

by indicating broad conceptual similarities, which have for him a distinctively Pauline character (see especially his discussion from pp. 163ff. of the construction metaphor in Similitudes 9). In the end individuals will have to decide whether Soyars's reasoning is believable or not, and whether the hypothesis of Pauline usage makes better sense of what Hermas is writing in individual cases. Soyars in his helpful conclusion does not address this latter point, though it is perhaps worth addressing. Also worth addressing is whether in the end we are able to say that Paul is a major influence on Hermas. In an appendix Soyars attempts to demonstrate the conceptual coherence of the *Shepherd* with Paul's letters but that is not straightforwardly an answer to this question, a point Soyars would concede. I would suggest that the atmosphere of James is closer to Hermas than Paul; but that is not a point against Soyars. What he has given us in this book is a refined and sustained plea for Pauline influence on Hermas, and in so doing he has raised important questions about the way scholars should frame their approach to the wider question of how Paul was appropriated in early Christian writings.

PETERHOUSE,
CAMBRIDGE

JAMES CARLETON PAGET

The Mandaean book of John. Critical edition, translation, and commentary. Edited by Charles G. Häberl and James F. McGrath Pp. viii + 467. Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2020. €189.95. 978 3 11 048651 3

JEH (72) 2021; doi:10.1017/S0022046920001049

The study of the Mandaic language and literature stands on the shoulders of two philological giants, Theodor Nöldeke and Mark Lidzbarski. The grammatical aspects of Classical Mandaic were almost fully revealed by Nöldeke in his groundbreaking *Mandäische Grammatik* (1875), while its literary aspects were gradually uncovered in the first quarter of the twentieth century by Lidzbarski in his superb annotated translations into German of the three major Mandaic works. More than a century after these pioneering studies, research on the Mandaic language seems poised to enter a new phase, with several projects in their final stage, chief among them the New Mandaic Dictionary project under the direction of Matthew Morgenstern. The book currently under review should be recognised as one of the prominent contributions in this new phase.

The Mandaean book of John offers a complete edition of one of the central compositions of the Mandaeans, *Draša d-Yahia* 'The doctrine of John', better known as the *Mandaean book of John* or *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*, a collection of wisdom and teachings, many of which are attributed to the great Mandaean teacher, John son of Zechariah. This new edition includes some basic prefatory remarks (pp. 1–12), a preliminary overview, courtesy of April D. DeConick, that sets the conceptual core of the book in a wider perspective (pp. 13–20), the newly edited text arranged admirably together with a similarly laid-out exhaustive critical apparatus and English translation (pp. 21–335), a comprehensive critical commentary divided into chapters and subchapters (pp. 337–443) and concluding remarks (pp. 444–8). For the benefit of scholars and other readers, Häberl and McGrath have also included informative indices at the end of the book (pp. 454–67).

This new edition is designed to replace Lidzbarski's time-honoured edition that was published more than a century ago. Although both editions share the same methodology and are based upon the same main manuscripts, they differ in numerous cases due to their choices of criteria for privileging variant readings. This is particularly prominent regarding forms with prosthetic vowels that are most common in manuscripts A and C: for example, *almana* 'lit. to the intellect' (1.12), *asmika* 'supported' (1.16), and *ašumaihun* 'their name' (1.20), *atlata* 'three' (1.20), *abkanph* 'in his bosom' (1.26), *abriha* 'scent' (1.27), *alqumba* 'the valet' (1.33). In each of these examples, Lidzbarski adopted the reading of his base text, manuscript A (with the superscript sign), while Häberl and McGrath prefer variants from a different group of manuscripts (i.e., without the prosthetic vowels). Lidzbarski's edition is, as a result, far less eclectic than Häberl and McGrath's.

At the time that Lidzbarski published his edition, there were four complete manuscripts of *Draša d-Yahia* in Europe institutions – three in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF) and one in the Bodleian Library – and two more fragmentary manuscripts in the British Museum. Häberl and McGrath have had the advantage of incorporating in their edition the important eighteenth-century manuscript from the Drower Collection (DC 30) that was not available to Lidzbarski. As can be seen in different places in the new edition, the contribution of DC 30 – which was completed by Ram Yuhana son of Ram in the spring of 1753 – to the study of the *Mandaean book of John* was only partly exploited by Drower and Macuch in their *Mandaic dictionary* (cf. *sirma/sidma* 2; *purana*; *kaila*). In addition to DC 30, the new edition includes a systematic record of three twentieth-century manuscripts currently in the private hands of Mandaean families. In spite of these contributions, the earliest surviving copies of *Draša d-Yahia* remain the manuscripts employed by Lidzbarski, i.e. Codex Sabéen 10 (1616 CE = MS B), Codex Sabéen 8 (1630 CE = MS A), Huntingdon 71 (1659 CE = MS D), and Codex Sabéen 9 (1691 CE = MS C).

