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

A Structure

1 Introduction

2 Textual Observations

2.1 Literary Critical Analysis

2.2 Tradition and Redaction

3 Temple Theology and Exodus Narrative

4 Hymn and History

B The Research Project and the Paper

The paper presents an abstract of the exposition chapter of my **habilitation project** (working title: "Hymn and History: The Reception of Biblical History in Poetic Texts of the Hebrew Bible"). The research project deals with the historical accounts in poetic literature and investigates why biblical history came to be reformulated in poetic form.

The main focus of the paper is set on the **Song of the Sea** in **Exod 15** that is of great importance for the project outlined. It will be demonstrated that temple theology and narrative tradition are fruitfully merged in this poem, thus creating a paradigm for the further literary and theological development.

The argumentation is divided into **two parts**: Starting point is an analysis of Exod 15:1-21 that investigates the song's literary integrity and traces its literary genesis. The second part deals with the different pretexts that are referred to during the literary growth and focuses on their impact on both form and theology of Exod 15:1-21.

C Main Theses

- The literary nucleus of Exod 15:1-21 is the **Song of Miriam** in 15:20f.* that praises the might of Yhwh. The older tradition incorporates a cultic hymn in V 21b praising the glorification of Yhwh, who has thrown horse and its rider into the sea. At a later stage, the tradition has been combined with the narrative account of Exod 14 and thus was interpreted in view of the events at the Red Sea.
- In a next step, the original **Song of the Sea** in 15:1-3, 6-11a* is set before the Song of Miriam by using the cultic hymn of 15:21b as means of an introduction in 15:1b. The praise of Yhwh is now attributed to Moses and the song is transformed into a hymn of an individual. Yhwh's victory over his enemies undergoes a substantial embellishment and is interpreted in terms of his supremacy over the other gods.
- **Further additions** comprise a significant continuation in 15:4, 13, 17-19 and minor additions in 15:5, 11b-12 and 15:8aβ, 14-16.
- The investigation into the pretexts demonstrates that Exod 15:1-21 is 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 of Exod 15, while the references to the literary preceding context in Exod 14 are also strengthened.

- 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.

