

## SETH F.C. RICHARDSON

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### education

**Columbia University**, New York, NY

Ph.D., Ancient Near Eastern Studies

May 2002

*Dissertation*: "The Collapse of a Complex State: A Reappraisal of the  
End of the First Dynasty of Babylon, 1683-1597 B.C."

*with distinction*

M.A., M.Phil., Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

Oct. 1997, Feb. 1998

*Thesis*: "Numbered Days: Labor-Value and Mesopotamian Economies."

**Middlebury College**, Middlebury, VT. B.A., American History, Literary Journalism

May 1990, *cum laude*

### awards

2006-07: Franke Institute for the Humanities Fellow

2005: Grant for Instructional Improvement

### employment

**The University of Chicago**, The Oriental Institute / Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

**Managing Editor, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* / Research Associate**

2011+

**Assistant Professor of Ancient Near Eastern History**

2003-2011

Professorial appointments in the College and Department of Classics (Program on the Ancient Mediterranean World). Program Head for Ancient Near Eastern History Ph.D. Faculty advisor for Oriental Institute Museum. Student Affairs Committee 2004-2010, Graduate Student Counselor 2007-2010.

*Graduate courses*: Survey of Mesopotamian History (2003, 2006, 2008, 2010), Historiography for Ancient Near Eastern Research (2004, 2007, 2011), Decline and Collapse in the Ancient Near East (2004, 2009), Problems in Ancient Greek and Near Eastern History (2004-5, co-taught), Seminars on Old Babylonian (2005, 2008) and Akkadian History (2010), Methodology for Ancient Near East History (2006).

*Undergraduate courses*: Ancient Empires: Neo-Assyria (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010), War and Society in Ancient Iraq (2004, 2006), Uses of Ancient Middle Eastern Pasts (2004, 2005), Nomads and Fellahin: Social History of the Ancient Near East (2005), Babylonian Knowledge (2006, 2008, 2010, 2011), The Event: Jerusalem, 701 B.C.

### books

*Texts of the Late Old Babylonian Period*. Copies of 95 cuneiform tablets dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> c. B.C., and an additional 91 texts in transliteration. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplemental Series* 2 (2010), 232 pp. illus.

*Rebellions and Peripheries in the Cuneiform World* (*American Oriental Series* 91) Ann Arbor, MI: American Oriental Society, 2010. Editor of and contributor to six-chapter volume on Mesopotamian political dissent; also including N. Brisch, S. Melville, A. Podany, E. von Dassow, and R. Westbrook.† xxxii + 109 pp.

### books in progress

*On Babylon and Collapse*. An historical study of the collapse of the First Dynasty of Babylon and a critical review of historiographic questions about state collapse in antiquity, with new attention to the role of borderlands, non-state actors, and ancient states as "imagined communities." In prep. for 2013.

*Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem, 701 B.C.E.: Story, History, and Historiography*. Co-editor I. Kalimi; on historiographic problems of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. Contributors include myself, I. Kalimi, E. Frahm, E. Weissert, T. Holm, M. Fales, P. Dubovsky, J. Pope, D. Weisberg, J. Verheyden, M. Cogan, D. Ussishkin, R. Ulmer. In prep. for Brill's *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* series, expected 2012.

*The People They Ruled: Ancient Near Eastern Empires and the Conquered*. A history of ancient imperialism from the perspective of the ruled peripheries. In prep. for 2013 for Pluto Press.

### projects

*Prosopography of the Late Old Babylonian Period* (First release 1 May 2009; Release 3 Sept 2010). Searchable database edits and records 14,315 personal names from cuneiform documents of the 17<sup>th</sup>-c. B.C.:

