

## The Levites in Josephus

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In relating events of the procuratorship of Albinus (62-64 A.D.) Josephus (Ant. 20.216-218) cites two developments instigated by the Levites of the time. First, the Levitical singers, with the backing of King Agrippa, secure permission from the Sanhedrin to wear linen robes "on equal terms with" the priests. Secondly, those (other) Levites "who served in the Temple"<sup>1</sup> get approval that they too might "learn the hymns by heart." Having recounted these developments, Josephus appends the following critical commentary concerning them: "All this was contrary to the ancestral laws (ἐναντία... τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις), and such transgressions (παραβαθέντων) were bound to make us liable to punishment."

A number of recent authors have adduced the above passage (as well as a various other ones in Ant.) as evidence of a "anti-Levitical tendency" on the part of the priest (see Vita 2) Josephus.<sup>2</sup> What has been lacking hitherto is, however, a comprehensive survey of Josephus' uses of the proper name "Levi" (Ληουείς, i.e. the son of Jacob, 5/6 times); the collective noun "Levite(s)" (Ληουίτης, αι, Λευίτης, αι: 82/83 times), and the adjective "Levitical" (Ληουίτις, Λευίτις, Ληουτικός: 5/6 times; τὸ Λευιτικόν: 1 time [Ant. 5.69]<sup>3</sup> in relation to their Biblical source(s) with a view to determining just how consistent (and how "anti") the purported Tendenz actually is.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, in this

paper I shall undertake such a survey, following the order of the terms occurrence in Ant.<sup>5</sup>

Before embarking on this study, I would, however, first call attention to a number of considerations/questions that need to be kept in mind concerning it. 1) The passages to be studied raise, of course, numerous wider questions of all sorts. To the extent possible I shall confine myself here, however, to their treatment of the Levite theme. 2) There are complicating text-critical problems in passages mentioning the Levites in both the Biblical and the Josephan corpora. 3) The Bible itself offers varying/ opposing conceptions regarding the Levites (particularly in their relation to the priests), e.g., those of the Deuteronomic Corpus, P and Ezekiel, and Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>6</sup> Does Josephus consistently align himself with one of these? Are there points in which he goes his own way vis-à-vis all of them? 4) In a number of instances Josephus had two (differing) versions of an episode involving Levites available to him (Samuel-Kings/ Chronicles; Ezra and 1 Esdras). Which one does he follow and how does this affect his evolving portrait of the Levites? 5) There are, in fact, numerous Biblical mentions of Levi/the Levites which lack any counterpart in Josephus. The references in question frequently stand in types of material which Josephus, as an apologetic re-teller of his people's history intent on holding the interest of a Gentile audience, tends to leave aside (or drastically reduce), i.e. such non-narrative genres as prophetic discourses, poetry, prayers, lists of names, discussions of cultic matters, and incidents reflecting poorly on the Jews (e.g., their making of the Golden Calf, Exodus 32).<sup>7</sup> In these instances, Josephus' non-reproduction of source Levitical reference should not be attributed simply (or in first place) to his intention of downplaying the Levites' role; rather it reflects wider tendencies of his work, ones which surface also in his handling of Biblical

texts that have nothing to do with the Levites. 6) Finally, a wide reading of Josephus' retelling of Biblical history makes clear that Josephus is simply not consistent with his various "tendencies"- be these stylistic or contentual-; a given tendency may be brought to bear by him in one context, but not in another. One might begin then with the presumption that such editorial inconsistency/license will emerge also in his handling of the Levitical thematic. The above points having been made, I shall now trace Josephus' mentions of Levi/the Levites over the course of Ant. In so doing, I distinguish seven overarching historical epochs in which the terminology surfaces, i.e. 1) the Ancestral Period; 2) the Mosaic Period; 3) The Conquest and the Judges; 4) The United Monarchy; 5) The Later Monarchy and the Exile; 6) The Restoration; and 7) The Post-biblical Period.

### **1. The Ancestral Period**

Josephus' account of the Ancestral Period in Ant. 1.154-2.200 features three mentions of the Levites' ancestor. In 1.304 he records Levi's birth and the significance of his name ("surety of fellowship") on the basis of Gen 29:34. Ant. 1.337-341 is Josephus' version of the episode of the rape of Dinah (Genesis 34) in which Levi (along with his brother Simeon) plays a dubious role as ringleader in the massacre of the defenceless Shechemites. In contrast to the Bible, Josephus portrays Levi and Simeon as acting alone (1.340; contrast Gen 34:27-29 where the other brothers plunder Shechem once the pair has butchered its menfolk) and emphasizes that their deed was done without Jacob's prior approval (1.340) and aroused his "indignation" when he does hear of it (1.341). On the other hand, he replaces the concluding confrontation between Jacob and the two primary culprits (Gen 34:30-31) in which they respond to his censure with words of self-justifying impenitence ("should he [Shechem] treat our sister as a harlot?")

with a divine intervention (1.341) the thrust of which is that Jacob should not further concern himself with the matter. With this conclusion Josephus would appear to be saying that Levi's (and Simeon's) deed was not so serious a matter in the eyes of God himself as it was in those of Jacob. Still, the episode does not reflect well on Levi and it is noteworthy that Josephus has opted to utilize the story at all, given his overarching concern to downplay Jewish-Gentile animosities.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, by reducing the poetic "Blessing of Jacob" (Genesis 49) to a passing allusion in Ant. 2.194, Josephus leaves aside the patriarch's sharply condemnatory judgment on the brothers' anger and violence in its vv. 5-7. Finally, in 2.178 Josephus cites (// Gen 46:11) the names of Levi's three sons who accompany their father to Egypt.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The Mosaic Period

Josephus' narration of the Mosaic Period encompasses Ant. 2.201-4.331. As in the source (Exodus-Deuteronomy), this section of his history is punctuated by references to Levi and the Levites. A first such reference comes in 2.229b where, in line with Exod 7:16-20 (cf. Exod 2:1), Josephus designates Moses as a descendant (great-grand son) of Levi.<sup>10</sup>

Biblically, the Levites make their first appearance as a group in Exod 32:25-29 where Moses sets them aside for the service of the Lord after they respond to his appeal by slaying 3,000 of the guilty people, their own relatives included. This passage is part of the Golden Calf narrative of Exodus 32(33-34). In function of his overall non-use of this narrative with its highly embarrassing portrayal of his people's first fall into idolatry, Josephus leaves aside its Levite-centered segment as well, just as he does the wording of

Moses' benediction of Levi with its likely allusion to the Levites' heroism at Mt. Sinai in Deut 33:8-11.<sup>11</sup>

The Biblical locus classicus concerning the distinct status of the Levites vis-à-vis both the Israelites as a whole and the Aaronide priests, their separate counting, divisions, duties, dues, term of service, investiture ceremonies, etc. comprises the series of P passages in Num 1:47-54; 2:17; 3:5-4:49; 8:5-26. Josephus makes an initial, highly selective use of this complex in the context of his exposition of the biblical cultic laws (Ant. 3.224-286) in 3.258. Specifically, this paragraph relates Moses' setting the Levites aside as a "holy (ἁγία) tribe" by purifying waters (see Num 8:7) and sacrifices (compare Num 8:8), his entrusting them with the care of the tabernacle (Num 3:25-26; 4:25-26) the sacred vessels (see Num 3:31; 4:12) and the tabernacle's covering (3:25-26; 4:25-26)<sup>12</sup>, and placing their ministry under the supervision of the priests (see Num 3:5-9, 32; 4:28,33).<sup>13</sup>

In what follows Josephus does make additional use of elements of the "Levitical matter" of Numbers 1-8. A first such utilization comes in the segment 3.287-294 where Josephus recounts the preparations for Israel's departure from Sinai. This complex opens with a summary mention of the census of the tribes recorded in Numbers 1. With allusion back to his qualification of the Levites as the "holy tribe" in 3.258, Josephus here cites the Levites' exemption from the general census in light of their special status (3.287 // Num 1:47-49), and notes that Ephraim and Manasseh were assigned Levi's place (3.288; compare Num 1:32-35). Thereafter (3.290), he combines items drawn from Num 1:53 (cf. 2:17; the camp-place of the Levites in relation to the tabernacle)<sup>14</sup> and Num 3:39 (the number [22,800 (MLEZon read 23,800)] of the male

Levites older than one month).<sup>15</sup> Finally in 3.293 he draws on Num 2:17 in noting that the Levites were grouped all round the Tabernacle when the Israelites broke camp.<sup>16</sup>

Num 16:1-17:5 (Eng. 16:1-40) tells the story of the renegade (Kohathite) Levi Korah who (along with 250 others) challenges Aaron's right to the priesthood and who is punished for this by having the earth swallow him and his confederates alive. Josephus markedly embellishes the Biblical story in Ant. 4.11-56 as a object lesson in the dangers of civil discord.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, he does not seem particularly concerned to expatiate on the anti-Levite polemic of the Priestly source story. Thus, one notes that Levitical terminology is used explicitly only in Josephus' (expanded) version, i.e. 4.15 (Korah denounces Moses among his fellow tribesmen, the Levites; compare Num 16:1-4 where the rebels en masse make their complaint directly to Moses and Aaron) and 4.19 (Korah affirms that if God's decision was to award the priesthood to "the tribe of Levi" he had a greater claim to it than Aaron and his sons; no parallel in Numbers 16). Note too that Josephus lacks an equivalent to Moses' emphatic affirmation in Num 16:8 "you have gone too far, sons of Levi." The Biblical story of Korah's rebellion finds in positive counterpart in Num 17:6-27 (Eng. 16:41-17:13) where Aaron's right to the priesthood is made clear through the blossoming of the rod of the Levi on which Moses had written his (Aaron's) name (17:18, Eng. 17:3). In Josephus' version of the affair (4.59-66), it is rather the name "Levi" (Λευίτην; Niese conjectures Λευίτιν) which Aaron inscribes on his rod.<sup>18</sup>

Following the narrative interlude of Ant. 4.11-66 (// Numbers 16-17), Josephus returns, under the influence of Numbers 18, to the subject of the Mosaic directives concerning the Levites, their upkeep in particular. He introduces the topic (4.67a) by recalling the Levites' previous "exemption" from military service (see 3.287) and with an

(un-Biblical) motivation for the provisions Moses is about to lay down ("from fear that through indigence and the quest for the necessities of life they [the Levites] should neglect the temple [τοῦ ἱεροῦ])." To this introductory formulation he attaches a mention, drawn from distinct Biblical contexts, of the two "benefits" which are to be conferred on the Levites by their fellow Israelites, i.e. the 48 Levitical cities plus their surrounding lands (4.67b; see Num 35:1-8)<sup>19</sup> and the "tithe" (4.68a; see Num 18:21-24), the later benefit being one which the "priests" are to receive as well.<sup>20</sup> Mention of the "priests" here, in turn, provides a lead-in to Josephus' enumeration (4.69-75) of Moses' instructions concerning the dues owed this group.<sup>21</sup> Of these, the first two to be mentioned (4.69) are ones that the Levites are to make over to the priests from what has been given them, i.e. 13 of the 48 Levitical cities<sup>22</sup> and a tithe of their tithe (see Num 18:26,28; cf. n. 20).

