Archaeology from Every Angle

Papers in Honor of Richard L. Zettler



Edited by Katherine Blanchard, Yelena Rakic, and Paul Zimmerman

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frontispiece Richard Zettler at the Penn Museum. Photo courtesy Penn Museum

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Editors' Preface

Katherine Blanchard, Yelena Rakic, Paul Zimmerman

This volume brings together 17 papers that reflect on the wide range of Richard Zettler's work. There are papers from his students, his professors, and his colleagues. What you will find within these pages are submissions as diverse as Richard's own range of scholarship yet all feature multiple types of evidence to clarify our understanding of the past; that is, to see all problems from every angle possible.

Several of his students remarked how Richard made them think out of their comfort zone: to look at anthropological approaches to archaeological issues. Tim Matney's chapter discusses this influence on the way he approaches an "uncommon" burial at Ziyaret Tepe, while Jill Katz fondly remembers how the methodology in a particular book became the basis of her investigation on Samaria and Jerusalem.

Never accepting previous identifications, Richard has encouraged his students to bring together new ideas and findings as they interpret the past. Brad Hafford revisits a silver hoard; Bill Zimmerle uses cuboid incense burners as new evidence of trade; Aubrey Baadsgaard offers a fresh perspective on the jewelry of familiar names from the Royal Cemetery at Ur; Marshall Schurtz looks at transportation costs as a way to prove Babylonian efficiency; and Mitchell Rothman reminds us all to look more broadly as he discusses developments in the 5th millennium BCE.

In honor of how Richard's research presents a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the past, James Armstrong presents to us a chronology of 1st millennium pottery from Nippur by looking at the gray ware and polychrome glazed pottery from specific clear contexts; Mac Gibson uses field notes and tablets to relocate a temple in Khafajah; Karen Wilson offers a new report on the Middle and Late Uruk levels of the Inanna Temple; and Jean Evans uses temple assemblages deemed sacred as the basis to investigate the sacred in houses at Khafajah.

Pointing to the lack of information from the archaeological record but the wealth of information in the written evidence, Tim Clayden offers up an investigation into Kassite sites and how we can use the written to prove the archaeological. And then combining the visual and textual representations of equids in the 3rd millennium BCE, Jill Weber takes those examples and investigates the osteological evidence for lip rings.

Reminding us that you shouldn't look at just the glyptic tradition on sealings, Augusta McMahon honors Richard's interest in sealing function with her chapter on Tell Brak; while reflecting on a previous discussion with Richard about the origins of presentation scenes on seals, Claudia Suter furthers this idea by looking at banqueting scenes.

Ali Aljuboori's look at how these Sumerian and Akkaddian proverbs have continued on into today, reminds us all how Richard is working in the same areas as his past, but is now looking at today and how to improve these places for the future. And finally, reminding us that throughout his entire career, Richard has been active in fieldwork around the middle east, Michael Danti and Darren Ashby share a preliminary analysis from the Rowanduz Archaeological project, on which Richard serves as the current Director.

These diverse papers—spanning time, space, and disciplines—are a true celebration of his work as a mentor.

Biography

Michael D. Danti and W.B. Hafford

This volume celebrates the long and successful career of archaeologist Richard L. Zettler, consummate scholar of the ancient Near East.

Richard has influenced countless academics—as witnessed by the many submissions to this festschrift—from long-established scholars to students and all levels in between. One of the primary reasons for so gratifying a response is his unfaltering dedication to his students and close associates. No matter the stage of their career, Richard is there for them. Often has he answered a late-night phone call or frantic email about anything to do with our field: grant writing, the state of the job market, fieldwork, teaching techniques, navigating university committees, and much more. He is an overflowing font of knowledge, full of sage advice, and always understanding of his students.

