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# The Introduction of the Hallel into the Passover Seder and the Split of the Chapters 114 and 115 in the Book of Psalms

**Abstract:** During the Seder of Pesach, the Jewish celebration of Passover, one is used to sing Pss 113–118, the Hallel, in two parts, namely Pss 113–114 before and Pss 115–118 after the meal. The ancient manuscripts of the Psalms do not show any break between Ps 114 and Ps 115. The split of the text in the liturgy presupposes its original unity. Medieval manuscripts of the Genizah begin to indicate a division between Ps 114 and Ps 115. This split in the transmission of the Psalm as a biblical text reflects the spread of the liturgy of the seder.

**Keywords:** Hallel, Genizah, Psalm 114–115, Pesach, seder

## 1 Introduction

Jewish statutory prayer includes the recitation of the so called Egyptian Hallel (Pss 113–118). The following paper discusses the recitation of the Hallel during the seder of Passover (Pesach).<sup>1</sup> In its traditional form, the seder is celebrated in Jewish groups and families, involving the reading (singing and performance) of a ritual text, the haggadah. Celebrants of the seder are used to reciting Pss 113–114 before and 115–118 after the meal. In this essay, the seder as well as the haggadah of Pesach are regarded as resulting from developments in rabbinic times.<sup>2</sup>

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This short essay refers to Genizah texts from the Cambridge University Library as its most important data. Thus, it expresses its author's gratitude to Stefan Reif for his tireless efforts to combine the Genizah research with the study of the history of Jewish liturgies. Even if it hardly extends the huge scope and depth of his work, it indicates that others gratefully walk on paths that he has beaten.

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1 I am grateful to the members of the workshop "Psalms in Rituals from Antiquity to the Present" (October 2018 in Erfurt), and to the Max Weber Kolleg in Erfurt for a fellowship in 2018 that enabled me to discuss questions of this paper especially with Günter Stemberger.

2 Cf. Leonhard, *Jewish Pesach*, 73–118 and "Pesach and Eucharist", 287–305. Finkelstein's ("The Origin") approach to the history of the Hallel is out of the question for the present context, even though some of his observations are acceptable. Thus, he rules out the possibility of a celebration of Pesach (at least *lege artis*) outside of Jerusalem until the time of Antiochus (p. 332). If one moves this *terminus ad quem* towards the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, it is valid; Leonhard, "Tempelfeste."

Of course, Pesach was a major festival in Second Temple Jerusalem. The silence of Second Temple sources regarding rituals that could be compared with the seder is interpreted as an indication for the non-existence of this ritual in that epoch.

Occasionally, scholars quote Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26 in order to claim that Jesus and his disciples recited the Hallel as the conclusion of a domestic celebration of Pesach. The description of that group's behavior (*hymnēsantes*) is too vague to point to any concrete text.<sup>3</sup> However, the idea that Jesus recited "the Hallel" contradicts the earliest sources that discuss its recitation in a domestic celebration at Pesach.<sup>4</sup> In terms of the rabbinic seder, the gospels could only point to this group's reciting the second half of the Hallel at this point in the celebration. On the one hand, modern readers tend to regard Pss 113–118 as a literary and hence a liturgical unit. They learn from centuries of Jewish practice that the Hallel is a literary unit. On the other hand, they want to see a performance of the Hallel during a domestic seder in Jesus's time. They ignore the fact that this unit is split into two parts at the seder.

The splitting point at Ps 114:8 and 115:1 need not be a textually obvious hiatus in the Hallel, because liturgies need not abide by the literary structures of texts. The manuscripts that contain the Hallel Psalms tend to vary in their delimitation of chapters.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, one cannot reconstruct otherwise unknown liturgies from literary texts.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, liturgical structures may exploit literary features of a text. Conversely, a persistent liturgical use of a literary text may lead to changes in the literary transmission of the text. These observa-

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3 Cf. Leonhard, "Pesach and Eucharist," chapter 2.6, 301–4.

4 Prinsloo ("Tremble," 320) claims that the remark of the gospels implies the recitation of Ps 114, which is recited before the meal according to Hillel's opinion in the Tannaitic texts.

5 Koch ("Der Psalter," 247; cf. Prinsloo, "Unit Delimitation," 246–47) claims that the extracanonical Ps 151 be a colophon to the whole book. The Septuagint calls the number 151 "outside of the numbering" (Auwers, "La numérotation," 346). The rabbis know 147 chapters (Prinsloo, "Unit Delimitation," 246 n. 33; Auwers, "La numérotation," 362 referring to y. Shabb. 16:1, 15c). The number 147 is justified with the age of the patriarch Jacob,  $3 \times 7 \times 7$ .

