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ἀλγηδόνες ὀμμάτων

> 'It seemed as if this moment of observation went on and on and I realized seeing had become a variety of memory'
>
> (Pamuk, *My Name Is Red*)

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A Very Short But Instructive Tale of a Valiant King

An exceptionally vivid episode preserved in Plutarch's *Alexander-vita* reports that after the victorious battle at Issus (333 BC) the women both of the Persian royal family (*dukshish*[1]) and of other noble clans became Alexander's captives (ἐν τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις: Plutarch, *Alex*. 21. 1 and 30). The theme, popularized in the art by Giovanni Bazzi in early modern era, was taken up by Veronese's famous 1570 painting 'The Family of Darius before Alexander' (today in National Gallery, London), turned into the legend.[2] Now the triumphant victor had them at his disposal, as the unwritten laws of war stated: they could easily become his (sexual) prey,[3] if he only wished so, since a woman captive was, as James Davidson has put it recently, 'piece of living plunder' (cf. especially in the testimony of Herodotus 9. 82).[4] But the great conqueror treated the unhappy women with an unusual – regarding typical standards

[1] Brosius 2006, 241; also the same author 2010.

[2] Around 1660 the theme was also the subject of the painting by Charles Le Brun, the court-painter to the king Louis the XIV 'le Soleil'; see A. Cohen's fascinating study: 1997, 97 – 98. Also Giambattista Tiepolo has devoted one of his paintings to this theme; cf. Spencer 2003, 251; on Bazzi cf. Noll 2005, 36; Müller 2011b, 124–127.

[3] Known perfectly to the ancient Greeks like Homer, who shows 'the fragility of women's status" – so Lyons 2011; cf. Eurypides' remarks in the *Troades* and *Andromache.* See also Pritchett 1985.

[4] Davidson 2007, 255.

of the ancient attitudes toward the captives – reverence and respect: no indecent word was issued, no sordid attitude was ever shown; lastly and most importantly – no act of sexual abuse was committed toward the beautiful prisoners.[5] On the contrary, acting with an admirably modest attitude, the king displayed his astonishing indifference to their beauty and – *mirabile dictu* – he even (which was unusual by ancient and modern standards, ὥσπερ ἀψύχους εἰκόνας ἀγαλμάτων παρέπεμπεν (!).[6] As to the explanation why he refused to go into any intimate contacts with these exceptional women, Alexander is said to have confessed a famous remark, found in the sources and repeated then by the scrupulous compiler from Chaeronea (*ibid.*): simply, the king argued, there could be a danger in an acquaintance with them as '**Persian women were torments to the eyes' (εἰσὶν ἀλγηδόνες ὀμμάτων αἱ Περσίδες**[7]). As it stands, this is a pretty, amazing, yet – perhaps contrary to Plutarch's intention – a bit humorous story. Alexander, in Plutarch's (but not only his) a true philosopher on the throne (cf. *Mor.* 326d – 345d),[8] had no need to make use of such opportunities, as he was not a slave to these basic, carnal – and, all of all, low – instincts. If both queen Stateira's exceptional beauty (λέγεταί γε τὴν Δαρείου γυναῖκα πολὺ πασῶν τῶν βασιλίδων εὐπρεπεστάτην γενέσθαι – 21.3) and ἡ ἰδέα ἐκείνων (other Persian women's 'fair looks', for they 'were surpassingly stately and beautiful' – κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει διαφερούσας; cf. also Quintus Curtius Rufus, 3.12.12: *virgines reginas excellentis formae*[9]) did not seriously affect Alexander, it was the result of his royal, without a trace of irony, superhuman will to overcome his own temptations and to manifest his royal self-control.[10]

The story of Alexander's generosity and his clemency was to become a legendary one.[11] Besides the Chaeronean biographer, it was repeated in antiquity by almost all of the Alexander historians:[12] before Plutarch it has been told by Diodo-

[5] Giovannelli-Jouanna 2011, 302.

[6] *Alex*. 21. 5: '[…] passed them by as though they were lifeless image for display'; transl. B. Perrin, Loeb edition. The story looks as a reversal of the mythical tale of Pygmalion, later told by Ovid, *Met*. 10. 243–297.

[7] Here and elsewhere emphases and italics are mine – B. B.

[8] In the two 'speeches', conveniently known and cited under the Latin title *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*; with the remarks of Cammarota 1998 and Nawotka 2004.

[9] The Greek writers were particularly keen for the woman beauty as such and both poetry as prose abounds with the description of it – from Homer, through Sappho, Alcaeus or Archilochus, to the novelists of the Second Sophistic, e. g. Chariton (*Callirhoe*, 2.2.2) or Longus' *Daphnis et Chloe*; cf. Morales 2008, 42 on 'the visual aspect of the beloved which stimulates desire'; see generally Goldhill 2000, 41–2.

[10] The same generosity of Alexander is praised again by Arrian on the occasion of the capturing the Sogdian Rock and victory over the prince Oxyartes (*Anab*. 4.19.5 – 4.20); with Bosworth's notes: 1995, 131–134.

[11] Cf. Konstan 2005, 337–346.

[12] See de Romilly 1988, 3 – 15. It should be kept in mind, however, that in the recent scholarship there is a conviction that in the tale of Alexander and Persian women two different ancient traditions

rus (17.37.3–38: here the king and Hephaestion visit the Persian tent)[13] and Curtius Rufus (3.12.1–26; 4.10; 5.3; 5.7).[14] Later on, it was reminded by Arrian of Nicomedia (*Anab*. 2.12.3–8; actually he explicitly relies on Ptolemy and Aristobulus,[15] but has some doubts, if he should give credit to it) and Justin in his *Epitome* (11.9.12–16). Obviously, all of them praised the king's uncommon abstinence from the sordid pleasures of such kind.[16]

It is not my goal here to issue any verdict whether Alexander story was in all its details true or not. In its outlines, modern scholars have doubts about its historicity,[17] but the question what were the king's real motives and whether his behavior was influenced by an ideal of the royal self-constraint,[18] as some of the ancient morali-zing historians and philosophers pictured him, is another thing.[19] Nevertheless, it only must be borne in mind that alternative (or, better to say, complementary) versions about Alexander's attitude towards other Persian beauties focus on his (oriental) lasciviousness, rather than 'Olympian' (Stoic?) indifference.[20] So did Diodorus and Curtius Rufus, who hurried up with gossip that imitating the Persian customs, the Epirote-Macedonian mythomaniac just kept a harem.[21] The Sicilian writer reveals in his *Bibliotheke* (17.77.6–7) that there were 365 concubines who every evening strolled in front of the king to make his choice easier, with whom should he spend the night.[22] Curtius says in turn at one place in his work (3.3.24) about *regiae pelices trecentae et sexaginta quinque vehebantur*;[23]

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were mingled: the first was 'official', as recorded by Arrian. According to this version Alexander did not go to the Persian tent, sending instead Leonnatus. This is also Plutarch's version. But, as Arrian himself says (*Anab*. 2.12.3) there was another version (it is found in Diodorus and Curtius) which is ascribed to the 'Vulgate'; cf. Müller 2011b, 115–123.

[13] See the comment by C. B. Welles 1970, 227, n. 1.

[14] See Atkinson 1980, 248 – 249. However, it must be said that the fate was not so lenient for other women the victorious Macedonians have found in the Persian army.

[15] Cf. Pearson 1960, 159; see Bosworth 1980b, 221.

[16] As Polybius admired the modesty of the generous Roman consul Scipio the Elder 'Africanus': 10.18–19 (with Walbank's remarks: 1967, 218–219); see also Liv. 26.50.1–12; cf. Müller 2008, 263.

[17] Bosworth 1980b, 222; Baynham 1998, 80; Carney 2000, 94–97 and 2003, 227–252; cf. Olbrycht 2010, 356.

[18] However, Ogden 2007, 88–89 reminds that there was another story about Alexander: in a strange passage from Athenaeus 10.435a (based on Hieronymus of Rhodes = Wehrli, F 38, p. 40), Alexander is called *gynnis* ('womanish'); Ogden interprets it as meaning just 'eunuch'.

[19] Cf. Keaveney 1978, 268.

[20] Cf. Coppola 2010, 147.

[21] See Plutarch, *Crass.* 32, lamenting that Surena, the Parthian grandee and commander was lascivious and in his army there were wagons with concubines.

[22] πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τὰς παλλακίδας ὁμοίως τῷ Δαρείῳ περιήγε<το>, τὸν μὲν ἀριθμὸν οὔσας οὐκ ἐλάττους πλήθει τῶν κατὰ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἡμερῶν, κάλλει δὲ διαπρεπεῖς ὡς ἂν ἐξ ἁπασῶν τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν γυναικῶν ἐπιλελεγμένας. αὗται δὲ ἑκάστης νυκτὸς περιῄεσαν τὴν κλίνην τοῦ βασιλέως, ἵνα τὴν ἐκλογὴν αὐτὸς ποιήσηται τῆς μελλούσης αὐτῷ συνεῖναι (ed. K.T. Fischer, Teubner).

[23] See Brosius 2007, 45–46.

at another (6.6.8) he mentions *pelices CCC et LXV, totidem quot Darei fuerant*.[24] Also Arrian (*Anab*. 2.11.9–10) and Justin (*Epit.* 12.3.10) heard some rumors about Alexander's excessive promiscuity.[25]

In the light of all these stories of the king's luxury and polygamy (here it has to be reminded that as a husband of Rhoxane, Alexander married at Susa in 324 BC Barsine-Stateira and Parysatis – the latter was the King Artaxerxes s III's daughter),[26] and his unexpected show of abstinence (even if only at this moment) must have been regarded as a mark of the true royal virtue – astonishing and worth admi-ring – in the eyes of both his subjects and the others. That the fact that such self-restraint became, for the next generations, a vital part of the myth how 'good' and just a ruler Alexander was, remains naturally something obvious and understandable. None the less, here one should avoid generalizations: on this particular occasion the king might have shown kindness after the campaign. In other circumstances, regarding these matters he seems to have lived and acted differently. A small wonder, in sum: since he made the vast Persian empire (and the whole Asia) his property and δορίκτητος χώρα ('land won by spear': Diod. 17.17.2), all its inhabitants – including the female ones – just became his spoil.[27]

Greeks, Those Committed *philobarbaroi*[28]

I only have recalled this meaningful and evidently didactic passage in Plutarch (for some modern scholars a tale too instructive, perhaps, as a kind of introduction). It is not Alexander himself who entirely concerns me here. In what follows I would like to pay more attention to another aspect of this important episode. Whereas it remains true that its main hero was the young, brave megalomaniac, it seems equally obvious that the supporting (let us say) but none the less the significant part was played by the Persian womenfolk. Or, to be more

[24] Atkinson 1998, 296.

[25] As Heckel (in Yardley and Heckel 1997, 205) rightly observes, Justin's phrase *greges* ('a flock' of the concubines) bears strong negative connotations; similarly Curtius Rufus who employs the same term when saying (6.6.8) of eunuchs – *spadonum greges*; according to him they were, more importantly, *muliebria pati assueti*; cf. also Carney 2000, 23–24.

