The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesah Haggadah*

A. The Problem

THERE ARE MORE than twenty passages in the Bible, ranging from Exodus to the Second Book of Chronicles, which deal in one way or another with the ordinances of ḥag ḥa-pesah and ḥag ḥa-maṣṣoṭ. The Rabbis of mishnaic times were already aware of some inconsistencies in the ancient records. They speak, for instance, of pesah miṣrayim and pesah le-dhoroth. Modern Old Testament scholars, in particular, have drawn attention to the variety of Biblical source material on the subject. To mention only a few of the more striking discrepancies: originally Pesah was observed as a domestic festivity. The whole account in Exodus xii has no trace of the deuteronomic centralization of sacrificial worship. In Exodus xii: 22 ff, the sprinkling of the blood on the lintel and the two sideposts of the door is commanded “as a statute unto thee and thy sons for ever.” The passages in Deuteronomy, Joshua, the Second Book of Kings, Ezra and the Second Book of Chronicles, though phrased in more general terms, do not mention any such ordinance. And what in the Exodus account seems to refer entirely to the duties of every householder, is transferred in Ezra to the tasks of the priests and Levites.

Only one aspect seems to be an unchangeable feature of the Pesah traditions from hoary antiquity to the present day—the duty incumbent on every father and teacher in Israel to perpetuate the memory of the story of the Exodus from Egypt and to pass it on to the next generation. Four sections in the Pentateuch are supposed to accentuate this obligation.¹ A fifth quotation from Exodus x: 2 is not used as a proof-text in the traditional Haggadah, though it occurs in the Midrash ha-Gadhol in the name of Rabh Huna, in the Guide of the Perplexed, iii: 39, and in the Haggadah of the Karaites.²

* I am indebted to my colleague, Mr. J. G. Weiss, for drawing my attention to the structural and historical relationship between the Haggadah and Symposia Literature. My friend, Dr. J. Rosenwasser, has made valuable suggestions on various points which have a bearing on this enquiry.

¹ Exodus xii: 26 ff, xiii: 6 ff and 14, and Deuteronomy vi: 12 ff.

² Continued at foot of next page
It appears, however, that at best only the first three passages have a bearing on what later became the statutory liturgy of the *Pesah Haggadah*. The context of the question of the son in *Deuteronomy* deals generally with “testimonies, statutes and ordinances,” which, though traced back to the time of the Exodus, have nothing to do with the specific laws of Passover, such as the paschal lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Even the first three commandments in *Exodus* bear only remote resemblance to their ultimate transformation in the *Haggadah*, if we consider their original *Sitz im Leben*. The Samaritans, for instance, have nothing corresponding to the Jewish Seder Service in their early history. Their table hymns appear first in the fourteenth century. In obedience to the law in *Exodus* xii: 7 and xii: 22, they merely dip a little bunch of hyssop into a bowl of blood and touch the lintel and sideposts of their huts with it. On a number of occasions, the custom has been observed that adults and children mark their foreheads and probably their arms or hands with blood. In *Exodus* xiii: 9, the exhortation to tell the son is immediately followed by the sentence “And it shall be as a sign upon your hand and for a memory between your eyes, so that the Torah of the Lord should be in your mouth, because the Lord has brought you forth from Egypt with a strong hand. And thou shalt keep this statute at its proper season from year to year.”

A very similar, though shorter, instruction occurs in verse 16, after reference has been made to the slaying of the first-born in Egypt. Chapter xii: 26 stands in the same context. What was originally meant to be preserved in the memory of future generations was simply the annual domestic sacrifice and the accompanying blood rite, the eating of unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and a brief explanatory reference to the

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4 For a late reminiscence of its originally prophylactic character cf. *Jubilees* ii: 15. Cf. also the phenomenological study by F. Bammel, *Das Heilige Mahl im Glauben der Völker*, Gütersloh, 1956, p. 56. On the early replacement of the dipping of hyssop into a bowl of blood and the touching of lintel and sideposts into the two *tibbulim* cf. the interesting article by S. Zeitlin, *Seder shel Pesah*, Hadoar xxxvi, No. 21, 1956, pp. 414 f. The Karaite usage to recite the *'arami 'obhedh* passage in their Passover Haggadah is merely a late adaptation to the Rabbinic custom.

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Exodus and the covenant connected with it. There is certainly no allusion in any of the Biblical passages to the duty of telling the story of deliverance at night.

There are many references to the celebration of the Passover meal in Jubilees, Philo, Josephus and the New Testament which we shall discuss later. Some of them reveal interesting points of contact with later developments, but it is almost certain that apart from Kiddush, Hallel and some very elementary questions and answers in connection with the rites of the festival, there is no fixed Seder liturgy was in existence before the second third of the second century C.E. Even after that, the establishment and adjustment of traditions lasted for many centuries. Had there been any pre-Christian literary history of the Haggadah, the Hellenistic Jewish writers would have given a detailed account of its educational and "philosophical" importance to their Greek neighbours. Finkelstein's dating of the greater part of the Haggadah text in the second or third century B.C.E. is thus unconvincing. Neither the Elephantine Papyrus of 446 B.C.E., which deals with some of the laws of Passover, nor the Pesah passage in Sirah, chapter 50, mention anything about the Seder Service.

What then gave the impetus to the extension from the unspecified Biblical ordinances to the elaborate ritual of the Haggadah as it now stands before us? A number of explanations can be put forward: the expansion of any form of liturgy after the cessation of the Temple service, the general increase in midrashic exegesis since the beginning of the Christian era, the amalgamation and harmonization of a great variety of these rabbinic traditions, eschatological expectations side by side with the attempt to organise national resistance against Rome, and the tendency to stress the antiquity of the Jewish people. In addition to such causes which all played their part in the shaping of the statutory ritual of the Seder Night, I submit for consideration the influence of Symposia Literature on the literary form of the Haggadah.

I. Lewy, E. Baneth, S. Krauss and D. Goldschmidt have already drawn attention to the fact that the forms of the Seder meal pre-

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5 The tenth chapter of Mishnah and Tosefta Pesahim, for instance, records early controversies regarding Kiddush and Hallel between Hillel and Shammai. The mishnaic mah nishtanah, and possibly the saying of Rabban Gamaliel presuppose the existence of the Temple. See, however, below pp. 25ff, 32f, 41f.

suppose acquaintance with, and dependence on, Graeco-Roman table manners and dietary habits. There is—apart from the old constituent parts of the paschal festivities—the washing of hands, the *hors d’oeuvre*, the wine before, in the middle and after the meal, and the reclining on beds or couches at supper time. Not one of these items is in any way restricted to the Seder Night, not one to a specific sacred occasion. Examples illustrating such affinities between the Jewish and non-Jewish way of life could be multiplied to fill a small volume of comparative study. The scarcity of Biblical and especially of Pentateuchal data and their setting in a relatively primitive form of society leave little doubt as to who borrowed from whom, though allowances must be made for transformation from the profane to the sacred, from pagan to Jewish religiosity and for a certain natural development of each civilization within its own sphere.

A random selection of additional evidence must here suffice. In the course of a lexicographical enquiry, Athenaeus quotes a number of passages from Homer to the poets of the Old and New Comedy in which the terminus technicus *didonai hudor kata cheiron* is used. Such pouring of water over the hands was done before and after meals. Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium* (175 a) is washed by a servant to make him ready for reclining. The elliptic נמל יהודא, or נמל היהודא והנה ליריס (Tosefta Berakhot, iv: 8) which stands for נמל מיומיע ליריס is the aramaizing equivalent for the Greek phrase.

Athenaeus alone refers to lettuce seven times in his *Deipnosophists*, describing the variety of its kind and its usefulness at table. As to *haroseth*—made of nuts and fruits pounded together and mixed with spices, wine or vinegar—similar though not identical dishes are described at length by the same author, and the question is raised whether they should be served before or after dinner. Heracleides of Tarentum, a physician of the first century B.C.E., is said to have recommended these appetizers as an *hors d’oeuvre* rather than a dessert. It is interesting that the *Mishnah Pesahim* x: 3 does not consider *haroseth* as a miswah. Only a Baraita, quoted in the Gemara

8 *Deipnosophists* ix: 408c ff. cf. also Index s.v. Washing of Hands. More about Athenaeus on p. 19. If not stated otherwise Greek and Roman authors are quoted from the *Loeb Classical Library*; its translations have been used with occasional modification.
9 See Index s.v. Lettuce.

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ad loc., attaches the well-known symbolism to it, whilst Abaye, an Amora of the fourth century, could still suggest a different interpretation of this “fruit salad” (Pesahim 116a).

