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Review Article

Persepolis and Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions

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Abstract

The article presents a detailed review of two fundamental volumes published recently by Italian Orientalists and Archaeologists on Persepolis and the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions.

Keywords

Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions, Achaemenid Iran, Persepolis

DARIOSH, of which the two publications in paper are under review,¹ means Digital Achaemenid Royal Inscription Open Schema Hypertext. An international project, active for more than 10 years, is based at L'Orientale University of Naples with collaboration at La Tuscia University of Viterbo, the National Museum of Tehran and the Parsa-Pasargade Foundation. DARIOSH “aims at the study of the trilingual corpus of the Royal Achaemenid inscriptions through a complete catalogue of the epigraphic units (with a new high-resolution photographic documentation) and an interlinguistically integrated edition of the texts (with translation, commentary and cross-linguistic dictionaries), both on-line and in print” (p. VII).

¹ G. P. Basello, E. Filippone, G. Giovinazzo, A. V. Rossi, *DARIOSH Studies I. The Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions in an Intertextual Perspective*, Napoli 2012, XII + 184pp. + 36 plates.

G. P. Basello and A. V. Rossi (eds.), *DARIOSH Studies II. Persepolis and Its Settlements: Territorial System and Ideology in the Achaemenid State*, Napoli 2012, VIII + 473pp. + 122 plates.

Volume one concentrates on the inscription by Xerxes at Persepolis (XPc), selected by DARIOSH as an example of the methodology planned for the whole corpus. The three parallel texts in three languages, Old Persian (OP), Achaemenid Elamite (AE) and Achaemenid Babylonian (AB), are presented in a synoptic manner, in transliteration, transcription and translation with commentary and three glossaries, one for each language, of the terms used in the inscription XPc. In the glossaries, all occurrences of each word in the inscription are mentioned, with the corresponding passages in the other two languages.

While the first part of the book is due to the joint work of four scholars, in the second part, Gian Pietro Basello presents the Catalogue of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions *in situ* at Persepolis, stressing formal typology with the aim of providing “a classification of the royal Achaemenid inscriptions, developing the assumption that they had different functions and, therefore, have to be differentiated also in linguistical and historical studies” (p. 105). According to the author, “it is possible to define a formal typology of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions singling out the physical features of each epigraphic unit and then defining groups where different features occur always together” (ibid.).

In the following section, Ela Filippone studies the protection formulas in the final paragraphs of the Achaemenid inscriptions, since “the royal Achaemenid inscriptions, which belong to a textual typology with fixed models and are, therefore, largely repetitive, contain stereotypical formulas and recurrent themes. These themes partly stem from the Indo-Iranian cultural heritage, and partly derive from the Ancient Near Eastern royal epigraphic tradition” (p. 125).

After a careful discussion of every aspect of this question, addressee, formulaic lexicon, object and recipient of the formulas, etc., the author concludes this section acknowledging that: “the final prayer formulaic pattern, which is composed of fixed constituent parts (some lexical items, in particular the main verb, and morpho-syntactic functions), their linear lay-out and other optional constituents, whose addition is not so random as one could think; a margin is also left to the text producer for minimal innovations, in order to adjust the relevant passage to particular communicative purposes, to give cohesion and coherence to the whole text or to

adapt the written sequence to the dimension of the physical support, also in accordance with aesthetic criteria" (pp. 166-167).

In general, this volume appears very useful for cataloguing and interpreting all collected data, thus providing the reader with essential information and a general panorama of the inscription selected as a model. It is rich at a methodological level, and the criteria adopted in this work can be applied to the whole Achaemenid inscription corpus. Notwithstanding the limited circulation of this volume, a second edition incorporating many suggestions from the scholarly world has been announced.

Volume two contains the Proceedings of a Conference held at La Tuscia University of Viterbo on the theme: "Territorial System and Ideology in the Achaemenid State: Persepolis and its Settlements" (16th-17th December 2010), within the framework of the same DARIOSH Project.

The first article, by G. P. Basello, treats the "function(s) of the Elamite and Achaemenid inscribed knobs". In particular, the author concentrates on the word *like*, concluding that it is "not possible to ascertain whether the four *like* mentioned in the administrative tablet PF 335 were objects similar to the carriers of DPi and XPi. Like the English word 'knob' and 'nail', used to denote objects ranging from a driving control to a handle, *like* could be used to refer to various kinds of objects roughly sharing a nail or knob shape. As a peg or hook in a wall, a *like* could not have had a predefined function, being available at hand for different and unforeseen needs. [...] The name of the king affirms the royal ownership over that *like* and the place where it was installed as a notice and warning both for contemporary and future people. So many are the purposes of writing, just as the functions and shapes, maybe, of a *like*" (p. 49).

M. C. Benvenuto's article deals with the linguistic evidence in the inscriptions DNb and XPi on "self-discipline and the exercise of power", trying to explain "the behaviour and the actions of the king: he fulfils his duties to Ahura Mazdā by upholding his law and punishing those who are liars and rebels" (p. 84). She analyses in particular "the valence alternation of the verb *dar-* [...] licenced by both the basic meaning of the root and the suffix *-aya-*. Given that, if we accept this characterisation of the verb *dar-*, then we have no difficulty explaining the object omission in the context under consideration either in the case of transitive or intransitive construal" (p. 81).

C. Ciancaglini analyses the “outcomes of the Indo-Iranian suffix **-ka-* in Old Persian and Avestan”. In her discussion, she concludes that “the diffusion of *-ka-* is a further isogloss connecting Old Vedic with Young Avestan and Old Persian, against Old Avestan and the more recent Vedic” (p. 98), and that “if we take into account the relationship between Proto-Indo-European and Indo-Iranian, we can be sure that the diffusion of the PIE suffix **-ko-* as a means of adjectival derivation is a relatively late phenomenon” (p. 99).

Aim of E. Filippone’s article is “to investigate the function assigned to the combined text DPd/DPe, its addressees and the effects on the political scene one would have expected from it” (p. 103), with the conclusion that “DPd/DPe as a whole clearly represents a piece of political propaganda, where the universality of the royal authority (from which Persia cannot escape) is once again emphasized, but at the same time the establishment of a special relationship between Darius and his *dahyu-* (i.e. Persia) and the Persian people, is clearly and scintillatingly expressed, presumably for political motivations. [...] The Persian *kāra-* probably represented the *ethno-classe dominante* during the whole history of the Achaemenid state, as the royal texts and iconography let think; however, in no time the royal chancellery stressed this concept as straightforwardly as in the time of King Darius. If this depends on a change in the communicative strategies, or on a development of royal ideology, may hardly be asserted with certainty at the present state of our knowledge” (p. 117).

G. Giovinazzo, with her intervention on the stone-artisans, hypothesises that the *kurtaš HAR mazzip* were “i tagliatori di pietra”, the *kurtaš HAR tukkip* “gli scalpellini”, the *kurtaš HAR huttip* and the GIŠ *šeškip* had the task of “rifinire e preparare le pietre e il legno” for the *kurtaš HAR patikuraš huttip* and the GIŠ *šeškip patikuraš huttip* “gli scultori su pietra e su legno” (p. 135).

A. Panaino’s article deals with the *hapax gegrammenon* *p^a-r^a-d^a-y^a-d^a-a-m^a*, the word for ‘paradise’, and concludes that the entry *paradaida-* (see, *inter alia*, G. Tavernier, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period*, Leuven-Paris, 2007: 446-447) should not be deleted from the attested *Sprachgut* of Old Persian. *En passant*, the author states: “I will not be discontent with the fact that the *hadiš* of Artaxerxes was not a ‘living place of pleasure’, but that it was simply built up as a ‘paradise’ during the life of that king” (p. 146).

Aim of F. Pompeo's contribution is "to re-examine a passage of the monolingual inscription XPL, lines 30-31, where a genitive co-occurs with a form of the verbal root *dā-*. A comparison of the text under discussion with similar occurrences in the rest of the Achaemenid corpus suggests the existence of hitherto unnoticed syntactic and semantic peculiarities" (p. 155). As a conclusion, the author gives a series of hints on the uses and differences of the two roots ¹*dā-* 'to give' and ²*dā-* 'to put, make, create', which "are documented in two groups of occurrences. Both of them are formulaic in character, but quite different regarding context, semantic content and syntactic structure; such differences seem to find parallels in Avestan texts. However, given the fact that in the first group of occurrences the genitive phrase is always an enclitic pronoun [...] the genitive phrase has the syntactic status of adjunct and encodes a Benefactive only in the second group. [...] the subject of the roots taken into consideration is always Auramazdā, and [...] in Achaemenid inscriptions a sort of 'gradation of sacredness' reflected in the selection of a specific root depending on a particular semantic context, seems to exist. Finally, [...] in Old Persian, 'creation' is a possible area of semantic convergence between the verb signifying 'to give' and the verb signifying 'to put, make, create', with a resulting comprehensive meaning such as 'to put in existence (something for someone)', that is to say 'to put (something) at the disposition (of someone)' (pp. 176-177).

