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Discerning Trajectories: 4QInstruction and the Sapiential Background of the Sayings Source

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DISCERNING TRAJECTORIES:  
4QINSTRUCTION AND THE SAPIENTIAL  
BACKGROUND OF THE SAYINGS SOURCE Q

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4QInstruction (1Q26, 4Q415–18, 423) is the largest wisdom text of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹ There has been relatively little examination of this composition in relation to the Synoptic Gospels.² Two dominant issues in the study of Q

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are its relationship to the wisdom tradition and the extent to which Q itself can be understood as sapiential. In his book The Formation of Q, John Kloppenborg discusses approximately ninety ancient collections of sayings, including material from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Israel, and Greece, situating Q in a broad international sapiential context. This book was published in 1987, when 4QInstruction was not available.

In this article I will argue that 4QInstruction does not represent the redaction of distinct sapiential and apocalyptic layers. The document incorporates ideas that are alien to traditional wisdom, such as heavenly revelation, elect status, theophanic judgment, and an interest in the angelic world. 4QInstruction is a sapiential text with an apocalyptic worldview. The issue of wisdom in relation to apocalypticism in 4QInstruction has implications for the study of Q. There have been numerous studies on the relationship between these two traditions in the sayings gospel. Some scholars have emphasized its sapiential character. Others have downplayed the characterization of Q as apocalyptic, and classifying the work as sapiential has also been questioned. 4QInstruction lends support


4 In Kloppenborg’s more recent Excavating Q, he observes that 4QInstruction can be used to exemplify some of the issues involved in the composition of Q (p. 130), but does not pursue this line of research.


to the opinion that Q contains sapiential material with perspectives not found in traditional wisdom. These ideas include rewards and punishments after death and an expectation of imminent punishment. 4QInstruction bolsters the view that it is not necessary to separate sapiential and apocalyptic material in Q. The sayings source can be understood as developing trends in Jewish wisdom that are found in 4QInstruction. This Qumran wisdom text should be taken into consideration when assessing the sapiential background of Q.8

I. Trajectories of Wisdom

A common starting point for understanding the relationship between Q and Jewish wisdom is James M. Robinson’s article “LOGOI SOPHON.”9 He postulated the existence of a genre of “the words of the wise,” a designation for collections of sapiential sayings. The origins of the genre are rooted in biblical collections of wisdom sayings such as Prov 22:17–24:22 (LXX 22:17, λόγοις ἰσόφων) and older proverb assemblages from the ancient Near East, including Amenemope and Ahikar.10 The genre is defined by the association of didactic material with named sages. The best example of this is the Gospel of Thomas, and Q also attests a quotation formula (9:58). Attribution of sayings to specific figures is also evident, Robinson argued, in earlier stages in the development of this genre. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the incipit often attributes logoi to a specific patriarch (e.g., T. Dan 1:1). 1 Enoch may be introduced as the “words of the blessing of Enoch” (1:1; cf. Jub. 21:10).11 Robinson also has

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claimed that the genre exhibits a “gnosticizing tendency” in which a sage who is
associated with sayings over time becomes identified with Wisdom itself.12

The work of John G. Gammie has also been used to identify trajectories of
Jewish wisdom in relation to Q.13 He argued that there are three topics with
regard to which one can discern a shift in the wisdom tradition during the late
Second Temple period—the family, the king, and Israel in relation to other
nations. Whereas the family is revered in older wisdom, later texts such as the
Wisdom of Solomon place less emphasis on the family (e.g., 3:13–14), favoring
instead the individual and one’s life after death. Traditional wisdom is often sit-
uated in the royal court, above all in the figure of Solomon. There is minimal
criticism of kingly abuses of power or the institution of kingship. Gammie
argues that later wisdom texts are more willing to question the infallibility of
kings (e.g., Sir 10:10; 46:20).14 Older sapiential texts consider wisdom an inter-
national commodity, a view exemplified by the appropriation of the Egyptian
instruction of Amenemope by Proverbs 22–24. In later wisdom writings, how-
ever, there is a more nationalistic emphasis, often centered on the Torah, as in
Sirach 24, which presents the Torah as a product of the descent of Lady Wis-
dom to Israel.

