

Between *Měšûbâ* and *Môšâbâ*: On the Status of Diaspora Jews in the Period of Redemption according to the Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism*

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Abstract: The word *měšûbâ* is translated in several places in the Septuagint as the word κατοικία, as if it were written in the Hebrew source as *môšâbâ*. This modification was defined by scholars as an “etymological exegesis” or a “midrashic exegesis”. However, this definition does not explain the meaning, the purpose, and the motivation of this exegesis. My hypothesis is that by using the well known concept of κατοικία, the translator deliberately changed the meaning of the original Hebrew verse in order to legitimize the existence of the Diaspora not only in the contemporary Hellenistic world of his own lifetime, but also during the Restoration period, yet to come. Thus some of the very optimistic prophecies concerning the return to Zion, become in the Septuagint a prophecy regarding the continuity and well being of Diasporan communities in that future period. A comparison to Jewish Hellenistic authors will help us to define and describe this tendentious exegetical phenomenon.

My objective in the following lines is to uncover one of the considerations guiding the translators of the Septuagint in their selection of precise terms for their translation. I would assert that certain proposed translations, seemingly incompatible or in dissonance with the Hebrew version, derive not merely from a different reading of the Hebrew biblical text; rather they are grounded in a coherent worldview pertaining to the translated material. It is my opinion that readers would certainly have understood the Greek text in the context of its revised ideological and theological meaning and it is plausible that on the

* This is an enlarged version of my paper: “Between *Měšûbâ* and *Môšâbâ*: On the Status of Diaspora Jews in the Period of Redemption according to the LXX Hosea and Flavius Josephus,” given at the IOSCS conference held at Helsinki, July 2010. I thank Prof. Alexander Rofé and Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz who read earlier drafts of this paper. All biblical English translations are the New JPS, unless noted otherwise. All LXX English translations are the NETS, unless noted otherwise.

translation level too, ideology rather than lexicography serves as the focus of the discussion and the agent of change.

I

The biblical word *mēšûbâ* appears several times in the Masoretic Text (MT) of the Bible; in Jeremiah and Hosea exclusively, aside from one occurrence in Proverbs 1:32. *Mēšûbâ*, in the context of all its occurrences, connotes betrayal, sin and apostasy; the outcome of turning back from God, in other words, removal from Him and abandoning His ways.¹ So, for example, the analogy in Jeremiah 3:6–8 between “rebel Israel (*mēšûbâ* Israel)” and “her sister, faithless Judah” should be understood, as well as the parallel between “their transgressions” and “their rebellious acts (*mēšûbôtēyhem*)” (Jer 5:6). The root ŠWB appears too in its more typical sense—return to the ways of God, and God abandoning his wrath—in many occurrences of the word as used by prophets. Thus, a play on inversely related words is created: *mēšûbâ* and *šōbābîm* (rebellious) juxtaposed against the call to “return” to God: **שובה משובה ישראל** (“Turn back, O rebel Israel”; Jer 3:12), **שובו בנים שובבים ארפה משובתיכם** (“Turn back, O rebellious children, I will heal your afflictions”; Jer 3:22), **שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך ... ושובו אל ה' ... ארפא משובתם ... כי שב אפי ממנו** (“Return, O Israel to the Lord your God ... and return to the Lord.... I will heal their affliction ... for My anger has turned away from them”; Hos 14:2–5).

Though this is the straightforward, and most probable meaning of all the word's occurrences, the Septuagint is inconsistent in its proffered translation. *Mēšûbâ* is translated in the Septuagint in the following ways: κατοικία; ἀποστροφή; σύντριμμα;² ἁμαρτία; ἀποστασία (and ἀνομία in Ezek 37:23 should be added too). In most cases, the word implies sin and betrayal³ with the glaring and frequent exception of the word κατοικία, which appears in five of the word's occurrences throughout the Bible (Jer 3:6, 8, 12 and Hos 11:7, 14:5).

1. See, for example, BDB s.v. **שוב**; **משובה**; HALOT s.v. **משובה**.

2. However, the rendering σύντριμμα (Jer 3:22) can reflect the Hebrew **משבריים** instead of MT **משובתיכם**.

3. According to Johan Lust et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 76, and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 85 (s.v. ἀποστρέφω II.1.e), the word ἀποστροφή means “faithlessness” (Lust) or leaving “the current (right) path or course of action” (Muraoka), based on Jer. 5:6 and several other instances. This meaning is indeed corroborated by 3 Mac 2:10. However LSJ does not give this nuance probably because it stems, as in Hebrew, from the meaning “turning back”, which has both positive and negative connotations.

What caused the modification in these five occurrences? The general meaning of the word κατοικία is “dwelling place”. In several appearances, the word indicates a colony, at times pertaining to a military colony.⁴ In the Septuagint too, the word κατοικία is generally used to translate the Hebrew word *môšāb* or *môšābâ* (settlement).⁵ It is therefore possible that the Greek translator misread *měšúbâ* as *môšābâ* and posited a fitting Greek equivalent of the word.

