

# PTOLEMY IN PERSPECTIVE: USE AND CRITICISM OF HIS WORK FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT



CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY - FRESCO (c. 1475) by Hans van Wierzbny

MAY 31—JUNE 2, 2007  
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

*Organized by the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences  
at the California Institute of Technology with the support of the Francis Bacon Foundation*

**F**irst published at the height of the Roman Empire during the second century of our era, Ptolemy's writings soon established themselves as the authoritative presentations of Greek mathematical and physical science. From late antiquity to the present, scholars and scientists have exploited Ptolemy's treatises on astronomy, astrology, and cartography with a view both to contemporary scientific problems and to the understanding of the past. This conference explores Greco-Roman, Islamic, and European engagements with—and criticisms of—Ptolemy's sciences of the earth and heavens.

If you plan to attend or need information, please call Lisa Keppel at 626.395.3609 or RSVP by e-mail to [ldkeppel@hss.caltech.edu](mailto:ldkeppel@hss.caltech.edu). Space is limited.

**THURSDAY, MAY 31**  
25 Baxter Hall

5:15 p.m.  
Keynote lecture by  
Bacon Prize winner

**Alexander Jones**  
*University of Toronto*  
"Erigor Dum Corrigor: Ptolemy  
Condemned or Vindicated?"

**FRIDAY, JUNE 1**  
*Treasure Room, Dabney Hall*

9:00–10:00 a.m.  
**Anne Tihon**  
*Université catholique de Louvain*  
"A New Astronomical Document  
Contemporary with Ptolemy"

10:00–11:00 a.m.  
**Stephan Hellen**  
*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*  
"Ptolemy's Doctrine of the 'Terms'  
and its Reception"

2:00–3:00 p.m.  
**F. Jamil Ragep**  
*McGill University*  
"Islamic Reactions to Ptolemy's  
Imprecisions"

3:00–4:00 p.m.  
**Florian Mittenhuber**  
*Universität Bern*  
"The Relation between Texts and  
Maps in the Tradition of Ptolemy's  
Geography"

**SATURDAY, JUNE 2**  
*Treasure Room, Dabney Hall*

9:00–10:00 a.m.  
**Darrel Rutkin**  
*The University of Oklahoma*  
"The Use and Abuse of Ptolemy  
in Renaissance and Early Modern  
Europe: Two Case Studies"

10:00–11:00 a.m.  
**James Voelkel**  
*Independent Scholar*  
"Abandoning the Equant"

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.  
**François Charette**  
*Independent Scholar*  
"Ptolemy and His Medieval Heirs  
in the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century  
Scholarship"

2:00–3:00 p.m.  
**John Steele**  
*University of Durham*  
"The Use of the Almagest Eclipse  
Reports in Early Studies of the  
Earth's Rotation"

3:00–4:00 p.m.  
**Noel Swerdlow**  
*The University of Chicago*  
"Tycho and Kepler on Ptolemy's  
Observations"

4:00–5:00 p.m.  
Concluding discussion