THE STUDY OF INTERMEDIATE AUTHORS AND ITS ROLE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS*

Abstract: This paper aims to address some of the questions raised by the study of fragmentary prose writers from a methodological point of view. It especially concerns the study of intermediate authors, that is: the authors who (seem to) bear witness to lost writings within their own works. Whereas scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries were first of all concerned with gathering so-called fragments, a more critical view developed in the last decades of the 20th century. Some scholars pointed out that fragments were the result of a selection and adaptation made by an intermediate author, and they consequently tried to take this into account in the process of interpretation. Now, this requires complex analysis. This paper argues, first, that general studies on the methods and aims of a specific intermediate author can and should help in this process, second, that considering the intermediate authors can and should play a role at many levels of interpretation. Such needs are exemplified with concrete examples. It is, first, shown how the general study of Athenaeus' methods and aims has recently influenced the edition and interpretation of historical fragments found in his work, so that it could play an essential role in determining such important features as the chronology of the quoted historian or the paternity of value judgements. Then, it is argued that the study of intermediate authors may help assessing whether a fragment may be considered a witness to the original text's vocabulary, as well as determining whether an explanation is due to the original or to the intermediate author. The study of intermediate authors consequently appears to be integral to any solid interpretation of fragments.

The word 'fragment' is clearly a hangover from a time when scholars felt they were rediscovering within extant works texts which, until then, had been considered lost. Its use suggests an analogy with material papyrus fragments, and it erases the difference between direct and indirect tradition. It cannot be stated often enough how inadequate the word

'fragment' is and how misleading with regard to the nature of the texts in question.[1] A philologist is not an archaeologist. An expression like 'intermediate author' at least has the advantage of showing the difference between a 'fragment' stemming from *Quellenforschung* and a 'fragment' stemming from *Papyrusforschung*. It conveys the existence of an additional stage in the process of transmission, even if it provides only a too vague or even distorted picture of this process.

Scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries invested much energy in the extraction from extant literature and the gathering together of textual traces which were thought to bear witness to lost historical writings and which could be traced back to a named author. Their main concern was to delimit and collect as completely as possible the pieces of text that could stem from an original lost work. Their extensive efforts gave rise to important and fundamental collections of fragments. However, their interest in intermediate authors was first and foremost an interest in treasure-troves of fragments.

It was only in the last decades of the 20th century that the notion of the fragment came under question, or at least the naive understanding of it as being simply a piece of a lost work. After the pioneering paper of Peter Brunt, published in 1980,[2] the critical trend fully developed more than a decade later, especially among scholars responsible for editing and commenting fragments of historians.[3] These scholars pointed out that, far from being just pieces extracted from an original work, fragments were the result of a selection and adaptation made by the intermediate author.

Of course, this observation was not entirely new, and we would not be doing justice, for example, to Jacoby if we claimed that he was not aware of it. Indeed, in some cases it suffices to compare two parallel fragments to realise that one of them, or even both, have deviated from the original text. But Jacoby, who had so much to do with the gathering

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[1] As Stefan Schorn has suggested to me, it seems that we have yet to find a better word. Brunt's *reliquiae* (see Brunt (1980)) has the same shortcomings as 'fragment', while *testimonium* (see Döring (1972): *Testimonien*, *Zeugnisse*, either on life or on works) can be confusing because modern collections of *historical* fragments conventionally reserve this term for allusions to the lives of authors and to others' explicit judgments on their works — *Testimonia* (T) as distinct from *Fragmenta* (F). The weight of that convention is likely to further impose the use of 'fragment' in the future as well.

[2] Brunt (1980).

[3] See Vattuone (1991) 11-15; Most (1997), esp. Schepens (1997); Lenfant (1999). See also Pelling (2000).

and editing of historical fragments, never theorized on the role played by intermediate authors, nor did he systematically try to confront the issue. New in recent times, on the other hand, is the tendency to exhibit rather than to erase the role played by intermediate authors in the composition of their own texts (from which we extract the fragments) and, consequently, to take this into account in the process of interpretation.