The Levites make their next appearance in Josephus' version of Numbers in his parallel (4.159-164) to Numbers 31, the story of Israel's war with Midian and the division of the booty following this. According to Num 31:27-29 (cf. 31:41,47) God enjoins that the booty be divided into two portions with 1/500th of the first going to the priests and 1/50th of the second being awarded to the priests. Josephus (4.164) eliminates this surprising advantage of the Levites over the priests: in his presentation, each receives a 50th when the booty is divided up into two lots.<sup>23</sup>

The concluding chapters of Numbers (32-36// Ant. 4.165-175) feature various instructions given Israel by Moses in the Transjordan. Among these are his directives concerning the setting aside of refuge cities (Num 35:9-34). In his rendition of this item (4.172-173) Josephus, drawing on the related material of Deut 4:41-43; 19:1-21; Joshua

20-21, has Moses refer to the six Levitical cities (see 4.67// Num 35:1-8)- three east of the Jordan, and three west of it- which are to function as such refuge sites (4.173).<sup>24</sup>

The remainder of Antiquities 4 (## 176-331) constitutes Josephus' version of the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy itself is replete with references to the Levite(s) and the "Levitical priests." Josephus omits many of these, while modifying others in line with his preceding, P-based account of the Levites as a group distinct from (and subordinate to) the priests.<sup>25</sup>

Deuteronomy's use of Levitical terminology is concentrated in the "Code" of chapters 12-26 to which Josephus' (re-arranged and selective) parallel is 4.196-301, his summary account of the Jewish "constitution." Four times in this section Josephus makes mention of the Levites. First, he introduces his rendition of the law concerning the agricultural tithe that is to be utilized in the Israelites' sacrifices at the central sanctuary (Deut 14:22-27) with the notice that this is additional to the tithe which "I [Moses] appointed to be given to the priests and Levites" (see 4.68).<sup>26</sup>

Josephus' next two references to the Levites in the context of his recapitulation of the Deuteronomic Code concern their juridical responsibilities. In both instances as well a modification of the relevant Deuteronomic prescription whereby the Levites as a distinct group are introduced into the regulation in question is involved.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Deut 16:18 enjoins that "judges and officers" are to be appointed in all Israel's towns.

Josephus (4.214) specifies that these judicial bodies are to consist of seven "rulers" and "two subordinate officers of the tribe of Levi."<sup>28</sup> Similarly, whereas Deut 21:5 prescribes that "the priests, the sons of Levi" are to "come forward" in the case of the unsolved murder (Deut 21:1-9), Josephus (4.222) makes reference to an involvement by "the

priests, the Levites, and the council of the city," all of whom are to declare themselves innocent of the murder.<sup>29</sup>

The last of Josephus' renderings of provisions of the Deuteronomic Code relates to the appendix to the "second" tithe prescription (Deut 14:22-27 // 4.205) in Deut 14:28-29 (itself resumed in Deut 26:12-15) which ordains the collecting of a tithe for the benefit of the poor among the Israelites (including the Levite, see v. 29) every three years. This tithe might be understood as additional to that spoken in 14:22-27 and so Josephus qualifies it (4.240, cf. 242) as a "third tithe," i.e. beyond "the one for the Levites and the other for the [sacrificial] banquets."<sup>30</sup>

The above are Josephus' utilizations of the Deuteronomic Code's references to the Levites/Levitical priests in his sketch of the Jewish "constitution." Other such references in the Code are left unused by him, most notably the provisions for the upkeep of the Levitical priests (Deut 18:1-8). This omission is understandable given that in 3.67-75 he has already treated the dues of both Levites and priests on the basis of P's Numbers 18, etc.

Deuteronomy's end matter comprises its chapters 27-34 in which the Levites/Levitical priests make a number of appearances. In the Josephan parallel (4.302-331) there is only a single mention of the Levites. This occurs in 4.305 in the context of Josephus' rendition of Moses' instructions concerning the ceremony to be conducted at Mts. Gerizim and Ebal (Deut 27:11-13). In the source "Levi" is directed to stand along with five other tribes on Mt. Gerizim while the remaining six tribes position themselves on Mt. Ebal. By contrast, 4.305 directs that "the Levites and priests" stand alongside the two groups of six tribes each stationed on either mountain.<sup>31</sup> Another noteworthy instance of such a Josephan modification of the formulations of Deuteronomy's closing

chapters regarding the Levites occurs in connection with his account of Moses' disposition of his "book" in 4.304. Whereas Deut 31:9 represents Moses entrusting the book to "the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark" (cf. 31:25-26: Moses commands the Levites who carried the ark to put the book of the law beside it), Josephus has him confide both book and the ark itself to "the priests."<sup>32</sup> Finally, we noted above that Josephus passes over the laudatory blessing of Levi pronounced by Moses in Deut 33:8-11 with its allusion to Exod 32:25-29, also omitted by him).

### 3. The Conquest and the Judges

Josephus treats the period of Israel's entry into the land and its life there under a series of judges in Ant. 5.1-6.94 (// Joshua-Judges-Ruth-1 Samuel 1-12). Here too he both eliminates or reformulates source mentions of the Levites/Levitical priests.

In Jos 3:2 those who are to carry the ark across the Jordan are initially designated as the "Levitical priests" (and thereafter simply "the priests"; see 3:6 etc.). Josephus (5.17) introduces a separate mention of the Levites alongside the ark-carrying priests (see n. 32); in the procession into the Jordan the latter follow the former, themselves bearing the sacrificial vessels in accordance with the charge given them by Moses in 3.258.<sup>33</sup> Josephus proceeds similarly with the reference (Jos 8:30-35// Ant. 5.69-70) to the ark-bearing Levitical priests before whom the tribes in their two divisions stand for the ceremony that takes place at Mts. Gerizim and Ebal, as Moses had enjoined (see Deuteronomy 27). In line with his own reformulation of Moses' directive of Deut 27:11-13 in Ant. 4.305, he has (5.69) "the Levites (τὸ Λευιτικόν) and the priests" stand together with the six tribes stationed respectively on one of the two mountains.<sup>34</sup> The last of Josephus' mentions of the Levites in his rendering of the Book of Joshua (5.1-119) picks

up the subject of the "Levitical cities," cited earlier by him in Ant. 4.67,172. With an eye to the narrative of Joshua 21 about the distribution of their cities by lot to the Levites, he represents Joshua (5.91) as directing that their remaining 38 cities now be awarded to the Levites, the ten Transjordanian ones having already been allotted them by Moses (see 4.172).<sup>35</sup>

Josephus' parallel to the Book of Judges is Ant. 5.120-317.

The Biblical book opens with a series of "occupation notices" (Judges 1), including mention of Hebron's being given to Caleb (v. 20). In the parallel passage, i.e. Jos 21:11-13, however, Hebron and its pasture lands is assigned to the descendants of Aaron as one of the 13 Levitical cities conferred on the priests, with Caleb himself receiving only the territory beyond this. Accordingly, Josephus in his one mention of the subject (5.126) distinguishes between the town (Hebron) and a tract of 2000 cubits (see 4.67) which go "to the Levites"<sup>36</sup> and the "rest of the land" which Caleb receives.

The Book of Judges concludes with two extended segments both of which feature a somewhat disreputable Levite, i.e. chaps. 17-18 (the idolatrous founder of the Danite priesthood) and chaps. 19-21 (the man whose concubine is raped, this touching off a civil war between the Benjaminites and the other tribes). Josephus shifts his version of these two episodes to a much earlier point in his account of the Judges period in 5.136-149, likely doing so in order to provide illustrations of the people's decline spoken of in the introduction to the Book of Judges (Judg 2:6-3:6 // 5.132-135), reversing as well the sequence of the episodes. He does recount the story of the Levite's "wife" (so 5.136; compare Judg 19:1, "concubine") and its sequels in considerable detail in 5.136-174. In his rendition, however, this figure appears notably more sympathetic than does his Biblical counterpart; e.g., whereas the latter (Judg 19:25) throws his concubine out to the

attackers, in Josephus (5.147) the men of the town seize her for themselves. In this connection it should be noted too that Josephus turns the couple's host at Gibeah into a Levite as well (see 5.142,144; compare Judg 19:20 where he is simply said to be "from the hill country of Ephraim"), likewise accentuating his efforts to ward off the molesters (see 5.143-146 and compare Judg 19:22-24).<sup>37</sup> As for the Levite of Judges 17-18 who starts off as custodian of Micah's idol and ends up as the first priest of the Danite sanctuary housing this idol, he simply disappears in Josephus' truncated version of the story of Dan's migration in 5.175-178 where this is portrayed as simply a military development.<sup>38</sup>

