

From Exodus to David – History and Historiography in Psalm 78

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... erst dadurch, daß der Mensch denkend, überdenkend, vergleichend, trennend, zusammenschließend jenes unhistorische Element einschränkt, erst dadurch, daß innerhalb jener umschließenden Dunstwolke ein heller blitzender Lichtschein entsteht, – also erst durch die Kraft, das Vergangene zum Leben zu gebrauchen und aus dem Geschehen wieder Geschichte zu machen, wird der Mensch zum Menschen ...

(Friedrich Nietzsche)¹

1. Historiography as a Feature of Identity

The way in which society reflects on its past, the way in which it shapes the inner space of its memory, the way in which it constructs its own history in a creative act, and the way it makes it enriching for its present, all reveal essential characteristics of a society's cultural profile, of the structure of meaning that determines it, and of its identity.

Ancient Israel and Judah also dealt with history in the sense that they reproduced past events and experiences in the shape of a narrative course of events. Characteristic of their way of shaping history are, on the one hand, the so-called Deuteronomistic and Chronistic history, as well as first and second Maccabees²; and, on the other hand, the so-called *historical Psalms*.

The prehistory and early history of Israel are recorded in the mythical tradition of the hexateuch and revolve around the figures of the patriarchs Moses and Joshua. With regard to this early history, it is precisely the historical psalms that can clarify how Israel dealt with its own history. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) stated this correctly: "In the Psalms therefore we see how the people of Israel evaluated the Mosaic journey"³.

Psalm 78 holds a special position among Old Testament evaluations of history. Unlike prose works and also in contrast with poetic elaborations of history such as Pss 105–106, 135–136, Isa 63–64 or Neh 9, Psalm

1 NIETZSCHE, *Betrachtungen*, 33.

2 Cf. here WITTE, *Geschichtswerke*, 53-81.

3 HERDER, *Moses*, 204.

78 has a lengthy *prologue* in which a speaker (the Psalmist)⁴ outlines the form and function of his view on history in a programmatic way. To this end, Psalm 78 is equipped with an historiographical *vocabulary* that tends towards systematization, through which the events of history are qualified as miracles, and human reaction to them as either faith or sin. Furthermore, Psalm 78 offers explicit comments from the author, framed as a kind of dialogue between historical portrayal confronted with theological reflections. An historiographical profile emerges from this alternation of the view of history and the interpretation of history. Such a profile embeds *readers* in the outlined history, encourages them to form an opinion on what has been proposed, and contributes toward the clarification of one's own historical position before God.

2. The Literary Genesis of Psalm 78

2.1 The Build-up of Narrative Tension in Psalm 78

In two large sections, the psalm outlines the ancient history of Israel and Judah in macro textual dependence on the books of *Exodus through II Samuel*, from the departure out of Egypt until the foundation of David's kingdom in Judah. The epoch between the Exodus and the "Eisodus" is seen as the *foundation period of God's people*. This time period focuses on the construction of the temple in Jerusalem and the commissioning of David as shepherd of Israel. The time-window from "Egypt up to Jerusalem", the qualification of the depicted epoch as עֶקֶב (cf. Pss 44:2; 74:2; 77:6,12; 143:5), and the presentation of history as God's field of action mark the described time as mythical time. In keeping with this concept of time, the Psalm, in its final stanza, introduces the motif of the everlasting sanctuary, which traditionally derives from the Jerusalem temple theology⁵.

2.2 Literary-Critical Tensions in Psalm 78

A characteristic of the diptych-like panorama of history in vv. 12-72 is the double reference to God's miracles "in the fields of Zoan" (Tanis)⁶ (v. 12 or rather v. 43). The chronological account of the events of the miracle of

4 In order to differentiate between author and speaker of the Psalm, see GREENSTEIN, *Memory*, 214.

5 Cf. Ps 24:1f; 87:1 and with it SPIECKERMANN, *Heilsgegenwart*, 133-150.

6 Cf. Num 13:22; Isa 19:11, 13.

the sea up to the journey in the wilderness in vv. 12-37, which have their natural continuation in the description of the guidance in the desert and the giving of the land in v. 52ff., are interrupted by the detailed review of the Egyptian plagues in vv. 44-51. This interruption, as well as the aforementioned doubling, speak for the assumption that vv. 43-51 are an insertion⁷. The terminological and poetic features of vv. 44-51 also support this thesis.

Even the prologue in vv. 1-11 and the first main section of the historical presentation in vv. 12-39 are not free from later insertions. Vv. 9-11 are an addition within the prologue⁸. These verses interrupt the original connection between v. 8, which mentions as a negative example the generation of fathers who did not respond with the required faith to the miracles God wrought (v. 7), and v. 12, which opens the series of these miracles in the presence of precisely these fathers. Vv. 9-11, on the contrary, identify only the Ephraimites as the unbelieving fathers, and thereby anticipate the rejection of the house of Joseph and the tribe of Ephraim in favour of the election of Judah (in v. 67f.). Until v. 67 the Psalm consistently has the whole of Israel in mind (cf. v. 5 in contrast to v. 71 and v. 41 in contrast to v. 59).

Contrary to the suggestions of Hermann Spieckermann (1989), whose literary-critical analysis has been supported by Frank-Lothar Hossfeld (2000/2002)⁹, and those of Klaus Seybold (1996)¹⁰, I do not think that it is necessary to distinguish further layers within the prologue. Nevertheless, v. 19אα(יידברו באלהים).20-21.28 and 30-31 may be later additions within the first main part¹¹. In this way, the aforementioned direct speech by the generation of the Exodus against God in v. 19, is embellished by v. 20 where the people refer to themselves in the 3rd person singular. Verse 21 forms a tricolon, whereas the psalm itself consists almost exclusively of bicola. This tricolon emphasizes that God's wrath (אף) flared up at Jacob *and at* Israel, and its clarifying לכן stands in logical tension with v. 22, which is introduced with כי and refers back to v. 19*.

7 Cf. SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 133-150, and HOSSFELD – ZENGER, Psalmen, 423, who consider vv. 40-51 to be a secondary development.

8 Cf. HITZIG, Psalmen, 161, as well as in recent times, HIEKE, "Weitergabe", 49-62; but cf. also SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 134 and MATHIAS, Geschichtstheologie, 54-57, as well as MICHEL, Tempora, 74 for syntactical connections of vv. 9-11.

9 SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 134, judges vv. 3-4a to be a secondary additional writing under the influence of Ps 44:2, similarly, HOSSFELD – ZENGER, Psalmen, 424f, who also consider v. 6a to be secondary.

10 SEYBOLD (Psalmen, 303-313), supposes three layers: 1) an "ephraemische Vers-Chronik" (vv. 43-51, 12-16, 18-21, 23-31, 33-41, 52-55, 57-64) as aetiology for the destruction of the sanctuary in Silo, 2) a deuteronomistic redaction (vv. 3-8, 10, 11, 17, 22, 32, 42, 56), and 3) a sapiential redaction (vv. 1-2 and 65-72). Verse 9 originally belonged to vv. 60ff, vv. 5-8 (vv. 5-11) and vv. 43-51 were rearranged by the deuteronomistic redactors.