Richard espouses an approach to archaeology that emphasizes practical experience. His popular graduate courses frequently involve artifacts brought directly from museum storage. Listening to him expound on pottery is never dull and has helped many of us to connect with Mesopotamian material culture in a very tangible way. Colleagues and former students often seek his advice directly from the field, emailing a photograph of a piece of pottery, a sealing, or any manner of artifact, simply captioned: "What is this?" Richard responds not only with a basic identification, but also with its historical period, importance, and usage. So good is he at this process that the FBI, Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection have all come to him to identify suspected smuggled Middle Eastern artifacts coming across US borders.

Not only is Richard an expert on ancient Near Eastern material culture, but also on Near Eastern history, religion, and daily life through the cuneiform texts. All Near Eastern archaeologists must at least be passingly familiar with cuneiform, but Richard is far more than that. His dissertation, later published as a monograph, dealt with the Temple of Inanna at Nippur through both archaeological and textual evidence. The archaeology allowed him to reconstruct the layout of the temple at particular periods, and the texts allowed him to reconstruct the economic activities of the temple as well as to follow the organization of particular families of priests. In tracing the sequence of the temple building and the texts found within the sequences, he was securing an interest that would remain with him throughout his career—that of text and context. He would continue to see and work with tablets both as direct information from the ancients through their writing and as artifacts left behind by them in particular contexts of buildings and activities.

Although Richard has spent much time reconstructing the activities of ancient priestly families, space precludes a complete reconstruction of his own family tree here. A short overview will have to suffice: He was born on November 13, 1949 in Topeka, Kansas to Richard Zettler, MD, and Dorothy M. (Alston) Zettler. His father was serving as a medical doctor in the United States Army Air Corps and

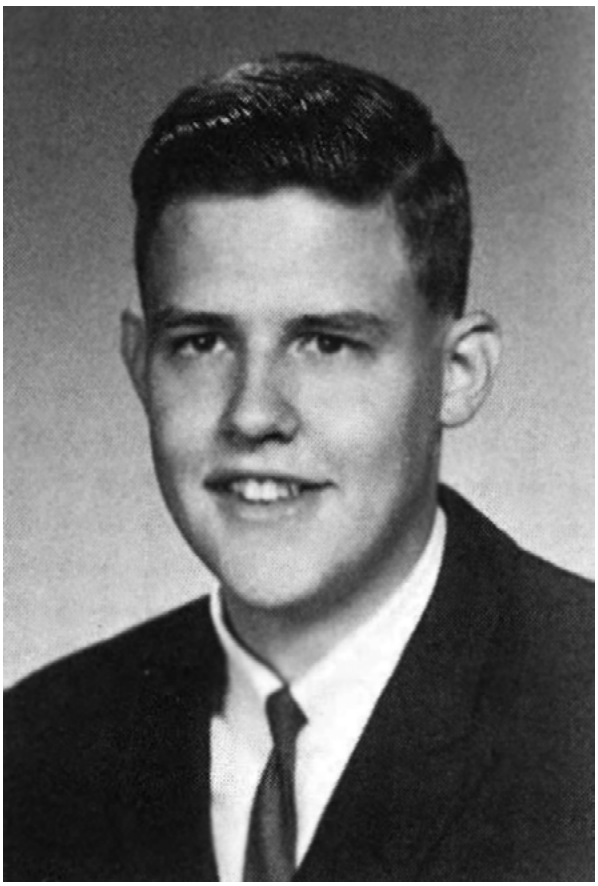
later the Air Force. Richard is the eldest of five children—Robert Zettler, William Zettler, Janet Wolf, and Carol Hoelle. His mother's line came to America before the Revolutionary War, his father's in the mid-19th century and they eventually settled in southern Ohio like many other German immigrants. In fact, his family has deep roots in Hamilton, Ohio (where Richard grew up and attended high school).

Catholicism played its role, but his immediate family was more involved in the medical than priestly occupation. He comments that he was surrounded by the entire cycle of life, from birth to death, since many of his relatives were either doctors or funeral directors.

