

bearing ear of corn, and that the one be, the other not' (234–8 Diggle). It is this attitude which predominantly survived among the Greeks into the Byzantine period – even among the Christians.⁶⁸

3. Soul and underworld in the Old Testament

Let us now turn to the world of ancient Israel. We are much less informed about Israelite ideas concerning the soul and the underworld than about Greek views, since our only source is the Old Testament. Moreover, the texts of those books of the Old Testament which describe the earliest period of the Israelites have been revised at a relatively late stage in Israel's history, probably after the Babylonian exile, in the so-called Deuteronomist revision.⁶⁹ Consequently, studies of Israelite concepts customarily limit themselves to a synchronic description for the time covered by the Old Testament. It is only in the intertestamentary, Hellenistic period that we start to find Greek influence.

There is in ancient Hebrew no term equivalent to our 'soul'. From the various words which together correspond to our notion of the soul,⁷⁰ the most important one is *nəpəʾēš*,⁷¹ which seems to have combined the functions of the *thymos* and *psychê* of the living. It is probably connected with a root meaning 'breath' (*Exodus* 23.12, 31.17; *2 Samuel* 16.14) and can often be translated 'life' or 'life-force'. For example, when Rachel was dying, her *nəpəʾēš* left her (*Genesis* 35.18) and when the prophet Eliah resurrected the son of a widow, he prayed for the return of his *nəpəʾēš* (*1 Kings* 17.21–2). At the same time, the term can also signify the seat of emotions, such as the inclination to evil (*Proverbs* 21.10) or the desire for God (*Psalms* 42.2). Unlike *psychê*, though, it never means the soul of the dead and is not contrasted with the body. Israelite anthropology was strictly unitarian and remained so until the first century AD, when the Greek belief in an immortal soul started to gain ground in Palestine and the Diaspora. It cannot be chance that we find the first examples of this development among those Jews, who had been thoroughly influenced by Hellenistic culture, such as Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* 2.154–65, *Ant.* 18.14–8) and Philo (*De mundi opificio* 135).

In historical times the hereafter is called Sheol, which in the *Septuagint* normally is translated 'Hades',⁷² but in the oldest Israelite ideas the grave must have played an important role, since 'to go down into the grave' (*Psalms* 16.10, 28.1 etc.) is equivalent to 'to go down into Sheol' (*Genesis* 37.35, 42.38, etc.).⁷³ Sheol was located beneath the earth (*Psalms* 63.10), filled with worms and dust (*Isaiah* 14.11, 26.19) and impossible to escape from (*Job* 7.9f). Its shadow-like (*Isaiah* 14.9) inhabitants no longer thought of the living (*Job* 21.21) or even of God himself (*Psalms* 88.13). Good and bad – Sheol received them all (*Psalms* 89.49).⁷⁴

It was only in the post-exilic period that new ideas came to the fore. Good and bad now started to be thought living in different compartments of Sheol (*1 Enoch* 22). As the earliest strata of the *Book of Enoch* must go back to the third

century BC, it is attractive to connect this development with Jewish presence in Alexandria, where early second-century Jewish historians already made Orpheus a witness to the truth of the Mosaic law (Artapanus *FGrH* 726 F 3), and adapted Orphic literature in the so-called *Testament of Orpheus*.⁷⁵ Moreover, in the second century BC Sheol started to be complemented by Gehenna. This valley south of Jerusalem, where tradition located the sacrifice of children to Moloch during the time of the kings,⁷⁶ now first became thought of as the place where punishments would be dealt out after the Last Judgement, but soon became the name for the fiery hell destined for the impious straight after their death and after the Last Judgement.⁷⁷

However, as in Greece, old and new continued to co-exist. Josephus relates that the Pharisees located the souls of the righteous and the unjust in the underworld (*Bell. Jud.* 2.163, *Ant.* 18.14), but mentions that he himself, despite being a Pharisee, believed that only the souls of the bad went to Hades, whereas the souls of the righteous remained in heaven until the final resurrection (*Bell. Jud.* 3.375). In fact, Jewish inscriptions and literature show that old ideas about the lack of a real afterlife would still have a long and persistent life (Ch. 3.2).

4. Plan of the book

Having seen that the soul and the underworld have their history too, I will now deal in detail with several particular problems and developments. First, I will discuss the rise of the immortal soul in Greece, which took place in the milieu of two closely related movements at the margin of the Greek city, Pythagoreanism and Orphism. Considering the importance of these milieus for the development of the Western concept of the soul, some attention will be paid as well to their lifestyle, religious ideas and social composition. In the case of Orphism, especially, the years since 1970 have provided a stream of new discoveries which enable us to sketch a much more detailed picture of this movement than previous generations could (Ch. 2). Accounts of journeys of the soul, however, were already ascribed to 'miracle-workers' from the Archaic Age and we will have to discuss these accounts as well in order to refine our picture of the rise of the immortal soul in ancient Greece (Ch. 3).

After Greece, we turn to the early Christians. The most striking innovation in the eyes of pagans undoubtedly was the belief in the resurrection. The Christians owed this belief to the Jews, but from whom did the Jews in turn derive their ideas? Did they borrow them from the Persians? And did pagans, perhaps, later borrow the idea from the Christians? The possibility of exchanging religious ideas has often been neglected, but will be of particular interest here (Ch. 4). How did the early Christians construct their representations of the afterlife? Did they exploit the current Jewish and Greco-Roman pool of ideas about life after death or did they develop new ones inspired by their own tradition? We will follow these developments in Western