Christopher Pelling, ed., *Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Book VI*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, 352 pp., 29.17 € (Pb.), ISBN 978-1-316-63021-1.

Christopher Pelling, ed., *Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Book VII*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, 290 pp., 26.93 € (Pb.), ISBN 978-1-316-63022-8.

It is no easy task for someone who is himself largely engaged in writing (historical) commentaries (I currently write them for *Brill's New Jacoby*, general editor I. Worthington, and as companion volume(s) to my *Ctesias' Persian History*, Part 1: *Introduction, Text, and Translation*, Düsseldorf 2010), to write an *iudicium* on a commentary written by someone, anyone, else. After all, how do you define a commentator's task, or even duty, and how are you to decide whether (s)he has succeeded in it. The first and foremost task of a commentator is, I think, to make a (classical) text accessible to an interested audience that is as wide as possible, by making clear what the text tells us, how the classical author conveys his message and the options (mostly) he (may have) had to do it, and – perhaps – why he opted to choose that particular form to do so. In that process, the commentator needs to be constantly aware of the fact that the level of knowledge of *his/her* audience possibly, or even probably, might well be lower, perhaps even much lower, than that of him/her and that therefore NO foregoing knowledge within the audience may be taken for granted. Only after this phase of clarifying the text proper has been fully, or at least optimally, concluded, the commentator should, I believe, proceed to the next stage of the commentary, sc. to inform the audience on the historical backgrounds of the text, wherever possible elucidated by the relevant historical, archaeological, and/or other evidence.

Anyone wishing to deepen her or his knowledge of Thucydides' work on the Peloponnesian War, as the conflict he describes has become generally known, up to now only had a few options to turn to. First and foremost is/was the 5-volume series of the *Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (further to be abbreviated as *HCT*) started by A.W. Gomme, volume I of that series already being published in 1945 for the Oxford University Press.[1] For a comparison with the books discussed in the new *Commentaries* by Pelling under scrutiny here, we have to take volume IV of Gomme's series to hand, published in 1970 and prepared by A.W. Gomme (who already had died in January of the year 1959, though leaving an extensive corpus of notes for the completion of the *HCT*), A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover, treating books V.25-VII. The commentary in the volumes of Gomme's *HCT* is, generally, very full, due to notably Gomme's broad interests and his extensive knowledge of both ancient and modern literature, especially his familiarity, not to

[1] See for the genesis of this work notably C. Pelling, 'Gomme's Thucydides and the Idea of the Historical Commentary', in S. Harrison, C. Pelling, eds., *Classical Scholarship and Its History. From the Renaissance to the Present. Essays in Honour of Christopher Stray*, Berlin-Boston 2021, 219-47.

use the word 'intimacy', with that regarding Thucydides. In that respect, however, both Andrewes and Dover fully matched Gomme, making the later volumes of the *HCT* equally valuable as the ones solely edited by Gomme.

Another option could be using Simon Hornblower's *Commentary on Thucydides* (1991-2008 further *CoT* in short), also for the Clarendon Press at Oxford, the only commentary in English by a single author on the complete writings of Thucydides, and presenting many new interpretations of well-known passages and problems, as well as providing bibliographical orientation in the copious modern literature on Thucydides, updated until publication of the three volumes.[2] For a comparison with the books discussed in Pelling's *Commentaries*, we need volume III of Hornblower's *Commentary*, published in 2008, discussing books V.25-VIII.109. In between these two extensive commentaries, we will find those of K.J. Dover, *Thucydides. Book VI*, Oxford 1965 and K.J. Dover, *Thucydides. Book VII*, Oxford 1965, both providing the reader with a Greek text with introduction and commentary, together two relatively slim volumes, 111 and 78 pages respectively, not including the (largely identical) introductions. These were intended for use by 'senior pupils in schools and students in universities', but, in spite of Dover's clear and high standard of scholarship, as yet not very detailed. Apparently, Dover kept part of his powder dry for his contribution to volume IV of Gomme's *HCT*. Preparing the review of Pelling's *Commentaries*, I obviously compared them with both the *HCT* and the *CoT* in the process (see also below). The *Commentaries* by E.C. Marchant, *Book VI*, London 1906 and *Book VII*, London 1893, however, I did not use.

