

Beat: Local

FLUCTUAT NEC MERGITUR = MOTTO USED SINCE AT LEAST 1358 BY THE CITY OF PARIS

MEANS TOSSED BUT NOT SUNK

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USPA NEWS - 'Fluctuat nec mergitur' is a Latin phrase meaning 'Tossed but not sunk'. The motto has been used since at least 1358 by the city of Paris. This phrase is the motto of Paris, France, and is translated as 'Elle est agitée par les vagues, et ne sombre pas' : 'She is tossed by the waves...

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This motto is present in the city coat of arms depicting a ship floating on a rough sea. Both motto and city arms have their origins in the river Seine boatsman's corporation; this powerful hanse ruled the city's trade and commerce as early as the Roman era.

Although this corporation through the centuries became an entity resembling more a municipal government than a trade organization, they maintained their original arms and motto, and it is for this that the Mairie de Paris bears them still today. It was made official on November 24, 1853 by the Baron Haussmann.

The Romans believed that a city was defined by its status, in Lutetia's case, it was the capital of the Parisii tribe. A city's political function mattered most, and distinguished it from mere urban areas or other types of settlements. In terms of urban planning, this function was expressed by the construction of large monuments, particularly a forum that was-even on a modest scale-a reflection of the City, i.e. Rome.

In this sense, in the Roman city of Lutetia that consisted of three centres-the city of the left bank, the Île de la Cité, and the suburbs of the right bank-only the left bank could claim this role. It was not only the largest of the three areas-the regular grid pattern of its layout was typically Roman, and it was the only sector in which, starting in the 2nd century CE, public monuments were constructed. No Early Roman public building has been found on the Île de la Cité or in the suburbs on either bank.

The urban centre of the town was built on the slopes of the Saint-Geneviève hill the suburbs were only peripheral zones of Lutetia.

Source : Paris culture

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