The study by C. Romagnuolo focuses on "two verbs used in a restricted group of inscriptions belonging to the Persepolitan *corpus*, namely the texts that have been written to testimony the building activity of the Achaemenid kings" (p. 184). At the end of her review, she states that: "In its only occurrence within the *corpus* of Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the verb *kuši-* is obviously intended as 'to build' but, considering its use in the administrative tablets connected with the creation of life, it could imply, in our opinion, something more: a gestation, the creation *ex nihilo* of something so great and complex that required a long time to get to completion" (p. 191).

The following contribution by M. L. Amadori, M. Galluppi, P. Pallante, and G. Raffaelli, opens the archaeological and historical section of the book. Their project, *From Palace to Town* (University of Bologna), started in 2008, and dealing with the study of the Achaemenid terrace of Persepolis West

and Pasargadae (Fars, Iran), examined the ceramics coming from Persepolis West and Toll-e Takht of Pasargadae, in order to obtain chemical and petrographic information for correlating groups of ceramics.

A. A. Chaverdi and P. F. Callieri conclude that the preliminary research of the Iranian-Italian joint archaeological mission at Persepolis West, commenting particularly on a kiln excavated that was excavated; they establish that “the kiln (Phase 4) was built at an age earlier than the end of the 2nd century B.C., the higher time boundary for calibration of Phase 3. Since the kiln does not seem to have been used for a long time, it is likely that the construction of the kiln should be placed in the period immediately before that limit, i.e. in the 2nd century B.C. The Post-Achaemenid dating of the kiln is also confirmed by the fact that two fragments of a specific variant of carinated bowl, which in the sequence of Trench 6 appears only from Phase 3, were recovered in its first phase. The filling of the kiln (Phase 3) is placed from the end of the 2nd century B.C. to the end of the 1st century A.D., whereas the collapse of the kiln (Phase 2) has a wide time range, from the mid-1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D. The deposits of Phase 1, on the contrary, contain materials of earlier age, probably linked to the excavation of earlier layers for the kiln, ranging from the mid-4th century B.C. to the mid-1st century B.C., as also seen from the other artefacts recovered such as the Egyptian Blue fragments of wing” (p. 240).

The main goal of the archaeological mission introduced by the following article by R. Boucharlat, T. De Schacht, and S. Gondet, was “to assess any evidence of what possibly had a much greater expanse and which makes up an overall managed zone, possible to be considered the ancient Parsa of the Fortification tablets. In order to maintain a clear distinction between textual information and archaeological data, we decided to call this the *Persepolis settled zone*. As a working hypothesis, we assumed that the *Persepolis settled zone* extended much beyond the Royal Precinct and Persepolis West” (p. 253). Trying to draw a general conclusion, they state that “if not dense, the wider and closeby located countryside was a varied managed landscape in which we could pinpoint some specific occupational zones or activity areas. [...] As a hypothesis we could suggest, the occupation around the Royal residences (i.e. Parsa?) is not to be characterized by any dense occupational area but by sparsely distributed sites

and buildings, nevertheless integrated in a wider cultural landscape, comprising quarries, roads and areas irrigated or protected by a large-scaled hydrological infrastructure” (pp. 281-282).

B. Costazza’s article on “the funerary ritual as a rite of passage” starts from the assessment that the “Zoroastrian vision of afterlife and the destiny of the soul is well known thanks to Avestan and Middle Iranian sources”. She wonders whether one really knows what kind of relation, if any, exists between funerary rituality and theoretical teachings, and what the ancients believe would happen to the deceased after he passed away.

R. Dan’s contribution deals with “one of the various meanings of the Akkadian word *sikkatu*”, which, according to him, “is ‘nail’ in its broadest sense [...]; those found in major Urartian archaeological sites have some typological and dimensional differences, and, consequently, different uses” (p. 301). He concludes that “in both the *sikkatu* and this square decorative element Assyrian influence on Urartian artistic production may be clearly seen. Such influences are recognizable from the beginning of the kingdom until its last decades of life” (p. 307).

F. Franzese and A. Genito introduce their activities “towards an archaeological map of Fars”, presenting the preliminary methodology used. Among their statements, they specify that “even if an archaeological map is not a geographic map, the digital representation of a given territory is without doubt a heritage of the basic geographic, cartographic and topographic concepts going back to Babylonian times” (p. 313). Then, the authors affirm the criteria of their forthcoming work: “realization of an archaeological map [...] will be based on: the historical and geographical maps in order to know how the evolution of the environments (...) had affected the cultural development of the area; the digital images and the relative viewable features; the digital maps (...); the explanations of the meaning of place-names, some references to their change in the course of time and the standardization of their present names; the graphic and photographic documentation (...); the material culture collected in order to reconstruct how a past society lived and was structured” (pp. 315-316).

A. Gariboldi’s article deals with the circulation of the imperial Achaemenid coins. From the starting point it was Cresio to introduce a bimetallic coin, inherited by Archaemenid Persia and for a long period distinct from Greece where the system was based on silver; the author states:

“Possiamo certamente ritenere che nell’ambito della politica di grandezza di Dario I, vi fosse anche la realizzazione di un nuovo sistema monetale ‘universale’ nella diffusione, duraturo e forte nella qualità del valore intrinseco, portatore fra i sudditi ed i suoi nemici di una immagine potente di re guerriero e cacciatore, invincibile agli occhi degli uomini” (p. 347). Minted coin was, then, according to the author, a way used by the Achaemenids principally for commercing with the Greek West.

According to B. Genito, in the Sistan Basin, the influence “have also arrived from the world of the north-eastern oases, much resembling, from morphological and ecological points of view, those of Sistan, characterized by a tenacious defence of their productive potentiality. Furthermore, the whole region was also influenced by nomads and semi-nomads coming from northeast, who, in a certain age, also gave their own name to the region. The southeastern area, finally, never ceased to remain in touch with Sistan through the natural corridor represented by the Hilmand River. This series of influences, in turn, took place in the area where Shahr-i Sokhta, one of the most important proto-historic centres in Asian and world history, had flourished” (pp. 367-368).

G. F. Guidi, S. Rahbar, S. Rahmati, R. Sheikholeslami, M. Soleimani, G. Trojsi, and A. Zare present the diagnostic activities directed to three phases: “1. Survey on the state of conservation of stone materials; 2. Identification of stone quarries in the Marw Dašt plain; 3. Sampling and application of chemico-physical, biological and mineralogical analyses” (p. 387). Their preliminary study introduces a larger research, finalised to “picking up the seasonal climatic and microclimatic data [...]; realizing a database of the photographic documentation existing to date[...]; studying the archaeological artefacts through the application of chemico-physical and mineralogical analyses also using portable instruments” (pp. 398-399).

W. Kuntner and S. Heinsch investigate the fortress of Aramus expecting “to study the local culture development in the light of its alternating interaction with the polities of the 8th to 4th century B.C. within an uninterrupted sequence, as well as closed archaeological context. For better understanding the Achaemenid-time occupation at Aramus, this sequence has to be considered in a first step as a unit irrespective of its transition over historical periods. The insight achieved so far helps to clarify the identity of the

actors, as well as the socio-political network underlying this process” (p. 404). As an answer to who ruled in Aramus and who were the inhabitants, they suggest “to locate members of local tribes given the equal mixture of local pre-Urartian and Urartu-distinctive building techniques and handi-craft products, as well as the occurrence of Transcaucasian elite symbols such as the bronze belts” (p. 411).

P. Ognibene’s contribution focuses on the “rapporti tra il variegato mondo scitico e gli *xšāyaθiyā xšāyaθiyānām* achemenidi [...] da sempre turbolenti. [...] Le poche notizie dettagliate che abbiamo sugli Sciti sono dovute ai contatti con le popolazioni sedentarie che già utilizzavano la scrittura e ciò avvenne in particolare nelle città greche sulla costa settentrionale del mar Nero” (pp. 417-418).

