

M. Willis Monroe

Assistant Professor
University of New Brunswick
US and Canadian Citizen

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Education:

- 2010-2016 **PhD** Brown University, Department of Egyptology and Assyriology
Supervisors: John Steele, Matthew Rutz
Title: Advice from the Stars: The Micro-Zodiac in Seleucid Babylon
- 2008 **M.A.** Ancient Near Eastern Languages, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies
- 2007 **B.A. Hons** Ancient Near Eastern Studies, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies

Professional Appointments:

- 2023 - Assistant Professor, Department of Historical Studies, University of New Brunswick
- 2016 - Research Associate (Postdoctoral Research Fellow until 2020), Associate Director,
2023 Database of Religious History, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia
- 2018 - Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies
2020 Department, University of British Columbia
- 2016 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Egyptology and Assyriology,
Brown University

Books:

M. Willis Monroe, The Micro-zodiac Texts from Seleucid Babylonia, Brill, *under-contract*.
(planned submission June 2024)

Journal Articles:

Alstola, Tero, Paola Corò, Rocio Da Riva, Sebastian Fink, Michael Jursa, Ingo Kottsieper, Martin Lang, **M. Willis Monroe**, Laurie Pearce, Reinhard Pirngruber, Kai Ruffing, Saana

Svärd 'Sources at the End of the Cuneiform Era'. *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 11, no. 2, 2023: 5–29.

M. Willis Monroe, Rachel Spicer, Gino Canlas, Travis Chilcott, Stephen Christopher, Megan Daniels, Andrew J. Danielson, Matthew Hamm, Caroline Arbuckle MacLeod, William Noseworthy, Ian Randall, Robyn Faith Walsh, Michael Muthukrishna, Edward Slingerland, "On the Category of "Religion": A Taxonomic Analysis of a Large-Scale Database", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 2023.

Kelley, Kathryn and Born, Logan and **Monroe, M. Willis** and Sarkar, Anoop "On Newly Proposed Proto-Elamite Sign Values" in *Iranica Antiqua* LVII. 1-25, 2022.

Kelley, Kathryn and Born, Logan and **Monroe, M. Willis** and Sarkar, Anoop. "Image-aware Language Modeling for Proto-Elamite" in Ferrara, S. and F. Tamburini *Advanced Methodologies in the Decipherment of Ancient Writing Systems*. Special Supplement of *Lingua e Linguaggio* XXI.2, 2022.

Born, Logan, **Monroe, M.**, Kelley, Kathryn, and Sarkar, Anoop. "Sequence Models for Document Structure Identification in an Undeciphered Script" in *Proceedings of the 2022 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing, EMNLP 2022*. Association for Computational Linguistics. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Rachel Spicer, **M. Willis Monroe**, Matthew Hamm, Andrew Danielson, Gino Canlas, Ian Randall, Edward Slingerland, "Religion and Ecology: A Pilot Study Employing the Database of Religious History", special issue "Ecologies of Belief and Practice: Environmental influences on religion across cultural contexts" in *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology*, volume 3, 2022.

Danielson AJ, Arbuckle MacLeod C, Hamm MJ, Canlas G, Randall IE, Moreiras Reynaga DK, Weideman J, **Monroe MW**. "Testing and Disrupting Ontologies: Using the Database of Religious History as a Pedagogical Tool". *Religions*. 2022; 13(9):793. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090793>

M. Willis Monroe, "Astronomical and Astrological Diagrams from Cuneiform Sources", *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 53, 2022, 338-361.

Beheim, B., Atkinson, Q. D., Bulbulia, J., Gervais, W., Gray, R. D., Henrich, J., Lang, M., **Monroe, M. W.**, Muthukrishna, M., Norenzayan, A., Purzycki, B. G., Shariff, A., Slingerland, E., Spicer, R., & Willard, A. K. (2021). Treatment of missing data determined conclusions regarding moralizing gods. *Nature*, 595(7866), E29–E34. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03655-4>

Slingerland, Edward, **M. Willis Monroe**, Brenton Sullivan, Robyn Faith Walsh, Daniel Veidlinger, William Noseworthy, Conn Herriott, Ben Raffield, Janine Larmon Peterson, Gretel

Rodríguez, Karen Sonik, William Green, Frederick S. Tappenden, Amir Ashtari, Rachel Spicer, Michael Muthukrishna, “Historians Respond to Whitehouse et al. 2019, ‘Complex societies precede moralizing gods throughout world history,’” *Journal of Cognitive Historiography*, 5:1-2, 2018, 124-141 (published 2020-11-06).

