The volume is a detailed, insightful treatment of the central issues in the Romano-Jewish War and addresses a wide range of secondary literature. No scholars of the conflict or of Josephus can ignore it.

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PLUTARCH'S USE OF THE *PERSICA* AUTHORS

ALMAGOR (E.) *Plutarch and the* Persica. Pp. xx + 332, figs. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018. Cased, £85. ISBN: 978-0-7486-4555-8.

This book is devoted to Plutarch's use of *Persica* in his works (primarily, in *Artaxerxes*) and Plutarch's method of writing. The volume comprises an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and two appendices. The table of contents is unfortunately not as clear as it could be because the titles of chapters do not give any clear indication of what kind of information they include. On pages 31–2, however, A. gives a useful outline of each chapter (but not the appendices), which are devoted to the known *Persica* authors: two chapters for Ctesias, two for Deinon and one for Heracleides.

The *Persica* topic is not new to historiography (see e.g. R.B. Stevenson, Persica. *Greek Writing about Persia in the Fourth Century* BC [1997]), and several books have been devoted to Ctesias (more recently: J.P. Stronk, *Ctesias'* Persian History: *Introduction, text, and translation* [2010]; L. Llewellyn-Jones & J. Robson, *Ctesias'* History of Persia. *Tales of the Orient* [2012]; M. Waters, *Ctesias'* Persica *in Its Near Eastern Context* [2017]).

A. claims that the aim of the book is 'to build a bridge' between Achaemenid/Persian Studies and studies of Greek imperial literature (particularly studies of Plutarch) (p. 1). A. wants to understand better the character of the *Persica* ('fourth century BCE portrayals of Ancient Persia', ib.) and the 'manner of reception and adaptation of these works nearly five hundred years later' (ib.). A. supposes that it will enable us 'to appreciate the information given on Persia in extant texts of Plutarch' and allow us to understand better Plutarch's method of writing his works (p. 2).

First, A. presents an analysis of the more significant parts of Plutarch's *Persica* (Ctesias), then he presents the work with the parts of *Persica* that are less represented in Plutarch's texts (Deinon and Heracleides). In the first chapter, 'Ctesias (a)', A. considers the places in Plutarch's texts where he indicates the use of Ctesias' *Persica* directly, and the second chapter, 'Ctesias (b)', is dedicated to those sections that were probably taken from Ctesias by Plutarch, but without direct reference. Also in this chapter, A. compares information from Ctesias' fragments with similar evidence from other sources, reflecting upon how Plutarch dealt with the differences between Ctesias and other texts.

A. rightly notes that Plutarch censured the 'mythical' element in Ctesias' writing, and, alongside other ancient authors, drew attention to the limitations of Ctesias' work: bias, excessive digressions, verbosity and dubious descriptions (p. 255). Nevertheless,

Plutarch selected reliable information according to his own purposes. A. suggests that from Plutarch's point of view the advantage of Ctesias' version over others was due to his presence at the Persian court (p. 36). Further A. considers Plutarch's whole argument doubtful because, if Ctesias is generally lying, he could also have fabricated the fact that he was present at court.

According to A., Ctesias himself probably referred to his relations with other contemporary characters on two levels, the historical and the literary: 'As a real person, he was dependent on these figures, as an author, they (as literary constructs) were dependent on him' (p. 255). A. emphasises in some parts of his book that Ctesias represented himself both as the historian and the historical agent (pp. 45, 51, 70). It is, however, unclear as to whether or not it was Ctesias' intention to refer to the relations with contemporaries on two levels – i.e. historical and literary. Maybe we can find it in Plutarch's Ctesias fragments (as a Plutarchian construct), but it does not suggest that Ctesias intended to do so.

A. shows how in *Artaxerxes* Plutarch used Ctesias' and Xenophon's accounts of the battle of Cunaxa in 401 BCE and events after it. It may be appropriate for future studies to investigate why Plutarch, who was a Greek patriot, might not have accepted Xenophon's sharply negative assessments of Artaxerxes II, who, from the Greek point of view, broke oaths. Unlike Xenophon, Plutarch did not write about the king's ἐπιορκία and ἀσέβεια (cf. *Anab.* 3.2.4), but only wrote about Tissaphernes' deception and oath-breaking (*Art.* 18.1), and about the king, who, it was told, wanted to – but ultimately could not – capture the Greek mercenaries of Cyrus (*Art.* 20.1). We may perceive a hint towards the involvement of the king in breaking oaths, but the king's blame was not shown so brightly by Plutarch.

