

**THE QUEST FOR UNITY  
OWNING OR SHARING THE TRADITIONS OF THE  
CLASSICAL WORLD<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

"Know thyself" is one of the most notable wisdoms of the classical past connected to both philosophy and religions. For centuries, already, the West has "known itself" as the heir of the classical world, embraced its ideas and traditions and emulated its forms and symbols. For many modern Western leaders and intellectuals, the classical heritage represented the moral compass of the Western world and its main credential for global leadership or rule.

After the end of the Cold War the victorious West had to re-envision itself in relation to the world. Is it the most efficient coercive global power, as Huntington followers suggested, or the moral authority and prudent leader, that, according the Fukuyama, was able to unite the world? In this context, the essay reexplores the philosophical and religions messages of the Classical world. We ultimately ask if Socrates and Sun Tzu, preaching "know thyself" in the 5c. BC, represent the edges of the same Old world, capable to unite us again.

**Keywords:** global relations, philosophy, Classical world, united universe;

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<sup>1</sup> original scientific paper

## INTRODUCTION

### *“Ut Omnes Unum Sint”*<sup>2</sup>

*The Gospel of John*

The famous quote as part of the prayer of Jesus Christ “That they all may be one”(ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν), was used for centuries by leaders and preachers urging for harmony and by many ecumenical organizations that stand for unity in faith despite the diversity of cultural traditions and practices. It was part of the wider religious message, that, according to the Gospel of John, was pronounced by Jesus himself on “The Last Supper” that gathered famously his disciples before they were sent in all corners of the world, spreading the message that united peoples in all continents.

In modernity this “Judeo-Christian” messages and the wider tradition were admitted as constitutional element of the Western civilization, together with the traditions of the Classical world that in the romantic perceptions of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries European elites were even more uniquely “Western”.

The end of the Cold War was seen by many western intellectuals, as well as numerous representatives of the “non-western” elites that were inspired by the western values and success, as a new chance and a historical momentum for unity of the universe. One of the most prominent representatives and ideologist of this trend was the American political philosopher and intellectual Francis Fukuyama. In his essay for the influential “National Interest”, and later in a separate book, Fukuyama enthusiastically called for the “end of history” and the world as we know it. He has envisioned this final stage of development of human society as a united world through “universalization” of the “idealized” values, traditions and accomplishments of the Western civilization.<sup>3</sup>

Decades latter many still exclaim “the end of the word”. No matter if someone believes them or not, almost everyone is convinced today that the end as foreseen by Fukuyama will not come. Our contemporary world is far

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<sup>2</sup> *The Gospel of John (17:21)*

<sup>3</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, *The National Interest* 16, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18

from united and more than ever challenged by its diversity of values and traditions and the misconceptions, misuses and mistrust connected to them. In this context, it is becoming more popular in politics, mass media and even in scientific analyses to quote the more skeptical or “realistic” views of the world. One of those, and certainly the most prominent, is the argumentation and vision of Samuel Huntington. As one of the most influential intellectuals and political philosophers of his time and foreign policy adviser to the White House, he reacted directly to the ideas of united universe of his former student Fukuyama.

Huntington transformed his critical reaction in Foreign Affairs, into a book titled as “Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order” that exposed a realistic, but also ideologically very different vision of the world and its Western leadership. For Huntington the “Western belief in the universality of Western culture suffers three problems: it is false; it is immoral; and it is dangerous”.<sup>4</sup> But, the moralizing element of his vision is not connected to threatening of the values and traditions of the “others” by the process of universalization and westernization. Exposing his vision of the contemporary world, its past and its future as “history of different civilizations,” Huntington urges for preserving the unique characteristic of one of them, the Western civilization, as the only path for its survival. For him the western traditions and values are not universal and do not have the ability to serve as such. Instead, the West is utterly different than the rest, as it is founded on the unique traditions of Christianity and the Classical world.<sup>5</sup>

### THE FRACTIONALIZED WORLD

The world was less fractionalized, at least in theory, when the West took the lead over the “others” in early modernity. The early leaders of the West, like the French Bourbons or the Holy Roman Emperors perceived themselves as continuation of the millennial traditions of global rule, which included the empires of the Egyptian, Persians and other non-European

