MARVIN A. SWEENEY

Reading Prophetic Books

Forschungen
zum Alten Testament
89

Mohr Siebeck

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Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature

Mohr Siebeck

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Dedicated to the Memories of my
Maternal Great Aunts and Uncles

Bloomie Stein, z"l

Harry Stein, z"l

Jeanne Stein, z"l

Mayer Stein, z"l

Preface

This volume presents a selection of my essays on the study of the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible and post-biblical Jewish literature. It begins with the title essay of the volume, "Reading Prophetic Books," and it continues with essays devoted to the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Prophets, as well as to post-biblical texts, including the Temple Scroll from Qumran, the Babylonian Talmud, and Targum Jonathan on the Prophets. Following from my earlier *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books* (FAT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), these essays further illustrate my fundamental concerns with the continuing development of form- and literary-critical exegetical methodology in the Hebrew Bible as well as the intertextual character of biblical literature. Many of these essays have been published elsewhere over the course of some thirty years, but four, plus the Introduction, appear in print for the first time.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, Cheflektor für Theologie und Judaistik for Mohr Siebeck Publishers, for his willingness to publish this collection of essays in Mohr Siebeck's Forschungen zum Alten Testament Series. Among his many insights in the preparation of this volume, Dr. Ziebritzki suggested the title for the volume based upon the lead essay. I would also like to thank Ms. Tanja Mix Idler, Ms. Susanne Mang and Ms. Katharina Stichling, staff members at Mohr Siebeck, for their work in the preparation of this volume.

I am indebted to my Research Assistant, Ms. Soo Jung Kim, Ph. D. candidate in Hebrew Bible at Claremont Lincoln University, for her meticulous work in proofreading the various drafts of the volume and for preparing the indices. This work could never have appeared without her. Any remaining errors are my own responsibility.

My wife, Muna, our daughter, Leah, and Leah's fiancé, Brian, continue to make my life a joy through their love and support.

I have dedicated this volume to my maternal Great Aunts and Great Uncles. Uncle Mayer passed away when I was a toddler, but he was a gifted inventor and entrepreneur who did much to support and guide my Grandmother's family as they made a new life in Springfield, Illinois. I still have a photo of him and a comrade in uniform as part of a World War I

U.S. Army Balloon Regiment. Aunt Blo, Aunt Jeanne, and Uncle Harry, were constant sources of love and support throughout my childhood and young adulthood. I owe so much to them all.

San Dimas, California Marvin A. Sweeney
December, 2012 / Kislev, 5773

N. b. In keeping with some streams of Jewish tradition, the terms YHWH, G-d, L-rd, etc., are employed to express the sanctity of the Divine Name.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

AASOR	Annual of the American School of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AcOr	*Acta Orientalia*
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AION	*Annali dell' Istituto Orientale di Napoli*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEP	James Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* (2nd edition; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ANET	James Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ARAB	Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927)
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BDB	Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CB	Cambridge Bible
CBQ	*The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CC	Continental Commentaries

ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
EBib	Études bibliques
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EncJud	Cecil Roth et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (16 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1972).
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*
ETR	*Études théologiques et religieuses*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.* As edited and enlarged by the late E. Kautzsch (2nd engl. edition, revised in accordance with the 28th German edition by A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. and ed. under the supervision of M. E. J. Robinson; 4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999)
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBD[1]	Paul J. Achtemeier et al., eds., *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988)
HBD[2]	Paul J. Achtemeier et al., eds., *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (2nd edition; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996)
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HS	*Hebrew Studies: A Journal Devoted to Hebrew Language and Literature*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IB	George A. Buttrick et al., eds., *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon, 1951–1957)
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962)
IDBSup	Keith Crim, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*

JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JJS	*Journal for Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEH	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LD	Lectio divina
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LUÅ	Lunds universitets årsskrift
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
Mus	*Le Muséon*
NCeB	New Century Bible
NIB	Leander E. Keck et al., eds., *The New Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2002)
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NJV	Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Traditional Hebrew Text
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OPIAC	*Occasional Papers of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PJ	*Palästina-Jahrbuch*
POT	De Prediking van het Oude Testament
RB	*Revue biblique*
RevScRel	*Revue des sciences religieuses*
RHPR	*Revue de l'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
RST	Regensburger Studien zur Theologie
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SANE	Studies and Monographs on the Ancient Near East
SB	Sources bibliques
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSym	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies

SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
ST	*Studia theologica*
TDOT	Gerhard Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (trans. John T. Willis et al.; 15 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974 ff.)
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum/Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
UT	Cyrus Herzl Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook: Grammar, Texts in Transliteration, Cuneiform Selections, Glossary, Indices* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965)
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
UUÅ	Uppsala universitets årsskrift
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare

Introduction

The present volume builds upon my earlier, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (FAT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005). The title comes from the lead essay of the volume, and the volume as a whole focuses especially on the interpretation of prophetic and post-biblical Jewish literature from the standpoints of contemporary form-critical exegesis and intertextual method. But whereas the earlier volume began with the development of the study of prophetic literature from the late-nineteenth century work of Bernhard Duhm through the present, *Reading Prophetic Books* begins with a critical discussion of form-critical and intertextual methodology as a means to orient the reader to the studies presented here. Form-criticism has changed markedly since the initial work of Hermann Gunkel in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly due to its interaction with other critical methods.[1] Although form-criticism originated as a diachronic critical method for attempting to reconstruct the oral forms and societal settings that stood behind the present form of individual biblical texts, it has now evolved into a comprehensive synchronic and diachronic literary method for reading biblical texts as a whole. Contemporary form-criticism has not abandoned diachronic exegesis; indeed, a full understanding of the final, synchronic form of the text is the necessary pre-condition for reconstructing its diachronic forms and settings.[2]

Form-criticism is a foundational exegetical method designed for the modern interpretation of texts. All written texts draw upon the larger language

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[1] For discussion of contemporary form-critical method, see my "Form Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications* (ed. S. L. McKenzie and S. R. Haynes; 2nd edition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 58–89; idem, "Form Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings* (ed. T. Longman III and P. Enns; Downers Grove and Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2008), 227–241; and idem and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds., *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003). See also, Rolf Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," *Int* 27 (1973): 435–468; idem, "Criticism of Literary Features, Form, Tradition and Redaction," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* (ed. D. Knight and G. M. Tucker; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 123–165.

[2] Knierim, "Criticism of Literary Features," 150–158.

or linguistic system of communication and expression in which they are expressed, and each language has its own unique forms of syntactical organization and semantic expression that work together to make communication possible. Form-criticism therefore analyzes the formal linguistic features of a text, including its unique syntactical and semantic form or literary structure and its use of typical linguistic genres that aid in giving shape to the text and function within it to facilitate its communication.

Form-criticism functions first synchronically to analyze the present literary form and communication of the present form of the text, without regard to its diachronic composition or settings, and then diachronically, based upon the synchronic analysis, to ascertain and examine the compositional history of the text in question in relation to its reconstructed written and oral stages. It works together with other critical methodologies, such as rhetorical criticism, redaction-criticism, tradition-historical criticism, textual criticism, narrative, plot, and character analysis, social-scientific criticism, linguistics, and intertextuality in the interpretation of biblical texts. Form-criticism is intimately concerned with the societal, historical, literary, and conceptual settings in which the biblical texts were produced, in which they function, and in which they are read.

Form-criticism recognizes the roles of both the reader and the author in the interpretation of biblical texts. In the case of the former, contemporary readers construct meaning in their reading of texts based upon the perspectives, questions, and interpretative agendas they bring to the reading of texts. In the case of the latter, ancient authors and redactors wrote and edited the texts that we readers have before us in keeping with their own perspectives, questions, and interpretative agendas from their own times and settings. Ancient authors and redactors set the formal structure and semantic expression of the text at hand, and it is up to the interpreter to identify and analyze those features of the text as bases for the reconstruction of its authorial-redactional viewpoint. Such an enterprise meets with great difficulties; our attempts at reconstruction can at best be hypothetical as we can never be absolutely certain that we have correctly reconstructed authorial intention in a text. Indeed, even if we achieved such an understanding, we must also recognize that texts take on their own lives following composition and sometimes even the author does not grasp the full meaning of a text. But such difficulties cannot negate the attempt per se; they can only play a role in determining the extent to which the attempt is perceived to be successful. By the same token, the reader's perspectives and world views play an important role in determining why we read ancient texts, viz., what do they have to say to our own contemporary world? The tension between the authors' and the readers' perspectives and agendas – and even the gray area in between – is where the key issues of biblical interpretation are to be found.