6 Initially, Zenger ("Der Gott Israels," 145) tries to avoid this trap. Eventually, he falls back into genre analyses that (allegedly) point to liturgical performances: Ps 118 "reflects the two parts of a liturgy of thanksgiving," (p. 159). Zenger takes an obscure idea about an imagined liturgy for granted as an explanation of formal aspects of this chapter of Psalms. He accepts "Psalm 115" as a literary unit. (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalms* 3, 179) claims: "... the obvious liturgical saturation of the composition suggests that it was put together as a liturgical cantata by temple singers...." Cf. Prinsloo's critique ("Tremble," 307–8) of reconstructions of ritual contexts of Ps 114.

tions raise the following questions: Why was the Hallel split at all? Why was it split at Ps 114:8 and 115:1? When did this custom emerge? What is the relationship between the literary transmission of the texts and the liturgical customs?

## 2 The Hallel

Because of the performance of Jewish liturgies over the course of centuries, exegetes tend to regard Pss 113–118 as a literary unit.<sup>7</sup> Its liturgical use also insinuates that it should be a liturgical and hence literary unit. The accepted literary setting shows that this group of verses is not part of its immediate context. Acrostics (Pss 111 and 112 as well as 119) precede and follow the Hallel in the Masoretic editions of the book of Psalms. The contents of Ps 119 do not suggest this text as a continuation of Pss 113–118. Likewise, Ps 112 is not interested in the Exodus from Egypt. Such evidence does not establish Pss 113–118 as a coherent text.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, both Ps 111 and Ps 112 begin with *Allēlouia*. In the Greek translation, Ps 119 also belongs to the *Allēlouia* psalms. The question of whether *Allēlouia* stands at the beginning or at the end of a psalm or between psalms is up for discussion.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the Hebrew hallelujah psalms run from Ps 111 to Ps 118. The putative vorlage of the Greek translation included Ps 119 in this group. Even if the liturgical unit “Hallel” points to a literary unit of Pss 113–118, this does not prove that the literary unit should be related to a ritual performance. Sources of Second Temple times do not assign a liturgical use to the Hallel (Pss 113–118). Did they know Pss 113–118 as a literary unit?

Even if Second Temple sources do not point to the Hallel as a liturgical unit, one may nevertheless refer to literary texts of the book of Psalms. The manuscripts of Qumran preserve precious evidence for cases of unit delimitation and the arrangement and sequence of the Psalms in Second Temple times. Thus, the famous Psalms manuscript from cave eleven (11QP<sup>a</sup> = 11Q5) seems to point to a collocation of Pss 113–118 despite its fragmentary state of preservation. This would suggest that “the Hallel” could already have been a literary unit before

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7 Cf. Hammer, “Hallel.”

8 (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalms* 3) collect observations in support of the coherence of Pss 113–118. However, (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalms* 3, 178) also regards the frame as an indication of the coherence of its contents: “Within the group of Psalms 111–119, the six Psalms 113–118 stand out as a clearly profiled composition.”

9 Cf. Auwers (“La numérotation,” 364 and 367–68) with regard to b. Pesah. 117a.

the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. However, Qumran texts occasionally combine Ps 118 with Ps 136. Ps 136 may even precede Ps 118.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the literary transmission of Pss 113–118 does not suggest that this group of chapters was a primordial liturgical unit.

In Jewish liturgical tradition, it is customary to omit verses of the Hallel (Ps 115:1–11; Ps 116:1–11<sup>11</sup>) on certain liturgical occasions.<sup>12</sup> The custom is normally connected with a passage from the Babylonian Talmud, b. Ta’an. 28b. The Talmud tells the story of Rav, who visits a congregation on the new moon. Seeing that the congregation performs “a hallel” (or the “hallel”), he wants to stop them. When he notices that they kept omitting certain (undisclosed) verses, he accepts their practice as a “custom from their forbears.” This implies that the deliberate violation of the integrity of this literary unit conveys a liturgical message.<sup>13</sup> The ostentatious omission of verses attests to an understanding of Pss 113–118 as a unit of some kind. Only if these verses somehow belong together, can one encode a message in the liturgical practice of omitting parts of them. Nevertheless, the custom preserves the practical knowledge that the unit is flexible. Moreover, the textual transmission of Pss 113–118 points to further predetermined breaking points.<sup>14</sup> Thus, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* mentions

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**10** Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation,” 242–43 n. 22. According to Arad (“great hallel,”) 11QPs<sup>a</sup> (11Q5) is one of the witnesses for Ps 136 as Hallel of the seder night before the destruction of the temple. Arad (“great hallel,” 145 [and 146–57]) assumes that 11QPs<sup>a</sup> should convey an “ancient liturgy of (the) hallel,” even the “great hallel.” This approach cannot be discussed exhaustively in the present context. The theses of the present paper would be falsified, if Pss 113–114 and 115–118 were regarded as two independent literary texts to be performed in domestic liturgies of Pesach in Second Temple times.

**11** Dalia Marx pointed out to me that the Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon) mentions Ps 117:1–118:4 as a third passage to be skipped, adding “This is the easy custom. There are some who omit other verses” (*Halakot Megillah Wehanukkah* 3.8).

**12** Hayes (“Unity,” 145) points to “the Tannaitic period” as the time of origins of this custom and mentions that Ismar Elbogen “1993” (as the translation of the monumental work of 1931) traces back liturgical usage into Second Temple times.

