

Conceptions of God's Dwelling in the Septuagint

Introduction

It is well-known that the translator of the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy mitigated or at least avoided the notion of the “life” of God on earth. The following article will reframe this observation in a larger context. The question is: Why do some translators avoid the idea, but some do not? What trends can be found in ancient Jewish literature as a whole from the time of the Septuagint? Is the avoidance of that idea the rule or the exception? The method employed for studying this topic is to compare the Septuagint with Jewish and Greek literature of the 3rd to 1st century BCE. This study will demonstrate the fruitfulness of this approach.

1. Environment of the Septuagint

1.1. Pagan Greek

Terminologically the Septuagint differs from pagan Greek; but these differences do not by any means immediately and consistently suggest theological accents.

Homes of people, like the deities in Olympus¹ and in the underworld,² are often referred to in Homer and Hesiod by the term δῶμα. This term is not used in the Septuagint in the same sense. But one should not immediately regard this phenomenon as motivated by theology. In the Septuagint, δῶμα renders ἰβ (roof). So it has no theological meaning if δῶμα does not denote a “living-place” of God in the Septuagint.

In the Greek literature, the word family οἶκος/οἰκεῖν sometimes is used for the dwelling of gods, at first without this idea being problematized. First, of course, Olympus is called the “house for Zeus”.³ *Iliad* 1:18 is however explained in the *Scholion exegeticum*: Homer says, the gods not only live in heaven but also on earth, so that one does not despise the gods

¹ Homer, *Il.* 1:18, 607, West, 5, 38; Hesiod, *Theogony* 40f., 75, 114, LCL 57, 4, 8, 12.

² Homer, *Od.* 12:21, von der Mühl, 217; Hesiod, *Theogony* 303.455.816, LCL 57, 26, 38, 68; Sophocles, *El.* 110, LCL 20, 176; Euripides, *Heracles* 808, LCL 9, 386.

³ See e.g. Homer, *Il.* 1:606, West, 38 (οἶκος for Zeus).

as if they were far away.⁴ The noun *κατοίκησις* is attested in Plato, *Critias* 115c in the phrase “the whereabouts of God and the ancestors”; the noun *οἶκημα* sometimes can mean a temple⁵ but that is not a set meaning. The fact that it is not associated with the theme “Living God” in the Septuagint is therefore not surprising.

The verbs *ναιετᾶν* and *ναίειν* (“live”), often are used in Homer and Hesiod to describe the “living” of gods and men.⁶ The verb *ναίειν* is encountered only once in the Septuagint, namely in Job 22:12, where there is nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew. That passage contains typical Homeric vocabulary, as also seen elsewhere in the Septuagint of Job.⁷ The verb *ναιετᾶν* is completely absent in the Septuagint; it was probably unknown to the translators. The related noun *ναός*⁸ is, of course, very common in the Septuagint.

The noun *σκηνή* is occasionally attested in Greek literature outside the Septuagint as a place of accommodation of (portable) shrines,⁹ whereas *σκήνωμα* is also occasionally used for a temple.¹⁰ The verb *κατασκηνώω* apparently is not used in pagan-antique Greek literature with regard to the dwelling of a God in a sanctuary. When it appears in Jewish literature of the 3rd – 1st centuries BCE, it already shows the aftermath of a change in language use found in the books of Numbers and Leviticus.

In Hellenistic-Jewish perception, the assignment of different living places (*τόποι*) for the gods above or below the earth is thought to be just as abhorrent as anthropomorphism.¹¹

1.2. Jewish Literature of the 3rd–1st Century

The motif of ‘God’s dwelling’ went through many transformations throughout the Old Testament, in parts in conjunction with the idea of Zion as God’s mountain and the throne in his sanctuary.¹² In this article only the latest consequences of these transformations will be discussed. In late texts¹³ like 1Kgs 8 the idea of God’s transcendence is stressed. The imagi-

⁴ Erbse (Ed.), *Scholia Graeca*, Vol. 1, 14.

⁵ Herodotus 8:144, LCL 120, 152.

⁶ Hesiod, *Theogony* 814, LCL 57, 68 (*ναίειν*). 816, LCL 57, 68 (*ναιετᾶν*).

⁷ KEPPEL and WITTE, “Job/Das Buch Ijob/Hiob,” 2098.

⁸ SCHROER, “Heiligtümer,” 247.

⁹ Euripides, *Ion*. 806, LCL 10, 416; Diodorus Siculus 20.65, LCL, 320.

