Militia amoris and the Roman Elegists (*)

Militia amoris, the description of a love-affair and its various participants in military terms (1), apart from its obvious popularity in love-poetry, also occurs in one form or another in most other genres of Greek and Latin poetry, including epic, tragedy, comedy and satire, and is even mentioned in prose. In the Roman elegists there are over a hundred examples of its use and three whole poems almost entirely devoted to it. Clearly such a popular and ubiquitous figure deserves detailed comment (2). It is the purpose of this article to examine its origins, trace its development and discuss fully its position and importance in Roman elegy.

It may seen somewhat puzzling that two occupations, which at first sight appear to be diametrically opposed, should be compared to one another so frequently. However, a closer examination shows that the similarity between the two is in fact extensive and that to explain the origins of militia amoris we need suppose nothing more than a realization of the inherent affinities between certain amatory and military situations, based on observation of the behaviour of lovers. For instance, the pursuit of the beloved by the lover and the actual fights between the two, which are so fully treated by later authors (3), can easily be compared to military encounters, and similarly the assault on and occupation of the lover by love has obvious parallels in the sphere of warfare. So Ovid, who gives militia amoris its most detailed and comprehensive treatment, devotes the whole of Amores 1. 9 to a discussion of such similarities and repeats the point at Ars Amatoria 2. 233 f and 674.

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(1) I have excluded simple references to Love as an archer, except when the military implications are fully worked out.

(2) The subject has already been discussed by A. Spies, Ein Beitrag zur Bildersprache der antiken Erotik, Diss. Tübingen, 1930, E. Thomas in G. & R., 1964, 151-65 and J. Barsby, Ovid Amores Book 1 (on 1.9). However, all three contain a number of omissions and points of detail with which I disagree.

(3) See, for example, Tib. 1. 1. 73 f, 1. 10. 53 f, Hor., Carm. 1. 6. 17 f, 3. 14. 25 f, Prop. 2. 5. 25, 2. 15. 4 f, Ov. Am. 1. 5. 14 ff.
A survey of the earliest examples of love's warfare tends to confirm this opinion: as it was developed it became more complex and eventually in Roman elegy was actually contrasted with real war, but in its most rudimentary form it was simply an application of military language to amatory activities, suggested by their resemblance to military operations.

The first instance of the figure is to be found at Sappho 1. 25 ff (B). In the piece Sappho asks Aphrodite to help her secure the affections of a girl who has so far resisted her and concludes her appeal with the words:

\[ \text{ἐλθὲ μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λύσον} \]
\[ \text{ἐκ μερίμναν, δόσα δὲ μοι τέλεσαι} \]
\[ \text{θύμος ἱμέρει, τέλεσον· σὺ δ' αὔτα} \]
\[ \text{σύμμαχος ἔσσο.} \]

Throughout the poem, in contrast to the somewhat "blasée" Aphrodite (4), Sappho herself is in earnest and describes her feelings in rather dramatic terms (e.g. 3 μὴ μ' ἄσαις μηδ' ὄνιασί and 22 f. χαλέπαν ... μερίμναν). Her appeal in the final lines is in keeping with this: her attempt to win over the girl is viewed as a battle and she implores the goddess to fight on her side. So because of her personal involvement and the intensity of her emotions Sappho describes the aid of the goddess as that rendered by an ally in a military engagement. A similar kind of dramatization is evident in Anacreon 46 (B):

\[ \text{ἀστραγάλαι δ' Ἐρωτός εἰσιν μανία τε καὶ κυδομοῖ.} \]

Κυδομοῖ is an epic word and is here mock-heroic as so often in Anacreon (5). This time the figure is employed not in earnest but in jest, and Anacreon's attitude is one of amusement, most probably as a detached observer, although he may be personally involved (compare for example 89 B). The meaning of the line is that Love plays around with the frenzies and conflicts which lovers take so seriously as if they were dice, and once again we see militia amoris in a very simple form, i.e. being in love is like being at war. Because of textual difficulties the exact meaning of Theognis 1285 f is uncertain. The text printed by most editors is:

\[ \text{[οὐ γὰρ τοῖ με δόλω] παρελεύσεαι οὐδ' ἀπατήσεις·} \]
\[ \text{νεχίσας γὰρ ἐχις τὸ πλέον ἐξοπίσω.} \]

(4) See Page, Sappho and Alcaeus. 12 ff.
The words in brackets were added by a very late hand (6) but, bearing in mind the story of Atalanta that follows, it seems clear that the boy to whom the piece is addressed has eluded Theognis' advances somehow and that this is described as a victory. The lines, then, pick up the idea that the encounters of lovers are like warfare and add a new refinement, a victory won by one of the parties involved (7).

The other main form of militia amoris is the fight against love, rather than the lover. The earliest example of this appears in Homeric Hymn 19. 33 f (8), where the onset of love, in abstract form, is described as an attack:

... θάλε γάρ πόθος ύγρός ἐπελθὼν νύμφη ἔπλεξαίμι Δρόσος φιλότητι μεγίστηι.

Aeschylus picks up this idea at Supplices 1003 f, designating the mastery of the man by love, again in abstract form, as a victory:

καὶ παρθένοιν χιλιάδαίσιν εὐμόρφοις ἐπὶ πᾶς τις παρελθὼν ὄμματος θελκτήριον τοξευμ' ἐπεμφύει, ιμέρου νεκώμενος.

He repeats the idea of love as a conqueror at Choephoroi 598 ff with the observation that through the might of love neither humans nor animals are faithful to their mates (9):

σὺς γάρ δ' ὀμαλίας θηλυκρατίας ἀπέρω- τος ἔρως παρανικά κνωσάλαι τε καὶ βροτῶν.

(6) See Hudson-Williams, The Elegies of Theognis, 248 f.

