

Although an incomplete poem, the *Achilleid* does not betray the evidence of incompleteness we see in other incomplete poems. Rather, it is a polished poem with no lacunae, incomplete verses, or “stitching” between sections and the themes of the work and the overall structure seem to have already been fully developed in the poet’s mind. Were it chronologically possible for Statius to have finished the epic,⁶⁷ we might believe that the extant lines are a fragment of a longer work.

As it is, some 1,127 lines of the poem are extant,⁶⁸ of which 960 are in the first book and 127 in the second. Since P contains both the *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid*, and since the readings of P are vastly superior for both works, it has been largely assumed since Müller 1861 that the *Achilleid* was transmitted from antiquity together with the *Thebaid* and that their manuscripts (*ex ante*) show the same pattern of transmission.

There is some supporting evidence for this. As was the case in the *Thebaid*, P transmits lines found in no other witness of the *Achilleid* (1.881–82, which are added in the next-best manuscripts by a second hand), and there is also a group of next-best manuscripts that share facets of P that the *codices deteriores* lack (such as lines 1.661 and 1.772). For these reasons, the manuscripts of the *Achilleid* are usually divided into three groups: P, a mixing group (QCK),⁶⁹ and the *deteriores* (Ω).

There is some evidence that the *Achilleid* was transmitted from antiquity separately from the *Thebaid*,⁷⁰ however, suggesting at least a trifurcate transmission. I should note, however, that a detailed stemma of the manuscripts of the poem has never been created, let alone tested. The present work provides some information that could further that cause.⁷¹

In any case, the earliest manuscripts of the *Achilleid* can be divided into two groups on the basis of the division of the poem: P divides the epic into two books while the others do not divide the poem. The division of the poem into two books, with Book 2 beginning where it does in P, has antique authority,⁷² and is probably accurate. Most earlier manuscripts do not divide the poem. By the twelfth century, however, the poem was normally divided into five books, with breaks before 1.198, 1.397, 1.675, and 2.1. Other division-schemes are also attested, but

⁶⁷ He refers to it as incipient in *Silv.* 4.7.23 and 4.4.93–94, both of which are datable to 95, a year before he seems to have died.

⁶⁸ This figure includes lines 1.661 and 1.772, which are not found in the best manuscripts.

⁶⁹ Q is Paris, BnF, lat. 10317; C is Bruxelles, 5338; and K is Wolfenbüttel, Guelf. 54 Gud. lat. 2°.

⁷⁰ The tenth-century monk Gerbert of Reims asked monks in Mettlach to send him a copy of their manuscript of the *Achilleid*, and in the exchange of letters, no mention is made of the *Thebaid*. Incidentally, the manuscript that Gerbert received had physical flaws, as does the manuscript that is now at Trier (1089/26 8°), but they are likely not the same manuscript. See J. Havet, *Lettres de Gerbert* (Paris, 1889), nr. 33. Cf. M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (München, 1923), 2.731.

⁷¹ Several manuscripts of the *Achilleid* betray close relationships based on extrinsic characteristics, for example, London, BL, Add. 10090, Stuttgart, poet. und phil. 4° 34, and Wolfenbüttel, 13.10 Aug. 4° (same commentary and *mise en page*); Vaticano, Reg. lat. 1556 and Vat. lat. 1663 (several ancilia in common); and Firenze, BML, plut. 38.8 and Perugia, Ms. C. 63 (from the same school). All of the post-fourteenth century manuscripts of the *Achilleid* that are now in Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland are very closely related and I suspect that they all descend from a common ancestor.

⁷² Priscian, *Inst. Gramm.* 7.12.65 (GLK 2.342.5–6) and Eutyches 2.6 (GLK 5.475.13) cite 1.794 ad 1.898 as being in Book 1, respectively, and the only division found in the manuscripts that accommodates this is at 2.1. Two manuscripts cite Priscian as an authority in the placement of book divisions: Venezia, BNM, Lat. Zan. 541 (=1560) (XIV s.) and Modena, Est. lat. 331 (α F 8, 15) (XV s.). Müller (1870) was the first modern scholar to divide the poem there. The division into two books at 1.675, which is found in only one manuscript (Bruxelles, BR, IV 719, XV s. in.) and in almost all editions from the Aldine (1502) onward (the most notable exceptions being the five-book divisions in Lindenbrog 1600 and Cruceus 1618), seems to have been done without knowledge of the ancient division into two books. Dilke (1954.23) suggests that it resulted from an attempt to divide the poem into two equal parts.