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The globalised Roman world

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Introduction

If the existence of pre-modern globalisation, or the application of theories of globalisation to the ancient world, has been controversial (see Jennings this volume; Robertson this volume), there is no doubt that the Roman example holds a special place within this debate. For if an empire spanning parts of Europe, Africa and Asia and characterised by the mass production, exchange and consumption of a shared material culture does not qualify as a form of globalisation, then it is improbable that any other pre-industrial example qualifies either. For scholars of past globalisations, the globalised status of the Roman Empire is a given. Their challenge is to find earlier, smaller or unexpected forms of globalisation; the Roman Empire is the base-line, not the finish-line.

Studies of Roman globalisation demonstrate a tentative start and a diversity of scope and ambition. Over the past 15 years, a scattering of papers have explored the possibilities (e.g. Witcher 2000; Sweetman 2007; Hitchner 2008; Pitts 2008; Boozer 2012) leading to the publication of an edited volume which has deepened thinking and revealed difference of opinion about the value and limitations of using globalisation to think about the Roman Empire (Pitts & Versluys 2015a). Meanwhile, more general treatments of the Roman past increasingly adopt the terminology of globalisation (e.g. Panella 2012: 110-1 sees a 'globalizzazione' of Roman production and commerce) without always specifying what precisely is intended. Do these different studies help to shed new light on the Roman past or do they simply retell the conventional narrative of the Roman Empire in new words (see Naerebout 2006-7)? The latter is a concern, for if globalisation is used simply as a synonym for existing explanations of Roman cultural change we are unlikely to discover anything new about the Roman world or to understand it differently (Gardner 2013; Pitts & Versluys 2015b; Versluys 2014).

This chapter argues that there is, in fact, much to be learnt by thinking about the Roman past in terms of globalisation but that this enterprise raises particular challenges. The intention is not to dispute that the Roman Empire was globalised, but rather to encourage caution in how we conceptualise and measure that globalisation. To this end, the chapter starts with a series of vignettes intended to draw attention to different expressions of Roman globalisation. Next, it examines two of the most frequently discussed indicators of Roman globalisation: roads and human mobility, noting both possibilities and problems. From here, the chapter moves to a broader

discussion of the theory of Roman globalisation, emphasising wider spatial and chronological context. Finally, attention turns to the concept of identity in the globalised Roman world. These respective themes—decentring, connectivity and mobility, plus identity—map on to the areas identified by Morris (2005: 37) in his globalising study of Mediterranean history (see also Nederveen Pieterse 2015: 228-9).

Before continuing, however, it is important to address an issue of specific concern regarding globalisation and the Roman past. The privileged status of the Roman Empire in Western historical accounts is linked to the ancestral value the West draws from Rome. Indeed, Greco-Roman globalising ideologies inform contemporary political thought: *orbis terrarum*, *oikoumene*, *humanitas*, the *pax romana*, and universal citizenship (Robertson & Inglis 2004). Most obviously, Polybius provides a model of global history (*symploke*), and Rome's role within it, by narrating the interconnection of Mediterranean events from the late third century BC onwards (e.g. *Polyb*. 2.13.3-7). Thus, Woolf (2012: 27) observes, "Our age has rejected the language of empire, arguably without always surrendering much of its power" (see also Morley 2010: 134-5). In light of this, post-colonialists have expressed concern that the application of globalisation to the Roman past is not only anachronistic, but also politically naïve. It may, for example, provide legitimacy to the Western globalisation project (Hingley 2005; 2015) or, through use of language such as 'negotiation', underemphasise the scale of violence involved (see James 2011). These specific concerns deserve attention, but the wider scholarly project concerning pre-modern globalisation finds support in the work of Jennings (2010) who argues that Western society has hijacked the concept of globalisation for its own political purposes ("modernity's greatest theft"). Indeed, the examples presented elsewhere in this volume demonstrate that studies of past globalisations can *de*-centre Western narratives about the present world-order. Hence, the study of Roman globalisation must not view the Roman case as *sui generis*, or as a precedent for the current world, but rather must seek to contextualise it with other historical globalisations in order to *provincialise* it spatially (e.g. alongside contemporary globalisations of the Indian Ocean and China, Seland 2008; Shelach-Lavi 2015) and chronologically (e.g. the earlier Greek world, Vlassopoulos 2013). The latter, in particular, permits us to see how early Rome was itself a glocalisation of Greek culture on the periphery of an East Mediterranean network.

Vignettes from a globalised Roman world

To illustrate the interconnectivity, human mobility, scale, and diversity of the globalised Roman world, we begin with four vignettes drawing on archaeological and textual evidence. Two are fictionalised first-person accounts emphasising situated experience, and two are third-person accounts that consider linkages and understandings inaccessible or unimaginable to individuals in the past (Figure 1).

