

## The Long-Armed Persian King: Disabled or Powerful Man?

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the evidence of ancient authors on the unofficial nicknames of Achaemenid Persian kings. It pays special attention to the interpretation of the nickname of Μακρόχειρ. Two variants are considered for its translation. In the first case, one must talk about the ancient authors' perceptions of this nickname as relating to a person who had one arm longer than the other. In the second case, the nickname is interpreted metaphorically: it is believed to be used for a ruler who is seeking an extension of his possessions. The possibility of applying the nickname of Μακρόχειρ to each of the three Persian kings – Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I – is investigated.*

**Keywords:** *Nicknames, Artaxerxes, Darius, Xerxes, Achaemenids.*

The issue of Greek nicknames of Persian kings remains virtually out of view of modern researchers. It is possible to find only a few remarks on this subject in the literature and, of course, only in relation to a few Persian monarchs, but even here the researchers' views diverge<sup>4</sup>. This work is dedicated to the examination of one nickname – Μακρόχειρ – and the question is raised regarding the possibility of interpreting it as 'Long-Armed.'

According to the most common version, the Persian king Artaxerxes I received the nickname Μακρόχειρ (that is, 'Long-Armed'). This, in particular, is discussed in Plutarch's two

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<sup>4</sup> Giving Darius III the epithet *Codomannus*, for example, is cause for discussion. This is reported only by Justin (10. 3. 3), but his information is interpreted ambiguously. Rüdiger SCHMITT 1982, 90-1 + not. 34. referred to the report of the Babylonian astronomical diaries, from which it follows that Darius III's own name was Artašat; that suggests that *Codomannus* was his Persian nickname. Otherwise, Ernst BADIEN 2000, 247-8, who believed that *Codomannus* was a personal name, interpreted it as the Aramaic word *qdmwn*, meaning 'Eastern' or 'From the East.' However, *Codomannus* is, of course, a nickname or name known to the Greeks in its eastern version. Other nicknames of Persian kings, however, were of Greek origin: Μακρόχειρ ('Long-armed'), Νόθος ('Bastard') and Μνήμων ('Mindful'). As far as Μνήμων is concerned Said Amir ARJOMAND 1998, 245 argued that it can and should be taken as a Greek translation of the theophoric name, *Vahuman* (New Persian "Bahman"), which he assumed as a sign of his devotion to Vohu Manah ('Good Thought'), the second of the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas ('Holy Immortals'). Alternatively, Carsten BINDER 2008, 85 proposes that the epithet Μνήμων was a Greek literal translation of the same Persian nickname reported by Hesychius as ἀβιάτακα (Hesych. s. v. ἀβιάτακα μνήμονα. Πέρσα).

works: in the biography of the Persian king Artaxerxes II and in *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. In his biography of the king the author reports that the first Artaxerxes, preeminent among the kings of Persia for gentleness and magnanimity, was surnamed “Long-Armed”, because his right hand was longer than his left, and was the son of Xerxes (Ὁ μὲν πρῶτος Ἄρτοξέρξης, τῶν ἐν Πέρσαις βασιλέων πραότητι καὶ μεγαλοψυχίᾳ πρωτεύσας, Μακρόχειρ ἐπεκαλεῖτο, τὴν δεξιὰν μείζονα τῆς ἐτέρας ἔχων, Ξέρξου δ' ἦν υἱός) (Plut. *Artax.* 1.1). Taking the Greek text into consideration, one can see the ordinal πρῶτος as applied to Artaxerxes – not only designating him as the first king who bore that name but also emphasizing his superiority over other kings, his primacy, and thus consonant with the verb πρωτεύειν. However, the nickname Μακρόχειρ, as explained by a physical disability of the king (the right arm longer than the other), is left without further comment.

Plutarch’s information in his other work – *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* – is even more interesting since it metaphorically explains the nickname of the king. According to him, Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, called ‘Long-Armed’ because of his having one hand longer than the other, used to say that it is more kingly to give to one who has than to take away (Ἄρτοξέρξης ὁ Ξέρξου, ὁ μακρόχειρ προσαγορευθεὶς διὰ τὸ τὴν ἐτέραν χεῖρα μακροτέραν ἔχειν, ἔλεγεν ὅτι τὸ προσθεῖναι τοῦ ἀφελεῖν βασιλικώτερόν ἐστι) (Plut. *Mor.* 173d). And thus, in this passage the ‘long-armedness’ of the king corresponds not only to the physical disability but also to his generosity (as indicated, apparently, according to Plutarch, as the longer arm of this king).