Richard has always challenged himself and never accepted second best, whether in his early days of golfing (where he attained an impressive handicap), his meticulous undergraduate studies in History at Notre Dame (1968–72), his work with Bill Rathje on the ground-breaking archaeological Garbage Project (1976) or his Ph.D. with honors from the University of Chicago (1984). He often claims that receiving an advanced degree is more about perseverance than intelligence, but he has a surfeit of both. His dedication and perseverance are easily seen in the way he reads archaeological stratigraphy and the phasing of excavated walls. On excavations he is often found defreeting mudbrick. Defreeting is the process of defining the joins in an ancient wall with a fine-pointed pick in order to highlight courses, bonds, and additions—determining how the wall was built and altered in its history. It is a time-consuming process that takes a steady hand and focused attention. These are traits Richard has in spades, so to speak, and he jokingly refers to them as stemming from the stubbornness of his astrological sign, Scorpio.

Along with an intense connection to his work, he also possesses a down-to-earth sense of humor. He is known to appreciate the folksy wit in older television programs such as the Andy Griffith Show or the Golden Girls. More bizarre or outlandish tales have also been known to turn a smile for him and his own stories of the eccentricities of archaeology are often the most entertaining part of a field season.

Graduate school at the University of Chicago saw him come under the tutelage of McGuire Gibson and gave him the opportunity to excavate at



0.1 Richard Zettler high school photgraph..

the ancient city of Nippur. This would solidify his career in Mesopotamian archaeology, his interest in the origins of cities, and begin the development of much of the expertise that so inspired this festschrift. He met many of his close colleagues in the Chicago years and worked tirelessly in the field at many sites in Iraq and Syria

The one that comes up most frequently in his stories for its harsh conditions and difficulties in general is Umm al-Hafriyat.

It turned cold early in Iraq that year (1977). The excavation suffered from what Richard refers to as every Biblical plague (though no firstborn children were harmed). Mice ate their food and subsequently perished throughout the tent encampment. Many of the staff were ill. Severe sandstorms blew their tents away and destroyed their provisions (including a bottle of vodka). At one point, frogs literally rained from the sky. Despite the hardships, Richard and James Armstrong (Mac Gibson was there part of the time too, but he had fallen quite ill) forced



0.2 Richard at Sweyhat on donkey.

themselves to continue in their goals and complete the excavation. Naturally, it made an impression that would last a lifetime and form the basis of countless tales in later excavations.

Richard also remembers the long hours spent meticulously measuring carinations on thousands of ancient bowls from Nippur in order to chart minute differences through time. His work in this regard was remembered and immortalized in the mural painted on the dig-house wall at Nippur, a mural that survives to this day.

Though he often jokes about how tedious and futile such efforts seemed at times, the attention to detail and dedication to completing a job shown by these examples are characteristics that define Richard. He will not give up and he will always do a thorough and thoughtful job.

If he has a fault, it is in being too thorough. Richard does not accept half-thought-out solutions and has been known to spend weekends and spare time finding the precise answer to a particular question. This is due both to his dedication and his innate curiosity. When he wants to know an answer, he will not stop until he has it. He might spend weeks identifying an exact piece for the FBI, rather than settle for a range of dates or possible manufacture locations that might have satisfied them. And he initially writes hundreds of words for a museum label. These labels by their nature must be short, and yet Richard does not like easily confused or too-broad statements. Thus, he starts with a great deal of background and boils it down in order to capture the important essentials of the artifact. The eventually shortened label ends up vastly better for the research and careful thought put into it.

