THE SAMARITANS IN LXX-AMOS 6

By Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg
School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger

Preface to the presentation in Göttingen
I would like the discussion to focus on this passage in LXX-Amos.

> Am I offering a likely explanation to this text?
> Is my method sound? The question of how to use the Septuagint translations as sources for historical information either of theological or ideological character has been debated. How clear must the signs of the translator's own preferences be before we dare to trust our intuition?

1 Introduction

When the prophet Amos wrote his prophecies against the northern kingdom social injustice and idolatry were his main indictments.[1] In chapter 6 we find a prophecy concerning people who live carelessly in abundance and do not think that their behavior has anything to do with their religion.

In the second century when Amos was translated into Greek the northern kingdom was ancient history. By now the Samaritans lived in the same area claiming to be the legitimate heirs of the Israelite religion. Their cult was a Yahweh-cult closely related to the Jewish cult in Jerusalem. The claims both the Samaritans and the Jews made to orthodoxy caused rivalry and hostility between the groups. Towards the end of the second century the conflict peaked when John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Garizim. The hostility between the groups is well attested in ancient sources and my claim in this paper is that it also influenced the translators of the Septuagint.[2] An example of this is seen in Amos 6.

2 The Samaritans

There is ample evidence that the Samaritans were a group of considerable importance in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms in the second century BCE. The excavations in the area of Mount Gerizim indicate a viable cult.[3] Furthermore, from a place as remote from Mount Gerizim as the Aegean island Delos, we have inscriptions stemming from "Israelites" paying their temple tax to Argarizein. This is taken as evidence for the existence of a Samaritan colony on the island.[4] Indications of a Samaritan diaspora is also found in Josephus when he recounts a dispute in Alexandria between Jews and Samaritans as to which temple had been

---

[1] For an introduction to the message of Amos see Hans Walter Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 2: Joel und Amos* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1975) 121 – 129 or Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York, 1989) 23 - 73.

[2] See note 10 below.

[3] Among the finds made during the excavations were hundreds of thousand of burnt animal bones, mostly goats and sheep, but also cattle and pigeons. This is taken as an indication of a cult to the God of Israel (Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Leiden / Boston, 2009) 208).

[4] Ibid. 216 – 217. There are also indications of Samaritans in diaspora in Gaza and Egypt in the second century. Alan D. Crown even suggests that the number of Samaritans in the diaspora was equal to their number in the homeland, in all around 1 million. Alan D. Crown, "The Samaritan Diaspora," in *The Samaritans*, ed. Alan D. Crown (Tübingen, 1989) 199 – 201. For the estimations of the population see also Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1980) 62-63.

built in accordance with the law of Moses, either the temple in Jerusalem or the temple on Mount Gerizim.[5]

Furthermore, we have texts, especially Jewish, which attests to the rivalry: I will briefly mention a few:

In Ben Sira 50:25-26 we find the following passage:[6]

בשני גוים קצה נפשי והשלישית איננו עם
יושבי שעיר ופלשת וגוי נבל הדר בשכם

With two peoples my soul is vexed, and the third is no people: Those who live in Seir, and the Philistines, and the foolish people that dwell in Shechem.[7]

Those who dwell in Shechem are the Samaritans. Thus we have three enemies listed, Seir, Philistine, and the Samaritans. The description of the Shechemites as גוי נבל is traced to Deut 32:21 where the expression occurs as a parallel to לא עם.[8]

הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְלֹא־אֵל כִּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלֵיהֶם וַאֲנִי אַקְנִיאֵם בְּלֹא־עָם בְּגוֹי נָבָל אַכְעִיסֵם

They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no god; they have provoked me with their idols. **So I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation.**[9]

An anti-Samaritan understanding of this verse in Deut may have occurred early due to the description in 2 Kgs 17 of the people living in Samaria as a mixture of people.[10] The לא עם in Deut was identified with the Samaritans.[11]

Another text that may have connections to Deut 32:21 is a fragment from Qumran. The fragment is dated to ca 50 B.C.E., but the text itself is likely to be older.[12] 4Q372 has this text:

Line 10 – 15

10 ….And in all this, Joseph was cast into lands he did not k[now]
11 among a foreign nation and dispersed in all the world. All their mountains were desolate of them ..[*w* and fools were dwelling in their land

---

[5] Antiquities of the Jews 13.74 – 77.
[6] Text from manuscript B printed in Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (Leiden, 1997) 90.
[7] Translation from Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* 141.
[8] Ibid. 140 - 148
[9] If not indicated differently all the English translations are taken from NRSV for the Hebrew text and NETS for the LXX.
[10] Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* 143.
[11] The Greek translation of passage may be understood as reinforcing the anti-Samaritan sentiment (Ibid. 143). Her we find καθήμενοι ἐν ὄρει Σαμαρείας instead of יושבי שעיר. It reads:

25 Ἐν δυσὶν ἔθνεσιν προσώχθισεν ἡ ψυχή μου, καὶ τὸ τρίτον οὐκ ἔστιν ἔθνος· 26 οἱ καθήμενοι *ἐν ὄρει Σαμαρείας* καὶ Φυλιστιιμ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ὁ μωρὸς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν Σικιμοις.	25 My soul is offended at two nations, and the third is no nation: 26 those who settles on Mount Samaria and Phylistiim and the foolish people who live in Sikima.

