

The content of the first two blocks in the Hebrew Bible, namely the Torah and the Former Prophets, express their teaching and theological message with history of the Israelites in the background, from exiting Egypt, preceded by prehistory and the stories of patriarchs until the country loss in the Babylonian period. These texts bear traces of a work by many authors and editors. Attentive reading often reveals the lack of formal and contentious consistency of these texts. It does translate into difficulties in comprehending their utterances as well as deciphering the message therein. Numerous studies confronting those issues ultimately lead to conclusion that the modern transcript of that part of the Bible bears the fruit of a long process of formation embodying different phases of its critical edition, completion and redaction. All of the undertakings were conditioned by their historical situation and requirements thus involved.

The research project presented herein, with its hypothesis of the universalizing redaction of the biblical text on the early history of Israel, inscribes to the ism of biblical and historical studies, and its aim is to point the attention towards utterances of texts speaking of the earliest history of Israel, which show universalising tendencies in terms of nationality and religion. Analysis of these texts shall aid in identifying the specific stage of their formation and redaction. Placing it in time and considering its historical conditioning – the historical situation of the authors /redactors and the initial recipients – will grant a proper decoding of the message conveyed in those utterances and it will contribute to the reconstruction of the historical process of the formation of biblical history of the beginnings of Israel.

The project stipulates thorough exegetic, literary and historical studies. The subject of analysis will at first comprise texts initially regarded as the fruit of universalising redaction. They are utterances viewed as reflections of the so-called greater-Israelite perspective of Jewish identity. The criterion for their selection will be the motif of the mountain of God and the mountain of covenant occurring in the Bible, the place of God's revelation and cult, as an element uniting the Israelites and distinguishing them from others, as well as the motif of strangers with which expressing the inclusivistic tendencies is connected. The next step of the research will be to set and describe the historical context of those utterances, both for their authors /redactors and their initial recipients, and then to elucidate the message conveyed therein. The last phase of the research will be an attempt to outline the course of the final stages of Hebrew Bible texts formation and redaction, where the earliest history of the Israelites is spoken of, as suggested by the results of the conducted research.

The reason to undertake the investigative substance of the project is fore mostly the inclination to join in the debate on the still unsolved issue of creation and redaction of the biblical texts of the Old Testament, those describing the earliest history of Israel in particular. The subject matter of the project is also strictly connected with the dispute over the national and religious identity of that nation. The texts which will be analysed constitute the testimony of that discussion. They prove the truth that in the specific period of Israel's history, such as the times after Babylonian exile, along with the tendency to emphasize national and religious separateness, the need for concern for religious orthodoxy, and even national and religious exclusivism and separatism, concepts that were marked by openness towards strangers also broke through. The belief in the universal character of God's actions towards the man laid the foundation for such openness. Religious and political discussions on that topic are often conducted even today.

The research grant will bear fruit by contributing to the international scientific debate through notifying a new hypothesis and providing a detailed study of biblical utterances and historical conditioning of their formation. This, in turn, will also allow to indicate the proper meaning of those texts and to outline a fuller image of the environment of their authors /redactors and recipients. The results of the research shall be presented in journals that are in the international scientific circuit.