

MICHAEL PASCHALIS

THE AFFAIR BETWEEN VENUS AND ANCHISES
AND THE BIRTH OF AENEAS IN THE *AENEID*

In Virgil's *Aeneid* the traditional erotic adventures of the gods are either completely eliminated from the narrative or are pushed into the background. Even those instances which do occur are not intended to function in isolation from the overall context or to convey a picture of unrestrained sexuality. The lascivious and wanton conduct of the gods, as portrayed e. g. in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is alien to the *Aeneid*. Speaking of Virgil's Jupiter Boyancé observes that «il n'est plus guère question des amours de Jupiter, de ses nymphes séduites et de ses Ganymèdes», and concludes about the gods of the *Aeneid* that «l'Olympe virgilien est un Olympe moralisé»¹.

A similar sense of restraint in these matters characterizes the conduct of the human characters in the *Aeneid*. Indeed respect for marriage is evident throughout the epic among both immortals and mortals². The major love scene in the *Aeneid* is the one between Venus and Vulcan, that is between a husband and his wife (8,387 ff.). The encounter of Dido and Aeneas in the cave (4, 160ff.) is condemned as the *dies primus leti primusque malorum* (169); central to the understanding of the Dido tragedy is the queen's breach of loyalty to Sychaeus, her

1. P. Boyancé, *La religion de Virgile*, Paris 1966, pp. 28-29. The fact that the rape of Ganymedes by Jupiter's eagle appears embroidered on a chlamys--Cloanthus' prize for his victory in the boat race of Book 5, 250ff. -- does not contradict the view of the French scholar. It is useful to remember that the *rapti Ganymedis honores* (1,28) was one of the causes contributing to Juno's endless hostility to the Trojans. I can hardly agree with R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*, Leipzig / Berlin 1915³ (Darmstadt 1967), p. 400 that this ephrasis has «keine notwendige Beziehung zur Handlung». In the midst of the games this scene is a reminder to the Trojans of the wrath of Juno, as Mnesteus' prize is a reminder of the violence of the outer world (260-261); see in general M.C.J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid*, Cambridge, Mass. 1965, Ch. 2

2. G. Williams, «Poetry in the Moral Climate of Augustan Rome», *JRS* 52 (1962) pp. 28-46, p. 44.

dead husband, i.e. the concept of Dido *univira* according to Roman ideals¹. In the episode of Aeneas and Creusa (2, 737ff.) Virgil draws an ideal picture of mutual love and devotion between husband and wife. In spite of her marriage to Helenus Andromache retains vividly the memory of dead Hector (3, 301ff., 482ff.) and still considers herself the wife of Hector (488). Trojans, Greeks and Latins alike are unanimous in their respect for marriage and in their condemnation of adultery².

Virgil's Venus is «weit über die Gestalt einer Liebesgöttin hinausgehoben». She is very different from the Greek Aphrodite and in fact she resembles more Artemis, or Odysseus' protectress Athena. As the goddess of love she appears only exceptionally and when this guise is absolutely required by the plot³.

The tradition of Venus' adulterous love affair with Mars is completely ignored in the *Aeneid*⁴. As indeed, the only love scene in the epic involving Venus is with Vulcan, her husband. The goddess uses her rhetoric and her charms in order to persuade him to make new armor for her son. In this scene (8, 370ff.) Virgil adapts Homer *Il.* 18, 369-467 and 14, 292-353; but he also introduces elements from Lucretius (1,33ff.) and from love poetry and thus deliberately substitutes conjugal for adulterous love (Mars and Venus) or love between unmarried persons⁵.

1. On Dido *univira* see G. Williams, «Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals», *JRS* 48 (1958), pp. 16-32, pp. 23ff. On Dido's *culpa* as «illicit sexual behavior» (4, 172: *coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam* see the discussion in R. C. Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, Leiden 1981, p. 106, n. 29. On the concept of the ideal Roman marriage in the *Aeneid* see also G. Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid*, New Haven / London 1983, 125ff.

2. Clytemnestra is branded by Diomedes as *coniunx nefanda* and Aegisthus as *adulter* (11, 266-268); Deiphobus refers to Helen in bitter irony as *egregia coniunx* (6, 523) and Virgil himself calls her marriage to Paris *inconcessosque hymenaeos* (1, 651). Elsewhere the poet condemns Antony's marriage to a foreigner (*Aegyptia coniunx*) as an outrage (*nefas*: 8, 688—according to Roman feelings). And behind the clash of Aeneas and Turnus there is no adultery and rape, as in the case of the Trojan war, but the struggle for the possession of Lavinia as a lawful wife.

3. A. Wlosok, *Die Göttin Venus in Vergils Aeneis*, Heidelberg 1967, p. 103, n. 14, and pp. 98ff. See further W. Willi, *Vergil*, München 1930 (1952), 115f.

4. Wlosok, *op.cit.*, p. 98, n. 105.

5. For Virgil's adaptation of his models in the love scene between Venus and Vulcan see V. Schmidt, «Dans la chambre d'or de Vulcain (à propos de Virgil, *Én.* 8,370 sqq.)», *Mnemosyne* 26 (1973), pp. 350-375. Schmidt concludes that the aim of imitation is to increase «la dignité et l'élevation de Vénus tout autant que de Vulcain» (p. 368). But R. Coleman, «The Gods in the *Aeneid*», *GR* 29 (1982) pp.

