

VERGIL'S *CERTISSIMA SIGNA* REINTERPRETED:
THE ARATEAN *LEPTE*-ACROSTIC IN *GEORGICS* I

by

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cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit
Ovid, *Amores* I 15, 16

ABSTRACT: Vergil qua imitator of Aratus' art appears to be an infinite source of concealed layers of text interpretation to be explored. The author of this paper argues that at *Georgics* I 424 ff. the poet announces, and then encrypts, not only his signature, but also the Aratean *ΛΕΠΤΗ*-acrostic in Latin transliteration; its specificity consists in its being divided into two parts, placed in reverse order (first PTE, then LE). As regards the form, the imitation is extended to further include a reversed telestich (TOTIS). The author suggests a precedent in Aratus (*Phaen.* 783–787), where the reversed telestich *ΟΣΣΑ ΙΣΗΣ ΣΑ* (= ὅσσα ἴσης, σά, “as much as you perceive, [is] yours”) can be discerned. In the passage in question, yet another, undiscovered so far, reversed acrostic (SCIES, lines 439–443) is discussed. While tracing parallels both in Greek and Latin poets, the author additionally presents such newly detected reversed acrostics as SPES at Germanicus' *Aratea* 573–576 and ΠΑΣΑ at Aratus' *Phaenomena* 246–249. As far as the “Greek” acrostics in Latin transliteration are concerned, the author proves the possibility of such a phenomenon by indicating some further, previously undetected, reproductions of the Aratean acrostics ΠΑΣΑ and ΛΕΠΤΗ in Manilius' *Astronomica*.

Vergil's disputed *sphragis* MA(ro)-VE(rgilius)-PU(blius) at *Georgics* I 429–433, first noticed and analysed by Edwin L. BROWN in 1963¹, albeit afterwards accepted rather sceptically², or even consciously ignored by scholars³, seems to

¹ E.L. BROWN, *Numeri Vergiliani. Studies in «Eclogues» and «Georgics»*, Bruxelles 1963 (Collection Latomus LXIII), pp. 102–104.

² See e.g. Thomas HALTER's review of BROWN's book in *Gnomon* VI 1964, p. 582; R.G.M. NISBET's review of R.F. THOMAS' *Virgil. Georgics*, vols. 1–2, Cambridge 1988, in *CR* XL 1990, p. 262; M. HASLAM, *Hidden Signs: Aratus Diosemeiai 46ff., Vergil Georgics 1.424ff.*, *HSCPh* XCIV 1992, pp. 199–204; M. HENDRY, *A Martial Acronym in Ennius?*, *LCM* XIX 1994, pp. 108 f.

³ Cf. R.A.B. MYNORS, *Virgil. Georgics*. Edited with a Commentary, Oxford ²1990.

have won many supporters by now⁴. As a direct pointer to this unusual acrostic, significantly occupying a position corresponding to that of the *lepte*-acrostic in Aratus (*Phaen.* 783–787), the discoverer takes the words “namque is certissimus auctor” (432), which, he says (rightly to my mind), bear also the underlying significance “for this is the most reliable means of verification”. Denis FEENEY and Damien NELIS in a recent paper⁵ clearly share BROWN’s conviction that this parenthetical phrase glosses the poet’s name, and add a note that the words “sequentis/ ordine respicies” (424 f.) also⁶ announce this “authorial” acrostic⁷, which is in keeping with Peter BING’s wider supposition⁸ that Vergil conflated the self-identification of the *Phaenomena*’s opening and the acrostic pattern that Aratus had employed with the first letters of *lepte*⁹ – without any apparent connection with the surface meaning of the verses, clearly visible in Aratus¹⁰.

These interpretations sound generally convincing, but – in respect of form – the interrelation seems to be more complex, and the announcement “sequentis/

