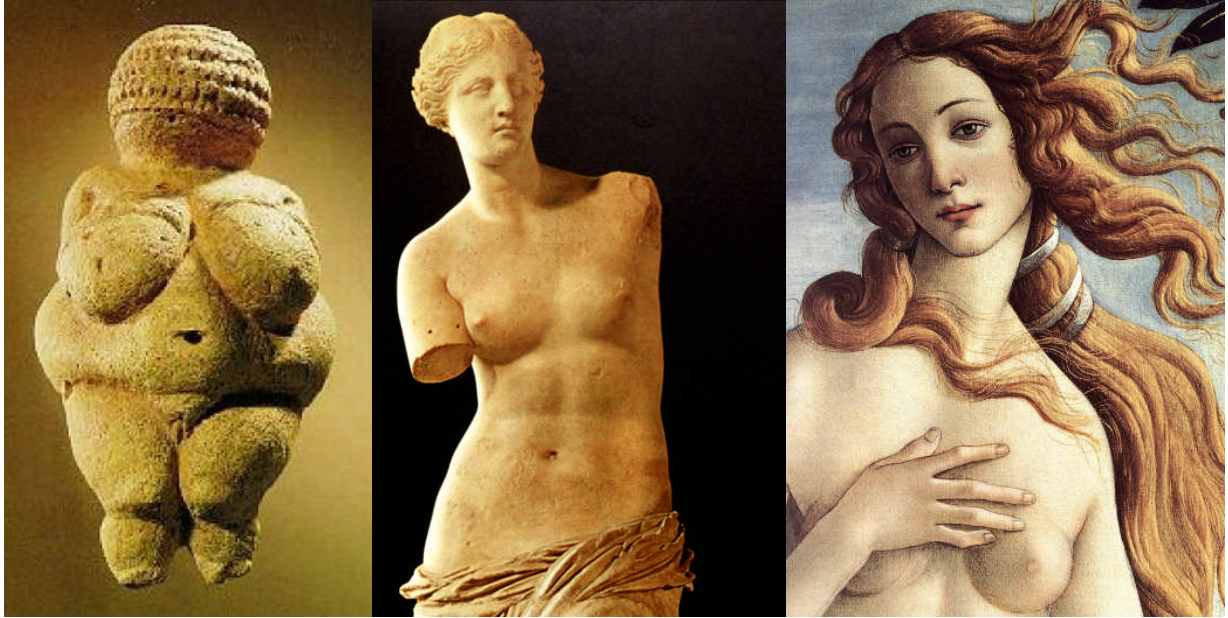
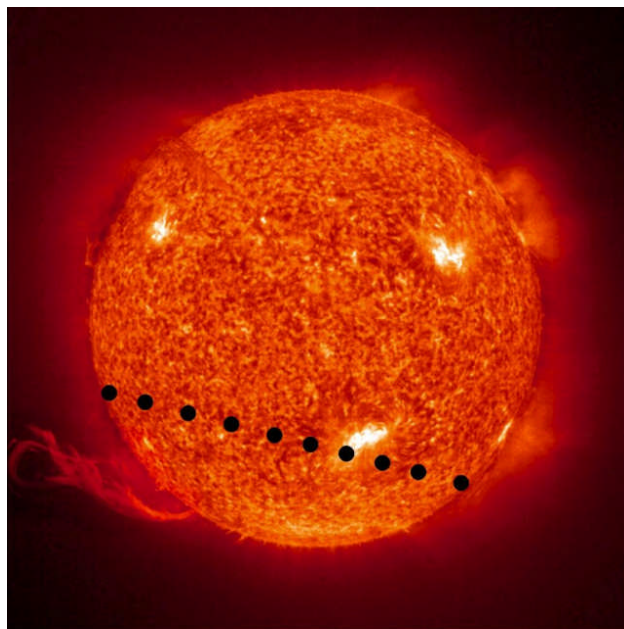


The Transit of Venus *a silent silvery star*

Like poets, dreamers and lovers all before her, Emily Bronte was captured by Venus' beauty when she portrayed her as *a silent silvery star*. Palaeolithic Venus figurines, the Hellenistic Venus de Milo, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* all attest to her magnetism.



