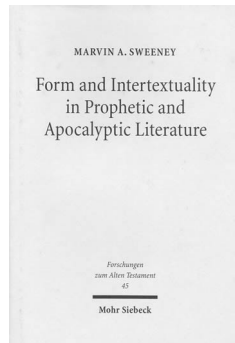# REVIEW OF MARVIN A. SWEENEY, *FORM AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN PROPHETIC AND APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE*

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With *Form and Intertextuality* the German publisher Mohr Siebeck has provided us with a collection of Marvin Sweeney's main essays on Prophetic and (Proto-)Apocalyptic literature. The book contains 19 articles – three of them so far unpublished – subdivided in five parts: essays concerning Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, the Book of the Twelve and (Proto-)Apocalyptic texts. In the 'Introduction' Sweeney positions his investigations in the tradition of Bernhard Duhm, whom he describes as the forefather of the diachronic analysis of Prophetic literature. While the main interest during the first half of the last century was on the primary words of the Prophets, research from the 1970s onwards stressed the redaction-critical perspective. Once the classification of original and editorial parts of the prophetic books has been determined, the question of intertextuality between the books appeared. This intertectuality is Sweeney's focus.

The first part, essays on the book of Isaiah, contains four articles on different phenomena. First Sweeney presents a study on the meaning of the word *tôrâ* in Isa 2:2-4 and in the whole book of Isaiah. Therefore he outlines the relevance of the book for the reform of Ezra in the 5th century B.C.E. While Ezra installed the Mosaic *tôrâ* as community rule, the Book of Isaiah conceived the *tôrâ* as the divine order for the community and for all nations to define Israel's relation to them (p. 27). In regard to the parallel items of Isaiah and Ezra, Sweeney concludes that in post-exilic Judah the question of the holiness of the Jewish community in relation to God, to itself, and to other nations was a constitutive topic of the theological debate. The second essay discusses the phenomenon of multiple settings in a prophetic book with as many layers as the book of Isaiah. Sweeney lines out four editions of the book, the first dated in the late 8th century, and the last in the time of Ezra. Referring to Richter's insight, the so-called *Sitz im Leben* changes to a *Sitz in der Literatur* by re-reading the texts in later times with different circumstances. Thus,

texts such as Isa 9:1-6 have a different function and meaning by the time of the final edition. The reader of the entire book assigns the promises to the messianic figure to the people of Judah as Isa 55:3 announces it. The third article deals with the difficult term *ûmĕśôś* in Isa 8:6. As Sweeney shows the ancient scribes and translators had already problems understanding the meaning of the verb, especially its form and root. After discussing all suggested solutions and analysing possible Hebrew *Vorlagen* of ancient translations, Sweeney offers a new solution. He points to Isa 66:10-14 as an early reflection on Isa 8:6-8 and shows the similarities between both texts. Therefore Isa 66:10 obviously reads *ûmĕśôś* in Isa 8:6 and uses it also with a direct object, Sweeney concludes that the text critical problem could be solved with an intertextual argument. The first part of the book concludes with an investigation of the form, structure, and function of Isa 65-66 for the whole book. Against the argument that Isa 65-66 seems to be written in reference to Isa 1 as the closure of the entire book, Sweeney argues that Isa 65-66 is not an origin unit. Rather, it shows traces of an editorial rework of an earlier text. Isa 65:1-66:4 deals with the announcement of YHWH to the returnees from exile while Isa 66:5-24 contains an announcement of the new creation in Zion which was written in late Persian times. A closer look at the text of Isa 65:1-66:4 shows the interdependence of Isa 65-66 on several Isaian texts (namely Isa 2-4; 6; 8; 11; 13; 37:30-32; 54; 60-62). So Sweeney concludes that Isa 65-66 represents an editorial text that takes images from the entire Isaian tradition to announce the return of exiles to Jerusalem. From a tradition-historical point of view the Isaian tradition became the source of revelation as the basis for a new prophecy which is represented by the final form of the book (cf. p. 62).