⁴ Among others, D.O. ROSS, JR., *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome*, Cambridge 1975, pp. 28 f.; P. HARDIE, *Vergil*, Oxford 1998, p. 43; M.A.S. CARTER, *Vergilium vestigare: Aeneid 12.587–8*, CQ LII 2002, pp. 615–617 (the author adds another possible Vergil’s signature at *Aen.* XII 587 f.); G. DAMSCHEN, *Das lateinische Akrostichon: Neue Funde bei Ovid sowie Vergil, Grattius, Manilius und Silius Italicus*, Philologus CXLVIII 2004, pp. 107 f.; J. KATZ, *An Acrostic Ant Road in Aeneid 4*, MD LIX 2007, pp. 77–86; IDEM, *Vergil Translates Aratus: Phaenomena 1–2 and Georgics 1.1–2*, MD LX 2008, pp. 105–123, specifically 108 with n. 4 and 115 f., with 116, n. 1; T. HABINEK, *Situating Literacy at Rome*, in: W.A. JOHNSON, H.L. PARKER (eds.), *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, Oxford 2009, pp. 131 f.; T. SOMERVILLE, *Note on a Reversed Acrostic in Vergil Georgics 1.429–33*, CPh CV 2010, pp. 202–209, esp. 203 f.; D.P. NELIS, *Vergil’s Library*, in: J. FARRELL, M.C.J. PUTNAM (eds.), *A Companion to Vergil’s Aeneid and its Tradition*, Malden, MA 2010, p. 22; R.A. SMITH, *Virgil*, Malden, MA 2011, pp. 16 f.; C. CASTELLETTI, *Following Aratus’ Plow: Vergil’s Signature in the Aeneid*, MH LXIX 2012, pp. 84 f.

⁵ D. FEENEY, D. NELIS, *Two Virgilian Acrostics: certissima signa?*, CQ LV 2005, pp. 644–646.

⁶ That is, on the metapoetic level (my comment).

⁷ Cf. FEENEY, NELIS, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 645 with n. 8. The authors of the article take the prefix *re-* in *respicies* (425) and *revertentis* (427) as pointing out that the acrostic runs backwards.

⁸ See P. BING, *A Pun on Aratus’ Name in Verse 2 of the Phaenomena?*, HSCPh XCIII 1990, pp. 284 f. The concept of “conflation, or multiple reference” is derived from R.F. THOMAS, *Virgil’s Georgics and the Art of Reference*, HSCPh XC 1986, pp. 193–198.

⁹ To use a neat recapitulation by SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 17.

¹⁰ It should be stressed here that nowadays the metapoetic significance of Aratus’ *lepte*-acrostic as a *critical literary* term is not taken for granted any more. For a radical negation see M. ASPER, *Onomata allotria: Zur Genese, Struktur und Funktion poetologischer Metaphern bei Kallimachos*, Stuttgart 1997, p. 192, and K. VOLK, *Aratus*, in: J.J. CLAUS, M. CUYPERS (eds.), *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, Malden, MA 2010, pp. 206 f. (VOLK gives a minute examination of all occurrences of the word *leptos* / *lepte* in Aratus’ *Phaenomena*). According to a compromise view the Aratean acrostic emphasises fineness that unites subject matter and poetic style, see HABINEK, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 129. Therefore, we should not expect, as BING, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 284, does, Vergil to counter Aratus’ acrostic with “a comparable literary critical term”. Rather than that, it is “an acrostic alluding to another acrostic” – to use SOMERVILLE’S (*op. cit.* [n. 4], p. 207 with n. 20) felicitous formulation.

ordine respicies” certainly is not so narrow in scope as FEENEY and NELIS suggest. Let us look closely at the text:

Si uero solem ad rapidum lunasque sequentis ordine respicies, numquam te crastina fallet	425
hora, neque insidiis noctis capiere serенаe. luna reuertentis cum primum colligit ignis, si nigrum obscuro comprehenderit aëra cornu, maximus agricolis pelagoque parabitur imber;	
at si uirgineum suffuderit ore ruborem,	430
uentus erit: uento semper rubet aurea Phoebe. sin ortu quarto (namque is certissimus auctor) pura neque obtunsis per caelum cornibus ibit, totus et ille dies et qui nascentur ab illo	
exactum ad mensem pluuiā uentisque carebunt,	435
uotaque seruati soluent in litore nautae Glauco et Panopeae et Inoo Melicertae. sol quoque et exoriens et cum se condet in undas signa dabit; solem certissima signa sequentur,	
.	
at si, cum referetque diem condetque relatum, lucidus orbis erit, frustra terrebere nimbis et claro siluas cernes Aquilone moueri.	460

The passage consists of the moon- and the sun sections (note this order of treatment). The announcement (“si uero solem ad rapidum lunasque sequentis/ ordine respicies”, 424 f.) points likewise to these two objects, but refers to them in *inverse* order¹¹. If we put aside the literal meaning of the whole phrase and concentrate, as FEENEY and NELIS do (to support their concept), on its metapoetic function, this duality of objects should not be dismissed. It is not enough to exploit exclusively the latter element (“lunas [...] sequentis”), and treat the former one (“solem [...] rapidum”) as unimportant, almost non-existent. Nonetheless, FEENEY and NELIS proposing to interpret the signal “sequentis/ ordine respicies” as “look at the following in order”, confine themselves practically to the description of the moon which comprises the poet’s signature MA (429), VE (431), PU (433)¹².