Form-critical interpretation of a text entails seven basic factors: form, genre, settings, rhetorical function, narratological character, intertextuality, and interpretation. "Form" (German, *Form*) refers to the unique formulation of a text. "Genre" (German, *Gattung*) refers to the typical conventions of expression or language that appear within a text. Although form and genre are frequently confused in form-critical scholarship, they are not one and the same. Genre functions within form as a means to facilitate expression and communication. Settings include a variety of factors, including the societal setting (German, *Sitz im Leben*) in which language functions; the literary setting (German, *Sitz in der Literatur*) or literary context in which the text functions; and the historical setting, including both the historical context in which the text is produced (German, *Sitz in der Historie*) and the historical context in which the text is presented (German, *Sitz in der Geschichte*). Rhetorical function takes up the communicative side of a text, viz., how does it relate to and address its audience? How does it attempt to persuade or influence its audience? Narratological character takes up issues of plot development, dramatic presentation, gapping, and characterization as means to further a textual agenda. Intertextuality includes the relationship of a text to its literary context, including the larger textual work in which it appears, the larger textual universe to which it is either intentionally or unintentionally related, and the larger textual universe to which it might be read. Interpretation refers to the sum total of textual understanding derived from the readers' encounters with the text in relation to the preceding factors. Form-criticism (German, *Formkritik*) refers to the analytical study of the formal features of a text, and the history of form (German, *Formgeschichte*) refers to the historical or compositional development of forms and genres as expressed in texts.

Each text is uniquely formulated and constitutes a singular event of communication in relation to the language and societal context in which that text is written or translated. Every language, including biblical Hebrew, Koine Greek, biblical and targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, and others, employs a combination of typical semantic, syntactical, and generic linguistic features and elements that are combined to produce its unique textual expressions. Thus, the analysis of the formal literary structure of a biblical text requires a full understanding of the semantic and syntactical dimensions of biblical Hebrew, Koine Greek, biblical or targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, etc., in order to enable the interpreter to grasp the means by which a text organizes and presents its contents and communication.[3] Such formal

[3] See Harald Schweizer, *Metaphorische Grammatik: Wege zur Integration von Grammatik und Textinterpretation in der Exegese* (ATSAT 15; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1981); cf. Ellen van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

literary structure appears in the micro-level of biblical texts, such as the seven-day creation pattern in Gen 1:1–2:3 in which six days are devoted to creative work and the seventh day is reserved for the Shabbat as a day of sanctity, rest, and renewal for all creation.[4] It appears in the "woe" (Hebrew, *hôy*) patterns of Isa 5:8–24 in which the "woe" statements appear within the context of prophetic judgment speeches that articulate both a potential consequence and a statement of the offensive action that would bring about that consequence as a means to convince the audience to change its behavior.[5] It appears in the vision reports of Amos 7–9 in which the prophet sees some phenomenon, such as locusts devouring the crops or a basket of summer fruit, and understands that phenomenon to be a vision from YHWH that instructs him in the means by which he must address the people.[6]

Formal literary structure appears also in the macro-level of texts. Diachronic presuppositions cannot interfere in the determination of structure. Following the critical discovery of Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah, critical interpreters have assumed that the structure of the book constituted three parts, viz., Isaiah 1–39; 40–55; and 56–66, based on the view that a different prophet wrote or featured in each section. But synchronic critical analysis of Isaiah points to a different structure in which the related but contrasting narratives of Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah in crisis (Isaiah 7–12 and 36–39 respectively) point to their role in defining the perspectives of the two basic parts of the book, viz., the narrative concerning Ahaz's refusal to turn to YHWH in Isaiah 7–12 points to the concern with judgment in Isaiah 1–33 whereas the narrative concerning Hezekiah's turn to YHWH points to a concern with restoration in Isaiah 34–66.[7] Likewise, attempts to identify the contents of Jeremiah's original scroll stand behind attempts to define a two-part structure of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1–25 and 26–52, but a synchronic reading of the text based on syntax points to the prophetic word transmission formulas as the key to the structure of Jeremiah.[8] Likewise, the concern for judgment against Israel, judgment against the nations, and restoration for both the nations and Israel underlies attempts to define the three parts of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1–24; 25–32; and 33–48, but close attention to the chronological formulas of the book points to the principle that Ezekiel's prophetic career begins at the age of thirty when he would have

[4] See Michael Fishbane, "Genesis 1:1–2:4a: The Creation," in idem, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 1–16.

