# Before the Beginning: No Story of Troy Before *The* Story of Troy

#### Part I: Non-Iliadic (and Post-Iliadic) Evidence

- 1. ἔπειτα ἀποβαίνοντας αὐτοὺς εἰς Ἰλιον εἴργουσιν οἱ Τρῶες, καὶ θνήσκει Πρωτεσίλαος ὑφ' Ἔκτορος. ἔπειτα Αχιλλεὺς αὐτοὺς τρέπεται ἀνελὼν Κύκνον τὸν Ποσειδῶνος. καὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἀναιροῦνται. καὶ διαπρεσβεύονται πρὸς τοὺς Τρῶας, τὴν Ἑλένην καὶ τὰ κτήματα ἀπαιτοῦντες. ὡς δὲ οὐχ ὑπήκουσαν ἐκεῖνοι, ἐνταῦθα δὴ τειχομαχοῦσιν. ἔπειτα τὴν χώραν ἐπεξελθόντες πορθοῦσι καὶ τὰς περιοίκους πόλεις. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Αχιλλεὺς Ἑλένην ἐπιθυμεῖ θεάσασθαι, καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ Αφροδίτη καὶ Θέτις. εἶτα ἀπονοστεῖν ὡρμημένους τοὺς Αχαιοὺς Αχιλλεὺς κατέχει. κἄπειτα ἀπελαύνει τὰς Αἰνείου βοῦς, καὶ Λυρνησσὸν καὶ Πήδασον πορθεῖ καὶ συχνὰς τῶν περιοικίδων πόλεων, καὶ Τρωΐλον φονεύει. Λυκάονά τε Πάτροκλος εἰς Λῆμνον ἀγαγὼν ἀπεμπολεῖ. καὶ ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων Ἁχιλλεὺς μὲν Βρισηΐδα γέρας λαμβάνει, Χρυσηΐδα δὲ Ἁγαμέμνων. ἔπειτά ἐστι Παλαμήδους θάνατος. καὶ Διὸς βουλὴ ὅπως ἐπικουφίση τοὺς Τρῶας Ἁχιλλέα τῆς συμμαχίας τῆς Ἑλλήνων ἀποστήσας. καὶ κατάλογος τῶν τοῖς Τρωσὶ συμμαχησάντων.
- (1) When the Greeks disembark at Troy, the Trojans push them back, and Protesilaus dies at the hands of Hector. Achilles routs them, killing Cygnus, son of Poseidon. (2) They collect the corpses and send an embassy to the Trojans, demanding the return of Helen and the valuables. (3) But when they did not comply, the Greeks lay siege to their walls. Then, going out into the countryside, they destroy the neighboring cities. (4) Thereafter, Achilles desires to look upon Helen, and Aphrodite and Thetis bring them together. Later when the Achaeans are eager to sail back, Achilles restrains them. Then he drives off the cattle of Aeneas, sacks Lyrnessos and Pedasos and many other nearby cities, and slaughters Troilus. Patroclus takes Lycaon to Lemnos to sell him; from the spoils Achilles takes Briseis as his prize, while Agamemnon takes Chryseis. Then there is the death of Palamedes and the plan of Zeus to alleviate the Trojans by removing Achilles from the Greek alliance, and the catalogue of the Trojan allies. (Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 148-69 Severyns)
- 2. Πρωτεσιλάου δὲ τελευτήσαντος, ἐκβαίνει μετὰ Μυρμιδόνων Ἀχιλλεὺς καὶ λίθον βαλὼν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν Κύκνου κτείνει. ὡς δὲ τοῦτον νεκρὸν εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι, φεύγουσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, οἱ δὲ Ἑλληνες ἐκπηδήσαντες τῶν νεῶν ἐνέπλησαν σωμάτων τὸ πεδίον. καὶ κατακλείσαντες τοὺς Τρῶας ἐπολιόρκουν. ἀνέλκουσι δὲ τὰς ναῦς. μὴ θαρρούντων δὲ τῶν βαρβάρων, Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐνεδρεύσας Τρωίλον ἐν τῷ τοῦ Θυμβραίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερῷ φονεύει, καὶ νυκτὸς ἐλθὼν ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν Λυκάονα λαμβάνει.

Once Protesilaus died, Achilles disembarked with the Myrmidons and killed Cygnus with a stone to the head. When the barbarians saw his corpse, they flee into the city, and the Greeks, leaping from their ships, fill the plain with bodies. They hemmed in the Trojans and besieged them. They [the Greeks] draw in their ships. The barbarians showing no courage, Achilles ambushed Troilus in the sanctuary of Thymbraean Apollo and slaughtered him, then entered the city by night and took Lycaon captive. (*Apollod. Epit.* E. 3.31-2)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All translations are my own.

3. ἐνναετοῦς δὲ χρόνου διελθόντος [...]

Then nine years passed. (Apollod. *Epit.* E. 3.34)

4. Post acies primas urbis se moenibus hostes continuere diu, nec aperti copia Martis ulla fuit: decimo demum pugnavimus anno.

After the initial battle, the enemy held itself for a long time within the city's walls, and there was no opportunity for an open engagement. Finally, in the tenth year, we fought. (Ovid, Met. 13.207-9)

## 5. Hera (5.788-91):

οὐδέ ποτε Τρῶες πρὸ πυλάων Δαρδανιάων οἴχνεσκον·

ὄφρα μὲν ἐς πόλεμον πωλέσκετο δῖος Άχιλλεύς, As long as divine Achilles would go out into battle, the Trojans would never come out in front of the Dardanian gates.