[26] Cf. Ogden 2009, 41–46. On the Persian polygamic tradition, see Strabo, *Geogr*. 15.3.17: 'The men marry many wives, and at the same time maintain several concubines, for the sake of having many children' (Loeb transl.); cf. Kuhrt 2003, 683 who counts: Darius I had six legal wives; Artaxerxes II – only three; Darius III – two; cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2013, 7–8. Similarly was in Media: Strabo, *Geogr*. 11.13.11 (cf. 15.3.13).

[27] See Curtius, 3.10.6; Justin, *Epit.* 11.5.9; cf. Carney 1996, 571.

[28] Again, the term is used by Plutarch's from the essay *De malignitate Herodoti* 12 (= *Mor*. 857a), for, as Bowen 1992, 110, observes, 'Roughly half of H.'s history is devoted to the Persians and their empire'.

precise, it was the women's beauty (κάλλος) and charm that mattered in the story, providing a dramatic (in a literary sense) challenge to Alexander's alleged – but highly doubtful, in my view – 'Stoic' temperance. Such is, I think, the lesson from Plutarch's biography but looking from a more general perspective on, his anecdote reveals something more: an amazing durability of an old, very old myth. It is a perennial myth concerning Oriental women. This 'myth' proves, in fact, a great curiosity and fascination the ancient Greeks felt and showed when meeting with -, and looking at them.

The adjective 'old' seems to be here particularly relevant here, since one might rightly say that such observations were expressed by the Greeks long before Alexander. One striking example from the fifth century BC has been preserved in Herodotus' magnificent ἱστορίη (5.h18). The famous story, anyway, was referred to by J.R. Hamilton,[29] who making the comment upon the relevant passage in Plutarch, reminds that a similar phrase – ἀλγηδόνας ὀφθαλμῶν – was used by the *pater historiae*.[30] Assuming that Alexander knew Herodotus' work,[31] Hamilton was ready to maintain that the Macedonian ruler might have made an allusion to it.[32] So briefly about it.[33]

The stunning tale by 'the father of history' concerns a banquet organized by the Macedonian king Alexander I, in order to celebrate a visit of the Persian envoys. On the demand of the drunken guests a lot of pretty court women were called upon to participate in the feast. But just when they were sitting in front of the barbarians the events quickly turned out to be highly dangerous, as οἱ Πέρσαι ἰδόμενοι γυναῖκας εὐμόρφους ἔλεγον πρὸς Ἀμύντην φάμενοι τὸ ποιηθὲν τοῦτο οὐδὲν εἶναι σοφόν.[34] For the guests, contrary to the knightly Alexander, the arrival of the court pretties posed a greater challenge than to resist their own sensual appetites, since, as the lustful (a true feature of barbarian character, let us note) barbarians argued, 'It was painful thing only to be allowed to look at them' (κρέσσον γὰρ εἶναι ἀρχῆθεν μὴ ἐλθεῖν τὰς γυναῖκας ἢ ἐλθούσας καὶ μὴ παριζομένας ἀντίας ἵζεσθαι **ἀλγηδόνας** σφίσι **ὀφθαλμῶν**). In consequence – the narrator tells us with an unmistakably overt disdain – Persians could not restrain from touching the classy beauties' breasts and even trying to kiss them. Every reader of Herodotus knows how cruel was the end of the party, as it is plain that his tale serves as

[29] Hamilton 1969, 56.

[30] See generally Konstan 1987; on the historical value of the Persian account in Herodotus cf. Munson 2009, 257–270; cf. Lewis 1985, 108.

[31] Another notorious problem that cannot be discussed here, see the next note.

[32] Unless we take the details of it as a product of the Plutarch's imaginary invention, this alone may be viewed as a clue that Alexander, himself educated in, and acquainted with – as it is assumed – Greek culture, made an allusion to Herodotus.

[33] Cf. also Dewald 2013.

[34] Ed. Ph.-E. Legrand (Budé); in the Aubrey de Sélincourt's Penguin rendering: 'The Persians, who finding them very charming, remarked to Amyntas that such arrangement was by no means a good one'.

a cautionary episode, again stressing out that particular feature of a typical Oriental – his unusual lustfulness and sexual intemperance.[35] At the price of making a stereotype,[36] the lesson from the story is straightforward – it just points out that in Greeks' eyes such exuberant sensuality was in fact a sign of being a Persian, man proverbially addicted to erotic pastimes.[37]

The suggestion made by Hamilton is very attractive but from my point of view Herodotus' story appears to be striking as far as it leads to another important point: the presence of the women themselves (as women are always behind everything). So, by implication, the underlying observation emerging from the story allows us to acknowledge that the astonishing hedonism of Persian males was *the result of* an uncommon beauty of their female partners:[38] wives, mistresses or concubines.[39] Naturally, such line of argumentation does not appear explicitly in Herodotus, yet it lies at the roots of the reasoning which is also visible in works of other Greek writers: spending their life in such conditions and surrounded by such dreamlike entities (who always were obedient and remained ready at men's disposal – another ideal stereotype[40]), how could the barbarians – the Greek authors seem to

[35] Tuplin 2007, 797 (on courtiers, concubines and eunuchs). Later on, this can be particularly clear from a famous passage Plutarch adduces in his fine diatribe *Advice to the Bride and Groom* (*Coniugalia praecepta*), ch. 16; on the stereotype of a barbarian lustfulness cf. the remarks by Tuplin 1999, 49, footnote 13; cf. Castriota 1995, 90.

[36] See Lewis 1985, 101–117 (= 1997, 345–361).

[37] By the way of comparison there is similar tone in Mesopotamian literature: L.D. Steele quotes the verses from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* where the hero is given advices to return home and enjoy pleasures of life (Steele 2007, 299–300); concerning Assyria see Melville 2004, 39–40.

[38] See Briant 1990, 69. This is visible in Curtius Rufus' memento (5.1.36–39) when describing lustfulness of the female inhabitants of Babylon and shocking sexual customs of the Babylonian women – everything that made the city a proverbial spot of moral evil and decadence. When Alexander entered the city, his moral downfall has begun; it happened because 'Nothing is more corrupt than the habits of that city, nothing more inclined to arouse and attract dissolute desires (*immodicas cupiditates*)'. So is with Babylonian noble women: 'The women who take part in these feasts are in the beginning modestly attired, then they take off their outer garments one by one and gradually disgrace their modesty, at last – with due respect to your ears – they throw aside the inmost coverings of their bodies. This shameful conduct is not confined to courtesans, but practiced by matrons and maidens, with whom the baseness of prostitution is regarded as courtesy' (cf. also *Dissoi logoi*, 2).

[39] Besides Macedonian ladies, Persians were not indifferent to other women: so in Herodotus 5.12 a beautiful and tall Paeonian girl was observed by the king Darius: 'the sight of her as she passed was sufficiently remarkable to catch Darius' eye'; Cyrus the Younger also was in intimate relations with a Greek woman, as Xenophon in the *Anabasis* tells us. The same is true with fictional Callirhoe in Chariton's fine novel, a Syracusan *femme fatale* against her will – its beauty works like a tornado, destroying mental health of the Persian satraps and the Great King himself; cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2013b, 177.

[40] So, in the *Book of Esther* 2.2–4 beautiful women from all the empire were gathered in Susa in order to be at the Great King's disposal; cf. Rawlinson 1867, 173 who saw in this a custom: 'The Empire was continually searched for beautiful damsels to fill the harem, a constant succession being required, as

imply – remain quiet and self-constrained?[41] Naturally, it's just a rhetorical question.[42] In such a way, one cannot miss the fact, however, that a perfect ambiguity arises: did many of the Greeks really condemn that Persian unmasked *libido* (even if it was a product of their imagination),[43] or was the majority of them seduced and fascinated by such a barbarian way of life?[44]

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none shared the royal couch more than once, unless she attracted the monarch's regard very particularly'. Rawlinson quotes additional sources: Herodotus 6.32, Aelian *VH*, 12.1 and Maximus of Tyre 34.4.

[41] Understandably enough, such 'philosophy' is difficult to be accepted in the modern times, given especially the rise and popularity of various (although in many cases flawed with apparent absurdities and logical self-contradictions) feminist ideologies: from this perspective it just looks nowadays as a manifesto of pure chauvinism. However, I am convicted that in respect of this problem the Greeks were usually far from being cynical and that their attitude had *also* much to do with religious sphere, being therefore not wholly rational: love passion was something that could not have been rationally explained, with help of reason since it remained under the care of the goddess Aphrodite, as Homeric Helen argued in the Fourth Book of the *Iliad* (cf. also *Il.* 14. 212–219; *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* V, 60–64; 85–90), or in Gorgias' famous speech (also Plutarch, *Coniug. praec.* = *Mor.* 138C; cf. *Amatorius*, ch. 5 and 13), cf. Dalby 2005, 48–49; see Pirenne-Delforge 2010, p. 5. From a modern, far more sophisticated point of view, it may be argued that it was a very primitive kind of explanation, indeed, as the blame for behavior on the part of men was most often laid on women and their presence as such, see Walcot 1984, 39. In this sense, women, if physically attractive (see Hesiod's warning and suggestive adjective *poikilai*: *Op.* 66), were also for Greek men highly and – inevitably – dangerous entities, as the representative tale of the deceptive Pandora in Hesiod's *Theogony* shows (*Theog.* 570–589; cf. also Homer, *Il.* 14. 216 – 217; see Ogden 1998, 213ff). Professor J. Redfield has some illuminating remarks on this problem in his admirable essay 2000, 219; as he philosophically (but pointedly) remarks, women constitute some problems to men; cf. also Whitmarsh 2004, 197–199.

[42] Cf. Plutarch's famous picture in *Praecept. coniug.* 16 (= *Mor.* 140b): Τοῖς τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεῦσιν αἱ γνήσιαι γυναῖκες παρακάθηνται δειπνοῦσι καὶ συνεστιῶνται· βουλόμενοι δὲ παίζειν καὶ μεθύσκεσθαι ταύτας μὲν ἀποπέμπουσι, τὰς δὲ μουσουργοὺς καὶ παλλακίδας καλοῦσιν, ὀρθῶς τοῦτό γ' αὐτὸ ποιοῦντες, ὅτι τοῦ συνακολασταίνειν καὶ παροινεῖν οὐ μεταδιδόασι ταῖς γαμεταῖς.

[43] One case was certainly an exception: it was the cruel treatment of the Greek women by the Persian 'dogs of war' during their march under Xerxes in 480 BC: Herodotus mentions that many women died after being raped by the soldiers.

