
On a Newly Discovered Acrostic in Virgil (*Aen.* 10.693–697): Mezentius and Jupiter

Sobre un acróstico recientemente descubierto en Virgilio (*Aen.* 10.693–697): Mecencio y Júpiter

NEIL ADKIN

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
nadkin3489@aol.com

DOI: 10.48232/eclas.161.03

Recibido: 05/03/2022 — Aceptado: 28/03/2022

Abstract.— Gabriela Marrón has very recently drawn attention to a new and important acrostic in Virgil: *Iovis* (*Aen.* 10.693–697). The acrostic's intentionality is confirmed by horizontally identical *Iovis* (l. 689). The present article endeavours to complement Marrón's own paper in three main ways. In the first place, the article suggests that acrostical *Iovis* can shed light on Virgil's puzzling statement that the notoriously sacrilegious Mezentius is acting here *Iovis monitis* (l. 689). Secondly, the acrostic would appear to elucidate the odd syntax of the ensuing simile and its application to Mezentius (693–697). Thirdly and lastly, this article also endeavours to show that Virgil has inserted clues which tip the reader off to the presence of this acrostic. These hints are embedded in the text spanned by the acrostic itself as well as in the broader context. It can be shown that these Virgilian tip-offs conform to his customary practice in connection with acrostics.

Keywords.— acrostic; Jupiter; Mezentius; Virgil

Resumen.— Gabriela Marrón ha llamado muy recientemente la atención sobre la presencia de un nuevo e importante acróstico en Virgilio: *Iovis* (*Aen.* 10.693–697). La aparición horizontal del mismo término, *Iovis* (l. 689), confirma el carácter intencional de ese acróstico. El propósito de este trabajo es complementar el artículo de Marrón en función de tres cuestiones principales. En primer lugar, se sugiere que el acróstico *Iovis* puede iluminar la desconcertante afirmación de Virgilio acerca de que Mecencio, un personaje notoriamente sacrilego, actúa allí *Iovis monitis* (l. 689). En segundo término, el acróstico parece dilucidar la extraña sintaxis del símil siguiente y su aplicación a Mecencio (693–697). En tercer y último lugar, este artículo también intenta mostrar que Virgilio insertó ciertas pistas que advierten al lector sobre la presencia de este acróstico. Se trata de indicios imbricados tanto en el texto que abarca el mismo acróstico, como en su contexto más amplio. Es posible demostrar que esas señales virgilianas se ajustan a las prácticas habituales del autor con relación a los acrósticos.

Palabras clave.— acróstico; Júpiter; Mecencio; Virgilio

Virgil's use of acrostics is at present one of the most dynamic areas of Virgilian scholarship¹. A new acrostic has now been identified by Gabriela Marrón (2019) at *Aeneid* 10.693–697: *Iovis*². The deliberateness of this *Iovis*-acrostic is signalled by the occurrence of exactly the same word in the body-text (l. 689: *Iovis*). The whole passage at issue, which marks the start of Mezentius' *aristeia*, reads as follows (*Aen.* 10.689–700):

at Iovis interea monitis Mezentius ardens	
succedit pugnae Teucrosque invadit ovantis;	690
concurrunt Tyrrhenae acies atque omnibus uni,	
uni odiisque viro telisque frequentibus instant.	
ille, velut rupes vastum quae prodit in aequor,	
obvia ventorum furiis expostaque ponto,	
vim cunctam atque minas perfert caelique marisque	695
ipsa immota manens, prolem Dolichaonis Hebrum	
sternit humi, cum quo Latagum Palmumque fugacem,	
sed Latagum saxo atque ingenti fragmine montis	
occupat os faciemque adversam, poplite Palmum	
succiso volvi segnem sinit ³ .	700

Marrón offers no *raison d'être* for acrostical *Iovis* (693–697). This acrostic would seem however to perform the important function of supplying a key to the problematic phrase which serves as the acrostic's horizontal confirmation: *Iovis...monitis* (l. 689). This statement that it is the “admonition of Jupiter” which here motivates the infamously irreligious Mezentius has been a notorious crux since antiquity. The problem is conveniently set out in Servius' note on *Iovis...monitis*, which reads thus: *novimus sacrilegum esse Mezentium, novimus quoque Iovem etiam adhortatum esse alios deos, ut a bello desisterent, et dixisse* (10.112) “*rex Iuppiter omnibus idem*”. *quomodo ergo procedit “at Iovis interea monitis”*? Servius then continues with two further observations: *dicitur “sacrilegum Iuppiter admonere non debuit”* and *illud etiam...quaeritur, quemadmodum numini sacrilegus obtemperare potuerit*. What can be the solution of this long-standing crux?

