Xenophon’s Foreign Wives

Stories become shaped over time into patterns that make them more memorable. Explicit literary patterning of historical narrative leads historians to tread carefully, to assume that the record of what ‘actually happened’ must have been compromised. But this patterning may convey additional meaning: it may express a community’s ‘most basic mythic thought patterns’,¹ and also reveal the mentality of the individual who set a story’s final form. The Greek mind seems to have moulded historical events rather quickly into familiar patterns, even while ‘real’ knowledge still circulated.² Elements of stories were suppressed and others elaborated upon, within or against the grain of existing story-patterns.

* I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Christopher Pelling and Prudentia’s anonymous referees for their extremely helpful suggestions, and to the University of Auckland Classics Dept. for all their support. My debt in particular to Prof. Vivienne Gray, an inspirational supervisor, will be apparent. Translations are adapted from those of the Loeb Classical Library.


² See Gray, Character (as in n.1), 71-2. Xenophon’s narrative of Alexander’s death, for example, written only a decade after the events it describes, is already shaped by the tradition or Xenophon himself into a clear pattern (that of a woman who takes revenge on her husband, using male agents to murder the man and usurp his position), behind which lies ‘a pattern of thought that looked to women as the cause of dynastic troubles’ (71). The phenomenon suggests that the ‘storytelling style of history’ was a valid alternative to more literal accounts (72).
This phenomenon helps to explain how fictional and non-fictional material alike sometimes fell into similar patterns.

Some of the narrative patterning evident in Xenophon’s works will have been present in his source material, but much seems to have occurred at his own hands, arising from his particular interests and emphases, often of a moral and philosophic nature. The great extent to which his reflections upon ideal leadership informs all his works, resulting for example in the remarkably similar character sketches of many of his positively portrayed figures (the Cyrruses, Agesilaus, Jason of Pherae, Socrates, Xenophon the soldier, and so on), is well known. In Xenophon’s view, any manifestation of ideal rule involved the creation and maintenance of a bond of φιλία (friendship) between ruler and subject. Successful leaders proved very good friends of those who

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4 V.J. Gray, ‘Xenophon and Isocrates’ in Christopher Rowe, Malcolm Schofield and others (eds.), The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought (Cambridge, 2000), 142-54, at pp.146-51, offers the most recent general discussion of the leadership theory and emphasises its very broad application and its resemblance to friendship. Cf. Neal Wood, ‘Xenophon’s Theory’ (as in n.3), 52, 59, 66.
served them. They knew how to define and effect a common good, beneficial both to ruler and subject. Thus the ideal ruler-subject relationship is characterised by reciprocity and mutual benefit: the leader, being *philanthropos* as well as *philotimos*, outdoes those who serve him in his generous bestowing of gifts in return, and is honoured and loved by those who think he can benefit them. Charismatic, often beautiful too, he attracts his subjects’ gazes and inspires them to virtue. He is self-ruled, his salient quality *εγκράτεια* (self-control), so that physical cravings never hinder him from fulfilling the requirements of the ideal friend. In all, he demonstrates that he is the leader because he is the most morally fit to rule.

This article will analyse the particular narrative patterns that envelop Xenophon’s depictions of women through the filter of his wider leadership pattern, with the aim of reaching a deeper understanding of how he envisaged women fitting into his theory of human relations, and of how he used narrative patterning. I will focus for brevity’s sake on one striking category of his women, the high-ranked foreign wives—whose relative historical prominence perhaps made them more susceptible than their Greek equivalents to the application of his philosophy of leadership.6

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5 E.g. Cyrus the Great, *Cyropaedia* 1.2.1; or he at least seems beautiful because of the fact that he rules (*Hier* 8.5).

6 Gray, ‘Xenophon’ (as in n.4), 147 writes that ‘Xenophon believed women to be as useful as men and as capable of rule and friendship’, and illustrates the point with examples from his *Oeconomicus*, *Memorabilia*, and *Cyropaedia*. Pomeroy, *Oeconomicus* (as in n.3), esp. 278-9 and 302, discusses the leadership of Ischomachus’ wife (but see n.64 below). On the whole, however, despite the fact that Xenophon the philosopher showed an unparalleled interest in the women’s sphere in writing his *Oeconomicus*, his depictions of women have been considered with minimal reference to his broader notions of human relations. His works, particularly the *Oeconomicus*, are often mined for information on the lives of women in fourth-century Athens, or for generally-held attitudes towards those women. S.I. Oost’s 1977 judgment remains *communis opinio*: ‘the general ideas of Xenophon on women, when he is not writing under the influence of Socrates, or possibly of his own marriage, seem to be probably a fair representative selection of the prejudices of Athenians of his education and upper-class status’, ‘Xenophon’s Attitude Toward Women’, *CW* 71 (1977), 225-36, at p.236.
And yet in some ways his narrative works to collapse the conceptual distance between these women and their closer-to-home Greek wife or courtesan counterparts. Xenophon deals with the foreign wives in the context of their relationships with men, usually their husbands or the narrative’s male protagonist. Epyaxa, wife of Syennesis, appears in the Anabasis; Panthea wife of Abradatas in the Cyropaedia; and both the wife of Alexander of Pherae, and Mania wife of the deceased Zenis, in the Hellenica. Their role is distinctly ‘in-between’: Xenophon focuses on the role they play as intermediaries between the man of rank who is (or was) their husband and another man who is more powerful (or potentially so), while also representing them in some ways as ideal leader figures in their own right.

Intermediaries

Epyaxa, Mania and Panthea each enter the narrative in a vulnerable and potentially disadvantageous situation vis-à-vis the powerful outsider, and then transform their relationship with him into one characterised by

Whereas the Socratic works are more favourable, and Ischomachus/ Xenophon even ‘envisions the possibility that, in her own sphere of course, woman may be or become the superior of man’, in the non-Socratic works ‘women are ordinarily inferior to men, are regarded as male possessions to be bandied about without reference to their own wishes.’ Exceptions like Mania ‘make no impression on male smugness concerning the “second sex”’ (ibid, 235). Paul Cartledge’s 1993 article, ‘Xenophon’s Women: a Touch of the Other’, Liverpool Classical Papers 3 (1993), 5-14, deals with Xenophon’s literary constructions of women as illuminating (and to some extent challenging) the stereotypical male-female polarity of Greek thought. That polarity was natural to the Greek mind and certainly finds reflection in Xenophon’s thought, but in my view the leadership theory too informs Xenophon’s representation of women, as it does his representation of men, and in doing so strengthens the challenge Cartledge detects.

7 These women are ‘foreign’ on account of their residing outside the physical, or in Alexander’s wife’s case conceptual, bounds of Greece (Thessaly with its reputation for barbarism may be deemed an honorary foreign place), and ‘wives’ because Xenophon’s narrative situates them in relation to their (in Mania’s case former) husband. Only Panthea is straightforwardly fictional, but the patterns that pervade the representation of even those women who are historical figures suggest that all have been moulded into literary shape by Xenophon or his source.
Epyaxa’s domain Cilicia, over which her husband Syennesis rules, is threatened by the plundering of Cyrus and his men. Pharnabazus intends to grant the sub-satrapy of Aeolis (which Mania’s husband had ruled while he lived) to someone else rather than to Mania. Panthea, in the lowliest position of all, has been captured by Cyrus’s men and faces the prospect of slavery. The fact that these women are conducting the negotiations signals the particularly hopeless nature of the situation: Epyaxa and not her husband does so because he will not deal with anyone in whose power he is already (Anabasis 1.2.26), whereas Panthea’s husband was away when she was captured with the camp. But only in Panthea’s case is the wife’s lowly initial situation elaborated at length. It serves to emphasise, as well as Cyrus’ generosity, her own remarkable transformation in his eyes from a mere war-won concubine into a useful friend.

Panthea first appears as the spoils are divided after Cyrus’ victory, when ‘the most beautiful tent and the woman of Susa, said to be the most beautiful woman in Asia’, are to be taken to Cyrus (Cyropaedia 4.6.11). Panthea is booty like this skene with which she is first paired. She is described with the same adjective as it is, and identified simply by her provenance as war-won concubines generally were (4.6.11). The extravagance of her description evokes the story-telling tradition, though the wording here (τήν Σουσίδα γυναίκα, ἡ καλλίστη δὴ λέγεται ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ γυνη γενέσθαι) is reminiscent of Hellenica 3.3.8, when Cinadon is instructed to bring back the woman of Aulis—a hint that this woman may likewise play a part in the tale and exercise some sort of influence? Her description is evocative of such legendary womanly paragons as Helen of Troy, and of the lovely females selected, some of them captives, for the harem of the Great King. Such fine loot represents an honourable prize, and in its eastern context, Homeric models are brought to mind: we recall Agamemnon’s reluctance to give up Chryses’ daughter, and then his demand for Briseis. The verbal pairing of lady and

8 τὴν γυναίκα, ἡ καλλίστη μὲν αὐτόθι ἐλέγετο εἶναι, λυμαίνεσθαι δ’ ἐδόκει τοὺς ἄρισκουμένους Λακεδαιμονίων καὶ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ νεωτέρους (‘the woman who was said to be the most beautiful there, and was thought to be corrupting the Lacedaimonians who came, older and younger ones alike’).
tent\(^9\) recalls the similar pairings in Homer and Herodotus of 'Helen (or 'the woman') and the treasure'.\(^10\) Proteus in Herodotus' version takes it upon himself to guard the woman and treasure for Menelaus (2.115), as Araspas is to guard the woman and tent for Cyrus (5.1.2): both are Cyrus' possessions, just as Helen and the treasure belong to Menelaus.\(^11\) Cyrus, like Paris, has seized woman and tent, but Panthea (though like Helen, the wife of another) is rightfully his, not stolen.

