discussion article

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Understanding objects in motion. An *archaeological* dialogue on Romanization

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Abstract

This essay argues that Romanization revolves around understanding objects in motion and that Roman archaeologists should therefore focus on (1) globalization theory and (2) material-culture studies as important theoretical directions for the (near) future. The present state and scope of the Romanization debate, however, seem to prevent a fruitful development in that direction. The first part of this paper therefore briefly analyses the Romanization debate and argues that large parts of 'Anglo-Saxon Roman archaeology' have never been really post-colonial, but in fact from the mid-1990s onwards developed a theoretical position that should be characterized as anti-colonial. This ideologically motivated development has resulted in several unhealthy divides within the field, as well as in an uncomfortable ending of the Romanization debate. The present consensus within English-speaking Roman archaeology 'to do away with Romanization' does not seem to get us at all 'beyond Romans and Natives', and, moreover, has effectively halted most of the discussion about how to understand and conceptualize 'Rome'. The second part of the article presents two propositions outlining how to move forward: globalization theory and material-culture studies. Through this focus we will be able to better understand 'Rome' as (indicating) objects in motion and the human–thing entanglements resulting from a remarkable punctuation of connectivity. This focus is important as an alternative perspective to all existing narratives about Romanization because these remain fundamentally historical, in the sense that they reduce objects to expressions (of identity) alone. It is time for our discussions about 'Rome' to move 'beyond representation' and to become genuinely archaeological at last, by making material culture, with its agency and materiality, central to the analyses.

Keywords

Romanization; post-colonial Roman archaeology; globalization; material-culture studies; the object turn; material agency

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> *While such works undoubtedly enriched our perspective, the fundamental assumption underpinning all modern views about Rome went substantially unchallenged.*
>
> *This means that we are moving on a completely different plane from that of most postcolonial discourse, at least in its most frequently used forms.*
>
> Terrenato 2005, 65, 70

Introduction: an uncomfortable and unfruitful ending

What on earth has happened to the Romanization debate?

With Martin Millett's seminal *The Romanisation of Britain* from 1990 as its point of departure and the two 'Roman imperialism' volumes (Webster and Cooper 1996; Mattingly 1997) as its manifesto, the discussion on how to understand Rome in 'the postcolonial world of today' (as characterized by Terrenato 2005, 59) can be said to have profoundly changed Roman studies. Now, in 2014, Rome is no longer the same as it was a quarter of a century ago. Many perspectives on how to understand 'Rome' and its material culture have been enriched by the Romanization debate, which demonstrates how useful, important and fecund it has been (cf. Woolf 2004).

To state that it was only a debate does not sufficiently characterize what most scholars probably would describe as a genuine paradigm shift in our conceptualization of Rome. It appears to have been, to some scholars at least, a kind of historical readjustment or perhaps even an ideological battle. Similar to how the 'people without history' (cf. Wolf 1982), oppressed by 19th-century European empires, had to fight for their own post-colonial history and the liberty they were entitled to, this new generation of Roman archaeologists and historians felt a strong need to confront and oppose old paradigms of Rome, like a *mission civilisatrice*, and to create the post-colonial Roman studies that the world would be waiting for. Post-colonial analyses that spoke in the language of proud, Native resistance – such as *La résistance africaine à la romanisation* (Bénabou 1976) – were now eagerly used by scholars dealing with Roman provinces (cf., for instance, Van Dommelen 1998). In these studies, the post-colonial point of departure of the Romanization debate seems to have been highly ideologically motivated. This impression is strengthened by the fact that many things changed dramatically with regard to research traditions and interests related to the 'old' and 'new' paradigms. The 'colonial' tradition had a tendency to focus on matters related to Roman emperors and the centre of empire: elites, cities, 'high culture', the monumental, literature and material culture that it had classified as 'art'.

The 'post-colonial' tradition, on the other hand, deliberately marginalized and neglected all this and redirected its attention from centre to periphery, from Romans to Natives, from empire to resistance, from emperors to slaves, from city to countryside, from elites to the 'people without history', from monumental to mundane, from culture to economy and from visual material culture to artefacts that could impossibly be mistaken for art. In order to achieve this, post-colonial Roman archaeology strongly invested in its own research instrument par excellence: the field survey. With Braudel (1966) as part of its legitimation package, the new paradigm succeeded rapidly, at least

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in some countries (see below), in transforming 'classical' archaeology into 'Mediterranean' archaeology. Although this initially was a fully justified and much-needed attempt to broaden the archaeology of antiquity beyond Greeks and Romans, the choice for either of these self-definitions soon became highly ideologically motivated as well (as is the case in the Netherlands, where all chairs for classical archaeology have been changed into Mediterranean archaeology – see Versluys (2010–11)). Profiting, although indirectly, from the intellectual space created by postmodernism and its deconstruction of grand narratives, the Romanization debate thus started off as 'truly post-colonial', in the sense that it investigated the location of culture from a variety of (alternative) perspectives (see Bhabha (1994); for alternative definitions of 'post-colonial', see Webster and Cooper (1996), Van Dommelen (2006) and the 2011 volume (43.1) of *World archaeology*). However, soon it developed into a theoretical position that actually should be characterized as *anti-colonial*. Therefore, instead of becoming *proactive* for the field as a whole, I argue that post-colonial Roman archaeology soon became (and remains) too exclusively *reactive* (for the same criticism with regard to the so-called 'new (= post-colonial) Achaemenid history', in some aspects a comparable case to what is analysed here, see McCaskie (2012)).

Before I elaborate on this, it is necessary to first look briefly at what the Romanization debate precisely entails. The term as such is suggestive of a discussion that spans the entire discipline and incorporates a wide variety of source material from all areas of the Roman world as well as from its interpreters. But this is not the case. The Romanization debate as characterized above is a debate largely within (and about) British Roman archaeology and, through an important and theoretically rather comparable Dutch tradition that grew out of the work of Jan Slofstra (cf. Brandt and Slofstra 1983), about the Roman archaeology of north-western Europe in general as well. Within classical/Mediterranean archaeology the debate developed differently – if, some would argue, at all. On the one side there is an influence from the debate within British Roman archaeology, for instance in volumes like Alcock (1997), Hoff and Rotroff (1997) and Keay and Terrenato (2001), or, more recently, Van Dommelen and Terrenato (2007) and Roth and Keller (2007). On the other side there clearly is, in my opinion, an independent development. In French-speaking archaeology the concept of *résistance* was put firmly on the agenda by volumes like Bénabou (1976) and Pippidi (1976) – which would (strongly) influence post-colonial British Roman archaeology in turn, and also, for instance, the work of scholars like Leveau (1984). In Italian-speaking archaeology there was and is the long-running discussion on how to understand the transition from Italic to Roman; with the concept of *autoromanizzazione* already being discernible in contributions to Zanker (1976) (cf. Stek 2009, chapter 1). And if post-colonial Roman archaeology is really about fragmenting the empire and deconstructing monolithic, top-down concepts of Rome, then (some) studies of Roman (visual) material culture started doing that as long ago as Alois Riegl's *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* from 1901. Therefore, not only are there many Romanization debates; there are also many debates within Roman

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history and archaeology that are about Romanization but only implicitly. A leading scholar like Paul Veyne, to give one example, has had much to say about Romanization from his classic 1979 paper on 'L'Hellénisation de Rome et la problématique des acculturations' onwards, but neither he (nor his paper) play any significant role in the Romanization debate. The same holds true for discussions within French academia on questions of *altérité*, although these are highly relevant to the Romanization debate (see, for instance, Dupont (2002) on the notion of 'included alterity'). What is usually understood as *the* Romanization debate, therefore, is in fact only a specific (originally) British part of a much larger and much more international discussion (see further below). It is very true, however, that this specific part of the larger discussion has been most prominent and visible over the last decades.

The aim of this discussion article is not to provide an in-depth historiographic analysis of the Romanization debate (I will continue to use this characterization for reasons of convenience). The above summary has, of course, represented the matter too concisely and schematically – and the three peer reviews of this article clearly showed that every scholar has his or her own view on the historiography of the subject. The aim of this discussion article is to ask critical questions about the situation that we are in, now, in 2014, because of this shift, and about the prospects of future research. These are timely questions, I think, seeing that the Romanization debate appears to have ended in an uncomfortable and unfruitful manner. But why?

In British and Dutch scholarship a consensus has clearly been reached: we should do away with Romanization. The word itself should not be used any more, as it would direct our analyses automatically towards interpretations in the realm of the old and condemned paradigm that regarded Rome as something positive (exemplary for this approach is Mattingly (2010)). The ideological traces of the Romanization debate are clearly manifest in Anglo-Saxon scholarship,[1] through the continuing condemnation of the old paradigm (which was certainly useful back in the 1990s, but nowadays seems more like flogging a dead horse; see already Merryweather and Prag (2002)), and through the rejection of any terminology containing the word 'Rome' to account for change in temperate Europe, the Mediterranean and the Near East between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. out of this principle alone – while no convincing or generally accepted alternative has been put forward (see below). This is not illogical or even problematic in itself: one could argue that every paradigm change needs an ideological agenda to be successful in the first place, and the post-/anti-colonial perspectives have certainly been successful and rewarding. The genuine problem seems to be the fact that the (ideological) development of the Romanization debate – that is, from truly post-colonial to anti-colonial – has been obstructing theoretical innovation within the field for some time already.

There are various witnesses to this unnatural and illogical state of affairs. In the first place, the plea to do away with Romanization is very much a consensus restricted to (archaeological) Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Because most leading theoretical scholars work within this tradition, it would appear that Romanization is dead nowadays, but it is important to realize that

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this conclusion is not shared by the (various) French, German or Italian traditions at all. This unhelpful dichotomy is strengthened by the fact that Anglo-Saxon scholarship bases itself, more and more exclusively, on studies written in English alone: there clearly is a danger of self-fulfilling prophecy. In the second place, it seems that the consensus is not really shared by a new generation of Roman scholars, who regard themselves as confronted by a dogma rather than by a discussion that they can participate in. This became clear at the various (Theoretical) Roman Archaeology Conferences (RAC and TRAC) in years past. At Oxford (2010), quite a number of lecturers were smiling apologetically whenever they used such expressions as 'the R-word' or 'Romanization between inverted commas' while addressing their own key terminology. Apparently they did not dare to pronounce the actual word 'Romanization', yet this was exactly the concept that they reasoned from. It became clear that this had been no exception or exaggeration when, triggered and somewhat confused by my observations from Oxford, I organized a session on these issues at TRAC Frankfurt in 2012,[2] together with Michael Sommer, who shared my impression of unhealthy divides (cf. now Sommer (2012, 238): 'It is imperative that we determine to what extent our own anti-colonial reflex does and should shape the way we conceptualise cultural contact in Antiquity'). The interest and enthusiasm for the session from younger scholars was overwhelming and from the discussions it became clear that the TRAC generation present in Frankfurt, at least, definitely has issues with the current state of affairs: they are told ('ordered', as some of them described their feelings) not even to contemplate using the concept – or even word – 'Romanization' while simultaneously Romanization seems to be the working hypothesis and terminology of most Roman archaeologists – especially those outside, but also those within, Anglo-Saxon academia. The TRAC attendees clearly wanted a discussion in order to move forward, a discussion not determined beforehand by ideological choices and their implications.

This is the practical reason why we should 'reinvigorate the Romanization debate', albeit from a different (re-)starting position. There is a continuing need for theoretical discussion to overcome the two important divides noted above (I formulate them as caricatures here to highlight their characteristics) between an Anglo-Saxon tradition that has been simply repeating itself for more than a decade now already (important exceptions below) and a Continental tradition that is not explicitly reacting anyway (important exceptions include Schörner (2004); Le Roux (2004); the dossier on Romanization published in the *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome (Antiquité)* 118(1) (2006) 81–166; Häussler (2008); Le Bohec (2008)), and between an older and younger generation, of which the former is formulating hypotheses as truths in such a way that the younger generation feels it has little room for disagreement.

When I use the term 'reinvigorating' I explicitly do not mean to indicate that we should continue the debate as if Romanization were either good or bad, or to question whether we should use the term at all. 'Reinvigorating the Romanization debate' implies that we should continue to creatively discuss what we mean when we say 'Rome', across boundaries set by disciplines

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or scholarly traditions, fuelled by new developments in other fields, and especially in terms of material culture.

We should, in other words, take up what we have gained from the post-/anti-colonial paradigm shift, and now try to develop these insights outside and beyond the ideological cradle in which they were bred. The importance of this has already been effectively outlined in an article by Nicola Terrenato (2005) on Roman colonialism, from which I have therefore used two quotes as epigraphs to this essay. The problem with post-/anti-colonial interpretations is that they have (only) changed the perspective within, but not the rules (or the nature) of, the game itself. To put it schematically, where the colonial paradigm viewed Rome as the 'good' 19th-century imperialistic nation state, the post-/anti-colonial paradigm approached Rome as the 'bad' 19th-century imperialistic nation state and thus put all perspectives (and research interests) upside down, as has been described above. The real problem – the fact that in many respects Rome was not a 19th-century imperialistic nation state at all, and that this comparison is always implicit in our thinking about Rome and, as such, is playing tricks on us – has therefore not been dealt with (for more on this conceptual problem in general, see Gosden (2012) and Cannadine (2013)). In somewhat more structural terms, therefore, one could say that post-/anti-colonial Roman studies encounter exactly the same problems as the old paradigm – albeit they work from a radically different 'bottom-up' perspective – and that the latter was as much ideologically motivated contra Rome as earlier generations were pro-Rome. In both cases there clearly are strong value judgements involved and, as Marc Bloch remarked a long time ago, 'Unfortunately the habit of passing judgments leads to a loss of taste for explanations' (Bloch 1953, here quoted from the new edition of the 1954 English translation, at 116).

In the next three sections I will formulate three perspectives along which, in my opinion, the Romanization debate can continue to fruitfully develop and remain the central theoretical discussion that Roman archaeological and historical studies need. These perspectives overlap, of course, and I have selected and formulated them in such a way, moreover, that it is made clear each time why 'the Romanization debate 1.0' has difficulties advancing on its own, 'handicapped' as it still is by its ideological development and character. My choice is also meant to make clear that most of what I put forward is neither new nor original; 'the Romanization debate 2.0' began long ago (with Woolf (1998) and Wallace-Hadrill (2008) perhaps as its most important general formulations; note also that Slofstra (2002a) called for a rehabilitation of the concept of Romanization), and it has probably always run parallel with (and sometimes even been part of) the main developments, especially if we look beyond Anglo-Saxon scholarship and take various other scholarly traditions into account, as I have described above.

Historiography will always do injustice to a much more complex reality. Let me therefore emphasize again that the purpose of this paper is explicitly *not* to analyse what happened – although it would certainly be worthwhile to have at our disposal the same critical deconstructions and intellectual contextualizations of post-/anti-colonial Roman archaeology that post-/anti-colonial

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Roman scholars created out of the traditions that formed the foundation on which they were building (like, for instance, Hingley (2000; 2001)). Instead, the purpose of this paper is to bridge some of the divides that seem to have been growing by means of formulating directions for future research.

I will start by emphasizing that we have so far not really succeeded in getting 'beyond Romans and Natives', although Greg Woolf (1997) emphatically argued for this almost two decades ago. In fact, I believe that this should be the starting point for any new direction of thinking about what 'Rome' and Romanization are. Second, I will therefore suggest how we can get 'beyond Romans and Natives': to make this happen we should do away with 'the leaning to the West' of Roman archaeological and historical research and instead study the Roman world and its material culture systematically on a local and global level simultaneously. This implies the abolishment of 'provincial Roman' as a useful intellectual category of analysis and a redirection of our research agenda. I will suggest that globalization, or '*mondialisation*', as Paul Veyne (2005, chapter 6) called it, might indeed be a good concept of approach in order to achieve all this. Lastly, I will try and make the dialogue that this article aims to be a genuinely *archaeological* dialogue. Although archaeologists have been prominent in the Romanization debate, it has remained, in my opinion, mostly a historical discussion, a debate about empire as understood in terms of colonialism and imperialism, with material culture merely illustrating these historical concepts and processes. It is now time for the Romanization debate to become genuinely archaeological and, therefore, to make material culture, with its agency and material properties, central to the analyses.

Beyond Romans and Natives

In 1997 Greg Woolf published the article 'Beyond Romans and natives', in which he called for 'a new view of the nature and genesis of Roman imperial culture' (Woolf 1997, 339). He subsequently presented such a new approach and fleshed out the theoretical model with his 1998 landmark book *Becoming Roman*. Having digested the alternative perspectives on Rome exemplified by Millett (1990) – and thus writing history 'from below', while making extensive use of archaeological sources and focusing on 'provincial civilization' – there are, however, no ideological value judgements in his analysis of the process of transformation wherein both Romans and Natives participate. Roman and Native are, in his view, strictly relative categories to the extent that one could *become Roman*, something unimaginable in the context of 19th-century imperialism. Woolf views Roman power as only one out of many factors that explain cultural change, and, following earlier research by others, he therefore proposes the term 'Roman cultural revolution' (Woolf 2001) to properly describe the transformations taking place around the time of Octavian. This is not to say that differences between Roman and Native did not matter – they mattered a lot – but rather that we would be dealing, to a large extent, with constructed ethnic and cultural identities that were fluid and permeable. It remains indeed surprisingly difficult to answer the simple question 'who were the Romans' (Woolf 2012, 219; see below), but we are not likely to find answers in the right direction by constructing absolute

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dichotomies between Roman and Native. As Woolf summarized recently (2012, 222), 'Considerations like these mean we can never study "Roman societies" without including many who were not Romans. Yet if we treat all provincials as "in some sense" Romans, we obscure distinctions that mattered enormously at the time'.

