

'Cut in two', Part 2: Reconsidering the redaction of Q 12:42–46

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In his influential 1987 monograph, Kloppenborg identified three layers in the Sayings Gospel Q: the 'formative stratum' (or Q¹), the 'main redaction' (or Q²), and the 'final recension' (or Q³). He ascribed the cluster of sayings in Q 12:39–59 to the main redaction. Within this cluster appears the parable of the loyal and wise slave (Q 12:42–46). In my view, some portions of this parable actually originate with the formative stratum. The aim of the current article is to reconsider the redactional make-up of this parable by appealing to Kloppenborg's own criteria for distinguishing between Q¹ and Q², including those of 'characteristic forms', 'characteristic motifs' and 'implied audience'.

Introduction

In his influential 1987 monograph, Kloppenborg identified three layers in the Sayings Gospel Q: the 'formative stratum' (or Q¹), the 'main redaction' (or Q²), and the 'final recension' (or Q³). Out of these, only the first two are relevant to the current discussion. In his analysis, Kloppenborg (1987:148–154) ascribed the cluster of sayings in Q 12:39–59 to the main redaction. Within this cluster appears the parable of the loyal and wise slave (Q 12:42–46). In my view, some portions of this parable actually originate with the formative stratum. The aim of the current article is to reconsider the redactional make-up of this parable by appealing to Kloppenborg's own criteria for distinguishing between Q¹ and Q², namely those of 'characteristic forms', 'characteristic motifs' and 'implied audience'.

As the previous statement reveals, this article accepts the influential stratigraphy of Q proposed by Kloppenborg in 1987, thereby using it as a basis for further study. A number of other scholars have done the same (e.g. Arnal 2001:5; Cotter 1995:117; Vaage 1994:7, 107). The present author has defended his acceptance and approval of Kloppenborg's stratigraphy of Q at length elsewhere (see Howes 2012:79–105, 167). This does not mean that every aspect and argument of Kloppenborg's stratigraphy is simply taken over without question. In fact, the current article functions as an example of how one may accept Kloppenborg's stratigraphy in principle, but still question and critically re-examine some of the more specific arguments and conclusions that pertain to particular texts.

Kloppenborg (1987:148–154) treats the cluster of sayings in Q 12:39–59¹ together, claiming that '[t]he threat of apocalyptic judgment recurs as the formative literary and theological motif'. He distinguishes this cluster from the foregoing material (Q 12:22–34) on grounds of general tone and basic motif: 'Whereas 12:22–34 is hortatory in character and sapiential in its idiom and mode of argumentation, 12:39–59 is aggressive and threatening in tone, and marked by warnings of judgment' (Kloppenborg 1987:149). He further argues that the foregoing material is aimed at the Q people, while Q 12:39–59 breaches the boundaries of the Q people, threatening everyone with apocalyptic judgement.

Regarding the parable in Q 12:42–46, Kloppenborg (1987:150) rightly claims that it 'gains its explicit connection with the coming Son of Man through its attachment to 12:39–40' (cf. Kirk 1998:233). According to Kloppenborg (1987:150), the parable originally addressed the delay of the parousia, and functioned as a warning for leaders of the Jesus movement to be faithful and trustworthy stewards during the interim. In the context of Q, however, the parable of the loyal and wise slave has been attached to Q 12:40, thereby highlighting not only the unexpectedness and suddenness of the impending parousia, but also the catastrophic consequences that will accompany it (cf. Kloppenborg 2000:118). As such, the whole composition of Q 12:39–46 acts as a warning to be prepared for the Son of Man and his devastating parousia (cf. Allison 1997:27; Fleddermann 2005:635).

1. That is, Q 12:39–40, 42–46, 49, 51–53, (54–56), 57–59.



The first article in this series of two argued for the existence of a redactional seam between verses 44 and 45, with the second half of the parable (Q 12:45–46) representing redactional elaboration. In what follows, it will be argued that Q 12:42–44 belongs to the formative stratum, and that Q 12:45–46 was added by the main redactor to redirect the message and intent of the whole pericope. The discussion is arranged according to Kloppenborg's three main criteria.

