A few years ago, on the bimillennial anniversary of Ovid’s death, a small group of North American scholars began to discuss the desirability of establishing an International Ovidian Society (IOS), dedicated to the future of scholarship on Ovid’s poetry and its reception. The North American founders applied for Affiliated Group Status for the IOS in the SCS, and celebrated our receipt of this standing in January 2019 with an inaugural business meeting and reception in San Diego CA. As the idea was taking root, we enlisted the support of our international colleagues, who signed on as co-sponsors and future members of the organization, and many of these Ovidianisti came together in Pisa in 2019 to launch the first European meeting of IOS. The Society seeks to promote Ovid studies not only in Classics but in other fields, as well, such as art history, music, modern language studies, theater and performance, and more.

The organizers have been delighted to see the number of conferences proliferate in the three years across North America and beyond. Inaugural IOS panels have been held under the auspices of Classical Association of the Middle West and South – Southern Section (CAMWS-SS) in Winston-Salem North Carolina in October 2018; at the Society for Classical Studies in San Diego in January 2019; at the Classical Association of New England (CANE) in Worcester MA, in March 2019; at the Boston Area Roman Studies Conference and the Women’s Classical Caucus panel at CAMWS in Lincoln Nebraska in April 2019 and at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Canada in Hamilton Ontario in May 2019. Also in May 2019, the Columbia Global Center in Beijing hosted a conference on ‘Ovid and the Latin Classics in Chinese’, which surely marked the arrival of a new global era of Ovidian studies. In July 2019, FIEC (Fédération internationale des associations d’études classiques) also featured a session on ‘The Dominant Female in Ovid’s Metamorphooses and her reception’ to cap the series of international conferences marking the establishment of the IOS. The fledgling Society has put into place a governance structure (http://ovidiansociety.org) and also begun to reach out to scholars and teachers in such organizations as the Modern Language Association, the Renaissance Society of America, the Shakespeare Association of America, and others. We hope that European members will take the opportunity to do so in their national scholarly arenas as well.

Our conference in June 2019 at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa was intended to serve as a coming-out notice and European launching board for the International Ovidian Society and its future
activities. We hoped to attract a wide array of interests and members from Europe, and we will continue to be actively reaching out to younger scholars and graduate students. Our panels in Pisa were composed chiefly of senior faculty, and showcased the work of scholars training the next generation of Ovid enthusiasts. Papers ranged over the full spectrum of contemporary scholarship on Ovid from sustained studies of intertextuality, gender, and Augustan politics to issues of philosophy, ethnicity, imperialism, and reception. As founding President of the IOS, I want to thank everyone for their participation in this exciting venture, and especially our host at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Gianpiero Rosati, and his colleagues on the planning committee (Laurel Fulkerson, Sharon James, and Alessandro Schiesaro), who made it possible for IOS members to enjoy both an Ovidian feast and San Ranieri’s festa at the European launch of the International Ovidian Society.

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