

“Vaine Repetitions”?

Re-evaluating Regular Levitical Sacrifices in Hebrews 9:1–14

Introduction¹

Thomas Cranmer, in his preface to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, criticized medieval Roman Catholic worship for (among other things), containing “vaine repetitions”. This phrase was no doubt a rallying cry against Roman Catholicism amongst Reformers, and it found its way into the Geneva Bible, written by exiled English Protestants. In Matt 6:7, earlier English translations render the injunction μὴ βατταλογήσητε “bable not moch as the hethen do”;² but in the Geneva Bible of 1560 we find “vse no vaine repetitions,” and from here it makes its way not only into the revised Geneva Bible of 1599, but also into the King James translation of 1611.³ This phrase is evocative of the bad press that repetition has had in certain streams of theological tradition, and it is cited at the beginning of a study on Hebrews because this letter, perhaps more than any other early Christian document, has helped create and sustain

¹ This essay is based on a paper given at the international SBL meeting in St Andrews, July 2013, under the title “From ἅπαξ to ἐφάπαξ: Singularity and Repetition in Covenants Old and New in Hebrews 9.”

² So, with some variation in spelling, the Tyndale Bible (1525), Coverdale Bible (1535), Matthew’s Bible (1537) and Great Bible (1539); a marginal note in the 1560 Geneva Bible offers “bale not much” as an alternative translation. The Wycliffe Bible reads “do not ye speak much.”

³ This translation was not uncontroversial, as witness the exchange between the future archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift, a high churchman, and the Puritan Thomas Cartwright; see *The Defense of the Aunswere to the Admonition against the Replie of T.C. By Iohn Whitgift Doctor of Diuinitie* (London: Henry Binneman, 1574), 803–5.

such a tradition, and because this tradition in turn has affected how many interpreters read Hebrews.⁴ Particularly in its cultic section, Hebrews appears to denigrate repetition irredeemably: the tabernacle sacrifices were repeated, and therefore they did not cleanse, whereas Christ's sacrifice was once-for-all, and therefore superior and eternally effective. The old covenant cultus, if you like, was the ultimate instantiation of vain repetition, and Roman Catholic worship falls into the same category as that of Jews and pagans.

Before going any further with Hebrews, however, the ambivalence of this tradition must be noted. Cranmer's critique comes in the preface to a new liturgy which was to be repeated daily throughout England.⁵ And Matt 6:7 is part of the introduction to the Lord's Prayer. As Stephen Sykes has put it: "It is ironic that the most frequently repeated prayer of all in the Christian tradition should follow an injunction against vain

⁴ For Hebrews' use in controversies over repetition in the Mass, see John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St Peter* (ed. William B. Johnston, David W. Torrance, and Thomas F. Torrance; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), ix–xii. Note its dedication to King Sigismund II of Poland in direct response to Johann Eck, *De sacrificio missae libri tres (1526)* (ed. Erwin Iserloh, Vinzenz Pfnür, and Peter Fabisch; CCath 36; Münster: Aschendorff, 1982). Note also Cranmer's emphatic language of "once-for-all" in the Prayer Book eucharistic prayer and in Article 31, and how in his amendment of the Sarum lectionary he introduces large parts of Hebrews 9 and 10 into the Passiontide eucharistic readings (my thanks to Kenneth Padley for this last point).

⁵ The Preface makes clear that his criticism is not of repetition *per se*, but of "vaine" repetition, which gets in the way of reading sufficient scripture in the course of church services.

repetition.”⁶ Clearly then, certain forms of repetition are vain and others are valuable – the difficulty is telling the one from the other.

This essay will proceed in three parts. First, the complexity and polyvalence of repetition in Hebrews is indicated: brief comments are offered on God’s plural speech through the prophets in Hebrews 1, and then turning to the central cultic section of the letter, Hebrews 7–10 (where repetition features most prominently in the argument), several observations on the nature of this repetition are made. Secondly, Heb 9:1–10 is examined, and it is argued that the regular service of the priests in Heb 9:6 indicates the desirability of continual access to God. Finally, drawing this together with the comparison made with Christ in Heb 9:11–14, it will be suggested that this understanding of continual priestly service better enables us to appreciate the way in which the tabernacle cult foreshadows not only the atonement but also the life of the Christian community.

Repetition Elsewhere in Hebrews

A Plurality of Prophetic Speech

“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, *but* in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.” So Hebrews begins. Or does it? As many and various commentators have pointed out, there is in the Greek no indication of syntactical contrast between the two parts of this statement. Gene Smillie has pressed this point further, noting that: “The author of Hebrews demonstrates a singular capacity

⁶ Stephen Sykes, “Ritual and the Sacrament of the Word,” in *Christ: The Sacramental Word* (ed. David Brown and Ann Loades; London: SPCK, 1996), 160.

to define with precision the contrasts between the different elements he is comparing.”⁷ The absence of any such indicators suggests that no contrast ought to be understood here.⁸

In particular, the absence of the word ἐφάπαξ is notable; this is a favourite term of Hebrews which would have made clear the contrast between the two parts of Heb 1:1–2a by reinforcing both the contrast between singularity and repetition and the e-sound alliteration of the second half of the phrase. Furthermore, although some have argued that the terms πολυμερῶς and πολυτρόπως in Philo bear connotations of imperfection and inferiority⁹ – and on this basis many scholars continue to read contrast into Heb 1:1–2 – the evidence in Philo is not as uniform as alleged: sometimes cognate terms are used to describe things that are evil, sometimes they are neutral, and yet at other times they qualify the actions of God himself.¹⁰ Additionally, there are other

⁷ Gene R. Smillie, “Contrast or Continuity in Hebrews 1.1–2?,” *NTS* 51 (2005): 550–51.

⁸ Alongside Smillie, “Contrast or Continuity”; see also Beate Kowalski, “Die Rezeption alttestamentlicher Theologie im Hebräerbrief,” in *Ausharren in der Verheissung: Studien zum Hebräerbrief* (ed. Rainer Kampling; SBS 204; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 39–43; Tomasz Lewicki, *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden! Wort Gottes und Paraklese im Hebräerbrief* (Paderborner Theologische Studien 41; Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 13–22; David Wider, *Theozentrik und Bekenntnis: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Redens Gottes im Hebräerbrief* (BZNW 87; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 12–22.

⁹ Most scholars taking this line are dependent on Lala Kalyan Kumar Dey, *The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews* (SBLDS 25; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 129–34.

¹⁰ *Ebr.* 85–87 describes the coloured garment the high priest wears when outside the sanctuary, in contrast to the plain white garment he wears inside; this represents the manifold wisdom of God in the world. Cf. also *Mos.* 1.117, not mentioned by Dey, which describes how nature rejoices in manifoldness.

parallels valuing plurality, such as the prologue to Sirach which begins: “Many great teachings have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them” (Sirach prologue 1–2).¹¹ For all these reasons it can be confidently affirmed that repetition is not contrasted with singularity in the exordium, and is not denigrated; this is an important point, because, as scholars agree, the exordium sets the tone for the rest of Hebrews.

