NYMPHAS . . . E NAVIBUS ESSE: DECORUM AND POETIC FICTION IN *AENEID* 9. 77–122 AND 10. 215–59

ELAINE FANTHAM

EVEN BEFORE Servius, critics of Vergil had reproached the poet for his invention of the scene in which Cybele rescues Aeneas' ships from Turnus by transforming them into nymphs of the sea (*Aen.* 9. 77–122). Though they recognized that he had not inherited but created the episode, they deplored the boldness of this unprecedented invention. Servius himself assumes that there is a standard of probability appropriate to epic fiction, and he argues that Vergil is attempting to give authority to his invention by the retrospective αἴτιον of Jupiter's concession to Cybele that occupies the greater part of the narrative (ad *Aen.* 9. 81):

> figmentum hoc licet poeticum sit, tamen quia exemplo caret, notatur a criticis; unde longo prooemio excusatur, nam ideo et prisca ratione religionis et Iovis beneficio dicit esse perfectum, ut naves mutarentur in nymphas, quo vel aliqua ex parte possit esse verisimile.

Indeed, as H. Georgii showed in his analysis of individual comments on this episode, critics had been uneasy about several aspects of the metamorphosis.[1]

Modern editors, too, have been troubled by the episode. In the most recent English language commentary on Book 9, R. D. Williams called it "the most incongruous episode in the whole *Aeneid,*" referring the student to Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14. 530–65, "where it easily and naturally belongs."[2] The reference to Ovid is common and significant: nearly sixty years ago J. W. Mackail declared that "many . . . readers are inclined to wish [Vergil] had discarded the incident and its sequel in 10. 219–255 and left it to be treated by the hand of Ovid as a fairy tale."[3]

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1. *Die antike Aeneiskritik* (Stuttgart, 1891), pp. 392–96. Note that this passage is cited by Servius at 3. 46 as one of three Vergilian inventions criticized for implausibility: "vituperabile enim est poetam aliquid fingere quod penitus a veritate discedat. obicitur Vergilio de mutatione navium in nymphas; et quod dicit per aureum ramum ad inferos esse descensum; tertium cur Iris Didoni comam secuerit." Cf. Servius Danielis at 9. 81: "alii laudant quod dicendo 'fertur' incredibili rei auctoritatem dare noluerit."

2. *The "Aeneid" of Virgil: Books 7–12* (London, 1973), p. 283.

3. *The "Aeneid"* (Oxford, 1930), p. 335. For a doxography of scholarly reaction, see now R. M. Wilhelm, "Cybele, the Great Mother of Augustan Order," *Vergilius* 34 (1989): 89–90.

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It seems that the scene has generally been the victim of its place in literary history. Lacking the authorization of a close Homeric or Hellenistic model, its transformation is seen in terms of the great epic of metamorphosis that appeared within a generation of the *Aeneid.* The predominantly detached or ironic tone of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has colored the ethos of metamorphosis itself, making the post-Ovidian reader forgetful of the sacred or tragic metamorphoses of other societies and their literatures. But Williams makes a further reproach. The very precedents from the *Odyssey* and the *Argonautica* that could be used to justify aspects of Vergil's treatment of the ships are disqualified: "the Argo and the Phaeacians belong wholly to a heroic world, in contrast with Aeneas' fleet which is entering a proto-Roman world." This criticism, based on Williams' concept of decorum, could be answered with the argument that Vergil, by drawing on both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad,* was rejecting the limits of decorum imposed by the *Iliad* and was reserving for himself the license of the fabulous central books of the *Odyssey.*[4] But precedent is at best a partial answer to the question of decorum, which requires instead concentration on the poet's own procedures for integrating the exceptional into his narrative: he will create his own decorum by foreshadowing, by context, and by poetic devices that mediate the transition from the marvelous Odyssean or Apollonian world into the more realistic Iliadic narrative.

Vergil's sources in Greek epic were established early in this century by the great pioneers of *Quellenforschung* and have since been subjected to detailed analysis by Georg Knauer.[5] In this paper I shall draw on their interpretations, moving from a summary of *Aeneid* 9. 77–122 to a brief comparison with its acknowledged formal model in *Odyssey* 13. I then review precedents for the treatment of ships as animate or supernaturally endowed in Greek and Roman tradition, before returning to Vergil's transformation scene to focus on the poet's manipulation of language to suggest the special status of Aeneas' ships. Next, I recall elements of indirect foreshadowing in the *Aeneid* itself, contrasting with the bare record of the ships' construction in Book 3 the episodes in Books 1 and 5 where they are rescued by divine intervention from destruction by storm and fire.

With this evidence in hand we will consider Cybele's intervention in the metamorphosis of Book 9, in the context of Aeneas' relations with the gods from his first arrival in Latium to his return from Rome and Caere and his reunion with Ascanius and the Trojans in Book 10. The encounter with the nymphs at 10. 219–55 is a prelude to this reunion, and I hope to show that this nocturnal scene, richly reminiscent of

4. Cf. N. Frye's distinction between high heroic poetry and romance (*Anatomy of Criticism* [Princeton, 1957], p. 33): "the hero of romance moves in a world in which the ordinary laws of nature are suspended: . . . enchanted weapons, talking animals [for which read "ex-ships"] . . . violate no rule of probability once the postulates of romance have been established."

5. For discussions of this scene, see R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*[5] (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 241–42, 295, 311, 358, 391; E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro: "Aeneis" Buch VI*[8] (Darmstadt, 1984), p. 169; and G. N. Knauer, *Die "Aeneis" und Homer* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 270–72.

Hellenistic poetry and evoking the marine world of Aeneas' past, has been designed by Vergil to prepare Aeneas and Vergil's readers for the new Italian world from which Rome will emerge. As epilogue, Ovid's adaptation of this episode in the *Metamorphoses* will be used to demonstrate the difference of aesthetic and the affinity of national purpose that animate the versions of the two poets.

I. THE TRANSFORMATION AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

At 9. 77 Vergil suspends Turnus' attack on the fleet to set the approaching crisis apart by a proem (77–79):

> quis deus, O Musae, tam saeva incendia Teucris
> avertit? tantos ratibus quis depulit ignes?
> dicite: prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis.

The reader is prepared for divine rescue, and by stressing the antiquity of the tale, Vergil prepares the reader for a myth, like tragedy removed in time and not confined to realistic events.[6] In 80–106 Vergil returns to the time of Aeneas' departure from Troy and his construction of the fleet, to report Cybele's petition to Jupiter for the protection of her sacred pines, now exposed to risk from wind and sea. Jupiter protests that ships of human manufacture may not have the privilege of immortality, nor has any god power to give Aeneas certainty in face of undefined future hazards. He offers a lesser boon: when the fleet reaches Italy he will take away the mortal shape from each ship that has brought Aeneas to Laurentum and bid them become goddesses of the sea. He seals this promise with an oath, and Vergil returns the narrative to present time: the promised day is at hand, and the fates have completed the due span of time. Now Turnus' insult prompts the Mother to ward off the firebrands (107–9). In this divine perspective Vergil hints, with the words *mortalem . . . formam* (101) and *tempora . . . complerant* (107–8), that as ships the sacred trees have a finite life, whose duration is known to the Fates.

