



CSCP Support Materials

for

Eduqas GCSE Latin, Component 3A

Latin Literature (Narratives) Ovid, *The Flood*

For examination in 2020 and 2021

Teacher's Notes: Section D



Section D

Neptune worsens the flooding (*Metamorphoses* 1.274-290)

Neptune helps to flood the earth by giving orders to the rivers and causing the flooding to worsen; the waters overwhelm the land.

Notes

1 ***nec caelo contenta***: the harsh sounds of these words (note the repetition of the letter C) may suggest the anger that is mentioned later in the sentence, or seek to evoke a thunderstorm.

caelo...suo: the word *suo* reminds us that Jupiter had particular control over the sky.

est: Ovid continues to make use of the historic present tense. Other examples in Section D are *iuvat* (line 2), *convocat* (line 3), *ait* (line 5), *redeunt* and *relaxant* (line 8), *volvuntur* (line 9), *ruunt* (line 12), *rapiunt* (line 14), and *tegit* and *latent* (line 17).

ira: this word is the subject, perhaps indicating just how angry Jupiter is – it is as if (grammatically) he has been taken over by anger.

illum: referring to Jupiter.

2 ***caeruleus frater***: this description introduces Neptune. The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition, p. 1230, s.v. Poseidon) quotes Pausanias (7.21.7): “All men call Poseidon god of the sea, of earthquakes, and of horses”. In this section Ovid refers to the different areas under the control of Neptune (the Roman equivalent of Poseidon) – the sea (*auxiliaribus undis* here), the earthquakes (lines 10-11) and the imagery of horses (see note below on lines 7-9).

auxiliaribus: the word may call to mind military auxiliaries, giving a warlike sense to what the gods are doing to the human race.

3 ***hic***: referring to Neptune.

qui: a “connecting relative”, referring to the rivers: a brief change of subject from *hic* (which remains the subject of *ait* in line 5).

tyranni: although *tyrannus* could carry the negative connotations of the English word “tyrant”, it could simply mean “ruler” too.

4 ***intravere***: this is a contracted form of *intraverunt* which is common in poetry, possibly to help with the metre.

5-7 ***effundite...aperite...immittite***: Neptune gives three direct orders to the rivers using imperatives.

- 7-9** **habenas...defrenato**: notice the equestrian imagery here: *habenas* are “reins” and the participle *defrenato* literally means “unbridled”. It is possible to interpret other words as being “equestrian” too, e.g. *ora relaxant*.
- 8-14** There are again several changes of subject in these lines. Neptune is the subject of *iusserat* and *percussit* (he is referred to as *ipse* in Line 10); the rivers (referred to as *hi*) are the subject of *redeunt*, *relaxant* and *volvuntur*, and then of *ruunt* and *rapiunt*; the earth (referred to as *illa* in line 10) is the subject of *intremuit* and *patefecit*.
- 9** **volvuntur**: another passive verb (like *funduntur* in Section C, Line 8) which here conveys an active meaning.
- aequora**: this word seems here to mean “the sea”, but as *aequor* could just mean any flat surface, it could possibly also imply a flat piece of ground. This arguable ambiguity works well here as the boundary between sea and land will soon be eradicated.
- 12** **apertos flumina campos**: Ovid’s word order here suggests the rivers rushing through the broad plains, as the word *flumina* (rivers) is physically between *apertos...campos* (broad plains)
- 13-14** **-que**: note that this conjunction is used five times across lines 13-14 – a good example of polysyndeton being used to give the effect of a list to emphasise how much has been destroyed by the flood.
- 13** **arbusta**: an *arbustum* is a place where trees are planted.
- pecudesque virosque**: Ovid will discuss the experience of animals and men during the flood at greater length in Section E.
- 14** **tecta**: from the verb *tego*, *tecta* literally means “coverings” or “roofs”, but came to be used for “roofed buildings” or “houses”.
- suis**: seems here to refer not (as usual) to the subject of the sentence (i.e. the rivers) but to the *penetralia*.
- penetralia**: the basic meaning is “inside space”, but the word also means a sanctuary (or temple), most particularly that of the Penates, the “Roman spirits connected with the inner part...of the house” (*Oxford Classical Dictionary* third edition, p. 1135, s.v. “Penates, di”). As the story of the flood took place before the foundation of Rome, mention of the Penates is technically anachronistic.
- sacris**: Although *sacrum* means “a holy or consecrated thing”, it seems here that the word refers to images of the Penates that were kept in the *penetralia*.
- 16-17** **culmen...turres**: the height of the flood waters is not just suggested by the adjective *altior* (line 16) but also by the fact that they have now submerged *culmen* (“highest part”) and *turres* (“towers”).

Questions

1. Look at lines 1-2 (*nec...undis*):
 - a. What Latin words describe Jupiter's helper here, and what do they mean?
 - b. What assistance is Jupiter given here?
2. Look at lines 3-8 (*convocat...iusserat*):
 - a. What happens in these lines?
 - b. How does Ovid make the instructions given to the rivers effective in lines 4-7 (*non...habenas*)?
3. Look at lines 8-17 (*hi...turres*): how does Ovid make clear the devastating nature of the floodwaters?