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WEAVING "CATULLAN" SONG:
ACHILLES' PERFORMANCES IN STATIUS' *ACHILLEID*

Summary: It has already been discussed in Statian scholarship that Achilles' first song in the *Achilleid* has close intertextual ties to Catullus' *Carmen* 64, the epyllion about the wedding of Achilles' parents. My aim in this paper is to show that this special intertextual relationship with Catullus 64 is not confined to Achilles' first song, but extends to the other two passages as well, where the hero is presented as a singer (1. 572–583 and 2. 157–158). In all three cases, furthermore, the intertextual connection is strengthened by the use of weaving metaphors, which were also of central importance in Catullus' epyllion.

Key words: Roman epic, Statius, *Achilleid*, Achilles, intertextuality, weaving (as metaphor), Catullus

By the end of the 1990s, after a long period of neglect, Statius' unfinished *Achilleid* has come to be regarded by many scholars – especially those focusing on issues of intertextuality and genre – as an exceptionally interesting piece of Roman literature.[1] One of the causes for this change in the reception of the poem was the finding that the *Achilleid* seems to form a quite different relationship with Augustan epic than the other works of Flavian epic, read frequently (and in many cases coupled with disapproving aesthetic judgments) as "Vergilian" in that they constantly try to imitate the *Aeneid* and reproduce epic discourse as set by Vergil's epic. By contrast, the *Achilleid* now seemed to be a poem which encourages its readers to recast the roles in Roman epic tradition, suggesting that works other than the *Aeneid* could be placed at the center of this canon as well – focusing on Vergil's epic is just one (still, of course, a very convincing one) among the many possible versions of how the history of Roman epic could be narrated.

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[1] This paper is the partial but updated English version of Chapter 5 in KOZÁK D.: *Achilles másik pajzsa. Hagyomány és értelmezés Statius Achilleisében* [The Other Shield of Achilles. Tradition and Interpretation in Statius' Achilleid]. Budapest 2012. The present version was completed with support of the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The winner in this "recasting of roles" has been Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the first place;[2] but Catullus' *carmen* 64 – an epyllion also located at the periphery of the epic genre as usually defined – has been recognized as a programmatically important intertext as well. It also contains sketches for a biography of Achilles: at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis the Parcae are singing about the deeds of the yet-to-be-born hero. It is thus not surprising that the *Achilleid* contains some significant allusions to (and in a few cases almost word-by-word quotations of) the Catullan song of the Parcae.[3] There seems to be, however, an even more interesting case of intertextual contact between the *Achilleid* and Catullus' epyllion, which serves as the starting point for my interpretation in the present paper. In the evening before his departure for Scyros, the young Achilles entertains his mother and Chiron with a song. The subjects are the labors of Hercules, the boxing match of Pollux and Amycus, Theseus' victory over the Minotaur and, finally, the famous wedding of Achilles' own parents (1. 188–194). The situation might remind the reader of *Iliad* 9 in the first place, where Achilles also performs a song (186–191); but, as Hinds noted,[4] there is a close thematic and compositional similarity between Achilles' and Catullus' song. Emphatically, it is Catullus 64 as a whole, not one particular story told in that poem, which is recalled by the Statian hero's performance. Both Achilles and Catullus combine in a single poem the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and Theseus' Cretan adventure. It is, however, not just similarity which connects the two songs: Catullus 64 is also an important literary model for the *Achilleid*. Statius – and this is Hinds' main point – inserts not any other song into his own, but the variant of a song which is a key text in the literary tradition behind the *Achilleid* itself. A model for the *Achilleid* according to the chronology of literary history, to be sure; but according to the chronology implied by Statius' fiction, it is Achilles' song in the *Achilleid* – sung at the beginning of the Trojan war – which is presented as a sort of "prototype" for the Catullan epyllion.

My aim in this paper is to continue the line of interpretation suggested by Hinds, and show that the "special relationship" between the *Achilleid* and Catullus 64 is not confined to Achilles' song mentioned above, but extends to the other two passages as well, where the hero is presented as a singer: on Scyros, Achilles (still disguised as a girl) is singing in duo with Deidamia about himself (1. 572–583), and in his autobiographic speech which ends our text of the *Achilleid* he mentions what he used to sing about while living in Chiron's cave (2. 157–158). In all three cases, furthermore, the intertextual connection with Catullus seems to be strengthened by the use of weaving metaphors, which were also of central importance in Catullus' epyllion.

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[2] On the *Achilleid* as an "Ovidian epic", see ROSATI, G.: L'Achilleide di Stazio, un'epica dell'ambiguità. *Maia* 44 (1992) 233–266 and especially HINDS, S.: *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry.* Cambridge, 1998, 135–144.

[3] See e.g. *Ach.* 1. 84–89 with Cat. 64. 343–349, 357–360; *Ach.* 2. 111 with Cat. 64. 341. M. LAULETTA (L'imitazione di Catullo e l'ironia nell'Achilleide di Stazio. *Latomus* 52 [1993] 84–97) also discusses some possible points of contact with *carmen* 63.

[4] HINDS (n. 2) 126–129, cf. HESLIN, P.: *The Transvestite Achilles. Gender and Genre in Statius' Achilleid.* Cambridge 2005, 88.

ACHILLES' SONG AT CHIRON'S CAVE

In *Ach*. 1. 118 the reader learns that Chiron taught Achilles about heroes of old by singing about them: *monstrare lyra veteres heroas alumno*. It is Achilles' first song, already summarized above, which makes it clear that playing music and singing are themselves part of the hero's education. When Thetis arrives at Chiron's cave, Achilles has the opportunity to present his skills to his mother (1. 184–197):

> Tunc libare dapes Baccheaque munera Chiron
> orat et attonitae varia oblectamina nectens
> elicit extremo chelyn et solantia curas
> fila movet leviterque expertas pollice chordas
> dat puero. Canit ille libens immania laudum
> semina: quot tumidae superarit iussa novercae
> Amphitryoniades, crudum quo Bebryca caestu
> obruerit Pollux, quanto circumdata nexu
> ruperit Aegides Minoia bracchia tauri,
> maternos in fine toros superisque gravatum
> Pelion: hic victo risit Thetis anxia vultu.
> nox trahit in somnos; saxo collabitur ingens
> Centaurus blandusque umeris se innectit Achilles,
> quamquam ibi fida parens, adsuetaque pectora mavult.

