GLOBALISATION AND ROMAN IMPERIALISM:

PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITIES IN ROMAN ITALY

ROBERT WITCHER

Introduction

In the contemporary world, we are increasingly aware of global processes which transcend the interests of individual nations and affect the population of the entire world — for example, environmental concerns and financial markets. Ironically, in spite of this shrinking globe, simultaneously we live in a world of fragmenting identities (national, regional, ethnic and religious) which appear to be increasing rather than decreasing in number. The sociological models advanced to account for these trends are grouped together as theories of globalisation. In this paper, I note some apparently similar trends within the material culture and historical sources of Roman Italy and suggest that it is possible to use these theories in order to enhance our understanding of the past.

Interpretations of Rome's Italian conquests have arguably been more explicitly ideological than for most historical periods. For the last century and a half, there has been an emphasis on the unity of the peoples and cultures of the peninsula (Laurence 1998: 95; Mouritsen 1998; Terrenato 1998: 21—2). However, contemporary archaeological and historical discourses reflect the global fragmentation of identities at the end of the twentieth century through the emergence of approaches which stress the diversity of Roman Italy, questioning the very notion of its existence as a unified entity. For example, there is renewed interest in the eighteenth century conception of Roman Italy as a federation of individual municipalities. Indeed Terrenato (1998: 26), exploring the Romanisation of Italy is acutely aware that he writes from the perspective of a globalised world, and that the stress placed upon the diversity of both modern and ancient Italy is just as ideological as that placed on their unity in the last century.

So rather than persisting with an approach which conceives of unity and diversity as opposed and mutually exclusive, it is necessary to acknowledge the ideological positions which perpetuate the dichotomy — theories of globalisation represent one way of mediating these two extremes, and some of the other apparent contradictions, which our approaches to Roman Italy appear to foster — continuity and change, similarity and difference (Woolf 1992: 349)

I do not intend to claim that theories of globalisation can be applied wholesale to the past — indeed, as a process, globalisation is itself intimately associated with the condition of modernity, i.e. imperialism, (post-/neo-)colonialism, capitalism, industrialisation, rationalisation and telecommunications, etc. (Giddens 1990; Waters 1995: 3).[1] Rather, I wish simply to suggest that globalisation offers both a vocabulary and a series of models with which to explore identities in Roman Italy. The applicability of such models to the ancient world is discussed further below

Approaches to Identity in Roman Italy

Until recently, the predominant approach to the Roman conquest of Italy has concerned the replacement of a multitude of different cultures and identities with a universal Roman ideal (e.g. Pallottino 1991: 159). This approach attributes widespread inter-regional similarities to the imposition of an over-arching Roman administrative structure and the development of a 'Roman' cultural identity. Regional differences are the result of the persistence of pre-existing traditions — inevitably, however, these differences are

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subsumed by a new common identity. This has led Terrenato (1998: 20) to comment that most literature on the Romanisation of Italy is concerned with the date of, and circumstances in which, pre-Roman cultural characteristics and identities disappeared — phrases such as "la perdita di una identità" (D'Henry 1988) abound.

However, as archaeology turns it attention away from the major urban centres, it is increasingly possible to identify significant diversity of local characteristics and divergent regional histories persisting throughout the Roman period — the most obvious characteristic of Roman Italy that emerges is, not unity, but diversity. The assumption of an inevitable cultural trajectory (i.e. replacement by Roman culture) has therefore moved towards a position which stresses the persistence and survival of pre-existing cultures and identities, the various permutations between them, and their long-term significance for identity in Roman Italy (e.g. David 1994: 135—9; Keaveney 1987: 35). However, as Terrenato notes, the current emphasis on the diversity of Roman Italy is also ideologically-motivated, and as such there is a tendency to forget about those aspects of the historical and archaeological records which intimate the possibility of a wider cultural identity. We are therefore left with some evidence that can be used to suggest Roman Italy was a unified entity, and some which can used to suggest is was a diverse federation of cities and tribes. This is most neatly summarised by Woolf (1992: 352) who claims "Diversity and unity in Romanisation form a paradoxical pair, like continuity and change".

