

Greek Tragedy

The Flower of Persia: Botanical Language in Aeschylus' Persians

Wanton Growth (ὕβριζεν)

59 τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας

60 οἴγεται ἀνδρῶν,

61 οὔς πέρι πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιήτις

62 θρέψασα πόθωι στένεται μαλερωῖ,
τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδὼν
τείνοντα χρόνον τρμεόνται.

πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος ἄρχων [ἀντ. α]
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει
διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἕκ τε θαλάσσης ἐχυροῖσι πεποιθῶς
80 στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις, χρυσονόμου [χρυσόγονος]
γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φύς.

109 ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσης [ἀντ. γ]

πολιανομένας πνεύματι λάβρωι

111 ἔσορᾶν πόντιον ἄλσος,

πίσυννοι λεπτοτόνοις πείσμασι λαοπόροις τε μηχαναῖς.

115 ταῦτά μου μελαγχίτων φρήν ἀμύσσεται φόβωι.

ἄς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας καὶ πεδοστιβῆς λεῶς [στρ. ε]

127 σμῆνος ὧς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμοις
στρατοῦ,
τὸν ἀμφίζεκτον ἐξαμείψας ἀμφοτέρας ἄλιον
πρῶνα κοινὸν αἴας.

Pruning (κολοῦειν)

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ὦ γῆς ἀπάσης Ἀσιάδος πολίσματα,
ὦ Περσὶς αἴα καὶ πολὺς πλοῦτος λιμὴν,

251 ὡς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς

252 ὄλβος, τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴγεται πεσόν.

ὑπτιοῦτο δὲ / σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν ἰδεῖν

420 ναυαγίων πλήθουσα [ἄνθουσα] καὶ φόνου βροτῶν

Atossa's Propitiation (Interpretive Keys)

610 φέρουσ', ἄπερ νεκροῖσι μειλικτήρια,

611 βοός τ' ἀφ' ἀγνῆς λευκὸν εὐποτον γάλα,

612 τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, παμφαῆς μέλι,

613 λιβάσιν ὑδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μέτα,

614 ἀκήρατόν τε μητρὸς ἀγρίας ἄπο

615 ποτόν, παλαιᾶς ἀμπέλου γάνος τόδε·

616 τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φύλλοισι θαλλούσης βίον

617 ξανθῆς ἐλαίας καρπὸς εὐώδης πάρα,

618 ἄνθη τε πλεκτά, παμφόρου Γαίας τέκνα.

Speech of Darius (The Metaphor)

παῦροί γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν
χρῆ θεσφάτοισιν, εἰς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα
βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μὲν, τὰ δ' οὐ.
κεῖπερ τάδ' ἐστί, πλῆθος ἐκκριτον στρατοῦ
λείπει κεναῖσιν ἐλίσι πεπεισμένος·

805 μίμνουσι δ' ἔνθα πεδίον Ἀσσωπὸς ῥοαῖς

806 ἄρδει φίλον πιάσμα Βοιωτῶν χθονί·

οὐ σφιν κακῶν ὕψιστ' ἐπαμμένει παθεῖν,

ὑβρεως ἄποινα κἀθέων φρονημάτων·

809 οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη

810 ἠδούντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·

811 βωμοὶ δ' αἰστοὶ, δαϊμόνων θ' ἰδρύματα

812 πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανίσταται βάθρων.

τοιγὰρ κακῶς δρᾶσαντες οὐκ ἐλάσσονα
πάσχουσι, τὰ δὲ μέλλουσι, κοῦδέπο κακῶν
κρηνὶς ὑπέστη, κἄλλ' ἔτ' ἐκπιδύεται.

816 τόσος γὰρ ἔσται πελανὸς

αἱματοσφαγῆς

πρὸς γῆ Πλαταιῶν Δωρίδος λόγῃς ὕπο·

818 θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρω γονῆ

819 ἄφωνα σηματοῦσιν ὄμμασιν βροτῶν

ὡς οὐχ ὑπέρφου θνητὸν ὄντα χρῆ φρονεῖν·

821 ὑβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν

822 ἄτης, ὄθεν ἀγκλαντον ἐξαμᾶ θερος.

