

The Sumerian World By Harriet Crawford

A streetwise heroine crosses from Mexico to USA to find her brother in this mythologizing novel by Juan Rulfo's heir.

This collection of essays presents a synthesis of current research on the Oxus Civilization, which rose and developed at the turn of the 3rd to 2nd millennia BC in Central Asia. First discovered in the 1970s, the Oxus Civilization, or the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), has engendered many different interpretations, which are explored in this volume by an international group of archaeologists and researchers. Contributors cover all aspects of this fascinating Bronze Age culture: architecture; material culture; grave goods; religion; migrations; and trade and interactions with neighboring civilizations, from Mesopotamia to the Indus, and the Gulf to the northern steppes. Chapters also examine the Oxus Civilization's roots in previous local cultures, explore its environmental and chronological context, or the possibly coveted metal sources, and look into the reasons for its decline. *The World of the Oxus Civilization* offers a broad and fascinating examination of this society, and provides an invaluable updated resource for anyone working on the culture, history, and archaeology of this region and on the multiple interactions at work at that time in the ancient

Near East.

The museums of the world are full of statues and other artefacts of the Greeks and the Romans. All are given a date. But how are these dates arrived at. What is the evidence? This study provides the student with an introduction and explanation of the ways scholars date the archaeological remains of classical antiquity. Specific examples from architecture, sculpture, and painting are presented, and the differnt methods of dating them are explained. These are supplemented with many original photographs and drawings. Old, and not so old problems in chronology are thus investigated and new theories reviewed from a fresh perspective.

Women in the Ancient Near East provides a collection of primary sources that further our understanding of women from Mesopotamian and Near Eastern civilizations, from the earliest historical and literary texts in the third millennium BC to the end of Mesopotamian political autonomy in the sixth century BC. This book is a valuable resource for historians of the Near East and for those studying women in the ancient world. It moves beyond simply identifying women in the Near East to attempting to place them in historical and literary context, following the latest research. A number of literary genres are represented, including myths and epics, proverbs, medical texts, law collections, letters, treaties, as well as

building, dedicatory, and funerary inscriptions.

This abundantly illustrated volume explores the genesis and flourishing of Uruk, the first known metropolis in the history of humankind. More than one hundred years ago, discoveries from a German archaeological dig at Uruk, roughly two hundred miles south of present-day Baghdad, sent shock waves through the scholarly world. Founded at the end of the fifth millennium BCE, Uruk was the main force for urbanization in what has come to be called the Uruk period (4000–3200 BCE), during which small, agricultural villages gave way to a larger urban center with a stratified society, complex governmental bureaucracy, and monumental architecture and art. It was here that proto-cuneiform script—the earliest known form of writing—was developed around 3400 BCE. Uruk is known too for the epic tale of its hero-king Gilgamesh, among the earliest masterpieces of world literature. Containing 480 images, this volume represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the archaeological evidence gathered at Uruk. More than sixty essays by renowned scholars provide glimpses into the life, culture, and art of the first great city of the ancient world. This volume will be an indispensable reference for readers interested in the ancient Near East and the origins of urbanism.

Nearly 50 students, colleagues, and friends of Nicholas Postgate join in tribute to

an Assyriologist and Archaeologist who has had a profound influence on both disciplines. His work and scholarship are strongly felt in Iraq, where he was the Director of the British School of Archaeology, in the United Kingdom, where he is Emeritus Professor of Assyriology in the University of Cambridge, and in the subject internationally. He has fostered close collaboration with colleagues in Turkey and Iraq, where he has been involved in archaeological investigation, always seeking to meld the study of texts with that of material remains. The essays embrace the full range of Postgate's interests, including government and administration, art history, population studies, the economy, religion and divination, foodstuffs, ceramics, and Akkadian and Sumerian language—in a word, all of ancient Mesopotamian civilisation.

