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FROM DIFFERENCE TO DEVIANCE
RIVALRY AND ENMITY
IN EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY

EDITED BY

DANIEL A. SMITH – JOSEPH VERHEYDEN

PEETERS
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ABBREVIATIONS

ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
BAGD	W. BAUER – F.W. DANKER – W.F. ARNDT – W.F. GINGRICH (eds.), <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BiTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQ.MS	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JSJ.Sup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNT.Sup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	H.G. LIDDELL – R. SCOTT – S. JONES – R. MCKENZIE, <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i>
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NT	Novum Testamentum
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	New Testament Studies
NT.Sup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum

RB	Revue Biblique
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SNTS.MS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

RIVALRY AND ENMITY IN Q

I. INTRODUCTION: PAINFUL POLEMICS ALL THE WAY DOWN THE RECORD

1. *Introductory Remarks*

Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity are nothing if not diverse. Even the curated New Testament exists in heated tension, both within itself, and with external opponents real and rhetorical¹. The Pauline epistles, for instance, revolve around hot disputes both internal to Paul's recipient groups and at large in his wider networks. The Gospels can be seen correcting and countering each other's interpretations of Jesus. The pastoral epistles labour to vehemently repudiate Paul's apocalyptic asceticism. Revelation is quite happy with apocalypticism, but is not having Paul's agentic women for one second as it imagines a haughty Empire (and a few rival assemblies) brought to violent demise. As the movement and its texts turn over into the second century, we can begin to watch, like a slow-motion car crash, deep cracks forming between an increasingly non-Jewish Christ movement, and an increasingly maligned "the Jews". Even if we lay aside the myriad competing texts that were not canonised, those that were bear witness to struggles and polemics.

Q derives from a time when these polemics were still exclusively Jewish². Burton Mack calls it "the best record we have for the first forty years of the Jesus movements"³. Richard Horsley says Q brings us "closer

1. My warmest thanks to Joseph Verheyden and Daniel Smith for spearheading this international collaboration and for embracing feminist praxis at each step of the way, even when it meant significant delays. Thanks to John Kloppenborg, Shelly Matthews, Sarah Rollens, and David Sloan for generous suggestions. Three heroes, Matthew R. Anderson, Olegs Andrejevs, and Meredith Warren, read the first draft and made invaluable improvements.

2. On the emergence of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity out of the many diverse competitors, see A. REINHARTZ, *A Fork in the Road or a Multi-Lane Highway? New Perspectives on "The Parting of the Ways" between Judaism and Christianity*, in G. OEGEMA – I. HENDERSON – S. PARKS (eds.), *The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005, 278-293 and her extended argument for the Gospel of John's deliberate encouragement of such a parting in EAD., *Cast Out of the Covenant: Jews and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John*, Lanham, MD, Lexington Books – Fortress Academic, 2018.

3. B. MACK, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins*, San Francisco, CA, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, p. 245.

to the circumstances of Jesus' ministry and the early stages of the movement"⁴. John Kloppenborg says that Q is "one of the earliest expressions – perhaps the earliest expression" of the Palestinian Jesus movement⁵. Yet despite its nearness to "ground zero", Q is almost always overlooked in discussions of rivalries in first-century Judaism and nascent Christianity⁶. In this chapter, I argue that some of the enmity found in Q goes back to enmity around Jesus of Nazareth himself, in addition to preserving tensions from the time of Q's translation and composition.

2. Methodology and Q

Q is a vital resource for questions about animosities in the early Jesus movements⁷. It is material that predates the typical rivalries around which New Testament scholars congregate, and showcases instead a Jewish stage of the movement that is neither obsessed, as Paul was, with the Gentile question, nor as in later writings, with "the Jews" as rhetorically constructed opponents⁸. With Q we have an example of pre-destruction Jesus material, which is simply not under the same pressure to distance itself from Jewish groups that could draw suspicion as post-destruction literature is. Despite this, Q is nevertheless a collection that is internally rife with animosity and competition: vile name-calling, instructions on how to deal with rejection, and visions of apocalyptic come-uppances! When I have my students try to imagine that they have never heard of Jesus, and then try to describe him in one word using only what they can learn from Q,

4. R. HORSLEY – J. DRAPER, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q*, Harrisburg, PA, Trinity Press International, 1999, p. 150; J.M. ROBINSON, *Die Logienquelle: Weisheit oder Prophetie? Anfragen an Migaku Sato, Q und Prophetie*, in Id., *The Sayings Gospel Q: Collected Essays*, ed. C. HEIL – J. VERHEYDEN (BETL, 189), Leuven, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 2005, 349-374; L. SCHOTTRUFF, *Itinerant Prophetesses: A Feminist Analysis of the Sayings Source Q*, in R. PIPER (ed.), *The Gospel behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q* (NT.Sup, 75), Leiden, Brill, 1994, 347-360.

5. J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Introduction*, in Id. (ed.), *The Shape of Q: Signal Essays on the Sayings Gospel*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1994, 1-21, pp. 1-2.

6. While Q scholars (Kloppenborg, Amal, Joseph, etc.) interrogate rivalries in Q, historical Jesus and Gospels scholars largely do not.

7. So Simon Joseph: "Q remains a useful theoretical tool in the study of Christian origins since it ... represents a time in which the Jesus people began to differentiate themselves from other Jews". S. JOSEPH, *A Social Identity Approach to the Rhetoric of Apocalyptic Violence in the Sayings Gospel Q*, in *History of Religions* 57 (2017) 28-49, pp. 28-29.

8. "For both Matthew and Luke, the issues precipitated by the expansion of the Jesus movement into non-Jewish areas are critical in the construction of those gospels". J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Conceptual Stakes in the Synoptic Problem*, in H. OMERZU – M. MÜLLER (eds.), *Gospel Interpretation and the Q-Hypothesis* (LNTS, 573), London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018, 13-42, p. 39.

the first adjective they overwhelmingly come up with is “angry”. His woes against towns, his disgust with “this generation”, and his pointed references to those who stay silent when prophets are killed all point, for them, to what one student diagnosed as “unresolved anger issues”. Sarah Rollens suggests that Christianity’s well-known persecution-based identity, which has become such a Christian hallmark to this day⁹, goes all the way back to Q: “The Gospel of Mark and Q both stand at the early end of [the] continuum ... creating this mythic identity of rejection”¹⁰.

Rejection requires *people*. I will soon comment briefly on the “Q people” and discuss to what extent Q may function as a window onto a unique and early stage of the Jesus movement as well as onto the historical Jesus, particularly onto the *rage* of Q’s Jesus. I will first turn, though, to methodological considerations concerning enemies and rivalry.

