit (יִדְעֹנִי).” It is possible simply to retain a translation such as “spirit” in 19:31, though in practice the endpoint would be the same since this would be a prohibition against going to the person who conjured such a spirit.

and so become impure. A consequential use of the infinitive (Joüon §124l).

19:33. *your land.* See Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:9 for the switch from singular (“your [sing.] midst”) to plural (“your [pl.] land”).

19:34. *among you.* A partitive use of the **יְנִי** (BDB 580.3.a).

so you must. Or “and you must...”, though this reads very naturally as a logical consequence of the preceding phrase (“so you must”; see Joüon §119e for this use of the *wəḡqātal*).

love him. With **לְ** marking the direct object; see “love your neighbor” at 19:18.

19:35. *You must not commit unrighteousness in legal trials.* A few versions connect this phrase very closely with the following, translating **מִשְׁפָּט מִן** as “standard”: “Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or volume” (NLT; cf. NJB). There is no strong evidence, however, that “standard” is an allowable range of meaning for the term **מִשְׁפָּט מִן** (cf. BDB, *HALOT*, *DCH*; the only possible exceptions I am aware of are 1 Kings 5:8 [4:28], though versions differ on how to translate the word in this context, and Ecclesiastes 8:6 [so *DCH*], though most modern English versions translate the word as “way/procedure”).

You must not commit unrighteousness...in measurement of length, weight, or volume. For one example of how this might be done, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:35. Here is a second example. In the days before coins, someone might buy an object by weighing out its price in silver (Gen 23:16; Jer 32:9). To do so, they would use a balance, which was made of a bar with a plate hanging from each end and a fulcrum in the middle. If the item’s price was 7 ounces (200g) of silver, they would put seven ounces of weights into one pan and then keep adding silver to the second pan until the balance was even. If the seller’s weights were inaccurate in the seller’s favor, the buyer could end up paying a lot more than the agreed price.

in measurement of length. Heb. “in the measurement of length,” although English usage requires the article to be left out (see Joüon §137o for the use of the definite article in Hebrew with nouns referring to measure). So also on the next two words. The word **מִדָּה** is frequently used in the context of a measurement of length (Exod 26:2, 8; 36:9, 15; Josh 3:4; 1 Kgs 6:25), which is what might distinguish it

here from the following two words. Alternatively, it may refer to “measurement” in general with the next two words specifying two types of measurement. In either case, the endpoint is the same: measurements of whatever type must be just.

weight. Used most frequently to refer to a weight measured in shekels (Gen 24:22; Num 7:13; Josh 7:21; Judg 8:26; 1 Sam 17:5). As noted in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 5:15b, one shekel would have been around .4 oz (11–12 g).

volume. The Hebrew word translated “volume” (מְשׁוּרָה) occurs in only two other contexts. In one, it refers to some type of measurement, but it is not possible to tell what type (1 Chr 23:29); in the other, it refers to a unit of liquid measurement in particular (Ezek 4:11, 16), that is, one of volume. Translating here with “volume” fits well contextually since the following verse mentions measurements of volume in particular (the ephah and hin).

19:36. *Honest balances [and] honest weights.* Heb. “balances of justice, weights of justice,” the noun “justice” best brought across adjectivally (cf. Joüon §129f.C1). English speakers today more commonly speak of “honest” balances or weights.

20:2. *Anyone.* See Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 15:2.

resident aliens. A collective singular (cf. Ezek 14:7). For description, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 16:29.

Israel. Probably a reference to the nation of Israel as opposed to the land of Israel; cf. Num 1:3; 3:13; 23:21.

with stones. Heb. “with a stone,” the singular used either because “stone” (אֶבֶן) is a collective, or because the sense is distributive (“each one of the locals must stone him with a stone”).

20:3. *set my face.* Hartley (*Leviticus*, 333) notes a possible play on words in the Hebrew: for those who “give” (נָתַן) their children to Molech (20:2), the Lord will “give/set” (נָתַן) his face against them!

so as. The particle לְמַעַן is regularly followed by the infinitive construct without the preposition לְ (Gen 18:19; 37:22; Exod 9:16; Deut 2:20; etc.); the particle often indicates the purpose of a previous action but can also indicate the result (see Joüon §169g, which cites this verse as an example of the latter; see also 2 Kgs 22:17; Amos 2:7).

my holy name. Heb. “the name of my holiness.” See Joüon §129kb and §140b for the translation of a genitive chain that ends with a pronominal suffix.

20:4. *so as.* See Joüon §124l.

20:5. *I will cut off.* Heb. “and (י) I will cut off,” an explicative use of the *wāw* and therefore left untranslated (see Joüon §118j).

all who follow them in prostituting themselves. Heb. “and all who prostitute themselves after him,” that is, who follow him in this spiritual act of prostitution.

by prostituting themselves. See Joüon §124o.

prostituting themselves with Molech. Or “whoring themselves after Molech,” but see “with whom they are prostituting themselves” at 17:7.

20:6. *As for the person who turns to mediums or to spiritists...I will set my face against that person.* There is a possible play on words here: if a person turns (root פָּנָה) to mediums or spiritists, the Lord will set his face (root פָּנָה) against that person; it is a punishment fit the crime (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1738–39).

As for the person. The start of a new cases law can be indicated by *wāw* + noun at the beginning of the phrase (so also 20:10–21; cf. 2:1).

person. The term is grammatically feminine (שֹׁפֵט) but is followed here by grammatically masculine forms (Heb. “cut him off from the midst of his people”). This happens elsewhere as well (2:1; 5:1), perhaps simply because the masculine form is the most common for laws to use.

20:8. *them.* Masculine, even though “statutes” is feminine; this same mismatch in grammatical gender happens at 22:31 and 24:6 (Jacob Milgrom,

Leviticus 23–27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, 1st ed., AB 3B [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001], 2096).

20:9. In explaining this verse, I note: “...this verse does not have in mind young children and their typical disobedience. In light of the surrounding verses (which have adults in view), and in light of other commands to honor and revere parents (which apply especially to adult children who are to care for their aging parents), this verse has adult sons or daughters in view, those who are old enough to bear the responsibility of caring for aging parents but have scorned their parents’ words and their parents’ needs” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 560). Compare in this regard Deut 21:18–20, which describes the case of a son who does not listen to his parents. He is described as a “glutton and drunkard,” language that describes adult behavior (not a child’s behavior) and that describes behavior that is habitual (and not simply a moment of disobedience). It may also be noted that such a son was rejecting covenant instruction (“gluttons” are elsewhere contrasted with those who keep the law [Prov 28:7]) and was effectively abandoning his duty to care for his parents by means of his reckless living.

If [*there is*]. **כִּי** often stands at the head of a series of laws and is translated with “if” (1:2; 4:2a). In such cases, however, the subject is not followed by the relative particle “who/which (**אֲשֶׁר**)” (as here). It has therefore been suggested that the **כִּי** is emphatic, leading to: “Indeed, if anyone dishonors...” (cf. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 423, 426; for the emphatic use of **כִּי** see BDB 472.1e). This would be a fairly unique use of **כִּי** in a case law in Leviticus. Alternatively, the **כִּי** does in fact have its more normal function of introducing a case law and simply assumes a linking verb. Cf. Deut 23:11 (10), which has a similar structure but includes a linking verb phrase: “If (**כִּי**) there is among you (**יְהִיָּה בְּךָ**) a man who (**אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר**) is not clean...”

20:10. *As for a man who commits adultery with his local neighbor’s wife.* As it currently stands, the MT would read: “As for a man who commits adultery

with a man's wife, who commits adultery with his local neighbor's wife, he must certainly be put to death, the adulterer and also the adulteress!" The end of the first phrase, however, has "wife" in the construct form, even though there is no noun following it, suggesting that we have a dittography here:

"As for *a man who commits adultery with the wife of* (אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת־) (אִשָּׁת) —

a man who commits adultery with the wife of (אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת־) (אִשָּׁת) — his local neighbor..."

This must have occurred at an early stage in copying the text, as shown by the fact that other early versions repeat it (see LXX and SP).

his local neighbor's. The parallel law in 18:20 uses עֵמִית, which seems to be interchangeable in some contexts with רֵעַ; cf. 19:15, 17 (עֵמִית) with 19:16 (רֵעַ) and note that the LXX translates both Hebrew words with the same Greek word (πλησίον).

he must certainly be put to death. When a verb precedes a compound subject, the verb is often in the singular (Joüon §150q).

20:14. *a woman*. Though an indefinite noun, it is preceded here by אֵת, which sometimes happens when a noun "has a certain logical determination" (Joüon §125h, though he does not comment on this verse). If that is the case here, perhaps the definiteness of "her mother" (וְאֵת־אִמָּהּ) in the following phrase attracted the אֵת here? Alternatively, GKC §117d simply suggests it is a scribal error, the אֵת being wrongly written under the influence of the אֵת on the phrase "her mother."

20:15. *he must certainly be put to death*. So also in Exod 22:18 (19).

The animal you must also kill. But not sacrifice it, for which the standard verb is different (שָׁחַט) (1:11; 3:2, 8; 4:4; etc.).

20:16. *approaches*. That is, sexually; see Gen 20:4; Lev 18:6; Isa 8:3.

to mate with it. For the form of the infinitive construct, see Joüon §49d.

20:17. *shameful act.* Normally, the noun **דָּוָק** refers to “steadfast love” or “kindness,” but it can occur with a negative sense, “shame, reproach.” This second use is clear in Proverbs 14:34, where it is in contrast to being exalted. Moreover, a verb built on the same root occurs in Proverbs 25:10 to describe someone being shamed or reproached for wrongdoing, and further support for a negative sense is found in other Semitic languages: “In [Leviticus 20:17], *ḥesed* is cognate with Aramaic *ḥasda*’ and Syriac *ḥesda*’, ‘ignominy, disgrace’” (Levine, *Leviticus*, 138).

20:18. *flow.* See at 12:7 above.

20:22. *So.* See BDB 254.4.

so that. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by means of **לֹא** followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j).

20:23. *these things.* See BDB 41.a for this use of **אֵלֶּה** (cf. Deut 18:12; 22:5; 25:16). The noun phrase is put ahead of the verb for emphasis: *all these things* they have done!

therefore. See Joüon §118h for *wayyiqṭōl* with logical consequence.

I have detested them. For **קִוִּי** followed by **אֲנִי** with the sense of “detest, loathe,” see Num 21:5 (of food that is detested) and 1 Kgs 11:25 (of a nation one hates).

20:24. *a land flowing with milk and honey.* Heb. “a land flowing of milk and honey,” that is, flowing with these things (see Joüon §121m for participles in construct).

20:25. *Therefore.* “A *vav* can express ‘an informal inference, or consequence, *so*, *then*, esp. at the beginning of a speech’ (BDB 254.4; for other examples that do this with a *wəḡqātal*, see Deut 2:4; 4:15; 7:9; Ruth 3:9). Here it is the natural conclusion to the preceding, as also at [19:37]; 22:31; 25:18” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 545 n. 176).

set apart as distinct the pure animal from the impure [animal]. See at 10:10 above. Our verse uses בָּיִן...בֵּין instead of בָּיִן...בֵּין, though these appear to be interchangeable when occurring with the verb הִבְדִּיל (cf. Gen 1:4 with 1:6).

must not make yourselves detestable by animal. That is, by eating any impure animal; cf. at 11:43–45, verses which overlap greatly with this section.

yourselves. See at 11:43 above.

that creeps along the ground. Heb. “which the ground creeps [with it]” (note that the verb is feminine because the word “ground” [אֲדָמָה] is feminine). This expression is interchangeable with “creeps along the ground” (cf. Gen 7:8 with 9:2; cf. Deut 4:18). In this context it refers to smaller teeming land creatures (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 11:44). The phrase “animal...flying creature...creeps along the ground” appears to be a condensed way to refer to three of the major groupings of Leviticus 11: larger land animals (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 11:39), flying creatures (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 11:13), and smaller teeming land creatures (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 11:44). See the same grouping of animals in Gen 7:8; 8:17.

that I have set apart for you to regard as impure. The *Piel* can be used in a “declarative” or “estimative” sense, that is, “to *declare/regard* someone/something to have a certain quality” (*IBHS* §24.2f, g; Joüon §52d). For a list of the pure and impure animals, see Leviticus 11.

20:26. *to be mine.* It is clear that the themes of Exod 19:5–6 and Leviticus 20:24b–26 are similar (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 20:24b–26). It is also interesting to note that the ending of Leviticus 20:26 (“to be to me” [הָיָה לִי]) naturally recalls the similar expressions in Exod 19:5–6: “you will *be to me* (הָיָה לִי) a treasured possession...you will *be to me* (הָיָה לִי) a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

20:27. *Now as for a man or a woman who is a medium of the dead or of a spirit.* Heb. “And a man or a woman that will be in them a spirit of the dead (אוֹב) or a spirit (יִדְעֹנִי).” The word אוֹב can refer to the spirit of the dead person themselves, or by extension to a person who contacts the dead (see Sklar, *Leviticus*,

at 19:31; as also noted there, the term יְדַעֲנִי is less clear, but typically understood along similar lines). The former meaning for אִנּוּב is likely here, as the spirit is described as being “in” the man or woman, who in turn acted as a “medium” of that spirit.

a man or a woman. The phrase “a man or a woman” is used elsewhere to refer to “anyone” (Exod 21:28; Lev 13:38). It is possible it is used here specifically because of the way that women in particular were involved with this specific wrong (cf. 1 Sam 28:7, where Saul specifically asks for a “woman” who is a medium).

Canonical and Theological Significance. “Sin is both an act of rebellion against the LORD and an act of vandalism against the type of good, life-giving world he desires” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 568). This idea may be elaborated. “Sin offends God not only because it bereaves or assaults God directly, as in impiety or blasphemy, but also because it bereaves and assaults what God has made’ (Plantinga, 1995, 16). This well captures the biblical understanding of what sin is: anything contrary to God and his purpose for this world. And since that purpose is for humanity to reflect his character and enjoy perfect harmony with God, other people, and creation, sin is consistently described as ruining and destroying these very things: people become a broken and marred image of their Creator, break fellowship with God and rebel against him, commit great treachery and harm against one another, and rule over the creation as a despot instead of as a benevolent king. Sin defaces the sinner and acts as a relational poison with fatal consequences” (Sklar, “Sin,” 2:297; the reference is to Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995]).

21:1. *his people.* For the plural suffix see at 7:20, “their people.”

[a priest] must not make himself impure. Heb. “he must not make himself impure.” The 3ms (and 3mp, v. 5) can be used to indicate an impersonal subject, in much the same way that an English speaker uses the word “one” or “someone” (15–

16; cf. GKC §144d–g; Joüon §155b [esp. n. 4], d–e; *IBHS* §4.4.2; 22.7). But since the law is addressed to the priestly family, I have added the word “priest” for clarity.

21:2. *except for.* For אֶם כִּי as “except for” (21:2) see BDB 474.2a.

his mother, his father. See at 19:3, “their mother and their father.”

21:3. *his maiden sister.* (The following note expands that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 21:3.) Heb. “his sister the maiden.” Modern English translations often translate the term for maiden (בְּתוּלָה) with “virgin.” This is often a connotation of the term, but the term itself refers to something far broader than the term virgin allows. Focusing on the Pentateuch in particular, the following four observations are true of a maiden: 1. She is not necessarily a virgin (else Gen 24:16 is redundant; see also Leviticus 21:13–14; cf. Judg 21:12) but expected to be (Deut 22:14–19; cf. 2 Sam 13:2 with 13:14 and 13:19; cf. also the use of the related term for “virginity, evidence of virginity (בְּתוּלִים),” Deut 22:14, 15, 17, 20); 2. She is not married (Exod 22:15–16 [16–17]; Lev 21:3; cf. Isa 62:5), and perhaps never has been (Lev 21:14; Ezek 44:22), but may be betrothed (Exod 22:15–16 [16–17]; Deut 22:23, 28); 3. She is a young person (Deut 32:25, where the term is parallel to a term for “young man”; cf. 2 Chr 36:17; Pss 78:63; 148:12; Isa 23:4); and 4. She is under her father’s care (Gen 24:16–51; Exod 22:16 [17]; Deut 22:16). The term thus seems closest to the English terms “maid” or “maiden;” that is, “an unmarried girl or woman esp. when young” (“Maid,” Merriam–Webster, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maid>; cf. John H. Walton, “בְּתוּלָה,” *NIDOTTE* 1:782–83).

since. Or “who,” though this would be somewhat redundant since the fact she is a maiden makes clear she has not had a husband (cf. 21:14). The use of “since” is a fairly common use of the particle אֲשֶׁר (Gen 30:18; 31:49; etc.; see BDB 83.8c; so also NRSV, NASU, ESV, NIV, NJB, NLT) and better fits the context: *since* she is still a maiden, she is within her father’s household, and thus still to be treated as a close relative when it comes to mourning.

