



International conference of the ERC project

JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals
by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

ABSTRACTS



18 - 20 JUNE 2018

MAISON MÉDITERRANÉENNE DES SCIENCES DE L'HOMME
SALLE PAUL-ALBERT FÉVRIER

Organisé par Katell Berthelot (CNRS)
katell.berthelot26@gmail.com

Comité scientifique
K. Berthelot, N. Dohrmann,
Y. Furstenberg, C. Nemo-Pekelman



Maison méditerranéenne
des sciences de l'homme
USR 3125 MMSH



TEXTES ET DOCUMENTS
DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE
ANTIQUE ET MÉDÉVALE

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

(Alphabetical order)

Clifford Ando (University of Chicago)

“Performing Justice in Republican Empire”

I shall discuss the staging of judicial rituals in provincial contexts, in two different ways. On the one hand, this sometimes serves as a mean to enact an ideology of empire. In this sense, such performances of procedural justice were sometimes even done among those outside the empire, by way of demonstrating the power of the institutions within. On the other hand, Roman insisted that legal institutions best operated in particular kinds of spaces, regulated by particular kinds of public law: in this sense, the staging of judicial rituals was an exercise of ideological power, and served to further the nature of Rome as a republican empire.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Leanne Bablitz (University of Vancouver)

“The Vocabulary of Legal Spaces”

As part of my work on Roman courtrooms I identified locations within Rome at which legal activities took place. For this conference I would like to expand this investigation to a small and unique set of documents that tell us something about where legal activities took place within the smaller communities across Italy. Amongst the documents found within the archive of the banking family known as the Sulpicii are several references to a space identified as the chalcidicum. Over the past several decades scholars have struggled to identify the architectural form to which this term applied. In this paper I review the suggestions put forward by E. Fentress and others who have proposed that certain spaces found in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia might in fact be chalcidica. While their work has focussed on these spaces as places for the sale of slaves, it is my intent to compare these structures against what we know of other spaces used for legal activities. Through such examination, we will consider the landscape of communities well-known to many of us with an eye to placing legal activities within the daily context of the inhabitants of these communities.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Caroline Barron (CNRS / Aix-Marseille University)

“Transculturation: Legal Changes and the Role of Roman Law in Roman Baetica”

The municipal charters discovered in Malaga, Salpensa, Irni and other towns of Roman Spain have vastly improved our understanding of how provincial government operated and have helped us understand the legal aspect of 'being Roman'. The changes that the grant of *ius Latii*, *ius Italicum* or full citizenship entailed are reflected in the assumption of magistracies and priesthoods, the establishment of urban centres which reflected the adoption of Roman infrastructure, and the success of the imperial cult, particularly in the southern region of Baetica. This paper is concerned with how these changes were reflected in the local epigraphic habit; issues of citizenship, property and resolution of disputes shall be given as evidence not only for the adoption of Roman law in the period immediately following the Flavian municipal grants, but also for how it contributed to interweaving of Roman traditions with existing Iberian habits.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Aitor Blanco-Pérez (University of Navarra, Pamplona)

“Appealing for the Emperor’s Justice: Provincial Petitions and Roman Responses Prior to Late Antiquity”

