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FROM CUNEIFORM TEXTS TO ANCIENT WRITERS: BEROSSOS

ÇİVİYAZILI METİNLERDEN ANTİK YAZARLARA: BEROSSOS

Ercüment YILDIRIM*

Abstract

While ancient historians created their works, they made citations to previous authors' narratives and did text quotes. These quotations were meant to enrich the author's work and provide wider information about the previous nations. Ancient writers used the narrations of the authors of these societies while giving information about the history of distant nations, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia. Many ancient historians have benefited from the writing of Berossos, which has not survived, for the Mesopotamian history and mythological narratives, which are known to go back thousands of years. These authors included the work of the Berossos, especially the king's lists, the Flood myth, and the descriptions of the Oannes, adding their interpretations. This situation has led the Greek community to arrive in the Hellenic world with the historical thought system of Mesopotamia and the tradition of mythological expression. While some of this information had been adopted with great appreciation by the Hellenic community, some of its credibility had been skeptical. The main reason for this situation can be the cultural difference between the two communities. This study aims to reveal the effects of Mesopotamian wisdom on the Hellenic way of thinking of the narratives reaching the Hellenic society through the work of Berossos.

Keywords: Berossos, Babylon, Zeus, Marduk, Oannes.

Öz

Antik tarihçiler eserlerini oluştururken önceki yazarların anlatılarına atıflar verirken metin alıntılarını da yapmışlardır. Bu alıntılar hem yazarın eserini zenginleştirmek hem de önceki uluslar

* Doç. Dr., Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, Kahramanmaraş/Türkiye. E-posta: neshali@gmail.com ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5376-4061>

hakkında daha geniş bilgi vermek amacını taşımaktaydı. Antik yazarlar, Mısır ve Mezopotamya gibi coğrafi olarak uzak ulusların tarihleri ile ilgili bilgi verirken bu toplumların yazarlarının anlatımlarını kullanmışlardır. Birçok antik tarihçi, binlerce yıl geriye gittiği bilinen Mezopotamya tarihi ve mitolojik anlatımları için Berossos'un günümüze ulaşmayan eserinden faydalanmışlardır. Berossos'un eserinden özellikle kral listeleri, Tufan mitosu ve Oannes anlatımına dair parçaları kendi yorumlarını da ekleyerek çalışmalarına dahil etmişlerdir. Bu durum Mezopotamya'nın tarihsel düşünce sisteminin ve mitolojik anlatım geleneğinin Hellen dünyasına Yunan toplumuna ulaşmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu bilgilerin bir kısmı Hellen toplumu tarafından büyük takdir görerek benimsenirken bir kısmının güvenilirliğine kuşkuyla yaklaşılmıştır. Bu durumun temel nedeni ise iki toplum arasındaki kültür farkı olduğu iddia edilebilir. Bu çalışma, Berossos'un eseri vasıtasıyla Hellen toplumuna ulaşan anlatımların Mezopotamya bilgeliliğinin Hellen düşünüş tarzı üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Berossos, Babil, Zeus, Marduk, Oannes.

1. Introduction

Inspired by all successive civilizations, the writers of antiquity have completely changed humanity's interpretation of the world with their fund of knowledge. In the history of humanity, cultural development has progressed as a whole but in a priority relationship. It is assumed that historical and intellectual knowledge in the Hellenic world exists out of nowhere and that the origins of this accumulation are based on the ancient wisdom of Mesopotamia and Egypt.¹ This ancient wisdom has also reached today with archaeological excavations in the last centuries, as in Mesopotamia, where cuneiform had been used for thousands of years in the culture that can be defined as society's memory and subsequent generations. In this ongoing transfer between generations, many elements from the belief system to cosmology and mythos to heroic tales continued to live. Mesopotamia preserved the existence of narratives, which are integral parts of the Mesopotamian civilization, created by millennia even in the period when the writing of letters instead of cuneiforms and the use of parchments instead of clay tablets were used.²

Mesopotamia societies managed to preserve their local cultures and religions because of their strong traditional structures, even during the reign of Persian domination and the Hellenistic kingdoms.³ Beyond this success, their knowledge was transferred to the Hellenic world through writers' works such as Berossos and Ctesias.⁴ This transmission, which is seen in the works of ancient writers, also includes many elements arising from the practices of Mesopotamia belief, although it is generally housed in historical events.⁵ Berossos, which constitutes the starting point of our study, is seen as the representative of Eastern wisdom. In addition, the works of Berossos make a great contribution to the realization of knowledge and culture sharing between Babylon and the Greek civilization, which is considered the beginning of development and western thought.