The Sumerians are widely believed to have created the world's earliest civilization on the fertile floodplains of southern Iraq from about 3500 to 2000 BCE. They have been credited with the invention of nothing less than cities, writing, and the wheel, and therefore hold an ancient mirror to our own urban, literate world. But is this picture correct? Paul Collins reveals how the idea of a Sumerian people was assembled from the archaeological and textual evidence uncovered in Iraq and Syria over the last one hundred fifty years. Reconstructed through the biases of those who unearthed them, the Sumerians were never

simply lost and found, but reinvented a number of times, both in antiquity and in the more recent past.

In *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq*, Benjamin and Karen Foster tell the fascinating story of ancient Mesopotamia from the earliest settlements ten thousand years ago to the Arab conquest in the seventh century. Accessible and concise, this is the most up-to-date and authoritative book on the subject. With illustrations of important works of art and architecture in every chapter, the narrative traces the rise and fall of successive civilizations and peoples in Iraq over the course of millennia--from the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians to the Persians, Seleucids, Parthians, and Sassanians. Ancient Iraq was home to remarkable achievements. One of the birthplaces of civilization, it saw the world's earliest cities and empires, writing and literature, science and mathematics, monumental art, and innumerable other innovations. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* gives special attention to these milestones, as well as to political, social, and economic history. And because archaeology is the source of almost everything we know about ancient Iraq, the book includes an epilogue on the discovery and fate of its antiquities. Compelling and timely, *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* is an essential guide to understanding Mesopotamia's central role in the development of human culture.

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This anthology of Sumerian literature constitutes the most comprehensive collection ever published, and includes examples of most of the different types of composition written in the language, from narrative myths and lyrical hymns to proverbs and love poetry. The translations have benefited both from the work of many scholars and from our ever-increasing understanding of Sumerian. In addition to reflecting the advances made by modern scholarship, the translations are written in clear, accessible English. An extensive introduction discusses the literary qualities of the works, the people who created and copied them in ancient Iraq, and how the study of Sumerian literature has evolved over the last 150 years.

This work reviews the social and technological developments in Mesopotamia from 3800 to 2000 BC.

The Age of Agade is the first book-length study of the Akkadian period of Mesopotamian history, which saw the rise and fall of the world's first empire during more than a century of extraordinary political, social, and cultural innovation. It draws together more than 40 years of research by one of the world's leading experts in Assyriology to offer an exhaustive survey of the Akkadian empire. Addressing all aspects of the empire, including its statecraft and military, territory and cities, arts, religion, economy, and production, The Age of Agade considers what can be said of Akkadian political and social history, material culture, and daily life. A final chapter also explores how the empire has been presented in modern historiography, from the

decipherment of cuneiform to the present, including the extensive research of Soviet historians, summarized here in English for the first time. Drawing on contemporaneous written and artifactual sources, as well as relevant materials from succeeding generations, Foster introduces the reader to the wealth of evidence available. Accessibly written by a specialist in the field, this book is an engaging examination of a critical era in the history of early Mesopotamia.

This volume presents for the first time both the authoritative Sumerian text and an elegant English translation of four Sumerian epics, the earliest known in any language. The introduction discusses the intellectual and cultural context as well as the poetics and meaning of this epic cycle.

The breathtakingly beautiful art created deep inside the caves of western Europe has the power to dazzle even the most jaded observers. Emerging from the narrow underground passages into the chambers of caves such as Lascaux, Chauvet, and Altamira, visitors are confronted with symbols, patterns, and depictions of bison, woolly mammoths, ibexes, and other animals. Since its discovery, cave art has provoked great curiosity about why it appeared when and where it did, how it was made, and what it meant to the communities that created it. David Lewis-Williams proposes that the explanation for this lies in the evolution of the human mind. Cro-Magnons, unlike the Neanderthals, possessed a more advanced neurological makeup that enabled them to experience shamanistic trances and vivid mental imagery. It became important for

people to "fix," or paint, these images on cave walls, which they perceived as the membrane between their world and the spirit world from which the visions came. Over time, new social distinctions developed as individuals exploited their hallucinations for personal advancement, and the first truly modern society emerged. Illuminating glimpses into the ancient mind are skillfully interwoven here with the still-evolving story of modern-day cave discoveries and research. *The Mind in the Cave* is a superb piece of detective work, casting light on the darkest mysteries of our earliest ancestors while strengthening our wonder at their aesthetic achievements.

