

# Reassessing Josephus Keynote Speakers

**Tal Ilan, Ph.D.** has emerged as one of the world's foremost historians of Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman period and is the preeminent anthroponomastician of that historical era. She is an expert on Jewish personal names in antiquity and has shared her knowledge through a series of publications, culminating in the multi-volume *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, published by Brill. A student of some of the greatest historians of Hellenistic Judaism, including Menachem Stern and Martin Hengel, she earned her doctorate degree from Hebrew University and is a professor at the Institute for Judaic Studies at the Free University of Berlin.



Ilan is a long-time friend of Siena College. She addressed the Kieval Institute nine years ago when she shared the podium for our 16th Colloquium ("The Greatness of Herod") with another Torontonion, Peter Richardson.

**Steve Mason's** work is the starting point for any contemporary scholar's work on Josephus. Mason is the editor and the most significant of the 10 translators and commentators of the main scholarly edition of Josephus, the Brill Josephus Project, published in ten volumes. Mason's other published books include *Josephus and the New Testament* (1992), which has been translated into at least four languages, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (1991), and, most recently *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (2009), among many others.



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Jewish-Christian Studies  
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# Reassessing Josephus



The Kieval Institute for  
Jewish-Christian  
Studies at Siena College  
25th Annual Colloquium  
December 6 and 7, 2009

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The Kieval Institute for  
Jewish-Christian Studies

## Program

Sunday, December 6, 2009  
Roger Bacon Hall, Key Auditorium  
2:00 p.m

Remarks.....Peter Zaas, Ph.D.  
*Director, Kieval Institute  
for Jewish-Christian Studies*

Welcome.....Fr. Kevin Mullen, '75, O.F.M., Ph.D.  
*President, Siena College*

Lecture.....Tal Ilan, Ph.D.

Lecture..... Steve Mason, Ph.D.

Discussion.....Audience welcome to participate

Monday, December 7, 2009  
Serra Hall, West Dining Room  
10:00 a.m.

### Kosher Brunch and Discussion

Greetings..... Bishop Howard Hubbard  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

Moderator.....Rabbi Bernard Bloom, Ph.D.

### About the Kieval Institute

The Hayyim H. Kieval Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies was founded in 1983 and is named for its inaugural director, Rabbi Hayyim Kieval. An advisory board of Siena faculty and other area regional clergy and community leaders advises the Institute on matters of policy and program.

The annual colloquia are dedicated to bringing internationally recognized scholars on campus to discuss matters of history, theology and current events pertaining to the continuing historical relationship between Jews and Christians. The events are free and open to the public.

## Flavius Josephus - Traitor or Patriot?

If not for Flavius Josephus, nee Yosef ben Mattityahu/Joseph, son of Mattathias [37 CE - 100 CE], we would know little about one of the most important events in Jewish history – the ill-fated Jewish War against Rome [66 CE - 70 CE] which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

Born into his father's privileged priestly caste, at the age of nineteen Josephus turned his back on the elitist Sadduceean sect, favoring the populist Pharisees. He became aware of the vast resources of the Empire while participating in a delegation sent to Rome, and when Josephus returned home in 66 CE at the onset of the doomed revolt against Roman rule, he was convinced that armed resistance was futile and he urged negotiation. For this he was branded disloyal.

Despite his qualms, Josephus was appointed governor of the northern Galilee region and military commander of its army, but his forces were quickly defeated by Vespasian, Rome's greatest general, to whom he surrendered. A survivor of that devastating revolt, Josephus was condemned as a traitor by the militant Zealot nationalists for having survived – even though two Zealot leaders, John of Giscala and Simon bar Giora, also opted for Roman captivity rather than commit suicide.

General Titus, Vespasian's son and the victor of the Jewish War, brought Josephus to Rome in 71, where the recently-installed Emperor Vespasian became his patron, and extended him Roman citizenship. There he authored *The Jewish Wars* and the millennium-spanning *Antiquities of the Jews*, to acquaint the Roman public with the valor and sophisticated culture of his vanquished people. He also published *Contra Apion* to refute widespread scurrilous anti-Jewish slanders.

Throughout his life Josephus served as his people's spokesman and defender, and remained a loyal and observant Jew.

-Rabbi Bernard Bloom, Ph.D.

## Reassessing Josephus

\_\_\_\_\_ I shall participate in the Colloquium

You can also respond online at  
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