

## Photius on Ctesias

Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 72, p. 45a 10–15 Bekker = I, p. 133 Henry reads: *Τῶν μέντοι γε μύθων ... οὐδ' οὗτος (Ctesias) ἀρίσταται ... Ἡ δὲ ἡδονὴ τῆς ἱστορίας αὐτοῦ τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν τῇ τῶν διηγημάτων αὐτοῦ γίνεται διασκευῆ, τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ ἀπροσδόκητον ἐχούσῃ πολὺ, καὶ τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μυθώδους αὐτὴν διαποικίλλειν.*

(1) The scholars take the clause *τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μυθώδους αὐτὴν διαποικίλλειν* as the object of *ἐχούσῃ*. So does René Henry (Budé, 1959), while translating: “L’agrément de son récit provient surtout de sa façon de construire les narrations: elles suscitent de l’émotion, offrent beaucoup d’inattendu et des embellissements variés qui les portent aux confins du récit légendaire.” But this is not at all likely, for then the words *αὐτὴν διαποικίλλειν* look superfluous.

(2) That is why Robert Renehan, in *A.J.P.*, LXXXIV (1963), p. 71, had conjectured *τῷ ἐγγὺς* for the transmitted *τὸ ἐγγὺς*, while governing the phrase by the *ἐν*. According to Renehan, “the pleasure we derive from reading Ctesias’ history is to be found in two causes:” (a) *ἐν τῇ ... διασκευῆ*, and (b) *ἐν τῷ ... διαποικίλλειν*.

I don’t think Renehan’s solution is likely. First, *τῷ* can hardly imply *ἐν τῷ*, since the *ἐν* is too far from it. Second, the most natural way is to take *τὸ* as the article to the immediately following *ἐγγὺς*.

(3) Consequently, I would suggest the following reading and interpretation: *καὶ ἀπροσδόκητον ἐχούσῃ πολὺ, (ὡς) καὶ τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μυθώδους αὐτὴν διαποικίλλειν*, “... with the result that his narrative is adorned (or embellished) even by the elements which touch the realm of fable.” This reading can be supported by the following points.

(a) As is known, the abbreviations for *ὡς* and *καὶ* are very similar, almost identical: S. I think some scribe had dropped *ὡς* before *καὶ*.

(b) Photius uses *ὡς καὶ* in the same meaning (standing for *ὥστε καὶ*) in the immediately following lines (15–17): *Καὶ διαλελυμένος δὲ ἐστι πλέον τι τοῦ δέοντος αὐτῷ (Ctesias) ὁ λόγος, ὡς καὶ εἰς ἰδιωτισμὸν ἐκπίπτειν.*

(c) *αὐτὴν* refers to *ἱστορία* and is the object to *διαποικίλλειν*, the subject of the clause being *τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μυθώδους*. For the construction and the idea: *καὶ τὸ μυθώδες τὴν ἱστορίαν αὐτοῦ διαποικίλλει* cf. Plutarch, *De genio Socratis* 596 D ... *καὶ καθάπερ δρᾶμα τὴν πράξιν ἡμῶν ἀτ’ ἀρχῆς διαποικίλλουσα (sc. ἡ τύχη) κινδυνώδεσιν ἐπεισοδίοις*. Isocrates, *Evagoras* 9. 9 *Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ποιηταῖς πολλοὶ δέδονται κόσμοι ... πᾶσιν τοῖς εἶδεσιν διαποικίλει τὴν ποιήσων.*