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THE CUMAEAN SIBYL AND THE ENIGMAS OF AENEID 6

Abstract. – Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid* is noted for two enigmatic sequences, involving the Golden Bough and the Gates of Sleep. In particular, the use of the Ivory Gate for the departure of Aeneas and the Sibyl from the underworld has been the subject of extensive study. Close examination of the portrayal of the Sibyl Deiphobe aids in offering a novel solution to the problem of the Gates. The poet's consistent emphasis on Aeneas' haste and preoccupation with visiting his father in Elysium is coupled with what amounts to the usurpation of the Sibyl's role by the shade of Anchises, and the distracted Anchises' inadvertent employment of the gate of false dreams.

One of the more mysterious characters in Virgil's *Aeneid* is the Sibyl Deiphobe, the priestess of Apollo who plays a significant role in the unfolding revelation of the destiny of Aeneas and his Trojan exiles in Italy.¹ While appreciable scholarly attention has been to various aspects of her origins, her portrayal in the Augustan epic, and her reception in later literature and art, relatively little has been done to explicate exactly what she says and does in light of what is foretold of her by other prophetic figures, not to mention Aeneas' execution of the admonitions he receives with respect to her.² By carefully examining the poem's Deiphobe passages, we shall be able both to refine our knowledge of certain aspects of Aeneas' mission, and, more importantly, to propose solutions to certain notorious puzzles from *Aeneid* 6, in particular why the shade of Anchises utilizes the Ivory Gate for the departure of Aeneas and the Sibyl from the underworld.

The Cumaean Sibyl is first mentioned in the epic when Helenus gives instructions to Aeneas at Buthrotum about his future Hesperian itinerary, in a passage of some length that introduces the Sibyl as a key source of details about what awaits the hero, and how he is to surmount

¹ For further reading, note especially Lightfoot 2014 and (more generally) Parke 1988.

² Stark 2014 provides a detailed account of the extensive *Nachleben* of the Sibyl in the visual arts; cf. Wilson 2023, with a perceptive look at other aspects of Sibylline reception.

forthcoming hazards in Italy (3.441–460).³ The Sibyl is identified as both *uirgo* (445) and *uates* (443, 456).⁴ She is also prominently labeled as *in-sana* (443, with the key adjective in first position), with reference to how she is often physically possessed by the god Apollo, with attendant loss of self-control.⁵

Helenus is fairly precise about the topics and substance of the Sibyl's destined message for Aeneas:

illa tibi Italiae populos uenturaque bella
et quo quemque modo fugiasque ferasque laborem
expediat, cursusque dabit uenerata secundos. (3.458–460)⁶

The Sibyl will reveal information about peoples and wars, and about Aeneas' response to each labor that he encounters (fight or flight, we might say).⁷ She will send him on his way with a favorable course to his central Italian destination. We shall see how this key passage is later recalled, in the context of Aeneas' departure from the underworld.

Aeneas receives a second announcement about the Sibyl, in a nocturnal visitation from his dead father Anchises (5.724–739).⁸ *Defer in Italiam* (730): Aeneas' father orders him to proceed to Italy (that is, rather than to remain in Sicily with Acestes). Anchises mentions the war in Latium (730–731). Aeneas will descend to the underworld, where he will find his father's shade not in Tartarus, but in Elysium (731–735). The Sibyl will be his guide, so that he safely reaches his sire:

... huc casta Sibylla
nigrarum multo pecudum te sanguine ducet.
tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces. (5.735–736)

We may detect a subtle shift here. The Sibyl is now portrayed not as a conduit of information *per se*, but as the one who will bring Aeneas to the shade who will tell him about his *genus* and the *moenia* that have been granted to him in Italy.

Helenus did not mention anything about Anchises' imminent death and the underworld visit to Elysium; either he was unaware of these future events, or (likelier) he was forbidden to reveal them. His note at 3.461

³ For commentary on the Helenus sequence note especially Horsfall 2006 and Heyworth and Morwood 2017, *ad loc.*

⁴ On the significance of the Sibyl's gender note Buelens 2013.

⁵ Draper 2022 considers the physical condition of the Sibyl and the presence of medical metaphors as an indicator of the civil disease of internecine strife.

⁶ Passages from the *Aeneid* are cited from Conte 2019.

⁷ For the idea that Helenus leads Aeneas to think the Sibyl will tell him more than she does, see Miller 2009: 144.

⁸ Note here Fratantuono and Smith 2015, *ad loc.*

haec sunt quae nostra liceat te uoce moneri is haunting, even eerie; in light of what soon happens, we are left to wonder if he knew about Anchises' death. Aeneas notes later that neither Helenus nor Celaeno warned him about this loss (3.710–715), and it is reasonable to assume that the caveat of 3.461 points to Anchises' fate.

Needless to say, the Sibyl figures prominently in Book 6. She is never mentioned after the hero's visit to Avernus. The precinct where Apollo presides and his priestess resides is introduced near the opening of the book:

at pius Aeneas arces quibus altus Apollo
praesidet horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae,
antrum immane, petit, magnam cui mentem animumque
Delius inspirat uates aperitque futura.
iam subeunt Triuiæ lucos atque aurea tecta. (6.9–13)⁹

Achates is sent to bring the Sibyl to Aeneas (6.34 *praemissus Achaetes*); she arrives as he is distracted by the artwork of Daedalus that decorates Apollo's precinct.¹⁰ We learn her name and her father's identity: 36 *Deiphobe Glauci*. The exact meaning and etymology of the name is not certain.¹¹ Our investigation is hampered here by the fact that no extant source before Virgil uses this name. One may posit connections with *deus* and *Phoebus*, though vowel quantities, for one thing, may give pause (*Dē-* versus *de-*). We shall return to this question in due course.

Glaucus is referenced in the description of the retinue of marine deities that accompanies Aeneas' voyage from Acesta to Cumae: 5.823 *et senior Glauci chorus*. Apart from a single mention in the *Georgics* (1.437), these two brief citations constitute Virgil's only mention of the figure (as for the Sibyl's name, it is given only at 6.36, and never recurs). There is no mention of any of Glaucus' mythology in Virgil, and no hint of any connection to Circe such as we know of from Ovid.¹² There is a natural enough progression, as the sea gods are mentioned in connection with Aeneas' sailing from Sicily to Italy; the chorus of Glaucus accompanies the journey, and soon after his arrival the hero meets Glaucus' daughter Deiphobe. The Sibyl's Cumaean haunt was in origin a Greek colony; nautical and marine associations are appropriate.

