The Levites in Deuterony
Reflections based on Dtn 10 and 18

"Contrary to assumptions sometimes made in the social sciences, there is no such thing as a straight-forward synchronic cross-section, springing unproblematically into view the moment one's argument requires it. A single snapshot, outside time, without a degree of chronological depth, would be lacking in life and therefore in usefulness. […] How can one gauge or comprehend life in progress without enlisting the passage of time as an accomplice?"

Fernand Braudel: Out of Italy: 1450 – 1650. Paris 1991.
[orig. Le modèle italien. Paris 1989.]

You will not be surprised that again the Levites are the subject of my paper. There is still much to be said! The issue is continually growing and new questions arise while I try to cope with it. Usually it is assumed that in the priestly texts of the Hebrew Bible there is a clear dichotomy of priests as *clerus maior* on the one hand and Levites a *clerus minor* on the other hand, while the dtn-dtr literature speaks of כהנים לויים – whatever the precise meaning and translation and whatever the concrete historical background.

To be precise, the sharp distinction in the priestly writings concerns mainly the book of Numbers (and in a certain way Ezekiel 40-48). The books of Exodus and Leviticus hardly mention Levites, except of one all cases are later additions to the priestly portions. In Numbers by contrast, Levites "pop up" in virtually every chapter and every story, so that it rather than the preceding book should bear the name "Leviticus". If one adheres to the idea of a *Grundschrift* of the priestly code (P^g) ending in Ex 40 (or Lev 9) then the differentiation between priests and Levites is of no concern until the secondary layers of the priestly code (that is P^s).

My concern however is the second aspect: the כהנים לויים in dtn-dtr terminology. There is a lengthy discussion on this formulation alone, its exact meaning and translation. Though a glimpse into a concordance suffices to show that this phrase is neither typically dtn-dtr nor typically in Deuteronomy. We find it five times in Deuteronomy and two times each in

Jeremiah and *Ezekiel*.[1] Semantically similar are two verses which speak of "the priests, the sons of Levi".[2] But in Deuteronomy there are also 14 verses mentioning "the Levite(s)", and in four instances we hear of the tribe of Levi or Jacob's son Levi.[3] These verses may have expressed similar thoughts in different phases of the redactional history of the book of Deuteronomy, but this hypothesis has to be shown first. Having in mind the small number of occurrences one should not speak of a "formula". Typically in Deuteronomy is rather a multitude of different terms rather than a single "formula".

The terminological variety tempted U. Dahmen to investigate the problem of priests and Levites *in* respectively *based on* Deuteronomy diachronically.[4] The idea does not seem to be new, already A.H.J. Gunneweg analyses the dtn usage of the terms.[5] Unfortunately, his approach sometimes obscures his results. Important and correct observations in the text, which contradict the then valid overall picture of the political and religious history of biblical Israel, are adjusted to that picture by means of *Traditionsgeschichte*. Already the arrangement of the material in pre-Josianic and post-Josianic texts sets the agenda. This leads to occasional *aporiae* and the reader may sense that Gunneweg sometimes intuited things that simply were unthinkable in 1965 and that seem possible today, if not self-evident. Other articles on the Levites in Deuteronomy, especially from the Anglo-Saxon sphere, abandon the diachronical questions almost entirely.[6] Not surprisingly I consider that somewhat one-dimensional and not very helpful as I try to find a solution on what is my central question: How did the internal structure of ancient Israelite and Judaean priesthood develop and how is that reflected in the biblical texts. Hence I appreciate Dahmen's approach.

This paper aims to take up this approach, to amend its conclusions in some instances, and to carefully enlarge upon other literary parts of the Hebrew Bible. Deuteronomy is especially suitable for diachronic approaches because in its terminological variety it can serve as a benchmark for tracking the internal development of the (literary) controversy between priests and Levites. Other textual corpora of the Hebrew Bible – Num, Ezr/Neh and Chr, not to mention the scattered verses in the former and the latter prophets – do not show such a logical

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[1] Dtn 17,9.18; 18,1; 24,8; 27,9; Jer 33,18.21 (one may call these „dtr") and Ez 43,19; 44,15; furthermore some verses in Ezr/Neh and 1/2 Chr in which the text is doubtful, except probably Neh 11,20.

[2] Dtn 21,5; 31,9.

[3] Dtn 10,8f.; 18,1; 27,12; 33,8.

[4] Ulrich Dahmen: Leviten und Priester im Deuteronomium: literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien. BBB 110. Bodenheim 1996.

[5] Antonius H.J. Gunneweg: Leviten und Priester. Hauptlinien der Traditionsbildung und Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Kultpersonals. FRLANT 89. Göttingen 1965.

