

## CTESIAS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS WRITINGS REVISITED

Eran Almagor

**Abstract:** Following the recent attempts to rehabilitate the reputation of Ctesias and the information given in his works, this paper proposes to understand certain of the seemingly fanciful details that were associated with the physician and his writings. It tries to shed some light on several uncertainties connected with Ctesias (i.e., his sojourn in Persia) and the *Persica* (i.e., date, original style and sources of imagery). It argues that the pedestrian lists included in the work might have been later interpolations and that the minor works circulating under Ctesias' name might have been either sections of the *Persica* that were taken out to be presented as stand-alone volumes or else falsely attributed to him. The paper addresses the *Indica* and puts forward several possibilities concerning its relation with the *Persica*. The influence of Ctesias on the author Deinon is examined, and in the appendix the impact of the *Persica* on Xenophon's *Anabasis* is analyzed.

**Keywords:** Ctesias, *Persica*, *Indica*, Artaxerxes II, Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Greek Historiography, Photius, Plutarch, Deinon.

From Cnidos comes one of the more controversial and influential authors of Classical literature, namely Ctesias, a physician and a historian (probably *floruit* 401–392 BCE).<sup>1</sup> Ctesias seems not only to have been one of the first prose writers to dwell on his own personal experiences (in this case, at the court of the Great King Artaxerxes II), in what might be considered tantamount to a proto-autobiography,<sup>2</sup> but also to have developed a unique genre of historical writing, following Herodotus yet going beyond his model, in creating works situated between fact and fiction.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, Ctesias seems to

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<sup>1</sup> For a bibliography on Ctesias and his *Persica*, see the references in Alonso-Núñez (1996); Lenfant (2004); Wiesehöfer/Lanfranchi/Rollinger (2011). The fragments and testimonia of Ctesias presented here follow the accepted sequence of Jacoby (1958), as augmented by Lenfant (2004), and should be understood as *FGrH*, no. 688. See also Tuplin (2004a) for further references. The first full translations of all fragments was in Latin (Müller 1844), followed by the French ones of Auburger (1991), Lenfant (2004) and Nichols (2008). Fragments of the *Indica* were translated into English by McCrindle (1881) and Nichols (2011), those of the *Persica* by Gilmore (1881) followed by those of Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010) and Stronk (2010). In 1972 König published a German translation and commentary of the *Persica*. The text of Photius was translated by Henry (1947) into French and Wilson (1994) into English.

<sup>2</sup> Alongside fifth-century travel descriptions; cf. Momigliano 1971: 57.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lenfant 2004: XXVIII–XXXII.

have continued an already existing tradition of works called *Persica*, written by Dionysus of Miletus (*FGrH*, no. 687; *Suda*, s.v. “Διονύσιος”, Delta, 1180: Περσικὰ Ἰάδι διαλέκτω), Charon of Lampascus (*FGrH*, no. 262, 687b; Περσικὰ ἐν βιβλίῳις β) and by Hellenicus of Lesbos (*FGrH*, no. 4).<sup>4</sup> Ctesias followed in the footsteps of these works in providing colorful ethnographic depictions of Eastern cultures, mythologies and political history, yet his innovation was to do so with an internal, Persian, point of view.<sup>5</sup> The espousal of the Persian attitude to the past apparently opened the door for the inclusion of novelistic features in Ctesias’ description, as well as for making it more disposed to the adoption of Greek literary techniques and allusions (see below). On the other hand, Ctesias combined his presentation with a story of a grand historical process, like Herodotus’ “Great Event” but in a way that seems to have marginalized the Greco-Persian Wars into one event among many of the Persian Empire.<sup>6</sup> The new genre challenged generations of readers from antiquity, and continues to defy any well defined appreciation even today.<sup>7</sup> In antiquity, Ctesias’ works were not highly regarded. Repeatedly regarded as untrustworthy and deemed a mythographer, whose accounts are sensational and full of pathos and whose details could not be relied upon,<sup>8</sup> Ctesias was thus said to have founded his own “liar school.”<sup>9</sup> This attitude appears to be maintained among several scholars today.<sup>10</sup> Yet, both in ancient and modern times, this approach has not precluded Ctesias from being cited widely.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Plutarch uses him extensively in the biography of Artaxerxes, even though he shares this disrespect for the physician (*Art.* 1.4, 6.9, 13.5–7).<sup>12</sup> Indeed, recent years have seen an attempt at a Rehabilitation of

<sup>4</sup> See Lenfant 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Marincola 1997: 170.

<sup>6</sup> See Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 52, 58–68, 83.

<sup>7</sup> “Demetrius” (F T14a.215) calls Ctesias a poet (ποιητής). Cf. P. Högemann in *Der Neue Pauly*, s.v. “Ktesias”: “Historiker dem lit. Genre, Romanschriftsteller modernen Kriterien nach.” Cf. Jacoby 1922: 2033 and Whitmarsh 2008: 2: “romanticized Persian history”; cf. the attempts of Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: they consider it something more than straightforward “history” writing (4), a melding of “the legendary aspects of Eastern history” with personal observations of recent events (6–7), a “court history” (66–68), a “novella” combined with history (69–76), a “creative dramatic history” (78) and a “melange of history, gossip, fantasy, and (tragic) poetry” (86). See the lengthy discussion in Stronk (2010: 36–51).

<sup>8</sup> See Antigonos of Caristos, *Hist. Mir.* 15; Luc. *VH* 1.3; cf. Gellius, *NA* 9.4.1; Strabo, 1.2.35 and 11.6.3. Most of the criticism was on the *Indica*. See Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 32–33.

<sup>9</sup> See Braun 2004: 123. On Herodotus in particular D. Fehling, *Herodotus and his “Sources”* (trans. J.G. Howie), Leeds 1989; originally published in German in 1971). See Momigliano 1958; Evans 1968; Pritchett 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Under the influence of Jacoby (1922: 2033, 2045–2047: “gleich Null”); cf. Burn (1962: 12); Momigliano (1975: 134); Cook (1983: 22); Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983: 21; 1987: 35, 43); Briant (2002: 7, 265); Lenfant (2004: CXXIV–CXXVII). On Ctesias’ love of sensationalism see Cizek, 1975: 547. On his many shortcomings as a historian see Bigwood 1976; 1978; 1980: 197; 1983 (errors, doubtful numbers, questionable geography, bias, simplification, confusion, duplications, anachronisms, etc.). Cf. MacGinnis 1988. A comparison with Herodotus is usually to Ctesias’ disadvantage. Cf. Drews 1973: 103–116. The first publication of the celebrated epitome of Ctesias by Photius (see below), by Stephanus (1566) saw it appended to the text of Herodotus.

<sup>11</sup> See Arrian, *Anab.* 5.4.2: ἰκανὸς καὶ Κτησίας ἐς τεκμηρίωσιν. Cf. Karttunen 1997: 636.

<sup>12</sup> He also quotes Ctesias in *De sollertia animalium* (974de), where oxen in Susa carry only a hundred buckets of water each and it is impossible to make them fetch more; cf. Ael. *NA* 7.1 = F 34a. Stadter (1965: 53) assumes that Plutarch made direct use of Ctesias in *Mul. Virt.* 246ab, on Persian women, as this story also

Ctesias, his reputation and the information that he gives.<sup>13</sup> A clear judgment is difficult to obtain, since Ctesias' works have regrettably been lost and are only preserved in several fragments found in a few authors (like Plutarch). Thus, the original content cannot be fathomed with absolute certainty. What is clear is that through his influence upon his immediate readers, chief among them being Xenophon, Ctesias should be seen as one of the most significant and creative writers of the fourth century BCE.

Ctesias was born in the second half of the fifth century BCE,<sup>14</sup> in Cnidos (T 2–4, 7c, 11h, 12), one of the two centers of medical practice in classical Greece,<sup>15</sup> and the place where he presumably studied and practiced this occupation. His father was named Ctesiochus (T 1, 11h) or Ctesiarchus (T 1).<sup>16</sup> According to his own report, he was taken prisoner and brought to the Persian court because of his medical expertise (Diod. 2.32.4). His departure from Persia involved some sort of trickery; according to Ctesias' report, he was apparently involved in mediation between the king on the one hand and Evagoras, king of Cyprian Salamis, and Conon, the Athenian admiral (and soon to become an admiral of the new Persian fleet) on the other, and made sure he would be assigned a diplomatic mission (Plut. *Art.* 21.1–4;<sup>17</sup> cf. F 30.72–4), an opportunity he used to bring about his escape from Persia and the service to the Great King (398/397 BCE, cf. Diod. 14.46.6); Ctesias departed on his way to Sparta, but somehow was detained in Rhodes (F 30.75).<sup>18</sup> He may have settled in Sparta or returned home, to Cnidos,<sup>19</sup> and may also have continued practicing medicine.<sup>20</sup>

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appears in Nicolaos of Damascus, *FGrH* 90 F 66, 43–44. But this is not necessarily correct. Hamilton (1969: liii, 191) believes Ctesias is the source of Plutarch's *Alexander* 69.1.

<sup>13</sup> For a high opinion of Ctesias' account of the revolt of Inaros see the references in Bigwood 1976: 1 n. 2. Cf. Cawkwell 1972: 39–40. For Ctesias as basically trustworthy on the tyrannical and capricious ruthlessness of rulers see Lewis 1977: 29. See also Stevenson 1997: 72 (“basic honesty in the description of contemporary events in which he was not personally involved”), 75, 81; Murray 2001: 42 n. 57; Dalley 2003: 182; Lenfant 2004: CXXIII; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 53; Stronk 2010: 54. For a view that sees Ctesias as faithfully transmitting local traditions see Momigliano 1931; cf. Lenfant 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Brown 1978: 10: between 440 and 435.

<sup>15</sup> See Nutton 2004: 69–70.

<sup>16</sup> There is clearly some corruption of the name in the MSS tradition. Ctesias' father was apparently also a physician (cf. F 68), and the family regarded itself as Asclepiad (T4: ἦν Ἀσκληπιάδης τὸ γένος). Ctesias was contemporary to Hippocrates; cf. Lenfant, 2004: VIII, and is described as one of his relatives (συγγενῆς αὐτοῦ [*scil.* Ἴπποκράτους]). Cf. F 67.

<sup>17</sup> It is clear that the second version Plutarch cites at 21.4, and according to which the physician is said to insert a section into Conon's letter, suggesting that Ctesias would be sent to assist the Athenian admiral, does not come from another author (*contra* Haug 1854: 98; Smith 1881: 4; Mantey 1888: 17; Brown 1978: 17; Stevenson 1997: 117–118 and Binder 2008: 284) but from Ctesias himself as a tale illustrating an instance of heroic trickery, modeled on Odysseus and others.

<sup>18</sup> As Lenfant (2004: xxii–xix) points out, the trial mentioned (καὶ κρίσις πρὸς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίων ἀγγέλους ἐν Ῥόδῳ, καὶ ἄφαισις: at Rhodes there was a trial concerning the Spartan envoys followed by an acquittal) is in fact not of Ctesias, but of the Spartan delegates, *contra* Jacoby 1922: 2036; Brown 1978: 18; Eck 1990: 423–424. Cf. Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 17.

<sup>19</sup> Sparta: cf. Lenfant 2004: XX–XIX; Cnidos: Brown 1978: 18; Lenfant 2004: XXIII.

<sup>20</sup> Brown 1978: 19.

Ctesias' account, however, is problematic, as the circumstances of his captivity are not clear<sup>21</sup> and the story of his escape bears a striking resemblance to the tale of Democedes, who escaped to Croton after a period of medical service in the court of Darius the Great (Hdt 3.129–137).<sup>22</sup> The MSS of Diodorus state that Ctesias spent seventeen years (ἑπτακαίαδεκα) in Persia. This figure appears also in Tzetzes (*Chil.* 1.85–89 [= 82–86 Kiessling] = T1b) and should not be considered a scribal error, but the correct form inserted by either Ctesias himself or a later reader. Since it is known that the year of Ctesias' departure from Persia is the year 398/397,<sup>23</sup> it would seem that Ctesias' medical services began with Darius II in 415/414 BCE, even though this is not corroborated.<sup>24</sup> It might be the case that the number of years was fabricated by the physician, presumably just as the whole story of the way in which he arrived at Persia might have been falsified.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars suppose that Ctesias was not captured, but actually invited to the king's court because of his medical skills.<sup>26</sup> In fact, it might be that Ctesias never claimed to have been captured: no story of such an event exists in ancient summaries of his work, and one would assume it should be found in some form had the physician dwelled on these circumstances. It is not entirely unlikely that some later reader inserted this depiction to the introduction, in an error stemming from a conflation of the story of Democedes with that of Ctesias. Another option would thus be to discard the number "seventeen," like some scholars who emend the text to "seven years" (ἑπτὰ ἔτη), corresponding to the date of Artaxerxes' rise to power (405/404).<sup>27</sup> The emendation might be in place.<sup>28</sup> It might be that some confusion entered Ctesias' MSS, presumably the introduction to his renowned work, the *Persica* (see below). It would seem that the physician referred to himself as working in the service of Artaxerxes II. Since he left Persia in the year 398/397 (and apparently finished the story recounted in the work at this dramatic date), he seems to have written only on the first seven years of the Persian monarch (405/404–398/397 BCE). A conclusion of one reader was apparently that Ctesias spent seven years in court, a detail which he inserted. Although this comment found its way into the text of Ctesias, it does not prove that it is precise; nothing in fact prevent Ctesias from coming to the Achaemenid court later than 405/404 and for a shorter period than seven years. All the events in which he describes his own personal presence in Persia are between 401 and 398/397 BCE. To solve some discrepancy which another reader found

<sup>21</sup> See the suggestion of Brown (1978: 7–10) to the effect that Ctesias was captured during Pisouthnes' revolt (414 BCE). Cf. Stronk (2004/2005: 102–104) on the proposal that it was during the revolt of Amorges, followed by Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010: 14). See the equally unconvincing attempt of Stevenson (1997: 4–6) stressing Lysander's role.