Lactantius has an interesting digression on the history of the Sibyls in the first book of his *Institutiones* (1.6.9), citing the *Res divinae* of Varro's *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et diuinarum*.¹³ The Cimmerian Sibyl

⁹ Extensive commentary on all aspects of Book 6 is provided by Horsfall 2013.

¹⁰ On the fitting mystery that surrounds the logistics of her arrival see Austin 1977: 56.

¹¹ On the name see especially Blandford 2017.

¹² *Met.* 7.232–233, 13.904–14.74.

¹³ For the text, see Heck and Wlosok 2005.

was the fourth of Varro's ten, and we learn that she appeared in Naevius' *Bellum Punicum*, though we cannot be sure how she figured in that epic, and speculation is hazardous.¹⁴ Greek and other sources abound for the various Sibyls for whom we have attestation.¹⁵ But we are largely in the dark as to Virgil's rationale for his depiction of the Cumaean Sibyl.

The first concern of Deiphobe is religious propriety and sacrificial rites (6.37-41); Anchises had alluded to this at 5.735. The propitiatory offerings are rendered, and the Sibyl summons the Teucrians to the threshold of Apollo's temple (41).¹⁶ Soon thereafter she seems to undergo a frightful metamorphosis, as she is possessed by the god and takes on a form both larger and otherworldly (47-55). The Sibyl urges Trojan Aeneas to redouble his prayers (51-52).

Aeneas addresses Apollo, specifically in his capacity as patron of Troy. He notes that the god aided Paris in slaying Achilles (56-58) – a provocative choice of subject matter, to say the least. Aeneas offers an interesting account of the wanderings of the Trojans in the wake of the fall of Priam's city. He speaks of how he has now arrived in Italy, though he characterizes the goal of his quest in language that is both contradictory and reminiscent of an earlier passage in the epic:

iam tandem Italiae fugientis prendimus oras.
hac Troiana tenus fuerit fortuna secut;
uos quoque Pergameae iam fas est parcere genti,
dique deaeque omnes, quibus obstitit Ilium et ingens
gloria Dardaniae. (6.61-65)

The Trojans finally have grasped Italy, and yet Italy is described as fleeing away (6.61). The language recalls Aeneas' farewell message at Buthrotum:

uiuite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta
iam sua: nos alia ex aliis in fata uocamur.
uobis parta quies: nullum maris aequor arandum,
arua neque Ausoniae semper cedentia retro
quaerenda ... (3.493-7)

There is a strong emphasis in Aeneas' address to the Sibyl on the fate of Troy *qua* Troy.¹⁷ Allusion is made both to Paris' involvement in Achil-

¹⁴ Cf. Servius *auct. ad Aen.* 9.712, Biggs 2020: 83-84, and Dufallo 2021: 10-11.

¹⁵ Cameron 2004: 120-121 provides a helpful *précis* here.

¹⁶ On the topic of Virgilian allusion to the future place of Sibylline oracles in Roman (especially Augustan) religion, see Pillinger 2019: 177-179.

¹⁷ Aeneas' remarks are especially interesting in light of 12.834-838, which we shall highlight below.

les' death, and to the negative attitude toward Troy displayed by some of the immortals (Aeneas is circumspect in not naming Juno).

Finally, Aeneas turns to the requests that he wishes to make of the Sibyl:

... tuque, o sanctissima uates,
praescia uenturi, da (non indebita posco
regna meis fati) Latio consistere Teucros
errantisque deos agitataque numina Troiae. (6.65-68)

The hero prays that the Teucrians may settle in Latium, and he references the Trojan Penates. The Sibyl is a most venerable *uates*, and she knows the future.¹⁸ From the start, we may observe that Aeneas makes absolutely no mention of what Helenus had said about the Sibyl. There are no questions (let alone expressions of concern) about the looming war. Arguably, Aeneas' prayer here comes closer to the sentiments expressed by Anchises in the nocturnal visitation in Sicily: *tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces* (5.736), though once again there is no exact correlation between what Aeneas had been told, and what he now says.

Aeneas promises a temple for Phoebus and Trivia, and a revered place for the Sibyl and her oracles (6.69-74). The Sibyl is addressed affectionately as *alma* (74), with the implication that she is viewed as a nurturer of the destined Trojan settlement (the appellation will recur at 117, when the hero makes his appeal about the descent to Avernus). Aeneas' prayer draws to a close, again with no mention of Helenus' warning about future conflict in Latium.

The possessed Sibyl rages like a Bacchant (6.77 *bacchatur uates*). There is an interesting juxtaposition here of the Apollonian and the Bacchic; Deiphobe is described as *Phoebi nondum patiens* (76), and she struggles against a forceful god (79-80). She is a complex figure, with connections to more than one deity (Apollo, Hecate). Her violent condition matches the subject of her song: Aeneas may have forgotten about wars, but the Sibyl certainly has not. She addresses Aeneas periphrastically, noting that he has surmounted great hazards on the sea (83). But greater challenges await him on land (84 *sed terrae grauiora manent*). We may quote her chilling prophecy in full:

... in regna Lauini
Dardaniae uenient (mitte hanc de pectore curam),
sed non et uenisse uolent. bella, horrida bella,
et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.
non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra

¹⁸ On the difficult concept of the *vates*, for an introductory study note Newman 1967.

defuerint; alius Latio iam partus Achilles,
 natus et ipse dea; nec Teucris addita Iuno
 usquam aberit, cum tu supplex in rebus egenis
 quas gentis Italum aut quas non oraueris urbes!
 causa mali tanti coniunx iterum hospita Teucris
 externique iterum thalami.
 tu ne cede malis, sed contra audientior ito,
 qua tua te Fortuna sinet. uia prima salutis
 (quod minime reris) Graia pandetur ab urbe. (6.84-96)

The sons of Dardanus will arrive at the kingdom of Lavinium; this declaration foreshadows the settlement of Aeneas' city of that name; this is the city that Jupiter had mentioned to Venus in his promise to her about the destiny of her son and his people (1.258-259), the city of the epic's proem (1.5-6). Lavinium is a stage on the way to Rome. There is a degree of prolepsis here, since troubles aplenty await the Trojans before any actual settling of Lavinium.

Aeneas had spoken of Paris' victory over Achilles with Apollo's aid; Apollo's prophetess responds with the laconic announcement of the birth of another Achilles, in Latium (an allusion to Turnus, the hero's main antagonist in the Latin war). Aeneas spoke of Paris in an Achillean context; the Sibyl alludes to the abduction of Helen by noting that the cause of the war in Latium will be another *coniunx*. Aeneas is implicitly cast in the role of Paris.

