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The Apocalypse Of Peter

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I. The *Apocalypse of Peter*: Greek or Jewish?

JAN N. BREMMER

When in the winter of 1886-87 a French archaeological team opened a grave near Akhmim in Upper Egypt, they struck gold. In the grave they found a parchment codex with fragments of the *Book of Enoch*, the *Gospel of Peter* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* (*ApPt*). The texts immediately drew the attention of the foremost patristic and classical scholars of the time. In 1892 the meritorious J.A. Robinson (1858-1933) and M.R. James (1862-1936) published a 'pirate' edition based upon an unpublished version by the excavators'. In the next year the French team came with an official facsimile, but they had retouched the photographs, thus making their *editio princeps* somewhat unreliable'. On the basis of the English edition, the greatest patristic scholar of the late nineteenth century, Adolf von Hamack (1851-1930), published his own edition, which he followed one year later with a revised and expanded version³. The text also drew the interest

¹ J.A. Robinson and M.R. James, *The Gospel according to Peter and the Revelation of Peter* (London, 1892). For the codex, see now Van Minnen, this volume, Ch. II.

U. Bouriant, 'Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Énoch et de quelques écrits attribués à saint Pierre', *Mémoires publiés par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire* IX.1 (Paris, 1892: editio princeps); for photogravures of the manuscript, see A. Lods, *ibidem*, IX.3 (1893). For more reliable photographs see O. von Gebhardt, *Das Evangelium und die Apokalypse des Petrus* (Leipzig, 1893).

³ A. von Hamack, 'Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus', *SB Berlin* 44 (1892) 895-903, 949-65, repr. in his *Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche: Berliner Akademieschriften 1890-1907* (Leipzig, 1980)

of the brightest classicists of the day, as the names of Hermann Diels (1848-1921)⁴, Hermann Usener (1834-1905)⁵, and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848-1931)⁶ in the *apparatus criticus* of the now in quick succession following editions demonstrate. This first phase came to an end with the editions of E. Preuschen (1867-1920) and E. Klostermann (1870-1963) in the early 1900s⁷.

The publication of the *ApPt* took place at a time that the growing criticism of the historical pretensions of the biblical texts became combined with the first attempts at an interpretation of early Christianity from the point of view of the history of religion. These attempts, later known as the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, had a profound interest in the Jewish sources of early Christianity as well as in its apocalyptic and eschatological ideas. Against the traditional views which saw the New Testament basically as the successor of the Old Testament, the scholars of the new movement looked for the contemporary world of early Christianity in order to explain its beginnings. This interest helps to explain the attention paid to the question of the sources in the early interpretations of the Greek version of *ApPt*. Harnack had already noted in passing the influence of Greek traditions', but it was Eduard Norden (1868-1941), who first analysed its Greek sources in some depth in a popular article (1893)⁹.

83-108; idem, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus* (Leipzig, 1893).

⁴ For Diels see now W. Burkert *et al* (eds), *Hermann Diels (1848-1921) et la science de l'antiquité* (Geneva, 1999).

⁵ On Usener see my 'Hermann Usener' in W. Briggs and W.M. Calder III (eds), *Classical Scholarship. A Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York, 1990) 462-78; see also D. Ehlers (ed), *Hermann Diels, Hermann Usener. Eduard Zeller: Briefwechsel*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1992).

⁶ For Wilamowitz see the many studies (edited) by W.M. Calder III.

⁷ E. Preuschen, *Antilegomena* (Giessen, 1905) 84-8 (with patristic citations); E. Klostermann, *Apocrypha I. Reste des Petrus-evangeliums, der Petrusapokalypse und des Kerygma Petri* (Berlin, 1908²).

⁸ Hamack, 'Bruchstücke', 954.

⁹ E. Norden, *Kleine Schriften zum klassischen Altertum* (Berlin, 1966) 218-33.