3. *Methodology and Enemies*

Candida Moss, Leif Vaage, and others¹¹ have pointed out an important methodological rule – that inscribed “enemies” in literary productions can differ from actual relationships with groups with whom the authors and consumers of those literary productions often had to live and interact “cheek by jowl”¹². Relatedly, Christopher Tuckett reminds us that persecution “may reflect only one side’s description of the events concerned”¹³. Sarah Rollens succinctly quips, “persecution is not a thing, but an interpretation”¹⁴, reminding us that the presence of

9. On early Christian martyr discourse contributing to the myth that Western Christians are persecuted today, see C. MOSS, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*, New York, HarperCollins, 2013.

10. S.E. ROLLENS, *Persecution in the Social Setting of Q*, in M. TIWALD (ed.), *Q in Context II: Social Setting and Archeological Background of the Sayings Source* (Bonner biblische Beiträge, 173), Göttingen, V&R Unipress; Bonn, Bonn University Press, 2016, 149-164, p. 152.

11. See L. VAAGE, *Ancient Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success: Christians, Jews, and Others in the Early Roman Empire*, in ID. (ed.), *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism / Études sur le Christianisme et le Judaïsme, 18), Waterloo, ON, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006, 3-20. Candida Moss has shown that there does not need to be much actual persecution in order for a community to perceive itself as persecuted or to construct a persecuted identity: MOSS, *The Myth of Persecution* (n. 9).

12. J. LIGHTSTONE, *Urbanization in the Roman East and the Inter-Religious Struggle for Success*, in R.S. ASCOUGH (ed.), *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism / Études sur le Christianisme et le Judaïsme, 14), Waterloo, ON, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005, 211-241, p. 212.

13. C.M. TUCKETT, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q*, London, T&T Clark, 2004, p. 297.

14. ROLLENS, *Persecution* (n. 10), p. 164.

inscribed enemies and perceived or constructed persecution in a text is not a stepping-stone (or at least, not an automatic one) to historical persecution or real-life communities. It is good to maintain an awareness that rhetorical reconstructions may be socio-historical dead-ends, useful most of all for “generating questions about what language of persecution *does*”¹⁵.

As an additional caveat, for Q as for other textual witnesses to various stages of early Christianity, different moments and contexts are represented in a text’s source materials, its own creation, and its later redactions and usage. In other words, if we have in Q some authentic sayings of Jesus, *his* perceived enemies will be different from the perceived enemies of those who translated and edited the Q collection, who will be different from the perceived enemies of those who redacted it, who will be different from those who incorporated it into later Gospels, and so on for their recipients through the ages. If we were to flip Q and the canonical Gospels through our fingers like those old cartoons in the corners of books, we could almost see the enemies morphing, as “scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, Sadducees, elders, etc.” are plugged in interchangeably depending on the author’s pet “Other”, the whole eventually conflating, unfortunately and tragically, into “the Jews”¹⁶.

Most dauntingly, for each of the above interlocking steps, we have to bear in mind that a group’s or an individual’s enemies are themselves *not static*. Rather than being superheroes with a single lifelong archnemesis, real human frictions and conflicts are often changeable and temporary, catalysed by a specific personality or event.

With the awareness, therefore, that we are, as ever, on unstable (and sometimes imaginary) ground, let us turn to the context and contents of Q.

II. CONTEXT: THE PEOPLE IN AND AROUND Q

There has been much speculation about “Q people”, and much effort to determine Q’s social location¹⁷. Olegs Andrejevs recently advised the

15. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

16. M. WARREN – S. SHEINFELD – S. PARKS, *Judeophobia and the Pharisees*, in S.E. ROLLENS – M.J.C. WARREN – E. VANDEN EYKEL (eds.), *Judeophobia and the New Testament: Text, Context, and Pedagogy*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, forthcoming.

17. See KLOPPENBORG, *Introduction* (n. 5), pp. 1-2; G.B. BAZZANA, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy: The Political Theology of Galilean Village Scribes* (BETL, 274), Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2015; S.E. ROLLENS, *Framing Social Criticism in the Jesus Movement: The Ideological Project in the Sayings Gospel Q* (WUNT, II/374), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

use of “Q movement” over the more well-delineated “Q community”¹⁸. However, Rollens points out that there *are* features internal to Q itself that do prompt historians to employ Q material “to reconstruct the ‘first Christian community’”, such as a certain “group mentality” and Q’s seemingly programmatic use of the *basileia* of God symbol¹⁹, which implies insiders... and thus outsiders.

There are certain broad commonalities amongst the scholarly reproductions of those who produced and consumed the early sayings material in Greek²⁰. The community that the sayings imply and have inspired scholars to reconstruct is a group of Galilean Jews²¹ who are keenly interested in holding on to the teachings of Jesus but are seemingly not attached to preserving his biographical details²². At least some of this group are scribally trained²³, and they translate, collect, and seek to transmit Jesus’ teachings about the Kingdom of God, using the ethics and practices of that Kingdom to mark insiders and outsiders (Q 7,28; 10,9;

18. Olegs Andrejevs suggests a seemingly simple but conceptually important shift from “Q community” to “Q movement”; this interpretive key from his monograph on apocalypticism and stratification in Q allows for connection among “people from different walks of life [where] impoverished peasants with little to lose, and settled, respected scribes could coexist and network under the umbrella of a mission”. O. ANDREJEVS, *Apocalypticism in the Synoptic Sayings Source: A Reassessment of Q’s Stratigraphy* (WUNT, II/499), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2019, p. 195.

19. S. ROLLENS, *The Kingdom of God Is among You: Prospects for a Q Community*, in S.E. PORTER – A.W. PITTS (eds.), *Christian Origins and the Establishment of the Early Jesus Movement* (Texts and Editions for New Testament Study, 12), Leiden, Brill, 2018, 224-241.

20. This paragraph is a condensation of the research in S. PARKS, *Gender in the Rhetoric of Jesus: Women in Q*, Lanham, MD, Lexington Books – Fortress Academic, 2019, pp. 30-41.

21. Note that the geographical locations specifically mentioned in Q are Galilean; the “woes” against local towns include Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Q 10,13-15). For more on a Galilean setting for Q, see, *inter alia*: W. ARNAL, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2001; M.A. CHANCEY, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; S. FREYNE, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus Story*, London, T&T Clark, 2004; S. GUIJARRO, *Domestic Space, Family Relationships, and the Social Location of the Q People*, in *JSNT* 27/1 (2004) 69-81; HORSLEY – DRAPER, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me* (n. 4), p. 102; J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Sayings Gospel Q: Recent Opinion on the People behind the Document*, in *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 1 (1993) 9-34; and J. REED, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*, Harrisburg, PA, Trinity Press International, 2000.

