



# JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Institute of Archeology and Art History of  
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca  
Technical University Of Cluj-Napoca



**JAHA**  
JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY  
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

# Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v8i4>

ISSN 2360 266x

ISSN-L 2360 266x



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JOURNALS

**No. 8.4 /2021**

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Design & layout:  
Petru Ureche

### **RUSSIAN AND SOVIET RECEPTION OF CICERO'S VIEWS ON THE IDEAL CITIZEN, RULER, AND STATE IN THE 19-21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES**

**Abstract:** The article deals with the analysis of Russian and Soviet works related to Cicero's views on the ideal citizen, ruler, and state. There are several contradictory trends in the Russian and Soviet historiography on the topic mentioned above. The first one is about Cicero's conservatism in ethical and political questions (Grabar'-Passek and Utchenko considered Cicero conservative). A bigger number of scholars, on the contrary, wrote about Cicero's definite innovation (Derevnin, Kamalutdinov, Temnov, and Bragova). The approach to the essence of Cicero's concept of the best ruler is also twofold: Vipper and Marchenko attach a monarchical essence to it, while the majority of the scholars (Vekhov, Protasova, Mashkin, Utchenko, Zimin, Motus, Derevnin, Kamalutdinov, Temnov, and Bragova) point to its non-monarchical nature. Zvirevich and Derzhavitsky wrote about the humanism of Cicero's image of the ideal citizen. Some researchers (Zelinsky, Knabe, Motus, Chernyshov, and Bragova) believe that Cicero's perfect state was a utopia in the time of transition from the republic to the principate, while Temnov is convinced of its realism.

**Keywords:** *Cicero, antiquity, Ancient Rome, reception, Russian.*

**Arina BRAGOVA**

Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod  
arbra@mail.ru

DOI: 10.14795/j.v8i4.683

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

**T**he aim of this article is to name and analyse the Russian bibliographic sources referred to the question of Cicero's ethical and political views, i. e. his views on the ideal citizen, ruler and state. First of all, we should name Th. Zelinsky among the researchers who wrote about Cicero's ideal citizen and ruler in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly, he pointed out the importance of justice as the main virtue in Cicero's ethical concept of the perfect citizen and statesman and called it a social instinct.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the ideal state, Th. Zelinsky wrote about its utopianism for Cicero's times and concluded that Cicero's perfect state died with him, that Cicero loved that most condemned constitution, but with such ideas he was doomed to be left alone.<sup>2</sup> Another scholar of the pre-Soviet period, Sergey Vekhov, dwelled upon Cicero's reflections on the necessity of having a single state leader in his times, and that it led Cicero to analyse the image of the ideal ruler in his dialogue "On the State". Regarding Cicero's glorification of royal power on the pages of the above-mentioned dialogue, the researcher noted that such glorification could be explained by the influence of the

<sup>1</sup> ZELINSKY 1993, 269

<sup>2</sup> ZELINSKY 1901, 25, 28.

Greek philosophy on Cicero, and not at all by his desire to put the ideological foundation under the monarchical rule.<sup>3</sup> Robert Vipper in his review lectures, which were entitled “Essays on the History of the Roman Empire”, called Cicero a supporter of the passive republic and condemned him for diminishing the role of the national element in governing the republic. He stated that, although republic was a nationwide affair (*res populi*) for Cicero, popular supremacy was only a general principle that remained in theory, and was admissible only as a fiction.<sup>4</sup> The researcher believed that the monarchical, not the democratic element, was natural and useful in Cicero’s perfect state.<sup>5</sup> R. Vipper stated that Cicero’s political conception seemed to be a pale and deprived of concreteness version of Plato’s bright and realistic utopia. In relation to Cicero’s concept of the perfect ruler, the researcher wrote about its monarchical essence and pointed to the non-dynastic nature of such a monarch.<sup>6</sup> A certain contribution to the study of Cicero’s political conception was made by Michael Pokrovsky, who presented a linguistic analysis of Cicero’s work “On the State”.<sup>7</sup>