David Mattingly (2006) begins his historical account of Roman Britain (Part I of the Penguin History of Britain series) as follows: 'This book tells the story of the occupation of Britain by the Romans'. In the very first sentence the three main constituents of his narrative are immediately clear: there is Native Britain, there is Roman, and the relation between them is characterized by the word 'occupation'; later on the same page he characterizes the period in question as 'four centuries of foreign domination'; further on (ibid., 7) he concludes that 'Britain in the Roman Empire was a colonized and exploited territory'. Mattingly is clear about his agenda for writing up the history of Britain in the Roman Empire as 'an imperial possession': 'In this book, considerably more emphasis than usual will be placed on the negative aspects of imperial rule and their impact on the subject peoples' (ibid., 12). His 2010 book *Imperialism, power and identity. Experiencing the Roman Empire* and an earlier article for the general public both summarize his reasons for pursuing that agenda: 'Despite an increasingly critical treatment of the reputations of many modern empires (the British empire included), the consensus verdict on the Roman empire remains surprisingly favourable' (Mattingly 2007) – and Mattingly clearly wants to change what he considers to be the consensus.

Briefly summarizing and characterizing the work by two leading (Anglo-Saxon) scholars on Romanization illustrates, I hope, the difference in their approach: Woolf focuses on 'cultural transformation', while 'imperialism' is central to Mattingly's understanding of the Roman world. It is interesting to note that both are (originally) historians making extensive use of material culture while putting a historical concept at the centre of their general interpretation: for Woolf, Rome is about 'empire'; for Mattingly it is about 'colonialism'. Both views on the Roman world are, of course, legitimate and important, but if we want to pursue and reinvigorate the Romanization debate, I suggest that we focus on '(cultural) transformation taking place in the context of empire' rather than on 'imperialism and colonialism'. Why?

Over the past decades, a large number of studies have shown the relative, contextual character of what we used to call Roman and Native, especially where material culture is concerned. This is illustrated by the now ubiquitous use of the term 'hybrid' to characterize artefacts and archaeological contexts – especially in the Roman world everything is, indeed, in one way or another, a ' hybrid' (for critique of the use of this concept, see below). This approach is summarized by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, whom I consider the third leading Anglo-Saxon scholar in the Romanization debate, for whom Rome is about bilingualism and code-switching. Building on the important insight that in order to 'be Roman' you could 'go Greek', Wallace-Hadrill (2008) compares Romanization to the drawing and pumping of blood to and from the heart, with diastolic and systolic phases. This metaphor – and

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Wallace-Hadrill's 'classical', exclusive focus on Greece and things Greek in a Roman context – is not unproblematic in itself (cf. Versluys (2014) and below), but its importance lies in the circularity that it puts at the centre of its understanding of transformation. What I have above characterized as the 'handicap' of anti-colonial studies here becomes particularly apparent: its focus on (good) Natives presupposes (bad) Romans – it simply needs two different cultural containers – and as such it leaves little room for circular processes whereby Natives become Romans and Romans behave as Natives. Still, as we now increasingly find out, that is exactly what happens in large parts of the republic and the empire, with various and varying forms of power and agency involved. An exclusive focus on 'imperialism and colonialism' will only continue to result, probably, in rather one-dimensional interpretations; Robin Osborne (2008) even characterized such a persistent focus as 'colonial cancer'.

Does that make Mattingly's interpretation of what goes on in Roman Britain less feasible? No – in order to make such statements we would have to review the evidence, which is not what this article sets out to do. It does demonstrate, however, that extrapolating his (laudably explicit) ideological, anti-colonial interpretation of this one area from the Roman world to a more general theory on Romanization is dangerous, because both 'power' and 'Roman Britain' are very specific points of view (and of departure). Before I try to indicate, in the next section, how, then, we should arrive at views that hold wider relevance for the Roman world as a whole (and perhaps even for Roman Britain itself as part of that world), two methodological observations pertain.

The first observation is that an individual scholar's view of Romanization appears to greatly depend on the area that he/she studies, as well as on the historical and archaeological sources available for that particular region. Britain in the first centuries A.D. made Mattingly speak of colonial exploitation; not many scholars would like to use those terms for, let us say, Greece or Syria in that period. The situation of (and preconditions for) becoming Roman in Gaul are markedly different from those in Britain, and it is probably only a scholar familiar with visual culture who could propose to make bilingualism and code switching central to the functioning of Roman identity.

The second observation is the dominance of the concept of 'power' – and the concept of 'imperialism and colonialism' along with it – in much Anglo-Saxon scholarship on Romanization. Note how even a recent article that thoughtfully discusses the theoretical agenda of Roman archaeology (Gardner 2013) is entitled 'Thinking about Roman *imperialism*' (my emphasis). If we should do away with anything, I would argue that it should be the terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism', rooted as they are in 19th-century nation-state discourses and their 20th-century deconstructions (cf. Cannadine 2013). As we are increasingly discovering nowadays, what we call Greek and Roman imperialism and colonization functioned markedly differently from our modern understanding of these concepts: these are 'deceptive archetypes' (Terrenato (2005), cf. also Osborne (2008); for a different perspective see, however, Van Dommelen (2012)).

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Why, then, are these terms in their current understandings still so important for many scholars? What are the difficulties of thinking beyond Romans and Natives? Perhaps it lies in the fact that, because of their more general approach to culture, Anglo-Saxon scholars seem to be possessed by relatively stronger ideas of ethnicity and race than are their Continental colleagues (cf. Leersen (2007), with examples and references). It may also be related to the 'invasion narrative' so important for an island culture, as Laurence (2001) has suggested for Roman archaeology in particular. Perhaps there are thus indeed 'English peculiarities' where reflections upon culture and power are concerned, as Gibson (2007, chapter 3) has argued. This is not the place to explore these questions, but for writing a historiography of post-/anti-colonial Roman studies (see above) it is certainly important to describe it as part of the 'culture wars' of the 1980s and 1990s. In a book from 1989, James W. Carey argued that 'British cultural studies could be described just as easily and perhaps more accurately as ideological studies in that it assimilates, in a variety of complex ways, culture to ideology. More accurately, it makes ideology synecdochal of culture as a whole' (Carey 1989, 97). This seems an apt summary of what happened to large parts of the Anglo-Saxon Romanization debate, in which case it is remarkable that this perspective is still so strongly represented in Roman historical and archaeological studies today. The concept of 'power' is important for all historical narratives, but it is only *a* concept. We should therefore certainly continue to think about 'power' in Roman historical and archaeological studies, but only if we seriously theorize the subject – and not in terms of imperialism and colonialism alone.

Local *and* global: beyond provincial Roman archaeologies

In order to get 'beyond Romans and Natives' we will have to get rid of these static taxonomies in an absolute sense, while simultaneously providing enough room in our interpretations for the fact that the categories themselves held much significance in the Roman world. For such an exercise it is crucial to rethink what exactly 'Roman power' is. The intention here would explicitly not be to picture a world in which Romans and Natives are happily joining together in building a new world full of aqueducts, bathhouses and other civilized amenities – such interpretations would focus too much on elite negotiation alone and would unhelpfully bring back aspects and associations of the *mission civilisatrice* (see the just criticism in some of the articles in Keay and Terrenato (2001), Mattingly (2004) and Dench (2005)) – but rather to better understand Romanization as a cultural process (see further below).

The fact that we need to rethink our categories of analysis is the other conclusion that follows from the two methodological observations above. Roman archaeology is hampered by dichotomies between 'classical', 'Mediterranean' and 'provincial', while all are talking about (material culture from) the same social context. Specialization within these dichotomies is even more extreme due to the creation of distinct traditions of 'provincial Roman archaeology' – with scholars working on these Roman 'provinces' who often, or even exclusively, especially in north-western Europe, are citizens of the 19th-century nation states that were founded with the help of such 'ancestor cults' (Terrenato 2001). Scholars often still think, analyse and

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publish in terms of 'the archaeology of Roman Britain, the Low Countries, Gaul, Germania, Spain, the Balkans, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, North Africa' as if these are proper units of analysis (cf. Woolf 2004). They are only to a limited extent, and what makes things worse is the fact that, as described above, a scholar's specialization in one of these areas and its archaeology strongly influences his/her ideas on what Romanization looks like. Within the Romanization debate this is most clearly visible in what is designated 'the leaning to the west' (or 'the north-western inclination') of Roman archaeology: the fact that thinking about Romanization is often largely based on studies about the north-western provinces alone. If Martin Millett (1990), in his essay on archaeological interpretation, had analysed Roman Syria instead of Roman Britain, the Romanization discussion in the English-speaking world would have been markedly different (as will be immediately clear from reading Butcher (2003), for instance; cf. also Versluys (2012)). Despite several attempts (like Hoff and Rotroff (1997) and Alcock (1997), or, although differently, Ball (2000)), the field still very much needs 'an eastern inclination'.

To get beyond Romans and Natives we will therefore have to do away with provinces as the main structuring principle of Roman historical and archaeological studies and try to consistently analyse on a local and global level simultaneously (cf. already Witcher 2000). This will likewise result in a better integration of the various research traditions within Roman studies. Scholars who actively use the approaches of both Mattingly and Wallace-Hadrill in discussing Romanization are not widespread (enough). Still, Wallace-Hadrill's arguments about code switching – although undoubtedly primarily a metaphor borrowed from literary studies – are relevant in order to understand, for instance, 'provincial' realities at the lower Rhine. When the Batavian chief Iulius Civilis 'revolts' against the Romans, he has his hairstyle changed from the Roman custom into a typically Germanic style (cf. Slofstra 2002a). This is very telling of ('Native') power, about becoming Roman and about cultural competence, and indeed we need all three perspectives to understand what goes on – especially in the context of the Batavians, an ethnographic category and identity created in a Roman context alone.

Its ideological development, however, has made the English-speaking Romanization discussion neglect or even forget subjects like the centre(s) of empire, the cities, the monumental, literature and 'art'. But these themes should be actively incorporated again, especially because (quite a few) scholars working in those fields have learned the post-colonial lesson and initiated similar deconstructions. Note, for instance, how Peter Stewart followed up his *Roman art* from 2004 with *The social history of Roman art* in 2008, giving the Romanization discussion an important role. There certainly is a common language now, even if not in all parts of those fields. If provincial Roman archaeologists start taking Classics seriously again, and Mediterranean archaeologists art history, it will soon become even clearer that they are all talking about similar problems in the same social contexts. Here also different (national) research traditions seem to play a role. I was (happily) surprised to see that at the first RAC/TRAC taking place on the (not Anglo-Saxon) Continent (Frankfurt 2012) there was a much wider

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range of approaches represented than at earlier conferences in Britain (and Amsterdam).

'How then do you "do" Roman archaeology "beyond provinces" on local and global levels simultaneously?' one might ask at this point. The answer is simple: by regarding the Roman world and the areas it thought of as the *oikumene* as one single cultural container. From that perspective we do not deal with acculturation between separated cultural groups in terms of the adopting (voluntarily or not) of cultural traits from *A* to *B* or *B* to *A*, but with cultural and social interactions within the same group (Le Roux (1995) was already moving in this direction by talking about *acculturation permanente*). With this interaction, all kinds of (invented) ethnicities and (imagined) identities are played out, of course. However, by regarding them as *strategies* of identity and alterity it becomes clear that indeed 'the main cultural tensions in the Roman Empire were between small conservatism and global trends, between customary power and Mediterranean-wide political games, between traditional forms of surplus circulation and elements of market economy – more than between Romans and natives or colonizers and colonized' (Terrenato (2005, 70); cf. Versluys (2013), where I work out in detail what is only briefly summarized here). Terrenato's theoretical conclusion following this statement is equally apt: 'This means that we are moving on a completely different plane from that of most post-colonial discourse, at least in its most frequently used forms' (see further below).

If we are looking for terminology that rules out ethnic entities and cultural-container thinking – and we therefore have to rule out (post-/anti-)colonial solutions to the problematics of how cultural processes work, like acculturation, colonization, creolization, resistance or even hybridization – then a key element must certainly be connectivity. The Mediterranean and Near East are characterized by an increasing connectivity from the middle of the second millennium B.C. onwards. An intensive circulation of goods in the Bronze Age soon results in trade revolutions and, along with those, a diaspora of Phoenicians and many other Mediterranean peoples like (what we call) Greeks all across the Mediterranean. In the Hellenistic era this 'global' world has already become so interconnected that it even starts actively developing its own 'culture' – and with an immense velocity all kinds of religious, social and cultural concepts are translated from one context to the other. The Roman *oikumene* is the 'outcome' of this accelerating process of interconnectivity. We will never know what Polybius' agenda was, when he wrote (in his *Histories* 1.3, to be dated somewhere between 160 and 120 B.C.) that 'from this point onwards [after the Second Punic War] history becomes an organic whole: the affairs of Italy and Africa are connected with those of Asia and of Greece, and all events bear a relationship and contribute to a single end'. But it clearly shows that ideas of living in one, single, global world did exist.

The fact that Mediterranean history is all about connectivity within a single framework, in economic and social terms, was strongly argued by Horden and Purcell (2000) already over a decade ago, and they pictured the Roman world as a quintessentially Mediterranean society driven by communication

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with good reason. Although scholars have certainly been interested in these new perspectives theoretically, archaeologists in particular have done too little with them in practice, in the sense of trying to understand what this connectivity implies for (their understanding of) material culture (important exceptions include Van Dommelen and Knapp (2010) and Maran and Stockhammer (2012)). The realization that the Roman world is fundamentally about connectivity and communication has led to many interpretations about the 'hybridity' of material culture, but, as has been argued above, the problem lies in the fact that such interpretations remain within the (post-/anti-)colonial framework because they reason from separate ethnic and cultural containers. Metaphors of hybridity thus presuppose (if not produce) static, cultural dichotomies (cf. Flood 2009). Saying that something is (a bit) Roman and (a bit) Native is not going beyond Roman and Native at all. For the Roman world there seems to be something much more radical at stake and it might well be possible that the continuing dominance of the anti-colonial framework within Roman studies prevents us from moving in that direction (cf. more in general Weinstein (2005), where this state of affairs is characterized as 'the post-colonial dilemma'). Here my analysis differs from that of Gardner (2013), who considers post-colonialism and globalization as the two main (theoretical) approaches taken by scholars to get 'beyond Romanization' so far (on this question see now also Hingley (2014b)). I argue, on the contrary, (1) that post-colonialism was, in fact, often anti-colonialism and has left the Roman–Native dichotomy intact – something which has resulted in replacing Romanization with 'Romanization' and the impasse we are in at present, and (2) that the exploration of globalization theory within Roman archaeology has remained very limited and that the radical consequences (and possibilities) of the concept (cf. Appadurai 2001) have not yet materialized at all.

In his 2009 essay *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité*, the French anthropologist Marc Augé has analysed the difficulties that scholars encounter when describing a world that is fundamentally characterized by people and objects in motion. We are all well aware, for instance, that we live in a postmodern world (*surmoderne*, as Augé calls it, perhaps more aptly) but we still (and rather naively) use the conceptual toolbox designed for understanding modernity to describe and understand it. I think that the same holds true for understanding connectivity in antiquity. Taking connectivity as the defining characteristic of the Roman world has immense implications and forces us to move our intellectual concepts from *acculturation* to *globalization*, from *history* to *mnemohistory*, from *traditions* to the *invention of traditions*, from *being* to *becoming*, from *communities* to *imagined communities* and from conceptualizing in terms of *cultures* to thinking in terms of *cultural debates* (Versluys (2013) and (2014) both provide more background to this claim as well as many examples).

The paradox of the current situation is the fact that, while most scholars seem to agree on the great advantages of this new theoretical position – Horden and Purcell (2000) has been hailed as a landmark publication and has even been described as a true paradigm shift – at the same time they do not seem to take it seriously enough. Studies looking for more specific

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understandings (and critique) of the general notion of connectivity – like Morris's concept of Mediterraneanization (2005) and Woolf's (2001) or Wallace-Hadrill's (2008) idea of a cultural revolution – remain limited. By staying within the (post-/anti-)colonial framework many studies, in fact, strengthen the borders that the new paradigm sets out to undermine and dissolve. In order to genuinely take connectivity in antiquity seriously – and to arrive at a historical anthropology of mobility for the Roman world – we should, I propose, focus on two things: (1) globalization theory and (2) the entanglement of things and people (material-culture studies).