One method of mediating this contradiction and integrating our evidence is based upon the notion of scale. Keaveney (1987: 2 1—35), for example, refers to three interrelated scales of identity— 'national', regional and local. At each of these levels, it is possible to reconstruct a different impression of the unity or otherwise of Roman Italy — the more closely we look, the more diversity we find. Yet above all of the local and regional differences we can identify an over-arching identity. This model alludes to the words of Cicero:

> I believe that he [i.e. Cato] and all men from the *municipia* have two homelands, one by birth and one by citizenship. ...But that which is the common citizenship must stand first in our affection in the name of the state; for it is our duty to die for this and to give ourselves completely, to consecrate ourselves and offer up everything we have. But that in which we were born is not less sweet to us than that into which we were adopted. And so I will never deny this [i.e. Arpinum] is my homeland, although the other [i.e. Rome] is greater, and includes this within it.

> (Cicero, *De legibus* 2.5 quoted and annotated in Lomas 1996: 108).

For the great and good at least, the possession of two (or more) hierarchically-ordered identities was commonplace. However, Cicero's words, although open to alternative translation (see Keyes' [1928: 376] commentary on his translation of Cicero's *De legibus),* might be taken to suggest that the 'dominant' identity was fluid and determined by context and not, as Keaveney (1987: 189) suggests simply a universal Roman identity that united Italy.

The key to any investigation of Roman Italy must surely lie in the articulation of these multiple identities — national, regional and local; social, political and ethnic. Patterson (1988: 101) uses the same three scales of identity as Keaveney, to explain the changes in the archaeology and identity of the Samnites. Briefly, a shift in the focus of monumental construction from sanctuaries to urban centres is interpreted as a manifestation of the local elite's desire to compete with one another for access to the Roman political system (Patterson 1987: 144). This required wealth which was generated through agricultural changes leading to a decline in the number of rural settlements and a growth in the size of elite estates. However, there is no *a priori* assumption that this competition will involve a universal transformation of elite identity from 'Samnite' to 'Roman'. Rather, there is a

tension between pre-existing local identities and new ways of expressing status through the opportunities afforded by involvement in an imperial dialogue with Rome. Most recently, Terrenato (1998: 23) has referred to identities in Roman Italy as a "constellation of graded entities", the result of a cultural bricolage.

It is the tension between these different scales — between the global and the local — which lies at the heart of globalisation in the contemporary world. Sociological theories make this apparent contradiction both explicit and central by emphasising the process(es) involved as a dialectic. Globalisation theories therefore form useful heuristic devices for the debate which surrounds the motives, dynamic and consequences of the Roman conquest of Italy.

Globalisation - Definitions and Theories

Globalisation itself is not an easily characterised phenomenon. Two helpful, if vague, working definitions, and an 'anti'-definition, are:

> Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. (Robertson 1992: 8)

> A social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. (Waters 1995: 3)

> Globalisation is not cultural homogenization or political integration — it is the patterns of human interaction and awareness which reconstitute the world as a single social space. (McGrew l992a: 65).

Questions about the applicability of theories of globalisation to the ancient world relate to the extent and scale of the process, the date to which it can be pushed back, and its relationship to capitalism. First, it has been suggested that globalisation must involve the entire globe. For example, Robertson's use of the term 'world' is literal, yet obviously the Roman Empire did not include or influence the entire globe. However it is possible to argue that this is largely a semantic point and emphasis upon awareness, or perception, of the world as a single social space might be considered profitably in terms of the Roman concept of *imperium sine fine.*

Although there is dispute over the date to which globalisation can be pushed back, most commentators agree that it is not exclusive to the modern world (Friedman 1994: 15—41; McGrew 1992b: 262; Robertson 1992: 8), and Waters (1995: 4) suggests that it includes "the fits and starts of various ancient imperial expansions". Globalisation can therefore be seen as a relative concept which has always been present, but which has gathered pace dramatically in the comparatively recent past.