[44] Naturally, one cannot forget that we are talking about a highly stereotypical way of thinking, not about any sociological research or anthropological typology how the Oriental women really looked like, or what the Persian canon of beauty was: the majority of the Greeks, small wonder, was not interested in the question of how beautiful were the women dwelling in the Achaemenid provinces whose humbler status did not allow them to display their (supposed) attractiveness, and who – instead of being admired by Greek itinerant onlookers – must have worked hard together with their husbands and children on their native soil (their presence, never the less, is attested by *Persepolis Fortification Texts*, cf. Brosius 2010). Thus Brosius 1996, 2, points out that the Greeks had a very limited knowledge of the Persian royal women: the suggestion is that the Greeks expressed opinions based on what they *saw* (otherwise, it is well known that Persian kings care a lot about the importance of the visual manifestation of their power). Nowadays, scholars claim that that there probably lies the source of a distorting mirror in which Persians and Persian culture as such were seen by the Greeks; see Harrison 2008, 51; also Llewellyn-Jones 2002, 22–23. To a great extent this observation is valid, as the Greek perception was shaped by various distortions and stereotypes – otherwise, a common and understandable phenomenon, by no means restricted to

In what follows I hope to show that, of course, the latter case was true, just to recall the remark made by Heraclides called 'Criticus' who have said that that the inhabitants of Attica are 'obsessed with foreign way of living' (*FGrH* 369a F1.4; cf. Thucydides 1.6).[45] This 'way' embraced women. We do not have a full body of evidence to maintain that such reasoning was common among the Greek travelers, diplomats, aristocrats, or other men of substance.[46] Yet, in the remaining body of sources one can certainly detect something that may be called a fascination: it was an impression the Oriental (Persian especially, but not only Persian: see Xenophon,

the ancient Greeks. This being so, the Greek picture and judgment of the Persians must not by interpreted today as totally denigrating: quite the opposite, Hellenic attitude toward Persian culture was, in fact, broadly speaking, highly ambiguous, rather than one-sided and *a priori* prejudiced. It is true that the ancient Greeks feared the Persian despotism (cf. Herodotus 7.8; see Ctesias' portrait of Parysatis in the *Persica*) but by the same token, they remained strongly fascinated with many items of Persian power and monarchy, so in some cases it is the allure and sense of attraction that lie at the roots of the distortion. The role and status of women in Persian court society certainly belonged to this category: it was the allure of Persian (Oriental) luxurious way of life as such, within which the attractiveness of beautiful women seemed very exceptional to the Greek observers (see esp. Herodotus, 9.81.1 on τὰς παλλακὰς τῶν Περσέων; cf. also Plutarch, *De fort. et virt. Alex*. 2.11; with Livy 39.6.7–9 and Ovid, *Med. faciei fem*. 21; cf. also Horace, *Carm*. 1.38.1 on *Persicos ... adparatus*; see L. Llewellyn-Jones in Llewellyn-Jones, Robson 2010*,* 84–85; also Llewellyn-Jones 2013, 5 on harem as 'inner' court. To put it briefly, court and elite women were just the fullest manifestation of Oriental *tryphe,* luxury and richness (as Maria Brosius reminds, often the women themselves owned large estates: Brosius 2000, nos. 163–167, pp. 83–84), seen usually when wearing adornments and jewelry (cf. Bahrani 1995, 1635–6). A perfect evidence for such attitude may be seen in Dio Chrysostomus' third discourse on kingship (*Or.* 3. 93) who says that: 'beautiful parks, costly residences, statues, paintings in the exquisite early style, golden bowls, inlaid tables, purple robes, ivory, amber, perfumes, everything to delight the eye, delightful music, both vocal and instrumental, and besides these, **beautiful maidens** and handsome boys – all these evidently subserve no useful purpose whatever, but are **obviously the inventions of plea-sure**' (καλὰ δὲ ἄλση καὶ οἰκίαι πολυτελεῖς <καὶ> ἀνδριάντες καὶ γραφαὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς τε καὶ ἄκρας τέχνης καὶ χρυσοῦ κρατῆρες καὶ ποικίλαι τράπεζαι καὶ πορφύρα καὶ ἐλέφας καὶ ἤλεκτρος καὶ μύρων ὀσμαὶ καὶ θεαμάτων παντοίων καὶ ἀκουσμάτων τέρψεις διά τε φωνῆς καὶ ὀργάνων, [πρὸς δὲ αὖ τούτοις **γυναῖκες ὡραῖαι** καὶ παιδικὰ ὡραῖα] ξύμπαντα ταῦτα οὐδεμιᾶς ἕνεκα χρείας, **ἀλλ' ἡδονῆς εὑρημένα φαίνεται**; ed. J. von Arnim; tr. J.W. Cohoon, Loeb edition). Another clear example of such manifestation was Oriental cuisine and the custom of giving extremely immense (by the Greek standards) royal banquets (Herodotus 9.82; 9.110.2; Ctesias *FGrH* 688, F 53; Heraclides of Cumae *FGrH* 689, F2 = Athenaeus 4.144d; cf. Dinon *FGrH* 690 F12 = Athenaeus 14.652b-c): I deal with this last topic in Burliga 2012, 14–23.

[45] The translation by McInerney 2012, 251; cf. Gunter 2009.

[46] There were plenty of the Greeks in the Orient. Among the other representatives of them were the artisans (sculptors, builders, engineers), cf. Raaflaub 2000, 53, with Richter 1946, 15–16 on Greek sculptors. They were all certainly acquainted with many Persian customs and elite lifestyle in general: the Persian career of Themistocles (Plutarch, *Them*. 27–31) may serve as an most notable example (here, at 31.2, a strong suggestion is that the hero of Salamina was in some acquaintance with the concubines of the satrap of Sardes); cf. especially Boardman 1980, 102–103; cf. the excellent summary by Rollinger 2006, 197–226.

Anab. 1.10.1) beauties left on the Greek onlookers; those of them who had opportunity to see the barbarian women remained under a strong and unforgettable allure; happily (nowadays for us) they thought that the beauties were worth immortalizing in a written form.[47] Nothing can be more telling than the remark Plutarch is making in his biography of the Athenian politician Themistocles (*Them*. 26.4–5):

τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ γένους τὸ πολὺ καὶ μάλιστα τὸ Περσικὸν εἰς ζηλοτυπίαν τὴν περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἄγριον φύσει καὶ χαλεπόν ἐστιν. οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὰς γαμετάς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἀργυρωνήτους καὶ παλλακευομένας ἰσχυρῶς παραφυλάττουσιν, ὡς ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ὁρᾶσθαι τῶν ἐκτός, ἀλλ' οἴκοι μὲν διαιτᾶσθαι κατακεκλειμένας, ἐν δὲ ταῖς ὁδοιπορίαις ὑπὸ σκηναῖς κύκλῳ περιπεφραγμένας ἐπὶ τῶν ἁρμαμαξῶν ὀχεῖσθαι (‘Most barbarous nations, and the Persians in particular, reveal the harsh and cruel side of their nature in the jealously with which they behave to their women. Not only their wives, but even their slaves and concubines are closely guarded, so that they are never seen by strangers; at home they are shut up indoors, and when they travel, they are carried about under awnings which are surrounded with curtains and placed on four-wheeled waggons.’[48]

[47] Another works on the Hellenic ‘diaspora’ in the Achaemenid Empire are: Hofstetter 1978, esp. 201–209; Balcer 1993; see Momigliano 1984, 62 (he collects 300 known names of the Greeks in Persia before the era of Alexander); also Boardman 2002b, 203–204; cf. the recent chapter by Hodos 2012, 325–326. Today, one may regret that this presence did not result in more detailed accounts of the customs according to which Oriental womenfolk lived.

[48] Ed. K. Ziegler, Teubner; tr. I. Scott-Kilvert, Penguin. Cf. Le Corsu 1981, 227; see especially Schmidt 1999, 289–290. The same attitude is seen when the king Darius III asked an eunuch if his wife, having become Macedonian captive, remained faithful to him: the eunuch confirmed that and Darius was to glorify Alexander’s modesty: cf. Arrian, *Anab*. 4.20, with A.B. Bosworth’s note (Bosworth 1995, 133–134: ‘Darius worried about his wife voluntarily accepting her captor’s favours’). A long quotation from Maria Brosius’ excellent entry on women in Pre-Islamic Persia (see footnote 1, above) will be most telling, if not shocking: ‘To prevent the women’s falling into enemy hands, Parthian kings did resume to extreme measures. In 26 BCE, threatened with an advance of Tiridates, Phraates IV killed the women in his entourage (Isidore of Charax, *Parth. Stat*. 1), and in 52 CE the wife and children of the Armenian king Mithridates were killed by Rhadamistus, son of Pharasmanes of Iberia (Tac. *Ann*. 12.44–47). When Rhadamistus himself was pursued, he stabbed his pregnant wife and threw her into a river. She was found alive and rescued (Tac. *Ann*. 12.51; 13.6)’. On the margin, here I must remind that Plutarch’s story has found – among others – its confirmation in one of the most famous episodes from the Polish military history. Of course it does not deal with the Persians, yet it remains relevant for our understanding of the Oriental attitude toward women. The story concerns the glory days of the Polish army that in September 1683 under the command of the king Jan III Sobieski launched a successful attack on the Turkish troops, actually besieging Vienna. Happily, a priceless letter by an eyewitness, the king himself, is preserved. In this letter, sent to his wife Queen Mary, and dated on 13 September, at night, the victorious Polish monarch reports a shocking fact he and his hussars have discovered after entering the camp of the Grand Vizier, Kara Mustafa: many odalisques accompanying the Turkish officers and notables on the campaign were killed by the retreating Muslims (they even killed an exotic animal – ostrich) and the reason was the wish to prevent the possibility that the concubines (that is, propriety of the victors) will become the captives to the other men; see Kukulski 1970, 523; cf. Greene 2009, 249. On the earlier examples cf. Peirce 1993,

In other words – I dare to suggest here – the evidence we get at disposal seems to imply that when looking at the Oriental classy women, the attitude of the Greeks certainly was at odds with a cliché of a 'bad barbarian'.[49] In rejecting (perhaps fortunately, as many scholars surely would agree) any respect for political or cultural correctness, for a while at least,[50] the Greeks became – willingly and enthusiastically (it is not wholly certain, if always deliberatively or consciously) – *philobarbaroi*,[51] to borrow very apt phrase from an excellent book by Professor Gerold Walser.[52]

37 who at one place observes that the Byzantine historian Ducas did not fail to note that after the siege of Constantinople many Byzantine noblewomen and their daughters were ordered to leave the city on carriages and horseback – apparently as attractive captives; cf. also Hopwood 2003, 231, 238.

[49] There is one unnoticed but in this context astonishing tale in Curtius Rufus 5.2.18–19: it reports that Alexander, leaving in Susa the queen Sisigambis and her granddaughters, gave them some Macedonian women who were experienced in making the clothing: their task was to teach Persian captives to make cloth too. But unexpectedly for Alexander, the Persian queen bursts into the tears as she felt to have been heavily disgraced by such an offer; she just rejects it by arguing that nothing, as Curtius comments, is more disrespectful to Persian noble women as to sit and 'and working with wool' (tr. J. Yardley: quippe non aliud magis in contumeliam Persarum feminae accipiunt quam admovere lanae manus; Loeb edition by J.C. Rolfe). The episode, repeated nowhere else, remains conspicuous: if the Greek visitors got to know such an attitude to what was a custom of the Greek wives (cf. Dissoi logoi 2), it might in some way contribute to their distorted perception of a high position of Persian women: it was the 'liberty' of the latter – irrespective of how was their real status – that made them more attractive in the Greek eyes.

[50] Lee 2009, 173–174, observes that 'no provisions are made in the texts for the diet, exercise, or bathing practices of non-Greeks'. Her remark may be supported by Polański's 1997, 35, claim that 'The alien beauty of the Orientals proved inconceivable and psychologically impenetrable to the Western intellectuals whether of Greek or of Latin origin'.

