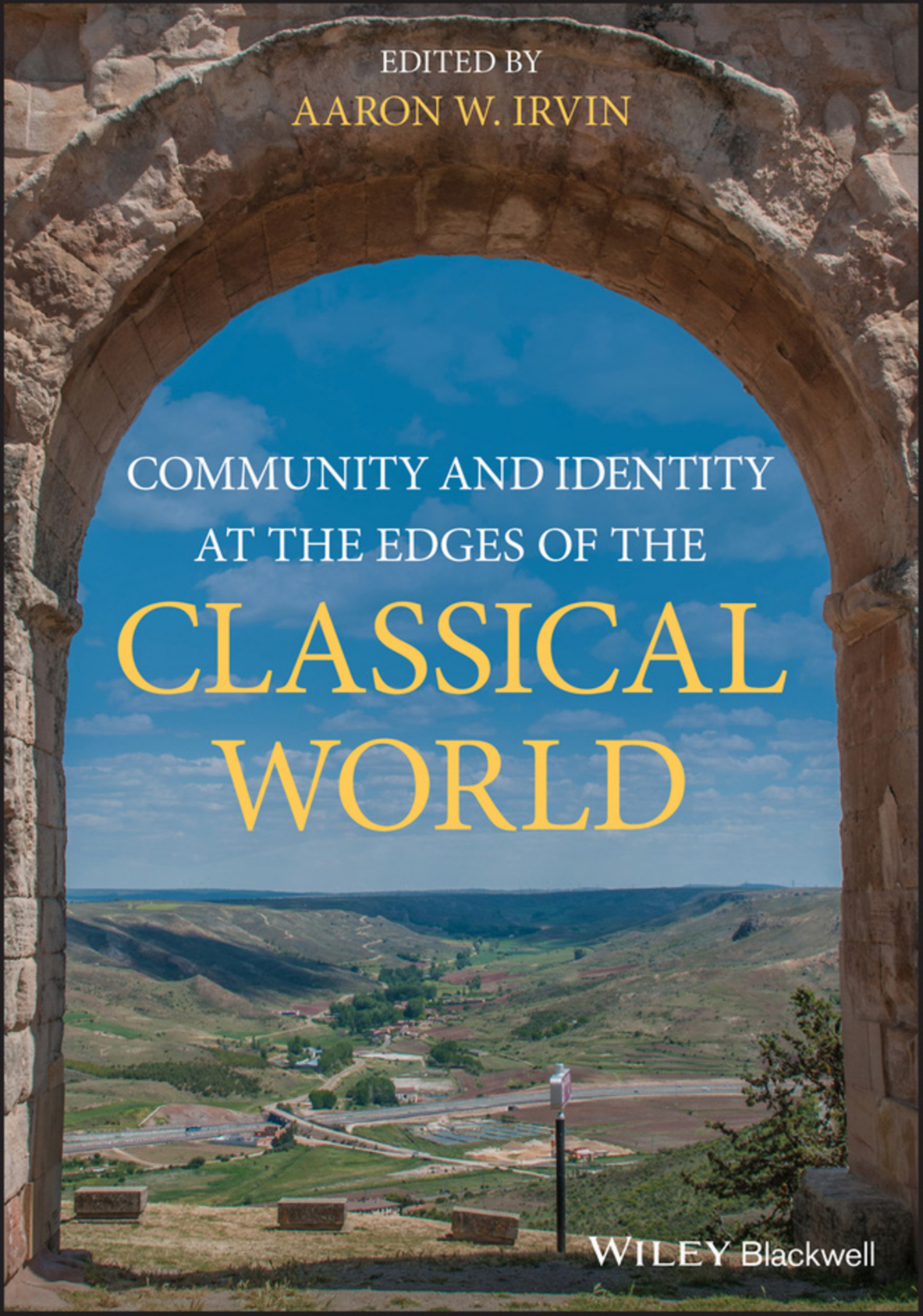


The image features a large, weathered stone archway in the foreground, framing a landscape view. The arch is made of rough-hewn stones and is set against a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The landscape beyond the arch consists of rolling green hills, a small village with red-roofed buildings, and a road that winds through the valley. In the foreground, just below the arch, there are some stone blocks and a small black signpost. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a clear day.

EDITED BY
AARON W. IRVIN

COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY
AT THE EDGES OF THE
**CLASSICAL
WORLD**

WILEY Blackwell

Community and Identity at the Edges of the Classical World

Edited by Aaron W. Irvin

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2021
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Irvin, Aaron W., editor.

Title: Community and identity at the edges of the classical world / edited by Aaron W. Irvin.

Description: First edition. | Hoboken, NJ : Wiley, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020013456 (print) | LCCN 2020013457 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119630715 (paperback) | ISBN 9781119630722 (adobe pdf) | ISBN 9781119630708 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Rome--History. | Roman provinces--History. | Rome--Antiquities. | Rome--Ethnic relations. | Ethnology--Rome--History. | Mediterranean Region--History--To 1500.

Classification: LCC DG77 .C5825 2020 (print) | LCC DG77 (ebook) | DDC 937--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013456>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013457>

Cover Design: Wiley

Cover Image: © By Eve Livesey/Getty Images

Set in 9.5/12.5pt STIXTwoText by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India

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Introduction

This volume examines the active construction of identity in the ancient world, observing how macro events such as increased contact, multi-culturalism, and economic globalism affected identity on the micro level. Our authors come predominantly from participants in the Imperial Identities on the Edge of the Roman World conference, held biennially since 2012 in Petnica, Serbia, and organized by Dr. Marko Jankovic and Dr. Vladimir Mihajlovic. Their work in maintaining the conference has allowed a focus in research areas and voices that are commonly not heard in scholarship coming out of the US or the UK. For many readers then, this work serves as perhaps their first exposure to Macedonian, Serbian, or Russian scholarship on the Roman Empire, or the nature of Roman and Hellenistic archaeological sites in Eastern Europe. A timely addition, we hope, to an ongoing debate, from a group of scholars who traditionally have not been a part of the discussion in western publications. It is my profound honor to be able to edit and open this volume.