In one of the most famous episodes involving the contact of rabbis with Roman authorities, R. Hiyya is said to have hastened through the graves of Tyre in order to see Diocletian (y. Berakhot 3:1, 6a). In December 293, this Tetrarchic emperor issued a rescript to a man called Judah concerning the appointment of judges (CJ 3.13.3). Even if the identification of the patriarch Judah III should remain speculative, Diocletian’s response shows the importance of approaching the imperial court for issues affecting provincial subjects. Visits of emperors did not only produce impressive *adventus* ceremonies worth contemplating, but also provided the local population with exceptional opportunities to present their petitions for the most authoritative form of Roman justice. Epigraphic evidence from the high imperial period and, particularly, in the 3rd century CE sheds light on the process of petition and response through which individuals and communities could appeal directly to their rulers. The aim of my paper is to study these inscriptions in order to understand the application and reception of Roman justice in the eastern provinces of the Empire. Particular attention will be devoted to remarkable testimonies such as the bilingual minutes from Dmeir (Syria) recording the trial that Caracalla admitted for a village struggling with a local temple. The petition from Skaptopara in Thrace is also illustrative of difficulties requiring imperial attention and, together with a cluster of related texts from Lydia, will allow us to analyse the legal strategies deployed by peasants not necessarily trained in Roman law. Moreover, all these testimonies date after the promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, so the impact of the (quasi-)universal grant of Roman citizenship will likewise need to be assessed. Consequently, this paper does not seek to provide a series of case studies but rather construct a framework of legal activity and action which was applicable to the world of the rabbis prior to the Christianisation of Late Antiquity.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Ari Z. Bryen (Vanderbilt University)

“A Frenzy of Sovereignty: Punishment in P.Aktenbuch”

The “Berlin Legal Codex”, recently republished as P. Aktenbuch, is a puzzling document: it purports to record a series of criminal judgments given by an unnamed governor (*hegemon*) against a range of malefactors. Given the rarity of criminal verdicts in the corpus of papyri more generally, P.Aktenbuch would seem to be of the highest importance; however, there are many reasons to doubt whether it records actual verdicts given in the governor’s court. More likely, it is a literary artifact that uses criminal punishment to meditate on the question of sovereignty more generally. In this respect, it seems to be a cousin of the more famous Martyr Acts or Acta Alexandrinoum – but with an important twist: in the Aktenbuch, the governor is unambiguously good, whereas the victims are unambiguously bad. The Aktenbuch is in that sense an inverted Martyr Act (see Bryen 2014). Unlike the martyr acts, the text is also constructed as a series of monologues, rather than a series of dialogues between empire and subject. Most unusually for a Roman provincial document, the Aktenbuch celebrates violent punishments, and should be read as part of a broader provincial conversation on the nature of sovereignty.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Kate Cooper (Royal Holloway, University of London)

“Domestic Violence and Legal Hybridity: The Case of P. Oxy 903”

This paper has at its centre P. Oxy 903, a deposition in which a Christian wife explains her attempt to get the bishop's help in dealing with a violent husband. The papyrus seems to document a case of 'forum shopping' where the wife goes back and forth between a bishop and a magistrate in terms of a resolution to her domestic difficulties that will 'stick'. This case will allow us to explore the question whether domestic violence was an area where 'Roman' and 'Christian' law had different ways of framing the duties and obligations of family members, along with diverging processes and priorities for the protection of the vulnerable. Did a perceived discrepancy between Roman and Christian law offer a motivation to individuals to 'frame' themselves differently for the different contexts, or is this a far simpler case of recourse to multiple potential sources of justice and/or protection?

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Natalie Dohrmann (University of Pennsylvania)

“Ad similitudinem arbitratorum: On the uses of commensurability & comparison in ancient and modern sources”

Among other things, CTh 2.1.10 declares that the judgments of Jewish civil tribunals will be respected by the state as if they were issued by Roman courts of arbitration (*ad similitudinem arbitratorum*). The extraordinary power exerted by this analogical reasoning—comprehending all Jewish civil law as ersatz arbitration—serves as the inspiration for an exploration into the question of “similarity” between legal systems. Arbitration, my case study, is a liminal form of legal tribunal, whose administration reflects in a range of ways on the court and the law. As a legal signifier, arbitration raises as many anxieties as it assuages. The first part of the paper will look at the early rabbinic construction of the idea of arbitration (cf. Mek Nez 1; tSan 1; SifreDt 17), and map its conceptual foci in relation to similar Roman ideas. The second part of the paper will use Boaz Cohen's treatment of the topic in his compendium *Jewish and Roman Law* to reflect on the manifold methodological pitfalls (and potentials) of comparison, history, and jurisprudence in the study of rabbinic and Roman law in an imperial landscape.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Anna Dolganov (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