[51] Cf. La Forse 2013, 570; see Murray 2000, 333; cf. Blank 1999, 11. There is one outstanding example of such attitude: the Macedonian Harpalus. He became notorious when he escaped with a great amount of money to Greece from Babylon after Alexander ordered to return from India. But why? As a royal treasurer at Babylon, he could not have resisted to taste Oriental 'way of life'. Diodorus remarks (17.108.4–6): ' Harpalus had been given the custody of the treasury in Babylon and of the revenues which accrued to it, but as soon as the king had carried his campaign into India, he assumed that Alexander would never come back, and gave himself up to comfortable living. Although he had been charged as satrap with the administration of a great country, he first occupied himself with the abuse of women and illegitimate amours with the natives and squandered much of the treasure under his control on incontinent pleasure. He fetched all the long way from the Red Sea a great quantity of fish and introduced an extravagant way of life, so that he came under general criticism. Later, moreover, he sent and brought from Athens the most dazzling courtesan of the day, whose name was Pythonicê. As long as she lived he gave her gifts worthy of a queen, and when she died, he gave her a magnificent funeral and erected over her grave a costly monument of the Attic type. After that, he brought out a second Attic courtesan named Glycera and kept her in exceeding luxury, providing her with a way of life which was fantastically expensive. At the same time, with an eye on the uncertainties of fortune, he established himself a place of refuge by benefactions to the Athenians' (tr. C. B. Welles; also cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 41.4; Justin, *Epit.* 13.5.9; Athenaeus 13. 295a–296b).

[52] Walser 1984, 73–100. Again, it itself shows that Greek attitude toward Persian was much more complex than a simple polarity: 'they' vs. 'us'. Of course, it was the Greek who 'invented

τὸ οὖν ἡδονὰς διώκειν προπετῶς λύπας ἐστὶ θηρεύειν

The title of this section is a quotation taken from Athenaeus' *The Learned Banqueters* (12.511a).[53] Although it sounds as a sentence borrowed right from the Epicurean philosophy,[54] it acutely characterizes, I believe, impressions and feelings which some representatives of the Greek elite held about the Achaemenid 'dolls' they have had the opportunity (or: luck) to meet on their paths through Asia. Naturally enough, the 'pedagogical' instruction embedded in Athenaeus' *memento* is plain, as it simply states that if one pursues pleasures too eagerly, he risks at hunting pain.[55] Naturally, the proverb undoubtedly rings with a highly moralistic tone, but otherwise it tells something extremely trivial and repeated thousand times by the poets (see Ovid, *Heroid*. 16) and prose writers around the world – both good and bad ones, later and nowadays, from the cheapest popular romances to the acknowledged masterpieces like Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*: that is, not only that love hurts (such and alike truisms do really sound as if it was simply borrowed from a worst and muddle melodramas) but also that since the gazing at beauty means desire, it may bring for the spectators (and often does) by the same disturbance, anxiety (or suffering), too,[56] to quote again Ps.-Lucian's highly ironical remark: οὕτως τις ὑγρὸς τοῖς ὄμμασιν ἐνοικεῖ μύωψ, ὃς ἅπαν κάλλος εἰς αὐτὸν ἁρπάζων ἐπ' οὐδενὶ κόρῳ παύεται (*Amores* 2). But perhaps even more revealing commentary on Athenaeus' sad moralizing may be found earlier, in Xenophon's philosophy of love torment. It was inserted in the *Cyropaedia* (see below, under the subsection 'The Old Cavalryman's Noble Dream: Panthea'), where Cyrus pointedly warns boastful Araspas (5.1.12):

Πῶς οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, εἰ ἐθελούσιόν· ἐστι τὸ ἐρασθῆναι, οὐ καὶ παύσασθαι ἔστιν ὅταν τις βούληται; ἀλλ' ἐγώ, ἔφη, ἑώρακα καὶ κλαίοντας ὑπὸ λύπης δι' ἔρωτα, καὶ δουλεύοντάς γε

(metaphorically) the Barbarian' (cf. Hall 1989, 56–57; also Cartledge 1995, 77–78; cf. Gehrke 2000, 89), but the Greeks' admiration for Persian beauties contradicts a famous claim of Said who criticized the Westerners for treatment of the Orientals with contemptuous protectionism and a sense of being better. For by far more complicated nature of the relations between the Greeks and Persians, see Balcer 1991, 57–65; cf. also a classic study see Austin 1990, 289–290; more generally Vasunia 2010, 701.

[53] The title of this work after the new edition and translation by S. D. Olson in the Loeb series.

[54] Clearly seen in Plutarch's bitter polemics with such attitudes in his diatribe *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* (*Mor.* 1086c–1107c); cf. also Cicero, *Fin*. 1.10.32–33.

[55] Although the author of the diatribe ascribed to Lucian, wrote: τῶν γε μὴν ἐρωτικῶν ἱμέρων αὐτὸ τὸ βασανίζον εὐφραίνει καὶ γλυκὺς ὁδοὺς ὁ τοῦ πόθου δάκνει (*Amores*, 3; ed. M.D. Macleod, Loeb); cf. generally Katz 2004, 107.

[56] It is interesting to observe that in similar circumstances R. Scruton in his analysis (2006, 64–65) cites Dante's *Paradise* (*canto* XXIII), where the medieval genius describes his feelings accompanying the vision of the late Beatrice.

τοῖς ἐρωμένοις καὶ μάλα κακὸν νομίζοντας πρὶν ἐρᾶν τὸ δουλεύειν, καὶ διδόντας γε πολλὰ ὧν οὐ βέλτιον αὐτοῖς στέρεσθαι, καὶ εὐχομένους ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλης τινὸς νόσου ἀπαλλαγῆναι, καὶ οὐ δυναμένους μέντοι ἀπαλλάττεσθαι, ἀλλὰ δεδεμένους ἰσχυροτέρᾳ τινὶ ἀνάγκῃ ἢ εἰ ἐν σιδήρῳ ἐδέδεντο. παρέχουσι γοῦν ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς ἐρωμένοις πολλὰ καὶ εἰκῇ ὑπηρετοῦντας· καὶ μέντοι οὐδ' ἀποδιδράσκειν ἐπιχειροῦσι, τοιαῦτα κακὰ ἔχοντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ φυλάττουσι τοὺς ἐρωμένους μή ποι ἀποδρῶσι (‚How then, pray, said Cyrus, ‚if falling in love is a matter of free will, is it not possible for any one to stop whenever he pleases? But I have seen people in tears of sorrow because of love and in slavery to the objects of their love, even though they believed before they fell in love that slavery is a great evil; I have seen them give those objects of their love many things that they could ill afford to part with; and I have seen people praying to be delivered from love just as from any other disease, and, for all that, un-able unable tob e delivered from it, but fettered by a stronger necessity than if they had been fettered with sackles of iron. At any rate, they surrendered themselves to those they love to perform for them many services blindly. And yet, in spite of all their misery, they do not attempt to run away, but even watch their darlings to keep them from running away‘; tr. W. Miller, Loeb).

The above apt observation by Lucian is hardly new, too, one may here object, and would be right. In some sense, it has been observed by Plato in *Phaedrus* (237d), where Socrates believes that δεῖ αὖ νοῆσαι ὅτι ἡμῶν ἐν ἑκάστῳ δύο τινέ ἐστον ἰδέα ἄρχοντε καὶ ἄγοντε, οἷν ἑπόμεθα ᾗ ἂν ἄγητον. One of them (ἡ μὲν), Socrates adds, is ἔμφυτος οὖσα ἐπιθυμία ἡδονῶν.[57] Greek literature abounds in other examples proving observations of such type. The motif of a spiritual torture accompanying looking at beloved but for some reasons (e. g., due to the different social statuses and cultural distances between the two) inaccessible person was (and still is[58]) a highly popular literary subject: in Greek literature it begins with immortal poem by Sappho, to be aped most famously by that famous grumbler, *miser* Catullus. Another Roman poet, the famous and talented *Epicuri de grege porcus*, also did not forget to play with it. In one of his fine *carmina* (1.19) the old Augustan lustful satyr expresses a passion (again literary, of course, we may suspect) toward a girl (*urit me Glycerae nitor*; *urit grata protervitas*), whose *voltus nimium lubricius adspici* compelled him into an (imaginary) love torment.[59]

[57] Ed. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera,* Oxford 1901.

[58] To remind probably the most famous modern example, it constitutes – leaving aside a different context – a recurring motif in the nihilistic, but moralizing in fact novels by the popular French writer Michel Houllebecq.

[59] Cf. the commentary by Mayer 2012, *ad loc.* And the same kind of feeling has been lovingly revoked many centuries later by the master of the Polish Renaissance poetry, Jan Kochanowski, who in his perhaps two the most enchanting short pieces from a famous collection of the *Epigrams* (Latin: *Nugae*, Polish: *Fraszki*; the *editio princeps* has appeared in 1584), superbly played with the ancient motif of gazing at the beloved person (I mean the epigram no. 91 in the Book Two, and – even to a greater extent – the epigram no. 28 from the Book Three).

The question of a torment that most often follows the gazing upon beautiful women reminds us of a more basic fact: how careful and astute viewers, if not *voyeurs*,[60] were the ancient Greeks in this respect fundamentally.[61] What is more, it may be conceded that such generalization allows us to formulate a further remark that numerous literary *ekphraseis* we meet in Greek writings indicate a clear celebration of the process of watching itself and admiring female beauty and body.[62] Indeed, it would be interesting to read an anthology of

[60] See Goldhill 2002, 374–375; Cairns 2005, 126–127; Llewellyn-Jones 2013b, 172. The two famous cases of such drive for gazing may be recalled here: the one concerns Menelaus being about to kill Helen but abandoning the idea the moment he seesher breasts (*Ilias parva*, F 13; Aristophanes, *Lys*. 155; Euripides, *Andr.* 627–631; Pliny, *NH*, 23. 23); the second is that of the beautiful Phryne and Hyperides. There is an analysis in S. Bartsch's 2006 study, 67–68, quoting, among others, the poet Agathon (fr. 37, Nauck) that the verb *eran* (to love) is similar to *horan* (to see).

[61] It is true that besides the descriptions we are dealing here with, there are many types of the Greek reflection on women: very often, their curiosity in representation of womenfolk took a literal form; *today* it may be shocking for the taste and sensibility of the modern European readers and viewers, especially in the scenes or descriptions abounding with sexual abuse, open brutality, maltreatment or violence towards women; see, e. g., some contributions in the book by S. Deacy, K. F. Pierce (eds.) 2002.

[62] It goes without saying that the same is true with the Romans. Let me adduce a telling passage from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, 2.8–10, describing the girl called Photis: *diligenter omnem eius explorassem habitudinem. Vel quid ego de ceteris aio, cum semper mihi unica cura fuerit caput capillumque sedulo et puplice prius intueri et domi postea perfrui sitque iudicii huius apud me certa et statuta ratio, vel <quod..> vel quod praecipua pars ista corporis in aperto et in perspicuo posita prima nostris luminibus occurrit et quod in ceteris membris floridae vestis hilaris color, hoc in capite nitor nativus operatur; denique pleraeque indolem gratiamque suam probaturae lacinias omnes exuunt, amicula dimovent, nudam pulchritudinem suam praebere se gestiunt magis de cutis roseo rubore quam de vestis aureo colore placiturae. At vero — quod nefas dicere, nec quod sit ullum huius rei tam dirum exemplum! — si cuiuslibet eximiae pulcherrimaeque feminae caput capillo spoliaveris et faciem nativa specie nudaveris, licet illa caelo deiecta, mari edita, fluctibus educata, licet inquam ipsa Venus fuerit, licet omni Gratiarum choro stipata et toto Cupidinum populo comitata et balteo suo cincta, cinnama flagrans et balsama rorans, calva processerit, placere non poterit nec Vulcano suo. Quid cum capillis color gratus et nitor splendidus inlucet et contra solis aciem vegetus fulgurat vel placidus renitet aut in contrariam gratiam variat aspectum et nunc aurum coruscans in lenem mellis deprimitur umbram, nunc corvina nigredine caerulus columbarum colli flosculos aemulatur, vel cum guttis Arabicis obunctus et pectinis arguti dente tenui discriminatus et pone versum coactus amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem? Quid cum frequenti subole spissus cumulat verticem vel prolixa serie porrectus dorsa permanat? Tanta denique est capillamenti dignitas ut quamvis auro veste gemmis omnique cetero mundo exornata mulier incedat, tamen, nisi capillum distinxerit, ornata non possit audire. Sed in mea Photide non operosus sed inordinatus ornatus addebat gratiam. Uberes enim crines leniter remissos et cervice dependulos ac dein per colla dispositos sensimque sinuatos patagio residentes paulisper ad finem conglobatos in summum verticem nodus adstrinxerat*.