Romanization: History and Mythology

The question of identity is one that has been central to the study of the Roman Empire in particular for at least the last century. The now academically abandoned paradigm of “Romanization” posited the idea that the subjects of the Roman Empire eventually saw themselves as Romans, thus creating a homogenous culture. In its specifics, Romanization was the march of civilization against barbarism, of the advancement of culture and society against the more primitive peoples of the western Mediterranean especially and formed the base upon which more modern concepts such as the nation-state and colonial empires were built. Three 19th century authors in particular established what might be considered the “core concepts” of Romanization, with Mommsen identifying consistency and homogeneity in Roman cultural expression throughout the Empire as well as positing an active policy of the part of the Romans to establish uniform cultural expression, Haverfield crafting the term “Romanization” itself and defining it as a process of conversion from a native/provincial sociocultural identity to a Roman identity, and Jullian further defining the concept and expanding on what might be termed “moral” or “qualitative” judgments and analysis such as the concept of Romanization as cultural evolution and Rome bringing civilization to the “barbaric” provincials.¹

The early 20th century saw the term largely defined within a justification of European colonialism and nationalism. This is not to say that all scholars invariably followed Mommsen, Haverfield, and Jullian in their assessment of Roman culture’s effects on the provinces, but that such social changes brought about by exposure to Roman culture were presented as positive developments.

The material culture of the provinces, whether Roman or Roman-inspired goods and architecture, were the key components in analyzing how and why a change of internal identity and social being took place among the provincials, and the active role that the Romans themselves took in “civilizing” their inherently less-civilized subjects.

After World War II, scholars attempted to divorce the concept of Romanization from European colonialism and take into account the agency and decisions of the provincials. Rather than the empire-wide approach taken by Mommsen, or even the large territorial approach taken by Jullian and Haverfield, the field has become highly subdivided and specialized, focused on specific regions, fields, even highly specialized “types” of evidence such as examinations of only pottery, or only architecture throughout the empire.² Whereas a “top down” Roman policy of cultural conversion, of “civilizing the barbarians”, was central to Mommsen’s and Haverfield’s presentation of Romanization, it was not until the 1990s that a truly “bottom up” analysis of Romanization can be said to have emerged with the works of Martin Millett and Peter Brunt, who argued for provincial agency in the face of Roman imperialism.³

The underlying feature of Romanization studies was a vision of an ancient Roman government and society that was comparable to that of the scholar’s present. Rome was granted a complexity in its organization and internal cohesion that was otherwise ascribed to no other civilization in the ancient world. Rome became not only the exception, but exceptional; Rome was better, more complex, more advanced, its contours and internal identities clearly defined in a way that, were the same concepts to be applied to any other of the great empires of the ancient world, would not only seem out of place but laughable. Rome has long served as a trope and symbol within western culture, as the embodiment of civilization and the high point of western cultural achievement; it is this “myth of Rome” that formed the basis of Romanization studies throughout the research and analysis of Roman culture and material. As Hingley has extensively outlined, and I have argued elsewhere, the study of Rome and Romanization among western European and American scholars has always included a self-reflective and receptive quality aimed at studying what Rome could mean for the present. In short, “Rome” has never stood for just the city or empire but has consistently served as a reflection and appropriation of the society examining Roman history; Rome has always been how western culture views itself at a distance and comments on its methods, its gains, and its shortcomings.⁴

Moving Beyond Rome

While scholars such as Brunt and Millett effectively deconstructed that model at the end of the 20th century, the last 20 years has seen a new paradigm emerge in the works of Woolf and Mattingly, allowing for a kind of heterogenous discussion of cultural values that incorporated the elite of several societies.⁵ The work of Prag and Quinn has also seen the expansion of this discussion into the Hellenistic period of empires prior to the Roman expansion.⁶ In the introduction to their *The Hellenistic West*, Prag and Quinn call attention to,

a world in which the level of variety, of available cultural elements, increases significantly.... At the same time, this is a variety that, paradoxically, looks ever more similar as it repeats across the Mediterranean (and beyond).⁷

This model, in turn, allows the discussion to expand beyond simply Rome and the effects of Roman rule, but to the broader impact of contacts and networks throughout the Mediterranean, independent of artificial periodization and classification.

This focus on connectivity, networks, and influences can likewise be seen in a collected volume edited by Pitts and Versluys, titled *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*.⁸ Pitts' and Versluys' volume takes a fundamentally materialist approach to the topic and applicability of models from globalization studies. Both are careful to avoid the accusation that they have simply replaced Romanization and acknowledge that globalization represents not a set theoretical paradigm but a conceptual toolbox.⁹ As Pitts and Versluys summarize,

There is a clear conceptual challenge to be faced in applying the concept of globalisation to the Roman world. This volume takes up the challenge. This is necessary, as the evocative use of globalisation as a description of what goes on in the Roman world is quickly becoming popular.... Although we sympathise with calls for restraint and proper theoretical reflection, we also believe that the arguments to not use globalisation have been countered.... We can use a concept developed to describe present day phenomena for the study of other periods – as many globalisation scholars presently believe, while some explicitly ask for such an exploration; the concept of globalisation has been used convincingly to describe other periods of history; globalisation is not exclusively tied up with modernity or capitalism and it can be fruitfully applied to the Roman world.¹⁰

While not abandoning the archaeological focus, this volume takes a substantivist look at some of those same issues and discussions, broadening the scope in terms of time period and geographic focus, as well as the background of our authors, and continuing to look at the applicability of theories such as discrepant identities, heterarchy, and models of interaction built on observations of the increasingly globalized world. Thus, we believe this volume, and the approaches taken therein, to be academically significant, as well as timely in their presentation.

