

## HORNBLOWER'S THUCYDIDES

Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*. Volume I: Books 1–3. Pp. xi+548 (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1991); Volume II: Books 4–5.24. Pp. xvi+520 (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1996); Volume III: Books 5.25–8.109. Pp. xix+1107 (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2008).

Today Herodotus is perhaps more generally appreciated, certainly more generally loved, than Thucydides. Thus Momigliano, in his Sather Classical Lectures delivered in the years 1961–1962 (posthumously published as *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, Berkeley, 1990, p. 52). If indeed the twentieth century witnessed a resurgent Herodotus on both the historical and the literary fronts—a process of rehabilitation initiated by Felix Jacoby's seminal article for Pauly–Wissowa—it was also the age of Thucydides Deconstructed—a process of demolition already presaged at the beginning of last century by Cornford's *Thucydides Mythistoricus*. Yet barely half a century after Momigliano gave his Sather Lectures, we are beginning to learn to love Thucydides again. Anyone who wishes to know how this renewed love has come about, and what courses it is likely to take in the years to come, will never do without this book. Hornblower's *A Commentary on Thucydides*, in three volumes, is the first lemma-by-lemma commentary on the entire Greek text of Thucydides to appear, in any language to the present reviewer's knowledge, since A. W. Gomme, A. Andrewes and K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides (HCT)*, 5 vols. (Oxford 1945–1981).<sup>1</sup> H.'s now completed commentary is a truly monumental achievement, spanning over eighteen years for writing and covering over two thousand, two hundred and twenty pages, about a thousand pages more than Gomme's own 1262 pages and matching the 2298 pages of the entire *HCT*. Few, if any, in our current generation would be able to turn out so much with H.'s intensity, erudition and scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup> Partial commentaries, such as J. S. Rusten, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War Book II* (Cambridge 1989) and P. J. Rhodes, *Thucydides: Book III* (Warminster 1994) did appear in the meantime, as did D. Cartwright, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides: Companion to Rex Warner's Penguin Translation* (Michigan 1997).

This may sound like an unabashed panegyric. Yet things did not begin that way. When the first volume of this commentary appeared in 1991, it generally attracted more disapproving voices than eulogies from reviewers. It was, of course, inevitable that any commentary that apparently aspired to succeed the work initiated by Gomme would be sternly measured against its predecessor. There were, however, two criticisms initially raised against H. which, in my view, were largely justifiable. These did not concern matters of detail or the work's overall academic standard in comparison with Gomme, but focussed rather on the question of what a commentary on one of the greatest classics of history should be like. This review will begin by assessing how H.'s subsequent volumes responded to those two particular criticisms (§ 1). Since much has already been commented by more qualified reviewers on each volume, especially on the earlier vols. I–II, I shall then look into the commentary's general character, its strengths, and its possible weaknesses (as the present reviewer perceives them to be after the completion of the entire work) in the format (§ 2), historical and literary interests (§ 3), arguments (§ 4), and treatment of modern literature (§ 5). In conclusion, some scope for improvement will be suggested (§§ 6–7).

## § 1

The first criticism that greeted the publication of vol. I centred on its apparent lack of any agenda, or rather any clear statement of one: it opened, Xenophon-like, with no introduction, bar half-page prefatory notes (replaced in the 1997 paperback edition by a Preface of two pages or so). In response to this charge, vol. II came out five years later with an impressive Introduction of some 145 pages divided into seven thematic sections: 1. The overall purpose and objectives of the commentary; 2. Thucydides' attitudes towards Herodotus; 3. The "heroic" presentation of Brasidas; 4. Thucydides' concern with inter-communal kinship; 5. Speeches and the question of authenticity; 6. Thucydides' relationship to the epigraphic evidence; and 7. The "completeness" and possible dates of composition of Bks. 4–5. 24. Of these, section 1 can properly be said to constitute a general introduction to the whole commentary. It engages extensively and exclusively in promoting its advantages over Gomme's share of *HCT*; these H. justifiably claims to be the translation of every Greek lemma, the use of digitalised databases, the consideration of religion, and the systematic analysis of literary and narratological aspects on the basis of unitarianism (on these see below). The remaining six sections, on the other hand, are more or less independent essays, dealing with issues that have generally characterised Thucydidean studies, both traditional and of the more recent kind. Yet they are also strongly angled to reflect

H.'s own concerns. Moreover, the practical aim of these essays is no more than "to pull together ideas scattered through my commentary on these 160 chapters" (II, p. 2); that is, not so much to provide an introduction but to draw up conclusions from his notes on the passages of Thucydides treated in vol. II—except for s. 2, which essentially consists of polemics against R. Stroud, "Thucydides and Corinth", *Chiron* 24 (1994) 267–304, and J.J. Kennelly's dissertation, *Thucydides' Knowledge of Herodotus* (Brown 1994), plus some material gleaned from vol. II supplementing H.'s own 1992 paper, "Thucydides' Use of Herodotus" (incorporated as Annex A in the same volume). Thus someone expecting to find in these 145 pages an introduction to Thucydides' work as a whole, or to major problems of Thucydidean scholarship, or even to H.'s own overall views on the historian, is sure to be baffled.

