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The Golden Bough: Orphic, Eleusinian, and Hellenistic-Jewish Sources of Virgil's Underworld in *Aeneid* VI

Abstract: More than a century after the first appearance of Norden's classic commentary on *Aeneid* VI in 1903 the time has come to see to what extent the new discoveries of Orphic materials and new insights in the ways Virgil worked enrich and/or correct our understanding of that text. We will therefore take a fresh look at Virgil's underworld, but limit our comments to those passages where perhaps something new can be contributed. This means that we will especially concentrate on the Orphic, the Eleusinian, and the, if usually neglected, Hellenistic-Jewish backgrounds of Aeneas's descent. Yet a Roman poet hardly could totally avoid his own Roman tradition or the contemporary world, and, in a few instances, we will comment on these aspects as well. As Norden observed, Virgil had divided his picture of the underworld into six parts, and we will follow these in our argument.

Résumé : Plus d'un siècle après la publication, en 1903, du commentaire classique de Norden sur le livre six de l'*Énéide*, il est temps de considérer à quel point les nouvelles découvertes de matériel orphique et les nouvelles idées sur la manière de travailler de Virgile enrichissent et/ou corrigent la compréhension de ce texte. Il s'agit dès lors de porter un regard neuf sur l'au-delà de Virgile, mais en limitant nos commentaires aux passages sur lesquels il est possible d'apporter quelque chose de nouveau. Ce sont les éléments orphiques et éleusiniens, tout autant que l'arrière-plan hellénistique juif – souvent négligé – sur lesquels l'analyse se concentre. En outre, un poète romain pouvait difficilement négliger totalement sa propre tradition romaine ou le monde contemporain, et, à quelques reprises, ces aspects seront également commentés. Comme Norden l'a observé, Virgile a réparti l'image de l'au-delà en six parties, et c'est son parcours que notre analyse épouse.

There can be little doubt that the belief in an underworld is very old. In fact, most peoples imagine the dead as going somewhere. Yet they each have their own elaboration of these beliefs, which can run from extremely detailed, as was the case in medieval Christianity, to a rather hazy idea, as was the case, for example, in the Old Testament.¹ The early Romans do not seem to have paid much attention to the afterlife. Thus Virgil, when working on his *Aeneid*, had a problem. How should he describe the underworld where Aeneas was going? To solve this problem, Virgil drew on three important sources, as Eduard Norden argued in his commentary on *Aeneid*: Homer's *Nekuia*, which is by far the most

¹ In general, see J.N. BREMMER, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*, London & New York, 2002.

influential intertext in *Aeneid* VI,² and two lost poems about descents into the underworld by Heracles and Orpheus (§ 3). Norden had clearly been fascinated by the publication of the Christian *Apocalypse of Peter* in 1892,³ but he was not the only one: this intriguing text appeared in, immediately, three (!) editions;⁴ moreover, it also inspired the still very useful study of the underworld by Albrecht Dieterich.⁵ A decade later Norden published the first edition of his commentary on *Aeneid* VI, and he continued working on it until the third edition of 1927.⁶ His book still impresses by its stupendous erudition, impressive feeling for style, ingenious reconstructions of lost sources and all-encompassing mastery of Greek and Latin literature, medieval apocalypses included. It is, arguably, the finest commentary of the golden age of German Classics.⁷

Norden's reconstructions of Virgil's Greek sources for the underworld in *Aeneid* VI have largely gone unchallenged in the post-war period,⁸ and the next worthwhile commentary, that by the late Roland Austin,⁹ clearly did not feel at home in this area. Now the past century has seen a number of new papyri of Greek literature as well as new Orphic texts,¹⁰ and, accordingly, a renewed

² For Homer's influence see still G.N. KNAUER, *Die Aeneis und Homer*, Göttingen, 1964, p. 107-147.

³ See NORDEN, *Kleine Schriften zum klassischen Altertum*, Berlin, 1966, p. 218-233 ('Die Petrusapokalypse und ihre antiken Vorbilder', 1893¹).

⁴ U. BOURIANT, 'Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Énoch et de quelques écrits attribués à saint Pierre,' *Mémoires publiées par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire* IX.1, Paris, 1892 (*editio princeps*); J.A. ROBINSON and M.R. JAMES, *The Gospel according to Peter and the Revelation of Peter*, London, 1892; A. VON HARNACK, 'Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus,' *SB Berlin* 44 (1892), p. 895-903, 949-965, repr. in his *Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche: Berliner Akademieschriften 1890-1907*, Leipzig, 1980, p. 83-108. For the most recent edition see T.J. KRAUS and T. NICKLAS, *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse*, Berlin & New York, 2004.

⁵ A. DIETRICH, *Nekyia*, Leipzig & Berlin, 1893. The second edition of 1913, edited by R. W'nsch, contains corrections, suggestions and additions from Dieterich's own copy and the various reviews. For Dieterich (1866-1908) see the biography by W'nsch in A. DIETRICH, *Kleine Schriften*, Leipzig & Berlin, 1911, p. ix-xlii; F. PFISTER, 'Albrecht Dieterichs Wirken in der Religionswissenschaft,' *ARW* 35 (1938), p. 180-185; A. WESSELS, *Ursprungszauber. Zur Rezeption von Hermann Useners Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung*, New York & London, 2003, p. 96-128.

⁶ E. NORDEN, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis VI*, Leipzig, 1903¹, 1927³, p. 5 (sources).

⁷ For Norden (1868-1941) see most recently J. RÜPKE, *Römische Religion bei Eduard Norden*, Marburg, 1993; B. KYTZLER et al. (eds.), *Eduard Norden (1868-1941)*, Stuttgart, 1994; W.M. CALDER III and B. HUSS, 'Sed servandum officio...' *The Correspondence between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf and Eduard Norden (1892-1931)*, Berlin, 1997; W.A. SCHRÖDER, *Der Altertumswissenschaftler Eduard Norden. Das Schicksal eines deutschen Gelehrten jüdischer Abkunft*, Hildesheim, 1999; A. BAUMGARTEN, 'Eduard Norden and His Students: a Contribution to a Portrait. Based on Three Archival Finds,' *SCI* 25 (2006), p. 121-140.

⁸ For a good survey of the *status quo* see A. SETAIOLI, 'Inferi,' in *EV* II, p. 953-963.

⁹ R.G. AUSTIN, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber sextus*, Oxford, 1977. For Austin (1901-1974) see, in his inimitable and hardly to be imitated manner, J. HENDERSON, 'Oxford Reds', London, 2006, p. 37-69.

¹⁰ These new discoveries make that older studies, such as those by F. SOLMSEN, *Kleine Schriften III*, Hildesheim, 1982, p. 412-429, are now largely out of date.

interest in Orphic traditions.¹¹ Moreover, our understanding of Virgil as a poetic *bricoleur* or mosaicist, as Nicholas Horsfall calls him,¹² has much increased in recent decades.¹³ It may therefore pay to take a fresh look at Virgil's underworld and try to determine to what extent these new discoveries enrich and/or correct Norden's picture. Naturally, space forbids us to present here a detailed commentary on all aspects, and we will limit our comments to those passages where perhaps something new can be contributed. This means that we will especially concentrate on the Orphic, Eleusinian, and Hellenistic-Jewish backgrounds of Aeneas's descent. Yet a Roman poet hardly can totally avoid his own Roman tradition or the contemporary world, and, in a few instances, we will comment on these aspects as well. As Norden observed, Virgil had divided his picture of the underworld into six parts, and we will follow these in our argument.¹⁴

1. The area between the upper world and the Acheron (268-416)

Before we start with the underworld proper, we have to note an important verse. At the very moment that Hecate is approaching and the Sibyl and Aeneas will leave her cave to start their entry into the underworld,¹⁵ at this emotionally charged moment, the Sibyl calls out: *procul, o procul este, profani* (258). Austin (*ad loc.*) just notes: 'a religious formula', whereas Norden (on 46, not on 258) only comments: 'Der Bannruf der Mysterien ἐκὰς ἐκὰς'. However, such a cry is not attested for the Mysteries in Greece but occurs only in Callimachus (*H.* II, 2). In fact, we know that in Eleusis it was not the 'uninitiated' but those who could not speak proper Greek or had blood on their hands that were excluded.¹⁶ Norden was on the right track, though. The formula alludes almost certainly to the beginning of the, probably, oldest Orphic *Theogony*, which has now turned up in the Derveni papyrus (Col. VII, 9-10, ed. Kouremenos *et al.*), but allusions to which can already be found in Pindar (*O.* II, 83-85), Empedocles (B 3, 4 D-

¹¹ This interest has culminated in the splendid new edition, with detailed bibliography and commentary, of the Orphic fragments (= OF) by A. BERNABÉ, *Orphicorum et Orphicis similitum testimonia et fragmenta. Poetae Epici Graeci. Pars II. Fasc. 1-3*, Munich & Leipzig, 2004-7.

¹² N. HORSFALL (ed.), *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, Leiden, 2000², p. 150.

¹³ See especially N. HORSFALL, *Virgilio: l'epopea in alambico*, Naples, 1991.

¹⁴ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 208 (six parts).

¹⁵ For the entry see H. CANKIK, *Verse und Sachen*, W'rzburg, 2003, p. 66-82 ('Der Eingang in die Unterwelt. Ein religionswissenschaftlicher Versuch zu Vergil, Aeneis VI 236-272', 1980¹).

¹⁶ Ar., *Ra.*, 369 with scholion *ad loc.*; Isoc., 4, 157; Suet., *Nero*, 34, 4; Theo Smyrn., *De utilitate mathematicae*, p. 14, 23-24 HILLER; Celsus, *apud* Or. C. *Celsum* III, 59; Pollux, VIII, 90; Lib., *Decl.* XIII, 19, 52. For the *prorrhesis* of the Mysteries see C. RIEDWEG, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, Berlin & New York, 1987, p. 74-85, who also compares our passage at p. 16.

K), who was heavily influenced by the Orphics,¹⁷ and Plato (*Symp.*, 218b = *OF* 19): 'I will speak to whom it is right to do so: close the doors, you uninitiated' (*OF* 1 and 3).¹⁸ A further reference to the Mysteries can probably be found in the poet's subsequent words *sit mihi fas audita loqui* (266), as it was forbidden to speak about the content of the Mysteries to the non-initiated.¹⁹ The ritual cry, then, is an important signal for our understanding of the text,²⁰ as it suggests the theme of the Orphic Mysteries and indicates that the Sibyl acts as a kind of mystagogue for Aeneas.

After a sacrifice to the chthonic powers and a prayer, Aeneas and the Sibyl walk in the 'loneliness of the night' (268) to the very beginning of the entrance of the underworld, which is described as *in faucibus Orci*, 'in the jaws of Orcus' (273). The expression is interesting, as these 'jaws' as opening of the underworld recur elsewhere in Virgil and other Latin authors.²¹ From similar passages it has been rightly concluded that the Romans imagined their underworld as a vast hollow space with a comparatively narrow opening. Orcus can hardly be separated from Latin *orca*, 'pitcher', and it seems that we find here an ancient idea of the underworld as an enormous pitcher with a narrow opening.²² This opening must have been proverbial, as in [Seneca's] *Hercules Oetaeus*. Alcmena refers to *fauces* (1772) only as the entry of the underworld.²³ All kinds of 'haunting abstractions' (Austin), such as War, Illness and avenging Eumenides, live here.²⁴ In its middle there is a dark elm of enormous size, which houses the

¹⁷ See Bernabé *ante OF* 447 V with the bibliography; add now C. MEGINO RODRÍGUEZ, *Orfeo y el Orfismo en la poesía de Empédocles*, Madrid, 2005.