Following his rendering of the Book of Ruth in Ant. 5.318-337, Josephus relates the career of Samuel, the last of the Judges, in 5.338-6.94 (// 1 Samuel 1-12). The Bible itself offers divergent indications concerning the ancestry of this figure. According to 1 Sam 1:1 his father Elkanah was an Ephraimite, whereas 1 Chr 6:18-19 (Eng. 6:33-34) reckons father and son among the Kohathite Levites.<sup>39</sup> In the face of this source difference, Josephus opts to follow Chronicles, calling "Alkanes" "a Levite of the middle classes" in 5.342. A similar case arises with regard to the custodian assigned the ark at Kiriath-jearim. In 1 Sam 7:1 this figure is called "Abinadab" and nothing is said concerning his ancestry. In 1 Chr 15:10-11, however, one meets an "Amminadab" among the Levites assembled by David to carry the ark. In line with this latter text, Josephus (6.18) assigns "Aminadab" to "the stock of Levi," likewise inserting a reference to his being "reputed for his righteousness and piety."<sup>40</sup> In the context of 6.18 (// 1 Sam 7:1), by contrast, Josephus eliminates a Biblical reference to the Levites as carriers of the ark. According to 1 Sam 6:15 Levites remove the ark from the cart which has conveyed it to Bethshemesh. In Ant. 6.15 it is rather the inhabitants of "Bethes" who do this themselves

with the result that they are subsequently smitten by God for approaching the ark "though they were not priests" (6.16; compare 1 Sam 6:19 where certain of the inhabitants are struck down for "looking into the ark").<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. The United Monarchy

Josephus devotes the segment Ant. 6.95-8.211 to the history of the united monarchy. For this part of his history, Josephus had available two, rather distinct Biblical presentation, i.e. 1 Samuel 13-1 Kings 11 and 1 Chronicles 10-2 Chronicles 9. As will emerge, he mostly follows the latter for what concerns his notices on the Levites during the period in question. This is already evident in his first such mention in Ant. 7.56 where, following the Chronicler's Sondergut passage 1 Chr 12:26, he refers to 4,700 men of the tribe of Levi who come to Hebron under the leadership of "Jodamos" to offer their support to David there.<sup>42</sup>

Josephus continues to give precedence to the Chronicler's presentation in his next relevant passage, i.e. the story of David's moving the Ark to Jerusalem, Ant. 7.78-89. Whereas in the short form of this episode found in 2 Samuel 6, the Levites are nowhere mentioned, they play a major role, overshadowing that of the priests themselves, in the expanded version of 1 Chronicles 13-16. Between these two extremes, Josephus accords the Levites a significant, though not so all-dominant, place in his retelling.

In all three versions the episode itself unfolds in two stages, i.e. a first failed attempt to move the ark and a second successful such attempt. Like the Chronicler, but in contrast to 2 Samuel 6, Josephus (7.78) has David assemble the "priests and Levites" prior to his initial effort (see 1 Chr 13:2). Against both Biblical accounts (see 2 Sam 6:3// 1 Chr 13:7) which leave the subject here indeterminate, Josephus characteristically specifies (7.79;

see n. 32) that it was "the priests" who carried the ark out of Aminadab's house (see 6.18). Thereafter, however, he rejoins the common source presentation according to which the ark was (initially) conveyed upon an ox-drawn cart, a procedure that violates the regulation introduced by him in his account of the making of the ark in Ant. 3.316 (see n. 32). The three accounts further agree (2 Sam 6:6; 1 Chr 13:10-11; Ant. 7.81b) in having David's first, failed attempt culminate with God's smiting the attendant Uzzah (Josephus: "Osas") who touches the ark in an effort to steady it when the oxen stumble. Only Josephus, however, provides a motivation for the divine initiative, i.e. the fact of Osas' touching the ark "though he was not a priest." According to both 2 Sam 6:10 and 1 Chr 13:13, the ark at this point is entrusted to an apparent foreigner, i.e. "Obed-edom, the Gittite." Josephus, drawing on a later Chronistic passage, i.e. 1 Chr 15:18 (see also 1 Chr 9:26) which mentions "Obed-edom" as one of the two Levitical doorkeepers qualifies him rather as "a Levite by descent" (7.83).<sup>43</sup>

The Levites "come into their own" especially in connection with David's second, successful attempt at moving the ark as this is told by the Chronicler in 1 Chronicles 15-16. In this (largely) Sondergut material (i.e. 15:1-24; 16:4-42) the Levites are designated by David to carry the ark in accordance with God's choice of them (15:2) and further assigned their musical duties before the ark by him once they reach Jerusalem (16:4ff.). This focus on the Levites disappears in Josephus' account of David's second effort at transporting the ark (7.84-89) where it is rather the "priests" who carry it (7.85; compare 1 Chr 15:26, the Levites) and where there is only an oblique reference to the musical tasks given the Levites by David in 1 Chr 16:4ff., i.e. the mention (7.85) of the "seven choirs"- the makeup of which is not specified- which precede the ark in procession (see on 7.305, however).

In Ant. 7.200 Josephus does draw on a mention of the Levites in material unique to 2 Sam 15:24 in his story of David's flight from Absalom. Whereas, however, the Biblical verse would appear to make the Levites the (co-) bearers of the ark here.<sup>44</sup> Josephus' wording, which speaks of David's "persuading the priests Abiathar and Zadok together with all the Levites" to remain behind with the ark, edits out this notion.

As noted above, Josephus does not, as such, utilize the complex concerning David's assigning their musical activities to the Levites of 1 Chr 16:4ff., in its Chronistic context, i.e. the sequel to the ark's arrival in Jerusalem. He does, however, make summary reference to this role for the Levites as part of a parenthesis on David's musical initiatives (7.305-306) which he inserts into his presentation of David's "heroes" in 7.298-304,307-317.<sup>45</sup> According to 1 Chr 16:4-5 (picked up in 1 Chr 25:1ff.) David directs the Levites to play on a variety of instruments; Josephus (7.305) portrays the king as making the instruments himself and entrusting these to the Levites.<sup>46</sup>

2 Samuel 24// 1 Chronicles 21 is the story of David's ill-advised census. The latter text includes the notation (v. 6) that "Levi and Benjamin" were not numbered since Joab found the king's initiative "abhorrent." Josephus' rendering of the story (7.318-334) incorporates this exemption of the two tribes (7.320), attributing it, however, simply to Joab's lack of time.<sup>47</sup>

1 Chronicles 22-29 constitutes a long block of Chronistic Sondergut concerning David's final measures in view of the approaching accession of Solomon and the latter's task of building the Temple; it contains as well repeated references to the (priests and) Levites. Josephus combines this presentation with the alternative portrayal of David's last measures in 1 Kings 1-2 (from which the Levites are absent) into a composite account of the finale of David's reign in Ant. 7.335-394. Within this segment the Levites, along

with the priests, receive an initial mention in 7.363a (// 1 Chr 23:1) where David summons both groups to Jerusalem for the appointment of Solomon. Continuing to follow the sequence of 1 Chronicles 23 (vv. 3-6) Josephus (7.363b-364a) has David next first determine the number of Levites of the requisite age for service (38,000, so 1 Chr 23:2)<sup>48</sup> and his assignment of them to four overarching roles (7.367a// 1 Chr 23:3-6; cf. the further elaboration of these divisions in 1 Chronicles 25-26 with mention of many names): building overseers (24,000), judges and scribes (6,000), gatekeepers (4,000) and singers (4,000). Thereupon, at the start of 7.365 he makes an initial reference to David's establishment of the 24 Levitical "courses" which he then picks up in 7.367 (see 1 Chr 25:9-31)<sup>49</sup>, after recounting (7.365-366) the king's dividing up the priests into their own twenty-four courses (// 1 Chronicles 24). Finally, he rounds off his summary rendition (7.363b-367) of 1 Chronicles 23-26 on David's organization of the two clerical groups with citation of the royal injunction (7.367b) that "all those of the tribe of Levi and the priests should serve God night and day, as Moses had enjoined them."<sup>50</sup>

Neither of Josephus' final two references to the Levites at the end of David's reign have a precise parallel in his source, i.e. 1 Chronicles 28-29. In 7.376 the king urges the "chiefs and the tribe of Levi" to assist Solomon in building the Temple,<sup>51</sup> while according to 7.378 "the chiefs and the priests and the tribe of Levi" all contribute eagerly to the Temple building fund.<sup>52</sup>

Josephus gives his account of Solomon, drawn from both 1 Kings 1-11 and 2 Chronicles 1-9, in Ant. 8.1-211. His first mention of the Levites under Solomon, lacks, however, a basis in the sources as such. In 8.94, in the context of his enumeration of the king's making of all kinds of items for the future Temple, he notes that Solomon produced two such for the benefit of the Levites, i.e. 200,000 "robes of linen for the

Levite singers" (στολῶν τοῖς ὑμνωδοῖς Ληουιτῶν ἐκ βύσσου)<sup>53</sup> and an array of musical instruments "devised for singing psalms."<sup>54</sup>

The high point of Solomon's reign as described in 1 Kings 8 // 2 Chr 5:1-7:10 // Ant. 8.99-125a is the dedication of the Temple, this featuring the bringing of the Ark, together with the Tabernacle and the sacred vessels, into the structure. The Biblical sources differ as to who carried the objects in question. According to 1 Kgs 8:3 the priests lift up the ark, while 8:4 ascribes the bringing up of ark, tabernacle and vessels jointly to the priests and Levites (so MT 8:4b; the verse half is absent in LXX).

Conversely, 1 Chr 5:4 has the Levites lifting up the ark, whereupon 5:5 reproduces 1 Kgs 8:4 virtually verbatim. In the face of this discrepancy, Josephus (8.101a) leaves the identity of those who bear the above three cultic objects unspecified.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, he does introduce an explicit reference to the Levites preceding the ark along with the king and people mentioned in 1 Kgs 8:5 // 2 Chr 5:6.

In the dénouement of his Solomon story Josephus inserts two further mentions of the Levites where the sources lack such. First, when telling of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (8.165-175 = 1 Kgs 10:1-13 // 2 Chr 9:1-12) he cites (8.169) her observing the care with which "the priests and Levites" conduct the sacrifices, whereas 1 Kgs 10:5 // 2 Chr 9:4 speak simply of her seeing Solomon's burnt offerings. Thereafter (8.176) he relates that Solomon used the wood imported by him to make instruments "with which the Levites might sing hymns to God<sup>56</sup>; compare 1 Kgs 10:12 // 2 Chr 9:11 where Solomon employs the word to make lyres and harps "for the singers" (i.e. of unspecified origin).

