

## Citation style

Stronk, Jan P.: Rezension über: Simon Hornblower (ed.), Herodotus, Histories Book V, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, in: Exemplaria Classica, 24 (2020), S. 283-286, DOI: 10.33776/ec.v24i0.4992, heruntergeladen über Website

**exemplaria**  
C L A S S I C A  
Journal of Classical Philology

## copyright

This article may be downloaded and/or used within the private copying exemption. Any further use without permission of the rights owner shall be subject to legal licences (§§ 44a-63a UrhG / German Copyright Act).

P. J. RHODES, (ed., trans., comm.). *Herodotus. Histories. Book V*, Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019, ix+263 pp., £22.99 (pb), ISBN 978-1-789-62015-3.

SIMON HORNBLOWER (ed., comm.). *Herodotus: Histories, Book V*, Cambridge Greek and Latin classics, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, xxii + 351 pp., illus. £22.99/US\$38.99 (pb), ISBN 978-0-521-70340-6 (Case): £60/US\$99, ISBN 978-0-521-87871-5.<sup>1</sup>

Central in this review stands book V of Herodotus' *Histories*, named after Terpsichore, the Muse of dancing and choral song (Ἡροδότου ἱστοριῶν Ἐ-Τερψιχόρη), in an edition independently of each other (and with a gap between them of six years) presented by two scholars who both have an excellent track record in the field of both ancient history and classical studies. As regards their subject, they have to deal with one of the central books of Herodotus' *Histories*, a book that not merely sits at the middle of the *Histories* in both textual and geographic terms, but also a book that has been called "problematical" (Oswyn Murray<sup>2</sup>), "fragmented" (Elizabeth Irwin and Emily Greenwood<sup>3</sup>) and, more neutrally, "una sorta di cerniera" ('a kind of hinge' sc. between books I-IV and VI-IX) and a "libro di transizione" (Giuseppe Nenci<sup>4</sup>). With its tales of revolt, tyrants, political intrigue, deception and even a ghost (sc. the ghost of Melissa: 5.92.η2-3), book 5 of Herodotus' *Histories* would seem to have something for everyone.

Rhodes explains his choice to start the series of Aris and Phillips-editions of Herodotus with book V as follows: "I have made this start with book V, where after the varied preliminaries in books I-IV Herodotus begins (though still with digressions large and small) to provide a continuous narrative from the late sixth century BC to the end of the Persian Wars in 479" (p. v). Though Rhodes, like Hornblower before him, to some considerable extent constitutes his own Greek

<sup>1</sup> For ToC, see: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139050968>. See also my review, *ExClass* 23, 2019, 277-80 on Simon Hornblower and C.B.R. Pelling (eds.), *Herodotus. Histories: Book VI*, Cambridge; New York 2017.

<sup>2</sup> O. Murray, "The Ionian Revolt" in J. Boardman *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, second edition, vol. 4: *Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean, c. 526 to 479 B.C.*, Cambridge 1988, 481-90 at 466: "For the Ionian Revolt Herodotus is our only surviving literary source; yet his narrative has generally been regarded as one of the most problematical sections of his history."

<sup>3</sup> E. Irwin and E. Greenwood, 'Introduction', in E. Irwin and E. Greenwood (eds.), *Reading Herodotus. A Study of the Logoi in Book 5 of Herodotus' Histories*, Cambridge 2007, 1-40, *passim* in various formulations, but literally, e.g., on 14.

<sup>4</sup> G. Nenci, 'Introduzione al libro V', in G. Nenci (ed.), *Erodoto. Le storie. Libro V: La rivolta della Ionia. A cura di --*, Milan 1994, liii-lxii at lv.

