
Paris’ ferus amor encloses his molle pectus (chiastic pattern); see n. on 16.35f. (lecto Venus aurea nostro) for other examples of enclosing word order in this pair of letters.

127–8. portubus. Although it was Vergil who introduced the poetic use of the plural of portus (Barchiesi (1992) Ov. Her. 2.92), Ovid is the first Latin poet to use this form of the poetic plural in place of the expected singular ablative portu. This replacement is obviously due to metrical reasons; but it also further bestows epic majesty on Paris’ trip. Cf. also 16.26 (in portus suos), 16.275: Sigeos portus, 17.215 (Illicos portus).

ingedor ... applicor. Paris now abandons the first person plural and ‘personalizes’ his mission by focusing on himself.

uentisque ferentibus. These favourable winds for Paris’ trip were the work of Venus (16.23): illa dedit faciles auras uentisque secundos. We should assume that thanks to these winds the longa freta Paris mentioned at 16.22 were covered fairly quickly.

applicor. On the specifically Ovidian use of the passive applicor in the sense ‘to put in at’ see Kenney (1999a) 409.

Oebali. Ovid is the first Latin poet to address Helen in this way. Oebalus was king of Sparta, the father of Tyndareus and thus Helen’s grandfather (Hes. fr. 199.8 M–W: Τυνδαρέου ποτὶ δῶμος δαίμονος Ὀἰβαλίδαο. Hyg. Fab. 78.1: Tyndareus Oebali filius ex Leda Thestii filia procreatus Clytaemnestræm et Helenam). Pausanias (3.15.10) mentions an altar in his honour at Sparta. The adjective Oebalii occurs for the first time in Latin in the Georgics (4.125) in the sense ‘Spartan’. Servius notes ad loc.: Oebalia ipsa est Laconica. Cf. Ov. Rem. 457f.: et Parin Oenone summos tenuisset ad annos, / si non Oebalia paælicæ laesa foræt.

nympha. Kenney (1996) ad loc. notes that Ovid alone and only in the Heroïdes uses nympha as an equivalent to the Greek νυμφή ‘young wife’ (OLD s.v. 2). It is also used in this sense by Penelope (Her. 1.27): graia ferunt nymphae pro saluis dona maritis. See Barchiesi (1992) ad loc. and Casali (1995a) Ov. Her. 9.50.
This is of course true. However I suggest that well-chosen double entendre is in play here, which further picks up Helen's divine substance, since *nympha* also denotes a 'divine female being'. Paris has already prepared the way for Helen's divine portrayal: he has compared her with Venus (16.135–40) and has pleaded with her as with a goddess (16.197: *da modo te facilem*). For Helen's divine substance see Bethe, *RE* VII 2824–5, Pollard (1965), Clader (1976), Lindsay (1974) 209–39, Calame (2001) 191–202. Moreover the depiction of the beloved as a goddess (*puella divina*) is an established *topos* of love poetry. Cf. Catul. 68.70, Tib. 1.10.59f. and 2.4.59f. with Murgatroyd (1980) and (1994) ad loc., Lieberg (1962), Lyne (1980) 250, Greene (1998) 88, Galán Vioque (2002) 111. In Euripides' *Helen* the Dioscuri foretell the deification of their sister (*Eur. Hel.* 1667), and so does Apollo in the *Orestes* (1683–90). According to another version Menelaus and Helen were transferred to the Elysian fields (*Isoc. Hel.* 62, Apollod. *Epit.* 6.30). One should also recall the reaction of the Trojan elders, when they saw Helen on the walls of Troy (Hom. *II.* 3.158): ἀιώνιος ἀθανάτης θεής εἰς ὅπα ἔοικεν. Cf. Telemachus' words to Helen (*Od.* 15.181): τὸ κέν τοι καὶ κείθε τεῦ ὡς εὐχετοφόρην.

But most notably the portrayal of Helen as *nympha* has an important effect on Paris' case, since he was previously attached to Oenone, another nymph (*Ov. *Her.* 5.11f.: qui nunc Priamides (absit reuerentia uero), / seruus eras; seruo nubere nympha tulil, 16.96f.: sed nymphis etiam curaque amorque fui. / †quas super Oenones faciem mirabar†*). In this light, addressing Helen as *Oebali nympha* creates an intertextual link between *Her.* 5 and *Her.* 16 (see Intro, p.19) and also bridges Paris' two affairs, joining his amatory past with his amatory present.