¹⁸ For further versions of the highly popular opening formula see O. WEINREICH, *Ausgewählte Schriften* II, Amsterdam, 1973, p. 386-387; C. RIEDWEG, *Jüdisch-hellenistische Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos*, Munich, 1993, p. 47-48; A. BERNABÉ, "La fórmula órfica "Cerrad las puertas, profanos". Del profano religioso al profano en la material," *Ilu* 1 (1996), p. 13-37 and on *OF* 1 F; P.F. BEATRICE, "On the Meaning of "Profane" in the Pagan-Christian Conflict of Late Antiquity. The Fathers, Firmicus Maternus and Porphyry before the Orphic "Prorrhesis" (*OF* 245.1 Kern)," *Ill. Class. Stud.* 30 (2005), p. 137-165, who at p. 137 also notes the connection with *Aen.* VI, 258.

¹⁹ In addition to the opening formula see also *Hom. H. Dem.*, 476; *Eur., Ba.*, 471-472; *Diod. Sic.*, V, 48, 4; *Cat.*, 64, 260: *orgia quae frustra cupiunt audire profani*; *Philo, Somm.* I, 191. For the secrecy of the Mysteries see HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 130; BREMMER, "Religious Secrets and Secrecy in Classical Greece," in H.G. KIPPENBERG and G.G. STROUMSA (eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment*, Leiden, 1995, p. 61-78 at 71-78; W. BURKERT, *Kleine Schriften* III: *Mystica, Orphica, Pythagorica*, ed. F. GRAF, Göttingen, 2006, p. 1-20; HORSFALL on *Aen.* III, 112.

²⁰ For similar 'signs' see HORSFALL, *o.c.*, (n. 13), p. 103-116 ('I segnali per strada').

²¹ *Verg., Aen.* VII, 570 with HORSFALL *ad loc.*; *Val. Flacc.*, I, 784; *Apul., Met.* VII, 7; *Gellius*, XVI, 5, 11, 6; *Arnobius*, II, 53; *Anth. Lat.*, 789, 5 RIESE.

²² H. WAGENVOORT, *Studies in Roman Literature, Culture and Religion*, Leiden, 1956, p. 102-131 ('Orcus'); for a, possibly, similar idea in ancient Greece see M.L. WEST on Hesiod, *Theogony*, 727.

²³ See also *TLL* VI, 1, 397, 49-68.

²⁴ For a possible echo of Empedocles, B 121 D-K see C. GALLAVOTTI, "Empedocle," in *EV* II, p. 216f.

dreams (282-284).²⁵ The elm is a kind of *arbor infelix*,²⁶ as it does not bear fruit (Theophr., *HP* III, 5, 2, already compared by Norden), which partially explains why the poet chose this tree, a typical arboreal *Einzelgänger*, for the underworld. Another reason must be its size, *ingens*, as the enormous size of the underworld is frequently mentioned in Roman poetry,²⁷ unlike in Greece. In the tree the empty dreams dwell. There is no Greek equivalent for this idea, but Homer (*Od.* XXIV, 12) also situates the dreams at the beginning of the underworld. In addition, Virgil locates here all kinds of hybrids and monsters, of whom some are also found in the Greek underworld, such as Briareos (*Il.* I, 403), if not at the entry. Others, though, are just frightening figures from Greek mythology, such as the often closely associated Harpies and Gorgons,²⁸ or hybrids like the Centaurs and Scyllae. According to Norden (p. 216), 'alles ist griechisch gedacht', but that is perhaps not quite true. The presence of Geryon (*forma tricornis umbrae*: 289) with Persephone in a late fourth-century BC Etruscan tomb as Cerun may well point to at least one Etruscan-Roman tradition.²⁹

From this entry, Aeneas and the Sibyl proceed along a road to the river that is clearly the real border of the underworld. In passing, we note here a certain tension between the Roman idea of *fauces* and the Greek conception of the underworld separated from the upper world by rivers. Virgil keeps the traditional names of the rivers as known from Homer's underworld, such as Acheron, Cocytus, Styx,³⁰ and Pyriphlegethon,³¹ but, in his usual manner, changes their mutual relationship and importance. Not surprisingly, we also find there the ferryman of the dead, Charon (298-304). Such a ferryman is a traditional feature of many underworlds,³² but in Greece Charon is mentioned first in the late archaic or early classical Greek epic *Minyas* (fr. 1 Davies – Bernabé).³³ The growing monetization of Athens also affected belief in the

²⁵ For a possible Greek source see HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 126f.

²⁶ Most important evidence: Macr., *Sat.* III, 20, 3, cf. J. ANDRÉ, "Arbor felix, arbor infelix," in *Hommages à Jean Bayet*, Brussels, 1964, p. 35-46; J. BAYET, *Croyances et rites dans la Rome antique*, Paris, 1971, p. 9-43.

²⁷ Lucr., I, 115; Verg., *Aen.* VIII, 193, 242, 251 (*ingens!*); Sen., *Tro.*, 178.

²⁸ HORSFALL on Verg., *Aen.* VII, 323-340; BERNABÉ on OF 717 (= *P. Bonon.* 4), 33.

²⁹ See NISBET and HUBBARD on Hor., *C.* 2, 14, 8; P. BRIZE, "Geryoneus," in *LIMC* IV.1, (1990), p. 186-190 at no. 25.

³⁰ A. HENRICH, "Zur Perhorreszierung des Wassers der Styx bei Aischylos und Vergil," *ZPE* 78 (1989), p. 1-29; H. PELLICIA, "Aeschylean ἀμέγατος and Virgilian *inamabilis*," *ZPE* 84 (1990), p. 187-194.

³¹ Note its mention also in OF 717, 42.

³² L.V. GRINSELL, "The Ferryman and His Fee: A Study in Ethnology, Archaeology, and Tradition," *Folklore* 68 (1957), p. 257-269; B. LINCOLN, *Death, War, and Sacrifice*, Chicago & London, 1991, p. 62-75 ("The Ferryman of the Dead", 1980!).

³³ See most recently F. DIEZ DE VELASCO, *Los caminos de la muerte*, Madrid, 1995, p. 42-57; E. MUGIONE *et al.*, *PP* 50 (1995), p. 357-434 (a number of articles on Charon and his fee); C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, *'Reading' Greek Death to the End of the Classical Period*, Oxford, 1995,

ferryman, and the custom of burying a deceased with an obol, a small coin, for Charon becomes visible on Athenian vases in the late fifth century, just as it is mentioned first in literature in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (137-142, 269-270) of 405 BC.³⁴ Austin (*ad loc.*) thinks of a picture in the background of Virgil's description, as is perhaps possible. The date of Charon's emergence probably precludes his appearance in the poem on Heracles' descent (§ 3),³⁵ but influence of the poem on Orpheus' descent (§ 3) does not seem impossible.

Finally, on the bank of the river, Aeneas sees a number of souls and he asks the Sibyl who they are (318-320). The Sibyl, thus, is his 'travel guide'. Such a guide is not a fixed figure in Orphic descriptions of the underworld, but a recurring feature of Judeo-Christian tours of hell and going back to *1 Enoch*, which can be dated to before 200 BC but is probably not older than the third century.³⁶ This was already seen, and noted for Virgil, by Ludwig Radermacher, who had collaborated on an edition with translation of *1 Enoch*.³⁷ Moreover, another formal marker in Judeo-Christian tours of hell is that the visionary often asks: 'who are these?', and is answered by the guide of the vision with 'these are those who...', a phenomenon that can equally be traced back to Enoch's cosmic tour in *1 Enoch*.³⁸ Now these demonstrative pronouns also seem to occur in the *Aeneid*, as Aeneas' questions at 318-320 and 560-561 can be seen as rhetorical variations on the question 'who are these?', and the Sibyl's replies, 322-30 contains *haec* (twice), *ille*, *hi*.³⁹ In other words, Virgil seems to have used a Hellenistic-Jewish

p. 303-361; J.H. OAKLEY, *Picturing death in classical Athens. The evidence of the white lekythoi*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 108-125.

³⁴ OAKLEY, *o.c.* (n. 33), p. 123-125, 242 note 49 with bibliography; add R. SCHMITT, "Eine kleine persische M'nze als Charonsgeld," in *Palaeograeca et Mycenaea Antonino Bartoněk quinque et sexagenario oblate*, Brno, 1991, p. 149-162; J. GORECKI, "Die M'nzbeigabe, eine mediterrane Grabsitte. Nur Fahrlohn f' r Charon?" in M. WITTEGER and P. FASOLD (eds.), *Des Lichtes beraubt. Totenehrung in der römischen Gräberstrasse von Mainz-Weisenau*, Wiesbaden, 1995, p. 93-103; G. THÜRY, "Charon und die Funktionen der M' nzen in römischen Gräbern der Kaiserzeit," in O. DUBUIS and S. FREY-KUPPER (eds.), *Fundmünzen aus Gräbern*, Lausanne, 1999, p. 17-30.

³⁵ *Contra* NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 237.

³⁶ See now G. BOCCACCINI and J. COLLINS (eds.), *The Early Enoch Literature*, Leiden, 2007.

³⁷ L. RADERMACHER, *Das Jenseits im Mythos der Hellenen*, Bonn, 1903, p. 14-5, overlooked by M. HIMMELFARB, *Tours of Hell*, Philadelphia, 1983, p. 49-50 and wrongly disputed by H. LLOYD-JONES, *Greek Epic, Lyric and Tragedy*, Oxford, 1990, p. 183, cf. J. FLEMMING and L. RADERMACHER, *Das Buch Henoch*, Leipzig, 1901. For Radermacher (1867-1952) see A. LESKY, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Munich & Berne, 1966, p. 672-688; A. WESSELS, *Ursprungszauber. Zur Rezeption von Hermann Useners Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung*, Berlin & New York, 2003, p. 129-154.

³⁸ As was first pointed out by HIMMELFARB, *o.c.* (n. 37), p. 41-67.

³⁹ HIMMELFARB, *o.c.* (n. 37), p. 49-50; J. LIGHTFOOT, *The Sibylline Oracles*, Oxford, 2007, p. 502-503, who also notes 'that 562-627 contains three instances each of *hic* as adverb (580, 582, 608) and demonstrative pronoun (587, 621, 623), a rhetorical question answered by the Sibyl herself (574-577), and several relative clauses (583, 608, 610, 612) identifying individual sinners or groups'. Add Aeneas' questions in the *Heldenschau* in 710ff and, especially, 863 (*quis, pater, ille...*), and further demonstrative pronouns in 773-774, 776 and 788-791.

apocalyptic tradition to shape his narrative,⁴⁰ and he may even have used some Hellenistic-Jewish motifs, as we will see shortly.