text, he does so on the basis of the current Oxford Classical Texts-edition by N.G. Wilson<sup>5</sup>, whereas Hornblower, obviously, still used its OCT-predecessor edited by K. Hude (sc. its third edition of 1927). Both Rhodes and Hornblower provide a very, very succinct apparatus to the Greek text, elucidating some of their textual choices. Though there are minor differences between both texts, they ultimately do not diverge dramatically. What makes Rhodes's edition, in my view, somewhat more user friendly is the fact that he offers, facing the Greek text, a translation into English, ensuring, moreover, that the translation's readability and clearness prevails over too literal a rendering of Herodotus' sentences. On the other hand, I must confess that I find the maps in Hornblower's edition (five in number) somewhat clearer than in Rhodes's (three in number). In both, however, a detailed map of Ionia (relating, e.g., to the expedition against Sardis: Hdt. 5.100-102) is absent, which I find a missed opportunity, as not every user of either of the commentaries will be (completely) familiar with the geographical features of the region. In that respect, Nenci must be commended: 15 maps and plans as well as 33 photographs (both black/white and colour) to illustrate the text.

As regards the introductions of both volumes, though they do not differ much in size, they do more so in emphasis. Though both, by and large, give the reader a relatively sufficient view into person and work of Herodotus (though entire libraries could be filled with works on these subjects) as well of the material discussed in book V, I find Hornblower's approach generally speaking somewhat more technical than Rhodes's (in Nenci, the introductions are limited to the extreme, I find, though I like the method of his bibliography). This becomes especially clear in the discussions on Herodotus' language, where Bowie's contribution and discussion on 'Language and Dialect': Hornblower 2013, 41-7, is perhaps even too detailed. As it is, I think that both Rhodes's and Hornblower's (= Bowie's) discussion on Herodotus' language (absent in Nenci, as a matter of fact) ultimately more suited for a linguistically specialized than a general audience that is using either work predominantly as a *historical* commentary (but, admittedly, I am a historian and not a classicist by origin). As regards one of the key subjects of Herodotus' book V, the Ionian Revolt, I believe the discussion in the 'Introduction' by Hornblower to be gradually slightly better than that by Rhodes, even though I found the latter easier to read for a wider audience. Both are, however, (necessarily) lacking in depth on this subject due to the limited space available staked out against the many aspects of the revolt. Perhaps regrettable, but not an insurmountable problem (the more because Murray's contribution, referred to above in note 3, can be regarded as an excellent starting point for further exploration; alternatively, Rosaria Vignolo Munson's 'The Trouble with the Ionians: Herodo-

<sup>5</sup> N.G. Wilson (ed.), *Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols., vol. I: *Libri I-IV*; vol. II: *Libri V-IX*, Oxford 2015; the edition was reviewed by me in *ExClass* 21, 2017, 263-7. Nevertheless, while presenting some textual choices he made, Rhodes criticizes Wilson on 24 "that <Wilson> is in fact more willing to doubt the transmitted text than might have been expected of an edition published in today's climate" and too prone to support (alleged) emendations.

tus and the Beginning of the Ionian Revolt (5.28-38.1)', in: Irwin and Greenwood 2007, 146-67, could do as well: succinct and easy to read). Remarkably, a specific introduction on the Ionian Revolt is altogether absent in Nenci's commentary.

As it is, someone seriously using either of the commentaries under scrutiny could certainly benefit from also consulting Christopher Pelling's *Herodotus and the Question Why*, Austin, TX: Texas University Press, 2019. Admittedly, Pelling casts a much wider net than either Rhodes or Hornblower can do (and Nenci even attempts) in the limited space available in commentaries like the ones under scrutiny, and in spite of that is as yet unable to raise all questions that come to the fore working through Herodotus' book V only (let alone provide all answers), but in the end the reader is left with a better understanding of the problems facing any student of the Hallicarnassian's work. As such, Pelling's book is -in my view- therefore a useful complement to Irwin and Greenwood 2007 (see above, note 4), as well as to both the commentaries under scrutiny. Though this should not be an advert for yet another study, my remarks are intended to underline the (necessarily) inherent weaknesses of a brief introduction as either Rhodes or Hornblower (or, for that matter, Nenci) provides: far too limited a space for too many issues. Nevertheless, both Rhodes and Hornblower should be commended for at least trying to indicate some ways out of the many and varied quagmires Herodotus dishes out for his readers.