Chapter Summary

The overall approach of this volume can immediately be seen in the first chapter by Dr. Ljuben Tevdovski, from Goce Delcev University, Stip, Macedonia. Dr. Tevdovski proposes a re-examination of the late Roman Republic, viewing the conflicts that gave way to the Principate in the context of continuing struggles and models of authority from the Hellenistic world. The Principate thus emerges as a localized attempt at interpreting and integrating values and concepts from the globalizing Hellenized culture of the broader Mediterranean.

Chapters 2 through 4 then present highly localized narratives of specific locales and populations responding to broader, macro-level pressures in the development of their own localized identity. Luca Mazzini examines the processes by which the Phrygian city of Blaundos developed a complex ethnic and civic identity for itself in the face of Roman interaction, whereby Roman presence in the region encouraged the development of localized distinction rather than homogeneity. Dr. Ivan Radman-Livaja examines the traditional analysis and narratives regarding the pre-Roman populations of Siscia, and how newly emerged evidence demands a reformulation of those traditional models and the way in which archaeological data has been used to classify local populations throughout the Roman empire. Finally, Aleksandar Simic of the University of Belgrade, Serbia, examines the evidence for Romans integrating themselves into Athenian society and civic life from the Hellenistic through Roman periods.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine local cult centers in the eastern Mediterranean, and the choices made by localized populations to integrate macro-level influences. Dafni Maikidou-Poutrino of the Aristotle

University of Thessaloniki, Greece, examines the construction of the Isiac sanctuary of Herodes Atticus at Marathon. Maikidou-Poutrino highlights the mix of styles integrated into the sanctuary, as well as elements of the visual style that are standardized throughout the Roman Empire, creating a mix of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman features, as well as interpreted and standardized forms of each. Dr. Francesca Mazzilli looks at a similar integration of local and regional features in the cult centers of the Hauron. Dr. Mazzilli takes these observations a step further, arguing the patrons of the cult sites sought to actively portray their regional connections and associated networks.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 analyze the mixing and blending of multiple cultures from the Hellenistic through the Roman periods. Chapter 7 by Dr. Rachel Mittelman of Gordon State College examines the challenges facing Ptolemy I Soter and Ptolemy II Philadelphus in attempting to simultaneously rule as Egyptian and Greek monarchs. Dr. Mittelman likewise presents the strategies employed by both monarchs to overcome these challenges, and the ways in which these contrasting cultures were reconciled. In Chapter 8, Dr. Nina Mazhoo analyzes the Roman mystery cult of Mithras as a collection of tropes and images ultimately derived from Hellenic culture and philosophy, developing an idealized “oriental” religion for the Romans without a trace of actual Persian provenance. In Chapter 9, Dr. Francisco Machuca Prieto of the Universidad de Málaga, Spain, examines a similar sense of “otherness” actively developed and encouraged among the Phoenician colonies of southern Spain. As Dr. Machuca argues, contact with Rome encouraged these Phoenician colonies to emphasize their own cultural uniqueness and antiquity, but as a means of integrating themselves into the Roman system and not as an attempt to resist Roman culture.

Chapters 10 and 11 examine the interaction between local and regional religious customs and practices. Dr. Alessandra Esposito, of King’s College London, discusses the distribution of religious instruments and accoutrements in different archaeological contexts, revealing a series of interrelated religious practices and artefacts transcending the traditional Roman/native dichotomy. My own chapter with Dr. Jason Lundock of the College of Central Florida examines the expression of a series of interrelated cults focused on healing/purity and dog sacrifice, spanning from Bronze Age Mesopotamia to Roman Britain and Late Antiquity. The spread of these cults, built on thematically related concepts and specific practices, presents a means of tracing thematic networks and contacts throughout the Mediterranean while also allowing for idiosyncratic expressions within local communities.

Our final set of chapters, from 12 to 15, focus on the challenges of modern reception studies and the ways in which present political and cultural ideologies affect interpretations of the Roman and Hellenistic periods. Kala Drewniak of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany, examines the way in which the assumption of a common and monolithic Germanic culture, derived almost exclusively from Roman sources, has limited the work of archaeologists in the Barbaricum. Drawing on concepts derived from feminist theory, post-colonial, and anarchist models, Drewniak discusses the different analyses that can be derived from data that has otherwise been overlooked or glossed by the traditional methods. Dr. Dragana Kunčer discusses the development and longevity of the concept of “Balkan Latin”, explaining how and why the concept continues to appear in Balkan scholarship despite the lack of evidence. Dr. Kaja Stemberger-Flegar likewise examines the limits of language, in this case the attempt to examine ancient topics regarding sex, gender, and identity, and analyze related archaeological remains, when language lacks the ability to recognize these categories and properly acknowledge their existence, let alone analyze them. Finally, Dr. Anton Baryshnikov of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, examines the Soviet approach to Classical history and archaeology, and the view of Roman history from a culture that did not have the same receptive and social value placed upon these ancient cultures as those in the west that developed the reflexive paradigm of Romanization.