(7) There are two other possible examples of militia amoris at this period. Alcaeus 60 (B), ἐπετον Ἐνυρρογίας παλάμαισιν, is translated by Page (Sappho and Alcaeus, 291) as 'I fell by the arts of the Cyprian goddess...'. However παλάμη is also used of the hands employed in physical violence and later of violence itself (Homer, Iliad, 3. 128, 5. 558; Soph., Philoct., 1206), while πίπτω is regularly used of falling in battle. Unfortunately the fragmentary nature of the words makes further speculation impossible. There are also a few lines of Hermippus quoted by the scholiast on Aristoph., Vesp., 1169: ὡστερον δ' αὐτο- στρατηγον οὖσαν ἐλωττιμένην καὶ κασαλβαζόμεαν εἶδου καὶ σεσαλακωνισμένη (the text given is that of the Loeb edition in Elegy and Iambus, 2. 240). Both text and translation are doubtful but this is possibly the forerunner of Plaut., As., 656 and Tib. 1. 1. 75 where the term general is employed.

(8) Homeric Hymn 19 is usually dated around the time of Pindar: see Allen and Sikes, The Homeric Hymns, 262.

(9) This strictly refers to marriage, an area in which references to warfare are frequent. While not maintaining that love is necessarily distinct from marriage, I find it more convenient to treat these passages separately, since they refer rather to quarrels between husband and wife than to amatory 'warfare'. See, for example, Semonides 7. 105, Menander 302. 6 K, Plaut. As. 912, Cas. 357, Menacech. 129 ff, Stich. 140. Rather similar to the passage of Aeschylus is Menander 566 K.
These particular expressions of human encounters with abstract love are taken up by the other tragedians (10), who in turn make the logical progression of personifying love in this context.

By the introduction of the deities of love Sophocles and Euripides prepared the way for some important advances made by later poets. They provided the starting-point for the highly-developed form of the battle with Love and did much to popularize the idea of victory, which subsequently becomes an ubiquitous feature of militia amoris (11). Sophocles is the first to introduce Love in personalized form into the figure and adds another refinement at Antigone 781 when he mentions the invincibility of Love:

Ερως ἀνίχατε μάχαν.

He makes similar remarks about Aphrodite at line 799 of the same play and at Trachiniae 497 f. Euripides also mentions the victories of Aphrodite when at Andromache 631 Peleus says to Menelaus:

τὴν περικυρίως Κύπριδος, ὁ κάριστε σὺ.

He represents the onset of Love as a military attack by the god at Hippolytus 525 ff and calls him the most difficult of all the gods to fight in frag. 430 (N). His most significant contribution is when he turns the tables on Aphrodite and depicts Phaedra attempting to conquer the goddess herself at Hippolytus 401 and in a similar phrase at line 1304:

γυνώμη δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη.

This innovation subsequently became very popular, particularly with Ovid, who employs it extensively in the Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris.

In comedy references to love's warfare are disappointingly scarce. Although much has been lost and, to judge from the popularity of the figure in Plautus and Terence, it may well have played a more important part in New Comedy than the remains suggest, yet the sparse and isolated oc-


(11) This takes four forms: (1) A victory won by one or other of the lovers: Lucilius 1181 (Marx), Tib. 1, 6, 27 f, 8, 49, 10, 53 ff, Ov. Her. 4, 14, 9, 2, 113 f, A.A. 1, 394, 665 f, 699 fr, 2, 197, 741 ff, 3, 1-6, 559 ff, Rem. 454, 674 ff, Am. 1, 5, 14 ff, 1, 7, 35 ff, 12, 2, 18, 11, Met. 2, 436 ff, 4, 356, 7, 741, 14, 718, 721. (2) The lover conquered by abstract love: Aristoph. Nub. 1081 f, Lucr. 1, 34, Ov. Her. 4, 151-3, Am. 3, 2, 46. (3) The love-god wins a victory: A.P. 12, 45, Virg., Ecl. 10, 69, Aen. 4, 95, Ov. Her. 9, 26, Am. 1, 2, 20, 37, 2, 9, 6, Met. 5, 366-70, 9, 545, 10, 26. (4) The lover conquers love: Theoc. Id. 30, 25 f, A.P. 5, 179, Tib. 3, 6, 4, Ov. A.A. 1, 21, Rem. 157 f, 199 f, 260, 358, Met. 7, 73.
currences of *militia amoris* in comedy indicate that it was still as yet at a very rudimentary stage. In Aristophanes, apart from his application of the figure to Zeus at *Nubes* 1081 f, the only other possible example is at *Plutus* 1002 where a youth refuses to continue his affair with an old woman, saying:

\[ \tau\alpha \lambda\alpha i \pi\omicron\tau\epsilon \gamma\rho\sigma \nu \alpha \lambda \chi\mu\omicron\omega \ Μ\lambda\iota\iota\sigma\omicron\iota \]

a line which is repeated at 1075. When Polycrates of Samos wanted to enlist as allies the Milesians, who had formerly been very powerful, he consulted the oracle and this was the reply that he received. The scholiast explains the proverb’s present application as *ταλαι ποτε μοι και ἄκοντα χρησίμη ὑπηρχες διὰ τὴν ἔνδειαν, ἃν δ’ ὀικέτη σων ρωματία ποιούμαι*. Certainly this meaning is present, but Rogers (12) probably comes nearer when he says, "here it denotes the youth’s unwillingness any longer to enter ‘the lists of love’”. The choice of this particular proverb with its military implications tends to confirm Rogers’ opinion and we probably have here an oblique reference to *militia amoris*. In Menander, apart from references to marriage (see note 9), there is only one play that is at all relevant to the present discussion. In the *Perikeiromene* the attempts to recover Glycera from a neighbour’s house are described in terms of a military attack (see especially Act 3 in the Oxford Text). Although this cannot strictly be classed as *militia amoris*, it does have an influence on certain later details, as found for example in Horace, *Carm.* 3. 26 and Ovid, *Am.* 2. 12, and so is worthy of mention (13).