In the Soviet period the Marxist methodology prevailed, which left a definite imprint on the works of scholars specialised in Ancient Rome history in general and Cicero’s writings in particular. It should be noted that scientists of the Soviet period interpreted ancient social, ethical and political views from the standpoint of class struggle, exaggerating the role of slave rebellions. For example, Vladimir Sergeev gave a Marxist explanation of the social basis of Cicero’s political activity and ideology in his book “Essays on the History of Ancient Rome”.<sup>8</sup> However, even in that period there appeared some objective studies of Cicero’s ethical and political views. Regarding Cicero’s image of the ideal *rector*, Sophia Protasova expressed the idea that from a formal point of view Cicero’s concept of *rector* was not a constitutionally formalised position, but a model of behaviour.<sup>9</sup> The same idea was developed in the research made by Nikolay Mashkin. In his opinion, there was no reason to talk about the theory or the system of principate, created by Cicero. In the context of an aggravated political struggle, power was allowed to be concentrated in the hands of one person as a temporary act, necessary to restore the aristocratic republic.<sup>10</sup> Another scholar, Joseph Tronsky, believed that Cicero’s statesman was not a “monarch” or a “president”, but simply an outstanding man, a perfect citizen, an ideal.<sup>11</sup> Sergey Kovalev pointed to Cicero’s political unsuitability, which forces us to speak of the subjective and overly critical assessment of Cicero by this researcher.<sup>12</sup> Another scholar of the Soviet period, Geler Livshits, believed that Cicero gave a certain form to his ideal of the state structure on the basis of his political experience, that Cicero’s theory “grew” out of practice, not vice versa.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>3</sup> VEKHOV 1882, 3-4, 12.

<sup>4</sup> VIPPER 1995a, 427.

<sup>5</sup> VIPPER 1995b, 40.

<sup>6</sup> VIPPER 1995b, 23.

<sup>7</sup> POKROVSKY 1913.

<sup>8</sup> SERGEEV 1938.

<sup>9</sup> PROTASOVA 1927, 268, 275, 277.

<sup>10</sup> MASHKIN 1949, 51.

<sup>11</sup> TRONSKY 1949, 181.

<sup>12</sup> KOVALEV 1949, 399.

<sup>13</sup> LIVSHITS 1955, 131.

We should mention two collections of scientific articles published in Moscow, in 1958 and 1959: they were related to Cicero’s 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>14</sup> The articles were written by such famous Soviet scholars as S. Radzig, M. Grabar’-Passek, N. Deratani, F. Petrovsky, E. Berkova, T. Kuznetsova, and I. Strelnikova. They were related to some aspects of Cicero’s political, philosophical, and literary activities. In the second collection we should pay attention to the article “Cicero and his time” written by Sergey Radzig; it referred to the historical processes taken place in the Late Roman Republic and Cicero’s role in them.<sup>15</sup> Maria Grabar’-Passek wrote about Cicero’s political concept as conservative, because, although Cicero saw the shortcomings of the modern system, he found no other way to correct them, except to return to the ancient Roman state.<sup>16</sup> Nikolay Deratani paid a special attention to the importance of oratorical abilities for Cicero’s perfect statesman. The researcher drew attention to the fact that Cicero’s works related to oratory (“Brutus”, “Orator”, “On the Orator”) acquired a particular political meaning in the specific historical situation of the time, as they showed oratory as a powerful force capable of saving the perishing Roman aristocratic republic.<sup>17</sup> Vladimir Gorenstein attached great importance to Cicero’s correspondence, especially to those letters in which Cicero disapproved of Caesar’s rule.<sup>18</sup> We want to underline the fact that Vladimir was a great translator of most of Cicero’s works into Russian. Due to his translator’s skills, we enjoy reading “good Cicero” in the Russian language.