¹⁰ Pausanias 3:17.6, LCL, 106.

¹¹ BARCLAY, *Against Apion*, 308, on Josephus, Ap. 2:240–241 (there in Ap 2:240 the term *τόποι*).

¹² Cf. JANOWSKI, “Einwohnung,” 10–26. He does, however, not deal with the Septuagint.

¹³ There are indeed literary stratifications in this text, which are not kept in mind when discussed today by the translators of this text (cf. ROHDE, “Wo wohnt Gott?,” 165–

nation of God being enthroned in heaven (1Kgs 8:29 etc.) can be seen as a correction of 1Kgs 8:12–13, since the notion in this passage is that God is living in a temple forever.¹⁴ 2Chr 6:18 might stress the corrective idea found in 1Kgs 8:29 even more. If in the sequence of consonants אֱלֹהֵינוּ the first ה is pronounced as הָ (with), the original Hebrew passage can be understood as a question whether God should really be dwelling on earth ‘with the people’. This question has influenced the reproduction of the corresponding text of the ‘Books of King’ in the Septuagint.

The idea that God is living in heaven is without problem; this statement can be proven in many ways within ancient Jewish literature.¹⁵ But much more important for the question in this article is where and how beyond the heaven God's dwelling is to be presupposed. The idea is not avoided, and Exod 15:17; 24:12–16; 25:8^{MT} and Deut 12:11 are the leading texts, if one pursues the theme.

It is not very spectacular that the temple is recorded to be God's dwelling on earth.¹⁶ The word *κατασκήνωσις* is found several times, as in 2Macc 14:35 and in Sap 9:8. In Sap 9:8, the sacrificial altar is seen as imitation of the holy tent. Perhaps the idea of a pre-existing heavenly sanctuary, which was also assumed for Exod 15:17 can be found in this passage also.

The book of Sirach demonstrates the idea of “God's dwelling on earth” in some characteristic aspects. 1. With regard to Sir 24:9 (“before all ages”) it can be asked whether there is evidence here that the wisdom that has lived in the heavenly model of the sanctuary will become reality in Israel as a tent or temple.¹⁷ 2. The author uses the statement “you will dwell in Jacob”¹⁸ in 24:8 to stress this wisdom in contrast to older texts.¹⁹ However, the concept which is found in Sir 24 was not the only one in early Jewish literature. 1Hen 42:1–3 also talks about the ineffective search for

183). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that some of the later conceived perceptions nowadays are also close to the point of view of the translator.

¹⁴ JANOWSKI, “Einwohnung,” 15.

¹⁵ Tob 5:16 A; 1Hen 1,3; (4Q299 Frgm. 50,9); 1Hen 14:15–23 (a house will be described there, which is built of flames). An angelic host can be found there, to praise his name (1QM XII 1f.; 4Q405 XX 7; 4Q405: Frg. 81; 4Q491, Frg. 5–6,1 11Q17 B 9); he appears in the court from this abode (4Q201 I 5; 1Hen 1,3; AssMos 10,3). Perhaps the “holy eternal place” in 1 Hen 12.4 also is interpreted as heavenly sanctuary, in which the “guards” lived before their fall (Gen 6:1–4), cf. UHLIG, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, 533.

¹⁶ Tob 1:4 and 2Macc 14:35, here in relation to the Second Temple.

¹⁷ MARBÖCK, “Gottes Weisheit unter uns,” 79 with n. 21.

¹⁸ The verb *κατασκηνοῦν* is encountered not only with God and his wisdom as a subject (it is clearly identified with the Torah), as the third document in the Book of Sirach shows Sir 28,16; therefore, no special holy language is created. The verb *κατοικεῖν* is not used with God as the subject in the Book of Sirach.

¹⁹ JANOWSKI, “Einwohnung,” 33.

wisdom and its return to heaven but does not develop the motif of “dwelling in Israel”, and this is how 1Hen 42 explains in clear opposition to Sir 24²⁰, how the origin and the prevalence of injustice took place.

The different terminology in 2Macc 14:33, 35, concerning the temple of Jerusalem, is remarkable. Nicanor, the enemy, names it *σηκός* whereas the priests in Jerusalem refer to it as *ναός τῆς σῆς κατασκηνώσεως* [A: *σκηνήσεως*]. The author probably had the difference between *σηκός* and *ναός* in mind, which in other Greek literature is not always respected²¹: *σηκός* refers to a small temple that may be dedicated to a hero²², and *ναός* refers to a normal temple. The choice of the word *σηκός* by Nicanor implies a pejorative connotation, while the formulation of the Jerusalem priests implies the full-fledged commitment of God to indwell the temple. Similarly, in Sap 9:8, Jerusalem is considered the city of divine *κατασκήνωσις*.