21:4. *and so profane himself.* Heb. “to his profaning himself/ being profaned,” that is, with the result that he profanes himself/is profaned. Since a priest is holy, he does not simply become impure (which refers to entering a state of impurity) but profaned (which refers to leaving a state of holiness) (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1800–1801).

profane himself. For the reflexive sense of the *Niphal*, see Joüon §51c.

21:5. *must not make a bald spot.* The MT has the consonants of a feminine form (“she/it will not”), though the LXX and SP have the plural (as also the *qere*), and the following verbs in the verse are also plural. It is possible that MT is a dittography, a scribe copying the ending of the following noun (קִרְתָּה) in place of the ending of this verb (all the easier to do since both are built on the same root).

21:6. *Holy.* Placed ahead of the verb, seemingly for emphasis (note the repetition of this requirement at the end of the verse).

so that they do not. Purpose or consecution in a negative clause is usually indicated by means of אֲל followed by an indicative (Joüon §116j; so also 21:12, 15, 23).

the LORD’s offerings by fire. Possessive use of the genitive; since they are offered “to the LORD” (cf. 2:11, 16), they belong to him. See further at 1:9 for translation. This phrase and the next (“the food of their God”) come ahead of the verb, perhaps to emphasize the priests are not presenting just anything; *the Lord’s offerings by fire* they are presenting, and the priests must therefore be holy.

present. A participle, perhaps due to the ongoing nature of the activity (priests are repeatedly presenting these offerings) (cf. Joüon § 121d).

holy. The noun “holy” (קֹדֶשׁ) is frequently used adjectivally (Exod 40:9; Lev 6:10 [17]; 8:9; etc.).

21:7. *profaned.* See at 19:29 above. The contrast with the “holy” priest here again suggests “profane” over the more general “defile.”

prostitution. For a more detailed discussion see W. G. Lambert, “Prostitution,” in *Aussenseiter und Randgruppen: Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orients*, ed. V. Haas, Xenia 32 [Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1992], 127–61.

divorced from her husband. The word ‘divorced’ is a *Qal* passive participle of גָּרַשׁ, “to drive out,” used in Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel to refer to divorce (Lev 21:7, 14; 22:13; Num 30:9; Ezek 44:22). (Deuteronomy and Jeremiah use the verb שָׁלַח to refer to divorcing a wife: Deut 22:19, 29; Jer 3:1; cf. Mal 2:16.) The phrase “from her husband” seems superfluous and is not repeated in 21:14. Its occurrence here might simply be to avoid any ambiguity (she has not been “driven out” from her people in general but from her husband in particular), or it might simply be a set phrase (cf. “As for the man who commits adultery with a man’s wife” [20:10], where “with a man’s wife” is also superfluous but perhaps just part of a set phrase).

holy is [a priest]. Heb. “holy is he”; “priest” has been specified for clarity.

21:9. *a priest’s daughter.* Heb. “and a daughter of a man, a priest,” the word “priest” being in apposition to “man” (cf. Joüon §131b).

that profanes herself. See at 21:4 above (“profane himself”) for the reflexive sense. For the form see Joüon §82m.

by prostitution. See Joüon §124o for this use of the infinitive construct.

21:10. *on whose head is poured the anointing oil.* Heb. “which it will have been poured on his head the anointing oil.” The use of the *Hophal* might be in order to make clear that the priest did not do this himself; it was caused to be poured on him by another (cf. Ps 45:3 [2]).

21:11. *to any dead person.* Heb. “souls (נַפְשֹׁתַיִם) of a dead person (מֵת).” Either term by itself can refer to a dead person (for מֵת, see Gen 23:3; for נַפֶּשׁ, see at 21:1); together, they are equivalent to the occurrence of נַפֶּשׁ on its own (cf. Num 6:6 with Num 6:11). Why “souls” instead of “soul”? The LXX and SP read a

singular for the first term (“soul of a dead person”) though 11QpaleoLev supports MT (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 344), which appears to be the more difficult (and thus preferred) reading. Kleinig (*Leviticus*, 448) suggests the term “dead person” (מֵת) is a collective here (“dead ones”), the plural מֵתִים being avoided so as to avoid confusion with מְתִים (“men”). In any case, it is agreed that the phrase refers to the dead.

[even] for father and for mother he must not make himself impure. The phrase “for father and mother” is not strictly necessary since it would be covered by the preceding phrase (“to any dead person he must not come near”). Its presence here suggests that Israelites might have assumed, “Surely, he can become ritually defiled for his parents,” to which this law responds, “No, there are no exceptions allowed, even for his parents.” The addition of “even” above helps to bring this across.

21:12. *so that he does not.* See at 21:6 above (“so that they do not”).

21:13. *A virgin woman he must marry.* Heb. “And as for him, a woman in her virginity he must take,” the phrase “as for him” switching focus from the Lord (21:12b) back to the high priest.

A virgin woman. Heb. “a woman in her virginity.” “For בְּתוּלִים as a reference to a state of virginity, see also Judg 11:37–38” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 590 n. 51). Abstract nouns describing a condition often have a plural form; see *IBHS* §7.4.2b; Joüon §136h.

a woman profaned by prostitution. Heb. “a profaned woman, a prostitute.” The lack of conjunction between the words suggests an apposition (cf. Joüon §131b), so that the words are read together. Cf. 21:7.

21:14. *or.* See BDB 252.1d.

instead. For אֲזַי indicating contrast, see BDB 475.2b.

he must marry as a wife. Heb. “he must marry, a wife,” the latter being an adverbial accusative: marry *as* a wife (cf. Joüon §126c).

21:15. *so that he does not.* See at 21:6 above (“so that they do not”).

among his people. “His” could refer either to the high priest or to the offspring; the endpoint is the same.

21:17. *who has a physical blemish.* Heb. “which there will be in him a physical blemish”; הָיָה followed by בִּי is frequently used to indicate “having” a malady or condition (cf. 13:24; 21:19; 22:21).

21:18. *blind or lame.* See Joüon §88Hb for this form of the adjective to describe various physical conditions.

disfigured face. A *Qal* passive participle; the word occurs only here and in the *Qal* (and perhaps once in the *Hiphil* [Isa 11:15], though this is debated). Victor P. Hamilton (“חָרַם,” *NIDOTTE* 2:277) connects it to Akkadian roots meaning “to separate” or “to stretch or place (a membrane, skin, a layer of metal) over an object.” Wenham follows earlier versions and Jewish commentators in translating with “split nose” (*Leviticus*, 289; cf. Snaith [*Leviticus and Numbers*, 144], who relates it to Arabic *ḥarama*, “which means ‘slit, pierce nostrils, lip, or ear’”). Several versions go with the more general gloss “disfigured” (NJB; NLT), which seems too broad to be helpful. NASB specifies “disfigured face,” the approach followed in the above, which is a general way of following the earliest guesses we have, though it is simply a guess.

misshapen limb. Also a *Qal* passive participle; it occurs in a similar context in 22:23 and may be in contrast to a limb that is shorter than normal (though this, too, is speculative). The verb occurs once in the *Hithpael*, where it appears to refer to “stretching oneself out” (Isa 28:20), so that if it does refer to a limb, it could suggest “a limb too long,” that is, stretched out (RSV, NJPS, NRSV). Given the uncertainty, I have gone with the more general “misshapen limb,” though it is again simply a guess.

21:19. *a man who has.* See at 21:17.

a foot [misshapen from being] broken or a hand [misshapen from being] broken. Heb. “a fracture, a foot, or a fracture, a hand”; the nouns in each phrase are in apposition, the second specifying the place of the fracture (“a broken foot or a broken hand”; cf. Joüon §131b). In the ancient world, broken bones could not always be properly set and would therefore result in misshapen limbs or body parts. The idea is not simply that someone has broken their foot at some point or has a broken hand or foot at that moment, but that they have had a broken foot or hand and the bone was not properly set and the foot or hand became misshapen. This also demonstrates that the physical blemishes that could disqualify one from serving at the altar are not simply those one is born with.

21:20. *hunchbacked.* The form of the word indicates this is referring to some sort of physical condition (Joüon §88Hb). The root appears to refer to that which is curved (BDB 148), with Syriac and Aramaic roots being associated with eyebrows in particular (Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 145; cf. BDB 148), though it is not clear what type of physical blemish might be in view if eyebrows were the focus here. The word גִּבְנָנִים in Ps 68:16–17 (15–16) is possibly built on the same root but its translation is also questioned, with *HALOT*, 174, suggesting “high-arched” and many English versions translating “many-peaked.” The approach here is that of the LXX and *m. Bek.* 7:2, which understand it to refer to someone with a curved back. This is as good a guess as any, but still a guess.

dwarf. The adjective דַּק refers to that which is “thin” or “withered” (Gen 41:3, 4, 6, 7), as in cobs or ears of corn that are not as full-grown as one might expect. Milgrom (*Leviticus* 17–22, 1827) notes that “*Tgs. Onk., Neof.* and the Pesh. render ‘pygmy,’ and the Akkadian cognate *daqqu* means ‘small’ (*CAD* 3.107),” leading him to translate “dwarf.” Other translations assume a condition related to sight (LXX) or the eyebrows (*Tg. Ps.-J.*). Everyone is guessing.

eye defect. Heb. “mixture/spot in his eye.” The word תִּבְלָל occurs only here and its form is rare (see Levine, *Leviticus*, 210 n. 28). Its root (בלל) could refer to

that which is “mixed” (cf. Heb. בָּלָל), though Levine (*Leviticus*, 146) and Milgrom (*Leviticus* 17–22, 1827) both note the Akkadian root *balālu*, “to be spotted” (*CAD* 2.41.1e). In either case, it is usually understood to refer to some sort of eye defect, perhaps a discoloration of the eye. An alternative suggestion, which I have not yet seen elsewhere, is that the phrase “in his eye” should be taken to mean “in his appearance” (cf. Num 11:7 for this use of עֵיִן). The phrase could then refer to being “spotted” in his appearance, a reference to some form of skin disease as (apparently) in the following phrases.

scabs. Levine (*Leviticus*, 146) claims the term “is cognate with Akkadian *garābu*, a kind of eczema or scab, perhaps a form of dermatitis” (cf. *CAD* 5.46).

sores. The term יִלְפַת occurs only in conjunction with the previous term (see also 22:22) and is generally taken to refer to some sort of skin problem.

damaged testicle. The word אֶשְׁךָ occurs only here but “means ‘testicle’ in cognate languages: Akkadian *išku* (*CAD* 7.250) and Ugaritic *ušk* (*UT* 132.1.2)” (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1828). The word מְרוֹחַ also occurs only here, and its root is debated. If it comes from מָרַח, it could refer to a crushed testicle (the verb is used in Isaiah 38:21 to refer to an object that is spread smooth); if it comes from the root רוּחַ, it could refer to an enlarged testicle (the verb is used in Jer 22:14 to refer to “spacious/broad rooms”). In either case “at least one testicle is impaired (LXX, Pesh; *m. Bek.* 7:5)” (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1828).

21:22. *may eat.* See Joüon §1131 for the permissive sense of the imperfect.

21:23. *but.* The adverb אֲדָ can be used to introduce a contrast, often emphasizing the new idea it presents (Gen 9:4; Lev 27:26; Num 18:15).

behind the curtain he must not go. Some versions translate as though this verse simply prohibits him drawing near to the curtain (RSV; NJB). If this were the case, one might expect the verb נִגַּשׁ or קָרַב (21:17, 21). The use of בּוֹא followed by אֵל, however, suggests it is entering into a place—here, the Most Holy Place—

that is in view (16:2–3; cf. 9:23; 10:9; 14:8, 34, 46; 16:23, 26, 28; cf. NASB, ESV, NLT, NJPS).

so he must not profane. See at 21:6 above (“so that they do not”).

21:24. *So Moses spoke [these things] to Aaron and to his sons and to all the Israelites.* It is not entirely clear if this refers to 21:16–23 in particular, chapter 21 as a whole, or even the whole of chapters 20–21. In favor of the latter is the simple observation that this would account for all three groups mentioned here, listing them in reverse order as presented above: Aaron (21:17), his sons (21:1), and the Israelites (20:2).

22:2. *Tell Aaron and his sons that [when they are impure] they must keep themselves separate from the holy gifts of the Israelites that they are setting aside as holy to me, so as not to profane my holy name.* See Joüon §129kb and §140b for the translation of a genitive chain that ends with a pronominal suffix. The Hebrew of the verse as a whole is very choppy: “they must keep themselves separate from the holy gifts of the Israelites—so they must not profane my holy name—which they are setting aside as holy to me.” It is clear that the last clause modifies the first since the Israelites are the one who give holy gifts to the Lord (22:3; see also Exod 28:38; Lev 27:14–19, 22); it has therefore been moved forward in the English (so most translations). The second clause may occur where it does for emphasis. Alternatively, it could be where it is for clarity. The Hebrew could have read: “they must keep themselves separate from the holy gifts of the Israelites, which they are setting aside as holy to me, and they must not profane my holy name.” In this case, it would be less clear if the subject of the third clause was the Israelites or the priests.

Tell Aaron and his sons that [when they are impure] they must keep themselves separate. (The following expands on the note found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 22:2.) In terms of the form of וַיִּצְוֵהוּ, it is a jussive, which can be used after the imperative “speak/tell” (דַּבֵּר) in order to indicate what the person who is spoken to

is to do (cf. Exod 14:2, 15; 25:2; Lev 16:2). In terms of the verb's use, it focuses on separation, and in this context, on the priests keeping themselves separate from holy food (for the idea of separation, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 409 n. 54; in 15:31, the verb is *Hiphil*; in this verse, it is *Niphal*, which can act as the passive of the *Hiphil* [Joüon §51c]). The priests must do so in order not to “profane” the holy gifts, which means that this command applies when the priests are ritually impure, an understanding which 22:3 confirms (hence the addition of “when they are impure” above). Translations such as “deal carefully” (NRSV; cf. NASB; NLT) or “treat with respect” (NIV; cf. NET) are headed in the right general direction but miss the idea of “separation” conveyed by the verb itself.

so as not to. See at 21:6 above (“so that they do not”).

22:4. *ritually defiling skin disease.* A *Qal* passive participle, a common way to describe someone with this condition (Lev 13:45; 14:3; 22:4; Num 5:2).

of the holy gifts he must not eat. For this sense of אָכַל בֶּן, see Exod 12:43–45, 48; Lev 22:11–13.

until he is pure. The phrase עַד אֲשֶׁר is commonly used of future time and followed by an imperfect (BDB 725.II.1.a.[b]).

anything impure because of a dead person. Heb. “any impure thing of a dead person,” that is, impure because of them (cf. Joüon §129i).

22:5. *by which he becomes impure.* Heb. “which he becomes impure with reference to it/because of it,” or more simply, “by it” (see BDB 514.5.f for לְ with the sense “with reference to, because of”).

or [the man who touches] a person. The verb “touch” (נָגַע) is followed by בְּ on the front of the direct object of the verb (BDB 619.1.a); the presence of בְּ on the front of “person” thus makes it clear that “person” is a direct object of the verb “to touch” from the preceding phrase.

by whom he becomes impure with regard to any [type of] impurity. Heb. “or a person by whom he can become impure with regard to any of his impurity,” that is, the impurity of the person the priest touches (cf. at 5:3).

22:6. *these.* Heb. “touches it,” that is, any one of the objects of the verb “touch” in 22:4b–5 (cf. 15:23 for **נָגַח** being used in a similar way); in this context, it is more natural in English to translate with a plural (“these”).

unless. See BDB 474.2a; Joüon §173b.

impure until evening...bathed his body. “Bathing and waiting until evening were typical rites for cleansing this type of impurity” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 594). For the impurities of 22:4b–5, see 11:25, 28; 15:5–8, 10, 11, 16. Many of these examples also require the person to launder their clothes, but not all do (15:16), which might explain why laundering is not mentioned here.

