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DIO CHRYSOSTOM
DISCOURSES 61–80



Translated by
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DIO CHRYSOSTOM

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DIO CHRYSOSTOM

THE SIXTY-FIRST DISCOURSE : CHRYSEÏS

IN this little dialogue it would seem that Dio had chosen for discussion the most unpromising of topics. Little as is known about Briseïs, Homer at least tells us that when Agamemnon's messengers came to fetch her she followed them unwillingly, but Chryseïs, the involuntary cause of the quarrel out of which grew the *Iliad*, is restored to the arms of her father without giving the slightest clue to her emotions or desires. Apart from the epithet "fair-cheeked" which she shares with Briseïs, our only testimony regarding her personality is the tribute paid her by Agamemnon when he compares her with Clytemnestra to the disadvantage of the latter, a tribute, it may be, inspired as much by arrogant pride as by passion.

So far as is known, none of the Greek playwrights found in her story material suitable for dramatic treatment; yet Dio here undertakes the task of endowing this lay figure with life. His partner in the discussion is not a colourless individual, as is often the case, merely providing the cues for further argumentation and meekly assenting to the conclusions reached, but a woman with a mind of her own, repeatedly raising logical objections and asking pertinent questions. Her final utterance shows that, despite the dexterity of Dio, she has some lingering doubts about the true character of Chryseïs. It is of course peculiarly fitting that in treating such a topic as Chryseïs the interlocutor should be a woman, but that Dio should have cast a woman for such a rôle is of itself noteworthy, and there is such an atmosphere of verisimilitude surrounding the dialogue as to suggest that it may actually have taken place.

ΔΙΩΝ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ

61. ΧΡΥΣΗΙΣ

1 Δ. Ἐπεὶ τυγχάνεις οὐ φαύλως ἐπαινοῦσα Ὅμηρον οὐδέ, ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοί, πιστεύουσα τῇ δόξῃ προσποιῇ θαυμάζειν, ὃ δὲ δεινότατός ἐστιν ἡσθῆσαι τοῦ ποιητοῦ, τὴν περὶ τὰ πάθη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐμπειρίαν, τᾶλλα μὲν ἐάσωμεν, εἰ ἐθέλεις, τὰ νῦν, τὰ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ στρατηγῶν, περὶ δὲ μιᾶς γυναικὸς σκεψώμεθα τῶν αἰχμαλώτων, ὁποῖαν τινὰ πεποίηκε τὴν θυγατέρα τοῦ ἱερέως, ἧς εὐθύς ἐμνήσθη κατ' ἀρχὰς τῆς ποιήσεως. ὃ μὲν γὰρ Ἀγαμέμνων οὐ μόνον τὸ εἶδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τρόπον ἐπαινεῖν ἔοικε τῆς παιδίσκης, λέγει γὰρ ὡς οὐδὲν εἶη τὰς φρένας χείρων τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναικός· δῆλον δὲ ὡς ἐκείνην οἰόμενος γοῦν ἔχειν.

2 Τί δέ;¹ οὐκ ἄλλως τοῦτο εἶρηκε διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα ἀπατῶμενος;

Δ. Ἰδεῖν ἄξιον· καίτοι χαλεπώτατον πείθειν τοὺς ἐρῶντας. καὶ γὰρ ὑπονοοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ ὀργίζονται ῥαδίως, καὶ οὐδέποτε φασιν ἀγαπᾶσθαι κατ'

¹ Τί δέ; Wilamowitz : εἰ δέ.

¹ Cf. *Iliad* 1. 113-115, spoken in praise of Chryseis.

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Dio. Since, as it happens, you praise Homer in no ordinary manner and you do not, like most persons, merely pretend to admire him, trusting to his reputation, but instead have discerned that quality in the poet in which he is most effective, his acquaintance with the passions of mankind, let us, if you please, pass by all else for the moment, the fortunes of kings and generals, and turn our attention to just one woman among the captives, aiming to discover how the poet has depicted the daughter of the priest whom he has mentioned at the very beginning of his poem. For Agamemnon seems to praise not only the beauty but also the character of the young woman, for he says that she is in no wise inferior in mind to his own wife ¹—clearly believing that Clytemnestra has intelligence.

