

SAVE ANCIENT STUDIES ALLIANCE
& DIGITAL HAMMURABI



ARE TO PROUD PRESENT

OPENING THE ANCIENT WORLD

A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 15 -
AUGUST 16, 2021



OPENING THE ANCIENT WORLD: RELIGION, HISTORY, & CULTURE

A FREE, VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

CO-ORGANIZERS

DAVID DANZIG

MEGAN LEWIS

CHRISTIAN CASEY



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REMINDERS!

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ROUNDTABLES [HERE!](#)

LIVESTREAMED

SASA's website [_saveancientstudies.org/virtual-conference_](https://saveancientstudies.org/virtual-conference)

SASA's YouTube Channel [\(Save Ancient Studies Alliance\)](#)

Digital Hammurabi's YouTube Channel [\(Digital Hammurabi\)](#)

SASA's Facebook [\(@SaveAncientStudies\)](#)

SASA's Twitch [\(@SaveAncientStudies\)](#)

Want to learn more about us?

Go to our websites!

saveancientstudies.org

digitalhammurabi.com

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CONFERENCE GOALS

I

Present and support excellent scholarship by scholars at the fringes of the academic community and researchers who have not followed the traditional tenure-track career path.

II

Foster discussion and action regarding public outreach and scholarly inclusiveness.

III

Hold a conference freely available to the public.

IV

Begin building a joint community of scholars including both those not on the traditional path and those in the ivory tower.

WHO ARE WE BRINGING TOGETHER?

What do we mean when we say we aim to bring together those “at the fringes of the academic community and researchers who have not followed the traditional tenure-track career path.”? To us, this conference serves to bring together scholars who do not have the same opportunities to present their work and engage with scholars as those who went the traditional tenured track might. Some of the groups we sought to reach out to included:

- Completed a PhD and are now professionals in other fields
- Left PhD programs
- Contingent faculty
- Academics from marginalized groups
- Teachers, professors, and staff from all educational institutions
- Cultural resource management professionals

HOW WE PROMOTED INCLUSIVITY

Any scholar of the Ancient Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, broadly defined, was welcomed and encouraged to submit an academic paper proposal in the subject areas of Religion, Culture, or History. In addition, all presenters were strongly encouraged to participate in at least one of the two discussion groups.

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.

Additionally, we have two roundtables that open up conference discussions to the public, allowing anyone interested to academically engage with Ancient Studies. Day 1’s conversation is “Diversity in Ancient Studies: Problem Solving Through Outreach.” Day 2’s is “Research Outside the Academy: Building an Inclusive Environment. These Roundtables are intended as forums for those who are interested in proactively developing real solutions to these problems of diversity and inclusivity. We view them as working groups to convene and begin to outline practical steps for solutions that will be taken up via future collaborations to truly Open the Ancient World to all.

THE ORGANIZERS

DAVID DANZIG

SASA - Founder & Director
PhD Candidate, Institute for the
Study of the Ancient World, New
York University



MEGAN LEWIS

Digital Hammurabi
- Co-Founder & Operator



CHRISTIAN CASEY

SASA Virtual Conference
Team Leader
ISAW Postdoctoral Fellow



THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DR. MARK SMITH

Helene Professor of Old Testament Literature and
Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary



DR. MOUDHY AL-RASHID

Assyriologist and Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson
College, University of Oxford



DR. HEBA ABD EL GAWAD

Postdoctoral Researcher for "Egypt's Dispersed Her-
itage: Views from Egypt", Institute of Archaeology,
University College of London



SABER A. PARIAN

Engineer, Researcher of Elamite
and the Behistun Inscription



SESSIONS

The Ancient World Today

Amber Zambelli
Dr. Anna Goldfield
Stacy Davidson
Dr. Anne Austin
Dr. Heidi Jauhainen

Then and Now

Dr. Georgina Longley
Dr. Ariadne Schulz
Carly Silver

Ancient Identity (I and II)

Dr. Rachael Goldman
Dr. Roberto Gozzoli
Emily McElroy
Alison Manley
Ron Clark

Literature (I and II)

Dr. Maria Luisa Bernardini
Bryan Kinzbrunner
Matthijs Kronemeijer
Elliot Stern
Jackson Reinhardt
Dr. David Miano
Dr. Henry Dosedla

SCHEDULE - DAY 1

AUGUST 15, 2021

10:15am - 10:30am EDT **Introductions - David Danzig and Megan Lewis**

10:30 am - 11:15am EDT **Keynote I - Dr. Moudhy al-Rashid | Making and Remaking Ancient History**
#OAWKeynoteAlRashid

11:15am - 12:45pm EDT **Ancient Identity I**
#OAWSessionAncientIdentity1
Dr. Rachael Goldman | Reading the Ruins and Ancient Jewish Memory: An Investigation into Monuments and Inscriptions
Dr. Roberto Gozzoli | Egyptian Hieroglyphs as God's Language in the Kingdom of Kush. Part II: Was Piankhy hieroglyphic literate?
Emily McElroy | Disabled, Disinherited, and Decisive Daughter: An Assessment of Labda in the Corinth Founding Myth

