Ancient Greek Democracy

Readings and Sources

Edited by
Eric W. Robinson

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BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

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First published 2004 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd
Reprinted 2004

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ancient Greek democracy: readings and sources / edited by Eric W. Robinson.
p. cm.–(Interpreting ancient history; 2)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-631-23393-8 (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-631-23394-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Democracy–Greece–History. 2. Democracy–Greece–Athens–History. I. Robinson, Eric W. II. Series.

JC75. D36 .A43 2003
320.938′5′09014–dc21

2002038286

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10 on 12 pt Galliard
by Kolam Information Services Pvt. Ltd, Pondicherry, India
Printed and bound in the United Kingdom
by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

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Preface

This volume is intended to provide students and other interested readers with an accessible, up-to-date survey of vital issues in ancient Greek democracy (*demokratia*). Six chapters each present a question of continuing interest matched with key ancient texts, followed by two or three recent scholarly articles on the subject. Every chapter thus invites the reader into the process of historical investigation as he or she engages the ancient testimony and sees how classical scholars analyze and gain insights from it. At the same time, the selection of topics is designed to provide an overview of the phenomenon of Greek democracy, from its earliest roots in the archaic period to its appearance and development in Athens (and, for a useful comparison, how it looked in another Greek city of the classical period). It is hoped that readers will be able to learn a great deal about *demokratia*, the present state of its study, and some of the approaches and methods of ancient historians.

An opening introduction briefly sketches the history of Greek democracy and its legacy, and also describes some of its major features. Each chapter closes with a selection of suggestions for further reading. These short bibliographies (restricted to English-language books and articles) are intended to help students researching papers or other readers interested in further exploration of that chapter's topic. A glossary at the end of the volume defines some of the more common Greek names and terms encountered in the book.

Almost all the scholarly articles included here have been previously published. Some have had sections omitted for reasons of length or focus. For easy accessibility to the Greekless reader, translations of Greek terms have been inserted and occasionally Greek phrases eliminated. Notes and bibliographies are retained to maximize the articles' usefulness to advanced students and scholars.

As for the ancient source selections in each chapter, they are for the most part given in chronological order, earliest authors to latest. Some of the older translations of the sources have had archaic terms updated for this volume. Necessarily, all the selections have been excerpted from longer original works: for context and further insights students are encouraged to seek out the unabridged text.

No attempt has been made to impose a uniform system for the spelling of transliterated Greek names and terms across the contributions in this volume: they have been left as each author or translator chose. Readers can therefore expect to find variant spellings (e.g., Clisthenes or Kleisthenes for Cleisthenes).

I have many people to thank for their help in bringing this project to fruition. Working for Blackwell, Al Bertrand, Angela Cohen, and Margaret Aherne all deserve my deepest gratitude for their roles in helping to formulate, produce, and edit the book, and for making it all an enjoyable process. The anonymous readers provided many useful suggestions, and I must also thank Fred Robinson, Vanessa Gorman, Phil Kaplan, and Nino Luraghi for readings or advice at various stages along the way. Jay Samons showed great generosity in contributing new material for the volume – and then paid for it by (patiently) putting up with my niggles thereafter. Bryce Sady provided invaluable help with bibliographies and proofing, all done on short notice and with great skill. This project also benefited from funds from the Loeb Classical Library Foundation and a research leave from Harvard University. Finally, I gratefully thank my wife, Carwina Weng, for her proofing and especially for her love and support.

Acknowledgments

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Harmodius and Aristogeiton drinking song (Athenaeus 15.50, p. 695ab, with scholion to Aristophanes *Acharnians* 980); trans. C. Fornara, from *Archaic Times to the End of the Peloponnesian War*, 2nd edn. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 39.