Norden was not a member of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule *stricto sensu*, but his ambitions were closely related and he maintained contacts with some of its most prominent representatives, especially Richard Reitzenstein (1861-1931)¹⁰. As Norden observed, unlike in Rome, the absence of a central authority made it possible for the Greek world to have competing eschatologies. One of these, Orphism, had become very popular with the masses, according to Norden, due to the clever organisation of the movement by *schlaue Priester*¹¹. Orphism had originated in competition with the Eleusinian mysteries, but already at an early stage both mysteries started to influence one another, just like Orphism and Pythagoreanism often became indistinguishable. Important innovations as regards the traditional picture were the ideas of a judgement on moral basis, wonderful banquets for the righteous, and a paradise-like afterlife. These new ideas, as Norden claimed, constituted the basis of Vergil's description of the underworld in Aeneid VI¹².

Unfortunately, so still Norden, the first two centuries of the Christian era were strongly characterised by a superstition ('Aberglaube'), in particular influenced by oriental religions, which was greatly interested in a blessed life after death. That is why we find descriptions of the afterlife by such differing authors as Apuleius and Plutarch. It is in this context that we have to read the *ApPt*. Norden

¹⁰ See K. Rudolph, 'Norden und die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule', in B. Kytzler *et al* (eds), *Eduard Norden (1868-1941)* (Stuttgart, 1994) 83-105 at 95-105. For Reitzenstein see C. Koch, 'Richard Reitzensteins Beiträge zur Mandaerforschung', *Zs. f. Religionswissenschaft* 3 (1995) 49-80; add the observations by G. Wissowa, in G. Audring (ed), *Gelehrtenalltag. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Eduard Meyer und Georg Wissowa (1890-1927)* (Hildesheim, 2000) 12f.

¹¹ This idea of the deceiving priests, the *Priestertrug*, originated in Enlightenment circles in the eighteenth century and had a long and influential life, but I do not know of a substantial treatment of the theme.

¹² Norden already betrays here his interest in apocalyptic literature which would later culminate in his authoritative commentary on the Aeneid VI, cf. E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis VI* (Leipzig, 1927³). For a more recent view of Vergil's sources see R. Schilling, *Dans le sillage de Rome* (Paris, 1988) 89-100.

did not present the whole of the treatise to his readers, however. He refused to insult them with the 'wirklich grauenhafter, nach meiner Meinung nur bei einem Orientalen möglicher Phantasie erdachten Hollenstrafen' (p. 229). In a similar manner, Harnack had already left the most cruel passage untranslated in a preliminary translation in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* in order not to offend the sensibility of his readers¹³. Instead, Norden enumerated typically Greek elements in the *ApPt*. Successively, he noted the stream of fire (27), the wallowing in burning mire (23), the watching of the murderers by the souls of the murdered (25) and the suicides who cast themselves from a high slope, but, having landed at the bottom, were driven up again by their torturers (32). In this continuing punishment, Norden recognised an imitation of the mythological punishments of Ixion and Sisyphus. Norden concluded by observing that there was a great difference between the Greek spirit of this Christian Apocalypse and that of Jewish ones, as anybody reading the *Book of Enoch* immediately would notice.

One can only speculate to what extent Norden was moved to stress the perverse imagination of Orientals or the opposition between Christian and Jewish Apocalypses by his own Jewish origin. At the age of seventeen, Norden had converted to Christianity and he never came back on his decision. Can it be that he thought it necessary to demonstrate his definitive farewell to his own origin¹⁴? However this may be, his interest in the Greek elements of the *ApPt* had been independently shared by another German scholar, who even dedicated a complete book to it, published only shortly after Norden's article.

¹³ A. Hamack, 'Die neuentdeckten Bruchstücke des Petrus-evangeliums und der Petrusapokalypse', *Preussische Jahrb.* 71 (1893) 36-58.

¹⁴ For Norden see most recently Kytzler *et al.*, *Eduard Norden*; W.M. Calder III and B. Huss, "*Sed serviendum officio...*" *The Correspondence between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Eduard Norden (1892-1931)* (Berlin, 1997); W.A. Schroder, *Der Altertumswissenschaftler Eduard Norden. Das Schicksal eines deutschen Gelehrten jüdischer Ahnkunft* (Hildesheim, 1999).

