Hymn and History in Exod 15: Observations on the Relationship between Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative in the Song of the Sea

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1. Introduction

The Exodus has undergone a wide reception in the poetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. The best-known example is the Song of the Sea in Exod 15. Following the narrative account in Exod 14, the song praises the divine deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. However, the divine deeds that are glorified go far beyond the literary setting and extend to the biblical period of the entry into the land. Yhwh is depicted as a warrior god who leads his people to his holy mountain, the place from where he rules as divine king. As such, the Song of the Sea contains not only a number of linkages to the Hexateuchal narrative, it is also influenced by the Canaanite myth, traces of which are frequently encountered in the Book of Psalms.

Though the various parallels both to the Hexateuchal narrative and the Book of Psalms have been widely acknowledged, scholarship has not yet undertaken to investigate fully the character of the relationship between hymn and history in Exod 15.[1] This will be attempted in the following contribution. Starting point of my observations is a literary critical and redaction historical analysis of Exod 15, which demonstrates that the song is not a unified composition, but rather the product of a longer literary growth. The second part of my paper investigates the extent to which the literary genesis has been influenced by references to poetic and narrative texts respectively. Finally, the results will allow for some concluding remarks on the idea of history in the Song of the Sea and its importance for the reformulation of biblical history in the Old Testament poetic texts.

2. Textual Observations

2.1. Literary Critical Analysis

Strictly speaking, the poetic account of the events at the Red Sea in Exod 15:1-21 comprises two poems praising Yhwh's act, namely the Song of

[1] However, some fruitful contributions should be mentioned here: S. Norin has already been well aware of the links with other texts from the Psalms or the Hexateuchal narrative (cf. S. Norin, *Er spaltete das Meer: Die Auszugsüberlieferung in Psalmen und Kult des Alten Israel* (CB.OT 9; Lund, 1977), 77-107); more recently the study by B.D. Russell should be mentioned (*The Song of the Sea: The Date and Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1-21*, Studies in Biblical Literature 101; New York, 2007). C. Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung* (Habilition; Göttingen, 2010), 381-395, though, investigates the various literary links with the Exodus narrative.

the Sea initiated by Moses[2] in V 1b-18 and the Song of Miriam in V 21b. Thereby, the hymnic praise of the Song of Miriam in V 21b (שירו ליהוה כי גאה גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים) has a close parallel in the introduction of the Song of the Sea V 1b (אשירה ליהוה כי גאה גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים) and thus frames the combination of both texts. The short hymn glorifies Yhwh who is exceedingly glorious and has thrown horse and its rider into the sea. A prose transition in V 19-21a links the two songs, while a similar prose introduction in V 1a provides a joint to the preceding narrative account in Exod 13:17-14:31.

Obviously, the literary relationship between the Song of the Sea and the Song of Miriam represents the crucial literary problem. As is clearly demonstrated by the identical wording, one of the songs should be given literary priority. Here the evidence suggests that V 1b has to be understood as a resumption of V 21b in order to place the Song of the Sea before the Song of Miriam. Apparently, a later author did not want Moses to be inferior to Miriam and thus attributed to him a similar praise of Yhwh, relegating the Song of Miriam to second place.[3]

However, the literary unity of the Song of the Sea as a whole also has to be questioned. The main corpus of the song in V 1b-18 consists of two parts: The first part in V 1b-11 praises the supremacy of Yhwh over the enemy and draws heavily on the events at the Red Sea. Its basic literary layer can be found in V 1-3, 6-11a* and has later been supplemented by V 4, V 5 and minor additions in V 8bβ and V 11b.[4] Moreover, the mentioning of the Israelites (ובני ישראל) next to Moses in V 1b is a secondary insertion, which explains why the plural subject disagrees with the singular verbal form ישיר. The first part can be divided further into a hymnic introduction V 1b-3 and a poetic unit in V 6-11a* that is mainly composed of regular bicola. While the hymnic introduction invokes the praise of Yhwh and introduces him as a mighty warrior (איש מלחמה, V 3), the poetry

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[2] The mention of the Israelites in V 1b represents a secondary insertion, cf. in the following.