More important is the issue of how far globalisation is a 'product' of capitalism or *vice versa.*[2] The above definitions are useful from this perspective in that although they all have their own theories concerning the cause(s) of globalisation, they agree on the consequences — and these do not require specific economic pre-conditions *per se.* More important, is the stress placed upon *awareness* of global shrinkage, or the 'phenomenology of contraction' (Waters 1995: 62). This awareness is the result of the compression of time and space (McGrew 1992a: 67), whereby the friction of space is overcome in order to accommodate wider social interaction. There are various mechanisms which can be used to achieve this, the most obvious being the improvement of communications. Telecommunications have taken this process to its logical extreme (Hoogvelt 1997: 120) — communication is instant, regardless of location — leading to claims of the literal "annihilation of space through time". Clearly, such friction was never significantly diminished in the ancient world — the most obvious example concerns the

relationship between Rome and the imperial frontiers. Whatever motivations or policies originated at the core, the friction of space — that is, the time it took for these decisions to be implemented and the means through which they were enacted — ensured that their manifestation on the periphery was at best a compromise or translation (Eckstein 1987: 320). However, the very fact that contact took place implies a degree of compression and social relations did not remain unaffected.

The significance of this compression relates to the removal of social relations from local contexts of everyday interaction and their recombination across time and space (McGrew 1992a: 66; Giddens 1990: 17—21 'time/space distanciation') — this leads to a conflation of presence and absence. In other words, people who are not physically present are able to make their presence felt (Giddens 1990: 18). In the telecommunications era, this is achieved through the media; however, there are various other mechanisms of 'presencing' absent people and institutions. In the towns of Roman Italy, this was most obviously achieved through munificence or euergetism. Games and monumental architecture both presenced the elite and alluded to the wider world (Rome, Italy, the Empire) with which they had become involved. However, the failure to significantly compress time and space through improved communications meant that social relations remained far more closely associated with spatial location than is the case today.

Another important effect of the compression of time and space and enhanced relations between different parts of the world, is the necessity of 'relativisation' (Waters 1995: 3). Every part of the world must come to understand itself, and to be understood by others, as relative to the rest. The key point to emphasise is that this does not require that the world must adopt the values and institutions of a single (core) area — theories of globalisation, for example, do not predict that the entire world will become capitalist and Westernised (Waters 1995: 3). In fact, globalisation is uneven in who and what it affects and the consequences it effects (McGrew 1992b: 262) — differences which can be observed spatially (i.e. between regions) and socially (i.e. within societies).

In the contemporary world, the division between the First and Third Worlds, demonstrates the potential of globalisation to create and reinforce inequalities between the power and wealth of nations in terms of development and underdevelopment (McGrew 1992a: 76). There is also diversity in the experience of globalisation for groups and individuals within these regions. In particular, globalisation is promoted by certain groups (e.g. the media, industry), with the aim and/or result of increasing their power and influence — Massey (1991: 25) refers to this social heterogeneity as *power geometry.* Roman imperialism, like globalisation, can be considered as a strategy effected by multiple agents, Roman or otherwise, leading to the strengthening of pre-existing inequalities both spatial and social.

Therefore, despite the global currency of objects, images, institutions, etc., globalisation does *not* lead to a more politically or culturally homogeneous world, nor, necessarily to its replacement with a new social or political order (McGrew 1992b: 262). And it is this tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity, of old and new, which makes theories of globalisation attractive for explaining the patterns observed from Roman Italy. The effects of Roman imperialism are likely to have been unevenly distributed both spatially and socially, a situation in Roman Italy to which Terrenato (1998: 24) refers when he observes a "dimension of variability, which is not working at the level of geographical regions, but at that of different groups within the same community (classes, genders, etc.) or even within the same individual…".[3]

Indeed, the promotion of such apparently contradictory trends may be the defining characteristic of globalisation. It is a dialectical process that does not bring about change in a uniform direction, but one which promotes mutually opposed tendencies (Clark 1997: 28; Giddens 1990: 64; see Table 1).

Universalisation : Particularisation
Homogenisation : Differentiation
Integration : Fragmentation
Centralisation : Decentralisation
Syncretisation : Juxtaposition

Table 1 Dualities of globalisation (based on McGrew 1992a: 74—5)

An example of universalisation and particularisation (the first pairing in Table 1) is the rise in national and ethnic identities in many former Soviet republics. This involves the promotion of the universal model of an ethnically-defined nation state, independent of Russian control. At the same time, this model is subjected to local needs, in this case, a desire to gain access to the wealth and 'lifestyle' of the West. This is seen most clearly through the requests of the newly independent Baltic states to join an alternative bloc — the European Union (Hall 1992: 295).