¹For a recent and full bibliographic survey cf. Robinson 2019: 290 n. 2, 308 (“Appendix”).

²Marrón's own article is largely concerned with examining the links between this new *Iovis*-acrostic and the famous *Mars*-acrostic (*Aen.* 7.601–604). In this connection it may be pointed out that this *Mars*-acrostic in fact continues with unidentified *has* (605–607), which is corroborated by identical and anacoluthically high-profile *has* at the start of l. 611. The acrostic is to be understood as *Mars has* (*sc. portas* [cf. 607: *sunt...Belli portae*] *servat* [vel sim.]).

³Text of Conte 2019²: 287. The same edition is also used in all subsequent citations of the *Aeneid* in this article.

Acrostical *Iovis* could be nominative. However after genitival *Iovis* in *Iovis...monitis* one expects a corresponding genitive. On what then does the acrostical genitive *Iovis* depend? The third and middle line of the acrostic (695) begins with *vim*⁴. Here *vim* requires a gloss: *id est violentiam, impetum* (thus Servius Auctus *ad loc.*)⁵. When this Virgilian *vim*, which supplies the “v” of acrostical *Iovis*, is taken in conjunction with the *v-i-s* which forms the second half of this *Iovis*-acrostic, we have a gamma-acrostic: *vim / vis*⁶. *Iovis* was perceived as containing the word *vis* (cf. Ziogas 2016: 1–3). Here Virgilian *vim* is the direct object of *perfert* (695). The syntactic arrangement of the acrostic’s first three lines (693–695: *ille, velut rupes vastum quae prodit in aequor, / obvia ventorum furiis expostaque ponto, / vim cunctam atque minas perfert...*) invites the reader to take *ille* (= Mezentius) as the subject of *perfert*. *Perferre* can mean “to withstand” (*OLD*² s.v. 7b)⁷. Virgil is accordingly giving a subtextual hint that Mezentius “withstands” the *vis* of (acrostical) *Iovis*⁸.

This Virgilian *perfert* (695) is directly followed by line-final *caelique marisque*, which depend on line-initial *vim*. This syntagm *caelique marisque* could be taken as hinting at Jupiter as ruler of the whole world⁹. The whole of this line 695 (*vim cunctam atque minas perfert caelique marisque*) could accordingly be construed as a subtextual dog-whistle that Mezentius is in fact “withstanding the power of Jupiter”. It is only the start of the next line (696: *ipsa immota manens*) that refers unambiguously to *rupes* (693). However the phrase *immota manens*, for which there is no correlate in Homer’s simile, at once calls to mind the *mens immota manet* of Aeneas’ response to Dido’s pleas (*Aen.* 4.449), where *immutus* means “emotionally unmoved, unrelenting, inflexible” (*OLD*² s.v. 4). The subtextual implication is accordingly that the godless Mezentius remains similarly “unmoved” by the “admonition” (689) of the god Jupiter. It may

⁴For the importance which Virgil attaches to such “third” lines in an acrostic cf. Adkin 2018: 74 with n. 9, 85 with n. 102.

⁵Here Virgil’s *vim* finds no counterpart in his Homeric model (*Il.* 15.620–621): ἦ τε (sc. πέτρῃ) μένει λιγέων ἀνέμων λαίψηρά κέλευθα / κύματά τε τροφόντα.

⁶The accusative *vim* of the gamma-acrostic’s horizontal arm merely reflects this line’s syntax. On such gamma-acrostics in Virgil cf. Adkin 2021: 130.

⁷Homer (cf. n. 5 above) has instead simply μένειν: “await (an attack without blenching)” (*LSJ* s.v. II.1).

⁸*Vis* can mean “influence (of a deity or sim.) over events, power, sway” (*OLD*² s.v. 12a). For Virgil’s own use of *vis* in this way with reference to the gods cf. Squillante Saccone 1990: 568–569. On *Aen.* 1.4 (*vi superum*) Austin (1971: 30) observes that in such cases “*vis* comes close in meaning to *numen*”.

⁹Cf. (e.g.) *Aen.* 1.223–224 (*Iuppiter aethere summo / despiciens mare...terrasque*). For Jupiter explicitly identified with *caelum* (which Virgil here puts first and for which there is no parallel in his Homeric source) cf. (e.g.) Varro *ling.* 5.67 (*is* [sc. Jupiter] *Caelum*).

furthermore be observed that exactly the same expression (*Iovis monitis*) is used in similar combination with *immotus* in a slightly earlier passage of Virgil's aforesaid description of Aeneas' dealings with Dido (4.331–332): *ille* (*sc.* Aeneas) *Iovis monitis immota tenebat / lumina*. This time however we have a piquant contrast with godless Mezentius: here godly Aeneas (*pius Aeneas*) piously obeys the “admonition” of Jupiter.