## 5. The Later Monarchy & Exile

Josephus' narration of the period extending from the death of Solomon down to the end of the Exile comprises Ant. 8.212-10.281; its primary sources are 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25// 2 Chronicles 10-36 (plus the Book of Daniel for 10.186-281).

Throughout the period of the post-Solomonic monarchy Levites are mentioned by Josephus- as in the sources- above all in connection with the cultic initiatives (whether legitimate or illegitimate) of various kings of Israel or Judah. The first relevant instance involves Jeroboam I. According to the notice in 1 Kgs 12:31 he "appointed priests from among all the people who were not of the Levites," this formulation reflecting the characteristic Deuteronomistic expression "Levitical priests." Josephus' reformulation (8.228) accords with the P/Chronistic distinction between the two groups of cultic officers with Jeroboam announcing to his people: "I shall appoint for you priests and Levites in order that you may have no need of the tribe of Levi and the sons of Aaron." For his subsequent allusion to Jeroboam's measures regarding the clergy, Josephus switches from Kings to Chronicles. 2 Chr 11:13-14 reports a flight to the South by the "priests and Levites" due to Jeroboam's depriving the latter of their priestly office; Josephus cites (8.248) the movement of the same two groups but does not refer to a "priestly" service of the Levites as does 2 Chr 11:14).<sup>57</sup> An additional Sondergut Chronistic reference to Jeroboam's abrogation of the cultic officers' rights comes in the speech attributed to King Abijah of Judah and addressed to the Israelite army in 2 Chr 13:4-12. V. 9 of this speech invokes Jeroboam's expulsion of the priests and Levites, while its v. 10 has the Judean king affirm "we have priests ministering to the Lord... and Levites for their service." In line with his overall reduction of the "cultic component" of the royal speech in his version of this in Ant. 8.275b-281, Josephus has no equivalent to either of these source items.<sup>58</sup>

Another, even more noteworthy, Josephan omission of a source item featuring the Levites occurs in his retelling of 2 Chr 17:7-8 in 8.395. The Biblical sequence records the Judean King Jehoshaphat's dispatching of nine, named Levites and two (also named) priests to teach the law to the people. Josephus omits any mention of the Levites' role in the affair (while also passing over the names of the two priests involved). Conversely, Josephus does take over (9.4) the notice of 2 Chr 19:8 about Jehoshaphat's subsequent appointment of Levites (along with priests and chiefs) as judges for the people. From the king's address to his judges (2 Chr 19:9-11// 9.6), he eliminates, however, the reference to the Levites' serving them as "officers."<sup>59</sup>

The Levites appear prominently in the story of Jehoshaphat's God-given triumph over an enemy coalition, 2 Chronicles 20. Josephus' version (9.7-16) deals variously with the relevant references. 2 Chr 20:14 designates "Jahaziel" who conveys God's assurances to the Judeans as a Levite; Josephus qualifies him rather as a "certain prophet" (9.10).<sup>60</sup> In 2 Chr 20:19 two groups of Levites respond to Jahaziel's announcement by loudly praising God; according to 9.11 the Levites "continued praising God with their instruments" on this occasion. Finally, whereas in 2 Chr 20:21, Jehoshaphat, in anticipation of the upcoming encounter with the enemy, appoints "those who are to sing to the Lord...", Josephus (9.12) specifies the identity of the musicians who are to lead Judah's procession, i.e. "priests with their trumpets and the Levites with the singers."<sup>61</sup>

Josephus' next set of references to the Levites comes in his account (Ant. 9.140-155) of the overthrow of the usurper Athaliah by the high priest Jehoiada for which he gives precedence to the version of 2 Chr 22:10-23:21 over that of 2 Kgs 11:1-20, particularly with regard to the role of the cultic personnel in this event. At the same time, one also

notes a clear tendency on Josephus' part to accentuate the priests' involvement in the affair vis-à-vis the Chronicler's more Levite-centered presentation. Thus, in 2 Chr 23:2 Jehoiada's embassaries assemble the Levites alone; 9.144 speaks of their gathering the priests as well. Again, while in 2 Chr 23:6 Jehoiada enjoins that only priests and ministering Levites be permitted to enter the Temple, Josephus has him restrict entry solely to the priests. Similarly, in 2 Chr 23:7 Jehoiada prescribes that the Levites are to surround the king (the boy Joash); his Josephan counterpart appoints the priests to this duty as well (9.147). Thereafter, Josephus amplifies (9.148) the notice of 2 Kgs 11:10 // 2 Chr 23:9 about Jehoiada's distributing weapons to the "captains" with mention of his also arming the priests and the Levites. Josephus' version of Athaliah's overthrow concludes in 9.155 with Jehoiada entrusting the priests and Levites with care of the Temple, just as he appoints "some of the Levites and porters to guard the sacred precinct." This notice, with its double mention of the Levites' role in guarding the Temple, represents his rendition of 2 Chr 23:18-19 where Jehoida secures the Temple by means "watchmen... under the direction of the Levitical priests"<sup>62</sup> and "gatekeepers."

The reign of King Joash, Athaliah's boy successor, is related in 2 Kgs 12:1-22 // 2 Chr 24:1-27 // Ant. 9.161-172. Here too, Josephus bases himself primarily on Chronicles in recounting the king's Temple repair initiative. In agreement with 2 Chr 24:4 he begins (9.161) by citing Joash's directive to Jehoiada that he dispatch "Levites and priests" to collect the Temple-tax that is to be used for its repair. Whereas, however, 2 Chr 24:5b states that "the Levites did not hasten the matter (i.e. the collection)," Josephus (9.161), eliminating this "anti-Levitical" remark, charges Jehoiada alone with disregarding the royal order. This change notwithstanding, he then (9.162) portrays Joash as confronting both Jehoiada and the Levites, this in contrast to both 2 Kgs 12:8 (Joash confronts

Jehoaida and the [other] priests) and 2 Chr 24:6 (the king confronts Jehoaida alone). 2 Chr 24:11 refers to the Levites bringing the collection chest to the king's "secretary" and the "officer of the high priest" who empty it, while in 9.164 (as in 2 Kgs 12:11) these two figures approach the chest on their own to empty it.

Josephus' parallel (Ant. 9.260-276) to the story told in 2 Chronicles 29-31 of King Hezekiah's great cultic reform is a particularly noteworthy instance of the historian's downplaying the role of the Levites in favor of that of the priests.<sup>63</sup> In accord with 2 Chr 29:3 he does begin (9.260) with Hezekiah's convening the priests and the Levites (he adds "the people" as well). According to 29:5 the king directs his following discourse specifically to the Levites; in Josephus he addresses both groups, calling on them to jointly open and purify the Temple that King Ahaz had profaned (9.262; Hezekiah's speech in 2 Chr 29:5-11 lacks a precise parallel, compare 29:11 "my sons, do not be negligent...").

2 Chr 29:12-15 depicts the Levites (14 of whom are named) as the first to respond to Hezekiah's appeal, with the priests following their lead in 29:16a. Josephus passes over the entire sequence 29:12-15, proceeding immediately to his parallel to 29:16a (9.263), just as he omits the notice of 29:16b about the Levites carrying the "uncleanness" the priests had removed from the Temple and conveying this to the brook Kidron.

Drawing on, while also abbreviating 2 Chr 29:25-30, Josephus does subsequently acknowledge (9.269) the Levites' playing of instruments and singing hymns (cf. Ant. 7.305; 8.94,176) to accompany the priests' sacrificing (29:20-24).<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, he has, significantly, no equivalent to the statement of 2 Chr 29:34 that, due to the paucity of sacrificing priests, the Levites assisted them in flaying the victims "for the Levites were more upright in heart than the priests in sanctifying themselves."<sup>65</sup> In place

thereof one reads in 9.270 (in the context of Josephus' version of 2 Chr 29:30-36) the historian's remark: "And the priests performed all things in accordance with the law. With this the king was well pleased..."

Josephus' diminuation of the Levites' role in Hezekiah's cultic reform surfaces again in his description of the Passover observances in 9.271-272. This segment represents a greatly abridged version of the account given by the Chronicler in 2 Chr 30:13-27 of the Passover sacrifices (and their seven-day extension).<sup>66</sup> In particular, he passes over the source's detailed indications concerning the role of the cultic officers in the celebration, i.e. the Levites killing the lambs and presenting their blood to the priests who "sprinkle" it (30:16-17) as well as the praise of God sung by both priests and Levites (30:21) which calls forth Hezekiah's encouragement of the former "who showed good skill in the service of the Lord" (30:22).<sup>67</sup>

The Chronicler concludes his treatment of Hezekiah's reforms with an elaborate account (2 Chr 31:2-19) of the king's provisions for the collection and distribution of the dues in kind owned the priests and Levites (several of whom are mentioned by name, see 31:11-15). Josephus (9.273b-274) reduces this whole sequence to its core content: Hezekiah enjoins the people to give the priests and Levites their tithes and first-fruits so that they might focus on the service of God (cf. Ant. 4.67-68); the people do so; and the king builds storage facilities for what has been collected and distributes this to the intended recipients.<sup>68</sup>

The post-Solomonic royal cultic reforms culminate in those of Josiah. The two Biblical accounts of this king (2 Kgs 22:1-23:30 // 2 Chr 34:1-36:1) differ rather considerably in their details. Josephus' version (10.48-78a[78b-80]) stands closer overall to the Chronicler's presentation of Josiah, even while going its own way in many respects

(including the role and relative prominence accorded the Levites).<sup>69</sup> Thus, in relating the Temple-repair project as the context for Hilkiah's finding of the book of the law, Josephus (10.55-56) leaves aside the references in 2 Chr 34:12-13 (no parallel in 2 Kgs 22:3-7) to the Levites' supervisory role in the project. For his ratification of the terms of the lawbook, Josiah summons "priests and prophets" according to 2 Kgs 23:2, "priests and Levites" according to 2 Chr 34:30. Josephus' rendering (10.62) follows the Chronicler's indication on the matter. In recounting Josiah's Passover (10.70-72) Josephus gives a more detailed account than 2 Kgs 23:21-23, but also a considerably less expansive one than 2 Chr 35:1-27. From 2 Chr 35:5 he takes over (10.71) mention of the contributions made to the Levites by their leaders, even while dispensing with the source's naming of six of those leaders. He omits as well Josiah's Passover address to the Levites (2 Chr 35:3-6), at the same time also eliminating his encouragement of the priests cited in 35:2. As described in 2 Chr 35:10-16 the ritual of the Josianic Passover is jointly effected by the priests and Levites, with the latter performing multiple tasks (killing and flaying the victims [35:11], distributing the flesh to the lay people [35:12-13], preparing for both themselves and the priests [35:14], while their brethren "the singers" exercise their office [35:15-16]). Josephus reduces these indications to a summary reference to "the priests directing each step and ministering to the multitude" (10.72).<sup>70</sup>

The reference to the Levites' being given Passover victims by their leaders in 10.71 (// 2 Chr 35:5) is, in fact, Josephus' last reference to the group in Antiquities, Book 10, his story of the last decades of the Judean monarchy and the subsequent Exilic period. It is only when he comes to relate the Restoration epoch in Book 11 that the Levites surface once more in his presentation.