The second part contains four essays on the prophetic book of Jeremiah. The first deals with the dual text history in its Hebrew and Greek version and points out meanings for synchronic and diachronic perspectives on the book. After exploring the differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts and the two text traditions represented in the scriptures from Qumran caves 4 and 2, Sweeney refers to the structures of both versions. The synchronic reading of the versions already shows the different intentions of the writers. While the LXXJer orders his book in analogy to Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, MTJer lays emphasis on the restoration of the Davidic kingship in post-exilic Judah. The interrelations between LXXJer and Isa on the one hand, and the focussing on the house of David on the other, leads Sweeney to date the LXX version in the times of Ezra / Nehemia and the MT version in the Hasmonean time. Therefore the versions are identical until Jer 25:13a. He doesn't doubt that there was a book of Jeremiah which was redacted in two ways: The LXX version in form and content approaches the book of Isaiah while the MT version announces the doom of the foreign reign over Judah. Following the line of exploring the interrelationship of the prophetic books, Sweeney refers to Jeremiah's debate with Isaiah in the next essay. Jer 7; 26 exemplifies the meaning of true and false prophecy. Finally he shows that the question of true and false prophecy is actually a task of the right or wrong interpretation of delivered prophetic announcements. Jeremiah never negates Isaian traditions, but he expects their fulfilment in later times. As interesting and elaborate as Sweeney's argument is, he makes one assumption which should be questioned: he deals with the Isaian texts as if they already existed to the time of Jeremiah. But redaction-critical investigations show that we should be careful with these assumptions. Not to say he is wrong in his reconstruction, he just gives no proof. The seventh essay contains an investigation of Jer 2-6. The synchronic analysis leads Sweeney to the conclusion that Jer 2-6 is a reworked text from early Jeremian times in which the prophet announces the

fall of Northern Israel and the reunification of Israel under Judah in a new established Davidc kingdom under the reign of Josiah. As different investigations have pointed out, the editorial rework of the text took place in the time after Josiah. In its final form it criticises the Judean rulers for their alliance with Egypt by identifying Judah with Israel. In matter of methodology it is remarkable that Sweeney didn't follow the traces of former interpreters of the text which used literary criticism for explaining the growth of the text. Instead of this he takes the separate texts as units with their own function and character. From this point of view editorial work has its own value by combining already existing texts by giving new perspectives and functions to them. The final essay on Jeremiah offers a study on Jer 30-31. In a redaction-critical investigation Sweeney shows that the first edition of these chapters contains a collection of prophetic words about the destruction of Northern Israel and its re-establishment as part of the new Davidic kingdom under the rule of Josiah. Sweeney sees a confirmation of his thesis that Jeremiah was involved in Josiah's reform. A later (deuteronomstic?) editor added the late message of Israel's and Judah's restoration and return to Zion.

The third part of this collection contains three articles on the book of Ezekiel. In the first essay Sweeney points out the tradition-historical background of the prophet by taking up Odell's thesis of the priestly ancestry of the prophet. The main topic of his message is the purification of Jerusalem which requires the destruction of the city first. It is remarkable that Sweeney moves away from literary-critical investigations of the book. His main emphasis is to show that the order of the book is determined by the priestly idea of impurity and that each part of the book plays its role in this context. The second essay on Ezekiel continues the investigation of the priestly background of the prophet. Dealing with the vision of the destruction of Jerusalem in Ez 8-11, ritual acts describe divine actions in these chapters. The vision report contains acts similar to the purification of the temple in the times of Hezekiah, Josiah and Judah the Maccabee. The separation of the people for death and life is described in the way of the scapegoat ritual which is practiced on Yom Kippur: some people are killed directly, others are sent out in the desert carrying the sin of the people. The final article on Ezekiel contains an analysis of Ez 33:21-39:29. In contrast to former investigations of these chapters which defined Ez 33-39 as proto-apocalyptic literature from a later hand, Sweeney points to the priestly and prophetic traditions of this text. First of all he shows that the book of Ezekiel is structured by chronological order. This insight leads him to the mentioned unit. Furthermore he points out the function of the sub-units. The aim of the author is to let his readers realise that the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah was not a sign of YHWH's impotence but rather a sign of his power. The oracular report 1 – 3 describes the punishment, while the oracular report 4 – 6 the restoration of Judah, Jerusalem and the Davidic kingship. While seeking the tradition-historical background of Ezekiel's message Sweeney refers to the Holiness Code. The ideas of purity in Lev 16-18 and the warnings against the devastation of the land in Lev 26 are the key to understanding Ezekiel's prophecy. From the point of view that Ezekiel represents the Zadokite priesthood, Sweeney sees the restoring of Israel as a part of the restoration of the divine covenant.