M. Willis Monroe, “Looking Through the Cracks: Tracing Damage in Textual History”, eds. E. Cole, A. Mandell, *MAARAV*, 23.1, 2019, 115-135.

M. Willis Monroe, “Mesopotamian Astrology”, *Religion Compass*, 13.6, 2019.

M. Willis Monroe, “Organizational Structure of Knowledge in Cuneiform Sources”, *KASKAL*, 12, 2015, 519-534.

John Macginnis, **M. Willis Monroe** “Recent Texts from Ziyaret Tepe”, *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*, 20, 2015, 47-56.

John MacGinnis, **M. Willis Monroe**, Dirk Wicke, Timothy Matney “Artifacts of Cognition: the use of clay tokens in a Neo-Assyrian provincial administration”, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 24, 2014, 289-306.

Timothy Matney, Tina Greenfield, Britt Hartenberger, Chelsea Jalbrzikowski, Kemalettin Köroglu, John MacGinnis, Anke Marsh, **Martin Willis Monroe**, Melissa Rosenzweig, Kristina Sauer, and Dirk Wicke “Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe, Diyarbakir, Turkey 2009-2010”, *Anatolica*, 37, 2011, 67-114.

Timothy Matney, Tina Greenfield, Britt Hartenberger, Azer Keskin, Kemalettin Köroglu, John MacGinnis, **Willis Monroe**, Lynn Rainville, Mary Shepperson, Tasha Vorderstrasse, and Dirk Wicke “Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe 2007-2008”, *Anatolica*, 35, 2009, 37-84.

Book Chapters:

M. Willis Monroe and Kerry M. Sonia, “*Kūbu, Kummu*, and the Netherworld: Interpreting the NIGIN₂.GAR in Cuneiform Literature” *Ambiguity in the Ancient Near East*, eds. E. Knott and L. K. McCormick, Brepols, *under-review*.

Caroline Arbuckle MacLeod, Megan Daniels, and **M. Willis Monroe** “The Database of Religious History as an Open Access Digital Resource for the Study of the Ancient Mediterranean World” in *The Future for the Past: The Digital Humanities in Cultural Heritage*, edited by Katie Kelaidis and Zeta Xekalaki. London: Bloomsbury, *under-review*.

M. Willis Monroe, “Quantifying Thick Descriptions for the Database of Religious History” *Data Science, Human Science, and Ancient Gods: Conversations in Theory and Method*, eds. S. Blakely and M. Daniels, Lockwood Press, 2023, 223-246.

M. Willis Monroe, “Seeing Stars – Knowing the Sky in Mesopotamia” *The Routledge Handbook of the Senses in the Ancient Near East*, eds. K. Neumann and A. Thomason, 2021, 471-488.

M. Willis Monroe, “Using Quantitative Methods for Measuring Inter-Textual Relations in Cuneiform”, *CyberResearch on the Ancient Near East and Neighboring Regions: Case Studies on Archaeological Data, Objects, Texts, and Digital Archiving*, eds. V. Juloux, A. Gansell, A. di Ludovico, Brill 2018, 257-281.

M. Willis Monroe, “BM 40187: A Birthnote for Two Named Individuals”, *The Scaffolding of our Thoughts: Essays on Assyriology and the History of Science in Honor of Francesca Rochberg*, eds. C. J. Crisostomo, E. Escobar, T. Tanaka, N. Veldhuis, Brill 2018, 113–119.

M. Willis Monroe, “The Micro-Zodiac in Babylon and Uruk: Seleucid Zodiacal Astrology”, *The Circulation of Astronomical Knowledge in the Ancient World*, ed. J. Steele, Brill 2016, 119-138.

M. Willis Monroe, “Tokens as Artifacts of Neo-Assyrian Administration”, *Conference Proceedings of The Provincial Archaeology of the Assyrian Empire*, eds. J. MacGinnis, D. Wicke, T. Greenfield, McDonald Institute Monographs Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research 2016, 119-138.

Book Reviews:

Review of Frances Reynolds, *A Babylonian Calendar Treatise: Scholars and Invaders in the Late First Millennium BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 52.4: 492-494, 2021.

Review of Eleanor Robson, *Ancient Knowledge Networks: A Social Geography of Cuneiform Scholarship in First-Millennium Assyria and Babylonia*. London: UCL Press, 2019. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 79.2: 349-351, 2020.