The findings in the literature found in Qumran are also not very spectacular. The abode of God is in heaven (see above). The Deuteronomistic theology of God’s presence in Jerusalem is found in some sources, such as in the phrase “God’s abode in Jerusalem ... which thou hast chosen, that thy name for ever was there” (4Q504 Frg. 2 IV 3f.). Similarly, in 4Q216 II 9f., a sanctuary is mentioned, “that I have consecrated for me to put in the middle of the country, my name on it.”

In the Temple Scroll, the indwelling of God in the sanctuary is the reason why its sanctity must be protected against contamination. Some elements support this intention, e.g. the specifications to prohibit certain groups from entering (11QT XLV 12–14: blind will have no access), as well as instructions for the building for a temple wall (11QT XLVI 9–12) or instructions for execution of evildoers who violate the sanctity of the temple (11QT LVI 1–5). The Deuteronomistic theology of the divine name is the background for 11QT XLVII 3f.²³

The Book of Jubilees introduces the motif of the “dwelling of God” when describing the revelation at Sinai and the eschatological temple building. Exod 15:17; Exod 24; Deut 24:11; 1 Kings 8:46–51; 2 Ch 35:15f. are the biblical support. The dwelling of the “Glory of God” on Mount Sinai is described in Exod 24:16^{MT}. The author does not share the alternate notion visible in the Septuagint (see below). The same is true for Jub 1:17, if Exod 25:8 is to be regarded as its template.²⁴ According to Jub 1:2, the cloud “overshadowed” Mount Sinai whereas Exod 24:16 presupposes a “covering”. What is the intention of this change? Does Jub 1:2 allow that

²⁰ LEUENBERGER, “Die personifizierte Weisheit,” 81.

²¹ PAPE, *Deutsch-Griechisches Handwörterbuch*, 873.

²² EURIPIDES, *Ion*. 300, LCL 10, 354; PLUTARCH, *Themistocles* 10.1, LCL, 28.

²³ POPKES, “Tempelrolle,” 96–101.

²⁴ At least, BERGER, *Jubiläen*, JSRZ II/3, 317.

Moses can see the glory of God at all? In Jub 1:10 (“Let my name live in it”) the Deuteronomistic theology of the “dwelling” of the divine name is resumed. At the end of Jub 1:8–16 (a passage corresponding to 1Kgs 8:46–51), we have the idea of the living God committing to live among, assist, and have communion with his people: “I will build my sanctuary among them and live with them and will be their God, and they shall be my people in truth and justice. And I shall not forsake them and not fail them, for I am the Lord their God.” This connection of the living God and the eschatological temple building reoccurs in TestLevi 5:2b. However, Enno Edzard Popkes demonstrated, that the idea of an eschatological Temple building is by no means always linked with the terminology of שכן.²⁵

To conclude this paragraph: Whereas avoiding the notion of “God’s dwelling” is characteristic for the Septuagint of Exodus and Deuteronomy, such an attitude elsewhere is exceptional, not a regular element within Jewish tradition.

2. Septuagint

Modern Septuagint realizes that it is wrong to take the Septuagint at a whole as a scientific project initiated by a central instance.²⁶ This applies particularly to the subject of this study. From the beginning, there are translation conventions, made in the choice of the corresponding vocabulary already used when describing the dwelling of human beings; κατοικέω renders שכן;²⁷ κατασκηνώ renders שכן. The noun κατασκήνωσις is encountered in the LXX four times referring to the abode of God on earth, namely in Ezek 37:27 (rendering משכן); Tob 1:4; Sap 9:8 and 2Macc 14:35. The verb simplex σκηνώ for שכן is encountered only in 3Reg 8:53^{LXX.A}.

Why does κατοικέω render שכן whereas (κατα)σκηνώ render שכן? The distribution of these equivalents can be justified by the phonetic assonance of (κατα-)σκηνώ to שכן.²⁸ The verb κατοικέω with God as the subject is used in 3Reg 8.27 and twice in 3Reg 8.53. Perhaps for underlining “the idea of prolonged sojourn”²⁹, composite forms with κατά are chosen. Otherwise it would be inappropriate to use κατασκηνώ in Sir 24:4 referring to

²⁵ POPKES, “Tempelrolle,” 99f., referring on 1Hen 90:29f., Jub 1:27f. In 1Hen 89.50, the point of reference for “home” and “tower” is unclear, when facing 1Hen 90,29f., especially as the text of the site provides ample uncertainty.

