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## CTESIAS AS MILITARY HISTORIAN

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### Introduction

Ctesias is famous, or infamous, for court-history. But his work was sufficiently like ordinary Greek historiography to deal with military confrontation, so his status as a military historian is a question that ought at least to be raised. His qualifications were not especially strong. He is known to have (claimed to have) been present at one major battle, that at which Cyrus' rebellion was brought to an abrupt end. But his role was medical and, apart from that occasion, personal contact with warfare is not readily visible. His putative pro-Spartan disposition (T7b = Plutarch *Artoxerxes* 13) does not guarantee a particular engagement with things military, and its bearing on the re-timing of Plataea is arguable. We do hear of our historian in possession of a pair of rather special swords (45[9]), but they were gifts from his royal employers, not objects actually to be wielded in anger: and it is poetically just that they are made of magical Indian metal - just the sort of swords Ctesias *would* have had, one might say.

Military history plays an extremely modest role in *Indica* - a geo- and ethnographic work that lacks a narrative thread and (at least as now accessible) pays scant heed to any politics and warfare that might have figured in such a narrative-thread: thus the war of Semiramis and the Indians described in *Persika* -- an event far in the past -- has no place here. All we can do is note the military use of Indian dogs (45[10]),<sup>1</sup> the 3000 pygmy archers (45[23]) and 5000 archers and javeliniers of the mono-parturients (45[50]) who follow the Indian king, the impossibility (because of mountainous topography) of making war on the dog-heads, to whom (on the contrary) every five years the King gives 300,000 bows, 300,000 javelins and 50,000 swords, and the appearance of two military similes: the way the Sacae shoot arrows (what later came to be called the Parthian shot) is used as an analogy for the way the *martikhora* allegedly looses off its darts (45dβ) and a spring rejects objects thrown into

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<sup>1</sup> Unknown to Herodotus 7.187

it ὡς ἀπ' ὀργάνου (45sβ), perhaps in reference to a catapult or the like.<sup>2</sup>

*Persica*, of course, is a different matter. The part played by military history here essentially consists in the presence of more or less - generally less - detailed accounts of 48 armed engagements (together with the wider context within which they occurred) plus sixteen allusions to other campaigns or periods of warfare during which battles certainly or possibly were fought, though none survive in any even evanescently specific form in the preserved fragments. This material represents a significant thread within the work's narrative - perhaps in its own way as significant as the court intrigue that dominates most readers' perception of *Persika*: after all, court intrigue is often interconnected with political narrative - and (as in other ancient historiography) that usually sooner or later means military narrative. It is significant that the long string of Assyrian rulers starting with Ninyas who did not engage in military activity, save for the sending of a small expeditionary force to Troy, do not seem to have been treated by Ctesias as having had any *other* sort of history worth reporting or imagining (1b[21-23]): on the contrary they are a bunch of effeminate, unworthy of their predecessors and unlike their Median and Persian successors, for whom manly and warlike virtue is apparently assumed to be the norm.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, the nature and prominence of military narrative will have varied and may sometimes be hard to assess. Consider, for example, the case of Book XVIII (15[47-56]), which dealt

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<sup>2</sup> cf. LSJ s.v. *Lenfant* translates as "machine" and makes no comment. The parallel sources for this fragment cast no further light: 45sα says if something is thrown in to the spring *πλάγιον* it throws it out *ὀρθόν*. 45[49] has nothing precisely parallel. For possible Ctesian interest in contemporary advances in mechanized warfare cf. below at n.35.

<sup>3</sup> Reasons for warfare are rarely explicitly discussed. Rebels and their targets have various relatively clear sorts of motive (and in the case of the Elder Cyrus his mother's dream is represented as sparking off the whole affair). Semiramis attacks India in order to win military glory against a worthy foe (though his wealth is also a consideration), but without the justification of any wrong committed against her. Perhaps this helps to account for her defeat? Ninus was naturally warlike and a devotee of virtue (*ζηλωτῆς τῆς ἀρετῆς*: 1b[1.4]), and Semiramis was characterised by *τὸ φιλοπόλεμον καὶ κεκινδυνευμένον* (1b[6.5]); Zarinaea was somewhat similar (5[34.3]), her enemies "carried away by boldness" (5[34.4]). The Photian epitome generally neglects to assign any specific cause for Persian campaigns that are not provoked by rebellion: although we should not assume Ctesias himself was quite so casual, there is no way of filling the gap.

with the reign of Darius II and attracted an unusually lengthy Photian summary (120 lines of text). The rebellion of Darius' brother Artyphius engendered reported military activity - three battles, all now entirely undetailed - whereas the fates of Secundianus, Pissuthnes, Artoxares and Terituchmes were encompassed - to judge by surviving information - without explicit battles. On the other hand, Pissuthnes and the King's generals were certainly squaring up for a fight - so perhaps parts of the original text would have amounted to a sort of military narrative, even if in the end it lacked actual armed confrontation. At the same time, it is clear that other parts of the work were characterised by stretches of military narrative that were both intense and extensive: one may think of the conquests of Ninus, Semiramis's Indian campaign, the defeats of Sardanapalus and of Astyages (each of them made up of a string of seven military events: the fall of empires requires, it seems, a seriously rich military elaboration),<sup>4</sup> and Xerxes' Greek campaign. The success with which Ctesias took up the opportunities that military riffs of this sort offered for the pursuit of literary variety is now difficult to pin down, though in the case of the Astyages sequence one can, I think, get some sense that he made the effort. There are also potential structural issues. If, for example, the Trojan War interlude within the *longue durée* of Assyrian military inactivity was a rather more important narrative element than Diodorus' treatment now suggests,<sup>5</sup> it would make a neat parallel for the prominence of the Zarinaea-Stryangaeus story in the middle of the Median section of the work.

In both *Persica* and *Indica* our principal problem in dealing with the relevant material is the fragmentary preservation of Ctesias' oeuvre. This is a problem, of course, for study of any aspect of Ctesias. But in military history the devil is often in the detail, so it is a particular problem in the present context. The way in which Cunaxa is reduced to

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<sup>4</sup> There is also a clear element of divine will (cf. n.15): those responsible have omens, oracles and prophecies on their side. General similarity of this sort (to which attention is explicitly drawn: 8d[12]) is consistent with literary and substantive differentiation in the detailed presentation of the three empires covered in *Persika*: but did Ctesias have a medical man's view of the recurrence of historical experience *alias* symptoms of disease? Did he ever ask himself what would cause the fall of the Persian Empire?

<sup>5</sup> It perhaps caught Plato's fancy: in *Leg.* 685CD the Trojan War was part of Assyrian history, and Plato comments that the Assyrian Empire frightened Greeks of that era just as the Persian empire frightened those of Plato's time.

almost nothing in Photius' epitome is a salutary warning: the three battles with Artyphius in Book XVIII could once (at least collectively) have had as much to offer in terms of military narrative as Plutarch allows one to see was the case with Cunaxa. It must be stressed that all of the comparatively less impoverished remnants of Ctesian military narrative come from authors other than Photius, that only three episodes (**15**, **26**, and **48** in Table 1: see below pp. 43-45) are attested outside the summaries provided by Diodorus, Nicolaus or Photius; and that Cunaxa (**48**) is the only case in which this non-epitomised evidence offers enough to make understanding what one is being told an interesting question (rather than a complaint about lack of detail) or to make it meaningful to speak of "reconstructing" a battle.

In these circumstances one cannot expect to achieve much, and what follows is a report on what little I have been able to do with the topic so far, not a fully-fledged argument. To be more precise: I shall (in Section A) tabulate the material in *Persica* (calling attention to inclarities surrounding the way this tabulation has been done), comment on the sort of detail that is or is not preserved and on a few particular features or individual passages, and then (in Section B) deal with Cunaxa - the one military event for which more than very sketchy evidence exists of Ctesias' treatment. You will probably feel (and rightly) that in both sections discussion comes to an end rather than a conclusion.

## **A. THE GENERAL PICTURE**

### **Tabulating military events in *Persica***

There are two categories of material. Category I consists of passages that summarize campaigns or periods of warfare in an entirely non-specific fashion. Category II consists of accounts of discrete military engagements. They are listed in Table 1 in the order in which they occur in Ctesias' text, with Category I items identified by letter (**A**, **B** etc.), Category II items by number (**1**, **2**, **3** etc.).

Category I includes two sub-categories. The larger one consists of cases where military action was clearly involved but no individual military engagements (battles or skirmishes) appear in the surviving evidence (**A**, **B**, **C**, **D**, **E**, **F**, **G**, **H**, **I**, **J**, **K**, **M**). Within this group one can distinguish three special cases where we hear of campaigns over a period of time against a multiplicity of specified or unspecified enemies rather than a single campaign against a single enemy (**C**, **E**, **I**). In the first of these special cases it is impossible to tell how many of the 28 peoples or regions listed were the subject of actual narrative. It will certainly not have been all, both on grounds of general probability and because Diodorus says that no-one had

recorded all the individual battles - or, indeed, provided a complete enumeration of the nations conquered by Ninus. He himself undertakes, therefore, merely to list the most notable (ἐπισημότατα) nations as given by Ctesias (ἀκολούθως Κτησία τῷ Κνιδίῳ), and this may strictly be consistent with the possibility that Ctesias did not provide actual narrative of the conquest of any of them. The fact that Diodorus glosses *Kaspiane* as a region entered by an extremely narrow pass known as the Caspian Gates might be a sign that that operation, at least, elicited description, but it is hardly a strong argument.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever our conclusion about this item, there are certainly other cases in which surviving evidence about Ctesias' text does at least leave a question about whether there were narrated military confrontations, as opposed to military preparations that might have resulted in such confrontations. This applies to Darius' Scythian expedition (**L**), the revolt of Babylon during Xerxes' reign (**N**), and the challenges to royal authority mounted by Pissuthnes (**O**) and Terituchmes (**P**).

Prolonged absence of military confrontation is, of course, a feature of Herodotus' version of the Scythian expedition, but even there the absence is not total (4.128). Perhaps Ctesias' version went one better on this point (as well as changing the exchange of symbolic messages), or perhaps from Photius' point of view military action at the level of Herodotus 4.128 was insufficient to make it into the epitome. (There is, of course, the Scythian slaughter of 80,000 Persian soldiers trapped in Europe by Darius' precipitate flight: 13[21]. I have not counted this as a military engagement, but I am conscious of having been influenced in making that decision by the fact that in Herodotus the people left behind are those who are wounded and incapable of fighting. It may be illegitimate to assume that the same was true in Ctesias.)

In the case of the Babylonian revolt Photius explicitly compares Herodotus and Ctesias, and our question is exactly what (or how much) he means by saying that (apart from the story about a mule giving birth) Ctesias attributed to Megabyzus

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<sup>6</sup> Lanfranchi (this volume) sees **A**, **B**, **1** and **C** (the pre-Bactria campaigns of Ninus) in terms of the four corners of the earth, but **C** embraces areas both west (Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Anatolia, Caucasus) and east or south-east (circum-Caspian region, south, central and north-east Iran) of Assyria. It might be at least equally appropriate to say that, taken along with events in Babylonia, Media, Armenia and Bactria, **C** allows Ctesias to fill in the rest of a sort of List of Lands/Peoples -- albeit one with un-Persian elements and a contrast in structural organisation between the west (where items follow a single geographical order) and the east (where this is not true, and where there are oddities such as the duplication of Hyrcanians and Borcanians).

everything that Herodotus attributed to Zopyrus. I suspect this probably *does* mean that Ctesias described military encounters between Darius and the Babylonians (led by a treacherous Megabyzus). In the Pissuthnes episode one could imagine that Tissaphernes and his colleagues dealt with the rebel entirely by seducing his Greek mercenaries and persuading him to surrender by offering false guarantees, but one can hardly rule out the possibility that the full story contained some minor military skirmishes along the way. By way of comparison one may notice that Photius' summary of what happened after Cunaxa (16[65]) says nothing at all about clashes between the mercenaries and Persian forces between the battle and the seizure of the generals: I have not thought it justified to include the episode in the table of military events, but it would be foolish to assert with confidence that Ctesias' version contained no such skirmishes. As for Terituchmes, Photius reports (16[55]) that Udiastes killed him "after he had acted bravely (*ἀνδρισάμενον*) during the uprising and killed lots of people" - as many as 37, in fact. Is this the account of a battle or just of a *putsch* within the insurgent's satrapal palace - a grander version of Darius' *putsch*? Mitradates then seized Zaris and held it (*ἐφύλασσε*) for Terituchmes' son (16[56]). Did this have military implications? Subsequent developments, in which Mitradates becomes satrap in place of Udiastes after the latter was executed at Stateira's behest (16[58]) and, later still, Terituchmes' son was poisoned by Parysatis (16[61]), do not resolve the question.

Table 1 contains 48 individual military confrontations ("battles"). In drawing up this list I have made at least three decisions that may be contentious.<sup>7</sup>

First, as I have already noted, I should perhaps have categorised the Scythians' slaughter of abandoned Persian troops as (the result of) a military engagement.

Next, I have treated Semiramis' reduction of islands and cities in the Indus as part of item **4** - a decision that may, on reflection, be inconsistent with other decisions. The issue is simply one of strategic setting and time-frame: is Diodorus summarising mopping-up operations immediately consequent upon the river-battle (**4**), or is this a separate Category I military episode occupying a certain amount of time between the two formal battles with Stabrobates' forces? My instinctive preference for the first option may be wrong, but there is not much more than instinct to go by.

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<sup>7</sup> By contrast, I am fairly confident that Zopyrus' death in Caunus (14[45]) and Mardonius' death at Delphi (13[29]) should not be categorised even as skirmishes.