Unrefereed Articles and Public Outreach:

“What did the ancient Babylonians discern in the skies above?”, magazine article for *Psyche*, March 2022 <https://psyche.co/ideas/what-did-the-ancient-babylonians-discern-in-the-skies-above>

“Mythologies of scholarship, the role of imagination in the history of science”, entry in MediaCommons *In Media Res*, November 2018.

“The Database of Religious History and Mesopotamian Studies” in *Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies Journal*, vols. 11 & 12, 2018, 66-68.

“Quantifying Religion: Messy Data and Scholarly Input in the Database of Religious History”, entry in MediaCommons Field Guide on Digital Religious Studies, October 2017.

Contributions in: *Ziyaret Tepe: Exploring the Anatolian frontier of the Assyrian Empire*, Timothy Matney, John MacGinnis, Dirk Wicke, Kemalettin Köroğlu, Cornucopia Books, 2017.
*Winner of the 2019 AIA’s Felicia A. Holton Book Award, recognizing excellence in public scholarship.

John MacGinnis, **M Willis Monroe**, Dirk Wicke, Timothy Matney, “Hesap Taşları: MÖ 1. binyılın Kayıt Sistemi”, *Aktüel Arkeoloji*, volume 41, 2014 (In Turkish, English version in *Actual Archeology*, volume 11, 2014).

Invited Lectures:

“Quantitative historiography of religion with the Database of Religious History”, Pandora and IsoMemo Lecture Series, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History (November 23rd, 2021)

“Introduction to the Database of Religious History”, CSU Chico Digital Humanities Series (September 29th, 2021)

“Closer than you Think: The Stars and Daily Life in Mesopotamia” AIA Webster Lecture series, Akron, Ohio (March 3rd, 2021) and Chicago, Illinois (March 4th 2021).

“The Database of Religious History as a Classroom Tool”, Carrie Arbuckle and M. Willis Monroe, CNERS Departmental Seminar, January 20th 2021.

“The Database of Religious History”, University of British Columbia, Open Scholarship in Practice conference, October 24th, 2019.

“Thinking about Religion Digitally: Archaeology and the Database of Religious History”, Gretel Rodríguez and M. Willis Monroe, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University, March 21st, 2019.

“Innovation in Late Babylonian Astrology: The Micro-zodiac Texts from Babylon and Uruk”, University of Toronto, November 13th, 2017.

“Clay Tokens and Cuneiform Writing in the 1st Millennium BCE”, Archaeological Institute of American, Vancouver Society, November 15th, 2016.

“Micro-Zodiac Schemes in Late-Babylonian Astrology and Astronomy”, CNRS Paris, SAW (Mathematical Sciences in the Ancient World) group, June 25th, 2014.

“Administration on the Frontier: The Role of Tokens in Neo-Assyrian Bureaucracy”,

Altorientalisches Institut, Universität Leipzig, June 3rd, 2014.

“Innovations in Seleucid Astrology”, Departmental Colloquium Series, Department of Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, Brown University, May 6th, 2013.

“The Black Stone of Desire: Diorite Trade in the Persian Gulf, Unpacking a Commodity of Opportunity”, Brown Bag Series in Archaeology, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University, February 28th, 2013.

Organized Conferences and Workshops:

Co-organized 3 day conference, “History in Ones and Zeroes — The Challenges Involved in Coding the Past”, Vancouver 2022.

Co-organized workshop, “Motivating Engaged Student Learning in Elective Courses”, Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology, University of British Columbia, May 2020.

Co-organized conference, “Digital Humanities and Classical Studies: Prospects and Challenges” at the Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin, May 23-24th, 2019.

Organized Workshop: “The Heavenly Bodies in Image and Text” at the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Geneva & Bern, June 2015.

Conference Papers:

Gino Canlas, Ian Randall, Andrew Danielson, **Willis Monroe**, Rachel Spicer, “Quantifying the (In-)Validity of Exceptionalism: Using the Database of Religious History to Re-Examine “Classics””, Classical Association of Canada, Halifax, May 2023

M. Willis Monroe, Andrew Danielson, Carolyn Arbuckle Macleod, “Big Data and Pedagogy: The Database of Religious History as a Resource for Comparative Historiography”, ASOR, Boston, November 2022

“Tabular Data and Knowledge Formation”, Prescription to Prediction: The Ancient Sciences in Cross-Cultural Perspective, Baltimore, October 2022.

“Cuneiform astral diagrams in theory and practice”, Imagining the Sky: The Zodiac and Related Astral Imagery in the Ancient World, Berlin, September 2022

Edward Slingerland and **M. Willis Monroe**, “The Database of Religious History (DRH) as a Tool for the Cognitive and Evolutionary Sciences of Religion”, International Association for the Cognitive and Evolutionary Sciences of Religion, Aarhus, September 2022.