If then acrostical *Iovis* thus throws light on the odd theology of this Mezentian passage, the same acrostic would also appear to elucidate the similarly perplexing syntax of this same text¹⁰. The lines which form the acrostic (693–697) read as follows: *ille* (*sc.* Mezentius), *velut rupes vastum quae prodit in aequor, / obvia ventorum furiis expostaque ponto, / vim cunctam atque minas perfert caelique marisque / ipsa immota manens, prolem Dolichaonis Hebrum / sternit humi*. Here the syntactical problem was set out clearly by Forbiger (1875⁴: 403), who describes the statement that “*ille Hebrum sternit, velut rupes perfert vim et minas caelique marisque*” as a “*mira et ridicula comparatio*”. With similar puzzlement the canonical commentary of Conington and Nettleship (2008: 297) expresses itself thus: “Virgil had begun the simile as if he intended to complete the sentence with some such word as *resistit*: but apparently forgetting this, he constructs *ille* with *sternit*”. The “apparent forgetfulness” is deliberate. Mezentius does not “resist” his attackers. Instead the idea of “resistance” is restricted to line 695, where “Mezentius” “withstands” (*perfert*) the *vis* of acrostic *Iovis*.

This *Iovis*-acrostic (in conjunction with gamma-acrostical *vim*) accordingly serves as a gloss on the problematic *Iovis...monitis* of the body-text (689): ungodly Mezentius does not in fact obey the admonition of god Jupiter¹¹. Virgil is in fact at pains here to stress Mezentius' independence of Jupiter. Though the acrostic spells *I-o-v-i-s*, it starts with the “i” of the pronoun *ille*, which denotes, not “Jove”, but Mezentius. This *ille* is furthermore emphasized by the immediately preceding *uni, / uni...viro* (691–692)¹². Here we have “one man” (*uni viro*), acting with no help, human or divine. If moreover this *Iovis*-acrostic starts with Mezentian *ille*, it ends with this same pronoun's long-postponed verb (*sternit*)¹³: here we have Mezentius, not “Jove”, in action. In this connection a final word

¹⁰ For such “noteworthy” language as itself a cue to the presence of an acrostic cf. Adkin 2021: 135–136.

¹¹ For Virgil's use of such “corrective” acrostics that rectify the body-text cf. Adkin 2021: 128.

¹² This *geminatio* of *uni* across the line-break is “intensely emphatic” (Page 1900: 342).

¹³ For such “coextensiveness” of the acrostic with the text it glosses cf. Adkin 2021: 131–132.

may be said about etymology¹⁴. If Jove, whose name was etymologized from *iuvare* (“help”; cf. Maltby 1991: 319), conspicuously fails to “help”, it is perhaps possible that Jove’s epithet *μητίετα*¹⁵ is echoed in Virgil’s similarly penultimate *Mezentius*¹⁶: here Mezentius “counsels” for himself — without Jupiter¹⁷.

If then this *Iovis*-acrostic undercuts the body-text’s *Iovis...monitis* (689) and shows that these two words are not in fact to be taken seriously, the acrostic thus evinces an *espiègle* disrespectfulness towards Jupiter: this disrespect mirrors Mezentius’ own irreverence towards the gods. Another acrostic which similarly mocks the same Jupiter is to be found near the end of the previous book (*Aen.* 9.626–629)¹⁸. Here Ascanius answers the rant of Numanus Remulus by killing him with an arrow-shot. The text may be cited in full (9.621–634):

talia iactantem (sc. Numanum) dictis ac dira canentem
 non tulit Ascanius nervoque obversus equino
 contendit telum diversaque brachia ducens
 constitit, ante Iovem supplex per vota precatus:
 “Iuppiter omnipotens, audacibus adnue coeptis. 625
 ipse tibi ad tua templa feram sollemnia dona,
 et statuam ante aras aurata fronte iuvenum
 candentem pariterque caput cum matre ferentem,
 iam cornu petat et pedibus qui spargat harenam”.
 audiit et caeli genitor de parte serena 630
 intonuit laevum, sonat una fatifer arcus:
 effugit horrendum stridens adducta sagitta
 perque caput Remuli venit et cava tempora ferro
 traicit.

