

## Time Management and Authentication Strategies

Two further clines address the rhetorical structure of historical and biographical narratives: time management and authentication strategies. Time management deals with the interior organization of the discourse. How does the author arrange his or her timeline? Do they structure it according to large, sweeping scenes or around the life-story of an individual (or set of individuals)? Authentication strategy refers to ways an author establishes authority for their claims. Ancient authors frequently recruit source citation as one such method of authorization but this technique surfaces in distinct ways relative to considerations of genre.

### 1 Time Management: Episodic Time vs. Field Time

Martin and Rose drew the important distinction between episodic time, where historical narratives tend to be organized around episodic features (geography/nations, events, political regimes, etc.)—moving more quickly from activity sequence to activity sequence—and field time, where biographical narratives seem more driven by a portrayal of the life experience of their subject, developing slower, more focused narrative.<sup>1</sup> In other words, biographical (field) timelines unfold along the axis of the life of their subjects while historical (episodic) timelines unfold along the axis of some much wider organizational paradigm (e.g. a war or series of wars, the world's history, etc.). This raises another possible cline, then, to consider for ancient histories and biographies.

#### 1.1 *Episodic Time in the Greek History*

The historians consistently arrange their narratives according to episodic time in a variety of ways. This includes macrostructural organization around the histories of wars or civilizations<sup>2</sup> origins of cities,<sup>3</sup> the causes of war(s),<sup>4</sup> acts

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1 J.R. Martin and D. Rose, *Genre Relations: Mapping Culture* (London: Equinox, 2008), 130–133.  
 2 Herodotus 1.1; Thucydides 1.1; Polybius 1.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 1.4.1; Diodorus, *Lib.* 1.1–5.  
 3 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 1.9.1; 1.45.1; 2.1.1.  
 4 Herodotus 1.1.2; 3.1.1; 7.1.1; 9.1.1; Thucydides 8.1.1; Xenophon, *Hell.* 3.1.1–2.

of war(s),<sup>5</sup> famines,<sup>6</sup> temporal sequences,<sup>7</sup> the death of a significant narrative figure,<sup>8</sup> occurrences,<sup>9</sup> and great military strategies and/or achievements.<sup>10</sup>

Polybius' structural reflections on the organizing principles driving the construction of his narrative in book 1 are telling:

In the previous book, I have described how the Romans, having subdued all Italy, began to aim at foreign dominion; how they crossed to Sicily, and the reasons of the war which they entered into against the Carthaginians for the possession of that island. Next, I stated at what period they began the formation of a navy; and what befell both the one side and the other up to the end of the war; the consequence of which was that the Carthaginians entirely evacuated Sicily, and the Romans took possession of the whole island, except such parts as were still under the rule of Hiero. Following these events, I endeavored to describe how the mutiny of the mercenaries against Carthage, in what is called the Libyan War, burst out; the lengths to which the shocking outrages in it went; its surprises and extraordinary incidents, until its conclusion, and the final triumph of Carthage. I must now relate the events which immediately succeeded these, touching summarily upon each in accordance with my original plan.

POLYBIUS 2.1.1–4

Note the rapid pace Polybius sets for his narrative, quickly summarizing each activity sequence in large sweeps before moving on to the next. He organizes his narrative from major scene (e.g. causes of wars, formation of navies, mutinies) to major scene (e.g. ends of wars, beginnings of wars). Polybius says he writes summaries that 'lightly touch upon'<sup>11</sup> (κεφαλαιωδῶς ἐκάστων ἐπιψαύοντες) the events, as he narrates them in successive order. This is exactly what Martin and Rose mean by episodic time. We may compare this with the field time that often drives Greek biographical texts, dealing in much more detail with the

5 Herodotus 4.1.1; 5.1.1; 8.1.1–2; Thucydides 7.1.1–4; Xenophon, *Hell.* 1.1.1; 5.1.1–2; 6.1.1.

6 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 7.1.1.

7 Sunrises: Xenophon, *Anab.* 2.2.1; 4.1.5; days: Herodotus 1.3.1; winters and summers: Thucydides 2.1.1; 3.1.1; 4.1.1; 5.1.1; 6.1.1; 8.1.2; Xenophon, *Hell.* 2.1.1; autumns: Xenophon, *Hell.* 4.1.1; years: Thucydides 2.1.2; Xenophon, *Hell.* 7.1.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 5.1.1; 6.1.1; 8.1.1; 9.1.1; 10.1.1; 11.1.1.

8 Herodotus 2.1.1; 6.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 3.1.1; 4.1.1.

9 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Pomp.* 3.77.1.

10 Thucydides 1.1.23; Xenophon, *Anab.* 3.2; 5.1.2; 6.1.1; 7.1.2.

11 Cf. LSJ, 674.