22:8. *becoming impure.* Infinitive with **לְ** to indicate result (Joüon §124l; see at 15:32 for the form of the infinitive here).

22:9. *so as not to.* See at 21:6 above (“so that they do not”).

because of [mishandling a holy gift]. Heb. “because of it.” See discussion in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 22:9. The singular may have been used here because 22:7 spoke of the portions of the priest with a singular: “it [the holy portion] is his food.”

on account of. See BDB III.90.5.

22:10. *a resident alien hired worker staying with a priest.* (The following note expands that of Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 22:10.) Heb. “a resident alien of a priest and a hired worker,” that is, a resident alien associated with the priest because he is working for him. The term **תּוֹשֵׁב** refers to a non-Israelite (cf. Lev 25:35, 47). It is always paired in the Pentateuch with one of two nouns (or with verbal forms built on the same root as one of those nouns). In some cases, it is paired with **גֵּר** (Gen 23:4; Lev 25:23, 35, 45 [verbal form of **גָּר**], 47; Num 35:15), a term that refers to a “resident alien” (see details in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 16:29). In these contexts, the phrase appears to be a hendiadys—the two nouns working together to express one

idea (*IBHS* §39.2.1 n. 5). This view is supported by the fact that the nouns can occur without a conjunction between them (Lev 25:47b), and by the fact that the phrase can be summarized by the term גֵּר alone (cf. Lev 25:47a with 25:47b). Since גֵּר refers to a “resident alien” (see at 16:29), תוֹשֵׁב would as well. In other cases, as here, it is paired with שָׂכִיר (Exod 12:45; Lev 25:6, 40), a term which refers to a “hired worker.” In light of the fact that תוֹשֵׁב is used with גֵּר as a hendiadys, it is certainly plausible that it is used with שָׂכִיר in the same way, leading to “resident alien hired worker” (cf. also Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1861–62, with further argumentation). If the terms are to be taken separately, the translation would be “a resident alien staying with a priest and a hired worker,” in which case it refers to two groups of people that have one thing in common: they did not count as part of the priest’s household (the “resident alien” perhaps being a guest).

22:11. *acquires a servant with his money.* Heb. “acquires a person [as] an acquired thing of his money.” The phrase “of his money” (בְּסֻפּוֹ) is a subjective genitive (his money is what accomplishes the purchase), hence “with his money” (cf. Gen 17:23).

eat of. See at 22:4 (“of the holy gifts he must not eat”).

those born. The MT has a singular (“the one born”), though the plural pronoun that follows (“they”) suggests that this noun should be plural as well and should have an extra *yôd* on the end (so LXX, Syr.). “MT may be an error rising from the presence of the preceding two *yods*” (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 353).

22:12. *a layman.* Heb. “to a man, a layman,” the word “layman” being in apposition to “man” (cf. Joüon §131b).

of the contribution offering of the holy gifts she must not eat. That is, the contribution offerings that were edible food gifts in particular (“holy gifts” is thus a genitive of species [Joüon §129f.C.4]). See Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 7:14 for the various types of contributions offerings that could be made; as noted there, these belonged either to the tabernacle, to the priests (and their families), or in some cases to the

Levites. It is not clear why “contribution offering” is used in our verse. Since the meat of a fellowship offering was also holy (19:8), and since lay people could partake of it (7:15–18; 19:5–6), “contribution offering” may be included to make clear that she is not forbidden from every holy thing, just from the holy things of the priests in particular.

she. Heb. “she, of the contribution offering of the holy gifts, she must not eat.” The pronoun “she” is perhaps included to switch the subject back to the daughter.

22:15. *So [the priests] must not profane.* Heb. “they must not profane,” that is, the priests, in contrast to “the Israelites” about to be mentioned.

[the Israelites] contribute. Heb. “they contribute,” the Israelites being the natural subject (cf. Num 18:19).

contribute. The verb “to contribute” (הָרִים) is often used to refer to removing one item from a group of others in order to give it to the Lord (2:9; 4:8–10, 19; etc.), who then gives it to the priests (Num 18:8). The verb is used in particular to refer to the holy gifts which the Israelites give to the Lord (Num 18:19). For further detail see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 7:14.

22:16. *when [the Israelites] eat their holy gifts.* “Hebrew ‘when they eat their holy gifts.’ Since it is not wrong for priests to do so, the Israelites are the subject (clarified in the translation above)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 597 n. 107). It would thus be natural to take the suffix (“their”) as a reference to the Israelites as well (“their holy gifts” = the ones the Israelites have given to the tabernacle), although it could be a reference to the priests (“their holy gifts” = the ones belonging to the priests). In either case, it is a reference to Israelites eating holy gifts they should not have eaten.

22:18. *resident aliens.* A collective singular (cf. 17:8; Ezek 14:7). See Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 16:29 for a description of resident aliens.

voluntary offerings. Feminine plural nouns can take the suffix of the singular noun (Joüon §94g).

22:19. *for you to be favorably accepted.* Heb. “for your favorable acceptance,” an objective genitive: “for you to be favorably accepted.” This starts a new phrase, as evidenced by the change in person (from third person to second).

[it must be]. The verb “to be” is often elided; cf. 22:21 where it is included in a similar context. Alternatively, the elided verb could be “you will present,” in keeping with the verb of 22:18 and 22:20. In either case, the endpoint is the same.

whether. For this use of the וְ , see Exod 12:19; Num 31:26; Hos 4:3.

the herd, the sheep, or the goats. For the types of animals, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:3a and 1:10a.

22:20. *[But] all which have a physical blemish.* Heb. “all which [there is] in it a physical blemish”; וְהָיָה is frequently used to indicate “having” a malady or condition (cf. 13:24; 21:19; 22:21; in our verse, the verb וְהָיָה is supplied but the meaning of the phrase is the same; cf. 22:21 where the verb is included).

for they will not result in you being favorably accepted. Heb. “for not for favorable acceptance it [the blemished animal] will be to you”; English requires a plural pronoun (“they”) in this context.

22:21b–25. “And just as earlier verses listed twelve blemishes that would a priest from serving at the altar (21:18b–20), these verses lists twelve blemishes that would disqualify an animal from being offered on the altar” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 608). “Five of the twelve blemishes are the same [as that for priests]: blindness, limbs too long, broken bones, sores, and scabs. The remaining blemishes are close but not exact matches with those listed for the priests, which may be explained by the biological differences between animals and humans” (Balentine, *Leviticus*, 171, summarizing Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1875–82).

22:22. *blindness.* A nominal form, built on the same root as “blind” (עִוֵּר) in 21:18.

being [misshapen from having a] fractured [bone]. Heb. “being fractured,” the verb שָׁבַר often being used to refer to the breaking of a bone (Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; Prov 25:15). As noted at 21:19 above, broken bones could not always be properly set in the ancient world and would therefore result in various misshapen limbs or body parts.

being maimed. A *Qal* passive participle of the root חָרַץ, which can refer in its verbal form to sharpening (Exod 11:7), in its adjectival form to describe something as sharp (Isa 41:15; Amos 1:3) and its nominal form to that which has been cut (1 Sam 17:18) or to sharp implements which cut (2 Sam 12:31). Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1877) notes that this sense of the root is also “attested in Akkadian *ḫarāṣu* (CAD 6.92–94).” It is therefore usually understood to refer to an animal that has been cut in some way (hence “maimed”).

[having] a running sore. Some believe this to be built on the root יָבַל—which can refer to that which “flows”—and thus understand the term to refer to a running sore of some sort (BDB 385; Keil, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 2, 436; Hartley, *Leviticus*, 358; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1877, citing Dillmann and Ryssel, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus*, 1897). Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1887) also notes that “HAL³ (2.367) renders ‘warts’ on the basis of Akkadian *ublu* and the LXX.” Levine (*Leviticus*, 151) believes it is “related to *tevallul*, ‘wen, a growth in the eye,’ in 21:20.” At this point in our knowledge, certainty is impossible.

[having] scabs or sores. See above at 21:20.

22:23. *an ox or a flock animal.* The terms in 22:21 are collectives: “herd” and “flock”; the terms here refer to single animals from these groups, namely, an “ox” (see at 1:3a) and “flock animal” (see at 5:7 and cf. 22:27).

or. See BDB 252.1d.

a misshapen limb. Or “a limb too long”; see at 21:18 above.

stunted body part. A *Qal* passive. This is the only time the verb occurs. BDB tentatively suggests “be stunted” or “be drawn in,” citing Arabic *qula ṭun*, “very

short” (886). Milgrom (*Leviticus* 17–22, 1878) notes that “*Tgs. On.* and *Neof.* Render *ḥāsîr* ‘underdeveloped limb’,” a rendering he follows (“contracted”). The LXX has “with a docked [= manually shortened] tail” (cf. Wevers, *Leviticus*, 358; note that this would be quite noticeable with the broad-tailed sheep [cf. at 3:9]). Due to the uncertainty as to which part of the body was stunted, the above remains general (“stunted body part” as opposed to “stunted limb”).

[*as*]. See at 5:15 above (“[*as*] a whole burnt offering”).

you may offer. When the priest is the subject, this verb would appear to refer to the execution of the rite as a whole (see esp. 9:16, 22); when the lay person is the subject (as here), it would appear to refer in a general way to them bringing the offering for the priest to offer on their behalf (cf. 23:11 with 23:12).

22:24. *But [as for an ox or a flock animal...].* Supplied from 22:23.

crushed. The verb is used in Ezekiel 23:3 to refer to breasts being squeezed or pressed (it is pointed there as a *Pual* perfect but is perhaps a *Qal* passive; see Joüon §58a).

pulverized. In the *Qal*, the verb occurs in Deuteronomy 9:21 to describe crushing the golden calf (and is parallel to “grinding” it small); it also describes crushing adversaries (Ps 89:24 [23]), and a potter’s jar being completely shattered (Isa 30:14).

torn away. In the *Qal*, the verb can refer to drawing a person or object off or away (Judg 20:32; Jer 22:24).

emasculated. The same verb appears to be used in Deuteronomy 23:2 (1) to refer to the full emasculation of a human, and thus perhaps the same here. This would be an escalation from the third term (castration) to this one (full emasculation).

22:25. I argue that this verse prohibits Israelites from offering a blemished animal they bought from a foreigner. A possible objection to this understanding is that such a prohibition should not be necessary; it should be able to be implied from

the preceding verses. But the same is true with 22:19–20, where the requirement of 22:20 should be able to be implied from 22:19. Laws in Leviticus simply do not leave everything up to implication.

a foreigner. Heb. “a son of a foreigner,” the word “son” (בֶּן) denoting a member of a class (BDB 121.7.a; Joüon §129j); the phrase is usually translated simply as “foreigner.” It refers to someone who is not a native Israelite (cf. Gen 17:12, and also the use of נִכְרִי in Deuteronomy 17:15; 23:21 [20]).

[such animals] have a defect. Heb. “their defect [is] in them”; cf. at 22:20 above (“[But] all which have a physical blemish”). It is clear that the word מְשַׁחֲתִים is built on the root שָׁחַת, and that words built on this root can be used to describe physical damage or disfigurement of someone’s body (Exod 21:26; Isa 52:14). There is some debate whether it is a noun (so BDB 1008) or a *Hophal* participle (so Hartley, *Leviticus*, 358; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1882; cf. Mal 1:14), though in either case it clearly refers to a physical blemish (cf. context as well as Mal 1:14).

22:27. *must remain.* Or “be”; for הָיָה with the sense “remain” see BDB 226.III.2.

with its mother. Heb. “under its mother,” where it spends so much of its time nursing in its early days. English requires “with” here, which is the preposition used in a similar context in Exodus 22:29 (30).

from the eighth day onward. Or “and beyond”; this adverb can be used to refer to “beyond/onward” in a geographical sense (Num 32:19), or, as here, in a chronological sense (Num 15:23).

it will be acceptable. Or “it will be favorably accepted” (cf. 22:23, 25); the endpoint is more or less the same.

an offering by fire. The term “offering by fire” (אֵשֶׁה) can refer to burnt and fellowship offerings (1:9; Num 15:3), which fits the context here (cf. 22:18, 21, 29).

22:28. *an ox or a flock animal.* See at 22:23.

its young. When used of animals, the term יָרֵא describes their young (BDB 121.4; see Deut 22:6–7; 1 Sam 6:7, 10).

on the same day. Heb. “in/on one day,” the word “one” (אֶחָד) having the sense “one and the same” (cf. Gen 40:5).

22:31. *them.* Masculine, even though “commandments” is feminine; see at 20:8 above.

22:32. *treated as holy.* The verb שָׁדַק can be used in the *Piel* with the meaning “to treat as holy” (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 588 n. 31), and it is possible for the *Niphal* to act as the passive of the *Piel* (see Joüon §51c; *IBHS* §23.6.2 n. 36).

23:2. *which you must proclaim [as] holy gatherings.* Heb. “which you must proclaim them [as] gatherings of holiness.” The word “them” refers back to the “appointed times”; English style does not allow it to be brought across in translation.

[as]. See at 5:15 above (“[as] a whole burnt offering”).

proclaim. A common use of the term אָרָב, particularly in the context of proclaiming a certain event in the land (Lev 25:10; Deut 15:2; cf. 1 Kgs 21:9; 2 Kgs 10:20).

holy gatherings. Heb. “gatherings of holiness,” a genitive of quality (Joüon §129f.C.1), resulting in “holy gatherings.”

my appointed times are as follows. Heb. “these [are] they, my appointed times,” returning us to the chapter’s primary organizing category: appointed times.

23:3. *a holy gathering.* While a holy gathering, the Sabbath is not called an “appointed time,” a phrase that seems to be reserved for the major non-weekly gatherings described in the rest of the chapter (see at 23:4, 38).

23:4–43. For a comparison of these festivals with other ancient Near Eastern cultures, see Bryan C Babcock, *Sacred Ritual: A Study of the West Semitics Ritual Calendars in Leviticus 23 and the Akkadian Text Emar 446*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 9 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014). Among

his findings, he notes that while it has been argued that various features of Leviticus 23 indicate that it was edited or redacted sometime during the first millennium, many of these same features are very similar to the Akkadian text Emar 446, dating from the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BC), perhaps as early as the fourteenth century BC. This does not prove that the final form of Leviticus 23 was fixed in the Late Bronze Age, but does show that its features fit perfectly well within that time.

23:5. *on the fourteenth of the month.* Heb. “on the fourteenth with regard to the month.” The word “day” is implied; it is often included in the Hebrew, although not always (Exod 12:3; Num 1:1).

23:6. *of this [same] month, the Festival of Unleavened Bread to the LORD [begins].* Or “...of this same month [is] the Festival...” (NASB, NJB, etc.), though this is awkward in English since it comes across as though a seven-day festival happens on one day. The sense is clearly that this is the day on which the festival begins.

[for] seven days. See at 8:33.

23:7. *any laborious work you must not do.* This qualified work prohibition applied also to the Festival of Weeks (Lev 23:21; Num 28:26), the first day of the seventh month (Lev 23:25; Num 29:1), and the Festival of Booths (Lev 23:35–36; Num 29:12). Since those who traveled to the sanctuary would be away from their work anyway, the prohibition may be particularly for those who had stayed at home; they, too, were to set these days apart and were to do so by not working on them.

23:11. *so that you may be favorably accepted.* There is debate whether the phrase “so that you may be favorably accepted (לְרִצְּנָה)” goes with the preceding phrase or the one that follows it. The MT accents put it with the preceding phrase, but the occurrence of the phrase elsewhere favors putting it with the latter since this would match with other places where it starts a phrase and is followed by a

description of the specific procedure that must be followed for the offering to be acceptable (19:5; 22:19, 29).

on the day after the Sabbath. Which Sabbath is meant? The debate here is extensive (for a survey of approaches, see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2056–63, and more concisely, Hartley, *Leviticus*, 385–86). Several approaches relate the Sabbath to the Festival of Unleavened Bread in one way or another. This faces a potential difficulty, however, in that the harvest would fluctuate every year, which would make it difficult to tie this event to a specific date in the calendar. What is more, as Gane notes, “while these directions come after those of Unleavened Bread, they are in a separate divine speech that begins in verse 9” (Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 389), and thus not necessarily linked closely to it. It is more likely the Sabbath in view is the first Sabbath of the harvest (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 19:11 for details).

on the day after. The preposition מִן (“from”) typically precedes the word מִחֲרַת (“day after”) with the meaning “on” (7:16; 19:6; etc.).