²⁶ TOV, “Reflections,” 16–17.

²⁷ A closer examination of the word-group κατοικέω in the Pentateuch shows that only the Noun κατοικητήριον in Exod 15:17 is associated with the “dwelling” of God.

²⁸ DORIVAL, *Les Nombres*, 60; DE VOS, *Heiliges Land*, 144. He points out that σκηνώ already in Greek had a detached meaning.

²⁹ MICHAELIS, Art. Κατασκηνώ, 390.

the pre-existence of Wisdom. For the question of whether *σκηνή* or *σκήνωμα* is used, when referring to the “tabernacle of witness,” it depends on the decision and tendency of the individual translator; in the books of Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus, the term *σκήνωμα* is missing; in the Psalms, conversely, this rendering is more common than *σκηνή*.³⁰ In the Septuagint Psalm, it names places of divine living.³¹

In the Septuagint of Exodus, the idea of the transcendence of God requires a distinct rendering of some phrases, whereas in the Septuagint of Deuteronomy and Isaiah the concern for a logically comprehensible statement is decisive when describing this concept. Other translators do not feel free for changing in this way; the loyalty to the Hebrew original was more important. In addition, it has become clear in the first main part of this study that, in Judaism of the 2nd and 1st Centuries BCE, there was no continuous tendency to avoid the subject of the indwelling of God, which can be explained by the pursuit of loyalty to the Hebrew original.

2.1. Exodus

In the Septuagint of Exodus, the idea of God’s dwelling in Exod 25:7 is replaced by the notion of God’s appearance and in Exod 29:45f. by the motive of human invocation of God.³² The connection of “dwelling” with the glory of God is replaced in Exod 24:16 by the motif of descending³³ and in Exod 40:35 by the motif of overshadowing. Critical examination of these changes suggests they are the conscious work of the translator.³⁴ Due to this emphasis of God’s transcendence, any definition of physicality or containment of God is avoided.³⁵ This interpretation is supported by the unifying translation *σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου* (tent of the testimony) employed for *אהל מועד* (tent of meeting) or *אהל עדות* (Tent of the testimony); in this case the translator made a selection emphasizing the transcendence of God. Nevertheless, two questions arise: 1. Why is the idea of God’s dwelling changed so significantly? 2. Why is it changed at all?³⁶ In Exod 15:17^{LXX}

³⁰ MICHAELIS, Art. *Σκήνωμα*, 385.

³¹ Ps 14[15]:1; Ps 131[132]:5 *passim*.

³² The replacement of *בן* by *ἐπιαληθῆσαι* is not imitated in the Septuagint.

³³ Philo of Alexandria, *Qu. Ex.* 2:45, LCL 401, 89, however, feels the necessity to defend even this notion: There are no movements of place or of change in the Deity. It is the glory of God, which descends, not God himself.

³⁴ JOOSTEN, “Une théologie de la Septante?,” 39f.

³⁵ RÖSEL, “Tempel und Tempellosigkeit,” 454. Even LE BOULLUEC and SANDEVOIR, *L’Exode*, 252, argue for this interpretation, but also considers as an alternative the concern to avoid contradiction with the idea that God dwells only in Jerusalem.

³⁶ RÖSEL, “Tempel und Tempellosigkeit,” 461, refers to contradicting tendencies in the Targumim.

the concept of earthly abode, of the *κατοικητήριον* of God to which the Israelites are to be brought, is not avoided.

1. In Exod 24:16, the idea of God's dwelling in heaven evokes the changing whereas in Exod 40:35, phenomena typical for clouds are decisive. In Exod 25:7 perhaps an anticipatory reference to Exod 40:28³⁷ or Lev 9:23 is intended. Exod 29:45f.³⁸, however, does not function in an anticipatory way in the Pentateuch; there are no parallels for *ἐπικαλέω* implying God as addressee. Perhaps both passages form a diptych: Exod 25:7 deals with the appearance of God, and Exod 29:45f. deals with Israel's reaction.

2. But why is it changed at all? A close look at Exod 15:17 can help. "The habitation of thy dwelling"³⁹, the sanctuary, is to be built by God himself,⁴⁰ whereas the "tent of testimony" is to be prepared by Moses. From this one could construe that the "tent of testimony" names the place where the Torah is mediated to the people, the synagogue; and the temple is the sanctuary erected by God. In this way, the translator could balance between the institution of synagogue and the order of cult centralization in Deuteronomy 12.

