

# THE TROJAN EXODUS: THE INITIATION OF A NATION

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## Introduction

The second book of the *Aeneid*, a familiar and favourite reading of a number of Latin students, focuses on the drama that unfolded during the last night of Troy.<sup>1</sup> Aeneas, grateful to the Carthaginian Queen for her hospitality and flattered by her admiration, cannot but agree to her request to hear, detail by detail, the events of the fatal day that saw the utter destruction of his city.<sup>2</sup> Aeneas' narration has almost cinematographic qualities;<sup>3</sup> however, despite his majestic descriptions of palaces and private buildings yielding to the flames and annihilation (real and metaphorical), the dramatic emphasis falls on the misfortunes of the people, relived in short episodes throughout the night, so terrible and so numerous that the audience is almost exhausted by the relentless repetition of deaths and devastation. Troy, in common with the tragic fates of renowned ancient capitals, resembles a paradise utterly lost and reduced to a flaming hell in the hands of its irreverent conquerors. The cause of all this is a gigantic wooden horse (*instar montis*, *Aen.* 2.15), a crafted 'trap' (*insidias*, 36), set in action by the 'deceptions' (*doli*, 152) of treacherous Sinon.<sup>4</sup>

This paper is divided in two parts. The first part focuses on the role of the wooden horse in the destruction of Troy. I shall demonstrate that the currently suggested interpretations which by and large associate the wooden horse with sympathetic magic are not fully satisfactory. I shall also revise the argument that Troy was consumed by a magical fire and that the city was a symbol of a magical maze. In the second part, I shall suggest that the elements of Aeneas' narration that have been interpreted as magical could be more appropriately read as initiatory. A close reading of the second book of the *Aeneid* could reveal that Vergil describes the destruction of Troy in terms that recall initiation into ancient mystery cults, including the Eleusinian and the Bacchic/Orphic mysteries.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation is in line with the longstanding

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2 Gale 2003: 337ff. argues that during his retelling Aeneas, like another Orpheus, fights with the ghosts of the past on the brink of his unknown future. The comparison is extremely useful and as insightful as the idea that the last night of Troy resembles a catabasis. Although Gale focuses on the idea of leaving the past behind in acceptance of a brighter future (a message that runs through Vergilian poetry), she does not associate the catabasis with initiation rites which might be employed to the same effect. Austin 1959: 16f. associates the wooden horse episode with the bizarre and disastrous interaction of Aristaeus and Orpheus in *Georgics* 4.

3 The recent cinematic version of the fall of Troy (*à la* Hollywood) has left us with vivid impressions of the horrible deaths that the citizens may have suffered.

4 The size of the horse is employed as an ominous sign that escaped the attention of the delirious Trojans, an indication that this wooden structure would prove to be, far from an attempt at expiation, a sacrilegious monstrosity. Cf. *Aen.* 2.195f. where Aeneas refers to Sinon's duplicity: *talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis/credita res, captique dolis lacrimisque coactis...* ('with such snares and the craft of perjury the tale won credibility and we were captured by wiles and forced tears...'); cf. Eur. *Tr.* 534.

5 The view that Vergil employs Eleusinian motifs was first put forward by Bishop Warburton and C. Still who are cited (with some doubt) by Knight 1929: 213; cf. Luck 1973: 147-66 and Zetzel 1989:

recognition that Vergil employs mystery motifs in his epic,<sup>6</sup> although book two was not previously suspected of bearing initiatory elements.

In particular, I shall suggest that book two represents the initiation of the Trojans into a different identity: that of exiles. The poet needs to show that there is a decisive point between being a Trojan and realising that one is a Roman. This initiation reaches its culmination in book six when Aeneas finally enters the Underworld and secures from his deceased father a blessing and a confirmation of his future destiny. When he emerges from the Underworld Aeneas is 'reborn' as a Roman-in-the-making:

quae postquam Anchises natum per singula duxit  
incenditque animum famae venientis amore...

(*Aen.* 6.888f.)

When Anchises led his son over every episode and inflamed his soul with love of fame that was to come...

I shall begin my discussion by revising the role of the wooden horse, the Doureios Hippos, as an object of magic through which a victorious spell is cast by the Greeks on the Trojans. My interpretation does not oppose the magical elements of book two, but places them in the context of a religious ceremony through which the Trojans are initiated into the mysteries of death and promised regeneration.

## I. The last night of Troy

### Doureios Hippos: an enchanted gift

As soon as the Trojans discover the horse on their empty shores, they are ecstatic about the prospect that the Greeks, having abandoned their quest, are heading for their homeland (*Aen.* 2.26-31). Soon confusion arises among the crowd as to whether the horse should be admitted to the city or not (*Aen.* 2.31-38), especially as this would require the destruction of part of the city wall (*Aen.* 2.234). Laocoon, the archpriest of Apollo, advises his fellow-citizens against such a rushed decision (*Aen.* 2.40-53).

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276n.52. Zetzel is right to adopt Graf's (1974: 126-31) distinction between the Eleusinian and the Orphic-Pythagorean mysteries, although in my view the soteriological aspect of the mysteries is what Vergil wishes to employ rather than follow the initiation stages of a very particular mystery rite. Zetzel is also right in observing that although Graf denies a ritual catabasis as part of the Eleusinian mysteries, Pindar's account of Heracles' initiation alludes to it. He cites Lloyd-Jones 1967: 206-29; also, see Endsjø 2002: 233ff.; Bonnechere 2003: 170, 174; Cole 2003: 198 and Cosmopoulos 2003 (concluding remarks): 263 where he states: 'At Eleusis it is possible that an "advent festival" predated the mystery cult; this festival could have taken on a metaphysical character in the sixth century, when it became a mystery by the addition of an initiation ritual involving a katabasis, a simulation of descent to Hades and the search for Persephone'; also see Clinton 2003: 50ff. and Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 25ff.

<sup>6</sup> Vergil emphasised in his works the association of heroic suffering with apotheosis, similar to the suffering through which the initiates sought to secure a better lot after death. See Quiter 1984; Sullivan 1969: 161ff. and Luck 1973: 147ff.; cf. Penwill 1995 on common themes in Vergil's *Georgics* 4 and *Aeneid* 6 and Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: chs. 3-5 for Aeneas as another Orpheus. I have elsewhere (forthcoming) discussed in detail the Eleusinian patterns of book 6 with special emphasis on *Aen.* 6.109, 117-23, 645-47, 666-68.

