OPVS IMPERFECTVM? COMPLETING THE UNFINISHED ACROSTIC AT OVID, *METAMORPHOSES* 15.871–5

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the incomplete acrostic INCIP- *at Ov.* Met. *15.871–5 can be completed. If viewed as a 'gamma-acrostic', we can supply* -iam *from line 871, so that it receives its termination in retrospect. Ovid's manipulation of gamma-acrostic conventions caps his persistent confusion of beginnings and endings, and emphasizes the role of the reader as co-creator of his metamorphic œuvre.*

Classical literature abounds in acrostics, anagrams and other types of alphabetic play—Ovid's poems perhaps more so than most.[1] These are miniaturizations at the level of individual letters of other lexical games involving greater (sense-)units, such as puns or centos which recontextualize and resemanticize words or sentences, and figure-poems whose *mise-en-page* encodes their theme. On the spectrum of interpretative certainty, such verbal acrobatics fall somewhere between the text's surface-level meaning and the implicit significance of allusion; acrostics or puns that become objects of allusion muddy the waters.[2] Acrostics hold an intermediate position because they make a relatively great demand on readers to see authorial intentionality.[3] As with allusion/intertextuality, readers must 'work harder' to make acrostics meaningful.[4] Scholarship on these phenomena shows increased readiness to accept them: quantification sensitizes

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[1] For Ovidian acrostics/telestics, see G. Damschen, 'Das lateinische Akrostichon: neue Funde bei Ovid sowie Vergil, Grattius, Manilius und Silius Italicus', *Philologus* 148 (2004), 88–115; L. Kronenberg, 'Seeing the light, part II: the reception of Aratus's *LEPTĒ* acrostic in Greek and Latin literature', *Dictynna* 15 (2018), par. 21–4; M. Robinson, 'Arms and a mouse: approaching acrostics in Ovid and Vergil', *MD* 82 (2019a), 23–73; M. Robinson, 'Looking edgeways: pursuing acrostics in Ovid and Virgil', *CQ* 69 (2019b), 290–308; K. Mitchell, 'Ovid's hidden last letters on his exile—telestichs from Tomis: postcode or code?', *CCJ* 66 (2020a), 144–64; K. Mitchell, 'Acrostics and telestics in Augustan poetry: Ovid's edgy and subversive sideswipes', *CCJ* 66 (2020b), 165–81; M. Hanses, '*Naso deus*: Ovid's hidden signature in the *Metamorphoses*', in A. Sharrock, A. Möller and M. Malm (edd.), *Metamorphic Readings: Transformation, Language, and Gender in the Interpretation of Ovid's* Metamorphoses (Oxford, 2020), 126–41; J. Abad Del Vecchio, 'Literal bodies (*somata*): a telestich in Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 1.406–11)', *CQ* 71 (2021), 688–92. Anagrams: F. Ahl, *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets* (Ithaca, 1985), 44–54; D. Nelis, 'Arise, Aratus', *Philologus* 160 (2016), 177–9.

[2] See L. Kronenberg, 'Seeing the light, part I: Aratus's interpretation of Homer's *LEUKĒ* acrostic', *Dictynna* 15 (2018); Kronenberg (n. 1); L. Kronenberg, 'The light side of the moon: a Lucretian acrostic (*LUCE* 5.712–15) and its relationship to acrostics in Homer (*LEUKĒ*, *Il.* 24.1–5) and Aratus (*LEPTĒ*, *Phaen.* 783–87)', *CPh* 114 (2019), 278–92.

[3] See, infamously, I. Hilberg, 'Ist die *Ilias Latina* von einem Italicus verfasst oder einem Italicus gewidmet?', *WS* 21 (1899), 264–305 and 'Nachtrag zur Abhandlung "Ist die *Ilias Latina* von einem Italicus verfasst oder einem Italicus gewidmet?"', *WS* 22 (1900), 317–18; cf. A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton, 1995), 37–8; M. Korenjak, 'ΛΕΥΚΗ: was bedeutet das erste "Akrostikhon"?', *RhM* 152 (2009), 392–6; J. Hilton, 'The hunt for acrostics by some ancient readers of Homer', *Hermes* 141 (2013), 88–95.