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<sup>4</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon&Schuster Publishing, New York, 1996, p.310

<sup>5</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon&Schuster Publishing, New York, 1996, pp.70-71

dynasties.<sup>6</sup> However, the later developments, like the French revolution and the 19<sup>th</sup> century Spring of Nations, led the Europeans into extensive search for identity that would dramatically change their self-perception and their unique perception of the world. Such developments were essential in the creation and shaping of some of the main paradigm of the research of the past and the scientific disciplines that developed simultaneously or through this process.<sup>7</sup>

The European imperialistic and colonial mindset of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries fractionalized the perception of the past so dramatically that even the cultural developments most closely related to Europe, through the Mediterranean, were pronounced as separate 'cultures' or 'civilizations', implying the qualifications of non-European and less valuable. Tons of books by different authoritative academics were written to expose the morally dominant Western system based on Christian values and Classical traditions that was constantly threatened by the chaos and primitivism of the "Orientals", "barbarians" and "savages". They constructed the ideological bases, but also the structure, definitions and semantics of the past and its research.<sup>8</sup>

These dualistic approaches were incrementally transformed in the later developments in different scientific disciplines and are constantly reevaluated by contemporary research, thus losing much of their previously condensed and coherent loading. Yet, the fractionalized perception of the world and its history is still firmly grounded in the stereotypes of the large body of early literature and contemporary researchers are still heavily dependent on its main related constructs, such as 'Classical world', 'Oriental

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<sup>6</sup>Julie Reeves, *Culture and International Relations: Narratives, natives and tourists*, Routledge, London & New York, 2004, 15-22

Ng, Su Fang, "Global Renaissance: Alexander the Great and Early Modern Classicism from the British Isles to the Malay Archipelago." *Comparative Literature*, 58, no. 4, (2006): pp. 293-308

<sup>7</sup>Ljuben Tevdovski, Zoran Ilievski, "French revolution, archaeology and their imprints in the contemporary French and European identity." *International Scientific Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities - Horizons*, University St. Clement of Ohrid - Bitola, XI-17, 2015, pp. 7-22

<sup>8</sup>Julie Reeves, *Culture and International Relations: Narratives, natives and tourists*, Routledge, London & New York, 2004, pp. 15-35

Margarita Diaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century - Archaeology, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past*, Oxford University Press, New York, USA, 2007, p. 127-128

cultures', 'Judeo-Christian' and pagan traditions, for purposes of structure and epistemic valuation.<sup>9</sup>

These remnants of the past embedded deeply in the academic traditions, with the misconceptions that they still create or imply, are increasingly becoming a burden and an obstruction to the further development of the research processes. At the same time, as elements of recidivism in contemporary academia, they also have non-academic implications, reinvigorating or legitimizing old racist and xenophobic ideas in societies around the world.

### NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM

The critical reading of the traditional approaches and body of knowledge, together with eclectic application and combination of wide assortment of methods and theories taken from all current and previous traditions in the different scientific disciplines led the contemporary researchers towards rapid paradigm shifts and transformed the scientific and societal understandings of human past, culture and identities. The constructs born in the early stages of professional development of disciplines studying the past, like "Classical world", 'Oriental cultures', 'Judeo-Christian' or pagan traditions have lost their traditionally compact character and became increasingly perceived through open puzzles of diversity, interrelation and connectivity.<sup>10</sup>

Today, the Classical world is not exclusively related to the European and Roman rule. The Empire and the process of 'Romanization', so important and debated in scientific and societal circles in connection to the identity and history of the 'West' is dominantly analyzed, especially in the last decade, in the context of great connectivity between the Mediterranean and wider areas of Western and Central Europe.<sup>11</sup> Contemporary analyses of this processes

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<sup>9</sup>Ljuben Tevdovski, *The Beauty of the Oikumene Has Two Edges: Nurturing Roman Imperialism in the "Globalizing" Traditions of the East*, in Aaron W. Irvin, ed., *Community and Identity at the Edges of the Classical World*, Wiley Blackwell, New York, 2020

<sup>10</sup>Pitts, M., Versluys, M.J. (Eds.) *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2014

<sup>11</sup>Hingley, R., 2005: *Globalizing Roman culture. Unity, diversity and empire*, Psychology Press, London, 2005

Hitchner, R. B., *Globalization avant la lettre. Globalization and the history of the Roman empire*, *New global studies* 2(2), 1–12. 2008

are increasingly using the construct 'Mediterraneanization', in the context of wider cultural and overall influence received in the West from the "East" through the Mediterranean region.

