



Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 3A

Latin Literature (Narratives) Ovid, *Ceyx and
Alcyone*

Teacher Notes

For examination in 2022 and 2023



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Introduction

Ovid: his life and works

Publius Ovidius Naso (43BC – AD 17) was born outside Rome in Sulmo to a wealthy equestrian family. He is famous for his love poems which he wrote whilst living in Rome. In 8BC, Ovid was banished from Rome by the emperor Augustus. Ovid writes that it was because of *carmen et error* (a poem and a mistake). The poem was the *Ars Amatoria* (the Art of Love), but scholars still debate what the mistake may have been. Ovid spent the rest of his days in exile at Tomis on the Black Sea (modern Romania), where he wrote his *Metamorphoses* (a collection of myths around the theme of transformation) amongst many other works. He never returned to Rome.

The text

Our Latin text is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book XI, lines 415-429, 439-453, 478-523, and 560 (part lines)–569. The Latin is unadapted. The English sections tell the remaining parts of the story.

The story of Ceyx and Alcyone

Ceyx was the son of the Morning Star and he was married to Alcyone, the daughter of Aeolus, the king of the winds. Together they ruled Trachis in Thessaly, Greece. Ceyx had a brother, Daedalion, whom he loved very much despite the fact that they were opposite in their personalities. Ceyx was peaceful, whereas Daedalion was warlike. After Daedalion's daughter, Chione, was killed by the goddess Diana for daring to impugn her beauty, Daedalion was overwhelmed with grief. He fled to the top of Mount Parnassus where he hurled himself from the summit. As he plunged to his death, the god Apollo transformed him into a hawk. In this way, the warlike man became a warlike bird.



Ceyx was deeply troubled by these events and wished to find out the meaning behind them. He decided to consult an oracle of Apollo. As Delphi was currently inaccessible to pilgrims due to a warlike local king, Ceyx decided to travel to the oracle at Claros, across the sea in Ionia. This is the point where our text begins.

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greece_location_map.svg

Ceyx tells his wife of his plan, and she is deeply concerned for his safety, begging him first to stay and then to take her with him. Ceyx is unwilling both to put off his voyage and to put Alcyone into danger, and so he reassures her and promises to

return within two months. As he departs, Alcyone is overwhelmed with a sense of foreboding.

The ship is halfway through its voyage when a storm strikes, tearing the ship apart and pitching everyone into the sea. As Ceyx sinks under the water, he calls the name of 'Alcyone'.

Meanwhile, Alcyone sees a vision of his death and rushes to the beach. There, she sees a body drifting closer on the waves. Eventually she is able to make out the features of her husband and rushes into the sea towards his corpse. At this point the gods intervene, transforming the pair into birds, kingfishers, so that they can remain together.

Themes

These main themes will be discussed in the text:

- the love between Ceyx and Alcyone
 - pathos
 - dramatic writing
 - descriptive writing
 - transformation
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Further reading

Murphy, G.M.H. *Ovid Metamorphoses XI* Bristol Classical Press (2009)

Raeburn, D. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation* Penguin (2004)

Reading the Text

The key aims are:

- understanding the meaning of the Latin
- developing literary appreciation

It is often useful to adopt the following approach when introducing students to original literature:

- Read the Latin aloud to emphasise phrasing and stress word groups
- Break up more complex sentences into constituent parts for comprehension
- Focus on comprehension of the text and understanding the content through questioning and using the vocabulary
- Look closely at how the Latin is expressed and the ways in which the literary devices enhance the meaning.
- Although a sample translation is provided in the course resources, teachers might want to encourage their students to make their own version after various options have been discussed and evaluated. The first step is a literal

translation, then something more polished in natural English that is as close to the structure and vocabulary of the original Latin as possible. Students will soon see that a degree of paraphrasing may be required when the Latin does not readily translate into correct and idiomatic English.

About the Teacher's Notes

The prescribed text is broken up into short sections and the *Notes* on each passage are followed by a *Discussion* and *Questions*. The *Notes* focus both on language and content, but also include some comment on style and literary effects. The *Discussion* and *Questions* focus mostly on literary appreciation and interpretation.

Rhetorical and technical terms are used throughout the notes. Some of these may be unfamiliar to teachers new to teaching Latin literature; usually a definition is supplied when the term is first used. **The students are not required to know specific terms for this course**, and they should be encouraged instead to focus on the effects being created by the literary techniques.

These notes are designed to provide for the needs of a wide spectrum of teachers, from those with limited knowledge of Latin and who are perhaps entirely new to reading Latin literature, to teachers experienced in both language and literature. It is hoped that all will find something of use and interest. **Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate.**

Some of the information contained in the notes is for general interest and to satisfy the curiosity of students and teachers. **The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.**

Section A

Alcyone begs Ceyx to rethink his plans

Following the strange transformation of his brother into a bird, Ceyx decides to visit an oracle of the god Apollo to discover the meaning of these events. Usually he would visit the oracle at Delphi, overland from their home in Greece, but the way is blocked by a hostile king. He decides instead to sail across the Aegean Sea to Asia and the oracle at Claros on the Ionian shore. In this passage he tells his wife his plan, and she reacts with alarm.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 The translation is **ante** (before [he left]) **tamen** (however) **fidissima Alcyone** (most faithful Alcyone) **certam te facit** (he made you certain) **consilii sui** (of his plan)

The loving relationship between Alcyone and Ceyx is stressed by the superlative vocative **fidissima** ('most faithful'). The delay between the adjective and the noun with which it agrees (**Alcyone**) causes the reader to dwell on the word. The strong bond between the two is one of the main themes of this text.

facit: there are lots of verbs in the historic present tense in this text. These are present tense verbs but used to describe something happening in the past. They make the reader feel as if they are experiencing the events alongside the characters. From this point on, *vivid historic present tense* verbs will be identified in these notes but not analysed individually.

- 2 In line 2 we discover that Ovid (the poet) is here directly talking to Alcyone (**te**). This adds to the emotion of the scene, implying even the author is deeply invested in his own characters.

protinus ('immediately') adds a sudden sense of foreboding about the journey as Alcyone's reaction is so swift and so negative. The sentence describing the change in her begins in the middle of the line, Ovid emphasising the speed of the reaction by refusing to delay these words until the start of the next line.