[6] Vgl. v.a. G. Ernest Wright: The Levites in Deuteronomy. In: VT 4 (1954), 325-330; J.A. Emerton: Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy. An Examination of Dr. G. E. Wright's Theory. In: VT 12 (1962), 129-138; Raymond Abba: Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy. In: VT 27 (1977), 257-267.

and terminological variety and can be correlated and subordinated to the positions of Deuteronomy.

1. Tribe and Ark in Dtn 10:6f.8f.

The reference to the Levites in Dtn 10 is part of the larger context Dtn 9:(1/)7b-10,11. In this speech Moses looks back on the events on Mt Sinai (which is of course Mt Horeb here) addressing Israel in 2nd person plural. Alluding to Ex 32-34 he tells of the tablets of the covenant, their destruction due to the making of the golden calf, his intercession in favour of Aaron, the newly made tablets and their storage in the ark made of acacia wood. The models attempting to explain the different redactional layers of this pericope are of no detailed interest for us today.[7] But there is a broad scholarly consensus that already the *Grundschicht*, the first layer, should be seen as deuteronomistic. A similar consensus exists concerning the exclusion of verses 6f.8f. which in most commentaries are referred to as late and latest glosses [see handout].[8] While Dtn 10:1-5 tells of Moses making the new tablets and depositing them in the ark, in v. 6f. we read of an itinerary similar to Num 30:30-33 and in its centre a note on Aaron's death and on the priestly succession of his son Eleasar. V. 8 deals with the separation of the tribe of Levi. The intention of this singling out is that the Levites a) carry the Ark of the Covenant, b) stand before the LORD to minister him and c) bless in his name to this day. This serves also as the reason for the following v. 9 which states that Levi therefore "has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren" – i.e. the other tribes of Israel – because "the LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God promised him". V. 10 flashes back to Moses at the Mountain with God.

According to the current text, especially v. 6f., one must assume that the separation of the tribe of Levi took place in "Jotbathah, an area rich in streams". I think it is almost clear that this is not the original intention. This event obviously belongs to the mountain of God, and the itinerary note v. 6f. is in all likelihood an addition. This addition disturbs the connection of v. 5 and v. 8f., i.e. of the ark and its bearers. The tribe of Levi is now singled out in "an area rich in streams" but meagre in relevance: Jotbathah instead of Mt Sinai is a severe loss of authority – and all this as reward for a circumstantial remark on the priestly succession? The place names of the itinerary correspond only partially with Num 33 and distort the sequence. The scribe who added the gloss may or may not have been a scholarly trained scribe, but he surely

[7] Cf. the superb book of Peter Porzig: Die Lade Jahwes im Alten Testament und in den Texten vom Toten Meer. BZAW 397. Berlin; New York 2009.

[8] Cf. already Martin Noth: Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien. Darmstadt [3]1967, 17 n. 2.

had polemical intentions: “priestly matters” in the narrow sense of the word are in the end more important than “pan-levitical” interests. This is a far-reaching alteration by adding a few words!

But v. 8f. too are a later addition, as mentioned, on occasion of the mentioning of the Ark of the Covenant. As this is (almost) scholarly consensus I will sum up these last stages of the redactional history of Dtn 9f.: In a deuteronomistic text were inscribed a) the separation of the tribe of Levi including the setting of its duties [v. 8f.] and b) later on priestly interests which have a critical stance towards the pan-levitical interests of the following verses [v. 6f.] A priestly reaction and redaction subsequent to a pro-levitical redaction is apparently the endpoint of the textual development. Inasmuch as Dtn 10 for the first time in Deuteronomy mentions Levites it sets the mind of the reader for the whole book and these verses are of importance beyond their immediate context, i.e. in the several shapes of the book of Deuteronomy.

2. Legislation concerning the priests in Dtn 18:1-8

I will skip some chapters of Deuteronomy now and turn to Dtn 18:1-8. The reason is simple: In Dtn 18 we find almost all the dtn variety of terms concerning the Levites in a few verses. Our short reflections on Dtn 10 were just the “preparation” which should enable us to look at the text through the latest stages of redactional developments, while we are now heading for the center of all the (at least my) problems. Many scholars connect the priestly legislation in Dtn 18 with a Josianic Reform and 2 Kgs 22f., and therefore there are whole libraries of literature and of course no consensus. The best is however to have a look at the text itself.