11 Similar SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 136.

Verse 28 forms a doublet with v. 27 interrupting the tripartite description of the miracle of the quails in vv. 26-27.29, which has its complement in the tripartite description in the miracle of manna in vv. 23-25. Verse 28 is at variance with the context due to singular suffixes in מִחֲנֹהוּ and לְמִשְׁכַּנְתּוֹ. This verse could be a gloss influenced by Num 11:31.

In a way similar to vv. 20-21, vv. 30-31 are also at variance with the context. In contrast to v. 29, v. 30 uses the term תִּאֲזַח with a negative connotation and prepares the scene for v. 31, which is likewise formulated as a tricolon and which contains, just like v. 21, the motif of God's wrath (אָף) including Israel explicitly undergoing divine punishment.

Verse 55b could also belong to the aforementioned additions to the body of the psalm, because this verse metrically overloads v. 55, and, like the additions in v. 21 and v. 31, emphasizes particularly the dimension of Israel as a whole (שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Verse 71a α , finally, appears to be a gloss.

It cannot be established with certainty whether or not the additions in the main body of the psalm come from only one author. The additions, in any event, are stylistically connected by the usage of tricola (vv. 21, 31, 49-50, 55), and on the level of content by means of the common motif of God's seething wrath (vv. 21, 31, 49-50). In the original psalm, this motif is mentioned only once, and then with the opposite meaning in the middle of the composition (v. 38). On account of the explicit emphasis on the dimension of Israel as a whole in God's historical acts, the later additions in the body of the psalm could well refer back to the particular climax on the Emphraimites in the prologue (vv. 9-11). A three-fold literary division of layer results:

- 1) an *original layer* consisting of a prologue containing 12 bicola (vv. 1b-8), and a body containing twice 24 bicola (vv. 12-39* or rather vv. 40-42+52-72*). Its center is dominated by the opposition between the divine formula of mercy (vv. 38-39), and the reflection on the Israelite offences against its God (vv. 40-42);
- 2) a *first addition* in vv. 9-11;
- 3) a *second addition* in vv. 19a α *, 20-21, 28, 30-31, 43-51, 55b, 71a α .

3. The Theology of History of Psalm 78

3.1 The Historiographical Profile of the Prologue (vv. 1-8)

Three points are characteristic of the historiographical profile of the prologue:

- 1) The self-understanding of the psalm's speaker;
- 2) The explicit naming of the theme of the psalm;
- 3) Outlining a chain of tradition.

3.1.1 *The Self-Understanding of the Psalm's Speaker*

The psalmist, speaking in the first person singular, addresses his people (עַמִּי), classifies his speech as an instruction (הוֹרָה), and thereby establishes a *community of communication*. The terms used in vv. 1-2 are essentially derived from Old Testament wisdom and mark the speaker as a teacher of wisdom¹². The term used in the title of the psalm¹³, מִשְׁכִּיל also points in this direction. The term itself is probably derived from the root שָׁכַל I (“to be wise”), and is to be translated as “sapiential instruction”¹⁴.

Situating the speaker of Ps 78 within wisdom has a counterpart in the prologue of Ps 49, which has a similarly constructed summons to listen (Ps 49:2-5; cf. 4Q185 1 I 13-14). While the speaker of Ps 49 addresses “all you peoples ... all who live in this world”, and while he considers the anthropological mystery of life and death for this audience, the speech of Ps 78 considers, in the manner of a parable, the mystery of ancient history. Whereas the anthropological topic of Ps 49 fits the basic themes of Old Testament wisdom, the reflection on history in the context of wisdom represents a later phenomenon in the history of tradition¹⁵.

The opening of Ps 78, finally, touches upon the introduction of the *Song of Moses* in Deut 31:30–32:1. The pointed way he addresses his own people in Ps 78:1 can be understood as a deliberate allusion to Moses’ speech “in the ears of all the assembly” (Deut 31:30). The sapiential speaker of Ps 78 thereby clothes himself with Moses’ mantel (cf. Sir 45:5e-f)¹⁶.

The special claim with which the speaker of Ps 78 appears can be further clarified against the background of the *deuteronomical law concerning prophets* (Deut 18:15-21). Since it is said that God will place his words into the mouth of the prophet he chooses after Moses (Deut 18:18-19), it follows that the teacher of wisdom in Ps 78 speaks in his own words. Thus his speech receives the character of a revelation. That this speech comes nevertheless from God himself becomes clear in the verses that follow. In these verses parable-like words from distant times, passed on through the line of the fathers, are characterized first as praise of the divine acts and secondly as praise of the God-given Torah (v. 5).

12 Cf. Prov 1:5f; 3:1; 4:2; 5:1f, 7; 7:2, 24; 8:4-9; Sir 38:34–39:3(G); 47:17; 4Q300 1 II 1. SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart ,140, thinks the speaker is the “personifizierte Weisheit” (cf. Wis 8:8).

13 The next parallel to this title is Ps 74:1 (מִשְׁכִּיל לְאִסְרָה), cf. also Ps 89:1 (מִשְׁכִּיל לְאִתְּנָהּ הַדְּוֹרָה) 142:1 (... מִשְׁכִּיל לְדָוִד).

14 See here as well DCH V (2001) 504: מִשְׁכִּיל III (“instruction”).

15 STERN, Dating, 52-54, proved convincingly that Ps 78 depends on Ps 49, even though his literary historical and religious historical dating of both Psalms in the 8th century BC is hardly appropriate; cf. for this WITTE, Tod und Leben, 540-560.

16 Cf. for this CLIFFORD, Zion, 130f; WITTE, Mosebild, 164ff; WEBER, Asaph-Psalter 126, 139f.

The claim of the teacher in Psalm 78 that he is issuing his people a torah arises from the subject matter of his torah, and this is the miracles and God's Torah itself (vv. 4b-5a). That is, God's deeds and his Torah themselves set their proclamation in progress. Proclaiming the Torah and the miracles of God appears as an act of obedience and as a sign of wisdom. By passing on the Torah and the deeds of God, the individual places himself in the line of a multitude of transmitters and wise men and he thus enters into Moses' inheritance.

3.1.2 *The Explicit Mention of the Topic of the Psalm*

The prologue states the twofold topic of the psalm: 1) the *history* which has been passed on from the fathers to the sons, 2) the God-given *law*.

The history which has been passed on is understood as a "parable" (משל cf. LXX παραβολαί) and as "mysteries" (חידות cf. LXX προβλήματα) on the one hand¹⁷, and as "miracles" (נפלאות cf. LXX τὰ θαυμάσια) on the other hand (v. 4b). This means that, on the one hand, history is considered from a functional perspective so that history, as a "parable", has a paradigmatic function for the present. Insofar as it presents "mysteries", it demands constant reflection. On the other hand, history is qualified as God's field of action through the joining of the terms תהלות, עוז, and נפלאות. The reflection upon history becomes a reflection upon God. The mystery of history is the mystery of God himself. In knowing and recognizing God, the meaning of history is therefore revealed.

