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Oceanus and the Aesthetics of Catullan Ecphrasis

My purpose here is to call attention to a juncture in the Catullan text that, to my thinking, betrays an additional level of literary awareness. This textual hyper-consciousness deserves mention for what it says about Catullus' poetic agenda. The juncture I would like to discuss is a moment of Ariadne's speech in Catullus 64, the famous 'Wedding of Peleus and Thetis' epyllion. Ariadne is depicted on an elaborately woven tapestry placed on the marital bed in the middle of the splendid palace (*sedibus in mediis*, Catull. 64.48)[1]; this ecphrasis likewise occupies the central portion of the poem and dominates its imaginative space, despite its ostensible two-dimensional texturing. The ecphrasis itself and its implications for the wider poem have been exhaustively discussed, and so at this point I only wish to offer an observation that further illustrates the complexities of this ecphrastic dynamic. Ariadne, in a long lament, arrives at the seemingly hopeless terms of her circumstance:

> praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,
> nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.
> nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
> omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.
> (Catull. 64.184-7)

Gaisser comments on these lines, «And at last she sees that (unlike Theseus) she has no way out – or, as we might be tempted to say, no escape from her labyrinth»[2]. Gaisser thus raises the possibility of Ariadne's self-conscious assessment of her plight as being imaginatively linked to the labyrinth (and, in continuation, linked to all of the attendant meaning of interpreting the Catullan text itself as exceptionally labyrinthine) but it seems that these words also raise the possibility of indicating Ariadne's own knowledge of her particular *ecphrastic* fate. Ariadne cannot see an exit or an escape from the surrounding waves of the sea; none seems to be permitted (*nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis*, 185)[3]. If we are prepared to read this poem as obsessively and purposefully engaged in literary dialogue, the meaning of this line can be construed beyond mere physical escape from the sea: it can be used to indicate an awareness of the ecphrastic tradition that dictates a discrete bordering of the ecphrastic work, specifically here the tradition as it originates in Homer. The Shield of Achilles, crafted by the smith-god Hephaestus and gifted to Achilles by Thetis, is bordered by Oceanus: ἐν δ' ἐτίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο / ἄντυγα πὰρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο (Hom. *Il.* 18.607 f.)[4]. There are a

[1] The text used throughout is Mynors's 1958 OCT (rev. 1960).

[2] Gaisser 1995, 603.

[3] Commentaries tend to pass over this line without much interest; Kroll 1968 focuses on the idea of impending death, Ellis 1889 omits any mention of the line, moving from the *litus* of 184 to the *nulla spes* of 186; Nuzzo 2003 looks forward to two Ovidian reworkings, also in the context of this set of Cretan tales.

[4] All Homeric text is from Allen and Munro's OCT (1920[3]). The Hesiodic Shield also features a border of Ocean: ἀμφὶ δ' ἴτυν ῥέεν Ὠκεανὸς πλήθοντι ἐοικώς, / πᾶν δὲ συνεῖχε σάκος πολυδαίδαλον· οἳ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν (Hes. [Sc.] 314 f.); the artistic three-dimensionality of the bor-

number of reasons for Catullus to view evocation of the Homeric shield as desirable in this poem[5]. Firstly, it provides further connective tissue between the ecphrasis and

der is further underscored by the qualifying details that swans flew overhead and sat upon it, and fish swam through its depths, details that lead into the wondrous reaction of Zeus (Hes. [Sc.] 316-23). For the ecphrastic importance of the Hesiodic Shield and its relationship to Homeric ecphrasis, cf. Schmale 2004, 111-3. Water as a border can be seen variously throughout the ecphrastic tradition: Proserpina's tapestry also features Oceanus as its edging (*coeperat et uitreis summo iam margine texti / Oceanum sinuare uadis*, Claud. *De rapt*. 1.269 f.); Hannibal's shield in the *Punica* is surrounded not by Ocean, but by the Ebro (*extrema clipei stagnabat Hiberus in ora / curuatis claudens ingentem flexibus orbem*, Sil. *Pun*. 2.449 f.), yet it is gifted by the people of Ocean (*ecce autem clipeum saeuo fulgore micantem/ Oceani gentes ductori dona ferebant*, Sil. *Pun*. 2.395 f.), perhaps a point which serves to emphasise the non-universal aspect of the shield, with its border of localised limitation. The encircling powers of Ocean are also emphasised on the ecphrasis that opens *Metamorphoses* 2, describing the double doors of Sol's palace: *nam Mulciber illic / aequora caelarat medias cingentia terras / terrarumque orbem caelumque, quod imminet orbi* (Ov. *Met*. 2.5-7). One further example of this feature of ecphrastic tradition can be shown in the recognisable play that Statius makes upon it in crafting the shield of Crenaeus (Stat. *Theb.* 9.332-8). The shield depicts Europa upon the bull, and ends with the line *adiuuat unda fidem pelago nec discolor amnis* (Stat. *Theb.* 9.338). Here, the sea depicted on the shield is said to merge chromatically with the river next to which Crenaeus is standing; rather than create a definitive border, Statius blends the two environments of the artistic and the narrative setting together through this phrasing. Critically, for our purposes, there is also an allusion to Catullus 64 in the description of the water playing about Europa's feet, *iam secura maris, teneris iam cornua palmis / non tenet, extremis adludunt aequora plantis* (Stat. *Theb.* 9.335 f.), which visibly reworks the Catullan passage 64.60-7; cf. Chinn 2010, 152 f. He does not note the effect of this merging of borders as a conscious comment on or metamorphosis of this originary ecphrastic feature, although he does discuss at length potential readings of the phrase *nec discolor amnis*. It is also important to remember that the bordering of Ocean is the only *definitive* piece of information we receive about the spatial relationships of the shield's descriptive and narrative scenes, beyond the fact of its five circles.

5 Although Homer's presence in especially c. 64 is inarguable and important, on the other side of the table, the lack of focus on Homeric influence in Catullan scholarship is perhaps best summarised by the comment of Tartaglini 1986, n. 16 «La bibliografia sui rapporti tra Catullo e Omero non è molto ricca», an assessment similarly found in the comments of Pardini 2001, n. 29 who, fifteen years later, likewise still notes, «Unfortunately we need a comprehensive study on this subject. The influence of Homer was entirely ignored by Tolkiehn 142; Ronconi limits himself to a few instances drawn from c. 64; Luppino aims simply to list some Homericisms neglected by commentators». Tartaglini 1986 cites Ronconi 1973, but also Wheeler 1934 and Braga 1950, both uncited by Pardini 2001. C. 64 has understandably received more attention as regards Homer's poetic precedence, but mostly in terms of contextual mythic material rather than as a *poetic* influence, due to the perceived incompatibility between Homeric epic and neoteric aesthetics. This is exemplified in the treatment of Ronconi 1973, who largely rests on the mere citation of comparative passages without analysis (with the one exception of a scant treatment of 64.105-8 on 37-9, scarcely differing from the unadorned index of comparative passages on 79). For a focused, systematic analysis of the Homeric material in c. 64 and its significant interpretive ramifications, see Stoevesandt 1994-95; cf. also selectively Schmale 2004 and Fernandelli 2012. Schmale 106-11 especially provides a useful overview of the influence of the ecphrasis of the Homeric shield and the development of scholarly analysis, particularly the related impulses of viewing the shield as representative of Homeric poetics and as comprehensive worldview vis-à-vis the twinned fates of Achilles within the martial context of the *Iliad*. Klingner 1956 occasionally forays into territory examining Homer's poetic influence; cf. e.g. his assessment of Catullan description as it relates to Homeric descriptive aesthetics, p. 47: «So weit kann sich also der Leser immer noch im Bereich einer bis zu den Grenzen ihrer Möglichkeiten getriebenen homerisierenden Bildbeschreibung

