GLOBAL ROMANS?
IS GLOBALISATION A CONCEPT THAT IS GOING TO HELP US
UNDERSTAND THE ROMAN EMPIRE?

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Globalisation in ancient history and classical archaeology

Globalisation has been called a buzz word, a fad word, even a shibboleth (Bauman 1998, 1). It certainly is: google 'globalisation' and you get 17 million hits and another 31 million for 'globalization'. To say you are into globalisation studies gets subsidies flowing, articles and books published, and courses over-booked. So it was certain to reach the study of the ancient world, and it did, even though it took quite a long time[1]. Is it a fad or fashion in the field of ancient studies as well? Maybe. Does that mean it is likely to be short-lived? Not necessarily: the concept may have come to stay. It may outlive its current fashionableness, because it carries with it a number of tools which turn out to be quite helpful in studying the ancient world. But this is something we cannot take for granted: we will have to establish globalisation's usefulness by systematically unravelling what the concept is about. That is no easy task: globalisation is a relatively young concept, so opinions are quite divergent. Instead of looking for some welcome definition, we have to tackle those divergences first. As Jan Aart Scholte has put

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[1] Against the 48 million hits on the World Wide Web, we can set some *ten* occurrences of the concept in the digital files of the *Année Philologique* (as of October 1, 2007). There exists a handful of publications on the Roman world in which globalisation is brought into play dating from before Hingley (*cf*. note 4): Malitz 2000; Witcher 2000; Petzold/Rüpke/Steimle 2001; Cancik/Rüpke (eds.) 2003 (non vidi; this results from a so-called 'Schwerpunktprogramm' (SPP 1080) of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, running from 1999; *cf*. note 37); Fusco 2003; Alonso-Núñez 2004 (non vidi); Sfameni Gasparro 2004-5, and a few titles in which 'global' refers to Greek or Roman ideas about conquering or reigning the world. Sturgeon 2000, referred to by Hingley, does not belong: in this review of Alcock (ed.) 1997, 'global' is to be understood as 'in East and West' without any reference to 'globalisation' as such. Forthcoming: *TRAC* 2006 had a session: "Making ends meet or early globalisation? Economies of power, culture and identity in the Roman world" (*cf*. note 49), and March 2007 there was a joint CACW/CAPN-conference at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, titled "Regionalism and globalism in Antiquity". For 'global history' encompassing the ancient world, *cf*. below. The stress on unity and diversity in several of these publications (Malitz 2000, Cancik/Rüpke 2003, Sfameni Gasparro 2004-5) makes them look very much like Hingley.

it: we should become "constructively more confused about globalisation (Scholte 2004, 14)."

My point of departure will be Richard Hingley's book *Globalizing Roman culture*. There, Hingley has thrown down the gauntlet, arguing at length that globalisation is the one concept that will set the bogged-down romanisation debate going again[2]. Of course everybody will be pleased to see the romanisation debate move forward. It has been a most valuable debate, dealing with issues of crucial importance for our understanding of the ancient world. A lot of old insights have been found wanting, but we are still groping for new ones to take their place. There seems to be little in the way of a consensus, not even much feeling of having gone somewhere at all. So there we are, waiting for Hingley, or anybody else, to point the way. Hingley argues that we should do away with the concept of romanisation – which I can wholeheartedly agree to, even if it is unlikely to happen[3]. He then urges us to consider 'globalisation' as a viable alternative. Whether I can, and would advise others to follow him in this respect, is the subject of this article.

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss at some length what Hingley has said: you may not have read his book; or you have read it, but you feel the need for some proper critique[4]. In his lengthy first chapter Hingley states that historians cannot possibly study history independent of their own context, and that this was as true in the past as it is in the present, whatever idealist position our forbears wanted to take and whatever grand narratives they wanted to construct. He next asks whether the past is relevant to the present, and whether the Roman empire is at all comparable to modern empires and the globalising world of our own days. The answer is affirmative: globalisation is a useful concept to describe the Roman empire, as a heuristic tool, but also a descriptive one: the Roman Empire is not only like our globalising world, it was itself globalising. It is also valid in an evolutionary sense: the present world system has roots that reach back to the ancient world. Thus Rome is relevant to the present: there is no disjunction between ancient and modern, the ancient world is not the 'other', but it stands in a significant relationship to the present. What saves us from ending up in the same idealist position of previous generations of historians, only now with globalisation instead of pre-World War II imperialist ideology, is the fact that we are conscious of our subjectivity and make it explicit. We do not do grand narratives anymore. The chapter is an immaculate 'postmodern' exercise, with which I am largely in

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[2] Hingley 2005; in a more exploratory vein: Hingley 2003 (May 21, 2007).

[3] A concept, once introduced and put to use, is very difficult to get rid off. Romanisation is a case in point, cautioning us against a precipitous introduction of globalisation into our field of study.

[4] Although Hingley's 2005 book already makes its appearance on many reading lists (it certainly struck a chord), debate has been somewhat meagre up to now: reviewers (U. Rothe, *Classical Review* 56 (2006) 441-444; D.B. Saddington, *Scholia Reviews* 15 (2006) 13; E. Adler, *Bryn Mawer Classical Review* 2006.02.26, and J.W. Prag, *Journal of Roman Studies* 96 (2006) 214-216), say very little, really. Their enthusiasm is not exactly overwhelming, but their criticism not very acute either.

agreement, but comparable things have been said by generations of historians, even long before postmodernism had been invented, and are still being said, now that postmodernism is gone again. The saving grace of being explicit is nothing new either: Hingley quotes a 20 year-old pronouncement of Ernest Gellner in support of this. But I admit things like this bear repetition. Endearing is that Hingley ends his wildly deconstructive chapter with the reassurance that it is, after all, possible to know something about the past: a common thought amongst historians who do not want to join the breadline. But this is not the main point of the chapter; that is Hingley's insistence that Antiquity is readily comparable to our present: I fully agree, and think this nonsense about the ancient world as 'the incomprehensible other' should be over and done with. So comparison is in good order. But as we just saw, Hingley goes on and also posits an evolutionary link between ancient empire and modern globalisation, and suggests that globalisation can be used to describe processes in both the modern and the ancient world.

There follows an even longer second chapter tracing the origins and usage of the concept of romanisation. It is a thorough example of *Ideengeschichte* especially dealing with the earlier phases, when all went wrong, and the most recent stages, when some of those wrongs were righted again. Centre stage are Theodor Mommsen, Francis Haverfield, Camille Jullian, Martin Millett and Greg Woolf. This is a very useful chapter, clearly outlining the problems and referring to a host of literature; but it is nothing new – Hingley himself has given us previous accounts of the matter (Hingley 1996; Hingley 2000). The end of the story is that Greg Woolf had almost got it right. But what Woolf's analysis was still lacking never becomes quite clear: it is too elite-centred, and, what? It seems as if its main fault is that it does not use the word globalisation.

