THE PASSOVER EVE CEREMONY — AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE

by JOSEPH TABORY *

The ceremony of the Passover eve is conducted according to an order prescribed and fixed by law and tradition. Indeed, because of this, the evening is also simply called the Evening of the Order. However, in spite of the relative rigidity of the regulations pertaining to the conduct of the ceremony, it is well known that the present day ceremony is not exactly the same as it was in its earliest origins. The history of the Passover eve ceremony has been the subject of much discussion by both Jewish and Christian scholars for various reasons. Christian scholars have been interested in this ceremony mostly because of its connection with the Passion of Jesus and his crucifixion. The main challenge in this connection was to discover how the Passover ceremony was celebrated in the time of the Second Temple — the time of Jesus — in order to get a better understanding of Jesus' actions and intentions at his Last Supper — if it was indeed a Passover eve ceremony.[1] The paucity of

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1. An extensive bibliography of works on this problem, classified according to whether the author identifies the Last Supper with a Passover meal or rejects this identity, is to be found in Joachim Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesus* (Gottingen 1960), pp. 5-9. Further references to this work will be to the English translation (*The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, tr. by Norman Perrin, London, SCM Press, 1966)

sources and a modern tendency to historical research necessitated a twofold approach. On the one hand, the Passover holiday was studied from its earliest inception in biblical times until its "culmination" in the time of Jesus.[2] On the other hand, later Rabbinic sources, redacted in the second century C.E., were used critically in an attempt to discover the earlier strata in them which, presumably, reflect the custom in the Second Temple period.[3]

As against the Christian approach, Jewish scholars have been generally interested in the present day Passover ceremony and its historical origins. For this reason their approach has been to point out the differences between the modern ceremony and its observance in the early Rabbinic literature — although they too have taken a critical approach to this literature

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which is really a later edition since it incorporates the author's revisions up to July 1964. Unfortunately, the bibliography is omitted in this edition. See also: David Flusser, "The Last Supper and the Essenes", *Immanuel* 2 (Spring, 1973), pp. 23-27.

2. The most comprehensive work on this subject is that of J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover*, London Oriental Series 12 (London 1965). Although Segal is a Jewish scholar, his bias is shown in the title of his book which treats of the history of the *Hebrew* Passover as if it were completed in the Second Temple period. Presumably, the celebration of the Passover ceremony after the Second Temple period is a *Jewish* Passover and needs separate treatment. There would be some justification in this approach if one were to differentiate between the Passover ceremony as a sacrificial meal and its non-sacrificial character after the destruction of the Temple. However, this distinction was not clear to the people of the time. As we shall point out further on, the destruction of the Temple does not provide a clear break in the history of the ceremony.

3. A number of descriptions of this type exsit: Adalbert Merx, *Die Vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihren altesten bekannten Texte*, Vol. 2, part 2 (Commentary to Mark and Luke), (Berlin 1905), pp. 416-432; George Beer, *Pesachim — Text, uebersetzung, und erklerung*, Die Mischna — Text, Ubersetzung und ausführlichen Erklarung — mit eingehenden geschichtlichen und sprachlichen Einleitungen, (Giessen 1912); Herman Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament* (Munich 1928; repr. 1956), Vol. 4.2, pp. 611-639; Gordon J. Bahr, "The Seder of Passover and the Eucharistic Words", *Novum Testamentum* (1970), pp. 184-202. Uncritical use of Rabbinic texts misled Robert Eisler in his article "Das letzte Abendmahl und der Sederabend" (*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925), pp. 161-192. His theme is based on the Jewish custom of using three loaves of unleavened bread at the Seder which are called "Cohen, Levi and Israel". However, three loaves were not used before the tenth century while their appelations are even later — as pointed out by A. Marmorstein ("Das letzte Abendmahl und der Sederabend", *ZNW* 25 (1926), pp. 249-253. David Daube ("He That Cometh", lecture given by David Daube, October 1966, pp. 7-8) accepts the criticism but contends that the thesis is not dependent on this error. A full history of the development of the custom of using three loaves on the Passover eve is found in my dissertation (see below, note 5).

and have tried to discover its earliest strata.[4] The following survey will attempt to present a reconstruction of the Passover ceremony as it was conducted in the early Second Temple period and to follow it in its historical adaptation until it received its present form.[5]

The Passover ceremony may be divided into three basic components: the meal; the Haggada (recital of the story of the Exodus and its exegesis); and the songs — mostly in praise of God although there is an accretion of other types. Although there is a certain intertwining of the elements it is more convenient, for the sake of our exposition, to treat of each element separately.

