

COMPOSITION, ORDER, AND MOTIVATION IN EZEKIEL'S TWO EDITIONS

TRACY J. MCKENZIE*

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

ABSTRACT: The different textual shapes of the book of Ezekiel allow readers to understand the book's growth, revealing both compositional technique and theological motivation for the new shape of scripture. The present article briefly summarizes the state of research on P967, highlighting a largely unaddressed problem within the research. It then considers the most important compositional details that establish the text as expansionary before commenting on the motivation for each textual shape.

KEYWORDS : Ezekiel, literary growth, MT, LXX, P967

Introduction

Recent publications on pluriformity and rewriting in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Second Temple literature have brought to the forefront of research the importance of these phenomena in understanding the composition of texts, and alongside considerations of genre, the increasing recognition that there can be no sharp distinction between textual criticism and what is generally known as the literary critical analysis of the Old Testament (Zimmerli 1979: 68–74; Ulrich 2015; Zsengellér 2014; Zahn 2010, 2020; Marek 2020). These considerations are especially apropos for the text of Ezekiel, the so-called “Writing Prophet,” with its many literary formulae, and in addition, the work's content and composition, which occurs and accrues after the failure of Israel's ancient traditions and institutions, therefore requiring a reconsideration of what these meant and how they might yet come to fruition.

Discovered in the early 1930s, Papyrus 967 as well as Old Latin palimpsest, *Wirceburgensis*, display a varied order and a minus in Ezekiel's salvation oracles in comparison with Masoretic-like texts (MT) (Kenyon 1937, 1953: 39–46; Johnson 1938: 1–14;

* TRACY J. MCKENZIE (PhD 2006, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Email: tmckenzie@sebts.edu

Crane 2008: 207).³ The minus occurs in Ezekiel 36:23b β –38, a large and important section of text including YHWH's gift of a new spirit. The varied order in P967 transpires at a significant juncture in the book's macrostructure in which Ezekiel 37 follows eschatological Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38–39) and precedes the well-known temple plans in Ezekiel 40–48. If not accidental, this case would not only exhibit an alternate/earlier edition but also could divulge methods and motivations for textual production as the work moves toward stabilization (Schwagmeier 2004; Crane 2008; Lilly 2012). Understanding a text's movement toward stabilization enhances our grasp of compositional technique and cohesion and ultimately leads to a more thorough comprehension of intentionality in the book. Various stages could also be used to hypothesize or—when more discoveries are made—pinpoint historical, theological, and cultural contexts in which the texts emerged.

My argument in this article is that the different textual shapes of Ezekiel allow one to understand Ezekiel's growth, yielding both compositional technique and theological motivation for the new shape of scripture. In what follows I will briefly summarize the state of research on P967, highlighting a largely unaddressed problem within the research. I then consider the most important compositional details that establish the text as expansionary before commenting on the motivation for each textual shape. My method follows that of O. H. Steck, starting with the so-called final shape, attempting to discern the unity of a text through bridge texts, repetition, genre, or formulae, before discerning possible growth of the literary layers through textual reuse, inconsistencies, or the presumption of different content between or within each stage in the larger textual unit (Steck 1998, 2000). Establishing the unity of the text in the latest shape through the above means allows one to discern—where it exists—previous stages and establish a relative chronology. The difference between each stage of a text allows one to ask what might have caused dissatisfaction with an earlier stage and motivated the updated shape. As I mentioned, this consideration could provide insight into the historical context that caused the growth in a subsequent textual shape. Utilizing this method in conjunction with the extant Ezekiel texts allows us to see more clearly the composition of Ezekiel as it reached stabilization without having to hypothesize earlier stages for which we have no evidence.

State of Research on P967

Multiple types of evidence demonstrate that the differing text was not accidental nor an intentional abbreviation. Lines of evidence for argumentation include translational considerations, textual criticism, literary criticism, structural analysis, and redaction and composition criticism. Given the long history of this problem and recent

³ For simplicity, I use MT for those text types that would later become MT, e.g. MasEzek (Talm-
on 1999).

contributions, I will merely summarize the evidence until I arrive at my own comments on structural and compositional analysis.

Translational Considerations

Beginning in 1903, several years before the discovery of P967, H. St. J. Thackeray examined the LXX of Ezekiel and proposed three sections to the Greek translation by two separate translators (Thackeray 1903: 408). Although his observations concerning the triple section hypothesis has not won scholarly support, his observation that the translation of Ezekiel 36:23b β –38—included in a larger section from chs. 28–39—is much different than the rest of Ezekiel has garnered scholarly attention. Thackeray suggested that this section was translated in the Theodotian school (Lust 1981: 521). The *Textual History of the Bible* goes further and concludes that on the basis of Johann Lust's analysis of two other longer minuses (Lust 1987:14–5) and Peter Schwagmeier's unpublished dissertation concerning shorter minuses (Schwagmeier 2004:115–238) that 'The present Greek translation in the majority manuscript tradition may then be disregarded as it betrays the hand of Theodotian' (Lange 2017: 582–3). These observations demonstrate the likelihood that the translation of this passage in the LXX tradition was later than the rest of Ezekiel.