Later in 1893, too late to take fully notice of Norden's article, Albrecht Dieterich (1866-1908) published his views on the newly discovered *ApPt*¹⁵. Dieterich, too, was highly sympathetic to the aims of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. He had started his studies with theology, but in 1886 he changed to classical philology at Bonn, where he gained his doctorate in 1888 under the aegis of Hermann Usener. It was the time that Usener prepared his famous analysis of Christmas, *Das Weihnachtsfest* (1888), and increasingly paid attention to what he considered the pagan elements of Christianity in order to 'carry out the purification and elucidation of our religious consciousness'¹⁶. Dieterich was greatly inspired by Usener, his later father-in-law, and until the end of his life he always had a keen eye for pagan roots of early Christianity¹⁷.

It is therefore not surprising that, like Norden, Dieterich also looked for the Greek roots of the *ApPt*. In order to prove his point he painted with a wide brush. He started with a survey of Greek popular belief in the afterlife, then analysed the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries and completed his first part with a sketch of Orphic descents into the underworld. In the second part he discussed the sinners in Hades and their punishments, but in the penultimate part Dieterich finally came to speak of Jewish apocalypticism. Although he had an eye for Greek elements in Jewish life at the beginning of the Christian era, he stressed that the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter* did not use Jewish writings to compose his picture of the hell. In his last chapter, Dieterich concluded that the Egyptian Christian community derived its picture of heaven and hell from Orphic-Pythagorean traditions, since most Christians would have been Orphics. In Dieterich's view, then, Orphism stood in many ways at the cradle of Christianity.

¹⁵ A. Dieterich, *Nekyia. Beiträge zur Erklärung der neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse* (Leipzig, 1893), who mentions Norden's article on p. 152. The second edition of 1913, edited by R. Wunsch, contains corrections, suggestions and additions from Dieterich's own copy and the various reviews. For Dieterich see the biography by Wunsch in A. Dieterich, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1911) ix-xlii; F. Pfister, 'Albrecht Dieterichs Wirken in der Religionswissenschaft', *ARW* 35 (1938) 180-5.

¹⁶ H. Usener, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1907) 65.

¹⁷ For a good summary of his views see Dieterich, *Kleine Schriften*, vi.

Dieterich's book was well received, but the lack of new data meant that interest soon shifted to other areas of early Christianity.

A second phase in the study of the *ApPt* was inaugurated with the publication of the Ethiopic text in 1910, a pseudo-Clementine composition in which the *ApPr* was embedded¹⁸. The nature of the text immediately raised the problem as to how the Ethiopic version was related to the Greek fragment from Akhmim. The modern consensus is that the Ethiopic tradition is 'authentic and offers the original text of the *ApPt*, albeit in parts somewhat distorted'¹⁹. The Greek version is therefore always to be used with caution for the establishment of the original text. For our problem it is important to note that the Ethiopic tradition added a few more references to the Greek tradition. In c. 14, of which the Greek version was found only later (the so-called Rainer fragment), we find 'the field Akrosja (= Acherusia) which is called Aneslesleja (= Elysium)' and in c. 13 we hear of an angel Tatirokos (= Tartarouchos), but in this second phase the old question – Jewish or Greek? – no longer played a role, and we have to wait until the 1980s before the question was raised again.

Naturally, the scholarly and spiritual climate had now radically changed from that at the turn of the century. New questions were being asked and new approaches came to the forefront. In 1983 the American Jewish scholar Martha Himmelfarb published a detailed analysis of what she calls 'tours of hell' in Jewish and Christian literature²⁰. Naturally, the *ApPr* receives plenty of attention as the oldest surviving specimen of the genre. However, instead of considering it to be 'the successor to archaic and classical descents into Hades, far removed from Jewish literature', she puts forward the thesis that these tours of hell 'find their proper context in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature' (3). Naturally, Dieterich is now the 'bad guy', whose work is regularly lambasted for his neglect of Jewish tradi-

¹⁸ S. Grébaud, 'Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-clémentine. La seconde venue du Christ et la résurrection des morts', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 15 (1910) 198-214, 307-23 (text), 425-39 (translation).

¹⁹ C.D.G. Miiller, in NTA II, 625.

²⁰ M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell. An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia, 1983).

tions and who is even suspected (accused?) of 'a certain kind of history-of-religions anti-Christian (and Jewish), pro-Greek feeling' (44)²¹.