Combining the language used by the priestly writers and the deuteronomistic authors, the God-given *law* is referred to as עדות ("testimony")¹⁸ and תורה ("instruction")¹⁹. The arguments in favour of interpreting v. 5 as an allusion to the Torah of Mount Sinai are: 1) the parallelism between עדות and תורה (cf. Ps 19:8; 99:7); 2) usage of the term ציה in v. 5b according to Torah theology (cf. Dtn 33:4); 3) usage of the term תורה in v. 10 (cf. 2 Kgs 10:31; Ps 1:2; 119:1; Neh 10:30; 4Q525 3 ii 3-4), even if only in a secondary manner; and also 4) the expressions מצותיו יוצרו and עדותיו לא שברו in v. 7 or rather v. 56, which allude to the Torah²⁰. The bicola of vv. 4b-5, which are closely linked by the introductory *waw*, form compositionally the climax of the first stanza of the prologue (vv. 1b-5). On the level of the content, they clarify the close cohesion between the historical acts of God, which are understood both as miracles, *and* the gift of the Torah. This means that according to Ps 78 history and Torah are closely interwoven. History and law are not alternatives, but rather two aspects of God's action

17 Cf. Sir 39:3; Wis 8:8; Hab 2:6.

18 Cf. P: Exod 25:16, 21; 31:7, 18; 32:15; 34:29; 40:20 among others.

19 Cf. D: Deut 1:5; 4:4, 8; 17:18f; Josh 1:7; 2 Kgs 17:13; 21:8.

20 Cf. HITZIG, Psalmen, 160; JUNKER, Entstehungszeit, 492; KRAUS, Psalmen, 706f.

(מעל-ל-א-ל)²¹. Remembering God's deeds implies keeping his commandments, just as observing these commandments ensures the remembrance of history (v. 7).

What is more, it is quite remarkable for the theology of history of Ps 78 that the giving of the Torah and therefore the whole complex of themes of the revelation at Sinai are: 1) integrated into the recapitulation of history²² at all, and that: 2) the remembrance of the Torah already occurs within the prologue of the psalm and precedes the unfolding of the historical events connected with the Exodus and the journey in the desert (cf. Ps 81:6). These two aspects of Ps 78 point to a typical feature of this psalm, as well as of other historical psalms and poetic writing on historical themes from the time of the second temple. In these writings, the exact chronological order of recalled events is not of primary importance, but this order is determined rather by rhetorical and theological factors (cf. Sir 51:12a-o). Here history is concentrated on central experiences that create an identity and is hierarchically arranged on the basis of the theology.

The second stanza (vv. 5b-8) begins with the *summons* to transmit the tradition (vv. 5b-6a). Together with the stylistically similar introduction to the theme in vv. 3-4a, these verses frame the subject matter of the teaching unfolded in the psalm (vv. 4b-5a). The summons refers accordingly to a teaching in history *and* in the law (cf. Ps 106:43-45; Neh 9:13-15; 1 Macc 2:50-51). The author has inherited both from his fathers and in the end from Moses, and both should be preserved throughout the ages. The attitude towards history and law becomes a criterion of God's community.

From the perspective of the history of tradition, the thematizing of Torah in the mouth of the teachers of wisdom shows itself to be, like its thematizing of history, an advanced stage of wisdom²³.

3.1.3 Outline of a Chain of Tradition

The third emphasis of the prologue is the definition of a sequence of transmission, by means of which the foundational experiences of God are passed on from generation to generation, always with the goal of establishing a new trust in God (כסל, v. 7aα, cf. v. 22 בנח). The ideal people of God are characterized as a *narrating* and *remembering* community, which, depending on its behavior with respect to God's historical acts

21 Cf. v. 11 (על-ל-א-ל).

22 According to VON RAD, Problem, 19, the integration of the Sinai tradition into the cultic lyric occurs in Neh 9:6ff for the first time. LAUHA, Geschichtsmotive, 98, misses the choice of Mount Sinai, too. But see for further and fundamental critique on VON RAD's credo-hypothesis MATHIAS, Geschichtstheologie, 16-29.

23 See also KÜHLEWEIN, Geschichte, 91.

and God's Torah, is qualified as either a recalcitrant or faithful generation. Insofar as the tradition is supposed to be passed on from fathers to sons and from them to a next generation and to future sons²⁴, the historiographical program of Ps 78 is not just aimed at its own time, but also at the future. That this form of remembering history has a definite purpose can be deduced: 1) syntactically from the formulation of v. 6 as the last sentence (למען); 2) terminologically from the double use of the expression אחרון דור²⁵, and 3) compositionally from the line drawn with the help of the key word עם, extending from the address to the people in v. 1, up until the perspective on the people of God being led by God (v. 52 / v. 62), and then by David (vv. 71-72).

The course that tradition should run is clarified by the sequence of verbs in v. 3, which recur in the entire prologue. The knowledge of the history of God and of the gift of his Torah arise primarily from listening (שמע). This knowledge continues in a growing familiarity (ידע) with what was heard, and so leads to a time-transcending account (ספר) of what was heard. That the psalmist attaches great importance to the becoming familiar and the recounting, is shown by his using both terms three times each within the prologue (vv. 3, 4, 5 and 6). The negative contrast of this sequence is characterized by the terms "to conceal" (כחד, v. 4)²⁶ in the sense of "to keep something from someone" and "to forget" (שכח, v. 7aβ). The transmission and the remembrance of history (v. 5), demanded by God himself, enables the people to participate in history and to integrate it into their own life-story and their own history with God. The actual aim of remembering history is to establish trust in God (vv. 7aα, 8b). This trust, in turn, shows itself in a continuous remembrance and keeping of God's commandments (v. 7b). Remembering one's own history with God and keeping God's commandments dynamically interact with each other. At the same time, remembrance is more than a rational act. It is an active incorporating of the transmission into one's own life story.

Just as history itself, so the remembrance of history challenges one to make a *decision*. Insofar as history becomes alive by being recalled, there is no essential difference between the generation that experienced the historical event and the generation that recalls it. Each generation anew faces a decision. The conclusions that each generation will draw from history for its present life, and its attitude regarding the experience that is passed on decides whether it becomes a דור סורר ומרה as is mentioned

24 The clarification of ילדו בנים as an asyndetic dependent clause see MICHEL, *Tempora*, 199. Verse 6 is metrically problematic. Atnach is to be placed presumably under אחרון, the loss of a word is very likely after ילדו and v. 6b is supposed to be connected to v. 7aα as one bicolon (cf. BHS).

25 Cf. Ps 44:2; 48:14; 102:19. This expression obtains an eschatological connotation in Joel 1:2f and CD-A I.12 (דורות אחרונים).