At 110 Vergil moves from the divine to the human point of view. A strange light dazzles the onlookers (*oculis offulsit*), as a vast cloud crosses the horizon from the East with the Mother's retinue (112 *Idaei . . . chori*) and an awe-inspiring voice fills the ears of both Trojan and Rutulian forces. Vergil conveys what is happening through the divine injunctions, first to the Trojans—they need not fear or fight, since Turnus will sooner burn the seas themselves than the sacred pines—then

6. See Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*[5], pp. 241 n. 3, 242 nn. 1 and 2, on the implications of *fama, vetustas,* and *dicitur* or *fertur* for the status of the following narrative. Robert Kaster has pointed out to me Vergil's similar use of "postponed exposition" to present Diana's introduction of Camilla's story at 11. 535–94: this retrospective account, inconsistent in several respects with the introduction to Camilla at 7. 803–17, is no less a *figmentum* than the metamorphosis of the nymphs; see now N. Horsfall, "Camilla, o i limiti dell' invenzione," *Athenaeum* 66 (1988): 31–51. Ovid (*Met.* 1. 400, *Fast.* 4. 203, 5. 625) and Lucan (4. 590, 9. 356–59) follow Vergil in invoking *vetustas* or *vetus fama* before narrating the fabulous.

to the former ships (116–17): "vos, ite solutae, / ite deae pelagi; genetrix iubet." Now the ships become the subjects of active verbs: they break their moorings and seek the sea-bottom, dipping their prows as dolphins do their snouts. The comparison with a living sea creature is followed by a sea apparition: there surface the same number of *virgineae . . . facies* (120–22), a phrase stressing human appearance, which we should not trivialize as a periphrasis for *virgines*. These are instantly borne away to sea, leaving the Rutuli dazed and terrified and no hint of the Trojan reaction.

In formal terms we can recognize Vergil's adaptation of narrative elements from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The proem (77–79) draws on Homer's invocation of the Muses at *Iliad* 16. 112, before Hector's successful attack on the Greek ships; but Homer asks the Muses to tell how fire took hold of the ships, not to explain a divine intervention.[7] Again, the dialogue between Jupiter and Cybele formally recalls the scene between Zeus and Poseidon at *Odyssey* 13. 125–38.[8] There the Phaeacian ship that has successfully brought Odysseus to Ithaca is on its way home when Poseidon asks Zeus to punish the Phaeacians by destroying the ship in mid-voyage and burying (or perhaps isolating) their city with an earthquake. Zeus grants him the lesser satisfaction of turning the ship to stone when it is in sight of the Phaeacians (13. 163–64). The decision is immediately implemented, without any divine epiphany or voice from the sky. Instead, it is king Alcinous who interprets the miracle, recalling that his father told him long ago of ancient oracles foretelling punishment by Poseidon if the Phaeacians gave passage to castaways. He urges them to sacrifice to Poseidon before he engulfs the city, and Homer cuts away from the scene, leaving them still at the altar. In contrast with Poseidon's vengeance, Cybele intervenes in Vergil to bring rescue, not destruction, and apotheosis, instead of petrification.

While still considering *Odyssey* 13 we note two other differences between the Homeric transformation and its Vergilian offshoot. First, the magic status of the Phaeacian ships: as Alcinous told Odysseus before his departure, the Phaeacian ships "take aim in their minds . . . [and] know the thoughts and minds of men" (*Od.* 8. 556, 559).[9] Homer encourages the recall of this conversation by giving to Alcinous in 13. 174 the same words as in his earlier speech (8. 566), describing the Phaeacians as "happy conveyers of all men." Again, the sudden doom of the Phaeacian ship is less disturbing to the reader than the sudden glory

7. For discussion, see Knauer, *Die "Aeneis" und Homer,* pp. 270–72. Note that 9. 77 resembles the proem to the Aristaeus episode (*G.* 4. 315 "quis deus hanc, Musae, quis nobis extudit artem?") and shares its function of shifting the level of discourse from the naturalistic to the marvelous.

8. See now P. Hardie, "Ships and Shipnames in the *Aeneid,*" in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble,* ed. M. and M. Whitby and P. Hardie (Bristol and Chicago, 1987), pp. 163–71, esp. 163–64 and 167. Hardie's many valuable insights have enabled me to shorten considerably the original form of my paper.

9. On this episode, see D. Frame, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 78–80.

of Aeneas' fleet, because the Phaeacian vessel has been introduced into the epic only for the duration of this brief episode: the voyage and metamorphosis form one short, uninterrupted narrative. In contrast, when the ships that have been buffeted over the Mediterranean for so many years are suddenly transformed, the reader is likely to wonder why divine intervention suddenly takes so extreme a form. Hence, as Heinze realized, the careful detail of Jupiter's guarantee to Cybele in 9. 98–103 ensures that she will not intervene until the *promissa dies* when the ships have reached Italy and ended their service.[10]

Thus, though the dialogue of Poseidon and Zeus in the *Odyssey* is a formal model for Vergil's postponed exposition of Jupiter's promise to Cybele, the petrification of the Phaeacian ship offers no adequate precedent for the transformation of Aeneas' long-suffering fleet.

II. THE PECULIAR STATUS OF SHIPS

Hardie has called this metamorphosis "an uncanny way of overcoming the uncanniness of ships" and has pointed to the opening lines of Catullus 64 as the immediate stimulus to Vergil's poetic imagination.[11] There is no doubt that both Catullus and Apollonius provided a tradition that privileged the ship as something more than an artifact, still carrying the life of the trees it had been, whether constructed by men alone or with divine assistance. Thus Argo, the first ship of all, is depicted by Apollonius as made by Athene and Argos the son of Arestor from the timbers of Mt. Pelion (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1. 111–12). She had speech because Athene had fitted into the middle of her stem a divine plank (1. 526 δόρυ θεῖον) from an oak at Dodona. Argo speaks as they leave the harbor and again "in a human voice" at 4. 580–90, warning the Argonauts against the wrath of Zeus and giving them instructions. Later in Book 4 the oracular voice of the Libyan goddesses will treat Argo as the mother of her passengers, ordering the Argonauts to recompense their mother for the months she bore them in her womb, so that they may get their return to Thessaly (4. 1325–28). Thus Argo is both a moral being, in touch with divine will, and a personality who suffers and receives compensation. Perhaps it was on the model of Argo that Naevius gave Aeneas a ship constructed by Mercury.[12] But Jupiter's words *mortali . . . manu factae . . . carinae* (9. 95) reaffirm that these ships were manmade, as Aeneas himself had indicated in 3. 5–6 ("classemque sub ipsa / Antandro et Phrygiae molimur montibus Idae") and as Vergil's language suggested at 9. 80–81 ("tempore quo primum Phrygia formabat in Ida / Aeneas classem").

