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THE STRUCTURE OF NEPOS' BOOK ON FOREIGN GENERALS

Summary: The paper aims at specifying Nepos' principles of composition in the *Liber de excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium*. After reviewing the hypotheses on the structure of the work it will be argued mainly on the basis of the editorial notes and cross-references written in the book that the generals are lined up according to their provenance and arranged in a kind of frame structure to express the *translatio imperii*. The author focuses attention on the Athenian commanders to demonstrate the organic nature of history: in the background of their *vitae* the biography of Athens itself is also depicted. With the help of these observations most of the uncertainties, including the striking chronological discrepancies, can be clarified.

Key words: foreign generals, political biography, composition, chronology, *translatio imperii*

What kinds of principles determined the sequence of the biographies in the Book is still one of the unanswered questions concerning Nepos, in spite of the fact that this problem is rarely raised by scholars. According to the *communis opinio*, the main reason for this is that the structure of the book is regarded as confusing and badly organized, which may be led back to the mediocre literary ability of the author (frequently proclaimed by many scholars in several other relations as well). Although some analyses have been published on this subject, which have thrown light upon the signs indicating the consciousness of the editorial work of Nepos, these do not offer a satisfying answer to the question, why the biographies are arranged in *this* order.

(1) Nepos *expressis verbis* connects some of his generals' biographies: the summary at the end of the *Timotheus* (*haec extrema fuit aetas imperatorum Atheniensium, Iphicratis, Chabriae, Timothei, neque post illorum obitum quisquam dux in illa urbe fuit dignus memoria* 4. 4) testifies that the Greek leaders mentioned in the quotation

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form a unit (XI–XIII); similarly the biography of Hamilcar cannot be set apart from that of Hannibal (XXII–XXIII), as can be read in the common introduction to their Lives (*non incommodum videtur non praeterire Hamilcarem et Hannibalem, quos et animi magnitudine et calliditate omnes in Africa natos praestitisse constat. Reges 3. 5*).¹ These obvious connections can be supplemented with others, since the *Aristides* (III) joins with the *Themistocles* (II) as an appendix, similarly the *Epaminondas* and the *Pelopidas* form an inseparable pair (XV–XVI), too.²

It is evident that Nepos knew the chronology of the historical facts quite well and that he was fully aware of the *translatio imperii* of Hellas:³ the generals of the Persian and of the Peloponnesian Wars and after them the leaders representing the periods (*aetates*) of Spartan and Theban hegemony constitute smaller groups in the series (I–V, VII–IX, XV–XVII).⁴ In spite of these observations, although smaller parts of the book follow chronology, considering the entire book the biographies are in chronological order *only* on the whole. The chronologically correct place of the *Alcibiades-vita* (VII) would be before that of *Lysander* (VI); the *Dion* (X) should have been put after the *Agesilaus* (XVII), while the *Epaminondas* (XV) should stay before the place where it is at present; the biographies of *Eumenes* (XVIII), *Phocion* (XIX) and *Timoleon* (XX) should appear in the reversed order.⁵

On the basis of these chronological discrepancies the majority of the scholars are satisfied with the rather contradictory conclusion that the sequence of the Lives roughly follows chronology, but Nepos occasionally handles this carelessly,⁶ and no

¹ Cf. also: *venio nunc ad fortissimum virum* [sc. Datamen] *maximique consilii omnium barbarorum, exceptis duobus Karthaginiensibus, Hamilcare et Hannibale* (*Timoth.* 4. 5); this proves the connexion of the Lives of Hannibal and Hamilcar on the one hand, and of all three barbarians of the book on the other.

² Cf. *Cornelius Nepos*. Erkl. von K. NIPPERDEY – K. WITTE. Berlin 1913¹¹, 7.

³ Cf. *Rhet. ad Her.* IV 34: *Imperium Graeciae fuit penes Athenienses, Atheniensium potiti sunt Spartiatae, Spartiatae superavere Thebani, Thebanos Macedones vicerunt, qui ad imperium Graeciae brevi tempore adiunxerunt Asiam bello subactam.*

⁴ Cf. SCHÖNBERGER, O.: *Cornelius Nepos*. Ein mittelmäßiger Schriftsteller. *Altertum* 16 (1970) 156.

⁵ Cf. LEO, F.: *Die griechisch-römische Biographie nach ihrer literarischen Form*. Leipzig 1901, 198 n. 1; NIPPERDEY–WITTE (n. 2) 7.

⁶ Although Leo tried to reveal the possible causes of some chronological discrepancies – according to him the *vita* of *Epaminondas* was inserted after that of *Timotheus* because the first steps of the latter's military career started later, and because Nepos did not want to separate the Lives of *Iphicrates*, *Chabrias* and *Timotheus* (cf. *Timoth.* 4. 4); placing the *Agesilaus* after the *Epaminondas* can be explained by the fact that *Agesilaus* died later than *Epaminondas* –, he did not find acceptable answers either to the question why *Lysander* precedes *Alcibiades* in the series or to the problem of reversing the order of *Eumenes*, *Phocion* and *Timoleon*. In spite of these uncertainties Leo argues that Nepos' aim to order the generals according to chronology is obvious, which can be proved by the chronological list of kings in the chapter *Reges* (apart from the places of *Pyrrhus* and *Dionysius*) as well as by the insertion of the Carthaginian Lives into the series *after* the *Reges* (cf. LEO [n. 5] 198. n. 1). *Dionisotti* ascertains that taking the dates of the death of the generals in the book as a guide-line, the sequence of their Lives basically ('within ten years') follows chronology; *Timoleon* is the only one whose biography is not in its 'proper' place, because he died approximately twenty years before *Eumenes* and *Phocion* (cf. *DIONISOTTI, A.: Nepos and the Generals. JRS* 78 [1989] 40 n. 20). *Geiger* also accepts chronology as a guide-line of the sequence of biographies, (cf. *GEIGER, J.: Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography*. Stuttgart 1985, 96), but speaks of 'vague and virtually non-existing chronology of the Greek Lives' elsewhere (111).

system can be detected in the order of the biographies which could be extended to the *whole* book: after all the biographies stand for themselves.⁷ Geiger comes straight to the conclusion that Nepos did not have any exact conception, or if he did, it must have been very flexible, because the inclusion of the new, and what is more, barbarian, lives in the second edition of the book⁸ would have been hardly possible in case of a strict structure.⁹ Thus, most of the scholars are convinced of the lack of conscious planning or at least that the work is a superficially composed biographical series.

On the other hand it is hard to accept that such a lengthy opus was created without any principle of composition,¹⁰ and there are several signs which hint at a conscious editorial work. First of all Nepos puts a *Prologus* before the series and a closing sentence at the end of it: *sed nos tempus est huius libri facere finem et Romanorum explicare imperatores, quo facilius collatis utrorumque factis, qui viri praeferendi sint, possit iudicari* (Hann. 13. 4). Above all these two nations (the Greeks and the Romans) are to be compared, while the author does not want to give up the possibility of drawing occasional parallels *inside* the book *between* the foreign generals. Thus the numerous cross-references, mainly comparisons of characters,¹¹ also support the thesis of a well thought-out plan, as well as the fact that Nepos here and there just refers back to some details he has already related in previous sections of the book,¹² so as to avoid repetition.¹³ Furthermore it is also remarkable that the Life of Datames is put not at the end of the book along with the other barbarians introduced only in the second edition.¹⁴

Regarding the fact that it is completely uncertain whether Nepos' knowledge of historical dates was identical with that of modern scholarship, in my opinion we can neither say that the order of the Lives follows chronology nor that it does not. The striking discrepancies, however, suggest that Nepos' principle of composition, at least in part, must have been different: it should not be excluded that the departure from chronology both in the content of the single Lives and in their sequence may have been a conscious purpose of the author.

⁷ Cf. LEO (n. 5) 199; NIPPERDEY-WITTE (n. 2) 7.

⁸ The hypothesis of the second edition of the book is from Leo, who argues that the chapter *Reges* and all the three barbarian Lives (*Datames*, *Hamilcar*, *Hannibal*) were not part of the first edition (cf. LEO [n. 5] 195–198, 213–215). This enlargement of the series of (solely) Greek commanders has been questioned (cf. e.g. RAHN, H.: *Die Atticusbiographie und die Frage der zweiten Auflage der Biographien-sammlung des Cornelius Nepos*. *Hermes* 85 [1957] 205–215; TOHER, M.: *Nepos' Second Edition*. *Philologus* 146 [2002] 139–149), but not yet convincingly disproved.