The introductory lines of the passage have received much less attention than Achilles' song itself. Chiron is characterized here as a host who goes out of his way to ensure the satisfaction of his illustrious guest: he not only offers her food and drink, but also gives some delightful presents (*oblectamina*, 185) and checks the tuning of the lyre (*expertas ... chordas*, 187) before handing the instrument over to Achilles. The chords are specified metaphorically as "threads", *fila* in the first word of line 187; this Latin metaphor is then explained by the Greek technical term, *chordas* at the end of the same line. The use of the metaphor here is especially interesting because the same will be used in both of the other *Achilleid* passages in which Achilles is presented as a bard. On Scyros Achilles shows Deidamia "the sweet threads of the lyre" (*dulcia ... fila lyrae*, 1. 572–573), and in his autobiography the hero himself calls the strings "resounding threads" (*fila sonantia*, 2. 157).

Ovid is apparently the first Latin author to use *fila* in this metaphorical sense in several of his poems, in most cases coupled with the name of the instrument: *fila lyrae*.[5] This expression is then found among the Flavians in Martial (*fila lyrae movi Calabris exculta Camenis, Epigr*. 12. 94. 5) and Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica,* according to which the young Achilles used to play the lyre together with Patroclus (*ut socius caro pariter meditetur Achilli / fila lyrae*, 1. 408–409). Statius is the only one to use it multiple times: in addition to the three *Achilleid* passages under discussion

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[5] *Am*. 1. 8. 60; *Ars* 2. 494; *Met*. 5. 118; *Fasti* 5. 106; *Met*. 10. 89 (without *lyrae*).

here, once in both the *Thebaid* and the *Silvae*.[6] *Fila*, of course, is only one of the traditional metaphors which connect the semantic fields of spinning, weaving and of poetic composition. Only a short sketch can be given here of the evolution of this network of metaphors.[7] The appearance of the noun *textus* in the meaning of 'text' happens at a relatively late stage in this process, but speech and wiles are already "woven" in Homeric epic; and when the narrator tells us about Helen working on a tapestry with scenes from the Trojan war, it would be hard not to read this as a *mise en abyme*.[8] The known fragments of archaic lyric suggest a more direct connection between poetry and weaving: the speakers of Pindaric and Bacchylidean poems describe themselves as "weavers of song".[9] Callimachus, in connection with rhapsodic performances, mentions "the *mythos* woven on the staff" (τὸν ἐπὶ ῥάβδῳ μῦθον ὑφαινόμενον, *Aitia* fr. 26. 5 Pf.).[10] In Roman poetry the metaphor is represented most frequently by the expression *carmen deducere / carmen deductum*,[11] especially marking refined, "fine-spun" poetry of "small" genres in contrast to "grand" epic, and explained by Servius thus in his comment on its earliest known occurrence: *translatio a lana, quae deducitur in tenuitatem* (*ad* Verg. *Ecl*. 6. 5). The narrator of the *Achilleid* himself uses *deducere* in the proem: he is going to "escort in his song the young hero through the whole of Troy" (*tota iuvenem deducere Troia*, 1. 7). This announcement can be read as a programmatic allusion to Ovid's slightly paradoxical statement *ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen* in the proem of the *Metamorphoses* (1. 4): Statius' poem, similarly to Ovid's, is going to be both "refined" and totalizing, telling about the whole life of the hero just like Ovid set out to narrate world history from Chaos to the poet's present day.[12]

The most consistent and forceful use of the "woven song" metaphor in Roman poetry can no doubt be found in Catullus' *carmen* 64, where the comparison of the world of texts and textiles is developed into a system of metaphors and other poetic

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[6] *Ferrum per pectus Agylleus / exigit aptatamque cava testudine dextram / percutit et digitos inter sua fila trementes* (*Theb*. 10. 308–310); *nil cantus, nil fila deis pallentis Averni / Eumenidumque audita comis mulcere valerent* (*Silvae* 5. 1. 27–28).

[7] See in more detail SNYDER, J. M.: The Web of Song. Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets. *CJ* 76 (1981) 193–196; SCHEID, J. – SVENBRO, J.: *The Craft of Zeus. Myths of Weaving and Fabric*. Cambridge, Mass. – London 1996, 131–155 and ROSATI, G.: Form in Motion: Weaving the Text in the Metamorphoses. In HARDIE, P. – BARCHIESI, A. – HINDS, S. (edd.): *Ovidian Transformations. Essays on Ovid's Metamorphoses and Its Reception*. Cambridge 1999, 240–253.

[8] Cf. KENNEDY, G. A.: Helen's Web Unraveled. *Arethusa* 19 (1986) 5–14, who also emphasizes the differences between the carpet and the song as works of art. The parallel between the carpet and the song is also mentioned in the scholia: ἀξιόχρεων ἀρχέτυπον ἀνέπλασεν ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας ποιήσεως *(sch.* T *ad Il*. 3. 126–127).

[9] Pind. *N*. 4. 44 and 94; *O*. 6. 86–87; *fr*. 179 S–M; Bacch. *Epin*. 5. 9–10, *Dith*. 5. 8–10.

[10] The metaphor is based on the supposed etymological connection between ῥαψῳδός and ῥάβδος instead of ῥάπτω.

[11] EISENHUT, W.: Deducere Carmen. In RADKE, G. (Hrsg.): *Gedenkschrift für Georg Rohde*. Tübingen 1961, 91–104 = ID., in *Properz* [Wege der Forschung 237]. Darmstadt 1975, 247–263; KOSTER, S.: Liebe und Krieg in der Achilleis des Statius. *WJA* 5 (1979) 192–196.

[12] Cf. BARCHIESI, A.: La guerra di Troia non avrà luogo: il proemio dell'Achilleide di Stazio. *AION(filol)* 18 (1996) 58–59 and FEENEY, D.: *Tenui ... latens discrimine*: Spotting the Differences in Statius' Achilleid. *MD* 52 (2004) 87.

figures which spans the whole of the epyllion.[13] Catullus' poem is partly about different threads and textiles, similar in that they all function as kinds of media conveying information, substituting or supplementing human language. Theseus uses Ariadne's thread as a map in the labyrinth. The famous coverlet of the wedding bed of Peleus and Thetis is decorated with scenes from the story of Ariadne, Theseus and Dionysus: scenes which the narrator, while providing an ecphrasis, turns into a story, thus partially blurring the line which separates image and text from each other. Aegeus invents a simple code system – a language, in fact – based on differently colored sails. Last but not least the Parcae, while singing about the life of the yet-to-be-born Achilles, also spin the threads of fate, into which threads basic facts of the hero's life are encoded, as it were: the song and the thread are two media which convey the same information.