Here Ascanius’ prayer to Jupiter for help with this arrow-shot contains the acrostic *ieci* (626–629: “I’ve shot already”)¹⁹. This acrostic, which is

¹⁴It has already been argued that in l. 689 the *ardens* that qualifies Mezentius is meant as an antonymic gloss on *segnis* (700), which was etymologized as *se igni*; cf. Adkin 2007: 173. “Mezentius” itself was linked by Paschalis (1997: 341, 359) with *μείζων* (cf. dial. *μέζων* and *μείδων*), while Rivero García and Librán Moreno (2011: 464) instead suggested *μητίετα* Ζεύς.

¹⁵Cf. (e.g.) *Il.* 15.599 (line-final *μητίετα* Ζεύς), in a passage which Virgil is imitating here.

¹⁶Here *Mezentius* is separated by just two words from *Iovis*. The old spelling (*Medientius*; cf. Ribbeck 1857) is particularly close to the Greek: *Medient-* / *μητίετ-*.

¹⁷On such significant use of names cf. Booth & Maltby 2006.

¹⁸Cf. Adkin 2016: 33 n. 104, where this acrostic is discussed more fully.

¹⁹This acrostical *ieci* is confirmed by “ungewöhnlich” (so Dingel 1997: 238) *traicit* (634), which has to be glossed as *transiit* by Ti. Claudius Donatus (*Aen.* 9.630 p. 270.14 G.). This *traicit* is further highlighted by being emphatically enjambed (“edge”-position, like the acrostic) before a strong sense-break at the first diaeresis.

coextensive with the prayer, accordingly points up the pointlessness of this same prayer to Jupiter, who is in any case the wrong god to invoke (cf. *Serv. Aen.* 9.624 [= 621]) for help with such an arrow-shot — in this case already “shot”: *ieci*.

If then this acrostic near the end of Book 9 (*ieci*) resembles the one near the end of Book 10 (*Iovis*) by expressing disrespect for the god Jupiter, it can be shown that an acrostic near the end of the next Book (11.820–827) likewise evinces a comparable disrespectfulness, this time not to a divine figure, but to a legendary one — Camilla’s comrade-in-arms, Acca. Again the text (11.820–827) may be set out in full²⁰:

tum sic expirans Accam ex aequalibus unam	820
adloquitur, fida ante alias quae sola Camillae	
quicum partiri curas, atque haec ita fatur:	
“hactenus, Acca soror, potui: nunc vulnus acerbum	
conficit, et tenebris nigrescunt omnia circum.	
effuge et haec Turno mandata novissima perfer:	825
succedat pugnae Troianosque arceat urbe.	
iamque vale”.	

Here the description of Camilla’s last-breath apostrophe to Acca (= slightly anagrammed Caca [“Shit!”]) is exactly coextensive with a diglot acrostic, first anabatic *caq[=c]at* (820–824)²¹, then synonymously catabatic *cesi* (= χέζει; 824–827)²²: Acca (Caca) “shits”. This impish disrespectfulness finds corroboration just ten lines earlier in a further “cacatory” acrostic (807–811):

nec iam amplius hastae	
credere nec telis occurrere virginis audet (<i>sc.</i> Arruns, Camilla’s killer).	
ac velut ille, prius quam tela inimica sequantur,	
continuo in montis sese avius abdidit altos	810
occiso pastore lupus magnove iuenco...	

Here Virgil’s acrostical *caco* (808–811; “I shit”) is a roguish recycling of Homer’s homonymous κακόν in the simile (*Il.* 15.586: θηρὶ κακὸν ῥέξαντι ἐουκῶς) which Virgil is imitating here: the Homeric animal’s “evil deed”

²⁰ On this third acrostic (11.820–827) cf. more fully Adkin 2016: 23–24.

²¹ For “q” (822) = “c” cf. Maurenbrecher (1907): 1.39–44. For “h” (823) as a disregarable non-letter cf. Dittmann (1936–1942): 2391.26–55.

²² For “c” (824) = “χ” cf. Maurenbrecher (1907): 1.36–38. For “s” (826) = “ζ” cf. OLD² s.v. “z”.

becomes an acrostical “crap”²³. The final point may be made that this *caco*-acrostic resembles the *Iovis*-acrostic in exploiting a Homeric simile for Virgil’s puckish purposes²⁴.