The model of Argo dominated the Roman poetic tradition, from Ennius' adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* to the generation of Varro of Atax, translator of the *Argonautica,* and Catullus, who makes his yacht, the *phaselus,* the lively speaker of a poem recalling her birth among the

10. *Virgils epische Technik*[5], p. 392.
11. "Ships and Shipnames," p. 164.
12. Naevius frag. 7 Strzelecki = Serv. Dan. on *Aen.* 1. 170.

trees of Amastris and Cytorus (4. 11–12). Hardie and R. F. Thomas have stressed the influence on Vergil and other Roman poets of the brilliant opening scene in Catullus 64, which begins by personifying, or at least animating, the pine trees born of Pelion that have learned to swim the sea: "Peliaco quondam prognatae vertice pinus / dicuntur . . . nasse per undas."[13] As Hardie notes, Catullus' famous description of the sea nymphs rising in amazement at the sight of Argo uses language that Vergil echoed elsewhere and certainly recalls in this scene: compare (*Aen.* 9. 119–22)

> delphinumque modo demersis aequora rostris
> ima petunt. hinc virgineae (mirabile monstrum)
> reddunt se totidem facies . . .

with (Catull. 64. 12, 14–15)

> quae simul ac rostro ventosum proscidit aequor . . .
> emersere feri candenti e gurgite vultus
> aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.

Clearly, the image of the nymphs' *virgineae facies* goes back to Catullus' *feri . . . vultus.* Catullus' nymphs welcome the ship as another sea creature, a newcomer to their world. The Catullan model will be renewed in the scene at *Aeneid* 10. 215–59, when the new nymphs rejoin their old companion, Aeneas' flagship.

III. VERBAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN "AENEID" 9. 77–122

Thus Vergil had precedent for retaining the identity of his trees while describing their experiences as ships, and for portraying these ships as personalities. But until Book 9 he had not used this potential, and he had to prepare the actual transformation of the ships to living beings without a literary model. It is important to consider every detail of his language in this crucial scene to show how he both keeps the identification of tree and ship before his reader and stresses the transitional nature of their form as ships.

This is achieved more through the skillful exploitation of pronouns than through the usual devices of metonymy or transferred epithet. In Cybele's speech the timbers (87 *trabes*) of her sacred grove are represented by the feminine pronoun *has:* "has ego Dardanio iuveni, cum classis egeret, / laeta dedi." The circumstantial *cum*-clause permits the idea that they are merely lent to Aeneas to serve as his fleet: similarly her appeal in 90–92 ("hoc precibus sine posse parentem, / ne cursu quassatae . . . / vincantur: prosit nostris in montibus ortas") avoids any word for ships, substituting two verbs more appropriate to persons.[14] Jupiter, too, after speaking of *mortali . . . manu factae . . . carinae* in 95,

13. See Hardie, "Ships and Shipnames," p. 163; Thomas, "Catullus and the Polemics of Poetic Reference," *AJP* 103 (1982): 144–64.

14. Vergil uses *ortus* only of the sun (or daylight) and of persons (cf. *Aen.* 3. 167, 7. 206, 240); according to Serv. Dan. on 9. 91, *ortas* marks the trees as a higher form of life with consciousness (*sensum quendam*).

continues with a sentence based on feminine forms and two verbs proper to human subjects, *defunctae* and *evaserit.*[15]

When the direct narrative resumes after the reported dialogue of the gods, Vergil modifies his previous language by calling the ships sacred (109 *ratibus sacris*), and in 114–16 Cybele both claims them as her own (*meas . . . naves*) and recalls their origin by an ἀδύνατον—"maria ante exurere Turno / quam sacras dabitur pinus"—that reinstates their nature as trees. Her address to the ships suppresses their old identity with another ambiguous feminine participle (116 *ite solutae*) before introducing their new identity, *deae pelagi:* the direct command—117 "ite deae pelagi: genetrix iubet"—enacts the promise given by Jupiter at 101–2: "magnique iubebo / aequoris esse deas."[16] The miracle is less startling because it can be seen to proceed according to the divine decision.

Not only has Vergil traced the creation of the fleet from trees and its recreation as nymphs, but through the use of *formabat* (80) and *mortalem . . . formam* (101) he has stressed from the beginning the transitional nature of the ships' manufactured form.[17] Only J. Perret, to my knowledge, has expressed what is at issue here.[18] The ships have a form imposed by man, and this is doomed to perish; but their raw material (*silva* and *materies* are the ancient terms for both timber and matter) has a soul capable of taking on a new, immortal existence, at the will of a god.

So, too, when the nymphs emerge from the sea, the reflexive verb *reddunt se* (122) carries a double meaning: not only do they return to the surface, they are also restored to their proper nature.[19] This renewal will be confirmed by the words of the former ship Cymodocea in 10. 234: "hanc genetrix faciem miserata refecit"—"The Mother in compassion restored this appearance to us."[20]

15. *Defungi* is used by Vergil only of persons: with 9. 98 cf. the Sibyl's address to Aeneas at 6. 83 ("O tandem magnis pelagi defuncte periclis"), and 6. 306 ("defuncta corpora vita / magnanimum heroum," echoing the poet's anthropomorphization of the bee-world at *G.* 4. 475). *Evadere* is more ambivalent, but it is used ten times of persons, only twice of things: of a boulder thrown in battle (12. 907) and, significantly, of Aeneas' fleet (5. 689 *da flammam evadere classi*).

16. Note that Cybele, with the phrase *genetrix iubet,* identifies herself not only as The Mother, but as mother of the trees (i.e., ships) that she is addressing.

17. This is the only instance of *formare* in the *Aeneid;* at *G.* 3. 163 it is used in a personification of calves, as if they were young men to be trained for country life. The verb is also uncommon in Ovid, but note the first of the six instances in *Met.*: 1. 363–64 (Deucalion regrets that he cannot create human life like his father, Prometheus) "o utinam possim populos reparare paternis / artibus atque animas formatae infundere terrae."

18. *Virgile: "Énéide" IX–XII* (Paris, 1980), p. 8; Perret also provides the most sensitive appreciation of the encounter with Aeneas in Book 10: cf. ibid., p. 52 n. (on 10. 248).