Even the custom of Hillel to eat Maṣṣah and Maror together with the paschal lamb need not be based on a literal interpretation of Exodus xii: 8 and Numbers ix: 11. Sandwich bread eaten with lettuce belongs to the Graeco-Roman menu. Bread attached by skewers to the meat was also common. The habit was apparently en vogue, before it was linked with a scriptural commandment.

That wine, mixed or unmixed, belongs to most festive occasions, Gentile, Jewish, secular and sacred, is natural and needs no stress. Biblical and Rabbinic references have been assembled in every work dealing with the ancient Jewish meal in general and with the Seder in particular. Of the comparable Greek source material Antiphanes’ saying that one should honour the gods to the extent of three cups might perhaps be quoted, though nobody would claim any direct influence on the four cups of the Haggadah.

In Homer’s time “men still feasted sitting, but gradually they slid from chairs to couches, taking as their ally relaxation and ease,” leaning on their left arm whilst they were eating. In Biblical times, a similar development took place and has been traced by E. Baneth in his Commentary on the Mishnah Pesahim. Yet it is clear that those Biblical records which refer to reclining do so only in connection with royal circles and a degenerate aristocracy. The Haggadah, on the other hand, and its tannaitic sources reflect general social changes of the time and allow, nay, command ex-

11 Pesahim 115a.
12 Athenaeus iv.: 151a.
13 Cf. e.g. Strack-Billerbeck iv.: 1 Exkurs: Das Passahmahl, pp. 41 ff. and iv: 2 Exkurs: Ein Aljüdisches Gastmahl, pp. 611 ff.
14 Antiphanes was a poet of the fourth century B.C.E. Cf. Athenaeus x: 441c and Index s.v. Wine. Plutarch singles out wine, bread, meat, couches and tables which must be provided for every entertainment. Other things are brought in not for necessity but pleasure. (Quaestiones Conviviales, ed. G. C. Bernadakis, Leipzig 1892, 629c). Cf. also K. Kircher, Die sakrale Bedeutung des Weines im Altertum, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, ix: 2, 1910.
15 Athenaeus i: 11 f; viii: 363 f; x: 428b, and Index s.v. Reclining.
17 Cf. Amos ii: 8, vi: 4; Esther i: 6, vii: 8; Canticles i: 12.
18 ii: 53c and Index s.v. Nuts.
19 Rabbi Sadoq, who does not share this view, speaks only for himself. Cf. also Tosefta Pesahim x: 9f.
tension of upper-class prerogatives even to the poorest in Israel.\textsuperscript{19}

Moreover, words like \textit{tragema}, \textit{parpereth} and \textit{’epikomion}, mentioned in the tenth section of \textit{Pesaḥīm}, betray their foreign origin at once and lead back to the contemporary environment out of which they grew.\textsuperscript{20}

But more than words and dinner habits are here involved. Since Plato, a literary species, the so-called \textit{Symposia}, had developed, in which a description was given of a banquet held by a few learned men who had met at a friend’s house to discuss scientific, philosophical, ethical, aesthetical, dietetic and religious themes over a glass, and very often over a barrel of wine, after they had dined together. Plutarch, one of the most famous contributors to sympotic literature, and a younger contemporary of Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Tarfon, summarizes earlier practice and theory in the following manner: \textit{Koinōnía gar esti kai spoudēs kai paidiās kai logōn kai praxeōn to symposion}. “A symposium is a communion of serious and mirthful entertainment, discourse and actions.”\textsuperscript{21} It is meant to further “a deeper insight into those points that were debated at table, for the remembrance of those pleasures which arise from meat and drink is ungenteel and short-lived . . . but the subjects of philosophical queries and discussions remain always fresh after they have been imparted . . . and they are relished by those who were absent as well as by those who were present at dinner.”\textsuperscript{22}

Occasions for such meetings varied from ordinary desire for pleasant company to birthday, victory, or religious celebrations. A full discussion of dietetic questions is not to be found in the earlier \textit{Symposia} of Plato and Xenophon. Plutarch, however, covering the whole range of human knowledge of his time, includes a number of table talks which deal at length with the peculiarities of all kinds of fish, meat, vegetables and wine (iii: 7-9). There is even one \textit{Tischgespräch} which centres round the question whether

\textsuperscript{19} For reclining at ordinary meals in tannaitic times cf. \textit{Tosefta Berakhoth} iv: 8 f.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Parpereth} has been derived by JACOB LEVY, \textit{Wörterbuch über die Talmudim}, from Hebrew \textit{parar}. BANETH, however, in his \textit{Die Sechs Ordnungen der Mischna, Pesachim}, Berlin 1927, p. 240, is certainly right in connecting the word with the Greek \textit{perifora}. For \textit{’epikomion} cf. S. LIEBERMAN, \textit{Ha-Yerushalmi Kifshuṭo}, Jerusalem 1934, p. 521.

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. \textit{Quaestiones Conviviales}, l.c., 708 D.

\textsuperscript{22} Plutarch, l.c., 686 C f.
the Jews abstain from pork, because they worship the pig, or because they have an antipathy against it (iv: 5). Since the days of Pythagoras, considerable interest had been taken in dietetic problems. Hellenistic, Gnostic, Neo-Platonic and Patristic writings make relevant, though dispersed, observations on them. Athenaeus, who lived in Rome at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century C.E., gives a fantastic list of dishes and drinks in his 15 books entitled The Deipnosophists. One of the various banquets described in them is said to have taken place on the holiday of the Parilia, an April feast instituted in commemoration of Hadrian’s erection of the Temple of the Fortune of Rome (viii: 361f).

The Deipnosophists contain an encyclopaedic summary of similar older compilations, valuable for their traditions and methods of approach. Heavy dependence on earlier authors is also conspicuous with the last representative of this type of literature, Macrobius, whose Saturnalia belong to the early fifth century.

Statements made in symptic writings are often traced back to their classical sources. Eipe gar Homéros appears over and over again. He is “the wisest”, and to quote him is almost identical with the midrashic and haggadic she-ne’emar or ka-kathubh. Yet there is no restriction of authorities or subject matter in the arguments of these authors, whilst the Rabbis, in spite of all their diversity of opinion, have only one Bible to confirm their views.

No hard and fast rules for the talk are observed in Greek and Roman literature. “Even Plato,” we are told by Plutarch, “did not prepare himself for the contest like a wrestler, that he may take the faster hold of his adversary . . . Questions should be easy, the problems known, the interrogations plain and familiar, not intricate and dark, so that they may neither vex the unlearned nor frighten them from the disquisition . . . The discourse should be like

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24 Edited by H. BORNEQUE and F. RICHARD, Paris 1937. The object of the whole work is colloqui, interrogare, respondere (i, ii, 4, 5). Almost all sources of Macrobius have been traced to the second century C.E. if not to an earlier period; cf. the articles Macrobius and Gavius Bassus in Pauly-Wissowa. For the connection of earlier symposia with religious occasions see XENOPHON’S Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, 146 d.
25 A random selection from Athenaeus yields theios Homéros, v: 185a; kalos Xenoфон, xi: 504 e; sofos Platон, iv: 155 f; polumathestatos Aristotelēs, xi: 505 c.
our wine, common to all, of which everyone may equally partake."  

Classical scholars have described the literary development of sympotic writings from their masterly beginnings to their degenerate end.  

B. Pre-Haggadic Traces of Symposia Literature in Jewish Hellenistic Writings  

There are some traces of such table talks in early Jewish-Hellenistic literature. In the pseudepigraphic Letter of Aristeas, we learn that the Palestinian emissaries who had come to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek were invited by the king to inaugurate their mission with a "party" in their honour. It is emphasized that the day coincides with the anniversary of the king's victory which would have at any rate demanded a special celebration of a sympotic character. During the meal all participants recline. A prayer over the specially prepared food is pronounced, and after a suitable time has passed, a table talk on the art of good and just government ensues.  

Following the examples of classical Symposia literature every one of those invited participates in the discussion. For a full week the festive meals are repeated, the talks too are continued. It is not their contents, but their apparent dependence on a fixed literary pattern which is relevant for our enquiry.  

No direct or indirect information about the origin of the Haggadah can be gained from the long section on Pesah in the Book of Jubilees (chapter 49). It merely follows its general trend of presupposing Rabbinic observances in Patriarchal times, if it projects the drinking of wine and the praise of the God of the Fathers into the time of the Exodus.  