The fourth part deals with the Book of the Twelve Prophets. The first essay concentrates on the meaning of the sequence of the books. While in former research the separate books were the focus of interpreters, Sweeney points to the structure of the whole book and its meaning for the scroll as one scroll. To show the sense of the sequences he refers to the different orders of the MT and the LXX version. With the LXX the sequence Hos-Am-Mi-Joel-Obd-Jon-Nah-Hab-

Zeph-Hag-Zach-Mal is common while the MT version has the sequence Hos-Joel-Am-Obd-Jon-Mi for the first six books. Compared with the LXX versions of Jer and Ez, Sweeney concludes that the sequence found in the LXX fits the thematic order of these two prophetic books: 1. disruption and ultimate restoration of Israel's relationship with YHWH and restoration of the unity of Israel and Judah under the guidance of the Davidic kingship and Jerusalem Temple in Zion; 2. concern with the nations and the Day of YHWH as programmatic day of judgement against the nations and of restoration for Zion. 3. the fall of Babylon and the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem as sign of YHWH's reign over the nations. 4. Mal closes the book by renewing the call for Israel's repentance and observance of the covenant (p. 186f.). The MT sequence differs insofar as the opening of the book outlines two topics: the disrupted relationships between YHWH and Israel and YHWH's defence of Jerusalem and Israel on his day as manifestation of YHWH's sovereignty over the nations. Sweeney explains the different sequences with their different socio-cultural backgrounds: while the LXX originated in the Alexandrian Jewish Diaspora reflecting the concerns of an exiled Jewish community, the MT focuses on the role of Jerusalem as the place of YHWH's sovereignty over the nations in times of foreign reign over Judah. The second article continues Sweeney's investigation of the meaning of the sequences for the entire book. In this essay he concentrates on the book of Joel, which plays a key role in the form and composition of the Book of the Twelve. Joel contains YHWH's response to Judah's appeal for relief from the threat and the announcement of YHWH's punishment of the nations. Beside the Exodus tradition the book contains many references to other prophetic scriptures both inside the book of the Twelve and to Isaiah. The meaning of the intertextual references changes depending on the sequences. While in the LXX Hos, Am and Mi stand in front, the punishment of the nations contained in Joel becomes a second step in YHWH's acting. From this perspective Joel receives a typological meaning for the punishment of all nations. In the MT sequence the punishment of the nations are included in YHWH's judgement of Israel. Therefore the image of Jerusalem as related to all nations doesn't appear in the reader's mind. 'Micah's Debate with Isaiah' is the title of the next paper. Sweeney discusses the relation of Mi 4:1-5 to Isa 2:2-4.5 by focussing on the differences between these two texts and their wider context in the final composition. After a detailed analysis of both, Sweeney finally concludes that the editorial texts communicate a controversial point of view. While Isaiah stresses the meaning of Zion for the Persian Empire and announces the realisation of YHWH's reign, Mi points to Judah and Jerusalem's restoration and the coming rule of a Davidic king who will defeat the Persian power. Sweeney finds reasons for the difference in the texts' historical circumstances: Mi reflects the hope of restoration in early post-exilic times while Isa refers to the times of Ezra and Nehemiah which were authorised by the Persian rulers. In the final paper on the twelve prophets Sweeney discusses Zachariah's relationship to Isaiah. Following older Jewish commentators he points out the shift of the name we find in Zechariah 1:1 and Ezr 5:1; 6:14. In his synchronic reading of Zechariah, Sweeney discusses the admissions of Isaiah in Zechariah. Therefore he points out several motifs taken from Isaiah. But finally he has to state that Zechariah contains another expectation of the fulfilment of God's reign on Mount Zion which corresponds to the image drawn in Mi. While Isaiah intimates the realisation of YHWH's sovereignty in the Persian rule, Zechariah still awaits the re-establishment of the Davidic kingship over Israel and Judah. Finally we have to ask how Sweeney's synchronic reading relates to a tradition-historical understanding of prophetic books. One problem is that he doesn't deal with the influences of younger books on older. For example,