V. 1a establishes the rule that Levitical priests “shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel”. V. 1b formulates that they shall eat or live on the אשי יהוה [the older translation “offerings by fire” is problematic]. The apposition “the whole tribe of Levi” has always been suspicious to literary critics. A slight tension emerges between the singular subject and the plural verb, but this does not necessarily lead to a literary critical operation. Such an operation is compelling only if one considers the conceptual difference between priests that are called “Levitic” and a tribe of Levi – what does the latter say what is not already said by stating “Levitical priests”? – and because the grammatical singular of the tribe is taken up from v. 2 onwards. A problem of its own is the word נחלתו in v. 1. Does the singular suffix refer to “the tribe” or to “the LORD”? Both solutions are problematic, because the tribe does explicitly not have a נחלה and

the LORD's נחלה is the land or the people of Israel. Today we may set aside that problem as its possible solutions are not related to my general question.

However, it is obvious that from v. 2 on the singular of apposition "the whole tribe of Levi" is taken up and v. 2 therefore belongs to a secondary layer with respect to the basic layer of v. 1. In V. 3 the perspective changes. We hear of legal entitlements of the priests to the people concerning animal sacrifices. The first part of the verse speaks of priests in general while the second part takes the individual into consideration (with a *we-qatal*-phrase in 3rd person singular). The issue of the following v. 4 are (annual?) tributes, yet unlike v. 3 the hearer/reader is addressed in 2nd person singular and there is – by the suffixed preposition לו – a reference back to a 3rd person singular. In the present text this probably refers to the priest of v. 3. The non-personal wording of v. 3 and the formal introduction as a legal text (וזה יהיה משפט הכהנים) lead most scholars to the conclusion that v. 3 (often also v. 4) is seen as an old rule and therefore pre-dtn. Indeed the covenant code is introduced by ואלה המשפטים [Ex 21:1] and the legal portions in Deuteronomy by אלה החקים והמשפטים [Dtn 12:1; admittedly A. Rofe holds Dtn 11:30 as the introduction]. Other scholars tend to see similarities to the deuteronomic introduction of single laws as Dtn 15:2 or 19:4: וזה דבר השמטה\הרצח [without direct legal context 1 Kgs 9:15 וזה דבר המס]. The closest parallel however is 1 Sam 8:11 זה יהיה משפט המלך which should be a most effective danger sign for everybody who wants to prove the old age of v. 3 relying solely on stylistic considerations. If the junction of v. 3 and v. 4 is noted but tagged with a question mark, the reasons for that uncertainty are clear: There is a difference in style (3rd person address vs. 2nd person address) and in issue (onetime vs. annual tributes). This suffices for me to assume a literary critical cut. I will return to that aspect later.

In v. 5 the idea is shaped that a "3rd person singular" of all the tribes of Israel is chosen to minister the LORD. The identity of that "3rd person singular" is however unclear. Concerning the present text surely a reference to the nearest noun is intended, that is the priest of v. 3. But the phrase "of all your tribes" [address in 2nd person singular] suggests a connection to the addendum in v. 1. Commonly v. 5 together with v. 2 are believed to be the work of the redactor of v. 1.[9] The disadvantage of this solution is apparent: That redaction is virtually laid as a circle around v. 3 which disturbs the internal references. The alternative[10] is to drop מכל שבטיך in v. 5. Then v. 5 would originally not refer to v. 1 but to the priest of v. 3. But there is no textual reason for that operation and the question arises what that gloss aimed at. The few who were bothered by answering that question – and not answering it is a misuse of literary

[9] Cf. already Julius Wellhausen: Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels. [6]1927, 136 n. 1.

[10] Represented by Udo Rüterswörden: Von der politischen Gemeinschaft zur Gemeinde. Studien zu Dt 16,18-18,22. BBB 65. Frankfurt/M. 1987.; and Schaper, op. cit.

criticism – stated that this gloss created a reference to v. 1f. But that leads to the same shortcomings as the former solution, because a reference back across v. 3 is implausible. I will return to that problem. It is however possible that v. 5b in contrast to v. 5a points to a single person, that is the priest of v. 3, and therefore may belong to a later redaction that strengthens or even creates a reference to v. 3!

Commonly accepted is the observation that the masoretic *s^{e}tuma* mark between v. 5 and v. 6 designates a new topic. How to define that topic depends on where the apodosis of this casuistic legal proposition begins. Starting in v. 8 it would speak about the supply of the Levites at the temple.[11] Starting in v. 7 it addresses the access right of the Levites *to* the temple respectively their rights of duty *at* the temple.[12] In both cases the centralisation of the cult is only implicitly stated but not claimed. This claim could only be understood if v. 6a would be the protasis and v. 6b the apodosis ("then he may come"), but v. 6a actually lacks a real condition and therefore cannot be seen as the protasis. According to Dahmen, syntactical reasons – the apodosis follows a multi-chained protasis by a break in the syntactical pattern – speak in favour of v. 8 as purpose of the legal regulation. My short remarks may suffice to show the difficulties of all approaches that rest their theories concerning a Josianic reform upon a certain interpretation of Dtn 18,6-8 as does J. Schaper.[13] In respect of our literary critical question there emerges almost nothing from v. 6-8 except that Levites acting in the cult are presumed, which is important for the relation to v. 1.