Philo deals directly with the celebration of Pesah in a number of passages, particularly in his De Specialibus Legibus, ii: 145ff. Nevertheless, he does not mention any form of a fixed liturgy for the Seder night, though he describes in great detail how "on this festival many myriads of victims were offered by the whole people, old and young alike, raised for that particular day to the dignity of priesthood." Only in its broadest outline can his interpretation

26 Quaestiones Convivales, 614 C f.
27 I am particularly indebted to JOSEPH MARTIN, Symposion, die Geschichte einer literarischen Form, Paderborn 1931.
28 About 100 B.C.E. according to STAEHLIN, Die Hellenistisch-Jüdische Litteratur, Munich 1921, p. 621.
29 Cf. XENOPHON, Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, 147a ff.
of the religious, historical, and agricultural meaning of the festival rites—and still less his allegorizations—be compared with the later Rabbinical records. All he has to say about domestic celebrations is comprised in one paragraph (148). "On this day every dwelling house is invested with the outward semblance and dignity of the Temple. The guests assembled for the banquet (sussitia)... are there not as in other festive gatherings (eis ta alla sumposia) to indulge the belly with wine and viands, but to fulfill with prayers and hymns (met' euchon te kai humnon) the custom handed down by their fathers." I have shown elsewhere that the term humnos stands for Hallel since the days of the Maccabees.30

In his De Vita Contemplativa (48ff), Philo gives further details about pagan banquets and the luxury, ostentatiousness and immorality prevailing at them. He describes the elaborate couches (triklina and poluklina) on which the guests used to recline, and a great variety of precious cups and goblets from which they drank as well as baked meats and savoury dishes which they ate. The performances of flute-girls, dancers and jugglers are contemptuously referred to as accompaniments to unrestrained merry-making.31 Even the table talk itself is denounced as leading to effeminacy and vulgarity. The criticism includes the famous Symposia of Plato and Xenophon. In contrast, the simplicity of dining habits amongst the Therapeutae is recommended to the reader. Philo,32 for reasons unknown, singles out their celebration of Shabhu'oth33 and praises the utmost seriousness with which it was conducted: their sincerity in prayer, their orderly reclining for dinner, the chastity of their women who sit apart, and their contentment in all things, which does not even allow slaves to serve upon them. In his own words, "When the guests have laid them-


selves down . . . and the attendants have taken their stand . . . the President of the company (prohedros) discusses (tséeti) some question arising in the Holy Scriptures, or solves one that has been propounded by someone else. His instruction proceeds in a leisurely manner, he lingers over it and spins it out . . ., thus permanently imprinting the (sacred) thoughts in the souls of his hearers.” After the discourse, disciplined antiphonal community singing concludes the festive but simple meal.

No such “Haggadah” of the Therapeutae is left, but it needs no sagacity to recognize in Philo’s description of this vigil the general background out of which the related Seder ritual must have grown as well.

The community singing is comparable to that of the Hallel at the Seder as described in Mishnah, Tosefta and Gemara. The prohedros becomes in a way the ‘omer ha-haggadhah or the maggidh, the lector of Latin Symposia literature, and fiétein is identical with darash. The questions come from the audience and the answers are to be given in a simple manner. Even the leavened bread of which the community partakes seems related to the unleavened bread to be eaten on the Seder night, though the circumstances of, and the reasons for such practice, are not identical. Like the scholars of B’ne B’rak in the Haggadah or like those in Lud mentioned in the Tosefta, x: 12, “they continue till dawn . . . not with heavy heads or drowsy eyes but more alert and wakeful than when they came to the banquet (eis to sumposion). . . . When they see the sun rising, they stretch their hands up to heaven. . . .” It is interesting that such habits originated in sectarian circles, or rather that our first information comes from them. More one cannot say at the moment.

Josephus has little if anything to report about the domestic festivities on Pesah, though he refers to the Pesah sacrifices offered

34 A few Greek words are here filled up from the Armenian, cf. p. 158, note 1 in the Loeb edition.
35 Ibid. 75.
by the multitudes in Jerusalem on many occasions, both in his Antiquities and in his Jewish War.

From the New Testament we can learn little more about the Seder arrangements in the first century than that Jesus formed a Habhurah with his disciples to partake of the Paschal meal. It was arranged well in advance, cushions were prepared on which they reclined while eating, at least once herbs were dipped in the dish of sauce, at least three cups passed round, and the Hallel completed the festive ordinances. Investigations into the literary criticism of the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline documents need not concern us here. It falls equally outside the scope of our present enquiry that the night-long discussion between Jesus and his disciples gave an entirely new meaning to an ancient and hallowed tradition. In the Haggadah, the re-enactment of the delivery from the land of bondage remains a historical reminiscence: "as if everyone had come out of Egypt." There is comparison and not identification. Faith in the new redemption is bound up with certainty of belief in the miracles of the past, e.g. the Mekhulta on Exodus xiii: 3 (Ben Zoma and the sages), now incorporated into the Haggadah, has also a Messianic and possibly anti-Christian implication, according to which the Exodus from Egypt gains an importance which includes the days of the future Messiah. For Jesus, the Jewish elements of his last supper are eclipsed in spite of the traditional setting. His body replaces the masstab, or better still perhaps the paschal lamb (toto estin to söma mou), his blood the wine (toto estin to haima mou).

Finally, attention may be drawn to two Mishnayoth in Abhoth which are connected with our theme. One, iii: 4, reads thus: "Rabbi Simeon (ben Yoḥai, c. 100-170 C.E.) says, 'If three have eaten at one table and have not spoken over it words of the Law, it is as though they have eaten of the sacrifices of the dead. For it is written (Isaiah xxviii: 8) "All tables are full of vomit without

32 It may be that söma equals gufo shel pesah, especially in view of the fragmentary character of the Synoptic records. Cf. however, Jeremias, l.c. p. 140 and G. Dalman, Jesus—Yeshua, London 1929, pp. 141 ff.
33 For references to red wine in biblical, apocryphal and rabbinic literature, see Jeremias, l.c., p. 145.
"Makom;" but if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of the Law, it is as if they have eaten from the table of Makom, for it is written, "And He said unto me, this is the table that is before the Lord" (Ezekiel xli: 22). Such a statement should not be seen in isolation but in the framework of the contemporary cultural habits of the wise, both Jewish and Gentile. It is noteworthy, that Hellenistic influence is also apparent from the exegesis of Makom in the Isaiah passage. None of the ancient versions understood it to mean God. Only since the identification of topos with God, Rabbi Simeon's interpretation became possible.44

Rabbi Jacob's well-known ethical exhortation "This world is like a vestibule before the World to Come. Prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the reclining hall" (Abhoth iv: 16) provides another incidental example of Rabbinic familiarity with Graeco-Roman dining habits in the second century C.E. One used to assemble in the prostat45 for the hors d'oeuvre before entering the triklinion for the main meal.

C. The Haggadah

The Haggadah itself has come down to us in a very fragmentary state, and it is often more complicated to unravel its original component parts than those of the sympotic talks of Graeco-Roman antiquity. Of the Four Questions, for instance, only the first two are briefly answered in the present Seder liturgy. Regarding the last, discussions or even a simple statement like that of Rabban Gamaliel towards the end are replaced by praxeis, the partaking of food and dinner habits "so that the children should watch and ask" (Pesahim 115b). Occasionally, unauthorised compilations of the ritual such as Palestinian traditions, Genizah fragments or the collections and comments of well-known medieval scholars can throw light on a passage otherwise unrelated to its context or setting in life.

In some cases, one can hardly decide whether a halakhic Midrash, a Mishnah, Baraita or Tosefta existed prior to the Haggadah or whether certain practices and exegetical remarks of famous Rabbinic

44 Cf. Philo, De Somniis, I, 63, and Genesis Rabbah, section 68, 9, on Genesis xxviii: 11. Even if Makom is a substitute for ha-shamayim=ouranos, the new epithet, so often recurring in our Haggadah text and in Genizah fragments of the Seder liturgy, reflects environmental, and not Biblical terminology.

45 Thus Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 2, pp. 617 ff., against J. Levy, Wörterbuch über die Targumim, who derives the word from prosodos or prostōn.
scholars at the Seder table have found their way into the statutory ordinances of the legal codes. The shifting of traditional material from one place to another is such a common feature in this type of literature that it needs no emphasis. We also know little of what happened at the "Symposium" at B'ne B'rak in which five of the great teachers of the first half of the second century participated. Only Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah's contribution to the discussion—if it belonged to it at all from the outset—has been handed down to us in the name of Ben Zoma. Neither can it be assumed without reservation that the Midrashim on the Ten Plagues formed part of the discussion at B'ne B'rak. The contemporary Rabbis Yehudah and Jose ha-Gelili who appear later on in the Haggadah liturgy are not mentioned as original members of the B'ne B'rak assembly, though one might argue that it happens occasionally in sympotic literature that only four or five people are enumerated at the beginning of a banquet whilst some arrived later or are anonymously described as "others."

