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The Early Reception of Berossos

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In this paper, I will review the three main ancient sources for Berossos: the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, Alexander Polyhistor and Juba of Mauretania.¹ I will compare them in order to understand better why and how these three sources became interested in the *Babyloniaca*. When dealing with authors and works preserved only in scanty fragments, firm conclusions are often difficult to reach; still, some of these fragments may give some suggestions of how Berossos was read in the early period and why he was so unsuccessful in the Graeco-Roman world.²

While Alexander Polyhistor and Juba of Mauretania, though not among the best-known authorities, are nonetheless familiar names in ancient historiography, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, a newly published text on papyrus, is rather unknown. However, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary preserves two fragments of Berossos and also gives us an extremely interesting contextual background that helps us better understand the early reception of Berossos. For this reason, I will start with this odd text on papyrus.

The Oxyrhynchus Glossary

Without going into the details of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, I would like to focus on some of its characteristics which are necessary for understanding the context in which Berossos is quoted.³

The Oxyrhynchus Glossary consists of the combination of two different Oxyrhynchus papyri, POxy 1802, a glossary first published by Arthur S. Hunt in 1922,⁴ and POxy 4812, which consists of a series of fragments joining the first papyrus. The latter were found by

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- 1 The sources preserving fragments of Berossos in chronological order are: Alexander Polyhistor (c. 110–40 BC); Vitruvius (second half of the first century BC); Juba of Mauretania (50 BC–23 AD); Pliny the Elder (23/4–79 AD); Seneca (c. 4 BC–65 AD); Josephus (37/8–100 AD); Pausanias (c. 115–180 AD); Tatian (born c. 120 AD); Athenaeus (acme c. 190 AD); Clement of Alexandria (died before 215/221 AD); Eusebius (c. 260–340 AD); Hesychius (fifth or sixth century AD); Agathias (c. 532–580 AD); Syncellus (acme c. 810 AD); Suidas (tenth century AD). Only Alexander Polyhistor and Juba seem to have read Berossos directly, while all the others relied either on these two scholars or on Posidonius of Apamea. On the history of Berossos' reception and tradition, see Schnabel 1923, esp. 94–171; Burstein 1978, 6, 10–11; Verbrugge and Wickersham 2000, 27–31.
 - 2 I will not discuss the other direct user of Berossos, Posidonius of Apamea, who, according to Schnabel 1923, 94–110, and Verbrugge/Wickersham 2000, 27–8, is the one who transmitted all the astronomical fragments of Berossos, because of the debated question of whether Berossos 'the astronomer' is the same as Berossos the author of the *Babyloniaca*. For clear summaries of this debate, see Burstein 1978, 31–2, and especially Kuhrt 1987, 36–44.
 - 3 This introduction is largely based on Schironi 2009; however, since many of the characteristics of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary are fundamental to explaining the ancient reception of Berossos and this text is little known to most classical scholars, I have preferred to summarize the main features of the Glossary in this article instead of simply referring the reader to the 2009 monograph.
 - 4 Hunt 1922.

Edgar Lobel, who did not publish them, and were published as POxy 4812 in 2007.⁵ A complete edition of the entire Glossary followed in 2009.⁶ The fragments are dated on palaeographical grounds to the second half of the second century AD; however, the glossary itself is probably much earlier, most likely dating to a period between the first century BC and the first century AD.⁷

This Glossary collects words of a very peculiar type: they are not literary words, that is, words found in literary authors like Homer or Aristophanes, which needed an explanation; rather, they are non-literary words which mostly belong either to Greek dialects or to non-Greek languages, especially from the Near-East. The extant portions of the Glossary preserve lemmata pertaining to the letters κ, λ, and μ; they are listed in strict alphabetical order, a very rare feature in ancient lexica. Lemmata are set in reverse indentation, followed first by a blank space and then by the explanation, which is almost always accompanied by a quotation from an ancient author, who is the supposed source of the explanation, like in the following example:

Fr. 3, ii, 17:

μενεμανι τὸ ὕδωρ παρὰ τοῖς Πέρσαις. Δείνων ἐ[ν Περσι]κῶν
Menemani : water among the Persians. D(e)inon in Book ... of the *Persica*

Lemma – Explanation – Quotation of an ancient author

This Glossary is unique among the other glossaries preserved on papyrus or in the medieval tradition, for at least two reasons. First, it collects mostly words from Greek dialects and foreign languages, in particular Iranian or Semitic languages. Second, it preserves an astonishing number of quotations from ancient historians, antiquarians, and ethnographers of classical and Hellenistic times. These two features are fundamental in order to understand the early reception of Berossos.

The Glossary's first important characteristic to examine is the interest which it displays in Greek dialects and Near Eastern words. Among the twenty fully preserved lemmata, three are labelled in the Glossary as deriving from Greek dialects (the Euboean μέρορες, the Aetolian μεσοτέλεστον and the Rhodian μινῶδες⁸) and ten as coming from non-Greek languages (the Lydian μερμνάδαι, the Scythian μελύγιον, the Persian μενεμανι and Μίθρας, the 'Chaldean' μίθοργ, μινოდολέσσα, μισαι, and the 'Albanian' μιληχ⁹), and one lemma (μῆτραι), which could belong either to a Greek dialect or a non-Greek language since the Glossary says that it was a word spoken 'in Soli and Tarsus in Cilicia' – an area originally Luwian and Semitic, then colonized by the Greeks and finally under Persian

⁵ Schironi 2007.

⁶ Schironi 2009.

⁷ For a discussion of the dating of this text, see Schironi 2009, 13, 50–2.

⁸ παρὰ Ῥοδ[ίοις?] is partly in lacuna in the papyrus in fr. 3, iii, 18.

⁹ Ancient Albania was a region near the Caspian Sea. The language spoken there was probably a Caucasian language. This gloss μιληχ, however, sounds Semitic since it might be a transcription of the Aramaic *m(e)lĕk*. See Schironi 2009, 105–7.

influence.¹⁰ For most of these ‘oriental’ lemmata it is impossible to find the original Semitic or Iranian word behind them, but the lack of correspondence with attested words in real languages does not diminish the importance of the Glossary. The most interesting feature of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is that it shows a specific interest in non-Greek or dialectal words, and this is almost unique in Greek glossography.¹¹ Moreover, in addition to the lemmata listed above, the Glossary refers to works on Asia¹² and on Phoenicia.¹³ It also uses phrases such as ‘among the Persians’¹⁴ or ‘among the Chaldeans’,¹⁵ which all support the idea that the author of this Glossary had a strong interest in the Near East. Given the ‘exotic’ content of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, quotations from Berossos come as no surprise. Berossos’ *Babyloniaca* are quoted twice,¹⁶ in these two fragments:

Fr. 5, 20:

Βή]ρωσος ἐγ̃ Βαβυλω[νιακῶν

Berossos in Book Three of the *Babyloniaca*

Fr. 10a, 9–10:

] θάλασσα κατὰ Πέρσας. Βήρωσος [
ἐν] ᾧ Βαβυλωνιακῶν.

the sea according to the Persians. Berossos
in Book One of the *Babyloniaca*

As a starting point, given the confusion among later authors, it is interesting to note that this early Glossary cites Berossos’ work consistently as *Babyloniaca* rather than *Chaldaica* and that it quotes it by book; whoever collected these glosses from Berossos could count on a good edition, organized in books, of the *Babyloniaca*.

