

MARGHERITA GUGLIELMINA CASSIA*

Greek novel and Roman rule: the eudaimonia in the Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes

Abstract

This paper intends to study the myth of “happiness” in the *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* by Xenophon of Ephesus. Analysing the passages of the work in which we find the two roots εὐδαιμον– and μακαρ–, we’ll show how the “happiness” in the novel is aimed at an audience of ideal and real readers and written by an author who lived in a supranational and multilingual State such as the Roman Empire. Be happy, wealth and blessed are connected with four semantic fields: the fulfilment of the soul, the possession of material goods, the “peace of mind” reached in the netherworld, and some geographic locations of the Roman Empire considered favourite because hometown of the main characters (Ephesus, Perinthus) or *provinciae* economically rich (Sicily) or even regions inhabited by people “happy” (Pontus) to speak their mother tongue (Cappadocia).

Keywords: ancient novel; material and immaterial goods; Roman Empire; social structures; local cultures.

TOGETHER WITH FOUR OTHER WORKS that have come down to us complete in medieval manuscripts – *Chaereas and Callirhoë* by Chariton (I AD), *Daphnis and Chloe* by Longus (II AD), *Leucippe and Clitophon* by Achilles Tatius (II AD), and *Theagenes and Charicles* or *Ethiopica* by Heliodorus of Emesa (IV AD) – *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* by Xenophon of Ephesus represents the literary genre of the novel of the Roman Imperial period. This literary genre of narrative fiction tells of love stories, troubled marriages, kidnapping, adventures in fabulous and distant lands before the happy ending¹.

* Professore associato di Storia Romana, Università di Catania.

¹ Ancient texts don’t mention the word “novel” but use the term δρᾶμα: cf. N. MARINI, Δρᾶμα: possibile denominazione per il romanzo greco d’amore, in «Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica», IX, 1991, pp. 232-243; R. KOZIC, Il termine δρᾶμα e le origini del romanzo antico, in «Invigilata Lucernis», XXVII, 2005, pp. 181-203. There is a vast amount of literature on the controversial definitions of this literary genre: see at least B. LAVAGNINI, *Le origini del romanzo greco*, Mariotti, Pisa 1921; B. LAVAGNINI, *Studi sul romanzo greco*, D’Anna, Messina 1950; *Il romanzo antico greco e latino*, edited by and with *Introduc-*

In this paper we propose to trace the myth of “happiness” in the *Ephesian Tale* by Xenophon of Ephesus – an author likely of Greek-Eastern origin who probably lived in the 2nd century AD² (§ 2) – through the analysis of selected passages, which will highlight the semantic and ideological significance of the use of the

tion of Q. Cataudella, Sansoni, Firenze 1973; B. LAVAGNINI, *Ancora sul romanzo greco*, in «Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Classe di Lettere e Filosofia», XV, 1985, pp. 69-80; P. JANNI, *Il romanzo greco. Guida storica e critica*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1987; B. P. REARDON, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1989, pp. 1-16; M. FUSILLO, *Il romanzo greco. Polifonia ed eros*, Marsilio, Venezia 1989; D. FOWLER-M. LABATE, *Studi sul romanzo antico*, in «Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici», XXV, 1990; N. HOLZBERG, *The Genre: Novels Proper and the Fringe*, in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, Brill, Boston 2003, pp. 11-28; *The Novel in the Ancient World*, edited by G. Schmeling, Brill, Leiden 2003; L. GRAVERINI-W. KEULEN-A. BARCHIESI, *Il romanzo antico: forme, testi, problemi*, Carocci, Roma 2006; *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, edited by T. Whitmarsh, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008; G. ZANETTO, *Il romanzo antico*, BUR, Milano 2009; M. FUSILLO, *Il romanzo: un genere 'cannibale' e polimorfico*, in «Lector, intende, laetaberis»: *il romanzo dei Greci e dei Romani*, Atti del convegno nazionale di studi, Torino 27-28 aprile 2009, edited by R. Uglione, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2010, pp. 27-56; G. D'IPPOLITO, *Storografia e romanzo nella Grecia antica: gli incerti confini di due sottogeneri della prosa narrativa*, in «Studia Philologica Valentina», XII, 2010, pp. 49-70; M. A. DOODY, *The True Story of the Novel*, Collins, London 2016 (1997). On the manuscript tradition see N. BIANCHI, *Il codice del romanzo: tradizione manoscritta e ricezione dei romanzi greci*, Dedalo, Bari 2006.

