Iranian Wives and their Roles in Macedonian Royal Courts

When, in 324 BC, Alexander ordered the mass marriage of seventy of his *hetairoi* and Iranian brides, drawn from the noblest Persian and Median families, he was aiming at unifying his Greco-Macedonian and Persian elites (A.7.4.4ff, cf. P.70.3), following the policy he had adopted earlier with his marriage to Roxane in 327 (C.8.4.25). The reaction of the Companions to this mass-marriage is not recorded, but it seems likely that they regarded it as a whim of Alexander’s which they could not afford to refuse.

This view is supported by the fact that most of these marriages do not seem to have long outlasted Alexander’s death,² by the hostility of the Macedonians to the prospect of a half-barbarian heir (C.10.6.13),³ and the hostility of the Macedonians to Alexander’s adoption of the Persian

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The following abbreviations have been used in this article: A. = Arrian Anabasis; C. = Q. Curtius Rufus; D. = Diodorus Siculus 17; J. = Justin Epitome of Trogus; P. = Plutarch Alexander; ME = Metz Epitome.


³ Paul McKechnie, ‘Manipulation of Themes in Quintus Curtius Rufus Book 10’ *Historia* 48 (1999), 53, points out that this view is not attested in other sources and contradicts what Ptolemy said in 311 on the Satrap Stele: E. Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy* (London, 1927), 28-32. J.13.2.9 expresses similar views, but attributes them to Meleager. As McKechnie says, such views are not implausible for Macedonians to have held, but the evidence that they did hold them is poor.
custom of mixed dining with Persian noblewomen present.\textsuperscript{4} If Macedonian men reacted with hostility to the idea of Persian women acquiring respectable positions in their households, how did these women react, and what sort of roles were they able to play in Greco-Macedonian life and politics?

We have a problem in evaluating these questions because we have little information on the few Iranian women about whom anything at all is known. We do know something about the three wives of Alexander, Roxane, Stateira and Parysatis and one mistress, Barsine. Two other wives of successors and later kings are known in some detail: Apama, wife of Seleukos and Amastris, wife of Krateros and later of Lysimachos. Moreover, much of the information about them concerns the symbolic importance of the women and their value as pawns in the relationships between their men-folk. Very little survives about the attitudes and actions of the women themselves.

However, it seems unlikely that Persian women, who came from a society in which women controlled their own property and could exercise political influence,\textsuperscript{5} even though that society was polygamous, would have been willing to be confined to the households of their new husbands. Macedonian society itself gave a more visible and active part to its womenfolk than that of Athens, even though a woman’s role was not the equal of a man’s.\textsuperscript{6} The Persian wives would have had some possibilities of influencing events outside the household, if they wished, and their background would make them think this right.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{4} Maria Brosius, \textit{Women in Ancient Persia}, (Oxford, 1996), 96. C. 6. 2. 2ff regards these women as \textit{captivae}, and so declassed, but Alexander’s treatment of Ochus’ granddaughter suggests that he was adopting Persian attitudes, not Greek ones.

\textsuperscript{5} Brosius, \textit{Women in Ancient Persia} (as in n.4), 84, 87, 122, 180, 200.

\end{footnotes}
The one Iranian marriage which is known to have endured was that of Seleukos to Apama, the daughter of Spitamenes, who had been Alexander’s most serious opponent in the conquest of the eastern parts of the Achaemenid empire. Her importance to Seleukos’ regime is clear. She was the mother of his heir and successor, Antiochos I, and cities were named after her throughout the kingdom. Of course, while the naming of cities made royal women public figures, the power remained in the hands of the men who named the cities. In addition, his marriage to Apama may have been of assistance to Seleukos in winning over the province of Bactria from which her family had come, although we must remember that Justin (15.4.11) says that Seleukos conquered the Bactrians. Seleukos cannot have won over Bactria or its neighbours just on the strength of his Bactrian marriage. Tarn has shown that Apama probably had Achaemenid ancestry, and so she may have been of symbolic value for Seleukos elsewhere in Iran.


9 Bevan, House of Seleucus (as in n.2), 31. Antiochos was born by the end of 324: Wilcken ‘Apama(1)’ RE 1 (1984), 2662.

10 Appian Syriake 57, 295; cf. Bevan, House of Seleucus (as in n.2), n.4 on p. 31. On the naming of cities after oneself or one’s kin as a royal prerogative, see James L. O’Neil, ‘The Creation of New Dynasties after Alexander the Great’ Prudentia 32.2 (2000), 123 n.16.