[3] Furthermore, the differing of the introductory verbal forms points to this direction of literary dependency: While the Song of Miriam is opened with the summons שירו that fits well into the literary setting, V 1b starts with the liturgical formula אשירה. This shows an acquisition of the literary preceding hymn by the language of prayer. Scholarship takes a nearly unanimous point of view in this question with only H. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart: Eine Theologie der Psalmen* (FRLANT 148; Göttingen, 1989), 99f., opting for the literary priority of 15:21b.

[4] V 4 represents a doublet to V 1b varying the assertion that Yhwh has cast his enemies into the sea, while V 5 anticipates the sinking of the foe from V 8, 10 (similarly S. Norin, *Er spaltete*, 93-95; 98-100, and J. Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen* (FRLANT 141; Göttingen, 1987), 98). V 8aβ and V 11b can mainly be discarded *metri causa*.

further dwells on this topic and describes the supremacy of Yhwh over the foe culminating in stating his supremacy over other gods (V 11a). The second part of the song in V 12-18 deals with leading the people to the sanctuary, where Yhwh will reign as king forever. The basic layer comprises V 13 and V 17f., while V 12 and V 14-16 represent later additions.[5]

The clear bisection of the Song of the Sea raises the question as to the literary relationship between V 1b-3, 6-11a* and V 13, 17f. There is no denying the fact that the two parts deal with different events in the history of the people, which points to a redactional unity rather than an original unity. Not only exceed V 13, 17f. with the topic of entry into the land the exposition of V 1b in a thematic way, but the verses also represent a surplus in view of the self-contained part V 6-11a*. Therefore, it can be assumed that the original Song of the Sea in V 1b-3, 6-11a* has been secondarily supplemented with V 13, 17f.

Finally, the prose joint in V 19-21a has to be considered. While V 20, 21a represent the original introduction to the hymnic praise of V 21b,[6] V 19 seems to be rather redundant. The verse does not introduce anything new but rather recalls the events at the Red Sea, thus providing a literary setting for the following Song of Miriam in V 20f. Hence it has to be seen in connection with the continuation in V 13, 17f., as only the addition of the Zion topic necessitates the back reference in order to shift back Miriam's praise to the banks of the Red Sea. At last, the collective reworking that shaped the introduction in 15:1b has also left its traces in the exposition of the Song of Miriam: The masculine pronoun להם in 15:21a only makes sense as secondary reference to the group of Israelites from V 1b, whose praise is answered by Miriam's song.

After having established sufficient evidence for a longer literary growth, the following account will describe the literary genesis of Exod 15:1-21 as a whole.

2.2. Tradition and Redaction

The *nucleus* of Exod 15:1-21 is the Song of Miriam in 15:20f.* praising the might of Yhwh, who has thrown horse and rider into the Sea (סוס ורכבו רמה בים, V 21b). Its prose introduction in V 20.21a* depicts the women as meeting the victorious men and initiating the glorification. However, though the divine praise fits well with the preceding victory over the

[5] The addition of V 12 has to be seen in connection with the supplementation of V 11b, whereas V 14-16 disrupt the connection between the arrival at the Zion in V 13 and V 17 that further dwells on the Zion topic (cf. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 195-107).

[6] The apposition אחות אהרו in V 20 represents a secondary bonding that makes the Exodus a family affair.

Egyptian enemy, the setting as a victory procession does not correspond to the scenery at the Red Sea, where the people as a whole have been the subject of rescue. Furthermore, the description of Yhwh's action lacks specific reference to the narrative account; even more so as horses (סוס) are only mentioned in post-priestly additions within Exod 14 (14:9, 23).[7] Thus, Exod 14 and its poetic counterpart in Exod 15 do not share any literary links in their respective earliest literary layers. It can therefore be suggested that Exod 15:21b represents an older tradition that has been combined with the narrative account of Exod 14 at a later stage. Praising the glorification of Yhwh (כי גאה גאה), a *Sitz im Leben* in the temple theology can be assumed.[8] Such a setting, however, is by no means an indication of the antiquity of the Exodus creed. What is praised here is not the concrete action of Yhwh at the Red Sea, but his divine kingship that is manifested in his supremacy over his enemies. The horses and their riders are mere wild-card characters, whose identification has long since slipped into the obscurity of tradition.