² G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse. Les Éphésiaques ou le Roman d'Habrocomès et d'Anthia*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1926, pp. IX-XII; B. LAVAGNINI, *La patria di Senofonte Efesio*, in *Studi sul romanzo greco*, edited by B. Lavagnini, G. D'Anna, Messina-Firenze 1950, pp. 143-156, part. pp. 145-146; 155; H. GÄRTNER, *Xenophon II*, in «Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft», IX A, 2, Alfred Druckenmüller, Stuttgart 1967, coll. 2055-2089, part. coll. 2057-2059; A. M. SCARCELLA, *La struttura del romanzo di Senofonte Efesio*, in *La struttura della fabulazione antica*, edited by A. M. SCARCELLA, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Filologia Classica dell'Università di Genova, Genova 1979, pp. 89-113, part. pp. 89-90; G. ANNIBALDIS, *Senofonte Efesio. Anzia e Abrocome*, in *Storie d'amore antiche. Leucippe e Clitofonte, Dafni e Cloe, Anzia e Abrocome*, with Introduction of L. CANFORA, Edizioni Dedalo, Bari 1987, pp. 327-408, part. p. 329; B. KYTZLER, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, Leiden-New York 1996, edited by G. L. SCHMELING, pp. 336-360, part. pp. 345-346; A. BESCHORNER-C. CONSONNI-E. MIGNOGNA-A. STRAMAGLIA, «Ἐπος πεζός», *Profili di romanzieri, "novellisti", epistolografi erotici greci e latini*, in «Ἐπος. Antiche trame greche d'amore», edited by A. STRAMAGLIA, Levante Editore, Bari 2000, pp. 9-70, part. pp. 68-69; *Romanzi greci. Caritone d'Afrodisia, Senofonte Efesio, Longo Sofista*, edited by A. BORGOGNO, UTET, Torino 2005, pp. 33-34; T. WHITMARSH, *Narrative and Identity in the Ancient Greek Novel. Returning Romance*, Cambridge 2011, p. 29. The novel was most likely written in the first half of the second century AD: C. MORESCHINI, *Un'ipotesi per la datazione del romanzo di Senofonte Efesio*, in «Studi Classici e Orientali», XIX-XX, 1970-1971, pp. 73-75; G. ANNIBALDIS, *Senofonte Efesio. Anzia e Abrocome*, in *Storie d'amore antiche. Leucippe e Clitofonte, Dafni e Cloe, Anzia e Abrocome*, with Introduction of L. Canfora, Bari 1987, pp. 327-408, part. p. 330; C. RUIZ-MONTERO, *Xenophon von Ephesos: ein Überblick, in Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II, 34, 2, Berlin-New York 1994, pp. 1088-1138; A. BESCHORNER-C. CONSONNI-E. MIGNOGNA-A. STRAMAGLIA, «Ἐπος πεζός», cit., p. 69; A. BIERL, *Räume im Anderen und der griechische Liebesroman des Xenophon von Ephesos. Träume?*, in *Mensch und Raum von der Antike bis zum Gegenwart*, edited by A. Loprieno, K.G. Saur, München-Leipzig 2006, pp. 71-103; C. RUIZ-MONTERO, *L'Asia Minore nel romanzo greco*, in *Tra Oriente e Occidente. Indigeni, Greci e Romani in Asia Minore*, Atti del Convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli 28-30 settembre 2006, edited by G. Urso, Pisa 2007, pp. 259-270, part. p. 267. However James N. O'Sullivan (J. N. O'SULLIVAN, *Xenophon of Ephesus. His Compositional Technique and the Birth of the Novel*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1995, pp. 168-169; cf. also J. L. RIFE, *Officials of the Roman Provinces in Xenophon's*

two roots εὐδαιμον– and μακάρ–³ within a work of entertainment aimed at an audience of ideal and real readers and written by an author who lived in a supranational and multilingual State such as the Roman Empire⁴ (§ 3).