the poem's celebratory event, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. The parallels between the song of the Fates that ominously conjure the future glory of Achilles and the ecphrasic coverlet have been well-remarked, especially as regards the calculated descriptive and linguistic repetition that link the ecphrasis and Ariadne's utterances to the song of the Fates. The Homeric shield also lurks situationally in the background here as it was intended as a replacement for the armour that Peleus received at his wedding, subsequently given to Achilles and unceremoniously stripped from Patroclus' body by Hector (cf. Hom. *Il*. 18.82-5 for Achilles' lamenting the loss of this divine armour). However, Catullus radically departs from the usual catalogue of gifts (l.279 ff.), nowhere mentioning the armour; this is an absence that is made conspicuous by virtue of Catullus' changes to the gift catalogue[6]. Ariadne's self-conscious allusion to the ecphrasis of the Homeric shield (and therefore, to the general ecphrastic tradition) can therefore generate the shield's presence in a way that is in keeping with the stylistic time-warp that characterises the entire Catullan poem, and also participates in the setting up of expectations that are ultimately foiled by the poet: when we see the divine gifts presented to Peleus, armour is nowhere mentioned.

1. Homeric Backgrounds.

Before embarking on the central discussion of the digressive nature of Catullan ecphrasis and the attendant issues of escapism and self-perception, my own digression on the Homeric background to this poem and some contextualising of the Homeric junctures active within it is perhaps necessary. If we are inclined to think textually, the deeds of Achilles that are brought to the fore in the song of the Parcae only come to fruition after the gift of divine armour from Hephaestus. Catullus ushers the presence of Achilles into the space of his poem thus[7]:

> Nascetur uobis expers terroris Achilles,
> hostibus haud tergo, sed forti pectore notus,
> qui persaepe uago uictor certamine cursus
> flammea praeuertet celeris uestigia ceruae.
> currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi.
> non illi quisquam bello se conferet heros,
> cum Phrygii Teucro manabunt sanguine campi,
> Troicaque obsidens longinquo moenia bello,
> periuri Pelopis uastabit tertius heres.
> (64.338-46)

fühlen». Cf. also p. 67 for his attempt to contextualise Catullus' interconnected treatment of two different myths within the dynamics of Homeric epic narrative.

6 For analysis of the Catullan innovation here and his literary sources, cf. esp. Fernandelli 2012, 255-74; cf. also the discussion of Stoevesandt 1994-95, 192-8 of how the opening word *Peliaco* indicates a programmatic importance of the *Iliad* alongside Ennius' *Medea Exul* and Euripides' *Medea* through reference made to Peleus' spear.

7 For Achilles' presence within the poem, cf. esp. Schmale 2004, 239-53 and Stoevesandt 1994-95, 175-87, as well as Nuzzo's introductory section 1.5. '*Il canto delle Parche e la saga di Achille'* (18-22).

As far as the *Iliad* is concerned, Achilles only truly appears as a warrior after the death of Patroclus and his vengeful turn to battle, equipped in his newly-forged armour. Achilles will be no coward (*hostibus haud tergo*), but will outrun the fiery footsteps of the swift deer, a being marked by its timidity to the point of embodying cowardice[8]. Achilles as a *victor* in a foot-race immediately points to the events of *Iliad* 22, and the fateful final showdown between Hector and Achilles; the penultimate simile describing their progress round the walls of Troy is that of a hunting dog relentlessly chasing down a fawn:

> Ἕκτορα δ' ἀσπερχὲς κλονέων ἔφεπ' ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς.
> ὡς δ' ὅτε νεβρὸν ὄρεσφι κύων ἐλάφοιο δίηται
> 0ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς διά τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσσας:
> τὸν δ' εἴ πέρ τε λάθῃσι καταπτήξας ὑπὸ θάμνῳ,
> ἀλλά τ' ἀνιχνεύων θέει ἔμπεδον ὄφρά κεν εὕρῃ:
> ὣς Ἕκτωρ οὐ λῆθε ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.
> (Hom. *Il*. 22.188-93)

Although the fawn is not an uncommon feature of epic similes, at this point in the text the reader is perhaps more sensitively conditioned to the Homeric plight of such creatures. Should the brutality of Homer's war come into focus, the example primarily invoked to conceptualise its horrors is the capture of twelve Trojan youths to be sacrificed in revenge for Patroclus: these hapless warriors are rounded up by Achilles like dazed fawns and bound by their own belts, a momentary respite before Achilles plunges back into frenzied slaughter.

> ὃ δ' ἐπεὶ κάμε χεῖρας ἐναίρων,
> ζωοὺς ἐκ ποταμοῖο δυώδεκα λέξατο κούρους
> ποινὴν Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος:
> τοὺς ἐξῆγε θύραζε τεθηπότας ἠΰτε νεβρούς,
> δῆσε δ' ὀπίσσω χεῖρας ἐϋτμήτοισιν ἱμᾶσι,
> τοὺς αὐτοὶ φορέεσκον ἐπὶ στρεπτοῖσι χιτῶσι,
> δῶκε δ' ἑταίροισιν κατάγειν κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας.
> (Hom. *Il*. 21.26-32)

[8] It is nevertheless true that we see the young Achilles as a prodigious hunter under the watchful eye of Chiron in Pindar (Pind. *Nem.* 3.43-52), hunting down deer without the assistance of javelins or nets by relying upon his swiftness of foot; this gives a very clear picture of the boy who will become the 'swift-footed' (πόδας ὠκὺς) Achilles of the *Iliad*. Pfeijffer's commentary on these lines (1999, 211-3) emphasises Pindar's reliance upon the Iliadic Achilles as 'swift-footed', arguing for a picture of continuous characterisation; however, Homer largely suppresses what is a clear tradition of Achilles' tutelage at the hand of Chiron in favour of the mortal Phoenix (c.f. e.g Robbins 1993). It is possible that the *Cypria* contained such a picture of the young Achilles (where we also see the significant connection between Chiron and Peleus' spear), given Catullus' transition into further cyclic material with the sacrifice of Polyxena. Nevertheless, it is only in these late books of the *Iliad* that Achilles fully realises this defining epithet of 'swift-footed', and the contextualising of enemies points further to a martial context beyond adolescent training. Furthermore, the characterisation *forte pectore* perhaps points to the Homeric epithet καρτερόθυμος, first applied to Achilles at *Il.* 13. 305 (cf. also *Od*. 21.25, used of Heracles, and of Strife at Hes. *Theog*. 225, 476).

These victims are soon recalled when book 22 opens with a comparison to the Trojans who have escaped the onslaught huddling in their city like fawns that have fled:

> ὣς οἳ μὲν κατὰ ἄστυ πεφυζότες ἠΰτε νεβροὶ
> ἱδρῶ ἀπεψύχοντο πίον τ᾽ ἀκέοντό τε δίψαν
> κεκλιμένοι καλῇσιν ἐπάλξεσιν
> (Hom. *Il*. 22.1-3)

Therefore, in close collocation (21.29, 22.1, and 22.189) we see Achilles' victims as fawns, leading up to the penultimate simile of the climactic chase between Hector and Achilles. As proven by the *Iliad*, the deer or fawn is an apt image to use in constructing the picture of a particularly brutal Achilles, and so the Catullan description seems consciously to indicate the late-Iliadic Achilles, in his guise as killing machine initiated by the receipt of his new armour. *non illi quisquam bello se conferet heros* further is a potential indication of the cessation of the title 'best of the Achaeans' (ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν) being traded amongst a select few[9] whilst Achilles had withdrawn from battle, and the drenching of fields in Trojan blood again speaks to his rampage after Patroclus' death, marking a turn from his wish for Greek blood to be spilt as testament to his wounded honour[10].