Berossos was born between 330 and 323 BC, the beginning of the Hellenistic period when the Eastern and Western worlds became a whole. His name means "Bel-re-uşu" and "Bel

¹ In general see Rochberg 1999, 559-569; Haubold 2013, 2-14; Stuckrad 2016, 115-120; For relevancies between Mesopotamian and Hellenic myths, wisdom, cosmology Dietrich 1974, 1-67; Buccellati 1981, 35-47; Graf 1996, 88-95; Penglase 1997; Launderville 2003; Livingstone 2011, 357-380.

² Mesopotamia myths and cosmology also see Foster 1974, 344-354; Nemet-Nejat 1998; Dalley 2000; Rochberg 2005, 316-327; Kuiper 2010, 169-170; Curnow 2011; Lambert 2016, 108-121.

³ Dandamayev 1969, 296-311; Curtis 1997; Cline 2011, 80-99.

⁴ Ctesias was born in the Carian town of Cnidus, in the southwest of modern Turkey. In Antiquity, Cnidus was well-known for its doctors. He was taken to Persia approximately in 400 B.C. He served as a medical doctor to the royal family. During this time in Persia, he wrote a twenty-three-volume book about Assyrian and Persian histories. Also see Brown 1978, 1-19; Stronk 2010; Yıldırım 2015, 573-590.

⁵ Dietrich 1974, 1-67; Dalley 1998, 85-124; Noegel 2007, 21-37; Cooper 2010, 430-444; Metcalf 2015, 104-129.

(Baal), his shepherd" in his language, although it has passed as Berossos or Berossus in the works of ancient Greek writers. Sources that provide information about Berossos say that he was a clergy member in an important position in the great Esagila Temple in Babylon.⁶ It was inevitable to be a member of the clergy of intellectuals who were seen as the importer of knowledge in Mesopotamia, where faith was transformed into the society's lifestyle, and Berossos was one of those people. The fact that clergy members in Mesopotamia used the inscription from the early stages and preserved the cuneiform script remaining from previous periods in their temples increased their historical fund. It is possible that Berossos wrote the "History of Babylon" using these deposits.⁷

Although the work of Berossos written in the Greek language is likely to have several opinions about the period of the work, it is possible that it was written at the time of the king of Seleukos Antiochos Soter I. (290 - 278 B.C.) Moreover, even though it is a general opinion that Berossos wrote his work in Babylon, there are some probabilities that he also completed some part of his work when it was taken into consideration that he had opened an astronomy school on Kos Island in the Aegean Sea after 292 B.C.⁸

2. Berossos Narration in Ancient Writings

Despite the fact that all of Berossos' work did not reach the present day, ancient writers such as Eusebius,⁹ Syncellus,¹⁰ Josephus,¹¹ Pliny¹² and Vitruvius¹³ Quoted Berossos as part of their interpretations. In these lectures, we will limit our work to the creation of the king lists, the lectures on the flood myth, and the Oannes myth, although there are also records concerning the military marches of the Babylonian kings.

The king's lists, considered the beginning of the tradition of keeping the history of humanity, had been printed by kings from the early stages of Mesopotamia history. The printing of these texts can be argued that the king is striving to find legitimacy by linking himself to the first kings. It can also be claimed that "Kingdom from heaven," which is at the beginning of each king's list, had been put forward, and the king was trying to sanctify the Royal Institution.¹⁴ Beyond the debate of which is more valid, the sense of creating a list of kings and the king lists took their places in the work of Eusebius, who was an important ancient writer, which was extracted from Berossos after thousands of years in Mesopotamia societies.

"How the Chaldaeans record their chronology, from (the writings of) Alexander Polyhistor, about the books of the Chaldaeans, and their first kings. That is what Berossos relates in his first book, and in the second book he lists the kings, one after another. He says that Nabonassar was king at that time. He merely lists the names of the kings, and says very little about their achievements; or perhaps he thinks that they are not worth mentioning, when he has already stated the number of kings. He begins to

⁶ Lambert 1976, 171-173; Sterling 1992, 104-105; Breucker 2003, 13-24; Glassner 2003, 10; Gmirkin 2006, 91-100;

⁷ See also the record keeping and historical accumulation in temples in Mesopotamia, Keister 1965, 18-24; Keister 1970, 169-181; Sterba 1976, 16-26; Mieroop 1999, 9-13; Liverani 2001, 303-311; Oelsner 2003, 284-301; Postgate 2015, 109-117.