In 'Deinon (a)' A. first considers fragments that belong to Deinon explicitly, and then deals with those fragments that are not explicitly attributed to this historian. In 'Deinon (b)' A. points out that 'most of the episodes here, which Plutarch presumably adopts from Deinon but does not ascribe to him explicitly, belong to the period after the conclusion of Ctesias' *Persica* (that is, events after 398 BCE)' (p. 171).

A. supposes that the order of Deinon's work (unlike that of Ctesias) was not chronological, but thematic. The fragments give the impression that Deinon's descriptions were derivative and that he substantially borrowed scenes from his predecessors, Ctesias and Herodotus (p. 151). A. refers to those cases in which Plutarch presents Deinon's portrayals as fantasy ('*artistic* representation[s] of Deinon': p. 161). We might suppose, however, that Plutarch from time to time referred to Deinon's fragments as fantastic not in order to make 'a deliberate presentation of his text for literary means' (ib.), but simply because he thought they were fantasy, i.e., in comparison to the texts by other authors available to Plutarch, the biographer considered Deinon's work to be that of fantasy.

The last chapter is 'Heracleides'. A. supposes that Plutarch probably did not read the work of Heracleides of Cyme directly, but culled the fragments from other authors and (mis)interpreted them. A. notes that 'Heracleides disrupts the entire narrative sequence of Artaxerxes 23–9 … it would appear that Heracleides was added at a later stage in the composition of the work' (p. 260) for undermining and problematising the last third of Artaxerxes.

The book ends with two appendices: 'Two Notes on the Cypriot War' and 'Plutarch, the Persica and the *Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata*'.

Some conclusions of A. are not indisputable and some are hypothetical, but sometimes this is due to the condition of the texts. A combination of the investigation of Plutarch's historical method with the interpretation of information required (sometimes allegedly) by Plutarch from now lost works written by *Persica* authors and from other fragments by the same authors found in other texts makes A.'s argument complicated and not always

clear in substance. It may have been better for A. to concentrate on a historical and literary interpretation of Plutarch's works that include material on Achaemenid Persia where the sources of information may be claimed or proposed rather than to deduce from Plutarch's texts fragments which may belong to *Persica* authors. When A. writes about probable use of the *Persica* authors by Plutarch, in some cases it is not clear to the reader whether A. has found new fragments of *Persica*, which are not traditionally attributed to these authors, or whether he is drawing parallels between well-known fragments and Plutarch's texts. In some cases A. analyses fragments of authors of *Persica*, which seem to appear outside of Plutarch's text, and sometimes this makes the book's text difficult to understand.

Despite these issues the book gives a good overview of the presence of the *Persica* in Plutarch's texts, and A. contributes to our understanding of the image of the Achaemenid Empire in the Greek literature of the fourth century BCE. The content of the book and the methodology employed by A. may also be useful not only for those who study issues raised in the book, but for a wide circle of scholars, engaged in the study of ancient literature and history. The book is likely to provide valuable impetus for further discussion and research into Plutarch's methods of working with the *Persica*.

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NEW STUDIES ON THE GREEK NOVEL

SCHWARTZ (S.) *From Bedroom to Courtroom. Law and Justice in the Greek Novel.* (*Ancient Narrative* Supplementum 21.) Pp. xiv + 270. Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, 2016. Cased, €90. ISBN: 978-94-92444-08-0.

WHITMARSH (T.) *Dirty Love. The Genealogy of the Ancient Greek Novel.* Pp. xviii + 201. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Cased, £32.99, US$44.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-974265-3.

S. and W. present new and stimulating responses to old but fundamental questions of novel studies: how is the origin of the novel connected to questions of intercultural relations, and what is the role of Rome in the Greek novel? Both build on their own earlier work (articles by S.; W. in *Returning Romance* [2011], and W. and S. Thomson, *Romance between Greece and East* [2013]) to develop or synthesise landmark contributions that scholars of ancient narrative will need to take into account. While W.'s study has implications for Greek prose as a whole, S.'s work will be of great interest to those concerned with Roman imperial culture and the eastern provinces.