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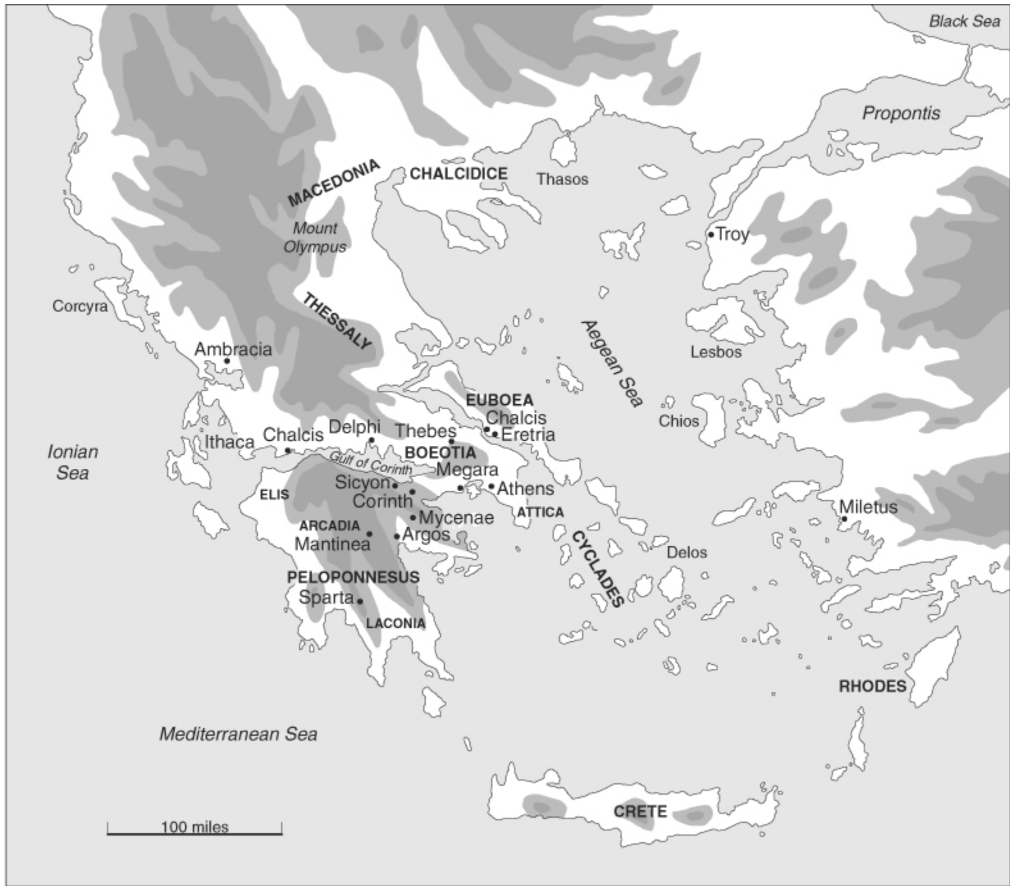
Abbreviations

AHB	*Ancient History Bulletin*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
CJ	*Classical Journal*
C & M	*Classica et Mediaevalia*
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche scientifique
CP/CPH/CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CR	*Classical Review*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
G & R	*Greece & Rome*
GHI	M. N. Tod, ed., *Greek Historical Inscriptions* (1946–8)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HSCPh	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873–)
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
LCM	*Liverpool Classical Monthly*
ML	R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1988)
P. Oxy.	*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*
PCPhS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
QS	*Quaderni di storia*
SEG	F. Jacoby, *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*



Map1 *Mainland Greece and the Aegean*

Map 2 *Greece in the Mediterranean World*

Ancient Greek Democracy: A Brief Introduction

Democracy is one of the most astonishing and compelling inventions of the ancient Greeks. Although a few earlier civilizations might have allowed a degree of popular involvement in decision-making, and before then some primitive human societies might have been organized in roughly egalitarian fashion, the Greeks were the first people we know to have conceived and implemented the striking notion that the citizens of a community, even a large and complex one, could govern themselves. They called it *demokratia* ("people power").

The basic premise is not very different from that which still animates democracies today: that in a given community the ordinary citizens – not some king, tyrant, or clique of the especially distinguished or wealthy – should collectively hold the sovereign power to administer all public affairs for the common good. Indeed, the Greek ideal went a step farther than its typical modern counterpart in that as much as possible the people were to govern *directly*, filling offices themselves through citizen lotteries and participating in large public assemblies to debate and vote personally on most affairs of state. Elected leaders and representative bodies also played important roles but did not dominate government policy-making the way they do in the democracies of modern nations. Freedom and equality were invoked as abiding principles of democratic constitutions, then as now, though they were not always applied in the same ways.

