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The Shade of Andromache: Laodike of Sardis between Homer and Polybios¹

Monica D'Agostini

Abstract:

When reading the long fragment of Polybios 8.15.1-21.11, about Antiochos III's siege of Sardis, it is impossible not to be amazed by the favourable attitude of the historian towards Laodike, the wife of the Seleukid usurper Achaios. Contrary to what might be expected from an historian who tends to be markedly indifferent towards women, Polybios gives us more information about Laodike than about any other Seleukid woman. Achaios' Laodike is an exemplar of the loyal and brave wife and her portrait has clear epic echoes. As Polybios was no newcomer to associating Homeric *topoi* with unexpected situations and portrayals, it is indeed possible to detect in the words of Polybios on Achaios and Laodike a clear reference to the well-known Homeric couple, Hektor and Andromache.

The rebellion of Achaios the Younger against Antiochos III has attracted interest among scholars mainly thanks to Polybios' detailed account². Nevertheless, since Walbank's commentary³ onwards academics seem not to have been as curious about Achaios' wife, Laodike. This study will therefore read the passages devoted to Laodike, analysing the narrative pattern of Polybios' account with the aim of highlighting the peculiarity of the evidence related to the Anatolian princess.

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² Achaios the Younger was a close relative of the Seleucids, and a *philos* (courtier) and general of Seleukos III. In 226/225, Achaios lead a campaign with Seleukos III against Attalos I to recover the territories of Asia Minor conquered by Pergamum during the last phase of the War of the Brothers. When Seleukos III was murdered in 223, Achaios initially recognised Antiochos III as Seleukid king, but subsequently he rebelled and proclaimed his independent kingdom in Asia Minor. On Achaios the Younger and the rebellion see Meloni 1949, 535-53 and Id. 1950, 161-183; Will 1962, 72-129; Wörrle 1975, 59-87; Ehling 2007, 497-501; Marek 2010, 278-79; Ager 2012, 421-29; D'Agostini 2015.

³ Walbank 1957 *ad l.* and Thornton 2002a *ad l.* On Polybios on Anatolian events between 222 and 214 see also McShane 1964; Schmitt 1964; Hansen 1971²; Allen 1983; Heinen 1984,²412-45; Billows 1995, 98-99 and 110; Ma 1999, 54-63; Chaniotis 2005, 57-77.

I. The Text⁴

A long fragment of book 8 of the *Histories* of Polybios is devoted to the account of the last hours of the life of the Seleukid rebel Achaios, trapped in Sardis in 214/213⁵ by the army of the King Antiochos III the Great. The fragment describes Achaios' plan to escape secretly overnight from the acropolis in order to look for help in Phoenicia and Coelesyria and, eventually, to come back with support to save his city from Antiochos III's siege⁶. He is, however, betrayed by Bolis, a Cretan inside the acropolis, who makes arrangement with Kambylos, the chief of the Cretans under Antiochos III's command,⁷ to sell Achaios to Antiochos III. Consequently, during the escape from Sardis, Achaios and his *philoï* (friends of the king)⁸ fall into an ambush resulting in his capture and execution at the hands of Antiochos III.⁹

Polybios devotes two paragraphs to the description of the relationship between the usurper Achaios and his wife Laodike, showing a sympathetic attitude with regards to the couple. In the first passage Polybios vividly describes the last goodbye between Achaios and Laodike:

When they had done as he requested, he (Achaios) revealed at the last moment the project to his wife Laodice, who was so much taken by surprise that she almost lost her wits, so that he had to spend some time in beseeching her to be calm, in soothing her by dwelling on the brightness of the prospect before him.¹⁰

These lines are between the account of the preparation of Achaios' escape plan and the actual escape plan: Polybios temporarily interrupts the narrative of the war to focus on the

⁴The passages of Homer and Polybios in the article are in Greek with an English translation. The vocables concerning the Seleukid administration and the Homeric society mentioned in the article are Greek transliterations followed by the English translations.

⁵ Fragment 8.15.1-21.11. The first phase of the siege of Sardis by Antiochos III is narrated in Pol. 7.15.1-18.10, but the exact dates of the attack are difficult to determine. The *terminus post quem* is the defeat at Raphia of Antiochos III by Ptolemy IV in 217; the *terminus ante quem* is provided by repopulation and the granting of benefits to the city by Antiochos III in 213. On the siege see Meloni 1950, 161-83; Walbank 1957 *ad l.*; Will 1982² II, 49-50.

⁶The fragment 7.15.1-18.10 is the account of the first part of the siege: Antiochos entered the city walls of Achaios' capital, Sardis, and laid siege to the acropolis.

⁷On Cretans presented by Polybios as experts in deceit see Herman 1997, 199-224 (209-210) and Thornton 2002a, 467.

⁸The *Philoï* in the Hellenistic period were considered the restricted council of the king, and the Hellenistic court society. As specified by Strootman 2014, 18 they "served the royal family first of all as military commanders [...]" and they also "functioned as intermediaries between court and cities [...]". See Strootman 2014, 124-160. See also Herman 1980- 81, 103-127; Savalli Lestrade 1998 and *id.* 2001, 263-294; Landucci 2014, 3-18.

⁹8.19-21.

¹⁰8.19.7: τῶν δὲ πειθαρχησάντων, κοινωσάμενος παρ' αὐτὸν τὸν καιρὸν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ ποιήσας διὰ τὸ παράδοξον τὴν Λαοδίκην ἔκφρονα, χρόνον μὲν τινα λιπαρῶν ταύτην καὶ καταπραΐνων ταῖς προσδοκωμέναις ἐλπίσι προσεκαρτέρει. The Greek text and the translation of Polybios book 8 are from Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011.

bond between the Seleukid usurper, king in Sardis, and his wife. Polybios shows Laodike caring about her husband and being troubled about his fate since she perceives the risk in the plan: when Achaios bids farewell to her, Laodike reacts emotionally, nearly to the point of insanity because she believes the plan is absurd (διὰ τὸ παράδοξον τὴν Λαοδίκην ἔκφρονα). Nevertheless, Laodike is eventually shown to be obedient and loyal to Achaios in accepting her husband's decision and in supporting him in his venture. According to the author, Achaios' behaviour towards his wife is also caring, in addition to responsible and wise: he clearly values her, since not only she is the only person in the acropolis he shares the plan with, but he is also concerned to calm her down, and to persuade her of the "good hopes which he entertained".

This familiar scene, the farewell between husband and wife before he goes to embrace his destiny, is a Greek *topos* that can be traced back to the epic farewell between Andromache and Hektor before the hero faces his fate in book 6 of the *Iliad*.¹¹

Then Hektor smiled, as he glanced at his boy in silence, [405] but Andromache came close to his side weeping, and clasped his hand and spoke to him, saying: "Ah, my husband, this might of yours will be your doom, and you have no pity for your infant child nor for unfortunate me, who soon will be your widow; for soon will the Achaeans [410] all set on you and slay you. But for me it would be better to go down to the grave if I lose you, for never more will any comfort be mine, when you have met your fate, but only woes. Neither father have I nor queenly mother."¹²

[...]

