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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract:

While many have noted the differences between the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts for Ezekiel, they have done so largely to rediscover an earlier Hebrew text, or to determine which variant preserves the better reading, frequently with the aim of establishing a ‘critical text’ for their commentaries. This often leaves the other variant(s) in a sense ‘incorrect’, often attributed to various forms of scribal error.

This thesis adopts a ‘textual-comparative’ methodology that accords each textual witness equal status as an interpretive trajectory, enabling each to be ‘heard’ in its own right. The aim of this thesis is to examine these different witnesses with a view to determine what they might tell us about the way Ezekiel 36-39 was interpreted by each particular community. This entails comparing the oldest extant Hebrew and Greek texts both intra-linguistically and trans-linguistically, noting any variants, and exploring possible interpretive reasons for them.

This study finds that the Greek translators were familiar with both languages, and that they often exegetically and interpretively interacted with the text before them. The Greek (LXX) is both translation and interpretation of the Hebrew. Other interpretations are found in ‘inserts’ or ‘plusses’, occurring in both the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Included is an examination of Papyrus 967 (\(\text{\$967}\)), which exhibits a different chapter order (chapter 37 follows 38-39), and is minus 36:23c-38. Rather than finding that these differences result from error, or that \(\text{\$967}\) is a maverick text, we find that it is closest to what was probably the Hebrew Urtext. All other extant Hebrew and Greek texts then exhibit theological interaction; the change of chapter order exhibiting a ‘call to arms’, and the inserted pericope (36:23c-38) exhibiting a ‘call to purity’. Our research methodology thus elucidates the earliest Jewish interpretation of the Restoration of Israel in Ezekiel 36-39 (ca. 200-50 BCE).
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ...........................................................................................................5

1.0. Chapter 1: Overall Introduction ...........................................................................7
   1.1. Introduction ...........................................................................................................7
   1.2. Traditional Textual Methodology .........................................................................8
   1.3. The Goal of this Study and its Textual Methodology ...............................................9
   1.4. A Proposed New Methodology ...........................................................................10
   1.5. Our Chapter Pathway ..........................................................................................12
   1.6. Overall Summary: Chapter 1 ..............................................................................13

2.0. Chapter 2: The MT and LXX in Comparison .....................................................14
   2.1. Introduction: Extant Resources ...........................................................................14
       2.1.1. Extant Hebrew MSS .....................................................................................14
       2.1.2. Extant Greek MSS .....................................................................................16
       2.1.3. Summary of Extant Resources .....................................................................17
   2.2. LXX as Translation and Interpretation ..................................................................17
       2.2.1. Translation Location ....................................................................................19
       2.2.2. The Genesis of LXX ....................................................................................19
       2.2.3. OG Translation Date ...................................................................................22
       2.2.4. Number of Translators ...............................................................................24
       2.2.5. Early LXX Variants ....................................................................................25
       2.2.6. A Fixed Text ...............................................................................................27
       2.2.7. Translation Quality and Glosses ..................................................................28
       2.2.8. Continued Dominance of the Hebrew .......................................................31
       2.2.9. Summary of LXX as Translation and Interpretation ....................................33
   2.3. Theological Interpretation in the MSS .................................................................34
       2.3.1. Trans-linguistic Wordplays .........................................................................36
       2.3.2. Other Observed Exegetical Practices .........................................................37
       2.3.3. Summary of Theological Interpretation .......................................................38
   2.4. Sense Divisions ...................................................................................................39
       2.4.1. Hebrew Sense Division Markers ..................................................................41
       2.4.2. LXX Sense Division Markers ......................................................................43
       2.4.4. Summary of Sense Divisions ......................................................................44
   2.5. Overall Summary: Chapter 2 ..............................................................................45
3.0. Chapter 3: The Text of Ezekiel 36 ................................................................. 48
   3.1. Introduction: Ezek. 36 ................................................................................. 48
   3.2. Section 1: Ezek. 36:1-15 ............................................................................. 48
       3.2.1. 36:1-4 ................................................................................................... 48
       3.2.2. 36:5-12 ................................................................................................. 56
       3.2.3. 36:13-15 ............................................................................................... 74
   3.3. Section 2: Ezek. 36:16-21 ......................................................................... 81
       3.3.1. 36:16-21 ............................................................................................... 81
   3.4. Section 3: Ezek. 36:22-38 ........................................................................... 92
       3.4.1. 36:22-32 ............................................................................................... 92
       3.4.2. 36:33-36 ............................................................................................. 100
       3.4.3. 36:37-38 ............................................................................................ 104
   3.5. Overall Summary: Chapter 3 ..................................................................... 105

