

4 Globalisation, ancient cosmopolitanism, and the Western Bollywood

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Introduction

In November 2014, just a few months after he was elected as president of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hosted a representative summit of the Latin American Muslim leaders on the Bosphorus. It was in that particular context that the first popularly elected president of Türkiye decided to spectacularly declare that “Muslim sailors reached the American continent 314 years before Columbus” (Guardian, November 2014). The utterance was widely hailed and gave a sense of pride to many Muslims worldwide (see: Kar 2019; Yayla 2022), but it seems it did not resonate well with the wider Western public.

For the specialists and political analysts in the West, the pompous speeches, historical revisionism, and even the specific wording might have seemed unsurprising. They interpreted this statement of the early re-Islamising and populist “reformer” in the Near East mostly in the narrow context of his domestic political aspirations, the need to present himself as leader of the “Muslim world”, or as just another mantra or catchy phrase tailored for the needs of his new foreign policy, frequently labelled as “neo-Ottomanism”.

Yet, the wider public in the West seemed to be less prepared for such historical revelations. The response came through the leading Western media outlets that were not yet so decisively critical of Erdoğan’s policies. Instead, the very content of this political statement coming from the East and its explicit character turned into mind-boggling global news. While the numerous public reactions carried overtones that varied between humour and ridicule (The Guardian, 18 November 2014), serious news agencies, including The Guardian and BBC (14 and 16 November 2014), acted much more “responsibly”. In accordance with Western intellectual traditions, they objectivised the context of this “irrational” claim by consulting relevant scholars who anonymously confirmed that “there is no archaeological evidence of Islamic structures or settlements in the Americas pre-dating (Columbus)” (Scham 2009, 172; O’Connor 2014; The Guardian, 18 November 2014).

Today, when Erdoğan is increasingly alienating politically and geo-strategically from the major Western powers, his original motives behind the 2014 statement of “the Muslims’ possible discovery of the Americas” are largely forgotten in the West. Yet, what remains interesting from this episode is our prompt response and

the attitude in this short, uneven debate. Even then, many were fast to portray the president as another megalomaniac *oriental despot*, ignoring the substance of his arguments that “an objective writing of history will show the contribution of the East, the Middle East and Islam to the science and arts” (Tharoor 2014; Rubiés 2005). It made no difference that Erdoğan’s argumentations were not an isolated appearance but part of a wider perspective that included the viewpoints and extensive analyses by academics and institutions from the “Orient”, as their academic credentials and “(un)scientific methods” are traditionally questioned and considered less reliable in the West (Scham 2009, 166–183).

As prime minister of Türkiye, Erdoğan was proclaimed “the European of the Year” in 2004; he was co-founder of United Nations’ Alliance of Civilizations and a “model US partner” for presidents such as Bush and Obama. Yet, no one dared or cared to locate in his historical revelations an element of a new bond or shared history between the East and the West. Thus, the segment of the same 2014 speech in which Erdoğan underlines that “converting people by force, by the sword, has never been a part of Islam” (O’Connor 2014) was less interesting to Western audiences. At the same time, there were no signs of serious considerations to analyse this new “American discovery theory” as a unique attempt to bring America and the West, as well as their values and achievements, closer to the Muslim identity.

Though deeply rooted in their “uniquely Muslim” narratives and ontologies, with a bit of effort to reconceptualise through the perspective of the “other”, one might find in Erdoğan’s statements interesting aspects of contemporary cosmopolitanism. After all, his dislocation of Muslim culture, ideas, and accomplishments beyond, and even far away from, the traditional boundaries of the *Ummah* in the Old World of Afro-Eurasia, closely resembles the ancient challenge to the political and mental boundaries of Greek poleis of the first “Western” cosmopolitan, Diogenes (Eikeland 2016, 26–30; Lavan et al. 2016). At the same time, his exposed visions for the history and nature of Islam and Islamic proselytism might be targeting mainly Western stereotypes. Yet, in his *polis* in the East, such bold statements might be interpreted by many influential political and religious authorities as “religious impiety and corruption of the minds of the youth”.¹ These are, incidentally, the same charges brought once against Socrates and his cosmopolitan ideas that were extremely intimidating to the political, ideological, and religious particularities of ancient Athens (Brown 2000, 74–87).

These interesting parallels might have been much more useful in some parallel universe where the Islamic or re-Islamising leaders are the main proponents of globalisation and cosmopolitanism or are perceived as such in the West. In our world, instead, the most important questions arising from this short-lived debate are not particularly connected to the Orient. They rather reflect certain dilemmas of the contemporary identity of the West.

One wonders whether the (non-)existence of Muslim material culture in the early Americas represents the key question of such a debate or just the best excuse. Should we not rather ask ourselves why we are so dismissive of the whole idea of Muslim sailors predating Columbus in the Americas? Or why we are able to imagine a prehistoric migration to these continents or a Viking landing but not

consider a Muslim one? Even more importantly, are we subconsciously ignoring or undermining the great and well-documented contributions of Muslims in the development of medieval and early modern cartography and science? Should we be reminded of their contributions in the transmission of the “classical knowledge” that led towards the overall growth of early modern European societies and the transatlantic and wider discoveries (Jolivet 1988, 113–148)?

These and other such questions reveal a more substantial one, that convincingly reminds us how much of our objective analyses are still undermined by the importance of the past and its symbols for our present identity. Is our dismissive attitude towards Muslim presence or contribution to the early development of the new Western world only a reflection or even a direct reflex of our Huntingtonian worldview (Huntington 1996)? Do we still share this strong ideological conviction that the primacy of the West and its values is dependent on its “uniqueness” and clear ideological distinctiveness and moral superiority to the “other civilizations” and especially those most stereotypically connected to the idea of the “Orient”? Even more, are such propositions of the contemporary political, scientific, or cultural leaders from the East considered as dangerously undermining even the most liberal and cosmopolitan global visions of the West? Are the liberal (or cosmopolitan) followers of the idealistic traditions in International Relations’ theories of Fukuyama, Huntington’s main ideological opponent, able to imagine or accept an intensively globalising world where the “non-Western values” are equally promoted and influential as the unilaterally and strongly proposed Western liberal democracy?

This chapter explores the roots of cosmopolitanism far beyond its traditional Western ontologies, which are limiting its appearance to the Western-imagined “Greek, Roman, and Enlightenment” historical contexts (Meskell 2009, 2). Instead, it reconstructs a thick layer of protocosmopolitanism related to the wider historical, political, and cultural transformations in ancient Afro-Eurasia. It locates the roots of this development in the intensifying globalisation processes of the first millennium BC, strongly empowered by the widely extending, consistent, and ever-transforming imperial system.

I hypothesise that the climactic point of this ancient globalisation, occurring in the last three centuries of the first millennium BC, and closely connected to the decentralisation of the universal imperial model, created a shared “cultural (and political) horizon” (Versluys 2022, 67), that can be categorised as “cosmopolitan *oikumene*”.