τοιαῦθ' ὀρώντες τῶνδε τάπιτίμια
μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδέ τις
ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
ἄλλων ἐρασθεῖς ὄλβον ἐκχέη μέγαν.

827 Ζεὺς τοι κολαστῆς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν

828 φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὐθυνοσ βαρύς.

Infecundity (ἀκαρπεῖν)

Χο. ὁτοτοῖ, βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς
καὶ περσονόμου τιμῆς μεγάλης

920 κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν,

921 οὔς νῦν δαίμων ἐπέκειρεν.

γὰ δ' αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν

923 ἦβαν Ξέρξαι κταμέναν, Ἄιδου

σάκτορι Περσᾶν· †ἀγδαβάται† γὰρ

925 πολλοὶ φῶτες, χώρας ἄνθος,

τοξοδάμαντες, πάνυ ταρφύς τις
μυριάς ἀνδρῶν, ἐξέφθινται.

1035 Χο. καὶ σθένοσ γ' ἐκολούθη.

Gilded Fruit on Spears

Hdt 8.41 “καὶ τούτων χίλιοι μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖσι δόρασι ἀντὶ τῶν σαυρωτήρων ῥοιάς εἶχον χρυσέας καὶ περίξ συνεκλήιον τοὺς ἄλλους, οἱ δὲ εἰνακισχίλιοι ἐντὸς τούτων ἐόντες ἀργυρέας ῥοιάς εἶχον· εἶχον δὲ χρυσέας ῥοιάς καὶ οἱ ἐς τὴν γῆν τράποντες τὰς λόγχας, καὶ μῆλα οἱ ἄγχιστα ἐπόμενοι Ξέρξῃ.”

“One thousand of these latter bore golden pomegranates on their spear-shafts in place of the spike, and surrounded the rest; the nine thousand were enclosed within, and bore silver pomegranates; they that held their spears reversed carried golden pomegranates also, and they that were nearest to Xerxes, apples of gold.” (trans. Loeb)

The Sacred Tree on the Acropolis

Hdt. 8.55 “ἐποίησαν τὰ ἐντεταλμένα. Τοῦ δὲ εἵνεκεν τούτων ἐπεμήσθη, φράσω. Ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθέος τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, ἐν τῷ ἐλαίῃ τε καὶ θάλασσα ἐνι, τὰ λόγος παρὰ Ἀθηναίων Ποσειδέωνά τε καὶ Ἀθηναίην ἐρίσαντας περὶ τῆς χώρας μαρτύρια θέσθαι. Ταύτην ὦν τὴν ἐλαίην ἅμα τῷ ἄλλῳ ἱρῷ κατέλαβε ἐμψησθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων· δευτέρῃ δὲ ἡμέρῃ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐμψησῆος Ἀθηναίων οἱ θύειν ὑπὸ βασιλέος κελευόμενοι ὡς ἀνέβησαν ἐς τὸ ἱρόν, ὧρων βλαστὸν ἐκ τοῦ στελέχεος ὅσον τε πηχυαῖον ἀναδεδραμηκότα. Οὗτοι μὲν νυν ταῦτα ἔφρασαν.”

“There is a temple of Erechtheus the Earth-born, as he is called, in this citadel, containing within it an olive-tree and a sea. The tale goes among the Athenians, that they were placed there as witnesses by Neptune and Minerva, when they had their contention about the country. Now this olive-tree had been burnt with the rest of the temple when the barbarians took the place. But when the Athenians, whom the king had commanded to offer sacrifice, went up into the temple for the purpose, they found a fresh shoot, as much as a cubit in length, thrown out from the old trunk. Such at least was the account which these persons gave.” (trans. Loeb)

A Tree Uprooted in the Iliad

15.414-16 “ὡς δ’ ὄθ’ ὑπὸ πληγῆς πατρός Διὸς ἐξερίπη δρυὸς πρόρριζος, δεινὴ δὲ θεοῦ γίγνεται ὀδμὴ ἐξ αὐτῆς, τὸν δ’ οὐ περ ἔχει θράσος ὅς κεν ἴδῃται.”