In his premonition Laocoon seems to fear that the horse might be a *machina belli*, a kind of *aries* suitable for breaking the resistance of besieged cities.<sup>7</sup> Servius mentions this as one possible explanation for the significance of the horse,<sup>8</sup> but, in my view, the doubt with which Laocoon is made to guess the role of the horse anticipates that the audience should also reject it. In addition, Laocoon offers an ominous clue about what the horse might hide when he is made to speculate *aut aliquis latet error* ('another deception might lie hidden', 48). Indeed, it has been suggested that the horse should be understood as an instrument of magic through which a spell is cast all over the city which then yields to the demands of the conquerors.

This explanation, put forward by W.F. Jackson Knight<sup>9</sup> and, more recently, by C.A. Faraone, could satisfy the many references throughout the book to the blind enthusiasm with which the citizens of Troy accepted the wooden horse into their town. The Trojans act irrationally, contrary to the cautiousness they exhibited during the many years of the war and against the opinion of their priest. Blinded and charmed by the soothing words of Sinon, they resemble the countless victims of ancient magic. It is stated that as soon as the Trojans cast their eyes on the wooden horse they were stupefied and kept admiring it, thus showing the early symptoms of having succumbed to magic (*Aen.* 2.31f.).<sup>10</sup> Indeed, magic typically afflicts the eyes of its victims especially in the context of erotic magic.<sup>11</sup> Although the context of the destruction of Troy is not immediately erotic, we should not forget that it takes place in the shadow of the illicit affair of Helen and Paris.<sup>12</sup> Hence, from this point of view, the burning of

7 Smith 1999: 503ff. associates the episodes of Sinon and Laocoon with ritual sacrifice.

8 The wooden horse is mentioned in Hom. *Od.* 8.50ff.; Apollod. *Ep.* 5.15; Tryphiod. *IlPer.* 375; Hyg. *Fab.* 135; Q.Smyrn. *Posth.* 12.391f. Servius wrote ad *Aen.* 2.15: *de hoc equo varia in historias lecta sunt: ut Hyginus et Tubero dicunt, machinamentum bellicum fuit, quod equus appellatur, sicut aries, sicut testudo, quibus muri vel discuti vel subruui solent: unde est aut haec in nostros fabricata est machina muros* ('Regarding this horse much has been written in various commentaries: hence, Hyginus and Tubero say that it was a war machine, because it is called a "horse", like the "ram" and like the "tortoise", with which (armies) use to bring down or climb over city walls: or it is from this (tale) that the invention of this machine was worked out (to be used) against our walls').

9 Knight 1933: 254-62 (cf. *ibid.* 1930: 358-66 and also Duckworth 1944: 99-103); Faraone 1992.

10 *pars stupet innuptae donum exitiale Minervae et molem mirantur equi* ('some are amazed at maiden Minerva's gift of death, and marvel at the massive horse', tr. Fairclough).

11 Most ancient spells demand from the dark mediator that it relentlessly attack the senses of the victim with special emphasis on the eyes. Although affliction of the eyes is mostly associated with erotic charms (Faraone 1999: 41, 43f., 50, and 89), one could argue that the Trojans are blinded by their desire, their *eros* for peace. Of course, the gods are magicians par excellence endowed with extraordinary abilities and often a short temper. Blinding was a common punishment for offending a goddess; Hdt 2.112-20 (Helen and Stesichorus episode); Callim. *Hymn* 5 (Athena and Teiresias tale); *Hom. h. Ven.* 5 (Anchises and Aphrodite). However, Cyrino 1995: 150, 162n.60, argues that in Homeric and Greek lyric poetry similar vocabulary is employed for death and erotic blindness. In a way, the blindness of the Trojans is indicative of the death darkness they will soon experience: Faraone 1999: 69ff. (cf. 158f.); Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 39ff. (esp. 91n.282). Gernet 1981: 116ff. discusses the magical qualities of beautiful objects in antiquity; cf. Dickie 2001: 176. Of course, here the performer of the magical rites is Sinon, who, surrounded by the Trojan youth, manages to deceive them with his deadly sway. It is not perhaps accidental that Sinon appears as the pupil of Palamedes, who supposedly invented civilisation and several arts, including magic (Hyg. *Fab.* 277). Magic is also associated with Odysseus, the originator of the horse, through his adventures with Circe and the Cyclops. Just as Sinon blinds the Trojans with his lies, later Odysseus will literally blind the Cyclops with a magical wand upon which he has cast an Orphic spell (Eur. *Cycl.* 646-49).

12 Also see *Sib. Or.* III.419 where it is prophesied that Troy will be the 'prey of people in love' (cf. line 447). The reference has been understood to refer either to the love affair of Helen and Paris or the greed of the Greeks; nevertheless, it creates a sense of eroticism in which magic is to be expected. See Buitenwerf 2003: 231n.45. In addition, it could be argued that Helen's erotic disposition was clearly highlighted when Aeneas met her during the last night of Troy (see p.7 below).

Troy could be seen as the performance of magic on behalf of the Greeks who wish to break the affair, restore Helen to her husband, and destroy the city that harboured it.<sup>13</sup>

When finally Venus removes the veil of mortal (and probably magic) folly from Aeneas' sight (*Aen.* 2.594-633; esp. 604-07), it becomes obvious that the gods have been destroying Troy on behalf of the Greeks who succeeded through their supplications in enlisting the divine powers for their cause.<sup>14</sup> This is reminiscent of popular spells recorded in the Greek magical papyri for acquiring supernatural assistants,<sup>15</sup> and it has been argued that by persuading the Trojans to substitute the Palladium of the Trojan acropolis for the Argive horse, the Greeks magically broke the protection of the city and secured the favour of the gods.<sup>16</sup> The walls of Troy that were built with divine assistance, hence magic, would reasonably require equal supernatural force in order to be demolished.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, details like the falling of stars or sometimes the flying of falcons are specifically described in the corpus of ancient Greek spells as signs that the divine assistant is already at your service.<sup>18</sup> In fact, it is a shooting star that convinces Anchises, who until then was stubbornly refusing to be uprooted in his old age, to follow Aeneas to their new homeland (the 'New Troy') (*Aen.* 2.692ff.). Apparently, some of Troy's old magic still holds its sway even as fire reduces it to ashes.

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13 Note that Faraone and Knight do not focus on the erotic element of the magic spell that is supposedly cast over Troy, but rather explain it as a large scale magical act performed for securing victory in agreement with other acts of sympathetic magic endorsed by ancient cities or armies for guaranteeing protection and prevalence in the battle-field. This is especially true for Faraone 1992. For Knight's (1933) association of Troy with magic medieval mazes featuring a girl in the centre, see p.7 below.