Sergey Utchenko was the most prominent scholar of the Soviet period, who wrote a number of books and articles about Cicero and his time. S. Utchenko’s works were very important for the topic discussed, because they gave a very objective assessment of the events of that period, of Cicero’s activity as well as of Caesar’s dictatorship. In fact, S. Utchenko acknowledged Cicero’s innovation as a historian, philosopher, and politician, who reworked the Greek tradition and applied it to the Roman political reality.<sup>19</sup> The researcher considered the ethical concept of the best citizen to be an attempt to “substantiate” the old-Roman *polis* ideal with the entire available arsenal of the Hellenistic theory adapted to Roman conditions and the Roman situation.<sup>20</sup> Based on Cicero’s concept of the best state, the researcher concluded that defending the “senate republic”, i.e. the system that existed in the “era of prosperity”, Cicero acted as the spokesman for moderately conservative and “intelligent” circles of the Roman ruling class. In addition, the key points of Cicero’s theory of the best state served as the theoretical justification of the slogans of his political practice.<sup>21</sup> Finally, commenting on Cicero’s doctrine of the perfect ruler, S. Utchenko concluded its non-monarchical tendencies and expressed the opinion that the *rector* implied by Cicero was an aristocrat reformer.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> PETROVSKY 1958; DERATANI 1959b.

<sup>15</sup> RADZIG 1959, 19.

<sup>16</sup> GRABAR’-PASSEK 1993, 378.

<sup>17</sup> DERATANI 1959a, 70.

<sup>18</sup> GORENSTEIN 1975, 184.

<sup>19</sup> UTCHENKO 1972, 334.

<sup>20</sup> UTCHENKO 1977, 201.

<sup>21</sup> UTCHENKO 1975, 174.

<sup>22</sup> UTCHENKO 1966, 166. Cf. UTCHENKO 1975, 174.

There are some other scholars, who dwelled upon Cicero's ideal of the citizen, ruler, and state. Galina Marchenko argued that Cicero, preferring royal power to other simple forms of government, thereby she assigned the monarchical element a leading role in the mixed form of government, and therefore the glorification of royal power by Cicero, as well as the arguments expressed in its defense, were in her opinion at the same time an apology of autocracy.<sup>23</sup> She proved it by analysing Cicero's treatise "On the State", where examples from everyday life and from the history of the Roman state showed that the rule of individuals, if only they were fair people, was the best government (Cic. *rep.* 1.61).<sup>24</sup> In addition, she stated that according to Cicero's point of view a potential *princeps* should relate to the ruling elite, to be one of the *optimates*.<sup>25</sup> Victor Zimin, on the contrary, believed that Cicero's praise for royal power was nothing more than a desire to veil the aristocratic tendency of his political constructions and to depict the power in his best state as an all-class one, controlled by a super-class institution – the royal element. However, it should be noted that the studies of the former scholar had a pro-Marxist orientation. In his arguments, Zimin constantly accused Cicero of belittling the democratic element, restricting the political activities of the bearers of democratic power, and those accusations led him to the conclusion that Cicero's concept of the mixed state structure was reactionary, because it served as a theoretical and philosophical justification of Cicero's political credo, and expressed the interests of the slave owners' class. In terms of political essence, this ideal was seen by the researcher as either unified or mixed, since Cicero's state was an aristocratic republic with a number of democratic elements which support the rule of aristocrats.<sup>26</sup>

Publications of the 1980s became free from the Marxist dogmas. Researchers tried to objectively set forth the essence of Cicero's views, relying both on the Russian and foreign bibliography and referring to the latter not as bourgeois and therefore *a priori* negative, but as having the right to independent judgements. For example, A. Motus stated that Cicero's political views reflected Rome's dominant ideas of thirst for peace and restoration of the republic among Roman citizens. Motus believed that Cicero's perfect state of the past reflected *polis* ideology, but, following the requirements of historical reality in the transitional period from the Republic to the Empire and being a supporter of Rome's world domination, Cicero, even speaking against the open forms of "royal power", in his search for state forms approached the principate as a monarchy covered by republican attributes.<sup>27</sup> Another scholar, Anatoly Derevnin, considered Cicero an innovator. He was sure of the innovation of Cicero's political concept because the Ciceronian mixed form of government, unlike the concepts of his predecessors, could be formed at certain stages of the development of a state. With regard to the Ciceronian concept of the perfect statesman, the researcher acknowledged its non-monarchical essence. A. Derevnin

also pointed out that Cicero considered the concepts of *res publica* and *civitas* equivalent.<sup>28</sup> K. Kamalutdinov had the same opinion about the non-monarchical essence of Cicero's ruler. He also paid tribute to Cicero's innovation and believed that when creating the theory of the best state, Cicero was guided not so much by Greek sources but by observations of the functioning of the mechanism of the Roman Republic. Finally, in relation to the concept of the perfect ruler K. Kamalutdinov concluded that Cicero's concept of *princeps* was identical to the concept of *optimas*, i. e. Cicero's ideal ruler was an aristocrat.<sup>29</sup> Cicero's humanistic view as a philosopher was presented in Vitold Zvirevich's monograph. The author of it positively assessed Cicero's ethical concept, noting that the Cicero's and all ancient humanism were expressed in the degrees of kinship of a person presented in Cicero's writings, kinship with the whole human race, even with a strangers.<sup>30</sup>

