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Psalm 114 as a Hymn to the Creator of Israel

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Psalm 114 as a Hymn to the Creator of Israel

Abstract

Psalm 114, as a part of the so-called Egyptian Hallel (Pss 113–118), occupies a special place within it, serving as a compositional element that could be called a “Hymn to the Creator of Israel.” The lexical and grammatical structures employed indicate that the author intended to actualize events from Israel’s history, which have been kept alive in the collective memory through the liturgical celebration of Passover and a certain kind of national pride. The aim of this article, through the exegesis and literary analysis of Psalm 114, is to demonstrate with this example the literary structure of the “Hymn to the Creator of Israel” as well as the significance the Psalms have for “giving birth” and maintaining the national identity of the Chosen People.

Keywords: Psalm 114, The Book of Psalms, Hymn to the Creator of Israel, national identity, literary analysis

Psalm 114 jako „Hymn do Stwórcy Izraela”

Abstrakt

Psalm 114 jako część tzw. Hallelu egipskiego (Ps 113–118) zajmuje w nim szcze- gólne miejsce, pełniąc rolę kompozycyjnego elementu, który może zostać nazwany „Hymnem do Stwórcy Izraela”. Zastosowane w nim konstrukcje leksykalne i gramatyczne wskazują na to, że zamiarem autora była aktualizacja wydarzeń z historii Izraela, żywych w zbiorowej świadomości dzięki liturgicznej celebracji Paschy oraz swoistej narodowej dumie. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest, dzięki przeprowadzonej egzegezie i literackiej analizie Psalmu 114, ukazanie na jego przykładzie struktury literackiej „Hymnu do Stwórcy Izraela” oraz znaczenia, jakie Psalmy mają dla „zro- dzenia” i utrzymania tożsamości narodowej Ludu Wybranego.

Slowa kluczowe: Psalm 114, Księga Psalmów, Hymn do Stwórcy Izraela, tożsamość narodowa, analiza literacka

Psalm 114¹ is the subject of various studies because of its present location in the Hebrew Psalter, as it is a part of the so-called Egyptian Hallel (Pss 113–118).² However, it is difficult to put it into one of the Psalms' categories. L. Alonso Schökel and C. Carniti in their commentary showed that “[n]o one will doubt that this psalm is a hymn of praise to God for the liberation from Egypt; the fact is, however, that this hymn is independent of the traditional canons of the genre. There is no invitation for participants, nor a dedication to the Lord, nor a formula of motivation.... We know that this psalm (merged by the ancient versions with the following one) has traditionally been sung and continues to be sung as an Easter hymn; however, we do not know if it was born for such a purpose or when this tradition began.”³

The merging of the psalms in the Hallel is so deep that ever since the Talmud there has been a fierce discussion over whether the word הַלְלִיָּה defines the beginning or the end of a psalm (cf. bPes 117). Even if we can trace four Hallels in the Psalms (Pss 105–107, Pss (111–)113–118, Pss 135–136 and Pss 146–150), the Qumran discoveries showed that there was an alternative sequence of the psalms; this does not apply, however, to the Egyptian Hallel.⁴ Furthermore, neither in the *Aleppo Codex* nor in the *Codex Leningradensis* is there a division between Ps 113 and Ps 114 as well as Ps 114 and Ps 115, the former being visible in the omission of the Hebrew cardinal

¹ The author follows the Hebrew numeration of the Psalms (not to be confused with the *Codex Leningradensis* numeration, as will be shown below).

² Cf. E. Hayes, *The Unity of the Egyptian Hallel: Psalms 113–118*, “Bulletin for Biblical Research” 9 (1999), pp. 145–156; G.T.M. Prinsloo, *Unit Delimitation in the Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113–118). An Evaluation of Different Traditions*, in: *Unit Delimitation in Biblical Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Literature*, eds. M.C.A. Korpel, J. Oesch, Pericope 4, Leiden 2003, pp. 232–263; J. Gärtner, *Exodus Psalm 114 – the hermeneutical centre of the so-called Egyptian Hallel?*, in: *Exodus. Rezeptionen in deuterokanonischer und frühjüdischer Literatur*, hrsg. J. Gärtner, B. Schmitz, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 32, Berlin 2016, p. 71–88; S. Gillingham, *The Egyptian Hallel. Narrative and Liturgy, and the Formation of the Hebrew Psalter*, in: *The Formation of the Hebrew Psalter. The Book of Psalms Between Ancient Versions, Material Transmission and Canonical Exegesis*, ed. G. Barbiero, M. Pavan, J. Schnocks, FAT 151, Tübingen 2021, pp. 347–366; J. Gärtner, *Das ägyptische Hallel. Eine Untersuchung zu Theologie und Komposition der Psalmen 113–118*, Göttingen 2023.

³ L. Alonso Schökel, C. Carniti, *I Salmi*, Roma 2007, II, p. 541 (own translation).

⁴ In the scroll 11QPs^a the sequence goes as follows: 101, 102, 103(104?), 109, 118, 104, 147, 105, 146, 148, 121–130, 132, 119, 135, 136, 118 (some verses in changed order), 145, non-canonical part, 139, 137, 138, non-canonical part (including Sirach 51), 93, 141, 133, 144, non-canonical part, 142, 143, 149, 150, non-canonical part, 140, 134, 151 (cf. E. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls. Transcriptions and Textual Variants*, VTSuppl 134, Leiden–Boston 2010, pp. 694–726. Here we can see three Hallels (147–105–146–148; 135–136, 149–150), while Psalms 113–117 are entirely absent from the scroll. From the fragments 4QPs^e, 4QPs^o and 11QPs^d a connection between Ps 114 and Ps 115 as well as Ps 115 and Ps 116 is seen (cf. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, op. cit., pp. 677–678).

number on the margin, the latter – apparent from the lack of the break in the text (the next psalm commences in the same line) as well as the absence of הַלְלוּ־יְהָה.⁵

The aim of this essay is not to prove the unity of this part of the Bible, but – having taken that unity as a premise – to show the purpose of inserting the eight verses known as Psalm 114 into this structure. In the first part, a literary analysis of Ps 114 will be provided; in the second, a unique category of Psalms proposed by M.F. Kolarcik⁶ as “Hymns to the Creator of Israel” will be examined; in the last part, a role of Ps 114 will be presented as this type of hymn in the Ps 113–115 sequence as well as in the Egyptian Hallel.