However, even earlier than Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos wrote about this nickname of Artaxerxes I in his work *Of Kings: (Artaxerxes) Macrochir* was greatly celebrated for a most noble and handsome person, which he rendered still more remarkable by extraordinary bravery in the field because for no one of the Persians was more valorous in action than he (*Macrochir praecipuam habet laudem amplissimae pulcherrimaeque corporis formae, quam incredibili ornauit uirtute belli: namque illo Perses nemo manu fuit fortiori*) (Nep. *De reg.* 1).

It is also noteworthy that Nepos uses the word ‘long-armed’ through its Greek analog *Macrochir*, and not the Latin translation *Longimanus* (under which he appears, for example, in the Latin text of the chronicle of Hieronimus: *Artaxerxes qui Longimanus cognominobatur* – Hieron. *Chron.* 192f). However, the concluding part of the characterization of Artaxerxes in Nepos’s exposition uses the phrase, *namque illo Perses nemo manu fuit fortiori*.

It is also interesting that Nepos decided to use the Greek version of *Macrochir*, whereas the word *Longimanus* undoubtedly provides the necessary play on words, correlating with the noun *manus* (in the usual translation – ‘hand’ – but other meanings of the word are strength, might, courage, hand-to-hand combat, the fight, battle). The use of the epithet *Macrochir* undoubtedly speaks of the fact that Nepos used a Greek source. In general, the epithet ‘long-armed’ (Μακρόχειρ, *Macrochir*) is used in relation to Artaxerxes I by most Greek and Latin authors. This is mentioned, for example, by the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* (P. 304), George the Monk

(Chron. P. 284), the *Suda*'s lexicon (s. v. Ἑσδραῖος), Ammianus Marcellinus (30. 8. 4), and some others. They all undoubtedly go back to the same source, but the earliest obviously was Cornelius Nepos, who used the *Persian History* of Deinon of Colophon (*Con.* 5) in his work.

Meanwhile, originally there could have existed several versions of which of the Persian kings was called 'Long-Armed.' Strabo was obviously familiar with this tradition. In his *Geographica* he cites the historian Polyclitus,<sup>5</sup> who assigns the epithet 'Long-Armed' to Darius I (15.3.21. Translation by H.L. Jones):

Perhaps also the following, mentioned by Polycritus, is one of their customs. He says that in Susa each one of the kings built for himself on the acropolis a separate habitation, treasure-houses, and storage places for what tributes they each exacted, as memorials of his administration; and that they exacted silver from the people on the seaboard, and from the people in the interior such things as each country produced, so that they also received dyes, drugs, hair, or wool, or something else of the kind, and likewise cattle; and that the king who arranged the separate tributes was Dareius, called the Long-armed, and the most handsome of men, except for the length of his arms, for they reached even to his knees (τὸν μακρόχειρα, καὶ κάλλιστον ἀνθρώπων πλὴν τοῦ μήκους τῶν βραχιόνων καὶ τῶν πήχεων: ἄπτεσθαι γὰρ καὶ τῶν γονάτων).

We note that in some editions of Strabo's *Geographica* the last sentence is excluded as a later interpolation, though there are no immediate reasons for such an exception.<sup>6</sup> In this passage Strabo, when explaining the nickname Μακρόχειρ as attributed to Darius, gives it a rationalistic interpretation. But Herodotus, who, as we know, had a special interest in this question, says nothing about such a nickname for Darius, son of Hystaspes.

Especially interesting in this context is mention of nicknames that, in the words of Herodotus, were given to the first three kings in Persia: '... the Persians say that Darius was a merchant, Cambyses was the Lord, and Cyrus was the father, because Darius arranged all his power in a tradesman's way; Cambyses – because he was cruel and arrogant; and Cyrus – because he was merciful and they owe him all the benefits' (λέγουσι Πέρσαι ὡς Δαρεῖος μὲν ἦν κάπηλος, Καμβύσης δὲ δεσπότης, Κῦρος δὲ πατήρ, ὁ μὲν ὅτι ἐκαπήλευε πάντα τὰ πρήγματα, ὁ δὲ

<sup>5</sup> In this passage Strabo uses the name Polycritus, however, publishers have corrected it to Polyclitus due to the fact that the latter is mentioned elsewhere (15. 3. 21).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the critical commentary on this passage in the well-known Loeb edition of Strabo's *Geographica*: 'Various publishers believe that this is an interpolation. Plutarch (Artaxerxes I) refers to Artaxerxes, that he had the nickname 'Long-Armed,' since his right arm was longer than the left; but the above-stated in relation to Darius lacks confirmation' (JONES 1930, 185, note 2). In the most recent edition of Strabo's *Geographica* the text includes lines about Darius the Long-Armed (RADT 2005, 269).