“And just as when beneath the blast of father Zeus an oak falls uprooted, and a terrible reek of brimstone arises from it—then truly courage no longer possesses him who sees it from near by.” (trans. Loeb)

Solon’s Metaphor 4.32-5

ταῦτα διδάξει θυμὸς Ἀθηναίους με κελεύει

...
Εὐνομίη δ’ εὐκοσμία καὶ ἄρτια πάντ’ ἀποφαίνει,
καὶ θαμὰ τοῖς ἀδίκους ἀμφιτίθησι πέδας·
τραχέα λειαίνει, παύει κόρον, ὕβριν ἀμαυροῖ,
αὐαίνει δ’ ἄτης ἄνθεα φυόμενα.
εὐθύνη δὲ δίκας σκολιάς, ὑπερήφανά τ’ ἔργα
πραύνει· παύει δ’ ἔργα διχοστασίης,
παύει δ’ ἀργαλέης ἔριδος χόλον, ἔστι δ’ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς
πάντα κατ’ ἀνθρώπους ἄρτια καὶ πινυτά.

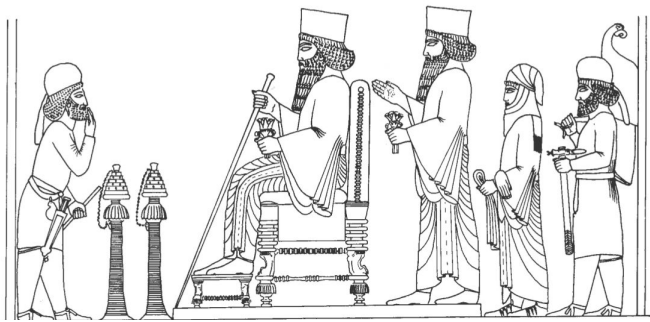


Fig. 1 (left): sketch of a panel taken from the East side of Apadana (figure 123 in Roaf). Darius sits enthroned holding a scepter in his right hand and a flower in his left. Behind him stands his successor, Xerxes, who also holds a flower in his left hand

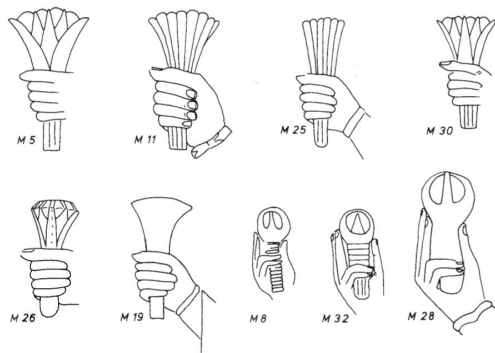


Fig. 2: Sketch of flower types carried by nobles on Apadana reliefs (fig 49 in Roaf).

