

THE USE OF HOSEA 11:1 IN MATTHEW 2:15: ONE MORE TIME

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Matthew's use of Hos 11:1 is a notoriously difficult and debated text: Joseph "was there [Egypt] until the death of Herod in order that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'"¹ There are three problems with the way in which Matthew uses the OT passage from Hosea. The first is that the verse in Hosea is a mere historical reflection, but Matthew clearly understands it as a direct prophecy that is fulfilled in Christ. The second problem is that what Hosea attributes to the nation Israel, Matthew attributes to the individual Jesus. Third, the Hos 11:1 reference to Israel coming out of Egypt first introduces the holy family with Jesus entering into Egypt, and it is only later in Matt 2:21 that Jesus and his parents come out of Egypt.

In view of these problems, there have been a variety of responses. One commentator has said that this passage is "a parade example of the manner in which the NT uses the OT," especially in not being "interested in reproducing the meaning" of the OT texts but in reading into the OT foreign Christological presuppositions.² Another commentator has said that this is "the most troubling case" of "NT exegesis of the OT" for many people.³ Others have viewed the use of Hosea 11 as a mere mistaken interpretation by Matthew, somehow viewing Hos 11:1 as a prophecy when it was only a historical reflection on the original exodus.⁴ For example, M. Eugene Boring has said that "Matthew's use of Scripture" in Matthew 1 and 2, including the Hosea 11 quotation, is "in contrast with their obvious original mean-

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¹ It is clear that Matthew has quoted the Hebrew of Hos 11:1 (which reads "my son") and not the Greek OT (which reads "his children"), on which, e.g., see D. A. Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1–12* (EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 91.

² Peter Enns, "Biblical Interpretation, Jewish," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000) 164 (for the Enns reference, I am thankful to James W. Scott, "The Inspiration and Interpretation of God's Word with Special Reference to Peter Enns, Part II: The Interpretation of Representative Passages," *WTJ* 71 [2009] 264).

³ Martin Pickup, "New Testament Interpretation of the Old Testament: The Theological Rationale of Midrashic Exegesis," *JETS* 51 (2008) 371, who says "it is futile to try to defend Matthew's messianic interpretation of Hos 11:1 on grammatical-historical grounds" (p. 372; so also see p. 373) and "to put it bluntly Matthew appears to be reading Hos 11:1 out of context" (p. 374).

⁴ E.g. D. M. Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 236–38. See also David L. Turner, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 90, who, while not in agreement, gives a sampling of scholars holding this view. Cf. G. E. Ladd, "Historic Premillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium* (ed. R. G. Clouse; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1977) 20–21, who says that Matthew's interpretation of Hos 11:1 as a prophecy was not intended by Hosea as a prophecy but only a description of a past event (Israel's exodus out of Egypt).

ing,” and “the changes he makes in the text itself ... make him subject to the charge of manipulating the evidence in a way that would be unconvincing to outsiders.”⁵ Others have attributed to Matthew a Qumran-like special revelatory insight into the “full meaning” (*sensus plenior*) of Hos 11:1, a revelatory stance no longer available to subsequent church interpreters.⁶ Still others have understood Matthew to be employing a faulty hermeneutic used elsewhere in Judaism, which Christian interpreters should not emulate, but that nevertheless the interpretative conclusion is purportedly inspired by God.⁷ Somewhat similarly, but with a new wrinkle, others have concluded that Matthew’s interpretation of Hos 11:1 is not to be considered correct according to our modern standards of interpretation, but was part of an acceptable Jewish hermeneutic in the first century world, which modern scholars have no right to judge as wrong.⁸ According to this view, the interpretative procedure, while strange, is to be seen as Spirit-inspired and even to be seen as a pattern for the contemporary church to follow. From another perspective, some see the interpretative procedure not to be wrong but so unique that Christians today should not dare practice the same procedure in approaching other similar OT passages that merely narrate a historical event.

Usually such conclusions are made because Matthew (and other NT writers) is being judged by what is often called a “grammatical-historical” interpretative method and by a particular understanding of that method.

Finally, there are scholars who understand Matthew to be viewing Israel’s past exodus out of Egypt in Hos 11:1 as generally typological of Jesus coming out of Egypt in the light of the broader OT canonical context.⁹ Typology can be defined as the study of analogical correspondences between persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God’s special revelation, which,

⁵ Boring, *The Gospel of Matthew* (The New Interpreters Bible 8; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995) 153. Similarly, S. V. McCasland, “Matthew Twists the Scriptures,” *JBL* 80 (1961) 144–46, says that Matthew “misunderstood Hosea 11:1” and “found a meaning entirely foreign to the original” of that in the Hosea passage. So also William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956) 35–36, and Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928) 9.

⁶ See, e.g., G. D. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 166–67; see again Turner, *Matthew* 90, for examples for this among other commentators.

⁷ See, e.g., Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 124–25, especially when seen together with Longenecker’s general hermeneutical approach to the Old in the New in “Who is the Prophet talking About? Some Reflections on the New Testament’s Use of the Old,” *Them* 13 (1987) 4–8; and “Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?,” *TynBul* 21 (1970) 3–38. Beegle’s directly above view also comes close to this perspective.

⁸ This is the general approach to the Old in the New by Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* 113–63, who includes the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15 among his examples (p. 134); Enns wants to classify this as an “odd use,” on which see further his subsequent article “Response to Professor Beale,” *Them* 32 (2007) 9–11; and Dan McCartney and Peter Enns, “Matthew and Hosea: A Response to John Sailhamer,” *WTJ* 63 (2001) 97–105. Nevertheless, Enns’s actual explanation is what I would consider to be a biblical-theological one that is not contrary to the standards of doing biblical theology today and which biblical theologians would accept and understand (see my further analysis in my *Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism* 88–89).

⁹ Among many, see R. T. France, *Matthew* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 40, 86; Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1–12* 91–93; and Turner, *Matthew* 90–91.

from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature. According to this definition, the essential characteristics of a type are: (1) analogical correspondence; (2) historicity; (3) forward-pointing; (4) escalation; (5) retrospection (though this last element will be qualified below).¹⁰

The notion that OT history could be a foreshadowing of events in the NT has a long-standing interpretative history among interpreters, stretching back to the apostolic fathers. The hermeneutical legitimacy of such typological interpretation rests on the presuppositional legitimacy of what is considered to be a biblical philosophy of history in which God is seen to be designing patterns of earlier history to foreshadow later patterns of history.¹¹ Scholars, of course, vary on their acceptance of this presupposition and thus differ about the hermeneutical legitimacy of the typological approach by the NT writers. Some have criticized the typological approach as being virtually identical to the *sensus plenior* view, since NT authors' typological insight has often been viewed as insight that could only have come through the work of the Spirit retrospectively, after the death and resurrection of Christ.¹² Accordingly, OT authors would not have been privy to such typological interpretation of their writings.

