ACROSTIC SHIT[1] (*ECL.* IV 47-52)

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Abstract: The *cacata*-acrostic (*Ecl*. IV 47-52) is considered accidental, as being inconsistent with the *dignitas* of this "Messianic" *Eclogue*. It is however possible to demonstrate that Virgil employs such acrostics on other occasions with the object of undercutting such political panegyric. The intentionality of this *cacata*-acrostic is further buttressed by clues in the lines it spans as well as by winks tipped in other parts of the poem. Pointers to this acrostic are also embedded in the foregoing third *Eclogue*, especially in the section devoted to Pollio, dedicatee of *Eclogue* IV. Problematic passages in both these *Eclogues* are elucidated by the presence of the *cacata*-acrostic.

Keywords: acrostic, encomium, etymology, Pollio, shit.

"This (sc. *Ecl*. IV) is the most famous of the *Eclogues* (indeed perhaps the most famous piece of Latin literature"[2]. In this *Eclogue*'s tail the *cacata*-acrostic (47-52) is dismissed as an "accident" in the recent overview of Virgilian acrostics by Joshua Katz[3]. Here Katz refers to Danielewicz' similar dismissal of *cacata* as accidental on the grounds that intentionality would entail "hypocrisy, even blasphemy" in a poem that is an encomium of Pollio[4]. Virgil can however be shown to deploy similar acrostics elsewhere with the aim of subverting such political eulogy. Two examples may be cited. The first occurs in the next *Eclogue* but one (VI 14-24), where the unidentified up-and-down acrostic *laesis* ("for those who have been hurt"; first up, then down) runs counter to the imme-

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[1] The present writer apologizes for unavoidable recourse to the profane tetragrammaton. Here he is merely following Virgil, as will soon become clear. The method of citation follows *Oxf. Lat. Dict*. 2nd ed. Oxford 2012 ("Authors and Works": xviii-xxix); material not found there is cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*. 2nd ed. Leipzig 1990, and its online *Addenda* at http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/pdf/addenda.pdf.

[2] So begins the Introduction to *Ecl*. IV in Williams 1979, 104.

[3] Katz 2013, 5-6. On Katz' own discovery (6-10) of an acrostic in *Aen*. VI 77-84 cf. Adkin 2015a. The *cacata*-acrostic is not mentioned at all in the recent commentaries of Cucchiarelli 2012 and Casanova-Robin 2014. The former conveniently assembles the secondary literature on this *Eclogue*. For recent additions cf. www.niklasholzberg.com/Homepage/Bibliographien.html.

[4] Danielewicz 2005, 324.

diately antecedent *éloge* of Varus (6-12), who like Pollio was involved in the "hurtful" land-confiscations[5]. The second instance of a political acrostic that negatives the homage starts in the opening line (*Georg.* I 466) of the passage in which Virgil purports to wring his hands at the murder of Pollio's supportee Caesar, while the same deed is simultaneously enjoined by this unidentified acrostic: "Strike Caesar with a sacrificial axe"[6].

Pollio is evidently the object of similarly acrostical procacity in the dedication to *Eclogue* VIII, where the unidentified acrostic *tu si es, ac[c]i[pe]!* ("If it's you, accept!"; 6-13) shows that the much-debated identity of the dedicatee (Pollio or Octavian) has been left deliberately indeterminate[7]. Here the acrostic is flagged by *oram ... legis* (7), which bears the subtextual sense "you read the (acrostical) edge"[8]. The same subtextual cue (*lege ... oram*) marks the start of the overlooked acrostic *fias* (*Georg.* II 44-47), where dedicatee Maecenas is pertly bidden to "become" what the politely commendatory dedication has just told him he already is: *o decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae* (40). Pollio himself would also appear to be subjected to acrostical dicacity by Virgil's friend Horace, whose tribute to Pollio's History of the Civil Wars is gainsaid by the undetected acrostic *nepia*[9]. In view of all the afore-mentioned acrostics that undercut the praise of *laudandi* in general and Pollio in particular, it would be unsurprising to find another such instance in the "Pollio"-*Eclogue*'s *cacata*-acrostic.

In this fourth *Eclogue* the undercutting is given a specifically coprological form: *cacata*. Here Danielewicz' above-cited article sees an "inconsistency of

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[5] On this acrostic cf. Adkin 2015c. A similarly land-confiscatory reference would seem to mark the acrostical pair *fons* (*Ecl.* I 5-8) and *undis* (*Ecl.* IX 34-38), since the land at Mantua was waterlogged (cf. Serv. Auct., *Ecl.* IX 10). On the *undis*-acrostic cf. Adkin 2015d.

[6] Read 466-470 downwards (*icito*), then continue reading normally (470: *o-[b]scena[e]*). *O[b]scenus* (for expendable "b" cf. Conte 2013, 142 [ad loc.]) had lately been etymologized by Varro (*L.* VII 96) from the *scena* ("stage") that is homonymous with *scena* ("sacrificial axe"; cf. Fest. p. 318 M. and p. 330 M., referring to Liv. Andr., *Com.* 2: *ictus scena*). This acrostic is discussed more fully by Adkin 2015c, 454, n. 192, where long-range clues are assembled, including the line-numerically corresponding passage of the next *Georgic* but one (III 466-470), especially 468, where bizarrely judgmental *culpam ferro compesce* does not suit a surtextual sheep, but a subtextual Caesar.

[7] Acrostical *ac[c]i[pe]* is corroborated in its first line (11) by horizontal *accipe*, which is itself spotlighted by "non-Virgilian" (Levi 1966, 76) non-elision in antecedent *desinam*. For single "c" in *ac[c]i[pe]* cf. Koster 1988, 103; for decurtation after the third letter cf. Adkin 2014, 47, n. 11; 51, n. 44; 59, n. 107.

[8] *Oram ... legis* is highlighted by the ensuing anacoluthon that starts with wink-tipping *en* (= ἰδού [*Gloss.*ᴸ II Philox. EN 5]; cf. line-initial *en* [9]).