Virgil's scholiasts were apparently shocked by Venus' «tactlessness» in asking of Vulcan a favor for Aeneas, the offspring of her adultery¹. I believe that Virgil skilfully minimizes the impact of this delicate point²-- which was anyway unavoidable--by (a) placing the plight of Aeneas within the overall context of the misfortunes of the Trojans, past and present (b) stressing the maternal aspect of Venus' care for Aeneas and reinforcing it with the mythological precedents of the pleas of Thetis and Aurora (383-384) and the reference to her earlier concern for the «sons of Priam» (379) (c) causing the memory of the goddess' adulterous love affair with Anchises to be effaced by the constant emphasis of her marriage to Vulcan throughout this scene, and (d) inserting the simile of ll. 408ff., in which Vulcan is compared to a wife determined to «keep her husband's bed unsullied» and, quite significantly, to «bring up her little children». This simile gives further emphasis to the idea of marriage, and the reference to the wife's care for her children may have been intended to correspond with Vulcan's task of fashioning the arms of Aeneas (*opera ad fabrilis surgit*: 415)³.

The story of the seduction of Anchises by Aphrodite as it appears in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* is not mentioned in the *Aeneid*⁴. The reference to the union of Anchises and Venus is made in a highly idealized fashion in Helenus' respectful address to Anchises in 3, 472ff.:

143-168, p. 163 calls the «seduction of Vulcan» the «most egregious instance of frivolous anthropomorphism» in the *Aeneid*. One should, however, keep in mind that the god whom Venus «seduces» is her own husband and that the fruit of her union with Vulcan is the Shield of Aeneas. As Putnam correctly observes (*op. cit.*, p. 138), «Venus' specific and present interest in her son takes grander shape in the vision of the whole race of her future offspring..., depicted on the shield which is forged as a result of her appeal to Vulcan».

1. See Servius on 8, 372 and 383; Macr. *Sat.* 1, 24, 7 (Evangelus regards this piece of immorality as one of the reasons why Virgil wanted to burn the *Aeneid*!) and H. Georgii, *Die antike Aeneiskritik aus den Scholien und anderen Quellen hergestellt*, Stuttgart 1891 (Hildesheim 1971), on *Aen.* 8, 372 and 383.

2. Cf. also C. J. Fordyce, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Libri VII-VIII with a Commentary*, Oxford 1977, on 8, 382, and Putnam's comment above.

3. On Virgil's technique of developing correspondences between the narrative and the simile see D. West, «Multiple-correspondence Similes in the *Aeneid*», *JRS* 59 (1969) pp. 40-49; *Id.*, «Virgilian Multiple-correspondence Similes and their Antecedents», *Philologus* 114 (1970) pp. 262-275. About this simile in general see R. Rieks, «Die Gleichnisse Vergils», *ANRW* II 31.2, 1011-1110, p. 1047; M. Hügi, *Virgils Aeneis und die hellenistische Dichtung*, Bern / Stuttgart 1952, 47f.; P. T. Eden, *A Commentary on Virgil: Aeneid VIII*, Leiden 1975, 124ff.

4. But Latin love poetry of the Augustan age retained the tradition of the *Fifth Homeric Hymn*, as seen by Ov. *Her.* 16, 201-202 (*Phryx etiam Anchises, volu-*

Interea classem velis aptare iubebat
 Anchises, fieret vento mora ne qua ferenti.
 quem Phoebi interpretes multo compellat honore:
 «coniugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate superbo,
 cura deum, bis Pergameis erepte ruinis,
 ecce tibi Ausoniae tellus: hanc arripe velis.
 et tamen hanc pelago praeterlabere necesse est:
 Ausoniae pars illa procul quam pandit Apollo.
 vade», ait «o felix nati pietate. quid ultra
 provehor et fando surgentis demoror Austros?»

In this passage Anchises is represented as blessed in every respect with human and divine favor in past, present and future: he holds a position of authority and leadership among the Trojans (472); the winds are favorable for the voyage to Italy (473, 481); he is addressed with deep respect by Helenus¹ in the latter's capacity as *Phoebi interpretes*: he is the man who was once deemed worthy of Venus' proud wedlock (475)²; he is loved by the gods and was rescued from the two destructions of Troy (476); Italy, the ultimate destination of his journey, lies ahead of him (477); he is favored by Apollo (479) and is blessed in his son's love (480). Thus Virgil places Anchises' union with Venus in a most favorable context, elevates it to a marriage (*coniugium*)³ and views it as a sign of divine goodwill.

crum cui mater Amorum / gaudet in Idaeis concubuisse iugis) and probably by Prop. 2, 32, 35-36 (*quamvis Ida Parim pastorem dicat amasse / atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam*: the reading *Parim* of the MSS is corrected by several editors; see G. R. Smyth, *Thesaurus criticus ad Sexti Propertii textum*, Leiden 1970, p. 78 and P.J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii elegiarum liber secundus*, II, Leiden 1962, *ad loc.*).

1. See G. Highet, *The Speeches in Virgil's Aeneid*, Princeton 1972, pp. 215 and 257.

2. R.B. Lloyd, «*Superbus* in the *Aeneid*», *AJP* 93 (1972) pp. 125-132, concludes that the adjective *superbus* in the *Aeneid* is regularly the harbinger of destruction. Discussing this line (*coniugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate superbo*) he says (p. 129): «So, Helenus, in referring to Anchises' proud union with Venus... views it from the destruction of Troy twice fallen and we must be reminded of the marriage's disastrous outcome--the crippling lightning stroke mentioned by Anchises himself in Book II». I think that Lloyd is wrong in his interpretation of *superbus* in our passage. It is unlikely that Helenus would have here deliberately used *superbus* in a negative sense since the poet himself explicitly underlines the seer's intention of honoring Anchises and since the context itself implies not divine punishment but divine favor (l. 476).