Psalm 114 as a literary unit

The classical division of Psalms made by H. Gunkel provides four major types: complaint (petition), hymn (praise), thanksgiving and “spiritual” (including wisdom ones).⁷ Following Gunkel’s observations, C. Westermann unifies the “hymn” and “thanksgiving” groups into one vast group of “praise” with two sub-groups, namely, the declarative praise (which is more connected with thanksgiving) and the descriptive praise.⁸ It is described as an epiphany psalm⁹ with an explicit Exodus reference.¹⁰ However, Psalm 114 does not fall into any of the groups. Moreover, it presents various textual problems suggesting the conflation of multiple sources for some theological purposes.¹¹

⁵ On the unity of Pss 113–115 cf. H. Lubsczyk, *Einheit und heilsgeschichtliche Bedeutung von Ps 114/115 (113)*, “Biblische Zeitschrift” 11 (1967), pp. 161–173; F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, ed. K. Baltzer, Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, Minneapolis 2011, pp. 188–190; M. Witte, *Psalm 114 – Überlegungen zu seiner Komposition im Kontext der Psalmen 113 und 115*, in: “Einen Altar von Erde mache mir...”: *Festschrift für Diethelm Conrad zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, Kleine Arbeiten zum Alten und Neuen Testament 4/5, Waltrop 2003, pp. 293–311. There was also a third tradition seeing the division after Ps 115:3 and so counting Ps 114 as eleven-verse and Ps 115 as fifteen-verse (vv. 4–18). Cf. A. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet: die Rezeption der biblischen Geschichte in den Psalmen des Alten Testaments*, FAT 94, Tübingen 2014, p. 51.

⁶ M.F. Kolarcik, *The Psalms*, Weston 2023, p. 85.

⁷ Cf. H. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, Eugene 2020.

⁸ The whole discussion about the relationship between praise, hymn and thanksgiving can be found in: C. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, Atlanta 1981, pp. 15–35.

⁹ Together with Ps 18:7–18; Ps 29; Ps 66:8–12 and Jdg 5:4–5 (cf. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, op. cit., p. 83).

¹⁰ Together with Pss 18:20, 25:15, 17, 31:5, 43:3, 60:9, 68:8, 22, 71:20, 78:54, 80:8, 105:34, 107:14, 25, 136:11, 142:7, 143:11. (cf. Kolarcik, *The Psalms*, op. cit., pp. 32–33). For Y. Zakovitch, the list comprises Ps 77, 78, 80, 81, 95, 105, 106, 135 and 136 (Y. Zakovitch, *The Exodus – the biblical Big Bang. Reading Psalm 114*, in: *Der immer neue Exodus*, eds. C. Neuber, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 242, Stuttgart 2018, p. 82).

¹¹ Thus, Brettler’s claim that “[f]rom a grammatical, lexical and textual perspective, it is... one of the most straightforward psalms in the Psalter” cannot be accepted. Cf. M.Z. Bret-

Psalm 114 stands in contrast to the rest of the Psalter with the use of proper names of God and his chosen people. It is a well-described phenomenon that in v. 2 there are two resumptive pronouns **לקדשו** and **ממשלותיו** with no apparent antecedent within the psalm. Moreover, there are only two psalms which do not employ **יהוה** nor **אלhim** as divine names, namely, Ps 114 and Ps 150; in the latter, however, both shortened forms, i.e. **ה** and **אל**, are used. In Psalm 114, God's name does not occur, except in v. 7, where both **אלוה** and **אדון** (singular) are used. **אלוה** is used fifty-eight times throughout the Hebrew Bible, but only four times in the Psalms (18:32, 50:22, 139:19) and only once in a construct state with **יעקב אדון**.¹² Regarding God is used only fifteen times (not taking into account the suffixed forms), in the Psalms it is only in 97:5. Additionally, **אדון** and **אלוה** are referring to different books.¹³ On the other hand, in vv. 1–2 all three names for the people of God are used: **יעקב**, **ישראל** and **יהודה**.¹⁴ In v. 7, there is also the expression “God of Jacob” which only occurs elsewhere in the Psalms in 76:7 (with **אלhim**). There are only two other psalms, namely, Ps 76 and Ps 78, which employ all three names for the people of God. However, in v. 2a the verb **היתה** is third person feminine, while all three names are considered to be masculine.¹⁵ It suggests that the use of name **יהודה** is a substitution of some feminine name, probably the more common **צין**.¹⁶

tler, *A Jewish Historical-Critical Commentary on Psalms: Psalm 114 as an Example*, “Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel” 4/5 (2016), p. 413.

¹² Some scholars see here a corrupted form of the plural construct with **אלוהי** dropped because of the haplography; however, this form is present only three times (and only in the Psalms: 18:47, 143:10, 145:1), while the regular one (present over 500 times) is **אלهي**. Cf. H. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart. Eine Theologie der Psalmen*, FRLANT 148, Göttingen 1989, p. 153; G. Glaßner, *Aufbruch als Heimat: Zur Theologie des 114. Psalms*, “Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie” 4 (1994), p. 474.

¹³ The first one is found in Ex (2x), Josh (2x), Pt-Is (5x), Mi (1x), Zech (2x), Mal (1x) and mentioned Ps 97:5; the second one mainly in Job, but also in Dt 32 (2x), 2Chr (1x), Prov (1x), Dt-Is (1x), Dan (3x) and Ha (2x). Cf. H. Bosman, *Psalm 114 as Reinterpretation of the Exodus During and After the Exile*, “Old Testament Essays” 26 (2013), no. 3, p. 566.

¹⁴ Cf. J.D. Seo, *Gottesgegenwart im Tempel: Studien zur Spiritualisierung der Tempeltheologie in den Psalmen 29, 48, 68, 74, 84 und 114*, Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 71, Leipzig 2021, p. 179. The question remains, whether are they parallel names for the one people of God or a sign of division (does Israel equal Jacob in v. 1 and, more difficult, does Judah equal Israel in v. 2?). Cf. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet...*, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁵ This problem was solved in some of the translations: in the Aramaic Targum to Psalms there is an expansion **הוּתָה כְּנֶשֶׁתָּא דְּבִתָּה אֲדִידָא** (“the congregation (fem.) of the house of Judah was devoted”), while in Peshitta the verb is changed to 3 masc. (ܒܪַגְתָּא ܒְּאָמָּת).

