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THE BOOK DIVISIONS OF THUCYDIDES

By ROBERT J. BONNER

All the extant manuscripts of Thucydides are divided into eight books. But both a nine- and a thirteen-book edition are mentioned by ancient writers. Diodorus¹ refers twice to a nine-book edition. οὗτος μὲν οὖν ὁ πόλεμος διέμεινεν ἐπὶ ἑτῇ εἴκοσι ἐπτά, ὃ δὲ Θουκυδίδης ἑτῇ δύο πρὸς τοῖς εἴκοσι γέγραφεν ἐν βίβλοις ὀκτώ, ὡς δὲ τινες διαιροῦσιν, ἐννέα. Marcellinus² reports that the eight-book division was the most common. He mentions a thirteen-book edition among others. The words ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλως may very well refer to the nine-book edition mentioned by Diodorus. Wilamowitz³ doubts that there ever was a nine-book division. He imagines that there were two editions in which the books were numbered by *letters*, A to Θ (8) and A to N (13). In transmission N became H. Then someone supposing that they were numbered by *figures* reported an eight- and a nine-book edition, α'-η' (8), α'-θ' (9). Wilamowitz is not so much interested in discrediting the nine-book tradition as in gaining a new witness for the thirteen-book edition. Conradt⁴ rejects this theory and advances the following: One eight-book edition was marked by *letters* α-θ, another by *figures* α'-η'. Someone supposing that both were numbered by figures reported an eight- and a nine-book edition. Both of these highly ingenious but utterly futile theories may be dismissed at once. They prove nothing. In view of Diodorus' two statements and the implication of Marcellinus' ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλως the silence of the scholiast, who mentions only the thirteen-book edition, does not justify any doubt of the existence of a nine-book edition. Nothing is more natural than that some editor

¹ xii. 37; cf. xiii. 42. There is evidence of a nine-book edition of Xenophon's *Hellenica* (Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen*, p. 448).

² *Vita Thucydidis* 58. ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι τὴν πραγματείαν αὐτοῦ οἱ μὲν κατέτεμον εἰς δέκα τρεῖς ἱστορίας, ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλως. ὅμως δὲ ἡ πλείστη (οἱ βελτίστη) καὶ ἡ κοινὴ κεκράτηκε, τὸ μέχρι τῶν ὀκτῶ διηρησθαι τὴν πραγματείαν.

³ *Curae Thucydidae*, pp. 7 ff.

⁴ *Neue Jahrbücher f. Kl. Phil.*, CXXXIII (1886), 33.

should have duplicated the number of Herodotus' books in an edition of his great successor. This could easily be done by dividing Book i at chapter 66, where the account of military operations around Corcyra and Potidaea ends and the diplomatic history begins.¹ On several occasions the scholiast indicates the beginnings and endings of books in the thirteen-book edition and on one occasion at least a note is clearly drawn from a thirteen-book manuscript.

The evidence of the scholiast regarding the thirteen-book edition is as follows: (1) that Book i was divided into two parts;² (2) that the third book³ ended at ii. 78; (3) that the end of the fifth book corresponded with the end of the third book;⁴ (4) that chapter 78 of the fourth book was the first chapter of the seventh book.⁵ The scholiast's comment on *ἐλεξε τοῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀκάνθῳ παραπλήσια* (iv. 114) is *ἐν τῷ ζ'* [*fort. ζ'*]. This note must have been made originally on a thirteen-book MS. According to the scholiast on iv. 78 the speech of Brasidas to the Acanthians (iv. 85–87) would fall not in the sixth book (*ἐν τῷ ς'*), as this note states, but in the seventh (*ζ'*). Figures are frequently copied incorrectly because they are isolated from the rest of the sentence. So we may read *ζ'*. There is no occasion for surprise to find the scholiast on a chapter in Book vii referring to an earlier chapter in the same book as being in "Book vii." One further indication of the beginning of one of the thirteen books has been noticed by Wilamowitz.⁶ In Vaticanus B he observed that a new recension began at vi. 94, and plausibly concluded that one of the thirteen books began at this point.

The problem of reconstituting the thirteen-book edition on the basis of this information has attracted considerable attention owing to its possible bearing on the question of separate publication of the history of the Archidamian or Ten Years' War. The tentative

¹ The scholiast (iv. 135) says that Book i was divided in the thirteen-book edition.

² οἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν (τῶν κριτικῶν) διεῖλον εἰς ὀκτώ, οἱ δὲ εἰς ιγ', τὴν πρώτην εἰς β' καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπτά εἰς ια' (iv. 135).

³ οἱ διελόντες ταύτην τὴν συγγραφὴν εἰς τρισκαίδεκα, ἐνταῦθα τὸ τέλος τῆς τρίτης ἱστορίας ὥρισαν καὶ ἀρχὴν τῆς τετάρτης (ii. 78).

⁴ τῶν εἰς ιγ' τέλος τῆς ε', ἀρχὴ τῆς ς' (iii. 116).

⁵ τῶν εἰς τρισκαίδεκα τέλος τῆς ἑκτῆς, ἀρχὴ τῆς ἑβδόμης (iv. 78).

⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 3 ff.; cf. Festa, "Sulla pubblicazione della storia di Tuciddide," *Rassegna Italiana*, I (1918), pp. 1 ff.

reconstructions that have been proposed are open to three objections: (1) They reject without adequate reasons part of the evidence of the scholiast. (2) The books are of disproportionate length. (3) They usually seek to apply some definite principle in the distribution of the subject-matter to the exclusion of other considerations.

It is true that the scholiast is an indifferent authority in matters requiring critical scholarship; but in matters of fact, such as the point at which one of the thirteen books began, anyone who could read and write could observe and report the fact correctly. Such notes are quite different from serious speculations as to why Thucydides, whose name begins with θ , wrote η' books, while Herodotus, whose name began with η , wrote θ' books. ἀποροῦσί τινες ψυχρὰν ἀπορίαν, διὰ τί Θουκυδίδης, ἔχων τὸ ὄνομα ἀπὸ τοῦ θ , η' συνεγράψατο ἱστορίας, ὁ δὲ Ἡρόδοτος, ἔχων ἀπὸ τοῦ η , ἔλιπε θ' . ὦν ἡ λύσις ψυχρότερα, ὅτι ἐπειδὴ φασιν ἀπὸ H ἕως τοῦ P θ' στοιχεῖά εἰσιν, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Θ ἕως τοῦ o ὀκτὼ εἰσιν τὸ πρῶτον ἐνταῦθα τοῦ ὀνόματος γράμμα ἀριθμήσαντες καὶ τὸ ὕστερον (iv. 135). Similarly one might reasonably reject the statement that Thucydides did not divide his material into books but composed it as a unit. ὁ Θουκυδίδης οὐ διεῖλεν εἰς ἱστορίας, ἀλλὰ μίαν συνεγράψατο (iv. 135). But when in a note on ii. 78 it is said that the fourth book of the thirteen-book division began at this point one is scarcely justified in assuming that the note belongs to ii. 71, where a campaign ends. Precisely the same situation occurs at the end of the sixth book. The campaign of the year 415 ends at chapter 93, but the book division comes at the end of chapter 115. Had the situation been reversed and had a scholiast on a thirteen-book MS observed that the sixth book of a lost eight-book division ended at chapter 115 the modern scientific restorer of the eight-book edition would inevitably have disregarded the evidence and shifted the division point back to chapter 94 or forward to vii. 18. These considerations show that it is unsafe to reject the scholiast regarding a matter entirely within his knowledge and entirely beyond ours.

While the book divisions of ancient authors are not of uniform length there is an approximation of uniformity. In Thucydides the average book length is 74 pages, the maximum 87, and the minimum 65. Kalinka, one of the more recent restorers of the thirteen-book scheme, has quite properly taken account of this factor. Starting

with the principle that the end of a book should normally fall at the end of a year, he splits Book i, assigning five books to the Ten Years' War, one to the period of truce, and five to the remaining five years of the war. The result is a marked disparity of book lengths. The maximum is 66 pages and the minimum 19. Consequently he modifies¹ the scheme so as to increase the minimum to 36. Curiously enough, while refusing to credit the scholiast who reported the fourth book as ending at ii. 78, and shifting it back to chapter 71, where the year ends, he himself in four instances fails to make the book divisions correspond with campaigns.² In view of these inconsistencies Kalinka cannot expect his criticism of the scholiast to be convincing. It is clear that no mechanical scheme of book division will produce anything like the uniformity that is found in classical authors in general.