When Virgil employs an acrostic, it is his habit to insert clues that alert the reader to the acrostic’s presence (cf. Adkin 2021: 132–136). Since the *Iovis*-acrostic, which mocks the King of the Gods, is important, it is appropriate for Virgil to embed a correspondingly large number of hints that point to the existence of this particular acrostic. One might start by noting that the *Iovis* (689) which confirms acrostical *Iovis* (693–697) is placed as near to the beginning of the line as metrically possible (*at Iovis...*): here we accordingly have a species of gamma-acrostic, like afore-discussed *vim / vis* (695–697)²⁵. If one turns to the lines spanned by the acrostic itself (693–697), one finds that each of these lines contains at least one word that besides its face-meaning is also marked by an additional “resonance” which is appropriate to the acrostic: this “resonance” is conferred by the presence of the acrostic and serves in turn as a pointer to it²⁶. Thus in the first of these lines (693: *rupes vastum quae prodit in aequor*) *prodit*²⁷, which was etymologized as *porro it* (Non. p. 47.10–11 M.²), fits the beginning of an acrostic, which “goes further”. In the second line (694: *obvia ventorum furis expostaque ponto*) both line-initial *obvia* (“marginal”, like the acrostic) and ensuing *exposta*, neither of which finds a parallel in Homer, can also bear the acrostically appropriate sense of “presenting itself to the sight”²⁸. The next and central line of the acrostic (695: *vim cunctam atque minas perfert*) contains two such acrostically “resonant” terms, which are also related in meaning. The first is the first-foot *cunctam*, for which there is nothing comparable in Homer: such words that mean “all” are regularly used as a hint to read “all” the acrostic²⁹. The other

²³This same act of acrostical cacation is also the reference of Virgil’s next line (812: *conscius audacis facti, caudamque remulcens*), which is problematic (cf. Horsfall 2003: 431–432): the “audacious deed” alludes to the beast’s bowel movement, after which it duly “retracts its tail”. On this *caco*-acrostic as a whole cf. further Adkin 2016: 23.

²⁴The passages of Homer in question (*Il.* 15.586–588 [beast-simile] and *Il.* 15.618–621 [rock-simile]) are notably close to each other.

²⁵The point may also be made that the *monitis* (689) on which *Iovis* depends finds an echo in the virtually homographic *montis* at the end of the line (698) immediately after the conclusion of the *Iovis*-acrostic.

²⁶For such acrostically-sensitive “resonance” attaching to diction employed in the environment of an acrostic cf. Adkin 2014: 54–55, 61–64, 68–69.

²⁷This *prodit* has to be glossed by Servius as *extenditur*. Here Homer (*Il.* 15.619) has instead just ἀλός ἐγγύς ἐοῦσα.

²⁸So *OLD*² s.v. “obvius” 4. For this same meaning of *expos[is]tus* cf. Hiltbrunner 1931–1953: 1766.16–30 (“i. q. ... obiectus, proiectus, propositus... oculis, conspectui”).

²⁹Cf. Adkin 2018: 80–82, where it is argued that Virgil’s puzzling substitution of *Panopeae* for Parthe-

“resonant” word is *perfert*, which can also mean “read to the end” — all (*cunctam*) the acrostic³⁰. In the following line, which is also the penultimate one of the acrostic (696: *prolem Dolichaonis Hebrum*), the hapax *Dolichaon* is evidently an allusion to the “length” (δολιχός) of the acrostic. The next and last line of the acrostic (697) resembles the middle one (695) in again containing two conceptually-related words that are marked by acrostical “resonance”: *sternit humi, cum quo Latagum*. Since on the one hand the basic sense of *sterno* is “humi spargo” (Forcellini 1940: 483), this verb is appropriate to the “bottom” of an acrostic, especially in conjunction (as here) with *humi* (*sternit humi*), which is strictly superfluous³¹. Since on the other hand the hapactic *nomen proprium* “Latagus” is derived from λάταγες (so Saunders 1940: 552), which means “the drops of wine in the bottom of the cup” (*LSJ s.v. λάταξ* I), this “bottom”-related name likewise fits the “bottom” of an acrostic. A final observation may be permitted: this “Latagus” is used here in the rhetorical figure of *regressio* (697–698: *Latagum... / sed Latagum*)³², which aptly signals the end of the acrostic.