The first aspect can only be briefly dealt with here; in a forthcoming book Martin Pitts and I (2014) will discuss the perspectives and opportunities that globalization theory offers for studying the Roman world critically and at length. I refer to that publication for all further details. Together with the small monograph by Richard Hingley (2005), this is the first book within Roman studies to explicitly deal with globalization theory from a variety of perspectives, underlining, I think, how limited its application has been so far. Within the social sciences globalization is now simply *the* way to talk about connectivity; simultaneously those social scientists are asking archaeologists and historians for a deep historical perspective on the connectivity of our modern world(s) (cf. Appadurai 2001). At the same time, Roman studies are (still) struggling to get beyond Romans and Natives and beyond doing Roman–provincial-area studies by means of focusing on connectivity and (as we have seen, still held back perhaps by the ideological characteristics of the anti-colonial Romanization debate) not really getting there. The only logical conclusion seems to be that we should 'push the globalization analogy harder, applying to the ancient Mediterranean the same tough questions that scholars ask about connectedness in our own time' (Morris 2005, 33). Globalization is not about (American or Roman) power destroying local and authentic cultures; quite the contrary. Globalization theories are about investigating diversity within a single cultural framework, with complex power structures between all kinds of different groups that have shifting boundaries, but also with unintentional results of connectivity and communication. And it is about the transformative capacities of intercultural encounters. 'Glocalization' is only a word, but the basic questions of the Romanization debate can be very usefully reconceived within this framework – as explained and illustrated, for example, by Witcher (2000), Pitts (2008), Alexandridis (2010) or Mol (2012). Globalization is therefore an excellent tool to make us think local and global, and to get us beyond provincial Roman archaeologies and beyond Roman and Native at last. The second focus, on material-culture studies and the entanglement of people and material culture, will be the central point of the next and final section.

An *archaeological* perspective on Romanization

Images of Rome in European culture are omnipresent, strong and persistent (Hingley 2001). One of the foremost associations ever made with Rome is that of military conquest and empire building (cf. Terrenato 2001, who identifies lawmaking and engineering as distant seconds). As we have seen above, also for many scholars this is what the quintessential story of Rome

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is about; for them Rome is always, and simply out of logical consequence, about asymmetric power relations, about imperialism, about colonization and about clashing identities (see Mattingly (2010); cf. Woolf (2012, vii): 'All histories of Rome are histories of empire'). Now let us for a moment radically put aside these ideas about Rome (as if that were possible, cf. Reece (1990)) – and along with them let us put aside all Roman literary sources that were likewise spellbound by the need to explain empire – and let us do what archaeologists should always primarily try to do: look at material culture in its own right first. What do we see then?

We see diasporas of material culture. Material culture of all kinds of different styles, forms and materials. This repertoire is as broad and varied as it is omnipresent all across the Roman world. If it were possible to have a map displaying all artefacts from the Roman world that have been preserved from a certain period, and if an anthropologist with no real knowledge of the Roman world and its history were asked to identify different clusters of material culture on that map to try and make sense of it, he would, I imagine, have a very difficult time drawing such clusters in. Something as clearly recognizable as an amphitheatre or an aqueduct would be evident all across the map, as also, and with even more examples, would be the case for an architectural form called 'Greek temple' or an object form called 'Greek statue'. Objects and architecture in an 'Egyptian' style clearly stand out in terms of stylistic properties: they are clustered at some places on the Nile but also at some places in Italy, and the remainder of them are to be found everywhere. Stucco wall paintings, mosaics and *terra sigillata* pots certainly show small-scale local clusterings, but again they are everywhere to be found on this map, which represents around five million square kilometres – as are large stones with Latin inscriptions, although these are found predominantly in the western half of the Mediterranean. Military forts are everywhere, stereotypical and thus (perhaps) clearly recognizable as 'Roman'; however, within these forts the variety of (cultural) artefacts is bewildering and impossible to cluster. Even the frontiers of the Roman world would not be as easy to point out as one might expect, if at all. I am not concerned with these specific examples, but with the general picture that emerges from them: in material-culture terms there is no identifiable Roman culture or Roman Empire (on the fundamental question of the meaning of the concept 'material culture' see, in general, Hicks (2010)). From the many circles that our anthropologist would draw on the map – probably constantly correcting himself when, on closer inspection, he notices an example of what he has just labelled as category *X* in a very different area – it would be impossible to distinguish centre from periphery, colonizer from colonized, and, indeed, Roman from Native. If Roman archaeology were prehistory, Roman imperialism would be quite invisible in the archaeological record. Even the city of Rome itself would be invisible, albeit as a clustering of probably the largest amount of different styles in a single context (cf. Edwards and Woolf 2003). A mind map of Rome in material-culture terms is therefore not first and foremost about military conquest or about empire building in terms of imperialism and colonialism at all. In material-culture terms Rome is about the reworking and redistribution of a bewildering variety of (what

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we call) Celtic, Greek, Mediterranean, Near Eastern and Egyptian forms and styles of material culture. Here Wallace-Hadrill's (2008; see above) metaphor of the drawing and pumping of blood to and from the heart springs to mind as an alternative narrative. There is, however, no single heart: the system is quintessentially polycentric. And there are no diastolic and systolic phases – there is constant circularity and certainly not between 'Greece' and 'Rome' alone ('Egypt', for instance, plays an important role as well; see Versluys (2010)). In other words, Rome is globalized and is globalizing.

One could characterize this perspective of looking at material culture in its own right as 'beyond representation' (cf. Malafouris 2004). Nicolas Thomas (1999, 16) characterizes the importance of this approach very well when he writes that 'the interpretative strategy of regarding things essentially as expressions of cultural, subcultural, religious, or political entities, depends on too static and literal an approach to their meanings'. Still, as we have seen, this is what most (post-colonial) Roman archaeology is still doing, often under the heading of 'identity' (cf. Pitts 2007; Van Oyen 2013 for critique). Thomas adds (1999, 18–19) that in his case, 'This way of seeing things perhaps also helps us move beyond the long-standing dilemma of historical anthropology in Oceania, which has lurched between emphasis on continuity and discontinuity, between affirmation of the enduring resilience of local cultures, and critique of the effects of colonial history'. I argue that the same is true for the long-standing dilemma that is the Romanization debate.

But one could even take this 'beyond-representation' perspective one (radical) step further and make material culture, with its stylistic and material properties (and thus agency; see below), *central* to our understanding of the Roman world. This would be following what is now commonly designated the 'object turn' or 'the material-cultural turn' (cf., out of a quickly growing bibliography, Knappett and Malafouris (2008), Saurma-Jeltsch and Eisenbeiß (2010), Hicks and Beaudry (2010) and Hodder (2012), all with references to the texts by Latour, Appadurai and Gell fundamental to this approach; Hicks (2010) is an important historiography and outlook from an anthropological and archaeological perspective). Scholars in fields ranging from political theory and literature to sociology are now moving away from an understanding of the world centered on people and texts, and instead are moving towards a reconsideration of the interrelationships between all things, including humans. This 'material turn' is, of course, explicitly relevant for the three disciplines that have always been centered around the object, and that now seem to rediscover its agency in cultural-historical terms: art history, anthropology and archaeology. Given the fact that, as has just been argued, in archaeological terms Rome is a world fundamentally characterized, in all aspects, by objects in motion, this seems like a promising direction for Roman archaeology. It will immediately be clear how much the basic questions of the debate are reconceived through and within this framework: a central question for Roman archaeology now becomes whether or not Romanization can be understood as a relatively dramatic punctuation of connectivity that was primarily brought about by objects in motion and, of course, by the implications of this human–thing entanglement. We should, to phrase it

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radically, try and understand the era we call Roman primarily in terms of materiality – and thus in some ways similar to how we commonly understand the *Bronze* Age, the *Iron* Age, etc.

Material culture is an active agent in its relationship with people, rather than simply a representation of (cultural) meaning (alone). It is important to emphasize this point because, as we have seen, material culture often has (only) been made to *represent* a lot of different things in the various meanings of 'Rome' that have so far been discussed. But if the (potential) meaning of things in Roman contexts is of such bewildering complexity and fluidity – especially when looking for meaning as the outcome of the use of stylistic and material properties in a fixed relation to identity – we should perhaps focus more on what the object in question *does*. And in order to focus on what it does, we should investigate its agency: the way it determines its viewer, its immediate context and, consequently, its historical context (cf. Boivin 2008). An object called 'Greek statue', for instance, has no fixed meaning as such. It has not necessarily anything to do with ethnic Greeks and often cannot be connected with a desire to acquire a 'Greek identity' in a particular context. Even as a cultural or social concept it is evasive; the same form of Greek statuary can simultaneously be found on a bone amulet worn by a slave and, in original Greek bronze, in an imperial collection. This indicates, again, that we should not so much focus on what things with their stylistic and material properties would represent – or to what historical narrative they testify – but on what things do in a certain context. And in order to reconstruct what we then should call the experience of the object (form) called 'Greek statue', we should seriously take its agency into account. Understanding (Roman) material culture is about human–thing entanglement in which the 'thingness' of the object has an important part to play (cf. Jones and Boivin (2010), who call this 'material agency').

It is already well known that the specific stylistic and material properties that make up the diasporas of material culture that we call the Roman world had specific associations that actively affected people. With good reason Tonio Hölscher (2004) has talked about 'the language of images' – note how this phrasing puts the agency with the objects – but material culture without images had also agency. When these aspects of materiality and the agency of material culture in the Roman world are brought into connection with the potential of globalization studies as discussed above, things become particularly interesting. If we can really describe material culture as *actant*, as playing a role in networks of (social) relationships, the Roman world is a very special case. As has been described above, from the period around 200 B.C. onwards the network had become so 'hyper-' and interconnected that it would be better to call it global in order to indicate the degree of connectivity at stake. More things and people came together in the Roman world than ever had done before, which implies that (potential) human–thing entanglements exploded. Gosden (2004) is therefore certainly right, I think, in understanding colonialism as crucially a relationship with material culture, a particular grip that material culture has on people. But I would understand this more generally and see colonization as just one out of many more forms (and degrees) of connectivity. It is the degree of connectivity that

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matters when understanding 'material agency'; this is the point of calling the Roman world 'global'. Following Appudurai (2001) and others, it is interesting and important to think about the Roman world as a device trying to handle all these objects in motion and to make sense of all the human–thing entanglements that constantly kept coming back, because, as we have seen, Rome was globalized and globalizing. The urban landscape of Rome itself testifies to this idea of 'handling objects in motion' in many respects, so it seems, because all the (important) object forms that circled within the system had their place in Rome: from 'Greek temples' and 'Egyptian obelisks' to 'Celtic armour'. Things from the Eastern Mediterranean always were most prominent within this system: might that be the reason why the Roman Empire, as a device to handle objects in motion, eventually had to move east and make Constantinople its new capital? Be that as it may, I argue that we are in need of a non-anthropocentric approach towards the genesis and functioning of the Roman Empire (cf. Knappett and Malafouris 2008).

There is, of course, much more to be said about what I wished to indicate here as a fundamental alternative perspective. The choice to take material culture seriously in its own right forces us to critically rethink Romanization: be it in terms of 'beyond representation' or in terms of (radically) following the 'object turn'. My reasons for underlining the archaeological/material culture/object perspective in the context of this essay are still rather limited and applied. Studying material culture in its own right, like having agency in a human–thing entanglement, makes clear at a glance that 'Rome' is not about empire building and imperialism or about Romans and Natives. If thinking in terms of globalization is one way to overcome that paradigm, then focusing on material culture and its agency certainly is another. We should therefore consider redirecting part of our research agenda from a focus on *territories* towards *networks* (or, as James Clifford famously remarked, from *roots* to *routes*: this is what globalization studies can do) and from *texts* towards *things* (as material-culture studies does; cf. Flood (2009)). Let me stress immediately that such a redirection should, of course, be understood as an alternative perspective alone. Material culture certainly has its own problems when used for historical analysis and also I certainly do not want to suggest a dichotomy between 'historical' and 'archaeological' interpretation. However, in the current situation, which I have analysed in the first part of this essay, material culture in particular seems able to nuance and challenge existing (historical) narratives. We have seen that historical narratives made 'Rome' into a story of military conquest and imperialism, while a focus on (networks of) material culture and its agency might tell very different stories. Especially Roman archaeologists, therefore, should take the 'object turn' seriously. But that does not imply that they should forget thinking about territories and texts or about colonialism and imperialism. It also does not imply that the only things that matter in understanding 'Rome' are *longue durée* developments of these kinds regarding the power of things and the flow of cultural transformations: *événements* and *conjonctures*, institutions and politics, also hold much significance and indeed Rome is more than a cultural process alone. However, I believe that focusing on 'Rome' through

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the lens of globalization theory and material-culture studies has, at this very moment, the potential to reconceive the debate and to move us beyond some long-standing dilemmas.

Hartmut Böhme (2006) has beautifully shown that one can write 'Eine andere Theorie der Moderne' when taking 'die stummen Dinge im Aufbau der Kultur' seriously. This is what we now should try to do for the Roman world. That prism will make clear that, in material-culture terms, 'Rome' does not so much refer to a culture or a culture style, but rather indicates a period of remarkable connectivity and its material/human consequences. Artefacts we call 'Roman' are therefore not in the first place expressions of Romans or of ideas about Rome. They are concrete material presences part of a spatial relation in (historical) time and (geographical) space: Romanization is about understanding objects in motion.

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This essay is the result of teaching about and participating in the Romanization debate for over a decade now. I would like to thank my sparring partners during that period for all the fierce debates, especially my colleagues at the Free University Amsterdam (VU) Gert Jan Burgers, Ton Derks, Jeremia Pelgrom, Nico Roymans, Jan Slofstra and Douwe Yntema; as well as my Leiden colleagues Tatiania Ivleva, Tesse Stek, Hanna Stöger and Erik van Rossenberg; and, from Groningen, Onno van Nijf. A special word of thanks is reserved for Frederick Naerebout: our Leiden cooperation in research and teaching is one big discussion about understanding Romanization, from which I continue to learn much. I am quite sure that none of those mentioned will (totally) agree with what I say here: let us continue the debate! I have profited greatly from the many RAC and TRAC conferences I visited during this period and would like to thank in particular Martin Pitts for all his (critical) input and for our cooperation. My stay as guest professor at Toulouse (Le Mirail) made me discuss and reconsider the issue from various different perspectives; Laurent Bricault was an excellent host. Rethinking Romanization is central to our current NWO VIDI project Cultural Innovation in a Globalising Society: Egypt in the Roman World; this article could not have been written without all the discussions, over the past years, with Ph.D. candidates Marike van Aerde, Maaike Leemreize, Eva Mol and Sander Müskens. For understanding the active role of material culture I am much indebted to discussions with Caroline van Eck and Pieter ter Keurs. Lastly, I gratefully acknowledge the critique of the three anonymous reviewers from which I profited and learned much.

Notes

[1] Talking about Anglo-Saxon scholarship is, of course, an unwarranted generalization. In each country the varied and varying images of Rome very much influence thinking about what Romanization is (cf. Hingley 2001). Here, however, I am not concerned with historiographical analysis to understand what (kind of) perceptions of Rome surface where and when. I am concerned with what clearly is perceived as the consensus in Great Britain and the Netherlands and at the various RAC/TRAC conferences that I have been visiting from 2008 to 2013, and its consequences.

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[2] The session took place on 30 March 2012 and was entitled The Romanisation of the Roman World: New Theoretical, Practical and Methodological Approaches to an Old Paradigm. Lectures were given by S. Gonzalez Sanchez, D. Mladenovic, B. Misic (i.a.), M. Termeer, L. Gilhaus and D. van de Zande; Hartmut Leppin kindly led the plenary discussion. Both organizers would like to thank the TRAC committee for their enthusiasm and assistance, which helped make the session a success.

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Struggling with a Roman inheritance. A response to Versluys

*Richard Hingley**

> *. . . the phenomenon of globalization is in itself random and chaotic, to the point where no one can control it*
>
> Jean Baudrillard (2003, 50)

I am very grateful to Miguel John Versluys for this paper, which raises several important issues that derive from current debates in Roman archaeology. I am aware of the context of Versluys's arguments as I am a contributor to the forthcoming volume *Globalization and the Roman world* (which Versluys has jointly edited; Pitts and Versluys 2014). I am pleased to be able to develop some of the themes outlined in my chapter for that volume (Hingley 2014b) through this reflection upon Versluys's contribution to the developing debate. The issues raised by Versluys are particularly timely since a number of younger colleagues have observed that the critical focus provided by what I shall term 'post-colonial Roman archaeologies' (PCRAs) is stifling innovative research. PCRA is the term I use to address the body of research and publication characterized by Versluys as 'Anglo-Saxon Roman archaeology' (for reasons given below). I did not attend the TRAC session at Frankfurt to which Versluys refers, but I recognize his observation that there is a genuine concern about the form and content of PCRAs arising from Roman archaeologists both in Britain and overseas. PCRAs have focused around two core themes: (1) critiquing the concept of Romanization and (2) the development of new ways of approaching the Roman Empire. Versluys suggests that this discussion has culminated in 'an uncomfortable ending' (p. 1) for the Romanization debate and his proposal includes the reintroduction of this concept. Taking a rather different perspective, I shall propose that a dynamic and transformative agenda is spreading across several continents and that PCRAs form an important aspect of this developing perspective.

