

AUTOREFERATY

STUDIA EUROPAEA GNESNENSIA 9/2014
ISSN 2082-5951

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FROM LEX IULIA MUNICIPALIS TO FLAVIAN LEGES MUNICIPALES. DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION FROM CESAR TO DOMITIAN

DOI 10.14746/SEG.2014.9.23

Summary of doctoral dissertation defended at the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, on June 12th, 2012; dissertation supervisor Prof. Leszek Mrozewicz.

The structures of municipal administration were a core element in the consolidation of the Roman state, while their systematic development was a tool of unification, erasing differences between individual regions of the Empire, including Italy and the rest of the provinces. Thus municipalisation became a benchmark of Romanization, one of the most interesting phenomena in the history of the Empire which, on the cultural plane, permanently integrated the diverse parts of a great state.

Expansion of Rome transformed the Urbs into the Empire. Roman practice consisted firstly in military and subsequently in economic subordination of the newly conquered territories. Subjugation was effected through administration. *Leges municipales* and *leges coloniarium*, which regulated the process and the extent of autonomy served to found colonies and elevate administrative rank of cities. Thanks to such laws, lasting administrative structures would come

into being in the provinces, which had a decisive impact on the cohesion of Imperium Romanum, a culturally and economically diversified state. They also enabled the state to continue to exist for such a long time. Apart from other sources, analysis of those legal acts became the basis of undertaken studies, as only such approach makes it possible to divine the intentions of the legislator and the realities in which the laws were implemented as well. The objective was to demonstrate the mechanism of unifying the Empire and its significance in the history of the Roman state.

Roman municipal system, whose chief principles were developed under Julius Cesar and Augustus, was a crucial component in the process of unifying the Roman Empire, and at the same time an efficient tool of management. The thesis relies on the conviction that without municipal administration and local government, Roman Empire would not have attained such a degree of integration and development, nor would it have been capable of persisting so long, as thanks to the municipal system it became resistant to internal crises. In that respect, the rule of the Flavian dynasty (69–96 BC) is the peak point of the process, because it was in that period that the concept of municipalisation of state as a whole took its final shape. Hence the adopted chronological frame, delimited by *lex Iulia municipalis*, associated with the figure of Gaius Julius Cesar and the Flavian *leges municipales*. Apart from other sources, analysis of those legal acts became the basis of undertaken studies, as only such approach makes it possible to divine the intentions of the legislator and the realities of their implementation as well. The objective was to demonstrate the mechanism of unifying the Empire and its significance in the history of the Roman state.

Transformation of the Empire has to be approached beginning with the “federate” state of various provinces and peoples to the formation of one, coherent and efficient state body. The process was undoubtedly associated with the creation and development of the municipal system, which was introduced following Roman political experience in contacts with peoples of Italy during the conquest as well as the later assimilation. Initially, Caesar’s actions were associated with provisional political solutions, only to become a fixed framework of unification of the Empire, a mainstay of ideology and politics. The chapter devoted to integration of Roman Empire under Julius Cesar and Augustus is a crucial one in these deliberations. Gaius Julius Cesar’s “*quietem Italiae, pacem provinciarum, salutem Imperii*” (BC III 57.4) may be considered a kind of political programme. His policy went beyond the frontiers of Rome and Italy, encompassing the provinces and the whole Empire as a result. It should be noted that the whole process set out from the annexation of territories conquered by

the Romans, creation of the federation system and then adapting local administration to the uniform Roman model. The power granted to Caesar by virtue of *lex Aemilia de dictatore creando* of 49 BC and *lex de dictatore creando* of 48 BC provided him with opportunity and legal instruments to carry out *deductiones coloniarum*.

As part of an extensive political undertaking aimed to reorganise the state, both Caesar and Augustus strive to satisfy the expectations of their veterans, which resulted in a number of *coloniae veteranorum* created in the Apennine Peninsula and beyond it. To a large extent, this resolved the “thirst for land” and became a convenient measure applied to solve the issue of discharged soldiers. The land they were awarded with attached them to a given community. As the veterans settled, the number of inhabitants increased. Veterans would often form a separate enclave, but they stabilised cities and, more importantly stimulated urban development policies and claimed for new legal regulations. Municipal communities created by Caesar or Augustus were granted the status of Roman or Latin colonies. Similar privileges were given to a number of indigenous communities in recognition of their services for the Republic or for voluntary adoption of Roman customs and culture. By doing so, Caesar accomplished the first breach in the barriers which separated the people of the provinces from the inhabitants of Italy.