Before analyzing the fragment that is of some interest for the reception of Berossos, which is the second and longer one, it is necessary to discuss the second characteristic of this glossary: that almost every entry is ‘certified’ by a quotation or reference to some ancient work. This relatively short glossary thus becomes a gold mine of lost authors and lost book titles

10 For a discussion, see Schironi 2009, 99–101.

11 For an overview of Greek glossography and foreign languages, see Schironi 2009, 28–42.

12 Fr. 3, i, 10 and 17–18.

13 Fr. 10a, 6.

14 Fr. 5, 13.

15 Fr. 5, 6.

16 Plus twice in the same column (fr. 3, iii, 15 and fr. 3, iii, 20) at the end of an entry we read a reference to what seems to be a work ‘On Babylon’: τῶν | κατὰ Βαβυλῶνα which could be supplemented as [ἐν] τῶν κατὰ Βαβυλῶνα, ‘in book X of the books on Babylon’. This phrase, however, could also mean: ‘of the people living in Babylon’, i.e. the Babylonians. The former solution – that is, a reference to a work on Babylon – seems to be slightly preferable because the Glossary tends to conclude most of the entries with a quotation from a textual authority. Of course, this does not imply that the work quoted here is the *Babyloniaca* by Berossos, especially because in the other two secure cases where Berossos is quoted (fr. 5, 20; fr. 10a, 9–10), the title of his work is the usual Βαβυλωνιακῶν (in the genitive preceded by the book number) and not τῶν κατὰ Βαβυλῶνα, as here. Therefore, in this discussion I will limit myself to the two certain Berossan fragments.

from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. The list of the authors and works quoted in the Glossary is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Works and Authors Quoted in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary

Author	Title of the work	Date	Fragment in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary
Anonymous authors (no title preserved, name of the author partly in lacuna)			
A ... from Rhodes			fr. 11, 3
Anonymous works (only title preserved, name of the author in lacuna)			
	<i>On Agriculture</i> (Γεωργικά)		fr. 18, 5; perhaps fr. 17, 3
	<i>On Rivers</i>		fr. 3, iii, 16–17
	<i>Scythiaca</i>		fr. 3, i, 1
	<i>Thessalian Constitution</i> ¹⁷		fr. 2, i, 8
	Work 'On Asia' (κατὰ Ἀσίαν)?		fr. 3, i, 10 and 17–18
	Work 'On Babylon' (κατὰ Βαβυλῶνα)? ¹⁸		fr. 3, iii, 15; fr. 3, iii, 20
	Work 'On Libya' (κατὰ τὴν Λιβύην)?		fr. 5, 10
Authors securely attested in the papyrus, but not securely identified			
Asclepiades ¹⁹			fr. 3, i, 6
Dionysius			fr. 3, ii, 20
Glaucus	<i>Description of Places Lying Towards the Left of the Black Sea</i>		fr. 3, ii, 8–9
Heraclides ²⁰	<i>Foreign Language</i>		fr. 3, iii, 13
Authors securely attested in the papyrus and securely identified (chronologically ordered)			
Homer		8 th c. BC?	fr. 11, 5
Andron	<i>War Against the Barbarians</i>	4 th c. BC	fr. 3, ii, 18–19
Aristotle	<i>Constitution of Soli</i>	4 th c. BC	fr. 3, iii, 6–7
Aristotle	<i>Historia Animalium</i>	4 th c. BC	fr. 3, ii, 22; fr. 3, iii, 4
D(e)inon	<i>Persica</i>	4 th c. BC	fr. 3, ii, 17
Xenophon		4 th c. BC	fr. 5, 21

17 By Aristotle or Critias?

18 Berossos' *Babyloniaca*? See footnote 16.

19 Given the content of the Glossary the most likely candidates are: Asclepiades of Myrlea (second/first century BC) or Asclepiades of Cyprus (first century BC?), author of *On Cyprus and Phoenicia*.

20 The most likely candidates are Heraclides Lembus (second century BC) or Heraclides of Cymae (fourth century BC), author of *Persica*.

Author	Title of the work	Date	Fragment in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary
Anticlidides ²¹		3 rd c. BC	fr. 3, i, 5
Autoclidides ²²	<i>Explanations</i> (Ἐξηγητικόν)	3 rd c. BC	fr. 3, iii, 9
Berosos	<i>Babyloniaca</i>	3 rd c. BC	fr. 5, 20; fr. 10a, 9–10
Callimachus	<i>Commentaries</i> (Ῥπομνήματα)	3 rd c. BC	fr. 3, ii, 15–16
Erasistratus	<i>On Cookery</i>	3 rd c. BC	fr. 10a, 7–8
Antenor ²³		2 nd c. BC	fr. 2, i, 5
Apollodorus of Athens	[<i>On Gods?</i> ; <i>FGrHist</i> 244, F 89]	2 nd c. BC	fr. 3, ii, 1
Hegesander of Delphi	<i>Commentaries</i> (Ῥπομνήματα) ²⁴	2 nd c. BC	fr. 3, i, 12; fr. 3, iii, 21
Cassius Dionysius of Utica	[<i>On Agriculture</i>]	1 st c. BC	fr. 3, i, 13
Hestiaeus	<i>On Phoenicia</i>	3 rd c. BC– 90 AD ²⁵	fr. 10a, 5–6

Among all these works, those that we can identify do not go beyond the first century BC or first century AD, with Cassius Dionysius of Utica and perhaps Hestiaeus being the most recent identifiable authors in the list. Most authorities are dated between the fourth and the second century BC. Whoever collected the entries in this Glossary and chose whom to quote to support them seems to have had access only to authors not later than the first century BC or, at the latest, first century AD. This means that, even though the papyrus is dated to the second half of the second century AD, the Glossary itself is almost certainly more ancient.

Both the topic (odd words from Greek dialects and Near Eastern languages) and the quotations from erudite literature from the fourth century BC to the first century BC/first century AD suggest that the Glossary was written in the late Hellenistic or early Roman period. Also, a necessary condition for this type of work is the presence of a good library where these less-than-ordinary authors could be found. While copies of Homer and Xenophon were probably quite easy to find everywhere, all the other authorities quoted in the Glossary are definitely reserved for readers with ‘refined’ tastes and certainly were not best-sellers in antiquity. Only royal libraries that aimed at collecting ‘all’ Greek authors would have had them available. Two places meet these ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ criteria: Alexandria and Pergamum.²⁶ Between these two possibilities, Alexandria seems to be the more likely candidate, not only because of the obvious fact that our papyrus comes from Egypt. In fact, the Library of Alexandria was the largest and most famous in the Hellenistic period and the Ptolemies supported a policy of systematically collecting ‘all’ Greek literature, in the widest sense; hence the Alexandrian Library is the place where all the authorities quoted in the

21 Historian from Athens.

22 Antiquarian from Athens.

23 Antiquarian from Crete.

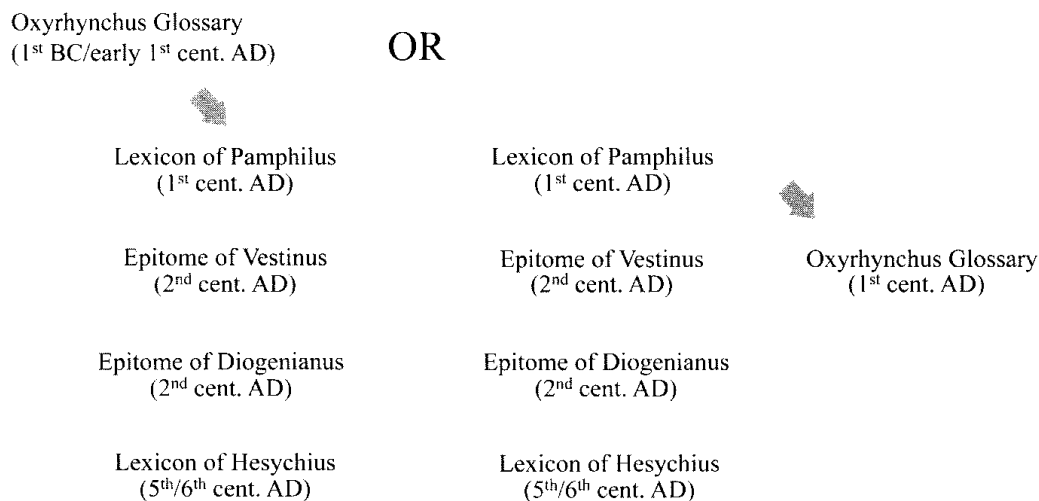
24 On the kings of Macedonia and Syria.