In the post-Soviet period Cicero has not been forgotten, either. Among the Russian publications of the 1990s it is essential to name Georgy Knabe, who believed that Cicero considered reality through the prism of lofty and normative reality. The scholar remarked that next to the real Rome of Cicero's correspondence stood the Rome of the dialogue "On the State".<sup>31</sup> Yury Chernyshov noted that Cicero's ideal state was a political utopia.<sup>32</sup> Besides, we can name some dissertations referred to Cicero's ethical and political ideas. Evgeny Derzhavitsky defended the dissertation "Personality and politics in Cicero's philosophy", in which he pointed to the specific Roman features that Cicero used to denote his best citizen, for example, *humanitas*, a concept that had no equivalents in the Greek language.<sup>33</sup> Evgeny Temnov considered Cicero's political concept original. He wrote that unlike Plato's utopian state, Cicero's ideal state was realistic, because it was based on the Roman history. Plato's state could be built only in the future, while Cicero's was an accomplished fact. With regard to the Ciceronian image of the ruler, the researcher agreed with S. Utchenko's opinion, considering Cicero's *rector* an aristocrat reformer.<sup>34</sup>

Svetlana Demina defended the dissertation called "The Roman Society in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC (the Civic Consciousness and Behaviour)".<sup>35</sup> Cicero's name appears in nearly all the chapters of it as well as in the monograph based on the dissertation.<sup>36</sup> S. Demina states that by the term *civitas* Cicero means community of citizens' relations, primarily legal ones that benefit them.<sup>37</sup> Another important point is if Cicero's *civitas* is compatible with the sole royal power, then *civitas libera* is opposed to it, i. e. freedom and the royal rule were mutually exclusive principles to Cicero.<sup>38</sup> S. Demina underlines Cicero's idea that *res publica* is a form of *civitas* fixed by laws.<sup>39</sup> The scholar adds that Cicero does not

<sup>23</sup> MARCHENKO 1976, 143-144; 1980, 15-16.

<sup>23</sup> MARCHENKO 1976, 143-144; 1980, 15-16.

<sup>24</sup> MARCHENKO 1976, 144.

<sup>25</sup> MARCHENKO 1974, 57.

<sup>26</sup> ZIMIN 1975, 189-190, 192.

<sup>27</sup> MOTUS 1983, 45.

<sup>28</sup> DEREVNIN 1985, 6, 14.

<sup>29</sup> KAMALUTDINOV 1986a, 72; 1986b, 22; 1990, 54.

<sup>30</sup> ZVIREVICH 1988, 80-81.

<sup>31</sup> KNABE 1991, 19.

<sup>32</sup> CHERNYSHOV 1992, 53-72.

<sup>33</sup> DERZHAVITSKY 1998, 106-134.

<sup>34</sup> TEMNOV 1999, 11, 17.

<sup>35</sup> DEMINA 2000, 35.

<sup>36</sup> DEMINA 2012, 29-41, 57-58, 82-88.

<sup>37</sup> DEMINA 2012, 29.

<sup>38</sup> DEMINA 2012, 31.

<sup>39</sup> DEMINA 2012, 36.

have an absolute identification of the terms *civitas* and *res publica*.<sup>40</sup> Besides, the concept of *res publica* is not identified with the Roman Republic: they do not constitute a single phenomenon.<sup>41</sup> Besides, S. Demina has written a number of articles, which are about Cicero's views on bravery, war, anger, and love,<sup>42</sup> and thus they help us understand Cicero's ideal of the citizen and ruler better.