⁸ Vitruvius de Architectura 9.6.2; Komoróczy 1973, 125-152; Sarton 1987, 167; Nissen 2009, 116-117.

⁹ Horn 2016, 6-9; 12-13; 14-15.

¹⁰ Mosshammer 1984; Syncellus, Ecloga Chronographica 25-27; 29-30; 32; 50-53; 53-56; 71-72.

¹¹ Josephus, Antiquitates, 1. 93; 10.20; Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 1. 128-131; 1. 131-134; 1. 145-153.

¹² Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 1. 7; 7. 123; 7. 160; 7. 193.

¹³ Vitruvius, de Architectura 9.2.1-2; 9.6.2; 9.2.1; 9.8.1.

¹⁴ See also Mesopotamian king list, Rowton 1960, 156-162; Thorkild 1939; Michalowski 1983, 237-248; Nemet-Nejat 1998, 20-21; Holland 2009, 136.

write as follows "Apollodorus says that the first king was Alorus who was a Chaldaean from Babylon, and he reigned for ten sars" He divides a sar into 3,600 years, and adds two other (measures of time): a ner and a soss. He says that a ner is 600 years, and a soss is 60 years. He counts the years in this way, following some ancient form of calculation. After saying this, he proceeds to list ten kings of the Assyrians, one after the other in (chronological) order; from Alorus, the first king, until Xisuthrus, in whose reign the first great Flood occurred, the Flood which Moses mentions."¹⁵

The entrance of the text of Eusebius began with a question about the way of creating the historical records of the Chaldean. The Ancient Greek history printing, which was accepted to be started by Herodotus, was based on the events and legends of the societies being transported by storytelling style. In the Assyrian and Babylonian societies of Mesopotamia, the tradition of keeping records of the activities of the Kings, defined as annual, was wide.¹⁶ However, each king printed lists that covered the names and reigns of kings before him, and those lists continued until the time of the king, who was printed from the first king. Eusebius, who took the work of this historiographical system from Berossos, which was not encountered in the ancient Greek world, answered the question at the beginning of the text while transferring this information. The presence of only names and years in the Berossos's list of the kings and not mentioning the events related to the period were not included in the ancient Greek history printing. For this reason, Eusebius has criticized the text related to this situation. In the text, the reign in the king's list, taken from Berossos, was dated according to the 60-based counting system used in Babylon,¹⁷ and explained in accordance with the calculation of Greek dating.

Eusebius revealed this part of the text on the formation of the Flood and stated that the Prophet Moses also mentioned the incident. Before the cuneiform scripted texts in Mesopotamia began to be read, the oldest records about the Flood were considered in scripture. When Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian languages were read and scripted cuneiform texts were translated, it was understood that the Flood myth¹⁸ was seen as a milestone for the king's lists. When we look at the most general combination of cuneiform scripted king lists obtained in the excavations until today, the first kingdom came down from heaven or the sky, and then the kingdom came down from heaven or the sky after the Flood. The kingdom coming down from heaven or the sky was given to the city, not to a king.

*"After the Flood had swept there over when the kingship was lowered from heaven the kingship was in Kish. In Kish Ga..ur became king and reigned 1200 years (...) Kish was smitten with weapons its kingship to E-Anna was carried. Mes-kiag-gasher son of Utu, became high priest and king and reigned 324 years."*¹⁹

The king's list, copied by the Mesopotamian kings for thousands of years, became a traditionalized writing system. The ancient Greek writers only mentioned the names and dominion periods of the kings in their works, while the cities holding the kingdom in the cuneiform scripted texts were mentioned. In addition, the kingdom, which was sanctified by

¹⁵ The translation is based on the text of Eusebius 2: 1-6; Verbrugghe 2003, 46-48; Horn 2016, 7.

¹⁶ See also the prominence of king's annuals in Mesopotamian history writing, Oppenheim 1977, 144-153; Drews 1975, 39-55; Grayson 2000, 1-6; Budge 2005; Charpin 2010, 229-232.

¹⁷ Also see Babylonian number system, Sarton 1980, 69-72; Linton 2004, 11-12; McIntosh 2005, 265-269; Nardo 2007, 176-178.

¹⁸ Woolley 1953, 52-54; Simoons-Vermeer 1974, 17-34; Davila 1995, 199-214; Bertman 2003, 314-316; Mattfeld 2010, 52-56; Chen 2013.

