



2-4 OCTOBER 2013  
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY  
GILMAN 496

## The Future of Rome: Roman, Greek, Jewish and Christian Perspectives

## WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER

- 900 Reception and Coffee
- 930 Greetings by **Professor Eyal Zisser**, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, TAU
- 945 Greetings and introduction to conference by **Jonathan Price**
- First Session: Roman Perspectives**  
Chair: **Ariel Lewin** (Università degli Studi della Basilicata)
- 1000-1100 **Martin Goodman** (University of Oxford)  
**Enemies of Rome Revisited**
- 1100-1200 **Greg Woolf** (University of St Andrews)  
**Posterity in the Arval Acta**
- 1200-1215 Break
- 1215-1315 **Carlos Lévy** (Université Paris Paris-Sorbonne)  
**Roma Aeterna vs Will fluctuations: a Contradiction in Cicero?**
- 1315-1430 Lunch
- Second Session: Christian and Other Perspectives**  
Chair: **Hillel Newman** (University of Haifa)
- 1430-1530 **Youval Rotman** (Tel Aviv University)  
**The Martyr and the Conquest of Rome**
- 1530-1630 **Hervé Inglebert** (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense)  
**The Future of Rome after 410: the Latin Conceptions (410-480)**
- 1630-1700 Coffee Break
- 1700-1800 **Samuele Rocca** (WIZO Haifa Academy of Design and Education)  
**When the Future is Present and the Present is Past: The Collatio and the Future of Rome**
- 1800-1900 **Peter Oakes** (University of Manchester) (by Skype)  
**Revelation 17:1-19:10, a Vision of the Destruction of Rome**  
Dinner for Conference Participants

## THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER

- 900-930 Coffee
- Third Session: Roman Perspectives**  
Chair: **Michal Bar-Asher Sigal** (Ben Gurion University of the Negev)
- 930-1030 **René Bloch** (University of Bern)  
**The Future of Rome According to Tacitus**
- 1030-1130 **Benjamin Isaac** (Tel Aviv University)  
**Names: Ethnic, Geographic and Administrative**
- 1130-1145 Break
- 1145-1245 **Jonathan Price** (Tel Aviv University)  
**Three Greek Views on the Past and Future of the Roman Empire**
- 1245-1400 Lunch
- Fourth session: Jewish Perspectives**  
Chair: **Yair Furstenberg** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- 1400-1500 **Vered Noam** (Tel Aviv University)  
**Is it Possible that this One will Never be Brought Down?": Jewish Hopes, Fears and Prophecies Regarding the Future Downfall of the Roman Empire**
- 1500-1600 **Misgav Har-Peled** (Tel Aviv University)  
**The Eternal Return of the Empire's End: Time, History and Practice of the Sages' Identification of Rome with the Pig**
- 1600-1630 Coffee break
- 1630-1730 **Oded Irshai** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), **The Foundation of Rome in Late Antique Rabbinic Lore**
- 1730-1830 **Ron Naiweld** (Centre national de la recherche scientifique), **Rome's Future in Hekhalot Rabbati: A Rabbinic Fantasy of Revenge**  
Dinner for Conference Participants

## FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER

- 930-1000 Coffee
- 1000-1200 Workshop

## ABSTRACTS

**Martin Goodman**

### **Enemies of Rome Revisited**

I wrote back in the late 1980s a chapter entitled 'Enemies of Rome' for the French edition of Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, at the insistence of Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who was not prepared to recommend a French edition without such a chapter. Bloomsbury are to bring out a new English edition of Garnsey and Saller, and they have decided to include a lightly revised English version of the French chapter, with an addendum designed to bring the bibliography up to date and discuss the state of the question and how things have moved on or changed since the 1980s. The group will discuss the original chapter in its unpublished English version and my proposals for the addendum.

