

Nepos and the Origins of Political Biography (*)

Sometime in the second third of the first century BC Cornelius Nepos wrote a work entitled *de uiris illustribus*. Nothing survives except book XVII on *Foreign Generals* and two items from Book XIV (*Lives* of Cato and Atticus, who were categorized as Roman historians). These texts have traditionally been used as reading matter for relatively unskilled students of Latin language, and their author has tended to accord very little respect whether as historian or writer of literature. More than a decade ago Joseph Geiger published a monograph on Nepos, which is almost the only and certainly the best book about Nepos in existence (1). Its principal thesis is that Nepos was actually the inventor of a category of ancient biography whose existence we are apt to take for granted, because it dominates what survives intact of the whole genre, whether in Nepos, Plutarch or — from one point of view — Suetonius. This genre is what Geiger describes as political biography.

It cannot be said that the thesis has had a huge impact, though this is partly because there is so little scholarly writing about Nepos (or ancient biography in general) that there are few publications where one might seek an impact. But it is surprising that the excellent, translation with commentary of the Atticus, Cato and some fragments by Nicholas Horsfall (2), though it refers to Geiger's book, does not address its main contention. Still, such reaction as there has been has been mixed. One eminent authority on the literary world of the late Republic, Peter Wiseman, declared himself convinced when reviewing the book for *Journal of Roman Studies* (3). Carlotta Dionisotti in an important article refers to it in passing and says that Geiger's view 'invites all manner of question' (4). A third authority on ancient biography,

(*) Finalization of the text of this paper (originally composed for a lecture trip to Ekaterinburg in 1993 — an opportunity for which I have to thank Andrei Zaikov [LAU, Ekaterinburg] and the financial assistance of the British Council, British Academy and University of Liverpool) has been long delayed by the competing claims of (relatively) unconnected fields of study. I have deliberately kept annotation to a minimum.

(1) J. GEIGER, *Nepos and Political Biography*, Wiesbaden, 1985.

(2) N. HORSFALL, *Cornelius Nepos: a Selection including the Lives of Atticus and Cato*, Oxford, 1989.

(3) T. P. WISEMAN, in *JRS* 67, 1987, p.250.

(4) C. DIONISOTTI, *Nepos and the Generals* in *JRS* 68, 1983, p. 35-47.

John Moles, reviewed it but concluded firmly: and it seems worth adding that it will not be very clear-cut, but will be raised on the way and find — more definitively.

Geiger's contention is that an external argument is essential about Greek biographical writing which can be classified as a category of ancient Rome and by someone demonstrating that there is that it is a literary novel rather than the two lines of argument rather further than Geiger.

1. — EXTERNAL COMPONENTS. One is similar to *Chronica* and *Exempla* is no presumption against. In the case of *Chronica* in the invention of a new feature, and a strict argument further novelty in the juxtaposition of Greek and for the novelty of *Foreign* think of writing about be addressed later. *Exempla* same mould as that of some assignments of fraud of paradoxa), then it is — and the novelty involved postulated about *Foreign* a new sub-genre. It is, of public form to a type of But for the moment we reason to regard the origin

(5) J. L. MOLES, in *CR* n

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John Moles, reviewed the monograph at unusual length in *Classical Review*, but concluded firmly: 'its main thesis is mistaken' (5). The issue is important, and it seems worth addressing some further thought to it. The outcome may not be very clear-cut, but I hope that some interesting subsidiary questions will be raised on the way and that other scholars may be stimulated to seek — and find — more definitive conclusions.

Geiger's contention is based on external and internal considerations. The external argument is essentially twofold: (a) such information as we have about Greek biographical writing prior to the time of Nepos reveals nothing which can be classified as political biography; and (b) there are good reasons why such a category might appropriately have been invented in late Republic Rome and by someone like Cornelius Nepos. The internal argument involves demonstrating that there are features of the *Foreign Generals* which suggest that it is a literary novelty and presented by Nepos as such. I shall consider the two lines of argument in turn and extend the possible scope of the second rather further than Geiger does.

I. — EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS. — The external argument has two components. One is simply stated — and briefly dealt with: it is that Nepos' *Chronica* and *Exempla* displays his capacity for novelty and show that there is no presumption against his having also displayed it in *de uiris illustribus*. In the case of *Chronica* the analogy is imperfect. Its novelty consisted not in the invention of a new genre or sub-genre but only in its adaptation to include both Greek and Roman history. *De uiris illustribus* shared this latter feature, and a strict argument from analogy does not permit us to posit any further novelty in the biographical work. It is true that the point about juxtaposition of Greek and Roman can be turned into a speculative argument for the novelty of *Foreign Generals* (along the lines that only a Roman would think of writing about military leaders); but that is a different matter, to be addressed later. *Exempla* is a more interesting case. If this was in the same mould as that of Valerius Maximus half a century later (and not, as some assignments of fragments suggest, something more akin to collections of paradoxa), then it is hard to find a clear antecedent example of the genre — and the novelty involved is, on the face of it, actually greater than anything postulated about *Foreign Generals*, being the creation of a new genre, not a new sub-genre. It is, of course, possible that all Nepos was doing was giving public form to a type of private *florilegium* made by many ancient readers. But for the moment we should probably concede at least that there is no reason to regard the originality attributed to Nepos by Geiger as absurd.

(5) J. L. MOLES, in *CR* n.s. 39, 1989, p. 229-233, at p. 233.

The second component is also easily stated, but requires rather more discussion: it is the simple claim that there is no reliable evidence for works of political biography before Nepos.

Geiger's critics harbour a feeling that he 'discovers' the non-existence of political biography before Nepos only by choosing to define his terms arbitrarily; he certainly somewhat obscures the point by casting much of his argument as a refutation of Steidle's monograph⁽⁶⁾. I think we can at least curtail objections by keeping things as simple as possible and restating the relevant facts in a slightly different form. I take 'political' to mean that the subjects are people active in the political or military events of city-states or monarchies, and 'biography' to refer to works which make some show of providing a birth-to-death account of a person's life and actions; and I believe that Geiger has a point at least to this extent, that it is hard to prove that anyone except Plutarch and Nepos wrote biographies of Greek politicians and soldiers who were not also lawgivers, orators or monarchs.

1. Among extant writings other than those of Plutarch and Nepos biographical treatment of Greek politico-military leaders is represented by

- (1) Isocrates' *Evagoras*
- (2) Xenophon's *Agésilas*
- (3) the pseudo-Plutarchan *Lives of the Ten Orators* and other, mostly anonymous, lives of orators preserved in the manuscript tradition of their works or elsewhere
- (4) brief Ptolemaic biographies in Pap.Haun. 6
- (5) the brief *On Thrasybulus* preserved in Pap.Oxy. 1800, a document whose contents perhaps represent extracts from a work *On Famous Men*.

Items (1) and (2) receive much attention in discussions of ancient biographical theory and practice, but they deal with monarchs (though a Spartan king is admittedly a special case), belong firmly in the realm of encomium, and were written to meet a particular practical need and not because of established interest in biographical treatment of political figures. Items (3) and (4) are also irrelevant to our present enquiry. So only (5) represents the sort of thing that we are looking for. The papyrus is of late second or early third c. AD date, but the biographical work it represents (which is made up of very brief entries) is undatable.

2. No general comments survive which unambiguously indicate the existence of political biographies. Cicero, *De oratore* II, 341 (*quorum sunt libri quibus Themistocles, Aristides, Agesilaus, Epaminondas, Philippus, Alexander aliique laudantur*) and Suetonius, *De rhetoribus* 1 (*interdum Graecorum scripta*

conuertere ac uiros illustres laudantur) are not biographies. Jerome includes in his works *On Famous Men* but not those of Nepos (*familiares* V, 12, 5) distinguished by death or Themistocles' exile. Different types of historiography are more interested in the fortunes of biography. (Lucceius' planned something comparable with Themistocles.) Nepos' references to events as we shall see, yield no evidence that Iphicrates was commonplace as appear in Plutarch's *Lives*. Any reference to the existence of Greek politicians are not fully covered by these sources.

3. Turning to specific works we may distinguish four potentially

- (1) Works on individuals with titles of *X*
- (2) Compendious works with titles (a) *(Parallel) Lives* or *(O)* (b) *Lives of Famous Men* (c) e.g. *On Demagogues*

4. The vast majority of items are biographies of historians, orators, philosophers, queens, Roman emperors, other. *Life of Tilliborus*: F.Gr.H. 156 on five different persons, named

1. Plutarch's lost *Aristomenes*
2. Polybius' encomiastic work (not preserved),
3. Philistus' *On Dionysius* (H)
4. Polycritus' *On Dionysius*
5. Amyntianus' *Life of Dionysius*

None is really pertinent here. The two Dionysii were, of course, as well; moreover Philistus' treatise is not a self-contained work, and

(6) W. STEIDLE, *Sueton und die antike Biographie*, Munich, 1951.

conuertere ac uiros illustres laudare uel uituperare) strictly refer to encomia, not biographies. Jerome includes *duces* among the classes of people appearing in works *On Famous Men* but this does not demonstrably apply to any such works other than those of Nepos and Varro (*Epistulae* 112, 3). Cicero (*Ad familiares* V, 12, 5) distinguishes *annales* from works describing Epaminondas' death or Themistocles' exile; but he is arguably distinguishing between different types of historiography (one *quasi enumeratio fastorum*, the other more interested in the fortunes of leading men), not between history and biography. (Lucceius' planned work on Cicero was not a biography but something comparable with Timaeus on Timoleon or Herodotus on Themistocles.) Nepos' references to earlier writers and his programmatic remarks, as we shall see, yield no evidence that the writing of lives of e.g. Cimon or Iphicrates was commonplace activity; and such programmatic statements as appear in Plutarch's *Lives* discuss methods and literary purposes without any reference to the existence of precise literary models, while the lives of Greek politicians are not full of explicit references to earlier biographical sources.

3. Turning to specific works which are attested but do not survive, we may distinguish four potentially relevant categories:

- (1) Works on individuals with titles in the form *On X* or (*On the*) *Life of X*
- (2) Compendious works with titles such as
 - (a) (*Parallel*) *Lives* or (*On*) *Lives*,
 - (b) *Lives of Famous Men* or *On Famous Men*, or
 - (c) e.g. *On Demagogues* (i.e. on a specifically political class of person).

4. The vast majority of items in class (1) concern literary figures (poets, historians, orators, philosophers, musicians), mythical characters, kings and queens, Roman emperors, other Roman personalities or (once — Arrian's *Life of Tilliborus*: F.Gr.H. 156 F 52) a pirate. There is a residue of six items on five different persons, namely:

1. Plutarch's lost *Aristomenes* and (*Life of*) *Daiphantus*,
2. Polybius' encomiastic work on Philopoemen (F.Gr.H. 173 T 1, 2: title not preserved),
3. Philistus' *On Dionysius* (F.Gr.H. 556 T 11, 12, 17a),
4. Polycritus' *On Dionysius* (F.Gr.H. 559 F 1)
5. Amyntianus' *Life of Dionysius* (F.Gr.H. 150 T 1).

None is really pertinent here. We are looking for non-Plutarchan works. The two Dionysii were, of course, monarchs (and had a Platonic connection as well); moreover Philistus' treatment was actually part of his *Sicilian History*, not a self-contained work, and Polycritus' *On Dionysius* is also quoted as

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Histories and may not have been a biography. Polybius' work was avowedly an encomium, whose existence need not reflect the existence of a political biographical genre.

5. The situation is not greatly improved if one relaxes the requirement of a title in the precise forms defined in category (1) and simply looks for any work whose title included or may have included the name of an individual (including cases of *On X and Y* or (*On the*) *Life of X and Y*). This time the removal of poets, orators, lawgivers, historians, philosophers, kings, emperors, tyrants, mythical characters and Roman and barbarian generals leaves a residue of fourteen items on thirteen different persons :

1. Aratus' *Memoirs* (F.Gr.H. 231 T 5,6 and F 4b),
2. Demosthenes' *Encomium of Pausanias* (Dion.Hal., *Dem.* 44),
3. Stesimbrotus' *On Themistocles, Thucydides and Pericles* (F.Gr.H. 107 F 10a),
4. Xenophon's *Life of Epaminondas and Pelopidas* (F.Gr.H. 111 T 1),
5. Works by Arrian, Timocrates and Timonides on Dion (F.Gr.H. 156 T 4a, 561 T 3 and F 1-2),
6. A work by Arrian on Timoleon (F.Gr.H. 156 T 4a),
7. Demetrius of Phalerum's *Dionysius* (fr. 74 Wehrli),
8. The *Alcibiades* of Aeschines of Sphettus (Diog.Laert. II, 61 ; P.Oxy.1608), Antisthenes (Diog.Laert. VI, 18) and Euclides (II, 108),
9. Phaedo's *Nicias* (Diog.Laert. II, 105),
10. Aeschines' *Miltiades* (Diog.Laert. II, 61).

The last five items were, of course, dialogues named after a prominent interlocutor. Aratus' autobiography and Demosthenes' rhetorical joke are plainly irrelevant.

Timocrates' *Dion* is known only for a comment on the teachers of Zeno and may well not have been a biography of Dion. Timonides and Arrian were undoubtedly concerned with events of Dion's public career ; but it is well nigh certain they did not use the title *Life of Dion* and perfectly possible that one or both of them were not writing a biography of Dion in the sense that e.g. Plutarch did. (The same uncertainty applies to Arrian's companion piece on Timoleon.) In any case, the significance of these works needs careful qualification. Timonides' *Historiai* owed their existence to particular contemporary circumstances, since they were written by a participant in the Sicilian expedition and addressed to an interested third party, Speusippus ; Arrian's attraction to Dion is intelligible in view of his personal predilections and independently of any tradition of writing biographies of political figures. More generally, although the existence of Timonides and Arrian's works may give some colour to the practice of inferring a lost hellenistic biography from

comparison of Plutarch an intimately tied up with philological interest) mean anything about the general

Stesimbrotus' *On Themistocles, Thucydides and Pericles* is a biographical' data on political figures of three separate *Lives*, not a political biography (a recent work of — effectively — imperial history does not demonstrably inspire such examples as were (as Schachermeyr has

About Xenophon's work on Timoleon say nothing at all (and some like a straightforward example of the sort of eccentric examples.

6. Items in category 2a contain

- (1) Amyntianus, *Parallel Lives*
- (2) Works entitled *On Lives* of Timoleon, Timonides, Ponticus (fr. 45 Wehrli), Straton (SVF fr. 136), Demetrius (SVF fr. 685ff), Epicurus (III, 5 ; IV, 4 ; V, 1 ; V, 2) (FHG iii 500), and Plutarch
- (3) A work of Clearchus (fr. 72 Wehrli).
- (4) Works entitled *Lives* by Timonides (Diog.Laert. IV, 17, Atten. 80 ; Athen. 250F ; 541) and Satyrus' *Lives*).

Items in (1) and (4) were contained *Lives*. But Amyntianus, Augustus and Domitian, and philosophers, as apparently did H

(7) A. TSAKMAKIS, *Das hellenistische Geschichtsbild*, p.129-152.

(8) F. SCHACHERMEYR, *F. Stesimbrotus*, Vienna, 1965 [= SB Wien, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 237].

