In recent years, the Covid-19 outbreak has rapidly altered our society on a large scale. The pandemic has changed our view on social interaction, health, and administration. Everywhere, politicians have reacted by taking drastic political measures. However, their policy actions have been subject to intensive public debates. Many changes have not been received easily. Since ancient times, policymakers have faced the challenge of making large-scale socio-political changes acceptable. In the ancient Roman world, for example, since the first moment of its expansion, Rome had to deal with this issue.

A significant turning point for the Roman administration of Italy were the consequences of the Social War that juxtaposed Rome to a league of allies from 90 to 89 BCE. As allies, they had been dissatisfied by their legal and financial treatment in connection to a heavy contribution to Rome’s military. A federation of Italian cities fought against their former ally Rome. Despite their military defeat, all surrendering Italian cities received Roman citizenship after 90 BCE. Accompanied by significant socio-political changes, Italy consolidated as the centre of Roman power. In the following years, a Roman type of local government was adapted to cities all over Italy.\footnote{Filippo Carlà-Uhink, “(Re-)Founding Italy: The Social War, Its Aftermath and the Construction of a Roman-Italic Identity in the Roman Republic,” *History in Flux* 1:1 (2019) 3-19, there 6-9; P. A. Brunt, “Italian Aims at the Time of the Social War,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 55:1/2 (1965) 107.}

This essay focuses on the Greek town of Tarentum in the Southern Italian region of Apulia. Tarentum was founded as a Greek polis, a city-state under Greek law, by a group of Spartans in the 8th century BCE. The town gained the status of a Roman municipium shortly after the end of the Social War. Although it probably never participated in a battle.\footnote{A municipium describes a Roman town, which distinct legal status is defined by a city statute issued in Latin. This paper will make use of the Latin name of Tarentum. For the history of the Social War and Tarentum. See: George C. Bauer, *Taras: Its History and Coinage* (New Rochelle 1986) 1, 207; Kathryn Lomas, “Magna Graecia, 270 bc–ad 200,” in: Alison Cooley ed., *A Companion to Roman Italy* (John Wiley & Sons 2016) 253-268, there 256.}

The city of Tarentum offers valuable primary sources for the analysis of socio-political change in this period. For this town, two fragments of Roman legal texts survive, the Tarentum fragment (c.123-103) and the *Lex Tarentina* (c.89-62 BCE).\footnote{The dating of the *Lex Tarentina* is hotly debated. The law was issued somewhat after

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3  The dating of the *Lex Tarentina* is hotly debated. The law was issued somewhat after
Tarentum fragment, consists of a fragmented bronze panel holding parts of a Roman law concerned with compensations for Roman and non-Roman citizens in connection to the implementation of and persecution under Roman law. The later *Lex Tarentina* consists of bronze pieces containing sections of Tarentum’s Roman municipal statute. Here, the surviving part focuses mainly on the rights and responsibilities of local officials. Their analysis can be supported by the investigation of other epigraphic sources found in Tarentum around 200 to 30 BCE. This approach allows for an in-depth case study. It examines Roman legislation as a tool for propagating and implementing Roman ideals of political and social order in allied Italian towns both before and after the war.

Departing from these premises, this paper engages with the extensive historiographical discussion on the impact of the Social War on transforming political, cultural, social, economic, and demographic contexts in Rome and Italy. Traditionally, scholars have examined primarily the political processes in Rome alongside demographic and military developments in the rest of Italy. Some work has been done on the Italian federation and its attempt to create an alternative to Roman domination in Italy. The main question remains if and how a shared Italian identity under Roman hegemony was forged after the conflict. An interesting approach to the formation of Italo-Roman identity has been suggested by Niklas Rafesteder. He compares

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4 Epigraphy describes ‘ancient texts that were documented on various, mostly permanent materials (stone, bronze, etc.).’ Definition via: Mischa Meier and Meret Strothmann, “Epigraphy”, in: Hubert Cancik, et.al. eds., *Brill’s New Pauly*, http://dx.doi.org/ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e332350 (consulted online on 29 December 2022).

the *Lex Tarantina* with a law from the city of Bantia, in Apulia, written in a local language as an expression of a hybrid Italo-Roman identity. Nevertheless, his work lacks an in-depth source analysis. Kathryn Lomas’ studies on the identitarian and social changes in Magna Graecia allow a good overview of political and social changes occurring under Roman influence, by contrast. The short-term impact of the Social War on the municipal administration in Italian towns is mostly overlooked and research gaps are yet to be filled. Most studies on the development of Roman municipal law focus on changes in the Roman administrative system over a longer period of time. In more detail, Edward Bispham offers an extraordinary comprehensive contribution on both short- and long-term transformation in organisation and legislation for the Italian *municipia*. Further positive examples are the works of Michael Crawford about the process of municipalisation after the social war, and Henrik Mouritsen’s detailed analysis of the album of Canusium and its local administration. This album from 223 BCE provides the only complete list of town magistrates and their offices outside of Rome. The scarcity of literary and epigraphic sources on such matters partly explains the lack of more extensive research. Thus, to investigate local representations many studies focus on the period from the early empire onwards. More epigraphic material has survived for that time. Scholarship coins this phenomenon concerning Roman epigraphic material, the ‘epigraphic habit’. Roman epigraphy does not solely represent historical evidence, but it is also a public expression of peer rivalry in Roman society. This cultural process heightened only in the first three imperial centuries.