According to A.H.J. Gunneweg v. 6-8 do not contribute anything beyond what is already stated in v. 1-5 and therefore they should be considered primary against the beginning of the chapter. For him the "old nucleuses of tradition" consist of v. 3f. and 6f. Hence Gunneweg disagrees with the majority of scholars that regard only the glosses in v. 1 as well as v. 2 and v. 5 as additions to an otherwise coherent *Grundschicht*. Even more conservative is J. Schaper assuming only a few glosses in the respective verses.

U. Dahmen tries a different solution, and is followed by E. Otto and R. Achenbach [Schaper lists also Th. Rudnig among the scholars who accepted Dahmen's position, but Rudnig never stated anything concerning Dtn 18:6-8]. He too sees v. 3f. as an old pre-dtn sacrificial tariff which was framed by v. 1* (with question mark!) and v. 5 in the dtn *Grundschicht*. But Dahmen is uncertain whether to assign the attribute "levitical" in v. 1 to an addition (cf. Rüterswörden pointing to Dtn 17:9). But as he himself puts it there is no reason for that

[11] Rodney K. Duke: The Portion of the Levite: Another Reading of Deuteronomy 18:6-8. In: JBL 106 (1987), 193-201, which is followed by Dahmen.

[12] That is the classical solution since Wellhausen.

[13] Joachim Schaper: Priester und Leviten im achämenidischen Juda: Studien zur Kult- und Sozialgeschichte Israels in persischer Zeit. FAT 31. Tübingen 2000.

concerning literary criticism. Much younger, and that is the new idea of Dahmen, could be v. 6-8. Yet in his argumentation he again abandons the level of literary criticism and resorts to linguistic-statistic analysis. I am going to quote some of his arguments in order to show their persuasive power: The phrase הלוי מאחד שעריך in v. 6 deviates from the usual הלוי בשעריך. The "usual phrase" is however dispersed on different literary layers, what makes that "observation" obsolete. The rephrasing is however matter-of-factly imperative: The Levite simply comes "*from* any of your gates", he cannot come "*in* the gate". Likewise there is, according to Dahmen, a tendency of "totalization". This relates to the use of the "remarkable" word כל. I regard this kind of argumentation as unrewarding. More serious is the observation that there are otherwise no cultic Levites in Deuteronomy. But this alone is not reason enough to exclude the only passage possibly mentioning them. One instead has to ask, why Deuteronomy should speak of Levites in the cult at the central sanctuary on several occasions – and in the gates of course there cannot exist any form of cultic activity. Moreover one should bear in mind that for the rest of Deuteronomy the Levites always occur in the lists of the *personae miserae* in context of the feasts of Israel which I consider at least cultic context, though admittedly "faded". However, there are no textually immanent criteria that suggest a internal relative chronology with v. 6-8 belonging to a later hand than the rest of the passage. And there is another striking point: Dahmen misses a priestly reaction to that impressive pro-levitical addition (v. 6-8) to the priestly legislation as parallel to Dtn 10:6f. [The quest for fresh arguments in Otto or Achenbach is inconclusive.]

The only scholarly consensus we can record so far is the classification of Dtn 18:3(f.) as "pre-dtn sacrificial tariff". I hope to have prepared you well by mentioning all the *aporiae* so that you may accept my conclusions that argue against this solely remaining consensus.

Let us for one moment set aside the idea that v. 3 has to be "old", probably "pre-dtn". Which reasons in the text itself indicate for its priority? I must admit, I can see none! To the contrary, if we abandon v. 3 there is a marvellous junction of v. 4 to v. 2. This connection is broken only by the insertion of v. 3. The reason for that insertion must still be found, but the result is clear: The following statements of v. 4-5 (tributes and election) are no longer related to the whole tribe of Levi but to the priest(s). This tendency is similar to other passages which introduce a social distinction with considerable privileging of the priests. As well as in Dtn 10:6f. the "technique", if I may say so, is rather to disrupt an existing connection by a partially clumsy insertion which sheds a different light on the following verses. Both the tributes (v. 4), the saying about the election and the duties resulting from that (v. 5) are solely connected with the priest(s). [Incidentally in the masoretic text the "blessing", which seems to

be a priestly prerogative is still missing in v. 5. The Samaritanus and Septuagint instead have here a harmonizing addition. In Dtn 10:8 where the whole tribe is concerned LXX uses the rather unusual ἐπεύχομαι (elsewhere only 1 Chr 23:13) instead of εὐλογέω.] The exclusive back reference to the priest by stating "chosen out of all your tribes" is as well significant since the curious concept of "the priests" (not the Levites!) being a tribe gleams at best in late texts as Num 17, the budding of Aaron's rod, and 1 Chr 27:17 where Zadoq is named as "leader over Aaron" besides the heads of the other tribes!

