

## REVIEW–DISCUSSION

### A NEW COMMENTARY ON NEPOS

Francesco Ginelli, *Cornelius Nepos: The Commanders of the Fifth Century BCE. Introduction, Text, and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 368. Hardback, £157.50/\$200.00. ISBN 978-0-19-883613-1.

When the last scholarly edition of Nepos' text was published, his reputation as an author was so low that one reviewer suggested that it was doubtful whether Nepos would 'need (or deserve) to be edited again'.<sup>1</sup> This attitude was the culmination of a trend started over a century and a half ago, when Karl Nipperdey wrote the first modern commentary (1849) on Nepos' surviving works, which underwent several revisions culminating in Witte's edition of 1913. Nipperdey deliberately imparted this negativity over concerns that Nepos' work, viewed as thoroughly erroneous, would impart falsehoods to schoolchildren reading him. Later, Norden added a condemnation of style in the *Kunstprosa*, which coloured subsequent assessments just as decisively, the nadir being Horsfall's notorious—and now thoroughly discredited—verdict of Nepos as an 'intellectual pygmy' in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*. Though a rehabilitation of this author has been well under way for some time, with positive reassessments by T. P. Wiseman, Joseph Geiger, Fergus Miller, Carlotta Dionisotti, Rex Stem, and others, Witte's final revision of Nipperdey's commentary (last reprinted in 2002) has, until now, remained the best available. Horsfall wrote a learned commentary on what is widely seen as the most important of Nepos' biographies, the *Life of Atticus*, but after more than a century, a new commentary on the *Lives of the Foreign Commanders*—a work no less important—has been badly needed.

Francesco Ginelli's admirable volume on the first eight of Nepos' lives (with more to come) fills this need, and in quality, scope and judgement excels in every area one would expect a commentary to. First and foremost, it facilitates a understanding of the editorial decisions behind the current text, and demonstrates good judgement when mediating differences in the latest prior editions. Second, it usefully illuminates matters of grammar, syntax,

<sup>1</sup> Winterbottom (1979).

semantics and style, and contextualises Nepos' writings in the evolution of Latin prose. Finally, it provides thorough orientation with regard to the historical events Nepos depicts, their relationship to the wider record, and the author's contemporary setting.

Looking at these in order, Ginelli examines a well established text, leaving little room for anything but light retouching. He unpacks the latest *apparatus critici* and illuminates the text's evolution and the rationale behind editorial decisions. When differences arise between the latest versions, those of Malcovati and Marshall, Ginelli acts as a referee. A few times he deviates from both to defend the decisions of earlier editors, especially versions adopted by Guillemin in her Budé edition (1923), usually cited only to demonstrate what Marshall and Malcovati have rejected. A few times Ginelli proposes emendations that deviate further, some of which, to this reader, seem unnecessary.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, I agree with the decision to athetise *regi Lacedaemoniorum* at *Them.* 4.2, and in general Ginelli's reasoning as an editor is observant, able, and even sagacious.<sup>3</sup> Some emendations defend Nepos' intelligence and competence. For example, at *Them.* 8.5, Ginelli acutely demonstrates how Guillemin and Malcovati's adoption of *quis*, instead of the variant *qui*, reflects the author's careful attention to Thucydides, while the expungement at *Them.* 4.2 (see above) removes an imputed error.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, his adoption of Winstedt's arguments (supported by Hofmann-Szantyr) for keeping *vimque* at *Thras.* 1.4 (*contra* Malcovati and Marshall) is convincing (though another parallel from Nepos would be nice). In general, Ginelli has diligently worked his way through the scholarship behind the apparatus and left behind a polished version of his notes to light the way. Throughout, he nimbly uses the relevant grammatical, syntactic and stylistic compendia to defend his text.