22. On Q as representing the Gattung of sayings over deeds, see, among many others, R.A. PIPER, *Jesus and the Conflict of Powers in Q: Two Q Miracle Stories*, in A. LINDEMANN (ed.), *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* (BETL, 158), Leuven, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 2001, 317-349, p. 319 or L.M. WHITE, *Scripting Jesus: The Gospels in Re-Write*, New York, HarperOne, 2010, p. 189.

23. On the fact that the Q compiler/s could write, and in Greek, the authority is ARNAL, *Jesus and the Village Scribes* (n. 21).

12,31; 16,16; 17,21, etc.). They know Jewish wisdom (Q 6,31), apocalyptic (Q 3,9), and prophetic traditions (Q 11,47-51), and they expect with some relish to witness violent eschatological judgement on non-*basileia* Jews²⁴, although they themselves do not plan to inaugurate that violence. Instead, they seem to expect (or at least they remember Jesus as having expected) insiders to take part in itinerant work, healing and spreading their *basileia* message and their careful brand of Torah observance (Q 10,5-12.16)²⁵. They mistrust and subvert the dominant urban cultures of Rome and Jerusalem²⁶. Notably, they are totally unconcerned with non-Jews except as occasional foils.

III. CONTENTS: THE PRIMARY TEXT

As a reconstructed text, the heart of Q consists of *logia* of Jesus, translated into Greek and gathered within the briefest of narrative frames, beginning in the movement of John the Baptist, and implying continuity between the Baptist and Jesus by moving quickly into clusters of Jesus' teachings. There is little concern for the stories of Jesus' travels, miracles, and healings that interest the canonical Gospels, and there is no passion narrative²⁷. Jesus' death is not noted at all, nor any hint of the idea that he has been resurrected²⁸. Mack says those responsible for Q were instead "engrossed with the social program that was called for by

24. See B. MACK, *The Kingdom That Didn't Come: A Social History of the Q Tradents*, in D.J. LULL (ed.), *SBL 1988 Seminar Papers*, Atlanta, GA, Scholars, 1988, 608-635.

25. See PARKS, *Gender in the Rhetoric of Jesus* (n. 20), pp. 36-37; SCHOTTROFF, *Itinerant Prophetesses* (n. 4); G. THEISSEN, *Social Reality and the Early Christians*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1992, pp. 33-59; ID., *Le Christianisme de Jésus: Ses origines sociales en Palestine* (Relais Desclée, 6), Paris, Desclée, 1978.

26. See A.J. LEVINE, *Women in the Q Communit(ies) and Traditions*, in R.S. KRAEMER – M.R. D'ANGELO (eds.), *Women and Christian Origins*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, 150-170, p. 154; PARKS, *Gender in the Rhetoric of Jesus* (n. 20), pp. 39-40.

27. A larger more narrative-heavy Q is possible, even plausible, but would be difficult to reconstruct; David SLOAN, who maintains the Reconstructing Q website (<https://www.reconstructingq.com/>) will make a case for a passion narrative in Q, in a monograph now underway. Sloan presented on "Maximalist Q" at the International Conference, *Gospel Interpretation and the Q-Hypothesis*, Roskilde, Denmark, June 2015. Many others have argued in part for a larger Q, e.g., D.R. MACDONALD, *How Many Controversies Appeared in Q? A Radical Expansion of the Lost Synoptic Source*, in C. HEIL – G. HARB – D.A. SMITH (eds.), *Built on Rock or Sand: Q Studies: Retrospects, Introspects and Prospects* (BiTS, 34), Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2018, 549-562.

28. This is not to say that Q shows no knowledge of Jesus' death, but, as D.A. Smith argues, Q vindicates Jesus' death without a passion and with "no hint of resurrection theology", putting forth instead that Q assumes an assumption into heaven like luminaries of old: D.A. SMITH, *The Post-Mortem Vindication of Jesus in the Sayings Gospel Q* (LNTS, 338), London, T&T Clark International, 2006, pp. 5-21, 168-170.

his teachings”²⁹. Kloppenborg more recently affirms “the absence of a salvific interpretation of Jesus’ death in Q”³⁰. Despite the dearth of narrative, Q is by no means without organisation. It is not a random list, but a structured interpretation with its own theology³¹. Scholars frequently lift out certain aspects of that theology, such as the *basileia* of God³², wisdom³³, itinerant prophecy³⁴, or apocalypticism³⁵.

The apocalyptic sayings are of particular interest for the question of enemies. Much of Q can be described as vengeful, vitriolic, and violent. There are pronouncements of eschatological judgement on *general* categories of places, such as towns that do not take in Jesus followers (Q 10,10-12) as well as against *specific* named places, such as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Q 10,13-15). Unpleasant eschatological fates are pronounced against one recurring target of Q’s wrath in particular, identified as “this generation” (e.g., Q 11,29-21). There are also references to what happens to those who murder (or are complicit in the murder of) *prophets*, including the strong statement in Q 11,50 that “this generation” will be “charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world”³⁶.

29. MACK, *The Lost Gospel* (n. 3), p. 1.

30. KLOPPENBORG, *Conceptual Stakes* (n. 8), p. 38.

31. See J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity), Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1987; ID., *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2000, along with a recent reassessment in ANDREJEVS, *Apocalypticism in the Synoptic Sayings Source* (n. 18).

32. E.g., H. SCHÜRMAN, *Das Zeugnis der Redenquelle für die Basileia-Verkündigung Jesu*, in J. DELOBEL (ed.), *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus / The Sayings of Jesus. Mémoires Joseph Coppens* (BETL, 59), Leuven, Leuven University Press – Peeters, 1982, 121-200; J.D. CROSSAN, *Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Kingdom Movement*, in E.A. CASTELLI – H. TAUSSIG (eds.), *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack*, Valley Forge, PA, Trinity Press International, 1996, 113-129; or more recently G.B. BAZZANA, *Basileia and Debt Relief: The Forgiveness of Debts in the Lord’s Prayer in the Light of Documentary Papyri*, in *CBQ* 73 (2011) 511-525 and I.-H. PARK, *Women and Q: Metonymy of the Basileia of God*, in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 35 (2019) 41-54.

33. E.g., S. PATTERSON, *Wisdom in Q and Thomas*, in ID., *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Origins: Essays on the Fifth Gospel* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies, 84), Leiden, Brill, 2013, 141-174; R.A. PIPER, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

34. E.g., SCHOTTROFF, *Itinerant Prophetesses* (n. 4); HORSLEY – DRAPER, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me* (n. 4); S. MCKNIGHT, *Jesus and Prophetic Actions*, in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10 (2000) 197-232.

35. E.g., W. ARNAL, *The Rhetoric of Marginality: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and Sayings Gospels*, in *HTR* 88 (1995) 471-494 and ANDREJEVS, *Apocalypticism in the Synoptic Sayings Source* (n. 18).