(9) The last named was also known as *ibid.*

comparison of Plutarch and Nepos, Dion's position as a political figure intimately tied up with philosophers and tyrants (two categories of established biographical interest) means that we cannot safely use his case to prove anything about the general incidence of political biography.

Stesimbrotus' *On Themistocles, Thucydides and Pericles* included 'biographical' data on political figures. But we do not know that it was an assemblage of three separate *Lives*, nobody would claim it reflects an existing genre of political biography (a recent study suggests it was inspired by the curiosity of — effectively — imperial subjects about famous Athenians (?), and it did not demonstrably inspire such a genre, since its descendants — if any — were (as Schachermeyr has observed) works *On Demagogues* (8).

About Xenophon's work on Epaminondas and Pelopidas we can really say nothing at all (and some consider it a literary forgery). It does not sound like a straightforward example of a biographical genre — and may not be the sort of eccentric example which presupposes the existence of 'normal' examples.

6. Items in category 2a come in four groups :

- (1) Amyntianus, *Parallel Lives* (F.Gr.H. 150 T 1).
- (2) Works entitled *On Lives* by Dicaearchus (frr. 25-46 Wehrli), Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 45 Wehrli), Theophrastus (fr. 436, 15 Fortenbaugh), Straton (SVF fr. 136), Xenocrates (Diog.Laert. IV, 12), Chrysippus (SVF fr. 685ff), Epicurus ([10] 1-3 Arrighetti), Timotheus (Diog.Laert. III, 5; IV, 4; V, 1; VII, 1), Seleucus (Hapocration s.v. *Homeridai* = FHG iii 500), and Plutarch (Lamprias no. 105) (9).
- (3) A work of Clearchus variously quoted as *Lives* or *On Lives* (frr. 37-72 Wehrli).
- (4) Works entitled *Lives* by (?) Hermippus (frr. 11, 30, 45 Wehrli), Antigonus (Diog.Laert. IV, 17, Athen. 162E) and Satyrus (Diog.Laert. II, 12; VI, 80; Athen. 250F; 541C; 584A; cf. Heraclides Lembus' Epitome of Satyrus' *Lives*).

Items in (1) and (4) were definitely biographical works made up of self-contained *Lives*. But Amyntianus' attested subjects were Philip II, Dionysius I, Augustus and Domitian, and Antigonus confined his attention to philosophers, as apparently did Hermippus; Satyrus included a life of Philip II,

(7) A. TSAKMAKIS, *Das historische Werk des Stesimbrotos* in *Historia* 44, 1995, p.129-152.

(8) F. SCHACHERMEYR, *Stesimbrotos und seine Schrift über die Staatsmänner*, Vienna, 1965 [= SB Wien, Phil.-Hist.Klass. 247.5].

(9) The last named was also known as *On life's being like a game of dice* (Lamprias *ibid.*)

but the view that there were also lives of Dionysius II and Alcibiades is pretty insecure. The fact that many fragments of Clearchus' work concern ethnic groups (Lydians, Spartans, Milesians, Tarentines, Medes, Sicilians) shows that he was writing about ways of life, and the only politico-military individuals known to have been mentioned were Darius III, Dionysius II and Phalaris. The sole possibly relevant unattributed Clearchan fragment concerns Epaminondas (fr. 31 Wehrli) but surely came from the *Eroticus* (cf. fr. 30 on Pericles). Epicurus and Chrysippus *On Lives* were certainly philosophical treatises about life-styles and there is no good reason to think anything different of the other items. In view of the importance assigned to peripatetics by Leo⁽¹⁰⁾, it is worth stressing explicitly that none of the fragments about politicians quoted (often in Plutarch) from Theophrastus and Phaenias is attributed to a biographical work.

7. The following examples of category 2b come to hand :

- (1) Neanthes' *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* (F.Gr.H. 84 F 13 : III/II c. BC)
- (2) Charon's *βίοι ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* and *ἐνδόξων γυναικῶν* (Suda s.v. Charon : ? before 146 BC)
- (3) Amphicrates' *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* (Athen. 576C ; Diog. Laert. II, 101 : perhaps I c. BC)
- (4) Jason of Nysa's *βίοι ἐνδόξων* (Suda s.v. : I c. BC)
- (5) Santra's *de uiris illustribus* (Jerome *de u.i.praef.* ; frs. 13-15 Funaioli : I c. BC)
- (6) Varro's *Imagines* or *Hebdomades* (fr. 68f Funaioli : I c. BC)
- (7) Hyginus' *de uiris claris* or *de uita rebus inlustrium uirorum* (Gellius I, 14, 1 ; VI, I, 24 : I c. BC)
- (8) Plutarch's *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* (Lamprias no.168 : I/II c. AD)
- (9) Suetonius *de uiris illustribus* (I/II c. AD)⁽¹¹⁾
- (10) Megacles' *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* (Athen. 419A : before late II c. AD)
- (11) Nicagoras' *βίοι ἑλλογίμων* (Suda s.v. : III c. AD)
- (12) Apollonius' *de uiris illustribus* (Jerome *de u.i. praef.* : pre IV c. AD)
- (13) Theseus' *βίοι ἐνδόξων* (Suda s.v. : before 500 AD)
- (14) P. Oxy. 1800 perhaps represents an abbreviated *de uiris illustribus*.

The only items known to have contained material on Greek political or military figures are Amphicrates (quoted on Themistocles' mother) and P. Oxy. 1800 (Thrasylbulus), though Megacles and Varro (both quoted only for various Roman luminaries) also probably extended their range to Greek

figures : Megacles, being Greek, of 700 subjects surely requires even more (Notice that Neanthes 84 F 17 on *Hellenica*). About the scale of the 1800's contents are very brief and the components of Varro's collection are very brief annotations. But it is clear that these are not productions.

8. Amidst the many ancient works of a philosopher, orators, doctors and historians, few have any relation to politics or to demagogues. Only two attested works are *On the Demagogues* [sc. at Athens] by Idomeneus' *On the Demagogues* and Idomeneus' *On the Demagogues* [sc. at Athens]. Idomeneus is not writing *Lives* but marshalling material as a digression in a historical work. Idomeneus' work, by contrast, represents (a) does not require a separate work (Theopompus and perhaps Stesimbrotus does not seem to have inspired any other work).

9. To summarize : at the most, the evidence provides evidence for *Lives* of on the type of Thucydides, Pericles, Alcibiades, Timoleon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas. If one is (justifiably) more cautious, one might pre-date Nepos one is more cautious than Epaminondas/Pelopidas. Two of the *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* type of works are the best way of believing in the hellenistic figures of the type under discussion. Since this is precisely the sort of work that allows a presumption that Nepos had a model in mind — and yet, one must allow for the possibility that the chronological relationship between Themistocles' mother and Nepos is such that the second or third century AD work of Thrasylbulus represents exactly a work of the type. The strongest case for a work both on the type of *Foreign Generals* and on the type of that work was so distinctive as to be a literary imitation, not to mention

(10) F. LEO, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie*, Leipzig, 1901.

(11) On *De uiris illustribus* cf. B. BALDWIN, *Suetonius*, Amsterdam, 1981, p.379ff ; R. A. KASTER, *Caius Suetonius Tranquillus : De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*, Oxford, 1995, p. xxif.

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figures : Megacles, being Greek, would hardly not do so, and Varro's total of 700 subjects surely requires every possible category to have been exploited. (Notice that Neanthes 84 F 17 on Themistocles is explicitly quoted from his *Hellenica*). About the scale of these works all we can say is that P. Oxy. 1800's contents are very brief and the same must be true of the individual components of Varro's collection of pictures with verse epigraph and prose annotation. But it is clear that both could presuppose more substantial productions.

8. Amidst the many ancient works on musicians, sculptors, poets, painters, philosopher, orators, doctors and other classes of person, the only ones which have any relation to politics or warfare are those on kings, tyrants and demagogues. Only two attested works are relevant here, therefore, Theopompus' *On the Demagogues* [sc. at Athens : = the later portion of *Philippica* X] and Idomeneus' *On the Demagogues at Athens*. Theopompus was certainly not writing *Lives* but marshalling critical material about Athenian leaders as a digression in a historical work much concerned with Athenian politicians. Idomeneus' work, by contrast, was at least separate and self-contained. However, the particular form of research into Athenian history which it represents (a) does not require belief in a genre of political biography (Theopompus and perhaps Stesimbrotus are adequate antecedents) and (b) does not seem to have inspired any imitations.

9. To summarize : at the most generous estimate the material surveyed provides evidence for *Lives* of only the following relevant persons : Themistocles, Thucydides, Pericles, Alcibiades, Thrasybulus, Philopoemen, Dion, Timoleon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas. But one must stress 'most generous estimate'. If one is (justifiably) more rigorous and concentrates on works which might pre-date Nepos one is left with Themistocles, Thrasybulus and Epaminondas/Pelopidas. Two of these items represent the contents of works of the *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* type, and if one thing is clear it is that the best way of believing in the hellenistic writing of lives of politico-military figures of the type under discussion is via compendious biographical works. Since this is precisely the sort of work that Nepos wrote there may be more of a presumption that Nepos had antecedents for *Foreign Generals* than Geiger allows — and yet, one must allow, the evidence is really extraordinarily thin. The chronological relationship between Amphicrates (who is quoted on Themistocles' mother) and Nepos is quite obscure and it is not demonstrable that the second or third century AD P. Oxy. 1800 with its diminutive Thrasybulus represents exactly a work from three or four centuries earlier. The strongest case for a work both earlier than Nepos and probably containing subjects similar to *Foreign Generals* remains Varro's *Imagines*. But since the form of that work was so distinctive (though rapidly followed by Atticus' literary imitation, not to mention the actual annotated statues of the Forum

Augustum⁽¹²⁾) it arguably would not detract significantly from Nepos' claim to originality — unless it presupposed in turn more conventional Greek compendia of *Lives* with a similar range of subjects.

Subjects who were political or military leaders but not also kings, lawgivers or orators predominate in surviving biographical works. But the tacit assumption by modern students of ancient biography that they must always have been a feature of the genre or that collation of individual *Lives* of Nepos and Plutarch permits the inference of a common biographical source is simply illegitimate. Geiger's monograph causes one to notice this point. In that respect it performs a valuable service and is a good deal more intellectually respectable than Leo's belief that what he termed the peripatetic method of biographical writing was invented for the purpose of writing political biography. Moreover — at least if we restate the point in the relatively objective terms I have suggested (i.e. leaders who were not kings, orators or lawgivers) — the external case for Geiger's central claim about Nepos' novelty is certainly not demonstrably false.

II. INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS. — Under this heading there are two things at which we can look: (i) programmatic passages which make statements about the characteristics of *Foreign Generals* and (ii) certain observable features of the work to which Nepos does not explicitly draw attention. The former raises issues of antecedents, the distinction between history and biography and readership. The latter could include several, to some extent overlapping, matters, and I shall look at six themes.

A. The programmatic passages. — There are really only four passages: the preface, *Epaminondas* 1, 1f and 4, 6, and *Pelopidas* 1. (A few extra passages underline the issue of brevity raised in the main passages: cf. *Alcibiades* 2, 3; 11, 6; *Lysander* 2, 1; *Timotheus* 4, 2; *Hannibal* 5, 4. All of these are essentially saying that more could be said, or more examples produced, about some particular topic, if the need for brevity did not have to be met.)

1. *Epaminondas* 4, 6: *Plurima quidem proferre possimus [i.e. exempla abstinentiae], sed modus adhibendus est, quoniam uno hoc uolumine uitam excellentium uirorum complurium concludere constituimus, quorum separatim multis milibus uersuum complures scriptores ante nos explicarunt.*

One purpose of this passage is to underline the extent of Epaminondas' *abstinentia*. But what sort of novelty is Nepos claiming? Do the *complures*

(12) M. M. SAGE, *The Elogia of the Augustan Forum and the de uiris illustribus* in *Historia* 28, 1979, p. 192-210.

scriptores have to be biographers (i) the word *uitam* must be understood as 'life', not 'virtue', and caught on the horns of a dilemma to infer that works which were devoted to some of the subjects of *Foreign Generals* and claim that the reference is to works dealing with monarchs or the like, are not between such things and 'political biography' that Nepos had done anything which *duces* are not kings.

One might dispute whether *complures uersuum* (I suspect that Nepos probably — did not himself think of) supplying *res (gestae)*, this being the case. But even if we accept the assumption, it simply misses the point. Nepos' 'individual-centred histories' of the appearance of individual political figures, the treatment of Miltiades in *Hippias* as well as the sort of thing from *milibus uersuum* might be exact, but is exaggeration here. The fact that the works contain material about many of the subjects it was not all *uno ... uolumine* — at least proves nothing either way, and it does not even prove that they were put into one *uolumen*, for Nepos was as much.

2. *Pelopidas* 1, 1: *Pelopidas I cuius de uirtutibus dubito que explicare incipiam, ne non uitam si tantummodo summas attingere dilucide appareat, quantus fuerit potuero, et medebor cum satiata*

(a) Pelopidas is someone who is not *rudes Graecarum historici* and *uulgo* is between popular literature (e.g. a distinction between popular historical biography), though he never figured in biographical works.

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scriptores have to be biographers? Moles (cf. n. 5) argues that they do because (i) the word *uitam* must be understood after *quorum* and (ii) we are then caught on the horns of a dilemma : either we understand *uitam* literally and infer that works which were *Vitae* in Nepos' sense did exist about at least some of the subjects of *Foreign Generals* or we dilute the sense of *uitam* and claim that the reference is to encomia or individual-centred histories (ones dealing with monarchs or the like) — in which case we destroy the distinction between such things and 'political biography' and made it hard to maintain that Nepos had done anything novel — quite apart from the fact that the *duces* are not kings.

One might dispute whether *uitam* is necessarily the word to supply after *quorum* (I suspect that Nepos either deliberately left it vague or — more probably — did not himself think about the question but was unconsciously supplying *res (gestae)*, this being what goes with *explicare* in other passages). But even if we accept the assumption, the elegant piece of logic which results simply misses the point. Nepos can perfectly well be talking not about 'individual-centred histories' of an Alexander or Dionysius I but about the appearance of individual political / military leaders in general historical works : the treatment of Miltiades in Herodotus (or Ephorus) could qualify perfectly well as the sort of thing from which Nepos is distinguishing himself. *Multis milibus uersuum* might be exaggerated : but Moles himself claims that there is exaggeration here. The fact that Ephorus' *History*, for example, would contain material about many of Nepos' subjects does not render him ineligible : it was not all *uno ... uolumine* ! In short, I feel quite sure that this passage at least proves nothing either way about the nature of Nepos' predecessors : it does not even prove that no-one had previously compressed many *Lives* into one *uolumen*, for Nepos — quite carefully — does not actually claim as much.