Studying the part played by the intermediate author in fact requires complex analysis, the result of which never merely consists in concluding that a given 'fragment' is faithful to the source text or not. The complex relationship between the 'fragment' and the lost original text has been best theorized by Guido Schepens, who developed the idea of a 'cover-text' to designate the works in which 'fragments' are found. According to him, these works 'cover' a previous text in a threefold manner: first, they preserve it; second, they conceal it (for example, with a different wording); third, they enclose it in a new context which may, in turn, create new meaning.[4] Schepens' term, although it may appear somewhat esoteric, is certainly more eloquent than 'intermediate author (or text)': it emphasizes the active role of the intermediate author, and sounds in itself as a warning.

Such a shift of perspective on 'fragments' was in part linked to the new editions of historical fragments that had recently been undertaken and had given rise to questions of methodology.[5] In fact, at this time, there were important changes in the practices of the editors of fragments, who began to take into account the role played by intermediate authors. This can be seen in several of these editors' introductions and in the detailed commentaries they provide on the fragments.

In this way, certain steps have already been taken and the initiative should now be continued in two directions:

1) It is necessary to study the aims and methods of cover-texts, and many intermediate authors are in need of special consideration in this respect. The symposia held on historical fragments contained in Polybius, Athenaeus and the Suda constitute important first steps.[6] The

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[4] See Schepens (1997) 167 n. 66.

[5] See *e.g.* the continuation of Jacoby (Part IV, under the direction of G. Schepens), the collection *I Frammenti degli storici greci* and the edition of Ctesias' fragments in the *Collection des Universités de France* (a revised and abridged version of my doctoral thesis of 1994). Awareness of the issue does, however, predate these works (see Vattuone (1991)).

[6] Schepens & Bollansée (2005); Lenfant (2007a); Vanotti (2010).

results of such research should help in assessing the value of the fragments extracted from these and other cover-texts.

2) In interpreting the details of fragments, one must always keep in mind that it is not the 'true' text of the author under consideration. On the other hand, we should try, if possible, to go beyond simply adopting a position of outright scepticism with regard to 'knowing' the fragmentary authors. Taking into account the habits of the intermediate author is often a fruitful means of guiding interpretation.[7]

I would like to show, first, how general studies on the methods and aims of a specific intermediate author can and should aid historical analysis; second, how studying the intermediate authors can and should play a role at many levels of interpretation. I will illustrate this with some examples taken from fragments of *Persica*, which lie within my own field of research.

My first point will summarize how the general study of Athenaeus' methods and aims has influenced my interpretation of some of Dinon's and Heracleides' fragments. My second and third points will concentrate on two fields where it is not usually easy to know whether an item derives from the source or if it has been introduced by the intermediate author, namely vocabulary and explanation. I will conclude with some more general thoughts on the approach we should adopt when dealing with fragmentary historians.

1. THE STUDY OF ATHENAEUS' METHODS AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF FRAGMENTS

The colloquium on "Athenaeus and the fragments of historians" which was held in Strasbourg in 2005 focused on the *Deipnosophists* as a source of information for the works quoted by Athenaeus. It mainly concentrated on historical writings, although it was also thought enlight-

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[7] The importance of considering the context of a reference to an earlier author is arguably self-evident. Vattuone (1991) 11-12, warned his reader that Jacoby's edition of the *Fragmente* could be "il luogo di una pericolosa *illusione"*, that "dei frammenti non ci si può *servire*, considerandoli già pronti, così come sono pubblicati, per i propri scopi" and that fragments "cominciano ad avere un qualche significato all'interno di un commento (…), presuppongono l'opera intera da cui variamente sono stati tratti e tutto l'incommensurabile spazio referenziale della cultura dell'autore nel proprio tempo."

ening to compare fragments from other literary genres (such as medicine, philosophy, or poetry).

Two introductory, general surveys shed light on the discrepancies between Athenaeus' aims and perspectives and those of the historians to whom he abundantly refers. The considerations contained in these surveys need to be kept in mind when analysing fragments found in the *Deipnosophists*. However, the bulk of this collaborative investigation consisted of a series of case-studies concerning three types of objects: quotations of extant historical writings, fragments of lost historians, and fragments from other literary genres. The main goal was to assess the value of the fragments and their proximity to the original text, in short, their capacity to bear witness on the latter. However, as already noted, the aim of these studies was not to present a simple verdict on Athenaeus as a faithful or not faithful reproducer of his source text. Every study tried to assess the nature of the reproduction, its degree of literality, if there was a contamination of several sources, how the quotation was delimited, and what Athenaeus' additions and corrections were. Attention was also paid to the effects of the changing context: did Athenaeus give an idea of the context from which the citation was extracted? Less obvious, but more important: what were the visible effects of the new context in which the quotation was inserted? What sort of material was selected by Athenaeus, and could that selection be representative of the quoted work? Despite valuable previous work, such a study had never been carried out upon this scale; it required internal textual analysis, study of the context, and, above all, comparison with extant writings or parallel fragments.