The approach of this essay will broadly agree that Matthew employed a typological approach but will attempt to show that Matthew's typological perspective was not something unique to his own charismatic revelatory perspective. Therefore, Matthew's interpretation was not purely something that he would have viewed to have been accessible only retrospectively through the Spirit's revelatory work, after the coming of Christ. Rather, what Matthew sees was already something seen to some degree by Hosea himself. Another way to put this is that Matthew's typological interpretation of Hos 11:1 was stimulated by Hosea's own typological understanding of that verse, much of which can even be discerned by a broad grammatical-historical exegesis of that entire chapter in Hosea.

Discussion in this introductory section could review recent discussions of so-called "intertextuality" or, my preference, "inner-biblical exegesis," but I do not think it will substantially affect my following interpretation of the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15.¹³

¹⁰ For discussion of this definition of typology, see G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), chaps. 1 and 4.

¹¹ Among many sources that could be cited on typology in the NT, see the classic work in the field by Leonard Goppelt, *Typos* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

¹² Though there are some who do not view typology as deriving exclusively from a retrospective vantage point but has seeds in the OT that are developed in the New (e.g. see Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1–12* 91–93).

¹³ For further discussion of this subject, see Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, chapter 3 and some representative sources cited therein. The remainder of this article is based on a paper delivered at the Affinity Theological Studies Conference in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, England (Feb. 2–4, 2011) and again at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for the Gheens Lectures (March 15–16, 2011), which was summarized briefly in Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) 406–12.

I. A GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING MATTHEW'S USE OF HOSEA 11:1

Besides a “strict” grammatical-historical method, there are, however, other approaches to interpreting Scripture that have hermeneutical viability and integrity. For instance, could it be that Matthew is intentionally not only employing a balanced “grammatical-historical” approach but is also employing a kind of biblical-theological approach, and the two approaches are complementary?¹⁴

The argument of this essay is that Matthew is interpreting Hos 11:1 in the light of its relation to the entire chapter in which it is found and in the light of the entire book, and that his approach does, indeed, verge upon a grammatical-historical approach combined with a biblical-theological methodology. In Hosea 11, after alluding to Israel's exodus out of Egypt (Hos 11:1), the history of the nation in her land is narrated briefly. They did not respond faithfully to God's deliverance of them from Egypt and to his prophetic messengers exhorting them to be loyal to God, but they worshipped idols, despite the grace that God had shown to them (11:2–5). Consequently, God will judge them for their lack of repentance (11:6–7). Nevertheless, the judgment will not be absolute because of God's compassion on the nation (11:8–9). God's compassion is said to express itself through future restoration of his people, who “will walk after the Lord” and “come trembling from the west. And they will come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria,” so that God “will settle them in their houses” in their land (11:10–11).

1. *The focus in Hosea of Israel's future eschatological return from Egypt.* Thus, in the end time, according to Hos 11:10–11, there will be a restoration of Israel from several lands, including “Egypt.”¹⁵

a. *The significance of the use of Numbers 23 and 24 in Hos 11:10–11.* In fact, even the lion imagery in Hos 11:10–11 in direct connection to Israel coming “out of

¹⁴ The usual “strict” understanding of a “grammatical-historical” approach is too limited in its scope, since it studies a passage primarily from only two angles: (1) investigation of only the human author's viewpoint through a study of the historical, linguistic, grammatical, genre contexts, etc., of a passage; (2) the divine author can theoretically be left out of consideration until the “grammatical-historical” study is complete, since the meaning sought for is only that of the human author. For example, even an interpreter who does not believe in divine inspiration must study a prophet like Isaiah from the viewpoint that Isaiah himself believed that he was inspired in what he wrote, and, therefore, that intention must be projected onto the process of interpreting Isaiah. How much more should this be the case for the believing exegete? Accordingly, this is only one example showing that considering divine intention should be part of a grammatical-historical approach. Thus, grammatical-historical exegesis and typology are two aspects of the same thing: hearing God speak in Scripture (I am grateful for a personal communication from Vern Poythress for this observation; see further his “The Presence of God Qualifying Our Notions of Grammatical-Historical Interpretation: Genesis 3:15 as a Test Case,” *JETS* 50 [2007] 87–103).

¹⁵ There are some commentators who say that “Egypt” is metaphorical for Assyria, but the “west” is also mentioned here, which would seem to point to a restoration from a number of lands. Such a restoration from multiple lands appears to be supported also by other OT prophecies (e.g. Isa 11:11 says, “The Lord will again recover the second time . . . the remnant of his people . . . from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea”; Isa 11:15–16 likewise foresees Israel's future return from both Egypt and Assyria; cf. Isa 49:12; 60:4–9). On this issue of whether or not “Egypt” is literal or metaphorical, see Appendix 2.

Egypt” is an allusion to her first Exodus in Numbers 23 and 24, where God is said to lead her “out of Egypt” and the people and the king are compared to a “lion”:¹⁶

Numbers	Hos 11:10–11
<p>Num 23:22a: “God brings them <u>out of Egypt</u>, He is for them like the horns of the wild ox.”</p> <p>Num 23:24: “Behold, a people rises <u>like a lioness</u>, And <u>as a lion</u> it lifts itself; It will not lie down until it devours the prey, And drinks the blood of the slain.”</p> <p>Num 24:8: “God brings him <u>out of Egypt</u>, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox ...</p> <p>Num 24:9a: “He crouches, he lies down <u>as a lion</u>, And <u>as a lion</u>, who dares rouse him?”</p>	<p>He will roar <u>like a lion</u>; indeed, he will roar, and his sons will come trembling ... like birds <u>from Egypt</u> ...</p>

The two Numbers passages together with Hos 11:11 are the only places in the OT where there is the combined mention of (1) God bringing Israel “out of Egypt”; and (2) of either the deliverer or the delivered being compared to a lion. In Numbers 23 the people who came “out of Egypt” in the past are compared to a lion and in Numbers 24 Israel’s king is also said to have come “out of Egypt” and is also compared to a lion (though it is possible that this describes God).¹⁷ It is pos-

¹⁶ See Duane Garrett, *Hosea* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997) 229, who also argues that Num 24:8–9 is an allusion in Hos 11:10–11. Intriguingly, the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text cites as an allusion in Matt 2:15 not only Hos 11:1 but also Num 23:22 and 24:8. See John H. Sailhamer, “Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15,” *WTJ* 63 (2001) 87–96, in support of Nestle-Aland’s proposal; so also W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988) 262; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33A; Dallas: Word, 1993) 37 (for a list of others in support, see Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1–12* 93). It is unlikely the Numbers texts are allusions in Hos 11:1, but perhaps they stand as echoes behind Hos 11:1, which anticipate the clearer allusions to Num 23:22, 24 and 24:9 in Hos 11:10.

