

## THE STATE AS A FOEDERATIO AND ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PERSONALITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE DURING THE DOMINATE ERA

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**Abstract:** The article characterises the interaction between the "lex foedus" as a legal regime of the Roman *ius publicum* (public law) and the state identity of Imperial Rome in the era of dominion. The author's position is that the Roman Empire was de jure a republic by the form of government and a federation by the form of territorial structure. At the same time, the international legal subjectivity of any State is a formal manifestation of its legal identity in the system of international relations through the prism of conclusion, implementation and cancellation of acts of international law. The aim of the study is to characterise the State as a foederatio and to identify the elements of the international legal personality of the Roman Empire in the dominion period. The object of the study is the Roman Empire of the dominion period. The subject of the study is the interaction between the "lex foedus" as a legal regime of the Roman *ius publicum* and the state identity of Imperial Rome in the era of dominion. The article uses the following research methods: description, analysis and synthesis, comparison, generalisation, periodisation, historical and comparative method, and historical and systematic method. The article notes that contrary to the traditional theses of the Germanic legal historiography, foedus agreements between Roman emperors and barbarian tribes did not have the features of interstate agreements. They reflected acts of internal Roman law and regulated relations based on the principle of patronage and client relations. Thus, the Roman People (*Populus Romanus*), through the person of the Roman Emperor, acted as a patronus about the barbarian tribes "federated" by such agreements - *clientes*. This aspect of the federal form of the territorial structure of the Roman Empire became the prototype of modern federal states, where each federation subject enjoys limited sovereignty and sometimes has signs of political independence. At the same time, the Roman Empire was internally differentiated into the Eastern part of the Roman Empire and the Western part of the Roman Empire. This state and legal aspect, called in historiography "divisio regni", was based on the acts of the Emperors Diocletian (286), Valentinian I (364), and Theodosius I (395). This article articulates that all three legal manifestations of the "divisio regni" became the fundamental basis for the Roman Empire's federal worldview of the surrounding political entities constituted in accordance with the "lex foedus" agreements. In other words, the "barbarian kingdoms" of Western Europe in the IV-VI centuries were understood as integral parts of the federal Roman Empire, despite the real signs of their political independence. At the same time, the division of the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire also did not indicate the establishment of legally sovereign state entities. It was only a matter of internal political, administrative, and territorial reform. In the author's opinion, such principles of the federal structure of the Roman Empire are reflected in the body of international legal agreements between Rome and Iran (298, 337, 363, 387, 422). In other words, the Roman Empire positioned itself through these treaties as a patronage metropolis that had the right to dispose of its dependent client entities and a twofold federation of eastern and western provinces. Such legal norms received exceptional ideological and theoretical support from the widespread Christian political and legal concepts.

**Keywords:** Administrative division, State, Dominion, Foederatio, Lex foedus, Public law, Roman Empire

### 1 Introduction

In the context of the Diocletian administrative reform, the federalism of the Roman Empire was ensured by the autonomy of the tetrarchs' regions (Waldron, 2022, p. 78). We are talking about prefectures and dioceses, well-known for the administrative practices of Galerius (305-311) and Constantine the Great (306-337). Of course, the system of the "tetrarchy" as a quadruple power of two senior emperors (Augustus) and two junior co-rulers (Caesars) reflected the realities of a soft territorial union under the auspices of the Empire (Cameron, 1993, p. 23).

During 324-337, Constantine the Great restored personal imperial rule, but de jure, the Roman Empire was considered a tetrarchy (Pohlsander, 2004, p. 54). More legal clarity in the relationship between the "prefectures of Praetoria" and "dioceses" as administrative-territorial units was brought by the reform initiated on 28 March 364 by the brothers-emperors Valentinian I (364-375) and Valens II (364-378) (Gibbon, 1932, p. 847). While in the capital of Constantinople, with the participation of the supreme legislature (the Senate), the emperors legally established the "East" and "West" as officially defined areas of their co-rulership (Drijvers, 2015, p. 89). They declared each other "equal" emperors (Melnyk, 2024a, p. 4). The division of the Empire into "East" and "West" was purely administrative. Accordingly, all decisions of the Eastern emperor were valid for the West and vice versa. This system of legal innovations was based on the legislation on the "dummvirate of the West and the East" of the Diocletian period.