Supplemented with its prose introduction, the cultic hymn is given the context of a victory scene and attributed to Miriam. Later on, the tradition piece 15:20f* has been used by the author of the Exodus narrative and was placed at the end of the pre-priestly account, thus giving the cultic praise a life setting at the Red Sea. In the next step, the original Song of the Sea in 15:1-3, 6-11a* is set before the Song of Miriam by using the actual hymn of 15:21b as means of introduction in 15:1b. Apparently, the short hymn by Miriam provided the reason to insert a longer poetic praise at precisely this place. However, the Song of the Sea clearly outlines different priorities: First of all, the praise of Yhwh is now attributed to Moses, the leading man of the Exodus narrative, while Miriam's song becomes a mere antiphon. Moreover, the praise is transformed into a hymn of an individual (אשירה, V 1) with elements of a thanksgiving (cf. V 2). Thus, the poetry is shaped as a psalm that can be re-used over and over again. In view of the content of praise, Yhwh's victory over his enemies undergoes a substantial embellishment and is interpreted in terms of his supremacy over the other gods.

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[7] The literary layering in the narrative account of the sea miracle in Exod 14:15-31 is well established. Since Nöldeke, the demarcation of the priestly parts 14:15-18, 21*, 22f., 16, 27*, 28f. is virtually certain (cf. T. Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* (Kiel, 1869), 45). The remaining text is divided into the pre-priestly account of the sea miracle and post-priestly additions.

[8] Cf. F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (WMANT 32; Neukirchen, 1969), 19-24; Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 100-102; C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen, 1993), 343.

Considering the major continuation in 15:13, 17-19 and the further additions in 15:11b-12; 15:14-16; 15:4f.; 15:8aβ, the relative chronology is difficult to establish. As V 13, 17-19 are presupposed by the majority of the other additions, these verses presumably form the first supplement to the Song of the Sea. Their insertion creates a historical account that goes beyond the literary setting of the original song. While the people are still on the bank of the sea according to Exod 14:30; 15:22, the continuation already knows of their successful arrival at Mount Zion. Close in time to this insertion (or even as part of it), V 4 was added. Like V 19, the verse has a number of references to Exod 14, thus paving the way for an understanding that identifies the nameless foe in the Song of the Sea as the Egyptian adversary. A later author inserted V 11b-12 in order to supplement the historical account with an allusion to the Datan/Abiram-Episode. By again referring anew to the "right hand" of Yhwh (ימינך, V 12), the extermination of the rioter comes to be paralleled with the victory over the Egyptians, who have similarly been destroyed by the divine right hand (ימינך, V 6). As V 5 prepares for the parallelisation of Yhwh's punishment, the verse might also be assigned to this redactional reworking.[9]

The last major reworking was done by inserting V 14-16 into the second part of the Song of the Sea. Theses verses complement the reaction of the nations in view of Israel's entry into the land and display various links with the preceding literary version of the song.[10] In this way, the nations are shaped in great similarity to the foe of the original song and additionally, the march of the Israelites through the nations takes features of their march through the divided waters of the Red Sea. Similarly, the insertion of V 8aβ uses the term "standing up in a heap" (נצבו כמו נד) to describe the floods when destroying the enemy. The phrase represents a fixed literary term that is normally used for the crossing of the Jordan (cf. Jos 3:13, 16) so that the march through the waters of the Red Sea becomes transparent for the crossing of the Jordan. To sum up, V 8aβ, 14-16 as a whole belong to a redaction that uses the divine praise of Exod 15 as a paradigm extending to the events of the entry into the land.

Finally, the collective interpretation in 15:1*, 21* has to be considered. It seems safe to assume that this reworking presupposes the post-priestly

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[9] The synonym parallelism in 15:5 sets the covering with floods (V 5a) next to the going down into the depths (V 5b) and thus prepares for the fate of Datan and Abiram who are swallowed by the earth (V 12).

[10] For example, the verses are inserted into the context by the resumption of עם זו גאלת („the people whom you redeemed", V 13) in form of עם זו קנית („the people whom you acquired, V 16). Furthermore, while in V 5 the enemies sank „like a stone" (כמו אבן), in V 16 the nations become still as a stone (ידמו כאבן), thus taking the place of the foe from the original Song of the Sea.

ending of the Red Sea episode in 14:31, where the people are said to believe in Yhwh and his servant Moses. Turning the Song of Moses into a thanksgiving song of the people following their rescue at the Sea, the collective reworking can be understood as a redactional answer to the creed in Exod 14:31.

The preceding account of the literary genesis has clearly demonstrated that the understanding of history and the reception of existing literary tradition plays an important part in the literary growth of the song. The following part will further investigate the different pretexts that are referred to during the process.

3. Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative

In view of the Song of Miriam, it has already been demonstrated that the hymn has a cultic *Sitz im Leben* in the temple theology. Praising Yhwh as being glorious (גאה גאה) is an integral part of this theology and strongly recalls Ps 93, in which the divine king Yhwh is characterised by being robed in glory (גאות לבש, 93:1). Thus, the author who integrated the hymn into the Exodus narrative not only created a perfect ending for the events at the Red Sea, but he also glorified the victory as deed of the mighty god-king.

As far as the original Song of the Sea in Exod 15:1-3, 6-11a* is concerned, the influence of two different backgrounds can be noticed. Firstly, motifs and coined issues from the psalms are referred to, whereby the influence of Canaanite mythology clearly prevails. Secondly, the Exodus narrative and especially the account of the events at the Red Sea in Exod 13:17-14:31 had a considerable impact on the poetic praise in Exod 15. Already the introductory statement of faith in 15:2 shows the double influence, as textual linkages both to Ps 118 and Exod 14:13 exist. Apparently, the designation of the events at the Red Sea as "deliverance" (ישועה) in Exod 14:13 recalls associations to the thanksgiving Ps 118 that was subsequently quoted in Exod 15:2a (עזי וזמרת יה ויהי לי לישועה; = Ps 118:14) and 15:2b (זה אלי ואנוהו אלהי אבי וארממנהו; cf. אלי אתה ואורך אלהי ארממך, Ps 118:28).[11] Yet the differing address of Yhwh in terms of "God of my father" (אלהי אבי) in Exod 15:2b can be explained as a reference to the narrative of Moses' appointment in Ex 3:6, where God introduces himself as "God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (אלהי אביך אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב). This scene is further alluded to when Exod 15:3 stresses the divine name: "Yhwh is his name" (יהוה שמו). The statement reminds us of Moses' question of Exod 3:13 and

[11] The use of the short form יה, which is singular in Exod 15:2, while it occurs frequently in Ps 118 (V 5; 14; 17; 18; 19), shows that the dependency runs from Ps 118 to Exod 15 and not the other way round.

once and for all closes the discussion about the divine name.[12] These linkages to the beginning of the Exodus narrative demonstrate that the god who is praised in the original Song of the Sea was supposed to be identified with the god who had already introduced himself to both the patriarchs and Moses. However, the divine image is further complemented with characteristics that describe god as divine king and mighty chaos fighter in the psalms. As an example, Exod 15:3 might suffice, where the praise of Yhwh as "warrior" (איש מלחמה) complements the references to Exod 3. This characterisation is borrowed from Ps 24:8, according to which Yhwh's fighting strength establishes his kingship.[13]

In the same manner, the description of Yhwh's victory over the foe in Exod 15:8-10 is clearly shaped by elements of the chaos fight. Yet a decisive change has taken place. The floods are no longer the antagonist of Yhwh as for example in Ps 93 but they are a device in conquering the enemies. The mythical cloak cannot be misunderstood, since the waters are described as "mighty waters" (מים אדירים), thus using the same adjective that usually characterises divine kingship (cf. Ps 93:4). Despite these mythical allusions, the description is also influenced by the narrative account in Exod 14. In the pre-priestly version a strong east wind (ברוח קדם, 14:21aα^{2}β) serves Yhwh when pushing back the sea, while the priestly parts add the notion that Moses divided the waters (בקע, 14:21aα^{1}b). Evidently the meteorological event is in the background of the description of 15:8*, according to which Yhwh turns the waters up in a heap by ways of his scornful blast (ברוח אפיך). While the east wind was transformed into the image of the divine blast, the heaping up of the waters clearly refers to the priestly idea of dividing the waters.[14] Furthermore, the quotation of the foe in 15:9, that they want to pursue (ירד) them, reworks the priestly motif that the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the divided sea (ירד, 14:23). Finally, the notion that the waters covered (כסה) the enemies, succinctly summarises the events described in 14:24-28 (כסה, 14:28). The fate of the Egyptian thus becomes transparent for the fate of the nameless foe of the Song of the Sea.

The tradition historical and literary background demonstrates that the original Song of the Sea in Exod 15:1-3, 6-11a* is an exegesis of the preceding Song of Miriam that had been composed for its current literary

[12] Exod 3:13: But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

[13] The linkage between the two verses is also demonstrated by the textual witnesses that partly adjust the text in Exod 15:3 to Ps 24:8 (cf. the Samaritanus and the Syriaca).