¹⁷ That the individual king of Israel is referred to is evident from Num 24:7, the pronouns “him” in 24:8, and the blessing and cursing in 24:9 that refers to the king. In addition, Num 24:8–9a is an allusion itself to the prophecy of the eschatological king from Judah in Gen 49:9: “Judah is a lion’s whelp ... he couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion who dares rouse him up?” I think that it is likely that Num 24:7–8a, 9a portrays the past exodus, but it is possible that it describes a future coming out of Egypt in the light of the Gen. 49:9 allusion and in view of the clear eschatological prophecy of the end-time king in Num 24:17–19, which appears to continue the description of the king in 24:7–9. This future kingly

sible that the Numbers 24 portrayal is of a future exodus, but more likely the past exodus is in view in both Numbers' passages, and then Israel's future victories come into view in the following contexts, which likely include an eschatological perspective (Num 23:24 and 24:8b, 9b, 17–19). A possible problem with Num 24:7–8a being a reference to a past exodus is that there was no “king” who came out of Egypt at that time, unless one identifies such a leader with Moses, which would appear to be the case (see Exod 2:14, where Moses is called a “prince” [MT] or a “ruler” [LXX; so also Acts 7:35]).

The exact identification of the “lion” in Hos 11:10 is thorny. It is possible that the lion in Hosea 11 is the king coming “out of Egypt” from Num 24:7–9, but it appears to continue a description of God himself.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in both Numbers 23 and 24 God is said to be “for them [or him] like the horns of the wild ox,” so that the directly following lion description in Numbers may likewise be applied to the people and the king because they are identified with their God, who is the one giving ultimate power for deliverance. This ambivalence may be reflected also in Hos 11:10. Nevertheless, in the light of Israel and her king being likened to a “lion” in Numbers 23 and 24, God may well be the one compared to a “lion” in Hosea 11 because of the corporate identification between Israel and her God and because God is the one who brings Israel “out of Egypt” in both Numbers' texts. On the other hand, as we will see below, the parallel between Hos 11:11 and Hos 1:11 could suggest further that the “lion” of 11:10 may be the eschatological kingly leader of Israel's return. This might be pointed to further by Hos 3:5, where Israel's return from captivity is also led by an eschatological Davidic king. That an Israelite leader could be compared to a “lion” in 11:10 is also pointed to by Numbers 23 and 24, where the lion represents Israel and her human leader.

Thus, the precise identification of the “lion” figure in Hos 11:10 is somewhat difficult, and there may be an intentional ambiguity, though on the surface the reference seems to point to God being “like a lion,”¹⁹ which is my own final assess-

identity is underscored by the LXX that translates the Hebrew of Num 24:7 (“water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed *will be* by many waters”) by “there shall come a man out of his seed, and he shall rule over many nations.” The fact that allusion to the end-time king of Gen 49:9 occurs in both Num 23:24 and 24:9 complicates the temporal scope of Numbers 23 and 24, though the Numbers texts may indicate a beginning fulfillment of Gen 49:9.

¹⁸ See Sailhamer, “Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15,” for discussion of these allusions in Hosea 11.

¹⁹ Could it be that Matthew was aware of the possible echo to Num 23:22 and Num 24:7–9 (v. 8, “God brings him [the king] out of Egypt”) in Hos 11:1 and the later allusion to Num 23:22, 24, and 24:8–9 in Hos 11:10? (See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007] 80, who sees that Hos 11:1 reflects the above Numbers 23 and 24 texts.) This is pointed to from the fact that many commentators view the background of the “King of the Jews” and “his star” in Matt 2:2 to be a clear allusion to Num 24:17! If these connections are plausible, could this have fueled Matthew all the more to have applied Hos 11:1 to Jesus *the Messiah* as representative of *Israel*, doing what she had failed to do? (as argued, e.g., by Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.262; cf. similarly David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* [Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1972] 85). As we have seen earlier, some commentators even see Matt 2:15 as an allusion to these Numbers texts together with Hos 11:1. Cf. similarly Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 34.

ment. In this respect, the reference to “he” (Hos 11:10b, “he will roar like a lion”) likely has its antecedent in the “Lord” (11:10a, “They will walk after the *Lord*.”)

Though there are some difficult interpretative issues in the Numbers 23 and 24 references and their use in Hos 11:10–11, in the latter passage it would appear likely that Hosea sees that these Numbers allusions about the past coming “out of Egypt” together with the “lion” image will be recapitulated again in the eschatological future. Accordingly, the past exodus is seen to foreshadow a later end-time exodus, which is a typological understanding. And, if Num 24:8–9 is not a narration of the first Exodus but a prediction of an end-time exodus, then Hos 11:10–11 may even be the reiteration of that prophecy, though Numbers 23 would still be included likely in a typological sense.

Thus, the main point or goal of Hos 11:1–11 is the accomplishment of Israel’s future restoration from the nations, including “Egypt.”²⁰ The overall meaning of chapter 11 is to indicate that God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which led to their ungrateful unbelief, is not the final word about God’s deliverance of them; though they will be judged, God will deliver them again, even from “Egypt.” The chapter begins with the exodus out of Egypt and ends with the same exodus out of Egypt, the former referring to the past event and the latter to a yet future event. The pattern of the first exodus at the beginning of Israel’s history (Hos 11:1) will be repeated again at the end of Israel’s history in the end time. It is unlikely that Hosea saw these two exoduses to be accidental or coincidental or unconnected similar events. Hosea appears to understand that Israel’s first exodus (Hos 11:1) was to be recapitulated at the time of the nation’s latter-day exodus. This understanding of 11:1 *in its context* is fueled further by recalling that Hosea has already seen the first exodus in Numbers 23 and 24 to be recapitulated in a latter-day exodus.

b. *The significance of repeated references throughout Hosea of Israel’s first exodus from Egypt and of Israel’s end-time exodus from Egypt.* Mention of a first exodus from Egypt outside of 11:1 occurs elsewhere in Hosea and a future return from Egypt would appear to be implied by repeated prophecies of Israel returning to Egypt in the future, though Hos 1:10–11 (on which see below) and 11:11 are the only texts explicitly affirming a future return from Egypt (though, as we have seen above there are several texts in Isaiah that are also explicit about this):

²⁰ Hos 11:12, concerning Israel’s deception and rebellion, is actually the beginning of the next literary segment, which is a negative narrative continued throughout chapter 12.

First Exodus Out of Egypt	Future Return to Egypt (implying a future return from Egypt)
<p>Hos 2:15b: And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt (though this passage compares the first exodus with a future exodus).</p> <p>Hos 12:13: But by a prophet the Lord brought Israel from Egypt, And by a prophet he was kept.</p> <p>Cf. Hos 12:9: But I have been the Lord your God since the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Cf. Hos 13:4: Yet I have been the Lord your God since the land of Egypt, and you were not to know any god except me, for there is no savior besides me.</p>	<p>Hos 7:11: So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense; They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.</p> <p>Hos 7:16b: Their princes will fall by the sword Because of the insolence of their tongue. This <i>will be</i> their derision in the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Hos 8:13b: Now he will remember their iniquity, And punish <i>them</i> for their sins; They will return to Egypt.</p> <p>Hos 9:3: They will not remain in the Lord's land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean <i>food</i>.</p> <p>Hos 9:6: For behold, they will go because of destruction; Egypt will gather them up, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take over their treasures of silver; Thorns <i>will be</i> in their tents.</p> <p>See also Hos 1:11: And they [Israel] will go up from the land [of Egypt].²¹</p> <p>Hos 11:5: He [Israel] assuredly will return to the land of Egypt.²²</p> <p>Note the implication of a future exodus from Egypt in Hos 2:15 above.</p>

²¹ On which see the discussion below.