The third and final volume, published twelve years after vol. II, also begins with a General Introduction in eight sections: 1. Compositional questions of Bks. 5. 25–8; 2. The historical context of the Sicilian expedition; 3. The theatrical culture of Sicily; 4. Syracuse characterised as another Athens; 5. Thucydides' silence over the role and responsibility of the Athenian Βουλή; 6. The possibility of oral recitation; 7. Narrative functions of indirect speech; 8. Stylistic enactment (again more on these below). This introduction has above all the virtue of brevity, 36 pages in all, which was so sorely lacking in that of vol. II that one reviewer of the earlier volume, P.J. Rhodes, commented on the "substantial repetitions in the Introduction of material in the commentary" the relationship between which "might have benefited from a little more editing" (*BMCR* [1997]). One potential downside, on the other hand, is that, since some of the sections have developed straight out of H.'s lecture notes and conference papers, their immediate relevance to the commentary is at times less than obvious: this reviewer scabbled in vain to find out any tangible links between s. 3 on the theatricality of Sicilian culture and the main text of the commentary. Moreover, this introduction, like that of vol. II, restricts itself to the books covered by that volume, and to a very specific set of issues. We are still left not quite sure what H. thinks of many "basic" interpretative questions like, say, what was Thucydides' general understanding of the Great War, of its "truest cause", of human nature, of political leadership, of reason, of power, of imperialism, or indeed of his own undertaking to record it ἐξ αἰεὶ? All these are topics that remain scattered through the notes (esp. in the introduction-less vol. I) but ought to have been "pulled together" somewhere.

The best place, therefore, to look for a more comprehensive overview is not these two Introductions, but his *Thucydides* (London 1987, <sup>2</sup>1994). Though published earlier and partly out of step with H.'s later intellectual

development, it remains useful both as an induction course for the *History* in its entirety and as a précis of H.'s various strategies to read it, many of them duly carried over into the present commentary. In addition, H. published a number of articles and a monograph on Thucydides during the eighteen years that intervened between the appearance of vol. I and vol. III. Some of these have been "extensively rewritten" and collected into a book, *Thucydidean Themes*, which came out from OUP in Nov. 2010 (yet to be seen by this reviewer) and which, according to the publisher, is to serve as "a companion volume" to the entire commentary. Its Introduction, as H. promises in the Preface to vol. III, will try to offer his "views on Th., as arrived at after the completion of the present commentary" (p. viii).

The second criticism that was as often aired as the first involved the total absence of maps in vol. I. Vol. II, on the other hand, had a single, rather rudimentary, map of Amphipolis. Still, this patently was not enough: given the geographical extension of the theatres of war treated in the relevant part of the *History*, at least maps of Pylos-Sphacteria and the Chalcidian districts would also have been desirable. This cartographic deficit has finally been rectified in vol. III, by the addition of eight maps, including (belatedly) those of Greece and the Aegean, South Italy and Sicily, and Asia Minor, all in clear drawings and just about full enough to serve their purpose.

## § 2

The main body of the commentary arranges Thucydides' text by episodic units ("The Pylos Episode"), which are in turn further divided into sub-sections (e. g. "The Athenians occupy Pylos"), all prefixed with subject headings. The beginning of each year is also flagged in the text. This format follows that of *HCT*, except that the latter signalled only years and seasons in the running heads. Under each sub-section come the Greek lemmata and the notes. Unlike *HCT*, H. provides each lemma with the corresponding passage taken from B. Jowett's Victorian translation of Thucydides in *Oxford World's Classics*, revised and updated by himself. These translations, intended for the Greekless, reflect the "democratisation" of classical studies in the English-speaking world that took place after the appearance of Gomme's first volumes. The long-promised separate publication of a revision of Jowett's whole translation has now been abandoned, as we learn from the Preface to vol. III (and in the meantime OUP published a fresh translation of Thucydides by J.M. Hammond for its *World's Classics* series in 2009).

Another useful feature in the economy of the commentary is the "introductory notes", which preface many of H.'s sections and sub-

sections, as well as speeches. *HCT*, especially that of Dover, occasionally had such explanatory notes. But while *HCT*'s were sporadic and sparing, H. deploys them in a far more extensive and systematic manner. They are most noticeable in vol. III—and so are their positive effects. In their reviews of vol. II, D. Lateiner (*Histos* 2 [1998]), and to a lesser extent C.J. Smith (*CR* 49 [1999] 19), have both questioned the very point of wrapping the thematic and structural approaches adopted by H. in the “atomistic” format intrinsic to a line-by-line commentary. However, the use of longer introductory notes in vol. III than in the previous volumes has enabled H. to develop sustained arguments uninterrupted over large blocks of Thucydides' text, and thus helps alleviate if not completely work out the conflict between his working methods and his chosen medium. Furthermore, the detailed introductory notes in vol. III compensate for its brief Introduction, and by so doing, also avoid those “substantial repetitions” that created a sense of redundancy in vol. II.