1. The Ephesian Tale

Due to the omissions and contradictions in the work, it has been suggested that *Ephesian Tale* was an epitome of the original text⁵. This hypothesis has more recently been ruled out by James N. O’Sullivan, followed by Consuelo Ruiz-Montero⁶.

Like other novels, the plot of the story is quite simple: Habrocomes and Anthia, two young people from Ephesus, fall in love and get married, but, to escape the vengeance of Eros – who is angry with Habrocomes for neglecting his cult⁷ –

Ephesiaca, in «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», CXXXVIII, 2002, pp. 93-108, part. p. 106) has suggested that the novel must be attributed to an earlier date, i.e. 1 century AD, based on a reconsideration of the available data and an analysis of the narrative technique. Kathleen M. Coleman (K. M. COLEMAN, *Sailing to Nuceria: Evidence for the date of Xenophon of Ephesus*, in «Acta Classica», LIV, 54, 2011, pp. 27-42; cf. B. KYTZLER, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, cit., p. 348; N. HOLZBERG, *The Ancient Novel. An Introduction*, Routledge, London 1995 [ed. orig. *Der antike Roman. Eine Einführung*, Artemis & Winkler, Munich 1986], p. 38), based on the episode in which Habrocomes arrives in Italy at Nuceria, believed that Xenophon wrote between the end of the Flavian era and the beginning of the Antonine era, i.e. in the period between the destruction of the ports of Pompeii and Stabiae following the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD and the restoration of the port facilities at Stabiae itself.

³ Cf. H. G. LIDDELL-R. SCOTT-H. S. JONES, *Greek-English Lexicon. Revised Edition*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996, p. 708, ss.vv. εὐδαιμονέω: “to be prosperous, well off, happy”; εὐδαιμονία: “prosperity, good fortune, wealth, weal, happiness”; pp. 1073-1074, ss.vv. μακάρ: “blessed, happy”; μακαρίζω: “to bless, deem or pronounce happy, congratulate”; μακάριος: “blessed, happy”; F. MONTANARI, *Vocabolario della lingua greca. Greco-Italiano*, Loescher, Torino 2013, p. 983, ss.vv. εὐδαιμονέω: “essere felice, avere successo, stare bene, prosperare”; εὐδαιμονία: “felicità, successo”; p. 1454, ss.vv. μακάρ: “beato, felice”; μακαρίζω: “stimare o chiamare beato, esaltare come beato”; μακάριος: “beato, felice”; G. SEMERARO, *Le origini della cultura europea. Vol. II. Dizionari etimologici. Basi semitiche delle lingue indeuropee. Vocabolario della lingua greca*, Olschki, Firenze 1994, p. 173, s.v. μακάρ: “favorito”, “privilegiato”, “beato”; F. MONTANARI, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2015, p. 841, ss.vv. εὐδαιμονέω: “to be happy, have success, be well, prosper”; εὐδαιμονία: “happiness, success”; pp. 1270-1271, ss.vv. μακάρ: “blessed, happy”; μακαρίζω: “to praise o deem happy, to exalt as blessed”; μακάριος: “blessed, happy”.

⁴ I have written about Xenophon of Ephesus in M. CASSIA, *Terre dell’immaginario nell’Impero romano. Il mito della “felicità” nel romanzo di Senofonte Efesio*, in «Aiónos. Miscellanea di Studi Storici», XIX, 2015, pp. 25-46; M. CASSIA, *La Sicilia nelle Efesiache di Senofonte e il viaggio di Adriano nell’isola*, in «Hormos», n.s., XIV, 2022, pp. 124-156.

⁵ E. ROHDE, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig 1876; K. BÜRGER, *Zu Xenophon von Ephesus*, in «Hermes», XXVII, 1892, pp. 36-67.

⁶ J. N. O’SULLIVAN, *Xenophon of Ephesus, passim* and C. RUIZ-MONTERO, *Xenophon von Ephesos: ein Überblick*, pp. 1088-1138; C. RUIZ-MONTERO, *L’Asia Minore nel romanzo greco*, cit., p. 268.