At her next appearance the woman is identified further as Abradatas' wife (5.1.3), and a first description opens with her guard's question to Cyrus: 'Have you seen (έώρακας) the woman whom you bid me guard?' The men could not at first tell Panthea apart from the maids around her; 'but when we gazed around at them all, wishing to know which was the mistress (ἡ δέσποινα), at once her superiority to all the rest was evident, even though she sat veiled, looking to the ground.' When she stood up she was conspicuous 'both for her stature and for her nobility and grace' (5.1.4-5). Learning that she would now belong to Cyrus she ripped her outer peplos from top to toe and wept aloud—'At which point,' Araspas exclaims, 'we had vision of most of her face and vision of her neck and arms; and let me tell you, Cyrus, that it seemed to me and to all the rest who saw her that there never was so beautiful a woman of mortal birth in Asia' (5.1.7). He then urges Cyrus to see the woman for himself.

The situation recalls the story of the arrival of the free-born concubine Aspasia of Phocaea to serve in Cyrus' harem.\(^12\) Having been

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\(^9\) Cf. 5.1.2.

\(^10\) E.g. 'Ελένην καὶ κτήματα πάντα ('Helen and all her treasure'), Iliad 3.70, 72, 91, 282, 285 etc.; γυναῖκα μὲν ταύτην καὶ τὰ χρήματα ('this woman and the treasure'), Histories 2.115; cf. 2.114; καὶ τὴν 'Ελένην τε καὶ τὰ χρήματα ('both Helen and the treasure'), Histories 2.115, 118 (two occurrences), 119.

\(^11\) A skene—the opulent, Persian, treasure-filled variety—like chremata, is an indication of wealth.
led in to Cyrus, Aspasia’s companions sat down and accepted readily his advances, whereas she stood in silence, and at being called to him swore, ‘Whosoever lays his hands upon me shall rue the day!’ The king recognised her as the only one who was free and uncorrupted and from this time on was ruled by her and loved her above all other women, calling her “the Wise” (26.5). Panthea, too, is easily distinguished from the women around her by her noble bearing and ruler quality, and the value she places on freedom is evident in her lament at its loss. The comparison invites the implication that Cyrus will recognise the same quality in Panthea as he had in Aspasia, and choose to treat her with similar respect. Cyrus’ subsequent advice that Araspas ‘guard the woman well, for she may perhaps be of very great service to us when the time comes’ (5.1.17) does suggest he already sees in Panthea the makings of a valuable friend, and anticipates her usefulness in that role. When she later refrains from informing Cyrus of Araspas’ threats, ‘hesitating to cause trouble between friends’ (6.1.32), until she risks being violated, Panthea demonstrates again the store she sets on philia.

Araspas’ emphasis on the notion of vision and gazing as he extols Panthea’s beauty, continuing on from the emphatically positioned ἑώρακας of his opening question, invites comparison with the way in which the courtesan Theodote is discussed in Xenophon’s Memorabilia, and also with Candaules’ enthusiastic description of his wife to his underling Gyges. That tale, preserved in the Herodotean logos but presumably borrowed from the wider oral tradition, tells how the Lydian empire was doomed to fall at the hands of the same Cyrus who is the protagonist of the Cyropaedia. Both Araspas and Candaules are besotted

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12 Xenophon mentions this Aspasia at Anabasis 1.10.2. He and some of his audience were surely familiar with this story, having heard it themselves or via Ctesias, and perhaps with variants of it as well.

13 Plutarch Artaxerxes 26.4.

14 Xenophon was certainly familiar with the Histories (W. Keller, ‘Xenophon’s Acquaintance with the History of Herodotus’ CJ 6 [1911], 252-9), and could assume the same of many of his readers, although various other versions of this sort of story were probably floating about in the wider oral tradition. See Gray, Character (as in n.1), 71-2.
by the woman when the account begins and consider her to be of unrivalled quality. Stunned by such beauty, both enthuse about it to another man, and then—dissatisfied at the adequacy of their description—urge the other to look\textsuperscript{15} for himself. For, Candaules insists (using a proverb that will turn out to be true in a way quite different from what he expects\textsuperscript{16}), ‘eyes are more trustworthy than ears’ (Histories 1.8.2). Memorabilia 3.11 begins similarly with a rumour of Theodote’s beauty, which is ‘beyond words’, able to be expressed only by artists—and so Socrates urges that the men go and see her (θεασομένους) for themselves.

Candaules and Araspas each claim that no harm could come from the other man seeing the beautiful woman, oblivious to the potential ramifications; but Gyges and Cyrus are aware of the dangers involved and so reluctant. Gyges’ concern is with the impropriety of seeing his mistress naked; he recalls the wise moral ‘to look at one’s own’, (1.8). Cyrus, who (in Greek terms, and as the comparison serves to underline) has every right to treat this woman as he will, wishes rather to avoid being compelled to remain watching her indefinitely (Cyropaedia 5.1.8). In similar fashion men who have seen Theodote desire to touch what they have seen, and yearn for her when they are gone, with the result that they are transformed into her servants (Memorabilia 3.11.3).\textsuperscript{17} Thus the gazing upon Panthea as upon Theodote is not simply proprietorial, as in the Herodotean story: the danger is not the execution of a violent punishment, but far more insidious; for the men, as Cyrus and Socrates both recognise, may be rendered willing slaves to eros. The disturbing

\textsuperscript{15} Θεασαί, Cyropaedia 5.1.7; Θεησαί, Histories 1.8.2.

\textsuperscript{16} The queen’s eyes will indeed be crucial as she glimpses Gyges: see Christopher Pelling, ‘Herodotus and Croesus’ (forthcoming) on this, and on the unexpected applications of the other proverbs in the scene as well. Cf Susan O. Shapiro, ‘Proverbial Wisdom in Herodotus’, TAPA 130 (2000), 89-118, at p.98.

\textsuperscript{17} Simon Goldhill, ‘The seductions of the gaze: Socrates and his girlfriends’, in Paul Cartledge and others (eds.), Kosmos: Essays in order, conflict and community in Classical Athens (Cambridge, 1998), 105-24, esp. 113-24, illuminates the issues of power, exchange and desire that are involved in viewing Theodote.
way in which gazing so naturally leads on to more, surfaces again as a theme in Herodotus’ *Histories* with the tale of the Persians’ visit to the Macedonian court: the men’s gazing upon the royal women—‘torments to their eyes’—engenders their desire to touch them too, which in turn precipitates their destruction at Alexander’s hands (5.18-20). But Araspas cannot compel Cyrus to gaze upon Panthea, whereas Candaules can and does coerce his subject Gyges to gaze upon his wife—and that will inevitably lead further. Both men’s concerns are validated by the events that follow in which *eros* precipitates transgressions of acceptable behaviour. Thus Xenophon shows us again the powerful effect of Panthea, whom Cyrus afterwards describes as an ‘irresistible creature’ (*Cyropaedia* 6.1.36), upon the men about her. Her later comment that Cyrus has treated her as one would a brother’s wife (6.4.7) enriches further the matrix of associations, in its veiled allusion to Xerxes’ less than fraternal treatment of his brother Masistes’ wife in Herodotus’ *Histories*. The horrendous (and also politically hazardous) events precipitated by Xerxes’ illicit love underline again Cyrus’ wisdom in refraining from seeing the woman, and in allowing Araspas to play out that part instead.

The naming of Panthea by Cyrus (6.1.41) marks the point at which she becomes the counterpart of Mania and Epyaxa. Threatened by Araspas, she has sent word to the great man as a preventative measure, and upon hearing of Araspas’ departure she begins actively to arrange an alliance between Cyrus and her husband. All three women approach the powerful outsider with a view to establishing a reciprocal relationship based upon *philia*. They take far more constructive action than merely to

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18 Cf. Plutarch’s story that Alexander the Great believed that the beauty of the Persian royal women (who likewise seemed ‘torments to the eyes’) was a test of his kingly *sophrosune*, since gazing at it could so easily lead to more (Plutarch *Alexander* 21.10-11).

19 And the queen knows it: as Christopher Pelling pointed out to me, there is a sense here that she too regards the next step as a natural consequence, and thus as one she can insist on in the paradoxical way she does.