2. *Pelopidas* 1, 1 : *Pelopidas Thebanus, magis historicis quam uulgo notus. cuius de uirtutibus dubito quem ad modum exponam, quod uereor, si res explicare incipiam, ne non uitam eius enarrare, sed historiam uidear scribere : si tantummodo summas attingero, ne rudibus Graecarum litterarum minus dilucide appareat, quantus fuerit ille uir. itaque utrique rei occurram, quantum potuero, et medebor cum satietati tum ignorantiae lectorum.*

(a) Pelopidas is someone more likely to be known to *historici* and those who are not *rudibus Graecarum litterarum*. Since the distinction between *historici* and *uulgo* is between degrees of expertise, not between types of literature (e.g. a distinction between 'serious' historical publications and popular historical biography), the passage does not prove that Pelopidas had never figured in biographical works, either as a freestanding subject or as

an item in a compendious publication — provided that such works were in Greek.

(b) The *uitae* / *historia* distinction resembles that in Plutarch *Alexander* 1. Plutarch explains that the reader must not expect him to provide all the achievements of Alexander and Julius Caesar; he may have to epitomize a bit. This is justifiable since he is not writing *historia* [which implicitly covers all notable politico-military events] but βίοι; the function of βίοι is to convey essential and distinctive characteristics; and these can sometimes be revealed better by 'unimportant' actions on the subject's part. The reasons for the statements in the two authors are different, of course: Plutarch confronts the problem of two very familiar figures of huge historical stature, Nepos the problem of a figure who is far from familiar. Moreover Nepos' worry is about the amount of general historical setting one needs to appreciate Pelopidas' specific deeds, whereas Plutarch is worried about being unable to provide a full account of all the subjects' deeds. But Nepos' presumptions about *uitam enarrare* are clearly similar to Plutarch's presumption that a βίος can be selective and must concern itself with individual characteristics. There is also a similarity to one element in *Epaminondas* 1, 1f, where Nepos explains that even things which are (to some readers) *leuia* should not be left out when one is producing a picture of a man's character and life. Again there is a difference of emphasis, since Plutarch is excusing omissions, while Nepos is professing to be exhaustive. (The principal line of thought is the matter of *alienos mores* to which we shall return later.)

Intent on denying Nepos any novelty, Moles (cf. n. 5) claims that the *uita* / *historia* distinction (i) resembles what Polybius says about his three-volume *Philopoimen* (X, 21, 7-8) and (ii) is anyway a simplified derivative from *Ad Herennium* 1, 13, Cicero *De inuentione* 1, 27 and Asclepiades as quoted in Sextus Empiricus *Aduersus Mathematicos* 1, 253. Both observations lack cogency.

Polybius' *Philopoimen* was an encomium which dealt in detail with the subject's νεωτερικὴ ἀγωγή and his νεωτερικοὶ ζῆλοι (youthful upbringing and ambitions) and then provided a (more) summary and somewhat exaggerated account of his most notable deeds during maturity (κατὰ ἀκμὴν). The purpose was praise. In his *Histories*, however, Polybius will say less about upbringing and more about public career and seek to show objectively where praise and blame are due. Some of the surface phenomena are different: the distinction between education and maturity plays no role in Plutarch or Nepos (though youthful training and ambitions may well reveal things about a subject's character), and Plutarch does not claim to be necessarily engaged in laudatory delineation of a subject's characteristics, though Nepos as a matter of fact was in the case of Pelopidas. But these are arguably accidental matters (Polybius' principles could theoretically be followed in constructing a denun-

ciation just as well as an encomium). Polybius' encomium of Philopoimen is contemporary, whereas Nepos' is a more historical frame of reference (in sense). Polybius' decision to write about that others are writing or writing about political individuals about which others are writing 'the influence of the prose era is quite apparent' (Moles [cf. n. 5]). Nepos and Plutarch were writing about figures from Polybius (or Xenophon).

As for Hellenistic rhetorical theory, the distinction between *narrationes* and *personae*. The former divided into *personae* (from Pacuvius), *historia* (from *Annales*) and *argumentum* (from a passage from Terence (signifying the individual's *actus*) great vivacity, fluctuations of hopes, fear and so forth. The latter is from *Ad familiares* V, 12, 4f which deals with vicissitudes of fortune in words. But the implicit location of the distinction is from Lucceius to write, which is from *nostrorum* (6), but was a history centred on Cicero, not a *Life* of Cicero and Themistocles' exhortation as biographies. Moreover the distinction being assigned to e.g. Thucydides Momigliano (whom Moles claims means certain). There is no doubt a biography, and the distinction between Nepos, one about selection even if Moles were right, that the subject be provided with a theoretic framework. The theory does not prove that the distinction in Nepos' generation; and how to distinguish encomiastic narration? The subject overtly claim that the distinction between Nepos and Plutarch. But then it does not have to be differentiated before, even if like those in *Foreign General*

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ciation just as well as an encomium). What really matters is motivation : Polybius' encomium of Philopoimen is that of a politically engaged younger contemporary, whereas Nepos and Plutarch are approaching their task in a more historical frame of mind (using the word 'historical' is the loosest sense). Polybius' decision to write about Philopoimen creates no expectation that others are writing or will write similar works about non-contemporary political individuals about whom they have no partisan feelings. The fact that 'the influence of the prose encomium on some of Nepos' and Plutarch's *Lives* is quite apparent' (Moles [cf n. 5]) does not make it meaningless to say that Nepos and Plutarch were writing *Lives* not encomia and are to be distinguished from Polybius (or Xenophon or Isocrates).

As for Hellenistic rhetorical theory, the passages cited concern the distinction of non-legal *narrationes* into ones to do with *negotia* and ones to do with *personae*. The former divide into *fabula* (fictitious and fabulous : example from Pacuvius), *historia* (distant in time but actual : example from Ennius *Annales*) and *argumentum* (fictitious but realistic). The last is exemplified by a passage from Terence (*Adelphoe* 60-63) which contains conversation signifying the individual's *animi*. It is a type of *narratio* which should have great vivacity, fluctuations of fortune, character contrasts, severity, gentleness, hopes, fear and so forth. This requirement has been compared with Cicero, *Ad familiares* V, 12, 4f which comments on the attractiveness of entertaining vicissitudes of fortune in works which can be contrasted with [mere] *annales*. But the implicit location of such treatment is in (i) what Cicero wanted Lucceius to write, which may have been *fabula rerum euentorumque nostrorum* (6), but was a historical monograph on the events of 63-56 BC centred on Cicero, not a *Life*, and (ii) the works dealing with Epaminondas' death and Themistocles' exile which it would beg the question to identify as biographies. Moreover the qualities mentioned here are quite capable of being assigned to e.g. Thucydides. Moles' case is not obviously correct, and Momigliano (whom Moles cites for the argument) actually says that it is 'by no means certain'. There is some distance between a passage of Terence and a biography, and the distinction is, explicitly in Plutarch and implicitly in Nepos, one about selection of material more than style of narration. But, even if Moles were right, the fact that the *Lives* / History distinction might be provided with a theoretically underpinning in terms of hellenistic literary theory does not prove that it had been so provided at any date prior to Nepos' generation ; and how can we be sure that we are not talking about encomiastic narration ? The most we can say is that Nepos does not very overtly clam that the distinction he is drawing is one that he has invented. But then it does not have to be. History and *Lives* can perfectly well have been differentiated before, even if nobody had been writing lives of subjects like those in *Foreign Generals*

(c) *Pelopidas* 1, 1 presumes that Nepos' readership may include *rudēs Graecarum litterarum*. There are two points to make about this. First, it surely does not preclude readers of better education. It is true that the converse of leaving greekless readers in the dark about Pelopidas' stature is not initially described as boring educated readers who know all about Pelopidas, but as appearing to write history instead of narrating a life. However Nepos does later talk about 'curing' the *satietas* of readers who are not ignorant of Greek; and it might be said that the complaint about genre — *historiam scribere* as opposed to *uitam enarrare* — is one which educated readers were most likely to make. One should not picture Nepos as a literary hack, mechanically servicing the needs of an uncultured audience and therefore implicitly doing nothing original. (We shall return to readership later.) Second, the Greek literature of which some readers may be ignorant need not include 'biographical' works on Pelopidas. In fact, it is essentially Greek historiographical accounts which appear to be in question. One may be tempted to infer that, if biographies of 'political figures' did exist before Nepos' time, they did not include ones of Pelopidas. But second thoughts (cf. A 2 [a]) show this to be a premature conclusion.

(d) The reason for the passage is apparently Nepos' feeling that Pelopidas' unfamiliarity means that an unusual amount of historical setting is required to appreciate his stature. Two problems arise. (i) Was Pelopidas really so much more unfamiliar than e.g. Iphicrates or Chabrias or Timotheus? That at least is a question we cannot answer. (ii) Nepos is not worried elsewhere about failing to explain historical settings. A case such as *Timotheus* 1, 2-3 does perhaps have an unusually dense list of brief references to unexplained incidents. But almost all the *Lives* take for granted that there existed appropriate settings of domestic or international conflict for the hero's activities and leap *in medias res*, either assuming that the reader in some sense knows what these settings were or not caring particularly whether he does or not. Moreover, if some special problem was felt to exist with the liberation of Thebes in 379/8, material about Sparta's occupation of the city could surely have been disposed in e.g. a fashion like that about the Thirty Tyrants in *Thrasybulus* 1, 1-5. No programmatic commentary would then have been required at all.

One effect of the programmatic introduction is to emphasize the figure of Pelopidas. Perhaps then it is merely a particular rhetorical strategy for starting a *Life*. Some *Lives* begin by explicitly stating the special claim to fame of the subject, and the present passage would simply be a distinctive variation on this, designed to stress the importance of Pelopidas' personal intrusion into the political troubles of his city. On this view the programmatic statement is something of an imposture — at least to the same degree as *Epaminondas* 4, 6, where the programmatic comment is a way of highlighting Epaminondas'

abstinentia. This is no programmatic statement (his compendious work and history), merely that is somewhat arbitrary.

There is, however, one pause about this background to the liberal problem. The whole of the junta by an and name is occasionally at assertion that the liberat that Epaminondas then in characterization of the really characterful thing hostility to Alexander statement is not 'unreal' was better known to *his* (even) Nepos actually ha

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abstinentia. This is not to say that in either case the content of the programmatic statement is false (Nepos does see a formal distinction between his compendious work and the writings of predecessors and between *Lives* and history), merely that its appearance in the particular passage in question is somewhat arbitrary.

There is, however, one further point about *Pelopidas* which may make one pause about this explanation of 1, 1. At first sight it is not just the background to the liberation of Thebes which presents the biographer a problem. The whole of 1, 2 — 3, 3 is really an account of the overthrow of the junta by an anonymous group of conspirators to which Pelopidas' name is occasionally attached (1, 4 ; 2, 5 ; 3, 3) ; and 4, 1-3 consists of the assertion that the liberation was Pelopidas' *laus* accompanied by information that Epaminondas then outshone him. The whole *Life* is singularly lacking in characterization of the hero by key-words, or in any way ; indeed the only really characterful thing said about him is that he became implacable in his hostility to Alexander of Pherae (5, 2). Perhaps, then, the programmatic statement is not 'unreal' and Nepos did have a problem — not that Pelopidas was better known to *historici* (like Nepos) than to ordinary people but that (even) Nepos actually had little distinctive information about him.

Yet it is hard to see why this should be so : Plutarch managed to produce a *Pelopidas* and the relevant historical tradition had not been significantly enriched in the interim. Moreover the proposition does not really explain the phenomena : if he had wished to, Nepos could have generated more explicit moral judgments about Pelopidas out of just the information which he has actually deployed. The degree of arbitrary choice may be seen by comparing the *Datames*. Here, surely, is a figure who might be said to be better known to historians than the general public. Nepos' reaction (*Timotheus* 4, 5-6) is to give a longer discourse because his deeds are fairly obscure and his successes more due to calculation than greatness of resources — *quorum nisi ratio explicata fuerit, res apparere non poterunt*. This verbally echoes *Pelopidas* 1,1 : *uereor, si res explicare incipiam, ne non uitam enarrare sed historiam uidear scribere* ; but there is no apology about genre-confusions. The case is, of course, distinct in that the whole of *Datames* is firmly focused on the hero's actions. But, if Nepos could derive the *Datames* from the source-material at his disposal, it is impossible to imagine that he could not have devised a *Pelopidas* which did not require 'apologies'. It follows that he did not wish to do this. The reason, we must assume, is that the opportunity to produce further variation in structure for an individual *Life* and to make a programmatic comment about *historia* and *uitae* appealed to him more — in both cases an essentially literary motive. So far as variety is concerned one also notes that the result is a juxtaposition of two lives, *Epaminondas* and *Pelopidas*, which are very distant from one another in literary design

— the one utterly unlike narrative history, the other incorporating a sizeable piece of text which looks just like narrative history. This cannot be accidental, and surely shows that it is Nepos, not a hypothetical direct source, who is in control of the eventual appearance of his *Lives*. This is not to say that the nature of the pre-existing tradition about individual figures necessarily has no effect upon the character of Nepos' *Life* of those individuals. But Nepos is not to be imagined working mechanically from a single existing Greek text as source for both literary character and factual content. Be that as it may, an impression may remain that *Pelopidas* 1, 1 exists for reasons other than the pressing importance of the programmatic statement which it contains; and this only tends to emphasize the absence of overt claims to substantial novelty in selection of subjects and to tell against Geiger's thesis. *Pelopidas* 1, 1 certainly does not rule out earlier 'political' biographies (cf. A 2 [a], [c]) and perhaps would tempt us into postulating them. And yet it is extraordinarily hard to be sure. Manipulation for literary effect is not necessarily inconsistent with the making of serious statements; and we are at this point in the middle of *Foreign Generals*. Perhaps we should expect the *Preface* to supply the real evidence.

3. Preface: *Non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leue et non satis dignum summorum uirorum personis iudicanti, cum relatum legent quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam aut in eius uirtutibus commemorari saltasse eum commode scienterque tibiis cantasse. Sed ei erunt qui expertes litterarum Graecarum nihil rectum nisi quod ipsorum moribus conueniat putabunt. Hi si didicerint non eadem omnibus esse honesta atque turpia, sed omnia maiorum institutis iudicari, non admirabuntur nos in Graiorum uirtutibus exponendis mores eorum secutos.*

(a) Geiger appears to believe that the Preface presupposes that Nepos is the first to write political biography. This is false. The novelty of the work is not that it involves doing biographies of political figures (*summi uiri*) but, at most, that it involves doing biographies of Greeks in Latin, and thus exposing them to potential readers who are ignorant of Greek language and customs. Those who judge that the genre is *leue et non satis dignum uirorum summorum personis* are at fault for parochialism not for conservative rejection of a new genre. The genre could also be new, but there is no way of telling this from what Nepos says — and one feels again that if he were conscious that what he was doing was fundamentally new he would make this fact more apparent. There are then only two possibilities. (i) He did not see it was new, even though it was; that is, he did not properly appreciate that it was one thing to write about politicians who were also orators or kings or lawgivers and another to write about ones who were simply generals. Geiger seems at times tempted by this view. But someone composing a compendious

work arranged by category (One effect of restating orators, lawgivers or mort is to bring this out.) (ii) Latin and perhaps (b) greater than characterised the explicitly on these novelty being ones which applied in the overall preface. The models for even the literary the appropriate bits of people. But this does not

(b) The Preface raises scarcely pursued relentlessly 2 repeats the point about a 2, 3: *atque haec ad nostrum* (The sentence is misplaced and properly applies to many male lovers *more amore, quoad licitum est* is not preaching moral ne in Athenian practice of examples in the preface — and performance on the in fact *Alcibiades* quite re Olympic Games. One of chariot teams at the game But this is unmentioned at 6.3 where the presentation his return to Athens in 4 case of Olympic victors.