A detailed comparison between Symposia literature and the Seder liturgy must distinguish between a general similarity of dining habits—such as foods and drinks, the attendants who serve them, tables and couches and the reclining at dinner—and specific affinities of literary form—such as religious services and the statutory talk woven around the meal. An occasional overlapping will be unavoidable, and here and there an analysis of the tannaitic sources of the Haggadah will be necessary for the elucidation of the main purpose of our enquiry.

**Kiddush, Hallel and Nishmath**

Even these prayers must, in some way at least, be understood against the background of classical and Hellenistic Symposia literature, though differences are again obvious, and fundamental transformations cannot be ignored.

Plato's *Symposium* takes place within the framework of a secular...
occasion, yet "when Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest, they made libations and sang a chant to the god" (176a). In Plutarch's *Quaestiones Conviviales* we are told that the guests at a banquet used to sing the first song together, praising Bacchus and describing the power of the god (615b). In Plutarch's *De Musica*, the paean is recited at the end of the banquet and sacrifices are offered to Zeus, the other gods and the muses. 48

Athenaeus summarised the evidence of classical antiquity in the following manner: "*Pása de sumposiou sunagogē para tois archaios tēn aitian eis theon anefere.*" "Every gathering among the ancients to celebrate a Symposium acknowledged the god as the cause for it, and made use of chaplets appropriate to the gods as well as hymns and songs" (v: 192b). He also quotes Xenophon's description of a symposium in the *Anabasis* vi: 1, 5: "After they had poured libations and sang the paean, the Thracians rose up to begin the programme dancing in armour to a flute accompaniment. 49 Vulgar dances (*faulai orchēseis*) sometimes went together with hymns to Aphrodite and Dionysus." 50 There was thus no strict demarcation line between the sacred and the profane in this type of literature and in the pattern of life it tried to depict. 51

Any concession to such customs was unthinkable to the Rabbinic authorities of the time. Their views, in fact, only make sense as a challenge to contemporary habits of this sort, as can be seen particularly in connection with the *Epikomion*.

Affinities between *Kiddush* and *Hallel* on the one side and prayers and songs as a constituent part of a Greek symposium on the other are of a general nature. Regarding the *nishmath* eulogy, however, traces of Greek rhetoric seem still recognizable. I am referring to certain characteristics of the *genos epideiktikon*, *panēgurikon* or *egkōmiastikon* or—in its Latin garb—the *genus demonstrativum* or *laudativum*. Speeches on public occasions and at the dinner table were meant to celebrate gods and emperors, heroes and distinguished personalities as well as countries and

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48 Quoted by Martin L.C., p. 251 f. Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* is arranged to honour and conciliate the goddess Aphrodite (146d). After the tables are cleared away, libations are poured out and repeated towards the end (150d and 164d).
50 Ibid. xiv: 631d.
51 Plato would not consider the performances of flute girls and comedians as conducive to serious table talk (*Symposium* 176e, *Protagoras* 347c, and *Laws* 637a). Philo's criticism is nevertheless not without foundation. Cf. below p. 32, n.77.
Greek and Roman rhetoricians tried to guide those upon whom the honour had been bestowed to address a festive audience. There was indeed a special kind of the genus laudativum, the so-called logos basilikos. In it, all the good qualities of the Emperor were described and amplified, and an affection of personal inadequacy preceded the laudatory oration. Menander, for instance, who assembled the principal features of this literary species as early as in the fourth century B.C.E., offers the following simile for expressing an often-recurring rhetorical task: “As the eyes cannot measure the endless sea, thus one cannot easily describe the fame of the Emperor.” Such patterns were modified or copied for many centuries, and its offshoots can be traced down in Roman literature to the fifth century C.E.

The proem was followed by an enumeration of valiant deeds or in the case of gods, by a list of their special gifts to mankind. Quintilian’s Institutio Oratoria may be quoted as a theoretical manual of the first century C.E. “In praising the gods our first step will be to express our veneration of the majesty in general terms, next we shall proceed to praise the special power of the individual god and the discoveries whereby he has benefitted the human race . . . .” The Nishmath eulogy is thus a perfect example of a Hebrew logos basilikos, the basileus not being an emperor but the King of Kings. Its specific qualities outgrew in fact its generic characteristics and surpassed all traceable literary antecedents, royal or divine. The glories of the One God did not have to be divided into what was due to “Jupiter for the governance of all things, to Mars for his power in war, to Neptune for his authority over the sea.” In the birkhath ha-shir “every mouth gives thanks

54 For the general popularity of such figures of speech see also Canticles Rabbah, I, 20.
55 Cf. W. Barr, The Panegyrics of Claudian on the Third and Fourth Consulates of Honorius, Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1952, pp. 38 f.: Si partem (laudis) tacuisset velim, quodcumque relinququerim malius erit. For an early Greek example, cf. Theocritus, A Praise of Ptolemy (c. 275 B.C.E.), ed. A. S. F. Gow, Cambridge 1952, pp. 130 ff. Towards the end of this encomium, the king is described as “sitting enthroned in those broad plains.” The suitability of the Isaiah quotation (עַל אֶתְהָא מָשְׁלֵה יְהוָה) in the context of the Nishmath prayer will be readily perceived. On amplificatio or auxësis see below pp. 33 ff. The requirements of the species are here met by אַלּ אֶתְהָא מָשְׁלֵה יְהוָה רַבִּם רַבַּתָּו פַּתֵּם.
56 iii, vii, 6 f.
to the One King alone, to Him swears every tongue." A king of flesh and blood had long ceased to be the focus of Jewish admiration.

We have already touched upon the sociological importance of the first Mishnah of the tenth section in *Pesahim*, according to which even the poorest in Israel may not eat until he reclines and be offered not less than four cups of wine. The habits of a higher stratum of society which could afford to be served upon at dinner are here shared by everybody. The verbs \( \text{תְּמָשׁ} \) are used impersonally not less than six times in this section. Yet it appears from the *Mishnah Pesahim*, vii: 13 that the word *shammashim*\(^5\,^7\) is the implied subject of these sentences. The *Tosefta Pesahim*, x: 5 is still more explicit: "The *shammash* minces the entrails and puts them (as a kind of appetizer) before the guests, and though there is no proof for this (from the Bible), there is a hint, as it says: 'Break up for you a fallow ground, and sow not among thorns'" (Jeremiah, iv: 3). Athenaeus mentions sweetbreads, paunches and liver some twenty times in his *Deipnosophists*, and quotations from the whole range of Greek literature accentuate their common use and excellence. One poem, *The Banquet*, by Philoxenes of Cythera (fifth to fourth century) describes the arrangements of a dinner in the following manner: "And the slave set before us . . . meats of kid and lamb, boiled and roasted, and sweetest morsel of . . . entrails . . ., as the gods love" (iv: 146f-147a). Hillel and Shammai knew already of a *shammash* talmîdh ha-kham and a *shammash* 'am ha-âres, though not in connexion with Passover (*Berakhoth* 52b). The Exilarch with whom Rabbi Yehudah ben Bathyra II (c.200) dined on the eve of the Day of Atonement also had an attendant (*talya*) to wait upon them.\(^5\,^8\) Another passage in *P. Shabbath* 3a, refers to a *mazoghah*,\(^5\,^9\) a wine mixer who functioned at a banquet of Rabh.

\(^5\,^7\) These *shammashim* were under obligation to fulfill all commandments appertaining to the Seder night. Cf. *Pesahim* 108a. For a similar linguistic usage on an ordinary occasion, see *Mishnah Berakhoth* vi: 6; *Tosefta*, *ibid.* iv: 8, 12 and *Gemara Berakhoth* 40a, 43a, *Yerushalmi*, *ibid.* 10d. Attendants (*diakonoi*) are also referred to in the above-mentioned description of the Therapeutic Meal: *De Vita Contemplativa*, 75.\(^5\,^8\) *Ekhah Rabbathi* (BUBER) on iii: 17.\(^5\,^9\) For occurrences of the term in the Targumim, cf. J. LEVY, *Wörterbuch über die Targumim*, s.v. mazogha.
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Athenaeus provides again the wider background by referring to table-makers, trapatsopoi, who would “wash the dishes, get the lamps ready, prepare the libations and do everything else which it is their business to do.” He also mentions table servers, trapet-sokomoi, or as the Romans called them structores (iv: 170d f). Elsewhere one comes across wine inspectors and wine pourers, oinoptai and oinochoountes (x: 425a). Some of these attendants, at least, were not slaves but young men, the sons of freemen (hoi neoi tôn eleutherôn, v: 192b).

