

## “Midas and the Golden Touch”

### Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book 11.100-105, 119-126

Blessed and cursed with the infamous “touch of gold,” Midas is one of the more memorable characters to be found in Ovid’s motley collection of myths entitled *The Metamorphoses* (“The Changes”).

**Section I. 100-105.** After Midas, the king of Phrygia, took in Silenus, the god of wine, Bacchus is delighted to be reunited with his foster-father (*altor*) and offers to grant any favor Midas might choose. Unfortunately, the mortal king is driven by avarice and asks that everything he touch turn to gold.

**Section II. 119-126.** As he goes about touching everything within reach, ecstatic over his newly-granted power, Midas discovers there is a drawback to his new power.

#### Section I

Huic deus optandi gratum — sed inutile! — fecit 100

To this man the god gave (lit. “made”) the power of choosing a pleasing —

muneris arbitrium, gaudens altore recepto.

but useless! — gift, rejoicing in (his) foster-father returned.

Ille, male usurus donis, ait “Effice, quicquid

That man, about to use the gifts poorly, said, “Make (it that) whatever

corpore contigero, fulvum vertatur in aurum.”

I will have touched with my body, might be turned into tawny gold.”

Adnuit optatis nocituraque munera solvit

Liber granted (the things) desired and (though they were) going to harm paid

Liber et indoluit quod non meliora petisset. . . 105

the gift(s) and grieved because he had not sought better things.

## Section II

. . . Gaudenti mensas posuere ministri

To (him) rejoicing, (his) servants set tables

exstructas dapibus nec tostae frugis egentes:

heaped up with meals and not lacking in (lit. "of") baked bread:

120

tum, vero, sive ille suā Cerealia dextrā

then, truly, whether that man had touched with his own

munera contigerat, Cerealia dona rigebant,

right hand (the gifts) of Ceres, the gifts of Ceres became stiff,

sive dapes avido convellere dente parabat,

or if he was preparing to tear apart a meal with a greedy tooth,

lammina fulva dapes admoto dente premebat;

he was pressing golden sheets of metal (for) food when (his) tooth was applied;

miscuerat puris auctorem muneris undis:

had he mixed the giver of the gift with pure water(s):

125

fusile per rictūs aurum fluitare videres.

you would see liquid gold flow over his open mouth.

# Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Midas -Worksheet

a. The questions below pertain to the forms underlined in the passage

b. When you're asked to change a word from one form to another, change only **that** form of the word. For instance, if you're asked to change *habet* to the passive voice, make *habet* passive but leave it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative.

## Section I

1. Make **huic** plural. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What case is **inutile** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Make **inutile** plural. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Change **fecit** to present imperative. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Change **recepto** to future active. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Make **corpore** nominative. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Make **contigero** passive. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Change **adnuit** to imperfect subjunctive. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Make **munera** vocative. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Change **solvit** to a future active infinitive (modifying *liber*). \_\_\_\_\_
11. Make **indoluit** subjunctive. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Make **meliora** singular. \_\_\_\_\_

[Continued on the next page]

## Section II

13. Make **gaudenti** perfect (passive). \_\_\_\_\_
14. Make **mensas...egentes** genitive. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Make **exstructas** modify *frugis*. \_\_\_\_\_
16. What case is **dextrā** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Change **rigebant** into a passive infinitive (present). \_\_\_\_\_
18. Make **avido...dente** (line 123) plural. \_\_\_\_\_
19. What mood is **convellere** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
20. What case is **dapes** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What case is **dente** (line 124) and why? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Change **premebat** to pluperfect subjunctive first person. \_\_\_\_\_
23. Change **muneris** to ablative plural. \_\_\_\_\_
24. What case is **rictūs** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
25. What mood is **fluitare** and why? \_\_\_\_\_

# Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Midas - Notes and Vocabulary

