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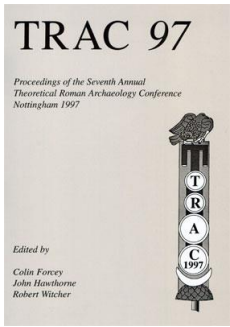

Paper Information:

Title: Motivations and Ideologies of Romanization
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Pages: 11–19

DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC1997_11_19
Publication Date: 16 April 1998

Volume Information:

Forcey, C., Hawthorne, J., and Witcher, R. (eds.) (1998) *TRAC 97: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Nottingham 1997.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.

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Motivations and Ideologies of Romanization

by Ralph Häussler

Introduction

In order to aim for a better understanding of 'Romanization' and the motivations of the individual to participate in the Roman culture, we have to see 'Romanization' as a form of discourse which becomes increasingly important for maintaining the post-Republican Empire. Forms of ideology and culture developed which were internalised by many, and as such, the Romanization of the western empire becomes comparable to Hellenization. In this paper, Romanization is understood as numerous, often contemporary, processes of interaction between the 'Romans' as conquerors and the various conquered peoples. It will be shown that the relatively random forms of adaptation and accommodation to Roman rule became increasingly homogeneous after the first century BC. At the same time, one has to consider that the societies involved in the processes of interaction were continuously changing and adapting, i.e. Roman society changes its attitudes to the conquered people, and *vice versa*. I am particularly interested in the changing and evolving image of Rome from the late Republic to the Principate and it seems necessary to explore how Rome's image motivated the individual 'indigenous' person to adopt aspects of Graeco-Roman or Italo-Roman 'culture'. Among the questions I wish to address are the meaning and purpose of adopting Roman artefacts such as dress, life-styles and language and their implications for the maintenance or disintegration of so-called indigenous societies.

In order to explore the problem of discrepancies between chronologies based on literary and archaeological evidence, often labelled as cultural resistance (e.g. Keay 1992), this paper examines the case study of north-west Italy. From the third to the first century BC, north-west Italy develops from a marginal dominion of the Empire to an economic and political focus. In the third century BC, the Cisalpine Gauls – especially the *Insubres* in the Lombardy region – were among Rome's 'fiercest' enemies. By the first century BC, Cisalpine Gaul had become the most prosperous region of Italy, part of Augustus' *tota Italia,* with its people having acquired Roman citizenship (cf. Gabba 1984). In what follows I present contradictory chronologies. First, a chronology of events in north-west Italy based on literary evidence. This is compared with changes in material culture, long-term developments and some apparent 'anti-Roman' developments between the third and first century BC.

The chronology based on the literary evidence, especially Livy and Polybius, is well established. With the exception of the Alpine valleys, north-west Italy had been conquered by the late third century BC and re-conquered in 196BC after the Second Punic War. In the lower Po Valley, especially south of the Po, a network of Latin colonies, accompanied by land distribution and road-building, was established which left little freedom for manoeuvre to indigenous communities. North of the river Po, and in north-west Italy, we encounter a very different situation. There seems to be no fundamental break after the Roman conquest, nor is there any visible Roman occupation. Although the *foedera* forbade the grant of Roman citizenship to the Insubres and Cenomani (Cicero *pro Balbo* 14, 32), Latin rights were granted to the communities in Piedmont and the Transpadana after the Social War in 89BC. After Caesar had been governor of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, he granted the Cisalpine

population Roman citizenship in 49BC, and it is Augustus who will end the provincial status of Cisalpine Gaul and incorporate it into Italy. This suggests a gradual process of integration, culminating in the grant of Latin rights and Roman citizenship in the first century BC. However, the archaeological record of Piedmont and Lombardy provides a very different chronology.

Pre-existing material cultures, funerary rituals and settlement patterns seem to continue down to the late first century BC and in some cases, especially in Piedmont, down to the first century AD. Type-sites include the necropoleis of Ornavasso (Graue 1974), Oleggio (Spagnolo Garzoli 1988) and those in the Lomellina (Vanacci Lunazzi 1982). In other words, for almost two centuries after the conquest, we are still dealing with a basically La Tène or Ligurian 'culture' (De Marinis 1978; on Ligurian culture, cf. Gambari and Venturino Gambari 1987). The Roman conquest is difficult to identify through the archaeology, while artefacts, rituals and therefore the discourse, in which the inhabitants of north-west Italy participated, was still embedded in the pre-existing La Tène and Ligurian traditions, despite Rome's presence in the area.