Finally, I have identified a total of just five engagements between Cyrus and Astyages. The area of possible contention concerns items **21** and **22**. The fourth battle (**21**) is the one at or near Pasargadae in which the Persians are stimulated by the taunts of their womenfolk to stop retreating and drive the Medes back down the mountain, killing 60,000 of them. Our text of Nicolaus (from the Constantinian *Excerpta de insidiis*) adds that "Nonetheless Astyages did not abandon the siege" (sc. of Cyrus' mountain position) and then breaks off with a cross-reference to the *Περὶ ἀνδραγαθημάτων καὶ στρατηγημάτων*, a lost volume of Constantinian excerpts. It then continues: "After many events in the meantime, Cyrus entered Astyages' tent, sat on his throne and took up his sceptre". Amid acclamations Oebares crowns Cyrus, and booty (*πάντα τὰ χρήματα*) is then carried off to Pasargadae. News of Astyages' defeat leads to defections among his subjects, viz. Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sacae, Bactrians and all the rest.<sup>8</sup> A short while later Cyrus made a sudden sally against Astyages (who now had few adherents), defeated him and took him prisoner. This engagement I count as item **22**. My assumption, therefore, is that the act of heroism or stratagem described in the missing excerpt is essentially part of a continuation of item **21** - one single, if prolonged, engagement ending with Astyages' defeat and the capture of his tent - and I make it in the light of the version of these matters in other (non-Herodotean) sources. Justin 1.6 actually regards **21** as the battle in which Astyages is captured, Polyæn.7.6.1 says that **21** produced such a victory that Cyrus did not need to fight the Medes again, Anaximenes 72 F19 and Strabo 730C regard Pasargadae as the site of Cyrus' definitive victory. None of these makes allowance for **22**, but that (I take it) is because it was merely a skirmish in which the fleeing Median king was rounded up. So if there was any other fighting between the counter-attack following the women's taunts and the capture of Astyages' tent it must either also be merely skirmishing or represent the continuation of the counter-attack to the point of definitive victory. We know from the cross-reference to the missing *Excerpta* that something interesting and

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<sup>8</sup> Lenfant takes the reference here to *inter alios* Bactrians and Sacae as corresponding to the references to Bactrians and Sacae in 9(2-3) [Photius], items coming after capture of Astyagas at Ecbatana, and concludes that Nicolaus' summary inverted the order of events. But why should Photius not be summarizing subsequent rebelliousness among Bactrians and Sacae, something to be contrasted with willingness of their contingents in Astyages' army to switch sides? (Justin 1.7 postulates rebellions against Cyrus after Astyages' overthrow.) Photius' Bactrians are loyal Median subjects who are won over by the honour Cyrus ascribes to Astyages.

distinctive happened in the interval between the women's taunts and the capture of Astyages' tent: so the option of a mere skirmish seems to be excluded. Hence, it is best to see **21** as continuing up to and including the capture of Astyages' tent.

### **Distribution across *Persika***

Data on distribution of items within *Persika* I-XX are summarised in Table 3 (p. 48). (No material is now attested from XXI-XXIV, so only I-XX enter the calculations.) The distribution of Category I items is very uneven. But when we bear in mind that there are not very many items involved, that they are not entirely homogeneous and that the status of some of them is uncertain, this volatility is neither surprising nor specially significant. If there is anything to be learned from what is certainly in some measure an exercise of rather dubious mathematical validity, it is from the distribution of the 48 Category II items and the 64 items in Categories I and II taken together (columns 5-8 of Table 3).

The plainest single feature is a bias of material to the earlier parts of the work: over three-quarters of it occurs in I-XIII, i.e. in just under two-thirds of the relevant text. This profile reflects the fact that I-VI and XII-XIII contain more than their fair share of material (very much more in the case of XII-XIII), while the reverse is true of XIV-XVII and (to a high degree) XIX-XX. The most striking element, of course, is the contrast between XIX-XX and XII-XIII. XIX-XX must as a whole have been heavily concerned with the background to and execution of Cyrus' rebellion but, although this rebellion could well have involved a certain amount of low-grade military material at various points in Ctesias' version of the story, it was resolved in a single engagement which, presumably, provided the climax of Book XX. These two books (XIX-XX) thus simply represent a quite different sort of literary artefact from Books XII-XIII, a comparable amount of texts (two books again) that covered a period of some fifty years, stretching from Cambyses' accession to the end of the Greek invasion of 480-79. The relatively extreme compression of material that corresponds to the contents of Herodotus III-IX is surely a deliberate choice, and one primarily driven by Ctesias' wish to distinguish himself from his predecessor, not by views about how military history should or should not be treated. Similarly, the extensive treatment of the three years from Artaxerxes' accession to Cunaxa no doubt reflects the importance of Cyrus' rebellion, as well the fact that it occurred during Ctesias' residence at the Persian court. By contrast, the over-representation of military events in the Assyro-median narrative of Books I-VI and under-representation in the reign of Artaxerxes I (Books XIV-XVII) are less obviously explicable. The former perhaps says something about the readiness with which the invention of history - or its



"realisation" from scattered stories - will centre around warfare when the distant past is involved (though it does also involve e.g. the building of cities and other adjustments to the visible landscape), but the impact of differences between (a) Diodorus and Nicolaus and (b) Photius as epitomators can hardly be entirely left out of account. As for Artaxerxes I, I have nothing to suggest - save, perhaps, that it may just illustrate the inherent difficulties of the present exercise. On the one hand, fewer episodes need not necessarily mean less military narrative. The Photian version of Artaxerxes' reign is in fact heavily dominated by military events, even if there are fewer of them proportionately to the number of books than an entirely even distribution would require. It is not impossible that these events were more elaborately narrated than some others and/or that there were several discrete but ancillary episodes of a sort that the Photian approach weeded out. On the other hand, categorising XIV-XVII as the reign of Artaxerxes I, rather than as four books of text, does draw attention to another way in which to measure the distribution of material. Columns 1-5 of Table 4 (p. 49) show that, if one adopts the passage of time as the perspective from which to view data from *Persica* VII-XX (the only books to which it is applicable), the pattern is almost entirely different, with Cyrus now claiming much more and Cambyses-Xerxes much less than a fair share, while Darius II and Artaxerxes II are almost exactly on target. Only the data relating to Artaxerxes I looks much the same as those relating to XIV-XVII. Does this prove anything? Perhaps only that (as columns 6-7 of Table 4 show) Artaxerxes I is the only king whose reign occupies a number of books proportionate to its length.

#### **Detail in military narratives**

*General* The minimum information we have about individual engagements is along the lines "A fought B and won/lost/drew". This is all we get for items **23, 38, 45-47**, about which there is consequently nothing more to be said. Additional information present in the other 43 cases can be divided into seven categories: numbers of combatants, the fate (death or wounding) of individual combatants, the taking of prisoners, indications of topography, tactical setting and other narrative details. The incidence of such material is shown in Table 2 (pp. 46-48), under seven columns (A-G).

22 items have information under A, 31 under B and/or C, and 35 under B and/or C and/or D. In other words, among the 43 records that go beyond provision of minimal information, 51% quantify the forces involved in the engagement in some degree, and 80% contain something about the resulting death, wounding or capture of groups or individuals. Calculating on a similar basis 44% (19 items) give some topographic information, 40% (17 items) contain indications about the tactical character of the

engagement, 51% (22 items) preserve some other narrative detail, and 33 items (77%) score under one or more of these three heads. (The last two - tactics and other details - account already for 29 items or 67% of the sample.) Perhaps all one can say about this is that the figures will have been higher for the full text. It is true that only six items (**4, 5, 18, 19, 43, 48**) provide information under five or six columns (not even Cunaxa [**48**] actually scores under all seven), while a couple more (**21, 26**) score in four columns but have several bits of miscellaneous detail in column G. Moreover, these eight items (under 19% of the relevant 43 records) represent only five completely distinct military contexts. But these data probably signify more about the state of survival of Ctesias' text than anything else, and it worth noting that a score of six *can* be achieved by a modest amount of surviving text (**43** occupies just 14 lines of Photian epitome). It is not impossible that in the original text the incidence of detail as measured by the seven categories outlined here was rather high, and that its suppression in epitomes and fragments says more about the pressure to extract a simple summary what were actually quite lengthy narratives than about the absence of detail in the first place.

*Numbers* Detail in categories A and C involves Ctesias in the provision of figures for forces engaged and/or the losses they sustained.

There is a general tendency to gross exaggeration, and this also applies when numbers appear elsewhere in military contexts, e.g. the 100,000 prisoners taken after the Indus battle (**4**: 1b[18.5]), the 20 stades of Nineveh's wall washed away in **13** (1b[27.1]) and the 70,000 troops who gather round Artaxerxes in the latter part of the Cunaxa narrative (**48**: 20[13.3]).

There are three reasonably clear exceptions. Ariaramnes crosses the Black Sea to attack Scythia with 30 penteconters (**30**), and the fleets associated with successive expeditions against Inaros number 80 and 300 (**40-42**), of which even the latter is only half what is a standard Persian war-fleet figure in other sources. Of the 80 ships in the first expedition 50 are said to be lost in the naval battle at which Charitimides distinguished himself - a high proportion of those engaged, but still in absolute terms not a ludicrous figure for naval losses. Should we say that Ctesias felt greater inhibitions about ships than men? The fact that he assigns Xerxes 1000 triremes in 480 (13[27]) does not entirely refute that suggestion, since 1000 is slightly below the figure in Herodotus and Aeschylus. The total of 6000 boats (2000 for Semiramis, 4000 for Stabrobates) at the Battle of the Indus (**4**), with losses of 1000 boats on the Indian side, is another matter - but these were river-boats, the setting is much more distant in time and place from Ctesias' world, and 4000 of the boats were made of an exotic material

("Indian reed" - bamboo?), so the case is not strictly commensurate.

Ctesias also undercut Herodotus' figures for Xerxes in the case of the land-forces (800,000 men, excluding charioteers, as against Herodotus' 1,780,000 [7.184]),<sup>9</sup> and his estimate of the King's army at Cunaxa (22) is half that of Xenophon (*Anabasis* 1.7.11) - which cannot be simply a reaction to Xenophon's figure, since Ctesias' version came first. That his figures in these cases are more modest does not, of course, make them any more accurate or realistic. But one can usefully look at the matter from the opposite direction. Despite the fact that he was certainly present at the battle of Cunaxa, Xenophon assigned Artaxerxes an army twice the size of that in Ctesias. The principle explored in Bruno Jacobs' paper about Babylon (that entrenched fantasy can outface the evidence of autopsy) is also on display here, and it applies to Xenophon as much as Ctesias. For Greek authors dealing with Persian armies (it seems) there is simply a category of cognition that we find it difficult, perhaps impossible, properly to envisage.

I mentioned the rate of losses in a couple of cases. Where we can tell, this is not always in itself grotesquely high,<sup>10</sup> though may seem implausible given initial disparity of forces: this question certainly arises with e.g. **14** and **21**, where 6% casualties are inflicted on forces three or four times the size. At the other end of the scale, when 83% casualties are inflicted on 300 Median cavalry in **17**, the Persian cavalry force is over three times as large (not to mention the 5000 infantry in attendance), but all the killing is said to be done by Cyrus and three companions - a possible result achieved by implausibly heroic means.

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<sup>9</sup> Within the narrative Ctesias' figure of 120,000 for Mardonius' army at Plataea (13[28]) is well below Herodotus' 350,000 (9.32); the Greek army (7300 in total) is also much smaller than in Herodotus. The successive frontal attacks at Thermopylae are by 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 troops. Herodotus does not specify, though when Hydarnes and the Immortals attack we naturally assume 10,000 are involved. The Anopaea party numbers 40,000 in Ctesias, surely more than Herodotus had in mind (we are again dealing with Hydarnes and the Immortals).

<sup>10</sup> The attested percentage loss figures are 5 (maximum) (**48**), 6 (**14, 21**), 10 (**L**), 25 (**4, 40**), 50 (**36**), 62.5 (**41**), 83 (**17**). In **27-29** we cannot estimate the percentage because the initial size of the force is not preserved. 13(30) appears to say that in Persian Wars battles other than Salamis Persian losses were 120,000, i.e. 15%.

*Wounds* Twelve category B items in Table 2 mention 19 wounds (6 fatal, 11 non-fatal) sustained by 14 individuals,<sup>11</sup> and this is a type of information also encountered in some non-military incidents (13[14], 13[16], 14[45]). Sometimes (both in military and non-military cases) we get - even in epitome - a certain amount of further detail about weapon, general location of the wound, more precise traumatic effect or the time-lapse from wound to death (cf. Tuplin 2004a: 336-7 for details).<sup>12</sup> It has often been noted that this characteristic reflects Ctesias' medical interests, and I strongly suspect that details were provided more often than is now apparent from the epitomised sources at our disposal. Once again Cunaxa (48) is a salutary warning: one could not deduce from Photius' version of the battle the degree of precision with which the several wounds sustained by Ctesias were described, a description we owe to Plutarch's summary. Modern study of Greek warfare has taken on board the need for military history to envisage the physiologically and psychologically traumatic consequences of combat, something often missing in the sanitised rhetoric of Greco-Roman battle-narrative. Should we celebrate Ctesias for better-than-average performance here? Perhaps only circumspectly. Ctesian battle-field wounds have a good deal to do with Ctesian interest in quasi-heroic fighting by individual military leaders, and Homer (at least) is (in)famous for detailed treatment of wounds. Homeric wounds do, of course, display a mixture of medical fact and fancy of a sort that we should not attribute to Ctesias, but we should probably concede that Ctesian battle-narrative involves the elaboration of a basic story-line in terms that owe as much to literary models as to a precocious awareness of the face of battle. At the same time, one may well feel that incorporation of "real" wounds (and, in some cases, their medical treatment) into a romantically fictive realization of historical events

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<sup>11</sup> 5 and 44 contains two wounds (sustained by a single person), 3 three (sustained by two different persons) and 48 four (sustained by three different persons). I count Cyrus' first wound in 48 as (in itself) non-fatal, though it would perhaps have killed him in any case, given time. In 19 Atradates (Cyrus' father) sustains "many wounds": perhaps these were all separately specified, but the main narrative interest in this case was that he survived long enough to have a death-bed conversation with Astyages.