Furthermore, the Administrative Edict of 395, published by Theodosius the Great (379-395), was not so much an independent set of norms as a simple confirmation of the reform mentioned above by Valentinian and Valens. It is noteworthy that the first of them (Valentinian) died during the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Quads (Ammianus, 1974, p. 901; Hughes, 2013), and the Visigoths killed the second (Valens) in the battle of Adrianople (Errington, 1996, p. 16). In his turn, Theodosius I stopped the Visigothic uprising (Curran, 1998; Yilmazata, 2018, p. 27) and restored the border limes along the Right Bank of the Danube. However, the realities of administering the Rhineland limes, where the Vandals, Sves and Burgundians appeared, and the constant assaults on the Danube limes by Hun cavalry required the presence of the Roman emperor simultaneously on two sections of the potential front.

At the end of the fourth century, the "federation" could no longer contain the barbarians, who feared total massacres by the Huns (Hughe, L., 2013, p. 21). These barbarians were forced to break through the border with the Roman Empire and invade the provinces. Such a military and political situation required the Roman emperor to be constantly at the epicentre of the expected breakthrough. Thus, the sons of Theodosius Honorius (395-423) and Arcadius (395-408) had to lead the West and East of the Empire to respond quickly to the barbarian invasions. Before publishing the Edict, Theodosius I had briefly been the sole ruler of the entire Empire and was well aware that he could preserve his own political achievements only by dividing the single office of the emperor (the magistracy) in two.

One way or another, the Roman Empire from 364, and not only from 395, was a single state, administratively divided into the Eastern part (*Imperium Romanum Pars Orientale*) and the Western part (*Imperium Romanum Pars Occidentale*) (Drijvers, 2015, p. 85). These "parts" (*partes*) were not considered independent states. The "parts" were "aggregates of provinces" where the emperors could exercise "immediate", i.e. operational military and political administration (Grant, 1998, p. 46). In the end, the norms of 364 and 395 justified themselves, as in 480, Roman statehood was preserved due to the existence of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (Melnyk, 2024b, p. 90). My author's thesis is that this Eastern Roman Empire, called "Byzantium" by modern historians, assumed legal supremacy over all political entities of the barbarian federation that emerged in the lands of the Western Roman Empire after the breakthrough of the Rhine limes (31 December 406) (Canepa, 2020, p. 23). The de jure "acceptance of the supremacy" of the Byzantine East became possible only because the Empire, even when divided into West and East by the reforms of 364 and 395, was perceived by contemporaries, including philosophers and lawyers, as a single legal entity.

### 2 Literature review

A number of researchers have considered the interaction between the "lex foedus" as a legal regime of the Roman *ius publicum* (public law) and the state identity of Imperial Rome during the dominion period (Banchich, 2015). Thus, M. Canepa, in his work "The Iranian Expanse: Transforming Royal Identity Through Architecture, Landscape, and the Built Environment", draws attention to the fact that in the pre-Islamic period in the Middle East, local dynasties interacted with cultural and ideological monuments. In this way, they united with local tribes and formed strong ties that allowed them to form their power technologies. The author also draws attention to the essence of royal discourse as a systemic phenomenon (Canepa, 2020, p. 23).

The scientist V. Melnyk, in his work "The Roman Empire and the Legal Status of the Visigoths: The Context of the Lower Danube War of 365-369", draws attention to the fact that

diplomatic relations of the Roman Empire were a vital aspect of the development of statehood in a certain period. Thus, Emperor Valens was not only a supporter of peace treaties but also developed strategies for developing relations between the parties in the future. In addition, the author examines the unique experience of the Roman Empire's relations with the states of Eastern Europe. In building interaction between different parties, it is determined that an important role was given to the analysis of the economic and political situation, which determined the strategies of the participants in the diplomatic process (Melynk, 2024c, p. 1).