Cultic Repetition in Hebrews 7–10

The above considerations suggest that repetition does not function in a uniform fashion throughout Hebrews, such that Heb 1 should not be subordinated to the contrast between singularity and repetition that is found elsewhere in the letter. Indeed, if anything, the direction of influence should flow *from* the exordium *to* other parts of the letter.¹² However, while this demonstrates that repetition functions polysemously in Hebrews as a whole, it does not prove that repetition is valued in the cultic section of Hebrews, where the contrast is at its strongest both rhetorically and theologically. The primary concern of this essay is the way in which regular Levitical sacrifices function in

¹¹ Cf. also Luke 1:1; texts valuing plurality in connection with God’s speech, wisdom, or nature include Job 33:14; Wis 7:22; Eph 3:10; Josephus *Ant.* 10.142. See also the references to other speeches in antiquity opening with a positive reference to “many” in Johannes Bauer, “POLLOI Luk 1:1,” *NovT* 4 (1960): 263–66; Loveday Alexander, “Luke’s Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 72–74.

¹² “Die Bedeutung der *implizit* komparativischen Figur des Ansatzes beim ‘Reden Gottes’ sollte nicht auf der Basis späterer *expliziter* Antithesen ausgezogen werden.” Wider, *Theozentrik und Bekenntnis*, 21 (emphasis original); so also Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 89.

the complex comparison between the tabernacle and Christ's sacrificial work in Heb 9:1–14. However, before we turn to this some comments on the cultic section generally and the striking portrayal of repetition it contains are in order.

There is increasing hesitancy in scholarship about the traditional “relapse” theory of Hebrews’ occasion: that the letter seeks to dissuade a return to (or even remaining within) Judaism.¹³ This re-evaluation is based in part on plausible (though ultimately unprovable) suppositions of a Jewish Christian audience and a post-70 date,¹⁴ but also finds support internally in the now widespread recognition of the importance of the rhetorical device of *synkrisis*:¹⁵ Hebrews gives so much attention to comparing

¹³ Though this view continues to be robustly defended by scholars such as Peter W. L. Walker, “Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:9–14 and the Dating of the Epistle,” *TynBul* 45 (1994): 39–71; Norman H. Young, “Bearing His Reproach (Heb 13.9–14),” *NTS* 48 (2002): 243–61.

¹⁴ A majority of scholars reckon a Jewish Christian audience likely, though see the significant dissent registered by David A. deSilva, “Hebrews 6:4-8: A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation (Part 1),” *TynBul* 50 (1999): 39–41; *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrews”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 2–7. A reading of Hebrews as consolation following the temple’s destruction is offered by, among others, Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (JSNTSup 73; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992); Gabriella Gelardini, *Verhärtet eure Herzen nicht: der Hebräer, eine Synagogenhomilie zu Tischa be-Aw* (BibInt 83; Leiden: Brill, 2007); Kenneth L Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice* (SNTSMS 143; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁵ For classical treatments see Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* 10.8–24; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.38–41; Isocrates, *Hel. enc.* 22; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.7.16. For the importance of *synkrisis* for Hebrews see Christopher F. Evans, *The Theology of Rhetoric: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Dr Williams’s Trust, 1988); Timothy W. Seid, “Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: The Rhetorical Structure and Strategy,” in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps; JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 322–47; Michael W.

Christ with foundational Jewish institutions not because it seeks to disparage them or dissuade its audience from adhering to them, but because they hold such great symbolic significance that comparison with them constitutes the superlative demonstration of Christ's excellency. This tendency within scholarship arguably fosters a more detailed and nuanced appreciation of Hebrews' treatment of the institutions of the old covenant.

Nevertheless, even those scholars who have sought to re-evaluate Hebrews' relationship to first-century Judaism often see some degree of critique or attack on the tabernacle in these chapters. Take, for example, Richard Hays' chapter emerging from the St Andrews conference on Hebrews and theology, in which he criticizes his earlier self for portraying Hebrews as a supersessionist document and a foil for his reading of Paul. In place of this he advocates reading Hebrews as an example of "new covenantalism." He notes that the letter contains no debate over circumcision, Sabbath observance, or food laws, and no polemic against central Jewish figures or institutions – indeed, he says that Hebrews "criticizes nothing in the Mosaic Torah *except for the Levitical sacrificial cult.*"¹⁶ But that "except" is a rather large exception. It is often assumed that a uniform stream of polemic against the tabernacle cult and Levitical priesthood runs through Heb 7–10, including in its deployment of repetition. In this light the function of Hebrews' treatment of the Levitical system, including the role of repetition, needs to be clarified.

Martin and Jason A. Whitlark, "The Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis as the Key to the Structure and Argument of Hebrews," *NTS* 57 (2011): 415–39; "Choosing What Is Advantageous: The Relationship between Epideictic and Deliberative Syncrisis in Hebrews," *NTS* 58 (2012): 379–400.

¹⁶ Richard B. Hays, "'Here We Have No Lasting City': New Covenantalism in Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham et al.; Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 154 (emphasis added).

Hebrews indicates that the old covenant and especially its cultic regulations are inherently transitory, and that this is divinely intended. The tabernacle is the earthly counterpart (ὑπόδειγμα, σκιά, 8:5; ἀντίτυπος, 9:24) of the true, heavenly sanctuary (the τύπος seen by Moses, 8:5). It mirrors the celestial cult and extends the reach of divine worship into the earthly realm, whilst at the same time foreshadowing the greater and more perfect cult at the eschaton (σκιά, 10:1).¹⁷ Moreover, the earthly system's weakness, imperfection, and provisional nature is fully revealed and understood only when Christ himself arrives, fulfils the tabernacle system, and makes the heavenly sanctuary "visible" and accessible (9:11, 26; 10:19–22). Put another way, the imperfection of the old covenant system is *derivative*, both *ontologically* (it was instituted on the model of the heavenly sanctuary, and foreshadows the eschatological ministry in that sanctuary) and *epistemologically* (its imperfection is understood only in the light of the coming of the perfected priest).