The above survey shows that *militia amoris* originated in the pre-Hellenistic period and was known to a number of poets. Already it is found in its two main forms, the battle between the lovers and the battle with love, and a few minor refinements have taken place. However, although it is possible that the figure may have been more popular than the remains indicate, it would appear that it was as yet in a very rudimentary form and that its use was sporadic and infrequent. It is not until the Hellenistic poets that any significant developments are made and militia amoris becomes really popular: it is in their hands that it becomes a well-established figure and it is their influence that is to be detected in Roman poetry.

Apollonius Rhodius began a popular Alexandrian idea, the application to Love of an epic adjective usually reserved for warriors. So at *Argonautica* 3. 296 f he has:

(12) Note b on page 451 of his Loeb edition.
(13) In Roman comedy pseudo-military operations are often undertaken against other people involved in the love-affair: *Plaut. Mil.* 814, 1025 (rival), *Pers.* 753 ff, *Pseud.* 380 ff, 524 ff, 580 ff, 761 ff, 1270 (lento), *Cas.* 50 ff, 113 ff, 344, 713 f (attempt to win a girl in marriage). Compare also *Hor. Carm.* 3. 15. 8 f.
This epithet, which in Homer is applied to Ares and Achilles (14), is repeated at line 1078 of the same book and is later picked up by Moschus 7, 1 f. Similarly Dioscorides applies a stock epithet of Ares (15) to Love at A.P. 12. 37. 1 f.

and Meleager imitates at A.P. 5. 180. This imaginative use of the Homeric adjective was peculiar to the Hellenistic period but it did have an influence on subsequent treatment of the figure. By elevating Love’s military status and assigning to him a dignified position it was to a certain extent the forerunner of the elegiac designation of Amor as a general. A similar innovation occurs at A.P. 5. 213. 4, where Posidippus describes Love as his guide:

\[ \text{This epigram is particularly significant, since it combines three details which are subsequently found in the Roman elegists. Apart from developing the battle against Love and thereby providing the stimulus for many such} \]

(14) See Iliad 5. 461, 717, 21. 536.
(16) Meleager picks up this idea at A.P. 12. 144. 3.
situations in elegy, it also contains the first reference to arms and, along with Caecilius (see below), directly inspires the Propertian and Ovidian preoccupation with this theme. In addition, the presence of Reason in line four anticipates to some extent the allegory of Ovid, Am. 1. 2. 31 ff and represents a great step forward by the employment of this personification. The use of such an abstract idea in this context shows that militia amoris was by now well-established among the resources of the love-poet. Another subsequently omnipresent feature of the figure is revived by Hermesianax (7. 83 f Powell, Collectanea Alexandrina) who, with a possible reminiscence of Anacreon 47, says of philosophers:

οὐδὲ ὁδ' αἰνίν ἐρωτος ἀπεστρέψαντο χυδομένην μανομένου (17).

Finally, Asclepiades makes an important innovation when he describes the lover as the spoil of Aphrodite at A.P. 12. 50. 2. The idea is taken up and developed by Hedlylus (18) when he depicts the ravished Aglaonice dedicating certain articles of her clothing to Aphrodite and describes them as spoil at A.P. 5. 199. 3 ff:

τοῖς πάρα Κυριρίδι ταύτα μύροις ἐτὶ πάντα μυδώντα κεῖται, παρθενίων ύγρα λάφυρα πόθων, σάνδαλα, καὶ μαλακαί, μαστῶν ἐνδύματα, μέτραι, ὑπὸνοι καὶ σκυλιμών τὸν τότε μαρτύρα.

This particular detail was picked up by the early Latin authors and was subjected to extensive treatment by Propertius and Ovid.

The contribution made by the Hellenistic poets is of extreme importance. They were the first to employ militia amoris with regularity and the first to give anything like a detailed and comprehensive treatment. By the introduction of many novel ideas and details they developed it from its previous crude state into a well-established figure and ensured its lasting popularity. Finally, the influence which they exerted directly or indirectly on Roman poets was considerable, especially in the case of the elegists, under whom love’s warfare reached its most perfected form.

(17) Compare A.P. 12. 22. 1 f. After this passage of Hermesianax references to the battles of love without further elaboration become common: Ter. Eun. 59 ff, Adelph. 843, Plaut. Pers. 25, Lucilius 1323 (Maxx) Catull. 37. 13, Hor. Sat. 2. 3. 267, Carm. 4. 1. 1 f, Tib. 1. 3. 64, 1. 10. 53, Prop. 1. 6. 30, 2. 1. 45, 2. 12. 13 f, 3. 5. 2, 3. 8. 32, Ov. Her. 17. 256, A.A. 2. 674, Rem. 25, Am. 1. 9. 45, 1. 11. 12, 2. 18. 12.

(18) Meleager also picks up the idea of the lover as spoil at A.P. 12. 23 and adds garlands at A.P. 5. 191.
The Roman poets of the Republic picked up, and often elaborated, most of the Hellenistic features. So the idea of the lover fighting back against Love re-appears when Alcesimarchus is warned of the rashness of such an act at Plautus, Cist. 300. The detail of arms is taken one stage further by Caecilius (66-7 Ribbeck 3rd ed.):

... sine blanditiis nihil agit
in amore inermus.

The meaning of inermus seems to be 'defenceless', as at Ovid, Am. 2. 10. 3, and, such being the case, Caecilius can be regarded as the originator of an idea that found particular favour with Ovid. Spoil, the innovation of Asclepiades, is taken up by Plautus and Terence and given a more earthy application (19). In the Trinummus of Plautus Lysiteles calls Love a 'despoliatores' (line 239), describing how he traps men and then strips them of their property. Similarly in Terence’s Hecyra Syra’s advice to Philotis in her dealings with men at line 65 is:

quin spolies, mutiles, laceres, quemque nacta sis.

The designation of money extorted from the lover as spoil is first found here and later occurs in Propertius and Ovid. Catullus is more true to the Hellenistic originals when he says of Ptolemy III at 66. 13 f:

dulcia nocturnae portans uestigia rixae
quam de virgineis gesserat euum.

There are two meanings present here: Catullus is describing as spoil both Berenice’s clothing and her virginity (20). The employment of such an interplay is an obvious indication that the figure is approaching a state of high development.