ὅτι χαλεπός τε ἦν καὶ ὀλίγωρος, ὁ δὲ ὅτι ἦπιός τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ σφι πάντα ἐμηχανήσατο).<sup>7</sup> In another place the historian focuses on an interpretation of the Persian kings' own names (6. 98): 'Now as touching the names of those three kings, Darius signifies the Doer, Xerxes the Warrior, Artoxerxes the Great Warrior; and such the Greeks would rightly call them in their language' (δύναται δὲ κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ταῦτα τὰ οὐνόματα, Δαρεῖος ἐρξίης, Ξέρξης ἀρήιος, Ἄρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος. Τούτους μὲν δὴ τοὺς βασιλέας ὧδε ἂν ὀρθῶς κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν σφετέρην Ἑλληνες καλέοιεν).<sup>8</sup>

Thus, we emphasize that Herodotus, who was interested in all that concerned the epithets of Darius, does not report the nickname the 'Long-Armed' for him. However, the fact that Strabo correctly understood Polyclitus's evidence is confirmed by Pollux's statement in the *Onomasticon* (2. 151) as an attempt to explain the word Μακρόχειρ: 'either according to Polyclitus, it is Darius the son of Hystaspes, or Xerxes, according to Antileon; either, according to most, Artaxerxes, called Ochus, or having a right arm longer than the left, or both' (εἴτε κατὰ Πολύκλειτον ὁ Ὑστάσπου Δαρεῖος, εἴτε κατὰ Ἀντιλέοντα Ξέρξης, εἴτε κατὰ τοὺς πλείστους Ὡχος ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Ἄρταξέρξης, ἤτοι τὴν δεξιὰν ἔχων προμηκεστέραν ἢ τὴν ἀριστερὰν ἢ ἀμφοτέρως). We immediately note that Pollux undoubtedly confused Artaxerxes I and Artaxerxes III Ochus, citing the 'majority opinion' – κατὰ τοὺς πλείστους. But the author confirms that Polyclitus called Darius 'long-armed,' and Antileon called Xerxes this. Pollux's last phrase deserves close attention: 'and also because each spread his power as far as possible' (οἱ δὲ ὅτι τὴν δύναμιν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐξέτεινεν).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Raymond DESCAT 1994 believes that the nickname κάπηλος was given to Darius I in connection with his coinage and currency-based economy. However, in the opinion of other researchers, this nickname should have had a pejorative character. Christopher TUPLIN 1997, 379–381 believes that in the view of the Greeks the καπηλοι were completely vicious people. Leslie KURKE 1999, 65–100 suggests that with the use of the word κάπηλος in relation to Darius, Herodotus hints at the desire of this Persian king to be adventurous, as befits a merchant.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur COOK 1907, 169 suggested that according to Herodotus, the correspondence between the names of Persian kings and Greek words, perceived as their equivalents, should have been different from the beginning. In the opinion of the researcher ἀρήιος should refer to Δαρεῖος, ἐρξίης to Ξέρξης, and κάρτα ("very" is a more appropriate word than μέγας) ἐρξίης to Ἄρτοξέρξης. One of the arguments was the following: why did Herodotus have to use the very rare word ἐρξίης unless he wanted to do so to establish the obvious etymology of the name Xerxes? Lionel SCOTT 2005, 349 believed that the name of Darius in the text of Herodotus should not correspond to ἐρξίης, but rather to \*ἐξίης, derived from the verb ἔχω and meaning "possessor," which thus bringing the explanation closer to the actual meaning of the name Darius. It is commonly accepted that the name "Darius" (ancient Persian *Dārayavauš*) is a composite and comes from a combination of two ancient Persian words: *dāraya-* "the one who possesses" and the adjective *vau-* "good"; consequently, the name should mean: "possessing good." The name "Xerxes" (ancient Persian *Xšayārša*) is composed of the two words *xšaya-* "reigning" and *\*ršan-* "hero"; it is translated as "reigning over heroes," while the name "Artaxerxes" (ancient Persian *Artaxšaça*)—as "the one who reigns in justice" (about the meaning of the names of Persian kings, see for more details see: SCHMITT 1977, 424–425; 1982, 93–94).