**Greg Woolf**

### **Posterity in the Arval Acta**

The monumental *Acta* recovered from the grove of Dea Dia located about 5 miles outside of Rome on the road to Portus constitute records of ritual actions conducted by one of the most prestigious priesthoods of imperial Rome, the Arval Brethren and also provide much information about how rituals were planned and conducted. Among the most prominent rituals concern vows made to the goddess in respect of future events. This paper will draw on wider studies of concepts of time in Roman epigraphy to explore ideas of the future implicit in those vows and these acts of monumentalization. Some extracts of the *Acta* from Scheid's edition will be provided to form a basis of discussion.

**Carlos Lévy**

### ***Roma aeterna* vs will fluctuations: a contradiction in Cicero?**

The theme of *aeternitas* has a complex history in Cicero. We can distinguish at least two forms of it:

– the empirical and rhetorical form, present in the speeches about glory or infamy, is one of the favorite Cicero's hyperboles;

– the philosophical form, that he describes especially in the *De re publica*, is an ambitious program in political science, since it pretends to go beyond Plato's construction of a transcendental political perfection, giving a status unique in the history of mankind to the Roman *res publica*.

At the same time, Cicero elaborates an ever more sophisticated concept of will, the apex of which we find in the *De fato*, with the affirmation of the perfect autonomy of *voluntas*.

During the civil war, for quite evident reasons, the theme of *aeternitas* disappears from Cicero's writings and, after the war, the philosopher is much more interested in opposing, a long time before Descartes, the fallibility of reason and the complete autonomous will.

Are the theme of Roman *aeternitas* and the one of human free will really incompatible? How can the prevision of future be possible if will is perfectly autonomous?

**Youval Rotman**

### **The Martyr and the Conquest of Rome**

The paper examines the development of three figures whose death became a symbol of a battle against the Roman state: members of the Alexandrian élite whose trials and execution were recorded in late antique Egypt; Christian martyrs of the second to fourth centuries; Jewish sages who were executed following the suppression of the revolts in Judea. The paper analyzes the term "martyr" through a comparison of the different ways in which the three groups presented their battle against the Roman state and envisioned its outcome.

**Hervé Inglebert**

### **The Future of Rome after 410: the Latin Conceptions (410-480)**

From the sack of Rome (410 CE) to the end of the Roman Empire in the West (476-480), several theories about the future of Rome were produced by pagans, Christians (clerics and ascetics) and Roman administrators. These theories affirmed the survival of *Roma Aeterna*, the persistence of the Theodosian Christian Roman Empire or the coming end of the world. But we have to combine diverse criteria to explain the spectrum of opinions: religious beliefs, eschatological thoughts about the end of Rome or of the

world, social statutes, the insistence about Rome as City or as Empire, and chronological evolution of the relations between Romans and barbarians during the fifth century.

Christians used three main arguments: speculation from some Biblical texts about the duration of the times, exegesis of certain contemporary events (among which was the growth of heresies) thought to be eschatological signs of the end of the world, and reflexion on the achievement of the conversion of the nations to the Christian faith.

## Samuele Rocca

### **When the Future is Present and the Present is Past: The *Collatio* and the Future of Rome**

The main purpose of this lecture is to discuss the relationship between the author of the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum*, a small treatise consisting of a systematic comparison between Biblical-Jewish and Roman legislation, and its audience, trying to establishing the authorial view of the Roman Empire. Possibly the original author composed the text at the beginning of Diocletian's rule. Indeed the short excerpt of Mosaic Law, perhaps from the *Vulgata Vetera*, is followed by short excerpts from books written by the most important Roman jurists as well as from Imperial constitutions. Therefore, it seems to me that the author envisioned the future as a return to the past, in this case, the Golden Age of Roman pagan jurisprudence. Accordingly, Roman law has a universal and eternal value, because it can be compared positively to the Law of Moses. Indeed, Mosaic Law is presented not just as a term of comparison for the excellence of its Holy Law, but it shows moreover that Roman law, as it upholds and mirrors the Mosaic values, can be taken as an universal *Ius Gentium*. Therefore as Mosaic Law is eternal, albeit valid only for the Jews, Roman law, as it mirrors it, has a corresponding universal and eternal value for all the people who have submitted to the mighty rule of Rome. Once the Empire became Christian, the ideology of the author was even more relevant than before, and therefore this amazing document remained a source of dialogue through the fourth century. Hence, we are dealing with a universal model valid for the future, but rooted in the past.