- 2-3 Ovid frequently describes emotional reactions as physical changes happening to his characters. This engages the audience as we are asked to draw our own conclusions based on the description rather than simply being told how she feels.

intima frigus/ossa: the word order here brings the image to life. The word **frigus** is placed between **intima...ossa**, mirroring how the 'chill' is buried inside her 'deepest bones'.

- 3 **buxo...simillimus ora:** boxwood, commonly used in the UK for hedges, is a pale colour. The simile here highlights her fear draining the colour from her face.
- 2-4 **ossa...ora...genae:** the list of three (*tricolon*) zooms in from the whole of Alcyone to her face. Ovid stays focused on her face in the following lines as well. Foreshadowing what will happen later, here Alcyone's face grows wet with weeping as she talks to her husband: eventually Ceyx's face will be submerged as he murmurs words to her.
- obit** is a *vivid historic present* verb.
- 5 **ter... ter:** in Latin literature, significant actions are often repeated 'three times' to emphasise that they were done over and over. It is also useful to note that the number three was of superstitious importance to the Romans: magic spells and cult rites often required things to be done 'three times'.
- 6 The translation is **singultuque** (and with her sobbing) **interrumpente** (interrupting) **pias querellas** (her loving protests)
- pias** is often translated as 'dutiful', but 'loving' shows Ovid's meaning better: she is showing the concern and affection which is appropriate for a wife to show for her husband. The double -rr- of **interrumpente** and -ll- of **querellas** mimic the sound of sobbing.
- 7-10 **string of questions:** Alcyone interrogates her husband with a series of direct questions which he is not given time to answer, although the reader can imagine his gestures protesting her accusations. It is important to remember that Ovid has told us that these questions are 'loving', rather than angry: she is trying to remind Ceyx of his love for her rather than question it.
- 7 **carissime** ('my dearest one') reminds us again of the couple's love for each other.
- 9 The juxtaposition of **abesse relict**a ('to be away, left behind') emphasises the separation.
- 10 **absens** ('absent') is placed emphatically at the end of the line.
- 11-12 **dolebo ... non metuum ... curaque timore carebunt:** Alcyone's emotions are arranged as a list of three (*tricolon*) with the first two sentiments opposing each other, and the final sentiment explaining how this reaction will work.
- 11 Alcyone stresses the words in this line with the repeated use of the letter 't'. Of course, Ceyx will not be travelling over the lands (see the introduction to this section), and so the sense should be "supposing your journey was by land..."
- 13 **aequora me terrent:** ancient ships were well-built and their crews skilled, but this fear of the vast and uncontrollable sea appears to have been common, especially amongst those who only occasionally travelled by sea. The fear of a storm as a loved-one leaves on a ship is a common trope in elegy.

- 14** **laceras tabulas:** these are the planks which are all that remain of a wrecked ship. The participle **laceras** ('mangled, shattered') emphasises the violence of the wreckage.
- 15** Alcyone says that she has read names on tombs 'without a body' **sine corpore**. The Roman would set up tombstones to those whose bodies could not be buried, most commonly due to being lost at sea. An example of one of these tombs can be seen in the Grosvenor Museum in Chester (online here: <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/544>). A tombstone would often end with the letters H.S.E, (hic situs est- he is buried here). This tombstone ends with the letters S.E (situs est – he is buried). A space has been left for the H in the hope that one day the body would be found and laid to rest.
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Discussion

This section shows us how much the characters of Alcyone and Ceyx are devoted to one another, but it also begins to foreshadow what will happen to Ceyx. Ovid's use of direct speech brings his characters to life, and also introduces us to the mixing of genres he is exploring in this episode. The journey of a beloved is a theme more common in elegiac poetry rather than epic – as a master of both styles Ovid is able to blend the two together dramatically.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-4:

- What did Ceyx tell Alcyone? When did he do this? How is Alcyone described? Who is Ovid (the poet) talking to here when he says 'te'?
- Which part of Alcyone's body is mentioned? How is it described? What does it receive? When does it receive this?
- What covered her face? What was it exactly like?
- Which part of her is mentioned now? What happened to them? What made them wet?

lines 5-6:

- How many times did she try to speak? What else did she do three times?
- What did her sobs interrupt?

lines 7-10:

- What does she call her husband?
- What is she worried might have changed her husband's mind?
- What question does she ask about his care for her? What did this care used to be?

- What does she ask if he can do? Where would Alcyone be? How does she imagine he would feel?
- What does she think might be pleasing to him now?
- How does she think she might be dearer to him now?

lines 11-15:

- Where does she think his journey might be? What does she say she will do? What does she say she will not do? What does she say about her cares?
- What two things terrify her?
- What has she seen recently? Where?
- What has she read often? What were they on?

Questions on Content and Style

- (lines 1-2) *consilii...Alcyone*:
 - What is the plan which is mentioned in these lines?
 - Who does the word *fidissima* describe?
 - Who is speaking and to whom in these lines?
- (lines 2-4) *cui...profusis*: how does Ovid, through his choice of vocabulary and style of writing, make this a dramatic description of Alcyone?
- (line 5-6) *ter...querellas*: how does Ovid, through his style of writing, show Alcyone's desperation?
- (lines 7-10) *quae...absens*: how does Alcyone attempt to persuade Ceyx to stay through her words and the way in which she says them?
- (lines 11-15) *at puto...legi*:
 - Where is Ceyx going and how will he get there?
 - How does Alcyone say she would feel if the journey was over land?
 - What terrifies her?
 - What has she seen and why would this terrify her?
 - What has she read and why would this terrify her?
 - How does Alcyone emphasise her fears in these lines?
- Think about the whole of Section A. How does Ovid, through his style of writing, show us Alcyone's love for Ceyx?