¹⁶ Cf. Seo, *Gottesgegenwart im Tempel*, op. cit., pp. 193–194. The same author offers an elaboration of meanings of **קדש** and **ממשלה** referred either to the place (temple/sanctuary/land), or to the people, discussing the concept of God dwelling “among” or “inside” (**בתוכ**) his people (cf. Ex 25:8, 29:45; 1 Kgs 6:13; Ezek 43:7,9; Zech 2:9,14,15; 8:3). Cf. Ibid., pp. 190–195, and also: A. Siquans, *Wunder auf dem Weg durch die Wüste: Israels Verwand-*

Another textual problem is the tense used. It is unusual that the psalm begins with an infinitive construct preceded with **כ** (which is translated mostly as temporal but can be also causal) – the only other Psalm beginning with an infinitive construct is Psalm 4.¹⁷ In vv. 2a and 3a *qatal* is employed as expected, but beginning with v. 3b *yiqtol* becomes prevalent. It appears as a deliberate elaboration especially when comparing v. 4 and v. 6, differing only by a verbal form (*qatal* in v. 4 versus *yiqtol* in v. 6). The simplest resolution of this phenomenon is achieved by analogy to *yiqtol* use in Hebrew poetry (especially the most ancient songs),¹⁸ where it corresponds to the North-West Semitic *yaqtul* prefix conjugation with a preterite sense.¹⁹ Most of the ancient translations perceived it in that way: e.g. the LXX has passive aorists ἐστράφη (v. 3) and ἐσαλεύθη (v. 7) and active aorists ἐσκίρτησαν (v. 4), ἔφυγες (v. 5a), ἀνεχώρησας (v. 5b) and ἐσκιρτήσατε (v. 6). The Aramaic Targum to Psalms retained the prefix conjugation in v. 5 but switched to suffix conjugation in v. 3b (חֶזֶר), v. 6 (טוֹפֵז, repeating v. 4). Peshitta, however, has all six perfect forms. The most intriguing example is the imperative in v. 7. Because of the pronunciation similarity, it is proposed to amend γολι ἀρζ to חֹלִי אַרְצָה (as in Ps 97:5);²⁰ however, the motif of the חֹל of the earth is well-known (e.g. Ps 29:8, 77:17, 96:9).²¹ While the Targum

lung zum Ort der Gegenwart JHWHs in Ps 114, “Protokolle zur Bibel” 21 (2012), no. 2, pp. 129–152.

¹⁷ Cf. E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 15, Grand Rapids 2001, p. 281; C. Fuad, *Exodus Reimagined: Psalm 114 and the Restructuring of the Exodus Tradition*, “Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament” 36 (2022), no. 2, p. 224.

¹⁸ Cf. P. Jouon, T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Rome 2006, §113o.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Gianto, *Archaic Biblical Hebrew*, in: *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew. Volume 1: Periods, Corpora, and Reading Traditions*, eds. W.R. Garr, S.E. Fassberg, Winona Lake 2016, pp. 23–24.

²⁰ Cf. L.C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC 21, Grand Rapids 2002, p. 103; S.A. Geller, *The Language of Imagery in Psalm 114*, in: *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, eds. T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard, P. Steinkeller, Harvard Semitic Studies 37, Atlanta 1990, p. 180.

²¹ There is a discussion about the significance of חֹל in Ps 114:7. The root is connected with various actions, even opposite ones, as it means both to “stand firm” (which “strength” comes from) and to “tremble.” The most primary meaning is to “whirl” or “twist,” which is where “to bear” (to writhe in labor) and even “to dance” come from. Some see in this root an exhortation to a liturgical dance. Supporting this interpretation is the double use of רַקֵּד, which in *pi’el* means “to dance” (cf. Is 13:21; Job 21:11; 1Chr 15:29; Eccl 3:4). Cf. F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford 1907, s.v. חֹל and s.v. רַקֵּד; N. Lohfink, *Das tanzende Land und der verflüssigte Fels. Zur Übersetzung von Ps 114,7*, in: “...dann werden wir sein wie die Träumenden”. Ingo Baldermann zum 65. Geburtstag, eds. A. Greve, I. Baldermann, Siegen 1994, pp. 199–222; E. Zenger, *Soll die Erde vor ihrem Herrn beben oder tanzen? Beobachtungen zum Verständnis von Psalm 114*, in: *Diskurse und Texte: Festschrift für Konrad Ehlich zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. A. Redder, Tübingen 2007, pp. 197–208; Siquans, *Wunder auf dem Weg*, op. cit., pp. 137–138, 145–147.

retains the imperative, the LXX and Peshitta have an aorist/perfect indicative. In the Vulgate, however, both forms are attested, as the Clementine Vulgate has a passive perfect *mota est*, while in the *Nova Vulgata* an imperative *contremisce* was chosen.²² However, there is also the possibility to perceive these prefix-conjugation verbs as modal ones, describing, for example, necessity (בָּשׁ as “must have turned,” etc.) or, more interestingly, the *present* temporal aspect.²³ If so, the hymn may serve as a liturgical “recurrence” of the salvific events from the past, suggesting that they happen also in the very presence of those praying.

There are two textual arguments in favor of this point of view. The first is the “bleaching” of two forty-year distant “passages” from the history of Israel – crossing the Red Sea and crossing the Jordan.²⁴ The latter is rarely mentioned, and apart from Ps 114:3,5, הַיְרָדֵן only occurs in the Psalms in Ps 42:6 while the Jordan crossing is alluded to only in Ps 66:6.²⁵ The vocabulary used for the description of the event in vv. 3–6 is rather unique: סָבֵב לְאַהֲרֹן is used once in the Psalms, as well as בְּנֵי-צָאן (the only other place for this expression is Jer 31:12); the verb רָקַע is present only in Ps 29:6 and the rhetorical question מַה-לְךָ – in Ps 50:16. The subject of the verb סָבֵב also changes: in Ex 14 it is the Egyptians who flee (Ex 14:25,27), while in Ps 114 it is the sea. Apparently, for the final redactor of the psalm there is no need of historical accuracy, but rather of a universal perspective: in every generation the same miracles happen.²⁶ The second argument is the meaning of the expression אַהֲרֹן. As a direction marker, it is present only in Jer 7:24; however, in Dt-Is it is used twice (41:23, 42:23) to describe “the things to come” (rendered in the Vulgate as *ventura* and *futura* respectively). In this meaning, Jordan’s actions forty years after the Egyptian Exodus “make return” to the “future things” or even make the praying reverse themselves with their “back to the future.”²⁷

²² The result is that there is ambiguity in the *editio typica* as well as in many translations of the Liturgy of the Hours, as the ancient antiphon follows the Clementine Vulgate, but the text of the Psalm follows the new translation.