This has several implications for cultic repetition: first, it is important to stress that repetition is not singled out as part of a wider opposition to ritual. Indeed, the direct association of repetition with ritual is problematic: not all rituals are repeated, and not

¹⁷ These verses and terms are the focus of much attention in discussions regarding Hebrews' supposed Middle Platonist background. The language does not quite fit normal Platonic usage, but undoubtedly has a Platonic ring to it. Lincoln Hurst in particular hotly contests any hint of Platonism here, but he does so by vastly over-emphasizing the horizontal or eschatological nature of 8:1–5 and 9:23–24. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (SNTSMS 65; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13–17, 24–42. Similarly Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology*, 117–22, 165–68. In fact, metaphysical dualism is just at home in Jewish apocalyptic, and the notion of a dual cult even more so; thus the relationship between earthly and heavenly sanctuaries in Hebrews can be understood both "vertically" and "horizontally" without subscribing to a Platonist metaphysics.

all repetition constitutes ritual.¹⁸ Rather, Hebrews stresses that Christ's crucifixion, exaltation and session constitute *the supreme ritual act*, in fulfilment of old covenant rites. Secondly, cultic repetition derives from the weakness inherent in the old covenant regulations: the priests' mortality and sinfulness (7:23–28); the law's foreshadowing role and the consequent categorical inability of animal blood to remove sins (10:1–4). That is to say, repetition must be understood as *indicative* rather than itself *constitutive* of the weakness of the old system. Thirdly, repetition takes on this indicative status only where there is direct comparison to Christ (as in 7:23–24, 27; 9:25–28; 10:1–14); it demonstrates the imperfection of the old order only in contrast to the perfection of the new. Repetition does have negative connotations in these parts of Hebrews, but this is not because of an attack on ritual, or because repetition itself impedes the efficacy of the tabernacle system; rather, it serves as a rhetorically effective *post factum* illustration of the imperfection of the former dispensation.

Cultic Repetition in Hebrews 9:1–10

The description of the tabernacle in Heb 9:1–10 includes the following description of the regular Levitical service: “the priests continually go into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties” (9:6). This statement is usually subsumed under the treatment of repetition elsewhere in Hebrews 7–10, examined briefly above. For example, Guthrie states that Heb 9:6 “brings out the repetitive character of the Mosaic order [...] to

¹⁸ In this regard see the practice-based approach to ritual developed by Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. 81–92. This model clarifies that while repetition is one frequently employed strategy by which ritual practice is differentiated from other forms of practice, it is neither necessary nor sufficient to constitute ritual.

contrast with the finality of the new way,” and O’Brien suggests that “The daily ritual by its very functioning and repetition [...] was sure testimony that the way into the Most Holy Place was blocked.”¹⁹ Yet, in contrast to other places where repetition is highlighted, this regular service is neither stressed nor developed in direct contrast with Christ and the singularity of his sacrificial work, and it therefore ought to be treated separately. Indeed, the contention of this essay is that the continual entrance of the priests in 9:6 needs to be understood in a positive light for the intricate argument of 9:1–14 to function. This will be established by examining the context immediately preceding and following the verse, and then the verse itself.

On cutting oneself short (v. 5b)

Hebrews 9:1 states that the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary, and proceeds to describe first the sanctuary in vv. 2–5 and then the worship in vv. 6–10. In vv. 2–5 the author briefly evokes the tabernacle and its furniture, breaking off in v. 5 with the statement that “we cannot speak about these things in detail now.” Some commentators take this to be a derogatory gesture, disparaging the

¹⁹ Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), 184; Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 313; for nearly identical wording see Norman H. Young, “The Gospel According to Hebrews 9,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 200. Gareth Lee Cockerill states that the old covenant “was characterized by repetition of the Levitical rituals. [...] Everything in v. 6 emphasizes the continuous, repetitive nature of the priests’ ministry and its *consequent* limitation to ‘the First Tent’” (emphasis added); *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 379. The implication that repetition is the reason why the ordinary priests’ ministry was limited to the first tent is somewhat cryptic and implausible. Herbert Braun takes the intensity of cultic activity to contrast drastically with its “Effektlosigkeit.” *An die Hebräer* (HNT 14; Tübingen: Mohr, 1984), 254.

tabernacle,²⁰ but there is no explicit indication to this effect.²¹ Scholars generally classify this rhetorical figure as *paraleipsis*, “passing by something without detailed comment.”²² Its originating use would seem to be in legal contexts where a matter is usefully evoked but best not gone into in detail because it cannot be proved or even can be easily refuted (cf. Quintilian *Inst.* 9.2.75), although it can be used to avoid tedium, indecorum, or confusion, or simply “because there is advantage in making only an indirect reference” (*Rhet. Her.* 4.27.37) – which indicates that it could in effect serve any number of purposes. A clearer instance of *paraleipsis* is Heb 11:32, where the author states that “time would fail me (ἐπιλείψει με ὁ χρόνος) to tell of...” and then lists further OT exemplars of faith.²³ Listing (*epitrochasmos* or enumeration)²⁴ is also found in Heb 9:2–5, although here occurring before the phrase in v. 5b.²⁵

²⁰ Hans-Friedrich Weiß thinks this phrase “spricht entschieden gegen alle Neigung, in der Benennung der einzelnen Kultgegenstände in den VV. 2–5 zugleich ein eigenes Interesse des Autors des Hebr an einer bestimmten Kultsymbolik zum Ausdruck kommen zu sehen.” *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (KEK 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 452.

²¹ Braun, *Hebräer*, 251, 254 suggests an implied contrast between the grandeur of the tabernacle and the inefficacy of its worship; Erich Grässer, *An die Hebräer* (3 vols.; EKK; Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1990), 2.127 appears to agree with this assessment; Samuel Bénétreau, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Commentaire Évangélique de la Bible; Vaux-sur-Seine: ÉDIFAC, 1988), 2.67 also inclines towards this view; on p. 70 he interprets Heb 9.5b as the author's invitation to moderation.

²² Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 36; New York; London: Doubleday, 2001), 404; cf. Knut Backhaus, *Der Hebräerbrief* (RNT; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2009), 307. “We say that we are passing by, or do not know, or refuse to say that which precisely now we are saying” (*Rhet. Her.* 4.27.37).

²³ So William L. Lane, *Hebrews* (2 vols.; WBC 47; Dallas: Word, 1991), 2.383. Cf. Philo *Sacr.* 27 for the very close ἐπιλείπει με ἡ ἡμέρα; *Spec.* 4.238 for a similar expression with καταλείπω.

Attention to classical rhetoric in this case suggests both the relevance and relativization of the subject in hand; yet even where a rhetorical figure is precisely identified, *how* it is used in a particular text remains paramount.²⁶ Reading Heb 9:5b on its own terms and in its own context, it is certain the author means he could speak at greater length about the cultic furniture and vessels (especially from his use of *vōv*, which implies that while it is not necessary/appropriate to speak about them *now*, he could speak about them later – though in fact he does not in the rest of the letter); it is also certain that the thing of greater importance to which he proceeds is the ministry within the two compartments, which foreshadows the work of Christ (9:6–14). Yet, given that there was no need to mention the cultic vessels at all (9:2 from *ἐν ἧ* to *ἄρτων*, and 9:4–5a), or indeed to include 9:5b, it also seems likely that this phrase should be taken as an indication of their importance. As it stands, the phrase suggests there are occasions when it is appropriate to go into detail about cultic furniture (an invitation which many commentators readily take up!); if it were an attempt to disparage the

²⁴ *Percursio* and *praeteritio* (the Latin for *epitrochasmos* and *paraleipsis*, respectively) often occur together. Backhaus, *Hebräerbrief*, 307.