Within that framework, I myself worked on one of the very few extant historians quoted by Athenaeus, Herodotus.[8] I tried to assess how Athenaeus reproduced or adapted the latter's text, and what impression he gave of the historian's work. The results can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, the selection of 43 Herodotus 'fragments' is not a representative one, and is even, in some respects, misleading. More precisely, Athenaeus chooses passages that allude to meals and drinking, and to descriptions of Barbarian realia, but he does not refer to narrative and political aspects. Many fragments lack any indication of time and space, and when we read about Egypt, we get the impression that Herodotus

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[8] Lenfant (2007b).

depicted this country as being inhabited by drunkards. This all comes as no surprise, in light of Athenaeus' own purpose and his penchant for literary play. However, it needs to be kept in mind when trying to understand authors transmitted via his work.

Secondly, the comparison shows that *verbatim* quotations do exist in Athenaeus, but that paraphrases are more common. I also found (or confirmed)[9] some formal criteria for distinguishing between paraphrase and quotation[10] (a useful distinction for the interpretation of some fragments, as will be seen below). Finally, I observed the frequent kinds of distortion in the paraphrases and how the new context (that of the *Deipnosophists*) could give the quoted text a different meaning (for example, in an illustration of *tryphe*, which in Athenaeus' view was a pejorative notion, but not for Herodotus).

In my role as an editor and interpreter of fragments, which was my point of departure, the consideration of Athenaeus' methods has been helpful. Let us take some examples from Dinon's and Heracleides' fragments of *Persica*:[11] Athenaeus provides us with a third of Dinon's fragments and half of Heracleides', and thus it is all the more important to assess the value of his testimony.

It comes as no surprise that the fragments are more or less related to food and table themes, but Herodotus' case proves that these should not be considered as the main concerns of Dinon and Heracleides.[12] In a similar fashion, Athenaeus' predilection for description at the expense of narration should not be considered as a characteristic feature of his sources, and we may then correct what has often been said in that respect about Heracleides (on the basis of four fragments drawn from Athenaeus, although two others from Plutarch do attest to narrative issues).

In addition to these warnings about the nature of Athenaeus' selection, the knowledge of his general methods helps in assessing in which way(s) the quoted text could have been distorted. Thanks to the formal criteria observed in the case of Herodotus, it is possible to distinguish

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[9] See already Zepernick (1921).

[10] Lenfant (2007b) 50-53: these are mainly the expressions used to introduce the 'fragments'.

[11] See Lenfant (2009).

[12] I am aware that what is true for Herodotus is not necessarily true for other, less well-known historians (Lenfant (2007b) 69-70). However, the selective citing of Herodotus' work by Athenaeus shows at least how dangerous it would be to use Athenaeus' quotes to draw conclusions about the subject matter of a given fragmentary author's work.

literal quotations from paraphrases, something which can be crucial for the interpretation of a fragment. For example, in the fragment from Heracleides on the Persian king, on his concubines and his bodyguard (F 1),[13] the words ὡς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Κυμαῖος Ἡρακλείδης reveal that this is a paraphrase, and not a quotation. As a result, one cannot conclude — as some have — from the past tense (Ἦσαν) that Heracleides was writing after the fall of the Persian Empire; in reality, the past tense has been introduced by Athenaeus, and probably was not used by Heracleides. This technical detail is not insignificant, since it helps in determining Heracleides' chronology.[14]

Another warning concerns the words that introduce quotations. Herodotus' fragments have shown that these were Athenaeus' words, and that they often lead the reader to adopt Athenaeus' own interpretation. For example, when Athenaeus quotes Herodotus about Smindyrides of Sybaris,[15] the non-pejorative χλιδή of Herodotus is interpreted in Athenaeus' introductory words as an instance of τρυφή, which in his view is a pejorative notion.[16] In the same way, Athenaeus gives some of Dinon's fragments as examples of the Persian king's *tryphe* and *hêdypatheia* (the theme of his book 12),[17] while there is nothing to indicate that this was Dinon's perspective when describing, for example, the King's perfumed headgear.[18]

