

## Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 8: Philemon and Baucis

The myth of Philemon and Baucis is a story of piety rewarded. Jupiter and Mercury come to earth disguised as men to test the humanity of mortals. When they seek refuge as strangers, they are driven from village to village until they are received by a kindly old couple, Philemon and Baucis, who share their humble cottage and meager supply of food with the gods .

Ovid weaves an intimate picture of their modest peasant life, focusing on the preparation, and selection of food and a humorous scene of goose-chasing after the elderly pair have come to believe they have offended their guests and pursue their only suitable offering as a recompense.

The gods reveal themselves and ask Philemon and Baucis to accompany them up the mountain. When the old pair look down at their village, they see it has been flooded except for their own cottage which the gods have turned into a marble-columned temple. Because of their kindness and humanity, Jupiter asks the astonished couple to request anything and it will be granted.

Philemon and Baucis confer, and in the excerpt which follows the aged husband speaks for both of them.

“Esse sacerdotes delubraque vestra tueri  
“We ask to be priests and to watch over

poscimus, et quoniam concordēs egimus annos,  
your shrine, and since we have spent (our) years in harmony,

auferat hora duos eadem, nec coniugis umquam  
let the same hour take (us) two away (to death), and don't let me ever see

busta meae videam, neu sim tumulandus ab illā.”  
the tomb of my spouse nor let me have to be buried by her (hand).”

Vota fides sequitur: templi tutela fuere,  
Fulfillment follows (their) wishes: they were the guardian(s) of the temple,

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donec vita data est; annis aevoque soluti  
as long as life was given; weakened by years and age,

ante gradūs sacros cum starent forte locique  
when they were standing before the holy steps and by chance

narrant casūs, frondere Philemona Baucis,  
were relating the history of the place, Baucis (saw) that Philemon was growing

Baucida conspexit senior frondere Philemon.  
leaves, (and) Philemon, the older (of the pair), saw that Baucis was growing leaves.

Iamque super geminos crescente cacumine vultūs  
And now, with a tree-top growing above both (their) faces,

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mutua, dum licuit, reddebant dicta “Vale”que  
while it was permitted, they exchanged words back and forth and said, “Farewell,

O coniunx!” dixere simul, simul abdita textit  
O spouse!” at the same time, (and) at the same time bark covered

ora frutex: ostendit adhuc Thyneius illic  
(their) mouths, (now) hidden; even now an inhabitant of Bithynia shows

incola de gemino vicinos corpore truncos.  
in that spot tree trunks next to each other (made) of a two-fold body.

## Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Philemon and Baucis): 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.

1. What mood is **Esse** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Change **poscimus** to pluperfect second person. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Change **egimus** to present passive. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Change **auferat** to perfect passive (neut. sing.). \_\_\_\_\_
5. Make **eadem** accusative. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Change **coniugis...meae** to dative singular. \_\_\_\_\_
7. What mood is **videam** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What construction is **sim tumulandus**? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Make **illā** genitive. \_\_\_\_\_
10. What case is **Vota** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Change **data est** to imperfect subjunctive. \_\_\_\_\_
12. What case is **aevo** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Make **soluti** present (active). \_\_\_\_\_
14. Make **gradūs** genitive singular. \_\_\_\_\_
15. What mood is **starent** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What mood is **frondere** and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Change **conspexit** to future passive. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Change **crescente** to perfect passive (fem.). \_\_\_\_\_
19. What case is **cacumine** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
20. What case is **vultūs** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What case is **abditā** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Change **textit** to a present passive infinitive. \_\_\_\_\_
23. Change **ora** to ablative singular. \_\_\_\_\_
24. Change **frutex** to genitive plural. \_\_\_\_\_
25. Make **vicinos** modify *ora*. \_\_\_\_\_

## Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Philemon and Baucis): Notes and Vocabulary

### Line    Note/ Vocabulary

1.    **sacerdotes:** *sacerdos*, *-dotis*, m/f: priest/priestess  
**delubrum:** *delubrum*, *-i*, n.: shrine  
**tueri:** *tueor*, *tueri*, *tuitus* (deponent verb): watch over
2.    **poscimus:** *posco*, *-ere*, *poposci*: ask  
**concordes:** *concor*, *-ordis*: compatible; here, in harmony
3.    **auferat:** *aufero*, *auferre*, *abstuli*, *ablatum*: take away  
**duos:** *duo*, *duae*, *duo*: two (accusative plural)  
**coniugis:** *coniunx*, *-iugis*, m./f.: spouse
4.    **busta:** *bustum*, *-i*, n.: tomb; here, translate as singular  
**neu = neve:** nor  
**tumulandus:** *tumulo* (1): bury
5.    **vota:** *votum*, *-i*, n.: wish  
**fides:** *fides*, *-ei*, f.: trustworthiness; here, fulfillment (of a promise)  
**sequitur:** *sequor*, *sequi*, *secutus* (deponent verb): follow  
**tutela:** *tutela*, *-ae*, f.: guardianship; here, guardian(s)  
**fuere = fuerunt**
6.    **donec** (adverb): as long as  
**aevo:** *aevus*, *-i*, m.: age  
**soluti:** *solvo*, *-ere*, *solvi*, *solutum*: loosen; here, weaken
7.    **grad\_s:** *gradus*, *-\_s*, m.: step; ancient temples often had steps leading up to them  
**sacros:** *sacer*, *-cra*, *-crum*: holy  
**starent:** *sto*, *stare*, *steti*, *statum*: stand  
**forte:** *fors*, *fortis*, f.: chance
8.    **casus:** *casus*, *-\_s*, m.: event; in plural, “history”  
**frondere:** *frondeo*, *-ere*, *frondui*: grow leaves  
**Philemona:** *Philemon*, *-onis*, m.: man’s name; Greek accusative

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9. **Baucida:** *Baucis, -idis, f.:* woman's name; Greek accusative  
**conspexit:** *conspicio, -ere, -spexi, -spectum:* see  
**senior:** *senior, -oris, m.:* elder
10. **gemino:** *geminus, -a, -um:* twin, two-fold  
**crescente:** *cresco, -ere, crevi, cretum:* grow  
**cacumine:** *cacumen, -inis, n.:* top; here, tree-top  
**vultus:** *vultus, -s, m.:* face
11. **mutua:** *mutuus, -a, -um:* back and forth  
**licuit:** *licet, licere, licuit, licitum est* (impersonal verb): it is permitted  
**reddebant:** *reddo, -ere, -didi, -ditum:* return; here, exchange  
**dicta:** *dictum, -i, n.:* word
12. **dixere = dixerunt**  
**simul** (adverb): at the same time  
**abdita:** *abdo, -ere, abdidit, abditum:* hide  
**textit:** *tego, -ere, texi, tectum:* cover
13. **ora:** *os, oris, n.:* face  
**frutex:** *frutex, -icis, m.:* shrub; here, bark  
**adhuc** (adverb): even now  
**Thyneius:** Bithynian, of Bithynia; Bithynia is in Asia Minor  
**illic** (adverb): in that spot
14. **incola:** *incola, -ae, m.:* inhabitant  
**vicinos:** *vicinus, -a, -um:* next to each other  
**truncos:** *truncus, -i, m.:* tree trunk; torso