



# The Political Biographies of Cornelius Nepos

*S. Rex Stem*

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The Roman writer Cornelius Nepos was a friend of Cicero and Catullus and other first-century BCE authors, and portions of his encyclopedic work *On Famous Men* are the earliest surviving biographies written in Latin. In *The Political Biographies of Cornelius Nepos*, Rex Stem presents Nepos as a valuable witness to the late Republican era, whose biographies share the exemplary republican political perspective of his contemporaries Cicero and Livy. Stem argues that Nepos created the genre of grouped political biographies in order to characterize renowned Mediterranean figures as role models for Roman leaders, and he shows how Nepos invested his biographies with moral and political arguments against tyranny.

This book, the first to regard Nepos as a serious thinker in his own right, also functions as a general introduction to Nepos, placing him in his cultural context. Stem examines Nepos' contributions to the growth of biography, and he defends Nepos from his critics at the same time that he lays out the political significance and literary innovation of Nepos' writings. Accessible to advanced undergraduates, this volume is addressed to a general audience of classicists and ancient historians, as well as those broadly interested in biography, historiography, and political thought.

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