36. Translations of Q are from J.M. ROBINSON – P. HOFFMANN – J.S. KLOPPENBORG (eds.), *The Critical Edition of Q: A Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas*

Some scholarship has eschewed the attribution of these eschatological judgements to Jesus. Jesus Seminar members such as Crossan expressed the hopeful notion that these angry, vengeful sayings are later inventions³⁷. Others like Eugene Boring have suggested that a persecution of those responsible for the Q source gave rise to such sayings³⁸. While large scale inner-Jewish persecution of the Galilean Jesus movement in the 50s is not corroborated by evidence, it is not impossible that a group may have *perceived* themselves as victims. Rollens notes that even having one's message rejected in a public setting could cause a "sense of 'persecution'" that "might stem as much from the acute shame of public dishonour as it does from real situations of violence"³⁹. However, working with the assumption that an exclusively lovey-dovey Jesus *may* be a product of wishful thinking, I have kept Eschatologically Angry Jesus as a historical option in this study. I here suggest an earlier context than Q for the *origins* of the angry sayings, however useful such sayings may have also been later for Q redactors.

IV. CATEGORIES OF ENEMIES IN Q

Reading Q with an eye for animosity, a few categories emerge. There are generalisations about real-life but sometimes unidentified groups, categorised by their behaviours. The wealthy and well-respected receive sustained criticism. Adversaries will suffer negative eschatological outcomes, whether as specific groups, or as more hypothetical didactic examples. Either way, the "enemies" operate within a Jewish world that assumes that both insiders and outsiders are Jewish. Non-Jews are simply not part of this discussion. If the implied enemies of Q could all be grouped into a single umbrella category, it might be something like "Jewish groups that will not fare well on judgement day". Under this umbrella I have discerned the following categories.

(Hermeneia Supplement Series), Minneapolis, MN, Fortress; Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

37. For example, Jesus is a non-apocalyptic wisdom teacher in J.D. CROSSAN, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, San Francisco, CA, Harper-SanFrancisco, 1991.

38. E. BORING, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982. See also W. ARNAL, *Redactional Fabrication and Group Legitimation: The Baptist's Preaching in Q 3:7-9, 16-17*, in J.S. KLOPPENBORG (ed.), *Conflict and Invention: Literary, Rhetorical, and Social Studies on the Sayings Gospel Q*, Valley Forge, PA, Trinity Press International, 1995, 165-180.

39. ROLLENS, *Persecution* (n. 10), p. 164.

1. *Jews Who Do Not Behave in Line with Jesus'/John's Teachings (But Have a Chance to Reform)*

Most of the chastisement and displeasure in Q is expressed indirectly. Q consistently, but opaquely, points to what will happen to certain people on judgement day based on their behaviours. Parsing Q's pronouncements about *who* fares poorly on judgement day is tricky, because sometimes it seems as though the decision has already been made (e.g., the Galilean towns and villages), while at other times it seems as though a change in behaviour could reverse a bad outcome. Some of the chastisement in Q is presented as being from Jesus (and John) toward a general Jewish *in-group*, to inspire behaviour changes among whomever will listen. These targets have a hypothetical chance to reform right up until judgement day. For example, John's listeners who do not "bear (healthy) fruit worthy of repentance" (Q 3,3.7-9) will be "threshed" by the "one to come" (Q 3,16) and the "chaff" will be burned (Q 3,17). Those who are enslaved to wealth cannot follow God properly (Q 16,13). Those who might be complacently expecting eschatological safety because of their comfortable station in life may be surprised when they find out that while they were busy making money, others were invited to the feast instead (Q 14,16-18.19-21.23). In general, many will be surprised at the eschaton by the series of remarkable reversals predicted in Q: the last and first will have reversed fates (Q 13,30). This constitutes an indictment of the rich, well-positioned, satisfied, comfortable, and high-status. The same is true of those who exalt themselves (Q 14,11) and those who "find their lives" (Q 17,33).

Those who do not follow Jesus are subtly called "dead" (Q 9,60), while those not with Jesus are against him (Q 11,23). Those who interpret Torah in a more relaxed way than Jesus does are suspect (Q 16,17-18). Following Jesus is exacting; those who deny Jesus in public are destined for rough treatment at the judgement (Q 12,8-9). In Q 12,53, one is not counted a follower unless one is willing to hold Jesus above the family unit, even to the point of "hating" family (Q 14,26). Following Jesus means being willing to "take one's cross and follow after" him (Q 14,27). Following Jesus is active; one must make oneself useful because "insipid salt" is thrown out (Q 14,34-35).

Part of following Jesus also means accepting those who work on his behalf, especially the travelling labourers who receive instructions in Q. Those who do not accept these itinerant workers by providing food and shelter and being receptive to their healings and their message, are to be abandoned to their eschatological fate (Q 10,1-12.16). Perhaps becoming

a travelling worker is seen in the text to be mandatory, since anyone not “gathering” with Jesus is “scattering” (Q 11,23)⁴⁰.

Other behavioural groups castigated by Q include those not “entering through the narrow door”. These people may claim to have often feasted with the master or householder, but they will be surprised when he denies knowing them, and throws them out, because they “do lawlessness”. This is another indication that proper Torah observance is a key issue, and proper Torah observance is contrasted against status and birth when the latter are falsely held up as safe assurances of escape from eschatological wrath. At the end of Q as we have it, those who follow Jesus are promised that they will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; this promise implies that all such followers are still assumed to be Jewish at this stage in the movement.

None of the above-mentioned groups are portrayed as irredeemable “enemies”. Rather, they constitute the “Jewish target audience”, eligible for reform. The above texts list behaviours that are encouraged or condemned, and different behaviours are linked with different imagined eschatological outcomes. It is assumed that people can reform themselves to take on new behaviours and thus be marked safe from judgement.

2. *Jews of “This Generation” (Who Perhaps Do Not Have an Option to Reform?)*

The phrase “this generation” crops up numerous times in Q, and those it describes seem both more specific and less capable of reform or redemption than the wider behavioural group listed above. “This generation” stands in opposition to wisdom. Those in it cannot be pleased, since they dismissed John the Baptist for being too ascetic, but equally dismissed Jesus for not being ascetic enough (Q 7,31-35). “This generation” demands a sign but is not going to get any more signalling than it has already been given (Q 11,16.29-30). “This generation” compares poorly to both the “queen of the South” and the “Ninevites” of old, who, even as foreigners, did a much better job of listening to wisdom and repenting when warned (Q 11,31-32), leading to the conclusion that “this generation” is foolish and beyond repentance.

