

Rhetorical Analysis of *Arachne and Minerva*

Arachne and Minerva, which occurs at the start of Book VI in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is written with many visual and artistic elements. In lines 59 to 102, the section I chose for my Ovid Project, Ovid at first describes both tapestries, and then focuses on Minerva's tapestry. Due to the descriptive and visual nature of those lines, Ovid combines the use of poetic devices and uses enjambments, so that the reader gets a more unbroken, clean, visual, and artistic description of both the dyeing process and the tapestries.

In line 61, Ovid describes the process of making the dyes used for the tapestries, writing, "Tyrium quae purpura sēnsit aēnum" (61). The literal translation of this phrase is "purple, which felt the Tyrian bronze." Ovid combines both personification and a hyperbaton to make the dyeing process come to life. By using the word "sēnsit," or "felt," Ovid personifies the process of making purple dye in bronze vessels, making it more vivid and relatable to the reader (61). These effects help the reader gain a more visual idea of the dyeing process. Furthermore, Ovid places "Tyrium" and "aēnum" on opposing sides of "purpura" in order to create a hyperbaton (61). By doing so, he encloses the purple dye in the Tyrian bronze vessel, visually replicating the dyeing process, as the purple dye is ground inside of the vessels. Therefore, the combination of hyperbatons and similes gives the reader a visual replication of the dyeing process, making the story much more poetic and descriptive.

In lines 70 to 71, Ovid first starts to describe Minerva's tapestry. He describes her depictions:

Cecropiā Pallas scopulum Māvortis in arce
pingit (70-71).

Ovid intentionally enjambes "pingit" in order to keep the hyperbaton in line 70 unbroken (71). He creates a hyperbaton by surrounding "scopulum Māvortis," or "the hill of Mars" by

“Cecropiā...in arce,” or “in the Athenian citadel” (70). This word order allows the reader to visualize the Areopagus (the hill of Mars) in Athens, as Athens surrounds the Areopagus, both in real life, and in the text. Therefore, Ovid combines an enjambment, which keeps the phrase above it unbroken and clean, with a hyperbaton, giving the reader an unbroken, visual depiction of what Minerva is weaving.

By combining various poetic devices, Ovid helps the reader better visualize the contents of the story. This style carries through the whole story, making it clean and flowing, and filled with artistic and visual elements.