There was, moreover, a special code for the Saturnalia (nomoi prōtoi and nomoi deuteroi)60 which has come down to us in Lucian’s Kronosolon61 (about 120-180). It was meant to further the idea of freedom and equality amongst men. “During these days the same honour should be bestowed upon all, the slaves and the free, the poor and the rich . . . nobody should count his money . . . nobody should write on this festival . . . ” Presents consisting of clothes, domestic utensils and silverware should be given to all friends. It is interesting that the Tosefta Pesahîm, x: 4 includes a similar exhortation. “It is a commandment to please one’s children and the members of one’s household . . . with wine. Rabbi Yehudah says, women with what is befitting them and children with what is befitting them.” The P. Talmud (Pes. 37b) explains: Women with garments made of fine linen (bussina) and with belts, and children with nuts and almonds.62

The First and Second Laws in Lucian’s Kronosolon are immediately followed by the nomoi sumpotikoi which deal specifically with the festive meal held on the Saturnalia. At least some of these laws have strong structural affinities with the relevant section of the Mishnah and Tosefta Pesahîm. We read, for instance, “as soon as the shadow of the sun-dial is six feet long one should go to the bath. Before it, one may play with nuts,63 one may recline every-

60 Cf. Luciani Samosatensis Opera, iii, ed. C. Jacobitz, Leipzig 1813, pp. 308-11, section 396-401.
61 The combined word depicts Solon as the law-giver for these festive days which were devoted to the memory of Kronos, the father of Zeus, who ruled the world in its golden days.
62 Cf. S. Lieberman, Ha-Yerushalmî Kifshuto, l.c. i, pp. 516 f, and with slight alterations Pesahîm 109a. Wine is excluded from Lucian’s list of suitable gifts. The poor scholar should reciprocate with an old book of sacred or sympotic contents. Presents are distributed to the guests at a dinner in Athenaeus iv: 128d-e. Two late Biblical books, Esther, ix: 19, 22 and Nehemiah, viii: 10, 12, seem to refer to presents of foodstuff only.

Continued at foot of next page

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where, i.e., without paying attention to status, family or wealth . . . all should drink of the same wine, all should have the same ration of meat. Equality for all should prevail . . . every rich man should inscribe these laws on a pillar of brass in his courtyard and take it to heart.”

It is possible that the introductory passage of the Haggadah is to be interpreted in a way similar to the last paragraph of Lucian’s *nomoi sumpotikoi*.

Such unqualified general invitation would serve as a kind of motto set over the whole Haggadah. Scholars have drawn attention to the fact that Rabh Huna (3rd century) used almost the same phrase when inviting the needy. (Ta’anith, 20b). But the Aramaic of Rabh Huna’s saying is of the Babylonian variety (יִשְׂמַעֲךָ לְיוֹלָדֶיךָ instead of לְיוֹלָדוֹ לְיוֹלָדוֹ), whilst the Haggadah passage is written in Palestinian Aramaic. Moreover, Rabh Huna does not refer to Passover or any other holiday.

The second chapter of the *Book of Tobit* offers perhaps a nearer comparison to our Haggadah text. It speaks of the festival of *Shabhu’oth*. On that occasion a fine meal is prepared, and Tobit asks his son to go out and bring along any of their poor brethren who is mindful of the Lord. Co-ordination in liturgy and law is common in those early centuries of halakhic consolidation, and can be observed for the three festivals of pilgrimage, the awe-inspiring days, and even for Hanukkah and Purim. Yet there is no mentioning of instruction or talk in the quotation from Tobit or in Rabh Huna’s formula. The *ha lakha ‘anya* passage, on the other hand, seems to present a fragmentary recollection of a *Seder* once held. The *theamaton*, the *massah*, is explained to the participants of the sacred meal; messianic expectations, or at least hopes for political freedom, are expressed, and a summary invitation is extended to the needy.

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64 Ibid. section 399-401.
65 The verb *pasah* is used in a unique sense in this text. It may mean either to partake of the paschal lamb, which would presuppose a practice in the Diaspora, such as described in *Tosefta Besah* ii: 15, *Pesahim* 53a, *Yerushalmi Mo‘ed Katan* 81d and *Yerushalmi Besah* 61c, or it may simply stand for the participation in the Seder festivities. For the halakhic difficulties involved, cf. M. M. Kasier, l.c., pp. 106 ff and p. 99 (Hebrew numbering).

67 The playing with nuts on the festival of the Saturnalia is also mentioned by Lucian, l.c., sections 391 ff and 400. It is not confined to children, however, as in Rabbinic sources.
Plato dined and had discourse with the elite of his time. In Xenophon’s *Banquet*, Socrates and Antisthenes figure prominently. Archestratus of Syracuse, a contemporary of Aristotle and author of a book entitled *Gastronomia*, suggests that there should be three or four people in all, or at most not more than five.⁶⁷ This is also the approximate number of the learned guests enumerated in the sympotic writings of Plutarch. The Haggadah thus combines a scholarly and a popular element. On the one hand we have the assembly of sages in B’ne B’rak, which seems to exclude even the pupils, on the other the wide opening of doors as expressed in בְּנֵי בָּרָק. It is tempting to construct a gradual development, which started—as in Greece—with the secluded activity of the wise and ended—so differently—with the imitation of their practices by the whole people. Prior to the example set by the learned, the festive gatherings of ordinary folk lacked an elaborate setting.

Women take no part in the Seder liturgy. Apparently they did not even serve upon their guests and the members of their household. The Mishnah knows only of the paschal lamb prepared by husband or father for wife or daughter respectively.⁶⁸ On the other hand, no ְחַבְּרוּ הָעָלֶּה may be made up of women, slaves and minors.⁶⁹ Only one Baraita reckons with the possibility of women partaking in the table talk: “The wise son asks his father (about the laws of Passover), and if he is not wise, the wife asks her husband.”⁷⁰ An Amora of the first generation, Joshua ben Levi, finds it necessary to state that women too are under obligation to drink the four cups, because they participated in the miracle of the Exodus (*Pesahim* 108b). Even reclining is not considered indispensable for a woman at her husband’s side, only ְאַשָּׁר בּוֹטֶה, a lady of high standing, is required to recline (*ibid.*).⁷¹

Women took no share in the serious talk of the Symposia of Plato, Xenophon and Plutarch, even if their admissibility was under discussion,⁷² or if they appeared at the beginning to attend to the guests.⁷³ In Lucian’s *Symposium⁷⁴* men and women are

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⁶⁷ As recorded in *Athenaeus* i: 4e.
⁶⁸ *Pesahim*, viii: 1, cf. also the Baraita, quoted in *Pesahim* 88a.
⁷⁰ *Pesahim* 116a.
⁷¹ Yerushalmi *Pesahim* 37b allows for no social distinction, and makes reclining obligatory for an ordinary housewife as well.
⁷² Cf. PLUTARCH, *Quaestiones Conviviales* i: 1 and Macrobius, vii: 1.
seated separately, and Athenaeus, at least on one occasion, refers to the same arrangement as described in the work of an earlier poet.  

Symptotic writers of a later period depict on the whole a mixed society. Invitations were issued indiscriminately to men and women alike, coarse talk became predominant, and vulgar ostentatiousness prevailed. A comparison between the ethical level of this type of literature and the Haggadah is impossible. Yet the Seder liturgy and its tannaitic sources reflect a lesser degree of asceticism and a higher measure of upper class urbanity than the description of the Therapeutic meal in Philo, or the synoptic records of Jesus' Last Supper.

Early and late formulations of this passage, and its adaptation to changed circumstances have been sufficiently dealt with by a number of scholars. We are here only concerned with its setting in life. It appears to be an introductory question once raised at a Seder Symposium of the early tannaitic period, after which it became statutory for well nigh two millennia.

Plutarch's view on the essence of a symptotic talk has been quoted in the general introduction. According to Gellius, questions were not to be too serious. They may deal with a point touching on ancient history. Macrobius too follows classical rules when he suggests that he who wishes to be a pleasant questioner should ask what can be easily answered, and he should be sure that the subject had been thoroughly studied by the other person (vii: II, 3). The questions of the mah nishtanah, particularly in their Urform, are quite simple and meant to appeal to all participants of the festive meal.

It will be remembered that in Plutarch many questions are concerned with dietetic problems. Some should here be added which form the theme of a symposium and appear as an interrogative

73 Cf. PLUTARCH, Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, 148c.
74 Ed. A. HARMON, p. 420.
75 Athenaeus, xiv: 644d.
76 For a specifically religious occasion, however, cf. MACROBIUS’ Saturnalia ii: 1, Nos honorem Dei . . . nullo admixtu voluptatis augemus.
77 Even in PLATO'S Symposium Alcibiades is so drunk that he can hardly stand (214a).
79 Cf. the mishnaic rule לַאָרְמָןָה שָלֶה בְּנֵי אָבִי מְלַחְמָו (Pesahim x: 4).
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sentence at the beginning of the relevant section: "Are different sorts of food or one single dish eaten at one meal more easily digestible?", "Does the sea or land afford better food?", "Why is hunger allayed by drinking but thirst increased by eating?", "Why do the Pythagoreans forbid to eat fish more strictly than other animals?". In the *Attic Nights* of Gellius the question is once raised why oil congeals often and readily, wine seldom, vinegar hardly ever.