### § 3

In his recently published collection of Thucydidean studies, J. S. Rusten, referring back to the early 80s, has summed up H.'s programme thus: “Dover had just completed the last volume of *HCT* [...], Connor was about to write the sort of ‘literary commentary’ that Dover [...] could not envision. And Hornblower was to write one that would take account of both”.<sup>2</sup> In retrospect, this is not an inaccurate description of the work and its place in the scholarship as it has finally emerged in its entirety. However, when it was first conceived, this project, like Gomme's (but unlike H.'s own earlier *Thucydides*), clearly seems to have started from the historical. And it remains deeply engaged in historical issues throughout. In this exercise, H. tries hard to “improve on” Gomme as much as update him. In order to effect that improvement, he digs deep into subjects seldom addressed by Gomme, including one that has not been deemed by many to have been a factor in Thucydides' historical explanations—not, at least, in the way it might have been in Herodotus or some other historians: namely religion, in both the narrower and the broader senses of the word. Narrower, in that its manifestations took the specific forms of sanctuaries, sacrifices, oaths, oracles, purifications, divination etc.; and broader, because under the same heading will have fallen a very wide variety of aspects of Greek life, including festivals, theatres, athletics, battle

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<sup>2</sup> J.S. Rusten (ed.), *Thucydides*, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (Oxford 2009) 17.

preparations, amphictiony, and those often mythically explained kinship ties, *συγγένεια*, between communities. All of which are themes that are central to H.'s enquiry. And in order to bring matters up to date, he draws on epigraphic and archaeological discoveries that have come to light since the mid-twentieth century, plus non-Attic inscriptions overlooked by Gomme, as well as the latest works of reference including *IACP* and the still ongoing *LGP*N; this evidence is then set against the text, in order to re-examine old financial problems arising from it or to expound on personal and place names, where his expertise shines.

H. is rightly wary of “marrying epigraphy and Thucydides” “at every turn”, however (II, pp. 6–7). Nor is he unaware of the similarly circular risk of “correcting Thucydides out of Thucydides” (II, p. 110). And yet the historian in H. is nonetheless quick, when he chooses, to challenge the perceived shortcomings of his ancient Greek master: Thucydides’ omission of key events in the 430s leading to “serious distortions” in the picture of the causes of the Ten Years War (I, pp. 66 f.; 97–99; 110–112; 133; 187 f.; 382 f.); a “most serious” misjudgement on Pericles’ optimistic assessment of the war finances (I, pp. 341 f.); Thucydides’ earlier failure to take in the Persian factor (I, pp. 181; 415; II, pp. 423 f.; III, pp. 765; 769–771); exaggeration of the significance of the Pylos affair (II, p. 113); misplaced blame for the Athenian failure at Delium (II, pp. 286 f.); general blackening of the Athenian assembly and its susceptibility to passion (III, pp. 30; 568); downplaying of the long-term relationships between Athens and south Italian cities, and comparable overplaying of the latter’s bleak reception of the Athenian fleet in 415 BC (III, pp. 5 f.; 34; 419; 421 f.; 461; 608 f.); a “dramatically” inflated number of the Athenian and allied troops retreating from Syracuse (III, pp. 619 f.; 713 f.; Appendix 2); poor coverage of Pharnabazus’ sphere of control in northern Asia Minor in “the Ionian War” (III, pp. 760; 773; 987), and so on. H. is particularly impatient with Thucydides’ general tendency to speak only in terms of personified collectivities (e. g. rash Athens versus dithering Sparta) and to let a part stand for the whole—a group of citizens or a political organ for “the Athenians”; the Spartans, the Corinthians etc. for “the Peloponnesians”; “the Athenian army” for the ethnically mixed collection of citizens and allies; some of the federation’s constituent πόλεις for “the Boeotians” (perhaps very much like our “Russians” for the old USSR or “the English” for UK)—and, related to Thucydides’ talk of “the Athenians”, his near-universal silence over the role played by the Council (βουλή) in Athenian decision-making. And he is quick to point out Thucydides’ biases for, or against, Alcidas, Cleon, Brasidas, Alcibiades, Phrynichus *et al.* in his character portraits, where the historian postures as the omniscient narrator who can read into his characters’ minds.

This last point touches on a banal and yet crucial truth: where written histories are concerned, any “historical” issues such as those above soon become just as literary, or historiographical. Gomme and the two continuators of a “historical commentary” had all purposefully, but not always successfully, tried to stay within an artificial boundary separating Thucydides the Historian, i. e. the external referentiality of his text, from the so-called “Thucydides the Artist”, i. e. its internal representation. H., on the other hand, by not placing any qualifier such as “historical” or “literary” on the title of his own, seems from the start to have been set to stride over that boundary. A typical example of this attempt at synthesis is his engaged examination in vol. II of the “epic” presentation of Brasidas, where he combines literary analysis inspired by J. G. Howie’s “Ἡ ἀριστεία ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου ἕως τοῦ Ξενοφώντα” (*Parnassos* 34 [1992] 425–448)<sup>3</sup> with historical questions, or rather the historical question, which this literally exceptional presentation entails: Who really was the Spartan? Although H.’s observations on Thucydides’ historical “failings” may strike us as not so much ground-breaking discoveries as a restatement of old charges against the historian, what marks H.’s commentary out from previous ones is this close engagement with the literary, and above all his application of the specialised vocabulary of narratology for systematically identifying and conceptualising familiar issues (cf. II, pp. 18 f.).

