

IAMQUE RUBESCEBAT: AURORA IN THE AENEID

by

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ABSTRACT: The paper investigates the named appearances of Aurora in Virgil's *Aeneid*, with some consideration of other Virgilian dawns where the goddess is not explicitly named. Associations of color, mythological tales of the Dawn's husband Tithonus and her son Memnon, and Homeric parallels are considered as part of detailed analyses of the scenes where Virgil describes the coming of morning, and the specific events of the days he heralds with significant dawns. Study of these dawns and the poet's depiction of Aurora as part of the divine machinery of his epic reveals Virgil's concern with his unfolding of the ethnography of the future Rome, a city that will be Italian and not Trojan, and the related problem of the reinvention of the Homeric *Iliad* in central Italy.

The significance of the dawn goddess Aurora to the narrative of Virgil's *Aeneid* has not been studied systematically¹. Close study of the appearances of the goddess of the morning in Virgil's epic and especially the events of those days on which her advent is described will reveal a progression of images and episodes that serve in part to foreshadow and highlight key occurrences of the war in Italy, episodes that link ultimately to the final ethnographic disposition of the future settlement of Rome. In particular, we shall see how Virgil's careful uses of color in his descriptions of the goddess and her epiphanies help to illustrate the progression from the old Troy to the new Italy². Virgil's descriptions

¹ On Aurora in Virgil see especially S. FASCE in *EV I*, coll. 418 f.; C. PRATO, *Titone, EV V**, coll. 201 f.; A. KEITH, *The Dawn in Vergil*, *Studies in Philology XXII* 1925, pp. 518–521; L. WALKER, *Vergil's Descriptive Art*, *CJ XXIV* 1929, pp. 666–678, at 667 f.; C. BAILEY, *Religion in Virgil*, Oxford 1935, pp. 186 f.; W. PÖTSCHER, *Vergil und die göttlichen Mächte*, Hildesheim–New York 1977, p. 121. The present study is concerned principally with named appearances of the goddess, her husband Tithonus and son Memnon in the *Aeneid*; other Virgilian descriptions of the breaking of day are considered throughout where relevant. I am especially grateful to Jakub PIGON and the anonymous referee for their helpful corrections and suggestions and to Michael PUTNAM for his remarks and guidance.

² See KEITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 518 for Virgil's blending of the roles of Aurora, Lucifer, and Sol, and how "In one respect Aurora retains an individuality. She seems to get entire credit for the colors associated with dawn".