20 9.108-14; cf. Cartledge ‘Xenophon’s Women’ (as in n.6), 13.
weep and plead in conventional style (as did the Herodotean intermediary Intaphrenes’ wife, who relied on the pity of the powerful outsider Darius: *Histories* 3.119). Epyaxa and Mania set forth to visit the man, accompanied by an impressive retinue, determined to influence his policy: the Cilician desires to secure (for her husband) positive diplomatic relations with Cyrus so that their territory might not be plundered when his army passes through, whereas Mania desires that Pharnabazus leave her as ruler of her deceased husband’s satrapy. Panthea hopes to secure decent treatment for herself and to be reunited with her spouse. The widow Mania, like Panthea, clearly acts of her own accord. The singular verb describing the Cilician’s action leaves the impression that she, too, is acting independently: only later is her husband’s involvement in the expedition made clear. Another woman who appears in a similar role is the Armenian’s wife, who approaches Cyrus before he departs from Armenia (*Cyropaedia* 3.3.2), but she is explicitly an intermediary, bringing gifts from her husband to the powerful Persian, and acts out of gratitude for peace rather than to secure further favour.

Mania and Epyaxa each gain a personal audience with the great man, bringing their feminine appeal to bear in winning his friendship, while Panthea—already the man’s captive—does not approach him in person, but sends a message. Xenophon sets down in direct discourse the words with which she and Mania address the powerful man. Both enter into the discourse of Xenophontic ideal relations, speaking in terms of reciprocity and *philia*, while also offering tangible rewards. The manner of each is deferential and unassuming as well as psychologically perceptive: each flatters the ego of the powerful male. In her speech, Mania speaks both of simple friendship, and of the practical material benefits that Pharnabazus has already enjoyed from her husband: ‘Pharnabazus, my husband was both a friend to you in all other ways, and he also paid over the tributes which were your due, so that you praised and honoured him’ (*Hellenica* 3.1.11). Her manner then becomes understated when she asks: ‘Therefore, if I serve you no less faithfully (μηδέν χείρον) than he, why should you appoint another as satrap?’ (*Hellenica* 3.1.11). The modesty of the turn of phrase μηδέν χείρον ἐκείνου (‘no worse than he’) is matched with a subjunctive that leaves her proposition conditional, suggesting humble uncertainty of her ability to carry it out. And her final statement—‘and if I should fail to please you in any respect, surely it will be in your power to deprive me of the office
and give it to another’—provides him with a psychologically reassuring escape clause. Her appeal to his power, as a reason to be confident in granting her the position at least temporarily, is flattering. The speech conveys Mania’s own view of her (and previously her husband’s) relationship with Pharnabazus. She specifies friendship, praise and honour in return for the payment of tribute owed, service for appointment, and the giving of pleasure (3.1.11): all the marks of a reciprocal philia relationship. Her speech immediately has its desired effect. Without disputing a single point and clearly recognising in the woman the signs of a good friend, Pharnabazus enters into the philia relationship, offering Mania the job (12).

Panthea, upon learning of Araspas’ departure apparently to join the enemy, is equally eloquent in the message she sends to Cyrus. She advises him not to be distressed,

for if you will allow me to send to my husband, I promise you that a much more faithful friend (πολὺ ... πιστότερον φίλον) than Araspas will come to you. And I know that he will come to you with as many forces as he can bring; for whereas the father of the present king was his friend, the one who is king now once even tried to separate my husband and me from one another. Inasmuch, then, as he considers him an insolent man (υβριστήν), I am sure that he would willingly transfer his allegiance to such a man as you (πρὸς οἷος σύ, Cyropaedia 6.1.45).

With this offer of a valuable alliance, Panthea—up to this point booty that Cyrus has elected to treat well—transforms her relationship with the king into one of some mutuality, from which he might reap concrete benefit. Her reference to the Assyrian king’s hubristic nature and impropriety towards her suggests a comparison between him and Cyrus: the Assyrian king’s unacceptable actions are contrasted with those of (and to be expected of) οἷος σύ, flattery that might indeed encourage

21 And perhaps an intertextual comparison too, with Herodotus’ Xerxes: for Panthea’s mention of the Assyrian’s attempt to divide the couple recalls Xerxes’ similar attempt with regard to Masistes and his wife (Histories 9.111).
Cyrus to continue his gentlemanly behaviour.\(^\text{22}\) And as Mania’s offer is twin-pronged, functioning both on the level of ideal relations with the reference to the φίλος that her husband had been to Pharnabazus, and on a more concrete level with the mention of his prompt payment of tribute, so Panthea refers first to the πιστότερος φίλος her husband would be for Cyrus, and then to the many troops—solid military assistance—he would provide. Both women thus appeal to the Persian’s sense of honour, entering into the discourse of ideal friendship, while also displaying worldly appreciation of accompanying material benefits. Panthea’s words prove as effective as Mania’s, for Cyrus straight away bids her to send for her husband, who proceeds to join him with a thousand horse (46). Xenophon does not record the direct discourse of the Cilician queen, but the concrete financial assistance that she provides is evidence of prudent diplomacy. She, like Panthea, does eventually secure an alliance between Cyrus and her husband.

As Panthea proves correct in her estimation of her husband, so Mania lives up to the role in which she envisaged herself as her husband’s successor. Her initial statement to Pharnabazus that her husband ‘paid over the tributes due’ (τούς φόρους ἀπεδίδου) finds reflection in the statement in the following paragraph that she ‘paid over the tributes due no less faithfully than her husband had’ (τούς τε φόρους οὐδὲν ἴττον τάνδρος ἀπεδίδου, 3.1.12). But following this comparison is an extensive list of her excellent services, which gives a strong impression that in her achievements on Pharnabazus’ behalf she has easily surpassed even her husband. The list culminates with the remark that ‘whomever she praised she would give plentiful gifts, with the result that she equipped her mercenary force most splendidly’ (3.1.13)\(^\text{23}\)—and thus, along with her personable style, she is shown to provide Pharnabazus with the most crucial of aids, by being herself an ideal military ruler on his behalf. As a woman she is perhaps better placed than the men to aspire to

\(^{22}\) Panthea’s technique here is exactly Socrates’ towards Callias at Symposium 8.7-11, as Hermogenes recognises (8.12).

\(^{23}\) See Due, Cyropaedia (as in n.3), 182-3, for the ideal leader’s principle of granting rewards for effort to encourage those who serve him.
match her superior in leadership ability, while still not presenting a threat to his rule.24

These women secure what they desire through tact and diplomacy, but also, in the case of Epyaxa and Mania, through giving generous gifts. In the tale of Mania the word δώρα recurs, when she twice bestows them on Pharnabazus (at 3.1.10, 12), and then on favoured mercenaries (3.1.13), and related verbs with the ‘given’ root are also several, used of her or by her.25 Setting forth to visit the satrap to make her request, she takes with her ‘gifts, both to give to Pharnabazus himself, and to use for winning the favour of his courtesans and of the most powerful men at his court’ (Hellenica 3.1.10). She sees the value of forging a network of relationships that stretches beyond the king himself to encompass others who may have influence with him26 (and that presumably is also Panthea’s purpose in developing a friendship with Cyrus’ man Araspas, 5.1.18). The Cilician, too, bears valuable gifts, when she arrives to visit Cyrus at the city of Caystru-pedion. Xenophon has just recorded Cyrus’ inability to pay his troops, who, being owed more than three months’ wages (μισθός πλέον ἡ τριῶν μηνῶν),

went again and again to his headquarters and demanded what was due to them. And he continued to express hopes, and was clearly troubled (Anabasis 1.2.11).

The queen’s arrival at precisely this moment solves the problem, and reads as an answer to the hopes just mentioned: μισθῶν τεττάρων μηνῶν (four months’ wages) is a clear response to Cyrus’ owing his troops μισθός πλέον ἡ τριῶν μηνῶν. In choosing to spend the money on his troops, Cyrus displays the mark of an ideal ruler who prioritises his

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24 Cf. Herodotus’ tale of Aryandes, who ‘made himself equal to Darius’ and so was killed (Histories 4.166).

25 δοῦναι: 3.1.10, 11; ἀπεδίδου: 3.1.11, 12; ἐδίδου: 3.1.13.

26 The real historical influence of the pallakai of the Persian royal and satrapal courts is difficult to assess (Maria Brosius, Women in Ancient Persia, 559-331 BC [Oxford, 1996], 31-4, 191-2), but they ‘clearly enjoyed a good status’ (89 n.14).
men before himself, though the groundswell of discontent must also compel him towards that decision. Thus the Cilician grants the powerful man a most significant favour, in bringing the cash that makes feasible the continuation of his expedition, and in a sense becoming a paymaster before whom the troops later stage a terrifying military display. The favour places him under an obligation to the queen. The Armenian woman brings the elder Cyrus both other gifts (άλλοις δώροις) and money (τό χρήματα), which he returns exclaiming ‘You shall not make me go about doing good for pay!’ He advises her not to give it to the king again to bury, but rather to spend it on her family and son (Cyropaedia 3.3.2-3). Under less dire circumstances the younger Cyrus might have preferred to respond likewise to Epaxa. Rather like Xenophon at Seuthes’ dinner party (Anabasis 7.3.29-32), Panthea is in no position to offer Cyrus material gifts: but as Xenophon, in want of a gift, pledges his men’s friendship, so Panthea, having nothing else (respectable!) to offer, pledges her husband’s friendship.