[14] Cf. Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 387.

context.[15] While the Song of Miriam can only be connected to Exod 14 because of its position after the narrative account, the original Song of the Sea displays a number of literary links with and allusions to Exod 14 in its priestly reworked version. These connections clarify that the horses and rider thrown into the waters (15:1b, 21b) can only allude to the army of the Egyptians, while the explanatory statement of the cultic hymn (גאה גאה, 15:1b, 21b) is mainly referred to in those sections that borrow from the imagery found in the Psalms. As the miracle of the Red Sea is merged with elements of Canaanite mythology, it receives a mythical elevation as a mighty deed of the god-king. Speaking of the "myth", however, it should be noted that the author of the original Song of the Sea only used mythological ideas as existent in the psalm compositions.[16] That is clearly demonstrated by the various literary links. Therefore, it seems to be much more appropriate to speak of a temple theological interpretation of the Exodus narrative. This, however, has not been without consequences. When merged with the narrative tradition, the temple theological issues underwent a "historical" transformation: The god-king was identified with Yhwh, who has proven his kingship in acting to the benefit for his people in history; from the time of the patriarchs until the Exodus.

This literary and theological historical development has also affected the subsequent literary genesis of Exod 15, which will be only briefly sketched in the following. As far as the subsequent expansion in 15:4, 13, 17-19 is concerned, the dual background again prevails. V 4 and V 19 serve as a frame and enforce the existing links with Exod 14 by referring to the single units of the Egyptian forces.[17] The main body of the addition, however, is dominated by influence of temple theology. While the guiding statement in 15:13 (נחה) is encountered in passages of the Psalms that compare the people to a flock (cf. Ps 77:21; 78:52f.), it is especially the idea of Yhwh dwelling on his holy mountain that belongs into the realm of the Canaanite myth and has left its traces in the Psalms (cf. Ps 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122). All three designations that are used for the sanctuary in Exod 15:17 have close parallels referring to this background. While "mountain

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[15] This excludes the suggestion that the original Song of the Sea similarly represents an old tradition (cf. Brenner, *Song*, 80, and Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 386. Differently, M. Noth, *Das 2. Buch Mose: Exodus* (ATD 5; Göttingen, 1984), 98; J. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen, 2000), 191, and W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB 2, New York, 1999), 562-568.

[16] See in general R.G. Kratz, *Reste hebräischen Heidentums am Beispiel der Psalmen* (NAWG.PH; Göttingen, 2004), 53-62.

[17] On this see E. Zenger, 'Tradition und Interpretation in Ex XV 1-21', in J.A. Emerton (Hg.), *Congress Volume Vienna 1980* (VT Supp. 32; Leiden, 1981), 452-483, 462, and Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 386.389f.

of your own possession" (הר נהלתך) has a near parallel in the ugaritic Baal cycle ("mountain of my possession" *qdš. b ġr. nḥlty*, KTU 1.3 III,30), the second designation "the place that you made your abode" (מכון לשבתך) has a close parallel in Ps 33:14 (ממכון שבתו), where it refers to Yhwh's dwelling place in the skies. Finally, "sanctuary" (מקדש) is the designation for the holy dwelling place mainly used in the priestly writing and the Book of Ezekiel.[18] Comparable to the Baal myth, the holy dwelling place is a prerequisite for the royal reign. Consequently, Ex 15:18 ends with the proclamation of Yhwh's ever lasting kingship (יהוה ימלך לעלם ועד); a frequently encountered topic in the kingship-psalms (cf. Ps 10:16; 29:10; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1).[19] Apparently, only with the arrival at the holy mountain can Yhwh's kingship adequately be proclaimed, though it is presupposed throughout the events described in Exod 15.

The remaining two insertions in Exod 15 fit this picture well. As mentioned above, 15:11b-12 refer to the Datan/Abiram-episode in Num 16.[20] This seems safe to suggest as the combination of בלע and ארץ in the Hebrew Bible only occurs in the context of punishment of the two rioting men (Num 16:32, 34; cf. Deut 11:6; Ps 106:17) and in Exod 15:12. By referring to this episode, the image of the foe in Exod 15 receives a decisive expansion: Not only will Yhwh prove his supremacy over enemies from the outside, but also riots within his chosen people will be punished accordingly. Furthermore, the existing historical account in Exod 15 is supplemented with another station and the enumeration of Yhwh's deeds is labelled as "wonders" (פלא, V 11).