[12] Eileen Schuller and Moshe Bernstein, "371-373. 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition," in *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh and Qumran cave 4, XXVIII: Miscellanea, part 2*, ed. Douglas M. Gropp et al. (Oxford, 2001) 165, and Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* 161.

(ו ונבלים ישבים בארצם)]
12 and making for themselves a high place (במה) upon a high mountain to provoke Israel to jealousy (להקניא את ישראל);
and they spoke with wor[ds of]
14 words of deceit they spoke to provoke Levi and Judah and Benjamin with their words. And in all this Joseph [was given]
15 into the hands of foreigners, who were devouring his strength and breaking all his bones until the time of the end for him.

The reconstruction ונבלים ישבים בארצם in line 11 is based partly on a parallel text in 4Q371 and partly on the assumption that the text interprets Deut 32:21.[13] This connection is further strengthened by the occurrence of להקניא את ישראל in line 12. The text accounts for another instance of the Samaritans being called "fools". Furthermore the text also referred to the Samaritan temple as a במה and thereby indicating the cult to be idolatrous.

In "Joseph and Aseneth", an Alexandrian novel, we find a negative attitude towards Shechemites i. e. Samaritans. The dating of this novel varies from 200 BCE to 200 CE.[14] The story of the novel focuses on the marriage of Joseph to the Egyptian women Aseneth and how she converts in order to marry Joseph. Aseneth's beauty attracts other suitors and jealousy drives Pharaoh's son to go as far as to ask Joseph's brothers to assassinate Joseph. In his approach to the brothers Pharaoh's son says:[15]
23:3

> And Pharaoh's son sent messengers and called to him Simeon and Levi. And the men came to him and stood before him. And Pharaoh's firstborn son said to them, "I know today that you are powerful men beyond all men on the earth, and by these right (hands) of yours the city of the Shechemites has been overthrown, and by these two swords of yours thirty thousand fighting men were cut down.

23:13

> And Simeon and Levi drew their swords from their sheats and said, "Behold, have you seen these swords? With these two swords the Lord God punished the insult of the Shechemites (by) which they insulted the sons of Israel, because of our sister Dinah whom Shechem the son of Hamor had defiled.

The reference in these statements is the story from Gen 34. The story is, however, exaggerated and now thirty thousand Shechemites are slaughtered by Simeon and Levi's swords. This act is seen as God's revenge on the Shechemites. The story thus displays a negative attitude towards the Samaritans.

With these examples in mind we shall read the translation of Amos 6.

3 LXX-Amos

---

[13] Schuller and Bernstein, "371-373. 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition," 174.
[14] C. Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth (first Century B.C.-Second century A.D)," in *The Old Testament Pseudigrapha* ed. James H. Charlesworth (London, 1985) 2:187 – 188.
[15] Translation from Ibid. 177 - 247

The LXX translation of Amos is part of the translation of the whole Minor Prophets scroll.[16] The translation as a whole may be characterized as a literal translation; nevertheless it offers a variety of readings that differs from the MT. It is intrinsically difficult to trace the origin of these deviations since many of them may have several competing explanations. The Book of Amos has received attention in this respect and scholars discuss whether the deviations found in the Greek text should be explained as the translator misreading the *Vorlage*[17] or that the translator was more actively involved in the shaping of the Greek text.[18] Deviations are way too often explained separately from their textual context. In the following I will suggest that many of the peculiarities we find in the Greek translation is best explained in light of how the translator viewed the whole passage.

