



Eduqas GCSE Latin
Component 3A

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

Introduction

For examination in 2022 and 2023



Introduction

Ovid: his life and works

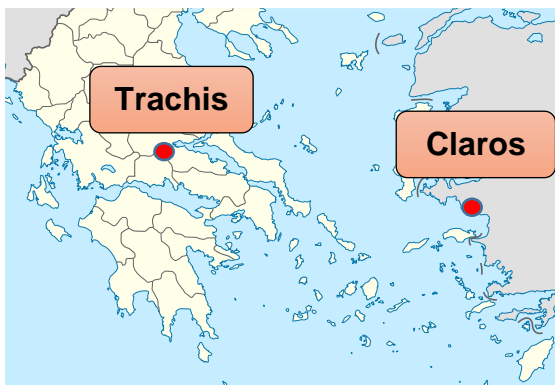
Publius Ovidius Naso (43BC – AD 17) was born outside Rome in Sulmo to a wealthy equestrian family. He is famous for his love poems which he wrote whilst living in Rome. In 8BC, Ovid was banished from Rome by the emperor Augustus. Ovid writes that it was because of *carmen et error* (a poem and a mistake). 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.**