Indeed, there is no doubt that these two words gave rise to misunderstandings and that a degree of exchangeability characterized their use, in the Hebrew Bible too. Ezekiel 37:23 reads: “nor shall they ever again defile themselves by their fetishes and their abhorrent things, and by their other transgressions. I will save them in all their settlements (מושבתיהם) where they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people” (ולא יטמאו עוד בגלוליהם ובשקוציהם ובכל פשעיהם, והושעתי אתם מכל) (מושבתיהם אשר חטאו בהם וטהרתי אותם והיו לי לעם). It is apparent that the word *môšēbôtēyhem* is irrelevant to the context of this verse and that perhaps reading the word *měšúbôtēyhem* is preferable, as reflected in the Septuagint (ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν).⁶ The obvious source of this problem is the close affinity between the forms and derivatives of the verb ŠWB (שו"ב) and those of the verb YŠB (יש"ב) and the lack of distinction between the various forms—such as *měšúbâ/môšābâ* in a non-vocalized text.⁷ In several studies Emmanuel Tov addresses κατοικία, as a Greek rendering of the word *měšúbâ*.⁸ He postulates that “the Greek translation (to Jer 3:6,8,12 κατοικία) is based

4. See: Michel Casevitz, *Le Vocabulaire de la colonization en grec ancien: Étude lexicologique: les familles de κτίζω et de οἰκέω-οἰκίζω* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1985), 164.

5. See E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 755 s.v.

6. Yet it is also possible that MT seeks to incorporate a double meaning: the ingathering of exiles (mentioned above in v. 21) and disengagement from the sins referred to in v. 23, within this word. Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 178, alludes to this phenomenon of multiple meanings, in his reference to Isac L. Seeligmann, “Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese,” in: idem, *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (ed. E. Blum; FAT 41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 10–11.

7. This was of course the nature of the Hebrew text of Hosea held by the translator; see: Jan Joosten, “Exegesis in the Septuagint Version of Hosea,” in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, (Oudtestamentische Studiën 40; ed. Johannes C. De Moore; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 64.

8. See, for instance, Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 171–78 esp. 177–178; idem, “Bilateral Exegesis of Hebrew Roots in the Septuagint?” *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* 5–6 (2007), 304 [Hebrew].

on YŠB ...and seems inappropriate in this context". He suggests viewing this as "midrashic" exegesis or "etymological" exegesis that identifies the words according to two of the root letters.⁹ The aforementioned affinity between the forms in Hebrew is also at the heart of interpretations suggested by other scholars who call attention to many other instances of exchanges between the verbs ŠWB(שׁו"ב) and YŠB(שׁ"ב) in the Septuagint.¹⁰

However, the varied possibilities for reading that produce the option for multiple ways of translation, as well as defining the translator's approach as "etymological" or "midrashic" exegesis, merely provide a label for the manner in which the translator treated the text before him while leaving the question of *why* he preferred one interpretation over another unanswered. Similarly, the affinity between the verbs only serves to elucidate the linguistic foundation that enabled the translator to operate the way he did, without explaining his seemingly inappropriate translation preference in the context of this specific prophecy. As stated above, in many instances *měšúbâ* was properly translated as sin (for example: Jer 2:19, 5:6, 8:5, 14:7 and Ezek 37:23 as cited above). Since the translator was indeed familiar with the meaning of *měšúbâ*, and the context clearly indicates a preference for this rendering, why did he nonetheless prefer the meaning *môšābâ* (colony) and use κατοικία in these five places?

It seems that with regard to at least some of these examples, the translation preference was influenced by the translator's exegetical tendency.¹¹ κατοικία is documented in relation to the Jewish world too not only in the general sense of dwelling place but also in the specific sense of a colony of Jews or in the sense of Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel. Strabo, quoted by Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 14.117), uses the word κατοικία when discussing a site of Jewish settlement in Egypt.¹² A second-century C.E. inscription from Hierapolis in Phrygia refers to a κατοικία of Jewish settlers;¹³ probably the Jewish

9. See also: David Weissert, "Alexandrian Analogical Word-Analysis and Septuagint Translations Techniques," *Textus* 8 (1973), 31–44

10. See: Eberhard Bons, Jan Joosten, and Stephan Kessler, *Les Douze Prophètes: Osée*, (La Bible d'Alexandrie 23.1; Paris: Cerf, 2002), 164.

11. On this important question, see: Joosten, "Exegesis in the Septuagint Version of Hosea," 62–85, esp. 82–85;

12. On this passage, see: Bezalel Bar-Kochva, "The Settlement of the Oniads in Egypt—Philological Notes," *Zion* 64 (1999), 221–229, esp. 226, n. 24 (in Hebrew); Daniel R. Schwartz, "Once Again, Strabo on the Land of Onias (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.117): Text or Semantics?," *Zion* 64 (1999), 230–234, esp. 231–233 (in Hebrew). Yet the two concur that the meaning of the word could be colony.

13. *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, II: Kleinasien (TSAJ 99; ed. Walter Ameling; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 432–435, no. 205.

organization, or community in Hierapolis. It seems, therefore, that the word κατοικία is used not only in the general context but in the Jewish context too, to describe Jewish settlement in various locations throughout the world in the sense of a colony. It is also feasible that the nuance of community derives from here, as evident in LSJ's definition, a "body of residents in a foreign city",¹⁴ based on this inscription.