**129. excipit hospitio uir me tuus.** Ovid may be recalling Propertianus (2.34.7): *hospes in hospitium* Menelao uenit adulter. The offer of hospitality in antiquity was a sacred duty and was governed by specific rules (Hom. *II.* 11.779: ἔννυμι τ' ἐν παρασηκεστ, ᾧ τε ἔννυμις τε管理工作 ἔστιν). It was so important that it was supervised and protected by Zeus Xenios. For hospitality in Homer see Reeco (1993). The host (ἔννυμις in Greek, *hospes* in Latin) was a sacred person and was tied to his host with unbreakable bonds. See Konstan (1997) 33–7. Menelaus obeys closely the demands of this holy institution, whereas Paris is about to violate it brutally. However in the meantime Paris takes care to be on good terms with Menelaus, because this will facilitate his plans. Befriending the husbands of the women they love is a piece of advice Ovid offers to his male pupils in the *Ars* (1.579f.): *sint etiam tua nota uiro placuisse puellae: / utilior uobis factus amicus erit.*

COMMENTARY ON HERoides

296, Cic. Div. 2.79, Att. 2.16.4, Liv. 29.11.8, Hor. Sat. 1.5.1f., Ov. Her. 12.29, Fast. 5.391, 647 etc.).

In this erotic triangle Menelaus holds the part of the uir/riualis, which is well established in the world of love poetry. See Kraus (1968) 279, Sabot (1981) 2561, Hintermeier (1993) 19 and Pichon (1966) s.vv. For the uir as a standard figure in love elegy see Barsby (1979) 57 n.1. For the use of the motif of the ‘rival’ in the single Heroides see Jacobson (1974) 400.

Paris’ reference to Menelaus is contemptuous in the extreme. He does not mention him by name, showing that he does not deem him important. It is also significant that nowhere in his letter does Paris refer to Menelaus with the more dignified conium. Ovid similarly refers to his beloved’s escort with contempt at Am. 1.4.1: uir tuus est epulas nobis aditus easdem. This elegy is very important for Paris’ letter, since it constitutes the subtext for the banquet scene in Menelaus’ palace (16.217–58). For the degradation of the rival in love elegy see Prop. 1.8.3 and 1.11.7 with Fedeli (1980) ad loc.

The bucolic diaeresis falls at a strong pause and emphasizes the juxtaposition of me and tuus. See Coletti (1977) 116.

130. non sine consilio numinibusque. Litotes (see Intro. p.58), amounting to a strong affirmative clause. Aeneas too expresses the same belief to his comrades, that everything is done according to the will of the gods (Verg. Aen. 5.56f.): haud equidem sine mente, reor, sine numine diuum / adsumus et portus delati intramus amicos. In his effort to show Helen that the gods are on his side, Paris shrewdly suppresses the fact that Menelaus would in any case have received him well, since he would have had to abide by the laws of hospitality. Although the offer of hospitality was not obligatory, strangers would normally expect to be warmly welcomed upon arrival; see Konstan (1997) 36. In this way Paris enrols Menelaus too, even though unconsciously, into the divine scheme, in order to overcome Helen’s hesitations.

131–2. ille quidem ostendit. Menelaus proves a worthy host, who takes thought for the entertainment of his guest. He is an equally good host for Telemachus in the Odyssey and presents in detail his view of proper hospitality (15.68–74). According to Apollodorus (Epit. 3.3) Menelaus’ hospitality to Paris lasted nine days before he left for Crete.

There is elision at the second short syllable of the first foot of the hexameter (see Platnauer (1951) 82f. and cf. 16.75, 17.37, 75).

For the contrast quidem ... sed (133) within two successive couplets see 16.5–7 with n. on 16.5, and 17.65–7.

ostendit ... ostendi. Another polyptoton; see Intro. p.61. At Eur. IA 582f. the chorus mentions Menelaus’ ivory-built palaces.