<sup>12</sup> Only 9, 15, 19, 34, 37 and 40 provide no detail about the wound, and even 37 specifies that it was healed μόλις πολλῇ ἐπιμελείᾳ. (For the record note that the discussion in Tuplin 2004a: 336f omitted Atradates' wounds in 19, and the summary figures seem on re-reading to have involved some slight miscounting.)

exemplifies perfectly the distinctive - and, to modern empirical minds, disturbing - Ctesian way of writing history.

*Prisoners* This normally involves specific individuals and represents an important piece of the narrative. It is true that the impalement of the captured Median King Pharnus (1) passes by rapidly in Diodorus' summary, but one can well imagine some narrative elaboration (especially since his wife and children were also captured), and there can be no doubt in the cases of Zarinaea and Stryangaeus (15, 16), Atradates (19), Astyages (22),<sup>13</sup> Amorges (24, 25), Croesus (26), Marsagetes (30) and Ousiris (43).

One wonders, therefore, about two cases where this is less immediately obvious from the surviving summary - the capture of Indian boat-crews and of 100,000 island and city-dwellers at / after the Indus battle (4) and the exchange of prisoners after Stabrobates' defeat of Semiramis (5). It seems perfectly possible that the fact that these two cases involving large numbers of prisoners made it into the epitomized source (Diodorus) - and they are the only such cases - reflects an original narrative in which they were specially highlighted.

*Topography* Military conflict happens in three-dimensional space. The way in which classical historians address this fact is often disappointing, as anyone who has tried reconstructing particular battles will know. There is no reason to think that Ctesias was different in this regard. The remnants of his narratives allude to plains and/or mountains (2, 4, 7-9, 11-12, 19-21), rivers (4, 11-12) and bridges over them (5, 29), passes (εἰσβολαί: 2, 14; ἐμβολαί: 19; cf. the allusion to the Caspian Gates in C), thick woods (20), a narrow sea-channel (36) and a hill (48), while something emerges about Bactra (3), Nineveh (13) and Sardis (26) from the accounts of their capture by siege. But it is all pretty banal, and the same goes for items in military contexts but outside the individual battle-narratives, e.g. the strategic assessments that it is hard to campaign in Arabia because it is a desert landscape where water is either lacking or only to be found in hidden wells (1b[1.5])<sup>14</sup> or that Median attacks on Cadusia will be thwarted by the mountainous landscape (8d[15]). There is, of course, ample evidence elsewhere that the latter proposition - even if true of Cadusia - is not open to generalisation: consider, for

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<sup>13</sup> He was, moreover, captured twice, it seems, since 8d(46) = 22 and 9(1) must refer to separate events (cf. Lenfant 2004: 256 n.412).

<sup>14</sup> Both Jacoby and Lenfant omit this part of Diod.2.1.5: the previous sentence contains a reference to Macedonian kings, which is plainly Diodoran, not Ctesianic, and it may well carry this sentence with it.

example, Astyages' moves between **19** and **20**, the conquest of Bactria (**4, D**) and the fate of Thermopylae (**33**). If Ctesias' full narrative displayed much in the way of sense of place it does not survive the activities of his epitomators, though it is possible (I suppose) that the accounts of Bagistanus, Chauon, Zarcaeus and Orontes in 1b(13.2-8) had something to offer here - despite the fanciful idea that the Behistun rock was 17 stades high. But all of this - as also the notion that the *tells* of the Middle Eastern landscape were constructed by Semiramis - takes us well away from military history and is really part of the same sort of discourse as the descriptions of Nineveh and Babylon. In devising battle-narratives, by contrast, it is likely that Ctesias confined himself to the simple manner of other classical historians. One case that might have been different - though strictly speaking it falls between battles (**20** and **21**) - is the moment when Cyrus comes upon his father's house in the mountains around Pasargadae (8d[41]). But I imagine that the narrative stress was upon the offerings he made and the omens he received.<sup>15</sup> In literary terms, of course, it is a striking scene - a moment of suspense before the final decisive moves in what has been a lengthy military narrative - but Ctesias was a pre-Romantic and we cannot assume that evocation of landscape was deployed to increase the impact.

*Tactical character* Fewer than half the narratives preserve any sort of tactical detail. We can point to three ambushes (**2, 6, 27**), one of them involving elephants, an unexpected sally of some sort (**22**), a night-attack (**10**), four sieges (**3, 13, 26, 35**) - all but one resolved by stratagem - and

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<sup>15</sup> The religious element in warfare is present in the Cyrus story from the moment of his mother's prophetic dream (8d[9] etc.) until "the gods took away Astyages' power" (8d[45]), and in other places. A *daimonion phantasma* makes Croesus surrender his son as hostage (**26**, at 9[4]), and Croesus is later miraculously released from captivity; omens dissuade Stabrobates from a river-crossing (**5**, at 1b [19.10]); Belesys' confidence in foretold victory forms the climax of a lengthy narrative thread about his Chaldaean skills (1b [24-25], 1pe) and the fall of Nineveh is prefigured by an oracle (**13**, at 1b [26.9]). 1f = Hermippus 1026 F58 (a tantalising piece from Arnobius) suggests that there was a religious or *magus* element to Ninus' Bactrian war completely lost in Diodorus (even if we heed Lenfant 2004: 248 n.286 and do not suppose Ctesias to have identified the Bactrian King with Zoroaster). Xerxes' mistreatment of the tomb of Bel/Belitanas (13b, 13[25-26; Henkelmann [this volume]) was a cause of defeat in Greece: cf. Ael.VH 13.3 (13b), adding that Xerxes' murder was part of the pay-back. (It is sad that no one explains why Xerxes invaded the tomb; even in propaganda [Henkelmann §5], one would expect some statement on the matter.) Photius' epitome is singularly lacking in religious elements.

an encirclement (33). These are all cases in which an element of surprise is used to engineer contact-fighting in which one side will start with an advantage. Some such element may also been present at Cunaxa (48), though (if so) it arose more through error on Cyrus' part than ingenious planning on that of Artaxerxes. A slightly different category is represented by the first skirmish of the Elder Cyrus' rebellion at Hyrba (17), where Cyrus led one wing and Oebaras the other - a rather superfluous bit of information, since in the event all of the killing is done by Cyrus and three unnamed companions. This sort of heroic image recurs with the single combats of Semiramis with Stabrobates (5), Stryangaeus with Zarinaea (15), Inaros with Achaemenides (40), and Megabyzus with Inaros (42), Ousiris (43) and Menostanes (44).<sup>16</sup> This is a species of tactical situation that Cunaxa warns us not to regard as unthinkable in the post-Homeric real world, and ancient commanders were in general certainly more at risk of physical harm than their modern counterparts, but one may well feel Ctesias overdoes it.

For more complex battle-field tactical descriptions we can look to just four cases.

In the first battle between Cyrus and Astyages (18) we are provided with information about dispositions on both sides (Astyages is out in front with his 20,000 *doryphoroi*; Atradates, Cyrus and Oebaras are placed on the right, in the middle and on the left respectively, Cyrus being with the "best of the Persians") and told that, after initial successes, the Persians were beaten because the more numerous Medes mounted relay-attacks (a tactical feature beloved of Diodorus, though what we are reading here is Nicolaus). The fact that part of the way through the battle Astyages is found watching the conflict from his throne (and issuing threats against his own generals) seems to show that the initial dispositions changed before the battle started. The next encounter (19) involves two strands: while the Median and Persian armies in front of an unnamed city, a separate Median contingent detaches itself and circles around (ἐκπεριελθοῦσαι) to attack the city. This is captured, and the implied presentation of a successful assault on a fortified site

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<sup>16</sup> Could the death of Datis at Marathon (31) have actually been the result of a single combat with Miltiades? Photius fails to put it like that (contrast 40, 42-44) but is conceivable he was distracted by a greater interest in the Athenians' refusal to hand back Datis' body, evidently a significant narrative point in view of its alleged status as a justification for Xerxes' later attack (13[25]), and a notable divergence from Herodotus. (Cagnazzi 1999 has argued that one might accept Ctesias' version as true.) Another divergent death of a Persian commander is that of Mardonius, who survives Plataea and dies at Delphi (13[29])

probably dominated the overall narrative, for that would ensure that the successive battles (**18** and **19**) provided sufficiently varied literary entertainment. More complex still, even in summary (55 lines of text), is the second battle between Semiramis and Stabrobates (**5**). An initial Indian cavalry and chariot attack is neutralised by Semiramis' cavalry and her corps of fake elephants, and she counter-attacks, accompanied by *epilektoi*. But Stabrobates then send his infantry into action, preceded by (real) elephants, while he himself, mounted on a particularly fine animal, leads a charge on the right wing towards the Assyrian Queen. There is a general rout, Semiramis is wounded twice, but escapes (as her horse outruns Stabrobates' elephant), and a chaotic struggle ensues at the pontoon-bridge over the Indus. After a time the moorings are cut, casting many Indians into the violent current of the river and providing safety to Semiramis and those of her army who had made it across beforehand. Since Cunaxa (**48**) - the fourth of the more detailed narratives - only survives in very unbalanced form (see discussion later), this Indian battle is our most systematic example of what a full-scale Ctesian battle might look like. Aside from the presence of real and fake elephants (on which more later) the tactical picture is fairly unremarkable in Greek terms, save perhaps for the fact that Stabrobates (on his right wing, as would be normal) finds himself opposite Semiramis - who therefore appears to be commanding from her left. Since no formal description of initial dispositions survives and since Diodorus says that Semiramis was "placed opposite Stabrobates by chance" (*κατ' αὐτὸν τυχικῶς τεταγμένην*) it is conceivable that what happened during the first phase of the battle (including Semiramis' exploitation of the discomfiture of the initial Indian attack) had accidentally produced the relevant situation. If so, Diodorus' epitome has suppressed a significant element in the story. If not, it has suppressed comment on the Queen's choice of an unusual battle-field position. Either way, then, something not entirely banal is going on. But, no doubt, it would not be appropriate to get too excited about the fact.

*Other details* Identification of items in this category is somewhat arbitrary: some could no doubt be assigned to the previous one, others might be regarded as not part of a specific battle-narrative *stricto sensu*. At any rate, items represented by crosses in Table 2, column F include: pre-battle messages between opposing commanders (**4**, **8**, **18**), exhortatory rhetoric before (**19**, **48**) or during (**20**) a battle,<sup>17</sup> the threats of Astyages against his own generals (**18**) or troops (**21**), whipping of soldiers into battle (**32**),<sup>18</sup> shouts of support from shore-

<sup>17</sup> cf. also 8d(31).

<sup>18</sup> cf. Hdt.7.56,103,223, Xen.An.3.4.25.



line troops during a naval engagement (4),<sup>19</sup> the obscene but effective message of Persian women to their menfolk (21), Astyages' inspection of a battle from his throne (18),<sup>20</sup> the capture of besieged cities (3, 13, 26, 35: see below p.12), pre-battle manoeuvring in the mountains (20), fighting at a bridge (5) or in a river (11-12),<sup>21</sup> capture of an enemy camp (9), interaction between horses and elephants (5: see below p.12), the capture of the wounded Zarinaea (15), prisoner-suicide and hostage-murder (26), failure to return the body of a dead commander (31), use of stones as weapons (20), Combaphis' treachery (29), discomfiture of Bactrian troops by adverse wind (39), the unspecified bravery of Charitimides (41) or the sons of Megabyzus (43), and a partly lost tale of stratagem, rout and the capture of a wealth-laden tent (21).<sup>22</sup> It is hard to say that there is any pattern here, and much of it is more or less banal. Exceptions might include the Bactrians' problem with wind (and desert sand?) during a land-battle or the shocking intervention of Persian womenfolk in the final battle between Astyages and Cyrus: I do not recall precise analogies in Greek military narrative, though the active engagement of women in (what Ctesias - or Nicolaus - characterizes as) a siege is not in itself odd.<sup>23</sup> So, rather than discussing the contents of this category further as such, I shall instead draw attention to a number of matters that are not immediately captured by the raw tabulation in Table 2.

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<sup>19</sup> cf. Thuc.7.71. (I do not mean to assert that Ctesias actually matched the sober emotionalism of this passage; but the event was an opportunity for colourful treatment.)

<sup>20</sup> cf. Xerxes at Salamis: Hdt. 8.86,88,90, Aesch.Pers.465f, Plut.Them.13.

<sup>21</sup> cf. Thuc.7.84. (The same caveat applies as in n.11.)

<sup>22</sup> Pace Lenfant 2004: lx, the wealth carried off here does not come from Ecbatana, but from Astyages' campaign tent.

<sup>23</sup> Thuc.2.4.2, 3.74.1, Hdt.6.77, Plut. Pyrrh.34, id.245BC, Diod.13.56, 15.83, Paus.8.48. Schaps 1982, Graf 1984, Loraux 1985, Kearns 1990. -- Note, incidentally, that elsewhere in *Persika* women-fighters appear not only as heroic individuals (Semiramis, Zarinaea, Sparethra, Rhoxane) but *en masse*: Sparethra leads an army of 300,000 men and 200,000 women (25 = 9[3]).