And her husband was touched with pity at sight of her, and he stroked her with his hand, and spoke to her, and called her by name: "Dear wife, in no way, I beg you, grieve excessively at heart for me; no man beyond what is fated shall send me to Hades; but his fate, say I, no man has ever escaped, whether he is base or noble, when once he has been born. [490] But, go to the house and busy yourself with your own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and tell your handmaids to ply their work: and war will be the concern for men, all of those who live in Ilios, but especially for me." So spoke glorious Hektor and took up his helmet [495] with horse-hair crest; and his dear wife went immediately to her house, often turning back, and shedding large tears. Quickly then she came to the well-built palace of man-slaying Hektor and found there her many handmaidens; and among them all she roused lamentation. [500] So in his own house they made lament for Hektor while

¹¹ Of the long Homeric passage *Il.* 6.369-500 I selected the verses more relevant for this study. See the commentary to this passage by Segal 1971, 33-57, Kirk 1990, 18-21 and *ad.l.* (208-225) as well as Bierl and Latacz 2008 *ad.l.* On Andromache's scenes in the *Iliad* see *infra* and Pomeroy 1995², 20-23; Katz 1981, 19-44; Lohmann 1988; Felson and Slatkin 2004, 91-114; Lovatt 2013, 226. See also Grillo 2010, 43-68.

¹² *Il.* 6.404-413: ἦτοι ὁ μὲν μείδησεν ἰδὼν ἐς παῖδα σιωπῆ· / Ἀνδρομάχη δέ οἱ ἄγχι παρίστατο δάκρυ χέουσα, / ἔν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε· / «δαιμόνιε, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος, οὐδ' ἐλεαίρεις / παῖδά τε νηπίαχον καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον, ἢ τάχα χίρη / σεῦ ἔσομαι· τάχα γάρ σε κατακτανέουσιν Ἀχαιοὶ / πάντες ἐφορμηθέντες· ἐμοὶ δέ κε κέρδιον εἶη / σεῦ ἀφαρματούση χθόνα δύμεναι· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλη / ἔσται θαλπωρὴ ἐπεὶ ἂν σύ γε πότμον ἐπίσπης, / ἀλλ' ἄχε'· οὐδέ μοι ἐστὶ πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ. The Greek texts of the *Iliad* are all from the critical edition by van Thiel 1996. The translation of the passages of the *Iliad* are all from Murray 1999.

still he lived; for they said that he would never more come back from battle, escaped from the force and the hands of the Achaeans.¹³

Both Polybios, in his account of Achaïos and Laodike, and Homer share the interest in the intimate conversations between husband and wife, and, consequently, in the representation of the relationship among spouses. This conjugal *homilia* (intimate, familial relationship) is one of the main themes of the Homeric poems.¹⁴ The bond between Hektor and Andromache is the most important conjugal *homilia* in the Iliad and the interplay between its vicissitudes and the warfare is one of the main driving forces of the poem. The *homilia* between Hektor and Andromache has a few distinctive peculiarities which recur in the Polybian scene as well: both conjugal conversations take place during a war but are spatially segregated from the war field, in a closed and secure space.¹⁵ Additionally, the behavioural dynamics between husband and wife described in the two texts present similarities: both Laodike and Andromache try to persuade their husbands to remain with them when they come to say goodbye, perceiving that the venture will not be successful. Achaïos, as Hektor, refuses to give up, and remains loyal to his duty as man and commander. Both Achaïos and Hektor believe their bond to their wives to be exceptional and meaningful, and they consider it a priority to devote time to convince Laodike and Andromache to accept their decision.

Polybios does not let the fertile parallel slip away. In fact it becomes evident again later on in the narration. After Achaïos is caught, brought to Antiochos III's tent and horribly executed, Polybios again draws attention to Laodike's actions:¹⁶

When this had been done, and the army was informed of what had happened, there was such enthusiasm and wild excitement throughout the whole camp, that Laodike on the acropolis, who alone knew that her husband had left it,¹⁷ when she witnessed the commotion and disturbance in the camp, divined the truth. And when soon afterwards

¹³ *Il.* 6.484-502: πόσις δ' ἐλέησε νοήσας, / χειρί τέ μιν κατέρεξεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε / «δαιμονίη, μή μοί τι λίην ἀκαχίζεο θυμῶ / οὐ γάρ τίς μ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν ἀνὴρ Ἴδι προιάψει / μοῖραν δ' οὐ τίνα φημί πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν, / οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται. / ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε, / ἰστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε/ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι πόλεμος δ' ἀνδρῆσσι μελήσει / πᾶσιν, ἐμοὶ δὲ μάλιστα, τοῖ Ἰλίῳ ἐγγεγάασιν.» / ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας κόρυθ' εἴλετο φαίδιμος Ἔκτωρ / ἵππουριν ἄλοχος δὲ φίλη οἶκονδε βεβήκει / ἐντροπαλιζομένη, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα. / αἴψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκανε δόμους εὐναιετάοντας/Ἐκτορος ἀνδροφόνιοι, κινήσατο δ' ἔνδοθι πολλὰς/ἀμφιπόλους, τῆσιν δὲ γόον πάσῃσιν ἐνῶρσεν. / αἶ μὲν ἔτι ζῶν γόον Ἐκτορα ᾧ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ / οὐ γάρ μιν ἔτ' ἔφαντο ὑπότροπον ἐκ πολέμοιο / ἴξεσθαι, προφυγόντα μένος καὶ χεῖρας Ἀχαιῶν.

¹⁴ On *homilia* see Maronitis 2004, 29-45 and Felson and Slatkin 2004, 91-114.

¹⁵ About space in the Homeric poems see Hellwig 1964.

¹⁶ The sentence according to Pol. 8.21.2-3 is: "it was resolved that his extremities should be cut off, his head severed from his body and sewn up in the skin of an ass, and his body impaled". See Walbank 1957 *ad l.*; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 125.

¹⁷ Cfr Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011: "Laodice, who was alone aware of her husband's departure from the citadel".

the herald reached her, announcing the fate of Achaëus and bidding her to come to an arrangement and withdraw from the citadel, there was at first no answer from those in the citadel but wild wailing and extravagant lamentation.¹⁸

In this passage Polybios explicitly reveals that Laodike is the only person in Sardis who is aware of her husband's plan and is able to guess the death of her husband while she is waiting inside the acropolis for his return: she hears the excitement coming from the camp, and she immediately knows what has happened. The author also adds dramatic irony to the narrative, since the audience knows that Achaios is dead and is expecting the news to be given to Laodike.