[4] Cf. Robinson (n. 1 [2019b]), 290–2.

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us to their presence and demonstrates the reader's collusion with the text (and author) to bring such aspects of textuality into hermeneutic focus.

The imperfect acrostic *INCIP-* discovered by Alessandro Barchiesi in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* (15.871–5), apropos of Ovid's 'endgames'—the poet's fascination with the (un)finished nature of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*—presents a limit-case.[5] I contend that Ovid, forever bilocating on finishing but never ending his work and playing with varying notions of perpetuity and change, enables us to complete it. If viewed as a 'gamma-acrostic', like Aratus' famous ΛΕΠΤΗ-acrostic (*Phaen.* 783–7), the two axes of Ovid's acrostic are complementary.

I. THE ACROSTIC: *MET.* 15.871–5

The underlined and bolded letters in the coda of the *Metamorphoses* form the acrostic discovered by Barchiesi.[6] Following intra- (§II) and intertextual (§III) cues, I try to complete it.

> **Iam**que opus exegi, quod nec Iouis ira nec ignis
> **n**ec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere uetustas.
> **c**um uolet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
> **i**us habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aeui:
> **p**arte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis   875
> astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum;
> quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris
> ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama
> (siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia) uiuam.

Now I have completed my work, which neither Jupiter's anger, fire nor sword can efface, nor voracious old age. Let that day, that has power over nothing but my body, end, when it wishes, my uncertain span of years: yet my better part will be borne, immortal, beyond the distant stars. Wherever Rome's power extends, in the lands it has brought under its dominion, I will be spoken of, on people's lips: through all ages, if there is truth in poets' prophecies, in fame I will live on.

In the open-ended world of the *Metamorphoses*, where everything is ever-changing and nothing fixed, Ovid foretells his enduring legacy: an apparent constant in a cosmos where everything is in flux. At this significant moment, when he fulfils the proem's promise to conclude the *Metamorphoses* in his own day (*Met.* 1.1–4, below), Ovid unravels his text's fabric. As he proclaims—after Horace (*Carm.* 3.30.1)—his work finished (*iamque opus exegi*), a near-indestructible monument cementing his everlasting mutable *fama*, he negates closure with an incomplete acrostic: *INCIP-*.

Does an imperfect acrostic fit within established knowledge of acrostics and related phenomena or is it an accidental acrostic meeting an overzealous reader?[7] Parallels are instructive, though seldom definitive in debates of intentionality, but Ovid provides clues.[8]

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[5] A. Barchiesi, 'Endgames: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15 and *Fasti* 6', in D.H. Roberts, F.M. Dunn and D.P. Fowler (edd.), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton, 1997), 181–208, at 195.

[6] Text: R.J. Tarrant (ed.), *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoses* (Oxford, 2004).

[7] Cf. n. 3 above for agnosticism.

[8] Compare our 'matrix of texts' in D.P. Fowler, 'On the shoulders of giants: intertextuality and classical studies', *MD* 39 (1997), 13–34 = *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin*

II. MAKING MEANING: INTRATEXTUAL ARGUMENTS

Ovid's coda should be an *explicit*, signifying the book roll's end and providing closure. Instead, we get an *incip(it)* and an incomplete one at that: an *incertum spatium* concluding neither Ovid's *opus* nor *aeuum* and challenging the reader to supplement.

Incipio, ongoing present tense, would contrast neatly with the definitive perfect tense *exegi*, although the ending has no textual support. The temporal disjunction is mediated retroactively as one continues through the future tenses (*poterit*, *ferar*, *erit*, *legar*, *uiuam*) and the present subjunctives' future-oriented uncertainty (*uolet*, *finiat*),[9] since Ovid realizes that 'survival' beyond death is contingent on 'being read' (*legar*). But if we take ***Iam***, our acrostic's starting-point, as an interpretative marker, we can construe *incipiam*. We may not have to choose (if we choose): *incipiam* can be future tense ('I shall begin') and present subjunctive with optative and/or adhortative force ('may I/let me begin').