The Republican period also produced a number of innovations. If love is a kind of warfare, it seems only natural to expect that peace may be established at some stage, and so it is at Terence, Eunuch. 59 f:

in amore haec omnia insunt uitia: iniuriae,
suspiciones, inimicitiae, indutiae,
bellum, pax rursum.

(19) Cf. Ennius, Scaenaica 370-1 (V). The words are presumably spoken by the Sabine women and so should possibly be excluded from militia amoris, although they do closely reproduce the thought of Hedylus.
(20) See Quinn, Catullus The Poems, 358.
The sentiment is echoed by Cicero and Horace (21). However, of greater significance are three passages in Plautus. In the *Persa* the maid Sophoclidisca tells the boy slave Paegnium that he has not yet reached a man's weight and implies that he is therefore unsuitable for love. The boy's retort at 231 f is:

\[
\textit{at confidentia}
\]
\[
\textit{illa militia militatur multo magis quam pondere.}
\]

Similarly at *Truculentus* 229 f Astaphium says:

\[
\textit{numquam amatoris meretricem oportet causam noscere, quin, ubi nil det, pro infrequente eum mittat militia domus.}
\]

Although the point is not fully worked out, we can see here quite clearly that the lover is regarded as a soldier under his mistress' command and the obvious implication is that her rôle is similar to that of a general. This particular title is actually employed at *As*. 655 f where Argyrippus indulges in some extravagant praise of his slave for producing a sum of money which will ensure the success of his love-affair:

\[
\textit{custos erit is, decus populi, thensaurus copiarum, salus interioris corporis, amorisque imperator.}
\]

The term obviously refers to the slave's strategy and to the power and authority which he wields in the field of love. Incidentally this is its first appearance in *militia amoris* and it is later taken up by Tibullus. In these three examples, then, the concept that the lover is in some kind of military service is given concrete expression for the first time, and it is possible to discern here the origins of the idea which played such an important part in the elegiac treatment of the figure. In the absence of any evidence for imitation of Greek New Comedy these passages can fairly be regarded as the most important contribution of the Republican period (22).

So during this period the poets carried on an elaborated earlier details of the figure with the addition of a few innovations. Under them and under the Hellenistic poets militia amoris had made quite considerable advances from its earliest form, but had by no means reached its highest development. The

(21) See Cicero, *Tusc*. 4. 35. 76, Hor. *Sat*. 2. 3. 267 f. At Terence, *Eunuch*. 53 and Lucilius 729 (Marx) the word *pax* is again used in an amatory context, but it is not clear whether the full military implications are present.

(22) The comparison of the lover to a town also occurs during this period at Plaut. *Truc*. 170 f. Cf. also *A.P.* 12. 33. 1 f. The idea is occasionally found in the elegists: Prop. 3. 13. 9, Ov. *A.A.* 3. 577 f, Am. 2. 12. 1 ff. See also Hor. *Sat*. 1. 2. 96 ff.
elegists employ the figure far more frequently and treat it at much greater length than any of their predecessors. They add many clarifying details to provide a full and varied picture, while working out in depth the similarities between amatory and military situations. More important, they use the figure to reinforce their basic concept of the humility of the lover and incorporate it within their overall philosophy by stating their preference for love's warfare in contrast to real warfare. It is these two final points which represent the figure in its most advanced form and so clearly distinguish the elegists from preceding poets.

With regard to the actual details of the figure we see in the elegists a process of extensive elaboration and innovation. Tibullus' contributions in this field are few but significant. In former poets the love-deities frequently appear as enemy or conqueror and in the Hellenistic period Love was elevated by the attribution of epic epithets usually applied to the finest warriors or the god of war himself. However, they had as yet no particular rank. Tibullus was the first to fill this gap by making Amor a full general and assigning to him his own standards at 2. 6. 5 f:

\[\text{ure, puer, quaeo tua qui ferus otia liquit atque iterum errorum sub tua signa voca}^{(23)}.\]

So Propertius is told that he must serve under Venus at 4. 1. 137 and Ovid himself acts as standard-bearer to general Amor at Rem. 4:

\[\text{tradita qui toties te duce signa tuli.}\]

This assignation of standards to Amor is the first example of a number of elegiac innovations in which specifically Roman features are applied to the figure and provides an excellent illustration of their careful and imaginative handling of it. Tibullus was also the first to introduce the camp at 2. 3. 33 f:

\[\text{at tu, quisquis is es, cui tristi fronte Cupido imperat ut nostra sint tua castra domo.}\]

(23) The first appearance of the term general in elegy comes at Tib. 1. 1. 75 and seems to have been partially inspired by Plaut. As. 656. There are a few more examples of its application to the lover: Prop. 2. 22. 34, Ov. Am. 2. 12. 8, 13. Further passages in which Amor is a general with standards are: Tib. 2. 3. 33 f, Ov. A.A. 2. 234, Am. 2. 9 a. 3 f, 2. 12. 27 f, 3. 15. 15 f, Hor. Carm. 4. 1. 15 f. Compare also Tib. 2. 1. 75 ff where Amor is a guide.
The actual commander of the camp varies: in Tibullus it is the rival, but elsewhere we find the girl and the lover in control (24). Ovid, keeping up the idea of Amor as a general, frequently assigns the camp to him as, for instance, at Amores 1. 9. 1:

\[ \text{militat omnis amans et habet sua castra Cupido} \]  

By the addition of these details Tibullus and the other elegists after him clarified in particular the position of Amor and, more important, their own relation to him.