Greek writers' quotations (if someone would ever attempt to make such one) concerning this topic,[63] including also *agalmatophilia.*[64] It is trivial to say that they appear in Homeric poems that abound with relatively numerous remarks of the type – starting with Agamemnon's ideal of woman (*Il.* 1.113–115; cf. *Od*. 13.412 on *Sparte kalligynaika*), or, more detailed descriptions (*Il.* 1.31; 24.215). A lot of identical or quite similar sentiments may be found in archaic poetry (e. g., Archiloch, fr. 196a, West; Sappho, fr. 44.15; Anacreon, fr. 24, Bergk). Literary testimony (see Aristophanes' judgment on Spartan women: *Lys*. 1306–1315)[65] is accompanied – obviously – by visual representations, since, as Catherine Jones has written generally, 'overtly sexual representations were common in both Greek and Roman art',[66] with the most famous, late Hellenistic statue of Aphrodite from Melos (Venus de Milo) ahead.[67] Jones' claim is corresponding to Barbara Hughes Fowler's observations on the post-classical instance of the representation of female body: 'One of the most charming features of the Hellenistic aesthetic is the subtle eroticism that pervades both the poetry and the visual art'.[68] As the ancient evidence for this sensuous aspect of life may serve the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus' striking characterization of the sinister figure of Odysseus, that *dirus Ulixes* (*Enn*. 1.6.8): ἔχων ἡδονὰς δι' ὀμμάτων καὶ κάλλει πολλῷ αἰσθητῷ συνών;[69] it may be supplied by the

Cf. Duret 1996, 173–174; see generally Winkler 1985, 175.

[63] Although it remains obvious that the Greeks were no exception, I have to mention the unique, enchanting, and unrivalled description how Beloved Woman looks, as given in the biblical *Song of Songs* (*Shir ha-shirim*, ascribed to the King Solomon), 4.1–15: metaphorical and allegorical interpretations of this masterpiece (flourishing especially in medieval times by, e. g., the reverend Bernard of Clairvaux) do not contradict the fact that the sensual aspect of this feeling is mostly espoused here. The same remains true with the careful attention with which the author of the *Book of Judith* describes how pretty his heroine was (Jdt 10.4–19), irrespective of the interpretations that insist that the woman is a symbol of Israel: all men – both Israelites in Betulia and the Assyrians in the camp – were charmed by her beauty that served her as weapon and means (but used with a noble aim) to deceive the cruel Holophernes, kill him and save Jerusalem. Let us only recall a characteristic remark Holophernes gives to eunuch Bagoas: it would by a shame for him , if he permitted such a woman to go away without having sex with her (indeed, Holophernes' enormous desire is depicted very vividly: Jdt 12.16).

[64] See Chariton, *Callirh.* 1.1: θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου καὶ ἄγαλμα τῆς ὅλης Σικελίας (ed. R. Hercher); see Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow 2004, 87.

[65] See Neils 2012, 153.

[66] Jones 1982, 143.

[67] Cf. Kousser 2005, 227. She refers to the common perception of this statue as expressing 'a timeless ideal of female beauty.'

[68] Hughes Fowler 1989, 137; as she also adds, 'female flesh in all its beauty was a major achievement of the Hellenistic sculptors'; cf. generally the observations in the recent book by Osborne 2011; see especially Dillon 2010.

[69] Ed. P. Henry, H.-R. Schwyzer: *Plotini opera.* Leiden 1951.

congenial sentence from Athenaeus (13.608a), sounding like a generalization: οὐδέν ἐστιν ὀφθαλμῶν οὕτως εὐφραντικὸν ὡς γυναικὸς κάλλος. In this context the motto from G.M.A. Richter's classical treatment *A Handbook of Greek Art* also could be in this context appropriate for quoting:[70] 'What is that attracts the eyes of everyone of those who behold a beautiful object, and call them, lures them towards it, and fills them with joy at the sight?' For a possible response the case of relief sculpture from temple of Victory (Nike) in Acropolis may be recalled here: as for the goddess of victory, this Nike loosening her sandal is astonishingly sensual.[71]

If the modern reader is not patient enough to look for data through ancient Greek sources, one literary monument to this topic certainly may be helpful in convincing him about the Greeks' enormous sensibility for women and curiosity in exploring this theme that – additionally – also resulted in many treatises about the nature of love and desire:[72] for example, the recalled *Deipnosophistae* by Atheneaus, particularly with its Book XIII, being τὸν περὶ ἐρωτικῶν λόγον (13.555a; cf: τὸν ἐρωτικὸν ἐκεῖνον κατάλογον).[73] The lecture of the unique Book XIII of this giant monument to the Second Sophistic erudition is especially instructive (and enjoyable, by the way). Even if the majority of the examples the writer adduces are literary, anecdotic and apocryphal in its character, above all, the mentality of the narrator and his audiences is visible as nowhere else:[74] the impression about Greek inclination toward sensual pastimes is so strong that despite the confession made by the narrator as if he were not addicted to erotic (οὐκ ὢν οὕτως ἐρωτομανὴς: 13.599e), one suspects the opposite which is rather true.

In general, Athenaeus' Book XIII concerns the Greek fondness for women (they are treated by him as a sign of men's taste for luxury) but is cannot be any

[70] London – New York 1996[6], 10.

[71] See Osborne 1998, 187, who writes in his analysis about 'frank sexual appeal'; cf. Spivey, 2013, 33–34 on 'The cult of beauty'.

[72] Like those by the philosophers: Theophrastus (Athenaeus, 12.526d; 13.562e; 13.567b), or Chrysippus of Soloi (Athenaeus, 13.564f). The subject was attractive to the Byzantines, if one may to rely on the Suda: an Astyanassa was to be the author of the first handbook of love positions (Silk *et al.* 2014, 87).

[73] See L. McClure 2003, 1–2; cf. Danielewicz, in Bartol, Danielewicz 2010, 1021, n. 1. It begins with Plato's discussion on the topic in *Phaedrus.*

[74] To give but one emphatic example: at 13.558d Athenaeus quotes Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3.11.1), where even the honest Socrates, on a hearsay about an exceptionally unusual beauty of the courtesan Theodote (that's, about her breasts, to put it frankly), desires to visit her and personally check out if this is true. This and many other anecdotes, again remind something obvious: that Greek culture was imbued in narrating tales, including to a great degree those erotic ones, more or less frivolous.

surprise that Persian and other foreign cultures play also important role in his learned dialogue. However, among the others, the Persians took the most privileged place. According to popular stereotype, the Achaemenid elite was especially prone to such luxurious forms of life (Xenophon, *Cyr*. 8.1.14; 8.8.9; *Anab*. 1.5.8; see also Plutarch, *Artax*. 13);[75] and if it is luxury what it was about – women must have been present obligatorily, too. In the book 12.513e-f, the learned sophist from Naucratis remarkably concludes that διαβόητοι δὲ ἐπὶ τρυφῇ ἐγένοντο πρῶτοι πάντων ἀνθρώπων Πέρσαι. This note corresponds well to Xenophon's earlier statement in the *Cyropaedia*, 4.1.14, where Cyaxares addresses the Persian prince with following observation: Ἀλλ', ὦ Κῦρε, ὅτι μὲν κάλλιστα ἀνθρώπων μελετᾶτε ὑμεῖς οἱ Πέρσαι μηδὲ πρὸς μίαν ἡδονὴν ἁπλήστως διακεῖσθαι καὶ ὁρῶν καὶ ἀκούων οἶδα ('Well, Cyrus, I know from what I see and hear that you Persians are more careful than other people not to incline to the least intemperance in any kind of pleasure'). The same type of view taste is found in the *Cyropaedia* slightly later, at 4.3.1–2, where the Median practice is evaluated in such a way:

Τῶν δὲ Μήδων τινὲς ἤδη, οἱ μὲν ἁμάξας προωρμημένας καταλαβόντες καὶ ἀποστρέψαντες προσήλαυνον μεστὰς ὧν δεῖται στρατιά, οἱ δὲ καὶ ἁρμαμάξας γυναικῶν τῶν βελτίστων τῶν μὲν γνησίων, τῶν δὲ καὶ παλλακίδων διὰ τὸ κάλλος συμπεριαγομένων, ταύτας εἰληφότες προσῆγον. πάντες γὰρ ἔτι καὶ νῦν οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν στρατευόμενοι ἔχοντες τὰ πλείστου ἄξια στρατεύονται, λέγοντες ὅτι μᾶλλον μάχοιντ' ἂν εἰ τὰ φίλτατα παρείη· τούτοις γάρ φασιν ἀνάγκην εἶναι προθύμως ἀλέξειν. ἴσως μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἔχει, **ἴσως δὲ καὶ ποιοῦσιν αὐτὰ τῇ ἡδονῇ χαριζόμενοι.**[76]

Regarding womenfolk, the Persian despot – as the writer does not fail to remind us – remained under a sweet care of three hundred women (12.514b: φυλάσσουσί τε αὐτὸν καὶ τριακόσιαι γυναῖκες.[77] This information was given by the

[75] Consult also Braund 2000, 3–22 who rightly points out the Roman context of the writer's discussion about *tryphe*; cf. also Dalby 2000, 12 and Idem, 2003, 201–202; see especially the excellent study by Lenfant 2007, 52.

[76] 'Now a part of the Medes were already bringing in the wagons which had been hurried forward and which they had overtaken and turned back packed full of what an army needs; others were bringing in the carriages that conveyed the most high-born women, not only wedded wives but also concubines, who on account of their beauty had been brought along; these also they captured and brought in. For even unto this day all who go to war in Asia take with them to the field what they prize most highly; for they say that they would do battle the more valiantly, if all that they hold dearest were there; for these, they say, they must do their best to protect. This may, perhaps, be true; **but perhaps also they follow this custom for their own sensual gratification**' . Needless to say that the author's judgment is by no means derogatory, cf. my note *ad loc*, in Głombiowski *et al.* 2014, 205.