In fact, as the commentary proceeds from the first volume to the last, H. is more and more strongly drawn to the representational end of the historical-literary spectrum. One may observe this, for example, in his increasing concentration on Thucydides’ narrative techniques. In vol. I, H.’s interest in such literary devices was limited to ring composition and anachrony (the latter being variously rendered as “narrative misplacement” or “narrative displacement” in vol. I and “narrative dislocation” or “anachrony” in vols. II–III). From vol. II onwards, however, it expands to take in many more classic concepts of narratology originally developed by Genette and other theorists, and adopted and adapted by classical scholars like Irene de Jong to poetic studies. A few specimens include: focalisation, or the point of view from which the narration of an event, a speech, or a statement within it (“embedded focalisation”), is made; narrative rhythm or pace (e. g. a slower rhythm in order to mark an incident as paradigmatic: the extended account of the great Corcyraean *στάσις* versus the briefer notes on other *στάσεις*, the detailed coverage of the

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<sup>3</sup> A later more focussed English treatment is available as “The Aristeia of Brasidas: Thucydides’ Presentation of Events at Pylos and Amphipolis”, *PLLS* 12 (2005) 207–284.

first land-battle on Sicilian soil before all other battles, etc.); iterative presentation (e. g. Th. 7, 8, 1: “[Nicias] had often sent [such messages] before”, which is strictly an iteration and analepsis combined [πολλάκις μὲν καὶ ἄλλοτε ... μάλιστα δὲ καὶ τότε]); linearisation, or the way of structuring a set of synchronous events into an ordered linear sequence; what de Jong calls “presentation through negation”, a device for engaging in an emotional and intellectual discourse with the reader (Th. 7, 28, 3: “even so they did not withdraw from Sicily”); counter-factual (the “if X had not happened” formula, like “if the ships [commanded by Th.] had not come to the rescue at top speed, Eion would have fallen to Brasidas at daybreak” at Th. 4, 106, 4); and closure (Th. 7, 87, 6: “These were the events in Sicily”). At the same time, H. veers more towards specialised language, as for example he switches to “prolepsis” where in vol. I he had simple “anticipation”: compare the cross-references at I, p. 463 ad Th. 3, 68, 3: “This *anticipates* [Th.] iv, 66” and II, p. 231 ad Th. 4, 66, 1: “See the *prolepsis* or anticipation of this at [Th.] iii, 68, 3” (my italics). As with many other matters, however, nowhere in the present commentary does H. set out systematically to expound on these narrative devices, nor does he bother to provide much in the way of a general introduction to narratologists’ terms. Most of them just come in piecemeal. Again, for the uninitiated the best starting-point would not be this commentary, but his “Narratology and Narrative Techniques in Thucydides”, in id. (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford 1994) 131–166.

H.’s discussions of textual and linguistic matters are on the whole as restrained as Gomme’s. A long-promised “textual appendix” has eventually failed to appear; as he now believes (III, p. vii) it has been made largely unnecessary thanks to G. B. Alberti’s new edition of Thucydides with its most up-to-date critical apparatus. Yet here, too, the pull of the text seems to become ever stronger as the commentary progresses: e. g. observe the long notes ad Th. 4, 120, 1 and 121, 1: ἐπύρχοντο, προσήρχοντο; 6, 6, 2: ὥστε τὴν γενομένην ἐπὶ Λάχητος...; 6, 31, 4: εἰκασθῆναι; 8, 38, 3: ἐς ὀλίγον (although it must be noted that H. tends to stop and dwell on the text where a reading has some additional bearing on historical problems). However, what characterises H.’s exegesis most in this respect is his diligent comparisons of various translations. We are all aware, while rarely explicitly stating so, that translation is part of a critical and/or interpretative process that is tacitly applied and usually left unexplained by the translator. But some elucidations would certainly be called for of how seemingly innocent ἵνα μὴ ὀλιγαρχῶνται (Th. 8, 63, 3) has resulted in renderings (and meanings) as widely divergent as “an insurrection [...] against the oligarchy” (Hobbes), “in order to put down oligarchy” (Jowett) and “had just had an anti-oligarchical revolution” (Warner), on the one

hand, and "...an oligarchy [...] which a party of them had lately risen to avoid" (Crawley) and "in order to avoid being governed by an oligarchy" (Smith) on the other—so had these Samians been fighting against the real thing, or in fear of the possibility? H.'s comparisons not only have the value of shedding light on such arcane procedures; they also make a kind of reception history, yielding at times some unexpected findings, like the modern western failure to appreciate units of ten thousand (μυριάδες): it draws a discreet smile to learn that, already in the seventeenth century, the great Hobbes mistranslated δέκα μυριάδες as "10 000" (III, p. 167). Again, after being relatively few in vol. I, these comparisons become markedly more ample from vol. II, and vol. III extensively takes account of Valla's fifteenth-century Latin translation as well.

