

# A BRIEF NOTE ON OVID'S *METAMORPHOSIS*

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# Poet's Biography

Ovid was a Roman poet who lived during the reign of Augustus. He was a contemporary of the older Virgil and Horace, with whom he is often ranked as one of the three canonical poets of Latin literature.

The Imperial scholar Quintilian considered him the last of the Latin love elegists. Although Ovid enjoyed enormous popularity during his lifetime, the emperor Augustus banished him to a remote province on the Black Sea, where he remained a decade until he succumbed his death.

# Metamorphosis at a glance

The *Metamorphoses* is an 8 AD Latin narrative poem by the Roman poet Ovid, considered his magnum opus. Comprising 11,995 lines, 15 books and over 250 myths, the poem chronicles the history of the world from its creation to the deification of Julius Caesar within a loose mythico-historical framework.

# Background of Metamorphosis

*Metamorphoses* falls squarely in the category of epic. In content, it has little in common with such epics as the *Aeneid*, which is characterized by a single story line and one main protagonist. In fact, Ovid explicitly pokes fun of the epic genre. The *Metamorphoses* more closely resembles the work of Hesiod and the Alexandrian poets, who favored a collection of independent stories connected by a theme. The *Metamorphoses*, having roughly 250 stories, are linked only by their common theme of metamorphosis.

# Themes in Metamorphosis

The major themes reflected in  
Metamorphosis include –

- ❖ **Sudden unexpected transformation**
- ❖ **Family duty**
- ❖ **Responsibility**
- ❖ **Alienation**

# Lesson learnt by reading Metamorphosis

The only permanent thing in nature is metamorphosis or continuous change, and trying to order this chaos is futile. Secondly, Ovid gives a moral lesson against **yielding to passion / lust**. It is this lesson, which made this poem one of the most read texts in Christian Europe during the Middle Ages.



THANK YOU