### Miscellaneous features

The epitomized nature of Ctesias' surviving text means that few, if any, components reach us in a rich enough form to sustain much discussion. I shall pick on just three general features here.<sup>24</sup>

*Non-critical military environments* The mounting of major expeditions involves prolonged special preparation (two years in the case of Semiramis' attack on India: 1b [16.5,17.1]), but armies also have some continuous existence away from the battlefield or the active campaign. Ninyas and his successors, inactive as conquerors, maintain a standing army, changed on an annual basis (1b [21; 24]; 1pd, 1pe). Semiramis took an army with her as she progressed round the empire building things, and had a predilection for inspecting it (1b[13.3, 14.2], 1ld), as well as for one-night stands with handsome officers. Parsondes is captured and carried off to demeaning servitude in Babylon during a hunting expedition that seems to involve an army - or, at any rate, a large enough body of men to require the services of *kapeloi* (6b.2): one recalls that a hunting expedition can be a cover for military aggression in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (1.4.16f, 2.4.16f).<sup>25</sup> Much later "the army" (ἡ στρατιὰ) becomes disenchanted with Secundianus (15[49]) because of his murder of Xerxes II and execution of Bagorazus. No doubt this is tied up with the later defection of Arbarius and Arsames (15[50]), but Ctesias (or Photius) seems to write as though the army has an existence independent of its being summoned for a particular military task. One wonders, but cannot tell, what connection, if any, passages like this have with the issue of military training raised at the start of the story of Ninus (1b[1.4]).

*Strategy and stratagems.* Campaign strategy is rarely articulated in the surviving material: pretty much the only example is defensive occupation of fortresses, rejected by anti-Assyrian rebels in 1b(25.5), but adopted (with varying eventual results) by the Bactrians against Ninus and the Persians against Astyages. As for stratagems, I have already noted the missing one in **21** (the final Cyrus-Astyages confrontation) - unless, indeed, it was not a stratagem but an *andragathema* - and not many others are visible. Stabrobates' retreat from the Indus after the river-battle (**4**), to entice Semiramis over the river into his territory, is rather banal, Semiramis' creation of 300,000 fake elephants (actually camels camouflaged with stuffed

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<sup>24</sup> For some other stray themes or items cf. nn. 3,15,25,31.

<sup>25</sup> Other association of hunting and warfare: 1oa, 1pd, 6b.1. Camp-followers recur in the Cunaxa narrative (F20 = Plut. *Artox.*11.9, 12.5, F26 = *ibid.*14.2).

cow-hide) grandly absurd (**5**: 1b[16.8-10, 18.6-8, 19.1-3]),<sup>26</sup> and the latter comes accompanied by a nice variation on the reaction of horses: horses unfamiliar with (real) elephants are upset when they encounter them, but in the battle with Stabrobates the Indian horses (which *are* familiar with elephants) are thrown into confusion when they meet animals that look like elephants but do not have the right smell - and this despite the fact that the Indians have already discovered from deserters that the elephants are fake.<sup>27</sup> Two other stratagems involve the ending of sieges. Actually, Semiramis' use of rock-climbing experts to get into a supposedly impregnable sector of the Bactrian capital may hardly qualify as a stratagem.<sup>28</sup> But creation of mannequin soldiers on the end of long poles to convince the Lydians that the upper part of Sardis had been entered by Persian troops surely does (**26**: 9[4], 9a-c) - and displays the same sort of whimsical absurdism as Semiramis' elephants.

This Sardian stratagem is one of the relatively few military items preserved not only in one of the major epitomes (in this case Photius) but also elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> These extra passages do not add much, though Polyaeus (7.6.10 = 9c) does specify that the mannequins looked Persian because they had beards, Persian dress, a quiver on their back and a bow in their hand. 9b comes from a discussion of *ekphrasis* in Theon's *Progymnasmata* (7 [118 Sp]), so one might think the Ctesian original was quite detailed. But I am not sure whether this is certainly so. The precise context is *ekphrasis* that deals with the way in which *σκεύη*, *ὄπλα* or *μηχανήματα* are made. Ctesias is

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<sup>26</sup> Suda s.v. *Semiramis* reports that she made 200,000 imitation elephants with two Ethiopian archers on each of them. Goukowsky 1972: 475 has this as a Ctesian fragment, but Lenfant does not include it, and Jacoby 1958: 434 [apparatus] describes the entry as "aus einem Benutzer des Kt." - one who has evidently somewhat altered the original. (There are other similar slight differences elsewhere in the Suda entry.) König 1972: 38 considers the whole story to be a Hellenistic invention.

<sup>27</sup> For a presumably more conventional example of horses discomfited by elephants cf. **27** = 9(7), though no details survive.

<sup>28</sup> The hypercritical may suspect contamination from sources aware of Alexander's Bactrian feats of mountaineering warfare, but the case is not specially good - weaker, certainly, than e.g. that of Semiramis' consultation of Ammon (a story which, however, is gamely defended by Dalley 2005: 19). Auberger 1991: 149, 160 worries about contamination of the Semiramis-India episode from Alexander material.

<sup>29</sup> The others are **15** (mostly involving the romantic story of Zarinaea and Stryangaeus) and **48** (Cunaxa).

cited in parallel with Homer's *Hoplōpoia*, Thucydides' *περιτειχισμὸς τῶν Πλαταιέων* and the same author's *ἡ τῶν μηχανημάτων κατασκευή*. The first of these occupies much of *Iliad* xviii, the last only some ten lines (4.100.2-4: the opening words are cited *verbatim*). The extent of the second is debatable. The Budé commentator glosses it as "3,21sq". But (a) if one is going beyond just 3.21 [14 lines] one might have to extend to all of 3.21-24 [100 lines in total]); and (b) 2.76-78 (65 lines) must on the face of it come into consideration as well.<sup>30</sup> In any event we have three examples here of very differing length. When he comes to Ctesias, Theon gives the *dénouement* of the story in some four lines but says nothing about construction of the mannequins. We might account for this by assuming that the four lines are (as Lenfant supposes) a *verbatim* quotation, that Ctesias, having told the story first, then glossed it with an account of how the *eidola* were made, and that Theon treated the cited lines as the opening of that account (so that his citation of them is parallel to his citation of Thucydides 4.100.2 just above). But this does not feel a very comfortable hypothesis, and I have a suspicion that, as this is Theon's only allusion to Ctesias, he may not have had a text in front of him or known anything more than that Ctesias told a story that included a rather odd bit of military machinery: on this view the idea that there was an *ekphrasis* may simply be an assumption or a dim recollection, and we can infer little or nothing about the extent or elaboration of any such *ekphrasis*.

*Military hardware.* The Sardian mannequins are not the only military hardware in Ctesias. We encounter camel-riders with four-cubit long swords (*makhairai*) and scythe-chariots - the latter a Persian invention (so one view has it: Nefiodkin 2001: 268ff; 2004: 369f) that the historian gaily shows already in use in Assyrian times and will have seen in action at Cunaxa. When Semiramis' 2000 Levantine river-boats defeat Stabrobates' 4000 Indian *kalamos*-boats (4: 1b[16.6-7, 17.4-5, 18.4]), this may in the original narrative have had something to do with differential naval architecture. It is conceivably relevant that Ctesias apparently claimed that Semiramis was the first person

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<sup>30</sup> Thucydides on the Plataean *periteikhismos* is already mentioned in Theon 68 Sp. in an introductory section about the types of literary discourse that Theon is going to cover: there it is said to occur *ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ*. Other *ekphraseis* include Thucydides on the plague, Plato on Sais, Theopompus on Tempe, Herodotus on the walls of Ecbatana (wrongly ascribed to Book II - which makes one wonder about *ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ*), and Philistus on Dionysius I's preparations against the Carthaginians and the building of weapons, ship and machines.

to travel on a warship (3 = Pliny *NH* 7.207).<sup>31</sup> There is little of special interest about personal armour or weapons. Ctesias' armies unremarkably consist of cavalry and infantry, but little precise description survives. Wounds are inflicted with swords or ballistic weapons. We have noted the archetypal bow-bearing Persian at Sardis. Artaxerxes wears a *thorax* (20[11.2], 21), Cyrus' blood drenches his *ephippeios pilos* (20[11.6]) - an object of disputed identity<sup>32</sup> - and the Sacae are asserted to have invented the *sakos* (7b). 1b(6.6) reports that Semiramis devised a form of clothing for her journey to Bactria that concealed her gender and protected her skin from the sun. This, we are told, was the dress later used by Medes and Persians, and we are clearly dealing with the riding-costume that Greeks tended to regard as typical of their Persian enemies and imagined as the normal dress of the Persian King (Tuplin 2007). This is certainly *inter alia* a form of military dress, and Ctesias' account of its origin succeeds in giving it a somewhat ambiguous but nonetheless real feminine allure.<sup>33</sup> The protection of the skin from the sun vividly recalls King

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<sup>31</sup> Dalley 2003: 182 follows König's over-optimistic treatment of the corrupt *paradosis* in Pliny (1972: 39) in believing that an Aramaic boat-term (*sapanu*) is used in this passage. - Naval (or riverine) warfare plays no large role in Ctesias, and other instances - Ariaramnes' penteconter expedition to Scythia (30), Salamis (36), and Charitimides' naval victory (41) - fall within the Photian epitome and survive without detail. Ctesias' non-Hellenocentric treatment of pre-490 and post-478 history rules out Lade and Eurymedon; and Artemisium is missing from the Xerxes invasion (an indecisive event which simply did not earn a place in narrative terms, I think, rather than an "Athenian" event suppressed because of the Spartan bias identified by Lenfant 2004: xcvi). The last episodes of *Persika* concern negotiations with Conon that would lead to a naval campaign: but no hint of what Ctesias made of that appears to survive.

<sup>32</sup> Normally taken to be a saddle-cloth, it has been re-identified as a *prometopidion* (i.e. an adornment on the head of the horse) by Bassett 1999. It is perhaps easier to see how something on the horse's head (onto which Cyrus might have slumped after receiving his head wound) could become blood-soaked, but that a prince's horse would have a felt *prometopidion* does seem rather unlikely, and both *ephippios* and *pilos* are suitable words for a something that one sits upon (cf. Xen.*RE* 12.8, *Cyr.*5.5.7).

<sup>33</sup> Lanfranchi (this volume) suggests that Ctesias was correcting Hellanicus' ascription of the invention to a Median queen called Atossa (4 F178a).

Agesilaus' public display of the white skin of Persian (male) prisoners.<sup>34</sup>

In his account of the siege of Nineveh, Diodorus (2.27.1) draws attention to the fact that siege machinery (πετρόβολοι, χελῶναι χωστρίδες, κριοί) was not then available. A comparable observation appears in 45r = Aelian *Nature of Animals* 5.3, to the effect that the Indian King uses *skolex* oil as a fire-raising resource in the siege of cities (pots of it are thrown into the city with slings) and therefore does not need κριοί, χελῶναι and the other ἐλεπόλεις. Lenfant secludes the first passage from her text of Flb as a Diodoran addition, but makes no comment on the second. Κριοί and χελῶναι do already appear in fourth century texts and were allegedly in use in 440-439,<sup>35</sup> but the terms χελῶναι χωστρίδες, πετρόβολοι and ἐλεπόλεις are decidedly Hellenistic. But, if it is unlikely that the wording is Ctesias', is it impossible that the essential comment should be his? The time at which he was writing *Persika* coincided with Dionysius I's great promotion of siege-machinery. Ctesias was potentially in a position to comment that eastern rulers did not have or did not need such things; we simply have to assume that those citing him later updated the comment by referring to contemporary models.<sup>36</sup> While speaking of siege-warfare, we may also note that in the description of Babylon we are told that there were no towers in the sector facing marshland because the latter was a sufficient natural defence (1b[7.5]): the presumption is that towers, not just a protected parapet-walk, are needed properly to defend a wall.<sup>37</sup>

Finally in this section there are the elephants - living creatures, indeed, but surely also to be categorized as military hardware. Ctesias had seen elephants (45[7], 45b). He saw them

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<sup>34</sup> Xen.*Hell.*3.4.19 = *Ages.*1.28.

<sup>35</sup> κριοί: Xen.*Cyr.*7.4.1. χελῶναι: Xen.*Hell.*3.1.7, Aen.*Tact.* 32.11, 33.1. Diod.12.28.2-3 uses both terms to describe machines allegedly first used by Pericles in the siege of Samos. (Plut.*Per.*27 is less specific.) Marsden 1969: 50 was sceptical and Whitehead 1990: 196 calls the claim controversial.

<sup>36</sup> For another comment on change cf. 1b(1.5): "in Ninus' times Arabia seems to have been full of brave men (ἀλκιμῶν ἀνδρῶν)". Later Arabs contribute to the alliance that topples Sardanapalus (1b[24.5,7]), but thereafter drop out of Ctesias' world. See Lanfranchi (this volume) on Ctesias' treatment of Arabia.

<sup>37</sup> Lenfant 2004: 33 n.155 says that Ctesias is explaining the wall did not surround entire city (as confirmed by archaeology). But Ctesias does seem to assume that it did.

in Babylon, not India, of course, and it hard to know how rare a thing it was there, but there cannot have been very many Aegean Greeks of his generation who had shared his experience. Moreover, he had seen them being used to knock down palm-trees and could thus provide some indirect autoptic validation for the report that the Indian King used them to break down the walls of his enemies.<sup>38</sup> (Perhaps this was in contexts where the walls in question were less robust than those that demanded deployment of *skolex* oil.) But Ctesias also knows of them in use on the battlefield. When the Elder Cyrus sustained his fatal wound, it was because the Derbicans had deployed Indian elephants in an ambush (one would love to be able to read how that was done...) and disrupted his cavalry (9[7]), and elephants (real as well as fake) play a significant role in the great battle between Semiramis and Stabrobates (5).

