



## Opening the Ancient World A Free Public Virtual Conference

### ***Discovery, Science, and Technology in the Ancient World - Traditions and Innovations***

Sunday - Monday, July 23rd - 24th, 2023

Save Ancient Studies Alliance presents our third annual conference, a new type of online conference for ALL Ancient Studies scholars & anyone interested in the Ancient World. Our goals are:

1. to hold an academic Ancient Studies conference freely available to the public,
2. to foster discussion and action regarding public outreach and scholarly inclusiveness, and
3. to present and support excellent scholarship by independent scholars around the world, in order to continue building a joint community of scholars including both those whose occupations are inside and outside academia.

We aim to bring together scholars who do not normally have the opportunity to present and engage with scholarship, including:

- those who completed a PhD and are now professionals in other fields,
- those who left PhD programs, or have had to take time out of their studies,
- contingent faculty,
- academics from marginalized groups,
- teachers, professors, and staff from K-12 schools and community colleges
- public humanities institutions,
- cultural resource management professionals, and
- independent scholars.

#### **CONFERENCE THEME:**

Science, or the systematic development and application of knowledge about the world, has been an essential part of human culture throughout history. Cultures tend to develop and conserve bodies of scientific knowledge, while scientific breakthroughs occur periodically.

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For example, in Europe and the USA during at the turn of the 20th century, transportation via the automobile spread, while use of animal-drawn carriages declined. Carriages, however, were the product of a long history of technological advancement: early ancients invented the wheel in the 4th millennium BC, the Hyksos equipped horses with them to dominate the battlefield in the 18th century BCE, and Egyptians adopted this technology and adapted it to craft war chariots that helped them dominate their region.

Similarly, while ancient Greek physicians argued over how the body worked, the Galenic tradition held sway for 13 centuries, seeing the human body as governed by the four bodily humors. It was not until the 16th century CE that Vesalius challenged this entrenched system, initiating a change in thinking that led to the concepts of modern anatomy.

The major statement on scientific developments is laid out by Thomas Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, where he claims scientific traditions are punctuated by periodic shifts in thinking, which he called "paradigm shifts." Nonetheless, these developments may be quite complicated, gradual, or piecemeal. Perspectives from Ancient History give more space for investigating the dialectic between tradition and innovation in science.

This conference invites you to consider traditions and innovations in discovery, science, and technology throughout the Ancient World, meaning across the globe in pre-modern times. We invite presenters to submit abstracts on any ancient culture on a topic relevant to this discussion. Presentation topics may include:

- Traditions
  - Methods of transmission of scientific knowledge over time
  - Perception of foreign/divine influence on science and technology
- Innovations
  - Causes for innovation
  - Failures and their impacts
  - Paradigm shifts
  - Internal innovation vs cross-cultural borrowing

Four keynote addresses will be given by

- Adrienne Mayor, Research Scholar at Stanford University
- Gerardo Aldana, Professor of Chicana/o Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara
- Geoffrey Killen, Egyptologist, Wood technologist and furniture historian, Consultant for the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Ancient Egyptian Coffins Project
- Alexander Jones, Professor of the History of the Exact Sciences in Antiquity at New York University, Director of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

This free, public conference will be held on Sunday and Monday, July 23-24, 2023, and will be livestreamed on SASA's YouTube channel and on our partners' platforms. All viewers will be

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able to submit questions to be posed to the presenters through any of the streamed chats, though they will be moderated to ensure that the discussion stays on topic. Presentations will remain freely available online for viewing after the conference.

Through our partnerships, we were able to attract over 10,000 people to participate in the conference last year. This year, we expect to grow our online reach to new communities of students, enthusiasts, and scholars.

In this inclusive context, beyond the scholarly presentations, we will also host special sessions in which we aim to discuss a range of issues pertaining to the precarious situation of Ancient Studies. These discussions will broach the issues of how to develop outreach by Ancient Studies scholars, further inclusiveness, and reimagine scholarship as a lifelong pursuit within a diverse yet inclusive scholarly community. These sessions will be livestreamed. But, only those present in the Zoom meeting will be able to participate. So, please RSVP if you would like to participate in them.

Please see last year's conference at [saveancientstudies.org/virtual-conference](https://saveancientstudies.org/virtual-conference).