The chapter focuses on the Hellenistic-period decentralisation of the global system of rule as a key element for the empowerment of local and regional elites, as well as an important driver of their economic, political, and symbolic exchanges. Most importantly, I am reconstructing through these processes the creation of a universal system of mutual legitimisation of local, regional, and global elites. A system that was constantly reimagining the shared *oikumene* through syncretisation, glocalisation, and globalisation of numerous local religious, social, and political traditions, narratives, and symbols.

In that context, I argue that this shared ideology of ancient Afro-Eurasia represents an ancient form, or at least a precursor, of the “rooted cosmopolitanism,

which accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches and that rests on the legitimacy of plural loyalties, of standing in many circles, but with common ground” (Cohen 1992, 480–483).

In addition, using globalisation theory, I propose a new model that explores the elements of the heritage of the holy grail of the Western “uniqueness”, the Classical “Greco-Roman” world. Utilising the comparative framework of the extending *oikumene* of ancient Afro-Eurasia and the Waters’ triparted theorem of globalisation as a primary matrix, the chapter synthesises a sharper picture of the elements of localism, glocalisation, and cosmopolitanism of Rome and its heritage.

Finally, arguing that Rome, as other Western historical *topoi*, presents only one of the many diverse successors or transmitters of the resilient elements of the ancient cosmopolitan ideology, I suggest that the glocalised heritage of this protocosmopolitanism, embedded in different local cultures around the world, should be utilised in the constant reconceptualisations of the dialectically imagined rooted cosmopolitanism.

The cosmopolitan *oikumene* and its heritage

“The deeply embedded ancestral status” that the West ascribes to Rome, and the aspects of Roman heritage that were used for modern self-identification, the creation of the shared identity of Western elites and the legitimisation of their global dominance in the colonial phase and later, are postulated on the understandings of the unique and uniquely Western history, culture, and identity of the Romans and the Greco-Roman world (Witcher 2015, 202; Hingley 2001).

However, this status of Rome as a key milestone in the creation of the “imaginative geography” and the new local heritage of the modern Western imagined communities and the imagined community of the West, had repeatedly stumbled upon the multitude of undeniable and indelible historical sources and material, exposing the major impact of *Ex oriente lux* on the creation and identity of the Roman world (Athanassiadi and Macris 2013, 61; Clark 2013).

The classicists, historians, archaeologists, and other researchers have spent decades debating and finetuning the different aspects of this East-West dichotomy. Finally, due to the new paradigms and achievements in these and numerous related disciplines developed in the last few decades, we can no longer see Rome or the Roman world as uniquely Western.

Important arguments in favour of such a conclusion emerge as well from the increased application of the globalisation theory, suggesting that Rome could not be analysed adequately through this modern categorisation or as any other form of consistent “cultural container” (Pitts and Versluys 2015, 12). Furthermore, this “beyond container thinking” framework also involves the deconstruction of the stereotypical nomenclature of Eastern or Near-eastern influence (Versluys 2015, 143–147). Instead, the complex transformative processes that created the Roman world(s) and Roman heritage can be reanalysed, in this context, only in the wider frame of the spatio-temporal continuities and change of the Afro-Eurasian globalisation processes (Agut-Labordère and Versluys 2022; Beaujard 2010, 1–43).

Thus, while the roots of these processes might be traced to early Bronze Age globalisation (Vandkilde 2017, 509–518), born in the Near East, Rome was integrated into a much wider, complex, and interrelated globalisation network. This shared world, or *oikumene* to which Rome was introduced, was neither exclusively Near-eastern nor Eastern. Instead, it extended and related communities, ideas, and materials from the Indian to the Atlantic Ocean and from the Caspian Sea and Hindukush to Eritrea.

As much as it owed to its Bronze Age roots, this *oikumene* was truly developed only in the first millennium BC. At that stage, the globalisation process received a new great impetus through the emergence of the imperial systems of the Neo-Assyrians, Persians, and Macedonians (Versluys 2022, 34–71; Tevdovski 2020, 7–28).

These ancient empires, or evolving system(s) of global governance, expanded dramatically the geographic scope of the globalisation process and served as additional cohesive elements that supported the constantly increasing wide-scale flow of materials, ideas, knowledge, and technological know-how (Lavan et al. 2016, 1–28). In addition, the imperial policies, in conjunction with the wider transformative effects of the globalisation process, helped the creation of a widely shared framework of institutions, society, belief systems, customs, and practices among numerous interrelated communities (Versluys 2022, 34–71).

This ever-evolving imperial system was developed under the central, millennia-old premise that the world should be ruled by a universal ruler, like the Assyrian “king of the four quarters”, the Persian Great king, as a restorer of the “primordial unity of the world”, or the Macedonian “cosmocrator” (Stoneman 2008, 96–97; Lavan et al. 2016, 1–28; Chin 2016, 134). Such a ruler, as “Archimedes fulcrum”, was perceived as a unique legitimate force with a mandate to move or model the universe by the will of god/s, in accordance/synergy with the gods, or as living god or son of god (Iossif et al. 2011).

While this paradigm of the rule suggested strong centralisation, the effective system that implemented it was very decentralised. It represented a wider multi-layered network, consisting of the ruler’s extended family or ethne, the priests, and the free/autonomous merchants. The extended family or ethne, effectively ruling different areas of the empires, drew their legitimacy from the central authority, its narratives, propaganda, and policies, and as such, they represented the main element of homogenisation and standardisation of the imperial space. Yet, this first layer of integration was only one element in the creation of the ancient *oikumene*. An equally important element of the imperial system was the priestly (and bureaucratic) class, which drew its legitimacy from both global and local factors. Depending usually simultaneously on the will of the global ruler (or his extended court) and the local/regional traditions and dynamics, priests were constantly in a position to translate global ideologies and policies into local religious and political idioms. Finally, the free/autonomous merchants represented an additional adhesive element interrelating the diverse communities through the imperial space and providing new links even with those living beyond the geographical, sociological, or ideological boundaries of such worlds (Payne 2016, 212).

Thus, the priest/bureaucratic class (and merchants) was crucial for the deep penetration of the imperial propaganda, as well as the ideas of universality and unity that it conveyed. Serving the political needs of the universal rulers, perceived as universal protectors of all temples, saviours of all peoples or giving freedom (autonomy) to mercantile cities, priests and bureaucrats were constantly injecting global conceptions, messages, and symbols into the local religious and political narratives. At the same time, the status, interests, and aspirations of these elites were directly connected with their capabilities to innovate and promote their own local cults and traditions over others in the wider imperial context and among central administration and dynastic courts.

Thus, they transformed into key protagonists of the two-way dialogue between the local and global elements of the imperial system. Through reimagining or globalising the local religious and political traditions, the priest class impregnated the ideas of universality into numerous and diverse local narratives. At the same time, together with the dynastic courts and the decentralised ruling class, they promoted them globally, creating increased global awareness of the cultural diversity of the ideologically united world. The deep penetration of this global multidirectional flow of ideas, materials, and symbols in diverse local realities initiated the creation of an *oikumene*, united not in homogeneity but in diversity and cosmopolitanism.