25 The precise dating for Hestiaeus (*FGrHist* 786) is unknown; the terminus *ante quem* is Josephus, who quotes him.

26 For a discussion of these two possibilities, see Schironi 2009, 13–19.

Oxyrhynchus Glossary could most easily be found. There is also further evidence in favour of Alexandria as the place of origin for the Oxyrhynchus Glossary.

First, an analysis of the entries of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary shows that this glossary on papyrus is very close to the Lexicon of Hesychius. This is evident from the nine entries that they have in common, with the difference that those in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary are richer than those in Hesychius.²⁷ Such similarity is unique, that is, these entries, with the same lemmata and the same explanations, are not found in any other Greek lexicon except in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary and in Hesychius. The Lexicon of Hesychius dates back to the fifth or sixth century AD and represents the summa of Alexandrian lexicography because it is ultimately derived from the huge lexicon of the Alexandrian Pamphilus, dated to the first century AD and now lost. The Lexicon of Pamphilus was epitomized in various stages (by Vestinus and by Diogenianus) before being used by Hesychius in the fifth/sixth century AD. The close and unique similarities between Hesychius and the much earlier Oxyrhynchus Glossary on the one hand and the fact that the papyrus Glossary's entries are richer than those in Hesychius on the other make it very likely that the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is also very close to the lost Lexicon of Pamphilus. The Oxyrhynchus Glossary could be either a predecessor of the Lexicon of Pamphilus, which Pamphilus used, or a lexicon derived from Pamphilus, an excerpt of the latter produced in the same environment and around the same years, as Figure 1 illustrates.²⁸



Second, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary quotes Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* according to a different edition than ours, with a different title and a different book division. Twice the papyrus quotes a passage that in our editions belongs to the ninth book of the *Historia Animalium* but the Glossary says that it is to be found 'in Book Eight of *On the Parts in Animals*' (ἐν ἡ Περί τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζώοις μορίων).²⁹ We know that different editions of Aristotle's corpus circulated

27 μέλισσαι ≈ Hsch. μ 719; μελύγιον ≈ Hsch. μ 733; μερμνάδαι ≈ Hsch. μ 884; μέρωψ ≈ Hsch. μ 886; μήτραι (1) and μήτραι (2) ≈ Hsch. μ 1291; Μίθρας ≈ Hsch. μ 1335; μινωδολόεσσα ≈ Hsch. μ 1391; Μινύαι ≈ Hsch. μ 1396; μινῶδες ≈ Hsch. μ 1417.

28 For a full analysis of the relationship between the Oxyrhynchus Glossary and the Lexicon of Hesychius, see Schironi 2009, 43–52.

29 Fr. 3, ii, 22 Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ἡ Περί τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζώοις μορίω[v] referring to Aristotle, *HA* 9.13, 615b25, and Fr. 3, iii, 4 Ἀρι[σ]τοτέλης ἐν ἡ Περ[ι] τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζώοις μορίω[v] referring to Aristotle, *HA* 9.41,

between the Hellenistic and early Roman period.³⁰ In particular, the Alexandrian edition of the *Historia Animalium* and the one by Andronicus of Rhodes were organized in nine books, in which what is for us Book Seven was placed after Book Nine, so what is now Book Nine was then Book Eight, exactly as in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary. Last but not least, the title used in the Glossary for this work of Aristotle is interesting. The *Historia Animalium* is not referred to with the usual Περὶ τῶν ζῴων ἱστορία. The Glossary, as far as the only complete entry allows us to conclude,³¹ refers to this treatise as *On the parts in the animals* (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις μορίων). This is a very interesting ‘title’, because it is actually the *incipit* of the *Historia Animalium*, which reads: Τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις μορίων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἄσύνθετα, . . . , τὰ δὲ σύνθετα . . . : ‘Of the parts in the animals, some are simple . . . some are composite.’ ‘Naming’ a work of poetry or prose by its *incipit* was a typical feature of antiquity and in particular of the Alexandrian grammarians; for example, in the *Pinakes* Callimachus listed both the ‘official’ titles of books and their beginning; in the case of doubtful, multiple or lost titles, the *incipit* was essential to ‘name’ a work.³² Thus the author of the Glossary was following the Alexandrian book division of Aristotle’s *Historia Animalium* and referred to it according to the practice used at Alexandria.

If we think of the Alexandrian Library as the place of origin of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, then it is relatively easy to explain how Berossos could be quoted here. The policy of systematic book acquisition pursued by the Ptolemies was not limited to ‘Greek’ literature but included also ‘foreign’ literature written in Greek, like the *Egyptian History* of Manetho or the *Septuagint*. While an interest in Egyptian history was natural in the Ptolemaic kingdom, an interest in the Jewish Bible was less so. The effort that the Ptolemies put into having the Bible translated into Greek to enrich their library testifies to their attention to foreign history and culture. It is thus not surprising that the Ptolemies took an interest in other cultures and acquired another text that told the stories of the Near East: Berossos’ *Babyloniaca*.

What is the cultural context in which Berossos is quoted by the Glossary? With the exception of Homer and Xenophon, all the works quoted are not literary works. As we remarked earlier, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is not a literary glossary, that is, a glossary conceived to explain a piece of literature, as for example a glossary of Homer. The authors and works quoted in the Glossary belong to another type of written texts: ethnography, history, or writings dealing with ‘technical subjects’ like cults, animals, diet, agriculture, etc. The authors and works of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary are grouped according to some thematic groups in Table 2, which shows that the large majority of works deal with foreign ethnography, and indeed Berossos fits perfectly in this category. He is one among several ethnographers and antiquarians who dealt with the Near East, which is among the main interests of the glossographer that put together this text.

The next question is: what is the focus, the attitude of the glossographer towards this material? None of the glosses derives from fieldwork by the author. Rather, they are the result of the work of a scholar sitting in his library, a scholar who could consult many different ethnographic and antiquarian treatises and select all the ‘exotic’ glosses, which he then collected in his Glossary. The Oxyrhynchus Glossary is thus a bookish, erudite product of a learned man working in a very rich library, most likely the Alexandrian Library. In this

627b33.

30 See Düring 1950, who (ibid., 50) thinks of at least three editions for the *Historia Animalium*.

31 Fr. 3, ii, 22 Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ἡ Περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις μορίω[v].

32 Cf. Call., fr. 433, 434, 436, 443, 444, 449 Pf.; see Blum 1991, 153 and 157.

context, the real focus is ethnographic, not linguistic: the glossographer collected words from all over the ancient world without distinguishing between different languages. Thus, the Glossary does not make any distinction between a word taken from a Greek dialect and a non-Greek ‘foreign’ word. The selection criterion adopted for the words lemmatized in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is the fact that they are ‘strange’. In other words, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is a collection of *mirabilia*, though in the format and with the content of a glossary.