⁹ Cf. GEIGER, J.: *Cornelius Nepos, De Regibus Exterarum Gentium*. *Latomus* 38 (1979) 663.

¹⁰ Albrecht pointed out, in an unusual and generous manner on his part concerning Nepos: 'Dennoch dürfte die Anordnung der Viten besser durchdacht sein als vielfach angenommen wird' (ALBRECHT, M. VON: *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*. München 1992, 382).

¹¹ For instance: *tum autem et intemperantia Pausaniae, et iustitia factum est Aristidis* (Arist. 2. 3); *hic* [sc. Timotheus] *a patre* [sc. a Conone] *acceptam gloriam multis auxit virtutibus* (Timoth. 1. 1).

¹² Cf. LEO (n. 5) 199.

¹³ Cf. SCHÖNBERGER (n. 4) 159.

¹⁴ It cannot be decided whether the *Datames* was inserted at this point of the series, although the place after the *Agesilaus* would have been better in terms of chronology (cf. LEO [n. 5] 197), because (in the first edition) there was already a *caesura* (*haec extrema fuit aetas imperatorum Atheniensium*. Timoth. 4. 4), or because Nepos inserted this *caesura* completed with an introduction (*venio nunc ad fortissimum virum* etc. Timoth. 4. 5) to compare Datames with the two other barbarians (Hamilcar and Hannibal) at the time of inserting his Life into the second edition.

(2) The starting point of U. Fleischer is that Nepos' *De viris illustribus* can be connected with Varro's *Hebdomades/Imagines* (edited in 39 BC).¹⁵ The idea of dividing the biographical series into Greek and Roman pairs of books could have been borrowed from the lost opus of Varro,¹⁶ and there could have been structural similarities between these two works. Fleischer argues that the Book on Foreign Generals was enlarged only with the last two biographies, those of Hamilcar and Hannibal, as an appendix in the second edition, so the first edition included only twenty-one Lives (among them the chapter *Reges*) arranged in *hebdomades*, i.e. in groups of seven biographies:

First *hebdomas* (I–VII):

Miltiades / Themistocles / Aristides / Pausanias / Cimon / Lysander / Alcibiades

Second *hebdomas* (VIII–XIV):

Thrasybulus / Conon / Dion / Iphicrates / Chabrias / Timotheus / Datames

Third *hebdomas* (XV–XXI):

Epaminondas / Pelopidas / Agesilaus / Eumenes / Phocion / Timoleon / Reges

Fleischer interprets the ending sentence of the *Alcibiades* (*sed satis de hoc, reliquos ordiamur* 11. 6) as the end of part one, the first *hebdomas*, so he argues that these seven Lives belong together. In the case of the second *hebdomas* it is more difficult to recognize the unity because Nepos' next editorial note (*haec extrema fuit aetas imperatorum Atheniensium, Iphicratis, Chabriae, Timothei, neque post illorum obitum quisquam dux in illa urbe fuit dignus memoria*) appears at the end of the *Timotheus* (4. 4), which is the *thirteenth* biography in the book. The point is that the 'athenische Feldherrntradition' ends here, with the *Timotheus*,¹⁷ so the *Datames* (XIV) has to be regarded as a supplement of the second part. By placing the Carian here Nepos interrupts the line of Greek commanders. Although the chronology is not broken, it seems that Nepos gives up the chance of emphasizing the *translatio imperii*, i.e. the rise of Thebe after the fall of Athens. Actually in this way, by inserting the Theban Epaminondas at the head of the third *hebdomas*, Nepos can emphasize the change of power more effectively. Moreover, the introduction of the *Epaminondas*, repeating here the thoughts of the *Prologus*,¹⁸ is obviously a new section-line in the whole structure. The third *hebdomas*, and at the same time the first edition of the book, ends with the chapter *Reges* (XXI), which, in Fleischer's opinion, can be regarded as a supplement, too. Nepos supplements the *hebdomas* and the series of the Greek generals (cf. *hi fere*

¹⁵ FLEISCHER, U.: Zu Cornelius Nepos. In ERBSE, H.: *Festschrift Bruno Snell*. München 1956, 197–208.

¹⁶ Cf. LEO (n. 5) 195.

¹⁷ FLEISCHER (n. 15) 204.

¹⁸ This is an addition to the argumentation (of Fleischer) by Schindel (SCHINDEL, U.: Geiger, J.: Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography. Stuttgart 1985 [recension]. *Gnomon* 65 [1993] 25).

fuert Graecae gentis duces 1. 1) with a *résumé* of the Book on Foreign Kings (*De regibus exterarum gentium*) supposed to have been published earlier.¹⁹

According to the list of kings in the chapter *Reges* this book included fourteen biographies, its Roman pair necessarily consisted of seven, thus, similarly to the first edition of the Book on Foreign Generals, both books on kings could have been divided into *hebdomades*. The kings in the *Reges* can easily be grouped into two parts: five Persians and two Macedonians can be added to the first group (5+2), one from Epirus and one from Syracuse along with the five *diadochoi* to the second (1+1+5). It can be assumed that every book of the *De viris illustribus* was constructed according to the *hebdomades*-scheme.

This scheme seems to have been given up in the second edition of the Book on Foreign Generals when Nepos extended the series with the Lives of the two Carthaginians. But, as Fleischer adds, we have to take into account that these new Lives were inserted not before the *Reges*, but after it, which confirms that the author considered the first twenty-one biographies a completed and concluded unit. With the extension the principle of composition was not changed essentially, the book was merely supplemented with a free-standing appendix.²⁰

(3) Even the starting point of Fleischer's hypothesis is questionable. Nepos must have known Varro's *Hebdomades* edited in 39 BC, but its chronological correlation to the *De viris illustribus* has not been clarified yet. Some important questions concerning the working process of Nepos as well as the content and the publication of the *De viris illustribus* cannot be answered. When did Nepos start the preparations for his work? How many biographies and books did it contain? Were the books written in pairs and edited one after another or was the entire biographical collection

¹⁹ Relying upon F. RITSCHL's researches on the structure of the *Imagines* concluding that Varro treated the kings not in a separate book but along with the generals (RITSCHL, F.: *Kleine philologische Schriften. Opuscula III*. Leipzig 1877, 552–554), Fleischer argues that the role of the chapter was to express the aim of Nepos, namely to follow Varro's principle of composition as a model, therefore, although the Lives of the kings had been published earlier in a separate book, he expressed the close relations of the two groups in this manner (cf. FLEISCHER [n. 15] 206). We have pointed out elsewhere that the *Reges* is not a *résumé* of the presumed Book on foreign kings (SZABÓ, F. K.: *Cornelius Nepos királyéletrajzai? (Megjegyzések a Reges fejezetéhez)* [Cornelius Nepos' Lives of kings? (Remarks on the chapter *Reges*)], *Antik Tanulmányok* 51 [2007] 217–237), and if the hypothesis of Ritschl is proved to be true that would exactly mean that, by treating the kings in a separate book, Nepos consciously departed from the structure of the *Imagines*. Thus there is a contradiction in Fleischer's argumentation, because on the basis of the fact that Nepos, supposedly following Varro, treats the famous generals and kings in the same book, the proper conclusion would exactly be that there was no book on kings at all.

²⁰ Simultaneously the role of the *Reges* in the structure of the book changed: while in the first edition this chapter closed the entire series, in the second it separates the Greeks and the barbarians (cf. FLEISCHER [n. 15] 197). (As already mentioned, Fleischer insisted on the hardly acceptable view that the barbarian *Datames* had already been part of the first edition.) Setting out from the study of Fleischer, U. Schindel holds the opinion that the hypothesis of the second edition is unnecessary: accordig to him the introduction to the two Carthaginians at the end of the *Reges* (*non incommodum videtur non praeterire Hamilcarem et Hannibalem*. 3. 5) does not verify in itself that their Lives were inserted into the series on the occasion of a possible enlargement, because Nepos hints here at being aware of exceeding the *hebdomades*-scheme with the *Hamilcar* and the *Hannibal* (cf. SCHINDEL [n. 18] 26).

published simultaneously? There are reasons adduced both for a quite early beginning of Nepos' biographical series (ca. 46–43 BC)²¹ and for a quite late edition of the *Hebdomades* (32 BC).²² Thus it cannot be stated that the structure of the *Hebdomades* had influenced Nepos and was adapted already in the first pairs of books. Nevertheless, the books may have had different structures, and it is more than probable that the Book on Foreign Generals²³ was published some years after Varro's work (35–32; 31–27 BC).²⁴ Therefore, the supposed resemblance concerning the structure of the two works is not entirely unfounded, because in the books published after 39 BC Nepos could have adapted the scheme of Varro as an innovation. If he did so, he, obviously, adapted it quite flexibly. Still, what renders this assumption dubious is mostly the addition of the Carthaginian lives. In case of innovation/imitation the *hebdomades*-scheme should be much more apparent.