<sup>22</sup> On the resemblance, see Griffiths 1987: 48, who also proposes that Ctesias borrowed from Herodotus the story of the circumstances that brought his predecessor to Persia, in order to justify his own employment at the court of the foreign king. Lenfant (2004: X–XI n. 19) rejects the comparison.

<sup>23</sup> F 30.72–74; cf. Plut. *Art.* 21.4 and Diodorus 14.46.6.

<sup>24</sup> See Bigwood 1978: 20 n. 3.

<sup>25</sup> See Jacoby 1922: 2033 (allegedly to be superior to any other predecessor). Cf. Bigwood 1964: 177.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Briant 2002: 264, who assumes Ctesias was contracted.

<sup>27</sup> Following Müller 1844: 2. See Drews 1973: 103; Bigwood 1978: 19.

<sup>28</sup> Note that even those who accept the figure of "seventeen" propose that Ctesias began his actual royal service in 404 BCE, spending previous years at the service of the satrap Tissaphernes. Cf. Brown 1978: 8–10; Eck 1990: 431–432.

in the work (seemingly what he construed as evidence for Ctesias' presence in court during Darius II's reign),<sup>29</sup> in a second interference with the text, the figure was manifestly and erroneously hyper-corrected to "seventeen." It would seem that the ancients were not sure about the period of Ctesias' stay in Persia, a perplexity which is also relevant to the date of composition of his most important book (below).

The first certain event related to Ctesias is his medical assistance to the king during the battle of Cunaxa and his treatment of his flesh wound (Plut. *Art.* 11.3) in 401 BCE.<sup>30</sup> Treatment of the king was presumably not the main reason for Ctesias' presence at court. Ctesias' narrative also portrays him as the personal physician of the queen mother Parysatis and the Great King's wife and children (Plut. *Art.* 1.4).<sup>31</sup> As we mostly hear of Greek physicians treating Persian royal women (Democedes and Atossa: Hdt. 3.133–134; Apollonides of Cos and Amytis: F 14.44), one might presume that Ctesias was largely employed (or even contracted) to attend to the court women, especially Parysatis.<sup>32</sup> It may be that Ctesias' service was called for as he happened to be at the scene of battle, probably escorting the royal entourage.<sup>33</sup> For his service to the king he received royal gifts; he reports that once he was given two swords (F 45.9), one from the king and the other from the king's mother Parysatis. The occasion could well be the aftermath of Cunaxa (Plut. *Art.* 14.1).<sup>34</sup>

Apart from attending to the royal family, Ctesias maintained that he had participated in various activities. He claimed to have negotiated with Cyrus' Greek soldiers immediately after the battle of Cunaxa, as part of a delegation which included a person loyal to Tissaphernes, namely Phalinus (Plut. *Art.* 13.5–6). This service might have been asked of him since as a Greek on the spot he was most suited to conversing with the mercenaries. This does not necessarily mean that Ctesias was loyal to Tissaphernes, but quite the con-

<sup>29</sup> Cf. an interesting inference of Syme (1988: 139) to the effect that Ctesias already attended upon Darius II in 405 and accompanied him during the campaign of northern Media (see Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.12). But cf. Bigwood 1978: 20 n. 3 and Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 13 on the relatively short treatment of Darius II in the *Persica*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Diodorus' depiction of Cunaxa (14.23.6). Cf. Plut. *Art.* 14.1 on the award given to Ctesias after the battle. It does not seem probable that Ctesias was captured during the battle of Cunaxa, as mentioned by Bähr (1824: 13–15) and König (1972: 1 n. 17); cf. Jacoby 1922: 2033–2035, but it may be that the king's wound provided him with the first opportunity to be of service to the king. If this interpretation is true, it corresponds exactly to the story of Democedes, who treated Darius the Great's sprained ankle. Cf. Bigwood (1983: 348) on the possibility that this assistance was exaggerated by Ctesias. Cf. the latter's description of the injury incurred by Cyrus the Great in his battle against the Derbikes (F 9.7: *πίπτει καὶ αὐτὸς Κῦρος ἐκ τοῦ ἵππου... ἐξ οὗ καὶ τελευτᾷ. τότε δὲ ζῶντα ἀνελόμενοι αὐτὸν οἱ οἰκεῖοι ἐπὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον ἦσαν*; Cyrus fell off his horse... as a consequence Cyrus died... however, Cyrus was taken up before dying and brought back to camp by his servants). Though carried out of the battle, Cyrus' life could not be saved by his men (as opposed to Ctesias' own achievement).

<sup>31</sup> On the role of the physician in the Achaemenid court, see Briant 2002: 264–266; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 15. Ctesias mentions another Greek doctor at court (Apollonides of Cos: F 14.34, 44, who treated Megabyzus and Amytis, Artaxerxes I's daughter. Other physicians were Egyptians (cf. Hdt. 3.129).

<sup>32</sup> All the doctors reported to have saved a male noble (Diorous I: Hdt. 3.132 and Megabyzus: F 14.34, respectively) and later to be employed in the service of women. On Ctesias' contemporary Greek gynecological knowledge and practice, found in the Hippocratic texts, see Hanson 1991 and King 1998.

<sup>33</sup> On the manner royal women travelled with the court during military campaigns or the seasonal migration of the king see Brosius 1996: 84, 87, 90–93. Cf. Curtius Rufus, 3.3.22–25; Plut. *Alex.* 43.2.

<sup>34</sup> See Bigwood 1995: 137.

trary, that the king wanted another Greek in the delegation, to balance the person loyal to his dubious satrap. Ctesias helped Clearchus, Cyrus the Younger's Spartan general, while waiting for his execution, by handing him a comb and providing for a meal to be sent to him (Plut. *Art.* 18.1–4). He claimed to have done so on behalf of the queen mother Parysatis (F 27.69: καὶ θεραπείαν δι' αὐτῆς ἔπραξε; cf. Plut. *Art.* 18.3: καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ὑπουργῆσαι καὶ παρασχεῖν χάριτι καὶ γνώμη τῆς Παρυσάτιδος), which might be true, as only through a Greek messenger could Parysatis actively reward a soldier who was essentially employed against the king.<sup>35</sup> Presumably, this service was rendered in 400 BCE. Ctesias also came to admire the general (*Art.* 13.7). In return, Clearchos gave Ctesias his signet ring. As mentioned, Ctesias also functioned in various diplomatic activities with Evagoras on behalf of the Great King: once by receiving envoys in order to obtain letters from Aboulites [the secretary?] (F 30.72) and once by delivering a letter from Artaxerxes to Conon (Plut. *Art.* 21.1–4).<sup>36</sup> We learn that Ctesias attained this position when the letters failed to go through the hands of another court physician, Polycrites, who was presumably associated with another person in court. Since the purpose of the deal forming between Evagoras and Artaxerxes was to weaken Spartan power in the eastern Aegean and in Cyprus, Ctesias, a native of Cnidus, a pro-Spartan city (yet one that was a member of the Athenian confederacy between 479–412 BCE),<sup>37</sup> was in a perfect position to serve as a mediator, and to be employed in negotiations with the Spartans designed to deceive them.<sup>38</sup> The central place given to Ctesias in these negotiations also spells the reconciliation of the king and his mother, if it is true that after the murder of Stateira, Parysatis was banished to Babylon (Plut. *Art.* 19.10).<sup>39</sup> All or some of these accounts seemed suspect to ancient readers<sup>40</sup> and still are to modern ones. Dorati (1995) in fact goes on to propose that Ctesias was never really present at the court of Artaxerxes II, and that he concocted this story in order to be in a better position to refute Herodotus. However, outright rejection of Ctesias is not needed,<sup>41</sup> and there may be a grain of truth to his tales.<sup>42</sup>

Ctesias' most celebrated work was the lost *Persica*, which must have been impressive, narrating, in 23 books, the history of the East, from the legendary King Ninus (F 1 = Diod. 2.1.4–2.7.1) to the days of Artaxerxes II, down to the year 398/397 BCE.

<sup>35</sup> Accepting this story are: Stevenson 1997: 73; Briant 2002: 238, 265; Lenfant 2004: XII–XIII.

<sup>36</sup> The letter finds its parallel in the summary of Photius (F 30.74), where Conon is mentioned as sending a letter to the king and Ctesias.

<sup>37</sup> And a pro-Spartan himself, as evidenced by his account of Spartan valour and enhanced importance during the wars with Persia. Cf. Plutarch's description of him as φιλόλακων (*Art.* 13.7). But cf. Eck 1990: 416–417.

<sup>38</sup> See Brown 1978: 18 n. 83.

<sup>39</sup> This "Babylonian exile" of Parysatis presumably also restricted her close physician, and might explain a period of about two years in which Ctesias was not employed in any diplomatic mission and did not have any knowledge of current affairs.

<sup>40</sup> Isoc. *Evag.* 55–56 omits Ctesias' role altogether; cf. *Philip* 62. Cf. Diodorus 14.39.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. an attempt to counter this theory by Lenfant (1996: 353 n. 14). Some of Dorati's arguments can be easily contested: e.g. for other historians we sometimes lack external evidence that they were historical agents – for instance, Diodorus never mentions Xenophon as such. The fact that Xenophon does not mention Ctesias may be done with other purposes in mind (see below) and does not necessarily disprove the physician's account.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Stevenson 1997: 116, who believes Ctesias on the last diplomatic mission ("...no obvious reason to exaggerate his role"). Cf. 140.

It would seem that at some point the work was divided into two parts.<sup>43</sup> Though widely read and popular, it is probably because of the various summaries made of this immense work that it has disappeared from sight.<sup>44</sup> Books 1–6, dealing with pre-Persian history and sometimes called *Assyriaca*, are largely known to us via Diodorus (= F 1–8) and the fragments of Nicolaus of Damascus.<sup>45</sup> The books were separated into three volumes of Assyrian history and three of Median history.<sup>46</sup> The story begins with the Assyrian king Ninus, who established an empire (through wars in Babylonia, Armenia and Media), and after campaigning in Bactria returned to found a new city (which he named after himself). Ninus conquered Bactra, with the machination of his wife Semiramis. The latter succeeded Ninus, to become a great queen and heroine of the first books. Semiramis founded the city of Babylon, and expanded the empire to the Indus. From Ninyas, her son and heir, and onward, Ctesias apparently derogatively portrayed Assyrian luxury and decadence. The last Assyrian king, Sardanapallus, was defeated by the Medes and committed suicide. Diodorus (F 5) provides a brief outline of the Median section, and especially omits the popular romance story between the Saka queen Zarinaia and the Mede Stryangeos (F 7–8). Ctesias did not have Cyrus the Great as a relative of the last Median king Astyages, but as his cupbearer, who gradually obtained power and eventually revolted.<sup>47</sup>

Books 7–23 of the *Persica* were summarized by the Byzantine patriarch and humanist scholar Photius (820–c. 892 CE) in his *Bibliotheca*.<sup>48</sup> This *oeuvre* consists of 279 chapters (codices), not uniform in length or quality, which serve to abridge the content of 386 works that its dedicatee (Photius' brother) manifestly did not read.<sup>49</sup> Most of the cited works are lost, including Ctesias' works (Codex 72). Book 7 of the *Persica* began with Cyrus the Great after he assumed power; his campaigns (Ecbatana, Bactria, Saka, Lydia and the Derbikkas) are related in Books 7–11 (F 9).<sup>50</sup> It may be the case that Book 10 was devoted to the ethnographic and geographical description of central Asia.<sup>51</sup> One might think of a parallel in Book 2 of Herodotus' *Histories*, dedicated to Egypt. After Cyrus' death from a fatal wound, the account moved to that of his successor, Cambyses, at the beginning of Book 12 (F 13). This book included a depiction of Cambyses' Egyptian campaign, his death and the familiar tale of the ururper-Magus ousted by the Seven conspirators, headed by Darius (cf. Hdt. 3.61–80 and DB. 26–71). Presumably Book 12

<sup>43</sup> Broadly speaking, *Persica* is the name of the entire work, cf. T8, T9, F1h, F1n. But in a narrow sense, it is the title of only the second part, see Lenfant 2004: XXXIX. Cf. Strabo (14.2.15), who mentions two titles. See Jacoby 1922: 2040.

<sup>44</sup> See in general Mendels 2004: 19–21.

<sup>45</sup> It is thanks to Lenfant (2004) that some fragments of Nicolaus, disregarded by Jacoby, are now included among the fragments of Ctesias (F 1pδ-ε, F 6b, F 8c, F 8d).

<sup>46</sup> On Diodorus' adaptation of Ctesias, see: Bigwood 1980; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 38–40; Sulimani 2011. Cf. Comploi 2002, for a theory that Diodorus' version of Semiramis' story should not be regarded as a mere summary of Ctesias.

<sup>47</sup> Yet Lenfant (2004: 93) puts Cyrus' ascent in Book 7.

<sup>48</sup> For the date of this work, see: Mango 1975: 38, 40–42; Wilson 1983: 85, 93–94; Lemerle 1986: 38.

<sup>49</sup> On some occasions, Photius is even known to repeat himself, see Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 43–44. In others still, he is seen to be inaccurate, see Wilson 1994: 5.

<sup>50</sup> It could be that Photius intentionally disregarded books 1–6, see Stronk 2010: 14, 141ff; but it is more likely that these were not in his possession.