A good example from ancient Italy can be found in a late fourth/early third century Paestan tomb painting in which the Hellenistic motif of Greek fighting barbarian in single combat is subverted through the casting of a Paestan in the role the Greek, and possibly even a Greek in the role of the barbarian (Rouveret & Pontrandolfo 1985; discussed by Dench 1997: 46; Curti *et al.* 1996: 184). In other words, the painting demonstrates a universalisation of the particular (Hellenistic culture) and particularisation of the universal (recasting the ethnicities of the participants).

As such, the universal and the particular — the global and the local — are not opposite ends of the spectrum; they do not compete as monolithic entities. The universal does not simply replace the particular; the global does not replace the local. Rather, there is a new articulation between the two (Hall 1992: 304). Through the compression of time and space, the local (place, home, community, etc.) has to relativise itself through a process of relocalisation, that is the reformulation of local understandings (Robertson 1992: 29; Eade 1997: 4). Robins (1991: 36) sums up this apparent contradiction by observing that the globalised world is characterised by "a process of cultural decentralization and by the sudden resurgence of place-bound traditions, languages and ways of life". An example is provided by the funerary epigraphy of southern Italy. Lomas (1991: 232—5) has identified significant local variation in funerary inscriptions which emerges during the Roman period and is therefore difficult to interpret as pre-Roman cultural persistence. Theories of globalisation would suggest this represents a new expression of the local in relation to the global, both universalising and particularising (see Lomas 1993: 174—85 for emergence of a regional identity in Magna Graecia).

Therefore, Roman imperialism, like globalisation, does not require every corner of the Empire and beyond to become 'Roman(ised)' in order to be intimately related to, or involved with, Rome. Possession of Roman material culture, or the attributes we have tended to package as such (i.e. urbanism, *terra sigillata,* the classical pantheon, etc.), does not necessarily imply that a population considered itself, or was considered by others, to be Roman. Conversely the absence of these indicators need not imply an absence of Roman identity, or the survival of an 'authentic indigenous' identity unaffected by Rome (e.g. Hedeager 1992). Rather, Roman imperialism led to a series of (re)negotiations, both local and global, which led to the (re-)definition of societies and identities.

Globalisation through exchange

One model of globalisation, which may have particular relevance to the ancient world, suggests that the compression of time and space, and awareness of it, does not reach its greatest extent through economic means, as suggested by Marx and Wallerstein, but

instead in the cultural sphere (Waters 1995). Waters (1995: 7—8) defines three arenas of social life: economy polity and culture (Table 2). Changes in the organisation of any one of these can lead to alterations in the other two. Globalisation centres on the relationship between these different arenas in terms of exchange: material, political and symbolic respectively (Table 3). Each type of exchange has a specific relationship to space or territory — material exchange ties social relations to localities; political exchange ties relations to extended territories; symbolic exchange liberates these relationships from any spatial referent (Waters 1995: 9). All three forms of exchange co-exist, but the relationship between them is relative and one may therefore dominate the others. For example, culture and economy may become 'politicised' by excessive political influence over culture and economy (e.g. the former Soviet Union); alternatively, economy and polity may become 'culturalised' through the dominance of the exchange of symbols (e.g. the contemporary world according to Waters 1995).