In the three chapters that form the second half of the book we get down to business. We have heard that romanisation is no good, and that globalisation might do the trick. The crucial words are in the book's subtitle: unity and diversity. Globalisation directs our attention towards local diversity, but at the same time stresses that there is an overarching unity. We have both, the global and the local: what explains the pun 'glocalisation'[5]. In the Roman Empire too we have local diversity, but also unity. What this unity is, does not become completely clear[6]. But anyhow: there is a wide variety of local engagements with elite groups according to local needs, but there is also Roman power to ensure some unity. Globalisation theorists (and, I would add, others, for instance Franz Boas seventy and more years ago[7]) tell us that cultures are not bounded and monolithic: they are dynamic, with porous boundaries. Such is Roman culture: the force of Rome

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[5] 'Glocalisation' is in common usage in the globalization literature, e.g. Anheier/Isar (eds.) 2007, 12. The word was coined by Eric Swyngedouw, and popularised by Roland Robertson (Robertson 1992, 173-174), *cf*. Robertson 2007.

[6] Hingley 2005, 49, speaks of "generalized Roman identities", plural, and one line down of "'Roman' identity", singular and with Roman between inverted commas. Had he been more consistent, I still doubt whether it would be clear what he means by this identity or identities.

is its flexibility and openness. The creation of empire is the creation of opportunities for 'becoming Roman' (Hingley frequently uses this phrase which reminds of the title of Greg Woolf's study *Becoming Roman*). The key moment is the reign of Augustus (Hingley limits his account to the period 30 BC – 115 AD): at that stage a discourse of domination and imperial ideology were fully formulated, with Greek building blocks, but without the binary opposites of Greek thought on alterity. Roman *humanitas* is gradual and can be acquired, it can grow on you. This opened the way for a Roman policy that was not a simple laissez-faire, but a deliberate attempt to 'civilize' (here Hingley uses the same famous passage from Tacitus' *Agricola* 21 which he already adduced to show the naivety of the modernist accounts of Romanisation).

We have arrived at chapter four, and we have not got very far as yet: the Roman empire creates some measure of imperial identity by seducing or forcing elites into a Roman cultural mould. Next we look at material culture for traces of the same. In urbanism (given most extensive coverage), domestic space and dress we find universal standards at work, expressive of relatively uniform elite behaviour – without old identities being lost. In support of this we are told that material culture is meaningful: artefacts can "articulate roles, relations and identities". But were there any people left who thought they did not? Hingley really is expert at putting up straw men, whom he then knocks down with a wealth of references. In chapter 5, titled 'Fragmenting identities' we move away from the elite and only then do we see the true extent of local variety. Can that mixed bag still be called Roman society or is Roman society a façade behind which everything goes on as if the Romans were not there? Unity, states Hingley, is a colonising image (both Roman and modern), and the model of elite emulation, or the osmosis of Roman culture, is simplistic. Just see: the adoption of Latin is not (necessarily) a sign of sharing in a unified culture: Latin was adopted for many different ends, several purely practical. The 'discrepant' experience in the landscape, that is: the presence of non-villa landscapes, shows that there is no standard rural or urban development. Material culture can be adopted to "symbolize variable motivations". There are hybridisation, interpretation, translation, manipulation, mutation, and indigenisation going on: so how are we to know why they bought that Samian plate? (here Hingley refers to the usage of (American) culture in a globalised economy, one of his relatively few explicit references to theories of globalisation[8]). So we encounter some measure of unity for the elite, but not for the others? This seems to be what Hingley is saying, for although he states that he opts for an answer between extremes, he adds that there were many poor people in the empire for whom little changed and who lived relatively 'un-Roman' lives. The main message here seems to be: if one starts using Latin (for whatever reason), or buys Roman pottery (for whatever reason and putting it to whatever usage), we should debunk

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[7] I pointed out the long pedigree of what are supposed to be recent insights in Naerebout/Versluys 2006.

[8] Hingley 2005, 111, esp. footnote 187.

these examples as instances of romanisation. But of course we can hardly say that there has been no impact of Roman culture, because the Latin and the pottery are there, but how to label this? As examples of globalisation, with Rome as the globalising culture.

So what is Hingley's conclusion? That Greg Woolf's 'becoming Roman' is more or less how things worked in the Roman empire – except that many did not become Roman. Now of course we all knew that there were inhabitants of the Roman empire whose lives remained untouched or were hardly touched at all, by the fact of living within the empire. How many they were, depends on locality and date. But what we want to get clear is how it worked with those whose lives *were* effected. What cultural processes were brought about by incorporation inside the Roman empire? That is a complicated story that we have been refining and undoubtedly will go on refining for many years to come. Hingley has shown, or reshown, us some of the issues. These issues have been discussed under the heading of romanisation, but that has shown itself to be less help than hindrance. Romanisation tends to obfuscate the complications, and we should do away with it. However, to replace it straightaway by a new concept, globalisation, begs some questions: has Hingley shown us what we gain by adopting the globalising perspective? This is where I think Hingley fails us. Surely, our gain cannot be the idea that in the Empire there was diversity underlying unity: we already knew that. That is archaeology's contribution to the story, as Hingley, himself an archaeologist, rightly indicates. Maybe the globalisation perspective can tell us something about the way (im)material culture is negotiated. But that is a debate that is in full swing. Hingley does not enter into that debate, nor any other debate on globalisation. He does not even give us a clear idea what it is that is being debated, so how are we to judge whether research into the Roman Empire could profit from it[9]? By claiming a new departure without explaining what it is, Hingley's replacement of romanisation by globalisation seems perilously close to wordplay. That is not good enough; it might even get us out of the frying pan into the fire – and I am not sure our awareness of the subjectivity of our dealings will be able to save us this time round. While advocating the value of a globalisation approach, Hingley does not demonstrate what it would do. Maybe this was intentional, and his diffidence is an invitation to archaeologists and ancient historians to have a go. In that case I rose to the challenge, or snapped at the bait. In the second half of this article I intend to carry on where Hingley stopped and scrutinise the concept of globalisation and its adaptability to the Roman world.

