

Eduqas Latin GCSE

Prescribed text for Component 3A: Latin Literature (Narratives) Ovid, the Flood

N. B. The passages in italics are summaries of events to support understanding of the narrative. They are not part of the prescription.

This is the official examination text for the Eduqas Latin GCSE (2020-2021)

Ovid: The Flood

In his Metamorphoses, Ovid fitted together into a continuous poem of around 12,000 lines an enormous range of myths and folk-tales, beginning with the creation of the world and ending in Ovid's own day. Almost all the stories it contains (including this one) involve a change of shape (in Greek, a 'metamorphosis') of one sort or another - humans, for example, being transformed into animals, trees, and even mountains!

At the beginning of this story, Jupiter is in despair at the evil behaviour of mankind. He calls all the gods to a meeting, and announces that he has decided to destroy the entire human race.

A

Some approved Jupiter's words with their voices and spurred on his seething anger, others played their part with applause. Yet the loss of the human race was a grief to them all, and they asked what would be the shape of a world deprived of men, who was going to bring incense to their altars, and whether he was planning to hand over the lands to be ravaged by the wild beasts. When they asked about such things the king of the gods told them to have no fears (for he said everything else would be his concern), and he promised a race quite different from the previous population, from an amazing source.

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B

Now Jupiter was ready to scatter thunderbolts across the whole world, but he became afraid that by accident the sacred upper air might catch light from so many fiery weapons, and the wide vault of heaven might begin to burn. He also remembered that there was a prophecy in the laws of fate that there would come a time when the sea, the earth and the royal palace of heaven would catch fire and burn and the magnificent body of the world would suffer. So the weapons forged by the hands of the Cyclops were laid aside: instead he chose a different punishment, to destroy the mortal race beneath the waves and to send down rain-clouds from every part of the sky.

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C

protinus Aeoliis Aquilonem claudit in antris
et quaecumque fugant inductas flamina nubes, 5
emittitque Notum. madidis Notus evolat alis,
terribilem picea tectus caligine vultum;
barba gravis nimbis, canis fluit unda capillis,
fronte sedent nebulae, rorant pennaeeque sinusque.
utque manu late pendentia nubila pressit, 10
fit fragor; hinc densi funduntur ab aethere nimbi.
nuntia Iunonis varios induta colores
concipit Iris aquas alimentaue nubibus adfert;
sternuntur segetes et deplorata colonis
vota iacent, longique perit labor inritus anni.

D

nec caelo contenta suo est Iovis ira, sed illum
caeruleus frater iuvat auxiliaribus undis. 5
convocat hic amnes; qui postquam tecta tyranni
intravere sui, 'non est hortamine longo
nunc' ait 'utendum. vires effundite vestras
(sic opus est). aperite domos ac mole remota
fluminibus vestris totas immittite habenas.' 10
iusserat; hi redeunt ac fontibus ora relaxant
et defrenato volvuntur in aequora cursu.
ipse tridente suo terram percussit; at illa
intremuit motuque vias patefecit aquarum.
exspatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos 15
cumque satis arbusta simul pecudesque virosque
tectaue cumque suis rapiunt penetralia sacris.
si qua domus mansit potuitque resistere tanto
indeiecta malo, culmen tamen altior huius
unda tegit pressaeque latent sub gurgite turres.

E

iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant;
omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto.
occupat hic collem, cumba sedet alter adunca
et ducit remos illic ubi nuper arabat;
ille supra segetes aut mersae culmina villae
navigat, hic summa pisces deprensit in ulmo;
figitur in viridi, si fors tulit, ancora prato,
aut subiecta terunt curvae vineta carinae;
et, modo qua graciles gramen carpserunt capellae,
nunc ibi deformes ponunt sua corpora phocae.
mirantur sub aqua lucos urbesque domosque
Nereides, silvasque tenent delphines et altis
incursant ramis agitataque robora pulsant.
nat lupus inter oves, fulvos vehit unda leones,
unda vehit tigres; nec vires fulminis apro,
crura nec ablato prosunt velocia cervo;
quaesitisque diu terris ubi sistere possit,
in mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis.
obruerat tumulos immensa licentia ponti
pulsabantque novi montana cacumina fluctus.
maxima pars unda rapitur; quibus unda pepercit,
illos longa domant inopi ieiunia victu.