The climactic point of interconnectedness and sharing throughout this cosmopolitan *oikumene* of ancient Afro-Eurasia occurred in the last three centuries of the first millennium BC, a period that we still refer to, Eurocentrically and derogatively, as Hellenistic.²

The Hellenistic globalisation involved global elements of homogenisation, like the massive urban planning and elements of life in the cities, global monetisation, new communication and trade lines, development of the universal (linear) time, universalising languages and alphabets and the culture of reading, global educational and scientific centres, as well as hybridisation, globalisation and glocalisation of numerous local and regional cultural, religious and political traditions and practices (Irby-Massie and Keyser 2002; Russo 2004; Bugh 2006, 265–94; McKenzie 2007; Kosmin 2018; Berrey 2017). Yet, most of all, the Hellenistic period brought an unprecedented increase in the consciousness of the world as one place.

One of the key developments of this period that the globalisation process would benefit greatly from was the modification of the structure of the traditional imperial system (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). Macedonian imperialism was built upon the traditions and parameters of the Near-eastern imperial systems and especially those of its immediate predecessors (Briant 1996; Ma 2005, 187–191). Yet, the unique developments in the few decades following the death of Alexander led towards a process of transformation that replaced the embedded centralisation of the system with a form of competitive multidimensional network. This amended imperial model has proved to be very compatible and adaptable to overall globalisation trends (Martinez-Sève 2003, 234).

Thus, the new Macedonian dynasts, emerging at the end of the 4th century BC, in the tradition/pattern of their Persian and other Near-eastern predecessors, ruled as universal rulers of the world in synergy with gods and frequently as living gods

or sons of gods (Chanotis 2003, 431–443; Ma 2013, 323–352). Each Macedonian dynast was presented as a new Alexander, a descendent of the Macedonian royal house and related to its gods and godly predecessors Heracles, Dionysus, and Helios (Apollo) (Mørkholm 1991, 27; Stewart 1993; Strootman 2014a). As such, each Antigonid, Ptolemaid or Seleucid, by his real and imagined birthright and accomplishments, was an inheritor and ruler over the entirety of Alexander's *oikumene* (Stewart 1993; Strootman 2014c, 38–61). Yet, at any point in time during the Hellenistic period, there were at least a few of these universal Alexanders, effectively ruling only limited parts of this imagined world (Strootman 2014c, 38–61; Kosmin 2017, 85–94).

The fierce mutual competition of these localised global rulers, embedded in the amended imperial model, involved a constant re-legitimisation through a battle of the spear, but even more through the competing and ever-evolving dynastic narratives (Strootman 2014d, 325–341). Yet, such parallelism did not lead towards estranged imperial spaces or worlds. Instead, it initiated a great mobilisation of local and regional resources, populations, technologies, ideas, and traditions in the lasting global competition for envisioning and achieving the shared conception of a universally ruled *oikumene*.

Thus, both coalitions and confrontations of different Macedonian dynastic centres ultimately resulted in intermarriages. Over time, every Macedonian dynast in Europe, Asia, or Africa was not just legitimised as the “new Alexander” through his lineage from the old Macedonian royal house (the Argeads) but also through his descent from dynasts from some other dynastic centre, which added to his narrative and ambitions (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). At the same time, it was not just the rulers of the core territories who were related and were basing their legitimacy on this combined heritage. The consistency of such a model can be seen throughout the Hellenistic world. Thus, even the rulers of different edges of this wide globalising world, like India or Sicily were distantly related between themselves and, through marriages with Macedonian princesses of different lateral dynastic branches, integrated into the wider dynastic system.

In addition, all these multiplying universal rulers, in the pattern of their Persian and other Near-eastern predecessors, acted as protectors of all temples, saviours of all peoples or giving freedom (autonomy) to mercantile cities/elites (Beaulieu 2014, 13–30). Yet, in the new competitive global realities, Macedonian dynasts were particularly close and relied upon the resources, cooperation, and loyalty of concrete local or regional communities, elites, and centres of power. Thus, if the policies of localisation of power and “co-opted local elites” were already used by Assyrians and Persians in their system of governing different regions (Lavan et al. 2016, 18), in the case of the Macedonian dynasts, the policies towards concrete local traditions, institutions, and elites became central for their global imperial pretensions (Martinez-Sève 2003, 234). As much as they depended on the support of the global Macedonian ruling/military elites, their localised effective rule promoted the status of the local elites as well.

This close relationship of different local elites, especially those from the core territories of different dynasts, like Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, or Bactria, and

those from contested territories like Jews, Hellenes, and Anatolian elites (even India), with the local dynastic centres, as primary nodes of Hellenistic globalisation, created diverse forms of cultural and political metamorphoses, with dramatic local, regional, and global effects.

The policies and initiatives of these universalistic hubs preserved and promoted globalised or glocalised different local traditions, like the Aegean heritage of Homer's myths, theatre, and the *paideia* of the Hellenes, Phrygian Tales, "Indian wisdom", or the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Jewish history, culture, and tradition. They also promoted, transformed, glocalised or globalised early Buddhism, Hellenic, Babylonian, Anatolian, and Egyptian gods and paved the way for the global expansion of Mithraism, Judaism, and Christianity.

All these traditions, "memorised" by the Hellenistic *oikumene*, were rooted in the heritage, values, and aspirations of different local and regional elites (Versluys 2022, 34–71). However, their reproduction in the Hellenistic period was part of the enhanced local-global dialogue of the Macedonian imperial model. They served the needs for legitimising different dynasts as universal and ideal rulers, descendants and related to all Kings and Gods and benefactors of all communities and temples (Beaulieu 2014, 13–30). At the same time, they promoted the status and aspirations of different priestly and bureaucratic elites trying to establish ownership or authority over this reimagined heritage as a unique tool in the global battle of narratives in the shared *oikumene* (Stevens 2016, 82).

One of the many appropriate illustrations of this multi-directional dialogue of the local and the global is the heritage of Hellenistic Babylonia. There, in the light of the Antiochus cylinder, we are able to witness the glocalisation of the globalised symbols and narratives or rule and order into the traditional idiom of the Babylonian religious and bureaucratic elites (Beaulieu 2014, 13–30). Thus, the dynast is presented with his usual universalised characteristics: as "Macedonian", "king of the world", and "king of (all) countries" (Stevens 2016, 82–84; Strootman 2013, 67–97). Yet, at the same time, he is "king of Babylon", caretaker of the temple of "Esagila and Ezida", who complies with its traditional/regional religious rituals, compared to the traditional deities, and, as the previous Neo-Assyrian and Persian universal rulers, enters the eternal Babylonian archives (Stevens 2016, 82–84). Berossos' *Babyloniaca*, on the other hand, although emerging from the same local (and religious) tradition, takes a totally opposite approach. It tells a local/regional history of Babylonia, from its traditional myths of the creation of the world to its Assyrian and Babylonian dynastic history. Yet, Berossos chooses not to use the local elitist traditions of the Akkadian cuneiform script. He also avoids the older universalised written tradition of Imperial Aramaic, although it was widely used in the Seleucid realm. Instead, he introduces his "local history" through the widest possible medium, the Koine language used by courts and elites throughout the Hellenistic *oikumene* (Haubold 2016, 95–96). In addition, Berossus "establishes his credentials" through a globally prominent stereotype (and exonym) as a "Chaldean sage" and carefully selects his "Babylonian" mythical material, choosing the narratives that could be easily understood and appreciated by elites with different cultural and educational backgrounds (Haubold 2016, 92). Finally, he illuminates

episodes and aspects of Assyrian and Babylonian kingship that directly identify with and legitimise the policies and global status of the Seleucid dynastic house (Haubold 2016, 94–97). Thus, *Babyloniaca* visualises a local/regional heritage that was, at the same time, globalised and glocalised (Stevens 2016, 70). Even more, in its striving towards universality, this Hellenistic heritage transforms into a monument of the ancient cosmopolitanism rooted in the Babylonian local traditions.