In this period, Rome's influence seems to be present through imports, especially the *vernice nera* (so-called Campanian ware). *Vernice nera* has often been interpreted as an obvious indicator of 'Romanization' (De Marinis 1977; Frontini 1985:25–27). Similarly, the abandonment of hilltop sites in the Ligurian Appennines has been seen as a factor of 'Romanization'. But when looking at patterns of settlement and exchange mechanisms within a long-term chronology, both interpretations become doubtful. In this respect, the rather sporadic imports of Campanian black-slip ware and Italo-Roman bronzes seem to reflect the continued import of prestige goods – often feasting equipment, traditionally used in funerary rituals – as in the centuries before the Roman conquest. The place of manufacture (e.g. South Etruria), trade route (via Genoa) and local usage (funerary/prestige item) remain almost unchanged from the sixth-fifth century BC. Only the objects have changed, i.e. Republican *vernice nera* has replaced Etruscan *bucchero*. These objects themselves should therefore not be taken as an indicator of Romanization, i.e. of socio-cultural change.

The significance of imported artefacts as cultural markers can be disputed in two further examples from south-east Piedmont. First, Guardamonte, a Ligurian hilltop site, occupied from the sixth century BC to the second century AD (Lo Porto 1957). Although occupied during the La Tène period, as evident from imported artefacts, there are no La Tène artefacts at Guardamonte (except for one arm-ring). This shows the continuity of one site, interlinked in exchange mechanisms with the Etrusco-Golaseccan and the Roman world, but hardly affected by the dominant presence of La Tène culture in the Po Valley. Second, Libarna (Serravalle Scrivia) and Villa del Foro (Alessandria) are two sites in close vicinity to each other. In the sixth/fifth century BC, objects demarcate trade-routes. The presence of South Etrurian and Golaeccan artefacts indicate Libarna's position along the north-south trade route from the Lago Maggiore to the port of Genoa. By contrast, artefacts from Etruria Padana and Southern France indicate Villa del Foro's role on the Etruscan east-west trade-route from the Po Valley to the Alps. Despite their vicinity, there is no evidence for any interaction or redistribution between the two sides. Consequently in the late Republican period, the presence of so-called Campanian ware shows the continued trade-relations between Piedmont, southern Etruria and the Po Valley. Only from the first century AD, with the import of South Gaulish, Spanish and African pottery and amphorae, do we encounter a radical change in exchange mechanisms which affects both Piedmont and Lombardy.

With regard to settlement patterns, there are many similarities between the first centuries BC/AD and the sixth/fifth centuries BC, such as an intensification of trade, urbanisation, and an epigraphic culture. Sites, such as Libarna and Villa del Foro, which were abandoned after the Etruscan period (fifth century BC), become re-occupied from the first century BC (Gambari and

Venturino Gambari 1982; Venturino Gambari 1987, 1994; Zanda 1993). In this respect, it was the La Tène period which provoked significant changes of settlement patterns, i.e. the hilltop sites of the Ligurian Appennines are an episode. There is no clear break in settlement pattern between La Tène and Roman, since hilltop sites are occupied and abandoned at different periods or continuously in use, as exemplified by Guardamonte (Häussler 1997; Lo Porto 1957). The main difference from the sixth/fifth centuries BC is that west Piedmont becomes fully integrated in this process of urbanisation from the first century AD, while the Etruscan presence there seems to have been restricted to the isolated inscription from Busca (Cuneo). Consequently, despite the early conquest of north-west Italy, the developments in Piedmont largely reflects aspects of continuity and persistence of pre-existing traditions during the Republican period. Does north Italy therefore 'lag behind' with a culture of 'residual La Tène culture' (Arslan 1991:464)?