Both rulers place their elephants in front of the rest of their troops. (I see no sign of the intermingling of elephants and light-armed troops found at Hydaspes and in some Hellenistic sources.<sup>39</sup>) Semiramis' appear to remain static - prudently given their ramshackle nature - allowing the enemy cavalry to be disrupted when it attacks; but Stabrobates sends them charging at the Assyrians ahead of his advancing infantry, and the elephants play a large role in winning the battle for him. I have not conducted a rigorous examination of Hellenistic elephant use, but it is not my impression that the tactics of this Ctesianic battle are particularly banal by Hellenistic standards. A relatively minor engagement in Diodorus 18.45 (Antigonus sends his elephants *κατὰ μέτωπον* accompanied by cavalry and infantry in a downhill attack on Alcetas near Pisidian Cretopolis) and the more important Battle of Gaza in Diodorus 19.83ff (where a second wave elephant assault, after initial cavalry skirmishing, is neutralised by the use of caltrops) provide as good a pair of partial parallels as any. At the Hydaspes, by contrast, the developing battle does not seem to involve a strongly proactive attacking role for Porus' elephants, while in other battles where there were (real) elephants on both sides the tactical character of the event seems pretty dissimilar to that of Ctesias' Indian event: at

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<sup>38</sup> The claim is validated by later Indian material: Karttunen 1989: 63, 1997: 188. Among later Greek sources Ones.134 F14 has them uprooting trees and destroying walls, as does Arist.HA 610a19. See also Diod.18.34.1f (Perdiccas' attack on Camels' post), 18.71.2 (Damis thwarts an elephant attack on Megalopolis with caltrops).

<sup>39</sup> Strab.4.3.22; App.Syr.18(83) (Magnesia); Diod.19.29.7 (Paraetacene), 40.2,3 (Gabiene), 82.3 (Gaza); Polyb.18.7 (Panion); I Macc.6.34f (Beth Zacariah).

Ipsus, for example, the elephants were on the flanks and the most important contribution by any of them was blocking the return of Demetrius' cavalry to the battlefield.<sup>40</sup>

It is hard to tell how, if at all, Ctesias attempted to evoke the spectacle of war-elephants: nothing survives quite like the Alexander historians' idea that they made Porus' battle line look like a wall in which the elephants were the towers, and the troops between them the *mesopurgia*.<sup>41</sup> But we should not discount the possibility that some colourful scene-painting lies behind the statement in 1b(17.8) that they constituted an *ἀνυπόστατον ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει...ἐπιφάνειαν*. This particular passage is of interest for another reason, for it represents Stabrobates' elephants as having towers (*θωράκια*) on their backs. It seems open to serious doubt that this would have been true of Indian elephants in Ctesias' time (the silence of the *Artaśastra* and of Megasthenes (F31) is quite telling here), and many believe that such towers were in fact a Greek invention of the early third century BC (Goukowsky 1972: 475 n.10, 497, Scullard 1974: 105; cf. 240f). Since Stabrobates' elephants are *κεκοσμημένοι τοῖς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον καταπληκτικοῖς* (1b [16.3]; cf. 17.7) and since the *Artaśastra* does speak of elephants being protected by body-armour, we might conclude that (as with siege machinery: see above) a Hellenistic excerptor (i.e. Diodorus) has embellished the Ctesian original. But there is, perhaps, an alternative possibility. Goukowsky 1972: 473 notes that at Diodorus 17.88.6 (part of the account of the battle of the Hydaspes) there is disagreement in the MSS between the readings *θηρίων* and *θωράκιον*. In this case it is clear that the former is right, because other witnesses to the vulgate tradition do not allow for a *howdah* at this point. So, Diodoran MSS are vulnerable to the false substitution of one word by the other. Might this have happened the other way around in Diodorus 2.17.8? Certainly the statement that the Indian King's elephants appeared like something beyond the power of human nature to resist *διὰ τε τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῶν θωρακίων κατασκευὴν* would still make sense if *θηρίων* were substituted for *θωρακίων*.

Ctesias' knowledge of war-elephants is certainly an advance on Herodotus (for whom elephants are a source of ivory), and it is isolated until the Alexander historians. There is no reason to think them a normal feature of the Achaemenid practice of warfare in Ctesias' time. Even six decades later the few that Darius allegedly had at Gaugamela (Arrian 3.8.6, 11.6) are not actually said to have done anything and are perhaps to be seen more as a prestige-gift from some Indian ruler (Briant 2002:

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<sup>40</sup> Plut.*Dtr.*29; Bar-Kochva 1976: 107-109, Billows 1997: 182-185.

<sup>41</sup> Diod.17.87, Curt.8.14.13, Polyen.4.3.22; cf. Arr.5.15.7.



680, 756) than a serious piece of military hardware.<sup>42</sup> So Ctesias is undoubtedly engaging his imagination: once again we have the characteristic mixture of feasible data and fictive creation. The same thing applies to another (non-military) proposition about elephants: the existential problems of the *martikhora* does not make the statement that Indians hunt it with elephants (45[15]) wholly worthless, even if strictly speaking it is better evidence for the way people told stories about an imagined world than for deployment of pachyderms against big cats in the real one.<sup>43</sup>

## B. THE BATTLE OF CUNAXA

### Ctesias' account of Cunaxa: general lineaments

What is known of Ctesias' account falls under seven heads.<sup>44</sup>

1. *Numbers of combatants*. Ctesias (22) assigned the King 400,000 troops. No figure survives for Cyrus' army.

2. *Harangues*. 16(63) reports pre-battle harangues by Cyrus and Artaxerxes. Given the order of items in 16(63-64) it may be that these harangues are not literally battle-field ones; but the items between them and the start of battle could all be embraced in an (at times digressive) account of the components of two armies.

3. *Clearchus' advice*. 16[64] says that Cyrus died as a result of ignoring Clearchus' advice - i.e. the advice not to fight in front line reported in Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 8 = F18. In Xenophon (1.7.9) many people give Cyrus this same advice, though he also has Clearchus ask whether Cyrus thinks Artaxerxes will fight and get the reply that he will if he is the son of Darius and Parysatis - a remark reminiscent of the way Plutarch's Cyrus

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<sup>42</sup> Twelve were given to Alexander in Susa by Abulites (Curt. 5.2.10). Ironically Lane Fox 1996 has argued that the Porus decadrachms were minted by Abulites at Susa ahead of Alexander's return from India in a vain attempt to recover favour.

<sup>43</sup> Incidentally elephants and hunting intersect in a different and more mundane fashion in Ctesias' representation of Stabrobates preparing for Semiramis' attack by organising large-scale elephant-hunts (1b[16.3,8, 17.7-8]).

<sup>44</sup> The principal sources for Cunaxa are Xen.*Anab.*1.8.1-29, 10.1-19; Ctesias 16(64), 18-26; Dinon 690 FF16-17; Diod.14.22-24, Plut. *Artox.*7-13. Much of our knowledge of Ctesias' version (and all of our knowledge of Dinon's version) comes from Plutarch. The rest, apart from a few uninformative lines of Photius, comes from Xenophon (F21), Demetrius (F24) and Apsines (F25).

rebukes Clearchus for wanting him to be king without being worthy of it.

4. *Cyrus' death*. Cyrus' death is described at length.

5. *Greek activities*. The way in which the King's fear of rampaging Greeks inhibits him from going to see body of Cyrus hints at what is going on in Ctesias' narrative outside the death-of-Cyrus thread 20(12.3).

6. *Tissaphernes*. T14a/F24 = Dtr.216 appears to represent Parysatis as knowing that Tissaphernes has assured the King's escape. If this is indeed what is meant it guarantees that Tissaphernes played a role in Ctesias' narrative - something that is not otherwise apparent.

7. *Casualty figures*. Ctesias contrasts the official figure for the king's losses (9,000) with own estimate (20,000) in F22 (Plutarch Artoxerxes 13).

Of these seven items, only Cyrus' death survives in any detail. In the other six it is not plain that what we can tell of Ctesias' treatment is fundamentally inconsistent with the picture emerging from one or more of the other sources. I stress "fundamentally", and much does depend on what one regards as fundamental. The variation in estimates of Persian casualties in Ctesias and Diodorus (14.24.5: 15,000) is unremarkable. On the other hand, Ctesias' figure for the King's initial forces, though the same as that of Ephorus, is less than half of Xenophon's and smaller (we do not know by how much) than Dinon's. Since Ephorus' figure *may* reflect the direct or indirect influence of Ctesias' account (and so be irrelevant in this context), we might after all want to say that Ctesias represents a significantly different strand. What inhibits one from saying that immediately is perhaps a feeling that 400,000 and 900,000 are equally silly figures. But to assert modern realism in that way may be beside the point. Similarly (but pushing in the other direction), Ctesias' inclusion of pre-battle harangues might differentiate his narrative as a literary artefact but not necessarily betoken an essentially different version of the military events on the battle-field. (In particular, I can quite well imagine them in a narrative that nonetheless shared a version of Xenophon's claim that the King's appearance on the scene took Cyrus by surprise.) Cyrus' alleged refusal to accept Clearchus' advice not to expose himself to personal danger can be set against Xenophon's claim (1.8.12-13) that Clearchus refused to obey an order from Cyrus to reposition his troops immediately before the battle, but, although the promulgation of one or other story may look like an attempt to apportion blame for the eventual disaster to Cyrus or Clearchus respectively, both stories could be true - or at least could be told in the same narrative. And as to the King's apprehension about the Greeks even after Cyrus' death, if there is any disagreement between Xenophon and Ctesias here, it is not about

Artaxerxes' feelings but about the tactical setting within which he had them. The same goes for Tissaphernes' role. Ctesias, Xenophon and Diodorus seem to agree that Tissaphernes played a notable part in the battle: but its identity differs in Xenophon and Diodorus and is *prima facie* unknown in Ctesias, and any further thoughts on the topic sooner or later become enmeshed with the issue of Cyrus' death.

This brings us to the real problem. For what Ctesias says about Cyrus' death is on the face of it rather different from what we find in the others, though somewhat less dissimilar from Diodorus than from Xenophon or Dinon. For the historian of the battle of Cunaxa the question is whether a rational account of the battle can be constructed within which Ctesias' picture of Cyrus' end would fit. For the historian of Ctesias that may be a question too, but (just in case the truth is that a rational account of Cunaxa is beyond our reach) there is a more modest question: is Ctesias' attempt at evoking the occasion more or less stupid or inadequate than the attempts of Xenophon or Dinon or Ephorus?

#### **External validation of Ctesias on Cunaxa**

Is there any external validation for or evidence about the status of Ctesias' account? Two things come to mind.

1. The strong association of Ctesias specifically with the Cyrus expedition visible in T1b, T3, T5a, T5b (in 1b to extent of imagining that that was when Ctesias was captured by Persians) is quite striking. Is this some sort of implicit comment on Ctesias' account of Cunaxa - e.g. on the space it occupied (especially taking into account the subsequent mostly gruesome spin-off events, as Artaxerxes and Parysatis settle scores arising from Cyrus' death) and the historian's prominent role in one aspect of the narrative? Perhaps. But T5a explicitly links Ctesias and Xenophon in this context, and it is hard not to think that the intersection of *Persika* and Ctesias' doctoring of the King with the personal history of another Greek historian and the text of one of his masterpieces played a (perhaps determinative) role in linking Ctesias' name to Cunaxa.

2. This brings us to a second and more important point. Xenophon actually cites Ctesias twice in his account of the battle. This means that searchers after the truth of what happened at Cunaxa are denied the luxury of even trying to pretend that Xenophon's and Ctesias' account are entirely independent. It is certain that they are not. But can we say anything more than that? What sort of validation of Ctesias on Cunaxa is Xenophon issuing?

Ctesias is actually only cited by Xenophon for two very specific pieces of information, both said to be dependent upon his personal autopsy. The case fits a pattern explicated by Gray 2003, in which citation is primarily a rhetorical tool for

underlining the truth of an apparently surprising assertion rather than either (a) a marker of possible doubt ("Ctesias says so-and-so - but who knows if he is reliable?") or (b) a grateful acknowledgement that someone else is better informed than Xenophon is himself. (By the latter I mean, not that the informant does not in fact have information that Xenophon might not otherwise be able to have, but that the purpose of mentioning the source is not simply to make that point.) The case is, of course, also different from the others discussed by Gray in that the source is specified and named. But this too could be said to be a rhetorical gambit: it marks a particular pair of events (Cyrus' wounding of Artaxerxes and the losses among the King's entourage) as peculiarly important "improbable" occurrences. The particularity of the head-to-head of Cyrus and his brother and its elevated status on the world stage (Artaxerxes was, after all, the most powerful single individual in the world as known to Xenophon or his readers) cries out for the particularisation of the source who can vouch for it.

The fact that Xenophon labels Ctesias as ὁ ἰατρός at the first citation (as well as adding the statement that Ctesias treated Artaxerxes' wound) and - somewhat superfluously - comments παρ' ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἦν at the second citation, thus heavily insisting upon Ctesias as a specially qualified autopt, is very striking. On the one hand, anyone who bothered to think about how Xenophon could know that Ctesias attested what he is said to have attested would have to conclude that it was because of *Persika* - and might therefore pose the question of the general relation of Xenophon's battle narrative and Ctesias'. On the other hand, the way of putting it does not positively invite that response: for, although the second piece of information is not specifically medical, the apparently superfluous παρ' ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἦν does have the effect of keeping one's attention focused on Ctesias the actor (who would know of the relevant losses because his doctoring of the King brought him into close contact with the entourage at the relevant time) rather than Ctesias the historian. It is true, of course, that from one point of view Xenophon is virtually saying "if you want to know how many of the royal entourage died, go and look up Ctesias' account". But this is arguably not a real invitation. The rhetorical purpose of the reference is to highlight the statement about those who died in Cyrus' entourage. It does not matter whether the reader follows up the reference, only that he accepts Xenophon's word that Ctesias reported a number of deaths - guaranteeing that there was an epic struggle - and that this particular report is reliable.