Aeneas discreetly refrained from mentioning Juno; the Sibyl makes clear that she will continue to harry the Trojans.¹⁹ Arguably the most chilling of Deiphobe's prophecies concerns Trojan reaction to their arrival in Latium: they will wish that they had never landed there (6.86 *sed non et uenisse uolent*).

Helenus said that the Sibyl would instruct Aeneas in the matter of facing and fleeing from his various labors (3.459). Aeneas did not ask about this, but Deiphobe does offer a prediction that amounts to at least a partial fulfillment of Helenus' announcement: Aeneas will find the first path to salvation from a Greek city (6.95-96), with reference to the Arcadian allies that the Trojans will find in Evander's Pallanteum. We might think that the reference at 6.91-92 to Aeneas' future pleas with *gentes Italum*, etc. is arguably exaggerated (though it is not necessarily false). The fundamental point is that Aeneas will need to look to a Greek city for help in his Italian war; the *gentes Italum* will be allied with the *alius Achilles*, the Rutulian Turnus.

There is a word of encouragement amid all this, to be sure; Aeneas is enjoined to be resolute in the face of the grim circumstances that await

¹⁹ See Johnston 1998 on connections between the Sibyl, Juno, and Apollo.

him (6.95). But on the whole, the message is markedly bleak, at least in the immediate. Perhaps more interesting than what the Sibyl says is how the poet-narrator characterizes her revelations:

Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaea Sibylla
horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit
obscuris uera inuoluens: ea frena furenti
concutit et stimulos sub pectore uertit Apollo. (6.98-101)

The key detail here is *obscuris uera involvens*. The phrase offers a classic example of Virgilian enigma, not to say ambiguity. It is not precisely clear what it means. Virgil does not say that the Sibyl (under the influence of Apollo) tells falsehoods. There are true elements to her report (*uera*), and there are “obscure” ones (*obscuris*). The adjective soon recurs at 6.138-9 ... *hunc tegit omnis / lucus et obscuris claudunt conuallibus umbrae*, where it clearly means “dark”; we may compare its use in the passage where Aeneas first caught sight of Italy: 3.522-4 *cum procul obscuros collis humilemque uidemus / Italiam. Italiam primus conclamat Achates, / Italiam laeto socii clamore salutant*. It recurs in the eerie scene where Aeneas glimpses Dido’s shade (... *quam Troius heros / ut primum iuxta stetit agnoui que per umbras / obscuram, qualem primo qui surgere mense / aut uidet aut uidisse putat per nubila lunam* (6.451-4)). Here the metaphorical use recalls the allusion to *fama obscura* at 5.302. Evidently, some of what the Sibyl announces is veiled in less than pellucid language. The business about the Greek city qualifies as mystery, as does the enigmatic reference to another Achilles. Deiphobe speaks in suitably enigmatic terms, and Aeneas asks for no clarification. We shall revisit Virgil’s juxtaposition of *obscuris uera*.

Aeneas does not profess to be worried about any of this grim foreshadowing (6.103-105). His almost casual dismissal of Deiphobe’s prophecies has not inspired much attention from commentators. He professes already to have rehearsed in his mind what dangers and trials await him. What he is fixated on as the crown of his wishes is visiting his father (106-123).²⁰

The Sibyl replies to the hero she addresses as *Tros Anchisiade* (6.126). In her lengthy answer to Aeneas’ plea (125-155), there are two major prerequisites: 1) the business of the Golden Bough (136-148), and 2) the problem of an unburied companion (149-153). Aeneas and Anchises reflect on the second concern; in the immediate aftermath of the Palinurus episode, the lost helmsman would seem to be the obvious candidate

²⁰ On the darker implications of Aeneas’ wish to be reunited with his father see Monti 1981: 80.

in need of a requiem, though the Sibyl's rueful *heu nescis* (150) points to a hitherto unknown death.

The discovery of the body of Hector's companion Misenus (162-170) happens almost immediately; no great effort needs to be expended to resolve the matter. The preparation for Misenus' funeral offers a suitably somber scene for the poet's book of the dead, as Aeneas carries out the *iussa Sibyllae* (176-184).

One interesting, somewhat unappreciated detail of the Misenus passage is the possible connection between the Sibyl and the Trojan's death. Deiphobe is the daughter of the marine god Glaucus, and Misenus was drowned by Triton (171-174). Tritons were part of the procession of sea gods that accompanied Aeneas' fleet alongside Glaucus' chorus (5.823-824). The connection serves to aid in the fashioning of a tightly constructed narrative.

It was no effort to find Misenus' body, and a brief prayer is enough to set in motion a solution to the problem of finding the Bough (6.187-189). Twin doves appear; the sacred bird of Venus will guide the way (190-200). Why are there two doves and not one? Perhaps because Aeneas is closely joined with Achates in this scene (158-159).

The Bough is located, and it is brought to the Sibyl:

corripit Aeneas extemplo auidusque refringit
cunctantem et uatis portat sub tecta Sibyllae. (6.210-211)

Otto Güthling emended the notoriously problematic participle *cunctantem* to *nutantem*, an all too easy way to find a solution to the problem of the apparent contradiction between the behavior of the Bough and the Sibyl's earlier remarks about what to do when the magical object was located:

carpe manu; namque ipse uolens facilisque sequetur,
sit te fata uocant; aliter non uiribus ullis
uincere nec duro poteris conuellere ferro. (6.146-148)

Certainly the problem of *carpe versus corripit* deserves attention; the two verbs are not the same, and arguably Aeneas does not exactly execute the Sibyl's instructions (and in such contexts, strict fidelity to the rubrics is expected).²¹ The Sibyl's verb connotes a gentle action; Aeneas (in an understandably excited state) is hasty and harsh (the artfully balanced ABAB pattern *corripit Aeneas ... auidusque refringit* frames the adverb *extemplo*; all the emphasis is on impatience).

²¹ For the conjecture *nutantem* see Güthling 1894: xv-xvi.