2. Between the Acheron and Tartarus/Elysium (417-547)

Leaving aside Aeneas' encounter with different souls (333-383) and with Charon (384-416), we continue our journey on the other side of the Styx. Here Aeneas and the Sibyl are immediately 'welcomed' by Cerberus (417-425), who first occurs in Hesiod's *Theogony* (769-773), but must be a very old feature of the underworld, as a dog already guards the road to the underworld in ancient Indian, Persian and Nordic mythology.⁴¹ After he has been drugged, Aeneas proceeds and hears the sounds of a number of souls (426-429). Babies are the first category mentioned. The expression *ab ubere raptos* (428) suggests infanticide, whereas abortion is condemned in the Bologna papyrus (*OF* 717, 1-4), a *katabasis* in a third- or fourth-century papyrus from Bologna, the text of which seems to date from early imperial times and is generally accepted to be Orphic in character.⁴² This papyrus, as has often been seen, contains several close parallels to Virgil, and both must have used the same identifiably Orphic source.⁴³ Now 'blanket condemnation of abortion and infanticide reflects a Jewish or Christian moral perspective'. As we have already noted Jewish influence (§ 1), we may perhaps assume it here too, as 'abortion/infanticide in fact occurs almost exclusively in *Christian* tours of hell'.⁴⁴ And indeed, Setaioli has persuasively argued that the origin of the Bologna papyrus has to be looked for in Alexandria in a milieu that underwent Jewish influences, even if much of the text is of course not Egyptian-Jewish.⁴⁵ We may add that the so-called *Testament of Orpheus* is a Jewish-Egyptian revision of an Orphic poem and thus

⁴⁰ See also BREMMER, "Orphic, Roman, Jewish and Christian Tours of Hell: Observations on the Apocalypse of Peter," in E. EYNIKEL, F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, T. NICKLAS & J. VERHEYDEN (eds.), *Other Worlds and their Relation to this World*, Leiden, 2009, forthcoming.

⁴¹ LINCOLN, *o.c.* (n. 32), 96-106; M.L. WEST, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, Oxford, 2007, p. 392.

⁴² For the text see now, with extensive bibliography and commentary, BERNABÉ, *Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta*. II, 2, 271-87 (= *OF* 717), who notes on p. 271: 'omnia quae in papyro leguntur cum Orphica doctrina recentioris aetatis congruunt'.

⁴³ This has now been established by N. HORSFALL, "P. Bonon.4 and Virgil, *Aen.* 6, yet again," *ZPE* 96 (1993), p. 17-18; note also HORSFALL on Verg., *Aen.* VII, 182.

⁴⁴ LIGHTFOOT, *o.c.* (n. 39), p. 513 (quotes), who compares *1 Enoch* 99.5; see also HIMMELFARB, *o.c.* (n. 37), p. 71-72, 74-75; D. SCHWARTZ, "Did the Jews Practice Infant Exposure and Infanticide in Antiquity?," *Studia Philonica Annual* 16 (2004), p. 61-95; L.T. STUCKENBRUCK, *1 Enoch* 91-108, Berlin & New York, 2007, p. 390-391; D. SHANZER, "Voices and Bodies: The Afterlife of the Unborn," *Numen* 56 (2009), p. 326-365, with a new discussion of the beginning of the Bologna papyrus at p. 355-359, in which she persuasively argues that the papyrus mentions abortion, not infanticide.

⁴⁵ A. SETAIOLI, "Nuove osservazioni sulla "descrizione dell'oltretomba" nel papiro di Bologna," *SIFC* 42 (1970), p. 179-224 at 205-220.

clear proof of the influence of Orphism on Egyptian (Alexandrian?) Judaism.⁴⁶ Yet some of the Orphic material of Virgil's and the papyrus' source must be older than the Hellenistic period, as we will see shortly.

After the babies we hear of those who were condemned innocently (430), suicides (434-436),⁴⁷ famous mythological women such as Euadne, Laodamia (447),⁴⁸ and, hardly surprisingly, Dido, Aeneas' abandoned beloved (450-476). In this way Virgil follows the traditional Greek combination of *abôroi* and *biaiothanatoi*.⁴⁹ The last category that Aeneas and the Sibyl meet at the furthest point of this region between the Acheron and the Tartarus/Elysium are famous war heroes (477-547). When we compare these categories with Virgil's intertext, Odysseus' meeting with ghosts in the *Odyssey* (XI, 37-41), we note that before crossing Acheron Aeneas first meets the souls of those recently departed and those unburied, just as in Homer Odysseus first meets the unburied Elpenor (51). The last category enumerated in Homer are the warriors, who here too appear last. Thus, Homeric inspiration is clear, even though Virgil greatly elaborates his model, not least with material taken from Orphic *katabaseis*.⁵⁰

3. Tartarus (548-627)

While talking, the Sibyl and Aeneas reach a fork in the road, where the right-hand way leads to Elysium, but the left one to Tartarus (541-543). The fork and the preference for the right are standard elements in Plato's eschatological myths, which suggests a traditional motif.⁵¹ Once again, we are led to the Orphic milieu, as the Orphic Gold Leaves regularly instruct the soul 'go to the right' or 'bear to the right' after its arrival in the underworld,⁵² thus varying Pythagorean usage for the upper world.⁵³ Virgil's description of Tartarus is

⁴⁶ RIEDWEG, *o.c.* (n. 18).

⁴⁷ Y. GRISÉ, *Le suicide dans la Rome antique*, Montréal & Paris, 1982, p. 158-164.

⁴⁸ Note the popularity of these two heroines in funeral poetry in Hellenistic-Roman times: SEG 52, 942, 1672.

⁴⁹ See, passim, S.I. JOHNSTON, *Restless Dead*, Berkeley *et al.*, 1999.

⁵⁰ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 238-239.

⁵¹ Pl., *Grg.*, 524a, *Phd.*, 108a; *Resp.* X, 614cd; Porph., fr. 382 SMITH; Corn. Labeo, fr. 7 MASTANDREA.

⁵² F. GRAF and S.I. JOHNSTON, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, London & New York, 2007, no. 3, 2 (Thuri) = OF 487, 2; 8, 4 (Entella) = OF 475, 4; 25, 1 (Pharsalos) = OF 477, 1; A. BERNABÉ & A.I. JIMÉNEZ SAN CRISTÓBAL, *Instructions for the Netherworld*, Leiden, 2008, p. 22-24 (who also connect VI, 540-543 with Orphism). For the exceptions, preference for the left in the Leaves from Petelia (no. 2, 1 = OF 476, 1) and Rhethymnon (no. 18, 2 = OF 484a, 2), see the discussion by GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), p. 108, 111. The two roads also occur in the Bologna papyrus, cf. OF 717, 77 with SETAIOLI, *l.c.* (n. 45), p. 186f.

⁵³ R.U. SMITH, "The Pythagorean letter and Virgil's golden bough," *Dionysius* NS 18, (2000), p. 7-24.

mostly taken from *Odyssey* Book XI, but the picture is complemented by references to other descriptions of Tartarus and to contemporary Roman villas. What do our visitors see? Under a rock there are buildings (*moenia*),⁵⁴ encircled by a threefold wall (548-549). The idea of the mansion is perhaps inspired by the Homeric expression 'house of Hades', which must be very old as it has Hittite, Indian and Irish parallels,⁵⁵ but in the oldest Orphic Gold Leaf, the one from Hipponion, the soul also has to travel to the 'well-built house of Hades'.⁵⁶ On the other hand, Hesiod's description of the entry of Tartarus as surrounded three times by night (*Tb.*, 726-727) seems to be the source of the threefold wall.⁵⁷ Around Tartarus there flows the river Phlegethon (551), which comes straight from the *Odyssey* (X, 513), where, however, despite the name Pyriphlegethon, the fiery character is not thematized. In fact, fire only gradually became important in ancient underworlds through the influence of Jewish apocalypses.⁵⁸ The size of the Tartarus is again stressed by the mention of an *ingens* gate that is strengthened by columns of adamant (552), the legendary, hardest metal of antiquity,⁵⁹ and the use of special metal in the architecture of the Tartarus is also mentioned in the *Iliad* (VIII, 15: 'iron gates and bronze threshold') and Hesiod (*Tb.*, 726: 'bronze fence').

Finally, there is a tall iron tower (554), which according to Norden and Austin (*ad loc.*) is inspired by the Pindaric 'tower of Kronos' (*O.* II, 70). However, although Kronos was traditionally locked up in Tartarus,⁶⁰ Pindar situates his tower on one of the Isles of the Blessed. As the tower is also not associated with Kronos here, Pindar, whose influence on Virgil was not very profound,⁶¹ will hardly be its source. Given that the Tartarus is depicted like some kind of building with a gate, *vestibulum* and threshold (575), it is perhaps better to think of the towers that sometimes formed part of Roman villas.⁶²

⁵⁴ Cf. A. FO, "Moenia," in *EV* III, p. 557-558.

⁵⁵ *Il.* VII, 131; XI, 263; XIV, 457; XX, 366; Empedocles, B 142 D-K, cf. A. MARTIN, "Empédocle, Fr. 142 D.-K. Nouveau regard sur un papyrus d'Herculaneum," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 33 (2003), p. 43-52; M. JANDA, *Eleusis. Das indogermanische Erbe der Mysterien*, Innsbruck, 2000, p. 69-71; WEST, *o.c.* (n. 41), 388. Note also *Aen.* VI, 269: *domos Ditis*.

⁵⁶ GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), no. 1, 2 = OF 474, 2.

⁵⁷ For Hesiod's influence on Virgil see A. LA PENNA, "Esiodo," *EV* II, p. 386-388; HORSFALL on Verg., *Aen.* VII, 808.

⁵⁸ LIGHTFOOT, *o.c.* (n. 39), p. 514.

⁵⁹ *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* I, Göttingen, 1955, *s.v.*; WEST on Hesiod, *Tb.*, 161; LIGHTFOOT, *o.c.* (n. 39), p. 494f.

⁶⁰ On Kronos and his Titans see now J.N. BREMMER, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East*, Leiden, 2008, p. 73-99.

⁶¹ For rather different positions see R. THOMAS, *Reading Virgil and His Texts*, Ann Arbor, 1999, p. 267-287 and HORSFALL on Verg., *Aen.* III, 570-587.

⁶² NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 274 rightly compares *Aen.* II, 460 (now with HORSFALL *ad loc.*), although 3 pages later he compares Pindar; E. WISTRAND, "Om grekernas och romarnas hus,"

The *turris aenea* in which Danae is locked up according to Horace (C. III, 1, 1) may be another example, as before Virgil she is always locked up in a bronze chamber (Nisbet and Rudd *ad loc.*).

Traditionally, Tartarus was the deepest part of the Greek underworld,⁶³ and this is also the case in Virgil. Here, according to the Sibyl, we find the famous sinners of Greek mythology, especially those that revolted against the gods, such as the Titans (580), the sons of Aloeus (582), Salmoneus (585-594) and Tityos (595-600).⁶⁴ However, Virgil concentrates not on the most famous cases but on some of the lesser-known ones, such as the myth of Salmoneus, the king of Elis, who pretended to be Zeus. His description is closely inspired by Hesiod, who in turn is followed by later authors, although these seem to have some additional details.⁶⁵ Salmoneus drove around on a chariot with four horses, while brandishing a torch and rattling bronze cauldrons on dried hides,⁶⁶ pretending to be Zeus with his thunder and lightning, and wanting to be worshipped like Zeus. However, Zeus flung him headlong into Tartarus and destroyed his whole town.⁶⁷ With 9 lines Salmoneus clearly is the focus of this catalogue, as the penalty of Tityos, an *alumnus*, 'foster son',⁶⁸ of Terra, 'Earth' (595), is related in 6 lines, and other famous sinners, such as the Lapiths, Ixion,⁶⁹ and Peirithous (601), are mentioned only in passing. It is rather striking, then, that Virgil spends such great length on Salmoneus, but the reason for this attention remains obscure.

Eranos 37 (1939), p. 1-63 at 31-32; idem, *Opera selecta*, Stockholm, 1972, p. 218-220. For anachronisms in the *Aeneid* see HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 135-144.