Himmelfarb shrewdly observed that in these apocalypses a question of a seer (prophet) is followed by a demonstrative explanation from a supernatural guide. This distinctive formal feature of the tours must have developed from the cosmic tour apocalypses, of which the oldest specimen is Enoch's cosmic tour in the *Book of Watchers*. The latter *Book* also displays the same interest in rewards and punishments after death as many later apocalypses. These features, then, with certainty locate the *ApPt* in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition. Bauckham has added the observation to Himmelfarb's argumentation that in these apocalypses the active punishment of the wicked begins not at the last judgement, but already at death, probably a minority view among the Jews until well into the second century AD²². However, Bauckham also returned to the questions posed by Dieterich. While admitting that Himmelfarb rightly observes that the tours of hell developed within the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, he also stresses that some of the punishments have clear precedents in Greek and Roman descriptions of Hades. Moreover, as in the apocalypses, in the Greek Hades the punishments take place now and not at a later stage in history²³.

The conclusions of Bauckham seem in general unassailable. Yet while happily conceding his main points, we are still faced with the problem raised by Dieterich as to whether the *ApPt* stands in the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition. Admittedly, Bauckham himself has presented us with a large survey of Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Syrian, Israelite, Iranian, Greek and Roman descents into the underworld²⁴. However, this survey is not targeted at the problem of the *ApPt* and neglects recent insights into the origin and development of the Orphic-Pythagorean ideas about the underworld. A balanced view

²¹ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, 3, 5-6, 41-5, 48, 67-8, 71, 116, 119-21.

²² R. Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead. Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden, 1998) 49-80 at 70f.

²³ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 35-6, 71-2, 208-9.

²⁴ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 9-48.

about Dieterich's ideas still remains a desideratum. It is therefore the aim of my contribution in the following pages to reconsider the Greek elements in the *ApPt* with special attention to their possible Orphic origins.

Let us start with the evidently Greek names of the angels Tartarouchos (13 E) and Temelouchos (8 E)²⁵. The first name means 'Keeper of the Tartarus' and is a strange name for an angel. It is fairly unique and, not surprisingly, occurs only in Christian literature clearly depending on the *ApPt*, such as the *Apocalypse of Paul* (16)²⁶, but also in the *Book of Thomas the Contender*. This treatise derives from East Syria, but its basic document probably originated in Egyptian Alexandria²⁷; in fact, the connection between Edessa and the Egyptian Hermetica is well established²⁸. In any case, it is interesting to note that the name has more recently turned up as female in a third-century Cypriote curse tablet and in a second- or third-century erotic charm from Oxyrrhynchus²⁹. The latter text mentions the 'bronze sandal of Tartarouchos', and the same sandal recurs in the famous magical papyrus from Paris (PGM IV.2335) and in a Greek spell in Marcellus Empiricus' *De medicamentis*³⁰. Apparently, the early Church borrowed this angelic name from its pagan environment by letting the 'mistress of the Tartarus' undergo a sex-change. Its early appearance in an Egyptian milieu may point to Egypt as the place of origin of the *ApPt*³¹.

²⁵ For a full discussion see J.-M. Rosenstiehl, 'Tartarouchos-Temelouchos: Contribution à l'étude de l'Apocalypse apocryphe de Paul', in *Deuxième Journée d'Etudes Coptes* (Louvain and Paris, 1986) 29-56.

²⁶ Ms. Paris has *angelo Tartarucho*, St Gall *angelo tartari* and Arnhem *angelo maliciae*. I quote from the new authoritative edition by Th. Silverstein and A. Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul. A new critical edition of three long Latin versions* (Geneva, 1997).

²⁷ B. Layton, *Nag Hammad codex II, 2-7: together with XIII, 2**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P.OXY. I, 654, 655: with contributions by many scholars* (Leiden, 1988).

²⁸ G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton, 1993) 203f.

²⁹ Cyprus: SEG 44.1279. Oxyrrhynchus: R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum I* (Opladen, 1990) no. 49.58 = SEG 38.1837.

³⁰ See Dieterich, *Kleine Schriften*, 101f.