Instead, in the second and early first century BC, the north-west Italian La Tène culture presents a much clearer identity than in the previous centuries. Two main aspects are worth noting. They both originate already from the pre-conquest periods and both continue down to the first century BC: coinage and epigraphy. The Cisalpine drachma is non-Roman in its appearance, iconography, and silver content (Pautasso 1962). It imitates the iconography of the heavy Massilia drachma of the fourth century BC (obverse: Diana; reverse: lion) (Brenot 1994). These images become more and more abstract under the influence of La Tène art in the second century BC (nominally a Roman period). In their appearance they clearly demonstrate that they are part of the La Tène *koinè*. This is emphasised by the appearance of legends in Gallic and in the non-Latin alphabet of Lepontic from the late second century BC. These coins circulate mainly north of the river Po and in Piedmont; they even spread beyond the Alps (Marinetti and Prosdocimi 1994).

Epigraphy, too, is non-Roman in Piedmont and Lombardy. It is written in a Celtic language – and the writing is based on the Lepontic alphabet. Inscriptions of this kind are already relatively common in the sixth and fifth centuries BC and concentrated around the Lago Maggiore and Lago di Como. Examples of Lepontic inscriptions can be found outside the sixth century BC core-area, as far south as Ameglia (La Spezia) (Giacomelli 1977) and Todi in Umbria. The so-called Celtic invasion of the fourth century BC caused a decline; numerous examples – inscriptions, graffiti, coin legends – in the second and first century BC suggest a revival of 'indigenous epigraphic culture' in north-west Italy.

One inscription stands out: the bilingual inscription from Vercelli, dedicating a *campus* to man and gods. The Latin text comes first, followed by the Gallic (Lejeune 1977; Baldacci 1977). Lejeune's dating to around 100BC seems plausible, since in this period, the Romans were active in the area (e.g. the battle against the Cimbri 104BC), the nearby silver mines and the foundation of a Roman colony at Ivrea). Names of magistrates confirm the non-Roman character of the local élite/government in north-east Piedmont in this period. The Vercelli inscription presumably records an *argantocomaterecus* as local magistracy. An inscription from Briona records a *lekatos* (perhaps Samnite, rather than Latin) and the *toutas* – an institution known from the Samnites of Central Italy (Campanile 1982). An graffito from Oleggio (*rikanas*) and the latest type of Cisalpine drachma (*rikoi*) may suggest the existence of a *rex* or *reges* in local government (Gambari 1989);

Therefore, both coinage and epigraphy appear as an anti-Roman development in a nominally Roman period. North-east Piedmont and Lombardy, attributed to the Insubres, seems to play a major role in this development. It has recently even been suggested that the Lepontic alphabet is a 'Celtic national alphabet' because of its spread into the Rhaetic regions and into the Transalpine Rhone Valley (Marinetti and Prosdocimi 1994). For some kind of Insubrian identity

(as the people roughly associated with Lombardy and north-east Piedmont), identity and ideology are 'materialised' (De Marrais *et al.* 1996) by many different media – media rarely employed in the pre-conquest La Tène culture. It is expressed in artefacts (the *vaso a trottola* (De Marinis 1978), in forms of art, in coinage and epigraphy, in onomastics (e.g., Akisios/Acisius from Vercelli) and titles of magistrates and political institutions (*takos toutas*, *rikanas*). This much clearer profile which we obtain by the early first century BC, makes the subsequent changes appear only more dramatic.

How can one explain the strengthening indigenous identity in a nominally post-conquest period? As demonstrated by Brown (1996), the concept of resistance has been overused in the past decades, so that nearly everything can be defined as such. Therefore, instead of talking about cultural resistance to Roman rule, I would like to suggest that these apparently non-Roman developments of the second century BC are forms of adaptations initiated by socio-economic pressures which followed the Roman conquest. Among these pressures, the intensification of exchange seems an obvious factor. This was caused by the establishment of markets at the new Roman/Latin colonies. In this respect, Cremona, Piacenza and Genoa are key-locations. Already in the second century BC, Rome had to arbitrate between Genoa and the inhabitants of the Appennine mountains (Bianchi 1996). Annual fairs of pan-Italian importance are attested for Cremona and the Campi Macri (near Mantova) (Gabba 1974).