19. For *reddere* used passively of a diver returning to the surface, cf. *Aen.* 5. 178; of restoration to one's proper element, cf. *Aen.* 6. 18 (Daedalus returns to earth), 545 (Deiphobus returns to his fellow shades). In *G.* 4. 225–26 ("scilicet huc reddi deinde ac resoluta referri / omnia, nec morti esse locum") as at *Aen.* 9. 122, the verb denotes recovery of the proper form of life.

20. Cymodocea is *fandi doctissima* (225), Vergil's hint that her words are carefully chosen. Serv. (at 10. 234) recognizes the force of *re-* in *refecit* but comments that the prefix either is superfluous or was chosen "quia ante in ipsis forma fuerat navium," which seems to miss the idea of restitution, as opposed to mere change.

IV. FORESHADOWING IN THE "AENEID": THE HISTORY OF THE SHIPS

But it is not enough to show that Vergil built the scene using a Homeric model for his divine dialogue and ensuing act of metamorphosis, or even that he has worded the episode carefully to transfuse the identity of the sacred trees into their temporary form as ships before they are reborn as nymphs. The major obstacle to the reader's acceptance of this transformation is his or her previous experience of the ships themselves as ordinary and vulnerable. This experience begins, not in historical sequence with Vergil's notice of the construction of Aeneas' fleet, but with the storm that opens the first book of the epic.

There are, however, several reasons why we should begin by examining Vergil's brief report of the building of the fleet (3. 4–6):

> desertas quaerere terras
> auguriis agimur divum, classemque sub ipsa
> Antandro et Phrygiae molimur montibus Idae.

We may wonder, with one ancient commentator, why Vergil did not indicate here that Cybele had authorized Aeneas to fell her trees.[21] Though the guarantee of divine auguries seems to legitimate Aeneas' action, and though Vergil does not specify that the ships constructed near Ida came from sacred timber, his words might evoke an ominous precedent or—worse—an act of impiety. Euripides, for example, assumes that Paris built his ship from the timber of Ida and cites the act as an omen of his destructive voyage.[22] More significantly, R. F. Thomas has recently shown that Vergil himself was concerned in the *Aeneid* with Roman religious scruples about tree-felling.[23] Inscriptions attest that Roman law enforced respect for sacred groves—a respect that had been demonstrated as recently as 30 B.C., when Octavian ordered the execution of D. Turullius for felling a grove of Asclepius on Cos to build his fleet.[24]

Did Vergil, by omitting Cybele's permission from the notice in Book 3, lay Aeneas open to suspicion of impiety? Was Book 3 perhaps composed before the scandal of Turullius?[25] Could Vergil have composed the dialogue of Cybele and Jupiter to exonerate Aeneas? It is possible; but even so, the exoneration of his hero would not also necessitate Jupiter's (that is, Vergil's) decision to transform the ships: that entailed a further poetic decision. On balance, I would argue that Vergil had good reason

21. Cf. Serv. Dan. on *Aen.* 9. 83: "sane haec narratio tertii libri erat, sed dilata est, ut hic opportunius redderetur, aut ne bis idem diceretur: potest ergo aut κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον videri aut hysteronproteron."

22. Cf. *Hec.* 629–35.

23. "Tree Violation and Ambivalence in Virgil," *TAPA* 118 (1988): 261–73.

24. See J. Bodel, "Graveyards and Groves: The *Lex Lucerina* Reconsidered," *AJAH* (forthcoming). Octavian had political reasons for executing D. Turullius, who was one of Caesar's assassins and served Mark Antony as admiral, but the reports of Dio 51. 8 and Val. Max. 1. 1. 9 show that the impiety toward Asclepius was given prominence.

25. So G. Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the "Aeneid"* (New Haven, 1983), pp. 262–77, reviving the claim that the book was composed as a third-person narrative and only later became Aeneas' own report; see *contra*, Heinze, *Vergils epische Technik*[5], pp. 82–95.

to be both brief and discreet in the notice at 3. 5–6: this is the beginning of Aeneas' major narrative of his wanderings by sea, and it could only have distracted from the forward movement to linger over the origin of a fleet that had already been made familiar and legitimate by its shipwreck and rescue in Book 1.

In composing this opening episode of the first book Vergil inherited the storm itself from the fifth book of the *Odyssey* and (to some extent) from Naevius' *Bellum Punicum*.[26] But he seems to have originated Neptune's intervention to reverse the shipwreck, and he deliberately extended this rescue narrative by suspending it before either the reader or Aeneas is aware of its full outcome—a technique that, as I shall demonstrate, he also applied to the divine rescue of the ships in Book 5 and their rescue and transformation in Books 9 and 10.

The recovery of the fleet is presented in skillfully articulated installments. The original storm drives three ships onto the rocks, and three more founder in the Syrtes, while Orontes' vessel is struck head-on and engulfed in a whirlpool: others are overwhelmed, and all take on water (1. 108–23). The fleet seems to be doomed, but Neptune intervenes, both with orders to the rioting winds and with action. In 142–46, after calming the storm, Neptune clears a channel through the Syrtes while Triton and Cymothoe push other ships off the rocks. It is at this point that the poet cuts away from the scene, and it will be some time before the outcome is confirmed. First the disguised Venus interprets the swan-portent for Aeneas as the safe arrival of his ships (397–400); this is followed by the appearance in Carthage of many of his shipwrecked comrades (508–12) and the request of Ilioneus (551) that the Trojans be allowed to beach and repair their shattered fleet. Finally, Achates brings the miraculous recovery of (almost) the whole fleet to Aeneas' attention (582–84):

> omnia tuta vides, classem sociosque receptos,
> unus abest, medio in fluctu quem vidimus ipsi
> submersum. . . .

This episode has two features in common with the miraculous rescue and transformation of the ships in *Aeneid* 9: the physical intervention of a god, and the delay before the rescue is made known to Aeneas. But in contrast with the explicit divine intervention in Book 9, in Book 1 neither Aeneas (333) nor his comrades (524–25, 535–38, 582–85) ever recognize the intervention of the gods.

One might say that there are two interventions of the gods on behalf of the fleet in Book 5. The brief episode of Cloanthus' prayer and his victory in the boat-race through the physical assistance of Portunus (232–42) playfully foreshadows the major divine response to prayer at

26. See Naevius frag. 14 Strzelecki (= Macrob. *Sat.* 6. 2. 31): "hic locus totus sumptus a Naevio est ex primo libro belli Punici; illic enim aeque Venus, Troianis tempestate laborantibus, cum Iove queritur, et sequuntur verba Iovis filiam consolantis spe futurorum."