In view of this it is reasonable to interpret the occurrence of the word in Hosea 14:5 in a similar fashion, as pertaining to Jewish settlement in the Diaspora, mainly and in all probability, to the Egyptian Diaspora. The words ἰάσομαι τὰς κατοικίας αὐτῶν (LXX Hos 14:5) signify that in the future, when Israel returns to its God (Hos 14:2–3), its colonies—according to our proposal, the Jewish settlement in the Diaspora, will be healed. In other words, the Diasporan Jewish communities will not only continue to exist during the age of redemption—they will even be healed. No longer will they be considered a manifestation of sickness, as punishment for sin, but rather as healthy, legitimate communities.¹⁵

Support for the premise that the translator of Hosea deliberately altered the meaning of the verse is seemingly found in LXX Deut 30:3. The Hebrew text reads as follows: "Then the Lord your God, will restore (ושב) your fortunes (את שבותך) and take you back in love (ורחמך)" while in the LXX, the verse appears as: καὶ ἰάσεται κύριος τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου καὶ ἐλεήσει σε (and the Lord will heal your sins and have mercy on you). These words mirror the Hebrew sentence ורפא ה' את משובותיך (and God will rectify your waywardness), a sentence clearly reminiscent of Hos 14:5 and Jer 3:22. The translator of Deuteronomy was apparently influenced by these verses when translating Deut 30:3, yet in contrast with LXX Hos 14:5, proposed sin as the meaning of *měšúbâ*, using the word ἁμαρτία. It is therefore probable that translating the word *měšúbâ* in Hosea as sin was an option recognized by the translator of Hosea, since he was undoubtedly familiar with the Septuagint of Deuteronomy. Therefore, his choice of a different rendering appears intentional and is replete with significance.¹⁶

It is a well known fact that the Septuagint translates the biblical root GLH, a word charged with negative overtones, using the Greek ἀποικία and

14. LSJ, p. 928 s.v. κατοικία 3.

15. Jer 3:22 (ארפה משובתיכם) cannot assist us in understanding the rendering of Hos 14:5, since LXX Jer translates the word as συντριμματα, reflecting the Hebrew משבריכם. Similarly the word משבריהם appears to be the Hebrew vorlage of the Vulgate in Hos 14:5; see Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, "Textual Gleanings from the Vulgate to Hosea," *JQR* 65 (1974–5), 95–96.

16. I am grateful to Prof. Alexander Rofé for calling my attention to LXX Deut 30:3.

ἀποικέσια; words whose original meaning, “settlement far from home”, is neutral and generally used to denote a colony. In this manner an equivalent is drawn between the Jewish and Greek pasts, negating the pejorative aspect of the word *gôlâ* (גולה).¹⁷ The Jewish people’s identity vis-à-vis its environment is refashioned in this way as is, more importantly, its perception of its situation in the Diaspora, outside of its homeland, as one of migration rather than Divine retribution. The novelty of this verse in Hosea is in its reference not to the past but to the future. The biblical conception—that of Deuteronomy and the Prophets alike—is that Israel will return to its homeland from the Diaspora as a central component of the redemption. This was a fundamental hope and expectation of Second Temple Jews in the motherland too.¹⁸ This exegetical translation of Hosea’s prophetic promise diverges therefore from customary biblical content with the innovation that even in the long-sought age of redemption, Israel will continue to dwell outside of its homeland and this need not be considered a punishment or curse. In accordance with this prophecy, Diasporan Jews might consider their places of residence not transitory but permanent, obviating the aspiration to relocate to the Promised Land. Moreover, the premise that the translator randomly, unintentionally generated this type of significant change is far-fetched. Seemingly then, what we have before us is an intentional modification undertaken by the Greek translator, deriving from his Diasporan point of view for the purpose of justifying the continued existence of the Diaspora even into the age of redemption.¹⁹

17. Joseph Méléze Modrzejewski, “How to be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?,” in *Diasporas in Antiquity* (ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs; Brown Judaic Studies 288; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 67–70; Isaiah. M. Gafni, *Land Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructions in Late Antiquity* (JSPS 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 28–29. It is surprising that Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 74, emphasizes the aspect of coercion making no reference whatsoever to the meaning of “colony”, that appears as the principle meaning in LSJ, s.v.

18. See e.g. Sir 36:10; 2 Macc 1:27; 2:18; Pss. Sol. 8:28. On this hope as a feature of Palestinian rather than Diaspora Jewish identity see: Esther G. Chazon, “‘Gather the Dispersed of Judah:’ Seeking a Return to the Land as a Factor in Jewish Identity of Late Antiquity,” in *Heavenly Tables: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (JSJS 119; eds. Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 159–175.

19. This point, the transience of the Diaspora communities due to their anticipated return to the Land of Israel, appears to Méléze to be the defining distinction between the Greek colonies and the Jewish Diaspora. See: Méléze Modrzejewski, “How to Be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt,” 70.