Gino Canlas, Ian Randall, **M. Willis Monroe**, Edward Slingerland, “Scaling Comparative

Approaches: Recreating Burkert's Analysis using the Database of Religious History", Archaeological Institute of America, Virtual, January 2022.

"Tracing Damage: Looking for Patterns of Paratextual Marking in Cuneiform Scholarship", American Schools of Oriental Research, Denver, Virtual 2021.

Britt E . Hartenberger, Timothy Matney, John MacGinnis, **M . Willis Monroe**, Tina Greenfield, "Finding Mannu-ki-liballi : Class Structure at Late Assyrian Tušhan", American Schools of Oriental Research, Chicago, November 2021.

M. Willis Monroe and Edward Slingerland "A Taxonomy of Global Religions: Preliminary Analysis from the Database of Religious History", American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Virtual, November 2021.

"School Friends and Family Relations: Quantifying Relationships and Identities in Late Babylonian Scribal Culture", Workshop on identities and late Mesopotamian archives, University of Helsinki, February 2020.

"Celestial Divination and Bounded Systems of Thought in Mesopotamia and Qumran", Society for Biblical Literature, San Diego, November 2019.

"A Sense of Scale: The DRH as a Cross-Disciplinary Global DH Project", Digital Humanities and Classical Studies: Prospects and Challenges, MPIWG, Berlin, May, 2019.

"Designing for Global Scale: the Database of Religious History", Implementing New Knowledge Environments, Victoria, January 2019.

Lightning talk on the *Database of Religious History* in the Ancient MakerSpaces workshop, Archaeological Institute of America, San Diego, January 2019.

"Ambiguity in Babylonian Astrology", American Schools of Oriental Research, Denver, November 2018.

Panelist, "The Chronology of Early Science", History of Science Society, Seattle, November 2018.

"Illustrating the Patterns of the Heavens in Cuneiform and Later Sources", Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Innsbruck, July 2018.

"Investigating Historical Religious Groups with Digital Methods: The Database of Religious History", International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Munich, April 2018.

"Quantifying Thick Descriptions for the Database of Religious History", Archaeological

Institute of America, Boston, January 2018.

“Multiple Sources of Data in Late Babylonian Astrology”, History of Science Society, Toronto, November 2017.

“Integrating with the wider Digital Humanities: The Database of Religious History”, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Marburg, July 2016.

“Analyzing Association in Babylonian Zodiacal Medical Ingredients”, American Oriental Society, Los Angeles, March 2016.

“Looking Through the Cracks: Tracing Damage on Cuneiform Tablets”, American Schools of Oriental Research, San Antonio, November 2016.

“Calendar Texts and the Micro-zodiac: Intertextuality in Seleucid Astrology”, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, July 2016.

“The Micro-zodiac: An Astrological Compendium in Hellenistic Babylonia” Meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians, Tacoma, Washington, May 2016.

“Physical Markers of Textual Formatting in Late-Babylonian Astrology” Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Boston, Massachusetts, March 2016.

“Lions and Snakes and Ravens! Oh My! Visual Knowledge Production in Late-Babylonian Astrological Texts”, American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Conference, Atlanta, November 2015.

“Paradigm and Model in Astral Thinking”, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Geneva & Bern, June 2015.

“New Developments in Seleucid Astrology: A Re-analysis of the Micro-zodiac”, Meeting of the American Oriental Society, New Orleans, March 2015.

“Organizational Structure of Knowledge in Cuneiform Sources”, Advanced Seminar in the Humanities, Venice, October 26th- November 2014.

“Form and Structure in the Micro-Zodiac: Re-assembling the Pieces”, 4th Regensburg Workshop on Mesopotamian Astral Sciences, Berlin, May 2014.

“The Micro-Zodiac in Babylon and Uruk: Seleucid Zodiacal Astrology”, The Circulation of Astronomical Knowledge in the Ancient World, Brown University, Providence, April 2014.

“Tokens and Tablets: Reinvestigating Literacy in the Neo-Assyrian Empire”, American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Conference, Baltimore, November 2013.

“The Role of Tokens in Neo-Assyrian Administrative Procedure”, The Provincial Archaeology of the Assyrian Empire, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, poster session, December 2012.

“Tablets and Tokens: Methods of Administration on Assyria's Northern Frontier”, Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Boston, Massachusetts, March 2012.