These developments brought a shift in the interest of the scholars of the Classical past. Previously neglected wide epochs, such as the Hellenistic and Byzantine periods got new attention and value.<sup>12</sup> The renewing integrative picture of human past places these periods in the center of the transfer of culture, ideology, materials and know-how from the Near East to the 'West'.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Versluys exposes the dominant position of the Hellenistic East in the Roman koine of material culture,<sup>14</sup> and scholars like Strootman are analyzing the ideological and political conceptions, born in Hellenistic society/es and their multifaceted influence over the later Roman world.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of the Christianity, many of the artificial dualities, created by the perceptions based on modern bias, are also increasingly fading, at least in academic circles. In the broader field of studies of ancient religions, the extensive literature concentrated on the cults and religious practices, frequently labeled as oriental, mystic or universalistic, has overcome the traditional 'roman-oriental' dichotomy. Today, the roots of this religious developments that lead towards monotheism are increasingly explored in the globalizing trends of the Hellenistic era, that united and transformed traditions and symbols from all over the Old World.<sup>16</sup>

There is a wider trend in different disciplines of exploring the great influence of the Hellenistic world, that united great parts of Asia, Africa and

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<sup>12</sup>Strootman, R. *Dynastic Courts of the Hellenistic Empires*, in Beck, H. *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, Wiley & Sons, 2013

<sup>13</sup>Lavan, M. Payne, R., Weisweiler, J. 2016: *Cosmopolitanism and Empire. Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Oxford University Press, 2016

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<sup>14</sup>Greg Woolf, G. *Romanization 2.0 and its alternatives*, in *Archaeological Dialogues*, 21, pp 45-50, 2014

<sup>15</sup>Facella, M. and Kaizer, T. (Eds.), *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*. Occidens et Oriens 19, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2010

<sup>16</sup>Nagel S., Quack J.F., Witschel C. (eds) *Entangled worlds. Religious confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire. The cults of Isis, Mithras, and Jupiter Dolichenus*. Tübingen: Orientalische Religionen in der Antike / Mohr Siebeck, 2017

Jörg Rüpke, *From Jupiter to Christ - On the History of Religion in the Roman Imperial Period*, Oxford University Press, 2014

Ljuben Tevdovski, *Analyzing Mithraism through the lenses of Hellenistic cosmology and theology*, RIHA, Annual Review of the Institute of History and Archaeology, FES, Goce Delcev University, 2018

Europe, over the later Roman world that emulated and further developed the existing universal concepts. Many contemporary scientists have stressed that the achievements and the systems of the Hellenistic world that united the traditions and symbols of the three continents, and areas of the Old world that we now diversify as “East” and “West”, were fundamental and continue to dominate in the later phase of the “classical globalization”, that we usually label as Roman.

In the studies of ancient religions, this novel view, relieved of the traditional eurocentrism, has reached to the point of rectification of the concepts, as exposed, for example, in the latest edition of Josef Lössl, where he analyzes the religious ideas, including the birth of Christianity, through the lances of 'Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic Era'.<sup>17</sup>

### THE CLASSICAL TRADITIONS OF THE HELLENISTIC UNIVERSE

*“There is really not a single form that art now uses  
that does not come from the critical spirit of Alexandria”*<sup>18</sup>

Oscar Wilde

The Hellenistic age has gained new attractiveness for researchers of the classics and the classical traditions, as well as other fields of research, connected to the cultural, economic, technological and intellectual history of the world. This contemporary development was certainly promoted by the new Imperial Turn in current historical studies, and strongly promoted by the wider self-reflective tendencies in social sciences and humanities, that anticipated the scientific and cultural misconceptions of the modern West. Today, many contemporary researchers of the past trace the roots of important elements of the historical development of societies, arts, science, religions, identities and ideas in the Hellenistic period.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Lössl, J. *Religion in the Hellenistic and Early Post-Hellenistic Era*, in Baker-Brian, N. Lossl, J. (eds). *A companion to religion in late Antiquity*, Blackwell: Wiley, 2018