Economy Social arrangements for production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and tangible services

Polity Social arrangements for the concentration and application of power, especially insofar as it involves the organised exchange of coercion and surveillance (military, police, etc.) as well as institutionalised transformations of these practices as authority and diplomacy, that can establish control over populations and territories

Culture Social arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of symbols that represent facts, affects, meanings, beliefs, preferences, tastes and values

Table 2 Arenas of social life (based on Waters 1995: 7—9)

Material Trade, tenancy, wage labour, capital accumulation exchange

Political Support, security, coercion, force, authority, obedience, legitimacy, exchange surveillance

Symbolic Oral communication, publication, oratory performance, teaching, exchange entertainment, ritual, exhibition, display, spectacle, public demonstration, propaganda, advertisement, data accumulation and transfer

Table 3 Types of exchange (based on Waters 1995: 7—9)

According to Waters' model, it is material or economic exchange which has the least scope for transcending local contexts and becoming global; that is, the least potential for compressing time and space, and making people aware of being closer together as it is always tied to specific places. Yet, ironically, it has been principally material exchange which has preoccupied archaeological approaches to the conceptualisation of the Roman Empire, both in terms of trade and of identity).[4]

The distribution of Italian material culture across the Empire has led to the suggestion that it was the expansive phase of Roman imperialism, not the stable Empire, which demonstrates the greatest integration, in the form of long-distance (material) exchange (Woolf 1992: 289). In terms of Waters' model, the dependence of material exchange upon the polity can be interpreted as a 'politicisation' of economy and culture; that is, during the Republican period, political competition between the Roman elite formed the principal logic or motive behind Roman imperialism (Garnsey & Whittaker 1978:5; Harris 1979: 11; Millett

1990: 8). Through the agency of the military, this political competition came to dominate the economies and cultures of both Rome and the peoples with which it became involved.

Clearly in the Republican period, the very success of this political exchange, and continued elite competition within Rome itself, served to maintain the dominance of the polity over economy and culture. That this relationship was continually open to renegotiation is illustrated by the fact that when the dynamic of Roman imperialism altered, and expansion slowed down, so the integrative influence of the polity declined. The role of the military— the instrument of this politicisation of economy and culture —was redefined, being immobilised both physically and in terms of its contribution to the integration of the Empire. It no longer demanded the massive mobilisation of material goods required during earlier years, and released from this stimulus, the economy began to fragment and regional exchange patterns reasserted themselves (Woolf 1992: 290).

Thus the transition to the imperial period witnessed a realignment in the relationship between economy, polity and culture. Initially, this may have involved the use of political exchange, not for further expansion, but for the consolidation of the existing territories — administrative reforms for more effective control and exploitation, for example, Augustus' Italian regions (Nicolet 1991: 202—3). Ultimately, however, it is possible to recognise a realignment away from material exchange, towards more symbolic forms — in effect, the polity and economy became 'culturalised'. In other words, the Empire was at its most integrated, cohesive and extensive, not in terms of material culture, but through the exchange of symbols which affected meanings and values, and effected a wider notion of *Romanitas.* People were most aware of the concept of Empire, not through the exchange and use of (for example) pots, but through the values and meanings that shaped the contexts in which those pots were perceived and utilised (see Dyson 1988: 199; van der Leeuw 1983 for an acculturation perspective).

A modern parallel illustrates the point. Consuming fast food from an American-owned company with global outlets does not make the consumer 'American'. Further, stripped of the ubiquitous and intensive advertising, or symbolic exchange, which serves to create these products as global phenomena, there is nothing about the act of consuming these products to make the consumer aware of, or believe, that he or she is a global citizen as a result. It is not global material culture itself which serves to compress time and space and to bring us closer together, but the symbolic exchange which makes us aware of that fact. However, material and symbolic exchange must always take place in relation to pre-existing structures — material culture and values must be actively negotiated and assimilated into other cultures. Through these processes, their form and significance are subtlety modified and subverted by groups and individuals. Returning to our fast food chain — its new outlets in the Far East serve to highlight different attitudes towards dining, concerning commensality, hygiene, status and gender, which are not easily reconciled with American models. This requires changes both in the approach of the company and in the values of its customers (Watson 1998; see Hawthorne 1998 for an archaeological approach to 'cuisine').

Hence, using a *terra sigillata* pot, does not convey *Romanitas* upon its owner, nor even an aspiration to Roman identity — neither does it instil an awareness of the wider world in which *terra sigillata* was used. The significance of material culture, as the case of the Paestan tomb paintings demonstrates, is contextual — it is dependent upon the symbolic exchange which accompanies the adoption of an item and the reinterpretation of this information as part of the item's assimilation into a different context. As archaeologists, we have tended to interpret the significance of material culture within our own Cartesian context through the use of distribution maps — yet this privileged perspective may have little or no relevance to those who used these goods. Was an inhabitant of a hill-fort in the south of Italy aware that he or she shared ceramic tastes with citizens of an Etruscan city?