Andrey Pavlov analyses the concept of *libertas* in Cicero's writings emphasising that Cicero's best state is, above all, a legal community of people, since in such a state all citizens are equal before the law and there is a proportional equality. The researcher also concludes that according to Cicero freedom in the Roman republic should be moderate and limited: Cicero opposes freedom to immoderate freedom and licentiousness. A. Pavlov also states that Cicero repeatedly underlines the connection between freedom, peace and tranquility, and to Cicero the presence of freedom is the factor that allows the power of *virii boni* to remain unchanged. Finally, A. Pavlov offers a quantitative analysis of *libertas* in Cicero's works.<sup>43</sup> N. Chekanova believes that Cicero's state is a common affair of the Roman people, a harmonious and peaceful institution.<sup>44</sup> Alexandra Karaseva's dissertation is about the way of life and intellectual activity of the Roman intellectuals in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. We can find some interesting conclusions about Cicero's *vir bonus* in it: A. Karaseva states that when modifying, the ideal of *vir bonus* demanded from a valiant man a lot of qualities – alongside with the traditional qualities like *virtus*, *fortitudo*, *constantia*, *fides*, *pietas*, *dignitas*, *gravitas*, and *auctoritas*, Cicero's *vir bonus* should have education, knowledge, and an ability to self-improvement, and those features were partially expressed in the new qualities – *urbanitas* and *humanitas*.<sup>45</sup>

Arina Bragova defended a dissertation related to Cicero's ideal citizen and state.<sup>46</sup> There are some ideas from it, which are worth mentioning. Firstly, in the conception of the best citizen and state Cicero eclectically combines the ancient Greek tradition with his own political experience and realities of the Roman society of his time. Secondly, the core idea of his conception is the moral renewal of the Roman society. Thirdly, unlike his predecessors, Cicero assesses moral beauty (*honestum*) and virtues (*virtutes*), which his *vir bonus* should possess, from the point of view of their importance to the society: it means that the main virtue is not cognition (*cognitio*), as for the Stoics, but justice and goodness as one virtue (*justitia et beneficentia*), because it is socially significant. Finally, a noble origin is not a required attribute of *vir bonus*. Cicero lived in the era of a shift of political elites and the emergence of *homines novi*, when wealth and the candidate's outstanding abilities began to play a more important role than the noble origin. As for Cicero's concept of the ideal state, it goes back to the mixed constitution, i. e. a harmonious combination of the three elements of power (the senate as an aristocratic element, the

consuls as a monarchical element, *comitia* and the tribune as a democratic element). Cicero is convinced that such a mixed rule is also possible in Rome but only under the condition of a moral reform, i. e. the rebirth of *mores majorum*. However, we think that Cicero's perfect state was a utopia in his times, especially after Caesar's dictatorship. The idea of the moral reform is part of Cicero's concept of the perfect statesman.<sup>47</sup> Another conclusion is that Cicero's ruler is not a monarch, because in his writings Cicero repeatedly expresses the opinion of the instability of the monarchical form of government and its tendency to degenerate into the tyranny of one person, which he considers the most unfair of all forms of tyranny. Cicero repeatedly cites Caesar's dictatorship as an example of the unjust monarchical rule, arguing that the destruction of a tyrant is good for the Roman people.<sup>48</sup> There are also a number of articles published by A. Bragova from 2010 up to the present moment. They are about Cicero's best citizen, ruler, state, laws of the best state<sup>49</sup> as well to certain terms of Cicero's ethical, social, political, juridical and philosophical categorical apparatus (*honestum*, *virtus*, *officium*, *otium*, *amicitia*, *ambitio*, *cognitio*, etc.).<sup>50</sup>

Denis Fedorov has written a number of articles and a monograph related to Cicero's social and philosophical views.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in his monograph D. Fedorov analyses Cicero's ideas about the social evolution and concludes that the communicative component of the sociogenesis is considered by Cicero quite an independent factor of the social progress alongside with the idea of the "social feeling", which goes back to Aristotle and implies a natural desire of a person as a "political" animal to be part of a state.<sup>52</sup>