26 Cf. Job 6:10; 15:18; 27:11; Ps 40:11; Jer 50:2.

in v. 8 in connection with Deut 21:18-20²⁷, or directs its life (רוח, לבו, v. 8) towards God. The anthropological terms לב and רוח are used here to show that the orientation towards God, which is derived from history, concerns the whole person. This orientation concerns one's ability to decide and one's ability to recognize responsibility insofar as a person is לב and it concerns creativity insofar as a person is רוח²⁸.

By means of different qualifications of the term "father", the author of Ps 78 shows that God's action in history gives rise to ambivalent reactions. The "fathers" from whom the author received the message of God's action are presented in a positive light in v. 2, but the "fathers" who were disloyal in the face of God's actions serve as a negative example in v. 8. At the same time, the last verse of the (original) prologue shows that the transmission of tradition, which begins with listening, reaches its goal only in loyalty towards God (v. 8b): נאמנה אלהיאל רוחו: (cf. vv. 22, 32, 37).

The addition to the prologue in vv. 9-11 makes the negative example of v. 8 more explicit when it identifies the disobedient fathers with "Ephraim's sons" who at "the day of battle" (ביום קרב) proved to be disloyal. It is not clear which historical event is alluded to in this verse.

The Targum applies the phrase ביום קרב to an event during the Exodus out of Egypt. The Ephraimites had already wanted to leave Egypt 30 years before the time that God had determined²⁹. More modern research maintains that the verse refers either to Saul's unsuccessful wars against the Philistines (1 Sam 15; 31)³⁰; or to the end of the Northern kingdom 720 BC (cf. Hos 1:4-5)³¹, which the Deuteronomistic historiography in 2 Kgs 17 explains as being caused by a lack of loyalty to the covenant; or to a supposed allusion to conflict between Ephraimites and "the men of Gath" that is recorded in 1 Chr 7:21-22³².

For the final shape of the historiographical profile of the prologue of Ps 78, v. 9 is in any event an anticipation, both with regard to chronology and content, of what first becomes a theme in vv. 67-68: namely, differentiating God's people and concentrating on Judah. Likewise anticipatory is the qualification of God's historical action with the term ברית which occurs in the original psalm first in v. 37, where it seems to be a synonym for נפלאות (cf. v. 32). V. 11, which closely follows v. 7aβ and v. 4bβ, recalls v. 3a because it refers to the "seeing" (הראות) of God's miracles. It stresses that the starting point of historical interpretation and of knowledge of God consists in the experience of listening (שמע) and seeing (ראה).

27 Cf. also 2 Chr 30:7f; Isa 65:5; Jer 5:23 as well as Hos 4:16 and with it CD-A I.13.

28 See here again WOLFF, *Anthropologie*, 57-95.

29 STEC, *Targum*, 151.

30 WEISER, *Psalmen*, 368.

31 JUNKER, *Entstehungszeit*, 493; STERN, *Dating*, 60f.

32 HITZIG, *Psalmen*, 168.

3.2 The Historiographical Profile of the Psalm's Corpus

3.2.1 *The Structure of the Body of the Psalm (vv. 12-72)*

The body of the psalm (vv. 12-72) is characterized by the alternation between historical miniatures and refrain-like reflections. Although Josef Schreiner (1990)³³ and Klaus Seybold (1996)³⁴ suggest that these refrains are later editorial sin-theological additions, these verses belong to the original psalm. Precisely such a connection between the presentation of salvation history and sin-theology is typical of Ps 78³⁵. This connection has a match in the twin Psalms 105 and 106, where there is a contrast of two individual compositions; in Neh 9:6ff in a block-like sequence; and in Dan 9:15, where the remembrance of the history of the Exodus is wholly integrated into a confession of sin (cf. Ezra 9:6ff). In contrast to Ps 105, Ps 106, Neh 9, and Dan 9, Ps 78 is not, however, structured like a prayer. In the liturgical instruction for the reception of members into the "Community of the New Covenant" in 1QS I.18ff, the contrast between historical description and sin-theological reflection, which is so clear in Ps 78, is assumed in the genre of history and in theology:

"When they enter the covenant, the priests 19 and the levites shall bless the God of victories and all the works of his faithfulness and all 20 those who enter the covenant shall repeat after them: «Amen, Amen» *Blank* 21 *Blank* The priests shall recite the just deeds of God in mighty works, 22 and they shall proclaim all his merciful favours towards Israel. And the levites shall recite 23 the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their blameworthy offences and their sins during the dominion of 24 Belial. [And al] those who enter the covenant shall confess after them and they shall say: «We have acted sinfully, ..."³⁶

3.2.2 *The First Historical Table (vv. 12-39)*

The first large historical sequence sums up God's action towards Israel, or rather towards the fathers of Israel in Egypt, during the Exodus out of Egypt, and into the desert. It recapitulates God's actions by using again the basic qualification of God's historical actions as "miracles" (מִלְפָּא, cf. v. 4; LXX θαυμάσια). The section is heavily dependent on Exod 13–17 and Num 11 and 20³⁷. It connects in a characteristic way terms from the theol-

33 SCHREINER, *Geschichte*, 307-328 (fundamental layer of the psalm: vv. 12, 44-51, 13-16, 23-28, 54-55, 68-72; dtr editorial work: vv. 1-11, 17-22, 29-43, 52-53, 56-67).

34 SEYBOLD, *Psalmen*, 308.

35 So in principle with SPIECKERMANN, *Heilsgegenwart*, 139, 150, and GERSTENBERGER, *Psalms*, 92-98.

36 Translation done by GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – TIGCHELAAR, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, I, 71.

37 Compare v. 12 with Exod 15:11; v. 13 with Exod 14:16, 21f; 15:8; v. 14 with Exod 13:21;

ogy of history and from the theology of creation³⁸.

The miracle of the sea appears as God's primary miracle (v. 13). The cosmological stylizing of the first historical reminiscence in Ps 78 corresponds to the outlook of the theology of creation that is found in the last stanza of the psalm (vv. 67-72). This last stanza compares the foundation of the sanctuary on Zion with the foundation of the earth (v. 69; cf. Ps 24:2; 89:12; 93:1-2).

The recollection of the miraculous guidance of God's people (v. 14) follows that of the miracle of the sea. The "leading" (נחה) is presented as the epitome of the relationship between God and his people (cf. v. 52; Ps 77:21). This motif also has its contrast in the last stanza of the psalm, where the last words state that David shepherded and led the people of God with piety and wisdom (v. 72).

The first stanza of the body of the psalm concludes with the description of the behaviour of the people of God as continuous sin (חטא) and rebellion (מרה) against God (v. 17). The background for these verses are similar descriptions in Num 20:10; 20:24; 27:14 and Deut 1:26, 43; 9:7, 24; 31:27. The historical reflections in Ps 106:32-33; 107:11; Neh 9:26; 4Q504 1-2 II 8; 4Q185 1 II 3 and 4Q370 I 2s are the closest parallels to them.