¹⁹ The translation is based on the text of Thorkild 1939, 77-85.

the conquest of a city by another city, moved to another city, is also described in scripted cuneiform texts.²⁰

*"Berossos says that the total length of the reigns of the (ten) kings was 120 sars. Which is the equivalent of 432,000 years He writes about the individual kings as follows: When Alorus died, his son Alaparus became king for 3 sars. After Alaparus, Amelon, a Chaldaean from the city of Pautibiblon, became king for 13 sars. After Amelon, Ammenon, a Chaldaean from Parmibiblon, became king for 12 sars (...) Then Euedorachus, from the city of Pautibiblon, reigned for 18 sars. - In this reign, another monster appeared out of the Red Sea, which also was a mixture between a man and a fish, and its name was Odacon. All these (monsters) explained in detail what Oannes had stated briefly. Amempsinus, a Chaldaean from Laranca, reigned for 10 sars. Otiartes, a Chaldaean from Laranca, reigned for 8 sars. When Otiartes died, his son Xisuthrus became king, for 18 sars, - In his reign, the great Flood occurred. In total 10 kings and 120 sars and they say that 120 sars are the equivalent of 432.000 years, because one sars the equivalent of 3,600 years. That is what Alexander Polyhistor says in his book. But if anyone thinks that what is contained in that book is a true history, and that (those kings) really ruled for so many mynads of years, then he should also believe in all the other similar things in that book, which are equally incredible."*²¹

Eusebius quoted Berossos in his work; while providing information about the king's lists, he mentioned the advent of a creature called Oannes during the Euedorachus era. Then the names and reign of kings were continued to count, and it was told the total was 432,000 years. Eusebius did not mention that it was unbelievable, although he has put this information on the rule of kings in his work quoting from Berossos. Despite the fact that Berossos' information on these exaggerated years is present in the cuneiform scripted king lists, it is at the root of Eusebius's approach to this suspicion that the Greek history printing can be verified and relies on information that does not contradict nature. To give superhuman traits to the kings that were believed to have divine origins in Mesopotamia societies had been seen as an element of the belief system as part of the management mentality. In Mesopotamian societies, Sargon was promoted to the rank of the god²², and there were the kings like Gilgamesh and Enmerkar who were heroized²³ in Naram-sin and mythos. Although it is easy for a person in Mesopotamian society to believe that the king lived and reigned for millennia because of his belief, ancient historians saw it impossible. For this reason, the lists of Mesopotamian kings for the ancient historians remained more mythological than a historical documents.

*"In the second book Berossos records the ten kings and the length of their reigns, 120 saroi or 432.000 years until the Great Flood. For Alexander himself, from the writings of the Chaldeans, again proceeding from the ninth king, Ardates (Otiartcs), to the tenth king, called by them Xisouthros, says the following. After Ardates (Otiartcs) had died, his son Xisouthros reigned for eighteen saroi, and in his reign occurred the Great Flood."*²⁴

²⁰ Also see divine kingship in Mesopotamia, Frankfort 1948; Jones 2005, 330-342; Brisch 2013, 37-46; Darling 2013, 15-30; Suter 2013, 201-226.

²¹ The translation is based on the text of Eusebius 2: 7; Verbrugge 2003, 46-48; Horn 2016, 7-8.

²² Klein 1995, 843-857; Brisch 2006, 161-176; Michalowski 2010, 147-168; Schneider 2011, 117-125; Delaporte 2013, 159-161.

²³ Alster 1974, 49-60; Westenholz 1983, 327-336; Ascalone 2007, 116-121; Lanfranchi 2007, 17-25.

²⁴ The translation is based on the text of Syncellus, Ecloga Chronographica 53; Verbrugge 2003, 49.

Another ancient writer who quoted from Berossos, Syncellus²⁵ He also mentions the king's lists, but instead of giving names and reigns of kings, he mentions only the ten kings reigning for 432,000 years until the Flood. Although Syncellus gave a brief description of the king's lists, he mentioned the narration of the Flood. It can be argued that the flood narrative which antiquity historians had included in their works was a very interesting mythos for the Hellenic society, dealing with maritime and exalting marine gods in their pantheon.