14 See *Aen.* 2.777ff. where Creusa refers to her fate as the 'will of heaven' (*numine divum*). Having crossed the waters of death, she is also aware of the hefty burden that fate has in store for Aeneas as well as the glorious end to his adventures.

15 Gransden 1985: 67ff; Coleman 1982: 153-55; Venus' epiphany in the second book of the *Aeneid* is necessitated by Aeneas' fury, a fury that overcomes him at the sight of Helen (*Aen.* 2.594F.). However, *furor* is often associated with symptoms of magic in ancient poetry as discussed by Cairns 1969: 131-34 and Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: ch.1. There are a great number of spells in the Greek magical papyri designed to instruct how one can enlist the power of gods and demons for satisfying one's wishes. In the context of sympathetic magic, whole cities in antiquity would perform certain rites to secure divine protection. See Faraone 1991, 1992 and 1993.

16 The Palladium, the *sacra effigies* of *Aen.* 2.167, protected Troy because the Trojans had performed on it their own magic rites. Knight 1933 and Faraone 1992. Also, see Dio .Hal. *Rom. Antiq.* 1.68.

17 See Hom. *Il.* 21.443-52; cf. Hom. *Il.* 7.452f. and Verg. *Aen.* 3.3 and 2.622. See Alden 2000: 24. Pind. *Ol.* 8.25 has Poseidon being persuaded that the city would be destroyed by an omen sent by Zeus: 'guarded by the Dorian people since the time of Aeacus, whom wide-ruling Poseidon and the son of Leto, when they were about to build the crown of walls to encircle Ilium, summoned as a fellow worker; for it was fated that when war arose, in the city-destroying battles, that wall would breathe forth ravaging smoke. And three gray-green serpents, when the wall was newly built, tried to leap into it; two of them fell down, stunned, and gave up their lives, and the third leapt up with a cry. Pondering this adverse omen, Apollo said right away: "Pergamos is taken, hero, through the works of your hands—so says a vision sent to me from the son of Cronus, loud-thundering Zeus, not without your sons: the city will be destroyed with the first generation, and with the third" [that is, by the generation of Heracles and that of Achilles]'.<sup>18</sup>

18 See Betz 1997: (for stars) 3, 42f., 49, 52, 64, 140, 249, 285; (for falcons) 26, 41, 211, 313. Also cf. *Aen.* 2.171-75 where Sinon in his effort to deceive the Trojans refers to the estrangement of Minerva who supposedly refused to continue supporting the cause of the Greeks. The portents Sinon describes include 'flickering flames' (*coruscate luminibus flammae*, *Aen.* 2.173) from the eyes of Minerva's statue and the 'dashing out' (*emicuit*, *Aen.* 2.175) of the image from the ground.

**A magical fire consumes Troy**

Fire which so impressively condemns Troy to oblivion is also associated with magic: fire-spells, that is, erotic spells that witches would perform over magical fires while asking that the bewitched burn like the magic objects they would simultaneously hurl in the fire, were well known since an early period and practised all over the Near East. They were received with enthusiastic zeal by the Greeks and later the Romans who would typically assign to their spells near eastern origins to increase their value.<sup>19</sup>

When Aeneas describes Troy as being consumed by fire, there is a hint that it was consumed by erotic desire. This connotation fits well both with the lustful character of the Greeks duly exemplified in the rape of Minerva's priestess (*Aen.* 2.402-08), and could also serve ironically, for the passion that soon will consume Dido and her own city (*Aen.* 4.640ff.).<sup>20</sup> The fire of Troy that momentarily burns once more through Aeneas' narration is the actual spell with which he has captured the Carthaginian queen. In this instance as well divine assistants were not absent from his side. Although Vergil describes the fire with striking insistence, tradition has it that the Greeks only burnt the city before leaving the site.<sup>21</sup> Hence the poet's intense descriptions must be aimed at creating an ambiance of terror and manic consumption and a feeling that resistance to the will of the gods is pointless.

In addition, the horse was an animal known in antiquity for its erotic and military associations used interchangeably in metaphors that have soldiers besiege cities like mistresses and mistresses yielding like besieged cities.<sup>22</sup> The penetration of the hostile city by the enemy has been often compared with sexual penetration in a well-known framework in which sexual and war violence are comparable.<sup>23</sup> Latin elegists often allude in their works to the magical abilities of love, thus confirming the popularity of the metaphor at the time of Vergil.<sup>24</sup> This metaphor has been often employed as the ideological framework according to which the Greeks avenged Helen's abduction by levelling the city militarily. The device of the horse is also thus explained.

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19 Faraone 1999: 50f., 58-60 and 150-53 (esp. 151); Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 63n.24 and 93. Vergil himself was familiar with magical spells not only as a close reader of Theocritus (see *Id.* 2), but also as the composer of *Ec.* 8; see Faraone 1989 and Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 194f.

20 In fact, already in *Aen.* 1.673-75, Erôs was instructed by his mighty mother to 'encircle the Queen with love's flame'. In addition, when Aeneas declares his intention to abandon Dido, she, infuriated, claims that she wants to break Erôs' spell by burning Aeneas' memorabilia in a huge pyre which will in reality serve as her own funeral pyre. In Roman propaganda, Dido's pathetic death is a sign of Carthage's future doom, of the city's funeral pyre: see *Aen.* 6.667-71 ('the palace rings with lamentation, with sobbing and women's shrieks, and heaven echoes with loud wails—even as though all Carthage or ancient Tyre were falling before the inrushing foe, and fierce flames were rolling over the roofs of men, over the roofs of gods', tr. Fairclough). Spence 1988: 32 also spotted the connection between the fire that consumed Troy and the funeral pyre of Dido (cf. Miller 1995: 232n.25).

21 See for example, Eur. *Tr.* 809, 820, 1260, 1300; *Andr.* 105; *Tr. Il. Pers.* 632f.; Procl. *Chrest.* 2. In addition, note Miller 1995: 225: 'Indeed fire symbolism in the *Aeneid* is deeply ambivalent. Always connected with passion and its dangers, it is cited in Book 6 as the fundamental energy that maintains the world (6.730-4).'

22 For the connection of love and war in the *Aeneid*, see Miller 1995: 226n.4 citing Blow 1994: 228, 242f. and Putnam 1985: 16f.

23 See for example, Cahoon 1988: 293f.; Thomas 1964: 151ff.; Murgatroyd 1975: 59ff. and Gale 1997: 77ff. with revision of earlier bibliography.