131–4. Over these four lines Paris develops a small-scale *priamel*. He rejects the places that Menelaus and the others consider important and longs to see the woman he loves. Ovid’s model was probably Sappho, who similarly rejects shows such as a host of cavalry or infantry or a fleet of ships, which can move others, and prefers to look at what she loves (fr. 195.1–4 P): *οί μὲν ἵπποις στροφὸν οἱ δὲ πέδιαν, οἱ δὲ ναών φαῖν’ ἐπὶ γὰρ μέλαιναν ἔφοβοι κάλλιστον, ἐγὼ δὲ κηφ’ ὄτ’ ἤτοι τις ἔραται*. It is not accidental that in the following lines Sappho goes on to refer to Helen’s escape from Sparta. For the *priamel* (*praecambulum*), already featuring in Homer (*ll.* 13.636–9 with Janko (1992) ad loc.), see Kröhling (1935), Fraenkel (1957) 230f., Schmid (1964), Nisbet–Hubbard (1970) 2f., Race (1982).


**laudatam formam.** Helen’s beauty has been praised both by *fama* and by Venus herself. See 16.38, 85f., 141. For the troubles that such praise causes Helen see 17.125–6 with n.

**cupienti ... caperentur.** The verb *cupere* features often in amatory contexts (see Pichon (1966) s.v.). For the etymological association here see A.N. Michalopoulos (1998) 236f.

**lumina.** For the poetic use of this noun instead of *oculus* see 16.37f. n.

**nil aliud.** The contracted form *nil* instead of *nihilo* is colloquial and serves metrical needs. Most poets (except Tibullus, who never uses *nil*) use the two forms interchangeably. See Axelson (1945) 129.

135–6. ut uid(i), *obstipui.* The elision of the long *ɪ* before the long *o* is not affected by the punctuation (see Platnauer (1951) 76).

**obstipui.** Also Paris’ reaction when the goddesses appeared before him on Ida (16.16). See Kenney (1996) ad loc. This is the first meeting of Paris and Helen, although, as he declares, he had already seen her with the eyes of his soul (16.37). For Helen’s inescapable charm upon everybody that sees her cf. *Eur. Tro.* 891–4. Ovid possibly works again on the analogy between Aeneas and Paris (see Intro. pp.9–12) and on the reaction of Helen to Aeneas and Paris (see Intro. 2.9–12) and in the first reaction – only with the sexes reversed – when she first saw Aeneas (Verg. *Aen.* 1.613): *obstipuit primo aspecus Sidonia*.
Dido. The same verb is used when Propertius remains speechless at
Cynthia's beauty (2.29.25).

praecordia ... curis. The two words are associated etymologically:
cura, quod cor urat (Varro LL 6.46); cf. cura dicta est, quasi corena,
vel quia cor urat (Paul.Fest. 50). For etymologizing on common nouns
see Intro. p.76. Here cura is used in the sense 'erotic cares' (cf. 16.96
with n. and see Pichon (1966) s.v., Navarro Antolín (1996) 133ff.). The
praecordia (cf. Greek περικάρδιον), relatively rare in elegy, are the
Met. 11.686 and Casali (1995a) Ov. Her. 9.157 with the relevant
bibliography about the true nature of this human organ. On the same
matter see also Horsfall (2000) Verg. Aen. 7.347.

praecordiaqu(e) intima. Elision at the fifth-foot thesis of the pentameter
(see Platnauer (1951) 85). For the expression cf. Verg. Aen.
7.347: conicit, inque sinum praecordia ad intima subdit. See Fletcher

intima ... intumuisse. Ovid exploits the similar sound of the two
words and possibly implies their (pseudo)etymological association; for
creative etymologizing see Intro. pp.76f. For the swelling of the internal
organs as a symptom of a strong emotion cf. Hor. Carm. 1.13.4
(feriens difficulti bile tumet iecur) with Nisbet–Hubbard (1970) ad loc.
atonitus. In Augustan poetry and Senecan tragedy atonitus is the vox
699–700.

137–8. similes uultus. Leander too equates Hero’s beauty to that of Venus
(Ov. Her. 18.69): a Veneris facie non est prior uilla tuaque. In the
Odyssey Helen is likened in beauty to Artemis (4.122), as is Nausicaa
(6.102ff., 151ff.) and Penelope (17.37, 19.54).