And there is more to it than that: The verse virtually had left no innerbiblical footprints, which would be surprising if it truly was an "old rule". There is but one exception, the affinity to 1 Sam 2:12ff. [s. handout], which has been noted before. Both verses share the unique phrase משפט (מ)את העם which is difficult to translate (at least into German). In addition to that the *figura etymologica* "sacrificing a sacrifice" is peculiar to those verses and has fewer parallels within the rest of the Hebrew Bible than one might expect. This could in sum point to a literary relation of both texts. The doublet of "people" and "those who offer" in Deuteronomy is odd, in 1 Sam organic. The את in 1 Sam is difficult, the מאת probably tries to smooth the text. This is of course weak evidence but it points to 1 Sam as the "donor" text. The משפט here is an integral part of the story, in Deuteronomy it is not. Dtn 18:3 turns the gambling game of 1 Sam 2 into a clear regulation: The priests get the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. There was obviously a need for regulation, but the redactor did not add something new, he just explicated what – in his eyes – was already implicitly stated in the text [and see below for the reception of that part in the Temple Scroll]. Whatever the date of 1 Sam 2:12ff., Dtn 18:3 is younger and in any case the youngest part in Dtn 18:1-8. We can also find the "priestly reaction on the pro-Levitical redaction" which U. Dahmen missed. And furthermore the redactional history of Dtn 18 is rid of some previous problems. As I already hinted at, v. 5b too may originate from the same redactor who concentred the passage on "the priest", may be the high priest as such.

Apart from that we may follow the consensus. Verses 2.4.5a refer to the additional gloss in v. 1 and thus are addenda as well. They regulate the income of the Levitical priests, which are now attributed and understood as "the whole tribe of Levi". These regulations are of course no pure invention. If we take an *Ur-Deuteronomium* as a basis which is (with T. Veijola, R.G. Kratz and others) strictly orientated by the idea of the centralisation of the cult, the reader comes from Dtn 14:23 and 15:19 [see handout]. There we find the crucial keywords that triggered the *Fortschreibung* in Dtn 18: Dtn 14 regulates the annual tithes of "grain, new wine and oil". From Dtn 15 we learn that the firstborn of the flock are sanctified to the LORD, and

therefore shall not be shorn. The fleece belongs to the tribe of Levi. In short, Deuteronomy delivers us all "building material" we need for this redactional layer. It clarifies what the נחלה of Levi consists of. The idea of the election of the tribe (v. 5) may belong to a similar phase in the redactional history of the book of Deuteronomy as that of the separation of the tribe in Dtn 10:8f.

Having stripped off the latest redaction in v. 3.5b and an older one in v. 1*.2.4.5 we are now left with v. 1*.6-8, and there the priority is clear: V. 6-8 are a legal proposition of its own, v. 1* alone would be meaningless, whereas prefixed to v. 6-8 it clarifies the necessity of that legal proposition. *Because* the Levites (v. 6-8) – now called "Levitical priests" (v. 1*) – "do have no portion nor inheritance with Israel" – in fact: must not have – they are supplied by the sanctuary. The former need to regulate the supply of the Levites had become a theological construction. It is a divine commandment, that the Levites/Levitical priests do not have any tribal homeland (=landed property?). This so called *Levitenregel* might originate from here, what gives an answer to Dahmens quite heavy-handed search for a programmatic text of origin. The usual alternatives are a) Num 18:20(-24), b) an original edition of the pericope on Mt Sinai Ex 32-34* or c) an "old religious formula", that is "floating tradition". The latter ones are rightly rejected by Dahmen, because they again open Pandora's Box of *Traditionsgeschichte*. No less problematic is the relation to Num 18, because the story there has a different focus: Num knows the sharp distinction between priests (in the person of Aaron) and Levites and ascribes each group its own נחלה. Furthermore the LORD speaks to Aaron, not to Levi, as stated in Deuteronomy. The search for a reference text which precedes Deuteronomy has to remain without an answer as none of the three mentioned possibilities fits. The *Levitenregel* does not have a reference text, it is theological theory of some dtr redactors.

As core of the priestly legislation remain thus v. 6-8. The regulation for supplying the Levites from outside the sanctuary, which these verses speak of, arises with necessity from the centralisation of the cult. According to R.G. Kratz – and not surprising I agree with him – this passage does not belong to the *Ur-Deuteronomium* but to its *Umfeld*.[14] It might once have followed the regulations concerning jurisdiction in Dtn 17:8-13*. In light of that junction one may speculate if the "Levite in your gates" was originally associated with jurisdiction. But so far this is almost mere speculation and I will not build any further hypotheses on that.