The use of the description, עליין, to describe God points to the significance of v. 17. This term is used once more within the psalm in the theologically central position of v. 35. By so strongly emphasizing that the generation of the Exodus and of the desert has *continuously* failed to serve God (ויספו עוד לחטא-לו), the speaker of the psalm links this part of the psalm back to the negative behaviour of the fathers in the prologue (cf. vv. 7b-8). At the same time, the speaker connects this verse to the contemporary audience he addresses. The admonition in the prologue not to forget God's deeds (vv. 7-8) is thus also widened in view of the present and the future, admonishing them, too, not to oppose God (מרה, Hiphil, v. 17, cf. vv. 40, 56). As the contrast between v. 17 and v. 32 shows, מרות עליין is a synonym for וילא-אמינו בנפלאותיו: rebelliousness against God is synonymous to lack of trust in God (cf. v. 22 *par.* v. 7a).

In the introduction to the following sequence about God's miraculous actions (vv. 18-22*), the term "temptation" (נסה)³⁹ further clarifies this qualification. In describing the behaviour of Israel's fathers towards God, the term (נסה) is repeated in v. 41 and v. 56 like a motto. Here, too, the psalmist establishes a link with the prologue and thereby also with the contemporary audience he addresses. He achieves this by using two basic anthropological terms, נפש and לב which occur also in v. 8b. The

v. 15 with Exod 17:6; and v. 16 with Num 20:8ff.

38 V. 13: בקע (cf. Gen 7:11; Hab 3:9); v. 15: הדמות (cf. Gen 1:2; 8:2; Ps 33:7; Ps 104:6; Ps 51:10); v. 16: נדרות (cf. Ps 24:2; 93:3f; Hab 3:8).

39 Cf. Exod 17:2, 7; Num 14:22; Deut 6:16; Ps 95:9; 106:14; Judg 8:12; Sir 18:23; Wis 1:2.

generation of the desert asking God for essential supplies of food (vv. 18-19*[20-21]22, cf. Exod 16 and Num 11) becomes a paradigm for the denial and neglect of God's power over life and death in general. Accordingly, the description of the miracles of the manna and of the quails (vv. 23-29) culminates in a sapiential reflection on life and death (vv. 32-34): ויכל-בהבל ימיהם ושנותם בבהלה (v. 33)⁴⁰.

The description of the response to God's punishments, which takes form in the *search for God* (שחר, דרש, v. 34), gains paradigmatic significance, too⁴¹. This search leads to *remembering* God's being. A number of characteristics mark v. 35 as a key verse for understanding the history and the theology of Ps 78: its use of the *terminus technicus* of the theology of history זכר (cf. vv. 39, 42); the increased number of titles and epithets for God ("rock", "the Most High", "redeemer"); and its position in almost the exact middle of the composition⁴². The appropriate response to God's historical deeds in history—not only in the recapitulated ancient and early history, but also the living history of the present—is a "remembering God" with one's whole person (לב). According to Judg 8:34; Isa 57:11; and Isa 64:4, what is meant by this "remembering God" is obedience to God and incorporating the experience of God into one's own way of life⁴³.

In confessing God to be a "rock" and "redeemer", the psalmist makes two points. First, these terms are a summary description of God's historical actions at the time of the Exodus and the journey through the desert⁴⁴. Second, this theological description also corresponds to the term זכר כי, which introduces the basic anthropological characteristic found in v. 39 where the immortal God (v. 35) is contrasted to the limited human beings who can learn, but who are frail (vv. 36-37, 39)⁴⁵. If the theological perspective secures the knowledge and acknowledgement of God as the cornerstone of life and one's own survival (v. 35), then the anthropological perspective secures the acknowledgment of one's own status as creature (v. 39). The two perspectives are based on a common conception: that human beings are historically related to God. According to Ps 78,

40 Cf. Ps 37:20; 39:6f; 89:47f; 90:5f; 102:4; Job 7:7; 10:9.

41 Cf. Isa 26:9; Hos 5:15; Job 8:5 or rather Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13; Amos 5:4, 6; 1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 14:3; 15:2, 12f; 17:4; 26:5; 31:21; 1QS I.1f.

42 Therefore, there are 30 bicola before v. 35 in the original psalm. 29 bicola follow. In the final version of the psalm, the marginal masorah mentions that Ps 78:36 is the center of the whole psalter; according to a notice within the Babylonian Talmud Ps 78:38 is the center (cf. bQid. 30a).

43 Cf. for this see SCHOTTROFF, "Gedenken", 128, 167ff.

44 Cf. the usage of the term זכר in context with the description of the Exodus in Ps 74:2; 77:16; 106:10; 107:2. Cf. v. 15 (צריח) as well as the epithet צור in Deut 32:4, 30; Ps 18:3, 47; 19:15; 28:1; 62:3, 7; 92:16; 144:1.

45 Compare vv. 36-37 with Isa 29:13 and Jer 12:2 and compare v. 39 with Job 7:7; Ps 103:14; 104:29 and Isa 40:6-8.

the positive development of this relationship from the side of the human being is characterized by the terms “faith”, “trust”, “remembering”, “transmitting”. The negative development of this relationship shows itself in “unbelief”, “mistrust”, “forgetting”, and “tempting”. Vv. 17 and 32 summarize this negative relationship with the term for “missing the mark” (אָפּטײַטש). God’s behaviour in response to this negative relationship on the side of human beings can be described either as a preserving or as a punishing. The psalmist, who shows himself again to be a student of wisdom and of later Deuteronomism, says that insofar as the human being basically tends to sin⁴⁶, God’s willingness to forgive and his grace alone enable the human being to survive. In the transition from the recapitulation of the Exodus and the journey in the desert to the account of the giving of the land, the psalmist alludes to Exod 34:6, Deut 4:31 and to parallel passages of the well-known formula of mercy (v. 38)⁴⁷. In using these allusions in his transition, the psalmist makes it clear that the course of history in the past, present and future depends solely upon God (cf. Gen 8:21-22; Deut 4:31-40). The real mystery of history, which the psalmist wants to proclaim in v. 2, is the mystery of God’s mercy; his willingness to forgive guilt is greater than his anger (v. 38). This mystery is accompanied by the mystery of the recurring apostasy of Israel from its God (cf. Judg 2:10ff).

3.2.3 *The Second Historical Table (vv. 40-72)*

The second historical table develops the fundamental statement about God’s being in vv. 38-39 insofar as it continues with the narrative historical line. After a review of the epoch of the Exodus as a time of salvation (vv. 42, 53b)⁴⁸—which was already recalled in the first part—and the guidance through the desert (vv. 52, 53a), the psalmist proceeds to name the following topics: “giving of the land” (vv. 54-55)⁴⁹, “settlement in the land” (vv. 57-58), “surrender of the sanctuary in Silo and armed conflicts of Israel” (vv. 60-64), and “election of Judah, Zion and David” (vv. 67-72).

