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

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

1. ἕπειτα ἀποβαίνοντας αὐτοὺς εἰς Ἰλιον εἴργουσιν οἱ Τρῶες, καὶ θνήσκει Πρωτεσίλαος ὑφ' Ἐκτορος. ἕπειτα Ἀχιλλεὺς αὐτοὺς τρέπεται ἀνελὼν Κύκνον τὸν Ποσειδῶνος. καὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἀναιροῦνται. καὶ διαπρεσβεύονται πρὸς τοὺς Τρῶας, τὴν Ἐλένην καὶ τὰ κτήματα ἀπαιτοῦντες. ὡς δὲ οὐχ ὑπήκουσαν ἐκεῖνοι, ἐνταῦθα δὴ τειχομαχοῦσιν. ἕπειτα τὴν χώραν ἐπεξελθόντες πορθοῦσι καὶ τὰς περιοίκους πόλεις. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Ἀχιλλεὺς Ἐλένην ἐπιθυμεῖ θεάσασθαι, καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ Ἀφροδίτη καὶ Θέτις. εἶτα ἀπονοστεῖν ὡρμημένους τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς Ἀχιλλεὺς 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 Ἀχιλλεὺς βουλὴ ὅπως ἐπικουφίσῃ τοὺς Τρῶας, Χρυσηΐδα δὲ Ἀγαμέμνων. ἔπειτά ἐστι Παλαμήδους θάνατος. καὶ Διὸς βουλὴ ὅπως ἐπικουφίσῃ τοὺς Τρῶας Ἀχιλλέα τῆς συμμαχίας τῆς Ἐλλήνων ἀποστήσας. καὶ κατάλογος τῶν τοῖς Τρωσὶ συμμαχησάντων.

 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.¹ (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)

¹ 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: <u>decimo demum pugnavimus anno</u>.

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. <u>Finally, in the tenth year, we fought</u>. (Ovid, *Met.* 13.207-9)

Part II: Before the Beginning of the Iliad

5. Hera (5.788-91): ὄφρα μὲν ἐς πόλεμον πωλέσκετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς, As long as divine Achilles would go out into battle, οὐδέ ποτε Τρῶες πρὸ πυλάων Δαρδανιάων the Trojans would never come out in front of the Dardanian gates. οἴχνεσκον· Achilles (9.352-5): ὄφρα δ' έγὼ μετ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν πολέμιζον As long as I waged war among the Achaeans, ούκ έθέλεσκε μάχην ἀπὸ τείχεος ὀρνύμεν Έκτωρ, Hector was unwilling to rouse battle far from the wall, άλλ' ὅσον ἐς Σκαιάς τε πύλας καὶ φηγὸν ἵκανεν· but only came out to the Scaean gates and oak tree. Poseidon (13.105-6): ὣς Τρῶες τὸ πρίν γε μένος καὶ χεῖρας Ἀχαιῶν In the past the Trojans were unwilling to stand fast against the strength and hands of the Achaeans, not even a bit. μίμνειν οὐκ ἐθέλεσκον ἐναντίον, οὐδ' ἠβαιόν. Hector (15.720-21): οί μ' έθέλοντα μάχεσθαι έπι πρυμνησι νέεσσιν They used to hold me back, and the army too, αὐτόν τ' ἰσχανάασκον ἐρητύοντό τε λαόν. 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 We have spent nine years ένθάδε μιμνόντεσσι τώ ού νεμεσίζομ' Άχαιούς lingering here. So I wouldn't blame the Achaeans άσχαλάαν παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν. for their distress by the curved ships. (2.295-7)

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 Ἀχιλλέως παρόντος οὐδέποτε ἐξήεσαν τῶν πυλῶν καὶ σχέδὸν ἄπρακτοι τὴν ἐνναετίαν ἐτέλεσαν, τὰς <δὲ> ὁμορούσας πολίχνας οἱ Ἐλληνες διαστρέφοντες· <u>περὶ ῶν ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῶ γράφειν οὐκ ἦν, μὴ παρούσης ὕλης τῷ λόγῷ</u>.

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 *Il*. 1.0)

8a. Θρήϊκες οἶδ' ἀπάνευθε <u>νεήλυδες</u> ἔσχατοι ἄλλων	The Thracians, here, far apart from the rest, <u>newcomers</u> (10.434)
8b. ἵπποι δ' οἴδε 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)
 καὶ γὰρ δὴ τότε φῶτας ἐείκοσι βῆσεν ἀφ' ἵππων πρῶτ' ἐλθὼν σὺν ὅχεσφι 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)
 ήως δέ μοί ἐστιν	Today is the twelfth dawn since I came to Troy. (21.80-2)
12. ἥδε δέ μοι νῦν	Today is
ἠὼς ἑνδεκάτη ὅτε Ἰλιον εἰλήλουθα.	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 Πριάμῷ καὶ Τρωσὶ φέρουσαι	We know this well, and you all are witnesses, even those whom the fate of death have taken — <u>yesterday or the day before, when Achaean ships were</u> <u>gathered at Aulis</u> , bringing evil to Priam and the Trojans [] (2.301-4)

Conclusion: The Paradox of Achilles

14. εἰ γὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς οἶος ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι μαχεῖται
οὐδὲ μίνυνθ' ἕξουσι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.For even if Achilles fights the Trojans by himself,
they won't hold back swift Peleus' son, not for a moment.καὶ δἑ τί μιν καὶ πρόσθεν ὑποτρομέεσκον ὁρῶντες·
νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ θυμὸν ἑταίρου χώεται αἰνῶς
δείδω μὴ καὶ τεῖχος ὑπέρμορον ἐξαλαπάξῃ.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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