The question is important. If the reader is expected to be conscious of Ctesias the historian, various other possibilities arise. At a rather broad level, for example, I suggested in 2004b: 155 that one (intended) effect of mentioning Ctesias

might be to locate Xenophon's *Anabasis* in relation to the latest work of Persian history. More specifically, the reader, once caused to juxtapose Xenophon and Ctesias, might in principle conclude either that Xenophon was vouching for nothing in Ctesias except the two points of explicit citation (so that the reader need pay Ctesias no further heed - perhaps in practice behaving as though Ctesias' account by and large is worthless) or that he thought the two accounts were broadly reconcilable (though it may not be the reader's business to dwell on this in detail) or that he was actually inviting the reader to conduct a critical comparison and even to notice that had constructed his account to respond to Ctesias on some points - in fact, that he was issuing an intertextual challenge. Since we cannot tell *a priori* which of these scenarios applies, this line of thought turns out to be unproductive as a way of establishing something qualitative about Ctesias' account by external criteria. But there is a further comment one might make immediately.

It is plain even from a superficial reading of the surviving sources that it was not universally agreed that Artaxerxes was wounded and (not unconnectedly) that one version had it that Artaxerxes killed Cyrus personally. It is credible, then, that someone might cite Ctesias to nail that particular lie and display no further concern about the rest of his narrative - and especially if this was done to (re-)claim some credit for Cyrus (hence the opportunistic second citation of Ctesias about the deaths in the king's entourage) rather than in a spirit of objective enquiry. If he was approaching the topic in that frame of mind, it might not occur to Xenophon that citing the autoptic evidence of a source whose overall account was substantially different from his own could cast doubt upon his own general veracity. There is a real question here, since one possible issue between Ctesias and Xenophon is the severity (as distinct from the fact) of the wound - and on that the autoptic doctor might seem to have a privileged position.

So far as external pointers to the nature of Ctesias' Cunaxa narrative are concerned, then, one might reformulate the question thus: was Ctesias' account one that Xenophon could get away with citing highly selectively? Now one might try to argue that Xenophon could just as well seek to exploit Ctesias' privileged information if the rest of his account were entirely different as if it were generally fairly similar. (It is, after all, a modern academic gambit to note acceptance of the argument of another scholar on some particular point precisely because one rejects the larger hypothesis within which that scholar uses the argument in question: this is supposed to confer particular cogency on the limited point of agreement - "if even so-and-so with his absurd overall view accepts this point, it must be

correct".<sup>45</sup>) But, frankly, Xenophon's behaviour is going to seem easier to understand in a context of broad similarity. We have already seen that other discernible features of Ctesias' narrative do not obviously fall outside the realm of general similarity. One might add that, if those scholars who believe Ephorus' account of the battle to be an amalgamation of Ctesianic and non-Ctesianic elements are correct,<sup>46</sup> implicit in their position is a belief that Ctesias was not completely out on a limb. (The caveat issued before about what constitutes general similarity or fundamental difference still applies, of course.)

We must therefore now examine the Death of Cyrus stories in more detail to see whether this general position can actually be sustained. And, if we find that there remains a degree of irreconcilable difference, we shall have to ask why this arises and whether all historiographical fault lies in Ctesias' court.

### **The death of Cyrus: Dinon and Diodorus**

The salient features of Dinon's account are that Cyrus was killed in the fighting around the King, there were different views as to who actually killed him (the King or a Carian), there is no sign that the King was wounded, and Tiribazus plays a prominent role. The last point is unparalleled in any other version. The first and third are actually inconsistent with Ctesias; and although the acknowledgement of uncertainty as to whether it was Artaxerxes or a Carian who killed Cyrus resonates with some features of Ctesias' narrative, it is certain that the Carian version to which Dinon alludes is different from Ctesias' one, not just because of the putative timing of Cyrus' death but because Dinon's Carian was rewarded whereas Ctesias' was tortured to death by Parysatis. In short, Dinon and Ctesias produce different accounts and they cannot both be true. The prominence of Tiribazus matches other parts of what is known or presumed to be Dinon's version of early fourth c. Persian history (cf. Stevenson 1997), and many will think it suspect - an arbitrary alternative for the prominence of Tissaphernes in all other sources.

Diodorus' narrative as a whole is a mixture of Xenophon-like elements and other material, some of it certainly consistent with Ctesias (e.g. the figure for Artaxerxes' army). What is said about the clash of Cyrus and Artaxerxes and about Cyrus' death is not consistent with Xenophon (not least because of the placing of Tissaphernes) and not necessarily inconsistent

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<sup>45</sup> cf. Binder's estimation (this volume) of Plutarch's citations of Ctesias.

<sup>46</sup> See e.g. Stylianou 91-94, Parker 2004: 39-40.

with Ctesias - though, if dependent on the Ctesianic version, has abbreviated it so heavily as to denude it of much distinctive character. But it is important that what is said about Tissaphernes - which cannot match Xenophon - *could*, for all we can tell, match Ctesias. As I have already remarked, if Ephorus did in fact combine Xenophon and Ctesias, he judged the two accounts had some degree of compatibility. On the other hand, on the matter of (e.g.) Tissaphernes' whereabouts and actions, Ephorus had to make a choice one way or the other, so the two accounts were certainly not entirely compatible. The extent of the choices Ephorus had to make and his grounds for making them (rather than following one source or the other from the outset) are opaque.

### **The death of Cyrus: Ctesias and Xenophon**

So, in the end, the issue is comparison of Xenophon and Ctesias.

*Initial observations* There are three areas in which Ctesias and Xenophon are certainly *prima facie* incompatible: the location of Ariaeus, the King's movements after Cyrus wounds him, and the time of day at which Cyrus died (after dark in Ctesias, but considerably earlier in Xenophon).

About the last point there is (for the moment) nothing more to be said: neither author claims to have been present when Cyrus died and the timings they assign to that event are simply a function of larger decisions about how to tell the story of the battle.

Ctesias puts Ariaeus with Cyrus at the time of the latter's clash with the King, whereas Xenophon seems to have him in a different part of the field. Xenophon ought in principle to have known to which part of the battle-line (and therefore battle) he belonged. It is true that he does not supply an entirely lucid account of that part of the battle,<sup>47</sup> but that is not *necessarily* a ground to dismiss his evidence at this point. 1.9.30f is after all very explicit in separating Ariaeus from Cyrus' immediate entourage on the ground that he (Ariaeus) was

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<sup>47</sup> Problems start with Xenophon's assertion that the King (in the middle of his own army: 1.8.12,21) was outside the left-hand end of Cyrus' (1.8.13,23), had no-one fighting opposite to him (1.8.23), threatened to encircle Cyrus' left, and in the event went past Cyrus' left-wing (1.10.6). The only way to make sense of this is to assume that Cyrus' non-Greek troops (under Ariaeus) were not in a position continuous with his own corps and the Greeks at the time at which the later engaged with Artaxerxes' left wing (1.8.18f). If τὸ βαρβαρικόν (1.8.14) refers to them (which I am not sure that it does), they were at least in some sort of order, but still drawn up some way to the west of the rest of the battle line. Thereafter we hear nothing about them, save that Ariaeus retreated on the death of Cyrus (1.9.31, 10.1) and that he sustained a wound at some stage (2.2.14).

in command of cavalry on the left wing. Ariaeus eventually switched sides after Cyrus' death, and among members of Cyrus' army was theoretically more likely than many to be someone about whom Ctesias might know something. In circles to which Ctesias could have had access it was arguably in Ariaeus' interest to play down his actual contribution to the battle, but it is Xenophon's account that makes him seem inactive and ineffectual, whereas in Ctesias he actually throws a javelin at the King. So, whatever else is the case, it is not obvious that Ctesias' treatment reflects Ariaeus' eventual preferred presentation of events. Perhaps, then, Ctesias actually had some good evidence for what he said. Or perhaps Clearchus told him that (during the period after Cunaxa but before his defection) Ariaeus had claimed to have had an unsuccessful shot at killing the King. Or perhaps Ctesias simply decided to make Ariaeus look more of a traitor to the King for reasons that are now beyond conjecture.<sup>48</sup> There is no way of telling. But it would certainly be begging the question to say that Ariaeus cannot have been with Cyrus because he survived, whereas other members of the close entourage did not. (Xenophon may have drawn that very inference. But perhaps Ariaeus' status as a *suntrapezos* required his presence with Cyrus, even though he was the titular commander of the barbarian left wing, and Xenophon failed to realise this.)

Xenophon and Ctesias (and Diodorus) agree that the King was wounded, but what happened to him thereafter?

In Diodorus he is carried away from the scene and then disappears from sight. In Ctesias' account he gets up, withdraws to a nearby hill and rests there with a small group of people including Ctesias.<sup>49</sup> Clearly this is the point at which Ctesias treats the wound (even if Plutarch does not bother to say so explicitly). When we next hear of the King (on the arrival of

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<sup>48</sup> It might conceivably be relevant that Ariaeus had a subsequent history in western Asia Minor at a time after Ctesias' presumed return home: *Xen.Hell.*4.1.27, *Hell.Oxy.*16.2, 22.3, *Diod.*14.80, *Polyaen.*7.16.1

<sup>49</sup> It is slightly unfair of Stylianou 2004: 93f to criticize the credibility of Ctesias' representation of himself as having been "in the thick of things" at Cunaxa, as though the doctor were actually involved in the cavalry-battle. The King was presumably taken to the nearest convenient location and Ctesias was summoned there - unless the hill had already been identified as a suitable place of refuge in case of need, and the King's doctor (and other body-servants?) located there, as the royal army advanced onto the battle-field. In Xenophon's account it is the King who dictates the precise battle-site and (see also above) nothing precludes Ctesias' essential agreement with that.



news of Cyrus' death) he is still far from his camp, extremely thirsty, suffering from his wound,<sup>50</sup> and in despair about the outcome of the battle. There is no obvious reason to think that he has actually moved from his hill in the meantime, and he has certainly not been engaging in any other military action.

In Xenophon things are very different. Though wounded (and treated by Ctesias), the King turns up with his troops in the Cyrean camp, meets Tissaphernes, proceeds back across the battlefield and has a further near-encounter with the Greek mercenaries, after which the barbarians retreat to a village and the King's entourage (a group of cavalry) establishes itself on an adjacent hill. There is clearly a flat contradiction here, but is Xenophon's version necessarily to be preferred? His evidence is partly based on autopsy, but for the crucial point of the King's whereabouts it apparently depends on (a) the version of events produced by Tissaphernes four to six days later (2.3.19) and (b) the belief that the King's standard had been seen on the hill (1.10.12). They may have been wrong about the standard but, even if they were not, the evidence it supplies for the King being on a hill at some stage in the story is not in itself in conflict with Ctesias. The important question is the validity of Tissaphernes' claim that the Persian troops whom Xenophon knew to have been in Cyrus' camp and whom he had seen move back across the battlefield towards the Greek mercenary army were accompanied (indeed led) by the King.

Would Tissaphernes have lied? His picture is one in which the King is not admitted to have been wounded but represented as active and mobile throughout the engagement, and that might have taken precedence over other considerations. Additionally Tissaphernes is making the point that (alone of those in that sector) he was not over-faced by the Greek forces. Perhaps the whole account is an imposture for which Xenophon fell and from which he was not deflected by Ctesias' presentation of something different. One could see an argument for not being deflected. Tissaphernes' role in Ctesias may have looked a good deal more aggressively heroic than it appears in the *Anabasis* (see below). Perhaps Xenophon decided that the relatively more self-effacing version that Tissaphernes gave straight after the event was more likely to be true. (This carried the implication that the King's wound was not serious and did not prevent continued participation in military events. Perhaps Xenophon lived with that because he felt Ctesias exaggerated the seriousness of the thing to make his own role more important. Or perhaps he did not really stop to think about it.)

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<sup>50</sup> Despite Ctesias' ministrations: the desire for a sharp contrast between despair and victory evidently over-rides the desire for self-congratulation.

*Further considerations* Having commented on some plain *prima facie* contradictions, let us now examine the two accounts as a whole to be sure that we are clear what they are saying.

Ctesias' story, as preserved for us, is lucid in the sense that each time he says that something happened one can be reasonably sure what he means,<sup>51</sup> and the medical realisation of the event is particularly rich (cf. Tuplin 2004a: 336). But it is not quite complete, since, as excerpted by Plutarch, it does not include an element directly corresponding to Xenophon's claim that Ctesias reported how many of the King's entourage were killed. This is no surprise, really, since Plutarch himself says in 11.1 that he has abbreviated the story, but it requires us to work out where the missing material should have been.

The answer must be that it was at the point represented in Plutarch by *φυγῆς καὶ παραχῆς τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν γενομένης* (11.3). I suggest that in Ctesias' picture of events, while the King was being taken away to the safety of a nearby hill and his doctor came to treat him, fighting continued for some time with his entourage.

When Plutarch describes Cyrus being carried off across the battlefield by his over-excitabile horse enveloped by enemies, he is picking up a development or outcome of that continuing fight. In the subsequent narrative Cyrus is no longer in any sort of (as one might say) orderly battle-situation, but moving self-confidently (*ἐπαϊρόμενος δὲ τῆ νίκη* :11.4) among groups of people who had not been part of the fight around the King (though they are part of the King's army). We are now in a quite distinct phase of the story (*ἐπαϊρόμενος δὲ τῆ νίκη* in fact refers to the apparently successful outcome of the missing piece of narrative) - and since darkness is falling it may be that some time has passed.