This paper attempts a new perspective on the discussion of the Social War’s aftermaths in terms of identity formation and political transformation. The essay explores how legislation from Rome influenced the socio-political organisation in the allied city-state of Tarentum before and after the conflict. I approach the main research question by engaging with two sub-questions. Namely, what does the (co-) authorship of the sources reveal about Roman and local political power and identity, and at which audiences were the sources targeted? I critically assess my source material and discuss my methodology before proceeding to the analysis in the next section.

**Approaching Fragmented Sources**

By adopting a micro- and meso-level perspective, my study follows the call of Guy Bradley and other scholars to approach the investigations of the developments of the Social War through the use of contextualised case studies. With Lomas, Magna Graecia has been particularly neglected in this regard. By analysing epigraphic material from Southern Italy, and Apulia in particular, my research focuses precisely on this area and will therefore make a contribution to research on Magna Graecia. In my source selection, I have only included inscriptions that could be located within the area of Tarentum and the bordering Gracchan colony of Neptunia and that are dated between 200 and 30 BCE. These sources have been found using the querying tools provided by the *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby*. My set of primary sources consists of 16 inscriptions in total. Nine are in Latin, six in Greek, and one is in both languages.

This set of sources needs to be examined in light of their authorship, production, and usage to uncover possible limitations.

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12 “Datenbank Recherche,” EDCS Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby, accessed May 10, 2022, https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi.php?s_sprache=en; AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; CIL 01, 1696; CIL 01, 1697; CIL 01, 1698; CIL 01, 2969; CIL 01, 3167; CIL 01, 3169; M. H Crawford, Roman statutes (London 1996), no.8; M. H. Crawford, Roman statutes (London 1996), no. 15; IgI Puglia, 99; IgI Puglia, 100; IgI Puglia, 102; IgI Puglia, 104; IgI Puglia, 130; IgI Puglia, 152.
mation on the actual authorship of these epigraphic fragments (excluding the two legal texts) has persisted to this day. Most of the inscriptions mention a name and often a title associated with the name. With little exception, the persons behind the name are lost in history. Furthermore, one can only assume whether the dedications were set up by the people mentioned in these texts themselves, because the inscriptions are heavily fragmented and contain only a few words of (readable) text. Keeping this survival bias in mind, the source analysis below can still reveal valuable information from the remains that have endured to this day. Nine sources are inscribed on stone, another one is engraved on ivory and one more is applied to ceramics.\textsuperscript{14}

Similarly, both legal fragments do not mention a specific magistrate implementing the law. Style, layout, content, and format make it evident that Roman officials drafted the laws under some influence of local magistrates. In Roman custom they were inscribed on bronze tablets from which only a few fragments survive. The six fragments of the \textit{Lex Tarentina} are numbered as the 9\textsuperscript{th} tablet of a series and contain parts of nine or ten chapters. Thus, only a small part of the law’s minimum of 90 chapters survives. It is possible that both statutes were drafted in Rome and then a local scribe copied them onto the bronze tablet.\textsuperscript{15}

The audience and meaning of the sources are aspects of major interest to this paper. By asking whom the sources addressed and what their functions were, I account for possible biases in the sources’ content.\textsuperscript{16} The majority of the inscriptions deal with a political or a religious topic (table 1). They were intended to represent the persons whose name was inscribed publicly in such a context. Consequently, the inscriptions reflect the social and religious identity that was connected to the people mentioned in the inscribed texts.\textsuperscript{17} Authorities displayed the laws publicly in similar manner as attested by the damage and weathering to the object’s material and the comparison with other cases. The display represented the normal procedure of the Roman legal political system to verify a law and could serve as a point of reference in future legal disputes. The \textit{Lex Tarentina} might have also served to exhibit the status of Tarentum as a municipium to by-passers.\textsuperscript{18} As this paper will argue, the statutes found in Tarentum

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{14} AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; CIL 1, 1696; CIL 1, 1697; CIL 1, 1698; CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 3169; IgI Puglia, 99; IgI Puglia, 100; IgI Puglia, 102; IgI Puglia, 104; IgI Puglia, 130; IgI Puglia, 152.
\textsuperscript{16} Tosh, \textit{The pursuit of history}, 149-154, 164-165.
\textsuperscript{17} Lloris, “Epigraphic habit,” 2; Lomas, \textit{Rome and the Western Greeks}, 159; CIL 1, 3167, CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3169; AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; IgI Puglia, 100; CIL 1, 1696; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1 1698; IgI Puglia, 99; IgI Puglia, 102.
\textsuperscript{18} What type of law the Tarentum fragment belongs to is still disputed. Most convincingly the statute has been recognised as a \textit{Lex repetundarum}. More precisely, the law has
also symbolise the increasing Roman understanding of law and political participation. The remaining epigraphy may have served to declare economic ownership, but their direct use is unclear.\textsuperscript{19} The audience of all inscriptions remains rather vague and can only be deducted partly from the content and its language.\textsuperscript{20}