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[13] Heracleides F1 (Athenaeus, 12.514b-c): *Φυλάσσουσί* τε αὐτὸν καὶ τριακόσιαι γυναῖκες, **ὡς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Κυμαῖος Ἡρακλείδης** ἐν πρώτῃ Περσικῶν. Αὗται δὲ τὰς μὲν ἡμέρας κοιμῶνται, ἵνα νυκτὸς ἐγρηγορῶσι, τῆς δὲ νυκτὸς ᾄδουσαι καὶ ψάλλουσαι διατελοῦσι, λύχνων καιομένων.

Χρῆται δὲ αὐταῖς καὶ πολλάκις ὁ βασιλεὺς < διελθὼν > διὰ τῆς τῶν μηλοφόρων αὐλῆς. *Ἦσαν* δὲ οὗτοι τῶν δορυφόρων καὶ τῷ γένει πάντες Πέρσαι, ἐπὶ τῶν στυράκων μῆλα χρυσᾶ ἔχοντες, χίλιοι τὸν ἀριθμὸν, ἀριστίνδην ἐκλεγόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μυρίων Περσῶν τῶν Ἀθανάτων καλουμένων. (…)

[14] For more details, see Lenfant (2009) 269.

[15] Περὶ δὲ Σμινδυρίδου τοῦ Συβαρίτου καὶ τῆς τούτου **τρυφῆς** ἱστόρησεν Ἡρόδοτος ἐν τῇ ἕκτῃ ὡς ἀποπλέων ἐπὶ τὴν μνηστείαν τῆς Κλεισθένους τοῦ Σικυωνίων τυράννου θυγατρὸς Ἀγαρίστης, φησίν, ἀπὸ μὲν Ἰταλίης (ἦλθε *om.* Ath.) Σμινδυρίδης ὁ Ἱπποκρατεῖος (Ἱπποκράτεος *Hdt.*) Συβαρίτης, ὃς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὴ **χλιδῆς** εἷς ἀνὴρ ἀφίκετο (Ath. 12.541b). Cf. Hdt. 6.126-127.

[16] Lenfant (2007b) 60-62, esp. 61.

[17] At the beginning of Book 12 a *logos* περὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τρυφῇ διαβοήτων γενομένων… καὶ τῆς τούτων ἡδυπαθείας (Ath. 12.510b) is announced.

[18] Dinon F25a (Athenaeus 12.514a): Καὶ τὸ παράσημον δὲ ὃ ἐπετίθεντο τῇ κεφαλῇ οἱ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεῖς οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸ ἠρνεῖτο τὴν τῆς ἡδυπαθείας ἀπόλαυσιν. Κατεσκευάζετο γάρ, ὥς φησι Δίνων, ἐκ σμύρνης καὶ τοῦ καλουμένου λαβύζου. Εὐώδης δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ λάβυζος καὶ πολυτιμότερα τῆς σμύρνης. Here ἡδυπαθεία is

These instances clearly show how knowledge of the aims and methods of the intermediate author can play an essential role in determining such important features as the chronology of the quoted historian or possible value judgements.

2. FRAGMENTS AS WITNESSES TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT'S VOCABULARY

As a general rule, studying the vocabulary of a fragmentary historian is a risky undertaking, since in most cases fragments are not *verbatim* quotations and the intermediate author often changes the wording of his model.[19] He may change the words for at least two reasons: first, he may be adapting the vocabulary to that of his own time with the intention of making reading easier; second, he may be adapting it to suit his own literary purpose.

Despite this strong tendency, the question of vocabulary does sometimes arise when interpreting fragmentary historians. And while it is certainly vain to conduct a survey of common terms, the same may not be true for specific or technical words: in that case, an investigation into the aims and methods of the quoting author, or of his own habitual vocabulary, may be helpful.

Let us take an example from *Persica* fragments. I have recently studied the ways in which Greeks translated into their own language the words used by Persians to designate officials, and, in order to exclude potential later rewordings, I chose to adopt a synchronic perspective and to limit my study to writings that were contemporary with the Persian Empire.[20] The question arose, then, whether or not I could also take Ctesias' fragments into account without running the risk of anachronism.[21]

Two words will be considered here in this respect.

