

HORNBLOWER (S.) and PELLING (C.) (eds) **Herodotus: *Histories Book VI*** (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xxvi + 342. £24.99. 9781107609419.

doi:[10.1017/S0075426922000428](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426922000428)

With the publication of Simon Hornblower and Christopher Pelling's *Herodotus: Histories Book VI*, the admirable Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series (aka Green & Yellow) has added to its catalogue the edition of another book of the Halicarnassian historian: amongst previous instalments is Hornblower's commentary on book 5 (Cambridge 2013), where the editor announced the publication of book 6 in collaboration with Pelling (vii). Herodotus' books 5–6 are strongly interrelated: they include the narrative of the Ionian revolt and the Marathon campaign, while book 7 opens with news on the outcome of the battle reaching Darius, his preparations for another invasion, the designation of Xerxes as his successor and Darius' sudden death, marking a new beginning and a strong divide between books 5–6 and 7–9.

The introduction includes six sections, each one dealing with a different topic:

- (1) The memories of the battle of Marathon, an event that is surprisingly discussed in only a few words by Herodotus (6.111–17), perhaps because his audience was already well acquainted with the succession of events and the outcome of the battle.
- (2) In the section 'Architecture', Hornblower and Pelling show very persuasively how different strands of narrative, both within and outside book 6, are tied together; the importance of transitions from one story to another is also very instructive for the overall understanding of Herodotus' work. Finally, Hornblower and Pelling react against Reginald Walter Macan's negative assessment that the literary structure of book 6 is, as Macan said, 'almost indescribably complicated' (13), by showing how the confusion that reigns in the Greek narrative and the mostly linear sequence of the sections dealing with the Persian Empire are deliberate: it displays the quarrelling Greek world in strong contrast with 'the firm direction that the King's war-aims impart to Persian affairs' (14), which is best illustrated at the outset of the Marathon campaign (6.94.1): 'While the Athenians were at war with the Aeginetans, the Persian (i.e. Darius) was going along with his plan [to invade Attica]'. (This was already noted in G. Nenci's commentary on 6.94.1 (*Erodoto: le Storie, libro VI, la battaglia di Maratona* (Florence 1988), 253); I noticed that Nenci's edition of book 6 is listed in the abbreviations at page xi, but never actually quoted in the rest of the book.)
- (3) The most original section of the introduction deals with the concept of impiety and especially concerning Cleomenes and Miltiades, while a cross-reference indicates that religious matters were discussed by Hornblower in his edition of book 5 (*Herodotus: Histories Book V* (Cambridge 2013), 31–40); it is surprising to find such a detailed and rich discussion of Cleomenes and impiety in the introduction: it could have represented the topic for a research paper. Nonetheless, readers will learn a lot from this stimulating section.
- (4) The section titled 'The Qualities of Book 6' discusses the change in pace of the narrative, the moments of high tension, as well as some comic episodes. An important aspect is the different use of speeches: there are only two elaborate speeches (6.86: Leotychides; 6.109: Miltiades) and one longer dialogue (6.68–69: Demaratos and his mother) in the whole of book 6, while most direct and indirect speech is short but powerful (see examples at 28–29).

- (5) The section ‘Language and Dialect’ is a reprint from A.M. Bowie’s edition of book 8 (*Herodotus: Histories Book VIII* (Cambridge 2007), 22–27) and includes a useful brief guide to the language of Herodotus. This is understandable, since a student reading book 6 can always rely on the section on language and dialect; however, it stands somewhat at odds with the choice of excluding much of the material already discussed in the introduction to book 5.
- (6) Finally, a brief section on the Greek text of book 6 closes the introduction, where the editors signal that they have made use of Wilson’s OCT text and his *Herodotea* (Oxford 2015), while minor disagreement has been included in the apparatus criticus. This does not allow readers to identify with ease those passages where Hornblower and Pelling’s text differs from Wilson’s, but they probably regarded this point as superfluous. Finally, in their introduction the editors refer to those passages that some scholars have regarded as interpolations, namely 6.60, 6.119.2, 6.121.2–123.1, suggesting that these are signs of different stages of composition. Such issues do not usually have a yes-or-no answer, but Hornblower and Pelling’s approach seems well balanced. Another passage that could have been flagged up in the apparatus or commentary is 6.98.3, which looks very much like an interpolation by later readers and is regarded as such by most editors.

It should be remarked that the distribution of the topics in the introduction is somewhat uneven: I am afraid that those unfamiliar with the contents of book 6 will find the introduction rather hard to follow. Since many topics discussed by Hornblower in the introduction to book 5 have been omitted from the introduction here, readers should read the two introductions in sequence, which is not always practical.

The commentary is certainly the most important and rewarding part of the book. It deals with matters big and small in an accessible way; it also offers students useful remarks on Herodotean syntax and grammar. Literary criticism is its strongest aspect, and readers will profit greatly from both authors’ deep knowledge of ancient sources and experience with commentaries on Greek prose authors. Insights regarding Homeric/epic allusions (for example, 6.11.1–2, 83.1, 114, 126–27) as well as Thucydides are particularly welcome, especially since book 6 includes the only reference to Pericles in the *Histories* (at 6.131.2). Some amusing remarks scattered throughout the commentary are an effective antidote to the risk of dullness that the commentary genre often faces.

It is evident that a short review cannot do justice to the quality, richness and erudition of the present book. Students of Greek and classical scholars in general will rejoice at the publication of another fundamental tool for understanding and appreciating one of the most charming and intriguing prose authors that has come down to us.

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FANTUZZI (M.) (ed.) *The Rhesus Attributed to Euripides* (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 63). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. viii + 711. £130. 9781107026025.

doi:[10.1017/S007542692200043X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S007542692200043X)

Marco Fantuzzi’s edition of *Rhesus* is a most welcome addition to the Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries series. It is an impressive work of a high scholarly standard,