Yet, this is not a unique characteristic of Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, but rather an omnipresent pattern that illustrates the level of cultural and societal transformation driven by the impact of Hellenistic globalisation.³

The same process might be traced in Hellenic heritage as well, despite the fact that its localism is most prominently appropriated in modern Western identity and traditionally exaggerated through scientific misconceptions related to Eurocentrism. Thus, the *paideia* of the Hellenistic world is notoriously related to the philosophers living and working in its numerous urban centres. However, despite the Hellenic-rooted nomenclature or possible appearances, the function of many of these professionals as educators of aristocrats and princes, advisors of kings, courtiers, court scientists and encyclopaedists/archivists, and even religious authorities, owes equally, if not more, to the imperial traditions of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the wider *oikumene*.⁴ The cosmopolitan ideas of Hellenistic philosophy, rooted in different local and global traditions, are an even more illustrative aspect of the globalisation of this local (or previously localised) heritage (Brown 2006, 549–558).

At the same time, through the local status and characteristics of this cosmopolitan elite group, we might analyse the impact of globalisation on the Hellenic *polies*' society. In the new Eastern Mediterranean, integrated into the Macedonian imperial model, the particularistic identity and vision of the micro-world of the Hellenic *poleis* lost its political, cultural, and military significance, which led towards the overall decay of different urban centres of the classical period. Yet, Athens endured this transformation and strengthened its reimagined identity and prominence as the city of the philosophers. However, while classical Athens, with its localism and particularism, condemned the elements of cosmopolitanism in the philosophy of its citizen Socrates and was hostile to and repeatedly banished the pro-Macedonian foreigner, Aristotle, during the Hellenistic period, the city of philosophers transformed into a small but important centre of cosmopolitanism. The numerous new philosophical schools attracted foreigners who frequently led these schools, promoted cosmopolitan ideas, collaborated closely, and profited from different competing dynastic centres. A particularly illustrative episode for the character of the new cosmopolitan Athens was the delegation sent to represent the polis in Rome in 155 BC. Consisting of the "heads of the Academy, the Peripatus and the Stoa, Carneades of Cyrene, Critolaus of Phaselis in Lycia, and Diogenes of Babylon", the delegation represented Athens as a cosmopolitan hub of the wisdom of the "four quarters of the world" (Haake 2015, 79; Lavan et al. 2016, 16). At the same time, it illuminates the results of a process through which a smaller centre of the Hellenistic *oikumene* reimagines its localist preimperial traditions into a globalising image of a meeting place for dialogue and competition of the intellectual traditions and heritage produced in the universalistic centres of the different dynastic branches.

Finally, even the most distinctive symbols of Macedonian imperialism, although rooted in the local or regional Macedonian heritage and initially transformed into deterritorialised social traditions of the ruling Macedonian elites, were later universalised into shared symbols of order, hierarchy, and power. Furthermore, this global heritage, through the close interrelations of different universal rulers with the local and regional political, bureaucratic, and religious elites, was multiplied into different glocalised and interrelated variants and interpretations. The iconography and mythology of these global symbols of power were re-rooted in diverse local or glocalised traditions, acquiring a multitude of forms, like the Buddhist, Egyptian-born, and Carthaginian Heracles, or different syncretisation and reinterpretation of Dionysus and Helios (Puskás 1990, 42–45; Arora 1992, 319; Karttunen 1997, 89; Bosworth 1996, 121–123). In the same context, we are able to follow, as well, the early integration and reinterpretation of the mythology and iconography of Alexander in Hellenic, Egyptian, and Syrian, and later in Jewish or Mithraic, temples and religious traditions, or his reimagining as universal ruler born to Egyptian, Persian, and, later, Ethiopian dynastic parents.

While certain cultural transfers can be traced in the needs and policies of the dynastic centres, this unprecedented level of transformation and interconnectedness of the local, regional, and global represents a direct result of the accelerated globalisation process during the Hellenistic period. Its level of affecting local communities and creating interrelated interests, ideas, and identities across the lines of the traditional social and cultural cleavages and throughout wider geographic distances displays many similar characteristics with the present stage of the globalisation process (Mairs 2017, 885–895).

Globalising Rome—between *polis* and *cosmopolis*

As much as the decentralised model of Macedonian imperialism promoted globalisation, the overall growth and empowerment of the local communities through this globalisation process ultimately challenged the central authority of the Macedonian dynasts.

In addition, the “decisive stage in the integration” and “interconnection” that, by the year 200 BC, spread towards the Western Mediterranean, continental areas of Europe and Africa, deeper north into Central Asia, and east towards Eastern India, and China, empowered communities, and elites beyond the traditional “imagined geographies” of the Hellenistic dynastic system (Beaujard 2010, 34). While the “material” and “political exchanges” were increasingly interconnecting these new entities with the *oikumene*, many of them were only recently introduced into its symbolic unity (Waters 2001, 20). This symbolic deficiency of the new-comers represented a particular challenge for the “global moral behaviour” that was uniting the complex “network of dependent and overlapping factors” of the *oikumene* and ultimately undermining its global rulers (Scham 2009, 169, also on global moral behaviour, see: Appiah 2006; Ng 2006, 293–308).

This complex relationship with the globalisation process encouraged further decentralisation and flexibility of the dynastic system, creating the new “cultural

(and political) horizon” of the post-Hellenistic *oikumene* (Versluys 2022, 67). Thus, in the process of dissolution of the most powerful dynastic systems/branches of the Hellenistic *oikumene*, those of the Antigonids, Seleucids, and Ptolemaids, numerous lateral dynastic branches and local elites grew into independent dynastic cores. This enhanced multiplication of the model of rule created a new strong bond between the local and global in the *oikumene*. Finally, between the first century BC and the first century AD, numerous territories of the Old World from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, were ruled by “universal” dynasts with shared origins, narratives, and worldviews. The traditional Macedonian dynastic names, like Ptolemy, Amyntas, Demetrius, Antiochus, or Archelaus, in these new globalised dynasties were frequently combined with local and regional ones, like Agathocles, Mithridates, or Ariobarzanes. Many of them were still wearing proudly their diadems, the Macedonian kausia, glorified royal chlamys or boots, issuing coins in koine, or promoting their patron gods and progenitors like Heracles, Dionysus, and Helios (van Oppen de Ruiter 2019, 160–191). Yet, in this new post-Hellenistic context, there was also an additional place and focus on numerous reinvented local and global symbols and traditions that were strengthening the legitimacy of the newly emerging dynasts. At the same time, through the well-developed model of Macedonian imperialism, these new dynastic cores reached legitimation through mutual marriages. Thus, they based their legitimacy on the co-dependence on a combined heritage, that recreated an even more vibrant, colourful, and, yet, ideologically unified dynastic “network of alliances and descent” throughout the post-Hellenistic globalised world (Ng 2006, 301).

