UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CLASSICS PROJECT

CSCP Support Materials

for
Eduqas GCSE Latin, Component 3A

Latin Literature (Narratives) Ovid, *The Flood*

For examination in 2020 and 2021

Introduction

Introduction

The Flood (extracts from Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.244-421)

Please note that these Teachers' Notes draw upon, and are indebted to, the commentaries of Anderson, Hill and Lee (see "Further Reading" below), and focus on the parts of the set text that are to be read in Latin.

Ovid

Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), 43 BC – AD 17/18

Ovid was born in Sulmo, around 75 miles to the east of Rome. He was educated in Rome (and elsewhere), but after holding some minor roles decided not to pursue a political career, preferring to become a poet. He was one of the greatest poets in Augustan Rome. He composed the *Amores* (a collection of love poems), the *Heroides* (imaginary letters exchanged by mythological figures), the *De Medicamine Faciei* (a poem offering advice on cosmetics), the *Ars Amatoria* (a poem offering advice on how to carry on a love affair), the *Remedia Amoris* (offering advice on how to extract oneself from love), the *Fasti* (a poem based around the festivals of the Roman calendar), and the *Metamorphoses* (see below).

He was exiled in AD 8 to Tomis on the shores of the Black Sea (modern day Constanţa in Romania) due to, in Ovid's own words, "a poem and a mistake" (*carmen et error*). The poem was his *Ars Amatoria*, but what the mistake was remains the subject of speculation. While in exile Ovid continued to write poetry: the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* (two collections of poems chiefly describing his exile and seeking a return from it) and the *Ibis* (a curse poem). Ovid's pleas to be allowed to return to Italy were in vain, and he died still at Tomis.

The *Metamorphoses*

The *Metamorphoses* is an epic poem, divided into fifteen books, written by Ovid in hexameters in the years immediately prior to his exile from Rome. It contains a large number of stories linked by the theme of metamorphosis, or "transformation". The first book begins with the creation of the world and the epic continues with many well-known myths.

The Flood

The story of "The Flood" comes from the first book of the *Metamorphoses*. Before getting to "The Flood" in Book 1, Ovid has described the creation of the world and of humans (lines 1-88), the succeeding ages of gold, silver, bronze and iron (lines 89-150), the battle between the gods and the giants (lines 151-162), and a council of the gods at which Jupiter decides to destroy the human race, in part as a result of the behaviour of Lycaon (lines 163-243).

The set text begins with the reactions of the gods to Jupiter's intentions (Section **A** = lines 244-252) and continues with Jupiter's decision to use a flood rather than thunderbolts for the destruction (Section **B** = lines 253-261); the flood itself begins with thunderstorms caused by Jupiter (Section **C** = lines 262-273), with Neptune helping by causing rivers to burst their banks (Section **D** = lines 274-290). Ovid then describes the effects of the flood on humans and animals (Section **E** = lines 291-312) and how a husband and wife, Deucalion and Pyrrha, who respect the gods, reach land in their boat (Section **F** = lines 313-323); seeing that they are the only survivors, Jupiter brings an end to the flood (Section **G** = lines 324-329 and lines 343-347). The story concludes with Ovid's description of Deucalion speaking to Pyrrha (Section **H** = lines 348-366), the couple seeking the guidance of the goddess Themis (Section **I**, lines 367-380), Themis' riddling reply and the couple's interpretation of it (Section **J** = lines 381-394), which leads to the creation of a new human race (Section **K** = lines 395-415).

There are many stories, from different cultures, of a flood that eliminates the human race apart from a very few survivors (e.g. the story of Noah in *Genesis* Chapters 6-9). For a good discussion of this, see Lee's notes on line 318 (See "Further Reading" below).

The text

The set text is prefaced by an introductory passage in italics, the first part of which gives an overview of the *Metamorphoses*, the second part of which provides a summary of the situation as the set text itself begins. The set text itself is presented as a series of sections, some of which are given in unadapted Latin, others of which are given in English translation. How the sections relate to Ovid's original text is shown in the table below:

Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1	Eduqas GCSE Set Text sections
Lines 244-252	A (English translation)
Lines 253-261	B (English translation)
Lines 262-273	C (Latin text)
Lines 274-290	D (Latin text)
Lines 291-312	E (Latin text)
Lines 313-323	F (Latin text)
Lines 324-329 and Lines 343-347	G (Latin text)
Lines 348-366	H (Latin text)
Lines 367-380	I (English translation)
Lines 381-394	J (English translation)
Lines 395-415	K (English translation)

NB lines 330-342 of *Metamorphoses* 1 are omitted from the set text.