²³ This proposal was used in the Polish translation *Biblia Tysiąclecia* (“The Millennium Bible”): in v. 3b בָּשׁ was rendered in past tense, but in vv. 5–6 all verbs are present and in v. 7a there is an imperative retained. Cf. A.L.H.M., van Wieringen, *Two Reading Options in Psalm 114: A Communication-Oriented Exegesis*, “Revue biblique” 122 (2015), no. 1, pp. 48–50.

²⁴ For an extensive excursus on this topic: H.-J. Kraus, *A Continental Commentary: Psalms 60–150*, Minneapolis 1993, pp. 372–373.

²⁵ There is also a possibility that הַיְם in v. 3a does not mean the Re(e)d Sea, but the Sea of Arabah, i.e. the Dead Sea from Josh 3:16. Cf. M. Dahood, *Psalms III. 101–150*, TAYB 17A, Garden City 1970, p. 135.

²⁶ About the meaning of the “mountains and hills” in various epochs of the history of Israel see: Siquans, *Wunder auf dem Weg*, op. cit., pp. 138–140.

²⁷ It aligns with the ancient Hebrew concept of time: the past is before, i.e. “in front of” (מִפְנִים), while the future is after, i.e. “behind” (מִזְרָחָה). Thus, the action described with סָבֵב would be a reversal to the right orientation, i.e. putting the past events before someone’s eyes and leaving the future behind someone’s back.

The same uniqueness can be observed in the Exodus 17 reference in v. 8. There are two rare terms used describing bodies of water: אַגְם (four times in the OT: Ps 107:35, 114:8; Is 14:23, 41:18) and מֵעַן (fourteen times in the OT, e.g. Ps 74:15; 84:7; Josh 15:9 – the only other place with the exact same phrase), as well as an uncommon parallel to rock – לְמַיִשׁ, “flint” (five times in the OT, only here in the Psalms). Finally, there is an unusual participle, הַהְפִּיכִי, found elsewhere only in Am 5:7–8, denoting a miraculous transformation.²⁸ This leads to a conclusion that both the vocabulary used and the motifs trace to various redactors and events in the Bible. On one hand, we have an Egypt motif (the word מִצְרִים appears in Ps 78, 80, 81, 105–106 and 135–136),²⁹ on the other – a Jordan motif linking to Joshua 3, as well as a number of references to Isaiah³⁰ and Jeremiah.³¹ What would be the purpose of such a bleaching? The answer may be hidden in v. 1. There is found a unique name of God’s people בֵּית יְעָקֹב (fifteen times in the OT, and apart from Ps 114:1, only in the Prophets) as well as a mysterious expression עַם לְעֵז.³² Although the parallel suggests the Egyptians,³³ there is another possibility that the omission of the proper name is an allusion to the present situation (of the final redactor of Ps 114) and the mentioned people is the current oppressor which – by God’s grace – is left behind in a similar way.³⁴ There is also another, later adaptation available, pointed out by J.D. Seo and W. Huß: “The somewhat peculiar designation of Egypt can be considered

²⁸ Upon this a “metallurgical interpretation” was proposed: “The fleeing of the seas and the skipping of mountains, the two recurrent themes of the psalm, finally combine in the last verse (v. 8) in a way evoking the melting of silicates. This meaning, supported first by the unusual use of the verb חָפַךְ in v. 8, refers probably to metallurgy, the single human activity involving the melting of stone. Such a metallurgical context is echoed by the explicit mention of the Exodus as the escape from the ‘iron furnace,’ both in Deut 4:20, Jer 11:4 and 1 Kgs 8:51. It is also reflected in the parallel existing between Ps 114 and Exod 19.” N. Amzallag, M. Avriel, *The Canonic Responsa Reading of Psalm 114 and its Theological Significance*, “Old Testament Essays” 24 (2011), no. 2, p. 316.

²⁹ Cf. Bosman, *Psalm 114*, pp. 567–571.

³⁰ More about the link between Psalm 114 and Dt-Is, especially Is 41:17–20: Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart*, pp. 155–156.

³¹ Regarding the link between Ps 114 and Jer 31:1–13 see: Siquans, *Wunder auf dem Weg*, p. 148.

³² Studies upon this expression include Geller, *The Language*, pp. 191–194; Zakovitch, *The Exodus*, p. 90; S. Bazyliński, “La simbolica dello straniero nel Salterio,” *Biblical Annals*, 14 (2024) no. 2, pp. 199–200.

³³ Thus, מִצְרִים should be interpreted more as a demonym and not as a toponym, and the exit (as the initial בְּצִאת is in *qal* and not in *hiphil* as expected) is not a delivery from the (house of) slavery, but a freely chosen march from among the enemy people. Cf. Bosman, *Psalm 114*, op. cit., pp. 559.

³⁴ There is a number of places in the OT where “a nation of unknown language” is a direct or indirect reference to a northern enemy, e.g. Dt 28:49; Is 28:11, 33:19; Jer 5:15. Cf. Bosman, *Psalm 114*, op. cit., pp. 572–576.

an adaptation to later Judaic society. The phrase ‘foreign language’ (לְשָׁן) in verse 1b is a *hapax legomenon* and otherwise only attested in Middle Hebrew – a finding that testifies to a later origin. The term לְשָׁן later refers to ‘Greek’ (in yMeg 71b) or, more generally, to a ‘foreign language’.... עַם לְשָׁן may refer to the Egyptian rulers in the Ptolemaic period. This dynasty ruled Palestine in the third and second centuries BC, before the area fell to the Seleucids (Antiochus III, after the fifth Syrian War, around the year 198).³⁵

Having taken all this material into consideration, the final redactor arrived with this literary structure of Psalm 114:

- 1) Account of the past events – Exodus from Egypt(ians) and the Jordan crossing (vv. 1–4);
- 2) Poetic repetition in a form of rhetorical question³⁶ (vv. 5–6);
- 3) Call to dance/tremble (v. 7) with a justification – allusion to Exodus 17 (v. 8).