I am convinced that Vergil intentionally introduced two objects (*solem* and *lunas*), in this very order, to guide the reader and help him to solve yet another encoded enigma. The first hint is given by lines 433–435, which begin with letters PTE, identical with the second part of Aratus’ acrostic ΛΕΠΤΗ:

¹¹ In Aratus both in the announcement (lines 773–776: ἄλλα [...] τοι ἐρέει [...] σελήνη [...] ἄλλα [...] ἠέλιος) and in the subsequent passages the order of objects remains the same – first the moon, then the sun. Vergil seems to have purposely changed the Aratean model.

¹² Hence in their paper they quote only lines 426–437.

pura neque obtunsis per caelum cornibus ibit,
 totus et ille dies et qui nascentur ab illo
 exactum ad mensem pluuiā uentisque carebunt...

It is highly improbable that precisely these three letters occur here – within the passage written in imitation of Aratus’ description of weather signs provided by the moon, where the Greek poet inserted his well-known acrostic – by pure chance. The Aratean origin of the imitated acrostic is confirmed by the adjective *pura*, corresponding to καθαρή at *Phaen.* 783, and generally by the subject matter of these lines. The fact that the sequence PTE in Vergil ends two verses beyond his signature does not mean that it comes too late. As demonstrated by Ted SOMERVILLE in his recent article¹³, the element PU, placed by Virgil at the end of the series, as a result of the Roman poet’s literary game of reversing the Aratean original, in reality corresponds to the *initial* part of Aratus’ description of the moon signs. More importantly, the phrase *ortu quarto* refers to Aratus’ τέττατον ἐκ τριτάτοιο (786), placed by him in the very middle of the element ΠΤΗ of his acrostic. If so, the position of PTE as a part of the supposed Vergilian acrostic (LE)PTE corresponds roughly to that of the Aratean ΛΕΠΤΗ.

Being aware that the idea of acrostics containing a Greek word (naturally, in transliteration) in Latin poetry may seem strange, and even hard to believe, I should like to illustrate this phenomenon with some examples. The first to take such a possibility into consideration was, to the best of my knowledge, Gregor DAMSCHEN, who in his interpretation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* XII 245–253 (the fight between the Lapiths and the Centaurs) discerned the acrostic PALE (RINEA), contextually justified¹⁴. Recently, Cristiano CASTELLETTI found the “Greek” acrostic AIDOS at Valerius Flaccus III 430–434¹⁵. I myself have detected a handful of further specimens of such devices in Manilius¹⁶. These, I think, are of special pertinence here because of their astral contexts and the form alluding directly to Aratus’ well-known acrostics, cf. PASA in Manilius’ *Astronomica* II 166–169, confirmed by the word *signa* beginning the third line of the passage in question, that is at the same position as σήματα in Aratus (see *Phaen.* 805)¹⁷.

¹³ SOMERVILLE, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 205 f.

¹⁴ See DAMSCHEN, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 101, n. 44. However, to achieve the acrostic PALE, the author is forced to treat the initial “h” in *haud* (XII 246) as the spiritus asper mark.

¹⁵ C. CASTELLETTI, *A “Greek” Acrostic in Valerius Flaccus (3.430–4)*, *Mnemosyne* LXV 2012, pp. 319–323. The author argues that this acrostic can be perceived as a commentary on the narrated scene.

¹⁶ This phenomenon requires explanation. I am working on a separate paper devoted to the Aratean acrostics in Manilius’ *Astronomica*. Manilius seems to have incorporated even the famous *lepte*-acrostic at I 846–850 (visible after a justifiable conjecture in line 848).

¹⁷ The visual similarity becomes striking when these two acrostics are shown as they stand in the text, i.e. vertically:

In the light of such evidence the use of a transliterated Greek acrostic in Vergil's *Georgics* (especially in the passage alluding to Aratus) ought not come as a surprise anymore.