Interlocutor. What of it? Has he not said this thoughtlessly, beguiled by his infatuation?

Dio. That is worth looking into; and yet it is very difficult to convince men who are in love, for most of them are suspicious and easily angered, and they never admit that they are loved as they deserve by

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ἀξίαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐρωμένων, ἄλλως τε ὅταν ὦσι κρείττους τοσοῦτον καὶ συνόντες μετ' ἐξουσίας.

Ταῦτα δέ φημι συμβαίνειν τοῖς φαύλοις ἐρασταῖς.

Δ. Εἴτε οὖν σπουδαῖος ἦν ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων, ὀρθῶς ἐγίγνωσκε περὶ αὐτῆς, εἴτε τοῖς πολλοῖς ὅμοιος, οὐ ῥάδιον φαύλην οὔσαν ἀρέσαι τὸν τοιοῦτον, ὥστε ἀγαθὴν ὑπολαβεῖν. φέρε δὴ καὶ τᾶλλα ἴδωμεν.

3 Καὶ τίνα ἄλλην ἀπόδειξιν ἔχεις παρά γε Ὀμήρῳ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς γυναικός; οὐδὲν γοῦν πεποίηκεν αὐτὴν πράττουσαν ἢ λέγουσαν, ἀλλὰ σιγῇ τῷ πατρὶ διδομένην.

Δ. Τί γάρ; ἐκ τῶν γενομένων περὶ αὐτὴν οὐκ ἂν τις συμβάλῃ τὴν διάνοιαν μὴ πάνυ ἀπλῶς μηδὲ εὐήθως σκοπῶν;

Ἴσως.

Δ. Πότερον οὖν¹ οἰώμεθα² τὸν Χρῦσσην ἀκούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον ἐλθεῖν μετὰ λύτρων ἅμα τὰ στέμματα κομίζοντα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἰκετεύειν καὶ τοὺς βασιλέας ἀφιέναι αὐτήν, ἢ τοῦναντίον ἐκείνης δεομένης τοῦ πατρός, 4 εἴ τι δύναιτο, βοηθεῖν; εἰ γὰρ ἔστεργε τοῖς παροῦσιν ἢ Χρυσῆς καὶ τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι συνεῖναι ἠβούλετο, οὐδέποτ' ἂν εἴλετο Χρῦσσης ἅμα τὴν θυγατέρα λυπῶν τῷ βασιλεῖ ἀπέχθάνεσθαι, οὐκ ἀγνοῶν ὅπως εἶχε πρὸς αὐτήν. τὸ γὰρ συνεῖναι τῷ βασιλεῖ τὴν Χρυσηίδα στεργομένην οὐχ ἥττον τῷ Χρῦσση συνέφερεν. καὶ γὰρ ἡ χώρα καὶ τὸ ἱερόν καὶ αὐτὸς

¹ Πότερον οὖν Selden : ποτέ.

² οἰώμεθα Reiske : οἰόμεθα.

¹ Cf. *Iliad* 1. 12-16.

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their beloved, especially when they are so superior in station to the objects of their passion and associate with them by virtue of authority.

Int. That kind of thing, in my opinion, happens with lovers of the low sort.

Dio. Well then, if Agamemnon was of the superior kind, he was right in his appraisal of the girl ; but if he was no better than most men, it is not easy for a woman of low degree to please a man like him to the point of taking her to be noble. Well now, let us examine also the other points.

Int. Why, what additional proof have you in Homer of the character of the woman ? At any rate he has not depicted her as doing or saying anything, but rather as being silently handed over to her father.

Dio. What ! Could one not deduce her faculties of mind from what took place in connexion with her, provided one were to consider the matter in a manner not wholly superficial and foolish ?

Int. Perhaps.