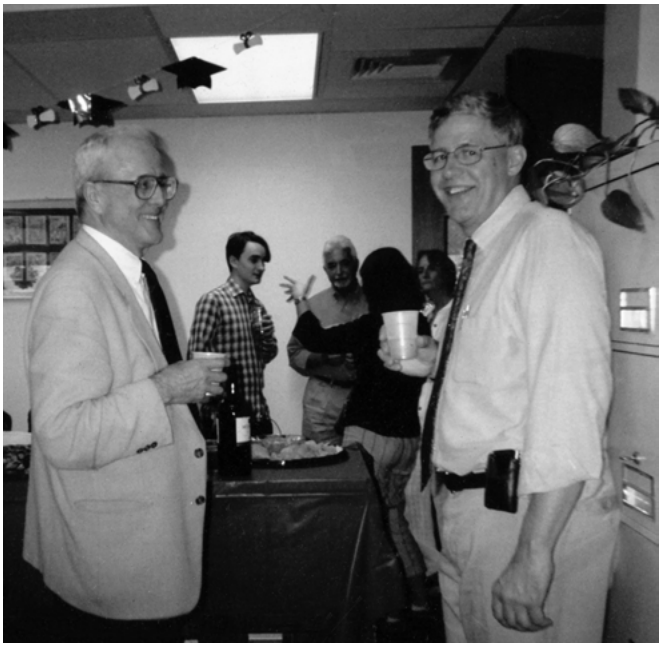
After receiving his Ph.D. from Chicago in 1984, Richard took a visiting professorship at Berkeley (1985–86). He was already making a name for himself in the field and presented a novel approach to clay sealings, following the work of Enrica Fiandra, where he investigated the seemingly mundane backs instead of the visually more interesting fronts. The front bears the imagery of a seal, but the back holds evidence of what kind of object had been



0.3 Mural of Richard and carinated bowl from Nippur. Photo courtesy W. Hafford.

sealed, an equally important aspect. He found that various containers and doors had been secured, and connecting symbols with what they sealed was particularly important analytical work. From that talk, the late Assyriologist Erle Leichty always claimed to have spotted Richard's brilliance and brought him to Penn

Richard began teaching at Penn in 1986 and has been there ever since, both as a professor and as the curator-in-charge of the Near East Section of the Penn Museum. Since that institution had sent an expedition to Nippur in 1889, the first American expedition to the region, its collection gave him an opportunity to stay connected with the site where he had cut his archaeological teeth even after it had become off-limits in the years of the Iran-Iraq war and beyond. During the years 1989 to 2007, he directed excavations in northern Mesopotamia, at Tell es-Sweyhat in Syria, giving many Penn graduate students the opportunity to work firsthand in the Near East. If they could not work in



0.4 Richard and Erle at a Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) party.

the heartland of cities, they could still examine the process of urbanization in the northern reaches. He and his students found that the region was more sophisticated than many had initially believed.

Commenting on his own schooling, Richard remembers being pushed to memorize the entire sequence of kings across some 3,000 years of Near Eastern history. He can effortlessly recite the challengingly polysyllabic names of the rulers of the Kassite Dynasty as a catchy tango. Richard has a near-photographic memory and so the process did not overly tax him, but he does not force his own students to perform old-school rote memorization. Nevertheless, he remarks on how it gave him a foundation in the overall progress of more than just kings, but also of dynasties, "cultures," and "civilizations." These terms, of course, are so broad as to defy definition, a fact that Richard knows only too well. His popular undergraduate classes frequently engage with the concepts of cities and civilizations. His students learn to deconstruct what they believe cities to be and come to grips with how to approach the exceedingly difficult question of the rise of cities across the world, beginning of course with the Ancient Near East.

In so long a career, Richard has published many influential articles and books. He has taught countless courses and curated many exhibits. One that had particular impact was the traveling exhibit, *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur*. It toured several cities from 1998 to 2007 and its catalog, one that included important essays about Ur and its artifacts, is one of his most frequently cited works.

Because Penn, jointly with the British Museum, sponsored major excavations at Ur from 1922 to 1934, Richard has become deeply connected with that ancient city. The Penn Museum received 25% of the finds from the early excavation, and as curator, Richard has become intimately familiar with them. In fact, he has written and lectured so often on Ur that it has at times seemed repetitive and stale to him. In this respect we might liken him to the director of the excavations at Ur some 90 years ago, Sir Leonard Woolley, who commented in a letter to the museum that he had grown tired of excavating lavishly beautiful gold headdresses. There were simply too many of them.