Now, if we accept "PTE" as the second part of the Aratean acrostic, it is logical to ask for its lacking part "LE". There is no trace of such a sequence of the initial letters close to lines 433–435¹⁸, nevertheless it seems worthwhile searching for it elsewhere, especially as a little later, just after completing the description of the moon's appearances, the poet inserts a very significant, intriguingly worded passage (438–443) which so far has not been fully explained:

sol quoque et exoriens et cum se condet in undas
 signa dabit; solem certissima signa sequentur,
 et quae mane refert et quae surgentibus astris. 440
 ille ubi nascentem maculis uariauerit ortum
 conditus in nubem medioque refugerit orbe,
 suspecti tibi sint imbres...

What is striking here, is the special stress on signs provided by the sun. The word *signa* is highlighted by repetition and additionally enhanced by the adjective *certissima*¹⁹, exactly as the word *auctor* (432) was qualified as *certissimus*. It is worth keeping in mind that these are the only two occurrences of the superlative *certissimus* within the whole corpus of the *Georgics*. Obviously, the poet wants to emphasise here not only the literal, but also the special (metapoetic) meaning of the sun's *signa*. On that secondary level, the future form of the expression *signa dabit* is not fortuitous and points to what will come later in the text – precisely to the subsequent mention of the sun "rising and setting into the waves". The metapoetic significance of *signa* is then neatly reinforced by the reversed acrostic SCIES²⁰ (note again the future tense of the verb), hidden in lines 439–443 and connected with its putative "object" by the shared letter *s*:

Manilius II 166–169: p	Aratus 803–806: π
a	α
signa	σήματα
a	α

¹⁸ We cannot assume that the syllable LE in *ille* (line 434) can substitute for the first two letters, according to the following diagram:

Pura ...
 Totus et ilLE ...
 Exactum ...

This arrangement would be contrary to the basic principle of the acrostic as a regular set of corresponding letters, usually the first in each line, taken consecutively.

¹⁹ The emphasis is much stronger than in Aratus who does not repeat the word "sign" and uses the comparative, not the superlative, see *Phaen.* 820: ἡελίω καὶ μᾶλλον εἰκότα σήματα κείτα.

²⁰ Not detected so far.

s i g n a
e
i
c
↑ s

The encoded message reads: “you will get the most sure notice when you reach (the mention of) the sun bringing and ending the day”.

Since the use of a reversed acrostic by Vergil may seem unparalleled (although it should not surprise at least those accepting the reversed order of Vergil’s signature at 429–433), I feel obliged to confirm the possibility of its occurrence in poetry with further examples. For our discussion, an important precedent (not discerned by other scholars so far) can be found at Aratus’ *Phaenomena* 783–787, i.e. in the direct Vergil’s model, containing the famous acrostic ΛΕΠΤΗ:

λεπτὴ μὲν καθαρὴ τε περὶ τρίτον ἡμᾶρ ἐοῦσα
εὐδιὸς κ’ εἶη, λεπτὴ δὲ καὶ εὖ μάλ’ ἐρευθῆς
πνευματῆ, παχίων δὲ καὶ ἀμβλείησι κερααίαις
τέτρατον ἐκ τριτάτοιο φόως ἀμενηνὸν ἔχουσα
ἢ νότῳ ἀμβλυνται ἢ ὕδατος ἐγγύς ἐόντος.

The “frontal” acrostic is perhaps accompanied, within the same unit of text, by a telestich exploiting not one, but *two* final letters in each line. If so, Aratus points, on the metapoetical level, to both acrostic and telestich when he, a little earlier (line 778), invites the reader to observe the moon “on each side” / “on either hand”: σκέπτεο δὲ πρῶτον κεράων ἐκάτερθε σελήνην. Here is the schema of this hypothetical acroteleuton, that is the acrostic-telestich passage:

↓ λ	σα
ε	ησ
π	ισ
τ	σα
η	οσ ↑

The telestich reads: ὄσσα ἴσης, σά, “as much as you perceive²¹, (is) yours”. Formulated in the second person singular, it shares this formal feature with the encouragement expressed by Vergil in his reversed acrostic SCIES (*signa*). If