II

Were this the sole possible interpretation of the word, the discussion hitherto would suffice. Even had this conception not been confirmed by other citations from the Septuagint to Hosea, as we shall see, the fact is that it does appear here and the translator, constrained by the original text before him, was assumedly not at liberty to introduce changes wherever he saw fit, except where the original permitted him to deviate. However, since the word *κατοικία* can also be construed as relating to the Jewish people's settlements *within their homeland*—that were destroyed as retribution for their sins—in the manner in which the word is used in many places throughout the Septuagint,²⁰ further evidence must be submitted to support the view that this was indeed the approach of the Greek translator of Hosea. Additional parallels to this conception from the Hellenistic Jewish world might further bolster the proposed interpretation.

One more methodological pause to remark upon the character of the Septuagint evidence adduced herein is called for. It must be stressed that these are hints that can also be interpreted in alternate ways. Yet one would hardly anticipate provocative modifications and exceptionally anomalous adaptations in a translation that, as a rule, seeks to remain faithful to the original text. Nor would one expect consistency regarding the occurrence of hints that stray from common and accepted theological conceptions; certainly not a coherent subversive theological doctrine. Therefore, it is the forthcoming subtle hints that might reveal the way in which the translation was understood by its readers and even the translator's ideological tendencies. These subtle intimations around which our discussion revolves, scattered here and there, reveal, as an aggregate, the worldview encoded within the translated text.

We commence, therefore, with LXX Hosea. Several indications suggest that the translator of Hosea sought to downplay the importance of the Land of Israel as the nation's special place. Takamitsu Muraoka points to Hos 2:20 "I will also banish... war from the land", in which "the land" according to the straightforward interpretation of the verse signifies the Land of Israel. The LXX, however, employs the translation ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς that obfuscates the specific territorial significance, presenting it in a more general sense, seemingly referring to the entire universe.²¹ This being the case, a universal blessing

20. E.g.: Exod 35:3; Lev 3:17; and many other verses.

21. Takamitsu Muraoka, "Notes on the Septuagint Version of Hosea," in *Studies in the Bible and the Hebrew Language offered to M. Wallenstein on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday*, (eds. Ch. Rabin et al.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1979), 186 [Hebrew]. He points to the fact that the first half of the verse contains the parallel οὐρανός-γῆ. Therefore using

inheres though not necessarily in negation of hope for the ingathering of the exiles. The second example that Muraoka brings of this trend is more noteworthy.²² The verse “I will sow her in the land as My own” (Hos 2:25: זרעתיה וזרעתי בארץ) (לִי בארץ) is translated in the LXX as καὶ σπερῶ αὐτήν ἐμαυτῷ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. The meaning of the verb σπείρω in the LXX is generally “to sow” though it is sometimes taken to mean, “to scatter” and in that sense appears in several places in the LXX.²³ Muraoka remarks that the juxtaposition of “to sow” (זרע) and in “the land” or “the field” is translated in the LXX by use of the aforementioned verb and the particle ἐν followed by the dative.²⁴ Conversely, in this particular case, though the original features the combination of “to sow” (זרע) and “the land”, the object of the verb appears in the genitive case with the particle ἐπί. In Muraoka’s view, this combination implies sowing the land in the agricultural sense perhaps as the Greek Church fathers interpret “I will make her a worker of the land”. However, the genitive following ἐπί means “upon” and in one occurrence is used to depict the dispersal of one group’s settlement over a certain area (Gen 47:27). This preposition is more clearly understood if we assume the meaning of the verb here not as “to sow” but as “to scatter”. Apparently, then, the meaning of the expression here is to scatter upon the earth, in other words—to disperse upon the earth.²⁵ In a straightforward sense, this verse constitutes the climax and finale of a prophecy of consolation to follow the Divine punishment that would be visited upon the people of Israel. This prophecy includes the restoration of God’s mercy upon His people and the people’s return to their God. The dispersion of Israel upon the earth, meaning throughout the world, included in this verse according to the Greek translation is therefore part of the assured propitious future destiny. Obviously, this adaptation of that destiny emanates from the Diasporan world seeking legitimization to dwell unremittingly in the Diaspora, redemption notwithstanding.²⁶

the same word (γῆ) in the second part of the verse would convey the same general sense. He also refers to Theophylactus (PG, 126, p. 617) who suggests the two options of exegesis: Judah or the whole universe.

22. Muraoka, “Notes on the Septuagint Version of Hosea,” 187.

23. Exod 32:20; Num 17:2; Prov 11:24.

24. In many other cases, an accusative comes after the verb that describes the site of the sowing or the object of the sowing.

25. On this meaning of the Greek translation see: Méléze Modrzejewski, “How to be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?” 71.

