

him, whom he consulted, were only one hundred years old.(1)

We may judge how far they are to be depended on, by their extravagant tales, which are handed down to us in the extracts from Aristæus of Proconnesus, and others.

Before them there were only poets; and the most ancient of those whose works have been preserved, Homer, the master and perpetual model of all the west, has only preceded our own times by two thousand seven hundred, or two thousand eight hundred years.

When these early historians mention ancient events, either of their own nation or of those near them, they only cite oral traditions, and not public records.

It was long after this, that pretended extracts from Egyptian, Phœnician, and Babylonian annals were given. Berosus only wrote during the reign of Seleucus Nicator, Hieronymus during that of Antiochus Soter, and Manetho under the government of Ptolemy Philadelphus. These three were only three centuries earlier than the coming of Jesus Christ.

Sanchoniatho may be a real or fictitious author; but nothing was known of him until Philo of Byblos published a translation of his work in the second century after Jesus Christ; and when it was made known, there was only discovered, as in all other authors of his kind, a childish theogony, or metaphysics, so blended with allegories, as not to be distinguishable.

(1) Cadmus, Pherecydes, Aristæus of Proconnesus, Acuitlaus, Hecateus of Miletus, Charon of Lampsacus, &c.—Vide Vossius de Hist. Græc. lib. i. and particularly his fourth book.