12:45pm - 2:15pm EDT **Then and Now**
#OAWSessionAntiquityThenNow
Dr. Georgina Longley | Polybius' Modern Blueprint
Dr. Ariadne Schulz | Politics and Plague: Disease, Democracy, and Athens
Carly Silver | Meet the Vanguard of the Ancient World

2:15m - 3:00pm EDT **Keynote 2 - Dr. Heba Abd el-Gawad | "To repatriate or not to repatriate? That should not be the question!": Centering Social Justice in the Current "Decolonising the past" Turn**
#OAWKeynoteAbdElGawad

3:00pm - 4:30pm EDT **Literature I**
#OAWSessionAncientLiterature1
Dr. Maria Luisa Bernardini | Euripides' Antiope: About the Rising of Intellectual Between Tradition and New Politico – Cultural Instances
Bryan Kinzbrunner | Evolution of Chariots from war vehicles to symbols of the Divine – A Proposal for how the Phrase Ma'aseh Merkabah Became the Description of Jewish Mysticism?
Jackson Reinhardt | "Outskirts of Paradise": Depictions of Hades in Early Syriac Literature

4:30pm - 5:30pm EDT **Round Table - Diversity in Ancient Studies: Problem Solving Through Outreach**
#OAWRoundtableDiversityinAncientStudies

5:30pm - 6:00pm EDT **Special session from Australia**
#OAWExtraSession
Dr. Joseph Chung | The Old Religious Traditions Used in the New

SCHEDULE - DAY 2

AUGUST 16, 2021

10:15am - 11:00am EDT

Keynote 3 - Saber Parian | The Elamite Version of the Behistun Inscription: New Perspectives and Insights
#OAWKeynoteParian

11:00am - 12:30pm EDT

The Ancient World Today
#OAWSessionAncientWorldToday
Dr. Heidi Jauhainen | The State of Encoded Hieroglyphic texts
Stacy Davidson and Dr. Anne Austin | The Egyptology State of the Field Project: A Data-driven Assessment of American Egyptology
Amber Zambelli and Dr. Anna Goldfield | Human Stories: Lessons Learned from Podcasting the Past

12:30pm - 2:00pm EDT

Ancient Identity II
#OAWSessionAncientIdentity2
Dr. Henry Dosedla | "Black Gold of Antiquity" – The Triumphant Advance of Graphite Pottery in the Mediterranean
Alison Manley | Lapis Lazuli Cylinder Seals of Ur: Third Millennium BC Burial Trends
Ron Clark | Your Warriors Will Become Women: The Feminization of Exiles, Captives, and Survivors in Ancient Jehud

2:00pm - 3:30pm EDT

Literature II
#OAWSessionAncientLiterature2
Dr. David Miano | Who Wrote the Tel Dan Inscription?
Matthijs Kronemeijer | The Hole In the Narrative: Philosophical Convention and Divine Mercy in Mark 1–3
Elliot Stern | One People, One Language, and a Tower to the Heavens: Exploring the story of the Tower of Babel as a Cultural Legacy

3:30pm - 4:30pm EDT

Round Table - Research Outside the Academy: Building an Inclusive Environment
#OAWRoundtableResearchOutsideAcademy

4:30pm - 5:00pm EDT

All About the Art Competition
#OAWArtCompetition

5:00pm - 5:45pm EDT

Keynote 4 - Dr. Mark Smith | The Hebrew Bible Against, and or in the Ancient Near East? The Problems with Claims about Cultural Conjunction
#OAWKeynoteSmith

5:45pm - 6:45pm EDT

Social hour for SASA and for Digital Hammurabi
#OAWSocialHour

WHAT ARE THE HASHTAGS?

Share your thoughts about each conference event on Twitter with these hashtags and follow the discussion live on SASA's Twitter feed! For general thoughts on the conference, use the hashtag #OAWconference!



ADDITIONAL INFO

WHAT'S THE ART COMPETITION?

The art competition is an opportunity for anyone out there to send SASA a design related to any ancient world culture or geographical region for a chance to get the artwork featured on merchandise in the Bazaar, SASA's store!

WHERE IS THE CONFERENCE STREAMED?

- SASA's website (saveancientstudies.org/virtual-conference)
- SASA's YouTube Channel (Save Ancient Studies Alliance)
- Digital Hammurabi's YouTube Channel (Digital Hammurabi)
- SASA's Facebook (@SaveAncientStudies)
- SASA's Twitch (@SaveAncientStudies)

CAN'T MAKE IT? DON'T WORRY!

Unless otherwise requested, the entire conference will remain on YouTube! That means you can see what you missed or go back and review a presentation at any time!

ABOUT THE ROUND TABLES

Please join us and bring your ideas so we can pool our efforts and make real change. The RoundtableS will be livestreamed, though only participants in the Zoom meeting will be able to engage in the discussion. Therefore, pre-registration is necessary to participate. There will be several mini-presentations to help steer the conversation.