**13** Cf. Hammer (“On the Origin,”) and Zeitlin (“The Hallel,” 28; cf. Zahavy’s, “Sources,” 107 objections) for the partial Hallel. T-S AS 60.84 is problematic, if one interprets the header both on the obverse and on the reverse to refer to the new moon liturgies. Because of this occurrence on both sides of the fragment, it cannot be a page number. One would expect Ps 115:1–12 to be skipped during the recitation of the Hallel in the new moon liturgy (cf. n. 27).

**14** Some manuscripts begin a new chapter with verse Ps 115:12. Kennicott (*Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum*, note to col. 410<sup>b</sup>) mentions manuscripts 76, 97, 133, 150, 156, and 264 as witnesses for the beginning of a chapter here. In the note to Ps 115:1 (410<sup>a</sup>), he mentions 19 manuscripts that continue Ps 114 without beginning a chapter here. The two lists do not overlap. That is, none of Kennicott’s textual witnesses presents Ps 115:12–18 as a literary unit. It belongs either

that “many” (i.e. more than 20) manuscripts begin a new chapter with verse Ps 115:12.<sup>15</sup> The Greek tradition reads *Allēlouia* at the beginning of Ps 116:10. The liturgical as well as the textual traditions pass on ambiguous bits of information with regard to the integrity and internal structure of Pss 113–118.

The Tannaim mention verses of Pss 113–118 in relevant contexts. Therefore, it is highly plausible that the rabbis associated Pss 113–118 with the designation “(Egyptian) hallel.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, Ps 113:9 and 114:8 (t. Pesah. 10:9 Lieberman 198/m. Pesah. 10:6); Ps 116:1 (t. Pesah. 4:11 Lieberman 164/m. Pesah. 5:6); Ps 118:16 (t. Pesah. 10:7 Lieberman 197) are quoted.<sup>17</sup> The Tannaitic traditions record deviant customs of the recitation of the Hallel during the seder.<sup>18</sup> The prevailing custom

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to the preceding or to the following chapter. Except for two (his nos. 76, 156), the manuscripts that begin Ps 115 at verse 12 do not mark a new chapter at Ps 116:1. For instance, Ginsburg’s, *Liber Psalmorum*, 258 oldest manuscript 9 (“circa 1160–1200”; NLI: 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> cent.) indents Ps 115:1 (British Library add. 9403 fol. 189 obv.) and gives the no. “115” besides Ps 114:1 and “116” above (using the left indent before) Ps 115:12 on fol. 190 rev. (“117” for Ps 116:1 etc.). In Ps 115:11, the liturgical division corresponds to a textual one. Cf. Prinsloo (“Unit Delimitation,” 244–45 and n. 27) for a historical division of Ps 116.

**15** Kennicott (*Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum* note to col. 410<sup>b</sup>) mentions manuscripts 76, 97, 133, 150, 156, and 264 as witnesses for the beginning of a chapter here. In the note to Ps 115:1 (410<sup>a</sup>), he mentions 19 manuscripts that continue Ps 114 without beginning a chapter here. The two lists do not overlap. That is, none of Kennicott’s textual witnesses presents Ps 115:12–18 as a literary unit. It belongs either to the preceding or to the following chapter. Except for two (his no. 76, 156), the manuscripts that begin Ps. 115 at verse 12 do not mark a new chapter at Ps 116:1. For instance, Ginsburg’s (*Liber Psalmorum*, 258) oldest manuscript 9 (“circa 1160–1200”; NLI: 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> cent.) indents Ps 115:1 (British Library add. 9403 fol. 189 obv.) and gives the no. “115” besides Ps 114:1 and “116” above (using the left indent before) Ps 115:12 on fol. 190 rev. (“117” for Ps 116:1 etc.). In Ps 115:11, the liturgical division corresponds to a textual one. Auwers, (“La numérotation,” 368) advises readers to use Kennicott’s data with caution. Cf. Prinsloo, (“Unit Delimitation,” 244–45 and n. 27) for a historical division of Ps 116. T-S A13.46 1 rev. left page FGP C150040 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 35) marks the beginning of Ps 115 centering the first line. It gives the no. “106” to this psalm. The fragment is not part of a haggadah, but of a collection of psalms.

**16** Finkelstein’s (“The Origin,” 331) claim that the term refers to Pss 113–114 in b. Ber. 56a is not supported by the context. According to Rashi, the Babylonian Talmud speaks about the “Egyptian” hallel, in order to distinguish it from the “great hallel.” Arad, “The ‘great hallel,’” claims that Pss 135–136 should be identified as “hallel” for the night of the seder in Second Temple times.

**17** Cf. Witte (“Psalm 114,” 297) for the observation of the problem that the liturgy divides a text that the manuscripts and modern literary analyses understand as a literary unit.