This interplay between the local and the global created various globalised identities and entities throughout the *oikumene*. The combinations varied, from those with strongly embedded universal symbols, narratives, identities, and principles of rule in their local realms, such as the pioneers of the post-Hellenistic dynastic model in Anatolia, to those aiming to reimagine and “bring forward” their local identities and culture, while pushing for wider extension of their realm and global pretensions (Versluys 2022, 67).

Numerous contemporary scholars have already suggested that the empires born in or on the spatio-temporal boundaries of the Macedonian imperial system should be analysed as successors of its model and socio-cultural traditions (Versluys 2015, 165; Strootman 2014a, 2; Nederveen Pieterse 2015, 225–237; Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). Thus, the Maurya Empire, the Parthian Empire, as well as the Roman and the Kushan Empires, Aksumite and Meroitic kingdoms, and even Han Empire were differently, yet substantially influenced by the global cultural horizon of the Hellenistic *oikumene* (Bang 2012, 60–75; Pitts and Versluys 2015; Beaujard 2010, 34).

Furthermore, the Parthian, Roman, and Kushan Empires that were building their identities against and upon the global cultural and socio-political horizon of the Hellenistic *oikumene* and in close interrelations with post-Hellenistic dynastic cores, such as Cappadocia, Commagene, Osroene, Judea, or post-Hellenistic dynasts in India, might be also analysed as integral elements of the wider post-Hellenistic dynastic system. These successful latecomers, in the competition for legitimacy and global rule, lacked some of the credentials of the traditional

post-Hellenistic cores and had to rely more heavily on their reimagined local identities. In that process, they created multiple “innovative” globalised versions of the ideology and heritage of the Hellenistic *oikumene* (Versluys 2022, 70–71; Witcher 2017, 634–651).

It is only in this wider context that we would be able to reconceptualise Rome beyond the rooted misconceptions (for 200 BC “threshold” see: Versluys 2022, 69–71) related to its status as a supreme shrine of the unique heritage of the Western world. Understanding Rome “as a successor culture” of Macedonian imperialism and the Hellenistic cosmopolitan *oikumene* (Versluys 2015, 165; Strootman 2014a, 2) and an integral element of the post-Hellenistic system takes away its status of a “*sui generis*” case and the historical “precedent for the current world” (Witcher 2017, 645). However, “contextualising” the development and transformations of Rome within the wider globalisation processes of ancient Afro-Eurasia, and even “provincialising it (them) spatially”, alongside the related transformations in Parthia, “Indian Ocean and China”, provides us with a useful comparative framework (Witcher 2017, 645; Nederveen Pieterse 2015, 231–232).

Using globalisation theory and the comparative approach, we might be able to introduce a more complex picture of the interrelated local, regional, and global identities and heritage of Rome. For the needs of this chapter, I have structured and simplified this complexity, following the main principles of Waters’ globalisation theorem, summarised as: “material exchanges localize; political exchanges internationalize; and symbolic exchanges globalize” (Waters 2001, 20).

Localism as Roman heritage

Although living beyond the borders of the dynastic system and on the margins of its cosmopolitan *oikumene*, Rome, like other less integrated parts of the Western Mediterranean, was deeply affected by the enhanced globalisation processes of the Hellenistic period. The analyses of the material culture and early Latin literature reconstruct a picture of Rome and Italy from the third century BC that is not just integrated into the global trade networks but also “perfectly comfortable with its cosmopolitan (cosmopolitanising), or globalised, state” (Isayev 2015, 132).

However, the particular “intensification” of the globalisation process in Italy (Versluys 2015, 162; Isayev 2015, 125–133), related as in other cases with the global developments around 200 BC, might be brought in direct relation with the appearance of the first element of Waters’ tripartite globalisation model—localisation (2001, 20).

Thus, the cosmopolitan world was already *ante portas* with all its glory, even by the end of the third century, when Hannibal brought in front of the walls of Rome the “strange (Indian) monsters of the Macedonians” (Justin, 18.1). Yet, half a century later, the books, artefacts, craftsmen, scholars and especially the cosmopolitan lifestyle that Roman generals themselves brought from the forums, royal libraries, and palaces of the Macedonian kings, were not just inside the city walls but also “corrupting” the minds of young Roman aristocrats (Polyb. 31.25.1–7, see also: Goldberg 2005, 24; van Oppen de Ruiter 2019, 160–191; Spawforth 2018, 262).

This “intensified”, multi-layered connectivity triggered a reaction from the overwhelmed local elites who were trying to navigate and reconceptualise their role and identities in the changing realities (Versluys 2015, 162; Isayev 2015, 125–133). The anti-globalist and xenophobic rhetoric and the religious prosecutions of this period, emerging from the historical sources, like the writings, speeches, and advocacy of Cato the Elder and the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 BC (Petrochilos 1974, 186), reveal the new element of the globalisation of Rome. This newly imagined localism dominated the discourse of Roman conservatives during the Republic and remained an important aspect of the identity of certain Roman elites even in the imperial period.

The ideas, as formulated in Cato’s era, that the newly approaching cosmopolitan, eloquent, and knowledgeable elites, like doctors, philosophers, diplomats, scientists, astrologists, priests, or seers, were dangerous for the city, its values, and system of rule, transformed into a consistent narrative, present in the city and among its elites for centuries.⁵

This embedded parochialism cultivated a specific *intra muros* aspect of the identity of the city and its elites. Thus, rustic ‘common men’, uncorrupted by extravagant global influences, like Marius, were praised in the city as “good Romans”, while the protagonists of wider cosmopolitan influence, projects, or global leadership, like Tiberius Gracchus or Mark Antony, were perceived as the biggest threat to Rome, its elites, and their social status quo (Petrochilos 1974, 166; Sall. Jug. 63.3; 85.12, 32; Rawson 1975, 148–59; Astin 1978).

These elements of Roman identity, entrenched in the ideological battle between the “unique local values” of Rome and the cosmopolitan *oikumene* are at the same time very recognisable, reminding us strongly of the xenophobia in classical Athens and the reactions against its own “medized” elites, “seduced by (the) luxury and power” of the great kings (Zacharia 2008, 29–31; Hall 1989, 204). In that context, we should remind ourselves of the words of Appadurai, that many of the products of globalisation “manifest themselves in intensely local forms but have contexts that are anything but local” (2001, 6).

Thus, if the Roman localism of the early second century was built upon the principles of the *intra muros* identity developed in classical Hellenic poleis,⁶ in the later period, it also recycled, integrated, and utilised concrete narratives from the “cultural memory” of the Hellenistic *oikumene* (Versluys 2022, 66). Prominent examples involve Cicero’s reminiscence of Demosthenes’ Philippics, in the process of defending the republic and its ideology from the Roman leaders “seduced by (the) luxury and power” of the dynasts, or Tacitus’ later defence of the city’s local elites and “freedom”, during the Flavian twilight of the Republican traditions (Andrade 2012, 441–475; Tevdovski 2020, 7–28).

