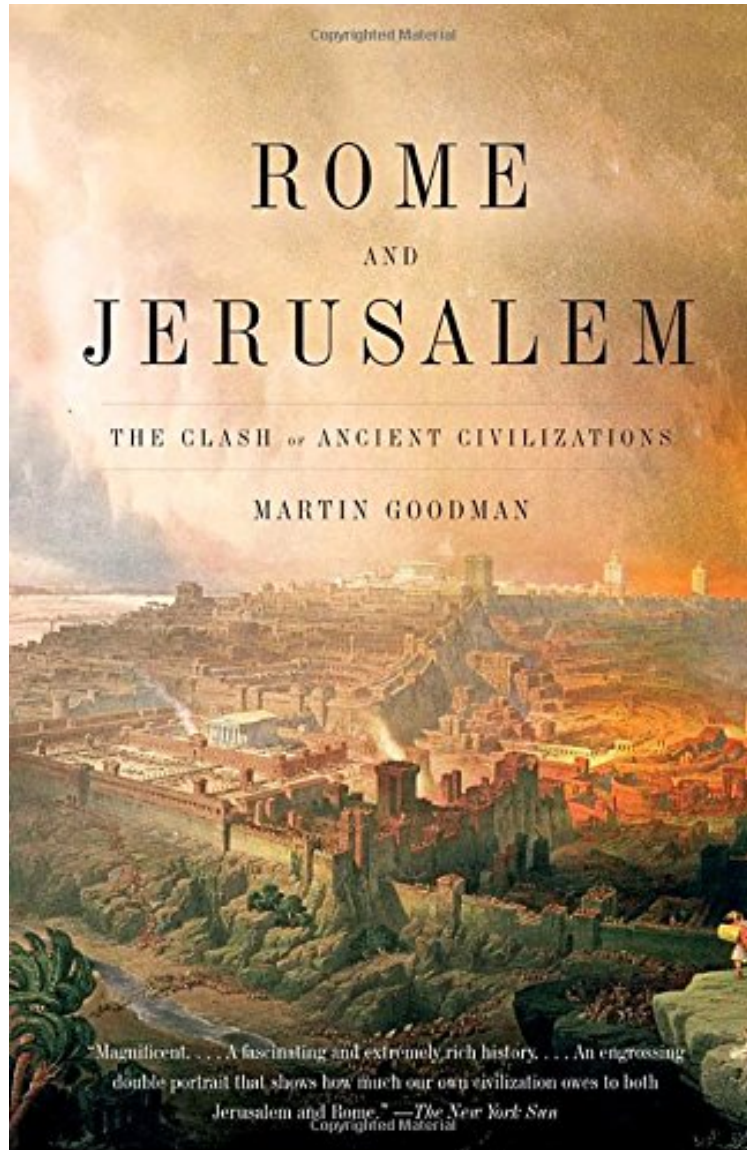


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# Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations

*Martin Goodman*

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#86862 in Books Goodman, Martin 2008-11-11 2008-11-11 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.97 x 1.28 x 5.16l, 1.30 #File Name: 0375726136640 pages | File size: 46.Mb

**Martin Goodman : Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Classic Culture CrashBy dmiguerMartin Goodman is one of the current heavyweight historians of the Jewish-Roman period of biblical times. To put this into context, Goodman recently edited the Oxford Bible Commentary on the Apocrypha, an assignment Oxford University Press would not offer and any serious scholar would not accept lightly. As far as I can determine this book may be the most widely