But let us return to the *Achilleid*. My point is that just a few lines preceding the summary of Achilles' first song which is going to allude (as interpreted by Hinds) to the Catullan epyllion through some of its subjects, the use of *fila* to refer to the strings of the lyre may recall not only the traditional metaphor of "weaving song", but Catullus 64 specifically as well. *Fila* may itself be seen as one of the ties that intertextually link the "most Catullan" passage of the *Achilleid* to Catullus' epyllion and, especially, the song of the Parcae. Achilles, just like the goddesses, is simultaneously singing and handling some "threads".[14] The hero, whose future life was the main subject of the song of the Parcae, has now grown up and become a bard himself, singing about the wedding during which the Parcae's song about himself had once been performed. The audience of the songs is partially the same: Thetis and Chiron were both present at the wedding.[15] The connection between the Statian and Catullan passage is further strengthened by some verbal similarities in their introductory lines:

> ... *fila movet leviterque expertas pollice chordas*
> *dat puero*.   (*Ach*. 1. 187–188)

> ... *dextera tum leviter deducens fila supinis*
> *formabat digitis, tum prono in pollice torquens*
> *libratum tereti versabat turbine fusum* ...   (Cat. 64. 312–314)

It is conspicuous in the Statian wording that Chiron hands over the strings rather than the instrument itself (*chordas / dat puero*). Technically, Achilles needs the lyre,

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[13] LAIRD, A.: Sounding out Ecphrasis. Art and Text in Catullus 64. *JRS* 83 (1993) 25–28; GAISSER, J. H.: Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64. *AJP* 116 (1995) 579–616; SCHEID–SVENBRO (n. 7) 95–107; ROBINSON, T.: Under the Cover of Epic: Pretexts, Subtexts and Textiles in Catullus' Carmen 64. *Ramus* 35 (2006) 49–54.

[14] The threads of fate – no less metaphorical, of course, than the threads of the lyre – are mentioned later in the *Achilleid*, although by a different word, when Calchas "consults the threads of fate" about Achilles' whereabouts: *nunc dura Sororum / licia ... consulit* (1. 519–520).

[15] Thetis' memories of the song of the Parcae, as HESLIN (n. 4) 88 notes, may influence her reactions to Achilles' song. The Parcae also prophesied the early death of Achilles, so it is easy to understand why the anxiety of the goddess, mentioned before the song (*angunt sua gaudia matrem*, 183) is not completely eased by his son's performance (*hic victo risit Thetis anxia vultu*, 194).

which is referred to by a synecdoche here;[16] but in the metaphorical language of poetic composition, he needs the strings, the metaphorical "threads" as "material" out of which, when combined with words, song can be "woven".

If we re-read the passage focusing on the Catullan metaphor of "woven song", other examples of its use begin to emerge. Before bringing the lyre, Chiron is "weaving various delights" for the amazement of Thetis: *varia oblectamina nectens attonitae* (185). It is not specified what they are – *oblectamen* can mean anything which delights one –, but this metaphorical weaving of presents may remind the reader of how in Catullus Chiron himself brought Thetis "wreaths woven of various flowers" (*hos indistinctis plexos tulit ipse corollis*, Cat. 64. 283).[17] The verb *necto* occurs again at the end of the episode. After performing his song Achilles goes to sleep, "twining himself under Chiron's shoulder" (*umeris se innectit*, 196). The use of the noun *nexus*, which is found exactly at the middle of the summary of Achilles' song, is more interesting and allows for a more detailed interpretation. One of the subjects of the song is Theseus' victory over the Minotaur: *quanto circumdata nexu / ruperit Aegides Minoia bracchia Tauri* ("with how strong a grip the son of Aegeus encircled and broke the limbs of Minos' bull", 191–192). The close connection with *carmen* 64 is made clear by the ending of line 192, recalling the simile with which the Catullan narrator describes the fight. Theseus, we are told, killed the Minotaur "just like the whirlwind on the top of Taurus brings down an oak-tree with its branches feathering" (*velut in summo quatientem bracchia Tauro / quercum ... turbo ... eruit*, Cat. 64. 105–108).[18] The geographical location chosen for the simile is, of course, a pun on the name of Theseus' opponent; and the Statian narrator acknowledges this pun by using the same line ending (*Minoia bracchia tauri*, *Ach*. 1. 192), but referring to the bull instead of the mountain.[19] It is probably not by chance that Catullus' oak is brought down by a whirlwind, *turbo* (107; cf. *exturbata*, 108): the word also denotes the fly-wheel of the spindle, and will be used in this sense by Catullus later in the poem (*libratum tereti vibrabat turbine fusum,* 314). By the use of *turbo*, then, the narrator inserts Theseus' fight into the system of textile metaphors in the epyllion already before mentioning Ariadne's thread (*tenui ... filo*, 113).[20]

It is important to note, however, that this simile in Catullus is not supplementing but replacing the narration of the fight itself: we are informed about what the

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[16] Cf. Statius, *Achilleid.* Edited with introduction, apparatus criticus and notes by O. A. W. DILKE. Cambridge 1954, *ad loc.*: "by *chordas* Statius means the whole instrument as obj. of *dat*, but the strings in connection with *expertas*."

[17] Statius uses *oblectamen* in the *Silvae* (3. 5. 95) as well, but referring to the tourist attractions around Naples. A closer parallel which supports my assumption of a Catullan allusion is provided by Ov. *Met.* 9. 342: *quos oblectamina nato porrigeret flores*. For the poetic terminology of wreaths of flowers, cf. also *nexilibus flores hederis habet intertextos* (Ov. *Met.* 6. 128, in the ecphrasis of Arachne's tapestry).

[18] On this Catullan simile, see MURGATROYD, P.: The Similes in Catullus 64. *Hermes* 125 (1997) 76–77.

[19] HINDS (n. 2) 127, quoting Philip Hardie *per litteras:* "*bracchia tauri* unriddles the line-ending of Catullus 64, 105".