Even if we disregard these uncertainties the series can hardly be divided into groups of seven Lives, and not just because it contains twenty-three biographies (including the chapter *Reges*). A more important counterargument is that the section-lines supposed by Fleischer are mostly forced: the examination of the structure should not be based exclusively on the serial-numbers of the biographies, while the issues of content are almost completely neglected or misunderstood.

In my opinion the ending sentence of the *Alcibiades* (*sed satis de hoc, reliquos ordiamur* 11. 6) is not a section-line, rather it is one of Nepos' editorial notes with which he reminds himself not to digress from the subject or not to get lost in the details.²⁵ The role of this kind of notes is not to divide the book into parts, but to connect the Lives: by means of these notes the author tries to construct a continuous, comprehensive text from dozens of biographies, and to maintain his readers' interest. Furthermore Fleischer neglects both the external and the internal context of the *Alcibiades*. Nepos previously wrote that he could add much more about the character of this actual title-hero but has to interrupt the text because he wants to present some more important things (*quae referremus, nisi maiora potiora haberemus* 2. 3). At the end of the Life, in the quotation in question, Nepos faces the same problem: the qualities of Alcibiades could be enumerated further (cf. *namque ea, quae supra scripsimus, de eo praedicarunt atque hoc amplius* 2. 3), but, regarding that this is one of the longest biographies in the book, there is no possibility of doing so. Consequently, the last sentence of the Life, wrenched from its context, does not end a *whole* section, it only concludes the biographical depiction of Alcibiades; in the text we read *de hoc*, not *de his*. Besides, the closure of the *Alcibiades* is not followed by an introduction

²¹ Cf. GEIGER 1985 (n. 6) 86, 100 ff.

²² Cf. SONNABEND, H.: *Geschichte der antiken Biographie. Von Isokrates bis zur Historia Augusta*. Stuttgart 2002, 106.

²³ This series was one of the last books of the *De viris illustribus* (14th, 15th or 17th); the summary of the question: GEIGER 1985 (n. 6) 87 ff.

²⁴ *Termini ante and post quem* to the first and to the second edition of the Book on Foreign Generals (cf. GEIGER 1985 [n. 6] 84 ff).

²⁵ Cf. LEO (n. 5) 197 n. 1.

obviously signalling the beginning of a new part, as in the first chapter of the *Epaminondas* commencing the 'third *hebdomas*'.

Furthermore, connecting the first seven generals is hardly acceptable on the basis of the fact that Nepos was aware of the periods of Greek history. It is the *Alcibiades* with which the series of the Athenian generals of the Peloponnesian War begins: this confirms that the Life of Alcibiades must be more narrowly connected with the ones *following* it rather than the ones *preceding* it. This thesis is supported by the strong relations of Alcibiades and Thrasybulos emphasized by Nepos hinting repeatedly at the deeds they had carried out together (*Alc.* 5. 4; 6. 3; 7. 1), and what is more: he remarks at the very beginning of the *Thrasybulus*: *Peloponnesio bello multa hic* (sc. Thrasybulus) *sine Alcibiade gessit, ille nullam rem sine hoc* (1. 3).²⁶

At the end of the penultimate Life of the 'second *hebdomas*' (*Timotheus*) there is a 'real' summary (4. 4), but not of all the Athenians treated before nor the previously lined up six generals, only of the 'last three Athenians' mentioned, and of the 'last period' (*extrema aetas*) of Athens, which is hallmarked by them.²⁷ The most reasonable element of Fleischer's argumentation is that the introduction of the *Epaminondas* (XV) can be regarded as a beginning to the next part. Echoing one of the leading ideas of the *Prologus*, Nepos warns his readers here again: *ne alienos mores ad suos referant, neve ea, quae ipsis leviora sunt, pari modo apud ceteros fuisse arbitrentur* (1. 1). We have to admit, however, that Nepos also declares his literary and methodological aims elsewhere (cf. *Pelop.* 1. 1). Referring back to the thoughts drafted in the Prologue right here, in the introduction of the *Epaminondas*, can be explained by the fact that there (beside Cimon) Epaminondas himself was mentioned as an example. Nevertheless, whether we accept that 'another part' begins with the Life of Epaminondas or not, it is in itself not enough to verify the hypothesis of the *hebdomades*-scheme as the principle of composition.

In addition, Fleischer does not deal with the chronological discrepancies inside the single sections, but instead writes, passing by the question, that the order in the book on generals (as well as in the chapter *Reges*) matches chronology.²⁸ Moreover it would be hard to divide into *two hebdomades* the fourteen kings listed in the chapter *Reges*, from whom five have Persian origin, the remaining nine are Greeks and Macedonians. Fleischer's attempt seems to be forced, because Philippos and Alexander would belong to the *diadochoi* rather than to the Persian rulers.²⁹ The chapter has to be regarded as a selection instead of a careful abstract or a *résumé*,³⁰ so the 'number

²⁶ The emphasis of their connection is hardly reduced by the fact that in the *Alcibiades* there are also more references to the hero of the preceding *vita* (VI), Lysander (8; 10. 1), on the contrary (see below).

²⁷ Furthermore it should not be forgotten that there is one more Athenian Life in the book: *Phocion*.

²⁸ As it has been stated above this point of view is quite superficial; cf. n. 6.

²⁹ In spite of the fact that GEIGER does not exclude that the *Imagines* was taken as a basis to the list of the kings in the *Reges*, he says nothing about his own point of view concerning the division of the chapter (cf. GEIGER, J.: *Hebdomades* (binae?). *CQ* 48 [1998] 308).

³⁰ FLEISHER himself remarks that from the Persians Kambyes is missing for the most part, as well as Kassandros from the *diadochoi* (FLEISCHER [n. 15] 202).

fourteen' cannot be used as a starting point for investigating the traces of the lost Books on Kings.

Finally, we have to note that while the division into *hebdomades* was valid in case of the *Imagines*, the same cannot be said about the *De viris illustribus*. The former contained fifteen books along with its Prologue, the number of Nepos' biographical series was at least sixteen (cf. *fr.* 43). On the basis of all these counterarguments it can be stated that the Book on Foreign Generals was not arranged by these principles of composition.

(4) Recently another researcher, Sabine Anselm came to the same conclusion, also scrutinizing the structure of the book on the basis of its content.³¹ She accepted some elements of Fleischer's hypothesis, for example the first seven Lives should be regarded as a coherent unit in her opinion, too, but in the case of the second and the third *hebdomas* she thinks that coherence is not so plausible. The Life of Datames, introduced by these rather forwards referring words: *venio nunc ad fortissimum virum maximique consilii omnium barbarorum, exceptis duobus Karthaginiensibus, Hamilcare et Hannibale. De quo hoc plura referemus, quod et obscuriosa sunt eius gesta pleraque (...) quorum nisi ratio explicata fuerit, res apparere non poterunt* (Timoth. 4. 5), can hardly be regarded as a *closure* of a structural unit. For similar reasons the *Reges* cannot be considered as a supplement of the six biographies preceding it. Nevertheless, Anselm finds that the weakest element of Fleischer's argumentation is that it is not properly underlined in it that by inserting the *Hamilcar* and the *Hannibal* Nepos had abandoned the *hebdomades*-scheme. So the structure of Varro's work clearly did not serve as a compulsory model to the *De excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium* at least in the case of the second edition. On the contrary: "vielmehr muß für die Interpretation mit der Möglichkeit gerechnet werden, daß die Überarbeitung des Textes durch den Autor mit einer intendierten Umgestaltung einherging."³²

For the simple reason of its content, the *Reges*, along with the Carthaginian Lives (XXI–XXIII), can be detached from the preceding part of the book (I–XX),³³ but according to Anselm this does not mean that the structure of these twenty Lives should be examined separately. It would seem to be self-evident to divide these twenty into two equal parts (two *dekades*), but, albeit the Lives finishing the single *dekades*, the *Dion* (X) and the *Timoleon* (XX) are connected with each other to a certain extent,³⁴ there are more arguments contradicting this. On the one hand by doing this the

³¹ Cf. ANSELM, S.: *Struktur und Transparenz. Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Analyse der Feldherrnviden des Cornelius Nepos*. Stuttgart 2004, 59–66.

