cautious manner, is that "the Aqedah not only as it existed in Gen. 22 but also as it existed in Jewish tradition influenced the epistle". Two introductory chapters survey the varied views of scholars on the significance or not of the Aqedah for New Testament studies, and then offer a quick presentation of the interpretation of Gen. 22 in early Judaism and certain New Testament passages. While this is clearly a carefully-argued book which will be of value to New Testament scholars, those who approach the subject from a different angle may — given the title — feel a tinge of disappointment, and perhaps the key to the cause for such a feeling lies in the admission at one point (p.190, n.4) that "the title of this study could have been 'Jesus and Abraham'". There is a full bibliography (the fact that several new items such as Robert Hayward's article in J.J.S. 32 (1981) could already be added, is indicative of present scholarly interest in the subject), and good indices are provided.

Oriental Institute, Oxford

S. P. Brock


The decades since the publication of Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Gnosticism have witnessed an upsurge of scholarly interest in the Hekhalot literature. Research has, however, been severely hampered by a lack of adequate editions of the texts. Those offered in Jellinek's Bet ha-Midrasch and Wertheimer's Batei Midrashot have generally been acknowledged to be inadequate, but few have made any attempt to improve on them. Scholem published a new edition of Ma'aseh Merkavah (as Appendix C of his Jewish Gnosticism), but he followed dubious editorial principles, and the end-product is far from satisfactory. Along with Ch. Wirszubski, he also prepared a new text of Hekhalot Rabbi't (see Jewish Gnosticism, p.6, note 14), but this never saw the light of day — a fact which may indicate Scholem's lack of confidence as to its worth. The only full-scale attempt to produce a classic, critical edition of any Hekhalot text was Odeberg's 3 Enoch. Despite Scholem's strictures on it, Odeberg's work was in many ways well ahead of its time, but it was vitiated from the outset by the fact that he chose a very poor manuscript for his base text.

Schäfer's major new attempt to publish the Hekhalot literature will be greeted with intense interest. The project is ambitious, the difficulties formidable; the failure of earlier, highly competent scholars stands as a warning. The choice of editorial principles is crucial to the success or failure of the venture. Schäfer has elected to publish seven major manuscripts more or less entire: New York 8128, Oxford 1531, Munich 40, Munich 22, Dropsie 436, Vatican 228, Budapest 238. He has studiously avoided breaking up the manuscripts into individual treatises, in order to avoid prejudging the issue of whether or not such treatises ever actually existed. He has refused to correct the manuscripts, but presented them "warts and all". He does not even venture to fill out standard abbreviations, or to emend very obvious lapsus calami.

It would be irresponsible to pass a snap judgement on a work of this complexity. A scholarly consensus on the quality of such a basic instrument of study will inevitably emerge in the course of time. However, having used the Synopse intensively for a
number of months, I have no hesitation in approving Schäfer’s approach: his principles are fundamentally sound. Indeed, he provides a model for the editing of all early Rabbinic literature, and not just the Merkavah traditions. One hopes that the authority of this edition will put an end to the debate on how to edit Rabbinic literature, and bury for ever the attempt to produce artificial, eclectic, “resultant” texts. The ultimate justification of Schäfer’s method is its sheer usefulness. The scholar has before him the raw evidence at a glance: the editor has refrained from intruding his own opinions or decisions between the reader and the facts. I have carefully compared substantial portions of Schäfer’s printed text with microfilms of the manuscripts, and it would appear that he has achieved a very high degree of accuracy. His work can be used with confidence.

It is, to be sure, possible to make a number of niggling technical criticisms. Schäfer’s paragraphing (explained in his Introduction, pp. V-VI) is curious in places, and rather disconcerting when, for reasons I fail to fathom, it cuts across the sense-units of the text (see e.g. §§5-6, p.5). There is also a certain amount of pedantry, or overzealousness, in the way in which the contents of the manuscripts have been presented. For example, a scribe sometimes slightly misforms a letter, by starting to write one letter, then realising he is making a mistake and hastily changing it into another. These instances are all painstakingly recorded, not with one but with two signs, the first of which indicates the letter which the scribe began to write, and the second, the letter he changed to! We find two cases of this on p.8: יָא (line 36); and וָל (line 50). If I read the Introduction IV 3.2 correctly, we are meant to understand by this that the scribe started on each occasion to write some unknown letter — indicated here by {?} — and then changed it to ו and ל respectively. I am sure anyone without access to the original manuscript will be mightily perplexed about what is going on here. In fact, all that the mysterious question marks show is that the keen-eyed transcriber has seen that the scribe has very slightly mis-shaped a letter. Again on p.8, line 37, the scribe has executed a “doodle” to fill out the line. The symbol has surely no other value, but because this “doodle” is slightly different from the other line-filling “doodles”, it comes out in the Synopsis as “??”! It is also annoying to find reproduced the words which the scribe repeats (whether accidentally or as catchwords) at the end of one sheet and the beginning of the next. There is a slight misjudgement here. Such extremely fine details cannot be represented successfully in a printed text, but only in a facsimile edition. It does the reader a disservice to try to do so. Schäfer eschews footnotes or any sort of traditional apparatus criticus. This has led to certain problems over the recording of marginal glosses, which have had to be incorporated into the body of the text. In general, the text is rather cluttered with symbols, and it takes a sustained effort to master its conventions. Given the valiant efforts made to record exactly what is in the manuscripts, I feel it is a pity that the titles and headings do not stand out from the mass of text. For example, in §81 the reader is given no hint that the words מַשׂא מְשַׁעֲלָה לְפִנֵי מַשָּׁעֲלָה וְמָשָׁעֲלָה מְרָכְבָה in Vatican 228 are in big bold letters in the original, and fairly leap off the page to meet the eye. This is no mere quibble, but has a bearing on the vexed question of the segmentation of the Hekhalot manuscripts. The scribe of Vatican 228 clearly felt that he was starting a new treatise here, and evidently wanted to make a clear break in his manuscript.