2.2. Numbers

In the Book of Numbers, the verb *נָשׂ*, referring to God, is rendered in 5:3 by *καταγίνομαι* and in 35:34 by *κατασκηνώ*. The verb *καταγίνομαι* in the profane Greek undoubtedly has the meaning of sustainable dwelling.⁴¹ In the Septuagint, however, it is used only here as an equivalent to *נָשׂ*. If in Num 35:34 *נָשׂ* is represented by *κατασκηνώ*, also in the Book of Numbers arises a relation of God's dwelling to *σκήνη τοῦ μαρτυρίου* (tabernacle of witness).⁴²

In the Book of Numbers, the tendency to water down God's presence on earth is present only in a very reduced way. This is also important for assessing the Septuagint texts in Num 9:17–22 and 10:12 where it refers to

³⁷ WEVERS, *Exodus*, 395.

³⁸ In Exod 29:45f., the replacement of *נָשׂ* by *ἐπικληθῆναι* the consequence that the relationship between God and Israel appears even more based on God's activity concerning Israel's exodus from Egypt. This is, however, consequence of the translation and amendment process, but not its motivation.

³⁹ WEVERS, *Exodus*, 234f. argued convincingly why *מָוֹן* is replaced by *ἔτοιμον*: The closeness of rendering *בָּן* Pil. (build up, establish, fix up) by *ἐτοιμάζω* was decisive.

⁴⁰ One can consider, with RÖSEL, "Tempel und Tempellosigkeit," 454, whether the idea of a heavenly preexistent sanctuary is effective. Rösels based his theory on the terms *παράδειγμα* in Exod 25:8 and *τύπος* in Exod 25:40 and the concept of an archetypal sanctuary in heaven to be found in the Sabbath sacrifice songs 4Q400–407.

⁴¹ DOGNIÉZ and HARL, *Le Deutéronome*, 176.

⁴² DORIVAL, *Les Nombres*, 80.

the clouds, indicating the presence of God. The verb כִּנַּח in Num 9:17; 10:12 is rendered by ἵστανω, and in Num 9:18, 22 it is rendered by σκιάζω. The intention behind these different translations is not to safeguard the transcendence of God, but to portray what we can imagine as realistic in connection with a “cloud”. A cloud can ascend (Num 9:15); an approaching cloud may come to a halt (Num 9:17; 10:12), and it casts shadows over what lies beneath it (Num 9:18.22), but a cloud cannot “dwell”.

2.3. Deuteronomy

In the Septuagint of Deuteronomy, the idea that God let his Name⁴³ “dwell” in Jerusalem (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם Hi.)⁴⁴ or “puts” his name there (שֵׁם Hi.)⁴⁵, is fundamentally replaced by the formulation⁴⁶ “wherever the Lord ... may choose for his name to be called there” (ἐπικληθῆναι).⁴⁷ Exod 29:45f. served like a role model.⁴⁸ According to John William Wevers, the intention of the Septuagint “is the understanding that God’s earthly presence signifies the reality of his invocation”.⁴⁹ Perhaps the problem of the Deuteronomistic idea for the translator was not a problem of transcendence, but a problem of logic: what should one thereby understand when saying that the name of God “dwells” somewhere? Probably he meant: the name of God is present by invocation.⁵⁰ According to Folker Siegert, this reproduction reinforces the “place of prayer” as purpose of Zion.⁵¹ In Deut 33:16^{MT}, it is mentioned that the grace of God “who dwells in the bush” should come to Joseph. The translator has used ὀφθῆναι. Maybe he wanted to suggest links to Exod 3:2 (ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐν φλογὶ πυρὸς ἐκ τοῦ βάλτου). In any case, Deut 33:16^{MT} contradicts everything ever said

⁴³ Perhaps this idea is to be interpreted as withdrawal of a massive notion of God’s dwelling in the temple; cf. METZLER, “Sacred and Profane,” 20; KAISER, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol. 2, 201 (he finds represented the older idea in Isa 8:18; Joel 4:17, 21 Ps. 135:21); see, however, JANOWSKI, “Einwohnung,” 14, with notes 46–48 (Lit.).

⁴⁴ Deut 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2.

⁴⁵ Deut 12:21; Deut 14:24 Cod. B etc.