In fact the only further values in the *Lives* is *Et* much higher status among *mercenarii* whereas Greek in the Greek world scribe and it might not be only needed to have it explain give the wrong impression about Cimon's marriage, Greece. But perhaps this could be expected to know

her incorporating a sizeable work. This cannot be accidental. The direct source, who is the model. This is not to say that individual figures necessarily represent those individuals. But the model is taken from a single existing work and its factual content. Be that as it may, *Alcibiades* 1, 1 exists for reasons which are grammatical rather than rhetorical. The absence of overt claims to novelty tell against Geiger's thesis. The 'political' biographies (cf. *Epaminondas*) postulating them. And yet the model for literary effect is not a historical statement; and we are not to expect. Perhaps we should expect

qui hoc genus scripturae leue iudicent, cum relatum legent uis uirtutibus commemorari. Sed ei erunt qui expertes uirorum moribus conueniat esse honesta atque turpia, sed abuntur nos in Graiorum

presupposes that Nepos is a Roman. The novelty of the work is the presentation of Greek figures (*summi uiri*) but, in Greek in Latin, and thus the novelty of Greek language and culture is not *non satis dignum uirorum* but a novelty not for conservative rejection but for novelty. In that if he were conscious of the novelty he would make this fact a novelty. (i) He did not see it or did not properly appreciate that the figures were also orators or kings but were simply generals. Geiger's thesis of composing a compendious

work arranged by categories should be the last person to fail to see this novelty. (One effect of restating Geiger's thesis in terms of persons who were not orators, lawgivers or monarchs rather than in terms of 'political biography' is to bring this out.) (ii) The element of novelty was confined to (a) use of Greek and perhaps (b) greater length and/or greater concern for literary variety than characterised the closest pre-existing models. Failure to comment explicitly on these novelties in the existing preface could then be due to their being ones which applied to the whole work, and thus received comment in the overall preface. This probably involves assuming that the immediate models for even the literary or cultural parts of the *de uiris illustribus* were the appropriate bits of Greek compendia, not freestanding works on such people. But this does not seem a particularly unreasonable assumption.

(b) The Preface raises the issue of Greek and Roman *mores*, but this is scarcely pursued relentlessly in the text which follows. *Epaminondas* 1, 1-2 repeats the point about music and dancing; and there is a further apology at 2, 3: *atque haec ad nostram consuetudinem sunt leuia et potius contemnenda*. (The sentence is misplaced in the manuscripts after the talk of Pythagoreanism and properly applies to music). *Alcibiades* 2, 2-3 notes that Alcibiades had many male lovers *more Graecorum* — and expresses distaste (*in quorum amore, quoad licitum est odiosa, multa delicate iocoseque fecit*), for Nepos is not preaching moral neutrality. *Cimon* 1, 2 comments on the acceptability in Athenian practice of Cimon's marriage with his sister. But the other examples in the preface — Spartan widows, attitudes to the Olympic games and performance on the stage, the seclusion of women — do not resurface: in fact *Alcibiades* quite remarkably *avoids* the opportunity to talk about the Olympic Games. One of Alcibiades' achievements was having entered several chariot teams at the games of 416 and won first, second and fourth prizes. But this is unmentioned in the *Life* and is actually almost wilfully ignored at 6.3 where the presentation of gold and bronze crowns to Alcibiades upon his return to Athens in 407 is said to have had no precedents except in the case of Olympic victors.

In fact the only further example of the distinction of Greek and Roman values in the *Lives* is *Eumenes* 1, 5, which points out that scribes had a much higher status among Greeks than Romans, because Roman ones are *mercenarii* whereas Greek ones were men of honour, *fides* and *industria*. Even in the Greek world scribes rarely rose to the heights of Eumenes of Cardia and it might not be only those who were *expertes litterarum Graecarum* who needed to have it explained that to say Eumenes was Philip's *scriba* might give the wrong impression. (I suspect a similar point could also be made about Cimon's marriage, for half-sister marriages were not commonplace in Greece. But perhaps this instance was one which those with Greek education could be expected to know about — but that begs the questions about the

familiarity of Greek political figures which the whole of this paper is essentially addressing). It remains something of an open question, therefore, how definitive a motive for *Foreign Generals* is provided by the point about foreign customs. But since some comparison of Greeks and Romans is involved anyway, the issue is not simply artificially attached to the text. And yet something of the same feeling subsists as with *Pelopidas* 1, 1. Nepos has found a perfectly valid programmatic point to talk about in the Preface; but if Geiger is right he had an even better programmatic point to make (novelty of subject matter). So why fail to make it?

(c) Like *Pelopidas* 1, the preface envisages readers who are ignorant of Greek literature. But, again like *Pelopidas* 1, it does not assume that all readers will be like this. This is a matter on which *Foreign Generals* as a whole is ambiguous. *Eumenes* 8, 3 assumes that an army veteran might read the *Lives*. Scholars compare this with Cicero's comment (*De finibus* V, 2) that even artisans (*opifices*) enjoy history and assume that Nepos is thinking of someone of limited education. But I do not see how one can be anything like as sure of this as one can be sure that Nepos' reference to his *veteranus*-reader is prompted by the desire to make a point about contemporary politics not by the desire to make a statement about intended readership.

Another matter of uncertainty is the purpose of Nepos' occasional Greek glosses. For example, in *Conon* 3, 3 Tithraustes warns Conon that those who approach Artaxerxes in person must *uenerari regem* and Nepos inserts in parenthesis the explanatory phrase quod προσκύνησιν illi uocant. Is he providing a piece of obscure 'foreign' knowledge for readers who are assumed not to possess it or making allowance for readers who will recognize the point of the story better through the technically precise Greek word than through the Latin translation? Or is he perhaps doing both? The fact that Nepos renders Greek terms into Latin (with or without gloss) rather than transliterating them without comment as quasi-Latin words says no more about intended readership than does the bare fact that he chose to write in Latin in the first place. Having made that initial decision, legitimate considerations of stylistic uniformity favoured latinization; and one could say that the unglossed reference in *Pausanias* 3, 4 to *claua...in qua more illorum erat scriptum: nisi domum reuertetur se capitis damnaturos esse* is only tolerable if Nepos was actually inclined to assume that his readers would know what a *skutale* was. The same goes for the (*lex*) *obliuionis* in *Thrasybulus* 3, 2 or the phrases for ostracism in *Themistocles* 8, 1, *Aristides* 1, 2 and *Cimon* 3, 2 which are only once glossed by the Greek word. Casual use of the transliterated Greek word ἄστυ in *Themistocles* 4, 1 and *Alcibiades* 6, 4 or of the technical term μόρα in *Iphicrates* 2, 3 surely discloses an author who is not consistently thinking of the needs of Greekless readers. (Oddly both are words which could be interpreted as Latin, without of course making

any sense in the context in which the Greekless readers are not being addressed.)

Altogether the phenomenon of Greek glosses seems to do in Latin a job which had previously been done in Greek. The question of 'political' correctness was accessible to people who were not and preferred to read in the Senate who as a whole was not (13). *De finibus* V, 89, and sometimes assume (13) a Greek — citing the model that someone with good education would be a model reader of the *Lives*. The riding motive for the book is not only Greekless readers in Latin (14). The latter part of the book that Nepos' *Lives* contain philosophical discourses and some of biography. But in Latin was entitled to be read by consumers, Roman in mind just because it was in Latin. If assimilation, there would be no sort in Latin even if the book took an extreme position is not a 'point' in the cultural 'point' in the *Lives* and other productions such as the events next to one another in the century Roman was given. If Greek and Roman in mind had to be written about the individuals in question. The degree of knowledge of Greek is not the degree of knowledge of Latin.

This is where we begin to see the observation of the end result of the function of the book as a whole. The nearest

(13) N. HORSEFALL, *D* 95.

(14) cf. GEIGER [n. 1].

any sense in the context. This rather underlines one's feeling that Greekless readers are not being specially catered for).

Altogether the phenomena seem best viewed as follows: Nepos had set out to do in Latin a type of book — a compendious biographical work — which had previously been done in Greek. (This is true irrespective of the question of 'political' biography). He was conscious, even proud, that his book was accessible to people who could not read Greek or who read it poorly and preferred to read in Latin. (Cicero says that there was always someone in the Senate who asked for an interpreter when Greek was being spoken (*De finibus* V, 89), and general knowledge of Greek was less good than we sometimes assume⁽¹³⁾). It is odd that while scholars denounce Nepos for poor Greek — citing the mistranslation at *Themistocles* 9, 4 — they rarely observe that someone with poor Greek — as opposed to no Greek at all — is arguably a model reader of the *Lives*!) But this accessibility was not in truth the overriding motive for the book's existence and Nepos no more expected, or wanted, only Greekless readers than Cicero did when he set about writing philosophy in Latin⁽¹⁴⁾. The latter had, of course, an inherent linguistic point in a way that Nepos' *Lives* could not; it was an achievement to prove that lucid philosophical discourse could be composed in Latin, but not to prove the same of biography. But both exercises reflected the same assumption that Latin was entitled to be used for intellectual discourse — and that, as consumers, Roman intellectuals should not be unwilling to read something just because it was in Latin. In a situation of cultural competition and assimilation, there would even be a case for producing works of a traditional sort in Latin even if there were no particular linguistic need at all. But this extreme position is not in question. At the very least there was a more specific cultural 'point' in the fact that the *Lives* — like the *Chronica* and perhaps other productions such as the *Exempla* — set Greek and Roman persons and events next to one another in implicit or explicit comparison. No first century Roman was going to write about Roman individuals in Greek, so if Greek and Roman individuals were to be set side by side, Greek individuals had to be written about in Latin. The issue of the purpose of writing about the individuals in question in the first place is in the end more crucial than the degree of knowledge of Greek on the part of some readers.

This is where we begin to move into the realm of speculation based on observation of the end-result, for Nepos' programmatic statements cast little light on the function or purpose of *Foreign Generals* or *de uiris illustribus* as a whole. The nearest approach is the identification in *Pelopidas* 1, 1 of

(13) N. HORSFALL, *Doctus sermones utriusque linguae* in *EMC* 22, 1979, p. 89-95.

(14) cf. GEIGER [n. 1], p. 70f.

uitam alicuius enarrare and *de uirtutibus alicuius exponere*. This leaves open many questions about the form in which the exercise will be carried out, but does suggest that those who read the work are expected to be interested in qualities not (merely) facts. It is in this light that we are to interpret the phrase *digni memoria* in *Reges* 1, 1 and the final sentence of *Foreign Generals*: *Romanorum explicare imperatores quo facilius collatis utrorumque factis qui uiri praeferendi sint possit iudicari*. Moreover Nepos' concern with *uirtutes* is evident to the casual reader; it is reflected by the number of allusions to particular virtues or characteristics (one could easily claim over fifty categories, judging partly by Latin key-words, partly by conceptual definition) and by the relative frequency of comments by the author underlining moral points or noting the scale of the subject's achievements (I reckon there are some forty such passages). All the same the question of what sort of value the reader is to derive from contemplating biographical discourses about the virtues of famous men is not one which Nepos addresses explicitly or to which the answer is necessarily self-evident. The remainder of this paper will discuss certain features of the text from the point of view of their possible bearing on Nepos' originality in writing *Lives* of politico-military leaders, but it may also have some bearing on the work's function. For if there is any novelty involved, it should surely be tied up with the reasons why Nepos composed it.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS.

1. The position of *Foreign Generals* within *de uiris illustribus*. — The books on generals come late in *de uiris illustribus* (forming books XVII and XVIII). Geiger suggests that they may represent an afterthought, something not part of the original plan because not immediately suggested by the model of Greek works *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν*. In support of this he adduces various other considerations.

(a) The elder Cato was put among the *historici* of Book XIV because a book of Roman *duces* had not yet been planned. — Surely false: Rome was not so replete with historians that Nepos could waste Cato as a military leader.

(b) The books on generals, especially Greek ones, would inform readers a bit more about the subject matter of the historians discussed in Books XIII and XIV. — This does not show XVII and XVIII are afterthoughts; and why are there not more explicit references to historical sources in XVII if this was a purpose?

(c) Atticus (the dedicatee of XVII) could have impressed upon Nepos the possibility of including *duces* in the overall collection (just as he suggested composition of the full-length *Life* of Cato), doing so under the influence of the model of Varro's *Imagines*. — Atticus' influence is, indeed, possible.

However, we can only accept that (1) it was Varro's *Imagines* which planned the order of *de uiris illustribus* is true that Nepos' correspondence with Geiger's *Imagines* which Geiger thinks indicates that *de uiris illustribus* does precede the *duces* in the margin is too narrow and the too great for this to be of any significance.

Nor does the late position in the *duces* are odd ones out in the *duces* we do not know for certain, the order of writers. Even if the inclusion of *duces* were arguably only two places in the plan from the outset. But the preparation would require more categories, so that, even if envisaged from the outset, it should not, in a context such as this, be delayed until the end of the collection. This is an argument of fund not a novelty in *de uiris illustribus* located anywhere, including first with the thesis of non-novelty a presumption (the afterthought).

In the end the order of items in *Foreign Generals* was included in the collection imitates a Greek literary form similar to that of its Greek antecedents. We should not consider *Foreign Generals* to be of a character, sufficiently different from the other work; and the explicit program of the collection contradicts this assumption. Unless as to the novelty of the arrangement.

2. Length. — The *Lives* are not in clear categories: (1) 1.5 — 3.75 pages (*Thrasylbulus, Conon, Iphicrate, Timoleon, Kings, Hamilcar*: 1.5 pages) and (2) 6 — 9.5 pages (*Miltiades, Epaminondas, Agesilaus, Eumenes*: 7.4 pages). Geiger offers the comparison in length with the

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However, we can only accept the idea of an afterthought if we are sure that (1) it was Varro's *Imagines* which inspired the notion and (2) the original planning of *De uiris illustribus* preceded preparation of Varro's *Imagines*. It is true that Nepos' correspondence with Cicero about philosophy in 45/44, which Geiger thinks indicates that Nepos is starting to plan the *De uiris illustribus* does precede the earliest trace of the *Imagines* (in 44). But the margin is too narrow and the amount of hypothetical supposition involved too great for this to be of any significance.

Nor does late position in the collection prove much. Geiger stresses that the *duces* are odd ones out in the collection as a whole — assuming what we do not know for certain, that they were (as Geiger thinks) all intellectuals or writers. Even if the inclusion of *duces* was planned from the outset there were arguably only two places they could go, viz. first or last. Geiger might argue that, as a novelty, they should have gone first if they were part of the plan from the outset. But one might also say that, as a novelty, their preparation would require more effort than that of *Lives* in more established categories, so that, even if envisaged from the start, they could end up being delayed until the end of the collection. Moreover, who is to say that a novelty should not, in a context such as this, be reserved for the end? But above all this is an argument of fundamentally flawed logic. If lives of *duces* were not a novelty in *De uiris illustribus* collections then they might be indifferently located anywhere, including first or last. But if last position is quite consistent with the thesis of non-novelty we are chasing our tail by using it to create a presumption (the afterthought) designed in turn to prove the thesis of novelty.