A. Piras, starting from the assumption that “the message of Bisitun was [...] a royal communication to the empire for the sake of alerting the subjects that Darius became the king and had conquered the full possession of his realm, and in order to notify people throughout the empire by means of a list of specific examples that Darius had been able to suppress all opposition against him” (pp. 434-435), goes further affirming that “this Aramaic tradition testify to a repertoire of stereotyped formulae widely attested in the cultural history of writing, from Near East and Middle East to Central Asia, throughout a millennium of transmission” (p. 437). He then concludes that “the enquire about the correspondence can furthermore illustrate and emphasize the Achaemenid culture by the point of view of a system of communication, by means of a refined set of signs and expressions, symbols, insignia, gestual and verbal languages, centred around the letter and related practices of writing, reading, translation and hearing”. He, therefore, depicts the “Achaemenid state as an ‘empire of signs’ [...], the Assyrian empire as an ‘empire of communication’” (pp. 440-441).

The aim of A. V. Rossi’s article is “showing how much even what Calmeyer considers as *genauere inschriftliche Datierungen* can be disputable” (p. 446). As stated by the author, the DARIOSH project “has hypothesized that the whole (or parts) of the superstructure of Palace I could have been completed by Xerxes’ time. All the inscriptions contained in it (DPa, DPb and XPk) could have been engraved in this period, ideated by the son in the father’s name out of filial respect, with the peculiar aim of enhancing the continuity of his reign

with that of Darius. DPa, with its isolated structure of a caption to a royal figure (*Dārayavauš*, with royal titles), also mentioning (in a relative clause) the results of the royal building activity (*haya imam tacaram akunauš*), represents in some way a counterpart to XPc, explicitly describing the work done on buildings or enterprises started by royal predecessors (such as, e.g., XPf, XPg), there is also a pattern in which the inscription is written *directly* in the name of the predecessor by his heir (such as DEa, which should coherently be redesignated XEb)" (p. 451). At the end the author emphasises "the full parallelism between 'the scribe's silence on Xerxes' title' on NN 1657 and on the label of Xerxes appearing on the figure of Darius on the east jamb of the southern doorway of the main hall of the Palace. The context filling a silence may be equally found on a tablet and on the stone of a royal building" (pp. 454-455).

The last article by M. Salvini comes back to the subject of the relations Urartu-Achaemenid Iran. He argues that the fortress of Zivistan, for some unknown reason, remained without inscriptions and that the series of at least 7 epigraphs was added later by Minua's son, but in the name of his father (pp. 471-472).

In summary, the two volumes, while giving new information, studying in detail parts of the cultural horizon of the Achaemenid period from multifaceted perspectives, philological, linguistic, archaeological, historical, religious, numismatics, etc., try to present a panorama of the current international projects of research in the field of the Achaemenid studies of individuals, as well as of groups of scholars and institutional missions. Different approaches can be confronted and help each other, thus stimulating a debate no more linked to a particular institution or country, field of research or school. This methodology, which is the only one allowing to proceed in the acknowledging process, no doubts, will certainly improve and develop our understanding of the Achaemenid world.

ALEXANDER AND PERSIAN WOMEN

Perhaps the most dominant symbol of conquest in Greek literature is that of the captive woman, the wife, the mother, the daughter of some once great warrior now slave and perhaps concubine to the man who killed him. It is the image of Andromache led away to do demeaning work for some Greek that most haunts Hector when he foresees defeat; he hopes he is dead before it happens (*Il.* 6.450–65). As the quarrel over Chryseis and Briseis demonstrates (*Il.* 1.26–31, 110–85), possession of the women of your enemy both symbolizes victory and *is* victory.¹ The family of Alexander's mother, the Aeacids, asserted their essential Hellenism via connection to the great saga of Troy, not only by claiming descent from Achilles, through his son Neoptolemus, but also from Andromache, the captive of Neoptolemus.²

The strong influence of the story of Troy in Greek literature has created the image of a male Greek conquering and taking captive an Asian woman.³ By the fifth century Greeks had defined themselves as superior because they had defeated Asians, Trojans and Persians had been conflated, and by then both were characterized as mere barbarians.⁴ Thus the capture of Asian women by Greeks could be understood as part of the victory of civilization over barbarism.

It is not incidental that the image is primarily one of a captive woman rather than a captive child; from the point of view of the ancient

¹A woman's suicide in order to avoid being a captive thus robs the victor, in a sense, of victory. Plutarch (*Anton.* 84–86) reports that Cleopatra VII killed herself in order to prevent herself from being paraded in Octavian's triumph as part of his victory over Antony. Darius' mother, Sisygambis, is said to have killed herself after the death of Alexander because she knew that she would then be treated like a real captive (*Curt.* 10.5.19–25; *Just.* 13.1.5–6; *Diod.* 17.118.3). Such deaths were usually seen as heroic, proof that the women in question had honored the glory of the men of the family; see below.

²Euripides (*Andr.* 1239–49) traces the Aeacids back to the union of Andromache (*gunaika d'aichmaloton*) and Neoptolemus (also called Pyrrhus). Paus. 1.11.2 does the same. Pindar (*Nem.* 4.51, 7.35–40) speaks of Neoptolemus as the ancestor of the rulers of Molossia without mentioning Andromache. See Hammond, *Epirus* 384–85, 505, 563, for further discussion and reference to a female member of the house named "Andromache." The marriage of an Aeacid to a member of a Chaonian dynasty which claimed descent from Helenus added another supposed Trojan element to the bloodline (see Heckel, "Polyxena" 81–82 for references).

³See *Il.* 2.354–56, 3.301, 4.161–63, 6.454–65, 24.731–76. Euripides' *Trojan Women*, as well as his *Hecuba* and *Andromache*, focus on the plight of captured women.

⁴Croally, *Polemic* 85, 103; Hall, "Asia Unmanned" 114.

world, the woman is the more compelling figure.⁵ More important, women, perhaps because they themselves could not generate status easily, were perceived to have *axiōma* ('reputation'),⁶ to carry the status of their fathers and/or husbands or sons with them, status which could then be transmitted to the male who possessed them—thus the importance of Andromache, widow of the greatest Trojan warrior.

Sexual possession of these bearers of status, whether legitimated by marriage or not, was a particularly powerful symbol of victory—a kind of second victory, both sexual and military, over the males to whom the women had belonged. Victory as rape and conquest as sexual union were commonplaces of Greek literature, metaphors but more than metaphors.⁷

Thus, that Alexander came into control of the women of the Persian royal family and other women of the Persian elite after the battle of Issus in 333 meant both that he had achieved a real victory and that he had acquired a potent set of symbols of that victory which he could manipulate to his own ends in the varying contexts of Macedonian, Greek, and Persian audiences. However, these Persian women were or could be, thanks to another old Greek literary tradition, dangerously ambiguous symbols to the Greeks and Macedonians. This tradition insisted that Persian monarchy had lost its original toughness by the fourth century and had become overly steeped in luxury. Much of this decadence was understood as effeminacy, often blamed on the role of royal women, especially in the education of princes (e.g., Plato *Laws* 3.694a–696a). If anything,

⁵References to captive children (e.g., *Il.* 4.161–63, 24.36) are almost always linked with references to captive women, whereas women are not infrequently mentioned alone. When children are killed, as in the case of Astyanax (*Eur. Andr.* 710–89), the focus seems to be on the horror for the mother rather than on the murder itself. In all likelihood, many real children quickly met the fate ascribed to Hector's son. The ancient world, less inclined than our own to be sentimental about very young children, would tend to find the woman a more pathetic figure than the child. See Pritchett, *War* 203–82, esp. 238–40, on the treatment of captives in classical times and Schaps, "Women" 202–6 on the treatment of women.

⁶For instance, Diodorus speaks of the *axiōma* ('rank', 'reputation') of Sisygambis, mother of Darius (17.38.1) and that of Olympias, wife of Philip II and mother of Alexander (19.11.2), and Plutarch refers to the *axiōma* and *timē* ('honor') of Phila, because she was the daughter of Antipater and the widow of Craterus (*Dem.* 14.2). He explains that Demetrius acquired the throne of Macedonia partly because his wife was the daughter of Antipater (37.3).

⁷See discussion and references in Hall, "Asia Unmanned" 110–12 and Lerner, *Patriarchy* 77–86.