12 Grainger, Seleukos Nikator (as in n.1), 105f, 148, 152.

13 Coin evidence suggests that there may have been Iranian rebels ruling in Bactria before Seleukos’ conquest: Grainger, Seleukos Nikator (as in n.1), 105.

14 W.W. Tarn, ‘Queen Ptolemais and Apama’ CQ 23 (1929), 140.
There is no doubt that Apama was a major figure in Seleukos’ regime, and that she was valuable to that regime. But little evidence survives on Apama herself. As is the case for many other early Seleucid women, we do not even seem to have a portrait of her.\footnote{Grainger, \textit{Seleukos Nikator} (as in n.1), 139.}

There is no evidence for her participation in Babylonian rituals, as there is for Seleukos’ second wife Stratonike.\footnote{Amelie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, ‘Aspects of Seleucid Royal ideology: The Cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa’ \textit{JHS} 111 (1991), 84.} However, our information on the Seleucids in Babylonia is not extensive, and what does survive probably represents the activities of local supporters of the monarchy, rather than the decisions of the monarchs themselves.\footnote{Susan Sherwin-White, ‘Seleucid Babylonia’ in Amelie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White (eds.) \textit{Hellenism in the East} (London, 1987), 9.}

Nor do we have any letters from Apama to Greek cities, like that of Laodike III to Iasos, conferring benefactions in support of her husband Antiochos III’s policies.\footnote{John Ma, \textit{Antiochos III and the Cities of Asia Minor} (Oxford, 1999), 217.} However \textit{I. Didyma} 480, a decree of 298 BC in honor of Seleukos’ rebuilding of the temple, mentions that Apama had shown goodwill to Milesians. She had done so to the Milesian soldiers in Seleukos’ service and to the ambassadors Seleukos sent to discuss the rebuilding of the temple.\footnote{Grainger, \textit{Seleukos Nikator} (as in n.1) gives the inscription as \textit{OGIS} 213, which is \textit{Didyma} 479, not 480, but this is an error.}

As the inscription records Antiochos’ donation of a stoa, which is to furnish income for temple, it must be before Antiochos’ departure, with Stratonike, for the upper Satrapies, and hence before Corupedium. Miletos will have been outside the boundaries of Seleukos’ rule at the time of Apama’s goodwill to the city. The mention of Apama in connection...
with Antiochos’ gift implies that she was seen as having encouraged her son’s benefaction. So we can see that Apama did play the role of benefactress to Greeks, even if on a smaller scale than Stratonike was to do, and that she did so for a city which was not yet part of Seleukos’ kingdom.

However, Apama was probably dead at the time of Seleukos’ marriage to his second wife Stratonike in 298, later in the same year as the Didyma inscription, so there would have been little time after Ipsos in which she could have communicated with Greeks and Greek cities. Beloch believes that Apama was discarded as Seleukos’ wife when he came down to the Mediterranean and married a Macedonian wife, Stratonike. However, as the city of Celaenae in Greater Phrygia, cannot have been renamed Apamea until after the battle of Corupedium, Apama, whether still alive or not, must still have been held in honour by the dynasty as late as 281 BC.

We can be sure of Apama’s symbolic value to Seleukos, but it remains uncertain how active a role she played in his kingdom. It is unlikely that Seleukos maintained the marriage only for its political values to him—he kept Apama with him while he was satrap of Babylon and


21 Malalas 9.11 (198) says so. Malalas has made a number of errors in this passage, such as making Apama a Parthian, but his statement on Apama’s death seems plausible: Ogden, *Polygamy* (as in n.2), 119. Tarn ‘Queen Ptolemais and Apama’ (as in n.14), 139, believes Apama was still queen consort after Stratonike married Antiochos, on the grounds that Seleukos must have had a consort after Antiochos married Stratonike, but he does not mention the evidence of Malalas.


23 Stephanus of Byzantium sv. Απάμεια; cf. Livy 38.13.5, who mistakenly calls Apama Seleukos’ sister, not wife.
when he fled to Ptolemy in Egypt—well before he had any possibility of bringing Bactria, or other parts of Iran, under his control. Nor can the attempt to link the Seleucids with their predecessors by claiming that Apama was the daughter of Alexander and Roxane, who was also claimed to have been the daughter of Darius III, have been an advantage to Seleukos in this early period: too many people would have known it was impossible.