As Pelling explains in the Preface of *Book VI*, pp. ix-x (p. vii in *Book VII*), his choice to (first) comment on books VI and VII, instead of starting with book I, is that: "Books 6 and 7 are natural choices for those coming to Thucydides for the first time, perhaps in an undergraduate or graduate class; but Thucydides' Greek is notoriously difficult, especially in the speeches, and Book 6 has the most speeches of them all. It is not just the novice reader that often needs, or at least welcomes, help, and even Dover's shorter school commentaries (1965) took too much prior facility for granted. ... ... In line with the aims of the series [sc. Cambridge's Greek and Latin Classics, perhaps better known as the 'Green and Yellows': JPS], I have also given particular attention to literary aspects. This has often squeezed out historical material that would be relevant even for a literary critic, for one can hardly gauge what Thucydides has done with his material without an idea of what that material would have been. Still, brevity here may be forgiven because so much | is readily accessible in the commentaries of Dover and Hornblower." That the literary aspects of Thucydides fully merit special attention indeed, already has been recognised by, e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BCE – after AD

[2] Those wishing to update those bibliographies could, obviously, turn to works like *L'Année Philologique* and similar. The 'Works cited', Pelling, *Book VI*, pp. 321-41; Pelling, *Book VII*, pp. 263-80, are not comprehensive.

7) in his *De Thucydide*: εὐαρίθμητοι γάρ τινές εἰσιν οἷοι πάντα τὰ Θουκυδίδου συμβαλεῖν, καὶ οὐδ᾽ οὗτοι χωρὶς ἐξηγήσεως γραμματικῆς ἔνια ("For the number of people who can understand the whole of Thucydides can easily be counted and even these cannot understand certain passages without a linguistic commentary": D.H. *Th*. 51).

As the basic text for his *Commentary*, Pelling opted to use (specifically volume III of) the edition by Giovan Baptista Alberti, *Thucydidis historiae*, 3 vols., Rome 1972, vol. 1 (*Books I-II*); 1992 vol. 2 (*Books III-V*); 2000 vol. 3 (*Books VI-VIII*), in the series Scriptores Graeci et Latini Consilio Academiae Lynceorum Editi, rather than either the Teubner edition, *post* C. Hude *edidit* O. Luschnat (Leipzig 1954), or the OCT, *Thucydides. Historiae. (Iterum) recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit* H.S. Jones; *Apparatum criticum correxit et auxit* J.E. Powell (Oxford 1958/60). Pelling's choice is excellent, as is also testified to in the reviews on Alberti's editions by, respectively, Dover and Hornblower (see below) and, actually, confirmed by Alexander Kleinlogel in his review of Alberti's vol. III in *Gnomon* 76.1, 2004, 4-15.

In his review of vol. II of Alberti's edition, Kenneth Dover, *CR* 44, 1994, 399-400 at 399, remarked that: "A[lberti] has devoted many rewarding years to the study of the *recentiores* [sc. both *manus recentiores* as well as fourteenth or fifteenth centuries manuscripts, next to texts on papyrus, notably *P. Oxy*. 3877-3901: JPS] of Thucydides and their extraordinarily complex interrelationship. Both the Budé editors of books II-VIII and Kleinlogel's *Geschichte des Thukydidestextes im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1965, benefited from his progress reports published (from 1957 onwards) in the *Bollettino del Comitato* (*ecc*.). Simon Hornblower, 'The Best Available Text of Thucydides', on *Thucydidis Historiae VI-VIII* by Alberti, *CR* 52, 2002, 238-40 at 238, states that: "with the completion of Alberti's three-volume *Thucydidis Historiae* ... we have what should now be regarded as the best available text of Thucydides, and an outstanding text it is too. ... Fair and full comparisons with the standard modern text, the OCT of Stuart-Jones/Powell, can now be made, and they are greatly to A[lberti]'s advantage. ... not only is A[lberti]'s actual text superior, his apparatus is far fuller and more useful than the OCT throughout. Until 2000, the fullest modern or fairly modern apparatus was that of the Teubner *editio maior* of Hude (1898-1901). But that book is not to be found outside good libraries and is a papyrologically prolific century out of date, whereas A[lberti]'s new Volume III starts with a three-page list of relevant new papyri which have appeared just since 1992, the date of his Volume II." Moreover, as Hornblower observes (at 239), Alberti also uses Dover's *Commentary* "[o]n historical matters calling (or not calling) for emendation," especially for books VI and VII.