We should also name the publications of Viktoria Pichugina and her colleagues.<sup>53</sup> They analyse Cicero's ideas about the best citizen, i. e. how a Roman citizen could educate himself or be educated by reading poetry, going to the theatre or taking an active part in the Roman social and political life. V. Pichugina states that, in Cicero's opinion, certain dissatisfaction, or "restlessness", of an educational result makes a student look for a mentor who can teach him how to independently build educational strategies in the context of his life strategies. Such strategies are important due to the fact that the student seeks to take an active part in the political life of his city.<sup>54</sup> Another article of the same scholar and her colleague Karina Shirinskaya substantiates the logic of the formation, development and practical embodiment of the Ancient Greek educational ideal in Cicero's writings. The scholars dwell upon some pedagogically oriented abstracts in Cicero's works, which illustrate his ideas about the ways and means of achieving an educational ideal by a Greek or Roman citizen. The researchers conclude that Cicero's reception of the Greek pedagogical culture was carried out in the

<sup>40</sup> DEMINA 2012, 41.

<sup>41</sup> DEMINA 2012, 38.

<sup>42</sup> DEMINA 2015a, 14-20; 2015b, 33-38; 2016, 521-526.

<sup>43</sup> PAVLOV 2001.

<sup>44</sup> CHEKANOVA 2001, 129-136.

<sup>45</sup> KARASEVA 2003, 1.

<sup>46</sup> BRAGOVA 2005.

<sup>47</sup> BRAGOVA 2016a.

<sup>48</sup> BRAGOVA 2005, 219-221.

<sup>49</sup> BRAGOVA 2010; 2016a; 2016b.

<sup>50</sup> BRAGOVA 2011; 2016c; 2016d; 2018; 2019; 2020.

<sup>51</sup> FEDOROV 2012; 2015; 2016a; 2016b; 2016c.

<sup>52</sup> FEDOROV 2015, 81.

<sup>53</sup> PICHUGINA 2013, PICHUGINA /SHIRINSKAYA 2015; KOZLOVTSOVA/ PICHUGINA 2016; PICHUGINA /LAZAREVA 2016; PICHUGINA 2016a; 2016b; PICHUGINA /VOROBYEVA 2017; PICHUGINA 2017; LAZAREVA/ PICHUGINA 2017; PICHUGINA 2018.

<sup>54</sup> PICHUGINA 2013, 167.

conditions of the forced cultural, political and educational integration of the Ancient Greek policies with the Roman Empire, which was reflected in the principle of *humanitas* formulated by him. Seeing his mission in popularising the Ancient Greek heritage, Cicero extrapolated that principle to the education of a citizen, speaker or politician of the Roman Empire. As the scholars put it, numerous sources reflecting Cicero's life suggest that the general idea of the Ancient Roman pedagogy, which was composed of subsequent generations, is largely due to Cicero. It is concluded that one of the key ideas taken by Cicero from the Ancient Greek mentors and adapted to the Roman mentality was the need to find oneself through education adequate to the nature of man, his *humanitas*. That acquisition in Ancient Greek pedagogy was denoted by the concept of "self-care", to which Cicero proposed a Latin counterpart, terminologically close to "*cura sui*".<sup>55</sup>

As far as we can see, there are several contradictory trends in the Russian and Soviet historiography related to Cicero's perfect citizen, ruler, and state. The first one is about Cicero's conservatism in ethical and political questions (for example, Grabar'-Passek and Utchenko considered Cicero conservative). A bigger number of scholars, on the contrary, wrote about Cicero's definite innovation (Derevnin, Kamalutdinov, Temnov, and Bragova). The approach to the essence of Cicero's concept of the best ruler is also twofold: Vipper and Marchenko attach a monarchical essence to it, while the majority of the scholars (Vekhov, Protasova, Mashkin, Utchenko, Zimin, Motus, Derevnin, Kamalutdinov, Temnov, and Bragova) point to its non-monarchical nature. Zvirevich and Derzhavitsky wrote about the humanism of Cicero's image of the ideal citizen. Some researchers (Zelinsky, Knabe, Motus, Chernyshov, and Bragova) believe that Cicero's perfect state was a utopia in the time of transition from the republic to the principate, while Temnov is convinced of its realism.

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<sup>55</sup> PICHUGINA /SHIRINSKAYA 2015, 124.

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