³² ANSELM (n. 31) 59.

³³ The *Reges* apparently differs from the biographies of the book, furthermore the first sentence of the chapter (*Hi fere fuerunt Graecae gentis duces*, etc.) can be interpreted as a section-line making more plausible the hypothesis that the *Reges* among with the the Lives of the two Carthaginians must have been put in the series at the time of its second edition (cf. ANSELM [n. 31] 60 ff.)

³⁴ After all, both of them represent ultimately the Greeks of the West; the *Dion* should be followed directly by the *Timoleon*; moreover, Anselm ascribes importance to these Lives in the structure of the book: "Daraus resultiert eine inhaltliche Verklammerung bzw. eine Rahmung der anderen Biographien, und die Intention, das Textganze zu strukturieren, wird verdeutlicht"; cf. ANSELM (n. 31) 64–65.

editorial comments of Nepos (cf. *Alc.* 11. 6; *Timoth.* 4. 4–5) giving clear bases to the inquiry of the composition would be neglected, on the other by regarding the part XXI–XXIII merely as a supplement we would also make a mistake like Fleischer and would not get a solution to the problem of the structure extendable to the *entire* book.³⁵ Furthermore the closure of the *Hannibal* (13. 4), which is at the same time the ending of the book (*sed nos tempus est huius libri facere finem et Romanorum explicare imperatores, quo facilius collatis utrorumque factis, qui viri praeferendi sint, possit iudicari*), makes it clear that this *vita* plays a bigger role in the structure of the series than being a part of an appendix. Hence the examination of Nepos' principles of composition has to take the present form of the book as a starting-point.

As we have seen above, Anselm accepts Fleischer's thesis that the closing sentence of the *Alcibiades* (11. 6) has to be interpreted as a summary of the first seven Lives (I–VII) which form a coherent unit (*heptas*). Since at the end of the *Timotheus* (4. 4) Nepos himself connects the three Athenian generals (Iphicrates, Chabrias and Timotheus), Anselm argues that their Lives compose a *trias*, a group of three Lives (XI–XIII). These two sections frame three other biographies placed between them (VIII–X), creating another *trias*. In the ending sentence of *Timotheus*, we also read a hint at the Carthaginians (4. 5), on the basis of which Anselm concludes that the following part of the book, i.e. from the *Datames* to the *Hannibal* (XIV–XXIII), can be seen as a *dekas*, a group of ten biographies. This *dekas* is divided into two sections by the editorial note at the beginning of chapter *Reges* (1. 1), yielding another *heptas* (XIV–XX) and another *trias* (XXI–XXIII). Since the first ten Lives, similarly to this *dekas*, can also be easily divided into a *heptas* and a *trias*, we can see a kind of frame-structure in the book: the *trias* in the middle of the book is framed by two *dekades*. So Anselm modifying the analysis of Fleischer divides the series in the following manner:

First *heptas* (I–VII):

Miltiades / *Themistocles* / *Aristides* / *Pausanias* / *Cimon* / *Lysander* / *Alcibiades*

First *trias* (VIII–X):

Thrasybulus / *Conon* / *Dion*

Middle *trias* (XI–XIII):

Iphicrates / *Chabrias* / *Timotheus*

Second *heptas* (XIV–XX):

Datames / *Epaminondas* / *Pelopidas* / *Agesilaus* / *Eumenes* / *Phocion* / *Timoleon*

Second *trias* (XXI–XXIII):

Reges / *Hamilcar* / *Hannibal*

³⁵ The *Datames* (XIV), which was not part of the first edition in Anselm's opinion as well, also impedes regarding the first twenty Lives as a coherent unit (cf. ANSELM [n. 31] 46).

Already Fleischer tried to demonstrate that the structure of the *Reges* helps to identify the composition of the entire book, but, as we have seen, his achievements are not convincing. Analysing the chapter Anselm also finds her hypothesis confirmed that the structure of the book is mirrored in the list of the kings ‘*bis ins kleinste Detail*’.³⁶ While the examination of Fleischer was limited to the fourteen kings introduced briefly (and arranged by him in this manner: 5-2-2-5), the starting-point of Anselm is different. According to her it must not be left out of consideration that also Agesilaus in the beginning as well as Hamilcar and Hannibal at the end of the chapter are mentioned. By taking them into account the division of the chapter can be outlined as follows: 1+5-2-2-5-2. On the macrostructural level of the book, the mention of Agesilaus is equivalent to the *Prologus*: the former introduces the kings,³⁷ the latter the generals, but strictly speaking none of them can be regarded as a structural element. On the basis of that, in the arrangement of the kings, apart from the numerical differences, but in proportion, the frame-structure of the whole series on generals can be clearly recognized: 1+7-3-3-7-3.

Anselm adds that the so-called frame-structure is obviously supported by historical and philosophical arguments, because each one of the above sketched sections in the Book on Foreign Generals represents one of the historical periods of Ancient Greece. In the first *dekas* Nepos lines up the famous generals of the Persian and of the Peloponnesian Wars (I–IX), commanders of the middle *trias* hallmark Athens’ new strengthening and rise (XI–XIII); the second *dekas*, after a short glance into the Persian Empire (*Datames*, XIV), comprises the epochs (*aetates*) of the Spartan-Theban hegemonies (XV–XVII) and after these the struggles of the *diadochoi* (XVIII–XIX); finally with the Lives of Hamilcar and Hannibal (XXII–XXIII) we approach the Roman world.³⁸

To the question why the sequence of the Lives, within the single parts, in some places, does not follow chronology, Anselm tries to answer on the basis of the structure outlined by her. The biography of Alcibiades stands after that of Lysander because in this way Nepos can more effectively demonstrate the decline of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. Because of inserting the *Dion* before its chronologically adequate place the description of the serial changes of the Athenian-Spartan hegemony is broken, but in this manner the end of the first *trias* becomes more impressive: the tyrant, that has become of Dion, is set against Thrasybulus and Conon who liberated their *polis* from the tyranny. On the other hand by placing the Life of Dion at the end of the first *dekas* (before the *Agesilaus*) the author can draw a parallel with Timoleon, who was in some respect also a ‘Sicilian’, inserted at the end of the second one.³⁹

³⁶ ANSELM (n. 31) 63.

³⁷ The aim of Nepos with bringing up Agesilaus in the beginning of the *Reges* (*Lacedaemonius autem Agesilaus nomine, non potestate fuit rex, sicuti ceteri Spartani*. 1. 2) was essentially to make clear who had been chosen among the kings who were also generals on the one hand and why Agesilaus had an own Life in the series of the *generals* on the other.

³⁸ After the fall of Carthage the supreme power on the west coast of the Mediterranean Sea was acquired by Rome, the history of which must have been written by Nepos in the (published but lost) next book of the *De viris illustribus* treating the famous Roman generals.

³⁹ Cf. n. 34.

It is also obvious that Nepos does not want to break up the *trias* which represents the new rise of Athens (*Iphicrates*, *Chabrias*, *Timotheus*) by inserting the *Epaminondas* at least before the *Timotheus* where it would fit in accordance with chronology.⁴⁰ What is more: the *Datames* comes before the *Epaminondas*, which can be explained by the fact that in the Life of *Timotheus* Nepos had already hinted at some contemporary events happening in Persia,⁴¹ which he wants to make clearer in the biography of the Carian, emphasizing that Persia had a great influence on the inner relations of Hellas in the fourth century BC. It seems to be a more weighty argument that the cause of inserting the *Datames* right here is to make a *caesura*⁴² "zwischen dem Ende Athens und dem aufstrebenden Sparta".⁴³ (After all the Life of *Dion* similarly serves as a *caesura*.) The chronologically proper order of the three Lives finishing the second *hebdomas* would be unambiguously the following: *Timoleon*, *Eumenes*, *Phocion*. Here, as well as in the cases pointed out above, the sequence of the Lives cannot be the result of the ignorance of chronology, it is much more probable that Nepos had a principle of composition considering chronology as a secondary point of view.⁴⁴

(5) Anselm's conclusions are more acceptable and more useful for further research, but she left many questions unanswered. First of all it is a right starting-point for analyzing the structure of the book to take into account its present form (that is the second edition) as a basis, not that of the first edition, which must have had a different composition.⁴⁵ We have to agree with the arguments that chronology played a subsidiary role in lining up the generals and that investigating Nepos' principles of composition we are not allowed to disregard the inner considerations concerning the content of the Lives, and the moral, historical, philosophical intentions of the author. Nevertheless, we have to say that in revealing the connections between the form and the content of the book Anselm's results cannot be considered conclusive.

