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Source: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 73 (1988), pp. 15-18

Published by: [Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20186836>

Accessed: 16-03-2016 14:44 UTC

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## WHEN DID THE TROJANS TURN INTO PHRYGIANS? ALCAEUS 42.15

The Greek tragedians reformulated the myths inherited from the epic cycle in the light of the distinctively 5th-century antithesis between Hellene and barbarian. But in the case of the Trojans the most significant step in the process of their "barbarisation" was their acquisition of a new name, "Phrygians".<sup>1)</sup> In the Iliad, of course, the Phrygians are important allies of Troy, but geographically and politically distinct from them (B 862-3, Γ 184-90, K 431, Π 719). The force of the distinction is made even plainer by the composer of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, which may date from as early as the 7th century,<sup>2)</sup> where the poet introduces as an example of the goddess's power the story of her seduction of Anchises. She came to him in his Trojan home, pretending to be a mortal, daughter of famous Otreus, the ruler of all Phrygia (111-112). But then she immediately explained why they could converse without any problem (113-116);

I know both your language and my own well, for a Trojan nurse brought me up in my palace: she took me from my dear mother and reared me when I was a little child. And that is why I also know your language well.

So the Trojans and Phrygians are quite distinct, politically, geographically, and linguistically. Well before the 5th century, however, the term "Trojan" had lost any contemporary application: its associations were literary and legendary. But the Greeks knew that the north-west corner of Asia Minor was in reality inhabited by Phrygians, whose name combined literary-heroic credentials with an intelligible contemporary reference: eastern Aegean and Ionian Greeks especially knew what a Phrygian looked like and how he behaved.<sup>3)</sup> Troy and Phrygia were therefore amalgamated. The use of this alternative label for mythical enemies of the Greeks thus marks the pivotal point in the process of their "barbarisation" in the literary tradition. Once Priam or Paris was identified as a Phrygian, all the pejorative contemporary resonances of that

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1) Strabo explains the confusion about boundaries in the Troad by reference to the tragedians' habit of identifying Trojans as Phrygians (12.573). The practice is particularly common in Euripides, but also occurs in Aeschylus and Sophocles. See Helen H. Bacon, *Barbarians in Greek Tragedy*, New Haven (1961) p.101 n.45.

2) R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns*, Cambridge (1982) p.180.

3) Archilochus 42.2 West; Sappho 92.12 PLF; Alcaeus 280.22 SLG, where a papyrus commentary on lyric poetry mentions Alcaeus' reference to the *Al-lienes*, a Phrygian people; Hipponax 27.2 West. It is likely that the people referred to as "Phrygians" in the Iliad were historically a different people from the *Φρύγες* who according to Herodotus 7.73 invaded Asia Minor after the Trojan war (see G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: a Commentary Vol. I*, Cambridge (1985) p.291), but it is unlikely that the Iliad's ancient audience would have been aware of or concerned with this distinction.

term - effeminacy, luxury, cruelty, and despotism - began to affect the way in which he was portrayed.<sup>4)</sup> Of crucial importance, therefore, is the ascertainment of the chronological point at which this new name was applied to the Trojans.

Vase paintings do not testify to the orientalisation of the Trojans and their allies until the 5th century.<sup>5)</sup> A scholiast on the Iliad seems to have thought that Aeschylus was responsible for the innovation (Σ A on B 862):

Φρύγας] ὅτι οἱ νεώτεροι τὴν Τροίαν καὶ τὴν Φρυγίαν τὴν αὐτὴν

λέγουσιν, ὃ δὲ Ὅμηρος οὐχ οὕτως· Αἰσχύλος δὲ συνέχεεν (fr.446 Radt).

It is of course arguable how much access the author of this comment had to pre-Aeschylean literature. But there is a prima facie case for believing that it was Aeschylus, the innovator and reworker of the old myths, with his enormous interest in βαρβαρικά, who first Phrygianised the Trojan royal house. There is moreover no evidence in the scanty remains of archaic Greek poetry for the identification of Troy with Phrygia except in a supplement to a fragmentary poem by Alcaeus.<sup>6)</sup> In all other surviving poems or fragments where the Trojans are mentioned, they remain Τρώες living in "Troy", "Dardania", or "Ilium".<sup>7)</sup> Elsewhere Alcaeus himself always follows the normal practice: fr. 283 PLF describes how Helen left her home, driven mad by a "Trojan" man (4-5), with the result that many men lay dead Τρώων πεδίῳ (13). In the exceptional poem (fr. 42) epic material is used in a new way: Alcaeus paints a picture "genommen aus der vertrauten homerischen Welt ... aber ausgefüllt in ganz anderer Stilisierung."<sup>8)</sup> But although the epic story is put to original use, the language, apart from the completely new application of the term Φρύγες, is all Homeric (reproduced from D.L.Page's Sappho and Alcaeus, Oxford (1955) pp.278-9).