These are not the only isolated incidents recalled from the late books of the *Iliad* in the Catullan song of the Fates. They call upon the river Scamander as a witness to Achilles' prowess:

> testis erit magnis uirtutibus unda Scamandri,
> quae passim rapido diffunditur Hellesponto,
> cuius iter densis angustans corporum aceruis
> alta tepefaciet permixta flumina caede.
> (357-60)

This description of the river choked with corpses directly summons the speech of Scamander at *Iliad* 21.214-21 (esp. 219-21), where the river first recognises Achilles' might, and then asks for his killing work to be continued on the plain rather than in his depths, as he is unable to give his waters to the open sea due to the obstruction created by Achilles' victims. When Achilles does not cease, instead defiantly leaping into the river, Scamander retaliates by surging upon him, flinging forth the corpses onto land (Hom. *Il.* 21.233-40). It is Achilles' shield that nearly proves his undoing, as the huge wave Scamander raises batters down upon it (δεινὸν δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ Ἀχιλῆα κυκώμενον ἵστατο κῦμα, / ὤθει δ᾽ ἐν σάκεϊ πίπτων ῥόος, 240 f.); Achilles finally feels fear, and hastens back onto land (Hom. *Il.* 21.246 f.). The meeting of shield and river in this way serves to foreshadow the confrontation between Hephaestus' fire, the divine agent behind the shield's forging, and the waters of Scamander. This confrontation is incited by the river's call to Simois for help, a plea

[9] Diomedes, Agamemnon and Ajax; cf. the classic treatment of Nagy 1979.

[10] Although Fordyce 1961 *ad l.* states that «the following lines sum up the whole course of the Trojan War, though Achilles did not live to see the last stage of it and the destruction (*uastabit*, 346) of Troy»; Fordyce, and other commentators, also draw attention to this phrase as an echo of Achilles' self-assessment at Hom. *Il.*18.105.

that includes the vaunt that Achilles will not be saved by his strength or beauty, or by his armour, which Scamander says will lie submerged in mud; he prepares himself to be Achilles' burial chamber (Hom. *Il.* 21.308-23, esp. 316-23). It is Hera's terror at this threat that brings Hephaestus as reinforcement to combat the river (Hom. *Il*. 21.328-82). The shield therefore plays a critical role in this scene, and as the target of Scamander's wave serves to draw the momentum towards the moment that the fire behind its creation, the god Hephaestus, will intervene. Catullus' Scamander warms with the blood of men, rather than the fire of Vulcan; a more sensory pathos is given to the plight of the river, which the reader feels, rather than sees, run red, yet the Catullan verb *tepefaciet* perhaps nonetheless activates the Homeric context of the river in flame, an earthly Phlegethon.

The fact that it is *unda Scamandri* that bear witness to the *magnae uirtutes* of Achilles is of potential note when we consider the great wave (κῦμα) that targets Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 21. Calling this act of Achilles one of *uirtus* is of considerable irony, as Catullus makes the Scamander a hostile witness by repurposing his own Iliadic speech and presenting Achilles' actions instead in a laudatory context. And yet, we remember that the deeds on the ecphrasis of the tapestry are also presented as *uirtutes*: *haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figures / heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte* (64.50 f.). In each context, *uirtus* appears in a fashion anything but straightforward[11]. The repetition and potential irony carried in each usage, however, is not enough to bring these two poetic moments together. As Konstan notes, *indicat* can also mean 'expose,' «used, for example, of uncovering the truth behind the testimony of a witness or defendant in court. The tapestry not only shows but unmasks the things that heroes do»[12]. A legal understanding of *indicat* can subsequently shed light on the Scamander as a 'witness', *testis erit* (64.357), and add further nuance to this understanding of what being a witness is and how it is implicated in an understanding of Catullan ecphrasis. The Scamander is not only a witness to the deeds of Achilles, as the narrator makes explicit, but, as knowledge of the Homeric backdrop to this moment imports further, a witness to the Homeric shield. As readers of the Catullan poem, instead of seeing the miraculous and unexpected

[11] Likewise the appearance of *uirtutes* within the lament of the Trojan women at Catull. 64.348 f., *illius egregias uirtutes claraque facta / saepe fatebuntur natorum in funere matres*. This assessment of Achilles' deeds as *uirtutes* is further connected to the introduction of the ecphrasis with the use of *variabunt* in the following couplet: *cum incultum cano soluent a uertice crinem/putridaque infirmis uariabunt pectora palmis* (64.350 f.). The bruising of the mourning women echoes in a particularly unsettling way the *uariata* of the coverlet's description. The women are also linked descriptively to the Parcae through the repetition of *infirma* (*cum interea* ***infirmo*** *quatientes corpora motu / ueridicos Parcae coeperunt edere cantus*, 64.305 f.), as well as the use of *fatebuntur,* considering the etymological relationship between *fari* and *fatum* and the Parcae as the physical embodiments or handlers of *fata*. The Trojan women therefore represent a further interstitial level of communicative ambiguity as far as the Catullan concept of *uirtus* is concerned, connected as they are to the woven acts of *uirtutes* through the repetition of *uariare* and the sung deeds of Achilles through internally echoing the act of the Fates through *fatebuntur*. For an overview of Catullus' problematic use of *uirtus*, cf. O'Hara 2007, 44 ff. For discussion of ironic tone in c. 64, cf. e.g. Kinsey 1965, esp. 916 and 929-31. Curran 1969, 192 n. 31 offers a useful response to Kinsey's notion of irony. Hubbard 1998, 83 calls the «hallmarks of Catullus 64" its "dominant tones of irony and dissonance».

[12] Konstan 1993, 68. Cf. also Landolfi 1998, 14 f. on the meaning and intent of *indico*.

scenes of the life and lifestyle that is no longer available to the warrior Achilles as circumscribed on the shield, we see the fate he has chosen: war and slaughter, as sung by the Fates themselves. The language of witness and the studied, ambiguous repetition of *uirtutes* allows us to examine the actions of Achilles sung by the Fates as an incantatory echo of ecphrasis, as Catullus presents us with an Achilles who has fully accepted his fate and yet wields as evidence of divine favour a wondrous shield preserving a vestige of the fate he has necessarily declined. Beyond the border of Ocean on Achilles' shield lies only death: the death he creates, and the death that awaits him. The shield itself thus acts as a border of experience for Achilles, and mediates the space between life and death.

2. Catullus within the Ecphrastic Tradition: Situating c. 64 between the *Argonautica* and the *Aeneid*.

In this way, it seems that the Homeric ecphrasis of the shield does indeed figure in the imaginative background of Catullus' poem. Its presence allows us to look for clues where the poet acknowledges his debt to this original act of ecphrasis, and we can find that within Ariadne's speech. Her cry that there is no escape from the surrounding waves of the sea is not only a cry of circumstance, but also a cry of poetic recognition: there is no escape because she is a figure in an ecphrasis, a tapestry bordered by the waters of Ocean. It is her woven existence that allows no escape, not simply her abandonment by Theseus. The fact that Ariadne speaks has long alerted scholars to her status as part of a «disobedient ecphrasis»[13], but Ariadne's speech itself picks up a suggestive hint in the Apollonian ecphrasis of Jason's cloak. The final visual vignette on the cloak is of Phrixus and the ram:

> ἐν καὶ Φρίξος ἔην Μινυήιος, ὡς ἐτεόν περ
> εἰσαΐων κριοῦ, ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἐξενέποντι ἐοικώς.
> κείνους κ' εἰσορόων ἀκέοις, ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν,
> ἐλπόμενος πυκινήν τιν' ἀπὸ σφείων ἐσακοῦσαι
> βάξιν, ὃ καὶ δηρόν περ ἐπ' ἐλπίδι θηήσαιο.
> (Ap. Rhod. *Arg*. 1.763-7)[14]