It is a good suggestion as well that the three Athenian biographies placed in the very center of the book (*Iphicrates*, *Chabrias*, *Timotheus*) compose an independent section (a *trias*, if you like), which can be interpreted as the axis of the series. On the other hand it is hard to agree with her about dividing the *dekades before* and *after* this axis into one *heptas* and one *trias*. With reference to the argumentation of Fleischer we have already expounded our view that the ending sentence of the *Alcibiades* is not a section-line. It seems, however, that Anselm, while trying to prove that Varro's *Hebdomades* had not served as a model to Nepos, insists upon the assumption that the number seven somehow plays a role in the structure of the book.

⁴⁰ Cf. NIPPERDEY-WITTE (n. 2) 7.

⁴¹ Cf. FLEISCHER (n. 15) 204.

⁴² In spite of that, Leo stated that Nepos inserted the *Datames* into a place where there was already a *caesura* (cf. LEO [n. 5] 197); cf. n. 14.

⁴³ ANSELM (n. 31) 65.

⁴⁴ Cf. n. 82.

⁴⁵ This concerns not only whether the *Datames*, the *Reges*, the *Hamilcar* and the *Hannibal* (or some of them) were inserted only into the second edition, but the speculative possibility cannot be excluded either that there are other Lives absent from the first edition.

This assumption has led to a series of forced solutions in the division of both the first and the second *dekas*. As a result, Anselm is compelled to consider the Life of Datames, which in Fleischer's opinion *closes* the second *hebdomas* (as an appendix to the six Lives preceding it), as the first biography of the second group of seven. She adds, however, that the next historical age of Hellas starts in fact with the *Epaminondas*, and that the *Datames*, being a *caesura* which separates the Athenians from the Thebans, is not closely connected with the following six Greek biographies. Similarly to Fleischer she also considers the Life of Datames an addition ('Lückenbüßer')⁴⁶ but places it at the *beginning* of a structural unit. This supposition seems to be even less plausible (than Fleischer's): how could a structural unit commence with a Life not in relation even with the one right after it? This can only be explained by the obvious effort of Anselm to interpret the section from the *Datames* to the *Timoleon* as a *heptas*. Hence she is compelled to regard the *Reges* (interpreted by Fleischer as the supplement and closing of the third *heptas*) as the beginning of the last unit (the second *trias*) whereas it is evidently an independent chapter not in any relation with the Carthaginian Lives following it. It is not necessarily a correct conclusion that the *Reges*, the Lives of Hamilcar and Hannibal compose one unit even if these were inserted together in the second edition. Therefore, in my opinion Anselm's hypothesis concerning the arrangement of the second *dekas* is not acceptable.

By examining the first *dekas* we come to the same conclusion. Even if we consider the first seven Lives as an independent structural unit, the connexion of the remaining three in the *dekas* is hardly supportable. This evidently caused Anselm a difficulty as well. As we have seen, she explains: "durch die vorgezogene Darstellung Dions stellt Nepos in der folgenden Triade den beiden Tyrannenvertreibern Thrasybulos und Konon das Warnbild eines zum Tyrannen gewordenen Feldherrn gegenüber".⁴⁷ Nepos expresses that Thrasybulus was of decisive importance in expelling the Thirty (cf. *Thras.* 1. 2), in the *Conon*, however, there is no mention of tyranny, even if the title-hero played a role (?) in overthrowing them.⁴⁸ Hence it is dubious that this could be the connecting link between these three Lives, and that is why the *Dion* was inserted *here*, before its chronologically proper place.⁴⁹ The supposition, 'put into brackets' by Anselm (in my opinion weakening her own argumentation),

⁴⁶ The phrase is from SCHINDEL (n. 18) 25; cf. ANSELM (n. 31) 65.

⁴⁷ ANSELM (n. 31) 64.

⁴⁸ Elsewhere Anselm specifies her observations adding that the central themes of this *trias* are *liberatio* and *libertas* (cf. ANSELM [n. 31] 73, 100). In my opinion, however, the fact that Conon, *cum patriam obsideri audisset* (*Con.* 2. 1), defeated the Spartans in a battle at Cnidus with the help of the Persians consequently *non solum Athenae, sed etiam cuncta Graecia, quae sub Lacedaemoniorum fuerat imperio, liberata est* (4. 4), is hardly equal to the liberation of someone's state from the suppression of a tyrant (cf. *Thras.* 1. 2: *nam quod multi voluerunt paucique potuerunt, ab uno tyranno patriam liberare, huic contigit ut a triginta oppressam tyrannis e servitute in libertatem vindicaret*). Furthermore, the motif of *liberatio/libertas* appears in more Lives of Nepos (e.g. *Miltiades*, *Themistocles*, *Epaminondas*, *Pelopidas*), so that it does not seem properly established to regard these three biographies in question as a structural unit.

⁴⁹ Similarly, the reasoning that Nepos inserted the *Datames* as the fourteenth Life to signal that Hellas was handed over to Persian supremacy (cf. ANSELM [n. 31] 65) seems to be artificial. Persia also influenced the circumstances and the relations of the Greek states earlier, it was not in the life of *Datames* that this started.

that the *Dion* is basically a *caesura*, the role of which (similarly to the *Datames*) is to delimit the various epochs of Greek History, seems to be more convincing (see below).

Dividing the two *dekades* before and after the so-called axis into a *heptas* and a *trias* each is hardly acceptable also because in this manner the chronological discrepancies mentioned earlier become over-simplified. It was never open to doubt that in the first *dekas* Nepos lines up generals representing the periods of the Persian wars and of the Athenian-Spartan contest for power. But regarding almost a whole century, an important question, namely why the *Alcibiades* is inserted after the *Lysander*, remains unanswered and becomes unimportant. The solution of Anselm, namely that Nepos put the Life of the Spartan before that of the Athenian to demonstrate more effectively the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, is in my opinion unfounded: on the one hand the biography does not lay emphasis on that, on the other Nepos introduces both Thrasybulus and Conon as *illustrious* commanders of the Peloponnesian War.⁵⁰ Moreover inserting the *Dion-vita* into the tenth place can hardly be explained by the parallel drawn with the *Timoleon* (XX): it is an exaggeration to state that the 'two Sicilians' create a connection between the two *dekades* while their role is not more emphasized than that of the others. Besides that it also seems quite sketchy to me that in the case of the second *dekas* Anselm always speaks of Spartan-Theban hegemony,⁵¹ meanwhile she does not even try to answer the question why Nepos introduced the Spartan Agesilaus *after* the Theban generals.⁵² I am convinced that as long as we do not find unambiguous answers to the questions of the chronological discrepancies, we will not be able to identify the *real* structure of the book.

The division of the *Reges* argued for by Anselm has to be queried, too. Hamilcar and Hannibal are just mentioned in the last sentence leading over to their Lives, they are evidently not parts of the chapter either in respect to its content or its structure. Nepos does not characterize them (not even as shortly as the kings of the chapter), which is understandable because they were not kings. Therefore, the fact itself that the Carthaginians are named is not enough to take them, and for similar reasons Agesilaus, who *nomine, non potestate fuit rex* (*Reges* 1. 2), into 'account'.

Nevertheless we have to agree with Anselm (and Fleischer) about taking the *Reges* as a starting-point, a kind of guide-line to examine the composition of the entire book, because this chapter is short and summarized, thus more perspicuous than the whole biographical series.⁵³ Let us take a close look at this chapter and let it be our starting-point as well. What principles determined the order of the kings in it? It can be noticed that Nepos basically follows chronology,⁵⁴ but besides that the place of the origin of the kings seems to be an important aspect of the arrangement as well: Persians, Macedonians, Greeks and again Macedonians (*diadochoi*) succeed each

⁵⁰ Cf. *Thras.* 1. 3; *Con.* 1. 1.

⁵¹ ANSELM (n. 31) 63, 65.

⁵² Elsewhere she hints at this problem; cf. ANSELM (n. 31) 120.