[14] Cf. Reinhard G. Kratz: Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments. Grundwissen der Bibelkritik. Göttingen 2000, 122.

3. „Levitical priests“ and the „Levite in your gates“ in Deuteronomy

The phrase “Levitical priests” in Dtn 18:1 is then too a theological construction found in a redactional layer (already a secondary one!) in Deuteronomy, which further weakens any possible connection with a “Josianic reform”. For reasons of time and space I will not go through all the other occurences but will restrict myself to giving some short hints: Dtn 27:9 belongs most probably to the oldest part of that chapter, but that chapter does not belong to the oldest editions of the book of Deuteronomy. And again there is reason to assume that והכהנים הליים was added by a later redactor. Though the redactional history of Dtn 27 is worth a paper by its own. We may nonetheless record that the Levitical priests have a liturgical-parenetic function. In Dtn 24:8 Levitical priests undertake what is the task of “the priest” according to Lev 14: In case of leprosy they shall “teach” (ירה), and the text reminds us on what happened to Miriam in Num 12. Israel is addressed in the plural and that suggests this verse being part of one of the later redactions. Dtn 17:18 belongs to the law of the king. The Levitical priests appear as the keepers of the Tora. But the law of the king too was not part of a *Ur-Deuteronomium*. Thus remains only Dtn 17:9 within the scope of the reorganization of jurisdiction. The pericope 17,8-13 has undergone several redactions and you will not be surprised that I consider the attribute “Levitical” (together with v. 10b.11) to be redactional. In these verses again the Levitical priests have to teach (ירה) the Tora. All verses containing the phrase “Levitical priests” circle thus around the same issue (and similarly Dtn 31:9 “the priests, the sons of Levi”). Keeping and interpreting the Tora is their task. This is explicitly stated in Moses’ blessing on Levi, and similarly thoughts are expressed in Chr.

Of course our interest is often in the origins which unfortunately remain obscure. If we subtract all the later “overpaintings” (*Übermalungen*) only those verses remain which entrust the “Levite in your gates” to the welfare of Israel. This conclusion is all but new and was seen by Gunneweg and others. The verses in question are Dtn 12:18,19; 14:27,29; 16:11,14. Differentiating with R.G. Kratz even within the *Grundschicht* none of these verses was part of the *Ur-Deuteronomium*. At the earliest a wave of *Fortschreibungen* would have inscribed the care for the Levites into Deuteronomy and listed them among the *personae miserae*. Our passage Dtn 18:6-8 as well could have been part of that setting. Historically we can infer from that no more than the banality that the centralisation of the cult had an impact on the Levites in the countryside, not in Jerusalem! But that impact was not taken into consideration in the *Ur-Deuteronomium* and necessitated some amendments to the dtn law. The connection to 2 Kgs 22f. is more and more weakened and so is any connection to a Josianic reform. However we still do neither know what exactly was the task of the Levites in the countryside nor what

the Levites at the central sanctuary did. To answer these questions we need other (textual) material.

4. Innerbiblical and qumranic reception

Somewhat more illuminating is the look into the reception history of our text, which of course cannot "prove" the previous analysis but may add further evidence for stringency in the development of our texts. According to Num 18 [s. handout] the Levites are commited to Aaron and his sons to serve them, not the LORD. Here the priestly reaction on the dtr programme is palpable! In Num 16:8ff., the latest additions to the Korah- respectively Dathan-Abiram-story, the tone becomes caustic. Taking up the wording about the duties of the tribe of Levi from Dtn 10:8f. Moses asks Korah and his Levitical fellow rebels whether these duties are still not considered privilege enough and whether Korah even seeks priesthood. The mentioned duties apparently do not imply priesthood. On the quiet Moses – or let us say the redactor of Num 16 – changed the wording slightly: The blessing was dropped and "to serve the LORD" was changed into "to serve the congregation". The degradation of the Levites proceeds.

The tax system too is refined in Deuteronomy. The Levites themselves shall offer a tenth of the tithe they received (Num 18:26f) from "the grain of the threshing floor" and from "the fullness of the wine- and olivepress". Further developments of the topic can be found in Neh 10.13, and 2 Chr 30f. The feature in Neh is the "wood offering… as it is written in the law" [Neh 10:35]. Peculiar to 2 Chr is the relation to the Passover under Hezekiah and the inclusion of honey unto the tributes [which should be the case in "a land flowing with milk and honey"]. The reference text is in both cases Dtn 18 through the lens of Num 18.