The Babylonian World presents an extensive, up-to-date and lavishly illustrated history of the ancient state Babylonia and its 'holy city', Babylon. Historicized by the New Testament as a centre of decadence and corruption, Babylon and its surrounding region was in fact a rich and complex civilization, responsible for the invention of the dictionary and laying the foundations of modern science. This book explores all key aspects of the development of this ancient culture, including the ecology of the region and its famously productive agriculture, its political and economic standing, its religious practices, and the achievements of its intelligentsia. Comprehensive and accessible, this book will be an indispensable resource for anyone studying the period.

The roots of our modern world lie in the civilization of Mesopotamia, which saw the development of the first urban society and the invention of writing. The cuneiform texts reveal the technological and social innovations of Sumer and Babylonia as surprisingly

modern, and the influence of this fascinating culture was felt throughout the Near East. Early Mesopotamia gives an entirely new account, integrating the archaeology with historical data which until now have been largely scattered in specialist literature. Authoritative and up-to-date, this key single-volume work is a thematic exploration of ancient Egyptian civilization and culture as it was expressed down the centuries. Including topics rarely covered elsewhere as well as new perspectives, this work comprises thirty-two original chapters written by international experts. Each chapter gives an overview of its topic, and also covers the latest research in the area. Chapters are divided thematically into seven sections, to enable a broader understanding of all the complexities of ancient Egyptian society without the constriction of chronological divisions, and illustrated with previously unpublished photographs and drawings. Providing fresh perspectives on this ancient culture, a digest of current research trends in Egyptology as well as a unique examination of the Egyptian world, this fascinating title enables students to gain a clear understanding of ancient Egyptian society. The Sumerians, the pragmatic and gifted people who preceded the Semites in the land first known as Sumer and later as Babylonia, created what was probably the first high civilization in the history of man, spanning the fifth to the second millenniums B.C. This book is an unparalleled compendium of what is known about them. Professor Kramer communicates his enthusiasm for his subject as he outlines the history of the Sumerian civilization and describes their cities, religion, literature, education, scientific achievements, social structure, and psychology. Finally, he considers the legacy of Sumer to the ancient and modern world. "There

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are few scholars in the world qualified to write such a book, and certainly Kramer is one of them. . . . One of the most valuable features of this book is the quantity of texts and fragments which are published for the first time in a form available to the general reader. For the layman the book provides a readable and up-to-date introduction to a most fascinating culture. For the specialist it presents a synthesis with which he may not agree but from which he will nonetheless derive stimulation."—American Journal of Archaeology "An uncontested authority on the civilization of Sumer, Professor Kramer writes with grace and urbanity."—Library Journal

*Includes pictures *Includes ancient accounts *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading

When American archaeologists discovered a collection of cuneiform tablets in Iraq in the late 19th century, they were confronted with a language and a people who were at the time only scarcely known to even the most knowledgeable scholars of ancient Mesopotamia: the Sumerians. The exploits and achievements of other Mesopotamian peoples, such as the Assyrians and Babylonians, were already known to a large segment of the population through the Old Testament and the nascent field of Near Eastern studies had unraveled the enigma of the Akkadian language that was widely used throughout the region in ancient times, but the discovery of the Sumerian tablets brought to light the existence of the Sumerian culture, which was the oldest of all the Mesopotamian cultures. Although the Sumerians continue to get second or even third billing compared to the Babylonians and Assyrians, perhaps because they never built an empire as great as the Assyrians or established a city as enduring and great as Babylon, they were the people who provided the template of civilization that all later Mesopotamians built upon. The Sumerians are credited with being the first people to invent writing, libraries, cities, and schools in Mesopotamia