[5] See my *Isaiah 1–39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 121–131.

[6] See my commentary, *The Twelve Prophets* (2 vols.; Berit Olam; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000), 1:249–274.

[7] See my *Isaiah 1–39*, esp. 31–62.

[8] See my paper, "The Masoretic and Septuagint Versions of the Book of Jeremiah in Synchronic and Diachronic Perspective," in idem, *Form and Intertextuality*, 65–77.

been ordained as a priest and concludes twenty years later at the age of fifty when he would have retired from active priesthood.[9] Only after synchronic analysis is completed may diachronic analysis begin.

Such considerations also influence the reading of textual versions. Analysis of the textual versions of the Hebrew Bible requires a similar understanding of the literary character of the version in question, including the semantic and syntactical dimensions of the language into which the text is translated or presented. Whether the versional language is Qumran Hebrew, Koine Greek, targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, or other relevant languages, a firm understanding of the literary character of the version in question in relation to its own linguistic base facilitates interpretation of the means by which each version reads and conceptualizes the biblical text in question. The versions are not simply translations of the underlying biblical texts that are used only as a means to reconstruct the underlying *Vorlage* of an original Hebrew text. Rather, they are literary and scriptural compositions in their own right that present interpretations of biblical texts based upon the perspectives or conceptualizations of their respective translations and the communities in which they were read. [10]

The interpreter cannot simply assume that a translated text conveys the same understanding as the parent text. The formal presentation of each text, whether it is a parent or a derivative text, must be evaluated on its own terms. At the micro-level, the well-known Septuagint reading of *hē parthenos*, "the virgin," for Hebrew, *hā'ālmâ*, "the young woman," completely changes the character of Isaiah's statements concerning Emanuel and plays a constitutive role in Christianity's conceptualization of Jesus which is at odds with Judaism's understanding of divine character.[11] At the macro-level, the Septuagint's ordering of the Book of the Twelve Prophets as witnessed in Codex Vaticanus, viz., Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, presents a very different conceptualization of the book from that found in the Masoretic text, viz., Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Whereas the LXX order presumes that the experience of northern Israel as articulated in Hosea, Amos, and Micah, will serve as a model for that of Jerusalem and

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[9] See my paper, "Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest and Visionary Prophet of the Exile," in idem, *Form and Intertextuality*, 125–143.

[10] See, e.g., Arie van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint Version of Isaiah 23 as Version and Vision* (VTSup 71; Leiden: Brill, 1998), who analyzes both the MT and LXX versions of Isaiah 23 in an effort to demonstrate the distinctive textual character and interpretation of each; cf. Marvin A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

[11] See, e.g., Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 65–66.

Judah, the MT order focuses on the question of Jerusalem from the outset even when reading the very same books.[12] And indeed the question of a different *Vorlage* comes into play as well, as indicated by the differing forms of the Book of Jeremiah in the MT and LXX.[13]

Although each text is unique, it employs typical linguistic patterns or genres that function within a specific social, literary, or historical context to facilitate the presentation of its contents and ideas. An example of a modern genre is the contemporary novel, which originated only in the eighteenth century and which employs typical elements, including a lengthy narration, well-developed plot lines and characterizations, and some challenge that must be addressed by the fictional or semi-fictional characters in an effort to entertain, stimulate, educate, and influence the reader. Alternatively, the ubiquitous offer of a credit card or loan refinancing, which emphasizes favorable interest rates, low monthly payments, and easy acceptance, is a well-known standard genre in contemporary American society.

