

## How to Govern Like a Roman

Between roughly 250 BCE and 14 CE, Rome increasingly defined itself as the sum of its Italian parts; eventually this perception of Romanness (that “Rome” was simply any land in Italy governed by Romans) so expanded “Roman” identity that Augustus called Italia, not Rome, the center of his “Roman” empire. Romans thus “went native” in Italy (such that Italians were seen as Roman and vice versa) but did not in Sicily, Spain, or the Greek East; these latter regions remained in some sense alien, with elites such as the Elder Cato, Cicero, and even Augustus himself viewing these extra-Italian provinces as somehow non-Roman. The theory that “Romanness” was defined not only by the perceptions of elites in the capital, but also by the *interactions* between elites in the capital and non-Romans in the provinces, may be described as a theory of “cultural exchange.” In the first century BCE, Roman identity itself was in large part shaped by this sort of cultural exchange. Significant aspects of the interactions between elites in the capital and provincial non-Romans took place through the offices of the provincial governors and the systems of provincial administration and taxation.

While many historians have considered the importance of cultural *transference* (Rome-centered propagation of cultural norms and customs) to the concept of Romanness in the provinces, none have fully explored the concept of cultural *exchange*. My study brings together the scholarship on Roman colonization of Italy (building on the work of such scholars as E. Bispham and G. Bradley), on the development of local identities through cultural exchange on the individual level (influenced by J.A. North, R. Roth and E. Herring), and on the socio-political rhetoric of Cicero (including work by A.M. Riggsby, J.M. May, E. Dench, and A. Lintott). By thinking about Roman identity in this context, we can create what N. Terrenato (2001) refers to as “a framework of explicit dialectics” in which to discuss the range of possible responses to Romanization and understandings of Romanness.

In this paper, I examine the ideas of Romanness portrayed in Cicero’s speeches concerning provincial administration. For Cicero, the understanding of what it meant to be “Roman” was an essential rhetorical tool and was inextricably linked to a code of conduct for Roman treatment of provincials. In the *Verrine Orations*, for example, the blistering indictment of Gaius Verres, the provincial governor of Sicily from 73 through 70 BCE, Cicero paints Verres as un-Roman (and even “piratical”) in his every action, and especially in his behavior toward the province he was supposed to protect. Later in his career, in contrast, Cicero went on to defend

other provincial governors (in the *Pro Scauro*, *Pro Fonteio*, and *Pro Rabirio Postumo*, for example) by again invoking un-Roman characteristics in order to appeal to the emotions of the jury, but this time ascribing such characteristics to the provincials under Roman authority.

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