5. 695–99, and the episode introduces a motif that is repeated in Book 10: just as Portunus boosts the speed of Cloanthus' ship, so Cymodocea will propel Aeneas' flagship toward Latium and the besieged Ascanius in 10. 246–48.[27] The major divine intervention in Book 5, like that in Book 1, comes in reaction to Juno's hostile initiative, when she inspires the women through Iris to set fire to the beached ships (5. 658–66). Many scholars have commented on the affinities between Book 5 and Book 9, both in large-scale episodes such as the firing of the fleet and in matters of detail.[28] The women's attack on the ships clearly anticipates Turnus' attack in Book 9 in several ways, especially in the use of fire and in the role of Ascanius, who is first on the scene, and who rebukes the women for their madness. Their flight marks the first phase of the counteraction (667–79), but the flames still rage, resisting human firefighting (680–84), when Aeneas approaches. In the second phase, Aeneas utters the prayer to Jupiter that saves the fleet (688–89 "da flammam evadere classi / nunc, pater").[29] A sudden rainstorm drenches the ships, so that all but four are saved, leaving the night vision of Anchises to complete the narrative by confirming to Aeneas that Jupiter extinguished the fire out of pity for the ships. His words—726–27 "imperio Iovis huc venio, qui classibus ignem / depulit, et caelo tandem miseratus ab alto est"—will be partly echoed to Aeneas by another night apparition, the former ship Cymodocea, in 10. 234: "hanc genetrix faciem miserata refecit."[30]

This episode stands halfway between the rescue of Book 1 and that of Book 9. As in Book 1, though Aeneas is present when his fleet is saved, he does not recognize the divine favor that has saved his fleet; in Book 5, however, unlike Book 1, Aeneas will be helped to understand what the gods have done for him and what they seek from him. As in Book 9, Ascanius faces the hazard of the fire before and without Aeneas, and the narrative of the miracle is followed by other matter (5. 700–721) before Aeneas is made aware of the divine intervention. The difference lies in Aeneas' absence from Book 9 and the amount of time and text that passes before he is made to understand. In both of the fire-episodes the

27. Compare 5. 241–43 "et pater ipse manu magna Portunus euntem / impulit; illa Noto citius volucrique sagitta / ad terram fugit" with 10. 246–48 "dextra discedens impulit altam / haud ignara modi puppim; fugit illa per undas / ocior et iaculo et ventos aequante sagitta."

28. On the structure of Book 5, see R. D. Williams, *P. Vergili Maronis "Aeneidos" Liber V* (Oxford, 1960), pp. xxiii–xxv. On its parallelism with Book 9, see G. E. Duckworth, "The *Aeneid* as Trilogy," *TAPA* 88 (1957): 17–30, and "Tripartite Structure in the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 7 (1961): 2–11; W. A. Camps, "A Note on the Structure of the *Aeneid*," *CQ* 4 (1954): 214–15, and "A Second Note on the Structure of the *Aeneid*," *CQ* 9 (1959): 53–56. Further details are added by E. L. Harrison, "The *Aeneid* and Carthage," in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus*, ed. T. Woodman and D. West (Cambridge, 1984), p. 114 and nn. 139 and 141.

29. Both 5. 688–89 and its echo in 726–27 raise the question of Vergil's motive in composing 1. 524–25: "Troes te miseri, ventis maria omnia vecti, / oramus: prohibe infandos a navibus ignes." Certainly 1. 539–41 suggest that Dido's subjects had attacked the newly beached Trojan ships; but there is no fire episode in Book 1, and the isolated reference in 1. 525 is more easily explained as foreshadowing the attacks in Books 5 and 9.

30. The verb *miserari* is used by both Vergil and Ovid to characterize divine reactions to human suffering: cf. Verg. *G.* 1. 466, *Aen.* 4. 693, 6. 56, 10. 686, 12. 243; Ov. *Met.* 6. 189, 11. 784, and (in divine acts of metamorphosis) *Met.* 6. 135, 11. 339, 741.

miracle fulfills its purpose only at this final stage, when the hero comes to appreciate his divine support and receives a new spur to action.

V. FORESHADOWING IN THE "AENEID": AENEAS IN LATIUM

When Aeneas lands in Latium he greets his destined home, praying first (7. 136–38) to the deities of his present place and time—the *genius loci,* Earth, the Nymphs and unknown rivers, and the approaching Night—then (7. 139–40) to those of his homeland and family—Idaean Jupiter and the Phrygian mother—and his divine and mortal parents, Venus in heaven and Anchises in the underworld.[31]

Here for the first time Cybele is closely associated with her son, who as *pater omnipotens* sends Aeneas the favorable omen of triple thunder and a golden cloud (7. 141–43). Vergil is preparing his reader for the eventual fulfillment of Jupiter's portent in the rescue of the ships at this same site, the place Vergil calls New Troy.[32] This manifestation of Cybele's goodwill, in its two installments of portent and miracle, is matched by the two phases of portent and miracle presented to Aeneas by his mother Venus at Rome and at Caere.[33] Before the celestial armor that Aeneas needs for the battles of Books 10–12 is delivered in the grove at the approach to Caere, he receives a divine notification at Rome itself. The sign that Venus sends him at 8. 523–29 is very similar to the portent sent by Jupiter in Book 7: after a thunderclap, the sound is heard of an Etruscan battle trumpet, and Aeneas' armor appears glittering and encircled in the sole cloud of a clear sky. There is surely a deliberate parallel between the thunder and cloud of 7. 142–43—"intonuit radiisque ardentem lucis et auro / ipse manu quatiens ostendit ab aethere nubem"—and those of 8. 528–29: "arma inter nubem caeli in regione serena / per sudum rutilare vident et pulsa tonare." Vergil has so organized his double narrative that Venus' portent is quickly fulfilled when Aeneas receives his armor from her outside Caere and she instructs him in person, urging him to challenge Turnus to battle (8. 611–14). The portent of Jupiter and Cybele is fulfilled soon after. Book 9, which opens with Iris' message to Turnus that Aeneas has reached Caere, places Cybele's manifestation to Ascanius within a hundred lines of the coming of his father's celestial armor.[34] But in this, the last of the

31. On Cybele's importance in the *Aeneid* and in Augustan cult, see T. P. Wiseman, "Cybele, Virgil and Augustus," in *Poetry and Politics,* pp. 117–28, and Wiseman's earlier discussion in *Clio's Cosmetics* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 94–98.

32. On the settlement as *Troia,* see N. Horsfall, "*Turnus ad portas,*" *Latomus* 33 (1974): 80–86 (esp. p. 86, nn. 37–38); and cf. 10. 26–27 *muris . . . nascentis Troiae,* 74–75 *Troiam . . . nascentem,* and 213–14 *ibant / subsidio Troiae.* The evidence for the name *Troia* goes back to Cato *Orig.* frag. 4 Peter (= Serv. on *Aen.* 1. 5 and 7. 158). Note that shortly after Aeneas' prayer in Book 7 he learns from Latinus that his landing is a sort of homecoming, a reversal of Dardanus' journey, since "his ortus . . . agris / Dardanus Idaeas Phrygiae penetrarit ad urbes" (7. 206–7). The prayer to Cybele and Jupiter anticipates this association between the old and the new Troy.