Text Critical Considerations

Text critical considerations between MT and P967 began in earnest after Joseph Ziegler published the *Ezekiel* edition of the Göttingen Septuagint (Ziegler 1952). An appendix was added to the second edition (Ziegler/Fraenkel 2006) that took into consideration the heretofore unknown sections of P967 found in Köln and Madrid. Ziegler described both P967 and B as prehexaplaric, and, as far as I am aware, no other scholar since then has disagreed with this assessment of P967 (Ziegler 2006: 28; Lust 1986: 12). In addition to this evaluation, a *Tendenz* that scholars have recognized in P967 has been its rather literal translation (Lust 1986: 15). However, unlike the case of Jeremiah, the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Prehexaplaric Ezekiel is not extant so any conclusion must remain tentative. Given the literal translation technique, in particular, for Ezekiel's salvation oracles—rather obvious from the translation portions that we have—pluses or minuses from Hebrew would not be expected at least as it relates to translation technique.

It is interesting, however, that the manuscript of P967 does have a preponderance of examples of parablepsis (Johnson 1938: 7–8). However, as A. C. Johnson pointed out, '[I]n a manuscript written in uncials, where there is no division of words,

we should perhaps expect it where whole lines end or begin with the same letters' (Johnson 1938: 7). Johnson demonstrates the likelihood of this assessment in that a preponderance of the minuses are the appropriate letter length of what would be considered a short line. Although the manuscript could contain as many as seventeen examples, in Johnson's opinion, the minus in Ezekiel 36 cannot be explained in this manner. This large minus in P967 would require the loss of at least an entire leaf and even so, only if the columns were narrow with ten letters per line (Spottorno 1982: 93–98). Frederick Kenyon points out in his *Text of the Greek Bible*, that this length was extremely rare for that era (Kenyon 1953: 231). Johnson lists several pages of P967 that contain an average of approximately 20.64 letters per line (Johnson 1938: 4). The conclusion of this matter is that such a loss of this size would be unique in text critical research.

Although parablepsis remains a possibility, other factors minimize the probability. The form of *γινωσκω* in the last clause of Ezekiel 36:23ba and the final clause in v. 38 differs in number and lacks the immediately following article and subject in the clause. These differences in what supposedly caused the parablepsis lessen the likelihood. Importantly, the 5th century Old Latin manuscript Wirceburgensis likewise contains the minus and varied order (Johnson 1938: 42–48; Crane 2008, 208). As it relates to text criticism and Wirceburgensis, textual critics have noted that while there is affinity between the tradition from which P967 and Wirceburgensis come, Wirceburgensis is not translated in a direct line from P967 thereby increasing its strength as a witness (Johnson 1938: 43–48; Lust 1981: 518). Finally and importantly, a case of parablepsis does nothing to solve the transposition of Ezekiel 37 subsequent to Ezekiel 38–39 in P967 and Wirceburgensis, thereby providing strong evidence that it was not an accidental omission.

Literary Critical Considerations

Classic literary criticism began for the book of Ezekiel at the turn of the century with C.H. Toy (Toy 1899) and Gustav Hölscher (Hölscher 1924). A factor in their analysis had to do with the prophet's *ipsissima verba*; an attempt to divide between authentic word and secondary accretion. Although their observations sometimes provide insight into textual problems, their treatment of the book of Ezekiel is problematic. As noted above, the book of Ezekiel is not merely a record of oral prophetic utterance but is a written, literary prophecy from the book's inception. Regardless of their methodological oversight, without the benefit of P967, Hölscher already concluded that 36:16–32 'everywhere showed signs of redaction' (Hölscher 1924: 174). He also observed that vv. 33–36 is an addition to that redaction and 'vv. 37–38 as an addition

to an addition,' this latter observation being all but certain because of multiple minuses in the full LXX tradition and P967.

As I also stated earlier, due to the growing body of evidence of pluriformity, re-writing, textual expansion, and various editions of biblical books within manuscript traditions, a sharp distinction between textual criticism and literary criticism is not realistic. We know from evidence within the Hebrew Bible itself that a text's composition, canonization, and transmission was not linear (Sailhamer 2004: 424–35). This factor becomes even more important when we recognize that the inception of Ezekiel's prophetic legacy was literary, not oral, nor a mere record of what he said. Structural analysis and genre consideration demonstrate the written foundation and frame from which the text derives its shape. This is not a statement on the historicity of a prophet named Ezekiel, only that the literary deposit related to Ezekiel's name shows signs of literary strategy, literary formulation, units and subunits, expansion, along with its own story of the prophet's dumbness.