<sup>51</sup> See Nichols 2008: 26.

continued with the reign of Darius I, and dwelled on his two Scythian campaigns (the first led by Ariaramnes). Book 13 would then have been devoted to Xerxes' rule and the Greco-Persian War (F 13.24–32). After Xerxes' assassination and upheaval in court, Artaxerxes I assumed power, and his reign apparently began in Book 14. This part of the *Persica* is marked by the intricate relations of the courtier and satrap Megabyzus with the king and court, and the revolt of Inaros the Lybian. It also contains one of three dominant women of the *Persica*, namely Amestris, the widow of Xerxes and the king's mother (F 14.34, 39, 42–46). Her death as well as that of Artaxerxes I come at the end of Book 17. The next book is devoted to Darius II Ochus, the violent way he gained power and the suppression of internal revolts (Arsites, Artyphios, Pisuthnes, the eunuch Artoxares and the king's son-in-law Terituchmes). It also introduces the last powerful woman of the work, Parysatis (first mentioned at F 15.48). The last books, from 19 and onward, relate the reign of Artaxerxes II; Photius' epitome here can be compared with Plutarch's adaptation in the biography *Artaxerxes*.<sup>52</sup> The contents of Books 19 and 20 are Cyrus the Younger's rebellion, its aftermath and court intrigues which saw Parysatis' systematic efforts to remove the men responsible for Cyrus' death and desecration of his body. Book 21 had the imprisoned Clearchus as its focus; the general was executed, presumably at the request of Queen Stateira. This book (or probably Book 22) contained the assassination of the latter. The last book reported Ctesias' last diplomatic mission, though Photius' summary is garbled and probably indicates his weariness of the lengthy account.

In the same codex (72), Photius also abridges another lost work of the physician, a monograph on India called *Indica*.<sup>53</sup> In this composition Ctesias apparently included ethnographic, geographical, botanical and zoological descriptions of India (F 45–52), or properly speaking only of the Indus valley and its north-western geographical part. Placed within the genre of marvel or paradoxical descriptions, it was notorious for its colorful tall stories,<sup>54</sup> especially about dog-headed people (Κυνοκέφαλοι: F 45.37) or unicorns (F 45.45, cf. F 45q), or miraculous springs (e.g. F 45.6, 20, 31, 49).<sup>55</sup> The people described are said to be very just (F 45.16, 20, 30; cf. 23, 37, 43). Yet, these fantasies were not completely figments of Greek or Ctesias' own imagination, as the portrayals at times correspond with local pictures or traditions.<sup>56</sup> Some creatures described might be real, like the elephant (F 45.7, 15) or the parrot (F 45.8).<sup>57</sup> Ctesias apparently included more factual ethnographic material than the extant text reveals, but it seems that this was of less interest to Photius or any other excerptor.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>52</sup> On which see Almagor, forthcoming (b).

<sup>53</sup> Or λόγοι Ἰνδικοί (F 46a).

<sup>54</sup> Of immensely tall creatures (F 45.7–8) or incredible people, like the Enotokoitai, who have ears big enough to cover their arms as far as the elbow and their entire back (F 45.50).

<sup>55</sup> On the character of the *Indica*, see Stevenson 1997: 7–8; Lenfant 2004: CXXXVII–CLVI; and Nichols 2011: 18–21. For real animals that can be Ctesias' "wild horned asses" see Shepard 1930: 26–33.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, the long-eared people are found in the *Mahābhārata* (2.28.44; 6.47.13): the *Karnaṇprāvarana* meaning "the people who cover themselves with their ears." See Kirtley (1963).

<sup>57</sup> See Bigwood 1993a and 1993b. See Karttunen 1997: 635 n. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. F 45.16, 30; Nichols 2011: 105–106.



Unfortunately, Photius' methods in his epitomes are not entirely clear,<sup>59</sup> and this fact hinders a true appreciation of such lost works as that of Ctesias.<sup>60</sup> Yet, compared with Plutarch's account, his sections pertaining to the period of Artaxerxes II seem extremely succinct.<sup>61</sup> This conclusion becomes apparent when one bears in mind the notoriously lengthy nature of Ctesias' descriptions (cf. below). There are signs that original speeches and whole conversations were removed by Photius, or reduced by him to indirect speech (cf. F 16.67 and Plut. *Art.* 15.1–7).<sup>62</sup> Some details are missing. For instance, in Photius' summary of the account of the battle of Cunaxa, Tissaphernes, the Persian Satrap does not appear, yet his role seems to have importance in the narrative, judged by other passages (cf. F 24, 27.68) and from the rewards he is known to have received (Diod. Sic. 14.26.4); it is more probable that Photius shortened the original version.<sup>63</sup> Out of carelessness, apparently, the patriarch refers only to an anonymous person who picked up the blood-soaked saddlecloth of Cyrus the Younger after he was hit (F 16.67: Ἀρτοξέρξης δῶρα ἔδωκε τῷ ἐνέγκαντι τὸν Κύρου πῖλον), and not to the fact that it was an attendant of Mithridates (Plut. *Art.* 11.6), who is later to play a significant role in the next scenes, as can be inferred from Plutarch (*Art.* 11.5, 14.5, 15–16) and from Photius' subsequent reading (Ἀρτοξέρξης παρέδωκεν αἰτησαμένη Μιτραδάτην Παρυσάτιδι, ἐπὶ τραπέζης μεγαλαυχίσαντα ἀποκτείνει Κῦρον...).<sup>64</sup> A summary written in haste is also Photius' brief note that the Carian, the other person who fatally injured Cyrus the Younger, is tortured by Parysatis, allegedly of her own accord (F 16.67), a statement which is seen not to be accurate by comparison to Plutarch (*Art.* 14.10).<sup>65</sup> Photius is not quick to correct himself, after he had a mistake; at one point he believes that the king himself severed the head of Cyrus the Younger (F 16.64: καὶ αἰκισμὸς τοῦ σώματος Κύρου ὑπὸ τὰδελφοῦ Ἀρτοξέρξου· τὴν τε γὰρ κεφαλὴν καὶ τὴν χεῖρα, μεθ' ἧς τὸν Ἀρτοξέρξην ἔβαλλεν, αὐτὸς ἀπέτεμε, καὶ ἐθριάμβευσεν), but afterwards wrote as if it was another person (F 16.67: ...Βαγαπάτου τοῦ ἀποτεμόντος προστάξει βασιλείως τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος Κύρου; corresponding to Plut. *Art.* 17). Another inference from this comparison to Plutarch is that Photius' summary appears erroneous and even self-contradictory

<sup>59</sup> On different conjectures with regard to his methods see: Wilson 1968; 1983: 95 [on writing from memory]; Lemerle 1986: 39–40, 223–224; Hägg 1973: 213–218 [on diverse methods]. Regarding Photius' reliability, see Goossens 1950 (esp. 519 on his reading of Ctesias). On the manner in which Photius adapted his original, see Hägg 1973: 97–116.

<sup>60</sup> On Photius' summary of Ctesias, see Bigwood 1976: 2–5; Stronk 2010: 34–35, 141–146, who does not exclude the possibility that Photius used an altered copy of the work, perhaps even an *epitome* of the *Persica*, and one made by Pamphila of Epidaurus (1<sup>st</sup> century CE). Yet, the mistakes Photius makes (below) seem to reflect a reading of the original.

<sup>61</sup> See Bigwood (1989: 308) on the *Indica*. In comparison with another work, it appears that Photius' version at a certain point is less than a fifth of the original account.

<sup>62</sup> See Gera 1993: 207–208. Photius was interested only in the content of the descriptions and less in their structure or form; cf. Bigwood 1989: 311.

<sup>63</sup> See Bigwood 1983: 355 n. 64. Plutarch also seems to minimize this satrap's role. See Wylie 1992: 128.

<sup>64</sup> The conclusion of Binder (2008: 233–234) that a different source is used by Plutarch is not needed.

<sup>65</sup> It seems inconceivable that Parysatis had the authority to execute the Carian herself; indeed immediately afterwards (F 16.67), Photius himself remarks that Parysatis requested Mithridates of the king. There is no reason to infer conclusions based on this careless summary. Cf. Brosius 1996: 114 n. 76. Cf. Bigwood 1976: 4 n.13, who claims that "Photius has perhaps been led astray by the fate of the Carian eunuch [*sic!*], which he described in the preceding sentence."

at times (cf. Plut. *Art.* 14–17 and 14.10). The names given in Photius' MSS are occasionally different from those of Plutarch (cf. Plut. *Art.* 1.4, 17.1), and this variance may stem from textual corruption during the copying of either Ctesias' work or the *Bibliotheca*.<sup>66</sup>

The possibility that Ctesias' sojourn in Persia lasted seven and not seventeen years has been proposed above. This figure might already have been found interpolated in the introduction to the *Persica*. The work's date of publication is hard to ascertain, but a remark found in Photius' summary is usually employed to shed light on the date. According to this account, palm trees grew on the grave of Clearchus the Spartan, after he was executed by the king (cf. Plut. *Art.* 18.8). Photius claims that this spectacle was seen eight years after Clearchus' death (F 27.71: καὶ τὸ χῶμα δὲ τοῦ Κλεάρχου δι' ἑπτῶν ὀκτῶ μεστὸν ἐφάνη φοινίκων, οὓς ἦν κρύφα Παρύσατις, καθ' ὃν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνος ἐτελεύτησε, διὰ εὐνούχων καταχώσασα). Since the event took place in c. 401/400 BCE, the year 393/392 BC is usually given as the *terminus post quem* for the work.<sup>67</sup> This interpretation might not be necessary, if the figure of "eight" comes not from Ctesias, but from Photius' misunderstanding of the "seven years" mentioned at the beginning of the work. If Ctesias' version had καὶ νῦν at this point,<sup>68</sup> it is easy to comprehend the divergence between Plutarch's phrase "shortly afterwards" (φοινίκων δὲ τιῶν διασπαρέντων, ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ θαυμαστὸν ἄλλος ἀναφῦναι) as his own interpretation, and Photius' "in the eighth year," as two attempts to clarify the date.<sup>69</sup> The two descriptions are hardly compatible with each other, and this fact seems to suggest that the original indication of time was not sufficiently clear. The "eight years" of Photius seem to be his own phrasing, based on the understanding that the work was written in the eighth year of Artaxerxes II.<sup>70</sup> If this constraint is removed, the work could just as well have been written even later than the 390s BCE.

Related to this question is the issue of the location where Ctesias' works were published. It does not seem obligatory for Ctesias to be present in Persia at the time of composition.<sup>71</sup> Yet, sometimes we do find in antiquity the view that he wrote his works while serving the monarch. See Lucian's opinion (*Hist. Conscr.* 39 = T11hδ): "The one duty of the historian is to relate how things happened. He [Ctesias] would not be able to do this as long as he was either afraid of Artaxerxes, whom he served as physician, or hoped to receive a purple garment or a horse from Nisaeon as payment for praising

<sup>66</sup> The differences between Plutarch and Photius probably stem from copyists' errors. On other instances in other sections of the *Bibliotheca*, see Bigwood 1976: 6–9; 1978: 27 n. 30. For convincing arguments in favor of the Plutarchan variant, see Lenfant 2004: 272 n. 608; 274 n. 629; Schmitt 2006: 75–77, 177.

<sup>67</sup> See Brown 1978: 6; Eck 1990: 433–434; Stevenson 1997: 6; Lenfant 2004: VIII, XXIV n. 72; 159 n. 728.

<sup>68</sup> It must be remembered that Ctesias does not profess to have seen it. See Stevenson 1997: 4 and Lenfant 2004: 159 n. 728. Cf. the far-fetched assumption of König (1972: 26 nn. 13, 29) that the physician returned to Persia, rightly rejected by Lenfant 2004: XXII. Cf. the equally implausible suggestion of Rettig (1827), that Ctesias did not leave Persia before 394–393.

<sup>69</sup> Palm trees (*Phoenix dactylifera*) bear fruit four to eight years after planting. Therefore, Jacoby's two attempts to emend the text as an attempt to reconcile Plutarch and Photius are clearly wrong and not needed: the first (1922: 2034) was to propose "during two years" and the second (1958: 481) was διὰ μηνῶν ὀκτὸ (eight months).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. the question of Brown (1978 n. 23): "Can he be counting the eight years from 398 instead of 400 BC?"

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Jacoby 1922: 2046–2047.

the king in his writing.<sup>72</sup> In this image, Ctesias was apparently cautious and managed to maintain a neutral position in the conflicts at court. But his *Persica* appears more of an open and outspoken work, which did not present Artaxerxes II (or any Persian king) in an entirely favorable light.<sup>73</sup> Following this logic, the *Persica* was probably written in a Greek country, outside of the monarch's reach,<sup>74</sup> and the *Indica*, which has far more nuances and innuendos, should have been composed in Persia.<sup>75</sup> For some of these innuendos, it is possible to compare some scenes in Plutarch's *Artaxerxes*, adapted from the *Persica*, or some scenes from the later books summarized by Photius, and observe that the *Indica* fragments allude to them.<sup>76</sup> If the *Indica* was composed earlier and insinuated actual contemporary scenes at court, it would be probable to assume that it was written during Ctesias' presumed stay in Babylon (400–398 BCE). There are, in fact, several hints pointing to this venue: the *Matrichora*'s description (below) evokes the Dragon of Marduk shown on the Gate of Ishtar at Babylon;<sup>77</sup> Ctesias claims to have seen an elephant uproot a date-palm in Babylon (F 45ba); there is a comparison of the palms in India to those in Babylon (F 45.29). In the *Persica* Ctesias seems to have reworked some themes from the earlier work, and to have now placed them in the right context.<sup>78</sup> One interesting passage is mentioned by Diodorus, to the effect that Semiramis heard stories about India, which convinced her to attack the country (F 1b.2.16.2–4):

When she heard that the people of the Indians was the greatest in the world and that they had the largest and most beautiful land, she decided to campaign against India... India is a land of surpassing magnificence divided by many rivers... there is such a profusion of life's provisions that the natives are always supplied by abundant of pleasures. It is said that there has never been a famine or loss of crops in this country because of its good climate. It has an unbelievable number of elephants beyond those in Libya... there is also an inconceivable source of gold, silver, iron and bronze, and moreover, there are precious stones of all sorts and everything which relates to luxury and wealth.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Τοῦ δὴ συγγραφέως ἔργον ἔν – ὡς ἐπράχθη εἰπεῖν. τοῦτο δ' οὐκ ἂν δύναται ἄχρι ἂν ἡ φοβῆται Ἀρταξέρξην ἰατρὸς αὐτοῦ ὣν ἡ ἐλπίζη κἀνδυν πορφυροῦν καὶ στρεπτόν χρυσοῦν καὶ ἵππον τῶν Νισαίων λήψεσθαι μισθὸν τῶν ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ἐπαίνων.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Stronk (2010: 51) who claims that Lucian's jeer against Ctesias is unjust.