Alexander’s wife Roxane is also best known for her symbolic value, rather than for her own views and actions. In her marriage to Alexander in 327, we are told of Alexander’s infatuation and the success of the marriage in ending the Sogdian rebellion, but nothing about Roxane’s own point of view. Roxane had been under Alexander’s power for some months before the wedding, so the marriage was probably intended to solve Alexander’s problems with the Sogdians, rather than

24 Grainger, Seleukos Nikator (as in n.1), 52.

25 Tarn ‘Queen Ptolemais and Apama’ (as in n.14), 141; Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), 119. cf. OGIS 388-401 on Antiochos of Commagene’s claim to descent from Alexander the Great through the Seleucids.

26 The story must have been widely accepted by the late third century, when a citizen of Megalopolis, named Alexander, who wished to pretend he was descended from Alexander the Great, named his daughter Apama (Livy 35.47.5). But Seleukos’ wife Apama was of the same generation as Roxane, and could not have been her daughter. This story must have been invented after the contemporaries of Alexander were no longer alive. Cf. Tarn ‘Queen Ptolemais and Apama’ (as in n.14), 141.

27 A. 4.19.5-20.4; C. 8.1.23-30.


29 F. Briant ‘Alexander’ Encyclopaedia Iranica I (London, 1985), 828; Holt, Alexander and Bactria (as in n.8), 53, 67f; Bosworth, Alexander and the East (as in n.8), 100, 145.
being a sudden love match. The marriage was celebrated in Macedonian fashion (C.8.4.27), so it was meant to show Macedonian dominance over the Sogdians,\textsuperscript{30} while showing them there was a place for them in the new order.

Oxyartes joined Alexander’s side after the marriage,\textsuperscript{31} and he assisted his new son-in-law by persuading Chorienes to surrender his stronghold (A.4.21.6). A year later, in 326, Oxyartes was appointed as satrap of the Parapamisadai,\textsuperscript{32} a position he kept after Alexander’s death.\textsuperscript{33} We also learn that Oxyartes’ three sons had been in Alexander’s service from 327 (C.8.4.21f.). Of these sons, we only know further details about Itanes, who was promoted to serve in the cavalry agema in 324 (A.7.6.5).\textsuperscript{34} We know more about the benefits the marriage brought to Roxane’s kin than we know about her own life.

The death of her child in India in 326 is recorded only in the Metz Epitome 70,\textsuperscript{35} and we know of the fact that she was pregnant at the time of Alexander’s death.\textsuperscript{36} But we learn of this because of the consequences for

\textsuperscript{30} Bosworth, Commentary (as in n.28), 131.

\textsuperscript{31} A. 4.20.4. see Berve, ‘Oxyartes’ RE 18 (1942), 2019.

\textsuperscript{32} A. 6.15.3; C. 10.6.9; D. 18.3.3.

\textsuperscript{33} Diodorus 18. 39; Arrian Successors; Felix Jacoby, Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker (Leiden and New York, 1950-99) (hereinafter FGrH), 186 F9.26; Dexippus FGrH 100 F8.

\textsuperscript{34} Berve ‘Itanes’ RE SupplB 4 (1924), 800.

\textsuperscript{35} George Cary, The Medieval Alexander (New York and London, 1987), 59 shows the Metz Epitome is an independent source. The modern writers who mention this event tend to be sceptical. Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), 44 says Roxane had a miscarriage; Carney, Women and Monarchy in Macedonia (Norman, OK, 2000), 107 says Roxane ‘may have born a child who died’.

\textsuperscript{36} C. 10.6.9; P. 77.6; J. 13.2-5; Arrian after Alexander = FGrH 156 F1(9); Pseudo-Callisthenes III 33, ME 115.
the Macedonian throne, just as we hear of a proposal that Perdikkas should marry the widow.37

Arrian (7.27.3) reports a story, which he considers unlikely, that Roxane prevented the dying Alexander throwing himself in the Euphrates, so that people would believe he had been carried up to heaven.38 This story is incompatible with the main information on Alexander's death, which has him unable to move or speak as he lay dying,39 but even if we must reject it, it shows that some contemporaries thought that Roxane may have played a more active role.