Characteristic forms

In its final form, Q 12:42–46 is clearly a parable (Bock 1996:1172), as defined by Scott (1989:7–62). It is a *mashal* (or proverb) with a short narrative fiction that is in some way symbolic of God's kingdom. It contains all three of the elements deemed by Crossan (1979:20; 2012:1–10) to be essential for a narrative to be generally classified under the genre 'parable': narrative form, metaphorical process and appropriate qualifier. Luz (2005:221) is technically correct when he points out that Q 12:42–46 only presupposes a narrative, and does therefore not formally qualify as a narrative. Even so, the text's clear presupposition of a narrative qualifies it as a parable. Notwithstanding the definitions offered by Scott and Crossan, not all the parables of Jesus feature, or even presuppose, a narrative (cf. Dodd [1935] 1958:18; see Donahue 1988:5; Hunter 1971:11).² In this regard, it is perhaps more significant that Q 12:42–46 coheres to Dodd's classical definition ([1935] 1958) of a parable as a:

metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought. (p. 16)

Notably, parable scholars all tend to include this text in their respective lists of parables (e.g. Blomberg 1990:190–193; Dodd [1935] 1958:158–160; Donahue 1988:234–235; Etchells 1998:107–112; Hunter 1964:121–122; Jeremias 1966:189–191; Scott 1989:207–212).

Despite its designation as a parable, Q 12:42–46 is itself made up of a series of small forms. Each of the first three verses qualify technically as a separate literary small form, with verse 42 being a rhetorical question, verse 43 being a macarism or beatitude, and verse 44 being an amen saying. Significantly, these are all sapiential small forms, commonly used in wisdom literature (cf. Scott 1989:211). More specifically, these micro-genres are all typical of instructional wisdom, and function deliberately to identify each individual verse as a piece of instruction. This taxonomy is substantiated by the deliberate use of the words 'wise' (φρόνιμος) and 'loyal' or 'faithful' (πιστός) to describe the slave in verse 42 (Edwards 1976:66). The first three verses address two classical themes of traditional wisdom. Firstly, they address the sapiential theme of how to distinguish between wise and foolish slaves

(Kirk 1998:234). Secondly, they address the theme of trusty and wise household management (Kirk 1998:230; cf. Pr 31).

In addition, Q 12:42–44 lacks all the formal features of prophetic or apocalyptic small forms, including prophetic introductory formulas, a threatening tone, and the features of the so-called 'eschatological' or 'prophetic correlative' (cf. Edwards 1976:41, 114). One could point to the future tense verb 'will appoint' (καταστήσει) in verse 44 as an indication of apocalyptic or eschatological intent, but this singular literary feature is wholly overshadowed by the evidence that Q 12:42–44 is intrinsically sapiential. In any case, the appearance of a verb in the future tense is not necessarily an indication that the author has an eschatological or apocalyptic future specifically in mind.

On the other side of the coin, Q 12:45–46 features no small forms. In other words, there are no textual indicators that would qualify either verse as a micro-genre of some kind. On the one hand, these verses are not marked by textual markers as sapiential small forms. On the other hand, they are not clearly marked as prophetic or apocalyptic small forms either. For instance, Q 12:45–46 lacks not only prophetic introductory formulas, but also the textual features of the so-called 'eschatological' or 'prophetic correlative' (cf. Edwards 1976:41, 114; Schmidt 1977:517–522). It follows that Q 12:45–46 does not *formally* function as either a prophetic or an apocalyptic warning. On the interpretive level, however, verse 46 does indeed seem reminiscent of a prophetic warning (Jeremias 1966:45; cf. Jacobson [1982] 1994:104 n. 32). It is certainly worth noting that verse 46 features no less than three future tense verbs, namely 'will come' (ἔξει), 'will cut in two' (διχοτομήσει) and 'will give' (θήσει). As with verse 44, these verbs are not necessarily indications that an apocalyptic or eschatological future is intended. The single aspect of verse 46 that is most telling in the current discussion is its unmistakable threatening tone (Blomberg 1990:191). In fact, the final verse is not merely threatening in tone, but in essence. Irrespective of its precise interpretation, the content of verse 46 can easily and without much controversy be classified as a threat.

Characteristic motifs

Verses 42–44

As a whole, the parable has traditionally been interpreted as highlighting some aspect of the apocalyptic event, whether it be its unexpectedness, severity or delay. Yet, these interpretations are exclusively dependent on verses 45–46. Other interpretations are made possible if verses 42–44 are considered on their own. If I am correct that Q 12:42–44 represents an earlier version of the parable, none of the traditional interpretations would apply to this earlier version, since these interpretations were all dependent on the content of verses 45–46. Put differently, it seems highly unlikely that Q 12:42–44, if considered in isolation, is about the unexpectedness, severity or delay of some or other future event. In order to extrapolate the motifs of Q 12:42–44, an

²In a former article (Howes 2014), I took the technical lack of a surface narrative as an indication that Q 12:39 should not be classified as a parable. In that specific case, however, it was not only this deficiency that convinced me, but also the likelihood that the saying is not at all about the kingdom of God, as well as its apparent function as a supporting logion in the overall sapiential structure of the formative layer.

interpretation of this earlier version of the parable must be proposed.