Table 2: Works and Authors quoted by the Oxyrhynchus Glossary according to topics

Greek history and antiquarianism	– <i>Thessalian Constitution</i> – <i>On Rivers</i> – Andron, <i>War Against the Barbarians</i> – Autoclide, <i>Explanations</i> (Ἐξηγητικόν) – Anticlides
‘Foreign ethnography’	– Hestiaeus, <i>On Phoenicia</i> – <i>Scythiaca</i> – Aristotle, <i>Constitution of Soli</i> – Berossos, <i>Babyloniaca</i> – D(e)inon, <i>Persica</i> – Glaucus, <i>Description of Places Lying Towards the Left of the Black Sea</i> – Hegesander, <i>Commentaries</i> (Ἵπομνήματα) – Work ‘On Babylon’ (κατὰ Βαβυλώνα)? – Work ‘On Asia’ (κατὰ Ἀσίαν)? – Work ‘on Libya’ (κατὰ τὴν Λιβύην)?
Greek religion	– Apollodorus [<i>On Gods</i>]?
Philology and history of Greek literature	– Callimachus, <i>Commentaries</i> (Ἵπομνήματα)
‘Linguistics’	– Heraclides, <i>Foreign Language</i>
Biology, agriculture, and diet	– Aristotle, <i>Historia Animalium</i> – Erasistratus, <i>On Cookery</i> – Dionysius of Utica, [<i>On Agriculture</i> ?] – <i>On Agriculture</i> (Γεωργικά)

Berossos in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary

In the Glossary Berossos is thus quoted as a source of ‘linguistic *mirabilia*’, ‘exotic glosses’, among the crowd of other ethnographers and antiquarians, most of whom have not been preserved by the manuscript tradition, exactly like Berossos. Even if the Glossary does not preserve any of the lemmata where Berossos is quoted and only a handful of the entries, it is clear that its main interest is ‘linguistic ethnography’.

Indeed, I would like to suggest that the very fact that Berossos is quoted in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary in part explains his lack of success in ancient times. We know that Berossos is largely ignored by Greek sources, which always preferred Ctesias as a source for Babylonian history.³³ Among the authors who quote Berossos, the earliest ones and also the only ones who directly used Berossos are Alexander Polyhistor and Juba of Mauretania, active between the first century BC and the early first century AD. If we accept the dating

33 Cf. Drews 1973, 116; Kuhrt 1987, 32–33; Kuhrt 1995, 63–4. On Ctesias, see Drews 1973, 103–16 and Kuhrt 1995, 60.

of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary that I have proposed (end of first century BC—first half of first century AD), the Glossary is more or less contemporary with these two authors. However, unlike Polyhistor and Juba, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary gives us a richer context for understanding who was interested in Berossos and why.

Alexander Polyhistor

Alexander Polyhistor (c. 110–40 BC) came from Miletus to Rome as a prisoner in the First Mithridatic War (89–85 BC).³⁴ He became the slave of a Cornelius Lentulus, was then freed and became a Roman citizen in 81 BC. Titles of at least twenty-five works by him are known and this is why he was called Polyhistor. Suidas describes him as a ‘grammarian, pupil of Crates’,³⁵ but this must be taken with a pinch of salt: Polyhistor could not possibly have been a direct pupil of Crates of Mallus because Crates lived a century before Polyhistor.³⁶ Thus, Polyhistor must belong to the ‘Cratetean School’. Given that Crates visited Rome and lectured there in 168 BC, in theory there might have been Cratetean followers in Rome and so Polyhistor could have become a ‘second-generation pupil’ of Crates in Rome. However, Polyhistor arrived at Rome around 85 BC when he was about twenty-five years old. At this age, he had probably already completed his education, and Pergamum seems the most likely candidate for his ‘Cratetean’ background. Even if the scholarship and librarians of Pergamum are less known than those of Alexandria, we know that Pergamum was an active cultural centre in the first century BC³⁷ and Alexander Polyhistor may have been educated there.³⁸

Polyhistor could have gained access to the work of Berossos either in Pergamum or in Rome. A copy of the *Babyloniaca* could have reached Rome in 86 BC when Sulla brought with him the library of Apellicon of Teos (who collected rare books beyond those by Aristotle), or around 67 BC when Lucius Licinius Lucullus opened to the public his library, which was part of the booty from the Third Mithridatic War (73–63 BC). Polyhistor could, however, have read Berossos already in Pergamum. Not only was Pergamum geographically close to Babylonia, but Pergamene scholars like Crates had long taken an interest in the Near East and in the Chaldeans.³⁹ Crates’ pupil Zenodotus of Mallus even thought that Homer was a Chaldean.⁴⁰ We might even speculate that Polyhistor brought with him a copy of Berossos from Pergamum to Rome.

Given that Pergamum and Alexandria were the greatest libraries of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, it is plausible that both of them had a copy of Berossos: the one in Pergamum might have been used by Alexander Polyhistor, and the one in Alexandria might have been used by the compiler of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary.

34 On Alexander Polyhistor, see Jacoby, *Komm. FGrHist* 273; Christes 1979, 38–42; Troiani 1988.

35 *Su. α* 1129 = *FGrHist* 273 T 1: Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μιλήσιος ... ἦν δὲ γραμματικὸς τῶν Κράτητος μαθητῶν. οὗτος συνέγραψε βιβλούς ἀριθμοῦ κρείττους. ... [Alexander of Miletus: ... He was a grammarian of the group of Crates’ disciples. He wrote books beyond counting ...].

36 Crates lived in the first half of the second century BC, while Polyhistor is dated between 110 and 40 BC.

37 Cf. Kuttner 1995, 162.

38 Christes 1979, 38–40 seems to share this view. Jacoby, *Komm. FGrHist* 273, 249, however, thinks that the phrase ‘pupil of Crates’ does not indicate any real affiliation to the Cratetean School but rather indicates Polyhistor’s range of interests, which were closer to those of Crates than to the more philological interests of the Alexandrians.

39 Cf. Broggiato 2001, 181.

40 Cf. *Sch. AT ad Ψ* 79 b (ex.); see Wachsmuth 1860, 28; Pusch 1890, 150–1; Maass 1892, 187; Helck 1905, 7.

Berosos and Paradoxography

Even though Alexander Polyhistor – linked to Asia Minor and Rome – and the author of the *Oxyrhynchus Glossary* – probably linked to Alexandria – lived and worked in very different environments, they seem to have some interesting characteristics in common. As Lucio Troiani already suggested, Polyhistor was writing more as a paradoxographer than as a ‘serious’ historian.⁴¹ Indeed Photius knows Polyhistor as a paradoxographer and not as a historian:

Phot. *Bibl.* 189 p. 145 b 38 = *FGrHist* 273 T 5

τῶν ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου παραδόξων συνειλεγμένων ...

Among the incredible things collected by Alexander ...⁴²

Other ancient sources like Suetonius⁴³ and Suidas⁴⁴ call Alexander Polyhistor a ‘grammarian’, not a historian. This description of Polyhistor as a grammarian and paradoxographer is reasonable in the light of ancient genres: paradoxographic literature was the realm of grammarians rather than ‘serious’ historians. Ever since Thucydides, ‘fabulous storytelling’, myths and wonders were not considered appropriate to history:

Thuc. 1.21.

