

Ephemerides, historical

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Derived from the adjective *ephémérios* ('daily'), this Greek historiographical genre comprised a journal or basic ledger that organized events under the heading of a given day (cf. Suda E 3903.1, ed. Adler). The most famous, and perhaps the original, example is the now lost "Royal Diaries" (Βασιλεῖοι/ Βασιλικαὶ Ἐφημερίδες) of Alexander the Great's campaigns, which were allegedly compiled by Eumenes of Kardia, a chief secretary (ἀρχιγραμματεὺς) of both Alexander and his father, Philip II of Macedon. These diaries seem to have been aimed at discounting the rumor that Alexander was poisoned but argued, instead, that he died of a fever brought on by drunkenness (fragments collected in Jacoby, *FGrH* 117). It was long thought that they were the basis for Aristoboulus' and Ptolemy the historian's lost accounts of Alexander but may in fact be a later fabrication based on these histories (Wilcken 1894; Kaerst 1905; cf. Pearson 1955; 1960: 185–7, 193–4, 260–1; Bosworth 1988: 157–84). Eumenes' *ephēmerídes* are cited by Plutarch (*V.Alex.* 76, ed. Ziegler), Arrian (*Anab.* 7.25.1–26.3, ed. Roos and Wirth), Athenaeus (10.434b, ed. Kaiber; naming Diodotus of Erythrae as coauthor), and Aelian (*VH* 3.23, ed. Dilts). The genre finds its authoritative Latin counterpart in the *commentarii* of Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars* (Cic. *Brut.* 262, ed. Malcovati; Plut. *Caes.* 22; J.Lyd. *De mag.* 3.32.1, ed. Schamp), though the normal Greek equivalent of *commentarii* is ὑπομνήματα (LSJ s.v.).

Perhaps due to these famous exemplars, the genre was very popular among Greek and sophistic writers in the Roman Empire: for example, Herodes Atticus (Philostr. *V.Soph.* 2.565.12, ed. Kayser; Suda H 545.1), "Dictys of Crete" (Suda Δ 1117.1; here the neuter form Ἐφημερίδα), and "Strattis of Olynthos" (Suda Σ 1179.2). Further, Aulus Gellius' *Attic nights*, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, and Aelius Aristides' *Sacred tales* could all justifiably be assigned to this genre. However, these more experimental works suggest that the genre was malleable, as with diaries of all periods, and the overlap with genres of collection (συλλογή), portent (e.g., Phlegon of Tralles), and miscellany (e.g., Aelian; Gellius) is expected, though clearly fruitful. In Byzantium, the classical exemplars were naturally exploited by the chronographic tradition (e.g., Malalas, ca. 565). The *ephēmerídes* thus offer an important glimpse of the relationships between knowledge organization, genre, and literary reception in the ancient world.

SEE ALSO: Historiography, Greek and Roman.

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