⁶³ *Il.* VIII, 13, 478; Hes., *Th.*, 119 with West *ad loc.*; G. CERRI, "Cosmologia dell'Ade in Omero, Esiodo e Parmenide," *PP* 50 (1995), p. 437-467; D.M. JOHNSON, "Hesiod's Descriptions of Tartarus (*Theogony* 721-819)," *Phoenix* 53 (1999), p. 8-28.

⁶⁴ Note their presence also, except for Salmoneus, in Horace's underworld: NISBET and RUDD on Hor., *O.* III, 4.

⁶⁵ Compare Soph., fr. 10c6 RADT (making noise with hides, cf. Apollod., I, 9, 7, cf. R. SMITH and S. TRZASKOMA, "Apollodorus 1.9.7: Salmoneus' Thunder-Machine," *Philologus* 139 [2005], p. 351-354 and R.D. GRIFFITH, "Salmoneus' Thunder-Machine again," *ibidem* 152 [2008], p. 143-145; Greg. Naz., *Or.* V, 8; Man., 5, 91-94 (bronze bridge) and Servius on *Aen.* VI, 585 (bridge).

⁶⁶ In line 591, *aere*, which is left unexplained by Norden, hardly refers to a bronze bridge (previous note: so Austin) but to the 'bronze cauldrons' of Hes., fr. 30, 5; 7 M-W.

⁶⁷ For the myth see Hes., fr. 15, 30 M-W; Soph., fr. 537-541a RADT; Diod. Sic., IV, 68, 2, 6 fr. 7; Hyg., *Fab.*, 61, 250; Plut., *Mor.*, 780f; *Anth. Pal.* XVI, 30; Eustathius on *Od.* I, 235; XI, 236; P. HARDIE, *Virgil's Aeneid: cosmos and imperium*, Oxford, 1986, p. 183-186; D. CURIAZI, "Note a Virgilio," *MCr* 23/4 (1988/9), p. 307-309; A. MESTUZINI, "Salmoneo," in *EV* IV, p. 663-666; E. SIMON, "Salmoneus," in *LIMC* VII.1 (1994), p. 653-655.

⁶⁸ Austin translates 'son', as Homer (*Od.* VII, 324; XI, 576) calls him a son of Gaia, but Tityos being a foster son is hardly 'nach der jungen Sagenform' (Norden), cf. Hes., fr. 78 M-W; Pherec., fr. 55 FOWLER; Apoll. Rhod., I, 761-762; Apollod., I, 4, 1. For *alumnus* see C. MOUSSY, "Alo, alesco, adoleo," in *Étrennes de septantaine. Travaux ... offerts à Michel Lejeune*, Paris, 1978, p. 167-178.

⁶⁹ Ixion appears in the underworld as early as Ap. Rhod., III, 62, cf. LIGHTFOOT, *o.c.* (n. 39), p. 517.

Moreover, the latter sinners are connected with penalties, an overhanging rock and a feast that cannot be tasted (602-6), which in Greek mythology are normally connected with Tantalus.⁷⁰ We find the same 'dissociation' of traditional sinners and penalties in the Christian *Apocalypse of Peter*.⁷¹ Evidently, in the course of the time, specific punishments stopped being linked to specific sinners.⁷² Finally, it is noteworthy that the furniture of the feast with its golden beds (604) points to the luxury-loving rulers of the East rather than to contemporary Roman magnates.⁷³

After these mythological *exempla* there follow a series of mortal sinners against the family and *familia* (608-613), then a brief list of their punishments (614-617), and then more sinners, mythological and historical (618-624).⁷⁴ In the Bologna papyrus, we find a list of sinners (*OF* 717, 1-24), then the Erinyes and Harpies as agents of their punishments (25-46), and subsequently again sinners (47ff.). Both Virgil and the papyrus must therefore go back here to their older source (§ 2), which seems to have contained separate catalogues of nameless sinners and their punishments. But what is this source and when was it composed?

Here we run into highly contested territory. As we noted in our introduction, Norden identified three *katabaseis* as important sources for Virgil, the ones by Odysseus in the Homeric *Nekyia*, by Heracles,⁷⁵ and by Orpheus.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, he did not date the last two *katabaseis*, but thanks to subsequent findings of papyri we can make some progress here. On the basis of a probable

⁷⁰ J. ZETZEL, "Romane Memento: Justice and Judgment in Aeneid 6," *TAPhA* 119 (1989), p. 263-284 at 269-270.

⁷¹ BREMMER, *l.c.* (n. 40).

⁷² Differently, HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 48: 'le punizioni dei grandi peccatori non siano arrivate ad una distribuzione "fissa" ancora alla fine del primo secolo a.C.'

⁷³ Note also Dido's *aurea sponda* (I, 698); Sen. *Thy.* 909: *purpurae atque auro incubat*. Originally, golden couches were a Persian feature, cf. Hdt., IX, 80, 82; Esther 1.6; Plut., *Luc.*, 37, 5; Athenaeus, V, 197a.

⁷⁴ P. SALAT, "Phlégyas et Tantale aux Enfers. À propos des vers 601-627 du sixième livre de l'*Énéide*," in *Études de littérature ancienne*, II: *Questions de sens*, Paris, 1982, p. 13-29; F. DELLA CORTE, "Il catalogo dei grandi dannati," *Vichiana* 11 (1982), p. 95-99 = idem, *Opuscula IX*, Genua, 1985, p. 223-227; A. POWELL, "The Peopling of the Underworld: *Aeneid* 6.608-27," in H.-P. STAHL (ed.), *Virgil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, London, 1998, p. 85-100.

⁷⁵ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 5 note 2 notes influence of Heracles' *katabasis* on the following lines: 131-132, 260 (cf. 290-294, with LLOYD-JONES, *o.c.* (n. 37), p. 181 on Bacch., V, 71-84, and F. GRAF, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Berlin, 1974, p. 145 note 18 on Ar., *Ra.*, 291, where Dionysus wants to attack Empusa), 309-312 (see also NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 508 note 77), 384-416, 477-493, 548-627, 666-678. For Empusa see now A. ANDRISANO, "Empusa, nome parlante (Ar. *Ran.* 288 ss.)?", in A. ERCOLANI (ed.), *Spoudaiogeloion. Form und Funktion der Verspottung in der aristophanischen Komödie*, Stuttgart & Weimar, 2002, p. 273-297.

⁷⁶ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 5 note 2 notes influence of Orpheus' *katabasis* on lines 120 (see also NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 506-507), 264ff (?), 384-416, 548-627. Unfortunately, R.G. EDMONDS III, *Myths of the Underworld Journey*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 17, rejects Norden's findings without any serious discussion of the passages involved.

fragment of Pindar (fr. dub. 346 Maehler), Bacchylides, Aristophanes' *Frogs*,⁷⁷ and the second-century mythological handbook of Apollodorus (II, 5, 12), Hugh Lloyd-Jones has reconstructed an epic *katabasis* of Heracles, in which he was initiated by Eumolpus in Eleusis before starting his descent at Laconian Taenarum.⁷⁸ Lloyd-Jones dated this poem to the middle of the sixth century, and the date is now supported by a shard in the manner of Exekias of about 540 BC that shows Heracles amidst Eleusinian gods and heroes.⁷⁹ The Eleusinian initiation makes Eleusinian or Athenian influence not implausible, but as Robert Parker comments: 'Once the (Eleusinian) cult had achieved fame, a hero could be sent to Eleusis by a non-Eleusinian poet, as to Delphi by a non-Delphian'.⁸⁰ However, as we will see in a moment, Athenian influence on the epic is certainly likely.⁸¹ Given the date of this epic we would still expect its main emphasis to be on the more heroic inhabitants of the underworld, rather than the nameless categories we find in Orphic poetry. And in fact, in none of our literary sources for Heracles' descent do we find any reference to nameless humans or initiates seen by him in the underworld, but we hear of his meeting with Meleager and his liberation of Theseus (see below).⁸² Given the prominence of nameless, human sinners in this part of Virgil's text, then, the main influence seems to be the *katabasis* of Orpheus rather than the one of Heracles.

There is another argument as well to suppose here use of the *katabasis* of Orpheus. Norden noted that both Rhadamanthys (566) and Tisiphone (571) recur in Lucian's *Cataplus* (22-23) in an Eleusinian context;⁸³ similarly, he observed that the question of the Sibyl to Musaeus about Anchises (669-670) can be paralleled by the question of the Aristophanic Dionysos to the Eleusinian initiated where Pluto lives (*Frogs* 161ff, 431ff). Norden ascribed the first case to the *katabasis* of Orpheus and the second one to that of Heracles.⁸⁴ His first case seems unassailable, as the passage about Tisiphone has strong

⁷⁷ Note that the commentary of W.B. STANFORD on the *Frogs*, London, 1963², is more helpful in detecting Orphic influence in the play than that by K.J. DOVER, Oxford, 1993.

⁷⁸ H. LLOYD-JONES, "Heracles at Eleusis: P. Oxy. 2622 and P.S.I. 1391," *Maia* 19 (1967), p. 206-229 = *o.c.* (n. 37), 167-187; see also R. PARKER, *Athenian Religion*, Oxford, 1996, p. 98-100.

⁷⁹ J. BOARDMAN *et al.*, "Herakles," in *LIMC* IV.1 (1988), p. 728-838 at 805-808.

⁸⁰ PARKER, *o.c.* (n. 78), p. 100.

⁸¹ GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 146 note 22, who compares Apollod., II, 5, 12, *cf.* I, 5, 3 (see also Ov., *Met.* V, 538-550; *P. Mich. Inv.* 1447, 42-43, re-edited by M. VAN ROSSUM-STEENBEEK, *Greek Readers' Digests?*, Leiden, 1997, p. 336; Servius on *Aen.* IV, 462-463), notes that the presence of the Eleusinian Askalaphos in Apollodorus also suggests a larger Eleusinian influence. This may well be true, but his earliest Eleusinian mention is Euphorion, 9, 13 POWELL, and he is absent from Virgil. Did Apollodorus perhaps add him to his account of Heracles' *katabasis* from another source?

⁸² *Contra* GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 145-6. Note also the doubts of R. PARKER, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, Oxford, 2005, p. 363 note 159.

⁸³ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 274f.

⁸⁴ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 275.

connections with that of the Bologna papyrus (*OF* 717, 28), as do the sounds of groans and floggings heard by Aeneas and the Sibyl (557-558, *cf.* *OF* 717, 25; Luc., *VH.*, 2, 29). Musaeus, however, is mentioned first in connection with Onomacritus' forgery of his oracles in the late sixth century and remained associated with oracles by Herodotus, Sophocles and even Aristophanes in the *Frogs*.⁸⁵ His connection with Eleusis does not appear on vases before the end of the fifth century and in texts before Plato.⁸⁶ In other words, it seems likely that both these passages ultimately derive from the *katabasis* of Orpheus, and that Aristophanes, like Virgil, had made use of both the *katabaseis* of Heracles and Orpheus. To make things even more complicated, the fact that both Heracles and Orpheus descended at Laconian Taenarum (above and below) shows that the author himself of Orpheus' *katabasis* also (occasionally? often?) has used the epic of Heracles' *katabasis*.⁸⁷

Now in Greek and Latin poetry, Orpheus' descent into the underworld is always connected to his love for Eurydice.⁸⁸ In fact, Orpheus himself tells us in the beginning of the Orphic *Argonautica* in the first person singular: 'I told you what I saw and perceived when I went down the dark road of Taenarum into Hades, trusting in our lyre,⁸⁹ out of love for my wife'.⁹⁰ Norden already noted the close correspondence with the line that opens the *katabasis* of Orpheus in Virgil's *Georgica*, *Taenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis, / ... ingressus* (IV, 467-469), and persuasively concluded that both lines go back to the *Descent of Orpheus*.⁹¹ We may perhaps add that the name of Eurydice appears pretty late in Virgil's version (486, 490). This late mention may well have been influenced by the fact that the original poem does not seem to have contained the actual name of Orpheus' wife, which does not appear in our sources before Hermesianax; in fact, the name Eurydice became popular only after the rise to prominence of Macedonian queens and princesses of that name.⁹² As references to the myth of

⁸⁵ Hdt., VII, 6, 3 (forgery: *OF* 1109 = Musaeus, fr. 68 BERNABÉ), VIII, 96, 2 (= *OF* 69), IX, 43, 2 (= *OF* 70); Soph., fr. 1116 RADT (= *OF* 30); Ar., *Ra.*, 1033 (= *OF* 63).

