



Key Stylistic Techniques

This is a non-exhaustive list of the stylistic techniques used in the text. Please consult the commentary for more in-depth explanations of each technique and the effect it achieves. Look for other examples of these techniques and try to explain why you think the author used each one in its context.

Alliteration

Repetition of consonants: e.g. pectora palmis (10.15), vela videre (10.46), portus patriaque (10.125).

Anaphora

Repetition of a word or phrase in successive clauses: e.g. quid...quid...quid (6.47-8), Medeam...Medea...Medeae (6.127-8).

Apostrophe

Address to a character who is not present: e.g. Tiphys (6.48).

Assonance

‘Vocalic rhyme’ or repetition of vowel sounds: e.g. tibi litore mitto (10.3), temperet..ventos (10.66).

Asyndeton

Phrases without ‘and’ or other connecting particles: e.g. tactum erat, dixi (6.23-5).

Chiasmus

ABBA pattern of words: terra tibi, nobis ..aquae (6.68)

**Compound adjective**

Adjective made up of more than one word joined together such as *aeripedes* ('bronze-footed' 6.32) or *terrigenas* ('earth-born' 6. 35).

Diaresis

A device in which the usual scansion of a word is changed to allow (e.g.) a four-syllable word to become five syllables by scanning a consonantal 'v' as a vowel: see *persolvenda* in 6.74.

Enjambement

Where the sense-making sentence runs on from one line to the next: e.g. 10.75-6.

Epanalepsis

Repetition of a word from one line at the start of the next line: *excitor illo/ excitor* (10.33-4).

Golden Line

A balanced line in which the pattern is: adjective, adjective, verb, noun, noun; e.g. *caerula propulsae subducitur unda carinae* (6.67), 6.90, 10.20: or else noun, noun, verb, adjective, adjective as in *aequora prospectu metior alrta meo* (10.28).

Hendiadys

The expression of a single concept or image through two joined terms e.g. *studio cursuque loquendi* (6.39).

Hypallage

Transferred epithet such as 10.129 where it is the speaker who is *sola* but the word is used of the land on which she has been left.

**Legal language**

E.g. *criminibus..insimulasse* (6.22).

Metaphor

Applying terms which are strictly inaccurate but which paint a vivid picture by so doing: e.g. *detegit* (6.40), *volat* (6.66).

Metonymy

Change of name whereby (e.g.) the name of Mars (god of war) is used to denote war itself (6.35) or a wedding torch (*taeda*) stands for the wedding itself (6.134). See also synecdoche.

Oxymoron

A clash of imagery in adjacent words, e.g. *hospita castra* (6.52), *adultera virgo* (6.133), *scelerata piam* (6.137).

Parody

The playful imitation of a particular style for satirical purposes, often taking the form of a character having pompous or tragic words put into their mouth: e.g. *me quoque fata vocant* (6.28).

Paronomasia

Playing on the sounds of words such as *verbera..verbis* (10.38).

Patronymic

Calling a person 'son of x' or 'daughter of x' where x is their father: e.g. *Aesonides* ('son of Aeson') at 6.25, or *Thoantias* ('daughter of Thoas') at 6.163.

**Polyptoton**

Repetition of the same word in different grammatical forms; e.g. *timidus timidum* (6.29), *Medeae Medea* (6.151).

Polysyndeton

Excessive use of 'and' in connecting words and phrases: *finge dari comitesque mihi ventosque ratemque* (10.63); cf. 10.11, 10.127.

Recusatio

The ironic 'refusal' to say something which thus hints at dreadful things unspoken – e.g. *quae nescierim melius* (6.93-4).

Rhetorical question

Posing a question to which an answer is not expected or not possible: e.g. *quid mihi cum Minyis? Quid cum Tritonide pinu?* 6.47-8, cf. 6.75-8, 145-6, 10.57-9.

Simile

The direct comparison of one thing with another: e.g. 10.139 where the body shivers 'like corn driven by the winds'.

Syllepsis

The figure in which a verb is used with different words in different ways: e.g. *recepti* in 6.55 can be taken literally with *urbe* and *tecto* but only figuratively with *animo*.

Synecdoche

A form of metonymy in which a thing or person is referred to by the term for one part or aspect alone: *carina* (6.1-2) literally means 'keel' but stands for the whole ship, *lecti* in 6.153 means 'bed' and so comes to stand for the sexual relationship as a whole, *carbasa* means 'linen' and so means 'sails' at 10.30, *puppis* means 'poop-deck' and so stands for the ship as a whole at 10.62.

Synizesis

The merging of two syllables into one for metrical effect: e.g. aureo (6.49) which is scanned as two syllables rather than three.

Tricolon crescendo

A 'rising three-folder' of three phrases of increasing length, often sharing a common stressed word; e.g. Medeam...Medea...Medeae (6.127-8), quo...quo...qua (6.145-6). 6.45-6 is an interesting variation on this figure.

Variatio

Saying the same thing more than once with different vocabulary: both Haemoniis and Thessalus (6.23) mean 'Thessalian'.