Amos 6:1-7

הַוֹי הַשַּׁאֲנַנִּים בְּצִיּוֹן וְהַבֹּטְחִים בְּהַר שֹׁמְרוֹן נְקֻבֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם וּבָאוּ לָהֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	1 **Οὐαὶ τοῖς ἐξουθενοῦσι Σιων καὶ τοῖς πεποιθόσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σαμαρείας· ἀπετρύγησαν ἀρχὰς ἐθνῶν, καὶ εἰσῆλθον ἑαυτοῖς.** οἶκος τοῦ Ισραηλ,
עִבְרוּ כַלְנֵה וּרְאוּ וּלְכוּ מִשָּׁם חֲמָת רַבָּה וּרְדוּ גַּת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים הֲטוֹבִים מִן־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אִם־רַב גְּבוּלָם מִגְּבֻלְכֶם׃	2 διάβητε πάντες καὶ ἴδετε καὶ διέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν εἰς Εμαθ Ραββα καὶ κατάβητε εἰς Γεθ ἀλλοφύλων, τὰς κρατίστας ἐκ πασῶν τῶν βασιλειῶν τούτων, εἰ πλείονα τὰ ὅρια αὐτῶν ἐστι τῶν ὑμετέρων ὁρίων.
הַמְנַדִּים לְיוֹם רָע וַתַּגִּישׁוּן שֶׁבֶת חָמָס׃	3 **οἱ εὐχόμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κακήν, οἱ ἐγγίζοντες καὶ ἐφαπτόμενοι σαββάτων ψευδῶν,**
הַשֹּׁכְבִים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן וּסְרֻחִים עַל־עַרְשׂוֹתָם וְאֹכְלִים כָּרִים מִצֹּאן וַעֲגָלִים מִתּוֹךְ מַרְבֵּק׃	4 οἱ καθεύδοντες ἐπὶ κλινῶν ἐλεφαντίνων **καὶ κατασπαταλῶντες ἐπὶ ταῖς στρωμναῖς** αὐτῶν καὶ ἔσθοντες ἐρίφους ἐκ ποιμνίων καὶ μοσχάρια ἐκ μέσου βουκολίων γαλαθηνά,
הַפֹּרְטִים עַל־פִּי הַנֵּבֶל כְּדָוִיד חָשְׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלֵי־שִׁיר׃	5 οἱ ἐπικροτοῦντες πρὸς τὴν φωνὴν τῶν ὀργάνων **ὡς ἑστῶτα ἐλογίσαντο καὶ οὐχ ὡς φεύγοντα·**
הַשֹּׁתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן וְרֵאשִׁית שְׁמָנִים יִמְשָׁחוּ וְלֹא נֶחְלוּ עַל־שֵׁבֶר יוֹסֵף׃	6 οἱ πίνοντες τὸν διυλισμένον οἶνον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα μύρα χριόμενοι καὶ οὐκ ἔπασχον οὐδὲν ἐπὶ τῇ συντριβῇ Ιωσηφ.
לָכֵן עַתָּה יִגְלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גֹּלִים וְסָר מִרְזַח סְרוּחִים׃	7 **διὰ τοῦτο νῦν αἰχμάλωτοι ἔσονται ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δυναστῶν, καὶ ἐξαρθήσεται χρεμετισμὸς ἵππων ἐξ Εφραιμ.**
NRSV **Amos 6:1-8** ***Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom*** the house of Israel ***resorts!***	NETS **Amos 6:1-8** ***Alas for those who count Sion as nothing and for those who trust in the mountain of Samaria. They have harvested the rule of the nations and entered for themselves.***

[16] The unity of the translation was first argued for by H. St J. Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of the Prophetical Books," *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903) 578 -585. Later the same notion was elaborated by Joseph Ziegler, "Die Einheit der Septuaginta zum Zwölfprophetenbuch," in *Syllogie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Septuaginta* (Göttingen, 1971), and more recently also Muraoka Takamitsu arrived at the same conclusion. Some voices claiming to spot different translators have been raised, but none has gained wide acceptance.

[17] A. Gelston, "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002)

[18] W. Edward Glenny, "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos?," *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007)

[2] Cross over to Calneh, and see; from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is your territory greater than their territory,

[3] ***O you that put far away the evil day, and bring near a reign of violence?***
[4] Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, ***and lounge on their couches***, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall;
[5] who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, ***and like David improvise on instruments of music;***

[6] who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
[7] ***Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.***

[2] Cross over, O house of Israel, all of you, and see, and from there pass on to Hemath Rabba, and go down to Geth of allophyles, the most excellent ones of all these kingdoms. See if their borders are greater than yours borders.
[3] ***Those who pray for an evil day, who draw near and hold fast to false sabbaths,***
[4] who sleep on beds of ivory ***and live lewdly on their couches*** and eat kids from the flock and suckling calves from the midst of the herds,
[5] who applaud at the sound of the instruments- ***since they considered them as permanent and not as fleeting-***
[6] who drink thoroughly filtered wine and anoint themselves with the finest oils, they were not even suffering anything over the ruin of Ioseph.
[7] ***Therefore they shall now be captives of the powerful from the beginning, and the neighing of horses shall be removed from Ephraim.***

3.1 A Passage about the Samaritans

That the translator had the contemporary Samaritans in mind when he translated is evident from the way he rendered the first line in verse 1. The line "alas for those who count Sion as nothing (τοῖς ἐξουθενοῦσιν Σιων) and for those who trust in the mountain of Samaria" is not a straight forward translation. The Hebrew line reads "alas for those who are at ease in Zion (הַשַּׁאֲנַנִּים בְּצִיּוֹן), and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria". In the Hebrew text the prophecy appears to be concerned with two groups, while in the Greek text both lines refer to the same group. Those who count Zion as nothing are the same as those dwelling on the mountain of Samaria.

In these lines it is especially τοῖς ἐξουθενοῦσιν Σιων which provide the different meaning of the Greek text.[19] Muraoka Takamitsu suggests that ἐξουθενοῦσιν is a free rendering.[20] This appears a likely explanation since, by closer examination, it seems that the translator did not fully understand the Hebrew phrase.