[...] ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων τεκμηρίων ὁμῶς τοιαῦτα ἂν τις νομίζων μάλιστα ἃ διήλθον οὐχ ἁμαρτάνοι, καὶ οὔτε ὡς ποιηταὶ ὑμνήκασι περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον κοσμοῦντες μᾶλλον πιστεύων, οὔτε ὡς λογογράφοι ξυνέθεσαν ἐπὶ τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῇ ἀκροάσει ἢ ἀληθέστερον, ὄντα ἀνεξέλεγκτα καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ χρόνου αὐτῶν ἀπίστως ἐπὶ τὸ μυθῶδες ἐκνενηκκότα, [...] 22. [...] καὶ ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες αὐτῶν ἀτερπέστερον φανεῖται ...

However, if, on the basis of the evidence produced, one thinks that the events that I exposed were more or less of such magnitude, he could not be mistaken, without trusting more what the poets have sung about those events embellishing and magnifying them, or what the logographers put together in order more to please the ear than tell the truth. Their accounts are difficult to disprove and for the most part, due to the passing of time, have won their way into the fabulous beyond belief ... and the lack of fabulous from my work will perhaps seem less attractive to the ear.⁴⁵

Even if not all later historians followed Thucydides’ strict methodology,⁴⁶ collections of *mirabilia* were developed as a separate genre by another type of scholars: the ‘grammarians’.

41 Cf. Troiani 1988, 20–1.

42 Cf. also *FGrHist* 273 T 4 = Phot. *Bibl.* 188 p. 145 b 28 9.

43 Suetonius, *De Gramm.* 20 = *FGrHist* 273 T 3: ... *Cornelium Alexandrum grammaticum Graecum* ... [Cornelius Alexander, Greek grammarian].

44 Cf. footnote 35.

45 Cf. also Polybius 9.1.

46 For a very good analysis of the various types of historical writings in antiquity, see Gabba 1981. I would, however, distinguish between the genre of paradoxography and that of ‘false history’. In antiquity it seems that a ‘false’ historian – that is, a historian who tells lies – was still considered a ‘historian’; however, collections of *mirabilia*, especially by authors who had a wide variety of interests (like Callimachus or Polyhistor), were another matter and did not belong to the genre of historiography.

Ancient grammarians were not devoted only to the study of language. They were philologists, collectors of proverbs and strange words, hunters of obscure stories about places, rivers and cults. The poet Callimachus with his many works on rivers, islands and names of cities is considered the founder of the so-called 'ethnographic philology'. More interesting for us, Callimachus was considered also the *πρῶτος εὔρετής* of the genre of paradoxography and two titles testify to this: *Collection of Wonders of the Entire Earth Ordered According to Places* (Θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους ὄντων συναγωγή) and *On the Wonders and the Incredible Things of the Peloponnese and Italy* (Περὶ τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ καὶ Ἰταλῷ θαυμασίων καὶ παραδόξων),⁴⁷ even if the latter might only be a sub-title indicating a specific section of Callimachus' collection of *mirabilia*.⁴⁸

As others have noted, the scanty fragments of Polyhistor provide no evidence in favour of a serious historiographic program.⁴⁹ Moreover, the titles and topics covered by Polyhistor (shown by Table 3) confirm that he did not dedicate himself only to historical writings.

Interestingly enough, Polyhistor's titles overlap in topics with the works quoted by the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, where we found many ethnographic treatises and works of scholarship like Callimachus' *Hypomnemata* or Apollodorus' *On Gods*. This 'coincidence' suggests that the compiler of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary and Alexander Polyhistor were both interested in 'ethnographic paradoxography' and curiosities covering mythology, literature, and various other erudite topics.⁵⁰ Berossos is thus quoted by scholars who do not have a specific interest in history or linguistics but are interested in *mirabilia* and curiosities from faraway countries.⁵¹

47 Cf. Su. κ 227 ... [titles of works by Callimachus] ... Κτίσεις νήσων καὶ πόλεων καὶ μετονομασίαι, Περὶ τῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ ποταμῶν, Περὶ τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ καὶ Ἰταλῷ θαυμασίων καὶ παραδόξων, Περὶ μετονομασίας ἰχθύων, Περὶ ἀνέμων, Περὶ ὀρνέων, Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένη ποταμῶν, Θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους ὄντων συναγωγή. For a survey of paradoxographers from Callimachus to the Imperial age, see Giannini 1964.

48 Cf. Giannini 1964, 105–9.

49 Troiani 1988, *passim*, and especially 28–30, 32–3, 37–9.

50 Already Jacoby suggested that Polyhistor was a follower of the 'ethnographic philology', as initiated by Callimachus, but not limited to his school. Cf. Jacoby, *Komm. FGrHist* 273, 252–3; Troiani 1988, 14 and 20.

51 Syncellus (*Ecl. Chron.* 28.17 = *FGrHist* 680 F 1b) accuses Polyhistor of having inserted *mirabilia* in the original text of Berossos: Ἐκ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Πολυίστορος περὶ τῶν πρὸ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ βασιλευσάντων δέκα βασιλέων τῶν Χαλδαίων καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ Νῶε καὶ τῆς κιβωτοῦ, ἐν οἷς **καὶ τινα διὰ μέσου τερατώδη φάσκει ὡς τῷ Βηρώσσῳ γεγραμμένα** [*'From Alexander Polyhistor concerning the ten kings of the Chaldeans who reigned before the flood and the flood itself, and concerning Noah and the ark, in which he also inserts some fabulous stories, as if written by Berossos'*]. Similar is the accusation of Eusebius (*FGrHist* 680 F 1a, from the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle*). However, these two particular texts cannot be used as evidence for Polyhistor's interest in *mirabilia*, as Johannes Haubold rightly pointed out to me. Eusebius and Syncellus had an agenda in reading Berossos, i.e. that of confirming Biblical history; therefore, all the monsters or similar 'wonders' which were present in Berossos (for example in the creation story) had to be considered by them as *mirabilia* extraneous to the 'real' and original Berossos. This is why Eusebius and Syncellus considered them as inserted by the 'pagan' Polyhistor. On these two passages, see also Troiani 1988, 16–17.

Table 3: Works by Alexander Polyhistor according to topics

Mirabilia	– <i>Collection of Marvellous Things</i>
‘Foreign ethnography’	– <i>Aegyptiaca</i> – <i>On Bithynia</i> – <i>On the Euxine Sea</i> – <i>On the Illyrian Region</i> – <i>Indica</i> – <i>On the Jews</i> – <i>Italica</i> – <i>On Caria</i> – <i>On Cilicia</i> – <i>Cretica</i> – <i>On Cyprus</i> – <i>Libyca</i> – <i>Lyciaca</i> – <i>Periplous of Lycia</i> – <i>On Paphlagonia</i> – <i>On Rome</i> – <i>On Syria</i> – <i>Collection of Things about Phrygia</i> – <i>Chaldaica</i>
Greek religion	– <i>On the Oracle in Delphi</i>
Philology and history of Greek literature	– <i>On the Typical Linguistic Usages of Alcman</i> – <i>Commentaries on Corinna</i>
Philosophy and philosophical doxography	– <i>Successions of Philosophical Schools (Φιλοσόφων διαδοχαί)</i> – <i>On Pythagoric Symbols</i>

The way in which in his fragments Polyhistor phrases his quotations shows his attitude extremely well:

Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἄβιοι = *FGrHist* 273, F 14:

Ἄβιοι ... Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐν τῷ Περὶ Εὐξεινοῦ Πόντου φησὶν, ὡς “Διόφαντος εἶπεν οὕτω λέγεσθαι αὐτοὺς διὰ τὸν Ἄβιανὸν ποταμὸν οἰκεῖν ...”