In the end the order of items is less interesting than the fact that *Foreign Generals* was included in the collection at all. *De uiris illustribus* as a whole imitates a Greek literary form ; and its purpose as a whole was presumably similar to that of its Greek antecedents. One must assume that Nepos did not consider *Foreign Generals* or *Roman Generals* to have a purpose, or be of a character, sufficiently out of line to prevent their inclusion in the work ; and the explicit programmatic passages certainly contain nothing which contradicts this assumption. Unfortunately no particular conclusion follows as to the novelty of the arrangement.

2. Length. — The *Lives* are not of uniform length, and in fact fall into two clear categories : (1) 1.5 — 3.75 pages (*Aristides, Pausanias, Cimon, Lysander, Thrasybulus, Conon, Iphicrates, Chabrias, Timotheus, Pelopidas, Phocion, Timoleon, Kings, Hamilcar* : 14 *Lives*, 34.75 pages, averaging 2.48 pages) ; and (2) 6 — 9.5 pages (*Miltiades, Themistocles, Alcibiades, Dion, Datames, Epaminondas, Agesilaus, Eumenes, Hannibal* : 9 *Lives*, 66.75 pages, averaging 7.4 pages). Geiger offers the following argument. The shorter *Lives* are comparable in length with established types of biography of 'intellectual'

figures. The Preface apologises for the length of *Foreign Generals*, which is the longest known Latin literary *uolumen* and must be longer than any Greek compendious biographical works. But, if Nepos was supposedly working to the model of such works, he ought not to have planned his book on foreign generals to exceed the ordinary length of book within a work *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν*. Therefore the end result is an accident; as he composed Nepos found himself writing some rather long *Lives*, and this happened because the closest Greek literary models did not include generals and therefore provided no guidance about length. Now it is true that 23 *Lives* at an average of about 2.5 pages would produce a volume of more conventional length; but the argument is really more ingenious than cogent. The size of *Foreign Generals* is the product of two variables: the size of individual *Lives* and the number of *Lives* included in the book. Whatever the nature of antecedent models, Nepos could control both variables in any way he wanted. He was prepared to accept the end result as we now have it, and we are in no position to say exactly why — or indeed to be sure how really eccentric he considered the length to be.

3. Sources. — The programmatic passages fail to tell us much about Nepos' relationship with literary models. One might also ask about his sources of information. I do not want to get involved in traditional speculation about this, though anyone can observe e.g. that it is not the Xenophonic tradition which is on show in the fourth century *Lives*. However one should at least remark on the passages where specific sources of information are named and on the fact that, except for Plato's *Symposium* (*Alcibiades* 2, 2), these are all historians: Thucydides (*Themistocles* 1, 4; 9, 1; 10, 4; *Alcibiades* 11, 1; *Pausanias* 2, 2), Theopompus (*Alcibiades* 11, 1; Iphicrates 3, 2), Timaeus (*Alcibiades* 11, 1), Dinon (*Conon* 5, 4), Polybius, Silenus, Sosylus, Sulpicius Blitho and Atticus (*Hannibal* 13, 3). Whether Nepos worked directly with these sources is no doubt hard to say. The account in Pausanias is for the most part fairly heavily informed by Thucydides, and includes passages which someone has clearly translated from the Greek text (not always accurately). But the story about Pausanias' mother (5, 3), the fine at 2, 6 and the misplacing of the adoption of Persian dress etc. in 3, 1-2 are not Thucydidean; and there is also re-arrangement of Thucydidean material⁽¹⁵⁾. The combination and relocation of material could theoretically be due to an intermediary; and Nepos' preference for Thucydides as a source on Themistocles might be learned from others: compare Cicero, *Brutus* 42, where Atticus make a very similar point. But it does not seem particularly likely. However, direct recourse to historians does not prove that there were no possible biographical sources;

(15) cf. DIONISOTTI [n. 4], p. 44 on the story of the erased Delphic dedication.

and there is no telling what Nepos prefers Thucydides (*nonnulli*).

The nearest thing to what Xenophon's *Agésilas* in Ag form of Xenophon's piece exemplary episodes, of more a degree, found in *Atticus* information either. He did of Athena (Minerva); more in 6, 2 is not in Xenophon's *Agésilas* 32) and, although Xenophon, the version and 36). Nepos notes that *ceteri* praised Agésilas — so the expect. Theoretically Nepos an intermediate source which Xenophonic with other material contamination for himself and that, even where a 'biographer' swallow it whole. Of course might be treated differently Xenophon — but it may well of Nepos' antecedents from general point: the reference *Generals*. But is this due to one being of exceptional length on the outstanding quality philosophical connections (*est*), the latter option is perhaps does not preclude the existence of biographical compendia imitating the genre and not

4. The relationship with others in that all of them are entered is set immediately by *Militia* a colony to Chersonese is as in Herodotus, but rather *generis et gloria maiorum esset aetate ut non iam so possent sui, talem eum futu*

Foreign Generals, which is longer than any Greek supposedly working to finish his book on foreign in a work *περὶ ἐνδόξων* composed Nepos found opened because the closest and therefore provided no at an average of about intentional length; but the size of *Foreign Generals* and the number of antecedent models, wanted. He was prepared we are in no position to eccentric he considered

All us much about Nepos' ask about his sources of additional speculation about the Xenophontic tradition never one should at least formation are named and *Alcibiades* 2, 2), these are 1; 10, 4; *Alcibiades* 11, Iphicrates 3, 2), Timaeus Silenus, Sosylus, Sulpicius Nepos worked directly with it in Pausanias is for the and includes passages which it (not always accurately). at 2, 6 and the misplacing e not Thucydidean; and rial (15). The combination e to an intermediary; and mistocles might be learned ticus make a very similar owever, direct recourse to ble biographical sources;

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and there is no telling what types of sources are involved in cases where Nepos prefers Thucydides or Dinon to anonymous alternatives (*plerisque; nonnulli*).

The nearest thing to quotation of a biographic source is the reference to Xenophon's *Agésilau*s in *Agésilau*s 1. Nepos does not reproduce the distinctive form of Xenophon's piece (narrative followed by topical discussion, with exemplary episodes, of moral and other qualities — the format which is, in a degree, found in *Atticus*); and Xenophon is not the only source of information either. He did not reveal that the temple at Coronea (4, 6) was of Athena (Minerva); more substantially the story about Spartan deserters in 6, 2 is not in Xenophon (cf. rather, if somewhat distantly, Plutarch, *Agésilau*s 32) and, although Agésilau's final 'campaign' in Egypt appears in Xenophon, the version and details in 8, 2 do not (again cf. Plutarch, *Agésilau*s 36). Nepos notes that *ceteri scriptores* had also, though less outstandingly, praised Agésilau — so the mixed end result is, after all, only what one should expect. Theoretically Nepos could be reproducing fairly exactly a lost intermediate source which had already carried out the 'contamination' of Xenophontic with other material. It seems more likely that he has done the contamination for himself and that we thus have some warrant for believing that, even where a 'biographic' source might be available, Nepos would not swallow it whole. Of course, sources of less status than Xenophon's Agésilau might be treated differently — one could not get away with simply plagiarising Xenophon — but it may well be in principle impossible to deduce the nature of Nepos' antecedents from the *Lives* in front of us. There is also a more general point: the reference to Xenophon's work is exceptional within *Foreign Generals*. But is this due to such a work being exceptional or to this particular one being of exceptional literary standing? Since Nepos actually comments on the outstanding quality of Xenophon's encomium and adverts to his philosophical connections (*tum eximie a Xenophonte Socratico collaudatus est*), the latter option is perhaps the more economical one; and Nepos' silence does not preclude the existence of e.g. more banale *Lives* within the context of biographical compendia — especially if Nepos were in any case only imitating the genre and not 'copying' particular examples.

4. The relationship with encomium. — All the *Lives* are related to encomium in that all of them are engaged in making evaluative comments. The tone is set immediately by *Miltiades* 1, If where the hero's selection as leader of a colony to Chersonese is not a matter of chance and political opportunism as in Herodotus, but rather placed in a laudatory context: *cum et antiquitate generis et gloria maiorum et sua modestia unus omnium maxime floreret eaque esset aetate ut non iam solum de eo bene sperare, sed etiam confidere ciues possent sui, talem eum futurum qualem cognitum iudicarunt....* In fact almost

all *Lives* start either with a moralising generalisation about the hero or some relevant topic (*Themistocles, Pausanias, Lysander, Alcibiades, Thrasybulus, Iphicrates, Chabrias, Timotheus, Eumenes, Phocion, Timoleon, Hannibal*) or with a 'narrative' opening which nonetheless always contains an initial evaluative comment (*Miltiades, Aristides, Cimon, Conon, Dion, Datames, Hamilcar*). The exceptions are *Epaminondas* and *Pelopidas* with their programmatic statements — and they are in themselves means of underlining the Nepos' valuation of the subjects.

The relentlessly judgmental approach of the *Lives* might suggest that the literary background is closely connected with encomium. Further reflection enjoins caution.

(a) If the immediate literary background were closely bound up with production of formal rhetorical encomia we might expect to find examples not only of *laudatio* but also of *uituperatio*. But we do not. Nepos avoids subjects who are real rogues (he does not, for example, produce a life of Chares, whom he clearly found distasteful — cf. *Chabrias* 3, 4); but he also does not take the opportunity provided by the dubious characters he does include. His Pausanias and Lysander are certainly not defended, but they are not energetically denounced either. The distress occasioned by Dion or Phocion is kept within bounds. In dealing with Alcibiades he consistently shifts us towards a favourable view, without explicitly expressing one. (Alcibiades is patriotic; fears of him as would-be tyrant are not endorsed as reasonable; he tries to operate as one of a number of colleagues not an autocrat; he is a victim of other people's reactions to his virtues not of his own vices; he pursued homosexual liaisons *delicate iocoseque* and did not have a sexual relationship with Socrates; an aptitude for self-indulgence only appeared in particular propitious circumstances.) In the light of this it seems likely that Nepos' relation to existing (or for that matter future) pieces of epideictic praise and blame of individuals is at best tangential — in family terms, a matter of cousins, not brothers or fathers and sons. We will come back to this in a different connection later.

(b) Several *Lives* include summary lists of (some of) their subjects' virtues. Eumenes is credited with *cura, uigilantia, patientia, calliditas*, and *celeritas* and all are exemplified in the body of the *Life*. In the case of Alcibiades, too, one can roughly match all the listed virtues with some incident or comment later in the *Life*, but one begins to have a vague sense of unease, as though one is seeing connections that Nepos had not; and in other cases there tends to be at least one virtue found in the list but not exemplified in the *Life* ⁽¹⁶⁾.

(16) (a) Cimon: virtues = eloquence, *liberalitas, prudentia* in civil law and in military matters. There is plenty on liberality (4, 1-4); and 2, 2-5 deals with military victories. But the others are unrepresented. (b) Dion: at the least *magnam corporis dignitatem* is not further mentioned; the other matters, *ingenium docile, come, aptum ad optimas*

These may be cases in which Nepos himself from whom he would not include the subject once again, it does not follow that Nepos himself (*Alcibiades*) (though they agreed in their characterisation of Iphicrates' evaluation and the assignment of Greek historians from a list of *Generals* could be explained in biographical or encomiastic terms.

(c) If all *Lives* are in fact homogeneous. Quite apart from variations of type, some are

In the latter class, and to the degree that encomium does something like this in the mere narrative (a thing which in some cases) will tend to make them have different effects (with a *Life* which is less deliberate than the features of *Thrasybulus*: the civil war of 404 BC) — the treatment, as the Phocion is less encomiastic than one is about *Fortuna*; an extra-ordinary discussion of Thrasybulus' poetic turn of phrase in 2, *libertatis clarissimae ciuitatis* amalgamating statements with the adjacent life of Conon all of an encomium: but here, viz. that the gross deviation from central matters (the Cypric episode) is one of the likes of Isocrates

artes are rather vague — that from Plutarch's *Dion* and his willingness to let Dion appear *neque minus [peritus] ciuitatis* which follows. (d) Epaminondas, *fortis manu, adeo uelut* described as both quite specific

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ctions to his virtues not of his
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aptitude for self-indulgence only
es.) In the light of this it seems
r that matter future) pieces of
at best tangential — in family
athers and sons. We will come

(some of) their subjects' virtues.
patientia, calliditas, and celeritas
Life. In the case of Alcibiades,
s with some incident or comment
ague sense of unease, as though
; and in other cases there tends
not exemplified in the *Life* ⁽¹⁶⁾.

prudentia in civil law and in military
2, 2-5 deals with military victories.
least *magnam corporis dignitatem*
um docile, come, aptum ad optimas

These may be cases in which the unexemplified virtues are not deduced by Nepos himself from his reading of primary sources — for if they were would he not include the material which led him to deduce the virtue? But, once again, it does not follow that his immediate background is encomium. Nepos himself (*Alcibiades* 11) calls Theopompus and Timaeus *maledicentissimi* (though they agreed in praising Alcibiades) and quotes Theopompus for characterisation of Iphicrates; and there is good evidence for character evaluation and the assignment of praise and blame as prominent features of Greek historians from at least Ephorus onwards. The phenomena in *Foreign Generals* could be explained in terms of historiographical sources as well as biographical or encomiastic ones.

(c) If all *Lives* are in some sense evaluative, they are certainly not homogeneous. Quite apart from variation in length (cf. B 2) there are notable variations of type, some subtle, others more gross.

In the latter class, and among shorter lives, *Thrasybulus* stands out in the degree that encomium dominates the design of the *Life*. One might expect something like this in the shorter lives: reduction in the space devoted to mere narrative (a thing which distinguishes [most] longer lives from the shorter ones) will tend to make the evaluative commentary bulk larger. But this can have different effects (witness *Pelopidas*), and even e.g. Aristides generates a *Life* which is less deliberately encomiastic. I note specially the following features of *Thrasybulus*: it is heavily focussed on one episode (the Athenian civil war of 404 BC) — not that that in itself produces strong encomiastic treatment, as the Phocion shows, a *Life* dominated by one episode but much less encomiastic than one might expect; it opens with a fairly elaborate piece about *Fortuna*; an extraneous anecdote about Pittacus is used to decorate discussion of Thrasybulus' reward for services to Athens; there is an almost poetic turn of phrase in 2, 1 (*hoc initium fuit salutis Actaeorum, hoc robur libertatis clarissimae ciuitatis*); and there is a strong tendency towards amalgamating statements of fact and encomiastic evaluation of them. The adjacent life of Conon also strikes me as more than usually in the manner of an encomium: but here the reason, and the literary effect, are different, viz. that the gross deviations from historical accuracy, wayward omission of central matters (the Cypriot exile for example) and odd chronology all remind one of the likes of Isocrates.

artes are rather vague — though *come* sounds nicer than the impression one gets from Plutarch's *Dion* and nicer than one expects in the light of Nepos' general willingness to let Dion appear in a relatively bad light. (c) Timotheus: the judgment *neque minus [peritus] ciuitatis regendae* does not have any correlate in the information which follows. (d) Epaminondas: of the list at 3, 1-3 at least *temporibus sapienter utens, fortis manu, adeo ueritatis diligens ut ne ioco quidem mentiretur* could be described as both quite specific and unexemplified.