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F

separat Aonios Oetaeis Phocis ab arvis,
terra ferax dum terra fuit, sed tempore in illo
pars maris et latus subitarum campus aquarum.
mons ibi verticibus petit arduus astra duobus,
nomine Parnasus, superantque cacumina nubes.
his ubi Deucalion (nam cetera texerat aequor)
cum consorte tori parva rate vectus adhaesit,
Corycidas nymphas et numina montis adorant
fatidicamque Themis, quae tunc oracla tenebat.
non illo melior quisquam nec amantior aequi
vir fuit aut illa metuentior ulla deorum.

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G

Iuppiter, ut liquidis stagnare paludibus orbem
et superesse virum de tot modo milibus unum
et superesse videt de tot modo milibus unam,
innocuos ambo, cultores numinis ambo,
nubila disiecit, nimisque Aquilone remotis
et caelo terras ostendit et aethera terris.

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iam mare litus habet, plenos capit alveus amnes,
flumina subsidunt collesque exire videntur,
surgit humus, crescunt loca decrescentibus undis;
postque diem longam nudata cacumina silvae
ostendunt limumque tenent in fronde relictum.

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H

redditus orbis erat; quem postquam vidit inanem
et desolatas agere alta silentia terras,
Deucalion lacrimis ita Pyrrham adfatur obortis:
'o soror, o coniunx, o femina sola superstes,
quam commune mihi genus et patruelis origo,
deinde torus iunxit, nunc ipsa pericula iungunt,
errarum, quascumque vident occasus et ortus,
nos duo turba sumus; possedit cetera pontus.
haec quoque adhuc vitae non est fiducia nostrae
certa satis; terrent etiamnum nubila mentem.
quis tibi, si sine me fatis erepta fuisses,
nunc animus, miseranda, foret? quo sola timorem
ferre modo posses? quo consolante doleres?
namque ego – crede mihi si te quoque pontus haberet,
te sequerer, coniunx, et me quoque pontus haberet.
o utinam possim populos reparare paternis
artibus atque animas formatae infundere terrae!
nunc genus in nobis restat mortale duobus
(sic visum superis) hominumque exempla manemus.'

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I

So he spoke, and they wept. They decided to pray to the power of heaven and to seek help through sacred oracles. Without further delay they together approached the waters of the Cephisus, which, though not yet clear, at least now followed their usual channels. When they had sprinkled water taken from there on their clothes and heads, they turned their footsteps towards the shrine of the holy goddess, the roof of which was yellow with foul moss and whose altars stood without fires. As they touched the temple steps, each of them fell flat on the ground and, shaking with fear, gave kisses to the cold stone, and they spoke thus: 'If the heavenly powers are won over and softened by just prayers, if the anger of the gods can be averted, tell us, Themis, by what means the loss of our race is capable of being repaired, and bring help, o gentlest one, to the drowned world.'

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J

The goddess was moved and gave this oracle: 'Depart from this temple, veil your heads, undo your tight clothes and throw the bones of your great mother behind your backs.' For a long time they were struck dumb, till Pyrrha first broke the silence with her voice; she refused to obey the goddess's commands, and in a fearful voice begged her to grant pardon, as she was afraid of hurting her mother's ghost by throwing her bones. Meanwhile they kept going over in their minds and discussing between them the obscure words and hidden meaning of the oracle they had been given. Then Prometheus' son tried to reassure Epimetheus' daughter with soothing words, and said 'Either my skill deceives me, or oracles are holy and urge nothing sinful. Our great mother is the earth: I think the stones on the body of the earth are what is meant by her bones; these are what we are commanded to throw behind our backs.'

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K

Though the Titan's daughter was impressed by her husband's interpretation, her hope was still uncertain; both of them found it hard to believe the heavenly advice. But what harm would it do to give it a try? So they came out of the temple, veiled their heads, untied their tunics and threw the stones, as ordered, behind their feet. The rocks – who would ever believe this without the evidence of history? – began to lose their hardness and solidity, then to soften and, once softened, to take on shape. Soon, when they had grown and a gentler nature came upon them, a kind of human form could be seen, not yet obvious but as if just begun in marble, not really finished and very like a roughed-out statue. Those parts of them that were earthy and damp with moisture became flesh; what was solid and could not be bent was turned into bones; what was already a vein remained so, and with the same name; in a brief space of time, through the power of the gods, those rocks hurled by the man's hands took on the likeness of men, and woman was restored from those thrown by the woman. For that reason we are a hard race, accustomed to toil, and so give proof of the source from which we were born.

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