1) The first is rather simple. The word ἀζαβαρίτης is a *hapax* which can be found in the summary of Ctesias by Photius:

> Βασιλεύει δὲ Σεκυνδιανὸς καὶ γίνεται ἀζαβαρίτης αὐτῷ Μενοστάνης.
> Sekyndianos becomes king and Menostanes becomes his *azabarites*.[22]

clearly Athenaeus' word and topic. See Lenfant (2009) 47, 213-214. The same argument has already been convincingly put forward by Bollansée (2008) about Clearchus.

[19] See the second meaning of 'cover-text' in the outline above.

[20] Lenfant (forthcoming).

[21] In fact, the question is also worth asking because it concerns Ctesias' own attitude toward Persian things.

[22] Ctesias F15 §49 (Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 72.42a.21-22).

Was this term introduced by Photius? We know that the patriarch some-times changed the words of the original he was summarizing. This is particularly striking when he uses the word θριαμβεύω about Artax-erxes II after the death of Cyrus, when the King wants to demonstrate to everybody that he is the victor. This is a word that Photius uses else-where but that Ctesias could not have employed because it refers to the Roman practice of the *triumphus*.[23] However, in this case, the substitu-tion is not surprising, since Photius is using a word which had become common by his own time. On the contrary, not only can ἀζαβαρίτης not have been chosen as an adaptation to aid comprehension, but the word has also been recognized as the transcription of an Iranian title.[24] We therefore have no reason to believe that Photius did not find the word in Ctesias' *Persica*.

2) My second test case is more complicated, since it concerns a more common word: σατράπης. In his work on *Satrapes et satrapies dans l'empire achéménide*, Thierry Petit claims that Ctesias was the first Greek author to use the word σατράπης, without considering the pos-sibility that the word could be an adaptation by intermediate authors.[25] The question is, however, worth asking.

Among these intermediate authors, Plutarch will not be considered here, since his *Life of Artaxerxes* draws on the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, the (assumed) second author to use the word σατράπης (as early as the beginning of the 4th century BC).

Photius, for his part, was not drawing on several sources and he is a most important witness, in fact the main intermediate author for Ctesias' history of the Persian Empire (*Persica* books 7-23). He regularly uses the word σατράπης in his summary of Ctesias' work.[26] However, unlike ἀζαβαρίτης, σατράπης had become a common word since Ctesias' time and it was apparently understandable to Photius' readers. Indeed, Photius uses the word elsewhere in his *Bibliotheca* without gloss or

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[23] F16 §64 and Lenfant (2004) 278 n. 659.

[24] More precisely, ἀζαβαρίτης seems to be the alteration of the transcription ἀζαραπίτης or ἀζαραπάτης, a form which is approximately attested in Hesychius' *Lexicon* and would be a transcription of Old-Persian **hazahrapati-*. See most recently Brust (2005) *s.v.* ἀζαραπατεῖς, p. 48-52, and Schmitt (2007).

[25] Petit (1990) 18. In the same way, Brust (2005) 597 quotes several occurrences of σατράπης in Ctesias, as if the latter's work was extant via direct tradition.

[26] *FGrHist* 688 F9 §8, F13 §20, F14 §35, 38, 41, F15 §47, 50, 53, 55, F16 §58 and 59.

explanation.[27] We do not have any reason to doubt that he took it from the work he was summarizing, but we cannot prove this either. At any rate, our knowledge of Photius' methods does not help much since, although he is a rather informed reader of Ctesias' works,[28] he was also capable of using words not employed by his model, as we have seen in the case of θριαμβεύω.

Σατράπης also happens to be used several times by Diodorus, when the latter draws on Ctesias for his history of Assyria and Media (the subject of the first six books of Ctesias' *Persica*).[29] However, if one compares the other uses of the word in the rest of his *Historical Library*, no definitive conclusions about its use in the opening six books can be drawn, since Diodorus uses σατράπης in nearly every one of his extant books and well beyond the parts that could draw on Ctesias and Xenophon. Could Diodorus have introduced the word himself in his Book 2, where he otherwise was drawing on Ctesias, influenced by what he had read about other periods?[30] This possibility cannot be excluded, but further evidence points in another direction.