published and popularly read work by Goodman to date. I hope that he will continue to publish work of this calibre in the near future. This is not just a straightforward account of the events preceding and following the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Instead Goodman lays out in detail many aspects of the social, economic, religious, political and military context of the times, not only of Rome and Jerusalem but also other contemporary cultures. This results in an excellent synthesis of sometimes segregated fields of study. One problem of the approach lies in the many paths to be pursued in the period. Since this is not simply a narrative of events and combines thematic history as well, there are times the reader may feel adrift. In the end patience is rewarded, and the story returns to the question stated at the outset; how it came to be that the pragmatic paganism of the Romans and the monotheistic faith of the Judeans clashed and were eventually superseded by the advent of Christianity. Goodman deconstructs the classic dualism between the city of God vs. the city of man. Jerusalem's theocracy (a term said to have been coined by Josephus) had previously peacefully co-existed with the Roman monarchy. Civil chaos in Rome following the death of Nero would eventually lead to the destruction of the Second Temple by Vespasian and his heir Titus during the Jewish War of 66-73. Following the cataclysmic reduction of Jerusalem, Goodman traces the repression of Jews by Rome, and the eventual rise of Christianity during the early 4th century. One of the key points regarding this period is how it became expedient to distance the New Testament faith from Judaism for political reasons. There is not much controversy in this analysis, but the book reflects well on the top notch research and scholarship of its author.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent in almost every way  
By JDRUCKI loved this book. It is chock full of interesting facts. I highly recommend you read this book on a Kindle so that you can instantly look up words and terms that the author either assumes you know or that he used previously only in passing. Goodman really tells the story extremely well of Judean life and rebellions against their Roman imperial occupiers, as well as the almost seamless development of institutional anti-semitism from Roman Imperial times through early Christianity. It's eye opening, in fact. My only warning is that this book is not for the faint of heart when it comes to reading. It is a long book, densely packed with facts. Finishing it left me both wanting more and proud for having finished it.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. the catastrophic collisions of Rome, Israel, and the early Christians  
By Robert J. Crawford  
This is one of those dense history books that separates the true history buff (or academic) from the casual reader. Starting more or less from the reign of the Julio-Claudians - the first imperial dynasty of the Roman Empire after the fall of the Republic - the book compares the cultures when the vassalage of "Judea" (as worked out by Herod during Augustus' reign) functioned well, follows the deterioration of relations that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, and then examines the aftermath of repeated rebellion and the rise of Christians (and anti-Semitism). For many reasons, this is one of the most interesting historical nexuses there is. First, the Imperial Regime of Rome is consolidating itself. The republican forms, such as rule (or some checks and balance) by the Senate as well as alternation of power, still exist but are increasingly irrelevant. Instead, a kind of quasi-religious autocracy (hinting at a totalitarian regime) has firmly taken hold. From the prudent Augustus, you witness the decadent and perhaps senile Tiberius, the cruelly insane Caligula, the almost-great Claudius, and finally the unbalanced Nero - all the time, the institutions related to the transfer of power are increasingly in crisis, leading to the terrible year 69 CE, in which there were 4 emperors who took power in civil war. The Army and Praetorians emerge as vital power brokers for the rest of Rome's history. Goodman's treatment of these years covers it as a narrative, but also as political science and cultural critique. This was a special treat for me, as I have long hoped to find a detailed description of what Augustus' regime led to, and here it is, in great detail. Second, the Jews had reached a crucial period that would define their religion and culture into the modern era: with their monotheism and strictly prescribed culture of purity and moral comportment, their "tribal" mentality was beginning to distinguish clearly who belonged and who didn't. Compared to the licentious Romans with their multiple gods and tolerance for diversity and morals, they appeared rigid and exotic. This filled the greatest gap in my historical knowledge and hence was most instructive for me, but it was very heavy going at times. Third, there were the Christians, who at that time were merely a sect of the Jews, in effect transforming their moral code to an evangelical universalism while discarding some of their practices, such as the circumcision that so horrified the Romans. Their numbers grew slowly, amazingly to become the official creed under the Emperor Constantine around 300 CE, almost totally divorced from its cultural and ethnic origins with the Jews. What the book accomplishes so masterfully is to explain how circumstances aligned themselves to create a terrible cataclysm for the Jews. It was at the time that Nero was ousted, he argues, that Vespasian - the military governor of the province of Assyria - needed the appearance of a major victory to make his claim to the office of Emperor. Somehow, under his son Titus, this meant crushing the Jews and perhaps even purposefully burning Herod's temple in 70 CE, though that may have been an accident as Goodman argues. The result was a fundamental disenfranchisement of nearly unprecedented savagery, which stamped the Jewish soul forever afterwards, as deeply as occurred over 1,000 years before, under the Egyptians. Interestingly, he argues that this was not at all inevitable but a direct consequence of the power struggles in Rome; the bitterness and rebelliousness it engendered among the Jews then led to a series of violent wars and periodical repression and persecution. Hadrian took over, in 117 CE, and after a major rebellion he turned old Jerusalem into a Roman colony, which lasted under the Byzantines until the Moslem conquests. Finally, Goodman sees the emergence of the Christians as the basis for anti-semitism, an argument that I didn't quite follow. For anyone