Achaios' death and Laodike's reaction evoke vividly the image of Andromache after the death of Hektor in book 22. Andromache is described by Homer as alone in her house with her handmaids preparing the bath for the return of Hektor from the battlefield, ironically unaware that her husband's is dead.¹⁹ Nevertheless, as soon as she hears the turmoil of the people, she perceives what has happened without anyone coming to tell her:²⁰

So she spoke weeping; but the wife knew nothing as yet - the wife of Hektor—for no true messenger had come to tell her that her husband remained outside the gates; [440] but she was weaving a tapestry in the innermost part of the lofty house, a purple tapestry of double fold, and in it she was weaving flowers of varied hue. And she called to her fair-tressed handmaids through the house to set a great tripod on the fire so that there should be a hot bath for Hektor when he returned from the battle—unwitting one, [445] nor did she know that far from all baths flashing-eyed Athene had vanquished him at the hands of Achilles. But she heard the shrieks and the groans from the wall, and her limbs reeled, and from her hand the shuttle fell to the floor.²¹

¹⁸ 8.21.4-6: γενομένων δὲ τούτων, καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ἐπιγνούσης τὸ συμβεβηκός, τοιοῦτος ἐνθουσιασμὸς ἐγένετο καὶ παράστασις τοῦ στρατοπέδου παντὸς ὥστε τὴν Λαοδίκην ἐκ τῆς ἄκρας μόνον συνειδυῖαν τὴν ἕξοδον τάνδρος, τεκμήρασθαι τὸ γεγονὸς ἐκ τῆς περὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον ταραχῆς καὶ κινήσεως. ταχὺ δὲ καὶ τοῦ κήρυκος παραγενομένου πρὸς τὴν Λαοδίκην καὶ διασαφούντος τὰ περὶ τὸν Ἀχαιοῦν, καὶ κελεύοντος τίθεσθαι τὰ πράγματα καὶ παραχωρεῖν τῆς ἄκρας, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀναπόκριτος οἰμωγῇ καὶ θρήνοι παράλογοι κατεῖχον τοὺς περὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν.

¹⁹ About the irony behind the Andromache's ignorance of her husband's death see Segal 1971, 33-57 and Lohmann 1988, 63-69.

²⁰ See the commentary to this passage by Lohmann 1970, 99-100 and Richardson 1993, 152- 163. Hektor's death was foreshadowed in book 6.407-13, 429-32 and 498-502: Kirk 1990, *ad l.*

²¹ *Il.* 22.437-448: ὡς ἔφατο κλαίουσ'. ἄλοχος δ' οὐ πῶ τι πέπυστο / Ἔκτορος· οὐ γὰρ οἷ τις ἐτήτυμος ἄγγελος ἐλθὼν / ἤγγειλ' ὅτι ῥά οἱ πόσις ἔκτοθι μίμνε πυλάων, / ἀλλ' ἦ γ' ἴσθον ὕφαινε μυχῶ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο/δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσε. / κέκλετο δ' ἀμφιπόλοισιν ἐυπλοκάμοις κατὰ δῶμα / ἀμφὶ πυρὶ στήσαι τρίποδα μέγαν, ὄφρα πέλοιτο / Ἔκτορι θερμὰ λοετρὰ μάχης ἐκνοστήσαντι / νηπίη, οὐδ' ἐνόησεν ὃ μιν μάλα τῆλε λοετρῶν / χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος δάμασε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη. / κωκυτοῦ δ' ἤκουσε καὶ οἰμωγῆς ἀπὸ πύργου· / τῆς δ' ἐλελίχθη γυῖα, χαμαὶ δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε κερκίς.

As Andromache herself stated, she is bonded to her husband by a common destiny since her status is determined by Hektor's status,²² and in virtue of such a bond she perceives her own doom as soon as Hektor dies. The *homilia* and the desired homecoming are the foci of the episode in Homer as well as in Polybios: both authors describe the destruction of the conjugal *homilia* by the war, which prevents husband and wife from re-establishing their bond because the man does not come home from the battlefield. Both these failed homecomings are sympathetic towards the wife, whose ironic ignorance of her husband's death gives way to her ability to perceive her husband's fate prior to actually being notified.²³

Considering the several references to Homer²⁴ and the *Iliad* in Polybios' work,²⁵ the echoes of Homer's book 6 and 22 in Polybian words are not to be seen as casual or incidental.²⁶ Polybios has indeed a profound admiration for and a peculiar relation with Homer and his work, stated explicitly in two chapters of the *Histories*.

In book 12, while criticizing the work of Timaeus of Tauromenium, Polybios uses Homer to highlight the proper approach of the historian to his subject-matter:

Homer has been still more emphatic on this subject than these writers. Wishing to show us what qualities one should possess in order to be a man of action he says [...] ²⁷

²² *Il.* 6.409-413: "for soon will the Achaeans all set on you and slay you. But for me it would be better to go down to the grave if I lose you, for never more will any comfort be mine, when you have met your fate, but only woes. Neither father have I nor queenly mother".

²³ On the theme of homecoming in Homer and its variations see Maronitis 2004, 63-76.

²⁴ On the close relation between poet and historian see Walbank 1960, 216-234 (=2011, 389-412) and Funke 2011, 413-432.

²⁵ The most famous reference is when Polybios' Scipio 38.22.2 cites Homer *Il.* 6.448 looking at the destruction of Carthage. Vercruysse 1990, 293-309 in his study on Polybios and the Homeric epic, analyses all of the quotes of Homer present in the *Histories*. One of his goals is to check if these quotes were mere ornaments or not. According to Vercruysse, Polybios quotes Homer mainly in unexpected contexts, producing a literary contrast between the historical event and the literary echo. This contrast might appear ornamental to some readers, but it might also aim to add a different interpretive layer to the event. On Polybios' exploitation of Homer and the *Iliad* see also Pédech 1964, 582-86; Walbank 1972, 51 and 125-126; Gibson 2013, 159-179 (176) and Sommer 2013, 307-318 (308).

²⁶ McGing 2010, 26-27 notices the epic atmosphere of these chapters, and parallels the character sketch of Achaïos to *Il.* 9.221-231.

²⁷ 12.27.10: ἔτι δὲ τούτων ἐμφαντικώτερον ὁ ποιητὴς εἶρηκε περὶ τούτου τοῦ μέρους, ἐκεῖνος γὰρ βουλόμενος ὑποδεικνύειν ἡμῖν οἷον δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν πραγματικὸν εἶναι, προθέμενος τὸ τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύς πρόσωπον λέγει πως οὕτως. Greek text and translation by Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011a. On Polybios' method of inquiry and on his critic of Timaeus of Tauromenium see in particular Walbank 1957, 1-37; Pédech 1964, 359-60 and 379; Sacks 1981, 21-95 and 171-175; Schepens 1990, 39-61; Zecchini 2003, 123-141; Schepens 2007, 39-55; Rhodes 2007, 56-66.

Polybios also devotes a later section of book 34 to investigate the geography of Odysseus' travels. At the beginning of this analysis is stated clearly that the Homeric subject-matter is to be considered historical subject-matter.