[20] Cf. DEBROHUN, J. B.: Ariadne and the Whirlwind of Fate: Figures of Confusion in Catullus 64.149–57. *CP* 94 (1999) 419–430. *Turbo* is also used by Ariadne in connection with Theseus' fight against the Minotaur: *certe ego te in medio versantem turbine leti / eripui* (149–150).

fight was similar to, but not how it exactly *happened*.[21] Did Theseus use a sword, a stick, or did he wrestle? These are the three variants in the iconographical and literary tradition.[22] In the two-line summary of the fight (110–111) – conspicuously short in comparison with the five-line simile – the Catullan narrator does not explicitly commit himself to any of these variants.[23] In the *Achilleid*, by contrast, the question is answered: the fight is described as a wrestling match in which the body parts of the two opponents are intertwined, as it were, which allows the narrator to use another weaving metaphor (*nexus*).[24] This is Statius' answer, then, to the "challenge" set by Catullus, to the comparison of the famous fight with both a whirlwind and with spinning by the use of *turbo*.

In the narrator's presentation of Achilles' poetic performance, furthermore, a progression can be discerned from the simple towards the complex. First, metaphoric threads are given by Chiron to his pupil to perform a song. Then, during the summary of the song, we read about how the wrestlers' body parts are intertwined. Finally, when the "weaving of song" nears completion, the "maternal bed" (*maternos in fine toros*, 193) becomes the subject. This bed, however, is figurative in a double sense. It both refers to the wedding as an event and – as Hinds emphasized – the woven coverlet which is described at length in Catullus.[25] The process of poetic composition and performance, as suggested by the series *fila–nexus–tori,* is really like the weaving of a fabric. In both cases threads (real or metaphorical) have to be combined with each other, resulting in textile or text. Using such metaphors when summarizing Achilles' first song, the Statian narrator not only strengthens the intertextual connection between his own poem and that of Catullus, but he also recreates in a miniature version the network of spinning and weaving metaphors which played a vital role in making *carmen* 64 such a unique poem.

ACHILLES' SONGS ON SCYROS

The following morning Thetis takes Achilles to the island of Scyros to hide him from the Greeks who are looking for the hero to join the army preparing against Troy. His mother has Achilles put on women's clothes and introduces him to Lycomedes, the king of the island, as Achilles' sister. The disguised hero thus begins living among the daughters of Lycomedes, and falls in love with the most beautiful, Deidamia. He takes every opportunity to have her attention and spend time together. Achilles teaches

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[21] WILLIAMS, G.: *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry.* New Haven – London 1980, 49; cf. ROBINSON (n. 13) 43–44, who also emphasizes that later the narrator himself labels the summary of the fight as an excursion (*sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura / commemorem*, 116–117).

[22] See *LIMC s. v.* "Theseus" 228–260 and HESLIN (n. 4) 90–91.

[23] Even less information is provided by the Vergilian narrator during the ecphrasis of the Temple of Apollo at Cumae (*Aen.* 6. 24–30).

[24] The fight is also described as a wrestling match by Statius during the ecphrasis of Theseus' shield in the *Thebaid* (12. 668–671).

[25] HINDS (n. 2) 127.

Deidamia how to play the lyre, while the girl (not yet aware of Achilles' true identity) teaches him how to spin (1. 572–583):

> ... *modo dulcia notae*
> *fila lyrae <u>tenuesque</u> <u>modos</u> et carmina <u>monstrat</u>*
> *Chironis ducitque <u>manum</u> digitosque sonanti*
> *infringit citharae, nunc occupat ora canentis*
> *et ligat amplexus et mille per oscula laudat.*
> *Illa libens discit, quo vertice Pelion et quis*
> *Aeacides, puerique auditum nomen et actus*
> *assidue stupet et praesentem cantat Achillem.*
> *Ipsa quoque et validos proferre <u>modestius</u> artus*
> *et <u>tenuare</u> rudes attrito pollice lanas*
> *<u>demonstrat</u> reficitque colos et perdita dura*
> *pensa <u>manu</u> ...*

Playing the lyre and spinning/weaving are both traditional elements in the myth describing Achilles' hiding on Scyros;[26] what makes Statius' version special is that it suggests a metaphoric relationship between these activities (recalling both Achilles' first song[27] and Catullus 64 again), also emphasizing this by a number of verbal similarities in their descriptions (marked in the above quotation). Playing music, just like in the case of Achilles' previous song, is described as "weaving". *Fila* is used again to refer to the strings of the lyre, and the metaphor is further developed by *tenuesque modos*. The "slender melodies" Achilles teaches Deidamia recall the idea of *carmen deductum* as opposed to grandiose epic (cf. Servius' explanation quoted above): *tenuis* is the near-equivalent of Callimachean λεπτός in Roman literature,[28] programmatically used for example in bucolic poems and lyric recusations.[29] The "small genre" specifically evoked by *tenues modos* here – especially after the "threads" of the lyre were just called "sweet" (*dulcia ... fila,* 572–573) – seems to be love poetry. Achilles' song, although heroic in subject, is going to be elegiac, after all, in its context and purpose: Achilles, playing the role of the Propertian and Ovidian lover-poets, tries to

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[26] Eur. *fr.* 683a Kannicht; Lycophron, *Alexandra* 278; Ps-Bion, *Epithalamios* 15–17, Ov. *Ars* 1. 691–695. On the Kaiseraugst plate (*LIMC s. v.* "Achilleus", No. 102) the disguised Achilles is playing the lyre and the girls are spinning in the same scene. Polygnotus, as we know from Pausanias (*LIMC* No. 95), has already painted the scene of Achilles among Lycomedes' daughters, but Pausanias' description does not allow us to decide whether or not he is playing the lyre. Among the known representations of the scene (*LIMC* Nos. 96–104), all later than the *Achilleid*, No. 98, the relief on an Attic sarcophagus is particularly interesting, which shows both the disguised hero and one of the girls (Deidamia?) playing the lyre – just like in the *Achilleid* passage under discussion here.

[27] The earlier *Achilleid* passage, in addition to the shared metaphor, is also evoked by *notae ... lyrae* (572–573) and, more explicitly by the wording *illa libens discit* (577), cf. *canit ille libens* (188).

[28] For details and bibliography see VAN TRESS, H.: *Poetic Memory. Allusion in the Poetry of Callimachus and the Metamorphoses of Ovid.* Leiden 2004, 43–55 (on λεπτός) and 55–71 (on *deductus* and *tenuis*).