But another matter may also warrant attention. The Sibyl mentioned finding the Bough, and then burying Misenus and making sacrifice. Misenus' lack of burial is a source of pollution to the Trojan fleet:

praeterea iacet exanimus tibi corpus amici
(heu nescis) totamque incestat funere classem (6.149-150)

The finding of the Bough occurs while the rites for Misenus are being prepared; the actual funeral is then described at leisure (6.212-235).²² Apart from the issue of whether Aeneas' action of *corripere* is the same as the Sibyl's injunction of *carpere*, there is a more subtle, potentially serious problem. The Sibyl tells Aeneas to secure the Bough, and then she mentions his unburied companion and the pollution that has been incurred for the entire fleet. Soon after the Sibyl gives her address, Aeneas and Achates find the dead body.

Once Misenus is located, certainly the Sibyl's orders are carried out, and swiftly: ... *tum iussa Sibyllae, / haud mora, festinant flentes aramque sepulcri / congerere arboribus caeloque educere certant* (6.176-178). But just as Aeneas' action of *corripere* with regard to the Bough displays a certain impatience (he is overwhelmed with the understandable desire to see his father as soon as possible), so there is a certain degree of haste with regard to priorities. Let us review carefully the sequence of events and information. First, the Sibyl speaks of the Bough, which is a talisman-like object that is needed to secure a successful round-trip underworld journey. Aeneas cannot descend to Avernus and return without the Bough; the Bough is a universal token, needed by anyone who contemplates this sort of quest. Next, she reveals a problem peculiar to the Trojans: the pollution incurred by the unburied Trojan. Aeneas needs to purify the fleet, as it were, before his descent.

In the immediate wake of the Sibyl's report, the dead body is found. To bury Misenus and thereby avert the fleet's pollution takes time; trees must be felled and a pyre constructed. Finding Misenus was almost too easy (especially for men haunted by the awareness that Palinurus is also presumably unburied). While preparations are made to bury Misenus, Aeneas expresses the wish that the Bough might be located, and his wish is immediately granted by the timely appearance of Venus' doves. Aeneas is understandably excited, and he hastily snatches the Bough. After this, Misenus' funeral is conducted, followed by the sacrifices enjoined by the Sibyl.

Leaving aside Palinurus for the moment, arguably Aeneas should have finished all of the necessary rites connected to Misenus, and then proceeded to the problem of the Bough. Certainly he might also have asked the Sibyl about his lost helmsman.

²² For a close study of this passage note Yona 2012.

But there is no question that Aeneas is fated to enter the underworld, to see his father in Elysium, and to return thence. Deiphobe escorts him on the way, and in interesting fashion. She urges Aeneas to be resolute, indeed, to draw his sword:

... ‘procul o, procul este, profani,’
conclamat uates, ‘totoque absistite luco;
tuque inuade uiam uaginaque eripe ferrum;
nunc animis opus, Aenea, nunc pectore firmo.’ (6.258-261)

The Sibyl is *furens* (262), and Aeneas carries out her commands. Soon the hero is confronted with the frightful specters at the threshold of the underworld.²³ The whole sequence is terrifying, with personified Dread and Famine and Labor, among other grim images; the monsters include phantom Centaurs, the Chimaera, and the Harpies. Aeneas is ready to defend himself with his sword; his fear is palpable:

corripit hic subita trepidus formidine ferrum
Aeneas strictamque aciem uenientibus offert
et, ni docta comes tenues sine corpore uitas
admoneat uolitare caua sub imagine formae,
inruat et frustra ferro diuerberet umbras. (6.290-294)

The verb *corripit* is the same as that used of Aeneas’ seizure of the Bough (210). The learned Sibyl must inform the frightened hero that these are images without substance; his sword cannot harm them, any more than they can harm him.

Why, then, did Deiphobe tell Aeneas to draw his sword in the first place? Apparently it was merely to arouse his ardor and to inspire him with boldness and bravery. His heroic instinct (not to say reckless daring) is all for naught, however. He would be fighting in vain with ghostly shadows. Again, the passage serves to highlight for the reader the poet’s concern throughout this book on reality *versus* illusion, on substance as opposed to shadow.

Soon thereafter the Sibyl answers Aeneas’ question about the identity of the throng of souls that he sees in eager anticipation of being able to board Charon’s skiff. She explains how he is gazing on the unburied dead, several of whom he recognizes as casualties of the Junonian storm that drove him to Carthage (6.305-336). Among the pitiable lot of souls, he glimpses of the shade of Palinurus, with whom he has a lengthy encounter (337-383).

Palinurus reveals what happened to him, the main import of which is that he did not drown at sea, but was in fact slain after he had swum to

²³ On the Herculean associations, see Galinsky 1969: 22.

shore. He begs for burial (365-366), or for Aeneas to conduct him across the infernal waters so that he may find rest. Interestingly, he references Venus as a possible source of aid:

aut tu, si qua uia est, si quam tibi diua creatrix
ostendit (neque enim, credo, sine numine diuum
flumina tanta paras Stygiumque innare paludem),
da dexteram misero et tecum me tolle per undas,
sedibus ut saltem placidis in more quiescam. (6.367-371)

We are reminded of how Aeneas' *diua parens* (197) assisted in locating the Golden Bough. Palinurus the helmsman is a master of finding his way, and he assumes that Aeneas must have had divine aid in managing to visit the lower world. He hopes that Venus can provide some means by which the hero will be able to show his helmsman the way across the infernal river.

Aeneas is given no chance to reply; the Sibyl answers for him (6.372-383). Deiphobe excludes any possibility of helping Palinurus, but she consoles him (at least for the moment) with the assurance that at some future point, nearby peoples (383 *finitimi*) from far and wide will be moved by prodigies to reverence his bones and to erect a tomb. At the very least, the Palinurus problem is resolved. The Sibyl is the one who provides closure to the strange story of the helmsman; especially after the Misenus interlude, the reader is left to contemplate the fact that Aeneas made no mention of his lost helmsman in that earlier episode.

The Sibyl handles Charon's objections to conveying a living soul across the river; she succinctly notes that Trojan Aeneas is on his way to visit his father, and she brandishes the Golden Bough as a token of the fated nature of the visit (6.384-416). Deiphobe also pacifies Cerberus with honeyed, soporific treats that the hellhound eagerly fetches (417-425). We may note that the verb *corripit* recurs here (422), of the action of the famished, rabid dog in scoffing up the bait. The verbal echo serves to remind us of the rapacity of Aeneas' seizure of the Bough.

The Sibyl does not figure in Aeneas' encounter with the shade of Dido in the Fields of Mourning (6.426-476); the queen appears at the exact midpoint of the book (450-451 *inter quas Phoenissa recens a uulnere Dido / errabat silva in magna ...*). Significantly, Deiphobe has nothing to say in this sequence, which ends because Dido's ghost leaves Aeneas in stony silence. The sorrowful reunion of the *quondam* lovers is followed by Aeneas' visit with heroes of the Trojan War, among whom the only personality with whom Aeneas engages is Helen's ill-fated husband Deiphobus, the dubious successor of Paris (477-534).²⁴

²⁴ For a sensitive reading of this scene see especially Clausen 2002: 114 ff.