quantum reminiscor. Paris quite boldly equates Helen’s beauty with
that of Venus, thus paying a great compliment to the queen of Sparta.
Quantum reminiscor is possibly an ‘Alexandrian footnote’ (so labelled
by Ross (1975) 78). Ovid may have in mind a reference to Helen’s
likeness to Venus in one of the texts that he used as a source, or per-
haps this is only a cross-reference to a previous part of his letter. For
the ‘Alexandrian footnote’ see Norden (1927) Verg. Aen. 6.14, Fordyce

uenit. Ovid wants to pick up the well-known etymology of Venus from
uenire (Cic. Nat. deor. 2.69): quae ... dea ad res omnes ueniret Venerem nostri nominauerunt. Cf. 3.62 and Arnob. Nat. 3.33: quod ad cunctos ueniat, Venerem. For parallels see Paschalis (1997) 44 and A.N. Michalopoulos (2001) s.v. Venus (a). Hence, although he gives the cult title of the goddess, Cytherea, at the same time with the help of etymology he alludes to the name Venus (which occurs two lines later), in arbitrium. Cf. Helen’s words at 17.119f.: credere uix equidem caelestia numina possum / arbitrio formam supposuisse tuo. Mercury had appointed Paris as the arbiter (16.69). Nevertheless, the expression ludi’cidium Paridis has become dominant. The phrase in arbitrium uerite belongs to legal terminology (see Intro. p.66) and is relatively rare in poetry; but it is especially frequent in the Heroides. See Knox (1955) Ov. Her. 5.36.

139–40. uenisses ... Veneris. Ovid again works on the etymological link between uenire and Venus (see previous note).

certamen in illud. Anastrophe of the preposition for metrical reasons.
in dubio. This is a favourite phrase of Ovid. In poetry it is used for the first time in Terence (Andr. 266, 347) and then in Lucretius (3.836, 3.1085, 6.556), while Ovid is the only Augustan poet to adopt it (Am. 2.10.6, 2.13.2, Her. 19.174, Met. 1.396 etc.). See Kenney (1996) ad loc.

Although Paris attempts gross flattery of Helen by questioning Venus’ supremacy if the two were in competition, he does not go to the extreme of offending the goddess by awarding first prize to the mortal Helen. Menelaus gives firm advice on avoiding the comparison of mortals with gods (Hom. Od. 4.78): τέκνον φιλ’. Ἡ τοῦ Ζηνί βροτῶν οὐχ ᾗ τις ἐρήμου. For the well-established topoi of depicting the beloved as superior to a goddess see Lieberg (1962), Lyne (1980) 308 n.20, Murgatroyd (1994) Tib. 2.6.27f., Ferri (2003) Oct. 545. Ovid too compares a mortal woman to Venus at Am. 3.2.60 (pace loquar Venere, tu dea maior eris), and so does Leander in his letter (Her. 18.69, quoted in previous note).

palma. For palma as a symbol of victory see Verg. Georg. 3.12 (primum Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas) with Mynors (1990) ad loc. In Rome it was introduced in 293 BC according to Livy (10.47.3): palmaeque tum primum translato e Graeco more victoribus datae. Hence this is an anachronism (see Intro. pp.35f.), because not even in Greece was there such a practice before 400 BC. On this matter see Willis (1941) 413, Wallert (1962) 101 and Murgatroyd (1980) Tib. 1.9.81f.

futura fuit. Normally we should have futura esset, but the metre demands a short and a long syllable at the end of the pentameter.

141–2. rumor praecania fecit. Helen will become more timid and cautious
through the power of fame (17.207f.): non ita contemno uolucris praec.onia famae, / ut probris terras inpleat illa meis. The theme of publicizing a woman’s beauty recurs often in Ovid’s work. At Ars 1.623 he makes an acute psychological remark: even chaste women enjoy the praise of their beauty (delectant etiam castas praeconia formae). To strengthen his argument Ovid cites the example of Minerva and Juno, who were embarrassed by their defeat in the beauty contest (Ars 1.625f.): nam cur in Phrygiis Iunonem et Pallad a situis / nunc quoque indicium non tenuisse pudet? At Am. 3.12.9f. the poet ruefully realizes that his promotion of Corinna’s beauty in his elegies resulted in sharing her with others: et merito! quid enim formae praeconia feci? / uendibilis culpa facta puella mea est. At Ars 3.535–8 he reminds his female readers that Nemesis, Cynthia, Lycoris and Corinna have become famous through the poetry of the elegists. For the spread of Helen’s fame cf. 16.38, 85f., 141.

feet ... facie. The noun facies was used for the first time in the sense ‘beauty’ by Lucretius (5.1111) and then widely by the elegists. See TLL 6.1.48.56ff., OLD s.v. 8a, Fedeli (1980) Prop. 1.2.21 and (1985) Prop. 3.22.36. For the etymological link facere–facies, on which Ovid may be working in this couplet, see Gell. 13.30.2: facies ... forma omnis et modus et factura quaedam corporis totius a faciendo dicta; cf. Isid. Diff. 2.52: facies dicta est, eo quod notitiam faciat hominis. For etymologizing on common nouns see Intro. p.76.

