

arcem .../Cadmi is enhanced by *parentis*,³ 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*.⁴

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³ A *CQ* referee generously notes a parallel to the separation of *parentis* from *Cadmi* at line-end in 4.10.40–1, *vasti parma ... ducis/Virdomari*.

⁴ 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, ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανόθεν νύξ (*Od.* 5.294). Most commentators construe *Oceano* as ablative of origin and understand *ruit* as equivalent to Homer's ὀρώρει,¹ a sense which the verb cannot easily bear, as was recently demonstrated in this journal by S. Mack.² 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.³ 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 οὐρανόθεν. This is supplied by an unnoticed passage in Quintus of Smyrna, who is perhaps drawing upon earlier epic models:⁴

μέχρις ἐπὶ χθόνα διὰν ἀπ' εὐρέος Ὠκεανοῖο
νύξ ἐχύθη, μερόπεσσι λύσιν καμάτοιο φέρουσα.

(Q.S. 10.436–7)

Night falls (ἐχύθη) upon the earth,⁵ 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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¹ Cf., e.g., Austin *ad loc.*: 'upward motion is meant.'

² 'Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.250–2', *CQ* 30 (1980), 153–8.

³ Cf. Roscher 3.1.570, s.v. 'Nyx' for references to the relevant texts.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Cf. *Aen.* 8.369 *nox ruit et fuscis tellurem amplexitur alis*.