[29] See e.g. Verg. *Ecl.* 1. 2, Hor. *c.* 1. 6. 9 and 3. 3. 72. Two Statian examples: *Silvae* 1. 4. 36, 4. 7. 9.

seduce Deidamia.[30] No surprise that the "threads" of the lyre are called "sweet" by the narrator (*dulcia*, 572–573), an adjective having strong erotic connotations in addition to the sense of 'delightful', and that Achilles praises his pupil's performance with a thousand kisses, *mille per oscula* (576), recalling for the reader Catullus' *basia mille* (*c*. 5).[31] Finally, in addition to kisses, Achilles also "twines Deidamia in his embrace" (*ligat amplexus,* 576) – thus the narrator inserts the hero's more explicitly erotic moves in the series of metaphorical weaving (singing) and actual spinning in the episode.

It is important to note that the narrator seems to summarize not the contents of one song, but a series of songs, a poetic repertoire. The passage is introduced as an iterative narrative (*nunc ... nunc ... nunc ... modo ... nunc,* 570–576), and Deidamia learns the song Achilles performs about himself: she repeats it, with or without variations (579). The subject of the duo's songs is summarized briefly: *quo vertice Pelion et quis / Aeacides* (577–578). The use of the patronymic might suggest that Achilles also sings about his family and predecessors in addition to mentioning his own name and narrating his deeds (*puerique auditum nomen et actus,* 578),[32] which have such an effect on the girl (cf. *assidue stupet,* 579) that she herself begins to sing about the hero: *praesentem cantat Achillem*. The narrator emphasizes the visual aspect of the song's effect on Deidamia: she is "*gazing* at the name and deeds she *heard*". The striking synaesthesia is justified: the hero of the song, Achilles, appears not only before the mind's eye, but he is actually there in front of Deidamia, he is *praesens,* although the girl does not yet realize that.[33]

Some additional details about these songs might be provided, if indirectly, by another *Achilleid* passage. Achilles, after some time, loses patience and rapes Deidamia. He then introduces himself thus, in words which certainly unsettle modern readers (1. 650–652, 655–656):

> *Ille ego (quid trepidas?) genitum quem caerula mater*
> *paene Iovi silvis nivibusque immisit alendum*
> *Thessalicis ...*

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[30] For a detailed "elegiac" reading of the passage, see MICOZZI, L.: A lezione di ars amatoria nell'Achilleide. *MD* 59 (2007) 132–140; cf. also ARICÒ, G.: L'Achilleide di Stazio. Tradizione letteraria e invenzione narrativa. In *ANRW* 2.32.5 1986, 2944. Another possible model is *Aeneid* 1–4, where Aeneas' "epic" narrative of his wanderings similarly becomes embedded in an "elegiac" context in that these tales are among the causes of Dido's falling in love with Aeneas (cf. RIPOLL, F. – SOUBIRAN, J.: Stace, *Achilléide*. Louvain – Paris 2008, *ad loc.*). An interesting coincidence is that Dido would like to hear about Achilles among other heroes: *rogitans ... quantus Achilles* (*Aen*. 1. 750–752), cf. *discit ... quis Aeacides* (*Ach*. 1. 577–578).

[31] Cf. RIPOLL-SOUBIRAN (n. 30) *ad loc.*

[32] For us readers, the name 'Achilles' is gradually revealed by the narrator. First he asks *quis Aeacides?,* then announces that the name is uttered by the bard and heard by Deidamia *(puerique auditum nomen);* but only at the end of the next line do we read *Achillem*.

[33] *Nomen ... praesentem ... Achillem* recalls how the Greek soldiers earlier "burn for the absent Achilles, love Achilles' name" (*omnis in absentem belli manus ardet Achillem, nomen Achillis amant,* 1. 473–474). There might be a Vergilian allusion in these lines as well, as noted by MICOZZI (n. 30) 140 – Dido cannot stop thinking about Aeneas: *illum absens absentem auditque videtque* (*Aen*. 4. 83).

> *Quid defles magno nurus addita ponto?*
> *Quid gemis ingentes caelo paritura nepotes?*

Achilles does not utter his name in these lines; he only identifies himself with a hero who could have been Jupiter's son, and who was sent by his sea-goddess mother to the forests of snowy Thessaly for education.[34] Such an introduction can be effective only if its addressee has already known the story and the name of the hero: and Deidamia knows them from the songs Achilles taught her – or at least this is what the narrator has suggested. Achilles' introduction, then, can be seen as supplementing the narrator's earlier summary of the songs. Achilles' words now imply that in addition to his real ancestry (as suggested by *quis Aeacides,* 577–578), he has also sung about why he had not been born as Jupiter's son; and the mention of Thessalian forests and snow elaborates the picture already outlined earlier by *quo vertice Pelion* (577).

In addition to summarizing the contents of Achilles' songs, the indirect questions *quo vertice Pelion et quis / Aeacides* also seem to outline the relationship of these songs to his first song performed in Chiron's cave, to the *Achilleid* as a whole, and to the literary tradition behind Statius' epic; and they do so by recalling the opening lines of two epic poems. The second question, *quis Aeacides* evokes the first words of the *Achilleid* itself, *magnanimum Aeaciden* (1. 1), and this reference is further strengthened by *puerique ... actus* (578), echoing *acta viri* in the proem (3).[35] Of course, the hero is called by the patronymic several times (ten, to be exact) in the epic; but its most important and memorable occurrence is, without doubt, the first line of the *Achilleid*. By alluding to the proem in this passage, the narrator may call attention to the special relationship between Achilles' songs on Scyros and the *Achilleid* in which they are summarized: to the fact that what Achilles – and then Deidamia – performs is not simply a "song inside the song", but an "Achilleid inside the *Achilleid*". Odysseus and Aeneas, to be sure, have also given lengthy accounts of their wanderings in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, but those accounts were not poems – in this sense, Achilles' songs about himself are a novelty in ancient epic. On the other hand, these songs are not really autobiographic: they cannot yet be told in the first person.[36]

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[34] The opening of the introduction, *ille ego (quid trepidas?)* seems to recall the "pre-proem" of the *Aeneid*, most probably unauthentic, *ille ego qui quondam* etc., and similar *ille ego* references in poetic texts (e.g. Ov. *Tr.* 4. 10. 1) by which a narrator or speaker identifies himself with the poet of another work. The Statian hero also identifies himself here not just with Achilles, but also with the composer of the song Deidamia has already heard, and thus implicitly reminds the girl of where she has heard all these pieces of information before. (I am grateful to Ábel Tamás for his comments on this passage.) Curiously, a phrasing similar to the pre-proem of the *Aeneid* is found again at *Ach.* 1. 881–882, as FEENEY (n. 12) 100–101 noted.