#### § 4

H.'s literary approach to his text, like many of our contemporaries', tends strongly towards unitarianism, a position first articulated in vol. II but already implicit in vol. I. Hence his close attention to the text's overall structures, strategies and inter-connectedness: patterns and progressions in the narrative and speeches; neat narrative rings; narrative "seeds" whose true significance emerges only later; expectations fulfilled or belied, and predictions borne out or falsified by the subsequent narrative; responsions, or what M. I. Finley once aptly called "telepathy", between speakers wildly separated by space (though H. is generally more cautious than some of the "Thucydides-the-Artist" school in regarding all these speeches as pure literary inventions, and readier to leave room for their "authenticity"); and other internal cross-references and echoes, both explicit and implicit, which cut across books and sections. The single greatest model for H. in this respect will no doubt have been W. R. Connor's influential book-by-book reading, *Thucydides* (Princeton 1984). One might almost say that what we have here is a Connor expanded and recast in narratology, while retaining all his sensibility to eschew reductionism.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, in later volumes H. becomes ever more emphatic in his rejection of an analytical approach, or separatism, "even in the moderate form represented by Andrewes in *HCT 5*" (III, p. 1). Yet, in praising his hero Connor, H. can at times sound too harsh towards the still useful contributions by the continuator of *HCT*, who is almost singled out as the villain that revived the separatist bogeyman (e. g. III, pp. 885 f.).

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Connor's remarks on what he then called "post-modernist tendencies" in Thucydidean studies, in id., "A Post-Modernist Thucydides?", *CJ* 72 (1977) 289–298.

Thus H. finds nothing unusually problematic or exceptional even in those portions of the *History* that have often been made to appear so, i. e. parts of Bk. 5 and the entire Bk. 8, by separatist critics, and Bks. 6–7 by literary scholars. Most of these portions are covered by vol. III, a tome bigger than vols. I and II put together. For the same reason, H. just carries on without fuss or pomp with his familiar themes in this volume: narratology, intertextuality, religion, onomastics. Some of his earlier interests are pursued with increased vigour: the Greek historian's concern with colonisation and kinship (esp. for the Sicilian books), use of indirect speech (most notoriously in Bk. 8) as part of his narrative strategies, and that of patronymics for particular rhetorical effects (e. g. as a form of attributive discourse or denomination, like my own "the Greek historian" earlier in this sentence). However, H. also introduces his reader in vol. III to two new topics: what he calls "stylistic enactment" (not many examples of it however, other than the paradigmatic case of the Syracusan counter-wall building at pp. 551–554 ad Th. 7, 6, 3–4); and the literary affinity as well as the historical complementarity between Thucydides and the fifth-century epinician poetry, notably Pindar and, to a lesser extent, Bacchylides, Simonides *et al.* The latter topic incorporates many of the major themes explored, and the insights gained, in his 2004 monograph, *Thucydides and Pindar: Historical Narrative and the World of Epinician Poetry*, Oxford, a standalone study of the cultural and literary history of fifth-century Greece.

Armed with these new literary tools, vol. III further advances another of H.'s favourite themes since vol. I and his earlier *Thucydides* (p. 29): the possibility of oral delivery by the historian. And this is the one proposition of H.'s that labours most under the lack of serious proof. It is one thing to identify Homeric or Pindaric echoes in Thucydides at his most excited and exciting moments, for we have the textual evidence, something with which to support or refute an argument. It is another to assert from this, as H. is prepared to do, that "We can almost hear the burst of applause at a symposium or Olympia, when Th. reached the words ἠπείγοντο ἀφίκεσθαι" (III, p. 390). This disturbingly looks like a reduplication of the notorious story that Herodotus charmed his audience at the Olympic games by reciting his λόγοι (Luc., *Herod.* 1–2), or an inversion of the legend that Thucydides wept upon hearing his ἐπίδειξις (Marcel., *Comm.* 54). On the one hand, in criticising Stroud, H. has rightly warned against "making a conjecture about Thucydides' life based on Thucydides' writings" (II, p. 22). On the other, in pressing his case so far for recitation, it looks as if H. is here doing exactly that. We know that Tacitus, the Roman historian with whom H. often likes to draw comparisons, began his *Annales* with a hexameter line, and public readings of one's work

were still being practised among the Hellenised Romans of that later age. That is no proof, however, that *he* recited like a bard at Trajan's court or Pliny the Younger's villa. Thucydides' text, it is true, does suggest his intended "audience" (not in the radical sense of the word, of course)—and that is a highly literate one willing to struggle with his generally difficult style, which defies, and surely defied, instant comprehension, μάλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν. At any rate, even those passages that are specifically in H.'s mind (notably on the Corcyraean incident and the Sicilian expedition), however oral-sounding, do not by themselves point to any particular circumstances under which, or by means of which, they were "displayed" and disseminated.

H.'s brand of unitarianism, however, by no means entails his seeing the *History* as "the product of one sitting" (III, p. 3). Instead, he adopts a developmental model drawn from C. Dewald's 1975 thesis,<sup>5</sup> suggesting that from Bks. 1–5 to Bks. 6–8 the historian gradually developed different, more flexible narrative techniques "over an extended period of time", the results of which are those last three books of the *History* as we have them. This represents both a mild departure from unmodified unitarianism and, incidentally, a single significant turnaround from his own earlier view of the Sicilian books as composed soon after the events (*id.*, *Thucydides*, 146–151; 153), as well as from his "Andrewsian" position on the nature of Bk. 8 (*ibid.*, 141–143; 148 f.; 155 f.; 161). At the same time, he allows that there are indeed some gaps left unfilled and some details not wholly revised, especially in Bk. 5.