This division seems imperfect as it lacks some key elements of the structure of the Psalm. Thus, it is probable that the final redactor inserted these verses (named now Ps 114) in this place of the psalter to make it a part of a greater structure – and so Psalm 114 should not be interpreted as an independent literary unit, but only as a part of the so-called Egyptian Hallel.³⁷ If the preceding and succeeding context are taken into consideration, the Psalm appears as a part of a “Hymn to the Creator of Israel.”

Hymn to the Creator of Israel as a psalm sub-type

The name “Hymn to the Creator of Israel” comes from M.F. Kolarcik, whose book *The Psalms* included this one, consisting of Pss 66,³⁸ 100, 111, 114 and 149, among

³⁵ Seo, *Gottesgegenwart im Tempel*, op. cit., pp. 179–180 (own translation); cf. W. Huß, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit. 332–30 v. Chr.*, München 2001, pp. 490–491.

³⁶ Pace deClaissé-Walford, who claims that the question is not rhetorical, but waiting for an answer from the Passover seder participants. Cf. N. deClaissé-Walford, *Book Five of the Psalter: Psalms 107–150*, in: *The Book of Psalms*, ed. E. J. Young, R.K. Harrison, R.L. Hubbard Jr., NICOT, Grand Rapids–Cambridge 2014, p. 852.

³⁷ In the history of exegesis, a claim was put forth by L. Finkelstein that “Ps. 114 seems to have been composed for the specific purpose of extolling the miracle of the Exodus, perhaps for use on Passover night.” L. Finkelstein, *The Origin of the Hallel*, “Hebrew Union College Annual” 23 (1950–1951), no. 2, p. 323. The difference between the house of Shammai and the house of Hillel regarding the first part of the Hallel attested in the Talmud (cf. bPes 116b:5; Zakovitch, *The Exodus*, op. cit., p. 83) shows that there was a shift or even an omission of Ps 114 (Finkelstein supports the latter option). He attests also another omission in the so-called “Babylonian Hallel” in which Ps 115:1–11 and Ps 116:1–11 were omitted (cf. Finkelstein, *The Origin*, op. cit., p. 334). This custom has been retained in the Sephardic Jews’ community on New Moon and the last Six Days of Passover (cf. H.A. Segal, *Siddur Tifereth David*, New York 1951, p. 390).

³⁸ More precisely, only the hymn part (vv. 1–12) is taken into consideration.

many other groups. Juxtaposition of these psalms allows for the description of some characteristics of this type of psalm.

All these psalms, except Ps 114, begin with a call to praise. As all the invitations are in the plural imperative (הָרִיעַ – Ps 66:1, 100:1; הַלְלוּ יְהָ – Ps 111:1, 149:1; שִׁירְוּ – Ps 149:1), these hymns are a sub-type of the community descriptive praise.³⁹ The call's addressee is the whole earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: Ps 66:1,4, 100:1), but also Israel and the sons of Zion (Ps 149:2). This call is taken up in the final part in all psalms except Ps 111:⁴⁰ again, the addressee is plural (הַשְׁמִיעַ, בָּרְכוּ: Ps 66:8; Ps 100:4; יְרָנֵנוּ, יְעַלֵּז: Ps 149:5), even if in Ps 114:7 the imperative חֹלֵי agrees in number with the grammatically singular (but collective in sense) אָרֶץ. Here, especially the link between worship and boast needs to be examined. The Hebrew root הַלְלִ in *pi'el* has its most known significance, as it appears in הַלְלוּ יְהָ – to "praise"; however, in *qal* and *hithpa'el* it is mostly translated as "boast."⁴¹ On the other hand, the Greek term καυχάομαι used mostly in the NT for "boasting" appears only five times in the LXX text of Psalms, only once being a translation of הַלְלִ (Ps 49:7); in other cases it renders the Hebrew roots עַלְלֵ (Ps 5:12), עַלְזֵ (Ps 94:3; 149:5) and רַנֵּן ("to sing with joy," Ps 32:11). There is also a compound verb ἐγκαυχάομαι used four times, twice rendering הַלְלִ in *hithpa'el* (Ps 52:3, 97:7), once ἀσαγή ("to roar," Ps 74:4) and once שְׁבַח (Ps 106:47).

Between the call to praise and the call back to praise, there are three crucial motifs. The first one is the reference to the knowledge of God and his works. In Ps 66:2 the awe is expressed by a rhetorical question מַה־נָּרֹא מַעֲשֵׂיךְ as well as by an exhortation to come and look on them (לְכֹו וְרָא מִפְעָלוֹת אֲלֹהִים) (v. 5a). In Ps 100, there is a direct call to acknowledge that YHWH is God, and his main work is his people, i.e. "we": דָּשַׁו כִּי־יְהָוָה הוּא אֶלְהֵינוּ (v. 3a). In Ps 111, the works of God are "great" and "sought" (דָּרֹשִׁים) by all delighting in them (v. 2), which is possible because of the memory of God's miracles made by him (זֹאת); in the latter part, they are explicitly named as "truth" and "judgment" (מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵינוּ אֶתְהָ וּמִשְׁפָט, v. 7a). The second motif is the historical reference. In Ps 66 and 114, it is the aforementioned Exodus the call back to praise (66:6; 111:1–4); in Ps 100 – the people's creation itself; in Ps 111 – טְרֵף (literally "prey," here "food," possibly the meat of the quails on the desert, cf. Ex 16:12–13) and the covenant (v. 5) based on the commandments (v. 7), alluding to Ex 20 and 24. The last motif is the reasoning. It is introduced twice by כי (Ps 66:10, 100:5). The reason to praise the LORD is his bounty (Ps 100:5,

³⁹ Although Ps 111:1 begins (after Hallelujah) with a singular cohortative אָוֹדֵה, the context is clearly communal (בְּסָדֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַדָּה).