“Si de hereditate ambigitur: Roman Jurisdiction in Testamentary Matters and its Provincial Reception”

This paper examines Roman jurisdiction in matters involving testation and the transmission of property as a key sphere for observing the character of Roman judicial administration and its impact and reception in the provinces. Since the Republic, Roman governors were regularly confronted with testamentary conflicts involving provincials who were not Roman citizens. This brought governors face to face with inheritance practices that were distinct from (or downright contrary to) Roman practices and principles. Testation was also a sphere in which the Roman state implemented its policies of social stratification, singled out a privileged sphere of Roman citizens, and designated a sphere of local law belonging to particular civic communities or ethnic groups. Precisely how Roman officials adjudicated testamentary cases reveals much about the ideology of Roman justice, the legal and intellectual framework of Roman jurisdiction, and the legal knowledge and expertise available to provincials on the ground. The paper will consist of a series of case studies from different Roman provinces during the Republic and Principate.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Julien Dubouloz (Aix-Marseille University)

“Les administrateurs romains pouvaient-ils dédaigner les droits des communautés provinciales ?”

La communication prend pour point de départ une question posée dans l'appel à communication pour le colloque : “Les autorités envoyées dans les provinces affichaient-elles toutes le même dédain (pour les droits et les institutions des populations locales) que Cicéron lors de son proconsulat en Cilicie ?”. Dans le monde de culture grecque, les modalités de la réception et de la mise en œuvre par les Romains de règles de droit positif et d'éléments de procédure antérieurs à leur domination sont désormais bien étudiées, e. g. par G. Kantor, “Greek Law under the Romans”, E. M. Harris, M. Canavero dir., *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Law*, online version 2015. La communication se concentrera sur un dossier grec, mais occidental et littéraire : les dispositions fiscales appliquées en Sicile à la fin de la période républicaine, connues, seulement par les *Verrines* de Cicéron, sous le nom de *Lex Hieronica*. Cet exemple est intéressant à un double titre. D'une part, les *Verrines* donnent accès à certaines formes de procédure, mais aussi de droit positif, qui permettent de poser la question complexe de l'interpénétration, dans le domaine de la fiscalité, entre droit grec et droit romain en Sicile. D'autre part, on verra comment Cicéron, mais aussi les autorités romaines en Sicile, ont pu conférer une forme d'exemplarité à une “loi grecque” largement “inventée” et la présenter comme étant à l'origine de la loi romaine : cette exemplarité sert d'abord à accuser Verrès d'avoir dédaigné la *consuetudo* des provinciaux, mais aussi à justifier le régime fiscal romain en Sicile.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Julien Fournier (University of Lorraine)

“Les *ekdikoi*, représentants des communautés civiques de Grèce et d’Asie Mineure devant les tribunaux impériaux”

L’obligation ou la possibilité, pour certaines affaires, d’être entendues devant les tribunaux impériaux, en première ou en seconde instance, nécessitaient parfois que des communautés soient physiquement représentées devant les cours impériales. Agissant seuls ou dans le cadre de commissions collectives, les *ekdikoi*, généralement issus des couches supérieures des sociétés locales, servaient d’intermédiaire entre les cités et ces tribunaux. Leur importance fut telle que l’institution évolua, dans l’Antiquité tardive, vers une magistrature permanente, désignée en latin comme celle du *defensor civitatis*. La présente communication dresse un état de cette fonction, en prêtant attention à la longue durée, depuis la fin de l’époque hellénistique jusqu’au début de l’Antiquité tardive.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Kimberley Fowler (CNRS / Aix-Marseille University)

“A Re-examination of Early Christian Perspectives on the Relationship between Roman Law and Mosaic Law”