[35] The interpretation of *acta viri* – which in the proem refers to the deeds of Achilles narrated by Homer – might be modified a bit if we take into account the summary of Achilles' songs on Scyros. *Viri* in the proem might not only recall the first word of the Odyssey (ἄνδρα) and the second of the *Aeneid* (*virumque),* but also suggest that the poet of the *Iliad* narrated the deeds of the *adult* Achilles. Achilles' songs on Scyros, by contrast, are about the deeds of the *boy* Achilles (*puerique ... actus).* The Scyros episode itself is what falls between the deeds of the *puer* and the *vir.*

[36] Cf. Odysseus' "Cretan tales" in *Odyssey* 14, 17 and 19 (although these, as the Homeric narrator tells us, are false).

Achilles' real autobiography will be related in speech, not in song, in *Achilleid* 2 (94–167).

The mention of the peak of Mount Pelion makes Achilles' songs comparable with another epic poem. The peak was also mentioned in the hero's first song as the venue for the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (*maternos in fine toros superisque gravatum / Pelion*, 193–194). This was the last subject of that song, and the one which has been interpreted as providing a strong link with Catullus 64 in the first place. Achilles may also have told Deidamia about the wedding, but this is not explicitly stated by the narrator; but even if he did not, the words used in the summary recall the epyllion again, although in another way than Achilles' first song did. The question *quo vertice Pelion*[37] seems to allude to two passages of Catullus 64. During the narration of the wedding proper the Catullan narrator states that Chiron was the first to arrive: *princeps e vertice Pelei / advenit Chiron portans silvestria dona* (278–279).[38] The *vertex* of Pelion, however, recalls the opening of the epyllion as well: *Peliaco quondam prognatae vertice pinus / dicuntur liquidas Neptuni nasse per undas* (1–2). These lines had quickly become the target of allusions (already in Vergil),[39] and Statius' *quo vertice Pelion* can be seen as one of them.

Thus, if *quis Aeacides* suggested a comparison between Achilles' songs and the *Achilleid* itself, then *quo vertice Pelion* implies that these songs are also an imitation of Catullus 64, according to the chronology of literary history. At the same time, however, we can also treat them as a "prototype" of the epyllion (like Achilles' first song was, as interpreted by Hinds), from the point of view of mythical chronology: a song is composed about the peak of Pelion and about Achilles already on the eve of the Trojan war. Catullus 64, of course, is about much more than the Pelion and Achilles. It also narrates the wedding of the hero's parents and, in a lengthy ecphrasis, the story of Theseus and Ariadne. The latter two were precisely the subjects treated (among others) in Achilles' first song in the *Achilleid;* on Scyros, they are the ones omitted and replaced by subjects that recall the opening of the epyllion and its closure, the song of the Parcae about the future deeds of Achilles. Whatever falls between the two in Catullus, is omitted on Scyros; Achilles' songs thus present Catullus 64 as a

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[37] DILKE (n. 16) *ad loc.* understands the question as referring to the height of Pelion, but its sense may be more general than that, concerning the overall sight of the peak.

[38] *Silvestria dona* refers to the flowers the centaur brings Thetis (280–284). The phrase *e vertice Pelei* – as noted by FORDYCE, C. J.: *Catullus. A Commentary.* Oxford 1961, *ad loc.* – might be modeled on the Homeric Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς (*Il.* 16. 144, about Peleus' spear).

[39] In fact, the Catullan narrator himself references it intertextually in the above quoted lines about Chiron's arrival at the wedding (278–279). In the *Aeneid* Aeneas' ships, after having been turned into nymphs, introduce themselves thus: *nos sumus, Idaeae sacro de vertice pinus, / nunc pelagi nymphae, classis tua* (10. 230–231); on the intertextual connection between this passage and Catullus 64, see FANTHAM, E.: *Nymphas … e navibus esse:* Decorum and Poetic Fiction in Aeneid 9.77–122 and 10.215–59. *CP* 85 (1990) 102–119. Ovid makes an even more obvious allusion to the Catullan opening in his propempticon addressed to Corinna: *prima malas docuit mirantibus aequoris undis / Peliaco pinus vertice caesa vias* (*Am.* 2. 11. 1–2). Valerius alludes to Catullus and Homer (see the previous note) at the same time when he uses the two keywords in connection with Peleus' spear: *tantum haec aliis excelsior hastis / quantum Peliacas in vertice vicerat ornos* (*Arg.* 1. 405–406). Among these passages alluding to Catullus, the peculiarity of Statius' *quo vertice Pelion* is that it does not mention the trees.

poem which has already been an *Achilleid*, basically – just with "some" embellish-ment added to it.

ACHILLES' *ARS POETICA* – AND STATIUS'

In his autobiographic speech which ends the unfinished second book of the *Achilleid*, the hero introduces himself as a hunter and soldier in the first place; but in the last part of his speech he adds other fields of expertise. The account of his physical train-ing ends with the statement that he was "urged by glory reaching the skies": *sic me sublimis agebat / gloria* (2. 152–153).[40] Achilles then speaks about his athletic skills (154–156) and his studies in arts and science. In addition to medicine (159–163), law and ethics (163–165) Chiron taught him music as well (157–158):

> *… Apollineo quam fila sonantia plectro*
> *cum quaterem priscosque virum mirarer honores*.

The reader is not surprised, of course, having learned about Achilles' songs in Chiron's cave and on Scyros; and he is not surprised to read about the "threads of the lyre" again. What is, however, conspicuous is that instead of the narrator, this time it is a character who employs the *fila* metaphor. Achilles himself is, unwittingly, using one of the self-reflexive terms of Roman poetry, and thus the *Achilleid* suggests how ancient the metaphor is, even if it came to be used mostly in connection with "finely spun" Alexandrian poetry: the heroes of the Trojan war had already employed it.