We now come to the interesting juxtaposition of Deiphobus and Deiphobe.²⁵ Apart from their homonymous connection, we may recall the Sibyl's Apollonian status. In his address to the god in Deiphobe's presence at 6.56–58, Aeneas highlighted Apollo's role in helping Paris to slay Achilles. Now he has a lengthy exchange with the Trojan who replaced Paris as Helen's would-be spouse. The Sibyl had warned that history would repeat itself, at least after a fashion; Aeneas would be something of a second Paris. Here we move from Aeneas with his onetime lover Dido, to Aeneas with Helen's last lover Deiphobus. There is something less than heroic in all this.

Citing the lateness of the hour, the Sibyl urges Aeneas to move on from his encounter with the ghostly Trojan. Deiphobus had asked Aeneas about his journey, in particular about his visit to the underworld. The Sibyl cuts the meeting short, noting that they have arrived at the fork in the road that leads either to Elysium or to Tartarus. Deiphobus is apologetic, and he encourages Aeneas:

Deiphobus contra: 'ne saeui, magna sacerdos;
discedam, explebo numerum reddarque tenebris.
i decus, i, nostrum; melioribus utere fatis.' (6.544–546)

The Sibyl dismisses the inheritor of Paris' ill-fated union; apart from any concern about the time, there is a degree of rebuke of Deiphobus, and a subtle message to Aeneas about how much honor his friend actually deserves. Deiphobus' parting prayer is that the man who embodies Trojan glory (*decus nostrum*) may enjoy a happier fate.²⁶

The fact that Sibyl and slaughtered shade share the same name surely is no accident, though we cannot be certain of Virgil's purpose here. It would seem that the two characters have nothing in common beyond a name. Indeed, they are opposites in several regards. Ultimately, Deiphobus looks to the past, and Deiphobe to the future. Aeneas is more fixated on the past; by the end of the book, we shall see how news of the future is largely conveyed to him via a figure from the past, namely the dead Anchises. Deiphobus does not represent the best of old Troy; for that we must wait to hear of Ilus, Assaracus, and Dardanus in Elysium. The mutilated Deiphobus does not have the same heroic pedigree as the mutilated Hector of 2.270–279. Not only does Aeneas look to the past here, he looks to a less than laudable representative thereof. Deiphobus addresses Aeneas as *amice* (6.507), a curiously casual vocative with no parallel in the epic with respect to Aeneas; apparently Deiphobus and Aeneas were on parti-

²⁵ Note here Hubaux 1939.

²⁶ See Bleisch 1999 on the connection between the remembrance in this passage of Troy's fall and Aeneas' attempted reconciliation with the past.

cularly friendly terms (at least in Deiphobus' estimation). Aeneas addresses him fulsomely with *Deiphobe armipotens, genus alto a sanguine Teucri* (500), a salutation that only draws more attention to Deiphobus' initial use of *amice* (not to mention his less than glorious fate).

Aeneas chooses those shades he wishes to address (341, 455, 499). Of his choices (Palinurus, Dido, Deiphobus), arguably Deiphobus makes the least sense. The fact that his name is the same as the Sibyl's may serve to underscore the striking contrast between what Apollo's priestess can tell Aeneas about the future, and what he can learn from Helen's second and last Trojan paramour about the past.

Ultimately, it is no wonder that the Sibyl has no patience here. When she cut short the conversation with Palinurus, she made time to give an account of his future honors. Here there is nothing of the kind. Indeed, arguably there is a hint of marked contempt.

Aeneas soon after asks the Sibyl about the torments in Tartarus, and the horrific sounds that emerge from the iron tower that the Fury Tisiphone guards (6.560-561).²⁷ Deiphobe addresses him in response as *dux inclute Teucrium* (562), with continuing emphasis on Aeneas' status as a renowned Trojan leader. She gives a lengthy account of the fate of the wicked souls that are imprisoned for all time, information that she credits to Hecate (563-627). The scene is interesting in part because it reveals what Aeneas is interested in, namely Tartarean mythology; he was less concerned with hearing about forthcoming events in Latium.

The Sibyl hurries Aeneas along to the threshold of Elysium, and to the setting up of the Golden Bough as an offering to Proserpina:

sed iam age, carpe uiam et susceptum perforce munus (6.629)

Deliberately, the language recalls 146 *carpe manu*, of what Aeneas was supposed to do when he located the Bough.²⁸ The haste here may be occasioned by the fact that an underworld mythology lesson is not what Aeneas needs at present. There is another interesting verbal echo, as Aeneas and the Sibyl proceed on their way:

corripunt spatium medium foribusque propinquant (6.634)

The verb *corripere* recurs, this time of the pair as they advance eagerly to where the Bough will be dedicated. Once again the sequence of *carpe – corripit* is followed, as at 6.146 and 210, this time in markedly briefer compass, and with the significant change that both hero and prophetess avidly perform the action.

²⁷ Heil 2022: 68-96.

²⁸ For speculation on the cause of the Sibyl's seeming impatience, see Boyle 1986: 149.

The pair enters Elysium (6.637-639). Orpheus is here (645-647), as well as a number of venerable Trojan fathers, namely Ilus, Assaracus, and Dardanus (648-650). The white-filleted company of heroes is here as well, alongside those who died on behalf of their country, priests and bards, and those who made great discoveries in the arts and sciences (660-665). The Sibyl addresses these blessed souls, and Musaeus in particular, asking them about the location of Anchises (666-671). Musaeus reveals that no one here has a fixed abode, but he is able to set them on an easy path to a valley (672-678), where indeed they will find Anchises.

It is evident from this passage that the Sibyl's knowledge of Elysium is incomplete; Hecate had told her much about Tartarus, but here the guide must herself seek someone's aid to show her around the perpetually bright and tranquil environs.

