

This paper will use Catullan allusion in Book 1 of the *Achilleid* to offer a new perspective on both Statius and Catullus. The technique of reading a text through the eyes of an author who alludes to it has proved useful in recent scholarship (Hinds 1998 and 2007). I argue that Statius' sustained allusion to Catullus 64 can help us re-read the epyllion as an aetiology of the Trojan War. Looking carefully at the role of Troy in Catullus 64 will give new point to the concluding portrait of Achilles and, more generally, help explain the poem's well-known narrative difficulty.

In the opening of his *Achilleid*, Statius melds together the sailing of the Argo in the earlier poem with the sailing of Paris' ship, and this allusive blending strongly suggests that the Argo's journey was a prime cause of the Trojan War. Thetis' reaction to Paris' ship in the *Achilleid* recalls and revises her Catullan counterpart's reaction to the Argo's first appearance. In the *Achilleid*, Paris' ship crosses over Thetis as it retraces the "guilty way" (*culpatum relegebat iter*). This "guilty way" is primarily to be understood as the way Paris traveled from Troy to Menelaus' palace. Still, we might see references here both to the role of the first ship in ending the Golden Age and to the Herodotean crime-driven crossings of all early ships traveling between East and West (*Herod.* 1.1-5). The phrase *relegebat iter* (lit: re-reading/citing) particularly primes the reader for an allusion to an earlier ship, and the reference to Helle (*Helle iam Nereis*) brings to mind the story of the Golden Fleece, the object of the Argo's mission. When the Argo appears in Catullus 64, the Nereids *emersere...e gurgite* and they are seen *exstantis e gurgite cano* in wonder as the first ever ship goes by. In the *Achilleid*, however, the sailing of Paris' ship finds Thetis no longer part of a group of Nereids. Instead, she is described as alone, frightened, and hidden under water: *expavit vitreo sub gurgite remos*. In Statius, the physical *ex* of the Catullus has changed into the verbal prefix intensifying Thetis' fear. Thetis has learned that ships crossing over her only bring pain. She tells Poseidon as much when she begs him to stop Paris' ship and complains that all was lost when the Argo first sailed. Statius' Thetis, then, causes us to re-read the Catullan scene of wonder by suggesting that she ought to have feared Peleus and the Argo as much as she now fears Paris and his ship. In fact, Thetis would not now fear this second ship had she been properly wary of the Argo, which, in the Catullan version, led to the birth of her now doomed son Achilles.

Statius' allusions to Catullus 64 imply that the sailing of the Argo paved the way for Trojan War and therefore suggest an interpretation of Catullus 64 that focuses on Troy. Since Catullus chose, despite notorious chronological difficulty, to cast the Argo as the first ship and to have Peleus and Thetis meet on its maiden voyage, he is able to combine into one version the traditional *aitia* of the Trojan War: the first ship, the birth of Achilles, and the wedding at which the strife between the goddesses began. I suggest that the famous competing perspectives of Catullus 64 (Gaisser 1995 and O'Hara 2007) can be seen as a comment on this theme of Troy. A series of narrative inversions showcase Catullus' ambivalence toward the Trojan War, which marked several important transitions in Roman thought (Feeney 2007). The sack of Troy was seen as a pivotal moment that turned Eastern Trojans into Western Romans, a shift that Statius will meet head on as a Roman poet rewriting the story of Troy's greatest adversary, Achilles. In a parallel dichotomy, Troy also straddles the Heroic and Iron Ages, standing for both the climax of the Heroic Age and the beginning the Iron Age. Finally, Statius' emphasis on the simultaneously bestial and godlike nature of Achilles can guide us to see how Catullus has miniaturized his double-edged picture of Troy in his final picture of Achilles, who is at once heroic and utterly consumed by Iron-Age violence (Heslin 2005).