Greek tradition exaggerated the power and influence of royal Persian women, particularly the mothers of kings. Stories of scheming and seductive queens playing succession politics abounded.⁸

As is now generally recognized, most of this tradition is false,⁹ a product of the Hellenic inclination to conceptualize in terms of polarities and to associate two different sorts of “others,” the foreigner and the female,¹⁰ coupled with Hellenic suspicion of the role of women in monarchy,¹¹ and envy of the comparatively rich Persian culture. Greeks claimed to pride themselves on their austerity and to disdain the material wealth of the Persians, but in practice proved vulnerable to it.¹² In fact, a considerable part of the appeal and motivation for warfare in general and the Graeco–Macedonian conquest of the Persian Empire in particular was the acquisition of that wealth and luxury supposedly so disdained and so often associated with women.¹³

Whatever one believes about the ethnicity of ancient Macedonians, one cannot assume that Macedonian views were identical to those

⁸See discussions in Sancisi–Weerdenberg, “Atossa” and “Decadence”; Hall, *Barbarian* 95, 209 and Briant, “Décadence” as well as Carney, “Influence” 320–22.

⁹See Sancisi–Weerdenberg, “Atossa” and “Decadence”; Briant, “Décadence”; Hall, *Barbarian* 95. Carney, “Influence” 320–21 suggests that while the public image of Achaemenid monarchy clearly does not involve royal women and that the theme of the scheming royal seductress is just that, Achaemenid women probably did play a role in succession politics. Brosius, *Women* 187–88 denies this, concluding that the king’s mother had “no formal political power,” but that she could use her personal wealth to support her son or family.

¹⁰Sancisi–Weerdenberg, “Decadence” 37–44; Hall, *Barbarian* 201–2 and “Asia Unmanned” 110; Brosius, *Women* 188.

¹¹Sancisi–Weerdenberg, “Decadence” 37–38 connects objection to Persian royal women’s political role to Greek insistence on a clear division between public and private, as does Carney, “Influence” 321, who notes that Greek sources saw the role of Argead women in Macedonian monarchy in the same way, for similar reasons.

¹²For instance, Herodotus (9.83) makes Pausanias, victor at Plataea, a patron of Spartan austerity, yet this same Pausanias was later accused of treasonous dealings with the Persians, accusations which ultimately led to his death (Thuc. 1.95, 131–34). Similar charges were later made against Themistocles (Thuc. 1.135) and would be lodged against generations of later Greek politicians (see Harvey, “Dona Ferentes” 76–117). It is often difficult to say how many of the charges were true, but clearly tradition saw Greeks as vulnerable to the influence of Persian gold. There was also something of wishful thinking in the decadence theme for fourth-century Greeks. Although no longer so dominant militarily, the Persians had been able to use their great wealth quite effectively for more than fifty years to effect the outcome of Greek political affairs.

¹³See the discussion in Austin, “Alexander” 197–207.

of southern Greeks. Certainly past Macedonian dealings with the Persians were quite different from those of the Athenians or Spartans. On the other hand, both Philip and Alexander were willing to use Greek tradition to their own ends, as in the suggestion that the Graeco-Macedonian invasion of Asia was revenge for the Persian invasion of the early fifth century (Arr. 2.14.4; Curt. 4.1.10–11).

Surviving evidence indicates Macedonian attitudes to Persian culture may have been as ambivalent and as colored by cultural preconceptions as those of the Greeks. Curtius tells a dubious anecdote which contrasts the lifestyles of royal Macedonian and Persian women: Alexander's sisters are said to have woven him garments, but Darius' mother and the other royal Persian women are horrified when Alexander expects them to weave as well (Curt. 5.2.18–21). While royal Macedonian women really may have woven fabric,¹⁴ the idea that royal Persian women did not, whatever the literal truth of the matter, almost certainly derives from the already noted tendency of Greek literary tradition to work in terms of false polarities.¹⁵ In any event, Athenaeus (6.256c–d) preserves a story in which these same women of Alexander's family are said to have been corrupted by the luxury-loving ways of the women of Artabazus' family, when they resided at the court of Philip II.

In reality, Macedonians, at least those in the elite, seem to have had a taste for luxury well before Alexander's campaign and in particular those with Alexander, including the king, supposedly grew especially fond of it.¹⁶ Yet excerpts from Polyaeus refer to an incident in which Alexander, much like Pausanias, contrasts the luxurious waste of Persian eating habits with those of the Macedonians and then associates

¹⁴Curtius could certainly have been influenced by Roman tradition about the family of Augustus (Suet. 64) as well as by earlier Greek tradition and prejudice (see below, n. 15), but royal Macedonian women may well have worked with fine fabric, perhaps even tapestries like those Helen and Penelope were said to have made, elaborate gold and purple work like that found in the *larnax* in the antechamber of Tomb II at Vergina (Andronicos, *Vergina* 191–95). As Jenkins, "Textiles" 112 notes, textiles formed part of the conspicuous wealth of an *oikos* and as such, women not only produced but managed their display and distribution (e.g., Diod. 20.93.4; Plut. *Demetr.* 22.1).

¹⁵See Briant's discussion of the Curtius passage ("Sources" 286 n. 9) which points out that Herodotus (9.109) has Xerxes' wife weaving him a garment and that elsewhere, as part of the Greek belief in Persian decadence and understanding of it as effeminacy, men are said to work with fabric and the making of textiles is assumed to be a universally female occupation rather than a peculiarly Greek custom.

¹⁶Plutarch (*Alex.* 20.8; 24.2, 39–41). Recent archaeology has confirmed the wealth of elite Macedonians so often mentioned by Greek authors (e.g., Athen. 3.126, 10.435b–c;

such luxury with softness and effeminacy (*anandria*).¹⁷ Women were closely associated with luxury, partly because by wearing jewelry they so often functioned as designators of wealth and status in ancient society. Alexander himself is sometimes represented as less affected by the lure of eastern wealth, luxury, and customs than the rest of the elite (Plut. *Alex.* 5), although elsewhere he is resentfully portrayed as easternized, particularly in terms of monarchy, more so than other Macedonians (Arr. 7.29.1; Curt. 6.6.1–10).

Because tradition gave a double-edged nature to Persian women, Alexander needed to take advantage of them as symbols of his victory, without somehow being compromised by the negative aspects. The fact that he was a Macedonian monarch may have made this task particularly difficult because the role of women in Macedonian monarchy, particularly the polygamy of the kings, tended to confirm what the southern Greeks understood the Macedonians to be, barbarians.¹⁸ The idea of a succession of world empires (a cycle triggered by the desire of poor, hardy nations to acquire wealth through conquest and perpetuated by the belief that, once having acquired wealth, the aggressor became soft and corrupt in turn and thus vulnerable to conquest by some new, hardy, poor nation)¹⁹ meant the successful conqueror needed to be particularly careful in his dealings with these walking symbols of luxury and power.

Although the body of tales surrounding Alexander and Persian women constitute a major theme in the history of Alexander, it is not a cultural construct which has traveled well and, because it is a literary construct and has the feel of conscious artifice, it is easy to dismiss as trivial. Moreover, in the late twentieth century the rapturous enthusiasm

Plut. *Alex.* 23.5–6). See Barr–Sharrar, “Vases” 122–39 and Ginouves, *Macedonia* 153–54, who note the wealth of Macedonian burials, particularly in jewelry, from early historical times on, and contrast it to the comparative austerity of Athenian burials in the same period. See especially Barr–Sharrar, “Vases” 133 and 123, where she observes, “Opulence was the style of the Macedonian court. . . .”

¹⁷*Excerpts* 3.5 and *Stratagems* of Leo the Emperor 4.2. The anecdote could easily be modeled on the story about Pausanias told by Herodotus (see above), but whatever its validity, the passages do signify that Macedonian figures had become part of the tradition. The equation of luxury with dangerous femininity is particularly striking.

¹⁸See above and Hall, *Barbarian* 201–3, who notes that the practice of polygamy and the presence of women with political influence were understood by the Greeks to be “barbaric” traits.

¹⁹See the discussion in Austin, “Alexander” 208–18.

of the ancient sources for Alexander's self-restraint in not raping Darius' wife or daughters (Plut. *Alex.* 21.4–5; Diod. 17.38.4–7; Curt. 3.12.18–23) can seem, at best, cloying and, at worst, false (see below). But we need to take it seriously without taking it literally. The theme can also shed some light on how other Macedonians, Greeks, and even Persians understood Alexander's conquest. Having granted the power of these two interlocking traditions, an analysis of various accounts of Alexander's treatment of the Persian women whom he had come to possess can yield a clearer picture of Alexander's own understanding of conquest and the role of the former ruling class in that conquest than any analyses derived from other, more political sources.