Tiber valley, Italy *c*. AD 75: I grew up in the hills of Samnium. My family was pushed off its land by a greedy magistrate keen to turn the territory over to sheep farming; my father had fallen into debt providing an excuse for his unscrupulous creditor to act. We moved to the town of Saepinum where my father worked as a labourer. Later, I was sent to live with my uncle who rented a farm in the Tiber valley, 20 miles north of Rome. He had made a success of growing market crops and had acquired sufficient wealth and reputation to buy land and to become a junior magistrate on the local council at the city of Veii. Whilst he furthered his political career, I took over management of his farm.

Today I have been to Veii, visiting my uncle and hearing news from Rome about the Egyptian harvest—rumours are rife that the Nile did not flood and grain prices are rising. While in town, I

bought new tablewares (red-slipped *terra sigillata*). Our old service is pretty worn and, besides, there were some fine new drinking cups from the *figlina* (pottery workshop) down by the Tiber; apparently everyone in Rome is using them at the minute. As I was at the market, I also bought bread and pork. Next week I make my annual trip into Rome to see the games. I don't spend longer in the city than I have to—it can be dangerous—but the Colosseum is like nothing else! Last year, I even saw the emperor, or at least I saw a tiny figure in the imperial box; he didn't look very god-like (elaborated from information in Patterson 2006 and Witcher 2005).

Garama (Jarma, Libya), *c*. AD 100: A journey of 1000 km south from the Mediterranean coast brings us to the outskirts of the Garamantian capital of Garama and one of its cemeteries (mod. Saniat Bin Huwaydi). A family of mourners lowers their deceased relative into a grave (T52). The body is laid out and surrounded by grave goods for feasting and drinking, nearly all which are imported, some specifically for this purpose. The grave goods include Tripolitanian oil amphorae; *terra sigillata* bowls from Italy, glass vessels, and oil lamps. In addition to these imports, the mourners include a small handmade ceramic incense burner and two saddle querns, the latter perhaps heirlooms, as new 'Roman-style' rotary querns were by then used for grinding grain. The imported goods are exotic, but not reserved exclusively for the elite; rather they are included in the burials of a wide cross-section of society. The mourners deliberately chip some of the grave goods as they are deposited, perhaps ensuring they cannot be used by the living. Once the ceremony is complete, the grave is filled and covered with a mudbrick pyramid. The mourners return home; they will not eat and drink from *terra sigillata* dishes and glass bowls again until the next funeral (Mattingly 2010a: 291-5).

***En route* from Muziris (Pattanam, India) to Berenike, Egypt, *c*. AD 100**: The winter winds carry us west with a cargo of pepper, cotton textiles, gemstones and glass beads. There's not much market for Indian pottery in Egypt—especially when compared to the profits to be made from pepper—so we take only a few (Coarse Red Slipped Ware) cooking pots for use on board. We often use these pots once ashore too; they remind us of home while we wait for the return winds. We've also brought rice for the journey, and some for the coming months—the wheaten bread in Egypt is indigestible! When we return on the summer monsoon winds our cargo will be amphorae (Dressel 2–4) of wine from Campania in the far west. We'll also take a few crates of red-slipped tablewares (Italian or Eastern Mediterranean *terra sigillata*). We'll make our profit on the wine, but we can always sell some drinking cups on the side; the Red Polished Wares from northern India look pretty similar, but they really aren't the right shape for drinking wine. On the way back, we plan to stop at the port of Qana (Bir Ali, Yemen) in southern Arabia, where there are profits to be made on wine and *sigillata*, then onto northern India and finally down the coast to Muziris. With luck, we'll make it home before the Egyptian and Roman merchants arrive with their own cargoes of wine, silver and even wheat—the *yavanas* import it for their compatriots who live in Muziris—they do like their bread (Tomber 2008)!

Camulodunum (Colchester, Britain), *c*. AD 50: During the century before the arrival of the Roman army in AD 43, the Trinovantian aristocracy had culturally transformed itself through contacts with northern Gaul and Augustan Italy. New forms of material culture were used to signal status and identity. This 'Aylesford-Swarling' culture included imported wheel-thrown Gallo-Belgic beakers for drinking wine, and other feasting equipment, as well as new elite burial practices and the minting of coins. Hence, by the time the *Legio* XX was established in its fortress at Camulodunum (AD 43-9), there were long-established links with the Roman world including the importation of Italian wine in Dressel 2-4 amphorae. Massive expansion of military supply lines brought even more Roman material culture and foodstuffs into the region, but the local elite maintained use of 'traditional' Gallo-Belgic drinking vessels. Hence, both Roman soldiers and

Trinovantian aristocrats enjoyed the contents of Dressel 2-4 amphorae, but they drank from different vessels, signalling different identities. Meanwhile, for the majority of the British population, the consumption of wine and the use of tablewares of any description remained anathema. These rural communities may have discerned greater social and cultural distance between themselves and the Trinovantian elite than between that elite and the Roman military. Little changed when the *Legio* XX moved northwards, handing over its fortress to a colony of Roman veterans: soldiers became retired soldiers; barrack blocks became houses; merchants ensured the continued supply of wine and olive oil, and the appropriate equipment with which to consume them including *terra sigillata* tablewares from southern Gaul. Perhaps neither the arrival nor the departure of the Roman army, marked decisive breaks. Within a few years, however, the Boudican revolt would change everything (Perring & Pitts 2013).