24 For the magical aspects of love in Latin elegies, see Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: ch. 1.

**Troy as a magical maze**

Furthermore, the city of Troy, with its narrow streets (*angusta viarum*, *Aen.* 2.332) and secret passages (*Aen.* 2.453f.), has been described as a labyrinth or maze that could be associated with ancient rituals of death and regeneration.<sup>25</sup> Often these mazes were built to conceal the object of a quest which lay hidden in their nucleus.<sup>26</sup> Knight suggests that in burning Troy this object could be identified with Helen, discovered by Aeneas just sitting in the middle of deadly havoc in the palace (*Aen.* 2.657-87), or Cassandra who suffers Ajax's violence, or even the virginal goddess Minerva.<sup>27</sup> He compares Troy's destruction with Theseus' adventure in the Cretan Labyrinth, and draws attention to a Sophoclean fragment, according to which the Greeks were required to send to Troy annually Locrian maidens to serve as slaves in the temple of Minerva.<sup>28</sup> Knight argues that the parallelism between the Cretan and the Trojan labyrinths is acknowledged by later poets—including Vergil—who presented the Trojan festivities around the wooden horse just as the Crane Dance performed by Theseus after his successful exit from the Labyrinth.<sup>29</sup>

The tale of Theseus and Ariadne evolves around erotic deception,<sup>30</sup> but also magic: according to one ancient tradition, Dionysus cast a spell on Theseus so that he forgot his promise to Ariadne, and indeed her very existence.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, it could be argued that the spell of the Greeks compels the gods that have fought on Troy's side to forget/ignore their commitment to the city. However, this is not the argument of Knight, who, at this point, becomes fascinated by the fertility cult(s) that possibly lay behind the myth of Theseus and Ariadne<sup>32</sup> and strays to rather implausible suggestions.<sup>33</sup>

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25 See Knight 1935: 99: 'The relation between the city of Troy and the conception of a labyrinth or maze has always been mysterious, and usually it has been regarded as a coincidence or the result of medieval confusion. Mazes are often called "Troy" or "the walls of Troy".' Also, note that Poseidon, who built the walls of Troy, had also gifted Minos the white bull who sired the Minotaur (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.8.11). The bull was to be offered to the god in sacrifice, just as the death of the Trojans has been associated with sacrifice by Smith 1999: 503ff.

26 Knight 1935: 100.

27 It could be argued that the violation of the priestess symbolises in a way the violation of her goddess whose beloved city now lay defenceless in the hands of the Greeks.

28 Soph. *Lacaen.* fr. 367 (Pearson) *ap.* Knight 1935: 101n.9. The episode is clearly reminiscent of the Athenian obligation to send annually fourteen young men and women to Crete to be devoured by the Minotaur (see Plut. *Thes.* 15-19).

29 Hom. *Il.* 18.592. Knight 1935: 104n.16 quotes Tryph. *Il. Pers.* 352ff. and 376ff.; Pollux 4.101 and Plut. *Thes.* 18. Also, see Lucian *De salt.* 34 and Verg. *Aen.* 2.238: *pueri circum innuptaeque puellae/ sacra canunt funemque manu contingere gaudent* ('children and unwed girls chant holy songs and delight to touch the rope with their hands'). Also, see Miller 1995: 236-38. Although Miller refers to Calame's association of the Crane Dance with rites of passages to adulthood, he does not explore the possibility that here Vergil wishes to elevate this initiation from a confirmation of sexual maturity to a regeneration in which sexual energy is vital. After all, Vergil suggests precisely the same idea in the *Georgics* book 3, where he presents the farmer as channelling his sexual urge to his furrows. See Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 239ff.

30 Miller 1995: 232 associates the lustful background of the Cretan Labyrinth, built to house the result of Pasiphae's uncontrollable desire for a bull, with Dido's destruction from unlawful desire.

31 Paus. 10.29.2, Diod. Sic. 5.51.4, schol. Theoc. *Id.* 2.45.

32 Nilsson 1950: 527; Plut. *Thes.* 20; Macr. *Sat.* 3.8.2; cf. Martin 1992: 55 who argued that Catull. 63 created parallels between Attis and Cybele, Theseus and Ariadne and Catullus and Lesbia. For the association of the labyrinth with mystery religions and initiation, see Knight 1935: 106ff.

33 It seems to me that the episode of Theseus and Ariadne is indeed relevant to the last night of Troy, but for reasons that have failed so far to attract scholarly attention. See, for example, Graf 2003b: 17-19 who discusses the tale of Theseus as alluding to adolescence initiation rites; cf. Zarker 1967: 220-6 and

## II. A Night of Wonders

### An Entrance to the Underworld

Labyrinths, such as the one Theseus successfully negotiates, also have a long tradition as symbols for the entrance to the Underworld.<sup>34</sup> The Minotaur of the Cretan Labyrinth was nothing but a confirmation of the terrible fate that awaited those who found themselves surrounded by its walls. In addition, a journey to the Underworld (/labyrinth) was also a major part of initiation rites, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries. Therefore, Theseus' adventure at the Cretan Labyrinth could be also compared with the catabasis often included in ancient mysteries.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, the Trojans found themselves trapped in a deadly city whose walls are no longer protective.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, Troy during its fatal night becomes a vast entrance to the Underworld.<sup>37</sup> While the Greeks on a literal level seek 'to enter, to gain access', on a metaphorical level the massacred Trojans are on the threshold between life and death, and they enter as a civic body the world of the invisible powers.<sup>38</sup> In this state they experience a conflation of time which is often observed in mystery rites: the glorious past painfully remembered by

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Miller 1995: 237-9 who associates the ill-fated affair of Dido and Aeneas with that of Theseus and Ariadne. In discussing *Aen.* 4.143-6 he once more notes the mythological associations of the Crane Dance 'with the Labyrinth and its own ritual ties to sexuality and rites of initiation', but does not examine the ritual aspects of the labyrinth or Aeneas' catabasis to the Underworld.