## Peter Oakes

### **Revelation 17:1-19:10, a Vision of the Destruction of Rome, Drawing on Scriptural Prophetic Themes**

This paper will introduce, and lead discussion on, one of antiquity's most vivid depictions of the doom of Rome. After briefly contextualising the passage in the structure and possible settings of the Book of Revelation, the paper will focus on a number of features such as: the use of the term, 'Babylon' (17:5, etc.); the imagery of 'Babylon the Great' as a harlot (17:5); the reference to martyrdom (17:6); the beast with seven heads representing both hills and kings (17:9); possible allusions to *Nero redux/redivivus* ideas; the war with the lamb (17:14); the role of the angel with authority (18:1); the catena of texts related to Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. (Rev. 18:2-10); the merchants and the list of goods, related to Ezekiel 27 (Rev. 18:11-19); texts on the deserted city, cf. Isaiah, etc. (Rev. 18:21-24); celebratory songs in heaven (19:1-10).

## René Bloch

### **The Future of Rome According to Tacitus**

Both Romans and Jews believed in the power of portents and oracles. In one rare case we can observe how Jews and Romans interpreted the same signs in different ways: Jewish and Roman authors describe how the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was preceded by mysterious heavenly signs. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, Jews mistook the prodigies as the beginning of a new era with Judea and the East (*oriens*) in power, while in reality (in the Roman reading) they predicted Vespasian and Titus, the victorious Flavian emperors (Tac. Hist. 5. 13.1-2; cf. Jos. Bell. Iud. 6, 288-315). This paper focuses on Tacitus' use of *omina* as a literary device to present the future of Rome. Right from the beginning of the Histories (1.10.3), Tacitus sets the stage for a series of prodigies pointing to the victory of the Flavians and the defeat of their enemies. Tacitus' description of the fiery signs in the sky over Jerusalem (Hist. 5.13.1: *rutilantia arma*) seems to follow a scene in Vergil's Aeneid where Venus comforts her son Aeneas, who is fighting the Rutulians, by showing him flashing weapons in the air (Aen. 8.528-9: *arma rutilare*). Tacitus playfully makes use of the Virgilian scene. At the same time, Virgil and Tacitus had very different ways of conceptualizing the future of Rome.

## Benjamin Isaac

### Names: ethnic, geographic and administrative

Ethnicity or group identity is a much-discussed topic. This paper will consider one subject that often confuses related issues, or, conversely, may elucidate them, namely geographical, ethnic and administrative names. A brief survey of several such names, with special emphasis on the Roman Near East, will show a remarkable fluctuation in the meaning and use of terminology. Geographical concepts turn into ethnic ones or into administrative terms. Ethnic appellations become geographic names and, subsequently, are used for administrative units. Again, administrative terms may develop into ethnic names. Careful consideration will show significant changes over time, while a lack of proper attention to such matters often leads to avoidable confusion. It will be argued that a proper investigation can contribute to an understanding of ancient concepts of group identity and its use for political and ideological purposes.

## Jonathan Price

### Three Greek views on the past and future of the Roman Empire

Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Appian of Alexandria: three Greek historians who wrote Roman history at different stages of the growth of Rome's power: Polybius at the peak of Rome's empire-building in the Republic, Dionysius during the Augustan peace and foundation of the Principate, and Appian towards the end of the second century of the Principate, a period of noted stability when the Empire had retracted after reaching its furthest extent. Each historian offered a different view of the place of Rome's empire in the history of the world, i.e. the significance of Rome's place as the last (or latest) in a succession of world empires. Each historian, moreover, had a different view of the role of Tyche, human virtue and other factors in the construction and maintenance of the empire. In these historical interpretations of Rome's past and present in the context of universal history are implied views about Rome's future.