⁵³ But we have to add that the *Reges* was inserted only into the second edition, so it can only be used to analyze the present stucture of the book.

⁵⁴ The order of chronology is interrupted only at the positions of Dionysius and Pyrrhus.

other. Exactly the same duality can be detected in the Book on Foreign Generals: the biographies succeed each other more or less in chronological order, but representing the same *polis* must be considered as a significant guideline, too. If we would like to identify the principles of composition, we should find a system which does not leave this guideline out of consideration.

(6) In all of his editorial references by which some of the biographies are connected, Nepos always emphasizes that the generals are from the same *polis*: in the case of Iphicrates, Chabrias and Timotheus (*imperatorum Atheniensium. Timoth. 4. 4*) as well as referring to Hamilcar and Hannibal (*duobus Karthaginiensibus. Timoth. 4. 5*). The sameness of the city-states can be clearly observed in the case of the above mentioned pairs of biographies: *Themistocles-Aristides* and *Epaminondas-Pelopidas*, too.⁵⁵ Pairing Themistocles and Aristides is noteworthy because in the historical work of Thucydides, which is referred to as the most important source of Nepos to his Life of Themistocles,⁵⁶ the excursion to Themistocles (1. 135–138) follows the story of the Spartan Pausanias (1. 126–134). Thus, Nepos had received a ‘ready-made’ parallel of Themistocles and Pausanias but broke it up and brought Themistocles in closer connection with the *Athenian* Aristides. This may also prove that in lining-up the generals their origin was a determining aspect.⁵⁷

The Lives of Iphicrates (XI), Chabrias (XII) and Timotheus (XIII) are connected by several cross-references.⁵⁸ Furthermore by placing the three Athenian commanders in the middle of the book Nepos wants to express clearly that the Athenians stand in the middle of his interest, and through them the polis of Athens itself. We come to the same conclusion if we consider that half of the generals (altogether eleven) are from Athens, and that in the last sentence of the *Timotheus* (4. 4) Nepos writes about the last period (*extrema aetas*) of *Athens*. It can be said that, while presenting the periods of Greek history, displaying the *aetates* of *Athenian* history was among his plans as well. Considering also the ‘revealing comment’ of Nepos (*hoc in tempore nulla civitas Atheniensibus auxilio fuit praeter Plataeenses. Milt. 5. 1*) the assumption that he approached Greek history from the stand-point of Athens is not unfounded.⁵⁹ On the basis of these considerations we have to pay particular attention to the positions of the Athenian biographies, because they can offer the clue to solving the problem of the structure of the book.

⁵⁵ As mentioned above, Nipperdey considers these two pairs of Lives to be in a close relation naturally enough besides the ones connected *expresses verbis* by the author (NIPPERDEY–WITTE [n. 2] 7).

⁵⁶ Cf. *ego potissimum Thucydidi credo* (*Them. 9. 1*); cf. 1. 4; 10. 4. In this Life Nepos obviously draws on Thucydides several times (cf. BRADLEY, J. R.: *The Sources of Cornelius Nepos. Selected Lives*. Diss. Harvard 1967, 9–38).

⁵⁷ Nepos considered it important to add the place of origin, not only in the case of the groups but of every single biography, since we come to know the name of the polis of the general at the very beginning of his Life.

⁵⁸ *Iph. 3. 3; Chabr. 3. 4; Timoth. 3. 2; 3. 4; 4. 4.*

⁵⁹ In the quoted text the person of Miltiades is forgotten, and the Athenians are put in the centre of the author’s interest; cf. SCHÖNBERGER (n. 4) 156.

The three Athenians placed in the middle of the book are encircled by the *Dion* and the *Datames*:

- X. *Dion* (Syracuse)
- XI. *Iphicrates* (Athens)
- XII. *Chabrias* (Athens)
- XIII. *Timotheus* (Athens)
- XIV. *Datames* (Caria)

The close connection of these Athenians is also emphasized by the fact that Nepos does not insert the life of Epaminondas among them (although this would be in accordance with the chronology),⁶⁰ this way he can present the last glorious *aetas* of Athens in one coherent group. The *Dion* and *Datames* frame (and also emphasize) this *trias*,⁶¹ and at the same time form two caesuras by which the book can be divided into three parts. Let us regard these five biographies (X–XIV) in the middle as the second part: we get nine biographies in the first part (I–IX), and just the same amount in the third one (XV–XXIII).

The first part lines up seven Athenian and two Spartan commanders in the following well discernible order:

- I. *Miltiades* (Athens)
- II. *Themistocles* (Athens)
- III. *Aristides* (Athens)
- IV. *Pausanias* (Sparta)
- V. *Cimon* (Athens)
- VI. *Lysander* (Sparta)
- VII. *Alcibiades* (Athens)
- VIII. *Thrasybulus* (Athens)
- IX. *Conon* (Athens)

It appears that the generals of this part are arranged, according to their native place, into a mirror- or frame-like composition: there is an Athenian in the middle surrounded by one Spartan and three other Athenians before and after. The generals of the Persian war (Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, Pausanias) are clearly separated from those of the Peloponnesian War (Lysander, Alcibiades, Thrasybulus, Conon).⁶² In both of these wars only one commander represents Sparta, so it can be stated that Nepos *concentrates* on Athens in this part of the book, too, which is emphasized by

⁶⁰ Cf. LEO (n. 5) 198. n. 1.

⁶¹ Although Anselm also hinted at this problem, as we have seen above, still she did not come to the conclusion that the Lives in question are single and independent structural elements, but considered them (as a kind of forced-solution) as supplements of larger units.

⁶² By introducing Cimon as one of the generals of the Peloponnesian War (cf. *Con.* 1. 1) Nepos makes clear that his Life is in close connection with the *Alcibiades* and the *Thrasybulus*. This should not be neglected even though the main subject of the *Conon* is the struggle for hegemony between Athens and Sparta restarting after the Peloponnesian War.

positioning the *Cimon*, embodying the golden age of Athens, the *pentékontaeteia*, in the middle.

It is also remarkable that the author does not interrupt the groups of the *Athenians* in case of either the Persian or the Peloponnesian War,⁶³ although this way he causes a chronological discrepancy, because the Life of Alcibiades should have been placed *before* that of Lysander.⁶⁴ I am convinced that Nepos did this consciously: according to all indications he considered chronology (which is basically kept except this case) as secondary, compared to the frame-like arrangement. Guided by this principle he placed the Lysander-*vita* right here (before the *Alcibiades*) so that it could be the *mirror-image* of Pausanias, in the strict sense of the word, because they are similar to each other not only in the aspect of their *polis* but also in the way Nepos judges them: both of them are depicted as absolutely negative figures.⁶⁵ We can add that these two biographies constitute two caesuras, which have the role to separate the Athenian generals belonging to certain different epochs (*aetates*) of Athenian history.

Similarly, the biographies of the third part⁶⁶ are ordered in a composition we termed a frame-like structure:

- XV. *Epaminondas* (Thebes)
- XVI. *Pelopidas* (Thebes)
- XVII. *Agesilaus* (Sparta)
- XVIII. *Eumenes* (Cardia)
- XIX. *Phocion* (Athens)
- XX. *Timoleon* (Korinth)
- XXI. *Reges* (kings)
- XXII. *Hamilcar* (Carthage)
- XXIII. *Hannibal* (Carthage)

There is only *one* Athenian *vita* (*Phocion*) in this part of the book, but this composes the axis, so Nepos here again places Athens in the focus. The biographies of the generals surrounding the *Phocion* (*Eumenes* and *Timoleon*) do not represent the same state, but considering that there are the only Cardian and Korinthian Life in the series, they do not have a pair with which they could constitute a frame. The situation is the same as with the biographies of the Syracusan Dion and of the Carian Datames encircling the three Athenians in the middle of the book. We can say that generals without

⁶³ Just as he treats the three Athenian generals placed in the middle of the book together.

⁶⁴ Cf. NIPPERDEY-WITTE (n. 2) 7.

⁶⁵ In a certain respect the Life of Phocion can be regarded similarly (see below); cf. MCCARTY, TH. G.: The Content of Cornelius Nepos' *De viris illustribus*. *CW* 67 (1974) 388.

⁶⁶ It has already been mentioned that in the introduction of the *Epaminondas* Nepos repeats some thoughts of the *Prologus*. Fleischer interprets this as the beginning of the third *hebdomas*, Anselm, however, does not mention it as a section-line at all. Although we disputed the division of Fleischer, his remark is not fully unfounded that with this Life a new structural unit in the book starts.

a *sympolités* make frames with each other,⁶⁷ and these biographies seem to be especially suitable for fulfilling the function of caesuras in the composition.