Apollonius gives here the causal reaction between sight and sound: Phrixus seems to be listening to the ram, which seemingly speaks, and in looking at the ecphrasis, you would fall silent, expecting to hear some wise words issue forth from them, and you would continue to look with that expectation. The expectation of sound prolongs the act of looking. However, Apollonius presents this silencing of the viewer as part of a deception (ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν); at the same time as he summons the possibility of speech, he yet dismisses it as false, as fantasy. The ecphrasis ends on this note: the viewer, waiting for speech, silently gazing. In crafting his own ecphrasis, Catullus has literalised the deception suggested by Apollonius: Ariadne speaks[15]. She not on-

[13] To use the now commonplace terminology of Laird 1993.
[14] The text quoted is from Fränkel's OCT (1961).
[15] Cf. Laird 1993, 23 for discussion of the relationship between this Apollonian moment and Catullus 64; my observations largely follow his connection between these literary moments. Cf. also

ly speaks, but rages, cries, prays, and curses – all speech-acts are made accessible to her, as she herself explores the semantic range of possibility *carmen* contains. In this way, Catullus further integrates knowledge of the ecphrastic tradition by granting Ariadne the freedom Apollonius stopped just shy of. Apollonius focuses on the viewer and the viewer's response to depict the heightened realism of the ram and Phrixus in dialogue, but Catullus gives full agency to Ariadne: there are no internal ecphrastic markers throughout that guide the viewer or reader, no framing of 'one might think that…' so common to the ecphrastic experience[16]. The dialogue between the ram and Phrixus in some way stands as the literary genesis of Ariadne's monologue, as the sense of exchange between the two figures on Jason's cloak becomes an exchange between Catullus and Apollonius as Catullus toys persistently with the idea of writing his own poem of Jason and Medea, a poem slyly and perpetually on the brink of becoming a new *Argonautica*.

It is perhaps Virgil who confirms this view of Catullus picking up the ecphrastic thread where it was left by Apollonius in *Aeneid* 6, in his description of the temple doors at Cumae[17]. We see a partial biography of Daedalus: the sacrifice to the Minotaur, the Cretan land rising from the sea, Pasiphae's unspeakable love, Ariadne's love, and the labyrinth (Virg. *Aen*. 6.20-30)[18]. We also see what would have been there, if grief permitted: the fall of Icarus, prevented by the falling of paternal hands (Virg. *Aen*. 6.30-3). Finally, we see Aeneas' reaction to the doors:

> quin protinus omnia
> perlegerent oculis, ni iam praemissus Achates
> adforet atque una Phoebi Triuiaeque sacerdos,
> Deiphobe Glauci, fatur quae talia regi:
> "non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit;
> nunc grege de intacto septem mactare iuuencos
> praestiterit, totidem lectas ex more bidentis".
> (*Aen*. 6. 33-9)[19]

Fernandelli 2012, 191-8 for the importance of the Apollonian ecphrasis to Catullus, as well as Landolfi 1998, 29 f., who also contextually integrates the textual example of Herod. 4.32-4. Previously discussing the trope of ecphrastic marvel, Landolfi connects Catullus' ecphrasis to the poetic lineage of Apollonius-Theocritus-Herodas-Moschus rather than Homer and [ps]Hesiod: «Per quanto concerne poi l'eccezionale bellezza della coperta … Catullo sembra discostarsi surrettiziamente dalla tradizione rappresentata da Omero … e dallo Ps. Esiodo, che privilegia le reazioni di chi contempla un'opera d'arte … rispetto alla valutazione dei meriti dell'artista, accostandosi piuttosto alla *lignée* Apollonio Rodio-Teocrito-Eronda-Mosco che contempera le mirabilie del capolavoro con gli elogi dell'autore…» (p. 17); however, he later points to the Homeric shield as a poetic precedent for the developing movement and activity of the Catullan ecphrasis (p. 20).

16 Cf. Breed 2003, 44 f. for a discussion of the commonality of the «ironic appeal to the credulity of the audience» within Hellenistic ecphrastic tradition; he cites e.g. Theoc. *Id.* 1.41, Virg. *Aen*. 8. 691-3 (*credas*) and Ov. *Met*. 6.104 (*putares*). Cf. also Laird 1993, 29, «We might have expected, for example, a predominance of the narrative present tense in the ecphrasis relative to the discourse outside it, or apostrophes to the reader (e.g. *ut credas*) emphasizing the verisimilitude of the artwork».

17 For the connections between Catullus 64 and Virgilian ecphrasis, cf. Weber 1978, 46-51; Elsner 2007, 82 f.

18 For the unique progressive construction of the ecphrasis by its own creator and what that artistically and thematically entails for the Virgilian epic, see Putnam 1987.

19 The text used in Mynors's OCT (1969).

As Virgil recounts, Aeneas would have read everything through with his eyes, if time had permitted, but the arrival of the Sibyl and her call for action prevents Aeneas from gazing thoroughly, and therefore prevents the reader from seeing the extent of the pictorial depiction; perhaps the reader is further implicated in the plural of *perlegerent*. Casali has suggested that what remains to be seen on the panels of the doors is Theseus' abandonment of Ariadne, an event foreshadowed by the overtly Catullan language used to describe the labyrinth[20]. The Catullan ecphrasis is alluded to in the Virgilian ecphrasis in a way that reflects the personal experience of the viewer, Aeneas. The use of *perlegerent* adds further emphasis to the fact that another *text* is being alluded to here; Aeneas, in some ways, doesn't get to witness the abandonment of Ariadne not only because he needs to be looking to his future instead of his past, but because we have already seen and heard about Ariadne's abandonment in Catullus 64. Virgil lets us know that something else is there, and indicates what that subject is by an ecphrastic cross-reference: to see the rest of Daedalus' doors, he says, read Catullus 64.

To press the intricacies of this textual relationship a bit further, it seems as though the Virgilian sense and usage of *omnia* could provide a contrasting angle of perspective against the expanse of the Catullan ecphrasis. Virgil lets the reader know that *omnia* includes what has already been described, crafted by Daedalus, as well as further depictions that the Sibyl states time does not allow a secure perusal of. In Ariadne's speech, at the point which I am focusing on as revelatory of her knowledge that she is part of an ecphrasis, she emphasises the totality of her helplessness: *omnia muta / omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum* (64.186 f.). The triple *omnia* balances the *nullo … tecto* of 184, and the *nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes* that opens 186. Ariadne's admission that *omnia muta* can be taken as another self-conscious indicator of her 'disobedience' – she is speaking, and so in fact, everything is far less than silent; it can also be interpreted ironically given her complaints that no one can hear what she is saying (64.164-70), which also indicate her awareness of her existence as part of an embroidered tapestry. If we suspend disbelief, however, and read this as an account of Ariadne's literary situation, the silence also shows her *limited* awareness of her ecphrastic fate, an awareness that I believe is intentionally Homeric in source. Ariadne's grieved mention of silence places her outside of the highly aural description of Bacchus and his followers at 64. 251-64. Ariadne has no hope, and cannot hear the sounds of her rescuer, Bacchus. Her speech, which also breaks the silence, she views as inconsequential[21]. Sounds overwhelmingly dominate the description of the Bacchants, and so Ariadne's mention of silence reveals that although she is aware of her own ecphrastic condition, she does not know what is depicted on the rest of the tapestry[22]. She does not know how her story ends – her

[20] Casali 1995.

[21] For the argument that Ariadne's speech is intentionally meant for Bacchus and that Catullus builds dramatic irony in the 'false conclusions' of Ariadne's lament, cf. Reitz 2002.