²⁵ A related figure is *aposiopesis*, “when something is said and then the rest of what the speaker had begun to say is left unfinished [...]. Here a suspicion, unexpressed, becomes more telling than a detailed explanation would have been.” (*Rhet. Her.* 4.30.41). If this implies actual rupture or breaking off then it does not describe Heb 9:5b. I am indebted to Georg Gäbel for his paper “What’s so Interesting about Old Furniture,” given at the same SBL session as this paper, and for subsequent personal correspondence; for further discussion of the precise rhetorical device used at Heb 9:5b I refer the reader to **HIS ESSAY IN THIS VOLUME???**

²⁶ Deploying *paraleipsis* himself, Quintilian indicates that a lengthy search for a precise categorization is ultimately perhaps best abandoned: “I will pass by those authors who set no limit to their craze for inventing technical terms” (*Inst.* 9.3.99).

tabernacle or to dismiss allegorical speculation, or an invitation to moderation, it would require more explicit indication and in the opposite direction.²⁷

The inaccessibility of “the second (tent)” (v. 7)

The immediately preceding context to Heb 9:6 is therefore a brief but well-informed and sympathetic evocation of the tabernacle. The importance of the priests’ regular service becomes particularly apparent when v. 6 is considered as part of the wider contrast that is made in vv. 6–7, and the interpretation of this given in vv. 8f. With a μέν... δέ construction, the continual entrance of the priests is contrasted with the annual entrance of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. When we come to v. 8, this arrangement is said to show that τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδόν, “the way in to the sanctuary,” has not yet been revealed. This is best understood as a reference to the most holy place, given the contrast with the “first tent” later in v. 8, and the usage of the neuter plural τὰ ἅγια elsewhere in Hebrews.²⁸ That is to say, the arrangement of the tabernacle shows the

²⁷ Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text* (3rd edn.; London: Macmillan, 1920), 244 says the author “describes with affectionate reverence the ordered arrangements of the Old Sanctuary and its furniture.”

²⁸ So Koester, *Hebrews*, 397; Weiß, *Hebräer*, 457; Bénétreau, *Hébreux*, 2.72; Young, “Hebrews 9,” 198–99. Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1964), 144 notes that “our author consistently uses the neuter plural with the article to mean the sanctuary, that is the inner and not [...] the outer Tent”. Richard J. Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament* (WUNT 2.328; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 160 argues that the 6 occurrences of τὰ ἅγια (with the article) in Hebrews occur only when the distinction between the two parts of the tabernacle is not in view, and thus the term refers to the sanctuary as a whole. However, in all of these cases the entrance of the high priest (9:25; 13:11) or of Christ as high priest (8:2; 9:12; 10:19) is in view, and what is important is not that he enters the sanctuary in general but the most holy place in particular. Ounsworth

inaccessibility of the holy of holies, and in preparation for this point the author stresses the *accessibility* of the first tent or outer sanctuary in v. 6.²⁹ This emphasis on continual access is reinforced by the description of the cultic service that occurs in each place: the present tense of εἶσμι emphasizes the continuous aspect,³⁰ which is reinforced by the phrase διὰ παντός, and the priests are said to “perform their services,” without hindrance. The description of the most holy place, by contrast, is carefully constructed to emphasize the barriers to access: entrance is once a year, it is only the high priest (not just any priest), and that not without blood, and this blood must be offered for himself before it can be offered for the people. The desired access or atoning act occurs only at the end of a long sequence of barriers and conditions.

What is more, this interpretation of the tabernacle so as to stress the *inaccessibility* of the most holy place is not some innovation on Hebrews’ part; rather, it is a commonplace of first-century Judaism. Leviticus 16:2 states that Aaron is not to enter the most holy place at any time (בכל־עַתָּה / πᾶσαν ὥραν) lest he die. His entry is to be ἄπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ (Lev 16:34 LXX; cf. Exod 30:10 (x2); Heb 9:7). In *3 Macc* 1–2 Ptolemy IV Philopator tries to enter the most holy place. The protestations of the Jews bear a resemblance to Hebrews: “not even members of their own nation were allowed to enter, not even all of the priests, but only the high priest who was pre-eminent over all –

correctly notes that the occurrences of Ἅγια and Ἅγια Ἁγίων (9:2–3) are not instances of Hebrews’ own usage, but rather terminological labels indicating what these tents are called in general or by others.

²⁹ This point escapes most commentators. Bénétreau, *Hébreux*, 2.71, however, states correctly that: “L’intérêt se concentre sur l’accès permanent [...], avec toutefois limitation à la première tente.”

³⁰ Notably Hebrews uses εἶσμι here and not εἰσέρχομαι which it reserves for believers’ entrance into rest (Heb 3:7–4:11) and in a cultic context for the entrance of Christ into the heavenly most holy place (6:19–20; 9:12, 24–25; also once of his incarnation, 10:5).

and he only once a year” (κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἅπαξ 1:11). Philopator is not persuaded and attempts to enter, only to suffer a stroke or fit which prevents him, and which is hailed by the Jews as a divine deliverance. A similar objection is raised by Philo (*Legat.* 306–7) to persuade the Emperor not to place a statue within the holy of holies: no-one else may enter, not even Jews, not even priests, not even the first rank of priest; even the high priest may not enter on two separate days of the year, or indeed three or more times on the Day of Atonement.³¹ Pompey entered the most holy place in 63 BC; Tacitus notes that there was no image within, a point that would have been of great interest for his Roman readers (*Hist.* 5.9). Josephus decries this as an excess and unlawful; he notes that Pompey did not disturb anything and ordered that the temple be cleansed and the offerings restored (*War* 1.152–53; *Ant.* 14.71–73). Other references to the once-yearly entrance are found in Josephus (*War* 5.236) and Philo (*Ebr.* 136; *Gig.* 52), who also describes the Passover as once-yearly (*Spec.* 2.146).

