> di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)   2
> adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.   4

There has been much discussion of the phrase 'perpetuum . . . carmen' and of its relation to Callimachus' rejection of the ἄεισμα διηνεκές (*Aetia* fr. 1. 3 Pfeiffer). Much less has been written about *deducite* in line 4. However it is, I believe, equally important for the 'programme' of Ovid's poem.

Deducere is a metaphor frequently applied to poetry in general with the sense of 'to write, compose something.'[1] In certain contexts the reference is much more specific and indicates subtle and polished writing of the kind associated with Callimachus. Here are four examples:

1. Cornificius fr. 1 (Morel):
                    deducta mihi voce garrienti

2. Horace, *Epistles* 2. 1. 224—5:
                    cum lamentamur non apparere labores
                    nostros et tenui *deducta* poemata filo.

3. Virgil, *Ecl.* 6. 4—5:
                                    pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
                    pascere oportet ovis, *deductum* dicere carmen.

4. Propertius 1. 16. 41—2:
                    at tibi saepe novo *deduxi* carmina versu
                    osculaque impressis nixa dedi gradibus.

(1) is quoted by Macrobius in his discussion of (3). He says, 'deductum pro tenui et subtili . . . positum est . . . item apud Cornificium.' (*Sat.* 6. 4. 1). Since 'tenuis' is the most common equivalent of Callimachus' λεπτός, it is likely that Cornificius, one of the 'Neoteric' poets who aimed at Alexandrian standards of craftsmanship, used the words 'deducta . . . voce' to proclaim the Callimachean cast of his poetry. Similarly in (2) 'labores', 'tenui' and 'deducta' combine to suggest poetry of the same sort. In (3) Apollo's words to Tityrus are adapted from fr. 1. 23 of the 'Aetia':

τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον
θρέψαι, τὴ]ν μοῦσαν δ᾽ ὦγαθὲ λεπταλέην

and the Callimachean provenance of (4) is indicated by a clear reference in line 42 to a Callimachus epigram (42 Pf., line 5).

Deducite at *Met.* 1. 4 is often simply rendered as 'bring down' etc. However,

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[1] See *TLL* v. 1, col. 282. 55 f. The metaphor is derived from spinning by ancient commentators and is often specifically employed in this way by Roman writers (e.g. Hor. *Ep.* 2. 1. 225, quoted below). However W. Eisenhut (in *Gedenkschrift für G. Rohde*, 1961, 91 f.) argues that in origin it stems from the use of 'deducere' illustrated by *TLL* v. 1, col. 280. 60 f. (= 'contrahere, attenuare', etc.), especially as applied to the human voice. This fits Cornificius fr. 1 (discussed below) admirably, since here at least the spinning metaphor seems completely absent.

given the unmistakable allusion to Callimachus in 'perpetuum . . . carmen' I
would claim that it must also[2] carry the Callimachean overtones present in the
four quotations discussed above. If this is accepted, we are in a better position
to appreciate the force of *deducite* here. It is intended to modify the effect of
'perpetuum . . . carmen'[3] with its apparent defiance of Callimachean principles.
In this context *deducite* would assure Ovid's readers that there would be no
betrayal of Callimachus.[4]

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[2] F. Bömer in his edition of *Met.* 1–3,
p. 15, translates 'weiterspinnen und geleiten'.
As he points out, *deducere* is here applied to
the gods and not, as normal, to the poet.
Contra, W. Eisenhut, art. cit., 91, who only
admits the meaning 'fortführen' here.

[3] Unlike Callimachus' ἄεισμα διηνεκές,
Ovid's 'perpetuum . . . carmen' refers to
temporal rather than thematic continuity.
See A.S. Hollis's edition of Bk. 8, p. xii.

[4] R. Coleman in *CQ* 65 (1971), 471, says,
'Ovid has developed his collection of fables
into a full-scale ἄεισμα διηνεκές that is the
antithesis of the μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν',
and is sure that Call. would have approved.
For the general problem of Ovid's intentions
and of how far the poem is an epic, see Cole-
man, art. cit., 461 f., A.S. Hollis, op. cit.,
pp. xiii f., Brooks Otis, 'Ovid as an Epic Poet',
ch. 3.