⁴⁶ In 2Esdr 6:12; 11:9, the translation is offered that one would expect in Deuteronomy: οὗ κατασκηνοῖ τὸ ὄνομα ἐκεῖ (2Esdr 6:2)/τὸν τόπον ὃν ἐξελεξάμην κατασκηνώσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκεῖ (2Esdr 11:9).

⁴⁷ In Deut 12:5, both elements, שֵׁם Hi. and כִּנַּח Hi., encounter sequentially. The verb ἐπονομάσαι, in the Septuagint otherwise the equivalent of קָרָה, probably is used in a free way, in order to avoid duplication.

⁴⁸ AEJMELAEUS, “The Septuagint of Deuteronomy,” 13.

⁴⁹ WEVERS, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, 209, referring to TargumOnqelos, ad loc. (“Place of a Schekhinah”).

⁵⁰ AEJMELAEUS, “Von Sprache zur Theologie,” 37. According to Aejmelaeus it is not clear that the name of God has been equated with God himself.

⁵¹ SIEGERT, *Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament*, 230.

in Deuteronomy about God's dwelling in heaven,⁵² his presence in Israel, and the nature of this presence.

2.4. Historical Books

The translator of Joshua rendered statements like Josh 18:1 ("tent of testimony") or Josh 22:19 ("Tent of Lord/God") without modification. The translator of 1Kings, in contrast, reflected several issues when translating 1Kgs 8; we have to deal with 1Kgs 8,12f./3Reg 8,53a; 1Kgs/3Reg 8:27 and 1Kgs/3Reg 8:39. Sometimes we have to consider the priority of the different Versions⁵³.

There is a controversial debate on both the source and ordering of 3Reg 8:53. Is the Greek text based on an older Hebrew original⁵⁴ or not⁵⁵? Was this text originally arranged before or after the great prayer?⁵⁶ In order to address our problem we should consider the following facts: By rendering עֶרְבָל by γνόφος, the Greek version follows Exod 20:21^{LXX}. It is disputed, however, whether the idea of "God's dwelling in temple" is an issue of this text at all. The answer revolves around the question to whom the imperative Οἰκοδόμησον in 3Reg 8:53a is addressed? Some interpreters perceive in this text the order of God to Salomon to build him a temple for God's κατοικεῖν⁵⁷; then the idea of God's dwelling in the temple is emphasized. Other authors interpret this text as a request of Salomon to God to build a house for the David-Salomon dynasty (for Salomon's κατοικεῖν) which means to make this dynasty long-lasting.⁵⁸ Then the idea of God's dwelling in the temple is suppressed.

When translating 1Kgs 8:27, the translator drew on the issue in 2Chr 6:18 of whether God "will truly dwell with men on the earth". However at this point, only the idea of God's living in a temple is put into perspective,

⁵² WEVERS, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, 548.

⁵³ 1Kgs 6:11–13 is a late addition, not reflected in the Antiochene text. In 3Reg 6,13^{LXX.A}, the Verbum *κατασκηνώ* of God's living together with Israel is used – probably an imitation to the extended Masoretic text.

⁵⁴ SCHENKER, "Septante," 130–135; KEEL, "Tempelweihspruch," 16f. Due to the unusual word order, it is conceivable that the introductory accusative Ἥλιον already implies a dogmatic correction to the effect that in any case God should be named as the subject of the action. Whether ἐστῆσεν (according to the Antiochian text) or ἐγνώρισεν (Rahlfs) is the original wording, is also controversial.

⁵⁵ HARTENSTEIN, "Sonnengott," 55–57.

⁵⁶ These questions should not be confused, as evidenced by the position of Martin Rösel: The Septuagint provides an older version; the order in 3Reg, however, is secondary. See RÖSEL, "Salomo," 413.

⁵⁷ KEEL, "Tempelweihspruch," 16.

⁵⁸ RÖSEL, "Salomo," 413f.

not the function of a temple as the location of adoration⁵⁹. God is choosing an earthly sanctuary for his name, though he does not need one; this manifests his grace. Robert Hanhart emphasized the strangeness of this concept for Greek thinking⁶⁰.