<sup>18</sup>Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, Salvatore Settis, ed. *Classical Tradition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, USA, 2010, p.33

<sup>19</sup>Marquis Berrey, *Hellenistic Science at Court. Science, technology and medicine in ancient cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017); Georgia L. Irby-Massie and Paul T. Keyser, *Greek Science of the Hellenistic Era: a sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Lucio Russo, *The Forgotten Revolution: How science Was Born in 300 BC and Why It Had to Be Reborn*, (Berlin: Springer, 2004); Judith McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, 300 B.C. – A.D. 700*, (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Glenn R. Bugh, “Hellenistic Military Developments”, *The Cambridge companion to the*

In that context, and even in the more traditional approaches, the historians and theorists of religions have pointed out that multiple aspects of the developments in the Roman empire, and especially the late antiquity, have been rooted in the universalistic traditions of the Hellenistic period and their continuity in the later epochs.

Therefore, many researchers are pushing their analyses beyond the traditionally labeled historical classifications of Hellenistic and Roman, Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic, or Roman and Oriental, that are also product of the early stereotypes of rigid cultural and civilizational borders of the West and the East in antiquity and Modernity. Such classifications imply artificial borders that usually do not reflect upon religious developments in antiquity but are rather connected to our contemporary misconceptions or our inherited modernist system of epistemic valuation.

It would be interesting to analyze the character of the Classical world and its ideological roots and religious transformations, and the further implications on the West, in the context of the distinctive characteristics of the Hellenistic age. On this occasion, and for the purposes of this essay, it would be useful to reflect upon the two critical aspects of society, ideology and religion of this period of ancient globalization, already acknowledged by different researchers of the classical past.

First being, the deification of the rulers, where the reformed Hellenistic system of global rule went step further than its imperial predecessors. The Macedonian generals, being “Western” and “European” and many times in early Eurocentric research and intellectual thought credited for establishing the Western hegemony over the world, inherited the empire and many of its traditions from the stereotypically “eastern” Persians. However, the Persians, were “kings of the world, by the will of God/s”, while in the classical centers of arts and sciences, like Alexandria, Antioch and even Athens the poets and intellectuals sang of the “western” Macedonian kings as if they were the gods themselves. This Macedonian “god-like” tradition was incrementally transferred to the Roman rulers, and only in the later period, that we call Byzantium, the emperors

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*Hellenistic world*, ed. Glenn R. Bugh. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 265–94; Andrew Steward, *Hellenistic Art, AD 1500–2000*, in *A companion to the Hellenistic world*, ed., Andrew Erskine (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).



were again “kings of the world, by the will of God”.<sup>20</sup> This system was passed on the early-modern European dynasts, that ruled the world “by the will of god” and exposed these arguments for universal rule to many “non-western” people that they encountered and conquered. In this context, the classical tradition is useful for reevaluating the Huntingtonian arguments on the differences of the West and the rest. It certainly brings new light to Huntington’s words: “God and Caesar... have been a prevailing dualism in Western culture. Only in Hindu civilization were religion and politics also so distinctly separated. In Islam, God is Caesar; in China and Japan, Caesar is God; in Orthodoxy, God is Caesar’s junior partner.”<sup>21</sup> It seems that “reinvigorating”, as Huntington urges, the classical traditions of the West, might help us find important elements of shared traditions with the non-western “civilizations” or as David Stasavage sees it, universalities in the societal transformation throughout world and history.<sup>22</sup>

The second aspect of reformation of the “Eastern” model of the Persians by the “western” Macedonians was the establishing of a decentralized model for promotion of the universal imperialism. Despite, our tendencies to find some form of “classical” ingenuity in this early development, it’s most logical to trace its roots in Stasavage’s historical pattern, that “European rulers for a very long time were remarkably weak”.<sup>23</sup> His analyses of the medieval developments are applicable to antiquity as well, where the small peripheral kingdom of the Macedonians, was emulating the Persian traditions for a century, but emerged as global power in less than a decade. While the Macedonian king, Alexander, was proclaimed as ruler of the world, his “early passing”, would transform at least few Macedonian aristocrats and generals, spread around the world, into uncontested “universal” rulers of the world, effectively governing only parts of