More subtle variation among shorter *Lives* is shown by *Iphicrates*, *Chabrias* and *Timotheus* in the middle of the collection. Nepos himself makes these a group by his comment in *Timotheus* 4, 4: *haec extrema fuit aetas imperatorum Atheniensium, Iphicratis, Chabriae, Timothei, neque post illorum obitum quisquam dux in illa fuit urbe dignus memoria* and the attentive reader notices various parallels and variations. They are of similar but increasing length. All give very abbreviated accounts of the subject's career (in the *Chabrias* some twenty years are missing and the epochal victory at Naxos totally ignored), but whereas *Iphicrates* deals with no incident at length, *Chabrias* and *Timotheus* devote space respectively to the subject's death and his political downfall. The three subjects have different relations to Nepos' favourite theme of popular *invidia* towards leading men: *Iphicrates* escapes it altogether, dying *placatis in se suorum civium animis*, after acquittal in his one trial; *Chabrias* escapes *invidia*, but only by living abroad as much as possible (*Chabrias* 3, 3, a passage which draws attention to the general theme as well as commenting on *Chabrias*' case); and *Timotheus* falls victim to a *populus acer, suspicax ob eamque rem mobilis, aduersarius, inuidus* (3, 5). All three *Lives* are (like all the *Lives*) engaged in evaluating the subjects, not simply describing them, though they are only moderately encomiastic. *Iphicrates* and *Chabrias* both start by highlighting a particularly famous invention (respectively a new form of armament and a defence-tactic). It was perhaps hard to claim a precisely similar achievement for *Timotheus*, but the general structure of his *Life* could have been assimilated to that of the other two by opening with the battle of Alyzeia and the Peace of 375 which (in Nepos' view) represented the high point of *Timotheus*' achievement. (There is even a statue involved as in the case of *Chabrias*' invention.) But Nepos avoids such parallelism and, although the most important achievement appears, as in *Iphicrates* and *Chabrias*, out of chronological order, this time it is moved forward to a point immediately before the end of *Timotheus*' career instead of being moved back to the opening of the *Life*. There is a similar elusive similarity between the final chapters of *Iphicrates* and *Timotheus*: both involve the subject's son, refer to a trial and offer a general characterisation which is then formally exemplified by reference to a particular event, but the details involved do not follow entirely parallel lines. Finally, in the *Timotheus* the event produced as an exemplum at the end of the *Life* is well out of chronological order: so, although the *Life* had not started by disobeying chronology, it does — unlike the other two — end by doing so. It is hard to be sure, but this pattern of near-similarity and divergence strikes me as deliberate. Nepos is not merely turning out a series of banal reference-book entries but (at least some of the time) manipulating things for literary effect.

Among the longer *Lives* the striking variation is that between *Epaminondas* and the rest. The majority of the long *Lives* consist of an essentially

chronological (if sometime of evaluative comment) chapter promises to give by surveying his birth and *res gestae*. The distinction the four categories is made *postremo*) create the impression of *res gestae*. But in the evaluation in 2, 1-5, and intellectual characteristics fashion, dealing in turn with (5, 1 — 6, 4), tolerance (5), noble death (9, 1-4). between the various topics as examples in 5-6 and 7-8 death does not come last lack of children (Leuctra war, and stressing that he was a leading power in the are treated seems fairly appropriate at the end. Some account version of the comment daughters, Leuctra and N juxtaposition of passages which also allows Nepos battles together. Moreover for the next *Life* — one version there is structural manipulation of consecutive items throughout *Epaminondas* 3, where Nepos explains in winter 379/8 was due to result can only be called whole of *Foreign Generals* long passage structured accordingly has already been a 'narrative

Even so one cannot particular set of rules for literary stable as encomiastic the stress on education and *bona* (3, 1) are recognisably reflects nicely the slightly

chronological (if sometimes lacunose) narrative decorated with varying amounts of evaluative commentary. *Epaminondas* is quite different. The opening chapter promises to give a full report on the subject's *consuetudo* and *uita* by surveying his birth and family, education, *mores ingenique facultates* and *res gestae*. The distinction between the last two and the fact that the list of the four categories is marked by temporal particles (*primum, deinde, tum, postremo*) create the impression that there will be a narrative section (the *res gestae*). But in the event no such thing appears. Instead, after family and education in 2, 1-5, and a summary of Epaminondas' notable moral and intellectual characteristics in 3, 1-3, the text is organised in a strictly topical fashion, dealing in turn with his poverty (3, 4-6), *abstinentia* (4, 1-6), eloquence (5, 1 — 6, 4), tolerance of the injuries done by fellow-citizens (7, 1 — 8, 5), noble death (9, 1-4). There is no maintenance of chronological order as between the various topics or even within any one topic (the episodes adduced as examples in 5-6 and 7-8 are not in chronological order). Even Epaminondas' death does not come last, since it is followed by a chapter dealing with his lack of children (Leuctra was his true immortal progeny) and hatred of civil war, and stressing that his career was the only period within which Thebes was a leading power in the Greek world. Overall the order in which topics are treated seems fairly arbitrary. But there is some deliberate manipulation at the end. Some accounts of the death of Epaminondas include a different version of the comment in 10, 2, to the effect that he died leaving two daughters, Leuctra and Mantinea; this hidden connection accounts for the juxtaposition of passages on Mantinea and on childlessness, a juxtaposition which also allows Nepos to draw attention to both of Epaminondas' 'great' battles together. Moreover the prominence of Pelopidas in chap. 10 prepares for the next *Life* — one very far removed in style from that of Epaminondas; there is structural manipulation here too and a more subtle interconnection of consecutive items than in e.g. *Aristides* 1, 1 or *Chabrias* 1, 1. The tone throughout *Epaminondas* is encomiastic, and sometimes apologetic (e.g. 10, 3, where Nepos explains that his failure to assist in the Liberation of Thebes in winter 379/8 was due to a moral aversion from civil war); and the overall result can only be called by far the most encomium-like composition in the whole of *Foreign Generals*. One has to look to *Atticus* 13-18 for a comparably long passage structured according to character traits — and in that case there has already been a 'narrative' section.

Even so one cannot quite mechanically match *Epaminondas* to any particular set of rules for epideictic encomium. It is certainly from the same literary stable as encomia envisaged in a whole series of rhetorical handbooks; the stress on education and the distinction between *corporis firmitas* and *animi bona* (3, 1) are recognisable, and the misleading comment about *res gestae* reflects nicely the slightly ambiguous position of *res* or *πράξεις* in such texts.

But many theoreticians would have felt that the traditional canon of four virtues (justice, temperance, courage, wisdom) played too small a role.

One reason for lack of homogeneity in *Foreign Generals* is undoubtedly desire for literary *uariatio*. But why should it be precisely *Epaminondas* which gets such extravagantly different treatment? It can hardly be irrelevant that *Epaminondas* is among the figures whom Cicero mentions as subjects of encomiastic treatment in the rhetorical tradition (*De oratore* II, 341; in *De finibus* II, 116 he is replaced by Cyrus). It is also significant that Cicero put a very high value on *Epaminondas*. He is mentioned in *De finibus* II, 67 as a classic example of men who put achievement above pleasure (along with Miltiades, Solon, Lycurgus, Themistocles) and is described in *De oratore* III, 139 as *summus uir omnis Graeciae*, a judgment similar to that of *princeps Graeciae* passed in *Tusculans* I, 4 and *Academica* 2, 2 on Themistocles — the only Greek politician mentioned appreciably more often by Cicero. The two appear together in *Tusculans* I, 110 to exemplify military fame won at a particular battle (Salamis and Leuctra) and in a (relatively) personal — not to say immodest — passage in *Tusculans* I, 33, where Cicero observes that he himself, like Themistocles and *Epaminondas*, might have led a quiet a comfortable life had he not aspired to immortal fame. The degree to which Cicero was impressed by Leuctra is suggested by *Ad Atticum* VI, 1, 26 where he jokingly calls the affray in which P. Clodius was killed *Leuctrica pugna*. *Epaminondas*' trial (*apud Graecos peruulgata*) is used as subject matter to illustrate construction of argument in *De inuentione* I, 55f; and his death is a topic for literary pathos, like the flight of Themistocles into exile (*Ad familiares* V, 12, 5), comparable with the demise of Leonidas (*De finibus* II, 62; 97; *Tusculans* I, 117) or the Decii (*Tusculans* II, 59).

Mere prominence in the tradition of noble exempla does not dictate the nature of Nepos' *Epaminondas*, since his *Themistocles* is unaffected, as are the lives of Aristides and Agesilaus, the other two relevant encomium subjects in *De oratore* II, 341. (The tendency to regard Nepos' *Agesilaus* as an encomium in the same category as *Epaminondas* is quite unjustified.) Nonetheless, it may have been easier or more natural for Nepos to deal with *Epaminondas* as he did than it would have been in many other cases. Systematic, 'narrative' knowledge of fourth century mainland Greek history was probably even worse than that of the fifth century and Nepos, who makes such a fuss about the historical setting of the liberation of Thebes in *Pelopidas* Iff, might have been readily tempted to save the trouble of working out an orderly account of *Epaminondas*' *res gestae*, if a model in a different form happened to present itself. This is not to say that *Epaminondas* slavishly reproduces some particular encomium used as 'source' (the encomia to which Cicero was referring were not necessarily documents which survived long anyway); the episodes it contains may come from various sources or represent

items recollected by Nepos in his texts over some period of time. The format of topical *laudatio* is a particular reason was about education, as required to recognise that other *Lives* of fame included philosophers like *oratore* III, 13; *Tusculans* I and Socrates. Be that as it may, to the procedures of encomiastic obvious subject to choose the general the *Lives*, or all were not made to conform to

But what does this tell us? Very little, I fear, since there are with several scenarios. On writing *Lives* of classical antiquity composed as a recollection of what existed, the prose encomium is original, except to the degree that *uiris illustribus* a literary *Epaminondas* can be seen as hard to see that one can

5. The Greek — Roman

(a) A feature of the tradition of this was a category whose members of greco-roman parallels were rich in important historical events but (simply) military leaders. Such subjects could be expected to be and the surviving Nepos' *Lives* with *duces* or *imperatores*.

But, *Foreign Generals* are not much elaborated. One may cite the extreme case of Dion and Timoleon to which in which *Epaminondas*, the direct treatment, despite the fame. Does this cast any light

A further question immediately arises: any more space to military

the traditional canon of four played too small a role.

Foreign Generals is undoubtedly precisely *Epaminondas* which can hardly be irrelevant that Cicero mentions as subjects of fame (in *De oratore* II, 341; in *De oratore* III, 13; *Tusculans* V, 100); and more could be said about Alcibiades and Socrates. Be that as it may, if one was going to do a *Life* which conformed to the procedures of encomiastic ἐπίδειξις, then *Epaminondas* was a fairly obvious subject to choose, and the end result serves to emphasize that in general the *Lives*, or all that they are concerned to praise their subjects, are not made to conform to such procedures.

But what does this tell us about the nature of Nepos' literary predecessors? Very little, I fear, since the oddity of *Epaminondas* is probably consistent with several scenarios. On the assumption that Nepos is being original in writing *Lives* of classical military leaders the *Epaminondas* could have been composed as a recollection of the only partly relevant genre that had previously existed, the prose encomium. But on the assumption that Nepos is not being original, except to the degree that he tries to confer on this part of the *De uiris illustribus* a literary interest absent in the Greek antecedents, the *Epaminondas* can be seen as one contribution to that literary interest. It is hard to see that one can tell on internal grounds which scenario is correct.

5. The Greek — Roman parallel

(a) A feature of the thesis that Nepos 'invented' political biography is that this was a category whose existence only occurred to anyone when the issue of greco-roman parallels presented itself. The idea is that, since Rome was rich in important historical figures who were not lawgivers, orators or kings but (simply) military leaders, an extension of the categories of biographical subjects could be expected under Roman influence and from a Roman author; and the surviving Nepos book and its Roman parallel were duly concerned with *duces* or *imperatores*.

5. The Greek — Roman parallel

But, *Foreign Generals* is notable for the way in which purely military details are not much elaborated — indeed sometimes quite startlingly unelaborated. One may cite the extreme neglect of the military operations which allowed Dion and Timoleon to overthrow Dionysius I and II, or the curious way in which *Epaminondas*, though mentioning Leuctra several times, avoids any direct treatment, despite the fact that it was central to his claim to special fame. Does this cast any light on the thesis of Nepos' originality?

A further question immediately presents itself: did Nepos actually devote any more space to military details in *Roman Generals*? It is an unanswerable

question since we know almost nothing about the subjects in that book. The only fairly clear cases are Marcellus (frr. 48-49), Lucullus (fr. 52) and Scipio Aemilianus (fr. 50). Fr. 51 refers to D. Brutus Callaicus — but only as the father-in-law of C. Gracchus (and the Gracchi were surely not counted as generals). Lucullus and Marcellus might reasonably have been treated as predominantly military lives. But this is hardly true of Aemilianus; and what about e.g. Marius or Sulla or Pompey or Antony — prominent fighters of wars, and not only of civil wars⁽¹⁷⁾: were their political roles suppressed or were they actually omitted altogether lest they spoil the purity of the category of Roman *imperator*?

Whatever the answer, though, the underplaying of military details in *Foreign Generals* remains. If Nepos worked without definitive biographical models and from historians as sources there was nothing to stop him biasing *Foreign Generals* as much towards military details as he wanted. Why introduce a pronounced bias towards the theme of general-as-political-figure in the Greek lives if it was not required by the Roman parallel? Why have a *Life* of Phocion who is openly admitted not to have been notable as a general, is not portrayed as admirable and who is not the subject of a proper *Life* anyway, since everything is neglected save the very final episodes of his long existence. More appropriate Greek generals could have been found (e.g. Brasidas) if it was just a question of numbers. So either the result is as we find it because that is what Nepos wanted or we must assume that there was a pre-existing genre of lives of the sort of leaders who figure in Nepos and that this has affected the nature of his work. Pursuing the second option, there are then two possibilities. (i) Although this genre's terms of reference were different from those Nepos actually required, he allowed himself to be influenced into privileging non-military details when working through the historical sources for himself. (ii) Nepos used as his direct sources actual examples of the genre which provided the historical material ready-selected according to criteria which did not suit his requirements. The second scenario provides saving of labour to compensate for the unsuitability of the material being used, whereas the first means that Nepos was both industrious and weak-willed enough to allow his industry to be misdirected, so the second may seem the more probable. But it is a scenario which requires us to postulate lost Greek lives quite similar in size and scope to those of Nepos. If this strains what can reasonably be deduced from the external evidence, second thoughts may take one back to scenario (i) — or to a compromise in which brief Greek lives exist and Nepos exploited them as a sort of template for (sometimes) more extensive compositions in which historical sources are used to fill out the

(17) On Antony cf. J. GEIGER, *An overlooked item in the War of Propaganda between Octavian and Antony* in *Historia* 29, 1980, p. 112-14.

bare structure provided by 'improving' on the model was allowing their disinterest, so, this is not a very satisfactory, and most natural, the battle of Marathon into

Perhaps after all it is *imperatores* was more like original assumption (that leaves open the possibility existing Greek genre which leaders in the manner exemplified is Nepos' idea, and that selection of generals (because also interest in them as a Generation of the Republic too). In short, no particular in which we are interested.