**18** Cf. Millard, *Die Komposition*, 31 n. 160. T. Pesah. 10:8–9 (Lieberman 197) proscribes the reduction of “the hallel” and the addition of something to it but continues to mention two sages who simplify/explain or double in its text. Any ramifications of their interpretation not-

(to recite the Hallel until Ps 114:8) follows the Hillelites' understanding. In m. Pesah. 10:6 (t. Pesah. 10:9 Lieberman 198), the Shammaites rule that "it" (the Hallel) should be recited until Ps 113:9 before the meal.<sup>19</sup> T. Pesah. 10:9 (Lieberman 197–98) and m. Pesah. 10:7 remark that the Hallel is continued later in the course of the celebration. The discussion does not imply that Ps 113:9 or 114:8 should be inevitable breaking points.<sup>20</sup>

These observations show that rabbinic scholars understood Pss 113–118 as a literary and liturgical unit. At the same time, they know traditions which regard the literary unit as flexible. None of the traditions understand this unit to consist of Ps 113–114 and 115–118 as two distinct sections—except for the liturgical norms that govern the performance of the seder.

### 3 Psalms 114 and 115

Judith Gärtner claims that Ps 114 "is a fragment, without a beginning and without an ending," although it somehow "shows a cohesive structure."<sup>21</sup> She understands the combination of Ps 114 with Ps 115 as secondary<sup>22</sup> and collects hints

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withstanding, these short remarks point to the rabbis' awareness of the problems involved in the liturgical use of the literary unit of Ps 113–118.

**19** The Tosefta and the old Mishnaic MSS skip hallelujah which is regarded as part of Ps 113:9 in the St. Petersburg Codex.

**20** Apple ("Understanding the 'Split'," 255–56) claims "narration of the Exodus" as topic of Pss 113–114 and more general "praise" of Pss 115–118. Such categories are vague and applied in different ways by other scholars.

**21** Gärtner, "Exodus Psalm 114," 73–74. (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalms* 3, 188 [and cf. the following pages there] claims that Ps 114 "represents an artistically developed poetic composition *in itself* and therefore *originated* as an independent psalm." Lubsczyk ("Einheit und heilsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 161) remarks that Ps 114 is mostly regarded as preexilic because of its "poetic power," whereas Ps 115 is considered postexilic because of the Godfearers mentioned there. Lubsczyk argues for the literary unity of Pss 114 and 115. The references to contemporary Psalm exegesis are designed to detach notions of coherence and consistence from the aesthetic judgement of the author of this essay.

**22** Gärtner, "Exodus Psalm 114," 73–74. Aesthetic judgments are elusive: "Scholarship regards Psalm 114 as a perfectly shaped work of art within ancient Hebrew poetry ... Nevertheless, this Psalm lacks a proper beginning and ending." One may wonder how a piece of poetry can be "perfectly shaped" if it does not have a proper beginning and end. Witte ("Psalm 114," 294–95 and cf. p. 301 about Psalm 115:2–18): "...despite its composite nature ... broadly consistent as a piece of literature..." (my paraphrases). Koch ("Der Psalter," 251–52) divides the so-called fifth book of Psalms into subdivisions. One of these divisions is supposed to end in a "hymnic" part,

in order to establish Pss 113–115<sup>23</sup> as a group. Observations like this are important for answering the question of whether or not the contents of Ps 114 and Ps 115 point to literary structures. To some extent, Ps 115:1–11 is built around a different topic than Ps 114. In the same vein, one may also regard Ps 115:12 as beginning of a new topic.

Prinsloo points to the differences of the division of Pss 113–118 into literary units between the Qumran material and the later manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> In the ancient texts, Pss 114 and 115 always appear as a single literary unit.<sup>25</sup> The Greek and Syriac<sup>26</sup> translators and revisers of the Hebrew Bible read Pss 114 and 115 as a single text with *Allēlouia* in Ps 114:1 and Ps 116:1. Saadia Gaon regards Pss 114 and 115 as a single text.<sup>27</sup> Both the St. Petersburg Codex (of 1008/1009 CE; fol.

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Pss 113–118. Koch does not regard Pss 113–118 as a literary unit. Gärtner (“Exodus Psalm 114,” 79) regards Ps 113 as “hymn-like.” Zenger (“Der Gott Israels,” 157) thinks that Ps 114 is “hymne-nartig”; cf. (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalm* 3, 178) for Pss 113–115 as “hymnic praise.” Prinsloo (“Psalms 114 and 115,” 669–75) summarizes earlier approaches and argues in support of reading Pss 114 and 115 as a textual unit. Troublett (“Approche canonique,” 340 n. 4) lists further studies that point into that direction. In the rest of Troublett’s paper, the “Psalms” are treated as literary units within a network of other Psalms. The idea that Pss 113–118 should represent Pesach, Ps 119 Shavuot and Pss 120–137 Sukkot is an unwarranted claim; e.g. Troublett (“Approche canonique,” 341) and Prinsloo (“Tremble,” 307–8) regarding the purported Passover hymns: “...Gunkel’s hypothesis finds no support in the text.”

**23** Cf. (Hossfeld and) Zenger (*Psalms* 3, 178–79) who thinks that “the hallel” consists of two parts, Pss 113–115 and Pss 116–118. In spite of his reference to the liturgy, he does not mention the fact that the seder liturgy splits the Hallel at Ps 114:8 instead of 116:1.