The Passover meal, just as the entire ceremony, is conducted according to a pattern or order which is determined partly by law and partly by etiquette. Since many of the details known of the Passover meal, such as reclining and washing of hands, are common to other festive meals, an obvious approach to the study of the structure of the Passover meal is to start with the description of the more usual festive meal which is given fairly fully in Tannaitic literature.[6] From this literature we learn that the festive meal ordinarily consisted of three courses:

1. The preliminary course served in the ante-room;
2. The main course served in the dining-room while the guests reclined on couches;
3. The dessert which consisted of a sweet table and in the course of which, they devoted themselves to serious drinking.

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4. J. Lewy, "Ein Vortrag über das Ritual des Pessach-Abends", *Jahres-Bericht des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars Fraenckel'scher Stiftung,* Breslau 1904; Eduard Baneth, *Der Seder Abend — Ein Vortrag* (Berlin 1904). The most important work of this type is that of E. D. Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggada — its sources and history* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem 1969).

5. Much of the material in this article is based on my Ph.D. dissertation, "The History of the Order of the Passover Eve" (in Hebrew), submitted to the Senate of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, 1977. The references in this article will be mainly to literature in modern European languages. References to Hebrew literature on many of the topics discussed here may be found in my dissertation. A popular survey of the entire history of the Passover ceremony is that of Ch. Raphael, *A Feast of History: The drama of Passover through the ages* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972). This book, written in a very lively style, summarizes a number of the main problems of modern scholarship and includes a short bibliography

6. Gordon J. Bahr, "Seder of Passover" (above, fn. 3). A fuller description of the festive meal based on these sources is found in Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar,* Vol. 4.2, pp. 611-639.

However, a critical analysis of Mishna Pesahim, the earliest Rabbinic portrayal of the ceremony which is extant, seems to lessen the points of comparison between the Passover meal and the regular festive meal.[7] The last course, called the *afikomon* from the Greek ἐπικωμον which was connected with after-dinner revelry,[8] was specifically forbidden in the Mishna because its attendant revelry was not considered suitable for the evening.[9] Although the Mishna mentions a first course, it has been shown that this belongs to a later stratum of the Mishna.[10] Thus the question of the existence of a first course during the Second Temple period is moot. On the one hand, the biblical injunction to eat the Passover sacrifice in haste (Exodus 12 : 11) would have made the first course an impossibility. On the other hand, the Rabbis stated that this injunction applies only to the Egyptian Passover while the Passover of the later era may be eaten at leisure (Mishna Pesahim 9 : 5). Nevertheless, another consideration seems to show that a first course was not common —at least as long as the sacrificial meal continued to be eaten. It was customary to eat the sacrifice as soon as it became dark, as part of a general tendency to fulfill a commandment without delay as soon as it was possible.[11] Some people used to fast on Passover as a preparation for the eating of the Passover meal although the duration of the fast and the circles in which it was customary are not clearly defined.[12] Under

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7. Jeremias (*Eucharistic Words*, pp. 41-62) gives a long list of differences between the regular order of the meal and the Last Supper in order to show that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. However, many of the peculiarities of the Last Supper to which he refers were common to most festive meals.
8. On the derivation of this work and its meaning, see the next note.
9. In medieval times it became customary to eat a piece of the unleavened bread at the end of the Passover meal and to refer to it as an *afikomon*. Merx (*Die Vier kanonischen Evangelien*, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 424-426) gave syntactically new interpretation to the passage in the Mishna by which he claimed that the Mishna insisted on the *afikomon* although he still retained the idea that the *afikomon* was connected with song and revelry. Robert Eisler went a step further in deriving *afikomon* from the aorist participle ἀφικομενος "he who comes" and explaining it as a Messianic reference ("Das letzte Abendmahl", above, fn. 3, pp. 172-180). Although Eisler's misunderstanding was corrected by Hans Lietzman (*ZNW* 25 [1926] pp. 1-5) the correction was not considered sufficient by N. M. Nicolsky ("Pascha im Kulte des jerusalemischen Temples", *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 45 [1927], p. 245 fn. 1) and Eisler's suggestion has more recently been resurrected by David Daube in his lecture "He That Cometh" (above, fn. 3). See also his article "The Significance of the Afikoman", *Pointer: Quarterly Journal of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues*, Vol. III, No. 3 (Spring 1968), pp. 4-5.
10. Ch. Albeck, *Untersuchungen uber die Redaktion der Mischna* (Berlin 1923), pp. 141-192. See below for the introduction of the first course into the meal.
11. *Tosefta*, Pesahim 1:35 (ed. S. Lieberman, New York 1962, p. 150).
12. See Segal, *The Hebrew Passover*, pp. 145-46. The connection of this fast with

these circumstances, it was not feasible to eat a first course before partaking of the sacrificial meal proper.