- 34 Dietrich 1974: 116 for the association of the Cretan bull with funerary rites. See, for example, the labyrinth construction under the tholos at Epidauros mentioned by Knight 1935: 110 (cf. Bonnechere 2003: 176, according to whom 'the Athenians claim to have shared with Asclepius the Mysteries at Eleusis, the second day of which was called Epidauria—hence, a labyrinth construction is associated with the Eleusinian mysteries'). On p.114 Knight quotes Pliny *HN.* 36.84, who says that labyrinths were used for palaces as well as burial chambers, and Hdt. *Hist.* 2.148 for the use of labyrinths by Egyptians. Interestingly, Zuntz 1971: 36ff. associated spiral symbols with the cult of the fertility deity and rebirth. However, just as with most ancient rituals, to gain rebirth one has ritually to die first. Hence, this double symbolism of ancient labyrinths is most appropriate for Vergil's purpose and could further explain his reference to female sexuality. Note Nonn. *Dion.* 47.434 who emphasises the role of Ariadne in Theseus' success. For her role as an ancient fertility goddess, see Larson 1995: 8, 15, 122, 164n.61, 181n.13. For evidence of continuation of Minoic cult at Eleusis during the Dark Ages (at least from an archaeological perspective), see Cosmopoulos 2003: 14ff.
- 35 See n.5 above; see also Cole 2003: 197f. who mentions that 'Critias, a contemporary of Sophocles and Euripides, even used a chorus of initiates to complement the katabasis of Theseus'. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 39 for the Syracusan festival of Kores Katagoge (Descent of the Maiden) which is obviously a local version of the Eleusinian mysteries during which they would sacrifice at a certain pool where the Kore supposedly entered the Underworld forced by her abductor. The sacrifice involved sinking bulls into the pool.
- 36 *Aen.* 2.365-67 is a perfect description of the massive casualties that the Trojans had that night: *plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim/ corpora perque domos et religiosa deorum /limina* ('many lifeless corpses lie here and there throughout the streets, through the houses and the sacred thresholds of the gods'). Again in *Aen.* 2.368f.: *crudelis ubique /luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago* ('everywhere there is cruel grief, everywhere terror and many images of death'). And again in *Aen.* 2.446f.: *...quando ultima cernunt, /extrema iam in morte...* ('...even as they realise that their death is imminent still...').
- 37 *Tr.* 623f. presents Hades as being afraid that Hermes, conductor of souls, would bring down all the race of men in that single night. For the 'voluntary and temporary death' of the initiates which is parallel with the real death experience of the Trojans, see Bonnechere 2003: 178; also Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 33 who cites Plutarch (fr.178 Sandbach) for the connection between those who have just died and mystery initiates: according to Plutarch, both groups suffer in their souls *pathos*.
- 38 This is certainly evident in the vivid descriptions of civilian deaths by Tryphiodorus.

Aeneas, the present described in all its tragic misery and the glorious future hinted in the several visions and oracles that Aeneas receives during that night.<sup>39</sup>

Aeneas is indeed presented as attempting a journey to the Underworld in book six of the *Aeneid*. Vergil seems to acknowledge the identification of labyrinths with the Underworld, because he presents Daedalus, the creator of the Cretan Labyrinth (*Aen.* 6.9-19), as the constructor of the vast temple that accommodates the Sibyl on the banks of the Underworld entrance in Italian Cumae.<sup>40</sup> He also seems to appreciate the mystery elements of the ceremonial catabasis he describes because, aware of the secrecy that surrounded the Mysteries, he asks to be pardoned for divulging these things that he has only heard (*Aen.* 6.265).<sup>41</sup> Vergil treats the Cumaean Sibyl as a mystagogue that is about to ‘teach’ Aeneas ‘the path’ and ‘open’ for him the sacred gates (*Aen.* 6.109: *doceas iter et sacra ostia pandas*). The initiation begins with the typical address to the uninitiated to stay away:<sup>42</sup>

‘procul o, procul este, profani,  
conclamat vates, ‘totoque absistite luco...’

(*Aen.* 6.258f.)

‘Away, stay away, unblessed ones,’ shouts the prophet, ‘and withdraw from the entire grove...’

### **Aeneas as Orpheus/ Dionysus**

The association of labyrinths with an initiatory catabasis to the Underworld is also emphasised by the fact that in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* Theseus appears in the company of heroic *mystai* (initiates) of the Mysteries at Eleusis such as Orpheus, Musaeus, Pollux and Heracles (*Aen.* 6.617-23, 645-47 and 666-68).<sup>43</sup> In my view, the second book of the *Aeneid* paves the way for the culmination of an initiation, similar to the Eleusinian Mysteries in which the role of the hierophant, typically assumed by Orpheus or Dionysus/Iacchus, is now suitably recast by Aeneas.

39 See Clinton 2003: 53 where he explains the term *telete*, used by Plutarch for both the Lesser and Greater Mysteries by citing Diotima’s description of the *daimonion* (Pl. *Symp.* 202e-203a). Her words reproduced here could explain the association of book two of the *Aeneid* with magic: ‘[the *daimonion*] being of an intermediate nature, it bridges the gap between them [men and gods], and prevents the universe from falling into two separate halves. Through the class of being come all divination and the skill of priests in sacrifices and rites (*teletai*) and *spells and every kind of divination and wizardry*’ (my emphasis).

40 For other interpretations of the Daedalic references of book six, see Putnam 1987: 173-198; Edgeworth 1986: 145-60; Kinsey 1986: 137; Paschalis 1986a: 33-41 and 1986b: 44-68; Skulsky 1987: 56-80. Yet Miller 1995 with bibliography identifies two scenes where the Cretan Labyrinth is alluded to in the *Aeneid*: the dances of the children in book 5 (*Aen.* 5.588-91), designed as reflections of Theseus’ Crane Dance, and in book 6, at the gates of the temple of Cumaean Sibyl, crafted by Daedalus (*Aen.* 6.24-30). See his nn.18-19 where he cites Catto 1988 and Reed Doob 1990.

41 *sit mihi fas audita loqui*; see also Knight 1929: 213.

42 Cf. Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 4: *gressus removete profani* (‘turn your steps back, unblessed ones’); cf. Call. *Hymn* 2. See also Zetzel 1989: 177.

43 For Orpheus’ association with the Eleusinian mysteries, see Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 271-78 (esp. n.243 with bibliography) and 352. Orpheus’ double association with mysteries and magic is also discussed at 397f.

The Dionysian elements of Aeneas have been already noted by Miller.<sup>44</sup> In this context, Aeneas' casting as Dionysus reflects his role as the spiritual leader of the group during this ritual.<sup>45</sup> The association of Dionysus with rites of the Underworld and indeed the Eleusinian mysteries is a popular tradition often employed by ancient poets.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, Dionysus' role in Orphic belief and the influence that both the Bacchic god and Orpheus exercised on the Eleusinian *teletai* (ceremonies) have been long recognised.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, Vergil's repeated references to both these figures in book six of the *Aeneid* increase the mystic atmosphere in which Aeneas attempts his catabasis. However, Vergil had already cast Aeneas in the role of Orpheus in book two, in an episode that has been variously interpreted as symbolising the need of the Trojans to endure and/or leave the past behind.<sup>48</sup> While Aeneas makes his desperate exit from burning Troy, his wife Creusa who has been following him disappears and dies under obscure circumstances (*Aen.* 2.736-51). Mad with worry Aeneas looks for her all over the city, in a scene reminiscent of the ritual search for Kore during the Eleusinian mysteries,<sup>49</sup> but in vain:<sup>50</sup> only her apparition appears to him to impart her last goodbye (*Aen.* 2.776-95).<sup>51</sup> Aeneas' search for Creusa and his brief encounter with her before she turns to the shadows of the Underworld has invited comparison with Orpheus' failed attempt to retrieve his wife from the realm of the dead. In my view, the episode is the start of Aeneas' role as Orpheus which he fully assumes in book six, the initial stages of his initiation corresponding to the Eleusinian *epopteia*, during which terrifying images are revealed to the *mys-*

44 Miller 1995: 233. For the Dionysian elements of Aeneas, see Weber 2002: 322f. with bibliography. Weber additionally remarks that Vergil creates interplay between the casting of Aeneas as Apollo and as Dionysus in *Aeneid* 4; however, both deities were associated with the Orphic tradition.