The global politics of English as a dominant academic language

PCRAs arose largely in Britain during the 1990s in response to an academic environment dominated by a simple monolithic concept of Roman identity and social change. The approach to Romanization at this time was deeply

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entangled with ideas of civilizing missions that had lived on beyond the collapse of British imperial rule (Cunliffe 1984; Reece 1982; cf. Hingley 1989, 1). The publication of Martin Millett's *The Romanization of Britain* (1990) spearheaded a new agenda that called these imperial pasts into question. Millett retained the use of the concept of Romanization, but others used his stimulating contribution to develop approaches that avoided using the term, drawing attention to the constraints that it places upon analysis (for recent summaries of these works see Gardner 2013, 3–6; Laurence 2012, 62–73). A group of archaeologists, led by Eleanor Scott, launched their campaign to introduce theory to Roman archaeology at the first Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (Scott 1993). They were seeking new ways to break out of the restrictions created by over-definitive and inflexible accounts of the Roman past. The creation of TRAC directly resulted in the development of another new initiative, the Roman Archaeology Conference, which first convened in 1995. TRAC has continued to meet in the UK and overseas and new directions of study have been developed at subsequent meetings. The Critical Roman Archaeology Conference, held in Stanford (California) in 2008, was an offshoot of TRAC that developed an explicitly theoretical focus for the Roman archaeology of the Mediterranean (Lafrenz Samuels and Totten 2012).

I am not convinced by Versluys's idea that the critical debates of Romanization represent a specifically 'Anglo-Saxon' concern. Recent publications indicate that PCRAs form part of an expanding and transnational body of research within a broader field of classical studies (e.g. Dietler 2010; Garraffoni and Funari 2012; González Ruibal 2010; Hales and Hodos 2010; Hardwick and Gillespie 2007; Janković and Mihajlović, forthcoming; Lafrenz Samuels and Totten 2012; Orells, Bhambra and Roynon 2011). In addition, the number and character of these works seems to challenge the idea that post-colonial approaches are stultifying new research focused on the Roman Empire. It is certainly true that not all the contributions to the volumes listed above support or acknowledge the agendas developed through PCRAs. Indeed, I recognize many of the issues addressed in Versluys's paper from discussions at two of the recent conferences that feature in this list. The agendas outlined by PCRAs, however, are encouraging and provoking researchers to articulate new accounts by drawing upon and/or contradicting what some see as dominant perspectives in Roman archaeology.

I suspect that there may be a more insidious issue at play in the spread of PCRAs, relating to the role of English as the dominant language of academic communication (cf. Sonntag 2003). Academic practice directly encourages archaeologists from across the world to communicate in this global language, a process that may also promote the adoption of academic research questions, theories and methods that predominate in English-speaking countries (Hingley 2014a). Rather than facing a climate of academic stagnation, however, I perceive a broadening out of research agendas and a healthy intellectual debate that is crossing international and conceptual boundaries. Debate and discussion may help to ensure that this body of scholarship does not become too random and chaotic, although part of our agenda, I feel, should be to support the opening up of debates that focus upon the meaning(s) of the Roman past (Hingley 2014b).

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Relating the Roman past to the global present

Versluys aims to use globalization theory and material-culture studies to build a new approach to the Roman Empire drawing upon the idea of objects in motion. I agree that it is useful to adopt globalization theory to interpret the Roman Empire. Versluys mentions that little detailed work has yet been undertaken to assess the relevance of globalization theory to Roman archaeology but that momentum is evidently increasing (e.g. Pitts and Versulys 2014). As Versluys notes, I made an early contribution to this debate (Hingley 2005), but my perspective differs from his in that it focuses upon the entanglement of our understandings of the Roman past with concepts derived from the global present (Hingley 2014b). The Graeco-Roman past has long provided a rich range of powerful tools and metaphors for people across the West, and the reworking of these concepts in the transforming researches of Roman archaeologists requires especially careful handling. This is because we continue to live with the consequences of Roman expansion, since later societies have picked up, adopted and transformed Roman concepts, practices and materials (Hingley 2014b; Morley 2010).

In her article 'Value and significance in archaeology', Katherine Lafrenz Samuels (2008, 88) has outlined an approach based on the idea of source criticism that I shall explore here (cf. Hingley 2014b). She argues that it is good to reconstruct the past by seeking to excise contemporary influences and by working back critically through the historical sources and material remains. This is how archaeological and classical scholarship has often operated, by using the idea that it is possible to construct an authentic past that can effectively be divided from the present as a result of detailed, scholarly research. Lafrenz Samuels observes, however, that to 'argue that reconstructions of the past should be free of value judgements ignores the fact that archaeology is shaped by its practices and exists in a social context that is decidedly contemporary' (ibid). This is the main reason why the past is regularly reinterpreted – changes in the way that the present is perceived within society are reflected in changing understandings of the past (Hingley 2014b). Lafrenz Samuels (2008, 88) continues by observing that the insistence that there is a strict separation between past and present 'considerably restricts the tools we have available for analysis'. This acknowledges that the present context deeply impacts on the pasts that we create and that the analysis of this interrelationship can reap rich rewards. She promotes 'a dialogical conversation between past and present' that 'blurs those barriers … to show their interconnectedness, without disregarding their differences' (ibid.). Extending this approach to consider how materials derived from the Roman Empire can be addressed, I have directed my attention to consider the origins and meanings of some of the concepts that lie at the core of Roman studies (Hingley 2014b).

The deconstruction of Romanization in England focused upon uncovering the ways in which the theories and practices of Roman archaeology were entangled with the 'imperial discourse' of Victorian and Edwardian society, providing imperial narratives that had deep relevance to the creation and maintenance of British imperial order at home and overseas (Hingley 2005, 28). The idea that we have moved on to a 'post-colonial' age is not universally agreed upon (cf. Hingley 2014a), but the agenda in Roman archaeology

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has changed over the course of the past 30 years. First PCRAs came to prominence and now a number of scholars are promoting the relevance of globalization theory (Pitts and Versluys 2014). We do not all agree how new approaches to globalizing Roman society should be achieved, but there seems to be consensus that we cannot avoid drawing upon ideas derived from globalization; this results from the idea that global conceptions are omnipresent in our societies, making it inevitable that globalization theory will influence current research and writing.

The explicit adoption of globalization theory requires a clear acknowledgement of the influence of the present on interpretations of the past. Post-colonial theory, globalization and Romanization are approaches that have been developed in modern times to make sense of the ancient world and we need to consider how the adoption of such concepts impacts on the types of past society that they help us to (re-)create. It is not necessary to interpret the relationship between Romanization, PCRAs and globalization as a simple chronological procession of successive theories through time. For example, Versluys tries to argue the continuing value of Romanization through an engagement with globalization theory and material-culture studies. I prefer to link the post-colonial to the global, but to sideline Romanization to the field of historiographical study. The introduction to a recent study, *The post-colonial and the global* (Krishnaswamy 2008, 2–3), addresses the relationship of these bodies of theory across the humanities and social sciences, suggesting that works in globalization theory often tend to pursue a 'brazenly positivistic' perspective and that this contrasts with the 'deconstructive or hermeneutic' focus explicit in much post-colonial theory. I propose that the development of theory in Roman archaeology can seek to work across the divide between positivism and deconstruction by exploring how present and past are interconnected, without losing sight of the possibility of establishing differences (for a focus on difference see Terrenato 2005).

Interrogating the past and understanding the present

The idea that we need not insist on a strict separation between past and present communicates new possibilities by emphasizing the creative and transformative character of the theories we use to study classical Rome. A number of scholars have argued in conversation with me that, since my generation has spilt so much ink to deconstruct the concept of Romanization, we can now move forward to develop approaches that build upon this term without reproducing the forms of bias inherent in earlier writings. It is also clear (as Versluys emphasizes) that Romanization continues to form part of the academic vocabulary in many parts of the Mediterranean and in France and Germany. Indeed, a resistant group of researchers continues to draw upon 'Romanization' in the UK, although this is largely an undercover movement. The reason why I feel that Romanization theory is unnecessary today is clearly addressed by the approach that Versluys adopts in his paper. Much of what he writes about material culture in the Roman world seems to decentre the idea of Roman identity to the extent that the empire seems Roman in name only (cf. Hingley 2005, 102). Why, therefore, do we need to use the concept of Romanization, apart from when we explore past research traditions? I should

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also say that I have no particular objection to people continuing to use this term, but that it does not fit with the type of perspective that I seek to develop.

I do agree with Versluys, however, that other core terms in Roman studies also require deconstruction. Versluys suggests that it would be useful to develop 'critical deconstructions and intellectual contextualizations' of Anglo-Saxon Roman archaeology to match those undertaken within the former traditions of the study of Romanization (p. 7). In this context, he argues that the concepts of 'imperialism' and 'colonialism', on which much of this scholarship has been based, should be done away with since they are rooted in '19th-century nation-state discourses and their 20th-century deconstructions' (p. 10). He also aims to justify reintroducing the use of Romanization as a concept, but this particular term was a product of the same 19th-century nationalist and imperialist discourses that created the terms that Versluys asks us to abandon (Hingley 2005, 37–40; Mouritsen 1998). I agree that PCRAs cannot be immune from the deconstructive focus inherent in the logic that this work purports to develop.

I wonder whether the combining of globalization theory with the critical perspectives inherent in post-colonial theory may allow the creation of approaches that enable the further spread of the critical and experimental programme of research that I outlined in reference to recent publications at the start of this contribution. This may also be serving, at least to a degree, to decentre the power relations inherent in academia as a result of the current role of English as a dominant language. Or perhaps this argument is politically just too naive in a world in which power relations are subject to continuous transformation and obfuscation (Hingley 2014a).

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Stage settings for a connected scene. Globalization and material-culture studies in the early first-millennium B.C.E. Mediterranean

*Tamar Hodos**

Miguel John Versluys has produced a stimulating and thought-provoking agenda to reinvigorate study of the Roman world, with its myriad social, political and economic connections between Rome and the diverse cultures and communities that fell within and beyond the boundaries of its empire. He teases out the explicitly anti-colonial nature in recent decades of specifically Anglo-Saxon discussions of Rome and its empire in response to

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Romanization. He also sets these particular understandings of what it meant to live within that empire in a comparative context with other scholarly traditions that engage with Roman studies. He advocates both globalization theories and material-culture perspectives to reconsider aspects addressed by Romanization as a means of pushing the discussion beyond Romans and Natives, where ultimately it still lingers in the guise of much more recent perspectives, which emphasize imperialism. The critical evaluation of Romanization of the 1990s in the Anglo-Saxon tradition was not a unique process for Anglo-Saxon scholarship engaged in study of colonizing cultures, however. Parallels can be seen in contemporary Anglo-Saxon scholarship of the Greek world as well. Does this mean that the potential Versluys sees for Roman studies in the marriage of globalization and material-culture approaches can apply to Greek studies too?

The Greek 'world'

During the 1990s, Anglo-Saxon scholars of the Greek world dismantled their own framework of colonial–native study, Hellenization. The Hellenization model is quite different from Romanization, however, for a number of reasons, beginning with the way the 'world' of the Greeks was created and interpreted. Unlike in the Roman period, the overseas settlements founded by the Greeks between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C. were not part of a national political agenda of conquest and territorial control. They were not necessarily civic foundations, either. Rather, groups of merchants, craftsmen and others seeking social, economic and political opportunities set forth to found new cities elsewhere in the Mediterranean, sometimes encouraged by political patrons, but not always on behalf of a city. As a result, the 'world' that they created was more loosely defined and flexibly articulated. Furthermore, this 'world' was shaped by the parallel, contemporary settlement process undertaken by the Phoenicians.

By convention, we call these overseas settlements colonies, but this has been the subject of debate, derived from comparative analysis between the Greek and Roman colonial processes and impacts. Some have suggested that they be regarded simply as culture contact or private enterprise, since they were not state-directed in the way that Roman colonization was (Osborne 1998; Gosden 2004). For others, both are unsatisfactory alternatives (Hodos 2006, 19–22). First, culture contact alone is too vague and broad to characterize the specific developments born of residential situations. It is particularly through long-term settlement of individuals and groups that contact and communication become regularized (at least in eras before electronic communications). Such settlements and contexts generate far more numerous and complex networks of collaboration beyond trade and gift exchange, which can be maintained without settlement. Thus the permanent nature of these settlements is a key feature in understanding their role in the networks of sociocultural developments between diverse groups in active communication with one another. Second, Greek colonization represents the movement of individuals and groups who collectively identified themselves with a certain social coherence that stood in contrast to others. The same may be argued for Phoenician colonization too. The groups of Greeks (and Phoenicians) who

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settled overseas often created new sites (and were sometimes co-resident), rather than moving into extant settlements, and many of the material forms, religious practices and even political forms of governance that they utilized we broadly characterize as Greek (or Phoenician), with diversities of practice within this general commonality. Therefore their collective organization and self-determination, and relationship with material culture, mean that these settlements are not evidence of mere private enterprise, either. These individuals created their own means of governance, which led to these settlements evolving into Greek (or Phoenician) city states, and their impact on their neighbours was notable (but not necessarily direct or instantaneous). Our recognition of these Greek and Phoenician overseas settlements as colonies therefore derives from the sociocultural nature of 'colony' in today's use, rather than the term's political aspects (cf. Osborne 1998). With regard to comparisons with Roman colonies, therefore, we need to distinguish carefully the role politics played in colonial foundations. Political concerns were likely one of a number of considerations that underwrote the Greek and Phoenician impetus to settle on foreign shores, but they were not the only ones. The different role politics played is perhaps one of the fundamental distinctions between the world of the Greeks (and Phoenicians) and the world of the Romans as generated by colonization. This does not mean that we need to discard the terms 'colony' or 'colonization' altogether, however.

The sense of 'world' that these Greek and Phoenician colonies helped to create was fostered through a series of social, religious, cultural, economic and political networks alongside the geographic networks of contact and communication. The continuation and expansion of these networks shaped cultural practices and beliefs among all who engaged with one another, while also concurrently generating sharply defined differences. This is how we are able to discuss collectively the Greeks and at the same time distinguish individual city states from one another. It is also why we are able to distinguish Greeks from others, whether Phoenicians, Etruscans, Sicilians etc. (and to distinguish between, e.g., Carthaginians and Motyans too). This paradox of shared practices and sharply defining differences is one of the features of globalization.

Critics of the application of globalization frameworks to the ancient world often focus on the extent of the connections between groups, arguing that the world was not wholly connected then. For this reason, some have advocated using *oikumene* to characterize the known world of the time (e.g. Seland 2008), as, indeed, Versluys discusses in his contribution with regard to the Romans. Herodotus is the first to introduce *oikumene* to conceptualize the known inhabited world. His descriptions extend from defined lands to boundaries defined only by lack of human knowledge. By the Hellenistic period, the term firmly has a more social nuance as a synonym for a 'civilized' Greek-speaking world (Hall 2002, 221), and this usage continues through late antiquity (Osterloh 2008, 195). This social facet is evident even in Herodotus, since, despite his focuses on geographic ethnography, the Other is the non-Greek-speaking *barbaros*, who thus also lacks Greek culture and its civilizing forces (Shahar 2004, 54–64). The descriptions of the populations inhabiting Africa are a case in point: each

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becomes more and more fantastical the further into the interior of the African landmass one moves, while still living in a land that Herodotus describes, and that therefore might be regarded, as 'known' to his *oikumene*. *Oikumene* itself therefore comes with the baggage of cultural superiority on the part of the ancient author. Furthermore, not all of the populations discussed by Herodotus and others who speak of an *oikumene* actually engaged with the Greeks and Phoenicians, or Romans, in their respective global eras, and so while they might have been considered to be known by ancient authors, in the sense that their regions were inhabited and therefore part of the *oikumene* concept, they were not part of the network of contact and communication that generates a global concept of 'world'. For these reasons, I suggest that *oikumene* is not necessarily an appropriate substitute to describe the multiple networks of connectivity and difference we see within a globalization model, for which we need to characterize both the social and geographic expanses covered. An *oikumene* may arise as an explicit outcome of interconnectivity, however, since its conceptions represent some aspects that we would expect to find in a complex network of sociocultural contact and communication. It does not, however, represent the whole of the framework.

The rejection of Hellenization

Despite the differences between Greek and Roman colonial processes, there are nevertheless parallels between their two scholarly traditions. One is the rejection of the colonial metanarrative, and the other is the increasing use of globalization interpretative frameworks to understand the social complexities that arose from colonial settlement.

