THE CENTRALITY OF ALEXANDER: FOCALIZATION AND WORLD CONQUERORS IN DIODORUS’S *BIBLIOTHEKE HISTORIKA*

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***Figure 1: A revised version of Kenneth Sacks’s “Spheres of Interest” chart***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Book** | **Greece** | **Sicily** | **Roman Italy** | **Athenian Invasion of Sicily** |
| **XI** | 68 1/2 | 22 1/2 | 1 |  |
| **XII** | 56 1/2 | 17 | 6 1/2 | 4 |
| **XIII** | 43 1/2 | 37 1/2 | <1 | 33 |
| **XIV** | 45 1/2 | 62 1/2 | 7 |  |
| **XV** | 83 | 8 | <1 |  |
| **XVI** | 69 1/2 | 25 1/2 | <1 |  |
| **XVII** | 117 | none | none |  |
| **XVIII** | 74 | none | none |  |
| **XIX** | 85 1/2 | 19 1/2 | 4 |  |
| **XX** | 52 | 52 | 7 |  |

**Diod. 17.1.2: [[1]](#footnote-1)**

ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ τὰς συνεχεῖς πράξεις ἀναγράφοντες ἀρξόμεθα μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου βασιλείας, περιλαβόντες δὲ τὰ τούτῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ πραχθέντα μέχρι τῆς τελευτῆς συναναγράψομεν καὶ τὰ ἅμα τούτοις συντελεσθέντα ἐν τοῖς γνωριζομένοις μέρεσι τῆς οἰκουμένης· οὕτω γὰρ μάλιστα ὑπολαμβάνομεν τὰς πράξεις εὐμνημονεύτους ἔσεσθαι, κεφαλαιωδῶς τεθείσας καὶ συνεχὲς ἐχούσας ταῖς ἀρχαῖς τὸ τέλος.

And in this [book], we will begin describing the continuous actions from the reign of Alexander, including the things accomplished by this king up to his death and we will simultaneously record the things completed at the same time in the known parts of the world; for in this way especially we assume the actions will be easy to remember, having been laid down summarily and the end being continuous with the beginnings.

**Diod. 16.1.1-2:**

Ἐν πάσαις μὲν ταῖς ἱστορικαῖς πραγματείαις καθήκει τοὺς συγγραφεῖς περιλαμβάνειν ἐν ταῖς βίβλοις ἢ πόλεων ἢ βασιλέων πράξεις αὐτοτελεῖς ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς μέχρι τοῦ τέλους· οὕτως γὰρ μάλιστα διαλαμβάνομεν τὴν ἱστορίαν εὐμνημόνευτον καὶ σαφῆ γενέσθαι τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν. αἱ μὲν γὰρ ἡμιτελεῖς πράξεις οὐκ ἔχουσαι συνεχὲς ταῖς ἀρχαῖς τὸ πέρας μεσολαβοῦσι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν φιλαναγνωστούντων, αἱ δὲ τὸ τῆς διηγήσεως συνεχὲς περιλαμβάνουσαι μέχρι τῆς τελευτῆς ἀπηρτισμένην τὴν τῶν πράξεων ἔχουσιν ἀπαγγελίαν. ὅταν δ’ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ τῶν πραχθέντων συνεργῇ τοῖς συγγραφεῦσι, τότ’ ἤδη παντελῶς οὐκ ἀποστατέον ταύτης τῆς προαιρέσεως.

In all systematic historical works, it is proper for the writers to include in their books the complete actions of *poleis* or of kings from beginning to end; for in this way especially we determine history to be easy to remember and intelligible to the readers. For half-finished actions, which do not have the end continuous with the beginning, interrupt the desire of the avid readers, but the actions which embrace a continuity of the narrative up to the end possess a narrative of deeds which has been brought to perfection. Whenever the nature itself of deeds works together with the historians, only then one must absolutely not abandon this principle.

**Diod. XXXII 4.4-5 = *Const. Exc.* 2 (1), pp. 291-292:**

 Ἐν δὲ τοῖς νεωτέροις χρόνοις Ῥωμαῖοι τῆς τῶν ὅλων ἡγεμονίας ὀρεχθέντες συνεστήσαντο μὲν αὐτὴν διὰ τῆς τῶν ὅπλων ἀνδρείας, πρὸς αὔξησιν δὲ μεγίστην ἤγαγον ἐπιεικέστατα χρώμενοι τοῖς καταπολεμηθεῖσιν. . . . οὗτοι δὲ σχεδὸν τὴν ἀρχὴν πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἔχοντες ταύτην ἠσφαλίσαντο φόβῳ καὶ τῇ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων πόλεων ἀπωλείᾳ.

In more recent times the Romans, when they were yearning for rule of the universe, they acquired it through manliness of their arms, and they brought it to the greatest increase by treating those exhausted by war most clemently. . . . And when they held rule of nearly all the known world, they secured it with fear and the destruction of the most distinguished cities.

**Select Bibliography:**

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1. All translations are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)