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[9] It is impossible to find out the true extent of Hingley's involvement in theorising globalisation. His bibliography mentions some 15-20 authorities in globalisation theory (I hesitate to count them exactly, because some authors well-known in the field are present with titles which do not deal with globalisation), but several seminal authors and works are lacking. Also, the actual references are in large part confined to the first few pages of Hingley's book, esp. chapter 1, note 6: "for a variety of perspectives see (…)", with ten references, two of these to edited volumes – but none of these perspectives are described or discussed.

Defining globalisation

In its most common usage the word 'global' has the sense of 'world-wide'. This is a fairly recent development: the first instance given by the standard dictionaries is an article in the 1892 *Harper's Magazine* where 'global' was used in that way, making this apparently unusual meaning explicit and suggesting a French derivation[10]. The word slowly caught on: after the First World War, in the 1920s, and especially during and after the Second World War, in the 1940s, we find 'global warfare' and the global actions of international organisations, and the global nature of the Cold War. In 1960 Marshall McLuhan famously spoke of the 'global village'. That particular use of 'global' is now very common: 'global positioning system', 'global warming', 'global' is everywhere. In the meantime, the 1940s and 1950s gave us a few examples of the verb 'to globalise', meaning to spread ideas on a world scale. But it is not until the 1960s that we find 'globalisation' or 'globalism' used on an appreciable scale, especially in economic contexts (e.g. in a 1962 *Sunday Times* article titled 'Globalising the Common Market'). The concept really caught on in 1983 with Theodore Levitt's 'Globalisation of markets' in *Harvard Business Review*, and has since been used countless times. From a rather narrow economic context, it has spread to a very wide field.

We will come back to the timeframe. For now, I personally would conclude from the above that I had better refrain from using 'globalisation' when speaking of a phenomenon that is not truly global. The Roman empire may have been big as empires go, but it did not operate on a global scale. This may seem like nit-picking: not nearly everything addressed nowadays as globalisation is occurring world-wide, in a literal sense[11]. Which shows that we should not linger with etymology or past semantics, but look at current usage: a certain awareness of 'globalism' is more important than its literal truth[12]. Still, it is not completely unimportant to look at the literal sense of 'globalisation': 'romanisation' I and others find problematic because the word itself stresses Roman agency, and thus one-way traffic, the 'mission civilisatrice'. Whatever way one redefines the concept, its natural language denotation will always interfere. With globalisation it is the same thing. But I will be devil's advocate.

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[10] This French provenance seems doubtful. The current meaning of French 'global' is rather: 'prise en bloc', that is: general, universal; 'global' seems an English derivation (from globe = earth). French for 'globalisation' is 'mondialisation' (10 million hits in Google). An excellent discussion of the semantics of 'mondialisation' as a synonym, or not, of 'globalisation' can be found at fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondialisation (October 15, 2007). Scholte 2002, 4, for the concept in other languages.

[11] Tomlinson 2007, 148, goes as far as calling globalisation the wrong word. *Cf*. W.H. McNeill's rejection of "world system" in favour of "transcivilizational entity", McNeill 1993, vii.

[12] But we should still ask: whose awareness? Harindranath 2006, 9 (quoting Michael Buraway): "who is the 'we' he [Anthony Giddens] is referring to?". Globalisation in this view is the province of the "raw cosmopolitan elite". *Cf*. Anheier/Isar (eds) 2007, 10. On the other hand, the idea that every part of the world and everybody on it is now affected by globalisation, albeit in very different ways, is a defensible proposition, if globalisation is what it is commonly said to be (see below).

There is an enormous literature dealing with (aspects of) globalisation[13]. If one draws up a list of the characteristics of globalisation as presented in this literature, these can be seen to comprise anything that happens on a global, or at least a trans- or international scale. I have categorised these characteristics, but I do not attempt any criticism[14]. First, we have the basic notion of increasing cross-border traffic: more messages, ideas, merchandise, money, investments and people cross borders between territorial units, in a progressive process of internationalisation. Informatisation, referring to the growing importance of information and telecommunications technology, can be seen as a special case of internationalisation. Here also belongs the idea of universalisation: the spreading of objects and experiences world-wide, with the connected issue of homogenisation versus heterogenisation: the question whether universalisation will lead to a loss of cultural variety, or to a new pluralism, when the local reacts to the impacting global with adaptation, resistance, 'critical localism' and so on (the neologism 'glocalisation', already mentioned above, is meant to summarise this interplay of the global and the local)[15].

Next we come to that part of the globalisation literature that deals strictly with the economic. The internationalisation of the economy implies a growth in exchange and interdependence: trade flows, capital investment, movement of labour and so on. Usually this is linked to the idea of the propagation of a free market economy, with its attendant privatisation, deregulation, liberalisation, transnationalisation (of economic production), the rise of multinational companies and of global consumerism, commodification, marketisation (including branding), financialisation, securitisation, and flexibilisation (de-standardisation of the organisation of production and labour). Also, the role of institutions like the World Bank and the IMF comes under scrutiny here. Obviously, questions of commodification and consumerism have an immediate importance for the issues of universalisation and cultural homogenisation[16].

In the socio-political sphere we have a large amount of research dealing with the supposed decline of the nation-state (sovereignty being decentred[17]), or at least the

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[13] I could not possibly claim to have seen all of this literature, or even a representative selection; happily there are good overviews: Smith/Smith 2005 (June 2, 2007); Scheuerman 2006; Robertson/Scholte (eds.) 2007; and up-to-date readers and collections: Inda/Rosaldo (eds.) 2008; Held/McGrew (eds.) 2007; Anheier/Isar (eds.) 2007.

[14] Admittedly, part of my categorisation makes use of categories formulated by Jan Aart Scholte – which might be seen to imply criticism (*cf*. note 43). With globalisation, every choice is 'political' in some sense of that word, but these paragraphs are intended as description.

[15] A variant is Westernisation/modernisation (Americanisation, McDonaldisation, Coca-colonisation): spreading the social structures of modernity, destroying pre-existent cultures and self-determination = colonialism, imperialism, cinema/music. Tomlinson 2007, 148: cultural imperialism of the US is not cultural globalisation.

[16] Appadurai 1986. Miller (ed.) 1995 (with Miller's introduction containing a rather severe criticism of theories of globalisation, 8, taken up in subsequent contributions to the volume). Further publications by Daniel Miller.

[17] Hardt/Negri 2002: Empire versus imperialism. In a footnote they suggest an evolutionary link with the Roman empire (415, n.2), but their analysis deals with the post WW2-world only.

reconfiguration of states, the advocacy of lean government, the growth of social inequality, and the rising levels of migration, the growing importance of global civil society, international non-governmental organisations, human rights, international law, and the international legal system, the threats of weapons of mass destruction and of international terrorism, and of global ecological degradation, such as ozone holes and global warming.