From one perspective, these vignettes illustrate the traditional—and much critiqued—concept of 'Romanisation': peoples of different political, cultural, economic and social backgrounds drawn, through military force and elite example, into an increasingly uniform body of Roman citizens/subjects defined by shared material culture. Here, this shared material culture is represented by *terra sigillata* and Dressel 2-4 amphorae (Figure 2), though might have included anything from pillar-moulded glass bowls to monumental forum complexes. Alternatively, these vignettes might be taken to indicate precisely the *lack* of shared identity and integration around the Roman world: the diversity of social and economic organisation and the experience of Roman colonialism, the different foodways, the proliferation of cultural, ethnic and professional identities, and local ritual beliefs. Little appears to link a farmer in the hinterland of Rome, a deceased Garamantian, an Indian Ocean trader, and a Trinovantian aristocrat. All may have used *terra sigillata* vessels, but these were produced in multiple locations and exchanged, used and deposited in quite different ways and contexts.

This chapter takes these vignettes as evidence for neither cultural homogenisation ('Romanisation') nor cultural fragmentation, but rather both—that is, Roman globalisation. Collectively, they demonstrate aspects characteristic of globalisation including: interconnectivity, global consciousness, the long-distance movement of people and commodities, imitation and adaptation of objects, repurposing of commodities with new functions or values, the reinforcement or exaggeration of existing inequalities, and the creation of new ones (see chapters by Feinman, Jennings and Robertson, this volume); most importantly, they stress the proliferation of identities. With these snapshots of the globalised Roman world in mind, we turn to the bigger picture.

Networks: roads & human mobility

Maps of the Roman Empire traditionally depict a series of provincial territories, enclosed within definitive imperial frontiers (Figure 1). Such images reflect the imposition of a nation-state mentality onto the past; in turn, these maps influence perceptions—provinces appear culturally bounded and homogeneous. One solution is to move from a territorial model to a network approach (see Smith 2005). Networks have already gained significant traction in studies of the Greek world (e.g. Malkin 2011), perhaps because it lacked any physical or symbolic 'centre' equivalent to Rome. But networks offer possibilities for the study of the Roman Empire as well. In particular, networks put less emphasis on territory and more on connectivities, reconceptualising the 'Roman Empire' as a more expansive 'Roman world'. Such network thinking relates directly to globalisation through connectivity. Indeed, Knappett (this volume) calls for a merging of globalisation and network concerns and the development of tools to address connectivities—their type, strength, content and directionality. The value of this approach is to provide specific indices of globalisation, facilitating better understanding of the drivers and/or symptoms of globalisation, such as time-space

compression, that is, the speeding up of communication and the increasing interrelation of previously unconnected people, places and events.

Partly under the influence of Horden & Purcell's *The corrupting sea* (2000), there has been rise of interest in Mediterranean maritime network connectivity (e.g. Keay 2012). Indeed, it is precisely the existence of this inland or 'Middle Sea' (Broodbank 2013) that differentiates the Roman Empire from other contemporary polities such as the land-based Parthian or Han Empires. But the Mediterranean Sea notwithstanding, the most widely discussed Roman 'network' is the road system. The extensive system of highways—perhaps not coincidentally, easily represented on maps in a way that maritime routes are not—facilitated the mobility of people, goods and ideas, and has been used as a powerful proxy or metaphor for Roman globalisation (e.g. Laurence 2013).

For decades, the primitivist view of the Roman economy held that land transport was slow and expensive, especially when compared to sea transport (Finley 1999). But as Laurence (1999) has emphasised, although relatively expensive, land transport remained the principal form of mobility. This re-instatement of Roman land transport has paved the way for a more optimistic evaluation of the impact of road building. Laurence & Trifilò (2015: 111), for example, argue for reduced journey times around Italy. Moreover, they suggest that Italian cities on consular roads possessed more impressive monumentality due to greater familiarity with urban symbolism facilitated by time-space compression. Others, however, are unconvinced. Morley (2015: 55), for example, concurs that roads may have made some journeys easier, more predictable, and slightly faster, but argues that these improvements were insignificant in terms of overall time-space compression.

One approach to these contrasting evaluations of transport networks is to introduce an element of quantification; Scheidel (2014) has used network modelling to examine the "shape of the Roman world". The ORBIS Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (orbis.stanford.edu) replaces an approach based on distance with one based on time and cost (Figure 3). This approach quickly demonstrates the enormous "connectivity cost constraints" (*ibid*.: 8) incurred by movement across the Roman world. Roads connected the Empire together—but the cumulative cost of land travel was high. This is of significance for understanding the regionality and cultural heterogeneity of the Empire. Even though the Roman state could project itself powerfully on distant imperial frontiers, such concentration of resource was exceptional; within the provinces, Rome instigated no significant technological means to compress time and space, in order to bring the state closer to its subjects (Morley 2015). Hence, the slight compression brought about by paved roads was dwarfed by the immense distances involved. Eventually, by the third and fourth centuries AD, the failure to overcome this friction of distance pulled the centre of power away from the Mediterranean towards the frontiers of the north-west and east (Scheidel 2014: 26).