As noted above, the Anglo-Saxon tradition has similarly rejected the Hellenization model of interpretation. Yet as a result of the ways in which the Greek 'world' developed, the deconstruction of the Hellenization framework of interpretation has taken two clear and distinct trajectories. The first has been an emphasis on the diversities of 'being Greek'. This has seen the deconstruction of the notion that Greek colonies were replicas of their mother cities. Instead, scholars have emphasized their diversities. In turn, this has also led to the deconstruction of the concept of the Greeks as a cultural unity, although there remain a sufficient number of common characteristics that we are still able to discuss a collective notion of Greeks (see discussion in Hodos (2010)). The second emphasis has been on articulating the role of the so-called native populations in the Greek–native relationship (e.g. Dietler 2010; Hodos 2006). Here, this has seen the breakdown of generalizations about the communities that the Greeks came into contact with, especially with regard to their use of Greek material-culture forms, noted initially particularly in pottery forms and styles, and architectural building plans, and subsequently in terms of burial customs and the use of language. Studies in these fields have demonstrated that the use of any of these features was not instantaneous, but gradual, and that only selective aspects of Greek material culture were adapted, and always in a manner appropriate to the local circumstances. As a result, Hellenization as a means of better understanding the nature of these developments has fallen out of favour.

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Globalization theory in the Iron Age

The Greeks and Phoenicians, who collaborated in trade and overseas settlement in the Mediterranean and who together created a Mediterranean culture that spanned the ocean, have been separated traditionally by scholarly disciplines. The Greeks have been part of the domain of classical archaeology while the Phoenicians have belonged to Near Eastern archaeology. Each discipline had notably different foundations, the former in the classical languages, and the latter in biblical studies. Only very recently have they begun to converge as scholars have started to reconsider the Mediterranean as a whole, especially during the Iron Age. It is precisely through the use of globalization thinking that the nature of their engagements with one another and their networks of collaboration have become more clear (e.g. Hodos 2009).

Thus globalization theory has been employed to understand the kinds of connection that these two colonizing cultures had with one another, as well as with the local populations with whom they came into regular contact. Such frameworks of interpretation have been instrumental in uniting divided disciplines, highlighting the means of knowledge sharing, and demonstrating the complex, multiple social identities that groups and individuals projected and reflected at any given time. Versluys, therefore, is correct to emphasize connectivity as globalization's key feature, since connectivity underpins its processes. Understanding the processes of globalization as they unfold helps us to move away from fixed identifications and expose cultural developments as they occur.

Material-culture studies in the Iron Age

Greek and Phoenician studies have yet to engage directly with material-culture studies as an explicit framework of interpretation (although it has already been used in recent reinterpretations of the social use of objects in the Aegean Bronze Age; see Knappett (2005)), whereas post-colonial approaches are now standard in both fields in Anglo scholarship. Although Versluys sidesteps the criticisms of material-culture studies, some direction in how we incorporate explicit study of material is necessary if any such emphasis is to be usefully integrated alongside globalization.

One of the more critical aspects of material-culture theories pertains to the notion that objects can possess agency. Things contribute to the formation of contexts, as well as simply fitting into them, where they are used and understood. While there is no doubt that we, as humans, are influenced by material things, many would still argue that we are the ones to take action in response to a material object; the object itself still does not act. Any relationship between object and human is conditioned by the individual's social experiences, which will be specific and unique, although shaped by and shaping the social values by which that individual acts through the material object. For this reason, Gell's perspective (1998), that objects are agents on behalf of social actors, is more workable in a practical interpretational way. This approach lies more in the specific realm of materiality.

Materiality, which focuses explicitly on the interplay between social and material experiences, may thus be more fruitful for our purposes, since we particularly interrogate how objects and ideas of their value, functions and

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uses are shared, modified and contrasted between different social groups. We need this intersection. For this reason, we also need networks (e.g. Knappett 2011). Versluys's emphasis on connectivity reinforces this point. Yet there are limitations to network thinking as well. Networks do not always explain the why behind cultural developments, but network thinking highlights connections we might not have been aware of otherwise. It is in the conjoining of network thinking with the social processes underpinning globalization that a much richer understanding develops. And since archaeologists by their very nature engage with study of the material, I believe that Greek scholarship can draw inspiration from Versluys's call to arms to join materializing and globalizing approaches in our study of the past.

Leave Hellenization to rest

Unlike Versluys, who suggests a reinvigoration of the Romanization debate from the combined approaches of globalization and material-culture studies, however, I do not advocate a return to the Hellenization debate for Greek scholarship. A Hellenized way of thinking is too unidirectional to characterize and explain the complex social changes that took place during the Iron Age. Hellenization in itself is concerned with the spatial and temporal spread of Greek culture. It overlooks the fact that local populations did not adopt Greek practices outright, but were far more selective and discriminating, and that by the time 'Greek' ideas were adopted, they had become normalized such that they had often lost an explicitly 'Greek' meaning. It also ignores any influence that the other populations with whom the Greeks came into regular contact through overseas settlement may have had upon the Greeks themselves. The move away from Hellenization has also enabled the Phoenicians and Greeks to be rehabilitated together into the archaeological narrative of the Mediterranean. The activities of the Phoenicians, and their interactions with Greeks and others in the Mediterranean, are an integral aspect of understanding the Greek–non-Greek relationship, especially during the period of Greek colonization. Hellenization simply cannot account for this. Any return to a Hellenizing narrative, rooted in its culture-historical perspective, will be a step back in understanding the constantly evolving nature of any culture or society, and in interpreting the complex, multiple identities its members will have at any given time.

This is not to say that post-colonial views have been sufficiently encompassing. Critics of post-colonial approaches in Greek colonization studies have rightly argued that the impact of the colonists often gets written out of the post-colonial narrative of the Iron Age Mediterranean (Domínguez 2012). Many such studies instead focus on the limitations of Greek influence and downplay Greek impact, framing the influence of Greek aspects of life solely through indigenous agency and hybridization. As a result, the extent of the role of the Greeks as agents in Greek–non-Greek sociocultural negotiations is ignored. This presents a different kind of one-sided perspective.

For these reasons, a globalization framework is valuable, as it provides a more useful means to reintegrate into discussion those shared practices that gave rise to the Hellenization model in the first place (Hodos 2012). In fact, globalization enables us to examine the balance between the shared traits that

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allow us to discuss 'the Greeks' (or 'the Phoenicians') while at the same time acknowledging the differences in the practices of being Greek (or Phoenician). We can also recognize the tension found in the shared practices between different cultural groups and the articulations of their social identities that stand in contrast to the commonalities borne by wider engagement. This is part of the essence of globalization. Globalization studies focus on processes of connectivity; these processes are borne from the networks that connect the wider and local levels of engagement that create a sense of globality. Globalization, therefore, does enable us to move beyond Greeks/Romans and Natives by its very nature of focus on the networks that connect people and facilitate cultural transformation. Indeed, recent studies that view the Roman world through an explicitly globalizing lens reveal very complex social expressions within that world (for examples see Pitts and Versluys (2014)). As a result, one can now argue that Rome and its world are both globalized and globalizing.

The same may be said for the Greeks and Phoenicians. The Mediterranean Iron Age as a globalized space – incorporating shared sets of practices and sharply defining differences that articulate local identities – is much more than a collection of decentred communities connected by mobile individuals and groups. For this reason, greater consideration needs to be given to the networks that create the sense of connectedness we witness here at this time. An individual, or even group, may have different identities that are appropriate for different social, cultural or even life-stage contexts. It is the networks linking the actors that help us to untangle these multiple connections. While some of these networks bind people together through common goods and ideas to create the sense of one-placeness that we identify with globalization, the network connections can also be used to differentiate groups from others, especially those outside a particular network. Ultimately, it is the expression of social identities through the use of material culture that underpins human connectivity. In short, the widely shared common characteristics that developed across the Mediterranean during the Iron Age do not reflect Hellenization, or Phoenicianization, but broadly understood Mediterraneanizations tempered by strongly articulated localized identities. For this reason, the integration of material with globalization approaches will create a more rich understanding of the social complexities that evolved during the Iron Age across the Mediterranean.

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Roman imperialism, globalization and Romanization in early Roman Italy. Research questions in archaeology and ancient history

*Tesse D. Stek**

Viewed from the perspective of early Roman Italy, Versluys's stimulating proposal is extremely thought-provoking, both with regard to the framework

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proposed and with regard to what we might call an 'ahistorical' approach that explicitly places a material-culture studies perspective at the centre of analysis. This proposed approach interacts in a variety of fascinating ways with the direction that study of the early Roman expansion and Roman Italy has taken over the last two decades, both in terms of research topics and questions, and also in terms of the academic and disciplinary setting within which they have developed. In order to stimulate the debate from the perspective of 'the beginnings' of the expanding Roman world, I would like to reflect briefly here on some of these potential interactions as I see them. Below, I will sketch the development of the discussion for early Roman Italy and raise two main, interrelated points.

The first regards the degree to which studies over the last decades have already come to embrace globalizing perspectives, as well as the impossibility of separating this development from very specific (if different from 19th- and 20th-century) conceptions of power and imperialism. Global perspectives can, at least in part, be seen as a reaction to excessively dichotomizing and atomizing approaches of the late 20th century (e.g. Hingley 2003) that exhibited a strong regional focus with little consideration for changing Roman agendas and attitudes (these approaches, of course, were in turn a salutary reaction to earlier, colonialist conceptualizations of the Roman world). To redress this bias, 'combining a global framework with sensitivity for the context' (Terrenato 2005, 62; 2008) seems wise, at least as a general attitude. But globalization and related views on local developments, connectedness and mobility themselves are underpinned by assumptions derived from our understanding of the workings of power and imperialism – wherever located, both geographically and socially – and it is important to acknowledge that to that extent the globalization framework is not intrinsically different to previous approaches: it is a specific world view, not a neutral method or research methodology. Power and imperialism have an important role to play here, too, and cannot be left out of this intricate equation – although the degree to which they matter varies with what it is we want to know (cf. below).

My second, closely related point concerns the recent convergence of archaeology and ancient history in the study of the early Roman expansion, and how this collaboration compares to approaches based more on material culture 'in its own right', such as the approach now advocated by Versluys. It is significant that much of the recent scholarly discussion on the early Roman expansion has been generated precisely by increased interaction and cross-fertilization between ancient historians and archaeologists. Nonetheless, I would argue that recent integrated theories of early Roman imperialism and Roman Italy, though still developing, have already come to rely progressively more on material and indeed archaeological approaches – although in a different way than Versluys envisages. Hence we should perhaps in general be less pessimistic about the possibility of fruitfully integrating a focus on material culture into research that explicitly aims to enrich our historical understanding of specific aspects or models of Roman imperialism. But what kinds of research question require which approach to material culture? And what consequences, then, might adopting a specifically material-culture

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studies approach as proposed by Versluys have on the current scholarly debate, also with regard to the recent 'historical turn' in Mediterranean archaeology? Is there still common ground to be found? And should we look for that at all?

That brings me to the point where the two issues I have introduced above converge. A great deal of the aporia concerning them, and also arguably surrounding discussions of 'Romanization' generally, resides, I think, in the assumption that all these issues can and should be studied in a single holistic framework or model. It is perhaps worth thinking again about this classic question in an explicit manner. Indeed, rather than try to do away with Roman imperialism and power when attempting to 'reinvigorate the Romanization debate', might we not gain more by acknowledging that different research questions require different sets of theories and approaches that are better suited to answering them? Might not an object-oriented approach answer certain questions, yet fall silent when other questions are asked? I would propose that we could take the discussion forward by engaging more directly with the diverse research *questions* (rather than general traditions and political agendas, though these are of course related) that underlie both previous and current scholarly projects.

Different research questions lead to wildly different conceptions or representations of what happened on the level of (material) culture – but should we aim for consensus in the first place? Critiques of previous studies for their general conception of Romanization sometimes seem to presuppose that there is one all-embracing model that explains it all. But can we really integrate all different levels and perspectives – as laid out, for instance, in Slofstra's (2002a, 20–21) 'simple diagram' of the 'dimensions of the romanization process' – in a single framework? And perhaps more importantly, what outcome is envisioned in such an enterprise? What explanatory value is added? To what deeper insight does considering everything everywhere simultaneously and contextually lead us?

Precisely the term 'Romanization' has been particularly unhelpful through its obfuscation of this fundamental diversity of research questions. Perhaps the best argument for abandoning Romanization is less its political connotations than the fact that it can simply refer to too many things – and on entirely different conceptual planes: it means and has meant many things to many scholars, from explanation to apology, from side effect to conscious strategy, from cultural process to research question, and might even just indicate a historical period. Romanization is not a debate, but a term that has been put to use, with varying success, in a series of partly separate debates centred on widely different research questions and aims. The status of Romanization in various argumentative structures has varied even more widely. Arguably, a clearer vision of the different research aims at play may not only help to clarify the lack of communication and comprehension between different schools of thought, but also legitimize to a certain extent particular choices in studying the ancient Mediterranean world or indeed only certain parts or aspects of it.

Through a rough sketch of the development of modern approaches to the early Roman expansion in the Italian peninsula and its cultural implications,

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I will now try to briefly illustrate how some new perspectives and methods interact productively, while others do not. This occasional incompatibility need not be a problem. Both historical imperialism and strict material-culture perspectives are valid in their own right and can produce important results – and in some specific instances may even complement one another – but in order for them to work most effectively, we should perhaps not insist on integrating them into one holistic, conceptual/explanatory framework (such as Romanization, however defined), but rather choose to work on the basis of specific, explicit research questions.

Early Roman expansion and the making of Roman Italy

Background The history of research on the development of Italy in the Hellenistic period holds a particular place in the historiography of Romanization studies. It is the ideology of 19th-century German and Italian unification, rather than modern imperialism and colonialism, that set the agenda for the most influential, all-encompassing scholarly works, such as those of Niebuhr and Mommsen. It should be stressed that developmental and often teleological notions have also been key in these works, but somewhat different goals and trajectories were envisioned, as cultural convergence prior to Roman domination, rather than the imposition of Roman culture on the colonized (or 'Roman enlightenment'), was the guiding principle here.

Although it is true that actual archaeological evidence has played a fundamentally passive role in the creation of the larger historical framework, as for instance Mouritsen (1998) and Terrenato (2005) somewhat pessimistically remark, the role attributed to culture, material and otherwise, has been far from passive in the broader conceptualization of the whole process: the *Annäherung* (Kiene 1845, 120) of the Italic peoples and Rome already prior to actual political integration is indeed posited as a crucial precondition for the smooth and, as it were, inevitable fusion of Romans and Italians. It is not Rome that brings (about) new culture, as envisioned in blunt, modern colonialist ideologies; it is rather the spontaneous convergence of Romano-Italic culture that facilitates and paves the way for Roman political leadership, a topos explored in depth by Mouritsen (1998, 59–86).

A rather different strain of thought can be recognized in representations of the rationale and effect of Roman colonization, especially, and by no means coincidentally, those developed over the course of the 20th century. Put simply, this view imagines the founding of Roman colonies as the establishment of small islands of Roman civilization from which Roman culture in turn would have radiated into the non-Roman hinterland. This line of thought undeniably has a closer relationship with the archaeological evidence, although this interpretation, especially with regard to the early phases of Roman expansion, has been heavily biased by particular imperialist readings (see especially Brown 1980; Fentress 2000). In a wave of statist and imperialist interpretations of republican Rome, archaeology was selectively used to support such a picture: a focus on urbanism, public buildings, roads and so on was the predictable result (cf. e.g. Terrenato 2008).

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In sharp contrast to the study of the Roman provinces, however, the archaeology of early Roman Italy has not experienced real development of a starkly 'post-colonial' or, as I have called it, 'anti-colonial' wave of interpretation *à la* Bénabou (Stek 2004, 29; 2009, 3). Italian *municipalismo* and modern regionalism have always inspired a different focus: on pre-Roman cultures rather than on what happens in the Roman period; in other words, a focus that is more in line with the general framework that posits the end of Italic cultures well before the rise of Rome. Less sophisticated notions of native resistance – the famous 'inversion of the paradigm' (cf. the 1978 review of Bénabou by Thébert (1978)) are visible in popular culture and local politics in some areas, but these have essentially been irrelevant to the main scholarly debate. In contrast, both explicitly and implicitly post-colonial archaeological approaches that place material culture first have naturally been extremely important. These include, to name but a few, the revolutionary studies by Van Dommelen (e.g. 1998), especially on Sardinia, and the studies of southern Italy by Yntema, Attema and Burgers (cf. now Attema, Burgers and Van Leusen 2011). These scholars deliberately take material culture and its meaning in local contexts as their point of departure: this research question and the related approach have opened up whole new vistas in our understanding of conquered areas in the republican period and the diverse ways local people dealt with their situation. That such an approach to material culture in context does not necessarily lead to underestimating developments at 'the centre(s)' is illustrated by the work of Torelli (e.g. 1999). Even if his work has a very different ideological background, the *duttilità* or malleability of (Roman and other) models and their application and meaning in local contexts has been central to his analysis.

It is important to note, however, that this development goes hand in hand with similarly contextualizing studies in ancient history. Indeed, especially for early Roman colonization studies, the post-colonial turn has influenced historiographical analyses at least as much as it has archaeological analyses, indeed with groundbreaking results (e.g. Crawford 1995; Dench 1995), yet initially, relatively little – albeit increasing – emphasis has been placed on archaeological evidence in its own right. This increase, however, is arguably a logical and natural development, as we will now explore further below.