The body of anecdote about Alexander and Persian women is a complex construct. Aside from the traditions about captive women and the role of women in Persian monarchy that we have already discussed, a number of elements contributed to the formation of this theme: Alexander's own propaganda aims as well as his real political goals; the need to whitewash scandalous rumors current in Alexander's own day; the rhetorical and ethical concerns of historians.

Alexander's most important political goal was conquering the Persian Empire and retaining it, while his most obvious and long-term propaganda aim was to appear as the legitimate ruler of that empire, without losing the loyalty and support of his European empire.²⁰ It was not always easy to reconcile the sometimes conflicting values of his Persian and Graeco-Macedonian audiences. Nonetheless, the royal Persian women were critical to both his political and propaganda aims. That he possessed them meant, in a sense, that he had already won. When Darius offered his eldest daughter in marriage to Alexander as part of a compromise division of the empire, Alexander noted that it was no longer Darius' decision to make (Arr. 2.25.3). Using both the carrot of his good treatment of the women and the implied stick of his physical control, he employed the royal women as bargaining chips in his dealings with Darius. Here, as elsewhere, the line between a hostage and a pawn in a marriage alliance was for the most part non-existent.²¹

²⁰See recent discussions in Briant, *Tributs* 357–403 and *Alexandre* 89–122 and Wieshöfer, *Jahrhunderte* 23–49 on Alexander's relations with the Achaemenid elite and attempts to gain recognition as legitimate ruler.

²¹For the problems surrounding Alexander's correspondence with Darius, see Bosworth, *Commentary* 227–29. Maria Brosius has suggested to me that Darius' offer of his daughter was an example of a pattern of Near Eastern political marriage alliances at the

These women were vital to Alexander's claim of being legitimate ruler rather than simply conqueror, particularly because Greek tradition, correctly or not, insisted that royal women, especially royal mothers, were an important aspect of Persian monarchy.²² Partly to give weight to his claims of legitimacy, especially for his Persian audience, and partly to distance himself from the decadent influence of these women in order to allay Greek and Macedonian fears, he reinvented the tradition of the captive woman. Instead of treating them like slaves and sexually possessing them (treatment acceptable to the Macedonians, but offensive to the Persians), Alexander treated Darius' mother like his own (Curt. 3.12.17, 25; Diod. 17.37.6),²³ and Darius' daughters like daughters or sisters of his own (Just. 11.9.16; Diod. 17.38.1; Curt. 3.12.21, 4.11.3). Supposedly, he was particularly careful of the chastity of Darius' wife (Plut. *Alex.* 22.3; Just. 11.12.6–7).²⁴

In addition to taking Darius' place literally in the royal family by playing his role within it,²⁵ Alexander was careful to reconfirm the status and titles of the royal Persian women and to allow them to retain all indications of their status (Arr. 2.12.5; Diod. 17.38.1; Curt. 3.12.12, 23, 4.11.3). Alexander kept the royal women with him until 330 (Diod.

time of the recognition of victory, offered as confirmation of a treaty, and believes that Alexander, ignorant of the tradition, misunderstood and rejected the offer. Though Alexander may not yet have been able to take advantage of this, I am not certain that he would have misunderstood what is implied. Some of Philip's marriages may have occurred under similar circumstances, but this is difficult to prove with any high degree of certainty, since their dates are disputed and hence the relationship of a given marriage to a war is often unclear.

²²See Hall, *Barbarian* 95. Brosius, *Women* 186–88 concludes that the mothers of kings were important in Persian monarchy, but not in all the ways ascribed to them by Greek sources.

²³Darius' mother, Sisygambis, and Alexander's treatment of her are stressed in the sources, probably because the Greeks believed that queen mothers were very important (see Carney "Foreign Influence" 320). It was a bit like having the queen mother in *Persians* under your control. Hall, "Unmanned Asia" 122 referring to Aeschylus' play, sees the aged queen mother as a "paradigm" for ancient Asian culture now superseded by the youthful and masculine Greeks.

²⁴Alexander seems to pay most attention to Darius' mother, just as Greek understanding of the importance of the king's mother would suggest that he should. As Bosworth, *Conquest* 63–64 notes, Alexander's treatment of Sisygambis also obviously parallels his dealings with Ada, whom he likewise addressed as mother (Plut. *Alex.* 22.4).

²⁵He also treated Darius' young son in a fatherly manner. See Curt. 3.11.24, 12.26 and Diod. 17.38.3 as well as Berve, *Alexanderreich* 409–10.

17.67.1), apparently rejecting Macedonian custom and his father's practice and favoring imitation of the Persian custom of having royal women travel with the royal entourage during campaigns (Athen. 557b).²⁶ Here too, in effect, he replaced Darius, though in a less familial and more monarchic sense. Alexander, even as early as 333, not only used these women to assert his claim to legitimacy but also to demonstrate his intent on providing continuity with the past. Indeed the two ends are surely linked, both being aimed at Persians. For Greeks and Macedonians, Alexander played a familial, but not a familiar, role with these women. Reassuringly, he kept his distance and did not enflame matters by marrying one, at least not yet.

It is possible, however, that Alexander may have compromised his claims to legitimacy and continuity with the Persians by treating one of the royal women in a more "traditional" way. In some accounts Alexander is said never to have met Darius' wife Stateira (Plut. *Alex.* 22.3), in virtually all he is praised for his sexual restraint with her, especially because of her great beauty. Yet, when she died, his public grief was extravagant (Curt. 4.21.4; Diod. 17.54.6; Plut. *Alex.* 30.1–3; Just. 11.12.6–8). Supposedly Darius himself wondered if Alexander's extreme grief signified that Alexander had, indeed, a personal and sexual relationship with her (Curt. 4.10.31–34). Perhaps supporting Darius' supposed suspicions are the assertions of Plutarch (*Alex.* 30.1) and Justin (11.12.6) that Darius' wife died in childbirth, apparently about two years after she had last seen her husband.

There is no way to be certain about the truth: Curtius (4.10.18) says she died of travel fatigue (Diod. 17.54.7 offers no cause of death) and the date of her death, even if it was in childbirth, may have been much earlier than that implied by the narratives.²⁷ On the other hand, it is clear that suspicions were rife that Alexander, like traditional conquerors, had indeed had a sexual relationship with Stateira. Not only is there the implied date of her pregnancy, but Justin's apology for Alexander's grief (11.12.6–7: *non amoris, sed humanitatis causa fecisse . . .*) makes it obvious that people wondered. Having a sexual relationship with the wife of

²⁶Brosius, *Women* 88. Diod. 17.77.6 says that, like many Persian kings, Alexander took royal concubines with him. Brosius, *Women* 90 argues that "the presence of women must be viewed as a part of the king's public persona during a campaign." Apparently, Alexander considered it an important enough aspect of Persian monarchy to imitate. See below, for the possibility that Roxane accompanied him to India.

²⁷See Bosworth, *Commentary* 221 for discussion and references.

Darius would seem to be the sexual equivalent of Alexander's burning of Persepolis (and surprising for the same reasons, in as much as it too jeopardized with the Persians his themes of legitimacy and continuity).²⁸ As already indicated, sexual possession as a symbol of conquest had a long history. In any event, whatever the real nature of the relationship, the theme of Alexander's sexual restraint was clearly intended to cope with rumors that he had not exercised it with Darius' wife, rumors that may go all the way back to Callisthenes.

But the need for a whitewash is hardly the only reason that the theme exists. Most ancient sources point to the compassion and humanity in his treatment of the frightened Persian women (Arr. 2.11.9; Diod. 17.37.3; Curt. 3.12.3). In addition, many ancient sources treat the episodes involving these women as ethical lessons: Plutarch (*Alex.* 21.4–5) considers Alexander more kingly for conquering himself rather than his enemies and Curtius (3.12.18) and Diodorus (17.38.5–7) also admire his *sophrosyne*. Part of the ethical lesson involves *peripeteia* (Diod. 17.35.3–7), the downfall of those once proud, a common theme in the narrative of the fall of empires.

Alexander's treatment of two female members of the Persian satrapal class, Barsine and Roxane, also relates to the tradition of the captive woman and to Greek fears about Persian women and their role in monarchy. Alexander's dealings with them have been taken for granted and oversimplified, and too great a distinction has been drawn between his relationships with these two women. His connections to both form part of a continuum, along with his treatment of the royal Persian women, a progression that met its logical end in his marriage to at least one Achaemenid woman.²⁹ The common thread is sexual possession of an elite woman by the Macedonian king, and it is easy to exaggerate the distinction between those he married and those he did not.³⁰

²⁸On the burning of Persepolis: Diod. 17.70.1–6; Curt. 5.6.1–8; Plut. *Alex.* 37.3–5. Scholars have generally interpreted the destruction of Persepolis as an act of policy, not passion, differing largely about which policy: Badian, "Agis III"; Borza, "Fire"; Balcer, "Persepolis"; Bosworth, *Conquest* 92; Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Persepolis" 184–85; Briant, *Alexandre* 94–95; Badian, "Revisions"; Wieshöfer, *Jahrhunderte* 35–39; Briant, *Tributs* 384–403.