The positions of the two Thebans and of the two Carthaginians are also notable. Instead of making a frame of the generals representing the same *polis*, Nepos mirrors the Thebans with the Carthaginians. Certainly this is because the commanders from the same state are in very close connection.⁶⁸ We have seen a similar case in the first part (I–IX): those Athenian Lives, which belong to the same *aetas* (that is to the periods of the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars) are close to each other, in two separated triades, while the two Spartan commanders are not side by side, because of the difference of the historical situation and due to the temporal distance. So the so-called frame-like composition is not broken by these pairs of Lives (of the Thebans and of the Carthaginians), they just compose double frames: the Lives of Epaminondas and Pelopidas represent the *aetas* of Theban hegemony, those of Hamilcar and Hannibal represent the *aetas* of the Punic wars. Hence both of these pairs are indissoluble.

It also seems to be a bit 'irregular', at least at the first glance, that the Life of Agesilaus composes a frame with the chapter *Reges*. It could be said that Agesilaus is the third Spartan in the book (and the only one in this part), so nobody was left to him but the *Reges* (similarly to the cases of the above presented Syracusan-Carian and Cardian-Korinthian frames). But it is a more weighty argument that the *Agesilaus* is the only Life of a king in this series: this serves as a basis for making it the mirror-image of the chapter lining up foreign kings. Nepos mentions Agesilaus at the beginning of the *Reges* (*Lacedaemonius autem Agesilaus nomine non potestate fuit rex, sicut ceteri Spartani*. 1. 2) partly to justify dealing with him, a king, among the generals,⁶⁹ partly to allude to the structural connection of the *Agesilaus* with the *Reges*. In my opinion this frame-like connection was the reason for Nepos to insert the Life of the Spartan right at this point. He intended the *Reges* to be the closure of the series of the Greek generals (cf. *hi fere fuerunt Graecae gentis duces*. *Reges* 1. 1), so he had to move the *Agesilaus* from its chronologically valid place to let the frame-structure become manifest.

To sum up, our structural examination has led to the following result: the book can be divided into three parts (I–IX; X–XIV; XV–XXIII); in each part, on the basis of the origin of the generals, Nepos sets the biographies in a frame structure. There are Athenian generals in the focus of the book and of each part, framed partly by their fellow-citizens (cf. the first part), partly by those from other *poleis*. In contrast to the previous hypotheses, this frame-composition is proved to be valid and extendable to the whole book, and seems to be a coherent, consciously constructed composition. Moreover, on the basis of this structural principle, we have found adequate

⁶⁷ In my opinion, the frame-structure was a novelty of the second edition, so Nepos must have had to alter the sequence of the generals included in the first edition to fit it to the new structural conception, in which the Lives without a pair could not be inserted in a different manner.

⁶⁸ It has been pointed out several times that Nepos himself made clear the connection of the *Hamilcar* and the *Hannibal* (cf. *Timoth.* 4. 5; *Reges* 3, 5), the relation of the *Epaminondas* and the *Pelopidas* seems to be self-evident as well (cf. NIPPERDEY–WITTE [n. 2] 7).

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ages.* 1. 2: *nomine magis, quam imperio*; cf. n. 37.

answers to *all* of the unanswered questions concerning the frequently mentioned chronological discrepancies.⁷⁰

(7) But can this frame-like composition be proved to be valid even if we confront it with Nepos' literary and historical conceptions? This question must not be evaded, since the biggest deficiency of the former examinations was exactly that the formal and the inner considerations, the coherence of the supposed structure and the content of the book could only be outlined roughly. What was the purpose of the author as a *historian* in ordering the Lives of the generals in this way?

Nepos was fully aware of the differences of historiography and political biography, and made it clear that he wants to write a biographical work.⁷¹ However, in spite of the numerous differences, there is a common element in these two genres: both of them treat history. The Book on Foreign Generals also comprehends a significant period of the history of Hellas (from the Persian wars to the struggles of the *diadochoi*), moreover by including the Carthaginian generals it exceeds its bounds. Though the Lives of illustrious commanders Nepos presents these approximately three hundred years in essence continuously.

It should not be neglected that Nepos was not only a biographer but a historian, too (cf. *Chronica*), for whom it must have been a hard task to decide which generals are worthy of being included in the book and which have to be omitted.⁷² Let alone the fact that some of the commanders were of the same age, were contemporaries, more of them were connected to the same historical facts. It must have been quite a hard problem to arrange them in order and, at the same time, to avoid repetition. In view of these it is not proper to condemn the author for departing from the chronology here and there. Otherwise I am convinced that the sequence of the biographies, formed by conscious planning, has to be interpreted as a device of historical thinking or as a manifestation of the author's approach to history.

We have hinted at the fact several times that Nepos was aware of the *aetates* of Greek history which guided him in arranging his generals in the series. After all the aim of Nepos was not only to *introduce* the selected generals, or to make his readers acquainted with the changings of hegemony (*translatio imperii*), but, searching for the causes, to learn a lesson of universal validity from the biographies, from the deeds and characters of his commanders. Although Nepos' view of history is built from some *topi* obviously forming a system, with the help of it the historical facts and processes can be interpreted on the grounds of the same principles: similarly to other ancient writers Nepos interprets history as a living organism emphasizing that all states have the same nature (cf. *Milt.* 6. 1: *quo facilius intellegi possit eandem omnium*

⁷⁰ On the problem of the reversed sequence of the last three Greek biographies, *Eumenes*, *Phocion*, *Timoleon*, see below; cf. n. 82.

⁷¹ Cf. *Pelop.* 1.

⁷² Jenkinson for example considers it "surely a serious omission" that the biography of Brasidas is omitted by Nepos from the series (JENKINSON, E. M.: *Genus scripturae leve: Cornelius Nepos and the Early History of Biography at Rome*. In *ANRW* I. 3. Berlin 1973, 713); also from this observation it is evident that the selection of the generals was a question of individual consideration.

civitatum esse naturam).⁷³ To quote professor László Havas: “Unter dieser gemeinsamen Natur versteht er aber, daß die den Aufstieg vorantreibende einstige Einfachheit allmählich verlorengeht und daß der Machtanstieg einzelner Völker immer mehr mit dem Verfall der Moral verbunden ist. Natürlich tritt der Rückgang erst an einem bestimmten Punkt des Wachstums ein, dann aber gesetzmäßig. [...] Laut Nepos besteht der Verlauf der Geschichte an sich darin, daß, wenn das eine Volk schon die Höhe seiner Entwicklung erreicht hat, nahezu gesetzmäßig die Blütezeit eines anderen Volkes beginnt.”⁷⁴

Summarizing her narratological examinations, Anselm came to the conclusion on the basis of the above quoted remarks of Havas that the messages transmitted by the single Lives are emphasized and systematized by Nepos on the macrostructural level of the book. The connection of the view of history and the principles of composition regarding chronology as a secondary aspect is clearly apparent in selecting the generals and in arranging their Lives to present the *translatio imperii* (according to Anselm the title of the first *dekas* should be “Die Glanzzeit Athens”, of the middle *trias* “Das Ende der Athenischen Hegemonie” and of the second *dekas* “Der Niedergang der fremden Welt”), and in this manner, by revealing the reasons of the *translatio imperii*, to relate the rise and the decline of a state with the abilities and characters of its actual commanders (one of the central key-ideas of the first *dekas* is e.g. *libertas*, by means of which the control over the leaders can be kept by the community, while in the second *dekas* the deeds of the generals determine the fortune of the whole state).⁷⁵

We can state with Anselm that the themes underlined in the Lives as well as the principles of composition are closely related with demonstrating the *translatio imperii* and with the author's organic view of history. After all Anselm also supposes a kind of frame-structure, clearly seeing that the three Athenian biographies placed in the middle of the book compose its axis. But by regarding the *dekades* before and after it as coherent units (cf. the titles given to both parts), although she divides them, to some extent Anselm simplifies the questions concerning not only the structure of the book but the historical thinking of the author as well. In my opinion Nepos suggests more complex and direct messages but these cannot be brought to light by the division supposed by Anselm. If we accept that the third part of the book starts with the *Epaminondas* (and not with the *Datames*, which has to be regarded as a *caesura*) and, similarly to the first part and to the entire book, is arranged in a frame-structure, we can notice that while presenting “den Niedergang der fremden Welt” Nepos places an Athenian Life (*Phocion*), and thus Athens itself again, in the middle.