Q 11 contains a series of seven woes against a group whose descriptor is not recoverable, but which is linked to “this generation” (Q 11,42.39.41.43-44.46.52.47-51). God will deliberately allow this Jewish group to kill and persecute wisdom’s Jewish prophets and sages, in order “that a

40. See D. ROTH, *Missionary Ethics in Q 10:2-12*, in *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 68 (2012) 192-199.

settling of accounts for the blood of all the prophets poured out from the founding of the world may be required of this generation”.

3. *Jews Not Specifically Called “This Generation”, Who May Have No Hope of Reform*

A certain group, who might be either “hypocrites” or “the faithless”, will be “cut up into pieces” at the judgement because they have behaved like an enslaved worker who thought the master would be away quite some time, and proceeded to abuse fellow enslaved people and party with drunkards (Q 12,39-40.42-46; the horrific image confirms the lack of safety endured by ancient enslaved persons). Perhaps the enslaved people in the story refer to Jews enslaved metaphorically (and often literally) under Romans, while the master is the son of humanity or God on judgement day. Those who turn against their fellow slaves and cozy up to the “drunkards” could be Jews who sell out to Roman overlords, or local despot puppets who cooperate with Rome rather than siding with the oppressed (subsistence living and overtaxed rural Galilean Jews). It is unclear whether this story offers a veiled condemnation of someone specific (perhaps Antipas), whether it overlaps with “this generation”, or whether it is another general behaviour group.

An equally uncertain saying is Q 17,1-2, where it is better for “those who entice little ones” to throw themselves into the sea and drown now, rather than to face their judgement.

Also in this category are the specific towns in Q that are decidedly doomed. Chorazin and Bethsaida will get a shock on judgement day when the foreign Tyre and Sidon are judged better than are they (Q 10,13-14), and Capernaum is destined for Hades too (Q 10,15). Additionally, anyone who speaks against the holy spirit cannot be forgiven (Q 12,10).

4. *Those Who Mistreat Prophets (and Have No Chance to Reform)*

Finally, Q refers with harsh vitriol to people who did not listen to prophets, people whose ancestors killed prophets, and people who kill prophets. Conversely, it refers positively to people who welcome prophets, and people who are mistreated in ways similar to the way the prophets of old were mistreated. Q’s macarisms and woes both culminate with reference to the treatment of prophets⁴¹. Jerusalem is the city “who kills the prophets”. This generation will pay for the blood of all the slain

41. Against the caution of ROBINSON – HOFFMANN – KLOPPENBORG (eds.), *Critical Edition of Q* (n. 36), I include the Lukan woes in Q, as do KLOPPENBORG, *Excavating Q*

prophets⁴². In my opinion, those who mistreat prophets are important in Q for specific, rather than generic, reasons. Rather than a generalised warning (such as not putting family, money, or social pressures before Torah/*basileia*), these warnings point to a specific locus of historical pain, and toward specific, subsequent rhetorical constructions of a specific enemy. In other words, when we examine this sore spot in Q, we may get closer to some real-life conflict. All the imagery of the death of prophets is doing some rhetorical work in the construction of enemies. The question for Q is: *whose* contemporaneous mistreatment is being compared with that of the prophets?

Sarah Rollens highlights the trope of the killing of prophets in Q as a key to the self-perception of the people around Q2 (Q's apocalyptic redactional layer)⁴³ as a righteous minority. Q "weaves its own experiences of rejection into this mytho-historical arc: Jesus, his disciples, and the people whom Q represents are at the tail end of a long line of rejected prophets (as in Q 7,31-35; 11,49-51; 13,34-35)"⁴⁴. Rollens notes that the Q collection "does not entertain the idea that its subversive or counter-cultural ideas might be the root of its rejection; instead, the legacy of the past prophets is the only explanation necessary"⁴⁵. If we are thinking of these sayings as reflecting the experience of Q2 as a first-generation Jesus community, then the trope of the violent deaths of prophets serves a double function: it explains both Jesus' death, and their own experiences of rejection. If, however, we imagine these sayings as perhaps reflecting the words of Jesus, the trope might have been drawn upon to talk about John the Baptist's death, and to situate John's apocalyptic message within the noble lineage of messages vindicated only after a prophet's mistreatment. These two rhetorical-historical contexts by no means exclude each other. Invoking the deaths of prophets of old helps ground first John's, then Jesus' deaths in *gravitas*, and one reinforces the importance of the other. Invoking these well-known ills of the past imply that John's execution, and later, that of Jesus, bear weight in Israel's history as significant unjust deaths that result from a people not living in

(n. 31), pp. 91-101, and D. SLOAN, *Luke 3:1-4:30 – How Much Is from Q?*, unpublished paper presented at the 2013 Meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society.

42. On this trope in Q, see R.J. MILLER, *The Rejection of the Prophets in Q*, in *JBL* 107 (1988) 225-240.

43. On Q's redactional layers, particularly Q2, the "apocalyptic layer", see KLOPPENBORG, *The Formation of Q* (n. 31); J.S. KLOPPENBORG, *Literary Convention, Self-Evidence and the Social History of the Q People*, in *Semeia* 55 (1991) 77-102; and MACK, *The Kingdom That Didn't Come* (n. 24).

44. ROLLENS, *Persecution* (n. 10), p. 163.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

correct relationship with Torah. Similarly, in line with 2 Maccabees, such stories perhaps anticipate (and provoke) God's turning back toward the people overall, to rescue them. For Q2 they can thus indicate that despite any perceived shame and rejection, the righteous Jewish in-group will come out victorious in the arc of Israel's salvation history.

V. REFLECTIONS SO FAR

Several observations arise from the above survey.

1. *Q's Dichotomy of Reversal*

First, Q constructs social expectations around "what makes a good Jew". Q disrupts and reverses what it depicts as the stereotypical *expectation* that those claiming to "do" Judaism properly are well-respected, from the elite, widely admired, and of unquestioned ancestral lineage. Q critiques the titled and entitled, those possibly connected to urban centres and to the temple. Judgement day will unpleasantly surprise these people. On the other hand, many of those in disrespected professions, those without any social currency, and those in distress, will turn out to have been the "good Jews" all along, and will be judged on what Q judges to be their correct practices. This observation is not new; many New Testament scholars have dwelt on the "upside-downness" of Jesus' kingdom, and Q scholars well know its trope of reversals. Rather, what is perhaps more important is a second observation:

2. *Q as Judaism*

The above dichotomy is not in any way an anticipated reversal set up by Q between Judaism as bad, and a new "Christianity" (which Jesus inaugurates) as good. As noted throughout this chapter, Q represents an exclusively Jewish and thus insider discussion about Torah observance, temple cult, and a Deuteronomistic interpretation of history⁴⁶. This should be obvious. However, one still sees scholars use the language of "Christian" for the movement around Q (not even "early Christian" or "proto-Christian"

46. On Deuteronomistic theology in general, see O.H. STECK, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT, 23), Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1967.

or “Jesus-following”) while juxtaposing it with “Jews” for the so-called opponents. This is not appropriate. There is no indication in this text of any historical context other than a Jewish renewal movement that deals in early Jewish sapiential, Deuteronomistic, and apocalyptic understandings of the world. All the important players, both the anticipated saved and the anticipated damned, are Jews. Non-Jews, when they appear at all, are trotted out to teach a lesson or to shame insiders. Non-Jews are not even invited, contra Paul, to be among the audience to witness the Jewish eschatological drama; both intended audience and implied speakers are Jewish. The most potentially proto-Christian element in the Q material – the figure of the Son of Humanity – harks back to early Jewish texts, is not divinised, and is only ambiguously equated with Jesus in Q. Jesus in Q speaks of the coming “son” in the third person, just as John does. Whatever lines are being drawn in Q are evidence of conflicting expressions of Second Temple Judaism.