⁸⁶ Pl., *Prot.*, 316d = Musaeus, fr. 52 BERNABÉ; GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 9-21; LLOYD-JONES, *o.c.* (n. 37), p. 182-3; A. KAUFMANN-SAMARAS, "Mousaios", in *LIMC* VI.1 (1992), p. 685-687, no. 3.

⁸⁷ As is also noted by NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 237 (on the basis of Servius on VI, 392) and *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 508-509 notes 77 and 79.

⁸⁸ GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), p. 172-174.

⁸⁹ Norden rightly compares VI, 120: *Threicia fretus cithara*; see also his *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 506-507 with further reflections.

⁹⁰ *Orph. Arg.*, 40-42: Ἄλλα δέ σοι κατέλεξ' ἄπερ εἶσιδον ἡδ' ἐνόησα, Ταίναρον ἡνίκ' ἔβην σκοτίν ὁδόν, Ἄϊδος εἶσω, ἡμετέρῃ πύσσονος κιθάρῃ δι' ἔρωτ' ἀλόχοιο.

⁹¹ See also NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 508f. For Orpheus' account in the first person singular, U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols, Darmstadt, 1959³, II, p. 194-195 also persuasively compares Plut., *Mor.*, 566c (= *OF* 412).

⁹² BREMMER, "Orpheus: From Guru to Gay," in Ph. BORGEAUD (ed.), *Orphisme et Orphée*, Geneva, 1991, p. 13-30 at 13-17 (also on the name Eurydice); see now also D. FONTANNAZ,

Orpheus and Eurydice do not start before Euripides' *Alkestis* (357-362) of 438 BC, a red-figure loutrophoros from 440-430 BC,⁹³ and the decorated reliefs of, probably, the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian Agora, dating from about 410 BC,⁹⁴ the poem about Orpheus' *katabasis* that was used by Virgil probably dates from the middle of the fifth century BC.

But by whom was the *katabasis* of Orpheus written? In fact, there were several *Descents* in circulation, as we know. The third-century BC poet Sotades wrote a *Descent into Hades* (*Suda* s.v. Σωτάδης), as did the unknown Prodikos from Samos (Clem. Alex., *Strom.* I, 21, 131, 3 = OF 707, 1124) and Herodikos from Perinthos (*Suda*, s.v. Ὁρφεύς = OF 709, 1123).⁹⁵ More interestingly, Epigenes, who may well have been a pupil of Socrates,⁹⁶ mentions a *Descent into Hades* by a Pythagorean Cercops in his *On the Poetry of Orpheus* (Clem. Alex., *Strom.* I, 21, 131, 3 = OF 707, 1101, 1128), but the most interesting example surely is the *Descent into Hades* ascribed to Orpheus from Sicilian Camarina (*Suda*, s.v. Ὁρφεύς = OF 708, 870, 1103). He seems to be a fictitious person, as Martin West has noted,⁹⁷ but the mention is remarkable. Surely, the author of this *Descent* owed his name to the fact that he told his descent in the first person singular (above). Was he perhaps the 'ingenious mythologist, presumably a Sicilian or Italian', to whom Plato's Socrates described punishments for the souls of the non-initiated after death (*Grg.*, 493a)? As Camarina was a town with close ties to Athens,⁹⁸ it is not wholly impossible that one of its inhabitants was the author of the *katabasis* of Orpheus. Yet at the present state of our knowledge we simply cannot tell.

We have one more indication left for the place of origin of the Heracles epic. After the nameless sinners we now see more famous mythological ones. Theseus, as Virgil stresses, *sedet aeternumque sedebit* (617). The passage deserves more attention than it has received in the commentaries. In the *Odyssey*, Theseus and Pirithous are the last heroes seen by Odysseus in the underworld, just as in Virgil Aeneas and the Sibyl see Theseus last in Tartarus, even though Pirithous has been replaced by Phlegyas. Now originally Theseus and Pirithous were condemned to an eternal stay in the underworld, either fettered or grown to a

"L'entre-deux-mondes. Orphée et Eurydice sur une hydrie proto-italiote du sanctuaire de la source à Saturo," *Antike Kunst* 51 (2008), p. 41-72.

⁹³ E. SIMON, "Die Hochzeit des Orpheus und der Eurydike," in J. GEBAUER *et al.* (eds.), *Bildergeschichte. Festschrift für Klaus Stähler*, Möhnesee, 2004, p. 451-456.

⁹⁴ They have survived only in Roman copies, cf. G. SCHWARTZ, "Eurydike I," in *LIMC* IV.1 (1988), p. 98-100 at no. 5.

⁹⁵ M.L. WEST, *The Orphic Poems*, Oxford, 1983, p. 10 note 17 unpersuasively identifies the two, like already WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *o.c.* (n. 91), II, p. 195 note 2.

⁹⁶ Pl., *Ap.*, 33e; *Phd.*, 59b; Xen., *Mem.* III, 12, 1.

⁹⁷ WEST, *o.c.* (n. 95), p. 10 note 17.

⁹⁸ F. CORDANO, "Camarina città democratica?," *PP* 59 (2004), p. 283-292; S. HORNBLLOWER, *Thucydides and Pindar*, Oxford, 2004, p. 190-192.

rock. This is not only the picture in the *Odyssey*, but seemingly also in the late-archaic *Minyas* (Paus., X, 28, 2, cf. fr. dub. 7 Bernabé = Hes., fr. 280 M-W), and certainly so on Polygnotos' painting in the Cnidian lesche (Paus., X, 29, 9) and in Panyassis (fr. 9 Davies = fr. 14 Bernabé). This clearly is the older situation, which is still referred to in the hypothesis of Critias' *Pirithous* (cf. fr. 6 Snell-Kannicht). The situation must have changed through the *katabasis* of Heracles, in which Heracles liberated Theseus but, at least in some sources, left Pirithous where he was.⁹⁹ This liberation is most likely another testimony for an Athenian connection of the *katabasis* of Heracles, as Theseus was Athens' national hero. The connection of Heracles, Eleusis and Theseus points to the time of the Pisistratids, although we cannot be much more precise than we have already been (above). In any case, the stress by Virgil on Theseus' eternal imprisonment in the underworld shows that he sometimes also opted for a version different from the *katabaseis* he in general followed.¹⁰⁰

Rather striking is the combination of the famous Theseus with the obscure Phlegyas (618),¹⁰¹ who warns everybody to be just and not to scorn the gods.¹⁰² Norden unconvincingly tries to reconstruct Delphic influence here, but also, and perhaps rightly, posits Orphic origins.¹⁰³ His oldest testimony is Pindar's *Second Pythian Ode* (21-4) where Ixion warns people in the underworld. Now Strabo (IX, 5, 21) calls Phlegyas the brother of Ixion,¹⁰⁴ whereas Servius (*ad loc.*) calls him Ixion's father. Can it be that this relationship plays a role in this wonderful confusion of sources, relationships, crimes and punishments? We will probably never know, as Virgil often selects and alters at random!

4. The Palace and the Bough (628-636)

However this may be, after another series of nameless human sinners,¹⁰⁵ among whom the sin of incest (623) is clearly shared with the Bologna papyrus (OF 717, 5-10),¹⁰⁶ the Sibyl urges Aeneas on and points to the mansion of the

⁹⁹ Hypothesis Critias' *Pirithous* (cf. fr. 6 SNELL-KANNICHT); Philochoros, *FGH* 328 F 18; Diod. Sic., IV, 26, 1; 63, 4; Hor., C. III, 4, 80; Hyg., *Fab.*, 79; Apollod., II, 5, 12, *Ep.* I, 23f.

¹⁰⁰ For this case see also HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 49.

¹⁰¹ D. KUIJPER, "Phlegyas admonitor", *Mnemosyne* n.s. 4 16 (1963), p. 162-70; G. GARBUGINO, "Flegias," *EV* II, p. 539-540 notes his late appearance in our texts.

¹⁰² Even though it is a different Phlegyas, one may wonder whether Statius, *Thebais* 6.706 *et casus Phlegyae monet* does not allude to his words here: *admonet* ... "*discite iustitiam moniti* ..."? The passage is not discussed by R. GANIBAN, *Statius and Virgil*, Cambridge, 2007.

¹⁰³ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 275-276, compares, in addition to Pindar (see the main text), Pl., *Grg.*, 525c; *Phaedo*, 114a; *Resp.* X, 616a.

¹⁰⁴ To be added to AUSTIN *ad loc.*

¹⁰⁵ D. BERRY, "Criminals in Virgil's Tartarus: Contemporary Allusions in *Aeneid* 6.621-4," *CQ* 42 (1992), p. 416-420.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 43).

rulers of the underworld, which is built by the Cyclopes (630-631: *Cyclopum educta caminis moenia*). Norden calls the idea of an iron building 'singulär' (p. 294), but it fits other descriptions of the underworld as containing iron or bronze elements (§ 3). Austin (*ad loc.*) compares Callimachus, *H.* III, 60-61 for the Cyclopes as smiths using bronze or iron, but it has escaped him that Virgil combines here two traditional activities of the Cyclopes. On the one hand, they are smiths and as such forged Zeus' thunder, flash and lightning-bolt, a helmet of invisibility for Hades, the trident for Poseidon and a shield for Aeneas (*Aen.* VIII, 447).¹⁰⁷ Consequently, they were known as the inventors of weapons in bronze and the first to make weapons in the Euboean cave Teuchion.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, early traditions also ascribed imposing constructions to the Cyclopes, such as the walls of Mycene and Tiryns, and as builders they remained famous all through antiquity.¹⁰⁹ Iron buildings thus perfectly fit the Cyclopes.

In front of the threshold of the building, Aeneas sprinkles himself with fresh water and fixes the Golden Bough to the lintel above the entrance. Norden (p. 164) and Austin (*ad loc.*) understand the expression *ramumque adverso in limine figit* (635-636) as the laying of the bough on the threshold, but *figit* seems to fit the lintel better.¹¹⁰ One may wonder from where Aeneas suddenly got his water. Had he carried it with him all along? Macrobius (*Sat.* III, 1, 6) tells us that washing was necessary when performing religious rites for the heavenly gods, but that a sprinkling was enough for those of the underworld. There certainly is some truth in this observation. However, as the chthonian gods were especially important during magical rites, it is not surprising that people did not go to a public bath first. It is thus a matter of convenience rather than principle.¹¹¹ But to properly understand its function here, we should look at the Golden Bough first.¹¹²

The Sibyl had told Aeneas to find the Golden Bough and to give it to Proserpina as 'her due tribute' (142-143, tr. Austin *ad loc.*). The meaning of the Golden Bough has gradually become clearer. Whereas Norden rightly rejected

¹⁰⁷ Hes., *Theog.*, 504-505; Apollod., I, 1, 2 and II, 1; III, 10, 4 (which may well go back to an ancient *Titanomachy*); see also Pindar, fr. 266 MAEHLER.