The eight-book division of Thucydides is not consistently based on any single plan. Why should we expect to find one in the thirteen-book division? The introduction is contained in the first book. Books ii, iii, and iv each contain an account of three years; but the tenth year of the Archidamian War, which is a distinct unit, is combined in Book v with an account of the events of the period of the truce. The division between Books vi and vii does not occur at vi. 94, where the campaign of 415 ended. The editor preferred to break into the year 415 because, perhaps, as the scholiast remarks, *ἐνταῦθα ἡ τῶν Συρακουσίων ἀρχεται νίκη καὶ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἦττα*. Similarly the account of the Sicilian War (vi and vii) neither begins nor ends with a year.

¹ *Zu Thukydides*, Festschrift für Gomperz., pp. 109 ff.

| | PAGES | | PAGES |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1. } i. Introduction | 100½ | 8. v. 25—vi. 7, five years | 50 |
| 2. } | | 9. vi. 8—93, one year | 53½ |
| 3. ii. 1—70, two years | 44 | 10. vi. 94—vii. 18, one year | 19 |
| 4. ii. 71—iii. 25, two years | 39 | 11. vii. 19—viii. 6, one year | 58½ |
| 5. iii. 26—116, two years | 53 | 12. viii. 7—60, one year | 34 |
| 6. iv. 1—116, two years | 66½ | 13. viii. 61—109, one year | 36 |
| 7. iv. 117—v. 24, two years | 28 | | |
| <i>Modifications:</i> | | PAGES | |
| | 6. iv. 1—77, | | 44½ |
| | 7. iv. 78—v. 24, | | 49 |
| | 10. vi. 94—vii. 41, | | 36½ |
| | 11. vii. 41—viii. 6, | | 41 |

² Books vi, vii, x, xi. Of ten books dealing with the war four depart from the scheme with which he begins.

The following reconstruction of the thirteen-book edition gives full effect to the evidence of the scholiast and follows closely the divisions of the eight-book edition.

| | PAGES ¹ | | PAGES |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 1. i. 1-65..... | 38 | 8. v. 26-116..... | 48 |
| 2. i. 66-146..... | 50 | 9. vi. 1-93..... | 60 |
| 3. ii. 1-78..... | 50 | 10. vi. 94-vii.41..... | 38 |
| 4. ii. 79-iii. 25..... | 36 | 11. vii. 42-87..... | 38 |
| 5. iii. 26-116..... | 56 | 12. viii. 1-60..... | 40 |
| 6. iv. 1-77..... | 48 | 13. viii. 61-109..... | 37 |
| 7. iv. 78-v. 25..... | 53 | | |

The first book is divided at the point where military operations cease and the diplomatic history begins.² The unity of the Archidamian War is preserved better than in the eight-book edition, though in two instances the division points do not occur at the end of a year. The eighth book, opening with the so-called second preface, covers the period of the truce. The unity of the Sicilian expedition as it appears in the eight-book edition is preserved in three books.³ The ninth book ends with a year at a point where Wilamowitz found indications of a former book division in Vaticanus B. The eleventh book begins with the arrival of Demosthenes in Sicily. The twelfth and thirteenth correspond to the eighth. The division point occurs at the end of a year. The maximum number of pages per book is 65, the minimum 36, the average 45.

Festa advances the novel theory that Thucydides himself began to publish his history in instalments after the conclusion of the war.⁴ The basis of this view is the appearance of his name twelve times in the stereotyped expression with which he ends each one of the

¹ Oxford text.

² Kalinka does not specify a division point. Festa (*op. cit.*, p. 7) would divide at i. 89, the beginning of the *πεντηκονταετία*.

³ A shift involving a few chapters at the beginning of Books vi and viii (vi. 8 instead of vi. 1 and viii. 7 instead of vii. 87) would bring the Sicilian expedition within the limits of two years. But why should we suppose that the editor of the thirteen-book edition disregarded the literary and historical unity of the story of the Sicilian war for the sake of a mechanical scheme which even the most zealous of its advocates admit cannot be consistently followed?