33. Cybele seems to be both intercessor with Jupiter and his representative: thus, whereas he sends the portent in 7. 141–43 and declares that he will order the deification of the nymphs (9. 101–2 *iubebo / esse deas*), it is Cybele who appears and gives his orders: 9. 117 *genetrix iubet.*

34. There are other elements of interplay between Aeneas' new armor, especially the shield, and the ships: the center of the shield is occupied by the naval battle that will seal the victory of Aeneas'

heavenly portents, there are additional features: the sounds of bands of worshippers (9. 112 *Idaei chori*) and the goddess' voice, with its unambiguous message that reassures the young Ascanius and his leaderless Trojans.[35]

Once Aeneas' celestial armor has appeared on earth it is time for the seafaring fleet to disappear. Aeneas left thirteen of his ships on the beachhead of new Troy, when he launched the two biremes upstream to Rome (8. 79); and once he has returned from Caere, he will never need his fleet again. So long as the ships were in human use it would have been a shock to decorum to confront readers with their special or sacred status; but now their duties are completed, and they have earned something better than the usual fate of old hulks—decay and neglect. Transfiguration into immortal beings for whom the sea is a benevolent, even obedient, element achieves both their reward and their escape from mortality.

But Cybele's miracle, with its extraordinarily abrupt termination, is not fully realized until the ships are reunited with Aeneas. As in Book 5 Ascanius shares in only the first phase of the divine intervention. The nymphs, glimpsed only as *facies,* disappear to sea at 9. 122 because they are intended to warn and reassure Aeneas. Like Creusa, they must make their formal farewell to their lord, and they have a divine message to impart.[36] Creusa's role was to hasten Aeneas' escape from old Troy and foretell the promise of the new settlement in Hesperia; the nymphs' role is to hasten his return to this new Troy; in both cases Ascanius and his followers eagerly await him. There is a symmetry between the events of the old Troy and the new; and, as in Book 1, full understanding of the divine favor is not given either to the participants or to Vergil's readers before it is gained by Aeneas himself. The incompleteness of the miracle and its lack of "explanation" match Ascanius' youth and undeveloped understanding and point forward to the moment when it will be fully realized and experienced by the hero.

VI. THE TRANSFORMATION REALIZED: AENEAS MEETS THE NYMPHS

There is another reason why it is not enough that only Ascanius and the Trojans should witness the marvelous transformation of the fleet: the portent of 7. 141–43 was given to Aeneas, and the readers are waiting to see how Aeneas will be made aware of its realization. By a brilliant stroke Vergil reintroduces him into the narrative at sea, in the world of

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descendant Augustus (cf. Wiseman, "Cybele," pp. 121–22, relating the Cybele episode to Augustus' cult of Apollo "of the ships"); at 10. 242 (cf. 260–63) Cymodocea urges Aeneas to raise the shield aloft from his ships, so that it is the first sign of his father's coming seen by Ascanius; structurally, the ecphrasis of the shield (8. 630–731) is placed equidistant from Venus' portent (8. 523–29) and Cybele's manifestation (9. 107–22).

35. On the divine voice, see Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*[5], p. 311, n. 1; he notes *Il.* 3. 93 as the closest Homeric parallel but also cites several instances of such divinely spoken prophecies from Roman historians.

36. For Creusa's account of her rescue by Cybele, *magna deum genetrix,* see *Aen.* 2. 776–90.

the nymphs, and isolated from the everyday world by night (10. 147): *media Aeneas freta nocte secabat.*

This will be Aeneas' last experience of the sea, and Vergil makes it one of magic harmony and sympathy between the hero and the marine world. Vergil points forward to the renewal of Cybele's miracle by his description of Aeneas' ship as it leads the fleet of his new allies, under the protection of Cybele, his figurehead her lion-chariot set against the background of her sacred mountain (10. 156–58):

> Aeneia puppis
> prima tenet rostro Phrygios subiuncta leones,
> imminet Ida super.[37]

Now the poet catalogs the Etruscan forces, focusing on the slow parade of their ships. But as he narrates, the symbolic figureheads of their vessels cease to be incidental and come to dominate the scene. First comes *Massicus aerata . . . Tigri* (166), next Abas, whose ship gleams with its gilded Apollo: *aurato fulgebat Apolline puppis* (171). Both figureheads are designated as artifacts by their epithets. Several contingents follow that are described without reference to their ships (175–93): Asilas' men, those of Astyr, Cunarus, and Cupavo, the son of Cycnus, whose swan-crested helmet recalls his father's *forma* (a famous metamorphosis used at this juncture to link the mythic-heroic world to early Italian history).[38]

Only after recalling this transformation does Vergil introduce Cupavo's ship, the Centaurus. From this point the figureheads acquire active verbs:[39] the literal description of the son—194–95 *filius . . . / ingentem remis Centaurum promovet*—is overshadowed by the vivid description of the centaur (195–97): "ille / instat aquae saxumque undis immane minatur / arduus, et longa sulcat maria alta carina." As the scene with the nymphs approaches, Vergil's figureheads become more animate: Mincius, the river god, carries the Mantuans *infesta . . . pinu* (206), as if his ship, going into battle, were aimed for hostile action. Aulestes, the last leader, beats the seas with a metonymous forest of oars, *centena . . . arbore* (207). His figurehead is a vast Triton, described in vivid detail (209–12):

> caerula concha
> exterrens freta, cui laterum tenus hispida nanti
> frons hominem praefert, in pristim desinit alvus,
> spumea semifero sub pectore murmurat unda.

37. Hardie, "Ships and Shipnames," p. 168, notes the inversion of the Odyssean metamorphosis: Aeneas' homecoming is marked by the ships' breaking away from their fixed position, while Aeneas returns on board a "floating mountain . . . , the Ida-ship."

38. The metamorphosis of Cycnus is associated with the death of Phaethon and his plunge into the Eridanus; variants of this saga (also reproduced in the separate *Catasterisms* attributed to Eratosthenes) are found in Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4. 596–609, Verg. *Ecl.* 6. 62–63, Ov. *Met.* 2. 324–80 (including the associations with northern Italy), and Luc. 2. 410–15.

39. *Instat . . . minatur / . . . sulcat* (196–97), *ducebat* (206), and *vehit . . . praefert* (209, 211).

