

Sappho 44 and Traditions of the Troad

Sappho 44, the poem on the wedding of Hector and Andromache, has puzzled interpreters because it appears to celebrate a marriage that ended with Hector dead, Andromache enslaved, and the couple's only son, Skamandrios/Astyanax, murdered by Odysseus or Neoptolemus (e.g. Kakridis 1966).

This paper will suggest that scholars have read too Homerocentrically (e.g. Nagy 1974, 135-39; Rissman 1983, 119-41; Schrenk 1994). So they have ignored another possibility, that Sappho follows a different version of the story in which Hector and Andromache's son survived and founded cities in the Troad. Skamandrios was later claimed as a founder of cities, usually in company with Aeneas or Askanios. Hellanikos of Lesbos 4 *FGrH* F. 24B : Ἀρίσβη· πόλις τῆς Τρωάδος, Μιτυληναίων ἄποικος, ἧς οἰκισταὶ Σκαμάνδριος καὶ Ἀσκάνιος, υἱὸς Αἰνείου. Nothing suggests that this Skamandrios not the son of Hektor and Andromache. Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives an account of Aeneas that also probably depends on Hellanikos: Skamandrios had apparently been captured by Neoptolemos, but released, and Askanios restored him as ruler of Troy (Ilion) (κατάγων αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν πατρώϊαν ἀρχὴν εἰς Τροίαν ἀφικνεῖται, *An. Rom.* 1.47). Strabo (13.1.45ff), depending on Demetrios of Skepsis, discusses the transfer of Skepsis from its earlier site high on Ida: Σκῆψιν μετῴκισθησαν ὑπὸ Σκαμανδρίου τε τοῦ Ἑκτορος καὶ Ἀσκανίου τοῦ Αἰνείου παιδός· καὶ δύο γένη ταῦτα βασιλεῦσαι πολὺν χρόνον ἐν τῇ Σκίῳ λέγεται. According to Sch. *Il.* 24.734 (exegetical), οἱ νεώτεροι say that Astyanax (another name for Skamandrios at *Il.* 6.402-3, but perhaps in some traditions another son of Hector) was founder "of Troy and other cities." Sch. Eur. *Andr.* 10 says that "some" claim that Astyanax founded and ruled cities, and that their views were cited by Lysimachos of Alexandria (*FGrH* 382 F9), who cited Dionysios of Chalkis for a story that, with the support of Theseus' son

Akamas, Askanios and Skamandrios founded no fewer than twelve cities. Because in the *Iliad* Aeneas will be the only survivor of the Trojan royal family (*Il.* 20.300-308), and *H. Aph.* makes him and his progeny the future rulers of the Trojans (*H. Aph.* 196-7), it is easy to forget that Sappho's story may have been different.

It cannot be proven that these claims about Hector's son go back to the archaic period, but the role played by Akamas looks like a classical Athenian attempt to appropriate older foundation stories from the Troad (Erskine 2001, 108). The *Iliad* insists that Aeneas will be sole survivor of the royal family, but some stories about Skamandrios/Astyanax and Aeneas suggest tensions among elite families in the Troad over possession of the past (Konon *FGrH* 26.F1.46). This paper does not endorse the argument that these differing versions necessarily represent distinctly Aeolic versions that were opposed to Ionian/Athenian accounts (Nagy 2010, 142-6, Bachvarova 2016, 409-410). Rather, when Mytilene and Athens came into conflict over the Troad in Sappho's lifetime (Herod. 5.94.2), their local alliances would have determined which versions they preferred, while poets might select variants for aesthetic reasons as well as political reasons.

If Sappho assumes that her audience imagines Hektor and Andromache as ancestors of leading families in cities in their (disputed) sphere of influence, the poem looks rather different. The name "Skamandrios" is attested on Lesbos. The poem may still have all the dark resonances that earlier critics have identified, and even more: it could evoke the return of Hector's corpse, the reception of Paris and Helen, or the bringing of the Wooden Horse into Troy. It would, however, probably stand in a different relationship to its echoes of other epic moments: the Trojans often opened their gates to misfortune, but in this marriage, the Trojans welcomed the right outsider.

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