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/lobpni/>

## articles and edited-volume contributions

- "The Hypercoherent Icon: Knowledge, Rationalization & Disenchantment in Mesopotamia," in *Iconoclasm and Text Destruction in the Ancient Near East and Beyond* (OIS 8), ed. N. May. Chicago: Oriental Institute, forthcoming 2012.
- "The Presumptive State: Early Polity Formation in Mesopotamia," forthcoming in *Past & Present* (Feb. 2012).
- "Towards a 'New Military History' of the Ancient Near East," in *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World* (PAAH 10), ed. L. Brice and J.T. Roberts (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2011), pp. 11-51.
- "On Seeing and Believing: Liver Divination and the Era of Warring States," in *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World* (OIS 6), ed. A. Annus. Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2010, pp. 225-266.
- "The Fields of Rebellion and Periphery," Introduction, *Rebellions and Peripheries* (2010, *supra*), xvii-xxxii.
- "Writing Rebellion Back into the Record: A Methodologies Toolkit," Chapter One, *Rebellions and Peripheries* (2010, *supra*), pp. 1-27.
- "A Light in the *gagûm* Window: The Sippar Cloister in the Late Old Babylonian period," in *Opening the Tablet Box: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster*, (=CHANE 42) ed. S. Melville and A. Slotsky (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 329-46.
- "Ningirsu Returns to His Plow: Lagash and Girsu Take Leave of Ur," in *On the Third Dynasty of Ur: Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*, ed. P. Michalowski (=Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplemental Series 1). American Schools of Oriental Research, 2008, pp. 153-157.
- "The World of the Babylonian Countrysides," in *The Babylonian World*, ed. Gwendolyn Leick, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 13-38.
- "Death and Dismemberment in Mesopotamia: Discorporation between the Body and the Body Politic," in *Performing Death* (OIS 3), ed. N. Laneri. Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2007, pp. 189-208.
- "gir3-gen-na and Shulgi's 'Library': Liver Omen Texts in the Third Millennium BC (I)." *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 2006:3, 1-9. See: [http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2006/cdlj2006\\_003.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2006/cdlj2006_003.html).
- "Axes Against Eshnunna," *Orientalia* 74:1 (2005), 42-50.
- "Trouble in the Countryside, *ana tarši* Samsuditana: Militarism, Kassites, and the Fall of Babylon I," in *Ethnicity in Mesopotamia* [CRAI 48]. Leiden: PIHANS, 2005. pp. 273-289.
- "Ewe Should Be So Lucky: Extispicy Reports and Everyday Life," in *Mining the Archives: Festschrift for Christopher Walker on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday*, ed. C. Wunsch. Dresden: ISLET, 2002, pp. 229-244.
- "An Assyrian Garden of Ancestors: Room I, Northwest Palace, Kalḫu." *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* XIII (2001), pp. 145-216.
- "Libya Domestica: Libyan Trade and Society on the Eve of the Invasions of Egypt." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* XXXVI (2001), pp. 149-64.

## notes

- Various essays in *The Middle East: The Cradle of Civilization Revealed*, ed. Stephen Bourke (Thames & Hudson, 2008): "The Kingdom of Israel," "Neo-Assyrian Sculpture," "The Neo-Babylonian Dynasty," "Nebuchadnezzar II," "The Chaldaeans," and "The Sack of Jerusalem."
- "Omen Report No. 38" and "Once more, *ana še'im*," in *N.A.B.U.* 2007:3, Nos. 47 and 48.
- "The Many Lives of a Brooklyn Figure," *B.E.S.* 17 (*Studies in Honor of James F. Romano*) 2007, 205-8.
- "Uneasy Lies the Head that Wears a Crown," *N.A.B.U.* 2006, No. 1, pp. 3-4.
- "Another Sin-leqe-unninni," *N.A.B.U.* 2004, No. 4, p. 93.
- "Whose Feast? Re-installing Room 7," *The Oriental Institute News & Notes* No. 183, Fall, 2004.

## works in progress

- "The First World Event: Jerusalem, 701 B.C. as Literary Event," for *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem* (*supra*).
- "Singers and Scribes," for *Communications in the Ancient World*, ed. F. Naiden and R. Talbert, for O.U.P. (2012).
- "The Mace and the Flood: Legitimacy and Violence in the Cuneiform World," for *Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient World*, ed. L. Brice and T. Howe, for Brill (2013).
- "Ex Oriente Flux," on problems in transmission to and reception of ANE literature to the Greek world.
- "Of Emblems, Wards and Witnesses," an analysis of divine emblems as witnesses in BM 80989.
- "Building Larsa," from the Toronto-London-Dresden talks, for ISLET volume (ed. P. Steinkeller).
- JESHO at 50* (editor). Selection and introduction of landmark *JESHO* essays (for Brill).
- "No. 3 Niche Lane" and "No. 4A Paternoster Row," Old Babylonian private archives from Ur (for CDL Press).