The three women continue to please and delight the powerful men. Xenophon depicts in each case a developing relationship characterised by mutual philia and reciprocal benefits. Mania’s loyalty, attentiveness and deferential manner to Pharnabazus win his ongoing friendship. Once in office, Xenophon notes that ‘whenever (οπότε) she went to Pharnabazus’ court she always gave him gifts, and whenever (οπότε) he came down to her province she received him with far more magnificence and courtesy (τόλο χάλλιστα καὶ ἰδιστα) than any of his other governors’ (Hellenica 3.1.12). The repetition οπότε ... οπότε suggests the generous extent of her willing helpfulness, but also serves to associate the two clauses, linking Mania’s gift-giving with her ability to give the satrap pleasure. The narrative hints at reciprocity in the balance of their actions (οπότε ἀφικνόετο ... οπότε ματασβάινοι). Mania is the ideal servant and friend, unassuming and reliable: she always (αεί) plies Pharnabazus with gifts whenever (οπότε) she visits him, and offers him far lovelier receptions than do the other sub-satraps; it is ‘for Pharnabazus’ (αύτῳ) that she keeps secure not only the cities she received from her husband, but also three more (καί ... καί ...) she accompanies Pharnabazus in the field (3.1.13). The many superlatives and eulogies that pepper the narrative emphasise the outstanding quality of her service. Xenophon concludes the section with the remark that ‘in return for these services Pharnabazus paid her magnificent honours, and sometimes asked her to
aid him as a counsellor’ (σύμβουλος, 3.1.13), thus illuminating the reciprocal nature of the relationship. The evocation here of splendid gifts and spectacular receptions, along with the earlier allusion to concubines and influential courtiers, hints at the luxury and debauchery Greek minds associated with an eastern court. But this background of associations, which brings to the fore the possibility that the relationship was erotic (and perhaps conveys the coarse assumption of uncouth observers that that must have been the case), serves as a foil to the fact that in Xenophon’s analysis it consists simply in philia. Their mutual philia is such that Pharnabazus declares after Mania’s murder that he would prefer not to live than fail to avenge her (3.1.15).

Xenophon’s narrative hints that the Cilician, too, has developed a friendship with Cyrus. She demonstrates diplomacy comparable to that of the other women, though the little that is suggested of the developing relationship is reported indirectly and remains rather obscure. We hear only briefly of her initial encounter with Cyrus: ‘and it was said that Cyrus had (intimate) relations with the Cilician’ (έλέγετο δὲ καὶ συγγενέσθαι Κύρον τῇ Κιλίσσῃ, Anabasis 1.2.12). At this point the soldiers focalise the narrative, and their views as to the nature of the relationship are conveyed in Xenophon’s choice of verb—for συγγίγνομαι where a woman is involved does imply sexual relations. And yet the wider narrative pattern indicates a different interpretative emphasis, upon the trust Epyaxa here offers for the sake of developing ties of philia. The single fairly detailed account of her interaction with Cyrus is the occasion when ‘the Cilician woman, as the report ran, asked

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27 The allusion here to the Herodotean Artemisia’s famous symboulos aspect underlines again the fact that Mania is not simply a tragic warner whose words are destined not to be heeded by the king (Artemisia fits both Lattimore’s categories in R. Lattimore, ‘The Wise Advisor in Herodotus’ CP 34, [1939], 24-35), but rather a figure who enters into a far more reciprocal friendship with her superior.

28 Cf. the later story of Cleopatra’s magnificent visit to Antony, bearing gifts and money, then reception of him at a surpassingly brilliant and elegant dinner (Plutarch Antony 25.4-27.1).

29 See below.
Cyrus to exhibit his army to her (λέγεται δεηθήναι ἡ Κίλισσα Κύρου ἐπιδείξαι τὸ στράτευμα αὐτῆς); such an exhibition was what he desired to make (βουλόμενος οὖν ἐπιδείξαι), and accordingly he held a review of the Greeks and the foreigners on the plain (1.2.14). This rather manly gesture on Epyaxa’s part, redolent of barbarian otherness (reminiscent perhaps of Pheretime’s request for an army in Herodotus’ Histories [4.162], or of Artaynte’s refusal to accept that same gift [9.109]), is nevertheless an intelligent and appropriate signal of friendly diplomacy, particularly as Cyrus has spent the money she gave him on these very troops. With λέγεται Xenophon seems to present the view of those who knew the queen and Cyrus, as witnesses of their perfect φιλία; βουλόμενος, along with the repetition of ἐπιδείξαι, expresses the exact harmony of her wish with his desire to fulfil it. The Cilician accompanies Cyrus in her carriage as he inspects the Greek soldiers from his chariot (16). Xenophon next describes the parading phalanx breaking into a run towards the camp (17), frightening the barbarians and causing the queen to flee, then roaring with laughter (σὺν γέλωτι) at the fright caused. The laughter casts an unfavourable light on the incident, which (even if intended to impress) seems inappropriate at the expense of this dignified woman. Again later with the plundering of the woman’s territory and destruction of her palace (though Cyrus is absolved somewhat from blame, for it is specifically Menon’s unruly troops30 that are responsible), there seems some disjunction between the woman’s irreproachable behaviour and the Persian leader’s failure to respond wholly in kind. But despite her discomfort the queen’s reaction is ever courteous:

Now the Cilician was filled with admiration at seeing the brilliance and the order of the army (ἡ δὲ Κίλισσα ἰδὼσα τὴν λαμπρότητα καὶ τὴν τάξιν τοῦ στρατεύματος ἔθαυμα); and Cyrus was pleased to see the fear with which the Greeks inspired the foreigners (Κύρος δὲ ἴσθη τὸν ἐκ τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους φόβον ἰδὼν, Anabasis 1.2.18).

The balance of the sentences—ἡ δὲ Κύρος ἴδε τὸν Ἡδωνὸν—situates the two subjects in parallel and their responses in accord, expressing the pleasing rapport with Cyrus that the queen has achieved through her efforts thus far. The symmetry serves also to link the two sentences, associating the queen with the powerful man’s pleasure (ἡσυχία)—but in a less erotic way than the earlier phrase has led one to expect.

These women show themselves to be more sensitive than the men to the requirements of philia. When Abradatas arrives, Panthea tells him of the piety, self-restraint and compassion that Cyrus has shown the pair. He asks what he might do to repay such a debt of charis (gratitude), and she advises: ‘What else, pray, than to try to be to him what he has been to you?’ (6.1.47). Abradatas afterwards approaches Cyrus to offer himself as his ‘friend, servant and ally’ (6.1.48), and pledges to co-operate with the king in whatever enterprise he might engage in. Thus it is Panthea who guides her husband into appropriate action. Later, just before the battle, she urges her husband to fight gallantly, for

\[\text{to Cyrus I think we owe a great debt of gratitude, because when I was a prisoner and allotted to him, he did not think fit to treat me as a slave or as a freewoman under a dishonourable name, but took me and kept me for you as one would a brother’s wife (6.4.7).}\]

Her words sum up the situation succinctly. Cyrus had every right to make her his slave or concubine. In choosing instead to treat her with respect he has shown her husband philia of the strongest variety,\(^{31}\) and he is therefore obligated to do all he can in return. Panthea next tells Abradatas of the promise she made to Cyrus,\(^{32}\) and so articulates for him the expectations he must strive to live up to. Touched (we are told) by these words, he lays his hand on her head and prays that he might show

\[\text{31 Cf. Hiero 3.7.}\]

\[\text{32 Her use of much the same vocabulary here as she used in making her original promise to Cyrus (6.1.45) suggests the seriousness with which that promise was made.}\]
himself ‘a husband worthy of Panthea, and a friend worthy of Cyrus, who has shown us honour’ (6.4.9). The gesture suggests that he draws strength from his wife, who will help him to be true to his oath. Panthea declares that she would rather die than face the dishonour of failing to repay the debt of gratitude she owes Cyrus (Cyropaedia 6.4.6). Likewise it is Epyaxa, not her husband, who establishes a bond of philia with Cyrus; and Mania shows herself more rigorous than her male sub-satrapal counterparts or her husband before her in fulfilling the requirements of friendship with Pharnabazus.