²⁹Bosworth, "Iranians" 10–12 implies this idea, but does not include Barsine in the continuum, as I do.

³⁰Bosworth, "Iranians" 12 rightly stresses the fact that Alexander's relationships and the marriages of others he sponsored always involve a Macedonian or Greek male marrying a Persian woman, never the reverse. Clearly this is the traditional image of the

Barsine's status was more formal and of longer duration than has been recognized. Barsine³¹ was the daughter of Artabazus, a Persian satrap and the grandson of a Persian king,³² and her mother was a sister of the Rhodian mercenary captains Mentor and Memnon. After his attempted rebellion against Artaxerxes III failed, Artabazus went into exile at the court of Philip II of Macedonia, taking with him his wife and children and his younger brother-in-law Memnon (Diod. 16.52.3; Curt. 6.5.2–3). Barsine grew up in Philip's court, and she and Alexander (who, contrary to the view of some,³³ could have been about her age)³⁴ may well have known each other as children.³⁵

Upon her family's return to Asia c. 342 (Diod. 16.52.3–4), Barsine married Mentor, the uncle who had engineered their return and who

captive woman, made more genteel by means of a ceremony. Curtius (8.4.25–26) claims that Alexander, out of love for Roxane, said that it was necessary for the stability of his empire for Persians and Macedonians to marry, thus taking the shame from the conquered and pride from the victors and even has Alexander cite the dubious ancestral precedent of Achilles and Briseis. Achilles did not, of course, marry Briseis.

³¹In general I follow the views of Brunt, "Barsine" 23–34 (and do not therefore re-argue them) that Barsine was Alexander's mistress, that she was once the wife of Memnon and probably Mentor as well, and that her son Heracles was Alexander's son. With the aid of Brosius' work, I expand on Brunt's conclusions.

³²Plut. *Alex.* 21.4 says that Artabazus was the son of a king's daughter. Tarn, "Barsine" 26–27 doubted this, but Brunt, "Barsine" 24–25 presents compelling arguments against Tarn's views; see also Weiskopf, *Satrap's Revolt* 27–28, esp. nn. 35, 55–56, who believes that Artabazus had Achaemenid blood not only through his mother, but through his father as well.

³³Berve, *Alexanderreich* 102 suggests that she was born in 360; Brunt, "Barsine" 25 says that she was born after 362 and could not have been born later than 357/6. Lane Fox, *Alexander* 177 implies a birth date of 360. These estimates seem to reflect a reluctance to believe that a fourteen year old could have married one of her uncles, yet that was common enough in the Hellenic world. It seems reasonable to assume that Barsine married for the first time between fourteen and eighteen.

³⁴If she married Mentor, she can hardly have done so before her family's return from exile c. 342, as Mentor did not accompany them into exile. If Mentor, as is assumed, died soon after, she is likely to have been 14 in 342 or soon thereafter. Barsine had a daughter by Mentor old enough to marry in 324 (Arr. 7.4.6), something that would tend to confirm these estimates (a probable date of birth between 342 and 340 for the daughter). By her second husband Memnon Barsine had a son who was too young to fight in 330, and she bore Alexander a son in 327 (Diod. 20.20.1) or in 324 (Just. 15.2.3).

³⁵Only Lane Fox, *Alexander* 177 has suggested this, but it is likely to be so. Even in Athens, where the roles of men and women were more narrowly defined, very young girls and boys played together; in Macedonia, at least at court, women's movements were less circumscribed.

now led the coastal forces of the Persian king.³⁶ Quickly widowed, Barsine soon married her younger uncle Memnon (Plut. *Alex.* 21.4), who succeeded his brother as commander of the western coast (Diod. 17.23.5–6). But Memnon, Alexander's original opponent, also died suddenly (Diod. 17.29.4), and Barsine, widowed for a second time, seems to have remained at the court of Darius. Certainly after the battle of Issus Parmenio captured Barsine, along with members of her family and the wives and children of others in the Persian elite at Damascus (Plut. *Alex.* 21.4).

Alexander apparently began his sexual relationship with Barsine not long after her capture in 333.³⁷ He was now sleeping with the wife of his former enemy, Memnon; she was, in effect, his Andromache.³⁸ At this time Barsine's father was still committed to Darius and remained so until Darius' death in 330 (Arr. 3.21.4, 23.7; Curt. 5.9.1–12.19, 6.5.1–5). Both personal loyalty to Philip's guest-friend and practical political concerns would surely have prevented Alexander from purposely offending a man he had every reason to want to conciliate, at a period when he was still trying to win over the Persian aristocracy. Yet Alexander apparently began his sexual relationship with Barsine before her father turned his support to Alexander, much as it is likely that he had possession of Roxane before her father went over to Alexander.³⁹

Alexander's relationship with Barsine was anything but brief. Probably accompanying Alexander on campaign, she bore him a son (Heracles) in c. 327 (Diod. 20.20.1), or possibly even later (Just. 15.2.3 suggests a date as late as 324). The name of her son obviously refers to the Heraclid ancestry of Alexander's dynasty and hardly suggests lack of status.⁴⁰ Despite Alexander's subsequent marriage to Roxane (see below), Barsine remained quite important, at least as late as 324. Plutarch

³⁶For the career of Mentor, see Kahrstedt, "Mentor" 964–65, who supposes that he died soon after the affair of Hermias (Diod. 16.52.5–8). See Brunt, "Barsine" 27 for arguments on the likelihood of this marriage.

³⁷Plutarch's accounts of the relationship (*Alex.* 21.4; *Eum.* 1.3) seem to imply that the relationship began right after Barsine's capture, as a kind of alternative to one with Darius' wife. Berve, *Alexanderreich* 103 assumes that the relationship began somewhat later, after the king's return from Egypt, c. 331.

³⁸Stanley Burstein made this point to me in private conversation.

³⁹So Arr. 4.19.4–6, 20.4 *contra* Curt. 7.11.1, 8.4.21–30; see further Holt, *Bactria* 66; Bosworth, "Iranians" 10f.

⁴⁰Schachermeyr, *Alexander* 409 connects the name to Alexander's hero emulation, but Heracles the ancestor (see further Borza, *Shadow* 173) is the more likely referent.

(*Eum.* 1.3) offers as the king's greatest honor to Eumenes the fact that he (and Ptolemy) married two sisters of Barsine (significantly, described as sisters of Barsine rather than daughters of Artabazus) during the Susa weddings of 324. He characterizes this marriage as establishing an *oikeiotes* ('kinship') and mentions Barsine's son by Alexander.⁴¹ Her father and other members of her family received important appointments under Alexander.⁴²

Maria Brosius' work on Achaemenid women suggests that there was a distinction between married women of the king (these women had to be Achaemenid or at least Persian) and unmarried women of the king (foreign women). Women in the first category could produce legitimate sons, whereas women in the second could not, but women in the second category were more respectable than concubines, though less so than wives.⁴³ If Barsine and her powerful family saw her relationship with Alexander as that of a woman in the second category, much would be explained. Alexander, still reluctant to marry a Persian, much less an Achaemenid, may have intended his relationship to Barsine to be interpreted in these terms, hoping to spare Macedonian sensibilities while, at the same time, catering to the Persian elite.⁴⁴

The story that Parmenio advised Alexander to begin the relationship with Barsine (Aristob. *ap.* Plut. *Alex.* 21.4–5), a story many have found unlikely, gains some plausibility if Parmenio knew about the Persian custom regarding unmarried women of the king.⁴⁵ Plutarch's ref-

⁴¹It is usually assumed that ties between Alexander and Barsine were cut in 327 (Berve, *Alexanderreich* 103; Schachermeyr, *Alexander* 212; Brunt, "Barsine" 29–30 [tentatively]) and that Barsine and her son withdrew at that time to Pergamum, but we know only that mother and son were there at the time of Alexander's death (Just. 13.2.7). One wonders whether these assumptions do not relate to scholarly discomfort with the realities of polygamy.

⁴²Artabazus, for instance, became satrap of Bactria: see Judeich, "Artabazos" 1299. On the family in general, see Brunt, "Barsine" 29–30.