The single course of the early Passover meal was very similar, in its general composition, to a modern main dish. It consisted of bread, meat, and a vegetable. Its unusuality was in the specifications of the components. The bread had to be unleavened; the meat (of the sacrificial lamb) had to be roasted; and the vegetable had to be the kind called in Hebrew *maror*. This Hebrew word seems to come from the root meaning "bitter" but the specific vegetable referred to is not definitely known. The Septuagint already translated *maror* as a generic term for something bitter and this tradition is followed by modern versions who translate "bitter herbs". Rabbinic law sanctioned specific vegetables for this purpose although, in their absence, any bitter vegetable could be used (Mishna Pesahim 2 : 6). It is somewhat surprising then that the vegetable preferred for this use by the Rabbis was lettuce. It has been suggested by modern scholars, based on Akkadian usage, that the original meaning of *maror* is indeed lettuce.[13] The Talmud explains the use of lettuce symbolically. Lettuce, if left in the field, becomes hard and bitter and so the sojourn in Egypt, although initially pleasant, became hard and bitter (BT, Pesahim 39a). In spite of this explanation, perhaps due to difficulties in getting lettuce which was totally free of worms, the Jews of Eastern Europe used other vegetables, notably horseradish, instead of the traditional lettuce.

The reason for the use of unleavened bread is somewhat problematic. In the modern Haggadas the use of unleavened bread is explained as a remembrance of the haste in which the Jews left Egypt. Because of their haste, they did not have sufficient time to permit their bread to rise. They took their dough along with them with the intention that it should ferment on the way.[14] But, as a result of Divine intervention, their dough did not ferment, and in memory of this they eat unleavened bread till this day. However, manuscripts of the Haggada and the Mishna do not give this reason for the eating of unleavened bread. From other sources it can be shown that even in the post Second Temple period people understood that while haste might be the reason for eating unleavened bread (during the seven day holiday of unleavened bread which came after the Passover sacrifice),[15] this was not the reason for its consumption

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that of the Quartadecimans has been discussed by Bernhard Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner* (Gütersloh 1953), pp. 15-73.

13. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover,* p. 169.

14. An interesting parallel to this is found in an ostracon from Arad published by Y. Aharony (*The Arad Inscriptions* [Jerusalem 1977], inscription no. 3).

15. Both Philo and Josephus recognised two separate holidays: The Passover

with the sacrificial meal. We should rather understand the use of unleavened bread on the Passover eve as part of an ancient tradition which forbids the use of leavened bread with a sacrificial meal — perhaps because of the idea of contamination involved in the use of leaven. This in turn may be connected with the idea that the Passover lamb had to be roasted and not cooked since roasting is a more primitive form of food preparation and involves less human activity.[16]

After the destruction of the Temple, when the sacrificial meal no longer existed, Rabbinical sages discussed whether it was still necessary to eat unleavened bread and *maror* in the absence of the sacrifice (BT Pesahim 120a). The trend was to require consumption of a symbolic quantity — the size of an olive — of these two foods, and thus their being the essential part of a full meal became obscured. Once we understand that the Passover sacrifice, while it existed, was part of a full meal, we see that this meal fits into the biblical theory of sacrificial meals as expounded by modern scholars.[17] The Passover sacrifice was of the type called *Zevah* which was a communal meal eaten in the presence of the Deity and whose purpose was to stress the fellowship of the participants. In this sense it is very similar to the *havura* meal which had the same purpose although it was not a sacrificial meal. Partly due to similarity of these two types of meals, some scholars have indeed considered Jesus' last supper as a *havura* meal rather than a Passover sacrifice.[18]

The second element — the Haggada — is not mentioned as a ritual obligation in biblical sources. It stands to reason, however, that the elders of each family transmitted the traditions of the people to the youth at suitable opportunities, and the Passover eve was certainly suitable for talk about the Exodus.