The invisibility of “the way in to the most holy place” (v. 8)

It is not simply the restricted access to the most holy place which Hebrews stresses, but its *invisibility*. Heb 9:8 claims that the arrangement of the tabernacle demonstrates that “the way into the most holy place has not yet been revealed while the first tent is still standing.” Commentators often object that the literal understanding of this verse is nonsensical – it makes no sense to think of the outer tent of the tabernacle being

³¹ This passage reveals that Philo thought the high priest entered the most holy place only twice on Yom Kippur, once with the blood of the bull for himself, and once with the blood of the goat for the people; other interpreters reckoned he must have entered at least three times, first with incense, cf. Lev 16:12–14, and *m. Yoma* 1.1–4; 7.4 counts four entries.

knocked down or somehow not existing so that the second, inner tent can be accessed.³² They therefore conclude that ἡ πρώτη σκηνή can only be a reference to the first tabernacle taken as a whole. Yet ἡ πρώτη σκηνή refers to the outer tent when it occurs earlier in 9:2 and 6, so we should presume it has the same referent here unless and until we have reason to think otherwise.³³ Harold Attridge takes this view: “The point then is that as long as the cultic system connected with the outer portion of the earthly tabernacle ‘has standing,’ the way to both the earthly and heavenly ἄγια is blocked.”³⁴ But this contradicts what has just been said: the high priest *does* have access to the most holy place, however heavily restricted this may be; Attridge is forced to qualify: “The access that the high priest has to that sacred realm does not signify its openness, but is only, as it were, the exception that proves the rule.”³⁵ Rather than labelling the high priest’s entrance “the exception that proves the rule,” however, the difficulty can be resolved by taking seriously the term πεφανερῶσθαι.³⁶ It is not simply that the way into

³² Koester, *Hebrews*, 405 describes this sense as “peculiar” and an “incongruity.”

³³ Young, “Hebrews 9,” 200, though he puts it perhaps too strongly when he states that “it would be intolerable for the meaning to fluctuate unannounced in such short compass”. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 438 takes it to refer to the tabernacle as a whole, pointing out that those taking other views “tend to underestimate the facility with which the author can glide from one meaning of an expression to another”. I do allow for the author’s transition from one sense to another, but in a less abrupt way; see below.

³⁴ Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 240.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; cf. O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 313 who follows Attridge on this point.

³⁶ I owe this point to Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology*, 160–62. Although he does not appeal to the contemporary literature which supports this point, he expresses it well: “the way in, *though it exists*, is not only of extremely limited availability but is, more importantly, hidden from the view of the People of God” (emphasis original). Cf. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 438.

the most holy place had not yet been “revealed,” in a figurative sense, but that it quite literally was not *visible* – and it is not visible as long as the first tent is standing.

The assertion that the most holy place, or even the entrance to it, is unseen while the outer tent can be seen is found widely in contemporary texts. In his description of the tabernacle, Josephus points out that there was a plain linen veil over the curtain at the entrance to the outer tent, which protected the actual curtain from snow and other inclement weather, yet which could be drawn back so that the sanctuary could be seen (πρὸς τὸ κατοπτέυσθαι, *Ant.* 3.128–29). Inside the tabernacle, however, there was a veil which concealed the most holy place, so that no-one could see it (μηδενὶ κάτοπτον, 3.125). In describing Herod’s temple, Josephus notes that one gate in the wall surrounding the temple itself has no doors, representing the invisible and uncontainable nature of heaven; through this gate, the “first house” in all its grandeur is visible (καταφαίνω); but he immediately goes on to note that only the outer part of the temple can be seen, because it is divided into two inside: the most holy place is veiled by a curtain, and he later describes it as invisible (ἀθέατος, *War* 5.208–12, 219).³⁷ Similarly, Philo describes the innermost part of the temple as beautiful beyond description, and *invisible* (ἀόρατος) to everyone except the high priest (*Spec.* 1.72), who sees what is invisible to others (τὰ ἀθέατα ἄλλοις, *Ebr.* 136); indeed, on Yom Kippur the high priest makes a cloud of smoke with incense, preventing others from seeing into the most holy place (*Spec.* 1.72). In the same context Philo stresses the visibility (τὴν [...] ἀκριβῆ θεάν) of the temple due to the wide open spaces that surround it (1.74–75). The

³⁷ Josephus also says the altar in Solomon’s temple was positioned so as to be visible when the doors were open, such that when fire descended and consumed the sacrifices, all could see it; *Ant.* 8.105, 118.

Mishnah reinforces this same point by describing a double veil in front of the inner sanctuary, with a space of one cubit between the two drops (*m. Yoma* 5.1; *m. Mid.* 4.7; cf. *b. Yoma* 54a).³⁸

These examples demonstrate that it is not impossible or incomprehensible to take Heb 9:8 in its literal, spatial sense: no-one can see the entrance to the most holy place because the holy place shields it from view. However, this is not to say that 9:8 must have a uniquely spatial sense; the reference to the Holy Spirit indicates that the author is beginning to interpret the significance of the tabernacle, and the adverbs μήπω and ἔτι suggest that a temporal sense is being introduced.³⁹ The author of Hebrews shows himself to be adept at subtly shifting meanings through the recurrence of a particular term.⁴⁰ Understood in this sense, 9:8 indicates that just as the most holy place cannot be seen because of the outer tent, so also the *true* or *heavenly* most holy place could not be seen while the first tent (i.e. the whole tabernacle system) existed. That the author has begun to move on to symbolic interpretation of the tabernacle is made clear by the next verse, 9:9: it is only here that he explicitly states that this is a παραβολή for

³⁸ “The purpose of the double veil was to prevent anyone seeing into the sanctuary were the high priest to enter through an opening in a single veil.” R. J. McKelvey, *Pioneer and Priest: Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 191.

³⁹ Young, “Hebrews 9,” 200; Bénétreau, *Hébreux*, 2.72 states that “il y a double référence”; Steve Stanley, “Hebrews 9:6–10: The ‘Parable’ of the Tabernacle,” *NovT* 37 (1995): 394: μήπω “shows that the author understands the old covenant as temporary and emphasises the time element in the progression of God’s covenant dealings.”

⁴⁰ The referent of πρῶτος has already shifted between Heb 8 and 9:1–2. See Stanley, “Parable,” 386.

the present time.⁴¹ Furthermore, whereas the most holy place was not visible, Heb 2:9 states that “we *see* Jesus.” More pertinent to this context, the only other occurrence of φανερώω in the letter comes in 9:26: whereas the high priest entered the most holy place unseen once a year, this verse describes Jesus as the one who has *appeared once for all* to put away sin by his sacrifice.

Before venturing too far into the comparison with Jesus, however, let us pause and take stock: I have argued that Heb 9:8, understood literally and spatially, is a statement that would not be particularly new or surprising to a Hellenistic Jewish audience. Taken together with earlier comments, it can be affirmed that there is *nothing* in the description of the tabernacle’s arrangement, furnishings, service, and significance in Heb 9:1–8 which is out of place in the context of first-century Jewish understandings of the tabernacle.⁴² The passage is descriptive rather than polemical, and it is extremely unlikely that the author would take a deprecating side-swipe at the repetition of sacrifices in 9:6.

Διὰ παντός and the tamid (v. 6)

With this context established, let us return to Heb 9:6 itself. The adverbial phrase διὰ παντός which describes the ongoing entrance of the priests also occurs in Hebrews in 2:15 – humans are continually under slavery through the fear of death – and in 13:15 – a

⁴¹ Stanley wonders which reading is correct (two parts of the earthly tabernacle, or earthly vs heavenly tabernacle), before concluding: “They both are, since the full significance of the παραβολή is understood by substituting corresponding referents for the two ambiguous terms.” *Ibid.*, 395.