23:13. *two-tenths [of an ephah].* See Sklar, *Leviticus*, 384 n. 106.

its drink offering. The form of the 3ms suffix here is less common (Joüon §94h); the *qere* has the more common form (which occurs everywhere else with this noun: Num 6:17; 15:24; 28:7–9, 15; etc.).

a fourth of a hin. Heb. “the fourth of the hin.” See at 5:11 above (“a tenth of an ephah”).

23:14. *bread...roasted grain...fresh grain.* “Bread” could be made a number of different ways (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:4, 5–6, 7). The term for “roasted grain” (קָלִי) occurs at several places in the Old Testament (Ruth 2:14; 1 Sam 17:17 [קָלִיא]; 25:18; 2 Sam 17:28). See description in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:14b. The term for “fresh grain” (פְּרִמָּה) can refer to a fertile land (Jer 2:7) but is also used to refer to the produce of the land in the context of the “firstfruits” (see also 2 Kgs 4:42). In contrast to roasted grain, this would appear to be unroasted (hence “fresh”). The

“ear” or “head” of a cereal plant contains the grains that are used for food, and the ears could be rubbed while raw and the grain eaten (Luke 6:1).

the offering for your God. Heb. “the offering of your God,” that is, the one just described and made for him (an objective genitive; Joüon §129e).

23:16. *fifty days.* How does “seven Sabbaths” (23:15) equal fifty days? If an English speaker says on Monday, “I’ll meet you a week from today,” they would most naturally think of that as a period of seven days because it would be equal to seven twenty-four hour periods. But it is also possible to count that as eight days if the count starts on that Monday: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6), Sunday (7), Monday (8). This is known as inclusive reckoning and means that an “extra day” must be added to what would normally be expected when measuring in weeks. This explains how the seven weeks of our passage is not 49 days (as we might expect), but 50 (adding the extra day).

23:17. *you must bring.* There is a dot in the נ, which occurs in 3 other places (Gen 43:26; Ezra 8:18; Job 33:21). This “does not indicate doubling, but informs the reader that it is not a vowel letter, a practice known in biblical manuscripts with the Palestinian point system” (Joüon §20a n. 2).

two loaves for a wave offering. Heb. “loaves of a wave offering, two” (see Joüon §142c for the adjectival use of “two”). For שְׁנֵי with the meaning “loaves,” see also 1 Sam 10:4; 21:4; 25:18; etc.

two-tenths [of an ephah]. See at 23:13 above.

23:18. *seven sheep.* See at 8:33 above (“seven days”).

one bull from the herd. For translation, see at 4:3 above (“a bull from the herd”). Numbers 28:27 calls for two bulls and one ram (instead of one bull and two rams). The reason for the change is not clear, though there is at least one other instance where Numbers requires more extensive offerings than Leviticus (see at 4:14 above, “bull”). It is also interesting to note that the change in Numbers 28 now

brings these offerings into line with the burnt offering of the previous two sections (see Num 28:11, 19). It is thus not impossible that there was simply a scribal error in Numbers 28:27, the scribe being influenced by 28:11 and 28:19.

grain offering...drink offering. The word for “grain offering” is singular and that for “drink offering” plural. This happens at several places where there is more than one animal being offered (Num 6:14–15; 29:17–18, 20–21). Perhaps the grain offerings were combined and brought together (cf. Num 15:9, where the two-tenths ephah grain offering is for both lambs) and the drink offerings were brought separately. Alternatively, it may simply be that the word for “grain offering” often functioned as a noun of species and was therefore singular (cf. Joüon §134c), whereas “drink offering,” for whatever reason, did not.

23:19. *a male goat for a purification offering.* For the purification offering coming after the burnt offering in 23:18–19, see at 12:6 above (“a one-year-old sheep for a whole burnt offering...”).

23:20. *along with [the] two sheep.* This refers to the two fellowship offerings just named in 23:19. The MT accents connect this phrase with the preceding: “The priest must then wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering along with two sheep [the two fellowship offering sheep] before the LORD; holy they will be to the LORD for the priest.” In this case, however, it is not clear what the suffix “them” refers to, since it cannot refer to the fellowship offerings (the verse then becomes redundant), and since burnt offerings and purification offerings are not presented elsewhere as wave offerings. The simplest solution is to connect the phrase “along with two sheep” with what follows (so Keil, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 2, 443).

23:22. Verse 22 concludes the section by repeating almost all of 19:9–10—the command not to harvest every last bit of the crops but to leave some for the needy. The major difference is that 23:22 does not mention vineyards, no doubt

because 23:15–21 focus on the harvest of wheat, which happens before the grapes are ripe (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, Appendix 2).

23:24. *trumpet blasts.* The term תְּרוּעָה refers elsewhere to “trumpet blasts” (Num 29:1; this could also be translated “the blowing of trumpets”). In this context, the word could be in apposition to “day of being remembered,” explaining how the “remembering” was accomplished (an apposition of species, Joüon §131b), or it could be a genitive of action/means (Joüon §129.f13); the translation would be the same in either case: “by trumpet blasts.”

23:25. *offering by fire.* See Num 29: 1–6. The “offering by fire” might refer especially to the burnt offerings (cf. Lev 23:37), which are by far the most numerous (Num 29:2; note as well that purification offerings [Num 29:5] are not identified elsewhere as offerings by fire).

23:27. *Now.* The particle אַּ could be here for emphasis (BDB 36.1), underscoring that the Day of Atonement is surely to be kept (cf. Exod 31:13), or it could be for contrast (BDB 36.2), emphasizing the solemn nature of this day in contrast to the more celebratory nature of the preceding one (so Péter–Contesse and Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus*, 352). The word “now” allows for either possibility.

Atonement. This plural form of the noun (כְּפָרִים) is common for nouns of abstraction (Joüon §136g–i) and can be used to describe the type of action the noun represents (Joüon §136i; *IBHS* §7.4.2c [cf. *GKC* §124f]), which in this case would be the act of making atonement.

23:29. *For.* Or perhaps “indeed,” which is a possible use of כִּי (BDB 472.1e).

any person. Heb. “any of the persons,” taking נָפֶשׁ as a collective (cf. Gen 46:26, 27); English requires a singular: “any person.” For נָפֶשׁ as “person,” whether male or female, see BDB 660.4.c(2).

any. See BDB 482.1.e.(b).

who will not humble themselves. Heb. “will not be humbled”; the *Pual* in this instance is similar to the *Niphal* tolerativum: “will not allow oneself to be humbled” = “will not humble oneself” (cf. Joüon §51c; *IBHS* §25.5b takes the verb as reflexive here). The normal expression uses the *Piel* and takes נִפְּשׁ as the direct object (16:29, 31; 23:27, 32), which was perhaps avoided here due to the use of נִפְּשׁ at the beginning of the verse (it would be awkward to say “For any נִפְּשׁ which does not humble its נִפְּשׁ...”).

their people. See at 7:20.

23:31. *[it will be] a perpetual statute throughout your generations.* As noted at 10:9 above (“[This is] a perpetual statute throughout your generations”), this phrase can come in between an original statement and a clarification of that statement in order to emphasize it.

in all of your dwellings. And thus to be observed even if you are not at the tabernacle; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 23:14.

23:32. *you must keep your Sabbath.* Heb. “you must sabbath your Sabbath”; cf. Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40.

evening until evening. It is sometimes argued that the phrase “evening until evening” implies the Israelite day began at evening, though other pentateuchal texts suggest it began in the morning (see Gen 19:33–34 and Lev 22:30, both cited by Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 1967). The reason for the phrase “evening until evening” here could simply be for the practical reason suggested in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 23:32: to make clear the fast was only twenty-four hours, not thirty-six.

23:34. *[lasting for] seven days.* See at 8:33 (“[for],” “seven days”).

23:36. *holy closing gathering.* This concluding day is described in two ways: a “holy gathering (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ)” and a “holy closing gathering (עֲצֻרָת)” (23:36b). Outside of the Pentateuch, this latter term can be used for a religious gathering in general, whether for a pagan god (2 Kgs 10:20) or for the God of Israel (Isa 1:13; Joel 1:14; 2:15; Amos 5:21). In the Pentateuch, however, it is only used

for the last day of a festival, whether the eighth and final day of the Festival of Booths (Num 29:35; cf. 2 Chr 7:9; Neh 8:18) or the seventh and final day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Deut 16:8). The related verb עָצַר is used to describe something being stopped (Num 17:13, 15; 25:8), which leads to the tentative suggestion that עֲצֵרָת refers to a “closing gathering” (cf. NIV: “closing special assembly”), to which I add the word “holy” since no laborious work could be done (making it similar to the other “holy gatherings”; 23:7, 8, 21, 24–25, 27–28, 35).

23:37. *offerings by fire.* Or “an offering by fire,” although in this verse it is introducing a list that consists of several different types of offerings by fire and is therefore best viewed as a noun of species or of category and translated as a plural (Joüon §135c; cf. Gen 32:6a). The same will apply to the singular nouns in the list that follows. It may be noted that purification offerings are not mentioned here; this is no surprise since they are not identified elsewhere as offerings by fire (cf. at 23:25 above).

sacrifices. Most likely a shortened form of “fellowship offering sacrifices” (cf. Lev 17:8; 19:6; Num 15:3, 5).

and drink offerings. It is not clear why this is the only noun in the list that is plural; see at 23:18 above (“grain offering...drink offering”).

each on its proper day. Heb. “a matter of a day in its day,” a phrase used elsewhere to refer to a task to be done, or an allotment to be received, as required on a particular day (Exod 5:13, 19; 16:4; 1 Kgs 8:59).

23:38. *in addition to.* A combination of בָּד + לְ + מִן; see BDB 94.1e; cf. Lev 9:17; Num 28:23, 31; 29:11.

23:39. *gathering.* As opposed to the verb “to harvest” (קָצַר), which focuses on the entire process of harvesting a field (19:9), the verb “to gather” (אָסַף) refers in this context to collecting from the field that which was harvested (Exod 23:16; Deut 16:13).

23:40. *branches from majestic trees.* “Hebrew ‘fruit of tree of majesty,’ that is, trees that are majestic with regard to their ‘fruit,’ which the verse goes on to define as various forms of ‘branches’” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 635 n. 64). In support of the identification of “fruit” with “branches,” Milgrom (*Leviticus* 23–27, 2041) cites the argument of Ginsberg (H. L. Ginsberg, “Towards a Lexicon of the Biblical Language,” in *H. Yalon Jubilee Volume*, ed. S. Lieberman et al. [Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1963], 167–70 [Hebrew]) that the words “fruit” and “root” are used together to refer to the tree as a whole, with “root” referring to the stock below the ground and “fruit” referring to the branches above it (see 2 Kgs 19:30; Isa 37:31; Hos 9:16; Amos 2:9; and esp. Ezek 17:9). As commonly happens, “tree” (עֵץ) is used here as a collective (Gen 3:2, 8; Exod 10:15; etc.).

palm fronds. If the MT pointing is retained, the word translated “frond” (כַּף) is the same word used elsewhere for the “palm” or “hand” (Gen 40:11, 21; Lev 8:27; etc.), as well as for other flat objects such as “pans” (Exod 25:29; 37:16). In this case, it may have been used because the fronds looked like hands or because they were flat. Alternatively, the word could be repointed so that it refers to a word translated elsewhere as “palm branch” or “shoot” (כַּפֶּה; Job 15:32; Isa 9:13 [14]; 19:15). In either case, it is agreed that our verse refers to the branches of palm trees.

branches of leafy trees. Heb. “branch of tree, leafy,” that is, branches from leafy trees (cf. the use of “leafy” [עֲבוֹת] in Neh 8:15; Ezek 20:28). Such branches could help provide shelter when made into a booth.

willows that grow by the stream. Heb. “willows of the stream,” the sense being they grow by it (genitive of place, Joüon §129f.C.11).

[for] seven days. See at 8:33 (“[for],” “seven days”).

23:42. *In booths.* Hebrew “in the booths” (cf. Joüon §137m.1); English requires the definite article to be left off. The word is put ahead of the verb here, seemingly to highlight where it is that the Israelites must dwell during these days.

23:43. *I had the Israelites dwell in booths.* The sense is “I settled them in booths on the way out of Egypt” (cf. the use of “settle” in Gen 47:6, 11), not “I caused/forced them to dwell in booths” (the idea of compulsion is not a necessary sense of the *Hiphil*; Joüon §54d).

24:2. *that they bring.* A jussive, which can be used after the imperative “command” (צִוֵּה) in order to indicate what the person who is spoken to is to do (Num 5:2; cf. Exod 14:2, 15; 25:2; Lev 16:2; 22:2). In terms of meaning, לָקַח אֵל can have the sense of “to bring to” (see also Num 19:2; 2 Kgs 2:20; with לָ, see Gen 15:9–10; 27:9).

to you pure oil from beaten olives. Heb. “oil, olive, pure, beaten.” The words “oil” and “olive” are either a genitive of species or material (“oil of olive,” Joüon §129f.C.4 or C.5) or an apposition of species or material (Joüon §§131b, 131d).

may be kept burning continually. Heb. “for the causing to go up of a lamp continually,” that is, in order that the lamps may continually burn. Cf. Exod 40:29, where Moses “causes to go up” the burnt and grain offerings on the altar (i.e., kindles them there), with Exod 40:25, where he “causes to go up” the lamps (i.e., kindles them) (Milgrom, 23–27, 2087).

24:3. *Outside the curtain [that is before] the testimony.* Heb. “the curtain of the testimony,” which appears to be a shorter way of saying “the curtain that is before the testimony (לְפָרֶכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדֻת)” (Exod 27:21).

Aaron must arrange them. Heb. “arrange it,” the singular pronoun being used because of the singular “lamp” in the preceding verse; since that noun is a collective, the pronoun here must be translated as a plural.

[it will be] a perpetual statute throughout your generations. As noted at 10:9 above (“[This is] a perpetual statute throughout your generations”), this phrase can come in between an original statement and a clarification of that statement in order to emphasize it.

24:4. *on the pure [golden] lampstand.* A few versions translate “pure lampstand” (NJB; cf. LXX; AV; JPS; TOB) or “ceremonially pure lampstand” (NET). This is of course possible grammatically but problematic in that these items were “holy” (cf. Exod 40:4 with 40:9), not just “pure.” The majority of versions thus translate “pure golden lampstand” (NASB, ESV, NIV, NRSV, etc.), understanding this to be a shorthand way of describing that it is made of “pure gold” (Exod 25:31).

24:5. *and bake it [into] twelve cakes.* Verbs that describe making something often take two accusatives. The first identifies the material used (here, the “it,” which refers to the fine flour); the second identifies the thing produced (here, the “twelve cakes”). This requires the English preposition “into” between the accusatives (see Joüon §125w; cf. Exod 12:39).

each. See BDB 25.2.

24:6. *them.* Masculine, even though “loaves” is feminine; see at 20:8 above. *[in].* Taking “two stacks” as an indirect accusative; cf. Joüon §126c.

two stacks. See Joüon §142c for the adjectival use of “two.”

stacks. The word is built on the root עָרַךְ, the verbal form of which (עָרָךְ) refers to setting things in order, not only in a “row,” but also in an organized stack, as with wood for a fire (Gen 22:9; Lev 1:7; Isa 30:33).

six in each stack. Heb. “six of the stack,” the sense from context being “six in each stack.”

24:8. *Every Sabbath day.* Heb. “in the day of the Sabbath in the day of the Sabbath.” Words or phrases can be repeated “to express the idea of *every, all*” (GKC §128c; see also §128d; cf. Exod 16:21; Deut 14:22).

[the bread]. Heb. “it”; context makes clear the bread is in view, and this is confirmed by Exodus 40:23.

24:9. *And [the bread] will be.* Heb. “and she will be”; the feminine form of the verb can be used to express the neuter (“it”, Joüon §151c), and the context makes clear that the bread of the presence is what is in view.

and they must eat it. The suffix here is masculine, even though the verb that starts the verse has a feminine subject. Cf. at 24:6 above (“them”). (The SP reads a feminine here and later in the verse, an easier reading and thus less likely.)

the LORD’s offerings by fire. It is clear from 24:7 that it is the frankincense in particular that is the “offering by fire.” But since the frankincense represents the bread as a token, the bread itself can be referred to as an “offering by fire.”