[9] *Carm.* II 1, 22-26, corroborated by imitation of *Od.* IV 32 (νήπια βάζεις) and by *nepotes* (27), since the virtual homographs *nepos* and νήπιος were in addition regarded as etymologically linked (cf. Maltby 1991, 408; *Etym. Gud.* p. 408,48-49 St.).

tone", which he takes to be another reason for thinking this acrostic an "acci-dent"[10]. It can however be shown that Virgil uses acrostical *cacare* not only in pastoral, but also in the most *distingué* and decorous of the genres, epic: here the passage at issue is moreover the climactic and intensely moving death of the noble Camilla. Her dying address to Acca (*Aen*. XI 820-827) is exactly coex-tensive with an unidentified pair of acrostics: upward *cacat* (820-824)[11], then synonymously downward *cesi* (= χέζει, 824-827)[12]. These acrostics that span the Acca-episode accordingly gloss this *nomen proprium* (Acca = slightly ana-grammed Caca) as "she shits". Confirmation is supplied by similarly acrostical *caco* (*Aen*. XI 808-811), which ends exactly ten lines before the "end" (820) of ascendant *cacat*. Just as *cacat* glosses *Acca*, so similarly overlooked *caco* glosses the homonymous κακόν of *Iliad* XV 586 (θηρὶ κακὸν ῥέξαντι ἐοικώς), which Virgil is imitating here: the κακόν is a crap[13]. A pawky allusion to acrostical *caco* is embedded in Virgil's next line (812), where *conscius audacis facti* is problematic[14]: the crisis of conscience is a crap[15]. If acrostical *caco* is located at the start of the narrative of Camilla's death, this account rounds off with *deiecta* (833), which is positioned exactly ten lines after the pivotal "c" (824) of *cacat / cesi*, of which *deicere* can be a synonym[16]: here euphemistical-ly double-sensed *deicere* accordingly provides horizontal corroboration of the dysphemistically unsayable acrostics[17]. If Virgil can thus employ acrostic "shit"

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[10] Danielewicz 2005, 324.

[11] For "q" (822) = "c" cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 3 col. 1,39-44 (s.v. "*c*"); for ignorable "h" (823) cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 6,3 col. 2391,26-55 (s.v. "*h*").

[12] For "c" (824) = "χ" cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 3 col. 1,36-38 (s.v. "*c*"); for "s" (826) = "ζ" cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 2343 (s.v. "*z*"). For such a two-way acrostic cf. afore-mentioned *laesis* (n. 5 above). For such use of Greek in a Virgilian acrostic cf. Adkin 2014, 57-68, where attention is drawn to unidentified *pithi* (= πείθει = "he [sc. Sinon] persuades") at *Aen*. II 103-107(=106 [76 is interpolated]; up) and 142(=141)-146 (down), which correspond line-numerically with Homer's use of the same verb in the same uncommon sense of "deceive" at *Od*. II 106 and XXIV 141.

[13] Just as Virgil replaces the *Odyssey*'s θήρ with *lupus*, so his choice of *Acca* is "clearly sug-gested" (Horsfall 2003, 434) by Acca Larentia, who was a "prostitute (*lupa*)" (Graf 2016): both Virgilian "wolves" shit.

[14] "An unconvincing carnivore in inner crisis" (Horsfall 2003, 432).

[15] *Conscius audacis facti* is immediately followed by *caudamque remulcens*, where *remulcens* ("apparently a coinage, only here in V." [Horsfall 2003, 432]) needed elucidation (cf. *Gloss.*[L] I Ansil. RE 1043: *remulcens: reducens*). Since a wolf's anus is right below his tail, which he extends horizontally while defecating, in the line immediately after acrostical *caco* the eye-catching phrase *caudamque remulcens* is evidently a scampishly subtextual allusion to his tail's post-defecatory retraction.

[16] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 554 (s.v. *deicio* 3a: "To evacuate [through the bowels]").

[17] The subtextually "BM" connotation of sentence-initial *deiecta* is borne out by immediately ensuing *crudescit*, which required explanation (*Gloss.*[L] II Arma C 238: *crudescit: ren<ov>atur*); cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 507 (s.v. *crudus* 3a: "[Of food in the stomach]"). If *deiecta* supplies crosswise

no fewer than three times in his epic's soul-stirring account of Camilla's death, he can use it once in an *Eclogue*.

In the *Eclogue* at issue acrostical *cacata* spans the passage which forms the climax to Virgil's description of the Golden Age: here he accordingly tempers eschatology with scatology. This passage, which is duly indented at both start and finish in the new Teubner[18], may be quoted in full:

> *"talia saecla", suis dixerunt, "currite", fusis*
> *concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.*
> *adgredere o magnos (aderit iam tempus) honores,*
> *cara deum suboles, magnum Iovis incrementum!*
> 50 *aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,*
> *terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;*
> *aspice venturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo!* (*Ecl.* IV 46-52)

Talia saecla (46) opens this passage, which also ends with exactly the same noun: *saeclo* (52)[19]. Here *talia saecla* is noteworthy: since on the one hand this phrase as accusative would be "exceedingly harsh"[20], and since on the other hand *talia* as vocative is "unusual"[21], this "unusually" vocatival *talia* is evidently a prompt to see it as being glossed by immediately ensuing *cacata*[22]: these *saecula* are not *aurea*, but *cacata*. A further clue to *cacata* would seem to be supplied by the immediately preceding tableau of technicoloured sheep (43-45), which are "ridiculous"[23]. The verse between Virgil's pavonine sheep and his

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confirmation of the acrostics, the customary hint to "look" at them (cf. Adkin 2014, 49-52) is furnished by line-initial *prospexit* (839; red-flagged by the immediately preceding μετάληψις αἰσθήσεων of *in clamore* and positioned exactly 20 lines after the "start" [820] of *cacat*), which governs the noteworthy (cf. Serv. Auct.) *mulcatam* (sc. *Camillam*) that recalls paronomastic and similarly noteworthy *remulcens* immediately after *caco* (cf. n. 15 above; this hook-up shows that [e.g.] Conte 2009, 363, is wrong to replace *mulcatam* with *multatam*).

[18] Ottaviano 2013, 54-55.