## Achilles (9.352-5):

ὄφρα δ' ἐγὼ μετ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν πολέμιζον οὐκ ἐθέλεσκε μάχην ἀπὸ τείχεος ὀρνύμεν Έκτωρ, άλλ' ὅσον ἐς Σκαιάς τε πύλας καὶ φηγὸν ἵκανεν·

As long as I waged war among the Achaeans, Hector was unwilling to rouse battle far from the wall, but only came out to the Scaean gates and oak tree.

## Poseidon (13.105-6):

ως Τρωες τὸ πρίν γε μένος καὶ χεῖρας Άχαιων μίμνειν οὐκ ἐθέλεσκον ἐναντίον, οὐδ' ἠβαιόν.

In the past the Trojans were unwilling to stand fast against the strength and hands of the Achaeans, not even a bit.

#### Hector (15.720-21):

οἵ μ' ἐθέλοντα μάχεσθαι ἐπὶ πρυμνῆσι νέεσσιν αὐτόν τ' ἰσχανάασκον ἐρητύοντό τε λαόν·

They used to hold me back, and the army too, when I was eager to fight at the sterns of the ships.

### Hector (18.287):

ἦ οὔ πω κεκόρησθε ἐελμένοι ἔνδοθι πύργων;

Have you really not had enough of being cooped up inside the towers?

6. ἡμῖν δ' εἴνατός ἐστι περιτροπέων ἐνιαυτὸς ένθάδε μιμνόντεσσι τὸ οὐ νεμεσίζομ' Άχαιοὺς άσγαλάαν παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν.

We have spent nine years lingering here. So I wouldn't blame the Achaeans for their distress by the curved ships. (2.295-7)

#### Part II: Before the Beginning of the *Iliad*

7. ζητεῖται, διὰ τί ἀπὸ τῶν τελευταίων ἤρξατο καὶ μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ὁ ποιητής. Καί φαμεν ὡς σποράδην οἱ πρὶν ἐγίνοντο πόλεμοι, καὶ οὐδὲ περὶ πόλεων μεγίστων. οἱ γὰρ Τρῶες Ἁχιλλέως παρόντος οὐδέποτε ἐξήεσαν τῶν πυλῶν καὶ σχέδὸν ἄπρακτοι τὴν ἐνναετίαν ἐτέλεσαν, τὰς <δὲ> ὁμορούσας πολίχνας οἱ Ἑλληνες διαστρέφοντες· περὶ ὧν ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῶ γράφειν οὐκ ἦν, μὴ παρούσης ὕλης τῷ λόγῳ.

It is asked why the poet began at the end rather than at the beginning [of the war]. It is because the previous battles happened sporadically and not around the biggest cities. Indeed, when Achilles was present, the Trojans never passed from their gates, and spent nine years in virtual inactivity, while the Greeks were destroying the neighboring cities. It wasn't necessary for the poet to write about those events, since there was not sufficient material for a story. (schol. bT *II*. 1.0)

8a. Θρήϊκες οἶδ' ἀπάνευθε <u>νεήλυδες</u> ἔσχατοι ἄλλων Τh

The Thracians, here, far apart from the rest, <u>newcomers</u> (10.434)

8b. ἵπποι δ' οἵδε γεραιὲ <u>νεήλυδες</u> οὓς ἐρεείνεις Θρηΐκιοι These horses that you ask about, old man, are <u>newcomers</u> from Thrace. (10.558)

9. ὅς ῥα νέον πολέμοιο μετὰ κλέος εἰληλούθει

Who came only recently following the report of war (13.364)

10. καὶ γὰρ δὴ τότε φῶτας ἐείκοσι βῆσεν ἀφ' ἵππων πρῶτ' ἐλθὼν σὺν ὄχεσφι διδασκόμενος πολέμοιο.

He cast twenty men down from their horses when first he came with his chariot, once he learned of the war. (16.810-11)

11. ἠὼς δέ μοί ἐστιν ἤδε δυωδεκάτη, ὅτ᾽ ἐς Ἰλιον εἰλήλουθα

Today is the twelfth dawn since I came to Troy. (21.80-2)

12. ἥδε δέ μοι νῦν ἡὼς ἐνδεκάτη ὅτε Ἰλιον εἰλήλουθα.

Today is the eleventh dawn since i came to Troy. (21.155-56)

13. 'εὖ γὰρ δὴ τόδε ἴδμεν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἐστὲ δὲ πάντες μάρτυροι, οὓς μὴ κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτοιο φέρουσαι· χθιζά τε καὶ πρωΐζ' ὅτ' ἐς Αὐλίδα νῆες Ἀχαιῶν ἠγερέθοντο κακὰ Πριάμφ καὶ Τρωσὶ φέρουσαι

We know this well, and you all are witnesses, even those whom the fate of death have taken — yesterday or the day before, when Achaean ships were gathered at Aulis, bringing evil to Priam and the Trojans [...] (2.301-4)

#### III. Conclusion: The Paradox of Achilles

14. εἰ γὰρ Ἁχιλλεὺς οἶος ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι μαχεῖται οὐδὲ μίνυνθ' ἔξουσι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα. καὶ δέ τί μιν καὶ πρόσθεν ὑποτρομέεσκον ὁρῶντες νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ θυμὸν ἑταίρου χώεται αἰνῶς δείδω μὴ καὶ τεῖχος ὑπέρμορον ἐξαλαπάξη.

For even if Achilles fights the Trojans by himself, they won't hold back swift Peleus' son, not for a moment. In the past they trembled just looking at him. But now that he rages terribly for his companion, I'm afraid he'll even annihilate the wall, contrary to fate. (20.26-30)

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