If one were to translate these interrogative sentences into Hebrew, the tannaitic term *mah nishtanah* could be used for almost every question. The close connection between the *theamaton*, the food served and looked upon, and the conversation which centres around it can perhaps best be illustrated from a passage in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*. "Whilst Furius was still speaking, the dessert was brought in and gave rise to a new conversation." The dish itself became the *leitōma*, the subject of enquiry. The Haggadah thus borrowed with extraordinary discrimination the external pattern of sympotic literature but remained single-minded in the pursuit of its sole aim, the religio-historical celebration of the Exodus from Egypt.

מלעש ברבר אלינורו.

The specific literary form of this fragment calls for a comparative investigation. As in the case of the *mah nishtanah* we seem to have before us a rudiment of a full record of a Seder gathering once held.

Athenaeus—or rather Masurius, a participant at one of his banquets—takes Epicurus to task because he did not specify place and time of the Symposium, and because he did not write a kind of foreword. Homer, on the other hand, is praised for his accuracy. He never fails to tell us about times, persons and occasions of the talk (*chronous, prosēpa kai aitia*). Plutarch adheres to these generic rules with greatest accuracy almost throughout. The names of the leading participants of the banquet, its time and place are given at the beginning of each section. Macrobius offers an excellent parallel to our Haggadah passage, "During the Saturnalia,

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80 Quaestiones Conviviales iv: 1; iv: 4; vi: 3; viii: 8.
82 Book III, 18.1. Cf. also *ibid.* iii: 19, p. 400: "Because we see apples mixed with a dessert, we must now . . . discuss the different kinds of apples."
83 v: 186e.
distinguished members of the aristocracy and other scholars (nobilitatis proceres doctique alii), assembled at the house of Vettius Praetextatus to celebrate the festive time solemnly by a discourse befitting freemen . . .” The host proceeds to explain “the origin of the cult and the cause of the festival,” thus doing homage to religion by “devoting sacred study to the sacred days.”

Sometimes the talk lasted until dawn. As early as in Plato’s Symposium the crowing of the cock reminds the guests to go home. Socrates on that occasion went on to the Lyceum.

All these features of sympotic literature occur in the Haggadah’s assembly of the sages. The people’s names, the place, the time and occasion are stated. Moreover, the reclining scholars were talking about the Exodus from Egypt, they were not yet midrashically explaining the passage in Deuteronomy, xxvi: 5ff, as demanded in the Mishnah Pesahim, x: 4. The Tosefta a.l. records another “Symposium” of a similar type. There too the people and the place are designated by name, and the occasion is described. Rabban Gamaliel II and the elders stand for the five scholars of the Haggadah, Lud replaces B’ne B’rak. As in Macrobius’ Saturnalia even the name of the person in whose house the Seder was held has been handed down. The time for the reading of the Shema replaces the crowing of the cock. As if to emphasise the sympotic setting, the Tosefta adds that the participants of the Seder removed the remnants of the food and cleared the table, before they went to the Beth ha-Midrash. The statutory Midrash on Deuteronomy xxvi is not known to the Tosefta either. By its reference to the scholars’ discussion of the laws of Passover, it steers

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84 i, vii, 8, 17. It belonged to these explanations to define the exact beginning of the Saturnalia: Quando Saturnalia incipere dicamus, id est, quando crastinum diem initium sumere existimesmus (i, ii, 18). Without maintaining direct influence, one is reminded of the similar question of the Haggadah and the Mekhilla on Exodus xiii: 8...

85 223c. In Macrobius’ Saturnalia we read: nec discedentes a se nisi ad nocturnam quietem (i, i, 1). Cf., however, MARTIN, l.c., pp. 145-148. The crowing of the cock re-occurs as a topos in the relevant sections of the Synoptic Gospels.

86 According to some versions. The passage is missing in SAADYA’S Siddur and in some Genizah fragments.

87 The passages in Pesahim 100a and Yerushalmi Pesahim 37b differ in form and contents from our texts. Cf., however, Kiddushin 40b for a secular symposium. In the Haggadah R. Jose ha-Gellili and R. Akiba. For further variants and parallel passages see ibid.

88 We read against ZUCKERMANDEL’S translation.

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a middle course between the free form of discussion which took place in B'ne B'rak and the apparently later requirements of the Mishnah.  

Some sympotic writers would not admit the layman to the table of the learned. Others would be less exclusive. Athenaeus suggests all sorts of suitable combinations of those invited in order to create the right atmosphere at a dinner party, and refers again to Homer as a guide for the decision on such questions. In his epic he is said to have introduced guests "who differ in their ages and their views of life—Nestor, Ajax, Odysseus—all of whom . . . strive after excellence but have set out in specifically diverse paths to find it." Gellius speaks of a banquet on the occasion of the Saturnalia, at which as many questions were asked as guests were invited. Sometimes sons joined their fathers for pleasant entertainment and scientific debate. Macrobius dedicates his Saturnalia to his son and finds nothing better than to instruct him.

According to Philo, there are four types of children. The best follow both parents, the father, who is representative of perfect Reason (orthos logos), and the mother, who stands for education (paideia). The wise should thus be furnished with the invisible ornaments of the soul and with those elements of knowledge which appear to the outside world. Children who consider neither their father nor their mother are, we might say, resha'īm. Intermediate are those who follow either father or mother (filopatores and filomētores). Bousset has drawn attention to the fact that Philo's De Ebrietate has come down to us in a very fragmentary condition. One might add that even if we possessed the full text of this treatise, we could not hope to find an exact parallel between the philosophical distinctions of Philo and the popular Torah-centred divisions of the Rabbis. Yet it appears that we have to reckon with some form of influence which found its way from Alexandria to Jerusalem. Through Philo or some other Hellenistic

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88 Cf. also Mekhilta on Exodus xiii: 14.
89 v: 187a f. and 177a f.
81 iii, xviii: 2.
82 Xenophon's Banquet iii: 12, and Plutarch's Quaestiones Conviviales, viii: 6.
83 i, p. 2 (Preface).
84 Cf. De Ebrietate, paras. 30-33, 35 and 68, and De Congressu Eruditionis, paras. 63-68.
85 Judisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom, Göttingen 1915, pp. 85-92. He does not refer to the Haggadah, however.
or Hellenistic-Jewish author the psychologizing typology of the four sons became widely known, was then linked with the relevant Pentateuchal exhortations and transformed, consciously or unconsciously, to serve the specific purpose of the Seder Night.

The transmission of the tannaitic sources of this Haggadic passage show a significant uncertainty in the choice of their Biblical proof-texts. In addition, one quotation of the Mekhila presupposes the text of the Septuagint and not that of the Masoretic Text. The Epikomion leads back to the sympotic background. There is no doubt that this Greek word signifies originally the revelry which used to take place after the end of a banquet. The mishnaic ruling forbids the imitation of such practices.

Sometimes a heated discussion, an agôn sofias, took place between the participants of a banquet. It provided a vulgar kind of amusement and became a literary pattern in later Symposia literature. It seems that the phrase “blunt his teeth” which occurs in the answer to the wicked is reminiscent of such topoi. Some old versions, including the Mekhila, still reflect a more direct attack on the rasha': If you had been there, you would not have been redeemed. Our texts have usually the third person. Such reading weakens the immediate appeal of the original.

“One begins with rebuke and concludes with praise.” The meaning of this mishnaic passage and its relation to the following Midrash on Deuteronomy, xxvi: 5ff has hitherto perplexed many scholars. A solution of the problem involved is, I think, to be found in connection with the genus laudativum with which we are already familiar.