⁴² The placement of the incense altar (the most likely meaning of θυμιατήριον here) inside the most holy place (Heb 9:4) is somewhat unusual; it is however a possible reading of Exod 30:1–10. See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 234–38.

command continually to offer to God a sacrifice of praise. These instances demonstrate that the term in and of itself is neutral, with its particular connotation determined by its immediate context. However, when we consider occurrences of the term in the LXX, particularly in the Pentateuch, διὰ παντός clusters in cultic sections and almost always translates תמיד, referring to the regular tabernacle service;⁴³ the usage of the Hebrew word is so ubiquitous that the term *tamid* on its own comes to refer to the regular, daily sacrifices. Awareness of this fact makes clear that Hebrews' use of διὰ παντός is not hyperbole.⁴⁴ Rather, in a cultic context διὰ παντός is a technical term which is simply descriptive of the *tamid*. The regular, daily offering was greatly valued by Jewish writers – again, this is something of a commonplace in writings of the period.⁴⁵ Of

⁴³ Within the Pentateuch, the phrase διὰ παντός qualifies the lamp, the showbread, the fire on the altar, priestly garments, and especially regular offerings, 25x in: Exod 25:30; 27:20; 28:30, 38; 30:8; Lev 6:6, 13; 24:2, 8; Num 4:7; 28:10, 15, 23–24, 31; 29:6, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38; Deut 33:10. Other occurrences of the term (6x) which are not related to the cult are found in Lev 11:42; 25:31–32; Num 9:16; Deut 11:12. Dennis Hamm, “Praying ‘Regularly’ (not ‘Constantly’): A Note on the Cultic Background of *Dia Pantos* at Luke 24:53, Acts 10:2 and Hebrews 9:6, 13:15,” *ExpTim* 116 (2004): 51 n. 5 counts 118 occurrences within the LXX as a whole, of which 72 translate תמיד, of these, 35 are in a cultic context. Outside the Pentateuch the phrase does occasionally denote regular sacrifices, as in 1 Chron 23:30–31; Isa 30:29. In the Psalms it tends to be used in a more general sense; cf. e.g. Pss (LXX) 18:15; 33:2; 34:27; 39:17; 69:5; 70:6; 118:117.

⁴⁴ A hyperbolic usage of εἰς τὸ διηνεκές is found in Heb 10:1, reinforcing κατ' ἐνιαυτόν, though note that the same term is used in Heb 10:12 of the eternal effects of Christ's sacrifice.

⁴⁵ They are an indication of the piety of the Jewish nation, Philo, *Legat.* 157, 280; Josephus describes them at length, *Ant.* 3.224–57; attacks on the temple cult in the Qumran documents (e.g. 1QpHab; 4Q174) focus on its impurity, and many of the texts look forward to the restoration of a pure cult, showing the value placed on the correct practice of the *tamid*.

course, Hebrews makes statements about the regular sacrifices that differ widely from what other contemporary texts say, but in this context in Heb 9:1–10 there is no indication of a critique of the tabernacle cult, and therefore it is not unreasonable to assume that the author associates with the cult similar values to those of his contemporaries.

Typology and the Tabernacle

Thus far I have argued that Heb 9:6 should be understood to value the regular *tamid* service fulfilled by the priests, in order to form a contrast with the restricted access that is represented by the high priest's once-yearly entrance into the most holy place, a restriction which is made all the more clear by the way the outer tent prevents the inner tent from being seen. Moreover, I have suggested that in all this Hebrews does not differ significantly from contemporary understandings found within the broad spectrum of Judaism. In this final section we turn to the ways Hebrews does differ, which begin to be seen in vv. 9–10.

An incomplete typology?

Hebrews 9:9–10 suggests a relativization of the efficacy of the Levitical cult, the basis for which becomes clear in v. 11. Χριστὸς δέ corresponds to the phrase Ἐἶχε μὲν in v. 1, indicating that the whole of the tabernacle described in vv. 1–10 is being compared with Christ. Verses 11–12 demonstrate how the Christ event corresponds to and fulfils the tabernacle, while vv. 13–14 make clear using an explicit *qal wahomer* the greater

significance or effect of Christ's sacrificial offering.⁴⁶ The relationship between the tabernacle and Christ is typological, but the typology does not exist simply between the high priest's entrance ἄπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ and Christ's entrance ἐφάπαξ, once and for all. This is the focal point for the correspondence, but it is not the whole of it. Indeed, taken on its own this correspondence is somewhat problematic: if an entrance once a year represents restricted access, then an entrance once for all surely means *even less* access. Furthermore, this typology does not explain why Hebrews describes *both parts* of the tabernacle in vv. 2–5, in preparation for its description in vv. 6–7 of the cultic service which takes place in *both tents*.

Felix Cortez highlights this problem with the traditional understanding of the Day of Atonement in Hebrews as a type of Christ's crucifixion and entrance into heaven, which he describes as "an incomplete typology."⁴⁷ He notes both that various aspects of the Day of Atonement are missing in Hebrews, and that in certain regards Hebrews' description is inconsistent with the rite as described in the OT. Six inconsistencies are listed: 1) in Hebrews the blood is "offered" not "sprinkled" (9:7); 2) sprinkling of blood, when mentioned, is associated with covenant inauguration and not the day of atonement (9:15–23); 3) sacrifices of "male goats" described by Hebrews were not in fact offered on the Day of Atonement; 4) purification of sins is effected *before* Christ's entrance into the most holy place; 5) the purification offering (9:11–23) conflates images from the Day of Atonement, the red heifer ceremony, covenant institution, and the ordination of priests; 6) the ratification of the covenant plays a

⁴⁶ So, e.g., Weiß, *Hebräer*, 463.

⁴⁷ Felix H. Cortez, "From the Holy to the Most Holy Place: The Period of Hebrews 9:6–10 and the Day of Atonement as a Metaphor of Transition," *JBL* 125 (2006): 528.

dominant role in Hebrews, as seen in Christ's description as mediator of a new covenant.⁴⁸ In place of the traditional understanding he proposes that the tabernacle and its cult function as an illustration (this is a possible sense for παραβολή, 9:8) of the transition from the old to the new age, and that only the one-off covenant inauguration ceremony functions typologically.⁴⁹

Cortez's study correctly recognizes that the identification of the Day of Atonement *on its own* as a type does not adequately account for Hebrews' use of other features of the tabernacle cult, both spatial (outer as well as inner sanctuary) and temporal (festivals and ceremonies such as covenant inauguration, red heifer, ordination). The solution he proposes is that interpreters should not regard the Day of Atonement as a type; by contrast, this essay suggests that a better solution is to regard the *entire* tabernacle cult as typological. That is to say, Cortez resolves the difficulty by reducing the scope of typology in Hebrews, whereas here it is argued that we should instead extend it.