Nonetheless, the spectacular nature of the artifacts from Ur, as well as Ur's important place in the origin of cities, draws Richard back time and time again. He gave many lectures across the US and abroad during the traveling exhibit, and his bibliography attests to the many articles he has published about Ur. In 2008, the Penn Museum loaned Near Eastern objects to the Beijing World Art Museum and Richard gave the inaugural lecture there not just on Ur but on Penn's historic involvement in the Near East. He went on to tour Chinese archaeological sites and gather more data for his cities class in a trip that he greatly enjoyed and still talks about today. Richard was fundamental in the Penn Museum exhibit entitled *Iraq's Ancient Past* (2009) and was equally instrumental in the long process of creating their newest set of permanent Middle East Galleries (2018). This is a set of three gallery rooms covering some 6,000 square feet and displaying more than 1,200 objects from Penn excavated sites across 10,000 years of history.

Over the years, Richard's interests have only increased. Not only does he study cities in Mesopotamia, but he also covers comparative material from China, Egypt, and the Americas in his classes. He even includes the development of Philadelphia in more recent history to engage his students in the concept of "city" and to encourage further local historical investigation. In fact, his classes are often cross-listed with other departments, such as Urban Studies. Furthermore, he has conducted or supported many cross-disciplinary and scientific investigations; perhaps the most recent of these being his efforts in the metallurgical sciences in conjunction with the Deutsches Bergbau Museum in Bochum, Germany. Through laser ablation and other cutting-edge techniques, the project is attempting to identify the sources of gold and other metals used in artifacts found at ancient Mesopotamian sites. Richard smiles and says he does not really understand the scientific language in the jointly authored articles, but he provides the historical and archaeological input while German scientists provide the chemical analysis and potential source identification. This has a great impact on understanding trade networks and core-periphery interaction.

As civil war in Syria made that country impossible for further work at Tell es-Sweyhat, Richard made the move, as did many archaeologists of the region, into Iraqi Kurdistan. More than just

excavation, he began—with many of his former students and their students—to assist Mosul University in modernizing their approach to archaeological teaching. In May 2014, they were involved in seminars and training of Mosul personnel only to find the city overrun by ISIS in the following month. During this harrowing time, Richard continued to assist where he could, eventually helping the dean of the archaeology department at Mosul, Ali Aljuboori, to escape that beleaguered city and come to Penn for a year. Now that ISIS has been driven out of Mosul, Ali has returned to the university and is rebuilding and modernizing, again with Richard's help. Moreover, the restoration process has grown and Richard, working with his close colleague Michael Danti and the Department of State, is now involved in a major effort to rebuild many cultural sites in and around Mosul.

As witnessed by the effort he has placed on helping Ali al-Jabouri and the city of Mosul, Richard maintains close relations with his Iraqi and Syrian (both Arabic and Kurdish) colleagues. His good nature and sense of humor comes across even in his somewhat broken Arabic. He remarks that he learned the language from shepherds in Afej, a small town near the ancient site of Nippur. The Iraqis laugh along with him at this, for the town tends to be known as something of a backwater. It has fostered the Arabic saying, "as poor as a shoemaker in Afej," with the joke being that no one can afford shoes there.

Those who are lucky enough to take a class or work in the field with Richard benefit from his enormous knowledge of material culture, cuneiform texts, mudbrick architecture, and his milieu of humorous stories. These latter typically border on the outlandish, and though they may have seen some embellishment through the years, truth is stranger than fiction, especially in the life of a field archaeologist. Whether expounding on the episode of the raining frogs at Umm al-Hafriyat or the day he tried to explain the origins and customs of St. Patrick's Day to a Kurdish cook, Richard is particularly good at relating absurdity with a smile.

Perhaps in summing up, we should write a sentence in honor not just of the man, but also of his writing style, that is, rather long but extremely informative, containing as it does so much information as to require many clauses in a Germanic style that so fits the great knowledge Richard desires to impart in a single breath, thereby resulting in sentences of up to one hundred words (which we did not quite reach as this sentence is only around eighty).