To turn to the second set of considerations (grammar, style, etc.). In all of this Ginelli is very good. He demonstrates the salient features of sentence

<sup>2</sup> E.g., the insertion of <*in*> to prevent the ellipsis of a preposition at *Them.* 1.4, first proposed by Fleckeisen, and, at *Them.* 2.7, the addition of <*omnia*> between *suaque* and *conferrent*, to make the text more consistent with what is seen further down in *Them.* 2.8, and with a use of *sua* with *conferre* found in Caesar. Here (Nep. *Them.* 2.8) however, Nepos uses a relative clause to limit *omnia* to movable property, while in Latin *sua* by itself is amply attested as a substantive. Finally, Ginelli follows Halm to change a demonstrative, *his*, to *iis* (at *Paus.* 2.2), but provides no rationale for doing so.

<sup>3</sup> Though I disagree with some decisions—e.g., the refusal to adopt Riedenauf's *ne* at *Alc.* 8.5, or either Malcovati or Marshall's text at *Them.* 6.2 (*ullam urbem habere*)—they are well-supported by reason and possibility.

<sup>4</sup> Other good defenses of expungements *contra* Malcovati and Marshall can be found at *Them.* 7.6 and *Thras.* 3.1.

structures, facilitates close reading through lexicographical precision (e.g., discussions of the terms *prudencia* and *felicitas* at *Milt.* 2.2, and *potestas/potentia* at *Milt.* 8.1, the rare meaning of *capti* at *Milt.* 2.5, the acute discussion of *lectores* at *Lys.* 2.1), and highlights archaic, forensic, legal, military, or colloquial language. He shows how Nepos at times adapts his sources to reflect a Roman audience and culture (e.g., the use of *optimates* to refer to the Athenian oligarchs), and meticulously details features of style and rhetoric (homoiototon, hyperbaton, climax, metrical clausulae, *figura etymologica*, etc), rare words and usages, those attested for the first time, or *hapax legomena*. On rare occasions he faults clumsy style. To voice three minor complaints: discussions of less rare usages feel, at times, a bit overdone, especially when they reproduce lengthy lists pulled from the *TLL*, compendia, etc. that interested readers could consult on their own. Second, on a few occasions Ginelli might rein himself in more, as some discussions are unneeded.<sup>5</sup> Finally, at times the terminology is applied unevenly—e.g., terms such as ‘iunctura’ initially appear frequently but tend to disappear as the text progresses.

Moving on to historical events and sources: a good commentary on Nepos faces two main challenges—the complicated relationship, first, between Nepos’ version and those of the other sources, and, second, between Nepos’ text and his contemporary world, which colours his narrative of the past. With regard to the first challenge, the author’s compressed biographical survey is extensive, spanning four centuries, from the late sixth to the early second century BCE. Moreover, during the nineteenth- and twentieth-century nadir of the author’s reputation, it was assumed that he plagiarised earlier biographies or was an unskilled compiler, incompetent at worst and (barely) mediocre at best. Recent scholarship, however, has revealed that this oversimplifies things considerably. Rather, Nepos most likely utilised and reworked the narratives of Greek historians directly and extensively, and attention to nuance shows that he did so adeptly and thoughtfully, especially when we do not project modern expectations, but judge him by ancient standards. What is more, he generally used sources that are now only fragmentary (the exceptions being Thucydides and Xenophon’s *Agesilaus*). This means that any commentary on Nepos must keep an eye on all the extant versions of historical events, and make extensive use of *FGrHist*. The fact that the only extant monograph devoted entirely to Nepos’ sources, by Bradley (1991, a reprint of

<sup>5</sup> For example, only the most elementary readers (for whom the commentary is not designed) need to know that *Asia* (*Milt.* 3.2), refers to Asia Minor. See also the discussion of *hic* and *ille* and the antecedent of *quae* at *Thras.* 1.3, or the relative clause *quod summa ...* at *Them.* 8.4. On p. 126 (*Them.* 2.6), the rundown of the scholarship on *fama* seems somewhat unnecessary, as does the discussion of the phrases *pacem petere* or *pedestribus copiis* at *Alc.* 8.2, and that, at *Alc.* 10.5, ‘*gladius*’ can only refer to a *ξίφος*.

his 1967 dissertation), examines but seven out of the twenty-three lives, demonstrates just how laborious this task is.