Such Virgilian clues to the presence of an acrostic are not only to be found in the lines that make up the actual acrostic; it is also Virgil’s custom to insert these cues at some distance from the acrostic itself³³. In the present passage Mezentius’ *aristeia*, which is introduced by aforesaid *Iovis... monitis* (689), is immediately preceded by Turnus’ removal from the battle-field, after the latter has been lured by the phantom-Aeneas onto a ship, which then sails away. In this connection Turnus deliberates thus (683–684): *an... litora nando / curva petat*³⁴. These words of Turnus (*litora... / curva petat*) are paraphrased as simply *veniret ad terras* by Ti. Claudius Donatus (*Aen.* 10.680 p. 379.18 G.). It is therefore noteworthy that the *litus* which Virgil uses instead is widely employed as a pointer to the presence of an acrostic at the “edge” of the text (*cf.* Adkin 2021:

nian Νηπει (*georg.* 1.437) is a hint to “see all” (*Pan-op-*) of the foregoing acrostic (429–433: *ma- ve- pu-*). In the present case (*Aen.* 10.695) the reader is being prompted to read “all” of acrostical *Iovis* — not just *v-i-s*.

³⁰For this sense of *perferre* *cf.* *OLD*² s.v. 5a (“to maintain [an activity...] to the end”), 5b (“to go through [a lesson, formula]”). Particularly pertinent are *Juv.* 6.391–392 (*dictataque verba / pertulit*) and 7.152–153 (*quaecumque sedens modo legerat, haec eadem stans / perferet*).

³¹*Sterno* is used without *humi* shortly afterwards at 10.730 and 10.733.

³²On *regressio* (“unterschiedsvertiefende Wiederaufnahme-Figur”) *cf.* Lausberg 2008⁴: 393–395.

³³For such long-distance pointers to Virgilian acrostics *cf.* Adkin 2021: 131, 134.

³⁴The line that opens with *curva petat* (684) is placed exactly ten lines before the start of acrostical *Iovis* (693). On Virgil’s use of such decemlinear spacing in conjunction with acrostics *cf.* Adkin 2020: 488.

134–135). Here *litus* is qualified by (“edge”-positioned) *curvus*, which had recently been identified by Varro (*ling.* 7.25) as the etymon of *cornu*, which is itself regularly used as an acrostical tip-off (cf. Adkin 2021: 135), since *cornu* frequently means “i. q. latus” (Lambertz 1906–1909: 970.78–971.11). Here *litora... / curva* is employed in conjunction with *petere* (*litora... / curva petat*). It may therefore be noted that *cornu petat* (subtextually “let him seek the [acrostical] edge”, as well as “butt with the horn”) is placed in the last line of the afore-discussed *ieci*-acrostic (*Aen.* 9.629)³⁵. If this *litora...petat* functions as an acrostical heads-up ten lines before the start of the *Iovis*-acrostic (693), the same hintful purpose is served by synonymous *ora* (706), which is separated by exactly the same ten-line interval from the end of the same acrostic (697)³⁶. Here Virgil is describing the fate of the next warrior to be slain by Mezentius after above-mentioned Latagus (706): *ignarum Laurens habet ora Mimanta*³⁷. Here *ignarus* has the unusual sense of *ignoratus* (so Servius *ad loc.*)³⁸. Here we accordingly have a subtextual clue to the “unknown” (*ignarum*) acrostic on the “edge” (*ora*).

Such acrostical cues can be even further away from the acrostic. The paragraph before the one that starts with *at Iovis...monitis* (689)³⁹ starts with *respicit* (*sc.* Turnus) *ignarus rerum* (666). If words connoting “edge”⁴⁰ serve as acrostical wink-winks, the same function is performed by words that involve “looking” (cf. Adkin 2021: 133–134). The particular verb used in the present passage (line-initial *respicit*) had already been used in the *Georgics* (1.425) as a similarly prevenient pointer to the *ma-ve-pu*-acrostic (1.429–433)⁴¹. If paragraph-starting *respicit* (666) has been placed 28 lines before the start of the *Iovis*-acrostic (693), a matchingly 27-line interval separates the same start of this same acrostic (693) from the start of the next paragraph (719), where the opening language constitutes a similar clue to the acrostic (719–720): *venerat antiquis Corythi de finibus Acron*,

³⁵ For *petere* used on its own as a cue to an acrostic cf. Adkin 2016: 33.

³⁶ For *ora* as a commonly used pointer to an acrostic cf. Adkin 2021: 134.

³⁷ These words are paraphrased as just *terrae exceperunt* by Ti. Claudius Donatus (*Aen.* 10.705 p. 381.15–16 G.).

³⁸ For a further instance of this very rare meaning of *ignarus* in Virgil cf. Adkin (forthcoming). In the present passage this semantic rareness highlights the word as an acrostical nudge-nudge.

³⁹ So the paragraph-arrangement in (e.g.) Geymonat 2008: 565–566.

⁴⁰ Cf. afore-mentioned *litus*, *ora* and *cornu*.