**24** Prinsloo, “Psalms 114 and 115,” 236–39.

**25** This is also true for MS Vatican Urbinati 2 (14<sup>th</sup> cent.; quoted by Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation;” 239, transcription: appendix 4, 255) and the Qumran fragment Ps<sup>o</sup> (4Q96, PAM 43.030 <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/media/dsselbt/43030C.jpg> and Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation,” 243). Cf. Troublett, “Approche canonique,” 339–340. The transition from Ps 114:8 to Ps 115:1 is not extant in Ps<sup>o</sup>: “In frg. 1 Psalms 114 and 115 most likely form a single Psalm”; Skehan, Ulrich, and Flint, “Psalms,” 139. Zenger’s remark that this question should be controversial is wrong. There is just no ancient witness for a division of Pss 114 and 115.

**26** The main manuscript of the Peshitta edition (Jenner and van der Kooij, *Liber Psalmorum*), 7a1 (Milan, Ambrosian Library MS B. 21 inferiore; seventh or eighth century), introduces Ps 114: “One hundred and fourteenth. Said by David about Moses, when he was uttering praises at the shore of the sea. 52 verses (= syntactic divisions in Psalm 114). When Israel went out of Egypt...,” 229 (cf. <http://dukhrana.com/ms/ambrosiano/> for images of the ms.). Psalm 116 is entitled: “One hundred and fifteenth. Said by David when....”

**27** Davidson, Assaf, and Joel, *Siddur R. Saadia Gaon*, 153–54 and n. to l. 25; cf. the manuscript of Saadia’s translation of the Psalms, T-S Ar.28.167 1 rev. FGP C179716 (Baker and Polliack, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, 2001) and T-S Ar.1c.1 43 rev. FGP C212783 and fol. 44

390 rev.) and the Aleppo Codex (of 925 CE) present a single chapter of Ps “114” containing the text of Pss 114 and 115.<sup>28</sup>

“Liturgical purposes” is a murky but powerful argument in modern discussions.<sup>29</sup> Two pivotal intuitions guide this argument. One of them is enlightening. The other one is wrong. It is enlightening to acknowledge a close link between the textual transmission of the Psalms and the history of the liturgies including the seder. It is wrong to assume that this encounter between liturgies and texts should have happened in Second Temple times.

Genizah manuscripts are the first witnesses to a split of Pss 114 and 115 into two chapters of a biblical book. Manuscripts of the haggadah of Pesach (whose textual transmission begins towards the end of the first millennium) separate Ps 114 and Ps 115 by definition. These manuscripts are irrelevant for the question of the literary consequences versus prerequisites of the liturgical breaking point at Ps 114:8. Haggadah manuscripts attest to the liturgical division.

Thus, this question requires a survey of manuscripts containing Pss 114 and 115 other than haggadot. In such a brief survey of a few dozens of manuscripts mostly from the Cambridge Genizah collections, sixteen follow the Masoretic standard codices and consider Pss 114 and 115 a literary unit, i.e., they regard Pss 114 and 115 as one psalm.<sup>30</sup> Roughly the same number of manuscripts

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rev. FGP C212785. Millard, *Die Komposition*, 13–14 and n. 50 (cf. Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation,” 246) refers to 74 Hebrew MSS in which Pss 114 and 115 are not divided into two chapters.

**28** Transcriptions: Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation,” appendix 2–3, 254–55.

**29** Cf. Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation,” 246 especially 234–25 and 247 to the chapter “Jewish Tradition.” Cf. Millard, *Die Komposition*, 13–14. On 32 n. 154, Millard quotes the Mishnah and the Tosefta in support of this case.

**30** Yeivin, “The Division,” esp. 78. T-S A13.48 1 obv. FGP C150051 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 35); Or.1080 A13.6 1 obv. FGP C147743 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 325); T-S NS 40.26 1 obv. FGP C335990 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 78); T-S NS 69.1 1 rev. FGP C351047 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 174); T-S NS 122.11 1 obv. FGP C354684 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 226); T-S A13.49 1 obv. FGP C150053 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 35); T-S Misc.1.67 1 obv. FGP C104222 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 269); T-S NS 161.26 1 obv. FGP C367084 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 230); T-S NS 281.67 1 obv. left page last line FGP C398627 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 294); Lewis-Gibson (formerly Westminster) Bible VI.70 2 rev. left page FGP C489934 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 408); T-S AS 54.12 1 obv. FGP C184473 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 254 no. 3883); T-S AS 50.96 1r FGP C184048 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 201 no. 3099); T-S AS 52.161 1 rev. FGP C184194 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 239 no. 3671); T-S AS 54.77 1 obv. FGP C184929/1 rev. FGP C184928 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 258 no. 3948); T-S AS 8.138 1 rev. FGP C165600 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 1–31*, 95 no. 1522); T-S AS 12.55 1 rev. FGP C137170 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional*



(twelve in the present sample) indicate some kind of a textual break.<sup>31</sup> If the Qumran texts are added to this sample, sources from antiquity and late antiquity understand Pss 114 and 115 as a literary unit. Only much later do scribes (beginning in the epoch of the Genizah) start to restructure the text. A reader of the book of Psalms in antiquity would not regard Ps 114:8 as the natural boundary where Pss 113–118 partitions into two blocks of text. Splitting the text at a point where it would not divide into parts by itself conveys the feeling that one should not actually split it at all. If this is true, why did the Tannaim of the Tosefta and later the designers of the haggadah divide it at all and why did they divide it at this point?