Important instruments employed in the process included legal documents, by virtue of which Rome shaped local administration or autonomy in other words. There are two documents known from Italy and Spain dating from the late Republic: *Tabula Heracleensis* (TH) and *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Urso* (LU). The former is a *digestum* of various acts, a “loose selection” of regulations, which is why it most likely does not determine the status of Heraclea but serves as a template provided to the city in order to draft the document proper in a way which takes local circumstances into account but nevertheless does not depart from the Roman model. The latter is a foundation charter of the Caesarean *colonia Iulia Genetiva Urso*, located in southern Spain. LU, being a normative act (only a third is known today, i.e. over fifty paragraphs of the total of 142) addresses various issues of the local administration: the clerical apparatus of the Urso colony, priestly colleges of pontiffs and augurs, the revenue of the colony (such as *vectigalia* — public lease, etc.), public order (sewage facilities, roads, maintenance of water supply, division of land), internal and external protection of the colony and burials.

Thus LU gives one the idea about the political and administrative organisation of Roman colonies in times between the Republic and the Empire, which

relied on the local officials, local assemblies and *ordo decurionum*, as colonial laws, among which LU undoubtedly belongs, are general legislation providing for the functioning of municipal centres, giving a free rein to *ordo decurionum*, local officials and judicature in the matter of regulations.

Changes introduced between 14 and 69 AD are another important element in the deliberations on the development of municipal administration. This issue is discussed in chapter two. The basic problem is to resolve whether during the rule of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the civil war of 68–69 AD the colonisation and municipalisation policy of Cesar and Augustus was continued.

In this period, the main urbanisation effort targeted the territories of Africa, Gaul and Noricum, as Pliny the Elder reports. The reign of Tiberius was characterised by somewhat restrained policy in that respect, which changed already during Claudius' principate. Both Seneca and Tacitus relate the nature of policies of the latter emperor. Seneca remarks that “ubicumque uicit Romanus, habitat” (ad Helv. VII 7). In Seneca's opinion, every province was subject to colonisation. This was undoubtedly accomplished by the Roman soldier who, “wherever he had won, there he would settle”. All this led to the founding of new colonies or “adding” the military component to the existing urban centres. In the eyes of the author, who wrote in the times of Nero, *omnes provinciae* are already inhabited by Romans. Areas beyond Italy, not infrequently *transmarinae* territories, tempted Romans with their wealth, fertile soil and mineral resources. *Coloniae* and municipia became an integrating instrument thanks to which their inhabitants were involved in the political life of the province and the Empire.

One should also consider the goals of such policies and identify any turning points, if such exist, in the development of municipal administration as a tool which served to integrate the Roman Empire. At this point, one should draw attention to a certain novelty in Claudius' policy, which was at times implemented in opposition to the will of the Senate. This applies in particular to the emperor speech to the senate from 48 AD, which fortunately survives in two kinds of sources, namely a literary one, i.e. Tacitus' *Annales*, and an epigraphic one: the bronze *Tabula Lugdunensis*. Claudius' speech as recounted by Tacitus demonstrates a policy which envisions eradicating differences between Italy and the Empire's provinces. Claudius also defined the aims of assimilation policy, which sought to unite inhabitants of the Empire under the name of Rome (“non modo singuli viritim, sed terrae, gentes in nomen nostrum coalescerent”). The emperor, Tacitus relates, emphasizes that this would be accomplished by founding military colonies worldwide (“cum specie deductarum per orbem

terrae legionum additis provincialium validissimis fesso imperio subventum est”). This means that urbanisation policy initiated in times of Julius Cesar and Augustus should extend beyond the frontiers of Italy.

Apart from Gaul, attention should also focus on the remaining parts of the empire, especially on Noricum and Africa, where Claudius carried out intensive urbanisation undertakings. As regards relationships between current politics and the development of municipal administration, it is crucial to examine municipalisation processes during the civil war of 68–69 AD, and showing whether the shifts on the political scene had an impact on the integration of the Roman state. From Julius Cesar and Augustus onwards, the changes in the urban structure across Gaul are clearly perceptible. Assimilation policy of Claudius’ followed in his predecessors’ footsteps, as demonstrated in the above fragment from the Lugdunum inscription. Claudius noticed that introduction of *viri ex Galia Comata* to the senate is a consequence of the previous state policy and represents its continuation.

The system of colonies and municipia caused the inhabitants of the above territories to become more involved in the political and social life of the Roman Empire. The principate of Claudius is a watershed in the history of Noricum. The emperor reorganised the administration of that territory, granting municipal status *ex iure Latini* to five cities. All of them were mentioned by Pliny the Elder as “oppidum Claudium” (NH III 146). Unfortunately, no normative sources relating to those territories have survived. The only document from Noricum is a fragment of *lex* dating to the 3rd century AD. The document was a normative fundament of the *municipium Lauriacum*. Research has confirmed that the law is in concordance with the Flavian *leges municipales*.

