word(s) in his exemplar bore a significant resemblance to it by e.g. containing a selection of the same letters. Hence Schoell suggested *atque erui*, a facile conjecture giving inappropriate sense: corn-merchants do not accumulate mountains of cattle-fodder. I propose:

quibu' cunctis montes maxumi frumenti accreuerunt domi.

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## PROPERTIUS' 'PATERNAL ASHES'

At 3.9.37–8, Propertius says that he will not bewail (sc. in epic verse) the destruction of Thebes by the Epigonoi or the earlier assault on the city by the Seven:

non flebo in cineres arcem sedisse paternos Cadmi, nec septem proelia clade pari. 37

That nec...pari in 38 refers to the Seven, with Lipsius' septem for the manuscripts' semper, J. D. Morgan demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt in his discussion of the couplet in CQ 36 (1986), 186–8. But Morgan's chief concern in that discussion was with paternos at the end of 37, and it is his treatment of that adjective which prompts this note.

Following Postgate (CR 15 [1901], 408 n. 1), against Housman (CR 9 [1895], 352 = Classical Papers i [1972], p. 372), who had felt that 'this was poetical, to say that the falling fortress blent her ashes with those of her former defenders', Morgan argued that paternos lacks an obvious referent, and that the ashes in question ought to be those of the Cadmeia itself, just as, for example, the fires mentioned by Vergil at Aen. 2.624 and 9.445 ('considere in ignis' bis) are those of Troy itself ablaze. And so, after properly brief consideration of Heinsius' paternam, Unger's arces... paternas, and Postgate's repentes, he emended paternos to perustam: '... the buildings of the Cadmeia are set afire, and after the flames have consumed the supporting timbers, they collapse into fiery ashes. Propertius could not have chosen a more appropriate word than perustam to indicate the total destruction of the Cadmeia by the Epigoni'.<sup>2</sup>

I know that Morgan will understand if I object that his *perustam* adds excessive heat to the line, and that his explanation for the corruption of *perustam* into *paternos*, in at least three distinct steps, is not convincing. There may be an easier way to get rid of *paternos*. Read:

non flebo in cineres arcem sedisse parentis

We now have a reference to Cadmus the 'father' or 'founder' of Thebes; one may compare the identical use of *parens* at 4.10.17, 'urbis virtutisque parens' (of Romulus), for which Camps (*ad loc.*) cites Liv. 1.16.3 ('parentem...urbis Romae salvere...Romulum iubent') and Cic. *Att.* 9.10.13 ('me quem nonnulli conservatorem istius urbis, quem parentem esse dixerunt'). The enjambement in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> He noted that arcem...paternam and arces...paternas could refer only to Cadmus' birthplace, Tyre, and that Postgate erred in assuming that the line refers to the 'sudden' destruction of the Theban palace, and the death of Semele, at the birth of Dionysus, since the context requires a reference to a war worthy of epic poetry.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Morgan also thought highly of *tepentes*, suggested to him by a CQ referee, and rightly so, for it is an attractive conjecture.

arcem.../Cadmi is enhanced by parentis,<sup>3</sup> and it is not hard to account for the corrupt paternos: by metathesis, parentis was copied as paternis, which then was corrected to paternos to agree with cineres.<sup>4</sup>

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- <sup>3</sup> A CQ referee generously notes a parallel to the separation of parentis from Cadmi at lineend in 4.10.40-1, vasti parma...ducis/Virdomari.
  - <sup>4</sup> I thank my colleague Allan Kershaw for helpful discussion.

## RUIT OCEANO NOX

Night falls on war-weary Troy after a day of celebration, setting the stage for the final agony of the city:

uertitur interea caelum et ruit Oceano nox inuoluens umbra magna terramque polumque Myrmidonumque dolos

(Virg. Aen. 2.250-2)

The opening verse is carefully formulated: the first phrase is borrowed from Ennius (Ann. 211 Sk), while the final three words clearly evoke the sense and rhythm of a Homeric model,  $\partial\rho\omega\rho\epsilon\iota$   $\delta'$   $o\partial\rho\alpha\nu\partial\theta\epsilon\nu$   $\nu\nu\partial\xi$  (Od. 5.294). Most commentators construe Oceano as ablative of origin and understand ruit as equivalent to Homer's  $\partial\rho\omega\rho\epsilon\iota$ , a sense which the verb cannot easily bear, as was recently demonstrated in this journal by S. Mack. Her further point, however, that Oceano must therefore be taken as a dative of direction, is untenable, in spite of the apparent imitation by Germanicus, Arat. 182 ruit Oceano bos. Oceanus was commonly regarded by the Greeks and Romans as both the starting and finishing point of the rotation of celestial bodies, including the stars, the sun, and night, who hitched her chariot to follow the same course as Helios. To an ancient reader, therefore, the descent of nox to the Ocean could only imply that the night was coming to an end, and the situation in Virgil is quite the opposite.

The interpretation of this scene has been rendered less secure by the lack of a closer parallel to *Oceano* than Homer's  $o\dot{v}\rho\alpha\nu\dot{v}\theta\epsilon\nu$ . This is supplied by an unnoticed passage in Quintus of Smyrna, who is perhaps drawing upon earlier epic models:<sup>4</sup>

μέχρις ἐπὶ χθόνα διαν ἀπ' εὐρέος 'Ωκεανοιο νὺξ ἐχύθη, μερόπεσσι λύσιν καμάτοιο φέρουσα.

(O.S. 10.436-7)

Night falls  $(\tilde{\epsilon}\chi \dot{\nu}\theta\eta)$  upon the earth,<sup>5</sup> but rises from the Ocean in a single indistinguishable motion, a concept which Virgil expresses clearly but tersely in *ruit*, in order to focus attention upon the ominous syllepsis in the following line and a half.

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- <sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., Austin ad loc.: 'upward motion is meant.'
- <sup>2</sup> 'Vergil, Aeneid 2.250-2', CQ 30 (1980), 153-8.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Roscher 3.1.570, s.v. 'Nyx' for references to the relevant texts.
- <sup>4</sup> These would not have included Virgil: cf. most recently M. Campbell, A Commentary on Quintus Smyrnaeus Posthomerica XII (Mnem. Suppl. 71 [Leiden, 1981]), pp. 115–17, with references to earlier works.
  - <sup>5</sup> Cf. Aen. 8.369 nox ruit et fuscis tellurem amplectitur alis.