²¹ From ἴσημι = γιγνώσκω, “to know by observation”, the verb attested about fifty times in Greek grammarians and lexicographers, but in the extant texts of classical Greek poetry found only in its Doric form ἴσαμι. This fact does not exclude the use of the form ἴσημι in the learned poetry of the Hellenistic period. Interestingly, in most cases (cf. Theocr. 15, 46 and 146) the Doric forms can be regarded as linguistically (ethnically) marked – see R. HUNTER, *Mime and Mimesis. Theocritus Idyll 15*, in: IDEM, *On Coming After. Part 1: Hellenistic Poetry and its Reception*, Berlin 2008, p. 242. Such a function certainly does not apply to Aratus, hence a non-Doric form of ἴσημι is quite thinkable here. As for a similar phrasing, compare ὄσσα ἴσατι in l. 146 of Theocritus’ Idyll 15. – Mathias HANSES (personal communication) drew my attention to a similar combination of an acrostic and

one accepts, as I suggest, the coexistence of an acrostic and a telestich at *Phaen.* 783–787, an extremely interesting case of internal differentiation of the text addressees emerges. The adjective *lepte*, which programmatically refers to “subtle signs”, that is those that are hard to make out, but will nevertheless be discerned by the skilled observer of the sky (who “reads” its signs)²², when inscribed in the form of an acrostic in Aratus’ text serves as a test of perceptiveness for the reader of the poem. The reader who manages to solve the riddle gains, as it were, the status of the initiated one and is metapoetically addressed by the poet with a *gnome* alluding to such achievements.

For another Aratean device of the kind we are interested in here see *Phaen.* 246–249 (the reversed acrostic ΠΑΣΑ intertwined with σῆμα)²³:

α
σῆμα
α
↑ π

As far as Latin astronomical poets are concerned, a reversed acrostic occurs at Germanicus’ *Aratea* 573–576 (SPES)²⁴:

saepe uelis quantum superet cognoscere noctis
et spe uenturae solari pectora lucis.
prima tibi nota solis erit, quo sidere currat,
↑ semper enim signo Phoebus radiabit in uno.

That said, let us return to the signs expressly announced by Vergil in lines 439–443 (SCIES “signa [...] solem certissima signa sequentur”)²⁵, and preceded by the information that these most reliable signs will be given by the sun when it rises and when it sinks under the waves. These descriptive details reappear at 458: “at si, cum referetque diem condetque relatum”. The *lucidus orbis*, bright disc of the sun, mentioned in the next line, is a rough equivalent of the *rapidus sol*

a reversed telestich in Catullus 60, which, taken together, make up an encoded comment: “natu ceu aes” (first noted by G.P. GOOLD in his *Catullus*, London 1983, p. 248).

²² The point made by K. VOLK – see, most recently, her article *Letters in the Sky: Reading the Signs in Aratus’ Phaenomena*, *AJPh* CXXXIII 2012, pp. 209–240, especially, in connection with the *lepte*-acrostic, 227.

²³ As yet unnoticed.

²⁴ As yet unnoticed. Possible signpoints: *spes* in the text comprised by the acrostic, and, perhaps, “prima [...] nota” (= “the first letter?”), *signo*.

²⁵ Krystyna BARTOL (personal communication) pointed to the alliteration and other repetition of the sound *s* as an additional means of drawing the reader’s attention to this announcement.

occurring in the initial announcement (424)²⁶, so the reader is eventually directed by the poet to lines 459 f.:

lucidus orbis erit, frustra terrebere nimbis
et claro siluas cernes Aquilone moueri,

the first letters of which spell LE. At that point we obtain the first part of the Aratean acrostic, removed from its proper place to create a sophisticated riddle.

Only then, according to the order prescribed²⁷, the reader is invited to look back (*respicere*)²⁸ at the runs of the moon (*lunas sequentis*, 424). While doing so, one should keep in mind, in particular, what is written in the lines describing the fourth rising of the moon (*ortu quarto*), since this very moment will serve as the most reliable indicator²⁹: “namque is certissimus auctor” (432). And the first letters of the lines indicated (433–435), as I already have pointed out, spell PTE.

Let me emphasise once again that the above quoted lines 459 f. have not been taken into consideration just because they begin with the required letters LE: they evidently form the final element of a whole system of subtle signposts – from the initial announcement suggesting the desirable course of action on the part of the reader through indicating exactly (with the help of a “guiding” quotation)³⁰ when to look for the lacking part of the acrostic to its concrete realisation in the text.