3. Cf. Serv. *auct.* on 3, 475: *bene, cum Veneri libidinem non obicit, dicendo coniugium maiorem honorem Anchisae tribuit*. Willi, *op. cit.*, p. 116 observes: «Das

The Virgilian version of the story corrects the tradition that Aphrodite met with Anchises either because Zeus caused her to, in order to prevent her having the laugh over all other deities¹, or δι' ἐρωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν². The marriage version certainly befitted the dignity of Venus and Anchises in the *Aeneid* and the dignity of their descendants -- from Aeneas and Ascanius to Augustus³.

Ennius' fragments (*Ann.* 1, 18f. V²) suggest that that poet constructed a scene in which Venus at the sack of Troy warned Anchises to depart⁴. A meeting between Venus and Anchises is also hinted at by two other sources: a) a scholium on Virgil, which says that in Naevius Venus gave Anchises *libros futura continentes*, probably before his departure from Troy⁵ (b) Quintus Smyrnaeus, who relates that Cypris led Aeneas and Anchises out of Troy⁶. Virgil, however, carefully avoided portraying a meeting between Venus and her ex-lover. In the *Aeneid* it is Aeneas who is warned by Venus to depart and who later persuades Anchises to go with him; and although Anchises in his lifetime acts as interpreter of divine signs and oracles⁷ it is now-

Venus sich dem Anchises hingab, erscheint als erhabene Würdigung und Geschenk, nicht als Schwäche». An echo of *coniugio dignate* is probably to be seen in Ov. *Fasti* 4, 35-36: *proximus Anchises, cum quo commune parentis / non dedignata est nomen habere Venus*.

1. *Hom. Hymn* 5, 45-52.

2. Apollod. 3, 12, 2.

3. On the Iulii as descendants of Venus see Wlosok, *op.cit.*, pp. 62f., 119f., and *passim*. The Sibyl's words to Aeneas as *deum certissima proles* (6, 322), besides making the obvious point that true divine ancestry is proved by one's *virtus* and feats (cf. also 4, 12), might imply Virgil's wish to underline the hero's legitimacy, in harmony with the *coniugium* version of the Venus and Anchises affair. On *certus* in the sense «born in wedlock» see OLD s. v. «certus» 4c and TLL III 917, 83ff. Quite significantly, Hercules, another illegitimate son, is addressed in 8, 301 as *vera Iovis proles*.

4. W. F. Jackson Knight, *Virgil: Epic and Anthropology*, London 1967, p. 86. Ennius exploited a version found in Sophocles [see Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 1, 48 and A.C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Sophocles*, Cambridge 1917 (Amsterdam 1963), on fr. 373], in which Anchises in obedience to the advice of Aphrodite (κατὰ τὴν μνήμην ὡν Ἀφροδίτη ἐπέσκηψε) warned Aeneas to depart from Troy.

5. *Schol. Verg. Aen. Cod. Paris. lat.* 7930 ad 7, 123 = Naev. *Bell. Pun. fr.* 13a Morel (= fr. 9 Strzelecki and p. XXV). See M. Barchiesi, *Nevio Epico*, Padova 1962, pp. 371f. and, for an overall interpretation of the scholium, H.T. Powell, «The Scholium of Naevius in *Parisinus Latinus* 7930», *AJP* 78 (1957) pp. 1-22.

6. Quint. Smyrn. 13, 326-328 and cf. Tryph. 651-652. See Barchiesi, *op.cit.*, pp. 349f.; F. Vian, *Recherches sur les posthomerica de Quintus de Smyrne*, Paris 1959, 55ff.; W. F. J. Knight, «Iliupersides», *CQ* 26 (1932) pp. 178-189, p. 188; cf. K. Schauenburg, «Aeneas und Rom», *Gymnasium* 67 (1960) pp. 176-191, p. 183.

7. See Powell, *art. cit.*, pp. 16f. He is not a true seer or prophet.

here stated that he received this gift from Venus or that he received any prophetic books from her. Finally there is no mention of Venus leading Aeneas and Anchises out of Troy¹ but only of Aeneas reaching the house of Anchises *ducente deo* (2, 632)².

Virgil's Venus does not refer to her ex-lover except when this becomes absolutely necessary and, even then, her words carry no memories whatever of their encounter on Mount Ida. Thus, in her speech to Jupiter (1, 229ff.) she does not specifically mention Anchises when she laments the great losses in human life that the Trojans have suffered (*quibus tot funera passis*: 232). In her speech to Aeneas during her epiphany at the sack of Troy³ she appeals to her son's love for his aged father in order to calm Aeneas' *furor*: to her, Anchises is only the *fessum aetate parentem* of Aeneas (596), and not the man she once seduced in the mountains of Phrygia.

According to a tradition--already hinted at in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphodite*--Anchises had been blasted by Zeus with a thunderbolt for boasting of his affair with Aphrodite, and was crippled or blinded or killed by it⁴. In his first appearance in the *Aeneid* (2, 635ff.) Anchises is represented as a helpless and feeble old man, bewildered, stubborn and without hope. In a speech to Aeneas (638ff.) he obstinately refuses to leave Troy and to survive a second destruction of the city. He urges the young and strong to leave and towards himself adopts an attitude of being al-

1. According to Servius (who quotes Varro) *Aen.* 1, 382 (*matre dea monstrante viam...*) conceals a reference to the star of Venus; see Wlosok, *op. cit.*, 79ff.

2. On the reading and sense see R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Secundus*, Oxford 1964, *ad loc.* B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry*, Oxford 1963, p. 255, has the following general comment about Venus and Anchises, which confirms what has been said above: «... she (sc. Venus) never intervenes when Anchises is present... Had Venus appeared in this book (= 3), the whole force of Anchises' relation to Aeneas would have been lost, and his old association with Venus could hardly have been recalled without a grotesque confusion of motifs and atmospheres».