An all-embracing typology

⁴⁸ Ibid., 528–29.

⁴⁹ This part of Cortez's thesis is hard to sustain given the extensive usage of (ἐφ)άπαξ in Hebrews to describe Christ's atoning action (7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10), which is clearly derived from the Day of Atonement, described as ἄπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ in Exod 30:10 (x2) and Lev 16:34. Cf. *3 Macc* 11:1 (κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἄπαξ); Philo *Spec.* 1.72; *Ebr.* 136; *Gig.* 52; *Legat.* 306; he also speaks of Passover as once-yearly, *Spec.* 2.146, as does *Jub.* 49.7–8, 15. Covenant inauguration, by contrast, is never described as occurring "once-yearly" or even "once." *Jubilees* describes the Festival of Weeks as "once a year" (6.17, 20; cf. 16.13), but it regards this festival as covenant *renewal* and not *inauguration*.

To begin with, let us examine the inconsistencies Cortez identifies. Number (4) states that Hebrews envisages purification occurring *before* the high priest's entrance into the most holy place. Yet the verses cited do not support this claim.⁵⁰ Hebrews 1:3 states that after Christ had effected purification for sins (ποιησάμενος, aorist participle preceding main verb, most likely indicating temporal precedence) he sat down (ἐκάθισεν). This verse reflects Hebrews' deliberate conflation of images of a messianic enthronement based on Ps 110:1 with cultic elements from the Day of Atonement. Significantly, the verse does not imply that Christ entered the heavenly most holy place/throne room *after* providing purification; rather, it does not mention entrance at all and is thus entirely consistent with Hebrews' view of Christ's entrance into heaven occurring *before* purification and session, something which in turn coheres with the OT understanding of the Day of Atonement.⁵¹ As for 9:12, εὐράμενος could imply that Jesus entered the

⁵⁰ Cortez cites Heb 1:3 and 9:7, though the latter says nothing about the sequencing of Christ's atoning work. One other verse which could support this view is 9:12, which will therefore be examined below.

⁵¹ On understanding Hebrews in line with the sacrificial logic of the OT see Aelred Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Achievement of Salvation in the Epistle's Perspectives* (St Meinrad, IN: Grail Publications, 1960), 170–202; Walter Edward Brooks, "The Perpetuity of Christ's Sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JBL* 89 (1970): 205–14 ; Richard D. Nelson, "'He Offered Himself': Sacrifice in Hebrews," *Int* 57 (2003): 251–65; David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NovTSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2011). Cody and Brooks have a rather vague notion of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice "becoming eternal" on his entrance to heaven, whereas Hebrews holds together both the decisively finished nature of that sacrifice and its ongoing effects (including Christ's intercession, Heb 7:25). For an outline of the wider context and implications of a sequential understanding of the atonement see Michael Kibbe, "Is It

(heavenly) sanctuary *after he had found* redemption; in fact, however, the aorist participle can indicate subsequent action, especially when it follows the main verb.⁵² All of the other inconsistencies Cortez identifies are cases where Hebrews integrates aspects of other cultic festivals or ceremonies into its account of Jesus' atoning action. That is to say, these should be considered not as inconsistent with the Day of Atonement, nor as based exclusively on covenant inauguration, but as deliberately combining various images. This brings us to a discussion of typology.

Typology serves as a heuristic device for understanding the way in which biblical authors drew correspondences between a (scripturally) recorded event, figure, or institution and a more recent one, in order to explicate the significance certainly of the latter, and also (possibly) of the former.⁵³ Although it is a modern term, it draws on ancient usage of the τύπος word-group to describe such relationships. It is not claimed that NT authors used terminology of τύπος and αντίτυπος in a technical sense, but it is plausible that the kinds of relationship it describes would have been perceived by first century Christians.⁵⁴ While typology requires the identification of analogies or correspondences between two entities, it does not require similarity in every respect; in fact, absolute identity would entail not so much a typological relationship as one of

Finished? When Did It Start? Hebrews, Priesthood, and Atonement in Biblical, Systematic, and Historical Perspective.,” *JTS* 65 (2014): 25–61.

⁵² Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 385–87, esp. 387; so NIV, NRSV, ESV.

⁵³ Christopher A. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfector of Faith: Jesus' Faith as the Climax of Israel's History in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (WUNT 2.338; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 7–8.

⁵⁴ Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology*, 19–54, esp. 32–54 elaborates a careful typology based on the usage of τύπος and cognate terms in the NT.

simple iteration. Indeed, G. B. Caird noted that the exegetical procedure of Hebrews involves expounding OT texts so as to reveal a “self-confessed inadequacy” out of which typology emerges, an insight which has been affirmed by more recent scholars.⁵⁵

The antitype thus does not need to correspond in a complete or systematic way to its type; given this, the Day of Atonement can continue to be understood as a type, in line with the view of most commentators. The importance of analogy but not absolute correspondence also allows other ceremonies to function typologically, including aspects of covenant inauguration as noted by Cortez. Most significantly for this essay, Caird’s observation can be applied to Heb 9:1–10: if the whole of the tabernacle in its arrangement and service functions as a type for the atonement achieved by Christ, we should expect to see analogies and “self-confessed inadequacies” in *both its parts*. This is precisely what we do see: the priests’ service is unlimited temporally, but spatially restricted to the first tent; the high priest’s service is unlimited spatially – he can access the most holy place – but temporally it is restricted to just one day in the year. Similarly, the outer tent is visible, but does not provide access to the very presence of God, while the inner part is accessed once a year, but it cannot be seen. Put another way, tabernacle service is neither sufficiently continuous, nor sufficiently once-for-all; it makes God’s presence neither fully visible nor fully accessible. In these ways its inadequacy is revealed, and thus it points beyond itself; but it points to something *analogous to, yet greater than itself*. Continuity and singularity cohere perfectly in Christ: 9:12 states that

⁵⁵ George B. Caird, “Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *CJT* 5 (1959): 44–51; cf. Stephen Motyer, “The Psalm Quotations of Hebrews 1: A Hermeneutic-Free Zone?,” *TynBul* 50 (1999): 12–13, 21–22 who builds on Caird’s suggestion. Richardson, *Pioneer*, 8 notes that typology involves “contrast, superiority, and finality.” Cf. also Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology*, 78–89, 96.

he entered *once for all* into the most holy place, thus obtaining an *eternal* redemption.⁵⁶
Because Christ's sacrifice is perfect, its effects are permanent.⁵⁷

New covenant worship as a secondary antitype

Given that repetition in the old covenant can have a positive and valuable function in Hebrews' thought, as has been argued with regard to Heb 9:6, what are the implications for the worship of God's people in the new covenant? Hebrews 13:15 exhorts the audience to worship in overtly cultic terms: "through [Christ] let us offer a sacrifice of praise διὰ παντός to God, that is the fruit of lips that confess his name."⁵⁸ Like its usual English translation "continually" διὰ παντός can have the nuance of "unceasingly," "without a break," or it can be used in the sense "regularly."⁵⁹ As noted above, the

⁵⁶ In his voluminous exegesis of Hebrews John Owen makes this comment on Heb 9:6: "Now all this daily service was typical. And that which it did represent was the *continual application* of the benefits of the *sacrifice and whole mediation* of Christ unto the church here in this world." (Emphasis added.) John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ed. W. H. Goold; 7 vols., reprint of the 1855 edn [London: Johnstone & Hunter]; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 6.228.