Ginelli's attention to Nepos' sources is generally sound (see especially the superb investigation of the characterisation of Alcibiades at the end of his biography). However, I also feel Ginelli is too guarded in attributing frequent overlaps with Diodorus merely to the 'Ephoran tradition' and not, more confidently, to Ephorus himself. This would correspond to the known stature of this source during Nepos' time, and account for the extensive overlaps for the relevant period, as well as some biases and distortions in Nepos' text.

When their studies overlap, Ginelli often confirms but at times contradicts Bradley's observations—not always, it seems, correctly.<sup>6</sup> I do not, moreover, agree with his assertion (43, 276) that Nepos 'strictly follows' Xenophon's *Hellenica* in the *Thrasylulus*. This contradicts Leo's assertion that there is no trace of the *Hellenica* in the lives.<sup>7</sup> Here, Ginelli follows Luciano Canfora,<sup>8</sup> who bases his contention on three faint textual parallels but does not consult Diodorus' Ephorus-based account, which, as Bradley has demonstrated, shows that Ephorus generally dominates Nepos' narrative for the overlapping period. If Canfora had done so, he would have seen that the first parallel he enlists clearly points to Ephorus, not Xenophon (cf. Nep. *Thras.* 2.1: **Phylen** ... *quod est castellum in Attica munitissimum* vs. Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.2: Φυλὴν χωρίον ... ἰσχυρόν vs. D.S. 14.32.1: κατελάβετο τῆς Ἀττικῆς χωρίον ὀνομαζόμενον Φυλὴν. ἦν δὲ τὸ φρούριον ὄχυρόν τε σφόδρα ...). Similarly, while one could argue that Nepos' previous sentence, in a broad sense, overlaps with Xenophon, it also perfectly matches Diodorus where Xenophon does not (cf. Nep. *Thras.* 1.5: *triginta tyranni ... servitute oppressas teneret Athenas, plurimos civis ... partim patria expulissent partim interfecissent, plurimum bona publicata inter se divisisset* ... vs. *Hell.* 2.4.1 οἱ δὲ τριάκοντα, ὡς ἐξὸν ἤδη αὐτοῖς τυραννεῖν ἀδεῶς, προεἶπον μὲν τοῖς ἔξω τοῦ καταλόγου μὴ εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ ἄστυ, ἦγον δὲ ἐκ τῶν χωρίων, ἕν' αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ φίλοι τοὺς τούτων ἀγροὺς ἔχοιεν. vs. D.S. 14.32.1:

<sup>6</sup> For example, it seems unlikely that Nepos would invent the number of Spartan ambassadors reported at Nep. *Thuc.* 7.3 by extrapolating the number Thucydides usually reports for Spartan embassies, as opposed to simply confusing it for the number of Athenians sent to Sparta, reported at Thuc. 1.91.3. Moreover, Ginelli asserts that Bradley (1991) 38 n. 35 'follows' Göthe (1878) who 'unconvincingly' suggested that Nepos misunderstood Thucydides, when Bradley himself suggests Ephorus could still be the source. Again, on pp. 183–4, Ginelli rightly suggests that a passage from Diodorus bears closer similarities to a variation from Thucydides than Bradley's citation of Justin, but postulates that Nepos adapted Thucydides instead of relying on his usual known source, Ephorus—who also used and adapted Thucydides.

<sup>7</sup> Leo (1901) 200, followed by Bradley.

<sup>8</sup> Canfora (1993) 159.

Οἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις δυναστεύοντες τριάκοντα τύραννοι καθ' ἡμέραν οὐκ ἐπαύοντο τοὺς μὲν φυγαδεύοντες, τοὺς δὲ ἀναιροῦντες.

Moreover, there are elements in Nepos' narrative that appear nowhere in the *Hellenica*—for example that there were *two* battles after Thrasybulus seized Munichia (*Thras.* 2.5 (*bis repulsi*) cf., as, it seems, D.S. 14.33),<sup>9</sup> and the olive crown awarded to Thrasybulus, which neither Xenophon nor Diodorus mention, but rhetorical sources (associated with Ephorus) notably do. In addition, the famous 'amnesty' is very well attested and Nepos need not have relied for it on Xenophon's barest report (*Hell.* 2.4.43), which does not even mention Thrasybulus.