⁷ D. SUSANETTI, *Amori tra fantasmi, mummie e lenoni: Sicilia e Magna Grecia nel romanzo di Senofonte Efesio*, in *Sicilia e Magna Grecia. Spazio reale e spazio immaginario nella letteratura greca e latina*, edited by G. Avezù-E. Pianezzola, Imprimatur, Padova 1999, pp. 127-169, part. pp. 128-129.

they are forced to embark on a sea voyage. The ship is attacked and set on fire by pirates, the couple is kidnapped, destined to be sold into slavery, compelled to separate and, only after a complicated series of adventures throughout the Mediterranean Sea, the two young people find each other again and return home⁸.

Although the structure reflects the usual *Leitmotif* of the Greek romance novel – albeit with the significant difference that the union of the protagonists does not represent the happy ending of the story but rather the preliminary fact⁹ – the *Ephesian Tale* presents at least three significant innovations: first of all, the protagonists' wanderings do not take place in distant and fabulous lands, but in real and traceable places in the central-eastern Mediterranean; secondly, the adventures are presumably set in the same era in which the narrator lived; finally, the two lovers manage to resist adversity not by chance or divine intervention, but thanks to their unwavering determination¹⁰.

2. Happiness and unhappiness in Ephesian Tale

In order to trace the presence of the myth of “happiness” in the novel, a lexical search was carried out within the *TLG-Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database. Below are the passages from Xenophon's work in which the root εὐδαιμον– has been identified. As you can see, the investigation allowed us to extrapolate thirteen occurrences of the root εὐδαιμον– and seven of another root, μακαρ–, semantically very close to the first.

I: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book I, 2, 7, G. DALMEYDA, *Xenophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 5: “More than once, seeing her at the shrine, the Ephesians worshiped her [Anthia] as Artemis. Even then, the crowd shouted when saw

⁸ Cf. B. KYTZLER, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, cit., pp. 336-343; 353-354; G. L. SCHMELING, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, Twayne Publishers, Boston 1980, pp. 21-74.

⁹ Cf. D. SUSANETTI, *Amori tra fantasmi*, cit., p. 131; G. ANNIBALDIS, *Senofonte Efesio*, cit., p. 331. On the distinction between love and mad sexual impulse see L. ROJAS ÁLVAREZ, *El amor en la novela griega*, in «Nova Tellus. Anuario del Centro de Estudios Clásicos», XXXVII, 2, 2019, pp. 27-47; L. ROMERO MARISCAL, *El amor en las «Efesiacas» de Jenofonte*, in *Eros en la literatura griega*, edited by J. A. López Férrez, Ed. Clásicas, Madrid 2020, pp. 699-714; A. DA SILVA DUARTE, *Eros e Himeros: o impulso erótico no romance grego antigo*, in «Classica. Revista Brasileira de Estudos Clássicos», XXXV, 2, 2022, pp. 1-10.

¹⁰ Cf. T. HÄGG, *Narrative Technique in Ancient Greek Romances. Studies of Chariton, Xenophon Ephesus, and Achilles Tatius*, Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, Stockholm 1971, pp. 172-175; A. M. SCARCELLA, *La struttura del romanzo di Senofonte Efesio*, cit., pp. 91-92; D. KONSTAN, *Xenophon of Ephesus: Eros and Narrative in the Novel*, in *Greek Fiction. The Greek Novel in Context*, edited by J. R. Morgan-R. Stoneman, Routledge, London-New York 1994, pp. 49-63. On the marvellous in Greek novels, see L. ROJAS ÁLVAREZ, *Lo maravilloso y extraordinario en la novela erótica griega*, in «Nova Tellus. Anuario del Centro de Estudios Clásicos», XXXVIII, 2, 2020, pp. 71-81. On geography in *Ephesiaka* cf. A. CAPRA, *Xenophon's 'round trip': geography as narrative consistency in the Ephesiaka*, in *Cultural crossroads in the ancient novel*, edited by M. P. Futre Pinheiro-D. Konstan-B. Duncan MacQueen, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2018, pp. 17-28.

her, and there were various exclamations from those present: some in their astonishment declaring that she was the goddess herself, others that it was a couple faithfully fashioned by the goddess. All often prayed, bowed down, and **congratulated** (ἐμακάριζον) her parents. All those present then became aware of Anthia, the beautiful one”.