3. On Venus' epiphany and her speech to Aeneas see R. Allain, «Le merveilleux dans un épisode crucial de l'Énéide», *LEC* 17 (1949) pp. 321-334; E.L. Harrison, «Divine Action in *Aeneid* Book Two», *Phoenix* 24 (1970) pp. 320-332; W. Kühn, *Götterszenen bei Vergil*, Heidelberg 1971, 44ff.

4. On the different versions see *Hom. Hymn.* 5, 188 and 286-290, and Allen-Halliday-Sikes *ad loc.*; Sophocles *fr.* 373 Pearson; Theocr. 1, 106f. and Gow *ad loc.* *Aeneid* 2, 647-649 and Austin *ad loc.*; Servius on 1, 617 and 2, 35 and 687; Hyg. *Fab.* 94. See also H.J. Rose, «Anchises and Aphrodite», *CQ* 18 (1924) pp. 11-16; L. H. Lenz, *Der homerische Aphroditehymnus und die Aristie des Aeneias in der Ilias*, Bonn 1975, 144ff.

ready dead or on the verge of death. He concludes his speech with a hint at the thunderbolt story (647-649)¹:

iam pridem invisus divis et inutilis annos
demoror, ex quo me divum pater atque hominum rex
fulminis adflavit ventis et contigit igni.

Virgil handles the story of the thunderbolt stroke in such a way as to turn the traditional picture of it as a sign of divine displeasure and disfavor into its opposite. First, he dissociates the thunderbolt from any reference to the act that provoked it and to the amorous encounter. Second, he incorporates it into the speech of a broken, querulous and confused old man whose statements are either not confirmed by what follows in the *Aeneid* or are directly disproved by it. In particular the fact that Anchises survived the first (as well as the second) destruction of Troy will later be portrayed by Helenus as a sign of divine favor; and Anchises' complaint that he is «hated of heaven» (*invisus divis*)-- which in essence reiterates his previous statement *me si caelicolae voluissent ducere vitam, | has mihi servassent sedes* (641-642)-- will be disproved first by Helenus' speech, in which Anchises is pictured as having enjoyed all along the love of the gods, and second by Anchises himself, who some lines below will stress his *pietas* towards Jupiter (690) and whose prayer to the same god for an *augurium* will be readily answered (692ff.). In addition Virgil represents Anchises as having been crippled by the thunderbolt only in this episode of Book 2, since elsewhere his picture of Anchises does not suggest a cripple²; and finally Virgil causes the thunderbolt that once struck Anchises to be overshadowed by omens which represent the beneficent and auspicious aspect of divine fire: first the tongue of flame above Iulus' head (679ff.) and second Jupiter's *augurium maximum* and the shooting-star (692ff.).

Thus, Virgil's account of the thunderbolt story is not motivated by a desire to preserve a scandalous piece of literary tradition or to condemn Anchises' act of frivolous indiscretion. Virgil uses it in order to give depth to the characterization of Anchises at this crucial moment

1. The attitude of Anchises at this crucial moment has been variously interpreted; see L.J.D. Richardson, «*Facilis iactura sepulcris*», *PIA* 46 (1940) pp. 85-101; A. Pagliaro, «*Ipse manu mortem inveniam* (Verg. *Aen.* II 645)», *Helikon* 1 (1961) pp. 139-147; R. B. Lloyd, «The Character of Anchises in the *Aeneid*», *TAPA* 88 (1957) pp. 44-55; Otis, *op. cit.*, 244ff. and Austin on 649.

2. See Austin on 649 and Marchiesi, *op. cit.*, 370.

as a helplessly feeble and utterly demoralized old man. He deliberately contrasts Anchises' feebleness' with Aeneas' strength (639) in order to provide the essential background to Aeneas' greatest act of filial *pietas* (described in ll. 707ff)¹. Virgil gives prominence to Anchises' complaint of divine hostility against him in connection with the thunderbolt, in order rather to confirm Jupiter's goodwill towards Anchises through multiple signs of divine favor.

We will now proceed to examine the most intriguing part of Virgil's adaptation of the Venus and Anchises story, i.e. the birth and birth-place of Aeneas. In ll. 494-614 of *Aeneid* 1 the poet narrates Dido's arrival at the temple of Juno, where she attends to the city affairs. Aeneas has been in the temple for some time together with Achates-- both of them hidden in a cloud and invisible. The hero sees his lost companions approach and hears Ilioneus ask the queen for help, which she readily grants. At this moment Aeneas comes forth from the cloud, briefly tells Dido of the plight of the Trojans and expresses his thanks to her. The queen is at first astounded at the miraculous appearance of Aeneas before her eyes and then addresses him with these words:

quis te, nate dea, per tanta pericula casus
 insequitur? quae vis immanibus applicat oris?
 tune ille Aeneas quem Dardanio Anchisae
 alma Venus Phrygii genuit Simoentis ad undam?
 (615-618)

According to Dido Venus gave birth to Aeneas at the bank of the river Simois at Troy. But the seduction of Anchises by Aphrodite took place traditionally on Mount Ida near Troy²; and the literary sources link the young Aeneas to Ida in various ways. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* he is to be raised by nymphs of this mountain and to be shown to Anchises; a second presentation will be made by Aphrodite herself when the boy reaches the age of five³. Anchises is to tell the Trojans

1. Austin *ad loc.*

2. In addition Aeneas was conceived on this mountain; see Hom. *Il.* 2, 819-821 and 5, 311-313, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* and Hes. *Theog.* 1008-1010. John Dryden 'translates' *Simoentis ad undam* «on the Idaean shore», thus combining Virgil with Homer.