[77] This reminds of the book by Grosrichard 1998, 165, who analyzed the relations within Oriental seraglio. According to him, there was a net of complicated ties and the role of the

Greek who was overtly fascinated with the Persian politics of the open hedonism – Heraclides of Cumae (ὡς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Κυμαῖος Ἡρακλείδης ἐν α΄ Περσικῶν – *FGrH* 689 F1).[78] With this last remark we return from a reminder about the Greek interest in women generally to the main topic: a fascination the ancient *Hellenes* showed particularly to the Persian Χάριτες, and thus the 'eternal' dilemma of hunting pain.[79]

In her famous paper 'Exit Atossa: Images of Women in Greek Historiography on Persia',[80] Professor Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg formulated a following observation: 'The majority of women in the ancient Orient have left no trace in the historical records. They remained nameless and unnamed. Exceptions that escaped anonymity are mostly of a notorious kind'. In her further analysis a few historical examples appear, however. It can be thus deduced that on the Greek part the fascination was mixed with fear.[81]

Such feeling is perfectly shown in that astonishing treasury of the Oriental stories as the Herodotean *apodexis* certainly is.[82] Already in the very beginning of his work, thanks to the author's extraordinary curiosity an archetypical, Oriental, semi-legendary tale is presented: the story of Candaules' unnamed wife (1.8–12),[83] whose uncommon fairness (in this respect she was the first one in the

women by no means was 'passive'. Grosrichard cites Plato who famously claimed that that a tyrant is a slave of his slaves: the Oriental seraglio may serve as the evidence for such a claim.

[78] See Lenfant 2009, 255–314. For the ear of an ancient Greek such numbers must have been a mere fantasy, yet if one is considering them in a comparison to other neighboring cultures, they were not so high: so, to put it frankly, the rulers in the Old Testament were in this respect far more voluptuous – famously, the king Solomon was to have 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11, 3) and the same was true with his son David (2 Samuel 5.13; cf. Deut. 22.7; Exod. 21.10). One may guess that if the Greeks had a detailed knowledge of these stories, they would have certainly issued a comment on those customs, yet, in the classical era the Greeks had little knowledge of the Jewish culture was little. Anyway, it is obvious that the exact numbers of the Biblical concubines and wives cannot be taken literally: metaphorically, as is the case of Persian king's mistresses, the numbers are just used to express a great amount.

[79] One cannot forget the *Book of Esther*, written in the Hellenistic epoch, that plainly proves that not only the Greeks paid a great attention to the Persian court; see Kuhrt 2007, 294–295.

[80] Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983, 20.

[81] Cf. Romm 1998, 170–171, on the Greek fascination with warrior women, seen also in the work entitled *Tractatus De Mulieribus* (probably written at the end of 2nd century A.D.), whose heroines are Oriental queens or women supporting the Persians: e.g., Semiramis, Zarinacea, Nitocris, Atossa, Rhodogyne; cf. Gera 1997, 12.

[82] See Raaflaub 2010, 189; cf. Lateiner 1989, 152–155 who gives an overview of the Herodotus' remarks on the Persians.

[83] See the remarks by D. Asheri, in Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2006, *ad loc*. Another unnamed heroine was the wife of Spitamenes, whose crime was described with details by Curtius Cufus 8.3.2–15.

whole Asia[84]) generates a chain of events straightforwardly leading to the catastrophe that ruins a few persons involved in it.[85] Later, the theme can be seen in Herodotus' narrative (9.108–113), with an elaborated episode about Xerxes' sudden falling in love with his brother's (also unnamed) wife and then, with his daughter-in-law (called Artyante);[86] the terrifying, truly deplorable and tragic fate of the former, shockingly mutilated on the behalf of Amestris,[87] the envious wife of Xerxes (in her cruelty she only was over out by the vengeful Pherecide: 4.202), must have been (again, here Herodotus does not state this explicitly) the result of the main factor: her beauty. A true tragedy lies especially in fact that both female victims were – if we give up for a moment Greek perspective – totally innocent.[88]

Echoes proving popularity of such thinking in the circles of the ancient Greek intellectuals may be found already in one of the arguments the sophist Gorgias plausibly revoked in his defense of the mythical beauty – Helen *(Hel.* 4 = Diels & Kranz, *FVS*).[89] Above all, again, it was her beauty that constituted a proverbially warning and damaging factor that provoked men's disastrous desires and could not reverse the events leading in effect to the Trojan war.[90] On hearing this a modern reader may smile, yet the idea is not so preposterous as it may have seemed.[91] There was certainly a potentially great attractiveness in it, so in the modern times the idea was repeated – in its fundamentals – by Gabriel Garcia Marquez's in his *Cien años de soledad*. Marquez's portrait of Remedios 'la Bella' Buendia – an entity essentially hopelessly stupid but so pretty that somewhat unreal – is purposely depicted in a funny way: her physical features are so exceptional that in consequence she must disappear from the novel – by an

[84] A similar description of Rhoxane is given by Arrian, *Anab*. 4.19.5: Ῥωξάνη ὀνόματι, ἣν δὴ καλλίστην τῶν Ἀσιανῶν γυναικῶν λέγουσιν. In antiquity there was a famous painting by Aetion presenting the wedding of Alexander and Rhoxane (Lucian, *Imag*. 7).

[85] Cf. Burliga 2011, esp. 166–169. Very often, women's beauty is simply dangerous and pernicious: in the *Odyssey* Melantho, a servant-maiden of 'the lovely face', being a mistress to a suitor, contributes to a great degree to his failure or even doom (*Od.* 18.321; tr. R. Lattimore).

[86] See the remarks of Boedeker 2011, 219–221.

[87] Cf. Harrison 2002, 196; see Walcot 1984, 37.

[88] See Rollinger 2004, 138–139. Such episodes belonged to 'harem-stories', narrating *erotica pathemata* as the Greeks called them, with *Callirhoe* by Chariton as a perfect example.

[89] So rightly Carson 1990, 142; cf. Harrison 2011, 63.

[90] Cf. Lucian, *Charid.* 16–19; see Stewart 1997, 41.

[91] There was well a known story reported by Ctesias of Cnidus in his *Persica* (*FGrH* 688, *Pers.* F42 = Photius, *Bibl.* 72). The time, the Graeco-Persian pitaval concerned a Greek physician, Apollonides of Cos, who, enamored of the sick daughter of the Great King Artaxerxes, Amytis, advised her as therapy frequent intercourses with many men. He also himself has exploited the princess sexually but then, as sometimes happens, abandoned her. Her vengeance, with an aid of the Mother Queen, Amestris, was cruel: before he died by being buried alive, he was tortured for two months.

act of spectacular levitation (quite literally). Astonishing for the European reader as it certainly is, this 'magical' and plausible concept seems to be a wonderful (and humorous) solution the writer introduces for the changing the course of the action in the novel: in this way he can stop a gathering storm – the annihilation of the male population of Macondo, obsessed with, and ruined by Remedios' disquieting, heavenly but pernicious beauty.[92]

One of the most explicit stereotyped beliefs about oriental women can be found in Attic plays, most conspicuously in Euripides' *Andromache*, where the envious Hermione brutally attacks Hector's wife for her (alleged) use of *pharmaka* that Asiatic women – stereotypically, of course – have at their disposal to deceitfully turn men into stupid, slavish and obedient creatures.

These and other examples, terrifying, warning and cautionary, lead to two further, more general observations, well known enough, yet worth reminding here: first, that the Greeks reacted vividly to sensual aspects of life;[93] second, that men as keen observers of the world around, were also including the perspicuous observing of women,[94] discussing almost all aspects of their 'distinctiveness' – mental as well as physical, according to the conclusion of Ann Carson's paper.[95]

But along the passages quoted above, there was other kind of the Oriental narratives that the ancient Greeks liked very much and repeated. In these stories the women of the East seemed to the Greek observers to be something like a dream, entities unreal and almost fabulous (again, quite in a literal sense) – let us say, ancient predecessors of the legendary Persian Sheherazade and the 'Arabian' princesses from the later, fabulous collection *One Thousand and One Nights*, or Firdousi's famous *Shahname*.[96] Nevertheless, it will be hardly an ex-

[92] A similar effect is created by E.L. Doctorow in his nostalgic novel *Ragtime* (in this case – the heroine is a famous model and dancer Evelyn Nesbit). It is striking that both Marquez and Doctorow employ similar literary solution to show how pretty their female characters were. I shall return to this below, because it was Xenophon to whom belongs the honor of being the first to employ this idea in the *Cyropaedia*.

[93] Cf. Mc Niven 2012, 510. So Epicurus was to say that there is a pleasure in gazing beautiful forms (*apud* Athenaeus 12.546e = Usener, fr. 67; cf. Cicero, *Tusc*. 3.18.46). Alciphron expressed almost the same sentiment (*Epist.* 3.19.8): Ζηνοκράτης δὲ ὁ Ἐπικούρειος τὴν ψάλτριαν ὡς αὐτὸν ἐνηγκαλίζετο τακερὸν καὶ ὑγρὸν προσβλέπων ὑπομεμυκόσι τοῖς ὄμμασι, **λέγων τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἀόχλητον καὶ τὴν καταπύκνωσιν τοῦ ἡδομένου (**'Zenocrates the Epicurean took the harp-girls in his arms, gazing upon them from half-closed eyes with a languishing and melting look, and saying that this was 'tranquility of the flesh' and 'the rumination (*katapyknôsis*) of pleasure' (ed. M. A. Schepers, Teubner).

[94] M. Squire 2011, 80–81, rightly recalls the judgment of Paris (Homer, *Il.* 24.25–30), 'the paradigmatic story of western male gazing'.

[95] See n. 89, above.

[96] It is a common committed mistake to see in these stories 'Arabian' tales: mainly, they still concern Persian women. This does not mean that there were no Arabian powerful women who

aggeration to say that it was the Greeks who as the first (as usual) much long before fabulous stories the Muslims have decided to write down, became known to the Europeans. It is a famous episode of Panthea, lavishly narrated by Xenophon in his great *opus vitae* that narrates the life and death of 'the best of the Achaemenids' – *The Education of Cyrus*.[97]

The Old Cavalryman's Noble Dream: Panthea[98]

Thanks to Xenophon's gift of creative imagination and natural talent for producing good narratives (which was rightly and famously observed by Cicero who called him 'Attic bee'), not only the secondary narrator, Araspas, but practically every reader of Xenophon remains until now under charm of Panthea. Along a legion of the moderns classicists, already the honest Plutarch knew it perfectly before.[99] To him as to many generations of the readers after him, Panthea will forever retain a charm of a fairest (περικαλλεστάτη; cf. also above, on Rhoxane),[100] yet inaccessible 'forbidden fruit' the men can only dream about. The tale was peculiarly vivid – from the allusions in Lucian's masterly and charming diatribe entitled *Images* (§10),[101] through the third century information preserved by Flavius Philostratus (*Vit. soph.* 524) that a Caninius Celer wrote a work about Araspas who was in love with Panthea to a theatrical stage by Polish writer Ludwik Hieronim Morstin, written in the 30s of the previous century.

The story of this exceptional woman has its roots in Xenophon's personal acquaintance with the people of the Achaemenid empire and his undoubted fascination with the Persian culture as such.[102] Such a direct contact was a supposed source of the various tales heard by the author during his famous mercenary adventure – firstly the *katabasis* into 'the lair of lion',[103] and then the heroic *anaba-*

inspired the imagination of 'Westerns' – like, for example, Zenobia – understandably and traditionally – beautiful; see Abbott 1941, 13.

[97] The term 'the best of the Achaemenids' is that of Danzig 2012, 499–540.