The participle in הַשַּׁאֲנַנִּים בְּצִיּוֹן occurs a number of times in the biblical books. Nevertheless, it does not appear that the translators of the LXX had a clear, or at least unified, idea of what the word meant. In LXX-Isaiah we find three renderings of שאנן by the stem πλους-/πλουτ- "wealth", but on the other hand the translator of Isaiah also uses πικρία "bitterness"[21] and λυπεῖν "to grieve".[22] In Job 12:5 we find שאנן, but there is no Greek

[19] Gelston suggests that the translator read השאטים from the root שוט "to despise" instead of השאננים. He does however not claim that it should be taken as a real variant but the translator's *Vorlage* was damaged and thus caused the translator to assume a *teth* instead of the two *nuns* (Gelston, "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos," 499). Another possibility is that τοῖς ἐξουθενοῦσιν may be an inner Greek error for τοῖς εὐθηνοῦσιν "those who do well" which is the translation for השאננים in Ps 122:4. But it is as Glenny suggests also possible that the parallelism in Ps 122:4 may have provided the translator of the Minor Prophets with the clue how to understand השאננים. It reads "the scorn of those who are at ease (השאננים), the contempt of the proud (הַבּוּז לְגַאֲיוֹנִים)". The translator may have read these as synonyms (Glenny, "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos?," 544).
[20] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets* (Louvain, 2002) 200.
[21] Isa 37:29.

equivalent. 2 Kings 19:28 has στρῆνος "insolence, sensuality" for שׁאנן while Psalm 123:4 has εὐθηνεῖν "to thrive, be prosperous". Jeremiah renders it by ὑπνοῦν "to sleep" and ἀναπαύειν "to stop, give rest, rest, refresh".[23] We see that there is some variety between the translators as to how they understood this Hebrew word.

In the Minor Prophets שׁאנן occurs in Zech 1:15 in addition to Amos 6:1. The text in Zech is slightly different in the Greek version, not least because of the rendering of שׁאנן.

Zech 1:15

וְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל אֲנִי קֹצֵף עַל־*הַגּוֹיִם הַשַּׁאֲנַנִּים* אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי
קָצַפְתִּי מְעָט וְהֵמָּה עָזְרוּ לְרָעָה׃

And I am extremely angry with ***the nations that are at ease***; for while I was only a little angry, they made the disaster worse.

καὶ ὀργὴν μεγάλην ἐγὼ ὀργίζομαι ἐπὶ τὰ *ἔθνη τὰ συνεπιτιθέμενα* ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ μὲν ὠργίσθην ὀλίγα, αὐτοὶ δὲ συνεπέθεντο εἰς κακά.

And I am angry with great anger against ***the nations who joined together in an attack***. Because I was angry in regard to a few things, but they joined together in attacking for evil.

The translator here gives a different translation of שׁאנן than he does in Amos 6. In this text he uses συνεπιτιθέναι which in the medium means "to join in attacking". He uses this verb twice in the verse and it seems that the context may account for the rendering. In verse 14 Yahweh has a great zeal for Zion and verse 16 states that he will rebuild it. That he in verse 15 is angry with those who attacked Jerusalem seems to suit the context well.

Thus the translator of the Minor Prophets has two completely different translations of שׁאנן, none of which are attested amongst the variety of the renderings we find in the other LXX-translations. It stands to reason to assume that our translator did not have a clear idea of this Hebrew word and thus chose the translation he found best suited to the context.

When the translator opted for ἐξουθενεῖν in Amos 6:1, he also dropped translating the Hebrew preposition in בציון. In the Hebrew text this preposition has a locale meaning placing "those who are at ease" in Zion. The equivalent Greek verb did not need a preposition, and thus there is no locale force in the sentence.

By this small omission the Greek text refers to one and the same group in the first hemistich of the verse. This group counts "Sion as nothing" and trusts "in the mountain of Samaria". This seems to be more than an accidental rendering of a text the translator did not fully understand. Instead it appears that as he struggled to translate the text, he used the presuppositions of his own day to interpret it. Those who count Zion as nothing and trust in Samaria appears to be the Samaritans in the second century.

3.2 Allegations towards the Samaritans

We saw some examples above of the Jewish hostility towards the Samaritans. Their origins were questioned, their cult accused of being idolatrous, and they were called a foolish people. In the Greek Amos passage our translator discloses some of his attitude towards the Samaritans.

---

[22] Isa 32:11.
[23]

3.2.1 Syncretism

The Greek text continues verse 1 with a description of the group in the opening line "they have harvested (ἀπετρύγησαν) the rule of the nations and entered for themselves". This is a peculiar translation of the Hebrew text "the notables (נְקֻבֵי) of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts!"[24]

The point of interest is the equivalents ἀπετρύγησαν - נְקֻבֵי. The root נקב usually means "pierce", but it may in some instances mean "designate".[25] BDB and modern translations understand the passive participle in Amos 6:1 as "noted, distinguished".

When we study the occurrences of נקב in the Minor Prophets and how it is translated, we find that the translator knew it as "pierce".[26] In Amos 6:1 it is clear that he did not find a translation of the meaning "pierce" suitable. The participle in Amos 6:1 may have occurred strange to him. But why would he come up with ἀπετρύγησαν "they have harvested"[27] as the translation?[28]

The line in the Greek text refers back to the first hemistich. The subject of "they have harvested the rule of the nations" is the same as in "those who trust in the mountain of Samaria". It appears that the translator accuses the Samaritans of cooperating with the foreign rulers.

In several ancient texts the Samaritans were accused of selling out their national pride to gain benefits from the Hellenistic rulers. Here we shall look at some passages, one from 2. Macc and one from Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews.

2 Macc 6:1-2

> 1 Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Judeans to forsake their ancestral laws and no longer to live by the laws of God – 2 also to pollute the shrine in Hierosolyma and to call it the shrine of Olympian Zeus and to call to call the one in Garizim the shrine of Zeus-the Friend of Strangers, as the people who lived in that place had petitioned (ἐτύγχανον[29]).