This starting place influences one's conclusion to this matter of a minus and varied text order. For example, if at one extreme, we consider the book of Ezekiel to be a recording of the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet, or even stemming from oral prophecy, something akin to Amos, a conclusion that v.23bβ–38 is missing makes sense initially and perhaps, primarily by means of an accident. One can see this tendency in Block's refutation of Lust's argument that P967 represents an earlier edition (Block 1998: 340–42; Flanagan 2009: 111). But if, at the other extreme, one recognizes Ezekiel as a literary formulation, with necessary strategy, selection, arrangement, with other literary phenomena, the rearrangement of an oracle in conjunction with other integrated Ezekielian clauses, seems quite plausible.

Structural Analysis

By structural analysis, I intend to speak of the division of the text into units, sub-units, and further breakdown. The book of Ezekiel is well known for its formula including but not limited to the messenger formula, utterance formula, and in particular, the word formula, 'The word of the Lord was to me,' occurring approximately forty-eight times (Mayfield 2016: 141). In brief, the word formula indicates a new prophetic oracle on the secondary level of organization, a chronological formula indicating a new unit at the highest level (Mayfield 2004: 146–7). Ezekiel 35:1 begins a prophetic oracle. Ezekiel 36:16 in the MT begins the next oracle. Ezekiel 37:15 contains the next word formula, Ezekiel 38:1 contains the next word formula before ch. 40 commences with a highest level, chronological formula. In short, the word formula creates a literary, prophetic, oracular unit. This observation is significant because

in the MT, it means that 35:1–15 is halved or mirrored with 36:1–15 creating therein a unit, 36:16–38 is halved with 37:1–14 also creating a unit, 37:15–28 contains an oracular unit, 38:1–39:29 contains an oracular unit, and 40–48 contains a unit, albeit at the highest level. In the MT, the valley of dry bones, in which YHWH says, ‘I will give my spirit in [among] you,’ is now coordinated with 36:16–38 in an oracular unit. But this is exactly where P967 and Wirceburgensis contain the minus and where Ezekiel 37 is instead coordinated with chs. 40–48.⁴ Additionally, in the MT, 36:26–28 is the place of a rewritten salvation oracle from Ezekiel 11:19–20. I return to these issues below, but first I consider the largely unaddressed problem in the research. How would a minus at Ezekiel 36:23bβ–38 affect the resulting text?

Unaddressed Problem in Research

As it pertains to the minus in P967, Zimmerli highlighted the importance of the word formula in his magisterial commentary (Zimmerli 1969). Regarding what would have been an abbreviated oracle in 36:16–23ba witnessed in p967—at the time of his writing, it had not been confirmed that this section of P967 had a minus at 36:23bβ–38—Zimmerli says, ‘[T]he section which ends with v23ba gives, on its own, a fragmentary impression’ (Zimmerli 1983: 245). In other words, without the extended version of Ezekiel 36:23bβ–38 and the second half of the oracle that includes the Valley of Dry Bones, the oracle that begins in 36:16 would only contain seven and one-half verses (Block 1998: 341). Hence, it appears quite fragmentary in comparison to other Ezekielian prophetic units, giving the impression of an accidental omission. Because Zimmerli did not have the extant text available to him at the time of his commentary’s writing, he left the issue unresolved and explained the MT. I return to this problem below, but it seems to me that the abbreviated form of the oracle presents an unexplained problem for P967’s extant text.

Redaction and Composition Criticism

The textual repetition occurring in 36:23bβ–38 and the passage’s coordination to 36:16–23ba and ch 37, demonstrated by Lust (Lust 1981: 517–533; Pohlman 1992: 86–88; Crane 2008: 62–86; Klein 2008: 81–96, 2010; Tooman 2013: 151–182), make an intentional abbreviated Greek translation highly unlikely. Other than expansion, this conclusion leaves only an accidental omission possible due to parablepsis. However, as pointed out above, not only does the large omission of material makes para-

⁴ “The hand of the Lord was upon me” shows signs of connection to ch. 40, occurring in 1:3, 3:14, 3:22, (an alternate form in 8:1), 33:22, 37:1, and 40:1.

blepsis unlikely but again, accidental omission does not resolve the different chapter order in P967 and Wircebegensis. Lust's research on the variation of the book of Ezekiel's form in P967 and MT is well known and has been expanded by others. He analyzed the translational glosses in P967 (Lust 1986: 7–20), considered text critical arguments (Lust 2006: 155–67), developed redactional proposals (Lust 1981: 517–33), and concluded that P967 represents a variant edition of Ezekiel (Lust 2003: 82). Klein analyzed Ezekiel's salvation oracles in her dissertation on Ezekiel 34–39 and later approached Ezekiel 36–37 as innerbiblical exegesis along the lines of what I discuss momentarily (Klein 2010, 9–12). William Tooman presents his own analysis of how these expansions affect the book's composition and development in his "Covenant and Presence in the Composition and Theology of Ezekiel" (Tooman 2013: 151–82). While others disagree (Block 1997: 340–343; Filson 1943: 27–32; Patmore 2007: 240–242), the preponderance of evidence indicates alternate editions.