And if so, did this knowledge lead to a sense of social or cultural unity? Most importantly, as discussion of the relationship between the global and the local has demonstrated, this awareness is central, not only to consideration of any wider Roman or Italian identity, but also to the new understandings of the local and its relativisation. As such, not only should we be suspicious that the widespread adoption of particular material culture was accompanied by a new homogeneous identity, but we might expect a proliferation of alternative identities with locally-diverse and context-dependent relationships with that material culture.

As stressed above, all three forms of exchange — material, political and symbolic — may coexist, and political exchange clearly continued to be important after the end of the Republican period with the shift to a greater emphasis on symbolic exchange. Of course, it is simplistic to make a sharp distinction between these forms of exchange — for example, political exchange in the form of the imperial frontiers is likely to have had strong symbolic currency as well. However, in terms of this heuristic framework, it was the circulation of 'symbols' around the Empire and beyond that represents the most dominant and extensive form of exchange. As stressed above, the physical size of the Empire, and the failure to significantly compress this, meant material exchange was not a sustainable means of integration without the stimulus of the polity (i.e. the military). However, the friction of space could be overcome through the exchange of symbols, and it is in the cultural sphere that we find the most significant awareness of the notion of wider identity during the imperial period.

The ability of cultural symbols to be reproduced regardless of spatial location permits the development of 'imagined communities' which, to some extent, are able to transcend the immediate limitation of spatial locations. Most obvious in the case of the Empire was the 'community of interest' generated between Rome and elites of the periphery — this group was defined primarily through cultural means, permitting the emergence of a community which was connected not so much spatially as symbolically. These relationships may have involved political and material exchange, and been imbued with asymmetrical power relations, but these other exchanges were subjected to the dominance of the cultural sphere. Further, the culturalisation of these political and economic exchanges may have served to help 'naturalise' them and make them more potent forms of control: such imagined communities may belie the dependency of one group on the other for its social reproduction.

Imperial Strategies

As with later empires, contact between coloniser and colonised leads to changes in both groups. A widely observed phenomenon is the formation of larger tribal groups around the fringes of such polities, as formerly loosely allied groups are coalesced into more integrated political units through external pressures (Friedman 1994: 10; Shennan 1989: 11). What are often taken as pre-existing ethnic identities and social groupings may therefore actually be the *result* of imperial contact. Bradley (1997: 63) has interpreted the origins of Umbrian identity in a similar framework — as a regional ethnic identity it appears to post-date the area's involvement with Rome. Likewise, Dench (1997: 47) has suggested that the literary Samnite is the complex and evolving product of interaction between emic and etic perceptions, to the point that, by the late Republic, it is inappropriate to use labels such as local or Roman. Most obviously, the notion of *Italia* itself is inconceivable without the aid of Roman imperial expansion. In each case, it can be argued that Roman imperialism has promoted 'non-Roman' identities. Like globalisation, Roman imperialism, does not require that people become more similar, only that their identities become relative.

As Waters' model demonstrates, there is a close relationship between identity, territory and power. These themes are also central to studies of (Roman) imperialism. In the contemporary world, the compression of time and space, and symbolic exchange, have loosened this relationship considerably. In particular, there has been much discussion of the decline of the nation state — and national identity — as a social and political unit. Instead we are experiencing the enhancement of identities above and below the nation state — regions and provinces (e.g. Scotland and Wales) and international organisations (e.g. the European Union). Nations — and national identities — originate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as social mechanisms which aimed to mask social heterogeneity (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and to make political, social and cultural identities physically congruent (Hall 1992: 292—6; Gellner 1983 on the nation state as a 'political roof'). In a globalised world, it is difficult to maintain such national boundaries, as forces such as the market and the media, serve to bring the citizens of spatially distant locations together. As a result, formerly repressed identities are 'unmasked'; old identities are revived, reasserted or even invented, often in fundamentalist forms; new hybrid identities emerge as people 'pick and choose' from an ever larger pool of 'free-floating' cultural identities (Hall 1992: 308—13). Globalisation, having created nation states is an earlier phase, now undermines them — but this does not lead to a new homogeneous world order, but to a proliferation of alternative identities (Hall 1992: 292); a similar multiplication of identities is likely as a result of Roman expansion.