<sup>74</sup> See Lenfant 2004: XVII, XXIII.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Stronk (2010: 34), who maintains that Ctesias began writing or at least taking notes with the intention of writing a book.

<sup>76</sup> For instance, *Art.* 19.4, taken from the *Persica*, relates a small bird called *rhyntakes* which has no excrement (γίνεται δὲ μικρὸν ἐν Πέρσαις ὀρνίθιον, ὃι περιττώματος οὐδὲν ἔστιν), and is the size of an egg (F 27.70), used as an instrument in the assassination of Stateira. This description parallels the elements found in one depiction of the *Indica* (F 45.34). It describes a small bird called *dikairon* the size of a partridge egg, which buries its excrement so it cannot be found (καὶ ὄρνεόν φησιν ἐπικαλούμενον δικαίρον... τὸ μέγεθος ὅσον πέρδικος οἴων. τοῦτο τὸν ἀπόπατον κατορύσσει, ἵνα μὴ εὔρεθῆι). Cf. Ael. *NA* 4.41.

<sup>77</sup> See Nichols 2011: 105.

<sup>78</sup> Another case can be made between, on the one hand, a reference to a drink that works like wine in disclosing the truth (F 45.31), used by the Great King and on the other, the unfortunate story of Mihtridates, who caused the death of Cyrus the Younger and having revealed this fact while intoxicated at a banquet, brought about his own painful end (*Art.* 11, 15–16).

<sup>79</sup> πυνθανομένη δὲ τὸ τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἔθνος μέγιστον εἶναι τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην καὶ πλείστην τε καὶ καλλίστην χώραν νέμεσθαι, διενεοῖτο στρατεύειν εἰς τὴν Ἰνδικήν... ἡ γὰρ Ἰνδικὴ χώρα διάφορος οὔσα τῷ κάλλει καὶ πολλοῖς διελιμμένη ποταμοῖς ἀρδευεταί τε πολλαχοῦ καὶ διτοῦς καθ' ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτὸν ἐκφέρει καρπούς: διὸ καὶ τῶν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν ἐπιτηδεῖων τοσοῦτον ἔχει πλῆθος ὥστε διὰ παντὸς ἀφθονον ἀπόλαυσιν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις παρέχεσθαι. λέγεται δὲ μηδέποτε κατ' αὐτὴν γερονένα σιτοδείαν ἢ φθορὰν

If Diodorus does in fact give a short version of Ctesias here, there are two possible conclusions to be drawn: the parallel themes and verbal echoes of this passage and the fragments of the *Indica* lead one to speculate that the *Persica* at this point intentionally alluded to Ctesias' earlier work. A different interesting conclusion would be to propose that the *Indica* is none other than this very digression itself, along the lines of Herodotus' Book 2. This assumption is hampered by the fact that the *Indica* as Photius relates it apparently included references to Ctesias as a historical agent (receiving swords from royal family members) or as an investigator, commenting on animals and sites he had seen. We do not know whether Ctesias inserted himself so early in the *Persica* and alluded to Artaxerxes and Parysatis, who were to appear much later in the work. We should not rule out the possibility that this section, probably written before the *Persica* to form a seemingly single work, was later separated from the rest of the work.

Two other works attributed to Ctesias are the *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν φόρων* (F 53, 54), whose content was presumably a catalogue of goods that were transferred to the royal house,<sup>80</sup> and the *Περίοδος* or *Περίπλων*: F 55–60, containing three books.<sup>81</sup> All have been lost, and there are not enough fragments to construct their content. In the cases of these obscure works, once again, we might suggest that certain sections of the *Persica* could have been taken out and presented as stand-alone works. It is especially hard to imagine a colorful author such as Ctesias composing volumes made up entirely of pedestrian lists. Either these items were falsely identified with Ctesias,<sup>82</sup> because of his renown as a writer describing Persia setting the standard for the following works on the area, just like the spurious works on mountains and rivers (F 73–74),<sup>83</sup> or otherwise (more probably) they were taken out of context from his works to form the relevant books.<sup>84</sup> The same goes for the account of the number of stages, days and parasangs in the Achaemenid Empire, that was ostensibly to be found in the last part of Ctesias' work and that Photius read in his copy (F 33).<sup>85</sup> This section seems to have been a later interpolation in the *Persica*, together with the list of kings “from Ninus and Semiramis to Artaxerxes II,” just like a parallel list at the end of Xenophon's *Anabasis* (7.8.26).<sup>86</sup>

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καρπῶν διὰ τὴν εὐκρασίαν τῶν τόπων. ἔχει δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐλεφάντων ἄπιστον πλῆθος, οἱ ταῖς τε ἀλκαῖς καὶ ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ῥώμαις πολὺν προέχουσι τῶν ἐν τῇ Λιβύῃ γινομένων, ὁμοίως δὲ χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, σίδηρον, χαλκόν: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις λίθων παντοίων καὶ πολυτελῶν ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῇ πλῆθος, ἔτι δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων σχεδὸν τῶν πρὸς τρυφήν καὶ πλοῦτον διατεινόντων. ὑπὲρ ὧν τὰ κατὰ μέρος ἢ Σεμίραμις ἀκούσασα προήχθη μηδὲν προαδικηθεῖσα τὸν πρὸς Ἰνδοὺς ἐξενεγκεῖν πόλεμον.

<sup>80</sup> See Lenfant 2007: 205.

<sup>81</sup> See Stevenson 1997: 143.

<sup>82</sup> Especially disconcerting is the reference to a region in Italy (F 59). Most of the areas mentioned are in the Black Sea region.

<sup>83</sup> The work *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν φόρων* could be identified with the lost work of another *Persica* author, Heracleides of Cumae, termed *Παρασκευαστικοί* (scil. βίβλοι) (*FGrH* 689 F 2, 4), which recorded Persian particularities (such as the king's dinner) in five books.

<sup>84</sup> In fact, Gilmore (1888: 3) has suggested that the minor works of Ctesias were portions of the *Persica*. Cf. Stronk (2010: 12) for a contrary position. Yet, this view may also be correct for the works on mountains and rivers, discussing natural medicinal cures. Similarly, the allegedly medical treatises (F 67–68), in which he criticizes Hippocrates could be derived from the *Persica* or the *Indica*.

<sup>85</sup> ἀπὸ Ἐφέσου μέχρι Βάκτρων καὶ Ἰνδικῆς ἀριθμὸς σταθμῶν, ἡμερῶν, παρασαγγῶν. κατάλογος βασιλέων ἀπὸ Νίνου καὶ Σεμιράμεως μέχρι Ἀρτοξέρξου. ἐν οἷς καὶ τὸ τέλος.

<sup>86</sup> See Almagor, forthcoming (a).

Among his sources, Ctesias apparently mentioned royal documents (βασιλικαῖς ἀναγραφαῖς: Diodorus 2.22.5, or βασιλικῶν διφθερῶν: Diod. 2.32.4), which presumably listed or narrated court events.<sup>87</sup> There were also oral traditions, one would imagine, of the distant past, so that Ctesias could have echoed Persian and Near-Eastern folktales, which can be traced in material as early as Mesopotamian myths and prayers and as late as the medieval Epos of Ferdowsi, the *Shahnameh* (the book of kings).<sup>88</sup> It appears that Ctesias gained the trust of the highest-ranking persons at court and was privy to the most intimate secrets of the royal family. For instance, his knowledge of Artaxerxes' original nickname (Ἀρσάκων: F 15.51; Plut. *Art.* 1.4: Ἀρσίκας), which is different from the official Ar-shu.<sup>89</sup> The version that Ctesias mentions is most probably a name based on the hypocoristic suffix \*-ka-,<sup>90</sup> and he may have learnt of this from Parysatis herself.<sup>91</sup>

Ctesias also claims autopsy (F 8, 15.51, 45.24, 45g),<sup>92</sup> even of phantastical creatures (F 45.15, 45dβ, 45dγ: the *Matrichora*<sup>93</sup>), but he appears to derive most of his facts from informants (soldiers, merchants, officials, courtiers).<sup>94</sup> Although Ctesias mentions the Behistun monument (F1b.2.13.1: πρὸς ὄρος τὸ καλούμενον Βαγίστανον), it should be questioned whether he had actually seen it. Firstly, he attributes its erection to Semiramis and not to Darius I, which cannot be expected. Secondly, although Ctesias' story of Cambyses' assassination of his brother and the tale of the Magus imposter who succeeded to the throne (F 9.8, 13.13) are in some respects closer to the version of the Behistun Inscription (DB 1.26–71) than to that of Herodotus (3.61–80),<sup>95</sup> and although he mentioned the seven Persian nobles led by Darius to oust the pretender, Ctesias' list of the conspirators (F 13.16: Onophas, Idernes, Narondabates, Mardonius, Barisses, Ataphernes, and Darius) disagrees with that of Herodotus (3.70), who is closer to the one in the Behistun inscription (DB 4.80–86).<sup>96</sup> One would assume that almost all of his informants

<sup>87</sup> Jacoby (1922: 2047) denies the existence of these written documents, with no good reason. Cf. Briant 2002: 889. Yet see Esther, 2.23, 6.1, 10.2 with Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 61–64 and Stronk 2010: 15–21, who suggests documents written on perishable material, such as hides or papyri, and in Imperial Aramaic.

<sup>88</sup> Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 64–65; Stronk 2010: 27–30.

<sup>89</sup> Sachs-Hunger 1988, e.g. 381, 382, close to the Greek Ἄρσης, and apparently derived from the Persian \**Rša*, stemming from \**ršan-* (= “hero”). This goes against suggestions that take Deinon's version as mentioned by Plutarch (*Art.* 1.4), namely, Ὀάρσης, and reconstruct its original Persian form as derived from the prefix “hu” (= “good”); see Stevenson, 1997: 76–77; cf. Justi 1895: 231; Hintz 1975: 131.

<sup>90</sup> See Kent 1953: 55 § 164; Schmitt 2006: 76.

<sup>91</sup> See Lenfant 2004: 275 n. 632. See the piece of information on Cyrus' name (see below): ...καὶ φησιν ὁ συγγραφεὺς αὐτὸς παρ' αὐτῆς ἐκείνης τῆς Παρυσάτιδος ταῦτα ἀκοῦσαι... (F 15.51).

<sup>92</sup> F 8: φησὶ δὲ αὐτὸν τῶν πλείονων ἅ ἱστορεῖ αὐτόπτην γενόμενον ἢ παρ' αὐτῶν Περσῶν, ἔνθα τὸ ὄρᾶν μὴ ἐνεχῶρει, αὐτήκοον καταστάντα, οὕτω τὴν ἱστορίαν συγγράμει. See Marincola 1997, 87, 107. Cf. Bichler 2007.

<sup>93</sup> A name probably deriving from Old Persian *martiya-* (“man”) and *khordēh* (“eating”); cf. McCrindle 1881: 298 n. 25. In Modern Persian *mard-kwār* signifies a tiger. It could be that the physician referred to this animal as well. Ctesias' source could have been either Persian or Indian. Cf. Karttunen 1991: 79; cf. also Lenfant 2004: 302 n. 810.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Drews 1973: 107.

<sup>95</sup> In placing the death of Tanyoxarkes before Cambyses' Egyptian campaign (F 13.12) and in suggesting that the Magus had a different name than the legitimate royal heir (Ctesias: Sphendadates; Behistun: Gaumata; Herodotus: Smerdis). Cf. Bickerman/Tadmor 1978.

<sup>96</sup> Herodotus' Seven are Otanes, Intaphernes, Gobryas, Megabyzus, Hydarnes, Aspathines and Darius (3.70). The Behistun Inscription (DB 68) has Utāna, Vidafarnah, Gaubaruva, Bagabuxša, Vidarna, Ardumaniš

spoke Greek at some level, or at least through Greek interpreters;<sup>97</sup> Ctesias' knowledge of Persian or even Elamite is hardly likely to have been great.<sup>98</sup> A comparison between Plutarch and Photius reveals that, in some instances, Ctesias mentioned the significance of words or names in Persian, for example the fact that Cyrus' name comes from the Persian for "sun": F 15.51 (τίκτει δὲ αὐτῷ ἕτερον υἷον βασιλεύουσα, καὶ τίθεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου Κῦρον) and Plut. *Art.* 1.3 (μὲν οὖν Κῦρος ἀπὸ Κύρου τοῦ παλαιοῦ τοῦνομα ἔσχεν, ἐκείνῳ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου γενέσθαι φασί).<sup>99</sup> Other cases for Persian phrases are Photius' mention of the word for leper, *πισάγας* (F 14.43, from the Old Persian *paesa*, *pīs* apparently used for lepers,<sup>100</sup> ἄζαβαρίτης (F 15.49, from Old Persian *hazarapatiš*, "commander of one thousand" (= chiliarch), *κίταρις* (F 15.50, probably a semitic loanword to denote a crown that entered Old Persian).<sup>101</sup> Another instance still would be Plutarch's "Ἐξίστασθε, πενιχροί." τοῦτο δὲ περσιστί πολλάκις αὐτοῦ βοῶντος (11.4; cf. Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.26).<sup>102</sup> For the *Indica* passages, Ctesias had Indian informants (F 45.8, 18, 45bα). If Ctesias could speak one of the Imperial languages, it would be best to consider Aramaic the official *lingua franca*.<sup>103</sup> It is interesting to note that some of Ctesias' informants may have spoken in Aramaic, for instance, if the name of "Cunaxa" is indeed a distortion of the Aramaic form *Kenishta*, namely, (Jewish) synagogue.<sup>104</sup>

Ctesias was well versed in Greek literary sources, for example Herodotus, whom he clearly used,<sup>105</sup> and also deliberately attempted to correct (T 8a, 13, F 9, 13.26, 16.62, cf.