## 6. The Restoration Period

Josephus completes his narration of the "biblical period" of his people's history in Ant. 11.1-296. This segment of his work corresponds to Ezra-Nehemiah // 1 Esdras in its first part (11.1-183) and the Book of Esther in its second (11.184-296). Since the Levites are absent from the Esther story (in both its Biblical and Josephan forms), we need only concern ourselves with the material of Ant. 11.1-183 here.

For his presentation of the early Restoration period and the activity of Ezra (Ant. 11.1-158) Josephus seems to have drawn in first place on 1 Esdras, while also making occasional use of its canonical parallel, the Ezra material of the Book of Ezra (+ Nehemiah 8).<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, in what follows I shall refer to both these (possible) sources for Josephus' references to the Levites in the Restoration era.

An initial set of relevant passages in this segment of Antiquities 11 concerns the return process itself. The first of these occurs in 11:8 where, in line with 1 Esdras 2:7-8// Ezra 1:5, Josephus notes the presence of "Levites and priests" (the sources have the reverse order) among those who act on Cyrus' permission for the exiles to return to Jerusalem. The Sondergut passage 1 Esdras 4:55 cites King Darius' directive that the Levites be provided for once the Temple has been rebuilt. Josephus rewords (11.62), having the king prescribe the giving of musical instruments to them for their praise of God.<sup>72</sup> From the source enumerations of the various categories of returnees, he cites figures for the Levites (74: 11.69= 1 Esdras 5:26// Ezra 2:40), along with the associated groups of "Levitical singers" (128: 11.70= 1 Esdras 5:27 [Temple singers]// Ezra 2:41 [singers]), "porters" (110: 11.70; 1 Esdras 5:28// Ezra 2:42 [here the figure given is 139]), and the temple servants (92: 11.170; in 1 Esdras 5:29-35// Ezra 2:43-58 a combined figure, 372 vs. 392 respectively, is given for the temple servants and the "sons of Solomon's

servants," the last of which groups is not mentioned by Josephus).<sup>73</sup> As an appendix to the returnee list he refers (11.71) to those priests whose names "could not be found in the genealogies of the Levites and priests," a qualification of the term "genealogy" absent in the source texts, 1 Esdras 5:39// Ezra 2:62. Recapitulating then his account of the (initial) return he notes that "the priests and Levites" joined a portion of the Jews living in Babylon for the move to Jerusalem. The source texts 1 Esdras 5:46// Ezra 2:70 append mention of the lesser cultic officers as well.

Josephus relates the beginnings of cultic reconstruction in Jerusalem in 11.79-83 (= 1 Esdras 5:56-65a// Ezra 3:1-13a). Speaking of the start of work on the rebuilding of the Temple "in the second year" (11.79a), he omits the source references to the involvement of "the priests and Levites" (Ezra 3:8)/ "the Levitical priests" (1 Esdras 5:56). On the other hand, he does (11.79b) reproduce the notice of 1 Esdras 5:58a// Ezra 3:8 about those Levites 20 years and older being put in charge of the project, while leaving aside the additional allusions to the Levites' role found in 1 Esdras 5:58b// Ezra 3:9. In 11.80 (= 1 Esdras 5:59-61// Ezra 3:10-11) Josephus proceeds to recount the ceremony marking the completion of the Temple structure: joining the priest trumpeteers, "the Levites and the sons of Asaph... sang the praises of God as David had first shown how to bless him" (see Ant. 7.305b).

Once the difficulties occasioned by the Jews' neighbors have been resolved, Josephus relates the dedication of the Temple and the subsequent Passover observance, 11.107-110 (= 1 Esdras 7:1-14// Ezra 6:13-22). At the dedication itself priests, Levites and people offer sacrifices (11.107= 1 Esdras 7:6// Ezra 6.16). These accomplished, the priests and Levites jointly appoint "porters" (θυρωροί) for the gateways of the Temple porticos, doing this "in accordance with the laws of Moses."<sup>74</sup> In this instance, Josephus

appears to depend specifically on 1 Esdras 7:9 which mentions the presence of "gatekeepers" (θυρωροί) at each gate- although not their actual "appointment" by the two clerical orders- as opposed to its parallel, Ezra 6:18 where an unspecified subject appoints the divisions of both priests and Levites to their service.

Ant. 11.120-158 is Josephus' account of the later Restoration figure, the priest Ezra; the segment has its counterpart in 1 Esdras 8:1-9:55 // Ezra 7-10+ Nehemiah 7:73-8:12(8:13-10:39<sup>75</sup>). King Artaxerxes' letter commissioning Ezra for his work as cited in 1 Esdras 8:10 // Ezra 7:13 refers to the royal permission given those "priests and Levites" who wish to do so to accompany him to Jerusalem. Josephus' rendition (11.123), notably, mentions such permission only for the Levites.

The continuation of the king's letter in 1 Esdras 8:22 // Ezra 7:24 informs the royal officials that various categories of Jewish cultic officers, the priests and Levites in first place, have been exempted from all taxes. Josephus (11.128) closely follows the wording of the sources for this exemption.<sup>76</sup>

Having cited the text of Artaxerxes' letter, Josephus continues with the account of Ezra' journey to Jerusalem (11.131-138= 1 Esdras 8:25-67 // Ezra 7:24-8:36). In this connection, he notably modifies the presentations of the sources, both of which speak, albeit with differences of detail, about an initial absence of Levites among those ready to accompany Ezra, this necessitating his taking special measures to procure 38 Levites to accompany his party (1 Esdras 8:42-49 // Ezra 8:15b-20).<sup>77</sup> In Josephus' version (11.134) this unflattering portrayal of the Levites' disinterest in Ezra's mission yields to the notice that "a great number" of all classes of cultic officers- the Levites included- joined him of their own volition.

Once in Jerusalem, Ezra confronts the problem of the foreign wives many of the Jews have married (Ant. 11.139-153= 1 Esdras 8:68-9:36// Ezra 9:1-10:44). In all three accounts the crisis begins with Ezra being informed that there are members of the community, including both priests and Levites, who have married non-Jewish wives (11.140= 1 Esdras 8:68-70// Ezra 9:1-2). In all three as well Ezra responds by compelling the offenders- of whom the "leading priests and the Levites" are mentioned explicitly- to swear that they will terminate their illegal marriages.

On the other hand, Josephus lacks an equivalent either to the mention (Ezra 10:15) of the opposition, emanating, inter alia, from a Levite named "Shabbethai" to the community's pledge to put an end to foreign marriages (see 10:12) or to the rather different notice in 1 Esdras 9:14 in which "Shabbethai" is not called a Levite and is depicted rather as a "judge" in the mixed marriage cases. Josephus (11.151) does, however, rejoin the sources (1 Esdras 9:23-24// Ezra 10:23-24) in noting that among those who ended up dismissing their foreign wives were "many Levites."<sup>78</sup>

The Ezra story of the three accounts culminates with a reading of the book of the law to the assembled people presided over by Ezra. In the sequence of Nehemiah 8-10 this event itself leads into a celebration of Passover, a confession of sin by Ezra, and an solemn acceptance by the people of their legal obligations. 1 Esdras' parallel (9:37-55= Neh 7:73-8:12) to this sequence is limited to the reading of the lawbook, while Josephus (11.154-157) incorporates his account the reading of the book into a description of the communal Passover observance (in Nehemiah 8 the latter follows the former).

Both 1 Esdras 9:37-55 and Neh 7:73-8:12 accord the Levites considerable attention in their respective accounts of Ezra's reading of the law: First, the Levites' (as well as other groups of cultic officers) place of residence (1 Esdras 9:37 [in Jerusalem]// Neh 7:73 [in

their towns]) is mentioned. Next, a group of named Levites helps the people understand the lawbook that Ezra previously read to them (1 Esdras 9:48// Neh 8:7-8 [in the MT of these verses those named in v. 7 seem to be distinguished from the Levites cited in v. 8]). Thereafter, the Levites join Nehemiah and Ezra in calming the weeping people (so Neh 9:9,11; compare 1 Esdras 9:49 where a certain "Attharates addresses himself to Ezra and the "Levites who were teaching the multitude" with reassuring words, while 1 Esdras 9:53 does correspond to Neh 9:11's reference to the Levites urging the people not to be sorrowful). All mention of the Levites' role, by contrast, disappears in Josephus' rendering of the book-reading by Ezra (ll.155-156) where, e.g., it is Ezra alone who endeavors to pacify the people weeping at the remembrance of their past offenses against the law (11.156). This elimination of any role for the Levites on the occasion of Ezra's reading of the lawbook recalls Josephus' similar- though not as drastic- downplaying of Levitical involvement in the cultic reforms initiated by Hezekiah and Josiah (see above).

As noted previously, Josephus does mention a Passover observance in connection with Ezra's reading of the lawbook. In this he aligns himself with Neh 8:13-18 against 1 Esdras which concludes with an (expanded) equivalent to Neh 8:12. On the other hand whereas Neh 8:13 opens its Passover narrative with mention of the priests and Levites, along with the heads of fathers' houses, joining Ezra for study of the lawbook, Josephus lacks a parallel to this introduction. Like 1 Esdras he has no equivalent either to the segment Nehemiah 9-10 which tells of subsequent initiatives by Ezra. Accordingly, he has nothing corresponding to the recurrent mentions of the Levites in this segment (see Neh 10:1,10-14,29 [the Levites join in ratifying the covenant]; 10:29 [the Levites too are to be responsible for providing firewood for the Temple]; 10:38-39 [tithes for the Levites, a tithe of which will go to the priests]).