45 Weber 2002: 333 compares *Aen.* 6.803f. with *Aen.* 4.145f. and argues that Vergil intended to resurrect the comparison between Aeneas and Dionysus which he first employed in book four. However, this is the moment that Aeneas has descended to the Underworld as a hierophant to receive guidance for the future.

46 See Cole 2003: 193ff.; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 132f. Vergil's references are to be expected since Dionysus is also associated with Ariadne and Theseus' Cretan adventure; see n.31 above and Weber 2002 for Aeneas and Dido as another Dionysus and Ariadne. Also note that the search of Aeneas for missing Creusa (*Aen.* 2.769) is accompanied by his loud cries of her name: here the incorporation of the actual cry 'Creusa' to the construction (*Creusam*) has been compared with *Aen.* 4.302 where the cry 'Bacchus' is heard (Austin *ad loc.* 277; see also n.55 below).

47 Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 171ff. and ch. 5; cf. Robertson 2003: 218ff.

48 Gale 2003 associates the episode with Augustan politics; in her view Vergil wishes to show that if Aeneas chooses to act like Orpheus he will head for destruction, while if he chooses to free himself from the past, he will empower himself for the future, exactly like the Romans who survived the terrible civil wars should do (cf. Gale 2000: 144f.). While I agree that Vergil's message is one of hope for the future, I do not see the juxtaposition of Orpheus with Aeneas as an absolute one; in fact, it is my opinion that in a ritual context and through the example of Orpheus the sacrifices of the past fulfil the preconditions for future glory. Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: ch. 4.

49 Sourvinou-Inwood 2003 and Clinton 2003: 66ff.

50 Aeneas wanders the city shouting Creusa's name (*Aen.* 2.768-70): *ausus quin etiam voces iactare per urbem /implevi clamores vias, maestusque Creusam /nequiquam ingeminans iterumque iterumque vocavi* ('I even dared to cast my cries throughout the city and filled with my shouts the streets and devastated I fruitlessly redoubled my voice and called Creusa again and again').

51 The author of *Cypria* fr.23 (Davies) called Aeneas' wife Eurydice; in *Aen.* 6.738 Creusa is characterised as *erepta* ('snatched') which sounds very close to Eurydice's typical address as *rapta* (*Georg.* 4.517-20). The phantom of Creusa is reminiscent of the phantom of Eurydice, especially when the Queen tells Aeneas (*Aen.* 2.788): *sed me magna deum genetrix his detinet oris* ('but the great mother of the gods keeps me on these shores'; cf. *Aen.* 6.784 and 9.617); also, her farewell in line 789 *iamque vale* ('and now farewell') has been put in the mouth of Eurydice by Ovid (*Met.* 10.62). Creusa is believed to have been transferred to other shores to become the priestess of the Mother of the Gods (Paus. *Per.* 10.26.1).

*tai*.<sup>52</sup> Not only did the Eleusinian mysteries include a nocturnal search for the abducted Persephone, similar to Orpheus' desperate search for his wife, but Vergil had already compared Eurydice with Persephone, the Eleusinian Maiden, in his *Georgics* (4.453-527).<sup>53</sup> Hence, the Orphic associations of book two belong to a familiar and preferred motif of the poet. In addition, Vergil seems to allude further to the Eleusinian rites in book two, because just before Aeneas throws himself into this manic pursuit of his wife, he meets his other companions at the 'mound and Ceres' ancient sacred home' (*Aen.* 2.742: *tumulum antiquae Cereris sedemque sacratam*) located at the end of the city.<sup>54</sup>

Another connection between the Orphic imagery of book two and mysteries seems to be the many references to snakes which have been variously employed in mystic cults. Bacchic imagery is full of snakes, a powerful symbol of regeneration, while Orphic tradition refers to the snake that fertilized the cosmic egg.<sup>55</sup> Two god-sent snakes devour Laocoon and his sons in a fatal omen that the Trojans misinterpret as his punishment for opposing the entrance of the horse to the city. The episode has been understood already within a ritualistic framework as a sacrifice in which Laocoon substitutes the sacrificial bull (*Aen.* 2.222f.) in exchange for (deceptive) guidance from the gods.<sup>56</sup> However, in the light of the Orphic innuendos of the second book, the episode can be compared to the terrible deaths of Dionysus and Orpheus, which were enacted in the ceremonial dismemberment of the sacrificial victim at Eleusis.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, Pyrrhus (Neoptolemus) is specifically presented as killing both Priamus and his son on an altar, thus continuing the sacrificial tone which is pervasive in book two. Especially as he launches his attack on old Priamus (*Aen.* 2.469-505) he is described as an evil, glittering snake. In line 472 the snake is described as *tumidum*, a word that has troubled commentators, but Vergil has also applied to Charon (and the Underworld powers) in *Aen.* 6.407: *tumida ex ira tum corda resident* ('then, his swelling breast subsides from his anger'). Although the word is used on other occasions in the *Aeneid*, this instance underlines the continuous interplay between books two and six, and the importance of snake imagery which is strongly associated with initiation mysteries and Eleusis.<sup>58</sup>

52 Clinton 2003: 55 quoting Pl. *Phd.* 69c. For mystery religions and Vergil's employment of the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries in his work, see Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: chs. 3-5; cf. Guthrie 1993: 181.

53 Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: 362n.126 and 355f. for Eurydice's comparison with Persephone in *Georgics* 4.

54 An issue that has attracted scholarly attention is the fact that Vergil does not seem to follow a strict time-sequence when describing or alluding to the various stages of mystery initiations. For example, he asks the crowd of the uninitiated to abstain only after Aeneas has undertaken his catabasis (Zetzel 1989: 277); however, I do not think that Vergil's intention here is to reproduce a poetic version of an ancient mystery rite. By alluding to mystery cults generically, he achieves his goal of convincing the reader of the brighter future that awaits Aeneas and his descendants.

