

# A Problem in the *Kypria*

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**I**N *Iliad* 6.289–92 Homer says that Paris went to Sidon on his voyage to Troy with Helen. From Sidon he brought women, but Homer does not state that they were captives.

ἐνθ' ἔσαν οἱ πέπλοι παμποίκιοι, ἔργα γυναικῶν  
Σιδονίων, τὰς (τοὺς Welcker) αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς  
ἤγαγε Σιδονίηθεν, ἐπιπλῶς εὐρέα πόντον,  
τὴν ὁδὸν ἦν Ἑλένην περ ἀνήγαγεν εὐπατέρειαν.

Herodotos (2.116.3) quotes these verses and goes on to infer (117) that the epic called the *Kypria* cannot be by Homer, but must have been the work of someone else, because “in the *Kypria* it is stated that Alexander reached Ilion from Sparta with Helen on the third day, taking advantage of a fair breeze and a smooth sea; but in the *Iliad* Homer says that Paris wandered with her.” This, as Leaf, commenting on these lines of the *Iliad*, remarked, is “the oldest piece of Homeric criticism in existence.”

Herodotos evidently had a text of the *Kypria* before him or some of its verses running in his head. His phrasing echoes the words *πνεύματι τ' εὐαεῖ λείη τε θαλάσση vel sim.*, as F. G. Welcker noted.<sup>1</sup> Thus the version of the *Kypria* known to Herodotos differed from the *Iliad* in its account of the flight of Paris and Helen from Sparta, but herein lies our problem.

The fragments of Proklos give what purports to be a summary of the “so-called Kyprian poems.”<sup>2</sup> In it we are told that after Aphrodite had brought Helen and Paris together, they put treasure aboard ship and sailed away. But Hera raised up a storm against them; and Paris put in to Sidon and destroyed the city. Then they sailed to Ilion and wed there. Therefore on two counts, the route and the weather, the Proklos version of the *Kypria* contradicts that known to Herodotos.

<sup>1</sup> *Der epische Cyclus* II (Bonn 1849) 515.

<sup>2</sup> For the various ways in which the poem(s) are mentioned see A. Severyns, *Recherches sur la Chrestomathie de Proklos* 1.2 (Paris/Liège 1938) 93.

One way out of the difficulty has been to suggest that the Proklos version was adjusted to agree with the *Iliad*; but that can hardly be, because in the *Iliad* there is no word of Hera's storm. It is far more likely that Herodotos and Proklos (or his source) had different texts of the *Kypria* before them. A non-Herodotean version of the *Kypria* is also presupposed by the Apollodoran *Epitome* (3.4); here we are told that after Hera's storm Paris and Helen put in at Sidon. "And fearing pursuit Alexander spent much time in Phoenicia and Cyprus. But when he thought that all chance of pursuit was over, he came to Troy with Helen." In Dictys Cretensis, too (*Bellum Trojanum* 1.5), winds drove Paris and Helen first to Cyprus. In this version of the *Kypria* a visit to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos would surely have been an appropriate part of their stay in the island.

These mentions of Cyprus are significant, because the *Kypria* was sometimes ascribed to a Cyprian, Stasinus,<sup>3</sup> and there was a tradition of epic in Cyprus,<sup>4</sup> as is to be expected in a place where Mycenaean survivals were strong. It is a just inference that when the flight of Paris and Helen was related in Cyprus, then the version which brought them to the island and to Sidon was preferred owing to its local interest. It was not the one known to Herodotos.

Now it is remarkable that a poet of the *Kypria* was claimed for the city of Herodotos, Halikarnassos. Demodamas of Miletos, a general of Seleukos I, asserted in his *Περὶ Ἀλικαρνασσοῦ* that the poems called *Kypria* were in fact the work of a certain Kyprias of Halikarnassos—*Κυπρία Ἀλικαρνασσεώς [δ'] αὐτὰ εἶναί φησι ποιήματα*.<sup>5</sup> Whether or not there had ever been a Halikarnassian called Kyprias,<sup>6</sup> the testimony of Demodamas does suggest that the story of the *Kypria* (the precise significance of the poem's title is still unknown) was current in the

<sup>3</sup> Suda s.v. Ὀμηρος 29, with Ath. 682D.

<sup>4</sup> A Stesander, almost certainly a Cyprian, sang epics at Delphi: Timomachos (FGrHist 754 F 1): *Τιμόμαχος δ' ἐν τοῖς Κυπριακοῖς Στήσανδρον λέγει τὸν Σάμιον* (read *Σαλαμίνιον* Wil.) *ἐπὶ πλείον ἀξέησαι τὴν τέχνην καὶ πρῶτον ἐν Δελφοῖς κιθαρῳδήσαι τὰς καθ' Ὀμηρον μάχας, ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς Ὀδυσσεΐας*. Stas- names, such as Stasinus, are found in Cyprus, e.g. *Στασάνωρ* (Strabo 683) and Stasikypros (C. D. Buck, *Greek Dialects*<sup>3</sup> [Chicago 1955] No. 23). See T. W. Allen, *Homer, The Origins and the Transmission* (Oxford 1924) 62. Some ascribed the *Kypria* to Hegesinos of Salamis (in Cyprus?): Prokl. Chr. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Ath. 682DE = FGrHist 428 F 1. The text is much disputed; I follow Jacoby.

<sup>6</sup> Proklos may have been aware of this theory or fact, since we are told in Chr. 23 that he noted the accentuation of the name to be *Κυπρία* (i.e. genitive), not *Κύπρια* (neuter plural): cf. Severyns, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 97–8. The case for identifying the Proklos of the *Chrestomathy* with the fifth-century Neoplatonist is most vigorously put by Allen, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 51–6.

city. This perhaps was the version known to Herodotos, in which Paris and Helen were said to have gone straight from Sparta to Troy.

To conclude, there were in Greek epic tradition at least three versions of the voyage of Paris and Helen.

(1) The Homeric, in which they sailed to Troy by way of Sidon. This does not contradict (2), but is less explicit.

(2) That in the fragments of Proklos and the Apollodoran *Epitome*, in which Hera stirs up a storm and the couple visit (Cyprus and) Sidon. This version was perhaps current in Cyprus.

(3) The version known to Herodotos, perhaps a Halikarnassian poem, in which Helen and Paris reach Troy from Sparta on the third day, after a calm voyage.

Therefore to assert of the voyage of Paris and Helen, "Proclus' excerpts give the Homeric version—which shows how far he is to be trusted," is to miss the significance of the differing forms of the tale.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that what seems to be a fragment of a version of the *Kypria* is to be found in Stephanos of Byzantion. In the article of the *Ἐθνικά* s.v. *Σαμυλία*, we are told that Samyilia was a city in Karia founded by one Motylos, who entertained Paris and Helen.<sup>8</sup> This is an allusion to their voyage, but that the entertaining took place in Karia is not quite clear from the words of Stephanos, so we cannot tell from which version of the *Kypria* the story may have come. Herodotos does imply, though, that Paris and Helen in the poem known to him sailed non-stop to Troy. Hence a visit to Motylos is not likely to have been mentioned in it.

THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST

October, 1966

<sup>7</sup> A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, tr. J. Willis/C. de Heer (London 1966) 82.

<sup>8</sup> p. 554, 5 Meineke s.v. *Σαμυλία, πόλις Καρίας, Μοτύλου κτίσμα τοῦ τὴν Ἑλένην καὶ Πάριον ὑποδεξαμένου*. J. Geffcken (see Stoll, *MythLex.* II.2.3223.52ff), however, attributes the citation to the *Καρικά* of Apollonius of Letopolis.