Josephus gives a markedly abbreviated rendering of the Biblical material pertaining to the figure of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1-7,11-13) in 11.159-183.<sup>79</sup> In that rendering he takes over only two of the source material's many mentions of the Levites. First, in 11.181, loosely following Neh 7:4 + 11:1(15-18), he speaks of Nehemiah's urging the priests and Levites to resettle in Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup> Thereafter (11.182; cf. Neh 12:44,47; 10:38b-39) he cites the governor's directive that the people bring the tithes on their produce to Jerusalem "in order that the priests and Levites, having a perpetual source of livelihood, might not abandon the temple service."<sup>81</sup>

## 7. The Postbiblical Period

In the whole extended account of the postbiblical period (i.e. from the time of Esther down to the beginnings of the Great Revolt) related by him in Ant. 11.297-20.268 Josephus makes mention of the Levites in only two passages. The first of these (Ant. 13.62-73) concerns the temple which the refugee high-priest Onias IV gets permission to build at Leontopolis. In making his application on the matter to King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra Onias further asks that he further be allowed to appoint "Levites and priests of his own race" (13.63), while the end of the account (13.73) one hears that he did indeed find "priests and Levites to minister there."<sup>82</sup>

Josephus' second and final mention of Levites is the one cited at the beginning of this essay, i.e. their securing, a few years prior to the outbreak of the Revolt, two new privileges for themselves (the wearing of line robes "on equal terms with the priests," and the learning of hymns by those who served in the Temple), an "innovation" which Josephus denounces as one certain to evoke divine punishment (Ant. 20.216-218). It is on this explicitly negative note that the Levites make their exit from Josephus' history.

## Conclusions

I conclude with a few summary remarks concerning Josephus and the Levites suggested by the foregoing survey. With regard, first of all, to Josephus' understanding of, e.g., who the Levites are, what they do, and how they<sup>83</sup> are to be maintained, Josephus clearly aligns himself with the conceptions of P and the Chronicler as opposed to those found in the Deuteronomi(sti)c material of the Bible. Thus, like the former, he sharply distinguishes the Levites from the priests as a lower category of cultic officers, whereas the latter seems to identify them (see its characteristic phrase, the "Levitical priests" which Josephus systematically eschews). Again, following P, he assigns the Levites the care of the tabernacle and the sacred vessels, while in accord with the Chronicler he highlights the Levites' role as liturgical musicians.<sup>84</sup> By contrast, he denies to the Levites a task with which the Deuteronomi(sti)c authors especially associate with them, i.e. carrying the ark.<sup>85</sup> Further, whereas in Deuteronomy the Levites pertain to the persones miserae in Israel who, as such, are dependent on the charity of those better off, Josephus, basing himself on P and Chronicles, represents them as a group whose sustenance is duly assured by means of the ("first") tithe.

My second concluding point concerns Josephus' handling of the Biblical source material on the Levites. Here, he displays the same freedom he does in his rewriting of the Bible overall. Most notably, he leaves aside entirely or drastically reduces many Biblical passages mentioning the Levites, particularly when these occur in non-narrative contexts (e.g., the Blessings of Jacob [Genesis 49] and Moses [Deuteronomy 33]), present a particularly unflattering image of Israel (the Golden Calf affair [Exodus 32] and the idolatrous shrine at Dan [Judges 17-18]), or involve a level of (cultic) detail

likely to prove offputting to Gentile readers (e.g., the Levitical regulations of Numbers 1-8\*). Likewise diverging from the source sequence, he brings together items from widely separate Biblical contexts (e.g., he combines the Levitical cities of Numbers 35 with the Levitical tithe of Numbers 18 in 4.68). He also feels free to modify Scripture's wording regarding and way of presenting the Levites (see, e.g., the position he assigns the "priests and Levites" for the ceremony at Mts. Gerizim and Ebal in 4.305; 5.69 as compared with the indications concerning the "Levites" in Deut 27:12-13 and the "Levitical priests" in Jos 8:33). Occasionally too, he amplifies the Bible's data on the Levites (see, e.g., his inserted explanation for Moses' provisions on behalf of the Levites [4.68] and motivating of Nehemiah's appeal that the priests and Levites resettle in Jerusalem, i.e. his having prepared residences for them there at his own expense [11.181]). Where, finally, he had available two Biblical accounts (Samuel-Kings and Chronicles; 1 Esdras and Ezra [Nehemiah 8-10]) with somewhat different presentations of the Levites, he does not limit himself to a single source, but draws now from one, now from the other.

Lastly, I would like to return to the question touched on at the opening of this essay, i.e. can one- to what extent can one- speak of an "anti-Levitical" Tendenz operative in the Antiquities? A rather differentiated response to this question seems in order. On the one hand, one notes the sharply critical commentary on the Levites' efforts at self-promotion in 20.216-218.<sup>86</sup> In the same line, a clear downplaying of the Levites' role can be observed in Josephus' version of a series of religious reform initiatives, those of Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chr 17:7-8), Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra in particular, while in still other cases, the historian, in reworking a given Biblical presentation, evidences a concern to accentuate the involvement of the priests alongside that of the Levites (see,

e.g., his account of the overthrow of Athaliah, 9.144-155 and compare 2 Chronicles 23). On the other hand, the denunciation of 20.218 is the only instance of such explicit anti-Levite polemic in the whole of Ant. Conversely, his references to Levites are elsewhere generally neutral/ positive. Indeed on occasion, his Levites appear in a more favorable light than do their Biblical counterparts (see, e.g., the pair involved in the Gibeah outrage in 5.136-149// Judges 19; or the many Levites who volunteer to join Ezra in 11.134 whereas in 1 Esdras 8:42ff.// Ezra 8:15ff. Ezra initially finds no Levites among those ready to make the return). Nor does Josephus opt to make anything like full use of the available source material that might contribute to a negative image of the Levites (e.g., the idolatrous Levi of Judges 17-18 disappears in his presentation, while in 9.161 the statement of 2 Chr 24:4 about the Levites' failure to carry out King Joash's orders regarding the Temple collection is redirected against the high priest Jehoida himself).<sup>87</sup> Where source references to the Levites are curtailed by him, tendencies other than simple "anti-Levitism" are generally also operative (e.g., avoidance of extended list of names and of cultic details), just as such curtailment frequently extends to Biblical data on the priests as well.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, in a whole series of contexts, he actually introduces mention of the Levites as a distinct group where the Bible lacks such (see, e.g., 4.222 [the priests and Levites join in making a declaration of innocence regarding the unsolved murder; compare Deut 21:5]; 7.378 [the priests and Levites contribute to the Temple building fund; compare 1 Chr 29:6]; and 8.169 [the Queen of Sheba observes the care with which the priests and Levites perform the sacrifices; compare 1 Kgs 10:5]). In sum, what "anti-Levitical" Tendenz there may be in Josephus is a muted, sporadic one, especially when compared with his treatment of his true bêtes noires, the Zealots, for example.

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<sup>1</sup> The reference here is to the Levitical "gatekeepers" as opposed to the Levitical "singers"; see L.H. Feldman, Josephus X (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1971) 116-117, n. b.

<sup>2</sup>So, e.g., Seth Schwartz, Josephus and Judean Politics (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 18; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 89-90; U. Glessmer, "Levitiden in spät-nachexilischer Zeit. Darstellungeninteressen in den Chronikbüchern und bei Josephus," in M. Albani and T. Arndt (eds.), Gottes Ehre erzählen. Festschrift für Hans Seidel zum 65. Geburtstag (Leipzig: Thomas Verlag, 1994) 132-151, esp. pp. 139,148-151; L.H. Feldman, Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible (Hellenistic Culture and Society 17; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 62-63; C.T. Begg, Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy (BETL 145; Leuven: Peeters/ Leuven University Press, 2000) 11, n. 32; 342, n.15.

<sup>3</sup> For the occurrences of these terms in the Josephan corpus, see A. Schalit, Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus (Supplement I to A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus; Leiden: Brill, 1968) 83.

<sup>4</sup> By contrast, Josephus' treatment of other religious groupings (and the relationship between these) in Biblical history has received such systematic attention. See, e.g., C.T. Begg, "The Classical Prophets in Josephus' Antiquities," Louvain Studies 13 (1988) 341-357; J. Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus," JJS 25 (1974) 239-263; L.H.Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus," JTS 41 N.S. (1990) 386-422.

<sup>5</sup>The relevant terminology is limited to Ant. in the Josephan corpus.

<sup>6</sup>For a recent survey concerning the history of the diverse Biblical depictions of Israel's cultic officers, see J. Schaper, Priester und Leviten im achämenidischen Juda (FAT 31; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

<sup>7</sup>On this, see the summary remarks in Begg, Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy, 627-629; and Feldman, Interpretation, 37-38,72-73.

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<sup>8</sup>On this point, see the remarks of Feldman, Interpretation, 118-121. See further C.T.Begg, "Josephus' Retelling of Genesis 34," in A. Wénin (ed.), Studies in the Book of Genesis (BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2001) 599-604.

<sup>9</sup>Here, exceptionally, Josephus reproduces an extended list of Biblical names (i.e. those of the descendants of Jacob who accompany him to Egypt, Gen 46:8-27), not, however, without first making an elaborate apology for doing so (Ant. 2.176).

<sup>10</sup>Thackery, Josephus IV, 264, n. a points out that some have questioned the originality of the sentence in question given its interruption of the narrative flow and suggests that it could be "a postscript of the author." E. Nodet, Flavius Josèphe, Les Antiquités Juives Livres I à III, B. Traduction et notes (Paris: Cerf, 1990), p. 109, n. 1 affirms that the passage is well in place as an explanation of how it was that that Moses, despite his Egyptian name, was indeed a Hebrew. In any case, Josephus leaves aside the indication of Exod 2:1 (see 7:20) that Moses' mother was also a descendant of Levi.

<sup>11</sup>Just as he does with the "Blessing of Jacob" (Genesis 49, see above), Josephus reduces the "Blessing of Moses" (Deuteronomy 33) to a brief, generalized allusion in Ant. 4.320.