Achilles, as he puts it, used to "marvel" at the subject of his songs: *priscosque virum mirarer honores*. The use of *mirari* in the sense of 'singing (with marvel)' is not unparalleled, but still extremely rare;[41] it implies that the poet himself is emo-tionally affected by his song. The Homeric Achilles was also singing about famous heroes to console himself (φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ … τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν, *Il*. 9. 186–189); but what is the effect the songs have on the Statian Achilles? The context – his education – seems to suggest that the heroes the boy sings of are to be followed by him as examples; and by singing about them with marvel, he is both strengthening more and more his adherence to the heroic code and proving to his teacher Chiron – who is supposed to be the audi-ence[42] – not only his musical skills but also that he has interiorized the heroic ide-ology. Achilles' singing can thus be seen as a kind of autosuggestive educational

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[40] Cf. κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἵκανε (Hom. *Od*. 8. 74, on the subject of Demodocus' first song); later Odysseus himself uses the same metaphor, introducing himself to the Phaeacians: μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει (9. 20). Aeneas' introduction to the disguised Venus also recalls these Homeric passages: *sum pius Aeneas … fama super aethera notus* (Verg. *Aen*. 1. 378–379).

[41] In the *Aetna* songs are themselves "marveling" at their subjects: *illos mirantur carmina vatum* (642). Statius also uses the verb in this sense in the *praefatio* of *Silvae* 4, about poem 3 in the collection: *tertio viam Domitianam miratus sum* (*Silvae* 4, *praef.* 7).

[42] Patroclus might be present too, cf. *Ach*. 1. 174–177.

method; Achilles, as implied by *mirarer,* was indeed the primary, "ideal audience" of his own songs.[43]

The subject of Achilles' marvelling-in-song is *priscos ... virum honores*, "the pristine respect of men". *Priscos* further develops what is also expressed by *mirarer:* the adjective usually implies that something is not just pristine, but also highly valued, to be marveled, because of its age.[44] The wording suggests an enallage; "the respect of pristine men" would sound much more natural, and would be a more exact "translation" of the extended Greek formulas like τῶν πρόσθεν … κλέα ἀνδρῶν (Hom. *Il.* 9. 524), κλεῖα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων (Hes. *Theog.* 100) or παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν (Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 1. 1).[45] Especially in light of these Greek parallels, the use of *honores* here seems to be somewhat strange. Latin *honor*, although it is sometimes used in contexts where renown is also implied,[46] means 'respect', not 'fame' in the first place. It could be translated to Greek probably with τιμή rather than κλέος. Both are, to be sure, important ideas in archaic Greek poetry, especially in Homer, and both refer to the acknowledgment of heroic achievement; but they refer to different aspects of it. Epic heroes are acquiring κλέος to become famous and ensure that the memory of their deeds will be preserved in the poetic tradition even after their death. By contrast, τιμή emphasizes social recognition during the hero's lifetime: respecting one's status, receiving a fair share of the booty (γέρας) and so on.

The *honor* mentioned by Achilles might thus also be interpreted as a "translation" of τιμή. Just a few lines after mentioning his claim for "fame reaching the skies" (152–153), Achilles now suggests that respect is also a value he learned about as a child, singing about the "pristine respect of men". If we follow this interpretation, it does not seem necessary after all to assume an enallage here: Achilles is not (apparently) singing about some ritual cult of pristine heroes, but about the respect heroes *received* in the past, during their lifetime. Achilles' speech is his first public performance in the Greek army; he is just becoming a member of this group. One of his aims in the autobiography is to lay claim – by words instead of deeds, for now – to membership in heroic society. This is why he is giving a lengthy account of his physical

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[43] A similar interpretation might be suggested by the introduction of Achilles' first song, *canit ille libens immania laudum semina* (1. 188–189): Achilles is singing about κλέα ἀνδρῶν, but the metaphoric use of *semina* implies that the stories about heroes of old are also the "seeds" of Achilles' heroic deeds and thus his own fame. (Thus already VALPY, A. J.: P. Papinii Statii *opera omnia ... in usum Delphini.* London 1824, *ad loc.*, followed by later commentaries.) The phrase *semina laudum* is found again in the *Achilleid* in a more explicitly educational context (2. 89). The "seeds of fame" metaphor, as I have discussed elsewhere (KOZÁK [n. 1] 222–228), also evokes the idea of "fame as a flower" latent in κλέος ἄφθιτον (cf. NAGY, G.: *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter.* Cambridge, Mass. 1974, 241–261 and ID.: *The Best of the Achaeans. Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry.* Baltimore–London 1999², 175–189), and also found for example in Pindar (*P.* 1. 66; *N.* 9. 39) and even Horace (*c.* 1. 12. 45–46).

[44] *OLD s. v.* "priscus" 3b; in the proem the narrator of the *Achilleid,* identifying with the poet of the *Thebaid*, is counting himself among the *prisca parentum / nomina* as the founder of a "literary Thebes" (1. 12–13).

[45] Cf. RIPOLL-SOUBIRAN (n. 30) *ad loc.*

[46] Cf. e.g. *semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt* (Verg. *Ecl.* 5. 78 = *Aen.* 1. 609); *effugiunt nomen honorque rogos* (Ov. *Ep. ex Ponto* 3. 2. 32).

training, the basis of his becoming the greatest of heroes in the Trojan war. When, to-wards the end of his speech, he states that he used to sing about the respect for heroes in particular, he might be suggesting to his audience that he will demand respect for himself as well.[47] How much he will demand respect is well known for readers of the *Iliad:* the epic plot is set in motion by Achilles' frustration over not getting the respect he deserves. The Statian Achilles' songs about the respect for heroes thus foreshadow this moment: ten years before the outbreak of his famous μῆνις, when joining the Greek army, Achilles is already preoccupied by issues of heroic τιμή.[48]

For the supposed (but, as we have seen, not necessary) enallage of *priscosque virum mirarer honores,* commentaries[49] mention a parallel in Catullus 64, the narra-tor's introduction to the ecphrasis of the coverlet, where *heroum ... virtutes* seems to serve as a translation of κλέα ἀνδρῶν (50–51):

> *Haec vestis <u>priscis</u> hominum variata figuris*
> *heroum <u>mira virtutes</u> indicat arte*.