24:10. *an Israelite man.* Heb. “And a man the Israelite(s).” If the MT is maintained, this would be a generic use of the article, identifying a class (“the Israelites,” cf. Judg 3:3); “a man of the Israelites” would then be equal to “an Israelite man” (cf. *IBHS* §13.4c for construct chains in which the last word is definite but preceding elements of the chain can be indefinite). Alternatively, the MT may have added the definite article under the influence of the definite article on the word “Israelitess” in the preceding phrase, in which case the article should be omitted (as in the SP).

24:11. *spoke.* (The following note expands on that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 24:11.) There is some debate whether this verb comes from the root נקב (*HALOT* 718–19, in which case it is a normal *Qal wayyiqṭōl*), or the root קבב (BDB 866), in which case it follows an Aramaic pattern for the *wayyiqṭōl*, as often happens with geminate verbs; see Joüon §82h). Support for the former comes from 24:16, since the root there is clearly נקב, and from the fact that a number of verses also use נקב together with שם (Num 1:17; 1 Chr 12:32; 16:41; 2 Chr 28:15; 31:19; Ezra 8:20; Isa 62:2; by way of contrast, there are no other occurrences of קבב with שם). In these instances, the phrase has the sense “to designate/identify by name,” which in our context means he “spoke” the Lord’s name, designating him as the object of his curse.

Now. The *wayyiqtol* sequence is broken here to indicate that this phrase is background information.

24:12. *under guard.* Heb. “in the guard/confinement/custody,” though since this is the first mention of it, the definite article is not translated in English (cf. Joüon §137m.1 for possible explanation of the definite article here).

until [the Israelites] could make clear to themselves. Heb. “to make clear to themselves”; using a passive translation earlier requires some adaptation of the English here in order to make the sense clear. The infinitive construct is well understood as indicating purpose here, which the English above captures.

24:14. *outside of.* See at 4:12 above.

24:15–16. It is sometimes argued that 24:15b–16b are two separate laws, one for “cursing God/a god” and one for “blaspheming/misspeaking” the name of the Lord (Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, 246–47; Hartley, *Leviticus*, 410). It seems better, however, to take these as parallel laws, as seems to happen in 24:23: the person is called “the one who cursed (הַמְקַלֵּל),” using the very same verb as 24:15b, and the congregation stones him to death, applying the penalty of 24:16b.

24:15. *And to the Israelites you will speak.* The phrase “to the Israelites” is perhaps put ahead of the verb because of the change of focus from the general proclamation made to Moses (24:14) to the way in which he is to pass on this command to the Israelites themselves (24:15; cf. 9:2–3).

24:16. *must certainly stone them.* The use of the infinitive absolute in both phrases of 24:16b seems to underscore the importance of carrying out this penalty. The verb “to stone” (רָגַם) occurs in at least one other instance followed by כִּי plus a suffix, the suffix indicating the object of the stoning (1 Kgs 12:18).

when anyone speaks the name. Heb. “when he speaks name.” The lack of the definite article is curious. The LXX of 24:16b reads, “when he speaks the name of the LORD he must be put to death (בְּנִקְבוֹ-שֵׁם יְהוָה יוּמָת),” which, if original, would imply that the scribe’s eye skipped from the י at the beginning of יְהוָה to the

’ at the beginning of וַיִּמָּוֶת (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2119; it may also be noted, however, that this is a longer and easier reading).

24:17–18. “The difference [in penalties] is not to minimize the value of animals or the need to show them love and care but to emphasize the tremendous worth of human beings. They alone have been created in God’s image (Gen 1:26–27; 9:5–6) and are to be respected as such” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 659). Nihan strengthens this connection by noting that the phrase “the life of human being” (נַפְשׁ אָדָם) that occurs in 24:17 also occurs in Genesis 9:5, a passage which also makes a distinction between taking animal life and human life (Gen 9:3–6), and also calling for death in the latter (9:5–6), specifying that humanity is made in God’s image (9:6) (Christophe Nihan, “Murder, Blasphemy and Sacral Law: Another Look at Lev 24,10–23,” *ZABR* 17 [2011]: 233).

takes the life of any human being. The word אָדָם is used here to refer to people in contrast to animals (cf. 24:18 as well as 24:21a with 24:21b).

they must certainly be put to death. This law applies consistently in cases of murder. For manslaughter, the guilty party was able to go to a city of refuge to live without fear of punishment (Exod 21:12–14; Num 35:11, 15; Deut 19:4–6).

24:18. *whereas.* Or “and”, though “whereas” helps to bring out the contrast between human life and animal life.

24:19. *injures their neighbor.* Heb. “puts a physical blemish (מוֹם) in their neighbor.” The word מוֹם is used frequently in Leviticus to refer to a physical blemish of one sort or another (see 21:18–20 for examples). In this context, the sense is that the person has injured their neighbor (see 24:20). The word “neighbor” is used because laws often address the most common situation, which in the case of physical violence would involve the people you interacted with most regularly. As 24:20b makes clear, however, this applied in the case of injuring anybody, whether a neighbor or not.

just as they have done. Or “they will have done,” the perfect sometimes being used for a past future, that is, a future “action which precedes another action” (Joüon §112i; here, the action of injuring the neighbor precedes the action of being injured in return; cf. 24:20b, which uses an imperfect).

the same. The phrase כַּאֲשֶׁר...כֵּן can be used to indicate the agreement between the actions that each particle introduces (see BDB 486.2.c.[d]).

24:20. *fracture for fracture.* A word used to refer to the fracturing or breaking of a bone (21:19; cf. the verb שָׁבַר in Exod 12:46; Lev 22:22; Num 9:12; Prov 25:15).

just as they injure...so. See at 24:19 (“the same”).

24:21. *So the one who takes the life of.* Or simply “strikes,” though the verb can be used to refer to slaying another (Gen 4:15; Exod 2:12), and this sense is clear from 24:17–18. So also in 24:21b.

24:23. *they stoned him [with] stones.* The word “with” is supplied here (cf. בָּאֲבָנִים in 20:2). It could be a rare double accusative of a *Qal* (so Joüon §125ua); otherwise, it could be an indirect accusative of instrument (cf. Joüon §126l). In either case, it is to be translated adverbially.

25:3. *you may prune.* The verb is rare, occurring only three times with this meaning (25:3, 4; Isa 5:6). Related nouns confirm the sense of pruning: זְמוּרָה refers in Numbers 13:23 to a cut branch of grapes, and מְזִמְרָה refers in several passages to a knife for pruning grapes (Isa 2:4; 18:5; Joel 4:10 [3:10]; Mic 4:3). Levine (*Leviticus*, 170), citing Gustaf H. Dalman (*Arbeit und Sitte im Palästina*, vol. 4, Schriften des Deutschen Palästina-Instituts [Hildesheim: G. Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928–42; repr. 1964], 290f.), notes the agricultural significance of pruning: “Pruning was essential for assuring the growth of the grapes. There were two prunings each year, one in the winter, or rainy season, when the shoots that had not produced grapes the previous year were snipped off, and a second in June or July, when the new blossoms had already appeared.”

25:8. *so that.* Consequential use of the *wěqātal* (Joüon §119e).

the time. Or “days”; “time” is more natural in English (see BDB 399.6a).

amounts to. Heb. “will become for you” (cf. BDB 226.II.2.d–f for this use of הָיָה לְ); “amounts to” is a more natural English idiom.

25:9. *Then you must sound.* Heb. “cause to pass through,” used frequently to refer to issuing a proclamation or decree throughout a land (Exod 36:6; 2 Chr 30:5; 36:22; Ezra 10:7; Neh 8:15); English requires “sound” in this context.

[throughout your land]. Understood from the context since the verb “cause to pass through” naturally suggests a place which the object is caused to pass through; cf. previous note and see also the inclusion of the phrase “throughout your land” at the end of this verse.

you. The text switches to the plural here, perhaps because the focus is even more now on what happens throughout the land: “All of you, throughout the land, are to do this.”

25:10. *fiftieth year.* Some have argued that the forty–ninth and fiftieth years overlap as one and the same (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 434–36; Adrian Schenker, “The Biblical Legislation on the Release of Slaves: The Road from Exodus to Leviticus,” *JSOT* 23, no. 78 [1998]: 25, following H. Graf Reventlow, *Das Heiligkeitgesetz: Formgeschichtlich Untersucht*, WMANT 6 [Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961], 125; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 538). A brief survey of the reasons, along with a response to each, now follows: 1) having two fallow years in a row would be difficult for the Israelites (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 435). The text sees this as no difficulty, as the Lord would provide abundantly enough in previous years to make up for the fallow ones (see further Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:20–22; for the possibility of abundant crops making up for fallow years, see Gen 41:1–49 and 47:13–26). 2) Verses 20–22 can only be understood if the Year of Jubilee overlaps with the seventh year of the seventh Sabbatical cycle (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 435–36). This is not the case (see comments below at 25:20–22). 3) The “seven Sabbaths” of Lev

23:15–16a—which equals seven weeks, and thus forty–nine days—is equal to fifty days, showing that days 49 and 50 must have overlapped (Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 538). As noted above at 23:16, the seven Sabbaths actually did equal 50 days by means of inclusive reckoning; there was no overlap of days 49 and 50 (see John S. Bergsma, “Once Again, the Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?” *VT* 55:1 [2005]: 121–25, esp. 122). For those holding to the Jubilee starting in the fiftieth year, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 23–27, 2248–51; Robert S. Kawashima, “The Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?” *VT* 53 (2003): 117–20; Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 432–35.

Jubilee. “Since the year was announced with the blowing of an animal’s horn (25:9), the name ‘Jubilee’ is often understood to come from a Hebrew word (יֹבֵל) used elsewhere to describe a trumpet made from an animal’s horn (Exod 19:13; Josh 6:4–6)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 687 n. 36). Others have suggested that the term could be related to the verb יָבַל, which is used in the *Hiphil* and *Hophal* to refer to “leading” or “bringing” a person or object somewhere, sometimes in the context of leading them home after captivity (Isa 55:12; Jer 31:9; so Bush, *Leviticus*, 254). See R. North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1954), 96–108, for a full discussion of suggested etymologies.

each person. The plural verb (“will return”) makes clear that שָׁמַיִם is being used distributively (BDB 36).

25:11. *That fiftieth year is a jubilee*. Heb. “a jubilee is it, the fiftieth year.”

a year it must last for you. Heb. “a year it must be for you,” the sense being it must last for one year (in keeping with 25:10a).

25:12. *for [that year] is a jubilee*. Heb. “a jubilee is it,” the “it” referring to the fiftieth year (here specified as “that year”), as in 25:10, 11.

holy it must be to you. Heb. “holiness it must be to you”; the noun is used elsewhere adjectivally (Lev 21:6; 27:9, 10; etc.).

[only] from the field may you eat its produce. Heb. “from the field you may eat its produce,” that is, only the naturally growing produce of the field they are to eat.

25:13. While many English versions place a break after 25:12 (NASB, NIV, ESV), it seems best to put the break after 25:13. This maintains the chiasm off 25:10c–13 as well as that of 25:14–17. What is more, 25:14 starts with וְכִי, the particle used elsewhere to introduce a new major law (19:5, 23; 22:29; 25:35).

25:14. *buy.* The infinitive absolute may be used to continue the previous verbal form (see examples in Joüon §123x).

from. Heb. “from the hand,” a phrase often used to describe the transfer of an item from one person to another (Gen 31:39; 33:10; 39:1; etc.); “from” is more natural in English.

one another. Heb. “a man his brother,” the common way to express “one another” in Hebrew (Gen 37:19; 42:21; Exod 16:15; Num 14:4; etc.).

25:15. *According to.* See BDB 90.III.8; cf. 5:15.

from. See BDB 86.4.a.

25:16. *the more years there are remaining, the higher its price, and the fewer years there are remaining, the lower its price.* Heb. “In proportion to the greatness of the years [remaining] you will raise its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years [remaining] you will lower its price...” The term לְפִי introduces a phrase indicating proportions (BDB 805.6.c). The point being made is that the price will change in direct proportion to the number of years remaining until the Jubilee. This is perhaps clearest in English with a less wooden translation, as above (cf. NET, NJPS).

25:18. *So.* See Sklar, *Leviticus*, 545 n. 76.

securely. Heb. “for trust, security.” When the preposition לְ is followed by a noun, the two together can have an adverbial sense, for example, לְאֵמֶת = “faithfully” (see BDB 516.5.i.[b] and 516.5.j).

25:19. *yield.* Or “give,” though with agricultural products the sense is “yield” (cf. Gen 4:12; BDB 679.1.t).

its fruit. In the broad sense of produce (cf. Deut 26:2, 10; 28:11).

to the full. Heb. “for satiation, fullness” (see Deut 23:25 [24]; Prov 13:25). See at 25:18 (“securely”) for ה followed by a noun to have an adverbial sense.

on [the land]. Heb. “on it,” that is, the land.

25:20–22. Hartley understands these verses to be proof that years 49 and 50 somehow overlap as one and the same. He argues: “If there were two consecutive fallow years, one would expect the question to be either what shall we eat in the eighth year or what shall we eat during the two years of fallow” (*Leviticus*, 435). It would be more accurate to say one *might* expect these questions. As I argue, however, it is equally possible for the Lord to name the most immediate concern (a Sabbath year would be the first year of concern the Israelites would face), and use this as a way to emphasize that he will provide in a far greater time of need (a Sabbath year followed by a Jubilee year) (Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:20–22). Going from the lesser concern to the greater is actually a powerful way to underscore that he will provide in all circumstances.

25:20. *Now if.* Or “now when,” although these verses are structured as a case law (ו followed by imperfect followed by *wēqātal* in the apodosis, 25:21), in which case the focus is not as much on the fact that this will happen (as the English word “when” could convey), but on what to do if it happens.

25:21. *then [know this:] I will ordain.* Or simply “then I will ordain,” although the idea is not, “If you ask the question of 25:20, then (and only then) will I ordain my blessing in the sixth year,” but, “If you ask the question of 25:20, then know what the answer is: I will ordain my blessing in the sixth year.”

in such a way. Or simply “so that”; either translation understands the following phrase to be a result of the preceding one, as context suggests (see Joüon §119e for this use of the *wēqātal*).

that [the land] will yield. Heb. “she/it will yield,” a rare 3fs form (GKC §75m; Joüon §79d), the subject most likely being “the land” (the term “blessing” is also feminine, though the context suggests “the land” is the most likely referent; cf. also Gen 41:47). For עָשָׂה with the sense “yield,” cf. Gen 41:47 (see further BDB 794.II.2).

produce. Heb. “the produce,” although the article is left untranslated in English; it may be present here because a definite amount of produce is in mind, namely, that of the three years the verse goes on to mention.

[enough] for. Or simply “for,” although the context makes clear that the sixth year produces enough for the following three years, as evidenced by the mention of “the old” produce in the next verse.

three years. Heb. “for the three of the years,” although the context makes clear that “for three years” is the sense (cf. a similar construction in Exod 13:7; 25:26).

25:22. *You will sow in.* Heb. does not have “in” but it is supplied because “the eighth year” is an accusative of temporal determination (Joüon §126i).

from the stored produce. Heb. “from the produce old things,” the adjective “old” (יָשָׁן) being used substantively as a noun of category, namely, “old things from the produce, whatever they may be” (cf. Joüon §135c for this use of a substantive). The Masoretic accents put the major break here, whereas I put it after the following phrase since there appears to be a chiasm in 25:22b (see “Translation and Exegetical Outline” in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 675); the endpoint is the same either way.

25:23. *the land is mine.* For הָיָה indicating possession see BDB 513.5.b.

under my authority. Heb. “with me.” This form of “with me” (עִמָּדִי) is interchangeable with the more common עִמָּי, with no discernible difference in meaning (BDB 767). For translating with “under my authority” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:6b.

25:24. *you must grant.* Or “permit”; the verb נָתַן can be used to indicate the granting of a request (1 Sam 1:17; Prov 10:24) or the permitting of an act (Gen 20:6; see BDB 678e, g).