Signposting through 'verbal referents' is familiar from explicit wordplay and implicit allusion,[10] and at home in the phenomenon examined here, although this gamma-acrostic seems the first of its kind.[11] Although unique in Graeco-Roman poetry, our acrostic is no more outlandish than reversed or boustrophedon acrostics.[12]

The epilogue, like the narrative of the *Metamorphoses*, moves from the past (*exegi*) through the present into the future, bookended by Ovid's *uiuam* and *INCIP-/iam*. Like the proem (*Met.* 1.1–4), the coda is a programmatic *pars pro toto*. The poem's metamorphoses show the world's coming-into-being and impermanence. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, holds for Ovid's fame: his *fama* lives on, but like everything else in the universe it is not static.[13] In history and interpretation (and in the history of interpretation) recontextualization occurs in the *longue durée*, changing the meaning

(Oxford, 2000), 115–37, 14–15; S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 50–1.

[9] *uolet* (873) could be future tense but is better understood, like *finiat* (874; 'konzessiver Konj[unktiv]': F. Bömer [ed.], *P. Ovidius Naso: Metamorphoses. Kommentar*, 7 vols. [Heidelberg, 1969–86], 7.489), as present subjunctive after *cum*. Conversely, *ferar* (876), *legar* (878), *uiuam* (879), taken as future tenses, can be present subjunctives with adhortative/optative force. Ovid's syntactical ambiguity seems an extension of his oscillation between beginnings and endings.

[10] The term was coined by G. Morgan, '*Nullam, Vare …* Chance or choice in *Odes* 1.18?', *Philologus* 137 (1993), 142–5, at 143, exploring Virgil's *MARS/MARTEM*-acrostic—dismissed by Hilberg (n. 3), 267; contrast D.P. Fowler, 'An acrostic in Vergil (*Aeneid* 7.601–4)?', *CQ* 33 (1983), 298. On signposting, J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford, 1997), *passim*, J.J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor, 2017²), 57–102. The best-known marker is the 'Alexandrian' (rather: Hellenistic) footnote.

[11] The closest analogue is the 'partial or humorously "failed"' (Mitchell [n. 1 (2020b)], 7 n. 18) *DISCE*-acrostic at Hor. *Carm.* 1.18.11–15 (marker ***discernunt***), discussed by Morgan (n. 10). For Ovid, Mitchell (n. 1 [2020b]), 10 with n. 27 detects an irregular gamma-acrostic (*Met.* 1.29–32 *DEVS*; 1.32 *deorum*, line-end) (cf. Hanses [n. 1]) and gamma-telestic (*Pont.* 3.3.7–10 *TORO*; 3.3.8 *toro*, line-end).

[12] Cf. the Virgilian monogram *Pu-Ve-Ma* at *G.* 1.429–33 (E.L. Brown, *Numeri Vergiliani: Studies in «Eclogues» and «Georgics»* [Brussels, 1963], 102–4) or the boustrophedon acrostic-cum-telestic at *Aen.* 1.1–4 (C. Castelletti, 'Following Aratus' plow: Vergil's signature in the *Aeneid*', *MH* 69 [2012], 83–95).

[13] On Ovidian *F/fama*, see G. Guastella, *Word of Mouth: Fama and its Personifications in Art and Literature from Ancient Rome to the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2017), especially 177–84, P. Hardie, *Rumour and Renown: Representations of* Fama *in Western Literature* (Cambridge, 2012), 150–77, 392–3 and the contributions by E. Peraki-Kyriakidou ('The Ovidian Leuconoe: vision, speech and narration') and A.N. Michalopoulos ('*famaque cum domino fugit ab Vrbe suo*: aspects of *fama* in

readers attribute to a text.[14] Feeney puts the paradox well: 'The word that begins the poem's final paragraph, on Ovid's future fate, is *iam*, "now"—the "now" of the poet's act of completion, but always into the future the ongoing and ever-changing "now" of each new reader's act of coming to the end.'[15] Ovid's finale heralds a new start.