1 Round Table One: Diversity in Ancient Studies: Problem Solving Through Outreach

Lack of diversity in Ancient Studies fields is a well acknowledged problem. Many fields within Ancient Studies developed through colonialist endeavors and allowed limited access to only particular social groups via elitist schools. Over the past several decades strides have been made to begin to transform the attitudes and practices surrounding the notion of who “belongs” in studying the deep past. SASA and Digital Hammurabi envision a New Ancient Studies in which all are not only welcome, but also actively incorporated into the study of the deep past of all places and cultures.

STILL WANT TO SIGN UP?

Sign up [here](#) for Round Table One!
Sign up [here](#) for Round Table Two!

Please note that the discussions will be livestreamed on our platforms. If you do not want to participate or do not want to be included in the broadcast then you can still follow the discussion!

2

Round Table Two: Research Outside the Academy: Building an Inclusive Environment

The fields of Ancient Studies consist of a wonderful, tight-knit community of scholars. Though they are spread out across the world, scholars see each other regularly at conferences and symposia held by the various learned societies and departments. However, this ivory tower has strict boundaries, imposed by the limited number of academic positions available and by the attitude that to be a “scholar” one must be directly part of an academic institution. Though we work to expand Ancient Studies fields, this model for the self-definition of the “community of scholars” and the attendant attitude of exclusivity must change. Ancient Studies can only truly grow beyond its current bounds when there is a home within this community for scholars who earn their livings in other occupations. SASA and Digital Hammurabi envision a New Ancient Studies in which all are not only welcome, but also actively incorporated into the study of the deep past of all places and cultures.

ROUND TABLE OUTLINES

DAY ONE

Beginning
15 minute mark
30 minute mark
45 minute mark

Introduction - David Danzig
The Queer Classicist - Yentl Love
Archaeological Virtual Reality Online Database - Jeremy Brooks
Amerlia the Archaeologist - Amelia Dall

DAY TWO

Moderator
Beginning
15 minute mark
30 minute mark
45 minute mark

Executive Director of the Society for Classical Studies - Dr. Helen Cullyer
Introduction - David Danzig
Working Classicists - George Connor
Religion for Breakfast - Andrew Henry
World History Encyclopedia - Jan van der Crabben

THE ABSTRACTS - DAY ONE

SESSION ONE: ANCIENT IDENTITY 1

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

I

Reading the Ruins and Ancient Jewish Memory: An Investigation into Monuments and Inscriptions | Dr. Rachael Goldman

The subject of Jewish patronage and slave inscriptions has long attested history from their artistic, epigraphic, and archaeological backgrounds (Branham, 2012, Fine, 2016, Gruen, 2011, Alcock, et. al, 2016); even addressing the subject of ancient Jewish memory. These inscriptions, dating from 1st cent. B.C. -4th century C.E., show the widest range of the creators, artisans and even the people themselves and their ability to continue and change their responsibilities as citizens and worshippers in the Roman Empire. Recent studies on color and polychromacity have also aided our understanding of how Romans, Jews and other worshippers attempted to become leading players in this cosmopolitan world. The change in how Roman culture was invoked on the Jews and other peoples evolved over time of how they interpret Roman culture for themselves. For example the names Sabbatius and Paschasius are examples of names given to Hebrew slaves, but what they call themselves is reflective of what they chose to identify themselves as, thereby ridding themselves of a Jewish memory. Memory, in this respect was held only through the decorative symbols, evocative of the temple, including menorot, animals, rolled up scrolls, ivy leaves, and even a wax tablet. In my discussion, I trace how generations of families evoked a language, decorative motifs and thereby creating a sacred space for worshippers and the passerby.

My conclusions are as follows: With recent studies on polychromacity, it is possible to discern that many inscriptions were painted and can be traced to the mosaics in synagogues in the Galilee, suggesting a "Jewish vocabulary." I will compare the paleographic nature of the lettering on these inscriptions to that of Roman art to demonstrate how Jewish artisans embraced the language of their captors and assimilated into Roman society. By connecting the Jewish memory evoked in these inscriptions, I consider a change in the redemption and afterlife, specifically in regard to the change in profession. This demonstrates that the Jews in the Diaspora created a visual presence quite different from that of the Jews in Palestine.

II

Egyptian Hieroglyphs as God's Language in the Kingdom of Kush. Part II: Was Piankhy Heroglyphic Hiterate? | Dr. Roberto Gozzoli

In a previous paper, the importance of Egyptian hieroglyphs and their relevance in the Kingdom of Kush has demonstrated that a hierarchy of knowledge in which the Kushite king was considered to be the intermediary between the god and the royal subjects, was present in the royal texts of the period spanning between the reign of Piankhy and the reign of Aspelta, a period that can be considered spanning for roughly a couple of centuries.

Over these prolegomena, this paper is an extension of such a research. The scope is the study of the so-called Triumphal stela of Piankhy, now kept at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. While a couple of Kushite royal texts previously composed are known, the Triumphal stela stands both for its dimensions, the peculiarity of its writing, as well the length of the text itself, As the text once more reiterates the special relationship between god Amun-Re and Piankhy, the concept of knowledge both by the king and other subjects toward the king himself is expressed a few times. At the same time, the text is rich of literary quotations from ancient Egyptian literature.