Researcher H. Elton, in his work "The Roman Empire in Late Antiquity: A Political and Military History", draws attention to the construction of statehood in the last centuries of the Roman Empire. In his vision, despite the crisis of the Roman Empire in the third century, Christianity flourished due to church councils. In addition, the relationship between the government and the people reached a new level, when debate became possible and the people were given the right to express their opinions. He also draws attention to new administrative division mechanisms that affect the defenders' activities and the prototype of the military police (Elton, 2018, p. 219).

Therefore, the analysis of the above-mentioned scientific works and other literature suggests that this issue has been thoroughly considered and fully reflected in the relevant literature.

The aim of the study is to characterise the State as a *foederatio* and to identify the elements of the international legal personality of the Roman Empire in the *Dominatio* period. The essence of the goal is to establish the main aspects of state-building in the Roman Empire during the *dominatio* period.

### 3 Research methods

The following research methods were used in the study: description, analysis and synthesis, comparison, generalisation, periodisation, historical and comparative method, and historical and systematic method. The description method considers the peculiarities of the period of domination. The analysis and synthesis method reflects the specifics of the unity of the political and legal totality of the Roman Empire. The comparison method compares the factors of the Roman Empire's subjectivity.

The method of periodisation is used to identify the time periods outlined in the paper. The historical-comparative method reflects the correlation of factors on which the unity of the people of the Roman Empire was based. The historical-systemic method presents a consistent description of events related to the research problem. The method of generalisation summarises the results of the study.

### 4 Results

From the point of view of theoretical and legal methodology, a particular study of the legal regime of "lex foedus" as the institutional basis of Roman public law federalism provides the basis for the study of instruments and mechanisms for constitutionalising the "Western part of the Roman Empire" and the "Eastern part of the Roman Empire".

Although the legal regime of "lex foedus" was applied by the Roman emperors to the barbarian tribes of Europe, North Africa, the Caucasus and the Middle East, its specificity allows us to conclude the federal form of government in general, as well as about the specifics of governing specific provinces and cities in the context of the division of the Empire into Eastern and Western parts (Bayless, 1972, p. 218).

Thanks to the studies of the legal regime of "lex foedus", it becomes possible to prove the federal nature of the entire Empire, which, in turn, allows us to accept the thesis of the federal content underlying the administrative division of the Empire into Eastern and Western parts (Congar, 1954, p. 13).

Accordingly, in the process of studying the history of the international legal personality of the Roman State, *lex foedus* plays not only a unique role in building a historical chronology and determining the self-identification of the Roman Empire in relations with barbarian tribes (Stickler, 2007, p. 500) but also constitutes the methodological basis for determining the political and legal subjectivity of the "East" and "West". At the same time, it should be recognised that the international legal personality of a state as an institution of international law provides for the full range of rights, obligations and opportunities of this state, relating to both legal (including official political and ideological) self-identification of the state body and expression of such legal identity in the system of international relations - formal diplomatic acts, interstate agreements.

A separate factor for characterising the federal system and the international legal personality based on it is introducing the "Pax Christiana" concept in the legal acts of the Roman Empire. It proves that Christianity helped the state to fulfil its federal functions rather than hindered them (Marcone, 2002, p. 129). The old historiographical thesis that Christianity influenced the "disintegration" of the Roman Empire is still quite widespread among researchers. However, through the process of Christianisation, the public law of the Empire received an ideological impetus to cement the provinces and tribes. At a time when Christianity did not have a legal status, the Roman Empire during the crisis of the third century AD had a much greater chance of collapse than when Christianity became the official religion of the state (after 380). It would have been more challenging to persuade barbarian settlements on imperial territory to be incorporated by the Roman state if it had not been for preaching the unity of the Christian Faith. Thus, it must be acknowledged that Christianity played a constructive rather than destructive role in Rome's political and legal history, ensuring the Roman Empire's long-term existence even after the so-called "Odoacra Revolution" in 476 (Elton, 2018, p. 219). At the end of the fifth century, legal ideology overcame political reality.