So far for the innerbiblical reception, but the Dead Sea Scrolls too should be mentioned, and concerning Deuteronomy the Temple Scroll is of importance.[15] In col. 60 we find the paraphrase of Dtn 18. The system of tributes there is defined more precisely, thus honey – compare Neh 10 – is included. But above all the statement about "election" is obviously related to the priests and the mentioned duties include the blessing (ll. 10-11), which was missing in Dtn 18 (MT). Likewise if a Levite comes from any of Israel's cities he shall serve "the ones who stand before me" (ll. 12-14). If the insertion of ישרת into the paraphrase of Dtn 18:7 is not just a textual mistake (stylistically it is however bad Hebrew) it shifts the meaning

[15] See Simone Paganini: »Nicht darfst du zu diesen Wörtern etwas hinzufügen« Die Rezeption des Deuteronomiums in der Tempelrolle: Sprache, Autoren, Hermeneutik. BZAR 11. Wiesbaden 2009.

of Dtn 18 towards Num 18: The Levites serve the LORD only indirectly, but directly they serve the priests.

Another important point touches the systematic application of the "sacrificial tariff" of Dt 18:3. The triad of "shoulder, cheeks, stomach" has no parallels in the Bible and within the Dead Sea Scrolls only in the Temple Scroll, namely during the sacrifices of the annual feasts. The Temple Scroll creates a feast of the firstlings for every element of the triad "grain, new wine and oil" and lists all the tributes to the priests according to a harmonized sacrificial tariff combining Dtn 18:3 with Lev 3f. and 7-9.

5. Conclusions

Let us come back to our starting point, the Levites. In my opinion Dtn 18:1-8 is a key text for understanding the literary development of one of the most important issues in the emerging biblical literature. If you accept my analysis 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 further 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 Temple Scroll which seamlessly attach to innerbiblical developments.

These observations concur with the working hypothesis of our joint Göttingen & Haifa DFG-Project "The reception of the book of Genesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls", an idea that was also outlined by Charlotte Hempel at the IOSOT-congress in Helsinki. I hope that I could show you at least partially the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Hebrew Bible Scholars beyond textual criticism on the one hand, and on the other hand the usefulness of the literary critical approach to the Hebrew Bible for Qumran scholars because it can clarify some of the problems which triggered the production of the Dead Sea texts. There is an urgent need in both disciplines to get into conversation with each other, and there is still a lot to do.

1. Ark and Covenant

Dtn 10:6 וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נָסְעוּ מִבְּאֵרֹת בְּנֵי־יַעֲקָן מוֹסֵרָה
שָׁם מֵת אַהֲרֹן וַיִּקָּבֵר שָׁם וַיְכַהֵן אֶלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו׃
10:7 מִשָּׁם נָסְעוּ הַגֻּדְגֹּדָה וּמִן־הַגֻּדְגֹּדָה יָטְבָתָה אֶרֶץ נַחֲלֵי מָיִם׃
10:8 בָּעֵת הַהִוא הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־שֵׁבֶט הַלֵּוִי לָשֵׂאת אֶת־אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה
לַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ וּלְבָרֵךְ בִּשְׁמוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה׃
10:9 עַל־כֵּן לֹא־הָיָה לְלֵוִי חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִם־אֶחָיו
יְהוָה הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לוֹ׃

2. Legislations concerning the priests

Dtn 18:1 לֹא־יִהְיֶה לַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם כָּל־שֵׁבֶט לֵוִי חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל
אִשֵּׁי יְהוָה וְנַחֲלָתוֹ יֹאכֵלוּן׃
18:2 וְנַחֲלָה לֹא־יִהְיֶה־לוֹ בְּקֶרֶב אֶחָיו
יְהוָה הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לוֹ׃ ס
18:3 וְזֶה יִהְיֶה מִשְׁפַּט הַכֹּהֲנִים מֵאֵת הָעָם מֵאֵת זֹבְחֵי הַזֶּבַח אִם־שׁוֹר אִם־שֶׂה
וְנָתַן לַכֹּהֵן הַזְּרֹעַ וְהַלְחָיַיִם וְהַקֵּבָה׃
18:4 רֵאשִׁית דְּגָנְךָ תִּירֹשְׁךָ וְיִצְהָרֶךָ וְרֵאשִׁית גֵּז צֹאנְךָ תִּתֶּן־לוֹ׃
18:5 כִּי בוֹ בָּחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֶיךָ
לַעֲמֹד לְשָׁרֵת בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה הוּא וּבָנָיו כָּל־הַיָּמִים׃ ס