25:25. *and consequently sells.* Context suggests logical consecution here: he is doing this because of poverty (hence “consequently sells”; see Joüon §119e for this use of the *wěqātal*).

part of. A partitive use of the מִן (BDB 580.3b).

and redeem what their relative has sold. Heb. “and redeem the sold thing of his relative,” a subjective genitive (cf. Joüon §129d.A2). For the use of מִמֶּכַּר elsewhere to refer to a sale or the act of selling something, see 25:27, 29, 50.

relative. In this case, אָח has the sense of relative (see BDB 26.2), since a kinsman–redeemer included relatives besides a brother (25:49).

25:26. *redemption.* Or perhaps “redemption price;” the endpoint is the same.

25:27. *refund.* The verb הֵשִׁיב is often used in contexts where property is being returned to its rightful owner (Gen 14:16; Exod 23:4; Lev 5:23 [6:4]; Deut 24:13).

the balance. The participle of עָדָה is used elsewhere to describe an amount left over (Exod 16:23; 26:12, 13), which in this context would refer to a “balance.”

25:28. *then that which they sold.* Heb. “his sold item,” that is, that which the person sold.

will remain. For הָיָה with the sense “remain,” see Exod 24:18; Lev 22:27 (BDB 226.III.2).

in the possession of. Heb. “in the hand of;” see BDB 390.5.c(2).

the person who bought it. Heb. “in the hand of the one buying it,” though English requires a past tense here.

25:29. *must remain.* See at 25:28 (“will remain”).

the completion of a year from its sale. Heb. “the completion of the year of its sale,” that is, the completion of one year from the date it was sold.

a full year. Heb. “days,” which appears to be used elsewhere to refer to a full year of time (1 Sam 1:21; 27:7; cf. BDB 399.6c). Verse 29a has already made the point expressed in 25:29b; the repetition in 25:29b serves to underscore that the seller does indeed have a full year to redeem his property.

25:30. *But if it is not redeemed within a full year.* Heb. “until the completion with reference to it [of] a full year.” See similar expressions in Jer 25:12; 29:10; cf. BDB 570.1.b. For לְ with the sense of “with reference to” see BDB 512.5.

then the house which is in the walled city. The *ketiv* reads: “in the city which no (אֶשֶׁר לֹא) wall”; the *qere* and SP read: “in the city which is to it (אֶשֶׁר-לוֹ) a wall.” Context demands the latter of these. (For similar situations involving לֹא and לוֹ, see Exod 21:8; Lev 11:21; Ps 100:3.) It is true that “city” is usually feminine, which would require אֶשֶׁר-לָהּ, but there are instances where it is treated as a masculine (Josh 24:13; 2 Sam 17:13; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2199).

will pass. For this use of קוֹם in business transactions, see Gen 23:17, 20; Lev 27:19; BDB 878.7.b.

25:31. *will be considered part of.* The preposition עַל can have the sense “with/together with” (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 2:2c); in this context, the sense is “will be considered *part of* the field” (cf. 2 Sam 4:2).

for it will remain. See at 25:28 (“will remain”).

25:33. *And if.* Though rare, אִם can begin a case law, in which case it has the sense “if” (see at 4:22 above). Alternatively, it could be translated “who/whoever” (“Whoever of the Levites redeems,” Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2202); the endpoint is the same.

someone. I take the 3ms verb to express an impersonal subject, as is often the case (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 92). This also fits with the following phrase (“someone *from the Levites*”; for similar constructions, see Lev 11:39; Deut 16:4).

the house sold. Heb. “a sold thing of a house,” that is, a sold thing which is a house.

are their holding. Heb. “it is their holding,” where “they are their holding” might be expected. Joüon §149c lists the singular pronoun (“it”) as an anomaly and suggests it occurs because of the singular predicate (“holding”).

25:34. *And as for the fields of pastureland of their city.* Heb. “And the field of the pasture (מִגְרָשׁ) of their city,” the word מִגְרָשׁ being used frequently in Numbers and Joshua to refer to the land surrounding a levitical city that was for their cattle (Num 35:3; Josh 14:4; 21:2), that is, “pasture/pastureland.”

25:35. *let them make a living.* In terms of form, the verb חִיָּה is often treated as a geminate (double ‘ayin) verb, thus leading to a 3ms *wəḡqātal* of חִיָּה instead of חִיָּה (cf. Joüon §82b; see also Gen 3:22; Exod 33:20; Lev 18:5; Num 21:8; etc.).

25:36. *interest or profit.* (The following note expands that found in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:36.) The word נִשְׁנָה (“interest”) refers to interest gained on money loaned (Exod 22:24 [25]) or, in Deuteronomy, to interest from the loan of anything (Deut 23:20 [19]). A bit less clear is the word תְּרִבִּית (“profit”). It only occurs in conjunction with נִשְׁנָה (Prov 28:8; Ezek 18:8, 13, 17; 22:12), suggesting the two are closely related. It could be a synonym, or a general term for types of interest that are related to the loan of items other than money, or a specific type of interest on money that differs from נִשְׁנָה—interest. At this point in our knowledge, it is perhaps best to think of these two terms as referring together to any kind of interest one might charge.

may make a living. This is pointed as though it is the word “life” (חִי) in construct, which makes little sense in context, unless this phrase begins the next verse: “And as for the maintenance of life of your countryman under your authority, your money you must not...” (This would require חִי to be a mispointed [and defectively spelled or scribally inaccurate] construct of חִיִּים, which can mean “maintenance of life” [BDB 313.3].) Alternatively, it may be repointed to be the

same as 25:35 (so LXX and most modern versions). The overall endpoint of either translation is the same: the text emphasizes that charging interest is antithetical to the poor person being able to sustain a living.

25:37. *with interest.* A common phrase in Hebrew to refer to lending money to someone and charging them interest on the loan (Ps 15:5; Ezek 18:8, 13).

for gain. The term מְרִבִּית is used only five times, usually referring to a “multitude” or to “greatness” (1 Sam 2:33; 1 Chr 12:30; 2 Chr 9:6; 30:18). This is the only time it is used in a context of giving a loan. In form, it is related to תְּרִבִּית (“profit,” 25:36), and probably has the same sense. Perhaps it is used here because this was the specific way to describe the interest charged to food loans.

25:39. *sells themselves.* Reflexive use of the *Niphal* (Joüon §51c); also in 25:47, 48, 50. In most other instances of this verb, the *Niphal* is passive (Exod 22:2 [3]; Lev 25:3, 34; etc.), though in this context it is not clear who would do the selling, nor is such selling permitted (25:42).

you must not make them serve as a permanent servant. Heb. “you must not make him serve as a servant (לֹא-תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ) a servant’s service (עֲבֹדַת עֶבֶד).” Elsewhere, עָבַד used together with a פָּ with a pronominal suffix occurs with the sense “to make a person a servant/serve as a servant” (Lev 25:46; Jer 30:8; 34:9, 10; Ezek 34:27; BDB 713.2, 3). As for the word עֲבָדָה, it is used to refer to work or service done for another (Gen 29:27; Exod 5:11), and the word עֶבֶד of course to a “servant,” and in this context in particular, a permanent one (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:39). Taken all together, this phrase prohibits Israelites from forcing other Israelites to serve as this type of servant.

25:41. *children.* Or “sons,” but since this case appears to be a final act of desperation, in which the whole family is sold, it is natural to read this more broadly as “children” (cf. Exod 21:5; see BDB 121.2). The wife would naturally be assumed as part of the husband-wife unit and need not be explicitly mentioned; the children

are specified because they could be sold as servants by themselves (cf. Exod 21:7) and so the verse makes clear that they, too, return with the parents.

forefathers. Or “fathers,” though the term אָבִים, especially in the plural, is used to refer to one’s ancestors, forefathers (BDB 3.4).

25:42. *They must not be sold as permanent servants are sold.* Heb. “sold the selling of a servant,” a cognate accusative (“sold the selling”) with a genitive of qualification (“of a servant”); cf. Joüon §125r.

25:43. *you must not rule over them.* The verb הִרְבִּי is followed by אֶת to indicate the object that is ruled over (cf. Gen 1:26, 28).

25:44. *With regard to.* By starting with *wāw* plus a non-verbal element, the passage switches attention to another subject.

your male and female permanent servants. Heb. “your male servant and your female servant”; in context, the nouns appear to function as collectives. For the sense “permanent servants,” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 25:39.

that you might have. Heb. “which they will be to you,” the imperfect being used to connote the modal nuance (in this case, “might,” cf. *IBHS* §31.4e). For “have” see 25:23 (“the land is mine”).

from. See BDB 86.4.a.

25:45. *who have been fathered.* Heb. “whom they have fathered,” the subject being either the “resident aliens” or a generic third person subject (which is often translated passively, Joüon §155b [esp. n. 4]). In either case, the passive translation is clearest here.

You may have them. Heb. “and they will be to you”; see 25:23 (“the land is mine”).

25:46. *to your children.* Or “sons,” who would usually be the ones to inherit, though in some cases it would be the daughter (Num 25:1–8).

as a perpetual holding. There is some question whether to take “perpetual” with this phrase (so above) or the following (NIV, NASB). There are points in favor

of each, though those in favor of the above approach seem stronger: a) the use of “perpetually” elsewhere at the end of phrases, and in particular, those dealing with succeeding generations (as is the case here) (Gen 9:12; 13:15; Exod 12:24; 32:13; Lev 10:15; Num 18:8, 11); and b) the use of the phrase “holding of perpetuity” (אֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם), with which this is semantically equivalent (Gen 17:8; 48:4; Lev 25:34). In either case, the endpoint is the same: these servants serve permanently.

But over your fellow countrymen the Israelites, you must not rule over one another ruthlessly. Heb. “a man over his brother, you must not rule over him ruthlessly.” The phrase “a man over his brother” is the Hebrew way of expressing “over one another”; see at 25:14 (“one another”).

25:47. descendants. There is some question on the meaning of this term. The related Hebrew verb (עָקַר) means to “uproot” (Eccl 3:2; Zeph 2:4), suggesting the noun has something to do with “roots,” and this is strengthened by the use of a similar Aramaic noun (עֲקָר) with exactly this meaning (Dan 4:12, 20, 23 [15, 23, 26]). Since the “root” grows down out of a plant (descends), I translate here with “descendants,” in which case the idea would again be similar to that of 25:45: even if the person is born in the land, if they are born of resident aliens, they themselves are resident aliens (a further tie with 25:45 is the use of מְשֻׁפָּחָה). It is also true, however, that roots often grow out and away from the stump, so that the sense of the term could be “member, offshoot” (so *DCH* 544), that is, a current relative, though not necessarily a descendant. In either case, it is a relative of the resident alien.

25:50. price. Or “money,” though used by extension to refer to the amount of money paid for something (“price”, cf. Gen 23:9; Lev 27:15).

according to. See at 25:15.

would have been. See *IBHS* §31.6.2.c, who cites Genesis 2:19 for a similar translation of an imperfect: “And he brought (them) to Adam to see what he *would name* them.”

25:51. *If there are still many years remaining.* Heb. “If still many among the years,” that is, if there are still many years remaining until the Year of Jubilee (cf. “until the Year of Jubilee” in 25:52).

according to the number of them. See at 25:16 above. The pronoun is feminine since it refers to the years.

they must refund. See at 25:27 above.

from the price paid for themselves. Heb. “from the price of his purchase,” that is, the price paid to purchase him, for which he sold himself (25:47; see Joüon §129e for the objective genitive).

25:52. *And if few years remain.* נִשְׁאָר is typically followed by the preposition אֶל on the noun from which the remainder comes (5:9; 26:36, 39; etc.).

with regard to themselves. Or “with regard to it” (the price?). The phrase “calculate for him/it” occurs in 27:18 and 27:23, where the preposition is perhaps best translated personally (“him”).

25:53. *before your eyes.* Heb. “to your eyes,” an expression used elsewhere to indicate “in plain sight of” (Gen 23:11, 18; Num 25:6).

25:54. “The jubilee implied that God himself was the ultimate Kinsman—Redeemer who, when no human family member intervened, acted to release his people from debt—slavery and give them back their inherited lands. At the time of the exodus from Egypt, God spoke of Israel as his ‘son’ (Exod 4:22–23). The Israelites were his special possession (Exod 6:7), as Pharaoh was constantly reminded by Moses in those famous words: ‘Let my people go!’ (Exod 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3). He was their next of kin and it was this Lord, who had redeemed them from Egyptian slavery by his mighty power (Exod 6:6; 15:13), who provided for the redemption of debtors and their lands” (Philip H. Eveson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Leviticus Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series [Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2007], 364).

by the above means. Heb. “by these,” that is, these means mentioned above (his relatives or himself, the subjects of the verb לָאֵל). For לָאֵל followed by a בְּ of instrument, see also Exod 6:6; Ps 77:16 (15); Isa 52:3.

26:1. figured stone. “The rare word ‘figured’ (מְשֻׁכָּת) occurs in contexts of illicit worship elsewhere (Num 33:52; Ezek 8:12), with Ezekiel 8:10 suggesting it referred in some way to carvings of various creatures” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 723). In a non-cultic context, Proverbs 25:11 also suggests it has something to do with that which is fashioned or shaped in some way. Milgrom (*Leviticus* 23–27, 2281–82) translates this as “a figured pavement,” arguing in part that the preposition עַל means “upon” when it follows the verb חוּה. While this is often true, it is not always the case (see Isa 60:14a), and the use of “figured” in Ezekiel 8:10 to refer to images on the walls (not the ground) points us in a different direction.

26:4. then I will give you rains. Heb. “then I will give your rains”; the possessive pronoun (“your”) is well understood here with dative force (Joüon §129h; cf. Gen 39:21; Ps 20:3 [2]).

so. See Joüon §119e for the consequential use of the *wēqātal*; this fits the context well (cf. Deut 11:14, 17; Ezek 34:26–27).

will yield. Or “give”; for “yield” see BDB 679.1.t.

trees. Taking עֵץ as a collective (cf. Gen 1:11; 3:2; etc.). These would include olive, fig, date, palm, pomegranate, and apple trees (Deut 6:11; 8:8; 2 Sam 6:19; Joel 1:12).

26:5. and threshing will last for you until grape harvest. Heb. “threshing will reach for you grape harvest,” that is, there will be such a great harvest, that you will be threshing it all the way until the grape harvest. It may also be noted that since the noun is not definite, the תָּא is unexpected. Joüon §125h explains: “Sometimes תָּא is used with an **indeterminate noun** for the sake of clarity, to indicate the object clearly: Lev 26.5; Nu 21.9; Ex 21.28 (contr. 29); Is 10.2; 41.7; 50.4; 64.4” (bold in original).

your food. Or “your bread,” though לֶחֶם is often used for “food” in general (BDB 537.2), and this fits the immediate context (threshing floor and grape harvest).

to the full. Heb. “to satisfaction,” that is, to the full (cf. Deut 23:25 [24]; Prov 13:25). For the adverbial sense, see above at 25:18 (“securely”).

securely. Heb. “for trust, security”; see above at 25:18 (“securely”).

26:6. *there will be no one to make you tremble with fear.* Heb. “there will not be one who causes to tremble with fear,” that is, one who causes the Israelites to tremble with fear.

26:8. *Five of.* A partitive use of the חֲמִשָּׁה (BDB 580.3.a).

will fall before you by the sword. Heb. “will fall before you with respect to the sword;” see BDB 512.5 for this use of לִפְנֵי .

26:9. *I will look on you with favor.* “Heb. ‘I will turn to you,’ that is, turn my face to you with attentive care, making you the object of my concern (2 Kgs 13:23; Pss 25:16; 69:17 [16]; 86:16)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 726 n. 22). The word “face” is built on the same root as the word “turn”; cf. the blessing of Numbers 6:25–26, which communicates the idea of our phrase here more fully: “The LORD make his face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance on you, and give you peace.”

uphold my covenant with you. “For the use of the phrase ‘uphold the covenant’ in a similar way, see Deut 8:18; negatively, see Jer 34:18” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 726 n. 23). In other contexts, the sense appears to be “establish a covenant” (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17; the use of the perfect in 9:17 undermines Milgrom’s suggestion that the phrase in these passages refers to “maintaining a covenant” [*Leviticus* 23–27, 2344–45]).

26:10. *produce that has been stored.* Heb. “old things that are becoming old,” with “old things” referring to the old produce that has been stored (see above at 25:22). The word “old” in English, however, conveys the idea of “stale,” which

is not the sense here. The idea is that their crops have been so blessed in the past that there is a stockpile of food to eat (cf. 25:22).

stored produce you will clear out to make room for new produce. Heb. “from before new produce you will bring out old produce,” the sense being that the old produce will have to be cleared out in order to make room for the new.

for new produce. Heb. “the new things,” but an obvious contrast to “old things,” that is, “old produce.”