A possible answer to this question emerges from a juxtaposition of t. Pesah. 10:12 (Lieberman, 198–99) and 4.11 (Lieberman, 163 [m. Pesah. 5:7]). The rabbis' study of the laws of the Pesach (offering) is a way to fulfill these laws in the absence of the temple. If the performance of the seder should include, replace, substitute, or depict the performance of the Pesach sacrifice, little can be done except for intellectual activities. One element of the ritual at the Second Temple (as the rabbis pretend to know it) can be taken over par for par. Nothing prevents the rabbis from reciting the Hallel. The Hallel comes into the seder, because the seder is the substitutional performance of the sacrifice, the offering, and the eating of the Pesach animals. Of course, the Levites did not split the Hallel in its performance at the temple of Jerusalem.

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*Series 1–31*, 150 no. 2448). Not counted: T-S Misc.1.132 1 obv. FGP C120892 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 274); T-S AS 62.167 1 obv. FGP C113756 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 404 no. 6170); T-S Misc.20.28 1 obv. FGP C124407 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 301).

**31** Lewis-Gibson (formerly Westminster) Bible 6.60 1 obv. FGP C489916 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 407); T-S AS 42.247 1 rev. FGP C160304 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 91 no. 1418); T-S AS 55.210 1 rev. FGP C164278 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 284 no. 4356); T-S AS 57.122 1 obv. FGP C185403, 1 rev. FGP C185402 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 320 no. 4905); T-S AS 60.84 1 obv. FGP C187827 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 383 no. 5809); T-S AS 104.170 1 rev. FGP C199479 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 32–225*, 473 no. 7154); T-S AS 29.114 Fragment 1 obv. FGP C486984 (Davis and Outhwaite, *Taylor-Schechter Additional Series 1–31*, 421 no. 6864); Or.1080 A13.9 1 obv. FGP C147755 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter Old Series*, 325); T-S NS 281.153 1 obv. FGP C398421 (Davis, *Taylor-Schechter New Series*, 300); T-S NS 150.231 1 rev. left page FGP C359475 (Shivtiel and Niessen, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, 1677); JTS 508 (Fragment Ec 22: Prinsloo, “Unit Delimitation;” 240, transcription: appendix 5, 256 = Yeivin, *Geniza Bible Fragments*, p. 141); JNUL/NLI ms. Heb. 8° 5241 (Yeivin, *Geniza Bible Fragments*, 256 no. Ec 94).

As an explanation for this development, it may be assumed that one should split the Hallel, because one should not split it at all. Therefore, one splits it at a point where one would normally not see an obvious and fundamental hinge of two texts. The performance of the Hallel in two parts stages that the seder has (at least) two functions which should actually be represented by simultaneous actions. First, celebrants should represent the fulfilment of the law of the sacrifice (including its consumption) by discussing its rules and by eating some of the prescribed food. Second, they should sing the Hallel as the Levites did while the Israelites slaughtered the animals. The celebrants of the seder thus create a sequence out of two simultaneous activities. The simultaneity is first expressed by splitting the Hallel and second by splitting it at a point in its text where it would not normally be split.

This explains the literary evidence and its chronology. Until the end of late antiquity, Pss 114 and 115 are regarded as one single chapter of the book of Psalms. Even the establishment of the seder ritual presupposes that Pss 114 and 115 comprise one chapter. Otherwise, its split could not have the aesthetic effect of pointing out the actual unity of the liturgical Hallel and the simultaneity of its recitation and the other activities of the celebration. With the spread of the seder ritual from rabbinic times onward, scribes and readers became accustomed to regarding Ps 114 and Ps 115 as two separate texts. Eventually, the medieval manuscripts began reflecting this understanding. As a by-product of these observations, Ps 114 and Ps 115 emerge as post-biblical texts with regard to their respective literary end and beginning.

## 4 Objections

The reconstruction advocated here strongly suggests a post-destruction date for the splitting of the Hallel into Pss 113–114 and 115–118.<sup>32</sup> The argument presupposes that singing the Hallel migrated from the slaughtering of the animals in the temple to the meal in the banquet room. The destruction of the temple was the occasion for this migration. If the performance of the Hallel at the meal and its split into two parts were a replacement of the temple cult, pilgrims would not have been used to singing the Hallel during their meals. A few sources seem to contradict this assumption.

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<sup>32</sup> I am grateful to Harald Buchinger for a discussion of these objections. Cf. also Arad, “The ‘great hallel’,” 125–26 for the passages referred to here.