Finally, Plutarch (77.6) records that after Alexander's death, Roxane, with the knowledge of Perdikkas the Regent, lured Alexander's second wife Stateira and her sister to her quarters and had them murdered. This falls within the Greek tradition of portraying Persian women as cruel savages, but the threat to Roxane of a royal wife (Stateira was the daughter of Darius III), makes the story plausible.40 Perdikkas’ position

37 ME 118. Waldemar Heckel, *The Last Days and Testament of Alexander* (Stuttgart, 1988), 52, points out that the Macedonians were hostile to Persian marriages; Julius Valerius III 33 (1401) has Roxane’s future partner to be the otherwise unknown Phanocrates, who was to be governor of Babylon. This downgrades Roxane’s importance. The name Phanocrates is not in Helmut Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographische Grundlage* (Munich, 1926). As Ogden, *Polygamy* (as in n.2), 46 shows, Alexander and his Macedonian predecessors had practiced levirate marriages to establish claims to the succession in both Macedonia and Persia, and Alexander's placing Roxane's hand in Perdikkas' would have been in this tradition. Roxane serves here as a symbol of legitimate succession, not an agent in her own right.

38 Also found in Pseudo-Callisthenes III 32, and ME 102.


40 See Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia* (as in n.4), 1, on Greek representation of Persian royal women, and Ogden, *Polygamy* (as in n.2), 45f on the threat to Roxane's position. Carney, *Women and Monarchy* (as in n.37), 146, finds the story plausible, but suggests the second victim would have been Parysatis, Ochus’ daughter, not Stateira’s sister Drypetis (110f.).
was not secure until Roxane’s child was born, so his assistance for Roxane’s murderous action was intended to protect his position as much as hers.

After 323, we hear little about Roxane. Strabo 17.1.8 (794) records that she left Egypt for Macedon, along with her son and Philip Arrhidaeus, after the failure of Perdikkas’ attempt to recover Alexander’s body. She was with Olympias in Pydna in 316 and sent with her son under guard to Amphipolis (Diodorus 19.52.4; cf. Justin 14.6.13). Finally she is named as being killed by Cassander in 311, along with her son Alexander, in order to secure Cassander’s ambitions to be king.

If Roxane had not been carried westwards with her son, but had been able to call on the support of her father Oxyartes and other kinsmen in the east, she might have been a more effective defender of her child’s interests. But while our sources largely describe Roxane as acted upon, rather than acting herself, a few traces remain of Roxane’s own history.

Roxane’s history is preserved largely as an example of a pawn, of symbolic value to her husband and others, but some evidence survives to show that she had been active (or could be thought to have been active) on her own behalf. If she had remained near to her kinsfolk, she might have been able to defend her interests more effectively, but in that case Roxane, like Apama, would have been outside the areas visible to the Greek historians, and we would probably know no more about her own

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42 D. 19.105.2; J. 13.2.5; Pausanias 9.7.2.

43 E.D. Carney, Women and Monarchy (as in n.35), 148, sees Roxane as deserted by her father.

44 Antipater’s decision to take the kings back to Macedon (Arrian after Alexander = FGrH 156 F11[44]), took Roxane to the opposite end of the empire. But she was probably already too far from her father in Babylon or Asia Minor.
life than we do about Apama's. In any case, Roxane was not able to
defend her interests as effectively as Olympias or Adea-Eurydike.45

Alexander's later wives were even less visible as agents in their
own right. Darius III's daughter Stateira46 is known only as a marriage
partner, both potential and actual, for Alexander. Darius offered her hand
in marriage to Alexander in 331, but Alexander refused (D.54.2;
J.11.12.3). Alexander said that there could no more be two kings than two
suns in the sky.47 In addition, Darius' offer implied his continued
suzerainty in the West, which was unacceptable to Alexander,48 and
marriage to a Persian lady was still unthinkable for him.49

However, the possession of Darius' womenfolk was still important
for Alexander's image, as can be seen from the funeral he gave to Darius'
wife Stateira (C.4.10.18).50 The daughter Stateira was left at Susa with
orders to learn the Greek language (D.67.1). On his return from India,
Alexander did marry Stateira as part of his mass marriage at Susa.51 He

45 Carney, Women and Monarchy (as in n.35), 147.

46 for her name see P. 70.1, D. 107.6 and J. 12.10.9. A. 7.8.4 calls her Barsine,
which seems to be a confusion with Artabazos' daughter—Berve, Alexanderreich
(as in n.37), no. 722 on 318. Kaerst, 'Barsine (1)' RE 3 (1894), 24, accepted the
name Barsine, and Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), 84f., suggests that an original
Barsine may have been renamed Stateira to represent her mother symbolically.