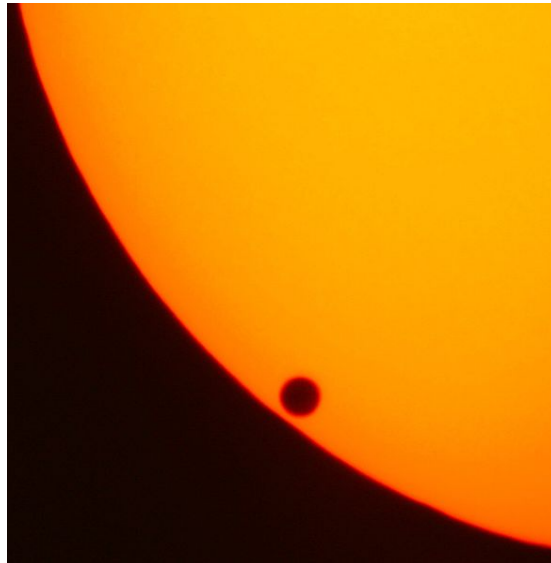
Her attractiveness is visible, enshrined in the night sky. Intrinsic to this silent silvery star is beauty: her brightness, her symmetry, her cycle, her myth. And on June 6th this year she reveals her exquisiteness in a rare passage across the face of the Sun, leaving behind the trace of a small precious necklace on the solar disk.¹



Synchronously, at the time of the transit, planetary planes are orchestrated so that the Sun, Earth and Venus are brought into alignment. Venus is in her retrograde phase; therefore as she moves in front of the Sun, she is experiencing her inferior conjunction closest to the Earth. She has disappeared from her

throne in the Western sky but not yet reappeared in the East. At this time both Venus and the Earth are on the same side of the Sun. As we look to the Sun during this orbital alignment, Venus appears as a delicate spot² across the solar countenance. She is in her underworld phase of the cycle yet for a few hours reveals herself on the brilliant backdrop of the blazing Sun.

This is the transit of Venus. Astronomically it is like an eclipse due to the aligning of the planetary orbits; yet the Sun is still visible. Some refer to it as an occultation, but nothing is hidden here. She has reached her nodal axis at its northern pole and now is at a crossroads in her cycle. And during the transit, if the other gods of weather permit us to see her, she is visible.

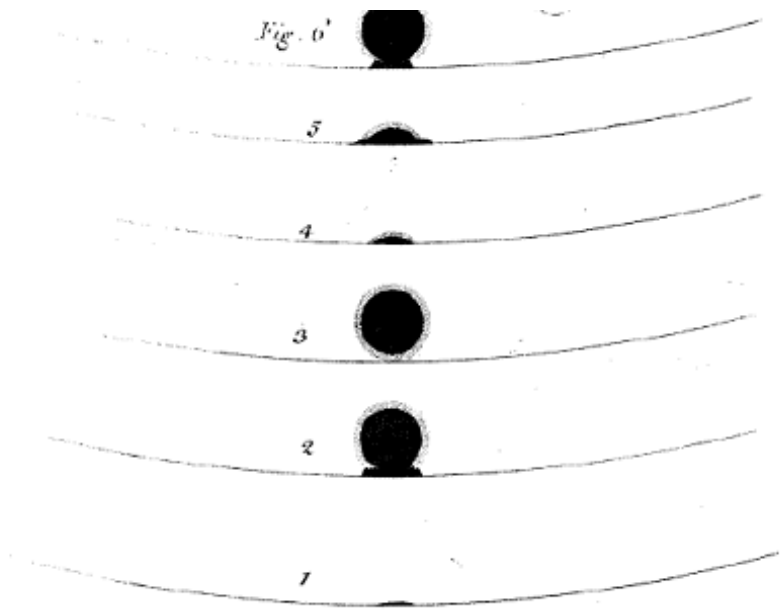


Transits of Venus are exquisite in design repeating every 243 years. Generally they will occur as pairs of transits eight years apart separated by gaps of 121.5 and 105.5 years. For instance, the first recorded sighting of the transit on the 4th of December 1639 was the second in its pairing. The next transit was 121.5 years later on June 6, 1761 followed by its twin on June 3/4, 1769. Therefore the next transit will take place 105.5 years later, as it did on the 9th of December 1874 followed by its partner on the 6th of December 1882. Our current transit is the second of the coupling that first occurred on June 8, 2004. Noticeably the transits take place either in June or December; Gemini or Sagittarius as Venus reaches her nodal axis. As Venus conjoints her North Node³ she invites us to shed light on our values personally and collectively.