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Notes

- 1 Cf. T. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire: From Caesar to Diocletian*, Vols. 1 and 2 (1886); F. Haverfield, "The Romanization of Roman Britain" in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, No. 2 (1905), pp. 185–217; F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1912); C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol VI: *La civilization Gallo-Romaine- État moral*. Paris: Librairie Hachette (1929)
- 2 Cf., for some examples, R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity, and empire*. New York: Routledge (2005), pp. 16–17.
- 3 P. A. Brunt, "The Romanization of Local Ruling Classes in the Roman Empire" in *Roman Imperial Themes*, P.A. Brunt, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press (1990), pp. 267–281; M. Millett, *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1990).
- 4 Cf. R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity, and empire*. New York: Routledge (2005); Aaron Irvin, "The Political Organization of the *Civitates* of the Three Gauls, and the Myth of Republican Exceptionalism". *Romans and Barbarians Beyond the Frontiers: Archaeology, Ideology and Identities in the North*, eds. Sergio González Sánchez, Alexandra Guglielmi. Oxford: Oxbow Books (2017), pgs. 137–151.
- 5 Numerous works from Woolf and Mattingly might be highlighted to reference this paradigm shift, but the two most important would probably be: Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998); David Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (2010).
- 6 *The Hellenistic West*, ed. Jonathan Prag and Josephine Crawley Quinn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2013).
- 7 Jonathan Prag and Josephine Crawley Quinn, "Introduction". *The Hellenistic West*, ed. Jonathan Prag and Josephine Crawley Quinn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2013), pg. 13.
- 8 *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, ed. Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2014).
- 9 Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman world: perspectives and opportunities". *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, ed. Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2014). Pg. 17–18, 20
- 10 Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation", 20–21.

1

The beauty of the *Oikumene* has two edges: Nurturing Roman Imperialism in the “Glocalizing” traditions of the East

Ljuben Tevdovski

The interest in the classical past and the study of its identities, communities and ideas in modernity can be characterized as extensive, constant and often almost manic.¹ This scientific and societal process has transformed into an alternative quest for the self-conception of the modern Westerner, and even the contemporary human.² In this context, the identities and communities coming from, or perceived to be from, the edges of the classical world represented a key element of self-definition through the “otherness”, in antiquity and modernity.³ They represented the final frontier or, alternatively, the beyond of the cultural or civilizational entities we analyzed or imagined in modernity. In addition, the postcolonial turn in the study of the classical past in the twentieth century has added an additional focus on the identities and communities on the edges, which were identified by the contemporary groups that felt “less represented” in the classical narrative, as their “oppressed” ancient ancestors.⁴ This long-lasting process has created the modern world of nations, races, cultures and civilizations, but also fractured our understanding of the classical past, producing misleading conceptions on ancient identities, including the artificial dichotomies such as Greek versus Near-Eastern, Roman versus Oriental or Native, Eastern versus Western, or Christian versus Pagan.⁵

However, the contemporary trends, achievements and paradigm shifts in different social sciences and humanities, occurring in the last few decades, together with the wider societal trends, instigated by the intensified multiple waves of the contemporary globalization process, has dramatically shaken our convictions for the self-contained, homogeneous, and static nature of the identities, communities and cultures in the present and in the past.⁶ The anticipation of the importance of these multiple and interrelated transformative processes produced extensive research interest in the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on identities and communities around the world. The profound effects of the global processes on different local realities in the contemporary world, was incrementally recognized as an applicable and useful approach for the research of the past as well.⁷

Thus, the scientific interest for globalization and its usefulness as a methodological approach in analyses of societies, communities and identities has steadily moved from the present into the past, tracing the roots of this process back in the early modernity, the Middle ages, classical antiquity, and even the prehistory.⁸ In this process, the traditional conceptions of well-defined cultural or political entities scattered through our historical narratives, are losing their compact character and boundaries, and are increasingly perceived as open puzzles of diversity and connectivity of people, materials and ideas, interrelated in the continuous and accelerating globalization process.⁹

Authors, like Frank, Gills or Morris, have reemphasized the role of the Near East as the locus of creation of the nucleus of the process of globalization, that Wilkinson calls “central civilization”.¹⁰ The convergence of the cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia in the Bronze Age, and the millennial imperial traditions of this region is increasingly perceived as a formative element of the ancient globalization, that was spreading in waves, affecting Rome on the West and China on the East, and continuously growing over centuries into a “world system” of connectedness, or the globalization phase that we live in today.¹¹

This chapter is looking toward the identities, communities and the very creation of the Roman world from this perspective of ancient globalization. My main aim is to shed a new light on the identities and communities of eastern edges of the “Roman world”, and their role and input in its creation. I will also raise wider ontological and methodological questions, connected to the very existence of such a world or such edges aside from the ancient or contemporary imagination. Finally, my analyses are in line with and aim to contribute to the contemporary trends of “decentering” Rome, and, as such, they place the communities and identities of the Roman world in the wider context of the globalization processes of antiquity.¹² The key element of my approach is the hypothesis that the perspective on the Roman world, that I refer to in this chapter as the “senatorial narrative”, although traditionally overrepresented and central in our modern understanding of Rome, embodies a minority voice of anti-globalism and elements of glocalization that faded away in the intensively globalizing ancient reality.

Hellenistic Globalization

The “globalization turn” in the study of the classical antiquity has recreated the picture of the ancient world where Rome represents both globalized and globalizing entity.¹³ In that perspective, “Roman civilization” was built upon globalizing tendencies that originated in the Near East.¹⁴

However, the globalizing system that Rome was introduced to was far wider and created in the changing global realities triggered by Alexander’s conquests.¹⁵ The Hellenistic world, created in the post-Alexander period, moved the globalization core to the west in the new centers of the eastern Mediterranean like Alexandria, Antioch, Pella, Thessalonica, or Pergamon, and produced a model of interrelation and connectivity that affected the “Old World”, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, and from the mountains of Hindu Kush to Eritrea.