The other two parallels Canfora draws between Nepos and the *Hellenica* are clearer than the first, yet not sufficient to prove that the former consulted the latter. Nepos claims that Thrasybulus (*Thras.* 2.6) would not allow his soldiers to take the clothes of the dead enemy citizens, but only their arms *and* provisions (*arma ... quaeque ad victum pertinebant*). This reflects Xenophon (*Hell.* 2.4.19) alone but he mentions taking arms and armour (ὄπλα) *only* and does not mention Thrasybulus.<sup>10</sup> The final parallel, that Thrasybulus was killed in his tent (*Thras.* 4.4, *Hell.* 4.8.30) adds but one element missing in Diodorus (14.99.4), who simply may have left out a detail Xenophon, Ephorus and Nepos reported.

<sup>9</sup> Nipperdey and Witte (1913) 93 posit that Diodorus and Nepos reflect the same source here. Ginelli attempts to salvage Nepos' reliance on the *Hell.* by assuming that the *failed* attempt to prevent the Thirty from entering Piraeus (*Hell.* 2.4.11) constitutes Nepos' 'first battle'. However, Nepos explicitly states that the Thirty attacked Munichia twice (*bis*) and, moreover, were shamefully repelled (*turpiter repulsi*) each time. Further evidence in support of Nipperdey derives from the fact that both Nepos and D.S. assert that Thrasybulus left Phyle and immediately occupied Munichia before the two battles (*Thras.* 2.5: *hinc in Piraeum transit Munitiamque munivit*, cf. D.S. 14.33.2: εὐθὺς μὲν ὤρμησεν ἐπὶ τὸν Πειραιᾶ καὶ κατελάβετο τὴν Μουνυχίαν, λόφον ...). Still, in Diodorus' 'second battle' (14.33.3) the exiles are on the offense, not defense. How do we reconcile this? Nepos must have confused Thrasybulus' successful attack on the camp of the Thirty near his base at Phyle (a hilltop fort), resulting in an abject rout of the enemy, with a first battle at Munichia (a hill in Piraeus that the exiles fortified). Diodorus (14.33.1–2), mentions the rout at Phyle and the battle of Munichia in close proximity and this is probably true of his (and Nepos') source Ephorus. Nepos occasionally confuses two elements closely transmitted in a source (see Lobur (2021) 51 n. 68, mostly following Bradley (1991)). Nepos then telescoped Diodorus' two 'battles'—which could strictly speaking be different stages of the same battle—into one battle he refers to as the 'second' battle (2.7, *secundo proelio*). Xenophon does mention reckless failed attacks on Phyle itself as well as Thrasybulus' attack on the Thirty near Phyle (2.4.2–7), but narrates the single battle at Munichia a few sections later (2.4.10).

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Canfora's parallel between τῶν πολιτῶν and *cives enim civibus parcere aequum censebat* is strained, and here Nepos unmistakably reflects contemporary Caesarean propaganda (e.g., Suet. *Iul.* 75.2. Cf. Plut. *Caes.* 45.1).

This all suggests that Nepos and Diodorus follow Ephorus, and that the faint overlaps between Nepos and Xenophon, missing in Diodorus, reflect overlaps between Ephorus and Xenophon which Diodorus omits—it would also explain Nepos’ slight (though significant) variations from Xenophon for matters omitted by Diodorus, as well as elements and sentiments in the *Thrasybulus* that overlap with Pausanias (who used Ephorus) and Isocrates, the latter believed to have been Ephorus’ pupil, and also the apparent melding of Xenophon and Diodorus/Ephorus for the brief description of Aegospotami (*Lys.* 1.2, *Lys.* in general, as Ginelli notes, showing clear dependence on Ephorus). One may further note that the *Alcibiades*, too, contains strong traces of Diodorus/Ephorus, but not Xenophon, for overlapping events (e.g., *Nep. Alc.* 6.2; 7.1; 8.1).