It is not like Homer to build an empty narrative full of marvels on no basis of truth. For naturally the fact is that one makes falsehood more credible if one mixes a little truth with it, as Polybios also says when he undertakes to deal with the wanderings of Ulysses.²⁸

Given these explicit statements, the presence of epic echoes in Polybios' account of the Achaïos episode should not endanger its historicity.²⁹ Nevertheless, the uncertainty about the nature and reliability of Polybios' sources for his account of Achaïos affects our ability to determine how much of it is a Polybian elaboration. With regard to this specific episode, Polybios might have acquired at least part of his information about the siege of the acropolis of Sardis in 214/213 from a local oral source, since Plutarch states that Polybios visited Sardis and collected material here by talking to people.³⁰ Such a source could explain the details in both fragments of book 7 and 8 about the activity and the emotions inside the city under siege. It may be a less satisfactory explanation for Polybios' account of the *homilia* between Achaïos and Laodike, and Laodike's feelings and her emotional reaction to her husband's death, since these events clearly took place within the intimacy of the wife-husband relationship.

Carney³¹ had found in past several epic echoes in narrative concerning the royal female behaviour of the Argead dynasty: according to Carney, in the period when Hellenistic royals were establishing patterns for royal women behaviour in their family, they looked at the heroic and epic tradition almost as a model. Drawing a parallel with our episodes, Polybios through the epic intertextual reference might have enhanced the heroic paradigm that was already present in Laodike's actions. It is possible that Polybios added to the substratum of historical information he had collected about the king and the queen in Sardis, and about the events in which they were protagonists, elements inspired by the siege of Ilium, the paradigm of sieges for the Greeks; such elements would include the dynamic of the private dialogue between Laodike and Achaïos and a portrayal of Laodike's feelings towards her husband. Polybios' choice to pair the Seleukid usurper Achaïos and his wife Laodike with the Homeric

²⁸ 34.2.1-4: ἐκ μηδενὸς δὲ ἀληθοῦς ἀνάπτειν κενὴν τερατολογίαν οὐχ Ὀμηρικόν. προσπίπτει γάρ, ὡς εἰκός, ὡς πιθανώτερον ἂν οὕτω τις ψεύδοιτο, εἰ καταμίσγοι τι καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀληθινῶν ὅπερ καὶ Πολύβιος φησι περὶ τῆς Ὀδυσσεύως πλάνης ἐπιχειρῶν. [= Strabo. 1.2.9]. Greek text and translation by Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2012. Walbank 1979, *ad l.*: "Homer's narrative basically true". See the whole account about Odysseus' wanderings: 34.2.1-4.8.

²⁹ See also Verduyck 1990, 293-309; Hornblower 1994, 1-72 (44-45); Marincola 2003, 285-315, *id.* 2007, 1-79, 2011, 357-9 and 2013, 73-90; McGing 2010, 72-4; Larran 2010, 232-7; Canfora 2011, 365-88 and Funke 2011, 413-432. Carney 2006, 84-85, writes with regard to Olympias' and Adea Eurydice's death: "The play-like, even epic, feel of the stories about the ends of these two royal women need not, however, render them entirely false"

³⁰ *Mulier*. 12 s.v. Chiomara (= Pol. 21.34). On Polybios' use of witnesses and oral sources see in particular Walbank 1957, 26-35 and 74-76; Pédech 1964, 359-372; Zecchini 2003, 123-141.

³¹ Carney 2000, 13-14, *id.* 2006, 84-85, 2011, 195-220 (196).

hero Hektor and his paradigmatic wife Andromache may have been dictated by his desire to resort to the Iliad as a model for elements relative to wife-husband relations.³² However, through this epic association, Polybios' account attributes an unexpected relevance and positive personal qualities to Laodike, which would otherwise be practically unknown since we do not have any other source on the princess but Polybios himself.

II. The Historical Context

Seleukid queens are not generally described as being politically active or treated as a *persona agens* by Polybios: they appear to be mentioned only to point out family relationships amongst Hellenistic rulers; influential Seleukid women, both princesses and queens, are named mainly to help locate their husbands, their sons, or their fathers in the complex web of Hellenistic marriages.³³ The first reference to Laodike in book 5 is consistent with this Polybian habit: she is named in order to relate her husband Achaïos to the ambassador of Selge, a city in Pisidia. Under siege by Achaïos' army, Selge dispatched an embassy led by a certain Logbasis with the aim of speaking directly with Achaïos.³⁴ Polybios provides the following explanation for the appointment of Logbasis as spokesman:

Calling a public assembly, therefore, they decided to send out as commissioner one of their citizens named Logbasis, who had often been entertained and had been for long on

³² On Polybios and the use of verisimilar elements in the historical reconstruction, especially where speeches are concerned, see 2.56.10; 12.25b.1 and 25i.8; 36.1.7 and Walbank 1957, *ad l.* and *id.* 1967, *ad l.* and 1979, *ad l.* See also Pédech 1964, 259-260, 265; Meister 1990, 165-166; Zecchini 2003, 123-141; Marincola, 2007a, 118-132 and *id.* 2010, 259-289.

³³ Polybios mentions Laodike wife of Antiochos III at 5.43.1-4. Of their daughters Polybios mentions the wife of Demetrius of Bactria at 11.39 as well as another princess rejected by Eumenes II at 21.19.8 and 21.8. The last two Seleukid royal women mentioned by Polybios are Laodike wife of Perseus at 25.4.8-10 and Laodike sister of Alexandros Balas at 33.15.1-18.12. None of these royal women are described by Polybios as being politically active, although evidence of epigraphy and numismatics suggests otherwise, see *infra*.

³⁴ The fragments of books 7 and 8 do not allow us to connect the siege of Sardis with the events of 219 described in book 5.72.1-78.6, *i.e.* the campaign of Achaïos in Pisidia and his war with Attalos. During the years of the Fourth Syrian War, Achaïos, while ruling Asia Minor as king, sent his general Garsieri to Pisidia to find a solution to the war between Selge and Pednelisso. Achaïos is not involved in this campaign until the last phase, when Garsieri, after freeing Pednelisso, is besieging Selge (5.72.1-78.6). On the expedition of Achaïos in Pisidia see Meloni 1950, 161-83; Walbank 1957 *ad l.*; Will 1982² II, 47-48; Ma 1999, 58; Dmitriev 1999, 397-411. On Attalos' expedition against Achaïos while he was in Pisidia and the new war between the two kings see Meloni 1949, 535-53 and *Id.* 1950, 161-83; Walbank 1957 *ad l.*; Schmitt 1964, 161; Dmitriev 1999, 397-411; Ma 1999, 55-56 and 58-59; Ager 2012, 421-29. Polybios 5.107.4 states that after Raphia Antiochos made a deal with Attalos against Achaïos. Some modern scholars think that this deal included the recognition by the Seleukids of the kingdom of Pergamon. Schmitt 1964, 264-7; Ma 1999, 59-60; Grainger 2010, 216-8.

terms of intimacy with that Antiochos who lost his life in Thrace,³⁵ and who, when Laodice, who afterwards became the wife of Achaios, was placed under his charge, had brought up the young lady as his own daughter and treated her with especial kindness.³⁶