26. A homily composed on this verse by Rabbi Eleazar, a native of Babylonia and a third generation Palestinian Amora (second half of the third century C.E.), features a similar exegetical conception. According to Rabbi Eleazar (b. *Pesah*. 87a.) “The Holy One, blessed be He, did not exile Israel among the nations save in order that proselytes might

An examination of a number of verses in the LXX text of Hosea gives rise to an exegetical possibility supporting the view put forth above. In several instances of references to Egypt in the MT of Hosea as the site of future punishment, the translator seemingly obfuscates the futuristic facet of the subject, preferring instead to view it as a reference to the past sojourn in Egypt. Thus a verse dealing with God's rejection of the children of Israel and the determination "they shall return to Egypt", (8:13: **יָשׁוּבוּ** **הַמָּזָה מִצְרַיִם**)²⁷ is translated αὐτοὶ εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀπέστρεψαν, using the aorist—in other words, they returned to Egypt. Contrastingly, the continuation of the verse in the LXX states that in the future they will eat unclean things among the Assyrians (καὶ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ἀκάθαρτα φάγονται) and this sentence appears to be an assured punishment for their sins (καὶ ἐκδικήσει τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν).²⁸ In two additional verses, the translator employs the aorist, replacing the futuristic aspect inherent in the Hebrew version. While the first two segments of the verse "They shall not be able to remain in the land of the Lord, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt and shall eat unclean food in Assyria" (9:3) are rendered in the past: οὐ κατώκησαν ἐν τῇ γῆ τοῦ κυρίου, κατώκησεν Ἐφραϊμ εἰς Αἴγυπτον, the con-

join them, for it is said: 'And I will sow her unto Me in the land' (Hos 2:25); surely a man sows a se'ah in order to harvest many kor." In other words, Rabbi Eleazar also understands the verse as referring to the dispersal of Israel and perceives this as a blessing. Yet even he does not regard this as a destiny appropriate to the age of redemption, emphasizing instead the positive aspects inherent in the exile of the current period. *Tg. Neb.*, on the other hand, offers the following rendition: **ואקימנכון קדמי בארע ביה שכינתי** (Alexander Sperber [ed.], *The Bible in Aramaic, III: The Later Prophets according to Targum Jonathan*, [Leiden: Brill, 1962], 390) "and I will establish you before me in the land of the house of my Shekinah" (Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, [The Aramaic Bible 14; Glazier: Wilmington, 1989], 34). Thus, it views it as a prophecy pertaining to the ingathering of the exiles to the dwelling place of the Shekinah in the Land of Israel. A similar divergence between the two translations manifests in relation to Hos 2:2 (**ועלו מן הארץ**) (כי גדול יום זרעאל ויעלו מן הארץ). *Tg. Neb.* renders: **ויסקון מארע גלותהון ארי רב יום כנושהון** (Sperber, 387) "and they shall come up from the land of their exile, for great is the day of their assembling" (Cathcart and Gordon, 31), where the Septuagint translates the verse literally with no mention of the ingathering of the exiles and no emphasis on the importance of the Land of Israel: καὶ ἀναβήσονται ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Ἰεζραήλ.

27. JPS translation.

28. See: Dominique Barthélemy *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* 3, (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/3; Fribourg and Göttingen: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse and Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), ccxxiv; Stephen Pisano, "Egypt' in the Septuagint Text of Hosea," in *Tradition of the Text: Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of his 70th Birthday* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 109; ed. Gerard J. Norton and Stephen Pisano; Fribourg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz and Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 301–308; Bons, Joosten and Kessler, *Les Douze Prophètes: Osée*, 125–6.

cluding segment is translated in the future tense, similar to the conclusion of 8:13: *καὶ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ἀκάθαρτα φάγονται*. In the Greek rendering of 11:5, “He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but Assyria is his king, because they refused to repent”²⁹ (*לֹא יָשׁוּב אֶל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֲשׁוּר הוּא מַלְכוֹ כִּי מֵאֲנֹן* (לשוב)), the negation disappears,³⁰ and the following translation is proposed: *κατώκησεν Ἐφραϊμ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Ἀσσοῦρ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἐπιστρέψαι*. According to this version, while it is clear that Ephraim had sojourned in Egypt in the past, the fact that Assyria itself is his king is not noted definitively in the past and it can be viewed as a depiction of current or incipient punishment deriving from past sins and the refusal to return to God.

These observations demonstrate that the Greek translator of Hosea strove to refrain from depicting the settlement in Egypt as prophetically foretold retribution. The settlement occurred in the past; its circumstances are not sufficiently elucidated. According to 9:3 it might be viewed as a punishment inflicted upon the people in the past, since, after all, the sentence follows a description of the negation of dwelling in the Lord’s land. On the other hand, neither do the remaining verses elaborate the circumstances of the sojourn in Egypt and there is no way of knowing if the period under discussion is that of the enslavement in Egypt, the formative period of Jewish history as Pisano contends, or some other historical period.³¹ Yet even if we were to recognize this sojourn in Egypt as punitive, it is associated with the past and if we add to it the healing of the colonies predicted by 14:5 then it might be considered one of the features of redemption: the colonies—or perhaps the Egyptian colonies specifically—will be healed, i.e. no longer regarded as punishment.

Other verses in the LXX of Hosea that feasibly might have adopted an anti-Diasporan stance in view of the Hebrew version do not draw a lucid portrait. An additional occurrence of *κατοικία* in the LXX of Hosea used to translate the word *mēšûbâ* appears in the verse *וְעַמִּי תְלוּאִים לְמִשׁוּבָתִי* (11:7). The meaning of this Hebrew verse is obscure and neither does the LXX suggest an acceptably coherent rendering. The Greek translation reads as follows:

29. My translation, depends on both the JPS and the New JPS.

30. The Greek translation effectively moved the word “no” (*לֹא*) to the end of the previous verse and replaced it with the word “him” (*לוֹ*).