While Xenophon could not have been Nepos’ exclusive, or even main, source for the *Thrasybulus*, another possibility may be that Nepos was familiar with the *Hellenica* (after all, he explicitly uses the *Agesilaus*) and that this familiarity leaked into his account.<sup>11</sup> This leads us to another consideration: Ginelli provides no theory of composition for how Nepos may have worked, and seems to assume that Nepos always follows or adapts one source at a time, when it is possible that he often works and cites from memory, which could lead to compressions and transpositions of elements within a source, and the leakage of sources into each other.<sup>12</sup> Thus, when Bradley sees meldings of Thucydides and Ephorus in the *Pausanias*, Ginelli explains them as Nepos’ adaptations of Thucydides throughout, only to admit that Nepos follows the ‘Ephoran tradition’ at the end of the life.<sup>13</sup> The blending of accounts is

<sup>11</sup> This is supported by Nipperdey and Witte’s (1913) 93 suggestion that Thrasybulus’ willingness to only harm those who struck the first blow (*Nep. Thras.* 2.6) distorts a seer’s advice reported at *Hell.* 2.4.18.

<sup>12</sup> Though Ginelli is comfortable with Nepos’ ability to reconcile sources at *Them.* 2.2 (123). The fuzziness and inaccuracy of Nepos’ writing was normal for his day, and one should bear in mind that modern precision was not possible. For example, at p. 160, regarding *Them.* 9.1, Ginelli argues Nepos preferred Thucydides’ version over ‘the others’, implying Nepos had mastery over the sources the way modern scholars, with the aid of modern apparatus, do. Likewise, when Ginelli says Nepos slightly modifies Thucydides’ transcription of the Serpent Column (*Paus.* 1.3), he assumes this is deliberate and not due to the fact that Nepos may be quoting from memory (in fact he only claims to render the *sententia*)—the limitations of which might lead to slight inaccuracies (as is common in Plutarch, even when quoting *verbatim*).

<sup>13</sup> Again, Ginelli does not always give Bradley’s observations due credit. For example (184), he does not appreciate Bradley’s (1991, at 45–6) clear evidence of source melding at *Nep. Paus.* 2.2. This sentence relies on *Thuc.* 1.128.5, but *προσήκοντές τινες* cannot, as Ginelli asserts, mean *complures Persarum nobiles* (see *LSJ s.v. προσήκω* A.III.3), whereas *πολλοὺς δ’ ... Περσῶν ἀξιολόγους ... ἄνδρας* (*D.S.* 11.44.3) can and does. He also disregards Bradley’s

complicated only if one assumes it is always deliberate and methodical, not, as is usual, inadvertent. It is mistaken to assume a widely read author writing compressed narratives maintained an airtight seal between sources. Moreover, Ginelli does not take into account that Ephorus made use of Thucydides, and that while Diodorus relied on Ephorus extensively, he was an author in his own right and not a copyist.

On the other hand, Ginelli makes excellent observations when defending Nepos from Bradley's occasional charges of carelessness, for example at *Them.* 8.3 when he points out Nepos' need to compress the narrative and fill in narrative gaps with *inventio*, and more astutely at *Paus.* 1.2, through close attention to the possible meanings of *gener*. One of Ginelli's greatest strengths is his keen eye for precise translation (see esp. his commentary to *Alc.* 1.2 (*commendatio oris*) or especially *Lys.* 3.1 (*Itaque hi*)), and he very nicely illuminates the way Nepos' Latin reflects his Greek sources, clever and unnoticed word-play (such as at *Paus.* 5.2), the terminology of political procedure (*Them.* 2.8) and so on. Likewise, he is sagacious in detecting support for Nepos' versions of events—for example when he cites Aristotle and Demosthenes to support Nepos' (*Milt.* 4.5) assertion that Miltiades alone of the *stratego*i urged an attack on Marathon, or when he supports *Them.* 2.8 through reference to the 'Themistocles Decree'. Ginelli also has good observations on likely influences of Cicero on Nepos (at *Milt.* 8.3, cf. *Them.* 8.1, *Alc.* 11.34), and Nepos on Livy (at *Milt.* 7.3, cf. at *Paus.* 4.4).