First, we can compare Diodorus' account with that of Nicolaus of Damascus, which also deals with the Assyrian and Median Empires. That author's related fragments are partly parallel to those of Ctesias-Diodorus. Importantly, the only instances of σατράπης and other words of the same family in the whole corpus of Nicolaus' fragments (eight instances in total) are all to be found in fragments that draw upon Ctesias.[31]

Moreover, that Ctesias may have used the word σατράπης in connection with the Assyrian and Median Empires — as suggested by the convergence between the accounts of Diodorus and Nicolaus[32] — could be explained by the fact that he envisaged the Assyrian and Median

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[27] There are some 12 further occurrences, a number comparable to the 10 occurrences or so in his summary of Ctesias. They are all included in 7 codices (58, 82, 91, 92, 238, 241, 258). I leave out the difficult question of the spelling *exatrapès* and other alternative forms, for which see Brust (2005).

[28] Lenfant (2004) CLXXXIV-CLXXXVIII. See also below.

[29] Assyria: F1b §2.1, §21.7, §24.3. Media: F1b §28.1.

[30] Books 11 to 16 notoriously have different sources, and among them Ephorus of Kyme — a city of Asia Minor where the title of *satrapes* could not have been unknown in the first half of the 4th century BC.

[31] *FGrHist* 90 F8, F9 and F66. On Nicolaus and Ctesias, see Lenfant (2000).

[32] In Nicolaus-Ctesias, satraps are mentioned under the Assyrians (Ctesias F1pε*) and under the Medians (F8d* §10 and 37).

Empires as being analogous predecessors to the Persian Empire of his time.[33]

I would therefore not hesitate to conclude that σατράπης was in fact the word used by Ctesias himself, nor to confirm his title as the first Greek historian to have used it. This finding also conforms to a more general observation: Ctesias and Xenophon are among the Greek writers who lived for the longest time within the Persian Empire, and they are also those who sometimes use transcriptions of Persian words, such as *azabarites*, *satrapes* or *karanos* — a solution that generally was not the preferred Greek mode of translation.[34]

In the case of the word σατράπης, the study of each intermediate author's own practices was not enough to resolve the matter; we only get a clearer idea because we are able to compare several different cover-texts. Ctesias-Photius, Ctesias-Diodorus and Ctesias-Nicolaus all present numerous and comparable uses of the word. However, such an opportunity for comparison does not exist for the majority of fragmentary historians.

3. EXPLANATIONS IN FRAGMENTS AND THEIR PATERNITY

Intermediate authors anxious to help their readers might be tempted to provide explanations. In that sense, an explanation could be considered as a form of adaptation for the sake of the readers, just like changes of wording. But how can we determine who is the author of the explanation? An example will show which sort of examination might help answer this question.

Yannick Muller and Francesco Mari have recently studied, each in their own way, the question of the mutilation of Cyrus the Younger by his brother King Artaxerxes II, especially that of the cutting-off of the rebel's hand.[35] This act is twice mentioned by Xenophon in his *Anabasis*, but without particular comment;[36] on the other hand, two parallel fragments of Ctesias provide more details (one from Photius, another

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[33] See also the exaggeration of the extent of the Assyrian Empire. Cf. Lenfant (2004) LIII.

[34] See Lenfant (forthcoming).

[35] Muller (forthcoming) and Mari (forthcoming).

[36] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 1.10.1: Κύρου ἀποτέμνεται ἡ κεφαλὴ καὶ ἡ χεὶρ ἡ δεξιά... 3.1.17: ἀποτεμὼν τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὴν χεῖρα ἀνεσταύρωσεν...

from Plutarch).[37] The attention paid to these details by these scholars can doubtless be explained by their concern with the practice of mutilation from an historical point of view, particularly as regards Persian customs. As often, it was a slight difference between two parallel fragments that led to the question of a possible adaptation by the intermediate author. Plutarch ascribes the amputation of the hand to "a Persian custom" (κατὰ δή τινα νόμον Περσῶν), while according to Photius, the King "cut off [Cyrus'] head and the hand with which [Cyrus] had struck him" (τήν τε γὰρ κεφαλὴν καὶ τὴν χεῖρα, μεθ᾽ ἧς τὸν Ἀρτοξέρξην ἔβαλλεν... ἀπέτεμε). Did each of these authors copy Ctesias or did they add something to his account?