The period of dominance began during the reign of Diocletian (284–305) and lasted for the Western Roman provinces until the barbarian "kings" recognised the unified imperial power of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (during 476–480), is interesting for the history of law for its vivid manifestations of direct interaction between socio-political ideology and acts of public law (Rees, 2004, p. 218).

During this period, the citizens and subjects of the Roman Empire mostly adopted Christianity but maintained their commitment to the ancient idea of "oikoumenism" (Heather, 2013, p. 432). The legal consciousness of the Western and Eastern Romans did not undergo cultural and territorial differentiation, which allowed them to look at the whole world as "their property" or as "their property in perspective" (Grant, 1998, p. 46).

The self-identification of the inhabitants of the Empire as bearers of "God's chosenness" was not intra-group but inter-group. The sociological phenomenon of the "Empire as a commonwealth", which emerged at the dawn of the principate, became part of the behavioural stereotype of the Romans under the dominion. Of course, the dominant innovations were significantly strengthened by Emperor Caracalla's Edict of 212 on granting "Roman city citizenship" to all free residents of the Roman Empire. It not only increased the tax base but also made the population of the provinces and tribal elites so loyal to the very idea of the Empire's existence that they stayed within the common political and legal framework (common borders) even in the critical period of 235 – 270 Homo Léon Pol "Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Aurélien" (Homo, 1904, p. 230).

What kept heterogeneous tribes and remote territories in a single political and legal entity? These forces should be considered a single supreme ruler (emperor), a single faith (Christianity) and a single citizenship (Roman), which were superimposed on the

traditions of the unity of the Mediterranean market – a free platform for trade and economic exchange, as well as information and cultural communication. This is demonstrated in Figure 1: The three pillars of the unified political and legal

system of the Roman Empire. Accordingly, the Roman Empire is still an example of a relatively successful functioning of a federal state.

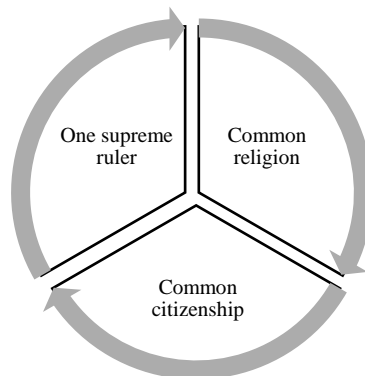


Figure 1. Three Pillars of the Unified Political and Legal System of the Roman Empire

Source: developed by the author

At the same time, speaking about the discourse of the Christian "chosenness" of the Roman Empire, we must not forget that any identity is built on the opposition of "our own – others". Today, studies on this topic are most often found in sociological and especially ethnological literature. Nevertheless, the problem of "friends and foes" remains an essential issue in the sociology of law and the theory of state and law. It relates primarily to the social determination of legal consciousness. It is impossible to deny that the adoption of Christianity and the simultaneous preservation of commitment to "oikoumenism" constitute a social psychology phenomenon.

The opposition of "self" to abstract or concrete "them" is the foundation for any identity. The opposition of a "good" phenomenon to something "evil" already forms an identity. The imperial identity of the Roman Empire, as noted, had a unique dialectical character - the Romans understood their Empire as a one-of-a-kind "ideal" state ("Republic").

The main force for the formation of the Roman Empire's subjectivity as an "opposition" was undoubtedly Iran (Lib. Or., 2017, p. 231). The opposition "us-them" considered the traditions of Alexander the Great's conquest in 332–323 BC and Hellenistic control over West Asia (Chaniotis, 2018, p. 209).