Biblical texts likewise employ typical genres that were easily recognized by ancient readers. The vision accounts in Jer 1:11–19 or Zech 1:7–6:15 are well-known examples of a genre in which a prophet or priest receives divine instruction, sometimes directly from YHWH and sometimes from an angelic intermediary, and often based on phenomena or imagery that was available to all but interpreted uniquely by the prophet. They typically begin with YHWH or the intermediary showing something to the prophet and asking what the prophet sees. When the prophet responds correctly as to the visual image at hand, YHWH or the intermediary then proceeds to explain the significance of what the prophet has just seen.[14] The prophetic *maśśā'*, "oracle," typically begins with the superscription, *maśśā' PN*, and then goes on to describe YHWH's actions in the world in relation to the subject of the *maśśā'*, such as the oracles concerning the nations in Isaiah 13–23 or the oracle concerning YHWH's purpose in bringing the Babylonians to Jerusalem in Habakkuk 1–2.[15] Indeed, genres can be mixed as indicated again by Habakkuk 1–2 which employs both the dialogue genre and the woe oracle genre as part of the larger form of the *maśśā'*.[16] They may also derive from social settings outside of prophecy. The above-mentioned

[12] See my paper, "Sequence and Interpretation in the Book of the Twelve," in idem, *Form and Intertextuality*, 175–188.

[13] E.g., Yohanan Goldman, *Prophétie et royauté au retour de l'exil: Les origines littéraires de la forme massorétique du livre de Jérémie* (OBO 118; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

[14] See Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (HSM 30; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980).

[15] Richard D. Weis, "A Definition of the Genre *Maśśā'* in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph. D. dissertation; Claremont Graduate School, 1986); idem, "Oracle," *ABD* 5:28–29.

[16] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 2:458–478.

dialogue genre is generally considered to be a wisdom form, and the prophetic books are filled with hymnic forms or psalms, such as Habakkuk 3, based on the theophany, or the so-called confessions of Jeremiah, based on the lament genre.[17]

Genres clearly function within texts as the preceding examples indicate, and they are sometimes mixed. But genres may also constitute texts, such as Ezekiel,[18] which is constituted from beginning to end as a chronology of the prophet's career, or Obadiah, which is constituted as a vision of the prophet.[19] In all cases, genres never appear in their ideal, Platonic forms; they are always adapted to the need of the text at hand. The days when Westermann could reconstruct a prophetic text by supplying missing elements of an ideal prophetic judgment speech are gone;[20] prophets didn't always need all of the ideal elements and they could reverse the typical order of the genre as in Isa 3:1–4:1 by presenting the outcome first and then the cause, thereby pointing to the analytical character of the genre which asks the question, what explains the catastrophe at hand?[21]

Early form critics focused especially on *Sitz im Leben*, societal setting, but the development of form-criticism has prompted interpreters to recognize a variety of contexts in which a text is produced and in which it functions. Thus, the social, literary, and historical settings of a text are key factors in influencing its form, composition, and function or interpretation in the contexts in which it is employed and read.

Setting is frequently a very challenging aspect of form-critical research insofar as the early literary as well as the social and historical settings of a text must be reconstructed, and because these settings can change throughout the lifetime of the text in question. Although interpreters are adamant in asserting that the proper *Sitz im Leben* of prophetic literature is prophecy itself, few have thought to ask about the setting of prophecy. Indeed, temples appear to be the most common settings for prophecy throughout the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds in antiquity.[22] Mesopotamian *baru* or divination priests were trained to function in temple or cultic environments, the Mari texts portray prophets who likewise function in temple environments, and Delphi was known as an important temple for oracular activity.[23]

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[17] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 2:478–488.

[18] Sweeney, "Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest."

[19] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:279–288.

[20] Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. C. White; Cambridge: Lutterworth; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

[21] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 105–112.

[22] Frances Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras* (JSJSup 90; Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[23] Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation* (JSOTSup 142; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

Such an observation has important implications for the interpretation of prophets in modern historical scholarship. Interpreters, largely Protestant in background, so frequently posit a fundamental dichotomy or opposition between prophets and priests, based in large measure on the worldview of Protestant Christianity which views Martin Luther's challenge of the Roman Catholic Church as a model for a prophetic understanding of their faith. And so Jeremiah and Ezekiel have so frequently been stripped of their priestly identity in modern scholarship to reveal the true prophet behind attempts by a self-interested priesthood to claim them as their own.[24] But such efforts fly in the face of the construction of prophecy in the ancient world. Prophets do not need to be priests, but they frequently are, and their authorization to perform as such so often comes from their presence or association with a Temple. Isaiah is no priest, but his inaugural vision in Isaiah 6 is based on the imagery of the Jerusalem Temple.[25] Amos is likewise no priest, but his visions are based on his presence at the Beth El Temple in Amos 7–9.[26] In the case of prophets who are identified as priests, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, even their visions – a quintessential mark of prophecy – betray priestly identity. Jeremiah's visions of the sprouting almond and the boiling pot from the north in Jer 1:11–15 are based on his identity as a priest of the line of Ithamar. The sprouting almond is based on the imagery of Aaron's sprouting rod which designated the Levites as priests in Numbers 17–18, and the boiling pot is based on the role of the Levites in preparing and serving sacrificial meat at the Temple during times of celebration.[27] Ezekiel's inaugural vision in Ezekiel 1–3 is based on the imagery of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies of the Temple and the pattern of the ordination of priests in Exodus 28–29; Leviticus 8; and Numbers 8.[28] And his vision of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in Ezekiel 8–11 is based in large measure on the understanding of the scapegoat ritual for Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16.[29]