1) An addition by Plutarch?

In order to prove that Plutarch himself added the reference to a Persian custom, it would be of great assistance to find in his writings a general tendency to refer to local, barbarian customs. A complete study on the matter would certainly be enlightening, but, after a quick overview, my personal impression is that Plutarch did not have such a habit. As regards Persian customs, he does refer to another one in his *Life of Artaxerxes*, but in a passage which certainly goes back to Ctesias.[38] In fact, if one turns to the corpus of Ctesias' fragments, there are several such references to a Persian or a Median *nomos* to explain the behaviour of someone, and these fragments are not only found in Plutarch, but also in Diodorus and Nicolaus.[39] The possibility cannot be excluded, then, that they were all drawing on Ctesias as a common source.

2) An addition by Photius?

Did Photius add the detail that the amputated hand was the one that had struck the King, a form of explanation from the ninth-century writer? The hypothesis has been tested by Muller[40] and Mari, because it is, in their eyes, an explanation which differs from that found in Plutarch.

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[37] Ctesias F16 §64 (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 43b37-39): αἰκισμὸς τοῦ σώματος Κύρου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Ἀρτοξέρξου· τήν τε γὰρ κεφαλὴν καὶ *τὴν χεῖρα, μεθ᾽ ἧς τὸν Ἀρτοξέρξην ἔβαλλεν*, αὐτὸς ἀπέτεμε καὶ ἐθριάμβευσεν.

Ctesias F20 §13.2 (Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 13.2): καὶ *κατὰ δή τινα νόμον Περσῶν* ἡ δεξιὰ χεὶρ ἀπεκόπη καὶ ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, ἐκέλευσε τὴν κεφαλὴν αὑτῷ κομισθῆναι· καὶ τῆς κόμης δραξάμενος οὔσης βαθείας καὶ λασίας, ἐπεδείκνυε τοῖς ἀμφιδοξοῦσιν ἔτι καὶ φεύγουσιν.

[38] Ctesias F29b (Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 19.9.1-2): ἀποθνήσκουσι δ᾽ οἱ φαρμακεῖς ἐν Πέρσαις κατὰ νόμον οὕτως...

[39] See Ctesias T3 = F5 §32.4 (Diodorus) and F8d* §2 (Nicolaus).

[40] This hypothesis was initially tested by Yannick Muller, who wondered if Photius may have added a personal commentary inspired by Byzantine legislation, which made

I must confess that, rightly or wrongly, I cannot see here a real discrepancy between Plutarch and Photius.[41] It is no surprise that two different readers did not select, interpret, express, or summarise in the same way. Why could the Persian *nomos* not refer to the symbolic amputation of the guilty limb, such as we find, for example, in the Code of Hammurabi?[42]

More important, I think that arguments should be drawn from Photius' common practices. If one wants to claim that he added something here, the best way would be to find irrefutable instances of other additions, for example by comparing his summaries with extant works. To my knowledge, such enquiries have discovered some misleading shortcuts, but no real additions.[43] Other studies on Photius might alter this picture, but in the present state I cannot see any compelling reason to believe in an addition either from Plutarch or Photius, and I would believe rather that the explanation went back to Ctesias.

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These two types of inquiries have shown, or so I hope, how the study of intermediate authors is integral to any solid interpretation of fragments. For that reason, general research on the aims and methods of intermediate authors remains an important task.

Secondly, the intermediate authors must have their place within a commented edition of fragments, not only in the introductions, where the reader deserves to be warned and guided with general considerations about the features of each 'cover-text', but also in the detailed comments, where indications on the context or possible alterations may be necessary.

provision for mutilations as sentences that reflected the offence (see Patlagean (1984) 405). I thank Yannick Muller for a stimulating discussion on the matter.

[41] On the contrary, Francesco Mari considers that "loin d'évoquer l'usage perse, Photius semble plutôt offrir une explication ponctuelle de l'épisode".

[42] Yannick Muller finally favours this hypothesis and he suggests that such a practice only concerned those Persians who had tried to kill the King, which would explain its rarity.