Anchises dominates the rest of his son's underworld adventure, not least with respect to the unfolding of the *Heldenschau*. The Sibyl is as much an audience member in this long sequence as Aeneas (6.752-755 *Dixerat Anchises natumque unaque Sibyllam / conuentus trahit in medios turbamque sonantem / et tumulum capit, unde omnis longo ordine posset / aduersos legere et uenientum discere uultus*). She does not much figure in the scene; before Anchises embarks on his survey of the souls waiting to be reborn, she is mentioned as being there with Aeneas, and she is referenced but once more, at the end. It is here that she appears in conjunction with one of the more celebrated of Virgilian mysteries:

Sunt geminae Somni portae, quarum altera fertur
cornea, qua ueris facilis datur exitus umbris,
altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto,
sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia manes.
his ubi tum natum Anchises unique Sibyllam
prosequitur dictis portaque emittit eburna,
ille uiam secut ad naues sociosque reuisit. (6.893-899)

Anchises facilitates the egress of Aeneas and the Sibyl via the gleaming Ivory Gate.²⁹ When first we read about the Gates of Sleep we may recall two earlier passages of the epic, first Somnus' encounter with Palinurus at the end of Book 5 (838-861), and second the personified Dreams at the threshold of the underworld:

In medio ramos annosaeque bracchia pandit
ulmus opaca, ingens, quam sedem Somnia uulgo
uana tenere ferunt foliisque sub omnibus haerent. (6.282-284)

²⁹ For the significance of the brightness of the ivory, see the close reading of Paschalis 1997: 225-226.

And, too, we may remember the poet's characterization of the Sibyl's initial address to Aeneas:

Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaea Sibylla
horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit
obscuris uera inuoluens ... (6.98-100)

Lastly, we may note how Helenus warned Aeneas about the Sibyl's habit of writing her responses on leaves, which left her clients susceptible to great frustration when even a slight breeze disturbed the fragile array (3.443-452). Mindful of this practice, Aeneas is careful to insist that the Sibyl speak her own messages, without recourse to leaves (6.74-76).

The Gates of Sleep passage posits a dichotomy; there are *uera* and there are *falsa insomnia*. At the threshold of the underworld there are *uana Somnia*. The Sibyl's message to Aeneas mixes *uera* and *obscura*. Somnus appears at the end of Book 5, and his Gates are referenced at the end of 6; at 6.278, *Sopor* is mentioned as the brother of *Letus*, among the grim, spectral personifications. Let us make an attempt to explicate the connections between these passages, with the Sibyl as cipher.

Aeneas' first knowledge of his destined encounter with the Sibyl comes from Helenus. The information that she is predicted to provide about Italy and the forthcoming war (3.458-460) is interesting to consider in view of all that Aeneas learns from his father's shade about the future history of Italy and Rome; the missing key is that Helenus does not reveal anything about the death of Anchises, or the future meeting of Aeneas with his father in Elysium. It is understandable that Aeneas would expect the Sibyl to provide information that actually comes from Anchises.

Anchises' visit to his son in Book 5 in nocturnal apparition confirms Helenus' prediction about the Sibyl, but with the Cumaean visit now recast in light of the meeting of father and son in the underworld. Armed with this refined, expanded information, Aeneas makes his way to Cumae, under the protection of Neptune. The god's aid was sought by Venus, at the price of a single life (5.778-826). Palinurus is the sacrifice, and Somnus is involved in such a direct way precisely because the helmsman is resolute in his struggle not to fall asleep at his post. Absent such heroic efforts to guard Aeneas' fleet in watchful, insomniac vigil, he would naturally have been tempted to fall asleep, especially on such a preternaturally calm night. Further (thanks to Neptune's aid) Palinurus' services are otiose.

As we have observed, when Aeneas meets the Sibyl not long after the loss of Palinurus, he is surprisingly unconcerned with the prediction of war in Latium. He also does not ask the Sibyl about Palinurus, even after he learns about the "doublet death" of Misenus. His focus is singular sharply focused: he wants to see Anchises. This accords with his filial

pietas, but it is disquieting that Aeneas seeks nothing in the way of clarification and further advice about the future. In some regards the Sibyl casts him as a new Paris, one who will face a new Achilles. This follows directly on Aeneas' own recollection of Troy and those two figures.

Aeneas is concerned with seeing Anchises, and the Sibyl guides him through the necessary preliminaries. We have seen how in his haste and zeal Aeneas rushes through some aspects of the process, both with respect to the snatching of the Golden Bough (6.210 *corripit Aeneas exemplo avidusque refringit*) and the priority of removing the pollution occasioned by the death of Misenus by finishing the funeral rites and propitiatory offerings. Capricious Venus aids the hero in his haste, by utilizing her doves to locate the Bough with miraculous speed. The Bough hesitates (211 *cunctantem*) not because Aeneas is not fated to see Anchises and to return safely, but as a subtle reminder of the less than exact execution of the Sibyl's instructions.

At this juncture we may explore something of the precise import of Virgil's characterization of some of the Sibyl's words as *obscura*. The adjective applies to details that are revealed and not fully explained, such as the business of the *alius Achilles* and the help that will come from a Greek city. But it is reflected also in such haunting sentiments as how the Trojans will wish that they had not come to the kingdom of Lavinium (6.86 *sed non et uenisse uolent*), a phrase that may point not only to the wars that loom, but also to the place of Troy in the future settlement of affairs in Latium. Indeed, by mentioning the *regna Lavini* – a kingdom that does exist in the timeline of the *Aeneid* – the Sibyl hints at problematic matters that lie beyond the scope of the narrative of the epic.

The Sibyl said to “pluck” the Bough (6.146 *carpe*); Aeneas snatched it and broke it off in his greed (209 *corripit, avidusque refringit*). If the fates called Aeneas (147 *si te fata uocant*), the Sibyl said that the Bough would follow willingly and with ease (146 *uolens facilisque sequetur*), while otherwise it would be impervious to any effort to pull it up or to cut it with a blade (147–148). Strictly speaking, there is nothing in the detail about the Bough's hesitation that disproves Deiphobe's comments. The Bough may hesitate before yielding willingly and easily to Aeneas, and certainly it does not resist his violent action.

When Aeneas enters the underworld, the Sibyl tells him to draw his sword (6.260), only then to restrain him when he tries to use it against mere phantoms (290–293). The spectral monsters (whose insubstantial nature the Sibyl must explain to Aeneas) are juxtaposed with *vana Somnia* (283–284). They are nightmare bogeys, akin to pictures in a book. They are not real in the sense of having body; Aeneas' sword is pointless in context. Why, then, did the Sibyl instruct him to brandish his weapon? What use could it possibly serve? The answer is absolutely none, except

to highlight of the difference between *uera* and *uana* (this point is echoed in the encounter with Charon and his hesitation to take Aeneas on board his *cumba*). On this point we may note the reaction of the shades of the Greek warriors when they see Aeneas (489-493). Some of them are struck with fear as they see Aeneas and his gleaming arms (490-491). Aeneas is real, but the shades do not realize that Aeneas cannot harm them. Urging him to draw his sword may help to instill bravery, but soon enough the hero is reminded that ghostly figures cannot harm him.