Historical Sketch

Traditionally, textbook accounts have turned almost exclusively to the famous case at Athens to trace the history of Greek democracy. Yet a broader view is both possible and desirable, and will be followed here.

The earliest instances of democracy arose in the sixth century BC in various city-states of the Greek world. Though reliable information for this period of Greek history is scarce, and it is not always clear how truly democratic some of the earliest were, the best candidates include Chios (in the Aegean Sea), Megara (on the

mainland), Heraclea Pontica (on the coast of the Black Sea), Cyrene (on the Libyan coast), and Ambracia (in northwest Greece). By the late sixth century Athens had turned to some form of democracy (an event examined in chapter 2), as had other major states like Argos (in the Peloponnesus) and Syracuse (in Sicily) by the early fifth century. This wide geographic scattering in cities of differing types suggests that *demokratia* was not a localized phenomenon, nor the spur-of-the-moment creation of any single "inventor" (for which there is no evidence anyway), but rather grew out of attitudes and conditions widespread in the Greek world. (The first chapter of this book looks to the oldest works of Greek literature for early signs of egalitarian structures and thought that might have led to democratic innovation.) As for how popular governments took root in particular cities, existing accounts imply that, with rare exceptions, they tended to appear only after a violent revolution or military catastrophe threw the entire *polis* (city-state) into upheaval. It would seem to have taken an extraordinary political crisis, then, to allow popular governments to win through against the interests of traditional royal, tyrannical, or aristocratic authority.

Over the course of the fifth and fourth centuries BC (the Classical era) democracy became more common and continued to appear all across the Greek world. On the islands and coasts of the Aegean many of the members of Athens' vast military alliance – ultimately transformed into an empire – had been or came to be democratically governed. The long Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) fought by the Athenian and Spartan coalitions intensified this trend within the Aegean alliance, for the Athenians favored democratic factions in their sphere of influence, in contrast to the Spartan preference for oligarchies in theirs. In fifth-century Sicily popular governments replaced tyrannical rule in most of the Greek cities starting in the 460s. (Chapter 3 investigates the case of Syracuse, the most influential *polis* in Sicily.) A number of cities in southern Italy also came to have democratic governments, as did nearby Corcyra in the Ionian Sea. The Peloponnesus on the Greek mainland had its share as well, including Argos, Elis, and Mantinea.

Sparta's defeat of Athens at the end of the fifth century led to the overthrow of many democratic regimes among its allies, and the return of tyranny to Syracuse around the same time had ramifications in that region. Nevertheless, inscriptions and literary sources make clear that democracy continued to flourish in the fourth century. Indeed, contemporary historians, orators, and philosophers speak of it as a widespread phenomenon, and inscribed state decrees indicate through their terminology an expansion of the institutions associated with democracy. Athens itself re-democratized after a brief interlude of autocracy following the Peloponnesian War, and many Aegean states retained their popular institutions. On the mainland, Thebes adopted democratic government, as did Sicyon, Phleious, and the Arcadian confederacy, at least for a time, while the Argives maintained theirs. Alexander the Great, Macedonian king and world conqueror until his death in 323, is said to have overthrown oligarchies and established democracies among the Greek states he liberated from Persian control.

Inscriptions suggest that the spread of democratic institutions in Greek cities continued after the Classical period. But in the succeeding Hellenistic era (roughly the third through the first centuries BC) individual city-states experienced generally decreasing autonomy and influence in a Greek world now dominated by Macedonian kingdoms and large confederacies. There is also reason to believe that the increasing

prevalence in this period of *demokratiai* was accompanied by a loosening of the term's meaning and a decline in actual popular participation in *polis* administration. The case of Rhodes, a vibrant, independent democracy for much of the Hellenistic period, may have been exceptional. As Roman influence grew from the second century BC on, true democracies became more rare and ultimately faded from view.