47 D. 54.5; Briant, 'Alexander the Great' Encyclopaedia Iranica I (London, 1985),
827; A.B. Bosworth, 'Alexander the Great; part one' ch 16 CAH 62 (Cambridge,
1994), 808.

48 Briant 'Alexander' (as in n.47), 827.

49 A.B. Bosworth, Conquest and Empire (Cambridge, 1988), 64.

50 Bosworth, Conquest (as in n.49), 54.

51 A. 7.4.7; P. 70.3; D. 107.6; J. 12.10.9.
also married Parysatis, daughter of Artaxerxes III Ochus (A. 7.4.7), thus marrying the daughters of his two predecessors as King of Kings.52

Unlike the marriage with Roxane, these marriages were celebrated in Persian fashion. This did not mark a triumph for the Persians, but showed that the Macedonians had now taken over the Persian empire completely.53 The marriages showed that the old Persian elite was to be absorbed in Alexander’s new empire, but in a subordinate position to the Macedonians.54 They also eliminated the risk of creating potential claimants to the Persian throne, which would have been the case if Alexander had found Stateira and Parysatis Iranian husbands.55

Stateira and Parysatis had only symbolic value, but are not recorded as having acted on their own behalf. They pass out of history on being murdered by Roxane, with Perdikkas’ connivance, as we have seen above.56

A fourth Iranian woman in Alexander’s life, Barsine, the mother of his child Herakles, is well attested in the historical record,57 but her role in history is disputed. W.W. Tarn denied she was Alexander’s mistress and

52 Bosworth, Conquest (as in n.49), 157; Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), 45 cf. xix. This was part of Alexander’s presentation of himself as ‘the last of the Achaemenids’—Briant, ‘Alexander’ (as in n.47), 830.

53 A. 7.4.4; Chares FGrH 125 F4; see Bosworth, CAH (as in n.47), 840. The marriages were designed to stir people’s imaginations—Briant, ‘Alexander’ (as in n.47), 829.

54 Fiehn, ‘Stateira (3)’ RE 3A (1920), 2511; Bosworth, Conquest (as in n.49), 187.

55 Bosworth, Conquest (as in n.49), 186; Briant, ‘Alexander’ (as in n.47), 829.

56 See n.40 above.

57 P. 21.7; J. 13.2.7; Diodorus 22.20, cf. 28; Plutarch Eumenes 1.7; Pausanias 9.7.2. She was the daughter of Artabazos (Plut. Eumenes 1.7) and widow of both Memnon (P. 21.7) and Mentor (A. 7.4.6).
that her son Herakles had ever existed.\textsuperscript{58} Tarn’s view has been generally rejected by later scholars.\textsuperscript{59}

However, some points of Tarn’s criticisms seem valid. At note 21, Tarn points out that Artabazos, who was 95 in 330 (C. 6.45.4), is too old to be the child of Artaxerxes’ daughter Apama, who married his father Pharnabazos in the 360s (P.21.9, cf. Plutarch \textit{Artaxerxes} 27.7). This does not disprove Barsine’s royal descent, since the founder of Artabazos’ house, the earliest Pharnabazos, was an uncle of Darius I.\textsuperscript{60}

On page 24, Tarn notes that Barsine cannot have been the mother of both Mentor’s son Thymondas, who had an adult son himself in 327 BC (IG II\textsuperscript{2} 356) and of a new-born son, Herakles, in that same year. It is necessary to assume that Thymondas was the son of an earlier wife.\textsuperscript{61} Since Mentor, son of Thymondas claims Artabazos as an ancestor, his grandfather Mentor must have married two different daughters of Artabazos.

Barsine had a Greek education (P.21.7), which might have been expected to have assisted her in maintaining a position at Alexander’s court. However, there is no trace of a public wedding for Barsine, as there was for Roxane (C. 84.27) and Stateira (A. 7.4.9). While the distinction between wife and concubine was not so clear in a polygamous society, Barsine’s position seems to have been weaker than her later rivals.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} W.W. Tarn, ‘Heracles, son of Barsine’ \textit{JHS} 41 (1921), 18-28.