In the analysis of Anselm, the significance of this biography is lost, because she regards Phocion as only one of the generals through the Life of whom Nepos displays ‘the decline of the foreign world’. The fact, however, that Nepos after presenting

⁷³ Cf. HAVAS, L.: Geschichtsphilosophische Interpretationsmöglichkeiten bei Cornelius Nepos. *Klio* 67 (1985) 502–506.

⁷⁴ HAVAS (n. 73) 504. Cf. HAVAS, L.: Zur Geschichtskonzeption des Cornelius Nepos. *Acta Ant. Hung.* 31 (1985–1988) 401–411; DIONISOTTI (n. 6) 36.

⁷⁵ Cf. ANSELM (n. 31) 119.

the last glorious period of Athens inserted another Athenian Life has to be of significant importance: the position of the *Phocion* (XIX) in the series as well as its content must convey important messages. Evidently it is much more significant than the remark of Leo according to which the inclusion of the *Phocion* is not in opposition to the summarizing sentence of the *Timotheus* (quoted above several times), regarding that Nepos declares right at the beginning of the Life that its title-hero became famous for the most part not because of his military career (*etsi saepe exercitibus praefuit summosque magistratus cepit, tamen multo eius notior integritas vitae quam rei militaris labor. itaque huius memoria est nulla, illius autem magna fama. Phoc. 1. 1*).⁷⁶

Before commenting on the selection and the inclusion of this Life to the given place we have to shed light upon some issues of its content. In the first *caput* of the *vita* Nepos emphasizes the virtues of the title-hero: *integritas vitae; cognomine Bonus est appellatus; fuit enim perpetuo pauper, cum divitissimus esse posset*. From the second *caput* there comes a turn in the life of Phocion (*extremis temporibus magnum odium pervenit suorum civium. 2. 1*) and, in connection with that, in the judgement of Nepos on him: because of his bad advice (*quod patriae male consuluerat. 2. 2*) and betrayal (*ab Agnone accusatus, quod Pireum Nicanori prodidisset. 3. 4*), because of leaving his friend Demosthenes in the lurch (*hunc non solum in periculis non defendit, sed etiam prodidit. 2. 3*) Phocion had become unworthy of his former fame both as a politician and as a man. At the end of the Life, however, Nepos makes his readers feel pity for Phocion to some extent, who was expelled by his enemies, and, although a part of the citizens felt pity for him (*alii, reminiscetes veteris famae, aetatis misererentur*), the will of the majority was to condemn him to death (*plurimi vero ira exaceruerentur propter prodicionis suspicionem Piraei maximeque quod adversus populi commoda in senectute steterat. 4. 1*) and not to pay even the last honours to him.

Although Anselm also recognizes that there is a kind of connection between the *Phocion* and the other Athenian Lives in respect both of the structure and the content (cf. “Nepos nimmt das Strukturschema [i.e. treating the military career separately from private life] der Lebensbeschreibungen der Athener auf. [...] Phokion reiht sich ein in die Gruppe all der Athener, die unverdientermaßen dem Neid ihrer Mitbürger zum Opfer fallen. Bei Phokion ist die *invidia* sogar zum *odium multitudinis* gesteigert”),⁷⁷ still she does not assign importance to this observation when dividing the book, and besides that, revealing the conception of Nepos. While she clearly sees that Phocion is portrayed unfavourably or at least ‘als eine moralisch und charakterlich zweifelhafte Persönlichkeit’,⁷⁸ still she does not search for the causes either of the contrast to the rest of the Athenians introduced encomiastically or of the resemblance to the judgement on Pausanias and Lysander one-sidedly condemned by the author.⁷⁹ As we have seen, the Lives of the latter play a significant role in the first part of the

⁷⁶ Cf. LEO (n. 5) 196.

⁷⁷ ANSELM (n. 31) 141.

⁷⁸ ANSELM (n. 31) 142.

⁷⁹ McCarty points out that Nepos disapproves of Pausanias and Lysander unambiguously and exclusively, and that there are only three biographies in the series (*Dion, Pelopidas, Phocion*) in which the good and the bad characteristics are balanced; cf. MCCARTHY (n. 65) 388.

book as opposites of the Athenians to enhance their glory. Phocion, characterized to some extent similarly to the Spartans, should also be regarded as an opposite of all the Athenians treated earlier in the series.

Nepos inserts another Athenian after the *Timotheus*, presents him in a form similar to the Lives of the Athenians but paints an entirely different picture of him – in my view, this fact must be in close connexion with the interpretation of history by the author as well as with the principles of the composition of the book. In the first part of the book the biographies mainly depict Athens – its rise (I–III), flowering (V), defeat from Sparta and the consequences of it (VII–IX). It is also meaningful that Nepos places glorious Athenians in the very middle of the book (XI–XIII), but these generals commanded their state when it was over the peak of its fame and power, from this time (cf. *extrema aetas*) on the decline cannot be stopped. Nevertheless, Athens, although without a supreme military power, still existed: that is what Nepos wants to signal and emphasize by inserting one, and *only* one, Athenian (XIX) in the third part of the series (while in the previous sections the Athenians outnumbered the others).

Although the period hallmarked by the generals of the middle *trias* can be considered as a turning-point also in the history of Hellas, primarily it is Athens that changes here. The author focuses attention on showing what the formerly glorious Athens was converted into and why this had happened: Phocion's state was over its zenith, fallen to the Macedonian expansion and the long-lasting subordination in the period of the *diadochoi*, which was caused considerably by the deeds and character of its commander Phocion – at least in his Life he is depicted to emphasize this message.⁸⁰ This is the reason why Phocion, in contrast to his Athenian predecessors, is not given unambiguous praise by Nepos. While we do not dispute that the main theme of the third part (XV–XXIII) is 'the decline of the foreign world' (to what the *Datames* can be attached in some respect), but it has to be observed that again there is an Athenian in the focus of this section, since the other Lives serve, in the strictest sense of the word, as frames to the *Phocion*. This does not mean that those are of no importance, however, the central position of the Phocion-*vita* transmits additional messages.

(8) Regarding that in the whole book (and in each part of it) Athens is in the focus, it can be stated that in the 'frames' of the Lives of generals Nepos also reports the '*Biography of Athens*'. In the consciously chosen, characterized and placed *vitae* of the *Athenian* generals, the *Life* of Athens can be traced from its rise over a turning point to its becoming unimportant.⁸¹ Thus Nepos illustrates the nature of history as

⁸⁰ The Nicanor-episode has only been preserved by Nepos (*Phoc.* 2. 4–5); cf. ANSELM (n. 31) 142.

⁸¹ Among others exactly the narratological analyses of Anselm reveal that, apart from some exceptions (e.g. *Timoleon*), the inner structure of Nepos' biographies is not linear but a kind of framework: in most of the *vitae* there is a turning-point giving the impression of a dramatic *peripeteia*. This editorial effort of Nepos can be discerned on the level of the structure of the book as well (a correlation which has not been recognized yet), therefore it supports the hypothesis that the generals are ordered in a frame-structure, and that, by placing the Athenians in the centre of the book, Nepos considers it a fundamental aim to present the *drama* of Athens.

an organism primarily through the example of Athens, and this is the *polis* through the fortune of which we can observe and understand the causes and the consequences of the *translatio imperii*.

In connection with this intention the author *decides* to deviate from the chronological order at some points of the series: it is due to this decision that Lysander stands before Alcibiades in the line, Epaminondas does not step between the Athenians in the middle, and Agesilaus comes only after the Thebans. To the problem that Timoleon does not stay in his 'proper' place after Phocion, we can temporarily accept the solutions offered by others.⁸² But the question can also be formulated otherwise: Why does Eumenes precede Phocion? The answer to this question, among others concerning further structural issues of the book, will be the subject of another paper.

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⁸² According to Dionisotti the place of the *Timoleon*, 'which is the only one seriously out of chronological sequence [...] concludes the series of figures from Greek history', can be explained by the intention of Nepos to emphasize his political stand-point: 'this life is, from beginning to end, a veritable hymn to *libertas*' (DIONISOTTI [n. 6] 40). Anselm argues that Nepos wanted to direct the attention of his readers to Sicily, which is a seat of operations of the Punic wars (cf. ANSELM [n. 31] 63), and that is why the *Timoleon* comes last.