<sup>9</sup> Carsten BINDER 2008, 83 finds confirmation of this statement of Pollux in the following lines of the ancient Persian inscription on the Naqsh-e Rostam tomb of Darius I: "When you think how many countries were ruled by Darius the king, then look at the image [of the subjects] supporting the throne. Then you will learn and you will know that the

With regard to the relationship of ‘long-armedness’ and power, there is, among other things, the rather interesting statement in Herodotus (8.140) that Alexander I – sent by Mardonius as ambassador to Athens after the battle of Salamis in 480 BC – cites one of the arguments in favour of reconciliation of the Athenians with the Persians: ‘for the king’s might is greater than human, and his arm is very long’ (καὶ γὰρ δύναμις ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον ἢ βασιλέος ἐστὶ καὶ χεῖρ ὑπερμήκης).

It is interesting that the various derivations of the word τὸ μήκος – length, in connection with long-armedness of the Persian kings – are mentioned in the above-cited excerpts: the expression μήκοι τῶν βραχιόνων καὶ τῶν πῆχεων by Strabo (15. 3. 21) and προμηκεστέρα by Pollux (2. 151). In the text cited by Herodotus, ὑπερμήκης acts as a superlative adjective. In the opinion of Thomas Harrison, the nickname ‘long-armed’ (μακρόχειρ), which is assigned by various ancient authors either to Darius or to Xerxes (Pollux. 2. 151), or to Artaxerxes I (Plut. *Artax.* 1. 1; *Mor.* 173d), in fact originates from Alexander’s misunderstood statement in Athens, that king Xerxes has χεῖρ ὑπερμήκης – ‘a very long arm.’<sup>10</sup> One can conclude that despite the nickname “Long-Armed” was used for Artaxerxes I by the most of ancient authors it seems to have been an opinion in the sources that this nickname was used for Darius I and Xerxes as well. Meanwhile the sources do not exclude also some metaphorical meaning of Μακρόχειρ as relating to the spreading power as far as possible.

In a recent article, Aleksey Vigasin particularly focuses on the meaning of the term μακρόχειρ in ancient authors. He concludes that the epithet had an eastern origin and, moreover, was used in a metaphorical sense, that is, in what Pollux ultimately points to, saying that the nickname comes from the fact that the power of each of the kings spread as far as possible. Vigasin reinforces his conclusion with references to eastern cases of the use of this kind of epithet, including Indian material very familiar to him.<sup>11</sup> In addition, eastern connotations of the nickname Μακρόχειρ with involvement of Persian material, which Vigasin in fact omitted, were specially studied by the Iranian scholar Ahmad Tafazzolī. He referred to the Iranian ‘national epic,’ which tells the story of Bachmann or Ardashir, king of the mythical Kayanian dynasty, nicknamed ‘Long-Armed’ (*Darāz-Dast*), whom we believe is a prototype of Artaxerxes I. From this, Tafazzolī derives a possible ancient Persian form of the word ‘long-armed’ – *darga dasta*.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that we, like Vigasin, give preference to the metaphorical meaning of the nickname, stating that the word *dast* is used in a number of Iranian languages in the meaning of ‘power.’ But this is not surprising considering the common Indo-European base of all these languages; both the Greek χεῖρ and the Latin *manus* have the

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spear of the Persian warrior penetrated far; then you will know that the Persian warrior struck the enemies far from Persia” (DNa. 39–47).

<sup>10</sup> HARRISON 2011, 65–66.

<sup>11</sup> VIGASIN 2015.