3. *Who Delivers the Comeuppance?*

All enemies in Q, whether generic or specific, are condemned to receiving a comeuppance if they do not repent. It is important to note, however, that retribution is *not* the task of the in-group. Judgement will be delivered when the son of humanity (not equated with Jesus at this early stage) arrives to bring about the day of judgement and the full-fledged *basileia* of God. Until that day, adherents are to turn the other cheek, settle out of court, give more than is demanded or requested (Q 6,29-31), and avoid being exacting and stingy like tax collectors (Q 6,32) or non-Jews (Q 6,34). One is to behave the way one would like to be treated on judgement day (Q 6,37-38), leaving their fate to the eschaton. When Jesus sends out followers in pairs to heal and teach, and some of the towns do not listen or support them, the mendicant labourers are to do nothing but shake the dust of the town off their sandals; their hosts’ comeuppance will wait until judgement day. In the meantime, Jesus in Q instructs listeners that “if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent’, you must forgive” (Q 17,4). In fact, Q 6,27-28 outrageously instructs the group members to *love* their adversaries, and even to pray for them. Despite Jesus’ claims that he has come to hurl a sword, would like to burn up the earth, and is willing to dismantle families, the terrible judgements foreseen with such satisfaction by Q are to be meted out by God, not by Jesus or by any of the listeners whom he instructs to heal, forgive, love, be generous, observe Torah expansively, and follow *basileia* ethics.

VI. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DEATH AS CATALYST FOR JESUS' RAGE

The context I posit as giving rise initially to the animosity preserved in and employed by Q is the death of John the Baptist. Most would agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a follower of John the Baptist (Joel Marcus confidently uses the term “disciple”⁴⁷), and Jesus embraced John’s call for renewed Torah observance. Historical Jesus researchers widely agree that Jesus submitted to John’s immersion ritual – a water purification rite that symbolised prior acts of repentance and renewed commitment to a Torah-abiding lifestyle. John the Baptist was arrested and executed while Jesus was his follower, although it may not have happened in the dramatically-staged way Mark tells it⁴⁸. All three Synoptic Gospels pinpoint the arrest of John as the moment of Jesus’ “solo career launch” (Matt 4,12; Mark 1,14; Luke 3,19).

As Clare Rothschild says, “Q’s pronounced Baptist *Tendenz* is widely recognised”⁴⁹. John’s violent death provides an interesting potential context for the origins of Q’s angry Jesus. The sayings material provides ample evidence of Jesus responding to this event. Jesus says, “there has not arisen among women’s offspring anyone who surpasses John” (Q 7,28). He calls John a prophet, and even “more than a prophet”. Couple this with the repetitive trope of prophets wrongfully killed. The beatitudes culminate with “Blessed are you when people hate you ... for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets” (Q 6,22-23). The woes end with “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets” (Q 6,26). Opponents are cursed for building “the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed; so you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors” (Q 11,47-48). “This generation” will pay for every single prophet’s wrongfully spilled blood (Q 11,49-51).

47. J. MARCUS, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press, 2018, pp. 113-114, also J. TAYLOR, *The Immerser*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1997; B. Meyer’s comments that “Jesus’ response to the Baptist was unequivocally positive” and that Jesus’ remembered words and actions imply “intimate association with the Baptist’s movement” and “participation in his aim” are not atypical: B.F. MEYER, *The Aims of Jesus*, Eugene, OR, Pickwick, 2002, pp. 127, 123.

48. Per T.S. Ferda: “We are likely not deceived by Josephus’s testimony that John alarmed Herod and moved him to act precisely because of the impact John was having on the people (A.J. 18:118). Whether the fear was legitimate or not, Herod feared insurrection. As many have argued, this portrait makes more sense than the claim of Mark that Herod reluctantly executed John because of the scheming of Herodias (Mark 6:17-29 parr.)”. T. FERDA, *The Historicity of Confusion: Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Construction of Public Identity*, in *JBL* 139 (2020) 747-767, p. 755.

49. C.K. ROTHSCHILD, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (WUNT, 190), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2005, p. 6.

In short, Q's Jesus very often focuses not on how people have responded to him, but on *how people have responded to John* (Q 7,29-30). "This generation" is called out as specifically guilty of dismissing John the Baptist. Jesus may use unexpected foils such as Gentiles to shame Jews into right behaviour, but the judgement as to their right behaviour rests in no small part on how they responded to John. Tax collectors and sex workers' responses to John were appropriate, as opposed to those who responded incorrectly. In Q we learn that "good Jews" are people who listened to John, and (again) that they are not necessarily well-regarded or elite.

We also learn that "those who kill the body" cannot kill the soul (Q 12,4). Rather than constructing for such sayings a stage of transmission where a later community feared execution, it makes more sense to imagine a recent, and relatively certain historical situation where an execution actually happened. And if the ostensible speaker is Jesus, and we imagine context in which he would use such sayings, it is John's death that stands out as the most obvious referent. In fact, this language preferring death of the body to death of the soul may indicate that Q's Jesus knows material from 2 Maccabees 7. The saying in the context of John's death would effectively associate it with a known tradition of martyr discourse (cf. 2 Macc 7,8-11). Fittingly, 2 Maccabees similarly predicted eschatological annihilation for all but those who were loyal to Torah⁵⁰. DeSilva says, "the tradition of the deaths of the prophets" in Jesus' sayings is "made poignantly pertinent by the arrest and execution of Jesus' cousin and, perhaps, mentor, John the Baptist, who clearly identified himself with the prophetic tradition" and "The Q tradition particularly gives prominence to Jesus' consciousness of ... this tradition of the prophets"⁵¹.