nullaque ... nescia. The litotes (see Intro. p.58) emphasizes the widespread fame of Helen’s beauty. The same effect is produced by the particularly disturbed order of the words (hyperbaton, see Intro. p.74). On the topos of worldwide fame see Horsfall (2000) Verg. Aen. 7.225.

tua (est). Aphaeresis of est, here at the final syllable of the pentameter; see 16.13f., n.

143. The pentameter and hexameter that must have followed line 143 are irretrievable. On the matter see Kenney (1970b) 179–81.

nee tibi par usquam Phrygiae. The reading of Naugierius, adopted by Kenney.

nee solis ab ortu. This phrase must have been formed by analogy to the Greek ἀφ’ ἄλιου ἀντώνυτος (Aeschines 3.132). For similar expressions ‘from sunrise to sunset’ see Fraenkel (1957) 451 n.4.

144. inter formosas. For Helen’s world-supremacy in beauty see 16.85f. n.; for adjectives in -osus see 16.53f. n. formosus is widely used in lyric and elegy, but is rare in epic (with the exception of Ovid). See Axelson (1945) 60f., Fedeli (1980) Prop. 1.2.9, Knox (1986b) 100, Ross (1969) 58, Watson (1985) 439ff. and McKeeown (1989) Ov. Am. 1.5.11f. Here formosus is used as a noun, which is common in Augustan poetry and
particularly in Propertius. Cf. Ov. *Her.* 17.97, Prop. 1.15.8 with Fedeli (1980) ad loc., Tib. 1.4.3 with Smith (1913) and Murgatroyd (1980) ad loc. with more examples.

**nomen habet.** The combination *nomen habere* means ‘to be famous’ (see *TLL* 6.3.2406.71–72). For Ovid’s particularly frequent use of this phrase, even to denote immortality through poetry, see McKeeown (1989) Ov. *Am.* 1.3.21f. See also Fedeli (1980) Prop. 1.7.10 for more parallels. Ovid possibly had in mind Propertius’ proud declaration about Cynthia (1.4.8): *Cynthia non illas nomen habere sit.*

**145. crede sed hoc nobis.** This phrase enhances the directness and vividness of the letter and preserves the illusion of a dialogue between sender and addressee. Paris realizes beforehand that what he is about to say may seem incredible, but he nevertheless asks Helen to believe it. Cf. similar cases at 16.42 and 60. Paris does not restrain himself in his praise of Helen’s beauty, as if he knew Ovid’s similar advice to lovers in the *Ars* (1.621–4); see Intro. p.55.

I am convinced by Reeve (1973) 334 that *crede sed hoc nobis.* (c, D.Heinsius, N.Heinsius, Bentley, Seldmayer, Housman, Goold (1974) 481) should be the correct reading, although, as Kenney (1979) 412 notes, *crede sed hoc* lacks any parallel in Ovid. Palmer, Showman, Dörrie, Rosati and Kenney print *credis et hoc nobis?*


**146.** Paris produces an oxymoron, claiming that Helen’s reputation for beauty is bad for her, because it does not correspond to reality: she is even more beautiful. This paradox is slightly varied by Cydippe, who also protests against her beauty but for a different reason: Acontius fell in love with her because she was beautiful, and this was the beginning of her troubles (cf. Ov. *Her.* 21.33f.): *haec nobis formae te laudatore superbæ/contingit merces, et placuisse nocet.*

**tua (e)st.** Aphaeresis of *est* at the final syllable of the pentameter; see 16.13f. n. The same feature is repeated in the next pentameter (148).

**147–8.** Reality far outstrips fame and Venus’ promises.

**materia.** This noun features mainly in prose and is also a Lucretian technical term, but it is especially common in Ovid. See McKeeown (1989) Ov. *Am.* 1.1.1f., Kenney (1996) ad loc. and (2002) 36 n.57.

**sua (e)st.** See above on 16.146.

**149–52.** Enjambment; see 16.53–6 n.

**149–50.** Now that Paris has seen Helen he can justify Theseus’ passion for her. This is the first of the mythological – i.e. historical, as far as the