Definition and Institutions

As it existed in the fifth and fourth centuries, democracy meant that the *demos* (the people) were sovereign in the deliberations of state. A popular assembly, to which all citizens were invited, met regularly and provided a forum for debating and voting on the most important matters. Representative councils typically prepared in advance the agenda for the assembly meetings. Popular courts, with ordinary citizens serving as jurors, tried legal cases, and administrative officials (magistrates, generals, treasurers, examiners, etc.) were either elected or chosen by lot for relatively brief terms, usually one year. Officials were held to account after their terms of office as a check on corruption. While property qualifications often applied to some of the higher offices, generally wealth requirements were minimal or non-existent for participation in the assembly, courts, and other positions.[1]

Some democracies employed more unusual institutions as well. Ostracism and analogous laws allowed the people to vote into exile for several years leaders who seemed to have grown too powerful, troublesome, or threatening to the popular order. Some states paid citizens for their service on juries or attendance at assembly meetings, encouraging active participation from all classes including the poor.

Underlying the development of these institutions were the ideals of freedom and equality. Chapter 4 examines such ideals, considering how they applied in ancient *demokratiai* and how they compare to modern uses of the terms. Chapter 5 debates the question of who really held power in ancient democracies such as Athens, the ordinary people supposedly in charge or the (typically) elite leaders who gained prominence and employed rhetoric to persuade the masses. One must also confront the fact that ancient democracies, like all other Greek constitutional forms, excluded from active citizenship women, slaves, and resident aliens. While not entirely devoid of civic rights or responsibilities, members of these groups could not join in the practice of *demokratia* in anything like the way native, freeborn males could. Chapter 6 looks at some of the reasons for and effects of these exclusions.

The Heritage and Study of *Demokratia*

As noted earlier, there are many similarities in the basic principles of ancient and modern democracy. It would be a mistake, however, to believe that modern democracy simply evolved out of its Greek predecessor or that the legacy of *demokratia* has been cherished throughout Western history. In fact, for most of ancient and modern history Greek democracy has had anything but a good reputation or broad influence. Starting in antiquity, historians and philosophers who treated the subject often voiced grave doubts about popular government. Greek philosophers found it flawed and

ill-conceived, especially as compared to "mixed" constitutions that balanced monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic elements, or measured against idealized city-states they might imagine. Roman observers often saw *demokratia* as one of those irresponsible Greek innovations to be given a wide berth or actively discouraged. Why, the ancient critics wondered, should a city employ throngs of the poor and little-educated to take on the complexities of public administration when the "best men," those with elite family backgrounds and/or training, could guide the state? Would the latter not make wiser rulers? Danger was also seen to arise from rampant demagoguery, fractious and emotional assembly meetings, and the mistreatment of illustrious leaders that could accompany rule of the "masses." Few ancient observers (whose works survive, at least) expressed positive views.

As democratic government faded and ultimately disappeared from the cities of the Roman Empire, *demokratia* drew less and less attention from writers, becoming little more than a curiosity of Greek antiquity or a forgotten subject altogether, especially as the Roman world gave way to the Middle Ages. The rediscovery of ancient history and its political examples during the Renaissance revived the topic, but typically "mixed" constitutions, most especially Sparta or Rome, gained the plaudits of those looking closely at politics. Early modern writers often echoed the classical critiques, branding democracy – particularly the famous Athenian version – as disorderly, ill-guided, and unjust to its leading figures. Even intellectuals of the French and American revolutions found more to condemn than to embrace about it. Federalists in America especially sought to avoid the democratic model when devising and promoting their new constitution, preferring the perceived stability and balance of the Roman Republic. One could occasionally find more charitable views about democracy, but negative opinions predominated, especially among the scholarly.