⁴³Brosius, *Women* 31, 190–91. She warns against understanding such a high-born woman as the equivalent of the Greek *pallake*.

⁴⁴Schachermeyr, *Alexander* 133 suggests that Alexander's attempts to mix Macedonian and Iranians in the rule of his empire may even have had their origin in his early acquaintance with the family of Artabazus. Lane Fox, *Search* 64–65, 262 agrees but adds that Barsine and her family were central to Alexander's attempts to understand and rule the old Persian Empire.

⁴⁵This would explain why Barsine's education, parentage, and high birth as well as her beauty are mentioned in this passage, since mere mistresses need possess little more than beauty. Tarn, "Heracles" 24 argued that the passage must mistake Barsine for Darius'

erence to Eumenes' marriage seems to offer more proof for the quasi-official nature of Alexander's relationship to Barsine. Certainly the evidence strongly suggests that Barsine and her family saw her relationship to Alexander as somehow respectable. Barsine's Graeco-Persian clan was unusually close-knit, supportive, and likely to be sensitive to any slight.⁴⁶

Yet Alexander did not marry her, but did marry Roxane, even though Roxane's family was hardly so distinguished.⁴⁷ In 327, within a brief period of time, three events occurred: the birth of Barsine's son Heracles; Alexander's marriage to Roxane; and the retirement of Artabazus, supposedly because of old age (Curt. 8.1.20). The order of the first two events is not clear, but the third certainly happened after the marriage to Roxane. While members of Barsine's family continued to hold high position after 327 (and, as we have seen, she herself was not without status), it seems likely that Artabazus' retirement was in fact his response to the change in status implied by Alexander's marriage. If Roxane, also an Asian and thus as "foreign" from a Macedonian point of view as Barsine (not to mention from a somewhat less prestigious family), could marry Alexander, then the fact that Alexander had not married Barsine began to seem, probably for the first time, insulting.⁴⁸ Barsine was a quasi-wife but Roxane was a real one. Granted that

daughter and doubted that Alexander ever took Parmenio's advice; *contra* Brunt, "Barsine" 28–29. Neither scholar takes the problem of the dubious veracity of the Parmenio advice motif into account: see Berve, *Alexanderreich* 300–3; Badian, "Parmenio" 328; Hamilton, *Commentary* 89; Heckel, "Philotas" 11–12 n. 3.

⁴⁶There are a number of examples of the close ties of this Graeco-Persian clan: Barsine's marriages, in turn, to her mother's two brothers; Mentor's determination to have his brother and brother-in-law recalled from exile (Diod. 16.52.3–4) and subsequent high offices held by those recalled; the fact that Barsine's brother Pharnabazus succeeded his uncle, at least in part, in his command (Arr. 2.1.3); and at the time of her capture the presence with Barsine of her brother Pharnabazus' wife and three daughters of Mentor, probably Barsine's step-daughters (Curt. 3.13.14).

⁴⁷On Artabazus' royal descent, see above, n. 32. Curtius (8.4.25) says that Roxane was of obscure birth. No royal antecedents are known for Roxane's father, Oxyartes (see Berve, *Alexanderreich* 292), although the frequency of marriages between Persian king's daughters and members of the elite (Brosius, *Women* 70–82), prevents us from excluding the possibility. Certainly from the Greek and Roman point of view, Artabazus' clan was better known and more prestigious.

⁴⁸Brunt, "Barsine" 29 suggested that Artabazus' "retirement" was a mere pretext, but Brunt assumed that Artabazus was motivated by the collapse of what Brunt believed to be a simple sexual liaison between Alexander and Artabazus' daughter. My more politi-

Alexander had long resisted taking a wife of any ethnic background and that he could have married Barsine or one of the daughters of Darius any time after 333, his decision to marry Roxane seems puzzling. There was obvious and considerable disadvantage to the match. Aside from offending other prospective fathers-in-law and especially Artabazus, the increasing hostility of Alexander's Macedonians to his sympathy for Asian culture and his adaptation of various aspects of Persian monarchical custom could only mean that marriage to an Asian woman would cause much more upset (Curt. 8.4.30 reports that, in fact, it did). Persians would probably have been puzzled by his choice of Roxane rather than Darius' daughter and might even have been offended by his apparent preference.

For Alexander, the benefits the marriage brought must have outweighed the disadvantages, and there were significant short term benefits. The marriage to Roxane represents yet another example of Alexander's gift for improvisation. He needed something to conciliate remaining resisters in Bactria more than he needed to worry about the Macedonians or Artabazus.⁴⁹ Alexander may have seen the comparatively modest status of Roxane's family as an advantage rather than the reverse. She would have been a bride much like some of Philip's more obscure wives, who had themselves been married toward the end of a campaign and were perhaps originally no more significant⁵⁰ and as such she would have been an easier pill for the Macedonians to swallow. Marrying Roxane may have upset Macedonians more than sleeping with Barsine, but not, apparently, much more.⁵¹ It would also have mattered

cal understanding of the relationship of Barsine and Alexander makes Artabazus' motivation somewhat different. It is true that younger members of the family remained in high position at Alexander's court after this (Arr. 7.6.4; Plut. *Eum.* 1.3), as one would expect with a family of such accomplished courtiers. Although Artabazus could indicate family opinion, discreetly, because of his age, his children had to be more practical.

⁴⁹On the political benefits, see further Bosworth, "Iranians" 10–11. Bosworth accepts the likelihood of Metz *Épitome* 31 that Alexander had some of his companions marry Bactrian brides at the same time.

⁵⁰Iranians would have interpreted it as having the same significance as the proposed marriage to the younger Stateira (see above).

⁵¹If Renard and Servais, "Mariage" 29–50 (followed by Bosworth, *Conquest* 117 and Briant, *Alexandre* 102) are correct in believing that the marriage ceremony of Alexander and Roxane was Macedonian in nature, not Persian (*contra* Berve, *Alexanderreich* 347 and

that Alexander was no longer so very young a king and would have been more inclined to think in terms of the relatively distant future and the production of a legitimate heir. The likelihood that Roxane accompanied him on the Indian campaign, contrary to Macedonian custom, and may have borne him a child there (who died shortly after birth, *Metz Epit.* 70) would tend to confirm this possibility.

On the other hand, the early death of Alexander tends to exaggerate the importance of Roxane. His decision, taken about 330, to arrange for instruction in Greek for the daughters of Darius (as well as his son and mother; Diod. 17.67.1; Arr. 3.22.6), may mean that he planned to marry one of them almost from the beginning.⁵² If it is true that, immediately after the death of Alexander (Plut. *Alex.* 77.4), Roxane was involved, along with Perdikkas, in the murder of Alexander's new Achaemenid wife, the elder daughter of Darius, then it would be confirmed that Roxane, despite the fact that she was about to bear Alexander's child, felt threatened by his Achaemenid bride and inclined to believe that any heir borne by this new bride would have precedence over any child of her own.⁵³

We can use Alexander's relationships with Asian women to trace the evolution of his public attitude toward his newly conquered Asian realm. He began by combining the sexual possession of a member of the elite with a curious attempt to substitute himself for Darius within the royal family, but only as a father and son, not yet as husband. First Barsine, and later Roxane, were stop-gaps along the way. Finally, nine years

Lane Fox, *Alexander* 317), then, as Briant, *Alexandre* 102 suggests, this may have been intended as a further sop to Macedonian resentment.

⁵²So Tarn, *Alexander* 336.

⁵³While Plutarch's story resembles stereotypical portrayals of Persian royal women in Greek literary tradition (as discussed by Sancisi-Weerdenberg, "Atossa" 20–33), I would suggest that the false or exaggerated stereotype is not so much that royal women became involved in court intrigue, even in murder (we know they did in Macedonia and a polygamous monarchy without an entirely clear succession pattern would always tend to turn royal mothers into players in succession politics), but rather that there was something innately feminine about this or that it was a consequence of their bad, manipulative character as opposed to circumstance. Men played succession politics by leading armies; but, as this option was generally closed to Persian royal women, court intrigue, occasionally leading to murder, was the only path open to royal women, who may have perceived this role as part of dutiful and responsible motherhood. See Brosius, *Women* 187–88 *contra* and above, n. 9.

after he could have, in 324, Alexander married Darius' elder daughter.⁵⁴ He placed his wedding to the Achaemenid princess in the context of the mass marriages at Susa—perhaps intending them, as Justin (12.10.10) says, as a distraction from the significance of what he was doing.