26:13. *so that you would no longer be their slaves.* Heb. “from being to them slaves.” לֹא plus the infinitive can be used to express a negative result clause (cf. Gen 27:1a; see Joüon §169h; BDB 583.7.b[a]); לְהִיָּחֵל often denotes possession (BDB 513.5.b). Here the term “slave” (as opposed to “servant”) is appropriate, in light of the oppressive nature of servitude under the Egyptians (Exod 1:11, 13, 16, 22; 2:23).

and I broke the bars of your yoke. “The ancient ‘yoke’ was a pole of wood, resting horizontally on the neck of an animal, or on the necks of a pair of animals; and the...‘bars’ consisted of pieces of wood passing perpendicularly through the yoke, and fixed on each side of the neck by ‘thongs’ (...Jer 2:20; 27:2)” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2303, quoting Samuel R. Driver and Henry A. White, *The Book of Leviticus in Hebrew* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1894–98]). Ropes would then be fitted to the yoke and attached to the object that had to be pulled (such as a cart or a plow). This object could be quite heavy, making this a suiting metaphor for the oppressive labor the Israelites’ endured as Egyptian slaves (cf. Exod 1:13–14).

with your head held high. The ending of this word occurs elsewhere on abstract nouns (GKC §86k). Its root is related to height as in stature (cf. קוֹמָה , 1 Sam 16:7; Song 7:8), and may be understood here as functioning as an adverbial accusative of state (thus “held high”; cf. Joüon §126d and cf. at 26:21).

26:14. *But if you will not obey me.* Or “listen to me,” but שָׁמַע is commonly used with the sense of “give heed” (BDB 1034.1.j).

26:15. *and if my statutes you reject.* The verb “to reject” (סָרַף) occurs with the preposition אֶל to indicate that which is being rejected (Num 14:31; Judg 9:38). The word “statutes” is fronted, seemingly for emphasis; so also “regulations” in the following phrase.

statutes...regulations. These terms often occur together as a way of describing the Lord’s commands as a whole (18:4, 26; 19:37; 20:22; 25:18). This is a full-scale rejection of the Lord and his ways that is being described.

so that you do not do. Heb. “to the not doing all my commandments.” The לִּי in this context indicates the consequence of the preceding actions (as it commonly does with the infinitive construct, Joüon §124l).

and so. The לִּי carries on the sense of consequence here: to reject the Lord’s commandments in such a complete way is to break the covenant they represent.

26:16. *dismaying terror.* The word occurs only three other times (Ps 78:33; Isa 65:23; Jer 15:8), and each time the sense is clearly negative. The verb of the same root is parallel to descriptions of fear or terror (Exod 15:15; Judg 20:41; 1 Sam 28:21; 2 Chr 32:18; Job 21:6; 22:10; etc.); these can be so strong the person is unable to act (Gen 45:3; Job 23:16; Isa 13:8; 21:3).

wasting disease and fever. Heb. “the wasting disease and the fever,” the article perhaps occurring because the noun is treated as a class or species (Joüon §137i). The words occurs only here and Deuteronomy 28:22, where they are followed by several other terms for physical affliction. On the basis of Arabic, BDB 1006 suggests “wasting disease, consumption” for שִׁחָפָה. (In English, “consumption” refers to tuberculosis in particular, though it is impossible to know whether the Hebrew term is that specific here.) As for קִדְחָה, its root is used elsewhere to refer to kindling a fire (Deut 32:22; Isa 50:11), suggesting here that it could refer to “fever.”

make the soul waste away. There is great debate on how this phrase should be translated: “cause the soul to pine away” (NASB); “make the heart ache” (ESV);

“sap your strength” (NIV). The debate is due to two facts. First, this is the only occurrence of the verb **דָּוַב** (unless 1 Samuel 2:33 is emended), and there are no Hebrew words built directly on the root to shed further light on it (and little to no help from cognate languages). Second, the word **נִפְּשׁ** has a wide variety of meanings. The translation above assumes there is some parallel between this verb and the preceding one, maintains a wooden translation of “soul” to help bring out the possible “punishment fit the crime” aspect of this penalty (see discussion in Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 26:16), and tries to translate in a way that could be read as either a physical or emotional response.

in vain. Heb. “for vanity”; see at 25:18 (“securely”).

26:17. *against you.* For “against” see BDB 89.II.4.

so. Or “and,” though a consequential sense fits the context well (see Joüon §119e).

you will be struck down. A common phrase to indicate defeat in battle (Num 14:42; Deut 1:42; 28:7, 25; Judg 20:32); “routed” is another possible translation (cf. Deut 28:7).

those who hate you. Another way to refer to “enemies;” cf. Num 10:35; Deut 30:7.

will rule over you. Israel will be soundly defeated in battle.

26:18. *obey me.* See at 26:14 above.

I will continue to discipline you. Or: “discipline you again.” The verb **יָסַף** is frequently followed by an infinitive (Gen 8:12; 38:26; Num 32:15; Deut 20:8; etc.). In these instances, it is used to convey that the action of the infinitive is “continued” or “done again.”

seven times over. Heb. “seven,” occurring in many other places with the word “times” (**פַּעַמִּים**, Lev 4:6; 8:11; 14:7), and in some instances (as here) without the word “times” even though “seven times” is clearly the sense (Ps 119:164; Prov 24:16).

26:19. *your strong pride.* Heb. “pride of your strength,” that is, your strong pride; cf. Joüon §129.f.C.1 for “the genitive of the quality expressed by an abstract noun.” Note that the noun “strength” often has this adjectival sense (Judg 9:51; 2 Chr 30:21; Pss 61:4 [3]; 62:8 [7]; 68:34 [33]; etc.). Alternatively, the phrase could be translated “your pride in your strength”; cf. Ezek 7:24, which uses a very similar phrase to refer to the “pride of the strong ones (גִּאיוֹן עֲזִים).” In either case, Israel has become very proud.

and will make your sky like iron. Heb. “I will give/put your skies like the iron,” the definite article occurring on “iron” since it functions like a noun of class or species and is “particularly frequent in comparisons” (Joüon §137i). The phrase “to give x like y” is often used with the sense “to make x like y” (1 Kgs 16:3; 2 Chr 1:15; Ezek 28:6; BDB 681.3.c).

like bronze. Heb. “like the bronze.” The form of the word here is rare (the more common form is נְחֹשֶׁת); it occurs only in poetry (e.g., 2 Sam 22:35; Job 20:24; etc.), demonstrating the poetic nature of this chapter. See previous note for the definite article.

26:20. *will be used up.* The verb תִּמְצָא often refers to something being consumed, spent, or coming to an end (Gen 47:15; Jer 37:21; Ezek 47:12; cf. BDB 1070.4 and 1070.5).

for. Or “and,” though this is best seen as an explanatory *wəqātal* (cf. Joüon §118j).

26:21. *with hostility.* The word translated here as “hostility” (קִרְיָ) occurs only in this passage; its meaning is thus debated. The context of these verses makes clear that it refers to conduct marked by opposition, whether Israel to the Lord (vv. 21, 23, 27, 40), or the Lord to Israel (vv. 24, 28, 41). The root it comes from is not clear. BDB 899 puts it under קָרָה, which is as good a guess as any, and which can refer to “encountering” others, often in a hostile sense (Gen 42:29; 44:29; Deut

25:18; 1 Sam 28:10). I thus take the noun here as an adverbial accusative of state (hence “with hostility”; cf. Joüon §126c.d).

obey me. See at 26:14 above.

then I will add. When followed by the preposition **עַל**, the sense of the verb **יָסַף** is usually “to add” (Lev 22:14; 27:13, 15, 19, 27).

plagues. Used several times in the curses of Deuteronomy 28–29 in conjunction with various types of physical maladies (Deut 28:59, 61; 29:22 [21]). In that context it appears to be a collective, and this fits the context here as well.

seven times over. See at 26:18 above.

26:22. *and they will bereave you.* Heb. “she will bereave you of children,” the 3fs referring back to the “beast,” translated as a plural and therefore requiring a plural pronoun here.

so that. Or “and,” though a consequential sense fits the context well (cf. Joüon §119e).

26:24. *will conduct myself...with hostility.* There is no evidence the addition of the **כִּי** onto **קִרְיָ** adds anything to the phrase (cf. v. 21); its presence or absence may be just a matter of normal linguistic variety.

I myself. Here **אֲנִי** (24b) instead of **אֲנִי** (24a). The terms are basically synonymous, the latter being preferred in poetry (BDB 64).

26:25. *a sword executing vengeance for the covenant.* Heb. “a sword avenging vengeance of a covenant,” that is, “vengeance for the covenant” (an objective genitive, Joüon §129.e.B). “Covenant” (**בְּרִית**) occurs elsewhere without the article in Hebrew where it would be expected in English (Gen 9:13; 17:11) and is usually added (cf. Joüon §137t.5, which may apply here). The verb and noun in this phrase are built on the same Hebrew root; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40, for translating with different English roots.

and when. The context makes clear there is a conditional relationship between these clauses (cf. Joüon §167.b), leading to the first *wāw* being translated with “when.”

a pestilence. The exact nature of this pestilence is unclear, though it was deadly and greatly feared (Exod 5:3; 9:15; Num 14:12; Deut 28:21; 2 Sam 24:13–15).

delivered into the hand. נָתַן בְּיָד occurs frequently to describe one party being delivered into the power of another (Exod 23:31; Deut 1:27; 2:24; 7:24; etc.).

26:26. *When I break your supply of bread.* “Hebrew ‘when I break with regard to you staff of bread.’ The phrase ‘staff of bread’ refers to the supply of bread, which, when ‘broken’ (i.e., destroyed), results in famine (Ps 105:16; Ezek 4:16; 5:16; 14:13)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 731 n. 55). The prepositional phrase (“with regard to you”) occurs two other times with this phrase to indicate the person whose bread supply is destroyed (Ezek 5:16; 14:13), hence “your supply of bread.”

in rationed amounts. Heb. “by the weight,” that is, “by weight”; for the omission of the definite article see at 19:35 (“in measurement of length”).

26:28. *with furious hostility.* Heb. “with fury of hostility,” that is, furious hostility (cf. Joüon §129f.C.1).

26:30. *incense altars.* The term occurs only seven other times in the Bible, all in contexts where it is parallel to other idolatrous objects (2 Chr 14:4 [5]; 34:4, 7; Isa 17:8; 27:9; Ezek 6:4, 6). Averbek suggests “incense altar” (so also Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2318) or “sanctuary (of a foreign deity)” as the most likely renderings (Richard E. Averbek, “מִזְבֵּחַ,” *NIDOTTE* 2:903).

My soul will loathe you. It is difficult to say if this continues the previous thought or starts the next one or stands on its own. This ambiguity is captured by making the phrase its own sentence.

26:31. *I will make your cities a ruin.* Heb. “give/place your cities a ruin,” that is, turn them into one by means of enemy forces (cf. Jer 25:18; Ezek 25:13).

to be desolate. The verb can refer to “ravaging/destroying” (1 Sam 5:6; Hos 2:14 [12]) or to “making desolate,” either of which fits the context here, though the sense of desolation is favored by the use of the same root elsewhere in the chapter (26:22, 32, 34–35, 43).

the pleasing aroma of your offerings. Heb. “your aroma of your pleasing.” Cf. Ezek 20:28 for another instance of a pronominal suffix on “pleasing.”

26:32. *I myself.* There is an extra pronoun; the Lord is again underscoring his involvement in this act of justice.

so that. A consequential use of the *wəḡātal* (Joüon §119e) fits the context well.

26:33. *And as for you.* An extra pronoun, thus drawing a contrast with the “I myself” of v. 32 (note the extra pronoun at the beginning of that verse as well).

your land will be desolate. Heb. “your land will be a desolation.” The noun “desolation” is built on the same root that refers to making holy places and the land desolate in vv. 31–32.

and your cities. The word “city” is typically feminine, but the verb accompanying it here (יָרַח) is masculine, either because “city” is sometimes treated as such (see at 25:30 above [“then the house which is in the walled city”]), or because the third feminine plural imperfect is often replaced by a masculine form (Joüon §150c).

26:34. *all the days it is desolate.* Heb. “all the days of being caused to be desolate,” which *IBHS* lists as a rare *Hophal* infinitive construct (§28.1.b n. 2; see also v. 43).

while. The conjunction וְ (“and, while”) can be used in circumstantial clauses to introduce “a statement of the *concomitant conditions* under which the action denoted by the principle verb takes place” (BDB 253.1.k).

then the land will rest. When followed by the cognate “Sabbath,” the sense is “to keep the Sabbath” (see at 23:32 above), but without the cognate—or when

occurring with the preposition אָ (see v. 35)—it can simply mean “cease from work, rest” (Gen 2:2, 3; Exod 16:30; 23:12).

and will make up for its Sabbath years. See GKC §75m for this form of a 3fs *lamed-hê* verb.

26:36. *full of fear.* Heb. “I will bring fear/weakness in their heart.” The term “fear/weakness” (פָּחַד) occurs only here but is built on the root פָּחַד, which as a verb refers elsewhere to “fearing,” especially in conjunction with the heart (Deut 20:3; Isa 7:4; Jer 51:46).

The sound of a wind-blown leaf will cause them to flee as though being pursued. Heb. “a sound of a leaf being driven will pursue them,” which is to say, it will only take the slightest sound to cause them to flee as though being pursued!

wind-blown. Or “driven,” though the wind is the assumed subject (cf. Ps 1:4).

and they will flee as one flees from a sword. Heb. “and they will flee a fleeing of a sword,” that is, a fleeing that is caused by a sword.

and fall. This verb (נָפַל) can describe those who fall down or fall into something (Exod 21:33; Deut 22:4), but can also describe those who “fall fatally,” that is, are slain (by the sword) (26:7, 8). The first makes most sense in the context (they are fleeing so rapidly they are tripping and falling in their haste), but the second meaning stands ominously in the background.

even though no one. אֲף usually occurs in the construct state before the word it negates but can also occur in the absolute state after the word it negates (as here; see also Gen 2:5; Isa 37:3; GKC §152k).

26:37. *one another.* Heb. “a man over his brother”; the words “man” and “brother” occur together as the typical way to say “one another” (Gen 37:19; 42:21; Exod 16:15; Num 14:4; etc.).

and you will not be able to stand up against your enemies. Heb. “and there will not be to you a standing up before your enemies.” This is the only time the

term “standing up” (תִּקְוֶמָה) occurs, but the verb of the same root (קוּם) occurs elsewhere in conjunction with “before” (לְפָנַי) with the sense “stand up against/before” someone you oppose (Num 16:2; Josh 7:12).

26:39. *on account of their sin.* Or “in their sin,” though the use of the same phrase in 26:39b requires “on account of” for the preposition. For this use of בְּ, see Deut 9:4; 24:16; BDB 90.III.5.

26:40. *But if.* A simple *wāw* can begin a protasis (Joüon §167b); since 26:41b appears to be a protasis, and is tightly connected to 26:40, I have chosen to treat 26:40 as a protasis as well.

their treachery that they committed against me. Heb. “in (בְּ) their treacherous act which they acted treacherously against me,” the בְּ introducing the way the Israelites sinned (cf. Ezek 20:27), and thus here left untranslated. For translating the verb with a different English root than the noun, see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40.

in what way. Heb. “that which”; cf. Lev 5:5b (and see BDB 83.8.a.β).

26:41. *I myself will have conducted myself.* “The imperfect can have a past future sense (Joüon §113b), which fits the context well (the exile will be a future event that is spoken of here as something that has already happened; see also Hartley, *Leviticus*, 453)” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 736 n. 87). Alternatively, the imperfect can have a past durative sense (Joüon §113f), the idea being, “In response to their conducting themselves with hostility against me, *I myself was conducting myself with hostility against them...*” In either case, it is clear that the Lord was responsible for bringing them into exile.

if then. “For וְ with the sense ‘if (perchance)’ see 1 Sam 20:10” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 736 n. 88). With this understanding, the clause is introducing the next stage in the process: the confession of sin (v. 40) is accompanied by humility of life and deed to show that the repentance is real.