50. On eschatological reward for martyrdom for Torah in 2 Maccabees, see R. DORAN, *2 Maccabees*, in J. BARTON – J. MUDDIMAN (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, 734-750 and J. GOLDSTEIN, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible, 41A), Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1983. On Maccabean martyr texts specifically behind early Jesus traditions, see D. DESILVA, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, esp. pp. 158-174, and G.S. OEGEMA – J.H. CHARLESWORTH (eds.), *The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins: Essays from the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies, 4), New York – London, T&T Clark International, 2008, especially pp. 51-67 (D. DESILVA, *Jewish Martyrology and the Death of Jesus*) and 69-84 (L.T. STUCKENBRUCK, *Jesus' Apocalyptic Worldview and His Exorcistic Ministry*).

51. See DESILVA, *Jewish Martyrology and the Death of Jesus* (n. 50), p. 59, who uses this to argue for Jesus' self-understanding as a martyr, in addition to that understanding of John the Baptist.

Maccabean vestiges may also be present in the logion that “those who lose their lives” will find them in the end (Q 17,33). Rothschild is right that Q’s keen interest in John is evident, and not only in those verses that discuss John directly, but throughout the material about the murder of prophets, and by association the material about “this generation”.

Q’s Jesus even has a teaching that marks John as a pivotal figure in history, important enough to mark a change in the apocalyptic timeline and/or in salvation history. “The law and the prophets were until John. From then on the *basileia* of God is violated and the violent plunder it” (Q 16,16). Surpassing John is impossible until the coming *basileia*, where even the least significant will be able to achieve this. Rhetorically, making John’s greatness so unattainable that the cosmos has to enter a new eschatological phase before anyone can match him, implies that both the speaker of the saying and the initial audience are already fully on board with John’s movement.

Throughout the time when the Synoptic Gospels were being composed and edited, it was so well-known that Jesus had been a follower of John the Baptist that the Gospel writers are unable to omit his baptism under John, even while engaging in awkward acrobatics to dance around “the problem of what [it] may have implied about [their] relationship”⁵². The Gospels’ obvious anxiety around how to depict the relationship between the baptiser and Jesus underlines for historians the subtext that John had a much greater following than the authors wished to admit, and that at least initially Jesus was counted among those followers.

John’s teaching is held up at the outset of Q, and one’s rejection or acceptance of it is a marker of eschatological outcomes. It is easy to imagine that John’s urgent eschatological reforms were picked up by Jesus all the more fervently after the outrage of John’s arrest⁵³. There is significant overlap between the remembered and inscribed messages of the Baptist and of Jesus⁵⁴. As an adherent of John’s reform movement,

52. MARCUS, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (n. 47), p. 81.

53. John’s arrest alone could be considered a traumatic event for his followers and those who believed him to be a prophet, but I follow Rothschild and many before her who place John’s death before Jesus’: “The dates of the respective deaths of both men should also have fallen between 28 and 36 C.E., probably John’s before Jesus’. The claim in Mk 6:14 that Herod understood Jesus as John redivivus probably indicates John died first”. ROTHSCHILD, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (n. 49), p. 52, n. 54.

54. So D.C. ALLISON, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2010, pp. 204-220. Even Robert Webb, who points out several differences between the two (such as different levels of asceticism), notes significant overlap and continuity: R. WEBB, *John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus*, in B. CHILTON – C. EVANS (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents, 19), Leuven, Brill, 1994, 179-229.

Jesus and his own cohort could not reasonably remain unaffected by the capture and murder of its prophet (however unceremoniously that execution may have actually happened in contrast to the Gospel accounts)⁵⁵. The impact of John's fate on Jesus (alluded to by his change of location), along with the culpability of any Jews responsible for, complicit with, or perhaps even indifferent to that death, merits consideration as the inspiration for Q's vengeful sayings. This is supported by the prevalence of the motif of the death of prophets (one of the least generic and most suspiciously specific types of sayings), across Q.

It is not necessary to diagnose Jesus psychologically in terms of trauma for this point to be made (although trauma theory has opened some interesting doors in biblical studies)⁵⁶. I simply want to suggest that where many scholars have hypothesised various unknown but unpleasant historical catalysts for Q's vengeful redaction, there is no reason not to examine at the same time, a disruptive and catalysing historic event in the life and career of Jesus and those surrounding him. I suggest that the demise of John the Baptist constitutes a plausible reason for Jesus and his core community to have been angry. The Gospels themselves suggest that the imprisonment and demise of John propelled a new stage of Jesus' public career. In such a context, Q's angry sayings of judgement and frequent references to John, may well help his followers make sense of his execution by placing it in a Deuteronomistic timeline. Doing so compared it with the untimely demise of righteous prophets of old, while imagining the deaths and teachings of all such mistreated prophets to be vindicated in the end. There will be vengeance for the blood of *all* slain prophets, but those who listen to prophets and are faithful to Torah observance and *basileia* ethics will escape.

We are not *required* to posit a persecution of early Galilean Jesus-followers to explain the vengeful sayings collected in Q (or, as some suggest, composed at the level of Q2). Instead, such sayings might reasonably be

55. "John probably died in prison at Machaerus. The explanation of his death in Mark is fabricated". ROTHSCHILD, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (n. 49), p. 52, n. 54. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 18.117.

56. See E. BOASE – C.G. FRECHETTE, *Bible through the Lens of Trauma* (Semeia Studies, 86), Atlanta, GA, SBL Press, 2016, and D. GARBER, *Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies*, in *Currents in Biblical Research* 14 (2015) 24-44. A particularly interesting example of cultural trauma theory's use in New Testament studies is Adele Reinhartz' piece on the destruction of the second temple as trauma: A. REINHARTZ, *The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple as Trauma for Nascent Christianity*, in E.-M. BECKER – J. DOCHHORN – E.K. HOLT (eds.), *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica, 2), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014, 275-288. See also Z. DUBE, *Jesus' Death and Resurrection as Cultural Trauma*, in *Neotestamentica* 47 (2013) 107-122.

expected to have arisen among the communications between Jesus and his own public circle in reaction to the death of John. Apocalypticism and socio-historical contexts of injustice and oppression often go hand in hand⁵⁷. Viewing Q through the lens of Jesus' continuity with John the Baptist, we can picture a Jesus movement which saw this negative event reinforcing their apocalyptic worldview. To read the reconstructed Q while remaining open to the possible historical context of an angry Jesus is to discover a text heavily invested in the loss of John the Baptist. Using Jesus' embodied and affective experience as a thinking tool provides a different window onto the apocalyptic sayings in Q. It is also useful for understanding apocalyptic hopes in general, both past and present, as cathartic⁵⁸.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Some scholars posit a persecution of the "Q people" as the context for Q's apocalyptic sayings. It is imagined that Galilean Jesus followers were spreading their urgent reform message about the *basileia*, healing and exorcising, perhaps baptising, and that they met opposition – scorn, rejection, even ostracisation. In response, they set down a body of vitriolic revenge sayings from John the Baptist and Jesus, whether remembered, adapted, or composed.