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<sup>20</sup>Ralf Strootman, *Queen of Kings: Cleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria*, in: Margherita Facella and Ted Kaizer eds., in *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East. Occidens et Oriens 19*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2010, pp.140–157

<sup>21</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon&Schuster Publishing, New York, 1996, pp.70-71

<sup>22</sup>Prof. Stasavage exposes further our contemporary stereotypes, explaining that some groups or tribes form different continents encountered and conquered by the armies of the European global rulers “with god’s consent” even had preexisting societal organization closely resembling the “democracy” known from classical sources.

David Stasavage, *The Decline and Rise of Democracy – A Global History from Antiquity to today*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2020

<sup>23</sup>David Stasavage, *The Decline and Rise of Democracy – A Global History from Antiquity to today*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2020, стр. 11

Alexander's empire. Such development created a "competitive model where different royal centers and elites lived and contributed in the same 'united universe', while their perception of it was slightly curved by the ideologies of their royal courts". In such competitive globalized realities of the Classical world the different hubs of universalistic tendencies managed to bring many local narratives and symbols, elites and cults close to the imperial religious and ideological matrix/es, and even those elites and cults built in reaction of such system became heavily influenced by the universalist narratives and their variations.<sup>24</sup>

In the West this tradition was taken over by the Romans and the "Byzantines", but it was equally, or even more, emulated by the Parthians in the East, later on transmitted to the "Sasanian empire(s) and ultimately to the empires of early Islam".<sup>25</sup> All the descendants of this model of universal rule from England of the Stuarts, and France of the Bourbons (and even Napoleon) to the rulers of the same period "in the East", like Iskandar Shah in Malaysia or Iskandar Muda in Indonesia, shared their common heritage, that legitimized them as descendants and aspirers of global rule<sup>26</sup> The "classical heritage" of these rulers of the Western world, as well as those in the East, would certainly not create "lines of cleavage"<sup>27</sup> or civilizational differences but rather unite their views on the society and the world as a whole.

### **THE CLASSICAL WORLD, CHRISTIANITY AND THE IDEAL OF THE UNITED UNIVERSE**

*"... He came as god-sent governor for everyone and mediator for all... He instructed all to think of the whole inhabited world as their fatherland, his camp as their acropolis and garrison, the morally good as their kin, the morally bad as foreigners."*

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<sup>24</sup>Ljuben Tevdovski, *The Beauty of the Oikumene Has Two Edges: Nurturing Roman Imperialism in the "Glocalizing" Traditions of the East*, in Aaron W. Irvin, ed., *Community and Identity at the Edges of the Classical World*, Wiley Blackwell, New York, 2020

<sup>25</sup>Rolf Strootman, *Hellenistic Imperialism and the Ideal of World Unity*, in C. Rapp, H. A. Drake, ed., *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World - Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2014, pp. 39

<sup>26</sup>Ng, Su Fang, "Global Renaissance: Alexander the Great and Early Modern Classicism from the British Isles to the Malay Archipelago." *Comparative Literature*, 58, no. 4, 2006, pp. 293-308

<sup>27</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster Publishing, New York, 1996, pp. 238-240

Plutarch, speaking of the advent of Alexander the Great and his new universe.

*As roman-period administrator, philosopher and priest, Plutarch quotes the work of the Hellenistic philosopher Zeno, whose main aim was that: 'our arrangement for habitations should not be based on cities or peoples, each one distinguished by its own special system of justice, but we should regard all men as citizens and members of the populace, and there should be one way of life and order, like that of the herd grazing together and nurtured by a common law/pasturing.' Plutarch adds a comment that: 'Zeno wrote this, picturing as it were a dream or image of a philosopher's well regulated republic, but it was Alexander who gave effect to the theory.'*<sup>28</sup>