In spite of the fact that Thucydides' text as established by Alberti therefore doubtless may be regarded as the best text available, Pelling felt it was, nevertheless, necessary to (ever so slightly) deviate from Alberti's text on a (very) limited number of places (though I would have welcomed more explanation, e.g.,

in the comments for his doing so and the choices he made), for both *Book VI* and *Book VII* duly indicated by him on the volumes' pp. 38-9, in both cases followed by the 'sigla' (p. 40), where only the texts on papyrus used differs in the volumes. Such identical page numbers might suggest that the Introductions to both volumes are (mainly) identical as well. Apart from the maps and one section, viz. 2 in the Introduction to the *Commentary* on book VI, 3 in that on book VII, that is not the case, even though they largely follow the same lines and there is, occasionally, some overlap – as might be expected. Moreover, in spite of their relative brevity, I found both introductions to be clear and to the point, discussing, among other issues, Thucydides' narrative skill and the part these books play in the architecture of the history. Some issues I missed, either in one of the Introductions or in the commentaries themselves, will be discussed further below. Succeeding the introduction, the deviations from Alberti, and the sigla, follows in both volumes the Greek text of the respective book as it has been established by Alberti, albeit with Pelling's (minor) emendations, and the commentary proper. A bibliography and indexes conclude both volumes.

In books VI and VII, Thucydides' narrative, in my view rightly, has been judged to be at its most emotional, vivid, and varied,[3] when describing the Sicilian Expedition that ended so catastrophically for Athens (415-413 BCE). Book VI features tense debates both at Athens, where the elder and cautious Nicias proved to be no match for the younger, risk-taking, zealous, and over-ambitious Alcibiades, and at Syracuse, with the statesmanlike Hermocrates confronting the populist Athenagoras. In Athens, Alcibiades convinced the citizens that it might be possible to conquer, next to Sicily, also Carthage. Many believed him, as Thucydides noted seemingly somewhat scornfully: ἄπειροι οἱ πολλοὶ ὄντες τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς νήσου καὶ τῶν ἐνοικούντων τοῦ πλήθους καὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων, καὶ ὅτι οὐ πολλῷ τινὶ ὑποδεέστερον πόλεμον ἀνῃροῦντο ἢ τὸν πρὸς Πελοποννησίους ("most of them [sc. the Athenians] being unacquainted with its size and of the number of its inhabitants, Hellenic and foreign, and of the fact that they were undertaking a war not much inferior to that against the Peloponnesians": Th. VI.1.1; for Pelling's comments, *Book VI*, pp. 94-5, for Hornblower's *CoT* III, pp. 260-1).

There is, however, in relation with the preceding remark by Thucydides, an issue Pelling does not address sufficiently in my view. Non-Greek peoples – like those living in Sicily – generally remain at the margins of his account (apart, perhaps, from his dealings with Thrace and Thracians: nevertheless, the description

[3] See also Plutarch's view on this matter: ἐπεὶ δοκοῦμεν οὐκ ἀτόπως τῷ Νικίᾳ τὸν Κράσσον παραβάλλειν, καὶ τὰ Παρθικὰ παθήματα τοῖς Σικελικοῖς, ὥρα παραιτεῖσθαι καὶ παρακαλεῖν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας τοῖς συγγράμμασι τούτοις, ὅπως ἐπὶ ταῖς διηγήσεσιν αἷς Θουκυδίδης, *αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ περὶ ταῦτα παθητικώτατος, ἐναργέστατος, ποικιλώτατος γενόμενος*, ἀμιμήτως ἐξενήνοχε ("I think that Nicias is a suitable parallel to Crassus, and the Sicilian to the Parthian disaster. I must therefore at once, and in all modesty, entreat my readers not to imagine for an instant that in my narration of what Thucydides has inimitably set forth, *surpassing even himself in pathos, vividness, and variety*": Plu. *Nic*. 1.1; emphases JPS).