Kloppenborg has argued that Q accords with the sapiential developments
delineated by Gammie.15 It is well known that Q advocates a radical rejection of
family ties. This attitude is exemplified by Q 14:26: “Whoever comes to me and
does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes,
and even life itself, cannot be my disciple” (cf. 12:51–53). Q emphasizes the
power and imminent arrival of the kingdom of God (10:11), showing little rev-
erence for the state. According to 10:23–24, kings desired to see what the disci-
pies will (cf. 12:27). In terms of the association of wisdom with national identity,
Q never thematizes the Torah as a divine gift to Israel in the manner of Ben
Sira. But through the association of Jesus with hypostatized wisdom, Q presents
the comparable viewpoint of a unique manifestation of heavenly wisdom in a
particular locale (7:35; 11:49–51).16

12 Robinson, “LOGOI SOPHON,” 129.
13 John G. Gammie, “From Prudentialism to Apocalypticism: The Houses of the Sages amid
the Varying Forms of Wisdom,” in Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East, 479–97.
14 Ibid., 486–87.
16 Christ is associated with divine wisdom also in 1 Cor 1:30 (cf. v. 24). The correspondence
between Christ and hypostatized Wisdom is developed in later Christian texts that use the genre of
instruction, such as the Teachings of Silvanus. See Jan Zandee, The Teachings of Silvanus (Nag
Hammadi Codex VII, 4) (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991); William R.
Schoedel, “Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Christian Ascetic,” in Aspects of Wisdom in
Judaism and Early Christianity (ed. R. L. Wilken; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,
II. Assessing Trajectories

The publication of 4QInstruction provides new evidence with which to evaluate shifts within the wisdom tradition during the late Second Temple period. 4QInstruction is often dated to the second century B.C.E. The work is aptly considered a sapiential text. 4QInstruction comprises statements given by a teacher to a student, who is referred to as the מִבְּנֵי (mēbîn), or “understanding one.” The document contains admonitions and practical advice that are designed to improve the ordinary life of the addressee, regarding topics such as marriage (4Q416 2 iii 21–iv 13) and the prompt payment of debts (4Q417 2 i 21–23). The pedagogical ethos of 4QInstruction is evident from 4Q418 81 17: “Increase in understanding greatly, and from all of your teachers (תּוֹרָב) get ever more instruction” (cf. 4Q418 221 3).

4QInstruction does not fit well with the criteria of Robinson’s Gattung. The composition is not a collection of sayings akin to the Gospel of Thomas. Like Ben Sira, this Qumran wisdom text contains a variety of sapiential forms. It includes sequences of parenetic vetitives (e.g., 4Q416 2 ii 14–21) and extended discourses that are more elaborate and poetic, such as 4Q417 1 i. According to Robinson, collections of logoi sophôn are often associated with a named sage. This is not the case with 4QInstruction. No incipit is extant. It is possible that the text originally began with a statement such as “the instruction of PN.” 4Q416 1 is generally regarded as the first column of the composition. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar has proposed a reconstruction of the beginning of this column, which is poorly preserved, in which the first visible word of the composition is מְשַׁפַּר (“Instructor”). He puts this idea forward as a tentative suggestion, not a conclusive reading. Even if one were to adopt this reconstruction, it does not necessarily follow that the name of a specific “instructor” was recorded. It is reasonable to doubt that 4QInstruction circulated as a text that was attributed to a named sage. In marked contrast to Ben Sira, the author of this Qumran text shows virtually no interest in providing information about himself or praising his own office of teacher (cf. Sir 24:30–34). 4QInstruction

17 Goff, Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom, 228–32.
18 This word is from 4Q418 238, which he suggests can be joined, along with frag. 229, to the top of 4Q416 1 on the basis of their similar appearance. See Tigchelaar, To Increase Learning, 183; idem, “Towards a Reconstruction of the Beginning of 4QInstruction (4Q416 Fragment 1 and Parallels),” in The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought (ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger; BETL 159; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2002), 99–126.
19 No Qumran wisdom text is attributed to a specific sage. Out of this corpus 4Q298 comes closest to such an attribution. This text is entitled “Words of the Maškîl to All Sons of Dawn.” The title is based on the opening phrase of the document; however, the term "words" has a poor material basis. In the official edition of 4Q298 this word is transcribed as ‘םשֵׁר’. If this reconstruction is correct, 4Q298 would be an example of wisdom sayings and admonitions classified as the “words”
does not include a teacher figure who is associated with hypostatized wisdom. There is no “gnosticizing tendency” in this document.

