

## CONCLUSION

We have arrived at the end of our investigation of the beginnings of ancient political biography. Political biography, different from the *Lives* of men prominent in the spheres of the intellect in its subjects as well as in its aims and sources, was late to develop because historiography provided a convenient genre to deal with kings, statesmen and generals. Thus, the Hellenistic Age, in which biographies of poets, philosophers and other intellectuals were composed in great numbers by a variety of writers, did not discover political biography. It was left to the last generation of the Roman Republic to fill the void: Cornelius Nepos, a writer of mediocre standards but possessed of a keen sense of the needs of and opportunities provided by the Roman reading public, had already experimented with a number of literary genres new to Latin literature when he started to work on a long biographical series. It was towards the end of that series, with Nepos possibly unaware of the importance of his innovation, that he came to add a pair of books on Roman and on Greek (later Foreign) Generals. Thus, political biography was born: it was left to a later age, the Roman Empire, to provide the social and political context in which political biography could flourish and attain its highest development, eventually to all but supplant historiography.

JOSEPH GEIGER

CORNELIUS NEPOS  
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