

# The Light Side of the Moon: A Lucretian Acrostic by Leah Kronenberg

Post by “Joshua” of March 16, 2022 at 2:38 AM

It's not likely to be a coincidence, if that's the implication of your question! Virgil has a well-known acrostic in his *Georgics* in the terminal characters of four lines, spelling out *O-T-I-A*. He was followed by Horace in his *Satires*, who employed the same acrostic in the first characters of four lines.

[Otium](#) was an important word for upper-class Romans with good educations: it signified for them the kind of dignified leisure that they praised most highly; managing (perhaps *directing* is a better word for it) the cultivation of their country estates, maintaining personal libraries, collecting statuary, frescoes and fine furniture, playing host to the *convivium*, and, of course; reading and writing Greek and Latin literature.

Ask someone on the street to describe poetry, and the first thing they're likely to say is that 'it rhymes'. But poetry in the ancient world did *not* rhyme; like Milton and Shakespeare, they wrote in strictly metered blank verse. Also like Shakespeare, they continued to avail themselves of many other literary devices to ornament their work: Alliteration, assonance, dissonance, cacophony, chiasmus, asyndeton, onomatopoeia, metonymy, synecdoche--and probably a hundred others that I never even learned the names of!

There is a bawdy epigram in the *Greek Anthology* whereby the epigrammatist, a noted παίδεραστής, observes that: (spoiler...)

Quote

Display Spoiler

The numerical value of the letters in πρωκτός (anus) and χρυσός (gold) is the same. I once found this out reckoning up casually.

Perhaps not the most helpful example of wordplay I could furnish, but certainly one I won't soon forget...