

THE WILLIAM AND MYRTLE HARRIS DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES IN SCIENCE AND CIVILIZATION



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5 PM // HAMEETMAN AUDITORIUM



Aristoteles Bostra. Quid credis ipsum sibi velle per hoc
arigma: Bostra. Dicam ut possum.
Habet ab inimico seposita subiecta qua-
tuor & viginti, que vniuersa non adhaerent,
non inhaerent, non contingant. Sed libera,
& solitaria vel sitientur vel situata intelli-
gantur.

LIES & TRUTH IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Galileo wrote that Pythagoras believed that the planets orbit the Sun. Newton credited Pythagoras for having discovered the inverse square law of gravity. Nowadays, science textbooks credit Pythagoras with the theory that Earth moves. Some expert historians claim that Pythagoras proved the Pythagorean theorem. Yet there is no evidence for any of these claims. Stories about Pythagoras played a dangerous role in the Inquisition trials of Giordano Bruno and Galileo. Why do such fictions propagate? Some historians in the late 1900s increasingly echoed aspects of subjectivism, cultural relativism, and postmodernism to inadvertently propagate careless mistakes, as if the past were blurry, unstable, and subjective.

Alberto A. Martínez is the author of six books, including *The Cult of Pythagoras: Math and Myths* (2012), and *Burned Alive: Giordano Bruno, Galileo, and the Inquisition* (2018). His work has appeared in numerous professional journals, in the Big Picture Science program of SETI, and the Peabody Award winning show Radiolab.

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