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[24] Christl Maier, *Jeremia als Lehrer der Tora: Soziale Gebote des Deuteronomiums in Fortschreibungen des Jeremiabuches* (FRLANT 196; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Gustav Hölscher, *Hesekiel: Der Dichter und das Buch. Eine literarkritische Untersuchung* (BZAW 39; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1924); but see now T. J. Betts, *Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâ* (Studies in Biblical Literature 74; New York: Peter Lang, 2005); Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Reading the Old Testament; Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2013).

[25] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 132–142.

[26] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:249–274.

[27] Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature* (IBT; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 96–97.

[28] Sweeney, "Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest."

[29] Sweeney, "The Destruction of Jerusalem as Purification in Ezekiel 8-11," in idem, *Form and Intertextuality*, 144–155.

The literary setting of a text also plays a key role in interpretation.[30] One of the great debates of modern critical scholarship is the unity of the Book of Isaiah. Since the nineteenth century – and the 1892 commentary on Isaiah by Bernhard Duhm in particular – scholars have recognized the eighth-century prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 1–39, a late-exilic prophet known only as Deutero-Isaiah in Isaiah 40–55, and possibly a Persian period group of figures known as Trito-Isaiah in Isaiah 56–66.[31] The historical paradigm was so predominant that commentaries were assigned only on these portions of the book, never recognizing that the Book of Isaiah as a whole is presented as a 66-chapter unity. But beginning with the influence of redaction-criticism, which asked how the book came together in its present form, scholars began to recognize the literary dimensions of the Book of Isaiah and began to define its redactional or literary unity despite the diversity of its authorship. Such work made important insights possible. Second Isaiah's constant references to opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf to recognize YHWH's new actions in the world referred not simply to YHWH's acts themselves, but to the first part of the book in Isaiah 1–39 where Isaiah was commanded to render the people blind, dumb, and deaf so that the world would recognize YHWH as the sovereign creator of the universe.[32] Of course such work also opened theological questions as to how YHWH could sacrifice generations for YHWH's own revelation? And it pointed to an important facet of prophetic literature; prophetic literature is not always written to change the world (although it sometimes is), it is often written to explain the world and YHWH's actions in the world, particularly when evil rears its head as in the Babylonian exile. Similar observations might be made for Zechariah when it is read as a single book instead of a First and a Second (or even a Third) Zechariah.[33] And they might also be made for the entire Book of the Twelve which functions as both twelve discrete prophetic compositions as well as a single prophetic book.[34]

The historical setting of a text is also a key element in interpretation, when it is known. This applies in two senses, viz., the historical background

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[30] Wolfgang Richter, *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft: Entwurf einer alttestamentlichen Literaturt heorie und Methodologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 117.

[31] Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (5th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

[32] Ronald E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," *Int* 36 (1982): 117–129; idem, "Beyond Tradition History: Deutero-Isaiah's Development of First Isaiah's Themes," *JSOT* 31 (1985): 95–113.

