

## AMORES I. 1

Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam

edere, materia conveniente modis.

par erat inferior versus; risisse Cupido

dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.

5 “quis tibi, saeve puer, dedit hoc in carmina iuris?

Pieridum vates, non tua, turba sumus.



- 1 **arma . . . numero:** recalls the opening line of the *Aeneid*: *Arma virumque cano*.  
**gravi numero:** refers to the DACTYLIC HEXAMETER traditionally used for epic poetry, most particularly by Vergil in the *Aeneid*.
- 2 **ēdō, -ere, -idī, -itum:** *to give out, put forth, produce*.  
**materia:** refers back to *arma* and *bella*, the material most suitable for epic tales.  
**modis:** a direct reference to the DACTYLIC HEXAMETER meter required for epic verse.
- 3 **inferior:** in DACTYLIC HEXAMETER all lines are of equal length, six metrical feet.  
**risisse:** from *rideō, ridēre, rīsī, rīsum*.  
**Cupido, -inis (m.):** the eternally youthful son of Venus whose arrows could inflict either love or revulsion upon their victims.
- 5 **saeva puer:** Ovid here addresses Cupid directly. The scene is parallel to the Apollo/Daphne story in *Met.* I. 453 where Ovid describes Cupid’s wrath as *saeva ira* and to 456 where Apollo refers to Cupid as a *lascive puer*. In that scene Apollo expresses his annoyance with the boy-god for using a weapon (the bow) that Apollo felt was more rightfully suitable to his own epic-scale deeds than to the amatory deeds of Cupid. Here, Ovid scolds the mischievous god for interfering with the writer’s desire to compose epic verse.  
**iuris:** partitive genitive used after the neuter demonstrative pronoun *hoc*.
- 6 **Pierides, -um (f. pl.):** the Muses from Pieria on the northern slope of Mt. Olympus.  
**vātēs, -is (m.):** *poet, prophet*. Ovid ironically chooses the ancient term for a poet, *vates*, which once carried the meaning of “prophet.”  
**turba, -ae (f.):** *a crowd of followers, attendants, troop*.

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quid si praeripiat flavae Venus arma Minervae,

ventilet accensas flava Minerva faces?

quis probet in silvis Cererem regnare iugosis,

10 lege pharetratae virginis arva coli?

crinibus insignem quis acuta cuspile Phoebum



- 7 **praeripiō, -ere, -ripiū, -reptum:** *to take away, snatch, tear away.* A present subjunctive in the protasis of a future-less-vivid construction with the apodosis understood.  
**flāvus, -a, -um:** *yellow, having yellow hair.* The phrase *flavae . . . Minervae* is a kind of embracing word order.  
**Venus, -eris (f.):** goddess sacred to love and lovers.  
**Minerva, -ae (f.):** Ovid here chooses to contrast Love and War (*arma*).
- 8 **ventilō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to brandish in the air, fan.* A second protasis in the future-less-vivid construction.  
**accensas . . . faces:** CHIASMUS. The *faces* refers to the torch symbolizing love and always present at marriages, where Venus would be expected to reign.
- 9 **probō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to authorize, sanction.* Translated like a potential subjunctive but used to convey doubt.  
**Cerēs, -eris (f.):** the goddess of open fields and agriculture.  
**iugōsus, -a, -um:** *mountainous.*
- 10 **pharetrātus, -a, -um:** *furnished with or wearing a quiver, quivered.*  
*pharetratae virginis* refers to the goddess of the hunt and of the woodlands, Diana. Just as Ovid has contrasted Love and War in lines 7–8, here there is a contrast between Ceres whose appropriate territory is the open fields and Diana who frequents wooded areas.  
**arvum, -ī (n.):** *ploughed or cultivated land, a field.*
- 11 **crīnis, crīnis (m.):** *hair, tresses.*  
**insignis, -e:** *distinguished, outstanding, memorable.*  
**acūtus, -a, -um:** *sharp, pointed.*  
**cuspis, -idis (f.):** *spear, javelin, lance.*  
**Phoebus, -ī (m.):** an epithet for Apollo as the god of light.

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- instruat, Aoniam Marte movente lyram?  
 sunt tibi magna, puer, nimiumque potentia regna:  
 cur opus affectas ambitiose novum?  
 15 an, quod ubique, tuum est? tua sunt Heliconia tempe?  
 vix etiam Phoebo iam lyra tuta sua est?  
 cum bene surrexit versu nova pagina primo,  
 attenuat nervos proximus ille meos.