¹⁰⁸ Istros *FGrH* 334 F 71 (inventors); *POxy.* 10.1241, re-edited by VAN ROSSUM-STEENBEEK, *o.c.* (n. 81), 68.92-98 (Teuchion).

¹⁰⁹ Pind., fr. 169a.7 MAEHLER; Bacch., XI, 77; Soph., fr. 227 RADT; Hellanicus, *FGrH* 4 F 87 = fr. 88 FOWLER; Eur., *HF*, 15; *IA*, 1499; Eratosth., *Cat.*, 39 (altar); Strabo, VIII, 6, 8; Apollod., II, 2, 1; Paus., II, 25, 8; *Anth. Pal.* VII, 748; schol. on Eur., *Or.*, 965; *Et. Magnum*, 213.29.

¹¹⁰ As is argued by H. WAGENVOORT, *Pietas*, Leiden, 1980, p. 93-113 ('The Golden Bough', 1959¹) at 93.

¹¹¹ See also S. EITREM, *Opferitus und Voropfer der Griechen und Römer*, Kristiania, 1915, p. 126-131; A.S. PEASE on Verg., *Aen.* IV, 635.

¹¹² For Aeneas picking the Bough on a mid-fourth-century British mosaic see D. PERRING, 'Gnosticism' in Fourth-Century Britain: The Frampton Mosaics Reconsidered," *Britannia* 34 (2003), p. 97-127 at 116.

the interpretation of Frazer's *Golden Bough*,¹¹³ he clearly was still influenced by his *Zeitgeist* with its fascination with fertility and death and thus spent too much attention on the comparison of the Bough with mistletoe.¹¹⁴ Yet by pointing to the Mysteries (below) he already came close to an important aspect of the Bough.¹¹⁵ Combining three recent analyses, which have all contributed to a better understanding, we can summarize our present knowledge as follows.¹¹⁶ When searching for the Bough, Aeneas is guided by two doves, the birds of his mother Aphrodite (193). The motif of birds leading the way derives from colonisation legends, as Norden (p. 173-174) and Horsfall have noted, and the fact that there are two of them may well have been influenced by the age-old traditions of two leaders of colonising groups.¹¹⁷ The doves, as Nelis has argued, can be paralleled with the dove that led the Argonauts through the Clashing Rocks in Apollonius of Rhodes' epic (II, 238-240, 561-573; note also III, 541-554). Moreover, as Nelis notes, the Golden Bough is part of an oak tree (209), just like the Golden Fleece (*Arg.* II, 1270; IV, 162), both are located in a gloomy forest (VI, 208 and *Arg.* IV, 166) and both shine in the darkness (VI, 204-207 and *Arg.* IV, 125-126). In other words, it seems a plausible idea that Virgil also had the Golden Fleece in mind when composing this episode.

However, the Argonautic epic does not contain a Golden Bough. For that we have to look elsewhere. In a too long neglected article Agnes Michels pointed out that in the introductory poem to his *Garland* Meleager mentions 'the ever golden branch of divine Plato shining all round with virtue' (*Anth. Pal.* IV, 1, 47-48 = Meleager, 3972-3 Gow-Page, tr. West).¹¹⁸ Virgil certainly knew Meleager, as Horsfall notes, who he also observes that the allusion to Plato prepares us for the use Virgil makes of Plato's eschatological myths in his description of the underworld, those of the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and *Er* in the *Republic*.

However, there is another, even more important bough. Servius tells us that 'those who have written about the rites of Proserpina' assert that there is

¹¹³ Compare J.G. FRAZER, *Balder the Beautiful = The Golden Bough* VII.2, London, 1913³, p. 284 note 3 and NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 164 note 1.

¹¹⁴ This is also noted by WAGENVOORT, *o.c.* (n. 110), p. 96f.

¹¹⁵ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 171-173.

¹¹⁶ In this section on the Golden Bough I refer just by name to D.A. WEST, "The Bough and the Gate," in S.J. HARRISON (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1990, p. 224-238; HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 20-28 (with a detailed commentary on 6.210-11) and D. NELIS, *Vergil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*, Leeds, 2001, p. 240f. The first two seem to have escaped R. TURCAN, "Le laurier d'Apollon (en marge de Porphyre)," in A. HALTENHOFF & F.-H. MUTSCHLER (eds.), *Hortus Litterarum Antiquarum. Festschrift H.A. Gärtner*, Heidelberg, 2000, p. 547-553.

¹¹⁷ WEST, *o.c.* (n. 41), p. 190; BREMMER, *o.c.* (n. 60), p. 59f.

¹¹⁸ A.K. MICHELS, "The Golden Bough of Plato," *AJPb* 66 (1945), p. 59-63. For Agnes Michels (1909-1993), a daughter of the well-known Biblical scholar Kirsopp Lake (1872-1946), see J. LINDERSKI, "Agnes Kirsopp Michels and the Religio," *CJ* 92 (1997), p. 323-345, reprinted in his *Roman Questions II*, Stuttgart, 2007, p. 584-602.

quiddam mysticum about the bough and that people could not participate in the rites of Proserpina unless they carried a bough.¹¹⁹ Now we know that the future initiates of Eleusis carried a kind of pilgrim's staff consisting of a single branch of myrtle or several held together by rings.¹²⁰ In other words, by carrying the bough and offering it to Proserpina, queen of the underworld, Aeneas also acts as an Eleusinian initiate,¹²¹ who of course had to bathe before initiation.¹²² Virgil will have written this all with one eye on Augustus, who was an initiate himself of the Eleusinian Mysteries.¹²³ Yet it seems equally important that Heracles too had to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries before entering the underworld (§ 3). In the end, the Golden Bough is also an oblique reference to that elusive epic, the *Descent of Heracles*.

5. Elysium (637-678)

Having offered the Bough to Proserpina, Aeneas and the Sibyl can enter Elysium, where they now come to *locos laetos*, 'joyful places' (cf. 744: *laeta arva*) of *fortunatorum nemorum*, 'woods of the blessed' (638).¹²⁴ The stress on joy is rather striking, but on a fourth-century BC Orphic Gold Leaf from Thurii we read: "Rejoice, rejoice" (Χαῖτε<ε>, χαῖτε). Journey on the right-hand road to holy meadows and groves of Persephone'.¹²⁵ Moreover, we find joy also in Jewish prophecies of the Golden Age, which certainly overlap in their motifs with life in Elysium.¹²⁶ Once again Virgil's description taps Orphic poetry, as *lux perpetua* (640-641) is also a typically Orphic motif, which we already find in Pindar and which surely must have had a place in the *katabasis* of Orpheus, just as the gymnastic activities, dancing and singing (642-644) almost certainly come from the same

¹¹⁹ Servius, *Aen.* VI, 136: *licet de hoc ramo hi qui de sacris Proserpinae scripsisse dicuntur, quiddam esse mysticum adfirmant ... ad sacra Proserpinae accedere nisi sublato ramo non poterat. inferos autem subire hoc dicit, sacra celebrare Proserpinae.*

¹²⁰ Schol. Ar., *Eq.*, 408; C. BÉRARD, "La lumière et le faisceau : images du rituel éleusinien," *Recherches et documents du centre Thomas More* 48 (1985), p. 17-33; M.B. MOORE, *Attic Red-Figured and White-Ground Pottery = The Athenian Agora*, Vol. 30, Princeton, 1997, p. 136-137; PARKER, *o.c.* (n. 82), p. 349.

¹²¹ The connection with Eleusis is also stressed by G. LUCK, *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits*, Ann Arbor, 2000, p. 16-34 ('Virgil and the Mystery Religions', 1973¹), if often too specifically.

¹²² R. PARKER, *Miasma*, Oxford, 1983, p. 284 notes 12f.

¹²³ Suet., *Aug.*, 93; Dio Cassius, LI, 4, 1; G. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus and the Greek World*, Oxford, 1965, p. 68.

¹²⁴ For woods in the underworld see *Od.* X, 509; GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), no. 3, 5-6 (Thurii) = *OF* 487, 5-6; *Aen.* 6.658; Nonnos, *D.* XIX, 191.

¹²⁵ GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), no. 3, 5-6 = *OF* 487.

¹²⁶ *Oracula Sibyllina* III, 619: 'And then God will give great joy to men', and 785: 'Rejoice, maiden', cf. E. NORDEN, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, Stuttgart, 1924, p. 57f.

source(s),¹²⁷ even though Augustus must have been pleased with the athletics which he encouraged.¹²⁸ The Orphic character of these lines is confirmed by the mention of the *Threicius sacerdos* (645), obviously Orpheus himself.

After this general view, we are told about the individual inhabitants of Elysium, starting with *genus antiquum Teucri* (648), which recalls, as Austin (*ad loc.*) well saw, *genus antiquum Terrae, Titania pubes* (580),¹²⁹ opening the list of sinners in Tartarus. It is a wonderfully peaceful spectacle that we see through the eyes of Aeneas. Some of the heroes are even *vescentis*, 'picnicking' (Austin), on the grass, and we may wonder if this is not also a reference to the Orphic 'symposium of the just', as that also takes place on a meadow.¹³⁰ Its importance was already known from Orphic literary descriptions,¹³¹ but a meadow in the underworld has now also emerged on the Orphic Gold Leaves.¹³²

The description of the landscape is concluded with the picture of the river Eridanus that flows from a forest, smelling of laurels.¹³³ Neither Norden nor Austin explains the presence of the laurels. Virgil's first readership will have had several associations with these trees. Some may have remembered that the laurel was the highest level of reincarnation among plants in Empedocles (B 127 D-K; note also B 140), and others will have realised the poetic and Apolline connotations of the laurel.¹³⁴

The Eridanus flows *superne* and *plurimus*, 'in all its strength' (658-659). What does this mean? Norden, somewhat hesitantly followed by Austin (*ad loc.*), follows Servius and interprets *superne* as 'to the upper world' instead of its normal usage 'from above'. But this is a very rare usage of the word and also the type of information that seems out of place here. I would therefore like to point to a striking passage in *1 Enoch*, the book that also has given us the

¹²⁷ Pind., fr. 129 MAEHLER; Ar., *Ra.*, 448-455; Or. *Sib.* III, 787; Val. Flacc., I, 842; Plut., fr. 178; 211 SANDBACH; *Visio Pauli*, 21, cf. GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 82-84.

¹²⁸ HORSFALL, *o.c.* (n. 13), p. 139.

¹²⁹ For the Titans being the 'olden gods' see BREMMER, *o.c.* (n. 60), p. 78.

¹³⁰ GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 98-103.

¹³¹ Pind., fr. 129 MAEHLER; Ar., *Ra.*, 326; Pl., *Grg.*, 524a, *Resp.* X, 616b; Diod. Sic., I, 96, 5; BERNABÉ on *OF* 61.

¹³² GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), no. 3, 5-6 (Thurii) = *OF* 487, 5-6, no. 27.4 (Pherae) = *OF* 493, 4.