Firstly, the Triumphal stela has been considered as a text originally composed by Egyptian scribes and then "imported" into Kush. If such a theory is right, it remains quite difficult to understand the reasons for creating such a "complex" text. Secondly, there is the archaeological evidence: the text finds its counterparts on the temple walls of the Amun-Re temple at Gebel Barkal, in which some of the scenes and imagery return. At the same time, no evidence has been found of the existence of a temple library at Gebel Barkal itself. Thus, this paper is the first paper within Egyptology and Nubian Studies dealing with question of Egyptian literacy at the Kushite royal court.

III

Disabled, Disinherited, and Decisive Daughter: An Assessment of Labda in the Corinth Founding Myth | Emily McElroy

The Corinthian founding myth is a story of many things. It is a story of the rise of the tyrannos, men who seized power in unconventional ways, that would dominate Greek city states in the coming centuries. It is the story of victory over a corrupt aristocracy by a heroic young man. It is a story with both historical and folklore elements, half fantasy and half fact. And it is also the story of Labda, a figure in the founding myth who was an unlikely protagonist indeed, but without Labda there would be no hero, no resolution, no 'happy ending'. It is remarkable that a woman holds such a place in the founding myth of a city, and Labda is even more remarkable for the fact that she was physically disabled. Labda's disability permeates all aspects of her story. It is for her strange name. It is the reason she is reviled by her family. It is the reason she is abandoned in marriage to a man well below her station. And it is the reason nobody expects her to bear a son that could so decisively change the status quo. In looking at the story of Labda, the reader gains a richer sense of her role in the founding myth of Corinth, a richer sense of the story itself, and a richer sense of how disabled women interacted with the society around them.

IV

Polybius' Modern Blueprint | **Dr. Georgina M. Longley**

This paper seeks to demonstrate how by 'Opening up the Ancient World', we can open up our own. My primary focus will be on the methods and approaches of Greek historian, Polybius. My doctoral research showed how the scope and range of the Greek term, *politeia*, furnished Polybius with a sophisticated model for the analysis, not only of Rome, but also the other peoples with which he deals in his work. Polybius' sixth book, which contains his account of the Roman *politeia*, does not only describe the political workings of the Roman government, which he classes as a 'mixed-politeia', composed of three different political elements: kingship, aristocracy, and democracy. Polybius also includes a theory of historical causation, Roman military organisation, religious customs, economic attitudes, public and private displays and practices, popular stories. In short, this is a rich model through which a society and its people's behaviour can be analysed.

These many different areas build up the whole picture. It is a model highly relevant for our own times. I am not the first to make this argument. Polybius was an important inspiration for International Relations' theorist, Hans Morgenthau, in his work, *Politics Among Nations*. What I shall be arguing is that Polybius' holistic approach to the analysis of peoples can offer us a better understanding of our own society and others. It is very easy to look at a single aspect of a nation in isolation and praise or criticise it. But what does this system or practice tell us about the society as whole? What is the relationship between the people and the ruling element? Polybius offers us a sophisticated tool for taking a broader approach to exploring and asking questions about the world around us.

V

Politics and Plague: Disease, Democracy, and Athens | **Dr. Ariadne Schulz**

Pericles was one of the tens of thousands carried off by the plague of Athens. In his absence the city and those who succeeded him were ill equipped to carry on the Peloponnesian War. Given the opportunity to cease hostilities, Cleon squandered it and he and other populists allowed Athenian democracy to crumble. Thucydides, the chief recorder of the plague of Athens is primarily concerned with the cultural, religious, and political decay faced by Athens and had a cynical view on democracy itself. It is this historical inflection wherein Socrates was executed and when the *metoikoi* (immigrants) experienced increasing restrictions on their civil rights. Ethnic fears rose and laws were enacted curtailing *metoikoi* rights in response.

The parallel to the modern political landscape is inescapable with the near simultaneous rise of worldwide fascism and xenophobia alongside the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the xenophobia practiced in recent history and in Athens predates their respective epidemics. Both Britain and the USA enacted immigration and residency restrictions well prior to the pandemic. Pericles did enact law restricting metics' access to citizenship during the plague of Athens, but there had been and continued to be an othering and fear of non-Athenians within Athens before, during, and after the plague. The apparent origin of the plague supposedly in Ethiopia and its first emergence in Piraeus only compounded already present fears regarding non-Athenians.

Other epidemics and outbreaks including the English sweating sickness, black plague, smallpox, syphilis, ebola, and influenza have had lasting political and economic effect. Are these effects contingent upon the contemporary atmosphere or are they specific to the disease itself? This research will be a literature review of historical and archaeological sources exploring the relationship between disease and politics through the Covid-19 pandemic and the plague of Athens.

VI

Meet the Vanguard of the Ancient World | **Carly Silver**

The cult leader, a scammer of the first—and worst—degree—is alive and well, most recently with NXIVM. But the ancient world had its own Keith Raniere—Alexander of Abonoteichus—showing the timelessness of manipulative psychology employed by male cults of personality. Alexander of Abonoteichus did everything from breaking into a Turkish temple of Apollo to plant baby snakes in the sanctuary to spewing false prophecy with snake-oil sales techniques.