[19] The next line (53) reads: *o mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima vitae*, where the "slightly entangled and elaborated" language (Sidgwick 1890, II, 21) would appear to be an unidentified nod to Varro's recent etymology of immediately foregoing *saeculum* (*L.* VI 11): *dictum a sene, quod longissimum spatium senescendorum hominum id putarunt*. O'Hara's (1996) pandect of Virgil's use of etymology lists no instance whatever in *Ecl.* IV.

[20] So Conington – Nettleship – Haverfield 2007, 61.

[21] So Papillon – Haigh 1892, II, 19.

[22] For *talis* "referring to what follows" cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 2097 (s.v. 2b).

[23] So Thornton 1988, 226. Since these lines contain two unidentified *jeux étymologiques*, they may be cited *in extenso*:
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti
murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto;
45 *sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.*
Here *vellera* and *vestiet* occupy the same *sedes* in adjacent lines, which is an etymological signpost (cf. Michalopoulos 2001, 5): *vestis* had just been etymologized from *vellus* by Varro (*L.* V

acrostical *cacata* (viz. 46: *"talia saecla" ...*) alludes to Catullus 64 (321; 327; 382-383). It is therefore natural that Virgilian *cacata* itself should allude to another Catullan poem (36), which is likewise "framed" by this same word in the same transferred sense[24], the same lexical form (*cacata*) and the same "marginal" position (first and last lines: 1 and 20).

A further wink-wink at acrostical *cacata* is supplied by twofold *aspice* in the same *sedes* at the start of alternate lines (50; 52)[25]. This kind of nudge-nudge to "look" at an acrostic is S.O.P[26]. Here the second *aspice* is positioned at the end of the completed acrostic (*cacata*), while the first *aspice* coincides with the end of the first complete word: *caca*[27]. This twofold use of *aspice* would also seem to evince a debt to Aratus' similarly twofold employment of σκέπτεο as a similarly acrostical signpost[28]: *aspice* and σκέπτεο, which are linked etymologically[29], also resemble each other as imperative singulars that on both occasions fill the dactylic first foot and mean "look!"[30]. The second *aspice* in the acrostic's last line is followed by *laetantur* in emphatically post-caesural position: *aspice ... laetantur ut omnia*[31]. Since *laeto* can also mean *stercoro*[32], here *laetantur* matches above-mentioned *deiecta*[33] as bluenosedly amphibolous corroboration

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130). *Vellera* is juxtaposed with *lūto*, which is remarkable enough to require a gloss from Servius. *Lūteus* was etymologized from *dilutus* (cf. Maltby 1991, 353, who however omits the alternative derivation from *lŭtum* [cf. *Schol. Hor. Epod.* X 16], which was in turn derived from *lotus* [cf. Maltby 1991, 353]). If *lūto* (etymologically "wet") is placed last in l. 44, in the preceding line the post-caesural *sedes* (on both positions as etymological markers cf. Michalopoulos 2001, 5) is occupied by *aries*, which had recently been etymologized by Varro (*L.* V 98) from *ares* ("you are dry"): "dry" becoming "wet" accentuates Virgil's ovine marvel. For additional play on the etymology of *aries* cf. Adkin 2009 (the etymological joke in *aries ... vellera lūto* recurs in modified form in the previous *Eclogue* [III 95]: *aries ... vellera siccat*).

[24] Cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 3 col. 8,58-59 (s.v. *caco*): "2: transitive; a: i. q. concacare; in imagine".

[25] Such line-initial repetition of *aspice* is without parallel elsewhere in Augustan poetry.

[26] Cf. n. 17 above. Since in the present case it might be thought a tall order to expect a newborn babe to "look" at all the cosmic phenomena described in these lines, the acrostical reference of *aspice* is all the clearer.

[27] This imperatival form matches similarly imperatival *aspice*.

[28] Viz. *Phaen.* 778 and 799, where σκέπτεο points respectively to the gamma-acrostics λεπτή (783-787) and πᾶσα ... σῆμει- (803-811).

[29] *Aspicio* is a *compositum* of *specio* (cf. Adkin 2006, 464), whose *spec-* corresponds to the σκεπ- of σκέπτομαι, cf. Walde – Hofmann 2008, II, 570 (s.v. *specio*): "*σκεπ- umgestellt aus *σπεκ-". For the very large number of synonyms that could have been used instead of Virgilian *aspicio* cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 2 coll. 829,74-84; 832,81-833,16 (s.v. *aspicio*).

[30] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 202 (s.v. *aspicio* 2a); *LSJ*[9] 1606-1607 (s.v. σκέπτομαι I).

[31] Here *laetantur* is further highlighted by postposition of *ut*.

[32] Cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 7,2,2 col. 879,37-44 (s.v. 1. *laeto*).

[33] Cf. nn. 16-17 above.

of acrostical and horizontally no-no *cacata*[34]. The subject of *laetantur* is *om-nia*[35], which as neuter plural fits *cacata*[36]: "all" can be used with acrostical reference[37].

Besides this concluding line (52) all the other lines in *cacata* can be shown to contain clues to the acrostic. Its first line (47) introduces the Fates with the phrase *stabili … numine*. Varro (*L.* VII 85) had recently derived *numen* from *nutus*. The corresponding verb (*nutantem*) is employed in saliently post-caesural *sedes* just three lines later (50). *Nuto* means "to move unsteadily"[38], where "unsteadily" is the opposite of the "steady" denoted by the *stabili*[39] that here qualifies *numine*. Virgil's collocation *stabili numine* is accordingly an etymological self-contradiction appropriate to the start of an acrostic that contradicts the text. The next line of the acrostic (48) is framed by the similarly notable expression *adgredere … honores*, where the verb needed a gloss: *idest incipe ascendere*[40]. Equally noteworthy here is the grouping *adgredere o*, since elsewhere Virgil thus places this interjection immediately after an imperative on only one occasion[41]: in the present case the aim is evidently to facilitate the acrostic, to which this postposition also draws attention.

Line three of an acrostic is especially important[42]. The third line of the *Mars*-acrostic (*Aen.* VII 601-604) ends with corroboratory *Martem*. The same final *sedes* in the same third line of *cacata* contains a similarly confirmatory hint, which however because of this acrostic's *aeschrologia* cannot resemble *Martem* in being explicit: instead it has to match the demure circumlocution of afore-mentioned *laetantur* (52). This time the lexeme at issue is *incrementum*

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[34] For synonymous alternatives that were available for use in lieu of *laetor* cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 7,2,2 col. 879,62-68 (s.v. *laetor*).