Section B

Ceyx assures Alcyone of his safe return

In this passage, Alcyone begs to go with her husband. Although Ceyx is moved by her words, he does not want to put her in danger, nor delay his voyage. He tries to comfort her and promises to return soon.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1 **tua si flecti precibus sententia nullis:** the interlocking words here suggest how her prayers (**precibus**) have pierced as far as they can into his purpose (**tua...sententia**), but to no avail. The emphatic positioning of **nullis** at the end of the line emphasises his resolution.
- 2 **care...coniunx:** the loving tone continues as Alcyone addresses Ceyx as her 'dear husband'. The pause between the adjective and noun emphasises the 'dear', as does the 'c' alliteration and its emphatic position at the beginning of the line.
- 3 The emphatic position of **me quoque** at the beginning of the line highlights Alcyone's desire: take 'me too'. The command (*imperative*) **tolle** ('take') continues the feeling of urgency. The use of **simul** ('together') and **una** ('together') stresses the fact that Alcyone and Ceyx share a single identity as a couple.
- 4 The alliterative **nec nisi** sounds final and decisive. The repetition of **pariter** again stresses the unity of these two characters.
- 4-5 **feremus...feremur:** a neat little play on the active and passive forms of the same verb. They will *actively* 'endure' and *passively* 'be carried', but always together. There is another play on meaning here: they *will* be carried over the seas together in the end but as birds.
- 6 **Aeolidis** reminds us that Alcyone is the daughter of Aeolus, the immortal whose job it was to look after the winds. In epic literature, he is often responsible for storms at sea or for preventing them (Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey* for example).

movetur is a *vivid historic present*.

- 7 **sidereus coniunx:** a reference to the fact that Ceyx's father was Lucifer, the personification of the 'Morning Star'. This name was given by the Romans to the planet Venus when it was visible in the sky just before dawn.
- 8 The translation is **enim** (for) **neque** (neither) **est** (was) **ignis** (the fire) **in ipso** (in him) **minor** (less).
The words for 'fire' in Latin are often synonymous with passionate feeling, usually love. It is also here possibly a play on his connection with Lucifer: **ignis** is also a synonym for 'star'. **est** is a *vivid historic present*
- 9 **vult** is a *vivid historic present*
- 10 The translation is **respondit** (he replied) **multa** (many [words]) **solantia** ([which] try to soothe) **timidum pectus** (her fearful heart).
respondit is a *vivid historic present*.
- 11 **causam probat:** this phrase is more common in legal language than in epic or elegiac poetry. The metaphor here implies that he has delivered a persuasive speech (like in a law court), but it has failed. Ovid is not interested in telling us this part of the conversation: he is much more interested in the emotional ending. **probat** is a *vivid historic present*.
- 13 **nobis:** Ceyx deliberately points out that he feels the same: this is equally hard for them both.
- 14 **per patrios ignes:** to swear *by* something is a standard formula in Latin. Here, Ceyx swears by the light of his father Lucifer (see the Introduction for more information).
si me modo fata remittant: an ironic statement, given that he will not return.
- 15 **quam luna bis impleat orbem:** (ie the moon will become full twice) a poetic way of saying two months

Discussion

We can see the difference in the two characters coming out here. Alcyone expresses her love through her emotional speech, beseeching Ceyx using emotive language and stressing their inseparability. Ceyx, on the other hand, feels as passionately as she does but seems to express himself in a more structured way, employing formal language.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-5:

- Who is Alcyone speaking to and what does she call him? What has she been trying to change? What has she been trying to change it with? Is his purpose able to be turned by prayers? What is he absolutely certain of?
- What does she tell him to do?
- What shall certainly happen to them both? How shall she feel unless she suffers these things with him?
- What does she say they will do together? Where shall they be borne and how?

lines 6-12:

- How is her husband described? What was he moved by and whose were they?
- What was no less in him? What does this mean?
- But what did he not want to put off? What else did he not want to do?
- How much did he reply to Alcyone? What were his words trying to do? What did he, however, not manage to do?
- What did he also add to these reasons? What effect did this have on his loving wife?

lines 13-15:

- What does he say about this whole delay? What does he swear to her by? Of whom does he say 'if only they might allow me'?
- What does he say he will do? This will be before the moon does what twice? What does this mean?

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-3):

- a. Pick out the two Latin words Alcyone uses to describe Ceyx.
- b. What does Alcyone want Ceyx to do?
- c. How does Alcyone, through her choice of language and style of speaking, attempt to persuade Ceyx to agree?

2. (lines 3-5):

- a. Explain Alcyone's reason for being afraid.
- b. How does Alcyone emphasise the fact that they should face everything as a couple?

3. (lines 6-7):
 - a. Explain why Ceyx is '**sidereus**' and Alcyone is '**Aeolidis**'.
 - b. What effect has Alcyone's speech had on Ceyx?

4. (lines 7-12):
 - a. What does the phrase '**neque enim minor ignis in ipso est**' tell us about Ceyx?
 - b. What two reasons does Ceyx have for not agreeing to any of Alcyone's requests?
 - c. Which **three** Latin words in line 11 tell us that he was not successful in soothing her feelings?

5. (lines 13-15):
 - a. What promise does Ceyx make to Alcyone?
 - b. How does he, in these lines, stress how seriously he takes this promise?

6. (whole section):
 - a. How does Ovid create a dramatic tone in this section through his use of epic language? Think about the descriptions he uses and the vocabulary choices he makes?
 - b. How do we know that Alcyone and Ceyx have strong feelings for each other through their words and actions?

Section C

Ceyx departs

Notes and Discussion

This moment of prolonged departure will mirror Ceyx' gradual, tragic, return in Section H. It has a 'cinematic' quality to it, as the reader stands alongside Alcyone and watches Ceyx slowly disappear (**the ship drew further from the land and her eyes could not make out his face**) and provides a calm before the literal storm.

Questions

1. How do we know from this section that Ceyx is reluctant to leave Alcyone?
2. How do Alcyone's actions here tell us that she is upset at Ceyx's departure?
3. Why do you think that Ovid describes their moment of separation in such detail?

Section D

A sudden storm and sudden alarm!

In this passage Ceyx is halfway to his destination when a sudden storm arises. The captain and his crew react swiftly and professionally, but the power of the storm soon overwhelms their efforts.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

- 1-2** The translation is **medium** (the middle) **aequor** ([of the] sea) **aut** (either) **minus** (less) **aut** (or) **certe** (certainly) **non** (not) **amplius** (more than) **secabatur** (was being cut) **puppe** (by the ship), **-que** (and) **tellus** (the land) **erat** (was) **longe** (far away) **utraque** (on both sides)

The ship is roughly halfway across the open water. The drawn-out description over these two lines, stressing how far away the land is, sets the scene for what happens next.