Scheidel's analysis focuses on the movement of bulk-goods, and political and military networks; it explicitly excludes prestige-goods networks and gives limited attention to information exchange. For many globalisation scholars, however, it is precisely this latter consideration that is important. Ideas, symbols, identities, and consciousness of the wider world, are what underpin globalisation and, more importantly, which have the potential to extend furthest through time and space as they experience less friction than bulk goods (Witcher 2000). Indeed, no matter what the "cost constraints" working against the size and integration of the Roman world, we must recall that the Roman state successfully gathered thousands of communities around a small, but powerful set of shared ideas, reinforced through material culture, which promulgated a unifying (but not universalising) imperial ideology (Ando 2000: 8). In other words, mapping the distribution of bulk-goods and military infrastructure will get us so far, but it is information, ideology, ideas and identities which are likely most fully to reflect Roman globalisation.

This symbolic imperial integration can also be approached through road infrastructure, specifically milestones. For example, Laurence & Trifilò (2015: 111) suggest that the measurement of distance on milestones constituted a time-space compression, geo-referencing travellers within the wider Roman world. Talbert (2012: 247), however, observes that milestones were nearly always inscribed in Latin, even in the Greek East, and rarely refer to distance to Rome; milestones were not for the benefit of travellers, but rather local demonstrations of loyalty to the emperor. Yet even if these milestones could not physically geo-reference travellers, they can be understood as the means through which local/global relations were negotiated, referencing individual communities in relation to the imperial network (see Glatz 2009: 138).

Roads are central to discussion of Roman globalisation, but as these examples demonstrate, we require a better understanding of exactly *how* they were used. The key question is therefore not whether there was connectivity, but the causes and effects of that connectivity, and the degree— qualitatively and quantitatively—to which it changed over time. The study of Roman roads has not always enjoyed a positive reputation amongst professional archaeologists; a globalisation perspective repurposes such research with the critical analysis of issues of scale, connectivity and integration.

If the road network as a proxy or metaphor for globalisation presents conceptual and practical problems, what about mobility more broadly construed? There is, after all, consensus that the Roman period was characterised by unprecedented levels of human mobility (e.g. Woolf 2012: 227). Textual and epigraphical evidence have long been used to document significant human mobility around the Empire: colonisation, the army, trade, slavery, imperial administration, pilgrimage and tourism. More recently, techniques such as isotope analysis have demonstrated the movement of individuals within and between regions. But how representative is all of this evidence? Funerary inscriptions do not reflect a full cross-section of society and may be skewed towards groups who were particularly mobile such as soldiers, freedmen or merchants (Noy 2000). Similarly, isotope studies to date have concentrated on urban communities (especially Rome and Portus) which might be expected, *a priori*, to demonstrate higher levels of mobility (e.g. Killgrove & Montgomery in press). Hence we are left with fundamental questions: how much mobility? Was a larger percentage of the population moving? Were new groups and individuals on the move? Were people making longer or more frequent journeys (Eckardt 2010)? Were more goods (e.g. stone, Russell 2013) or new knowledge (e.g. cults, Collar 2013) connecting more people and places than before?

Like the Roman road network, the mobility of people, goods and ideas around the Roman world must play a critical part in any evaluation of Roman globalisation. Currently, this raises more questions than answers—how representative are the data? How do levels of mobility compare to pre- and post-Roman periods? It is important to note, however, that such questions arise precisely because a globalisation perspective demands that the evidence is examined comparatively, and at different spatial and temporal scales.

Here, roads and human mobility have been used here to flag issues with the identification and characterisation of Roman globalisation. There is, however, an overarching question about the concept of globalisation, ancient or modern: is globalisation primarily a descriptive term or does it also offer explanatory power (Witcher 2015)?

Context and constraints

As a neutral descriptive term globalisation identifies characteristics (such as time-space compression and global consciousness) which may occur during any period but which demand

period-specific explanation. In the contemporary world, these characteristics are explained via a package of technologies and concepts labelled 'globalism', including airliners, the internet and neoliberal economic policies. To explain Roman globalisation, we need a similarly bespoke package of explanations.

A closely related issue concerns the confusion between cause and effect, or the symptoms of globalisation and the processes which precipitate them. Did, for example, the construction of roads create connectivity, or were they built because connections already existed (see Hitchner 2012; Witcher 2016)? Did human mobility lead to the sharing of new cultural ideas, or did shared Roman culture promote mobility? Even in the contemporary world, differentiating cause and effect is extraordinarily difficult and it may be more profitable to recognise such cause-and-effect relationships as recursive, that is, as on-going processes.