[35] Whereas *laetor* is very frequently used of "animantes" to mean "rejoice" (cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 7,2,2 coll. 879,77-881,66 [s.v.]), this sense of the verb is seldom applied to "res naturales" like *omnia* (cf. ibid. 881,67-81): such disproportion facilitates a subtextual sense of *laetantur* here as *stercorantur*.

[36] Since *cacare* is here used in the sense of *concacare* (cf. n. 24 above), mention may be made of Sen., *Apoc.* 4, 3, where this compound is similarly employed in conjunction with *omnia*: [*Claudius*] *omnia … concacavit*.

[37] Cf. (e.g.) *Georg.* I 437, where problematic *Panopeae* ("see all") in place of Parthenian Νηρεῖ is evidently a hint to "see all" the foregoing acrostic (429-433): here the "see all" of *Pan-op-* matches the *aspice … omnia* of the present passage.

[38] So *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 1329 (s.v. 4a), citing the present passage.

[39] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 1998 (s.v. 1a).

[40] So *Schol. Verg. Bern.* (ad loc.). No other instance of *honor* as object of *adgredior* is furnished by *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 1 coll. 1315,26-1321,31 (s.v. *adgredior*).

[41] Viz. *Aen.* IX 234.

[42] Cf. n. 7 above.

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(49), which stands out as a fourth epitrite that makes the line a *spondeiazon*[43]: this word's "vulgarity"[44] is accentuated by the grandiloquent context[45]. At the same time the doubtful meaning of *incrementum*[46] invites the reader to toy with the prefix: "vulgar" *in-crementum* easily evokes still more "vulgar" *excrementum* – acrostic-matching "shit"[47]. Here *incrementum* is matched in untypical parison by pre-caesural *suboles* (49), which in such a "shitty" context naturally suggests its exact homonym: "you smell somewhat"[48]. Here the graveolent *cacemphaton* of *suboles* might easily have been avoided by recourse to a large number of available synonyms[49]. Finally, just as the next line's (50) *aspice* would appear to be indebted to Aratus[50], so Virgil's subtextual "you smell" may evince a debt to Theocritus[51].

The next line (50) bids the child perlustrate the entire universe (*aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum!*), thus engendering a kicky contrast between lofty body-text and lowly acrostic, which by this line has reached *caca*: "shit!". The three weighty trisyllables (*convexo nutantem pondere*) framed by this line's first and last words all carry the connotation of "downwardness" ap-

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[43] In the *Eclogues* there are only two other *spondeiazontes*, neither of which is created, as here, by a quadrisyllable.

[44] So Serv. (ad loc.: *est vulgare*). Virgil "dares" (so Clausen 1994, 142) to introduce *incrementum* into poetry.

[45] Cf. Traina 1986, 220-221.

[46] Cf. the review of opinion in Traina 1986, 219-220.

[47] Cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 5,2 col. 1283,47-56 (s.v. 1. *excrementum*): "i. q. … stercus".

[48] *Oleo* is the etymon of *oletum*, which is synonymous with *excrementum*. The "you" of subtextual *suboles* ("you smell") is vocatival *suboles* ("you child"), to which the acrostic's imperatival *caca* (47-50) and then participial *cacata* (47-52; = *concacata* [cf. n. 24 above]) might be thought applicable: shitty kids pong.

[49] Cf. *Synon. Cic.* p. 422,19-20 B.; p. 426,32 B. In particular Virgil might have availed himself of prosodically equivalent *proles*, as he does in *Aen*. VI 322 (*deum … proles*, matching the present *deum suboles*): *proles* is used with far greater frequency than *suboles*, especially in poetry (cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 10,2 coll. 1819,73-1820,5 [s.v. *proles*]). *Proles* and *suboles* are cited by Cicero (*De orat.* III 153) as making the discourse appear *grandior*: in the present passage this "grandeur" makes the subtextual "you smell" (*suboles*) all the more piquant, especially since the "child" (*suboles*) is here divine.

[50] Cf. n. 28 above.

[51] Cf. *Id*. V 52 (ὄσδεις), where the line-number (52) matches the last line of *cacata* (52); for such line-correspondences cf. n. 12 above. Theocritean ὄσδεις and Virgilian *-oles* are also linked etymologically, since *oleo* was etymologized from *odor*, which was in turn etymologized from ὄζω (cf. Maltby 1991, 425; 427 [s.vv.]). The Theocritean passage that starts (61) just ten lines after ὄσδεις (52) would similarly appear to have been in Virgil's mind in connection with *cacata*; cf. n. 122 below. In such a subtextually whiffy context one cannot resist pointing out postscript-wise that the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus", when backmasked, says: "You smell like bullshit".

propriate to a "downward" acrostic[52]: *convexus*, which is glossed as *declinatus*[53], qualifies *pondus*, which was etymologized from *pendeo*[54], while intervenient and "assai discusso" *nutare*[55] is explained by La Cerda as "se devehere"[56]. This line ends with *mundum*, which had recently been etymologized by Varro from both *moveo* and adjectival *mundus*[57]. Since the child is being told to "look" (*aspice*) simultaneously at *mundum* and acrostical *caca*[58], Virgil would seem to be signalling rejection of *mundus* ("clean") as etymon of nounal *mundus*: "shit" is not "clean". Instead Virgil would appear to be endorsing the alternative derivation of *mundus* from *moveo* by his employment here of synonymous *nuto* in emphatically post-caesural *sedes* in the same line[59]. *Mundum* occupies the same final position as notably homoeoteleutic *profundum* in the next line (51)[60]. Here the collocation *caelumque profundum* is remarkable: "*profundum* 'high' shows a rare, perhaps innovatory, use of the converse to its normal meaning"[61]. The "normal meaning" of *profundus* is "extending a long way down"[62], which certainly fits an acrostic extending no fewer than six lines down: Virgil's odd use of *profundus* here in *cacata*'s penultimate line would accordingly appear to be another subtextual clue to this acrostic.