Mania’s amenable manner is made strikingly evident through the implicit contrast that underlies the subsequent account between her usurper son-in-law’s style and her own. Having murdered Mania, Meidias copies her practice in sending gifts to Pharnabazus (Hellenica 3.1.15), a parallel gesture that illuminates the shockingly different context: Mania legitimately sought to become ruler in the place of her deceased husband, by virtue of her partnership with him in marriage, whereas Meidias, having slain the legitimate ruler, intends nevertheless to take over himself by virtue of kinship with her. Mania goes in person to Pharnabazus to speak with him and present him with the gifts, and she persuades him gently to give her a trial as satrap; whereas Meidias, with an abruptness conveyed by the aorist tense and the brevity of the sentence, merely ‘sent gifts (πέμψας δώρα) to Pharnabazus and claimed the right (ήξίου) to rule the province just as Mania had’ (3.1.15). Mania’s manner of gift-giving is less presumptuous (for she does not take for granted any right to rule the satrapy), and is farther-reaching, extended also to the others at court. Naturally Pharnabazus rejects Meidias’ gifts, and states his intention to avenge his wronged friend.

All the foreign wives grant concrete military assistance. Epyaxa provides money that is used to pay Cyrus’ troops. Mania introduces prizes that improve the standard of the mercenaries campaigning in Pharnabazus’ interest, and campaigns with him against the Mysians and Pisidians (3.2.13). It is under Panthea’s guidance that Abradatas pledges to co-operate in Cyrus’ every enterprise (6.3.48-49), and then proceeds not only to contribute a hundred chariots to Cyrus’ force (50) but also to take the most vulnerable battle position. Panthea says that she would prefer that he die a gallant soldier than live disgraced (6.4.6), and he pays heed: Xenophon devotes four chapters (7.1.29-32) to a dramatic account
of Abradatas’ courageous and effective action, which culminates in his
death as a man of valour (7.1.32). The Cilician, like Panthea, secures for
Cyrus her husband’s support, although (in keeping with the fact that the
pair are not indebted to Cyrus like the couple of Susa) this support is of a
more passive variety and without such tragic consequences. Pledges are
exchanged to ensure that the territory of Cilicia is not devastated further,
and the Cilicians provide more money for Cyrus’ troops (1.2.27). Hellas,
wife of Gongylus the Eretrian, fits much the same pattern too (Anabasis
7.8.8). It is she who entertains Xenophon in Mysia (no mention is made
of her husband or his whereabouts, though we imagine she must be acting
on his behalf), and she provides tremendous practical assistance: for she
advises Xenophon in precise military detail (7.8.9) as to a final action on
the Anabasis before Thibron takes over the leadership. In this way she is
responsible for the Greeks’ seizure of considerable booty that finally
places Xenophon in a position again to benefit others (καὶ ἄλλον ἡδὲ
ἐδοὺ ποιεῖν, 7.8.23)—and so be a good friend.

The expertise of the wives in establishing and preserving bonds of
φιλία is revealed in the context of their relations not only with the
powerful outsider, but also with their own husband. Panthea’s devotion to
Abradatas is central to Xenophon’s account. She repulsed Araspas’
advances, we are told, ‘and was true to her husband, although he was far
away, for she loved him devotedly’ (6.1.32). The impression of the
couple’s mutual φιλία is reinforced in the subsequent account through the
selection of snap-shots of emotive scenes. Although Xenophon makes

33 Nevertheless plundering of their territory still occurs: Xenophon also explores
the issues surrounding divided loyalties, and the compromises that the women,
especially Epyaxa and Panthea, endure for their efforts. Panthea, for example,
shows the philotimia characteristic of an ideal leader in being extremely conscious
of the favour she owes Cyrus. She wishes to be seen by others to act honourably
in this regard. But after her husband’s death, she berates herself (7.3.10),
regretting profoundly to have had to choose between the debt of φιλία owed to the
ideal leader, and that owed to her husband.

34 The joyful embrace of husband and wife when they are first reunited (6.1.47);
Panthea’s bedecking of Abradatas in golden armour made from her own jewellery
(6.4.2); her kissing of his chariot-box as he departs for battle (6.4.9); her holding
her dead husband’s head in her lap (7.3.5); and finally her death with her head
no explicit statement regarding the Cilician couple, the structure of his account and the symmetry of their roles likewise leaves an impression of partnership. The first record of Syennesis’ actual words (rather than merely his rumoured actions) marks the point at which he replaces his wife (who is not mentioned again) as the key negotiator with Cyrus. With the lines

for he said that he had never yet put himself into the hands of anyone who was more powerful than he was, and would not now go to Cyrus until his wife had won him over and he had received pledges (1.2.26)

Xenophon binds together the two portions of the account. The queen dominates the earlier stages of the story with Syennesis barely mentioned, while her husband dominates the later stages played out in his territory, yet here the two halves are joined with the suggestion that they are working together as a freedom-loving, barbarian pair. Symmetry in their roles is suggested in the way the account opens with the wife giving Cyrus χρήματα πολλά, apparently for his army (1.2.12), and closes with her husband giving χρήματα πολλά, explicitly 'for his army' (1.2.27). The contrast with the Herodotean wife of Intaphrenes (Histories 3.119), who chooses that Darius spare the life not of her husband but of her brother, is stark.

resting upon his chest (7.3.14), and the covering of the two bodies with a single cloak, as Panthea had directed (7.3.15).

35 A referee suggests it may be significant that Syennesis receives gifts from Cyrus at the end, whereas Epyaxa does not, and so perhaps we could view his condescending to have sex with her as a gift. I feel rather that the culminating gifts to her husband are also her own (she has been acting on behalf of both of them, after all), just as Abradatas is brought under obligation by Cyrus’ favour to Panthea. If we may compare Epyaxa’s situation with Panthea’s (as the narrative patterns appear to encourage us to do) then refraining from sex with her would be the greater gift. See also n.53 below. Cf. the tale reported in Plutarch’s Alexander, according to which ‘the finest and most princely favour’ that Alexander paid Darius’ female relatives was his respect of their chastity (21.5).
While Syennesis and Abradatas are represented as loyal partners of their wives, working in concert with them in negotiating with the powerful outsider, Alexander of Pherae (Hellenica 6.4.34-37) presents an absolute contrast. When he fails to be a loyal or supportive partner his wife turns to her brothers for help. Xenophon notes the dire effect of Alexander’s rule on the people of Thessaly, but the focus of his account is personal, on the man’s tyrannical behaviour within his household. Alexander’s wife’s part in his assassination is spelt out only once his death has been established as desirable, and so she is introduced not as a partner in tyranny (like Herodotean queens such as Amestris) but as the deviser of the deed and enactor of justice. She is vindicated further with the sketch of his arrival home drunk (6.4.36: information that is ominous in view of his generally menacing character), and with the record of two alleged reasons for her hatred of him, both of which suggest again his beastly nature. The first depicts a man who cuts the throat of his beautiful favourite because his wife pleads that the boy be released, flouting the moral code that one should listen to the entreaties of suppliants; the second, a man who undermines conjugal loyalty. In this second allegation—of those who say ‘that inasmuch as no children were being born to him of this woman, Alexander was sending to Thebes and trying to win as his wife (ξυνήστευε) the widow of Jason’ (37)—there seems a hint even at bigamy, unacceptable and barbaric behaviour to the Greeks: for a man might divorce an infertile wife without censure to remarry, but there is no suggestion here that the marriage be dissolved. Μνηστεύω is related to μνηστήρ, used often in the Odyssey of the suitors of Penelope, and thus lustful and debauched behaviour is evoked.

The dreadfulness of the couple’s relationship is illuminated further through the comparison it invites with the tale of Candaules’ murder by his wife,36 which in certain key differences reveals a considerable contrast between the character of the two queens. In the strange detail Xenophon provides of Alexander’s wife clutching the doorknocker as she waits for Alexander to die is a vivid suggestion of a desperate psychological

36 The motifs preserved in the Herodotean tale were perhaps part of a wider common tradition, but the similarity in detail suggests that Xenophon may well have had this specific version in mind. See Gray, Character (as in n.1), 71-2 for the main points of comparison.
condition: this woman has tolerated much before being driven to this extreme. While Candaules’ flaw was to love his wife too much (it was this that provoked him to display her naked), Alexander treated his wife not merely with callous neglect, if he wooed another woman, but also vindictively. It is he who allegedly killed an innocent underling, as Candaules’ wife might have done had Gyges chosen differently. Furthermore, the implied brutality recalls the cruelty suffered by Masistes’ virtuous wife (in Herodotus’ Histories) at the hands of another powerful outsider, Xerxes. Unlike Candaules’ dominant barbarian queen, Alexander’s wife is motivated not by a rationalistic desire for justice, but by a very human desperation. Moreover she works through her kin, using her brothers to carry out the deed, whereas Candaules’ wife overturns the social order in coercing a subject into killing his master and stealing the kingship. And while Gyges’ line is cursed as a result—an indication that his action is not divinely sanctioned—Xenophon’s narrative leaves the woman’s brother in secure possession of the throne at the end of the story, which serves tacitly to validate his rule. We are left with a vivid impression of a tyrant who undermined the partnerships both of husband and wife and of ruler and subject, and so deserved his fate. The Herodotean tale of Masistes and his wife is likewise a reverse story, telling of natural (in this case fraternal) ties of philia that are dissolved rather than forged, and of Xerxes’ transformation from caring kin to cruel outsider; although he, unlike Alexander, remains in control at the end.