¹³³ The Eridanus also appears in Apollonius Rhodius as a kind of otherworldly river (*Arg.* IV, 596ff.), but there it is connected with the myth of Phaethon and the poplars and resembles more Virgil's Lake Avernus with its sulphur smell than the forest smelling of laurels in the underworld. For the name of the river see now X. DELAMARRE, "Ἠριδανός, le « fleuve de l'ouest »,” *Études celtiques* 36 (2008), p. 75-77.

¹³⁴ N. HORSFALL, "Odoratum lauris nemus (Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.658)," *SCI* 12 (1993), p. 156-158. Later readers may perhaps have also thought of the laurel trees that stood in front of Augustus' home on the Palatine, given the importance of Augustus in this book, cf. A. ALFÖLDI, *Die zwei Lorbeerbäume des Augustus*, Bonn, 1973; M.B. FLORY, "The Symbolism of Laurel in Cameo Portraits of Livia," *MAAR* 40 (1995), p. 43-68.

prototypical tour of hell with a guide. Here, in his journey to Paradise, Enoch sees 'a wilderness and it was solitary, full of trees and seeds. And there was a stream on top of it, and it gushed forth *from above* it (my italics). It appeared like a waterfall which cascaded greatly (*plurimus!*) ...' (28, 3, tr. Charlesworth). Is it going too far to see Jewish influence on Virgil's Eridanus?

After Trojan and nameless Roman heroes (648-660), priests (661) and poets (662), Aeneas and the Sibyl also see 'those who found out knowledge and used it for the betterment of life' (663: *inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artis*, tr. Austin). As has long been seen, this line closely corresponds to a line from a cultural-historical passage in the Bologna papyrus where we find an enumeration of five groups in Elysium that have made life livable. The first are mentioned in general as those 'who embellished life with their skills' (αἱ δὲ βίον σ[οφ]ῆσιν ἐκόσμεον = OF 717, 103), to be followed by the poets, 'those who cut roots' for medicinal purposes, and two more groups which we cannot identify because of the bad state of the papyrus. Now inventions that both better life and bring culture are typically a sophistic theme, and the mention of the archaic 'root cutters' instead of the more modern 'doctors' suggests an older stage in the sophistic movement.¹³⁵ The convergence between Virgil and the Bologna papyrus suggests that we have here a category of people seen by Orpheus in his *katabasis*. However, as Virgil sometimes comes very close to the list of sinners in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, both poets must, directly or indirectly, go back to a common source from the fifth century,¹³⁶ as must, by implication, the Bologna papyrus. This Orphic source apparently was influenced by the cultural theories of the sophists. Now the poets occur in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1032-34) too in a passage that is heavily influenced by the cultural theories of the sophists, a passage that Fritz Graf connected with Orphic influence.¹³⁷ Are we going too far when we see here also the shadow of Orpheus' *katabasis*?

Having seen part of the inhabitants of Elysium, the Sibyl now asks Musaeus where Anchises is (666-678). Norden (p. 300) persuasively compares the question of Dionysus to the Eleusinian initiates where Pluto lives in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (431-433).¹³⁸ In support of his argument Norden observes that normally the Sibyl is omniscient, but only here asks for advice, which suggests a different source rather than an intentional poetic variation. Naturally, he infers from the comparison that both go back to the *katabasis* of Heracles. In line with

¹³⁵ Cf. M. TREU, "Die neue 'Orphische' Unterweltsbeschreibung und Vergil," *Hermes* 82 (1954), p. 24-51 at 35: 'die primitiven Wurzelsucher'.

¹³⁶ NORDEN, *a.c.* (n. 6), p. 287-288; GRAF, *a.c.* (n. 75), p. 146 note 21 compares VI, 609 with Ar., *Ra.*, 149-150 (violence against parents), VI, 609 with *Ra.*, 147 (violence against strangers) and VI, 612-613 with *Ra.*, 150 (perjurers). Note also the resemblance of VI, 608, OF 717, 47 and Pl., *Resp.* X, 615c regarding fratricides, which also points to an older Orphic source, as Norden already saw, without knowing the Bologna papyrus.

¹³⁷ GRAF, *a.c.* (n. 75), p. 34-37.

¹³⁸ Note that neither Stanford nor Dover refers to Virgil.

our investigation so far, however, we rather ascribe the question to Orpheus' *katabasis*, given the later prominence of Musaeus and the meeting with Eleusinian initiates. Highly interesting is also another observation by Norden. He notes that Musaeus shows them the valley where Anchises lives from a height (678: *desuper ostentat*) and compares a number of Greek, Roman and Christian Apocalypses. Yet his comparison confuses two different motifs, even though they are related. In the cases of Plato's *Republic* (X, 615d, 616b) and *Timaeus* (41e) as well as Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (*Rep.* VI, 11) souls see the other world, but they do not have a proper tour of hell (or heaven) in which a supernatural person (Musaeus, God, [arch]angel, Devil) provides a view from a height or a mountain. That is what we find in *1 Enoch* (17-18), *Matthew* (4.8), *Revelation* (21.10) and the heavily Jewish influenced *Apocalypse of Peter* (15-16). In other words, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Virgil draws here too, directly or indirectly, on Jewish sources.

6. Anchises and the *Heldenschau* (679-887)

With this quest for Anchises we have reached the climax of book VI. It would take us much too far to present a detailed analysis of these lines but, in line with our investigation, we will concentrate on Orphic and Orphic-related (Orphoid?) sources.

Aeneas meets his father, when the latter has just finished reviewing the souls of his line who are destined to ascend 'to the upper light' (679-83). They are in a valley, of which the secluded character is heavily stressed,¹³⁹ while the river Lethe gently streams through the woods (705). It is rather remarkable that the Romans paid much more attention to this river than the Greeks, who mentioned Lethe only rarely and in older times hardly ever explicitly as a river.¹⁴⁰ Here those souls that are to be reincarnated drink the water of forgetfulness. After Aeneas wondered why some would want to return to the upper world, Anchises launched into a detailed Stoic cosmology and anthropology (724-733) before we again find Orphic material: the soul locked up in the body as in a prison (734), which Vergil derived almost certainly straight from Plato, just like the idea of engrafted (738, 746: *concreta*) evil.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ 679-80 *penitus convalle virenti inclusas animas*; 703: *valle reducta*; 704: *seclusum nemus*.

¹⁴⁰ Theognis, 1216 (plain of Lethe); Simon., *Anth. Pal.* VII, 25, 6 (house of Lethe); Ar., *Ra.*, 186 (plain of Lethe); Pl., *Resp.* X, 621ac (plain and river); TrGF Adesp. fr. 372 SNELL/KANNICHT (house of Lethe); SEG 51, 328 (curse tablet: Lethe as a personal power). For its occurrence in the Gold Leaves see RIEDWEG, *o.c.* (n. 16), p. 40.

¹⁴¹ Soul: Pl., *Crat.*, 400c (= OF 430), *Phd.*, 62b (= OF 429), 67d, 81be, 92a; [Plato], *Axiach.*, 365e; G. REHRENBÖCK, "Die orphische Seelenlehre in Platons Kratylos," *WS* 88 (1975), p. 17-31; A. BERNABÉ, "Una etimología Platónica: *Sôma* – *Sêma*," *Philologus* 139 (1995), p. 204-37. For the afterlife of the idea see P. COURCELLE, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard*, 3 vols, Paris, 1974-75, II, p. 345-80. Engrafted evil: Pl., *Phd.*, 81c; *Resp.* X, 609a; *Tim.*, 42ac. Plato and Orphism:

The penalties the souls have to suffer to become pure (739-743) may well derive from an Orphic source too, as the Bologna papyrus mentions clouds and hail, but it is too fragmentary to be of any use here.¹⁴² On the other hand, the idea that the souls have to pay a penalty for their deeds in the upper world twice occurs in the Orphic Gold Leaves.¹⁴³ Orphic is also the idea of the cycle (*rota*) through which the souls have to pass during their Orphic reincarnation.¹⁴⁴ But why does the cycle last a thousand years before the souls can come back to life: *mille rotam volvere per annos* (748)? Unfortunately, we are badly informed by the relevant authors about the precise length of the reincarnation. Empedocles mentions 'thrice ten thousand seasons' (B 115 D-K) and Plato (*Phaedr.*, 249a) mentions 'ten thousand years' and, for a philosophical life, 'three times thousand years', but the myth of Er mentions a period of thousand years.¹⁴⁵ This will be Virgil's source here, as also the idea that the souls have to drink from the river Lethe is directly inspired by the myth of Er where the souls that have drunk from the River of Forgetfulness forget about their stay in the other world before returning to earth (*Resp.* X, 621a).

It will hardly be chance that with the references to the end of the myth of Er, we have also reached the end of the main description of the underworld. In the following *Heldenschau*, we find only one more intriguing reference to the eschatological beliefs of Virgil's time. At the end, father and son wander 'in the wide fields of air' (887: *aëris in campis latis*), surveying everything. In one of his characteristically wide-ranging and incisive discussions, Norden argued that Virgil alludes here to the belief that the souls ascend to the moon as their final abode. This belief is as old, as Norden argues, as the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where we already find 'die Identifikation der Mondgöttin Hekate mit Hekate als Königin der Geister und des Hades'.¹⁴⁶ However, it must be objected that 'verifiable associations between the two (i.e. Hecate and the moon) do not survive from earlier than the first century A.D'.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, the identification of the moon with Hades, the Elysian Fields or the Isles of the Blessed is relatively late. It is only in the fourth century BC that we start to find this tradition among pupils of Plato, such as, probably, Xenocrates, Crantor and Heraclides Ponticus, who clearly wanted to elaborate their Master's eschatologi-

A. MASARACCHIA, "Orfeo e gli "Orfici" in Platone," in *idem* (ed.), *Orfeo e l'Orfismo*, Rome, 1993, p. 173-203, repr. in his *Riflessioni sull'antico*, Pisa & Rome, 1998, p. 373-396.

¹⁴² TREU, *l.c.* (n. 135), p. 38 compares OF 717, 130-132; see also G. PERRONE, "Virgilio Aen. VI 740-742," *Civiltà Classica e Cristiana* 6 (1985), p. 33-41.

¹⁴³ GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 6, 4 (Thurii) = OF 490, 4; 27, 4 (Phrae) = OF 493, 4.

¹⁴⁴ OF 338, 467, GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 5, 5 (Thurii) = OF 488, 5, with BERNABÉ *ad loc.*

¹⁴⁵ Pl., *Resp.* X, 615b, 621a.

¹⁴⁶ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 23-26, also comparing Servius on V, 735 and VI, 887; Ps. Probus p. 333-334 HAGEN.

¹⁴⁷ S.I. JOHNSTON, *Hekate Soteira*, Atlanta, 1990, p. 31.

cal teachings in this respect.¹⁴⁸ Consequently, the reference does indeed allude to the souls' ascent to the moon, but not to the 'orphisch-pythagoreische Theologie' (Norden, p. 24). In fact, it is clearly part of the Platonic framework of Virgil.¹⁴⁹

It is rather striking that in the same century Plato is the first to mention Selene as the mother of the Eleusinian Musaeus.¹⁵⁰ It is hard to accept, though, that he would have been the inventor of the idea, which must have been established in the late fifth century BC.¹⁵¹ Did the officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries want to keep up with contemporary eschatological developments, which increasingly stressed that the soul went up into the *aether*, not down into the subterranean Hades?¹⁵² We do not have enough material to trace exactly the initial developments of the idea, but in the later first century AD it was already popular enough for Antonius Diogenes to parody the belief in his *Wonders Beyond Thule*, a parody taken to even greater length by Lucian in his *True Histories*.¹⁵³ Virgil's allusion, therefore, must have been clear to his contemporaries.