Principal urbanisation activities of Claudius’ in Africa concentrated in two provinces — Mauretania Tingitana and Mauretania Caesariensis. This was dictated by vital political and economic reasons. Nero did not depart from the policy implemented by Claudius. During the reign of the last representative of the Julio-Claudian dynasty *ius Latii* was expanded to encompass Alpes Maritimae, as Tacitus observes: “Eodem anno Caesar nationes Alpium maritimarum in ius Latii transtulit” (Tac. Ann XV 32).

The presence of *ordo decurionum*, *IIviri*, *aediles*, *quaestores* proves that organisational structure of municipia and colonies in Gaul, Africa and Noricum was identical. It is therefore clear that the process of integration and unification of the Roman Empire in those areas was an intensive one.

Subsequent chapter is concerned with municipal administration during the reign of the Flavian dynasty (69–96 AD). The deliberations focus on the extent of Flavian provincial policy, which produced a network of Roman cities, an essential device of Romanisation. Here, the investigations aimed to demonstrate unprecedented expansion of the Roman urban life in the provinces. However, the process cannot be approached only as urbanisation, as it also has to be considered as integration of indigenous centres and Latin colonies into the framework of the *civitas Romana*. It should be observed that municipalisation was the principal motif of urbanisation policy under Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian, which encompassed both the western (Africa, Gaul, Spain, Dalmatia, Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia, Thrace, lands on the Danube) as well as eastern (Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine) parts of the Roman Empire. Internal integration of the state was an important element of policies of the Flavian dynasty, with simultaneous increase in significance of the provincial territories. The policy was strictly linked to the Flavian urbanisation policy and their support for the development of cities.

During the hostilities in 68–69 AD, when contenders began to strive for the throne, granting citizenship became a tool of political struggle. The development of urban structures in the provinces depended at the time from current politics, or to be more precise, on the promises made by the leaders of the warring factions — Galba, Othon and Vitellius. *Civitas Romana* was an instrument they used to win allies. Still, it has to be noted that the choice of territories to which they were ready to grant citizenship was not accidental; they sought support on the territories under the influence of Roman culture, where urban network was markedly developed.

Inspired by Pliny the Elder's "universae Hispaniae Vespasianus Imperator Augustus iactatum procellis rei publicae Latium tribuit" (NH III 30) I paid particular attention to the Spanish provinces. Flavian municipalisation of three Spanish provinces, i.e. Hispania Citerior Tarraconensis, Hispania Ulterior Bética, Hispania Ulterior Lusitania, appears to be a multidirectional process, aimed at integrating the greatest expanse of the empire so far. The process was initiated by Vespasian in the early 70s AD, when an edict which began the municipalisation of the Spanish territories went into force. The civil war of 68–69 is also an important factor because, as Pliny the Elder observes, Vespasian's Spanish policy was associated with "procellis rei publicae". It should also be remembered that the process did not cease under Titus and Domitian, as demonstrated by the preserved *leges municipales*. Thanks to Pliny, we know that municipalisation of Spain was based on the Latin rights (*ius Latium*). Gaius,

a 2nd-century Roman lawyer, enables one to advance a thesis that that was the narrow variation of Latin rights, which in turn is corroborated by inscriptions.

For the Flavians, Romanisation had two essential goals. The first was to develop the urban network by “multiplying” cities, while the second was to create structures of local (provincial) aristocracy that the new dynasty could use as its support. They promoted the growth of local elites, thus ensuring integration of the community by means of Roman political and administrative practice. Flavian rule represents a culminating point in the unification of the Empire, as then the concept of municipalisation of the state as a whole took its final shape. Also, as many as twelve fragments of *leges municipales* date to that period; the origin of seven of those fragments has already been ascertained: all originate from Spain. Unlike *Tabula Heracleensis*, these regulations should certainly be classified as *leges datae*.

Those laws were concerned with public life of the citizens and regulated a number of issues of local administration such as clerical apparatus, priestly colleges, the revenues of cities, public order, internal and external security or burials. For this reason, their interpretation offers a comprehensive picture of the political and administrative organisation of municipia and Roman colonies, from Caesar to Domitian.

It was most likely Gaius Julius Cesar who began the process of unification of Italy by means of a large-scale undertaking of veteran settlement, and the attempt to carry out a normative unification of the cities of Italy. His heir, Augustus, is in all probability the author of *lex Iulia municipalis*, an act which brings uniformity to the functioning of Italian cities. The process, continued by Claudius, reaches its apogee under the Flavians. The rule of the Flavian dynasty marks a climax in the process of unification of the Empire, for it was in those times that the concept of municipalisation of the state as a whole assumed its final form.