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 9: "Tucidide pubblicò di mano in mano le varie parti dell'opera. Certo egli attese la fine della guerra intera, prima di accingersi alla composizione vera e propria."

twenty-one years covered by his history.¹ Festa argues that the words *ὃν Θουκυδίδης ξυνέγραψε* in the formula like *ὁ δέῖνα ἐποίησε* of the Greek artists are intended as a mark of literary ownership. Each one of these twelve tags ended a published section. He further believes that the opening words of the history *Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον κ.τ.λ.* are intended to serve the same purpose as the formula.² They mark the introduction as a separate section. There are thus in all thirteen sections in the Thucydidean edition ending with viii. 60. The last chapters of the eighth book, being unfinished, were not published by Thucydides. Therefore the thirteen-book edition containing the whole of the work cannot be identical with the Thucydidean group of thirteen books. It is assumed that the editor for some reason imposed upon the fourteen sections, thirteen published and one unpublished, a thirteen-book scheme introducing such modifications as were necessary to include the unpublished material and to secure greater uniformity in book length than he found in the Thucydidean edition.³ Festa's reconstitution of this edition involves the division of Book i, the grouping of four of the Thucydidean books into two, and the addition of a book to include viii. 61–109. This scheme is open to the same objections as Kalinka's. The disparity in book lengths is even more marked. The maximum number of pages is 71, the minimum 20, and the average 41. Of the three division points indicated by the scholiast he accepts only one.⁴ This is much too high a percentage of error for so simple an operation as observing and reporting the point at which a new book began. The theory is ingenious and attractive.

¹ ii. 70; ii. 103; iii. 25; iii. 88; iii. 116; iv. 51; iv. 135; vi. 7; vi. 93; vii. 18; viii. 6; viii. 60; e.g., *δευτερον ετος ἐτελεύτα τῷ πολέμῳ τῷδε ὃν Θουκυδίδης ξυνέγραψεν*.

² "Il valore preciso di questa formula va messo in chiaro, e non bisogna confondere con essa una dichiarazione come *γέγραφε δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ὁ αὐτὸς Θουκυδίδης*. Quest' ultima riguarda un dato di fatto, strettamente connesso con l'esposizione dei criteri dell'autore quanto alla materia e ai fini dell'opera. Nell'altra formula, invece, l'aorista dice chiaramente che abbiamo da fare con una dichiarazione di proprietà letteraria. Se però teniamo conto che il primo volume non aveva bisogno di quella dichiarazione, perché portava scritto da principio *Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε*," etc. The distinction is not convincing.

³ The books in Festa's scheme end as follows: (1) i. 88; (2) i. 146; (3) ii. 70; (4) iii. 25; (5) iii. 116; (6) iv. 51; (7) iv. 135; (8) vi. 7; (9) vi. 93; (10) vii. 18; (11) viii. 6; (12) viii. 60; (13) viii. 109. It will be observed that neither this scheme nor the Thucydidean puts the so-called second preface at the beginning of a book.

⁴ iii. 116.

The appearance of an author's name twelve times in the course of a single work cannot be without significance. One is inevitably reminded of the words of Theognis (19-20):

Κίρνε, σοφίζομένω μὲν ἐμοὶ σφρηγὶς ἐπικείσθω
τοῖσδ' ἔπεισιν, λήσει δ' οὔποτε κλεπτόμενα.

But if the name was intended to be a *σφρηγὶς* why was it not added to the formula at the end of every year?¹ For example, the name does not appear at all in the six-year endings included in the fifth book. These omissions can scarcely have been accidental. One very obvious weakness in Festa's theory may be indicated. The first occurrence of the tag is at ii. 70. And so the first Thucydidean book should include the introduction (Book i) and the story of the first two years of the war. But Festa, feeling that a book of 135 pages would be inordinately long compared with the subsequent books, seizes upon the introductory words *Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος κ.τ.λ.* as a substitute for the formula. This procedure is open to serious objection. It involves the awkward necessity of explaining why the sentence *γέγραφε δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ὁ αὐτὸς Θουκυδίδης*, v. 26, is not also a tag marking off a book. He cannot admit that it is, for he would then have two tags in one book or be obliged to select a division point somewhere between v. 26 and vi. 7. In this section there is no natural division point such as there is at the end of the first book, which constitutes an introduction easily separated from the rest of the work. In the first case there would be fourteen published sections and fifteen in the second. In either case the connection, psychological or sentimental, between the Thucydidean edition and the thirteen-book edition disappears.

It is much simpler to end the first book at ii. 70. Festa is unduly influenced by the disproportionate length of the section. An author publishing serially would not attach so much importance to uniformity of sections as an author dividing his entire work before publication as a whole. A further advantage of this modification is that the origin of the thirteen-book edition and its priority over the eight-book edition are established. The editor of Thucydides having before him thirteen sections, twelve published and one

¹ The formula with slight variations appears twenty-one times. The name is omitted nine times.

unpublished, might very well divide the whole work into thirteen books even if he felt obliged to rearrange them entirely. Furthermore, an author publishing the first instalment of his history of a war would, if he desired to engage public interest, most naturally include the history of one or two campaigns. Thus modified Festa's theory becomes extremely plausible, if not convincing.