## reviews

- of *Economy and Society in Northern Babylonia in the Early Old Babylonian Period*, by Anne Goddeeris, *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46:3 (2003), 379-383.
- of *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (=HSM Monographs 62), by Cynthia Chapman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 5 (2005), 241-246.
- of *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, by Simo Parpola and Michael Porter, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 65:2, April 2006, p. 125f.
- of *Vorderasiatisches Schriftdenkmäler XXIX*, by Horst Klengel and Evelyn Klengel-Brandt, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 124:4, Oct.-Dec. 2004, 787-791.
- of *Reconstructing the Emar Landscape*, by Lucia Mori (Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza, 2003), *Bibliotheca Orientalis* LXIV No. 3-4 (May-August 2007), 411-4.
- of *The Anatomy of a Mesopotamian City. Survey and Soundings at Mashkan-shapir*, by E. Stone and P. Zimansky. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) *Journal of the American Oriental Society* vol. 127:3, 376-8.
- of *Mesopotamien: Die altbabylonische Zeit* (*Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 160/4), by D. Charpin, D.O. Edzard and M. Stol. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69:2 (Oct. 2010), 260-63.
- of *From Egypt to Babylon: The International Age, 1550-500 BC*, by Paul Collins (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008), *Journal of World History* 21:2 (June 2010), 315-320.
- of *Ancient Mesopotamia at the Dawn of Civilization: The Evolution of an Urban Landscape*, by Guillermo Algaze (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71:1 (April 2012, *forthcoming*).
- of *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East*, by Amanda H. Podany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), *The Ancient History Bulletin* (*forthcoming* 2011).

## conference papers / invited lectures

- 2012 "The Presumptive State: Developing 'Legal Voice' in Babylonia." Invited speaker for panel on Ancient Law at annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, IL, **upcoming** (Jan.).  
"Mesopotamian Geographies, Pedestrian and Imaginative." Invited speaker for panel on Ancient Trade and Travel at meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, IL, **upcoming** (Jan.).
- 2011 "Sacred History and Pristine Civilizations in the Ancient Near East." Organizer and speaker for panel, at annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Boston, MA, January.  
"When Hatti Marched on Akkad, 1595 B.C.: Ancient State Collapse and the Roots of Instability." Invited lecture, Dept. Near Eastern Studies, Cornell University, February.  
"The Collapse of the First Dynasty of Babylon: From Prosopography to Politics." American Oriental Society, Chicago, IL, March.  
"Communication and Power in Mesopotamia." Invited lecture, National Humanities Center conference *Communications in the Classical World*, Research Triangle Park, NC, March.  
"The Hypercoherent Icon: Knowledge, Rationalization & Disenchantment in Mesopotamia." Invited lecture, Oriental Institute Symposium "Iconoclasm and Text Destruction in the Ancient Near East and Beyond," Chicago, IL, April.  
"Authority and Its Others: Rebellion and a Mesopotamian Politics." 2011 meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians, Erie, PA (May).  
"Babylonian Billets: Quartered Away from Home in the Middle Bronze Age." 2011 meeting of the Society of Military History, Lisle, IL (June).
- 2010 "'Deep History,' Environmental Determinism, and the Mesopotamian Past in the Present," American Oriental Society, St. Louis, MO, March.  
"On Babylon and Collapse: In Theories, In Dossiers." Invited lecture, Workshop on the History and Historiography of the Ancient Near East, Harvard University, April 28.  
"On Babylon and Collapse: Problems of Ancients and Moderns," 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Wheaton College Archaeology Lecture Series, Wheaton, IL, September.  
"Babylonian Knowledge: Formation, Reformation, Deformation." Invited lecture, University of Montana, Missoula, MT, October.