\textsuperscript{59} Berve, \textit{Alexanderreich} (as in n.37), 103. R.M. Errington, ‘From Babylon to Tripadeisos’ \textit{JHS} 90 (1970), 78. However, the criticism of Tarn has not always been pertinent: McKechnie ‘Manipulation of Themes’ (as in n.3), 48.

\textsuperscript{60} D.M. Lewis, \textit{Sparta and Persia} (Leiden, 1977), 52.

\textsuperscript{61} As Berve does on the genealogical table at \textit{Alexanderreich} (as in n.37), 442.

\textsuperscript{62} Ogden \textit{Polygamy} (as in n.2), 280, cf. 42. Beloch \textit{Gr. Gesch.}\textsuperscript{2} (as in n.22), III.149; IV.122, calls her ‘morganatic’.
Since Herakles was seventeen in 310 (Diodorus 20.20.1), he must have been born in 327, in the same year as his father married Roxane.63 When his parents’ affair started in 330, Herakles’ grandfather Artabazos was still a loyal supporter of Darius III (C.5.9.12-12.18), and Alexander need not have worried about Artabazos’ reaction to Barsine’s status. But it is unlikely that she did not receive some degree of recognition once her father came over to Alexander (C.6.5.1ff.) and was appointed satrap of Bactria in 329 (A.3.29.1). Even after Artabazos’ retirement as satrap in 328 (A.4.12.3), Barsine’s brother and sisters held important positions in Alexander’s court and it seems unlikely that she was completely disregarded.64

Beloch believes that Barsine retired to Pergamum in 327 after Alexander’s marriage to Roxane; 65 however, the inscription in honour of Mentor son of Thymondas (IG II 2 356), which he quotes, makes no mention of either Barsine or Pergamum. Like his mother, Herakles does not seem to have had his status officially recognised by Alexander. But since the boy was given a Macedonian dynastic name, Alexander would seem to have taken some notice of him, and we have no evidence for an official repudiation of Herakles by Alexander.66

Barsine is not recorded as having had symbolic value to Alexander, unlike Stateira, nor as having acted on her own behalf, as Roxane had done. She is last recorded being murdered in her son’s company (J.15.2.3-5), just like Roxane.

63 Berve Alexanderreich (as in n.37), 103. J. 15.2.4 says Herakles was fourteen, but he is confused in this passage—see Tarn ‘Heracles’ (as in n.58), 27. Tarn, 24, uses the date of birth as a further argument against the authenticity of Herakles. Beloch Gr. Gesch.2 (as in n.22), III.138, ‘corrected’ Herakles’ age to twenty.

64 Ogden Polygamy (as in n.2), 43.

65 Beloch Gr. Gesch.2 (as in n.22), III.124.

66 Errington, ‘Triparadeisus’ (as in n.41), 50; Bosworth, Conquest (as in n.49), 64; Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), 43.
A third Persian wife who is known for more than just her symbolic value is Amastris. She was the daughter of Oxathres, the brother of Darius III (who became a hetairos of Alexander in 330 BC—C.6.2.11) and her name, given to earlier Persian women, such as Xerxes’ wife Amestris, was a sign of her Achaemenid descent. She was married to Alexander’s leading general, Krateros, and Alexander’s choice of bride for him showed that Krateros’ position was inferior only to that of Hephaestion, who received another Achaemenid as his bride: Drypetis, the sister of Alexander’s new wife Stateira.

Amastris had apparently accompanied Krateros on his return to Macedon, unlike the Asiatic wives whom Alexander had arranged for the troops with Krateros to leave behind (A. 7.12.2). When, after learning of Alexander’s death, Krateros arranged a marriage with Antipater’s daughter Nikaia, he found a new husband for Amastris, Dionysios the tyrant of Herakleia in Pontos. Clearly Krateros felt in necessary to find a new husband for Amastris when he made a new marriage. Since the new husband was in Asia Minor, it is probable that Amastris was also there.

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68 C. 6.2.9 and Memnon FGrH 434 F4(4) give the name as Oxathres. P. 43.7 gives it as Exathres, while A. 7.4.5 and Diodorus 20.109.6 have substituted the name of Roxane’s father Oxyartes—see H. Berve ‘Oxyathres’ RE 18 (1942), 2020. Pseudo-Kallisthenes 2.7 records him as an adviser of Darius III before Issus.