As with Xenophon’s other foreign wives, Alexander’s is represented in relation to two different categories of man, but she is in partnership with her brothers against her husband: it is he who is initially situated in the role of powerful outsider (a role that is negated when he is

37.9.112. Xerxes was aware of what would ensue if he handed this woman over to Amestris: 9.111.

38. A Greek woman did have the right of recourse to her natal family if her marriage failed.

39. Immediately prior to the story of Xerxes’ love for Masistes’ wife, Herodotus tells of the king’s gratitude to the man who saved his brother’s life (9.107). The juxtaposition underlines the king’s fickleness.
assassinated and her brother becomes king). Where Panthea and Epyaxa negotiate with a powerful man to secure the good treatment of their husbands as well as themselves, Alexander’s wife negotiates with her brothers to secure her husband’s assassination. The husbands of Panthea and Epyaxa are supportive partners, and work together with their wives for their mutual benefit in securing good treatment from a powerful outsider; Alexander’s wife must turn to her brothers for support where her husband gives none. Rather than helping her to secure an alliance (which is not an option) they seek to get rid of the tyrannical man altogether and to win the sovereignty themselves. The brothers of Alexander’s wife are her agents. They commit the murder itself and take power in Alexander’s place, but she determines that this action must be taken and coerces them to execute it (6.4.36). Thus like Panthea and Epyaxa she exerts significant pressure on her male relations.

Xenophon himself—in his role as the gift-carrying, philia-seeking intermediary between the Greek mercenaries and the powerful outsider Seuthes in the Anabasis—serves as a helpful touchstone in assessing further the features that are unique to the pattern involving the wives. In his speech to Seuthes Xenophon, like the women, enters directly into the discourse of ideal relations, offering himself and his men as faithful friends (φιλους ... πιστος) to the king, noting that the soldiers desire that even more fervently than he, and indeed that they ‘are asking you for nothing more (οδεν δε προσαιτοντες), but rather giving themselves over to you and willing to labour and brave the first danger on your behalf’ (Anabasis 7.3.30-31). Again, the offer of friendship is matched with prospects of material gains: territory, horses, men and beautiful women. But the dynamic here is quite different. The backdrop of this spontaneous response on the part of a tipsy Xenophon to an unexpected dinner party custom is awkward rather than life-threatening: the Greeks are in a position of power vis-à-vis Seuthes, for they can offer the king the support he needs to regain his father’s territory, and failing that have other options open to them. In fact, the idealism of Xenophon’s speech sits quite jarringly alongside the practical reality of material advantage that has been the theme up till now. Events that follow reveal the futility of

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40 I thank one of the anonymous referees for this interesting comparison.
what seem to have been empty words: so far from its wanting nothing else from Seuthes, negotiations break down entirely when the army fails to receive sufficient monetary reward. The women, by contrast, understand Artemisia’s wisdom on the subject of matchmakers (Memorabilia 2.6.36): that above all else what they say must be true. The women conduct the discourse of ideal relations on a more ideal plane, retaining distance from what is nevertheless an underlying reality of utility. Their initial powerlessness obliges them to rely wholly on their personal skill at conducting human relations, and perhaps even assists in that diplomacy by ensuring that the men perceive in them no threat. Xenophon the commander fails in his objective: no genuine philia develops between him or his soldiers and Seuthes. He instead alienates both camps and finds himself (at Anabasis 7.6.10) in risk of his life.

**Ideal Rulers**

Xenophon’s foreign women prove to be ideal friends not only in their relationships with powerful outsiders and their husbands: their capacity for philia is underlined also through their characterisation in certain respects as ruling figures. For Xenophon the connection was natural: the best leaders of men were those most skilled at building relationships. This is how the techniques that come naturally to Theodote in pleasing her suitors—or to Panthea in relating to Araspas, or Mania to Pharnabazus—turn out to be much the same as those exercised by Xenophon’s Cyruses, for example, or his Jason of Pherae. These are the methods of the philanthropos leader, who shows appreciation of friends through simple kindnesses and thoughtfulness (visiting them in illness, for example, and gift-giving), and thus secures loyal friendship in return. In other ways too the women are characterised as skilled leaders in their own right. Along with the support provided by their husbands, their further

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41 At 7.2.35, for example, Xenophon demanded a detailed account of what Seuthes could offer each different section of the army.

42 See Due, Cyropaedia (as in n.3), 163-70 for the ideal leader’s philanthropia.
practical resources (which are those of any successful ruler: willing attendants, command of soldiers, considerable wealth, and so on) must culminate in real power, and specifically—as the tyrant’s advantages as enumerated by Simonides do likewise in the Hiero, 2.2—in a superb ability to reward friends. This capability renders Epyaxa useful to Cyrus and Mania toPharnabazus, and goes part way towards explaining why these women are well-treated by the respective powerful males: but their real achievement is to enshroud that reality in a form that brings out in the men the best behaviour in return. It is likewise his usefulness to his subjects that keeps Xenophon’s ideal ruler in power—and that same quality (ὡφέλεια) is most commonly ascribed by Xenophon to the man who is perhaps the prototype of his ideal-ruler model, Socrates himself.

All are portrayed, for example, surrounded by followers and loyal servants: Panthea’s maids encircle her in the opening scene, wailing in sympathy; her nurse is loyal to the end, dismayed by her mistress’s instructions but nevertheless carrying them out exactly; and her eunuchs slay themselves at her death, much as Cyrus the Younger’s eunuch does (Anabasis 1.8.29; cf. Deborah Gera, Xenophon’s Cyropaedia: Style, Genre and Literary Technique, Oxford [1993], 244). Mania is a fine military ruler who commands her men’s loyalty, improves their standard by giving rewards for achievement, and presides in person from her carriage over their successful seizure of several cities. In similar fashion the Cilician shows a personal interest in Cyrus’ soldiers, watching them from her carriage.

This is evoked with the mention of the two cities that housed most of Mania’s treasure (Hellenica 3.1.15), and implied in Epyaxa’s gift to Cyrus of so large a sum of money that it enabled him to back-pay his troops several months’ wages (Anabasis 1.2.12). Panthea has significant riches of her own which she puts to use without her husband’s knowledge (6.4.2) when she has golden armour made for him.

It is specifically the power to reward friends (and harm enemies) that caps the achievements of the Cyruses, too, e.g. Anabasis 1.9.11; Cyropaedia 8.7.7, 28.

See esp. Memorabilia 4.1.1; also, e.g., 3.8.1, 10.1, etc. The question of whether Xenophon’s model of the ideal ruler (of which many of his positive figures are variants) was fashioned after his perception of Socrates, or whether Xenophon’s representation of the philosopher was crafted in line with his own moralistic outlook, is interesting and perhaps unanswerable: see Gera, Xenophon’s Cyropaedia (as in n.43), 26 (and 27-131).
Mania alone of the women exercises actual rule, and in her case the narrative works specifically to evoke conventional tyrant story patterns.\textsuperscript{47} By thus accentuating her role as tyrant rather than woman or wife, it implies that she holds power in her own right, not merely by derivation of the authority invested in a man. In the second phase of her story (Hellenica 3.1.14), she is no longer represented as a mere subordinate ruling on behalf of a superior, or wife on behalf of a husband (there is no mention at all of Pharnabazus or Zenis), but rather as an autonomous ruling figure. The opening ("now when she was more than forty years old") suggests chronological separation from the preceding account, and perhaps also a parallel conceptual distance from her earlier portrayal: we are given the impression that Mania has been a successful ruler for a number of years. The focus of the narrative shifts from her relationship with Pharnabazus to her relationship with her son-in-law Meidias, who enters the tale for the first time at this point. Meidias, we are told, "was disturbed by certain people saying that it was a disgraceful thing (αίσχρόν) for a woman to be the ruler, while he was in private station" (γυναίκα μὲν αρχείν, αὐτὸν δ' ἰδιώτην εἶναι)—information forewarning of his motivation for the terrible deed that is to follow. In making explicit this motivation, Xenophon foregrounds the ruler–subject dynamic that to Meidias characterises his relationship with Mania. In his conception of himself as ἰδιώτης (private citizen) in contrast to ruler, the idio–tyrannos dichotomy (that forms the skeletal framework of the Hiero, and which Xenophon there explores at great length) seems specifically to be recalled.