[22] On a similar note, Armstrong 2006, 218 perceives an irony in the disconnect between Ariadne's emphasis on her loneliness, expressed by *quisquam apparet uacua mortalis in alga* (64.168) and the approaching procession of Bacchants, but in her reading the irony revolves around the fact that it is not a mortal appearing to break this sense of loneliness, but an immortal. The formulation of Fitzgerald 1995, 154 as regards resolution of two different sorts, narrative and compositional, and how it relates to internal figures and external readers is also worthy of note: «The viewer's

fate remains frozen, as she is. This bounded knowledge contrasts to the dynamic set up in Virgil's ecphrasis, where we have to piece together imaginatively the missing part of *omnia* by following the linguistic clues Virgil leaves in the labyrinth. Catullus, rather, gives us a picture *more* than complete – an ecphrasis that describes things that cannot possibly be contained in the actual artistic object- and then subtly calls our attention to this fact by having Ariadne give voice to her own sense of totality with this triple repetition of *omnia*, a totality the reader subsequently recognises in stages as curtailed. In this fashion, these two ecphrases correspond inversely, as the detail that makes up the Catullan super-ecphrasis (the speeches, the curse of Ariadne that seemingly causes the death of Aegeus, Aegeus' own lament) that utterly defy pictorial representation respond proportionally to the absences that characterise the Virgilian ecphrasis, beginning with the detail of Icarus' fall that is described, yet ultimately goes unrepresented. Cumulatively, Virgil shows himself to be a sensitive reader and interpreter of the dynamics of the Catullan ecphrasis, and presents the temple doors almost as a pendant description to Catullus 64. In crafting this pendant description, Virgil confirms the care and attention with which the Catullan ecphrasis was conceived, especially an attention to the very tradition of ecphrasis.

3. Ariadne as Homeric Ecphrasis.

If we return to the issue of Ariadne's awareness of her position as part of a woven ecphrasis, an awareness hinted at in two different ways by her exclamation of *omnia muta* – one hinting at her 'special' ecphrastic status by paradoxically calling attention to the unusual granting of a voice, and the other revealing rather a 'foundational' ecphrastic status, showing ignorance of the rescue at hand, through aural denial of the Bacchic clamour that visually comes to intrude on her depiction- we can examine further the specifically Homeric cues that allow us to see this portion of her speech as a comment upon ecphrastic tradition. Going back to the very beginning of the tapestry's depiction, Catullus employs the word *uariata* to illustrate the nature of

pleasure is always to some extent at the expense of the figures in the picture, who are unconscious of the whole, narrative or compositional, into which they fit; it is a pleasure that depends on our oscillation between entering the particular scene and knowing the whole story. In this case, there are two kinds of resolutions of which the abandoned Ariadne is unaware, one narrative and the other compositional. Catullus provides the compositional, or visual, resolution to the scene of the abandoned Ariadne in the balancing tableau of the riot of Bacchus and his attendants… We are given two different kinds of completion to the yearning, frustrated gaze of Ariadne: on the one hand, Theseus sails off the tapestry into the world of narrative resolutions, where the unreciprocated gaze of Ariadne and the dissipated energy of her anger are gathered into an economy of poetic justice on the other hand … there is the Bacchic riot … as she watches Theseus draw away from her, and balancing the desolation of the Ariadne tableau with its jostling gaiety». Cf. also Schmale 2004, 205-7 for an emphasis on the permanence of Ariadne's loneliness despite the surprise entrance of Bacchus. In assessing Ariadne's plight and existence, Schmale earlier approaches the idea of seeing the sea as a framing border, but does not connect it to the ecphrastic tradition, despite her constant contextualising of this aspect of the text: «Ariadne als bewegungslose Bildfigur muss immer wieder in ihren Rahmen verwiesen, an das unveränderliche Tableau erinnert werden – das die Insel umgebende Meer, das Ariadne an der Fortbewegung hindert, steht für den Rahmen des Bildes, in das sie eingesperrt ist und innerhalb dessen sie nur durch Erzählerkunst eine Zeitlang zum Leben erweckt werden kann» (p. 183).

this marvellous piece of artistry[23]. Whilst Laird[24] points out its potential resonance with the rhetorical term *uariatio*, anticipating the changeable nature of the ecphrasis as it alternates forms, Faber further connects *uariata* with ποικίλος, a descriptive adjective notably used in Homeric epic. The verb ποικίλλω is used to describe Hephaestus' activity in crafting the famous shield of Achilles (*Il*. 18590). If *uariata* «specifically recalls ποικίλος», as Faber suggests (cf. also Liddell and Scott, s.v. ποικιλία 3), the reader is gently conditioned to think about the ecphrasis itself in Homeric descriptive terms from the very beginning[25]. After briefly introducing the pictorial programme of the tapestry in these two lines, *haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figures / heroum mira uirtutes arte*, Catullus gives us the location of his heroine even before she is named: *namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae* (64.52). Most commonly in the myth of Ariadne, Theseus abandons her on Naxos after leaving Crete, either due to love of another woman (as related in Hesiod, fr. 147 and 298 M-W) or compulsion by Athena (schol. *Od*. 11.322), Hermes (Servius *ad Georg*. 1.222), or Dionysus (Diod. 5.51; Paus. 10.29.4). However, Homer relates in the *Odyssey* that Ariadne was killed by Artemis on the island of Dia, at the behest of Dionysus (Hom. *Od*. 11. 321-5). Scholiasts on the passage relate that Artemis killed Ariadne for being unchaste prior to her wedding to Dionysus, as the god himself had allegedly witnessed Theseus seducing her in his Naxian sanctuary, relating the events in an order reverse to the usual myth of her abandonment by Theseus and subsequent marriage to Dionysus, as we see in Catullus.[26] The name of the island, Dia, has largely been explained as an older name for Naxos (cf. Callim. fr. 601 Pf., Diod. 4.61, 5.51, schol. *Od*. 11.325, Eustath. *Od*. 11.324), although there is also a small island close to Crete named Dia, but one not contextually linked with the myth of Ariadne and Theseus (cf. Strab. 10.5.1; Plin. *nat*. 4.61; Steph. Byz. s.v. Dia). Therefore, the use of Dia in conjunction with the Ariadne myth is essentially, and inescapably, Homeric[27]. Catullus gives Ariadne a Homeric location, the sea-girt Dia

[23] Cf. Landolfi 1998, 11.

[24] Laird 1993, 24.

[25] Faber 1998, 212. Another line of Ariadne's lament is also worth citing for the debate it has provoked about the relationship between Catullus and Homer: Zetzel 1978 claims that *pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque / praeda, neque iniacta tumulabor mortua terra* (64.152 f.) is not only a thematic reference to the opening of the *Iliad,* but is *specifically* linked to the poem's opening as recorded by Zenodotus, indicating Catullus putting into practice his use of a commentary, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν οἰωνοῖσί τε δαῖτα (Hom. *Il*. 1.4 f.). For objections to this specific argument, cf. Thomas 1979, and, more extensively, Dee 1981. Dee finds lacking a sufficient demonstration that Catullus would have considered it a worthy task to offer his own opinion on a textual crux in Homer, citing that Homer was neither a favourite poet of the neoterics, nor, to his way of thinking, does Catullus demonstrate a concern for Homer and Homeric scholia in the same way that Virgil does. It is interesting that he cites poem 51 as proof of Catullus' «necessary patience in certain areas of literature» (42) whilst denying a firm interest in the subtleties of Homeric verse to him, given recent pieces exploring Homeric resonance in c. 51 (e.g. Pardini 2001 and Beasley 2012). Earlier scholars were similarly reluctant to ascribe any Homeric influence to the highly Alexandrian poem; cf. e.g. Perrotta 1923.