- 12 **instruō, -ere, -xī, -ctum:** *to instruct, equip, furnish.* Translate like a potential subjunctive, here used to express doubt, as does *probet*, I. 9.  
**Aoniam:** refers to Boeotia, a region in Greece, which includes the Aonian mountains and Mt. Helicon. Often an epithet for the Muses.  
**lyra, -ae (f.):** *lute, lyre.* The four-word phrase *Aoniam Marte movente lyram* is in CHIASTIC word order. The lyre is the standard emblem for Apollo and so suggests poetry. Ovid sets up a third contrast here between Poetry (Apollo) and War (Mars).  
 13 **tibi:** dative of possession with *sunt*.  
**nimum** (adv.): *extremely, very much, too much.*  
**potens, -tis:** *powerful, mighty, influential.*  
 14 **affectō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to strive after a thing, to pursue.*  
**ambitiōsus, -a, -um:** *ambitious, vain, vainglorious, conceited.*  
 15 **quod ubique:** supply a missing *est* to complete the clause. It is a common occurrence in Ovid for the verb *sum* to be omitted from phrases.  
**Helicōnius, -a, -um:** *of or pertaining to Mt. Helicon, the mountain sacred to the Muses.*  
**tempe (n. pl.):** (indecl.) *valley;* in particular the beautiful valley at the foot of Mt. Olympus through which ran the Peneus river.  
 16 **Phoebo:** dative of reference with *tuta*.  
 17 **pāgina, -ae (f.):** *page.*  
 18 **attenuō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum:** *to weaken, enfeeble, lessen, diminish.*  
**nervus, -ī (m.):** *string of a musical instrument or bow.*

- 20 nec mihi materia est numeris levioribus apta,  
aut puer aut longas compta puella comas.”  
questus eram, pharetra cum protinus ille soluta  
legit in exitium spicula facta meum  
lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum  
“quod” que “canas, vates, accipe” dixit “opus.”
- 25 me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas.  
uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor.



- 19 **mihi**: dative of possession with *est*.  
**materia . . . apta**: the material most suitable to the light meter (i.e., ELEGIAC COUPLETS) is Love. But as the next line reveals, Ovid is not in love.  
**aptus, -a, -um**: (+ dat.) *fitted, suitable, appropriate*.
- 20 **longas . . . comas**: CHIASTIC word order. The *longas comas* surround the *compta puella* just as her hair would fall about her body. The accusative here is a Greek accusative used of the part of the body affected.  
**comptus, -a, -um**: *adorned*.  
**coma, -ae (f.)**: *hair*.
- 21 **pharetra, -ae (f.)**: *quiver*.
- 22 **exitium, -ī (n.)**: *destruction, ruin, hurt*. The expression *exitium . . . meum* is in CHIASTIC word order.  
**spīculum, -ī (n.)**: *arrow*. Although technically this word refers to a pointed end, here it stands for the whole weapon, the arrow or dart itself. The figure of speech that uses the part for the whole is called SYNECDOCHE.
- 23 **lūnō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum**: *to bend like a half-moon or crescent*.  
**genu, -ūs (n.)**: *the knee*.  
**sinuōsus, -a, -um**: *bent, winding, sinuous, pliant*.  
**arcus, -ūs (m.)**: *a bow*.
- 24 **canas**: subjunctive in a relative clause of characteristic.
- 25 **me miserum**: accusative used in an exclamation. This is a standard phrase by which elegiac poets describe themselves as lovers.
- 26 **ūrō, -ere, ussī, ustum**: *to burn, inflame, consume with passion*. The use of this word here is parallel to the language and situation of *Met. I. 495–96* when Apollo is struck by Cupid’s golden-tipped arrow.

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sex mihi surgat opus numeris, in quinque residat;  
 ferrea cum vestris bella valete modis.  
 cingere litorea flaventia tempora myrto,  
 30 Musa per undenos emodulanda pedes.



- 27 **surgat**: a jussive subjunctive.  
**residō, -ere, -sēdī, -sessum**: *to sink or settle down, subside, grow calm.*  
 Here, a jussive subjunctive.
- 28 **ferreus, -a, -um**: *hard, unfeeling, made of iron.*  
**modis**: this is the last reference to DACTYLIC HEXAMETER, the meter of epic poetry and war. It echoes lines 1 and 2 of the poem.
- 29 **litoreus, -a, -um**: *of the seashore.*  
**litorea . . . myrto**: CHIASTIC word order.  
**flāvens, -entis**: *golden-yellow.*  
**tempus, -oris (n.)**: *the temple of the head.*  
**myrtus, -ī (f.)**: *a myrtle tree.*
- 30 **undēnī, -ae, -a**: *eleven each, eleven at a time.*  
**ēmodulor, -ārī, -ātum**: *to sing, celebrate in rhythm.* Ovid ends with a reference to the meter of Love, the defined theme of all three books of the *Amores*.



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