Abioi ... in the work *On the Euxine Sea* Alexander says that ‘Diophantus said that they are thus called because they occupy (the area of) the river Abianos ...’

Josephus AJ 1.240 = *FrGrHist* 273 F 102:

μαρτυρεῖ δέ μου τῷ λόγῳ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Πολύιστωρ λέγων οὕτως: “Κλεόδημος δὲ φησὶν ὁ προφήτης, ὁ καὶ Μάλχος, ἱστορῶν τὰ Περὶ Ἰουδαίων, καθὼς καὶ Μωυσῆς ἱστόρησεν ὁ νομοθέτης αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἐκ τῆς Κατούρας Ἀβράμῳ ἐγένοντο παῖδες ἱκανοὶ ...”

Alexander Polyhistor testifies to what I am saying when he says: ‘the prophet Cleodemus, who is also [called] Malchus, and who wrote a history of the Jews, in agreement with Moses, their lawgiver, says that there were many children born to Abraham by Keturah ...’

Euseb. *PE* 9, 17–39 = *FGrHist* 273, F 19a

ὁ Πολυίστωρ Ἀλέξανδρος ... ὃς ἐν τῇ Περὶ Ἰουδαίων συντάξει τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἀβραάμ τοῦτον ἱστορεῖ κατὰ λέξιν τὸν τρόπον: “Εὐπόλεμος δὲ ἐν τῷ Περὶ Ἰουδαίων ... (18) Ἀρτάπανος δὲ φησιν ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαικοῖς ...” (19) ... τοσαῦτα ὁ Πολυίστωρ ... (21) ... ἀπίωμεν δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν Πολυίστωρα. “Δημήτριός φησι ...”. (22) ταῦτά μοι κείσθω ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Πολυίστορος γραφῆς, ... (23) ... τὰ ἐξῆς περὶ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς τοῦ Πολυίστορος γραφῆς ἐπισυνήφθω “Ἀρτάπανος δὲ φησιν ἐν τῷ Περὶ Ἰουδαίων τῷ Ἀβραάμ Ἰωσήφ ἀπόγονον γενέσθαι ...” (25) ... ἄκουε δὲ οἷα καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰώβ ὁ αὐτός ἱστορεῖ “Ἀριστεάς δὲ φησιν ἐν τῷ Περὶ Ἰουδαίων ...” (26) τοσαῦτα καὶ περὶ τούτων ὁ Πολυίστωρ. [...]

Alexander ... who in the treatise *On the Jews* records this story about Abraham **verbatim** as follows: ‘**In On the Jews Eupolemus [says] ... in the work on Judaea Artapanus says ...**’ These things [says] Polyhistor. [...]. Let’s go back again to Polyhistor: ‘**Demetrius says ...**’. I quote this from the writings of Alexander Polyhistor. [...]. As for what happens next regarding Josephus, let’s follow closely what Polyhistor writes: ‘**In On the Jews Artapanus says that Josephus was a descendant of Abraham**’ [...]. And listen also to what he himself (Polyhistor) records about Job: ‘**In On the Jews Aristeas says ...**’ so Polyhistor [says] about these things.

In these examples – among many others⁵² – Polyhistor seems to compile his work by quoting his sources **verbatim**. He first introduces the name of the author he quotes from, and then adds a speech-introductory verb; the quotation is thus turned into indirect speech. This way of introducing an authority recalls the phrasing of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary:

Fr. 3, ii, 15–22:

15	μελωδία	ἡ τραγωδία τὸ παλαιὸν ἐλέγετο ὡς Καλλίμαχος ἐν Ὑπομνήμασιν.
	μενεμανι	τὸ ὕδωρ παρὰ τοῖς Πέρσαις. Δεῖνων ἐ ν – Περσι κῶν.
	μερμνάδαι	οἱ τρίορχοι παρὰ Λυδοῖς. Ἄνδρων ἐ ν – Περὶ τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους. [
20	μέροπες	οἱ ἄφρονες ὑπὸ Εὐβοέων. Διονύσιος ἐν [
	μέροψ	εἶδος ὄρνέου ὅπερ ἀντεκτρέφει τοὺς κ[ειμένους] ἔνδον τοκέας (vel γονέας) Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ἡ Περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις μορίω ν

Melodia: tragedy was so called in antiquity, as **Callimachus (says) in the Commentaries.**

Menemani: water among the Persians. **D(e)inon in Book ... of the Persica.**

Mermnadai: hawks among the Lydians. **Andron in Book ... of On the War Against the Barbarians.**

Meropes: foolish men by the Euboeans. **Dionysius in ...**

Merops: a type of bird that in return feeds its own parents, who lie inside. **Aristotle in Book Eight of On the Parts in Animals.**

As we have already remarked, in most of the Glossary’s entries the lemma is followed by the ‘translation’, which usually also gives the ethnographic origin of the word. The entry ends almost invariably with the quotation of the sources for the gloss, which testify to the

⁵² Cf. also *FGrHist* 273 F 29 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀφροδισιάς; *FGrHist* 273 F 60 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Ὑλαμοῖ; *FGrHist* 273 F 68 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Γάγγρα; *FGrHist* 273 F 72 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Ὠρωπός. On the **verbatim** quotations of Polyhistor, see Troiani 1988, 20–1, and Wacholder 1974, 46–9.

correctness of the information given in the entry. Each entry in the Glossary and each piece of information in Polyhistor is thus ‘certified’ by the quotation of an ancient learned work. This way of quoting verbatim is typical of scholarship and philology, and not of historiography because ‘real’ historians normally tend to rework their sources in a more critical way, as Polybius reminds us:⁵³

Polybius 9.2:

Πολλῶν γὰρ καὶ πολλαχῶς ἐξηριθμημένων τὰ τε περὶ τὰς γενεαλογίας καὶ μύθους καὶ περὶ τὰς ἀποικίας, ἔτι δὲ συγγενείας καὶ κτίσεις, **λοιπὸν ἢ τὰ ἀλλότρια δεῖ λέγειν ὡς ἴδια τὸν νῦν περὶ τούτων πραγματευόμενον, ὃ πάντων ἐστὶν αἴσχιστον**, ἢ τοῦτο μὴ βουλόμενον προδήλως ματαιοπονεῖν.

Since many have recounted in many ways the question of genealogies, myths and colonization and also the relationships [among people] and the foundations [of cities], for a contemporary historian dealing with these questions **it is left either to repeat other people’s words as if they were his own – and nothing could be more shameful than this – or, if he refuses to do so, to clearly toil in vain.**

Polyhistor does exactly what Polybius condemns: he shows very little reworking of his sources, which he quotes almost directly. While this way of proceeding by direct excerpts is good for modern scholars who want to recover the fragments of lost authors quoted by Polyhistor, it also shows how limited Polyhistor’s own intellectual autonomy is. His lack of independent research together with his strong interest in *mirabilia* makes him extremely similar to the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, who – as we have seen – proceeds in exactly the same way.

This confirms my point on the early reception of Berossos: Berossos does not seem to be an author for ‘real’ historians but rather for ‘grammarians’ or more generally ‘learned antiquarians’, interested in *mirabilia* and whose main activity consisted in excerpting from ethnographers and erudite literature of the Hellenistic period. The only meaningful fragment from Berossos in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary is a good example:

Fr. 10a, 9–10:

] θάλασσα κατὰ Πέρσας, Βήρωσος [
ἐν] ᾧ Βαβυλωνιακῶν.

the sea according to the Persians. Berossos
in Book One of the *Babyloniaca*

The lemma in the glossary is missing. The entry defines it as the Persian for ‘sea’, but the Old Persian word for ‘sea’ is *drayah*, and it would be hard to accommodate a lemma starting with δ- among the entries preserved in the Glossary, which cover letters κ-μ. It thus seems more likely that the gloss refers to a different word, which could be considered ‘Persian’ by a glossographer who was not very skilled in linguistics but was very much interested in the Near East. A clue comes from another fragment of Berossos:

⁵³ Cf. Drews 1973, 122.