The relationship between Christianity and Roman law is complex. Leaving aside the often discussed issue of the legal status of Christians under Roman law, this paper focuses on the various early Christian perceptions of the relationship between Roman and Mosaic law. At the end of the second century CE, the famous Christian apologist Tertullian claimed that Roman law owed much to the divine law of Moses (*Apology* XLV.2-4). For Tertullian, because Moses long predated Roman history, Roman law logically derived from Jewish law. In the fourth-century, Ambrosiaster understands this connection to be evidenced in the very character of Roman law: because the Romans are a civilised people, they naturally practice the ethical precepts of the Decalogue (*Commentary on Romans* 7.1). Moreover, if it is accepted as a Christian composition, we see this idea further cemented in the curious *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum*, which places Mosaic and Roman laws side by side in an apparent attempt to harmonise the two. A slightly less clear reference to the connection between the laws of the Romans and those of Moses is made in the third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum*. Part of the author's aim seems to be to assert the dominance of Christianity over Judaism by highlighting both the former's inheritance of the Decalogue and Rome's hostility to Jewish laws made subsequently (i.e. the Mishnah). This feature of the *Didascalia* has not been fully treated by scholars, and this paper in part seeks to remedy this. More broadly, however, this paper will trace the portrayal of the relationship between the law of Rome and that of Moses within the early Christian inhabitants of the Roman Empire, highlighting the ways that it was utilised by different authors with particular agendas.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Yair Furstenberg (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

“Making Space for Local Law: Towards a New Paradigm of Jewish Jurisdiction in Roman Palestine”

Recent scholarship on the nature of legal pluralism in the empire has developed a considerably nuanced image of the interchange and negotiation between local practices and the authoritative Roman institutions in the provinces, which has come to exchange the earlier models of confrontation between the discreet systems of *Reichsrecht*, *Volksrecht*, and *Provinzialrecht*. These new insights provide the necessary grounds for a reappraisal of the nature of rabbinic law-making within the context of provincial jurisdiction. A careful consideration of rabbinic legal literature reveals not only a knowledge of particular Roman practices and legal institutions, but a variety of strategies for making space for their own local jurisdiction within the Roman legal landscape. This paper will examine the contours of rabbinic law making in response to Roman legal presence in various fields of law. Roman imperialism created opportunities for local elites to acquire recognition as arbiters, legal experts and mediators of Roman legal standards. Within this context, the sophisticated legal production of the rabbis testifies not only to their adoption of Roman legalistic ideology but to their active participation in conforming local laws and customs to the Romanized legal discourse.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Catherine Hezser (SOAS, University of London)

“Did Palestinian Rabbis Know Roman Law? Methodological Considerations Concerning the Relationship Between Rabbinic Halakhah and Roman Legislation”

The paper will investigate on the basis of examples whether and to what extent Palestinian rabbis may have been knowledgeable of Roman law and legal decisions. The first issue will be the contexts in which Roman law was used in the eastern provinces. Where would one encounter Roman jurists? Would Roman law be used in local courts? How was knowledge about case decisions disseminated? Secondly, examples of similarities between rabbinic and Roman legal rules and decisions will be investigated. What may the similarities be based on? Should we assume that similar circumstances led to similar decisions or is the traditional proposition of "dependence" persuasive in some cases? How would the political situation and ethical considerations enabled or prevented adaptation?

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

David Kremer (Paris Descartes University)

“La diffusion du droit romain en Orient à l’époque tardive. L’apport des *Sententiae Syriacae*”

Connues depuis la découverte de quatre manuscrits syriaques dans la seconde moitié du siècle dernier, les *Sententiae Syriacae* se présentent comme une série de règles de droit romain pur dont les éléments essentiels ont été préalablement énucléés. Rédigées sans aucune controverse à partir de règles tirées de la jurisprudence classique et de constitutions impériales principalement du règne de Dioclétien, les *Sententiae Syriacae* énoncent un droit sûr, accessible et intelligible.

Composées entre la fin du V^e et le début du VI^e siècle de n.è, les *Sententiae Syriacae* nous renseignent sur les outils dont pouvaient disposer des populations vivant éloignées des grands centres urbains pour connaître et appliquer devant les tribunaux romains jurisprudence classique et constitutions impériales toujours en vigueur après la crise du III^e siècle.