⁴⁰ If we treat Ps 111 and Ps 112 as a part of a greater Hallel (Pss 111–118) then, in fact, the call to praise will be taken up in Ps 113:1. Ps 112 – a *Zwillingsakrostichon* (Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, op. cit., p. 66) – would be a sapiential "shift to the present" described below.

⁴¹ In the Psalms in *qal*: Pss 5:6, 73:3, 75:5, in *hithpa'el*: Pss 34:2, 49:7, 52:3, 63:12, 64:11, 97:7, 105:3, 106:5.

149:4), his power (Pss 66:3 and 7, 111:6, 114:7, 149:6), but also the fear, especially for the Gentiles (Pss 66:3 and 7, 111:9–10, 149:6–9a).

The final part is a reference to the present. All the historical events are recalled to present the iterating “cycle of time” – to juxtapose God’s past works with the present ones. In Ps 66:9–12, it is no longer the historical Israel, but “we” who experience God’s power in an analogous way to the Exodus, if not even more than that, as the passage is not only through water, but **בָּאָשׁ וּבָמִים** (v. 12b).⁴² The same “we” is present in Ps 100:3: **וְלֹא אֲנַחֲנוּ עָמוֹ וְצָאן מֶרְעַתּוֹ** (v. 3b).⁴³ In Ps 149, this “we” is substituted with the name “the pious” (חִסִּידִים, v. 5) or “his pious” (חִסִּידִי, v. 9), who are to exercise God’s judgment in the imminent future.

Based on Westermann’s proposal of the structure of a descriptive praise hymn,⁴⁴ a similar structure of a hymn to the Creator of Israel can be proposed:

- 1) Call to praise
- 2) Description of God’s works (**עֲשָׂה**)
- 3) Description of nation-formation events
- 4) Reason and the call back to praise
- 5) Shift from past to present (application)

There is one important difference: none of the psalms in this group ends with a concluding call to praise (except the repeated **הָלְלוּ יְהָוָה** in Ps 149:9 MT, absent in the LXX). The most significant dynamic in this type of psalm is the application – from the meditation upon the history, an essential conclusion emerges, that the creation of the Chosen People is not only a past event, but a present one.⁴⁵ This poses the question: what is required to create a nation? The answer is not an easy one, taking into consideration the circumstances of the redaction of the Psalms. The most common definition of a state, taken from the Montevideo “Convention on Rights and Duties

⁴² The same literary technique – in an explicit *correctio* – is used in the NT, where it is Jesus Christ who exercises his Passover (literally, his “coming through,” ἔρχομαι + διά with genitive) “not only in water” (οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον), “but in water and in blood” (ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἷματι) (1 John 5:6).

⁴³ The use of **וְלֹא** is very intriguing, as the most natural yet counter-intuitive way of interpretation is an adversative *waw* with negation marker: “but we [are] *not* his people....” *Qere-ketib* amends it to **וְלוּ** (possessive marker, “and we [are] *his*,” literally “[belonging] to him”), and Aramaic Targum to Psalms follows this interpretation (וְדִילֵה אֲנַחֲנוּ). The LXX, however, shifts the punctuation (and so does the Masoretic *atnah* indicate) and links **וְלֹא אֲנַחֲנוּ** with the preceding **וְשָׁעָרָה**, reading αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ οὐχ ἡμεῖς (“he made us and not we [ourselves].”) The Peshitta does the same (መ־אֲנַחֲנוּ וְלֹא אֲנַחֲנוּ, “and it is him who made us and it was not us.”).

⁴⁴ Cf. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, op. cit, pp. 122–130.

⁴⁵ Zakovitch, who divides Ps 114 into two equal parts also argues this: “1. A description of past events, at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (v. 1–4); 2. The poet’s response as he views in the present the effects of the Exodus (v. 5–8)” Zakovitch, *The Exodus*, op. cit., p. 85. Cf. also: A.P. León, *Salmo 114. Constricciones – Tropos – Convergencias*, “Efemerides Mexicana” 9 (1991), no. 1, p. 111.

of States" signed in 1933, includes four vital elements: "(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states."⁴⁶ This is not the case regarding Israel in the exilic or post-exilic period, as even if the national identity is distinct because of the monotheistic and religious heritage, there is no defined territory, independent government or internationally recognized sovereignty. The creation of Israel must have been based on another foundation – i.e. on the common history (including culture and religion), but also on the common present. The social functions of a "creation of Israel psalm" must have been, therefore, (1) to allow a common worship in a common ancestral language (i.e. Hebrew instead of Aramaic), (2) to recall nation-founding past events, especially Exodus, (3) to enhance the national identity using so-called social capital (creating links, bonds and bridges).⁴⁷ The first two objectives are strictly connected with the family celebration of the Passover after the fall of Jerusalem Temple which needed its own ritual (that is how not only the Egyptian Hallel, but the whole Passover seder haggadah came to be). The last one is based upon the aforementioned link between praise and boasting, which in this particular field resulted in a taunt.⁴⁸ Now it is necessary to broaden the context and to perceive Psalm 114 not as an independent psalm, but as a part of two structures – the minor one (Ps 113–115) being a community descriptive praise hymn, and the major one (Ps 113–118), with an individual declarative praise hymn (Ps 116–118) added.

Psalm 114 in its context

C. Westermann already saw that Ps 113 is an interesting example of a connection between the declarative praise and the descriptive praise: "...there is in the content a yet firmer connection between the declarative and the descriptive Psalms of praise in a summarizing sentence which often occurs at the end of these songs.... It is certain, however, that originally there was nothing but the simple sentence which looked only at the miracle of exaltation. This sentence is the basic theme of

⁴⁶ *Convention on Rights and Duties of States*, "League of Nations. Treaty Series. Treaties and international Engagements registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations" 165 (1936), p. 25.

⁴⁷ Cf. D.P. Aldrich, *The Importance of Social Capital in Building Community Resilience*, in: *Rethinking Resilience, Adaptation and Transformation in a Time of Change*, eds. Y. Wanglin, W. Galloway, New York 2017, pp. 357–364.

