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Harald Samuel, PhD student, University of Göttingen
DFG-Project "Die Rezeption der Genesis in den Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer"
harald.samuel@theologie.uni-goettingen.de

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# The Levites in Deuteronomy
## Reflections based on Dtn 10 and 18

*Summary*

In Deuteronomy, and especially in the deuteronomic law, numerous verses are concerned with the Levites, their socio-religious status and their provision. Traditionally scholars tend to ascribe a pro-levitical point of view to Deuteronomy or even trace back its origins to Levitical circles. Though such historical questions are unsolvable if not connected to the complex literary development of the book of Deuteronomy many articles on the Levites in Deuteronomy, especially from the Anglo-Saxon sphere, abandon the diachronical questions almost entirely. A turning point in this respect is Ulrich Dahmen's work "Priester und Leviten im Deuteronomium" (1996). Based on his work but with corrections in some crucial questions the present paper aims to clarify what is meant by "Levi" in the different phases of the book of Deuteronomy and which attitude Deuteronomy had towards Levites.

An analysis of Dtn 10:6f.8f. and Dtn 18:1-8 suggests that there is 1) an *Ur-Deuteronomium* without explicitly mentioning Levites; 2) an early version of Deuteronomy which lists the Levites within the *personae miserae* and tries to regulate their material supply; 3) an already dtr Dtn which speaks of "Levitical Priests"; 4) a late dtr Dtn which broadens the idea of "Levitical priests" to "the tribe of Levi" and focuses on keeping the covenant tablets and interpreting the Thora; and 5) a priestly revised Dtn. These literary strata could in my view serve as additional criteria for a redactional critical study of the whole book of Deuteronomy. Simultaneously 5) one can draw cross connections from the late and post dtr portions to Num. And finally 6) there are tendencies of reception in the LXX and in Qumran (Temple Scroll) which seamlessly attach to innerbiblical developments.