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(Ziskind 1972, 34), and many would argue that they were the first people to create and do those things anywhere in world. For a people so great it is unfortunate that their accomplishments and contributions, not only to Mesopotamian civilization but to civilization in general, largely go unnoticed by the majority of the public. Perhaps the Sumerians were victims of their own success; they gradually entered the historical record, established a fine civilization, and then slowly submerged into the cultural patchwork of their surroundings. They also never suffered a great and sudden collapse like other peoples of the ancient Near East, such as the Hittites, Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians did. A close examination of Sumerian culture and chronology reveals that the Sumerians set the cultural tone in Mesopotamia for several centuries in the realms of politics/governments, arts, literature, and religion. Even today, the world owes the Sumerians a tremendous amount. When Western Europe was still in the Stone Age, it was the Sumerians who invented writing and the wheel, divided time into minutes and seconds, tamed nature, and built gigantic cities. They embraced culture and the arts, and their caravans crossed the desert, opening up the first trade routes. Their myths and legends inspired various origin stories, and their memory lives on in the Old Testament. They wrote the history of the birth of mankind. The heritage of the Sumerian civilization and their successors is everywhere. Sumer: The History of the Cities and Culture that Established Ancient Mesopotamia's First Civilization chronicles the most important people, places, and events that took place across Sumer. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Sumer like never before.

Provides a new narrative history of the ancient world, from the beginnings of civilization in the ancient Near East and Egypt to the fall of Constantinople Written by an expert in the field, this

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book presents a narrative history of Babylon from the time of its First Dynasty (1880-1595) until the last centuries of the city's existence during the Hellenistic and Parthian periods (ca. 331-75 AD). Unlike other texts on Ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian history, it offers a unique focus on Babylon and Babylonia, while still providing readers with an awareness of the interaction with other states and peoples. Organized chronologically, it places the various socio-economic and cultural developments and institutions in their historical context. The book also gives religious and intellectual developments more respectable coverage than books that have come before it. A History of Babylon, 2200 BC – AD 75 teaches readers about the most important phase in the development of Mesopotamian culture. The book offers in-depth chapter coverage on the Sumero-Addadian Background, the rise of Babylon, the decline of the first dynasty, Kassite ascendancy, the second dynasty of Isin, Arameans and Chaldeans, the Assyrian century, the imperial heyday, and Babylon under foreign rule. Focuses on Babylon and Babylonia Written by a highly regarded Assyriologist Part of the very successful Histories of the Ancient World series An excellent resource for students, instructors, and scholars A History of Babylon, 2200 BC - AD 75 is a profound text that will be ideal for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses on Ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian history and scholars of the subject.

The Sumerian World Routledge

This “fascinating” (Malcolm Gladwell, New York Times bestselling author of Outliers) examination of literary inventions through the ages, from ancient Mesopotamia to Elena Ferrante, shows how writers have created technical breakthroughs—rivaling scientific inventions—and engineering enhancements to the human heart and mind. Literature is a

technology like any other. And the writers we revere—from Homer, Shakespeare, Austen, and others—each made a unique technical breakthrough that can be viewed as both a narrative and neuroscientific advancement. Literature’s great invention was to address problems we could not solve: not how to start a fire or build a boat, but how to live and love; how to maintain courage in the face of death; how to account for the fact that we exist at all. Wonderworks reviews the blueprints for twenty-five of the most significant developments in the history of literature. These inventions can be scientifically shown to alleviate grief, trauma, loneliness, anxiety, numbness, depression, pessimism, and ennui, while sparking creativity, courage, love, empathy, hope, joy, and positive change. They can be found throughout literature—from ancient Chinese lyrics to Shakespeare’s plays, poetry to nursery rhymes and fairy tales, and crime novels to slave narratives. A “refreshing and remarkable” (Jay Parini, author of *Borges and Me: An Encounter*) exploration of the new literary field of story science, Wonderworks teaches you everything you wish you learned in your English class, and “contains many instances of critical insight....What’s most interesting about this compendium is its understanding of imaginative representation as a technology” (The New York Times).