The “Hellenistic age”, widely defined by historians as the period between the death of Alexander and the death of Cleopatra (VII), has a long history of underrating in modern academic research. Due to the traditional “classical” focus of the study of antiquity, the period was perceived as impure and decadent; an amalgamation between the culture of western “classical centers” like Athens and, later, Rome, and that of the “Orient”.¹⁶ However, the recent paradigm shift in the study of antiquity, from the “old model” that “emphasized static cells” of homogeneous culture toward a new one, focused on the processes of “fluidity and connectedness”, instigated an “astonishing development” in the studies dedicated or related to this period.¹⁷

The accomplishments of this age loomed large among the many contemporary scholars of antiquity, and especially those approaching it from the perspective of ancient globalization. The revolutionary developments in science and technology, arts and architecture, urbanism, travel and trade, medicine, philosophy or religion of this era are recently frequently emphasized by researchers that attribute them widely to the great interconnectedness of different cultural centers, traditions and elites in this intensively interrelated and globalizing world.¹⁸

One of the most important characteristics of Hellenistic globalization is its close dependency on the unique system of rule and shared symbols and ideas that spread among numerous local communities and transcended different ages, remaining important at least until the early modernity.¹⁹

For the purposes of analyzing the identities and communities of the Roman period, I will focus in this chapter on the transfer of this system, and its symbols and ideas toward Rome and suggest its formative role in the creation of the “Roman world”.

Hellenistic *oikumene* and Cultural *koine*

The Hellenistic imperial model inherited and integrated the millennia-old traditions of “universal rule” of the Near East, and especially those of its immediate predecessors.²⁰ However, it developed the system further, and the narratives, concepts and principles of this enhanced model proved to be long-lasting and crucial for the transfer of the Near-Eastern traditions to the East and the West for centuries.²¹ I would argue that the modifications to the system of rule, made during the third century BCE, that reflected the fragmented realities after the battle of Ipsus, were responsible for the outstanding strength and endurance of this unique model of rule and organization of societies.

In contrary to the previous centralized imperial systems, the Hellenistic ideological and political system developed a competitive model where different dynastic centers and elites lived and contributed in the same universe, while their perception of it was slightly curved by the ideologies of their royal courts.²² The ideologies of the Seleucids, Antigonids or Ptolemaids, maintained that they were the rulers of the universe, Macedonians, and descendants of Alexander and other Argead kings.²³ However, in relations with local elites and religious authorities, this ideology developed in the Hellenistic courts focused instead on the dynast and his cult as a god and the descendent of gods, both those traditional in the Macedonian context, specifically Heracles, Dionysus and Helios/Apollo, as well as local gods and as an extension of previous imperial traditions.²⁴

In such competitive global realities, the different hubs of universalistic tendencies managed to bring many local narratives, elites and cults close to the matrix of the Hellenistic imperialism. The competition and legitimization of the Hellenistic dynasts was not solely or even predominantly a battle of the spear, but rather of competing narratives. Each royal court and the related elites were constantly building the narratives of their dynast, connecting him with his virtue, his possessions, and his care for his subjects.²⁵ These dynasts, and their respective courts would, therefore, work to preserve and promote the Aegean heritage of Homer’s myths and the *paideia* of the Hellenes; they would bring scholars from different parts of the *oikumene*, including far areas like India; they would promote Babylonian, Egyptian or Jewish history, culture and tradition; all in favor of legitimating of the King of the Kings, the universal and ideal king, descendent and related to all Kings and Gods and benefactor of all communities and temples.²⁶ This wide set of policies could be summed up in two general categories: tracing the dynastic lineage to Alexander and Macedonia, including imitating its royal costumes, traditions or Gods; and promoting and supporting the customs and religious traditions followed by the local elites over which the universal dynast effectively ruled or aspired.²⁷

But this second element, the localization of the universal rulers’ narratives, did not develop toward separate ideologies or worlds. One early development that prevented such separation of narratives was the early unification of the dynastic houses, and their codependence on a combined

heritage and the support of the Macedonian elites. The absence or elimination of a direct descendent of Alexander initiated a global competition in claiming a legitimate new ruler of Alexander's world, which placed all generals, no matter their aristocratic background, into the position of competing for the strongest lineage. As a result of that process, in few generations every dynast could effectively claim that they descended not only from the Macedonian Argeads, but also from Antipatrids, Antigonids, Ptolemaids, or Seleucids. This process, developing throughout the Hellenistic period, created *de jure* one universal dynasty, with few dynastic centers with localized traditions; a global system of governance that I will refer to here as "multiversal rule".

While the constant inter-dynastic conflict in the Hellenistic world was traditionally perceived as a weakness of the Hellenistic system, these military interactions provided a means of gaining legitimacy. The most obvious means are certainly the individual battles, as building blocks of the constantly recycled odes dedicated to every new Alexander, Nicator, and Soter, from Alexandria, Antioch, or Pella. More importantly, through this process, the Hellenistic dynasts and dynastic centers would feed off each other's narratives and strengthen their credentials with every new encounter. If a Ptolemaic dynast won a war against the Seleucids, he, and all his descendants, would forever claim the gained territories and even appropriate their local narratives although, in many cases, it was a short-lived conquest. In the other scenario, if the Ptolemaic dynast lost the conflict, he would most likely have to bear, or enjoy, the influence of a Seleucid queen as his consort at court. This would immediately bring certain Seleucid based globalized narratives, related and dedicated to the Queen-Goddess, but it would also add to the credentials of the next Ptolemaic dynast. As a Seleucid's queen son, the new dynast would inherit and potentially use the Seleucid narratives and credentials, and certainly aspire to Seleucid territories.

One of the unique traits of the Hellenistic narrative(s) of universal rule was that it constantly strengthened itself, through multiplication of the same model in diverse locales and periods that still maintained the backbone of the story. More importantly, it represented a common framing device for the affirmation and articulation of the aspirations, worldviews and traditions of different local elites, thus effectively globalizing the structure of the local narratives as well as their outreach.