*“Kronos appeared to Xisouthros in a dream and revealed that on the fifteenth of the month Daisios mankind would be destroyed by a great flood. He then ordered him to bury together all the tablets, the first, the middle, and the last, and hide them in Sippar, the city of the sun. Then he was to build a boat and board it with his family and best friends. He was to provision it with food and drink and also to take on board wild animals and birds and all four-footed animals. Then when all was prepared, he was to make ready to sail. If asked where he was going, he was to reply, “to the gods, to pray that all good things will come to man.” He did not stop working until the ship was built. Its length was five stades (920 m.) and its breadth two (365 m.). He boarded the finished ship, equipped for everything as he had been commanded, with his wife, children, and closest friends.”*²⁶

The Flood narration, which Syncellus conveyed based on the narrations of the Berossos, was initiated with Kronos, the father of Zeus, whom ancient Greek society valued greatly. Corresponding to Marduk, the son of God Enki in Mesopotamia, Kronos enters the dream of a protagonist of the myth called Utnapishtim or Ziusudra in scripted cuneiform texts, referred to as Noah in the holy books and called Xisouthros in the text of Syncellus.²⁷ In Mesopotamia societies, because the dream was believed to be more true than a dream, it was believed that what was seen in the dream had links to real life. Thus, there are many myths in which the gods use dreams to inform or warn people. In the text of Syncellus, this belief in Mesopotamia was transmitted using a Greek god. The presence of a Greek god in the myth of the Flood, whose origins are coming evidently from Mesopotamia, shows that ancient writers Hellenize the myths they convey. In the following periods, basic fiction of the myths taken from the barbarian societies with the definition of Greeks was preserved, but these narratives were added to the Greek culture and belief.²⁸ As a result of these additions, the so-called "Deucalion" myth has emerged. In this narrative of the Greek world's Flood Mythos,²⁹ Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha could survive through a disaster with a ship when the angry god Zeus was Prometheus, the loadstar of people then.

²⁵ Known to have died in 810, Syncellus wrote chronicles about the people's thoughts to have lived in the past, quoting from previous authors.

²⁶ The translation is based on the text of Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* 54; Burstein 1978, 20; Verbrugge 2003, 49-50.

²⁷ Butler 1998; Noegel 2001, 45-71; Delaporte 2013, 155-157.

²⁸ See also Flood in Greek Religion and Culture, Dundes 1988, 44-50; Westmoreland 2006, 644-645; Bremmer 2008, 101-116; Clark 2012, 101-102.

²⁹ At the beginning of the narrative, humankind grew very wicked and arrogant. The narratives became more and more tedious to him until Zeus finally decided to destroy them all. Prometheus, the Titan creator of humankind, was warned of this coming Flood, and he, in turn, warned his human son, Deucalion, and Deucalion's wife, Pyrrha. Prometheus placed the two of them in a large wooden chest. Furthermore, it rained for nine days and nine nights until the entire world was flooded except for two mountain peaks in Greece, Mount Parnassus and Mount Olympus, the latter being the home of the gods. Finally, the wooden chest landed on Mount Parnassus, and Deucalion and Pyrrha got out of it only to see that the entire world around them had been destroyed. The couple was grateful to be saved, and they gave thanks to the gods for their deliverance. See also, Kraeling 1947, 177-183; Lewis 1968, 106-107; Bierlein 1994, 128-130; Wilson 2002, 24; Peterson 2004, 43-44; Collins 2012, 403-426.

In the Flood myth, which had many different interpretations in the cuneiform scripted texts, it was told that Utnapishtim or Ziusudra only saved his family and that humankind was derived from them again; Syncellus stated that the close friends of Xisouthros were also saved from disaster.

“After the waters of the Great Flood had come and quickly left, Xisouthros freed several birds. They found neither food nor a place to rest, and they returned to the ship. After a few days he again set free some other birds, and they too came back to the ship, but they returned with claws covered with mud. Then later for a third time he set free some other birds, but they did not return to the ship. Then Xisouthros knew that the earth had once again appeared. He broke open a seam on a side of the ship and saw that the ship had come to rest on a mountain.”³⁰

Although the narration of the Flood was a discrete mythos, it had been used as a complementary element the Gilgamesh and in the myths related to the creation and punishment by gods in Mesopotamia. In Gilgamesh myth, in the section where Gilgamesh, seeking immortality, wanted Utnapishtim to give the secret of being saved from a cataclysm and being granted an award of immortality by gods, the narration of the Flood was mentioned.³¹ In the myth of human creation and punishment, the people created on the objection of the small gods who do the chore of the great gods made noise on the earth, and the god Enlil gave people drought, cataclysm, and illnesses as punishment. In the relevant section, the Flood narration was widely processed.³² Narratives highlighted the emphasis that the Flood came on the demands of gods and with the purpose of punishment by gods, but a savior maintained the human lineage. Although the name of this savior in texts has changed over the millennia in different societies, it is seen that this person was a virtuous person who did not oppose the gods.