Summary

Before discussing compositional technique, let me summarize what I consider to be the primary issues regarding Ezekiel's two editions. First, the translation of 36:23b β –38 in the remainder of the LXX tradition has the appearance of the later Theodotion. Second, because of the size of the minus, parablepsis is highly unlikely. Third, possible parablepsis does nothing to resolve the transposition of Ezekiel 37. Fourth, the independent witness of Wirceburgensis increases the likelihood that P967 witnesses an alternate edition. Fifth, the composition of 23b β –38 demonstrates an expansionary form of the book regardless of possible parablepsis. Sixth, and alternatively, the abbreviated form of 36:16–23ba remains an unexplained problem. If it were not for points 1–5, the abbreviated form of the oracle in 36:16–23ba and the extant text of MT-like manuscript at Masada may tilt the evidence towards parablepsis. But given the sufficiency of the other evidence, we must look for another answer to the abbreviated oracle and discern within the MT compositional technique and its motivations.

Compositional Technique and Motivation

In order to discern the distinct nuances of each edition, P967 and MT, we must first note what elements generated the unified form. Because we have the minus and varied order in P967 and have concluded the unlikely scenario that it was accidental, we merely need to analyze the compositional techniques in MT 36:23b β –38 and ask why the writer transposed Ezekiel 37 from its position prior to the temple chapters (40–48) to that of Ezekiel 36:23ba. The abbreviated oracle signals the problem that

the first clause in the expansionary Ezekiel 36:23b β begins to answer: How will Israel be made holy?

How Will Israel Be Made Holy?

Beginning with an utterance formula, which is itself a sign of expansion (Rendtorff 1954: 27–37), MT's plus in Ezekiel 23b β repeats the significant verb that commences Ezekiel 36:23. The verse reads, 'I will make holy [קדש] my great name, the one profaned among the nations, which you profaned in their midst, and the nations will know that I am the Lord, *utters the Lord YHWH, when I am made holy* [קדש] *among you before their eyes*.' The fact that the 'house of Israel profaned his holy name among the nations' in their uncleanness occurs five times in the section from 36:16–23. They had made the holy place [מקדש], themselves, and the land "unclean" in their idolatry and abominations. The expansion's adverbial infinitive repeats the lexeme קדש that concerns YHWH's name when he is made holy among or in them. The question that the abbreviated oracle demands is how will YHWH bring about his holiness [קדש] in the midst of the house of Israel who had profaned his name in their uncleanness? We must ask this question of the entire book, the form found in P967, and the expanded oracle with ch 37's new position in the MT.

Holiness and the Book's Strategy

The composition of the book Ezekiel explains why the glory of YHWH had abandoned the holy place: because of Israel's uncleanness with idols and abominations. They had made his 'holy place unclean,' Ezekiel 5:11 says, 'So I, I will withdraw.' The ensuing chapters explain the glory of YHWH's departure from the temple until he leaves the city in Ezekiel 11. YHWH would judge the land and people before eventually returning the people to the land whereupon his glory would return to the temple. The entire book resonates with the explanation of their defilement and that YHWH would not dwell in the midst of an unclean people. After their destruction, they must no longer profane his name. They must be holy. How that is accomplished varies throughout the book. Ezekiel 11 indicates when YHWH brings them to the land, they would set aside its idols and he would give them one heart and a new spirit, turning aside the old heart, replacing it with a heart of flesh *in order that* they walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. For those that did not, he would 'return their way on their head,' acknowledging that there would still be rebels. (Ezekiel 11:18–21)

Ezekiel 20:40–43 also speaks of a time when YHWH would be "made holy"

among them 'on the mount of his holiness, the mountain height of Israel.' Apparently, at a reconstituted "holy place," [מִקְדָּשׁ] he would be pleased with them and accept their holy offerings when he gathered them from the peoples and brought them to the land he swore to their fathers. They would remember their ways and loathe themselves for how they had acted. He would act, Ezekiel 20:44 says, 'For the sake of My name and not according to their evil deeds and corrupt ways.' Although YHWH would accept their cultic offerings and bring them to the land, Ezekiel 20 does not explain how and for what duration they would be able to dwell in his holy presence. What about his holy place in Ezekiel 40–48?

The root "holy" occurs 107 times in the book of Ezekiel. By means of a synchronic glance at the book, 39 of the occurrences transpire in the first 39 chapters of the book—this count does not take into account possible later expansions in these chapters. The remaining 68 occurrences transpire in the final 9 chapters of the book in 40–48. In other words, 64% of this root occurs in 19% of the book. Or we could generalize that two thirds of the occurrences transpire in less than one-fifth of the book. The reconstituted cult and holy place where YHWH would dwell in their midst was intended to have its sanctifying effect.

