

Revisiting the *Metamorphoses* from Exile: Reception of Deucalion and Pyrrha's Prayer
(*Met.* 1.377-80) in *Tristia* 2

Recent work has convincingly demonstrated that in his exile poetry Ovid encourages reinterpretation of his former work (Hinds 1985; Myers 2014; Knox 2016). The second poem of Ovid's *Tristia* participates in this process by conspicuously activating new readings of his *Metamorphoses*. *Tristia* 2 most famously engages with the *Metamorphoses* in its reminiscence of the story of Actaeon in *Met.* 3 (*Tr.* 2.103-10; *Met.* 3.173-255) (Forbis 1997; Inglehart 2006; Knox 2016) and in its panegyric of the emperor (Gibson 1999; Hinds 1999; Myers 2014). In this paper I argue that *Tristia* 2 similarly instigates a re-reading of the characterization of the gods in the *Metamorphoses*, especially how to interpret divine response to human entreaty, and offers Augustus an opportunity to authorize what is essentially a 'pro-Augustan' interpretation of the gods, particularly Jupiter, in his epic.

Because Augustus and Jupiter are explicitly compared in the *Metamorphoses* (1.168-76, 199-208, 15.858-60), many political readings of the poem have focused on Jupiter's portrayal. Current trends have moved away from characterizing Jupiter and divine/political authority as purely positive or negative, and instead emphasize the profoundly ambivalent character and destabilizing effect of Ovid's narrative (e.g. Miller 2009; Feldherr 2010). One of the scenes which elicits a divided interpretation of the gods is the flood episode in Book One, which results in the destruction and subsequent recreation of humanity out of rocks (*Met.* 1.182-415). Jupiter's role in this sequence of events, and the extent to which he treats mankind justly, is markedly ambiguous (cf. O'Hara 2007). It is therefore particularly interesting that Ovid chooses to allude to this episode of the *Metamorphoses* when discussing his exile in *Tristia* 2 and to associate Augustus with the

Jupiter of the flood specifically.

In *Tristia* 2 Ovid compares the emperor to Jupiter (2.33-42) and entreats him to revoke or relocate his exile (2.27-28, 573-78). These petitions reverberate with the plea of Deucalion and Pyrrha to quell divine anger and save mankind after the deluge in Book One of the *Metamorphoses* (1.377-80). Ovid divides the repeated vocabulary from the *Metamorphoses*' appeal between two prayers in *Tristia* 2. In the *Metamorphoses* Deucalion and Pyrrha ask that *numina* grow mild (*remollescunt*, *Met.* 1.377) and *ira* be assuaged (*flectitur*, *Met.* 1.378). In the *Tristia* Ovid asks that *ira* become milder (*mollior*, *Tr.* 2.28) in the first petition and that *numina* be assuaged (*possint flecti*, *Tr.* 2.573) in the second petition.

In the *Metamorphoses*, Deucalion and Pyrrha's prayer leads to the successful restoration of mankind, but Jupiter himself is distanced from direct responsibility for the positive outcome. This leaves the extent of his beneficence open to debate. By making Augustus the recipient of prayers which allude to Deucalion and Pyrrha's petition in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid provides Augustus the opportunity to prove that the Jupiter in Rome (and by implication also the Jupiter of the *Metamorphoses*) responds sympathetically to human appeals. Ovid sets up a correspondence between Jupiter and Augustus that has the potential to retroactively endorse a sort of 'pro-Augustan' reading of the gods, if Augustus should revoke Ovid's exile (cf. Hinds 1999; Myers 2014). Of course, Augustus in the end completely ignores the poet's pleas and leaves the deeply ambiguous and destabilizing vision of Jupiter intact.

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