Philo's *euchai kai hymnoi*<sup>33</sup> could point to the performance of the Hallel before the destruction of the temple. Philo describes the Pesach at the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup> Two extra-biblical texts paraphrase Exod 12 and add singing to the performance of the Israelites' meal. Thus, Wis 18:9 mentions the Israelites' singing (*proanamelpain*) as part of the account of the first Pesach in Egypt. Jubilees 49:6 remarks that Israel was drinking wine, "glorifying, blessing, and praising God...."<sup>35</sup> Wisdom 18:9 and Jub. 49:6 elicit explanations along the lines of Exod 12. The biblical text of Exod 12 projects the ritual at the temple back into the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>36</sup> Just as Exod 12 transposes the temple rite into the celebration of a meal in Egypt, Wis 18:19 and Jub. 49:6 explain temple rituals. Exodus 12 and its paraphrases tell the story of a prefiguration of that rite which could only have been a meal (because the temple was not yet available). The rabbis create a substitution for that rite, which could only be a meal (because the temple was no longer available).

The most explicit text comes from m. Pesah. 9:3. It rules that the Hallel is recited during the slaughtering *and* the eating of the Pesach animals:<sup>37</sup> "What is (the difference) between the first and the second (pesah)<sup>38</sup>? ... The first requires the Hallel with its consumption and the second does not require the Hallel with its consumption. This one and that one require the/a Hallel with their making."<sup>39</sup> The Mishnah states that the slaughtering of the Pesach (animals) requires the performance of the Hallel at the time of its consumption and preparation. M. Pesah. 5:7 rules that (the impersonal) "they" recite the Hallel.<sup>40</sup> The Mishnah seems to suggest that "the Israelites"—who are mentioned in the pre-

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**33** Philo, *Spec.* 2.148. Using three relativizing adverbs, Cohn (*Über die Einzelgesetze*, 150 n. 2) remarks that the phrase refers "arguably especially" to the Hallel, which was "probably" part of the celebration of Pesach in Philo's time.

**34** Philo, *Spec.* 2.145–48.

**35** *wayāsēbbəḥ wayəbārrək wayā'akk'ət 'əgzi'abəḥēr*. The terms *sabḥa* (I, 2 Dillmann, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicæ*, 356–57) and more obviously *'a'kwata* (II, 1 Dillmann, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicæ*, 785–86) appear as translations of *ainein* and *hymnein* in biblical texts according to Dillmann.

**36** Cf. for this argument Leonhard, *Jewish Pesach*, 15–72.

**37** Cf. Goldsmith, "The recitation," 80.

**38** Num 9:1–13 deals with the situation of male Israelites who cannot celebrate the festival of Pesach at its proper date because of a case of impurity, especially death impurity. They should celebrate the festival in the following month. Apparently, the text does not consider menstruation in any way. The rabbis discuss differences between the normal—"first"—and the compensational—"second"—Pesach.

**39** m. Pesah. 9:3.

**40** Cf. Goldsmith, "The recitation," 79.

ceding text—sang the Hallel. This is not evident. “They” recite the Hallel twice or three times if necessary, “although they never came to recite (the Hallel) a third time in their days.” It is reasonable to assume that “they” are the same persons who sing the whole afternoon during the three groups’ preparation of the Pesach animals. According to m. Pesah. 5:5, the three groups of Israelites entered the temple court, “they locked the doors of the court,”<sup>41</sup> and “they sounded/blew” (the bugles, trumpets etc.). The Israelites slaughter the animals (m. Pesah. 5:6). The Mishnah does not say who locked the doors and blew the trumpets. If any temple functionaries like the Levites were active in this case (locking doors and sounding instruments), they may also be the implied subjects of “they recited (the Hallel).”

This suggests that the Mishnah may just not contradict t. Pesah. 4:11 (Lieberman, 163–64), which mentions the Levites reciting the Hallel. On the contrary, m. Pesah. 5:7 comes closer to the rabbis’ reality than t. Pesah. 4:11, because after the destruction of the temple, the Levites lost that role in the rites of Israel. Hence, they are not mentioned any more as the group of people who performed the only part of the rite that was taken up by the later rabbis and in a different context. In the liturgy of the Jerusalem temple, certain functionaries (especially *kohanim* and Levites) fulfilled certain roles. After the destruction, the character of the liturgy changed. Thus, the rabbis (as well as contemporary Judaism) restricted the special roles of *kohanim* and Levites to a minimum and ordered every Jewish person to perform most of the new rites and customs. The rabbis pass on the tradition that the Levites were in charge of singing the Hallel in the temple. The omission of a reference to the Levites in the Mishnah may be due to the abbreviated style of that text. Conversely, it may also point to the new state of affairs.

The Tosefta compares the first and the second Pesach as does the Mishnah.<sup>42</sup> In that context, it does not mention the recitation of the Hallel. It mentions singing in another comparison: “The Egyptian Pesach requires a song<sup>43</sup> and the Pesach of (all following) generations requires a song.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, the Tosefta only compares the first Pesach ever with all other instances of its celebration. The rabbinic Pesach appears in full continuity with the temple Pesach. Of course, this short rule does not differentiate between the meal and its prepa-

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<sup>41</sup> The corrector of MS Kaufman changes the consonantal “the doors ... were locked” to “they locked the doors” (corresponding e.g. to MS Parma, de Rossi).

