

The case of Cynna(ne) is a nice example how dangerous a field onomastics can be: a somewhat careless interpretation of a single name, recorded only in the inscription from Skopje, can prompt far-reaching conclusions via different stages of scientific reception. Whatever Cynnane felt herself – or her parents intended her – to be, her name was surely Greek and is no hint to a personal Illyrian identity or an Illyrian tradition within the Argead dynasty.

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doi:10.1017/S0009838814000561

¹⁸ Z. Mirdita, *Antroponimia e Dardanisë në kohën romake* (Pristina, 1981), 94 and 146 qualifies Cinna as Latin *cognomen*. Cf. 151, where the name is missing among the Illyrian *cognomina*.

¹⁹ On the Latin or Etruscan *cognomen* Cinna, cf. I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (Helsinki, 1965), 42 and 106–7.

ONE SIGN AFTER ANOTHER: THE FIFTH ΛΕΙΠΤΗ IN ARATUS’ PHAEN. 783–4?

καλὸν δ’ ἐπὶ σήματι σῆμα
σκέπτεσθαι, μᾶλλον δὲ δυοῖν εἰς ταῦτὸν ἰόντων
ἐλπωρῆ τελέθει, τριτάτῳ δέ κε θαρσῆσειας. (*Phaen.* 1142–4)

It is a good idea to observe one sign after another, and if two agree, it is more hopeful, while with a third you can be confident.¹

Appropriately for a poet who is ‘subtly speaking’ (λεπτολόγος), the epithet applied to him by Ptolemy III Euergetes (*Suppl. Hell.* 712.4), Aratus does not cease offering unexpected material to explore. This statement holds true also for the famous passage containing the acrostic ΛΕΙΠΤΗ (lines 783–7):

λεπτὴ μὲν καθαρή τε περὶ τρίτον ἡμᾶρ εἴουσα
εὐδιός κ’ εἶη, λεπτή δὲ καὶ εὖ μάλ’ ἐρευθῆς
πνευματῆ, παχίῳ δὲ καὶ ἀμβλείῃσι κεραΐαις
τέτρατον ἐκ τριτάτοιο φῶος ἀμενηνὸν ἔχουσα
ἢ νότῳ ἀμβλυνταὶ ἢ ὕδατος ἐγγύς ἐόντος. 785

If slender and clear about the third day, she will bode fair weather; if slender and very red, wind; if the crescent is thickish, with blunted horns, having a feeble fourth-day light after the third day, either it is blurred by a southerly or because rain is in the offing.

In modern times, its hidden layers were detected gradually. For centuries, the students of the *Phaenomena* were aware only of what was visible while reading horizontally, that is, of the two instances of ΛΕΙΠΤΗ inserted, respectively, in lines 783 and 784. Significant pro-

¹ The text and translation of Aratus are taken from D. Kidd, *Aratus: Phaenomena* (Cambridge, 1997).

gress was made late, in 1960, by Jean-Marie Jacques,² who was the first to notice that the initial ΛΕΙΠΤΗ appears both horizontally and vertically (as an acrostic). Thus, since then the number of the identified occurrences of the adjective in question within these five lines has increased to three, and this was the established state of the art for the next half a century.

The intentionality of Aratus' literary game was fully proven by these purposely accumulated adjectives. There may be an oblique comment on the situation after Jacques's publication until quite recently in Aratus' *ipsissima verba*, i.e. the lines quoted above (καλὸν δ' ἐπὶ σήματι σῆμα | σκέπτεσθαι, κτλ.). If we take them, tentatively, as a general instruction which is meant to direct retrospectively³ the reader's attention not only to the secrets of the sky, but also – on the metapoetic level – to the text itself, the three instances of ΛΕΙΠΤΗ can indeed, in respect of their number, provide the feeling of satisfactory completeness.

On close inspection, however, it appears that the *trinum* identified by Jacques does not exhaust all the hidden resources of the text. As has been demonstrated recently by Mathias Hanses,⁴ in the passage under discussion one can discern the fourth ΛΕΙΠΤΗ, consisting of the first letters of the words in consecutive lines, disposed in a deliberate diagonal arrangement:

λεπτὴ μὲν καθαρὴ τε περὶ τρίτον ἡμᾶρ εὐόσα
 εὐδιὸς κ' εἴη, λεπτή δὲ καὶ εὐ μάλ' ἐρευθῆς
 πνευματῆ, παχίων δὲ καὶ ἀμβλείησι κεραταῖς
 τέτρατον ἐκ τρίτατοιο φῶς ἀμενηνὸν ἔχουσα
 ἢ νότῳ ἀμβλυνταὶ ἢ ὕδατος ἐγγύς ἐόντος.