Ovid's *fama* continues through his poetic *œuvre* and future audiences, who are beyond 'perfect' authorial control, despite Ovid's best efforts, no matter how beguiling the text of the *Metamorphoses* or the hermeneutic strategies it encodes—semiosis never stops, as the acrostic underscores.[16] Our acrostic makes sense in context; authorial control brings us to a testimonium about the coming-into-being of the *Metamorphoses*.

III. MAKING IT MEAN: INTERTEXTUAL ARGUMENTS

In *Tristia* Book 2, Ovid laments that exile prevented him from finishing the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*:[17]

> sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos,
>   cumque suo finem mense uolumen habet,   550
> idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar,
>   et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus;
> …
> dictaque sunt nobis, quamuis manus ultima <u>coeptis</u>   555
>   defuit, in **facies** <u>corpora uersa</u> **nouas**.

Six books of *Fasti* I wrote, and the same number again; each volume ends with its own month. This work, recently written with your name at its head, Caesar, and dedicated to you, my bad lot interrupted … Written by me, too, although the undertaking lacked the finishing touch, were bodies changed into new appearances.

We should not take Ovid at his word.[18] As Stephen Hinds summarizes, 'one suspects … the *Metamorphoses* was rather more, and the *Fasti* rather less, finished than Ovid seems

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Ovid's exile poetry') in S. Kyriakidis (ed.), *Libera Fama: An Endless Journey* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016), respectively 71–93, 94–110.

  [14] P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, transl. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, 3 vols. (Chicago, 1985–1988) explores the *longue durée*; for the reading's spatiotemporal 'situatedness', see C. Martindale, *Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge, 1993), 3: '*Meaning*, could we say, *is always realized at the point of reception*; if so, we cannot assume that an "intention" is effectively communicated within any text' (original italics; cf. his n. 39).

  [15] D. Feeney, '*Mea tempora*: patterning of time in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, S. Hinds (edd.), *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's* Metamorphoses *and its Reception* (Cambridge, 1999), 13–30 = *Explorations in Latin Literature. Volume 1: Epic, Historiography, Religion* (Cambridge, 2021), 203.

  [16] Cf. Martindale's dictum (n. 14) and 'a writer *can never control the reception of his or her work*, with respect either to the character of the readership or to any use which is made of that work' (3–4). Nevertheless, Ovid builds rapport with readers: N. Pandey, *The Poetics of Power in Augustan Rome: Latin Poetic Responses to Early Imperial Iconography* (Cambridge, 2018), 76, 118, 125, 131–3, 216, 226–30, 238–9.

  [17] Text: G. Luck (ed.), *P. Ovidius Naso. Tristia*, 2 vols. Volume 1: *Text und Übersetzung* (Heidelberg, 1967–1977).

  [18] Varying perspectives in J.C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964); R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford, 1978); J.-F. Gaertner, *Ovid, Epistulae ex Ponto, Book 1* (Oxford, 2005), 8–24.

to claim.'[19] Like our intext, these lines could double as paratexts (*in-/excipits*) to the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, showing again that Ovid blurs beginnings and endings.

It is relevant that lines 555–6 echo the *incipit* of the *Metamorphoses* (1.1–4):

> In <u>noua</u> fert animus **mutatas** dicere **formas**
> <u>corpora</u>; di, coeptis (nam uos mutastis et illa)
> aspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.

My mind conceived to speak of forms changed into new bodies; gods, inspire my undertakings (for you changed those also) and lead my continuous poem down from the earliest beginning of the world to my own times!