It is obvious that globalisation is seen to include, and that globalisation theorists deal with, every phenomenon that has a supraterritorial character, and even with the way any such phenomenon works out at the local level. That means that most of present day human society, and possibly a lot of past human societies, comes within the purview of globalisation. We cannot possibly go into any detail here, nor show the many strong links between the individual items listed here. But we can look at the way theories of globalisation try to find some common denominators. Most often mentioned is increasing interconnectedness[18]. Looking at it spatially, one could say that interconnectedness means that the distant impacts on the local. This is, however, not an exclusively spatial issue, but also a question of velocity: speed of travel, transport or messaging is essential for judging the nature of interconnectedness. Obviously, high-speed technologies make for faster connections, down to the stage where there is (near) simultaneity, or instantaneousness[19]. This whole development is often described as time-space compression[20]. The fact that distant powers and events penetrate local experience also means that it becomes less important to be bound to a certain locality, or that the sense of being thus bound weakens. Of course, territoriality (being situated at a particular place) remains a fact of life, but territorialism (the strictures on our thought and actions that follow from being thus situated) loses its grip. Deterritorialisation is the word used to capture this particular perspective[21].

Now we have some idea of what the concept of globalisation can be, but the picture is very diffuse. One can, in the context of a defence of, or attack on, neo-liberalism, select the burgeoning free market economy of the 1980s and beyond as the defining characteristic of globalisation. A very circumscribed area of research. At the other end of the spectrum, one can define globalisation as growing interconnectedness, and leave it at that. The concept is now vague enough to include the free market economy, in any period of time, or any other kind of economy. You might also not discuss the economy at all. We can see all of that happening: globalisation is being defined by any of the characteristics listed above. This has serious consequences: we can distinguish several mutually exclusive approaches. So, if we want to use the concept we have to decide for some approach.

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[18] Also: connectivity, connectedness, interlacing.

[19] Also: time-place continuum, network society, cyberspace.

[20] The notion of compressed space and time has been introduced already in the 19th and early 20th century by the likes of Marx, H. Adams and Dewey, who were observing (and extrapolating from) contemporary phenomena.

[21] Also: supraterritoriality, delocalisation (*cf*. Tomlinson 1999, 9).

A first approach is to say that globalisation is an *empty* concept. Globalisation as such, as a discrete phenomenon, does not exist. The word globalisation is a re-branding of colonialism, imperialism and the like; it is a mere smoke-screen, kept up (un)wittingly, to hide neo-liberal and neo-imperial agendas[22]. Globalisation is held "to articulate – and even to distribute and enforce – the dominant cultural, economic and political discourses of the West"[23]. Alternatively, globalisation is not so much a weapon in a political/ideological battle, but a failed theory (Rosenberg 2000; Rosenberg 2005). In this view, globalisation is an idea that gained currency especially in the 1990s, but it has no real-life existence. It has failed "as a general social theory; as a historical sociological argument about the nature of modern international relations; and as a guide to the interpretation of empirical events". Most serious charge here is that the *explanandum* has been turned into the *explanans*[24]. We see things happening; we label them 'globalisation'. We theorise globalisation, and say it is what causes those things to happen. All of these critics deny fundamental, epochal change, and reject the rather grandiose claims for a new epoch and a new social science to study it, made by the likes of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, David Held, Tony McGrew, Manuel Castells and Zygmunt Baumann[25]. Either critique of globalisation means that theories of globalization are useful only in so far as they can help us to study the way in which the image of globalization has been built up and made common. Ideologies should be analysed but there is not necessarily any substance to a particular specimen of ideology[26].

If the critics are right and globalisation is an empty concept, that would be sad for Hingley, who considers globalisation not to be a grand narrative as romanisation was/is. If globalisation is only a gloss on neo-imperial and neo-colonial thought and action, it would be a concept springing from much the same kind of thinking as romanisation did, only this time round dissimulating what in less politically

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[22] Wallerstein 2006; Callinicos 2007, who when faced with the question: transhistorical process or imperial project? describes globalisation as 'hyperpower imperialism'. Harindranath 2006 discusses the sceptics versus the radicals.

[23] Tomlinson 2007, 148, outlining a viewpoint that Tomlinson disagrees with.

[24] Rosenberg 2005, 14; "Eliding the two, such that the social phenomenon to which globalization refers become effectively its causes, is clearly problematic", is the somewhat limp reaction of Held/McGrew 2007, 2, who then proceed to ignore this problem (which, it should be said, that is not a peculiarity of globalisation theory).

[25] Giddens 1999, Beck 2004, Held/McGrew/Goldblatt/Perraton 1999, Castells 1996, Baumann 1998.

[26] Tsing 2008, 89-90: "Globalization is a set of projects that require us to imagine space and time in particular ways. These are curious, powerful projects. Anthropologists need not ignore them; we also need not renaturalize them by assuming that the terms they offer us are true (…) 'Why not throw out "the global" completely, since it only exists as a fantasy?' My answer is that even fantasies deserve serious engagement. (…) an analyst of globalism cannot merely toss it out as a vacant deception (…) an ethnographic study of the global needs careful attention not only to global claims and their effects on social life but also to questions of interconnection, movement, and boundary crossing that globalist spokespeople have brought to the fore."

correct ages could be stated without shame. And if globalisation is an *explanandum* turned into an *explanans*, we certainly will not get anywhere. Whatever the value of these critiques, for the sake of argument we now will ignore this line of thought, and go on the second approach: those who think that globalisation does refer to a specific phenomenon existing in the real world.

Amongst those who consider globalisation to be a historical phenomenon, and not merely a new label or a (flawed) theory, we find two exclusive approaches again[27]. The first says that globalisation is a unique feature of the modern world, and the second that it is a long-term process, stretching back over many centuries, or alternatively that there have been several subsequent globalisations[28]. If the first approach with its "epochal claims" to the effect that we have entered a new phase of history, turns out to be right, this would undercut Hingley's argument that he is not merely comparing Roman period developments to the present, but is on the trail of a deeper evolutionary relationship between the two. So we will look at the second approach first, and address the work of those who push back the globalising process in time, and thus try to do something more or less similar to what Hingley has been doing[29]. I include not only literature speaking about globalisation in the (deep) past, but also literature dealing with global history or world(-)system(s) – whether or not the concept 'globalisation' is explicitly used[30].
The clearest, most outspoken example I have come across is the archaeologist Helle Vandkilde, who in a programmatic text states that "there have always been economic, social, and cultural global systems", what he calls "earlier globaliza-

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[27] I do not refer to the political and ethical polarisation in the globalisation debate: globalisation from below v. globalisation from above, corporate globalisation v. people's globalisation, globalisation v. alter-globalisation. For critical approaches, see Dasgupta/Kiely (eds.) 2006. Nor will I address the idea that globalisation has ended: Ferguson 2005. Further references and a reaction in Held/McGrew 2007. The supposed 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington 1996) is either announcing the end of globalisation, or is the sad consequence of it.