In the review of the Egyptian plagues (vv. 44-51), which was added secondarily to the second table, the plagues are described as miraculous

46 Cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; 1 Kgs 8:46; 1 Chr 28:9; Job 4:17ff; 15:14ff; 25:4ff; Ps 103:14; 130:3; 143:2; Qoh 7:20; Prov 20:9; 11QPs^a XXIV.7; Sir 17:30-32; 1 Enoch 81:5; 1QS XI.20ff; 1QH^a IX.21ff; XI.23f; XII.29f; XX.24f among others.

47 Cf. Exod 34:6; Num 14:18-20; Deut 4:31; Joel 2:13; Nah 1:3; Jonah 4:2f; Ps 86:15; 103:8-11; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:7-9; Neh 9:17, 31; 2 Chr 30:9; 1QH^a VIII.16f; 4Q381 47 1; 4Q511 57 III 1; CD-A II.4f.

48 About פָּדָה as a term used in reference to the Exodus, cf. Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:6; 15:15; 24:18; Mi 6:4.

49 Cf. Exod 15:13, 17 and Exod 23:28; 33:2; 34:11; Deut 33:27; Judg 2:3, 21; 6:9; Josh 24:28.

signs, in accord with the Deuteronomistic tradition (אִזְוֹת, מוֹפְתִים)⁵⁰. The mandatory choice of seven plagues assumes the last editorial series of the plagues in Exod 7–12⁵¹. The plagues are understood, above all, as mighty acts of Israel's God and as God's punishment. The theological interpretation of the plagues in vv. 49–50 has no correspondence to Exod 7–12, but rather sees the plagues as the consequence of God's wrath. It thereby makes clear to the reader what the consequences of a lack of faith (cf. v. 37) can be, not only for the "tents of Ham" (v. 51; cf. Ps 105:27; 106:22), but also for the people of God themselves.

The individual sections of the second part of the original psalm (vv. 40–43 and vv. 52–72) are, like the first view of history, contrasted with one another by means of reflections about Israel's relationship to its God and reflections about God's response. Stereotypically, Israel's behaviour is described by words such as "temptation", "rebellion" and "disobedience against God's commandments" (v. 56). In contrast to the first historical table, however, a new component appears. Because of this, the three subsections in vv. 52–58, vv. 59–64 and vv. 65–72 are united by means of the *motif of worship*.

The guidance through the wilderness aims at the guidance of God's people (עַם, v. 52) into the promised land and towards God's mountain. We can anticipate that, by "God's mountain", Zion is meant, as in Exod 15:17 (v. 54, cf. Ps 74:2)⁵².

In the land, however, Israel degenerates into worshipping on high places (בְּמוֹת) and committing idolatry (v. 58). The psalmist formulates this degeneration by using the Deuteronomical demand for one, centralized worship without images⁵³. God's punishment is seen in the surrender of his sanctuary (מִשְׁכָּן) in Silo (v. 60)⁵⁴, and in the abandonment of his own people (v. 61–64)⁵⁵. With this punishment, the second part of the formula of mercy in v. 38b becomes historically explicit. This section (vv. 59–64) is even more exemplary than the previous passages. This is the role of the stereotypical description of the handing over of God's people to the

50 Cf. Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2f; 26:8; 28:46; 29:2; 34:11; Ps 105:27; 135:9; Neh 9:10.

51 See for this the evidence given by SCHMIDT, *Plagenerzählung*, 86–96, and MATHIAS, *Geschichtstheologie*, 92, as well as LEE, *Context*, 86 (though with an incorrect early dating of Exod 7–12).

52 Cf. the Targum to Ps 78 as well as LAUHA, *Geschichtsmotive*, 102; KRAUS, *Psalmen*, 710; SPIECKERMANN, *Heilsgegenwart*, 144f; MATHIAS, *Geschichtstheologie*, 94; HILBER, *Prophecy*, 107.

53 Cf. Deut 4:25; 9:18; 31:29; 32:16, 21; Judg 2:12; 1 Kgs 14:15; 15:30; 22:54; 2 Kgs 17:11, 17; 23:19.

54 Cf. Josh 18:1, 8, 10; 19:51; 22:9–12; Judg 19:31; 1 Sam 1:3; 3:21; 4:3; Jer 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9.

55 Because of the term עַם (cf. Ps 132:8) v. 61 is understood as an allusion to the narration about the ark in 1 Sam 4–6; however, it could also be seen as the peoples surrendering (for this cf. SPIECKERMANN, *Heilsgegenwart*, 146f). The Targum thinks of the Torah (אִזְוֹת), cf. TgPs 29:11; 105:4.

enemy, whose name is purposely omitted (v. 61), as well as Israel's experience of deportation due to the collapse of the northern empire 722 BC, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonians 587 BC. The closest parallels to vv. 63-64 are the prophetic statements about Israel's and Judah's downfall, and the collective prayers of lamentation and petition, but above all the Lamentations of Jeremiah⁵⁶. The wording in vv. 61-64 is left open-ended so that its content can be applied to each generation that commits any of the offences against the cult that are listed in v. 58, and therefore calls the wrath of God upon itself (cf. CD-A I.4ff.).

God's merciful reaction can be seen in his choosing Zion as the permanent place for the sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁ, v. 69) and in his choice of David as the shepherd of God's people (עַם, v. 71). With this, the first part of the formula of mercy in v. 38 is made more precise. The motif of the angry God was expressed in the formula of mercy in v. 38b with the negative term from the theology of history, נִאֲסָה (v. 59, cf. v. 67)⁵⁷. The motif of the God (v. 38a) who has mercy and brings about reconciliation (כַּפֵּר)⁵⁸ is now described with בָּחַר, a term known from the theological historiography of the Deuteronomists and the Chronicles (vv. 68-69)⁵⁹. Restricting the statement of the general rejection of Israel (v. 69) and looking ahead to Judah's, Zion's and David's election (vv. 68ff), both serve to confirm the theological fundamental principle that God's grace is greater than his anger (v. 38).

The first time that this Psalm uses אֲדֹנָי as a title for God, is also the last time that a title of God is given in this Psalm. This title and the strong anthropomorphism used of God who appears to be awakening from sleep and from a delirious state (v. 59) mark a turning point initiated by God. Only God's turning to the people enables the history of God's peoples to progress (cf. Ps 44:24). This progress, which continues until the psalmist's day and beyond, is characterized by *three features*:

1) Israel's enemies are defeated permanently (עוֹלָם). If v. 66 adverts, according to the internal textual chronology, to retaliation by the Phillistines under Samuel, Saul and David⁶⁰, the absolute wording (נִתָּן) points to their continued suppression. Ps 78:66 therefore takes its place next to the corresponding statement in the portrait of David in the Praise of the Fathers by Ben Sira (cf. Sir 47:7).