These lines are loosely modeled on *Argonautica* 4. 1613–15, where the description of the living Triton contrasts his anthropomorphic upper body with the fishy monster below the waist.[40]

The watchful Aeneas is far out to sea (219 *medio in spatio* recalls 147 *media . . . freta*), steering his ship, when the nymphs greet and surround him.[41] Vergil does not remind his readers that Nisus and Euryalus failed to complete their mission, but this mission is now completed by the nymphs, come to alert their king to Ascanius' danger.[42] Grasping the prow, their spokeswoman, Cymodocea (225 *fandi doctissima*), begins by identifying herself and her fellows (230–31): "nos sumus, Idaeae sacro de vertice pinus / nunc pelagi nymphae, classis tua."[43] Apologizing for their desertion (223 *rupimus invitae tua vincula*), she explains the miraculous intervention of Cybele.[44] The last ten lines of her address (236–45) report Ascanius' plight, urge Aeneas to muster his allies at dawn, and end with the prophecy of victory over the Rutuli.[45] *Haud ignara modi* (247), Cymodocea gives the ship an expert departing thrust so that it speeds through the sea "ocior et iaculo et ventos aequante sagitta" (248).[46]

Recognizing Cybele's intervention, Aeneas utters a pious prayer for her support in the coming battle, rich in religious language that confirms her primacy as divine patroness (254–55): "tu mihi nunc pugnae princeps, tu rite propinques / augurium, Phrygibusque adsis pede, diva, secundo." This nocturnal scene serves a structural function; it is also vivid and evocative, down to the last detail of Cymodocea dogpaddling with her left hand as she holds onto the bows of Aeneas' ship (beneath the likeness of Ida, her birthplace!) with her right.[47] Surely this scene of nymphs arising from the sea to greet their favored hero would immediately evoke Catullus 64. 12–16, where the nymphs, among them Thetis, rise breast-high above the waves to watch the new sea creature that was Argo. To them the ship is the miracle, to Aeneas it is the transformation

40. Apollonius offers more detail than Vergil, and he compares Triton's upper torso to a god, whereas Vergil says *hominem;* but Vergil's relative clause, with its descriptive antithesis, seems to echo 4. 1613 ὑπαὶ λαγόνων in *laterum tenus* and 4. 1611 ἐπὶ νηδύν and 1614 κήτεος ὀλκαίη in *in pristim desinit alvus.*

41. Surely the unexpected feminine, *chorus . . . suarum comitum,* is calculated to provoke curiosity before the identification in 220–23?

42. On Aeneas' status as king, see now F. Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1–28, 58–84. There are many examples of Aeneas as *rex* in *Aen.* 1–9; but in the company of the nymphs the word first surprises, then acquires a new association from the Roman ritual formula adopted by Cymodocea at 228–29 (see below, at n. 50).

43. Hardie, "Ships and Shipnames," p. 164, notes how this sentence encapsulates their history, from birth to transfiguration, including the temporary condition under which Aeneas knew them.

44. *Invitus* seems to be almost formulaic in these apologies; cf. *Aen.* 6. 460 and Catull. 66. 39. Note that Cybele is *genetrix* for the nymphs, just as she spoke of herself to them in 9. 117 as *genetrix.*

45. With 245 "ingentis Rutulae spectabit caedis acervos" compare Aeneas' own reaction to Venus' portent at 8. 537: "heu quantae miseris caedes Laurentibus instant!"

46. Both here and in the parallel incident at 5. 241–43 Vergil is probably recalling the passage of Apollonius already cited as a model for the Triton figurehead of 10. 219–21: at *Argon.* 4. 1609–18 Triton appears and lays hold of Argo's keel to speed her out of Lake Tritonis to the sea.

47. Like 10. 157 *subiuncta* (of the ship yoked like a chariot), 227 *subremigat* suggests both the propulsion of a ship and the action of the human rower.

of his former ships. *Stupet inscius* (249): he is as dazed as when he set eyes on Vulcan's prophetic shield,[48] but he recognizes the favorable omen and does his duty by first praying, and then fighting.

If we look back for literary models of Vergil's scene, the separate allusions mark Apollonius' description of the Argonauts' encounter with Triton as the acknowledged model. But it is only one of four similar episodes, all of which may have contributed to Vergil's fantasy in this scene: the appearance of Glaucus (*Argon.* 1. 1310–25) to give the Argonauts his divine knowledge of the fates of Heracles and Hylas (a fair equivalent for the lost Nisus and Euryalus?); Athene's assistance in holding apart the Symplegades (2. 598–600) so that Argo "like a winged arrow sped through the air"; and the Nereids' guidance of the Argo through the Planctae (4. 931–32), an episode in which they surface like dolphins but finally submerge—not like the dolphins of *Aeneid* 9. 117, but like seagulls.[49] Together these episodes offer most elements of Aeneas' encounter with the nymphs, and I would argue that Vergil shaped this scene in emulation of Apollonius, and secondarily of Catullus. His desire to create Aeneas' sea encounter committed him to the more unprecedented account of the metamorphosis: hence, perhaps, his greater success in the second marine episode than the first.

But Vergil introduced two completely original elements into this scene: the mystery of the nocturnal setting, and the extraordinary adaptation, in Cymodocea's address to Aeneas, of the formula with which the Vestal Virgins addressed the Roman *rex sacrorum: vigilasne, rex? vigila!*[50] The context of this sacred warning is unknown; the warning may have originated in a ritual older than the creation of the Vestals themselves, so that it would be rash to treat the nymphs as proto-Vestals.[51] But the nymphs of Italy, to whom Aeneas prayed both in 7. 137 and in the solemn invocation at 8. 71—*nymphae, Laurentes Nymphae*—were part of Italian patriotic mythology, like Marica, Carmentis, or Iuturna, mothers and sisters of national leaders.[52] Rome itself once belonged to them (8. 134 "haec nemora indigenae Fauni nymphaeque tenebant"), and it was the nymph Egeria who inspired Numa, the monarch to whom Roman institutions like the Vestals were traditionally attributed.[53] By

48. Cf. 8. 730 "miratur, rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet."

49. On Apollonius' influence, see E. de Saint Denis, *Le rôle de la mer dans la poésie latine* (Lyons, 1935), pp. 230–38, who singles out the scenes I have discussed (*Aen.* 1. 144–56, 5. 239–42, 9. 77–122, and 10. 219–55) as examples of Apollonian coloring. For a slightly different view, see M. Hügi, *Vergils "Aeneis" und die hellenistische Dichtung,* Noctes Romanae vol. 4 (Bern, 1952), pp. 67–69.

50. Cf. Serv. on 10. 228: "verba sunt sacrorum; nam virgines Vestae certa die ibant ad regem sacrorum et dicebant 'vigilasne rex? vigila.' quod Vergilius iure dat Aeneae, quasi et regi et quem ubique pontificem et sacrorum inducit peritum." Note that Aeneas has already been identified as *regem* in 224.

51. For the *rex sacrorum* and a passing notice of this ritual, see R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1–5* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 237–38.