55 Meyer 1987: 82; Eur. *Bacch.* 102, 105, 543, 697, 768, 1333, 1357; cf. Newbold 1998 (online publication) on the sexual (and fetishist) symbolisation of snakes.

56 Smith 1999: 518f. with bibliography.

57 Robertson 2003: 222-24. For the dismemberment of Orpheus and its rebirth symbolism, see Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: ch. 5; also see Jost 2003: 162 who cites Pausanias for the particular emphasis that the Arcadians put on the dismembering the sacrificial victims of their version of the Mysteries (Paus. *Per.* 8.37.8). Also, it is worth noting that during the preliminary initiation at Eleusis (the so-called Phronosis) dances were performed in a circle around a seated initiate, just as the dances of the Trojans around the fatal horse; more importantly, the initiates were described as having 'girdled themselves with purple fillets' just as those worn by Laocoon in his priestly capacity. See Clinton 2003: 64f.

58 See Hes. *Eoiae* 77 on the snake of Cychreus. Of course, snakes are very important for Cretan cults (Robertson 2003: 221). Again, the snake has been employed by Vergil in the fourth book of the *Georgics* as the main reason for Eurydice's death in an episode that has caused much scholarly debate. See

**Eleusis and the second book of the *Aeneid***

I have argued up to this point that the Labyrinth described by Vergil in book six is not an allusion to a magical maze, but rather a symbolic reference to mystery cults preoccupied with rebirth. This rebirth is proclaimed in book two, when the preparation for the Trojan initiation to their own mysteries is under way;<sup>59</sup> the comparison of Creusa with Eurydice, and the casting of Aeneas as Orpheus, the striking snake imagery, also applied to the sacrificial deaths of Laocoon and Priam, are ritual patterns that are taken up again (or alluded to) in book six where Aeneas descends to the Underworld.

Already as Aeneas crossed the hellish city with his father on his shoulders and his family following he goes through ‘shadowy places’ and he, for the first time, is frightened ‘by every breeze and sound’ (*Aen.* 2.725-9), just as the *mystai* who witness *phasmata* and *deimata* (images and fearful figures) and hear sacred voices.<sup>60</sup> Aeneas is startled out of his sleep by the frightening din of a city under attack (*Aen.* 2.301). The phrase *clarescunt sonitus* (‘the sounds grow clearer’), involves a verb rarely used for expressing sound, while the expression *armorumque ingruit horror* (‘the horrid din of arms sweeps on’) is very descriptive of threatening thunders reminiscent of the sounds heard during the initiation at Eleusis.<sup>61</sup> Also important is the phrase *incendia miscet* (‘making fiery turmoil’, 329), while in line 488 the *clamor* (‘noise’) reportedly reaches the golden stars.

However, we still need to explain the references to the blindness of the Trojans and the vivid fire-imagery, both of which have been interpreted as allusions to magic. Then, of course, there is the Trojan horse itself and its symbolism.

Blindness was apparently an integral part of the experience of the initiates that flocked to Eleusis and elsewhere in an attempt to receive guidance and to be able to witness the sacred enactments. Clinton writes:

In the context of the Mysteria it is much more likely that it indicates the one who is closed with respect to the eyes; evidence from other mystery cults shows that it was the practice for an initiate to be blinded; the term expresses the opposite of *epoptes* (viewer): the first stage is characterised mainly by ritual blindness [when the initiate is led by a mystagogue], the second stage by sight.<sup>62</sup>

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Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: ch. 5 for a bibliographical summary and the suggestion that in *Georgics* 4 Vergil alludes to mystic rites. Also, Know 1966: 124ff. who specifically refers to the mystic allusions of snake imagery in the second book of the *Aeneid*.

59 For the mystery cults performed in historical Ilion and their connection to the Eleusinian mysteries, see Lawall 2003: 79ff.

60 Clinton 2003: 56 quoting Pl. *Phdr.* 250c. Note that in *Aen.* 2.730f. Aeneas goes near the ‘gates’ when another terrifying vision attacks them and then he is distraught with fear. Hector’s warning vision can be also understood better in this context (*Aen.* 2.268ff.). We also know of *phasmata* and *deimata* in the mysteries of Dionysus according to Origen (Cels. 4.10), while the historian Idomeneus refers to a priestess in the mysteries of Sabasios as the spirit Empousa, known from Aristophanes’ *Frogs* as the Underworld vision that scares Dionysus and Xanthias (*FGrH* 338F2). We also find references to a personified Erinys, the madness of war (*Aen.* 2.337).

61 See Austin 1963 ad loc. (p.138).

62 Clinton 2003: 50. Also, see 66f. for fire-imagery during the mysteries quoting Lactant. *Div. Inst. Epit.* 23. Note that fire was also an important means of purification which was a vital stage of initiation rites. C. Kerényi 1967: 83f. translated the fragments of a papyrus from an oration of the time of Hadrian, that included a speech of Heracles whom they did not wish to initiate into the Eleusinian Mysteries: ‘I was initiated long ago (or: elsewhere). Lock up Eleusis, (Hierophant,) and put the fire out, Dadouchos. Deny me the holy night! I have already been initiated into more authentic mysteries.... (I have beheld)

Equally, fire imagery was closely linked with mystery cults;<sup>63</sup> it could be argued that the burning of the ships by the frenzied Trojan women of book five functions as a reminiscence of the flames that destroyed Troy in book two and reflects the frenzied search with torches that took place at night-time during the ancient mysteries.<sup>64</sup> In book two of the *Aeneid* fire is not only associated with destruction but also with hope for the future through the expressive oracle young Iulus receives (*Aen.* 2.681ff.).<sup>65</sup>

In the first book of the *Aeneid* (1.257ff.) this hope was sustained by Jupiter's promise; yet the destruction of their city is part of the heavy tribute that the Trojans must pay for securing the promised future, their regeneration through the Roman race. This critical hour also, typical of mysteries and death (see n.39 above), allows the epiphany of the gods that will confirm their consent to the regeneration of the Trojans.<sup>66</sup>

### A mystic encounter

More allusions to mystery rituals in the second book of the *Aeneid* can be found in Aeneas' surreal meeting with Panthus (*Aen.* 2.318ff.), the priest of Apollo, who bears in his hands the holy objects and images (probably) of the defeated gods (*Aen.* 2.320: *sacra manu victosque deos*).<sup>67</sup> The episode is very significant because it offers to the otherwise 'dark' book two an Apolline aura, the aura of a god that not only was particularly worshipped by the Trojans, but was also variously associated with Orpheus and his mystic rites.<sup>68</sup>

Although the encounter with Panthus serves to inform Aeneas of the situation, we also get a reference to the mystic objects that are necessary for conducting mystery rites.<sup>69</sup> It is crucial that Panthus holds in his hands the very symbols that Hector handed to Aeneas in his dream (*Aen.* 2.293: *sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia Penatis*). Vergil cannot have chosen the name of Panthus accidentally because Panthus' role was fixed in the tradition: in Lucian (*Somn.* 17) the cock who claims to have been Euphorbus before becoming Pythagoras gives his master some curious information about Troy, which he learned from Panthus. We are left

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the fire, whence (...and) I have seen the Kore' (cited by Endsjø 2002: 233). Cf. Plut. *Thes.* 30; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.12; Eur. *Her.* 602-14.