³¹ For the date and place of origin of our *Apocalypse* see most recently Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 185-94.

The case of Temelouchos is more problematic³². Bauckham writes that in 'chapter 34 of the *Apocalypse of Paul* he wields a three-pronged fork, surely modelled on the trident of the Greek god Poseidon', but, in this chapter we only find the angel Tartarouchos, not Temelouchos, who extracts intestines with a three-pronged fork³³. Temelouchos does occur in the Greek version of the *Apocalypse of Paul* as the name of the angel to whom the evil soul is entrusted after leaving the body (16) and who participates in the torture of a gluttonous elder (34). In the later Ethiopic *Apocalypse of Mary* and *Apocalypse of Baruch* the angel occurs at the end of the infanticide as in the *ApPt*. It is unclear how this coincidence has to be explained, and Himmelfarb thinks of an influence by the Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul*, which in turn would have been influenced by our *Apocalypse*. However, the Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul* calls the angel Aftemelouchos and the question still remains to be solved³⁴. In a learned article, Rosenstiehl has argued that Temelouchos derives from an epithet of Poseidon, Themeliouchos, 'in charge of the foundation'. However, the other earliest sources for this angelic name, Clement (*Eclog.* 48) and Methodius (*Symp.* 2.6), give the name as Τημελοῦχος, 'in charge of care'. As Poseidon's epithet is rather rare and occurs only in Attica and on Delos³⁵, it seems unlikely to have given birth to the name of our angel.

Other striking Greek imports are the mention of the Acherusian Lake and the Elysian fields as quoted above. The Ethiopic translation is here less trustworthy than the Rainer fragment which gives 'Lake Acherusia, which they say is situated in the Elysian Field'. The same combination of Acheron and Elysium, although unidentified as such, occurs in 3 *Baruch*. Here the angel takes **Baruch** to the third heaven where he sees 'an unbroken plain and in the middle of it was a lake of water' (10.2). The location is followed by those treatises that used the *ApPt*, such as the *Oracula Sibyllina* II (335-8) and the *Apoca-*

³² In addition to Rosenstiehl (note 25) see also C.D.G. Müller, *Die Engellehre der Koptischen Kirche* (Wiesbaden, 1959) 314; J. Michl, *RAC* 5 (Stuttgart, 1962) no. 239 on col. 237.

³³ *Contra* Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 224.

³⁴ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, 101-3.

³⁵ *SEG* 30.93 (Eleusis): 1. *Delos* 290.

lyse of Paul (22-3). From a traditional Greek point of view, the geographical location is rather curious, since in Homer the Acheron was located in northern Thesprotia, but the Elysian Fields at the ends of the earth. Apparently, the close combination derives from the belief that after baptism in the Acheron a straight transition into Paradise was possible, such as we find in the first-century *Apocalypse of Moses* (37.3), imitated perhaps by the late Coptic *Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by Bartholomew the Apostle* (46.3 Westerhoff). However, the reason why Hellenistic Jews used this Greek terminology still remains obscure³⁶.

So far then we have found some Greek terminology but no Orphics. It is time therefore to pay attention to this elusive movement. Himmelfarb rather disparagingly talks about Dieterich's use of the term 'Orphic-Pythagorean' and stresses that we know so little about Orphism³⁷. Given the relative dearth of data about Orphism at the time of her book's publication, Himmelfarb's scepticism about Orphism is understandable to some extent. However, since her book we have had a steady stream of new discoveries, such as the publication (albeit preliminary) of the *Derveni papyrus*³⁸, new Orphic Gold Leaves³⁹, new bone tablets⁴⁰, and Apulian vases with new representations of Orpheus and the afterlife⁴¹. These new discoveries enable us

³⁶ For a discussion of the passage see E. Peterson, *Friihkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Freiburg, 1959) 310-32; T.J. Kraus, 'Acheron and Elysion: Anmerkungen im Hinblick auf deren Verwendung auch im christlichen Kontext', *Mnemosyne* 46 (2003) 145-64; Copeland, this volume, Ch. III.

³⁷ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, 43f.

³⁸ For a new text and translation see now R. Janko, 'The Derveni Papyrus: an Interim text', *ZPE* 141 (2002) 1-62.

