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**Richard A. Horsley, with Jonathan Draper. *Whoever Hears Me Hears You: Prophets, Performance and Tradition in Q*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999. Pp. ix + 326. \$27.00 (Cloth).**

[1] *Whoever Hears Me Hears You* is Richard Horsley's latest contribution to the on-going debate about the social, political, and religious origins of Christianity. In this volume he receives significant help from a collaborator, the South African scholar Jonathan Draper, who contributes theoretical insight in the area of orality in antiquity (ch. 8) and a discussion of the question of itinerancy in early Christianity (chs. 2 and 11). Together Horsley and Draper build an argument for understanding Q, the common source widely held to have been used in the composition of Matthew and Luke. Horsley and Draper follow a course, however, that they understand to be quite distinct from the main lines of thinking about Q that have emerged of late, especially in connection with the Society of Biblical Literature's Q Seminar. According to Horsley and Draper, most Q scholarship favors a sapiential reading of Q; they offer a more prophetically oriented reading. Most Q scholarship associates this document with wandering itinerant preachers; they locate it in the settled village life of peasants. Finally, most Q scholarship posits a scribal cohort responsible for the written composition of Q; they argue that Q was originally an oral composition, and thus, presumably originated among peasants located lower in the social stratification of first century Galilee. The argument for a village-based, prophetic Jesus movement follows and develops further the basic position Horsley has laid out in numerous earlier essays and monographs. Draper, too, picks up earlier arguments that will be familiar to those conversant with his work on the Didache. Where both authors break new ground is in the area of orality. Indeed, much of the argument in this book hinges upon the claims both authors make about the oral origins of Q and the difference this needs to make in the assessment and interpretation of its texts.

[2] Horsley makes the case for seeing Q as an oral composition in chapter 7. His argument presupposes what most today would take quite for granted: the world of Christian origins was an oral world, in which very few people had access to, or could read texts. In cultures based in orality, people do indeed compose "orally." And yet, the Hellenistic world was not a place entirely devoid of texts, and our present day knowledge of Q depends on its having

been used *as a text* by Matthew and Luke. Horsley and Draper acknowledge this, but argue that this text was in fact originally an oral composition. This is indicated by the presence of certain oral features evident in the reconstructed text of Q. Specifically, they are convinced that Q evinces a certain poetic line by line structuring, the metered quality of measured verse, which they lay out for the reader in transliterated form in the course of chapters 9-13. Thus, they conclude, "Q would appear to be . . . a scribal transcript of a 'text' that had been regularly performed in a movement or community" (167).

[3] This is a novel hypothesis. No one has heretofore seen this metered quality in Q's sentences. To those skeptical of Q reconstruction generally speaking, it will seem particularly speculative. But even to one not so skeptical, the authors' supposed metering is not very obvious. In any event, it falls into no known Hellenistic or Semitic poetic style. Still, Horsley and Draper lay out their metrical version of Q for anyone to see and to judge for themselves whether there is poetry here or not. The real problem with their thesis lies not in the evidence for it. The problem lies in what this evidence, if indeed it is there, can and cannot prove. Even if metering or other features of orality were clearly present in Q texts, this would not prove that Q was composed orally. For, in a culture where orality is the dominant mode of cultural expression, the texts created by the literate few tend also to have the qualities of oral expression. The presence of oral features in Q would simply indicate that it comes from a culture that was primarily oral, not necessarily that it was actually composed orally.

[4] One might further question whether there is much really to be gained from this argument. If it cannot be proven that Q was composed orally, one can nonetheless assume that a good deal of the Q tradition comes from Jesus or his immediate followers, who probably could not read or write, and so "composed" orally. On the other hand, the Q we can reconstruct was in fact a written text. So, one must posit the eventual presence of scribal folk in the Jesus movement associated with Q, even if one will not credit them with "composing" the discourses of Jesus they were writing down. Thus, to account for the creation and appeal of this tradition, one must at some point ask how it came to mean something both to illiterate peasants and to those with scribal training. But this, of course, will also not be a matter of simply asking about the tradition in relation to people lower down or higher up in the social food chain. For there were illiterate elites in antiquity, and scribal slaves.

[5] This book will not settle anything in the world of Q scholarship, but it will surely provoke response. If nothing else, Horsley's opening chapter, a caricature of "recent Q scholarship" led astray by an unwitting devotion to the "unquestioning individualism" of "modern Western culture," is irritating enough get a rise out of the informed reader. The novice, however, is advised to begin her or his study of Q with something less tendentious than this controversial volume.

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