

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 Ἴλιον εἵργουσιν οἱ Τρῶες, καὶ θνήσκει Πρωτεσίλαος ὑφ' Ἑκτορος. ἔπειτα Ἀχιλλεὺς αὐτοὺς τρέπεται ἀνελῶν Κύκνον τὸν Ποσειδῶνος. καὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἀναιροῦνται. καὶ διαπρεσβεύονται πρὸς τοὺς Τρῶας, τὴν Ἑλένην καὶ τὰ κτήματα ἀπαιτοῦντες. ὥς δὲ οὐχ ὑπήκουσαν ἐκεῖνοι, ἐνταῦθα δὴ τειχομαχοῦσιν. ἔπειτα τὴν χώραν ἐπεξελθόντες πορθοῦσι καὶ τὰς περιοίκους πόλεις. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα Ἀχιλλεὺς Ἑλένην ἐπιθυμεῖ θεάσασθαι, καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ Ἀφροδίτη καὶ Θέτις. εἶτα ἀπονοστεῖν ὠρμημένους τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς Ἀχιλλεὺς κατέχει. κᾶπειτα ἀπελαύνει τὰς Αἰνείου βοῦς, καὶ Λυρνησοῦν καὶ Πήδασον πορθεῖ καὶ συχγὰς τῶν περιοικίδων πόλεων, καὶ Τρωῖλον φονεύει. Λυκάονά τε Πάτροκλος εἰς Λῆμνον ἀγαγὼν ἀπεμπολεῖ. καὶ ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων Ἀχιλλεὺς μὲν Βρισηίδα γέρας λαμβάνει, Χρυσήδα δὲ Ἀγαμέμνων. ἔπειτ' ἔστι Παλαμήδους θάνατος. καὶ Διὸς βουλή ὅπως ἐπικουφίση τοὺς Τρῶας Ἀχιλλεὺς 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.¹ (Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 148-69 Severyns)

2. Πρωτεσιλάου δὲ τελευτήσαντος, ἐκβαίνει μετὰ Μυρμιδόνων Ἀχιλλεὺς καὶ λίθον βαλὼν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν Κύκνου κτείνει. ὥς δὲ τοῦτον νεκρὸν εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι, φεύγουσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες ἐκπηδήσαντες τῶν νεῶν ἐνέπλησαν σωμάτων τὸ πεδίον. καὶ κατακλείσαντες τοὺς Τρῶας ἐπολιόρκουν. ἀνέλκουσι δὲ τὰς ναῦς. μὴ θαρρούντων δὲ τῶν βαρβάρων, Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐνεδρεύσας Τρωῖλον 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: 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)

Part II: Before the Beginning of the *Iliad*

5. Hera (5.788-91):
ὄφρα μὲν ἐς πόλεμον πωλέσκετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,
οὐδέ ποτε Τρῶες πρὸ πυλάων Δαρδανιάων
οἴχνεσκον· 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 Ἴκτωρ,
ἀλλ' ὅσον ἐς Σκαιάς τε πύλας καὶ φηγὸν ἴκανεν· 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):
ὣς Τρῶες τὸ πρὶν γε μένος καὶ χεῖρας Ἀχαιῶν
μῖμνεν 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):
οἷ μ' ἐθέλοντα μάχεσθαι ἐπὶ πρυμνήσι νέεσσι
αὐτόν τ' ἰσχανάσκον 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 οὐ πῶ κεκόρησθε ἐελμένοι ἔνδοθι πύργων; Have you really not had enough of being cooped up
inside the towers?
6. ἡμῖν δ' εἵνατός ἐστι περιτροπέων ἐνιαυτὸς
ἐνθάδε μῖμνόντεσσι· τῷ οὐ νεμεσίζοιμ' Ἀχαιοὺς
ἀσχαλάαν 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)

Conclusion: The Paradox of Achilles

14. εἰ γὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς οἶος ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι μαχεῖται
οὐδὲ μίνυθ' ἔξουσι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.
καὶ δέ τί μιν καὶ πρόσθεν ὑποτρομέεσκον ὀρώντες·
νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ θυμὸν ἑταίρου χῶεται αἰνῶς
δεῖδω 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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