²² Several commentaries and English translations render Hos 11:5 as "He will not return to the land of Egypt." Several commentaries and English translations, however, have "he will assuredly return to the land of Egypt"; others render verse 5 as a question, "will he not return to the land of Egypt?" I understand the expression to be a positive one, on which see Appendix 1 below for further discussion.

If one were to have asked Hosea if he believed that God was sovereign over history and that God had designed that the first exodus from Egypt was a historical pattern that foreshadowed a second exodus from Egypt, would he not likely have answered “yes”? At least, this appears to be the way Matthew understood Hosea, especially using the language of the first exodus from Hos 11:1 in the light of the broader and particularly the immediate context, especially of Hosea 11,²³ where a “return to Egypt” is predicted (Hos 11:5), and whose main point and goal is the end-time exodus from Egypt (Hos 11:11). What better language to use for Hosea’s prophecy of the second exodus and the beginning of its fulfillment in Jesus than the language already at hand describing the first exodus. This is a short step away from saying that the first exodus was seen by Hosea and, more clearly, by Matthew as a historical pattern pointing to the reoccurrence of the same pattern later in Israel’s history. In this respect, Matthew’s use of Hos 11:1 may also be called “typological” in that he understood, in the light of the entire chapter 11 of Hosea, that the first exodus in Hos 11:1 initiated a historical process of sin and judgment to be culminated in another final exodus (Hos 11:10–11). After writing the above, I found that Duane Garrett has also said in this regard that

We need look no further than Hosea 11 to understand that Hosea, too, believed that God followed patterns in working with his people. Here the slavery in Egypt is the pattern for a second period of enslavement in an alien land (v. 5), and the exodus from Egypt is the type for a new exodus (vv. 10–11). Thus the application of typological principles to Hos 11:1 [by Matthew] is in keeping with the nature of prophecy itself and with Hosea’s own method.²⁴

Many commentators have observed that the placement of the quotation of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15 appears to be out of order, since the quotation is appended directly only to the report of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus going to Egypt and not coming out of Egypt. Rather, they are said to come out of Egypt only later in 2:21. Accordingly, a number of commentators have noted that the quotation would seem to

²³ And in light of the hopes of the first exodus and implied second exodus elsewhere in the book.

²⁴ *Hosea* 222. See also the recent article by Richard B. Gaffin, “The Redemptive-Historical View,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* (ed. S. E. Porter and B. M. Stovell; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012) 106–8, who has also briefly noticed the typological significance of the past and future references to an exodus throughout Hosea and within chapter 11 of Hosea itself, and that Matthew follows Hosea’s method in Matt 2:15, thus exhibiting a grammatical-historical exegesis of Hos 11:1 in its context. He sees Jesus summing up Israel in himself, which actually also reflects a biblical-theological approach. I have also found subsequently that apparently the only other commentator who sees significance in the relation of Hos 11:1 to 11:10–11 is the very brief discussion of T. L. Howard, “The Use of Hosea in Matthew 2:15: An Alternative Solution,” *BibSac* 143 (1986) 321–22, 324, who argues that since Matthew would have viewed that Jesus would be the one to restore Israel into her yet future, final millennial kingdom, purportedly implied by Hos 11:10–11, this would have sparked Matthew’s analogical identification of Jesus with Hos 11:1. Strangely, Howard does not see Matthew using Hos 11:1 typologically but only analogically, seeing no foreshadowing element in Hos 11:1, so that Matt 2:15 does not represent any kind of beginning prophetic fulfillment of Hos 11:1. This dilutes Matthew’s “fulfillment” formula. See also the recent article by Robert W. Wall, “The Canonical View,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* 127, who implies that the repeated past references to the exodus in Hosea (11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4) have a forward-pointing significance, which is recognized by Matthew and who reminded me about the more muted references to a past exodus in Hos 12:9 and 13:4.

have been better placed directly after Matt 2:21, where it says that the holy family returned from Egypt and “came into the land of Israel.” Those who acknowledge the odd placement in 2:15 explain it to be an anticipation of the return from Egypt narrated in the following context.²⁵ That this, in fact, is partly the case is evident from noticing that the beginning of 2:15 mentions that the holy family “was there until the death of Herod.” This clearly anticipates verses 20–21, which narrated the return of Joseph and his family in inextricable connection to the death of Herod. Others contend that the quotation could not be put after verse 21 because the geographical focus at the end of verse 21 and in verses 22–23 is on the destination of Israel and particularly Nazareth. To have put the quotation after 2:21 would have distracted from the geographical focus on Israel and Nazareth. Hence, the chapter’s overriding concern with *geographical* locations led Matthew to put the quotation at verse 15, even though logically, the quotation appears to be out of place.²⁶ The geographical view would still see verse 15 as an anticipation of verses 20–21.²⁷

In this connection, the repeated OT pattern of Israel or Israelites reentering Egypt and then coming back out of Egypt may stand in the background of Matthew’s reference to Hos 11:1 and have bearing on the apparent odd placement of the quotation. The passages typically adduced by several commentators to compose this pattern are 1 Kgs 11:40; Jer 26:21–23; 44:12–15; 2 Kgs 25:26; Jer 41:16–18; and 43:1–7.²⁸ All of these passages portray Egypt as an apparent place of refuge from danger in Israel,²⁹ though in each case, it is disobedient Israelites seeking the refuge, and, except for 1 Kgs 11:40, Egypt becomes a place of danger. Craig Blomberg sees

²⁵ For a view that is compatible with this perspective, see M. J. J. Menken, “Out of Egypt I Have Called My Son: Some Observations on the Quotation from Hosea 11.1,” in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen* (ed. A. Hilhorst, Geurt Hendrik Van Kooten, and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 143–52, who sees that Matthew’s editorial intentions caused the apparent displacement “to emphasize that the command of the angel of the Lord and the word spoken by the prophet are of equal authority and are fulfilled at the same time” (p. 150).

²⁶ For a summary of these views, see Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel* (WUNT 2/257; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 128–31, who finds these explanations unsatisfying and solves the problem by identifying “Egypt” in Matt 2:15 metaphorically in contrast to the literal geographical references to “Egypt” in 2:13, 14, and 19. His main argument is that Israel has become like Egypt with Herod as another persecuting Pharaoh, so that when the holy family leaves Israel for Egypt, they are really departing from metaphorical Egypt to go to literal Egypt (see *ibid.* 313–14). Kennedy’s argument is creative, interesting, and attractive but still not as persuasive as the views that he criticizes, especially as these views are enhanced by the following discussion here about the context of Hosea. His view entails viewing “Egypt” in verse 15 to be metaphorical while the directly preceding and following references are literal, which is a hard inconsistency to overcome, even given his creative proposals.

²⁷ E.g. see France, *Matthew* 79–80.

²⁸ Though only going into Egypt is mentioned in the last three references, perhaps with the implication of returning back to Israel. See Kennedy, *Recapitulation of Israel* 134, as among those commentators who cite these references as relevant for Matt 2:14–15. Cf. 1 Kgs 11:14–22.