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Mathias Hanses' unconventional approach inspired me to seek further attestations of Aratus' cryptic art in this passage which had seemed thoroughly explored. I think that further progress can be made when we ask the question about the possible 'starting points' of acrostics (or other kindred forms). The acrostic detected by Jacques (an example of the so-called 'gamma-acrostic')⁵ is modelled on the traditional pattern known from funerary inscriptions,⁶ whereas the one proposed by Hanses anticipates the combinatory verses of Optatian Porfyrus.⁷ What the two patterns have in common is that both start from the first letter of the *first* (initial) ΛΕΙΠΤΗ. But what about the

² J.-M. Jacques, 'Sur un acrostiche d'Aratos (*Phén.*, 783–787)', *REA* 62 (1960), 48–61. In antiquity, this acrostic was recognized already by contemporary Greek authors (Callimachus, *Anth. Pal.* 9.507 = *Epigr.* 27 Pfeiffer; Leonidas, *Anth. Pal.* 9.25; Ptolemy, *Suppl. Hell.* 712) who obviously alluded to its keyword. It should be noted, however, that Aratus used it in the sense not necessarily concurrent with Callimachean aesthetics (as suggested by Jacques and his followers) – see, most recently, K. Volk, 'Letters in the sky: reading the signs in Aratus' *Phaenomena*', *AJPh* 133 (2012), 209–40, at 227.

³ The *prospective* use of the verb σκέπτεσθαι (in the imperative form) to signpost acrostics in Aratus has been generally recognized. Both the ΛΕΙΠΤΗ- and the ΠΑΣΑ-acrostic are preceded by σκέπτεο (in lines 778 and 799, respectively).

⁴ M. Hanses, 'The pun and the moon in the sky: Aratus' ΛΕΙΠΤΗ acrostic', *CQ* 64 (2014), 609–14. My thanks go to the author of the article for making available unpublished material.

⁵ This 'iconic' name, referring to the shape of the acrostic, has been coined by G. Morgan, 'Nullam, Vare... Chance or choice in *Odes* 1.18', *Philologus* 137 (1993), 142–5. For the use of that poetic device in Hellenistic poetry see, among others, J. Danielewicz, 'Further Hellenistic acrostics: Aratus and others', *Mnemosyne* 58 (2005), 321–34.

⁶ See E. Courtney, 'Greek and Latin acrostichs', *Philologus* 134 (1990), 3–13, at 10–11.

⁷ See W. Levitan, 'Dancing at the end of the rope: Optatian Porfyrus and the field of Roman verse', *TAPhA* 115 (1985), 245–69, esp. 258–63 and 266 (where a felicitous definition of Optatian's art is used: 'joinery').

second ΛΕΙΠΤΗ? Does it serve only to verify the intentionality of the ‘frontal’ acrostic or is it charged, additionally, with yet another function? I am convinced that the latter possibility is at least worth considering.

Let us give a closer look at line 783. In its second half, there occurs the phrase *περὶ τρίτον ἡμῶν*, placed just after the caesura of the type usually called *κατὰ τρίτον τροχῶτον*. The initial letters of that phrase spell ΠΤΗ, which does not seem to be accidental, bearing in mind the immediate context and the fact that Aratus as a rule avoids acronyms in his poem (hence any exception becomes meaningful).⁸ The missing part is to be found in the following line 784, this time around the caesura *penthemimeres*. To obtain the whole ΛΕΙΠΤΗ one has to read *boustrophedon*⁹ the first letters of the appropriate words (those underlined in the quotation below), starting from the lower line (right-to-left) and continuing in the upper line (left-to-right).¹⁰ This kind of layout of the inscribed text resembles the so-called *boustrophedon ab imo* which was used in some archaic inscriptions (the parallel applies exclusively to the direction of reading the first letters). Here are the lines under discussion; the arrows indicate the required direction of reading:

→
λεπτὴ μὲν καθαρὴ τε περὶ τρίτον ἡμῶν εὐόυσα
εὐδιός κ' εἶη, λεπτὴ δὲ καὶ εὐ μάλ' ἐρευθής
←

The ‘internal’ signposting technique employed by Aratus consists in suggesting the direction of reading by the use of the built-in expression *περὶ τρίτον ἡμῶν*, which in itself – when interpreted literally – may imply the meaning ‘around the third day’, that is, in a circular way (recalling the twists of *boustrophedon* inscriptions) within the description of the moon on the third day. The intentionality of the pattern is guaranteed by positioning ΛΕΙΠΤΗ at the very beginning of the sequence, just as it happens in the case of the two acrostics so far discerned. The appropriateness of this acronym to its context¹¹ seems obvious on account of the double repetition of the pivotal adjective in this particular couplet.