To some extent, the temple chapters explain YHWH's plan no longer to allow his name to be defiled nor his people unclean. The measurements and procedures in his house were the blueprint for the holy place and holy offerings that along with YHWH's presence would make Israel holy (Ezekiel 40–42). Ezekiel 43:1–10 returns to lexemes and concepts with which the book began. After referring to the first book's first vision, the glory of the Lord filled the temple (43:2–4 and 44:4), and the voice repeats why he had departed in Ezekiel 5:11. He had withdrawn because they had made his 'holy place unclean.' Ezekiel 43:7–8 explain that he had consumed them because they and their kings had made his holy name unclean, also repeating the concerns of the abbreviated oracle in Ezekiel 36:17–23.

Here in the final vision of the reconstituted temple, it is the design of the "house" that is to shame them of their deeds and compel them to keep its design and statutes. In a vision, Ezekiel saw the measurements of the temple complex that established the "holy of holies" and was intended to divide between the holy and the profane. The law of the house itself was its "holy of holies," Ezekiel 43:10–12 indicates. Ezekiel 43:13–27 explains the measurements and statutes of the alter because of which YHWH would "accept" them, just as Ezekiel 20:40–41 described. Ezekiel 44 describes again the glory of the LORD filling the temple, commanding Ezekiel to consider well all the 'statutes of the holy place' that would teach the people not to profane the holy place with foreigners and abominations (Ezekiel 44:7). The remainder of Ezekiel 44

establishes the orders of the priesthood in order to instruct the people regarding the holy and profane, between unclean and the clean.

Ezekiel 45 begins with the land's allotment, instructing them to first set aside a "holy" piece for the Lord. Some of that piece was for a larger holy place, of which part of it was for the "holy of holies" (Ezekiel 45:2–3). While that portion was for the priests and the holy place, other places were set aside for the Levites, residents, and the prince. Still, another set of statutes governed the systems of balances, measurements, and offerings, for which the people were responsible while the prince supplied offerings for the appointed feasts to make atonement for the house of Israel (Ezekiel 45:16–17). In this way, the people, priests, and prince would provide for the offerings, purify the holy place and make atonement during the year's cycle. The instructions continue until Ezekiel is brought to a place where the priests were to boil the sacrifices and bake the offering so as not to go out of the outer courtyard and make the people holy (Ezekiel 46:20–24). Apparently from the boiling of the sacrifices, from under the threshold, south of the altar, water flowed. Ezekiel 47 describes how it eventually becomes a river giving life and healing to whatever it touches, providing the borders of the tribal allotment in the land. Ch 48 describes the portion of the tribes, with Judah in its center along with the holy place that Ezekiel 45:1–8 had described. After concluding the tribal portions, the chapter closes indicating the city gates, and the book concludes, 'The name of the city from the day, YHWH is there.' The entire section concerns the house's holiness and how it spreads to Israel and the land. But how does MT's expansion and the vision concerning the dry bones and Israel's resurrection play into Israel's holiness?

Expanding Ezekiel in MT 36:24–36

Ezekiel 36:24

In response to Ezekiel 36:23's demand for holiness, verse 24 moves surprisingly to the restoration to the land. In the book of Jeremiah, one first discerns a concern for the exiles' return to Jerusalem after Judah's elites were exiled and Jerusalem destroyed; later in the book, it is expanded to the entire land and even Gentile nations. But in Ezekiel, the gathering of the "house of Israel" in the diaspora is a dominant theme. The theme is articulated in eight different passages by as many as six verbs in some combination with at least one other verb along with shared prepositional phrases.⁵ Ezekiel 36:24 contains three of those verbs, 'And I will take you from the nations and I will gather you from all the lands and I will cause you to come to your land.'

⁵ (שוב הוצא הביא, קבץ, לקח, אסף) Ezekiel 11:17, 20:34, 20:41, 28:25 (only one verb), 34:13, 36:24, 37:21, 39:27.

No doubt some material in the expansion is drawn from 11:17 given the other correspondences with that passage, but interestingly, the exact combination emerges in 37:21, which in its location in P967 was prior to Ezekiel 40–48. Besides Ezekiel 36:24, this combination of three verbs only occurs in Ezekiel 37:21, which as Lust pointed out requires the first verb, לָקַח, since the prophet was commanded to ‘take sticks’ and Yahweh would take the sons of Israel’ from the nations (Lust 1981: 527). Moreover, the noun “nations” is limited to these two “gathering” clauses. Once again, it appears to originate in Ezekiel 37:21–22 from YHWH’s intention to ‘take them from the nations...and make them one nation...and they will no longer be two nations’ (Lust 1981: 527). The deployment of these clauses in 36:24 links YHWH’s commitment to “make holy” his name in 36:17–23, which Israel had profaned among the nations, with the ingathering of his people.

Ezekiel 36:25

Ezekiel 36:25 reads, ‘And I will dump [זָרַק] upon you clean water and you will be clean. From all your uncleanness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you.’ The association of the lexeme זָרַק to water only occurs otherwise in two terse phrases in Num 19:13 and 20. The instructions in the Numbers passage concern the one who touches a dead body and is “unclean,” the same root that occurs three times in Ezekiel 36:17–18. When they offer a sin offering with water (Num 19:12), they will be “cleansed,” utilizing the same root that occurs three times in Ezekiel 36:25 [טָהַר]. If they do not “toss” [זָרַק] the “waters of impurity” upon them, they will remain unclean because they defiled the holy place, the same problem that Ezekiel 5:11 confronts.