[98] Cf. Gray 2011, 216; especially also Gera 1993, 221. A thoughtful analysis of the visual meaning of Panthea's portrait in Xenophon' *Cyropaedia* and Philostratus' *Imagines* (2.9) may be found in the book by Polański 2002, 193ff. Excellent remarks are given also by Stadter 1991, esp. 481–484; see Delebecque 1957, 391.

[99] *Non posse vivi*, 10 (= *Mor*. 1093c); cf. Walcot 1987, 21; see the classic treatment by Pollard 1908, 187.

[100] See Vout 2007, 221; cf. also Müller 2011a, 60 – 61; Beneker 2012, 117–121.

[101] Lucian's *Images* was addressed to Panthea, the Emperor Lucius Verus' mistress, see Elsner 2007, 60–61; above all Goldhill 2001, 189–190; cf. recently Francis 2012, 285–286.

[102] Cf. Hirsch 1985a and 1985b, 65–85; see generally Rzchiladze 1980, 311–316 and Tuplin 2004, 154–183.

[103] The title of J. Prevas' book on the *Anabasis*; cf. also Pomeroy 1989, 98ff.

sis, the retreat undertaken from the gates of Babylon.[104] Although the story of Panthea constitutes a great digression from the main story about the valiant Cyrus' conquests and his deeds and is dispersed within the course of the narrative (the story about her fate is presented in a few episodes which enumerates the index by W. Miller to his Loeb edition: 4.6.11; 5.1.2–18; 6.1.31–36; 6.1.45–51; 6.4.2–11; 7.3.2–15), it certainly was thought by Xenophon to play an important part in this work. If, as Erich Gruen has put it recently, the whole *Cyropaedia* is 'The most stunning paean to a Persian by a Greek',[105] we may add that a tale of Panthea shines within this essentially military narrative like a gem and certainly constitutes a homage of the Greek, paid to Oriental womanhood as such.

Yet before we make an attempt at reading the most famous love story in the *Cyropaedia*, a few words about another work of Xenophon – the equally famous *Anabasis* – need to be said. It will serve well as a prelude or an introduction to this section, proving that this busy soldier and pious believer was not indifferent to woman allure (cf. also *Conv*. 2.9 on *gynaikeia physis*).

There is exceptionally interesting remark the writer makes in the *Anabasis* 3.2.25. Xenophon delivers a speech to his soldiers and the subject-matter of his *oratio* is drawing attention to the question of how to save the returning army from difficult circumstances they have fallen in after the loss of the battle at Cunaxa and the betrayal of the Persian satraps. Surprisingly enough, at one moment of his lecture the reader acknowledges that one of the most important obstacles in realizing this goal is (yes, not as shocking as it might seem) Oriental women. The commander formulates his warning as follows: ἀλλὰ γὰρ δέδοικα μή, ἂν ἅπαξ μάθωμεν ἀργοὶ ζῆν καὶ ἐν ἀφθόνοις βιοτεύειν, καὶ **Μήδων δὲ καὶ Περσῶν καλαῖς καὶ μεγάλαις γυναιξὶ καὶ παρθένοις** ὁμιλεῖν, μὴ ὥσπερ οἱ λωτοφάγοι ἐπιλαθώμεθα τῆς οἴκαδε ὁδοῦ.[106] In Carleton L. Brownson's Loeb rendering the passage runs as follows: 'I really fear, however, that if we once learn to live in idleness and luxury, and to consort with **the tall and beautiful women and maidens of these Medes and Persians**, we may, like the lotus-eaters, forget our homeward way'.[107]

[104] Cf. Baragwanath 2002, 125–126.

[105] Gruen 2011, 53; recently Tuplin 2013, 67, calls it 'an odd work'.

[106] Ed. E.C. Marchant, OCT.

[107] On this term see an excellent (and fundamental) paper by Llewellyn-Jones 2011, 173. Here we have a touch of something very real: height of these women, as the adjective *megalai* refer to being tall, rather than large (so, in the *Odyssey*, 18. 195, Athene makes Penelope taller in order to make her more attractive: 'She made her taller for the eyes to behold, and thicker'). In a similar way, a tall height of the queen Kandake draws attention to the author of a work ascribed to Callisthenes (Ps.-Callisthenes, *The Alexander Romance*, 3. 22. 1; earlier on (3. 18. 1), Kandake has been called as 'a woman of excellent beauty'). The myth of prettiness of the Persian queens has been preserved in the *Book of Esther* (Est 1, 18), mentioned above, where the disobedient wife of Artaxerxes, Waszti, is labeled 'really beautiful'. There are other clues that

Such unexpected, open confession leaves the modern addressee substantially puzzled: are we to take it seriously? There is undoubtedly a lot of unmasked rhetoric in Xenophon's way of arguing,[108] that traditionally allowed the speaker to oppose Greek virtue to the Persian laziness. Nevertheless, it remains beyond the doubt that substantially this opinion must have been be true at its roots. Additionally, again it shows us now something priceless: that peculiar curiosity the Greeks (even being found themselves in extremely hard circumstances[109]) displayed toward female inhabitants of the Achaemenid provincial satrapies. Now when it is necessary to add that Xenophon's look at them has nothing to do with any roughness, so often appearing in the case of soldierly band toward womenfolk. His gaze bears something that may be called a look as discreet as possible. What we are dealing with here, is, in fact, a kind of contemplation.[110]

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prove that growth of a woman as so attractive a feature for the Greeks. When Herodotus, 1. 60. 3 relates the tale about Pisistratus' return to Athens, he stresses out that Phye (a 'telling' name in itself), a famous woman who was 'played' the goddess Athene, was exceptionally tall and beautiful: μέγαθος ἀπὸ τεσσέρων πήχεων ἀπολείπουσα τρεῖς δακτύλους καὶ ἄλλως εὐειδής. The trickery in which growth played a decisive role reminds of another archetypical opinion: the one expressed in the *Iliad*, 1. 115. Here, Agamemnon openly confesses that Chryseis is not inferior to his legal wife Clitaemestra: the former is 'quite as beautiful'. As regard to the last term, the Penguin rendering by E.V. Rieu, is, however, not particularly apt here, since the Homeric phrase is οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν. Thus Willcock 1984, 189 gives an adequate explanation: '*demas* is outward appearance, i.e. 'figure'; *phye* is growth, i.e. 'stature'. These and the following two nouns are further examples of the common Greek accusative of respect, most regularly used with parts of the body'. The mention of tall stature invites to further speculations, the more justified the more we realize that the ancient Greeks were vividly interested in physiognomic, to remind the most famous works by Aristotle or Polemon. Thus, was the stature this peculiar feature in the Greeks' perception of Persian women which fits what Mc Inerney has recently called 'ethnographic gaze' (2014, 2)? Beside the study of Llewellyn-Jones there is J. Boardman's classic 2000 collection of gems: one of the most telling examples the author has collected is that reprinted at p. 311; it is a scaraboid charmingly presenting the figure of a Persian noblewoman. Here Boardman adds (p. 310) a following remark: 'even the Greek artist caught the Persian's preference for full breasts and buttocks'; see a similar portrait of woman in the Sassanian representations: Wagner and Boardman 2003, plate 106, no. 75 and p. 106.

[108] Cf. Lendle 1995, 161: he rightly says of 'die breite Gegenüberstellung'. The sentiment was often taken at its face value as unequivocally hostile toward Persian luxury. However, I am convinced that there is a purported ambiguity in Xenophon's tale – to the same extent as it is visible in his famous episode concerning Hercules' choice in the *Memorabilia.*

[109] On this cf. Dillery 1995, 69–70.

[110] Tuplin 2004, 156; also his 2003 paper, 352, n. 6. Not surprisingly, the Greek obsession with growth reminds Aristotle's famous consideration concerning what beauty consists of: in his *Poetics,* 1450b 34–1451a, he says that "beauty consists in **magnitude** and order, which is why there could not be a beautiful animal which was either minuscule (as contemplation of it, occurring in an almost imperceptible moment, has no distinctness) or gigantic (as contemplation of it has no cohesion, but those who contemplate it lose a sense of unity and wholeness)' (tr. S. Halliwell, Loeb). The passage, remains important as it connects beauty with the onlooker himself and the

There is no coincidence that the reason that the Asian women are so fair is the geographical environment itself. We do not owe such a characterization to Xenophon alone, yet it may be detected in a famous Hippocratic treatise *On Airs, Water and Places* (ch. 12), where the author frankly maintains that Asia resembles a kind of a dream, promised land, an earthly paradise in fact: πολὺ γὰρ καλλίονα καὶ μείζονα πάντα γίγνεται ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ· ἥ τε χώρη τῆς χώρης ἡμερωτέρη, καὶ τὰ ἤθεα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἠπιώτερα καὶ εὐοργητότερα.[111] It is treated like an Oriental Eden due to the fact that among many pleasures there was one that was the most esteemed – τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀνάγκη κρατέειν.[112] It is here, if elsewhere, we feel fully justified to claim that myth finds its realization, a stereotype was born.

Now, we may pass to the Panthea-theme as it is the famous woman of Susa whose fate – in the light of what has been reminded in the subsection on Alexander the Great – constitutes a prefiguration to the fate the royal Persian women experienced after the battle of Issus in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*.[113] Space forbids me to recall all the details of that notorious story that Professor Philip Stadter divides into 'four acts'. It seems that it would be equally fruitful to pay attention to only on easpect of Xenophon's narrative. Xenophon' effort was to show how a reader could know how much beautiful was this woman. Mere repetition of the adjectives like 'beautiful' or 'pretty' would become inevitably trivial. What does Xenophon do instead to achieve his goal? His solution and plausibility in creating a charming atmosphere surrounding the figure of Panthea is as excellent as possible. The novella about her fate begins at 4.6.11: here she is conveniently called 'the most beautiful' (also *Cyr.* 5.1.7; 6.1.41);[114] loyalty to her

experience of gazing as such, what, in turn, reminds of R. Garland's first sentence from his excellent book about the perception of the disabled in antiquity: 'Deformity is the eye of beholder' (Garland 1995). On the more sophisticated level, it was claimed by the sophists that what is beautiful and what is not, depends on us and on the values cultivated in any given society (*Dissoi logoi*, ch. 2). The Aristotelian passage is recently analyzed by Porter 2010, 97.

[111] Cf. Wiesehöfer 1996, 81.

[112] See Brosius 2011, 139.