2: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book I, 7, 3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 10: “The city was full of banquets, everything was decked out for the festivities, and everyone was talking about the upcoming wedding: everyone **proclaimed** how **fortunate** (ἐμακαρίζετο) he [Habrocomes] was to be marrying such a girl, and how fortunate she [Anthia] was to be marrying such a young man”.

3: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book I, 14, 3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 18: “Some (those who were abandoned on the burning ship) said: ‘Masters, where will you be taken? Which country will welcome you and in what city will you live?’ The others (who were being led away) said: ‘**Blessed** (μακάριοι) are those who will be lucky enough to die before experiencing chains, before knowing the slavery of pirates’. With this, the former were carried off while the latter were burned alive”.

4-5: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book I, 16, 3-4, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., pp. 19-20: “Euxinus then spoke to Habrocomes on behalf of Corymbus: ‘Young man, it is natural to find it hard to bear misfortune: to have gone from being free to being a slave, from being **rich** (εὐδαίμονος) to being poor; you must attribute everything to fate and resign yourself to your destiny and love the one who has become your new master. Know that it is possible for you to receive **well-being** (εὐδαιμοσύνην) and freedom if you are willing to submit to your master Corymbus: he loves you with great passion and is willing to make you master of all his possessions”’.

6: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book II, 2, 4, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 22: “Their group proceeded, admired by all, and everyone marvelled at their beauty. The barbarians, who had never before seen such grace, almost believed they were seeing the gods themselves and **congratulated** (ἐμακάριζον) Apsyrthus on possessing such slaves”.

7: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book II, 5, 2, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 25: “...for if you [Habrocomes] say yes, I will persuade my father Apsyrthus to let us live together and we will get rid of your present wife, and you will be **rich** (μακάριος) and prosperous. If you say no, think what will happen to you when the mistreated girl [Manto, Apsyrthus’ daughter who fell in love with Habrocomes] takes her revenge; consider also what your companions will have to endure, accomplices to your arrogant behaviour”.

8: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book II, 8, 1, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 28: “In the end, she [Anthia] left the prison, and he [Habrocomes], as soon as possible, threw himself on the ground, weeping and wailing, saying: ‘O dearest father, and you, mother Themisto: where is the **happiness** (εὐδαιμονία) that seemed to smile upon us in Ephesus? Where are the splendid and admired Anthia and Habrocomes, the beautiful ones? She is far from our lands, servant; I have lost my only consolation, and I will die unhappy and alone in prison”’.

9: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book II, 11, 4-5, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., pp. 30-31: "She [Anthia] burst into moans and lamentations, saying: 'Oh, how treacherous beauty is for both of us! Because of his untimely attractiveness, Habrocomes died in Tyre, and I here. But I beg you, shepherd Lampo, since you have respected me until now, if you kill me, bury me immediately nearby and close my eyes with your own hands and while you cover me, repeat the name of Habrocomes continuously: so even my burial will be **sweet** (εὐδαίμων) to me'".

10: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book II 14, 2-3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 34: "Young man [Habrocomes], whoever you are, I see that you are handsome to look at and, above all, courageous: and your wandering speaks a lot about an injustice you have suffered. So let us leave Cilicia and head to Cappadocia and Pontus: there, they say, live **wealthy** (εὐδαίμονες) men".

11: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book III, 2, 1, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 35: "I [Hippotheus] am from Perinthus (a city near Thrace) and by birth I belong to one of the wealthiest families in that place. You will have heard of Perinthus as an illustrious city and of its inhabitants as **wealthy** (εὐδαίμονες) citizens".

12: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book III, 6, 2-3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 42: "She [Anthia] groaned and sighed through her tears: 'In this way I already became the wife of Habrocomes once. But we were driven by a fire of love and the wedding song was sung for a **happy** (εὐδαίμοσι) marriage. Now what will you do, Anthia? Will you betray Habrocomes, your man, your beloved, who died for you?...".

13: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book III, 6, 5, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 42: "Dearest Habrocomes, my soul, behold, I am keeping the promises I made to you and setting out on the path to reach you, a sad but necessary journey. Welcome me with joy and offer me a **happy** (εὐδαίμονα) existence there with you'. With these words she drank, at once fell into a deep sleep, and fell to the floor as the drug exerted its force".

