

BOOK REVIEW

Herodotus, Histories, Book V. By PHILIP S. PEEK. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. viii + 271. Paperback, \$34.95. ISBN: 978-0-8061-6103-7.

Substantially shorter (271 vs. 374 pages) than Hornblower's 2014 "Green & Yellow" Cambridge commentary, Peek's text clearly aims to serve a different audience: the relatively inexperienced reader of Greek. His notes are therefore designed more to aid in analyzing the language and explaining who the Greeks, Thracians and Persians were (and what they did) than to delve more deeply into larger philological or scholarly issues. In an introduction of 31 pages, Peek thus provides notes of relevance to readers that situate Herodotus in his temporal, geographical and literary contexts, citing a judicious but representative sampling of scholarship on the historian (complete with bibliography). He then explains how to use his text, which is broken down into sections (V.1.1-3; V2.1-2; etc.) and followed immediately by "grammatical and contextual notes that give narratological, historical, and cultural information" (18). After briefly treating parsing and narratology in the Herodotean context, Peek provides several pages of helpful tips on translating, with digressions on frequencies and expectations as well as on the Ionic dialect. A single page comprised of two maps is then followed by a facing page providing dictionary entries for the Greek names of the places listed on the maps in English, broken down by categories.

The actual Greek text is that of Hude, with no *apparatus criticus* to complicate matters. The commentary is exactly what one would expect: a series of notes, scrupulously compiled over years of teaching, all designed to make reading Herodotus as easy, swift and painless as possible. The only complaint this reviewer might offer (other than the decision not to include the running vocabulary lists with their individual sections in the text, for which see below) would be regarding the formatting. While there is admittedly little consensus on the optimal way to present notes (and vocabulary) relative to the actual text, a lot of flipping back and forth is required to use Peek's edition because the notes for a given section usually run onto the succeeding page. Cutting the Greek text into smaller chunks and including only the notes (and perhaps also vocabulary) cued to those smaller sections, all on

a single given page, would improve user-friendliness considerably. That said, all the notes are incredibly helpful, and will clearly help expedite the reading of the Greek.

Following the main text-and-commentary section are five appendices over 37 pages; a 74-page glossary; and a 7-page index. Appendix A provides a “Case and Function Chart” outlining the main uses (which Peek calls “Functions”) of each case. The presentation across three columns - the case-name to the left, the function in the center and “Supply in English” on the right - would seem at first blush to make a lot of sense, but the result is uneven. Despite only spanning five pages, the spacing and indentation are far from uniform. One also wonders why some entries have “*none*” listed under the “Supply in English” column, but others are left completely blank and still others include a Greek preposition. Furthermore, a cursory investigation of the examples provided reveals that while most of the Greek is in fact Herodotean (adaptations if not exact quotations), the vast majority of examples derive from Book III rather than Book V. In sum, much editing is required to streamline what could be a valuable resource to the student reader.

Appendix B, on infinitives, is much more straightforward. Eight main uses, with two examples each, are followed by a helpful section on “The Infinitive in an Indirect Statement or Question.” That section would be even more helpful, however, if it included some Greek examples along with English translations - especially given that one of the only two earlier examples of infinitives in indirect statement is incorrectly translated into English. A helpful addition to this section would be a short explanation on how the “tense” of infinitives outside of indirect speech tends to show aspect rather than “time when.” Appendix C, “The Subjunctive and Optative Moods in Summary,” provides much fuller explanations than does B, but stops providing Greek examples (and English translations) when it gets to conditionals. Such examples would be helpful generally, but especially so given that some of the descriptions do not include the full formula for the given condition (εἰ, for instance, is omitted more than once, despite being explicitly included elsewhere). Appendix D helpfully defines many of the “Parsing Terms” Peek uses throughout the commentary, though an unfortunate typo in the first entry, “Adverbial Accusative (or Dative Accusative)” doesn’t exactly start things off on the right foot.

Appendix E, the “Top 500 Ancient Greek Words,” while an invaluable resource, is of questionable value in a commentary on Book V of Herodotus’s *Histories* when some words do not even appear in Book V. The same issue obtains with the 35-page “Principal Parts of Commonly Occurring Verbs” document available

at oupress.com for free download, whose title Peek asterisks with the note: “Not all verbs are present in Book V.” More troubling is the decision to include a single, compendious, alphabetized glossary at the end of the book given the careful work Peek put into creating a much more user-friendly “Running Vocabulary” document (78 pages in total, but broken down helpfully by section). Appending the individual sections of the running vocabulary lists (which at present must be downloaded) to their individual sections would improve the text considerably.

TOM GARVEY

The Meadows School, tgarvey@themeadowsschool.org