

The Date of Ephorus' *Histories*

There is a clear scholarly consensus on the key dates in the life and career of the historian Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70). He was born c.400, died c.330 and wrote his *Histories* from the 350's until his death, which places the genesis of this work and most of the work itself well before the rise of Alexander the Great. Yet there are two fragments from the *Histories* that not only mention Alexander, but show an awareness of his epochal career (F217 and F223). F223 is particularly notable since it calculates the total number of years between the return of the Heraclids, the point at which Ephorus began his *Histories* (T8), and Alexander's crossing to Asia, which was yet to be narrated by the time of the historian's death (T10). There is a strong case for placing this fragment at the beginning of the work, which raises the distinct possibility that Ephorus lived and wrote decades later than conventionally thought. Down-dating Ephorus would significantly change our understanding of this influential author.

The argument in favor of a later date is not new (Niese 1909 and Stylianos 1998: 110-13), but it has been roundly rejected (Jacoby 1926, Parker 2011, and Parmeggiani 2011), not because there is a more likely context for F223, but rather because of the supposed strength of the evidence that supports an earlier date. Neither Niese nor Stylianos subject this evidence to critical analysis. Both choose to rely on what they feel are the manifest implications of the Alexander fragments, but that approach has made little headway.

In this paper, I will not present again the positive case for a later date. Instead, I investigate the case for the traditional date, which is in fact much weaker than is generally recognized. This case includes several points, and there is not time to address them all in this presentation. I make a start here by re-examining what Davies 2014: 59 identifies as the linchpin

for the traditional date – the alleged use of Ephorus' *Histories* by Aristotle and his school in both the *Politics* and the various *Politeiai* (Nafissi 1983/84, Bertelli 2004, and Moggi 2014). Since the *Politics* was written in the 320's, Ephorus' work must have been available by the 330's (or so the argument goes). Although there are several overlaps between the *Histories* and the *Politics* / *Politeiai* (F147, F149, F174, F179, and F183), none proves that it was Aristotle and his school that made use of Ephorus and not the other way around. Indeed, Perlman 2005: 302 provides an intriguing argument for the latter possibility when she notes the broadly philosophical perspective of F149. But I conclude here more conservatively that the overlap with Aristotle offers no firm clues about when Ephorus wrote, only that there was a relationship between these two bodies of work.

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