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and Darius – thus only one name (Aspathines vs. Ardumaniš) does not coincide. Cf. Lenfant 1996: 373–379; 2004: LXXVII–LXXX on the variances. Ctesias' Idernes is apparently the only name corresponding to the Behistun list and Herodotus. Concerning Ctesias' Onophas, note that Herodotus (7.62) has Anaphes as the son of Otanes. cf. Briant 2002: 135, and note that Diodorus (31.19.1) mentions Anaphas as one of the Seven. Similarly, Ctesias' Mardonius could be Gobryas' son. Cf. Lenfant 2004: 262 n. 484. Ctesias thus seems to be based on somewhat misinterpreted oral traditions.

<sup>97</sup> One of them could have been Clearchus, one of Cyrus the Younger's mercenary generals. See Stevenson 1997: 7. Cf. Plut. *Art.* 13.7 on his depiction as Lover of Clearchus (φιλοκλέαρχος).

<sup>98</sup> In general, Greeks had no knowledge of Persian, see Miller 1997: 131–133. Cf. Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010: 55–56) and Stronk (2010: 21–22) for the opinion that Ctesias could understand the language.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Hesychius, s.v. "Κῦρος"; linguistically, it is hard to base the name *Kurush* on OP \**hwar* (= sun; MP *Khwar* or *Hur*). Indeed, this etymological explanation is rejected by Weissbach 1924 and Schmitt 2002: 59–60; 2006: 104. This fact shows perhaps that Ctesias' knowledge of Persian was not profound. Cf. Lenfant 2004: 274 n. 630, who rightly proposes that this piece of information was given to the physician by Parysatis.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. König 1972: 78.

<sup>101</sup> See Ritter (1965: 170–172); Calmeyer (1977: 182–185). Cf. Nicolaus, *FGrH* 90 F 66.45. Cf. the Hebrew "כֶּתֶר" ("Keter", crown).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 56. Persian would have been used only sparingly by Ctesias if at all.

<sup>103</sup> Notice the point indicated by Stronk (2010: 22) based on a remark of Diodorus (2.22.5), which he makes into a new fragment (F.\*0b); Ctesias depended on hearsay for the use of royal archives in earlier periods.

<sup>104</sup> Obermeyer 1929: 73 n. 1, 249. The Jewish community is probably that of "Kenishta de Safyatib," built, according to Jewish tradition, from stones of the temple in Jerusalem; cf. *Megilah Tractate* 29a. See Barnett 1963: 16–17; Lendle 1986: 198 n. 10; Gasche 1995: 201 n. 1. If this assumption is true, then there is a great probability that Ctesias' informants were familiar with the place and presumably inhabited it.

<sup>105</sup> Compare one obvious borrowing: Herodotus (4.195) mentions an autopsy of a sight in Zakynthos: "even in Zakynthos I saw myself pitch brought up out of a pool of water" (καὶ ἐν Ζακύνθῳ ἐκ λίμνης καὶ ὕδατος πίσσαν ἀναφερομένην αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὤρων), which is repeated in Ctesias' *Indica* (F 45.20): "In Zacyn-

F 37).<sup>106</sup> Ctesias' familiarity with Attic literature and drama is evidenced, for instance, in his adaptation of Euripides' *Medea*'s phrase and alliteration (v. 476: ἔσωσά σ', ὡς ἴσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὄσοι; I saved your life – as witness all the Greeks who [went on board the Argo with you]; Cf. 515) into ἐγὼ μὲν σὲ ἔσωσα, καὶ σὺ μὲν δι' ἐμὲ ἐσώθης, ἐγὼ δὲ διὰ σὲ ἀπωλόμην ("I saved you and because of me you are still alive, but now I am ruined because of you;" F 8b = Demetr. *De eloc.* 213; cf. 8b\* = *P. Ox.* 2330), uttered by Strageos in a love letter to Zarinaia (on whom see above). One toponym may be specifically derived from an Aeschylan line; the Egyptian (and not Phoenician) town Byblos (F 14.37) evokes the Bybline mountains (*PV* 811) "from which the Nile sends forth his stream" (Βυβλίνων ὄρων ἄπο || ἴησι σεπτὸν Νεῖλος εὐποτον ῥέος).<sup>107</sup> The famous (or notorious) dog-heads of India (F 45.37–43; cf. Gell. *NA* 9.4.9; F45οβ; F45πα; F45πβ), that is, the group of people with canine heads who apparently howl like dogs, dwell in caves, wear thin strips of leather, sleep on mattresses of straw and live for 170 (or 200) years, were already seen previously in Herodotus, yet located in the west, in northern Africa (4.191). They even seem to have been mentioned earlier, in Aeschylus (Κυνοκεφάλους) if Strabo (1.2.35) is reliable in his reference. Cf. Hesiod (Ἡμίκυνας; also from Strabo) for an earlier instance.<sup>108</sup> When Ctesias appeared to be writing from his imagination, it seems to be have been fashioned by his reading and from images he was familiar with.<sup>109</sup>

On Ctesias' style and presentation we are not in a position to comment with certainty. His works are completely lost.<sup>110</sup> Yet, ever since the publication of the papyrus *P. Ox.* 2330 (second century CE), there is a consensus among scholars that it reflects the *ipsis-sima verba* of the physician/historian and that we therefore have at least 29 fragmentary lines of his work.<sup>111</sup> Yet there may be some reasons to believe that the papyrus may be some reworking of Ctesias or even the context of the celebrated line used to establish the

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thus, there is a spring filled with fish from which pitch is drawn" (καὶ ἐν Ζακύνθῳ κρηνηῖδας ἰχθυοφόρους εἶναι, ἐξ ὧν αἰρεται πίσσα).

<sup>106</sup> See Bichler 2004: 506; cf. Bigwood 1964: 76, 95–96. Contrary to Herodotus (1.193, 2.150), Nineveh is set on the Euphrates (F 1b.2.3.2). Cf. Lenfant 2004: 235 n. 107. Ctesias also presumably placed the battle of Plataea before that of Salamis (F 13.28–29). Cf. the reference of Dio Chrysostom (11.145) to a historian who altered the order of events; however, the (presumably tongue in cheek) presentation could have been set in a geographical and not chronological order. See the inference of Bigwood (1976: 4; 1978: 19). Ctesias reversed the order of Cyrus the Great's campaigns (F 9.1) from the Herodotean one (1.153) of Lydians before Bactrians and the Saka. Drews (1973: 106) terms this practice "a woeful correction of Herodotus."

<sup>107</sup> See Bigwood 1976: 23–24.

<sup>108</sup> This image was popular afterwards: Scylax, author of the *Periplus* (cf. *FGrH* 688 F 51b; Tzetzes seems to imply, on the contrary, that this was the Scylax the elder) and Artemidorus (Str. 16.4.14). Cf. also Karttunen 1989: 181–182. There have been attempts in research to identify this people or to connect this description to folkloristic traditions. See Lassen 1874: 659–661; Fischer/Wecker 1924: 26; Shafer 1964; Lindegger 1982: 55–62; Karttunen 1989: 183; White 1991: 28–29, 48–50, 71.

<sup>109</sup> See Bigwood 1978: 23.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the conclusion of Gilmore (1888: 2): "scarcely a sentence of [Ctesias'] text has come down to us verbatim" before the fragment *P. Ox.* 2330 was discovered (= F 8b\*). There are also some words or phrases in Photius' epitome which might be regarded as verbatim (e.g. F 13.13: "τοῦτον", ἔφη "νομίζετε Τανυοξάρκην;" ὁ δὲ Λάβυξος θαυμάσας "καὶ τίνα ἄλλον" ἔφη "νομοῦμεν;").

<sup>111</sup> See Biltcliffe 1969; Bigwood 1986: 406 ("There is in fact no linguistic feature, just as... there was no stylistic consideration, which gives us reason to deny attribution of the fragment to Ctesias"); Stronk 2007; 2010: 2–3.

attribution (see above).<sup>112</sup> If *P. Ox.* 2330 can be relied upon, Ctesias apparently wrote in the Attic dialect, or to be precise in a less rigorous or a modified Ionic with Attic forms.<sup>113</sup> This was perhaps not accidental, as the time of writing coincided with Athenian new marine ascendancy (post Cnidus, 394 BCE). Ctesias employed forms of Ionicism in his work, as Photius claims (T 10, 13), probably corresponding to Ionic historiographic writing, and this can occasionally be seen in the patriarch's epitome (F 16.67: δοκέοντα).<sup>114</sup> Photius claims that Ctesias employed Ionisms more frequently in the *Indica* (T 10).<sup>115</sup> Another feature is the use of simple grammatical structures and repetitions. Common to both passages cited above on Cyrus' name, one can easily spot one apparent characteristic of Ctesias' style, namely, the hiatus (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου).<sup>116</sup>

We are not sure whether Ctesias referred to himself in the third or rather first person,<sup>117</sup> and what was the earliest point in the narrative where he mentioned himself. It seems that the *Persica* was built as a series of episodes (cf. T 13: διηγημάτων),<sup>118</sup> a structure which is clearly reflected in Photius' summary and in Plutarch's presentation. These episodes, however, obviously did not strike the reader as digressions from the main narrative, if Photius' impression is any guide (T 13: οὐδὲ πρὸς ἐκτροπὰς δέ τινας ἀκαίρους, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος, ἀπάγει τὸν λόγον). Another feature discernible in his work is the practice of echoing backwards, making earlier episodes in his history duplicate circumstances in his own lifetime,<sup>119</sup> or, on the other hand, hinting forward to future events. For instance, Ctesias (ap. Plut. *Art.* 14.2) narrated the case of Arbaces, a Mede who, in the battle of Cunaxa, had run away to Cyrus, and, when Cyrus fell, had changed back again to Artaxerxes. Previously in his *Persica*, he mentioned another Median Arbaces who revolted from Sardanapallus the Assyrian (F 1b.2.1.24–28, cf. F 1pδ- ε, F 5.2.32.5–6, F 6b, F 8d.1, 12). Cf. also the case of persons called Bagapates (F 16.66 ~ F 13.9, 13, 15–16, 23) or Artasyras (Plut. *Art.* 12.1 ~ F 13.9, 13, 15–16, 23). Or see the case of Cyrus the Great, who, before dying, appointed Cambyses as his successor on the throne and gave his other son Tanyoxarkes authority on a territory in central Asia (F 9.8) – a description which pre-

<sup>112</sup> See the arguments of Giangrande 1976: 31–41.

<sup>113</sup> See Del Corno 1962: 128; Bigwood 1976: 400–406. Cf. Stevenson 1997: 8.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Arrian. *Ind.* 3.6, which has the form Κτησίης in a reference to the *Indica*. But cf. the spelling in Arr. *An.* 5.4.2 (= T11gα); cf. Lenfant 2004: 11 n. 39.

<sup>115</sup> If the possibility that the *Indica* was originally part of the *Persica*, and later circulated separately, is correct, one would have to conclude that Photius had a separate copy of the *Indica*, with a different tradition of transmission, one which kept many of the original Ionisms, as opposed to the *Persica*, which was reworked till it reached the patriarch's hands.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Bigwood 1986: 398. On Plutarch's avoidance of hiatus see Ziegler 1951: 932–935; Russell 1973: 18–41. On the *Artaxerxes* see Schottin 1865: 14–16. Cf. σὲ ἔσωσα above.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Marincola 1997: 185 and n. 56, relating to F 68, our only evidence for the latter choice; cf. 134; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 8. Cf. Dorati 1995: 37, 41, who is convinced of a first-person narrative. Stronk, 2010: 2 admirably tries to reconstruct Ctesias' proem in the first person, but in comparison with those of Herodotus and Thucydides, and in view of Xenophon's depiction of himself in the third person (*Anab.* 3.1.4), we perhaps should consider the other possibility.

<sup>118</sup> See Gera 1993: 209 on the *Persica*: "a chain of novellas arranged in chronological order and interspersed into descriptions of lands, customs, battles and the concrete achievements of each noteworthy monarch."

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Jacoby 1922: 2049. Bigwood (1976: 19–20) perhaps presses too far the case of court intrigues.



ceded the arrangement made at Darius II's death bed, between Artaxerxes II and Cyrus the Younger (Plut. *Art.* 2.6).

The Greek traits of his narration are visible. A cursory reading of Photius' summary, as well as Plutarch's rendition and other authors preserving fragments, reveals several recurrent themes and images in Ctesias' *Persica*: for instance, his fondness for single duels of the Greek epic type (Megabyzus and Inaros: F 14.37, Megabyzus and Ousiris: F 14.40, Udiastes and Terituchmes: F 15.54). From Photius' epitome, it can be gathered that Ctesias portrayed his royal figures (e.g. Cyrus the Great: F 9.6, Artaxerxes I: F 14.39, 43, 44; Darius II: 15.50, 52, 54, 56) as controlled by the court women, and as being unable to restrain their anger, employing various cruel methods of torture as a result (cf. Artaxerxes I: F 14.34; Artaxerxes II: Plut. *Art.* 16). Ctesias follows and develops the image of Persians as not free, slaves either to the king or to their passions, with the portrayal of the Persian court as a scene of decadence, harem intrigues, corruption, arbitrary decisions, hypocrisy, betrayal of trust and brutality.<sup>120</sup> In accordance with the prevailing orientalist image of the Eastern Empire,<sup>121</sup> men are depicted as effeminate and women as dominant. Persia is seen as a place which breeds creatures on the fringes of human society, such as strong eunuchs (e.g. F 9.6, 13.9, 13, 15–16, 24, 31, 33, 14.33, 42–43, 15.48, 51, 54, 16.66).<sup>122</sup> With Parysatis at the end of the work calling to mind the strong female character of Semiramis at its beginning,<sup>123</sup> there is a sense of a recurrent motif in the *Persica*.