³⁹ For the Gold Leaves see most recently C. Riedweg, 'Initiation – Tod – Unterwelt. Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblattchen', in F. Graf (ed), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart, 1998) 360-98; G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Le lamine d'oro orfiche* (Milano, 2001); A. Bernabé and A. Jiménez Cristóbal, *Instrucciones para el más allá. Las laminillas órficas de oro* (Madrid, 2001).

⁴⁰ L. Dubois, *Inscriptions grecques dialectales d'Olbia du Pont* (Geneva, 1996) 154-5.

⁴¹ See most recently J.-M. Moret, 'Les departs des enfers dans l'imagerie Apulienne', *Rev. Arch.* 1993, 293-351; S.I. Johnston and T. McNiven,

to speak about Orphism with much more certainty than previous generations of scholars⁴². It is now clear that in the early fifth century BC, Orphism originated from Dionysiac mysteries but very soon also became indebted to Pythagoreanism; indeed, in some respects it remains difficult to separate the two⁴³.

One of the major interests of Orphism is salvation. To that end, Orphism adopted the just invented Pythagorean doctrine of reincarnation, but it also designed a new view of the afterlife. According to the Orphics, after death there is a strict separation between the good and the bad. The bad are penalised, but the good enjoy a life of eternal sunlight, play on green meadows and feast on sumptuous banquets. This new picture of the afterlife completely modified the traditional Homeric picture of a sombre afterlife with a stay on the Elysian fields for a few elect. The Orphic world view never became very popular and certainly in its initial stages was limited to the rich who could pay for their religious instruction and the gold for their passports into the underworld. In this respect, one can only conclude

'Dionysos and the Underworld in Toledo', *Mus. Helv.* 53 (1996) 25-36; M. Schmidt, 'Aufbruch oder Verharren in der Unterwelt? Nochmals zu den apulischen Vasenbildern mit Darstellungen des Hades', *Antike Kunst* 43 (2000) 86-101.

⁴² For the most recent views on Orphism see R. Parker, 'Early Orphism', in A. Powell (ed), *The Greek World* (London and New York, 1995) 483-510; W. Burkert, 'Die neuen orphischen Texte: Fragmente, Varianten, "Sitz im Leben"', in W. Burkert *et al.* (eds), *Fragmentsammlungen philosophischer Texte der Antike* (Göttingen, 1998) 387-400 and *Die Griechen und die Orient* (Munich, 2003) 79-106; J.-M. Roessli, 'Orpheus, Orphismus und die Orphiker', in M. Erler and A. Graeser (eds.), *Philosophen des Altertums I. Von der Frühzeit bis zur Klassik* (Darmstadt, 2000) 10-35; C. Calame, 'Orphik, Orphische Dichtung', in *Der neue Pauly* 9 (2000) 58-69; Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London and New York, 2002) 15-24 (text), 141-4 (notes); a new translation of the main fragments, A. Bernabé, *Hieros logos. Poésia órfica sobre los dioses, el alma y el más allá* (Madrid, 2003).

⁴³ For an attempt at separating the two, see Bremmer, 'Rationalization and Disenchantment in Ancient Greece: Max Weber among the Pythagoreans and Orphics', in R. Buxton (ed), *From Myth to Reason?* (Oxford, 1999) 71-83 at 79.

that Dieterich's picture of a popular cult with great followings, especially in Egypt, as a *praeparatio evangelica* is highly imaginative, but also highly fantastic. Everything we know about the early centuries of our era points into the direction of little interest in the afterlife among the Greco-Roman population and even less belief in punishments after death⁴⁴.

Does this mean that Dieterich was completely wrong? That conclusion would perhaps go too far. In fact, there is at least one detail in the imaginative world of the *ApPt*, which can hardly be separated from the Orphic tradition. In *cc.* 23, 24 and 31 of the Akhmim fragment we hear of burning or boiling mire, βόρβορος. It is interesting to note that this term does not occur in the corresponding chapters of the Ethiopic translation. This raises the question as to whether it was dropped by the Ethiopic translation or at a later stage introduced into the Greek version. Now the idea of 'boiling mire' is strange enough to be dropped by a translator. This seems particularly clear in *c.* 31 where the Greek 'another great lake, full of discharge and blood and boiling mire' is replaced by the bland Ethiopic 'another place near by, saturated with filth'. I take it therefore that the mire was part of the original *ApPt*.