We might hazard a further guess. If we look at Diodorus' account we find Cyrus (a) wounding the king (with the result

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<sup>51</sup> (a) Cyrus kills Artageres with a thrown spear, having survived a hit by Artageres (which jolted Cyrus but did not penetrate his *thorax*). (b) Ariaeus throws at the King but fails to wound him or anyone else. (c) Artaxerxes misses Cyrus but kills Satiphernes. (d) Cyrus wounds Artaxerxes through the *thorax* (the spear goes in two fingers) causing him to fall; there is consternation and flight, while Artaxerxes is carried to a hill. (e) Cyrus is carried off into a *melée* of enemies by his high-spirited horse Pasacas (F19 = Plut. Artox.9.1) unrecognised (it is already dark). (f) Full of confidence he shouts out *ἐξίστασθε, πενιχροί* and people do obeisance to him. His *tiara* falls off. (g) Mithridates, running by, strikes him on the temple by eye, unaware who he is; a companion picks up Cyrus' blood-soaked *ephippeion pilon*. (h) Some eunuchs put Cyrus on a new horse, then lead him by foot; people all around are shouting that he is king. Some Caunians fall in with the group, and one finishes Cyrus off, when he realises that it is a group of enemies. He is still said not to know Cyrus' identity.

that he is taken off the battlefield) and (b) ἐπαρθείς τῷ προτερήματι τῶν περὶ αὐτόν 14.23.7) in the midst of his enemies. These sound rather like the two distinct phases in Plutarch - and between them Diodorus recounts the success of Tissaphernes in retrieving the defeat around the King (ἀναμαχόμενος τὸ περὶ τὸν βασιλέα γεγονός ἐλάττωμα). Since we know that Tissaphernes figured somewhere in Ctesias' account of the battle, it is tempting to suppose more precisely that he was part of Ctesias' picture of the fighting that followed the king's wound and withdrawal.

Precisely how this worked out we cannot say for sure, both because we only have a Diodoran epitome of Ephorus and because we cannot know how much Ephorus altered things in drawing upon Ctesias' version. But we can make two negative points. First, since Ctesias and Diodorus agree that Cyrus was elated by a sense of victory, it is clear that Tissaphernes' success did not directly impinge upon him: Tissaphernes' retrieval of the situation occurred in a sector distinct from that to which Cyrus had moved. Second, it was also one where the course of events was not visible to the King, since the latter is reported to be in despair about the outcome of the battle when news reaches him of Cyrus' death. It might even be the case that, in this picture of events, Tissaphernes in due course came into contact with Cyrus' main non-Greek contingents (Ariaeus' troops in Xenophon's picture) and ended up bursting into their encampment, as in Xenophon - though perhaps arriving by a different route and (pace Xenophon) certainly not meeting the King there. Diodorus 14.24.3 speaks opaquely of οἱ μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ταχθέντες looting the baggage-train, and in terms of his narrative this ought to mean the troops with Tissaphernes. One hesitates to press this, because by 14.24 Diodorus-Ephorus is on the face of it back with Xenophon as principal source, but perhaps this is precisely one of the areas where there was the sort of overlap that made it feasible to splice Xenophon and Ctesias in the first place.

One must, of course, note that Diodorus' version of the elated Cyrus in the midst of his enemies is on the face of it slightly different from Plutarch's: in Diodorus "he rushed boldly into the midst of the enemy (εἰς μέσους ἐβιάσατο τοὺς πολεμίους) and at first slew numbers of them as he set no bounds to his daring, but later, as he fought too imprudently, he was struck by a common Persian and fell mortally wounded", whereas in Plutarch's representation there seems to be no fighting at this stage: his elation at victory simply takes the form of sweeping through startled and disordered enemy troops instructing them regally to get out of his way. But if we allow for the fact that in Plutarch and Diodorus we are dealing with two disparate bits of excerption (and in particular that Plutarch is rushing to get from the King's wound to the immediate circumstances of Cyrus' death and is completely uninterested in an intervening military

narrative that could have been extensive) I think one can see that there is no disablingly large inconsistency.<sup>52</sup>

Xenophon's narrative (1.8.24-29) consists of four stages.

(a) Cyrus and 600 cavalry assault Artagerses and οἱ πρὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τεταγμένοι. Cyrus kills Artagerses, the rest are routed, and the majority of Cyrus' companions scatter in pursuit of them.

(b) Cyrus and his *homotrapezoi* rush at the King; Cyrus wounds him in the chest, but, as he does so, someone from the King's entourage hits him violently (βιαίως) in face below the eye.

(c) "And then the king and Cyrus fighting and those with them on behalf of each, how many of those around the king died Ctesias (who was with the King) reports, while Cyrus himself was killed and eight of his finest companions fell with him" (καὶ ἐνταῦθα μαχόμενοι καὶ βασιλεὺς καὶ Κῦρος καὶ οἱ ἀμφ' αὐτούς ὑπὲρ ἑκατέρου, ὅποσοι μὲν τῶν ἀμφὶ βασιλέα ἀπέθνησκον Κτησίας λέγει (παρ' ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἦν), Κῦρος δὲ αὐτός τε ἀπέθανε καὶ ὀκτὼ οἱ ἄριστοι τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἔκειντο ἐπ' αὐτῷ).

(d) Artapates, seeing Cyrus' body, dismounts, throws himself upon it and either kills himself or is killed on the King's orders.

The problematic part is the grammatically disjointed sentence in (c).<sup>53</sup> One could read the overall context to mean that Cyrus was struck a (more or less instantly) fatal blow as he wounded the King, and take (c) as a combination of retrospective summary (the clash of Cyrus and the King, and Cyrus' death) and continuation (the fate of people other than Cyrus and the King).<sup>54</sup> Or one could understand the point of mentioning the blow to be, not that it was the cause of Cyrus' immediate death, but only that it was the cause of his inability to press home the advantage over his brother. On this view (c)

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<sup>52</sup> I am tempted to suggest that, if Cyrus *did* engage in further fighting and carnage, the blood that soaked his saddle-cloth (cf. n.32) need not all have been his own.

<sup>53</sup> The opening thirteen words are (on a charitable description) a nominative absolute; less charitably the sentence suffers from asyndeton. Xen.*Hell*.2.3.54 is a parallel, though rather simpler, case. Graham 1996: 325 (citing Kühner-Gerth 1898: 288-9) describes the phenomenon as "concealed partitive apposition, in which the subject of the finite verb is the part, and the whole is expressed by a participle standing in the same case". I have not found much illumination from a rapid contemplation of other Xenophontic use of *kai entautha*. 2.3.11, 4.1.18 might exemplify a resumptive use, 3.4.45 a continuative one.

<sup>54</sup> Among translators Warner 1949 and Dakyns 1890 appear to take his view.

summarizes subsequent events (this seems to be Waterfield's view: 2005: 26), and it follows that both Cyrus and Artaxerxes continued to fight, despite having been wounded and (presumably) at least temporarily deflected from combat. (In Xenophon's view the King's wound was not bad enough to keep him out of the whole of the rest of the battle, so one *could* theoretically imagine that he fought on for a little before retiring to get medical help.) Either way, Xenophon seems slightly vague about the course of events and has chosen to focus on the numbers of elite casualties, not on the particular demise of Cyrus: in fact, the precise moment-of-death in which he is most interested is that of Artapates, not Cyrus.

Now, it is true that on either understanding of what Xenophon is saying, one would not instinctively describe his version as consistent with that of Ctesias: it is too natural a reaction to picture the death of Cyrus (even if it was not the instant result of the face-wound) as occurring quite close in time and place to the initial encounter. But, bearing in mind that Xenophon had seen Ctesias' account, one may wonder why (if he rejected it) he did not replace it with something equally clear. Instead, the only really clear event after Cyrus struck Artaxerxes and someone struck Cyrus is the death of Artapates on Cyrus' body - and even that admits of significant uncertainty (execution or suicide?). In fact, one might say that, instead of replacing Ctesias' account of Cyrus' death with an orderly narrative of his own, Xenophon has replaced it with an assertion of the loyalty of Cyrus' entourage; and one might conclude that the evidence at his disposal made him more sure about that than about the moment of Cyrus' demise, and left him unwilling to venture a precise account of the latter - and this is despite its importance for the subsequent fate of the 10,000. It is all rather odd: other things being equal, one would not expect Cyrus' elimination to slide by as part of a casualty summary.

Before proceeding, two further points about Artapates. First, the tableau of his death is one that *could* fit within Ctesias' overall scenario: Artapates comes upon his master's corpse somewhere on the battle-field and is discovered there when the King comes on the scene. (One might even be inclined to say that there were more likely to be credible reports of the matter if it unfolded like that than if it be supposed to happen in the middle of a piece of hot combat.) But it is surely unlikely that Artapates could have figured in Ctesias without comment from Plutarch, and (in fact) Plutarch's summary reveals that Ctesias had his own, different loyal-figure-at-the-body-of-Cyrus story: Artasyras, the King's Eye, finds Pariscas and other eunuchs mourning Cyrus, and thus discovers that the prince is dead. So Artapates was something of which Xenophon knew (even if in alternative versions) from his own sources. Second, the focus on Artapates and more generally on Cyrus' loyal entourage is

clearly connected with the obituary notice that follows (in which Cyrus' acquisition and cultivation of friends is a central thread), and it forms the link by which we return from obituary notice to main narrative in 1.9.28-1.10.1. In other words, the choice of focus has implications for the literary artefact formed by this part of *Anabasis* that go beyond the simple question of what happened to Cyrus.

Xenophon has chosen to "mark" the importance of Cyrus' death not by an elaborate narrative of the moment of death but by the interposition of a lengthy laudation. So my description a few lines ago of Cyrus' death sliding by as part of a casualty summary is a little misleading. Moreover, whatever elements of uncertainty there may be about Cyrus' death, we must allow that Xenophon explicitly says that someone dealt him a serious blow on the head while he himself was striking the king - something that is not in Ctesias and (given the very similar head-wound that occurs later on in Ctesias) may reasonably be called inconsistent with Ctesias - and, however we deal with (c) above, Xenophon's Cyrus does seem to die close in time and place to the clash with Artaxerxes. There is a consistent scenario here that differs from Ctesias.

Moreover it goes on differing from Ctesias, because, on the face of it, a necessary consequence of having Cyrus (and Artapates) die close in place and time to the clash with Artaxerxes is that the mutilation of his body (1.10.1) also occurs relatively immediately, and is followed by the King's incursion into Cyrus' camp (1.10.1f). For, if we set aside the digressive obituary chapter, the narrative thread apparently runs seamlessly from the items summarised in (a)-(d) above through 1.9.31 (which corresponds to [c]-[d]) to ἐνταῦθα δὴ Κύρου ἀποτέμνεται ἡ κεφαλὴ καὶ ἡ χεὶρ ἡ δεξιὰ (1.10.1).

At this point, however, one starts to become uneasy: what about the King's wound and the need for it to be treated? There are two possibilities.

(1) The King was not in fact treated until after his last explicit appearance in Xenophon's narrative at 1.10.10 - which, in effect, means after night had fallen and the battle was over. This flatly contradicts the implications of Ctesias' account - despite the fact that it is Ctesias Xenophon cites for the wound and Ctesias' treatment thereof.

(2) We find a way of inserting an interlude in Xenophon's apparently seamless narrative. The King's move towards the Cyrean camp seems to follow Ariaeus' flight from the battlefield (1.9.31, 1.10.1), and that follows Ariaeus' discovery that Cyrus was dead. Since (on Xenophon's view - but not Ctesias') Ariaeus was in another sector of the battlefield, that discovery may have taken some time. So perhaps there is an interval following Cyrus' death in the *melée* after he had hit the King, during which the latter could have retired, been treated and then

returned to Cyrus' corpse in a manner that would be similar in broad terms to the Ctesian narrative, but substantially different in detail.

The first of these possibilities is disturbingly paradoxical, but the second is (at least) disconcerting.

Since the best way of explaining certain other features in Xenophon's account is to have Ariaeus some considerable way from the site of the Cyrus-Artaxerxes clash and separated from it by other elements of the King's army,<sup>55</sup> the mechanics of his discovery of Cyrus' death are in any case something of a question, and the passage of time will certainly help in that it provides an opportunity for the confrontation of Ariaeus' troops with the King's right wing to degenerate into the sort of dispersed conflict through which intelligence about events elsewhere in the battle might pass.

But two other questions then arise. On the one hand, are we providing too much time for everything to fit between *deile* (1.8.8) and nightfall (1.10.15)? On the other hand, if Xenophon had a conception of the battle of the sort we are now outlining, why did he not spell it out properly and in a fashion that would (surely) redound more to Cyrus' credit? One way of answering this is to say that Xenophon is not interested in spelling out everything he actually knows because he has set out to produce a series of vignettes, not an intricately constructed, systematic tactical account.<sup>56</sup> But it may be more straightforward (and not very different in essence) to say that, in reconstructing a narrative of Cunaxa out of the bits of evidence that he chooses to regard as usable, he simply does not take account of the King's medical treatment. Because medical treatment of the wound as an event *ought* to be indissolubly linked with the fact of the wound as an event and with its medical treatment as a historiographical issue (i.e. Xenophon's report of the fact that Ctesias reported it), I feel increasingly drawn to the second approach, i.e. to the view that there is simply a disjunction in Xenophon's mind between (1) citation of Ctesias for (a) the wound and its treatment and (b) the death of elite royal companions and (2) the details of the rest of Ctesias' narrative.

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<sup>55</sup> cf. above n.47. It is implicit in the solution there that Ariaeus' troops are still not anywhere nearby at the moment at which Cyrus launches his attack (1.8.23). While those events were unfolding, the King's right wing presumably continues its advance and eventually comes into contact with Ariaeus.

<sup>56</sup> That is also why the whole of what went on in Ariaeus' part of battlefield has to be deducted from hints.