3. *Hom. Hymn.* 5, 256-279. In the *Iliad* (13, 464-466) he is raised by Alcatheos, the husband of his sister Hippodameia (see Lenz, *op. cit.*, 106; K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, Göttingen 1961, 521). In Xen. *Cyn.* 1, 2 he is a pupil of the Centaur Cheiron.

that the mother of the boy is one of the nymphs haunting Mount Ida¹. In the *Iliad* we are told that Aeneas had been a cowherd on this mountain, like his father Anchises at the time when he was seduced by Aphrodite². Later sources invariably place the scene of the seduction on Mount Ida³. The only exception is Sil. Ital. 15, 59-60 who, adapting Virg. *Aen.* 1, 617-618, places the scene of the meeting by the banks of the Simois.

According to the literary sources, therefore, Aeneas was conceived, raised and spent some of his early years on Mount Ida, though it is not specifically stated that he was also born there. Virgil could easily have placed the birth of the hero on this mountain, had he wanted to. The fact that he did not, was probably motivated in part by his desire to dissociate completely the birth of Aeneas from the embarrassing story of the love affair of Venus and Anchises on Mount Ida. Besides, Virgil's picture of this mountain is very different from the bucolic landscape of «many-fountained Ida» which we encounter in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* and in which the immortals mate with the mortals or with each other. In the *Aeneid* Trojan Ida acquires a religious and symbolic dimension: it is associated with the worship of Cybele, whose sacred grove on one of its peaks provided the timber from which the Trojan fleet was built; to the exiled Trojans Ida is a source of hope and encouragement⁴ and its representation on the beak of Aeneas' ship is *profugis gratissima Teucris* (10, 160). Anchises himself retains no memories of his meeting with Venus on this mountain but refers to the *Idaeum nemus* as the place of the worship of Cybele (3, 111-113).

1. *Hom. Hymn.* 5, 280-290. When Anchises first sees the goddess he in fact mistakes her for a Nymph (97-99).

2. 20,90-91 and 188-190.

3. Theocr. 1, 105-106 and 20, 34-45; Ov. *Her.* 16, 201-202; Prop. 2,32, 35-36 (see note 11 above); Longus 4, 17, 6.

4. See J.W. Hunt, *Forms of Glory: Structure and Sense in Virgil's Aeneid*, Carbondale / Edwardsville 1973, pp. 67f. (on p. 68, ll. 17-19, Hunt mistakes Mount Ida of Crete for Mount Ida of Troy) and also *Aen.* 3, 5-6; 9, 80ff.; 9, 619-620; 10, 219ff. The first signs of hope for the Trojans are associated with this mountain: Jupiter's shooting-star, in answer to Anchises' prayer, «hides in the forests of Ida» (2, 696); the first light of day for the Trojans fleeing from their captured city comes from Lucifer, the star of Venus, rising above the top of Mount Ida (see Austin on 2, 801; Wlosok, *op. cit.*, p. 81). Quite significantly, Virgil suppresses the detail (found in Apollod. *Ep.* 5, 14; Quint. Smyrn. 12, 123; Tryph. 59; Petron. 89,5) that the Trojan Horse was built of local wood from Mount Ida, while on the contrary giving great prominence to the fact that it was this mountain which provided the timber for Aeneas' ships (3, 5-6 and esp. 9, 77ff. and 10, 215ff.)

The phrase *genuit Simoentis ad undam* probably echoes *Il.* 4, 475-476 *παρ' ὄχθησιν Σιμόεντος / γείνατ'*¹, where Homer narrates the birth of Simoeisios, the son of Anthemion, as part of a typical battle scene². Simoeisios is born beside the banks of the Simois, when his mother follows her parents down from Ida³ in order to tend their flocks, and is named after this river. But what distinguishes the case of Simoeisios from similar «biographies» -- in particular that of Satnios, the son of Enops, born by the banks of the Satnioeis (14, 442-445)--is that at the moment of his death the youth is likened to a poplar-tree that is felled and then lies drying by the banks of a river (482ff.). Homer's achievement in conveying a distinct kind of pathos by associating the birth, the identity and death of this young Trojan-- in short, his total human condition-- to a river, must have impressed Virgil.

Indeed, a closer examination reveals that Virgil's imitation is not limited to *formal* adaptation of a Homeric phrase, since (a) the choice of the river Simois as the birthplace of Aeneas is significant and (b) Virgil links with this river not only Aeneas' birth but also his death-wish during the storm scene of Book 4.

One way to illuminate the passage in question is through reference to *Aen.* 4, 365-367, where Dido reverses all she had said in *Aen.* 1, 617-618⁴:

«nec tibi diva parens generis nec Dardanus auctor,
perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres...»

Here the queen retracts her previous statement about Venus and Dardanian Anchises being the parents of Aeneas. She replaces them

1. G. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer, Hypomnemata VII*, Göttingen 1964, p. 377.

2. B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad*, *Hermes Einzelschr.* 21, Wiesbaden 1968, pp. 150ff.

3. *Ἰδοῦθεν κατιοῦσα*: it is interesting that in this passage Mount Ida and the river Simois are linked, which may have stimulated Virgil's imagination. It is also worth noticing that the Simois flows from Mount Ida (*Il.* 12, 19-24; Prop. 3, 1, 27 calls the river *Idaeum Simoenta*); see E. Buchholz, *Die Homerischen Realien*, Ia, *Homerische Kosmographie und Geographie*, Leipzig 1874, 306-308.

4. Serv. auct. on 4, 365: *et studet illud destruere* (1,617) 'tunc ille Aeneas, quem Dardanio Anchisae' et reliqua. et nominando Venerem et Dardanum et maternam et paternam generositatem destruit. See A. S. Pease, *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus*, Cambridge, Mass. 1935 (Darmstadt 1963), *ad loc.* About Dido's speech in general see R. D. Williams, «Dido's Reply to Aeneas (*Aen.* 4, 362-387)», *Vergiliana*, H. Bardon - R. Verdière eds., Leiden 1971, pp. 422-428.

with Hyrcanian tigresses and Mount Caucasus¹. Through the phrase *admorunt ubera (tigres)* she picks up the epithet *alma*² of Venus and reverses it; and she substitutes the harsh, bristling crags of Caucasus for the banks of the river Simois.

