CHAPTER TWO

INSTRUCTIONAL SPEECH COMPOSITIONS IN ANCIENT WISDOM LITERATURE

In this chapter we shall examine the instructional speech in its various permutations across a range of ancient wisdom texts with a view to defining its characteristic contours. We shall then use the results heuristically in chapter three to clarify the composition and genre of Q's sayings clusters.

Choosing comparative texts exclusively from ancient Mediterranean wisdom literature appears to beg the question of Q's genre. However, there are good reasons for preferring wisdom literature over an alternative corpus, the main counter-claimant in this case being prophetic literature. It will be recalled that while we found much to admire in Sato's trail-blazing approach to the question of Q's framework genre, his case for identifying the prophet book as that genre seemed unable to account satisfactorily for important features of Q's profile, in particular the pervasiveness of wisdom forms. To be sure, small wisdom genres are to be found in the prophetic books, such as chains of questions, observations from nature and agriculture, numerical sequences, parables, and admonitions.\(^1\) This may tempt one to draw an analogy with Q, where indeed sapiential and prophetic genres—such as announcements of judgment—appear together. However, in striking contrast to Q, admonitions (Mahnworte) are relatively rare in the pre-exilic prophet books (virtually absent in Hosea; rare in Amos and Micah; distributed sparsely in first Isaiah and Jeremiah). When they do appear admonitions serve to emphasize Israel's disobedience (Schuldaufweis), which has evoked the dominating prophetic message of judgment, and thus as re-

gards rhetorical function stand in a supportive relationship—acting as **Begründung**—to the latter. Prophetic admonitions are articulated before the horizon of a future determined by Yahweh's inevitable acts of judgment and salvation. Wisdom admonitions, in contrast, are predicated upon an open future ostensibly contingent upon a person's choice whether or not to heed. This points up the crucial importance of determining framework genre, which functions to establish hierarchies among small genres of a text. In the case of the prophet books, the small wisdom forms are appropriated by and subordinated to the dominant genre of announcement of judgment: "Damit zeigen die auf Jeremia zurückzuführenden Mahnwo­rte, daß sie der definitiven Unheilsansage des Propheten stets untergeordnet sind." This is decidedly not the case in Q, where the exact opposite obtains. In the same vein, Q's speeches lack the close attribution to the word of Yahweh characteristic of prophetic speeches.

Though analysis involves constant dialectical movement back and forth between Q and the corpus of literature selected for comparison, having a chapter devoted to comparative genre research serve as frontispiece highlights the privileged status genre analysis should enjoy in exploration of Q's redaction history. This approach, which posits a close relationship between genre criticism and redaction criticism, represents a crucial shift with respect to Kloppenborg's methodology. Kloppenborg asserts:

One must first determine the principles of composition of Q and the portions of it which were formative from a literary-critical perspective. Only then is it possible to compare Q with antique genres and determine the extent to which Q shares or fails to share the characteristics and tendencies of those genres. It must be shown on redactional grounds that certain elements (e.g., apocalyptic Son of Man sayings) belong to a secondary compositional level and that compositionally and literarily the wisdom sayings, and the wisdom-gospel format, are foundational and formative for the document.

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