Among the ancient readers who liked Ctesias' writing are Dionysius of Halicarnassus (T 12) – for its pleasing style, although lacking in beauty (ἡδέως μὲν ὡς ἐνι μάλιστα, οὐ μὴν καλῶς γ' ἐφ' ὅσον ἔδει) – and Photius (T 13), for its clear and simple style, interwoven with pleasure, although it sometimes contains vulgar speech (σαφῆς τε καὶ ἀφελῆς λίαν, διὸ καὶ ἡδονῆι αὐτῶι σύγκρατός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος... καὶ εἰς ἰδιωτισμὸν ἐκπίπτειν). Photius claims that Ctesias' narrative is full of emotion and the unexpected (τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ ἀπροσδόκητον ἐχούση πολὺ). The *De elocutione* attributed to Demetrius of Phaleron attests to the impression Ctesias' lengthy style made on ancient readers (T 14 = *De eloc.* 212, 214, 216; F 24): the charge that he is garrulous because of his repetition is perhaps justified (ὡς ἀδολεσχοτέρωι διὰ τὰς διλογίας, πολλαχῆ μὲν ἴσως ἐγκαλοῦσιν ὀρθῶς; cf. Plut. *Art.* 11.11), yet Ctesias' depiction has liveliness (ἐναργεία), or the emotion of liveliness (τὸ ἐκ τῆς ἐναργείας πάθος), and necessitates repetitiveness. Demetrius praises Ctesias' measured and prolonged description, leaving the listener in suspense as well as portraying a character (...κατὰ μικρόν, κρεμῶντα τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ἀναγκάζοντα συναγωνιᾶν... μάλα ἠθικῶς καὶ ἐναργῶς... ἐμφήνας).

Ctesias' impact on subsequent generations was immense.<sup>124</sup> Suffice it here to mention some of his fourth century BCE readers. The earliest evident one was another Greek

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Kuhrt 2007: 563.

<sup>121</sup> See Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987: 43–44, who claims that Ctesias introduced the concept of *Orient* for the first time in European historiography.

<sup>122</sup> See Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987; Nippel 2001: 290. On eunuchs see Guyot 1980: 181ff.; Briant 2002: 268–272.

<sup>123</sup> Rightly pointed out by Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 76. One should also add the character of Amestris, who anticipates Parysatis.

<sup>124</sup> See Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 53–55.

participant in the battle of Cunaxa, but one who came from the opposite side of the conflict, being a mercenary soldier from Athens in the service of Prince Cyrus the Younger, namely Xenophon, son of Gryllus. The significance of the writings of Ctesias for the understanding of some of Xenophon's literary accounts – e.g. in the *Cyropaedia* – is now acknowledged.<sup>125</sup> Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010: 69–70) point out Ctesias' influence on Xenophon in terms of the novella form, in particular the four episodes interwoven within the main historical narrative: (a) Panthea the Lady of Susa (*Cyr.* 5.1.1–30; 6.1.30–55; 6.4.1–20; 7.3.3–17), (b) King Croesus (*Cyr.* 7.2.1–29), (c) Prince Gobryas (*Cyr.* 4.6.1–12; 5.2.1–14; 5.4.41–51), and (d) Gadatas the chieftain (*Cyr.* 5.3.15–4.51). Among the features Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010) indicate as characteristic of these stories are: (1) episodic presentation, (2) a link with the work's main narrative framework, not as digressions, (3) scenes of emotional intensity, (4) dialogues. These characteristics can all be traced back to Ctesias' writing, whose stories can be seen as novellas.<sup>126</sup> In what amounts to the reception of the *Persica* in the first generation after its publication, Xenophon used his precursor's descriptions of the military encounter, its background and its immediate aftermath in his own work the *Anabasis*.<sup>127</sup> (See more in the Appendix below.)

Another fourth-century reader of Ctesias was the obscure historian Deinon, about whose lost writings little is known – and even less of his life.<sup>128</sup> He may have been a native of Colophon and the father of the popular historian Cleitarchus, if indeed this is the same person Pliny refers to in his *Historia Naturalis* (1.10: *Dione Colophonio*).<sup>129</sup> This information, however, does not help us determine the dates of Deinon's life, as we cannot be certain of the date of Cleitarchus' writing. The prevailing view is that he lived at the end of the fourth century,<sup>130</sup> and hence Deinon presumably lived a genera-

<sup>125</sup> See Gera 1993: 115–118, 199–215, 240–241. Cf. Jacoby 1922: 2067.

<sup>126</sup> Llewellyn-Jones/Robson (2010: 71) claim that “There can be little doubt that Xenophon drew on Ctesias' *Persica* as a source of inspiration for his novellas.” Xenophon's Panthea especially evokes Ctesias' Semiramis; in both stories there is a motif of a love triangle or the suicide of the loving spouse.

<sup>127</sup> That Xenophon used Ctesias for the *Anabasis* was suggested by Reuss (1887: 3–5), and Neuhaus (1901: 279), dealing mainly with small sections, sometimes reaching wrong conclusions, and not tracing the intricate modes of dependence and rejection the Athenian historian displayed towards his predecessor. Neuhaus in particular seems off the mark in believing Xenophon's comments on the Phocaeen woman (= Aspasia; *Anab.* 1.10.2) to be derived from Ctesias. Jacoby (1922: 2067), does not discard this view but is more cautious. Bigwood (1983: 347 n. 33) also acknowledges the possibility of Xenophon's employment of the *Persica*, but only for two details (the arrest and release of Cyrus and the death of Artagereses). Her claim that “some use” was made of Ctesias (342 n. 10) definitely needs to be revisited. Cf. the statement of Momigliano 1971: 57 that “[i]n the matter of military campaigns Xenophon has learned something from Thucydides and perhaps also from Ctesias.”

<sup>128</sup> There are two forms of his name in Greek: Δείνων, which appears in this biography and in *Them.* 27.1 and Δίνων in some MSS of *Alex.* 36.4. On both forms see Schwartz 1905, who prefers the second one.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *HN* 10.136. Some of the fragments of Deinon have the form “Dio” (e.g. *FGrH* 690 F 6 = DL 9.50; F 18 = *Nep. Con.* 5.4; F 20 = *Luc. Macrob.* 15). This form might explain why in the Suda, under one heading (Delta, 1239: Δίων), some features of Deinon are attributed to Cassius Dio: ἔγραψε Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἱστορίαν ἐν βιβλίοις π'... Περσικά, Γετικά... (He wrote a Roman History in 80 books. Persika, Getika...).

<sup>130</sup> See Hamilton 1961: 448–449; Badian 1965: 5–6; Bosworth 1980: 30 n. 52. The only reference to Cleitarchus as a contemporary of Alexander is based on an understanding of Diodorus, 2.7.3 = *FGrH* 137 T 5: ὡς δὲ Κλεῖταρχος καὶ τῶν ὕστερον μετ' Ἀλεξάνδρου διαβάντων εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν τινὲς ἀνέγραψαν. Cf. Jacoby 1921: 622–624. There is a Cleitarchus mentioned with Stilpo the sophist, i.e., circa 307 BCE (DL 2.113), but we cannot be certain whether it is the same person. Some scholars therefore favor a date after 280 BCE:

tion before.<sup>131</sup> The work of Deinon, which also dealt with Persia and was also termed *Persica*, was divided into three series (συντάξεις: *FGrH* 690 F 1–3), each containing several books; they were probably published separately.<sup>132</sup> Deinon followed the genre, subject matter and style of Ctesias, thus expanding it further to the second half of the fourth century BCE.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, when a comparison with his predecessor's version is possible, it appears that Deinon not only appropriated significant scenes but also did not diverge much in terms of detail.<sup>134</sup> One case in point is the story of the murder of Queen Stateira during dinner through poison smeared on a certain bird. There are variances in detail between Ctesias and Deinon (Plut. *Art.* 19), but the main scene is adopted and its outline repeated.<sup>135</sup> The fact that Deinon seems to have placed this scene before the death of Cyrus (Plut. *Art.* 6.9) could merely point to the fact that Deinon's arrangement of episodes was not chronological but thematic, and built as a series of digressions. Scholars usually consider Deinon a fabricator of facts and denigrate his stories as either adapting Ctesias' accounts or echoing the official court version.<sup>136</sup> Yet, disregarding their Hellenic coloring and dramatic flavor, Deinon's stories seem to convey fairly reliable details of Persian life.<sup>137</sup> In this respect, they can be considered true successors to Ctesias' tales.

It should never be forgotten that Ctesias was a Greek author, writing in Greek to a Greek audience. While conveying local Eastern traditions, his work is set in an entirely Hellenic context. The *Persica* plays with known images and genres, maintaining some key features while subverting others, for instance setting India and the East as the "other"

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see Pearson 1960: 226–227. Note Pliny's claim (*HN* 3.57) that Cleitarchus described Romans as reaching Alexander in Asia, a reference that seems far too early for an author of the fourth century – but this could be a later interpolation in his text.

<sup>131</sup> According to Jacoby (1921: 622–624) Deinon was contemporaneous with Alexander, since in his opinion, the *Persica* genre died out after that period. Yet, the argument clearly begs the question.

<sup>132</sup> The earliest known event of Deinon's *Persica* mentions Queen Semiramis (F 7); its latest is Artaxerxes III Ochus' conquest of Egypt in 343/342 BCE (*FGrH* 690 F 21).

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Stevenson 1997: 15, 66–67, 70, 80; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson, 2010: 53–55. Deinon seems to repeat stories found in Herodotus as well (*FGrH* 690 F 11 = Hdt. 3.2.1: Cambyses in Egypt). It is known that the fifth book of the first series mentioned Amytis, Xerxes' sister [presumably an error for Artaxerxes I] (*FGrH* 690 F 21); that would make the second and third series include the period till Artaxerxes III, eighty years in all, unless the reference to Amytis comes in a flashforward (*prolepsis*) which anticipates future events.

<sup>134</sup> *Contra* Drews 1973: 117 ("Dion corrected Ctesias just as often as Ctesias corrected Herodotus, but since Ctesias' subject matter was inconsequential, Dinon's 'corrections' seem less grotesque"). The version brought in Chapter 10 of the *Artaxerxes* concerning Cyrus' the Younger's death does not come from Deinon in its entirety, but is actually a combination of two sources (Deinon and Ctesias) by Plutarch, *contra* Jacoby (*FGrH* 690 F 17). Also, the second version in Chapter 21 of the biography does not derive from Deinon (*contra* Dorati 1995: 45; Stevenson 1997: 25, 118). See Almagor, forthcoming (b).

<sup>135</sup> In Ctesias' account, the one who administered the poison was called Belitaras; Deinon names him Melantas (19.2) and has him cutting the bird with the poisoned knife (19.6). Ctesias claims that Parysatis is the one who sliced the bird. Ctesias seems to implicate the queen mother in the murder, while Deinon appears to exonerate her from the charges. See Stevenson 1997: 71–72.

<sup>136</sup> Fabrication and adaptation: Drews 1973: 117–118; Stevenson 1987: 29; 1997: 42–43, 49, 63–67, 80 (alongside an appreciation of Deinon as a serious historian), 94–100. Cf. Schottin 1865: 6–7. Official version: Kaemmel 1875: 681; Stevenson 1997: 29; Bassett 1999: 475.

<sup>137</sup> Even Nepos explicitly praises his trustworthiness (*Con.* 5.4). Increasingly popular in late republican and early imperial Rome, Deinon was used by Cicero (*De div.* 1.46) and probably by Nepos in *Datames* and *De regibus*, by Pompeius Trogus (cf. *Prol.* 10; Justin, 10.1–2) and by Diodorus in books 15–16. Plutarch draws on him extensively in the *Artaxerxes* and also mentions him in *Themistocles* (27.1) and *Alexander* (36.4).

country to balance Hecataeus' and Herodotus' Egypt (Hdt. 2 & 2.143) or transposing images from the African to the Indian edge of the world (the *Cynocephaloi*). While Ctesias engages in telling stories from the Persian side, this is not entirely a "Persian Version" of the events, for instance of the Greco-Persian Wars.<sup>138</sup> One theme that Ctesias was able to develop, by means of focalization on the Persian monarchy, was that of imperial fortunes, which was a predominant concern of Greek authors from Herodotus onwards, all throughout the fourth century. Ctesias developed the idea of a series of world empires (which would later assume the form of *translatio imperii*).<sup>139</sup> It was already seen in Herodotus (1.95; 1.130), but Ctesias developed it as a model with three items (Assyria-Media-Persia),<sup>140</sup> while inventing an extended and significant Median Empire.<sup>141</sup> Ctesias' concern, as made clear by the structure of the work, tightly linking all episodes of the *Persica* together, together with the closure between Semiramis and Parysatis mentioned above, is the theme of the rise of empires and the lapse into decadence and demise (cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8). The notion of transition of imperial power was not restricted to struggles between East and West, but also to conflicts within the Greek world. While the work of Herodotus was composed before the Athenian empire crumbled and Persian involvement in the Greek world prevailed, Ctesias' *Persica* was already written after Sparta lost its naval supremacy, Athens was on the rise again and the Persian presence as a major player in the Hellenic sphere was a basic fact of Greek politics. The question which the *Persica* presumably posed to its readers was whether this situation might change yet again.

## Appendix: Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Ctesias' *Persica*

Xenophon's version of the events surrounding the clash of Cyrus the Younger and Artaxerxes II was written perhaps in the late 380s or early 370s BC;<sup>142</sup> there are some who would push the date even further in time, to the 360s.<sup>143</sup> Since the *Anabasis* was composed subsequent to the publication of other reports,<sup>144</sup> it has been suggested that one of these earlier descriptions of the war of Cyrus and Artaxerxes was that of Sophanetus of Stymphalus, a commander of one thousand of Cyrus' mercenaries (*Anab.* 1.1.11, 1.2.3), and the eldest chief officer of the Greeks on their retreat from Persia (cf. *Anab.* 5.3.1;

<sup>138</sup> Pace Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010: 30, 33, 52, 57–58, 81.