- 2009 “Babylon Stood Alone: 1595 B.C. and the Death of the State Idea,” invited lecture at Brown University, Dept. of Egyptology and Western Asia, February 19.  
 “On Seeing and Believing: Liver Divination, Observationalism, and the Era of Warring States,” invited lecture at Univ. Chicago, Oriental Institute Symposium “Science & Superstition,” March 7.  
 “Going Down Slow: Again on Assyrian Trade at OB Sippar,” American Oriental Society, Albuquerque, NM, March 16.  
 “*ex Oriente* flux: Problems and Preconditions in Transmission,” Association of Ancient Historians, Vancouver, BC, May 16.
- 2008 “Ammiditana *in extremis*,” American Oriental Society, Chicago, IL (March).  
 “Failed States and Falling Cities: A Modernist Take on Ancient Collapse,” invited lecture, American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting, Boston, MA (November 20).
- 2007 “Exchange and Early Mesopotamian States,” Assoc. Ancient Historians, Princeton Univ., NJ (May)  
 “Opening Remarks” and “Response to Speakers” at “Text Envy & Artifact Allure” conference, Oriental Institute (May).
- 2006 “The Field of Rebellion: Surveying the Mesopotamian Evidence,” American Oriental Society, Seattle, WA (among eight-speaker panel organized by myself).  
 “At, Under, After Sippar: ‘Real’ Collections and ‘Artificial’ Reflections,” at “The Organization of Knowledge in Antiquity,” an invited conference at Western Washington University.  
 “Death and Dismemberment in Mesopotamia: Discorporation between the Body and the Body Politic,” at Oriental Institute Symposium “Performing Death”.
- 2005 “Countryside(s): Modeling Babylonian Exurbia,” American Oriental Society, Philadelphia, PA.  
 “Building Larsa: Mass Labor, Scope of Economy, and a Babylonian Rhetoric of Work,” British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology, London (March), Institute for the Study of Long-term Economic Trends, Dresden (May). [Substantially revised from 2001 lecture].
- 2004 “Forts on the River: ANE State Interest in Euphratean Trade,” American Schools of Oriental Research, San Antonio, TX.  
 “As Darkness Falls: Crown Lands in the Twilight of Babylon I,” American Oriental Society, San Diego, CA.  
 “Finding the Circuit of Babylon: Collapse, Warlords, and the State,” Franke Institute for the Humanities, the University of Chicago.
- 2003 “Seeing and Believing: On Extispicy as an Observational Science,” 49<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, The British Museum, London.  
 “Babylonian Divination and the Secrecy Paradigm,” Columbia University, New York, NY.  
 “A Prism Over Babylon: On Telling Mesopotamian History,” Bennington College, Bennington, VT.  
 “On Losing Babylon & Getting It Back: The Fall of an Ancient State, 1597 B.C.,” The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- 2002 “Period and Paradigm in Ancient States,” Towson University, Towson, MD.  
 “Trouble in the Countryside, *ana tarši* Samsuditana,” 48<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, The Netherlands.  
 “Babylon, *Desaparecida*: The Murky End of a Famous Kingdom,” The Historical Society, Atlanta, GA.
- 2001 “Changes and Paradigms: How We Periodize Mesopotamian History,” The Biblical Archaeology Society of New York, New York, NY.  
 “Building Larsa: A New Perspective on the Social Setting of Mass Labor in Ancient Babylonia,” American Oriental Society, Toronto, Canada.
- 1999 “The Geneonymy Garden of Aššurnaširpal II: Room I at Kalḫu,” American Schools of Oriental Research, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

- 1998 “The Merneptah Stele in its Ancient Near Eastern Context,” The Biblical Archaeology Society of New York, New York, NY.
- 1997 “Libyan Wars: The Other Front,” The Egyptological Seminar of New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

### panels organized

**Organizer and speaker** for American Historical Association panel “Sacred History and Pristine Civilizations in the Ancient Near East,” Jan. 2011. Speakers: Guillermo Algaze (U.C. - San Diego), Alhena Gadotti (Towson University), Andréas Stauder (Swiss National Science Foundation), and Beate Pongratz-Leisten (Institute for the Study of the Ancient World).

**Co-chair and organizer** for “Communication and Power in Mesopotamian Civilizations,” for Nov. 2010 ASOR meeting. Speakers: Alexandra Kleinerman (Johns Hopkins Univ.), Alan Lenzi (Univ. of the Pacific), Francesca Rochberg (Univ. California, Berkeley), and Ed Stratford (Brigham Young Univ.).