14-15: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book III, 7, 2-3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 43: Perilaus [a magistrate in love with Anthia], tearing his clothes and throwing himself on the corpse, exclaims: 'O my dearest girl, you who abandoned your lover just before the wedding, betrothed to Perilaus for only a few days, so we will take you to the grave instead of to your bridal bed? **Happy** (εὐδαίμων) indeed was that Habrocomes: truly **blessed** (μακάριος), for he receives such a gift from his beloved'. Thus he lamented, holding Anthia's body tightly in his arms and kissing her hands and feet: 'Poor fiancée,' he said, 'and very unfortunate wife'.

16: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book V, 3, 3, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. 61: "Only Hippotheus, having thrown down his weapons, fled under cover of night and reached Alexandria; and there, able to pass unnoticed, he boarded a ship ready to set sail and was taken away. His plan was to take refuge in Sicily: there, in fact, he believed that he could hide better and survive: he had heard that the island was large and **prosperous** (εὐδαίμονα)".



Giambattista e Giandomenico Tiepolo, *Meeting of Anthia and Habrocomes*, 1793 ca.

17-18: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book V, 9, 1-2, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., pp. 67-68: "Hippothous of Perinthus initially spent his days in Taormina living in poverty, in absolute indigence; but after a while, an old lady fell in love with him and he married her, driven by misery. Their life together was short-lived, because the woman died, leaving him great wealth and **prosperity** (εὐδαιμονίαν): a large number of servants, a quantity of clothes and refined furnishings. He then decided to sail to Italy to buy pretty servants and maids and other items, as befits a **wealthy** (εὐδαίμονι) man. He always remembered Habrocomes and hoped to find him again, eager to share with him the joys of his fortune and riches.

19-20: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, book V, 11, 3-4, G. DALMEYDA, *Xénophon d'Éphèse*, cit., pp. 72-73: "Then Hippothous went to the temple, taking Anthia with him; the girl looked at the votive offerings and, remembering the past, exclaimed: 'O Sun God, you scrutinise all things of men; only me, unfortunate, you do not look upon; some time ago here in Rhodes I worshipped you properly and sacrificed victims with Habrocomes. At that time I considered myself **fortunate** (εὐδαίμων): now I am a slave, whereas I was free, a prisoner and unhappy instead of **happy** (μακάριος)! And I return to Ephesus alone and will appear before my relatives without Habrocomes'".

3. Concluding remarks

As can be seen from the passages examined, the root εὐδαιμον– is used in ten cases as an attribute (εὐδαίμων), and in three as a noun, in particular in the variants εὐδαιμονία (twice) and εὐδαιμοσύνη (once), while the root μακαρ– is used in four cases as an attribute (μακάριος) and three cases as a verb (μακαρίζω):

No. occurrences	Xenophon's passages	Verb	Attribute	Noun
1	I, 2, 7	μακαρίζω		
2	I, 7, 3	μακαρίζω		
3	I, 14, 3		μακάριος	
4-5	I, 16, 3-4		εὐδαίμων	εὐδαιμοσύνη
6	II, 2, 4	μακαρίζω		
7	II, 5, 2		μακάριος	
8	II, 8, 1			εὐδαιμονία
9	II, 11, 4-5		εὐδαίμων	
10	II, 14, 2-3		εὐδαίμων	
11	III, 2, 1		εὐδαίμων	
12	III, 6, 2-3		εὐδαίμων	
13	III, 6, 5		εὐδαίμων	
14-15	III, 7, 2-3		εὐδαίμων -	
			μακάριος	
16	V, 3, 3		εὐδαίμων	
17-18	V, 9, 1-2		εὐδαίμων	εὐδαιμονία
19-20	V, 11, 3-4		εὐδαίμων -	
			μακαρίας	

The roots εὐδαιμον– and μακαρ– in the novel are therefore grouped around four semantic fields, respectively indicating the fulfilment of ψυχή (“soul”), the serenity deriving from the possession of material goods, the “peace of the senses” – which physical death (symbolised by the “burial”) and the afterlife seem to promise – and finally the “earthly paradises”, i.e. certain places in the inhabited world (οἰκουμένη) considered privileged. In other words, εὐδαιμονία and μακαρία can be found in an inner place, in a concrete dimension, in the afterlife, but also in a real geographical space.