<sup>139</sup> See Le Goff 1964, Ch. VI.

<sup>140</sup> A scheme of four empires appears in the OT book of Daniel (2: 1–40; cf. 7: 2–3), variously interpreted, and one of five successive kingdoms is found in authors from the Roman period. See Mendels 1981, Wiesehöfer 2003, and Almagor 2011: 3 n. 9 with references.

<sup>141</sup> See Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988).

<sup>142</sup> MacLaren 1934: 244–247; Delebecque 1957: 199–206; Breitenbach 1967: 1641–1642; Perlman 1976/1977: 245 n. 10; Wylie 1992: 131; Stevenson 1997: 8 n. 11.

<sup>143</sup> See Körte 1922: 16; Dillery 1995: 59, 94; Cawkwell 1972: 16; 2004: 48. Cf. Stylianou 2004: 72 n. 13. But see Rood 2004: 307.

<sup>144</sup> Very much like Xenophon's *Apology*, which was admittedly written after accounts of the trial of Socrates had already been circulating (*Apol.*, 1: γεγραφασι μὲν οὖν περὶ τούτου καὶ ἄλλοι καὶ πάντες ἔτυχον τῆς μεγαληγορίας αὐτοῦ) which may be seen as a possible allusion to Plato's *Apology*. On the relation of Xenophon to the latter see Mitscherling 1982; Vander Waerdt 1993, especially p. 14–15; Waterfield 2004: 93.

6.5.12). Sophacetus is thought to have written about the march, the battle and the return of the soldiers, as well as to have influenced the account of Diodorus (Ephorus), who mentions the elder general (14.19, 14.27–29, 14.31), but barely refers to Xenophon (not until 14.37.1).<sup>145</sup> Yet the evidence for the existence of an *Anabasis* by Sophacetus is scanty. The only mention of a work called Κύρου Ἀναβάσις by Sophacetus is in an abridged version of Stephanus Byzantinus' *Ethnica* from the sixth century CE (the fragments are gathered under *FGrH* 109). The four references to this work cite names of places and nations in Asia, all on the route of the Ten Thousand. It is hardly probable that this work was forgotten, and only surfaced hundreds of years later.<sup>146</sup> One may even question whether such a work existed at all, as the four references could easily derive from Xenophon's account.<sup>147</sup>

It is much more probable that Ctesias' *Persica* was the earlier report which Xenophon knew. It is not that the latter wrote in response to Ctesias or that the reason for composing the *Anabasis* was to correct his predecessor's account, but Xenophon's report is linked in a special way to the *Persica*. Xenophon had to take into consideration the stories he found there.<sup>148</sup> Xenophon's stance towards his forerunner appears to blend attitudes of appreciation and disapproval. On the one hand, he does not seem to value the physician's work or judgments very highly, yet on the other hand he is influenced by Ctesias and relies on his reports.

Although he was present at the combat zone (*Anab.* 1.8.15ff.), in Proxenus' battalion<sup>149</sup> and was an eye-witness for some of the occurrences, there are many details that Xenophon simply did not know, and whose absence is conspicuous in the *Anabasis*.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>145</sup> See Tarn 1927: 8 n. 2; Barber 1935: 126–127; Manfredi 1978: 63; 2004: 322; Dillery 1995: 59. Cawkwell (1972: 17–21; 2004: 50, 60–62) even believes that Xenophon wrote his *Anabasis* in response to the report of Sophacetus, which provoked him to set down his own account.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Anderson 1974: 81–82; Stylianos 2004: 70; *contra* Cawkwell 2004: 61.

<sup>147</sup> Χαρμάνδη is in *Anab.* 1.5.10, the Φύσκος river is in *Anab.* 2.4.25, the Καρδοῦχοι are in *Anab.* 3.5.15–17, 4.1.4, 4.1.8–11, 5.5.17, 7.8.25. While the Τάοι appear in *Anab.* 4.4.18, 4.6.5, 4.7.1, 5.5.17 but as Τάοζοι. Bux 1927: 1012–1013, probably builds too much on the latter variation. The difference may stem from a copier's mistake. Cf. von Mess 1906: 362, 372 and n. 3. Indeed, rather than assume that oral narratives gave rise to a mistaken belief that there was an actual account by Sophacetus (Stylianos 2004: 74) or that the work was a late forgery (Jacoby 1930: 349; Westlake 1987: 269), it may be suggested that the very name Sophacetus as the author of a work called Κύρου Ἀναβάσις is the result of some later corruption and a hyper-correction of "Xenophon". It is quite possible that the name of the Athenian historian was somehow miswritten in an epitome of his work, and there are several known mistaken versions of his name in late antiquity. Compare the attribution of the mention of Aspasia (cf. *Anab.* 1.10.2) to one "Zenophanes" (Ζηνοφάνης) in what appears to be a Byzantine interpolation into Athenaeus' text (13.576d). Cf. also Ath. 10.424c. The suggestion is that there were several corrupt varieties of the name Xenophon, and that one was eventually hyper-corrected into the intelligible form Σοφάνετος (perhaps via Ζοφάνης/Σοφάνης, a shorter form of Ζηνοφάνης). In addition, Diodorus' (or Ephorus') version may be the outcome of a conscious downplaying of Xenophon's role and need not come from another source (see Stylianos 2004 for the reliance of Diodorus/Ephorus on Xenophon in this narrative). See Bigwood (1983: 343 n. 14), on the possibility that these authors adapted their sources.

<sup>148</sup> Nothing precluded Xenophon from being acquainted with the text of Ctesias, composed approximately two decades previously. The historian himself testifies to the circulation of book rolls in the Greek world, and their transportation across the sea in cargos of ships (*Anab.* 7.5.14). Cf. Turner 1952: 19–21.

<sup>149</sup> See Lendle 1986: 435.

<sup>150</sup> Such as the role of the non-Greek force in Cyrus' army, especially in its left wing, and the composition of the king's army. Xenophon mistakes Tissaphernes' position and function, as well as the length of the

All things considered, the battle picture in his work gives the impression of a reconstruction done years after the event, comprising memories of a youthful mercenary and information he acquired later,<sup>151</sup> presumably from Ctesias. An instance of a detail that Xenophon may have found in the *Persica* and could not possibly have remembered is the impressive scene in which the head of the king's advance guard, Artagerses, clashed with Cyrus and was slain by him. This episode is elaborately related in the biography of Plutarch (*Art.* 9), who also indicates that the scene was described by almost every author writing on Cunaxa (9.4), that is from Ctesias onwards. Xenophon mentions the end of Artagerses – presumably because it highlights the fighting qualities of Cyrus – in a brief but heroic passage (*Anab.* 1.8.24): καὶ ἐμβαλὼν σὺν τοῖς ἑξακοσίοις νικᾷ τοὺς πρὸ βασιλέως τεταγμένους καὶ εἰς φυγὴν ἔτρεψε τοὺς ἑξακισχιλίους, καὶ ἀποκτεῖναι λέγεται αὐτὸς τῆ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ Ἀρταγέρσην τὸν ἄρχοντα αὐτῶν. (and, attacking with his six hundred, he was victorious over the forces stationed in front of the king and put to flight the six thousand, slaying with his own hand, it is said, their commander Artagerses). One should note the λέγεται (“it is said” here, which may reasonably refer to Ctesias’ account).<sup>152</sup>

Tissaphernes’ slanderous accusation against Cyrus, which was brought before the king and almost precipitated the prince’s execution, may be another case in point. Both Xenophon (*Anab.* 1.1.3) and Photius (F 16.59) mention this episode, but it is elaborated in our extant texts only in Plutarch’s biography (*Art.* 3.2–4). According to this tale, Cyrus was allegedly plotting against his brother in a temple, where he was supposed to lie in wait during the investiture ceremony of the new monarch. It was a priest and former teacher of Cyrus in the wisdom of the Magi, allegedly privy to the scheme, who reported it and was instrumental in convincing Artaxerxes. Xenophon’s report seems secondary and derivative, as it merely mentions an accusation, but does not provide its substance. It is much more feasible to assume that Xenophon willfully omitted a number of elements than speculate that these items were only later added to the story in the *Anabasis* and were not known to him. As Photius informs us that the story already appeared in Ctesias’ *Persica*, it is hard to imagine, given the physician’s predilection for tall tales and lengthy accounts (T 8, T 14a), that he would not have elaborated on the details of the accusation of conspiracy and on Cyrus’ arrest, but would have settled for a short version instead. Ctesias’ stories abound in false allegations<sup>153</sup> and the involvement of priests in conspiracies and plots<sup>154</sup> of exactly the sort that we find in Tissaphernes’ case, and these details may be considered some of the typical characteristics of his court stories.

Moreover, the consequences of this affair in the accounts of Xenophon and Ctesias are amazingly similar. What is striking when comparing the two reports is the crucial part assigned to Parysatis by the two authors in saving her son from the death sentence

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enemy’s front line. See Tarn 1927: 8; Bigwood 1983: 341–343; Wylie 1992: 126–127, 129, 132. He does not even give the name of the battle site (Plut. *Art.* 8.2).

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Wylie 1992: 132. This conclusion is made without entering the question of whether Xenophon the soldier kept a diary or not. See Cawkwell 2004: 54–59 and Stylianou 2004: 75–77.

<sup>152</sup> See Lenfant 2004: 147 n. 680. Notwithstanding the fact, rightly pointed out by Jacoby (1922: 2067), that not every λέγεται in Xenophon’s account necessarily refers to Ctesias.

<sup>153</sup> E.g. F 13.11–12, 14.32–33, 16.60.

<sup>154</sup> E.g. F 13.11, 19.

and in installing him back in his province. While Xenophon claims that the queen mother pleaded for him, and had him sent back to his region (1.1.3: ἡ δὲ μήτηρ ἐξαιτησαμένη αὐτὸν ἀποπέμπει πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχήν), Photius has Cyrus running to Parysatis, by whose intervention he was cleared of the charge and returned to his satrapy (F 16.59: καταφεύγει Παρυσάτιδι τῇ μητρὶ, καὶ ἀπολύεται τῆς διαβολῆς. ἀπελαύνει Κῦρος ἡτιμωμένος παρὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ πρὸς τὴν οἰκειαν σατραπείαν, καὶ μελετᾷ ἐπανάστασιν). In both reports, Cyrus appears as a prince whose royal ambition is fuelled by his mother's aspirations.<sup>155</sup> The humiliation and disgrace inflicted upon Cyrus are considered by both Ctesias and Xenophon the key factors in his decision to begin preparations for a revolt.<sup>156</sup> The similarities in the storylines of Ctesias and Xenophon are so astonishing that they seem to betray the dependence of Xenophon on his predecessor's account.

Xenophon thus appears to be particularly dependent on Ctesias in making use of those portions of the *Persica*'s narrative that offer the background to Cyrus' revolt.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, Xenophon apparently could not have witnessed Cyrus' manner of death and discovered it only later. There is a high degree of probability that he learned the specific details from Ctesias' *Persica*. According to the physician's narrative, the prince was first hit by a spear near the eye, by a young Persian named Mithridates, who did this unconscious of his victim's identity (Plut. *Art.* 11.5). After Cyrus fell to the ground and was slowly recovering from the blow, another person – a Carian slave – stabbed him from behind, in the back of the leg, again ignorant of the identity of his prey. This last injury caused Cyrus' death by making him strike his temple against a stone (Plut. *Art.* 11.9–10) in the very same place he had already been wounded. Accidents and coincidences feature strongly in this incredible tale. Mithridates and the Carian would prove significant to the rest of Ctesias' story. As they would later contradict the official royal version, which had Artaxerxes as the sole killer of Cyrus, they would be put to death (Plut. *Art.* 14.8–10, 16.1–7; F 16.67). Xenophon's narrative looks like a concise summary of this story, since it lacks many elements. The Athenian historian accepts that Cyrus was injured near or below the eye<sup>158</sup> and merely mentions that "someone" threw his lance at Cyrus (ἀκοντίζει τις παλτῶ: *Anab.* 1.8.27), thereby demeaning the thrower and his act. The prince is even made to look more heroic by the portrayal of his injury as occurring at the precise moment that he strikes the king. Cyrus dies instantaneously, and not, as in Ctesias' account, only after a while. The brief version of the *Anabasis* may be construed

<sup>155</sup> Cf. *Anab.* 1.1.4: Παρύσατις μὲν δὴ ἡ μήτηρ ὑπῆρχε τῷ Κύρῳ, φιλοῦσα αὐτὸν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν βασιλεύοντα Ἀρταξέρξη. But cf. Manfredini/Orsi/Antelami 1987/1996<sup>2</sup>: 270.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. F 16.59 and *Anab.* 1.1.4. Here, Plutarch's similar assertion (*Art.* 3.6) may be taken from Ctesias as much as it can be an adaptation of Xenophon. Hence, it cannot be considered conclusive evidence.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Stronk 2007: 26.

<sup>158</sup> I would not ascribe a great deal of importance to the different prepositions used in Xenophon's version (*Anab.* 1.8.27: ὑπὸ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν) or in that of Plutarch (*παρὰ* τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν: *Art.* 11.5), although Bassett (1999) does. After all, we do not have Ctesias' report and must allow the possibility that either Xenophon or Plutarch amended the original expression to suit their needs. The fact that Cyrus' eye is mentioned in both cases makes the accounts very similar indeed. I would also not go along with supposing that the difference is significant in expressing Xenophon's belief that Cyrus wore a helmet when he was struck (Bassett 1999: 476–477). Had the historian wished to convey this opinion, I believe he would have stated it clearly, and not leave his readers guessing as to his intent. The impression one derives from the *Anabasis* passage is that Cyrus was without headgear.

as one that follows the story of Ctesias, but not slavishly, and is pointedly opposed to the unbelievable elements in it, such as the coincidences of Cyrus' injuries and the figure of a Carian stabbing the prince.