who can concentrate on historical detail, this is a great read full of insight and fascinating trains of reasoning. While academic and targeting a sophisticated audience with at least university education, it is beautifully written and flows in a uniquely informal style that incorporates rigorous logic and wonderful narrative description. Once I was with it, I deeply enjoyed it. Warmly recommended.

A magisterial history of the titanic struggle between the Roman and Jewish worlds that led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Martin Goodman, equally renowned in Jewish and in Roman studies, examines this conflict, its causes, and its consequences with unprecedented authority and thoroughness. He delineates the incompatibility between the cultural, political, and religious beliefs and practices of the two peoples and explains how Rome's interests were served by a policy of brutality against the Jews. At the same time, Christians began to distance themselves from their origins, becoming increasingly hostile toward Jews as Christian influence spread within the empire. This is the authoritative work of how these two great civilizations collided and how the reverberations are felt to this day.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . The Jewish revolt against the Romans, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in A.D. 70, marked an irreparable breach between the pagan-and later Christian-worlds and an outcast Jewish minority. Yet the first two-thirds of this absorbing historical study explores the harmony of Roman and Judaic civilizations before the revolt. Goodman, a professor of Jewish studies at Oxford, finds many similarities in a far-ranging comparative analysis of their religions, cultures, economies and governments, though he gives more space to the worldly, extravagant Romans than to the relatively austere and parochial Jews. Before the revolt, he contends, Romans considered Jews unobjectionable, despite their eccentric monotheism; Jerusalem prospered under Roman rule and Jews living in diaspora were well integrated into Roman society. Goodman argues that the cataclysm could have been avoided (the burning of the Temple was accidental, he believes) but for the politics of the imperial succession, which prompted a needlessly hard line against the revolt and then Judaism itself. Drawing on Josephus's firsthand narrative, Goodman fleshes out his lucid account with archeology, numismatics and commentary from Roman and Jewish sources. The result is a scholarly tour de force, a resonant story of a tragic conflict caused by political miscalculation and opportunism. 16 pages of photos, 8 maps. (Oct. 28) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Magnificent. . . . A fascinating and extremely rich history. . . . An engrossing double portrait that shows how much our own civilization owes to both Jerusalem and Rome. The New York Sun Innovative. . . . A complicated bit of history brilliantly told. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Well-written, detailed and meticulous. . . . Provides an intricate examination of life in the first century. The Dallas Morning News A triumph. Goodman's scrupulous care with his sources, his eye for telling detail and his easy prose style combine to produce a work that will reward any reader. Jerusalem Post About the Author Martin Goodman has divided his intellectual life between the Roman and Jewish worlds. He has edited both the Journal of Roman Studies and the Journal of Jewish Studies. He has taught Roman History at Birmingham and Oxford Universities, and is currently Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford. He is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford, and of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. In 1996 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. In 2002 he edited the Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies, which was awarded a National Jewish Book Award for Scholarship. He lives with his family in Birmingham.