## Section 1

### Line   Note/ Vocabulary

100.   **optandi:** *opto* (1): choose; genitive gerundive (“of choosing”) agreeing with *muneris* (line 102)  
      **gratum:** *gratus*, -a, -um: pleasing  
      **inutile:** *inutilis*, -e: useless
101.   **muneris:** *munus*, -eris, n: gift  
      **arbitrium:** *arbitrium*, -i, n.: power  
      **gaudens:** *gaudeo*, -\_re, *gavisus sum*: rejoice  
      **altore:** *altor*, -oris, m: foster-father
102.   **male:** poorly  
      **usurus:** *utor*, -i, *usus* (deponent verb; + abl. object): “(he) about to use”  
      **effice:** *efficio*, -ere, *feci*, *fectum*: make it (that . . .)  
      **quicquid:** (indefinite pronoun) whatever
103.   **contigero:** *contingo*, -ere, -tigi, -tactum: touch  
      **fulvum:** *fulvus*, -a, -um: tawny  
      **aurum:** *aurum*, -i, n.: gold
104.   **adnuit:** *adnuo*, -ere, *adnui*, *adnutum*: grant (the subject is Liber)  
      **optatis:** *optatum*, -i, n.: wish  
      **nocitura:** *noceo*, -ere, *nocui*, *nocitum*: harm  
      **munera:** *munus*, *muneris*, n.: gift; here, plural for singular  
      **solvit:** *solvo*, -ere, *solvi*, *solutum*: pay
105.   **Liber:** *Liber*, -eri, m.: another name for the god Bacchus  
      **indoluit:** *indolesco*, -ere, *indolui*: grieve  
      **petisset:** = *petivisset*

## Section 2

119.   **gaudenti:** see line 101  
      **mensas:** *mensa*, -ae, f.: table  
      **posu\_re:** = *posuerunt*  
      **ministri:** *minister*, -tri, m.: servant

## Section 2 (cont.)

| <u>Line</u> | <u>Note/ Vocabulary</u>   |
|-------------|---|
| 120.        | <b>exstructas:</b> <i>exstruo, -ere, exstruxi, exstructum</i> : heap up<br><b>dapibus:</b> <i>daps, dapis, f.</i> : meal<br><b>tostae:</b> <i>tostus, -a, -um</i> : baked<br><b>frugis:</b> <i>frux, frugis, f.</i> : grain; here, bread<br><b>egentes:</b> <i>egeo, -re, egui</i> : lack; with genitive (literally, “lacking of...”) |
| 121.        | <b>vero:</b> (adverb) truly<br><b>sive...sive:</b> (conj.) whether... or if<br><b>Cerealia:</b> <i>Cerealis, -e</i> : belonging to Ceres, the goddess of grain; here, “of Ceres”<br><b>dextr_ (man_):</b> <i>dexter, -tra, -trum</i> : right (hand)   |
| 122.        | <b>rigebant:</b> <i>rigeo, -re</i> : become stiff   |
| 123.        | <b>avido:</b> <i>avidus, -a, -um</i> : greedy<br><b>convellere:</b> <i>convello, -ere, -velli, -vulsum</i> : tear apart<br><b>dente:</b> <i>dens, dentis, m.</i> : tooth  |
| 124         | <b>lammina:</b> <i>lammina, -ae, f.</i> : sheet of metal<br><b>admoto:</b> <i>admoveo, -re, -movi, -motum</i> : apply   |
| 125.        | <b>miscuerat:</b> <i>misceo, -re, miscui, mixtum</i> : mix<br><b>puris:</b> <i>purus, -a, -um</i> : pure<br><b>auctorem:</b> here, giver<br><b>undis:</b> <i>unda, -ae, f.</i> : water  |
| 126.        | <b>fusile:</b> <i>fusilis, -e</i> : liquid<br><b>per:</b> here, over<br><b>rict_s:</b> <i>rictus, -s, m.</i> : open mouth; here, plural for singular<br><b>fluitare:</b> <i>fluito (1)</i> : flow   |