Now mire is not a totally unknown part of the underworld in Greek tradition. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Heracles sees a number of sinners lying in the mire, such as those who have wronged a guest, struck their parents or committed perjury (145-51, 273). The mire returns in Plato's *Phaedo* where Socrates says '...and so those who have established initiations really do seem not so far from the mark, but have long been saying in their riddling fashion that he who enters the Hades uninitiated and unenlightened shall lie in the mire. However, he who arrives there purified shall live with the gods, for there really are, as those of the rites say, "many carriers of the fennel-stalk, but few *bacchoi* (true initiates)'" (69C). In his authoritative discussion of early Orphism, Fritz Graf seems to be a bit wavering about the interpretation of this passage. On the one hand, he argues that the lines point to Eleusis, but on the other, he suggests that they also in-

⁴⁴ R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London, 1981) 53-7.

clude Orpheus and friends⁴⁵. The whole context, though, with its reference to 'riddling', the repetition of 'rites' and *bacchoi* can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as Bacchic mysteries. And in the *Republic* Plato ascribes to 'Musaeus and his son' (Orpheus) the view that in Hades the just celebrate a symposium but 'they bury the impious and unjust in mud in Hades and compel them to fetch water in a sieve' (363D)⁴⁶. Unfortunately, the text is not fully clear to whom this latter view can be ascribed, but it seems reasonable to accept that Plato here again means Musaeus and Orpheus. As in Aristophanes, the sinners are characterised by ethical faults, a characterisation that is typical of Orphism but not *Eleusis*⁴⁷, it seems reasonable to conclude that mire played a big role in the Orphic picture of the under-

We can also say that *Orphic(-Pythagorean?)* literature is the first in which we find ethical categories in the underworld, like the sinners in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (above). Moreover, it fits the presence of morally devious categories in the underworld that it is *Orphic-Pythagorean* literature in which we first find the mention of judges in the underworld⁴⁹. Finally, it certainly seems to fit this picture that in Orphic circles several poems about a descent into the underworld, the so-called *katabaseis*, circulated. Apparently, they had to enlighten people about the bad fate of the morally unjust and the happy life of the righteous in the new afterlife. From the various *karabaseis* written in the fifth century we can get some idea of those by Orpheus and

⁴⁵ F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin and New York, 1974) 101f.

⁴⁶ Note that this water carrying also occurs in what may be a remnant of a very early Jewish apocalypse, the so-called Isaiah fragment, cf. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, 94-6, 136-7.

⁴⁷ Graf, *Eleusis*, 120.

⁴⁸ For the theme of the mud and its long lasting influence see M. Aubineau, 'Le thème du "Bourbier" dans la littérature grecque profane et chrétienne', *Rev. Sc. Rel.* 47 (1959) 185-214; P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard*, 3 vols (Paris, 1974-75) II, 502-19.

⁴⁹ Bremmer, *Rise and Fall*, 91-2; A. Lardinois, 'Het oordeel van Minos: boetes en beloningen na de dood', *Hermeneus* 75 (2003) 149-60.

Heracles. In the case of the latter we can also see that at an early stage Eleusis appropriated parts of the Orphic picture⁵⁰.

This is as far as we can go. With Bauckham I would conclude that Himmelfarb has demonstrated the Jewish origin of the genre of the tours of hell. At the same time I also agree with Bauckham that behind these Jewish apocalypses there looms in the shadowy background the genre of Orphic and Eleusinian descents and pictures of the underworld, as the presence of mire strongly suggests. The place where Jews were most likely to read Orphic literature must have been Alexandria. And indeed, we now know with certainty that the so-called *Testament of Orpheus* is an Egyptian-Jewish revision of an Orphic poem⁵¹. It may be one more pointer to an Egyptian origin for the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

⁵⁰ Graf, *Eleusis*, 142-9.

⁵¹ C. Riedweg, *Jüdisch-hellenistische Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos* (Munich, 1993).