

930 B.C.E.²⁴ Thus the form and content of the list attest that the institu-

tion of Levitical cities was in existence during Solomon's reign.²⁵ The cities allocated to the priests and Levites were stripped of their agricultural lands and of their outlying suburbs, leaving their inhabitants only a small common pasturage in the area immediately surrounding the city (Num 35:1-8; Lev 25:33-34).²⁶ Accordingly, it may be concluded that the inhabitants of these sites were dependent neither on agriculture nor on animal husbandry for their livelihood. The fact that towns which contained sanctuaries, such as Bethel, Nob and Jerusalem, do not appear in the list indicates that the duties of the resident Levites were not necessarily or exclusively sacerdotal. Some indications of their responsibilities may be inferred from I Chr 26:29-32 where the chronicler records that some Levitical families were appointed royal agents and judges (cf. also II Chr 19:4-11), while others were appointed as administrators, cultic functionaries and

²⁴ Z. Kallai, "The System of the Levitic Cities: A Historical-Geographical Study in Biblical History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100, 25, 27, 33-34. This study reviews scholarship on the list from 1959-1979 and argues cogently for the authenticity of the list in Josh 21 despite the accidental omission of Reuben after v. 35 (pp. 13-16). (Pace, A. G. Auld, "The Levitical Cities: Texts and History," *ZAW* 91 [1979] 194-206 who considers the Joshua list late and derived secondarily from that in Chronicles.)

M. Haran's lengthy discussion of the cities accepts the essential historicity of the list as deriving from the early monarchy, but argues that it is overlaid with "utopian" features. He dates its extant form to the reign of Hezekiah along with most of P (Temples, 129-31, 146-48). A similar position is adopted by T. Polk, who, as a result of his reconstruction of the history of the Levites considers the extant form of the list to derive from the Josianic era ("Levites in the Davidic-Solomonic Empire," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 9 [1979] 18). In this matter, I find the subtle geo-political discussion of Kallai more thorough and convincing than those of Haran and Polk and therefore accept his dating. Adoption of either of the other two positions would not, however, affect the following discussion, but it does have ramifications for interpreting the history of the emergence and ascendancy of the Aaronide priests. Accepting an early date for the extant list implies accepting an early distinction between the priestly Aaronide Kohathites and all the other Levites as well as ascribing to them an undefined but unique status in that group. (Cf. A. Cody, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood*, AnBib 35, Rome 1969, 159-161; pp. 161-166 where the implications of late dating are clarified. F. M. Cross' reconstruction of the "Priestly Houses of Early Israel" accepts their early ascendancy in the south [Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, Cambridge, MA, 1973, 198-199, 206-208, 215].)

²⁵ I surmise that the institution originated during the reign of David but lack of hard evidence prohibits any definitive statement.

²⁶ M. Greenberg, "Idealism and Practicality in Numbers 35-45 and Ezekiel 48," *JAOIS* 88 (1968) 59-63. Greenberg's plausible explanation of the paradigmatic text in Numbers indicates that the significance of the pasturage as a source for animal products was inversely proportional to the size of the city. Large cities, with presumably larger populations than small cities, would have had less area for pasturage than the small centers. The allotted pasturage, even in the best of circumstances, could not have been a significant source of sustenance. Cf. now J. Milgrom, *JSS* 33 (1982), 185ff.

laborers among the trans-Jordanian tribes and were encharged with both religious and royal affairs.²⁷ The text mentions 4,400 responsible men (I Chr 26:30, 32); if these are considered heads of households (v. 32), then approximately 20,000-30,000 people, Levites and their dependents, were living in the ten cities designated in that area alone. The possibility that they also had military obligations, especially where the towns bordered on hostile territory, must also be considered although these are not explicitly referred to in the texts.²⁸ This context provides a setting for the P tithes laws in Num 18.

Provisions for the needs of all these Levites was made through a grant of nine-tenths of an annual tithes as compensation for their labor (Num 18:21-24). The remaining tenth was given by the Levites to the priests (Num 18:25-28). M. Weinfeld dates this tithes provision for Levites through a combination of both form-critical and traditio-historical considerations to the period of the united monarchy, the same as that of the list of cities.²⁹ Thus, the non-Aaronide Levites, occupying slightly less than two-thirds of the cities, were allocated nine-tenths of the tithes income and were in control of the disbursement of the remaining tenth to the priests.

After the reforms of Josiah, 622-21 B.C.E., a triennial tithes was prescribed for the Levites and for other indigents (Dtn 14:27-29). This reduced status of the Levites, reflected in the diminished assignment, is to be explained provisionally, in the light of extant documentation, as the end process of a number of developments: (1) the reduced size of the territory over which the Jerusalem monarchy and clergy had control following the successful revolt of the northern tribes; (2) the elimination

²⁷ Mazar, "The Cities," 197. The expression *למנוחה* (I Chr 26:31b) indicates that the Levites were responsible for all projects involving *skills* or *crafts* associated with the cult or cultic site for which they were especially trained, as well as for all royal labor projects. (This notion is an extension of the lexicographical remarks of J. Milgrom, *Studies*, 60-61; 77-80 and note 295.) The expression *למנוחה* (I Chr 26:31b) which is more general, indicates overall administrative responsibility.

²⁸ Cf. I Chr 12:27-29; Mazar, "The Cities," 202, 204; but especially Milgrom who describes the quasi-military role of Levitical guards in the cultic setting (Studies, 5-59, particularly 8, 5-17, 31-32), and Polk who collects data on warrior Levites in a non-sacral one ("The Levites," 7-8, 12-14).

²⁹ M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and Ancient Near East," *JAOIS* 90 (1970) 201-202; idem "The Royal and Sacred Aspects of the Tithes in the Old Testament," *Ber-Sheva* 1 (1973), 124-125, 130 (in Hebrew). Haran connects these tithes to the concentration of Levites and priests in the Levitical cities, but because he views the comprehension of these cities in P as utopian, he considers the tithes votive offerings (Temples, 116-117). The text in Numbers does not support his interpretation. Similarly, why should a vow offering be encumbered by restrictions prohibiting substitution of a good for a bad animal (Lev 27:33)? Why doesn't the text mention vowing or donating? Cf. The next note.