To sum up, little epigraphic evidence has survived in Tarentum within the last 200 years of the Roman Republican period. What has survived is heavily fragmented. First, this implies a survival bias, because the material persisting until today only presents a – quite literally – fragmented picture, especially concerning the bronze epigraphy.\textsuperscript{21} Second, any interpretation relies on biased later reconstructions of the epigraphic evidence. The long-standing academic engagement with the sources leaves little question of authenticity, however. For my analysis it is important to recognise that the content of the sources is influenced by the original author’s intentions, biases, and goals, as well as, by the modern scholar’s interpretations and translations. The largely unknown authors and audience further limit the sources.

My method of analysis aims at tackling the discussed sources’ limitations. The distribution of Latin, Greek and bilingual inscriptions are compared over time and in relation to the total number of inscriptions found in Tarentum during the selected period (c. 300-30 BCE). The distribution of language can already give insight into the development of Roman and Greek influences on Tarentum. Most of the inscriptions consist only of a few words. Thus, here a concise quantitative analysis proves useful to track change over time with the Social War as the crucial period.

To gain a better overview of the sources, table 1 divides my source material into four different categories. This division is based on close reading of their primary sources and secondary literature. The categories have been broadly

\[\text{\textsuperscript{X}}\]

often been identified with the Lex Servilia Glauciae passed in 101 BC due to its formulation and the use of the legal principle of diuinatio. However, as Ferrary makes clear one clause does not fit this process of diuinatio and so a closer classification remains disputed. C.f. Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, 210-211, 30, 301; Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, no 8; Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, no.15; Rafestseder, “Rolle von Stadgesetzen,” 220-221; Frederiksen “Republican Municipal Laws,” 184, 186-187.

\textsuperscript{19} Igl Puglia, 104; Igl Puglia, 130; Igl Puglia, no. 152.
\textsuperscript{20} AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; CIL 1, 1696; CIL 1, 1697; CIL 1, 1698; CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 3169; Igl Puglia, 99; Igl Puglia, 100; Igl Puglia, 102; Igl Puglia, 104; Igl Puglia, 130; Igl Puglia, 152; Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, no 8; Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, no.15.
inspired by the categories used in the *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby.*²² This categorisation makes a better assessment of the inscription’s contexts possible while relating the content to their language and estimated date of authorship. In this manner, trends over time become visible. The first category, **legal,** includes texts such as laws, statutes, etc. The second, **political,** describes inscriptions that relate names connected to titles concerning political offices and/or acts of administration. The third, **religious,** collects inscriptions defined as scripts mentioning names concerning offices with majorly religious functions or were set up in a purely religious context. Of course, this division is somewhat arbitrary and inscriptions that do not fit any of the categories distinctly are indicated under the fourth category, **other.** In case an inscription fits to more than one category, this is listed in each of those categories. This heuristic quantitative examination (table 1) assists the more intensive qualitative textual analysis. The latter analysis focuses, especially, on the *Lex Tarentina* and the Tarentum fragment. The inquiry is based upon an in-depth reading of the sources merged with a contextualisation of the sources through secondary literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Category</th>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Other (inc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution among Inscriptions:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language: Latin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language: Greek</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language: Bilingual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time span:</td>
<td>c. 123-44 BCE</td>
<td>c. 130-31 BCE</td>
<td>c. 200-31 BCE</td>
<td>c. 200-71 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources:</td>
<td>Crawford, <em>Roman statutes,</em> no 8; Crawford, <em>Roman statutes,</em> no 15.</td>
<td>CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3169; AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; IgI Puglia, 100.</td>
<td>CIL 1, 1696; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 1698; IgI Puglia, 99; IgI Puglia, 102.</td>
<td>IgI Puglia, 104; IgI Puglia, 130; IgI Puglia, 152; CIL 01, 1697.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, in my analysis I make use of the heuristic concept of ‘anchor-

Table 1. Content of the 17 inscriptions found in Tarentum dated between 200 BCE the earliest and 30 BCE the latest (including Tarentum fragment and Lex Tarentina) based on Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby.

ing innovation’ as the theoretical framework to explain the nature of the municipalisation process in Tarentum. Dutch classicists have pioneered in using it to examine different implementations of innovative change over time. The theory describes change as innovative when a new practice is adopted by a part of a society that had not practised the innovative element before. Involved social groups accept and embrace innovation more readily if it references or includes components of their sociocultural traditions and habits. Such references to known elements are the metaphorical ‘anchoring’ devices of an innovation.23 The little changing layout of coins exemplifies such an anchoring process very well: even when the coins’ value or issuing authorities changed, the well-known design served as a powerful ‘anchor’ to the past that made a new currency more acceptable. The analysis of such ‘anchors’ accounts for the socio-cultural processes involved in the adaptation.24