of them in Th. VII.29.4 [cf. Pelling, *Book VII*, 144] rather lacks nuance, but so do – in my view – Pelling's comments here). 'Barbarian' peoples appear to be more the object of the sideways glances when Greeks have dealings with them than of a curious gaze in Thucydides' synoptic view of different theatres. In spite of the interest of the Sicilian expedition, where Thucydides appears to heavily rely on data provided by Antiochus of Syracuse (cf. Pelling, *Book VI*, 96), this Thucydidean myopia appears to play a part as well. Even though Thucydides' Sicilian insertion (VI.1.2-VI.6), represents a Herodotean literary manoeuvre in many respects, it is no ethnography proper, e.g., in the manner of Herodotus. Notorious I also find Thucydides' passing over Persian actions and influence: Persia is referred to in relation with the Sicilian expedition only glancingly in, e.g., Th. VI.17.7, 33.5, 83 (only after Th. VIII.5, Persia returns more prominently in Thucydides' account: see also, e.g., R. Vignolo Munson, 'Persians in Thucydides', in E. Foster, D. Lateiner, eds., *Thucydides and Herodotus: Connections, Divergences and Reception*, Oxford 2012, 241-77, *passim*). Pelling pays, even regarding the restricted space he has, in my view, too little attention to these historiographically notable issues – or omissions – in Thucydides' work.

The spectacle of the Athenian armada is, though, memorably described by Thucydides (Th. VI.30-32.2) and so is the panic at Athens when people fear that acts of sacrilege may be alienating the gods, with Alcibiades himself so implicated that he is soon recalled (Th. VI.27-9, see below). Book VI ends, as yet, with Athens seeming poised for victory, but that image will soon change. Book VII, consequently, opens with Athens seemingly on the point of victory, but the arrival of the Spartan commander Gylippus (to help the people of Syracuse) marks a change in fortunes and the Athenian commander Nicias is soon sending home a desperate plea for reinforcements. Three (in my view, at least) narrative masterpieces follow their arrival: first the eerie confusion of the night battle on the heights (Th. VII.43-5), then the naval clash in the Great Harbour (Th. VII.57-71), and finally the desperate Athenians' attempt to escape and the slaughter at the river Assinarus (Th. VII.75-86). Just like the sister commentary on book VI, the commentary on book VII, too, (as I explained above, rightly) offers students considerable help understanding the Greek, as Pelling announced he would do in line with the series' intent (cf. his remark in the preface to *Book VI*, p. ix, quoted above).

Initially, Thucydides describes the Athenians' Sicilian expedition as follows: ἔργον τοῦτο [Ἑλληνικὸν] τῶν κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον τόνδε μέγιστον γενέσθαι, δοκεῖν δ᾽ ἔμοιγε καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ Ἑλληνικῶν ἴσμεν, καὶ τοῖς τε κρατήσασι λαμπρότατον καὶ τοῖς διαφθαρεῖσι δυστυχέστατον: [6] κατὰ πάντα γὰρ πάντως νικηθέντες καὶ οὐδὲν ὀλίγον ἐς οὐδὲν κακοπαθήσαντες πανωλεθρίᾳ δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον καὶ πεζὸς καὶ νῆες καὶ οὐδὲν ὅτι οὐκ ἀπώλετο, καὶ ὀλίγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐπ᾽ οἴκου ἀπενόστησαν ("this [Hellenic] engagement was the greatest of any in this war, or, in my opinion, in Hellenic history; at once most glorious to the victors, and most calamitous to the conquered. [6] They were beaten at all points and altogether; all that they suffered

was great; they were destroyed, as the saying is, with a total destruction, their fleet, their army—everything was destroyed, and few out of many returned home": Th. VII.87.5-6; for Pelling's comments see *Book VII*, pp. 260-2, for Hornblower's *CoT* III, pp. 744-5). The latter correctly points out that Thucydides in a later stage may have nuanced his view, as might, perhaps, be construed from his remark καίπερ μεγάλη *τότε* δόξασα εἶναι ("great as it seemed *at the time*" [my emphases: JPS]: Th. VIII.96.1; T. Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation*, Oxford 1998, 278 n. 82, believes, though, that in essence Thucydides did not change his view but used here a stylistic figure, viz. 'conditional progressive correction').