A particular problem with Roman globalisation is that it is sometimes treated—usually inadvertently—as a novel process within the ancient world. This is especially the case in relation to the north-western provinces, where the Roman presence was late and the impact of integration faster and more dramatic. Even in the Mediterranean, however, concentration on the distinctive burst of cultural integration under the early Principate can lead to neglect of the long-term context, unintentionally implying that this globalisation was somehow novel. There were, however, earlier globalisations. Indeed, scholars of early periods are more likely to see the Roman world as the *outcome* of the accelerating connectivity of the Hellenistic or Greek worlds (e.g. Sommer 2015). These earlier globalisations provide both historical and theoretical context. For example, in relation to Greek globalisation, Vlassopoulos (2013: 21) outlines four intersecting Greek 'worlds' which operationalise the globalisation concept and transform it from description into explanation: (1) the world of networks (the movement of peoples, goods, ideas and technology); (2) the world of *apoikiai* (the self-conscious creation of Greek communities away from home); (3) the Panhellenic world (the shared imaginary of literature and myth which linked Greeks together); and (4) the world of empires (the imperial strategies of the competing eastern Mediterranean empires).

Collectively, these 'worlds' explain the globalisation of symbols, meanings, material culture, and identity (Vlassopoulos 2013: 19). The emergence of the Greek world during the first half of the first millennium BC occurred on the "impoverished periphery of a wider, older, richer and much more powerful world" focused in the East (*ibid*.: 24). Five centuries later, Rome itself would emerge on the periphery of the Hellenistic or 'Greek' world. This, Vlassopoulos (2013: 280), argues was not Hellenisation—the Romans did not become Greek—but rather a glocalisation of Greek literature, art, mythology, iconography, and religion used to define a distinctive Roman identity. The Carthaginians, Etruscans, Jews and other groups similarly glocalised Greek culture whilst maintaining their differences (on 'Hellenisation' in the West, see Prag & Quinn 2013).

Having glocalised a version of Greek culture, Rome then used military power to appropriate a Mediterranean-wide network which, by the Augustan period, consisted almost entirely of other glocalisations of Greek culture (Vlassopoulos 2013: 279-80). Hence, rather than a novel phenomenon, Roman globalisation should be understood as a shift in the balance of established connectivities; Rome was a product of globalisation. But it was also was a driver; the pre-existing network did not extend into north-western Europe, and here the violent extension of Roman power meant that Rome's version of Greek culture (*humanitas*, Woolf 2012: 226), was received rather differently. These 'outer provinces' (Terrenato 2008) experienced a more rapid and complete cultural transformation than the 'inner' Mediterranean provinces which had already glocalised Greek culture.

The four 'worlds' proposed by Vlassopoulos are intended to explain Greek globalisation. They are not, therefore, directly suited to the explanation of Roman globalisation for, despite substantial overlaps in time and space, there were important differences. Most obviously, the Greek world lacked a political and symbolic centre and was unable to deploy the military power fundamental to Roman expansion. But nor was Roman globalisation identical to other specifically 'imperial globalisations'. For example, the success of the Achaemenid and Parthian Empires lay in the ability to use existing local structures to support Persian interests; they did not impose a Persian cultural model but instead presented their empires in local terms; the Seleucid Empire was similarly organised (e.g. Vlassopolous 2013: 247; Kosmin 2014). In each case, elites were linked by courtly cultures focused on monumental architecture and portable art, but the wider populations shared little material culture. By comparison, the cultural transformation experienced across the Roman Empire was more pervasive, integrating a broader section of society and a wider variety of material culture. The Roman Empire still depended upon local power structures, but cultural transformation was more extensive. It is sufficient simply to compare the relatively distinct change in material culture marked by the Roman frontiers with the absence of any such clear cultural and political boundaries to the Persian and Seleucid Empires. This is not to suggest that Roman globalisation involved cultural homogenisation; on the contrary. But it is pertinent to note, in the context of all the research on cultural change and identity in the Roman Empire, the absence of analogous work on 'Persianisation' or 'becoming Seleucid' or 'Sassanian'. In this comparative light, Roman globalisation does indeed present something distinctive in need of explanation.

How then have archaeologists made use of globalisation concepts to describe and explain the Roman world? One of the most frequently deployed models of globalisation is that of Waters (1995). Studies by Pitts (2008), Sweetman (2007) and Witcher (2000) have all independently identified the same conceptual value in Waters' study and thus seem to represent a convergence on one specific model which may be particularly suitable. Waters (1995: 7-8) defines three arenas of social life: economy, polity and culture. Change in the organisation of one of these leads to change in the others. Globalisation centres on the relationship between these arenas in terms of exchange: material, political and symbolic. Each type of exchange has a specific relationship to space—material exchange ties social relations to localities; political exchange ties relations to extended territories, and symbolic exchange liberates these relationships from any spatial frame (*ibid*.: 9). All three forms of exchange co-exist, but any one may come to dominate. For example, culture and economy may become 'politicised' by excessive political influence, or economy and polity may become 'culturalised' through the dominance of symbolic exchange.