Dio. Are we, then, to suppose that against the wishes of his daughter Chryses came into the camp, bearing the fillets of the god along with the ransom, and besought the assembly and the kings to release her,¹ or, on the contrary, was it because she kept begging her father to aid her if he could ? For if Chryseis was content with her situation and wished to live with Agamemnon, Chryses would never have chosen at one and the same time to grieve his daughter and to incur the malice of the king, not being unaware of the king's feelings toward her. For it was no less to the interest of Chryses that Chryseis should live with the king, so long as he was fond of her, since the priest's country, his sanctuary, and he himself had

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ὑπὸ τοῖς Ἀχαιοῖς ἐγεγόνει, καὶ κεῖνος ἦν αὐτῶν
 5 κύριος. ἔτι δὲ πῶς παραχρῆμα μὲν ἀλούσης οὔτε
 ἦλθεν οὔτε ἐμέμνητο περὶ λύτρων, ὅτε εἰκὸς ἦν
 χαλεπώτερον φέρειν, χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον τῆς μὲν
 λύπης ἐλάττονος γεγεννημένης, συνηθείας δὲ πρὸς
 τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα πλείονος; δεκάτῳ γὰρ ἔτει τῆς
 πολιορκίας ταῦτα συμβῆναί φησιν ὁ ποιητής, τὰ
 περὶ τὴν ἄφιξιν τοῦ ἱερέως καὶ τὴν κομιδὴν τῶν
 λύτρων. τὰς δὲ περιοίκους πόλεις καὶ τὰς ἐλάτ-
 τονας εἰκὸς ἦν εὐθὺς ἀλῶναι κατ' ἀρχὰς τοῦ πολέ-
 μου, ὧν ὑπῆρχεν ἡ Χρῦσα καὶ τὸ ἱερόν.

Οὐκοῦν ὁ λόγος οὗτος πολλὴν ἀτοπίαν ἐπιδεί-
 κνυσι τῆς Χρυσίδος, τὸ πρότερον μὲν αἰχμάλωτον
 οὔσαν ἀνέχεσθαι, προσφάτως στερομένην τοῦ πα-
 τρός καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, διελθόντων δὲ δέκα¹ ἔτῶν
 χαλεπῶς φέρειν.

6 Δ. Εἴ γε καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἀκούσειας· οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸν
 τυχόντα ἐραστὴν ἅπαξ γεγόμενον ἡδὺ ἀπολιπεῖν
 ταῖς ἐλευθέραις, μή τί γε τὸν ἐνδοξότατον καὶ
 πλουσιώτατον, βασιλέα μὲν τῶν Ἑλλήνων ξυμπάν-
 των, μεγίστην δὲ ἔχοντα δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς τότε
 ἀνθρώποις, κύριον δὲ οὐ μόνον ἐκείνης, ἀλλὰ καὶ
 τοῦ πατρός καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, ἐλπίζοντα δὲ κρατή-
 σειν ὀλίγου χρόνου καὶ τῆς Ἀσίας· τὸ γὰρ Ἴλιον
 φαύλως εἶχεν ἐκ πολλοῦ, καὶ μόλις διεφύλαττον
 αὐτὴν τὴν πόλιν, ἐπεξῆει δὲ οὐδεὶς εἰς μάχην· καὶ
 ταῦτα οὐ παρέργως ἔχοντος πρὸς² αὐτὴν τοῦ βασι-

¹ δέκα added by Reiske.

² πρὸς added by Reiske.

¹ Strabo places Chrysa at the head of the Adramyttic Gulf, close to Cilla with which it is associated in *Iliad* 1. 37-38.