4QInstruction does not necessarily debunk Robinson’s proposal that the genre logoi sophôn existed. Two of the lengthiest Jewish wisdom texts from the late Second Temple period, Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon, are attributed to specific sages, although it is not clear that this is a feature of their genre. But 4QInstruction by no means confirms the Gattung delineated by Robinson. He uses texts such as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and 1 Enoch to trace the “prehistory” of the logoi sophôn Gattung, identifying Q and the Gospel of Thomas as full examples of this genre.20 In terms of genre, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and 1 Enoch are, respectively, a sequence of testaments and a collection of several apocalypses. Regarding the former, Robinson stresses that the speeches of the patriarchs are “sayings” of the “sages” and that they provide “experiential wisdom.”21 Since 1 Enoch 42 attests the Wisdom myth, he writes that with 1 Enoch “we are directed a step further back, into the wisdom literature in the narrower sense.”22 Adela Yarbro Collins has pointed out that Robinson’s formulation of the genre of logoi sophôn emphasizes its affinities with the sapiential tradition more than with apocalypticism.23 Christopher M. Tuckett has similarly suggested that Robinson’s examples are selective, since numerous nonwisdom works are introduced as collections of “words” by a named person (e.g., Amos 1:1; LXX 2 Esd 11:1).24 None of Robinson’s examples used to illustrate the background of the genre of “words of the wise” includes a sapiential text with an apocalyptic worldview. The genre of logoi sophôn is not a particularly helpful tool for understanding the combination of wisdom and apocalypticism in Q.

A fundamental issue in the study of 4QInstruction is its relation to the wisdom and apocalyptic traditions.25 Torleif Elgvin has argued that 4QInstruction

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21 Ibid., 122.
22 Ibid., 125.
23 Yarbro Collins, “Son of Man Sayings,” 373.
24 Tuckett, Q and the History of Early Christianity, 341.
Goff: 4QInstruction and the Sayings Source Q

is a composite text that “represents a conflation of two literary layers.”26 The first consists of admonitions that are reminiscent of traditional wisdom, and the second longer discourses that have an apocalyptic worldview. The document, in this formulation, circulated originally as a book of practical wisdom that was later redacted by people with an apocalyptic mind-set. It is certainly true that 4QInstruction contains parenetic admonitions that do not appeal to revelation or anything else that echoes apocalypticism. 4Q416 2 ii 18–20 reads, for example, “Do not sate yourself with food when there is no clothing, and do not drink wine when there is no food. Do not seek after delicacies when you lack (even) bread.” Further, there are longer discourses that provide little practical advice. 4Q417 1 i, for example, offers instruction on the nature of creation and history without including teachings on specific mundane topics.

To evaluate Elgvin’s redaction criticism, it is necessary to examine the theme of revelation in 4QInstruction. In this document wisdom is obtained through supernatural revelation. The הָלַח הָלַח, which can be translated as the “mystery that is to be,” enables the addressee to understand the world and to lead a successful life.27 The expression הָלַח הָלַח occurs over twenty times in 4QInstruction but is attested elsewhere only three times, in the Community Rule (1QS 11:3–4) and twice in one passage of the Book of Mysteries (1Q27 1 i 3–4; par 4Q300 3 3–4). The word הָלַח is used in apocalyptic texts and elsewhere in Second Temple literature to signify revealed knowledge (e.g., Dan 2:27–30; 4QEn³ 5 ii 26–27; cf. 1 En. 106:19). In 4QInstruction the mystery that is to be refers to a comprehensive plan that orchestrates history according to God’s will, presented as a revealed truth.28 Perception of the mystery that is to be allows the addressee to understand how the created order functions: “And you, understanding son, gaze into the mystery that is to be and know [the path]s of all life. The way that one conducts himself he appoints over [his] deed[s]” (4Q417 1 i 18–19).29 This attitude reflects a deterministic mind-set that is more in keeping with apocalypticism than traditional wisdom.