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sacrifice which began on the 14th and ended with the meal of that same evening; the Feast of Unleavened Bread which began on the 15th and continued for seven days. This distinction has been followed by modern scholars. Due to the lack of the sacrifice, modern Jewish tradition treats of the festive meal mainly as the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened bread.

16. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, tr. from Hebrew (Jerusalem 1967), p. 139. A fuller discussion of this subject will be found in my article "Towards a Characterization of the Passover Meal" (in Hebrew) which will be published in the Bar-Ilan Annual.

17. B. Lang, זבח V. Bedeutung, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum alten Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren), Volume 2 (Stuttgart 1977), pp. 527-531 and the bibliography on pp. 511-512.

18. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 29-31.

The Mishna is the earliest source which mentions the Haggada specifically. An analysis of the Mishna shows that there are two types of Haggada which developed at different times. The earlier form is not precisely defined in the Mishna. It is merely stated that the recitation must follow the rhetorical pattern of opening with ignominy and closing with praise.[19] Rabbinic scholars of the third century disagreed whether the ignominy is simply that their ancestors were slaves in Egypt or whether the concept should be broadened to include the fact that Abraham's forefathers were idol worshippers. This disagreement is assumed to be based on a much earlier tradition.[20] The praise was not defined but medieval scholars, analysing the text of the Haggada, discovered the praise as an antithesis of the ignominy.[21] According to the theory that the ignominy was the slavery, the praise was that the Jews were no longer slaves while the theory that idol worship was the ignominy found its antithesis in the fact that God had taken the Jews for His worshippers. The Mishna mentions that it is also necessary to expound the biblical passage beginning with Deuteronomy 26 : 5. It is possible that the exposition of this passage also followed the rule of beginning with ignominy and ending with praise. The first sentence may be translated "A wandering Aramean was my father" and the antithetic praise to this statement would be found in the fifth sentence which stated that God had brought the children of Israel to their homeland. Modern Haggadas reflect another translation "An Aramean tried to destroy my father" and the fifth sentence is lacking so that the prior construction remains a conjecture.[22]

The later type of Haggada found in the Mishna was conducted in the form of questions and answers relating to the significance of the special

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19. Cf. S. Stein who, in his article "The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesah Haggada" (*Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 [1957], pp. 13-44), points out the parallels to this in ancient rhetorical literature.

20. Cf. Louis Finkelstein, "Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggada", *Harvard Theological Review* 35 (1942), pp. 291-352; 36 (1943), pp. 1-38. Also appears in: Louis Finkelstein, *Pharasaism in the Making; Selected Essays.* (New York: Ktav, 1972), pp. 41-120.

21. The pattern of antithetic ignominy and glory appears also in Christian Passover sermons such as those of Melito of Sardis (Stuart Hall, "Melito in Light of Passover Haggada", *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 [1971], p. 38) and of the Syrian Aphrahat (An English translation was given by J. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: The Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth Century Iran* [Leiden 1971], pp. 36-37) although Melito finds the antithesis in the same subject: man, who fell into sin and was raised through gods salvation, while Aphrahat compares the ignominy of the Jews to the glory of the Christians.

22. Cf. David Daube, "The Earliest Structure of the Gospels", *New Testament Studies* 5 (1958-9), pp. 178-80.

Passover foods — *Pesah* (the sacrifice); *mazza* (the unleavened bread) and *maror*. The earliest form of the questions, retained in both early manuscripts of the Mishna and the Haggada, consisted of three questions which referred to the manner of serving the food. These questions were: "On all other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread, on this night only leavened bread; on all other nights we dip only once, on this night we dip twice; on all other nights we eat our meat either roast, boiled or cooked, on this night we eat only roast".

Analysis of the Mishna shows that this type of Haggada is later than that of the rhetorical pattern mentioned above. However, since these questions are suitable for use even when the sacrifice was no longer offered — for many continued to eat only roast meat on the Passover eve for many generations — it is a subject for speculation whether this type of Haggada had already been used before the destruction of the Temple or if it came into existence only afterwards. A key to the solution of this problem is to be found in the fact that Rabban Gamliel is mentioned in the Mishna as one who stresses the importance of correct answers to these questions. This is not a decisive factor because there were two Gamliels — the Elder who lived before the destruction of the Temple and his grandson, Rabban Gamliel of Yavne, who headed the Sanhedrin shortly after the destruction of the Temple. It seems more likely that the Rabban Gamliel here mentioned is the younger one since, as several scholars have independently pointed out,[23] there is an anti-christological content in his emphasis on the meaning of the Passover lamb while the first Rabban Gamliel, the teacher of Paul, was known for his tolerant approach to Christianity (Acts of the Apostles 5 : 38-39). Nevertheless, it is possible, and even quite probable, that Rabban Gamliel is merely emphasizing the importance of an earlier tradition so that, even if we are dealing here with the younger Rabban Gamliel, the custom itself may go back to the time of the Temple.