⁴¹ In *Aen.* 10.666 (*respicit ignarus rerum*) the unspecific *ignarus rerum*, which requires clarification from Servius (*id est artis per quam evaserat*), could be taken as a subtextual hint at “ignorance” of the acrostic. The speech which Turnus then begins in the next line but one (668) starts with invocatory “*omnipotens genitor*”, which is the antonomastic equivalent of acrostical *Iovis*.

/ *Graius homo*. Here *Acron*, which is a hapax in the *Aeneid*, is immediately followed by *Graius homo*, where the *Graius* prompts the reader to think of “Greek” ἄκρον, the “edge” — as in ἀκροατής⁴².

If line-initial *respicit* (666) is a cue to “look” at the ensuing acrostic, further “spectatorial” tip-offs have been inserted in the lines which come after this same acrostic. The line which immediately follows afore-discussed *Graius homo* reads thus (721): *hunc (sc. Acron) ubi miscentem longe media agmina vidit (sc. Mezentius)*. Here the use of *video*, which occupies the same line-final *sedes* as *Acron*, can be taken as another hint to “see” the acrostic. After a space of just three lines we have verse-initial *conspexit*⁴³. The next warrior to be dispatched by Mezentius tells him before expiring (740–741): *te quoque fata / prospectant paria*⁴⁴. To these dying words Mezentius then replies (743–744): *de me divum pater atque hominum rex / viderit*. This line-initial *viderit* is placed exactly fifty lines after the similarly line-initial *vim* (695) which supplies the “v” of the *Iovis*-acrostic as well as the key to its interpretation⁴⁵. The present passage could accordingly be regarded as a piquantly subtextual invitation to Jove to “see” his own acrostic (*Iovis*), which moreover expresses Mezentius’ “resistance” to this same Jove, which is also the point of Jove-defying *viderit* here.

Attention may finally be drawn to two other passages which occur shortly afterwards. The first of these passages (758) is located exactly seventy lines after the line (689) which opens the paragraph containing the *Iovis*-acrostic; this same line 689 also contains the acrostic’s horizontal confirmation (*Iovis*). Said line 758 starts: *di Iovis in tectis*⁴⁶. Said line 689 starts: *at Iovis interea*. It may therefore be noted that in both lines the all-important *Iovis* occupies exactly the same *sedes*: first biceps. Line 689’s *Iovis inte-rea* is moreover echoed by line 758’s *Iovis in te-ctis*⁴⁷. Virgil uses *tectus*⁴⁸ as an allusion to acrostical “secretiveness” elsewhere (cf. Adkin 2014: 60): it would seem therefore that we have another such acrostical

⁴² *Finibus*, which flanks *Acron* on the other side (*finibus Acron*), is likewise acrostically “loaded”, since *finis* can mean “ora, margo”; cf. Bauer 1912–1926: 790.46–791.16.

⁴³ 10.725: *conspexit (sc. leo) capream aut surgentem in cornua cervum*. Here *cornua*, which needs elucidation by Servius, is acrostically “charged”; cf. Adkin 2021: 135.

⁴⁴ Here line-initial *prospectant* is surprising. Cf. (e.g.) Paratore 1982: 294: “Ci saremmo attesi *expectant*”.

⁴⁵ *Vis* had furthermore been recently posited by Varro (*ling.* 6.80) as the etymon of aforesaid *video*.

⁴⁶ These words have to be glossed by Ti. Claudius Donatus (*Aen.* 10.755 p. 386.1–2 G.): *hoc est in caelo positi*.

⁴⁷ For this phrase (*Iovis in tectis*) no other example is supplied by the online *Library of Latin Texts*. For *tectum* itself numerous synonyms were available; cf. *Synon. Cic.* p. 422.17–19 B.

⁴⁸ Cf. *OLD*² s.v. 2b (“secretive [...] of speech, etc.”).

hint here. The other (and last) passage is to be found exactly ninety lines after the end of the *Iovis*-acrostic. Here (l. 786) Virgil describes the spear that wounds Mezentius: *viris haud pertulit*⁴⁹. This phrase (*viris haud pertulit*) echoes the *vim...perfert* of the central line of the *Iovis*-acrostic (695)⁵⁰. This echo underlines the importance of aforesaid *vim...perfert*. The present article has argued that these same words are the key to the newly discovered *Iovis*-acrostic.