It is, therefore, clear that the harsh and desolate Caucasus landscape functions as a contrast to the riverbank. In this way, the riverbank emerges as a lovely and pleasant landscape³ and reflects the gentleness of Aeneas' heart as opposed to the Caucasus landscape, which symbolizes his hard-heartedness.

In addition the pair of lines *Aen.* 1, 615-616 and 617-618 contrast with each other in a number of ways. There is an opposition between Venus who gave the life to Aeneas and the force seeking to destroy it (= Juno)⁴. There is also an opposition between salt water, always hostile to the Trojans, and fresh water, mostly friendly to them⁵; between the savage, inhospitable seashore and the riverbank. Thus, the river and its bank become symbols of life, natural charm, peace and

1. On the association of the hard-hearted with rock imagery see Pease on 366 (*duris*); F. Klingner, *Catullus Peleus-Epos*, München 1956 = *Studien zum griechischen und römischen Literatur*, Zürich / Stuttgart 1964, pp. 156-224, pp. 217ff.; O. Weinrich, «Catull c. 60», *Hermes* 87 (1959) pp. 75-90; Highet, *op. cit.*, 148f.

2. The first sense of *almus* is «providing nurture», «fostering» (a derivative of *alo*; Lucr. 5, 230 *almae nutricis*; Stat. *Ach.* 2, 98 *almis uberibus*; see the OLD s.v. «almus»). It is a regular epithet of Venus: see R. Waltz, «Alma Venus», *REA* 59 (1957) pp. 51-71. Unfortunately Waltz misunderstands the sense of *alma* in our passage; he renders it with «bonne» or «vénéral» (p. 67), while the epithet here most probably retains its original sense (see the commentaries of Page and Conway *ad loc.*). Venus is in fact called *alma* at the moment she gives birth to Aeneas and when she stands very close to him (2, 591; 2, 664: a reminiscence of 2, 591; 10,332). The epithet is especially applicable to the goddess at the moment of the birth of her son and the correspondence with *admorunt ubera* is illuminating. With regard to the latter, it may be of some significance that, in the topos of the hard-hearted, the detail of *having been suckled by a wild animal* first appeared in Virgil and impressed his scholiasts (Gell. 12, 1,20ff; Macr. 5, 11, 14ff; see Pease *ad loc.*; Weinrich, *art. cit.*, p.80).

3. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 696-697 Σιμόεντος ἀρκτός ἐπ' ἀεξυφύλλους.

4. G. Stégen, *Virgile, Le Livre I de l'Énéide*, Namur 1975, on 615-616; R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus*, Oxford 1971, on *insequitur*. The double irony lies of course in the fact that this conversation takes place in the Temple of Juno and that Dido is attacking her patron deity without being aware of it.

5. On the function of salt and sweet water in the *Aeneid* [see H.W. Benario, «Virgil and the River Tiber», *Vergilius* 24 (1978) 4-14; J. Thomas, *Structures de l'imaginaire dans l'Énéide*, Paris 1981, pp. 76ff.

security¹. They also become symbols of gentleness, since the hard-hearted were sometimes described as born of the sea².

Within the *Aeneid* the Simois (and / or the Xanthus) often function as poetic substitutes for Troy³. But this is the *only* passage in which we catch a glimpse of the river before its quiet was disturbed by the turmoil of war and before it was turned into a rapid stream sweeping under its waters the arms and the bodies of the slain⁴. The transformation of the bank of the Simois from a landscape of life into a landscape of death can be seen at 3, 301ff, where the poet represents Andromache sacrificing at Hector's cenotaph which lies *falsi Simoentis ad undam* (302).

Aeneas closely resembles Simoeisios in that his birth and longed-for death are spun around this river. In his despairing outcry during the storm (1,91 ff.) the hero wishes he had been killed at Troy where *tot Simois correpta sub undis | scuta virum galeasque et fortia corpora voluit* (100-101). The image of the sea a few lines later (118-119) engulfing in its vast waters men, weapons, planks and the Trojan treasure offers a powerful contrast: death at sea is dreaded and prayed away while the waters of the hero's native river would have offered a welcome grave⁵.

Servius observes on *Aen.* 1, 617 that goddesses and nymphs gave birth by the banks of rivers or woods⁶. But it can hardly be coincident-

1. On the riverbank offering protection cf. the simile of 10, 805ff.,--which quite significantly applies to Aeneas--and M. Bonjour, *Terre natale: Études sur une composante affective du patriotisme romain*, Paris 1975, p. 536. On the whole, Aeneas' birthplace represents a *locus amoenus* (on its typical elements see G. Schönbeck, *Der locus amoenus von Homer bis Horaz*, Diss. Heidelberg 1962, 18ff.), an environment that has rich maternal associations (see Thomas, *op. cit.*, 83ff., 94ff.). The description of Venus' cult-place on Mount Idalium (*Aen.* 1, 691-694) has characteristics of the *locus amoenus* (Wlosok, *op. cit.*, p. 140, n. 5); it is precisely there that Venus *hides* Ascanius when Cupid assumes his form.

2. Pease, p. 316 (also Klingner and Weinreich). Cat. 64, 154-156, for instance, includes both the topos of the rock and of the sea.