18:6 וְכִי־יָבֹא הַלֵּוִי מֵאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא גָּר שָׁם
וּבָא בְּכָל־אַוַּת נַפְשׁוֹ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה׃
18:7 וְשֵׁרֵת בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו כְּכָל־אֶחָיו הַלְוִיִּם הָעֹמְדִים שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה׃
18:8 חֵלֶק כְּחֵלֶק יֹאכֵלוּ לְבַד מִמְכָּרָיו עַל־הָאָבוֹת׃ ס

3. Lateral texts

to Dtn 18,3

1 Sam 2:12 וּבְנֵי עֵלִי בְּנֵי בְלִיָּעַל לֹא יָדְעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה׃
2:13 וּמִשְׁפַּט הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָעָם
כָּל־אִישׁ זֹבֵחַ זָבַח וּבָא נַעַר הַכֹּהֵן כִּבְשֵׁל הַבָּשָׂר
וְהַמַּזְלֵג שְׁלֹשׁ־הַשִּׁנַּיִם בְּיָדוֹ׃
2:14 וְהִכָּה בַכִּיּוֹר אוֹ בַּדּוּד אוֹ בַקַּלַּחַת אוֹ בַפָּרוּר
כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲלֶה הַמַּזְלֵג יִקַּח הַכֹּהֵן בּוֹ
כָּכָה יַעֲשׂוּ לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים שָׁם בְּשִׁלֹה׃

to Dtn 18,4

Dtn 14:22 עַשֵּׂר תְּעַשֵּׂר אֵת כָּל־תְּבוּאַת זַרְעֶךָ הַיֹּצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה שָׁנָה שָׁנָה׃
14:23 וְאָכַלְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם
מַעְשַׂר דְּגָנְךָ תִּירֹשְׁךָ וְיִצְהָרֶךָ וּבְכֹרֹת בְּקָרְךָ וְצֹאנֶךָ
לְמַעַן תִּלְמַד לְיִרְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־הַיָּמִים׃

Dtn 15:19 כָּל־הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר יִוָּלֵד בִּבְקָרְךָ וּבְצֹאנְךָ הַזָּכָר תַּקְדִּישׁ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לֹא תַעֲבֹד בִּבְכֹר שׁוֹרֶךָ וְלֹא תָגֹז בְּכוֹר צֹאנֶךָ׃

to Dtn 18,5

Dtn 18:5 LXX ὅτι αὐτὸν ἐξελέξατο κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐκ πασῶν τῶν φυλῶν σου παρεστάναι **ἔναντι κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου** λειτουργεῖν **καὶ εὐλογεῖν** ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ ***ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ισραηλ***

Dtn 10:8 LXX ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ διέστειλεν κύριος τὴν φυλὴν τὴν Λευι αἴρειν τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης κυρίου παρεστάναι ἔναντι κυρίου λειτουργεῖν καὶ ***ἐπεύχεσθαι*** ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης

Num 3:6 הַקְרֵב אֶת־מַטֵּה לֵוִי וְהַעֲמַדְתָּ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְשֵׁרְתוּ אֹתוֹ׃
Num 8:26 וְשֵׁרֵת אֶת־אֶחָיו בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמֶרֶת וַעֲבֹדָה לֹא יַעֲבֹד
כָּכָה תַּעֲשֶׂה לַלְוִיִּם בְּמִשְׁמְרֹתָם׃ פ
Num 16:9 הַמְעַט מִכֶּם כִּי־הִבְדִּיל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְהַקְרִיב אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו
לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְשָׁרְתָם׃
Num 18:2 וְגַם אֶת־אַחֶיךָ מַטֵּה לֵוִי שֵׁבֶט אָבִיךָ הַקְרֵב אִתָּךְ
וְיִלָּווּ עָלֶיךָ וְיָשָׁרְתוּךָ וְאַתָּה וּבָנֶיךָ אִתָּךְ לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת׃

to Dtn 18,4f.: 11QT[a] Kol. 60,6-15 (13-22)

13 *vacat* וללויים מעשר הדגן והתירוש והיצהר אשר
14 הקדישו לי לראישונה והשכם מאת זובחי הזבח והמכס מן
15 השלל ומן הבז ומן הציד לעוף ולחיה ולדגים אחד מן המאה
16 ומבני היונה ומעשר מן הדבש אחד מן החמשים ולכוהנים
17 אחד מן המאה מן בני היונה כי במה בחרתי מן כול שבטיכה
18 לעמוד לפני ולשרת ולברך בשמי הוא וכול בניו כול הימים
19 *vacat* וכי יבוא הלוי מאחד שעריכה מכל ישראל אשר
20 הוא גר שמה בכל אות נפשו אל המקום אשר אבחר לשכן
21 שמי ככל אחיו הלויים ישרת העומדים שמה לפני חלק כחלק
22 יואכלו לבד ממכר על האבות *vacat*