Finally, one might ask if Roman localism makes its heritage local. Regarding material culture, we might consider the introduction of Latin in epigraphy and particular objects that provide increased visibility to Italians in the Mediterranean of the second and first century BC as elements related to localism (Woolf 1992, 289; Isayev 2015, 125–133; Witcher 2000, 218–219). However, even as such, their close interconnectedness with materials, styles, techniques, and processes of

the wider *oikumene* translated them into part of the increased flow of ideas and materials and widened the repertoire of the global heritage of the post-Hellenistic *oikumene* (Versluys 2015, 141–167).

On the other hand, the reimagined “local” or “*sui generis*” Rome, appearing locally during the Renaissance, transformed into one of the most influential globalising discourses “over the course of the ‘long’ nineteenth century from the French Revolution to the First World War” (Funder et al. 2019, 2–3). It became an important reference point and “locus of meaning, memory and identity” (Malpas 2014, 4; also Malpas 2012; Berry 2009) for the newly invented localisms, such as races, cultures, nations, or civilisations. Thus, Roman localism, or at least its principles, through the agencies of colonialism and anticolonialism (Versluys 2014, 1–20), was embedded in countless localised social traditions and transformed into the glocalised heritage of the contemporary world.

Internationalisation and the Western Bollywood

During the second half of the second century BC a new trend of accommodation of Roman identities towards the globalisation process is clearly visible. While for some Romans, their identity remained inside the city walls, for others, their domination, education, or ventures within the ‘Roman protected’ cosmopolitan centres of the globalised world and wider became a new identity and Romanness. This development is closely related to the second element of Waters’ tripartite globalisation model—internationalisation (2001, 20).

In the words of Waters, Romans entered into numerous “political exchanges”, including challenging major actors and coalitions with minor actors of the international dynastic system (Eckstein 2008), and had to introduce new “social arrangements” in order to “control . . . the population that occupies (the extended) territory and harness . . . its resources” (Waters 2001, 19). However, this complex international dialogue required an internationalisation of their local ideological idiom in order to be recognised as collocutors in the “international relations” of the cosmopolitan *oikumene*.⁷

A new glocalised worldview that served the internationalising visions and aspirations of the Romans and articulated the changing realities appears in historical records through the works of Polybius (Isayev 2015, 123–140; Strootman 2019, 179–182; Quinn 2013, 337–345). Its narratives manage to reinvent the outdated elements of localism that were built through challenging central authorities from the fringes of the *oikumene*. Internationalising these localisms, the author presents them as unique capacities and elements of the ideology of the new “improved” world of the Romans (Erskine 2013, 243–245).

Polybius’ “Roman world” is ideologically structured upon the principles of the globally dominant universalistic narratives developed in the courts of the Macedonian dynasts and their predecessors. At the same time, it also follows some of the major patterns of other globalising efforts, already seen in the Hellenistic and augmenting in diverse post-Hellenistic contexts (Polybius, 1.1.5; Strootman 2019, 179–182, 2022). From that perspective, Polybius represents a post-Hellenistic

reincarnation of Manetho or Berossos, reimagining “classical Greece” as a mythological predecessor that legitimises the new global and glocalised rulers—the Romans (In Thornton’s words, “mediator”, like the Hellenistic bureaucratic elites, see: 2013, 225–226, also: Henrichs 1995, 243–261; Spawforth 2012).

In the post-Hellenistic context, Polybius’ vision strongly resembles the efforts of different local rulers in Asia to rearticulate their local identity into a new glocalised Persianism (Strootman and Versluys 2017). Although many of these local rulers were already integrated into lateral branches of the Macedonian dynasties, their court propaganda made diverse efforts to transform the stereotypes of outsiders or second-class elites into an additional argument for global rule—the descent from both the Macedonian dynasts and their predecessors in global rule—the Persian Great kings (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28).

An even closer glocalisation model might be recognised in the efforts of different, less integrated, or newly emerging dynastic cores to invest strongly in glocalising and globalising their cultural and religious traditions. Thus, compensating for their deficiencies in international legitimisation through dynastic lineage, dynasts from India, Indochina, or Judea were “reshaping” their religious traditions in an “innovative and cosmopolitan way” and presenting themselves as “universal monarchs” upon the argument of “rule in accordance with” and through the promotion of universal values and principles (Bang 2012, 60–75; Murphy and Lefferts 2017, 770–771; Leonhard 2012, 190; Amitay 2010; Vermes 1973, 212–213).

The structure of Polybius’ metathesis is not much different. It transforms the Hellenistic prejudice of Rome as a distant (aspiring) Greek *polis* (Strabo, 5.232) into a unique quality of the new global rulers (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). While they could not claim lineage from the great descendants of Alexander, Romans defied the model and instead presented themselves as proud global contesters of the will of the Great kings, on the model of the classical Greeks (or rather Athenians).⁸

This “innovative” glocalised vision was useful in introducing Romans into the cosmopolitan *oikumene* (Quinn 2013, 337–345). It internationalised (glocalised) their identities, reached towards the reimagined traditions and loyalties of certain communities they effectively governed, and formulated elements of structure, regulation, and shared values of their newly imagined world of “free poleis” (Thornton 2013, 225–226; Spawforth 2012). However, some of the early “innovations” of this ideological system transformed into limitation factors in the ever-increasing global dialogue and interrelation in the wider post-Hellenistic *oikumene*.

Thus, Roman leaders from the second half of the first century BC and the early emperors, together with other post-Hellenistic rulers, were increasingly perceived as integral parts of the system of global rule by the elites of the cosmopolitan *oikumene*. Therefore, their global imagery was developed upon the patterns of the court culture, ideology, and rituals of the Macedonian dynasts. However, the new glocalised identities of the Roman elites, different from the identities of the Macedonian and local priestly elites from the Hellenistic and other post-Hellenistic contexts, were not supporting the global credentials of their rulers. Instead, reimagined as global “free” elites, “well organised”, and united in taming the “irresponsible nature of kingly power” (Thornton 2013, 216–218), the identity and aspirations

of these elites were undermining both the global and the local credentials of the Roman emperors. Thus, ideological fractures were increasingly estranging Roman emperors and their growing courts from the traditional or conservative Roman elites and privileging the cosmopolitan elites with shared narratives, values, credentials, and worldviews. In addition, the majority of post-Hellenistic dynasts legitimised their positions as global rulers through descent from the Macedonian dynasts and constantly strengthened their credentials by entering into dynastic marriages, coalitions with different local and regional elites, and embracing different local traditions. Roman emperors, on the other hand, were in a challenging position of “homo duplex” (Versluys 2022, 70–71). Lacking dynastic credentials, they had to zealously, and sometimes preposterously, imitate and constantly reintegrate the growing repertoire of symbols and rituals of the global rule. At the same time, in order to reaffirm their Romanness, emperors had to tame the “irresponsible nature of (their own) kingly power” (Thornton 2013, 216–218; Harries 2013, 50–51), which was preventing them from developing a consistent dynastic ideology and system of rule.