Besides such clues within the *cacata*-acrostic itself Virgil has also embedded pointers outside it: here three passages in this *Eclogue* are pertinent. The first to be considered is the tetrastich that ends the poem:

60 *incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem:*
    matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.
    incipe, parve puer: qui non risere parentes[63],
    nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est. (*Ecl.* IV 60-63)[64]

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[52] For such acrostically-related "resonance" in language used in the vicinity of an acrostic cf. Adkin 2014, 54-55; 61-64; 68-69.

[53] So Paul. Fest. p. 58 M.

[54] Cf. Maltby 1991, 484.

[55] So Cucchiarelli 2012, 272.

[56] De la Cerda 1608, 83.

[57] Cf. Maltby 1991, 396.

[58] Line-final *mundum* is also aligned vertically with *in(ex)-crementum*; for such vertical juxtaposition as an etymological marker cf. Michalopoulos 2001, 5.

[59] For these two verbs as synonyms cf. *Gloss.* V 469,12: *nutat: ... movet*. For such use of synonyms in etymologizing cf. Michalopoulos 2001, 11.

[60] This is the line before the acrostic's last one (52), which was discussed above.

[61] So Coleman 1977, 146.

[62] So *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 1627 (s.v. 1).

[63] Thus the text of Ottaviano 2013, 56.

[64] The immediately preceding line (59) reads: *Pan ... dicat se ...* [*victum*]. Since *Pan* ("all") can be used with reference to an acrostic (cf. n. 37 above; Adkin 2015c, 453), the aforesaid line

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In the first of these lines (60) *risu cognoscere* is problematical: "Unfortunately the lines (viz. 60-61) do not make clear to whom the laugh at line 60 belongs"[65]. This unclearness would seem to be intentional: déraciné *risu cognoscere* is evidently a subtextual hint to us readers ourselves to "notice" the acrostic and to "smile" at its scatological scurrility[66]. The second line of this concluding tetrastich (61) contains two lexemes that are marked by an acrostically-related "resonance". The first is pre-caesural *decem*, which qualifies line-final *menses*: here Virgil might instead have employed metrically equivalent *novem*[67]. It may therefore be pointed out that *decem* is placed exactly ten lines after the end of acrostical *cacata* (52): Virgil can be shown to have been in the habit of inserting such numerical clues to an acrostic[68]. The other acrostically "resonant" item in this line is the next word but one: *fastidia*. This noun, which here needed explication[69], is used "de graviditate" only on this occasion[70], whereas the same term is employed in Classical Latin no fewer than five times "de odore"[71], which fits malodorous *cacata* admirably. The final point may be made that in this tetrastich's closing line, which is also the last line of the entire *Eclogue* (63: *nec deus hunc …*), Virgil puckishly makes the gods reward subtextual laughter at their own expense: this shitty kid is theirs (*deum suboles … ; 49*).

The second passage in this *Eclogue* to serve as a subtextual pointer to the *cacata*-acrostic is positioned at the exact mid-point (l. 23) between the start of the poem and the line that introduces the acrostic (46: *"talia saecla" …*). This line 23, which reads *ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores*, is athetized in the new Teubner edition[72]: on the one hand a cradle is out of place between li-

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bears the subtextual sense "all (the acrostic) would say itself" — which, because *cacata* is aeschrologous, it mustn't. Such pawky subtextuality favours the reading *dicat* against *dicet*.

[65] Scafoglio 2013/14, 78.

[66] For *cognosco* with this acrostically idoneous sense of "to become aware of, discern, detect, see" cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 380 (s.v. 7a). For *cognosco* used with specific reference to an acrostic cf. (e.g.) *CIL* XII 631,5-8: *nomen dulce, lector, si forte defunctae requires, a capite per litteras deorsum legendo cognoscis*. The problematicality of *risu* (60) is shared by *risere* (62; cf. the apparatus in Ottaviano 2013, 56), where this verb would seem to be similarly hintful. Lines 60 and 62 each start with *incipe*, just as lines 50 and 52 each open with *aspice*, which corresponds exactly to *incipe … cognoscere* (60): in all of these lines the subtextual reference is evidently to the acrostic.

[67] Cf. Pease 1958, 731-732; Adkin 1994.

[68] Cf. Adkin 2014, 59-60.

[69] Cf. Philarg., *rec.* I: *fastidia: idest contemptiones, vitae labores*.

[70] So *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 6,1 col. 316,73-83. The other passages listed are merely patristic imitations of the present one.

[71] So *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 6,1 col. 316,3-7.

[72] Ottaviano 2013, 53.

ons (22) and snakes (24), while on the other a cradle that sprouts is "grotesque"[73]. The oddness of this misplaced and bloomy cradle would however appear to be a deliberate clue to Virgil's ulterior purpose in his use of this word here. *Cunae* was linked etymologically with *cunire*, which is a synonym of *cacare*[74]. Hence Virgil's *cunabulum* is etymologically "the place you shit"[75]. The *cunabula* of line 23, which is exactly 30 lines before the end of *cacata* (52), would accordingly appear to be a pointer to this acrostic, while the acrostic itself evidently serves in turn as an etymological gloss on *cunabula* (< *cunire = cacare*)[76]. Malodorously cacatory *cunabula* finds a piquant foil in the same line's pre-caesural *blandos*, which "s'applique ici … à l'odeur"[77]. *Blandos* is separated from *cunabula* by *fundent*, which picks up the same verb three lines earlier (20), where it is separated by one word from *ridenti*[78], which in turn anticipates afore-mentioned *risu* and *risere* (60; 62). This *risu* (60) is directly juxtaposed with acrostically hintful *cognoscere*, which in turn picks up the same verb in the same lexical form in the same metrical position in line 27, where it is placed exactly five lines after *cunabula* in the same *sedes* from hephthemimeres to fifth diaeresis. This time (l. 27) *cognoscere* is juxtaposed with *legere*, which "fällt … aus dem Stil der Umgebung heraus"[79]. Since however *legere* can be used with subtextual reference to "reading" an acrostic[80], such would seem to be the point of "stilistisch herausfallendes" *legere* here. The *simul*-clause containing *legere et … poteris cognoscere* is then followed by a main clause containing circum-caesural *rubens pendebit* (29): *pendeo* can allude subtextually to an acrostic[81], and *rubeo* to its rubrication[82].

