

## Summary

Herodotus, Theophrastus, Pliny the Elder, Achilles Tatius, Philostratus, and other writers in antiquity provide similar descriptions of the fertilization of date palms in Mesopotamia. However, although all these narratives bear a general resemblance to one another, none can be proven to be the direct source of Ammianus Marcellinus's version (*Res Gestae*, XXIV,3,12–13). Instead this article argues that his account was influenced by contemporary oral retellings of an Assyrian fertility myth.

Keywords: Ammianus Marcellinus; sources; date-palms; mythology; cross-cultural transmission

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