The Post-Hellenistic context

The radical fractures of historical time created by the methods of periodization, deeply embedded in the disciplinary traditions of the researchers of the past, have the power to distort our perceptions and mislead our analyses on developments of processes, identities and communities in antiquity.²⁸ The term Post-Hellenistic has emerged through the efforts of different researchers to anticipate the cultural and wider continuities between the Roman and Hellenistic period, especially in the eastern Mediterranean.²⁹ However, many of these efforts are still based on the traditional Eurocentric and classicistic Greco-Roman dichotomy. From the perspective of ancient globalization, the scope of the transformative processes of the Hellenistic model is much larger and it can be traced throughout the Hellenistic *oikumene* as early as the heyday of the Hellenistic monarchies. In this part of the chapter, I present how the unique characteristics of the Hellenistic imperial model impacted the local communities and elite identities, and created an enduring wide context of shared values, symbols, institutions and mechanisms of rule that I refer to here as post-Hellenistic.

One of the crucial characteristics of the Hellenistic global system that led toward the creation of the post-Hellenistic context was the multiversal rule. The discrepancy between territorially limited effective power of each dynastic center and their shared ideology of global rule over Alexander's *oikumene*, placed the contested border areas in the center of the interest and investments of the

dynastic cores. The most prominent example for such tendencies was Anatolia. Contested from the beginnings of the Hellenistic period by all leading dynasts, including the Antigonids, Ptolemaids, Seleucids, and Lysimachus, in the zenith of the development of the Hellenistic world, it would transform into the birthplace of what would become a post-Hellenistic system.

An important episode of this process developed after the death of Antiochus II Theos in 246 BCE. Antiochus' sons, descendants of the great conqueror Seleucus I Nikator, and their mother, were involved in confrontations for the Seleucid throne that also involved aspirations of members of the dynasty related to the Antigonids, Ptoleamids, and the smaller Attalid and Achaean dynastic branches. In addition, Ptolemy III, brother of Berenice, another Seleucid queen and also contender for the throne, took over the core Seleucid territories in Syria, which left the "legitimate" and competitive Seleucid princes isolated in Anatolia for a time.

While each of the two Seleucid princes had a claim to the throne through their ancestry, their legitimacy also rested on the strength of their spear. This situation had pushed "the heirs of the great kings" toward relying on the capacities of the local Anatolian elites. In such circumstances, for the first time in this central region of the Hellenistic world, the local, non-Macedonian aristocracy acquired marriages with Seleucid princesses and was thereby legitimized as integral part of the global Hellenistic system of rule.

However, in order to become acceptable to the Seleucid dynasts, the local Anatolian rulers were provided with a reinvented Achaemenid dynastic line, thus becoming admissible into the dynastic system of the global rulers.³⁰ Later, other local rulers and elites would be permitted to enter the global dynastic system, and their heritage and symbols would be added to the Macedonian symbols of legitimization of the global rule of the Hellenistic dynasts. Antiochus III the Great, for example, in a new global effort to revitalize the empire of Alexander, continued these policies with further integration and elevation of the local elites in Anatolia, as well as in Judea and the territories in the far east of his empire.³¹ The dissolution of the central dynastic line of the Seleucids in the first century BCE placed its extended and localized branches in a position of frontrunners for the global throne. It is from that perspective that we are able to understand the positions of Mithridates VI of Pontus, Tigranes II the Great of Armenia, or Antiochus Theos of Commagene, which, although operating with limited resources, were credible descendants of the Seleucid dynasty and, as such, had to be considered legitimate contestants for universal rule.³²

The descendants of the first post-Hellenistic dynasts of the northern edges of the Seleucid realm would continue to provide legitimacy to other post-Hellenistic elites and centers, like the Parthians and the Herodians. Yet, even for the other dynastic centers of the post-Hellenistic period, we might trace the roots of their accelerated development in the dynamics of the Hellenistic world. In close resemblance to the Anatolian post-Hellenistic centers, the Parthian and Jewish elites lived in important contested spaces of dynastic rule, and, thus, acquired special interest in and policies of the global dynastic system.³³

The new diverse challenges that the Hellenistic dynasties faced in the later centuries, where the Romans for the first time played an important role, gradually changed the position of these newly created post-Hellenistic dynastic centers, increasing both their number and their autonomy.³⁴ The main invention of the post-Hellenistic global system is the globalization of the universal Hellenistic dynasty. While the decentralized model of the Hellenistic global system was united by the reference to the Macedonian identity and royal descent of the dynasts in all the dynastic centers, in the post-Hellenistic realities it was increasingly acceptable to trace the Macedonian roots to Alexander through lineage from Hellenistic dynasts, while the other lines of descent could be related to lesser "ethnically diverse" kings (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 Map of the Globalizing world after Alexander's death, including areas conquered by Alexander, and those influenced by his Successors.

This system that interconnected and glocalized local traditions, especially in the centers of the globalized world, was the cultural, social and religious milieu that the Romans encountered in the territories that they would later call “*pars orientalis*”.

Rome on the Western Edges

“Aren’t Romans related to the Hellenes? Don’t they have in their forum a temple of Castor, the Greek god who protects sailors? When one has these signs of civilization, pirating can no longer be tolerated.” – King Demetrius Poliorcetes³⁵

In the *Geography*, Strabo illustrates the perspective of the Hellenistic cores on Rome. While he mentions that previous dynasts had problems with piracy coming from these remote edges of the civilization, he also underlines the gesture of the Macedonian king that have returned the pirate ships to Rome with a lesson in “good international manners”, and a recognition for the early efforts of the Romans to join the Hellenistic world in some form of a remote polis.³⁶

The early influences of the ancient globalized world over Rome, in culture, religion, law and other areas, came from the less globalized edges of the Hellenistic *oikumene* in the western Mediterranean. These early influences of Greek *poleis* from Southern Italy or Sicily were so strong they created perceptions in the Hellenistic world that Rome represented a remote Greek polis. They had a formative impact on the political system of the Republic, but also on the identities and perceptions of Rome’s early elites. Trying early to integrate in the patterns of these edges of the globalized world, Roman elites acquired a worldview based on the “Greeks versus barbarians” duality.

