SUMMARIES

A NEW LOOK AT THE LIST OF LEVITIC CITIES

by N. Na'aman

(pp. 237–252)

The historical elements attributed by scholars to the List of Levitic Cities are faced with several difficulties. The map of Levitic Cities is based entirely on the boundary-system of the twelve Israelite tribes, yet the tribal-system served no administrative or organizational framework within the Israelite kingdom. It is, rather, a composition of historiographic nature, though based on reality both regarding its outer outlines and parts of the internal borders. Furthermore many Israelite cult centres are missing from the List of Levitic Cities, including major sanctuaries like Dan, Bethel and Beer-sheba. Being inhabited by the priests functioning therein, their absence is very odd.

In the light of these difficulties, a new approach to the problem is required. It is suggested here that only the 13 Aaronite cities of Judah+Simeon+Benjamin were the historical kernel of the list. All other names were borrowed from the twelve tribal allotments (to which were added the six Cities of Refuge) according to the principle of four cities per tribe. Since the towns were taken from an authentic list of the time of the United Monarchy, they reflect the situation in that period. However, the complete list of Levitic Cities is entirely non-historical both in the early and late periods.

The article discusses in detail all the flaws and mistakes in the list arising out of borrowing from an old document.

The complete system of 48 cities, four in each tribe divided between four sections of Levites, was formulated at one and the same time. The 13 Aaronite cities situated within the confines of the kingdom of Judah, in the area covered by the three tribes of Judah+Simeon+Benjamin, served as a model accordng to which the complete system was fashioned.

The List of Levitic Cities was composed in the days of king Josiah of Judah and reflects the aspirations of that period to restore the boundaries of the kingdom to the scope of the Israelite nation in its golden age of the past.

'EVED HA-SHEM' (SERVANT OF THE LORD) IN EARLY HASIDISM

by Y. Hisdai

(pp. 253–292)

This article takes up the question of the social origins of the founders of Hasidism. Using the *derush* literature as a primary source, the author describes a group referred to in this literature as the 'servants of the Lord' (עבדי ה'). While Hasidim frequently applied this appellation to themselves, it appears that the term covered a broad range of scholars that resembled those early Hasidim. *Avdai ha-Shem* were scholars who devoted every moment to the worship of God, and were therefore frequently hard-pressed to make ends meet. They would gather in disciple-circles around their rabbi, were regarded as saints by the community, and some were even favorably disposed towards worldly involvment.

A first-hand and highly detailed description of this phenomenon can be found in the writings of R. Zevi Hirsch of Galena, who apparently was also one of the 'servants' and described both their lifestyle and beliefs. From this description there emerges no sign of a messianic crisis, but rather of expectations for an imminent redemption. The 'servants' pondered over the relationship between scholars and the masses, and apparently suffered from the distance and animosity that existed between the two camps. This hostility was aroused both by the poverty of the 'servants', and the latters' obligation — in their own eyes — to admonish the community. Some were well-known *maggidim,* others were common scholars; they adopted numerous innovative and distinctive practices, frequently based on Kabbalah, and defended them vehemently. While cognizant of their uniqueness and self-merit, the 'servants of the Lord' strived to widen their ranks.

The social ideas of the group stress the common and unifying factors within Jewish society, and the 'servants' evidently projected themselves as a responsible and guiding element within the community. Spiritually, some of their number expressed an optimism and positive approach to this world. They stressed the innovative, and man's power to withstand adversity, ever advancing in the service of God. Some of the descriptions and *derushim* of R. Zevi Hirsch of Galena resemble those of the first Hasidim.

All this suggests that the circle of *Avdai ha-Shem* served as a social and spiritual background for the development of Hasidism.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY OF *KOLEL HA-PERUSHIM* IN ERETZ ISRAEL

by A. Morgenstern

(pp. 293–310)

The first wave of *aliya* from the ranks of the disciples of the Gaon of Vilna reached Eretz Israel in 1808. An independent Kolel was founded by these immigrants in Safed, but at the end of 1815 a group of settlers, under the leadership of R. Menahem Mendel of Shklov, left Safed and formed a community of Perushim in Jerusalem. Thus, for a period of 22 years, until the destruction of the community of Perushim in Safed caused by the earthquake of January 1 1837, there existed concurrently two communities of Perushim. Both communities were organized within the framework of one unified Kolel. It must be stressed that one of the conditions laid down by the mother community of Safed to the settlers in Jerusalem in granting them permission to move, was that the latter refrain from setting up a separate Kolel in Jerusalem. This position was supported by the 'leaders of Vilna' (רוזני וילנא), the patrons of the Perushim in Eretz Israel.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem became a source of ideological discord and financial bickering. Nevertheless the two groups were careful to appear before their supporters in Russia as a united Kolel.