- 3** **albescere**: the sea turns white as the foam is whipped up.

coepit: there is a sudden switch into the present tense here (*vivid historic present*) which makes the scene appear to be playing out with the reader watching. This use of the present tense continues for the rest of the section.

- 4** **eurus**: the south-east wind (in some texts, the east wind), and the bringer of storms.

- 5-6** The use of direct speech, and especially the imperatives (**demittite ... subnectite**), is dramatic and adds urgency. The captain appears to be decisive, although the inverted word order (the words **cornua** and **velum** are key to the commands, but they are left until the end of each command and line) may imply some panic.

The commands are to furl the sail, to put it away so that the wind will not catch it and either rip it apart or cause the ship to be blown around out of control. Unlike later sailing boats, Roman and Greek boats were designed so that this could be done without climbing up onto the yard.

There is a diagram below in which the parts of a Roman ship are labelled.

- 7** **hic iubet**: the short statement mimics the urgent commands of the captain.

adversae iussa procellae: the word order here mimics the way in which the orders are surrounded and swept away by the opposing winds. This is similar to **vocem fragor aequoris ullam** in line 8.

- 9-10** In these lines we see the professionalism of the sailors as they hurry to their tasks despite being unable to hear their captain. The emphatic position of **sponte** at the beginning of the line emphasises this. They work efficiently despite the chaotic situation: the lack of conjunctions (*asyndeton*) shows their speed, whilst the use of **alii...pars...pars** shows how the sailors swiftly split up into groups to complete the work, the list of three (*tricolon*) working with the other techniques to increase the impression of a great deal of toil.

The sailors are pulling oars inside the ship and then blocking up the oar holes to prevent the water coming in through them. Others are reefing the sails, making the sail smaller either by folding or rolling. Ovid may be imagining a Roman sail which can be reefed by a system of pulleys and ropes.

- 11-12** These lines focus in on individuals and give us some isolated snapshots in the midst of the general haste. The repetition of **hic...hic** makes it seem as though Ovid is pointing individuals out to his audience, as if we were all watching it in front of us. The first man's task seems especially futile: the repetition of **aequor** gives the impression that the sea is everywhere.

In line 12 suddenly there is a change in the storm, signalled by the change in focus and mid-line sentence end. The storm is encroaching on the sailors' work. The phrase **sine lege** implies both that the sailors are working without being ordered, and without order.

- 13-14** The translation is **aspera** (the violent) **hiems** (storm) **crescit** (grows), **-que** (and) **e omni parte** (from every direction) **feroces** (fierce) **venti** (winds) **bella gerunt** (wage war) **-que** (and) **indignantia** (angry) **freta** (waves) **miscent** (mix together/ join battle)

The list of three (*tricolon*) shows how the threats are coming from many different sources. The descriptives are menacing (**aspera...feroces... indigniantia**) and the storm is personified as an opposing army, beginning an analogy which will continue across several sections.

- 15-16** The translation is **rector** (the captain) **ratis** (of the boat) **ipse** (himself) **pavet** (is afraid) **ipse** (he) **fatetur** (confesses) **se** ([that] he himself) **scire** (knows) **nec** (neither) **qui** (what) **status** (the situation) **sit** (might be) **nec** (nor) **quid** (what) **-ve** (either) **iubeat** (he should order) **-ve** (or) **velit** (he should want)

The captain's fear shows us that we should also fear for the safety of the ship and its crew. His distress and helplessness is shown through the list of three (*tricolon*) in his reported speech, the repeated conjunctions (**nec...nec, -ve...-ve**) emphasising how much he does not know.

- 17 The translation is **tanta** (to great) **est** (is) **moles** (the size) **mali** (of the calamity) **-que** (and) **tanto** (so much) **potentior** (more powerful) **arte** (than his skill)

The repetition (*polyptoton*) of the words **tanta** and **tanto** stresses how overwhelmed the captain and the ship are by the situation, the alliteration of **mali moles** emphasising the phrase 'size of the calamity'. The *elision* of **arte est** (where the final **e** of **arte** is run into the first **e** of **est**) creates an apprehensive gulp.

- 18-19 Ovid focuses in on the sounds of the scene: the men are shouting, the ropes are creaking, the air ringing with thunder. The verb **sonant** is to be understood with each phrase, all the noises competing. This competition is also shown by arranging the man-made noises in line 18, the natural noises in line 19. The inversion of the word order in each phrase, with the nominative put last, emphasises the noises, e.g. **clamore**.

- 20-21 The translation is **pontus** (the sea) **erigitur** (is raised up) **fluctibus** (by the waves) **-que** (and) **videtur** (seems) **aequare** (to be level with) **caelum** (the sky) **et** (and) **tangere** (to touch) **inductas** (the gathered) **nubes** (clouds) **adspergine** (with spray)

From this point in the text humans vanish from the description of the storm until the ship is finally overwhelmed by the sea. Again, Ovid uses a list of three (*tricolon*).

- 22-24 The translation is **et** (and) **modo** (at one moment) **est** (it is) **concolor** (the same colour) **illis** (as those [clouds]) **cum** (when) **vertit** ([the sea] turns) **fulvas** (the yellow) **harenas** (sands) **ex imo** (from its depths) **modo** (at another moment) **nigrior** (blacker) **unda** (than the river) **Stygia** (Styx) **interdum** (and sometimes) **sternitur** (it is spread out) **-que** (and) **albet** (is white) **sonantibus** (with hissing) **spumis** (froth).