We come now at the topic of the differences between Pelling's commentary and that of the *HCT* and the *CoT*: do Pelling's *Commentaries* constitute a meaningful contribution to Thucydidean literature? Like Pelling's *Commentaries*, Hornblower's *CoT*, vol. III, also begins with a relatively brief (36 pages in all) 'General Introduction', in his case consisting of eight sections. Especially interesting I found his section 5, discussing Thucydides' silence over the role and responsibility of the Athenian Βουλή: I would have welcomed some (more) attention for this fascinating issue in Pelling's commentaries. A potential downside of the *CoT*'s introduction's *relative* [my emphasis, JPS] brevity is that, since some of the sections appear to have developed straight out of Hornblower's lecture notes and/or conference papers, their immediate relevance to the commentary is at times less than obvious, like, e.g., regarding the theatricality of Sicilian culture (i.e., section 3 of the *CoT* III's introduction). However, to obtain a comprehensive view on Thucydides by Hornblower this introduction (or that of the other volumes) is not the most suited vehicle (but, in truth, the same criticism applies to Pelling's *Commentaries* as well: Pelling's view on Thucydides would deserve much more room). For Hornblower's fuller view on Thucydides, we still have to rely on his *Thucydides* (London 1994, 2nd edition) or even his *Thucydidean Themes* (Oxford 2010). For those who would like a thorough introduction to Thucydides in combination with Pelling's *Commentaries*, also works like Tim Rood's *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford 1998) and Emily Greenwood's *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London 2006) could be referred to (both of them featuring in the list of 'Works cited' of *Book VII*, though Rood's with a wrong title, sc. *Thucydides: Narrative and Interpretation*; with the same title Rood's work also features in the 'Works cited' of *Book VI*, but Greenwood's is lacking there). In vol. III of the *CoT*, many of Hornblower's sections and subsections – and speeches – are preceded by "introductory notes", like also the *HCT* has, though more sparingly: the *CoT* wins in accessibility by those notes. Using these 'introductory notes' widely has enabled Hornblower to develop sustained arguments uninterrupted over large blocks of Thucydides' text (on that issue making, for me at least, the *CoT* III preferable over the *HCT* IV), and thus helps alleviate, if not completely work out, the conflict between Hornblower's working methods and his chosen medium. Moreover, they compensate for the (relative) brevity of the introduction to *CoT* III.

Though fully aware of the reputation of both the *HCT* and the *CoT*, I would as yet – for a study of books VI and VII – at present turn first to Pelling's *Commentaries* as a companion to the text of these books. The first reason to do so is Pelling's focus on making the Greek understandable: much less than both Gomme *c.s.* and Hornblower, he does take pre-existing knowledge of his audience for granted. Much more than Gomme *c.s.* and Hornblower, Pelling explains Thucydides' Greek and makes the text itself accessible, albeit even now clearly some difficult passages remain. However, does that make the *HCT* IV and the *CoT* III redundant? Far from it! After coming to terms with the text proper, I would like to be informed about backgrounds etc. For those, Pelling has, necessarily, (much) less room – as he himself admits in his preface to *Book VI* and/or *Book VII*. Therefore, both the *HCT* IV (even though at places perhaps (slightly) obsolete and selective) and definitely the *CoT* III remain still always relevant works to be consulted for the historical backgrounds, complementing the picture that is being clearly but rather more succinctly outlined by Pelling.