Sensitivity to chronology and the Romanization of Rome An enhanced sensitivity to chronology has been one salutary consequence of great importance. Whereas previous narratives typically suffered from a tendency to conflate different types of (mostly literary, but also archaeological) evidence from wide-ranging periods, the historiographical critique has drawn greater attention to chronology in assessing developments of all kinds. Focus has shifted away from developmental and teleological historical models toward synchronic analysis of what really happens on the ground in specific temporal and spatial contexts. This naturally taps into our appreciation of the character and development of Rome itself in the republican period (e.g. Curti 2001) and permits us to connect contemporary events in Rome with developments elsewhere. This realization is essential for any period and area, but the

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situation was exceptionally dire for republican Italy, where images of Rome were largely based on disparate pieces of imperial evidence (the misuse of Aulus Gellius' 2nd-century A.D. image of Roman colonies to interpret republican colonization is a notorious example). The development of Rome itself has become an extremely important research question for understanding processes elsewhere, especially now that historical reconstructions of the pre-Hannibalic period appear to be highly fragile.

Combined with the important insight that material culture does not have a static or uniform, intrinsic meaning, but can be invested with different significances according to sociopolitical and cultural context, this development has led to a particularly dynamic and promising field of research, in which the contextual study of material culture can be put to good use in historical analyses of selected sociopolitical and cultural processes at work in republican Italy.

Decentring Rome One major development in recent years has undoubtedly been the decentring of Rome in explanations of sociopolitical, economic and religious–cultural change in republican Italy. Interestingly, this development cannot be described as a phenomenon that is restricted to one discipline or the other; that is, for instance, in terms of the emancipation of archaeology from history. In fact, the deconstruction of historical narratives has been of primary importance here, and this in turn has led to carefully contextualized historical studies, not only in a chronological but also in a geographical sense – one of the traditional points of critique from archaeologists (Fronda (2010) is a good recent example). But, at the same time, archaeology has played an extremely important role in providing much more contextual regional information on several trends in material culture that once were necessarily biased by a predominantly Roman perspective. We might think, for instance, of the development of what can be called the Hellenistic farm phenomenon: in light of the huge increase in field-survey data available today, it should evidently be understood as a Mediterranean-wide development rather than as a consequence of Roman colonization (e.g. Attema, Burgers and Van Leusen 2011). The same goes for the multicentric and pluriform regional production of black gloss pottery, and indeed also for the presence of what were previously thought to be Roman guide fossils par excellence, such as anatomic votives. Similar arguments can be made for the appearance and occupation history of hill forts or villas (for further discussion and references see Stek (2013)). Archaeology is certainly taking an active, indeed seminal, role in this development. But the reframing of Rome and Italy, and Roman Italy, as part of a wider, pan-Mediterranean Hellenistic world can be seen as a joint movement, in which archaeologists and ancient historians are closely collaborating: an excellent recent example is the volume *The Hellenistic West* (Prag and Quinn 2013), in which historical and strictly archaeological approaches are utilized in combination to rethink the East–West dichotomy. This convergence of archaeologists and historians in addressing similar research questions, which in my view has been highly productive, will be taken up again further below.

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Local identities and Roman power The emergence and continued importance of local, civic and ethnic identities under growing Roman influence has attracted renewed scholarly interest over the last few decades, in part because scholars have broken with the traditional historiographical model that assumed the dissipation of Italic identities prior to Roman expansion. The special interest in ethnic identities over others, such as urban, civic and other aggregative identities, is certainly a result of specific modern concerns. These have been influenced both by studies of other areas of the (Roman) world and, albeit to a lesser extent, by modern political configurations. If one thing has become clear, it is that the importance of such ethnically coloured identities seems to increase over the period of growing tensions with Rome and other powers in the Hellenistic age. Examples of the creation of new ethnic categories in a Roman framework exist, for instance, in northern Italy (Williams 2001). Such categories come to be manipulated to a point where ethnic categories are turned into legal ones, and these in turn can be referenced by the selective use of material culture by local communities far from Italy itself (e.g. on the *ius Latii* see Stek (2013)). Therefore the emergence of local identities cannot be seen apart from Roman agency: on the contrary. This is, of course, and not coincidentally, in perfect harmony with current thought on modern globalization and on understanding local developments within it. Be that as it may, it is often the contextual analysis of literary and epigraphic sources that allows us to appreciate the complexity of the archaeological record in terms of its relationship with Roman influence in the peninsula (see e.g. Yntema (2006)). Without the historical framework, in many cases we would be unable to appreciate the intricate way in which material culture delicately plays with models in terms of creative adaptation, inversion or indeed subversion (for nice examples see e.g. Jiménez (2010)). To understand the meaning of such changes in the experience of the local people involved, however, a profound appreciation of the existing system of cultural codes is essential. A more typically – and truly – post-colonial, emic point of view becomes essential for approaching this specific question. Archaeological contextualization naturally emerges as the better-suited approach, and not simply because we are usually dealing with pre- or protohistory in such cases (cf., e.g., Van Dommelen and Terrenato (2007) explicitly on this perspective on the 'local articulation' of wider Mediterranean processes, including imperial power). According to what we would like to know, we can choose different perspectives.

Mobility and connectedness between material culture and recent historical work Another, partly related trend has been emphasis on the extent of mobility and connectedness in Italy and the Mediterranean world. The movement of people and of information and ideas, ranging from agricultural technologies to cultural representations and styles, as well as goods, has received a great deal of attention, obviously explainable by contemporary concerns and world views. Again, this line of thought is visible in the work of both historians and archaeologists, from, of course, Horden and Purcell to the explicitly material-culture approach espoused by Van Dommelen and Knapp, who propose to put material-culture studies to better use so as to 'explore

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how objects framed and shaped people's life and how their own physicality (their bodies) was intimately entangled with other "things"' (Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010, 4). Interestingly, several historical studies suggest nonlinear development, even if ever-increasing mobility or connectedness throughout the Hellenistic period (or Bronze Age/orientalizing period etc.) has long been taken as a general starting point in scholarly work on Italy (Gosden's 'shared cultural milieu'; cf. Terrenato's 'inner circle' (2008)), even before it came into vogue in our globalizing world. The inadequate exchange of information documented between Roman officials and communities in the republican period is but one example (Pfeilschifter 2006). At the same time, ever more detailed studies of migration patterns (including seasonal, short-distance versus long-distance, temporary etc.; see Erdkamp 2008) show the impressive scale of the phenomenon (Scheidel 2004). One fascinating finding is that legal studies potentially indicate the Roman authorities' growing concern with containing the phenomenon, trying to enhance fixity (Broadhead 2008). An archaeological view that focuses on the variegated distribution of goods, styles and representational models, and the complex relations between diverse 'centres' and 'peripheries', could certainly have added value in addressing specific questions in these scholarly debates. The case of peninsular Italy in particular is especially interesting for the future course of the debate. It has the potential to assess issues of increased and diversified connectedness in a deep chronological perspective, which encompasses the very emergence of Rome itself and the nonlinear, at times spasmodic, development of Roman expansionism (cf. above, on the Romanization of Rome).

New views on Roman imperialism and colonization: negotiation, rural communities and a renewed appreciation of Rome's impact It is within the context of the developments outlined above that stale, modern colonialist models of imperialism have already been abandoned for some time. With the deconstruction of the modernizing statist models put forward especially in the second and third quarters of the 20th century, both the naturalness of Roman hegemony and its direct correlation with the notion of superior Roman material culture have been discarded. Recent modelling of Roman imperialism is moving away from static models to more volatile balances of power, from imposition to negotiation, from Roman superiority to common social interests, from state policy to personal benefit. Competition between different relevant entities and groups is viewed as a key factor in the making of society and of power structures, a trend also seen in studies of other complex Old World societies: conflict-based models with fuzzy edges are replacing abstract, monolithic and bounded models (see, e.g., Stein 1998; Yoffee 2005). A focus on the players in the field has been the result, most importantly on the Roman clans or on the agency of individuals, also *after* the presumed demise of archaic Roman society and the emergence of the Roman 'state' (e.g. Terrenato 1998; 2007; 2011; Smith 2006; Bradley 2006).

Such revolutionary models, which have been outlined and explored for early Rome in the greatest detail by Terrenato, tally well with the redating of several developments mentioned above, the consequential decentring of Rome in these processes, and analogies with the archaic and classical periods

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– rather than the later imperial situation. It is evident that the role that material culture may or may not have played in establishing Roman imperialism, in a conception of Roman power as a tool or vehicle that could be hijacked by different elite groups in Rome or in other communities involved (to paraphrase Terrenato (2011, 236; forthcoming)), differs radically from the role it could play in statist, top-down models.

Another example is the conception of Roman colonization in the imperial project. After clearing away the layers of unifying or modern colonialist frameworks from the bare literary and archaeological evidence, exciting new possibilities open up. One of these concerns the traditionally assumed, exclusive relationship between urbanism and Roman influence and colonization, a topic I am currently working on together with a research team. Although we are still awaiting the analysis of our fieldwork, it has already become clear that, whereas the traditional 'Romanness' of colonial urban centres (especially Fentress (2000); Bispham (2006)) and related territories (Pelgrom 2008) has been seriously questioned, new interpretations of early Latin epigraphy indicate a clear Roman impact on small rural settlements (Stek 2009, 123–70). In some small village settlements, sanctuaries were built for deities such as Victoria, who had just been '(re)invented' in Rome itself, admittedly on the basis of more widely available Hellenistic models – but it seems undeniable that these communities were tapping into the association with Roman power and success. Such a polynuclear model of communities, centred on a new, Roman power structure, presupposes rather different models of cultural change and exchange, far removed from the traditional urban 'radiation' model, and suggests much more interaction and negotiation in the creation of these communities on the ground.

As has been hinted above, it may seem that, in the thrill of the late 20th-century deconstruction of traditional models, we have been somewhat overenthusiastic in minimizing Roman power and its visibility for the early period. Demonstrating the erroneousness of the framework through which previous scholarship arrived at a certain view of Roman imperialism does not automatically entail that that view itself is wrong. In fact, even after careful chronological and broader Hellenistic contextualization, Roman imperialist ambitions can be traced back earlier than the 1990s movement may have led us to believe (see especially Dench (2005)). Likewise, the multivalence and malleability of material culture and related styles or models do not preclude that in specific historical contexts objects and styles indeed related to Roman agency and were in fact meant to signal association with the new dominant power, or indeed mark the blunt imposition of Roman rule (Stek 2013, 343). The actual origin of the objects, styles or models is in fact generally irrelevant for understanding how they were put to use; it is the locus and motives for choosing them that are decisive. In a sense, symbols are seized or even hijacked by creating, or building upon, an association with the new dominant power, both in Rome itself and elsewhere.

Globalization and power

As is now clear from this – necessarily superficial – overview of recent developments in research on the early Roman expansion and Hellenistic

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Italy, contemporary concerns and trends closely follow globalizing world views. Deconstructing statist interpretations, questioning static boundaries, decentring and fragmenting the motor or causes of change, regarding local and global as inseparable and focusing on connectedness and connectivity in both social and economic contexts – all are central elements of modern globalization. This is unsurprising insofar as these studies are part of that world and its concerns. Globalization can therefore be considered an accurate description of research developments over, say, the last two decades. Importantly, however, newly emerging models of imperialism and the workings of Roman power are also intrinsically part of this same development and have arguably set the course for research on these very topics. The emphasis on the actual actors; on their negotiation, personal benefits and opportunism; and on power relations among relevant competing groups, as well as individuals, clearly resonates with globalizing notions of power structures as consisting of a 'less dichotomous and more intricate pattern of inequality' (Balakrishnan 2003, 143). Since, at least for the study of early Roman Italy, there are few influential scholars who still adhere to excessively dichotomizing approaches that treat material culture in an essentialist manner, it does not seem necessary to abandon approaches explicitly concerned with Roman imperialism, because doing so would automatically lead to simplistic representations and a fundamentally 'passive' use of archaeology. On the contrary, it seems important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of new research trends and emerging ideas of power and imperialism when pulling things together, whatever the overall framework.

One size fits all?

The interconnectedness of world views and research trends does not, however, in my view, necessarily mean that the Roman world (or early Roman Italy, for that matter) can or should be captured in one single explanatory framework. It is perhaps revealing that an often heard, central argument for a global perspective is (still) defined geographically: it is the atomizing, myopic effect of regional studies that must be redressed by a fusion of local and global. Another way of approaching this dilemma is to start with specific research questions rather than geography and then see which perspective works best: a truly post-colonial (not anti-colonial) perspective for understanding the specific societal circumstances of a given Italic community, for which Rome may have mattered little; a more global perspective when trying to understand developments in newly created settlement networks after incorporation; an elite Roman perspective to understand why certain symbols of power were deemed suitable at specific moments in time; and a local perspective again for explaining why or why not the same symbols seemed suitable to them. Perhaps uniting fundamentally different viewpoints within a single framework stretched to the point where it can accommodate them does not necessarily offer added value for each separate research question. It is one thing to say that all these developments are part of a connected reality, but that vast reality may have limited explanatory power if it is not brought into focus for specific questions.

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Of course, as already seen above, it is always the case that research interests and theories direct our attention to particular categories of datasets. But as long as the research methodology is sound, i.e. leaves room for falsification, that bias should not be a different or bigger problem than we would otherwise encounter. An explicit research methodology with specific questions, and the testing of a variety of potential models, are therefore, ultimately, perhaps also more transparent.

An archaeological turn?

As seen above, it can be argued that archaeology is actively contributing to the creation of new perspectives, including explicit consideration of the character of early Roman imperialism. This contribution should not, however, be viewed in isolation or as an emancipatory archaeological movement, but on the contrary in close association with directly related contemporary developments in the research on ancient history. This synergy of developments in historical and archaeological research is certainly no coincidence; we have undeniably witnessed a convergence of research interests in both disciplines. This movement seems to come from both sides. While ancient historians have put their hopes in archaeological evidence to the point where almost every member of a new generation of UK historians is directing a fieldwork project and central debates such as those on demography or the Roman economy increasingly rely on archaeological data, archaeologists seem ever more open to espousing 'historical' research questions. The discipline that (at least in the most influential Anglo-Saxon-oriented schools) was geared most towards a strictly archaeological, and in some ways even anti-classical, approach – landscape archaeology – has increasingly engaged in several plainly historical debates, including specific, but key, historical themes regarding Roman demography, colonization and economics. It is true that the more object-oriented and art-historical archaeology has played a relatively small part in all this. And perhaps this 'historizing' development is difficult to reconcile with a strict material-culture studies approach. The question, though, is whether this is a bad thing, and I would say that the verdict depends on what we want to know. At any rate, the more 'historical' debates do not preclude an active role for archaeology: the recent focus in imperialism studies on actors, negotiation, (personal) exchange and networks and locales that have previously remained out of the picture, such as rural nucleated settlements and economic centres, as well as the sensitivity to chronological and geographical context, brings archaeology confidently to the fore.

One promising avenue of research may be the confrontation (rather than integration) of the outcomes of different approaches to specific themes. The idea of focusing on the *process* of connectivity in the Roman world in a truly material sense, and especially its heightening (and waning?) at specific points in time, as Versluys proposes, for example, is not only exciting in its own right, but might also contrast in very interesting ways with legal measures to restrict and contain mobility during the same period. In other words, it could illuminate the countervailing forces of Roman power and the mobility of material culture.

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Fetishizing the Romans

*Peter van Dommelen**

Miguel John Versluys offers a richly textured essay in an attempt to resuscitate the concept of Romanization, which he has found to have been nearly flogged to death, to paraphrase an oft-quoted characterization of the Romanization debate in recent years. To be more precise, he argues that certain quarters of Romanist academia have 'ganged up' on the concept over the last decade or so and that others – the implicitly silent majority – have begun to stage a comeback in recent years. Versluys's self-imposed mission is to shore up the Roman resurgence with freshly cut intellectual joists.

Romanization is a topic with a long academic and intellectual history, which has in turn become a subject of debate and study itself (Freeman 1996; 2007; Hingley 1996). The term was invented and elaborated by Francis Haverfield in his study of *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1912) and has since been a consistent and often prominent presence in Roman studies. The concept is also a key fixture both on university curricula and in academic and popular accounts, which goes some way to explain its deep roots in scholarship and the reactions elicited by the debate about its relevance. The bibliography is accordingly huge and numerous debates have been convened at conferences and in print over the past several decades, including an extensive 'archaeological dialogue' published over ten years ago in this journal (Woolf 2002; Slofstra 2002a; see Versluys for more references; cf. Gardner 2013).

In Versluys's reading of recent intellectual history, the alleged demise of Romanization is inversely related to the rise of post-colonial studies. The first archaeological use of the latter term can be traced back to the mid-1990s and both Roman and historical archaeologists were instrumental in proposing and exploring the relevance of post-colonial ideas for archaeological research and interpretation (Liebmann 2008; Patterson 2008; Van Dommelen 2011): crucial early publications were *Making alternative histories* (Schmidt and Patterson 1995) and the self-consciously styled *Roman imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives* (Webster and Cooper 1996), to which we may add the *World archaeology* issue on *Culture contact and colonialism* (Gosden 1997), which included several papers that explicitly draw on post-colonial theories. As a result, the term 'post-colonial' has become a frequent occurrence in Roman studies over the past two decades, as it has elsewhere in academia. Does that mean, however, that it caused the demise of Romanization? Because coincidence does not necessarily equal cause, I will delve into this nexus of terms and perspectives in my contribution to this 'archaeological dialogue'.