The problem of conquering Iran up to the Indus River was often on the surface of the socio-political struggle within the Empire (Jul. Ep., 2012, p. 211). Iran was a constant military adversary, as well as the leading trade and economic partner in peacetime, a trade intermediary between Rome and the Far East, a competitor of Constantine the Great and other emperors in the matter of "patronage" over the Christian communities of the Middle East (Dignas, 2007, p. 31). It would not be an exaggeration to say that relations with Iran were the primary mechanism for constituting the Roman identity.

The primary sources on the history of the Roman Empire's international legal personality during the period of domination are the treaties with Iran. The terms and clauses of the agreements of 298 (Petrus, P., 2015, p. 185), 363 (Ammianus, 1974, 890), 387 (Williams & Friell, 199, p. 41), 422 (Canepa, 2020, p. 43) (provide space for a comparative study of the titles of Roman emperors and Persian shahs, demonstrate similarities and differences in the ways of legalising and legitimising the form of state government, characterise the peculiarities of the functioning of the federal form of state structure, and show transformations of the ceremonial name of the Roman and Iranian statehoods. Only interstate agreements can provide a legal historian with the necessary solid basis for comparative studies.

The political and legal identity of the Empire in its agreements with Iranian rulers is distinguished by persistent references to historical territorial law. However, the theory of territorial-historical law came to the Mediterranean from Greater Iran, where it flourished during the establishment and consolidation of the Sassanian dynasty (Canepa, 2020, p. 43).

Thus, while Iranian ideas about the legal personality of their state (i.e., their legal identity) are characterised by a strong connection with the dynastic principle and almost complete identification of Iran itself with the family of the ruling Shahinshah, Roman ideas of a similar order are distinguished by an emphasis on the republican foundation and a demonstration of the democratic and electoral principle of imperial power. According to the reconstructions of the agreements, the Roman side's power holder in all cases is the "Roman People", which nominally delegated its powers to the Senate. The emperors acted independently or through intermediaries (legates) but always agreed with the Roman Senate (Ibbetson, 2015, p. 30).

The epoch-making Edict of 311, signed by Emperor Galerius (305–311), outlined the contours of the further Christianisation of the entire Roman Empire. It was this document, and not the Edict of Milan issued two years later by Constantine I and Licinianus Licinius (313), that legalised Christian ecclesias (church communities) in the Roman state (Marcone, 2002, p. 21).

Later, when Constantine the Great realised the ideological and political power of Christianity, the image of Christianitas acquired an institutional and legal nature at the First Ecumenical Church Council in Nicaea (324) (Fernández, 2020, 200). In addition to the emergence of canon law, Emperor Constantine contributed to the relocation of old Rome to a new location. In 324–330, the construction of the New Rome was already underway, solemnly consecrated on 11 May 330. Thus, the city with the unofficial name "Constantinople" appeared (Georgacas, 1947, 355). In the canons that followed the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Italian Rome was already mentioned as "Old Rome" (Conciliorum Oecumenicorum decretal, 2002, p. 112). Likely, the primary Roman Senate (the highest legislative body of the Roman Republic) was transferred from Italy to the City of Constantinople, which allows us to assert that New Rome became the official capital of the unified Roman Empire (Skinner, 2008, p. 130). At the same time, Western Roman emperors, after 364, placed their "bets" in different cities (Mediolanus, Augusta Treverorum, Ravenna, Arelatum), only occasionally visiting "Old Rome". By doing so, the Western Roman rulers paid tribute to the only capital of the Empire, which had been located on the Bosphorus Strait since May 330.

Recognition of this fact (the national importance of the capital of the Roman Empire - Constantinople), as an additional aspect of the study of the history of the international legal personality of the Roman Empire, dramatically simplifies the legal reconstruction of the "assumption" by the Eastern part of the Roman Empire of supreme power over the provinces of the Western part of the Roman Empire after the death of the Western Emperor Julius Nepotus (480) (Stein, 1949, p. 45).