How did the invention of writing in the ancient world change our way of thinking, recording, and remembering forever? In this wide-ranging study, Charpin discusses the place of literacy in the early civilization of Babylonia in the time between 2500 and 500 BC. Writing at this time was used for domestic record keeping, tracking inventory and sales, for inscriptions and tombs, and for communicating with gods. He argues for a much wider spread of literacy than previously thought and explains the historical and social contexts within which literacy proliferated in early Babylon.

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Amongst the civilizations to participate in the dynamic processes of contact and interchange that gave rise to complex societies in the ancient Near East, Elam has remained one of the most obscure, at times languishing in the background of scholarly inquiry. In recent years, however, an increasing body of academic publications have acknowledged its relevance and suggested that its legacy was more considerable and long-lasting than previously estimated. The Elamite World assembles a group of 40 international scholars to contribute their expertise to the production of a solid, lavishly illustrated, English language treatment of Elamite civilization. It covers topics such as its physical setting, historical development, languages and people, material culture, art, science, religion and society, as well as the legacy of Elam in the Persian empire and its presence in the modern world. This comprehensive and ambitious survey seeks for Elam, hardly a household name, a noteworthy place in our shared cultural heritage. It will be both a valuable introductory text for a general audience and a definitive reference source for students and academics.

Situated in an area roughly corresponding to present-day Iraq, Mesopotamia is one of the great, ancient civilizations, though it is still relatively unknown. Yet, over 7,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, the very first cities were created. This is the first book to reveal how life was lived in ten Mesopotamian cities: from Eridu, the Mesopotamian Eden, to that potent symbol of decadence, Babylon - the first true metropolis: multicultural, multi-ethnic, the last centre of a dying civilization.

This work argues that women should settle for nothing less than greatness. It outlines the strategy women should adopt in order to achieve successful relationships with bosses, clients, lovers and parents. The book also discusses how to become powerful

without becoming a man.

The Art of Elam ca. 4200-525 BC offers a view of, and a critical reflection on, the art history of one of the world's first and least-known civilizations, illuminating a significant chapter of our human past. Not unlike a gallery of historical paintings, this comprehensive treatment of the rich heritage of ancient Iran showcases a visual trail of the evolution of human society, with all its leaps and turns, from its origins in the earliest villages of southwest Iran at around 4200 BC to the rise of the Achaemenid Persian empire in ca. 525 BC. Richly illustrated in full colour with 1450 photographs, 190 line drawings, and digital reconstructions of hundreds of artefacts—some of which have never before been published—The Art of Elam goes beyond formal and thematic boundaries to emphasize the religious, political, and social contexts in which art was created and functioned. Such a magisterial study of Elamite art has never been written making The Art of Elam ca. 4200-525 BC a ground-breaking publication essential to all students of ancient art and to our current understanding of the civilizations of the ancient Near East.

The Sumerian World explores the archaeology, history and art of southern Mesopotamia and its relationships with its neighbours from c.3,000 - 2,000BC. Including material hitherto unpublished from recent excavations, the articles are organised thematically using evidence from archaeology, texts and the natural sciences. This broad treatment will also make the volume of interest to students looking

for comparative data in allied subjects such as ancient literature and early religions. Providing an authoritative, comprehensive and up to date overview of the Sumerian period written by some of the best qualified scholars in the field, The Sumerian World will satisfy students, researchers, academics, and the knowledgeable layperson wishing to understand the world of southern Mesopotamia in the third millennium.