While the oldest witnesses of *The Mandaean book of John* date from the seventh century, the redaction of this composition is presumed to extend back many hundreds of years. The editors carefully place the time of the composition around the rise of Islam and emphasise its diverse nature. Several internal factors support these assumptions, such as literary parallels to other Mandaic texts, historical references to the Islamic period, syntactical observations regarding the gradual replacement of the inherited imperfect with a new conjugation based on the participle, and the presence of at least four different literary genres in the book. External evidence supporting these claims has been discovered recently by both Kevin T. van Bladel and Stefanie Rudolf in *Kitāb ad-Dalā'il* 'The book of Indications', which was written by the famous lexicographer al-Ḥasan ibn Bahlūl (Bar Bahlul) in the tenth century. In an informative chapter in this book, Bar Bahlul described Mandaean life, customs and scriptures, reporting that the Mandaeans 'have books of precepts, one of which is attributed to John son of Zachariah'.

Taking into account the prolonged and complicated textual transmission of *The Mandaean book of John* as an 'anthology' of treatises written in various times and places, the preference for an eclectic edition over a diplomatic edition seems

more than reasonable. According to Häberl and McGrath, the eight full manuscripts and three partial fragments can be divided into two primary families: one represented by three of the oldest witnesses and the other represented by the more recent witnesses as well as one seventeenth-century manuscript (B). Unlike Lidzbarski's edition, which was based mainly on the first family, the new edition aims to present a fuller picture of the Mandaean tradition of the Book of John 'by adopting features common to our oldest manuscript (B) and the younger manuscripts (GHIJ), while at the same time acknowledging variants from the discrete group of manuscripts that are not shared with the larger group, and at times improving upon the reading with those variants'.

Overall, the text presented is accurate, though collation of the five pre-modern manuscripts (=ABCDG) reveal some errors. The following examples are drawn from the first thirty-three chapters of the edition. Read rimiih instead of rimiuh (1.40); bat'inata instead of bat'nata (1.56); bšumaihun instead of bšmaiuhun (2.1; gna instead of gha (2.4; cf. 2.19); d-abad t'ab maška d-snia instead of d-abad t'ab maška t'ab d-snia (2.37); uabgan instead of ubgan (3.104); lanapqan (ABD) or lanapqia (CG) instead of lanapia (11.28); lnišimta instead of ulnišimta (13.41); t'abia instead of t'ubia (14.5); amartun (AC) or amritun (BG) instead of amrtun (15.19); ladiaurai instead of ladiarai (16.36); daria instead of dara (26.2); kušt'ania instead of kuštania (31.24); mišma instad of umišma (32.25); umistakra instead of umištakra (33.18).

To sum up, the impressive new edition of *The Mandaean book of John* is indeed a welcome one. The editors have presented the scholarly community with an up-to-date, well-arranged, accurate edition accompanied by a fluent English translation and enlightening commentary. Thanks to the great efforts of Charles G. Häberl and James F. McGrath we now have an almost full picture of one of the most important compositions of the Mandaean congregation.

TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY

OHAD ABUDRAHAM

Neue Perspektiven auf den Nikolaus. Ein populärer Heiliger im interdisziplinären theologischen Gespräch. Edited by Maria Lissek, Nancy Rahn and Florian Lippke.

(Jerusalem Theologisches Forum, 33.) Pp. 207 incl. 7 ill. Münster:

Aschendorff Verlag, 2019. €36 (paper) 978 3 402 11033 1; 1439 4634

JEH (72) 2021; doi:10.1017/S0022046920001803

This volume brings together nine articles about St Nicholas, bishop of Myra in the first half of the fourth century. The articles are revised versions of papers presented in 2015 at a conference in Bern, Switzerland, on 5 and 6 December, St Nicholas's saint's days. Participants consisted of promising junior scholars as well as well-established experts from different fields of theology. It was the organiser's aim to examine the traditions that are connected with St Nicholas and provide new perspectives on how this figure can potentially become a starting point for fruitful future discussions. Hence the methodological approach of the book is not merely historical, but also interdisciplinary, though one must note that this interdisciplinarity is restricted to theology. Peter Gemeinhardt's contribution 'Wanderungen eines Heiligen' examines the legends about St Nicholas in the hagiographical tradition until the time of the Reformation. Joachim Nagel