[28] Gills 2006, 14: "multiple globalizations".

[29] The idea of previous globalisations or continuing globalisation is related to the criticism mentioned above which says that globalisation is just a new word for colonialism and imperialism (*cf*. notes 22-23): one could possibly turn this round, and say that colonialism and imperialism are examples of globalisation. But the scholars discussed in this paragraph recognize elements of the present in the past, while the critics say the present IS the past.

[30] Mazlish 1998: global history deals with globalisation; not the same as world history. *Cf*. Mazlish 2002 (English: web.mit.edu/newglobalhistory/articles.html, May 15, 2007); Mazlish 2001 (English: as before); and Mazlish 1999. Mazlish is rather prone to repeat himself. See also Schäfer 2006, who argues that big history should ally itself with global history and not with Eurocentric world history. *Cf*. Schäfer 2007; Budde/Conrad/Janz (eds.) 2006; Geyer/Bright 1995; McNeill 1995. For world history (*histoire universelle*, H.G. Wells, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee), *cf*. Stuchtey/Fuchs (eds.) 2003.

tions"[31]. As an example of these globalisations he mentions Hellenism, and this seems to imply that there are some periods that see a lot of globalisation going on – periods of political and/or cultural empire. But with Vandkilde it is everywhere and always that "we see that the foreign – which I call the global here – intervenes and influences the local". There is also an evolutionary link: "the globalization of today is based on history and prehistory". Although there are some (superficial) similarities to Hingley's account, it is not here that we will find any support for Hingley: if globalization is a characteristic of *all* human societies, what could possibly be its analytic value in studying the Roman empire? If globalisation in the present evolves from 'the past' – instead of being the outcome of Roman globalisation – what does that mean? Everything has evolved from what went before. Vandkilde has made almost everything into globalisation and thus the concept vanishes into thin air.

Next, another archaeologist: Robert Witcher. He is rather more subtle and sophisticated in his approach. His argument is as follows: we see a shrinking globe and at the same time fragmenting identities. The sociological models with which to approach this, we find in theories of globalisation. In the Roman world we see parallel phenomena. So we can put to use the same models. So far so good: Witcher does not seem to belong in this section of my article, but somewhere further down. He wants to use the theory, but does not share in Hingley's evolutionism, nor does he want to project globalisation back into the past: "as a process, globalisation is itself intimately associated with the condition of modernity". But then he spoils his clear line by changing track and proclaiming globalisation a *relative* concept: "[it] has always been present, but (…) gathered pace dramatically in the comparatively recent past". This is half-hearted: either globalisation is "intimately associated with the condition of modernity", or "it has always been present". Where Hingley chooses, Witcher vacillates. As someone who thinks globalisation is also a phenomenon of the ancient world, he belongs in this section – but maybe he does not[32]. We will come back to him.

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[31] Vandkilde 2004. Somewhat comparable are Geyer /Bright 1995, 1059: "globality is without precedent in any one specific society, religion, or civilization – although it is not without precedent in more syncretistic ages and spaces": in the way Vandkilde mentions Hellenism, Geyer and Bright offer the later Roman Empire as an example of such a "syncretistic age and space".

[32] Witcher 2000; quotes: 214 and 215. *Cf*. the description (by Jörg Rüpke) of the research project "Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion: Globalisierungs- und Regionalisierungsprozesse in der antiken Religionsgeschichte" at www.uni-erfurt.de/spp1080/dfgkrz. htm. I quote: "Die Frage, wie sich Religion in politischen Groß-Räumen der Antike, in den 'Reichen' mit ihren 'Vasallen'-Staaten, Satrapien, Provinzen entwickelt, ist stimuliert von analogen Entwicklungen in den Großräumen, die in der Neuzeit durch Kolonialisierung, Europäisierung und Globalisierung geschaffen wurden und die zu vielen Fortschritten, aber auch zu Deformation und Untergang so vieler Ethnien, Sprachen und Kulturen geführt haben. Mit dem Begriff der 'Globalisierung' öffnet sich das Schwerpunktprogramm komparativen Perspektiven. 'Globalisierung' und 'Weltgesellschaft' sind nicht nur Modeworte, sondern zentrale soziologische Konzepte zur Beschreibung von Transformationsprozessen, die die interne

Frank and Gills edited, and partly wrote, a volume that pleaded very strongly for a "world system" that was 5000 years old (and not 500: their bête noir is the rise of 'the' or 'a' world system around 1500; with those who suggest that something new arose in the very recent past they seem to have no patience at all)[33]. They gathered together some other authors with an interest in world system theory, but these have rather divergent ideas (to brings these together in a single volume is of course much to the credit of Frank and Gills). In his introduction William McNeill states that "commonalities that ran across the entire civilized world in ancient and medieval times remained exceptional" and that "a market that actually embraced the globe could only arise after 1500"[34]. David Wilkinson argues for a "Central Civilization", which came about when Egypt and Mesopotamia got into close contact and which through the course of history embraced ever more of the world. But he explicitly refuses to consider this a world system. Abu-Lughod describes here, as she has done elsewhere, a thirteenth-century world system (actually a Eurasian system), which she considers fundamentally different from what went before or after – whether there are other world systems is not her concern. Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin defend the idea of "the modern world-systems" (hyphenated and plural)[35]. This leaves only a few contributors who really want to push global systems back 5000 years. But even if we do not take 'global' or 'world' in too literal a sense, it remains difficult to find any convincing arguments: the basic interconnectedness of our planet seems rather an article of faith.

The global history approach is also found in Robbie Robertson, who distinguishes three waves of globalisation: around 1500, 1800, and 1945. But he also presents a wider perspective: "before 1500 we had interconnections that share characteristics with globalisation" (Robertson 2003, 7). That is not saying very much, but further on we read: "the neolithic revolution transformed human societies: they grew larger and more complex. They globalized" (Robertson 2003, 105). This, however, is contradicted on the next page: "human populations then were very small and less interconnected". In the end, it is the 16th century that saw "a fundamental change in the nature of interconnections" (Robertson 2003, 78).