Antiquities of the Jews 12:257

> When the Samaritans saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred, nor that the temple on Mount Gerizim belonged to Almighty God. This was according to their nature, as we have already shown. And they now said that they were a colony of Medes and Persians; and, indeed they were a colony of theirs.
> So they sent ambassadors to Antiochus, and a letter, whose contents are these: ``To King Antiochus the god, Epiphanes, a memorial from the Sidonians, who live at Shechem. ...We therefore beseech you, our benefactor and Saviour, to order to Apollonius, the governor of this part of the country, and to Nicanor, the procurator of your affairs, to give us no disturbance, nor to lay to our charge what the Jews are accused for, since we are aliens from their nation,

[24] The Greek translation includes בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in the following sentence.

[25] As in Gen 30:28.

[26] See Hab 3:14 and Hag 1:6.

[27] Ἀποτρυγᾶν is not used elsewhere in the LXX-translations, but the meaning "to harvest, pluck grapes" is fairly certain based on other Koine Greek sources and the cognate and much more common τρυγᾶν.

[28] It is of course possible that the deviation stems from a different *Vorlage*, but it is hard to imagine that such a *Vorlage* would have been created by simple mistakes during the transmission of the text.

[29] For a survey over different interpretations of this word see Robert Hanhart, "Zu den ältesten Traditionen über das samaritanische Schisma," *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982).

and from their customs; but let our temple, which at present has no name at all be named the Temple of Jupiter Hellenius. If this were once done, we should be no longer disturbed, but should be more intent on our own occupation with quietness, and so bring in a greater revenue to you."
When the Samaritans had petitioned for this, the king sent them back the following answer, in a letter: ``King Antiochus to Nicanor. The Sidonians, who live at Shechem, have sent me the memorial enclosed.
When therefore we were advising with our friends about it, the messengers sent by them represented to us that they are in no way concerned with accusations which belong to the Jews, but choose to live after the customs of the Greeks. Accordingly, we declare them free from such accusations, and order that, agreeable to their petition, that their temple be named the Temple of Jupiter Hellenius."

The value of these passages as historical sources is debated.[30] They nevertheless attest to a negative attitude towards the Samaritans and claim that the Samaritans gave in to the Greek rulers even in cultic/religious matters. Whether the temple on Mount Garizim ever was used as a sanctuary for Zeus or Jupiter is not easy to determine since both these text may be taken as polemics against the competing Yahweh-cult. To the contrary, the inscriptions from the Garizim area itself do not indicate any syncretistic elements.[31] Be that as it may, the texts quoted above certainly testify to the anti-Samaritan sentiment that they gave in to pressure from the Hellenistic rulers. The same sentiment is found in LXX-Amos 6:1.

3.2.2 False Eschatology

In the first line of verse 3 the Greek text is exactly the opposite of the Hebrew. The Greek has "those who prey (οἱ εὐχόμενοι[32]) for an evil day" while the Hebrew has "o you that put far away (הַמְנַדִּים) the evil day". Praying for "an evil day" seems to be referring to an eschatological concept.

יום רע in the Hebrew text may be taken to refer to the day of retribution.[33] This understanding also appears in the Greek text where the verb indicates that the translator understood יום רע along similar lines as יום יהוה Amos 5:18, "woe, you who desire (οἱ ἐπιθυμοῦντες) the day of the Lord!"[34] What does it mean that they prayed for an "evil day"?

---

[30] Kartveit asserts that the passage in 2 Macc must be understood as polemics against the Samaritans (Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* 359), while Jonathan A. Goldstein believes that the Samaritans may have change the name of their temple to Διὸς Ξενίου (Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, The Anchor Bible (New York, 1983) 273 – 274).

[31] Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* 203 – 216.

[32] Here many manuscripts have ἐρχόμενοι (for the full list see Joseph Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae*, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum (Göttingen, 1984) 196). Though it is not easy to decide between the two alternative readings, the more likely scenario is that εὐχόμενοι is older than ἐρχόμενοι since the latter is more common and thus more likely to have occurred by mistake during transmission.

[33] In Prov 16:4 we find the same Hebrew expression in a similar context. See also Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 2: Joel und Amos* 319 – 320.

[34] The Hebrew equivalent of οἱ εὐχόμενοι is המנדים which is a Piel participle of the root נדה. This root is only found in Isaiah 66:5 elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and has the meaning "to exclude, to believe that something is far away". There is of course a far more common root with the same consonants, namely נדה which means "menstrual flow", and in Ezechiel 16:33 we find another homonym root meaning "gift, reward". None of these

The questions concerning the expression יום יהוה has been widely discussed.[35] It is well attested that the concept developed from future judgement to future deliverance in the prophetic literature.[36] We know that the Samaritans had a similar concept; is it possible that the translator had this concept in mind?

The question of the origins of Samaritan eschatology is very much debated since the oldest Samaritan source for this subject is from the fourth century CE.[37] It is however not unlikely that the roots of eschatology are older than the sources. In the fourth century source, *Memar Marqa*,, we find that "The Day of Vengeance" was an important concept in Samaritan eschatology.