The polemic message in Rabban Gamliel's words points to an important consideration in the attempt to date the custom of discussing and explaining the significance of the foods that were eaten. The Synoptic Gospels report that Jesus, in his last supper told his disciples that the bread they were eating was his body and that the wine was the blood of the covenant (Matthew 26 : 17-30; Mark 14 : 12-26; Luke 22 : 7-20). The

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23. A. Sulzbach, *Jeschurun* 4 (1917), pp. 216-18; S. Fischer, *Ve-Zot Liyehuda* (in Hebrew) Budapest 1926, pp. 238-40; Rosenwasser, apud Stein, "The Influence of Symposia Literture", p. 42, fn. 121.

fact that there is no mention of the Passover lamb has caused some to think that this report was created after the destruction of the Temple — when there was no longer such a lamb.[24] This lack is indeed very strange when we consider that in Christian theology Jesus himself was considered the true lamb. In spite of this, there is a wide consensus that the Synoptic reports reflect the realities of the Temple period and this would seem to show that already in this time it was customary to discuss the significance of the foods that were eaten.

The introduction of the new type of Haggada, explaining the meaning of the foods, brought about significant changes in the conduct of the evening. While it had apparently been customary to talk about the Exodus after the sacrificial meal, talk about the food was held as the food was brought to the table — before it was eaten.[25] As a result, the discussions about the Exodus were eventually also conducted before the meal was eaten. The postponement of the meal led to the introduction of a first course which was customary at other festive meals. However, due to the special menu of the evening, the first course was limited to *maror* — lettuce which was then eaten again as part of the meal.[26] To emphasize the significance of the *maror* a fourth question was added to the Haggada which fit in better stylistically with the questions about the bread and the meat "on all other nights we eat any type of vegetable, on this night only *maror*."

A further change in the structure of the meal brought about another change in the form of the four questions. For many years after the destruction of the Temple some Jews tried to celebrate the Passover

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24. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words,* pp. 66-67. See the further discussion of Bertil Gartner, *John 6 and the Jewish Passover,* Coniectana Neotestamentica XVII (Copenhagen 1959), pp. 46-52.

25. Daube (*The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* [London 1956], p. 193) shows a common didactic pattern which he characterizes by the terms "significant gesture", "question" and "interpretation". The Haggada seems to have the "significant gesture" — the eating of the lamb — after the question and interpretation and this alteration is considered by him "one of the most tantalizing riddles in the history of Jewish liturgy". However, if one considers the "significant gesture" as the bringing of this unusual menu to the table, the pattern is restored. Cf. Gartner, *John* 6, p. 26.

26. In later times it became obligatory to eat any other vegetable but *maror* for the first course and one called *carpas* was commonly used. See H. Kosmala, "Warum ist man Karpas am Sederabend", *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 5 (1967), pp. 121-131; Joseph Tabory, "On the History of the 'First Dipping' (*karpas*) on Passover Eve During the Period of the *Mishna* and the *Talmud*" (in Hebrew), *Bar-Ilan* 14-15 (1977), pp. 70-78.

ceremony in a manner as closely similar as possible, to that in which they celebrated it when the Temple still existed.[27] The main feature in this ceremony was the consumption of a roasted lamb — which, of course, had not been sacrificed nor had its blood been sprinkled on the altar. This lamb played a part in the Judeo-Christian confrontation. One of the Christian claims was that Jesus was the culmination of the Passover sacrifice. A proof of this was found in the fact that shortly after his crucifixion the sacrifice ceased as a result of the destruction of the Temple. A Jewish answer to this was that the Passover ceremony continued to be held — with minor changes. Interestingly enough, it seems likely that it was the same Rabban Gamliel whose anti-Christian, polemical, Haggada we have already mentioned, who was famous for eating a roasted lamb after the destruction of the Temple. Other Rabbis objected to this practice as it could lead to a misunderstanding of the centrality of Jerusalem and its Temple in the Jewish religion. A specific objection to this practice is recorded in a message to Theodosius of Rome (BT Pesahim 53a) and this emphasizes that the dangers inherent in this practice were specially evident in the Diaspora. The Rabbinic objection coincides with the Christian one that the Jews continue to "illegally" offer the Paschal sacrifice[28] — although the theological backgrounds to the two objections are diametrically opposed. Once the Rabbis managed to enforce their opinion, and roast meat was no longer eaten at the Passover meal, the question about the roast was removed from the Haggada. Since the number of four questions had already been hallowed, a new question was introduced in its place "on all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining, on this night we all recline". This question, lacking in Mishna manuscripts and in early Haggadas from the Geniza, seems to have been introduced in the Gaonic period. There was no place for such a question in the Roman period as reclining was then customary at most meals.