There were public orations which did not call for a tempered measure of glorification, such as certain logoi basilikoi or the ḥoreq ha-shir, but on the whole this literary species consists almost invariably of both egkômion and psogos, laus and contumelia, praise and rebuke. Excellence or perfection can after all best be judged against a background of adverse environmental circum-

96 Mekhila on Exodus xiii: 14 and Yerushalmi Pesahim 37d.
97 Deuteronomy vi: 20 has ἑμῖν, the Septuagint hēmin.
98 Thus Quintilian (b. 35 C.E.) Institutio Oratoria, iii: 4.11: Isocrates in omni genere (demonstrativo) inesse laudem ac vituperationem exstimatavi. Isocrates, who was a distinguished teacher of rhetoric in the fourth century B.C.E., wrote a well known Panegyric on Athens. He developed, in fact, the theory of the genus epideiktikon.
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stances or some fault or dubious quality in the character of the person or people whose fame is to be extolled. In the words of Sopatros, "If we wish to express doubtful matters in the eulogy as definitely honourable, we mention by way of contrast those facts which seem worthy of detraction, and thus convert them into an encomium, so that our speech becomes entirely one of praise." 100

A shorter, yet not less straightforward comparison to the Mishnaic abstraction can be quoted from Pliny the Younger (about 100 C.E.) who exclaims in his Epistolarum ad Traianum Liber Panegyricus: Quam utile est ad usum secundorum per adversa venisse. 101

On discussing the great variety which is required in the praise of men, Quintilian, the teacher of Pliny the Younger, is even more explicit and more to the point. He has this to say: "Regarding things preceding a man's birth there are his country . . . and his ancestors . . . (Patria et parentes) . . . It will be either creditable [to the object of a eulogy] not to have fallen short of the ancient fame [of his family] . . . or to have ennobled a humble origin by the glory of his achievements. Other topics to be drawn from the period preceding his birth will have reference to omens and prophecies foretelling his future greatness . . . At times weakness may contribute largely to our admiration . . ." 102 In the oldest as well as in the latest Encomia, genos, ethnus, to kalon, ischus and praxeis are concomitant features of the species, 103 whether the oration was given in praise of an Emperor, a public figure or—with slight adaptations—a city or a people. Moreover, panegyrics were often closely connected with the cult of a god in whose honour the festive assembly was held.

We now more readily understand the choice of Deuteronomy, xxvi: 5ff as the central passage of the Seder liturgy. By itself it has little to do with the three or four specific questions of the mah nishtanah. As a matter of fact, these sentences were normally recited in connection with the bringing of First Fruits to the Temple. 104

100 Quoted ibid. According to Pauly-Wissowa, this rhetorician and the time during which he lived cannot be identified with certainty.
102 Institutio Oratoria, l.c. iii, 7, 10-12.
103 Additional characteristics of the genus such as education, study, wealth, and ethical virtues are left out in the Haggadah, because it is ultimately concerned with the praise of God. For practical examples cf. Theocritus, Encomium for Ptolemy, l.c., and W. Barr, The Panegyrics of Claudian, l.c. pp. 40-45.
104 Cf. Mishnah Bikkurim, iii, 5-7.
But there no Midrash was required.

In the Haggadah, however, the detailed exegesis of the Biblical sentences follows the pattern of the genus laudativum, applied here to a people, but viewed under the aspect of Heilsgeschichte. In a kind of proem starting with בורא העולם בבריתנו we have the required reference to what Quintilian calls responsa et auguria: The Midrash then proceeds to juxtapose detraction and praise.

The first sentence deals with the humble origin of the Jewish people. In the midrashic interpretation of Deuteronomy, xxvi: 5, the sufferings of Jacob under Laban are accentuated. A literal exegesis of the verse, “A wandering Aramean was my father,” would have achieved the same purpose, but Jewish tradition in both Targumim and in the Sifre a.l. stresses the adverse circumstances which forced Jacob to emigrate into a foreign country (genos kai ethnos).

Only few were those that went down to Egypt, but there they became a nation. The Midrash adds: a distinct nation. On יrael העצמא the proof-text is taken from Exodus, i: 7: “And the Children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and waxed exceedingly mighty” (ischus).

Israel’s physical beauty is emphasised by the quotation from Ezekiel, xvi: 7: “... and thou hast become adorned with precious ornaments . . .” (to kalon).

From יתראנטו הקולאינם וחרותא the proof-text is taken from Exodus, i: 7: “And the Children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and waxed exceedingly mighty” (ischus).

L. Prijs and P. Winter have independently drawn attention to the significance of this passage in the light of the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah, lxiii: 8, the former to stress midrashic influence

105. The end of the verse את ערי ועיריה may not have belonged to the original proof-text.


SYMPOSIA LITERATURE AND THE PESAH HAGGADAH

on the Greek version, the latter to suggest an original Hebrew text which has not survived (אלהי לארם).\textsuperscript{108}

The expression also related to the Septuagint on Deuteronomy, iv: 37. The Masoretic Text reads

\textit{καὶ ἐσεῖχαν τὸν κακὸν τῆς ἀνθρώπου συνήθειαν.} The Greek version renders this verse in the following manner: \textit{kai exēgave se autos en té ischui autou té megaleí ex Aiguptou.}\textsuperscript{109} Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and the Peshitta translate with, but it is possible that the Haggadah and the Septuagint followed an earlier Hebrew tradition.

Of further interest are the Greek terms \textit{sēmeion} or \textit{notarikon}\textsuperscript{110} as employed by R. Yehudah.

According to the \textit{genos dikakikon} which is closely connected with the \textit{genos epideiktikon} and which deals with the technique of defence before a Court of Law, it was customary to conclude with a summary of the main facts of the case. The judge should thus be able to form his opinion without delay. This was called \textit{anamnēsis, anakefalaiōsis} or in Latin \textit{rerum repetitio}. Until now the word \textit{notarikon} has been connected with a kind of shorthand used in the offices of lawyers.\textsuperscript{112} It gains a more precise meaning in our context. Rabbi Yehudah offers a mnemo-technical help to the participants of the Seder so that they should remember the salient points hitherto made in praise of God.

If any doubt is left about the connection between the \textit{genos epideiktikon} and the statutory Midrash of the Haggadah liturgy, the argument can be clinched by reference to the peculiar augmentation of the plagues from 10 to 50 and eventually to 250. Quintilian has it that the proper function of a panegyric is to amplify and embellish its themes: \textit{"Proprium laudis est res amplificare et ornare"}.\textsuperscript{113} Such \textit{auxēsis}—as the Greeks call it—applies again to the eulogy of the gods and men as well as to forensic oratory.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{108} Winter, l.c., compares \textit{inter alia} Jubilees xv: 30-32 with our passage. See, however, Jubilees ii: 4. For a contrast to the theology of the Haggadah, cf. particularly The Wisdom of Solomon, xviii: 15 (ed. Charles). "Thine all powerful word leaped from heaven down from the royal throne, a stern warrior into the midst of the doomed land."

\textsuperscript{109} In the same way the Septuagint add \textit{autos} to their translation of Deuteronomy xxvi: 8. Cf. Pris, l.c. The Midrash on the seder ha'agafot has been dealt with by Geiger, Urschrift (2nd ed.), Frankfurt 1928, pp. 339 ff. In this case, the Greek, Samaritan and Aramaic versions seem to presuppose the version, in the original Hebrew. Only \textit{Aquila} corresponds to \textit{אֵלַיְהָא לָא לַאְרַמ}.

\textsuperscript{110} Tanhuma, Buber, מֵאָשֶׁר, 8 reads \textit{נְקַפֵּר} in a related passage.

\textsuperscript{111} Cf. Volkmann, l.c. pp. 21 ff. and 264 ff.

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The Rabbis had—in their own way—overcome sectarian scrupulosity.

The Midrash occurs in at least four collections, in the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, in the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai (on Exodus xiv: 31),116 in Exodus Rabbah v: 14 and xxiii: 9 and in Midrash Tehillim, ed. Buber, on Psalm lxxviii, section 15.117

The words מְסָמְרוֹן, fourfold, and סְמָרוֹן, fivefold, used in the last-named version, betray formal Greek influence to such an extent that their occurrence in this context must be co-ordinated with the distinct aim of the whole Haggadah passage, viz.: auxēsis or exaggeration.

Buber’s view, according to which the editor of Midrash Tehillim added these Greek words, cannot be accepted. Why should he have included them in a tannaitic text which would be perfectly understandable without them? Had they not been there, nobody would have missed them. On the contrary, the editor finds it necessary to explain the Greek words contained in the original text: מְסָמְרוֹן שָׁהְאוּ מִרְמָלָם.

It is not inconsistent with its high purpose that the tone of the Midrash is light, especially as the “play” is of no halakhic con-

115 De Vita Contemplativa, l.c., 75.
117 Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis xv: 14 and the Targum on Psalm lxxviii: have also a reference to the 250 plagues.