Otherwise, the verb זָרַק is most often used with the noun blood, occurring seventeen times in Exodus and Leviticus, twice in Kings/Chronicles, and once in Ezekiel 43:18. If Ezekiel 36:25 utilizes Numbers 19 or a similar tradition, he draws from this language that one purifies themselves with water as a means to convey metaphorically how Yahweh would “toss water” on them to cleans them from idols. The writer may also draw from the familiar construction of tossing blood on the alter, the people, the priests, and garments as an offering to the Lord or to sanctify the priests and their garments. If so, the writer conflates the “tossing of blood” in Leviticus 17:6 with the “cleansing in water” in Leviticus 11:32, 14:8 15:13, and 17:5 to convey YHWH’s cleansing effect upon the people.⁶ Regardless, the tossing of water cleanses the recipients of their “uncleanlinesses and idolatries,” an otherwise unique collocation in the book of Ezekiel.

⁶ See also Exodus 24:6, 8, 29:16, 20, Lev 1:5, 11, 3:2, 8, 13, 7:2, 14, 8:19, 24, 9:12, 18.

Ezekiel 36:26

Significantly, this verse originates from the prophetic word in Ezekiel 11, replicating Ezekiel 11:19 except for second instead of third person plural pronouns, ‘a new spirit’ instead of ‘one spirit,’ and an explicit marker of the accusative (Tooman 2013:177–8). After dumping clean water on them and cleansing them, Ezekiel 36:26 repeats, ‘And I will give to you a new heart and a new spirit, I will give in your midst. I will turn aside the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.’ In Ezekiel 11:13–16, YHWH had responded to Ezekiel’s question whether he would make a full end to the remnant of Israel. Even though he had scattered them, he would [weqatal sequence beginning in 17aβ] gather ‘you’ and ‘give you the land of Israel’ (11:17). Continuing the *weqatal* sequence, 11:18 switches back to the third plural address saying, ‘They will come there and turn aside [הסיר] all its [i.e. the land’s] detestable images and all its abominations from it.’ Verse 19 continues in *weqatal* sequence that he ‘will give to them one heart, and a new spirit, I will give in your midst and I will turn aside [הסיר]—seemingly in response to their turning aside their detestable images—the heart of stone from their midst and give to them a heart of flesh.’ These correspondences, which I will address below, continue into the next verse. But it is worth pointing out that Ezekiel 11:21 makes provision for those who continue to walk after detestable images and abominations. The Lord would bring their deeds upon their head, noting the contingency of punishment for those who do not obey. Ezekiel 36:27, on the other hand, conveys their obedience flowing from YHWH’s unilateral actions upon them.

Ezekiel 36:27b

In order to address the continued correspondences between Ezekiel 11 and 36, I will skip Ezekiel 36:27a for the moment. The correspondences of Ezekiel 11:20 continue in Ezekiel 36:27b. Ezekiel 11:20 had stated the purpose for why YHWH would do this act, ‘*In order that* they walk in my statutes, and they keep my judgments and they do them and they will be my people and I will be their God.’ Ezekiel 36:27b repeats the first clause of 11:20 except for the conjunction “*in order that*,” saying instead, ‘And I will make you walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them. Apparently, their obedience follows the cleansing that transpired in 36:25 and the giving of the new heart and spirit of Ezekiel 36:26—and even YHWH’s own spirit in Ezekiel 36:27a. Ezekiel 11:20 concluded with the well-known covenant formula that likewise follows in Ezekiel 36:28b. Back in Ezekiel 11, after making provision for those who don’t obey, the chapter concluded with the glory of the Lord departing from the city and standing upon the mountain.

A few observations are significant. First, Ezekiel 11:17 indicated that YHWH would gather them from the peoples and ‘give you the land of Israel.’ Upon arriving at the land, they would “*turn aside*” the land’s detestable images and its abominations [הסיר]. Using sequential *weqatal* verbal forms, he would then ‘give them one heart and a new spirit give in your midst and *turn aside* [הסיר] the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.’ Notably, the corresponding sequence of “give/turn aside” is suspended in Ezekiel 36 without the gift of the land like one finds first in Ezekiel 11. In Ezekiel 11, YHWH gathered them from the peoples and *gifted* them the land, and having come there, said they would *turn aside* its detestable images and abominations, after which he *gifted* them with the new heart, spirit, and heart of flesh and *turned aside* their heart of stone. Without placing too much weight on the sequential *weqatals*, there does seem to be a corresponding expectation that they “turn aside” their idols and abominations and YHWH would correspondingly “turn aside” their hearts of stone. How they would accomplish that prior to YHWH’s action upon them is not explained. However, in Ezekiel 36:24–30, it is the dumping of “clean water,” YHWH’s act of cleansing them from uncleanness and idolatries, and his other gifts that produce the obedience and saves them from their uncleanness. The suspension of the reciprocating ‘give/turn aside’ suggests signals that the expansion was incorporated from Ezekiel 11:17–20.

