

An Educator's Handbook for Teaching about the Ancient World





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Cover: Teachers (inspired by ancient Assyrian, Mayan, and Greek depictions holding teaching tools) and students (holding various school supplies) in a classroom. The image imitates the style of painted ancient stone reliefs. The colors and details are worn off. Artwork by Hannah M. Herrick.

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AN EDUCATOR'S HANDBOOK  
FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE ANCIENT WORLD  
(volume I)  
Edited by Pinar Durgun

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*Dedicated to all undervalued and underpaid educators...*

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## Editor's Note and Acknowledgements

I want to start by acknowledging that many of our university campuses, classrooms, and buildings where the teaching activities in this book were written and taught are located on Native lands<sup>1</sup> and/or on lands that have been bought with profits made from slavery and the slave trade.<sup>2</sup> As authors of these activities and educators on these lands, we would like to acknowledge, remember, and honor the communities and individuals who were made to suffer through slavery and colonialism, and those who were forcibly removed from their lands. We acknowledge this past and the privileges it has provided to white scholars and educators. We acknowledge that many of our colleagues and students who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, immigrant, First Generation, and are disabled continue to suffer in the hands of racism, colonialism, oppressive governments and institutions, police brutality, sexual abuse and harassment, xenophobia, exclusionary practices, and other systemic inequities in schools, on campuses, and in our societies.

Since February 2020, when this project started, 838 emails labeled as "teaching handbook" have accumulated in my inbox. But the amount of time and effort that went into this book is beyond calculation. I would like to thank each contributor and peer-reviewer for their input, time, work, support, and patience especially in a time of difficulty, uncertainty, and pain, when they had more important priorities in their life. It made me feel very humbled and proud to be part of a community of selfless hardworking educators. Their love for teaching and their students inspired me beyond words.

This book was created to:

1. Represent the ancient world as it was; diverse.
2. Provide open-access, accessible, and inclusive pedagogical methods and teaching activities about the ancient world for any educator to use.
3. Highlight the importance of student-centered and object-based/hands-on teaching.
4. Showcase the possibility of a transparent, respectful, and collaborative peer-review process.

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<sup>1</sup> Nash, M. 2019. Entangled Pasts: Land-Grant Colleges and American Indian Dispossession. *History of Education Quarterly* 59/4: 437-467.

<sup>2</sup> Wilder, C.S. 2013. *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*. Bloomsbury Press.

I am confident that this book has achieved some of these goals. And only time will tell us how successful it was in achieving some of the other goals. But I already know that I failed at least one goal. My goal to diversify what we mean by the “ancient world” is genuine. This was one of the reasons why the Call for Contributions to this volume was not by invite; it was an open call to any educator teaching any area, time period, and culture. But I acknowledge that I am guilty of sending the Call for Contributions of this volume to list serves and platforms I know or am part of.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in an imbalanced representation of geographical areas, with more activities on the ancient Near East and ancient Mediterranean. I wish I was able to include every single subject, area, and time period in this book. I wish educators from all backgrounds could contribute. But not every educator working on the ancient world has hands-on activities, has the time, energy, or resources to share them, is interested in publishing them, or publishing them in this book.<sup>4</sup> And many who are interested, may not have seen the Call for Contributions. I hope with your support there can be another volume, one that is more balanced in terms of areas represented. I would like to thank all my colleagues who reached out with suggestions, connected me with their colleagues, shared the Call for Contributions with their networks, who offered their help, their support, and their kind encouraging words.

The readers will notice that I excluded the names of the contributors’ institutions. The goal with this conscious decision was to empower the educators as individuals and not give all the credit to their institutions. As educators, we do not always agree with our institutions’ decisions, political stands (or lack thereof), value systems about what counts towards tenure, or how much time, energy, or resources we should be spending on our teaching, mentoring, public scholarship, or activism. Schools and universities also often do not protect their educators against wrongful or unethical policies. Many educators in the United

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<sup>3</sup> I am a Near Eastern archaeologist with a background in art history, anthropology, and cultural heritage. Due to my interdisciplinary education and interest in mortuary practices, I have some training in Egyptology, Assyriology, Bioarchaeology, and Classics. I mostly teach in university classrooms and museums.

<sup>4</sup> I also had to limit the number of contributions by the same author to one essay, one individual teaching activity, and one collaborative teaching activity to include more voices.

States are currently being asked to return to their schools to teach and put their (and their loved ones') health and safety at risk. Another reason for this decision was that part-time contingent faculty in the United States do not have job security, healthcare, or funding for their teaching through their institutions. They keep on trying to make their teaching better for their students despite many limitations. They do this while applying for dozens of jobs, doing their research, and working at multiple jobs. Adjuncts, post-docs, part-time instructors are often treated as disposable faculty, and will most likely not have the same affiliation and email address for longer than a year. Many graduate student instructors graduating this year will not have a job next year and therefore will have no university or institutional email address.