Not until the nineteenth century did the tide turn. A crucial figure in this shift was George Grote, an English banker and liberal who produced a monumental *History of Greece* in the years between 1846 and 1856. In it he passionately defended Greek democracy against the criticisms that had been leveled against it and praised the Athenian state for its populist practices and its vigor. Grote's *History* proved to be influential in Europe and in America, and classical scholars showed an increasing willingness to consider ancient popular government in a more positive light. It did not hurt the cause, of course, that all across the West social leveling and more liberal thinking were transforming the political landscape and would result in a flourishing of modern forms of democracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Ever since this turn toward modern democracy, its ancient counterpart has been a popular subject of classical historians, political scientists, and, to some extent, the general public. A great many books have been published by classicists in a variety of languages examining all aspects of *demokratia* and not infrequently making comparisons to modern versions. A sampling of English-language works will be noted here, both to indicate the persistent, lively interest in the field and to offer suggestions for further reading. (Readers may also look to the brief, specific bibliographies at the end of each of this volume's chapters.)

Three of the better-known works of the last half-century have been C. Hignett's *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century* BC (Oxford, 1952), A. H. M. Jones' *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford, 1957), and M. I. Finley's

Democracy Ancient and Modern (1973; revised edition, London, 1985). Among more recent works, painstaking scholarship on the history, institutions, and practices of the Athenian democracy continues to refine and improve our knowledge of that state. Prominent examples include Mogens Hansen's volumes of collected essays on the Athenian assembly (e.g. *The Athenian Ecclesia*, Copenhagen, 1983) and his *Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford, 1991); Martin Ostwald's *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law* (Berkeley, 1986); and P. J. Rhodes' *The Athenian Boule* (revised edition, Oxford, 1985). Focusing especially on the ideology of democracy at Athens is Josiah Ober's *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, 1989). Other important aspects are examined in Robin Osborne's *Demos: The Discovery of Classical Attika* (Cambridge, 1985); Raphael Sealey's *The Athenian Republic* (University Park, PA, 1987); R. K. Sinclair's *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge, 1988); Philip Manville's *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, 1990); and Edward Cohen's *The Athenian Nation* (Princeton, 2000).

Since the celebration of the supposed "2500th anniversary" of democracy in 1993 (counting from its advent in Athens ca. 508/7 BC), a number of notable edited volumes have appeared, including *Democracy 2500?*, eds. I. Morris and K. A. Raaflaub (Dubuque, IA, 1998); *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-century Athens*, eds. D. Boedeker and K. A. Raaflaub (Cambridge, MA, 1998); *Demokratia*, eds. J. Ober and C. Hedrick (Princeton, 1996); *The Good Idea: Democracy and Ancient Greece*, ed. J. A. Koumoulides (Caratzas, 1995); *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, eds. P. Euben, J. R. Wallach, and J. Ober (Ithaca, NY, 1994); and *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, eds. A. L. Boegehold and A. C. Scafuro (Baltimore, 1994).

Other recent works have attempted to broaden our view of ancient democracy by focusing attention on states and institutions outside Athens: see Eric W. Robinson's *The First Democracies* (Stuttgart, 1997); P. J. Rhodes' *The Decrees of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1997); and (though only partly focused on democracy) *Alternatives to Athens*, eds. R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (Oxford, 2000). James O'Neil's *The Origins and Development of Ancient Greek Democracy* (Lanham, MD, 1995) also devotes much attention outside Athens in an accessible study.

General introductions to Athenian democracy continue to appear, such as David Stockton's *The Classical Athenian Democracy* (Oxford, 1990) and Christopher Carey's *Democracy in Classical Athens* (London, 2000). The changing reputation of the Athenian democracy from antiquity through the modern era has been well presented in Jennifer Roberts' *Athens on Trial* (Princeton, 1994). John Dunn edited a very useful collection of essays tracing the evolution of democracy from antiquity to the present era in *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey 508 BC to AD 1993* (Oxford, 1992).

NOTE

1 Broad-based oligarchies in the Greek world might employ some of the above institutions, including citizen assemblies with final authority. Sparta, for example, invited its citizens to vote on all measures put before its assembly. But other elements were decidedly less

democratic: Spartan citizens were an elite, highly regimented group kept separate from other freeborn native men of the territory and were required to make regular contributions to retain their special status. And even among this group, the ability to participate in assembl1y debates was sharply limited as compared to that of citizens in democracies.