World History: Cultures, States, and Societies to 1500 offers a comprehensive introduction to the history of humankind from prehistory to 1500. Authored by six USG faculty members with advance degrees in History, this textbook offers up-to-date original scholarship. It covers such cultures, states, and societies as Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel, Dynastic Egypt, India's Classical Age, the Dynasties of China, Archaic Greece, the Roman Empire, Islam, Medieval Africa, the Americas, and the Khanates of Central Asia. It includes 350 high-quality images and maps, chronologies, and learning questions to help guide student learning. Its digital nature allows students to follow links to applicable sources and videos, expanding their educational experience beyond the textbook. It provides a new and free alternative to traditional textbooks, making World History an invaluable resource in our modern age of technology and advancement.

The Handbook on Crime is a comprehensive edited volume that contains analysis and explanation of the nature, extent, patterns and causes of over 40 different forms of crime, in each case drawing attention to key contemporary debates and social and

criminal justice responses to them. It also challenges many popular and official conceptions of crime. This book is one of the few criminological texts that takes as its starting point a range of specific types of criminal activity. It addresses not only 'conventional' offences such as shoplifting, burglary, robbery, and vehicle crime, but many other forms of criminal behaviour - often an amalgamation of different legal offences - which attract contemporary media, public and policy concern. These include crimes committed not only by individuals, but by organised criminal groups, corporations and governments. There are chapters on, for example, gang violence, hate crime, elder abuse, animal abuse, cyber crime, identity theft, money-laundering, eco crimes, drug trafficking, human trafficking, genocide, and global terrorism. Many of these topics receive surprisingly little attention in the criminological literature. The Handbook on Crime will be a unique text of lasting value to students, researchers, academics, practitioners, policy makers, journalists and all others involved in understanding and preventing criminal behaviour.

In her book, the author offers readers a compact guide to the religion of the peoples living in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers from the beginning of the Bronze Age to the time of Alexander the Great and Darius III. Drawing on extant texts, artifacts, and architecture, Schneider uncovers both an intriguing pantheon of deities -- including Marduk, Ishtar, and many others -- and the complex, fluid, and highly ritualized religious experience of the people who spent their lives serving and appeasing them.

*Includes pictures *Includes ancient passages and accounts about Ur written by Babylonian kings and others *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading

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that were produced at Ur. The people of Mesopotamia, which Ur was part of, employed the cuneiform system of writing; since cuneiform was almost always written on clay tablets, modern scholars have been forced with the unfortunate problem that many of those tablets have been broken and made unreadable throughout the centuries.

Despite the ephemeral nature of its monuments and to some extent its written texts, Ur proved to be an inspiration to the Sumerians who built the city and also to later cultures and dynasties that inhabited Mesopotamia. An examination of primary sources relating to Ur, as well as archaeological excavations done in the ancient city reveal that the city was a cultural beacon for thousands of years. Ur began as a Sumerian city of secondary importance but quickly grew to be the most important Sumerian city. At its height Ur was the center of a great dynasty that controlled most of Mesopotamia directly through a well maintained army and bureaucracy and the areas that were not under its direct control were influenced by Ur's diplomats and religious ideas. This study will also reveal that Ur was a truly resilient city because it survived the downfall of the Sumerians, outright destruction at the hands of the Elamites, and later occupations by numerous other peoples, which included Saddam Hussein more recently. Ur inspired the imaginations of ancient peoples, but it has also enraptured the minds of moderns, who have worked for over 150 years to unlock the city's mysteries. Truly, when it comes to important ancient cities, Ur should be counted among the greatest. Ur: The History and Legacy of the Ancient Sumerian Capital traces the history and legacy of

one of the most influential cities of antiquity. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the history of Ur like never before, in no time at all.

In this book Professor Woolley, one of the world's foremost archaeologists, shows quite clearly that when Egyptian civilization began the civilization of the Sumerians had already flourished for at least 2,000 years. The idea that Egypt was the earliest civilization has been entirely exploded. The Sumerians had reached a very high level of culture by 3500 B.C.E., and may be said with some justice to be the forerunners of all the Old World civilizations of Egypt, Assyria, Asia Minor, Crete, and Greece. This book will appeal to everyone interested in the early history of humankind.