We then hear of Mania’s ‘guarding herself carefully, as is proper in a tyranny’ (14), but trusting Meidias because he is kin. A μὲν ... δὲ construction (τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους μάλα φυλαττομένης αὐτῆς, ἐκείνῳ δὲ πιστευούσης καὶ ἀσταχέωμένης) spells out the contrast between prudent guarding against others, and trust of the particular individual who

\textsuperscript{47} Xenophon could envisage a good tyrant: see, e.g., Aliran Gelenczey-Mihalcz, ‘Thoughts on Tyranny: Xenophon’s Hiero’ AAntiHung 49 (2000), 113-21. The Hiero, in which Simonides presents the tyrant of Syracuse with a vision of the ideal ruler he could become, provides a useful concentration of tyrant narrative patterning.
XENOPHON’S FOREIGN WIVES

is let through the guard. The motif of the tyrant’s guard recurs in the
Hiero, and is associated in life and literature with the conventional
tyrant.\textsuperscript{48} So too is the phenomenon of trusted individuals who may pass
through a bodyguard—especially in the context of the betrayal of that trust
in assassination attempts.\textsuperscript{49} Together these motifs foreground a ruler’s
very real dilemma in balancing the need to conduct relationships, with the
need for personal protection. Mania trusts Meidias and lets him past her
guard, and so does indeed die the archetypal tyrant’s death: for she is
assassinated, and by a trusted kinsman, presumably in a private room: we
are told merely that Meidias ‘went in and strangled her’.

This bodyguard/trusted individual motif is present in the narratives
of all the wives. To Mania’s letting down her literal bodyguard to her
son-in-law we may add her initial journey to Pharnabazus in the protection
of her \textit{stolos} but subsequent rendering herself vulnerable in an apparently
private meeting. The guarded (in a different sense) Panthea lets down her
metaphorical guard when she opens up emotionally to Araspas, in
showing herself grateful for his care and attentive to him in sickness or
need.\textsuperscript{50} Meidias’ abuse of Mania’s trust and undermining of a natural
bond of \textit{philia} towards kin is made a focus of that account, much as
Araspas’ flouting of his bond of care is foregrounded by Artabazus’
condemnatory speech (6.1.35: she is his \textit{παρακαταθήκη}, entrusted to his
care). Thus Xenophon’s emphasis in both narratives is on the
dreadfulness of such abuse of the woman’s openness, which (the pattern
implies) is an act of \textit{megaloprepeia}\textsuperscript{51} that deserves a response in kind.

\textsuperscript{48} E.g., in the Hiero: 2.8, 4.9, 5.3, 6.10–11, 10.4. Cf. Herodotus 1.59; Thucydides
6.58; Plato \textit{Republic} 567e; Livy 1.49.2; and so on.

\textsuperscript{49} Hiero 1.38. Cf. Darius’ words at Histories 3.72 (proved correct at 3.77, when he
and the fellow conspirators are let through the royal guards).

\textsuperscript{50} A variation on the pattern is perhaps to be seen in the way Abradatas, trusted on
account of his being Panthea’s husband, is allowed to pass through Cyrus’ sentries
and then his wife’s personal guard (Araspas having left), \textit{Cyropaedia} 6.1.46.

\textsuperscript{51} ‘Magnificence’, but in this context, ‘trust of friends without fear of deceit’: Gray, \textit{Character} (as in n.1), 3. The quality is characteristic, in fact, of good
The pattern underlines the fact of the woman’s trust, which she offers for the sake of (developing) *philia*, and the fact too that she makes these decisions on her own. The same pattern appears to be present in Epyaxa’s case, for she likewise has a bodyguard, and juxtaposed with the bodyguard is the rumour of her close communication with Cyrus: ‘the Cilician woman had a guard about her of Cilicians and Aspendians; and it was said that Cyrus had relations with her’ (εἰχε δὲ ἡ Κιλίσσα φυλακὴν περὶ αὐτὴν Κιλικας καὶ Ἀσπενδίους· ἐλέγετο δὲ καὶ συγγενέσθαι Κύρον τῇ Κιλίσσῃ). In coming to Cyrus with gifts and letting him past her bodyguard, though she is a lone married woman and he an unknown man, she shows that she trusts him. That trust becomes clearer in the ensuing narrative. The similar narrative pattern suggests that her trusting openness may also be read as *megaloprepeia* (a reading lent poignancy by the fact that her generosity will not be altogether reciprocated52) rather than as sexual forwardness53—in which case the sensational rumour among Xenophon’s fellow soldiers on the Anabasis of the Cilician woman’s visit to Cyrus and their subsequent relationship is transformed into a tale of developing *philia*. We can see how Xenophon has fleshed out the bare bones of the circumstances—of married woman serving as envoy to powerful unrelated male—in line with his philosophical interests: the woman becomes a bearer of gifts and of friendship (in her own right, and on behalf of her husband). Whatever the truth-status of the soldiers’ rumours, Xenophon chooses to emphasise the *philia* she offers, much as he does even in the case of the courtesan Theodote, whose services are styled ‘gifts’ (*Memorabilia* 3.11.14) and whose intellectual and emotional companionship are the focus of that account.


52 Cf. n.33 above.

53 Indeed, when the verb is next used it records Cyrus’ negotiations with her husband (1.2.27; the reader is aware that Xenophon’s meeting with the king, too, involved that same word), and seems a further way in which the king and queen’s roles are made to mirror one another.
XENOPHON’S FOREIGN WIVES

Xenophon’s narrative technique does regularly work in this way to bring into question or undermine simplistic and conventional views of the women, and of male-female polarity generally. The frequent focalisation of the portraits through male onlookers expresses explicitly male views of female power, and so brings into play obvious gender stereotyping, and yet equally conveys for the reader the power of the women’s charisma, in that it re-enacts the effect of their presence upon men. Araspas’ description of Panthea’s effect upon him and his companions when they first catch sight of her, and then the way all eyes are drawn to her when Abradatas leaves for war, bring to mind Simonides’ vision of the ideal ruler whose divine-seeming aura and beautiful appearance draw the gazes of all. There is a hint of the supernatural about Panthea, too, in Araspas’ and the others’ conviction that such a woman ‘has never before been born a mortal, nor even come from mortal parents’ (5.1.7), and then in the way that his assertion that human beauty (κάλλος ανθρώπου) could not overwhelm him (5.1.9) is followed by his falling in love. The impression is heightened with the first mention of the woman’s name, for ‘Panthea’ means ‘altogether divine’, and bears an odd resemblance to the names both of the archetypal Pandora, ‘gift of all (the gods),’ and Theodote, ‘a gift of god’. The sexual appeal of Panthea and Theodote invites a reading in terms of the leader’s alluring quality, for although often contrasted with philia, eros can also be its ultimate form, as Simonides’ words imply: the poet tells Hiero that if he will transform himself into an enlightened ruler, οὐ μόνον φιλοῖαν ἄν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔρως ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων (‘you will not only be loved, but adored by mankind,’ Hiero 11.11). Theodote, like Cyrus, is a figure of eros, and she, like him, renders those she deals with her willing subjects (much as Araspas comes to attend on Panthea, 5.1.18): captivated by her beauty and so enslaved by desire, the men ironically serve her. The tale plays explicitly with this question of power relations. Both Theodote and

54 Xenophon believed that the ability to rule willing subjects is virtually divine (e.g. Oeconomicus 21.12).

55 James Tatum, Imperial Fiction (as in n.3), 178-9, reads the Cyropaedia in these terms: ‘In this love story, each person has fallen into his or her place around Cyrus, the ruler as eromenos ... In the most practical sense, the only Eros in the Cyropaedia is Cyrus himself’.
Socrates have a sort of magical power over others that draws others to them. She at the beginning attracts artists and onlookers, and he at the end a trail of followers; and at its close each claims the right to use Socrates’ magical wheel to draw the other. Indeed, Theodote emerges as a parallel to the philosopher, an expert in philia like he is, and doing a task much like his.

But although ‘Panthea’ recalls two women who embody the dangers of eros, the name serves ultimately to emphasise the fact that this woman, unlike those, does not exploit her sexuality (for her marital fidelity extends to a time when her husband is far away and may never be seen again, much as Mania’s extends beyond the grave). She instead offers a genuine gift of friendship, and quickly proves to the king that she may be better use to him as a friend than merely as a beautiful concubine. Indeed, Xenophon’s foreign queens, so unlike their several scandalously lustful and sexually potent counterparts in Herodotus’ Histories, remain paragons of sophrosune.

In a similar fashion in the tale of Mania, Xenophon recalls motifs and story-patterns characteristic of famous eastern ruling widows, but then transforms them in a way that illuminates her distinctiveness. Most earlier widow narratives capitalise, for example, on the sensational and paradoxical aspect of manly female rule (a direction alluded to in Pharnabazus’ decision ‘that the woman must be satrap’). However by the time Meidias enters this story, with his conventional notions of proper gender roles, Xenophon has already had Mania show just how ill-founded they are: how much better she is, even in traditional male endeavours,

56 Cf. Cyrus the Elder’s belief that rulers should enchant (καταγοητεύειν) their subjects, Cyropaedia 8.1.40.

57 We need only to recall Artaynte’s affair with Xerxes (9.108-112), Atossa’s bedroom persuasion of Darius (3.133-134), or the ominous dreams about Mandane’s excessive fertility (1.107). The royal wife of Masistes, who remains lovingly united with her husband in opposition to Xerxes (9.111-113), is a conspicuous exception. Candaules’ wife is of course also a model of sophrosune, horrified to have been seen naked—but that concern leads to her exchanging her husband for another!