Propertius' contribution is one of elaboration rather than innovation. Following Posidippus (A.P. 12. 120) he arms the combatants, but in elegy it is not only the lover who is armed against Love: all the protagonists, including Amor and Venus, are equipped with weapons for use against each other (26). Ovid makes much play of this in the Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris and at times even leaves participants unarmed and defenceless (27). Occasionally this armed warfare ends in peace. Following the lead of Terence, Propertius makes peace between the lovers (28), but also introduces peace with Amor, dangerous though this is, at 2. 2. 2:

\[ \text{at me composita pace fefellit Amor.} \]

So too Ovid sues for peace with Amor at Amores 1. 2. 21. However, more often than not the outcome is violent. The idea of spoil is resumed by Propertius and, although none of the actual examples of spoil are new (29),

(24) For the girl's camp see Prop. 2. 7. 15 ff, Ov. Am. 1. 9. 43 f. For the lover's camp see Prop. 4. 8. 28, Ov. Her. 19. 157, Am. 2. 18. 39 f.
(25) See also Her. 7. 31 f, A.A. 2. 236, 3. 559, Am. 1. 2. 32, 2. 9 a. 4. An interesting product of this is the idea of desertion: Tib. 2. 6. 5 f, Ov. Her. 19. 157, Fast. 4. 7.
(26) For the lover's arms see Prop. 3. 8. 33 f, 4. 8. 88, Ov. A.A. 2. 741 ff, 3. 46, Rem. 50, 674 ff.
For the girl's arms see Ov. A.A. 3. 1 ff, 589 f, 672, Rem. 50, Am. 2. 5. 48.
For the love-deities' arms see Prop. 4. 1. 137, Ov. A.A. 2. 397, Rem. 245 f, Am. 1. 22. 2. 9 b. 10, Met. 9. 543.
Horace defines his arms at Carm. 3. 26. 3 ff.
(27) See A.A. 3. 46, Am. 1. 2. 22, 38, 2. 9 b. 11, 2. 10. 3, 3. 7. 71. The idea probably came from Caecilius 66-7 (RIB.).
(28) See also Prop. 3. 6. 41, 4. 5. 32, 4. 8. 88, Ov. A.A. 2. 175, 413, 459 ff.
(29) Lover as spoil: Prop. 1. 20. 11, 2. 1. 55, 2. 16. 1 f, Ov. A.A. 2. 406, 3. 84, 560, 811 f, Am. 1. 2. 19, 29. 1. 3. 1. 2. 17. 5 f.
Clothes: Ov. Her. 9. 113 f.
The same idea is also found at Virg. Aen. 4. 93 ff.
there are a few refinements made by the elegists. Ovid invents an imaginary
inscription for the spoil at _A.A._ 2. 743 f:

*sed quicumque meo superauit Amazona ferro
inscribat spoliis Naso magister erat*_ (30).

Propertius equates a ‘victory’ over Cynthia with a triumph at 2. 14. 23 ff
and, naturally enough, spoil is present:

*haec mihi deutictis potior victoria Parthis
haec spolia, haec reges, haec mihi currus erunt.*

So in _Amores_ 1. 2. 19 ff (quoted below) Ovid himself is present as spoil in
Cupid’s triumphal procession. The idea of the triumph originated in Properti-
sus and is another example of the Romanization of _militia amoris_ by the
elegists. It became very popular in elegy and was given lengthy treatment.
Both Amor and the lover celebrate triumphs (31), and many details are taken
from real triumphs to make the picture as genuine as possible. At Propertius
2. 14. 23 f (quoted above) there is the procession with spoil, chariot and
captive kings, while Ovid introduces the Capitol at _A.A._ 2. 539 f and _Rem._
449 f. Ovid gives an even fuller description at _Amores_ 1. 7. 35 ff where he
imagines himself celebrating a triumph for a fight with Corinna:

*i nunc magníficos, uictor, molire triumphos,
cinge comam lauro, uotaque redde loui,
quaeque tuos currus comitantum turba sequetur
clamet ‘io forti uicta pu el la и iro est’,
ante eat effuso tristis captiua capillo,
si sinerent laesae, candida tota, genae.*

The facts have been made to fit the fiction cleverly and the detail under-
lines Ovid’s apparent remorse and anger with himself. The most com-
plete treatment of the motif is to be found at _Amores_ 1. 2. 19 ff where Ovid
describes fully Amor’s triumph. The passage not only contains nearly all
the details of the Roman triumph, with the occasional suitable modification,
but also is remarkable for the way in which Ovid introduces some elegant
allegory, which I will deal with below. The piece deserves to be quoted in
full:

(30) See also _A.A._ 3. 811 f and compare note 11.
(31) For Amor’s triumph see _Prop._ 2. 8. 39 f, 2. 9 a. 38 ff, _Ov. Am._ 1. 2. 19 ff, 2. 9 a.
15 f. 2. 18. 18.

For the lover’s triumph see _Prop._ 2. 14. 23 ff, 4. 1. 139 f, _Ov. A.A._ 2. 539 f, _Rem._ 449 f,
_Am._ 1. 7. 35 ff, 2. 12. 1 ff, _Met._ 14. 719 f.
necte comam myro, maternas iunge columbas;
qui deceat, currum uitricus ipse dabit,
inque dato curru, populo clamante triumphum,
stabis et adiunctas arte mouebis aues.
ducentur capti iuuenes captaeque puellae,
haec tibi magnificus pompa triumphus erit.
ipse ego, praeda recens, factum modo vultus habebo
et noua captiua vinctula mente feram.
Mens bona ducetur manibus post terga retortis,
et Pudor et castris quidquid Amoris obest.
omnia te metuent; ad te sua bracchia tendens,
ualgis 'io' magna uoce 'triumphe! 'canet.
Blanditiae comites tibi erunt Errorque Furorque,
adsidue partes turba secuta suas.
his tu militibus superas hominesque deosque;
haec tibi si demas commoda, nudus eris.
laeta triumphanti de summo mater Olympo
plaudet et adpositas spargit in ora rosas.
tu pinnas gemma, gemma variante capillos
ibis in auratis aureus ipse rotis.

Ovid took up and developed many existing details of militia amoris, as we have seen, and added several new ones of his own. The trophy was a refinement of his, as at Rem. 157 f where he advises the lover to be active, if he wishes to escape from love:

uince Cupidineas pariter Parthasque sagittas
et refer ad patrios bina tropaea deos (32).