[26] For variations on the myth, cf. e.g. Webster 1966.

[27] For Armstrong 2006, 191 the choice of Dia is another example of learned Alexandrianism: «The choice of the Homeric name Dia (52) for the island on which the heroine is deserted reflects an Alexandrian debate about whether the place was in fact Dia or Naxos, and whether Dia was just

(Δίῃ ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ, *Od.* 11.325) which could also be taken as an artistic situation, a physical embedding of her imaginatively within the tradition of Homeric ecphrasis, in relation to the sea-girt shield of Achilles[28]. With the combination of *uariata*'s relationship to ποικίλος and the placement of Ariadne on Dia rather than Naxos, it does not seem impossible that Catullus has taken especial care to add a layer of Homeric meaning to his own statement of epic artistry.

4. Water as Experiential Boundary.

Even the inventive compound adjective that he dedicates to the shore of Dia, *fluentisono,* seems to be Homeric in scope and inspiration, a different linguistic play on the 'loud-resounding sea' (πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης, Hom. *Il.* 1.35) that dominates the imaginative landscape in the opening scenes of the *Iliad* to that which the poet employs in poem 11, with *longe resonante* (Catull. 11.3). This adjective, the first descriptive element the reader is treated to of Ariadne's plight, becomes especially marked as we see Ariadne's emotions and experience linked overwhelmingly with the motion of the sea: *saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu / prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis* (64.61 f.)[29]. Even the repetition of *prospicit* (echoing the *prospectans* of 52) is mimetically reminiscent of the repetitive motion of waves, recreating Ariadne's visual experience on the shoreline linguistically for the reader, an effect used throughout the poem, which contains its own tidal rhythm[30]. The metaphorical cares that surge within Ariadne merge with her actual surroundings, particularly through the transference of the verb *fluctuat* (64.62) to the actual waves that toy with her discarded clothing on the tideline before her: *omnia quae toto delapsae e corpore passim / ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant* (64.66 f.). This wave imagery returns when Catullus describes the effects of Cupid (*sancte puer*, 64.95) upon Ariadne: *qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam/ fluctibus, in flauo saepe hospite suspirantem!* (64.97 f.). The borders of experience, as Catullus depicts them, become blurred as the sea and its characteristic, elemental motion are relied upon to

an old name for Naxos or a different island». Cf. also Paschalis 2004, 79 for the connections forged etymologically between Zeus, Dionysus, and Dia.

28 Dia also figures in the ecphrastic tradition of Apollonius, as the place where the Graces wove the robe for Dionysus that he wore when he first lay with Ariadne on the island; Apollonius describes the island in a way that clearly alludes to Homer (Δίῃ ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ, Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 4.425). Apollonius thus shows that he is aware of the tradition of Ariadne's abandonment, despite the fact that he has Jason (previously, and now, dangerously) use the *exemplum* of Theseus and Ariadne in a persuasive speech designed to encourage Medea to help him (*Arg.* 3.997-1004). One of the features of this marvellous robe is its perfume (*Arg.* 4.430 f.), which makes artistic objects in epic an especially sensory (and here, sensual) experience that we similarly see in the riotous sounds lavishly described in the Bacchic procession at Catullus 64.251-64.

29 This imagery has been well-noted by scholars: cf. e.g. Putnam 1961,171 f.; Wolf 1969, 298; Gardner 2007,164 f. For discussion of the 'waves of passion' theme cf. also Harrison 2005, 165-70, esp. 165. This simile has also been tied to a Homeric precedent, the description of the distraught Andromache at *Iliad* 22.460-72; cf. Tartaglini 1986 and in following, Stoevesandt 1994-95, 188 and Fernandelli 2012, 51 f.

30 I would disagree here with the opinion of Laird 1993, 21 who conceives of this repetition as indicative of a lack of motion: «…the anaphoric repetition of *prospicit* helps convey the immobility of the figure».

communicate both internal emotion and build the external landscape. This interchange causes the reader to reflect upon the consequential materiality of the ecphrasis, and Ariadne as no different from her woven surroundings, reminding that it is only a product of his poetic artistry that we react to an emotional depth that transcends the two-dimensionality of the tapestry[31].

From the very beginning of the poem, the reader receives cues to think about water as a boundary with the destination of the Argo described as *Phasidos ad fluctus et fines Aeeteos* (64.3)[32]. Water as the boundary of all is also invoked by the poet's description of Oceanus, *Oceanusque, mari totum qui amplectitur orbem* (64.30)[33]. These are two reference points to return to when we hear Ariadne's own assessment of her physical situation in the line *nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis* (64.185). Just as the sea is harnessed to communicate Ariadne's emotional experience, however, building a bridge between the physicality of the landscape depicted and the internal life of its perpetually inhabiting figure, it is also used to connect with the external audience viewing this physical object. Catullus uses a lengthy simile to illustrate the departure of the Thessalian youth[34]:

> hic, qualis flatu placidum mare matutino
> horrificans Zephyrus procliuas incitat undas
> Aurora exoriente uagi sub limina Solis,
> quae tarde primum clementi flamine pulsae
> procedunt leuiterque sonant plangore cachinni,
> post uento crescente magis magis increbrescunt,
> purpureaque procul nantes ab luce refulgent:
> sic tum uestibuli linquentes regia tecta
> ad se quisque uago passim pede discedebant
> (64.269-77)

Their departure (*discedebant*) is paradoxically illustrated by the procession (*procedunt*) of waves, which, although not explicitly stated, are imagined to move

[31] For the spatial relationship between the bed (outer story) and shore (inner story), cf. Paschalis 2004, 76.

[32] For a discussion of the thematic importance of boundaries (particularly temporal) within Catullus 64, cf. Feeney 2007, 123-7.

[33] Cf. the commentary of Nuzzo 2003 *ad l.* for the Greek models for this line and later Latin versions; he does contextually cite Oceanus as the outermost boundary on the Iliadic shield of Achilles. For its relationship to the *Argonautica*, cf. also Calzascia 2013, 112 f.

[34] For discussion, cf. Murgatroyd 1997, 79-81. His analysis of the Catullan similes is useful and relevant here for the connections he makes between them and their Homeric precedents, revealing a further and persistent thread of Homeric resonance and influence within the poem. Klingner 1956, 87-9 not only discusses the simile's relationship to *Il.* 4.442 ff, but also in light of 2.144 ff; he further separates the Catullan example from the later descriptive tradition that applies wave-similes to public, political gatherings. Cf. also Fitzgerald 1995, 160 for the simile as an inversion of the morning of Theseus' departure. Schmale 2004, 90 f. also discusses the simile's Homeric precedent and its position as a mitigating force between the ecphrasis and wedding narrative, and like Fitzgerald, ties it to Theseus' departure, but rather emphasises the tonal shift in the transformation of the sea from *uentosae… procellae* to the mildness of the simile waves.