In this passage Laodike is at the centre of an intricate web of political relations: she was the daughter of the Pontic king Mithridates II and the Seleukid princess Laodike³⁷, and was raised by Logbasis, a *philos* of Antiochos Hierax. It is possible that she was to be married to her uncle Hierax once she was of age; his death would have prevented that outcome. Instead she was married to Achaios, probably when he was still the Seleukid governor in Anatolia, around the same time that her sister and homonym, Laodike III, became the wife of Antiochos III and *basilissa* (queen) of Syria.³⁸ Because of the homonymy, some have doubted that the wife of Achaios was the sister of the wife of Antiochos³⁹: it is possible that Achaios deliberately gave to his wife the dynastic name of Seleukid queens in order to enhance his claim to rule Asia Minor as a representative of the Seleukid dynasty. The choice of Logbasis as ambassador shows that the role of Laodike in the dynastic network was not just a formal and meaningless status, but had an effective diplomatic weight and could affect international relations such as, in this case, putting an end to a war.⁴⁰

Even if Laodike's personal life was centred in Asia Minor and in Sardis, the regional capital,⁴¹ we do not have any direct evidence of her actions in Sardis. However, the numismatic and archaeological evidence indicate that Achaios and Laodike made Sardis the capital of their new kingdom. During the 3rd century Seleukid kings tended to trust the control of Asia Minor to a relative, who had full military and administrative authority in the area, with a role closer to that of a viceroy than a governor.⁴² Antiochos Hierax first, and Achaios later, transformed

³⁵ Antiochos Hierax, son of Antiochos II and Laodike I, therefore, the uncle of Antiochos III. He was the younger brother of Seleukos II, and was appointed viceroy in Asia Minor. In 240s he rebelled and proclaimed his independent kingdom, starting the so-called War of the Brothers with Seleukos II.

³⁶ 5.74.4-6: διὸ συνελθόντες εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἐβουλεύσαντο πρεσβευτὴν ἐκπέμπειν ἕνα τῶν πολιτῶν Λόγβασιν, ὃς ἐγεγόνει μὲν ἐπὶ πολὺ συνήθης καὶ ξένος Ἀντιόχου τοῦ μεταλλάξαντος τὸν βίον ἐπὶ Θράκης, δοθείσης δ' ἐν παρακαταθήκῃ καὶ Λαοδίκης αὐτῷ τῆς Ἀχαιοῦ γενομένης γυναικός, ἐτετρόφει αὐτήν ὡς θυγατέρα καὶ διαφερόντως ἐπεφιλοστοργήκει τὴν παρθένον. Greek text and translation by Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011.

³⁷ 8.20.11.

³⁸ 5.43.1-4.

³⁹ Beloch IV 2, 202-204 suggests that Laodike III was the daughter of Hierax because he could not accept the existence of two princesses of Pontus bearing the same name. On the contrary Walbank 1957 *ad l.* points out that homonymy is not infrequent in the kingdom of Pontus. See also Thornton 2002, 449.

⁴⁰ Logbasis made a treacherous deal with Achaios to give up the city to him, however the conspiracy was discovered and Logbasis was killed. Achaios therefore was forced to agree to a truce and to find a compromise with Selge: Pol. 5.76.11.

⁴¹ On the strategic, economic, and military relevance of Sardis and the prestige connected with the control of the city see Billows 1995, 97-99; Cohen 1995, 230-231; Virgilio 2003,² 140-142; Capdetrey 2007, 294-296 and 369-371.

⁴² Capdetrey 2007, 294-296.

that role into an independent Anatolian kingship. In particular, Achaios, as aforementioned, when establishing his new royal authority, chose to make Sardis the capital of his kingdom. Aside from the role of the city as it appears in Polybios' account, there is numismatic evidence of it: the mint of Sardis between 220 and 213 issued for Achaios several series of coins, among which were gold staters and silver tetradrachms with Achaios' draped bust and his title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ἈΧΑΙΟΥ (of king Achaios),⁴³ a title also present on the royal bronze coins.⁴⁴

The intense activity of the mint, especially when contrasted with its limited use during the previous two decades,⁴⁵ may indicate an economic boost to Sardis under the reign of Laodike and Achaios. Seventy-two exemplars of Achaios' royal bronze coins were found in the Artemision of Sardis, in the foundation of the temple under the simulacrum of the goddess. Le Rider rightly suggests that the temple was refounded by Achaios, after he proclaimed himself king in Asia Minor, establishing his court in Sardis and beginning to issue his own coins.⁴⁶ The evidence thus suggests that the shifting of its status from satrapal capital to capital of the kingdom of Achaios and his wife Laodike brought economic benefits to Sardis. It is consequently not surprising that the city granted to the royal couple strong support during the long siege of 216-214/213, and that it was later punished for that by Antiochos III.⁴⁷

Laodike's bond with Sardis is explicit in Polybios' account of the events following the death of Achaios:

And when soon afterwards the herald reached her, announcing the fate of Achaeus and bidding her to come to an arrangement and withdraw from the citadel there was at first no answer from those in the citadel but wild wailing and extravagant lamentation, not so much owing to the affection they bore Achaeus, as because the event struck everyone as so strange and entirely unexpected. After this outburst the garrison continued in great perplexity and hesitation. Antiochus having dispatched Achaeus continued to press hard upon those in the citadel, feeling convinced that some means of taking the place would be furnished him by the garrison itself and more especially by the rank and the file. And this actually took place. For they quarreled among themselves and divided into two

⁴³ WSM 1439; 1440; CSE 608; Houghton and Lorber 2002 n° 952-953. On Achaios' issues see Mørkholm 1969, 5-20; Le Rider 1991, 71-88; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 347-349; and Ehling 2007, 497-501.

⁴⁴ WSM 1441-1450; Houghton and Lorber 2002 n° 954-959.

⁴⁵ Houghton and Lorber 2002, 292-293, 318-322.

⁴⁶ LeRider 1991, 71-88; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 348.

⁴⁷ Inscriptions of letters from Antiochos III to Sardis in 213 indicate that he had earlier penalized the city: Gauthier 1989 n° 1; SEG 39, 1283; Bringmann and Von Steuben 1995, 260.I; Ma 1999 n° 1. And Gauthier 1989 n° 3; SEG 39, 1285; Bringmann and Von Steuben 1995, 260.IV; Ma 1999 n° 3. On the city being punished by Antiochos III for the support given to Achaios, see also Cohen 1995, 230-231 and Capdetrey 2007, 297-300 and 369.

factions, one placing itself under Aribazus, the other under Laodice. This produced mutual distrust, and before long both parties surrendered themselves and the acropolis.⁴⁸

According to Polybios, Laodike was the authority in Sardis in the wake of her husband's execution, until Antiochos III, taking advantage of the mutual distrust between the queen and the commander of the garrison, conquered the acropolis. In particular it is possible to discern some features of Laodike's exercise of political and military power in the city. Politically, Laodike was considered to be the diplomatic spokesperson in Sardis by Antiochos III, who sent the messenger to her, instead of to the military commander of the citadel. Also, from the military point of view, Laodike's role was not *pro forma*: she did not capitulate to her Seleukid brother-in-law's pressure, but rather the city continued to resist. Finally, Laodike's power was well-grounded enough to confront the power of Aribazos, the military commander of Sardis, when he decided to break away because of the constant pressure by Antiochos.