Here is the whole acrostic in its reconstructed form, respecting the “sun-and-moon”- oriented system of the intratextual *deixis*:

Lucidus orbis erit, frustra terrebere nimbis	459
Et claro siluas cernes Aquilone moueri.	460
Pura neque obtunsis per caelum cornibus ibit,	433
Totus et ille dies et qui nascentur ab illo	434
Exactum ad mensem pluuia uentisque carebunt,	435

The division of the acrostic into two widely separated parts remains the most striking feature which requires further investigation. On a microscale, however,

²⁶ See *OLD* s.v. *rapidus* 3: (of the sun, fire, etc.) scorching, consuming (and not “swift”, “fleet-footed”, as FAIRCLOUGH and FALLON render it; DELLA CORTE translates “cocente”).

²⁷ As an element of the “signposting technique”, *ordine* (425) may have this very meaning.

²⁸ I take this verb to mean, metapoetically, “look backwards”, cf. FEENEY, NELIS, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 645, n. 8, and SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 17, who, however, connect it only to the suggested way of reading Vergil’s signature. SOMERVILLE, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 204, rightly observes the metapoetic (“almost metatheatrical”) meaning of *respicies* in this context, but identifying it simply with Aratus’ σκέπτεο (“look”) fails to notice the nuance of suggested direction.

²⁹ Not so much of the author’s name as of the acrostic to be (partly) inserted.

³⁰ Cf. “sol quoque et exoriens et cum se condet in undas/ signa dabit” (438 f., the *signa* being reinforced by the reversed acrostic SCIES), and “at si, cum referetque diem condetque relatum” (458).

this practice seems to have a certain analogy precisely in the skipped lines of Vergil's MA-VE-PU signature³¹.

Analogically to Aratus, Vergil supplements his (combined) acrostic with an accompanying reversed telestich which reads TOTIS, i.e. "when written wholly", "with all letters present", "in full". This metapoetical, explanatory telestich is confirmed by *totus* at 434³². Its function consists in reassuring the reader that the acrostic he was challenged to reconstruct now appears in a complete form, strictly echoing the Aratean original. Vergil follows Aratus also as regards the direction of both acrostic and telestich (downwards-upwards), as a result of which he presents, as his predecessor, a perfect acroteleuton.

The idea of introducing telestichs is not alien to Vergil; compare the closing *sphragis* of the *Georgics* (IV 562–565):

per populos dat iura uiamque adfectat Olympo.
illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuuenta,

where the final letters of each verse spell OTIA (confirmed by *otī* in line 564)³³.

To sum up: I think that at *Georgics* I 424 ff. Vergil announces, and then encrypts, not only his signature, but also the Aratean *lepte*-acrostic in Latin transliteration. In respect of form, the imitation is extended to include a reversed telestich. The way he proceeds allows us to agree fully with SMITH's statement³⁴ that Vergil in *Georgics* I wrote in code³⁵.

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³¹ As one can see, I put the problem of the skipped MA-VE-PU lines in a different way to other scholars: not as a curiosity to be explained (see KATZ, *Vergil...* [n. 4], p. 108 with n. 4), but as an existing *datum* – a stated fact which can lend credence to a comparable *novum* elsewhere in the text. For an attempt at identifying an acrostic extended over a relatively long passage (another signature of Vergil at *Aen.* VI 637–659) see DAMSCHEN, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 107 f. with n. 63.

³² Robert COLBORN (personal communication) noticed that lines 433–436 (*sic*) contain an (imperfect) telestich TOTaE, echoing Aratus' acrostic ΠΑΣΑ (*Phaen.* 803–806), and observed that its intentionality is confirmed by the adjective *totus* at 434. However, in the light of the Aratean parallel, the inversed telestich TOTIS, which encompasses the whole of the reconstructed acrostic, seems more probable. – Mathias HANSES (personal communication) commented on the reconstructed acroteleuton LEPTE TOTIS, discerning therein a verbal echo of the noun λεπτότης.

³³ CARTER, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 616 f., n. 4, identifies Walter SCHMIDT as the scholar who first noticed that telestich.

³⁴ See SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 16 f.

³⁵ My gratitude for reading an earlier draft of this paper as well as making valuable remarks goes particularly to Joshua KATZ, Robert COLBORN, and Krystyna BARTOL. I would also like to thank them, and Jakub PIŁOŃ, for bibliographical help and moral support.