In the temple sanctification prayer of Salomon in 1Kgs 8:39, 43, 49; 2Chr 6:30, 33, 39, God's house in heaven is called *מכון שבתך* (place of your throne)⁶¹. In the Septuagint, as in Exod 15:17 *ἔτοιμον* is used for *מכון*, naming the place of God's dwelling on earth (Jes 4:5; Exod 15:17; 1Kgs 8,13; 2Chr 6) as in heaven (c.f. also Ps 33:14). In both cases, the term *κατοικητήριον* reflects *ישב*. We can interpret this influence in two directions: 1. What applies for the terrestrial Jerusalem – to be a holy place built by God himself – for sure applies for his living place in heaven. 2. The translation template in Exod 15:17 was decisive.⁶²

2.5. Psalms

The manner of speaking, that God dwells “in high altitude/in heaven” has not caused any problems in Psalms.⁶³ The same is true for the notion of God's dwelling at Zion⁶⁴ or in the land Israel⁶⁵ or in the temple.⁶⁶ The word *σκηνή*, used in the singular, may in some cases refer to the holy tent.⁶⁷ In that case it often is a rendering for *להא*, that, at other places in psalms referring to God, is translated with *σκήνωμα*. The more general *σκήνωμα* for *להא* is chosen if the more specific *σκηνή* does not fit. This is true concerning the sphere of heaven for Ps 18[19]:4; concerning the earthly sphere, *σκήνωμα* is used in relation to the temple of Jerusalem. The following exceptions have to be discussed.

⁵⁹ At least ALBANI, “‘Wo sollte ein Haus sein’,” 46. He considers that the “later interpolation” (scil. 1Kgs 8:27) was made under the influence of Isa 66:1f. (46), and named Ezek 43 as a “clearly recognisable temple theological counter-position” (47) to Isa 66:1f.

⁶⁰ HANHART, “Translation of the Septuagint,” 371.

⁶¹ The issue of God's transcendence further is reinforced by the added preposition *ἐκ*.

⁶² The additional reference to the “Book of the Song” in 3Reg of the Septuagint could be connected with the Psalter (BÖSENECKER, *Text und Redaktion*, 86), but also to Exod 15:17 (RÖSEL, “Salomo,” 414).

⁶³ Ps 2:4; 32[33]:14 (cf. Exod 15:17); 112[113]:5; 122[123]:1.

⁶⁴ Ps 9:12; 131[132]:14: *κατοικέω*; Ps 73[74]:2 *κατασκηνώω*; Ps 67[68]:17: both verbs.

⁶⁵ Ps 84 [85]:10: *κατασκηνώω*.

⁶⁶ Ps 25 [26]:8; Ps 83 [84],1.

⁶⁷ PIETERSMA, “The Present State of the Critical Text of the Greek Psalter,” 31. He refers to the example of this rendering in the Pentateuch. In Ps 26 [27]:5f., the term represents a unification of two different Hebrew terms (*להא* and *סכה*); in Ps 41[42]:5, the translation presupposes the interpretation of the unvocalized *ךס* as *ךס* (tent). According to Pietersma, Ps 26[27]:5f. includes an allusion to David's escape to King Abimelech in Nob (1Sam 21); within the other Greek traditions of this Psalm, this attracted the heading “before anointing.” This remains open.

In Ps 5:12 – only there –, the verb *κατασκηνώ* renders סכך Hi (to cover). The translator had probably a derivative of סכה (hut) in mind.⁶⁸

In Ps 21[22]:4, the translator perhaps read בקדושי instead of קדושי and interpreted תהלת as characterization of God. The notion of “thrones on hymns” seemed to be unthinkable.

In Ps 28[29]:10, τὸν κατακλυσμὸν κατοικιεῖ presupposes ישב Hi, not Qal. The requested Qal-form in MT would correspond to κατοικεῖ which is the basis of some old translations. We can suspect a mechanical transference (rather in Greek than in the Hebraic tradition). A conscious change is also conceivable, but not necessary. Perhaps the translator could not imagine a throne above water masses, or he wanted to disassociate God from the scope of the powers of chaos; the preposition ל in MT does not suggest a hostile relationship of God to the powers of Chaos.

In Ps 54[55]:20, the rendering of ישב by ὑπάρχω is unusual; the phrase πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων for דם occurs only here. (Here as elsewhere often this term means prehistory.) The verb ὑπάρχω is used four times for יש.⁶⁹ As the translator of psalms takes no offence at the idea of eternal Thrones of God, one can suspect most likely that he read יש, not ישב in his Vorlage.