Schäfer makes no unfair claims for his Synopsis. Anyone who takes the trouble to study his scrupulously exact Introduction will be left in little doubt about the nature of the product before him. However, I foresee problems arising if users fail to pay
attention to his preliminary remarks, or to appreciate the limitations of his work.

(1) The Synopsis prints only a selection of the extant Hekhalot manuscripts. Schäfer makes this point perfectly clear in his Introduction II (p. VIII) — at least in general terms. The most obvious omission is the important Genizah fragments. It seems he intends to publish these separately, and perhaps the other unused Hekhalot manuscripts as well (Introduction II, note 2). Meanwhile, the non-specialist has little idea of the extent of Schäfer's selectivity: only a few of the unprinted manuscripts are mentioned in passing in the Introduction. The major Hekhalot manuscripts are now well-known to specialists in the field. Most of them may be found recorded readily in the indices of the Institute for the Microfilming of Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem. A simple list and brief description of their contents would have been helpful. It should also be said that Schäfer could have done more to justify the precise selection of manuscripts he has made. I am not entirely happy with the brief defence of his choice in Introduction II (p. VIII).

(2) The user of the Synopsis must always bear in mind that it does not offer a critical edition of the Hekhalot texts. It provides materials for such an edition, but leaves the scholar to do the text-critical work himself. The nature of the manuscript variants in the Hekhalot texts is highly problematic, and it is a matter of debate whether they are recensional or purely textual. Schäfer is inclined to treat all, or the greater part, of the variants as recessional. I would see them as partly recensional and partly textual: the recensional variation between the manuscripts lies mainly on the level of ordering the individual text-units, or "pericopae", of which the literature is composed; within the individual "pericopae", however, the variants are largely textual and should be handled by standard text-critical procedures.

It is in the area of detailed text-criticism that some of the limitations of Schäfer's Synopsis show up most clearly. By restricting his choice of manuscripts, it may be questioned whether in every instance he has provided sufficient material on which to base sound text-critical judgements. A case in point is 3 Enoch. In the Synopsis, 3 Enoch is effectively represented by only two manuscripts: Munich 40 and Vatican 228. Though both these manuscripts are undoubtedly good, they are but a fraction of the textual evidence available for this work. 3 Enoch, either in whole or in part, is found also in the following manuscripts: (1) Oxford: Bodleian Library 1656, 2257 and 1748 (Neubauer); (2) Rome: Biblioteca Casanatense 180 (Sacerdote); (3) Florence: Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 44.13/18 (Biscionius); (4) Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library 4/4 (Scholem) (= Ms 8° 381). To the manuscript evidence we may add three printed editions which I feel have some independent value for the text of 3 Enoch: (1) S. Musajoff's Merkavah Shelemah (Jerusalem 1921); (2) Sefer Hekhalot (Lemberg/Lvov, 1864; reprinted Warsaw, 1875, and Piotrkow, 1883); and (3) Derush Pirqe Hekhalot (which Cowley, Hebrew Printed Books p.241, thinks may have been printed in Prague around 1650). Nor is this all. Parts of 3 Enoch 48 overlap one of the recensions of the Alphabet of Aqiva (see Vatican 228/3), so text-criticism of this section will have to take into account not just manuscripts of 3 Enoch, but manuscripts of the Alphabet of Aqiva as well. (The problems of this part of 3 Enoch cannot be shuffled off by saying that they belong to the study of the Alphabet of Aqiva: see Introduction II 4.). Moreover, since 3 Enoch is quoted in extenso in the writings of Eleazar of Worms, manuscripts of Eleazar's works (such as British Library, London, Add. 27,199 [Margoliouth 737]) ought also to come into play. Schäfer's Synopsis lays a firm foundation for the textual study of the Hekhalot literature, but it is only a foundation, and much further textual work remains to be done.
(3) The Synopsis does not cover the total content of the Hekhalot tradition; it is not complete (see Introduction I 2.9-14). A notable omission is Massekhet Hekhalot (Jellinek, BHM vol.II, pp.40ff), a text of which is found in the important Florence manuscript mentioned above. Massekhet Hekhalot is usually regarded as a late work, perhaps composed in the circles of the Hasidei Ashkenaz (as Gruenwald has suggested), but it is nonetheless important for the history of the Hekhalot traditions, and it is much too early in the day to disbar it from the corpus of the Hekhalot texts. There are also numerous Hekhalot texts scattered through the minor midrashim. One thinks of the ascension of Ishmael and the Alphabet of Aqiva found in Vatican 228? It is hardly an answer to state: "Die Zugehörigkeit der ABdRA zur Hekhalot-Literatur lässt sich von der literarischen Gattung her kaum vertreten, und im übrigen müsste sich eine Edition des Textes auf sehr viel mehr (und andere) Handschriften stützen als die durch unsere Auswahlkriterien vorgegebenen" (Introduction II 4). This prejudices a number of important questions. Could not something of the same kind be said about Seder Rabba diBere'shit? The affinities of this work, in the end, lie more with Ma'aseh Bere'shit than with Ma'aseh Merkavah. The scribe of Vatican 228 shows little awareness that when he is passing from the Alphabet of Aqiva to 3 Enoch he is passing from one kind of literature to another. He leaves half a sheet blank, but then runs straight into 3 Enoch without any kind of heading whatsoever. The net result of these omissions and inclusions is to throw some doubt on the overall balance of the Synopsis.