[33] E.g., Edgar W. Conrad, *Zechariah* (Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[34] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*.

of the composition of the text and the presentation of the historical setting within the text. Isaiah 1–39 is after all the work of the eighth-century prophet, Isaiah ben Amoz, except that it's not. Many of the oracles can be traced to Isaiah, but much of the material of chapters 1–39 is the work of later writers. The third person prose narratives are a case in point. Isaiah's encounter with Ahaz in Isaiah 7 may be based on the historical counter – although we really don't know – but it is clearly written by a figure other than Isaiah.[35] The same might be said for the Hezekiah narratives in Isaiah 36–39.[36] Both of these narratives are editorial compositions, and many elements of the oracles are as well. Similar observations might be made of Jeremiah, Hosea, or Amos, all of which contain third person prose material clearly written by a figure other than the prophet. And the presentation of the historical setting must be factored in as well. The account of Sennacherib's defeat in Isaiah 36–37 is a stirring account of YHWH's deliverance of Jerusalem, but the notice of the great victory conflicts with Sennacherib's own account of Hezekiah's capitulation and the surrender of many hostages and resources taken to Nineveh by Sennacherib.[37] Indeed, the notice of Sennacherib's assassination by his own sons in the temple of his own god is a telling factor – because it took place in 681 B.C.E., some twenty years after the events recounted in Isaiah 36–37. We may be able to reconstruct the historical settings of Isaiah's oracle – and even the narratives – but we must also be aware of account for the influence of later historical agendas in the presentation of prophetic literature.

Rhetorical criticism must also be considered as a part of the mix. Early rhetorical criticism focused on establishing the coherence and esthetic characteristics of the biblical text,[38] but subsequent work in the field recognized the classical roots of rhetorical criticism and focused on its communicative and persuasive aspects.[39] Texts were designed – or not – to have an impact on their audiences, to convince them of a certain set of ideas or perspectives, or to persuade them to adopt a course of action. Jonah, for example, is not simply a narrative about a hapless prophet who tried to escape his prophetic task. Rather, Jonah is a rhetorical task designed to reflect on the character and intentions of YHWH, who was capable of forgiving the Nine-

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[35] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 143–164.

[36] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 154–511.

[37] James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 287–288.

[38] James Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969): 1–18; idem, "Isaiah 40–66, Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (ed. G. A. Buttrick et al.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 5:381–773.

[39] Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning* (note 1), 156–182.

vites, knowing that some day they would destroy the northern kingdom of Israel.[40] And Second Isaiah employed the figures of a male and a female servant, in the latter case Bat Zion, to reconfigure the prophetic marriage tradition between YHWH and Israel or Jerusalem as a means to argue that YHWH was now about to restore Jerusalem and therefore the marriage.[41]

The narratological side of texts must also be considered in relation to contemporary form-criticism. Although interpreters normally associate issues of plot development and characterization with narrative literature,[42] they also impinge on prophetic literature. Prophetic books generally contain a great deal of oracular literature, but they frequently include narrative, even if it is only a superscription, and the arrangement of their materials demonstrates an interest in a progression of plot or ideas as well as a characterization of the prophet in question. Jeremiah is perhaps the most personalized of all the prophets. His book presents a chronicle of his receipt of prophetic words from YHWH. He tells us more about himself than any other prophet, and most of what we learn is that he is a very conflicted man who suffers the abuse of his peers, his government, and his G-d at a time when his nation faces collapse.[43] At the end of the book, he is back in Egypt, where his predecessor Moses started, railing against those who would abandon YHWH and the land of Israel. Hosea is a lousy husband, who comes home from who knows where to accuse his wife, Gomer, of adultery which in turn becomes a metaphor for the relation between YHWH and Israel. Although Hosea's accusations of infidelity against Gomer form the basis of YHWH's accusations against Israel, it is YHWH who is tasked with protecting Israel, just as Hosea is tasked as a husband with protecting Gomer, and both of them fail to do so. One may wonder what Hosea/YHWH is hiding, perhaps abandonment of the bride? But in the end, both YHWH and Hosea promise to take the bride back, and so everything should be okay. Or is it? After all, northern Israel is never restored.[44]

Finally, contemporary form-criticism is heavily bound up with intertextuality in all of its dimensions. Based especially on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, intertextuality recognizes that every text is part of a larger literary

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[40] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:303–332.

[41] Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

[42] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985); Mignon Jacobs, *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

[43] Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading the Hebrew Bible after the Shoah: Engaging Holocaust Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 104–127.