2.6. The Minor Prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel

In these prophetic books, the intended closeness to the Hebrew Vorlage suggests that also the idea of God's dwelling in Israel is retained, often in eschatological contexts. In Joel 4:17, 21; Zech 2:10[14f.]; 8:3; Ezek 37:27, *κατασκηνώ* names the dwelling of God in the midst of Jerusalem⁷⁰ and in Jer 7:12 even of his dwelling in Shiloh! Fidelity to the text obviously overrides any harmonization with the requirement of cult centralization. A compromise between interpretation and faithfulness to the text is provided by the translator of Ezekiel in Ezek 43:7, 9: According to Ezek 43:7^{LXX}, it is not God himself who dwells in Israel, but his name; in Ezek 43:9, on the other hand, the “I” of God remained in an unchanged condition. Ezek 43:9 is likely to be interpreted in the light of Ezek 43:7; the translator has not oriented his translation to the Septuagint of Deuteronomy and its corresponding formulas.

⁶⁸ BONS, “Psalm 5,” 1509 (σκηνή in Ps 17:12; 30:21, etc.).

⁶⁹ Jdgs 19:19^{LXX.A} (bis); Est 3:8; Mal 1:14.

⁷⁰ In comparison, it means little that in the matter of 2:11[15] not God, but the people appear as the subject of the verb *κατασκηνώ*. The change in the Septuagint increases the subject of the connection of the non-Jewish nations to the God of Israel, cf. KRAUS, *Volk Gottes*, 19.

2.7. Isaiah

In the Septuagint of Isaiah, the notion of the living God on Mount Zion is retained (κατοικέω in Isaiah 8:18). The statement in Isa 33:5 (Holy is God who dwells in the heights; κατασκηνοῦν) is no problem, just as Isa 66:1^{LXX}:⁷¹ Is it possible that the temple is indeed the place for divine καταπαυσις? Isaiah 66:1^{LXX}, however, is an interrogative sentence. Therefore, there is no need to avoid this concept. The full text gives an adequate relativizing, Isa 4:5^{LXX}, Isa 18:4^{LXX}, and Isa 57:15^{LXX} remain to be clarified.

In Isa 4:5^{MT} we read “and the Lord will create a cloud over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its assemblies.” Instead of the verb ברא witnessed also by 1QJes^a, the translator read a form of בוא and rendered it by ἤξει.⁷² God’s presence on Mount Zion, which provides the protection of Israel, is represented by the cloud.

In Isa 18:4^{LXX}, the “place of God” (מכון), refers to Jerusalem (πόλις μου), while the MT can also refer to a heavenly “place” of God. Furthermore, the statement of the MT “I want to rest and look (at my place)” is rendered differently in the LXX; the translator might read שקט Hi. and בטט Hi. (“I will give peace and security”), the latter instead of נבט Hi. (look up, look carefully), or he did not find the latter in its *Vorlage*.⁷³ He transmuted the announcement of disaster into a salvation announcement that has parallels elsewhere in Isaiah Septuagint⁷⁴; while, according to MT (שקט Qal.: rest, be idle), God does not intervene, the rendering in the Septuagint offers the possibility to introduce the concept of God’s intervention. More important, however, for the topic of this paper is the following: Jerusalem is indeed predicted to be a city of God; and the statement in the MT about God dwelling therein is not made explicit.

In Isa 57:15 God is named as ὁ ἐν ὑψηλοῖς κατοικῶν⁷⁵. In the following, however, the translator makes some changes in order to avoid a logical contradiction with that statement: God cannot dwell simultaneously on high and with humans on earth.

⁷¹ For effective history of Isa 66:1f. Acts 7:44–50 see VAN DE SANDT, “Presence and Transcendence.”

⁷² So even SEELIGMANN, “Septuagint Version,” 212: “erroneously”; TROXEL, *LXX Isaiah*, 205.

⁷³ TROXEL, *LXX Isaiah*, 128,

⁷⁴ Also in Isaiah 31:9 the translator expresses his loyalty to Zion, so SEELIGMANN, “Septuagint Version,” 284: in this way.

⁷⁵ SEELIGMANN, “Septuagint Version,” 268, suggests influence of liturgical language, as it is also mentioned in 3Macc 2:2, 21.

3. Summary

In light of the above, several issues are to be emphasized:

1. Changes in Exodus and Deuteronomy do not follow the general trend in Judaism in the 3rd to 1st Centuries BCE; in general, Jewish authors retain the diverse biblical notions of God's dwelling.

2. Faithfulness to the Hebrew source text does not preclude this trend of retaining these notions.

3. Sometimes the translators were not lead by the intention of avoiding such concepts. Rather the intention to achieve logically coherent statements was decisive.⁷⁶

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⁷⁶ I warmly thank Ed William Glenny for improving my English.

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