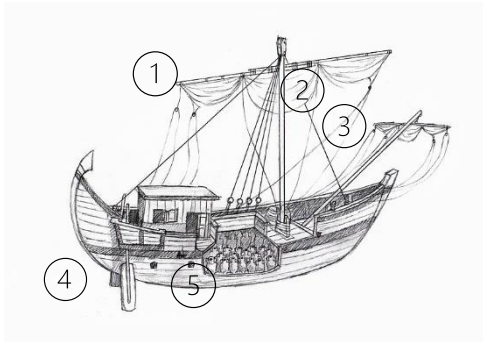
Ovid now focuses on the ever-changing colour of the sea, adding interest to his description by varying his language: **fulvas** (adjective), **nigrior** (comparative adjective), **albet** (verb). The use of **modo... modo... interdum** shows how quickly the colours are changing.

unda Stygia: the river Styx was one of the rivers in the Underworld (the Land of the Dead), and in the most famous Roman myths the river which the souls had to cross to enter. By using it as part of this description, Ovid foreshadows the death of those aboard the ship. Tragically, the Romans believed that those lost at sea were not able to cross the Styx until they had either somehow received the burial rites or waited for a hundred years.

The sibilance of **spumisque sonantibus** imitates the sound of the hissing froth.

Discussion

It may be helpful for students to understand what a Roman ship looked like (Ovid is not describing a Greek boat but one with which he himself is more familiar).



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1. **antenna**: the yardarm. The sail is hung from these.
2. **velum**: the sail. A large square sail.
3. **rudens**: the ropes, or halyards. These control the yardarm.
4. **puppis**: the stern. The word is also used to mean the whole ship.
5. **remus**: oar. In this diagram, the oars have been shipped (pulled inside).

In this section Ovid moves from the chaos onboard the ship to the chaos of the water. We see the sailors swiftly reacting in a series of quick vignettes, before Ovid begins to describe the storm, focusing on the sound as well as the sight of the sea. Description is often arranged in *couplets* (two-line sections) and short lists.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-4:

- What was the sea being cut by? Which part of the sea was being cut by the ship? Where exactly is the middle?
- Where was the land?
- What did the sea begin to do? What was it turning white with? What time of day was it?
- Which wind was the prevailing one? What did it begin to do?

lines 5-6:

- Who was shouting?
- What does he command the sailors to lower?
- What does he command them to furl?

lines 7-10:

- What does the captain do?
- What were the opposing winds doing?
- What does the crash of the sea not allow?
- How do some of the sailors hurry? What do they hurry to do? What are they pulling in?
- What do another group of sailors do? What do a third group do with the sail?

lines 11-14:

- What is this man bailing out? What is he pouring the sea back into?
- What is this (other) man doing?
- How are these things being done?
- While these things are being done without an order, what is growing?
- What kind of winds are there? Where are they coming from? What does Ovid describe them as doing? What else joins them?

lines 15-17:

- How does the captain himself feel? What does he do? What three things does he confess he does not know?
- What is so great (in size)? What is it so much more powerful than?

lines 18-19:

- What are the men doing? What are the ropes doing?
- What is the sea heavy with?
- What is the air ringing with?

lines 20-24:

- At one minute, what is the sea the same colour as? What has caused the sea to change colour? Where has the yellow sand come from? What has the sea done to this sand?
- At another minute, what colour is the sea? What is it blacker than?
- What sometimes happens to the sea? What colour does it become? What is it white with?

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-4):

- a. As this section opens, where is the ship exactly?
- b. How does Ovid make it clear that the ship is in the middle of open water?
- c. How does the weather change at this point in the text?
- d. Why do you think that Ovid makes the weather change **sub noctem**?

2. (lines 5-6):

- a. What two instructions does the captain shout?
- b. Why does the captain instruct the crew to do these things?

3. (lines 7-10):

- a. What two reasons are given for why the crew cannot hear the captain's orders?
- b. What three things do the sailors do?
- c. In these lines, how does Ovid's style of writing enhance the meaning of the text?

4. (lines 11-14):

- a. What are the two men doing?
- b. In what three ways does the storm get worse?

- c. How does Ovid, through his style of writing, make these lines dramatic?
5. (lines 15- 17):
- a. What three things does the captain say he does not know?
 - b. How does Ovid stress the captain's powerlessness in line 17?
6. (lines 18-19):
- a. What noises can be heard?
 - b. How does Ovid emphasise the noise through his style of writing?
7. (lines 20-24):
- a. How does Ovid stress the height of the waves in lines 20-21?
 - b. How does the sea change colour?
8. (whole section):
- a. How does Ovid show us the powerlessness of the people in the face of the storm?
 - b. How does Ovid create foreboding and menace in his descriptions of the storm?
 - c. How does Ovid vary his descriptions of the storm to keep the audience engaged?
 - d. Do you think that Ovid captures the terror of being caught in a storm at sea?

Section E

The storm

The storm begins in earnest, battering the ship from every angle. In this dramatic and descriptive passage Ovid paints a picture of the sea which is rich in imagery and violence.

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

All the verbs in this section are *vivid historic present*, bringing an urgency to the scene and helping the reader to imagine standing alongside Ceyx as the ship is battered by the storm.

- 1 Trachinia puppis:** the ‘Trachian ship’ comes from Trachis, Ceyx’s kingdom in Thessaly.

This ship is being pushed around helplessly by the storm, and Ovid’s writing throughout this section emphasises this. The passive verb **agitur** introduces this idea here, which is highlighted and supported by the word order in this line. The verb is in the very centre, the ship (**puppis**) has been pushed to the end far from its pronoun **ipsa**, separated from it by **his vicibus** (‘by these turns’).
- 2 nunc...nunc** (line 4): events change from moment to moment.
de vertice montis...in valles (line 3): the dramatic waves of the heaving sea are briefly outlined in the very vivid, and ironic, simile comparing the sea to mountains and valleys on land. Ovid is not original in using this imagery, but he employs it within a wide range of techniques and adds his own powerful adjectives to make it most effective.
- 3 Acheronta:** the Acheron was one of the rivers of the Underworld (land of the dead). It is an appropriate word, emphasising the depth of the furrow whilst drawing upon images connecting water and death.
- 4 demissam:** this participle (‘sunken’) describes the ship (**puppis** from line 1). The ship is in a trough in the sea at this point in the text, but the word foreshadows its later destruction. The sea towers over the ship, and the word order of **curvum circumstetit aequor** mirrors this, with the sea surrounding the verb. The alliteration of ‘c’ in this line recalls the creaking of the timbers as the sea batters the boat.
- 5 inferno summum:** the contrasting words for ‘the lower regions and ‘highest’ are placed next to each other (*juxtaposition*) to emphasise the distance between the crest and trough of the waves. The closeness of the words

suggests too that the boat is being tossed suddenly from one extreme to the other. The words **summum...caelum** ('the highest heavens') surround **gurgite** ('whirlpool') which paints a vivid picture of the depths surrounded on all sides by walls of water.

gurgite: a watery word whose pronunciation recalls its gurgling meaning (*onomatopoeia*).

