

**Save Ancient Studies Alliance**

**January 2024 Texts-in-Translation Master Class**

# **Antichi Colori: Getting to the Sources of Ancient Dyes and Pigments**

**Lead by Rachael B. Goldman**

The Ancient Mediterranean and global world was filled with ancient color. Ancient peoples were sophisticated in their technological resources; creating colors through multiple means. Recently the subject of whiteness in ancient marble sculpture and decoration has generated opinions, perspectives and even reconstructed models. The subject of color was documented heavily through literature, historical sources, painting, sculpture, and decorative arts, as a relatively static presence. But it is the dyes and pigments that command the most amount of attention. Evidence suggests that the manufacture application, attitudes towards and the color-terms were of prime concern to the ancients and contributed to their overall economic prosperity. Ancient color can be challenging for us to understand because of the temporal distance between our world and that of antiquity. Ancient dyes and pigments help to bridge the gap as solid tools for showing accurate tools from the ancient world. There has been long-standing research on the study of purple, in particular, but greater examination has been devoted to other natural and the creation of synthetic dyes. As a group we will consider the many different opinions and usages of ancient dyes and pigments from text and archeological evidence from the 1st century through the 3rd century. We will consider all the different types of items that were colors from clothing to wax tablets (or ancient paper!), types of dyes, chariot teams, food, makeup, medicine, what people looked like, natural historical items and even the velarium (the canopy over the amphitheater).

By coming together each week from all parts of global community, we will come together to recreate the ancient world in a truly colorful and diverse manner. Instead of considering the ancient world in dry, white and gray manner, we will discover a new and current conversation about how ancient writers manipulated and enhanced their own writings with color-terms. We will consider larger issues about text and image and get a chance to hear what others think about this subject.

### Meet Your SASA Educational Ambassador:



Rachael B. Goldman

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Greco-Roman history, Global history, color history, social history, food culture, history of slavery, epigraphy - City University of New York - Graduate Center, 2011

Social media handles (optional)

### Links to readings

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/29/the-myth-of-whiteness-in-classical-sculpture>

Sebesta, J. L. (2001). *Tunica Ralla, Tunica Spissa: The Colors and Textiles of Roman Costume*. In *The World of Roman costume* (pp. 65–76). University of Wisconsin Press.

Sebesta1.pdf

Bradley, Mark, "Importance of Colour on Ancient Marble Sculpture," *Art History* (2009): 426-457.  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OyBOFAJd19MaFpxpXk0KRlz3LCh\\_sgs0/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OyBOFAJd19MaFpxpXk0KRlz3LCh_sgs0/view?usp=sharing)

Goldman, Rachael. "You Are What You Wear," and "Clothes Make the Man" In *Color-Terms in Social and Cultural Context in Ancient Rome* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press): 39-83.

### Different Hues, Different Views

This evening we will consider how color manifested itself in the world through archaeological evidence. We will discuss the difference between dyes and pigments from the authors and epigraphic evidence. Contemporary discussion will consider the reconstructions of ancient monuments. Since study the color and polychromacity developed in stages, we will also consider how to examine these appearances.