towards land or shore, not recede from it. The descriptive time of the simile is morning, which is also unusual, for the simile heralds an ending, rather than a beginning. It is also notable that as the viewers are leaving, they are yet likened to waves gleaming with a reflected purple light (*purpureaque procul nantes ab luce refulgent*), which imaginatively casts them as bathed in an afterglow of the palace's own gleam (*fulgenti splendent auro atque argento*, 64.44) and especially the aura of the tapestry itself (*tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco*, 64.49); once again, the borders of experience are blurred between poetic description and actual events and surroundings, using wave imagery as the illustrative conduit. There is also purposeful dialogue between Aurora rising towards the threshold (*sub limina*) of the wandering Sun (*uagi … Solis*), and the Thessalians departing from the royal threshold (*uestibuli linquentes regia tecta*) upon wandering feet (*uago … pede*), further adding to the paradoxical nature of the simile and its play upon beginnings and endings, comings and goings. If we imagine the couch placed in the middle of the palace as the object of interest and gaze, we also imagine the crowd of youths around it, taking in its marvellous artistry; when we arrive at the simile, there is a natural instinct to picture the waves lapping and building towards the couch, as the object of interest. With the motion of waves described, logically there tends to be a destination for that movement; in the Catullan simile, the waves instead depart from a focus. The tapestry exerts a gravitational pull in this way as the centre of attention, for both the spectators and the reader, so that it is only with effort that we see the 'waves' of the Thessalian youth depart with a motion proceeding away from the couch, rather than towards it. Again, if we imagine that the placement of the couch in the middle of the room consequentially entails that it was surrounded on all sides by those gazing upon it, rather than onlookers approaching on one side and taking turns to look in a sort of rank and file (which would also in some ways mimic the motion of waves upon a shore), their departure as waves leaves the tapestry upon the couch as an anomalous space – as an island with a reverse tide. The natural first assumption is to imagine the waves as moving towards the tapestry, forming another poetic border of sea, one continuous to the waves breaking upon the shores of Dia seen by Ariadne; this speaks to a temptation for the reader to align imaginatively his or herself with Ariadne. However, in describing their departure, away from the object of focus, the wave-simile gives another impression of uncanniness to the ecphrasis as occupying a distinct space, defined poetically by these antithetical senses of tide and ocean movement – the waves lapping towards the shore of Dia and the ocean encompassing the tapestry, and the 'tide' of viewers departing in rings concentric. In short, to understand the paradoxical construction of the simile leaves the reader, so to speak, at sea. The simile therefore presents the sea once again as a border of experience, this time the experience of viewing, echoing visually in the poetic dimension for the reader what can be imagined as the physical border of the tapestry: the surrounding sea. The simile helps to confirm Ariadne's suspicion of her ecphrastic fate and her imprisonment by a boundary of water, for the spectators also comprise another, supplementary boundary of water as related by the simile. However, the waves that she sees break upon Dia and the tide that carries the viewers away from viewing her fate presents an unbridgeable gap. For the viewers, on this tide, can accomplish what Ariadne cannot: they can leave, and escape.

5. But I Digress… Ariadne and Escapism.

The paradoxical construction of the wave-simile works under a similar aesthetic to Catullus' construction of a self-aware Ariadne. First her movement and, subsequently, her speech allow the reader to suspend their disbelief in her existence as a two-dimensional object. It is largely her speech that lulls us into forgetting that she is, in fact, simply a figure on a woven piece of cloth. However, it is in this same speech that she contradictorily reminds us of what she is, if we only pay attention: *nec patet egressus cingentibus undis*. Ariadne's artistic imprisonment is further underscored by the sense of finality built throughout her speech, which culminates in her envisioning of death all around her, *ostentant omnia letum*[35]. We might suggest that Ariadne knows only of her Homeric fate on Dia, and this supplies the background of literary logic to her focus on death, beyond the ostensible signs her abandonment points to. Equally, however, the name Dia could anticipate her divine status on becoming the wife of Bacchus, as being the feminine form of δῖος. The island in name therefore also points to a paradoxical continuum of experience: Homeric death, as it is first recorded in conjunction with Ariadne, or her mythological happy ending as the rescued bride of Bacchus. On the tapestry itself, Ariadne stands in the middle of these two potential endings, unaware as she is of her imminent rescue. Her certainty lies in the permanence of her situation, and as an ecphrastic figure, she is not incorrect in this assumption. This fate is particular to Ariadne, and can be loosely traced by the other forms we see in the poem related to the verb *egredior*. Ariadne's troubles date to the time when Theseus first arrived in Crete:

> ferox quo tempore Theseus
> **egressus** curuis a litoribus Piraei
> attigit iniusti regis Gortynia tecta
> (64.73-5)

Egressus describes his departure from his homeland of Athens, although Catullus has taken the liberty of making him depart from Piraeus as opposed to the mythologically traditional Phaleron[36]. This moment, of Theseus' departure and subsequent arrival in Crete, is neatly bookended towards the end of the ecphrasis, before the closure of Ariadne's thoughts as she watched his ship receding which then leads into the description of the Bacchic parade:

[35] Cf. Armstrong 2006, 211 f. for the emphases on death within Ariadne's speech. Landolfi 1998, 31 rather reads her lament as a progressive enlivening and liberation from her depiction as a statue: «Nulla rimane ormai della statua di pietra evocata all'inizio del carme (v.61): Arianna ha assunto corpo e voce, si svincola dai ceppi della figurazione 'lineare' cui da coperta la costringeva, inveisce e si dispera, conquistando di fatto dignità di eroina tragico-elegiaco». He regards this metamorphosis of Ariadne as the defining artistic innovation of the poem (32); I would have to disagree based on my reading of Ariadne's literary awareness of her artistic imprisonment. In yet another interpretation Dyer 1994, 248 reads Ariadne's motion on awakening as evidence of her transcendence of the ecphrastic tradition, «…a figure of ambiguity, the grieving beloved, yet also in her ecstatic pose the vehicle ready for Dionysiac joy. She is ready to be the Ariadne of Hellenistic relief sculpture, who raises her arms to kiss the god of ecstasy».

[36] Cf. Paus. 1.1.2. For Piraeus and Phaleron cf. also Plin. *nat*. 4.7.24

sic, funesta domus **ingressus** tecta paterna
morte, ferox Theseus, qualem Minoidi luctum
obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit
quae tum prospectans cedentem maesta carinam
multiplices animo uoluebat saucia curas.
(64.246-50)

These two passages form a notable example of ring composition within the structure of the ecphrasis, marked by the repetition of *ferox Theseus*, but they also serve to bring Theseus' journey full circle. The *ingressus* of line 246 pairs with the *egressus* of 74, and Theseus returns home[37]. All the while, Ariadne remains on the shore of Dia. Theseus' story is brought to geographic (and poetic) closure in a fashion not approximated by the circumstances of Ariadne's abandonment, and this is made visible by the indisputable pair of *egressus* and *ingressus*[38]. For Ariadne, no such escape is permissible. Departure is also used in the context of Theseus escaping the labyrinth:

inde pedem sospes multa cum laude reflexit
errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo,
ne labyrintheis e flexibus **egredientem**
tecti frustaretur inobseruabilis error.
(64.112-5)

Ariadne has given Theseus the thread needed to escape the labyrinth, which becomes situationally expressive of his later ability to return home and 'escape' the poetic labyrinth of the ecphrasis itself. Theseus' egress from the labyrinth bleeds into the poet's own stated digression[39]:

sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura
commemorem, ut linquens genitoris filia uultum,
ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris,
quae misera in nata deperdita lamentatast,
omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem,
aut ut uecta rati spumosa ad litora Diae
uenerit, aut eam deuinctam lumina somno
liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx?
(64.116-23)

Egressus, rhetorically speaking, can also mean a 'digression'[40], and so Theseus' departure from the labyrinth blurs with the expressed 'departure' of the poet's own theme (*digressus*), which itself blurs anew into a real departure: Ariadne's departure

[37] Cf. Traill 1981, 235; for ring-composition generally in the ecphrasis cf. also Bardon 1943, 39-45.
[38] Fitzgerald's phrasing, «Theseus sails off the tapestry into the world of narrative resolutions», (op. cit. n. 19) can be appropriately recalled here.
[39] As Deroux 1986, 249 assesses, «…the poet is well aware of the liberties he takes with the tradition of the ekphrasis, as can be seen from his exclamation in lines 116-117…Using the term 'strangeness' explains nothing». Cf. also Landolfi 1998, 24 and n. 72.
[40] Cf. Lausberg 1998, § 340.