1

Prelude to Democracy: Political Thought in Early Greek Texts

Introduction

The earliest democratic governments began to appear in the city-states of Greece in the sixth century BC. Where did the idea come from? Since there is no evidence that the democratic impulse came from anywhere outside Greece, scholars have looked to the texts and events of earlier Greek history for clues of its beginnings. But reliable source material is scarce for the Archaic period of Greek history (roughly the eight through sixth centuries BC). Archaeological remains can tell us a great deal about many aspects of Greek settlements and culture of the time, but are ill suited to the task of revealing specific political institutions and concepts; for these, literary evidence is essential. The first authors offering potentially relevant information are the poets Homer and Hesiod – not historians, but tellers of epic tales. The political and historical interpretation of their works is thus complicated and has engendered much debate, but still offers the best way to get a glimpse of the kind of thinking that in time led to the development of Greek democracy.

Homer: Selections on speech and authority in assemblies

Though reliable information about Homer and his role in creating the Iliad and the Odyssey is famously lacking, most scholars believe the two great epics attributed to him date back to the second half of the eighth century BC or a little later, at least in the form we have them. The Iliad tells the story of a crucial portion of the legendary Trojan War, while the Odyssey describes the perils of the long-delayed return of the hero Odysseus to Ithaca after the end of that war. Both contain scenes where communities – either the Greek army before Troy or the people of Ithaca – gather in assemblies to

hear and react to proposals made by their leaders (often called *basileis*, translated as "princes" or "kings"). While the speeches and specific events portrayed in the epics are considered fictional by modern historians, many consider them to be revealing about the attitudes of early Greeks toward power, authority, and the role of the community at large in political decisions. (*Sources*: Homer, *Iliad* 1.1–305, 2.1–282, trans. by R. Lattimore from *The Iliad* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 59–67, 76–83; *Odyssey* 2.1–259, trans. by W. Shewring from *The Odyssey/Homer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 12–18.)

Iliad 1.1–305

Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus
and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians,
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting
of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished
since that time when first there stood in division of conflict
Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilleus.
What god was it then set them together in bitter collision?
Zeus' son and Leto's, Apollo, who in anger at the king drove
the foul pestilence along the host, and the people perished,
since Atreus' son had dishonoured Chryses, priest of Apollo,
when he came beside the fast ships of the Achaians to ransom
back his daughter, carrying gifts beyond count and holding
in his hands wound on a staff of gold the ribbons of Apollo
who strikes from afar, and supplicated all the Achaians,
but above all Atreus' two sons, the marshals of the people:
'Sons of Atreus and you other strong-greaved Achaians,
to you may the gods grant who have their homes on Olympos
Priam's city to be plundered and a fair homecoming thereafter,
but may you give me back my own daughter and take the ransom,
giving honour to Zeus' son who strikes from afar, Apollo.'
Then all the rest of the Achaians cried out in favour
that the priest be respected and the shining ransom be taken;
yet this pleased not the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon,
but harshly he drove him away with a strong order upon him:
'Never let me find you again, old sir, near our hollow
ships, neither lingering now nor coming again hereafter,
for fear your staff and the god's ribbons help you no longer.
The girl I will not give back; sooner will old age come upon her
in my own house, in Argos, far from her own land, going
up and down by the loom and being in my bed as my companion.
So go now, do not make me angry; so you will be safer.'
So he spoke, and the old man in terror obeyed him