<sup>42</sup> t. Pesah. 8:10 Lieberman, 187.

<sup>43</sup> The Tosefta does not identify the “song” (*šir*) as the Hallel.

<sup>44</sup> t. Pesah. 8.22 Lieberman, 188.

ration. At the temple, the preparation requires a song. After its destruction (and perhaps even after its future rebuilding), the meal inherits the song.

The Tosefta seems to be engaged in a discussion about who was able to recite the Hallel in the framework of the *seder pesah*: “Townsppeople who do not have anybody who would lead (them) in reciting the Hallel go to the synagogue and recite the first chapter. They go (back) and eat and drink. They come again and complete all of it. If they are not able (apparently: to come back), they complete all of it (apparently: on their first visit).”<sup>45</sup> One may envisage two reasons for the ruling of the Tosefta. First, this law could suggest that the performance of the Hallel requires a certain setting. However, the synagogue is not the only option. Diners may go to an expert’s home (*eşlo*).<sup>46</sup> Second, it seems more plausible that the Tosefta presumes the inability of the rabbis’ adherents to perform the recitation.<sup>47</sup> This inability may hail from the rabbis’ concept (or memory) of the temple cult, where the Levites, and not the Israelites, recited the Hallel during the preparation of the animals and not during the meal. The people who are supposed to perform the singing are actually not considered able to do it.

To sum up, the Mishnah (m. Pesah. 9:3) contains an erratic rule for the consumption of the Pesach animals, namely that the normal, i.e., the “first” Pesach, requires the diners (and not the Levites in the temple) to sing the Hallel during the meal in Second Temple times. In the light of the Tosefta and other texts mentioned here, this rule fits to the rabbis’ concern to blur the borderlines between the liturgy at the temple and in the domestic dining room. These liturgies are conceptualized as identical—in spite of some minor adjustments after the destruction of the temple. To cut the matter short, the phrase of the Mishnah “the first requires the hallel with its consumption” is just anachronistic for Second Temple times. It points to later practice although it is formulated as a rule that requires the temple in working order. As long as the temple was functioning, the Hallel was recited by the Levites (only). After its destruction, the Hallel came to be part of the customs surrounding the meal in the first night of the festival.

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<sup>45</sup> t. Pesah. 10:8 Lieberman, 197.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Goldsmith, “The recitation,” 80.

<sup>47</sup> Goldsmith, “The recitation,” 81.

## 5 Conclusion

The development that led to the split of Pss 114 and 115 can be summarized as follows. First, the rabbis' construction of the seder implies that the whole of the temple procedures is encapsulated and substituted by the seder. Thus, the meal with its discussions and more ritualized elements came to represent the slaughtering (preparing, offering, etc.) and eating of the Pesach animal. Formerly, the Levites recited the Hallel during the slaughtering and preparation of the Pesach animals. The rabbis move the recitation of the Hallel Psalms from the temple performance into their dining rooms and entrust the singing to all Israelites. While slaughtering and eating of sacrificial animals must be replaced by the study of the respective laws, the Hallel can be recited outside of the temple. This liturgical custom presupposes the destruction of the temple and the re-enactment of some of its rituals in a different setting, one that may be suitable for every Jew in any place. The case of the Hallel adjusts to the rabbis' general repertoire of strategies to create liturgies. They abandon some customs of the temple and transform others. They also create new ones with new halakic networks of obligations and exemptions.

Second, in order to stage the concept that the meal comprises the slaughtering, preparation, and eating of the Pesach animals, the rabbis actually needed to perform the Hallel at the same time when they ate the prescribed food (excluding, of course, the meat of a Pesach animal) and discussed the laws of the Pesach sacrifice. As this is not possible, they split the Hallel and performed half of it before and half of it after the meal. They decided to split the Hallel at a point where nobody would divide it, in order to express their understanding that it is performed as a whole. Thus, they divided one (literary) chapter of the book of Psalms (114 and 115) into two (liturgical) parts.

Third, this explanation fits with the observation of the development of the textual transmission of Pss 114 and 115 in the first and early second millennium. Scientific (i.e., Masoretic) and old-style manuscripts preserve the original tradition of the text. Yet, the liturgy was a powerful factor that shaped the textual transmission. Some scribes grew accustomed to splitting the Hallel at Ps 114:8 and 115:1 during the celebration of the seder. They began to reshape the graphic presentation of this chapter of the book of Psalms in manuscripts other than the haggadah.

Eventually the split of Pss 114 and 115 into two chapters in biblical manuscripts of the book of Psalms damaged the basis of the rabbis' original intention in the integration of the Hallel into the seder. As soon as Pss 114 and Ps 115 are perceived as two separate chapters or even two individual songs or hymns, the

split at 114:8 and 115:1 does not any more function as an aesthetic disturbance that expresses the theoretical unity of the performance of the Hallel as a whole. This is the current state of affairs. The literary text corresponds to the liturgy and the liturgy represents the literary text.

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