from her family. Catullus therefore implicates himself within his own labyrinthine work, as entrances and exits within the text (here, *linquens*, *uenerit*, *liquerit* and *discedens*) become increasingly assimilated to thematic entrances and exits to the text itself (marked by *digressus*)[41]. Theseus' exit from the labyrinth imaginatively prompts Catullus' own recognition of his departure from his stated theme, which yet circles back upon itself to begin the speech of Ariadne, returning to the shores of Dia. Catullus' own 'departure' is what allows him to relate the speech of Ariadne, as one moment of self-awareness (especially in acknowledgment of his song, *carmine*) also gives rise to an Ariadne with a conscious understanding of her particular plight. The self-aware acknowledgement contained in *digressus* nevertheless speaks to an element of poetic control, and allows us to see a further poetic meaning to Ariadne's use of *egressus.* Ariadne herself thinks about completing the cycle of the departure Catullus describes (*linquens genitoris filia uultum*, 64.117) when she questions *an patris auxilium sperem?* (64.180), but she ultimately knows this return is an impossibility. She does not have the luxury of the male power of exit and escape as emblematised by Theseus' return to Athens and his exit from the labyrinth that melds into self-professed Catullan poetic digression. Catullus uses these linguistic markers of *egressus, ingressus,* and *digressus* to mark Ariadne's fate of immobility through the contrasting literary experience of Theseus (who is not depicted physically on the tapestry, beyond the fact of his departing ship) and his own deft navigations of the textual labyrinth that he lays out as his poem.

6. Ariadne's Homeric Labyrinth.

This differentiation in experience and autonomy helps shape our understanding of this moment in Ariadne's speech as one of recognition of the literary tradition in which she is (actively) participating. There is yet one more element that binds Catullus' ecphrasis with Homer, and that is the mention of Ariadne herself on the shield of Achilles[42]:

> ἐν δὲ χορὸν ποίκιλλε περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις,
> τῷ ἴκελον οἷόν ποτ᾽ ἐνὶ Κνωσῷ εὐρείῃ
> Δαίδαλος ἤσκησεν καλλιπλοκάμῳ Ἀριάδνῃ.
> (Hom. *Il*. 18.590-2)

This dancing floor and the celebration of song and dance that takes place there is the last scene described on the shield before the border of Ocean. Therefore, spatially speaking, Ariadne 'belongs' next to the bordering water, as the smith-god has used this creation made for Ariadne as his inspiration for the shield. The Homeric simile comparing the movement of the dancers on this floor to the potter testing out the smooth running of his wheel (Hom. *Il*. 18.599-601) also seems inspirationally applicable to the first simile describing Ariadne in the Catullan poem, where she appears

[41] For Dufallo 2013, 62 the emphasis here is rather on the *ego* and the question of identity as regards the narrator.

[42] Cf. Nuzzo 2003, 13 f.

saxea ut effigies bacchantis. The Homeric simile uses movement as the point of descriptive comparison: the light, graceful, and understanding motions of the dancers' feet, and the circular spinning of the potter's wheel as he tests its process. Dance as artistic process in motion is compared to the initial stages of another artistic process, that of pottery. This embedded simile of artistic process also has to be contextualised within the wider frame of the forging of the shield: dance is likened to pottery amidst the unfolding creation of a miraculous metallurgical work. This complex interplay of artistic materiality and the specificity of moments borrowed from the stage of artistic process (the dance as it is happening, in contrast to the preparatory movements for the potter's work, both participants in the simultaneity of description with the shield's creation) can be brought to bear upon this initial description of Ariadne on Dia: she stands, looking over the sea, like a statue of a Bacchant, before beginning to move around like a Bacchant – and all the while, she is a woven figure on a coverlet[43]. Her motion breaks the stillness of the image of the statue at the same time it belies her existence as a woven picture. As noted, this simile anticipates the Bacchic rescue of Ariadne, foreshadowing the Bacchic parade that also occupies the space of the coverlet. Ariadne as a statue Bacchant therefore in a diffuse and allusive way replicates the initial stages of the potter testing his wheel; her description is the initialising of her divine relationship with Bacchus. There exists further the shared element of overlap in materiality, between Ariadne as statue and woven figure, and the shield as a work of metal that is borrowing its creative, productive energy from the motion of a potter's wheel. The shield is not *directly* compared to a work of pottery to make an equivalent analogy between these two artistic outputs and the statue-Ariadne and tapestry-Ariadne, but nevertheless, the cross-fertilisation of artistic creation can yet provide a certain sort of model for Catullus' own creative license as far as the ecphrastic tradition is concerned. In a way, his Ariadne simile sharpens and heightens the effect of the Homeric simile by its distillation into a single visual moment, as opposed to the descriptive process of ongoing movement which links the dance to the potter's wheel (and both of these to the circular shield). The fact that Ariadne's description as a statue leads into a frenzy of motion makes a link to this Homeric description perhaps more compelling, for, as stated, it is movement that provides the impetus for the Homeric blend of artistic forces; Catullus emphasises stillness, a seeming reversal of the Homeric focus that turns out to be a only a postponement, not only of her Maenadic action directly afterwards, but also later, in the Bacchic procession. Looking at the relationships between these two similes, it is also Ariadne's dancing floor in Homer that provides the *space* for the descriptive embedding of the artistic production of pottery in order to fully bring the shield's creation to life; Catullus places his Ariadne in the Homeric geographical space of Dia, and the Homeric artistic space of Achilles' shield, surrounded by Ocean.

This spatial relationship between the two poems and their artistic worlds is further underscored if we consider a scholiast on this passage of the dance that relates that it was Theseus who created this dancing floor, circular in shape, as the entrance and exit of the labyrinth was for him, and Daedalus who choreographed the dance[44].

[43] The phrase of Schmale 2004, 152-5 to introduce her discussion of the artistic implications of *saxea ut effigies bacchantis*, «die Potenzierung der Kunstgestalt», seems particularly apt.

[44] Scholiast on Venetus A, in Dindorf 1875.

If the circularity of the dance floor is meant to evoke the space of the labyrinth, there is further motivation for Catullus to explore and exploit the connections between his poem and the space of the labyrinth that provides its actual and metaphorical form and meaning, and the Homeric shield. This is made more poignant by the mention of entrance and exit that guided this circular creation of Theseus', for as previously discussed, escape, exit, and digression are accessible to the male protagonist and poet, but not Ariadne herself. Superimposing the circular levels of the Homeric shield over Catullus 64, Dia, surrounded by the Ocean, becomes Ariadne's labyrinth, created for her by Theseus. Once again, we return to Gaisser's assessment: she has no escape from her labyrinth. Amidst all of the false freedom of ecphrastic speech, the one true freedom Catullus does allow Ariadne is this slight utterance that reveals knowledge of her ecphrastic fate, and, in extension, an acknowledgement that in this radical poem, Catullus yet nods to the origins of ecphrastic tradition. In his drastic suspension of reality through this 'disobedient' ecphrasis, Catullus nevertheless encourages the reader to remember that Ariadne is nothing more than thread, the very material of escape that she granted to Theseus. Her very existence and experience within the poem spell escapism-but only for the poet, and for the reader.

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***Abstract*:** This article examines a juncture in Ariadne's famous speech from Catullus 64 in order to explore the self-conscious nature of Catullan ecphrasis. Focusing on the related constructs of boundaries and escapism, it looks at the figure of Oceanus amongst the textual tradition of ecphrasis as a boundary of experience to suggest Ariadne's awareness of her ecphrastic fate. This identification of a self-conscious Ariadne further illuminates the labyrinthine mechanism of the poem itself.

***Keywords*:** Catullus, Ariadne, Ecphrasis, Digression, Escapism.