A difference in the approach of their subject between Rhodes and Hornblower becomes clear immediately when using the commentaries. Some examples should suffice. The first example is the treatment of chapter 5.33, Herodotus' story on the clash between Aristagoras and Megabates on the eve of the Persian raid against the island of Naxos. Whereas Rhodes (179-80) explains the situation succinctly and, though clearly, largely passes over sensitivities in the relationship between a Persian and a Greek on the issue who commands whom during an (ultimately) Persian expedition, the discussion in Hornblower (134-6) is more detailed and shows greater awareness of such touchy matters. Both Rhodes and Hornblower, however, ultimately (and in my view rightly) agree that Herodotus' story does not add up (see also, e.g.: J.P. Stronk, "From Sardis to Marathon. Greco-Persian Relations 499-490 BC: A Review. Part One: Up to and Including the Fall of Eretria", *Talanta* 48-9, 2016-7, 133-84 at 142-3 and note 25). A similar difference between Rhodes and Hornblower we encounter as well in the account by Herodotus (5.100-102) of the Ionian/Athenian/Eretrian expedition against Sardis. Again, Rhodes (245-7) stands out by his compact and straightforward discussion of the events, Hornblower (282-286) by his attention for detail.

As regards the commentaries proper, we may, therefore, conclude that Hornblower's is much more elaborate than Rhodes's, being also over two times larger in size and printed in a somewhat smaller font size. Hornblower's entries in the commentary proper are introduced by the text in Greek, Rhodes's entries by the translation. Though I personally prefer the combination of text and translation to introduce such a *lemma*, Hornblower's choice represents the customary method and as such blends in in the line of 'traditional' commenta-

ries. On the other hand, where Rhodes sets out to provide his audience with a translation in which the meaning is expressed in good English, he unmistakably continues that practice in the commentary proper, too. I found it very readable and even if the commentary does not address all (textual) problems, it generally provides lucid answers to the issues that are discussed.

Ultimately, though, both commentaries appear to be intended (or at least: suited) for different audiences: Hornblower's for the (aspiring) specialists, i.e. students past their bachelor's degree and further in their academic career, Rhodes's more for a general audience that wants to go deeper into problems raised by reading Herodotus' work and for students reading for their bachelor's degree. The difference in intended audience is mirrored in the (method applied for the) bibliographies (Rhodes in all counts 6-odd pages of specific references and bibliography, apart from literature referred to in the text; Hornblower with 26 pages of elaborated bibliography) and the indexes (Hornblower has a nearly eleven pages index of subjects, one page of Greek words and phrases; Rhodes a mere three pages index of subjects, making the retrieving of particular discussions sometimes (too) difficult). In the end, therefore, I am unable to present a general advice which commentary to turn to for the desired deeper understanding of Herodotus' book V: it all depends from the aim one has, as I hope to have made clear above.

As a researcher involved with Herodotus' work on quite a frequent basis, I have used Hornblower's commentary from 2013 onwards and am, therefore, accustomed to it. Nevertheless, from the day Rhodes's commentary landed upon my desk, I noticed a tendency to quickly look up some facts therein and only whenever there was/is need to go deeper into some problem, to turn again to Hornblower. It shows, in my perception, that it is thoroughly feasible to use both commentaries next to each other. What is obvious moreover, and shows throughout both commentaries, is that they are both based upon sound and solid scholarship and provide full value for money. In fact: they make previous commentaries like the ones by How and Wells<sup>6</sup>, let alone the one by Macan<sup>7</sup>, now really largely (but not yet completely) obsolete. Though I found minor printing errors in both editions under scrutiny, none of them was crucial.

JAN P. STRONK  
Independent researcher in Ancient History  
jpstronk@planet.nl

<sup>6</sup> W.W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus, with Introduction and Appendixes*, 2 vols.: vol I: *Books I-IV*; vol. II: *Books V-IX*, Oxford 1912; reprinted several times, with corrections.

<sup>7</sup> R.W. Macan, *Herodotus. The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books*, 2 vols., London 1895.