On the level of the formative stratum, it seems probable to me that the master in the parable represents God, the appointed slave represents Jewish leadership, and the other slaves represent the Jewish populace (cf. Etchells 1998:109). By associating the slaves in Q 12:42–44 with Israel, the slave manager with Jewish leadership, and the slave-owner with God, the current study follows in the footsteps of a number of noteworthy parable scholars, including for example Dodd ([1935] 1958:160), Donahue (1988:99), Etchells (1998:109), Hunter (1964:79), Jeremias ([1958] 1963:58, 166), and Nolland (2005:997). It seems appropriate to classify Q 12:42–44 as a ‘parable’, since these three verses, considered in isolation, fulfil the same criteria discussed above in relation to the whole text. Even though these verses are made up of three separate small forms, their thematic content is deliberately obscured and inherently parabolic (cf. Crossan 1979:34; Marshall 1978:532; see Funk 2006:29–31). If Q 12:42–44 is read in the way proposed here, the message is that the socio-economic and politico-religious leaders of Palestinian society were primarily appointed by God to take care of the physical and nutritional needs of the Jewish masses (cf. Allison 2004:440; Dodd [1935] 1958:160; Donahue 1988:99; Etchells 1998:109; Hunter 1964:78, 79; Jeremias [1958] 1963:57–58, 166; 1966:44–45, 131).

By expecting Jewish leaders to feed their subjects, the parable promotes general reciprocity at all levels of society (cf. Oakman 2008:97). I would define ‘general reciprocity’ as barter and other (economic) exchanges that are characterised by the unilateral giving or receiving of something without any expectations and/or obligations of repayment, in the spirit of grace or benefaction (Oakman 1986:151–152; 2008:95, 105, 138; cf. Lk 11:11). This form of reciprocity was usually in antiquity reserved for exchanges between family members. In ancient society, especially in rural villages, the more usual type of economic exchange was ‘balanced reciprocity’, which can be defined as barter and other (economic) exchanges that are characterised by expectations and/or obligations of equal return, in the spirit of fairness or justice (Horsley 1995a:204; Oakman 1986:66).

In a word, the parable of the loyal and wise slave calls upon socio-economic and politico-religious leaders at all levels of Jewish society to provide for the bare necessities of those under their leadership, without expecting anything in return. To the extent that contemporary leaders were failing in this most important task, the parable advertises a vacancy and encourages ordinary Jews to apply. All you need to do to qualify is to find a way to feed those around you. This is how leaders are born, and the kingdom of God is established (cf. Oakman 2008:105, 264, 271–272). Space does not allow for a comprehensive defence and discussion of the interpretation proposed here. I do intend to elaborate on the precise meaning and intent of this message in a separate publication, but for the purpose of the current work, I want to focus rather

on the overlap between this message and the rest of Q. In the remainder of this section, Q 12:42–44 will therefore be considered on its own, with its intended message assumed to be the one recounted here.

The current exposition will firstly consider the syntagmatic literary context of Q 12:42–44. If, as I have argued elsewhere (see Howes 2014:54–75), the Son of Man saying in Q 12:40 were indeed a later addition, it would follow that verse 42 was preceded in the formative stratum by the robber saying in verse 39. As it happens, there are a number of formal and thematic agreements between the robber saying and Q 12:42–44 (see Howes 2014:61–62): (1) both feature the catchwords ‘know’ (γινώσκω) and ‘come’ (ἔρχομαι); (2) both feature a householder; (3) both take place in a domestic setting; (4) both deal specifically with the householder’s possessions; and (5) in both cases a representative of the upper class crosses paths with a representative of the lower class. What is more, some measure of narrative progression is implied between the robber logion and the introduction to the parable. Whereas Q 12:39 makes mention of a burglary, Q 12:42 could be taken as an attempt to ascertain culpability or determine potential negligence on the part of the loyal and wise slave. Linking verses 39 and 42 in this way might have been the original purpose of the illative particle ‘then’ (ἔρα), before it received a different function in the main redaction (cf. Marshall 1978:540; Kloppenborg 1995:293; 2000:126; Zeller [1982] 1994:119). It is only when the sentence in verse 42 finishes with the clause ‘to give [them] food on time’ (τοῦ δοῦναι [αὐτοῖς] ἐν καιρῷ τὴν τροφήν) that the audience is forced to make a mental shift, and reassess the question itself.