3. See esp. 5, 633-634; 5, 803-804; 6, 88-89; 10, 60-61.

4. About the motif «Erschlagene im Strom» see H. Raabe, *Plurima mortis imago: Vergleichende Interpretationen zur Bildersprache Vergils*, München 1974, 79ff.

5. Serv. *auct.* comments on 1, 100 as follows: *sane bene fecisse videtur Simoentis mentionem, ut ibi videatur pati se optavisse, ubi genitus est*; cf also Georgii, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*

6. Cf. Germain Vaillant de Guéris (Germanus) in his *Virgil Commentary* of 1575, *ad loc.*: «Ripas multas fluviorum ortus heroici non pauci insignes fecerunt, et Homeri natales Meletis ripam, unde Melesigenes poeta dictus fuit, quemadmodum Heroum multorum incerta origo ad auctores fluvios passim a poetis et historiographis relata est».

tal that Aeneas is the *only* character in the *Aeneid* born by the banks of a river¹, considering that Virgil mentions various goddesses, wood-nymphs, river-nymphs or mortal women who bore sons to (river) gods, rural deities or mortals². Neither can it be coincidental that, as it will be seen below, the hero's birth at the riverbank has vital associations with his mission. It would certainly be overbold to assume that the story of Simoeisios has had such a far-reaching influence on the plan of the *Aeneid*. Yet, the «biography» of Simoeisios constitutes a remote parallel for the later story of Aeneas, since the hero's mission and destination are closely linked with rivers and his *requies certa laborum* (3, 393),--a «rest» of another order--, is located by the banks of the Tiber.

The Tiber in the *Aeneid* functions as the Italian counterpart of the Simois (and the Xanthus). This is made clear from the Sibyl's prophecy to Aeneas (6, 86-89):

bella, horrida bella,
et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.
non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra
defuerint;...

The idyllic river which we encounter at the opening of Book VII is destined, like the Simois, to «foam with blood» after the outbreak of the war between the Trojans and the Latins. Later in Book 8, 538-540 it is Aeneas himself who transfers to the Tiber the image of the Simois «whirling along in its waters shields and helmets and bodies of the brave»:

quas poenas mihi, Turne, dabis! quam multa sub undas
scuta virum galeasque et fortia corpora volves,
Thybrî pater³.

1. *Eductum* in 7, 763 (*eductum Egeriae lucis umentia circum / litora*: of Virbius) and 9, 584 (*eductum Martis luco Symaethia circum / flumina*: of the son of Arcens) means «reared» (= *educatum*) not «born»: see Conington-Nettleship *ad loc.*; Norden on *Aen.* 6, 763-765; Austin on *Aen.* 6, 765; the TLL V² 119, 80ff; and Donatus on *Ter. Ad.* 48: *quod nos educare dicimus, educere veteres dixerunt...*

2. See e.g. 5, 38; 7, 47-48, 734-735 and 659-661; 8, 138-139; 10, 551.

3. «The repetition, which harks back to the storm scene, articulates this change from dark despair to renewed confidence in his mission» (W. Moskalew, *Formular Language and Poetic Design in the Aeneid*, Leiden 1982, p. 128, with a survey of earlier discussions on the repetition of this line). On the function of the Tiber in the *Aeneid* see F.J. Worstbrock, *Elemente einer Poetik der Aeneis*, Münster 1963, 40ff; Benario, *art. cit.*

Virgil portrays Aeneas' journey to Italy as a return to the Trojans' *antiquam matrem* (oracle of Apollo, 3, 94-96; cf. the prophecy in 3, 163ff.)¹ As it will be shown below, it is also for Aeneas a return to the environment of his birthplace and a return to Venus.

The hero is clearly attracted to sail from the sea into the Tiber mouth by the pastoral river landscape². The face of the promised land recalls that of his birthplace: it is a riverbank that offers natural charm, peace, security, protection and the possibility of a new life (7, 29-36). As Aeneas sights this spot from the sea, he bids his companions make for the shore and *laetus fluvio succedit opaco* (36). The shady river receives the joyous hero into the calm of its maternal environment³.

The journey of Aeneas from the sea into the Tiber is a journey from Juno to Venus, reversing the one from Venus to Juno referred to in *Aen.* 1, 615-618. Juno herself admits that in an outburst of anger: *optato conduntur Thybridis alveo | securi pelagi atque mei* (7, 303-304). The term *alveus* used here and in 7, 33 for the channel of the Tiber brings to mind its cognate *alvus* (belly) and suggests the womb⁴. The later penetration of the Tiber by Aeneas, which ultimately leads to his reunion with Venus, symbolically becomes a *regressus ad uterum*.

The meeting of mother and son in Book 8, 608ff. is prepared through birth imagery linked with the bank of the Tiber. At *Aen.* 3, 389-393 Helenus prophesies to Aeneas that he will establish his city and find rest from toils at the place where the sow prodigy will be fulfilled, i.e. *secreti ad fluminis undam litoreis... sub ilicibus*. By the banks of this secluded

1. Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 476ff.

2. The normal tradition put Aeneas' first landing south of the Tiber: see H. Boas, *Aeneas' Arrival in Latium*, *A. H. Bijdragen VI*, Amsterdam 1938, pp. 53ff. on the sources and other possible reasons for Virgil's choice. Cf. also J. Carcopino, *Virgile et les origines d' Ostie*, Paris 1968², 629ff.; V. Buchheit, *Vergil über die Sendung Roms*, Heidelberg 1963, pp. 173ff.; Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 535ff. On the landscape of the Tiber see H. - D. Reeker, *Die Landschaft in der Aeneis, Spudasmata XXVII*, Hildesheim / New York 1971, pp. 51-53, 58-62. On possible ominous traits in it see K. J. Reckford, «Latent Tragedy in *Aeneid* VII, 1-285», *AJP* 82 (1961) pp. 252-269, p. 255; M.C.J. Putnam, «*Aeneid* VII and the *Aeneid*», *AJP* 91 (1970) pp. 408-430, p. 417.