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than both her husband before her and the other satraps, while still retaining her womanly sophrosune. The conclusion of the tale, with Dercylidas’ quip to Meidias (the point of which being that he has no right to rule over others, but only over the small piece of property that was his father’s, 3.1.28), reiterates the notion central to Xenophon’s thinking on leadership, that authority to rule derives from ability not from emblems of rule.58

Cartledge’s description of reader response to Xenophon’s narrative in terms of two successive takes, the second of which reveals his ‘subtext and intertext’, is helpful.59 At first sight the surface of his narrative perhaps mollifies the insecurities of a traditional Greek audience concerning independent women, in that it names the women in accordance with Greek forensic convention,60 characterises them as intermediaries (thus framed within a context of male control), even portrays them sympathetically as having distinctly Greek womanly sophrosune. However the deeper narrative structure and content is more radical. It is the woman each time who is represented as the initiator of action: the power she secures derives not from her husband’s authority, but from her personal initiative, most dramatically in the case of Alexander’s wife. The ‘tyrant aspects’ of the women, especially Mania, contextualise and politicise their portrayal as ideal rulers by underlining the political and military realities of the role they play, whether as actual ruler or as

58 Memorabilia 3.9.10; cf. Oeconomicus 21.11-12.

59 E.g., on Mania: ‘At first sight ... Xenophon’s Mania is a latterday Artemisia ... At second sight, however—and this was surely Xenophon’s subtext and intertext—his Mania was not at all equivalent to Herodotus’ infinitely more subversive and transgressive Artemisia’, ‘A Touch of the Other’ (as in n.6), 8-9. (See Cartledge too for the disjunction between the connotations of Mania’s name and her ‘wholly positive’ portrayal, ibid. 8.)

60 I.e., as ‘the wife of x’. Cf. D. Schaps, ‘The Woman Least Mentioned: Etiquette and Women’s Names’ CQ 27 (1977), 323-30: in oratory, respectable married women were ideally identified in this manner. (In other genres they were named more freely: C. Schnurr-Redford, Frauen im klassischen Athen: Sozialer Raum und reale Bewegungsfreiheit, Berlin, 1996, 127-8). As a widow Mania’s position is different, yet she too is nevertheless first introduced as Zenis’ wife.
diplomatic envoy. It depicts them also as solo actors in their own right, influential through their own doing.

Thus these women are characterised in an interwoven manner as intermediaries, friends, and ideal rulers: they are relationship-builders par excellence. They are differentiated from others of Xenophon’s women by the very real-worldly context of their negotiations and of the influence they win. The ruler representation may be explained partly as issuing from historical reality: women of the East had in Xenophon’s time the possibility of exercising a significant degree of rule, whether in a satrapy or even in the empire (witness Parysatis), and whether through their influence with a ruler husband or son, or themselves ruling, like Mania, in their husband’s stead after his death. Persian royal women undertook travels, in a private or an official capacity, independently of their husbands. They accompanied the men on military campaigns. Mania undoubtedly did have a bodyguard and a murderous son-in-law; and Xenophon perhaps saw the Cilician when she reviewed the Greek army, and heard the rumours about her relationship with Cyrus. However the combination of intermediary and tyrant-ruler patterning, which fits so well with Xenophon’s philia-based philosophy of leadership and seems intended to further the portrayal of the women as ideal rulers, suggests that he has moulded his material considerably. Others of Xenophon’s women emerge as natural leaders in certain respects: Ischomachus’ wife has striking real-world leadership analogies applied to her, and like her housekeeper exercises rule within the oikos (even if that picture is

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61 As in Parysatis’ case. While the extent of female dominance over the Persian king is undoubtedly exaggerated in the Greek authors, these women do seem to have had a considerable degree of influence behind the throne on all sorts of matters, and also significant economic independence through their personal wealth: see Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia* (as in n.26). Parysatis backed Cyrus’ attempt on the throne, allowing his troops to encamp in her villages (*Anabasis* 1.4.9). Royal (and probably noble: Brosius, ibid. 200) Achaemenid women might have their own centres of manufacture and control large workforces (ibid. 123-82).

62 Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia* (as in n.26), 91-3.

63 Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia* (as in n.26), 87-91.
complicated by the extra-textual knowledge Xenophon’s audience had of the unruly woman she went on to become\textsuperscript{64}). But what seems unique here is the characterisation of the women as independent actors (in an economic and more general sense), and the association of that independence with the status of wife.\textsuperscript{65} For as we have seen, the narratives emphasise much more distinctly their status as wife than their foreignness—a consequence, perhaps, of the actual Greek ethnicity of some of the wives, which along with the geographical proximity to Athens of Alexander’s, challenges readers to draw comparisons also with their more thoroughly Greek counterparts. Hellas’ name underscores most emphatically that Greek connection.

We have seen that the patterns that envelop the foreign wives span three works of different genres and compositional periods, though all are ‘worked up’ to different literary ends,\textsuperscript{66} tempting readers to draw connections between them. In this they support a view of Xenophon’s literary production as being characterised by unity.\textsuperscript{67} We may imagine

\textsuperscript{64} For the real-life Chrysilla’s future career, and its bearing on an interpretation of the \textit{Oeconomicus}, see most recently Christopher Pelling, \textit{Literary Texts and the Greek Historian} (London & New York, 2000), 244-5 and Simon Goldhill, \textit{Foucault’s Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality} (Cambridge, 1995), 139-41. This extratextual dimension makes all the more convincing Pelling’s argument (ibid. 239-45) that many of the work’s apparently enlightened views on the wife’s potential may be read as ‘illuminating Ischomachus’ rhetorical strategy as much as Xenophon’s convictions’ (240), and the \textit{Oeconomicus} as a whole as ‘investigating not only household management but also the rhetoric of masculine control, exploring the strategies whereby a male can induce an impressionable wife to acquiesce in her role’ (241).

\textsuperscript{65} Theodote is clearly economically independent: richly dressed, with matching mother and maids at her side, living in a lavishly furnished house (\textit{Memorabilia} 3.11.4); but that for a courtesan was not astonishing.

\textsuperscript{66} The accounts of Mania and Panthea are both prominently worked up pieces of their respective larger narratives, but even the account of Epyaxa, with its brevity and obscurity, is likewise carefully tailored to the stretch of the \textit{Anabasis} in which it appears.
Xenophon gathering stories from all sorts of sources (Spartan, Athenian, even Iranian) throughout his life, and then recording what the tradition, and his own memory, had by then made of them, infusing those patterns with details exploring his philosophical interest in ideal leadership. The basic foreign-woman-as-intermediary pattern perhaps already structured the material as it reached Xenophon: it appears to reflect the historical role of women in Greek society (as link between male households, bringers of dowries in marriage, and so on), shaped to a foreign context. Alternatively the bare bones of the pattern perhaps arose simply from the historical visit of a woman such as Epyaxa to Cyrus. The pattern then struck Xenophon as an attractive vehicle for his own concerns and so was used and developed by him. Perhaps Xenophon found women to be particularly well-suited to the application of his theory. To judge from these portraits, their manner may have seemed to him to be more attentive, deferential, diplomatic and appealing than that of men. The Greek mind does appear to have conceived of women as natural gift-givers—bringing a dowry in marriage, associated in literature with treasure, and coming themselves as gifts in the marital alliances forged between patrilineages. They were prominently involved in the religious life of the polis, perhaps more so than men, as gift-givers to the gods. Women, the gift-givers, were also intermediaries: they forged bonds of goodwill between families, or between mankind and the gods. They may well have intrigued Xenophon as natural experts in the requirements of the philia relationship.

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67 Cf. Cartledge, ‘A Touch of the Other’ (as in n.6), 14: Xenophon’s literary manner remains largely the same in Hellenica, Cyropaedia and Oeconomicus; W.E. Higgins, Xenophon the Athenian (Albany, 1977); Due, Cyropaedia (as in n.2), 185.

68 In Homeric marriage the girl herself was at times considered the counter-gift (in which case no dowry accompanied her): M.I. Finley, ‘Marriage, sale and gift in the Homeric World’ (originally published in Revue internationale des droits de l’antiquité, 1955), in M.I Finley, Economy and Society in Ancient Greece (London, 1981), 241; cf. W.K. Lacey, The Family in Classical Greece (London, 1968), 41; and in the Achaemenid context, still in Xenophon’s time, a royal daughter might be offered as part of a gift in return for services to the king: Brosius, Women in Ancient Persia (as in n.26), 76; cf. 190.