Turning to the historical record, any commentary on Nepos must orient the reader first, with regard to the events depicted, and second, to the place of

(1991) 52–3 point that Nepos' description of the subterranean hiding place of the Ephors at *Paus.* 4.4 is supported by the scholia to Aristophanes *Ach.* 510, and that Ephorus could easily have provided such a description of the site of the temple. See, too, Ginelli's analysis of *Them.* 8.1 on p. 151, which again relies on Canfora, who does not consult D.S., to refute Bradley (1991) 25–6, who presents good parallels with Diodorus, as well as Ginelli's analysis of *Them.* 8.3 (p. 154). He also omits Bradley's (1991) 26 discussion of the parallels between *Nep. Them.* 8.2 and D.S., and ignores the traces of Ephorus Bradley (1991) 31 plausibly detects in the Thucydides-based *Them.* 10.1–2, only to agree with his point that *Them.* 10.3 mirrors Diodorus/Ephorus, before explicitly shifting back again to Thuc. in 10.4. Rather than constantly defending 'adaptations' of Thucydides that somehow bear resemblances to Ephorus, it is easier to assume that the narratives sometimes stuck together in Nepos' mind, especially given the limitations of ancient methods of composition. Finally, I suspect, for similar reasons, that Ginelli may be mistaken in asserting that Nepos mainly follows Thucydides in the *Alcibiades*, a biography Bradley does not examine. For example, Ginelli asserts (240) that attention to Alcibiades' rhetorical skill (*Nep. Alc.* 3.1) 'distances' Nepos from D.S. 13.2.1. But it is clearly present nearby, in D.S. 12.84, at the very end of the previous book (which may have been part of the same book in Ephorus), which also bears resemblances to *Nep. Alc.* 1.2. Ginelli certainly admits similarities to D.S. later in the life, which he seems reluctant to attribute to Ephorus.

Nepos' version in that record. Regarding the first point, Ginelli again demonstrates a good deal of aptitude, though historians are unlikely to start with Nepos, so he might focus tightly on evaluating only the information Nepos adds to the record.<sup>14</sup> Ginelli does do a good job fine-tuning things and pointing out elements first mentioned by Nepos or unique to his account: for example, that he alone mentions the camp of the Athenians before Marathon (*Milt.* 4.5), or the numbers the Persians employed in battle (5.4), or that the curse against Alcibiades was inscribed on a pillar, or that Alcibiades' (*Alc.* 9.4) defection to Persia was motivated by patriotism, or that Nepos alone of Latin writers praises Theopompus' reliability, etc. At times, though, one senses a bit of 'mission creep', when Ginelli wades into historical matters that have no relevance to Nepos or his text. On rare occasions, he seems a bit contentious regarding opinions that have no bearing at all, as when he attacks (169) Scodel's interpretation of Timocreon of Ialysos' praise of Aristides.

It has become increasingly clear since Dionisotti's groundbreaking article that the *Lives of the Foreign Commanders* have great relevance to Nepos' contemporary world. Like Sallust and Livy, Nepos projects a lot, and thus a good commentary requires attention to the late republic, triumviral and early imperial periods and their sources, in particular because, though many connections have been made, especially by Amerio and Mutschler, there are more still to be made.<sup>15</sup> Ginelli makes many good observations: for example how the portrayal of Lysander (*Lys.* 2.1) resonates with depictions of tyrants in republican prose, or how *Alc.* 4.4 resonates with Cic. *Flac.* 16, and how *Alc.* 11.6 recalls dynastic competition in the late Republic. Yet one might appreciate more attention to the contemporary salience of words and phrases such as *libertas*, *privatus*, *summum imperium potestatemque omnium rerum* (*Lys.* 1.3), *ei ... tota res publica tradita ut ab unius arbitrio gereretur* (*Alc.* 7.1), *e servitute in libertatem vindicaret* (*Thras.* 1.2), or make more of the way Thrasybulus' amnesty is emphatically germane to Nepos' environment, especially in light of Cicero's reference in the