**Co-organizer and respondent** for 10-speaker conference “Text Envy & Artifact Allure: Evidence, Methods and Epistemologies Across the History/Prehistory Divide,” Oriental Institute (May 2007); speakers included Jerry Cooper (Johns Hopkins U.), Jan Assmann (U. Heidelberg), L. von Falkenhausen (UCLA).

**Organizer and speaker** for panel “Rebellions & Peripheries,” American Oriental Society 2006 meeting. Speakers: N. Yoffee (Univ. Michigan), R. Westbrook† (Johns Hopkins Univ.), D. Fleming (New York Univ.), S. Melville (Clarkson Univ.), A. Podany (Cal. State Poly Univ. – Pomona), R. Beal (Univ. Chicago), N. Brisch (Univ. Michigan), and myself.

### public lectures

- 2010 “The Old Babylonian Period: A Users’ Guide,” California Museum of Ancient Art, Los Angeles.
- 2008 “Idols Without Anxiety,” Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL.
- 2008 “The Ziggurat as Entoptical Image of Power,” Chicago Humanities Festival, Chicago, IL.
- 2007 “How to Build a God: Mesopotamian Icons and Biblical Parodies,” U. of C. Humanities Open House.
- 2006 “Babylonian Liver Omens,” University of Chicago Humanities Open House.
- 2006 “The Future of the Past in Iraq,” open forum, Western Washington University.
- 2005 “Cosmic and Quotidian: Mesopotamian Perceptions of Reality,” U. of C. Humanities Open House.
- 2004 “Visiting an Assyrian Palace at Chicago,” University of Chicago Humanities Open House.

### university service

- 2007-2010 NELC Graduate Student Adviser.
- 2004-2010 NELC Student Affairs Committee.
- 2003-present Program Head, NELC Ancient Near East History program.
- 2007-present Manuscript reader for the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.
- 2004-2010 Oriental Institute Post-Doctoral Research Fellow Search Committee.
- 2005-2010 Program in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Executive Committee, 2008-2009; Admissions Committee, 2006; Curricular Review, 2005.
- 2008-2010 “Aims of Education” colloquium leader for U. of C. first-year orientation.
- 2005-2008 Faculty Sponsor, Ancient Societies Workshop.
- 2003-2009 Mesopotamian Faculty Advisor, Oriental Institute Museum; Guest Curator, 2004-2005.

### other academic service / experience

- Member**, Baghdad Committee, American Schools of Oriental Research, 2009+.
- Advisor**, Publications Committee, American Association of Ancient Historians, 2011+.
- Editorial advisor**, *Cambridge University Dictionary of Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, 2009+.
- Panel Chair**, “Writing Systems,” American Oriental Society, San Antonio, TX, 2007.
- Co-organizer**, Ancient Near East panel, The Historical Society, Atlanta, GA, April, 2002.
- Post-doctoral Research Fellow**, Columbia Univ., Dept. of Middle East Languages and Cultures, 2002.
- Preceptor**, New York Univ., Morse Academic Program: “World Cultures: The Ancient Near East,” 2001.
- Research Assistant**, Columbia University, Dept. of Middle East Languages and Cultures, 1995-2001.
- Copy- and style-editing for a dozen+ scholarly works, editing of Sumerian & Akkadian texts for publication.

**Research Assistant**, Ancient Near East Dept., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, 1998.

Research in support of the reinstallation of the Ancient Near Eastern department's permanent galleries.

**Preceptor**, Columbia University: "Islamic Civilization," "Theories of Culture," "Modern M.E. / India," 1997-2000.

**Rapporteur**, University Seminar on the Ancient Near East, Columbia University, 1996-1999.

**Research Assistant**, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1994-2001.

**Research Assistant**, The National Museum of the American Indian, 1991-1993.

**Research Assistant**, The National Museum of American History, 1990-1991.

### **memberships**

American Oriental Society (2000+)

American Historical Association (2002+)

Association of Ancient Historians (2007+)

International Association of Assyriology (2003+)

American Schools of Oriental Research (1998, 2004, 2008+)