Photius on Ctesias

Photius, Bibliotheca, 72, p. 45a 10–15 Bekker = I, p. 133 Henry reads:

Τῶν μέντοι γε μνήθων ... οὐδ' οὗτος (Ctesias) ἀφίσται ... 'Η δὲ ἡδονή 
τῆς ἱστορίας αὐτοῦ τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν τῇ τῶν δυνημάτων αὐτοῦ γίνεται διασκενή,
τὸ παθητικόν καὶ ἀπορραδίουτον ἔχοσήν πολὺ, καὶ τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μνημόνων 
αὐτή διαποικίλλειν.

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

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

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

(3) Consequently, I would suggest the following reading and inter-
pretation: καὶ ἀπορραδίουτον ἔχοση πολὺ, (ὡς) καὶ τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μνημόνων 
αὐτή διαποικίλλειν, “... with the result that his narrative is adorned 
(or embellished) even by the elements which touch the realm of fable.”
This reading can be supported by the following points.

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

(b) Photius uses ὡς καὶ in the same meaning (standing for ὡς καὶ) 
in the immediately following lines (15–17): Καὶ διαλελογέονος δὲ ἐστι πλεόν 
tι τοῦ δέοντος αὐτοῦ (Ctesias) ο λόγος, ὡς καὶ εἰς ἱδιωτικὰ ἔπειπτένες.

(c) αὐτή refers to ἱστορία and is the object to διαποικίλλειν, the subject 
of the clause being τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ μνημόνων. For the construction and the 
idea: καὶ τὸ μνημόνων τὴν ἱστορίαν αὐτοῦ διαποικίλλει cf. Plutarch, De genio 
Socratis 596 D ... καὶ καθάπερ διὸ ὑμῶν ἡμῶν ὑπὸ ἀρχῆς διαποικίλλουσα 
(sc. ἡ τύχη) καὶ ἐνδιδοοθεῖν ἔπειπτένοις. Isocrates, Evagoras 9. 9 Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ 
pοιηταῖς πολλοὶ δέχονται κόσμῳ ... πάσιν τοῖς εἶδεσι διαποικίλλαι τὴν ποιήσαν.

University of Illinois

Miroslav Marcovich