In the text of Syncellus, referring to the work of Berossos, the good news is that the Flood disaster was over by being sent the birds took parts in different endings in cuneiform scripted texts, although it was similar to the Torah narrative. Even if there is no complete text on how the Flood that continued for seven days and seven nights ended in cuneiform scripted texts, the current texts explain that the Flood ended because God Enki convinced God Enlil, or the hero of the Flood, presented victims to the gods. In other narrations, Utnapishtim, who survived the Flood catastrophe, gained immortality; it is stated that Ziusudra had both an eternal breath and the gods and was taken to the place where the sun was born, or to the far side of a waterfront to live.³³

“To this day a small part of the ship that came to rest in Armenia remains in Korduaian Mountains in Armenia, and some people go there and scrape off pieces of bitumen to keep as good luck charms.”³⁴

“This Flood and the ark are mentioned by all who have written histories of the barbarians. Among these is Berosus the Chaldaean, who, in his description of the events of the Flood, writes somewhere as follows: “It is said, moreover, that a portion of

³⁰ The translation is based on the text of Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* 54; Burstein 1978, 20; Verbrughe 2003, 50.

³¹ Fisher 1970, 392-403; Ray 1996, 300-325; Tigay 1997, 40-49; Dundes 1998, 62.

³² Moran 1971, 51-61; Frymer-Kensky 1977, 147-155; Clay 2003; Foster 2005, 227-280.

³³ Kraeling 1947, 279-293; Mallowan 1964, 62-82; Bouyer 1988, 45-46; George 2014, 112-114.

³⁴ The translation is based on the text of Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* 55; Burstein 1978, 21; Verbrughe 2003, 50.

the vessel still survives in Armenia on the mountain of the Cordyaeans and that persons carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they use as talismans."³⁵

It is remarkable that in Syncellus and Josephus's works, they describe the traces of the Flood reaching their period by referring to the Berossus narrative. That both authors claimed the remains of the ship that saved humanity from the Flood disaster in today's Eastern Anatolian Mountains, as it carries the purpose of emphasizing the reality of their narration, is unlikely to be reached by people of the period. It must also be originated from the desire to make geography mysterious. In addition, both writers indicated that the parts left from the ship were used as good luck and talisman. This tradition is important to show that the story of the Flood was a part of the people's beliefs at that period.

*"Now will tell what Berossus wrote in the first book of his history, and first I will add another quotation from the same book of Polyhistor as follows. Another unreliable account of Chaldaean history, from the same book of Alexander Polyhistor about the Chaldaeans Berossus in the first book of his Babylonian History, says that he lived at the time of Alexander the son of Philip, and that he transcribed the writings of many authors, which had been carefully preserved at Babylon, containing the records of over 150,000 years. These writings contain the history of heaven and the sea of creation, and of the kings and their deeds."*³⁶

*"My witness here is Berossus, a Chaldaean by birth, but familiar in learned circles through his publication for Greek readers of works on Chaldaean astronomy and philosophy. This author, following the most ancient records, has, like Moses, described the Flood and the destruction of mankind thereby, and told of the ark in which Noah, the founder of our race, was saved when it landed on the heights of the mountains of Armenia."*³⁷

A new element that emerged in the writing of ancient history is the development of the way of giving references. Ancient writers both referred to previous authors or by taking chapters from their work and referenced the people of the region when they transmitted an event that was the general belief of the people of a region. For example, Herodotus gives a general belief in the Persian community as a reference, saying, "The Persian learned men say that the Phoenicians were the cause of the feud."³⁸ In addition to this sort of giving references, ancient writers made statements to prove the source's credibility. It can be claimed that the main goal of these explanations was to prove the accuracy of the knowledge in the works of authors that ancient writers referred to as Eusebius and Josephus, quoting Berossos, were trying to explain the source of the information they received from Berossos by maintaining the mentality of Greek history writing.³⁹

Josephus mentioned that Berossos was an astronomer and philosopher who knew the ancient sources very well. Eusebius claimed that Berossos did its work by taking advantage of 150,000 years of records carefully preserved in Babylon. It is understood that authors expressed their desire to emphasize that the knowledge of Babylon, which was representative of the eastern development, had been transferred to their works through Berossos. In the

³⁵ The translation is based on the text of Iosephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, I – 93, 94; Josephus, "*Antiquitates (Loeb)*" 45.