Second, conspicuously absent in Ezekiel 11 is the clause that emphatically begins 36:27a, ‘My spirit, I will give in your midst.’ Without this clause in Ezekiel 11, one is hard-pressed whether to see YHWH’s gift of one heart and a new spirit as an inner transformation or simply as a prophecy that with a return to the land, they should have a renewed emphasis on single devotion to YHWH. Third, the causal conjunction in Ezekiel 11:20 indicating YHWH’s purpose for giving them one heart, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh was “*in order that*” they would obey, which is absent in Ezekiel 36:27. He makes their obedience transpire with the gift of his spirit. Given the history of Israel’s stubbornness and rebellion—and the destruction of Jerusalem it warranted, according to the Deuteronomists—a recognition that it would take a unilateral movement from YHWH appears to arrive late after other measures failed.

Ezekiel 36:27a

I have withheld comment on Ezekiel 36:27a because it contains perhaps the most significant integration of material. It reads, ‘My spirit, I will give in your midst and I will make you walk in my statutes and my judgments you keep and you will do them’ (GKC §157c). Ezekiel 36:27a originates from 37:14—observed from the necessary role that the ten occurrences of רוח play in that subunit. 37:14a reads, ‘I will give my

spirit in you and you will live and I will cause you to rest upon your land...’ The writer of 36:27a has flipped the order of the verb/object read in 37:14a and integrated the location drawn from 11:19 “in your midst” (קרב), a phrase not found outside of Ezekiel 11:19. These observations demonstrate that Ezekiel 36:26–27 was composed by means of the integration of material from ch 11 and ch. 37. Integrating clauses from Ezekiel 11 and 37 demonstrates the transposition of ch. 37 to its new location next to the expanded oracle.

I return now to an observation that I made above. Ezekiel 36:27b integrates an ensemble of three clauses that occur in at least ten verses—many more if all three clauses are not required—in the book of Ezekiel, most importantly from Ezekiel 11:20, ‘...walk in my statutes, keep my judgements, and do them.’⁷ Significantly, the author writes a unique construction in the book of Ezekiel and practically unique in the Hebrew Bible, only occurring in Jeremiah 51:12 and Isaiah 55:11. He reports, ‘and I will make you walk in my statutes and my judgments you keep and you will do them.’ The infusion of YHWH’s spirit results in their obedience. No contingency for punishment and disobedience is conveyed as in Ezekiel 11:21. Unlike its absence in Ezekiel 11:19–20, the integration of this clause concerning the gift of YHWH’s spirit from vision of dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1–14, in which the writer portrays a resurrection to new life, conveys the reconstitution of their being, resulting in obedience and entrance into the land. Ezekiel 36:28 follows with the covenant formula, ‘and you will dwell in the land... and you will be my people and I will be your God,’ similar to Ezekiel 11:20’s concluding clause. Unlike Ezekiel 11, the concern is not so much one of removal of detestable things from the land, but a removal of uncleanness and idolatry from them, which the dumping of clean water would accomplish in 36:25 along with the gift of YHWH’s spirit. The question is why was the writer dissatisfied with the shape of P967?

Motivation for MT’s Expansion

What caused the jump in shape from the Vorlage of P967 to MT? The expanded Ezekiel found in MT makes at least two conspicuous moves. First, it juxtaposes the vision of the dry bones’ resurrection, found in Ezekiel 37:1–14, with the abbreviated oracle in Ezekiel 16:23ba with its concern for ‘holiness of his name.’ It splices together these two textual pieces by means of a rewriting of—among other clauses—Ezekiel 11:17–20 in MT’s plus of Ezekiel 36:23bβ–38. This rewriting makes explicit that the symbolic resurrection is now a reconstitution of Israel—new heart, new spirit, turning aside the heart of stone, giving a heart of flesh—through a metaphorical washing that cleanses them from their unclean acts and idolatries and the giving of his Spirit.

⁷ Ezekiel 5:7, 6:7, 11:12, 11:20, 18:9, 20:13, 20:18, 20:19, 20:21, 36:27, 37:24.

This revivification would then lead into a dwelling in the land, in which the Davidic king/prince unites the two nations. YHWH would be their God with his dwelling in their midst, indeed his spirit in their very heart and spirit. Significantly, however, the metaphorical resurrection is no longer connected explicitly to the temple. Even though marauding attacks from tribes from the north would still take place, ultimately awaiting final battle against Gog and Magog in the last years, they had the assurance of God's Spirit among them along with its resulting obedience. Because of this transposition, it is not primarily YHWH's sanctuary in their midst that accomplishes the obedience but YHWH's initiative in their reconstitution.