Bibliographic References

- ADKIN, N. (2007) «The Etymology of *segnis* in Virgil», *ACD* 76, 171–176.
- ADKIN, N. (2014) «“Read the Edge”: Acrostics in Virgil’s *Sinon* Episode», *ACD* 50, 45–72.
- ADKIN, N. (2016) «Acrostic Shit (*Ecl.* 4.47–52)», *ACD* 52, 21–37.
- ADKIN, N. (2018) «*MA VE PU* Again: Kill Caesar! (*Georg.* 1.424–471)», *ACD* 54, 73–90.
- ADKIN, N. (2020) «A Virgilian Onomastic (*Aen.* 6.641–657)», *BStudLat* 50, 482–497.
- ADKIN, N. (2021) «Virgilian Acrostics: A Typology», *BStudLat* 51, 128–136.
- ADKIN, N. (en prensa) «Nisus and Euryalus: A Crux (*Aen.* 9.342–346)», *RhM*.
- AUSTIN, R. G. (1971) *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus*, Oxford, Clarendon [repr. 2001].
- BAUER, H. (1912–1926) s.v. «finis», *TLL* VI,1, 786.45–799.61.
- BOOTH, J. y MALTBY, R. (eds.) (2006) *What’s in a Name? The Significance of Proper Names in Classical Latin Literature*, Swansea, Classical Press of Wales.
- CONINGTON, J. y NETTLESHIP, H. (2008) *Conington’s Virgil: Aeneid, Books X–XII*, Exeter, Bristol Phoenix Press.
- CONTE, G. (2019²) *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, doi:10.1515/9783110649031
- DINGEL, J. (1997) *Kommentar zum 9. Buch der Aeneis Vergils*, Heidelberg, Winter.
- DITTMANN, G. (1936–1942) s.v. «h», *TLL* VI,3, 2389.1–2391.65.
- FORBIGER, A. (1875⁴) *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, Leipzig, Hinrichs.
- FORCELLINI, A. (1940) *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, Padua, Typis Seminarii.
- GEYMONAT, M. (2008) *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.
- HILTBRUNNER, O. (1931–1953) s.v. «expono», *TLL* V,2, 1756.32–1767.67.
- HORSFALL, N. (2003) *Virgil, Aeneid 11: A Commentary*, Leiden/Boston, Brill.
- LAMBERTZ, M. (1906–1909) s.v. «cornu», *TLL* IV, 962.36–973.68.

⁴⁹These words, which are highlighted by the bucolic diaeresis, have to be clarified by (e.g.) Sidgwick (1890: 432): “i.e. did not kill him, but only inflicted a slight wound”.

⁵⁰The reference has been piquantly inverted: the issue is no longer Mezentius’ “withstanding”, but his “wounding”.

- LAUSBERG, H. (2008⁴) *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, Stuttgart, Steiner.
- MALTBY, R. (1991) *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies*, Leeds, Cairns [repr. Cambridge, 2006].
- MARRÓN, G. A. (2019) «¿Un acróstico (más) en Virgilio? (*Eneida* 10.693-697)», *Argos* 43, no pagination, doi:[10.14409/argos.2019.43.e0016](https://doi.org/10.14409/argos.2019.43.e0016)
- MAURENBRECHER, B. (1907) s.v. «C», *TLL* III, 1.1-2.54.
- PAGE, T. E. (1900) *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books VII–XII*, London, Macmillan [repr. 1982].
- PARATORE, E. (1982) *Virgilio: Eneide*, Rome/Milan, Mondadori [repr. 2008].
- PASCHALIS, M. (1997) *Virgil's Aeneid: Semantic Relations and Proper Names*, Oxford, Clarendon.
- RIBBECK, O. (1857) «Mezentius: Beitrag zur lateinischen Grammatik», *RhM* 12, 419–425.
- RIVERO GARCÍA, L. y LIBRÁN MORENO, M. (2011) «New Light on Virgil's Mezentius: A New Homeric Model and Etymological Wordplay», *Paideia* 66, 457–489.
- ROBINSON, M. (2019) «Looking Edgewise: Pursuing Acrostics in Ovid and Virgil», *CQ* 69, 290–308, doi:[10.1017/S0009838819000375](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838819000375)
- SAUNDERS, C. (1940) «Sources of the Names of Trojans and Latins in Vergil's *Aeneid*», *TAPhA* 71, 537–555.
- SIDGWICK, A. (1890) *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, Cambridge, University Press [repr. 1934].
- SQUILLANTE SACCONI, M. (1990) «Vis», en F. della Corte (ed.) *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, Vol. V*, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 568–569.
- ZIOGAS, I. (2016) «Introduction: Power, Puns, and Politics from Horace to Silius Italicus», en P. Mitsis y I. Ziogas (eds.) *Wordplay and Powerplay in Latin Poetry*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 1–12.