Semantic fields of the myth of happiness		No. occurrences
	A) abstract dimension, psychological state, condition of the soul	1 2 5-6 9 19-20
	B) concrete dimension, physical state, material well-being	4 7 12-15 17-18
	C) afterlife dimension	3 9 13
	D) geographical location	8 Ephesus (hometown of protagonists) 10 Cappadocia (where a local language is spoken) and Pontus 11 Perinthus (bandit Hippotous' homeland) 16 Sicily (rich in material goods)

The presence of no fewer than 50 names of cities, islands and regions listed in the novel make this work the most “touristy” of those survived¹¹. Wherever the two protagonists go, however, the Roman Empire is always present and dominates the subjugated peoples. According to a circular pattern, in fact, in the fourth passage we read that Habrocomes went from being free to being a slave, and from being rich to being poor (4); in the last passage Anthia – who believed herself to be “happy” but is in fact a slave, who considered herself free but is in reality a prisoner, who believed herself to be “blessed” but is in fact unhappy – repeats the same pattern exemplified in the first book by Habrocomes (20).

How, then, is it possible to be happy in *Ephesian novel*? The “construction” of “happiness” in the novel is explained on the basis of the antinomic opposition freedom ≠ slavery, happiness ≠ poverty. In order to better contextualise this particular meaning of “happiness” within the novel and in relation to the chronological period in which the work is set, it can be observed that in four passages concerning “happiness” it is also possible to found the opposite concept of “unhappy-

¹¹ For the distinction between place and space cf. A. BIERL, *Space in Xenophon of Ephesus: Love, Dreams, and Dissemination* <<https://chs.harvard.edu/curated-article/anton-bierl-space-in-xenophon-of-ephesus-love-dreams-and-dissemination/#n.2>, accessed on 15.11.2025>. See also C. RUIZ-MONTERO, *L'Asia Minore nel romanzo greco*, cit., p. 268.

ness”. In fact, in II, 8, 1 Habrocomes thinks he will “die unhappy (δυστυχής)... in prison”, in III, 6, 5 Anthia is convinced that she is about to die and embark on an unhappy (δυστυχή) but necessary journey, in III, 7, 2-3 Perilaus considers Anthia to be a “very unfortunate (δυστυχεστέρα) wife”, and in V, 11, 3-4 Anthia prays to the Sun God and considers herself unfortunate (δυστυχή) and unhappy (δυστυχής).

In addition to the four passages just mentioned, the root δυστυχ- appears in 26 other instances: it is used as an adjective (δυστυχής, 27 times) or a verb (δυστυχέω, twice) or an adverb (δυστυχώς, once). There isn't the noun δυστυχία. The root δυστυχ- appears in the novel a total of 30 times and always in connection with personal moods:

Book	Chapter and paragraph
I	4, 1 (δυστυχής) 4, 6 (δυστυχής) 9, 2 (δυστυχήσας) 10, 10 (δυστυχή) 14, 5 (δυστυχή)
II	8, 1 (δυστυχής) 11, 2 (δυστυχεστάτη)
III	2, 13 (δυστυχοῦ) 5, 3 (δυστυχής) 6, 5 (δυστυχής) 7, 3 (δυστυχεστέρα) 8, 5-6 (δυστυχοῦσαν... δυστυχέστερον) 9, 8 (δυστυχέστατον) 10, 1-2 (δυστυχώς... δυστυχής) 10, 4 (δυστυχής)
IV	3, 4 (δυστυχή) 6, 7 (δυστυχή)
V	1, 12-13 (δυστυχεστάτη... δυστυχή) 5, 5 (δυστυχής) 6, 2 (δυστυχή) 8, 4 (δυστυχής) 8, 7 (δυστυχής) 9, 8 (δυστυχή) 10, 4 (δυστυχής) 10, 8 (δυστυχής) 10, 10 (δυστυχής) 11, 4 (δυστυχής)