Seront présentés les résultats d’une recherche conduite dans le cadre du projet ERC Redhis. A New Appreciation of Juristic Texts and Patterns of Thought (University of Pavia ; P.I. Dario Mantovani).

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Hayim Lapin (University of Maryland)

“Representing State Judicial Violence in Palestinian Rabbinic Literature”

The contemporary scholarly understanding of rabbinic accounts of judicial violence in the context of persecution is still governed by two contributions spanning the years before and after the Holocaust:

I. Baer, “Israel, the Christian Church, and the Roman Empire from Septimius Severus to the ‘Edict of Toleration’” (1956) and a series of articles by S. Lieberman comparing rabbinic and Christian accounts of martyrdom (1936–1946, and again in 1975). The latter sought to establish the verisimilitude and indeed the authenticity of rabbinic sources (they were to be treated as documentary evidence), while the former, at least in part, that Jews, no less than Christians, suffered under the Decian, Valerian, and Diocletianic persecutions.

My proposed paper returns to the theme of persecution through an examination of one of the paradigmatic examples of martyrdom in rabbinic literature: that of Pappus and Lullianos (Julianus, Lollianus?) at the hands of Trajan. Drawing on more recent scholarly approaches it examines how the tradents, editors, or compilers of the texts represent or construct state judicial violence and by extension how they locate themselves and their audiences within the state that perpetrates this violence. However we understand the historicity of the violence, the arguments of Baer and Lieberman suggest that the accounts take place within a broader discursive framework—encompassing identity, exclusiveness, submission or opposition the state—that overlaps with the extensive Christian performance and commemoration of martyrdom.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Orit Malka (Tel Aviv University) and Yakir Paz (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

"Captivus civiliter mortuus est: Captivity and Property Rights in Roman and Rabbinic Law"

This paper deals with the status of captives in the tannaitic law, through the test case of the captive's property. The common scholarly opinion is that according to the Tannaim captivity does not impact the legal bonds of the captive, and thus does not sever the captive's rights to his property. We argue that, in contradistinction to this opinion, in several tannaitic sources one can detect an approach according to which upon taken captive, the captives' property rights are dissolved, since they are in fact considered dead. However, upon their return they regain their previous rights. We suggest that this legal approach displays a deep interiorization of Roman legal concepts regarding the legal consequences of captivity and the principle of *postliminium*. According to Roman law, captives cease to be subjects of the law. They are no longer roman citizens, and are thus considered legally dead (*civiliter mortuus*). As a result all the legal bonds generated by the Roman law, and especially property rights, are annulled. However, if the captives return their rights are reinstated according to the law of *postliminium*.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Yifat Monnickendam (Tel Aviv University)

“What to Do with Roman Law? The Exposed Child in Jewish and Christian Late Antique Legal Discourse”

In classical Roman law, a private act such as child exposure, child sale, or the pledging of children could not change the legal status of a child or make a freeborn into a slave. Nevertheless, decisions concerning the status of foundlings practically lay with their finders, who often enslaved them. In the fourth century CE, in an attempt to minimize child exposure, Constantine legalized this common practice, granting finders the official power to decide the legal status of foundlings: whether a child would be raised as a slave or adopted and raised as a freeborn citizen.

Jews and Christians living under Roman rule addressed this question using Roman legislation, alongside their own legal thought, practices and traditions. In this paper I survey the Jewish and Christian approaches to child exposure and demonstrate how Roman legislation was transplanted into two new legal surroundings. While the Palestinian rabbis cited the Constantinian legislation, they molded it in the form of conversion, because Palestinian rabbinic halakha does not acknowledge legal adoption of children. The Christian writers, by contrast, seem to ignore the question of status. They focused on defining exposure as murder, comparable to abortion and infanticide. A closer look, however, reveals that they replaced the question of civil status with one of religious status, describing the adoption of a foundling as baptism and inclusion in the new Christian community.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Capucine Nemo-Pekelman (Paris Nanterre University)