We hope that Richard will enjoy the submissions to this volume in his honor and that all who read them will learn about the myriad aspects of the Near East that have so long interested him. We hope too that the articles will inspire readers to continue to learn about the Near East and delve still more deeply, asking new questions and conducting ground-breaking research. And we know that Richard and his work will continue to inspire us and future generations of scholars.

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From Sumerian and Akkadian Proverbs to Arabic: Thematic Continuity

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Mesopotamian civilizations commented extensively on their native culture. These remarks reflected a variety of purposes especially political, religious, and literary. Many of the Sumerian and Akkadian myths, epics, and even proverbs were inherited by Babylonian, Assyrian, and Arabic writers, which indicates the continuity of Mesopotamian civilization through thousands of years. However, one has to take into consideration that across this long period of time a great deal of their meaning varied according to their culture. Therefore, this paper will shed light on some of these proverbs and wise sayings, comparing their social, political, and religious commentary to old and contemporary wisdom, literature, and proverbs in Iraq.

A complete edition of previously discovered proverbs from ancient Sumer and their translations by early scholars exists (Alster 1997). In his introduction, Alster discusses their early publications as well as the following questions: What is a proverb? How are they classified? Why collect proverbs? How are they dated? How do they pertain to Sumerian scribal education and school tablets? What was their social setting? (See also Veldhuis 2000.) However, I find that letters from the Old Babylonian, Old-Assyrian, and Neo-Assyrian periods are also important sources for more proverbs (Aljuboori 2018).

The first question is how did these proverbs persist for those thousands of years? The answer is: since Akkadian language was introduced to school teachings alongside Sumerian by the end of the 3rd millennium, the student would have to learn and practice writing exercises in both languages in order to be a good scholar and to be employed by the temple or palace. Another reason is that proverbs are short sentences probably known from parents or culture at large, exactly as we ourselves know hundreds of proverbs from our own oral traditions. Due to this, Sumerian or Akkadian students used Sumerian proverbs in their writing exercises and education. Thus, the Sumerian proverbs: "A scribe who does not know Sumerian, what kind of scribe is he?" (Alster 1997:2.47), "If the scribe does not know Sumerian, how will the translator succeed?" (Alster 1997:2.49), and "You're a scribe and you don't know your own name! Shame on you!" (Alster 1997:2.37). This chapter will outline comparative proverbs across cultures and languages on the following topics: haste, intruders, flooding, incompetence, justice, order, wealth, security, death, and family.

Haste

A Sumerian proverb cited in an Old Assyrian letter addressed by the Assyrian king Šamši-Addu I to his son Iasmah-Addu (ca. 1750 BCE) found in the Mari letters, illustrates how popular the Sumerian proverbs were; they were used in an independent culture, centuries later, even in the public language. In this letter, which was written in Akkadian, the king advises his son to be careful in serious decisions, that he should not act rashly: "The bitch, in her haste, gives birth to blind whelps" {$^{(u)}$ *ša um-ma-a-mi*

ka-al-ba-tum (12) *i-na šu-te-bu-ri-ša hu-up-pu- du-tim* (13) *u$_2$-li-id*} (Dossin 1950: no. 5). This proverb is still used in northern Iraq: "The bitch in her hurry gives birth to blind pups." Moreover, this proverb is also found in the collection of present-day proverbs in the vernacular Arabic in Baghdad (al-Hanafi 1969:89) as well as Turkey and Italy, but the bitch is replaced by a cat: "The cat in her haste gives birth to blind kittens." Šamši-Addu wanted to instruct his hasty son in his decisions against his enemy. He also advised him to wait and train his army until the arrival of his father, therefore he should not hastily do something that could be harmful. In English, the same sentiment is expressed as "haste makes waste." Another similar Sumerian saying states: "The time passed, what did you gain?" (Alster 1997:3.157). And in Arabic one hears "Safety by going slowly; and regret in haste" {أَلسَلامَة وَفِي (أَلتَأَنّي) أَلنَدَامَة فِي أَلعَجَلَة}.