## Vered Noam

### "Is it possible that this one will never be brought down?" Jewish hopes, fears and prophecies regarding the future downfall of the Roman Empire

We will read together the following texts:

- 1) **1QM (the War Scroll) 11.6** – who are the *Kittim* mentioned in the prophecy – Hellenistic kingdoms or the Roman Empire?
- 2) **4QpIs<sub>a</sub> (Peshier Isaiah A) 3.7-10** – do the *Kittim* alluded to in the exegesis of the verse "והלבנון באדייר יפול" (*and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one*, Isaiah 10:34) represent the Hellenistic kingdoms or the Roman Empire?
- 3) **Syriac Baruch 36.5-6** – The eschatological enemy, destined to face trial in Jerusalem, is depicted as a falling cedar – and the allusion seems to refer this time to the Romans.
- 4) **Bavli Gittin 56 (=Avot of Rabbi Natan 1.4; 2.6; Lamentations Rabbah 4, 5 [pp. 65-69])** the same verse in Isaiah is evoked by Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai, this time not as a reference to the falling of Rome but, on the contrary, as an indication to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. This counter-midrash is an indication of a political-exegetical polemic dating from the end of the second temple period about the future of Rome and the prospects of the Jewish rebellion.
- 5) **Bavli Pesachim 54b** – "when the wicked kingdom will come to an end" ("מלכות חייבת מתי תכלה") is a secret hidden from human beings.
- 6) **Bavli Yoma 10a** – Rome will be defeated by Persia.
- 7) **Leviticus Rabbah 29** – Jacob fears "Edom" will never be "brought down".
- 8) **Midrash Tanhuma A (Buber's recension) Deuteronomy appendix 6 and Pesikta Zutarti (Midrash Lekah Tov) Deuteronomy 2:5** – Israel will overcome Esau only on the arrival of the Messiah.

## Misgav Har-Peled

### The Eternal Return of the Empire's End: Time, History and Practice of the Sages' Identification of Rome with the Pig

In early rabbinic literature we find the midrashic equation : "Rome = Edom= Esau = The Fourth Kingdom = Pig." The question is not just what this construction tells us about the way the Sages envisioned the end of

Rome, but also how they translated their understanding of Rome's existence in time and history into practice, or, in other words, how they designated concrete conception of the here and how to the messianic aspiration of the end of time. It is argued that the Sages' porcine discourse inter alia made the avoidance of pork a locus of resistance, in which the conception of history and politics was manifested and reinforced. In this discussion, we propose the term "politics of avoidance" in order to reflect on the Sages' politics vis-à-vis the Roman Empire.

## **Oded Irshai**

### **The Foundation of Rome in Late Antique Rabbinic Lore**

Following the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE there is no need to wonder why Rome became the arch-enemy of the Jews and assumed or merely enhanced its role as the "fourth Kingdom" within the Danielic-based redemption scheme promoted by the rabbis in anticipation of the Empire's demise. Alongside the former rather expected trend of thought one detects a stream of most interesting rabbinic traditions demonstrating knowledge of and pre-occupation with the legends surrounding the mythical foundation of Rome. Their decipherment and contextualization will be the focus of the proposed paper.

## **Ron Naiweld**

### **Rome's Future in Hekhalot Rabbati: A Rabbinic Fantasy of Revenge**

This article continues my paper from the last conference, in which I have shown how the redactors of the Babylonian Talmud created a mythologized image of Rome that played, in its turn, a crucial role in the establishment of their discourse. The present paper will examine the ways in which the Hekhalot literature, especially Hekhalot Rabbati, uses and elaborates rabbinic traditions about Rome. If in the Bavli Rome plays a structural role, as the eternal opponent of Israel, the Hekhalot literature uses Rome as an important element in the eschatological accounts. It is still a mythologized Rome — it is not the direct product of the Palestinian context but rather inspired by it. Thus, the Bavli on the one hand and the Hekhalot literature on the other present us with two complementary facets of the rabbinic image of Rome — structural and eschatological.