What is more, there are further probable signposts pointing metapoetically to this acronym. As it is easy to see, its former part appears in the first half of line 784, the latter – in the second half of line 783, which is in tune with the stress put on observing the moon not only at full, but also at the two halves (799–809), which finally leads to emphasizing these aspects by the acrostic ΠΑΣΑ (803–6)¹² followed by

⁸ Another exception is perhaps to be seen at *Phaen.* 216–17, where we can discern the acronym κύε, | κύ' ἀεὶ, ‘be pregnant, be pregnant all the time’ (of the spring Hippocrene activated by the Horse). As for the element ΠΤΗ separated from ΛΕ, cf. Verg. *G.* 1.433–5 (a part of the ‘Aratean’ acrostic in Latin transliteration within the description of weather signs provided by the moon); for further details – including the analogy: first ΠΤΗ, and then ΛΕ – see my article ‘Vergil’s *certissima signa* reinterpreted: the Aratean *lepte*-acrostic in *Georgics* 1’, *Eos* 100 fasc. 2 (2013), 287–95.

⁹ This arrangement has a precedent in Aratus: Cristiano Castelletti (‘Following Aratus’ plow: Vergil’s signature in the *Aeneid*’, *MH* 69 [2012], 83–95, esp. 85–6) has recently uncovered a *boustrophedon* acrostic-telestich ΔΑΜΗ(Ι) at 6–7(8), signposted by βουσί at 8. Cases like this confirm Aratus’ intentional inclusion of various forms of ‘visual’ wordplay, a feature rightly emphasised by Hanses (n. 4).

¹⁰ Cf. *CEG* 1, t. 344 Hansen. At a time when the *boustrophedon* ceased to be normal (in Attica c. 530 B.C.E.), the practice had a sacral air: see L.H. Jeffery, ‘The boustrophedon sacral inscriptions from the Agora’, *Hesperia* 17 (1948), 85–111, esp. 103–4.

¹¹ For similar criteria of an intentional acronym, see M. Hendry, ‘A Martial acronym in Ennius?’, *LCM* 19 (1994), 108–9.

¹² Detected by W. Levitan, ‘Plexed artistry: three Aratean acrostics’, *Glyph* 5 (1979), 55–68, at 57–8.

ME-ΣΗ (807–8).¹³ The signs occurring on the third (and fourth) days are to be differentiated according to the rule of dichotomization (for example, up to mid-month and after mid-month), which in Aratus' poetic code may be understood as a reference to the halves of the hexameter. And, as we have seen, ΛΕ is contained in the first half of line 784 (up to its mid-point), and ΠΤΗ in the second half of line 783 (just after the mid-point).

In conclusion, Aratus inserts in the passage in question, in addition to what has already been detected by the scholars, a sequence of words arranged to form an acronym spelling ΛΕΠΙΤΗ when read *boustrophedon*. This device, like the other ones, does not come as a complete surprise. A little earlier, at 778–9, the reader is asked, metapoetically, to observe (σκέπτεο) on either side (ἐκάτερθε)¹⁴ what the poet inscribes (ἐπιγράφει);¹⁵ the shape of the inscription may be different at different times (ἄλλοτε ... ἄλλη ... ἀγλή). Such a loose poetic formula encapsulates all the variants of Aratus' ΛΕΠΙΤΗ tricks mentioned above.¹⁶

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doi:10.1017/S0009838814000780

¹³ Singled out as semiotically correspondent with the content of the embedding lines by M.W. Haslam, 'Hidden signs: Aratus *Diosemeiai* 46ff., Vergil *Georgics* 1.424ff.', *HSCP* 94 (1992), 199–204, at 201.

¹⁴ For yet another possible interpretation of this expression see my article on Virgil (n. 8).

¹⁵ Perhaps I should add that the 'inscription' itself, treated as a separate unit of text (λεπτή εἴη περὶ τρίτον ἡμῶν), makes sense and can be interpreted as a record of the poet's hidden 'scenario': 'apart from the clear (καθαρῆ) instance of ΛΕΠΙΤΗ let me inscribe also a faint one in the description of the moon on the third day; let it go circuitously'.

¹⁶ Since my shorter note is meant as a supplement to the most recent paper by Mathias Hanses (n. 4), which contains an updated bibliography on the subject, I have confined myself to indicating mainly those publications that are directly connected with the arrangement of the ΛΕΠΙΤΗ-occurrences at Aratus 783–7.

LUTATIUS CATULUS, CALLIMACHUS AND PLAUTUS' *BACCHIDES**

Aulus Gellius records an epigram of the Roman consul Q. Lutatius Catulus (*Noctes Atticae* 19.9.14 = fr. 1 Blänsdorf/Courtney):

Aufugit mi animus; credo, ut solet, ad Theotimum
deuenit. sic est, per fugium illud habet.
quid si non interdixem, ne illunc fugitium
mitteret ad se intro, sed magis eiceret?
ibimu' quaesitum. uerum ne ipsi teneamur
formido. quid ago? da, Venu', consilium.

My soul has run away. I believe, as usual, it has gone off to Theotimus. That's it: it has a refuge there. What if I had not given a stern warning that he was not to allow that runaway into his

* In addition to Peter Brown, to whose keen eye and informed mind I owe many improvements in this note, I owe thanks to *CQ*'s referee and the editorial team.