Access to Roman markets might create new needs, for example, coinage. The facilitated exchange also de-values what was previously considered prestige-goods, presumably causing processes of emulation; the second century BC does not, however, reflect a spiralling demand for ever more prestigious imports (cf. Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978). Instead, wealth remains expressed by La Tène artefacts in Lombardy and by the import of Transalpine La Tène objects. Markets and fairs might have pacified the surrounding peoples by supplying necessary goods, especially for the Insubres, while indigenous élites retained control over access to prestige-goods. This has parallels with fairs and markets on the border and under the control of the Chinese empire and their relation to indigenous, nomadic people (Szynkiewicz 1989). The second century BC, therefore, reflects a period of adaptations to the new political and economic realities. What is significant, however, is that these adaptations, and the socio-cultural changes they cause, largely work within traditional socio-economic patterns. New status markers and new forms of élite control are employed, such as Gallo-Lepontic epigraphy and the Cisalpine drachma. But Rome does not appear to be the model. This can also be encountered in other regions of Italy and was described by Morel as *Romanization à l'envers* (Morel 1991).

All this makes the changes during the late first century BC and the first century AD even more dramatic. First, we see the end of the Cisalpine drachma. Then, the discontinuity of La Tène and Ligurian-style funerary rituals and their material cultures; items of dress (especially the Middle La Tène fibulae and the Ligurian *buttoni conici*) persist longer. After more than 500 years, the Gallo-Lepontic alphabet disappears and gives way to Latin epigraphy. Only during the first century AD do indigenous settlements acquire an urban character. These are changes which seem to start a century after the conquest and culminate in the Augustan period. Does the more intensive exchange of goods and information and the foundation of veteran colonies provide a sufficient explanatory framework for the abruptness and rapidity of change? By virtue of the social actor, societies are constantly being re-defined, but change can be expected to be slow and incremental (Tilley 1982). For the rapidity of change, which can be recognised in the first century BC/AD, it must have been necessary that contradictions within societies were revealed and that existing ideologies became void (Tilley 1982). Is it possible to identify, almost 200 years after the initial Roman conquest, events which might have destabilised existing social hierarchies in north-west Italy in the first century BC and which would have necessitated

significant changes and this new orientation towards Italo-Roman models?

There are many potentially significant events in the first century BC, from the Social War, to the various peninsula-wide persecutions, to the Civil Wars. These events are not unique to Piedmont, but apparent throughout Italy. An important aspect for Italy's indigenous societies must have been the organisation of the army. Before the mid first century BC, the Cisalpine allies were fighting in ethnic groups. With Caesar, the Cisalpine people, now Roman citizens, were enrolled in the legions, levied by Rome and under the command of the Roman élite. This must have threatened pre-existing hierarchies: local élites could no longer fulfil their traditional rôle in society as warrior and protector. Furthermore, the Cisalpine population were given Latin rights in 89BC and Roman citizenship in 49BC. It must be mainly members of the élite which profited from this new status, since it allowed them to participate in the army and administration. This has to be contrasted with the previous period. Cicero tells us (*pro Balbo* 14, 32), that it used to be forbidden in the peace-treaty (*foedus)* to grant Roman citizenship to any Gaul, whether from the Insubres or the Cenomani.

Granting Roman citizenship, did not only have a disruptive effect for the societies involved, it also provided new opportunities. During the Principate, members of senatorial families are known from virtually all cities in north-west Italy. North Italy, and especially the Insubres and the Veneti, became the main recruitment area for the Roman senate in the first century AD. Vercelli provides an interesting example in this respect. In the first century AD it was L. Iunius Vibius Crispus – Roman senator, several times consul, proconsul and who – as Tacitus records – "took the leading place in the Emperor's circle of friends ... by the practical advantages of oratorical power" (*Dial.* 8). The close connection with Rome is also present in the lower strata of Vercelli; many of them serve in the prestigious praetorian and urban cohorts at Rome. North Italy as a whole is also prominent in building works – euergetism – another new élite medium to reinforce status in the post-Republican period. However, villas do not seem to play a significant rôle as status markers, compared with the north-west European provinces. Another interesting example is Susa, the capital of the western Alps which was conquered by Augustus. The praefectus of the Alpes Cottiae is Cottius; the son of king Donnus. Cottius built a triumphal arch in honour of Augustus and a *heroon* – clearly taking up Roman models of his time and establishing a form of power-relationship with Augustus (Bartolomasi *et al.* 1994). For this period, we can generally recognise that developments are more dramatic. Nearby, in the Aosta Valley, we are told that Augustus has enslaved the local population, the Salassi (Strabo 4, 6, 7) and founded the colony of Augusta Praetoria (Aosta). But only four years later, the Salassi put up an inscription in honour of Augustus (Cavallaro and Walser 1988:20–1, no. 1). They called themselves *Salassi incolae*; the *Salassi* who live in the colony. The Aosta Valley, although just conquered, saw a radical change – in settlement pattern, epigraphy, material culture, and onomastics, in other words a complete Romanization within one generation (Walser 1989).