It may be useful to know that the story "versus Ovidiani" in *Cambridge Latin Course* Book 5 (Stage 39, page 74) is made up of parts of the set text: Lines 1-4 of the story are Section C lines 1, 3, 5 and 8; Lines 5-9 are Section D lines 1-2 and 10-12; and Lines 10-20 are Section E lines 1-6, 14, 17-18 and 9-10 (in that order).

Suggestions for reading and teaching

When reading a set text, it will be important for students:

- to understand the story as a whole;
- to understand what each Latin word, phrase and sentence means;
- to appreciate the literary qualities of the text.

Understanding the story as a whole is made easier by reading a text at a brisk pace, whereas understanding what each Latin word, phrase and sentence means necessarily requires a much slower pace of reading. Teachers will need to balance these two needs in determining how to approach the text with their students. Some teachers may find it helpful to discuss literary qualities of the text simultaneously with translating it, while others may prefer to return to literary analysis after translation has been completed.

Although a sample translation is provided in the course resources, it is important for students to understand that many different "correct translations" can exist, and it may be valuable for students to create their own translation as part of the process of evaluating the text for themselves (for example, by choosing between a range of possible English meanings for each Latin word).

To help students understand the text, teachers may like to:

- read the Latin aloud to emphasise phrasing and to stress word groups;
- encourage students to make use of the provided vocabulary;
- break up the more complicated sentences into shorter parts;
- display the text on an interactive whiteboard, on which words can be highlighted or annotated (e.g.

to show which adjectives agree with which nouns).

The text as poetry

Remember that Ovid wrote his *Metamorphoses*, including the account of the Flood, as a poem, and therefore had to follow the rules of the verse form he had chosen. Ovid wrote the *Metamorphoses* in hexameters, a form of poetry in which each line is made up of six metrical units, or "feet". Each "foot" was only allowed to contain a certain number of syllables and had to contain "long" and "short" syllables in fixed patterns. The three types of feet permitted in hexameter poetry were:

- dactyl (one long syllable followed by two short syllables)
- spondee (two long syllables)
- trochee (one long syllable followed by one short syllable)

A hexameter line was normally made up as follows:

First foot	Second foot	Third foot
Dactyl or Spondee	Dactyl or Spondee	Dactyl or Spondee
Fourth foot	Fifth foot	Sixth Foot
Dactyl or Spondee	Dactyl	Spondee or Trochee

The process by which we work out the metrical rhythm of a line of poetry is known as "scansion". Scanning poetry is not required for GCSE, but doing so may reveal interesting literary features of the text which could be commented upon, as a skilful poet like Ovid could use the metrical rhythm of the line to

enhance the meaning of the words he was writing. A line containing a large number of dactyls – a "dactylic line" – would sound light and fast, whereas a line containing a large number of spondees – a "spondaic line" – would sound heavy and slow. For example, Line 10 in Section C has dactyls in each of the first five feet, which gives an impression of the speed at which Iris is working to bring water to cause the flood; Ovid's use of thirteen dactyls out of a possible fifteen Lines 12-14 of Section D also suggests speed, this time of the rivers in flood.

If a teacher or students wish to scan lines of the set text, they will need to be familiar with the rules for working out whether vowels are "long" or "short": many guides to this are available, but one source of information would be sections 471-477 of Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer*.

It is also essential to be clear about the difference between *sentences* and *lines* in Latin poetry; the former is a unit of sense whereas the latter is a unit of metre (and consequently one cannot talk about lines in prose texts). The placement of a word first or last in a line tends to emphasise it, no matter where it appears in its sentence. In verse, sentences could be contained within a line or spill over into many lines.

Further reading

Commentaries

W.S. Anderson (ed.) *Ovid's* Metamorphoses *Books 1-5* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1997)

D.E. Hill (ed.) *Ovid* Metamorphoses *I-IV* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips 1985)

P. Jones *Reading Ovid: Stories from the* Metamorphoses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007)

A.G. Lee (ed.) *Ovid* Metamorphoses *I* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press 1984) [formerly A.G. Lee (ed.) *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoseon Liber I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1953)]

Translations

(D.E. Hill, above)

M.M. Innes *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* (London: Penguin 1955)

A.D. Melville *Ovid Metamorphoses* with an Introduction and Notes by E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1986) [*Oxford World's Classics*]

D. Raeburn *Ovid Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation* with an Introduction by Denis Feeney (London: Penguin 2004)