



## Can Sacrifice be Literary?

### Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Inauguration Day Episode

**Wednesday, February 17**  
**12:00PM – 1:00PM**  
**RSVP for Online Access**

One of the most enduring conclusions in pentateuchal studies is that the legal and narrative elements of the Pentateuch have distinct origins. Yet this argument is based more on outdated ideas of what counts as “literary” than on any textual or compositional evidence. In this talk, I will present an example from my recent book (*The Story of Sacrifice: Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Source*). I will argue that the seemingly non-standard ritual procedures in Lev 9 can only be understood when read in light of the section’s broader narrative context, and that the adaptation of the ritual procedure in Lev 9 then becomes the catalyst for a narrative scene in Lev 10. I use this example to highlight two main points: 1) the pentateuchal priestly source is characterized in large part by the mutual dependence of its ritual and narrative materials, and 2) by foregrounding the possibilities of narrative artistry, we can generate new insights about religious thought and literary composition in the ancient world.

**Liane Feldman** is an Assistant Professor in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University. Her work focuses primarily on priestly literature, with an emphasis on the literary representation of sacrifice and sacred space in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature. She is the author of *The Story of Sacrifice: Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Source* (Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