The Classical world created with Alexander's conquest strengthened and widely spread the religious concepts and ideologies related to the united universe of peoples, governed by universal principles of the good and righteous. However, it created and recreated assortment of diverse expressions, rituals, traditions and narratives, aiming to support this religious and ideological frame. In Athens the Macedonian king Demetrius was "greatest and dearest of the gods" bringing salvation and prosperity together with goddess Demeter, in Asia Minor king Seleucus I and his son Antiochus were "Revealed Gods" and their temples were next to that of the related Apollo, but in Babylon they were related to the local sun-god of the temple of Esagila and Ezida, and the Ptolemaic kings and queens were connected to Isis and Serapis.<sup>29</sup>

In places from India in the East to Sicily the West, and even further, these classical dynasts were "revealed gods" and "saviors", but also descending from gods and, thus, "sons of gods". For example, the inscription on a victory stele, from the area of the Red Sea addresses the king as: "Ptolemy the Great King, the son of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe the Brother-Sister Gods, children of King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice the Savior Gods,

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<sup>28</sup>Lavan, M. Payne R., Weisweiler, J. *Cosmopolitanism and Empire. Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 144

<sup>29</sup>Peter Thonemann, *The Hellenistic Age*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016

Chaniotis, Angelos. "The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers." In *A companion to the Hellenistic world*, ed., Andrew Erskine, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003. pp. 431-443.

descendant on his father's side of Heracles, the son of Zeus, and on his mother's side of Dionysos, the son of Zeus."<sup>30</sup>

The religious dynamics in the Classical world, gained an additional complexity when some of the biggest centers of the Hellenistic world, like Alexandria, Antioch, Pella or Pergamon were united under one political rule in Roman times. The elites that were already exposed or have embraced the idea of the 'united universe' and related concepts had the unique advantage and used the uneven playing field in the new highly competitive globalizing Roman world. The cults and traditions of peripheral and newly integrated territories to the classical civilization, like those of Western and Central Europe, were still trying to adapt to these ideas and concepts. In contrary to that, the 'advanced' and more globalized systems of belief, mostly from the Eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, that already shared the ideas of united and prosperous world, and the 'Romans' that have embraced them, were already competing for materialization of their interests, aspirations and worldviews in the 'united universe' of the classical world extended to the West.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, the intensive spreading of the 'universalistic' cults, that the Eurocentric research of the previous centuries perceived and analyzed as "oriental", such as the worship of Serapis and Isis, Mithras, Iuppiter Dolichenus, Magna Mater or the Sun-god, and even Judaism and early Christianity, represent the high tide waves of the ancient globalization. They were coming from the centers of the classical world, and affecting the peripheries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

In this sense the Christianity in Western as much as it is Classical, but it is also something that connects the East and the West, and is universal, together with the Classical world in which this religious tradition was born.

Stroetman connects the birth of the imperialism and monotheism in the ideals of unity of the early Classical world. Thus, even in the 3th c. BC we

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<sup>30</sup>C. Rapp, H. A. Drake, ed. *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World - Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2014, pp.48

<sup>31</sup>Ljuben Tevdovski, *The Beauty of the Oikumene Has Two Edges: Nurturing Roman Imperialism in the "Glocalizing" Traditions of the East*, in Aaron W. Irvin, ed., *Community and Identity at the Edges of the Classical World*, Wiley Blackwell, New York, 2020

read from the great poets like Callimachus and Theocritus that “Zeus is King of Heaven, Ptolemy King of the World”.<sup>32</sup>

These shared traditions of the “Classical world” continued in the East and the West for centuries where “the Roman emperor, Byzantine basileus, or Arabcaliph could claim to be the exclusive earthly representative of a sole universaldeity.”<sup>33</sup>

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8. Greg Woolf, Romanization 2.0 and its alternatives, in *Archaeological Dialogues*, 21, 2014

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<sup>32</sup>In Theocritus, for example, we read: “From Zeus let us begin, Muses, and with Zeus let us end, when we make our songs, for he is preeminent among the gods. But among mortals, let Ptolemy be reckoned first – first and last and in between, for he is supreme among men.”

C. Rapp, H. A. Drake, ed. *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World - Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2014, pp.49-50

<sup>33</sup>Ibid. p.38

9. J.Lössl, *Religion in the Hellenistic and Early Post-Hellenistic Era*, in Baker-Brian, N. Lossl, J. (eds). *A companion to religion in late Antiquity*, Blackwell: Wiley, 2018
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