The contrast between the ship sitting at the top of a wave and then plunged deep into a trough is brought out by the language used in both descriptions, and the arrangement of the words.

Each description is introduced by the word **nunc**. In each description, the boat is personified: it is shown looking down or up, using related words, (**despicere...susplicere**). In both descriptions, words for height and depth are repeated, and references to the depths being the Underworld. This also gives the impression of the ship being *at the same time* high above and down below, as if it is gazing at itself.

- 6 The translation is **saepe** (often) **icta** (struck) **latus** (in respect of its side) **fluctu** (by a wave) **dat** ([the ship] gives) **ingentem fragorem** (a mighty crack)

The word **saepe** ('often') shows the frequency of the battering the boat is experiencing. We can hear the waves striking and the mighty cracks in the repetition of 'c' and 't' in the words **fluctu latus icta** ('struck on the side by a wave').


- 7-8 **quam ferreus olim cum laceras aries ballistave concutit arces**: 'than when sometimes an iron battering-ram, or a ballista, violently shakes shattered citadels'.

Both battering-rams and ballistae were staples of Roman siege weaponry. Battering rams were used to beat down gates. The ballista was essentially a huge crossbow mounted on a frame, using torsion to hurl bolts and other projectiles with precision and power. Ovid uses this violent war simile to show how the boat is under siege from the waves, hammered at relentlessly with death on the horizon. Again, the alliterated 'c' immerses us in the sound of the scene. The simile is effective but anachronistic: the might of the Roman war machine in a mythological Greek setting.

- 9-10 The translation here is **utque** (and as when) **feri** (fierce) **leones** (lions) **sumptis** (having gathered up) **viribus** (their strength) **incursu** (with their attack) **solent** (are accustomed) **ire** (to go) **pectore** (chest-first) **in arma** (against the arms) - **que** (and) **tela** (the weapons) **protenta** (directed at them)

Immediately Ovid employs another simile, this time running over two complete lines. This simile is in a style typical of epic poetry, using nature as a reference point (often for actions in war). The waves here are being likened to the wild

lions, and the ship to the arms wielded by men defending themselves from the onslaught.

- 11 The translation is **sic** (in this way) **ubi** (when) **unda** (the surf) **se admiserat** (had let itself go) **ventis coortis** (after the winds had risen)
- 12 **in arma ratis**: both similes (lines 7-8, and lines 9-10) are picked up again briefly here by the choice of **arma**.
- 13 **iamque labant cunei, spoliataque tegmine cerae**: the hulls of Roman ships were made of planks joined end to end and secured using mortise and tenon joints pinned in place with dowels. The joins were then sealed with a mixture of pitch and wax to waterproof them. This short essay explains it all with an excellent  diagram. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/shipwrecks/0/steps/7964>. The **cunei** (wedges) in our text are the mortises.
- 14 **patet praebetque**: the plosive alliteration ('p') and juxtaposition of these two verbs highlights the moment at which the ship starts to fill with water and break apart. The sound also mimics the cracking noises made as the joints of the ship pull apart.
- letalibus undis**: the use of **letalibus** ('deadly') foreshadows what will happen next.
- 15 **ecce**: Ovid calls out to us as if we were standing together on the ship's deck. This brings the reader inside the action and is reinforced by the use of **credas** ('you would believe') in the next line.
- 15-17 The dramatic imagery here continues the theme which we saw in Section D of a sky and a sea both filled with storm and water and increasingly mixed with each other. The near identical word order in lines 16-17, (*inque + accusative*) (*X*) (*accusative adjective*) (*infinitive*) (*accusative*), emphasises how the sky and sea are becoming indistinguishable.
- 18 **caelestibus undis**: the rain
- 19 **caret ignibus aether**: as well as creating a dark and foreboding atmosphere this short, ominous statement tells us that Lucifer, Ceyx' father, is not watching from his place in the heavens.
- 20 A line which intensifies the foreboding, dark atmosphere. The choice of **caeca** to describe the night: rather than simply 'dark', this word has connotations of leaving the viewer unable to see. **premitur** ('is made heavier') is oppressive, the dark sky seeming to sink down towards the earth. The use of **-que...-que** gives a sense of the shadows piling up.

hiemisque suisque: Ovid makes the darkness seem more oppressive by telling us that it is actually ‘two darknesses’: a storm *and* night.

21 discutiant: the verb, emphatically placed at the start of the line, mimics its meaning as it dramatically ‘cuts through’ to the beginning of the sentence. It also introduces the juxtaposition of the **lumen** (‘light’) with the heavy darkness described in the previous line.

22 This line contrasts powerfully with line 20, where every word helps to add to a sense of darkness. In this line every word adds to a sense of bright, but dangerous, light (lightning, glow, fire). **fulmina** is emphatically placed at the start of the line, running over from the previous line (*enjambment*) to heighten the impact. This also places it next to **fulmineis** (the same vocabulary but in a different form, *polyptoton*), which gives the impression of two rapid lightning strikes. These techniques are used again with **ignibus ignes** at the end of the line, creating a carefully balanced line.

ignes: the stars.

Discussion

This section emphasises the power of the sea. The extreme height and depth of the waves is emphasised, and the image of the boat being under siege is continued from the previous section with the reappearance of military imagery.