Furthermore, H. does not entirely shrug off the old question of the dates of composition either; he is too much of a historian to do just that. For Bk. 1, he seems to presume that much of it was composed early in Thucydides' writing career (cf. I, pp. 134; 206), while explicitly accepting that parts of the Pentecontaetia were inserted after 404 BC (I, pp. 148; 195; 210 f.), as were some other bits of Bks. 1–3 (I, pp. 246; 342 f.). For the rest of the books, covered in vols. II–III, H. sketches out their possible dates with characteristic caution, and only in the broadest terms (e. g. III, p. 602: "a latish composition date"), concluding Bks. 4–5, 24 as "innovatory and exciting and late" (II, p. 122), and Bks. 5, 25–28 as "written relatively late, with a few rough edges, especially in bk. 5" (III, p. 1). Finally, he suggests at various points that Thucydides was probably still working in the early 390s (I, pp. 113; 123; 376; 505; 536; III, pp. 602; 890; 995; cf. *id.*, *Thucydides*, 143 f.; 151–154). Whether or not one agrees with each of these propositions, the fact that H. grapples with the "Thucydidean

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<sup>5</sup> Published as *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley 2005).

question”—a horror phrase—at all is to be welcomed. This is a salutary traditionalism, not a deplorable reversion to bad old days. For it would risk throwing the baby out with the bathwater to concentrate on the inner unity and static structure of a text, be it the Thucydidean συγγραφή or (for that matter) the Herodotean ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις, while ignoring its internal development and chronology. Such extreme unitarianism, this reviewer believes, is likely to fail to capture the most critical moments in the genesis of a literary genre, the one which we now understand as “history”.

The question of genre evokes yet another important issue that informs many of H.’s notes, an issue which also has attracted the attention of some ancient critics like Dionysius and many of his modern counterparts since Cornford: namely, possible connections or intertextuality between Thucydides and other literature from which history was later to emerge as a distinct genre in its own right. The use of IT such as text searches, which H. must have considerably exploited for this purpose, may have become old hat in the two decades since vol. I; but the substantial body of comparative material he has garnered from epic, epinician poetry, geography and ethnography, tragedy, comedy, medical writings etc., will remain an essential sourcebook for those keen to read “Thucydides in context”. The one area in which H. has apparently lost his earlier interest, however, is the relationship (either in the affirmative or in the negative) between Thucydides and the then nascent theory of rhetoric. That interest was much in evidence in his 1987 *Thucydides* and vol. I of the commentary, but has somehow petered out after vol. II outside the obvious cases of speeches (notably the Melian dialogue, the Sicilian debate, and the series of speeches in and around Syracuse); and the sophists, both as a category and individually, are given surprisingly short shrift: it is telling that the far slimmer *Thucydides* had more references to “sophists” than any volume of the commentary. Or, perhaps, it may be that H. is now reacting against the prominence given them in earlier Thucydidean scholarship by deliberately playing down the putative influences of their putative theories on the historian (cf. *Thucydides*, 60 f.; 112; 120; 127 f.; 184 f.; III, 223 f.; 954 f.).

H.’s style of argument throughout the commentary is (so to speak) un-Thucydidean, in that he tends to prefer to cite a variety of different views and readings from past scholarship, often adding his own to the list, rather than to pronounce any final authoritative verdict upon a given issue. That tendency is most striking where a problem involves questions like why Thucydides says X or fails to mention Y, why he reports something at *that* point rather than another, or who is the focaliser expressing this or that view (all difficult questions indeed): see, typically, his long introductory note on the notorious analeptic excursus on the fall of the Pisistratids (III,

pp. 433–440). Furthermore, because of, rather than despite, his unitarian approach, H. denies homogeneity in the text, and like Connor before him refuses to impose uniform interpretations, let alone establish rules, on the historian's views, thoughts, preferences and writing habits, "exceptions" to which have often been presumed since Ullrich to be "indications of incompleteness"—a phrase taken from the title of an appendix in Andrewes' *HCT* 5 (pp. 361–383)—which would have been expunged in a hypothetical final version. This whole tendency on H.'s part to leave important questions wide open might be seen in some impatient eyes as side-stepping. A more favourable view, however, would be that it reflects the stated aim of H.'s commentary to be the groundwork, "something on which to construct general propositions" (II, pp. 2 f.). At any rate, his handling of complex nexuses of historical, literary, and religious, as well as textual issues is on the whole clear, in language that is plain and expansive enough; only occasionally might one quibble with some unnecessary jargon (why use notoriously ambiguous "intertext" to describe the relationship between Thucydides and Herodotus when a simple "allusion" or "influence"—H. only admits Thucydides' awareness of Herodotus and never vice versa—would do better for clarity) or uncharacteristically meandering arguments that seem to lead to nowhere.