The intertextual connection, however, seems to be more than just a stylistic parallel. Other words are involved, too: the adjective *mira* might be the "source" of Statius' unusual *mirarer; virum* in the *Achilleid* is etymologically connected with Catullus' *virtutes*. We should also take into account that *fila* used in connection with song in the previous line has already recalled, for the third time in the *Achilleid*, the "weaving of song" metaphor and thus Catullus 64. In fact, the allusion constitutes a sort of in-tertextual metaphor: as the similarities in wording suggest, the songs of the Statian Achilles are like the coverlet described in Catullus. Both are the result of (real or metaphoric) weaving, and both are used as media to represent the *honores* or *virtutes* of heroes.

The announcement the Catullan narrator makes, however, is highly problem-atic: it is a notorious example of inconsistency in the epyllion.[50] He states that "vir-tuous deeds of heroes" were represented on the coverlet, which is then described at length as showing Ariadne left on Naxos, Theseus sailing away, and Bacchus ap-proaching with his entourage. These scenes can hardly be interpreted as prime exam-ples of *heroum virtutes*. Theseus' victory over the Minotaur to save his country is, indeed, a virtuous and heroic deed, but this is not actually represented on the coverlet, only mentioned by the narrator as an excursion accompanying the ecphrasis. The nar-

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[47] Achilles' claim to *honor* is already expressed in an earlier passage. In a monologue he states that he is worried that Chiron has perhaps already forgotten about his pupil who left for Scyros: *an desertoris alumni / nullus honos?* (1. 629–630).

[48] Achilles' Homeric anger was already foreshadowed in *Achilleid* 2, when Achilles asked Ulixes to stir up "just anger" in him – against the Trojans, of course; cf. HINDS, S.: Essential Epic: Genre and Gender from Macer to Statius. In DEPEW, M. – OBBINK, D. (edd.): *Matrices of Genre. Authors, Canons, and Society.* Cambridge, Mass. 2000, 242.

[49] JANNACCONE, S.: P. Papinio Stazio, *L'Achilleide*. Testo critico e commento. Firenze 1950; DILKE (n. 16); RIPOLL–SOUBIRAN (n. 30) *ad loc.*

[50] See O'HARA, J. J.: *Inconsistency in Roman Epic. Studies in Catullus, Lucretius, Vergil, Ovid and Lucan.* Cambridge 2007, 44–47, and cf. 47–54 on the narrator's similarly problematic statements about the "happy marriage" of Peleus and Thetis.

rator thus raises expectations in the reader which he cannot or does not want to satisfy.

What does such an allusion to a Catullan inconsistency suggest about Achilles' songs? Not, probably, that he did not in fact narrate with marvel the "pristine respect of men". We have read earlier about his songs in Chiron's cave and on Scyros in which he was singing about subjects such as Hercules' labors, Theseus' victory over the Minotaur and the childhood of himself as the greatest future hero of the Trojan war – these subjects seem to be heroic indeed. The allusion to the Catullan inconsistency, however, might call attention to the fact that Achilles' characterization of his songs does not equal those songs themselves: what I have been discussing is how the hero speaks about his songs, not what they really have been like. Achilles has quite specific rhetorical aims in his speech (see above), and these may influence what impressions he tries to give about his songs. Achilles' statement may well be much closer to the "truth" than Catullus' – but still, it is just an interpretation provided in a given situation, for a given audience. Did we (or Achilles' Statian audience) possess the script of the songs, we might or might not agree with Achilles' description of them.

The *Achilleid*, furthermore, has its own big inconsistency, to be revealed just a few lines after Achilles' statement about his songs: the inconsistency between the narrator's claim in the proem that he is going to tell the whole life of Achilles (1. 4–7) and the fact that the text ends with Achilles' speech after line 2. 167, leaving most of Achilles' heroic deeds, those in the Trojan war, untold. The *Achilleid* begins as a heroic biography, but ends (as we have it, at least) as just the first "chapter" of that biography; a chapter which, furthermore, focuses on the quite unheroic story of Achilles' hiding on Scyros in women's clothes. Readers have to make do with Achilles' autobiographic speech, in which he asserts that he is capable of performing heroic deeds.

Is the allusion to the Catullan inconsistency towards the end of the text we possess actually a hint that the *Achilleid* acknowledges this inconsistency, its own status as an unfinished poem? I am not suggesting that we should treat it as evidence that Statius, in fact, never intended to continue the *Achilleid*. Rather, I see it as a further example of what has already been pointed out[51] – namely that the *Achilleid* is a text which seems to be quite carefully composed, structurally well-designed, and in that sense looks finished as a "chapter one". It might well have been, as Heslin proposed,[52] intended to be read as a "prospectus", outlining the whole but elaborating only a part of it. A "prospectus" – or an epyllion of sorts, with the possibility of later being developed into the promised grand epic biography.

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[51] See JOHNSON, W. R.: Information and Form. Homer, Achilles, and Statius. In OBERHELMAN, S. M. – KELLY, V. – GOLSAN, R. J. (edd.): *Epic and Epoch. Essays on the Interpretation and History of a Genre.* Lubbock 1994, 34 on the symmetric A—B—A structure of *Achilleid* 1; HESLIN (n. 4) 64 on a parallel A—B—A—B structure of *Ach.* 1–2; and cf. BENKER, M.: *Achill und Domitian. Herrscherkritik in der Achilleis des Statius.* Diss. Erlangen–Nürnberg 1987, 163 on the poem's "unvollendete Abgeschlossenheit".

[52] HESLIN (n. 4) 58–62, also discussing the *Silvae* passages where the *Achilleid* is mentioned as an unfinished project.

Such a reading of the *Achilleid* as a "provisional short epic" seems also to be suggested by the intertextual connections with Catullus 64 discussed above. The three *Achilleid* passages where the hero is presented as a singer – passages of obvious metapoetic significance – recall Catullus' poem by different means, as we have seen, but all three include the "poetry as weaving" metaphor. Is the relevance of this metapoetic metaphor limited to Achilles' songs (in connection with which it is used), or does it in some sense extend to the *Achilleid* itself as well? We cannot, of course, provide an answer with regard to the promised grand epic; but for our *Achilleid*, Catullus 64 seems to be a primary model indeed not only because of its subject matter, but also in a generic sense. The *Achilleid* as we have it is closer to an epyllion than to grand epic: closer to that genre (or, in another view, that variant of the epic genre) whose characteristics have been notoriously difficult to define, but whose prime example in Roman literature is undoubtedly the "woven song" of Catullus.

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