² Dio accepts the term "singular" as a compliment to

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come under the sway of the Achaeans, and Agamemnon was their sovereign. And, besides, how is it that immediately after her capture, at a time when she might be expected to be in greater distress, Chryses neither came nor made any mention of ransom, but rather some time later, at a time when her grief had diminished and her intimacy with Agamemnon had increased? For the poet says these things took place in the tenth year of the siege—I mean the coming of the priest and the bringing of the ransom—while it is reasonable to suppose that the cities in the neighbourhood of Troy, and especially the smaller ones, would have been taken in the very beginning of the war, and it is to this group that Chrysa and its sanctuary belonged.¹

Int. Then this reasoning of yours attributes to Chryseis very singular conduct, in that formerly she endured her lot as a captive, though newly robbed of her father and her country, but after ten years had passed she took it hard.

Dio. Yes, at least if you listen to what else I have to say²; for it is not pleasant for free women to abandon even an ordinary man, once he has become their lover, to say nothing of the most illustrious and wealthy man, king of all the Greeks, a man who held the greatest power of all among the men of that day, who had authority over not merely Chryseis but her father and her country too, and who expected in a short time to become lord of Asia as well—for Ilium had long been in a bad way and its people were having difficulty in defending the city itself and no one went out for battle. And observe also that the

Chryseis, but the interlocutor does not catch his meaning at once.

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λέως, ἀλλὰ καὶ φανερώς ὁμολογοῦντος προτιμᾶν τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναικός. τοσαῦτα ἀποπτύουσιν καὶ τηλικαῦτα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἐραστήν οὐ μόνον βασιλέα μέγαν καὶ ἀνδρεῖον ἐν ὀλίγοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ νέον καὶ καλόν, ὥς φησιν Ὅμηρος τῷ Διὶ προσεικάζων αὐτόν, ἔπειτα εἰς ἐάλωκυϊαν ἀφικέσθαι τὴν πατρίδα καὶ συνοικεῖν ἐνὶ τῶν δούλων τῶν Ἀγαμέμνονος, εἴ γε ἔμελλε γαμείσθαι τῶν
7 ἐγχωρίων τινί, πῶς οὐκ ἄτοπον; τὸ γὰρ αἰχμάλωτον εἶναι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μὴ στέργειν τὸν λαβόντα οὐχ ἱκανόν. ἡ γοῦν Βρισηὶς ἀγαπᾶν ἔοικε τὸν Ἀχιλλέα, καὶ ταῦτα ὃν φησιν ἀποκτεῖναι τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς. τῷ δὲ Ἀγαμέμνονι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν ἐπέπρακτο περὶ τὴν Χρυσήδα.

Καλῶς. οὐκοῦν ἐκ τῶν λόγων τούτων οὐκ ἐβουλήθη Χρυσὴς ἀποπεμφθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ἀλλὰ Χρύσης ταῦτα ἔπραττε καθ' αὐτόν· ἢ εἴπερ ἐβούλετο, ἀφρονεστέρα ἂν εἴη, καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐναντίον εἶπας ἢ ὑπέσχου.

8 Δ. Ἀλλ' οὐν μηδὲ δίκην δικάσης, φασί, πρὶν ἀμφοτέρων ἀκοῦσαι. λέγεις δὴ σοφὸν ὄντα τὸν Ὅμηρον;

Ἰσως.

Δ. Οὐκοῦν τὰ μὲν αὐτὸν λέγειν οἷον, τὰ δὲ τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι καταλιπεῖν αἰσθάνεσθαι. τοῦτο δὲ οὐ τῶν¹ πάνυ ἀδήλων ἐστίν. ἢ γὰρ Χρυσὴς κατ'

¹ τῶν Pflugk : λόγων.

¹ *Iliad* 1. 113-115.

² *Ibid.* 2. 477-478.

³ *Ibid.* 19. 282-300.

⁴ He only promised to deduce her character from Homer's words. The speaker may be thinking of the appraisal of Chryseis in § 1.