Through the raz nihyeh the addressee can acquire knowledge regarding a wide array of topics. The mystery that is to be provides information regarding

27 For the translation of this phrase, see Goff, Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom, 33–34.
29 For the transcription of the final phrase of this passage, see DJD 34, 152; Tigchelaar, To Increase Learning, 52.
the eschatological future: “[Gaze upon the mystery] that is to be, and grasp the birth-times of salvation and know who is inheriting glory and who ini[q]uity” (4Q417 2 i 10–12). The raz nihyeh allows him to attain the knowledge of good and evil (4Q417 1 i 6–8). The mystery that is to be is also associated with daily life. 4Q416 2 iii 17–19 connects this mystery to an admonition on filial piety: “And as he gave them (parents) authority over you . . . so serve them; and as he revealed to you through the mystery that is to be, honor them for the sake of your glory and with [reverence] honor them for the sake of your life and the length of your days.” This does not fit into Elgvin’s redactional schema. Nor does 4Q416 2 iii 17–19 support Gammie’s claim that in the Second Temple period the wisdom tradition moved away from its traditional endorsement of the family. 4Q423 3 2 is fragmentary but relates the mystery that is to be to a successful harvest: “. . . [through the mystery] that is to be. Thus you will walk, and all your crops will multiply” (cf. 1Q26 1 4–6). Both practical advice that echoes traditional wisdom and themes more in keeping with apocalypticism are combined with supernatural revelation.

The mystery that is to be has the ability to provide knowledge about the natural order because it was used by God in the act of creation: “By means of the mystery that is to be he has laid out its foundation and its works” (4Q417 1 i 8–9). Reflection on creation is prominent in Israelite wisdom, and in that sense 4QInstruction continues this tradition. But in this Qumran wisdom text, unlike Proverbs or Ben Sira, the divine creation of the world is presented as a rāz. The mystery that is to be is thus related to the primordial past. It is also connected to the future. This is clear from the nip’al portion of the raz nihyeh. The participle signifies that the divinely ordained natural order to which the rāz refers exists throughout the entire historical continuum. 4Q417 1 i 3–4 uses הָדַּם in the nip’al three times, once in the mystery that is to be. The other two occurrences appear to refer, respectively, to the past and present, forming a tripartite division of time: “Gaze [upon the mystery that is to be and the deeds of old, from what has been to what exists through what] [will be] . . . [for]ever” (4Q417 1 i 8–9). Reflection on creation is prominent in Israelite wisdom, and in that sense 4QInstruction continues this tradition. But in this Qumran wisdom text, unlike Proverbs or Ben Sira, the divine creation of the world is presented as a rāz. The mystery that is to be is thus related to the primordial past. It is also connected to the future. This is clear from the nip’al portion of the raz nihyeh. The participle signifies that the divinely ordained natural order to which the rāz refers exists throughout the entire historical continuum. 4Q417 1 i 3–4 uses הָדַּם in the nip’al three times, once in the mystery that is to be. The other two occurrences appear to refer, respectively, to the past and present, forming a tripartite division of time: “Gaze [upon the mystery that is to be and the deeds of old, from what has been to what exists through what] [will be] . . . [for]ever” (4Q417 1 i 8–9). However, the period which God revealed to the ear of the understanding ones through the mystery that is to be: “Everything that exists in it, from what has been to what will be in it” (4Q418 43 2–3). 4Q418 123 ii 3–4 associates a threefold division of time with the mystery that is to be: “His period which God revealed to the ear of the understanding ones through the mystery that is to be.” The comprehensive plan of God that orchestrates reality is valid from creation to judgment. This explains why the rāz

nihyeh is at the root of moral instruction. The mystery that is to be provides the addressee with knowledge of the full extent of God’s dominion over the created order. 4QInstruction demands conduct from him that is in accordance with this larger truth. Heavenly revelation can be said to provide, or at least encourage, worldly wisdom.\textsuperscript{33}

It is not impossible that 4QInstruction is a product of “apocalyptists” who extensively reworked a composition of practical wisdom. But it is unlikely. 4QInstruction is a very fragmentary composition, comprising several hundred small texts that are often in poor material condition.\textsuperscript{34} It is difficult enough to discern the text in its present state, much less posit different strata. The mystery that is to be is essential to the pedagogy of the document. Often in apocalypses a heavenly vision is revealed to the seer and interpreted for him by an angel. This is the case, for example, in the book of Daniel. By contrast, in 4QInstruction no angel helps the addressee understand the mystery that is to be. The addressee acquires knowledge from the study of revealed wisdom. He is exhorted to “gaze” (נָצָאָה) upon,\textsuperscript{35} “examine” (מָשַׂא), “meditate” (תָּרָם) upon, and “grasp” (נָצָא) this mystery.\textsuperscript{36} The theme of revelation cannot be separated from the educational and eudaemonistic goals of the document. 4QInstruction is the best example available of a Jewish wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview.\textsuperscript{37}