26:42. *then I will remember my covenant with Jacob.* Heb. “my covenant, Jacob.” The construction here is unusual, though similar constructions are found in Numbers 25:12 and Jeremiah 33:20, and the sense in all three passages is that there is a covenant “with” someone (or something). (Joüon §129a n. 3 simply calls it “irregular” and treats it as a genitive: “my covenant of Jacob” = “my covenant with Jacob.”)

26:43. *it will have been abandoned.* The past future (see Joüon §113b) makes most sense in the context here.

by. The preposition **בְּ** can be used to indicate the person from whom an action comes (in which case English requires “by”); see Ps 37:23; Eccl 12:11; Joüon §132d.

so that. The verb is a jussive; this can be used after an imperfect to indicate purpose (Joüon §116e).

it can make up for. For translation see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 734 n. 77.

when it is made desolate without them. Heb. “in being caused to be desolate from them.” See above at 26:34 (“all the days it is desolate”). For the sense “without,” cf. Ezek 32:15.

while they make up for their sin. Heb. “and as for them, they will make up for their sin,” which in context happens at the same time the land is desolate (hence “while”).

26:44. *Yet also even in this.* Heb. “also even this.” This is the only place where these two particles for “also, even” occur next to each other. It suggests an emphasis: even in this situation! The “this” appears to refer to all the disciplinary punishment they have received up to this point (cf. 26:18, 27).

by. See Joüon §124o for this use of **לְ** with an infinitive.

completely destroying them. In the *Piel*, the verb **בָּלַה** often refers to “finishing” an action (Exod 40:33; Lev 16:20; Num 16:31), and in contexts like

this, to “finishing off” a people by destroying them completely (see Exod 32:10, 12; 33:3; Num 16:21–22; 25:11; etc.).

26:45. *the covenant with [their] ancestors.* Heb. “[the] covenant of [the] ancestors,” that is, the one made with the ancestors whom the Lord “brought out of Egypt” in his covenant faithfulness to them. (Joüon §137i notes that this word, for unknown reasons, never takes the definite article, though it should be understood as definite.) For אֲבוֹתָם with the sense “ancestors,” see Deut 19:14; Ps 79:8.

27:2–7. In desperation, a person may have vowed to dedicate themselves or another person to serve at the tabernacle. “In his compassion, the LORD allows the person to pay a redemption price to the tabernacle so they could honor their vows and yet be spared the consequences of rash words” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 752). Why did Hannah not take advantage of this law with her son Samuel (see 1 Sam 1:11, 19–28)? As shown by 27:28, it was possible to vow a person to tabernacle service in such a way that the vow was irrevocable. This might explain why the Samuel passage emphasizes that Hannah vows to give Samuel to the tabernacle “all the days of his life” (1 Sam 1:11, 28): it was a way of saying that it was an irrevocable giving to the Lord. Her vow was thus one of the costliest a mother could give, but it seemed right to her, not only to emphasize the depth of her need but also to ensure that appropriate praise and thanksgiving be given to the Lord. Indeed, while it should not surprise us if Hannah felt deep sadness when presenting Samuel to the tabernacle to serve there for the rest of his days (1:24–28), what is clear is that she was also filled with deep thankfulness to the Lord for hearing her prayers, as shown by the fact that she breaks out in a song of praise, giving public thanks to the Lord for being a God who answers the prayers of the weak and distraught (2:1–10). She thus models for us that costly gifts are the most appropriate to give to a God of such generous compassion and love (cf. Rom 12:1).

27:2. *people.* See BDB 659.4.c.(4).

27:3. *for a male.* Heb. “of the male,” that is, the standard price for a male (objective genitive, Joüon §129e). The definite article is used here because “male” is considered a class or species (Joüon §137i); English requires an indefinite article.

between twenty and sixty years of age. Heb. “from a son of twenty year unto a son of sixty year.” Hebrew describes someone’s age by calling them a “son of x years” (BDB 121.9.a; cf. 1 Sam 4:15a). The word “year” is singular, as is typical when it occurs “after [numbers] 11–19, tens and hundreds” (BDB 1040). The expression “from...unto” in Hebrew is best brought across “between...and” in this context.

fifty silver shekels. Heb. “fifty shekel of silver,” “shekel” used here as a collective (cf. Gen 23:15, 16; Lev 27:4). For “silver shekels,” see above at 5:15.

27:8. *according to.* Heb. “upon mouth,” that is, “according to, in accordance with” (Gen 43:7; Exod 34:27; “upon *the* mouth” might be expected but cf. Deut 17:6; 19:15).

27:9. *Now if [they vow any type of] domesticated animal that can be presented as an offering to the LORD.* Heb. “Now if a domesticated animal that they may present from it an offering to the LORD.” The context is that of making a vow (v. 2), so the words “they vow” are added. The words “from it” refer back to the word “animal,” the sense not being “they vow a certain piece of meat *from it* to the LORD,” but “they vow *from among that type of animal* to the LORD” (cf. v. 11a). As for the 3mp verb (“they may present”), I take it to refer to an impersonal subject (as often in sacrificial texts) and brought across as a passive (cf. Sklar, *Leviticus*, 92).

domesticated animal. The term בְּהֵמָה can refer to land animals in general (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 11:2b–8) or to domesticated animals in particular (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 161 and n. 19). Context here favors the latter (cf. v. 11; see also vv. 26–28).

whatever they give. Heb. “all that he gives from it,” that is, from among that type of animal (see above, “Now if”). The 3mp verb has switched here to a 3ms, which is not significant insofar as either form can be used for the impersonal subject (Joüon §155b; again, a passive is possible here: “whatever may be given to the LORD”). The suffix on “from it” has switched from feminine in 27:9a to masculine here, which happens elsewhere as well (Joüon §149b; cf. 6:7–8 [14–15]).

to the LORD will be holy. Heb. “will be holiness”; the noun is used elsewhere adjectivally (Lev 21:6; 25:12; 27:10; etc.).

27:11. *And if [they vow] any [type] of impure domesticated animal that cannot be presented as an offering to the LORD.* See translation notes above on 27:9. The phrase “that cannot be presented...to the LORD” is admittedly redundant but is perhaps here to match the parallel phrase in 27:9 (Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2378).

27:13. *wants to redeem it.* For the imperfect with the sense of “want” see Joüon §113n.

27:16. *a portion of the fields of their holding.* Heb. “from the field of his holding”; the לְ has a partitive sense (“some of, a portion of,” see BDB 580.3.b.[a]); “field” is a collective, as is often the case (Gen 41:48; Lev 25:31; Num 16:14; Josh 21:12).

in proportion to. See BDB 805.6.c.

the amount of seed required to seed it. “Hebrew ‘its seed,’ that is, the seed required to seed it” (Sklar, *Leviticus*, 755 n. 35). It is true that the word “seed” can refer to that which the seed produces (v. 30), so that this verse could refer to calculating the land’s worth according to how much barley it produces (so Wenham, *Leviticus*, 340). But this seems unlikely here, for the simple reason that harvests could vary widely (cf. Matt 13:8), making such a calculation very difficult. The amount of seed required for a certain plot of land, however, was much more consistent and thus probably what is in view.

for every homer of barley seed, fifty shekels of silver. Heb. “seed of a homer of barley in exchange for (כֶּ) fifty shekels of silver” (see BDB 90.III.3 for this use of כֶּ).

27:19. *it will pass back to them.* In business transactions, the verb קָנָה can be used to refer to an item passing from the possession of one person into the possession of another (Gen 23:17, 20; Lev 27:19; BDB 878.7.b).

27:20. *or if.* There is some debate whether this should be “and if...and if” or “and if...or if.” Either is possible grammatically (for וְאִם as “and if,” see Num 5:19; for וְאִם as “or if,” see Josh 22:22). The former indicates a compound case: the person has not redeemed it and also has sold it. This seems redundant since it would be fairly clear that a man who has sold the field to another has not redeemed it. The latter indicates two cases and avoids this difficulty.

may no longer be redeemed. See Joüon §113l for the imperfect with the sense of “may.”

27:21. Milgrom (*Leviticus 23–27*, 2386) notes that the prohibition on land ownership for priests in Numbers 18:20 and 18:23 comes in the context of the initial dividing up of the land; it is not a prohibition against the sanctuary owning land that is later irrevocably given to the Lord. To this I would add that the holding would be for the priests in general, not individual priestly families, thus making it different than the holdings of non-priestly Israelites, which were distributed among various families within the tribes.

when the field is released in the Jubilee, it will be holy to the LORD. Heb. “and the field will be, when it goes out in the Jubilee, holiness to the LORD.” The word order has been changed in accord with normal English usage. For “holiness” being used adjectivally see above at 27:9 (“to the LORD will be holy”).

will belong to the priests. Heb. “to the priest it will be”; see BDB 513.5.b for הָיָה לְ to indicate ownership.

27:22. *And if a field they have bought, which is not a portion of the fields of their holding, they set aside as holy to the LORD.* The Hebrew word order appears to draw attention to the fact that this field is not family property.

a field they have bought. Heb. “the field of his purchase,” that is, the field he has purchased (see Joüon §129e for the objective genitive; cf. 25:51). It is more natural in English to use an indefinite article here (cf. GKC §126q, r; *IBHS* §13.5.1.e.14–18).

fields. Heb. “field”; see at 27:16 above (“a portion of the fields of their holding”).

27:23. *the amount.* The word occurs again only in Exodus 12:4 where the sense demanded is “number/amount/computation/proportion.” A related noun (מִנְיָן) is used in Numbers 31 to refer to a portion of goods that is levied from the spoils of war (31:28, 37–41).

27:26. *But.* וְכֵן is often used to introduce a contrast (Gen 9:4; Lev 21:23; Num 18:15).

which must be given as a firstborn. Heb. “which it will be firstborned.” In Deuteronomy 21:16, the *Piel* of this verb appears to mean “to make x a firstborn” or “to treat x as a firstborn” (a denominative use of the *Piel*; Joüon §52d). In this case, the *Pual* refers to an animal that must be treated as a firstborn in terms of being given to the Lord.

among. BDB 88.I.2.

domesticated animals. See at 27:9. Here, it is a collective (see Joüon §135b; cf. 1:2).

a person. That is, anyone, male or female (BDB 36).

whether an ox. A member of the herd; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 1:3a.

or a flock animal. A sheep or a goat; see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 163 n. 31.

it [already] belongs to the LORD. Since these animals belonged automatically to the Lord (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, at 27:26–27), the word “already” is added for clarity.

belongs to. For לִי indicating possession see BDB 513.5.b.

27:27. In Exod, a donkey—which may have been the primary impure domesticated animal the Israelites owned (Gen 12:16; 36:24)—was to be redeemed with a lamb; if not, it was to be killed (Exod 13:13; 34:20; the latter option might have been used by those who were far from the sanctuary or who needed the lamb—or the cost required to buy one—more than they needed the donkey). It is not entirely clear if Lev 27:27 is changing this law for some reason or if it is assuming this law and providing additional options: the animal could also be redeemed with a monetary payment instead of a lamb, or it could be sold. Whatever the relationship is between the laws, it may be noted that each of them makes clear that firstborn animals may not remain in the owner’s possession.

it may be ransomed. The verb here is פָּדָה, the word of choice when the firstborn is being redeemed (the same is true of other terms built on the same root) (Exod 13:13, 15; 34:20; Num 3:46, 48–49, 51; Num 18:15–17). The next phrase uses לָאָחַז (“redeem”), the word of choice for almost everything else that is redeemed, whether animals or objects someone chose to give to the Lord or his sanctuary (as in this chapter, 27:13, 15, 19–20, 28, 31, 33), or objects or people that were given to others (as in 25:24–26, 29–33, 48–49, 51–52, 54). Since the latter verb is so common in this chapter, it is no surprise it is put in parallel to the former, especially since both verbs overlap in terms of referring to delivering a person or object from the authority of another (see Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 61–66).

27:28. *However.* See at 27:26 (“but”).

every item that anyone irrevocably devotes to the LORD. Heb. “every item irrevocably devoted [to the LORD] (מִכֶּלֶךְ) which a person irrevocably devotes

(הַחֲרִים) to the LORD.” The noun and verb are built on the same root and may thus be translated as a unit (see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40).

people. אָדָם is being used to refer to a human being in contrast to an animal (cf. Exod 13:2; see above at 24:17–18 (“takes the life of any human being”).

from a portion of the fields of their holding. See at 27:16 (“a portion of the fields of their holding”).

most holy. For this formulation of the superlative, see Joüon §1411.

27:30–33. Outside of our text, laws addressing the tithe in the Pentateuch are found in Numbers 18:21–32; Deuteronomy 12:6, 10–19; 14:22–29; 26:12–15. There are differences in these texts. This has led some modern scholars to view them as contradictory laws coming from different sources (e.g., Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27, 2431–34). By way of contrast, some early Jewish interpreters resolved the tensions by stating that more than one type of tithe was being described: “a first tithe (Num 18:21–24), a second tithe (Deut 14:22–27), and even a third tithe in the third and sixth years of the sabbatical cycle (14:28–29)” (Averbeck, “מַעֲשֵׂר,” 2:1047). Practically speaking, this meant “two tithes were to be taken every year except in the seventh year: Nos. 1 and 2 in the first, second, fourth, and fifth years; Nos. 1 and 3 in the third and sixth years” (Max Seligsohn, “Tithe [מַעֲשֵׂר],” *JE* 12:151). It is perhaps simpler to suggest that the Deuteronomy passages assume and complement the laws of Leviticus and Numbers. In this regard, all three books refer to one annual tithe, with Deuteronomy specifying that it was distributed in two main ways: at the sanctuary in years 1–2, 4–5 (Deut 14:22–27), and in local towns in years 3 and 6 (Deut 14:28–29; 26:12–15) (Averbeck, “מַעֲשֵׂר,” 2:1041–50, esp. 1041, 1046–1049; slightly different is that of Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 186, although he still assumes there was simply one annual tithe and that the laws complement one another).

27:30. *from that which was sown on the land.* Heb. “the seed of the land,” that is, that which comes from the seed of the land (cf. Deut 14:22).

belongs to. See at 27:26 above.

27:31. *wants.* For the imperfect with the sense of “want,” see Joüon §113n. *some of.* Partitive use of *לְ* (BDB 580.3.b).

one fifth [of its assessed value]. The phrase “of its assessed value” is understood from the surrounding context (vv. 13, 15, 19, 27).

27:32. *[shepherd’s].* Evident from context; cf. Ps 23:4.

holy. See at 27:9 (“to the LORD will be holy”).

27:33. *They must not distinguish between a good [animal] and a bad [animal].* Heb. “he must not distinguish between a good one with reference to a bad one.” The verb *בִּקֵּר* means “to seek” or “to examine” (cf. Lev 13:36), in this context referring to seeking to distinguish between a good animal and a bad one (so as to exchange the good with the bad; cf. Mal 1:8).

and they must not make a substitute for [the tenth animal]. Heb. “he must not make a substitute for it”; the referent of the pronoun here specified for clarity.

and if they in fact. For infinitive absolutes introducing contrast see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 230 n. 11.

will be. A singular verb for a plural subject; see Joüon §150p.

27:34. *for.* *לְ* is used elsewhere with verbs of speaking to mean “in regard to, concerning, for the sake of” (BDB 40.6; see esp. Exod 6:13). It is also possible that the verb “to speak” has been elided: “These are the commands that the LORD commanded Moses [to speak] to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai.” The endpoint is the same. For translating “commanded commandments” as “gave commandments” see Sklar, *Leviticus*, 112 n. 40.

Canonical and Theological Significance. (The following is referred to in Sklar, *Leviticus*, 763 n. 74.) “Although there were some Jews in the community, very little in the letter suggests a Jewish background. At least three texts that speak of their former way of life explicitly indicate that they were former idolaters and therefore chiefly Gentiles (6:10–11; 8:7; 12:2). Other items imply the same: e.g.,

the whole matter of going to the temple feasts in 8:1–10:22 is a strictly Gentile phenomenon; ... going to the proconsul, or city magistrates, for adjudication (6:1–11) fits the normal processes of the Greeks and Romans within the city, whereas the Jews were forbidden to ask Gentiles for judgments. Their arguing for the right to go to the prostitutes (6:12–20) and their denial of a future bodily resurrection (15:1–58) also sound more Hellenistic than Jewish” (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987], 4).

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