[113] It cannot be excluded that Alexander, a famous admirer of Cyrus the Great, according to Arrian, has read the *Cyropaedia*. As late as in the fourth century AD Eunapius rhetorically maintained in his *Lives of the Sophists* that without Xenophon it would be not Alexander. A very similar episode has been recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus at 18.10.1–4, 19.9.3–8 and 20.6.1

[114] It is of highest importance to point out here an unrivalled way Araspas relates Cyrus what a great impression Panthea made on her onlookers, on the first meeting (*Cyr*. 5. 1. 4–5): ὅτε μὲν εἰσήλθομεν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτῆς, τὸ πρῶτον οὐ διέγνωμεν αὐτήν· χαμαί τε γὰρ ἐκάθητο καὶ αἱ θεράπαιναι πᾶσαι περὶ αὐτήν· καὶ τοίνυν ὁμοίαν ταῖς δούλαις εἶχε τὴν ἐσθῆτα· ἐπεὶ δὲ γνῶναι βουλόμενοι ποία εἴη ἡ δέσποινα πάσας περιεβλέψαμεν, ταχὺ πάνυ καὶ πασῶν ἐφαίνετο διαφέρουσα τῶν ἄλλων, καίπερ καθημένη κεκαλυμμένη τε καὶ εἰς γῆν ὁρῶσα. ὡς δὲ ἀναστῆναι αὐτὴν ἐκελεύσαμεν, συνανέστησαν μὲν αὐτῇ ἅπασαι αἱ ἀμφ' αὐτήν, διήνεγκε δ' ἐνταῦθα πρῶτον μὲν τῷ μεγέθει, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τῇ ἀρετῇ καὶ τῇ εὐσχημοσύνῃ ('when we went into her tent, upon

husband is her virtue is (6. 1. 32–34); her additional virtue is bravery (finally, after her spouse's death, she too commits suicide: 7. 3. 13–16). But the most excellent literary solution Xenophon decides to employ is to describe not so much how she looked like but how much was unlucky Araspas' love passion was increasing.[115] Cyrus, the real hero as always, is in this episode too, of course, more clever: he does not believe in his iron will to resist expected temptation the figure of Panthea generates.[116] In this vein, avoiding a visit to 'la belle conquerant', he naturally reminds Alexander the Great – although it was of course Alexander who stylized himself on the Persian king and was even called *philocyrus*. As Cyrus argues in Xenophon, it is better not to experience love passion at all than to be a miserable prey of such powerful emotions which eventually lead to a total destruction of man (cf. Euripides, *Iph. Aul.* 543; *Hipp.* 443, 525; Menander, *Dysc.* 384–389).[117] Of course, the proud

my word, we did not at first distinguish her from the rest; for she sat upon the ground and all her handmaids sat around her. And she was dressed withal just like her servants; but when we looked round upon them all in our desire to make out which one was the mistress, at once her superiority to all the rest was evident, even though she sat veiled, with her head bowed to the earth. But when we bade her rise, all her attendants stood up with her, and then was she conspicuous among them both for her stature and for her nobility and her grace'). In this amazing passage an additional feature is worth reminding: the impact of the woman veiling. In this respect the female practice of concealing the face – an 'Oriental' woman habit according to the European stereotypical thinking about suppression – would result also in increasing men's desire, so it contributed – a lesser paradox than it might seem – to the female bearers' sexual attractiveness; cf. the intriguing study by L. Llewellyn-Jones 2003, esp. ch. 10 ('The White and the Black: Conspicuous Veiling'), p. 297 who rightly calls the veil 'erotically concealing' and generally argues that the veil (broadly conceived) was in use by Greek women and that this was a part of Oriental tradition; also Cairns 2001.

[115] To some modern observers it might be a proof in arguing that generally the Greek writers could not write adequately abut women's feelings, confining instead to some stereotypes that betray anything but male prejudices (however, here are always exceptions to this rule). In some sense this is true as a result of the secondary place the women took in Greek society. So, we cannot hope to find in Greek literature such an outstanding example of womanhood as Mecha Inzunza de Troeye, the main female protagonist in the last masterpiece of Arturo Perez-Reverte *El tango de la Guarda Vieja.* Indeed, Perez-Reverte has created one of the most alluring literary portraits which no ancient Greek ever did. But at the same time, it is worth observing how 'Greek' the way of Mecha's characterization is: not only it is her thoughts and feelings which are crucial for the narrative but to the same extent the narrator's attention focuses on her gestures, manners she looks, raises the hand, sits, smokes cigarettes and so on – that is, *the reader sees* her as reflected in the hungry eyes of the narrator.

[116] So it was repeated by Plutarch in *On Being a Busybody* (*De curiositate*), 521f–522a.

[117] As far as we know there is no hard evidence that the fate of Araspas was known to Epicurus and his Roman pupil Lucretius, yet the symptoms of love madness the latter describes in the *De rerum natura* (4.1037f.) fit the symptoms showed by Xenophon; cf. Cyril Bailey' commentary *ad loc*. (Bailey 1947, 1305–1306) in Xenophon Araspas is certainly *cupidine caecus* to borrow the phrase from Lucretius *(De rerum nat.* 4.1153).

Araspas, on the contrary, commits *hybris* and falls into a love passion that quickly turns out to be a love frenzy which is strikingly similar to what happens to Artaxerxes in Chariton's *Callirhoe* (6.1.8–12; 6.4.4–7; 7.1). This way of presenting Panthea's beauty is far from being a simple, trivial characterization. Xenophon choice is plausible: he prefers to depict the effects impression the makes, but this means also that the reader's curiosity and his imagination enlivens. In this way Panthea is immortalized and remains forever kept in addressee's imagination. By the way, a similar mode of presentation was used by Longus in his 'novel' on *Daphnis and Chloe* where we have a vividly, if not realistically, painted portrait of a shepherd who seriously has been attacked by a dangerous ill, that's, falling in love.

Back to Alexander

Now, I would like to end this essay with Alexander the Great, again. One of the most spectacular, non-military events that occurred in the course of his memorable expedition far and away took place in Susa, in 324.[118] The event still remains a somewhat unique and awkward episode in the history of Graeco-Persian relationships in antiquity: it concerns, of course, a 'cross-cultural' project managed by the Macedonian conqueror (from Issus onwards – 'the King of Asia", as Plutarch, *De fort. et virt. Alex*. 1.7, and Plutarch in *Alex*. 34.1, says). It was a great, astonishing mass wedding of his officers and rank-and-file soldiers to the Persian and Median noble women (cf. Diodorus 17.67.1), of which Robin Lane Fox remarked 'The bill of the wedding would not have disgraced a Shah'.[119] These famous and sumptuous *nuptiae* lasted five days and were prepared according to the Persian marital customs.[120] Leaving aside the political and cultural implications of the ceremony itself (some scholars take it for granted – wrongly, I think – that the celebration was also supposed to symbolize a kind of a sexual domination of the Macedonians over Asia and the Asiatic womenfolk), the spectacular wedding might have provided an important contribution to the subject-matter of this article. On this occasion one might even say could Xenophon have had seen it, it might have been a realization of his dreams: the Westerners were given an official, legal, opportunity to go into the intimate relations with the representatives of the Achaemenid *beau sexe*. So, according to Arrian (*Anab.* 7.4.6), there were about eighty of such

[118] Cf. Brosius 2003, 173.

[119] Lane-Fox 1978, 417.

[120] See Bosworth 1980a, 11–12; cf. Worthington 1999, 53–54; recently: Ogden 2011, 134.

mixed marriages;[121] Aelianus (*VH* 8.7) mentions 90 pairs of the spouses. Plutarch (*Alex*. 70. 3; *De fort. et virt. Alex*. 1.7) knows of 100 married couples, and this number agrees with that given by Chares of Mitylene (*FGrH* 125, a number repeated by Athenaeus in his *Deiphosophists*). Besides the officers, there were supposedly over ten thousand arranged marriages between average soldiers and Oriental womenfolk (Arrian, *Anab*. 7.4.4–8).

Despite these data, when regarding the problem of what the political purpose of the famous wedding was,[122] it must be fairly stated that it remains, in fact, a great mystery.[123] Beside a great loss of the majority of the works written by the Alexander historians, two main reasons contribute to this strange state; first, uncertainty arises how many (if all) Greeks took the Persian women as their wives. Ancient authorities speak mainly of the Macedonians, but they are not very helpful in revealing if Greeks were involved too: the most firm exception is Plutarch, who in his famous essay *De fortuna et virtute Alexandri* explicitly assumes that Greeks were engaged in this spectacular project.[124] Secondly, granted that there were Greek mercenaries among the just married, even more interesting question should be addressed: what was the fate of these marital relations? The answer depends on how deep (if any) their acquaintance with their new spouses was. What was the basis for arranging the men with these women into the pairs? One should probably reject the supposition that the pairs were coupled coincidentally. Probably, the 'new' husbands previously saw and knew their Persian wives before, maybe having intimate relations with them for some time.[125] Many questions appear here because of this unique event but what seems to be beyond dispute is that it used to be thought that these artificially managed relationships were dissolved soon after the wedding (the exception were Alexander himself and Seleucus[126]): such was the judgment of Professor E. Badian who was followed by Peter Green;[127] R. Malcolm Errington was also of the same opinion.[128] In fact, as we lack a firm evidence about the reactions and hopes of average soldiers (not to speak of the expectations the

[121] The Constantinople patriarch Photius, when summarizing Arrian's *Anabasis* (*Biblioth.* Cod. 91.68b), unexpectedly gives a similar list of the newly married.

[122] Cf. Bosworth 2012[4], 57.

[123] See Briant 2010, 128–129.

[124] Cf. O'Neil 2002, 159–177.

[125] It is inferred that before the official wedding the Macedonians must have been known to their Iranian wives, that is – a relatively great number of the Persian women were their concubines. If so, an official and formal change of the status in their relations with Oriental mistresses, might have been for the Macedonians less attractive, if not a change for worse, as many of the soldiers and officers left their families in Europe.

[126] See Strootman 2011, 82.

[127] Also Romm 2010, 384–385; see Worthington 1989, 53–54.

[128] Malcolm Errington 2010, 74.

Persian side had), we also can not generalize about them too categorically. It cannot be excluded that there were cases when marriages continued to exist. A suggestion made by Arrian allows us to infer that not all soldiers dismissed their new wives quickly.

Be that as it may, the wedding at Susa seems to have been an experiment perhaps too hasty and artificially managed – both for the Macedonians and for the Greeks (if really then involved). Had Xenophon had the opportunity to make any comment about, it would have been perhaps for him a step too 'political'. His personal feelings and observations of the Asiatic womenfolk were more subtle, in fact than these quickly arranged, in some sense – forced, matrimonies 'on behalf'; above all, Xenophon's feelings in this matter were enriched by his sensitivity. It always will remain an enigma of his talent that in the *Cyropaedia* he could give us his most intimate impressions, without falling into triviality and avoiding laziness. No wonder, then, that his impressions remain vivid among the men who love Oriental culture for so many centuries. Modern readers of the *Cyropedia* would certainly agree. Oriental beauties from Xenophon's and others' descriptions still impress Westerners,[129] to a degree no lesser than women of the East did in real life, enchanting or inspiring several representatives of the European intellectuals in previous generations, to mention only Flaubert and his somewhat mysterious Egyptian 'Panthea' – Kuchuk Hanem.

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[129] Oriental odalisque inspired the imagination of such artists like Boucher, Ingres, Lefevre, Renoir, or Matisse; cf. Blank 1999; Kahf 2002, 6.

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Abstract

The subject-matter of the of the article are the opinions the ancient Greeks held of Persian women. The starting point is the well-known episode from 'The Life of Alexander' by Plutarch in which the Boeotian biographer quotes a famous remark of the Macedonian king that refers to an exceptional beauty of the royal Persian women. Based on other sources of the classical era (especially Xenophon) and later times I try to show that Greek writers created the stereotype of 'Oriental woman': not only an entity of incredible beauty but of independent mind and – thanks to the high social status and influences on the Great King's court – dangerous. This stereotype was a part of a broader phenomenon which was Greek fascination with Oriental Achaemenid monarchy. To be sure the Persians aroused in the Greeks fear but in many ways the vast, powerful monarchy and Oriental institutions (including harem) had in themselves a lot of charm in the eyes of the Greek immigrants.