4QInstruction is not the only Qumran wisdom text that is reminiscent of the apocalyptic tradition. 4Q185 is a sapiential text with beatitudes (1–2 ii 8, 13).\textsuperscript{38} It exhorts one to acquire wisdom in order to have long life, as in Prov 3:16–18: “Find her and hold fast to her and get her as an inheritance. With her are [length of days, fatness of bone, joy of heart, riches and honor]” (4Q185 1–2 ii 12). The text also reminds its addressee of judgment implemented by the angels: “Who can endure to stand before his angels? For with flaming fire

\textsuperscript{33}Contra Garcia Martinez, “Wisdom at Qumran,” 9–10.


\textsuperscript{35}4Q416 2 i 5 (par 4Q417 2 i 10); 4Q417 1 i 3, 18 (par 4Q418 43 2, 14). See also 4Q418 123 ii 5.

\textsuperscript{36}See 4Q416 2 iii 9 (par 4Q418 9 8), 4Q418 43 4 (par 4Q417 1 i 6), and 4Q418 77 4. See Torleif Elgvin, “The Mystery to Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation,” in Qumran between the Old and New Testaments (ed. F. H. Cryer and T. L. Thompson; JSOTSup 290; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 113–50, esp. 133.


[they] will judge” (1–2 i 8–9). The central feature of the *Book of Mysteries* (1Q27, 4Q299–301) is a description of eschatological judgment: “when the begotten of unrighteousness are locked up and wickedness is removed from before righteousness, as darkness is removed before light. (Then,) just as smoke wholly ceases and is no more, so shall wickedness cease forever” (1Q27 1 i 5–6). This composition also appeals to higher revelation (lines 3–4; 4Q299 8 6). It has been argued that *Mysteries* is not a wisdom text; nevertheless, it is an instruction with prominent sapiential terms (e.g., חוח and הוסיף in 4Q299 8; cf. 4Q300 1a ii–b) and forms, such as rhetorical questions (1Q27 1 i 8–12; 4Q299 8 5). The work also offers some practical advice (1Q27 1 ii 2–8). The *Book of Mysteries* is a wisdom text with an eschatological perspective that appeals to higher revelation. The Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS 3:13–4:26) has an apocalyptic worldview, containing a highly dualistic and deterministic conceptualization of the natural order. The text is explicitly an instruction and in that sense can be understood as a wisdom text, or at least as influenced by the sapiential tradition: “The Instructor should instruct and teach all the sons of light about the nature of all humankind” (3:13).

Wisdom and apocalypticism are not mutually exclusive traditions, as Kloppenborg and others have observed. Sapiential influence is evident in apocalypses (e.g., 1 En. 42), and the testaments draw on both traditions. The main contribution of 4QInstruction to the issue of wisdom in relation to apocalypticism is that the work establishes that in the late Second Temple period a wisdom text could have an apocalyptic worldview. Ben Sira actively discourages

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42 This position is presented in more detail in Matthew J. Goff, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), ch. 2.
43 Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination*, 121–70.
45 Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 145; Collins, “Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility,” in *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages*, 393–401. Daniel J. Harrington aptly writes regarding Q that “to isolate the sapiential elements from the apocalyptic elements and then to reconstruct the wisdom tradition shorn of apocalypticism does not fit with what we know about wisdom teachings from Qumran and elsewhere in first-century Palestine” (Wisdom Texts from Qumran, 91).
the speculation of mysteries (3:21–24; cf. 34:5). 4QInstruction never associates wisdom with the Torah or the national identity of Israel in the manner of the Jerusalem sage. 4QInstruction’s differences with Ben Sira give an impression of the diversity of wisdom texts in this period. 4QInstruction is not the only sapiential text from this era with features reminiscent of the apocalyptic tradition. 4QInstruction, Mysteries, and other late Second Temple compositions provide evidence of a sapiential trajectory that is characterized by influence from the apocalyptic tradition.

III. Trajectories of Wisdom in Relation to 4QInstruction and Q

Q contains material that can be classified as apocalyptic. The document affirms the future judgment (e.g., 3:7–9; 10:13–15) and the promise of rewards after death (6:23), exhibits a concern with the angelic and demonic realms (12:8–9; 11:14–26), and has a profound sense of imminent eschatology (10:9–11). Q 17:23–37 describes the eschatological woes associated with the advent of the Son of Man. In terms of genre, some parts of Q are reminiscent of traditional wisdom. This is evident, for example, in its use of beatitudes and aphorisms (e.g., 6:20–22; 11:9–13). In terms of content, influence from the sapiential tradition in Q is evident in its adaptation of personified Wisdom (7:35; 11:49–51).