Second, in the transposition of Ezekiel 37 to Ezekiel 36:16–38, chapters 38–39 are moved from their location prior to the metaphorical resurrection and reunification, and instead transpire after these texts before the reconstituted cult and temple. In P967, the battle against Gog and Magog preceded and was completed prior to metaphorical resurrection and reunification, and because of YHWH's victory, the Davidic prince led them into the land and reconstituted cult and temple where he helped to insure proper offerings. Ezekiel 37's transposition no doubt moves the time period of YHWH's gift of his Spirit and resurrection of his people prior to the battle. Now the timing of the battle is extended for an indefinite time while YHWH's resurrected people await the completion of the restoration and the cleansing river of YHWH's sacrifices. Apparently, the writer recognized that something more was needed than merely a human-born Davidic king, a land, and reconstituted temple. By using Ezekielian language from Ezekiel 11:19–20 (and possibly 18:31), the writer awaited the reconstitution of the individual by means of God's spirit. Moreover, even after the gift of the spirit, the resurrection, and the unification in the land under the Davidic shepherd-king, the battles with Gog and Magog would still rage in the last days and in the last years, the eschatological age becoming increasingly important as the diaspora wore on. This latter move allowed for the restoration, albeit still with battles still raging, until YHWH defeated Gog and Magog.

P967's Reading

The reading of P967 conveys a significantly different nuance than the notion that the MT conveys. If one reads immediately from Ezekiel 36:16–23ba to 38:1, YHWH's gift of his spirit, symbolically producing a resurrection from the grave, conflated with his gift of a new heart and new spirit *does not occur*. Instead, the resurrection of the house of Israel indicates national restoration and the unification of the two houses of Israel, but nothing to do with the reconstitution of Israel's being. Instead, Israel's defilement, noted in Ezekiel 36:16–23ba, must first be cleansed by the battles of Gog and Magog, in which YHWH would 'be made holy' in 38:16, 23, and have concern

for his holy name in 39:7, 25, and 27, the concerns of the abbreviated oracle. The battle with Gog and Magog must take place and the land must be cleansed of the dead bodies before Ezekiel 37 with its metaphorical resurrection. Given the unexplained abbreviated oracle in Ezekiel 36:23:16–23b α , it is possible that at some point it immediately continued into Ezekiel 36:32ff., which is now unattested, or more likely, prior to chs 38–39’s inclusion, it continued into Ezekiel 37. As I indicated above, Lust demonstrated that parts of Ezekiel 36:23b β –38 were composed in response to its newfound juxtaposition with Ezekiel 37. But Lust presumed that Ezekiel 37 was originally written after Ezekiel 39 and written in connection to that chapter even though he could only find one clause that connected the two chapters (Lust 1981: 527–31). Because of Ezekiel’s repetitive language—especially at this late stage of composition, that was highly unusual. Lust did not realize that chs 38–39 were integrated into the book at a late point (Tooman 2010). If such is the case, Ezekiel 37 slides over to complete the abbreviated oracle from Ezekiel 36:23b α and the metaphorical resurrection likewise leads to national restoration, unification, and the cleansing of temple complex.

However, in P967, the battle in which Yahweh defeats the nations and cleanses the land is followed by the metaphorical resurrection and unification of the two nations/kingdoms, concluding in 37:27 and 28 with the Davidic king leading them into obedience and dwelling in the land. The “four spirits,” which revivify the dead bones in Ezekiel 37:9, and the gift of his spirit in Ezekiel 37:14 result in a national unification under the Davidic prince in 37:15–28. Apparently, the same “four spirits” measure the temple complex in Ezekiel 42:16–20, helping to separate the holy and the common and usher in the glory of God where he would dwell in their midst in his house.

This prince/king would lead them into unity and bring about the fact that they will ‘no longer make themselves unclean in their idols and detestable things in all their transgressions.’ (Ezekiel 37:22–23) Then YHWH would ‘save them ... cleanse them’ so that he would be their God and they would be YHWH’s people. Ezekiel 37:24 adds that the Davidic king will also lead them ‘to walk in his judgments and keep his statutes,’ that which the gift of YHWH’s spirit led them into in MT Ezekiel 36:27.

Ezekiel 37:26 leads into chs 40–48 by indicating that his holy place [מקדש] will be in their midst forever, where his dwelling will be among them. “Holy place” is a favorite Ezekielian term for YHWH’s house occurring 31x throughout the book including 19x in chs 40–48. Moreover, YHWH’s “dwelling” [משכן] would be among them and he would be their God and they his people, verse 27 adds yet again. Unlike ‘holy place,’ Yahweh’s ‘dwelling’ is an extremely rare description in Ezekiel only occurring here in 37:27 with the same verbal root describing the place of his dwelling in Eze-

kiel 43:7 and 9. Finally, Ezekiel 37:28 completes the chapter with a suitable lead into chapter 40, that he would 'sanctify Israel when his sanctuary is in their midst forever,' exactly what Ezekiel 40–48 describes.

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