In the Sayings Gospel, the complex of material in Q 12:39–40, 42–46 is preceded by the two passages in Q 12:22–31, 33–34.³ In my view, the original sequence of these two passages in Q is correctly featured by both Matthew and Luke, meaning that Q 12:22–31 preceded Q 12:33–34 in the Sayings Gospel. Q 12:22–31 follows effortlessly onto Q 12:11–12, seeing as both advise against anxiety. Q 12:33–34, on the other hand, follows well onto the conclusion of Q 12:22–31, since the process of seeking God’s kingdom enables one to disregard earthly treasures and to gather heavenly treasures. There is also a natural and logical progression from the bare necessities of Q 12:22–31 (like foodstuff and clothing) to the more valuable earthly ‘treasures’ (θησαυροί) of Q 12:33–34. Finally, the burglary of Q 12:39 follows very well after the mentioning of hoarding and potential robbery in Q 12:33–34.

Both Q 12:22–31 and Q 12:42–46 are about the kingdom of God (Bock 1996:1170; Marshall 1978:532; cf. Oakman 2008:105). To the extent that Q 12:42–44 can be labelled a parable (see above), it is a metaphor or symbol for God’s kingdom (see cf. Crossan 1979:20, 31; 2012:111; Dodd [1935] 1958:33; Funk 2006:59, 158; Hunter 1971:10; Nolland 2005:997; Oakman

3. Kirk (1998:227–235) argues that the *Sondergut* material in Luke 12:35–38 derives from Q, where it featured between Q 12:34 and Q 12:39 (cf. Schürmann 1994: 87–88; see Marshall 1978:533; Jacobson 1992:193–196). Given the absence of this text in Matthew, it is safer to follow the International Q Project and conclude that it was not part of Q.

2008:266; Scott 1989:51–62, 211). Q 12:31, on the other hand, encourages its audience to actively seek God’s kingdom, which in this context means to firstly consider and survey the natural world for clues about God’s rule, and to secondly implement these discoveries in their daily lives. This coheres with Crenshaw’s estimation (2010:16) of wisdom’s general intent: ‘wisdom is the reasoned search for specific ways to assure wellbeing and the implementation of those discoveries in daily existence.’ It is something of a truism that ancient wisdom tended to draw its inspiration and evidence from, above all else, both nature and human conduct (Howes 2012:246). The same is true of the parables of Jesus (Dodd [1935] 1958:22; Hunter 1971:10; Jacobson [1982] 1994:104; cf. Funk 2006:43, 48). Whereas Q 12:22–31 looks at nature to learn about the kingdom of God, Q 12:42–44 looks at human behaviour within a specific socio-economic institution. Whereas Q 12:22–31 asks what we can learn about God’s rule from ravens and lilies, Q 12:42–44 asks what we can learn about God’s rule from agricultural slaves.

The passage in Q 12:22–31 advises against anxiety over basic necessities. It is important to mention that this passage teaches neither against an obsession with earthly possessions, nor against work in general, as is sometimes claimed (e.g. Allison 2000:173–174), but rather against *anxiety* in the face of a perceived inability to procure food, clothing and the like (Piper 1989:33–34; cf. Arnal 2001:185; Kloppenborg 1995:303–304). The instruction not to be anxious is buttressed by the promise that God will feed and clothe his children (Piper 1989:30). Q 12:42–44 hooks onto this key theme by offering one specific example of how God provides for his children (cf. Oakman 2008:105). In his kingdom, God nurtures and nourishes his people through socio-economic and politico-religious leaders and institutions (cf. Fleddermann 2005:635). God appoints leaders and establishes institutions for the material benefit of the poor. The parable’s (subversive) message is that the main task of the well-to-do is to feed and nurture the poor (cf. Crossan 1974:44; 2012:63; Hays 2012:49). God provides for his children by allowing some of them to prosper and feed the rest. To a certain degree, this thematic overlap extends further to Q 11:2–4, 9–13. Ultimately, both Q 12:22–31 and Q 12:42–44 centre around the relationship between material support and the kingdom of God (cf. Hays 2012:51–52).