He also introduced the notion of betrayal: so at A.A. 3. 577 f, speaking of his precepts for women:

omnia tradantur (portas reserauimus hosti)
et sit in infida prodionis fides (33).

He is the first elegist to apply military vocabulary to explicit sexual practices. In Amores 3. 7. 68 he refers to the act itself as warfare:

nunc opus exposcunt militiamque suam.

He also has a few remarks to make on the condition of the lover afterwards: so of his rival's honourable discharge at Amores 3. 11. 14:

(32) Compare Her. 4. 66, 9. 103 f.
(33) Compare Am. 1. 5. 14 ff, A.A. 3. 667 f, Rem. 11.
and again of his personal vigour at *Amores* 2. 10. 27 f:

\[\text{saepe ego lasciue consumpsi tempora noctis,}
\text{utilis et forti corpore mane fui (34).}\]

His final innovation was the distinction between the veteran and the tiro in love’s warfare (35). Ovid himself is, not surprisingly, a veteran (Rem. 4) and even expresses the desire to retire from the service at *Amores* 2. 9 a. 23 f:

\[\text{me quoque, qui totiens merui sub amore, puella}
\text{defunctum placide uiuere temporis erat.}\]

However, with his experience, he is perfectly qualified to instruct the raw recruit (*A.A.* 1. 36),

\[\text{qui noua nunc primum miles in arma uenis}\]

and at *A.A.* 3. 559 ff carefully contrasts the veteran with the tiro:

\[\text{hic rudis et castris nunc primum notus Amoris}
\text{qui tetigit thalamos praeda nouella tuos ...}
\text{cingenda est altis saepibus ista seges ...}
\text{ille uetus miles sensim et sapienter amabit}
\text{mutuaque tironi non patienda feret.}\]

In fact at many points throughout the *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia* Ovid adopts the pose of the old soldier instructing the raw recruit in the correct strategy to employ, as I will discuss further below.

Apart from the abundance of new details with which the elegists invested the figure there are further indications that in their hands it reached the peak of its development. They treat it at much greater length than any of their predecessors and combine various ideas and images in a coherent and continuous whole (36). They so popularized love’s warfare that they could introduce mythological allusion without fear of confusion. So Propertius,

(34) Compare *A.A.* 3. 785 f where he refers to the position to be adopted by a woman marked by childbirth. *Militia amoris* had already been applied to sex, e.g. at *Ter. Adelph.* 843, *Lucilius* 1323 (Marx) and *A.P.* 12. 33. 1 f, but Ovid’s treatment is very different from that of his predecessors.

(35) The idea of the veteran is first found at *Hor. Carm.* 3. 26. 1 ff, where he announces his intention to retire, but the tiro and the contrast between the two are Ovidian innovations.

speaking of his own prowess in this particular type of warfare, says at 2. 22. 34:

hic ego Pelides, hic ferus Hector ego.

Mythology also provided Ovid with an opportunity of introducing some novelty into his handling of the battle of the sexes, as at A.A. 3. 1 f:

arma dedi Danais in Amazonas; arma supersunt quae tibi dem et turmae, Penthesilea, tuae (37).

and on several occasions he uses it to provide exempla for his own conclusions on militia amoris (38). A further illustration of how well-established love's warfare was at this period is to be seen in the confidence and regularity with which Propertius and Ovid indulge in word-play on military expressions. So at 1. 3. 15 f Propertius combines the phrases oscula sumere and arma sumere to produce an elegant zeugma:

subiecto leuiter positam temptare lacerto osculaque admota sumere et arma manu.

Not unexpectedly Ovid took particular delight in such verbal dexterity: so at Heroides 9. 113 f Deianira, complaining of Omphale wearing Hercules' lion-skin, says:

falleris et nescis—non sunt spolia illa leonis sed tua, tuque feri uictor es, illa tui.

Similarly at Amores 1. 9. 25 f, when comparing the lover to the soldier, Ovid remarks that soldiers find it advantageous to attack the enemy when asleep, and the same applies to lovers:

saepe maritorum somnis utuntur amantes, et sua sopitis hostibus arma mouent (39).

At times certain words and phrases from militia amoris are used as virtual synonyms for amor. Most frequently they are in contrast to some actual military situation described in the preceding lines. For example, at 3. 8. 32 Propertius says of Paris:

ille Helenae in gremio maxima bella gerit

(37) See also Ov. A.A. 2. 741 ff, 3. 672, Rem. 674 ff and compare Prop. 2. 1. 13 f.
(38) Compare, for example, Am. 1. 9. 33 f, 2. 12. 17 ff.
(39) Compare, for example, A.A. 2. 406, Am. 2. 12. 13 f, 2. 18. 39 f.
but his meaning is made clear by the previous line:

\[ \textit{dum uincunt Danai, dum restât barbarus Hector.} \]

In the same way Ovid describes his love-poetry at \textit{Amores} 2. 18. 12 as:

\[ \textit{resque domi gestas et mea bella cano} \]

but is here making a contrast between love’s warfare and real warfare, which he had intended to write about. However, on two occasions Ovid uses the word \textit{militia} in isolation and with virtually no illustrative remarks. At \textit{Amores} 1. 11. 11 f he says to Nape:

\[ \textit{credibile est et te sensisse Cupidinis arcus:}
\textit{in me militiae signa tuere tuae.} \]

Here line 11 does little to explain this use of \textit{militia}, since the concept of Amor as an archer, although used in various examples of the figure, does not by itself imply the presence of \textit{militia amoris}. A similar example is to be found at \textit{Amores} 3. 7. 68 (quoted above): again there is nothing to explain the exact meaning of \textit{militia}, but the reference there is to love in the physical sense.