Therefore, I would like to suggest that with the Principate, Rome's society and the attitudes of Rome's élite changed, so that aspects of integration or Romanization became possible. Various pre-conditions were necessary, the possibilities provided to the local population for participation in the Empire were significant. This aspect of 'integration' or 'involvement' was already recognised by Tacitus (*Ann.* 11.24) who contrasted it to the more exclusive Athenian empire. The participation of local élites in the Roman economy, society and politics stimulated a process of assimilation or self-Romanization, i.e. the adoption, if not internalisation of a Roman life-style, ideals, and culture which was focused on Rome and the *princeps* and was used by élites throughout the Empire to express a shared experience. The post-Republican period facilitated these processes. It provided the concept of a Roman identity which was no longer exclusive to Rome's inhabitants. A wider range of opportunities for locals was provided at the

discretion of the emperor. The principate also provided institutions which facilitated participation and integration, such as the *ius Latii* for provincials and reform of the army (e.g. the grant of Roman citizenship and *conubium* on discharge for auxiliaries). The importance of the imperial cult is obvious: the epigraphic culture of the new urban centres, which developed out of indigenous settlements, seems more concerned with *flaminis* and *seviri* than with civic magistracies. The Empire also offers a model for architecture which is copied by local élites, who use urban monuments to symbolise their status.

Rome also manifested itself physically: temples for Rome and Augustus were founded, roads and centuriation re-defined indigenous landscapes, indigenous agglomerations were restructured as cities, the emperor was present in the form of statues, milestones, coinage, festivals and rituals, regions were organised into *provinciae, regiones, civitates*, while theatres and amphitheatres are focus points of an imperial propaganda advertising the advantages of the empire (Häussler forthcoming). By contrast, the question arises of what Roman culture, should we expect to see spreading during the Republican period, prior to the re-definition in the early principate (Zanker 1978)? In other words, the development of indigenous settlements of urban character and monumental architecture and the Romanization of indigenous élites should not have been expected prior to the late first century BC, since both, the motivation and the concept of Roman culture were generally lacking. In that period, local élites, not only in north-west Italy, were able to reinforce their status and adapt to new realities by making use of pre-existing patterns, such as La Tène material culture, the Cisalpine drachma and Gallo-Lepontic epigraphy. This has parallels with other regions of Italy, such as Samnium or Lucania, but also Umbria and Campania, which provide similar chronologies of change with a turning-point – a change of focus – in the first century BC (cf. Coarelli, 1996; Torelli, 1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the term Romanization, as defined above, was intended to explore socio-cultural change, i.e. the impact of Rome on indigenous societies. Therefore, Roman impositions, such as colonies, roads, centuriation, should not be considered to be Romanization themselves, but alien elements put into an indigenous context. Their impact on the indigenous socio-economic systems has to be assessed. We have seen that the impact of Rome was manifested through a variety of processes. For example, exchange of goods is a premise for change, but exchange depends on *demand* and the demand for Graeco-Roman culture needed to be created first. It has become clear that the motivation for change was imports. In north-west Italy in the second century BC, the imported artefacts were prestige-goods, used within existing value-systems and traditions. They were used in feasting and social transactions and travelled along the same trade-routes as in the previous periods. Moreover, the La Tène remains an important focus point for north-west Italy during the second century BC. By the first century AD, however, we see the import, not only of individual items, but of a whole sets of objects, including new types. This was accompanied by changes in funerary rituals and settlement pattern (urbanisation).