Of particular significance was the ceremony of dedication of New Rome (Constantinople) to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which began the capital life of the city on 11 May 330. Among Byzantine scholars, the so-called "Byzantine history" is counted from this date (Lozanova-Stancheva, 2018, p. 320). Indeed, the transfer of the capital of Constantine the Great from Old Rome (Italian) to New Rome (Bosporus) should be considered a non-trivial event (Eusebius, 1999). However, this move never signalled the foundation of a new state. Rome as a City was now considered the "Second Rome", but the Roman Empire as a Republic was not the "Second Roman Empire". Reasoning about the "decline of the Roman Empire" and its transformation into a kind of "Byzantium" is devoid of political and legal basis and can only be perceived as philosophical and historical interpretations.

After 330, "oikoumenism" received ideological and theoretical support from the theoretical constructions of "Christianitas" (Smith, 2016, p. 12). In one way or another, Christianity officially claimed to be ecumenical, i.e., worldwide. Constantine the Great himself took many steps to ensure its proper formation. His policy was continued by Constantius II, Constantine the Great, Valens II and Theodosius the Great. Subsequently, Christianitas received additional legislative implementations from Theodosius II and Marcian (Odahl, 2004, p. 67).

The Christian faith linked the international legal personality of the Roman Empire with ecclesiological and even Christological doctrines. Among Christian thinkers, the concept of subjectivity was developed purely theologically. They were mainly concerned with the individual's subjectivity, connected with the state, the Church, autonomy or complete independence of the will, and the concept of freedom.

I note that early studies of biblical and apocryphal exegesis introduced the theological discourse of "divine election" into Roman political and legal doctrines (Cook, 2000, p. 76). From there, some conceptual elements of "divine election" penetrated the legal framework of the Empire, borrowed by the emperors in the process of discussing and concluding federal agreements or interstate treaties (primarily peace agreements with Sassanian Iran) (Smith, 2016, p. 122).

In any case, the "chosen people of God" thesis came to Roman rhetoric and jurisprudence from Judeo-Christian theoretical constructions. In this context, the imperial public-legal level of "divinely chosen" rejected the orthodox Jewish perception of "divinely chosen", where only one nation was recognised as worthy "by blood" (Harnack, 1961, p. 34). The principle of the world-historical exclusivity of the Jews was replaced by the principle of the exclusivity of the Roman Empire as a commonwealth of nations. It turned out that "God's chosenness" was open to all groups and individuals who accepted Christianity. Through the prism of the decisions (canons) of the Ecumenical Church Councils and their supplementary Local Synods, every Christian was connected to the church hierarchy of the Roman Empire. Since the Church depended on the imperial power, the Christians themselves, through the Church, depended on the Roman Empire and became its subjects (Congar, 1954, p. 23).

The example of the Roman-Persian confrontation related to Christianity is very revealing. Already in 324, Constantine the Great wrote a letter to the Iranian Shahinshah with a "demand" to stop the "persecution" of Christian ecclesia (Vita Constantini, IV, 9-13, 1999, p. 56). Subsequently, similar "demands" were made by successive emperors, among whom Theodosius the

Legislator is particularly noteworthy (Labourt, 1904, p. 105). Of course, the Roman government perceived such diplomatic appeals as a necessary "rhetorical device". However, from an ideological point of view, the Roman emperors considered themselves the defenders of Christianity on a world-historical scale. "Oikoumenism" and the "Christian World" - important complexes of ideological and political views of late antiquity - merged into a single whole. After the death of Constantine I the Great, none of the Roman rulers, except Julian the Apostate (Ammianus, 1974, p. 78), tried to separate Christianitas from "oikoumenism". The religious and political-ideological order phenomenon was perceived as a result of the imperial divine election of the people subject to Rome.