In these concise but meaningful passages, Laodike assumes an active role in political and military events, overstepping the conventional boundaries of her femininity and acting temporarily in the leading role, filling the void of leadership unexpectedly left by the death of her husband. Laodike is treated positively by Polybios even if her assertive actions move her beyond the Homeric parallel with Andromache.

III. The role of the wife and the place of the woman in Homer and Polybios

The two aforementioned episodes of the Iliad, which focus on the conjugal relationship between Hektor and Andromache, are the ones that contribute the most to a definition of the features of Andromache's role as wife. In the speeches of book 6 there is a clear acknowledgement of the concept of the "divided world", as applied to normative roles within the conjugal *homilia*. Hektor and Andromache's relationship is articulated in two separate gender-spheres, as Hektor points out: wife and husband devote themselves to different activities, in different places, spatially segregated from each other, in order to accomplish different kinds of good.⁴⁹ Specifically, war is not a female activity: women are supposed to

⁴⁸ 8.21.1-9: ταχὺ δὲ καὶ τοῦ κήρυκος παραγενομένου πρὸς τὴν Λαοδίκην καὶ διασαφούντος τὰ περὶ τὸν Ἀχαιῶν, καὶ κελεύοντος τίθεσθαι τὰ πράγματα καὶ παραχωρεῖν τῆς ἄκρας, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀναπόκριτος οἰμωγῇ καὶ θρήνοι παράλογοι κατεῖχον τοὺς περὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν, οὐχ οὕτως διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἀχαιῶν εὐνοίαν ὡς διὰ τὸ παράδοξον καὶ τελέως ἀνέλπιστον ἐκάστω φαίνεσθαι τὸ συμβεβηκός, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πολλή τις ἦν ἀπορία καὶ δυσχρηστία περὶ τοὺς ἔνδον. Ἀντίοχος δὲ διακεχειρισμένος τὸν Ἀχαιῶν ἐπέιχε τοῖς κατὰ τὴν ἄκραν αἰεὶ, πεπεισμένος ἀφορμὴν ἐκ τῶν ἔνδον αὐτῷ παραδοθήσεσθαι, καὶ μάλιστα διὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν. ὃ καὶ τέλος ἐγένετο· στασιάσαντες γὰρ πρὸς σφᾶς ἐμερίσθησαν, οἱ μὲν πρὸς Ἀρίβαζον, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν Λαοδίκην. οὗ γενομένου διαπιστήσαντες ἀλλήλοις ταχέως ἀμφοτέροι παρέδωσαν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀκροπόλεις. Cfr Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011 8.21.9: "upon which as they had no confidence in each other, they both of them surrendered themselves and the place".

⁴⁹ Katz 1981, 19-44; Lohmann 1988; Felson and Slatkin 2004, 91-114. On gender and narrative in Homer's epic see also Suzuki 1989; Cohen 1995; Zeitlin 1996, 117-152; Foley 2001, 109-144; Lovatt 2013.

passively endure the grief caused by warfare made by men.⁵⁰ While Hektor is fighting, therefore, Andromache must obey her husband's will and loyally remain in the house, segregated from external events and surrounded by women. Andromache obeys her husband's instructions and waits at home for him, devoting her time to spinning and to preparing the house for Hektor's homecoming.⁵¹ The behaviour of Andromache towards her husband expresses the social values of *aidōs* (shame and modesty) and *sōphrosynē* (dignity and discretion) fundamental female virtues in Archaic and Classic Greek society.⁵²

These are the virtues also expressed in Laodike's behaviour in Polybios' account. She plays a passive role in events, proving herself discreet and obedient to Achaïos in following his orders: the only one in the acropolis to know his plan, she remains segregated from the war, waiting inside her room for Achaïos to come back. Laodike's portrait would therefore seem to be consistent with what Eckstein defines as the Polybian "vision of domesticity".⁵³ According to Eckstein, even if Polybios mentions women more than other historians, he seldom refers to them positively.⁵⁴ Eckstein argues that, when women are engaged with political events, mainly because of their relation with men active in political and military affairs, Polybios' view tends to be negative and women are mainly seen as "another force for disorder within society"⁵⁵ with a "negative impact upon society and politics".⁵⁶ When women interact with political life, they are portrayed as hyperemotional and prone to hysteria, which can in some cases result in violence and *paranoia* (lawlessness). In the Hellenistic events we are considering, it is possible to find an example in the terrible circumstances of the death of Hermias' wife: when Antiochus III's counsellor was killed at Apamea in 220, the women of the city reacted with *paranoia* and stoned his wife to death.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there are also cases where Polybios spends a few positive words on women, e.g., when he discusses Apollonis, wife of Attalus I, because of her modesty and her successful way of raising her children with amity amongst them (22.20). It

⁵⁰ *Il.* 6.490-495: "But, go to the house and busy yourself with your own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and tell your handmaids to ply their work: and war will be the concern for men, all of those who live in Ilios, but especially for me". On the divided world of men and women in the *Iliad* and Hektor's claim see also Katz 1981, 19-44 and Mitchell 2012, 1-21.

⁵¹ Hektor does not even consider the suggestions by Andromache concerning a different battle strategy (*Il.* 6.430-440). He instead reminds her the war is man's matter (*Il.* 6.492-493).

⁵² Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 130-131, 158-159. The values of the Homeric Andromache appear again in Euripides' *Andromache* in the *Andromache* and in the *Troades*. See also North 1966, 69-74 and Cairns 1993, 123-125 and *id.* 1996, 78-83.

⁵³ Eckstein 1995, 150.

⁵⁴ Brown 1988, 9-10 and Eckstein 1995, 150-160. It has been rightly pointed out that women are mentioned 130 times in Polybios' surviving work, which is significantly less frequent than the 373 references to women in Herodotus; Thucydides, on the other hand, refers to women only 50 times and never in detail.

⁵⁵ Eckstein 1995, 150-151.

⁵⁶ Eckstein 1995, 150-160.

⁵⁷ 5.56.15.

would seem that, according to Polybios, women act positively when, governed by a man through a stable married life, they behave properly and play a useful role in society. According to Eckstein, when Polybios praises women, it is because of their domestic virtues, their modesty, their obedience and loyalty to their husbands:

in the concept of a stable married life in which the male, himself voluntarily subject to a strict standard of self discipline, also carefully controls the female, Polybios was participating in a vision of domesticity that would have a history in ancient Greek society long after his own time.⁵⁸

This vision of domesticity might seem to be applicable to Polybios' positive approach to Laodike, given that the parallelism with Andromache emphasizes Laodike's passive behaviour as submissive, discreet, modest and disengaged from war. However, such analysis contrasts with the actual diplomatic role and active political engagement of this woman.⁵⁹ The next section of this paper explores that role.