It is uncertain where Ovid's *manus ultima* (*Tr.* 2.555) is lacking, because the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* accomplishes what Ovid announced in the prologue, culminating in his metamorphosis into undying *fama* among readers. It cannot refer to *nam uos mutastis et illa* (*Met.* 1.2), as Ovid in *Tristia* 1.1 addresses his poems to join their 'big brothers' (cf. 1.1.107 *fratres*), the 'thrice five volumes of/on changed form' of the *Metamorphoses* (1.1.117 *sunt quoque* **mutatae**, *ter quinque uolumina*, **formae**) in Rome: 'I trust you tell them that the appearance of my fate may be numbered among the changed bodies' (1.1.119–20 *his mando dicas, inter* <u>mutata</u> *referri* | *fortunae* <u>uultum</u> <u>corpora</u> *posse meae*), proving that the *Metamorphoses* were in circulation.

Rather, it must refer to the 'sequel' of the *Metamorphoses*, highlighting Ovid's *fama*. Not only are transformations the poem's subject, the *Metamorphoses* itself has undergone a change in appearance (cf. *Tr.* 1.1.120 <u>uultum</u> ∼ 2.556 <u>facies</u>) after Ovid's reversal of fate, as his readers know and will read into the text. Consequently, *Tristia* Book 1 serves as 'a potential sixteenth book of the *Metamorphoses*'.[20] Ovid's *iam* at *Met.* 15.871 begins to look like an *incipit*, demonstrating again the poet's propensity for confusing beginnings and endings.[21]

If the narrative of the *Metamorphoses* seems linear, from primordial times to Ovid's day (*mea tempora*), its conception of time is cyclical, toying with the idea of recurring ages.[22] Moreover, Alessandro Barchiesi remarks that the prologue's thematic *tempora* is also the opening word, and the alternative title, of the *Fasti*, Ovid's cyclical/calendrical poem, signalling the poems' complementary programmes.[23] Feeney notes that 'the arrow of Ovid's hexametric time in the *Metamorphoses* carries on down until it hits the circle of his elegiac time in the calendrical *Fasti*. These two categories are not watertight in separation, since time's arrow and time's cycle are never completely

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[19] S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge, 1987), 10. Barchiesi (n. 5) takes up this line of enquiry.

[20] So S.M. Wheeler, *Narrative Dynamics in Ovid's* Metamorphoses (Tübingen, 2000), 108–9, at 109. Cf. S. Hinds, 'Booking the return trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1', *PCPhS* 31 (1985), 13–32; G.D. Williams, *Banished Voices: Reading in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (Cambridge, 1994), 79–83 ('Ovid's unpolished Muse') on the aesthetic of imperfection of the *Metamorphoses*.

[21] See P. Hardie in P. Hardie (ed.) and G. Chiarini (transl.), *Ovidio: Metamorfosi*. Volume 6: *libri XIII–XV*, transl. A. Barchiesi (Milan, 2015), 622, comparing the opening of Books 3, 7, 8 and 14.

[22] For the linear/teleological drive of the *Metamorphoses*, see S. Hinds, 'After exile: time and teleology from *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*', in P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, S. Hinds (edd.), *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's* Metamorphoses *and its Reception* (Cambridge, 1999), 48–67, at 51–3; Wheeler (n. 20); H.H. Gardner, *Gendering Time in Augustan Love Elegy* (Oxford, 2013), 249–50. For cyclical aspects, Feeney (n. 15), 13–14; H. Van Noorden, *Playing Hesiod: The 'Myth of the Races' in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), 212–60, especially 215–16, 259–60.

[23] A. Barchiesi, 'Discordant Muses', *HSPh* 37 (1991), 1–21, at 6–7.

independent in the apprehension of time.'[24] The same applies to Ovid's return to cyclical elegy in the *Tristia* and to his wish to alter the form of the linear epic *Metamorphoses* and its temporal scope. The problem with an ending in the present (*Met.* 1.4 *ad mea … tempora*) is that the present keeps slipping away into an unknown changeable future (cf. *Met.* 15.874 *incerti … aeui*; *Tr.* 1.1.120 *fortunae … meae*).[25]