²⁹ Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.387–388; 14.21; 15.45–47; 2 Macc 5:8–9, though a return to Israel is not mentioned in these passages; see, however, Josephus, *War* 7.409–410, 16, which mentions both entering into Egypt and return from Egypt. See France, *Matthew* 79, who sees that all of the preceding passages viewing Egypt as a place of asylum to be relevant to Matt 2:13–15.

the possibility that 1 Kgs 11:40 in particular may stand behind Matt 2:14–15:³⁰ “Solomon sought therefore to put Jeroboam to death; but Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt, and he was in Egypt until the death of Solomon” (Matt 2:14–15 reads, “So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left³¹ for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod”). This pattern of entering and then returning from Egypt is a recapitulation of Israel’s original entering into Egypt and their exodus (Gen 46:4; Ps 105:23 and 105:37–38), which also became a place of suffering and sin (e.g. see Ezek 20:7–8; 23:3, 8, 19, 27), as it was in the case of Israelites who later sojourned into Egypt.³²

This broader OT pattern of entering and then returning from Egypt is highlighted particularly by Hosea, a pattern that we have discussed earlier that is found throughout Hosea. The broader OT pattern, especially as it is found in Hosea, may have some bearing on the purported odd placement of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15. We have observed that Hosea’s broader context indicates Israel’s future reentering into Egypt and a future subsequent coming out of Egypt again. The reference to Hos 11:1 we have argued is to be seen within the context of repeated references throughout the book to a past exodus *and* Israel’s future *reentering and subsequent return out of Egypt*. In particular, this pattern is fully found within chapter 11 of Hosea itself: Hos 11:5, only four verses after Hos 11:1, says that “he [Israel] indeed will return to the land of Egypt,” and this is followed by the main narrational point of the entire chapter that “his sons . . . will come trembling like birds from Egypt” (11:11). Thus, the eleventh chapter of Hosea begins with Israel’s past exodus from Egypt (11:1), is punctuated in the middle with reference to Israel reentering Egypt, and concludes with a promise of their future return from Egypt (11:11). James Limburg has summarized the storyline of Hosea 11 in the following manner: “Thus the story comes to its end [in verse 11]: out of Egypt, back into ‘Egypt’ because of rebellion; then out of ‘Egypt,’ back home again because of the Lord’s compassion.”³³ And all of these references in 11:1, 11:5, and 11:11 are logically and narratively linked to one another.

In this light, if Matthew is aware of the broader and especially the immediate context of his Hos 11:1 quotation, then would he not have in mind both reentering into Egypt as well as return out of Egypt? Therefore, if the broader context of Hosea, especially Hosea 11, is in mind in Matt 2:15, as we have argued, then the quotation in Matt 2:15 is not oddly placed. In this regard, the holy family’s return to Egypt is a very crucial part of the packed typological Hos 11:1 reference.³⁴ The

³⁰ See Craig Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *A Commentary on the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 7. Cf. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans and Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2005) 122.

³¹ Note the use of “flee” in the angel’s command in Matt 2:13, bringing verses 14–15 even closer to 1 Kgs 11:40 (though the Greek words rendering “flee” in both passages are different).

³² Though for Jeroboam it was only a place of refuge.

³³ *Hosea-Micah* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988) 40.

³⁴ Others have concluded that Matthew understood Hos 11:1 to be generally typological of Jesus in the light of the broader Old Testament canonical context (and not the narrower Hosea context): e.g. see R. T. France, *Matthew* (INTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 40, 86, and Turner, *Matthew* 90–91.

narration of the family going to Egypt is viewed as an inauguration of the contextualized Hos 11:1 reference that included in its wider purview Israel's future re-entering into Egypt,³⁵ and then Matt 2:21 records a later stage of the fulfillment by recording the return back from Egypt to the land of Israel. This borders on Matthew having a "grammatical-historical" exegetical perspective of Hos 11:1 in the context of 11:2–11! Matthew is unpacking what is already exegetically latent in Hosea 11. This explanation adds further evidence to support the view of many commentators that the quotation in Matt 2:15 anticipates 2:21. However, this explanation also importantly shows that 2:15 is not completely anticipatory but indicates that 2:14 is an actual beginning fulfillment of Hos 11:1, *understood in the immediate context* of Hosea, especially Hosea 11. As we have seen, the more specific re-entering into and returning from Egypt" pattern found in Hosea is corroborated elsewhere in the OT and may enhance the force of the Hosea pattern.³⁶

2. *The one king who represents Israel in the future return from Egypt.* Some have seen it to be problematic that what was spoken of the nation in Hos 11:1 is applied by Matthew, not to the nation, but to an individual messianic figure. Accordingly, Matthew is seen by some as distorting the original corporate meaning of Hos 11:1.

However, the application of what was applied to the nation in 11:1 to the one person, Jesus, also may have been sparked by the narrative about the king of Israel coming out of Egypt in Numbers 24, which appears to be partly alluded to in Hos 11:10–11. In fact, Numbers itself applies the very same lion imagery to the people (23:24) as to the king (24:9). The potential to apply corporate language to the individual is also suggested by Hos 1:10–11, where Israel will be called "sons of the living God" at the time of their future restoration, which will be led by "one leader." In fact, even the statement at the end of 1:11, "and they will go up from the land is a reference to going up from the "land" of Egypt,³⁷ especially since it is an allusion to Exod 1:10 and Isa 11:16.³⁸ After all, what sense does it make that this

³⁵ William Hendrickson, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973) 178, is the only commentator who even remotely suggests that the Hos 11:1 quotation pertains to the holy family's entering into Egypt, since he sees that the broader OT typology of the exodus in relation to Jesus includes God's initial protection of Israel in bringing them into Egypt.

³⁶ References only to a future reentering into Egypt occur in Deut 28:68; Isa 30:2–3; 31:1; Jer 2:18; 42:14–18; 44:8, 12, 14; cf. Jews living in Egypt in the future in Isa 20:3–4; Jer 24:8; 44:1, 13, 15, 26–27. References only to a final eschatological return from Egypt, which assumes that Israelites would reenter Egypt in the future, are found in Isa 11:11, 15–16; 27:13; Zech 10:10.

³⁷ The Hebrew word "land" (*ʿāres*) refers in Hosea to Israel (7x), Egypt (5x), earth (2x), Assyria (1x), and the wilderness of Israel's sojourn (1x). However, the idea of "going up from the land" occurs only in 1:11 (= 2:2, MT) and 2:15 (= 2:17, MT): the former text has "they will go up from the land" (*wʿālū min-hāʿāres*) and the latter has "she [Israel] went up from the land (*ʿlōtāh mēʿeres*) of Egypt," the latter referring to Israel's first exodus. This identifies the two passages, suggesting that 1:11 is a reference to Israel "going up from the land" of Egypt at the time of her future restoration.