<sup>12</sup>In ascribing the care of the above cultic fixtures to the Levites as a whole, Josephus generalizes the Biblical account where it is the Gershonite Levites who are to carry the tabernacle and its coverings, while the Kohathites are entrusted with the vessels.

Significantly, in the above enumeration Josephus does not mention any role for the Levites with respect to the care of the Ark (compare Num 3:31; cf. 4:5,15); see below.

<sup>13</sup>Whereas in Numbers the material is presented as a series of divine injunctions to Moses about what he is to do regarding the Levites, Josephus here recasts it as a set of notices on initiatives undertaken by Moses.

<sup>14</sup>Nu 1:53 represents the Levites as encamping immediately beside the Tabernacle; in Numbers 3 (see vv. 23,29,35,38) the three Levitical groupings camp respectively on the west, south, and north sides of the Tabernacle, while the priests' encampment is on its

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east side. Josephus' generalizing formulation serves to accentuate the primacy of the priests in relation to the Tabernacle. See n. 16.

<sup>15</sup>In Num 3:38 the figure is slightly smaller, i.e. 22,000.

<sup>16</sup>Here, in contrast to 3.290, nothing is said about the priests' occupying the place closest to the Tabernacle; compare n. 14.

<sup>17</sup>On Josephus' treatment of Korah, see L.H. Feldman, Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible (JSJSup 58; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 91-109.

<sup>18</sup>With this modification Josephus harmonizes command (Moses directs that the names of the tribes are to be inscribed on the rods, 4.63) and its execution by Aaron (4.64). In Num 17:16-18 (Eng. 17:1-3), the twelve rods (17:17) seem clearly intended to represent the twelve tribes, so that one is surprised to hear that it is the name Aaron (rather than "Levi") which is inscribed on Levi's rod (17:18).

<sup>19</sup>Josephus goes beyond Numbers 35 in having Moses ordain that the cities in question are to be "goodly and fair." In specifying that the lands surrounding the cities are to extend for 2,000 cubits he reads in accordance with LXX Num 35:4 against the 1,000 cubits of MT.

<sup>20</sup>Numbers 18, which records the dues to be given the priests and Levites by the people, does not speak of the latter receiving a "tithe" from the former as such. Perhaps, however, Josephus' formulation has in view Num 18:26,28 which enjoins that a "tithe of the tithe" given the Levites by the Israelites is to be handed over to the priests; see below on 4.69.

<sup>21</sup>While in Numbers 18 the dues owed the priests are mentioned before those of the Levites, Josephus, notably, treats the Levites' dues in first place.

<sup>22</sup>The basis for this prescription is Joshua 21 (see vv. 4,13-20) where, in an account of the assignment of the Levitical cities to the various Levitical divisions, Aaron's descendants receive 13 given that they too are descendants of Levi. Moses' actual instructions on the

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subject of the Levitical cities in Numbers 35 do not mention the priests being awarded a set of these- as Josephus represents Moses prescribing here in 4.69.

<sup>23</sup>Compare, however, E. Nodet, Flavius Josèphe II. Les Antiquités Livres IV e V (Paris: Cerf, 1995) 40-40\* who maintains that the figure 1/50 for the priests' award as found in the MSS of Josephus should be corrected to 1/500 on the basis of Num 31:28.

<sup>24</sup>In 4.172, Josephus speaks of Moses' "building" ten (Transjordanian) cities as the first "among the number of the forty-eight." The reference here is to the 48 Levitical cities whose establishment Moses had decreed in 4.67. He will complement the notice of 4.172 with mention of the remaining 38 cities which Joshua awards the Levites west of the Jordan in Ant. 5.91.

<sup>25</sup>Thus, e.g., Glessmer, "Leviten," 139 notes that Josephus never employs the characteristic Deuteronomi(sti)c expression "Levitical priests" which reflects Deuteronomy's conception that all members of the tribe of Levi have a claim on the priestly office.

<sup>26</sup>According to the law of Deut 14:22ff. (see v. 27), the Israelites, in their use of the tithe for purposes of a sacrificial meal, are not to forget the Levite who lacks any "portion or inheritance" with them. Josephus has no parallel to this (and similar provisions elsewhere in Deuteronomy) since in his presentation the Levites have already been sufficiently provided for, i.e. via the (first) tithe that the Israelites are to give them (see 4.68 and n. 30).

<sup>27</sup>Compare the case of Josephus' rendering of Deuteronomy's "Law of the king" (Deut 17:14-20) in 4.223-224 where the reference to the "Levitical priests" (17:18) entrusted with the lawbook the king is to read becomes the injunction that the king is not to act "without the high priest" (4.224).

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<sup>28</sup>In introducing a reference specifically to the Levitical officers here, Josephus may have been inspired by (while also modifying) the reference to the "Levitical priests" functioning as judges of the "superior court" in Deut 17:8.

<sup>29</sup> In giving this speaking role to the two clerical orders, Josephus further modifies Deuteronomy's presentation where the Levitical priests simply "come forward" (21:5) and it is the elders of the city who alone make a declaration of innocence (21:6-7).

<sup>30</sup>Given that the "first" tithe (4.68) provides for the Levites, Josephus leaves aside the mentions of 14:29; 26:12,13 that this "third" tithe is to benefit also the Levite, just as he did the similar indication concerning the "second" tithe (see 14:27) in 4.205; see n.26.

<sup>31</sup>In 4.305-308 Josephus leaves aside Deuteronomy 27's other uses of "Levitical terminology," i.e. vv. 9-10 (the Levitical priests join Moses in addressing the people) and v. 14 (the Levites lead the people in the following curse ceremony).

<sup>32</sup>Josephus thus diverges from Deuteronomy's depiction of the Levitical priests (= the Levites) as the designated carriers of the ark (he has no equivalent either to the notice of Deut 10:8 which speaks, in the context of a retelling of the Golden Calf story [Deut 9:7b-10:11], of the Lord's setting aside the tribe of Levi to carry the ark). For him it is rather the priests alone who may carry the ark, as he makes clear in the notice he inserts into his rendition of P's directives (Exod 25:10-22) concerning the making of the ark in 3.133-138, i.e. the ark is not to be "drawn by a yoke of beasts, but was borne by the priests" (3.136). We shall note other instances of Josephus' re-formulating biblical references to the movements of the ark in light of this notice.

<sup>33</sup>The account in Joshua 3 makes no mention of the cultic vessels.

<sup>34</sup>On Josephus' account of the ceremony at Mts. Gerizim and Ebal (and the various placings of the narration of this happening in the different versions, i.e. MT, LXX, Qumran, and Josephus himself), see C.T. Begg, "The Cisjordanian Altar(s) and their Associated Rites according to Josephus," Biblische Zeitschrift 41 (1997) 192-211.

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<sup>35</sup>In Joshua 21 itself the initiative for the allotment of the Levitical cities comes not from Joshua (so Josephus), but from the tribal leaders who approach him and the priest Eleazar on the matter (see Jos 21:1-2).

<sup>36</sup>Given the Biblical specification that Hebron is awarded to the descendants of Aaron (Jos 21:11,13) it is noteworthy that Josephus has the town assigned rather to the (non-priestly) Levites. Here too, Josephus introduces a reference to the Levites where the Bible speaks of the priests.

<sup>37</sup>For more on Josephus' handling of the story of Judges 19-21, see C.T. Begg, "Josephus' Account of the Benjaminite War," Liber Annuus 48 (1998) 273-304; idem, "The Retellings of the Story of Judges 19 by Pseudo-Philo and Josephus: A Comparison," Estudios Bíblicos 58 (2000) 33-49; L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrayal (Antiquities 5.136-174) of the Benjaminite Affair of the Concubine and its Repercussions (Judges 19-21)," JQR 110 (2000) 255-293.

<sup>38</sup>The case here is similar to Josephus' omission of the embarrassing incident of the people's worship of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). In both instances, his omission/reduction of the wider episode results in the absence from Josephus' account of the Levite(s) who figure(s) in the given episode, whether positively (so Exod 32:25-29) or negatively (so Judges 17-18).

<sup>39</sup>This difference likely reflects the Chronicler's concern that Samuel, as an attendant of the ark (see 1 Sam 3:3) should have the requisite status as a Levite.

<sup>40</sup>With this "un-Biblical" qualification of a Levite, compare Josephus' positive retouching of the portrayals of the two Levites in his version of Judges 19-21.

<sup>41</sup>Josephus' adaptation of the Bible's presentation here reflects his characteristic insistence that priests alone- not Levites or lay Israelites- are the divinely designated carriers of the ark; see n. 32.

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<sup>42</sup>In Chronicles itself the figure is 4,600. It is noteworthy that Josephus, the priestly author, does not reproduce the following reference in 1 Chr 12:27 to the 3,700 men "of the house of the Aaron" under Jehoiada who approach David on this occasion.

<sup>43</sup>Compare his treatment of two earlier figures associated with the ark, i.e. Samuel (5.342) and Aminadab (6.18).

<sup>44</sup>The verse also mentions the presence of the priests Abiathar and Zadok on this occasion; see also 15:25 where David instructs Zadok to carry the ark back to Jerusalem and 15:26 where the two priests do carry it back.

<sup>45</sup>Josephus' placing of this "musical parenthesis" might have been inspired by the fact that in 2 Samuel citation of David's "Song" (chap. 22) and poetic "last words" (23:1-7) comes between the two parts of its complex concerning the heroes (21:15-22; 23:8-39).

<sup>46</sup>1 Chr 25:1 (cf. 25:4) designates the Levites' playing on their instruments as a "prophesying;" Josephus does not take over this terminological linkage of Levites and prophets. See n. 60.

<sup>47</sup>In exempting Levi from the census here, Joab acts in accordance with Mosaic procedure; see Ant. 3.258 (// Num 1:48).

<sup>48</sup>The period of the Levites' service is set between the ages of thirty and fifty according to 7.363b. Josephus obtains this figure by combining the data of 1 Chr 23:2 (thirty years as the start of the Levites' active service) and Num 4:3-4; 8:25 (age fifty as the end of it).