<sup>14</sup> E.g., the lengthy discussion of Themistocles' tapestry metaphor in Plutarch's life (*Them.* 29.3, p. 163) might be omitted.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the description of the Medising Pausanias is close to Cassius Dio's description of Antony, which depends on a source contemporary to Nepos. Cf. Nep. *Paus.* 3.1–2: *non enim mores patrios solum, sed etiam cultum vestitumque mutavit. apparatu regio utebatur, veste Medica ...* and Dio 50.5.2: *καὶ τό τε στρατήγιον βασιλείου ὠνόμαζε, καὶ ἀκινάκην ἔστιν ὅτε παρεζώννυτο, ἐσθῆτί τε ἔξω τῶν πατρίων ἐχρήτο ...* See, too, Plut. *Ant.* 37.1. One may also compare Nep. *Thras.* 2.4: *nam iam tum illis temporibus fortius boni pro libertate loquebantur quam pugnabant* with Cic. *Att.* 16.2.3: *mihī autem <quo> laetiora sunt eo plus stomachi et molestiae est populum Romanum manus suas non in defendenda re publica sed in plaudendo consumere*, in a letter dated just two days from one mentioning Nepos (Cic. *Att.* 16.5).

first *Philippic*,<sup>16</sup> or the way the civic *consensus* at Alcibiades' return (*Alc.* 6.1.) mirrors those in favour of Cicero and Pompey. The misgivings people had about Alcibiades' concentration of power, and the justifications he made in attacking his own *patria* also carry great relevance. To be fair, Ginelli rarely fails to point the reader in the right direction, and perhaps this is all a good commentary really should do.

Ginelli's introduction to Nepos and the text is very good, especially in its careful attention to the evidence (for example the language speaking against a volume *De Regibus*), though he may be a bit too strict contesting the existence for paired Greek and Latin volumes (and compare Frg. 58 Marshall to *Han.* 13.4), or even a volume on Greek historians (one wonders how the reader is otherwise supposed to know what text Nepos refers to at *Di.* 3.2). This is not to deny that Ginelli is careful, sober, and observant. For example, his discussion of the evidence in favour of sixteen rather than eighteen volumes is astute, noting that a gap at *Lys.* 2.3 (which Ginelli later reconstructs through Polyaeus) likely contains the word *partum* that Charisius cites from Book 15 of the *DVI*, while close attention to early editions and the ms *Harvardensis Lat.* 41 corrects Marshall's apparatus, which mistakenly asserts ms support for a chapter *De Regibus* separate from the *Timoleon*.

Moving to matters of compositional structure and influence, Ginelli faults Milne and Anselm's attempts to determine Nepos' artistry in the ordering and structure of the lives,<sup>17</sup> before reviewing studies that trace Nepos' main narrative influence to contemporary *encomia*—an excellent section fully trots this out for the first time through close attention to the sources. The following section seeks to rationalise the effects of Nepos' choice to write biography over history by invoking narratology, and seems a bit out of stride and uncharacteristically less keen than the rest of the commentary. Ginelli then moves to cover general themes in the lives (section 6), the sources (7), then matters of style and grammar (8). The latter two sections are especially commendable for their attention to the earliest studies. Ginelli concludes his introduction with a useful look at the manuscript tradition and general comments on the text he presents.

While the commentary excels in the details, at times one wishes for a bit more awareness of connections to be drawn with lives not covered in this volume. This affects the most basic level on only one occasion, when Ginelli

<sup>16</sup> Projection in the aftermath of Caesar's demise might also explain Nepos' (*Milt.* 8.1) claim that the Athenians were wary of Miltiades' prominence, because the Peisistratid tyranny had ended *paucis annis ante*, the inaccuracy of which Ginelli highlights. At *Them.* 5.3 the term *succumbo* is discussed but there is nothing on the highly salient term *unus vir*.

<sup>17</sup> See Anselm (2004) and Milne (1994).

defends Fleckstein's expungement of *ὄστρακισμὸν* (*Cim.* 3.1), adopted by Malcovati, as a scribal gloss, through the argument that Nepos never writes Greek terms but prefers Latin calques—this should at least discuss the Greek (*προσκύνησιν*) that appears at *Con.* 3.3, which neither Malcovati nor Marshall athetise. Less fundamentally, in discussing the absence of material on Lysander's early career and background, Ginelli might point to the similarly 'unbalanced' *Phocion*, and with regard to his *felicitas* (*Lys.* 1.1.), to similar sentiments expressed in the *Atticus* (19.3, regarding young Caesar) and *Thrasylbulus* (1.4); Lysander's recall might also be compared to Epaminondas' and Agesilaus'.