³⁸ What confirms that the expression in Hos 1:11 refers to "coming up from the land" of Egypt is the observation that it is an allusion to either Exod 1:10 or Isa 11:16 which has *ʿālū + min-hāʿāres* in the expression "they [or "he" = Israel] went up from the land [of Egypt]" (though Judges 11:13 and especially 19:30 are nearly identical to Isa 11:16; almost identical to Isa 11:16 is Zech 10:10, though it uses the verb "return" followed by "from the land," and both Egypt and Assyria are referred to as in Isa 11:16). Fifteen other times in the OT the same Hebrew wording is used but refers to God causing Israel

refers to the land of Israel, since at the end time, Israel was to be restored *back to her land*, and to describe this as Israel “going up from her own land” would be exceedingly odd? If this is a reference to Israel’s future return from Egypt, it fits admirably with the hope expressed in Hos 11:10–11 (and other such implied references noted above), and it would specifically affirm that such a future exodus would be led by an individual leader (literally the Hebrew reads “one head”). Such a return led by an individual leader appears to be further described in 3:5 as a latter-day Davidic king: “afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they will come trembling to the Lord ... in the last days.” This image of “trembling” in Hos 3:5 to describe the manner in which Israel approaches God when they are restored is parallel to the description of the manner of their restoration in 11:10–11, where also “they will come trembling from Egypt” (“trembling” is repeated twice in 11:10–11, though a different Hebrew verb is used than in 3:5). This may point further to Hosea’s biblical-theological understanding that when Israel would come out of Egypt in the future (according to 1:11 *and* 11:10–11), they would, indeed, be led by an individual king, which enhances further why Matthew could apply the corporate national language of Hos 11:1 and apply it to an individual king, Jesus. Could Matthew not have had such a biblical-theological reading of Hosea? We could even say that Matthew may be interpreting Hos 11:1 and 11:10–11 by Hos 1:10–11.

Interestingly, the reference to the restoration of “the sons of the living God” in Hos 1:10 has its closest parallel in all of the Bible to Matt 16:16, where Peter professes that Jesus is “the Messiah, *the Son of the living God*.” This may well be an allusion to Hos 1:10³⁹ by which Jesus is seen as the individual kingly son leading the sons of Israel, whom he represents.⁴⁰ Such an identification of this individual son with the corporate sons is likely the reason that Matt 2:15 applies the corporate “son” reference of Hos 11:1 to the individual Jesus.

There is one last rationale for understanding how Matthew can take what applied to the nation in Hos 11:1 and apply it to the individual Messiah. Duane Gar-

to “go up from the land” of Egypt (Exod 3:8; 32:4, 8; Lev 11:45; 1 Kgs 12:28; 2 Kgs 17:7, 36; Jer 2:6; 7:22; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 9:7; Mic 6:4; Ps 81:10 [11]; cf. Deut 20:1) or five times the expression is used with reference to Moses doing the same thing (Exod 32:1, 7, 23; 33:1; Num 16:13). It is possible that the expression in Hos 1:11 (= 2:2, MT) is a collective allusion to all of these references, which would only enforce a reference to “going up from the land” of *Egypt* in the Hosea passage. See Derek Drummond Bass, “Hosea’s Use of Scripture” 128–29, who has proposed that Exod 1:10 is the allusion in Hos 1:11 (= 2:2, MT). Isaiah 11:16 may be uppermost in mind, since it is the only other reference using this wording that refers to Israel’s future restoration and uses it in conjunction with restoration from “Assyria,” which Hos 11:11 also does together with restoration from Egypt (note the similar combination of Egypt and Assyria in Hos 7:11; 9:3; 12:1). Or, Isaiah (written between c. 739–690) could be dependent on Hosea (written c. between 755 and 725 BC), since their ministries overlapped by about 15 years. If so, then a plausible inner-biblical trajectory would be Exod 1:10 > Hos 1:11 > Isa 11:11. Or, both Hosea and Isaiah could be alluding to Exod 1:10 independently and understanding it typologically of the future.

³⁹ See Mark J. Goodwin, “Hosea and ‘the Son of the Living God,’ in Matthew 16:16b,” *CBQ* 67 (2005) 265–83, who has proposed such an allusion.

⁴⁰ The only other occurrence of “sons” together with “living God” occurs in early Jewish literature, though not as close to the wording of Hosea 1 and Matthew 16: Esth 16:16 (“sons of the most high, the most mighty living God”) and 3 Macc 6:28 (“sons of the almighty and living God of heaven”).

rett has analyzed the use of Genesis in Hosea and has found that repeatedly the prophet alludes to descriptions in Genesis of the individual patriarchs and to other significant individuals in Israel's history. Sometimes these are good portrayals and sometimes bad. The prophet applies these descriptions to the nation of his day. For example, the iniquity of Israel in the present involves her following the same pattern of disobedience as that of Adam (Gen 6:7) or Jacob (Gen 12:2–5), and the promise made to the individual Jacob to “make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because of multitude” (Gen 32:12; cf. Gen 15:5 and 22:17 addressed to Abraham) is now reapplied and addressed directly to the nation Israel: “yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered” (Hos 1:10). Similarly, the valley of Achor, where Achan and his family were taken to be executed for his sin (Josh 7:24–26), is taken by Hosea and reversed to indicate that God would reverse Israel's judgment of defeat and exile, and would not be exterminated for her sin but would have a hope of redemption (Hos 2:15). Instead of going from the one to the many, Matthew goes from the many (Israel) to the one (Jesus), but utilizes the same kind of “one and many” corporate hermeneutical approach to interpreting and applying prior Scripture, as did Hosea.⁴¹

II. CONCLUSION

Therefore, Matthew contrasts Jesus as the “son” (2:15) with Hosea's “son” (11:1). The latter who came out of Egypt was not obedient, and was judged but would be restored (11:2–11), while the former did what Israel should have done: Jesus came out of Egypt, was perfectly obedient, did not deserve judgment but suffered it anyway for guilty Israel and the world in order to restore them to God. Matthew portrays Jesus to be recapitulating the history of Israel because he sums up Israel in himself. Since Israel disobeyed, Jesus has come to do what they should have, so he must retrace Israel's steps up to the point they failed, and then continue to obey and succeed in the mission Israel should have carried out. The attempt to kill the Israelite infants, the journey of Jesus and his family into Egypt and back to the Promised Land again is the same basic pattern of Israel of old. Hence, Jesus did what Israel should have done but did not do.⁴² This use of Hos 11:1 also is an example of how important exodus patterns were to Matthew and the other NT writers in understanding the mission of Jesus and the church. Jesus' journey out of Egypt is identified as Israel's eschatological exodus out of Egypt to which Israel's first exodus out of Egypt pointed.

The upshot of this essay also attempts to show contrary to a number of scholars that Matthew's quotation of Hos 11:1 shows exegetical and “grammatical-

⁴¹ See Duane Garrett, “The Ways of God: Reenactment and Reversal in Hosea” (unpublished inaugural address for Duane Garrett's installation as professor of OT at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, Fall 1998). See also Bass, “Hosea's Use of Scripture,” which was written under the supervision of Duane Garrett.