A legal document from the year 1823 — 'the regulations of the Halukkah' — defines the unity of the Kolel and the nature of its leadership. This document stipulates that the united Kolel will have a joint leadership of six appointees, three from each community. This body convened a number of times during the 1830s, dealing with central issues within the Kolel. The regulations also determined that common emissaries from Safed and Jerusalem would be dispatched to Jewish communities in Europe, primarily Russia. Furthermore, the leadership was granted the power to veto any expenditure that was not for the express maintenance of livelihood within the community.

The unchallenged leader of the Kolel, until his death in 1827, was Menahem Mendel of

Shklov,who resided in Jerusalem and was the foremost disciple of the Gaon in Eretz Israel. R. Israel of Shklov was appointed by the leaders of Vilna as official head of the Kolel only around the year 1830. Ideological differences,however, primarily regarding the rebuilding of Hurvat R. Judah ha-Hasid, prevented R. Israel from imposing any practical authority over the community of Perushim in Jerusalem. All these disputes notwithstanding, the Kolel nevertheless remained united.

Only after the destruction of Safed did the officials in Jerusalem require that all the survivors of their community settle in Jerusalem. Those who refused were excluded from the Halukkah.

The total division of Kolel ha-Perushim into separate Kolels, based on cities of origin, came about only in the 1850s. This weakness was a result of the despair that ensued when the Messiah failed to appear in 1840 as had been expected, and was accompanied by the conversion to Christianity of some of the Kolel members in 1843, a famine in 1846, and the deaths of the founders of the community, the disciples of the Gaon of Vilna.

THE FAILURE TO 'EDUCATE' THE JEWS OF PERSIA
IN THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT

by A. Cohen

(pp. 311–334)

Vigorous missionary activities aimed at Persian Jewry were undertaken by various Christian groups. From the first half of the 19th century, the most active of these groups was 'The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews'.

Certain conditions related to these activities might have enhanced the chances of successfully converting Persian Jews. Nevertheless, the Christian missionaries failed completely in their efforts.

This paper enumerates the reasons for this failure.

LINKS BETWEEN MESENE AND ERETZ ISRAEL

by A. Oppenheimer

(pp. 335–341)

Talmudic literature testifies to various close ties between Babylonia and Eretz Israel. Eretz Israel maintained contact with other diasporas as well, among them the regions contiguous to Babylonia which had been excluded from the "Babylonia of impeccable lineage." Outstanding among those regions was Mesene — a kingdom in the area of the Persian Gulf and the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates — due to its location on the crossroads of international trade.

The links between the Jews of Eretz Israel and Mesene were expressed not only by intermigration, commercial traveling, and the dispatch of the dead from Mesene to Eretz Israel for burial, but also in halakhic consultations. This latter type of contact was not necessarily directed through the intermediary of Babylonia, and in certain instances Mesene preferred the halakhic hegemony of Eretz Israel to that of it own close neighbor to the north.

A HEBREW SOURCE ON THE MONGOL INCURSION INTO ERETZ ISRAEL
AND JERUSALEM IN 1299

by I. Hazanı

(pp. 343–346)

The author discusses the contents of a source published some time ago — the writings of R. Nissim of Marseille — and points out the importance of this material as a source for describing the 'Tatar' incursion into Eretz Israel in the thirteenth century.

The source confirms information found in non-Hebrew texts establishing the occurrence of such an invasion in 1299. Furthermore, it reflects the temporary nature of this conquest, and conforms to the picture of a desolate land at the time, a description that emerges from other Jewish commentators as well. Of particular importance is the testimony regarding the 'Tatar' incursion into Jerusalem in the same year.