52. For Marica, see *Aen.* 7. 47; for Carmentis, 8. 336 and 339; for Iuturna, 12. 146 and passim.

53. For Numa and Egeria, see Plut. *Num.* 8; on his supposed creation of the Vestals, ibid. 9. Plutarch reports (ibid. 13) that the Vestals fetched water from the spring of the Camenae: were they perhaps seen as surrogates for the nymphs?

evoking this ancient Roman formula Vergil has put away Hellenistic things and bound his mystical invention to the future loyalties of his Italian city and its peculiar blend of devout imperialism.

VII. ITALIAN TRANSFORMATIONS: OVID'S RESPONSE TO VERGIL

As Vergil's successor, Ovid shared and developed his interest in the nymphs of Italy and Rome: not only are the overtly patriotic *Fasti* full of nymphs, but he has given them prominence as agents in the Italian section of his *Metamorphoses,* building episodes around Pomona (14. 609–77), the nymphs of the shrine of Janus (14. 785–804), and Egeria (15. 490–547). Ovid's adaptation of the transformation of the ships at *Metamorphoses* 14. 527–65 can be seen both in this light and as a purely imaginative *tour de force* in imitation of a passage he had long admired.[54] His presentation of the episode throws light on Vergil's artistic choice, both by its difference of treatment and by its affinity of national spirit.

The miracle is introduced as a lighthearted foil to two related transformations: the adverse metamorphosis of Diomedes' men, impiously hostile to Aeneas, into birds (457–511), and the retaliation by Italian nymphs against the coarse shepherd whom they transform into an oleaster (517–26). In reworking Vergil's scene, Ovid concentrates on the grotesque details of the transformation;[55] but he adapts from *Aeneid* 5 (693–99) the natural, or meteorological, miracle that saves the ships. Thus Turnus has attacked, and the ships are already burning, when Cybele, *memor has pinus Idaeo vertice caesas* (535), rides on her lion-chariot through the air; in contrast with Vergil's Cybele, she ignores ships and Trojans and rebukes the Rutuli for their impiety (539–41):

> "inrita sacrilega iactas incendia dextra
> Turne!" ait "eripiam, nec me patiente cremabit
> ignis edax nemorum partes et membra meorum."

A hailstorm puts out the fire, and winds break the cables, sinking the burning ships; but as they resurface part by part they are transformed from wood to flesh—from poop to head, from oars to legs and toes, while the sides remain sides (552 *latus*), the center beam of the keel is changed to serve as a spine, the rigging becomes hair, and the yardarms—arms. Only their color remains (555 *caerulus, ut fuerat, color est*); but as

54. Ovid includes it in his list of *tours de force* of poetic invention at *Am.* 3. 12. 38: "quaeque rates fuerint nunc maris esse deas." On the Ovidian ship-transformation, see L. Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven, 1986), pp. 85–86, and J. Solodow, *The World of Ovid's "Metamorphoses"* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 127–36 (with a comparison of Ovid and Vergil), 195.

55. Note the listing of the ships' parts as they catch fire (14. 532–34), the incongruous phrase *nemorum partes et membra meorum* (541), and the head-to-toe enumeration of the actual metamorphosis (550–55).

he approaches the end, Ovid acknowledges both their origin in his Vergilian model (557 *durisque in montibus ortae* recalls *Aen.* 9. 92 *nostris in montibus ortas*) and Vergil's formal model, the Homeric ship victimized by Poseidon. As Trojan patriots, Ovid's nymphs delight to see Odysseus' raft shipwrecked and the Phaeacian vessel turned to stone.[56]

Here we have allusiveness and wit based on verbal and physical absurdity; but Ovid has set this metamorphosis at an important point in his history that gives the scene a special significance. In a recent study of the Italian books of the *Metamorphoses,* D. Porte has argued convincingly that with Aeneas' arrival in Latium Ovid shifts from negative or "downward" metamorphosis (such as Circe's malicious transformations of Scylla, Picus, and Canens) toward positive change—from inanimate matter to animate beings, from human royalty to immortality.[57] She may be over-precise, since we saw that two negative transformations—those of Diomedes' companions (14. 457–511) and the Apulian shepherd (14. 512–26)—intervene between the arrival of Aeneas at 14. 445 and the transformation of Aeneas' ships. But essentially this miracle is the first of a great series of positive transformations that will lead toward the ultimate metamorphoses of Julius and Augustus Caesar.

Porte enumerates from Book 14 the heron born from the ashes of Ardea, the apotheosis of Aeneas as Indiges (581–608), and then—after the inconclusive shapeshifting of Vertumnus—the apotheoses of Romulus as Quirinus (805–28) and Hersilia as Hora Quirini (829–51). The "upward" transformations continue after Pythagoras' great diatribe in Book 15, with Hippolytus' apotheosis as Virbius (15. 490–547), the creation of Tages from a clod of earth (552–59), and the new growth of Romulus' spear (560–64).

It seems that Ovid meant the transformation of the ships to be the prelude to this chain of ascent, and this change for the better is marked by his neat allusion at 566: *in nymphas animata classe marinas.*[58] For Vergil, too, the unconventional miracle, which he had taken such pains to foreshadow, by its very departure from precedent marked the change in Trojan and Latin fortunes. Despite R. D. Williams' misgivings, the newborn nymphs did belong in the proto-Roman world, and they symbolized the continuing future loyalty of that world to its leader.

56. The chronology is justified: Aeneas, who met Ulysses' castaway in Sicily three months after the Ithacan had escaped the Cyclops, lost only a year between leaving Sicily and reaching Latium, whereas Odysseus spent seven years with Calypso before he left in his raft and was washed up on Scheria. See A. Barchiesi, "Problemi d'interpretazione in Ovidio," *MD* 16 (1986): 89–90.

57. "L'idée romaine et la métamorphose," in *Journées ovidiennes de Parménie: Actes du colloque sur Ovide (24–26 Juin 1983),* Collection Latomus 189, ed. J. M. Frécaut and D. Porte (Brussels, 1985), pp. 175–98 (esp. 188 and 190, on "upward" metamorphosis).

58. Ovid limits the word *animare,* which occurs nowhere in Vergil, to the creation of life: in *Met.* it is used only of the actual creation (1. 158), of the miracle whereby the Gorgon's blood creates the serpents of Libya from the barren earth (4. 619), and of Aeneas' former ships.

As for literary decorum, while Ovid enjoyed absurdity and paradox without any inhibitions, Vergil embarked on a dangerous poetic enterprise in order both to bring Aeneas' fleet to a worthy ending and to recall for the last time the adventures at sea that Aeneas had abandoned to establish his community on Italian soil. Taken together, the transformation of the sacred ships and their last salutation and warning to their former master create a moving sequence. They should not be judged apart.

Princeton University