Transit of Venus Pairing 243 years apart	Heliocentric South Node of Venus
December 7, 1631 and December 4, 1639	13 \times 21 and 13 \times 26
December 9, 1874 and December 6, 1882	15 \times 33 and 15 \times 37

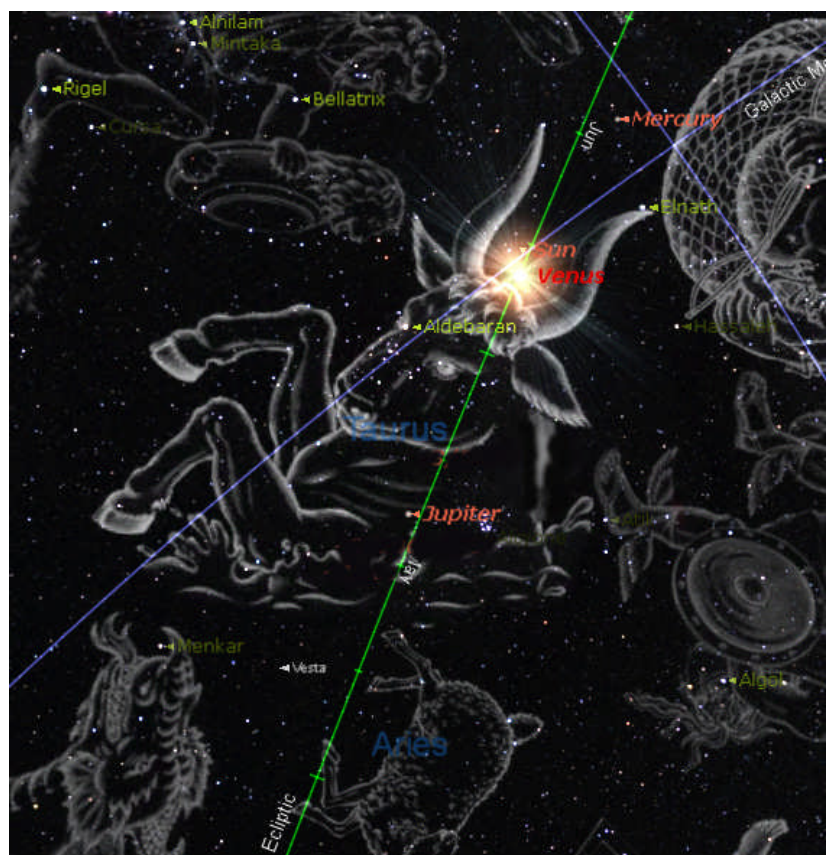
Transit of Venus Pairing 243 years apart	Heliocentric North Node of Venus
June 6, 1761 and 3/4 June 1769	14 Π 31 and 14 Π 36
June 8, 2004 and 5/6 June 2012	16 Π 43 and 16 Π 47

243 years ago the best sighting for the Venus transit was the Pacific islands. Commissioned by King George III, Captain James Cook set sail for Tahiti to observe the transit. And while the day was ideal for the sighting, the results were not as satisfactory as hoped. However, it was the precursor to Cook's discovery of this great southern land of ours and our intimate connection with the transit of Venus.



Appearances of Venus by Captain Cook

As astrologers we link transits with events. And with the transit of Venus in the signs of II and ♈ we can correlate many historical events that encapsulate the values of communication and discovery with these times. But how do we translate this rare event into a deeper understanding of this moment in time within ourselves and our world? Venus herself points to an archetypal focus on values and the transit across the Sun aligns these with the integrity of the Self. Venus is in the horns of the Bull and so the transit constellates this part of the heavens – our values, our resources, our natural world – our *oikonomikos*, the wise management of our household economy.