Tales of Alexander come to us via satirist Lucian, but he and his snake puppet, Glycon, are amply attested in archaeological evidence. He also targeted rich donors to bring in cash to fund his lifestyle, much as Raniere deliberately reached out to wealthy, vulnerable women like heiress Clare Bronfman. Lucian shrugs off Alexander's conquests as mere seductions, but Raniere is a brutal tyrant who branded and raped the women under his control. Would Lucian have treated Alexander so mildly in the modern world? Alexander sent notes offering to intercede with Apollo on people's behalfs during a pestilence. People inscribed his prayers to Apollo on their doorposts; ironically, the writer Lucian quips, he noticed that people who did this got sicker more often than people who did not.

Similarly, Raniere preyed on women's weaknesses by intimating these people were not themselves good enough and building off of a world that undermines women's confidence. He offered self-help classes that would seemingly cure these women's inadequacies, much like Alexander with his petitioners' anxieties. Alexander feeding on people's need for local divine manifestation and security in ancient tradition in an increasingly global society (second century CE). But Alexander is portrayed as a non-believer, someone who preyed on others' weaknesses, techniques that still survive and thrive in modern MLMs and cults.

VII

Euripides' Antiope: About the Rising of Intellectual Between Tradition and New Politico - cultural Instances | **Dr. Maria Luisa Bernardini**

The paper, concerning the fragmentary tragedy Antiope, will show the peculiarity of this Euripides' work, well known in the ancient world because of the famous agone (fight of words) between the two brothers, Amphione and Zetus: in this debate was established the opposition of active and contemplative life. The paper refers in particular to fr.910 Kn., in the attempt to explain its relevance for the figure of the intellectual in fifth century Greece. On the assumption that the Antiope belongs in the latest part of Euripides' production, the paper discusses intertextual relationships of fr.910 with poets such as Hesiod and Pindar, aiming to elucidate the meaning of intellectual search in a Euripidean perspectives: such research appears thus substantiated by the close ties with previous wisdom poetry thus it turns towards rational investigation.

VIII

Evolution of Chariots From War Vehicles to Symbols of the Divine - A Proposal for how the Phrase Ma'aseh Merkabah Became the Description of Jewish Mysticism? | **Bryan Kinzbrunner**

In the ancient world, the chariot was a status symbol. It was the vehicle of the royal army, the vehicle of nobles and pharaohs. For example, in Genesis 41:43, when the Egyptian Pharaoh appoints Joseph as the second-in-command, among the status symbols is allowing Joseph to ride in a chariot. We also find that the chariots and horses were often connected to the Sun God, as in Josiah's rejection of foreign worship as described in 2 Kings 23:11 "He did away with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance of the House of the LORD, near the chamber of the eunuch Nathan-melech, which was in the precincts. He burned the chariots of the sun." Finally, with Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot, we have the clearest attempt of connecting God to this powerful vehicle.

The term adopted for Ezekiel's vision, Maaseh Merkabah, became a term to describe a form of study within rabbinic literature that was reserved for the elite, presumed by later rabbinic scholars and academics as the study of Jewish mysticism. How do we get from the chariot to the basic corpus that we today refer to as Kabbalah? My contention in this presentation is to offer a connection between the actual chariot's usage, the metaphorical usage of the chariot to refer to something divine, often the sun God, and how Ezekiel's vision is the logical biblical antecedent to this early Jewish mystical tradition.

IX

"Outskirts of Paradise": Depictions of Hades in Early Syriac Literature | **Jackson Reinhardt**

In this paper, I examine the depictions of Hades/Sheol in the earliest Christian Syriac literature, with particular emphasis on three influential sources from the 3rd and 4th-centuries CE: The Odes of Solomon (~3rd-cent. CE), The Acts of Thomas (~3rd-cent. CE), as well as both the poetical and prose writings of Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306 – 373). There is a dearth of material on Hades, and eschatology more generally, in English-language Syriac academic discourse. Frequently, discussions on the posthumous state are examined through the prism of Christ's descensus ad infernos— his preaching of the Gospel to the Old Testament Saints and their deliverance into the Heaven. Over the past several decades, there have been several monographs and dissertations which study Christ's descent in Ephrem, The Odes, and other early and medieval Syriac literature.

Yet, there is little explicit surveying on the role of this place beyond the obscure theological event. Thus, this paper attempts to go beyond the descent and provide analysis and elaboration on Hades' location, inhabitants, function, and greater cosmological-eschatological significance. I contend that these works, even though they are arising from the same cultural-theological milieu, demonstrate a remarkable diversity in their conceptualization. This pictorial polyvalence points to these sources performing an active, imaginative, and poetic engagement with a common theological notion (e.g. the afterlife) for which there seemed to be no emerging or existing consensus within the broader Church which might condition their claims and constructions.

These sources are foundational for Syriac Orthodoxy, as they are still informing the vibrant liturgy, theology, and hymnody of this tradition. Additionally, the very idea of hell, as a historical and contemporary belief, is undergoing a scholarly problematization from a variety of theological commitments and contexts, a discursive trend this paper hopes to participate in.