Deiphobe interrupts Deiphobus' exchange with Aeneas. The long interlude with this Deiphobus serves principally to remind the reader of the drama of Helen, with implications for the question of Aeneas as an *alter Paris*. Aeneas wants to know about Deiphobus' fate, and the ill-fated husband of Helen informs him. For his part, Deiphobus wants to know why Aeneas is visiting the underworld. Deiphobe does not allow Aeneas to answer, and she ends the Trojan conversation abruptly, eliciting a virtual apology from the shade. Deiphobus represents the worst of the past. Aeneas proudly mentioned how Apollo aided Paris against Achilles; the encounter with Deiphobus is a reminder of the sordid affairs of Helen, and, on some level, how Aeneas should be more focused on the future (Achilles in Latium) than on the problematic Trojan past.

Throughout all of these sequences, we have observed a recurring emphasis on the status of Aeneas as a hero of Troy.³⁰ The shade of Anchises speaks of the glory that will pursue the children of Dardanus, and the descendants from the Italian race that await Aeneas (6.756-757 *Nunc age, Dardaniam prolem quae deinde sequatur / gloria, qui maneant Itala de gente nepotes*). The first figure Anchises identifies is Silvius, the posthumous son of Aeneas and Lavinia; he is described as *Italo commixtus sanguine surget* (762), since he will be the offspring of a Trojan and an Italian. This language will be echoed in the declaration of Jupiter to Juno in their final colloquy, where the fate of Trojans, Italians, and the Romans of the future is settled:

sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt,
utque est nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum
subsident Teucri. morem ritusque sacrorum
adiciam faciamque omnis uno ore Latinos;
hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget (12.834-8)

Apart from the less than glorious destiny that is envisaged here for the Teucrians, something else may be noted, of key significance to appreciating Virgil's employment of the Sibyl.

³⁰ Note here Fletcher 2014: 197.

Helenus was specific about what the Sibyl would reveal about the war in Latium:

illa tibi Italiae populos uenturaque bella
et quo quemque modo fugiasque ferasque laborem
expediat, cursusque dabit uenerata secundos. (3.458-460)

After Anchises gives his long recitation of the various souls to be reborn into new bodies, we hear briefly about how father and son discussed the forthcoming war:

quae postquam Anchises natum per singular duxit
incenditque animum famae uenientis amore,
exim bella uiro memorat quae deinde gerenda
Laurentesque docet populos urbemque Latini
et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem. (6.887-892)

The language here offers a partially verbatim recollection of what Helenus said would be revealed by the Sibyl to Aeneas. And yet when the Sibyl spoke of the war, Aeneas had no time for discussion:

incipit Aeneas heros: non ulla laborum,
o uirgo, noua mi facies inopinaue surgit;
omnia praecepi atque animum mecum ante peregi. (6.103-105)

Aeneas' sole request was to see Anchises (106 *unum oro...*). The element of impatience there is palpable, as is the inherent contradiction here. With the Sibyl, Aeneas had no interest in hearing about what Helenus said that she would tell him; with Anchises' shade, the devoted, *pious* Aeneas has ready ears to hear what Helenus said would be the subject of the Sibyl's discourse. Put another way, Aeneas had prudently asked the Sibyl not to use leaves to deliver her messages, but when she directly spoke about the future in Latium, he was not interested in hearing her. Virgil underscores this point by having 6.892 *et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem* virtually = 3.459 *et quo quemque modo fugiasque ferasque laborem*, except that he listens to Anchises say what the Sibyl was supposed to discuss. Immediately after this, we hear about the Gates of Sleep, to which we may now turn.

The Sibyl mingled *uera* and *obscura*. This is not to say that she is mendacious. The point of *obscura* is mystery, riddle, and enigma. At the entrance to the underworld, *uana Somnia* found a home in an elm tree (it is not in Virgil's interest to provide a detailed map that links the arboreal home of the *Somnia* and the Gates of Sleep). The point of *uana* is that the

Dreams are insubstantial. Nothing is said about their veracity. They lack substance, like the phantoms Aeneas vainly prepares to fight.

The Gates of Sleep provide egress for *uerae umbrae* and *falsa insomnia*. The noun *insomnia* occurs only twice in the epic, here and at 4.9, where Dido complains to Anna about *insomnia* that frighten her (*Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!*). Are *insomnia* = *somnia*?³¹ Probably not.³² But neither *somnia* nor *insomnia* have substance.

“True shades” (*uerae umbrae*) are *uanae*; they are insubstantial. Anchises is a true shade, as are Palinurus, Dido, and Deiphobus, for example. The exit that true shades are said to find through the Gate of Horn is *facilis* (6.894); we may compare the use of *facilis* with reference to the descent to Avernus (126), and of the surrender of the Golden Bough to those fated to retrieve it (146).

If *somnia* occur when one is asleep, we may argue that *insomnia* occur when one is awake. The waking may be just on the cusp of slumber, when one is either almost asleep, or when one is in the first stirrings of wakefulness. When Aeneas “sees” his father at 5.721 ff., the poet’s description is deliberately vague. It is night (721). Aeneas is not asleep; on the contrary, he is in a state of wakeful anxiety (719–720). The description of Anchises is curious: *uisa dehinc caelo facies delapsa parentis / Anchisae subito tales effundere delapsa parentis* (722–723). At first we might wonder if the *parens* is Venus, until the father’s name comes in prominent position. The departure of the image offers no clue, either, as to its nature. Anchises speaks of midnight and the approach of the savage *Oriens*, before vanishing like smoke in the breezes (738–740). Is this the shade of Anchises from Elysium? Is it odd to describe the arrival of an underworld *umbra* as descending from the *caelum*? All that we know for certain is that Aeneas sees the *facies* of Anchises; the origin and nature of the image are not explained.

There is nothing in the words of this nocturnal apparition that is false. When Aeneas meets his father in Elysium, he alludes to this and other visits: ... *tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago / saepius occurrens haec limina tendere adegit* (6.695–696).³³

What, then, are *falsa insomnia*? Is the point that all “waking dreams” are false, in that they are not actually the *umbra* in question? Should there really be four categories, namely true dreams, false dreams, true waking dreams, and false waking dreams?