Xenophon's approach to writing about Cunaxa was, I think, to reconstruct what happened from his own evidence - what he had seen and what he himself had heard in the relatively immediate aftermath - and was in principle no different from his approach in the rest of the *Anabasis* story. Moreover, Ctesias was actually performing a similar task from the other side. Neither author was present at Cyrus' death. What we know that they both (thought they) knew is that (a) Cyrus killed Artagerses, (b) there was a personal clash between the two brothers, (c) Artaxerxes was wounded, (d) a number of his entourage were killed and (e) Cyrus ended up dead. Xenophon could have known all of these facts in outline form without reading a line of Ctesias;<sup>57</sup> and in both authors everything beyond the outline represents realisation of a scenario designed to embrace these facts - realisation controlled by a greater or lesser amount of other information taken by one or other of them to be true.

So far as Ctesias is concerned, this means that we cannot treat Xenophon as having passed judgment upon Ctesias' realisation of the events of Cunaxa in general or even of the death of Cyrus in particular. Any judgments we wish to make about the actual truth or theoretical plausibility of (bits of) either account must essentially be made on *a priori* grounds. Application of this principle tends to find in Xenophon's favour, partly because his account survives intact and partly because his general reputation (poor as it has been in some circles) is better than that of Ctesias. It is certainly not my business to issue a comprehensive denunciation of Xenophon's plausibility, though I do think his handling of the consequences of Artaxerxes' wound is worrying, and no one can claim he is lucid about Ariaeus. All I wish to note the following four points.

(a) Given the nature of Xenophon's participation in the battle, much of what he reports (especially on matters that dominate the remnants of Ctesias' account) is necessarily

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<sup>57</sup> Artagerses' death is tantalising. On the one hand Xenophon reports it as a *legetai* (and Lenfant 2004: 147 n.680 thinks this could mean he is borrowing from Ctesias). On the other hand, Ctesias calls Artagerses commander of the Cadusians (F19 = Plut.9), whereas Xenophon says he was in command of the king's horse. That *could* imply that the two are independent here. Knowledge about Artagerses could have reached Xenophon from the same source as knowledge about Artapates - and the latter is something we have no reason to assign to Ctesias. Ariaeus was in touch with both sides after Cunaxa and may be the channel of information. It should, of course, be acknowledged that on the principle articulated by Binder (this volume) the Artagerses material in Plutarch would not all be certainly Ctesianic in the first place.



imaginative reconstruction not documentary evidence. Ctesias is not a categorically worse source in these terms.

(b) Xenophon conveys a general sense of Cunaxa as a battle that begins in a state of disarray and ends with the dispersal of fighting units across a rather wide geographical space. Ctesias' account of Cyrus' death inhabits a similar world - one in which one group of people can be on the battlefield and part of the battle but still far removed from other groups of people of whom the same can be said. In this respect both sources are conveying a similar sort of picture - and a perfectly plausible one.

(c) Plutarch has fun complaining about the "blunt sword" with which Ctesias eventually kills Cyrus, and we need not doubt that protracted elaboration was a feature of Ctesianic narrative. But, granted that Cyrus was not wounded at the time of the clash with the King, what Ctesias says happened next (especially if we make a judicious combination of Plutarch and Diodorus) does not seem essentially absurd, though it is doubtless melodramatic, e.g. in its central *peripeteia* (Cyrus has survived proper combat and is moving authoritatively, if arrogantly, among disordered troops, camp-followers and eunuchs when he is struck down) and in the playing out of the final scene in darkness. It is worth noting that, despite Xenophon's striking description of the distant sight of the royal army in 1.8.8, neither author pays any heed to the clouds of dust that must have enveloped the actual battle. I have sometimes wondered whether the difficulties of recognition caused by darkness represent a dramatic "improvement" by Ctesias of something that was actually caused by dust. But whether Cyrus could plausibly still have been alive at sunset depends entirely on how Ctesias defined the passage of time earlier, and that is something we do not know. As for the *peripeteia*, two remarks. First, Xenophon has *peripeteia* too: Cyrus is already receiving *proskunesis* as king in 1.8.21 before the fatal clash with Artaxerxes, and this is the alleged consequence of the Greek hoplites' success - a fact that might make one pause to take the Greek historian's assertion at face value. Second, Mithradates' random act of violence has a certain malign plausibility about it: such things surely do happen.

(d) It is worth stressing that, in dramatizing Cyrus' death Ctesias did not choose to create a quasi-heroic duel to the death between Cyrus and the King, even though such duels between commanders appear in earlier Ctesian battles (**5, 15, 17, 40, 42-44**). The reason for this must at least in part be that he knew it was not true, because he knew both that the King's wound had incapacitated him and that there was a great deal of trouble afterwards about the fact that the King had not killed Cyrus, though he wished to pretend that he had. Ctesias is at least

constrained by reality. But we have seen before that he can splice the real and imagined in a (to us) disturbing fashion.

**Ctesias and Xenophon: a conclusion**

Cunaxa is the only ancient battle for which we have two accounts by contemporary participants who viewed the event from opposite sides. That the two accounts display a very general similarity but considerable detailed divergence seems to me to be very much what one would expect. That one of the accounts is simply a serious attempt at recovery of the truth from autopsy and witness cross-examination while the other is simply an exercise in frivolously fictive theatre is a proposition that is often assumed to be true, but has not (I think) been proved - and may not in the current circumstances be susceptible of either proof or disproof. But the question is deserving of a larger amount of more unprejudiced thought, and I hope that these rather dense ruminations may serve to provoke it.

TABLE 1: Military events in Ctesias *Persica*

<u>Books I-VI</u>		
<b>A</b>	1b(1.7)	<i>Ninus v. Babylonians</i>
<b>B</b>	1b(1.8)	<i>Ninus v. Armenians</i>
<b>1</b>	1b(1.9-10)	<i>Ninus v. Medes</i>
<b>C</b>	1b(2.1-2)	<i>Ninus v. numerous peoples</i>
<b>2</b>	1b(6.3)	<i>Ninus v. Exaortes (Bactria)</i>
<b>D</b>	1b(6.4)	<i>Ninus v. Bactrians: unspecified battles</i>
<b>3</b>	1b(6.4-8)	<i>Siege of Bactra</i>
<b>E</b>	1b(14.3-4)	<i>Semiramis v. Egypt/Libya/Ethiopia</i>
<b>4</b>	1b(18.2-5)	<i>Semiramis v. Stabrobates (1): river-battle</i>
<b>5</b>	1b(19.1-20.10)	<i>Semiramis v. Stabrobates (2): land-battle</i>
<b>F</b>	1b(22.5)	<i>Memnon v. Greeks: unspecified battles</i>
<b>6</b>	1b(22.5)	<i>Memnon v. Thessalians</i>
<b>7</b>	1b(25.1)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (1): plain</i>
<b>8</b>	1b(25.2)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (2): plain</i>
<b>9</b>	1b(25.6)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (3): mountains</i>
<b>10</b>	1b(26.4-6)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (4): night-attack</i>
<b>11</b>	1b(26.6)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (5): outside Nineveh</i>
<b>12</b>	1b(26.6)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (6): outside Nineveh</i>
<b>13</b>	1b(26.7-27.3)	<i>Sardanapalus v. rebels (7): siege of Nineveh</i>
<b>14</b>	5(33.4)	<i>Parsondes v. Artaeus</i>
<b>G</b>	5(33.4)	<i>Parsondes ravages Media</i>
<b>H</b>	5(34.2)	<i>Battles between Medes and Sacae</i>
<b>I</b>	5(34.3-4)	<i>Zarinaea's successes against neighbours</i>
<b>15</b>	7/7b/8a	<i>Zarinaea v. Stryangaeus</i>
<b>16</b>	7	<i>Stryangaeus v. Mermeros</i>

Books VII-XI

<b>J</b>	8d(11)	<i>Cadusian-Median War</i>
<b>17</b>	8d(28f)	<i>Medes v. Cyrus: skirmish</i>
<b>K</b>	8d(33)	<i>Astyages burns unspecified cities</i>
<b>18</b>	8d(33-34)	<i>Astyages v. Cyrus (1)</i>

- 19** 8d(35-38) Astyages v. Cyrus (2)  
**20** 8d(40) Astyages v. Cyrus (3)  
**21** 8d(42-44) Astyages v. Cyrus (4)  
**22** 8d(46) Astyages v. Cyrus (5)
- 23** 9(2) Cyrus v. Bactrians
- 24** 9(3) Cyrus v. Sacae (1): capture of Amorges  
**25** 9(3) Cyrus v. Sacae (2): battle with Sparethra
- 26** 9(4), 9a-c Siege of Sardis
- 27** 9(7) Cyrus vs. Derbices (1): Cyrus' wound  
**28** 9(7) Cyrus vs. Derbices (2): Amorges' rescue

Books XII-XIII

- 29** 13(10) Cambyses vs. Amyrtaeus
- 30** 13(20) Ariaramnes vs. Scythians  
**L** 13(20) *Darius' Scythian Expedition*
- M** 13(22) *Datis ravaging Greek islands*  
**31** 13(22) Miltiades v. Datis (Marathon)
- N** 13(26) *Revolt of Babylon*
- 32** 13(27) Thermopylae: Persian failures (4 assaults)  
**33** 13(27) Thermopylae: Persian victory  
**34** 13(28) Plataea  
**35** 13(30) Siege of Athenian acropolis  
**36** 13(30) Salamis

Books XIV-XVII

- 37** 14(34) Artaxerxes vs. Artapanus' accomplices
- 38** 14(35) Artaxerxes vs. Bactrians (1)  
**39** 14(35) Artaxerxes vs. Bactrians (2)
- 40** 14(36) Inaros vs. Achaemenides  
**41** 14(36) Sea-battle (Charitimides)  
**42** 14(37) Megabyzus vs. Inaros
- 43** 14(40) Megabyzus vs. Ousiris  
**44** 14(40) Megabyzus v. Menostanes

Book XVIII

<b>45</b>	15 (52)	Artasyras vs. Artyphius (1)
<b>46</b>	15 (52)	Artasyras vs. Artyphius (2)
<b>47</b>	15 (52)	Artasyras vs. Artyphius (3)
<b>O</b>	15 (53)	<i>Revolt of Pissuthnes</i>
<b>P</b>	15 (55-56)	<i>Revolt of Terituchmes</i>

Books XIX-XX

<b>48</b>	16 (64), 18-22	Artaxerxes vs. Cyrus (Cunaxa)
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TABLE 2: Details in individual military engagements

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1				2	x			
2		x		2		x	x	
3						x	x	x
4		(x)		1	x	x		xx
5		(x)	2	1	x		x	xx
6		(x)	1				x	
7				2		x		
8				2		x		x
9			2	2		x		x
10							x	
11			1			x		x
12			1			x		x
13						x	x	xx
14		x		1		x		
15			2		x			x
16					x			
17		x		1			x	
18		(x)		2		x	x	xx
19		(x)	1, 2		x	x	x	x
20		(x)				x		xx
21		(x)		1		x		xxx
22					x		x	
23								
24					x			
25		x			x			
26			1		x		x	xx
27			1, 2	1			x	
28		x	1	1				

29				1		x		x
30		(x)			x			
31			1					x
32		x						x
33		x		2		x	x	
34		x	2					
35							x	x
36		x		1		x		
37			1, 2					
38								
39								x
40		x	1	1			x	
41				1		x		x
42		x	2	2				
43		x	2	2	x		x	x
44		(x)	2					
45								
46								
47								
48		x	1, 2	1		x	x	many
		22	18	21	12	19	17	22

- A Numbers of combatants
- B 1. Individuals' deaths  
2. Individuals' wounds
- C. 1. Group losses: precise numbers  
2. Group losses: non-numerical estimate
- D. Taking of prisoners
- E. Indication of topography
- F. Indication of tactical setting
- G. Other narrative detail

*Note*

(a) Under A (x) indicates that we have a start-of-campaign figure which in principle applies to the named battle but is not explicitly given as a battle-field figure. (This

might seem to apply to **40** too, but battlefield losses are later deducted from the start-of-campaign figure, so the latter is actually the battlefield figure. )

(b) Under G xx or xxx indicates that there are two or three discrete bits of other detail. In **48** (Cunaxa) the number is too large to be represented thus.

TABLE 3: Distribution of military events by books

Book	%ge	Cat.I	%ge	Cat.II	%ge	I + II	%ge
1-6	30	9	56.25	16	33.33	25	39.06
7-11	25	2	12.50	12	25.00	14	21.88
12-13	10	3	18.75	8	16.66	11	17.19
14-17	20	0	0.00	8	16.66	8	12.50
18	5	2	12.50	3	6.25	5	7.81
19-20	10	0	0.00	1	2.08	1	1.56

Each figure in columns 2,4,6 and 8 represents the figure immediately to its left as a percentage of the total number of items in the relevant category, viz. 20 books (there being no relevant material attested from Books 21-24), 16 Category I items, 48 Category II items, and 64 items in Categories I and II combined.

Cumulative totals (Categories I & II)

- I-VI (30%) 25 (39.06%)
- I-XI (55%) 39 (60.94%)
- I-XIII (65%) 50 (78.23%)
- I-XVII (85%) 58 (90.73%)
- I-XVIII (90%) 63 (98.54%)
- I-XX (100%) 64 (100.00%)



TABLE 4: Distribution in *Persica* VII-XX by time and book

King(s)	Years	%ge	Items	%ge	Bks	%ge
Cyrus	20	13.42	14	35.90	5	35.71
Cambyeses-Xerxes	65	43.62	11	28.21	2	14.29
Artaxerxes I	40	26.85	8	20.51	4	28.57
Darius II	20	13.42	5	12.82	1	07.14
Artaxerxes II	4	02.68	1	02.56	2	14.29

Each figure in columns 3, 5 and 7 represents the figure immediately to its left as a percentage of the total number of items in the relevant category, viz. 149 years, 39 items, 14 books.

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