While emulating the *poleis* of the Hellenes, Romans had the privilege of living beyond the scope of the major interests of the dynastic cores.³⁷ During the third century BCE, while many Aegean *poleis* were transformed into semi-autonomous urban centers deeply dependent on the balance of power and goodwill of different Hellenistic dynasts, on the fringes of the *oikumene* Rome was developing into an independent city-state built upon the models of the classical period.

The initial interest of the Ptolemaids toward the west, experimenting with solutions closely resembling those in Anatolia, created the post-Hellenistic dynastic trees of Pyrrhus of Epirus and Agathocles of Sicily that integrated into the global system of rule, but their role in the West was both peripheral and sporadic. However, one of the key episodes illustrating the approaching change in the West is the historiographic scenery of Hannibal’s elephants crossing the Alps. “The strange monsters of the Macedonians”, as Justin calls them, that were not only a symbol of the Hellenistic dynasts and warfare, but also the cultural unity of the Hellenistic *oikumene*, for the first time passed through Hispania and Gaul standing *ante portas* of Rome for more than a decade.³⁸ Hannibal did not enter Rome, but globalization did.

Rome was quite successful in avoiding political integration and overrule of the global centers of power. Even more, as a new unanticipated and largely underestimated element in global relations, Romans entered into various coalitions with smaller post-Hellenistic cores and soon transformed into an efficient and reliable power to challenge central authority. Although Roman military successes were intensively transforming Rome into a strong, politically independent and self-confident regional and, later on, global power, they also instigated a process in which significant elements of the Roman society entered into close interaction with the culture, religion, identities and the interests of the elites from the centers of the globalized world. In addition, Roman military leaders, suddenly

in competition with the dynasts of the universe, were increasingly acquiring the profile and resources of small dynasts, inevitably changing and challenging the structure and balance of power inside the city walls.

The ruling class of the city-state, focused around the Senate, felt threatened by both the political and the cultural changes of the globalization process that was increasingly challenging its positions and influence. Building upon the traditions of defiance to the global system and norms, in a close resemblance to the Atheno-centric narrative developed in the context of the approaching Persian empire, they reacted with numerous xenophobic and anti-globalistic messages and policies toward the changes.

After the Punic and Macedonian wars, the Roman economy and society was increasingly globalizing and becoming dependent on the international developments and resources coming from the Mediterranean world. In that context, the local narratives and identity of the Roman city elites also had to be globalized. Thus, from the time of Polybius' pro-Roman histories to the confrontation with Mithridates, the Roman elites made an effort to form a glocalized narrative that imagines the *oikumene* as a new "unique in history" Roman world in the Mediterranean, led by the civilized Romans and Greeks from the city-states as opposed to the uncivilized Eastern barbarians, presented as the new Persians and decadent Orientals.³⁹

This glocalized narrative, that I refer to here as the "senatorial narrative", although central in our modern understanding of the Roman world, represented a minority voice in antiquity. I would claim that from the time of Antony to the Severan period this narrative of the envisioned "Roman world" was never genuinely extended beyond the walls of the city, and perhaps not even beyond the walls of the Senate. Instead, it faded away in the plethora of articulations of the complex religious, ideological and political value system of the post-Hellenistic *oikumene*. In order to understand the globalization of Rome and the creation of the Roman world, we have to look beyond the overrated anti-globalistic exaltations of its local elites.

Orientalizing or Globalizing Rome

A century and a half after Demetrius Poliorcetes educated the Roman pirates, most of the elites in the Near-Eastern part of the Hellenistic world were unaware of their existence, or mentioned them as anonymous military leaders.⁴⁰ Ball hypothesizes that even later they were perceived as pirates, and other authors have suggested related concepts, such as privateers or warlords.⁴¹ One might wonder, with their involvements in the relations between the Hellenistic entities, if they were perceived by some dynasts as another useful group of mercenaries. In any case, it was increasingly recognized that they represented an entity, or at least a force, capable and useful in crashing kings and central authority, while not creating kings of themselves.⁴² From a widely shared perspective in the Hellenistic *oikumene*, these deviations were a sign of approaching anarchy, illegal rule, and chaos.⁴³

However, Rome, or at least certain Roman elites, did entertain the idea of integration into the global dynastic system. One might even trace episodes that illustrate such tendencies in the very early stages of Roman involvement in the Mediterranean affairs. A telling example, irrespective if there were any real intentions from any side or the sources were based upon gossips, ambitions or aspirations, is the narrative of a supposed marriage proposal to Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, by Ptolemy VIII.⁴⁴ This story, aside from other local contexts of the two involved characters, fits perfectly into the concept of integration of the elites from the edges into the global Hellenistic system.⁴⁵ Thus, when giving proper global context to the event, we have to bear in mind that

Cornelia's father's victory over Carthage reshaped the political landscape and took over the ownership of the process of globalization of the western Mediterranean, a territory of traditional interest to the Ptolemaids.⁴⁶ During this early stages of the globalization process, Roman imagination transformed their successful general into the first Roman "Alexander". Numerous Roman authors "made comparisons, real or imagined, between Scipio and Alexander", and many elements of his personal behavior certainly suggest emulation of Alexander or the Hellenistic dynasts.⁴⁷ Co-opting Alexander's nativity story that presented him as "son of god", comparison of the battles, age and virtuous behavior, transforms Scipio into the true progenitor of a process that Fowler and Hekster associate with later Roman military leaders, like Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, which they refer to as a "progressive 'basilization'" of the Roman generals' image."⁴⁸ In addition, with his globalist ambitions and ideas, he and some of his descendants represented a real threat to the conservative Roman elites that wanted to maintain the Republican status quo.⁴⁹