The bearing of this theory on the much-vexed question of the composition (*Entstehung*) of Thucydides' history¹ would seem to be important, but Festa has made no attempt to exploit it in this direction. He offers no argument to support his statement that Thucydides did not publish until after the conclusion of the entire war. But this statement cannot be disproved. There are everywhere throughout the whole work indications that the author knew the conclusion of the war. There are also passages that seem to have been written without such knowledge. This is to be expected in a history covering so many years. Beginning as he did to compose his history as soon as the war began it is natural that he should have written considerable portions before he knew the outcome of the war. The presence in these sections of references to the later phases of the war may be due to revision. Those who argue that Thucydides published the history of the Ten Years' War before the fall of Athens assume that an editor made the revision.

The question regarding the composition of the history was first suggested by the so-called second preface.² Under the impression that the war was over in 421 he published an account of the Ten Years' War. Upon the resumption of hostilities after the truce he continued his work, prefacing it with a statement of his views as to the unity of the war. The difficulty of this theory is that the history of the ten years which we have could not have been published until the war was concluded.³ Consequently it is assumed that it was revised and republished by Thucydides or by his literary executor.

According to Festa's scheme this chapter came, not at the beginning of an instalment, but in the heart of it. It is not a preface but

¹ Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of His Age*, pp. 387 ff. In an appendix Grundy has summarized the various views on this perplexing problem.

² v. 26.

³ A number of passages show that the author knew how the war ended; cf. ii. 65. 12.

an explanation of his views which were at variance with contemporary opinion.¹ This statement appears at the weakest point, the beginning of the story of the *ὑποπτος ἀνοκωχή*. By combining in one instalment the story of this period and the last year of the Archidamian War he emphasizes the unity of the war in a striking manner. In effect Thucydides says in this statement: "I am the man who started out to write the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians. In my opinion the war did not end with the peace of Nicias. For during the six years of doubtful truce, although they did not invade each other's territory, they failed to carry out the terms and did each other all the harm they could. Therefore I am going right on to give an account of these years as part of the task I originally set myself." This is not the sort of statement a man would make on renewing a task which he imagined he had completed.

If there was so sharp a distinction between the history of the Ten Years' War and the rest of the struggle one would expect to find some trace of it in the book divisions. There is none in the eight-book edition, where the second preface appears in the heart of the fifth book. This may not have much significance if the editor was mainly concerned with obtaining fairly uniform book divisions, for Book v without the chapters devoted to the tenth year of the war would be reduced to 48 Oxford pages as compared with an average of 82 if the history of the ten years was distributed over three books. Festa keeps the fifth book intact in his reconstruction of the thirteen-book division. Kalinka and the others begin a book at v.26. From a mechanical point of view this is a natural division point, for although the fifth book is the shortest in the eight-book edition it would be considerably longer than the others in a thirteen-book edition. By a slight variation in the reconstruction I have suggested above the eighth book could be increased so as to include our fifth book. If the eight-book edition grew out of the earlier thirteen-book edition the "second preface" made no impression on the editor responsible for it.

In another direction Festa's theory is in conflict with views that are widely held. Many scholars have found evidences of incompleteness, particularly in the fifth and eighth books. In the latter book

¹ Grundy, *op. cit.*, pp. 391 ff.

are found "contradictions as to matters of fact as well as differences in tendency." Regarding the treaty quoted in Doric in the fifth book Bury¹ remarks: "It was not in accordance with the artistic method of Thucydides, or of ancient historians in general, to introduce into the narrative matter heterogeneous in style; and it is almost incredible that he would have admitted texts not written in Attic Greek." All the probabilities support this view but they do not amount to proof. His practice in reporting Doric speeches in Attic Greek is quite another matter, for he makes no attempt to report speeches verbatim. Nothing short of the appearance elsewhere of an Attic version of a Doric official document made by Thucydides could justify the unqualified assertion that the fifth book is in an unfinished state and could not have been published by Thucydides.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

¹ *The Ancient Greek Historians*; cf. Bonner, "The Mutual Intelligibility of Greek Dialects," *Classical Journal*, IV, 361.