Intruders

In Esarhaddon's reply to a non-Babylonian who wrote to him, he describes his correspondent as an outsider, saying that they are not Babylonian but rather an intruder, as in the proverb: "The potter's dog, having entered the kiln, will bark at the potter" {(4) *ina tel-te ša$_2$* KA UN. MEŠ *ša$_2$-ki-in* (5) *um-ma* UR. KU *ša$_2$* LU$_2$.DUG.QA.BUR (6) *ina* ŠA$_3$ UDUN *ki-i i-ru-ub* (7) *a-na* ŠA$_3$ LU$_2$.DUG.QA.BUR *u$_2$-nam-bah$_3$*} (Reynolds et al. 2003:1). These Kaldu or Aramean individuals who settled in Babylonia, from Esarhaddon's point of view, were intruders whom he did not consider to be Babylonian citizens. This proverb continues in the Syriac legend of Ahiqar (4th century CE), which says: "My son—thou hast been to me like the dog that came to the potter's oven to warm himself and after he was warm rose up to bark at him." (Qasha 1996:31). This sentiment is found in the Arabic saying "beware of evil from those to whom you have made a favor" {إِتَّقِ شَرَّ مَنْ أَحْسَنتَ إِلَيْه}.

The name Ahu-'aqāri is mentioned in a text (dated according to the Seleucid reign 49–9 BCE) which is a list of names and date of previous kings, their governors and their scholars: "[under the authority] of the king, Nabû-kudurru-uṣur was Esaggil-kīnu-ubba the scholar/advisor. [under the authority of the king Assur-ahu-idinna , was Aba-Enlil-dāri, scholar/advisor, [whom the] Ahlamu/Aramean called him Ahu-'aqāri." {(Rev.18) [*ana tar-ṣí*] md AG.NIG$_2$.GUB.ŠEŠ LUGAL m*e$_2$.sag-gil$_2$-ki-i-ni-ub-ba* LU2*um-man-nu* (19) [*ana tar-ṣí*] md*aš-šur*-ŠEŠ. SPM LUGAL m*a-ba-*d50*-da-ri um-man-nu* (20) [*ša$_2$* LU$_2$]*ah-la-mi-mu-u$_2$ i-qab-bu-u$_2$* m*a-hu-'a-qa-a-ri*} (Van Dijk 1962:44–45). In this text, we understand that Ahu-'aqāri has two names: the Assyrian Aba-Enlil-dari and the Aramean Ahu-'aqāri (abbreviated Ahiqar). This dual name occurs in the Neo-Assyrian period for the second wife of Sennacherib written in Akkadian Zakuti and in Aramaic Naqi'a (Melville 1999). The scholar who wrote the story of Ahiqar from traditional literature after the 11th century, did not know his Assyrian name. However, the above texts were written by a state scribe who seems to have had references in his office. On the other hand, this proves that this Assyrian proverb was known to Esarhaddon's scholar Aba-Enlil-dāri (= Ahu-'aqāri) as it is cited in his advice to his son. By the 7th century BCE, the Aramaic language was widely used orally and written alongside Akkadian for everyday life (Fales et al. 2005:595–672; Dalley and Postgate 1984:36). It is also contemporary to Syriac language, and thereafter his story is also written in Syriac.

Flooding

Another example of continuity is found in an unpublished Old Babylonian letter from the Hamreen Basin, IM 52297. Written by a lady to her husband who had run away when she was young, without his help bringing up their children, she asked him to return her to her slave girl household, finally saying: "the water has overflown the field" {A. ŠA$_3$ *mu-u$_2$ it-ba-lu*} (Kamil 1996:122, L.H.E 15). I understand her expression to mean that she lost hope and got fed up with his promises and has no more patience for his behavior. In popular Arabic speech, a similar expression is used to express a similar sentiment: "the flood rose above the waterline" or "the vessel (for measuring) overflowed" {طَفَحَ أَلكَيْل أو بَلَغَ أَلسيْل أَلزُبَى}.

Incompetence

The Assyrian astrologer Issar-šumu-ēreš wrote a report to his king refuting the vision of the planet Mercury in the month of Nisan, about which his