⁴² Following here Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation* 134, though we understand Matthew's hermeneutical approach differently.

historical” sensitivity to the immediate context of Hos 11:2–11 together with the broader context of the entire book, the latter of which involves a biblical-theological perspective on how the various parts of Hosea relate to one another.⁴³ It is from the quarry of the book of Hosea itself (and possibly even from Hosea 11 itself) and its reverberations of Numbers 23–24, that Matthew gleans everything he has expressed in the Hosea 11 quotation. Thus, we can push back the question “Is Matthew’s typological exegesis of Hos 11:1 legitimate hermeneutically and exegetically?” to “Is Hosea’s typological exegesis, which Matthew follows, legitimate hermeneutically and exegetically?” There is not room here to answer this adequately, except to say that typological exegesis in Hosea can be discerned by a grammatical-historical exegesis of Hosea itself. Is typology legitimate hermeneutically for OT writers? I think so, at least on a biblical-theological level, but I cannot argue this here, though I have attempted to do so elsewhere.⁴⁴

In the light of this, can it be mere coincidence that the last two verses of Hosea 10, directly preceding Hosea 11, conclude by referring to a “tumult that will arise,” “*when* mothers were dashed in pieces *with* their children,” and “the king of Israel will be completely cut off” (Hos 10:14–15)? Then the next verse, Hos 11:1 says, “out of Egypt I called my son.” This is uncannily like Matt 2:13–21, where “all the male children in Bethlehem” were “slain” (Matt 2:16) and there was “weeping and great mourning” by the mothers for their children (Matt 2:18), followed by “Herod the king’s” (Matt 2:1, 3) death (Matt 2:15, 20), mention of which both precedes and follows the Hos 11:1 quotation, “out of Egypt have I called my son.”⁴⁵

The results of this study on Hosea 11 in Matthew 2 are an attempt to give an in-depth illustration and confirmation of R. T. France’s assessment over thirty years ago of the rich contextual background of the OT behind the quotations in Matthew 2:

Matthew ... was deliberately composing a chapter rich in potential exegetical bonuses, so that the more fully a reader shared the religious traditions and scriptural erudition of the author [i.e. the OT context], the more he was likely to derive from his reading, while at the same time there was a surface meaning sufficiently uncomplicated for even the most naïve reader to follow it ... the bonus meanings convey an increasingly rich and positive understanding of the person

⁴³ Pace France, *Matthew* 81, who says, “Matthew’s Christological interpretation consists not of exegesis of what the text [of Hos 11:1] quoted meant in its original context, but of a far-reaching theological argument which takes the OT text and locates it within an overarching scheme of fulfillment which finds in Jesus the end point of numerous prophetic trajectories.” France’s point about Matthew viewing Hos 11:1 within a broader theological argument and fulfillment scheme from several OT trajectories concerning Israel is correct but is not exclusive of Matthew paying close attention to the immediate context of Hosea 11 within its context in the entire book of Hosea. In fact, this latter notion is more probably the primary focus, which Matthew likely then understood secondarily in a biblical-theological sense in the light of the broader OT canonical context and trajectories.

⁴⁴ See Beale, *Handbook on the Use of the OT in the NT*, chaps. 1 and 4.

⁴⁵ The possible significance of Hos 10:14–15 was brought to my attention by an attendee at a conference at which I was speaking.

and role of the Messiah, not integrated into a tidy theological scheme, but diverse and suggestive for those with eyes to see.⁴⁶

APPENDIX 1: THE TRANSLATION PROBLEM OF HOS 11:5A

As noted above (see n. 22), English translations render Hos 11:5a as “They [or literally “he” = Israel] will *not* [לֹא] return to the land of Egypt” (NASB, KJV, ASV, Douay, HCSB, Targum). Several English translations, however, have “they shall return to the land of Egypt” (or “they will *surely* return to the land of Egypt”), apparently and implicitly construing לֹא to have a positive asseverate force⁴⁷ (RSV, NRSV, JB, NLT, NEB;⁴⁸ likewise JPS and NETB⁴⁹);⁵⁰ others take לֹא to be a negative but render verse 5a as a question, “will they *not* return to the land of Egypt?” (NIV).⁵¹ Accordingly, the rhetorical question expects a positive answer, so that this rendering has the same positive sense as the ones directly preceding. Commentators likewise are split in their view of the verse, some taking it as an explicit negative reference⁵² and others taking it positively.⁵³ Thus, both translations and com-

⁴⁶ “The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication,” *NTS* 27 (1981) 233–51 (my brackets).

⁴⁷ For לֹא with such a positive force, see *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, Vol. 4 (ed. David J. A. Clines; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 495, where also alternate vocalizations of the particle are discussed. An explicit rendering would be expressed as “they surely will return to Egypt,” on which see below the ESV and the preference of some commentators.

⁴⁸ “Back they shall go to Egypt.”

⁴⁹ On which see further below.

⁵⁰ The ESV reads “they shall not return to Egypt” but has a marginal note, saying the verse could be rendered “they shall *surely* return to Egypt.”

⁵¹ See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907) 519, who also see the negative particle לֹא possibly to have an interrogative force here.

⁵² John Calvin, *The Commentaries of John Calvin on the Prophet Hosea* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 394–95; Ebenezer Henderson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980 [orig. 1858]) 66; Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 139; A. A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997) 450–51; Thomas Edward McComiskey, “Hosea,” in *The Minor Prophets* (ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 188. See Garrett, *Hosea* 225, who views verse 5a to be a negative reference, though he allows for the possibility that verse 5a affirms that a few would go to Egypt voluntarily and many would go to Assyria by force. See also J. Andrew Dearman, *Hosea* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 276, 285, who also prefers to read verse 5a negatively but allows for the plausibility of several options generally in line with a positive reading, including the notion that verse 5a is a rhetorical question expecting a positive answer; Sweeny, *The Twelve Prophets* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000) 114, acknowledges the plausibility of the LXX’s positive reference to Israel’s return to Egypt, while at the same time admitting that verse 5 in the Hebrew may well be a reference to Israel not returning to Egypt.

⁵³ E.g. see Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 192, who sees that the pronoun לֹא either should be included at the end of verse 4 or that the particle לֹא in verse 5a be taken in a positive asseverative manner; so also James Luther Mays, *Hosea* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 150, 154, and Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 179, who prefer that the pronoun לֹא should be included at the end of verse 4; see David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea* (TOTC; Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1989) 190, and Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 583–84, who take לֹא asseveratively (“surely”), the latter who cite others in agreement; see also Gary V. Smith, *Hosea, Amos, Micah* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 159, 162, 164, who sees verse 5a as a rhetorical question expecting a positive answer. Cf. similarly Allen R.

mentators are fairly evenly split on whether or not verse 5a refers to a return to Egypt or denies a return to Egypt.

