Joe Manning was born in Champaign, Illinois, grew up in Chicago, and attended Ohio State, where he studied Medieval architectural history and History. He did his graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he took his MA and PhD degrees in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the famed Oriental Institute. He is is an ancient historian whose main interest is the social and economic history of the Hellenistic world. He is increasingly concerned with issues arising out of the study of Egyptian history in the long run.