My analysis examines both the influence of Roman and local norms on the legislation. At the same time, it highlights the role of earlier connections between Tarentum and Rome. Consequently, this paper focusses on the synchronic and diachronic anchoring of the socio-political order produced by the process of municipalisation. This concept allows the exploration of the agency of different groups of authors and audiences within the anchoring procedure.25

Before the Social War: Rome and Tarentum

As outlined in the previous section on the sources, knowledge of their authors, audiences and functions is quite blurry. Nevertheless, by contrasting the socio-political implications of the Tarentum fragment with that of other Roman and Greek epigraphic material I try to present a clearer picture of the dynamics of change and continuity in Tarentum in the second century. Already before the Social War, the sources display an increasing interconnection of Roman and local politics in public representation. The Roman influence on the Greek polis of Tarentum certainly grew steadily after the second Punic War when the former Roman ally – at that time still a very influential power in Magna Graecia – had sided with Hannibal. After Tarentum’s defeat, Rome perceived its port as strategically important and the city as still military dangerous. Thus, alongside a peace treaty, whose content is unfortunately lost, a Roman military garrison and prefect installed themselves in Tarentum for at least the next 30 years. Rome confiscated some of the community’s land and turned it into ager publicus – meaning public land assigned by the Roman state. Most probably, the Gracchi used this land to establish the colony of Neptunia.

24 Ibidem, 21, 23-24, 32.
25 Ibidem, 23, 32.
founded in the vicinity of Tarentum in 123/122 BCE. As tribune of the plebs, the Gracchi brothers had promised Rome’s poor inhabitants food supply and free land in colonies outside of Rome. Simultaneously, it seems that the political relevance and population of Tarentum steadily declined throughout the century. Yet, the Greek polis of Tarentum with its Greek political tradition continued to exist at least until 100 BCE. A Greek inscription dated between 131 and 101 BCE still uses purely Greek terms to describe the political offices of the ‘guardian of a leader.’

Before the Social War, Rome employed agents to allied communities situationally. These messengers essentially exercised Roman power across Italy. The agents represented Roman interests and publicised Roman law, as in the case of the Tarentum fragment. The ‘Tribunes of the plebs’ signed the fragment in question. Thus, its authorship was not local, but a result of Roman politics. The law likely passed through the plebian assembly and, so, Roman citizens had some influence on its implementation.

This is even more likely, as it shows similarities to the Gracchan Lex repetundarum. The law found in Tarentum concerns itself with a series of clauses on Roman law enforcement and offers bonuses for those assisting in such cases. Identified as a Lex repetundarum it describes the distinct Roman legal principle of nominis delatio. This principle labels the practice of informing the appropriate magistrate with the name of the accused. Furthermore, it only deals with the persecution of Roman citizens. Consequently, the law is firmly embedded in Roman legal tradition. Nothing in the law indicates that it was adapted to local circumstances and the city of Tarentum is not mentioned by name. The law held general validity for all Roman citizens and was probably published broadly in parts of Italy with extensive contacts to Rome. In that sense, the fragment definitely attests to the increasing presence of Romans in Tarentum and the proximity of Roman inhabitants in Neptunia and the villas of the hinterlands.

Significantly, however, the law does not just address Roman citizens. Following Crawford’s interpretation, the law offered rewards to successful non-citizen accusers. Such rewards entailed the exclusion from obligatory military service, most likely, the offer of citizenship, and the inclusion in the accused’s tribe. In case the accuser preferred the retention of local citizenship, he could ask for the exclusion from munera. In a broader sense, munera defines the duties to the public. An individual could fulfil this by political functions, financing

27 Gargola, Roman Order, 118; Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 50; Crawford, Roman statutes, no. 8; Crawford, Roman statutes, 210.
28 Crawford, Roman statutes, no. 8; Lomas, “Magna Graecia,” 256-257, 259; Crawford, Roman statutes, 210; Fergus Millar, The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic, Jerome Lectures, no. 22 (Ann Arbor 1998) 23-24; Bauer, Taras, 207.
of public events, or – as probably meant in this case – by military service.29

The inclusion of non-Roman citizens implies three important consequences. First, it shows that in military matters Rome had already integrated allied citizens through obligations manifested in treaties between Rome and the respective states. Second, the law indicates that Rome’s legal and political order was open to expansion and orientated itself toward local communities in encouraging participation in Roman jurisdiction. Third, a clear distinction between ‘allied’ and Roman citizenship was retained, because Roman or local citizenship were treated as two mutually different categories. Lists of such benefactors were publicised in a ‘contio and in the senate’ and ‘in the forum’ showing the importance and public awareness of citizenship grants.30