<sup>49</sup>In Chronicles it is only the musicians among the Levites who figure among the twenty-four courses of 1 Chr 25,9-31; Josephus generalizes.

<sup>50</sup>Compare 1 Chr 23:30 where David's command for the Levites (alone) is that they "shall stand every morning, thanking and praising the Lord, and likewise at evening."

<sup>51</sup>Note the absence of the priests as addressees of David's appeal here; compare 1 Chr 28:21 (David reminds Solomon that the "divisions of the priests and the Levites" will assist him in the work).

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<sup>52</sup>Compare 1 Chr 29:6 where only the (lay) heads of fathers' houses are mentioned as contributing.

<sup>53</sup>Josephus' introduction of this notice (and his lack of any critical comment concerning it) is of particular interest given its similarity with his statement about the "Levite singers securing permission to wear linen robes (τῶν δὲ Λευιτῶν . . . ἐπιτρέψαι λινῆν στολήν) on equal terms with the priests" in Ant. 20.216, a development he emphatically censures (see above). Perhaps the qualification "on equal terms with the priests" is what makes the Levites' linen robes in 20.216 objectionable whereas the (linen) robes worn by the two groups in Solomon's time were sufficiently different as to make those of the Levites unobjectionable (note too that the word for "linen" differs in the two texts).

<sup>54</sup>With this contribution Solomon recapitulates his father's giving the Levites their instruments in 7.305.

<sup>55</sup>His procedure here is noteworthy given that in what precedes he has designated the priests and Levites as the proper carriers of the ark (see 3.316) and of the Tabernacle and the vessels (see 3.258), respectively. It is only at the moment of the ark's being brought into the Holy of Holies that Josephus identifies the priests as its bearers, see 8.103 (= 1 Kgs 8:6// 2 Chr 5:7): "... when it was time to bring it into the adytum, the rest of the people went away, and only the priests carried it and set it down between the two cherubim."

<sup>56</sup>This formulation echoes those of Ant. 7.306 and 8.94 where, respectively, David and Solomon supply the Levites with their musical instruments; the latter text lacks a Biblical parallel as well.

<sup>57</sup>The Chronicler's wording in 11:14 ("because Jeroboam and his sons cast them [the Levites] out from serving as priests of the Lord") is peculiar given that he elsewhere regularly adopts P's distinction between priests and Levites. Perhaps his formulation in this instance is inspired by the language of 1 Kgs 12:31 (see above).

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<sup>58</sup>On Josephus' version of Abijah's address overall, see C.T. Begg, Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy (BETL 108; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1993) 99-106. Note that in this instance, it is not only the Levites but also the priests who disappear in Josephus' rendition. See n. 67.

<sup>59</sup>Compare Ant. 4.214 where, in his adaptation of Deut 16:18, Josephus cites Moses' directive that seven (judicial) rulers and "two subordinate officers of the tribe of Levi" be appointed.

<sup>60</sup>Josephus seems concerned to keep distinct the roles of "prophet" and "Levite"; recall that in his notice (7.305) on David's instructing the Levites on the use of musical instruments, he does not employ the formulation of 1 Chr 25:1 about the king's setting the Levites apart to "prophesy" with their instruments. See n.46.

<sup>61</sup>The MSS. RO of 9.12 add the qualification "Levitical" (Ληουίτων) to mention of the "singers" here.

<sup>62</sup>So MT; some LXX manuscripts read the more typical Chronistic phrase- avoided by Josephus- "Levitical priests."

<sup>63</sup>For more on this section- where Josephus notably re-arranges the source's sequence of events as well- see Begg, Later Monarchy, 340-365. In the Book of Kings there is only minimal mention of Hezekiah's cultic measures (2 Kgs 18:4-6), the focus being rather on the Assyrian threat (18:9-19:37// Ant. 10.1-23) which the Chronicler, conversely, markedly abridges (see 2 Chronicles 32).

<sup>64</sup>In Chronicles mention of these sacrifices and the Levites' musical accompaniment (29:20-36) follows immediately on the purification of the Temple, and preceding the account of Hezekiah's pan-Israelite Passover celebration (2 Chronicles 30). Josephus incorporates his parallel to 29:20-36 (9.268-270) into his story of the Passover observance (9.263b-267,271-272// 2 Chr 30:1-27).

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<sup>65</sup>This concluding editorial comment in 2 Chr 29:34 is often cited as evidence of the Chronicler's pro-Levite stance (and indeed of his being a Levite himself).

<sup>66</sup>Josephus himself says nothing of such a (paralegal) prolongation of the Passover festival.

<sup>67</sup>Here again, Josephus' abridgement serves to eliminate the role, not only of the Levites, but of the priests themselves; see n. 58.

<sup>68</sup>In 2 Chr 31:11-19 Hezekiah acts through (Levitical and priestly) intermediaries in building the storage facilities and distributing the collected dues. In dispensing with mention of such intermediaries, Josephus focusses attention on the figure of the king.

<sup>69</sup>For example, both Josephus (10.50-56) and the Chronicler (2 Chr 34:3-7), in contrast to Kings, mention cultic initiatives by Josiah prior to his 18th regnal year. On Josephus' account of Josiah overall, see Begg, Latter Monarchy, 457-497.

<sup>70</sup>Josephus' minimalizing of the Levites' role in Josiah's Passover (and conversely accentuating that of the priests) here in 10.70-72 is strongly reminiscent of his handling of their involvement in Hezekiah's Passover (and its extension), 2 Chr 30:15-27, in 9.271-272; see above.

<sup>71</sup>On the point, see Feldman, Intepretation, 35 who notes, e.g., Josephus' use (11.33-67) of the story of the three guardsmen of Esdras 3:1-5:6, unparalleled in the Book of Ezra. As to Josephus' utilization also of the canonical Ezra material, see his references to Ezra's Passover in 11.154-157 corresponding to the account of Neh 8:13-18 which lacks a counterpart in 1 Esdras.

<sup>72</sup>This modification reflects Josephus' recurrent, Chronistic-inspired emphasis on the Levites' role as liturgical musicians.

<sup>73</sup>In contrast to both sources, Josephus dispenses with the names of the family heads of the above groups, as he explicitly acknowledges doing at the start of the catalogue in 11.68 ("I have thought it better not to give a list of the names of the families lest I distract

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the minds of my readers from the connexion of events and make the narrative difficult to follow").

<sup>74</sup>It is not immediately clear which Mosaic "laws" Josephus has in mind here. Perhaps the intended reference is, in fact, to Ant. 7.364 where David appoints 4,000 of the Levites as "gatekeepers" (πυλωρούς); cf. 7.367c where the priests and the Levites whom David has just appointed to their duties are urged by the king to serve God "as Moses had enjoined them." Alternatively (or in addition) Josephus may simply have taken over the reference in Ezra 6:18// 1 Esdras 7:9 (see above) to the divisions of the priests and Levites standing for their service "in accordance with the book of Moses," (inadvertantly) applying this to another matter, i.e. the appointment of the gatekeepers by the priests and Levites, which lacks any clear Mosaic warrant.

<sup>75</sup>1 Esdras lacks a counterpart to this portion of the canonical Ezra material; see below.

<sup>76</sup>He does, however, introduce a reference to the "scribes" as a further category of beneficiaries of the exemption, this in place of the generalizing concluding mention of all others employed in the Temple service found in 1 Esdras 8:22// Ezra 7:24.

<sup>77</sup>In 1 Esdras 8:42 Ezra notes the absence from the group he has assembled not only of "Levites" (so Ezra 8:15b), but also "of the sons of the priests." Thereafter, in 1 Esdras 8:46 Ezra sends to Iddo to ask for "men to serve as priests of our God" (compare Ezra 8:18 ("ministers for the house of our God")). In both accounts (see 1 Esdras 8:49// Ezra 8:20) Ezra also secures 220 "temple servants" to accompany his party.

<sup>78</sup>Ezra 10:23-24 mentions by name six Levites, plus one singer, and three gatekeepers who dismiss their wives; 1 Esdras 9:23-25 names six Levites, two temple singers, and two gatekeepers.

<sup>79</sup>On this point and the possible reasons for it, see Feldman, Studies, 480-490.

<sup>80</sup>He has Nehemiah motivate his appeal to them with the non-Biblical affirmation that he "had prepared houses for them at his own expense."

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<sup>81</sup>This motivation for Nehemiah's directive- which lacks a Biblical parallel as such- echoes the one with which he prefaces Moses' command that the Levites be awarded their cities and the tithes in Ant. 4.67 ("from fear that through indigence and the quest of the necessities of life, they [the tribe of Levi] should neglect the temple...").

<sup>82</sup>In his earlier account of the Leontopolis temple found in B.J. 7.423-436, Josephus is more explicitly negative in his evaluation of Onias' initiative than he is in Ant., stating that this was motivated by the priest's resentment against the Jews of Jerusalem and his desire to cause multitudes to abandon the Temple there (7.431). Also in B.J. Josephus makes no mention of Levites for Onias' temple but only of its "priests" (see 7.430.434).

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<sup>84</sup>On the other hand, Josephus does not pick up on the Chronicler's recurrent linkage of the Levites and the prophets; see nn. 46,60.

<sup>85</sup>In this regard, Josephus also diverges from the Chronicler for whom the (non-priestly) Levites are the designated bearers of the ark. In fact, Josephus seems to go beyond even P in excluding any handling of the ark by the Levites, given that he does not take over P's directive that the (Kohathite) Levites are to carry the ark once it has been duly wrapped up by the priests (Num 3:31; 4:5,15; compare Ant. 3.136; cf. n. 32).

<sup>86</sup>The criticism here extends, however, beyond the Levites themselves to encompass the Sanhedrin and King Agrippa who go along with their wrongful demands.

<sup>87</sup>Another case in point is Josephus' non-utilization of Ezekiel's word (Ezek 44:9ff.) pronouncing a judgment of degradation on the idolatrous Levites, while conversely promising reward for the faithful "Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok."

<sup>88</sup>See, e.g., Josephus' drastic compression of Hezekiah's arrangements for the upkeep of both priests and Levites (2 Chronicles 31// Ant. 9.273b-274) or the description of Josiah's passover and the roles of the two clerical orders therein (2 Chronicles 35// 10.71-72).