Admittedly, one could say that Xenophon got this specific detail elsewhere. As a puzzled young soldier, he was surely curious to know how his leader had died and sought information without delay. Some rumors circulating in the field undoubtedly filled that void.<sup>159</sup> Yet it may be entirely plausible that Xenophon was not aware of the exact manner of Cyrus' death until Ctesias published his version. It is hard to imagine that any of Xenophon's colleagues could have had any knowledge of so precise a detail as a wound near Cyrus' eye. The Greeks were not close by (*Anab.* 1.8.19–20, 1.10.4), and there was no one to inform them. It is also not probable that this detail was to be found in some written account of the event other than the *Persica*, if such existed at all prior to the *Anabasis*. The exact location of Cyrus' wound would be very appropriate in the text of a physician, and indeed this accurate physical description may be thought of as one of the characteristic features of Ctesias' writing.<sup>160</sup>

It would also seem that Ctesias' presence as a historical figure was removed by Xenophon. As mentioned above, we can gather that Ctesias apparently presented himself in his work as an important agent in three decisive events during the battle and immediately afterwards – that is, in the medical treatment of the Great King, in a delegation headed by Phalinus that was dispatched to negotiate with the Greek mercenaries, and in the care given to the imprisoned Clearchus after he was taken captive to Babylon. Xenophon says nothing about Ctesias being involved in any of these activities. And yet he acknowledges that Cyrus did injure his brother, that Clearchus was indeed imprisoned and that there was a delegation to the Greeks. Of these three events, Xenophon could have witnessed only one, the diplomatic mission to the Greek generals. Here he merely states (*Anab.* 2.1.7–23) that on the morning following the battle heralds from the king and Tis-saphernes arrived, and that these were barbarians, with the exception of Phalinus. The latter is presented as the one who in fact demanded that the mercenaries surrender their arms. Xenophon's insistence that there was only a single Greek delegate (*Anab.* 2.1.7: οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι βάρβαροι, ἦν δ' αὐτῶν Φαλῖνος εἰς Ἑλλην) looks like an oblique polemic directed against Ctesias' contention that he was a member of this group.<sup>161</sup> In the *Life of Artaxerxes*, Plutarch concludes from Xenophon's ignorance of the presence of Ctesias that the physician is lying (13.6). This inference, however, is unnecessary. Xenophon may have chosen to remove Ctesias from his depiction of the embassy for his own reasons or for the sake of literary arrangement.

So far we have seen the manner in which Xenophon both borrows details from Ctesias and implicitly argues against the account of the *Persica*, while being cautious not to

<sup>159</sup> The possibility of eyewitnesses' accounts of Persian soldiers or oral tales heard after the battle is certainly to be taken into consideration (cf. Cawkwell 2004: 51), yet one should remember the communication problems, noted by Wylie 1992: 132. None of the Greeks spoke Persian (except some of the generals, perhaps). Very few Persians spoke Greek.

<sup>160</sup> See Stevenson 1997: 29; Bassett 1999: 476 n. 10. Cf. Bigwood 1983: 348; Tuplin 2004a: 336.

<sup>161</sup> See Lendle 1995: 92–93; Dorati 1995: 39–40; Cawkwell 2004: 50 n. 7.



mention his precursor. Such conduct is also typical of Xenophon with relation to Plato.<sup>162</sup> As must be admitted, there are two utterances in the *Anabasis* which specifically refer to Ctesias as a source and seem to present him as citing Ctesias, therefore apparently contradicting this picture. However, they may not be authentic. The first (*Anab.* 1.8.26) addresses the injury inflicted by Cyrus on Artaxerxes and the healing of it by the physician. It comes immediately after the description of Cyrus' headlong rush against his brother and the blow he delivers to the king. Disrupting the dramatic scene almost like an intermission, the following note appears: καὶ τιτρώσκει διὰ τοῦ θώρακος, ὃς φησι Κτησίας ὁ ἰατρός, καὶ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτὸς τὸ τραῦμά φησι (...and he wounded him through the corselet, according to the statement of Ctesias, and he states that he himself healed the wound). The narrator then returns to Cyrus, who is dramatically depicted as being struck at the very moment he is delivering the blow (παίοντα δ' αὐτὸν...). The second mention of Ctesias appears almost instantly, following the report on the ensuing struggle between the entourages of Cyrus and Artaxerxes.<sup>163</sup> It states that Ctesias provided the number of slain on the king's side (*Anab.* 1.8.27) – but oddly enough, no figure is specified: ὅποσοι μὲν τῶν ἀμφὶ βασιλέα ἀπέθνησκον Κτησίας λέγει: παρ' ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἦν (how many of the king's side died is stated by Ctesias, for he was with him). Following this note is a portrayal of Cyrus' fall together with eight of his bravest companions.

More than a hundred years ago, a proposition was put forward by the scholar Dürrbach (1893: 363 n. 1). His proposal was that these two references to Ctesias are in fact the result of a later intervention in the text of the *Anabasis* and are not Xenophon's own comments. Dürrbach's arguments are three and, slightly modified, they are as follows: (1) The allusions are very awkwardly inserted in the story and seem alien to it; (2) As a rule Xenophon never refers to his sources,<sup>164</sup> and there is no apparent reason why he should do so – twice – in this particular place; (3) The reference pertaining to the Great King's wound contradicts the ensuing description in Xenophon's account, according to which Artaxerxes is very active in the subsequent encounter: at the head of his men, he pursues and falls upon Cyrus' camp, plunders it (*Anab.* 1.10.1, 2, 4), masses his troops and lines up against the Greeks (*Anab.* 1.10.5); he then advances to their rear (*Anab.* 1.10.6) and joins forces with Tissaphernes and his division (*Anab.* 1.10.6, 8).

<sup>162</sup> As elaborately shown by the late Prof. Michael Stokes in his paper at the Xenophon conference in Liverpool (2009): "Xenophon's *Apology*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Apology*: some Comparisons."

<sup>163</sup> This report is also suspect of being not authentic, given its grammatically incoherent structure: καὶ ἐνταῦθα μαχόμενοι καὶ βασιλεὺς καὶ Κῦρος καὶ οἱ ἀμφ' αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ ἑκατέρου. The description is certainly understandable without these thirteen words. Moreover, this report appears as an unclear retrospective synopsis of the battle scene. This sentence, like the second reference to Ctesias, may have been a marginal gloss, influenced by Ctesias' account of the clash of the supporters of the two brothers, but inserted in the wrong place within the text of the *Anabasis*, since that fight preceded Cyrus' wound, and did not follow it. Finally, by excising this item, Xenophon's account would be more coherent, in that Cyrus' injury would debilitate him and cause his immediate death. The removal of this sentence would also make the picture more dramatic, in that the prince's moment of death would be clearer.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Marincola 1997: 227.

Dürnbach's suggestion has not been widely accepted by the scholarly community, and the two references are still considered by many a scholar as genuine.<sup>165</sup> Yet it seems there has been no real attempt to consider Dürnbach's arguments directly or in detail.<sup>166</sup> The main contention that could be brought against his case is Plutarch's claim in the *Life* of Artaxerxes (13.6), that Xenophon is quoting from Ctesias' work.<sup>167</sup> Anticipating this line of reasoning, Dürnbach argues that Xenophon's MSS had already incurred an interpolation at some stage before Plutarch read the work for his biography, that is, sometime between the end of the fourth century BC and the first century AD. In disagreement with Dürnbach, the curious references to Ctesias in the *Anabasis* have been variously defended by scholars as authentic, once with the argument that Xenophon is indeed quoting his predecessor only to express doubt concerning the physician's descriptions,<sup>168</sup> and once with the contention that Xenophon referred to Ctesias in order to support his own depiction.<sup>169</sup> But one has to seriously question both lines of argument. The case for the demonstration of Xenophon's disbelief is not convincing. Each of the two references to Ctesias comprises two claims, with the second one serving to support the first and lend it credibility. In the first reference we have the fact of healing performed by the physician as an occurrence which guarantees the reality of the wound; in the second, the claim "for he was at his side" is meant to back up the assertion regarding the casualties of the Great King's army. It is utterly unclear why Xenophon would put much effort in establishing claims which he himself regards as dubious.

The other argument, to the effect that the references to Ctesias are there because Xenophon needed them to vouch for his portrayal of the scene, fares none the better. In the second case, that is, the mention of Ctesias on the number of fallen soldiers, it is absolutely perplexing why the physician's report should be alluded to if the actual figures are not given. Even the rhetorical purpose of this allusion is not clear bearing in mind the absence of any number, and compared with the definite figure of eight followers dying on the corpse of Cyrus, which immediately ensues.<sup>170</sup> In the first reference to Ctesias, it is not at all clear what mention should be made of his account if it is so out of harmony with the rest of the narrative of the *Anabasis*. Some would say, perhaps, that the mention of the physician healing the king would explain Artaxerxes' activity later on.<sup>171</sup> But this rationalization does not really account for the indication of the wound: why mention a minor flesh wound (judging by the monarch's rapid recovery) in the first place if it is to be disregarded as quickly as it is brought in? Xenophon's report is perfectly consistent without it. His whole point is that Cyrus was hit while throwing his spear. Why should he obscure this detail with a vanishing wound?

<sup>165</sup> See Jacoby 1922: 2067 ("natürlich sind das keine Interpolationen"). Cf. Cawkwell 1972: 17; Bigwood 1983: 347; Wylie 1992: 132; Stronk 2010: 185, 368–369.

<sup>166</sup> See Bassett 1999: 475 n. 6; Lenfant 2004: 226 n. 12.

<sup>167</sup> μέμνηται γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς βιβλίοις τούτοις ἐντετυχηκῶς δῆλός ἐστιν (He [Xenophon] makes mention of him and had evidently read his works).

<sup>168</sup> See Bigwood 1983: 348 and n. 39. Cf. Dorati 1995: 38.

<sup>169</sup> See Gray 2003: 119 (= 2010: 565). Cf. Tuplin 2004b: 155.

<sup>170</sup> This vague statement on the fallen royal soldiers also blurs the impact of the description of Cyrus' death.

<sup>171</sup> Xenophon's insistence on the activity of the king may go back to his recollection of Tissaphernes' words (*Anab.* 2.3.19), which probably influenced him. I owe this observation to C. Tuplin.

It is unacceptable that these citations of Ctesias should be considered authentic. Firstly, this assumption contradicts Xenophon's reluctance to mention his forerunner, even in a situation where he has to address him. Secondly, the mention of Ctesias as a reliable witness for the king's wound and for the fact that there were casualties in the royal army necessitates an acceptance of many other items related to the physician and cannot possibly end in adopting these elements only. It would necessitate as true that Ctesias was in the king's service and did heal the monarch, that Artaxerxes was incapacitated and could not continue to participate in the battle and that there is a grain of truth for the physician's other figures. Ultimately, given Xenophon's general skepticism regarding Ctesias, it might cast doubt upon his own account. Hence, it is hardly believable that Xenophon would have endangered his reliability in this manner. Thirdly, there is scarcely any ancient author who treated Ctesias as a historical agent without reservations. Why would Xenophon do it, twice, within a space of a few lines? Fourthly, the assumption that the references are genuine (especially the second) would entail that Xenophon relied on his readers' acquaintance with Ctesias' *Persica* in order to understand the allusion, yet this is entirely at variance with his practice not to mention other written works (notable in the case of Plato).<sup>172</sup> A reference of the sort that compels the reader to look for the exact number of casualties according to Ctesias in another work would suit a note made by a later librarian, not by the author Xenophon.

Dürnbach's hypothesis, against which there is no strong argument, should be endorsed.<sup>173</sup> It may even be elaborated by suggesting that the text of the *Anabasis* has undergone several interpolations at different stages. Given the uncomfortable grammatical structure and stylistic peculiarity of the first reference to Ctesias, it would seem that the initial intervention noted the wounding of the king through his armour. The following one presumably referred to the healing by Ctesias, added as a gloss to the previous annotation. And the third was presumably influenced by the previous mention of Ctesias. It also includes the superfluous *παρ' ἐκεῖνω γὰρ ἦν*, perhaps indicating another hand. At some point, these notes probably drifted from the margins of the text to its main body. After this stage the particle *μὲν* was added in order to make the second reference cohere with the rest of the sentence. If this interpretation is correct, these glosses were made during the four hundred years that separate the writing of the *Anabasis* from Plutarch's time, when definite evidence for interpolation emerges.<sup>174</sup> The position presented here, to the effect that Xenophon borrowed some elements from Ctesias' story but did not mention him at all, is consistent, coherent and typical of his writing. The other view, which regards the references to Ctesias as authentic yet denies that Xenophon used any other item from the *Persica*, is incomprehensible, self-contradictory and goes beyond what is known of Xenophon's practices.

Of the two authors' works, it was the fate of Xenophon's to survive. Conceivably, this was not by chance, for besides the merits of his storytelling ability and the superiority

<sup>172</sup> He does not even mention himself as an author when treating his own *Anabasis*. Cf. *Hell.* 3.1.2.

<sup>173</sup> This approach has no bearing on Dürnbach's other suggestion that the *Anabasis* was written as an *apologia* or defense of Xenophon's conduct.

<sup>174</sup> An undeniable fact is that the text of the *Anabasis* suffers from multiple interpolations and external interventions and this case is no exception. The notable ones are at 1.8.6; 2.2.6, as well as the passages at the beginning of books 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 and at 6.2.1.

of his account compared with some of the questionable pictures found in the *Persica*, Xenophon did borrow parts of his predecessor's composition, in the process making Ctesias' account of Cunaxa seem redundant,<sup>175</sup> on top of being fanciful. Today, students and scholars read the *Anabasis* first, before they ever get to see the fragments of the *Persica*; but we must not forget that the real relationship between the two works was the reverse, and this fact should guide our reading of Xenophon's depiction of those historical events.

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<sup>175</sup> Even Plutarch has to apologize for relying on Ctesias for the account of the battle and not on Xenophon (*Art.* 9.4).

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