31. Barthélemy suggests viewing these changes as an outcome of an exegetical tendency that views reliance on Egypt as a sin, as demonstrated by Hos 7:11,16; 12:2. He also views 8:13, presented in the LXX in the aorist, as a component of the sins’ description. There is, however, no difficulty in the portrayal of Egypt by the prophet as a site of future punishment: if indeed Israel sought an alliance with Egypt, there the punishment would transpire. The Septuagint’s attempt to relocate Egypt to the past therefore begs a different explanation and is not sufficiently elucidated in Barthélemy’s thesis.

καὶ ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ ἐπικρεμάμενος ἐκ τῆς κατοικίας αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὰ τίμια αὐτοῦ θυμωθήσεται, καὶ οὐ μὴ ὑψώσῃ αὐτόν (and his people are hanging from his dwelling place, and God will be angered at his precious things and will not lift him up). The location of the nation's dwelling place (κατοικία) is unclear from the above—is it in the cities mentioned in verse 6 or in Egypt and Assyria referred to in verse 5? What is the nature of the damage to God's honor? And what is the significance of the declaration “will not lift him up”? The translation of the final verse of chapter 11 (11:11) foreseeing that “They shall flutter from Egypt like sparrows, from the land of Assyria like doves and I will settle them in their homes” is also insufficiently clear. The LXX renders: καὶ ἐκστήσονται ὡς ὄρνεον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου καὶ ὡς περιστερὰ ἐκ γῆς Ἀσσυρίων καὶ ἀποκαταστήσω αὐτοὺς εἰς τοὺς οἴκους αὐτῶν.³² Are “their homes” outside of Egypt and Assyria or will there be calm after the terror that will transpire in the place of their sojourn? In contrast with the LXX, the Aramaic translation of this verse presents a characteristically clear interpretation: “Like a bird which comes openly so shall come those who were exiled to the land of Egypt. And like a dove, which returns to its dovecot, so shall they return who were removed to the land of Assyria. And I will bring them back in peace to their houses and my Memra will be their support.”³³ Cyril of Alexandria understood this verse in relation to the return from exile and he interprets it as referring to the period of the Restoration.³⁴ The LXX, which posits a closer rendering, offers no definitive resolution, leaving open the question of ulterior motivation transcending the translation method.³⁵ It is plausible that the reluctance to portray Egypt as the site of punishment is demonstrated in an additional verse referring to Egypt in the LXX of Hosea. The verse *כִּי הִנֵּה הִלְכוּ מִשָּׂד מִצְרַיִם תִּקְבְּצֵם מִן תְּקַבְּרֵם מִחֲמַד לְכַסְפָּם קִימוֹשׁ יִרְשֵׁם חוּה בְּאֵהֲלֵיהֶם* (9:6 “Behold, they have gone from destruction, [with] the silver they treasure. Egypt shall hold them fast; Moph shall receive them in burial. Weeds are their heirs; prickly shrubs shall occupy their [old] homes”) is translated by the LXX as follows: διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ πορεύονται ἐκ ταλαιπωρίας Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἐκδέξεται αὐτοὺς Μέμφις, καὶ θάψει αὐτοὺς Μαχμας (therefore, behold, they go from the wretchedness of Egypt, and Memphis will receive them, and Machmas will bury them...). The reference to Machmas, located in the Benjamin region and not in Egypt is perplexing. Are we meant to understand that

32. “And they shall be amazed like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of the Assyrians, and I will restore them to their homes.”

33. Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 55.

34. See: Bons, Joosten and Kessler, *Les Douze Prophètes: Osée*, 147

35. Note that Aramaic translation like LXX reflects the Hebrew *והשבותים* instead of MT: *והושבותים*.

these people, departing due to the suffering of Egypt, will be accepted in Egyptian Memphis yet be buried in Machmas in the Benjamin region? Might an Egyptian city serve as a refuge for these people while in the Land of Israel they are condemned to die?³⁶ According to this prophecy, Egyptian Memphis serves as a safe haven for the children of Ephraim; should this be considered retribution? This exegetical direction is improbable according to the LXX though the Aramaic translation, in this instance too, views Egypt specifically as the site of punishment stating: “For behold they shall go into exile on account of plunderers. They shall be gathered into Egypt, they shall be brought near to Memphis.”³⁷

These ambiguous hints need not distract us. Three essential assertions lay the groundwork for the premise that according to LXX Hosea, the Jewish communities of the Hellenistic Egyptian Diaspora will persist into the age of redemption: use of the word κατοικία in Hosea 14:5, the rendering of Hosea 2:25, and the transposition of the negative sojourn in Egypt to the past. Aside from the clarity of this meaning of LXX Hosea to readers of these texts, these assertions also demonstrate the deliberate nature of the translator’s work. It seems that the conception expressed herein is that of the conversion of the status of the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt from punishment to blessing. According to the LXX of Hosea, Israel’s sojourn in the Assyrian exile is perceived as retribution, as the past sojourn in Egypt (8:13) is also pejoratively viewed. In other words, the departure from the Land of Israel was primordially punitive in nature. The vision that foresees the healing of the colonies in the future and the dispersal judged a blessing thus transforms the curse into a blessing; creating prophetic justification for the continued existence of the Diaspora during the Hasmonean-Hellenistic period—an age during which the inhabitants of the Land of Israel viewed their situation, to a certain extent, as fulfillment of the prophetic words of deliverance.³⁸

III

Analogous conceptions in Hellenistic Jewish literature stand to reinforce this interpretation of the LXX of Hosea and assist in pinpointing its historical

36. However, the word Μαχμας (Machmas) can be simply a mistake or a misreading. It seems improbable that the LXX speaks about an Egyptian Machmas, as Hieronymus suggested; see also Bons, Joosten and Kessler, *Les Douze Prophètes: Osée*, 128.

37. Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 48. Several manuscripts record this as יתקברון (they shall be buried) instead of יתקרבו (see *ibid.* n. 15; Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 400). In any case, this translation views Egypt as the site of exile.

38. See for example: 1 Macc 14:4–15 (glorification of Simon’s days); Flavius Josephus, *Ant.* 13.299 (on John Hyrcanus qualities).

location. The implicit and explicit struggle with the question of the continuity of the Diaspora vis-à-vis the vision of the ingathering of the exiles appears in additional sources in Jewish Hellenistic literature.

First, I would refer to another unexpected source in the LXX that clearly manifests a similar tendency. The concluding verses of Ezekiel 39 explicitly describe the ingathering of the exiles. Among other things, Ezek 39:28 states: “They shall know that I the Lord am their God when, having exiled them among the nations, I gather them back into their land, and leave none of them behind.” The first half of the verse is translated with the modification of one word while the second half is completely absent from the LXX: καὶ γνώσονται ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ἐπιφανῆναί με αὐτοῖς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (“and they shall know that I am the Lord, their God, when I appear to them among the nations”). The first significant discrepancy is the replacement of *bēhaglōtī* “having exiled”, with the verb ἐπιφανῆναί, seemingly reading the Hebrew as *bēhigālōtī*. Note that this epiphany will take place ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν—“among the nations”—ostensibly meaning within the lands of these nations; everywhere in the world, not especially within the Land of Israel. Second, and more significantly, the LXX bears no mention at all of the entire prophecy of the absolute ingathering of the exiles, after which not one deportee would remain.³⁹ Apparently, the Diasporan translator does not desire the ingathering of the exiles from their Diaspora abode, most probably because he himself does not view emigration to the Promised Land as his own personal destiny. Thus this translator too, endows residents of the Diaspora with legitimacy, even in the age of redemption.⁴⁰

Flavius Josephus’s remarks, paraphrasing Balaam’s words, are well known (*Ant.* 4.115–116)

that people is happy, to whom God ... has granted His providence as an ally and leader for eternity. ... You will hold fast the land to which He Himself sent you. It will always be subject to your children, and all land and sea will be filled with the glory surrounding them, and there will be enough of you for the world to supply every land with inhabitants from your race. Are you, therefore, amazed, O blessed army, that from a single father you have

39. Obviously, the LXX of Ezekiel does not unequivocally negate the ingathering of the exiles, explicitly mentioned in the LXX of the previous verse (39:27). The omission of the concluding portion of verse 28 articulates an attempt to nullify merely the all-encompassing nature of the ingathering of the exiles, thus detracting from its importance.

40. On this verse in the LXX see: Johan Lust, “The Final Text and Textual Criticism: Ez 39:28,” in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation* (ed. Johan Lust; BETL 74; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 48–54. My hypothesis differs entirely from his suggestions.

become so great? But the land of the Chananaians will hold your present army, consisting of a few; yet know that the inhabited world lies before you as a dwelling place forever, and your multitude—as many as is the number of stars in heaven—will reside on islands and in the continent.

And in *Ant.* 1.282, Flavius Josephus introduces the following prediction into Jacob's dream: "And good children will be born to you And their multitude will be beyond number. . . to them and to their children, who will fill all, both land and sea, which the sun beholds, I give the power over this land."⁴¹

In other words, dispersion throughout the entire world, land and sea, is a destiny promised Jacob even before the inception of the nation and one foretold by Balaam as the outcome of the blessing of multitudinous progeny. Such destinies obviously cannot be considered punishment and, as welcome expressions of the prolific nature of the Jewish people, there is no expectation that they be revoked come the age of redemption.

These ideas certainly appeared in Flavius Josephus's writings subsequent to his relocation to the Diaspora and as a consequence of this turnaround. It is possible that they were also influenced by the destruction of the Temple, as postulated by Gafni,⁴² or by fears that positions supporting a return to the Land of Israel expressed by Josephus might provoke rebellion anew, as Wilken contends.⁴³ Yet there is also a correlation, a most significant one perhaps, between these ideas and Flavius Josephus's status as a Diasporan Jew. In transition to Diaspora life, Josephus encountered and adopted a crystalized Jewish theology that also addressed expectations of a future redemption. These conceptions were not new: rather they were adopted and worked into the writings of this Jewish author, composing a post-destruction programmatic essay with a Diasporan orientation, intent on justifying his existence in the Diaspora and furnishing this existence with theological underpinnings.