If there are any activities you like and/or implement, please reach out to the authors.<sup>5</sup> I encourage you to do this, because there might be educators out there self-doubting or being convinced by the wrong advisors or colleagues that it is not worth spending more time in making their teaching valuable and meaningful to their students and to their communities. Your email can change their minds. If you implement any of the teaching activities in your classrooms and would like to share photos or observations with other educators on the book's website, please send me a message there. You can also use *#teachancient* on social media.

The idea for this book formed when I was an adjunct; working at two-part time jobs, commuting for hours every day, teaching all day, and preparing new classes from scratch every evening and trying to come up with fun and informative teaching activities until I fell asleep on the sofa. As an international scholar on an academic visa, I needed to have an academic job, whatever it paid, to be able to continue to teach and live here in the United States, where I had spent the last 7 years of my life, building networks, friendships, and a family. Many of my colleagues are in similar situations and therefore have to allow themselves to be abused by the adjuncting system. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge all the educators who contributed to this book despite being undervalued and underpaid. I also acknowledge

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<sup>5</sup> <https://pinardurgunpd.wixsite.com/teachancient/contributors>

dedicated educators who wanted to contribute but did not have the time, energy, or resources, because they were busy teaching at multiple jobs, were care-takers, were worrying about their visas, were protesting in the streets, were creating other resources,<sup>6</sup> or were educating others to make a change in their families and networks.

I was fortunate to have had a fellowship this year, where I had enough time to work on this book project. I would not be able to edit this book if I was adjuncting or if I did not have the financial (or visa) security provided by this fellowship. That being said, I also acknowledge that the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which provided me with this fellowship through the generous endowment by J. Clawson Mills, as well as many of the museums we provided links to in our activities, have collections acquired through questionable means from questionable collectors who looted or illegally owned ancient objects. Many of these museums have benefited from the mistreatment, abuse, and looting of indigenous cultures. Museums have to do better. As museum educators we need to push our institutions for change and hold our administration and decision-makers accountable.

I want to acknowledge the makers of the ancient objects that inspired many of our teaching activities. I hope the teaching activities will provide some agency to these objects (especially those in museums that have lost their contexts due to illegal looting and trade) and the ancient peoples who created, used, and buried them. I am humbled and inspired by the skill, knowledge, creativity, and craftsmanship that went into making these objects.

The peer-review process of this book (just like its “cookbook” format) was a little bit unusual. As a result of my own experience and countless studies showing that “‘Rude’ peer reviews inflict most damage on women and minorities”,<sup>7</sup> I decided to have an open-review process. I connected contributors with other educators and scholars in ancient world fields who agreed to be peer-reviewers (some reviewers are also contributors to this book). The goal of this open peer-review process

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<sup>6</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ktd0wxIAeuMsK99uIH1-tY1G8DJ5r8SdxrW2SMmK-2E/edit>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/rude-peer-reviews-inflict-most-damage-women-and-minorities>

was to increase collaboration amongst educators. It was more of a brain-storming communication, rather than the traditional review format, which is often one-sided and picky without providing constructive criticism. Many contributors told me that they appreciated the collaborative approach and that they received helpful feedback. In one case, the reviewers decided to write the activity together with the contributors, seeing that their activity could benefit from bringing together their forces (Barack, Edelstein, Beeler, and Gardner). I believe that this book will encourage many more collaborative teaching alliances.

Peer-review requires expertise, time, and hard work, but peer-reviewers are often anonymous and are not acknowledged for their volunteer work. Therefore, I want to thank the peer-reviewers of this book openly; Jen Thum, Rebecca Mendelsohn, Alena Buis, Christian Casey, Sara Mohr, Carl Walsh, Shane Thompson, Zach Rubin, Jennifer Bates, Christopher Jones, Kat Medill, Tine Rassalle, Anastasia Amrhein, Elizabeth Knott, Nick Cross, Christopher Jones, Sarah Barack, Beth Edelstein, Chelsea Gardner, Megan Lewis, Liat Naeh, Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos, and Eva Mol, for their time, diligent work, and thoughtful insights and suggestions in their reviews. Bilingual educators of this volume submitted their activities in Spanish and Turkish so that educators using languages other than English could also make use of this resource (you can find these in the Appendix). I would like to extend my thanks to Marina Escolano Poveda and Erhan Tamur for their work and for getting these bilingual reviews done within a tight deadline. A special thank you goes to Hannah Herrick for her fantastic artwork that is the cover of this book. I encourage you to read her essay on *Dig Doodles*. I also want to thank the publishers of this book, ArchaeoPress, particularly David, for believing in this project and bringing it to all of you. Consider publishing with their open-access series, and open access in general, to make your research and teaching accessible.

Lastly, I would like to thank my partner, my sister, my parents, my friends, and my colleagues for empowering me to turn this idea into reality. I am forever grateful to all of you.