2) Zion in Judah is chosen to be the permanent place of the central sanctuary (לְעוֹלָם, cf. Ps 74:2; 132:13; Sir 51:12m). On the basis of the historical narration, vv. 67-69 reflect the transition of political and religious

56 Cf. Ps 44:10ff as well as Lam 1:4-6, 18f; 2:9-11, 20f; 5:11-14.

57 Cf. 2 Kgs 23:27; Jer 7:29; 14:19; Lam 5:22; Hos 9:17.

58 Cf. Deut 21:8; Ps 65:4; 79:9.

59 Cf. Deut 4:37; 7:6f; 2 Sam 6:21; 1 Kgs 8:16; 11:34; 1 Chr 28:4, 10; 2 Chr 6:5f; 7:12, etc.

60 Cf. 1 Sam 7:13; 13f; 17f; 2 Sam 5:17ff; 8:1.

leadership from the tribes of central Palestine to Judah in David's reign (cf. 2 Sam 5:1-5). However, the absolute statements about God's love (אהבה) for Zion⁶¹, the motif of God as builder of his temple and his city⁶², as well as the comparison of the temple with the heavenly heights (רמים)⁶³ and the earth (v. 69), expand the vision to the contemporary time of the psalmist and to the future of his readers.

3) After the epoch of the Exodus, of the giving of the land, and of the erection of the temple, the guidance of God's people is delegated to David (compare v. 70 with v. 14). Within the framework of a Near-Eastern ideology of kingship, and in continuity with the (late) Deuteronomistic passages 1 Sam 16:8ff; 17:34; 2 Sam 7:7-8; 1 Kgs 3:6 and 1 Kgs 9:4, he becomes the ideal ruler and the permanent model for the fulfillment of this divine role of shepherding. The change of epoch is marked by the mention of this single person from Israel's history by name in the body of the psalm. In telling contrast to the historical summaries in Ps 105, 106, Neh 9, Isa 63 or CD-A II.16ff, Ps 78 names neither one of the patriarchs nor Moses nor Aaron⁶⁴. The divine history of leadership⁶⁵ leads into a history of David's leadership (v. 72; Ps 89:20ff; 132:11ff). In the election of Judah, of Zion and of David, the history of Israel's foundation is completed here. As, Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1823) had succinctly remarked earlier about v. 72: "Hier bricht der Dichter ab, und überläßt die Weiterführung der Geschichte und die Nutzenwendung seinen Lesern"⁶⁶. Taking into consideration the prologue, three essential and historically determined features of the identity of God's people appear:

- 1) the gift of the Torah for and in "Israel and Jacob" (v. 5),
- 2) Zion (vv. 54, 69),
- 3) the kingship of David in and over "Israel and Jacob" (vv. 71-72).

The way leading from Egypt to Zion (cf. Exod 15:13; 1 Kgs 8:16; 2 Chr 6:5-6) and from the Torah to the temple is actualized and becomes alive

61 Cf. Ps 48:2; 74:2; (76:3); 87:2; 99:2.

62 Cf. Exod 15:17; Isa 54:11f; Ps 102:17; 147:2; Sir 51:12g.

63 The Targum understands רמים as the angels (cf. Job 21:22). LXX reads ἄγγέλους ("wild oxen", cf. Ps 22:22) and translates it μονοκεράτων ("unicorns"). The parallel with ארץ and in Isa 33:5; 51:13, 16 and 57:15 suggests a different translation which is "the high heavens". Changing it into כמרמים (cf. Ps 148:1) is not necessary considering the usage of the comparative particle כמו in v. 13.

64 Moses and Aaron: Ps 77:21; 99:6; 105:26; 106:16; Sir 45:1ff; only about Moses: Neh 9:14; Isa 63:11f; about Abraham Ps 105:9, 42; Neh 9:7; Sir 44:19ff; 1 Macc 2:52; CD-A III.2ff (Triads of the patriarchs). The Targum further inserts selected figures of Old Testament descriptions of the "Heilsgeschichte" as in v. 12 "Abraham, Isaak and Jakob" and in vv. 13 and 15 "Moses".

65 Cf. Exod 13:17; 15:13; Deut 32:12; Isa 49:10; 57:18; 58:11; 63:14; Neh 9:12; Ps 48:15; 80:9.

66 DE WETTE, *Commentar*, 442; similarly SEYBOLD, *Psalmen*, 313: "Das helle, aber abrupte Ende dieses Psalms ist ein "Rätsel" (2) und stellt viele Fragen".

in the process of remembering⁶⁷. With regard to the whole psalter, the perspective of Ps 78 offers a complementary appendix to the viewpoints of Pss 1–2 and 149–150.

4. The Historical Position of Psalm 78 in Literature and Theology

In its historical construction Ps 78 offers us a peculiar mixture of sapiential, (late) Deuteronomistic, priestly (theology of atonement), prophetic and temple theologian traditions. The most important aspects in the history of tradition and of literature for classifying the psalm in the literary history of ancient Judaism are:

1) The *dependence on the (late) Deuteronomistic admonitions*, especially in Deut 4:9-10; 6:7ff; 8:2ff; 11:19 und 32:7, 46, where a concept of remembering within a group⁶⁸ is developed. This type of communal memory functions also in Ps 78. Just as in the admonitions of Deuteronomy, as well as in the paradigmatic historical sequences in Ps 105-106; Neh 9:6ff or 1 Macc 2:50ff, Ps 78 is concerned with an “edification of community”⁶⁹. In this sense, the catechetical layout of Ps 78 differs from the apologetic, outwardly oriented reflections on history in Sir 44–49 (cf. especially Sir 44:1-15).

2) The *dependence on the (late) Deuteronomistic theology of history* as it shows itself especially in 2 Kgs 17:7-18. Its most remarkable features are the judgment of Israel’s behavior towards the Torah, its commandments, and God’s covenant.

3) The *transparency of the events described in vv. 59-63 which still show the experiences of Israel and Judah* in Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian and Hellenistic times.

4) The *dependence on the priestly writings* describing the Exodus and the journey in the wilderness, as can be detected already in the original layer of the psalm⁷⁰.

5) The *parallels to (late) sapiential terminology*, especially in the area of anthropology (see also the Asaph-Psalm 73⁷¹).

6) The closeness to the historical thinking of the *Chronicles*, which interpret history with the paradigm of retribution (“Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang”), and closeness to the Chronicles’ image of David. The actual

67 Cf. also GREENSTEIN, *Memory*, 208f, and HIEKE, “Weitergabe”, 60.

68 Cf. also Exod 10:2.

69 GERSTENBERGER, *Psalms*, 98.

70 Cf. too, the proofs given by GUNKEL, *Psalmen*, 344; MATHIAS, *Geschichtstheologie*, 434, and HOSSFELD – ZENGER, *Psalmen*, 429.