Timothy Matney and **M. Willis Monroe** “Recent Excavations at Ziyaret Tepe/Tushhan: Results from the 2009-2010 Field Seasons”, Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, November 2010.

Awards, Grants and Fellowships:

- 2021 Co-PI with Edward Slingerland (UBC) "Exploring the Cultural Evolution of Religion Employing a Large-Scale, Quantitative-Qualitative Historical Database" John Templeton Foundation (\$4,792,151)
- 2020-2021 Webster lectureship, Archaeological Institute of America
- 2020 UBC Open Educational Resources Rapid Innovation Grant: Online Pedagogy Resource for Religious Studies, Co-PI Caroline Arbuckle (\$1,940)
- 2015 Dean's Faculty Fellowship (Brown University), dissertation completion fellowship awarded a semester-long Visiting Assistant Professorship. (\$15,000)
- 2014 The American Academy of Research in Iraq (TAARII) grant in support of a project titled: "Innovation in Seleucid Astrology: Re-investigating the Micro-Zodiac." (\$6,000)
- 2014 Joukowsky Summer Research Travel Grant in support of dissertation research. (\$2,000)
- 2013-14 Participant in Venice International University's Advanced Seminar in the Humanities, a biennial two-year seminar series covering the Classical world and Ancient Near East.

Curatorial and Archaeological Experience:

- 2007 - 2014 Ziyaret Tepe Archaeological dig, Site Registrar, Turkey
Conducting the initial registration and study of artifacts from the field. Responsible for maintaining IT resources and site-wide archaeological database.
- 2012 - 2013 U.S. Department of State, Virtual Student Foreign Service Intern,
Responsible for sourcing images for type objects of Iraqi cultural heritage, and assembling them into a database to be used by international law enforcement.

2009 Central Lydia Archaeological Survey, Survey Archaeologist

2008 - 2009 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Curatorial Intern,
Department of Art of the Ancient World

Service:

2017-
current Committee member of the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of British
Columbia, overseeing all archaeological instruction, resources, and events on campus

2019 Departmental representative for UBC Imagine Day and Language Day

2015 Member of Dean of Students search committee (Brown University)

2009 - 2015 Member of the Board of Trustees of Moses Brown School, Providence RI

Occasional Referee: American Journal of Archaeology, Journal of Ancient Near Eastern
History, Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion, Digital Humanities Quarterly

Teaching:

As Primary Instructor:

Discovering Ancient Civilizations

The Ancient Near East

Archaeology and the Bible

Ancient World Modern Issues

Near Eastern and Biblical Mythology (UBC 2020)

Literature of Mesopotamia and Egypt (UBC 2019)

Undergraduate and graduate students, included significant Digital Humanities
component.

Archaeology and the Bible (UBC 2018, 2019)

Scientific Thought in Ancient Iraq (Brown 2016)

Introduction to Akkadian (Brown 2012)

Undergraduate and graduate students

As Teaching Assistant:

Age of Empires: The Ancient Near East in the First Millennium B.C. (Brown 2014)

Astronomy Before the Telescope (Brown 2013)

Haunted Universe: Monsters and Demons at the Dawn of Civilization (Brown 2013)

Imagining the Gods: Myths and Myth-making in Ancient Mesopotamia (Brown 2012)

Mentor-ship and informal courses:

Advanced Akkadian reading seminar (UBC 2019-2021)

Mentor, Google Summer of Code

Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (2019-2020)
Classical Language Toolkit (2018)

Short courses and guest lecturing:

Early Astronomy (Brown Summer Program 2015)
Cuneiform (Brown Summer Program 2015)
Guest lectures for courses at the University of British Columbia (Akkadian, Archaeology,
History, Mythology, Technology, and Psychology)
Unit on Cuneiform for MOOC “Archaeology's Dirty Little Secrets” on the Coursera platform

Languages:

Ancient: Akkadian, Sumerian, Hittite, Luwian, Ugaritic
Modern: Turkish (competent), French (some), German (some)

Professional Affiliations:

Archaeological Institute of America
American Schools of Oriental Research
History of Science Society
Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science

References:

Professor Lisa Cooper (University of British Columbia)	lisa.cooper@ubca.ca
Professor Sara Milstein (University of British Columbia)	sara.milstein@ubc.ca
Professor Edward Slingerland (University of British Columbia)	edward.slingerland@ubc.ca
Professor Matthew Rutz (Brown University) PhD Committee Member	matthew_rutz@brown.edu
Professor John Steele (Brown University) PhD Advisor	john_steele@brown.edu