SPECIAL SESSION, LIVE
FROM AUSTRALIA
5:30 PM - 6:00 PM EDT

X

The Old Religious Traditions Used in the New Context by Haggai |
Dr. Joseph Chung

Religious traditions in Haggai are variously studied by scholars in the history of research but a comprehensive analysis is lacking. Six prominent ones can be highlighted as working in a cluster with regard to six ingredients, namely five characters plus the temple bearing their specific (and often unprecedented) designations respectively in the post exilic period. Firstly, Haggai, being a prophet working according to the old prophetic tradition is unprecedentedly indicated as 'the messenger of God', a designation never emphasized with the same weight for other prophets. Secondly, the God of Israel, indicated as 'Yahweh Zebaoth', an epithet not new but with the highest frequency of use among all books in the Hebrew Bible, is peculiarly linked with Exodus tradition, warranting his presence to encourage the people. Thirdly, the people being called 'the remnant' highlights the new identity in the post-exilic time, while being portrayed as 'these people' in the course of experiencing serious crop failure appears to be under the curses in Deuteronom(ist)ic tradition which relates to the storm-god tradition in ANE. Fourthly, Zerubbabel as 'the governor of Judah', a title for the royal descendant in the new context under Persian rule, has no royal authority but his future identity as a 'signet ring' shall still be perceived in the Davidic tradition. Fifthly, Joshua is the current high priest but more than simply pertaining to the traditional priestly tradition he is assumed to lead the people in cooperation with Zerubbabel. Finally, the temple to which the future/eschatological promise of glory draws in association with anticipated God's salvation 'on that day' is unprecedentedly called 'the house of Yahweh Zebaoth' and recalls the Zion tradition. This paper will investigate how these six traditions are traced from (but not exclusively found in each of) the six ingredients interacting intricately in Haggai.

— END OF DAY ONE —

THE ABSTRACTS - DAY TWO

SESSION FOUR: THE ANCIENT WORLD TODAY

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM EDT

I

The State of Encoded Hieroglyphic texts | **Dr. Heidi Jauhiainen**

In order to use digital methods for researching texts, the texts have to be machine-readable. For large modern languages, such as English, there are openly available digital corpora of texts. These corpora can be big and build from natively digital texts such as Wikipedia. A smaller corpus is sufficient for many purposes and there are several corpora build specifically for historical research. Assyriology, for example, has freely downloadable corpora of machine-readable texts, such as Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus, but the lack of similar corpora hinders the digital study of ancient Egyptian texts.

There is a tradition in Egyptology of using encoding to represent hieroglyphic texts so that the information on the signs themselves and their places in regard to each other is maintained. Such encoded texts are machine-readable. Various types of encoding have been used when publishing texts in books but those encoded texts are not openly available. Encoded texts could also be produced by OCRing hieroglyphic or hieratic texts, but currently this approach would require a lot of annotated texts in the same handwriting for training the method.

My dissertation dealt with feasts at Deir el-Medina as attested in the non-literary texts from the workmen's village. After defending it, I studied Computer Science and worked in Digital Humanities projects not related to Ancient Egypt. Since the beginning of year 2021, I have been working on a project of my own to produce machine readable hieroglyphic texts. In this paper, I will present the various methods used for encoding hieroglyphic texts from Manuel de Codage to Unicode signs. I will also suggest workflows for producing more machine-readable texts using the latest Unicode encoding.

II

The Egyptology State of the Field Project: A Data-driven Assessment of American Egyptology | Stacy Davidson and Dr. Anne Austin

Trends in higher education along with societal changes have required scholars to evaluate the nature of their fields, confront historical and current injustices, and determine whether or not their disciplines can survive into the future. Many fields have been collecting pertinent data and revising curricula and methodologies over the past few decades. However, within Egyptology, the answers to even the most basic questions remain unknown: How many Egyptologists are there in the United States? What barriers do historically-marginalized groups experience, and how do we overcome those to create a more inclusive and diverse discipline? What can be done to improve job prospects for recent graduates and contingent faculty?

The Egyptology State of the Field project (www.egyptologystats.org) was established in 2020 to address this lack of data. The first stage of the project collected both survey and interview data from U.S. citizens as well as those who were trained or work in the United States. Our analysis of the data will identify and address: (1) the demographics of the field of Egyptology and the inequities faced by underrepresented populations; (2) roadblocks for graduate students and early career scholars on the Egyptological job market; and (3) experiences with accessibility, professional development, and completion/retention for graduate students and early career scholars. The data collected will provide crucial information to potential and current Egyptology students, Egyptology programs, job seekers, and those currently in Egyptology and Egyptology-adjacent professions.