Having outlined when post-colonial ideas were first introduced and adopted in archaeology and Roman studies, I focus my discussion on the intellectual roots of the Romanization debate and its entanglement with

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the post-colonial ones. I therefore turn to historiography, despite Versluys's professed wish to steer clear of it. While his preference for focusing on future directions is surely laudable in itself, I take the view that past debates and intellectual genealogies, in Foucault's terms, hold the key to understanding current and upcoming intellectual trajectories. In other words, we need more historiography, rather than less. I contend that the connections between the Romanization debate and post-colonial theories are notably more complex than claimed and that disentangling their connections requires a much more detailed – 'thicker', if you like – historical description of academic debates to allow a contextualized reading of intellectual history.

A good starting point is to examine the roots of the recent Romanization debate in more detail. In English-language scholarship, Romanization was first prominently called into question by Martin Millett in *The Romanization of Britain* (1990). This book has its immediate intellectual precursor in a seminal essay by the Dutch archaeologist Jan Slofstra – incidentally a founding co-editor of this journal – whose 1983 paper 'An anthropological approach to the study of Romanization processes' offers a series of sophisticated and theoretically articulate arguments to redefine the term and to draw on anthropological acculturation theory (Millett 1990, 1–2). Slofstra's critical discussion of Romanization did not stand on its own at the time, as anthropologists had begun to re-evaluate acculturation in the 1950s (Slofstra 1983, 71–72; see Cusick 1998), and the 1970s had already seen classical archaeologists picking up on these debates to reconsider the notion of Hellenization. Clara Gallini (1973) in particular critically discussed the theoretical premises of acculturation and its reworking as Hellenization, and Gruzinski and Rouveret (1976) explicitly compared Hellenization to acculturation processes in colonial Mexico under Spanish rule.

While there is every reason to think of both Slofstra's article and Millett's book as seminal publications in Roman studies, it is quite something else to label them post-colonial pioneers, even if *avant la lettre*. In a later discussion of Romanization, Slofstra (2002a, 16–17) certainly resisted such a classification and emphasized that the roots of what we might term 'critical Romanization' are to be found elsewhere. The trail blazed by Slofstra and Millett, along with other colleagues working primarily on the Roman provinces of north-west Europe, was explicitly headed towards the indigenous inhabitants of the regions conquered and occupied by Rome, as they intended to foreground indigenous contributions to Romanization processes. This included attention to the role of indigenous elites in promoting the adoption of Roman values and material culture, but also a strong interest in indigenous resistance to Roman rule (e.g. Millett, Roymans and Slofstra 1995). Slofstra (1983, 73–83) explicitly traced these interests back to sociological, historical and anthropological work on indigenous societies and peasant communities in recent historical and ethnographic situations and their integration in nation states and global commercial networks. References to post-colonial theories are absent from these studies, even if key post-colonial publications had already appeared by that time (Said 1978; Guha 1982; Spivak 1985).

A case for early post-colonial affiliation can be made much more convincingly for the work of Marcel Bénabou, who not only similarly

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highlighted the indigenous role in the Romanization of North Africa but also emphasized indigenous resistance and the ability to maintain recognizably indigenous cultural traditions in Roman North Africa. Unlike his European counterparts, Bénabou was politically motivated and connected at the time of his writing (1976 and 1978), and his focus on resistance to Roman rule and insistence on indigenous agency were directly inspired by the contemporary North African struggle for independence. For Bénabou and his contemporaries the connection between history and contemporary politics had been spelled out by the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui, who fulfilled the role of what we would now call a 'public intellectual' in the colonial and early decolonized Maghreb (Bendana 2002).

Such an explicitly political dimension is clearly absent in Millett and Slofstra's work but their publications both represent what may retrospectively be labelled the 'nativist turn' (Parry 1994; Schmidt and Patterson 1995). The nativist turn can be traced back directly to the political decolonization of the so-called Third World in the two decades following the Second World War, beginning with countries like India and Indonesia and involving most of the African continent in the 1950s and 1960s – including, crucially, the Maghreb and the bloody Algerian War of Independence (1954–62). While Bénabou's work is exceptional in Roman circles because of its direct roots in these struggles, the 1960s and 1970s saw a more general trend of emancipation of indigenous peoples and other minorities, including a renewed focus on their relegation from 'official' history. The emergence of peasant studies in history, geography and anthropology, as represented by the work of Teodor Shanin (1971) and Eric Wolf (1966; 1982) and the establishment of the *Journal of peasant studies* in 1973, is another cross-disciplinary academic manifestation of this broader trend to write alternative histories (Hastrup 1992; Schmidt and Patterson 1995). The so-called Subaltern Studies group of South Asian historians and anthropologists was formed in the context of these debates and went on to become one of three foundational strands in post-colonial theories (Guha 1982; Van Dommelen 2006, 107–8). The shift in Roman studies to focus on people without history and to write alternative histories by using a wide range of archaeological evidence rather than relying primarily on the colonial elite's material remains and written sources may thus be seen as part and parcel of broader intellectual and academic trends in both classical studies and beyond that can be captured under the headings of the 'nativist turn' and 'alternative histories' (cf. Snodgrass 2002).

Seen in this light, post-colonial studies and the shift in Romanization studies, as signalled by Slofstra and Millett's work, share intellectual roots, but it is also clear that the one cannot be reduced to the other. A further aspect to take on board is that post-colonial theory is hardly a unified field or school of thought and that it has developed out of a range of intellectual and academic influences (Young 2001). While Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is universally regarded as the key foundational text, the field of post-colonial studies was also shaped by the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1985) and Homi Bhabha (1994). The already-mentioned Subaltern Studies scholars represent yet another strand in post-colonial studies, which moreover resonates more easily with archaeologists, no doubt because of its historical

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and ethnographic background (Van Dommelen 2006, 108). It is therefore in the end not too far-fetched to suggest that the nativist Romanization debates of the 1990s actually prepared the ground for the rapid adoption of post-colonial theories by the end of that decade (Van Dommelen 2011, 1–2).

This perspective undermines Versluys's interpretation that the 'nativist' perspective on Romanization provided a useful correction to earlier one-sided approaches but that it was subsequently derailed by post-colonial studies, which drove the anglophone debate towards an anti-colonial stance. As my reading of the 'critical' Romanization debate suggests, the 'nativist turn' was explicitly motivated by anti-colonial views and aimed to offset long-standing and one-sided elite and colonial biases in Roman studies. The adoption of post-colonial studies subsequently represents an attempt to provide more nuanced accounts that do justice to the complexities of colonial situations and contexts of culture contact. To claim that post-colonial studies inspire anti-colonial and thus anti-Romanization views is therefore misguided in my view, as a key plank of post-colonial studies is, on the contrary, constituted by an emphasis on the intricate and mixed or hybridized nature of colonial and contact situations – overcoming or blurring the colonial divide is a catchphrase of these approaches, as was for instance already evident in the contributions to the *World archaeology* issue on colonialism (Gosden 1997; cf. Van Dommelen 2006; Liebmann 2008; Silliman 2005; 2013).

A secondary question that lingers around Versluys's arguments is why post-colonial studies are apparently so much more prominent in British archaeology. One partial response is that this is perhaps an exaggerated claim, as Dutch, Scandinavian and US archaeologists have not been far behind their British colleagues in engaging with post-colonial ideas, but there has clearly been less interest in these views among Southern and Eastern European scholars. Another possible answer is suggested by the exception of Spain, where post-colonial ideas have been taken up with verve by scholars like Alicia Jiménez Díez (2008; 2010), Alfredo González-Ruibal (2010), Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez (2005; 2008) and Ana Delgado (Delgado and Cano 2008): I wonder whether a recent colonial past may be the common denominator between the academic communities with a stronger awareness of the colonial legacies?

What emerges from this complex interweaving of intellectual trends and social histories is, in my view, that, despite the frequency with which the term is bandied around, the debate is not really about Romanization. As Gallini and Slofstra (e.g. 2002b, 56) already argued and others have repeatedly pointed out since (e.g. Gardner 2013, 3–6), these discussions are about understanding contact and colonial situations, and Romanization is a mere label to group together those associated with Roman expansion and conquest. The notions and terms of the debate, be they acculturation or hybridization, are rooted elsewhere and have a much broader currency. In the end, I would therefore submit that the preoccupation with the term 'Romanization' that has emerged in recent years is less than helpful, because it deflects attention from the real theoretical and interpretive issues at stake. More seriously, it seems to me that it also discourages comparison of Roman colonial situations with others beyond the Roman world and thus risks reifying Roman contact and

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colonial situations, the effective result of which might be to isolate Roman studies intellectually (Van Dommelen 2012, 397; cf. Snodgrass 2002, 192). My contention is therefore that the problem with the current Romanization debate is not so much about post-colonial studies but rather about Roman studies themselves and their tendency to reify, if not 'fetishize', Roman culture and Romanization.

Arguments about the relevance or otherwise of Romanization are therefore not just a trivial terminological spat. The underlying reason is to be sought in the strong classical tradition that is an integral part of Western culture, including academic scholarship – all the more so when it comes to Roman and classical studies (Marchand 1996; Dietler 2005; 2010, 27–53). While this is undoubtedly an intellectually very rich tradition, which has much to offer, post-colonial studies have also made it clear that it is organized in certain ways that are profoundly implicated in the colonialist past of the West and that Roman and Greek achievements have systematically been foregrounded at the equally methodical expense of other cultures, regions and periods of the Mediterranean and European past (Goff 2005; Greenwood 2009). As archaeologists recognize that the contemporary contexts of both academic research and the archaeological record cannot and should not be ignored, it seems to me that a narrow classicist perspective on the Mediterranean past can no longer stand on its own – at the very least it has to be embedded in its broader contexts, both past and present.

To conclude, these are major issues that rightly are discussed in connection – but their interconnections are multiple and complex and as much partially overlapping as confusing. Even if they involve Roman studies in important ways, I have argued that many of the theoretical and intellectual developments are not specifically Roman and that they may best be grasped from a more distant vantage point. To return to the question of Romanization, therefore, whether or not to use the term is in my view not a pertinent question but rather a case of barking up the wrong tree. Instead, Romanists should look up, as Gallini, Slofstra and others have done before, and look beyond their own disciplinary tradition to engage with the humanities and social sciences at large. Versluys's essay and this 'archaeological diaglogue' are a timely reminder of the intellectual riches that may be gained from such engagements.

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Romanization 2.0 and its alternatives

*Greg Woolf**

It would be churlish (as well as difficult), when my own work is treated so generously in this article, to object to its thrust too strongly. But agreement does not make for much of a dialogue! Let me state my agreements briefly, then.

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1. Versluys has nailed the terminological impasse: 'Romanization' is far worse than Romanization, because it has all the sins of the former without its conviction. But I have less sympathy for those TRAC speakers 'ordered' not to use the concept by their supervisors. If they can answer the many criticisms made of the concept, and make it work for them on their material, let them demonstrate this. If not, they need to find something better.
2. Versluys also seems to me quite correct that some postcolonial approaches have often ended up in an unsatisfactory anti-colonialism. Yvon Thébert (1978) made a similar objection when he asked whether Bénabou (1976) had decolonized the history of Africa in the Roman period or simply turned it on its head. Denouncing ancient imperialism, colonialism and racial and sexual abuse might make us feel more comfortable, but it does not improve our analysis. I would add that it has also allowed British Romanists to return to a very traditional preoccupation: rewriting the Roman chapters of 'our island's story' in dialogue with contemporary imperial preoccupations.
3. Versluys argues that we should 'focus on "cultural transformation taking place in the context of empire" rather than on "imperialism and colonialism"' (p. 8). This too makes very good sense. But I wonder what the word 'cultural' adds to this programme? Does it operate to exclude the study of other kinds of change (economic? technological? agricultural?). I doubt that this is what Versluys advocates and cannot see the advantage of arbitrarily demarcating one sphere of life as 'cultural' and excluding discussion of other changes. And I doubt that it would be possible to do this in any case. How would we talk about bathing without aqueducts, engineering and hydrology, as well as euergetism, notions of the body and foodways? Or about wine without thinking about techniques of agriculture, exchange systems and so on. If the abundant recent literature on entanglement – along with Hodder (2012) I am thinking particularly of Thomas (1991), Dietler (2010) and Garrow and Gosden (2012) – has taught us nothing else, it is that we cannot easily separate 'the cultural' from the rest of life. Or does 'cultural' give holistic accounts of change a particular flavour? Or does it designate some particular *Schwerpunkte* for study? I have more sympathy with this position, but I suspect that it now obstructs more than it illuminates our projects. Now that 'culture' is no longer the final chapter of a book which has already dealt with conquest, administration, politics, the army, agriculture, manufacture and trade, town and country, and late antique decline (the traditional format of volumes in the genre 'provincial history'), perhaps we no longer need to signal so strongly that culture is all-encompassing and can simply study together the whole set of changes with which we are concerned?

All the same, I am wary of signing up at once to Romanization 2.0. My commentary is an attempt to articulate my reasons for this reluctance.

For a start, as Versluys says, the search for a substitute grand narrative to occupy the same space as the one we can no longer live with has been tried several times already in relation to Romanization and to Hellenization. Sophisticated critiques of both concepts date back to the 1970s at least

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(eg. Gallini (1973) and Goudineau (1979), the latter giving the title to Janniard and Traina (2006)). Arguably the Romanization debate has consisted of 30 years of expressions of dissatisfaction. Rejection of Romanization has become as much a habit as its use, and the case has been made on different occasions for 'creolization' (Webster 2001), 'Mediterraneanization' (Morris 2005) and 'globalization' and/or 'glocalization'. To those studies of the latter listed by Versluys we can add Martin and Pachis (2004), Sweetman (2007), Hitchner (2008) and Vlassopoulos (2012). Yet in many – not all – cases what these usages offer is not so much a new *explanatory* framework as a new *descriptive* one, and one that tactfully leaves undamaged most earlier scholarship as well as the many interpretations that have grown up in interdependence with notions like Romanization. The point that we often seem to be substituting new words for old ones is eloquently made for Romano-British studies by Millett (2007). If certain kinds of postcolonialism created *histoire inversé* – the same old narrative with the moral valencies reversed – then other new labels simply sanitize discredited brands. If so, then saying 'Mediterraneanized' is just as much an evasion as putting 'Romanized' in scare quotes. Naturally I hope to be proved wrong about all this, and I look forward in particular to Pitts and Versluys (2014), which promises a much more rigorous appraisal than we have had to date of the costs as well as the advantages of employing globalization theory in the study of antiquity.

So let us remember that there *are* alternatives. Most obviously we could simply abandon the search for a grand narrative of change – cultural or not – consequent on, and contained within, the Roman *oikumene*.

This is not intended to sound pessimistic, and is certainly not an attempt to foreclose debate (one that would certainly fail). But it is intended to sound a note of scepticism about the prospects of developing any new grand theory that will successfully achieve all the goals for which Romanization theory was eventually evoked. Romanization theory was asked (among other things) to provide :

1. an account of how and why material culture and social practices changed in areas controlled by Rome,
2. an account of how cultural change was related to imperialism,
3. an account of the formation of identities in Roman provinces and
4. a contribution to our understanding of the ideological foundations of Roman power and the means by which the consent of Rome's subjects was either won or engineered.

Just possibly, asking one concept to do all of this was a bit ambitious. And in practice different studies have given different weight to different parts of the programme. So Millett (1990) focused mainly on interpreting the material record to reconstruct processes of economic and social change, while Mattingly (2006) aimed at rewriting a conventional narrative in ways that cohered better with modern scholarship on imperialism, and so on.

It seems to me that those who do not want to sign up for Romanization 2.0 have at least two strategies available, both of which look quite promising.

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The first is to devise a series of less grand (or less grandiose) theories, each one directed more precisely at a smaller target. A good model is provided by a series of recent studies focused simply on identity formation, among them Goldhill (2001), Roymans (2004), Howgego, Heuchert and Burnett (2005), Derks and Roymans (2009) and Whitmarsh (2010). Many of these combine material from the East as well as the West, just as Versluys advocates. It is also striking that for this particular set of questions none of them attempts a purely archaeological debate but each instead combines epigraphy and numismatics, art history and philology, history and archaeology. That approach seems appropriate as well as successful. Indeed the very idea of trying to limit an analytical strategy so as to cohere with the contingent and contemporary limits of a modern academic discipline seems a bit bizarre.

A second alternative is to try to develop understandings of change that do not depend on (or at least defer to a later stage of the argument) the creation of higher-order abstractions like Romanization. This approach has been recently advocated in this journal on the basis of actor-network theory (Van Oyen 2013). Rather than starting from the conviction that there must be something like Romanization out there if we only had the ingenuity to find and describe it properly, we could simply look at how things are made, used, exchanged and consumed and see what patterns emerge.