In Waters' model, economy concerns the social arrangements for production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services; material exchange therefore includes aspects such as trade and labour. Polity concerns the concentration and application of power, so political exchange includes coercion, force, authority and legitimacy. Finally, culture concerns the production, exchange and expression of symbols that shape meanings, beliefs, preferences and tastes—or more broadly, identities; thus symbolic exchange includes ritual, spectacle and propaganda (*ibid*.: 7-9).

Archaeology is well suited to the documentation of material exchange through, for example, amphorae, finewares, and shipwrecks. Certainly the scale and extent of this Roman material exchange was significant. But, unlike the modern world, there was limited scope for the development of regional specialisation and mass consumption. Around the Mediterranean, no region had particular advantage in terms of basic resources (apart from metals and some types of stone); prices and labour costs were scarcely different across the Empire (Scheidel 2009). Nor was there any significant new technology for reducing the cost of transport. In fact, much of the well-documented, long-distance material exchange was relatively short-lived or episodic and correlated

with economic cycles, state intervention (supplying the armies and Rome), and the exchange of prestige goods rather than with wider consumer demand (Going 1992). In Waters' terms, this suggests that material exchange was politicised as the economy came under the dominance of the polity. The cost of moving large quantities of wine, oil and grain across the Mediterranean and up to the frontiers was high; this could be sustained by the state for political reasons—but not indefinitely. The widest distribution of Italian material culture across the Empire, for example, correlates with the expansive phase of Roman imperialism, not the stable Empire (Woolf 1992). Similarly, Scheidel (2009: 70) has argued that the most significant phase of economic growth relates, not to the stable first centuries AD, but to the turbulent final centuries BC. In other words, material exchange and economic growth were linked to imperial expansion; once the polity stopped growing, integration decreased and regional networks grew in significance.

Waters' model provides a framework for conceptualising and linking the driving force of imperialism with the archaeological evidence for long-distance trade and exchange. Moreover, it underscores the significance of the so-called 'Augustan threshold' or 'Roman cultural revolution' (Doyle 1986; Wallace-Hadrill 2008), which replaced a form of globalisation dependent on political and material exchange with one based on symbolism. In the Roman world, material exchange only seriously overcame the friction of distance when politicised; but symbolic exchange was able to extend much further afield. In the long-term, the Roman world was not globalised because of the scale of economic activity or the extent of its road network, but because of symbolic exchange. Through a series of mechanisms such as bureaucratic procedures (e.g. paying taxing, census returns), official rituals (e.g. sacrificing to the emperor), coinage, and iconography, Rome forged an empire-wide community (Ando 2000). The symbolic focus was the idea of Rome embodied in the emperor. The nature of Roman globalisation therefore shifted. The influence of political exchange over culture and economy during Rome's expansive phase reduced and, during the Principate, gave way to the culturalisation of polity and economy—that is, symbolic exchange came to dominate material and political exchange. It is in this context that the issue of identities comes to the fore.

Similarly different: identities in the globalised Roman world

A defining characteristic of contemporary globalisation is a consciousness of the wider world. This enhanced awareness of others heightens self-reflexivity with particular consequences for identity. Rather than cultural homogenisation—a single global identity—globalisation stimulates a proliferation of identities spanning from local to global (e.g. Giddens 1990). This emphasis on identity has been particularly attractive to archaeologists of the Roman period (see Mattingly 2010b). For most of the twentieth century, the dominant model of cultural change— Romanisation—focused on an idealised 'Roman' identity and the degree to which provincial communities measured up against it. Over the past two decades, sustained critique of Romanisation, by post-colonial archaeologists, has shifted emphasis onto the diversity of local and regional identities, deploying concepts such as hybridity and creolisation (van Dommelen 2006; Webster 2001). The resulting mosaic of identities is richly rewarding, but also risks neglect of global trends.

A globalisation approach incorporates both of these scales—the local and the global—and those scales in between, such as the region or province. Specifically, it develops the parallel concepts of the universalisation of the particular and particularisation of the universal. Hence, specific social, cultural or geographical identities can be universalised or globalised; in the process, these identities are glocalised or adapted for local purposes. As a result, the cultural identity of the Roman world was characterised both by unity and diversity (Witcher 2000; Woolf 1992). Critically, this means that the results of archaeological studies are highly dependent on the scale and locus of analysis. It

is therefore vital to move between scales to understand the cultural and political character of the Roman world.

At the global scale, it is easy to be struck by the evidence for cultural convergence. For example, from Britain, to Spain, to Syria, cities were the basic unit of administration and local identity, characterised by their monumentality, division of public and private spaces, and the exclusion of the dead to the urban periphery. Finer-grained analysis, however, indicates differences: some cities were planned, others not; some were ancient, others newly founded. Even in the immediate hinterland of Rome, towns varied significantly, representing a particularisation of a universal model (Keay & Millett 2016). Another example of urban particularisation is provided by comparison of the public buildings in the cities of Italy and North Africa. Over the first three centuries AD, African cities demonstrated persistent emphasis on the construction of temples and honorific arches, whilst Italian cities gave more attention to monuments for spectacles, such as amphitheatres. These communities drew on the same universal model, but their choice of public buildings indicates particular priorities and expressions of identity (Laurence & Trifilò 2015: 108-10).