ὡς λόγος, κάκων ἄ[χος ἔνεκ' ἔργων  
Περράμῳ καὶ παῖς[ί ποτ', ὦλεν', ἦλθεν  
ἐκ σέθεν πίκρον, π[ύρι δ' ὤλεσε Ζεὺς  
4 Ἴλιον ἱραν.  
οὐ τεαύταν Αἰακίδα[ς ἀγαυοῦ  
πάντας ἐς γάμον μά[αρας καλέσσα  
ἄγει' ἐκ Νή[ρ]ηος ἔλων [μελάθρων  
8 πάρθενον ἄβραν

4) See my *Inventing the Barbarian*, (forthcoming 1989, Oxford University Press), Chapter III.

5) See J.Jüthner, *Hellenen und Barbaren*, Leipzig (1923) pp.2-3.

6) But see also SLG 477 col.i.4. The context of the word "Phrygian," if that is the correct reading, is mythical. The poem is however undated and adespota, though the handwriting dates the papyrus to the 2nd century BC. See D.L.Page in ZPE 13 (1974) p.105.

7) See especially SLG 88 fr. 1 col. ii.7; 89.11; 105b.14, 16; 118.6 (Stesichorus); PMG 282a.14, 37, 44 (Ibycus).

8) U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Neue lesbische Lyrik," *Neue Jahrb.* 17 (1914) 225-247, p.232 (= Kl.Schr. 1.364-414, p.393).

ἐς δόμον Χέρωνος· ἔλ[υ]σε δ' ἄγνα  
 ζῶμα παρθένω· φιλό[τα]ς δ' ἔθαλε  
 Πήλεος καὶ Νηρηϊδῶν ἀρίστ[α]ς,  
 12 ἐς δ' ἐνίαντον  
 παῖδα γέννατ' αἰμυθέων [ φέριστον  
 ὄλβιον ξάνθαν ἐλάτη[ρα] πάλων·  
 οἱ δ' ἀπώλοντ' ἄμφ' Ἐ[λέ]ναι Φρύγες τε  
 16 καὶ πόλις αὐτῶν.

In line 15, the reading Ἐ[λέ]ναι Φρύγες τε was suggested by Wilamowitz. His supplement has been accepted apparently without query ever since:<sup>9)</sup> Page and Campbell both print it without indicating in their commentaries that they are aware of its possible anachronism.<sup>10)</sup> That Ἐ[λέ]ναι is correct is of course almost certain; the ring-form of the poem required a return to Helen, the bad wife, after the negative comparison with Thetis at line 5ff.: "Not such was the delicate maiden whom the [noble] son of Aeacus married...". The surviving words in any case suggest the Homeric phrase ἄμφ' Ἐλένηι...μάχεσθαι (e.g. Iliad Γ 70). But if Wilamowitz's reading Φρύγες τε is right, it testifies to a much earlier conflation of Troy and Phrygia than is implied by all the other evidence. If Aeschylus is to receive the credit for turning the Trojans into Phrygians, an alternative must be found. Τρῶες τε will not fit the Sapphic metre, which requires  $v - \bar{v}$  in this position. But there are several other possibilities. In fr. 283, the usually accepted supplementation of a similar passage describing the deaths of men on the Trojan plain for the sake of Helen results in lines reading (283.12-14)

κ]ασιγνήτων πόλεος μ[έ]λαινα  
 γα]τ' ἔχει Τρώων πεδίωι δά[μ]εντας  
 ἔ]νεκα κήνας

The word δάμεντας occurs in exactly the same metrical position in the Sapphic stanza, in an almost identical context. If the end of 42.15 were supplemented along similar lines, the result would read

οἱ δ' ἀπώλοντ' ἄμφ' Ἐ[λέ]ναι δάμεντες  
 καὶ πόλις αὐτῶν.

Other possibilities are παθόντες (cf. the Homeric phrase ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ ... ἄλγεα πάσχειν, Iliad Γ 157), or κάκιστα.

It is therefore possible to find another reading which removes the Phrygians from Alcaeus' poem. Given Mytilene's familiarity with contemporary Phrygia, and the readiness of both Sappho and Alcaeus to remould epic material for

9) See e.g. C.M.Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Oxford (1961<sup>2</sup>) pp.168-9; A. Lesky, "Peleus und Thetis im frühen Epos," *Stud. Ital.* 27-8 (1956) 216-226; A.W.Gomme, "Interpretations of some poems by Alkaios and Sappho," *JHS* 77 (1957) 255-266. Professor M.L.West, however, with whom I had discussed this passage, reserved judgement on Wilamowitz's supplement in his edition of Euripides' *Orestes* (Warminster (1987) p.66).

10) Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, pp.278-81; David A.Campbell (ed.), *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Bristol (1982<sup>2</sup>) pp.55, 291-2.

their own purposes (see especially Sappho fr. 44 PLF), it could be argued that Alcaeus is as likely as Aeschylus or anyone else to be responsible for the innovation of equating Troy with Phrygia. But if that were the case it would be surprising that other poets do not seem to have followed his example until the 5th century. Either Wilamowitz's supplement is wrong, or Alcaeus must be credited with a daring and imaginative innovation in the portrayal of the Trojans in Greek literature.

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