> "The Day of Recompense is for all the good, the Day of Resurrection (*'mdjwTh*) for all men, the Day of Regret for all the wicked, the Day of Reckoning for all things done, the Day of Recompense for the good and the evil, the Day of Interrogation about all things done by all creatures, the Day of Trembling for all feet, the Day of Terror for all limbs, the Day of Reckoning for all actions, a day in which every person receives recompense, the Day of Judgement, the day of Tears, the Day of Deliverance, the Day of Assembly, the Day of Truth the Day of Fear, the Day of Standing, the Day of Coming forth from the ground, the Day of Grief for all the wicked, the Day of Joy for all who were obedient, the day on which the Lord of the world shall appear and proclaim, *I, even I am He, and there is none other with me' (Deuteronomy 32:39)."[38]

To date this tradition is complicated, but we may have an indication of an early date in the version of Deut 32:35 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Massoretic text of this verse has לי נקם, while the Samaritan text has ליום נקם. יום נקם is not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch but belongs to Isaiah and Proverbs.[39] The fact that it is found in the Samaritan version is therefore of importance. The early date of the variant is confirmed by the LXX version which reads "in a day of vengeance" (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐκδικήσεως). It is therefore quite likely that the text the Samaritans read in the second century contained the concept, and therefore also likely that they had some teaching concerning it. When it comes to the translation of Amos 6, the peculiar translation οἱ εὐχόμενοι for הַמְנַדִּים, may be understood as an indication that our translator disapproved of this teaching.

3.2.3 False Sabbaths

---

can, however, account for the fact that the translator used εὔχεσθαι in Amos 6:3. Εὔχεσθαι is often used as a translation of the Hebrew root נדר and it is possible that the translator read this root (see Gelston, "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos," 496). A problem here is however that נדר is only used in Qal, so a suggestion like Gelston's המנדרים would not comply with the common usage of the root. In this verse it appears more likely that the translator had difficulties with the word המנדים and inferred εὐχόμενοι from the context.

[35] For instance Meir Weiss, "The Origin of the "Day of the Lord" - Reconsidered," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966), Joseph A. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974).

[36] See Richard H. Hiers, "Day of the Lord," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York, 1992).

[37] For a résumé of the debate see Ferdinand Dexinger, "Samaritan Eschatology," in *The Samaritans*, ed. Alan D. Crown (Tübingen, 1989) 266 - 292.

[38] Quote from Ibid. 285.

[39] Isa 34:8; 61:2; 63:4; Prov 6:34.

Also in the second part of verse 3 we find the Greek text to be different. The Greek text "who draw near and hold fast to false sabbaths" (οἱ ἐγγίζοντες καὶ ἐφαπτόμενοι σαββάτων ψευδῶν) deviates from the Hebrew "and bring near a reign of violence" (וַתַּגִּישׁוּן שֶׁבֶת חָמָס).

The first equivalents we shall take a closer look at are ותגישון - οἱ ἐγγίζοντες. The Hebrew root נגשׁ in Hifil is used quite often in the Hebrew Bible and it is no doubt that the translator knew it.[40] In Amos 6:3 the translator rendered it by ἐγγίζειν "come near, draw near, approach" which lacks the causative aspect of the Hebrew equivalent.
The Greek text then has a word which does not have a Hebrew counterpart. The Greek word ἐφάπτειν "to bind, make fast" is quite common in classical Greek, but in the Septuagint it is used only twice in addition to our verse, once by the same translator, Amos 9:5, and once in 2 Mac 7:1.[41] In Amos 6:3 it is difficult to reconstruct a different *Vorlage* which may be the basis of this Greek word. It appears more likely that the translator added this verb according to his understanding of the Hebrew verse.

The decisive word for the different interpretations of the verse is שבת. In the Massoretic vocalization it is understood as an infinitive construct of the root ישב while the Greek translator read it as שַׁבָּת "Sabbath". Reading the text without vowels both words are possible.[42] The context does not really exclude any of them and one might argue that the whole difference relies on a misunderstanding. On the other hand, that the translator used ψευδῶν for חמס as the adjective of Sabbath indicates that the translation was not simply accidental.

חמס is elsewhere in the translation of the Minor Prophets rendered by ἀδικία, ἀδικέω, and ἀσέβεια. The rendering by ψευδῶν in Amos 6:3 seems to be due to the understanding of the whole verse. False Sabbaths appeared as a more appropriate translation than unjust or ungodly Sabbaths.

I quoted a lengthy passage from Josephus above, and Josephus may also here be brought as a source of information. In Antiquities 11:346 we find a passage where the author makes several allegations concerning the religious group in Samaria.

Antiquities of the Jews 11:346

> Now when Alexander was dead, the government was divided among his successors; but the temple upon Mount Gerizim remained; and if anyone were accused by those of Jerusalem of having eaten things common {b} or of having broken the Sabbath, or of any other crime of the like nature, he fled away to the Shechemites, and said that he was accused unjustly. About this time it was that Jaddua the high priest died, and Onias his son took the high priesthood. This was the state of the affairs of the people of Jerusalem at this time.