An example may serve to elucidate my view. The issue at hand is the mutilation of the Herms in Athens preceding the expedition and the ensuing panic in the city for the possibility of retaliation by the god, essentially described by Thucydides in book VI.27-9.[4] Pelling introduces the episode with a two-page account on 'Herms and mysteries' (pp. 170-1), before detailing the text with textual, historical, and art-historical comments (pp. 171-6). Like in Pelling, also the discussion on this topic in the *CoT* III starts with an introduction, but much more than Pelling Hornblower focuses on an alternative story of the scandal, viz. Andocides' (c. 440 – c. 390 BCE) *On the Mysteries* (And. 1.11 *sqq*.), written about the same time Thucydides wrote his version of the events, possibly even before that time. Hornblower's introduction runs from *CoT* III p. 367 to 372, the ensuing comments from p. 372 to 381: taken together somewhat more elaborate, though in my view not necessarily distinctly better or worse than Pelling's treatment of the matter. The *HCT* IV starts the description of these occurrences with an introduction as well, a very lengthy at that (pp. 264-88), with an emphasis that at places is completely different from either Pelling's or Hornblower's (though the *HCT* IV also pays more attention to Andocides than Pelling can do). The ensuing comments in the *HCT* IV, though, are disappointingly brief, pp. 288-90, and in my view provide the user here insufficient access to the text proper. As yet, as indicated above, ultimately the commentaries do, some way or another, complement each other: here, though, I would prefer to combine Pelling with Hornblower.

Returning to the beginning of my review: do I believe that Pelling succeeds in the commentator's task (or perhaps even duty)? From the paragraphs above the reader may gather that I fully think he does. Even though Pelling might appear to suggest that these volumes are suitable "perhaps in an undergraduate

[4] The affair has been lucidly summarized by Debra Hamel, *The Mutilation of the Herms. Unpacking an Ancient Mystery* ([North Haven, CT], 2012), who makes a case for Andocides' guilt.

or graduate class" (see above), he has been overly modest there, I think. Anyone reading Thucydides' books VI and VII can, perhaps even should, benefit from the deep knowledge of and understanding for the text Pelling displays. That Pelling's two *Commentaries* under scrutiny do not succeed in answering all questions Thucydides' text poses is, in my view, only a minor inconvenience. Moreover, if even readers of Thucydides' work in antiquity were faced with (near) insurmountable problems regarding the author's Greek, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus makes clear, how can we complain not to understand all of it? As it is, some back up (or support) for Pelling may be present in the shape of, notably, the *CoT* (in fact, often more so than by the *HCT*) to help understand Thucydides' Greek, but essentially Pelling's efforts largely suffice. Equally important, perhaps, these two volumes by Pelling are very easily manageable (at least easier than the copious volumes of the *HCT* and the *CoT*), well produced and hardly contain printing errors. All in all, I think, the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series has two more jewels in its crown.

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Douglas Olson, *Aristophanes' Clouds: a commentary*, Michigan Classical Commentaries, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021, $75.00 (Hardcover), $29.95 (Paper), 274 pp., ISBN 978-0-472-07477-8 (Hardcover), 978-0-472-05477-0 (Paper).

This new commentary on Aristophanes' *Clouds* by a leading expert on Greek Comedy is a welcome addition to the scholarship on this play, a fundamental text for a variety of well-known reasons. In accordance with the aims of the newly launched "Michigan Classical Commentaries" series (https://www.press.umich.edu/browse/series/UM163), the commentary is intended for upper-level undergraduate and introductory graduate courses, but advanced readers will also find much that is useful in it.

In a brief introduction, Olson (henceforth O.) addresses some of the most significant and problematic aspects of the play, which, as O. rightly notes, "remains a puzzle" (1). O. first highlights the oddity of the hero of the *Clouds*, Strepsiades, compared to other Aristophanic heroes (1); he then discusses the thorny question of the double redaction of the play (2-5), that has important consequences both for the text we read and for its staging. A brief section (5-7) tackles the fundamental but often frustrating question of the presentation of Socrates in the *Clouds*, and is followed by two concise treatments of issues relating to staging and meter (7-11). An extremely selective bibliography (10-13) is thematically organized. No works in languages other than English are mentioned: this is perhaps understandable, given