A.G. Hopkins argues that we should always look at contemporary issues in a

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Struktur von Nationalstaaten und – häufig stillschweigend damit identifiziert – Gesellschaften wie ihre Beziehungen untereinander nachhaltig verändert haben. Der Streit um die Datierung dieses Transformationsprozesses und der Bestimmung seiner signifikanten Vorläufer erhellt die systematische Attraktivität des Konzeptes der 'Globalisierung', und diesen heuristischen Wert will sich das Programm zunutze machen." In the following, there is talk of the diffusion of religious phenomena from the city of Rome to the provinces as an example of globalisation processes. In Petzold/Rüpke/Steimle 2001, there are no explicit references to globalisation apart from the title.

[33] Callinicos 2007: analysis and criticism of Frank's ideas: stretching the concept so far as to render it meaningless.

[34] Foreword, x, xi. Also note the phrase: "civilized world".

[35] Wallerstein 2006 says that what is called globalisation is the *crisis* of a globalisation process that is 500 years old.

long-term historical perspective: the past is always relevant. As a historian I could hardly disagree. But what strikes the reader most is that for Hopkins 'globalisation' is clearly a contemporary issue. Consequently, he states: "the archaic form of globalization was a circumscribed one" (Hopkins 2002a, 4). Hopkins seems to consider globalisation mostly as a metaphor that will direct attention towards 'big(ger) history' and towards non-Eurocentric histories – while he takes every precaution to protect himself and his readers from this dangerous "portmanteau concept" that could easily give more problems than it solves[36].

It does not seem this is going to get us anywhere: either globalisation is used to mean human interconnectedness (which evidently is of any time and period), or globalisation is given the more specific contents of human interconnectedness on a specific level, which is seen to have begun sometime after the ancient world, most commonly around 1500 and even then this is usually seen not as globalisation but as the first steps towards globalisation[37]. The fact that we encounter a whole range of words like: protoglobal[38], archaic globalisation[39], known world globalism[40], nascent globalism and so on, shows that the concept fails without qualifications. Indeed, these qualifications say that globalisation is *not* what was going on. That we can address human history on a global scale is obvious, and we have many fine examples of global history[41], but there is no strong support for the idea that globalisation is or should be the analytical framework for such histories[42]. To put it quite bluntly: there is no serious support to consider the Roman world as a period of globalisation.

There is support, overpowering support, for seeing globalisation as a very recent phenomenon. Support can be found in the rise of the world 'globalisation' itself (but I readily admit that the existence of a phenomenon is not dependent upon there being a name for it). Space exploration ("looking at the earth"), satellites. Here I come back to what seems to me the most consistent effort to define what

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[36] Hopkins 2002b. Hopkins gives an excellent overview of the main issues surrounding globalisation: 15-21.

[37] Robertson 2007; Wills 2001. Schäfer 2007, 519: "global is a new age for some, but not for others".

[38] Burke 2007, 10: at best proto-globalisation (the early modern period: 1500/1600-); Schäfer 2007, 520: preglobal (before 1500), protoglobal (1500-1950), global (1950 onwards).

[39] Held/McGrew (eds.) 2007, label the 17th century as "archaic globalization"; *cf*. Bayly 2002.

[40] 'More prudent commentators' (i.e. more prudent than those who simplistically cite the Roman empire as an early example of globalisation), as quoted by P. Perkins in his abstract ("Have you got what it takes to be Roman?") for the TRAC 2006 session.

[41] Budde/Conrad/Janz (eds.) 2006; Crosby 1994; Diamond 1999; Diamond 2006; Kiple (ed.) 1993; McNeill/ McNeill 2003; McNeill 1976; Mitchen 2004; Sanderson (ed.) 1995; Spier 1996; Vries/Goudsblom (eds.) 2002. Braudel, McNeill and Wallerstein/can be seen as trailblazers. Amongst the few to explicitly address globalisation is: Mazlish/Buultjens (eds.) 1993.

[42] I will give a mere three references to works which carry 'global' or 'globalisation' in their title and deal with a specific period during the past 500 years: O'Rourke/Williamson 1999; Bayly 2004; Nussbaum (ed.) 2005.

globalisation is about, to be found in a number of publications by Jan Aart Scholte. He recognises that it often is a redundant concept, describing things which are not new and for which we already had an adequate conceptual apparatus[43]. Thus he states that internationalisation and liberalisation are sixteenth-century, and universalisation is of all time. It is only "planetarisation" that is new[44]. For Scholte "planetarisation" implies the space-time compression that was mentioned above. It might be useful to follow the lines of his argument in some detail: the world has been a single social space for many centuries, but that concerns connectivity in a general sense. Connections have increased in scope and intensity, but much of today's global connectivity is *qualitatively* different. Supraterritoriality is a new phenomenon. These new global connections often also have qualities of transworld simultaneity (that is, they extend anywhere across the planet at the same time) and transworld instantaneity (that is, they move anywhere on the planet in no time).

Criticism of Scholte has not so much denied the contemporary nature of globalisation, as tried to rescue internationalisation from Scholte's condemnation. Is Scholte's definition not too restrictive? If globalisation is "a multidimensional set of social processes", how multidimensional should it be[45]? Others have argued

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[43] Scholte 1999, 8: "Internationalisation, liberalisation, universalisation and westernisation have all figured significantly at previous junctures a hundred or even a thousand and more years in the past. No vocabulary of 'globalisation' was required on those earlier occasions, and it seems unnecessary now to invent new words for old phenomena." Scholte 2002, 8: "Much if not most existing analysis of globalization is flawed because it is redundant. Such research does not meet the first criterion above, namely, to generate new understanding that is not attainable with other concepts. Four main definitions have led into this cul-de-sac: globalization as internationalization; globalization as liberalization; globalization as universalization; and globalization as westernization. Arguments that build on these conceptions fail to open insights that are not available through preexistent vocabulary. Deployed on any of these four lines, 'globalization' provides no analytical value-added." *idem*, 13: "In sum, then, much talk of globalization has been analytically redundant. The four definitions outlined above between them cover most current academic, corporate, official and popular discussions of things global. Critics of 'globaloney' are right to assail the historical illiteracy that marks most claims of novelty associated with globalization."

[44] Scholte 2000, 15-17; idem 2007. Hopkins 2002b, 16: "unless sufficient thought is given to the language used (…) historians entering the discussion of globalization may find themselves tempted into adopting a new set of terms to portray developments that are not only familiar but also described in words that are already available and are entirely adequate for the purpose – apart from lacking the frisson that accompanies novelty".