IV. The role of the queen

Among Hellenistic royal women, Seleukid queens are shown in several epigraphic documents of 3rd century to be politically and economically active in the administration of the kingdom as representatives of the dynasty, interacting with various institutions, cities, temples, peoples or officials, whether directly or through their own officials.⁶⁰ This evidence has been extensively discussed in various past and upcoming publications;⁶¹ in this context, it is relevant to mention briefly a few elements that emerge in the documents regarding Seleukid queens immediately precedent to Laodike of Sardis. The inscriptions testifying to the activity of the queens are mainly of two kinds: documents concerning honorary decrees and cults for the queens, and documents by the queen concerning the administration of land-ownership (sales and donations).

The first kind of inscription concerns mainly, if not exclusively, honours and cults dedicated by Greek cities to Seleukid kings and queens, in order to confirm or establish relations between the Greek city and the ruling family.⁶² All of the first four Seleukid queens

⁵⁸ Eckstein 1995, 156-157 (156).

⁵⁹ Laodike is not the only Hellenistic royal woman politically active and positively mentioned in Polybios: Berenike II, daughter of Magas, is praised by the historian for being daring, despite that she had Demetrius the fair killed, and ruled Cyrene by her self before marrying Ptolemy III and becoming queen of Egypt. According to Polybios her personality caused her being killed by Sosibius (5.36.1). See Clayman 2013 and Ameling 2014.

⁶⁰ In this respect the most testified queen among epigraphic documents is Laodike III wife of Antiochos III; see in particular Ma 1999, 234 and n° 37; Virgilio 2003a, 39-50; Widmer 2008, 63-92.

⁶¹ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26 and 127-129; Ogden 1999, 117-170; Martinez-Sève 2003, 690-706; Virgilio 2003², 152-55; Widmer 2008, 63-92; Michel and Widmer 2010; Ramsey 2011, 510-27; Muccioli 2013, 122; D'Agostini 2013, 28-37 and 146-148; Ramsey 2015, 6; Ager and Hardiman 2015.

⁶² On the relation between the Seleukid family and the Greek institutions in the Seleukid kingdom see Capdetrey 2007, 191-226.

are documented in such honorary inscriptions: Apame, Stratonike, Laodike I and Berenike Syra⁶³. The second category of document, which concerns land sales and donations, pertains to both Greek and non-Greek communities and appears later in the dynasty, starting with the reign of Laodike I. The well-known inscription *I. Didyma* 492 is in fact a record of three documents concerning the sale of lands in Hellespontine Phrygia from Antiochos II to his first wife Laodike I.⁶⁴ Laodike I is said to administer this area through her *oiconomōn* (manager) Arrideos; she had the right to devolve or sell the land and the local population to other cities or institutions. Even if the sale was a private contract, the document was published in all major centres of Asia Minor, Sardis, Ephesos, Ilium and Miletus, showing Antiochos II's desire to publicize the deal and, consequently, Laodike I's administrative authority in those territories.⁶⁵

A similar background probably surrounds the sale of lands near Mylasa from a queen Laodike to the Seleukid official Olympichos mentioned in *I. Labraunda* I 8.⁶⁶ The inscription records the dedication to Zeus Osogoa by Olympichos of those lands that the Seleukid official had previously bought from queen Laodike.⁶⁷ Since Olympichos was originally a representative of Seleukos II in Caria,⁶⁸ the queen is either Seleukos' mother or his wife:⁶⁹ either way, the Seleukid queen is documented in this inscription, as in the aforementioned one, as landowner, as well as Seleukid representative with regards of those lands. The independent economic status of Seleukid royal women is consistently documented also in Babylonian sources of this period. Laodike I, wife of Antiochos II, together with her sons Seleukos II and Antiochos Hierax, is mentioned in a cuneiform tablet of March 236 as donor of lands near the Euphrates River to

⁶³ Apame: Ameling 1995 n° 281[E2] (= Kotsidu 2000 n° 269 [E1]); Kotsidu 2000 n° 269 [E2]. Stratonike: Kotsidu 2000 n°123 [E]; Kotsidu 2000 n° 198 and 199; Kotsidu 2000 n° 231 [E1]; Laodike I: Kotsidu 2000 n° 273 [E]. Berenike Syra: Blümel 1992 pp. 127-133 (= Gauthier, *Bé*, 1994 528= *SEG* 42 994; *SEG* 46 1413; *SEG* 48 1336); Kotsidu 2000 n° 178 [E]. See also Ager and Hardiman 2015.

⁶⁴ *OGIS* I 225; *SEG* 16, 710; *SEG* 19, 676; *SEG* 37, 878; Bielman 2002; Virgilio 2003² 19, 268-272; see also Welles 1934, 18-20; Lockhart 1961, 188-192; Papazoglou 1997, 35-41; Martinez-Sève 2003, 690-706; Bencivenni 2010, 149-178.

⁶⁵ *I. Didyma* 492 ll. 29-30: ἐφ' ᾧ οὐθὲν ἀποτελεῖ εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν καὶ κυρία ἔ[σ]/ται προσφερομένη πρὸς πόλιν, ἣν ἂν βούληται. And ll. 40-44: σύνταξον παραδείξει Ἄρριδαίω τῶι οἰκονομοῦντι τὰ Λαοδί / κης τήν τε κώμην καὶ τήν βᾶριν καὶ τήν προσοῦσαν χώραν / καὶ τοὺς λαοὺς πανοικίους σὺν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτοῖς / πᾶσιν καὶ τήν ὠνήν ἀναγράψαι εἰς τὰς βασιλικὰς γραφὰς / τὰς ἐν Σάρδεσιν καὶ εἰς στήλας λιθίνας πέντε.

⁶⁶ Crampa 1969, 52-67; Reger 1998, 11-17.

⁶⁷ *I. Labraunda* I 8, ll. 19-20: [πάντα] ταῖς γέαις ταύταις κατὰ τὰς προὔπαρχούσας ὁμοῦρειας ἃ εἰῶνημα[ι]/[παρὰ β]ασιλίσσης Λαοδίκης, ἀνατίθημι τῶι Διῖ τῶι Ὀσογῶι τᾶδε.

⁶⁸ On Olympichos see Crampa 1969, 86-96 and Capdetrey 2007, 116-124 e 145-147. Olympichos was a Seleukid official in Caria who later established a personal rule in the area, becoming a local dynast, as is shown in the inscription from Labraunda.