III

Human Stories: Lessons Learned from Podcasting the Past | Amber Zambelli and Dr. Anna Goldfield

The Dirt Podcast is a weekly downloadable audio series that brings the ancient past to an audience of listeners all over the world and from all walks of life. For three years, the show has taken a big-tent approach to archaeology and anthropology; however, no small part of it is dedicated to topics that fall within the traditional purview of the Classical world and Ancient Near East. In this paper, we share our successful model of presenting archaeology, anthropology, and ancient history to the public. We outline our philosophy for education and public outreach in archaeology, and suggest directions for the continued work of bringing the past to life for an audience outside of academia.

The Dirt's approach in presenting stories from the ancient past is to humanize the humanities, and to emphasize that archaeological assemblages are records of lived experiences. We highlight stories in which listeners can see themselves to demonstrate that the countless ways in which people have lived in the past mean that there is no single "correct" way to inhabit the world as a human being. In an effort to push back against academic gatekeeping and expand perceptions of the discipline, we bring in guests from a broad range of anthropological foci to demonstrate the many ways that one can "do" anthropology. Most importantly, in terms of our own philosophy, while we often take a lighthearted approach to the presentation of these stories, we draw attention to the real human joys and tragedies we glimpse through academic study, as well as the attitudes and biases brought to topics by past and present researchers.

SESSION FIVE: ANCIENT IDENTITY II

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM EDT

III

"Black Gold of Antiquity" - The Triumphant Advance of Graphite Pottery in the Mediterranean | Dr. Henry Dosedla

Some ancient trade routes linking Central Europe with the Mediterranean already started in the course of the Neolithic period, as in the case of maritime shells used for decoration, but were later also frequented by other trading articles including graphite. Though a number of these trading routes and exchange systems can be reconstructed, information is still lacking concerning their conditions and social context. This paper will focus on graphite, which is an important commodity that was sourced during the Neolithic period principally from some rare deposits in the Danubian region. Graphite was employed in the manufacture of black ceramics, such as the graphite painted pottery of the Bulgarian "Mound Culture", which circulated also in Aegean Thrace.

IV

Lapis Lazuli Cylinder Seals of Ur: Third Millennium BC Burial Trends | **Alison Manley**

Social identity may be materialized in many ways, but in Ancient Mesopotamia clothing and adornment were primary methods of choice. This study aims to analyze burial trends of lapis lazuli cylinder seal owners from the third millennium BC in Southern Mesopotamia to highlight a potential correlation with other objects that might be used to identify elite status. In this paper, general trends in cylinder seal use, iconography, and material choice are defined based on 1335 cylinder seals from the city of Ur. To provide background on lapis lazuli itself and the social power it might hold, a summary of lapis lazuli as a material is presented based on its presence in text, art, and the archaeological record. To explore how social identity may be reflected in the archaeological record, grave goods from 343 burials in the Royal Cemetery of Ur that collectively contained 411 cylinder seals are analyzed.

Many studies aim to draw connections between cylinder seals and owner identity focusing on iconography, but the data found in this study supports the idea that lapis lazuli material holds significant meaning in defining a seal owner's identity in its own right. It can be associated with ownership of multiple cylinder seals and burial with copper vessels. Lapis lazuli cylinder seals, independent of iconography, symbolize the elite status of an individual. The correlation of lapis lazuli with an elite social status is clear. Can the power of this material help to highlight the meaning of other material objects and enlighten us to a more holistic understanding of the elite society in third millennium BC Southern Mesopotamia?

V

Your Warriors Will Become Women: The Feminization of Exiles, Captives, and Survivors in Ancient Jehud | **Ron Clark**

Ancient texts use feminine language toward those individuals subject to violence in military, sexual assault, and forced migration. Valiant men are described as weak, afraid, confused, prostituted, or rape victims when defeated by a more powerful nation or god. The Hebrew Scriptures also use this type of description to indicate the defeat of Yahweh's foes whether in the community of Israel or outside its borders. This gendered violence language can be ruthless, cruel, and misogynistic. Biblical texts, however, use similar language toward Yahweh to nurture and protect the victim of violence so that shalom will exist. This is also true in the description of Jesus who carried "shame" in the crucifixion and in his humanity.

As a minister, adjunct Bible instructor, and an intimate partner violence advocate working with survivors; the intersection of masculinity, misogyny, and language create climates where males are taught to fear females and femininity. Through language young males are taught behaviors that are acceptable and unacceptable usually by degrading women or those considered "feminine." This has become especially true through many modern authors and speakers concerning Christian masculinity, feminism, and the #MeToo movement. However, embracing the identification of Yahweh and Jesus with the captives, exiles, and humiliated of society provides, in my teaching, opportunities to challenge a "toxic masculinity" that is cultural and driven through fear, misogyny, and the oppression of females in our society.

SESSION SIX: LITERATURE II

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM EDT

VI

Who Wrote the Tel Dan Inscription? | **Dr. David Miano**

Although it is generally accepted that the Tel Dan (or "House of David") Inscription was composed by a king of Aram-Damascus, the evidence does not demand such a conclusion. There is no evidence to show that, in the ninth century BCE, Dan was under the jurisdiction of any kingdom other than Israel. Moreover, use of the Aramaic language in royal inscriptions at this time was not restricted to Arameans. Israel's vassal status to Assyria, which used Aramaic in correspondence, and the city's proximity to Aram may account for the dialect of the inscription. Its contents point to Jehu son of Nimshi as the author.