---

[40] In Mal 1:8aα for instance he translates this form by προσάγειν. Διότι ἐὰν προσαγάγητε τυφλὸν εἰς θυσίαν, οὐ κακόν "For if you bring something blind as a sacrifice, is that not wrong?" - וְכִי־תַגִּשׁוּן עִוֵּר לִזְבֹּחַ אֵין רָע "When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not wrong?"

[41] In Amos 9:5aα it is used with Yahweh as the subject. He is the one who takes hold of the land (ἐφαπτόμενος τῆς γῆς) and causes it to shake. In 2 Mac 7:1 we find ἐφάπτειν used slightly differently. Here ἐφάπτειν is used to indicate the part taking in eating of or laying hold on swine's flesh.

[42] Aaron Schart suggests that the LXX understanding represent the original vocalization of the Hebrew text (Aaron Schart, "The Jewish and the Christian Greek Versions of Amos," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* ed. Wolfgang Kraus & R. Glenn Wooden, LXX and Cognate Studies (Atlanta, 2006) 164).

According to Josephus the Samaritans had no problems taking up into their assembly people who were accused of breaking the Sabbath. Josephus fosters the impression that the Samaritans consisted of people with a dubious reputation, people who ate common things and broke the Sabbath.

Furthermore, in the passage I quoted from 2 Macc 6 the Samaritans were accused of welcoming the dedication of their temple to Zeus. In the continuation this passage elaborates on the hellenization of the temple cult in Jerusalem. One of the consequences is that "People could neither keep the Sabbath nor observe their ancestral feasts nor so much confess themselves to be Judeans" (2 Macc 6:6). Verse 2 of this text accused the Samaritans of welcoming such a Hellenistic cult. The text implies that the Samaritan cult involved a different Sabbath celebration than what was considered lawful in Jerusalem.[43]

3.2.4 Wanton behaviour

In verses 4-7 the Greek text seems to underline the description of a luxurious and effortless life. In verse 4 we find κατασπαταλῶντες "live lewdly, wantonly" as a translation for סְרָחִים "go free, be unrestrained". In the Hebrew text סְרָחִים stands as a parallel to הַשֹּׁכְבִים in the first line, more or less as synonyms. The Greek translation on the other hand, has a progression in the verbs used, first καθεύδοντες "sleeping" and then κατασπαταλῶντες "live lewdly, wantonly". The Greek text seems to be intensifying the criticism of the subjects in the verse.[44]

Also verse 5 contains differences. In the second hemistich the Greek text has "since they considered them as permanent (ὡς ἑστῶτα) and not as fleeting", while the Hebrew text has "and like David (כְּדָוִיד) improvise on instruments of music". The point of interest is the equivalents כדויד - ὡς ἑστῶτα.[45] This deviation is not likely to depend on a different *Vorlage*.[46] Instead we should look for an explanation that relies on the subject matter of the expressions. The Hebrew text uses David as a reference for musical improvisation. In the Persian period and onwards the image of David grew into the portrayal of him in 1 Chron as the one who facilitated the building of the temple and initiated the cultic institutions.[47] In the second century Ben Sira describes David in a similar manner:

47:8-10[48]

---

[43] It is suggested that this passage and 1 Macc 1: 44 – 64 relies on a common source Goldstein, *II Maccabees* 269. Also in the passage from 1 Macc violation of the Sabbath is an aspect of the syncretism described.

[44] This verse has another set of equivalents which is interesting from a text critical point of view. The use of βουκολίων "herd of cattle" towards the end of the verse where MT has מֵרֶבֶק "stall", may be due to a different order of the consonants, namely בקר "cattle, herd". This is another instance where it is difficult to determine whether the deviation stems from the translator or the *Vorlage*. In the MP we find מֵרֶבֶק once more, in Mal 3:20, and also here the Greek translation is somewhat creative: ὡς μοσχάρια ἐκ δεσμῶν ἀνειμένα "like calves let loose from their tethers" – פְּעָגְלֵי מֵרֶבֶק "like calves from the stall".

[45] There is another deviation in the verse, namely להם כלי־שיר – και ουχ ως φευγοντα. Φεύγω sometimes translates the Hebrew word שׂריד and it is possible that the *Vorlage* was corrupt or different containing such a word. But the reconstruction of such a *Vorlage* would depend on too many uncertainties and should therefore not be attempted. The word pair created by this Greek text ὡς ἑστῶτα - ως φευγοντα may one way or the other has influenced each other and thus account for the deviations between the texts.

[46] Possibly the *Vorlage* may have read כהיו but this is as close as we get to a textual explanation.

[47] Mark A. Throntveit, "Was the Chronicler a Spin Doctor? David in the Books of Chronicles," *Word & World* 23 (2003)

[48] NRSV

8 In all that he did he gave thanks to the Holy One, the Most High,
proclaiming his glory; he sang praise with all his heart, and he loved his
Maker.
9 He placed singers before the altar, to make sweet melody with their voices.
10 He gave beauty to the festivals, and arranged their times throughout the
year, while they praised God's holy name, and the sanctuary resounded from
early morning.

David was very much associated with the temple cult in Jerusalem. The Samaritans on the other hand, did not ascribe anything of their cult to David. If the translator had the Samaritans in mind as he translated this text it seems quite obvious that he felt the need to omit the reference to David.

