"The Society of Humankind -
Roman Justice from Antiquity to the Enlightenment"

The "JustCity" ERC Research Project 2025 Conference Program

May 29 - 31, 2025

Lester Pollack Colloquium Room at Furman Hall

NYU School of Law, 245 Sullivan St., New York NY 10012

Topic

We take it for granted that human beings can make claims against each other. But why is this? And what kinds of claims are legitimate? Historically, an important justification for this ability has been the idea that humans live together in societies, be they societies of human beings, citizens or states. Making claims in the context of social and juridical bonds is at the heart of the Roman theory of justice and differentiates it from alternative conceptions, such as eudaimonist and distributive models, which have their origins in the Greek tradition. While these Greek conceptions of justice continue to have resonance today, it is the Roman theory and its legacy which is uniquely able to explain the dominance of a connection between claim-making, rights and justice. Our ERC-project 'The Just City' identifies the Roman thinker and statesman Cicero (106-43 BCE) as the key figure in this story: he combined Stoic natural law with Roman private law and political institutions to theorise humankind as a juridical society. The successful transmission of much of his large body of work ensured that Cicero's ideas would become foundational to the development of later political and legal thinking. This explains why later debates over justice in Western thought took the forms that they did, positing, for example, a crucial distinction between benevolence and strict obligation. The final conference of the Just City project brings together experts to examine this Roman concept of justice and its subsequent reception and adaptation. We will explore its development from its classical origins via Christian Late Antiquity to the Age of Revolutions, tracing its influence on a range of key moments in the history of political thought including the emergence of the Law of Nations and debates over Social Contract Theory.

Thursday, May 29

8:30 am – 9:00	Coffee
9:00 – 9:30	Introduction by Benedict Kingsbury (Vice Dean NYU Law School) and Benjamin Straumann (NYU/UZH)

9:30 – 11:15   **Panel 1: Greek Justice**
Chair: Melissa Schwartzberg (NYU)
Speakers: Mirko Canevaro (Edinburgh):"What's Greek about Greek Theories of Justice? Rights, Licence, Law and the Community", Federica Carugati (KCL): "Institutional Design for a Modern *Eudaimonia*", Phillip Mitsis (NYU): "Epicurean Contractual Justice and Why Cicero Rejects It"

11:15 – 11:30   Break

11:30 – 1:15 pm   **Panel 2: Roman Justice**
Chair: David Levene (NYU)
Speakers: Roberto Fiori (Roma II): "Roman Justice: The Text of the Jurists", Daniel Kapust (Wisconsin): "Lucretius on *Aequitas* without *Ius*", Claudia Moatti (Paris VIII/USC): "Justice for the *Res Publica*. Remarks on Some Conceptual Shifts at the End of the Republic and under the Principate", Alexander Yakobson (HUJI): "Justice in Speaking to the Roman People"

1:15 – 2:45   Lunch Break

2:45 – 4:30   **Panel 3: Cicero's Theory of Justice**
Chair: Jeremy Waldron (NYU)
Elizabeth Asmis (Chicago): "Cicero on the Priority of Justice", Jed Atkins (UNC), Mike Hawley (UNC): "Justice without Merit: Cicero's Position on 'Distributive Justice'", Ana Kotarcic (UZH): "Cicero's Historical Evaluation of the Best State"

4:30 – 5:00   Break

5:00 – 6:30   **Keynote 1: "Tensions in the Ciceronian Humanism: Be Fair Towards the Barbarians?"**
Speaker: Carlos Lévy (Paris IV)

<u>Friday, May 30</u>

9:00 am – 9:30   Coffee

9:30 – 11:15   **Panel 4: Pagan and Christian Justice in Late Antiquity**
                     Chair: Brent Shaw (Princeton)
                     Speakers: Sonsoles Costero-Quiroga (Madrid): "Cicero and Neoplatonism to
                     save the Roman state. Observations and comments on the Dialogus *De scientia
                     politica*", Nikolas Hächler (UZH): "Tracing Ciceronian Justice in Late Antiquity. A
                     Note on Augustine's Transposition of Cicero's Notion of the *Rector Rei Publicae*
                     in *De Civitate Dei*", Michele Renee Salzman (UCR): "Ciceronian Ideas as an
                     Influence on Ecclesiastical Justice in the Fourth Century"

11:15 – 11:30   Break

11:30 – 1:15 pm   **Panel 5: Natural, Civil, and International Society in Early Modernity**
                     Chair: Benedict Kingsbury (NYU)
                     Speakers: Daniel Allemann (Lucerne): "Prescription and the Spanish Empire in
                     America", Jeffrey Dymond (UZH): "International Legal Personality in the Early
                     Modern Law of Nations", Francesca Iurlaro (MPIPRIV): "Colonial *Emphyteusis* in
                     Italy: From Roman Law to Fascism", Daniel Lee (Berkeley): "Grotius on Expletive
                     and Attributive Justice"

1:15 – 2:45   Lunch Break

2:45 – 4:30   **Panel 6: Justice in the State of Nature and the Social Contract**
                     Chair: Signy Gutnick Allen (UZH)
                     Speakers: James Harris (St. Andrews): "Theorizing the People: Cicero vs. the
                     Moderns", Kajo Kubala (QMUL): "Roman Law *Collegia Licita* in Seventeenth
                     Century New England?", Daniel Luban (Columbia): "Justice in Hobbes' State of
                     Nature", Mark Somos (MPIL): "Gentili's Long and Winding Road to Rome"

4:30 – 5:00   Break

5:00 – 6:30   **Keynote 2: "Reconsidering Rome in the Americas"**
                     Speaker: Lauren Benton (Yale)

Saturday, May 31

8:30 am – 9:00	Coffee

9:00 – 10:45 **Panel 7: Cicero and the Enlightenment**
Chair: David Ragazzoni (NYU)
Speakers: Signy Gutnick Allen (UZH): "Ties that Bind? Eighteenth Century Debates Over Benevolence and Obligation", Michael Vazquez (UNC): "Philosophy for Citizens: Garve, Cicero, and the Aims of Popular Philosophy", Samuel Zeitlin (UCL): "A Justice of Peace: Natural Experimentation and Law in Bacon's *New Atlantis*", Elena Zeng (Princeton): "An Enlightenment Critique of Ancient Prudence"

10:45 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:45 pm **Panel 8: Cicero and Revolutions**
Chair: Dan Hulsebosch (NYU)
Speakers: Rebecca Kingston (Toronto): "*Liberté, Égalité* and Deferred Justice in the Public Rhetoric of Revolutionary France", Adam Lebovitz (UFL): "Dictatorship in the French Revolution", Benjamin Straumann (NYU/UZH): "'Justice Towards the Lowliest': Can We Find the Raw Material for Human Rights in Cicero?"

12:45 – 1:15 Closing Remarks