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[73] Thus Campbell 1938, 55.

[74] Cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 4 col. 1409,65-66 (s.v. *cunio*). On *cunire* and *cunare* ("to soil with excrement") cf. Adams 1982, 239.

[75] For suffixal *-bulum* "denoting … places" cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*[2] 267 (s.v.).

[76] For such long-distance glosses that likewise involve both etymology and acrostics cf. Adkin 2014, 52-54. In the present case Virgil could always dodge the subversive implications of *cacata* by insisting that the reference is not to politics, but potties: it's all "as innocent as a babe" – in nappies.

[77] Benoist 1884, 41. Similarly the next line but one (25) ends with rare *amomum*, which Servius glosses thus: *herba est suavissimi odoris*.

[78] This participle requires an extensive gloss from Servius Auctus.

[79] So the canonical German commentary by Ladewig – Schaper – Deuticke – Jahn 1973, 31. Both *legere* and *cognoscere* depend on *poteris*, the subject of which is the *puer* of the *cacata*-acrostic.

[80] Cf. n. 8 above (with text).

[81] Cf. Adkin 2015c, 441; 448, n. 141.

[82] Cf. Adkin 2015c, 447; 453. *Rubens* is used again (43) in final *sedes* exactly five lines before the start of *cacata*.

The third and last of this *Eclogue*'s cues to the *cacata*-acrostic is placed shortly before it at the end of line 41: *iuga solvet arator*. The only other instance of *arator* in the entire *Eclogues* is to be found in the immediately preceding poem (III 42), where this *nomen agentis* is evidently meant as a clue to the name of the *anonyme* in line 40: *quis fuit alter?* – Aratus[83]. If then the *qui* of III 41 (*descripsit ... qui ... orbem*) is the Aratus suggested by *arator*, in the very same line in the very next poem (IV 41) the very same *arator* is evidently meant to suggest the same Aratus[84]. This Aratus-suggesting *arator* in IV 41 is positioned exactly ten lines before the acrostically semaphoric *aspice* (50), which corresponds to Aratus' similarly acrostical semaphore σκέπτεο[85]. The *arator* of IV 41 is also juxtaposed directly with *solvet*[86]: *solvere* is likewise acrostically "loaded", since it bears the subsense "to solve"[87]. Virgil's aforesaid onomastic *ma- ve- pu-* (*Georg.* I 429-433), which is inspired by Aratus' λεπτή-acrostic and ἄρρητον-onomastic, is evidently meant as a *sphragis* endorsing acrostical "Strike Caesar with a sacrificial axe"[88]. The Virgilian allusion to Aratus' name in the *arator* of IV 41 is evidently preceded by an allusion to Virgil's own name, which is again meant to endorse similarly political *cacata*. Exactly ten lines before this acrostic Virgil inserts the notable line (38) *cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus ...*[89], where middle and end, when read *à reculons*[90], give *P(ublius)*[91] *Ve(rgilius)*[92] *Mar(i)*[93]. In this onomastical connec-

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[83] Cf. O'Hara 1996, 247. For *quis fuit alter?* itself as an allusion to Aratus' own allusion to his own name at *Phaen.* 2 (ἄρρητον. "l'Innomé") cf. Prioux 2005, 313-314. The Virgilian tristich at issue here (III 40-42) reads in full:

40   *in medio duo signa, Conon et – quis fuit alter,*
     descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
     tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?

[84] For Virgil's attentiveness to such line-correlations cf. n. 12 above.

[85] Cf. n. 28 above.

[86] Here the collocation *iuga solvet* necessitates a gloss from Philargyrius (*rec.* II): *idest non arabit*.

[87] For Virgil's use of *solvo* with this hypotextual connotation cf. *Ecl.* VI 24 (last line of the *laesis*-acrostic); *Georg.* I 399 (before the similarly unidentified *pin[n]ati* acrostic [409-414; up]; here *solutos* is problematic [cf. Mynors 1990, 85]); *Georg.* I 436 (after acrostical *ma- ve- pu-* [429-433]).

[88] Cf. n. 6 above. For similarly onomastical endorsement of the *laesis*-acrostic cf. Adkin 2015b; Adkin 2015c, 452-454. For an onomastic that endorses the *undis*-acrostic cf. Adkin 2015d, 51-54.

[89] This line requires large-scale explication by *Schol. Verg. Bern.*

[90] All the onomastics mentioned in n. 88 above are similarly to be read *à rebours*.

[91] Here *nautica pinus* has to be glossed as *nautarum navis* by *Schol. Verg. Bern.* For *P.* = *Publius* cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 10,1 col. 3,53 (s.v. "*p*"): "passim". For "geläufige und belegbare Abkürzungen" in acrostics cf. Koster 1988, 103.

tion a final word may be said about the *Vergilium* in the last sentence of the *Georgics* (IV 563), where it occupies the second line of telestichal *otia* (562-565)[94], which picks up the *otia* of *Eclogue* I 6[95], which is the similarly second line of acrostical *fons* (5-8), which evidently alludes to the land-confiscations round sopping-wet Mantua[96]. The onomastical *Vergilium* of *Georgic* IV 563 would accordingly appear to be a *sphragis* that similarly endorses political *fons*. This *Vergilium* is then followed in the last line of telestichal *otia* (565) by line-final *audaxque iuventa*, which is *difficile*[97]: this puzzling "audacity" would in fact appear to contain a reference to Virgil's political acrostics – including *cacata*.