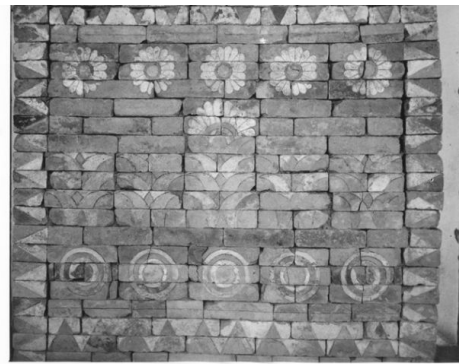
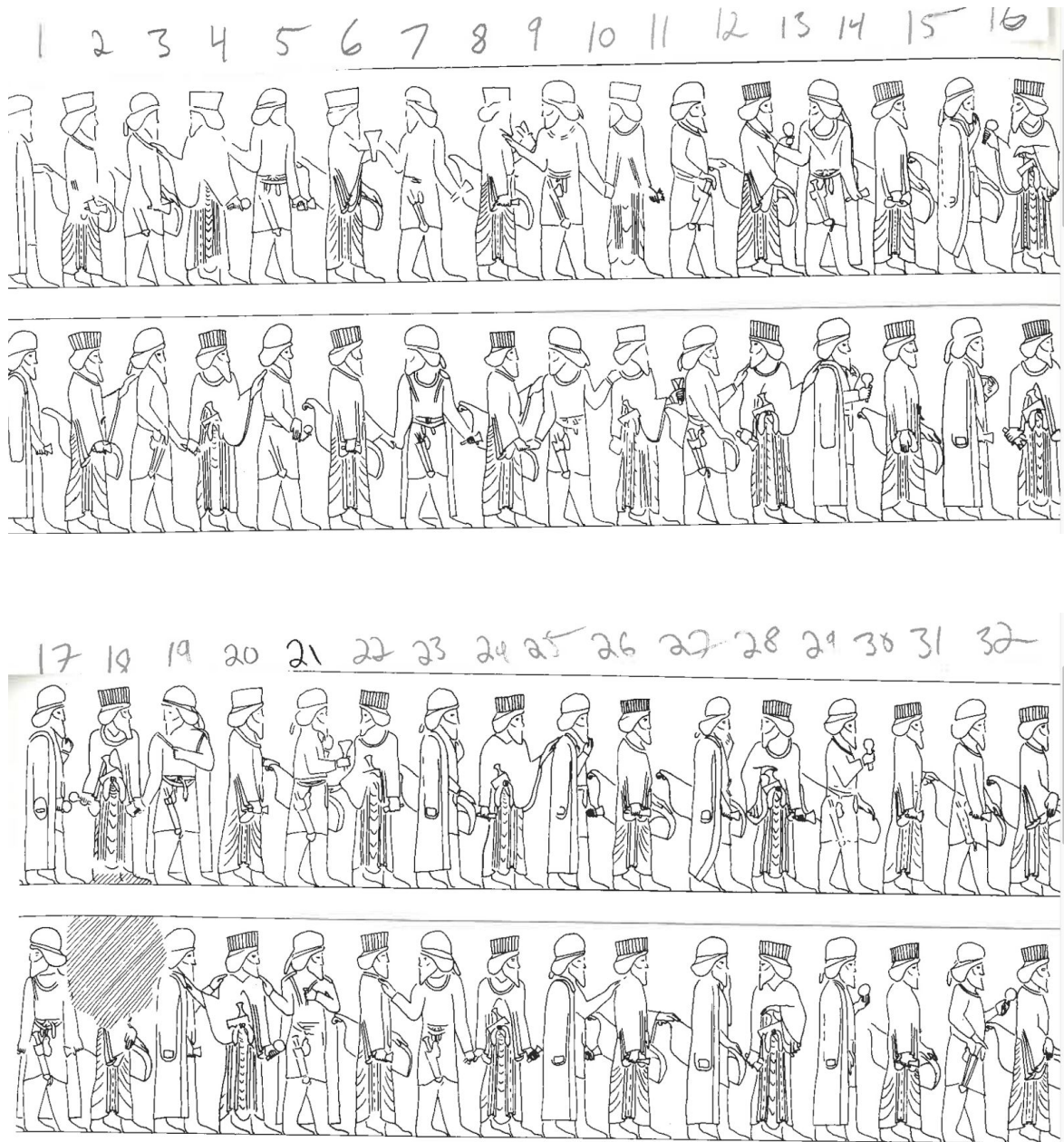


Fig. 3: glazed brick decoration with floral images from the Apadana (Oriental Institute).



Fig. 4: Myson red figure depicting Croesus on a funeral pyre c. 500-490 BCE (Artstor).

Fig. 5: sketch of nobles on north (Roaf). Colored diagram below colors in orange the positions on a grid to mark a noble with a flower (numbering and diagram mine).



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	
Top North (25)	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	
Bottom North (21)	f	f			f	f	f			f		f	f		f	f	f		f	f		f	f	f		f	f	f		f	f	f	f

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