Nation states did not exist in the ancient world and, despite the similarities between their defining characteristics and those of the Roman state, the Empire was not a nation state either (cf. Hall 1992: 293—5) — there is no evidence of any attempt to make culture, identity and territory coincide at the level of the Empire. However, it is possible to trace a developing relationship between identity (ethnic, cultural and political) and territory on a more localised scale as an integral part of Roman imperialism.

In terms of conquest and administration, it is widely accepted that Rome worked primarily in terms of peoples, not territory (Isaac 1992: 395—9; Millett 1990: 6—7) — it conquered this tribe; enfranchised that family — and the early Empire at least is better considered as a series of communities rather than a strictly defined territory. The autonomy of cultural identity from physical location is embedded in the history of the various migrations of early Italian peoples. However, territory and boundary were increasingly important concepts in the taxation and control of populations. Through these imperial strategies, gradually identities were tied down to specific territories. The aim, as with any imperial society, was control via spatial means (Nicolet 1991) — however, the effect was to create a new relationship between territory and identity. Augustus' Italian regions are a case in point. Apart from Aemilia/Gallia Cispadana and Transpadana, the new administrative units were based broadly upon pre-existing ethnic divisions, which were tied to specific territories. As the geographers fixed these divisions, they were in effect creating a static notion of ethnicity for those regions — in many cases they were aware of such arbitrariness but not capable of reconceptualising an organising paradigm based on the concordance of territory and ethnicity. (Laurence 1998: 102). The conflation of ethnicity and territory mimics the basis of modern nation states, though is, of course, not comparable in degree. However, the power relations are just as significant — it is important to stress that the work of these geographers was not simply the 'best' Rome could manage in the circumstances—the only paradigm it could contrive — nor simply administrative convenience (Bradley 1997: 61), but a central part of the exercise of imperial naming, mapping and control (Dilke 1985; Harley & Woodward 1987; Loomba 1998: 99—101; Said 1993: 271). The coincidence of pre-Roman ethnic identities and new political units, whether the Italian regions, or the *civitates* of the north-western provinces (Millett 1990: 7), was not accidental. There was a need to anchor the agents of Rome's devolved

government — i.e. social and power structures — to specific territories to ensure their continued administration. In particular, there was a need to stop ambitious local elites from abandoning their own communities in favour of political careers at Rome (Dyson 1992: 52, 54, 64).

Nicolet (1991: 202) considers the development of the Italian regions in terms of the replacement of administration based upon social groups and legal status to control based on documents and space — intentionally or otherwise, this had the effect of tying ethnic identities to certain territories. But these identities, as Laurence suggests, are complementary, context-specific and relative.

The populations of the individual regions need not have been directly identified with the ethnonym(s), which associated them with the region collectively: Indeed, identity could more easily be expressed through the structure of the local city, and it was only when the population came into contact with a central authority, the *iuridicus,* the curator of roads or the prefect of the *alimenta,* that there was contact with the notion of a wider collective region (Laurence 1998: 108).

As such, in Roman Italy, we can identify multiple identities, unevenly distributed both spatially and socially. The local survives as a valid unit of identity, but is now relative to a larger entity. The presence of Rome does not lead to the loss of local identity and its complete replacement with a sense of *Romanitas,* but the development of a range of new identities. Some of these, such as new regional identities, may only be apparent in certain social and political contexts and are defined specifically in relation to agents of Roman imperialism. Thus through local and regional political exchanges — the basis of Roman control over the early Empire — ethnic and cultural identities were tied down to territories. However, the wider entity, the 'political roof', we label the Roman Empire was not so much defined in terms of territory or shared material culture, but in terms of a community of interest based upon shared values, meanings and beliefs. These did not replace pre-existing identities, but served to supplement and relativise them.

