



# *Scholars Notebook*

San Diego Independent Scholars (SDIS)

April 2021

➤ **Saturday, April 17 at 1:30 p.m., by Zoom\***

## **Are the Roman and American Republics similarly fated?**

**(The Historian's Dilemma:  
How to responsibly use  
Rome to talk about  
modern political crises)**

**Abstract:** This talk will reconstruct how a toxic combination of wealth inequality, political opportunism, and complacency shifted Rome's Republic from a representative democracy into an autocracy. It will then use the example of Rome to consider the role historians can play in using the Roman past to inform our thinking about the present while also exploring the potential the deep past has as an interpretative tool-- and the limits on its use that we should observe.



### **Edward Watts, Ph.D.**

Chair and Professor,  
Department of History UCSD  
Alkiviadis Vassiliadis Endowed Chair

**Biosketch:** Professor Edward Watts was born in Princeton, New Jersey, received a BA in Classics at Brown University, and received his PhD in History from Yale University in 2002. His research interests center on the intellectual, political, and religious history of the Roman Empire and the early Byzantine Empire. He is the author of six books and the editor of five more. His most recently published book *Mortal Republic: (continued on page 2)*

**\* For Zoom information, contact  
[sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com](mailto:sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com)**



**Edward Watts Biosketch**  
(continued from page 1)

*How Rome Fell into Tyranny* (Basic Books, 2018), offers a narrative history of the last three centuries of the Roman Republic. In the summer of 2021, he will publish *Rome’s Eternal Decline and Fall: The History of a Dangerous Idea* (Oxford University Press, 2021), a book that traces the 2200 -year history of claims about Roman decline and the victims they created. His work has also been featured in Time, Vox, Smithsonian, and the Union Tribune. Before coming to UCSD in 2012, Professor Watts taught for ten years at Indiana University. He teaches courses on Byzantine History, Roman History, Late Antique Christianity, Roman numismatics, and the history of the Medieval Mediterranean.

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**Because this issue had to be prepared early, it primarily describes the monthly lectures sponsored by SDIS and allied groups. SDIS study group reports for March will be printed along with the April ones in next month’s Scholars Notebook.**

# "Zoonotic Disease: Past and Present"

**Barbara Canavan PhD**

a public health expert and independent scholar  
presents at the next meeting of the

NORTHWEST INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION (NISA)  
(representing primarily Oregon and Washington states)

**WEDNESDAY, March 31, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. via Zoom  
Pacific Time**

Contact [margaretdelacy@comcast.net](mailto:margaretdelacy@comcast.net) for Zoom information

**Abstract.** The History of Science Society (HSS) is creating a specialized publication about pandemics to include bibliographical essays by specialists in relevant fields. My contribution (under peer review) focuses on zoonotic disease: what it is, how and when it occurs, and its links to environmental conditions. The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is the latest example but is not the first deadly pathogen to jump from animals to infect humans. Scientific knowledge about zoonotic diseases is advancing rapidly but historical perspectives are still emerging. Thus, "historians in lab coats" (scientists, science journalists, and interdisciplinary sources) are essential for understanding zoonoses' past and present. This presentation includes an overview of zoonotic disease, its links to environmental degradation, and details about well-known zoonotic diseases in history such as the Black Death, HIV-AIDS, avian influenza. Twenty-first-century challenges mean that the convergence of animal health, human health, and ecosystem health is a new reality and a cross-disciplinary approach is essential.

**Speaker Biography.** Barbara's career in public health (immunizations, vaccines) blended well with her research in the history of medicine, focusing on viruses and pandemics.

# Oceanids Sounding Board

## Thursday, April 01, 2021 @ 12:00 noon



Stephen Spector, Ph.D.  
Professor of Pediatrics,  
Division of Infectious Diseases  
UCSD

### ***COVID-19 Vaccines: Fact and Fiction***

**Abstract.** I will provide an overview of COVID-19 vaccines including how they were developed, the efficacy of licensed vaccines, common side effects, and the potential impact of SARS-CoV-2 variants. I will also discuss the progress and challenges of achieving herd immunity and immunization of children.

Stephen A. Spector, M.D. is a Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Director of the Mother-Child-Adolescent HIV Program at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Spector has a long history of clinical trials in studies evaluating respiratory diseases including influenza, parainfluenza, and respiratory syncytial virus. Dr. Spector has been involved with HIV/AIDS research since the beginning of the epidemic. He was the PI and chair of the Executive Committee of the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group for more than 10 years. His laboratory research has focused on the pathogenesis of human immunodeficiency virus type-1 (HIV) and human cytomegalovirus (CMV). Dr. Spector has served as a senior advisor to the William J. Clinton Foundation and to the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). He was honored by the PACTG for "Exceptional Contributions & Leadership 1995-2006", the South African Embassy to the United States for contributions helping to prevent and treat HIV infection of children and was invited to give a presentation to the Special Parliamentary Committee on HIV/AIDS, Papua New Guinea. He has also been the recipient of the Gertrude and Herman Silver Award from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. Spector is an elected member/fellow of the Society for Pediatric Research, American Pediatric Society, Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the American Association of Physicians. Dr. Spector leads the Phase III Clinical Trial at UCSD that is evaluating the safety and efficacy of the Moderna mRNA vaccine in adults and children <12 years of age.

**Click this Zoom link to join:** <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/2392094686>

# **Information: San Diego Independent Scholars**

**The Scholars Notebook** is issued monthly during the academic year, except December, by the San Diego independent Scholars (SDIS), a nonprofit organization founded in 1982.

**The mission of SDIS** is to promote opportunities for active learning and scholarship, both for its membership and for the San Diego community.

Public service activities of SDIS include: (1) monthly public lectures presented during the academic year, (2) discussion groups held in public libraries or online, (3) small grants awarded on a competitive basis for research projects and (4) various cooperative educational and other projects with local organizations.

More information about SDIS and its activities is available at [www.sdscholars.org](http://www.sdscholars.org). Questions: [sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com](mailto:sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com)

Members may submit a piece to the Scholars Notebook. Email it by the middle of each month to [sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com](mailto:sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com)

## *SDIS Board, 2020-21*

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### **2021 Nominating Committee**

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Faye Girsh  
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Michael Sage

# SDIS Membership Form and Optional Library Card Form

**UCSD Library Cards:**

- If you are 65 or over, affiliation with SDIS entitles you to a discounted UCSD Library card, Level 2 (graduate student) privileges, except for inter-library loans.
- Your SDIS library card is \$25 with this membership form. SDIS will match your \$25. That is, for cards acquired at this time, UCSD charges SDIS \$50.

Tax-Deductible Contributions to SDIS are encouraged and welcome . Your dues are also tax-deductible.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Dues paid in September through March apply to the current fiscal year (Sept-Sept). Those paid from April through August also apply to the subsequent year.

PLEASE provide ALL information for our Directory. Print, or write very clearly.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Alt/Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Field(s) of Interest, (maximum of three)

**APPLICATION FOR OPTIONAL UCSD LIBRARY CARD**  
Effective for Academic Year Beginning October 1

I assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or overdue materials borrowed on my UCSD/SDIS library card:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENTS**

Make checks payable to SDIS. Please mail entire form with payment(s) to  
David E. Parker, 8773 Caminito Abrazo, La Jolla, CA 92037

<b>Tax Deductible SDIS Dues</b> (\$40/single, \$55/couple)	\$ _____
UCSD Library Card (Optional - \$25)	\$ _____
<b><u>Tax Deductible Contributions</u></b> (Optional)	
Operations	\$ _____
Helen Hawkins Research Fund	\$ _____
Jane Ford Book Fund	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>