Students may struggle to imagine the storm being described unless they are from a coastal community. There are many videos recorded during storms available online which might give them an understanding that, whilst Ovid’s descriptions may be poetic, he is representing what it must have felt to experience these conditions. Highly descriptive passages are excellent opportunities for students to respond to the text or represent its meaning in more creative ways: a simple yet detailed drawing of this passage, for example, with the metaphorical imagery overlaid.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-3:

- What is being driven? What is it being driven by?
- What is it as if it is on? What does it seem to do? Where does it seem to look down into?

lines 4-5:

- What is the curved sea surrounding?
- What does the ship seem to do now? What is it looking up to? What is it looking up from?

lines 6-8:

- What often gives a mighty crack? What causes it to give a mighty crack?
- What is it ringing out from? What two pieces of siege weaponry is the wave compared to? What are these weapons shaking?

lines 9-10:

- What animals are the waves also being compared to? How are these animals described?
- What are these lions accustomed to do? How do they go out? What have they done before they go out?
- What are they going against?

lines 11-12:

- What has the surf done? What has caused the surf to let itself go?
- What was the surf going against? How does the surf compare to the defences of the boat?

lines 13-14:

- What is now loosening?
- What is opening? What has this crack been stripped of?
- What is the crack now offering? What is this a route for? How are the waters described?

lines 15-17:

- What does Ovid want us to look at? How much rain is there? Where is the plentiful rain falling from?
- What would you believe that the whole sky is doing?
- What would you believe the swollen sea is doing?

lines 18-20:

- What has happened to the sails? What are the sails soaked with?
- What are the ocean waves mixed with? What does this description mean?
- What is the sky now lacking? Why do you think this is?
- How is the night described? What is this night made heavier by?

lines 21-22:

- What is described as flashing? What is it cutting through? What are the flashing bolts providing?
- What are the other fires in the sky? What are the stars doing? What are the stars glowing with?

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-5):

- Read through these lines and summarise in your own words what is happening to the ship.
- In line 1, pick out the **three** words which refer to the ship.
- Explain how Ovid creates a dramatic contrast in lines 2-5 through his style of writing and choice of vocabulary.

2. (lines 6-8):

- What is causing the side of the ship to give a crack?
- What is the battering of the ship described as being like?
- Do you think that this is an effective simile? Explain your answer.

3. (lines 9-10):
 - a. What are the waves described as being like?
 - b. Do you think that this simile is effective? Explain your answer.
 - c. Which of the similes in lines 6-10 do you think is more successful? Give a reason for your answer.

4. (lines 11-12):
 - a. Why is the sea getting wilder?
 - b. How does Ovid make it clear here that the boat is beginning to fill with water?

5. (lines 13-14):
 - a. Explain what is happening to the sides of the boat in these lines.
 - b. How does Ovid, through his style of writing, make this moment dramatic?

6. (lines 15-17):
 - a. Why do you think that Ovid uses the word **ecce** here?
 - b. How does Ovid make it clear through his description and arrangement of words that water is now everywhere?

7. (lines 18-20):
 - a. What has happened to the sails of the ship?
 - b. Explain three reasons why the sky is particularly dark.
 - c. How does Ovid through his style of writing emphasise the darkness in lines 19-20.

8. (lines 21-22):
 - a. What is causing there to be light in the sky now?
 - b. How does Ovid through his style of writing emphasise the light in the darkness in lines 21-22?

9. (whole section):
 - a. How does Ovid use personification to make the descriptions of the ship in the sea more dramatic?
 - b. How does Ovid make it clear through his choice of words that the ship is doomed?

Section F

All hope is lost

Notes and Discussion

Ovid's vivid description of the fears of those shipwrecked at sea harks back to Alcyone's fears for her husband. The sailors say that **those who would have proper funerals were the lucky ones**. The Romans believed that proper funeral rites were essential otherwise the restless spirit would not make the journey to the Underworld. In the absence of a body (such as in the event of a shipwreck), some rites were still carried out in the hope that it might be enough (see note on A15 for an example of a tomb without a body).

Ceyx himself is amongst those described as **holding out their arms in vain to the sky which he could not see**. This begging style of praying to the gods can be seen in statues such as this one: <http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=3643>. It is noteworthy that neither Lucifer nor Aeolus intervene to save Ceyx – Ovid does not suggest that he deserves his fate in any way, it is simply the capricious nature of gods.

Questions

1. Who might be expected to help Ceyx?

Section G

The final moments of Ceyx

In this passage, Ceyx begs for divine assistance, but in vain. As he slips under the waves

Notes

Teachers should not feel that they need to pass on to their students all the information from these notes; they should choose whatever they think is appropriate. The examination requires knowledge outside the text only when it is needed in order to understand the text.

1-2 These lines are an excellent opportunity to show students how word order can help us to imagine the scene more vividly. We focus first on a hand (**manu**), the desparation of its grasp emphasised by the placing of **tenet** at the start of the sentence. We are reminded immediately of what his hand usually holds (**sceptra solebat**) before this stately image is brutally contrasted with what it is now grasping (**fragmina navigali**). The name of the poor soul has been delayed, but now we learn it is Ceyx and we move our focus from his hand to his face, hearing the words he is repeatedly calling out (**socerumque patremque**), the sentence running on to a third line before abruptly being cut off (**frustra**).

Ovid has chosen to put the audience close to Ceyx in the following lines. We hear his thoughts and words, and we are with him to the last moment. Ovid is relentless in pushing us for an emotional reaction!

2-3 **socerumque patremque / invocat**: Ceyx's father is the god Lucifer (the morning star), and his father-in-law is Aeolus, the god of the winds. Neither seem inclined to intervene, but no clear explanation for this is given. Neither Ceyx nor Alcyone have wronged the gods in any way, and neither have brought this punishment upon themselves. It is implied in another part of the text that Lucifer may be buried in the stormy night and therefore unable to help. The repetition of **-que** (*polysyndeton*) suggests that Ceyx is also repeatedly calling upon them.

3 The author is moved by his own work to interject **heu**, directing our own emotional response to Ceyx's plight. The author, and now the audience, are informed that Ceyx' actions are **frustra** ('in vain'), adding a tragic touch of *dramatic irony*.

3-4 As always, it is Alcyone who is in Ceyx' thoughts. He calls upon her 'most often' (**plurima**), Ovid delaying the words **Alcyone coniunx** to the next line

(*enjambment*) for emphasis. The repetition of **-que** (*polysyndeton*) in **meminitque refertque** shows us his constant, repetitive thoughts of Alcyone.

- 5-6 The translation is **optat (he wishes) ut (that) fluctus (the sea) agant (might wash ashore) sua corpora (his body) ante (before) illius (her) oculos (eyes) et (and) exanimis (lifeless) tumuletur (he might be buried) amicis (by her kindly) manibus (hands)**

These lines recall Alcyone's fears in Section A as she considered 'names on tombs that contain no body' (**in tumulis sine corpore nomina**).