It is noticeable that the law implemented the process of full political integration in Roman society on an individual level and from case to case. Lomas’ and other’s research suggest, that a successful trial against a Roman citizen probably required networks in Rome and clientship with influential Romans. The integration into the new political system after a successful citizenship grant did, too.31 In consequence, the chance of success was in most cases limited to the local economic and political elite that could exploit pre-existing networks to Rome. However, this also inherently meant a political disconnection from the community of origin. Alternatively, an individual could opt for complete autonomy from Roman obligations and thus, strengthen their economic and political position in the local society. For Tarentum, it remains unclear if a citizen ever stood before such a choice. On a more abstract level, the Tarentum fragment represented Roman hegemony over a political and military order in Italy, while Roman and local citizenship and legislation remained two distinct categories in Tarentum.32

Tarentum’s Public Sphere: Religion and Politics

Tarentum’s democratic system existed since the late 4th century. Here, the elected office of the highest official and (often) general, the strategia, was the most important magistrate. As elsewhere in the Greek world, the societies in the Italian-Greek polis also expected benefactions from local elites towards the community in the form of festivals, building projects, and other gifts. This practice - called euergitism - showed similarities to aspects of the Roman client system.

Crawford, Roman statutes, no. 8; Crawford, Roman statutes, 215-216.
A contio is an assembly of Roman citizens summoned by an official for information- and explanatory purposes. Crawford, Roman statutes, no. 8.
Crawford, Roman statutes, no. 8; Lomas, “The weakest link,” 197-213.
Considering the presence of these social and political systems that were based on public representations, it is quite striking how little epigraphic evidence in the Greek language has survived in Tarentum for the examined period with only 36.6%. According to Lomas, this seems to be true for the whole of Magna Graecia.  

Nevertheless, the Greek inscriptions with religious or political content all date prior to the Social War. They attest to some form of engagement in the Greek political and religious public sphere in this way. Compared to the distribution of Latin inscriptions after the turn of the century, the presence of only one Latin engraving might indicate that the immediate public sphere in Tarentum still focused on a Greek-speaking audience. This perception might be influenced by the inherent survival bias. It is sure that the cities of Magna Graecia remained ethnically diverse and language was not necessarily an indicator of identity or ethnicity. Consequently, the modern historian has a very hard time understanding the demographics of these societies.

On the one hand, the epigraphic evidence in table 1 clearly testifies to the influence of Roman individuals and conceptions of religion in Tarentum. Very interesting in this regard is the bilingual inscription ‘A[ulus] Titinius A[uli] f[ilius] [Di]anae aidicolam votum dedit meretod / Αὖλος Τιτίνιος Αὖλω  ὑὸς Ἀρτάμιτος εὐχὰν ναίσκον ἀπέδωκε’ from 200-171 BCE. The name ‘A[ulus] Titinius A[uli]’ indicates a Roman background. This religious dedication to the Goddess Diana proves the long coexistence of Latin and Greek elements in Tarentum. In another inscription a Greek named ‘[Ἀ]ντιγόνου’ (‘[A]ntigónou’) dedicated his inscription to the ‘-ου Ῥωμαῖος’ meaning probably the Roman god or gods.

On the other hand, both epigraphic texts show that the authors perceived the Latin-Roman world and the Greek locality as somehow separate entities. Aulus’ inscription is bilingual. This implies that the text was aimed at two distinct audiences – a Greek and a Latin speaking – and that the author was part of both realms. In a similar fashion, the emphasis on Roman gods in the Greek inscription curiously highlights that in reality Greek and Roman practices often differed in ceremony, worship, priesthood, and perception. In that way, the source makes a strong case against the common assumption of large ly aligned Roman and Greek religious conceptions. Furthermore, many of the examined Greek epigraphy classifies as religious (table 1). This supports Lomas’ interpretation that the field of religious epigraphy displays the largest amount of continuity in the representation of Greek identity. Consequently, the sources showcase a complex interrelation between Rome and Tarentum. Accordingly,

33 Lomas, Rome and the Western Greeks, 143, 145-147, 160.
34 Ibidem, 160, 169; Lomas, “Magna Graecia,” 257; Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 32; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3169; AE 2013, 322a; AE  2013, 322b; Igl Puglia, 100; CIL 1, 1696; CIL 1 1698; IgI Puglia, 99; Troisi, IgI Puglia, 102.
35 CIL 1, 1696.
36 IgI Puglia, 99.
it is little surprising that no reports of Tarentine participation in the Social War against Rome seem to exist.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{After the Social War: Tarentum as a Municipium}

The community of Tarentum gained citizenship in or after 90 BCE. This accelerated the increasing interconnection between Rome and the Tarentum of the second century BCE. Indeed, the process of municipalisation after the Social War proved to be a turning point. The sources display an increasingly encompassing Roman understanding of politics and public representation. These changes unfolded in Tarentum at unprecedented size and speed after the Social War. Such innovations anchored themselves in the endurance and inclusion of previous social and political traditions. In that way, Rome’s and Tarentum’s political elite – and in a wider sense both their populations – could identify with the new socio-political order.\textsuperscript{38}