Finally, there remains the last major insertion in 15:8aβ, 14-16. As demonstrated above, the addition of V 8aβ refers to the crossing of the Jordan and combines the march through the divided Sea with the entry into the land. Thus, the time distance between the two events is annulled and Exodus and entry merge into one salvation historical event. Comparable to this fusion, the guidance through the land in 15:14-16 also receives elements of the crossing of both the Red Sea and the Jordan (cf. the use of עבר in Ex 15:16). However, the foreign nations take the place of the Egyptians and while they are not destroyed, they are seized by tremor in view of Yhwh's might (15:14f.). The motif of trembling is also known

[18] Though the dependency on the Canaanite myth is not so dominant in the last two examples, parallels in the Ugaritic texts also exist (on this cf. Norin, *Er spaltete*, 89f.; F.M. Cross (jun.)/D.N. Freedman, 'The Song of Miriam' (JNES 14, 1955), 237-250, 240).

[19] The differing use of the preformative conjugation in Exod 15:18 should not be given too much importance in view of a starting point of Yhwh's kingship (differently Jeremias, *Königtum*, 100, and Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, 110).

[20] Opposed to this, Noth, *ATD 5*, 99, or Propp, *AncB 2*, 529f., link Exod 15:12 with the demolition of Egypt.

from the idea of Yhwh's kingship (cf. e.g. Ps 48:5f.), however, the wording in Exod 15:14-16 recalls two texts from the context of the entry into the land (Deut 2:25; Jos 2:9, 24).[21] Firstly, Exod 15:14 refers to Deut 2:25 where Yhwh announces that he "will put dread and fear unto the people, when they hear report of you" (אשר ישמעון שמעך ורגזו וחלו מפניך). The author of Exod 15:14 re-uses the verb שמע, which now refers, though, to the report of Yhwh's rescue of his people at the Red Sea. It also leads to dread and fear amongst the nations (שמעו עמים ירגזון חיל). Similarly, Exod 15:15f. quotes from the speech of Rahab in Jos 2, who tells the Israelite scouts that her people are in fear of the Israelites (Jos 2:9, 24). Again, the quotation in Exod 15:15f interprets the reference along the line that not the people give reason to fear but Yhwh and his mighty arm instigate the dread of the nations. To sum up, the quotations from the Hexateuchal narrative are used to emphasise the mighty action of Yhwh and continue to build up the importance of the Exodus as a paradigm for Yhwh's action in general.

4. Hymn and History

On the whole, the fusion of hymn and history in Exod 15:1-21 proves to be a fruitful merge of the literary traditions found in the Psalms and in the Exodus narrative. Its starting point is the insertion of the Song of Miriam that gives the events at the Red Sea a cultic interpretation. Temple theology in all its aspects continues to influence the further literary growth of the poetry in Exod 15, while the references to the literary preceding context in Exod 14 are also strengthened.

Consequently, a twofold development has to be noted: On the one hand, the myth undergoes a historiographical interpretation as the Exodus narrative is interpreted with regard to the image of Yhwh as divine king and chaos fighter. On the other hand, the narrative account is attributed a deeper meaning as the alliance with the temple theology transcends the episode beyond the narrative frame and ascribes to it a paradigmatic impact. A concept of history of salvation emerges that makes the Exodus a key event in the history of Israel and its God. History arises not as the accurate replay of long gone events, but as a means of establishing the timeless relationship between God and his people.

My research so far has shown that a number of historical accounts in the Psalms already know the Song of the Sea and make ample use of the text. Moreover, the praise of Yhwh at the banks of the Red Sea is caused

[21] The dependency clearly runs from the Hexateuch to Exod 15 as the Song displays literary links to both texts, while the two passages are not linked with each other. Furthermore, Exod 15:14-16 shows a clear exegetical intention in view of Deut 2:25 and Jos 2:9, 24.

by a concrete occasion, thus offering an – albeit fictional – *Sitz im Leben* for the merge of hymn and history. This points to the conclusion that Exod 15 figured as the literary birth place of the alliance of hymn and history and might have triggered the literary and theological development of the so-called history psalms.