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king had no casual regard for her, but even openly admitted that he preferred her to his own wife.¹ That she should spurn such numerous and exceptional advantages, and in particular a lover who was not only a great king and had few who vied with him in valour, but was also young and handsome, as Homer says in comparing him to Zeus,² and that she should then go to her native land, now a prize of war, and live as the wife of one of Agamemnon's slaves—that is, assuming that she would wed one of the men of the district—is not that singular? For that she was a prisoner of war and for that reason did not care for the man who got her is not enough to explain her conduct. At any rate Briseïs apparently loved Achilles, and that although, as she declares, it was he who slew her husband and her brothers.³ But as for Agamemnon, nothing like that had been done regarding Chryseïs.

Int. Very good. Then from this line of reasoning it follows that Chryseïs did not wish to be parted from Agamemnon, but that Chryses was conducting these negotiations independently; or else, if indeed she did wish it, she would be rather foolish and the case you have made out is contrary to what you promised.⁴

Dio. Well now, as the saying goes, do not judge a case before you hear both sides.⁵ Of course you speak of Homer as being a man of wisdom?

Int. Possibly.

Dio. Then you should assume that he tells some things but leaves others to the perception of his readers. But this is not one of the very obscure instances. For Chryseïs at the outset apparently

⁵ A familiar maxim supposed to obtain in Athenian law-courts.

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ἀρχὰς μὲν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡγάπα μένειν παρὰ τῷ
 Ἀγαμέμνονι δι' ἃς εἶπον αἰτίας καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ἦδει
 χάριν ὅτι μηδενὶ δοθείη τῶν ἀδοξοτέρων, ἀλλὰ τῷ
 πάντων βασιλεῖ, καὶ κεῖνος οὐκ ἀμελῶς ἔχοι πρὸς
 9 αὐτήν· ὥστε οὐκ ἔπραττε περὶ λύτρων. ἐπεὶ δὲ
 ἦκουε τὰ περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν τὴν τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος
 ὅποια ἦν, ὡς χαλεπά, καὶ τὴν ὠμότητα τῆς Κλυ-
 ταιμνήστρας καὶ τὸ θράσος, ἐνταῦθα ἐφοβεῖτο τὴν
 εἰς τὸ Ἄργος ἄφιξιν. καὶ τὸν μὲν ἄλλον χρόνον
 παρέμενε στέργουσα ἴσως τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα· ὅτε δὲ
 ἦν πρὸς τέλος ὁ πόλεμος καὶ διέρρει λόγος ὡς οὐ-
 κέτι δυνήσονται πλείω χρόνον ἀντέχειν οἱ Τρῶες,
 οὐ περιέμεινε τοῦ Ἥλιου τὴν ἄλωσιν. ἦδει γὰρ ὡς
 τὸ πολὺ τοὺς νικῶντας ὑπερηφάνους γιγνομένους¹
 καὶ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν τότε μᾶλλον ἰσχύουσιν τὴν
 περὶ τῶν θεῶν,² ὅταν πολεμῶσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι.

10 Διὰ ταῦτα ἐκάλει τότε τὸν πατέρα καὶ δεῖσθαι
 τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἐκέλευεν· ἐπυνθάνετο γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν,
 ὅτι ἐγυναικοκρατοῦντο οἱ Ἀτρεῖδαι καὶ μεῖζον
 ἐφρόνουν τῶν ἀνδρῶν τούτων αἱ γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἐπὶ
 κάλλει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐταῖς νομί-
 ζουσαι προσήκειν μᾶλλον. τοὺς μὲν γὰρ Πελο-
 πίδας τε εἶναι καὶ ἐπήλυδας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, αὐταὶ
 δὲ Ἀχαιίδες, Τυνδάρεω θυγατέρες καὶ Λήδας. ὁ
 δὲ Τυνδάρεως ἔνδοξος ἦν καὶ βασιλεὺς τῆς Σπάρ-
 τῃς, ὥστε καὶ τὴν Ἑλένην διὰ τοῦτο ἐμνήστευσαν

¹ γιγνομένους Dindorf : γενομένους.