Georg. Sync. *Ecl. Chron.* 29.22 = *FGrHist* 680 F 1 b (6), p. 370.21:

γενέσθαι φησὶ χρόνον, ἐν ᾧ τὸ πᾶν σκότος καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ζῶα τερατώδη, καὶ ἰδιοφυεῖς τὰς ἰδέας ἔχοντα ζωογονεῖσθαι [...] 30.4 ἄρχειν δὲ τούτων πάντων γυναῖκα ἧ ὄνομα Ὀμόρκα.⁵⁴ εἶναι δὲ τοῦτο Χαλδαῖστί μὲν Θαλάτθ, Ἑλληνιστί δὲ μεθερμηνεύεσθαι θάλασσα.

He [i.e. Berossos] says that there was a time when everything was darkness and water, and prodigious creatures with peculiar forms were then alive ... [He says that] over them all ruled a woman whose name was Omorka; and that this in Chaldean is Thalath, and in Greek it is translated as ‘Thalassa’.

This quotation, taken from Georgius Syncellus, expressly says that the story is taken from the first book of the *Babyloniaca* by Berossos.⁵⁵ This reference is consistent with what we find in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, which quotes Βήρωσσοσ | ἐν ᾧ Βαβυλωνιακῶν. As for the lost lemma, on the basis of what Syncellus says, one possibility could be that it read Θαλάτθ, and another could be Ὀμόρκα, both of which mean ‘sea’ in Greek. Both could work, but for various reasons⁵⁶ Ὀμόρκα seems the better option.

If that is correct, it is striking to find the same fragment of Berossos in two different and unrelated works: the Oxyrhynchus Glossary and Syncellus, a Byzantine monk and the author of a world-chronicle in 810 AD. Syncellus ultimately derived his knowledge of Berossos from Polyhistor, transmitted to him through Eusebius of Caesarea. However, I would discount the possibility that the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary took his quotation of Berossos from Polyhistor. In fact, the Glossary seems to be almost contemporary with Polyhistor, and its Alexandrian origin makes it quite difficult to connect it with him. Moreover, the entire Glossary seems to quote directly and without intermediaries from its sources making it unlikely that it used Berossos through Polyhistor.

The coincidence between the Glossary and Syncellus can, however, be explained otherwise. The passage is taken from Book One of the *Babyloniaca* where Berossos deals with the creation myth. Among all the topics treated by Berossos the creation myth was the most appealing to a Greek scholar because Greek mythology too had its own creation story. In fact, while Berossos’ historical sections and chronology were completely unfamiliar to a Greek audience, the Babylonian history of creation would have been perceived as a ‘myth’, hence closer to existing Greek literature and so more likely to raise interest. Moreover, the monsters, offspring of Omorka, were particularly appealing to scholars and compilers interested in *mirabilia*, like Polyhistor and the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary. It is thus not unlikely that both authors read the work of Berossos directly and decided that that passage was worth excerpting. In addition, the fact that the *Wortlaut* of Berossos (if Syncellus – via Polyhistor – has preserved it correctly) sounded like a lexicon-entry itself (‘a woman whose name was Omorka; and this in Chaldean is Thalath, and in Greek it is translated as “Thalassa”’) would of course have attracted the compiler of the Glossary immediately.

54 Not Ὀμόρκα, as in Syncellus. Cf. *FGrHist* 680 F 1 b, p. 371.26 (apparatus). Omorka is the name of the woman, who, according to Berossos, ruled over the first living monstrous beings and was then killed by Bel.

55 Cf. Georg. Sync. *Ecl. Chron.* 28.21.

56 For a full discussion, see Schironi 2009, 122–4.

Juba of Mauretania

Another reader who seems to have used Berossos directly is king Juba II of Mauretania, who was born in 50 BC and probably died in 23 AD. He was a little younger than Polyhistor and was brought to Rome by Caesar. He was raised there and then sent to Mauretania in 25 BC to become king. His literary activity was similar to that of Polyhistor with his interests ranging from history to ethnography to literary studies, as the list (Table 4) of his known works attests:⁵⁷

Table 4: Works by Juba of Mauretania according to topics

Roman history and antiquarianism	– <i>Roman Archaeology</i> (or <i>Roman History</i>)
‘Foreign ethnography’	– <i>On Libya</i> – <i>On Arabia</i> – <i>On Assyria</i> – <i>The Wanderings of Hanno</i>
Philology and history of Greek literature	– <i>History of Theatre</i> (Θεατρική ιστορία)
‘Linguistics’	– <i>Similarities</i> (Ὀμοιότητες)
Botany and herbal drugs	– <i>On Euphorbion</i>
Art history	– <i>On Painting</i> (or <i>On Painters</i>)
Poetry	– Epigrams

Juba used Berossos for his book *On Assyria*. Where could he have found Berossos’ work? Juba could certainly have used the epitome of Polyhistor. However, he may also have read Berossos directly, at least if we trust a fragment from Tatian, who says that ‘Juba, writing about the Assyrians, says that he learned their history from Berossos’.⁵⁸

If Juba wrote *On Assyria* in his youth and read Berossos directly, he could have consulted Berossos at Rome. It is tempting to speculate that Juba read the copy of Berossos owned by Alexander Polyhistor, who had just finished his epitome a few years before.⁵⁹ Another possibility, however, is that Juba owned a copy of Berossos in his own library, which he established in his court at Caesarea in Mauretania.⁶⁰ We know that his library included Pythagorean writings and also a Punic section. The latter shows the ethnographic interests of the king, who certainly used books on Punic history and culture for his treatise *On Libya*

57 On the intellectual activity of Juba, see Gsell 1927; García García 2000; Roller 2003, 163–82.

58 Tatian, *Or. adv. Gr.* 36 = *FGrHist* 275, F4: Βηρωσὸς δὲ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἰκανώτατος, καὶ τοῦτου τεκμήριον Ἰόβας, ὃς περὶ Ἀσσυρίων γράφων **παρὰ Βηρωσοῦ φησι μεμαθηκέναι τὴν ἱστορίαν.**

59 The two might even have met because both Juba and Polyhistor appear to have been close to Octavian’s circle. If the reconstruction proposed by Roller 2003, 61–4, is correct, Juba, after being captured, was raised in Caesar’s household and, after Caesar’s death, Octavia, the older sister of Octavian, took care of him. Polyhistor, for his part, was the teacher of Hyginus, the future librarian of Octavian, who also belonged to the household of Octavian (cf. Christes 1979, 72–82; Roller 2003, 64–5). Polyhistor then visited Octavian’s house as a tutor; if Juba belonged to that household, the two could have met. However, the difference in age (Juba would have been a child while Polyhistor was an old man around 40 BC) makes it impossible that the two could ever have established any serious intellectual relationship.