63 See Knox 1966: 124ff.

64 Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 30-34.

65 The birth of a sacred child was typically celebrated at Eleusis but also, most importantly, at Cretan mysteries: Burkert 1985: 288-90; Cole 2003: 204-07; Robertson 2003: 231f. For the implication of the birth of a divine boy in Vergil's *Eclogue* 4, see Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: chs. 3 and 4; it could be argued that Iulus here assumes the identity of the divine boy in his early years.

66 Moore 1991: 16f. writes: 'It is this break in ordinary profane space that allows the world to be regenerated...without it there would be no access to the powers of creativity and renewal, no access to the primordial patterns that are the source of all correct order, no access to a transhistorical center which can give orientation and structure in a time of deterioration and impending chaos.'

67 It has been argued that when the horse went through the wall of Troy other taboos were intentionally broken in magical sympathy. 'Maiden girdles were loosened and the seal...of a jar of wine was broken, and the contents poured on the ground,' Knight 1935: 104f.; also his n.22 quoting Tryph. *Il. Pers.* 345f. The broken jar appears on Roman paintings and the famous Tragliatella *oenochoe*. See also Miller 1995: 235f. and especially his nn.38-40 with bibliography on the possible symbolism of labyrinths. However, see Bremmer 1987: 19 on the insubstantial evidence that the *oenochoe* offers.

68 Robertson 2003: 223f.; Graf 2003a: 243f.; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2005: chs. 3-5.

69 In ancient mysteries often a mystic box (*kiste*) where the sacred objects are kept plays an important role. See W. Burkert 1983a: 269n.18 and 272n.26; Tierney 1922: 77ff. The *cista mystica* was a popular symbol for coins and sarcophagi.

with the impression that Aeneas takes the sacred objects and hurries with them to his father's house, now himself the hierophant and arch-initiate of this mystery. This would explain how the Penates of Troy are found in Anchises' house: *tu, genitor, cape sacra manu patriosque penatis* ('you, father take in your hands the sacred objects and our native gods', *Aen.* 2.717). Equally, the exclamation *venit summa dies* ('the last day has come', *Aen.* 2.324) has a teleological tone, suitable to initiation rites.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

Having witnessed so much destruction and murder, Aeneas is hardly a living person in the first books of the *Aeneid*<sup>71</sup> during which the Trojans wander aimlessly and are often made to believe that other places—including Crete—could hold their destiny.<sup>72</sup> Aeneas and his fellow travellers resemble initiates that go through various terrifying and near-death experiences that culminate in the ceremonial catabasis of book six.<sup>73</sup> The interplay of books two and six seems designed to reflect the initial and final stages of this mystery. Soon after his cathartic emergence from the Underworld,<sup>74</sup> Aeneas is ready to meet his future and undertake his role as the re-founder of Troy and the forefather of the Romans.<sup>75</sup> Although Vergil draws his allusions from a number of mystery cults, he surely wished his readers to be reminded of the Eleusinian mysteries into which Augustus had been initiated shortly after his Actium victory (Suet. *Div. Aug.* 93). Therefore, Vergil transforms the Trojan horse from a treacherous machine of destruction to a cultic object, a sacred symbol of the very goddess that preceded these rituals, a symbol of Ceres.<sup>76</sup> The ritualistic tone is appropriate for the emphasis that Vergil wishes to give, not to the sufferings of the past, but to divine assurances for the future of Troy. Just as Aeneas is recast as Dionysus and Orpheus, to secure the desired message of resurrection, so Troy will relive its past glory as Rome.

70 Although *Aen.* 2.336 *numine divum* is sometimes explained as a protest against Heaven which has allowed this disaster to happen, I would interpret the ablatives as instrumental, meaning 'by the will of Heaven'; see Austin *ad loc.* (p.150); cf. *ad Aen.* 2.777 (p.280).

71 Hegisippus and Hegesianax *ap.* Dion. Hal. 1.49.1 claim that Aeneas died soon after departing from Troy in Thrace where he founded the city Aeneia/Aenos; see Lloyd: 1957: 383, esp.n.6.

72 In *Aen.* 3.105-20, the Trojans, after a brief stay at Delos, are misled by Anchises to believe that Crete, the homeland of their ancient mother, Cybele, would welcome their settlement. Later also, Dido will offer them Carthage as a kingdom to be shared by Phoenicians and Trojans, a deviation that would, obviously, deprive Rome of its future glory (*Aen.* 4.265-78).

73 The exuberant eroticism and fertility associations of the mysteries correspond to the erotic element that the scholiasts have sensed in the *Aeneid*. See Cosmopoulos (ed.) 2003 *passim*.

74 For the katharsis of the Eleusinian initiates, see Clinton 2003: 58ff. Aeneas also purifies himself in book two (*Aen.* 2.528) from witnessing and inflicting so much death. Although purification appears to take place somewhat late here, perhaps it is necessary before the next stage of the initiation in which Aeneas meets his divine mother, a sign of hope and peaceful presence amid the grip of death. Venus is reportedly covered in pure light (*Aen.* 2.590). With her divine guidance Aeneas finds his way home, just as in book six the guidance of the Cumaean Sibyl protects him from the recesses of the Underworld.

75 See Zetzel 1989: 280f. for the ceremonial sacrifices included in the Ludi Saeculares and how Augustus altered the character of these rites from offerings to the Underworld deities as a form of expiation for the past to 'an offering to the celestial divinities' accompanied by a prayer 'of hope for future sustenance'. In my view, Vergil is inspired by the same nexus of ideas in all his works, but particularly in the *Aeneid*.

76 Jost 2003: 143f. Particularly in Arcadia the festival in honour of Demeter was offered by way of appeasement for her rape by Poseidon in the shape of a horse.

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