This collection employs a multi-disciplinary approach treating ancient childhood in a holistic manner according to diachronic, regional and thematic perspectives. This multi-disciplinary approach encompasses classical studies, Egyptology, ancient history and the broad spectrum of archaeology, including iconography and bioarchaeology. With a chronological range of the Bronze Age to Byzantium and regional coverage of Egypt, Greece, and Italy this is the largest survey of childhood yet undertaken for the ancient world. Within this chronological and regional framework both the social construction of childhood and the child's life experience are explored through the key topics of the definition of childhood, daily life, religion and ritual, death, and the information provided by bioarchaeology. No other volume to date provides such a comprehensive, systematic and cross-cultural study of childhood in the ancient Mediterranean world. In particular, its focus on the identification of society-specific definitions

of childhood and the incorporation of the bioarchaeological perspective makes this work a unique and innovative study. *Children in Antiquity* provides an invaluable and unrivalled resource for anyone working on all aspects of the lives and deaths of children in the ancient Mediterranean world.

"Mind-blowing." —Kim Gordon *A Sand Book* is a poetry collection in nine parts, a travel guide that migrates from wildfires to hurricanes, tweety bird to the president, lust to aridity, desertification to prophecy, and mother to daughter. It explores the negative space of what is happening to language and to consciousness in our strange and desperate times. From Hurricane Sandy to the murder of Sandra Bland to the massacre at Sandy Hook, from the sand in the gizzards of birds to the desertified mountains of Haiti, from Attar's *Conference of the Birds* to Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* to Twitter, a sand book is about change and quantification, the relationship between catastrophe and cultural transmission. It moves among houses of worship and grocery stores, flitters between geological upheaval and the weird weather of the Internet. In her long-awaited follow-up to *Mercury*, Reines has written her most ambitious work to date, but also her most visceral and satisfying.

The ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur was a Sumerian city state which flourished as a centre of trade and civilisation between 2800–2000 BCE. However, in the recent past it suffered from the disastrous Gulf war and from neglect. It still remains a potent symbol for people of all faiths and will have an important role to play in the future. This account of Ur's past looks at both the ancient city and its evolution over centuries, and its archaeological interpretation in more recent times. From the 19th century explorers and their identification of the site of Mukayyar as the Biblical city of Ur, the study proceeds to look in detail at the archaeologist Leonard Woolley

and his key discoveries during the 1920s and 30s. Using the findings as a framework and utilising the latest evidence from environmental, historical and archaeological studies, the volume explores the site's past in chronological order from the Ubaid period in the 5th millennium to the death of Alexander. It looks in detail at the architectural remains: the sacred buildings, royal graves and also the private housing which provides a unique record of life 4000 years ago. The volume also describes the part played by Ur in the Gulf war and discusses the problems raised for archaeologists in the war's aftermath.

"The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East offers a comprehensive and fully illustrated survey of the history of Egypt and Western Asia (Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Iran) in five volumes, from the emergence of complex states to the conquest of Alexander of Great. The authors represent a highly international mix of leading academics whose expertise brings alive the people, places and times of the remote past. The emphasis lies firmly on the political and social histories of the states and communities under investigation. The individual chapters present the key textual and material sources underpinning the historical reconstruction, giving special attention to the most recent archaeological finds and how they have impacted our interpretation. The first volume covers the long period from the mid-tenth millennium to the late third millennium BC and presents the history of the Near East in ten chapters "From the Beginnings to Old Kingdom Egypt and the Dynasty of Akkad". Key topics include the domestication of animals and plants, the first permanent settlements, the subjugation and appropriation of the natural environment, the emergence of complex states and belief systems, the invention of the earliest writing systems and the wide-ranging trade networks that linked diverse population groups across deserts, mountains and oceans"--