Incorporation into the Roman Empire caused a variety of socio-economic pressures, such as demographic change, large-scale dispossessions, the loss of authority, tribute/taxation, etc. This must have caused disruptions to existing social hierarchies and economic systems – disruptions which needed to be resolved by processes of adaptation. One result of this process is the Cisalpine *drachma* and Gallo-Lepontic epigraphy in the second century BC. The underlying motivation was for élites to maintain their control in the local and regional context. In the second century BC, this was still possible within pre-existing patterns. In the first century BC, by contrast, north Italy had become increasingly involved in Rome's internal conflicts. North

Italians participated in the Social War and contributed largely to the Civil War armies. They also participated in Rome's internal politics. Caesar's power base, for example, was largely focused on north Italy. For Italy's population, the first century BC was a major factor of social and economic disruption, as well as political and military participation which creates a common shared experience. The focus point of north Italy's peoples became individual Roman magistrates: people like Pompeius who granted the *ius Latii* in 89BC, or generals like Caesar and Octavian, who granted Roman citizenship in 49BC and ended the provincial status in 41 respectively. The first century BC revealed contradictions and inequalities in both Roman society and societies throughout Italy; the Principate provided an answer for these.

It should occasion no surprise that, in the course of the second century BC, there was already the emergence of a certain *conoscienza unitaria* especially given that Rome's *socii* fought side by side with Roman legions and for common goals (Gabba 1984). This was an emerging common identity which was most clearly expressed in the Social War. The bilingual inscription of Vercelli, or the appearance of Latin names and titles (perhaps the *Kuitos Lekatos/Quintus legatus* from Briona) might be considered a first indication of this emerging identity. But after the Social War, the process of identity accelerated. Italy becomes politically integrated: *novi homines* aspire for magistracies at Rome and the Italian voting potential is used by Roman politicians. Rome's élite had to face an increasing number of *novi homines*. Many Italian communities were directly affected by Sulla's persecutions and the Civil Wars. An estimated ten percent of Italy's population found themselves *rassemblée, déplacée et transplantée* as result of the Civil Wars (David 1994:192–221). For generations, this created a shared experience, out of which a new imperial culture would emerge.

Once social hierarchies are restructured and the ambiguities and contradictions between the city of Rome, Italy, and the provinces were dissolved by Augustus, one returns to a situation in which societal change would be slow and gradual, as we would usually expect in a society (Tilley 1982:26–38). The grant of citizenship to Rome's allies also marks the shift from Rome as a conquering and exploiting empire, based on military force and tribute, to a new form of empire based on aspects of incorporation and participation. Empire becomes a discourse (Tiffin and Lawson 1994). A discourse which in literature is already reflected in Livy's *ab urbe condita*, in Horace's poetry, or, for example, in Tacitus (*Ann.* 11.24) on Rome's generosity in granting citizenship. This is part of an ideology to legitimise Rome's rule as natural and beneficial. By extending Roman citizenship to *peregrinae*, an imperial élite and society emerged. The élite had property and economic interests throughout the empire. It was an imperial élite consisting of senators and equestrians with close links between their local communities, their numerous estates and the political centre, Rome. The latter also became the focus for local communities. Embassies were sent to Rome, and her state cults, especially the imperial cult, were worshipped, while local élites were engaged in tax collection for the Empire.

In addition, the urbanisation of the western empire created new social strata. An urban *plebs* emerges that aspired, for example, for membership in local *collegia* and expressed its identity through the import and imitation of Roman artefacts, not dissimilar to the emerging urban classes in colonial India (Furedy 1979). This process towards an imperial society is a long-term development, of which the *constitutio Antoniana* of AD212 is another major stage. With the Principate, Romanization largely replaces Hellenism as a mode of discourse. A certain global culture emerges which is actively supported by the centre. The concept of modern globalisation does not mean the homogenisation of culture (King 1990), but it involves "the development of something like a global culture, not as normatively binding but in the sense of a general mode of discourse about the world and its variety" (Robertson 1987). Romanization – if understood as a specific post-Republican discourse – has become necessary to maintain the empire.

Romanization is therefore a means to spread an ideology of prosperity and *pax Romana*, which was internalised by local élites and motivated their widespread allegiance within the Empire. Romanization and Roman imperialism have therefore become mutually conditional, and the spread of Roman culture cannot be expected to be an arbitrary or accidental movement in the post-Republican period.

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