The full integration of Tarentum into the Roman political order was facilitated significantly by the process of municipalisation that occurred in all parts of Italy following the Social War. This process meant the re-ordering of Italy in a more coherent form of local administration. After gaining citizenship, the Italian cities were reorganised under Roman law as \textit{municipia} – a statute summarising the rights and obligations of the Roman citizens and community formally concluded this procedure, the \textit{constitutio}. For the case study of Tarentum, the \textit{Lex Tarentina} – most reasonably dated approximately ten years after the conflict – is the most important source on the earlier stages of the transformation of local legalisation and politics according to Roman norms.\textsuperscript{39}

The creation of a city statute was a highly complex process and our knowledge about it has significant gaps. The exact authorship of the \textit{Lex Tarentina} stays unknown. Following Bispham, Crawford, and other authors, the law must have been initiated through official channels in Rome and stands in the legal tradition of the twelve tables. The twelve tables describe a collection of civil laws and rights supposedly composed during the struggle of the orders. Their content has not survived in epigraphic form. However, the legislation of the twelve tables forms the most important basis for later Roman civil laws (\textit{ius civile}).\textsuperscript{40}

It seems likely that the law was composed by a small group of Roman legal

\textsuperscript{37} CIL 1, 1696; IGl Puglia, 99; Lomas, \textit{Rome and the Western Greeks}, 128; Lomas, “Magna Graecia,” 265.

\textsuperscript{38} Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, 302.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibidem, 302; Crawford, “How to create a ‘Municipium’,” 31; Crawford, \textit{Roman statutes}, 309.

\textsuperscript{40} Crawford, “How to create a ‘Municipium’,” 34; Bispham, \textit{From Asculum to Actium}, 209, 227. For twelve tables see: Gottfried Schiemann, “Tabulae duodecim” in: Hubert Cancik et.al. eds., \textit{Brill’s New Pauly} http://dx.doi.org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e1128170 (consulted online on 27 October 2022).
experts that were responsible for most of the city statutes in Italy. The similarities between the Lex Tarentina and other statutes such as the Lex Coloniae Genetiucae or the Lex Osca Tablueae Bantiniae suggest that the laws either inspired each other or that some sort of rough draft and standardised norms existed that were then adapted to each city specifically. A certain uniformity in the material, layout, and text format underscores these notions further. The theory of local changes to the laws is further underlined by − what other authors have called − a partly ‘clumsy adaptation’ of legal clauses in the Lex Tarentina. However, this adaptation might have represented local needs rather than ‘local clumsiness’. The passing of the law probably required verification through the Roman senate and not by an assembly, although the ancient sources remain vague in this regard. Judging from other laws, a curator − a juridical Roman magistrate with limited temporal appointment − overviewed the implementation.

Despite the strong Roman framework, the local agency remained important in the process of gaining a city statute. Bispham proposes that the creation of such a statute had to be initiated by the communities themselves. He hypothesises that the municipalities send representatives of their city to Rome. The cities probably activated personal networks to the Roman political elite to advertise for the implementation of a city law at the same time. Such delegations normally consisted of magistrates belonging to the local elite. The exact nature of such networks remains difficult to reconstruct. The fact that only one gens from Tarentum gained a relevant political position in Rome indicates that Tarentum’s connection to Rome must have been comparably weak. The relatively long distance to Rome probably created little incentive for Roman patrons to use Tarentum as a community of voters to influence popular assemblies in Rome. Nevertheless, Tarentum’s location at the important route of the Via Appia and its ancient traditions might have helped to gain the municipal charter, because the law states that the residing magistrates had to implement the Lex Tarentina. Crawford and Frederiksen believe that some unusual Latin formulations in the statute might account for a local scribe possibly

\[ \text{\textcopyright Robrecht Decorte, "Publishing Laws: An Investigation of Layout and Epigraphic Conventions in Roman Statutes," Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik 195 (2015) 243-254, there 244-245, 247, 249-250, 253; Eck, "8 Documents on Bronze," 144-148; Rafest-seder, "Rolle von Stadgesetzen," 219; Crawford, Roman statutes, 6-8, 309-310; Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 209, 227; Crawford, "How to create a 'Municipium',' 34.} \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 208.} \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright Crawford, Roman statutes, 6-8; Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 208-209, 237.} \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright Bispham, From Asculum to Actium, 234, 246, 416-17, 440.} \]

\[ \text{\textcopyright Gens is a Roman unit describing family related to a shared ancestor. Gens often pass on public responsibilities and offices. In this case, there was only one recorded senatorial family from Tarentum. Lomas, Rome and the Western Greeks, 157-158; Lomas, “Magna Graecia,”263.} \]
copying the law on bronze tablets for publication.\(^{46}\) Thus, the authorship and implementation of the law suggest a stronger reorientation toward Rome from Tarentum. Personal ties remained important – as before the war – and Tarentine magistrates retained important agency within the process although with a heavy dependency on their Roman colleagues.