⁶⁹ Crampa 1969, 52-67 thinks it is Laodike I the mother of Seleukos II, while Virgilio 2003,² 153 thinks it is Laodike II wife of Seleukos II.

the people of Babylon, Borsippa and Kutha.⁷⁰ Despite the uncertainty of the chronology of the donation, the publicity of the document, which was published in the major temples of the three cities, as well as the mention of the queen together with the two Seleukid princes, show the queen's status as institutional representative of the dynasty. A similar institutional context seems to surround another Babylonian document of 246 where a Laodike is mentioned relative to an estate and a festival.⁷¹

This epigraphic evidence documents the activity of Seleukid queens, who in the 3rd century interacted diplomatically and economically with institutional structures across the Seleukid kingdom, acting in line with the king's policy relative to the interest of Seleukid dynasty in order to integrate and expand the web of support built around the dynasty by male representatives of the family.⁷²

From the start of the Seleucid dynasty, the queen had won public recognition and honours, such as honorific statues, from Greek cities in and outside the empire, which can express the influence of a queen over the king's policy-making, though that is disguised by the public emphasis that the queen's actions are in line with the king's policy.⁷³

Even if Achaios and Laodike were usurpers and not Seleukid queen and king, Laodike of Sardis does not seem to be an exception to Seleukid queenship. When Achaios was alive, Laodike's connection with Logbasis offered a feasible political channel for diplomatic interaction between Achaios and the local population of Pisidia: her network successfully contributed to the accomplishment of her husband's political interest in the area. After Achaios died, she became directly involved in political events in a role of authority assigned her by her husband: Laodike in fact was the only one to be aware of Achaios' plan, and, therefore, she was left in a prominent political and strategic position in the acropolis. Becoming the leader of a city and of a faction of the army of Sardis, Laodike acted in a manner consistent with Seleukid queenship, which expected the queen to interact with officials and institutions of the kingdom as required by her loyalty to her husband and her dynasty.

⁷⁰ *Ed. prim.* Lehmann 1892, 330-332. See Ramsey 2015, 6. See also van der Spek 1986 11; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 128-129; Kuhrt 1996, 41-54; Del Monte 1997, 43-45; Virgilio 2003,² 154-155.

⁷¹ *AD II 245B - ES 66 Ro.* ll. 3-5. See Del Monte 1997, 47-48 and van der Spek 2013.

⁷² See D'Agostini 2013, 163. It is remarkable that this phenomenon is diametrically opposed to what happened in the contemporary Antigonid *basileia*. As Carney 2000, 179-202 points out, Antigonid queens had fewer opportunities to exert political influence and to be involved in the rule of the kingdom. This institutional difference is particularly evident in the case of two Seleukid princesses who married Antigonid rulers: Stratonike, wife of Demetrios II, and Laodike, wife of Perseus. According to Carney 2000, 198-199 "Stratonike was able to play a much more active role outside Macedonia. So too, apparently, did Laodice, wife of Perseus. Their Macedonian context rather than their personalities or their ability to produce heirs limited them. Both of these women were murdered after their departure from Macedonia, apparently because of their political influence in Seleucid circles. [...] In Antigonid Macedonia, royal women were too insignificant to be worth murdering."

⁷³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 127-129. They note as a first example of this queenly praxis the letter of Apame wife of Seleukos I to aid the Milesian soldiers, *I. Didyma* 480. See also Ramsey 2015, 6 and Ager and Hardiman 2015.

Consequently, under the extreme circumstances of Achaios' death and the presence of the imminent threat against the future of her dynasty and of her city, Laodike remained in line with her husband's policy and took on a position of political authority as the only feasible representative of Achaios' dynasty.

Conclusion

Polybios' vision of domesticity relative to women finds in this passage a new dimension, where the virtues of the wife are balanced against the duties of the wife of the king. The positive judgement on Laodike implicit in Polybios' epic parallel with Andromache concerns not only her obedience, but also her loyalty to her husband, values that led her to act as authority in the city under siege.⁷⁴ The Homeric parallel between the *homilia* of Hektor and Andromache and the *homilia* of Achaios and Laodike concerns the extraordinary bond between husband and wife, the Greek ideal of *homophrosynē*, the unity of ideas and feeling among the member of the family (*Od.* 6.180-185), rather than the concept of the divided world and gender roles.

While describing the farewell among lovers, and the wife mourning for the death of her husband, Polybios references Greek cultural models that go back to Homer, conferring on the episode of Achaios and Laodike a universal significance. The intertextual allusions to Homer thus allow us to discover a new layer in Polybios' account and a new side of his moral vision. The historian's judgement is not strictly limited to social boundaries and gender paradigms; epic can be associated even with people and acts that push such paradigms and boundaries if required by their circumstances to do so, in order to "bear bravely the vicissitudes of fortune."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ A similar approach might be behind Polybios' positive judgement on Berenike II: her killing her betrothed and acting as authority in Cyrene can be seen as example of her loyalty to her father's will and of her will to re-establish the paternal structure challenged by her mother Apame.

⁷⁵ 1.1.2: διδάσκαλον τοῦ δύνασθαι τὰς τῆς τύχης μεταβολὰς γενναίως ὑποφέρειν τὴν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων περιπετειῶν ὑπόμνησιν. Greek text and translation Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2010. The reflection on the capriciousness of Fortune is recurrent in Polybios as in the whole of ancient literature. See in particular Walbank 2007, 349-355 and McGing 2010, 26-30. The *topos* refers back to the meeting between Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* book 24 and is echoed in the Achaios episode in Polybios' description of the encounter between Achaios and Antiochus III, 8.20.8-12. Polybios explicitly mentions the theme in the epilogue of the Achaios episode 8.21.10-11: "Thus did Achaeus perish, after taking every reasonable precaution and defeated only by the perfidy of those whom he had trusted, leaving two useful lessons to posterity, firstly to trust no one too easily, and secondly not to be boastful in the season of prosperity, but being men to be prepared for anything".

FINAL NOTE

In the current state of the evidence, we do not know Laodike's fate or that of her children, if there were any, after the conquest of Sardis. Two inscriptions from Sardis show that in 213 the city was punished by Antiochos III; subsequently it was given economic privileges to help the recovery from the consequences of the war.⁷⁶ A third document from the same period records a letter from Antiochos' wife, Laodike III, to the people of Sardis. This is the earliest inscription concerning Laodike III's interaction with institutions throughout the kingdom. In the document Laodike III promises to Sardis she will provide it with benefits since the city devoted to her a sacred area, an altar, and a festivity, *Laodikeia*, with a procession and a sacrifice to Zeus *Genethlios*, protector of the family.⁷⁷ It may be no coincidence that this first important document in which Laodike III was granted honours came from Sardis, the same city that, until a few months earlier, had been the capital of her sister Laodike's kingdom.

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⁷⁶ See Ma 1999, 61-62. Inscriptions record the correspondence between Antiochos III to Sardis in 213: Gauthier 1989, n° 1; SEG 39, 1283; Bringmann and Von Steuben 1995, 260.I; Ma 1999 n° 1. See also Gauthier 1989, n° 3; SEG 39, 1285; Bringmann and Von Steuben 1995, 260.IV; Ma 1999 n° 3.

⁷⁷ Gauthier 1989 n° 2; SEG 39, 1284; Virgilio 2003 n° 8; Ma 1999 n°2. The Seleukid queen is known to have been the first Seleukid queen to be attributed with dynastic cult across the kingdom in 193: Ma 1999 n°37 and Widmer 2008, 63-92.

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