Keaveney's (1987) three scales of identity— national, regional and local — are therefore all represented. At the highest level, symbolic exchange promoted an awareness of a wider entity which, in certain contexts or circumstances, served as the basis of a universal identity. In a legal guise, this took the form of citizenship. On a regional level, contact, conquest and administration created and reinforced ethnic identities and social structures. But it is on the local level, the basic locus of these imperial relations, that the real dynamics of imperialism operated. It was at this level that we can locate the particularising of the universal, the re-negotiation of local identities in relation to the global, and the individual agents who articulated between these different identities, with varying degrees of awareness and power.

Conclusions

Here I have only had space to present some of the complex theories of globalisation and to demonstrate briefly how they might be of use in addressing identity in Roman Italy. I hope to have shown that, although the mechanisms of modernity were not present, the expansion of Rome can be seen to have initiated several changes which parallel patterns found in the contemporary world. Indeed, studies of globalisation and Romanisation/ Roman imperialism share several concerns — issues such as structure, agency and identity — and a common teleological problem in that their derivations (global and Roman) have been taken to presuppose a specific cultural outcome, rather than alluding to process and context. The vocabulary and models that globalisation provide therefore represent a significant tool kit with which to explore our previous ideological assumptions and to create alternative interpretations of Roman imperialism from the perspective of our own globalised world.

Through the expansion of Roman military power within Italy, ethnic and cultural identities were created and destroyed, strengthened and weakened, purified and blended. The size of the Empire and absence of suitable political structures meant that direct control of all these groups was impossible and administration was devolved to local agents. This involved both a universalisation of a particular model of elite social power — based upon urbanism, munificence, wealth and land — and a particularisation of that universal model for local requirements. Roman imperialism worked by exploiting pre-existing social structures — but equally, local elites were keen to maintain their status, and as agents themselves, could use the opportunities afforded by Roman imperialism to further their own ends. The elite, whether old or new, formed the principal link between the universal and the particular; between Rome and the local. It was drawn into a community of interest, based initially upon material exchange. However, the failure of time and space to be significantly compressed meant that this level of integration could not be maintained indefinitely. The only means through which this community could be held together was through symbolic exchange, which was limited neither by the friction of space, nor the location of its participants. It is in this cultural arena that the Empire reached its most 'globalised'.

There have been two trends in recent approaches to the understanding of the complexity and dynamics of Roman imperialism (and Romanisation) — one is towards more and more localised perspectives, taking individual towns as the appropriate focus for these processes. Others have gone to opposite 'extreme' and have attempted macro-regional synthesis, looking for wider patterns (e.g. Alcock 1993). In reality, both have made interesting advances and are working at either end of a continuum (see Terrenato 1998: 23—5). Globalisation offers the potential to work between these scales and to offer more rounded approaches to the mechanisms of Roman imperialism. Both the modern and ancient worlds involve overlapping scales of identity— global, national, regional, and local. The key is to locate these multiple identities in relation one another — "Globalization is ... a matter of inserting a multiplicity of localities into the overall picture of a new global system" (Robins 1991: 35). Similarly, Roman Italy is about placing different societies in to a wider framework whilst acknowledging their uniqueness.

Notes

1. A wide range of contemporary studies have contributed to our understanding of the ancient world, e.g. imperialism, post-colonialism, world-systems, etc. Many such attempts have been criticised for their indiscriminate application of such theories to the past without proper consideration of the contexts in they were developed. For example, analogies to modern European imperialism have been criticised for their failure to account for different ideological and economic contexts (inter alia Webster 1996); Thompson (1982) on applications of the notion of development/underdevelopment to the Roman Empire.

2. Approaches to the stimulus behind contemporary globalisation have cited capitalism (Wallerstein), technology (Rosenau) and international relations (Gilpin). However, such mono-causal explanations (economic, technological and political respectively) are not widely favoured. More satisfactory are explanations which integrate the polity, economy and culture (McGrew 1992a: 73).

3. Also Terrenato (1998: Table 2) for a list of dichotomised spheres in which Roman influence is likely to have been unevenly experienced.

4. Ancient historians have, perhaps, focussed more upon political exchange.

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