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was content to remain with Agamemnon for the reasons I have named, and she was grateful to the gods that she had not been given to any of the less illustrious persons, but rather to the king of all, and also that he was not indifferent toward her; and so she made no move regarding ransom. But when she heard what conditions were like in the house of Agamemnon, how disagreeable they were, and when she heard also about the cruelty of Clytemnestra and about her boldness, then she looked with dread to her arrival in Argos. Moreover, although she had hitherto remained with Agamemnon, possibly for love of him, still when the war was near its close and a report was current that the Trojans no longer would be able to hold out, she did not wait for the capture of Ilium. For she knew that in general men who are victorious grow arrogant, and that the time when religious scruples are more potent is when men are at war.

For these reasons at that juncture she summoned her father and bade him entreat the Achaeans; for she learned, it would appear, that the Atreidae were dominated by their wives and that the wives felt themselves superior to these men, not alone because of their beauty, but also because they believed that the right to rule belonged rather to themselves. For the Atreidae were descendants of Pelops and newcomers in Greece,¹ whereas they themselves were women of Achaia, daughters of Tyndareüs and Leda. Now Tyndareüs had been illustrious and king of Sparta, and so not only had Helen on this account been courted by the noblest among the Greeks, but

¹ Tradition made Pelops a native of Phrygia in Asia Minor.

² τῶν θεῶν Pflugk : τὸν θεόν.

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οἱ ἄριστοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βοηθήσειν ὤμοσαν.
 11 πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἀδελφαὶ Κάστορος καὶ Πολυδεύ-
 κους ἦσαν, οἱ Διὸς παῖδες ἐνομίσθησαν καὶ θεοὶ
 μέχρι νῦν πᾶσι δοκοῦσι διὰ τὴν δύναμιν ἣν τότε
 ἔσχον. τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ προεῖχον·
 τῶν δὲ ἔξω Πελοποννήσου μεγίστη δύναμις ἦν ἡ
 περὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας, καὶ ταύτην καθεῖλον ἐπιστρα-
 τεύσαντες Θησέως βασιλεύοντος. ἔτι δὲ ἀνεψιὸς
 ἐγγόνει αὐτοῖς Μελέαγρος ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων
 ἄριστος.

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἠπίστατο ἡ Χρυσήϊς, τὸ δὲ
 φρόνημα ἤκουε τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τὴν Ἑλένην
 ἐπεγίγνωσκεν ὅσον ὑπερεῖχε¹ τοῦ ἀνδρός· ὥστε
 ἐπειδὴ τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν μεγάλα ἤκουε διὰ τε
 χώρας ἀρετὴν καὶ πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων καὶ χρημά-
 των, κατεφρόνησεν οὐ τοῦ Μενελάου μόνον, ἀλλὰ
 τοῦ τε Ἀγαμέμνονος καὶ ξυμπάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος,
 12 καὶ ταῦτα εἶλετο ἀντ' ἐκείνων. ὁ μὲν οὖν Μενέλαος
 καὶ πρότερον ὑπεῖκε περὶ πάντων τῇ Ἑλένῃ καὶ
 ὕστερον εἰληφῶς αἰχμάλωτον ὅμως ἐθεράπευεν· ὁ
 δὲ Ἀγαμέμνων διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπαιρόμενος τὴν
 Κλυταιμνήστραν ἠτίμασεν,² ὥστε δῆλον ἦν ὅτι οὐκ
 ἀνέξοιντο ἀλλήλων, ἀλλ' ἔσοιτο τοιαῦτα σχεδὸν

¹ ὑπερεῖχε] ὑπερεῖδε Arnim.

² ἠτίμασεν] ἠτίμαζεν Arnim.

¹ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3. 10. 8-9, lists thirty-two suitors, adding that, on the advice of Odysseus, Tyndareüs exacted an oath that they stand by whoever might be chosen to wed Helen, in case any one should wrong him in his marriage rights.

² According to tradition Leda bore Castor and Clytemnestra to Tyndareüs, Polydeuces and Helen to Zeus.

³ Helen had been carried off by Theseus and Peirithoüs.