⁴⁸ "The questions put by the poet in vv. 5–6 have a taunting flavor.... These echoing questions focus the reader's attention back on v. 3–4 and cause us to think again about what we have read. They insert the reader into the poetic frame as an observer and evaluator. Moreover, these questions delay the resolution of the poem by holding off the identification of the cause of such flight and unstable movement. They invite (and perhaps tease or entice) the reader to solve the puzzle and interpret what is described. Come on now, you know the answer to this question!" R.D. Nelson, *Psalm 114, "Interpretation"* 63 (2009), no. 2, p. 173.

the descriptive Psalm of praise. This is shown with special clarity in Ps. 113.... It is speech directed toward God in the sense that it looks away from the unique occurrence of a specific deliverance and speaks of God's majesty and grace in a summarizing, recapitulating, and descriptive manner. But in Israel this recapitulating praise which brings together descriptions never lost its connection with the unique, concrete intervention which was experienced in the history of the people or of the individual.”⁴⁹

The shift is visible in Ps 113:5. After a call to praise and a description of the LORD comes a rhetorical, boastful question with a first person plural suffix: אלהינו כי הוה, which introduces a series of God's concrete intervention in people's lives, with a common motif of reversal of the fate. This “we” will be taken up in Ps 115:1 with a peculiar “call to praise” which is addressed immediately to the LORD: לנו לא יתנו. What follows is a clear distinction between “us” and “them” (Ps 115:2–3) with a comparison of the cult: “their” gods are criticized (vv. 4–8; cf. Ps 135:15–18), while “our” God is exalted (vv. 9–12ab; cf. Ps 135:19–21). In Psalm 114, however, “we” is absent.⁵⁰ To construct a perfect descriptive praise hymn, there are two elements yet missing: the creation/history reference and the passage from the past to present. And this is the purpose of placing Ps 114 exactly in this position.⁵¹ If we treat Pss 113–115 as a one song, it fits to both descriptive praise structure⁵² and hymn to the Creator of Israel structure:

- 1) Call to praise – Ps 113:1–3
- 2) Reason to praise – Ps 113:4–9
- 3) God's majesty in history – Ps 114:1–4
- 4) Taunt – Ps 114:5–6
- 5) Resumptive call to praise and Exodus reference – Pss 114:7–8, 115:1
- 6) God's majesty in creation – Pss 115:2–3 and 16⁵³

⁴⁹ Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, op. cit., pp. 117–118.

⁵⁰ For more about the links between Ps 113 and Ps 115 missing in Ps 114 see: Gärtner, *Das ägyptische Hallel*, op. cit., p. 19–23.

⁵¹ There is a striking thematic connection of Ps 114:1–4 with Ps 105 and Ps 114:7–8 with Ps 107. Cf. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, p. 73. It appears plausible that these verses might have been – at some time – a part of this Hallel (Pss 105–107) or another one (as present in 11QPs^a). Psalm 114 could also have been – prior to the composition of the Egyptian Hallel – a *catena* of various verses and only after that inserted into the Psalter as an “independent” chapter. In favor of two distinct sources of vv. 1–6 and vv. 7–8 speaks also the number of metrical feet: the first six verses have 3+3 bicolon, while the last two – 4+3 bicolon. Cf. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, op. cit., p. 102. Thus, it seems improbable that – according to J.D. Seo's proposal – there would have been a “basic version” of Ps 114 containing vv. 1a, 3–7a and 8, as 7a colon cannot be metrically paired with any other colon except 7b. (cf. Seo, *Gottesgegenwart im Tempel*, op. cit., p. 205).

⁵² Cf. Kolarcik, *The Psalms*, p. 26.

⁵³ There is also a suggestion that in Ps 114:3–6, thanks to the reference to four natural components, i.e. the sea, the river, the mountains and the hills, the Canaanite creation myth is

- 7) Opposition to other nations – Ps 115:4–8 (idols) and 9–11 (true God)
- 8) Shift to present “we” – Ps 115:12–15 and 17–18.⁵⁴

It is noteworthy that this psalm also does not end with a call back to praise, as it is continued with another sequence of Psalms – Ps 116–118, which form an individual declarative praise hymn. The entire Hallel, therefore, serves as a link with the past, the key term being “servants” – no longer servants of Egyptians or Babylonians, but of YHWH (עבדי יהוה, Ps 113:1, cf. Ps 116:16). “The expectation that such remembrance should be a communal enterprise is reinforced by the three-fold reference to “Israel, the house of Aaron, and those who fear YHWH” in Ps 115:9–11 and 118:2–4.... This reference to Israel’s identity as the poor and weak who were delivered from the powerful nations in the past (Pss 114:1, 118:10f.) serves not simply to give them hope for the future (Ps 118:25) but, equally important, to tether them to a particular group identity that is rooted in the nation’s past. Collective memory staves off the deleterious effects of cultural amnesia.”⁵⁵

W. Breuggemann saw it as a victory psalm together with Pss 29, 47, 93 and 96–99.⁵⁶ It is not, however, a psalm of enthronement, as the regnal power of YHWH is already confirmed. It is a psalm of the birth of a new people, basing upon the word-play with the root חול (in comparison with the “first birth” from mother’s womb, but in sin – cf. Ps 51:7).⁵⁷ The “shaking” of the earth is compared to giving birth, which is a motif in the Psalms:

blended with the Exodus narrative. Cf. W. Brueggemann, W.H. Bellinger, *Psalms*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary, New York 2014, p. 492–493; S. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, ECC, Grand Rapids 2003, p. 769.

⁵⁴ The national identity creative function is visible also in a chiastic structure presented by M. Witte:

- (a) Opening call to praise (Ps 113:1–3)
- (b) YHWH and the nations (Ps 113:4,5a,6a)
- (c) Anthropological development (Ps 113:5b,6b,7–9)
- (b') YHWH and Israel (Ps 114:1–2)
- (c') Cosmological development (Ps 114:3–6)
- (a) Final call to praise (Ps 114:7–8 and Ps 115:1 as a link)

to which also the third two-part component in Ps 115:4–11 corresponds. Cf. Witte, *Psalm 114*, op. cit., p. 303.

⁵⁵ W.D. Tucker Jr., “*Let Israel Now Say*” (Ps 124:1b). *Group Identity in Pss 107–145*, in: *The Formation of the Hebrew Psalter. The Book of Psalms Between Ancient Versions, Material Transmission and Canonical Exegesis*, eds. G. Barbiero, M. Pavan, J. Schnocks, FAT 151, Tübingen 2021, p. 339. Cf. O. David, D. Bar-Tal, *A Sociopsychological Conception of Collective Identity. The Case of National Identity as an Example*, “Personality and Social Psychology Review” 13 (2009), p. 354–379; W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms. A Theological Commentary*, Augsburg–Minneapolis 1984, p. 140–142.