The protagonists are slaves “for love”, and this condition is worse than actually being slaves: Georges Dalmeyda in I, 16, 3 (“you must attribute everything to fate and resign yourself to your destiny and love the one who has become your new master”) identified an allusion to the Stoic precepts of Epictetus (50/55-120/130 AD)¹². In II, 3, 4 (G. DALMEYDA, p. 24) Habrocomes also says: “Yes, I am now a slave, but I know how to keep my oaths. They have power over my body, but my soul is free. Manto can threaten me with the sword, the noose, fire, or any other torture that can be inflicted on a slave, but never, willingly, would I ever harm Anthia!”. According to Konstantin Doulamis as well, the rhetorical form of some passages should be linked to Stoic teachings¹³. Giacomo Annibaldis accepted this interpretation but noted that many contradictions remain in the text that Stoic philosophy does not help to explain¹⁴.

On the other hand, William Owens saw the novel not as an endorsement of stoicism, but as a critique of it: the protagonists of the story, slaves “for love” and then slaves to the vicissitudes that befall them, never stop comparing their lives to that of a slave:

The Stoic doctrine would appear to contest the elite construction of the legal slave as a degraded person... In the Stoic view, virtue was acquired through the proper exercise of the rational capacity of the soul. Slaves, too, could use reason to recognize and to act in accordance with the will of God and in harmony with Nature... It will be relevant to my hypothesis that Xenophon and Chariton were themselves ex-slaves writing in part for ex-slave readers to note here that the Romans reapplied their degrading stereotypes, *mutatis mutandis*, to freedmen¹⁵.

If “the vivid description of the impact of physical torture suggests that it is worse to be tortured as a slave than to be tormented as a slave of love”¹⁶, then the audience must have been well aware of the violence of the masters.

However, in the novel devotion between lovers – comparable to serfdom – is a voluntary choice¹⁷, but their loyalty is endangered by the state of slavery in which they are forced to live. From a legal point of view, Roman law had the *postlimitum*, «which referred collectively to the rights and procedures by which a captive who returned *might* be able to recover *some* of his former legal position»¹⁸.

¹² G. DALMEYDA, *Xenophon d'Éphèse*, cit., p. xxi.

¹³ K. DOULAMIS, *Stoic Echoes and Style in Xenophon of Ephesus*, in *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel*, edited by J. R. Morgan-M. Jones, Barkhuis, Groningen 2007, pp. 151-175.

¹⁴ G. ANNIBALDIS, *Senofonte Efesio. Anzia e Abrocome*, cit., pp. 331-332.

¹⁵ W. OWENS, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel*, Routledge, London-New York 2020, pp. 8-9.

¹⁶ W. OWENS, *The Representation*, cit., p. 32.

¹⁷ S. M. TRZASKOMA, *Slavery and Structure in Xenophon of Ephesus*, in *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel*, edited by S. Panayotakis, M. Paschalis, Barkhuis, Groningen 2019, pp. 55-73.

¹⁸ CH. G. COCHRAN, *Postliminium: Enslavement and Return in the Ancient Novel*, Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2020, p. 95.

When the two protagonists meet again, it is as if they have regained their freedom after a period of slavery, but this journey has changed them forever, not only in terms of their legal status but also in terms of their moral status. Habrocomes reiterates, as stoics do, that as a slave, his body belongs to his masters, but his spirit is free and he will not betray Anthia¹⁹.

The same conviction is repeated in every geographical location Habrocomes passes through, while Anthia pretends to be ill to escape physical violence. In this sense, I do not think it is possible to recognise any change in the two characters, who, in love at the beginning of the novel, remain with the same feelings at the end.

A change, in the sense of freedom, can instead be identified in some places so accurately listed by Xenophon: the reader of the novel, nevertheless subject to a supranational State, could hope for “emancipation”, “liberation” from Roman rule, only in the fictional narrative, and thus identify as “happy” peoples those who, despite everything, continued to speak their own language, such as the Cappadocians²⁰. Even Ephesus, Perinthus and Sicily are places of wellness because are either the birthplaces of protagonists or wealthy regions and the protagonists will return there for the happy end.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 56.

²⁰ On the language of Cappadocians see M. CASSIA, *Cappadocia romana. Strutture urbane e strutture agrarie alla periferia dell'Impero*, Edizioni del Prisma, Catania 2004, pp. 41-42 and nt. 60; 357.