Apparently, Philo's theological stance also provided legitimacy to future existence in the Diaspora. According to the accepted approach: "Philo... apparently found no contradiction between his stressing of the positive impli-

41. Translation of Flavius Josephus *Antiquities* from: L. H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities* 1–4 (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary 3, Brill: Leiden 2000), 372–73; 110.

42. Gafni, *Land Center and Diaspora*, 29. Azriel Shochet, "Josephus' Outlook on the future of Israel and its Land," in *Yerushalayim: Review for Eretz-Israel Research* (eds. M. Ish-Shalom, M. Benayahu and A. Shohet; Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Foundation, 1953), 43–50, hints that Josephus's view was influenced by the nation's sizeable population, prolific to the extent that a single country could not contain it.

43. Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 273–4, n. 66 (on Josephus' view on the Land of Israel in general).

cation of dispersion as a sign of the nation's growth... and his cultivation, at the same time, of a belief in a future ingathering of the people of Israel to their Land (*Praem.*165).⁴⁴ Yet painstaking consideration of Philo's words reveals that the ingathering of the exiles is a destiny intended for segments of the people and not for the nation in its entirety. In *Praem.* 162, Philo refers to the curse and punishment that will be visited upon those who denigrate the holy laws and those in thrall to polytheism that spawns atheism. The latter, should they repent, will benefit from the Lord's mercy and then:

for even though they dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, in slavery to those who led them away captive, one signal, as it were, one day will bring liberty to all. This conversion in a body to virtue will strike awe into their masters, who will set them free, ashamed to rule over men better than themselves. When they have gained this unexpected liberty, those who but now were scattered in Greece and the outside world over islands and continents (οἱ πρὸ μικροῦ σποράδες ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ βαρβάρῳ κατὰ νήσους καὶ κατὰ ἠπείρους) will arise and post from every side with one impulse to the one appointed place (πρὸς ἓνα συντενοῦσιν)...⁴⁵

The new Hebrew translation of Philo's writing translates these last words "to their sole destined land."⁴⁶ There is, however, no destiny here; only a destination—in other words, Philo's paragraph does not underscore the sole, indispensable, nature of the Jewish people's dwelling place rather it depicts a clear and unambiguous destination to which Jews should proceed. Note too, the fact that the word σποράδες denotes people scattered with no community affiliation, precisely the distinction between the two types of people Philo describes. Thus, though Philo does indeed predict a restoration, he foresees it not for the people at large—of whom he does not speak—but solely for those unattached to communities who were captives and enslaved in various lands. The latter, deserving of this fate due to their sins as aforementioned in 162–3, would be the ones to return to the Land of Israel and rebuild it. By contrast, those deserving people who dwell in the Diaspora as an expression of the blessing of prolific population growth are not captives; they are not depicted as sinners, are not in distress and thus there is no reason to assume that they

44. Gafni, *Land Center and Diaspora*, 29.

45. Philo, *Praem.* 164–165; translated by F. H. Colson, *Philo VIII* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1939), 417.

46. Suzanne Daniel-Nataf and Yohanan Cohen-Yashar, *De Praemiis et Poenis*, in *Philo of Alexandria: Writings* (ed. Suzanne Daniel-Nataf; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2000), 3:275 (Hebrew).

will return to the Land of Israel. In any case, no such description is found in Philo's writing.

Evidently then, Philo's vision of the ingathering of exiles does not pertain to the entire nation and a distinction must be drawn between migration of individuals from places where they had suffered, motivated by distress, and elective migration. Philo does not anticipate elective migration. As a manifestation of the demographic blessing bestowed on the Jewish people and of their colonial settlement (ἀποικία) during that period, there is no reason to expect Diaspora Jews, residents of the colonies, to migrate to the Land of Israel. By contrast, the captives and those enslaved by their enemies, whose situation articulates the punishment visited on the sinners, will be restored to the Land of Israel.

These conceptions were not innovations on the part of Philo and Flavius Josephus. They adhere to an ancient Diaspora tradition, which they color in various shades corresponding to each special, individual context. From the conception that the Jewish dispersion throughout the world at that time need not be considered Divine retribution, they also frame the visions of the future as legitimizing the existence of the Diaspora. Though one might view the Greek translation of the Bible as a precursor of these conceptions, in contrast with Philo and to a certain extent Flavius Josephus too, it does not posit an ordered theological doctrine, planting hints and scattering them where the biblical text permits instead. While the translation preference often hinges on linguistic considerations, one cannot ignore the theological and historical significances inherent in the translation outcomes. Revelation of the translators' motivations, though difficult to discern, assists in illustrating a historical reality that has not yet been sufficiently explored and depicted. This article discussed the choice of the word κατοικία to translate the biblical word *mēšûbâ* in Hos 14:5. The possible existence of this translation tendency in similar translations of the word in Jeremiah is an issue that need be addressed separately.⁴⁷

47. I will remark briefly that the three occurrences of the word κατοικία as a rendering for *mēšûbâ* are in Jer 3, which discusses the exiling of the kingdom of Israel and calls for Israel to return to God. The other two occurrences of the word *mēšûbâ* in all its inflections in this chapter are either not translated by the LXX or are read differently (see n. 15 above). Do we discern, here too, an intentional modification and positive approach on the part of the translator towards Israel's ongoing residence in the Diaspora?