Kloppenborg has put forward the well-received thesis that the formative layer of Q is a sapiential collection of six instructions. Kloppenborg lists these texts as (1) 6:20b–49; (2) 9:57–62; 10:2–11, 16; (3) 11:2–4, 9–13; (4) 12:2–7, 11–12; (5) 12:22–31, 33–34; (6) 13:24; 14:26, 27; 17:33 (Formation of Q, 342–45).
pedagogical, containing admonitions and other sayings designed to provide instruction on various topics, including judging (6:37–38) and proper prayer (11:9–13). The later stratum of Q is characterized by interest in judgment (e.g., 11:29–32). This redaction criticism has led to the simplistic view that Q is the product of a “sapiential” community in line with traditional wisdom that was transformed later by apocalyptic circles.

Kloppenborg aptly observes that distinguishing sapiential and apocalyptic elements in Q is not the key to its redactional history. In terms of content, both of the strata he delineates contain material that appears to be influenced by the sapiential and apocalyptic traditions. His six wisdom instructions include the expectation of rewards after death (6:23) and the conviction that eschatological events are imminent (11:9–11). The secondary layer, which is characterized by judgment (3:16b–17), attests the motif of personified wisdom (11:49–51). The wisdom of Q, whether one refers only to its six instructions or to the work as a whole, has an eschatological perspective. Kloppenborg has argued that Q contains a radical form of wisdom that is at odds with traditional wisdom, offering a rejection of the current state of the world (cf. 9:58; 14:26–27; 17:33). This can be understood as a move from the “wisdom of order” to the “wisdom of the kingdom.” Tuckett has expressed caution with regard to this view, writing that classifying Q’s content as “wisdom of the kingdom” runs the risk of the term “wisdom” becoming “such an inclusive catch-all term that it encompasses almost anything.”

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list is given with minor variations in Robinson, Critical Edition of Q, lxxiii; Kloppenborg, Excavating Q, 146. See also Tuckett, Q and the History of Early Christianity, 69–75. Piper has argued that there is a “wisdom redaction” of collections of aphorisms in Q. See his Wisdom in the Q-Tradition, 61–77, esp. 65. Consult further Kirk, Composition of the Sayings Source, 14–16, 61–62; Yarbro Collins, “Son of Man Sayings,” 374–75.

54 Kloppenborg, Formation of Q, 322–25.
56 Kloppenborg, Formation of Q, 379–85.
57 Dieter Lührmann, Die Redaktion der Logienquelle (WMANT 33; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 103.
60 Tuckett, Q and the History of Early Christianity, 353.
The phrase “wisdom of the kingdom” is an apt designation for Q material. This assessment is supported by 4QInstruction. The relevance of this text for Q is not that the former text comprises distinguishable sapiential and apocalyptic strata. Rather it is that by the second century B.C.E. a wisdom text could have an apocalyptic worldview. In 4QInstruction and Q the two influences come together in compatible ways. Form critically, neither work is an apocalypse. Both draw on the wisdom tradition in terms of genre, using admonitions and other sapiential forms in relation to specific areas of life. With regard to content, the two compositions rely on both the sapiential and apocalyptic traditions. Q can be understood as shaped by a trajectory of the wisdom tradition that was influenced by the apocalyptic tradition. The best example of this kind of Jewish wisdom is 4QInstruction.

The similarities between 4QInstruction and Q, however, should not be overstated. For example, they are quite different with regard to the theme of revelation. 4QInstruction constantly refers to the disclosure of the mystery that is to be. Mystery terminology is prominent in the NT, but much more so in Revelation and the letters of Paul than in the Gospels. In one Synoptic passage Jesus imparts the “mystery (μυστήριον) of the kingdom of God” to his disciples (Mark 4:11; Matt 13:11; Luke 8:10; cf. Gos. Thom. 62). In Q it may be implied that Jesus’ teachings are themselves heavenly revelations, but this is never stated explicitly. In Q 11:49–51 personified Wisdom gives an oracle that is spoken by Jesus, and he continues the utterance with his own speech. But Q never emphasizes the reception of heavenly revelation in the manner of 4QInstruction.