This point brings me to my one major criticism of Schäfer's work. Despite his remarks in the Introduction, I 2, p.VI, I feel the Synopsis has to some extent established an arbitrary "corpus" of Hekhalot literature. I greatly fear that it will define artificially the content of the Hekhalot tradition, much as Charles's Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha defined for decades in the English-speaking world the content of post-biblical Jewish literature. Whatever is not in Schäfer, will for most scholars simply not exist. He cannot be totally blamed for the possible shortcomings of his readership, though he may be contributing somewhat to their misapprehension. My main point is more serious. Schäfer has reacted strongly against any attempt to identify and delimit individual Hekhalot treatises. He argues that to speak of redacted works in the way Scholem and Gruenwald do, is not sanctioned by the manuscripts, which do not recognize the existence of the so-called Hekhalot texts as finished products. The treatises are largely a fiction of modern scholarship. I would go a long way with Schäfer on this point. I believe he has drawn attention to a fundamental fact, with wide implications, which we have all largely
ignored. However, I think that he is now in danger of substituting for the fiction of individual treatises the fiction of a Hekhalot "corpus", or "literature", in some narrow sense of that term. The quest is on to recover the Hekhalot corpus! The truth however is that the manuscripts do not recognize the existence of such a "corpus" or "literature", any more than they recognize the existence of finished, finally redacted, individual Hekhalot treatises. Ma'aseh Merkavah material shades off imperceptibly into Ma'aseh Bere'shit, into straightforward magic, into Qabbalah, and into works of uncertain genre and diverse content such as Midrash Elleh Ezkerah and the Alphabet of Aqiva.

None of these comments is meant in any way to detract from the achievement of Schäfer and his collaborators. The Synopsis is a truly magnificent production marking a great step forward in the publication of the texts. Schäfer promises in the future a concordance of the published texts, a translation, and literary and redaction-critical analyses. The completion of this great project bids fair to revolutionize the study of this curious but important literature.

Department of Near Eastern Studies
University of Manchester

PHILIP S. ALEXANDER


For nigh on a century, dogma has informed us that since translating the Bible into Aramaic was a living tradition in the East and a dead one in Europe, Eastern Targum texts are reliable while European ones are corrupt and unreliable. This dogma was based on minimal analysis of texts and is merely an idea which gained force by being repeated often. Van der Heide's work is a first in two respects. On the one hand it is an exhaustive discussion of eight manuscripts (some of them incomplete) which are all the extant copies of the Yemenite text of the Targum to one Biblical book. It begs comparison with Sperber's unwieldy but invaluable vol. IVb; van der Heide's is more scientific and manageable. On the other, it is the author's (cautious) opinion that the Yemenite tradition of the Targum to Lamentations is "a somewhat simplified version (of the text known from European sources)" (p.24). Since this conclusion is based on a thorough study of the manuscripts, in contrast to the received opinion which can be seen simply as an accumulation of restatements of Elia Levita's lament that European Aramaic manuscripts display massive confusion, one is naturally inclined to accept van der Heide's findings.

This intriguing conclusion is a by-product of the author's examination; his main aim is to present us with what is left of the Targum to Lamentations in its Yemenite form, and with what is known of the Yemenite tradition relevant to that Targum. He provides an edition of the text based on MS Br. Libr. Or.1476(15-16th century). Variants from the other manuscripts are recorded in an apparatus bulkier than the main text. The range and number of these variants lead him to observe how they contradict "the accepted picture of the reliability and grammatical consistency of the Yemenite tradition of the Targumim." (p. 4). Facsimiles of individual folios of the manuscripts are given and are described briefly. These accounts rely, for the most part, on library catalogues, etc. Despite the author's remark that they "tended to date the Yemenite traditions too early" (p. 19 n. 51), he does not take issue with