This temporal slippage is borne out by the inversion of the prologue of the *Metamorphoses* in *Tristia* Book 2, where the former's *in noua … corpora* and *mutatas … formas* switch places syntactically with the latter's *corpora uersa* and *in facies … nouas*: Ovid goes from 'speaking of forms changed into new bodies' to having written about 'bodies changed into new appearances', turning back the hands of cyclical-elegiac time in his banishment's living death to the linear-hexametric scheme of the *Metamorphoses*,[26] which in the hindsight of the *Fasti* and the *Tristia* is not simply a linear *deductum carmen* (cf. *Met.* 1.4 *deducite … carmen*) but a true *perpetuum … carmen* as the cycles of time repeat forever and change in the process. In what now is an 'unending', or at least 'unendable' or open-ended, poem, Ovid's *coepta* ('things begun') in retrospect become *incipientia* ('things beginning'), whose direction the gods changed at least once (*Met.* 1.2 *nam uos mutastis et illa*) and whose temporal (re-)orientation cannot permit a *manus ultima* (*Tr.* 2.555).[27] The gamma-acrostic *INCIP*-/*iam* underscores the poem's interminable nature.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The epilogue's unique gamma-acrostic *INCIP*-/*iam*, with its future anchoring point, markedly contrasts with the *coepta* of the prologue (*Met.* 1.2) and the *Tristia* (2.155). We come full circle: nothing is fixed in the time-space of Ovid's universe, not even his *fama*. Ovid's paradoxically (in)complete acrostic suits the literary programme of the *Metamorphoses* and the Ovidian *œuvre*. Ovid 'in his better part' is *perennis* (*Met.* 15.875), but in a world of unfettered semiosis this cannot be the part that 'has just now (*iam*) finished this work' (15.871), the letters or 'part' missing from our acrostic: readers must make Ovid whole again, recreate him in new forms (*in noua … corpora*)

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[24] D. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, 2007), 169, echoing Feeney (n. 15), 13. Cf. M. Labate, 'Tempo delle origini e tempo della storia in Ovidio' and S. Hinds, 'Dislocations of Ovidian time', both in J.-P. Schwindt (ed.), *La représentation du temps dans la poésie augustéene: Zur Poetik der Zeit in augusteischer Dichtung* (Heidelberg, 2005), respectively 177–201 and 203–30, at 208–11.

[25] Wheeler (n. 20), 108–9.

[26] For 'exile as death', see J.-M. Claassen, *Ovid Revisited: The Poet in Exile* (London, 2008), 16, 129–30, 136, 147; J.-F. Gaertner, 'Ovid and the "poetics of exile": how exilic is Ovid's exile poetry?', in J.-F. Gaertner (ed.), *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), 155–72, at 160 n. 26; M.M. McGowan, *Ovid in Exile: Power and Poetic Redress in the* Tristia *and* Epistulae ex Ponto (Leiden and Boston, 2009), 12 (with n. 44). The epitaphic/cenotaphic epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* aids the metaphor: P. Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge, 2002), 84, 91–7; Hardie (n. 13), 393, connected to the *Tristia* by F.K.A. Martelli, *Ovid's Revisions: The Editor as Author* (Cambridge, 2013), 162–4, 170–1; cf. J. Farrell, 'The Ovidian corpus: poetic body and poetic text', in P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, S. Hinds (edd.), *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's* Metamorphoses *and its Reception* (Cambridge, 1999), 127–41, at 141; Fowler (n. 8 [2000]), 196.

[27] Some take these passages as evidence for Ovid's banishment, although post-exilic textual changes remain difficult to explain: C.E. Murgia, 'Ovid *Met.* 1.544–7 and the theory of double recension', *CA* 3 (1984), 205–35.

in the act of reading, reflecting on previous appearances (*mutatas … formas*) across his *corpus* and its reception.[28] It is a fine irony that Ovid's disembodied undying *fama*, his 'better part' encoded within coda and intext, relies on the poem's physical layout on a book roll, a 'monument' subject to decay. In Ovid's end is his beginning and vice versa, but only 'at the point of reception' which is always-already new and full of *différance*.[29]

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[28] *CQ*'s reader suggests taking *in noua* as *innoua*, perpetuating Ovid's fiction of being commanded to write poetry.
[29] Cf. n. 14 above.