Finally, the internationalisation of Roman localism extended the ideological “city walls” throughout the imagined geographies of the new Roman world. Yet, at the same time, and in accordance with Waters’ definition, it strengthened and multiplied them. The conceptualisation of the “Roman world” upon the “Greeks-barbarians” dichotomy, as early as the second century BC, remained an important element and transformed into an agent of new glocalisations throughout the Roman empire.

Part of the Roman bureaucratic and intellectual elites, although increasingly embracing the global *koine* of material culture and ideas, kept the backbone of the narrative of “leadership over free cities that defy the kings and their loyal subjects” as their own version of Romanness in the next few centuries (On the concept, see: Polybius, 1.1.5; Spawforth 2012; Quinn 2013, 337–352; Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). Thus, picking and choosing through the traditions of Hellenistic philosophy, the *mundanus* Cicero was vigorously defending the republic, mocking the “phoney credentials, rituals, attire, and symbols” of different post-Hellenistic dynasts and the “medising” of the Roman administrative and military leaders (Cic., Q.fr. 2.12.2–3.; Facella 2006). After two centuries, Aristides was still able to reconstruct the ideological narrative of a world based on the traditions and glory of the Greek *poleis*, freed and united by the “ultimate *polis*”, Rome (Asirvatham 2008, 207–227). In the pattern of Cicero, Aristides evokes once again the picture of the “archenemy” of the freedom of Greeks, Philip of Macedon, reminding Thebes, Athens, and Rome of the “dangers” of the penetration of the shared values of a cosmopolitan *oikumene* ruled by the “barbarian” “kings of all nations” (Asirvatham 2008, 207–227).

By the second century, aspects of the Macedonian imperial ideology, including “unity under a single, divinely protected monarch became acceptable for the Romans” like Aristides (Strootman 2022, 391). Yet, their reinterpreted “notion of universal peace and prosperity” stood in stark contrast to its Hellenistic pattern (Strootman 2022, 391). Thus, the imperial ideology of the Macedonian dynasts,

styled as saviours of all nations, protectors of all peoples, *theoi synnaoi* or sons of their dynasts and gods, and promoters of their local traditions, aimed at *homonoia* (harmony) and “unity of all the peoples of the world under the king’s aegis” (Legras 2014, 104; Strootman 2014b, 2022, 391). The global credentials of Aristides’ Romans were, instead, related to “surveying” and “control of territories”, their transformation through Roman “bridges”, “roads”, filling deserted places (colonisation), and Roman citizenship (assimilation), with a final aim to “civilize(ing) everything with your (Roman) way of life and good order” (trans. Behr 1981, 78; Strootman 2022, 385; Ando 2016, 169–185).

This glocalised version of the cosmopolitan *oikumene*, as a pseudo-cosmopolitan element of the Roman heritage, was impregnated in the value systems of the modern colonial elites of the West and still influences our efforts to reimagine a new cosmopolitan world (Hingley 2015, 35–38).

The cosmopolitan Rome and its heritage

In a close resemblance with the developments in other post-Hellenistic cores, the globalisation process that triggered Roman localism and later reimaged these traditions in a wider international context, also exposed Romans to an assortment of universalised and widely shared “meanings, beliefs, commitments, preferences, tastes, and values” of the cosmopolitan *oikumene* (Waters 2001, 17).

Thus, even while living beyond the boundaries of the Hellenistic dynastic system, different Roman elites entered early into diverse “symbolic exchanges” with the world of the dynasts (Waters 2001, 18). Among them, the most important engines of change were the Roman military leaders. Their military successes, which escalated at the end of the second and during the first century BC, pushed these individuals deep into the global context and the constant dynastic contest for global rule.

This development, as in the case of previous successful or strategically important local military leaders, opened the path for the integration of the Roman military elites into the system of the global rulers of the Hellenistic world.⁹ While the process of “progressive basilisation” of Roman military elites, as an element of the wider “symbolic exchange”, might be traced as early as the second century BC, the unique opportunity for the Romans occurred only a decade after their triumph over one of the most ambitious post-Hellenistic pretenders for global rule, Mithridates VI of Pontus (Hekster and Fowler 2005, 9–38).

Rome was a latecomer in such a system, lagging behind the elites of Cappadocia, India, and even Sicily by over a century. Yet, the historical momentum that elevated its leaders, like Caesar and Marcus Antonius, beyond the possibilities of other post-Hellenistic pretenders for global rule was a logical development in the context of Roman tempestuous military penetration into the cores of the Hellenistic system and *oikumene* (Strootman 2010; 140–57; Tevdovski 2020, 7–28). Thus, the descendants of the suddenly deified yet consistently militarily effective leaders of Rome and the last prominent Macedonian dynast Cleopatra VII, Ptolemy Caesarian, Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene II, or Ptolemy Philadelphus, were for a

moment in history in a position to stabilise the Hellenistic world and legitimise the new Roman positions in such a global reality.¹⁰

Yet, this fast-track integration process created a “friction” of the “local, the regional, and the global” that, after the “brutal encounter” in Actium, resulted in new creative “arrangements of culture and power” in the Roman world (Versluys 2021, 33–43).

Thus, the Roman-governed areas of the globalised *oikumene*, living under the newly deified global rulers from Rome, remained in ideological unity with the rest of the world. However, the Julio-Claudians temporarily postponed the ambitious plans for reuniting Alexander’s *oikumene* of their relative, Antonius. Instead, they focused on introducing Hellenistic ideology in Rome and developing their new dynastic traditions through “symbolic exchanges” and close association with their dynastic cousins from different post-Hellenistic cores (Waters 2001, 18).¹¹

On the other hand, the conservative elites in the city were provided with the Actium “ideological bubble” that was artificially preserving some rudimentary forms of the anti-globalist or glocalised traditions (see: Spawforth 2012). This “illusion of *libertas*” was not inconsistent with the previous imperial policies of the Macedonian and Persian dynasts that allowed many poleis (and ethnae) to retain certain traditions and local institutions (Andrade 2012, 444–452).

However, the enthronement in Rome of the outsider Vespasian, elected as global ruler in Alexandria (Sullivan 1978, 933; Murison 2016, 80), in close relation with the Hellenistic elites and post-Hellenistic dynasts, and under the ideological, cultural, and religious norms shared by the cosmopolitan world, changed the city to its core (Andrade 2012, 444–452; Hekster and Fowler 2005, 29). The local traditions and elites had to give way to the ambitious visions of Rome as the important dynastic centre of the cosmopolitan *oikumene* (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28).

The “Vespasian momentum” of dramatic cultural, ideological, religious, and political change in the city was perceived by some locals as “Eastern enslavement” that erased even the Augustan “illusions of *libertas*” (Andrade 2012, 444–452). Yet, the close interrelation of Flavian emperors with the global network of cosmopolitan elites and post-Hellenistic dynasts and the development and promotion, under their auspices, of different globalised and glocalised narratives, religious cults, or institutions, paved the way for the creation of a new cosmopolitan Rome (Tevdovski 2020, 7–28).