The eschatological perspectives of 4QInstruction and Q are also different. The former teaches that judgment will occur in the future: “From heaven he will judge over the work of wickedness. But all the sons of his truth will be accepted with favor . . . They (the wicked) will be in terror. And all those who defiled themselves in it (wickedness) will cry out. For the heavens will be afraid. . . . The seas and the depths will be in terror, and every fleshly spirit will be laid bare” (4Q416 1 10–12; cf. 4Q418 69 ii 6–9). This proclamation

61 Contra Kloppenborg, Excavating Q, 130.
63 In the verses from Matthew and Luke the word “mystery” is in the plural.
64 Piper, Wisdom in the Q-Tradition, 178.
occurs at the beginning of 4QInstruction and establishes a framework for the rest of the instruction. Like the judgment scene of 1 Enoch 1, 4Q416 1 draws on the theophanic tradition. Although the composition teaches that there will be a “period of wrath” (4Q416 4 1), it has no sense of impending judgment. Q is less theophanic than 4QInstruction, although fire and sulphur will rain down from heaven when the Son of Man is revealed according to Q 17:29–30. Unlike this Qumran text, Q advocates an imminent eschatology in both of the two main layers postulated by Kloppenborg—“the kingdom of God has come near” (10:9–11; cf. 11:29–32). Both works place proclamations of judgment at the beginning, emphasizing the importance of this theme. 4QInstruction begins with the judgment scene of 4Q416 1 and the first section of the sayings source deals with the figure of John the Baptist and his eschatological proclamations (Q 3:16b–17).

IV. Poverty and Final Rewards in 4QInstruction and Q

The theme of poverty is important in both 4QInstruction and Q. The latter work can be understood as having originated in a commonplace, agricultural setting. The putative formative layer of the document does not evoke elements of sophisticated culture but rather simple agricultural images, including the coming of rain (6:35), the cultivation of figs and grapes (6:44), house building (6:47–49), planting, and bread baking (13:18–21). Q 6:20 affirms that some of the intended addressees are poor. They are also to suffer (6:22a; cf. 11:49; 13:34), and the disciples are to refuse creature comforts (10:4).


67 It is not clear to what extent the original audience was actually poor or oppressed. See Kloppenborg, Excavating Q, 189–96; Tuckett, Q and the Early History of Christianity, 283–325, esp. 322; Ronald A. Piper, “The Language of Violence and the Aphoristic Sayings in Q: A Study of Q 6:27–36,” in Conflict and Invention, 53–72.

Although Luke 6:25 is generally not considered part of Q, it is worth comparing to 4QInstruction. 4Q417 2 i 10–12 tells the addressee not to “rejoice in your mourning lest you toil in your life. . . . Is not [joy established for those contrite of spirit?] Or eternal joy for those who mourn?” Joy is contrasted with “mourning,” which is associated with the addressee’s present condition. Luke 6:25b reads: “Woe to you who are laughing now for you will mourn and weep.” In this text, unlike 4Q417 2 i 10–12, the state of mourning is promised for those who are laughing, the opposite of the promise given to the poor. See Robinson, Critical Edition of Q, 54; George W. E.
4QInstruction grants that some members of its intended audience are poor. The wisdom text repeatedly reminds the mebin that he is “poor” (e.g., 4Q416 2 ii 20; 4Q416 2 iii 2, 8, 12). Certain texts are designed for farmers (4Q418 103 ii 2–9; 4Q423 3 2; 4Q423 5 5), and artisans who possess “manual skill” (4Q418 81 15, 19). The addressee is recommended to accept beatings (4Q417 2 i 24–27), presumably from creditors, an attitude compatible with Q 6:29. For some members of the intended audience, material hardship is a real possibility: “If you lack, borrow, being without m[on]ey for what you need, for he (God) does not lack treasure” (4Q417 2 i 19). This endorses a radical dependence on God for basic material needs that is similar to the recommendation of Q that one should “consider the lilies of the field” (12:27).

4QInstruction, however, does not endorse an ascetic way of life. 4Q417 2 i 19 offers a temporary solution during a situation of extreme poverty. In 4QInstruction financial hardship is considered a problem that the addressee must solve. Neither the eschatological teachings of 4QInstruction nor its appeals to revelation presuppose a rejection of the “wisdom of order.” In contrast to Q 14:26–27, the revelation of the mystery that is to be is to encourage the mebin to practice filial piety (4Q416 2 iii 17–19). In 4QInstruction the reception of heavenly wisdom serves the eudaemonistic goal of financial and social stability, an aim fully in keeping with traditional wisdom.