A further point may be historians are notable for as historians. Geiger argued facts: someone like Cato as well as historian — so. Such an explanation hardly cannot deduce from the other of *Lives* of historians. Why historian is precisely not try to provide facts about claim that something like the biographer were saying but what else should you the bias against military arises and is inherently unlikely.

(b) Another feature of invitations to see analogies. The texts in question relate defence of liberty and the authorities; the latter two passages suggests concerns add that only three *Lives* on either *fortuna* or *invidia* it would be fair to describe

subjects in that book. The Lucullus (fr. 52) and Scipio Aemilianus — but only as the general — were surely not counted as political figures; they may only have been treated as political figures because they were prominent fighters of political roles suppressed by the spoils of the

military details in *Foreign Lives*. The comparative biographical models do not stop him biasing *Foreign Lives* as he wanted. Why introduce a political-figure in the Greek *Life*? Why have a *Life* of Phocion a general, is not portrayed as a proper *Life* anyway, since he lived for his long existence. More examples (e.g. Brasidas) if it was as we find it because that there was a pre-existing genre and that this has affected the tradition, there are then two genres were different from each other to be influenced into the historical sources through the usual examples of the genre selected according to criteria. The scenario provides saving of material being used, whereas the weak-willed enough to find and may seem the more postulate lost Greek lives. If this strains what can be said second thoughts may take place in which brief Greek lives are late for (sometimes) more material are used to fill out the

bare structure provided by the model. In this way, in the enthusiasm of 'improving' on the models, Nepos may not have properly noticed that he was allowing their disinterest in military details to affect his end-result. Even so, this is not a very satisfactory account: surely it would have been the easiest, and most natural, thing in the world to insert more details of e.g. the battle of Marathon into a model *Miltiades* of the sort we are envisaging?

Perhaps after all it is easier to assume that the treatment of Roman *imperatores* was more like that of the foreign ones. But that undermines the original assumption (that Roman *imperatores* were distinctively military) and leaves open the possibilities either that it was the characteristics of a pre-existing Greek genre which inclined Nepos to treat both Greek and Roman leaders in the manner exemplified in *Foreign Generals* or that the whole thing is Nepos' idea, and that what the Roman material dictated was not only a selection of generals (because Rome was good at producing generals) but also interest in them as political figures (because, particularly in the Last Generation of the Republic, Roman experience made that seem important too). In short, no particular conclusion can be drawn on the basic question in which we are interested.

A further point may be made. The two surviving Nepos *Lives* of Roman historians are notable for the small amount they say about Cato and Atticus as historians. Geiger argues that this was a consequence of Roman social facts: someone like Cato fell into several categories — orator and general as well as historian — so there were other things to be said about them. Such an explanation hardly seems to apply to Atticus, but in any case we cannot deduce from the observed phenomenon that there was no Greek genre of *Lives* of historians. What we might say is that the point of a *Life* of an historian is precisely not to talk about his historical works at length but to try to provide facts about the author external to his writings. We might even claim that something like this principle applies to generals as well — as though the biographer were saying, "You have heard of Epaminondas and Leuctra; but what else should you know about him?" If there is any truth in this, the bias against military detail is a natural development whenever the genre arises and is inherently unhelpful on the question of Nepos' originality.

(b) Another feature of the Greek / Roman parallel is Nepos' explicit invitations to see analogies or contrasts with contemporary political situations. The texts in question relate to excessive adulation of individuals, inadequate defence of liberty and the failure of soldiers and generals to obey the proper authorities; the latter two are, moreover, themes which a wider range of passages suggests concerned Nepos particularly (cf. Dionisotti [n. 4]). One may add that only three *Lives* (*Aristides*, *Agésilas* and *Iphicrates*) fail to touch on either *fortuna* or *invidia* or both: there is a conceptual area here which it would be fair to describe as a preoccupation of Nepos — a preoccupation

which could be seen as prompted by the instability and unpredictability of a civil war generation. (There is after all more than a little of this in the *Atticus*). But in the end these phenomena demonstrate that Nepos has a personal engagement with his subject beyond that of a mere encyclopedist and may be developing the sub-genre in which he is working, rather than that he has invented that sub-genre.

6. Educational functions. — Put simply, what the *Foreign Generals* does is offer quite large amounts of factual information (accurate or otherwise) and evaluative commentary (in one case, *Epaminondas*, in a quasi-formal encomium) — material for those of a judgmental frame of mind, or with judgmental purposes in view, *historia* plus *uirtutes*. Among those who had such a use for history were rhetoricians. The practical *progymnasmata* of the rhetoric school included historical narrative⁽¹⁸⁾, encomium or vituperation (cf. Suetonius, *De rhetoribus* 1), and other types of composition located in a historical context or within which historical exempla could be used. The same goes for more advanced declamations, and even for rhetorical productions designed for the 'real' world. Reading of historians was characteristically undertaken at the rhetoric school; and several passages in Cicero and Quintilian assert the importance of history for the orator: *tenenda ... est omnis antiquitas exemplorumque uis* (*De oratore* 1, 18); the orator must have *monumenta rerum gestarum et uetustatis exempla* (1, 201) or *rerum gestarum et memoriae ueteris ordinem* (*Orator* 120) or *res exempla* — which are to be had from historians (Quintilian X, 1, 34), though also poets and general conversation (XII, 4, 1). The reading lists presupposed in Theon, Cicero and Quintilian duly included historians. The assumption is that pupils will derive appropriate historical knowledge from reading such authors.

The view was expressed by Ronald Syme that Nepos' *De uiris illustribus* was a school-book⁽¹⁹⁾, and — particularly when it was a question of training Latin-speaking pupils — one can see that *Foreign Generals* could conveniently provide a lot of the material on Greek history any pupil would actually need, while dispensing with a great deal of reading of Greek authors. The situation might even be compared with that of a larger work in production in Rome slightly before Nepos' *De uiris illustribus* — the *Historical Library* of Diodorus, a work designed (i) to comprehend Greek and Roman History, (ii) to reduce the number of (disparate) books one had to read to get a picture of the whole of History and (iii) by virtue of such completeness to include an exceptionally large number of exempla (1, 3, 2). Elizabeth Rawson (*Intellectual Life in Republican Rome*, London, 1985) mentions the enterprise alongside

Nepos' *Chronica*, but *De uiris illustribus* is arguably all that can then be made: the value of Greek history would be in the Greek military leaders did. Moreover one can see that orators or other cultural adjunct to the reading might also attract treatises (Philip) or close associations. But the historians, like it in its own right, so there is it unnecessary, and there I have two worries about

1. The views about the theoretically implied by the contrast the view espoused (generally) wide cultural effect at speaking and (particularly) have a temporary effect essentially for pleasure — it might draw to one's attention (Dionisotti doubts whether would have included reading generally, one can realise almost anywhere. Greek only read historians for the digests of that content: of particular individuals.

2. The whole conceptual educational rhetoric involved scale of *Foreign Generals*. Greek historical material. This is a matter which it is some facts. (i) A quick check only eleven of Nepos' G

(18) S. F. BONNER, *Education in Ancient Rome*, London, 1977, p. 261.

(19) R. SYME, *Sallust*, Berkeley, 1964, p. 235.

(20) C. DIONISOTTI [n. 4].

(21) Themistocles: *De re publica* fin. II, 67; 104; 116; *TD* 71; III, 49; *Br.* 28; 41f; *D. Scatur.* 3; 141; *Ad fam.* V,

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Nepos' *Chronica*, but a general comparison with *Exempla* and *De uiris illustribus* is arguably also in order. Be that as it may, a further point could then be made: the value of Nepos' work as a concise source for classical Greek history would be particularly great if convenient accounts of the famous Greek military leaders did not exist in compendious publications even in Greek. Moreover one can see why they might not exist in Greek. Lives of poets or orators or other cultural figures were needed, or at least prompted, as an adjunct to the reading of literature; and certain sorts of political figure might also attract treatment because of overwhelming stature (Alexander, Philip) or close association with cultural figures (Alcibiades, Dionysius, Dion). But the historians, like the orators, were part of what was being studied in its own right, so there was no need to think of ways to render reading of it unnecessary, and therefore no motive to 'extract' Lives of political leaders.

I have two worries about such a line of argument.

1. The views about the importance of historical texts held by Cicero and theoretically implied by the various reading lists were not universal: one may contrast the view espoused in *De oratore* by Antonius (I, 157f; II, 59), that (generally) wide cultural education is less important to the orator than practice at speaking and (particularly) the reading of history is something which may have a temporary effect on one's rhetorical style but which is undertaken essentially for pleasure — and with no hint at the rhetorical exempla which it might draw to one's attention. Is this just a Roman view? I suspect not. (Dionisotti doubts whether training with Cicero's teacher, Apollonius Molon, would have included reading of historians, and she may be right⁽²⁰⁾). More generally, one can realistically expect to encounter educational short-cuts almost anywhere. Greek rhetoricians who shared Quintilian's view that one only read historians for their content might not necessarily have frowned upon digests of that content: one might even imagine *florilegia* of passages about particular individuals.

2. The whole conception of the use of historical exempla or situations in educational rhetoric involves a disproportion between even something on the scale of *Foreign Generals* and the amount of demonstrable use of classical Greek historical material in Latin rhetoric (and perhaps Greek rhetoric too). This is a matter which it is hard to pass judgment about. But one can register some facts. (i) A quick check suggests that, in the whole Ciceronian corpus, only eleven of Nepos' Greek subjects are mentioned⁽²¹⁾. Eighteen further

(20) C. DIONISOTTI [n. 4], p. 37.

(21) Themistocles: *De rep.* I, 5; *De amicit.* 42; *De sen.* 8; 21; *Acad.* 2, 2; *De fin.* II, 67; 104; 116; *TD* I, 4; 33; 110, IV, 44; 55; *De off.* I, 75; 108; II, 16; 71; III, 49; *Br.* 28; 41f; *De orat.* II, 299; 341; 351; III, 59; *Pro Arch.* 20; *Pro Scaur.* 3; 141; *Ad fam.* V, 12, 5; V, 12, 7; *Ad Au.* VII, 11, 3; IX, 10, 3; X, 8,

individuals of similar category also appear, but only Pericles does so in more than three passages (the figure is nearly 20) (22). Of the Nepos subjects only Themistocles and Epaminondas appear more (and a lot more) than six times. Almost without exception the passages involved are in philosophical or rhetorical works: one did not normally use Greek historical examples when addressing the people or lawcourts or Senate. Quite often one can see that the individuals in question have entered Cicero's consciousness via philosophical, oratorical or literary connections rather than through historical or subhistorical writings. (ii) A rapid survey of Senecan and Quintilianic *declamationes*, of other information (particularly in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*) about declamations with historical subjects and of the precepts of Theon and Hermogenes leave one with a similar feeling: few classical Greek political figures of the sort we are interested in appear in any of these texts, and there is an understandable but still startling willingness to indulge in historical fiction which does not require *recherché* topics on which to exercise itself and perhaps even delight in using banale ones (23). One cannot resist

the sensation that even indeed belongs in a diff wider explanation.

It is, of course, poss of supposed practical us and get out of proporti seen by Maslakoff as th also be said to exceed at is that Valerius Maxim general educational and well surviving evidence whole list of declamation to tyranny) which cou knowledge — though, p there more declamation sort than we may imag the historical exemplum (Unfortunately, Cicero's *controversia*-style proced no Greek historical exet of Roman ones). Is it Cicero than that only records of Seneca or th anodyne impression of a

4 and 7; *Ad Brut.* 24, 11. Epaminondas: *De fin.* II, 62; 67; 97; *De orat.* I, 211; II, 341; III, 137f; 139; *TD* I, 4; 33; 110; 117; II, 59; V, 49; *De off.* I, 84; 155; *Br.* 50; *De inv.* I, 55-56; 68-69; *Ad fam.* V, 12, 5. (Note also references to Leuctra: *De diu.* I, 74-5; *De off.* I, 61, II, 26; *Ad Att.* VI, 1, 26.) Aristides: *De off.* III, 49; 87; *De sen.* 21; *De fin.* II, 116; *De orat.* II, 341; *TD* V, 105; *Pro Scaur.* 141. Agesilaus: *De orat.* II, 341; III, 137; *De off.* II, 16; *De fin.* II, 116; *Ad Q. fr.* I, 2, 7; *Ad fam.* V, 12, 7. Alcibiades: *TD* III, 77; *De fato* 10; *De orat.* II, 93; 137; *Br.* 29; *Ad Att.* VI, 1, 18. Miltiades: *De fin.* II, 67; *De rep.* I, 5; *TD* IV, 44; *Pro Scaur.* 141. Lysander: *De off.* I, 76; 109; *De div.* I, 96; *De sen.* 59; 63. Dion: *De orat.* III, 137; *TD* V, 100; *De off.* I, 155. Timotheus: *TD* V, 00; *De off.* I, 116; *De orat.* III, 137f. Pausanias: *Top.* 75; *De off.* I, 76. Thrasybulus: *Ad Att.* VIII, 3, 6.

(22) Pericles: *De orat.* I, 216; II, 93; III, 59; 71; 137; *De off.* I, 108; 144; II, 16; 60; *De fin.* V, 5; *De rep.* I, 25, IV, 11; *Br.* 27; 44; 119; *Or.* 15; 29; *Ad Att.* VII, 11, 3. Theramenes: *Br.* 29; *TD* I, 96; 100. Cleisthenes: *De rep.* II, 2; *De leg.* II, 41; *Br.* 29. Callicratidas: *De off.* I, 84; 109. Critias: *Br.* 29; *TD* I, 96. Cleon: *De rep.* IV, 11; *Br.* 28. Cyrillus: *De off.* III, 48. Laches: *De diu.* I, 123. Harmodius and Aristogeiton: *TD* I, 116. Cleophon and Hyperbolus: *De rep.* IV, 11. Cylon: *De leg.* II, 28. Leonidas: *De fin.* II, 62; 97; *TD* I, 117. Cleomenes: *De off.* I, 33; *De Nat. Deor.* III, 25. Eurysthenes and Procles: *De diu.* II, 90. Cleombrotus: *De off.* I, 84.