## § 5

It has frequently, and justly, been noted that one of the commentary's greatest strengths lies in the dazzling array of modern literature that adorns H.'s learned arguments, mostly newer than Gomme but some earlier. This is drawn from a very wide range of works, from military analyses of the hoplite "shoving" (ὄθισμός) to a hair-raising introduction to the Pacific tsunamis (although the less specialised sources inevitably tend to be almost exclusively anglophone). It is therefore all the more unfortunate that the great virtue of bringing all this reading into the discussion is considerably offset by the equally great vice of a lack of organisation. To begin with, the commentary as a whole has no comprehensive bibliography listing the works cited such as one usually expects to find somewhere near the end of a book—a failing inevitably shared by the older *HCT*—other than the fraction of them listed in the Abbreviations sections. It need not be added that all the other unlisted works are abbreviated in one way or another.

This unhelpfulness is further aggravated by H.'s somewhat arbitrary methods of citation in the notes, which force us to search other pages and volumes for fuller references. For example, he draws much on "Rutter 56" for his literary analysis of the great sea-battle at Syracuse (III, p. 694); this

is followed a few lines later by the same, yet slightly more informative, “Rutter 1989, 56”. But it would take a most watchful, determined reader with a Plutarchean good memory to locate a full reference, N.K. Rutter, *Thucydides VI and VII: A Companion to the Penguin Translation of Rex Warner* (Bristol 1989), which appears more than three hundred pages earlier (*ibid.*, p. 381), with another work of the same author (p. 650) cited in between. Or take the cross-reference at II, p. 233, “see [Th.] I, 63, 2 n. and Bauslaugh there cited; Bauslaugh (6) reckons that...”, where we are instructed to reach to the shelf for vol. I (provided it is there) in order to find out in what paper or book Bauslaugh reckons so—only to discover instead yet another abbreviation, “R.A. Bauslaugh, *JHS* 99 (1979)” (I, p. 106). This is already tiresome enough. But we go mad when we find, about a hundred pages later (II, pp. 325; 350), “Bauslaugh, *JHS* 1979 ([Th. 4.] 8.6 n)”, and realise that the full citation, R.A. Bauslaugh, “Thucydides IV 8.6 and the South Channel at Pylos”, *JHS* 99 (1979), had been lurking in the same volume all the time, about a hundred pages earlier, at II, p. 159. Some more sensible tidying-up would certainly have eliminated this and other such oddities. The particular problem addressed in the above-cited paper is no doubt one well-known to ardent students of Thucydides, but H. intends his commentary for “a historian or literary scholar who merely wants to make casual use of just one passage” (II, p. 3). This is indeed the likeliest use of any lemma-based commentary, and the greatest advantage of its “atomistic” arrangement. But contrary to his best intentions, the way H. cites modern works all too often appears to presume sustained reading of his text, or expertise in the literature on (say) Greek stades, or maybe the Google search engine always at hand, as the above examples show. That will surely frustrate if not deter such “casual” users who might well have wished to avail themselves of a proper bibliography that made H.’s awesome range of reading more accessible.

## § 6

H. repeatedly reminds his reader that it is as important to look at what Thucydides does not tell us as to go over what he does. This reviewer has taken that injunction to heart and would like to raise one issue that H. himself only rarely addresses in his commentary: that of reception. In contrast to the great attention he pays to Thucydides’ debt to his literary predecessors (both declared and suspected), especially Homer, Pindar, Herodotus and Hellanicus, he is markedly reticent about how Thucydides himself was received by posterity. Not that he is uninterested in this topic. Between vol. I and vol. II, he wrote a paper on Thucydides’ reception in the late Classical and the Hellenistic periods, with particular emphasis on

his probable influences on the methodology of Polybius;<sup>6</sup> and as recently as 2006 he also contributed a chapter on Herodotus' reception in antiquity to C. Dewald and J. Marincola.<sup>7</sup> However, in the present commentary as in the above treatises, H.'s scope is mostly limited to the Hellenistic period and the early to high Roman Empire (I, pp. 75 f.; 240; II, pp. 21; 83 f.; 171; 220; 442; 444; 464 f.; III, pp. 208; 239; 244 f.; 285; 356; 696; 698). Anything that comes after the Second Sophistic gets no mention with respect to reception history. And the Byzantines? Forget them. As for the modern reception of Thucydides, all H. has to offer is a handful of isolated vignettes: a possible relevance (or irrelevance) of the Thucydidean οἶον τε ἐγίγνετο to the Rankean "wie es eigentlich gewesen" (I, pp. 320 f. ad Th. 2, 48, 3); a quotation from Alcibiades' speech at Sparta in a letter of Grotius (III, pp. 511; 513 f. ad Th. 6, 89, 6); the narrative of the Athenian catastrophe at the River Assinarus excerpted in a novel of Iris Murdoch, or giving inspiration to the Nobel laureate Giorgos Seferis (III, pp. 733 f. ad Th. 7, 84); the story of Harmodius and Aristogiton taken as a model by Mary Renault (III, pp. 434 f. ad Th. 6, 54–59); and Colin Powell haplessly ridiculed for allegedly attributing his made-up quote to Thucydides (III, p. 331 ad Th. 6, 11, 6).