- 7-8 The translation is **dum natat (while he is swimming) quotiens (as often as) fluctus (the sea) sinit hiscere (allows him to open his mouth) nominat (he calls out the name) absentem (of the absent) Alcyonen (Alcyone) que (and) immurmurat (he whispers it) undis (within the waves) ipsis (themselves)**

Again the word order makes the scene more dramatic: the word **absentem** moved far from **Alcyonen**, emphasising the couple's own separation. This also recalls Alcyone's fears in Sections A and B, and in particular the question in Section A, line 10 **iam sum tibi carior absens** ('Am I now dearer to you when I am not here?'). The verb **immurmurat** is then sandwiched between **ipsis** and **undis**, mimicking the meaning as his words are whispered amongst the waves themselves.

immurmurat: the repetition of the **m** sound brings the meaning of the word to life (*onomatopoeia*). Usually this would suggest a murmuring noise, but here it has the added chilling effect of the sound of his gulping in the water. Notice too how Ceyx was able to **invocat** (call out) in line 3, now he is only able to **immurmurat** (whisper) as he begins to slip below the water.

- 9 **ecce**: the shout of 'look' from Ovid again puts the audience and author into the scene. Our gaze is suddenly directed away from Ceyx to high above (**super**).

niger arcus aquarum: the water's blackness reflects the depth of water looming above Ceyx. As Ovid dwells on the description, the audience experiences a moment of tension as we look at the wave, waiting for it to crash down.

- 10 Ovid pulls us back to where we were, focusing on Ceyx' head as it goes under one last time, the piling-up of verbs (**frangitur...rupta mersum...obruit**) contrasting with the 'pause' created by the description in line 9. This final phrase is carefully constructed, the **rupta...unda** ('broken wave') enclosing the **mersum caput** ('submerged head').

Discussion

Although the scene itself may not have been particularly original in Roman literature, Ovid's description of the drowning Ceyx is particularly heart-breaking and harrowing: he refuses to let us look away, his description is written from up close, and we are alongside Ceyx in the water.

Alcyone, although physically absent, is very present in these lines: Ceyx specifically recalls and calls her, her words and fears are echoed in Ovid's vocabulary and themes.

Suggested Questions for Comprehension

Read the entire text aloud, emphasising phrasing and word groups. Then reread each section, asking leading questions so that the class comprehend the meaning of the Latin text. It may be desirable to produce a written translation once the students have understood the Latin.

lines 1-3:

- What is Ceyx holding on with? What was hand accustomed to hold? What is he holding on to?
- Who is he calling to? Is it effective?

lines 3-6:

- What name was most often on his lips? What was he doing?
- What exactly is he doing? What does he wish the sea would do? Where does he wish the sea would wash his body? What does he wish might happen to him, lifeless?

lines 7-8:

- While he is swimming, what is he calling out? How often is he doing this?
- Where is he murmuring it?

lines 9-10:

- What does 'ecce' mean? Where are we to look? What is over the middle of the waves? What happens to this black arch of water? What bursts? What does it submerge? What has happened to his head, and to him?
-

Questions on Content and Style

1. (lines 1-3 'frustra'):

- a. Where is Ceyx at this point in the poem?
- b. What two things is Ceyx doing?
- c. How does Ovid's description make this scene particularly tragic?

2. (lines 3-6):

- a. What is Ceyx remembering?
- b. What does Ceyx wish and why?
- c. How does Ovid show us how much Ceyx loves Alcyone through his choice of words and style of writing here?

3. (lines 7-8):
 - a. Describe the two different ways Ceyx is saying Alcyone's name.
 - b. How does Ovid make these lines vivid through the order and sound of the words?

4. (lines 9-10):
 - a. Why do you think that Ovid uses the word **ecce** here?
 - b. What happens to Ceyx in these lines?

5. (whole section):
 - a. How does this section show us the depth of love between Ceyx and Alcyone?
 - b. How effective is Ovid in creating sadness around the death of Ceyx?

Section H

Alcyone sees Ceyx in the waves

Notes and Discussion

In this dramatic scene, the body of Ceyx slowly drifts closer and closer to the shoreline, mirroring the scene in Section C when he slowly sailed out of sight at the beginning of his journey. The different stages of Alcyone's recognition are prolonged: first she sees **'something like a body'**, then **'it was a body'** but she was **'unaware of who the ship-wrecked man was'**. The gradual realisation continues until the final tragic moment: **'it is him'**. The reader, of course, has known all along.

The pathos is emphasised by Alcyone's ironic lament, whilst looking at the as yet unknown dead man, for **'whoever your wife is'**. Once she understands, her grief is physical as she **'tore at her face, her hair and her clothes'**.

Questions

1. How does Ovid make this scene tense for the reader?
2. Think back to Section B. How has Ceyx's promise come true?

Section I

Alcyone and Ceyx, transformed

Notes and Discussion

The moment of transformation for Alcyone is whilst she is in motion: as she makes her way into the sea towards the body of Ceyx. By the time she reaches him, the metamorphosis is complete.

This metamorphosis is presented as an explanation for the name and nature of the kingfisher. The Latin for kingfisher ('halcyon') is linked to Alcyone's name.

Students may know other myths which have similar themes (e.g. Narcissus, Echo, Arachne, Cygnus); myths which offer explanations for place names (e.g. Rome, Herculaneum); or myths which have transformations which save the characters from some danger or death (e.g. Daphne).

There are other references here to the behaviour of kingfishers, according to the Romans. They believed that the sea became calm for **seven days** either side of the winter solstice so that kingfishers could hatch their eggs. They called these days 'halcyon days' (Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 2.47). Alcyone is also described as brooding **on the surface of the water with her wings stretching out over her nest**. The Romans believed that kingfishers laid their eggs in a ball-like floating nest (Pliny *Nat Hist* 10.47) but in reality they lay their eggs in holes at the edge of the water.

Questions

1. Think about Ovid's description of kingfishers in this section. How similar do they seem to be to Alcyone and Ceyx when they were people?
2. Ovid does not tell us which god caused the transformation or why they did it. What do you think?