As well as the three afore-mentioned tip-offs re *cacata* within the fourth *Eclogue* itself, further such *verba sap*. are also to be found in the previous poem: *Eclogues* III and IV are linked by mention of Pollio, who is not named anywhere else in Virgil. The passage of the third *Eclogue* which introduces Pollio reads thus:

D(amoetas)   *Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, Musam:*
85   *Pierides, vitulam lectori pascite vestro.*
M(enalcas)   *Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina: pascite taurum,*
             iam cornu petat et pedibus qui spargat harenam. (*Ecl.* III 84-87)

In prominently post-caesural *sedes* in the second of these lines (85) Pollio is described as *lectori*, which invites criticism as both inappropriate[98] and fuzzy[99]. When however one realizes that *legere* can refer to reading acrostics[100], here *lector* instead becomes highly appropriate and perfectly fuzz-free: Pollio is being given a subtextual hint to read an acrostic. This hint to Pollio would then

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[92] Here *vector* is an "ungewöhnlicher Ausdruck" (Holtorf 1959, 255); cf. Serv. Auct. (ad loc.).

[93] It may be observed that the three parts of this onomastic (*P- Ve- Mar-*) become progressively longer (1:2:3). The point may also be made that in the next line's second hemistich *omnis* in strikingly polyptotic *geminatio* invites interpretation as a subtextual prompt to see "all" the antecedent onomastic; cf. nn. 37; 64 above.

[94] Identified by Schmid 1983, 317, who notes that this telestich is confirmed by horizontally line-final *oti* (564).

[95] *Ecl.* I 1 is likewise picked up by *Georg.* IV 566.

[96] Cf. n. 5 above.

[97] Cf. (e.g.) Heyne – Wagner 1830-33, I, 690: "Tenue enim genus est bucolicum".

[98] Cf. (e.g.) Heyne – Wagner 1830-33, I, 117: "Pastor … non … legitur". These words are repeated approvingly by Forbiger 1872-75, I, 56, who also finds fault with *pascite* immediately after *lectori*: "Etiam Musae vitulam … pascentes vix placere possunt". Here however Virgil is playing on the derivation of line-initial *Pierides* from πίων, cf. Adkin 2015c, 448, n. 142.

[99] Cf. (e.g.) Perret 1970, 43: "*Lectori*: … le sens du mot reste obscur".

[100] Cf. nn. 8; 80 above.

seem to be reinforced in the next line but one (87) by *cornu petat*, which carries the subtextual sense "let him seek the (acrostical) edge"[101]. This subtextual interpretation of *cornu petat*[102] is facilitated by two circumstances: on the one hand the striking postponement of *qui* to sixth position makes the subject of *petat* indeterminate, while on the other this rare use of *peto* in an absolute sense[103] enables *cornu* to be taken as object[104]. This subtextual injunction to Pollio to "seek the (acrostical) edge" (87: *cornu petat*) is positioned exactly ten lines after the start of an unidentified acrostic (78-82: *petad*), which repeats the *petat* of *cornu petat*[105]: Pollio is again being enjoined to "seek" an acrostic.

That the acrostic which this twofold nudge is prompting Pollio to "seek" is *cacata* is indicated by a subtextual hint which Virgil inserts a line but one after *petad* (viz. 84), where Pollio is first introduced: *Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, Musam*[106]. Here indicatival *est* after *quamvis* is "une incorrection"[107]: this is the only such indicative among the no fewer than 13 instances of *quamvis* in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. Part of the paradosis accordingly reads instead *sit*, which is also found in Servius[108]. Even if *est* is retained, its "incorrection" invites the reader to make a *sotto-voce* substitution of correct *sit*: this mental rectification imprints the resultant *quamvis sit* all the more sharply on the mind. This collocation *quamvis sit* however entails the cacemphatically

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[101] For the widespread use of *cornu* in the sense of *latus* cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 4 coll. 970, 78-971,11 (s.v. *cornu*).

[102] This phrase, like foregoing *lectori*, again incurs the disapprobation of Heyne – Wagner 1830-33, I, 117.

[103] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*² 1507 (s.v. 3a). Virgil's use of *peto* here has to be glossed by Philargyrius (*rec*. I): *petat: idest feriat*.

[104] This same *iam cornu petat* is again employed at *Aen*. IX 629 in the last line of the overlooked acrostic *ieci* (626-629; corroborated by noteworthy [cf. Dingel 1997, 238] *traicit* [634] in "edge" position). This acrostic plays on the etymology of *Iulus* (< ἰοβόλος; cf. Maltby 1991, 317) in order to play on the etymology of *Iuppiter* (< *iuvans pater*; cf. Maltby 1991, 319), who is the wrong god to invoke (cf. Serv. on 624 [621]) in a prayer for a successful bow-shot. The acrostic ("I've shot already"), which is coextensive with the prayer, shows this prayer for Jupiter's "help" with the "shot" is pointless. This impishly "audacious" impiety would seem to be subtextually signalled by *audacibus adnue coeptis* (625), which is a *Selbstzitat* from *Georg*. I 40, which corresponds line-numerically to *Georg*. II 40, which describes Maecenas as the *beau idéal* (*o decus ...*) which the overlooked acrostic *fias* (II 44-47) then "audaciously" tells him to "become" (cf. n. 8 above [with ensuing text]). This "acrostical" use of *audax* would appear to be pertinent to the employment of the same epithet at *Georg*. IV 565 (cf. n. 97 above).

[105] For "d" = "t" cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 5,1,1 col. 1,46-52 (s.v. "*d*"): "ponitur d pro t".

[106] This is the line immediately before hintful *lectori* (85).

[107] So Perret 1970, 43.

[108] This lection *sit* is also adopted by (e.g.) Coleiro 1979, 312.

homonymous *quam vissit*: "how (s)he farts"[109]. This line could accordingly be read thus: *Pollio amat nostram (quam vissit rustica!) Musam*, where the parenthesis means "how she, uncouth, farts!"[110]. This subtextual allusion to musal [af]flatus is evidently meant to direct Pollio's attention to the Virgilian Muse's similarly coprological *cacata*-acrostic[111].