⁵⁷ This same correspondence between the one sufficient sacrifice of Christ and the perpetuity of its effects is found in 10:12 and 14.

⁵⁸ The term θυσία αἰνέσεως, or the two words in close proximity, refers to a physical sacrifice of thanksgiving in Lev 7:12–15; 2 Chron 29:31; 33:16; 1 Macc 4:56; Jer 17:26; the term could refer to the thanksgiving sacrifice or simply to praise in Pss 50:14, 23 (LXX 49:14, 23); 107:22 (LXX 106:22); 116:17 (LXX 115:8). Praise is contrasted with sacrifice in Ps 51:15–16 (LXX 50:17–18). For καρπὸς χειλῶν in the context of sacrifice, cf. Hos 14:3 LXX.

⁵⁹ Both senses are found in Hebrews: "ceaselessly" in 2:15 and "regularly" in 9:6 (see above). Jukka Thurén, *Das Lobopfer der Hebräer: Studien zum Aufbau und Anliegen von Hebräerbrieff 13* (Acta Academiae Aboensis 47.1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1973), 172.

occurrence in 9:6 comes directly from the LXX translation of the term תמיד which often describes the regular morning and evening sacrifices and from which their name *tamid* derives. In a cultic context διὰ παντός is thus simply descriptive of the *tamid*, and this means that in 13:15 – with its language of offering a sacrifice to God – we should also read the term in this sense. It is moreover striking that διὰ παντός is not found in any other NT exhortation to pray or praise continually or without ceasing.⁶⁰ Taken together, these observations suggest that the exhortation “to offer a sacrifice of praise διὰ παντός to God” would have been heard as an injunction to pray *at the times of the regular daily sacrifice*.⁶¹

This contention is made more likely by widespread evidence that Jews in the Second Temple period, especially when separated from Jerusalem, prayed at these times. The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel when he is praying “at the time of the evening sacrifice” (כע מנחת-ערב / ἐν ὥρᾳ θυσίας ἑσπερινῆς, Dan 9:21), just as Judith also prays at the exact same time as the incense is being offered in the temple (ἦν ἄρτι προσφερόμενον ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ θυμίαμα τῆς ἑσπέρας, Jdt 9:1; cf. Ps 141:2). In Acts the followers of the Way appear to align their times of prayer with those of the sacrifice: in Acts 3:1 Peter and John go up to the Temple “at the hour of prayer, the ninth [hour];” most strikingly, in Acts 10:2–3 Cornelius is introduced as a

⁶⁰ Ibid. See Eph 6:18 (διὰ πάσης); 1 Thess 5:17 (ἀδιαλείπτως); 2 Thess 1:11 (πάντοτε); cf. Rom 1:9–10.

⁶¹ “[T]he author of Hebrews urges his readers to let praise be their sacrifice – regularly, like the *Tamid* service of the former temple.” Hamm, “Praying ‘Regularly,’” 52. He shows that διὰ παντός in Luke 24:53 and Acts 10:2 also has a cultic connotation.

pious man who prays διὰ παντός, and in the very next phrase an angel appears to him *at the ninth hour* (cf. 10:30).⁶²

It thus becomes clear that Hebrews envisages its audience as participating in a heavenly cult with a new kind of repeated sacrifice. This regular praise is enabled by and is the appropriate response to the perpetual effects of the one sacrifice of Christ. It is founded however not simply on the atoning work of Christ, but on this work *in fulfilment and continuation* of the old covenant cultus which prepared it: “Die ganze ständige Liturgie des alten Bundes wird im ständigen Lobopfer der Christen erfüllt.”⁶³ I argued above that the priestly *tamid* service in the outer sanctuary (9:6) is an integral part of the typology which Hebrews develops, and not just a foil for the high priestly once-a-year entrance into the most holy place (9:7). This typological potential of the regular tabernacle cult finds further confirmation in the ongoing praise and deeds of Christians in 13:15–16. In Hebrews itself, and in its understanding of salvation history, the former prepares and finds its fruition in the latter.⁶⁴

⁶² As Hamm notes, “The picture of a Roman army officer praying without interruption is scarcely plausible.” Ibid., 51. Cf. the practice of praying “at night and in the day” in 1 Thess 3:10; Luke 18:7; 1 Tim 5:5; 2 Tim 1:3. This tendency, already established in Second Temple Judaism, is developed in the morning prayer of the synagogue liturgy, *Siddur beit Yaakov*, which speaks of the fulfilment of the *tamid* in the speech of lips. Backhaus, *Hebräerbrief*, 475.

⁶³ Thurén, *Lobopfer*, 174; cf. Lane, *Hebrews*: “In v 15 διὰ παντός connotes simply and succinctly that the whole continuous liturgy of the old covenant is fulfilled in the continual praise offering of Christians.”

⁶⁴ “Die Formel wird also in 9:6 nicht ohne Bezug auf ‘unsere’ Liturgie gebraucht. Der Verfasser hat schon unseren vollkommenen Gottesdienst in den Gedanken, wenn er den unvollkommenen täglichen Gottesdienst des alten Bundes beschreibt.” Thurén, *Lobopfer*, 174 n. 605.

Conclusion: Repetition in Covenants Old and New

The regular cultic service of the Levitical priests in Hebrews 9:6 does not serve as an indication of the imperfection of the old order. Instead it forms part of an intricate typological comparison between the tabernacle system as a whole and Christ in whom that system finds fulfilment. It indicates the desirability and, after Christ's coming, the full availability of ongoing access to God. This point would have been deeply pertinent to the letter's audience. Whether Hebrews pre- or postdates Jerusalem's destruction, its probable Diaspora destination suggests that in either case its original readers were separated to some degree from the regular worship that took place in the temple. The letter consoles its addressees that this distance is in fact not a problem, and exhorts them to perpetuate and extend the regular worship of God in synchrony with the temple and on the basis of the reality and accessibility of the heavenly cult. Hebrews 13:15 is not "spiritualization" or metaphor; rather, it affirms that through Christ their high priest the audience can participate in the *tamid* wherever they are. This regular praise is enabled by and is the appropriate response to the perpetual effects of the one sacrifice of Christ. This consideration demonstrates that repetition – and not just repetition, but repetition which is appropriately described as liturgical and cultic – has a central place in the life of God's people.

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