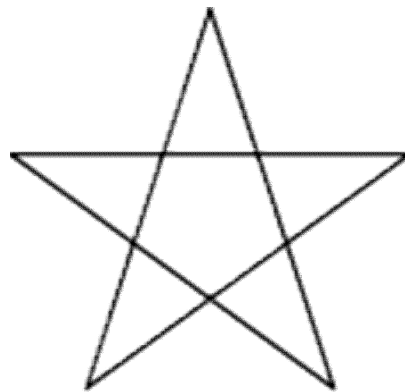
The Transit of Venus in the Horns of the Bull⁴

Perhaps more of the underlying meaning of her transit is embedded in her cycle and her myth.

The synodic cycle of Venus (the Sun Venus cycle) is 584 days while the cycle of the Earth around the Sun is 365 days. 5 synodic cycles of Venus exactly equals 8 of the Earth's ($584 \times 5 = 365 \times 8$); therefore in 8 years the Sun and Venus conjoin 5 times returning to their same place. Well there is a slight discrepancy as there is a few days leeway since the Earth cycle is really 365.25 days. But close enough. Venus returns to where it was 8 years ago creating 5 points in the zodiac that when joined together form a pentagram, a symbol involving man, symmetry, magic and mystery.

She has two conjunctions with the Sun during this time; one called the superior conjunction when the Sun is between the Earth and Venus and the inferior conjunction when the Earth and Venus are on the same side of the Sun. From the superior to the inferior conjunction she is the evening star; however she waits to reveal herself for sometime after the conjunction. We refer to her as Hesperos, 'of the west'. From the inferior to the superior conjunction she is the morning star, Phosphoros 'the light-bringer'.

One of the most fascinating aspects of her cycle is her disappearance from the sky as she loses herself under the Sun beams. This occurs twice in her cycle and is a feature of her duality. During one of these, after a period of intense brightness as the evening star and her resurrection as the morning star, Venus disappears below the horizon for 8 days. Many cultures thought of this period as the time the goddess walked amongst the people or descended into the underworld. But our oldest known myth that characterises the goddess abandoning the heavens for her descent to the underworld is the 3rd millennium BCE myth of the Sumerian Inanna, Venus' predecessor. In the narrative, Inanna leaves the heavens to witness the funeral of her sister's husband. At each of the seven gates into the underworld she is stripped bare of her identity, only to be killed by her sister and have her corpse hung in the underworld to rot. Eventually she is resurrected and once rises into heaven, renewed and reborn. Imaginatively the myth offers us an imagined narrative for the disappearance of Venus but also reminds us of the descent after the period of brightness, and return, especially the return of the feminine. Inanna's symbol was the pentagram, the eternal symbol traced in the heavens by Venus and one that inspires the link between the human body and the workings of the cosmos through Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.



Venus is often thought of as the sister to Earth. As she makes her close approach to the Earth she rises from the unseen world to become visible on the brilliant backdrop of the Sun, our system's heart centre. From our civilised vantage point this is an impressive reminder of cosmic synchronisation; yet from our soulful viewpoint we are reminded of how we are participants in valuing the resources of our household Earth. Whether we need more cosmic messages about aligning our values and our hearts waits to be seen.

ENDNOTES

¹ Listed below are the times on June 6th when Venus makes first, mid and last contact with the Sun.

Location	First Contact with the Sun	Maximum	Last Contact with the Sun
Perth	Before sunrise	9.32 am	12.47 pm
Adelaide/Darwin	7.46 am/7.45 am	11.01 am	2.15pm/2.16pm
Brisbane/ Sydney/ Canberra/ Melbourne/Hobart	8.16 am	11.30am 11.31am	2.44 pm 2.45 pm

² Nikki Worth's lecture to the VAA in May on the Transit of Venus was called The Sun has a Beauty Spot.

³ Venus' Heliocentric North Node is 16 \cap 47. Its movement through the zodiac is negligible and virtually rests at a degree of the zodiac for a century. Therefore the heliocentric planetary nodes remain in a relatively 'fixed' position highlighting an area of the zodiac; hence I find it of interest that Ceres' heliocentric north node is nearby at 20 \cap 30 as is Uranus' at 14 \cap 04.

⁴ Picture supplied thanks to Melanie Reinhart who has many articles and explanations about the transit of Venus on her website – see www.melaniereinhart.com