Likeliest is that *umbrae* and *insomnia* are used to refer to what in the end amounts to the same thing, at least in terms of visitations: visions

³¹ Getty 1933 is helpful here.

³² On the precise meaning see further Molyviati-Topsis 1995.

³³ Cf. 4.351–353, where Aeneas makes reference to Dido about visits from Anchises, and see further Fratantuono and Smith 2022, *ad loc.*

of the dead. Those visions can be said to be either true or false, depending on the content of the message imparted by the image. The mechanism at play seems to be that the *manes* can send forth an *umbra*, a *facies*, an *imago*. Hector, for example, seemed to appear to Aeneas in his sleep: *in somnis ... Hector / uisus adesse mihi* (2.271–272). One may speak loosely about the Gate of Horn as a conduit for true shades, but what is meant in the strict sense is the *imago* (in Hector's case, the *imago* is terribly mutilated, as it was after Achilles desecrated the body). The *manes* send the images (hence 896 *sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia manes*, where we may note that the direction is opposite that referenced at 5.722 *visa dehinc caelo facies delapsa parentis*).³⁴ We may also wonder if sometimes an *imago* appears because it has been sent by some immortal (that is, not by the *manes*), or if one simply has a dream that is the product of memory and not supernatural visitation.

Anchises' shade escorts Aeneas and the Sibyl to the Gates, and he sends them out by the ivory portal. We hear nothing more of Deiphobe; Aeneas hastily returns to his ships (6.899).³⁵ The emphasis is on Anchises as the agent of the exit from the lower regions (898 *prosequitur, emittit*); the Sibyl is silent.

Why the Ivory Gate? Nothing in the long and detailed account of the *Heldenschau* is redolent of falsehood.³⁶ But what is not long and detailed comes exactly at the end, just before the arrival at the Gates. The business about the forthcoming wars and how to manage his labors is what Aeneas was supposed to learn from the Sibyl. Instead, Anchises' shade usurps the role, and what presumably would take some time to outline is hastily summarized, with no actual content (6.890–892). When Anchises' apparition visited Aeneas at 5.721 ff., he said that he would discuss the future (Roman) *genus* and *moenia* (737), which is exactly the subject of the *Heldenschau*. The war in Latium was not on the planned syllabus.

What did Anchises' shade tell Aeneas about the war in Latium and the Laurentian peoples? We are not told, though presumably whatever he said would then be used by Aeneas at all the critical, major junctures of the war. What he learned from his father would provide the blueprint, one would think, for what he would do in the course of the war. Needless to say, Aeneas never references anything from this encounter.

Does Anchises' shade possess the same information as Phoebus' *sacerdos* and *uates* Deiphobe? Does he offer the same counsel and instructi-

³⁴ The easiest explanation here is that the *imago* was sent up to the *caelum* by the *manes*, and that it appeared to descend from the *caelum* from the vantage point of Aeneas.

³⁵ On how Aeneas never mentions anything about the visions he experienced, note Michels 1981.

³⁶ For a somewhat different view, see Thornton 1976: 61.

ons that she would have offered? If Aeneas had followed Helenus' instructions and discussed the war and his future labors with Deiphobe instead of dismissing the matter in favor of focusing solely on Anchises, would he have learned anything different? Would he have received any admonitions peculiar to the Sibyl? This much is certain: Aeneas does not follow Helenus' advice. When the time was at hand to do so, he dismissed the idea (6.103-105).

Anchises' shade then utilizes the Ivory Gate for the departure of the Sibyl and his son. The word order of 6.897-898 is purposeful. Anchises literally comes between his son and the Sibyl (*natum Anchises unaque Sibyllam*), and his words frame the scene, with enjambment (*his ... / ... dictis*). Due to Aeneas' zeal to see him and to talk with him, Anchises has, after all, usurped what the Sibyl was supposed to do. Let us dismiss any notion that Anchises' action is some negative verdict on his son. Let us also dismiss any idea that Anchises did not know the significance of the Gates.

What to my knowledge has never been suggested is that just as the son acted hastily in the matter of the Bough and with respect to what he was supposed to discuss with the Sibyl, so the father acted in a hasty and distracted manner in the matter of the choice of gate. The shade of Anchises was preoccupied with the visit with his son; he was focused entirely on Aeneas, just as Aeneas was focused entirely on Anchises. The simplest explanation for Anchises' action is that it was an accident.

Certainly there are implications to the accident, and Virgil invites his readers to ponder Platonic, Orphic, Lucretian, or other hermeneutics.³⁷ But a pattern may be traced with respect to Aeneas' behavior toward the Sibyl. Call it a hazard of exemplary *pietas* toward his father, but consistently there is a lack of focus on Aeneas' part toward the Cumaean Sibyl, Deiphobe. Her instructions about the Bough are not followed precisely, with its resultant hesitation. Aeneas is fixated on finding the Bough, even to the point of interrupting the purification from the pollution incurred by Misenus' unburied corpse. Deiphobe needs to interrupt Aeneas during his long and frankly less than purposeful discussion with Deiphobus. Ultimately (and most seriously), Aeneas rejects any need to discuss the Latin war with the Sibyl, only to be willing to do just that with Anchises; in this he does not follow the admonitions of Helenus, and in consequence he never hears the Sibyl's message in its entirety, and he never learns all that she may have been able to teach him (with appreciable implications for the hero's actions in the second half of the epic). We may also recall here the fact that Anchises once had the chance to interpret an Apollonian ora-

³⁷ The bibliography on the problem of the Gates is extensive; for a sampling, cf. Tarrant 1982, Kilpatrick 1995, and Fratanuono 2007.

cle, and his Cretan interpretation of the riddle of Troy's *antiqua mater* ended ruinously.³⁸

Venus aided her impatient son by sending her doves to help him to find the Golden Bough, even while Misenus awaited his requiem. It would be no surprise if Anchises were also impatient and ultimately distracted by the sudden advent of Aeneas in Elysium. Fixated on the son whose coming he had so long awaited, it would be entirely natural for him to send his son by the Ivory Gate instead of the Horn Gate, especially since either one would be just as serviceable from a practical standpoint. The key final adjective *eburna* comes as a surprise only to the reader, who is left to ponder the implications of Anchises' accidental choice, and of Aeneas' own distracted, preoccupied, less than focused attention on Apollo's priestess.

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³⁸ *Aen.* 3.90 ff. The Elysian shade can be expected to know more than the ship-bound wanderer, but the Apollonian connection bears comparison.

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