We now turn to the final component of the Passover eve ceremony — the songs. The main body of songs consists of selections from Psalms: chapters 113-118 and chapter 136. This group was not introduced into the ceremony as a unit but is rather the sum of successive additions to the ritual.[29]

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27. See the evidence assembled by Jean Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris 1914), Vol. I, page 357, n. 1. It is now known that the Theodosius of whom he speaks was active after the destruction of the Temple (see *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971, vol. 15, p. 1102).

28. See the sources cited in the previous note.

29. Adolf Buchler, "Zur Geschichte der Tempelmusik und der Tempelpsalmen: IV. Die Hallelpsalmen im Tempel", *ZAW* 20 (1900), pp. 114-135.

It would seem that in biblical times people were accustomed to sing songs of praise and thanksgiving as part of the Passover ceremony, but there was no prescribed selection. In the time of the Second Temple it was prescribed to sing chapter 113 of Psalms, perhaps as part of a tradition which required that the evening be closed with praise of God. The House of Hillel required the addition of the following Psalm,114, because it mentioned the Exodus, but this was not accepted by the House of Shammai.

Psalms 113 and 114, were sung over the second cup of wine, which came originally after the meal together with the Haggada. When the Haggada was transferred to before the meal, the whole unit of which it was part — wine, Haggada and song — was transferred as a whole. The Grace after the meal had always been said over the third cup of wine and this, in the early stages of the development, closed the evening. Many people lingered. Some discussed the Passover laws, while others sang additional selections from Psalms. Some of those who sang drank a fourth cup in connection with these songs. This custom eventually became law and the Mishna formulated — "The fourth cup — one sings the Hallel over it — and recites the eulogy of the song over it".

The Hallel of the fourth cup consisted of Psalms 115-118. Chapters 115 and 116 were said on the fourteenth of the month of Nissan during the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, so it was natural to select these again for recitation after the close of the evening ceremony. It is not clear why they added chapters 117 and 118.

During the Gaonic times (seventh-tenth centuries C.E.), many communities adopted the custom of drinking yet a fifth cup and reciting over it chapter 136, commonly called The Great Hallel. This custom was attributed to the opinion of Rabbi Tarfon (ca. 80 C.E.) — as interpreted by Rabbi Yochanan (early 3rd century C.E.). However, the sages of Lydda seemed to understand that Rabbi Tarfon was referring to chapters 115-116, which he called "The Great Hallel". Since Rabbi Tarfon was located in Lydda, it would seem that the second explanation is better founded. Only Rabbi Yochanan's explanation appeared in the Babylonian Talmud and it was therefore more influential, thus causing the adoption of chapter 136 into the course of the evening. This custom was widespread. We know of its adoption in Sura, Egypt, Yemen, North Africa, Rome and Spain. The Rabbis of France and Germany objected to the drinking of a fifth cup but they accepted the reading of the chapter of Psalms.

Popular custom has tended to extend the ritual by the addition of other

songs of various content which have, since then, become part of the Haggada. European ritual has added to the Haggada poetic selections from the liturgy and two folk-songs. One of the folk-songs is a number-riddle of religious content while the other, known by its Aramaic beginning as *Had Gadya,* is a cumulative song of the type of "this is the house that Jack built." [30] Only in the last verse is there any religious content but the whole song has been given allegorical interpretations. Some used to recite the Song of Songs or read the Book of the Righteous. Modern national-religious circles end the evening with Hatikva (The Hope), which has been adopted as the national anthem of the State of Israel, as an expression of the idea that the annual celebration of the redemption of Israel from Egypt, the pattern of its future redemption, serves to rekindle the hope for the final redemption.

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30. The most recent study of this song is that of S. G. Armistead and J. H. Silverman, "A Judeo-Spanish Cumulative Song and its Greek Counterpart", *Revue des Etudes Juives* 137 (1978), pp. 375-381.