Q 12:33–34, 39 then continues to warn against the gathering of perishable and transient worldly treasures in neglect of imperishable and enduring heavenly treasures (cf. Q 16:13). At first, the content of Q 12:42–44 might seem to contradict the derision of earthly possessions encountered in Q 12:33–34. This is particularly true of verse 44, where appointment over more possessions acts as a reward. In truth, however, Q 12:33–34, 39 is not against possessions *per se*, but against the ‘gathering’ or ‘hoarding’ (θησαυρίζω in Matthew) of possessions. This motif is wholly reconcilable with Q 12:42–44. If the two texts are read together, they advocate that those who are in a position to help should not be stingy with their possessions, but should provide for the basic needs of those around them (cf. Hays 2012:49). In the parable of Q 12:42–44,

the reward of being appointed over even more possessions (v. 44) is a blessing not only because of the slave’s increased honour (cf. Kloppenborg 1995:294), but also because it places that slave in a position to address the needs of even more slaves (cf. Allison 2004:440). The distinction in Q 12:33–34, 39 between ‘earthly’ and ‘heavenly’ treasures relates well to the distinction in Q 12:42–44 between the slave’s initial and ultimate appointment, especially if the latter is somehow representative of a ‘heavenly reward’ (cf. Hays 2012:49, 51). Whereas the passage in Q 12:22–31 relates to the fellow slaves in Q 12:42–44, the passage in Q 12:33–34, 39 relates to the appointed slave. As such, Q 12:42–44 is thematically linked to both preceding Q¹ pericopes.

Besides its immediate literary context, Q 12:42–44 has thematically most in common with the first few lines of the inaugural sermon (Q 6:20–35) (cf. Allison 2004:441; Luz 2005:225). The beatitudes that launch the sermon maintain that the poor, hungry, mournful and persecuted are blessed. The maxim about the robber (Q 12:39) and the passage against anxiety (Q 12:22–31) both have this in common with the beatitudes (Howes 2014:67–68). The same goes for Q 12:42–44. Both Q 6:20–23 and Q 12:43 make use of beatitudes to address the ruling socio-economic situation (Hays 2012:50). According to the inaugural sermon, the poor are blessed because they will eat anyway (Q 6:20–23). This initial claim is clarified by the remainder of the Sayings Gospel, which explains that God provides for the poor in a variety of ways, sometimes in rather unexpected ways (Q 12:31, 42). They are further blessed because they are free, not only from the stress (Q 12:22–31, 33–34, 39), but also from the responsibility and accountability (Q 12:42–44), that comes with having a lot (cf. Allison 2004:440; Hunter 1964:120).

Q 6:27–28 instructs its audience to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors. Elsewhere in Q, these persecutors and enemies are pertinently identified as the Jewish elite (cf. Q 11:39, 41–44, 46–48, 52; 12:11–12). Some scholars have argued that the Jewish elite constitute the Q people’s main out-group, called ‘this generation’ in the Sayings Gospel (e.g. Horsley 1992:191; 1995b:49; 1999:299; cf. Jacobson 1992:169). Like Q 6:27–28, Q 12:42–44 encourages the lower classes to foster a positive attitude towards the Jewish elite (cf. Crossan 1983:60). The latter text explicitly calls these leaders ‘blessed’ (μακάριος), and even imagines the possibility of them receiving a significant promotion (Donahue 1988:98; Etchells 1998:110; Taylor 1989:143).

The sermon then becomes more practical, offering some examples of what to do in certain circumstances (Q 6:29–30; [Matt 5:41]; Kirk 1998:159–160; Piper 1989:111). These include turning the other cheek if someone slaps you, giving someone two pieces of clothing if she or he demands only one, giving to someone who asks without expecting anything in return, and (possibly) walking a second mile if you are conscripted to walk only one. The last example certainly implies an unequal relationship between the two parties, and promotes voluntary submission to authority, but the

presence of this instruction in Q is disputed, seeing as it only appears in Matthew (5:41). The other three examples could apply to either equal or unequal relationships. If they refer to unequal relationships, the ones in Matthew [Q] 5:41 and Q 6:29 address the inferior partaker, while the ones in Q 6:30 address the superior partaker. In this regard, the attitude of deliberate submission by inferiors to superiors is promoted explicitly by Q 6:29 (and Matthew [Q] 5:41), but only implicitly by Q 12:42–44, through the acquiescence and passivity of the other slaves.