**A Changing Political Order and Public**

The flexibility and possibility for the expression of local traditions and elements proved a significant factor for the success of the Roman municipalisation process. This also attests to the power local magistrates managed to retain within the new political system. In particular, the law speaks of the misuse of ‘public, sacred or religious money’ by officials.\(^{47}\) As Crawford outlines, the misuse of public and religious money were separate offences in Rome. This divergence from the Roman standard might account for the local cult of Manes.\(^{48}\) Moreover, the property qualification of a building ‘which be roofed with not less than 1500 tiles,’ the control on the departure from the city, and other securities required for an office in the magistracy of Tarentum adapt to the local needs of the demographically declining city.\(^{49}\) The law facilitates the previous practice of *euergetism* by allowing fines to be spent on 'games' or 'monument[s].’\(^{50}\)

The frequent mentioning of Tarentum and formulations such as ‘in the senate in the municipium of Tarentum, he is to have in the town Tarentum or within the boundaries of that municipium a building’ seem to purposely emphasise the locality and significance of Tarentum, while also making a binary distinction to other municipia and Rome.\(^{51}\) The law reveals that the local assembly elects future magistrates and delegates the task of maintaining and constructing the local infrastructure such as buildings, streets, and canalisation to city magistrates. Power in local magistracies, finances, and policies could likewise be partly retained.\(^{52}\)

Despite this, the *Lex Tarentina* signifies a major restructuring of local administration and society in Roman terms. Roman administrational organisation

\(^{46}\) Ibidem, 457-459; Crawford, *Roman statutes*, no.15; Crawford, “How to create a ‘Municipium’,” 34; Frederiksen “Republican Municipal Laws,” 198; Crawford, *Roman statutes*, 310.

\(^{47}\) Crawford, *Roman statutes*, no.15; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 10; Crawford, “How to create a ‘Municipium’,” 31.


\(^{50}\) Crawford, *Roman statutes*, no.15; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 218-219.


\(^{52}\) Crawford, *Roman statutes*, no. 15; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 11-12, 209, 223, 416, 422; Crawford, *Roman statutes*, 6, 309.
typical for Roman towns replaced the Greek democratic system and Rome took responsibility for the foreign policy, military, and capital jurisdiction. Both ‘IIIviri’ and ‘Ilviri’ are mentioned in the law as the highest office, these are assisted by the local ‘aediles’, ‘senate’, and ‘curiae’.\(^{53}\) The simultaneous mentioning of ‘IIIviri’ and ‘Ilviri’ seems odd as these offices normally did not exist alongside each other. Most likely, this again attests to an imperfect local adaptation of the law either through including the colony of Neptunia or a mistake in the local transcription. Alternatively, it describes the process of implementation of the law which required an additional office for supervision. In line with other municipalities, ‘Ilviri’ ruled Tarentum around the Julian times as an inscription shows.\(^{54}\) The names of the offices and the clear connection to Roman legal tradition highlight the emulation of a very Roman understanding of politics, society, and law.

Furthermore, the text mentions that some of the first magistrates ‘shall have come to Tarentum’.\(^{55}\) This could refer to Tarentines that went to Rome to lobby for the law and overview its drafting and return with its implementation. However, it is also very likely that these new magistrates were Roman themselves. The new magistrates must have been under the influence of the Roman political elite in either case. These magistrates, then, allowed for a tighter political connection between Rome and Tarentum and could serve as representatives of Roman interests. The citizens of Tarentum could, now, redirect certain formal political participation to Rome as their citizenship allowed them to participate in the popular assemblies, at least in theory. The intensity of such participation is contested and was likely limited by the expensive travel to distant Rome. Again, probably only the elite could make use of their right to political presentation, but perhaps in the name of the whole community.\(^{56}\)


54 Controversial is the simultaneous use of the offices of Ilviri and IIIlvi in the law. For Frederiksen and others, this is explained by an imperfect use of clauses found in other legal texts or the merge of the nearby colony of Neptunia with Tarentum. Gasperini and Degrassi even argue that Tarentum had been ruled by Ilviri from the beginning. In opposition to Laffi, the different clauses reflect the transitional period of the law that eventually led to a new system under Ilviri; via Crawford, *Roman statutes* 302-303; U. Laffi, *Id. Colonie e municipi nello stato romano* (Rome 2007) 196-197, 225-227; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 216, 226-230; Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks*, 142-143, 146; Crawford, “How to create a ‘Municipium’,” 33; AE 2013, 322a.

55 Crawford, *Roman statutes*, no.15.

Importantly, the survival of more Latin epigraphic material and the use of Latin for legal and administrative purposes indicate a certain break with the past. Latin was now the language in which political business was conducted and represented in public. At the same time, Roman customs of public life seem to have gained importance. In line with Roman legal procedure the Lex Tarentina was publicly displayed on bronze, for example. The tablets’ nailholes, and wear and tear testify to this. The law represented the new socio-political order consciously and was a continuous public symbol of the new Roman-centred order in that way.\(^{57}\)