7. Conclusions

When we now look back, we can see that Virgil has divided his underworld into several compartments. His division contaminates Homer with later developments. In Homer virtually everybody goes to Hades, of which the Tartarus is the deepest part, reserved for the greatest sinners, the Titans (*Il.* XIV, 279). A few special heroes, such as Menelaus and Rhadamanthys, go to a separate place, the Elysian Fields, which is mentioned only once in Homer.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ W. BURKERT, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, Mass., 1972, p. 366-368, who also points out that there is no pre-Platonic Pythagorean evidence for this belief; see also F. CUMONT, *Lux perpetua*, Paris, 1949, p. 175-178; H.B. GOTTSCHALK, *Heracles of Pontus*, Oxford, 1980, p. 100-105.

¹⁴⁹ Note that Wilamowitz already rejected the 'Mondgöttin Helene oder Hekate' in his letter of 11 June 1903 thanking Norden for his commentary, cf. CALDER III and HUSS, "*Sed serviendum officio...*," p. 18-21 at 20.

¹⁵⁰ Pl., *Resp.* II, 364e; Philochoros, *FGrH* 328 F 208, cf. BERNABÉ on Musaeus 10-14 T.

¹⁵¹ A. HENRICHs, "Zur Genealogie des Musaïos," *ZPE* 58 (1985), p. 1-8.

¹⁵² *IG* I³ 1179, 6-7; Eur., *Erechth.*, fr. 370, 71 KANNICHT; *Suppl.*, 533-534; *Hel.*, 1013-1016; *Or.*, 1086-1087, fr. 839, 10f, 908b, 971 KANNICHT; P. HANSEN, *Carmina epigraphica Graeca saeculi IV a. Chr. n.*, Berlin & New York, 1989, no. 535, 545, 558, 593.

¹⁵³ For Antonius' date see now G. BOWERSOCK, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian*, Berkeley, LA & London, 1994, p. 35-39, whose identification of the Faustinus addressed by Antonius with Martial's Faustinus is far from compelling, cf. R. NAUTA, *Poetry for Patrons*, Leiden, 2002, p. 67-68 note 96. Bowersock has been overlooked by P. VON MÖLLENDORFF, *Auf der Suche nach der verlogenen Wahrheit. Lukians Wahre Geschichten*, Tübingen, 2000, p. 104-109, although his discussion actually supports an earlier date for Antonius against the traditional one in the late second or early third century.

¹⁵⁴ For Hades, Elysium and the Isles of the Blessed see most recently M. GELINNE, "Les Champs Élysées et les Îles des Bienheureux chez Homère, Hésiode et Pindare," *LEC* 56 (1988),

This idea of a special place for select people, which resembles the Hesiodic Isles of the Blessed (*Op.*, 167-173), must have looked attractive to a number of people when the afterlife became more important. However, the idea of reincarnation soon posed a special problem. Where did those stay who had completed their cycle (§ 6) and those who were still in process of doing so? It can now be seen that Virgil follows a traditional Orphic solution in this respect, a solution that had progressed beyond Homer in that moral criteria had become important.¹⁵⁵

In his *Second Olympian Ode* Pindar pictures a tripartite afterlife in which the sinners are sentenced by a judge below the earth to endure terrible pains (57-60, 67), those who are good men spend a pleasant time with the gods (61-67) and those who have completed the cycle of reincarnation and have led a blameless life will join the heroes on the Isles of the Blessed (68-80).¹⁵⁶ A tripartite structure can also be noticed in Empedocles, who speaks about the place where the great sinners are (B 118-21 D-K),¹⁵⁷ a place for those who are in the process of purification (B 115 D-K),¹⁵⁸ and a place for those who have led a virtuous life on earth: they will join the tables of the gods (B 147-8 D-K). The same division between the effects of a good and a bad life appears in Plato's *Jenseitsmythen*. In the *Republic* (X, 616a) the serious sinners are hurled into Tartarus, as they are in the *Phaedo* (113d-114c), where the less serious ones may be still saved, whereas 'those who seem [to have lived] exceptionally into the direction of living virtuously' (tr. C.J. Rowe) pass upward to 'a pure abode'. But those who have purified themselves sufficiently with philosophy will reach an area 'even more beautiful', presumably that of the gods (*cf.* 82b10-c1). The upward movement for the elite, pure souls, also occurs in the *Phaedrus* (248-249) and the *Republic* (X, 614de), whereas in the *Gorgias* (525b-526d) they go to the Isles of the Blessed. All these

p. 225-240; SOURVINOU-INWOOD, *o.c.* (n. 33), p. 17-107; S. MACE, "Utopian and Erotic Fusion in a New Elegy by Simonides (22 West2)," *ZPE* 113 (1996), p. 233-247. For the etymology of Elysium see now R.S.P. BEEKES, "Hades and Elysion," in J. JASANOFF (ed.), *Mír curad: studies in honor of Calvert Watkins*, Innsbruck, 1998, p. 17-28 at 19-23. Stephanie WEST (on *Od.* IV, 563) well observes that Elysium is not mentioned again before Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

¹⁵⁵ For good observations see U. MOLYVIATI-TOPTIS, "Vergil's Elysium and the Orphic-Pythagorean Ideas of After-Life," *Mnemosyne* n.s.⁴ 47 (1994), p. 33-46. However, recent scholarship has replaced her terminology of 'Orphic-Pythagorean', which she inherited from Dieterich and Norden, with 'Orphic-Bacchic', due to new discoveries of Orphic Gold Leaves. Moreover, she overlooked the important discussion by GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 84-87; see now also GRAF and JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), p. 100-108.

¹⁵⁶ For the reflection of this scheme in Pindar's threnos fr. 129-131a MAEHLER see GRAF, *o.c.* (n. 75), p. 84f. Given the absence of any mention of mysteries in Pindar, *O.* II and mysteries being out of place in Plutarch's *Consolatio* one wonders with Graf if τελευτῶν in fr. 131a should not be replaced by τελευτάν.

¹⁵⁷ For the identification of this place with Hades see A. MARTIN & O. PRIMAVESI, *L'Empédocte de Strasbourg*, Berlin & New York, 1999, p. 315f.

¹⁵⁸ F. D'ALFONSO, "La Terra Desolata. Osservazioni sul destino di Bellerofonte (*Il.* 6.200-202)," *MH* 65 (2008), p. 1-31 at 14-20.

three dialogues display the same tripartite structure, if with some variations, as the one of the *Phaedo*, although the description in the *Republic* (X, 614bff) is greatly elaborated with all kinds of details in the tale of Er.

Finally, in the Orphic Gold Leaves the stay in Tartarus is clearly presupposed but not mentioned, due to the function of the Gold Leaves as passport to the underworld for the Orphic devotees. Yet the fact that in a fourth-century BC Leaf from Thurii the soul says: 'I have flown out of the heavy, difficult cycle (of reincarnations)' suggests a second stage in which the souls still have to return to life, and the same stage is presupposed by a late fourth-century Leaf from Pharsalos where the soul says: 'Tell Persephone that Bakchios himself has released you (from the cycle)'.¹⁵⁹ The final stage will be like in Pindar, as the soul, whose purity is regularly stressed,¹⁶⁰ 'will rule among the other heroes' or has 'become a god instead of a mortal'.¹⁶¹

When taking these tripartite structures into account, we can also better understand Virgil's Elysium. It is clear that we have here also the same distinction between the good and the super good souls. The former have to return to earth, but the latter can stay forever in Elysium. Moreover, their place is higher than the one of those who have to return. That is why the souls that will return are in a valley below the area where Musaeus is.¹⁶² Once again, Virgil looked at Plato for the construction of his underworld.

But as we have seen, it is not only Plato that is an important source for Virgil. In addition to a few traditional Roman details, such as the *fauces Orci*, we have also called attention to Orphic and Eleusinian beliefs. Moreover, and this is really new, we have pointed to several possible borrowings from 1 *Enoch*. Norden rejected virtually all Jewish influence on Virgil in his commentary,¹⁶³ and one can only wonder to what extent his own Jewish origin played a role in this judgement.¹⁶⁴ More recent discussions, though, have been more generous in allowing the possibility of Jewish-Sibylline influence on Virgil and Horace.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ GRAF & JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 5, 5 (= OF 488, 5); 26a, 2 (= OF 485, 2). Dionysos Bakchios has now also turned up on a Leaf from Amphipolis: GRAF & JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 30, 1-2 (= OF 496n).

¹⁶⁰ GRAF & JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 5, 1; 6, 1; 7, 1 (all Thurii); 9, 1 (Rome) (= OF 488, 1; 490, 1; 489, 1; 491, 1).

¹⁶¹ GRAF & JOHNSTON, *o.c.* (n. 52), 8, 11 (Petelia) (= OF 476, 11); 3, 4 (Thurii) (= OF 487, 4); 5, 9 (Thurii) (= OF 488, 9), respectively.

¹⁶² This was also seen by MOLYVIATI-TOPTISIS, *o.c.* (n. 155), p. 43, if not very clearly explained.

¹⁶³ NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 6), p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ For Norden's attitude towards Judaism see J.E. BAUER, "Eduard Norden: Wahrheitsliebe und Judentum," in KYTZLER, *o.c.* (n. 8), p. 205-23; R.G.M. NISBET, *Collected Papers on Latin Literature*, ed. S.J. HARRISON, Oxford, 1995, p. 75; J. BREMMER, "The Apocalypse of Peter: Greek or Jewish?," in J. BREMMER and I. CZACHESZ (eds.), *The Apocalypse of Peter*, Leuven, 2003, p. 15-39 at 3-4.

¹⁶⁵ C. MACLEOD, *Collected Essays*, Oxford, 1983, p. 218-299 (on Horace's *Epode*, 16, 2); NISBET, *o.c.* (n. 164), p. 48-52, 64-65, 73-75, 163-164; W. STROH, "Horaz und Vergil in ihren

And indeed, Alexander Polyhistor, who worked in Rome during Virgil's lifetime, wrote a book *On the Jews* that shows that he knew the Old Testament, but he was also demonstrably acquainted with Egyptian-Jewish Sibylline literature.¹⁶⁶ Thus it seems not impossible or even implausible that among the Orphic literature that Virgil had read, there also were (Egyptian-Jewish?) Orphic *katabaseis* with Enochic influence. Unfortunately, however, we have so little left of that literature that all too certain conclusions would be misleading. In the end, it is still not easy to see light in the darkness of Virgil's underworld.¹⁶⁷

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prophetischen Gedichten,” *Gymnasium* 100 (1993), p. 289-322; L. WATSON, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes*, Oxford, 2003, p. 481-482, 489, 508, 511 (on Horace's *Epode* 16).

¹⁶⁶ Alexander Polyhistor, *FGrH* 273 F 19ab (OT), F 79 (4) quotes *Or. Sib.* III, 397-104, cf. LIGHTFOOT, *o.c.* (n. 39), p. 95; see also NORDEN, *o.c.* (n. 3), p. 269.

¹⁶⁷ Various parts of this paper profited from lectures in Liège and Harvard in 2008. For comments and corrections of my English I am most grateful to Annemarie Ambühl, Ruurd Nauta, Danuta Shanzer and, especially, Nicholas Horsfall.