(23) Nepos' subjects. Alcibiades: Hermog. 17; 159; 192; 193; Cimon: *Decl. Mai.* 6, 21; Sen., *Cont.* IX, 1, 1 (cf. *Decl.* p. 191.29 Ritter). Aristides: Sen., *Cont.* II, 1, 18; Hermog. 136. Themistocles: Theon 114; Hermog. 216; 252. Iphicrates: Sen., *Cont.* VI, 5; *Decl. min.* no. 386. Epaminondas: Theon 103f. Miltiades: Sen., *Cont.* IX, 1, 1. Other subjects. Pericles: Theon 111; Hermog. 17; 164; 179; 134; 148; 150; 213; 216; 258; 259; 392. Antiphon: Sen., *Cont.* II, 1, 33. Archidamus: Hermog. 134. Callimachus: Sen., *Cont.* IX, 1, 2. Cleon: Hermog. 136; 164; 234. Critias: Hermog. 136; 415-6. Cynegirus: Sen., *Cont.* IX, 1, 2; *Suas.* V, 2. (cf. S. F. BONNER,

Lucan and the Declamat Aristogeiton: Theon 93; X, 5, 18. Leonidas: Sen., Nicias: Hermog. 136. Oth I, 18. Polyzelus: Sen., *Suas.* (24) G. MASLAKOFF, *Val* 1984, p. 437-96.

(25) Even so the range of restricted. Nepos' subjects Pausanias, Themistocles, Th Leonidas, Pericles, Theop except Themistocles (8) and (26) cf. A. LUMPE, *Exer* work see now W. M. BLO *Nobility*, London, 1992. H they may have included m (p. 12; p. 254f), in which c — The text's organisation (and for that matter other c

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7; 97; *De orat.* I, 211;
49; *De off.* I, 84; 155;
so references to Leuctra:
Aristides: *De off.* III,
V, 105; *Pro Scaur.* 141.
fin. II, 116; *Ad Q.fr.* I,
D; *De orat.* II, 93; 137;
rep. I, 5; *TD* IV, 44;
; *De sen.* 59; 63. Dion:
; *TD* V, 00; *De off.* I,
5. Thrasybulus: *Ad Att.*

; *De off.* I, 108; 144;
; 119; *Or.* 15; 29; *Ad*
sthenes: *De rep.* II, 2;
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Laches: *De diu.* I, 123.
Hyperbolus: *De rep.* IV,
TD I, 117. Cleomenes:
rocles: *De diu.* II, 90.

93; Cimon: *Decl. Mai.*
ides: *Sen., Cont.* II, 1,
; 252. Iphicrates: *Sen.,*
Miltiades: *Sen., Cont.*
; 164; 179; 134; 148;
Archidamus: Hermog.
36; 164; 234. Critias:
V, 2. (cf. S. F. BONNER,

the sensation that even Nepos *Foreign Generals* vastly exceeds actual needs, indeed belongs in a different world of thought, and must have some other, wider explanation.

It is, of course, possible that one is being misled. For one thing works of supposed practical use can quite easily acquire a momentum of their own and get out of proportion: something like Valerius Maximus' *Exempla* (still seen by Maslakoff as the result of a rhetorician collecting *exempla* (24)) could also be said to exceed all practical needs (25). But perhaps the proper reaction is that Valerius Maximus served the needs both of rhetorical schools and general educational and entertainment reading (26). We may also wonder how well surviving evidence about declamation reflects reality. Cicero unreels a whole list of declamation topics in *Ad Atticum* IX, 4, 1f (all involving reactions to tyranny) which could have yielded great opportunities for historical knowledge — though, perhaps significantly, he unreels them in Greek. Was there more declamation on topics of a popular moralising / philosophizing sort than we may imagine — the type of material which could call forth the historical exemplum in the way that Cicero's philosophical treatises do? (Unfortunately, Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* which is explicitly applies *controversia*-style procedures to philosophical propositions actually contains no Greek historical exempla of the type we are interested in, though plenty of Roman ones). Is it more significant that 22 'political' figures appear in Cicero than that only three of them appear at all often? Do the written records of Seneca or the examples in the Quintilianic corpus give a falsely anodyne impression of actual declamation?

Lucan and the Declamation Schools in *AJP* 87, 1966, p. 281f.). Harmodius and Aristogeiton: Theon 93; Hermog. 136. Lasthenes: *Sen., Cont.* X, 5, 4; X, 5, 11; X, 5, 18. Leonidas: *Sen., Suas.* II, 11-12 & 14. Naucles of Plataea: Theon 90. Nicias: Hermog. 136. Othryades: *Sen., Suas.* II, 2 & 16. Phocion: *Sen., Cont.* II, 1, 18. Polyzelus: *Sen., Suas.* V, 2.

(24) G. MASLAKOFF, *Valerius Maximus and Roman Historiography* in *ANRW* 32.1, 1984, p. 437-96.

(25) Even so the range of persons in the category that interests us here is (familarly) restricted. Nepos' subjects: Alcibiades, Aristides, Dion, Epaminondas, Miltiades, Pausanias, Themistocles, Thrasybulus. Others: Callippus, Critias, Diomedon, Ephialtes, Leonidas, Pericles, Theopompus, Timagoras. None appears more than four times except Themistocles (8) and Pericles (7).

(26) cf. A. LUMPE, *Exemplum* in *RAC* vi, 1966, p. 1229-57, at p. 1239. On Valerius' work see now W. M. BLOOMER, *Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility*, London, 1992. He highlights declaimers as its audience, but suggests that they may have included many *arrivistes* from outside the traditional educated elite (p. 12; p. 254f), in which case there is a socio-cultural agenda of a more general sort. — The text's organisation by topical headings certainly makes it answer declaimers' (and for that matter other orators') practical needs more immediately.

Still, whatever the answer to these questions there is also a serious practical difficulty about the view that Nepos was writing a school text book. The envisaged purpose of supplying appropriate historical information and *exempla* (and doing so across the range of Greek and Roman history) would not be satisfactorily performed by a work which did not cover monarchs. Geiger is surely right that the cursory two pages *De regibus* between the Timoleon and Hamilcar rules out the possibility of there having been a whole book *De regibus* somewhere else in the collection. Yet Philip and (especially) Alexander were very important contributors to the store of historical exempla. Can one plausibly say that Nepos felt that such figures were adequately covered by some other publication — presumably the (Greek) sources in which *omnium res gestae separatim sunt relatae* (*De regibus* 1, 1)? Perhaps Nepos was targeting particular Greek authors for replacement. Such a policy would be a possible explanation of the gap between Cimon and Alcibiades (and the virtual suppression of events before 415 in the latter case): Nepos did not want to discourage the reading of Thucydides. The idea is tempting — but in the end it provides a poor reason for not writing a *Pericles*, when one considers how much of what e.g. Cicero thought interesting about Pericles is not in Thucydides. In any case one may wonder whether the Alexander historians were really authors deserving of such protection — though Clitarchus and Callisthenes do appear in Cicero and Quintilian's lists of historians, while figuring little in other sources on the historiographical 'canon'.

But the more one thinks about the more it seems evident that we should disagree with Syme and recognise in Nepos a purer scholarly, even historical, interest. (Dionisotti [n. 4], p. 35 also rejects the schoolbook explanation in passing.) He may be writing *vitae* not history, but he is also a *historicus*, engaged in recording *monumenta rerum gestarum* (*De oratore* 1, 201). *Foreign Generals* is more a reflection of having experienced an educational programme which drew attention to history (including non-Roman history) than a means of servicing such an educational programme. It represents another side of historical endeavour from the undoubtedly historical studies which led to the *Chronica*. The moralizing framework should primarily be compared with the moralizing of historians — something meant to have a direct impact on men's beliefs and behaviour rather than upon their supply of rhetorical examples. We see Cicero citing Greek historical exempla in just such a way in the privacy of letters to Atticus (VII, 11, 3; VIII, 3, 16; IX, 10, 3; X, 8, 7), just as he also rehearsed possible declamation topics (cf. above); and the emperor Augustus used to make collections of *exempla* with which to bombard private agents and public officials. It is worth stressing that this approach makes more sense of the contemporary political references, especially if (like Dionisotti [n. 4]) one feels that the overt references are accompanied by more numerous implicit ones; and it makes no less sense than the school-oriented

interpretation of the Thucydides. (2) are any Greek authors of Nepos, (2) might have a personality we can discern of Nysa. Of these Amphitruos — the identification is in history (*Hellenika*) and was son of a pupil of Aristotle whom he succeeded as he Poseidonius T40 Edelstein larship, historiography and

This observation brings *Foreign Generals*, but one would certainly have had knowledge of Greek history. Yet, while one can say that not previously been treated range to include them, that way.

Indecisiveness has been in the final conclusions.

Our discussion of the in some characteristics and but again and again leaves thesis, though some argument emerges it is the feeling that view of his achievement idea, the *Preface* could — for it!), but (b) that the life if only in a second edition author who, even if he had was being at least intermitted. There may well be a case in the sense of priority in

So far as external argument of demonstrating the existence of foreign generals; indeed the problem in connection with

interpretation of the Thucydides gap mentioned above. Moreover, if there are any Greek authors of *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν* literature who (1) predate Nepos, (2) might have written about politicians and (3) have a literary personality we can discern at all, they are Neanthes, Amphicrates and Jason of Nysa. Of these Amphicrates may have been an Athenian rhetor with a taste for extravagant metaphor (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 22; Ps.-Longinus 3, 2) — the identification is uncertain — but Neanthes certainly wrote political history (*Hellenika*) and was interested in the lives of philosophers, and Jason was son of a pupil of Aristarchus of Samothrace and grandson of Poseidonius, whom he succeeded as head of the school in Rhodes (Suda s.v. 'Ιάσων; Poseidonius T40 Edelstein) — backgrounds conjoining antiquarianism, scholarship, historiography and philosophy.

This observation brings us back to the question of Nepos' originality in *Foreign Generals*, but once again does not answer it. Nepos 'the historian' would certainly have had at least as good a motive for filling gaps in Roman knowledge of Greek history as Nepos the servant of the teachers of rhetoric. Yet, while one can say that, if the subjects present in *Foreign Generals* had not previously been treated, one can understand why Nepos extended the range to include them, this does not prove that he did extend the range in that way.

* *

Indecisiveness has been a key note of the argument and will predominate in the final conclusions.

Our discussion of the internal features of *Foreign Generals* has delineated some characteristics and indicated a 'historical' rather than school context, but again and again leaves one with no clear evidence for or against Geiger's thesis, though some arguments against him are ill-founded. If any trend emerges it is the feeling that (a) Nepos makes less claim to novelty than Geiger's view of his achievement would seem to justify (even if it was all Atticus' idea, the *Preface* could — indeed should — have started by thanking Atticus for it!), but (b) that the literary *uariatio* of the work and the inclusion (even if only in a second edition) of a figure as *recherché* as Datames disclose an author who, even if he had not invented a category of biographical subject, was being at least intermittently inventive in his production of examples of it. There may well be a case to be made for Nepos' originality (and not just in the sense of priority in Latin), even if it is less extreme than Geiger's.

So far as external arguments go, one must be impressed by the difficulty of demonstrating the existence of Hellenistic biography of people like Nepos' foreign generals; indeed I have been impressed by it since investigating the problem in connection with a paper on Plutarch's lost *Epaminondas* which

appeared the year before Geiger's monograph⁽²⁷⁾. If there were such *Lives* it seems rather likely that they appeared in the context of compendious works *περὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν*, not as free-standing compositions — precisely the type of source that would explain the succinct account of Epaminondas in Pausanias IX, 13-15 which I was concerned in 1984 to dissociate from Plutarch. But if we are going to accept that such compendious works provide a precedent for Nepos' *Foreign Generals*, we shall need to give some explanation of the fact that the direct evidence is so tenuous. Why is it so difficult to demonstrate the existence of *Lives* of Greek political figures who were not orators, lawgivers or monarchs — indeed so nearly impossible that the view that it is impossible becomes at least defensible? Students of ancient history are only too familiar with the depressing equivalent of Gresham's Law — that bad money drives out good — which means that we end up with not with e.g. Ephorus or Theopompus or the first-generation Alexander Historians but with the later works which used and 'replaced' them. Would we not expect that 'political' biographies of the sort we have been discussing would have played a role in such a process and be at least visible in the record (as other categories of *Lives* are), even if they were in turn denied survival by being supplanted by Nepos or (especially) Plutarch?

If an explanation is possible it must derive from special factors affecting the behaviour of the various classes of author who might be expected to supply testimonies or fragments of Greek 'political' biographies. Such works have a distinctive pair of characteristics compared with other biographies. First, they are highly and directly derivative from earlier historiographical works; they do not, therefore, represent a free-standing tradition in the way that *Lives* of philosophers or writers do. It is true that the latter at least may derive supposed biographical material from a writers' oeuvre in an intellectually unhealthy fashion⁽²⁸⁾, but like other well-attested types of biography and (arguably) unlike 'political' biography they at least re-package the material in a new fashion and in general provide information, real or bogus, which it is the distinctive purpose of the genre to supply and which is not supplied by any other genre. On the other hand, and secondly, 'political' biographies would not either formally or in purpose be replacements of the historiographical works upon which they depend in the way that Diodorus' *Historical Library* is a historiographical work aiming to replace a series of other historiographical works. Nor do we have to assume that they had any particular pretensions as literary products — though if Amphicrates the biographer was the same as Amphicrates the rhetor one might wonder in his case.

(27) C. J. TUPLIN, *Pausanias and Plutarch's Epaminondas* in *CQ* n.s. 34, 1984, p. 346-58.

(28) cf. M. LEFKOWITZ, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, Baltimore, 1981.

This combination of a range of antiquarian and us with fragments of lo not their biographical d a consequence ancient a historical information, v texts. (It is notable that is never cited in antiquit be unprovable.) (3) On likely to (help to) suppl Plutarch's *Lives* do fall removed in scale and in direct evidence would re before Nepos — though background of philosoph (as we saw) characteriz for that matter, Corneliu

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from special factors affecting r who might be expected to ical' biographies. Such works are with other biographies. from earlier historiographical standing tradition in the way true that the latter at least om a writers' oeuvre in an other well-attested types of aphy they at least re-package provide information, real or e genre to supply and which hand, and secondly, 'political' rpose be replacements of the d in the way that Diodorus' aiming to replace a series of to assume that they had any though if Amphicrates the rhetor one might wonder in

minondas in *CQ* n.s. 34, 1984.

ts, Baltimore, 1981.

This combination of features might have the following result. (1) The whole range of antiquarian and scholarly texts which quote their sources and supply us with fragments of lost historians will go to the historiographical authors, not their biographical derivatives — primary, not secondary sources. (2) As a consequence ancient authors in general, wherever they actually pick up their historical information, will be apt to pretend to get it from historiographical texts. (It is notable that even in the Latin tradition Nepos' *Foreign Generals* is never cited in antiquity and without a MS tradition its very existence would be unprovable.) (3) Only a rather exceptional political biography would be likely to (help to) supplant the historiographical text(s) upon which it feeds. Plutarch's *Lives* do fall into this category, but they are, of course, very far removed in scale and in artistic and intellectual eminence from anything that direct evidence would require us to postulate in the way of political biography before Nepos — though they do come from an author with the same general background of philosophy and/or history and/or antiquarian scholarship that (as we saw) characterizes Neanthes of Cyzicus and Jason of Nysa — and, for that matter, Cornelius Nepos.

In these circumstances the almost total silence that we find when searching for the antecedents of *Foreign Generals* is perhaps just explicable without assuming that there are no antecedents to find. I cannot say, however, that I feel entirely happy about it; and at the end of this long investigation Nepos still seems something of the enigma which discerning students have always seen him to be.

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Christopher TUPLIN.

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