Conversely, the attitude of generosity and supportiveness by superiors to inferiors is advocated explicitly by both Q 6:30 and Q 12:42–44. The expectation in Q 12:42–44 that the appointed slave should feed his fellow slaves corresponds to the instruction in the sermon that one should give without reservation or the prospect of return (cf. Hays 2012:49, 50). Both of these texts seem to promote general reciprocity (cf. Oakman 2008:95). If Q 6:29–30 addresses equal relationships, Q 12:42–44 could be taken to promote the exact same behaviour, especially if it is considered that the appointed slave in Q 12:42 is just another slave, who could lose his privileged position at any time. Whatever the case, both of these texts literally advocate going the extra mile for your inferiors, fellows and superiors.

Some scholars have taken the golden rule in Q 6:31 to contradict the general intent of the rest of the inaugural sermon (e.g. Furnish 1973:57; see Kirk 1998:153–158). Specifically, the inaugural sermon seems to promote general reciprocity, whereas the golden rule, according to them, promotes balanced reciprocity. At face value, the golden rule might seem to advocate a general *quid pro quo* type of attitude (Piper 1989:80). However, the saying does not address the aspect of return in reciprocal dealings, but general behaviour in all types of dealings (cf. Piper 1989:80). As such, the saying endorses everything that has gone before in Q 6:27–28, 35, 29–30. By not identifying the acting subject, the recipient or the specific action, this traditional saying renders itself relevant to many literary contexts, which is probably why it circulated independently (cf. Kloppenborg 1987:176). In this context, it substantiates and advocates general reciprocity. As such, the golden rule relates well to Q 12:42–44.

General reciprocity is also the central theme of the four rhetorical questions in Q 6:32, 34. These verses obviously imagine a closed system; one that does not include gentiles (Piper 1989:84–85; cf. Catchpole 1993:107, 115). Similarly, within the narrative world of Q 12:42–44, all the events occur within the closed system of the ‘household of slaves’ (οἰκετεῖα). In both the inaugural sermon and the parable, the undeclared closed system probably points to the nation of Israel, and to Jewish society in general (Dodd [1935] 1958:160; Etchells 1998:109). According to Q 6:32, you should love everyone in this closed system, without discrimination. According to Q 6:34, you should give to everyone within this closed system, regardless of whether they will be able to repay you or not. As we have seen, Q 12:42–44 endorses

the very same ideals. The appointed slave should love his fellow slaves indiscriminately, and should feed them despite their inability to repay the favour. Essentially, much of the inaugural sermon (Q 6:27–28, 30, 29–32, 34) explicitly promotes general reciprocity, which is also the central theme of the parable in Q 12:42–44 (cf. Oakman 2008:105).

Finally, like Q 12:42–44, the procurement of subsistence and sustenance is a central theme of the formative stratum.⁴ In general, the formative stratum is heavily concerned with people’s basic needs, like food, clothing and housing.⁵ In these texts, the focus is on physical survival, and basic needs are mentioned for their own sake, as the means whereby survival is attained. By contrast, when food, clothing or housing is mentioned in the main redaction (and final recension), they unfailingly serve some larger rhetorical purpose.⁶ On the level of the main redaction, it is difficult to understand, for example, the thematic link between Q 12:39–59, with its threatening images of trespassing, severe punishment, fire, family division, celestial warnings and imprisonment, on the one hand, and the parables of the mustard seed and leaven in Q 13:18–21, with its positive images of growth and spectacle, on the other (Kloppenborg 1995:309). On the level of the formative stratum, however, Q 13:18–21 follows directly after Q 12:22–31, 39, 42–44, and similarly revolves around the relationship between food and the kingdom of God (cf. Oakman 2008:105). It is important to note in closing that many of the thematic links identified in this section would remain valid even if my interpretation of the parable missed the mark completely. In particular, the concern over food and other basic needs in the formative stratum coheres well with the slave’s task to feed his fellow slaves in Q 12:42–44.

Verses 45–46

Past and present scholars have justly noticed a great degree of thematic overlap between Q 12:46 and other texts in the main redaction that similarly prophesy about the apocalyptic end (e.g. Jacobson [1982] 1994:114). Kloppenborg (1987: 150–151), for example, lists the following texts: Q 3:9, 17; 11:24–26, 34–36; 13:26–27, 28–29; 17:26–27, 30. Such thematic overlap is both obvious and inescapable if Q 12:46 is read in light of Q 12:40, as it should be on the Q² level. The idea that the apocalyptic event will occur abruptly and unexpectedly is a central theme of the main redaction (cf. Q 17:23–24, 26–27, 30, 34–35). The appeal for preparedness, sometimes in the form of repentance, is also a central motif for Q² (cf. Q 3:8; 10:13; 17:26–27, 30). The harsh and unforgiving images with which the parable describes apocalyptic punishment fit very well with similar imagery in the rest of Q² (Q 3:9, 17; 10:12, 14–15; 13:28; 17:24, 26–27, 30, 34–35, 37).

