

in sometimes arresting ways. Few will agree with all its conclusions but all should profit from reading it.

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The Shepherd of Hermas and the Pauline legacy. By Jonathan E. Soyars. (*Novum Testamentum, Supplements*, 176.) Pp. xiv + 286. Leiden: Brill, 2019. €114. 978-90-04-40254-6

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In this monograph, which is a version of a PhD dissertation written under the supervision of Margaret Mitchell at the University of Chicago, and successfully submitted in 2017, Jonathan E. Soyars makes a clear and systematic case for the view that the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, whether in his Mandates, Similitudes or Visions, taken by Soyars to be written by the same author, knew some of the Epistles of Paul. In making such a case Soyars endorses the tradition of the ancient Christian Church (Origen, for instance, assumes that the Hermas mentioned in Romans xvi.14 is the same person as the author of the *Shepherd*) but not that of the scholarship of the last one hundred years, which by and large has rejected the view that Paul influenced Hermas.

Soyars's case is in part predicated upon an argument from plausibility. Hermas wrote in a city whose Christian community had received an important letter from Paul, and where the author of *1 Clement* clearly knew *1 Corinthians* and *Romans*, and gave evidence of the standing of Paul in that community. In addition to these observations, we know that Ignatius, a figure who is roughly contemporaneous with Hermas, wrote a letter to the Romans in which knowledge of Paul was assumed. The likelihood that Paul's letters were in circulation is increased by noting that Polycarp of Smyrna knew *Romans*. It is perhaps also of significance that Marcion would soon emerge in Rome as an influential teacher whose ideas were partially formulated through an intensive engagement with Paul's letters. Soyars speculates about the context in which Hermas might have become familiar with Paul's letters. He toys with the idea of a library in which Paul's letters could have been read, but finally opts for a context in which the letters were read and discussed, possibly a ritual setting or some other kind of gathering. The failure of Hermas to mention Paul is consistent with his failure to cite any text explicitly except the otherwise unknown work of *Eldad and Modad*, a tendency which may have arisen from his view of himself as a seer imbued with individual authority. Connected to this tentative thesis is Soyars's view that Hermas 'felt able to engage Christian tradition loosely in a manner that at times deviated from it but still did not threaten its authority'. This assumption, which will be argued for in the main part of the thesis in which Soyars discusses instantiations of Hermas's use of Paul in all three parts of his *oeuvre*, arises also from his own critical assessment of previous criteria used by scholars to assess the question. These have often been too preoccupied with finding evidence of direct literary influence, an approach which is both atomistic and rigid; or have only conceived of Pauline influence in relation to a text's perceived Pauline (often viewed in a narrow way, with reference, for

instance, to justification by faith) or anti-Pauline profile, a hangover from the Tübingen School, which understood Pauline influence in too constricted a way.

With these criticisms in mind, Soyars attempts to discern influence in data that do not rise to the level of extended verbatim quotation. He groups these under what he terms Hermas's adoption of Pauline literary phenomena, their adaptation and their synthesis. Soyars then proceeds to an examination of each part of Hermas's *oeuvre*, which is the meat of the book. Hermas emerges as relatively familiar with Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians and Hebrews (here assumed, it would seem, to be in a Pauline tradition) and betrays knowledge of most of the rest of the Pauline *corpus* except 2 Thessalonians and Philemon. A gamut of subjects are touched upon ranging from baptism to ethical living, to its manifestation in such social units as the household, to the relationship of this world to the world to come. The discussions show Hermas not to be an expert on Paul but to be nothing less than a 'Pauline interpreter' for whom Pauline literary phenomena 'were baked into the grammar of Hermas' lived experience'. Drawing out the potential significance of his thesis, Soyars concludes: 'Recognizing the importance of Pauline literary tradition for Hermas should reorient scholarly study of the *Shepherd* by reconnecting it with early Paulinism and, at the same time, extend reconstructions of the sphere of Pauline influence even wider in the second century.'

This is a thoughtful and provocative book. With commendable rigour and with striking knowledge of the history of scholarship, Soyars makes as good a case as this reviewer has seen for Hermas's knowledge of Paul. He is right to critique the purely literary-critical approach to discerning the influence of Paul on another text (in this context one wonders to what extent the influence of studies on the use of the Gospels by non-canonical Christian witnesses, especially as these have been conducted by Helmut Koester and others, have influenced the field); and he is right also to think that such influence need not manifest itself as straightforwardly Pauline or anti-Pauline, just as one should not, for instance, see John as Markan or anti-Markan, if we assume use of the former by the latter. There is such a thing as creative interpretation of one author by another brought about by ongoing reflection in changed circumstances, where the binaries of endorsement or opposition of a source, all too often subjectively conceived in the history of scholarship, seem inappropriate. As noted, much of Soyars's case is predicated upon the *prima facie* likelihood of knowledge of Pauline letters in the Roman Christian community of Hermas. Once that case is conceded, then a good deal of the battle is over, and one can begin to engage in an exegetical project which assumes usage rather than the opposite. To convinced literary-critical types, whom Soyars opposes, this will seem like a problematic approach, possibly more like a thought experiment, dependent upon a historical judgement and a procedure that has a whiff of the *als ob* about it. Certainly it is true that Soyars has allowed himself much greater latitude than some would countenance when discussing possible Pauline influences; and this may seem to be the case in some of the more synthetic discussions (I think here especially of Similitudes 5.2–7 in which Hermas engages in an extended parable of the vineyard. See also Soyars's inventive discussion of Hermas's apparent knowledge of the Philippians ii.5–11). Also some may wonder what constitutes a legitimate adaptation in the face of very little verbal similarity (here the discussion of baptism comes to mind as this occurs on pp. 172–87); but on all these occasions Soyars makes clear his reasoning, sometimes

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.

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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

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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).