4.0. Chapter 4: The Text of Ezekiel 37 ............................................................... 110
   4.1. Introduction: Ezek. 37 ................................................................................. 110
   4.2. Section 1: Ezek. 37:1-14 .......................................................................... 111
       4.2.1. 37:1-10 ................................................................................................. 111
       4.2.2. 37:11-14 ............................................................................................. 128
   4.3. Section 2: Ezek. 37:15-28 ........................................................................... 131
       4.3.1. Excursus on τῆς, κατὶ, and ἀρχὶν in Ezek. 37:22-25. ......................... 148
       4.3.2. 37:23-28 (resumes) ............................................................................. 156
   4.4. Overall Summary: Chapter 4 ..................................................................... 166

5.0. Chapter 5: The Text of Ezekiel 38 ............................................................... 171
   5.1. Introduction: Ezek. 38 ................................................................................. 171
   5.2. 1st Oracle: Ezek. 38:1-9 ............................................................................. 173
   5.3. 2nd Oracle: Ezek. 38:10-13 ....................................................................... 188
   5.4. 3rd Oracle: Ezek. 38:14-16 ....................................................................... 194
   5.5. 4th Oracle: Ezek. 38:17 ............................................................................. 198
   5.6. 5th Oracle: Ezek. 38:18-23 ..................................................................... 201
   5.7. Overall Summary: Chapter 5 ................................................................... 207
6.0. Chapter 6: The Text of Ezekiel 39 ................................................................. 210

6.1. Introduction: Ezek. 39 ....................................................................................... 210
6.2. 6th Oracle: Ezek. 39:1-10 ................................................................................. 211
6.3. 7th Oracle: Ezek. 39:11-16 .............................................................................. 218
6.4. 8th Oracle: Ezek. 39:17-24 .............................................................................. 227
6.5. 9th Oracle: Ezek. 39:25-29 .............................................................................. 233
6.6. Excursus: Unique Plusses in Chapters 36-39 ................................................. 245

6.6.1. Plusses Unique to $\text{G}^{967}$ ........................................................................ 245
6.6.2. Plusses Unique to MT and $\text{G}^\text{A}$ .......................................................... 246
6.6.3. Plusses Unique to $\text{G}^\text{A}$ ........................................................................ 247
6.6.4. Plusses Unique to MT ................................................................................ 247
6.6.5. Summary of Unique Plusses ...................................................................... 249

6.7. Overall Summary: Chapter 6 ......................................................................... 249

7.0. Chapter 7: Papyrus 967 .................................................................................. 254

7.1. Introduction: Papyrus 967 .............................................................................. 254
7.2. $\text{G}^{967}$’s ‘Missing’ Pericope of 36:23c-38 ..................................................... 258

7.2.1. Omission by parablepsis .......................................................................... 258
7.2.2. Omission in Vorlage ................................................................................ 261
7.2.2.1. Omission in Vorlage by Lectionary Use ............................................... 262
7.2.2.2. Omission in Egyptian MSS ................................................................. 262
7.2.3. Omission by Accident .............................................................................. 263
7.2.4. Summary for ‘Omission’ .......................................................................... 264

7.3. $\text{G}^{967}$’s Unique Chapter Order ................................................................. 265

7.3.1. Summary to $\text{G}^{967}$’s Unique Chapter Order ........................................ 270

7.4. Later Insertion (and Re-order), not Omission ............................................... 270

7.4.1. Linguistic Styles Suggesting Later Insertion ............................................. 270
7.4.2. Insertion via lectionary ............................................................................. 277
7.4.3. Lust’s Theological / Eschatological Proposal ......................................... 282

7.4.3.1. Lust’s Pharisees Proposal ..................................................................... 288
7.4.3.2. Block’s Objections to Lust ................................................................ 290

7.4.4. External Evidence Supporting $\text{G}^{967}$ .................................................... 300

7.4.4.1 Daniel ..................................................................................................... 300
7.4.4.2. Revelation ........................................................................................... 301
7.4.4.3. Targum Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan Num. 11:26 ............................. 303
7.4.5. Summary of Insertion (and Reorder) not Omission ........................................ 304
7.5. Theological Significance, Timeframe and Motivation ...................................... 306
7.5.1. Theological Significance of $\mathfrak{G}^{967}$ ............................................................... 306
7.5.2. Theological Significance of the Received Order ................................................. 309
7.5.3. Possible Timeframe ....................................................................................... 314
7.5.4. Possible Motivations ..................................................................................... 317
7.5.5. Summary of Theological Significance, Timeframe and Motivation ............. 321
7.6. Overall Summary: Chapter 7 ........................................................................... 323

8.0. Chapter 8: Overall Conclusion ........................................................................... 328

Appendix: Abbreviations ......................................................................................... 335

Bibliography ............................................................................................................. 337
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I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Debbie.

In memory of my mother,
who saw this by faith,
Eva Muriel Crane
1930 – 2005

Rev. Ashley S. Crane
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