60 On the library of Juba, see Gsell 1927, 171–2, and Roller 2003, 158–9, who makes various guesses about its contents.

and *The Wanderings of Hanno*. It is not unlikely that a copy of Berossos could have been obtained by Juba in Mauretania, possibly having it copied from the Alexandrian exemplar. Juba could then have worked on the treatise *On Assyria* using the resources of his library alone. Roller, however, suggests that perhaps the work *On Assyria* was not a separate monograph but rather a part of the treatise *On Arabia*,⁶¹ written after Juba joined Gaius Caesar as a counsellor on an expedition to Antioch, Gaza, and Petra around 2 BC.⁶² According to him,⁶³ *On Arabia* was probably composed at the court of Archelaus of Cappadocia at Elaiussa Sebaste, where Juba stayed between 2 and 5 AD. If this is correct, and if *On Assyria* was indeed part of this work, Juba might have found a copy of the *Babyloniaca* in the library of Archelaus. Given the 'eastern' location of Elaiussa Sebaste in Cilicia, close to the original place of composition of Berossos' work and also close to Pergamum with its library, it seems likely that a copy of Berossos was available there.

To conclude, Juba could have read Berossos in at least three places: 1) at Rome, if he wrote *On Assyria* in his early age (was it the copy used by Alexander Polyhistor?); 2) in his library (was it a copy from Alexandria?); 3) at Elaiussa Sebaste (was it a copy from Pergamum?).

Wherever Juba had the occasion to read Berossos or an epitome of his work, his intellectual profile fits in the picture already outlined for Polyhistor and the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary. Juba seems to be rather more independent from his sources in that he does not limit himself to verbatim quotations from other authors like Polyhistor and the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary.⁶⁴ However, like these other two scholars, Juba is attracted by faraway countries and shows an interest in 'barbaric languages', just like the compiler of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary.⁶⁵ In fact, Juba wrote a work called *Similarities* in which he tried to derive Latin words from Greek and hence to prove that Latin was a form of Greek.⁶⁶ His other works on the *History of Theatre* and *On Paintings* also make him something other than what the ancients would have labelled as a 'historian'.

The topics covered by Juba's works are very close to those of Polyhistor and to those quoted by the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, and Juba's interest in 'foreign ethnography' reinforces our previous conclusions about Berossos' early reception: Berossos is quoted by a scholar who is neither a 'serious' historian nor particularly interested in preserving the Babylonian past. Juba is interested in collecting *mirabilia*, probably with the aid of copyists excerpting his sources.⁶⁷

61 Cf. Roller 2003, 237–8.

62 On this expedition, see Roller 2003, 212–26.

63 Cf. Roller 2003, 221, 222, 248.

64 The only case where Juba quotes another authority is *FGrHist* 275 F 24, where he refers to the historian Sulpicius Galba (born c. 75–65 BC).

65 Cf. Gsell 1927, 170–1.

66 Cf. Roller 2003, 170–3. Juba's efforts to see Latin as a Greek dialect are similar to those of his near-contemporary Philoxenus, who wrote a treatise to show how Latin was in reality a form of Aeolic. See Giomini 1953 and Gabba 1963. This was the only way Greeks could ennoble – and accept – a foreign language: making it somewhat Greek. Even if Juba is neither a Greek nor a Roman, but a 'barbarian' from Africa, he too follows this pattern, probably because of his philhellenic education. Similarly, the Oxyrhynchus Glossary does not seem to recognize the 'Chaldean', Babylonian and Persian glosses as words belonging to foreign, independent languages worthy of serious linguistic attention: for the glossographer they are just exotic curiosities.

67 Cf. Gsell 1927, 190; García García 2000, 422.

Conclusion

To conclude, Berossos was directly consulted by the compiler of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary and Alexander Polyhistor and most likely by Juba.⁶⁸ All these authors approached his text as a source of *mirabilia*, not specifically as history. This approach is typical of the Greek authors dealing with foreign peoples and becomes particularly common between the first century BC and the first century AD, when scholars educated in the Hellenistic schools of Alexandria and Pergamum find themselves working for the Roman Empire. The Romans, who were expanding towards the east, were hungry for stories about these faraway, barbaric lands. Both Juba and Polyhistor responded to Roman demand when writing 'ethnographic philology' about many of these foreign countries. However, I would like to suggest that exactly the breadth of their intellectual interests and their love for ethnographic *mirabilia* restricted them (and Berossos) to a particular type of readership. Polyhistor and Juba were perceived as very learned men, but fundamentally as grammarians and paradoxographers, which meant that those who wanted to write history in the Graeco-Roman world did not consult them. Even though Polyhistor and Juba did preserve not only 'mythic' and 'incredible' stories, but also original Babylonian king-lists as is certainly the case with Polyhistor,⁶⁹ people who wanted to have 'accurate historical facts' were not likely to read them.

Thus, historically-minded readers would never have heard of a barbarian author like Berossos; rather, their point of reference was the Greek Ctesias. No matter what modern scholars think about Ctesias' reliability, he was widely recognized in antiquity as the 'historian' of Persia and Assyria. Berossos was not successful among serious Greek historians because his style differed from what a Greek audience expected of a historian. Even though Berossos wanted to reach a Greek audience and in part imitated Greek historiographic style, his account lacked many of the ingredients, such as vivid narrative, speeches, or anecdotes that would have captured the interest of a Greek audience.⁷⁰ His excerptors Polyhistor, Juba and the author of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary sealed Berossos' fate. Being primarily excerptors, they could not improve on Berossos' style and make it more appealing to a Greek readership because they just recopied Berossos' excerpts almost verbatim. Moreover, they belonged to a very particular genre: paradoxography, the genre of *mirabilia*. This was Berossos' final 'death-sentence'. Even if Berossos did not write his *Babyloniaca* with the goal of 'amusing' his readers with exotic wonders, he became associated with mythical stories and odd names. I hope to have shown that this was due at least in part to Berossos'

68 According to Schnabel 1923, 169–71, the work of Juba was known to Didymus of Alexandria (see Su. 1 399); it was only through Juba, then, that Berossos was known at Alexandria and used by Pamphilus for his Lexicon in the second half of the first century AD, not because a copy of the *Babyloniaca* was present in the Alexandrian Library. Schnabel's theory was founded on the only instance where Hesychius quotes Berossos (Hsch. σ 169 = *FGrHist* 680, F 13; see Dossin 1971). However, now this one entry in Hesychius quoting Berossos finds at least two striking parallels in the Oxyrhynchus Glossary's quotations of Berossos. It is thus more plausible that the Hesychian entry shares the same origin as the Oxyrhynchus Glossary, i.e. that it belongs to the oldest core of the Lexicon of Hesychius (see Hansen 2005, ad Hsch. σ 169) and attests to a time when lexicographers (Pamphilus? Or the compiler of the Oxyrhynchus Glossary?) could check their entries against the original authors, Berossos in our case, whose text was present in the Alexandrian Library.

69 Cf. *FGrHist.* 680 F 3a (p. 377, 27–8); *FGrHist.* 680 F 3b (p. 377, 11); *FGrHist.* 680 F 5a.b (p. 383.25–384.1); *FGrHist.* 680 F 7c (p. 386.31); *FGrHist.* 680 F 9b (p. 392.22) = *FGrHist* 273 F 79.

70 Cf. Burstein 1978, 9–10; Verbrugge/Wickersham 2000, 31–4.

early reception, which was in the hands of authors perceived as 'grammarians' dealing with ethnographic philology, if not real paradoxography. The genre to which Polyhistor and Juba belonged precluded a more widespread interest for Berossos.

With time only a very select group of readers took the pains of taking Polyhistor and Juba seriously and transcribed them in their own works: these were the Jews and Christians of a much later era, who found that Berossos' history overlapped with the history told in the Old Testament. They also were detached enough from Graeco-Roman categories of literary genres to look at Polyhistor, Juba and Berossos as more than conveyors of exotic oddities. But that is another story.

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