3.3 Their Punishment awaits them

Both the Hebrew and the Greek text conclude in verse 7 by the use of respectively לכן - διὰ τοῦτο. But also here we find some peculiarities in the Greek version. In the first hemistich we find this Greek text: "Therefore they shall now be captives of the powerful from the beginning (ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς δυναστῶν)". Here the Hebrew text has "therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile (יִגְלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גֹּלִים)".

The Greek expression ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς δυναστῶν indicates that the reference is Yahweh.[49] Δυνάστης is used as a name for Yahweh in Alexandrian literature in the last centuries BCE.[50] The fact that the word occurs in plural does not change the likelihood of this reference. Thus, in the Greek text the Samaritans will be captives of Yahweh, that is, they will be punished by him.

The reference to the Samaritans appears to occur once more in the second hemistich of this verse. The line "and the neighing of horses shall be removed from Ephraim" is difficult to trace back to MT's version, "and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away". Gelston suggests that the translator may have read סוסים for סרוחים, but the occurrence of "Efraim" may not be explained as a misreading.[51] This deviation is not likely to have happened by accident. According to Josephus, Ephraim was a designation that the Samaritans used for themselves.[52] In this context it seems as if the translator used it ironically as an opposition to the real descendents of Joseph mentioned in the previous verse. In verse 6 the group did not suffer anything over the ruin of Joseph. The same group will, however, be taken as captives of Yahweh, and in the last hemistich of verse 7 the neighing of horses will be taken away from them. The neighing of horses apparently indicates prosperity and military power. And as the group is taken captive this will be taken away from them.

---

[49] Here Gelston suggests that the translator read מראש גדולים (Gelston, "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos," 495). It is of course possible that the translator had these words in mind when he translated, but that does not diminish the connotations this Greek noun has as a name for Yahweh.

[50] Especially in 2 Macc we find it used frequently. For example: 2 Macc 15:29 "Then there was shouting and tumult and they blessed the Sovereign (τὸν δυνάστην) in the language of their fathers".

[51] Gelston, "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos," 494 -95.

[52] Ant 9:290-291 and 11:341. 11:341: "for such is the disposition of the Samaritans, as we have already elsewhere declared, that when the Jews are in adversity, they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth; but when they perceive that some good fortune has befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying, that they belong to them, ***and derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh***."

4 Conclusion

We see that the translator left enough traces of his attitude towards the Samaritans for us to observe them. When the message the prophet Amos directed to the northern kingdom was translated into Greek, the message was given a new meaning. The recipients were now understood to be the contemporary inhabitants of Samaria, the Samaritans. A group which many Jews had strong antipathies against, including the translator of LXX-Amos 6. This passage in LXX may be seen as a documentation of anti-Samaritan attitude. The passage showed several signs of an attitude which is apparent in other Jewish sources from approximately the same time. The Samaritans lived unlawful and lewdly and would consequently be punished by Yahweh.

5 Bibliography

Anderson, Francis I. , and David Noel Freedman. *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1989.

Beentjes, Pancratius C. *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997.

Burchard, C. "Joseph and Aseneth (first Century B.C.-Second century A.D)." In *The Old Testament Pseudigrapha* edited by James H. Charlesworth, 2:177 - 247. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985.

Crown, Alan D. "The Samaritan Diaspora." In *The Samaritans*, edited by Alan D. Crown, 195 - 217. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989.

Dexinger, Ferdinand. "Samaritan Eschatology." In *The Samaritans*, edited by Alan D. Crown, 266 - 292. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989.

Everson, Joseph A. "The Days of Yahweh." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 329 - 337.

Gelston, A. "Some Hebrew misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos." *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 493 - 500.

Glenny, W. Edward. "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos?" *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 524 - 547.

Goldstein, Jonathan A. *II Maccabees, The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1983.

Hanhart, Robert. "Zu den ältesten Traditionen über das samaritanische Schisma." *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982): 106 - 115.

Hiers, Richard H. "Day of the Lord." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 82 - 83. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Kartveit, Magnar. *The Origin of the Samaritans*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2009.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets*. Louvain: Peeters, 2002.

Schart, Aaron. "The Jewish and the Christian Greek Versions of Amos." In *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* edited by Wolfgang Kraus & R. Glenn Wooden, 157 - 177. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

Schuller, Eileen, and Moshe Bernstein. "371-373. 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition." In *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh and Qumran cave 4,*

XXVIII: Miscellanea, part 2, edited by Douglas M. Gropp et al. Oxford: Clarendon, 2001.

Stern, Menahem. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. Vol. 2. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980.

Thackeray, H. St J. "The Greek Translators of the Prophetical Books." *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903): 578 - 585.

Throntveit, Mark A. "Was the Chronicler a Spin Doctor? David in the Books of Chronicles." *Word & World* 23, no. 4 (2003): 374 - 381.

Weiss, Meir. "The Origin of the "Day of the Lord" - Reconsidered." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966): 29 - 71.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Dodekapropheton 2: Joel und Amos*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975.

Ziegler, Joseph. "Die Einheit der Septuaginta zum Zwölfprophetenbuch." In *Syllogie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Septuaginta*, 29 - 42. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1971.

———. *Duodecim prophetae, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum*. Göttingen: Venadenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.