3. On shade as a maternal symbol see Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 114; see also Bonjour, *op. cit.*, p. 536:... *opacus* évoque l'ombre protectrice des arbres et accentue l'impression de sécurité que durent alors éprouver les exilés». On the river and the forest as maternal symbols see Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 83ff., 94ff.

4. Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 123ff. Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 538f. understands *alveus* as a symbol of the «sein maternel»; Reckford, *art. cit.*, p. 255 detects a latent symbolism of the future war in Aeneas' entering the «womb» of the river.

stream and under the oaks he will find a white sow just delivered of a litter of thirty young¹. In 8, 26ff. Aeneas lies down (*procubuit*: 30) at the bank of the Tiber (*in ripa*: 28) and goes to sleep. Tiberinus appears to him in a dream as a ghostly personification of the river landscape, assures him that he has obtained the promised land and repeats the sow prophecy. He also mentions the later foundation of Alba Longa by his son Ascanius and advises him to sail upstream to Pallanteum and to strike an alliance with Evander. The next day Aeneas sights the sow lying on the green bank (*procubuit viridique in litore*: 83) with its offspring² and sacrifices it to Juno in order to appease her wrath, as he had been instructed by Tiberinus.

Thus, the sow prodigy that is rendered through the image of «birth at the riverbank» marks Aeneas' arrival at his destination. The use of the term *procubuit* for Aeneas' sleep on the bank of the Tiber--later used also of the She-wolf and the twins in the opening scene of the Shield description: 630ff. - picks up the same image³: upon arrival at his destination the hero is spiritually reborn by the banks of the Tiber into his future and that of his son Ascanius⁴.

The culmination of Aeneas' journey comes at Caere, in Etruria, where Venus appears bringing her son the armor of Vulcan. There Aeneas retreats to a grove by a stream, all enclosed by *cavi colles* and dark forest (8, 597ff.). The setting teems with maternal symbols⁵ and suggests a return to the environment of the hero's birthplace.

It is precisely in this environment that Venus sights her son: «some way off and alone by a cool stream» (609-610). The intimacy of their reunion at the riverbank is strongly stressed. She embraces him and delivers him the armor to be used, as she explains, against the proud Latins and fierce Turnus. This is the first time since his departure from

1. For the sow prodigy in general see B. Grassmann - Fisher, *Die Prodigien in Vergils Aeneis*, München 1966, pp. 54ff.; G. Binder, *Aeneas und Augustus: Interpretationen zum 8. Buch der Aeneis*, Meisenheim am Glan 1971, pp. 21ff.; on the sow as a maternal symbol see Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 533.

2. About the symbolism of the landscape Bonjour, *op. cit.*, p. 534, observes: «On découvre là une constellation de symboles maternels: la fraîcheur, l'ombre, l'eau, la couleur verte, la forêt, symboles qui évoquent tous le calme, le repos, la profonde sécurité»

3. See Putnam, *op. cit.*, 148f.

4. For interpretations of Aeneas' «rebirth» see Putnam, *op. cit.*, ch. 3; Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 545ff.

5. See p. 38 n. 3; also Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 84f. (on the *cavi colles*) and p. 96 on the setting of this scene.

Troy that Aeneas sees his mother without disguise and the *only* time in the *Aeneid* that mother and son fall into each other's arms¹. Venus is no longer the «cruel» and inaccessible «vain phantom» of the past (1, 407-410). Her presence is real and tangible. The only other time that mother and son have had such a close contact was when Venus gave birth to Aeneas by the banks of the Simois. And while in the past Aeneas vainly attempted to embrace her, this time Venus seeks her son's arms without being asked to.

Venus' embracing of Aeneas takes place at the riverbank, in the last hours of peace² and just before she delivers to him the Shield, whose contents are *genus omne futurae / stirpis ab Ascanio pugnataque in ordine bella*. It picks up Aeneas' birth by the banks of the Simois and represents the hero's ultimate stage of spiritual regeneration--he has already attended Anchises' review of the future generations of glorious Romans and has walked on the future site of Rome. The warm reunion at the riverbank serves as a preparation of Aeneas for the violent war with Turnus and for the crucial moment of the final revelation to him of the future affairs of his descendants and the triumphs of Rome.

In conclusion, morality plays an important role in Virgil's adaptation of the Venus and Anchises story³. Their affair is elevated to a *coniugium* and all frivolous elements are excised from it. The story about the thunderbolt is placed in an entirely new perspective. In addition no meeting between the aged Anchises and Venus takes place at the sack of Troy. In his desire to dissociate the birth of Aeneas from Mount Ida, where the love encounter occurred, Virgil places it by the banks of the Simois. His choice of this river was partly influenced by the «biography» of Simoeisios in Homer (*Il.* 4, 473ff.). Furthermore, Aeneas' birth by the banks of the Simois has vital associations with his mission.

1. Putnam, *op. cit.*, 145ff. compares and contrasts the meeting of Aeneas with Anchises in the Underworld in a similar setting (6, 679ff.). On the meeting of Venus and Aeneas see also Kühn, *op. cit.*, 122f.

2. Cf. Bonjour, *op. cit.*, 544: «La sensibilité virgilienne crée un accord mystérieux entre le baiser de Vénus Genetrix, ces dernières heures de paix et la terre italienne dont le caractère féminin et maternel ne s'est jamais aussi bien exprimé». According to her interpretation «le baiser de Vénus authentifie les retrouvailles des Troyens avec *l'antiqua mater*».

3. On the moral climate of the Augustan age and the *Aeneid* see G. Williams, «Poetry...» *art. cit.*