This line (III 84) in which Virgil's Muse subtextually breaks wind as a hint at the "Aratus-esque" *cacata*-acrostic is exactly double the line-number (III 42) of Virgil's allusion to Aratus himself in *arator*[112]. A subtextual hint at this "in-the-middle-ness" of Aratean *arator* (III 42) would seem to be supplied by the problematic *in medio* that opens this sentence (III 40)[113]. This same *in medio* is then repeated shortly afterwards at III 46, which matches the line in the next poem (IV 46: *"talia saecla" …*) that introduces the *cacata*-acrostic[114]. "In the middle" between this line 46 in *Eclogue* IV and the start of this poem is the afore-mentioned line 23, which contains the "shitty" *cunabula* that is a further hint at acrostical "shit". In *Eclogue* III this same line 46 is itself "in the middle" between the start of this poem and line 92, which is framed by *qui legitis … fraga*. A mere eight lines after attention-grabbing *lectori* (85) this *legitis* naturally invites the subtextual construe "read"[115]. Here *legitis* governs *fraga*, which are lexically odd, since strawberries were regarded by the Romans as "a wild fruit unfit for consumption"[116]. It would therefore seem pertinent that para-prosdocetic *fraga* were etymologized from *fragro*[117], which accordingly constitutes an antiphrastic gloss on pongy "shit".

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[109] For the susceptibility of Roman ears to such *cacemphaton* involving *vissio* cf. Cic., *Fam.* IX 22, 4: *non honestum verbum est "divisio"? at inest obscenum, cui respondet "intercapedo"*.

[110] For this nuance of *rusticus* cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*² 1843 (s.v. 5).

[111] *Quam vissit* and the immediately following line's *lectori* occupy precisely the same *sedes* from main caesura to fourth diaeresis.

[112] Cf. n. 83 above. Here *arator* is qualified by *curvus*, which has to be explained by commentators; cf. (e.g.) Plessis – Lejay 1919, 20: "*curvus*: le laboureur se courbe sur la terre pour la travailler". It may therefore be observed that this same *curvus* had just been identified by Varro (*L.* VII 25) as the etymon of acrostically wink-tipping *cornu* (87).

[113] On the problematicality of *in medio* cf. (e.g.) Cucchiarelli 2012, 215-216.

[114] The same line in the next *Eclogue* but one (V 46) contains pre-caesural *fessis*, which evidently corroborates the unidentified acrostic *fes*[*s*]*i* (18-21 [up]; cf. Adkin 2014, 52). Since the "Daphnis" of intra-acrostical l. 20 evokes Julius Caesar (cf. Cucchiarelli 2012, 281-283), this acrostic is evidently saying: "we are 'sick' (cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*² 761 [s.v. *fessus* 5b]) of Caesar" (cf. n. 6 above [with text]).

[115] For such use of *legere* with subtextual reference to "reading" an acrostic cf. nn. 8; 80 above.

[116] So Morgan 1984/85, 579.

[117] Cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat.* 6,1 col. 1239,28-29 (s.v. *fragum*).

If *Eclogue* III 46 corresponds to acrostic-introducing IV 46, then III 50 corresponds to IV 50, where *aspice* signals the end of the acrostic's first complete word (*caca*): in *Eclogue* III this cynosurally semi-centenary "line 50" introduces the last acrostic-signposting passage to be discussed in this article. *Eclogue* III 50 runs: *audiat haec tantum – vel qui venit ecce Palaemon*. Here Palaemon is "a very strange name … to find in this context"[118]. The point may therefore be made that Palaemon recurs at *Aeneid* V 823: *Inousque Palaemon* ("P., son of Ino"). Palaemon is identical with Melicertes, who is likewise qualified as *Inous* at *Georgic* I 437 immediately after acrostical *ma- ve- pu-* (429-433). Here *Inoo Melicertae* is directly juxtaposed with surprising *Panopeae*, which is evidently an etymological wink to "see all" of this onomastical acrostic[119]. The same acrostically wink-tipping function would appear to be served by juxtapositional and similarly surprising *Inous*[120]: Ino is identical with Leucothea, who in such an acrostically loaded context perforce suggests the etymology "clear view"[121]. Since the "very strange name" Palaemon in *Eclogue* III 50 is accordingly son of "clear-view" Leucothea, here we evidently have a subtextually "clair-voyant" hint that matches *aspice* in the corresponding line of the next poem (IV 50): in both lines we are nudged to "see" the acrostic[122]. After the *Palaemon* of III 50, where this name is immediately preceded by acrostically charged *ecce*[123], the same *Palaemon* is then repeated in the same *sedes* in III 53[124], where this time *Palaemon* is immediately preceded by *vicine*[125], which here might be taken as a subtextual allusion to the "neighbouring" fourth *Eclogue*[126]: *tantum, vicine Palaemon*[127], / *sensibus haec imis (res est non parva) reponas*. Since *res est non*

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[118] So Clausen 1994, 104.

[119] Cf. n. 37 above.

[120] Cf. Thomas 1988, I, 141: "Whence 'son of Ino'?". His own hypothesis of a Callimachean source is dismissed by Erren 2003, 233.

[121] Cf. *LSJ*[9] 1042 (s.v. λευκός I,1); 786 (s.v. θέα I,1a).

[122] *Ecl*. III 50 is indebted to Theoc., *Id*. V 62 (cf. Clausen 1994, 104), where Λυκώπας in same final *sedes* as *Palaemon* will have suggested to Virgil "keen-eyed".

[123] For *ecce* (= ἰδού [cf. *Gloss*. III 147,18] = *aspice* [cf. *Gloss*. II 24,15]) as a pointer to Virgilian acrostics cf. Adkin 2014, 51, n. 44. At the start of this same line (III 50) *audiat haec tantum* might be taken as referring subtextually to hearing "only" *caca* instead of *cacata*: acrostical *caca* ends in the corresponding line (IV 50).

[124] This repetition of *Palaemon* parallels the repetition of similarly hintful *aspice* in similarly "edge" position (IV 50; IV 52).

[125] This term warrants a gloss from Servius.

[126] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict*.[2] 2266 (s.v. *vicinus* 2a).

[127] Since this *tantum* occurs in the line (53) that in *Ecl*. IV comes immediately after the completed acrostic (52), here this term might be thought to bear the subtextual sense of "that's all" – to the acrostic (cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict*.[2] 2101 [s.v. *tantum* 2a]); cf. also *tantum* in III 50 (with n. 123 above).

parva is surprising[128], we might see here one last subtextual hint at the acrostic, which is verily "no small matter": the Golden Age that starts with Pollio is "shit".

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[128] Cf. (e.g.) Conington − Nettleship − Haverfield 2007, 48.

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