⁵⁶ Cf. Brueggemann, *The Message*, op. cit., pp. 142–150.

⁵⁷ Cf. Zakovitch, *The Exodus*, op. cit., p. 99.

קוֹל יְהוָה יְהִיל מְדָכֵר יְהִיל יְהוָה מְדָבֵר קָדֵשׁ קוֹל יְהוָה יְחַולֵל אִילוֹת וַיְחַשֵּׁר יְעָרוֹת	The voice of the LORD makes the desert shake [in labor] (<i>hiphil</i> חָול), The LORD makes the desert of Kadesh shake [in labor] (a/a), The voice of the LORD is bearing (<i>poel</i> הָול) the deer and strips the woods (Ps 29:8–9a)
רָאֹק מִם אֱלֹהִים רָאֹק מִם יְהִילוֹ אָף יַרְגֹּז תְּהֻמוֹת	The waters saw you, o God, The waters saw you and shook [in labor] (<i>qal</i> חָול); also the depths quaked ⁵⁸ (Ps 77:17)
בָּרָם הַרִּים יַלְדוֹ וְתַחֲלֵל אָרֶץ וְתַבֵּל וּמְעוּלָם עַד־עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל	Before the mountains were born (<i>qal passive</i> יָלַד) [and] you bore (<i>poel</i> הָול 2ms ⁵⁹) the land and the world, ⁶⁰ [and] from eternity to eternity you are God (Ps 90:2)
הַאִירוּ בְּרַקְעֵי תָּבֵל רָאַתָּה וְתַחַל הָרָץ	His lightnings ⁶¹ illuminate the world, The earth sees and shakes [in labor] (<i>qal</i> חָול) (Ps 97:4).

The first context of this begetting is clearly the work of creation;⁶² however, even the root יָלַד is not used in the Psalms in this meaning, the only reference being Ps 90:2 (which is ambiguous, as mentioned above), while the ones who are born are children (Ps 78:6) and nations (Pss 22:32, 87:4–6). In fact, a reference to Israel/Jacob and Judah is also connected with the birth of nations or tribes (cf. Gen 25:23, 29:35, 49:10). It is not only the natural kinship (as the etymology of “nation” shows, derived from the Latin supine *natus* “born”) which begets the nation, but also it is heavenly “begetting,” the same which is present in the enthronement formula לְדֹחֵךְ יְהָוָה הַיּוֹם (Ps 2:7),⁶³ which in the New Testament was reinterpreted as showing the divine sonhood of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5). The concept of the birth of the nation – or precisely, the community of the faithful – different from the birth and the enthronement of the Messiah, is taken up by John (Jn 1:13, 3:3–8; 1 Jn

⁵⁸ For the root רָגַן cf. Pss 18:8, 77:19, 99:1.

⁵⁹ Or, if treated as 3fs, “the earth (and the world) bore” (singular predicate with compound subject in number and gender agreement with the first part of the subject). If so, the vocalization in the first colon should be amended to regular *qal* יָלַד “bore.” The ambiguity is upheld with double *waw* present at the beginning of the second and the third colon; one of these *waws* is merely conjunctive while the other begins the main clause.

⁶⁰ About the difference between “the land” and “the world” see: Siquans, *Wunder auf dem Weg*, op. cit., p. 147.

⁶¹ Cf. Pss 18:15, 77:19.

⁶² Cf. e.g. Job 38:28–29, 39:1–2.

⁶³ It is no more surprising that the enthronement of the Messiah needs God’s taunting, commonly described as “laughing” (קָהָשׁ) and “mocking” (לְעַזָּה) (Ps 2:4); it is not only God’s anthropomorization, but a vital element needed in the nation formation process. There is also an attempt by Zakovitch to link לְעַזָּה and לְעַזָּה, (cf. Zakovitch, *The Exodus*, op. cit., pp. 89–90).

2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:18) and James (1:18).⁶⁴ This process needs (1) a miraculous event(s) which create(s) the collective memory; (2) a distinguished identity achieved in some kind of passage rite;⁶⁵ (3) the boasting (described as taunting) in a form of liturgical celebration. An intriguing parallel is that both the idea of the community being a temple (cf. 1 Cor 3:16) and the notion of boasting (cf. Rm 5:1–11; 2 Cor 11–12) are found in the New Testament.

Conclusions

After the study, the following conclusions can be made:

- 1) Psalm 114 is a complex structure originating from various sources, to be interpreted only as a part of a broader context, at least in the Pss 113–115 complex. It was inserted into the Egyptian Hallel to provide vital elements for the descriptive praise hymn structure as well as the nation's creation hymn, named "Hymn to the Creator of Israel."
- 2) The grammatical and lexical features show that the redactor's aim was to present the historical events as contemporaneously vivid through the nation's collective memory exercised via the liturgical celebration as well as some kind of community boasting.
- 3) The creation of Israel is not only commemorated, but also actual: in the very act of praise and remembrance (not only with Ps 114 in particular, but with the entire celebration and throughout the Psalter) the new nation is born. The same process can be referred to the birth of the new community of the faithful in the New Testament.

These convictions should have been present in the mind of those celebrating the Passover, as it can be found in the final part of Talmudic *Pesahim* tractate: "In each and every generation a person must view himself as though he left Egypt, as it is stated: «And you shall tell your son on that day, saying: It is because of this which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.»" Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, glorify, extol, exalt, honor, bless, revere, and laud the One who performed for our forefathers and for us all these miracles: He took us out from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to a Festival, from darkness to a great light, and from enslavement to redemption. And we will say before Him: Hallelujah" (bPes 116b:3–4).

⁶⁴ Paul uses the same concept in an analogous way: it is the Apostle who begets the community on behalf of Jesus, becoming for them a father (cf. 1 Cor 4:15).

⁶⁵ In the New Testament, there are no more distinction between Israelites or barbarians, but the line of distinction goes through the new passage rite, i.e. the baptism, and between the "old man" and the "new man" (cf. Col 3:9–11). In the place of the "barbarian people" from Ps 114:1 a new people arise who speak "everyone the language in which we were born [sic!]" (cf. Acts 2:8).

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