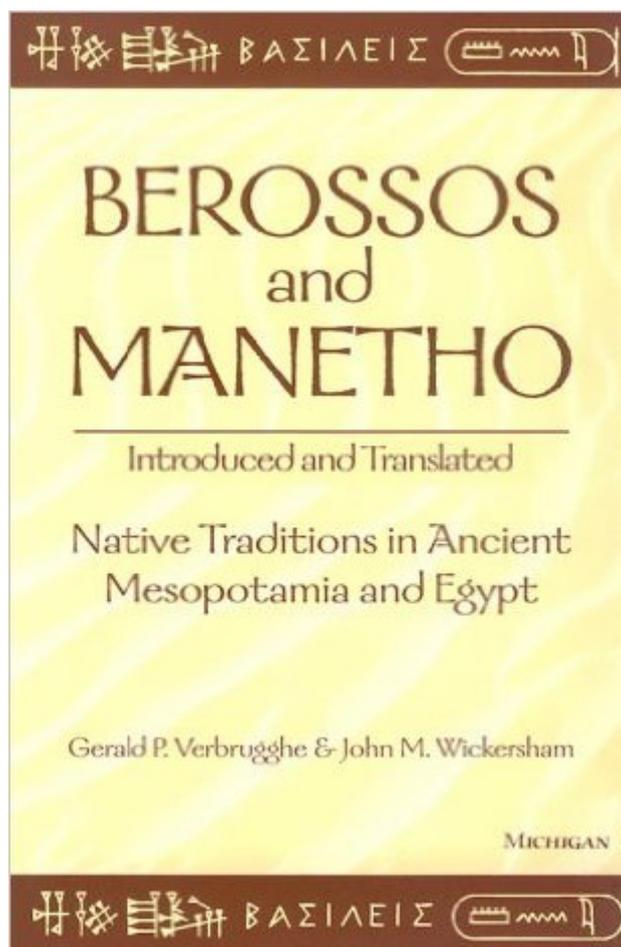


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Berosos And Manetho, Introduced And Translated: Native Traditions In Ancient Mesopotamia And Egypt



Synopsis

Berosos and Manetho begins with a general introduction to the cultural history of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. It then presents a translation of the only known native narratives, written in Greek, of the histories of these two civilizations. The priest Berosos chronicled the past of ancient Babylon from the mythical creation of the world down to Alexander the Great's conquest in the fourth century b.c.e. For Egypt, the scribe Manetho's list of rulers from the reigns of the gods down to Alexander's conquest remains the basis for the dynastic arrangement of the pharaohs that is still used today. Berosos and Manetho offers particular emphasis on and discussion of the languages and scripts used to preserve the glorious past of these lands. Each author receives his own special introduction, which describes his life, the sources of his History, the nature and content of his writings, and his goals and accomplishments. There follows a translation of all the surviving ancient information about each author, and of all that can be recovered of his writings. For the first time, Berosos and Manetho--priests and contemporaries who write just when their lands had been pushed into Hellenization--have been translated in one volume. This volume will appeal to all people interested in ancient Israel, Greek history, and ancient history in general. Gerald P. Verbrugge is Associate Professor of History, Rutgers University. John M. Wickersham is Professor of Classics and Classics Department Chairperson, Ursinus College.

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Customer Reviews

This book collects all the fragments by and about Berosos and Manetho, two historians in the early Hellenistic age who wrote about their own cultures for a Greek audience. I read this for my

Hellenistic Age, which is so far one of the most fascinating courses I've taken at university. Berossos was a Babylonian priest who later moved to Egypt, perhaps to be a fellow at the library of Alexandria. He wrote many works, all in Greek. The most important one is his history of Babylonian culture, beginning with the start of the universe and incorporating Near Eastern king-lists and mythological tales. He also texts on astrology. Manetho, an Egyptian priest, also wrote a massive history of Egypt for Greek audiences. His is the primary literary (e.g. not hieroglyphs on temple walls) source that we have about ancient Egypt. Although coming from different cultures, it makes sense that their writings are collected in one volume. Both wrote in Greek. Both integrate Greek thought into their work, often giving Greek equivalents for whatever deities in their pantheon they were speaking of. One wonders in both cases how much they had to interpret (perhaps distort) their history to be sensible and palatable to a Greek audience. Also, both have their primary writings lost to history, coming down to us only in fragments and paraphrases from later authors that Christian scribes saw more fit to copy. Early Jewish and Christian historians took interest in both of them, so much of what we have of Berossos and Manetho comes from Josephus and Eusebius.

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