Nepos is a difficult author to treat in depth and rife with complicated details. Ginelli's account has impressively few peccadillos,<sup>18</sup> none of which rise beyond the level of an inadvertent infelicity (though the omission of a commentary on the preface is puzzling). The breadth of scholarship utilised is commendable, especially for including generally overlooked studies in Italian and Spanish.<sup>19</sup> A subject index and an *index locorum* would have been useful (the latter perhaps not justified for the added bulk). Typos are rare, and only those in the Latin text really matter. A quick scan reveals but two.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> To point out a few things: regarding *FRHist* 45 T 23, one might at least discuss Büchner's assumption (*RE* VIIA: 1204)—based on the words *libero ... secundo* (not *altero*)—that the collection of Cicero's correspondence with Nepos comprised at least three volumes, not two. The discussions of what prompted Nepos' omission of Leonidas (Ginelli 179) might cite Dionisotti (1988) 49, especially since the argument that Nepos excluded him from the series on generals, because he was a king, contradicts Nepos' rationale for including Agesilaus (*Reg.* 1.2: *Agesilaus nomine, non potestate fuit rex, sicut ceteri Spartiani*, cf. *Ag.* 1.2: *mos erat enim a maioribus traditus, ut duos haberent semper reges, nomine magis quam imperio*). On p. 192 the phrase 'a Roman consul could be detained only by his colleague, one of the two tribunes of the plebs, or a Roman citizen ... citing the *provocatio at populum*', is inaccurate and the scholarship cited does not support it. Ginelli would be better served not by Kübler's *RE* article on the consul (n.b. it is in volume IV.1, not VI.1), but rather Enßlin's article on the tribune, especially the section on the *ius coercionis* (*RE* VIA.2: 2475–6). On p. 241 the translation of the phrase *convenire in Alcibiadem* (*Alc.* 3.4) 'to adapt himself' does not make sense (perhaps a typo?), and parallels to Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.26 could be discussed.

<sup>19</sup> Though use might have been made of Yannik Spies' bibliography, especially for early editions. Ginelli might have also included Trevor Luke's (*Histos* 9 (2015) XCVII ff.) worthy discussion of the evidence for a second edition of the *Lives of the Foreign Commanders*—an oversight this reviewer is himself guilty of.

<sup>20</sup> *Thras.* 1.5 should read *tenerent* not *teneret*; *Thras.* 3.2 *Praeclarum* not *Plaeclarum*. A few small ones elsewhere: p. 19 n. 101 mistakes Edna Jenkinson's gender, a few punctuation errors occur on p. 21 n. 108, p. 47 n. 191 *Diom* should read *Dion*, p. 48 *clausolae* should read *clausulae*, p. 189 *clementia* should read *temperantia*, p. 221 (*nutu ... gerebantur*) translate 'nod' instead of 'gesture', p. 271 *Hellenics* read *Hellenica*, p. 286 D.S. 47.13.3 read D.C., p. 255 should have Plut. Before *Alc.* 33.2.

Contrary to what one might expect from an author long deemed simplistic, a commentary on Nepos which aims at comprehensiveness (something Ginelli disavows in the preface but pursues nevertheless) is a tall order, and thus it is not surprising that his first installment covers but one third of the remnants—roughly thirty pages—contained in Marshall’s slim Teubner. The font size of Ginelli’s commentary, moreover, is at least one point smaller than the normal print of his introduction and text.

The minor criticisms this reviewer has voiced should by no means cloud the fact that Ginelli has produced a solid, useful volume, brimming with expertise. It improves our understanding of the text through close, alert attention to fundamentals, and even improves its very foundation. With grounded enthusiasm, Ginelli is currently producing an outstanding commentary on Nepos that will remain the best for a long time.

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