These examples suggest that a check-list approach to cultural change is insufficient. The presence of specific structures and objects is only part of the story; context and use are also important. As Nederveen Pieterse (2015: 234) cautions, it is important not to "mistake the stage…for the performance" (see also Ando 2000: 210). Globalisation is, and was, not so much about the acquisition of global material culture, but rather how it is used and the effects that it precipitates. Building a bath house was an empty gesture unless the furnaces were lit and appropriate bodily routines practised (Woolf 2012: 225). Even then, these bathers did not spontaneously 'become Roman'; the construction and use of the bath house was a medium through which local and global identities were endlessly re-enacted. At the heart of Roman globalisation, therefore, was the notion of doing similar things differently; it was a world structured by "Roman differences" (Woolf 2012: 222). That Roman culture was constantly transformed, however, did not mean that to be Roman, or to assert Romanness, was meaningless. On the contrary, *romanitas* was a potent concept; but it was also slippery. Across the Roman Empire, declaring oneself to be 'Roman' may have been as simultaneously empowering and opaque as proclaiming oneself a 'global citizen' today; it asserted clearly defined rights and responsibilities, conformity and difference; it meant something highly specific and but also fundamentally vague.

In tension with this global 'Roman' identity, localising tendencies proliferated (Whitmarsh 2010). Just as today, the simultaneous emergence of global and local identities was not coincidental and communities across the Roman world looked to the past to draw on, revive or invent, local identities. Alcock (2002: 178), for example, argues that the fascination with memory during the Roman period in the Greek East "grew directly out of the conditions and pressures of empire". This was not simple nostalgia, but a strategy for asserting status within a new political reality (*ibid*.: 96-8). Local heritage was a valuable source of authentic, and unique, identity. For example, by Roman times, the city of Sardis (Turkey) had been occupied for a millennium and could boast a rich cultural heritage of Lydian, Greek and Persian influence. During the mid/late imperial period, a monument was erected at the sanctuary of Artemis, 'recycling' ancient sculptural pieces. Notably, the inhabitants of Roman Sardis did not select relics from those periods when the city shared in the globalising cultures of Greece or Persia, but instead sought sculptures of eagles and royal lions from the city's politically independent and culturally distinctive days as the Lydian capital (see Rojas 2013; Vlassopoulos 2013). No matter that by the time the monument was assembled, no-one could understand the Lydian part of the bilingual inscription on one of the statue bases; the monument made a prominent statement about civic identity, past and present.

Interest in tradition was a strategy to create stability in a world-in-flux through 'new' locally meaningful identities. A concurrent trend of globalisation is the de-anchoring of such place-bound identities and their wider circulation (Woolf 2012: 228). This mobility of local identities might take the form of either people or ideas (e.g. Palmyrene merchants, the Jewish diaspora, Egyptian cults, Smith 2013: 150-73; Collar 2013: 146-223; Versluys 2011). Imperial globalisation was central to this form of mobility. The Roman state moved people from one part of the Empire to another, as punishment or reward, or for strategic purposes. Through wars, the state enslaved and relocated entire populations; through the military, it enlisted ethnic groups from one province and posted them to another. In turn, these movements could both consolidate cultural identities and establish networks through which other ideas could flow. For example, the Batavians of the Rhine Delta were recruited as auxiliary units and deployed elsewhere along the frontier. Military service exposed these soldiers to Roman culture, aspects of which were assimilated and shared with wider Batavian society back home; evidence of writing equipment from rural sites may indicate the importance of literacy in communication between the Batavian homeland and the soldiers posted abroad (Derks & Roymans 2006). Drawn into the globalised Roman world, the Batavians did not simply become Roman (or Romanised); indeed, military recruitment may have enhanced the martial ideology of traditional Batavian society.

The military network around the frontiers was particularly significant in terms of the globalisation of ideas. For example, Collar (2013) has demonstrated the centrality of the military in the universalisation of particular cults, such as Jupiter Dolichenus, which expanded rapidly from a local cult in northern Syria during the first century AD to a widespread cult across the frontier provinces by the third century. These military networks, directly or indirectly mobilised a host of other cultural groups and ideas: Palmyrene auxiliaries took their gods to Dacia, North African soldiers put up inscriptions in Britain, and Frisian units made use of traditional pottery when posted to Hadrian's Wall (Eckardt 2014: 63-91; Smith 2013: 165-8; Wilmott *et al.* 2009: 273-5).