[44] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 1:1–144.

universe that influences a given literary work, whether deliberately or not, and thereby enables a text to engage in dialogue with other texts and with its own readers.[45] Deliberate instances of intertextuality include citations of or allusions to earlier literature that are referenced or reworked in the work in question. Examples might include the citation of earlier texts from Isaiah and other prophetic works in Isaiah 24–27 or the reworking of the royal oracle from Jer 23:1–8 in Jer 33:14–26.[46] Deliberate instances also include the interrelationships between a text and its larger literary context, particularly the place of a text within the larger literary work or body of literature of which it is a part and for which it was composed. Examples might include the place of Zeph 2:1–3 within the larger structure of the Book of Zephaniah or the allusions to Isaiah 6 in Ezekiel's inaugural vision in Ezekiel 1.[47] But non-deliberate instances must also be recognized. The depiction of a withered and desolate land in Hosea 4 draws on a larger literary world in which the condition of the land points to inhabitants' relationship with the deity in question, whether that be YHWH, Baal, or Hadad or even Ishtar. Likewise, Ezekiel's affirmation of Davidic promise in Ezek 37:15–28 points to a very real, if unintentional debate with Second Isaiah who maintains that the Davidic promise is now applied to all Israel in Isaiah 55 or MTJeremiah which maintains that it is applied to Jerusalem in Jer 33:14–26.[48] Both of these texts were likely written after the composition of Ezek 37:15–28, but their inclusion together with Ezekiel in the Prophets of the Hebrew Bible artificially places them in dialogue with each other on the question of the Davidic House. And of course the reception of a text in a later context, and the dialogue that ensues therefrom, is an important dimension that scholars are now coming to recognize. The translation and rewriting of Zechariah 3 in Targum Jonathan and the rabbinic

[45] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1981); see also Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction* (SemeiaSt 38; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); see also Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality"; Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; and Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[46] See my studies, "Textual Citations in Isaiah 24–27"; "New Gleanings from an Old Vineyard"; "Jeremiah's Reflection on the Isaian Royal Promise: Jeremiah 23:1–8 in Context"; and "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in the Books of Jeremiah" republished in this volume.

[47] See my studies, "A Form-Critical Reassessment of the Book of Zephaniah," and, "Ezekiel's Debate with Isaiah," both of which are republished in the present volume.

[48] See my studies, "The Royal Oracle in Ezekiel 37:15–28," and, "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in the Books of Jeremiah," published in the present volume.

debate concerning the canonical status of Ezekiel would be cases in point.[49]

The essays published in this volume, like those published in *Form and Intertextuality*, illustrate the methodological principles articulated above. Most have been published before, some as early as 1983 and others have only recently appeared. And some others appear in print here for the first time. All previously published works appear here with permission.

Following the Introduction, Part 1 of the volume presents, "Reading Prophetic Books," which was previously published in *Iggud: Selected Essays in Jewish Studies. Volume 1: The Bible and Its World, Rabbinic Literature and Jewish Law, and Jewish Thought* (ed. B. J. Schwartz et al.; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2008), 57*–68* (English section). A much earlier version of this essay appears as the second part of my "Foundations for a Jewish Theology of the Hebrew Bible," in *Jewish Bible Theology: Perspectives and Case Studies* (ed. I. Kalimi; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 161–186. This essay addresses the major thematic interest of the volume with a discussion of the final forms and distinctive perspectives of each of the books of the Latter Prophets.

Part 2 of the volume presents six essays devoted to the study of texts from the Book of Isaiah. "A Philological and Form-Critical Reevaluation of Isaiah 8:16–9:6," previously published in the *Hebrew Annual Review* 14 (1994): 215–231, employs a combination of formal and philological arguments to make sense out of a passage that has so frequently troubled interpreters as a coherent work of Isaiah ben Amoz. "Jesse's New Shoot in Isaiah 11: A Josianic Reading of the Prophet Isaiah," previously published in *A Gift of G-d in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders* (ed. R. D. Weis and D. M. Carr; JSOTSup 225; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 103–118, employs formal and intertextual arguments to assert that Isa 11:1–12:5 reflects upon earlier Isaian texts as part of the seventh century Josianic redaction of Isaiah. "Textual Citations in Isaiah 24–27," previously published in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 39–52, examines the intertextual citations and allusions in Isaiah 24–27 as basis for reconstructing the hermeneutical viewpoint of Isaiah's redactors in reading earlier Isaian and other prophetic texts. "New Gleanings from an Old Vineyard: Isaiah 27 Reconsidered," previously published in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee* (ed. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 51–66, was written at the same time and with the same agenda as the preceding piece. "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah," previously published in *Studies in the*

[49] See my study, "Targum Jonathan's Reading of Zechariah 3," republished in the present volume.