69 Brosius, Women in Ancient Persia (as in n.4), 184f. The form of the name Amestris has been modified to suit the phonology of Attic-Ionic Greek. A. 7.4.5 gives her name as Amastrine, but Amastris seems the correct form.


71 Memnon FGrH 434 F4(4), Diodoros 20.109.6. see Heckel Marshals (as in n.70), 129. R. Schnitt ‘Amastris’ (as in n.67) says she was abandoned by Krateros, but the evidence does not support this.
Macedonian kings were polygamous,\textsuperscript{72} but not, it seems, Macedonian commoners.\textsuperscript{73}

Of the three children born to this marriage, the eldest son, Klearchos, was named after his paternal grandfather,\textsuperscript{74} while the second son received Amastris’ father’s name, Oxathres, and the daughter, her own, Amastris. That is the normal Greek practice in naming. However, on Dionysios’ death in 305 BC, he left the guardianship of the children, and of the tyranny of Herakleia, to Amastris and some others (Memnon F4[5])—which was not normal Greek practice. Nothing is known of these other guardians but Amastris clearly played a major role in the government of Herakleia during her children’s minority. She even struck coins in her own name at this time.\textsuperscript{75}

In 302 BC, when Lysimachus had invaded Asia Minor, but was waiting for the arrival of his ally Seleukos before fighting the decisive battle against Antigonos, he retreated to Herakleia and there he married Amastris (Diodorus 20.107.7). Memnon FGrH 434 F4(9) tells us that

\textsuperscript{72} Plutarch Comp. Dem. Ant. 91 (4); cf. William Greenwalt ‘Polygamy and Succession in Argead Macedonia’ Arethusa 22 (1989), 22; D. Ogden, Polygamy (as in n.2), xvii—it was a sign of the exceptional status of the kings.

\textsuperscript{73} One of the anonymous readers for Prudentia has suggested that Antipater’s eleven children (see Odgen, Polygamy [as in n.2], 53) indicate that he was polygamous. Ogden thinks Antipater may have been polygamous, but that polygamy was more likely to have been a royal prerogative, while Waldemar Heckel (Marshals [as in n.70], 39), thinks it unlikely Antipater had only one wife. However, Artabazos’ family of eleven sons and ten daughters by one wife (Diodorus 16.52.4) were more numerous and there is no sign in Antipater’s family of the amphimetric rivalry which was common between sons of different mothers—(see Ogden, ixv).

\textsuperscript{74} Diodorus 16.36.3 and 88.5.

\textsuperscript{75} Barclay V. Head, Historia Numorum\textsuperscript{2} (Oxford, 1911), 505.
Antigonos was hostile to Dionysios’ sons, and also that Lysimachos had fallen in love with Amastris. The resources of Herakleia, and its strategic situation, allowing communication by sea with Lysimachos’ kingdom in Thrace and access to the roads from the east along which Seleukos would come, were probably also factors in Lysimachos’ decision to marry Amastris.

The marriage was not just made for the advantage of the short term, since Lysimachos brought Amastris with him to his new capital of Sardis after the battle of Ipsos. A wife of Achaemenid lineage may have been helpful in winning over the Persian nobility settled in the satrapy of Sardis, but Memnon does not discuss such things; for him the move to Sardis is proof of Lysimachos’ love for Amastris.

Polyaeenus 6.12 refers to a son of Lysimachus and Amastris named Alexander. This seems unlikely, since Lysimachus’ son Alexander is twice said by Pausanias (1.10.4-5) to have had an Odrysian mother, and Amastris was rather old for childbearing by 301.

Lysimachos’ affection for Amastris did not prevent him marrying Arsinoe, the daughter of Ptolemy Soter, a few years later, and when this happened Amastris moved back to Herakleia. It seems unlikely that Lysimachos had any objection to the Macedonian royal practice of polygamy by the 290s (as Krateros seems to have had in 323), so it seems probable that either Ptolemy or Amastris objected to two wives sharing

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76 Although he had previously been friendly towards them—Hirschfeld ‘Amastris (7)’ RE 1 (1894), 1750.

77 J.G. Droysen, Geschichte des Hellenismus (Gotha, 1878), II. 343; Helen S. Lund, Lysimachus: a Study in Hellenistic Kingship (London, 1992), 75.