As a phenomenon that differed significantly from the Jewish discourse of "divine election," the Roman imperial analogue preached the "exclusivity" of every Christian. Only the Sacrament of Baptism could guarantee the salvation of the human soul and repentance of sins (Lookadoo, 2023, p. 23). Joining Christianitas was possible only through the active position of the human will; it could not happen against the will and desire of the individual. Anyone who sincerely and actively accepted the Christian faith could "count" on salvation, provided that they followed the Christian order of life.

After the Thessalonian Edict of Emperor Theodosius the Great (380), it became clear that the only genuinely unifying ideological and theoretical concepts of the Mediterranean would continue to be "Christianity" and "the supremacy of the emperor".

## 5 Discussion

From a linguistic point of view, both subjects and elites were multilingual - Hellenic-Latin bilingualism was a social norm even for the Italian "core" of the Empire. The moral and ethical components and the norms of customary law also differed depending on the tribe and region and sometimes even differentiated even neighbouring rural settlements. Legally, the cities of Spain and Dacia or the barbarian tribes of Friesland and Crimea were united only by the recognition of the Roman emperor as their supreme ruler. Thus, the political and legal identity of the Roman Empire was based on the authority of the critical institution of the political system. Supplementing this political and legal identity with another joint authority, the Christianitas faith, only strengthened Imperial Rome.

Accordingly, the question arises as to how the Roman Empire, which united many nations, could exist for an extended period and have periods of prosperity. After all, the Roman Empire, which was based on Christianity, also experienced confrontation between representatives of different faiths. In addition, the Roman Empire had periods of crisis, not just prosperity. All this indicates the existence of problematic aspects in the coverage of this issue.

## 6 Conclusion

Given the review of the context of the functioning of the federal state-territorial structure of the Roman Empire, as well as the ideological attitudes which dominated the educated circles of Roman society of the imperial period, it is clear that the international legal personality of the Roman State covered a relatively wide range of theoretical ideas, concepts and legal norms. In all cases, such ideas, concepts and legal norms must be studied against the background of a comprehensive analysis of socio-political processes. After all, the legal personality of the state itself, reflecting the public interpretation of the state identity, is always a dynamic process. The most striking sign of the dynamism of the socio-political identity and, derived from it, the legally specified legal personality of the Roman Empire was the agreements with barbarians based on the legal regime "lex foedus".

By its very definition, international legal personality is the capacity of an entity to participate in legal relations, which

presupposes that the entity has an identity. At the very least, "subjectivity" already carries the imprint of "identity", as it means that a particular legal entity considers itself "subject" to some "object". The example of the political and legal development of the Roman Empire during the period of domination is obvious: The empire understood itself as subject to barbarian tribes and tribal unions, as well as any political associations not covered by the supreme power of equivalent geopolitical forces. Due to the circumstances, the Roman Empire had to accept the "equivalence" of Iran.

The international legal subjectivity of the Roman Empire during the period of domination was regulated by the discourse of "divine election," but this "divine election" was of an associative nature. The Church Fathers explained the Roman Empire as an "association" of many lands and peoples. Most notably, the Christianisers recognised the cultural differences between the various elements of the Empire. Such differences constituted Rome's civilisational advantage, allowing for better and faster adaptation of Christian doctrines for preaching in a non-Roman political environment.

The synthesis of the idea of the Oikoumena with Christianitas emphasised the federal form of the state territorial structure of Imperial Rome. The prism of Christian teachings helps to assess the degree of "softness" of the Roman federation, where individual cities, colonies, provinces, dependent "kingdoms", and barbarian tribal "polities" had original cultural archetypes and symbolic and ethical features. Initially, even the confession of the Christian faith in different regions and liminal zones of the Empire was original. Only the practice of the Ecumenical Church Councils was able to unify the doctrine to some extent, although it could not overcome the regional and tribal differences in the interpretation of the same theoretical postulates, traditional for the federal system.

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**Primary Paper Section: A****Secondary Paper Section: AB, AD**