It is hard to define the audience of this display as Tarentum’s demographics at this time are unclear. Surely, the statute signified Tarentum’s status to Roman inhabitants and by-passers. It can be expected that the local elite was capable of understanding its Latin, after all the content that has survived, addresses them first and foremost. Hence, probably they were responsible for displaying Tarentum’s precious position in the new order. It is less certain whether lower townsfolk and farmers could understand the statute’s content. Perhaps, the use of Latin itself already indicated change and served as a point of reference. The merging of Neptunia and Tarentum indicates a certain degree of intermingling of the Greek and Roman population. The Roman rebuilding of the Greek theatre and the construction of an amphitheatre and baths in the city suggest an increasingly Roman society, as large Villa estates gradually divided Tarentum’s countryside. Romans and members of the local elite presumably owned these domains, while the number of small farms diminished.\(^{58}\)

These processes explain why authors of the first century only mention Tarentum in relation to its prosperous wool and purple dye industry. In line with Crawford’s and Bispham’s studies of municipalisation, the fluid nature of the city statute ensured cities like Tarentum to survive as ‘de-urbanised’ and politically less important, but, in Lomas’ words, ‘viable communities’ with a Roman political outlook anchored in local identity.\(^{59}\)

The remaining epigraphic evidence supports this further. All surviving sources with religious or political content after the turn of the century are in Latin. However, in line with the epigraphic habit, the majority of epigraphy included for analysis dates to the second half of the century. The only surviving Greek texts were inscribed on everyday objects. These instruments were intended for personal use and consisted of names or small sequences of letters. This trend in epigraphy seemingly signifies an increasingly Latin expression.

\(^{57}\) Crawford, *Roman statutes*, 32, 301; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 223, 244-245; Frederiksen “Republican Municipal Laws,” 186.


of public representation and politics, while Greek seemed to persist in private and economic spheres. As table 1 shows, the last Greek inscription dates to 71 BCE at the latest, yet, an endurance of Greek as a prevailing language outside the public sphere appears reasonable considering its high esteem in the Roman world and its continued importance in the empire’s east. The Greco-Roman historian Strabo described the survival of Greek customs and language in the case of Tarentum for the time of Augustus. Further, the persistence of Greek can explain a small Hellenistic revival in the first century CE.\(^{60}\)

**Conclusion: Piecing together a Local Perspective on Roman Italy**

The proposed survey of the epigraphic evidence clearly illustrates the complexity and multifaceted nature of the influence of Roman municipal legislation on the socio-political organisation in the allied city of Tarentum both before and after the Social War.

Before the Social war, Tarentum and Rome possessed distinct but compatible political systems with their own traditions under the auspices of Rome. Rome imposed some obligations on its allies – mainly of military nature – and the Roman legal system partially opened to allied citizens. This change made it possible for individuals to switch between the two political systems. Nevertheless, Rome had no direct influence on local municipal laws. Both religious and political inscriptions showcase awareness of nuances between local and Roman traditions. Yet, as time passed, the proximity to Romans, and, especially economic interactions, created a more and more intertwined legislative and socio-political system. Networks of the local and Roman elite probably managed the direct political contact.

The Social War proved to be a turning point. It caused an expansion of the Roman organisation of law and politics on local levels through the introduction of the Roman municipium system authored in Rome. The new order blossomed in the fertile soil created by the already existing interactions between Rome and its allies. Eventually, Roman-style bureaucracy replaced the older local administration. Through the grant of citizenship, the political relation to Rome became more formalised, but the local elite remained an important intermediary of power. Through assuring that it continued to be only a small and confined elite asserting political power these groups were recruited as supporters of the new system. These local magistrates could retain autonomy in communal matters on a local scale and influenced the authorship of the *Lex Tarentina*.

The theory of ‘anchoring innovation’ can help to better understand this process. In the beginning, Greek traditions were used to anchor the pres-

\(^{60}\) Igl Puglia, 104; Igl Puglia, 130; Igl Puglia, 152; CIL 1, 3167, CIL 1, 2969; CIL 1, 3169; AE 2013, 322a; AE 2013, 322b; CIL 1, 3167; CIL 1, 1698; Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium*, 437-438; Strabo via Lomas, “Magna Graecia,” 264.
ent new ideas of law, politics, and society. Then the anchor shifted and the created ‘hybrid order’ anchored further innovation. At that point, Greek tradition and language had lost their importance as an anchor for innovation in the public sphere. In the private religious and economic sphere, Greek proved more resilient as these were constrained more intensely by tradition. The municipalisation of Tarentum – preceded by the close interaction of the previous century – introduced an outlook of politics and society tied to Roman norms. Yet, it remained flexible enough to adapt to Tarentum’s specific situation. The innovative new order anchored in the preservation of older local elements of the previous administration to stabilise the new socio-political outlook. Thus, the change became acceptable to the Tarentines.

Further close-up case studies of other Italian municipia should trace the resilience of local elements more specifically. My analysis was limited by the fragmented nature of the sources, creating a survival bias that attests more strongly to a Roman agency in the changes of municipal legislation and politics. For upcoming research, an interesting and contemporarily relevant perspective could be how the management of the local infrastructure and natural environment allowed city magistrates to pursue their policies and defend their position in the complex governance system of Roman Italy.