[45] Steger 2007. *Cf*. Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSER) (at University of Warwick since 1997), which produces a Globalisation Index (1982-2001 in Robertson/Scholte 2007 vol. 4, appendix; 2002-2004 on website: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/index). Parameters are international trade, cross-border direct and portfolio investment, foreign population, foreign visitors, international telephone and letter traffic, percentage of internet users, import and export of films, books and newspapers, the number of foreign embassies, UN missions, and international organisations. According to these parameters, globalisation increases threefold over the period 1982-2001, esp. on the social level; there is also quite some political change, the contribution made by economic factors is small. On the social level, travel and electronic communication seem to be at the heart of things (I should note that the CSGR is directed by Jan Aart Scholte).

that scale, scope and speed make the results qualitatively different (i.e. 'global') across the full range of characteristics mentioned above[46]. This does not, however, impinge on the idea that globalisation is a recent phenomenon. Tomlinson puts it nicely: globalisation is "the transformative processes of our time", and is a condition of the modern world. Although he readily admits that things are rather more subtle than simple discontinuity, "still, the modern and the premodern are fundamentally different". As soon as you connect globalisation with discontinuous modernity (clocks, electricity, disembedding, and so on), this rules out evolutionary thought. There may have been (increasing) interconnectedness in the past, but this was in a premodern context which makes it, in a sense, incomparable with globalisation[47].

Globalisation will not do; but can it be rescued as an analytic or heuristic tool?
Rosenberg's critique is that globalisation never existed. Rosenberg cannot be dismissed: surely, claims were too grand, and the world and human beings on it have not changed overnight. But he seems rather too sure that *nothing* fundamental has changed at all. And even if Rosenberg is right after all, that would not imply that the concept can be dismissed. As argued above, it is out there, it is used and it is a creative force. But: is globalisation happening? Appadurai has said: "historians realize that globalization may not be a member of a familiar archive of large-scale historical shifts" (Appadurai 2001, 1). I am not quite sure I am one of those. As an historian, and an ancient historian at that, I am afraid to speak about my own time and about the (near) future. It seems rather too early to say whether globalisation is real, and if so, whether it will change our world for good, for bad, forever. But for the time being I will give people like Scholte, Tomlinson and Giddens the benefit of the doubt.
So what is globalisation? Globalisation is a description of a number of changes in human society, caused by time-space compression brought about by modern technologies, in correlation with an adapting lifeworld, thought patterns, and

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[46] Shaw 2001; likewise: Amartya Sen (2002), on extensity, intensity, velocity, impact, or Mazlish 2002, on synergy and synchronicity. Appadurai 2008, 55, speaking of current global flows (ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes) says: "of course, at all periods of human history, there have been some disjunctures in the flow of these things, but the sheer speed, scale, and volume of each of these flows are now so great that the disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture". *Cf*. Mazlish 1999. Even the critics such as Rosenberg argue that globalisation was an idea – a wrong idea – that the 1990s *Zeitgeist* came up with in order to explain the big changes of that decennium: so right or wrong, it is about the late 20th century.

[47] Tomlinson 1999, 1-2, 37, 43; Giddens 1999 (and many other publications): the world has changed irrevocably from the past; " unprecedented challenges", "for the first time in history": Anheier/Isar (eds.) 2007, 3-4: for the first time in history, unprecedented (but on p. 368 there is talk of "an ongoing historical process with deep cultural roots going back many centuries"). Appadurai 2001, 4: "globalization is inextricably linked to the current workings of capital on a global basis; in this regard it extends the earlier logics of empire, trade, and political dominion".

behaviour[48]. These changes occur on an unprecedented scale: their intensity and scope are large enough to warrant the use of a new concept – this stage was reached with the advent of telemediasation (television, telephone, mobile phones, computers and internet, email, chatting: the whole range of electronic communication and media systems and their integration) and its attendant immediacy, synchronicity, and ubiquity. Our tour d'horizon has shown that arguments for a continuous globalisation or for multiple globalisations are weak, while analysis of globalisation as a recent or very recent phenomenon seems quite strong. Globalisation is also used as an explanation of change, and as an ideology of progress or of disaster. These uses had better be avoided, in order to avoid the *explanans*/*explanandum* problem put forward by Rosenberg[49].

Of course I recognize that there is a circularity involved in finding out that globalisation does not fit the Roman world because I have defined it in such a way that it cannot possibly do so. Cannot we rescue globalisation by redefining it? Any concept can be redefined to fit any purpose: etic definitions are arbitrary tools. But in real life definitions are not completely arbitrary: definition theory states clearly that definitions are constrained by natural language and by previous efforts at defining[50]. So globalisation more or less had to be defined in the way I did.

After having thrown out Hingley's baby, might not the bathwater still be of use? Are there parts of globalisation theory that offer themselves as useful analytic or heuristic tools? Witcher and Rüpke & co. suggested as much (before going off in other directions) and probably Hingley might settle for this. Even a critic as severe as Rosenberg says that not everything written on globalisation is worthless, but it was worthwhile in spite of the concept and not because of it. Why not take theories of globalisation and see whether it is of use in the analysis of non-globalising but possibly comparable societies?

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[48] Scholte 2002, 27, warns for reification: while globality is a discrete concept, it is not a discrete concrete condition. It is helpful, analytically, to distinguish different spheres of social space; however, concretely, the global is not a domain unto itself, separate from the regional, the national, the provincial, the local, and the household. There is no purely global circumstance, divorced from other spaces, just as no household, local, provincial, national or regional domain is sealed off from other geographical arenas. So social space should not be understood as an assemblage of discrete realms, but as an interrelation of spheres within a whole. Events and developments are not global *or* national *or* local *or* some other scale, but an intersection of global *and* other spatial qualities. The global is a dimension of social geography rather than a space in its own right. It is heuristically helpful to distinguish a global quality of contemporary social space, but we must not turn the global into a 'thing' that is separate from regional, national, local and household 'things'.

[49] Because the globalisation advocates in their eagerness to show discontinuity, tend to overlook continuity. Still, I think there is a middle of the road position possible here: societal change is hardly ever complete and immediate across the whole spectrum of human life. It is a relatively slow-moving process, with differential speeds. In this dynamism, there is always continuity and discontinuity. Only, at some moments in history, speed and intensity of change may pick up, and discontinuity becomes quite pronounced.

[50] Excellent on definition theory: Snoek 1987.

Our best chance here is to look at ideas concerning globalisation and culture[51]. A main issue in this field is deterritorialisation: local worlds are penetrated by distant forces, meanings become dislodged from their anchors in the local. Underlying this is a vastly increased mobility: actual mobility by migration, but also a 'virtual' mobility taking place within the locality, by way of telemediasation. There are countermovements to re-establish the primacy of locality, but all in all the local is attenuated, and the distant becomes more important. This does not imply that the local gets replaced by an undifferentiated homogenised global culture. Something new is negotiated, with uncertainties, ambiguities, and problems of identity, but also positively opening up to new commodities and experiences. Nevertheless, commodification and the reach of institutions into existential experience create new forms of behaviour: "the threat here is not so much to cultural variety in itself, as to the capacity of cultural practices (…) to answer to 'existential needs'"[52].