4. For example, Q 6:21; 10:2, 7–8 (in my view, this text is not symbolic of missionaries); 11:3, 11–13; 12:22–31; 13:26; 14:16–19, 21, 23 (it is my opinion that the latter parable is part of Q¹, and that the references to dinner are more than merely symbolic); 15:4–5, 7. On one or two occasions, references to food appear not to represent subsistence as such, but to symbolise something else: Q 13:18–19, 20–21.

5. For examples of texts about food, see the previous footnote. Clothing: Q 6:29; 11:3, 11–13; 12:22–31; 13:26; 14:16–19, 21, 23 (it is my opinion that the latter parable is part of Q¹, and that the references to dinner are more than merely symbolic); 15:4–5, 7. On one or two occasions, references to food appear not to represent subsistence as such, but to symbolise something else: Q 13:18–19, 20–21.

6. For example, Q 3:8–9, 16–17; (4:3–4) 7:25, 33–34; 11:17, 42, 51; 13:28–29, 35; 17:27, 35.



Implied audience

Verses 42–44

That Q 12:42–44 is neither directly nor indirectly aimed at an out-group is confirmed by four factors. Firstly, there is no explicit or implicit mention of an out-group, whether gentiles or ‘this generation’, either in the parable itself or in its immediate literary context (Q 12). Secondly, it was mentioned above that Q 12:42–44 operates within the closed system of the ‘household of slaves’ (οικετρία). The parable does not feature any other characters in addition to the master, the appointed slave, and his fellow slaves. What is more, within the narrative world of the parable in Q 12:42–44, the master only features when he is within the closed system. His existence is only relevant in as far as it relates to the ‘household of slaves’ (cf. Dodd [1935] 1958:159; Funk 1974:68). We do not follow him when he leaves this space. The reason for his departure is not even mentioned, being entirely irrelevant to the story, which operates within the confines of a closed system (cf. Dodd [1935] 1958:159). It is hard to imagine a spatial depiction such as this being directed at outsiders, whether directly or indirectly. Thirdly, the sapiential aim of Q 12:42–44 to direct behaviour is reminiscent of wisdom for insiders. In general, ‘motivating positive action is an identifiable feature of Q¹, but not of Q²’ (Howes 2013:318). In our pericope, the intention to motivate positive action is particularly indicated by the opening clause, which introduces the parable as pertaining to the ‘loyal’ or ‘faithful’ (πιστός) and ‘wise’ (φρόνιμος) slave (cf. Oakman 2008:271–272; *pace* Crossan 1983:60). It is highly unlikely that Q would introduce a text aimed at an out-group with these epithets (cf. Jacobson 1992:197). Lastly, the master in the parable instructs the appointed slave to feed *fellow slaves*.⁷ From this, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that, on both the levels of interpretation and application, certain individuals are invited to perform the desired conduct, whatever it might be, upon *fellow members of the same group* (Allison 2004:440). Given the nature of the task to tend to the physical needs of others, it is all the more likely that Q 12:42–44 is aimed at the in-group. Conversely, it is extremely unlikely that this text would have hostile outsiders, whether gentiles or ‘this generation’, in mind as either the givers or the receivers of such kindness (cf. Scott 1989:210; *pace* Kloppenborg 2000:141).

If not directed at an out-group, who were the recipients of Q 12:42–44? In my view, the ‘in-group’ at which this text is directed is the Jewish people, to be distinguished from gentiles as the ‘out-group’. I disagree with Kloppenborg and others that sectarian boundary demarcation is already to some extent visible in the formative stratum. The more I deal with the formative stratum, the more I suspect that the wisdom it contains was directed at the Jewish people in general, as opposed to some sectarian group within it, otherwise known as the ‘Q community’ or ‘Q people’. Rather, the formative

stratum’s ‘out-group’ seems to be gentiles. If this were true, it would follow that the main redaction represents the emergence of the ‘Q people’ as a sectarian group *vis-à-vis* contemporary Judaism. The latter would to my mind support or even strengthen Kloppenborg’s proposal for the stratification of Q. As greater Israel increasingly rejected the message of the early followers of Jesus, their boundaries increasingly shrunk, eventually giving rise to the sectarian attitude encountered in the main redaction. To the extent that the message of Jesus was perpetuated by his followers, it remains valid to speak of a ‘Q people’, but this does not change the likelihood that this message was aimed at Israel *in toto*, and not just the Q people. In other words, although a limited group of ‘Q people’ preached and penned Q¹, the content and message of Q¹ was nonetheless aimed at Israel *in toto*.