Just as it is mainly in Ovid that we find the use of word-play and synonym, so in other respects also we must look to his works to find the figure at the ultimate stage of its development. The application of allegory to \textit{militia amoris} is found as early as Posidippus (\textit{A.P.} 12. 120), but Ovid employs it in a far more meaningful way in \textit{Amores} 1. 2. The poem consists of the conclusions reached by Ovid with regard to the phenomenon of love and contains a studied analysis. In the opening lines he notes the physical manifestations of love and in the triumph of Amor (quoted above) turns to psychological considerations. By means of the triumph-metaphor he represents love as the defeat of good-sense and modesty by flattery, illusion and madness. His conclusion is that love is a form of insanity, an observation which was by no means new (\textit{40}), but by the skilful combination of \textit{militia amoris} with allegory he not only gives his treatment of the idea a great degree of novelty and originality but also ensures that love’s warfare is raised well above the level of a mere conceit.

As I have already stated, it seems probable that the inspiration for \textit{militia amoris} lay simply in the similarity between many amatory and military situations, but it is not until \textit{Amores} 1. 9 that the comparison is worked out

(\textit{40}) See, for example, \textit{Anacreon} 46 B, \textit{Theognis} 1231 f.
at length. As often in Ovid, his originality rests on his detailed treatment. The same qualities are required in the soldier and the lover: both must be young and tough in the physical and mental sense. They find themselves in similar positions: both undergo much travel, spy on the 'enemy' and find 'night-attacks' useful, while the 'exclusus amator' is like the soldier on guard-duty and his attack on his mistress' house resembles that on an enemy town. Both war and love are uncertain and both require a man of action. Apart from being the final word on points common to love and war, the poem is also remarkable for its shifting viewpoint (41). The identities of the enemy and the commanding general constantly vary: in lines 1-2 Amor is the general but in lines 5-8 and 43-44 the mistress has assumed this rôle, while the rival (17 f), the mistress (19 f) and the husband (25 f) each become the enemy in turn. A similar process is evident in Amores 2. 9 a, where Amor is both Ovid's commander and his enemy. Lines 3-4 express the situation succinctly.

**quid me, qui miles numquam tua signa reliqui,**

**laedis, et in castris uulneror ipse meis?**

Throughout the Ars Amatoria and Remedia different people appear in different rôles. This shifting viewpoint in less expert hands could have caused considerable confusion and obscurity, but its complete success in these poems is not only a tribute to Ovid's skill but also an illustration of the advanced stage which militia amoris reached under the elegists in general and Ovid in particular.

In the final section of this article I will consider the special uses which the elegists made of the figure. Quite often it is nothing more than a conceit and merely another means of expressing the various phases in the elegiac love-affair, but by a happy extension Propertius and Ovid employ it to express the very raison d'être of their poetry. So Propertius, discussing how his mistress is his inspiration, says at 2. 1. 13 f:

**seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu,**

**tum uero longas condimus Iliadas (42).**

It also provides the elegist with an opportunity of injecting some novelty into the stories of mythology. So, for instance, Phaedra, recalling the 'victories' of Theseus and his son over her sister and herself, says at Heroides 4. 65 f:

(41) Perhaps the earliest example of this is Tib. 2. 1. 71 ff where Amor from an enemy becomes a guide. Tibullus, however, does not play on the point to the same extent as Ovid.

(42) Compare also Prop. 2. 1. 45 f, 4. 1. 135 ff, Ov. Am. 2. 18. 11 f, 17 f.
Thesides Theseusque duas rapuere sorores —
ponite de nostra bina tropaea domo

and Dido, longing for Aeneas, says at Heroides 7. 31 f:

parce, Venus, nurui, durumque ampectere fratre,
frater Amor, castris militet ille tuis (43).

Frequently it is used as a convenient means of exhibiting the poet’s wit
and cleverness, as in the case of word-play discussed above. So Ovid par-
icularly favoured it in his description of the battle of the sexes in the Ars
Amatoria and Remedia. If love is a battle, then Ovid, by giving instructions,
is providing arms for the combatants:

...diversis partibus arma damus (Rem. 50)

and arming girls is a betrayal of his own sex and himself:

quo feror insanus? quid aperto pectore in hostem
mittor et indicio prodo ab ipse meo? (A.A. 3. 667 f).

In the same way the attempt to escape from love is a fight:

nunc opus est armis; hic, o fortissime, pugna
uincenda est telo Penthesilea tuo. (Rem. 675 f).

So throughout the Ars Amatoria Ovid employs the figure to build up a
fairly coherent picture of love as a military operation requiring careful
strategy, and he himself poses as the old soldier with the appropriate
experience and knowledge (44).

Of greater interest and importance is the way in which Tibullus and
Propertius incorporate love’s warfare within their overall philosophy con-
cerning real warfare. Both poets object to war on moral grounds and both
hold up love as the alternative of their choice, using militia amoris to ex-
press this antithesis as a contrast between two types of warfare. Tibullus, for
instance, in 1. 1 declares his hatred of war and his personal preference for
the life of the rustic and the lover. To reinforce this sentiment he contrasts
love’s warfare with the real thing at 73 ff:

nunc leuis est tractanda Venus, dum frangere postes
non pudet et rixas consuruisse iuuet.
hic ego dux milesque bonus: uos, signa tubaeque,
iste procul ...

(43) See also Prop. 2. 2. 9 f, 3. 8. 31 f, Ov. Her. 8. 66, 9. 2, 25 f, 103 f, 12. 111, 16.
150, 154, 17. 255 f, 19. 157 etc.
(44) See also Prop. 2. 1. 13 f, 3. 8. 31 f, Ov. Am. 1. 5. 14 ff etc.
In 2. 7 Propertius expresses his delight that a law which would have forced him to marry has been withdrawn and declares at 13 f that he will never father soldiers for Rome. However (15 f), if he were in service to his mistress things would be very different:

*quod si uera meae comitarem castra puellae,*  
*non mihi sat magnus Castoris iret equus.*

So again in 3. 5 he contrasts his character with that of the greedy soldier and says at 1 f:

*pacis Amor deus est, pacem ueneramur amantes:*  
sat mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.*

These and many similar examples in elegy (45) have a twofold significance. By not confining *militia amoris* to love but extending its scope and using it to reinforce their views on real war, Tibullus and Propertius invested it with a degree of seriousness and gravity which it had not so far possessed. In addition, this inversion whereby a figure, which is a comparison of love to war, is actually contrasted with war represents a highly advanced and adventurous usage.