There is no evidence for a persecution of Jesus-following Palestinian Jews in the 50s or so of the first century. It is certainly possible (*qua* Duff, Moss, Rollens, and Reinhartz)⁵⁹ that texts themselves may *rhetorically construct* persecution for different reasons, or that their reading of their situation was as persecuted (*qua* Arnal, with disgruntled Herodian

57. On apocalypticism as revenge fantasy in times of difficulty, see, *inter alia*, K.B. STRATTON, *The Eschatological Arena: Reinscribing Roman Violence in Fantasies of the End Times*, in *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009) 45-76 and A. RICKER, *The Devil's Reading: Revelation and Revenge in the Comics*, in A.D. LEWIS – C. HOFF KRAEMER (eds.), *Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, New York, Continuum International, 2010, 15-23.

58. In Ronald Charles' important article on approaching Q with postcolonial questions, he advises that "the study of Q, of Christian origins, and of history in general, needs to be aware of the possible interconnectedness between the tensions and interests of yesterday and those of today". R. CHARLES, *Q as a Question from a Postcolonial Point of View*, in *Black Theology* 7 (2009) 182-199, p. 196.

59. Authors who explore persecution in early Christian texts as *doing* something rather than *reporting* something include P.B. DUFF, *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001; MOSS, *The Myth of Persecution* (n. 9); REINHARTZ, *Cast Out of the Covenant* (n. 2); and ROLLENS, *Persecution* (n. 10).

scribes)⁶⁰. These are convincing reasons for the undertaking of Q's main apocalyptic redaction.

However, as the contemporary reception of the book of Revelation shows, proclamations of apocalyptic judgement are endlessly adaptable. I have here explored an additional possibility for the sayings of judgement, earlier than Q's imagined, scribal, or rhetorically-crafted persecutions. I have argued that biographical elements in the life of Jesus and of his contemporary hearers provide a plausible context in which he would utter the calls for judgement that Q attributes to him. Jesus was a participant in John's reform movement and in the immersion ritual of repentance. He sided with John's stress on renewed Torah observance, and was in some way John's follower, carrying on John's baptising campaign and his apocalyptic warnings after the latter's death. Q opens with approval of John the Baptist and showcases his popularity⁶¹. It goes so far as to hinge time itself on a fulcrum of Before and After John. It presents a strong motif of murdered prophets. However well the vitriolic sayings may hypothetically serve a Galilean situation at the level of Q2, and however well such sayings helped to process the shock of Jesus' death among his early followers, it is at least equally plausible that they also gave voice to an earlier experience of unjust and violent loss.

There are a variety of different explanations on offer for the apocalyptic Q material. At every stage of the story – the people toward whom Jesus first directed his speech, the people by and for whom his sayings were collected and translated, the people who incorporated them into the canonical Gospels, and the people who were, and are, Gospel consumers – different rivalries can be attached to the same datum *ad infinitum* as rhetorical need arises or as situation inspires. Given both the prominence of the Baptist in Q, and the inescapable theme of the murder of prophets, an approach pointing back to the relationship of Jesus and John merits a place among our hypotheses about the origins of the vengeful sayings. The Q material should be incorporated into studies of the historical Jesus as well as the historical John the Baptist, as Clare Rothschild and Risto Uro have urged⁶². Additionally, Q should not automatically be assigned

60. ARNAL, *Jesus and the Village Scribes* (n. 21), esp. pp. 159-171.

61. "According to all witnesses, John was popular, drawing large crowds through his powers of speech". ROTHSCHILD, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (n. 49), p. 53.

62. So Rothschild: "most studies on the Baptist neglect Q as a source in its own right about John's life and work. Even specialists on Baptist traditions frequently overlook Q in their work on the topic". ROTHSCHILD, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (n. 49), p. 6, who notes as an exception W. WINK, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 18-26. To this exception, I would add Marcus, who employs key differences between Q and the Synoptics as clues in the search for the historical John

to “earliest Christianity” even as attenuated by our understandings of the Jesus movement. Rather, it can perhaps be given its place as an important expression of apocalypticism belonging squarely within the Second Temple period.

Furthermore, the apocalypticism present in Q has a contemporaneous comparator in the undisputed Pauline material. As Paul scholars know, there, too, we find constant references to disagreements and fights for which we only have one side of the correspondence. We know that some of those conflicts might be rhetorical constructions, but that others likely have some historical basis (if only because Acts and early Christian art try a bit too hard to portray a harmonious early movement). Yet New Testament scholars normally operate as though we do not have any evidence contemporaneous with Paul in which to see divergent expressions of the Jesus movement. One underexploited way to look at enmity and rivalry in Q is to put it in conversation with Paul’s assemblies. If Q’s movement coincided with Paul’s more urban and non-Jewish assemblies, we indeed do have evidence for opposing expressions.

The basic observations we can make are the following:

- Both Q and Paul are apocalyptic. As Arnal says, Paul “shares with Q – in sharp contrast to Mark – the concern that the continuation of ordinary life not dampen the expectation of the imminent end”⁶³. Yet, where Q does not address non-Jews in the eschatological pageant, Paul seems obsessed with having them play the part of “the eschatological gentiles”⁶⁴.
- Relatedly, both Q and Paul are missional, but Q people exclusively to Jews, and Paul clearly not exclusively so.
- Where Q cares about Jesus’ teaching to the point of having no passion narrative, Paul mentions no miracles or parables, seemingly almost disavows Jesus “in the flesh”, and by contrast focusses on Christ’s death and resurrection.

More conversation between Q and Paul is needed. Where Q is manifestly not concerned with Gentiles, Paul and Q represent evidence for

the Baptist: MARCUS, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (n. 47), p. 46; see also S. MASON, *Fire, Water, and Spirit: John the Baptist and the Tyranny of Canon*, in *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 21 (1992) 163-180; R. URO, *John the Baptist and the Jesus Movement: What Does Q Tell Us?*, in R. PIPER (ed.), *The Gospel behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q* (NT.Sup. 75), Leiden, Brill, 1994, 231-257.

63. ARNAL, *Jesus and the Village Scribes* (n. 21), p. 166.

64. See P. FREDRIKSEN, *Paul, the Pagan’s Apostle*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2017.

early diversity and inner-movement conflict that can be profitably compared. I suggest a conceptual shift in Q scholarship, in order to wield Q more sharply as a historian's tool. First, Q belongs among other apocalyptic expressions of early Judaism. Secondly, it should be seen as easily alongside Pauline scholarship as alongside Gospel scholarship.

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