I understand the expression to be a positive one: either “they will return to Egypt” or “will they not return to Egypt?,” the latter expecting a positive answer. Since $\text{l}\bar{o}$ can easily be taken with a positive sense, it is quite plausible that this is the force, especially since repeatedly throughout Hosea it is prophesied that Israel will reenter Egypt and that they will return from Egypt. If Hos 11:5a were truly affirming that Israel would not reenter Egypt, it would be the lone reference in Hosea and, indeed, would contradict all the other positive references in the book, which is unlikely, especially since 11:11 (“they will come trembling like birds from Egypt”) assumes that Israelites are already in Egypt, as well as in Assyria. Nevertheless, some still try to make sense of verse 5a as a negative reference within the context of Hosea.⁵⁴

If $\text{l}\bar{o}$ is not taken with a positive asseverate force or as a question expecting a positive answer, then it is just as possible that it forms the end of verse 4, so that the negative particle $\text{l}\bar{o}$ is read as the third person plural pronoun $\text{l}\hat{o}$, (“for him,” corporately understood as “them”), which is the way the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* takes it: “I [God] lifted the yoke from their neck, and gently fed *them* [literally “him”],” so that verse 5 begins with “They [he] will return to Egypt” If this is correct, as the NETB thinks, then the textual confusion between the negative $\text{l}\bar{o}$ and the pronoun $\text{l}\hat{o}$ occurred due to an error in hearing, since the two words sound identical, which is a scribal confusion found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (so see the note in the NETB).⁵⁵ The Septuagint essentially follows the Hebrew: “I will prevail with *him* [= corporate *them*],” and begins verse 5 by “Ephraim settled in Egypt.” The Septuagint’s expression, “Ephraim settled in Egypt,” is either a reference to the past or more probably the past tense verb is like a Hebrew prophetic perfect, functioning to refer to the future.

But even if the original reading were “they will not return to Egypt,” the LXX’s positive rendering (which understood the MT positively) would have be-

Guenther, *Hosea, Amos* (Scottsdale, PA/Waterloo, ON: Herald, 1997) 180, who takes the return to Egypt to be figurative for an entering into captivity in Assyria, on which see further Appendix 2 below.

⁵⁴ E.g. Landy, *Hosea* 139, and Macintosh, *Hosea* 450–51. In this respect, Macintosh, among others, thinks that Hos 11:5 reflects the historical situation of 2 Kgs 17:1–6, where King Hoshea of Israel tried to make an alliance with Egypt against Assyria, but the alliance was thwarted by the Assyrian king, and Hoshea did not go to Egypt but went into Assyrian exile. However, this text may merely refer to an attempted alliance with Egypt by the Israelite king and not an actual attempt to go to Egypt. Perhaps Isaiah 20 is a better fit, where it is prophesied that Israelite refugees in Egypt will be delivered into the hands of “Sargon, the king of Assyria.”

⁵⁵ It is difficult to know if this is the reasoning behind the positive renderings of Hos 11:5 by the RSV, NRSV, JB, NLT, NEB, since they have “them” at the end of verse 4, which, alternatively, could be the result of thinking that “them” is the implied meaning at this point (which is also read in as implied by NASB, KJV, ASV, Douay, HCSB, Targum, which take verse 5 as “they will not return to Egypt”) or whether they are actually implicitly reading the particle $\text{l}\bar{o}$ at the beginning of verse 5 in an asseverate manner (“indeed,” “assuredly”). The JPS reads the negative particle $\text{l}\bar{o}$ as beginning verse 5, but still takes the first part of the verse positively: “No! They return to the land of Egypt,” seeing the “no” as a sinful response to God’s offer of sustenance to them at the end of verse 4.

come part of the exegetical tradition in the first century AD, of which Matthew may have been aware and would have appreciated in the light of the other positive references elsewhere in Hosea to a future return to Egypt (perhaps comparable to Paul's view of Ps 68:18 in Eph 4:8, where he changes "He received gifts" to "He gave gifts," likely in order to understand the overall notion elsewhere throughout the Psalm of God bestowing gifts to Israel). And, even if Matthew were aware of only a negative reference in Hos 11:5, we have seen earlier that there are repeated references to Israel's future return to Egypt in chapters 7–9 of Hosea, which lead up to chapter 11, from which Matthew could well have derived the theme of Israel's future return to Egypt and woven it into his typological understanding of chapter 11.

APPENDIX 2: IS THE REFERENCE TO "EGYPT" IN HOS 11:5A AND 11:10–11 LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE?

Douglas Stuart⁵⁶ and Allen R. Guenther⁵⁷ are among those who take the return to Egypt to be figurative for an entering into captivity in Assyria. Wolff,⁵⁸ Dearman,⁵⁹ and Sweeny,⁶⁰ among others, contend that Egypt and Assyria are literal geographical places and not that Egypt is symbolic for Assyria. James Limburg⁶¹ enigmatically takes "Egypt" both as a literal land to which Israel will return and figurative for future captivity in Assyria. It is unlikely that "Egypt" is figurative for "Assyria" in Hos 11:5, since "Egypt" is never used figuratively throughout the OT outside of Hosea, except in Gen 13:10, where it is part of an explicit simile compared to part of the Promised Land. It is not convincing that Hosea uses "Egypt" figuratively for "Assyria" elsewhere in the book and then uses it to refer to literal "Egypt" in 11:5 (as, e.g., argued by McComiskey⁶²).

As far as I can tell, "Egypt" in its over 600 uses in the OT is used only once figuratively, which, as seen above, occurs in a formal simile: "Sodom and Gomorrah" was "like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt." When the restoration from Assyria and Egypt are mentioned together elsewhere in the OT, it is clear that both are to be literally understood (from the OT perspective) to be literal geographical places, which are listed among other geographical places from which scattered Jews are to be gathered (Isa 11:11, 15–16; Mic 7:11–13; Zech 10:8–11; apparently also Isa 27:12–13, in light of 11:11, 15–16; see also Isa 19:23–25, which refers to Egypt and Assyria themselves as returning to God in the eschaton). When "Egypt" and "Assyria" are mentioned together elsewhere in non-eschatological contexts, they are also distinct literal geographical places (Gen 25:18; 2 Kgs 17:4; 2 Kgs 23:29; Isa 7:18; 20:3–4; Jer 2:16–18, 36; Lam 5:6). The references to "Egypt"

⁵⁶ *Hosea-Jonah* 179.

⁵⁷ *Hosea, Amos* (Scottsdale, PA/Waterloo, ON: Herald, 1997) 180.

⁵⁸ *Hosea* 200, 202.

⁵⁹ *Hosea* 293.

⁶⁰ *Minor Prophets* 114.

⁶¹ *Hosea-Micah* 39.

⁶² "Hosea" 184, 188.

and “Assyria” in Hosea appear to be best taken in the same way as elsewhere in the OT, especially elsewhere in the prophets. Hosea 7:11 (Israel “calls to Egypt, they go to Assyria”) likely refers to distinct geographical regions, since 7:8 says “Ephraim mixes with the *nations* [plural],” apparently referring to more than the one nation Assyria. Hosea 9:3 (“Ephraim will return to Egypt, and in Assyria they will eat unclean *food*”) should be taken similarly in the light of 9:17 (“they will be wanderers among the *nations* [plural]”). Hosea 12:1 (Israel “makes a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt”) apparently should be taken in the same way. The reference in Hos 11:10–11 to Israel returning not only from “Egypt” and “Assyria” but also “from the west” would appear to indicate that a broader restoration is in mind than merely from Assyria, so that “Egypt” may be a literal reference among the various locations of the diaspora from which Israel is to be restored.