even though he points out Zechariah's version of the 'plowshares' word in Zech 8 refers to the Mican version, he doesn't discuss the influence of the Zacharian version on Isaiah. This seems to be a missing element in his investigations.

The final part of the essay collection refers to Proto-Apocalyptical and Apocalyptic literature. In his first article Sweeney points to priestly proto-apocalyptical reading of prophetic and pentateuchal texts. He identifies a key function of this reading as the priestly mission to teach the people YHWH's Torah. By referring to Joel, to Ez 38-39, and to Zech he shows that the use of earlier tradition is to demonstrate their fulfilment in the building of the temple and Joshua's ordination to serve as high priest. The Temple is the centre of creation and the people of Israel serve at the temple as representatives of all mankind before YHWH (p. 245). Teaching the Torah means to prepare creation for its sanctification. The Zadokite expectation of fulfilment of God's sovereignty in Zion is the subject matter of the second article included in this part of the collection, too. Sweeney refers to the book of Daniel which is generally regarded as apocalyptic. In contrast to this point of view, he outlines a historical understanding of its message. Inside the final form of chapters 1-6 he discovers Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the historical referent. By showing that Antiochus' attempt to destroy the temple in Jerusalem is actually an effort to destroy the centre of creation, the priestly redactor supports the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid reign. The throne vision of Dan 7 becomes the centre of the text. It describes the raise and fall of foreign rulers over Judah and points to the downfall of Antiochus. In his fall, YHWH's sovereignty will be shown to advantage. This downfall is described in Dan 7-12 by use of priestly imagery, symbolism, and concepts. The final form of the book of Daniel contains the priestly expectation of restoring the temple as the centre of creation. The third article refers to imagery used in 1QM. Sweeney points to the time-lapse of the war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. The time-lapse is subdivided in a circle of seven years until the securing of the temple in Jerusalem and a circle of 33 years for the war against the nations. In comparison with biblical traditions, Sweeney outlines the use of elements from the biblical history of David. The seven year circle is understood as David's rule in Hebron, the second circle refers to David's time in Jerusalem. The list of the enemies (the Sons of Darkness) is identical with the states David added to Israel. By using the Davidic tradition in such a way, the author of 1QM also emphasises a strong difference. While the Davidic tradition is bound to a messianic figure, 1QM sees YHWH as king who will rule over the Sons of Light at the end. The final article of this essay collection turns to the legend of the four Rabbis entering Pardes. In his analysis Sweeney concentrates on the meaning of the biblical quotations given to them. These quotations reflect the reason why they are allowed or not allowed to enter Pardes. By following rabbinic traditions on each Sweeney shows how R. Akiba became the only one who was allowed to enter. In interpreting the biblical quotations Sweeney is able to show the function of the legend: R. Akiba's life and work shall be valued as exemplary by drawing the image of the others as antitypes. Even if all of the four are important Rabbis for the post-biblical Jewish tradition, R. Akiba became the ideal figure.

In addition to his *Introduction to Prophetic Literature* published in the FOTL commentary on Isaiah, this essay collection gives the reader a deep insight into further investigation of prophetic books. Even if some details are questionable, Sweeney's way of using intertextuality to show the development of biblical and post-biblical prophetic and priestly traditions is another step in the history of critical investigations on biblical texts.