³⁶ The translation is based on the text of Eusebius 2: 10; Burstein 1978, 13; Verbrugge 2003, 43-44; Horn 2016, 8.

³⁷ The translation is based on the text of Iosephus, *Against Apion*, I – 128, 130; Josephus, "*Contra Apionem (Loeb)*" 215.

³⁸ The translation is based on the text of Herodotus 1: 1 Herodotus, *Historiae*, (Loeb) 3.

³⁹ Wardman 1960, 403-413; Scanlon 1978, 1-28; Luce 1997, 99-122; Gmirkin 2006, 6-21; Said 2011, 76-88; Tuplin 2013, 177-179; Hau 2014, 241-259.

world of Hellene, where knowledge and wisdom are of great value, another event as important as transferring the information in the east was the narrations of how humanity's knowledge had been formed. The most remarkable of these narrations is "The Oannes Myth.

“A large number of foreigner’s dwell in Chaldaeae; they live in Babylon in a disorderly way, like wild animals. In the first year, a horrible beast appeared out of the Red Sea in the region near Babylonia. Its name was Oannes. according to Apollodorus. It had the complete body of a fish, but underneath its head there grew another head, beneath the fish's head; and in the same way the feet of a man grew of the tail of the fish. It had the voice of a man, and its likeness has been preserved even down to the present day. He says that this beast spent the day with men, taking no food, but instructing them about writing and science and all kinds of crafts. It taught them about founding cities and establishing temples, about introducing laws and about geometry. It showed them how to sow seed and gather fruit; and in general, it gave men all the skills they needed for a civilized life.”⁴⁰

The basic fiction of the myth tells that the creature called Oannes in the works of ancient Greek writers, and called Apkallu in cuneiform scripted texts, came out of the sea and taught people all things about civilization was that the gods brought wisdom to humanity. This living creature, which was described in the cuneiform scripted texts as being accessible to humanity for divine wisdom and the realization of the gods' plans for the people, showed the ways of civilized life to humans in ancient works. This creature, described as "fish-like" in both societies, is represented by the most sacred river fish, "Carp" in Mesopotamia, and although its part of the body is fish in these vivid reliefs, it is also shown as a living with hands, feet, and head. Eusebius stated that although the whole body was fish, it had a male voice. Beyond all these descriptions, Oannes and Apkallu are divine beings and represent wisdom seen in scripted cuneiform texts and ancient writers' works. Despite the fact that the Apkallu in the cuneiform scripted texts are in contact with the Enki, the God of wisdom, ancient writers did not go beyond stating that these creatures are of divine origin.⁴¹

These beings, called Oannes and Apkallu and conducting wisdom to reach humanity from Gods, mingled freely with the people by coming out of the sea and left after completing their divine task. The number of these beings is seven in scripted cuneiform texts, and the texts containing both the names of the coming beings and the king's name at the time of the landing were written in later periods. The arrival of these beings more than once can be explained by the claim that people correct the deterioration in their lives and bring new information. In the work of Eusebius, the writing, science, and craft that people learned from Oannes were necessary information for the city community, and it is stated that they also told about the building of the city and constructing temples.⁴² In Mesopotamia, the accumulation of knowledge conceptualized as civilization began with the built-in life, which means that people continued their lives with agriculture and livestock. The urbanization of the built-up life has changed how human beings live forever. Urbanization in Mesopotamia was developed as temple-centered. Members of the clergy, who influenced the community's living from trade to management, also increased their knowledge by writing and transferred it to subsequent generations.⁴³

⁴⁰ The translation is based on the text of Eusebius 2: 15-18; Verbrugge 2003, 44; Horn 2016, 8.

⁴¹ Greenfield 1985, 13-20; Kuhrt 1987, 32-56; Dillery 2011, 221-228; Ristvet 2015, 191-192; McInerney 2017, 253-274.

⁴² Reiner 1961, 1-11; Bottero 1992, 246-249; Beaulieu 2007, 473-484; Hallo 2010, 148-150; Curnow 2015, 29-34.

⁴³ Diakonoff 1975, 121-133; Oppenheim 1977, 83-86; Banning 1997, 17-34; Leick 2002, 39-51; Pollock 2004, 28-44; Bernbeck 2009, 33-64; Liverani 2014, 61-73.