78 Memnon F4(9). cf. Lund, Lysimachus (as in n.77), 82.

79 Hischfeld ‘Amastris (7)’ (as in n.76), 1750. But it is accepted by Schnitt ‘Amestris’ (as in n.67), 937.
Lysimachos' court. Unfortunately, we cannot tell who was responsible for the decision.

It was after her departure from Lysimachos' court that Amastris founded a city in her own name, the only queen to found a city herself, rather than have one named after her. In fact, Amastris was one of the earliest cities named after a queen, with only Thessalonike being definitely earlier. Amastris was showing her exceptional position by naming the city, just as she had done by striking coins in her own name.

Memnon F4(9) gives the date and the fact that she founded it herself. Strabo 12.3.10 (C544) tells us that the city was named after its founder. Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. [Amastri” only tells us that the city was named after her, although he also quotes Demosthenes of Bithynia to the effect that it was named after a mythical Amazon. It is clear that here Amastris was adopting a male role which no other Greco-Macedonian woman is known to have done.

Friendly relations continued between Herakleia and Lysimachos, since we find Amastris’ eldest son Klearchos in Lysimachos’ company in 292, when he was captured by the Getae (Memnon F5[1]). However Amastris fell victim to her own son’s jealousy. Klearchos objected to her influence in Herakleia and had her drowned (F5[20]). It may well be that he felt Amastris was going beyond the proper role of a Greek mother, but we may recall a similar matricide around this time at 294 BC in Macedon, when Thessalonike was killed by her son Antipater.

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80 E.D. Carney, ‘Arsinoe before she was Philadelphus’ AHB 8 (1994) shows that Arsinoe was hostile to the idea of royal polygamy at a later time.

81 Memnon 4(9); Lund, Lysimachus (as in n.77), 88.

82 Carney, Women and Monarchy (as in n.35), 208.

83 Carney, ‘Eponymous Women’ (as in n.11), 141.

84 Lund, Lysimachus (as in n.77), 30.
At first Lysimachos pretended still to be old friends with the sons of Dionysios, but stung by reproaches that he was neglecting the memory of Amastris, he had both Klearchos, and later his brother Oxathres, killed as matricides (Memnon F5[3]). Lysimachos’ concern may have been more for control over the resources of Herakleia, especially its navy, than affection for Amastris, especially as he later transferred Herakleia to the possession of Amastris’ rival, his new wife Arsinoe (Memnon F5[5]).

Most of the Persian brides given to Macedonian husbands in the reign of Alexander played no role at all in history, either because they were rejected by their husbands as soon as possible, or because those husbands failed to establish a secure position for themselves after Alexander’s death. A few had a visible role, but only for their symbolic value.

However, three others did have some significance in the politics of the period. Seleukos’ wife Apama is best known for her symbolic value, but she did play a minor role as benefactress. Alexander’s widow Roxane had great symbolic value, and traces remain of her attempts to play an active role after his death, without any great success. Macedon was not a good place for the mother of an infant king to ensure his survival. Roxane was notably less successful there than Olympias, or Ade-Eurydike. Macedonian dislike of Roxane’s barbarian origins frustrated her efforts.

Only Amastris with three Greco-Macedonian husbands, and as guardian of her son’s inheritance of the tyranny of Herakleia, enjoyed much success. But even she proved unable to sustain her position in the long run, falling victim to her own son’s ambition. Amastris, like Olympias, failed in the end, but unlike Olympias she was the victim, not of her family’s enemies, but of the family itself. Hostility to barbarian women caused Amastris’ ruin, just as much as it did Roxane’s.

85 Lund, *Lysimachus* (as in n.77) 96 and 185.

86 O’Neil, ‘Olympias’ (as in n.6), 5, 7 and 13.
Some of the Persian women in Macedonian courts had symbolic value, but are not recorded as taking action on their own behalf. This is the case for Stateira and Parysatis, and Barsine did not even have a symbolic function. Others did try to go beyond symbolic roles. Apama is recorded playing the role of a Greek benefactress, while Roxane tried to protect herself after Alexander’s death, with little success. Amastris was the most successful. Like Macedonian women such as Olympias or Adea-Eurydike, she managed to play a significant role in a man’s world, but like those two women, she was eventually destroyed by it.87

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87 I would like to thank Prof. F.W. Walbank, who saw an earlier draft of this paper, and Paul McKechnie and the anonymous referees for Prudentia for their helpful suggestions. Any errors which remain are my own responsibility.