On the other hand, the marriage proposal to Scipio's daughter might have been just wishful thinking of certain Roman elites. At that point in history, Roman elites remained an unrecognized factor in the wider Hellenistic *oikumene*, and even in the next century Mithridates could argue that the Roman "kings" are "of very low rank", and, as such they could not be in a situation to relate in such manner to a "King of the universe".⁵⁰

However, Roman military leaders in the mold of Scipio Africanus, and their armies, did transform early into a force of globalization of Rome. Their scope was further and further outside of Rome, their benefits collected outside of the city, and their fortunes directly dependent on global affairs and thereby related to the dynasts and kings of the globalized Hellenistic world. The process of strengthening the importance and position of this element of the Roman society, the victorious Emperor and His Army, might be traced back to the beginnings of the first century BCE, in the Marian reforms or Sulla's accession to power. However, after Pompey's final victory against the main contender for global rule, Mithridates, and his dismantling of the Seleucid dynastic system, this aspect of Roman society gained entirely different "global" dimension.⁵¹

It is in this context that we are obliged to reanalyze Pompey's successor in the East, Caesar. Thus, we might ask ourselves: Why would Caesar prioritize the support of the Roman senators to be the legitimate guardian with his armies of a city on the edges of the "civilized world", when he and his armies could be the legal guardians and masters of the world? And not any world, but one led by his own child, the official and priority descendent of all rulers of the universe. From such a perspective, the only thing he needed from Rome, at that point, was to be proclaimed as God. This image of a deity, even a local one from the fringes of the civilization, would ease his integration into the global system, add to the primacy of his child over other contenders for the global throne, and, most importantly, might stabilize the base for recruitment of his armies that formed the main argument for this "low-born king" to enter into the dynastic system.

His role and behavior were perfectly clear and understandable in the context and traditions of the centers of the *oikumene*, replicating the model used by numerous military leaders from Pontus, Bithynia, Commagene or the early efforts of Agathocles from Syracuse. Even in Rome itself, Caesar's "ambition to be king of the Roman People and master of the whole world" and god, were well known to his contemporaries and critics like Cicero, and the rumors the he "planned to move to Alexandria or Ilium, take the wealth of the rule with him, exhaust Italy by levies and leave the care of the city to his friends" were widespread.⁵² The dynastic ambitions and policies developed under Caesar went even further when the new military leader Antony, with the greater portion of Roman armies outside Italy, was officially given the "East".⁵³ All his "acquired" territories were integral parts and important centers of the globalized Hellenistic world, only recently added under the "Roman protection". He had at his disposal all their potential, plus their preparedness to support a

king. Octavian, the adopted son of the new Roman ruler-God, had more credentials and possibilities to gain Rome, therefore Antony sought to legitimize himself, and delegitimize Octavian, by becoming the guardian of the biological child of the Roman god. In addition, no doubt under suggestions of the Alexandrian court elites, he followed Caesar's pattern, also becoming a guardian of a world of his own godlike children.⁵⁴

The Donations of Alexandria

This brings us to the "imperial ambitions" of Antony, and the (in)famous episode of the "Donations of Alexandria". The Donations may have instigated outrage among certain Roman elites and were certainly used by Octavian's propaganda in Rome but, at the same time, they represent an even more telling story of attempts to integrate Rome into the globalized world, and the influence on this process of the aspirations, policies and world-views of the Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic elites.⁵⁵ Strootman exposes the "Hellenistic context" of this important event for the globalized world and for the newcomer, Rome. With the Donations, perceived from this perspective, the Hellenistic world was symbolically reunited, and Rome was given an entry card.

The integration of the peripheral elites was not unknown in the Hellenistic system, and by the time of Caesar and Antony, local leaders, such as those in Pontus or Cappadocia, had been marrying dynastic princesses for more than a century. While these elites were already an integral part of the global system, Roman generals were presented such an opportunity for the very first time. In the perspective of Cleopatra, and many other Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic elites of the period, the Roman "low-born kings" were to be admitted in the system only because of the strength of their spear. As in the case of other Post-Hellenistic elites, they were providing the forces necessary to defend and maintain the "legitimate" world system at a moment of crisis. But in no way could they be the new universal rulers, as Mithridates had aspired to be. While Cleopatra and her children were recognized in the Donations as Queen and King of Kings and given "the universe", "the only participant, who was not awarded [any] royal honors, was Antonius, the Roman."⁵⁶

His, or Caesar's, status was elevated between a hero and a living God, in close resemblance of the Hellenistic rulers.⁵⁷ However, in order to claim a diadem, as any other Hellenistic dynast, they had to be related and integrated into a "legitimate bloodline". So, while Caesar's or Antony's behavior in the "East" was perceived, or presented by their opponents in the city, as disrespectful to Rome, in the contexts of the centers of the globalized world, they were paving the only possible way for integration of Rome into the civilization, and the legitimization of Roman acquired possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean. A rear glimpse into the perspective of the Hellenistic global elites to this unique development might be the so-called "*despoina* prophesy", that Tarn, with his extensive argumentation, placed in the very context of the Donations and suggested it might reflect on the ideas of the Donations from a Hellenistic perspective. The prophesy, might support us with additional context of the dynastic visions, in which the "*despoina*", Cleopatra Isis, would civilize Rome, "shearing its hair" and build an ideal unified word of *Homonoia*, according to the Hellenistic ideals, in which even Rome would enjoy the benefits.⁵⁸

A step further, Caesar's son and Antony's son and daughter involved in the Donations had a father who was a local ruler, legitimized as God, in his local realm, and a mother that had one of the strongest lines of descent of all Hellenistic dynasties. Taken together in a Hellenistic mindset, the Donations parallel the system of legitimizing global rulers in Pontus of Mithridates, or Commagene of Antiochus Theos. One might even stretch the parallel in the glocalization of symbols, narrative, and materials. Thus, while Antiochos Theos uses local craftsmanship and "Persian" gods on his