<sup>12</sup> TAFAZZOLĪ 1994.

added meanings of 'power,' 'force,' 'might.' It would seem that everything is true in this interpretation, except for one thing: the historical aspect. Artaxerxes I, to whom most ancient and modern historians assign the nickname Μακρόχειρ, was a much less suitable candidate for the bearer of the nickname 'Long-Armed' in its metaphorical meaning while Xerxes would have been the most suitable, as in fact Herodotus intuitively understood. And in this case, another interpretation seems more probable: the ancient authors' reference to the king by the nickname Μακρόχειρ did not proceed from his 'imperious characteristics' but rather precisely from physical disability (that is, one arm longer than the other). In fact, this could be quite visible to both the Greeks and the Persians, who were present at an audience of this king and who noticed this disability, which would have been very difficult to conceal. And only then they interpreted the word Μακρόχειρ in relation to a specific king metaphorically, as this appears only in the report of Pollux (2. 151).<sup>13</sup> It is worth here to cite Ammianus Marcellinus who combines both characteristics of Artaxerxes I, physical and powerful: the author reports of him as *rex potentissimus* and continues: *Macrochira membri unius longitudo commemoravit* (30.8.4. Translation by J.C. Rolfe):

Artaxerxes, that mighty king of the Persians (*rex potentissimus*), whom the length of one of his limbs made known as Macrochir (*quem Macrochira membri unius longitudo commemoravit*), with inborn mildness corrected various punishments which that cruel nation had always practised, by sometimes cutting off the turbans of the guilty, in lieu of their heads; and instead of cutting off men's ears for various offences, as was the habit of the kings, he sheared off threads hanging from their head-coverings. This moderation of character so won for him the contentment and respect of his subjects, that through their unanimous support he accomplished many noteworthy deeds, which are celebrated by the Greek writers.

Yet there is a medical approach to the topic of long-armedness. Of course, our constructions on this topic can only have a tentative character since we, not having the possibility of obtaining the analysis of the remains or absolutely accurate images of the ruler<sup>14</sup>, must rely primarily on data of the narrative tradition. With regard to some rulers of the ancient world, numismatic data can help us, namely their portrait images. Incidentally, even here, while proposing a hypothesis, one should maintain a certain (or even significant) share of hesitation.

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<sup>13</sup> About representation of physical characteristics of the dynasty of the Achaemenids, who appear as perfect rulers in every way, see BINDER 2008, 84; LLEWELLYN-JONES 2015.

<sup>14</sup> There are many depictions of Persian kings on reliefs, cylindric seals and coins, but the difficulties with identification of each king in these images as well as the stereotyping features in royal figures make almost impossible to use this material for reconstructing of physical appearance of every monarch in Persia.

Scholars have advanced various hypotheses regarding the kind of disease that could give Artaxerxes I the nickname 'Long-Armed.' Hutan Ashrafian proposed that the monarch could have had a *unilateral upper limb gigantism*.<sup>15</sup> Also, the author singles out the presence of macrodactyly in the king (which has not been recorded in the sources), saying its probable cause was *neurofibromatosis*.<sup>16</sup> The researcher relies on the opinion of Don Todman and point to the monetary image of the Parthian king Phraates IV, which displays an image of presumed *neurofibromatous* lesions on the forehead. Ashrafian expressed the opinion that if a kinship connection in fact existed between the Parthian and Achaemenid ruling dynasties, then *neurofibromatosis* could have afflicted Artaxerxes I as well.<sup>17</sup> We note, however, that characteristics for this disease with lesions that could be on the body of the Persian king are not mentioned in the sources.

Alternatively, it can be supposed that the king suffered from Marfan syndrome, which incidentally is transmitted most often through the male line and has a genetic etiology. In this case, all three famous representatives of the Achaemenid dynasty could be long-armed.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, as a cautious supposition, other medical versions of the origin of the 'long-armedness' of the Persian monarch should be considered. We can presume another alternative version, namely that Artaxerxes I could have suffered from *acromegaly*.<sup>19</sup> This disease, judging by extant sources, also occurred in the ancient world, and not just in the Persian monarchs: thus, they note enlarged facial features with elongation of the mandible and increase in nose, lips, and ears in images of Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV)..<sup>20</sup> There is the example of the Roman Emperor Maximinus Thrax (Maximinus I), who, according to written sources (Hist. Aug. *Maxim.* 12.1–4), was of tall stature and great physical strength. In addition, there are probable

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<sup>15</sup> ASHRAFIAN 2011, 557.

<sup>16</sup> "Neurofibromatosis is a hereditary disease. Manifested by tumors and pigmentation of the skin combined with tumors along nerve trunks. The disease is inherited autosomal dominantly; its frequency is 3–5:10,000" (BADALYAN 1987, 227).

<sup>17</sup> ASHRAFIAN 2011.