On the frontiers, the presence of literate soldiers, bureaucrats and merchants, all living far from home, perhaps explains the wealth of evidence, especially epigraphic, with which to explore identities. But how can the less impressive evidence from provincial, and especially rural, landscapes be understood in terms of Roman globalisation? After all, the vast majority of the Empire's population remained rural and, as today, rural populations were not immune from globalisation—indeed, the costs are usually borne by rural communities, whether in terms of the loss of land, higher rents, or environmental degradation. This situation was all the more marked in pre-industrial times, when the majority of wealth was directly or indirectly extracted from rural landscapes. Two very different urban hinterlands in Roman Britain illustrate the possibilities (Gaffney *et al.* 2007; Perring & Pitts 2013). High-status rural settlements around Camulodunum (Colchester) made significant use of Roman pottery, particularly fineware vessels for eating and drinking, reflecting practices which drew on Roman culture. In contrast, the territory around Viroconium (Wroxeter) made very limited use of Roman—or indeed, any—pottery. Perring & Pitts (2013: 250) argue that this difference was not the result of two different responses to Roman control, examples of successful and failed Romanisation respectively, but rather a continuity of pre-existing trends. Around Camulodunum, a century of Gallo-British culture had paved the way for Roman styles of consumption; around Viroconium, there was no such priming and hence no analogical resonance with Roman culture. The unevenness of the Romano-British countryside reflects its pre-Roman character—in effect, these were 'Iron Age' landscapes.

From a globalisation perspective, the situation looks different. Pre-existing structures always shape responses to globalisation, but even areas which cannot, or choose not, to connect are transformed. Globalisation crystallises or exaggerates existing trends; there is never simple continuity because

the local is redefined through reference to the global (Woods 2007: 489, 500). Hence, in the hinterland of Viroconium, we do not see simple persistence of an Iron Age way of life because the lack of consumption by rural populations during the Roman period was now referenced against a different baseline, most obviously the urban lifestyles at new city of Viroconium. These rural populations may not have used Roman material culture, but their identities and lifestyles were profoundly shaped by Roman globalisation (see Witcher 2016).

Elsewhere, other populations may have found no alternative but to make use of Roman material culture. Drawing on the concept of 'network power', Morley (2015: 62-4) has suggested that for many the cost of remaining outside the Roman network may have been too high—socially, economically or politically. Over time, adoption was less a matter of choice than necessity. For example, anyone putting up an inscription in the Roman West would have found it almost impossible to choose any language other than Latin. It had no intrinsic superiority, it was simply the language backed by the network. But the situation was different in the Greek East because there the Greek language was embedded within a well-established network—there was little cost to ignoring Latin.

Significantly, effects such as these did not require Rome to intrude systematically into the everyday lives of its subjects. Indeed, like other ancient states, Rome lacked the ability to do so routinely or universally (see Bayly 2004 on pre-modern empires). Instead it relied primarily on local elites who were drawn into an imperial community of shared interests and structured competition (Ando 2000; Scheidel 2013: 28). It was through these elites that imperial ideology and provincial loyalty were negotiated and it is therefore no surprise that when rebellions did occur (e.g. Social War, Gallic Empire, Palmyran Empire) these were not so much challenges against the Roman system as struggles for dominance within it (see Tomlinson 2003: 275). Like globalisation today, Roman globalisation made it difficult to articulate any alternative. It was a competitive ideology, well-aligned with the interests of a small elite, but with sufficient promise of opportunity such that a wider section of society saw possibilities; others were drawn in whether they liked it or not. It was flexible enough that it could evolve, diverging in ways that strained at the notion of unity and yet it could retain a sense of consensus and coherence. Moreover, it articulated a powerful counter-narrative of barbarism against which to promote the merits of its self-declared superiority.

The future of the globalised Roman world

Across large parts of Europe, south-west Asia and North Africa, the archaeological record documents a distinct Roman 'event horizon'. Compared to earlier and subsequent periods, the Roman world is often disproportionately visible, whether measured in terms of urbanism, rural settlement, population, agricultural production, shipwrecks, coinage, inscriptions, pottery or roof tiles. The scale and nature of this archaeological evidence, shaped by universalising concepts drawn from Roman texts, reinforce the notion of the Roman period as an unprecedented example of ancient globalisation. This chapter has raised a number of reasons for caution about accepting this evidence at face value. The Roman world was undoubtedly globalised, but it was not unique and we need better ways of contextualising and indexing Roman globalisation in relation to other ancient cultures and empires. Network studies, in particular, offer important theoretical and methodological frameworks within which to improve understanding.

The richness of this archaeological 'event horizon' also means that we are drowning in data (Perring & Pitts 2013: xviii). This is a very different problem from the study of other ancient societies and, in itself, signifies something distinctive about the Roman world. But if we continue to explain this difference in terms of the dominant interpretive paradigm of 'Romanisation', we will

fail to understand how this situation came about. Moreover, we might legitimately ask, why excavate yet more Roman sites which confirm what we think we already know? Globalisation offers renewed purpose. Rather than working top-down, centre-out, measuring individual sites against an idealised model (i.e. Romanisation), a network approach encourages consideration of sites as unique glocalisations demonstrating and explaining how people across enormous expanses of time and space connected together to form the globalised Roman world.

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