Chris Gosden (2005, 209) offers one such formulation in relation to Roman Britain that is worth considering, especially for those wishing to begin from things rather than texts:

> There is a general excitation of the object world from at least 100 BC onwards which owes something to trends emanating from the Mediterranean which ripple out through areas north and west. In a place like Britain these have complex effects that start well before AD 43 in the production of pottery on the wheel, the higher levels of fibulae and other small metal objects, the growth of large settlements and new burial rites to name but a few. Again our categories of objects are suspect. A Samian bowl or an amphora are definitely Roman for us, but not necessarily for all who owned and used them? – for those on rural settlements they may have had broader exotic connotations coming from over some far horizon, but not of necessity from anywhere connected with Rome. In any case as Thomas (1991) has said, it is not what objects were made to be that counts but what they can be made to become: the ability of objects to reorder their effects should not be underestimated.

This formulation does not provide Gosden with the basis for a new processual account of change – his interest in this essay is in how objects work on people, rather than in what they stand for or represent, or what they can be used (instrumentally) to achieve for the benefit of imperialist occupiers, profiteering merchants, collaborative elites, sexually rapacious soldiers or resistant natives. My point is not that issues of dominance and resistance should not be addressed – of course they should. But there are also other questions that may be asked about the mutually implicated transformations of material and social worlds, before, during and after episodes of conquest and contact. Many of these questions can be posed and answered without

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recourse to Romanization, creolization, globalization or any other high-order concept.

But not everybody wants alternatives. Let me finish with some comments on the contemporary use and value of the Romanization debate, and on who wins and who loses from its prominence.

One of the values of Romanization as a concept is that via one or another of its many concerns it has the potential to bring so many of us together. Versluys began his piece with the excellent point that 'the Romanization debate' is very local, something almost entirely confined to Roman archaeologists working in the UK and the Netherlands (and, one might add, to particular generations in those two countries). The wide-ranging nature of the discourse of Romanization allows a range of positions and specialisms to be accommodated. In addition, the very diffuseness of which we often complain prevents the discipline becoming fragmented into doctrinaire factions. Those involved might even be thought of as what Stock (1983), writing about medieval monastic scholarship, calls a textual community, a group united by their common devotion to the exegesis, commentary on and critique of a small number of key texts. As with biblical exegesis this is not really a zero-sum game; there is no real risk that one side will lose or win, or that any of the core questions will be definitively solved. Either we will go on forever or we will lose interest. No other outcome is very likely.

Versluys is quite right to say that 'every scholar has his or her own view on the historiography of the subject' (p. 4). Let me offer one of my own. What the Romanization debate has done is to install a new canon of reference works and key concerns, one that replaces a common familiarity with a group of Latin and Greek texts and ancient historical problems (*cruces*) referring to the northern provinces. The Romanization debate, and the texts, conferences and papers through which it is reproduced, thrive precisely because they serve the needs of a generation of Romanists who, by virtue of their training (mainly in archaeology departments) have much more to do with archaeologists of other periods, and much less to do with classicists, than did their predecessors. This is not meant as an allegation of sectarianism. It is simply that if one lives, works and teaches alongside specialists on Bronze Age and Iron Age Europe or the empires of the Inka, if one goes to seminars and examines papers and theses on a range of archaeological rather than classical topics, one may come to think of the Roman period in a different way than if one works alongside those teaching Virgil's *Aeneid* and the history of the Augustan Principate. It is a generalization, of course, but Roman archaeology in the UK at least is now far more often found in archaeology departments than Classics ones. This has transformed the field for the better in all sorts of ways. But it has meant that Roman archaeologists have needed a new intellectual common ground and new canonical texts. This, I suggest, is what the Romanization debate has provided. If I am right then we already have 'an *archaeological* perspective on Romanization' (p. 15), as Versluys puts it, although not in the sense in which he means it.

My guess – a prediction rather than a prescription – is that the capaciousness of the Romanization debate means that it will continue to be able to accommodate approaches based on globalization and material culture,

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and also the 'institutional archaeology' advocated by Gardner (2013) and the historicizing agenda which Terrenato (2005) argues is needed to clear the ground of unhelpful analogies between ancient and modern imperialisms. After all, it has absorbed a very wide range of postcolonial approaches over the last decade without much trouble, and the institutional conditions within which Roman archaeology is taught and studied have not changed recently. 'Let us continue the debate!' as Versluys declares in his acknowledgements.

But maybe we should pause for a moment and consider the costs, as well as the benefits, of prolonging the conversation, comfortable and familiar as it is to many of us. Those who bear the heaviest costs are the new entrants to the debate who encounter an ever-growing bibliography of deuterocanonical and exegetical works that must be mastered before they can be full members of the textual community. Perhaps this is one reason for the discomfort Versluys noted among speakers at TRAC? And then there are costs too, which we all bear, if we devote energy to repairing and refitting the vast bulk of Romanization theory rather than exploring some of the alternatives available.

Romanization 2.0 sounds wonderful, with glittering new globalization and a host of additional features imported from entanglement theory and the like. I am definitely looking forward to the release. But I also feel I should get out of my comfort zone and take a good look at other opportunities before I take out a subscription.

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Getting out of the comfort zone. Reply to responses

Miguel John Versluys

My essay is intended as an archaeological dialogue on Romanization in the sense that it tries 'to creatively discuss what we mean when we say "Rome", across boundaries set by disciplines or scholarly traditions, fuelled by new developments in other fields, and especially in terms of material culture' (p. 6). Therefore it is looking ahead on purpose, with the historiography of the field (only) serving as a means to an end and not so much as a point of discussion in its own right. Resuscitating, repairing or refitting the concept of Romanization itself is not at stake: on purpose I talked about 'reinvigorating the Romanization *debate*' while not discussing the feasibility of the concept in the present situation ('When I use the term "reinvigorating" I explicitly do not mean to indicate that we should continue the debate as if Romanization were either good or bad, or to question whether or not we should use the term at all') (p. 6). The essay, therefore, is not so much about Romanization 2.0 per se, but rather about triggering a debate to get us going again or, to paraphrase Woolf's conclusion, to get us out of the Romanization/'Romanization' comfort zone. The Romanization debate indeed seems to have brought us a new canon of reference works and key concerns, as Woolf

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rightly remarks. I argue that we should urgently try to refresh the canon by looking critically at what has become received wisdom and by simultaneously exploring what could become new key questions for our field. Canonization should be a dynamic and ongoing process.

It was very stimulating, therefore, to see all kinds of useful and intelligent applications and rejections of, and suggestions about, my propositions throughout the comments. If there ever was a discussion article that should be read along with its responses, it certainly is this one! To be clear: I have therefore no intention of creating yet another great narrative or overarching theory – how untimely that would be in our fragmented times. But I simply believe that Roman studies, and Roman archaeology in particular, can still do (even) better by engaging more 'with the humanities and social sciences at large' (as Van Dommelen characterizes it, p. 45). From my agenda it has become clear what, in my view, our creative discussion on 'Rome' should focus on at this particular moment, namely investigating Rome in the context of world history (globalization) and investigating objects we call Roman in terms of their material agency in the first place (material-culture studies). Such an approach very much decentres Rome and is therefore a useful (and much-needed) antidote to the ever-continuing 'fetishizing' of the Romans, a point eloquently made by Van Dommelen.

The five responses clearly show, I think, that such an agenda can count on broad assent (at least among my commenters) and, moreover, is timely. That is comforting indeed – although the important task of making it work in daily scholarly practice is still largely before us. Saying that the Roman world is a global one (and that we therefore need globalization studies to understand it better) is interesting, perhaps, but remains descriptive. In order to make the concept of globalization explanatory for the Roman world, we have to try it out and make it work. The same goes, of course, for my suggestion that we are in need of a non-anthropocentric approach to the genesis and functioning of the Roman Empire.

There are, however, differences of opinion about how all of this (which I characterized as 'an uncomfortable and unfruitful ending', p. 4) came to be, and about how to move forward. That we should engage with connectivity through globalization studies is not so much contested, I think; that we should (radically) follow the 'material turn' is. From the comments it is clear, moreover, that an important issue here is the question what the 'material turn' implies for the relation between historical sources and approaches in relation (or opposition?) to archaeological ones. In my reply I will first deal with what has been said about (my view of) the historiography. All five responses make important points that add to the analysis and bring it in sharper focus. Woolf, Hingley and Van Dommelen do so by discussing (parts of) the article and its suggestions proper; Hodos and Stek by zooming out and contextualizing the debate. They do this by looking at their own fields of, respectively, the archaeology of the Greek and the (pre-Roman) Italic world – thus usefully drawing in and discussing the notion of Hellenization. I will next turn to how my respondents think about globalization and material-culture studies as directions for the near future of Roman archaeology (or their own fields) and I will argue, in the spirit of dialogue, that they underestimate both

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the radical nature and the possibilities of these concepts, especially where it concerns 'the material turn'.

The response by Van Dommelen is largely concerned with (my reading of) the historiography of the debate and my understanding of (what Hingley calls) 'post-colonial Roman archaeologies' (PCRAs). He adds a crucial element to the debate, namely the 'nativist turn'. Indeed, alternative histories concerning people without history were already developed from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. Van Dommelen calls these approaches rather one-sided – what I characterized as anti-colonial. These 'nativist' perspectives would have paved the way for PCRAs; in their turn, these archaeologies would have tried to develop more nuanced approaches. Indeed, intellectual genealogies hold the key for understanding current intellectual trajectories and therefore Van Dommelen is quite right when he says that, in fact, we need *more* historiography. But I think that we agree on the fact that in most cases concerning PCRAs we could never really speak of post-colonialism. Much survey archaeology (but certainly not all), for instance, has until fairly recently withdrawn itself into the nativist/anti-colonial corner without really engaging in depth with what post-colonial theory has to offer. Hence, if PCRAs genuinely, and all across the field, aimed to be about investigating the location of culture from a variety of (alternative) perspectives, this archaeological dialogue would be unnecessary. However, although I certainly see innovative research emanating from PCRAs, with both Van Dommelen and Hingley, I also see many nativist/anti-colonial reflexes, as I have tried to illustrate in my text. And clearly, as also Hingley acknowledges, I am not the only one. Therefore, in my view, the 'dynamic and transformative agenda' can better start with what post-colonial theories are about in somewhat more general terms: contact situations and therefore connectivity, or, to use the concepts now widely used in the humanities and social sciences to study these processes, network theory and globalization. Would it not be illuminating to study Roman colonialism and imperialism from this much wider perspective? However, to be clear, this is not the main issue. Often we tend to expect too much of theory. Whether through post-colonial theory or globalization theory: what matters is the 'dynamic and transformative agenda', to use Hingley's formulation (p. 20). And I am more than happy (although a bit more sceptic) to share his optimism that, in that respect, PCRAs are now in a process of reinventing themselves at last.

If so, I hope that the two main points of the agenda presented in my essay will also be part of that reinvention; a recent article like Van Oyen (2013), at least, suggests that they can be. First, I will briefly elaborate on the feasibility of globalization theory. Talking about a global Roman world is, of course, dialectically continuous with our present-day concerns, as Hingley reminds us. But I believe it is more than that. This is why I drew on the 2009 essay *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité* by the French anthropologist Marc Augé and underlined that

> taking connectivity as the defining characteristic of the Roman world has immense implications and forces us to move our intellectual concepts from *acculturation* to *globalisation*, from *history* to *mnemohistory*, from

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> *traditions* to the *invention of traditions*, from *being* to *becoming*, from *communities* to *imagined communities* and from conceptualizing in terms of *cultures* to thinking in terms of *cultural debates* (pp. 13–14).

Or, as Appadurai (2001, 1) remarked (and shows throughout his work), 'globalization may not be a member of the familiar archive of large-scale historical shifts'. Be that as it may, I think the comments show understanding of, or even sympathy for, the idea that talking about connectivity necessitates the involvement of globalization theory. In discussing their respective fields, Hodos and Stek even use it in a rather matter-of-fact way and consider it useful. But, of course, all this remains to be seen. Woolf is certainly right in saying that talking about 'global Romans' is descriptive rather than explanatory. It is for that reason that we should make it part of our agenda and explore the concept by means of concrete, applicable and focused research questions. Globalizing the Romans is certainly not easy, and it is quite an intellectual responsibility, but we should try to do it – not least because it effectively decentres Rome.

Globalization thus might be a useful concept in order to understand differently the genesis of the Roman world (that is, in the context of world history) and the different scales within that particular network. Material-culture studies are useful, I argue, to develop a different conception of the relation between artefact and culture. I think there was less sympathy for or understanding of this. Woolf here really deferred his subscription; Hodos remarked that 'the object itself still does not act' and stated that the perception 'that objects are agents on behalf of social actors … is more workable in a practical interpretational way' (p. 28); while Stek associated it with an '"ahistorical" approach' (p. 31). Unfortunately, this reply is not the place to go into this issue in depth, which I believe to be of crucial importance for Roman archaeology in particular. Let me first repeat that 'I certainly do not want to suggest a dichotomy between "historical" and "archaeological" interpretation. However, in the current situation … material culture in particular seems able to nuance and challenge existing (historical) narratives' (pp. 18–19). For this, however, we have to take the 'material turn' and entanglement theory seriously. Taking material culture seriously, however, is not just to draw in more archaeology and archaeological sources. This is indeed, as Woolf rightly concluded, *not* the way I meant it. It is to study and understand the impact of things on human thought, society and evolution (cf. Boivin 2008), just as we study and understand the impact of humans. Hence the point is not only that we need more material culture in a debate that is dominated by historical questions and frameworks. As both Hodos and Stek show, such an 'archaeological turn' has already been taking place in their fields for around two decades already, and has certainly been fecund. Still, this 'archaeological turn' is not about understanding material culture as constitutive of its historical context as human actors. Hodos rightly remarks, 'Ultimately, it is the expression of social identities through the use of material culture that underpins human connectivity' (p. 30). But I think that theorists of material agency would even see this as more radical, and would argue that it is only material culture that makes human connectivity and articulation of

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social identities possible. The word 'expression' is at the heart of the matter here, because material culture is as expressive as it is constitutive of the social realities of its time. Therefore, we should not only go 'beyond representation' as far as material culture is concerned; we should also take material agency seriously in order to write history. This is why I concluded my essay with a reference to Böhme (2006): this is very much history writing but from the perspective of objects. And as it turns out, history looks very different from that perspective. This is also why I believe that we need to try and write a non-anthropocentric approach towards the genesis and functioning of the Roman Empire. Roman archaeologists, however, have been virtually absent from debates concerning 'the material turn' so far, and apparently have often not fully realized the immense potential of their own archaeological sources as history makers.

How to achieve all this and materialize such an ambitious agenda? As both Woolf and Stek usefully argue and underline, we need explicit and targeted research questions that are not dependent on grand theories or higher abstractions. I agree. At the same time, however, it remains the question whether or not we can really evade the great narrative so conveniently. I was reminded here of an observation by the social anthropologist Gerd Baumann, who urges us to dare to think in terms of structures and grand narratives (again), against what he calls 'the fashionable but helpless reduction of all social facts to contextual contingency' (Baumann and Gingrich 2004, xiv). This should certainly be the subject of another archaeological dialogue in the future.

Has Romanization still any role to play, then? I have tried to evade this question in my article, but the comments make it clear that I should have been more specific. Romanization as an explanatory model evidently will not suffice. It is too unspecific, too grand a theory, and it comes with much unhelpful baggage: all comments have important things to say about its faults. However, if we want to talk about change and transformation taking place in the context of an empire, and if we take into account the fact that what the Romanization debate has produced as alternatives is new words for old ones (*pace* Woolf), I believe that Romanization cannot but stay with us as a descriptive term. And similar to other descriptive terms (creolization, Mediterreanization, globalization), it only really means something when we try to make it explanatory. 'Rome' is the framework, the common denominator of what we see happening in large parts of the Mediterranean network. And unlike with Hellenization, as Hodos explains, power and politics that we call Roman *do* play an important role in the functioning of the network. Therefore, as long as we do not regard Rome in terms of the 19th-century nation state, Romanization is perhaps less at fault as a descriptive term than is often thought. And, in fact, is the history of the Roman Empire itself not a history of decentring Rome? Be that as it may – and perhaps most importantly – let me underline once more that Romanization 2.0 for me is a debate – canon-work – and not an explanatory grand theory.

We will achieve this, of course, only through a constant dialogue; not just with one another, but also with those in the humanities and social sciences

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whose debate is ours. I am confident that if we work on writing a historical anthropology of the Roman world in terms of connectivity and with a focus on material agency, as I have proposed in my essay, Greg Woolf will be applying for a subscription for Romanization 2.0 very soon. But even though this would certainly be a landmark, it would not be the ultimate goal of the exercise. That goal is a continuous intellectually creative discussion on how to understand Rome 'across boundaries set by disciplines or scholarly traditions, fuelled by new developments in other fields' (p. 6), leading to Romanization 3.0, 4.0, etc. Therefore: out of our comfort zones and *au travail*!

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