The final feature of love’s warfare, as found in the elegists, is the way in which it is used to show the humility of the lover and to impress upon him that this is the proper attitude to adopt. In earlier examples of *militia amoris* from its very inception it is noticeable that Love and the beloved are nearly always victorious and that the lover seldom wins a victory, but the elegists seem far more aware of the degradation involved in such continual defeats. They frequently employ the figure to depict the lover as an unmanly type, fit only for a frivolous occupation and by no means successful in that. Certainly the lover does occasionally win a petty victory: so Ovid extravagantly praises his own military prowess and demands a triumph at *Amores* 2. 12. 1 ff:

*ite triumphales circum mea tempora laurus!*  
*vicimus: in nostro est ecce Corinna sinu.*

Usually, however, the girl has allowed the lover to win his victory or he himself realizes just how worthless it is (46). By far the most common situation is where Amor or the girl defeat the lover or manifest their

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(45) Compare, for example, *Tib.* 1. 10. 53 ff, *Prop.* 1. 6. 29 f, *Ov.* *Her.* 17. 255 f and see below on the lover’s preference for love’s warfare.

(46) Compare *Tib.* 1. 10. 53 ff, *Ov.* *Am.* 1. 5. 14 ff, 1. 7. 35 ff, *A.A.* 1. 665 f, 675 f, 679 f, 699 f etc.
superiority in some other way (47). The lover himself is fully aware of his own lowly position, but, so far from being ashamed of it, actually rejoices in it and states his preference for it (48). Propertius realizes that he is not a brave man and accepts it at 1. 6. 29 f:

\[
\text{non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis:}
\text{hanc me militiam fata subire volunt.}
\]

Similarly Ovid knows his rank and takes a pride in it at Amores 1. 9. 43 f:

\[
\text{impulit ignavum formosae cura puellae}
\text{iuussit et in castris aera merere suis.}
\]

By the time of the Ars Amatoria this usage of the figure had become established enough for Ovid to make it a main feature of the work. The strategy constantly enjoined upon the tiro is one of humility: if he wants to win the war he must be prepared for self-abasement. Ovid describes a costly fight with his mistress and concludes:

\[
\text{proelia cum Parthis, cum culta pax sit amica (AA. 2. 175).}
\]

He goes to great pains to advise obsequium in dealings with one's mistress and assures the lover that this is the way to victory:

\[
\text{cede repugnanti: cedendo uictor abibis (AA. 2. 197).}
\]

So, if there is a rival, the lover must put up with him:

\[
\text{riualem patienter habe: uictoria tecum}
\text{stabit, eris magni uictor in arce louis (AA. 2. 539 f).}
\]

Similarly, when Ovid points out the contrast between the veteran and the recruit, it is noticeable that the old campaigner is a patient and humble lover:

\[
\text{ille uetus miles sensim et sapienter amabit,}
\text{multaque tironi non patienda feret (AA. 3. 565 f).}
\]

who will endure much:

\[
\text{hic fera composita uulnera mente feret (AA. 3. 572).}
\]

(47) For Amor see Prop. 2. 8. 39 f, 2. 9 a. 38 ff, 2. 12. 11 ff, Ov. Am. 1. 2. 19 ff, 37 f, 2. 9 a. 1 ff, 23, 2. 9 b. 11, 2. 18. 18.

For the girl see Tib. 1. 8. 49, Prop. 2. 1. 55, 4. 1. 137 ff, Ov. Am. 1. 3. 1, 2. 17. 5 f, 2. 18. 11 ff.

(48) For the lover's awareness of his rank and pride in it see Tib. 1. 1. 75, Prop. 2. 1. 45, 2. 7. 15 ff, 2. 14. 23 ff, 2. 22. 34, 3. 5. 1 f, Ov. Her. 17. 255 f and compare the discussion above on love's warfare contrasted to real warfare.
So it is clear that in love's warfare the lover must necessarily accept a situation in which he is almost inevitably humbled. More important, the lover fully realizes this and takes a perverse pleasure in it. In this way militia amoris was frequently used, like seruitium amoris (49), to show the lover the correct relationship with his mistress. Although love’s warfare does not make the point quite as forcibly as love’s slavery, in elegy it almost always represents the lover in a position not dissimilar to that of love’s slave or recommends that he adopt such a position, while at A.A. 2. 233-42 it is actually combined with servitium amoris, in the form of the myth of Apollo’s enslavement, to advocate humility:

\[\textit{militiae species amor est; discedite, segnes:}\]
\[\textit{non sunt haec timidis signa tuenda uiris.}\]
\[\textit{nox et hiems longaeque uiae saeuique dolores}\]
\[\textit{mollibus his castris et labor omnis inest.}\]
\[\textit{saep\'e feres imbrem caelesti nube solutum,}\]
\[\textit{frigidus et nuda saepe iacebis humo.}\]
\[\textit{Cynthius Admeti uaccas pauisse Pheraei}\]
\[\textit{fertur, et in parua delituisse casa.}\]
\[\textit{quod Phoebum decuit, quem non decet? exue fastus,}\]
\[\textit{curam mansuri quisquis amoris habes.}\]

This particular usage with its emphasis on humility epitomizes the way in which the elegists took over and adapted the figure to their own special purposes and illustrates the numerous elaborations and extensions which they made in the process.

In conclusion, this study of militia amoris in Greek and Latin poetry has shown that it probably took its origins simply from the extensive similarities between love and war. In early and classical Greek literature it was sporadic in frequency and rudimentary in form, but during the Hellenistic and Roman Republican periods it increased in popularity and many refinements were added. It reached the peak of its development in the hands of the Roman elegists, who raised it above the level of a mere conceit and gave it a position of real importance in their poetry by using it in the expression of their attitude to war and of their views on the nature of love and the natural rôle of the lover.

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(49) For seruitium amoris and the humility of the lover see Copley in \textit{TAPhA.}, 78, 1947, 291 ff.