[43] Hägg (1975), who compared 10 codices of Photius' *Bibliotheca* with their extant models, did not find any real additions, except the replacement of pronouns with nouns (p. 108-111, 154-155). The same is true for Bigwood (1989), who, for her part, compared Aelian's and Photius' parallel fragments. See Lenfant (2004) CLXXXV-CLXXXVIII. Cresci (2011) provides an excellent recent summary treatment of Photius' method as transmitter of historical fragments. Note that the example of θριαμβεύω seen above (and considered by Mari as a reason for suspecting Photius) is not an addition, but a rewording.

Third and most difficult, readers of fragments should be aware of
the peculiarities of such cover-texts, and should be able to adopt an
appropriate heuristic approach. The reason for this is that even the best
commented edition cannot solve every question. Assuming that the
editor is always right, he still cannot comment on every statement or
expression and explicitly wonder about the paternity of each detail.
Not only would he thus produce a monster, difficult to read (and to
publish!), but no scholar can be totally aware of all possible issues.
Some questions are therefore better dealt with in separate papers (at least
for the detail of the argument),[44] but, once again, the main difficulty is
to prompt readers to avoid some of the most frequent errors:

1. The first of these is blind confidence. As an example, a historian who
was recently speaking about Pythagorean thought according to Archytas
(4th century BC), which he thought to have been transmitted as such to
Roman politicians of the first century BC, did not understand my ques-
tion about the fragmentary nature of the corpus and the dating of the
Pythagorean themes he was discussing (he simply replied that Archytas'
fragments were "authenticated" by the fact that Aristoteles quotes
Archytas' name). It seems that this scholar had no idea of the possible
reworking that a prose text could be subjected to when used by a later
author, especially a philosophical one.[45] The same can often be said
about historical authors, such as, for example, Phylarchus.[46]

2. The second trend is blanket scepticism or avoidance. Some scholars
are tempted to reject fragmentary literature as a type of false literature,
or rather as a literature which eludes knowledge.[47] Such reservations

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[44] As an example, in my study on Ctesias' eunuchs (Lenfant (2012)), the first part
of the paper tries to assess how the diverse authors who refer to Ctesias might reflect or
distort his allusions to eunuchs. It is based on three main types of clues: (1) the general
literary practice of each author and his use of Ctesias' work, (2) his personal relation-
ship to eunuchs in his own life and society and his general depiction of eunuchs, in
cases where he is not drawing upon Ctesias (3) the comparison with parallel and inde-
pendent fragments of Ctesias thanks to other intermediate authors. Such an in-depth
investigation could (and should) not have been developed as such within an edition of
Ctesias' fragments.

[45] Note that, according to Riedweg (2002) 1032, "From the late Hellenistic period
onwards, the name A. was used as a favourite cover for pseudo-Pythagorean forgeries,
mainly concerning ethics and philosophy."

[46] See P. Pédech and K. Meister's views on Phylarchus, as criticized by Schepens
(2007) esp. 240-243. Schepens shows how these views result from an uncritical use of
intermediate authors like Polybius and Athenaeus.

[47] A case in point are G.W. Bowersock's critical remarks on the inclusion of a frag-
mentary historian such as Ephorus in a database of documents used by ancient historians:

may sometimes be due to an awareness of the difficulties involved in studying fragments and a desire to avoid them.[48]
3. The third trend, and perhaps the most harmful, consists in being sometimes sceptical, sometimes accepting according to one's own needs and purpose and without advancing any arguments.

These three trends remain common, perhaps precisely because they do not call for serious examination. However, interpreting a fragment is an exacting task that, in the ideal case, not only requires a familiarity with the other fragments of the lost writer, but also knowledge of the intermediate author and his habits. It also requires a dynamic approach to both sources.[49] Even if there is still much to do, we may hope that recent studies on fragments have led to a better awareness of the issues, and the fact that many scholars are now involved in such difficult research is certainly an encouraging sign.

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"a data-base that included Ephorus, for example, would be treacherous and ill advised." See Bowersock (2003) esp. 15-16 and G. Schepens' reply in his paper on Ephorus in the same volume (Schepens (2003)).

[48] Many books on Greek literature or Greek historians simply do not take into account non-extant works. The shortcomings of such an attitude are highlighted by Schepens (1997) 144-146. In some cases, such an approach can however be explained by the lack of previous specialized studies and the desire to remain cautious.

[49] See the brilliant analysis of G. Schepens on Theopompus' Agesilaos according to Plutarch and Athenaeus (Schepens (2005) esp. 62-70).

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