112 Cf. e.g. Bachler, Die Exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur, II, Leipzig 1905, p. 124.
113 Institutio Oratoria, l.c., iii, vii, 6.
114 Cornificius, one of the first Roman rhetoricians before Cicero, expresses himself as follows: “Conclusiones constant ex enumeratione, amplificatione (et commiseratione).” Quoted by Volkmann, l.c., p. 263. A considerable number of Greek and Latin Encomia illustrate their relation to the theoretical requirements.
sequence. The more mirthful aspects of the sympotic pattern, paidia and geloion, are thus reflected. The interrogative particle פָּלָתָן which introduces the multiplied account of God's miracles may well be more than a mere tannaitic terminus technicus, as which it appears at first sight. We know from Plutarch that riddles played their part in making the theme of the table talk interesting for all participants. He recommends the habits of simple people who "set one another a-guessing at names comprised and hid under such and such numbers." 118 Athenaeus too has a long section in his Deipnosophists, covering some 25 pages, in which the propriety of proposing riddles at table is proved by an abundance of literary examples. 119 One quotation must suffice: "The solution of riddles is not alien to 'philosophy,' and the ancients used to make a display of their knowledge by means of them. . . . Answering the first guest who recited an epic or iambic line, each one in turn capped it with the next verse, or if one recited the gist of a passage, another answered with one from some other poet to show that he had spoken to the same effect" (x: 457c-e).

The Rabbis did not philosophize at the Seder table, but they had their tsētēmata with which they entertained themselves, their guests—if there were any—and those who came after them. That the learned sometimes proposed riddles and solved them at the same time is again not unusual. For this we have the authority of Macrobius: "Quaestiones conviviales vel proponas vel ipse dissolvas" (vii, iii, 24). The rest of the amplificatio consists of a specification of miracles, chosen at random and not without variants in the different Haggadah versions and in midrashic sources. It ends in the glorification of God, the performer of all these marvellous deeds. 120

בְּנֵי מַלְאָכָּיו הָיוּ אָנוּ

Because of the reference to the paschal lamb, many scholars assume that R. Gamaliel I is the author of this passage, though he is usually described as R. Gamaliel ha-zaken. According to their opinion, the words שְׁהֵר אֵבָדוֹיָי וַאֲוָלוֹי בְּם שְׁבֵרָה שְׁמְךָ כֹּפֵן represent a later adjustment which became necessary after the

118 Quaestiones Conviviales, Introduction to Book V.
119 x, 448b-459c.
120 Psalm cxxvi, which is generally considered to be very late, is recited in the second part of the Seder Service. It was apparently included in the liturgy, because it shares the function of enumeratio with the dayyenu passage and the nishmath eulogy.
destruction of the Temple. Brief explanatory references to the meaning of the ritual performed are familiar to students of Comparative Religion.

Yet in view of the fact that all Tannaim mentioned in the Haggadah belong to the second rather than to the first century, it becomes likely that the author of this saying was R. Gamaliel II. He was responsible for the redaction of the 'Amidhah and for the inclusion of the Ḥamásim section in it.\(^{121}\) He was, moreover, well acquainted with Graeco-Roman civilisation,\(^{122}\) and we have special references to the almost humanistic atmosphere which prevailed in his circle: "Permission was given to the House of R. Gamaliel to teach its pupils Greek, because they had a close relation with the (Roman) Government." His son, R. Simeon, confirms: "that there were a thousand young men in his father's House or Academy, five hundred of whom studied the Law, while the other five hundred studied Greek Wisdom."\(^{123}\)

In the light of such personal background and in connexion with our former findings, we may expect sympotic traces in the peculiar saying of R. Gamaliel as well. We have indeed fragments of grammatical compilations like those of the Alexandrian Herodian (second part of the second century C.E.), in which the various foods and drinks are used as catchwords, in order to classify them after the fashion of the glossographers. In this side-branch of Symposia Literature, which had its antecedents in some medico-dietetic writings of the first century B.C.E.,\(^{124}\) one finds hardly any dialogue. Persons and actions appear only as a means to demonstrate learning. Usually only the name of the author of a statement is transmitted.

Macrobius makes interesting use of such philological and dietetic enquiries on the occasion of the banquet which he describes in his Saturnalia.\(^{125}\) "Symmachus takes some nuts into his hands, and asks Servius about the cause and origin of the variety of names

\(^{121}\) In an oral communication, Dr. ROSENWASSER suggested to me that R. Gamaliel's utterance may be directed against the transformation of the Jewish Seder Meal by Judaeo-Christians into what later became the deipnon kuriakon. Cf. I, Corinthians, v: 6ff and xi: 23ff.

\(^{122}\) This applies equally to the other members of the assembly of the sages, with the possible exception of R. Tarfon. We know, e.g., that R. Gamaliel II, R. Joshua, R. Eleazar b. Azariah, R. Akiba and R. Eliezer b. Hyrkanos went to Rome and had discussions with various Gentile scholars and philosophers (Gen. Rabbah, xx: 6, Ex. Rabbah xxx: 6, Mishnah 'Abodah Zarah iv: 7, and Gemara ad locum, Tosefta, ibid. vi: 7). R. Eliezer b. Hyrkanos was famous for his knowledge of foreign languages (Sanhedrin 17b).

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given to them. Servius answers that according to one school of scholars the walnut, *juglans*, derives its name *a juvando et a glande*. Gavius Bassus, however, is said to have connected *juglans* with Jupiter: *Juglans arbor proinde dicta est ac Jovis glans*. The nut is as it were worthy of the god.”

Gavius Bassus lived in the first century B.C.E. and wrote a book *De Significatione Verborum*. It is of special significance that most etymologies of this kind belong to the sacred sphere.

The Amora Rabha (fourth century) also required the lifting up of *Massah* and *Maror* for the reciting of R. Gamaliel's statement, though its mishnaic formulation does not yet indicate the necessity of an accompanying gesture. This does not mean that it was unknown. The Haggadah text as well as the above-quoted New Testament passages imply a general acceptance of this custom at an early stage of the development.

R. Gamaliel's etymology is sounder than that of Gavius Bassus, and, in fact, at least in two cases backed by pentateuchal proof-texts. It is nevertheless hardly accidental that he chose the glossographical method to impress the central message of the festival on the participants of the Seder. Goldschmidt has already sensed some formal inconsistency in the words: *massah* and *molai*a *masah*, which would be quite possible in the realm of *Volksetymologien*. Without being aware of possible affinities with sympotic literature, he proposes an implied connexion between *massah* and *maltzah*, which then employ the Septuagint rendering of *Exodus* xii: 39f... or gar *apumethē*. Professor

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126 Cf. also *Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales*, I.c., VIII, quest. 6 and 7. Athenaeus, i: 12 d ff., iii: 106 bc. vii: 278a, etc.
128 Cf. *Pauly-Wissowa*, s.v. Cloatius Verus. Early neo-Pythagorean influence may have played its part in the symbolism which was attached to the hallowed traditions of the Passover celebrations by way of “philology”: “Symbola sunt compendia, quae brevissima forma (dia brachutaten fonōn) largam doctrinan vel praecipient morale continent.” Cf. O. CaseL, *De philosophorum Graecorum silentio mystico*, Giessen 1919, pp. 58 f, and *Philo, De vita contemplativa* 78.
129 Cf. also *Phil., De Specialibus Legibus*, ii: 158. As an alternative, a pun between the Aramaic noun for *Massah*, *patira*, and the Aramaic verb, *petar*, to free, may be suggested.

130 Cf. S. Liebermann, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, New York, 1942, p. 20, for the relevant sources.
131 Cf. *Martin*, I.c., pp. 26 and 185-188.
132 *iii*, xviii, 1-3.
Liebermann has assembled so many examples of Greek phrases which remained in the context of Hebrew or Aramaic passages that such a device may have been used here as well, though there is no proof of it.

Should it then be said that form and content condition one another and that there is little difference between the Jewish and Greek legacies as far as Symposia literature is concerned? Such an evaluation cannot be expected after what has been said. It would do less than justice to either side.

There is with the classical authors a curiosity and vividness, an attempt to observe life and natural phenomena, above all a freedom of the enquiring mind which cannot be found in the Haggadah. On the other hand, there is on the Jewish side a singlemindedness of purpose and a deep faith which is both simple and moving. דוד in contrast to γιάτι is only a means to an ever-deepening confirmation of a certainty which was there before the search was started. The history of human efforts is concluded. Divine redemption at the End of Time, which may come tomorrow, is expected. Exactness of scientific endeavour is replaced by a precision of rules for the intermediate order of things. Theamata and pragmata are concentrated in the unchangeable and obligatory מֵהלַחְזָהּ and מָרָו. Neither jugglers nor dancers are allowed to defile the "guarded night." Flute accompaniment is relegated to the public sacrifice of the קֵרוּן מָהָר. The compilers of the Haggadah have made their own contribution to sympotic writings. It is, in fact, in all its fragmentary and perhaps clumsy state an unanswered challenge to its models.

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