“The Jewish Infra-Civic Elites from the West: Their Judicial and Legal Activities”

In a recent study, the Rabbinic movement in Palestine has been presented as a paradigm for understanding the effect of Roman “provincialization” on local populations. From the 3rd century, the Amoraim would have become suburban elite of well-off and learned men. In regards to the matter addressed by the present workshop, they would have developed a judicial activity in arbitral courts, addressing increasing fields in private law [H. Lapin, 2012]. Could we draw similar conclusions about the Jews from the Western part of the Empire? Their social and economic status, judicial activities and legal knowledge are far less documented. Yet, it has been emphasized on the basis of archaeological evidence, inscriptions and literary sources that the Jews from Rome fully participated in late Roman society [L. V. Rutgers, 1995].

In the light of these stimulating perspectives, we propose to investigate the imperial laws given in Milan and Ravenna at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries: they show that Jews held posts within municipal councils and the imperial government and were familiar enough with Roman administrative and legal practices to hold such positions. Furthermore, many imperial laws responded to Jewish complaints. They demonstrate that Jewish plaintiffs fully used judicial and legal tools for winning lawsuits, denouncing in particular the judicial harassments (*persecutiones*) that they endured at the hands of their enemies.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Kaius Tuori (University of Helsinki)

“Between the Good King and the Cruel Tyrant: *Acta Isidori* and the Images of Roman Emperors among Provincial Litigants”

At the latest after the reign of Augustus, inhabitants of the Roman provinces were convinced that the emperor was a crucial force in the legal process and with time, effort and connections one might be able to receive a hearing from the highest of judges. The emperor, if he so wished, was the law, even in the provinces. However, the image of the emperor, much like that of the Roman power in general, varied greatly between observers, from unquestioning praise to descriptions of cruelty. When approaching these descriptions, it becomes apparent that they were intended for different audiences, from the local partisans to the Roman officials and even the emperor. It could be said that via praising the emperor as right and just, the provincials may have hoped to persuade him to act that way.

The purpose of this paper is to observe this narrative dichotomy in the textual tradition in and around the text known as *Acta Isidori*, a part of a third century collection now called *Acta Alexandrorum*. The text appears as a transcript of a trial held before Claudius in Rome, relating to the complex and long standing conflict between the Jewish and Greek inhabitants of Alexandria. This text, purporting to be from the trial between King Agrippa and Isidorus, an ambassador of the Greeks, shows clearly the propagandist value and the difficulties faced by both those approaching the emperor and the emperor himself in projecting his power. The aim of the presentation is to explore the role of the narratives of kingship in the legitimation and delegitimation of power in the provinces.

International conference of the ERC project



JUDAISM AND ROME

Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire

The Perception and Reception of Roman Law and Tribunals

by Jews and Other Inhabitants of the Empire

Yael Wilfand (CNRS / Aix-Marseille University)

“A Proselyte whose Sons Converted with Him’: Roman Laws on New Citizens’ Authority over Their Children and Tannaitic Rulings on Converts to Judaism and Their Offspring”

This paper analyzes rabbinic rulings on bequests by converts as a case study for examining the dynamic and nuanced influences of Roman law on the development of rabbinic *halakhah*. More broadly, this analysis considers how Roman legal and social approaches to new citizens informed this aspect of Palestinian rabbinic *halakhah* regarding converts. The subject discussed here addresses the legal relations between converts and their offspring who were born (or even conceived) prior to their parents’ conversion, including those who joined Israel with one or both parents. According to tannaitic sources, even if they converted together, family ties between children and their father were severed upon his conversion, and those offspring were no longer deemed his heirs. Striking parallels with Roman law (such as Gaius, *Institutes*, 1.93-94; 3.19-20) lead us to ask again about the relationship between Roman and rabbinic law. I will discuss rabbinic *halakhah* regarding the assignment of converts’ legacies and analogous Roman rulings on new citizens to assess rabbinic reception of Roman law.