and went silently away beside the murmuring sea beach.
Over and over the old man prayed as he walked in solitude
to King Apollo, whom Leto of the lovely hair bore: 'Hear me,
lord of the silver bow who set your power about Chryse
and Killa the sacrosanct, who are lord in strength over Tenedos,
Smintheus, if ever it pleased your heart that I built your temple,
if ever it pleased you that I burned all the rich thigh pieces
of bulls, of goats, then bring to pass this wish I pray for:
let your arrows make the Danaans pay for my tears shed.'
  So he spoke in prayer, and Phoibos Apollo heard him,
and strode down along the pinnacles of Olympos, angered
in his heart, carrying across his shoulders the bow and the hooded
quiver; and the shafts clashed on the shoulders of the god walking
angrily. He came as night comes down and knelt then
apart and opposite the ships and let go an arrow.
Terrible was the clash that rose from the bow of silver.
First he went after the mules and the circling hounds, then let go
a tearing arrow against the men themselves and struck them.
The corpse fires burned everywhere and did not stop burning.
  Nine days up and down the host ranged the god's arrows,
but on the tenth Achilleus called the people to assembly;
a thing put into his mind by the goddess of the white arms, Hera,
who had pity upon the Danaans when she saw them dying.
Now when they were all assembled in one place together,
Achilleus of the swift feet stood up among them and spoke forth:
'Son of Atreus, I believe now that straggling backwards
we must make our way home if we can even escape death,
if fighting now must crush the Achaians and the plague likewise.
No, come, let us ask some holy man, some prophet,
even an interpreter of dreams, since a dream also
comes from Zeus, who can tell why Phoibos Apollo is so angry,
if for the sake of some vow, some hecatomb he blames us,
if given the fragrant smoke of lambs, of he goats, somehow
he can be made willing to beat the bane aside from us.'
  He spoke thus and sat down again, and among them stood up
Kalchas, Thestor's son, far the best of the bird interpreters,
who knew all things that were, the things to come and the things past,
who guided into the land of Ilion the ships of the Achaians
through that seercraft of his own that Phoibos Apollo gave him.
He in kind intention toward all stood forth and addressed them:
'You have bidden me, Achilleus beloved of Zeus, to explain to
you this anger of Apollo the lord who strikes from afar. Then
I will speak; yet make me a promise and swear before me
readily by word and work of your hands to defend me,
since I believe I shall make a man angry who holds great kingship

over the men of Argos, and all the Achaians obey him.
For a king when he is angry with a man beneath him is too strong,
and suppose even for the day itself he swallow down his anger,
he still keeps bitterness that remains until its fulfilment
deep in his chest. Speak forth then, tell me if you will protect me.'
Then in answer again spoke Achilleus of the swift feet:
'Speak, interpreting whatever you know, and fear nothing.
In the name of Apollo beloved of Zeus to whom you, Kalchas,
make your prayers when you interpret the gods' will to the Danaans,
no man so long as I am alive above earth and see daylight
shall lay the weight of his hands on you beside the hollow ships,
not one of all the Danaans, even if you mean Agamemnon,
who now claims to be far the greatest of all the Achaians.'
At this the blameless seer took courage again and spoke forth:
'No, it is not for the sake of some vow or hecatomb he blames us,
but for the sake of his priest whom Agamemnon dishonoured
and would not give him back his daughter nor accept the ransom.
Therefore the archer sent griefs against us and will send them
still, nor sooner thrust back the shameful plague from the Danaans
until we give the glancing-eyed girl back to her father
without price, without ransom, and lead also a blessed hecatomb
to Chryse; thus we might propitiate and persuade him.'
He spoke thus and sat down again, and among them stood up
Atreus' son the hero wide-ruling Agamemnon
raging, the heart within filled black to the brim with anger
from beneath, but his two eyes showed like fire in their blazing.
First of all he eyed Kalchas bitterly and spoke to him:
'Seer of evil: never yet have you told me a good thing.
Always the evil things are dear to your heart to prophesy,
but nothing excellent have you said nor ever accomplished.
Now once more you make divination to the Danaans, argue
forth your reason why he who strikes from afar afflicts them,
because I for the sake of the girl Chryseis would not take
the shining ransom; and indeed I wish greatly to have her
in my own house; since I like her better than Klytaimestra
my own wife, for in truth she is no way inferior,
neither in build nor stature nor wit, not in accomplishment.
Still I am willing to give her back, if such is the best way.
I myself desire that my people be safe, not perish.
Find me then some prize that shall be my own, lest I only
among the Argives go without, since that were unfitting;
you are all witnesses to this thing, that my prize goes elsewhere.'
Then in answer again spoke brilliant swift-footed Achilleus:
'Son of Atreus, most lordly, greediest for gain of all men,
how shall the great-hearted Achaians give you a prize now?

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