<sup>18</sup> 'Marfan syndrome is an inherited connective tissue disease characterized by pathological changes in the heart and blood vessels, musculoskeletal system, and eyes. Marfan syndrome is detected in 1 in 3,000-5,000 people, but several other inherited connective tissue diseases have similar clinical manifestations and similar dangerous complications. ... Marfan syndrome can be inherited from one of the parents or (in about a quarter of cases) be the result of spontaneous mutation. There are said to be spontaneous mutations in cases where no one in the family has previously suffered from this disease. The probability of inheritance of Marfan syndrome from an afflicted parent is 50:50.' One of the signs of the disease may be tall stature and long limbs. ([http://www.almazovcentre.ru/?page\\_id=9733](http://www.almazovcentre.ru/?page_id=9733)).

<sup>19</sup> "Acromegaly is a severe neuroendocrine disease caused by chronic hyperproduction of a growth hormone (somatotropin, STH) in individuals with complete physiological growth and characterized by pathological disproportionate periosteal growth of bones, cartilage, soft tissues, and internal organs, as well as impairment of the morpho-functional state of the cardiovascular, pulmonary system, peripheral endocrine glands, and various types of metabolism. Most often those with acromegaly fall ill between 20 and 40 years of age, but sometimes it occurs after the age of 50." See DEDOV 2014, 6.

<sup>20</sup> PRONIN and MOLITVOSLOVOVA 2009: 103–104;

signs of *acromegaly* on coins of Maximinus: protruding brow and enlarged lower jaw and nose.<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that various ancient authors assign a similar characteristic either to Darius I (Strabo. 15.3.21) or to Artaxerxes I (Nep. *De reg.* 1), while Herodotus (7.187) assigns it to Xerxes: 'Of all those tens of thousands of men, for goodliness and stature there was not one worthier than Xerxes himself to hold that command' (κάλλεός τε εἴνεκα καὶ μεγάθεος οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἀξιονικότερος ἦν αὐτοῦ Ξέρξεω ἔχειν τοῦτο τὸ κράτος). *Acromegaly* can also be due in some cases to heredity.

Therefore, it is also impossible to exclude here the proposition of supposed inheritance of the disease through the male line of the Achaemenids. We note that *acromegaly*, as a rule, does not occur in a patient unilaterally but rather with symmetrical lengthening of extremities. Therefore, this description of the disease does not fit the evidence that says one arm is longer than the other, but corresponds to the testimony of Strabo's *Geography* (15. 3. 21) and Pollux's *Onomasticon* (2. 151) that the Kings (at least possibly in the cases of Darius and Xerxes) might have both arms very long. It is attractive to conclude that ancient authors' reports of physical abilities of Darius I (Strabo. 15. 3. 21), Xerxes (Hdt. 7.87) and Artaxerxes I (Nep. *De reg.*1) reflected not only images of these Persian monarchs in Greek imagination but resulted from some hereditary disease.

Recently Omar Coloru skeptically viewed the medical interpretation of the 'long-armedness' of Artaxerxes, given the state of our sources, and preferred a symbolic interpretation for the nickname 'Long-Armed,' citing Tafazzoli and supporting his arguments with reference to the *Yashts*. In one fragment Zarathustra is being praised for physical abilities, namely his strong legs and long arms.<sup>22</sup> However, based on the above references to descriptions of the diseases and considering the state of the sources, we can say that the Greeks gave the nickname Μακρόχειρ most likely to each of three Persian kings of the Achaemenid dynasty (Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes I) very probably due to their physical disability. Moreover, the first Achaemenids could have suffered from some hereditary disease (either *neurofibromatosis* or from *Marfan syndrome* or *acromegaly*). In this case we only cautiously touched on the medical versions of why they could have had the nickname 'Long-Armed.' However, their striving to interpret the nickname metaphorically led to the fact that they were unable to determine which of the Achaemenids was more worthy of it.

**Acknowledgements.** The authors of this paper acknowledge Dr Julia A. ZOTOVA from the Saratov State Medical University, Dpt. of clinical diseases, Saratov, Russia for consulting them in medical aspects of this topic. The statements made herein are solely the responsibility of the authors.

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<sup>21</sup> With references to earlier literature, we notice that an image of a coin of Maximinus I was placed on the front of the dust jacket of the cited book, in which only one chapter of eight is dedicated to the history of the study of *acromegaly*.

<sup>22</sup> COLORU 2017, 68–69.



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