Verses 45–46

Even a cursory glance reveals that verse 45 centres around accusation, while verse 46 revolves around threat. The positive, constructive aims of Q 12:42–44 are moved to the background in order to make room for the caricatured characterisation of verse 45, and the threatened condemnation of verse 46 (cf. Crossan 1983:60; Dodd [1935] 1958:160). Whatever the metaphorical function of the accusations in verse 45, the content clearly accuses the implied audience of gross misconduct, and does so by caricaturing them (Dodd [1935] 1958:160). Such rhetoric is certainly reminiscent of socio-religious discrimination and demarcation. Jacobson (1992:197) points out that the beating of fellow slaves calls to mind the violence meted out by ‘this generation’ against God’s prophets and sages in Q 11:49–51. The debauchery of the disloyal slave is further comparable to the actions of ‘this generation’ in Q 17:27 (Jacobson 1992:197). What is more, both the slave’s internal dialogue and his revelry point to a careless disregard for Q’s message about the Son of Man’s unexpected return (Kloppenborg 1987:150; cf. Bock 1996:1182; see Fleddermann 2005:637; Luz 2005:223). Conversely, it seems extremely unlikely that the author of Q would feature descriptions of violent and licentious behaviour to depict the conduct and general attitude of the in-group (Jacobson 1992:197).

If the two forms of punishment in Q 12:46 are considered together, they seem like purposeful attempts at socio-religious segregation (cf. Kloppenborg 1987:150–151). The probability of such intentionality is enhanced if verse 46 is read with the Son of Man saying in verse 40, as intended by the main redactor. However one interprets verse 46, it clearly foresees the *implied* audience receiving severe punishment for their misdeeds (Donahue 1988:99). In my view, it is safe to conclude from the discussion up to this point that the implied audience of verses 45–46 is mainstream Jewish leadership, who *at this juncture* comprises one of the movement’s out-groups (cf. Kloppenborg 2000:141). If the abovementioned suggestions that verses 45–46 refer to ‘this generation’ are on the money, it would add support to Horsley’s (1992:191; 1995b:49; 1999:299) case that the Q people used the term ‘this generation’ in reference to the Jewish elite (cf. Jacobson 1992:169).

⁷Luke exchanged this phrase for ‘the male and female slaves’ (τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας) (Nolland 2005:999; cf. Scott 1989:209; Taylor 1989:140), probably to specify the socio-economic context more clearly (Luz 2005:221), and to render the text inclusive of both genders. Fleddermann (2005:628) argues in favour of the Lukan phrase for Q. Regardless, on a semantic level the Lukan text also features fellow slaves of the same household (Luz 2005:221).

Findings

This article reconsidered the redactional make-up of the parable in Q 12:42–46. The criteria used by Kloppenborg to delineate between Q¹ and Q² were reapplied specifically to this text. In the process, the parable of the loyal and wise slave was ‘cut in two’, with each half considered separately. On the one hand, it was argued that verses 42–44 properly belong to Q’s formative layer. On the other, it was argued that verses 45–46 were added by the main redactor in order to adjust the meaning of the parable as a whole, thereby aligning it with the overall message of the main redaction. Q 12:42–46 is but one example of how, in the Sayings Gospel Q, the parables of Jesus were ‘coopted to serve the compositional ends of the document [and] to embellish and dramatize the destabilizing [sic] of the cosmos by the Day of the Son of Man’ (Kloppenborg 1995:289). Matthew and Luke took this editorial process further, each in its own direction (see Allison 2004:439–442; Blomberg 1990:123–124, 190–193; Donahue 1988:96–101; Etchells 1998:107–109; Funk & Hoover 1993:253; Hays 2012:45–53; Jeremias 1963:56–57, 104; 1966:44; Luz 2005:225; Nolland 2005:996–1001; Scott 1989:209; Taylor 1989:138–150).

Paradoxically, even though this study has challenged Kloppenborg’s diachronic analysis of one particular text in Q, it has simultaneously reinforced and strengthened his overall proposal for the stratification of Q. The redactional evolution of Q 12:42–46 is a microcosm of Q’s overall literary development. In the case of both, material was added by an ancient editor in order to shift the focus from subversive wisdom to apocalyptic prophecy, and from the betterment of the in-group, whether it be Israel or the Q people, to the wholesale condemnation of one or more out-groups.

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