In both 4QInstruction and Q the eschatological rewards of the intended audience are described in relation to poverty. 4Q416 2 iii 11–12 reads: “Praise his name constantly because he has raised your head out of poverty. With the nobles he has placed you, and he has given you authority over an inheritance of glory.” This text is enclosed by reminders that he is poor (lines 8, 12). This suggests, as do other teachings in 4QInstruction that deal with the economic difficulties of the addressee, that 4Q416 2 iii 11–12 should not be interpreted literally. Rather, it should be read as a symbolic description of the addressee’s ordained destiny with the angels. In the mind-set of 4QInstruction, it is fitting to describe the angels as “nobles.” The rewards of the elect status of


70 For more on the theme of radical discipleship in Q, see Tuckett, Q and the History of Early Christianity, 355–91.
the addressee are presented as a form of wealth, in contrast to his material poverty. His possession of an “inheritance of glory” anticipates the eternal life he will enjoy with the angels after death.\textsuperscript{71} The addressee is taught that he is in the angelic lot (4Q418 81 4–5). He is given instruction about the “spiritual people” who are in the likeness of the holy ones and distinguished from the “fleshly spirit” (4Q417 1 i 14–18).\textsuperscript{72} Similarly, the mēbîn is told that he is separated from the “fleshly spirit” (4Q418 81 1–2). In the pedagogical spirit of the composition, angels are revered as ideal students whom the addressee should emulate: “Indeed, would they say: ‘We are tired of works of truth, [we] are weary of …’ Do [they] not wal[ke] in eternal light?” (4Q418 69 ii 13–14; cf. 4Q418 55 8–11). If the addressee imitates the angels during life he will join them after death.

In Q followers are promised a “reward” (μασθός) in heaven (6:23), a term that may be used in 10:7 to refer to the material “wages” received by itinerant preachers (cf. 6:35b).\textsuperscript{73} The heavenly rewards promised to the intended audience are portrayed as a reversal of their current situation, which is characterized by distress and hardship. The “reward” allocated to the poor in Q may include the prospect of joining the angels after death, as in 4QInstruction. It is possible to understand Q 6:35c in this manner: “you will be sons of the Most High (υἱοὶ οὐρανοῦ)” (cf. Luke 20:36; Matt 22:30).\textsuperscript{74} Even if this verse is interpreted in this way, the theme of eschatological fellowship with the angels is more prominent in 4QInstruction. In different ways both compositions use the theme of poverty with regard to the elect who are promised rewards after death.\textsuperscript{75}

V. Conclusion

The publication of 4QInstruction provides an opportunity to reassess the varieties of Jewish wisdom during the Second Temple period. This text does not fit the development of the wisdom tradition traced by Gammie. Robinson’s scholarship is useful in terms of understanding Q as a collection of sayings. But 4QInstruction does not accord well with the main criteria of the genre of logoi sophôn. Nevertheless, this Qumran wisdom text provides an impression of the

\textsuperscript{71} See further Goff, Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom, 206–14.


\textsuperscript{73} This word is used in Luke 10:7, whereas Matt 10:10 has the term τροφή. See Robinson, Critical Edition of Q, 170.

\textsuperscript{74} Matthew 5:45 uses the phrase υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

\textsuperscript{75} Leander E. Keck, “The Poor among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran,” ZNW 57 (1966): 54–78.
Jewish sapiential background of Q. Portions of Q are aptly considered sapiential instructions, and they very well could constitute the formative stratum of the work. The “wisdom of the kingdom” of Q represents a departure from traditional wisdom. 4QInstruction suggests that Q, however, does not break from the sapiential tradition. While there are significant differences between 4QInstruction and Q, both draw on the wisdom tradition in terms of genre and the sapiential and apocalyptic traditions in terms of content. Q is in continuity with a stream of the wisdom tradition characterized by influence from the apocalyptic tradition. This trajectory is exemplified by 4QInstruction. The Book of Mysteries also attests this type of wisdom. The instructions of Q suggest that this trajectory had an impact on sapiential texts composed in the first century C.E. 76

76 The Letter of James suggests that this wisdom trajectory has influenced the NT aside from Q. See Todd C. Penner, The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter (JSNTSup 121; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).