71 Cf. WITTE, *Weg*, 18ff.

historical period of the foundation of Israel is the time of David (compare Ps 78: 70-72 with 1 Chr 28-29). David is the ideal ruler (compare Ps 78:72 with 2 Chr 6:5-6; 1 Chr 29:17)⁷². The epoch of David counts as the golden age. Ps 77⁷³ recalls how God's people were guided through the wilderness by Moses (and Aaron) (v. 21). If we compare the conclusion of Ps 78 with that of Ps 77, then in Ps 78, as well as in the Chronicles, David appears as the new Moses. Seen against this background, the assignment of Ps 78 to Asaph in v. 1⁷⁴ can be considered to be one of the original parts of the psalm. The Chronicles see Asaph as a co-founder of the cult "according to David's regulations", and as a prototype of the restoration during the Second temple era (cf. 1 Chr 16:15ff; 2 Chr 24:20; Neh 12:46). What Ps 78 has in common with the intertestamental descriptions of David in 11QPs^a XXVIII.3-4 (= Ps 151A), Sir 47:3 or rather 11QPs^a XXVII.2ff; Sir 47:8-12⁷⁵ is the concentration on the motif of the shepherd's election and the motif of David's piety and intelligence.

As a result of these six observations, we can conclude that the psalm cannot be dated to the time of David as Otto Eißfeldt (1958) suggested by arguing that the collapse of the Davidic-Salomonic kingdom ("Reichsteilung") is not part of the outlook of the psalm⁷⁶. It would be just as false to maintain that the psalm takes place against the background of Hezekiah's reforms (725-697 BC)⁷⁷ or of Josiah's reforms (639-609 BC)⁷⁸.

72 Cf. also 1 Chr 22:17-19; 23:5; 2 Chr 8:14; Neh 12:24, 36, 45; Ezra 3:10; 8:20.

73 On the relationship between Ps 77 and Ps 78 see WEBER, Umfeld, 286ff and LEUENBERGER, Konzeptionen, 112ff.

74 Cf. Ps 50:1; 73:1; 74:1; 75:1; 76:1; 77:1; 79:1; 80:1; 81:1; 82:1; 83:1. I agree with Weber's thesis that Ps 78 plays a central role in the collection of the Asaph-Psalms (cf. WEBER, Asaph-Psalter, 117-141). His proposal to locate the Asaph-Psalms in the historical situation after the fall of the Northern kingdom 720 BC does not convince me, cf. n. 78.

75 Cf. also 1 Macc 2:57; 4Q398 14-17 II 1f; 4Q522 9 II 2ff; Ps-Philo, Lib.Ant. 59:3-5; as well as the tendency to portray David as an exemplary devout and wise person in the NT (Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25; 7:45f; 13:22; Heb 11:32) and respectively in the rabbinical tradition (bMeg. 11a; bMQ 16b).

76 EISSFELDT, Lied, 36f. At the same time EISSFELDT did not want to neglect the original history of Asaph's authorship in the title (cf. 1 Chr 16:5, 7; 25:6) (similar HOFBAUER, Lied, 41-50). For such an early dating back into the times of David see also CAMPBELL, Contribution, 75, and then following TATE, Psalms, 286. HILBER, Prophecy, 107, argues for the time of Rehoboam (926-910 BC). Nevertheless, the characterization of the depicted review of history as a mystery "from olden times" (מִיָּקְדָם) already shows the historical distance between the author/speaker of the psalm and the events described. The psalm's ending with the election of David is relevant in dating it insofar as the psalm thus could not have been written before the times of David. The question of the age of the psalm is not primarily solved by considering the topic but also by how the topic is presented. The fact that the author follows the historical line (only) until David is quite remarkable for his historical concept.

77 JUNKER, Entstehungszeit, 493, 498; similarly SCHILDENBERGER, Pentateuchquellen, 239f; CLIFFORD, Zion, 138f; STERN, Dating, 56-65; WEBER, Umfeld, 287f.

78 SCHMIDT, Psalmen, 150; SCHREINER, Geschichte, 317 (original psalm from the later

The parallels mentioned, and the looking forward to the permanent sanctuary, which is to be established in Judah (v. 69), support the thesis of a later dating within the time of the Second temple⁷⁹.

The *addition* in vv. 9-11 is marked by an *anti-Ephraimitic tendency*. An aggravated clash between the Samaritans and the cultic community in Jerusalem might be reflected here. These verses correspond closely to polemics in Sir 47:21, 23; 48:15; 50:25-26 or Tob 1:4⁸⁰. Therefore, the *terminus ad quem* for the original psalm is the end of the 3rd century BC. The historical reflection in 4Q504⁸¹ points to the same time. Like Ps 78, 4Q504 possesses a similar connection between the remembrance of history and sin-theological interpretation which also reaches its peak in a David-Zion-theology (4Q504 1-2 IV 2-12; cf. Sir 51:12g-h).

Despite the closeness of David's portrait in vv. 70-72 to the motif of *David redivivus* in Ezek 34:23-24 and 37:24-25⁸², there is no eschatological tendency in this psalm as there is in the book of Chronicles. In contrast to the images of David in Pss 18; 89 and 132, there is no mention of David's oath or of the promise of descendents⁸³. This demonstrates that for the author of Ps 78 the Davidic times are definitively ended. According to the original psalm as well as its additions [relecture] there are three essential ways, related to the present, to give shape to one's own, often mysterious and ephemeral life in God's presence: the constant remembrance of God's deeds, which are understood as the foundation of the people of God in the epoch from the Exodus to David and till the definitive election of Zion⁸⁴; the trust in God being the Lord of history and being merciful, as well as the loyalty to the God-given Torah. Read with the eyes of faith, the ancient history of Israel is, as the authors of Ps 78 reconstructed and interpreted the epoch from "Exodus to David", an exemplary opportunity to learn about the relationship between man and God.

times of the kings); LEE, Context, 86.

79 DE WETTE, Commentar, 441-448; OLSHAUSEN, Psalmen, 329-334; GUNKEL, Psalmen, 342, as well as in recent time KRAUS, Psalmen, 703-705; FÜGLISTER, Rätsel, 295. Cf. MATHIAS, Geschichtstheologie, 70f; SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 149, and HOSSFELD – ZENGER, Psalmen, 429: "late-exilic/after-exilic". A dating during the time of the Maccabees was supported by HITZIG, Psalmen, 153-172, und DUHM, Psalmen, 298-308.

80 Cf. also 4QpNah 3-4 II 2, 8; 3-4 III 5; 3-4 IV 5; CD-A VII.13.

81 According to MAIER, Qumran-Essener, II, 606, the manuscript was copied around 150 BC.

82 Cf. also Jer 30:9; 33:15-17, also further developed in Ps.Sol. 17:4ff. SPIECKERMANN, Heilsgegenwart, 149; FÜGLISTER, Rätsel, 295f; MATHIAS, Geschichtstheologie, 102f, 214f; HOSSFELD – ZENGER, Psalmen, 429f have different views.

83 Cf. Ps 18:51; 89:4f, 36, 50; 132:10f, 17.

84 For an inverse succession of the historical paradigm ("from David to Exodus"), cf. IQM XI.1f, 9f.

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