Much of the above does not hold good for the Roman empire: none of the modern technologies mentioned above were available, there occurred no time-space compression in the above sense. Of course, mobility (physical mobility and the sending of letters/messages – by way of an intermediary who was physically mobile) was enhanced (instituted and speeded up) by the empire. But the Roman empire was still subject to what has been called the tyranny of distance[53]. Antiquity is a world where distance is important, and where contact involves human bodies. As Braudel wrote about a later period: "Ce n'est pas l'eau qui lient les régions de la Méditerranée, mais les peuples de la mer (…) La Méditerranée n'a d'unité que par le mouvement des hommes, les liaisons qu'il implique, les routes qui le conduisent' (Braudel 1966, vol.2, 253). The same is true for all of the Roman empire.

When we turn to more general issues of "the distant entering the local", commodification, or the negotiation of identity, we touch upon basic questions – and basic hypotheses – which carry validity for any period or many different periods and places. But we do not need theories of globalisation to handle that kind of issue: Hingley's local and universal are very much central concerns in material culture studies, archaeology, history, history of religions and so on, without any reference to the global. Relevant here are, for example, many studies of European nation states which show that a real unity was brought about, partly enforced, only in the 19th century: before the coming of modernity (uniform time, roads, railroads, newspapers, conscription, (labour) migration and so on) whatever unity

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[51] In the following paragraph I base myself mostly on Tomlinson 1999, idem 2007 and Crothers 2007. Of course, the real test of the cake is in the eating: one should take a case study informed by theories of globalisation and confront this with a relevant set of Roman evidence.

[52] Tomlinson 2007, 165; *cf.* 166, note 3. Naerebout 1997, 403, note 962: homogeneity and diversity went hand in hand, globalisation (massification) destroys both. But here homogeneity meant 'shared culture' and diversity 'cultural variation across geographic space'.

[53] McCormick 2001, 469-500. Duncan-Jones 1989, 7-29.

there was on a national level, was always offset by a localism hard to imagine for the modern inhabitant of these or other nation states, let alone for the cosmopolitan scholar inhabiting a globalized world[54]. This is a particularism that precedes globalisation, not the particularism (possibly, but not necessarily related to previous particularisms) that evolves in negotiating globalising trends.

Material culture in particular is served as good or better by many others than by globalisation theorists. Appadurai, who seems to be the main globalisation theorist from the viewpoint of archaeologists – because he so explicitly addresses material culture –, is not a major voice in the globalisation literature (of whatever kind), and his discussion of material culture was written well before he mingled in the globalisation debate! What he and other theorists of material culture produced is far superior to anything found in theories of globalisation, or simply replicated there[55].

As Rosenberg says: the word globalisation might not disappear, but come to mean: "interdependence", and for the study of interdependence we need no theories of globalisation, because there are plenty of existing tools. I agree: either theories of globalisation address issues that are unique or unique in their extent or intensity for the global history of the late 20th century and thereafter (those things for which 'globalisation' is a useful shorthand), or they address more general issues, but do not do this in a way that improves upon the theory of culture contact and the like which we already have got[56]. If possibly useful insights provided by globalisation theory have already been provided elsewhere, we need not introduce any newspeak in order to discuss what is going on in the Roman empire (which does not mean that we need not read what is being written by globalisation theorists and those providing case-studies)[57].

Does this forbid us to compare acculturative processes of the Roman period with globalisation? Of course not, one can compare anything. But it is a comparison that will only yield limited insight into either phenomenon, because its conclusions can be expected to be purely negative: both globalisation and the Roman

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[54] Robb 2007 is a fine example, and so are the Dutch-language publications of Auke van der Woud.

[55] Appadurai 1986. By comparison, some typical globalisation studies of material culture as Ritzer 1998 or Crothers 2007 seem rather simplistic.

[56] For instance, 'acculturation' is still quite useful, whatever may be said against it; one should take the trouble to read Redfield/Linton/Herskovits 1935 (*cf*. note 10). So is 'world history': Mazlish 2002 distinguishes between a part of global history that studies the history of globalisation, what Mazlish calls "the factors of globalization", "as far back in the past as seems useful", and a second part that studies processes that are better studied on a global rather than a local or regional level. This second part he admits is a continuation of world history, or of certain issues within world history, such as ecology and the history of disease (I quote from the English language version available at web.mit.edu/newglobalhistory/articles.html, May 15 2007).

[57] There is nothing against introducing globalisation as a purely heuristic exercise: it might suggest areas of interest of which one was not previously aware, although I would maintain (*cf*. above) that there is nothing there which one could not have gathered from different sources.

experience will be shown to be *sui generis*. Either will at the most be illuminated by a comparison that shows what it is not.

In conclusion, I once again present my main arguments for NOT using globalisation outside the context of contemporary society: 1) Globalisation is a word problematic in itself, especially when dealing with the pre-modern world; 2) We should not use a concept that has come into being expressly to describe recent developments and that fits those developments, for the study of other periods; 3) Though it has indeed been tried to widen the use of the concept of globalisation to include other periods of history, that has never been done convincingly; 4) Theories of globalisation and the tools developed within it, are too much skewed towards studying modern, or even contemporary, society, to be of much use for studying the ancient world (or any other period of pre-modern history); 5) If we reduce globalisation theory to those items which will fit any time and place, these offer no improvement upon existing theories.

Ergo: Globalisation is a concept that should be restricted to the description of a world where time and distance become more and more meaningless, and where many contacts have become disembodied (a world which is becoming globalised). The importance of time and place, of face-to-face contact, and of the many constraints on such contact, makes the Roman empire a quintessentially unglobalised world.

Postscript

After this article had gone to the press, Richard Hingley told me in a personal conversation that he never intended to recommend globalisation as a concept to replace romanisation, but to present a critique of globalisation as a new paradigm, in the same way he had criticized romanisation as the old one. His book had been generally misunderstood, possibly because of the title – which was the publisher's and not his. I readily believe him, but want to stress that I have been led astray, as many others, by his text as much as by the title. Even if wrong about Hingley, the above can stand, because we can see globalisation now being propagated as an analytic tool in discussing the Roman empire by others than Hingley – and I still register my disagreement. Only, my criticism might be in support of Hingley's real intentions, rather than directed against him.

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