VII

The Hole in the Narrative; the Gospel of Mark (2:4) between Jewish Prophecy and Greek Philosophy | **Matthijs Kronemeijer**

In his 2014 study *Philosophy Between the Lines*, the political theorist Arthur Melzer chronicles the history of esoteric philosophical writing, an ancient dissimulation technique largely forgotten until its rediscovery by Leo Strauss. At present, the validity of this insight and of Strauss's overall approach is only accepted by a small group of scholars, whose interpretations of Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle are routinely ignored or dismissed by classicists. As a result, wide disagreements have developed and continue to exist on the interpretation of these foundational classics of the Western tradition.

Another badly understood classic is the gospel of Mark. It is generally considered the oldest biblical gospel and has been the object of intense research from a large variety of angles, historical as well as anthropological and performance-oriented. Still, there is virtually no agreement on the structural coherence of the gospel or on the date and place of its provenance; the genre is widely assumed to be a bios, a hero's life. In my research I combine an innovative literary analysis of the gospel of Mark with Straussian political theory in an effort to unite the strengths of classical philology, philosophy and biblical interpretation.

My paper demonstrates the presence of original concentric structures in Mark, including one centered around the proclamation of divine mercy in Mark 2:1–12. I also present examples of Mark's esoteric narrative strategies, the mere presence of which casts strong doubts on the assumption that Mark is a bios. My research confirms the use of esoteric techniques in Christian literature alongside more traditional Jewish modes of storytelling, and shows the oldest Christian gospel to be grounded in ancient political philosophy much more deeply than is generally recognized. This is an insight with potentially far-reaching consequences inside and outside of academia, for example in the Christian church.

VIII

One People, One Language, and a Tower to the Heavens: Exploring the Story of the Tower of Babel as a Cultural Legacy | **Elliot Stern**

Historical artifacts are not only uncovered, they are also received. This is particularly true for our literary inheritance, whose symbols and archetypes transcend the confines of their literary *sitz in leben* and serve as vehicles of meaning in their own right. The so-called story of the Tower of Babel, a tale of a primeval people, uniform in language and unified around a central geographic axis, with its iconic imagery of a tower to the heavens, has left a wide-ranging cultural imprint. In the hands of readers of the Hebrew Bible over the centuries, this short pericope from the Book of Genesis has been understood at a remove from its ancient context as a polemic against Babylon culture and an etiology for the origins of polyglotism, resulting in a mosaic of interpretations which use the story's familiar images and motifs as starting points for reflections on linguistics, social criticism, and political philosophy, among other interpretive veins.

In this paper, I will explore the use of the iconic symbols and themes- language, dispersion, city-building, cultural uniformity, and the tower itself- as manifest in a range of literary and philosophical tracts, artistic productions, and fictional reconstructions. First, I will briefly endeavor to show how the ambiguous and open-ended quality of the text in the Biblical story creates the interpretive space for expansive and variegated interpretation. This indeterminate and enigmatic aspect of the text has allowed the story to be received as a tale bound together by images and motifs rather than by a discrete and definitive narrative story.

To demonstrate, and to understand how the symbols of the Tower of Babel have been appropriated and reflected by the story's cultural inheritors, I will survey and analyze a range of works from the Rabbis of the Talmud, traditional Jewish commentaries of Don Isaac Abravanel and Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, political and social philosophers including Michael Oakshott, literary critics and theorists Jacques Derrida, George Steiner, and Jose Luis Borges, and the artists Pieter Bruegel and MC Escher, among others. The goal of the analysis is to understand how the story's images are deployed, and specifically how the meaning conveyed, in word and image, depends on a shared cultural inheritance in which the significance of the story's symbols is presupposed.

I will conclude with thoughts on the import of the weakened state of Biblical literacy on generating meaning through cultural inheritance today.

— END OF DAY TWO —



ABOUT SASA



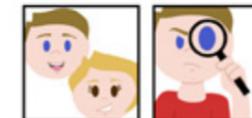
SASA was founded in reaction to the devaluation of the study of the ancient world in universities and high schools. A group of graduate students and early career scholars came together to expand exposure and access to the ancient world and re-envision how the ancient world is studied. Our founding Director, David Danzig, sought out those who shared this frustration and the commitment to make change. Together, we began to reach out and develop our strategic vision for SASA, and over the spring and summer of 2020 we took our first steps to engaging the public with our passion for the ancient world and Ancient Studies.

We are working on introducing new and varied programming, extending our reach among students, and attracting individuals committed to contribute their time and energy to further our effort.

ABOUT DIGITAL HAMMURABI



The Digital Hammurabi Podcast



Digital Hammurabi is a public outreach/digital humanities project/creative brain-child of Assyriologist Megan Lewis. Megan is ably assisted by a number of friends and colleagues.

Our aim is to provide reliable, accurate information about the Ancient Near East (that's modern Iraq and the surrounding area!) in an entertaining and engaging fashion. If it's anything to do with ancient languages, history, or culture, then you are in the right place and we hope you enjoy what we do!

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