D Literary Layering in Exod 15

15:1 אָז יָשִׁיר־מֹשֶׁה׀ [וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל] אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת֮ לַיהוָה֒ וַיֹּאמְרוּ֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר
אָשִׁ֥ירָה לַיהוָה֮ כִּי־גָאֹ֣ה גָּאָ֔ה סוּס֙ וְרֹכְבֹ֔ו רָמָ֥ה בַיָּֽם׃
2 עָזִּ֥י וְזִמְרָ֖ת יָ֑הּ וַיְהִי־לִ֥י לִישׁוּעָ֖ה זֶ֣ה אֵלִ֑י וְאַנְוֵ֙הוּ֙ אֱלֹהֵ֣י אָבִ֔י וַאֲרֹמְמֶ֖נְהוּ׃
3 יְהוָ֖ה אִ֣ישׁ מִלְחָמָ֑ה יְהוָ֖ה שְׁמֹֽו׃
4 מַרְכְּבֹ֤ת פַּרְעֹה֙ וְחֵילֹ֔ו יָרָ֖ה בַּיָּ֑ם וּמִבְחַ֤ר שָׁלִשָׁיו֙ טֻבְּעוּ֙ בְּיַם־סֽוף׃
5 תְּהֹמֹ֣ת יְכַסְיֻ֔מוּ יָרְד֥וּ בִמְצֹולֹ֖ת כְּמֹו־אָֽבֶן׃
6 יְמִינְךָ֣ יְהוָ֔ה נֶאְדָּרִ֖י בַּכֹּ֑חַ יְמִינְךָ֥ יְהוָ֖ה תִּרְעַ֥ץ אוֹיֵֽב׃
7 וּבְרֹ֣ב גְּאוֹנְךָ֔ תַּהֲרֹ֖ס קָמֶ֑יךָ תְּשַׁלַּ֤ח חֲרֹנְךָ֙ יֹאכְלֵ֣מֹו כַּקַּֽשׁ׃
8 וּבְרֽוּחַ֙ אַפֶּ֔יךָ נֶ֥עֶרְמוּ מַ֖יִם [נִצְּב֣וּ כְמֹו־נֵ֑ד נֹזְלִ֖ים] קָפְא֥וּ תְהֹמֹ֖ת בְּלֶב־יָֽם׃
9 אָמַ֤ר אוֹיֵב֙ אֶרְדֹּ֣ף אַשִּׂ֔יג אֲחַלֵּ֥ק שָׁלָ֖ל תִּמְלָאֵ֣מֹו נַפְשִׁ֑י אָרִ֤יק חַרְבִּי֙ תֹּורִישֵׁ֣מֹו יָדִֽי׃
10 נָשַׁ֤פְתָּ בְרוּחֲךָ֙ כִּסָּ֣מֹו יָ֔ם צָֽלְל֖וּ כַּעֹופֶ֑רֶת בְּמַ֖יִם אַדִּירִֽים׃
11 מִֽי־כָמֹ֤כָה בָּאֵלִם֙ יְהוָ֔ה מִ֥י כָמֹ֖כָה נֶאְדָּ֣ר בַּקֹּ֑דֶשׁ
נֹורָ֥א תְהִלֹּ֖ת עֹשֵׂ֥ה פֶֽלֶא׃
12 נָטִ֥יתָ יְמִינְךָ֖ תִּבְלָעֵ֥מֹו אָֽרֶץ׃
13 נָחִ֥יתָ בְחַסְדְּךָ֖ עַם־זֹ֣ו גָּאָ֑לְתָּ נֵהַלְתָּ֥ בְעָזְּךָ֖ אֶל־נְוֵ֥ה קָדְשֶֽׁךָ׃
14 שָׁמְע֥וּ עַמִּ֖ים יִרְגָּזֻ֑ון חִיל֙ אָחַ֣ז יֹשְׁבֵ֔י פְּלָֽשֶׁת׃
15 אָ֣ז נִבְהֲלוּ֙ אַלּוּפֵ֣י אֱדֹ֔ום אֵילֵ֥י מֹואָ֖ב יֹאחֲזֵ֑מֹו רָעֲד֙ נָמֹ֣גוּ כָּל֔ יֹשְׁבֵ֖י כְּנָֽעַן׃
16 תִּפֹּ֤ל עֲלֵיהֶם֙ אֵימָ֣תָה֔ וָפָ֑חַד בִּגְדֹ֣ל זְרֹועֲךָ֔ יִדְּמ֖וּ כָּאָ֣בֶן
עַד־יַעֲבֹ֤ר עַמְּךָ֙ יְהוָ֔ה עַד־יַעֲבֹ֖ר עַם־זֹ֥ו קָנִֽיתָ׃
17 תְּבִאֵ֣מֹו וְתִטָּעֵ֔מֹו בְּהַ֖ר נַחֲלָתְךָ֑ מָכֹ֤ון לְשִׁבְתְּךָ֙ פָּעַ֣לְתָּ יְהוָ֔ה מִקְדָּ֖שׁ אֲדֹנָ֥י כֹּונְנ֖וּ יָדֶֽיךָ׃
18 יְהוָ֥ה׀ יִמְלֹ֖ךְ לְעֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃
19 כִּ֣י בָ֗א סוּס֙ פַּרְעֹ֣ה בְּרִכְבֹּ֔ו וּבְפָרָשָׁ֑יו בַּיָּ֗ם וַיָּ֨שֶׁב יְהוָ֤ה עֲלֵהֶם֙ אֶת־מֵ֣י הַיָּ֔ם וּבְנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל
הָלְכ֥וּ בַיַּבָּשָׁ֖ה בְּתֹ֥וךְ הַיָּֽם׃ ף
20 וַתִּקַּ֞ח מִרְיָ֣ם הַנְּבִיאָ֗ה [אֲחֹ֤ות אַהֲרֹן֙] אֶת־הַתֹּ֣ף בְּיָדָ֔הּ וַתֵּצֶ֥אןָ כָל־הַנָּשִׁ֖ים אַחֲרֶ֑יהָ בְּתֻפִּ֖ים
וּבִמְחֹלֹֽת׃
21 וַתַּ֣עַן [לָהֶ֔ם] מִרְיָ֖ם שִׁ֣ירוּ לַיהוָ֑ה כִּי־גָאֹ֥ה גָּאָ֖ה סוּס֥ וְרֹכְבֹ֖ו רָמָ֥ה בַיָּֽם׃ ס