H. could surely have knitted together a more cohesive picture than this patchy collage—of the not-always-straightforward attitudes, for example, to our historian among later critics such as Dionysius and Lucian;<sup>8</sup> of his overriding influence on western political science and education from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first (Thomas Hobbes did not make his name just as a good translator of Thucydides, and Donald Kagan is as much a neo-conservative ideologue as an acclaimed historian of the Peloponnesian War); or of the Thucydides who has very recently undergone a kind of *περιπέτεια*, having been transformed from the paragon of objectivity to the master playwright of tragedy, from the hard-nosed social Darwinist to the indignant moralist of the old school, or from the father of what David Hume called real history to the father of what Collingwood disparaged as psychological history. One could easily cite many more examples. For the possible scope of such research, we only need to glance over the good

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<sup>6</sup> "The Fourth-century and Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides", *JHS* 115 (1995) 48–68; cf. id., *Greek Historiography*, 60 f.

<sup>7</sup> C. Dewald, J. Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge 2006) 306–318.

<sup>8</sup> On which see, most recently, G. Weaire, "Dionysius of Halicarnassus' Professional Situation and the *De Thucydide*", *Phoenix* 59 (2005) 246–266, and E. Greenwood, "Reading Thucydides with Lucian", in id., *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London 2006) 109–129.

range of modern works registered under the headings “Ancient Reception” and “Later Reception” in the bibliography section of Rusten’s collection of Thucydidean papers (*Thucydides* [Oxford 2009] 496–500), most of which were published after vol. I of the present commentary. These, in addition to the four contributions to the same anthology (a new one by the editor and three other reprints) as well as the forthcoming multi-authored compendia, K. Harloe and N. Morley (eds.), *Thucydides: Reception, Reinterpretation and Influence*, and *Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*, show how much H. has graciously left for others to explore in this relatively untrodden field, and how much he himself could further work on if he chose to. In this regard I daresay the commentary, for all its thoroughness, still falls short of full justice to its subject-matter. It is not so much because reception is a vital, almost mandatory, component of any comprehensive study of an author these days; rather, because posterity was, after all, what Thucydides cared about most.

## § 7

H. had earlier cautioned that his commentary was to supplement and update, not to supplant, *HCT* (II, pp. 3 ff.). It is probably now fair to say that the final product has surpassed that modest aim. But a final question arises: will H. supplement and update his own? Fully twenty years have passed since the appearance of vol. I, twice as long as the decade that lay between that volume and the last vol. of *HCT*. Moreover, unlike Gomme, and indeed unlike Thucydides, H. has managed to see his enormous project to completion while still in his prime. He will thus have the chance, again if he wishes, to revise earlier sections of his commentary in the light of the later, more mature part. Vol. III does contain a short Appendix to the earlier vols. (pp. 1055–1060), and all paperback editions have corrections and additions as well as a new Preface to vol. I. But they do little to bridge the gulfs between the volumes in approach and priorities and, according to this reviewer’s overall impression, the gulf between vols. I and II appears larger than that between vols. II and III, despite the lapse of twelve years that preceded the latter; it looks as though the more drastic shifts in H.’s intellectual outlook, or at least in the direction of the project, took place after the conception of vol. I.

The same passage of time has also left some inevitable bumps and holes on the shape of the commentary. As it stands, a general introduction that first appears halfway, in vol. II, is at best an awkward analepsis, so to speak. In any case vol. I remains in need of some sort of briefing on the books it covers, not least because the main text offers rather paltry notes on some pivotal passages: e. g. two pages or so each for Thucydides’ “methodology”

at 1, 22 (pp. 59–62) and his declaration of the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις at 1, 22, 6 (pp. 64–66). Those left yearning for further enlightenment will have to rummage through his other writings, such as his 1987 *Thucydides*. That, again, might cause no problem for the zealous and the informed, but is rather a tall order for many other, “casual”, readers. Also, inconsistencies in Greek spelling will need to be smoothed out: in vols. I–II Greek names are half hellenised and half latinised (hence Dekeleia but Corcyra), while in vol. III they are mostly hellenised (hence Kerkyra), with some amusing anglo-hellenic amalgams such as Korinth and the Korinthians (but not Syrakuse or the Syrakusans). These are still there in the latest paperback “box-set” edition, issued in Jan. 2011.

That said, it is perhaps idle to insist on unity (uniformity or homogeneity might be a better word; H. sees Thucydides’ text as a unity but not as homogeneous) in a work written over a period of eighteen years, and one which looks more like a trilogy than a tripartite opus. Every text is bound to leave some marks of its internal history. If a classic as great as Thucydides can betray signs of “a labour of years” (III, p. 3), then surely a commentary of this scale and length need not, or ought not, to try to blot out the traces of the intellectual development within it. And if these signs show that Thucydides remains “innovatory and exciting” throughout his *History*, H.’s commentary on it also reveals comparable qualities in its author. Indeed, just like his Thucydides, H. continues to try to be wide-ranging and refuses to be static down to the last pages of his commentary, ever ready (to borrow a phrase from the very beginning of his first monograph on Thucydides) for “making incursions into areas [...] new to [him]”. And just as Thucydides continues to challenge his readers with his text, H. challenges his. The task is left to us to take up both challenges.

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