Accounts of the elaborate display surrounding the weddings convey the sense that this was artifice, meant to impress and convince. Alexander had delayed this marriage so long because he did not think it safe or effective prior to 324. Considering the context in which his Achaemenid marriage alliance occurred (the “mutiny” with all its implications of a changing of the guard, the arrival of the *Epigonoï*, the departure of Macedonian troops), the timing of his marriage to the younger Stateira must signify that as long as Alexander perceived Macedonians to be central to his power, he dared not marry an Achaemenid. Only when he had truly changed the base of his power did he proceed with the marriages which he must long have intended: his marriage to Stateira being part of his rejection of Macedonia and one of the many signs that he had become an Asian ruler.⁵⁵

Postponing this marriage had another consequence: whereas a marriage to a daughter of Darius in the 330s would have been a kind of statement of the reality of Alexander's conquest, by 324 it tended to function as a symbol for continuity rather than for the already completed conquest.⁵⁶ No wonder that Roxane was worried about these women and any children they might produce—Alexander had made them the future. Yet in the end, sexual possession, whether legitimated by marriage or not, whether real or insinuated, was central to his seizure of control and to the way he chose to have his power understood.

Alexander used his treatment of Persian women to imply an attitude, not necessarily a genuine one, towards Persian monarchy, an attitude which could be read differently by different ethnic groups. Just as royal women could function as symbols of continuity in Argead monarchy when royal males were scarce, so they could in Achaemenid.

⁵⁴Plut. *Alex.* 70.2, *De Alex. fort.* 329e, 338d–e; Arr. 7.4.4–6; Just. 12.10.9–10; Curt. 10.3.12; Diod. 17.107.6. Arrian alone recounts (7.4.4) that Aristobulus said that Alexander not only married Darius' daughter at Susa in 324, but the daughter of Ochus, Darius' predecessor. Brosius, *Women* 77 points to the parallel of the marriages of Darius I.

⁵⁵Briant, *Alexandre* 114 notes that these marriages were performed by Persian rite, in contrast to the Macedonian nature of Roxane's marriage ceremony. Here too there is progression.

⁵⁶Brosius, *Women* 77 also considers it a symbol of continuity.

Alexander chose, literally, to embrace continuity, while the Successors, with the exception of Seleucus, generally preferred to reject it.⁵⁷

Neither Roxane nor Barsine were able to take advantage of the uncertainties of the period after Alexander's death to pursue their own goals as other royal women did. The sad fate of all the royal Asian women speaks to the views of the Macedonian elite when they no longer had to cope with Alexander.⁵⁸ Despite the common Hellenic view that tied parentage and citizenship to the father and ignored the mother, neither of Alexander's sons by Asian women were taken very seriously by Macedonians and Greeks, although Roxane's son fared better than Barsine's. The Macedonians allowed neither of Alexander's sons to reign in any real sense, primarily because the generals wanted power, and ultimately the title, for themselves. Alexander IV and Heracles were the sons of captives, of the conquered Asians (Curt. 10.6.13–14).⁵⁹

⁵⁷Carney, "Sisters" argued that the treatment of Alexander's sisters by the Successors demonstrated their lack of interest in continuity with the Argead past. It is likely that their treatment of royal and elite Persian women demonstrated a similar lack of interest on the Successors' part in continuity with the Achaemenid past. Of those married with Alexander at Susa, only the marriage of Seleucus to Apame is known to have lasted. Certainly, Craterus rejected Amastris in order to marry Antipater's daughter Phila (Strab. 12.544; Memnon *FGrH* 434 F4.4). It is possible but unlikely (if the presence of Amastris was insulting to Phila, the same would seem to apply for the marriages of Antipater's other daughters or for Argead women), that, despite the flurry of marriages to Macedonian women after Alexander's death, some of the other generals did not reject their Persian wives when they added Macedonian wives. See further Eddy, *King* 63–64.

⁵⁸Plutarch (*Alex.* 77.4) reports that Roxane and Perdicas killed Stateira and her sister. Roxane was consistently ignored by the Macedonian elite (e.g., Polyperchon's offer to Olympias, not Roxane of *epimeleia* and *prostasia*; Diod. 18.49.4, 57.3). Subsequently Roxane was virtually imprisoned with her son (Diod. 19.52.1–5). Years later Cassander murdered mother and son (Diod. 19.105.2–4; Just. 15.2.5; Paus. 9.7.2). Barsine, too, was murdered along with her son (Diod. 20.20.1–4, 28.1; Just. 15.2.3–5). Vulgate sources say Sisygambis killed herself after mourning Alexander (Diod. 17.118.3; Curt. 10.5.19–25; Just. 13.1.5–6).

⁵⁹The attitude of the Successors clearly contradicts that of the Aeacids who came to claim descent from the Trojan captive Andromache (see above, n. 2). Apart from the obvious point that Molossian attitudes and practices were not identical with Macedonian, the explanation for this contradiction lies in the difference between myth and reality. Just as the Macedonians were perfectly comfortable with the dynastic claim of Heraclid ancestry made by the Argeads but very uncomfortable with Alexander's claim to be, literally, the son of Ammon, so Alexander's generals were indifferent to the supposed Trojan blood in his mother's line, but uneasy and even hostile to the idea of their own king having Persian blood.

After Alexander's death at Babylon, Nearchus, who had married Barsine's daughter at Susa (Arr. 7.4.6), put forward Barsine's son Heracles as a candidate for the throne (Curt. 10.6.10–12). His preference was rejected both by the aristocracy (Perdiccas' preference for a possible son of Roxane's had already been stated [10.6.9] and others wanted a committee of generals [10.6.12–15]) and by the ordinary troops who would, at first, accept neither of Alexander's sons by Asian women and who forced the officers to accept the mentally limited Arrhidaeus, Alexander's half-brother, as co-king with Roxane's son.

A number of factors contributed to the failure of Heracles' candidacy in relation to the two other heirs: Alexander had not married Barsine;⁶⁰ the resentment of the Greek Nearchus, the only one of the generals who could claim kinship to a possible heir and, as uncle by marriage, might seem a natural regent; and the physical absence of mother and son from Babylon. Perdiccas may have preferred a possible son by Roxane to Barsine's Heracles both because more time would pass before Roxane's son, if he materialized, would come of age⁶¹ and because Barsine's powerful clan might interfere in ways which Roxane's would probably not. The failure of Heracles' candidacy was comparative rather than absolute, as subsequent events would demonstrate.⁶²

In any event, the initial preference for Roxane's legitimate son over Barsine's illegitimate one was, at best, superficial. One wonders whether any of the generals assembled at Babylon believed that Roxane's son would live long enough to reign in his own right. Alexander IV, as an infant and very young child, was a useful convenience in a fluid situation, but as he neared adulthood he became a burden and the generals breathed a collective sigh of relief when Cassander removed him (Diod. 19.105.2–4).⁶³

⁶⁰There is no evidence about whether he recognized Heracles as his son.

⁶¹Green, *Alexander* 6.

⁶²Errington, "Babylon" 74. Heracles was not a serious candidate until the death of Alexander IV, Roxane's son (Diod. 20.20.1–4, 28.1–4).

⁶³Gruen, "Coronation" 254 faults Diodorus' analysis of this situation (the double murder relieved the other Successors of the fear that they would have to yield up the areas they controlled, areas which were becoming, in effect, kingdoms), yet the fact that more time passed before any of them took the title of king need not mean that they had not been acting to achieve that goal for some time. Diodorus consistently portrays the various Successors as desirous of royal power from the start (e.g., Diod. 19.52.1–4; 18.58.3), possibly reflecting Hieronymus' views.

Sisygambis' suicide after the death of Alexander suggests she understood the function the women of her family had performed and that, with his death, that function was no longer desired.⁶⁴

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⁶⁴Whether Sisygambis really committed suicide after Alexander's death is unclear; literature often associated royal women and suicide. It was generally seen as an admirable, even a heroic death for a woman in certain circumstances and all three vulgate sources treat Sisygambis' death in favorable terms. Curtius in effect says that she killed herself rather than face losing royal status and becoming a captive, something Alexander had prevented from happening earlier. On royal women and suicide, see Carney, "Virago" 50–54. An earlier form of this paper was presented at the American Philological Association meeting in 1994. I wish to thank Sarah Pomeroy and Stanley Burstein for their initial comments, as well as Gene Borza, Pierre Briant, and Maria Brosius, who were all kind enough to read and comment on it as well. I am also grateful to Peter Burian for his assistance. Maria Brosius was kind enough to let me see portions of her manuscript before publication.

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