After the beginning of agriculture and the establishment of the first cities in Mesopotamia, people questioned the source of their knowledge, which may have led to the emergence of narratives such as the Oannes myth. These kinds of myths, which the members of the clergy in Mesopotamia used to base their divinity on the origins of the wisdom they possessed, despite being accepted in the Hellenic world, were not seen as the only truth in the face of knowledge (Epask), reality (Aletheia) and theories (Logos), which Greek philosophers came up with it. In these two different ways of thinking in antiquity, mythos was used to make sense of the world, but philosophy was seen as a means to explain the world.

3. Conclusion

In the Hellenistic period, which began with the conquests of Alexander the Great, the myths of the Eastern world began to take a wider place in the works of the authors of antiquity. Even though the Greeks, who traded in the Mediterranean before the Hellenistic period, established cultural relations with communities on the shores of Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean, in the works of the period, information about these societies remained limited to the general narrations. In the Near Eastern geography gathered under a common administration in the Hellenistic period, writers who adopted the Greek culture and knew the civilization in the east closely emerged. Some of these writers had knowledge about a Mesopotamian civilization by examining the works of writers in the east, and some got this knowledge by visiting the lands in the east. In this process of this enlightenment about Mesopotamian societies, the most important source of the ancient writers was the work of Berossos. The fundamental motivation which pushes Berossos, a member of the clergy, into writing the history of the society should be to glorify his civilization and the elements that constitute his civilization against the Hellenic community, which dominates the entire known world.

The main reason why ancient writers made transfers from Berossus has to be that he wrote his work in Greek, the most widely used language of the period. That Berossos also used myths, which were part of the general belief of society and the old texts in his work, has caused his work to be seen as valuable. The myths, which were considered part of the belief in Mesopotamia, triggered the humans' emotion of wonder as they created the memory of the community. Especially in the narrations related to the cosmology in which earth-sky separation is made, and the positions of the gods are determined, there are many resemblances between Mesopotamia and Greek myths. Although this situation shows the effect of Mesopotamian narratives on Greek myths, this influence has not revealed till the cuneiform scripted texts were decoded. After the cuneiform scripted texts were buried and forgotten in the ruins of the Mesopotamian cities, the accuracy of the citations and quotations of ancient writers was doubted. However, the origins of Greek thought and the Hellenic period myths were much better understood after the cuneiform scripted texts were deciphered.

Myths transferred from Mesopotamia, whose economy was based on agriculture, to the Greek world, whose livelihood was trading, underwent changes and then were completely Hellenized because both societies had different ways of life. In Mesopotamia, where agriculture was carried out with waterways opened by a joint effort, the hectoring management of the production form determined the form of belief while shaping social thinking. On the other hand, in the Greek world, organized in the city-states and the lifestyle was shaped by sea and sea trade, the individual life became more and more prominent, and the idea that the society was formed by the individuals coming together was dominant. The origins of this difference were rooted in the myths of Mesopotamia and in the way that the narratives in the works of ancient writers were accepted differently in both societies.

One of the emerging differences between Mesopotamian and Hellenic societies is the tradition of historiography. The king lists representing the historical accumulation in Mesopotamia can record the names and reigns of kings instead of giving information about the community; in the works of ancient historians, there is information about the lives of the people and the people and the ruling class. As a reflection of this situation, the annuals were prepared in the style of a king's biography as the kings, and the gods fictionalized the Mesopotamian myths. While the history of Mesopotamia cannot go beyond the history of kings, the ancient historians have stood on the living of societies as much as the lives of kings in their works. It can be argued that this was due to the use of king lists in Mesopotamia and that the annuals were used as a means of propaganda to ensure the loyalty of the society to the king, and it can also be argued that the works of the writers of antiquity originated from the desire for lessoning from the life of previous societies. From this point on, although the texts of the management concept in Mesopotamia were included in the works of the writers of antiquity, based on the loss of their importance and function in time, it can be said that new tools were developed to manage people in antiquity.

Although Flood and Oannes narratives, which are among the most impressive myths of Mesopotamian civilization, find their place in the works of ancient writers, they have not become a part of the Hellenic belief system. Based on this situation, the difference in understanding the world of both civilizations and the philosophical thought that began in ancient Greek society reveals a development from the supernatural to understanding nature. While the unquestionability of faith in Mesopotamia was the king's duty, the questioning of faith for the first time in a public place in ancient Greece led to the search for the truth in different ways in both societies. At this point, it would be quite pointless to argue that ancient Greek culture is a continuation of the Mesopotamian civilization.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization, person related to our article titled "From Cuneiform Texts to Ancient Writers: Berossos" and there is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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