The enlargement of the Roman world towards the East, which started with Vespasian, was augmented through the policies of another military leader and an outsider from Rome (and Italy). The new Rome of Trajan involved numerous Hellenistic core territories and post-Hellenistic dynastic centres and promoted on a global level their elites and narratives (Syme 1988, 315, also: Hammond 1938, 1957; Tevdovski forthcoming). This reinvigoration of the networks of the cosmopolitan *oikumene* “proliferated rapidly” the universal symbols in “any locality” and undermined many cultural barriers (Waters 2001, 19–20). Thus, Syrian and Anatolian dynasts could become Roman senators, consuls and officials in different provinces, while Roman senators could become Armenian kings (Tevdovski forthcoming, also: Sullivan 1978, 937; Syme 1988, 23, 195, 326–340; Rémy 1989,

202–204; Bowie 2014, 76). The Roman Senate was transforming into a club of dynastic elites and cosmopolitan intellectuals, serving, in a Hellenistic pattern, as emperors' companions. Finally, the Roman emperors were increasingly perceived as global rulers and “guiding spirit” of this enlarged *oikumene* and presented in the pattern of the Macedonian dynasts as Heracles, Dionysus, Helios, or the new Alexander (Voegelin 1974, 132).

During the first two centuries of Roman imperialism, the extensive “symbolic exchanges” of the Roman emperors, with numerous dynastic, bureaucratic, and religious elites from different post-Hellenistic centres of the *oikumene*, have gradually integrated Rome into the post-Hellenistic dynastic system and standardised its system of rule with the millennial imperial traditions, and especially those of its immediate predecessors, the Macedonians. As anticipated in Waters' tripartite definition, this cultural globalisation of Rome and the multidirectional “exchange of symbols” that is very hard (or impossible) to “monopolise”, ultimately “release(d) social arrangements from spatial referents”, creating a truly global and cosmopolitan Rome (2001, 19–20).

The most symbolic element that illustrates this new phase of development occurred during the enthronement in Rome of another military leader and outsider from Africa. Differently from the unsuccessful attempts with Cleopatra and Titus' Berenice, Septimius Severus brought and enthroned in Rome his dynastic princess and based the legitimacy of the new Roman dynasty on the glorious descent of the new “despoina of the *oikumene*” and “*augusta*” (Levick 2007, 150–153). His, or rather, her descendants became true rulers of the cosmopolitan *oikumene*.

The new Roman emperors of the third century resurrected the ideal of the united world in its full Hellenistic glory. They were universal dynasts who could trace their descent through post-Hellenistic dynasties to Alexander and Darius. Many of them were born and raised in the centres of the Hellenistic world, some with Macedonian dynastic names as Alexander and Philip, others as priests and princes in Mesopotamian and post-Hellenistic manner. They reintroduced the global symbols of rule, like Alexander, the royal diadem, and the Macedonian phalanxes, and globalised the local and glocal traditions, providing a Senate for the Alexandrians or “Syrian” and “Egyptian” gods for Rome.

Maybe the most symbolic triumph of the values of the cosmopolitan *oikumene* might be recognised in the policies of Caracalla. This “new Alexander”, in accordance with the ideals of the cosmopolitan universe, as exposed by Zeno, erased the “walls” inside his empire, providing equal law for all people, and by proposing marriage to another descendent of Alexander and Darius, the Parthian princess, he made the final stretch for uniting the *oikumene* (Burgersdijk and van Waarden 2010, 78–80).¹²

These cosmopolitan policies and universalistic ideologies represent an important element of the wider process in the Roman empire and the wider post-Hellenistic *oikumene* that introduced new localisms, glocalisations and globalisations of identities, symbols, and the related material culture. The later Roman empire, or rather *Basileia ton Rhomaion*, that emerged from this process was a protean hub of the interrelated globalised and glocalised heritage of the Hellenistic and

post-Hellenistic dynastic centres like Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Nicomedia, Edessa, Tarsus, Thessalonica, and Rome.

It was this global Rome and its cosmopolitan traditions that were reimagined and multiplied in the medieval and early modern courts and policies of its “heirs”, like the Holy Roman Emperors, Emperors of Ethiopia, Russian Tzars and Ottoman Sultans, and thus transformed into a shared heritage of the modern globalised world (Bang and Kołodziejczyk 2012, 1–40; Ng 2019, 49–73).

We the Bollywood: from proto to metacosmopolitanism

“Roma! Roma!” was the war cry of the soldiers of the Ottoman sultans that was terrifying the 16th-century diplomatic corps to the Pope in Rome.¹³ But the Ottomans were not in Italy yet, and their slogan was not related to the city of the Popes. At least not directly. Instead, they were marching in the name of their own “Rome” and the new universal rulers of the world in Constantinople. Each one of the Ottoman Sultans, these new rulers of the millennial centre of the globalisation process on the Bosphorus, was lavishly celebrated as the new Alexander and Caesar. (Ng 2019; Gibb 1882, 166).

Yet, they had to compete for the shared image and related narratives and heritage with the Hapsburgs, the Bourbons, the English or Portuguese kings and even the sultans of Sumatra, like Iskandar Muda, “the Young Alexander” (Ng 2019, for Mughal emperors as “lords of the universe”, see: Pagden 2003, 42).

Such insightful historical episodes, not differently from the contemporary historical revelations, increasingly present in the contemporary political and international debates, pose an important question for both researchers of the past and heritage managers. What kind of heritage are we really looking for? Does it need to be uniquely ours or just understood in our own terms? And is the cosmopolitanism still an applicable or desirable concept for such aspirations?

The same question was occupying the prominent American lawyer and philosopher, Ackerman, more than three decades ago. In the midst of the fierce debate of the intellectual elites about the question of whether the new Pax Americana should be conceptualised upon the protection of the “unique” Western values or upon their promotion as a universal norm, Ackerman promoted a new or reimagined concept (Huntington 1996, 21–22; Fukuyama 1989). His “rooted cosmopolitanism” exhibited awareness of the Western system as “lots smaller than the world” and with a “history (and history of ideas) that is a hiccup in world time”. Yet, at the same time, Ackerman was idealistically opposed to giving up on the premise of one world for “all earthlings”.

This chapter builds upon such early ideas of rooted cosmopolitanism and its dialectical nature (Cohen 1992, 480–483), daring to make new propositions and avenues for reconciliation, or at least added flow, between the local and global, or particular and universal, as pivotal categories of this philosophical conception.

Thus, by developing a wider frame for understanding the cosmopolitan *oikumene* of ancient Afro-Eurasia, it enlightens us with elements of shared heritage and traditions, overlooked, abandoned, and sometimes even proscribed by the

growing particularistic tendencies of the 19th and 20th centuries. The thick layer of protocosmopolitanism that I tried to reveal on this occasion, in the globalising world of antiquity, and the numerous localised and glocalised elements of continuity of such ideology around the world provides us with a new perspective on the rootedness and capacities of this conception.

In addition, analysing the globalisation of Rome in the wider context of this *oikumene*, I reacknowledge Ackerman's ideas of our "shrinking" world in the context of its "shrinking" mythical predecessor (Ackerman 1994, 516). Through such a methodological approach, the "unique" values of Rome, and implicitly those of its symbolical heir, the Western world, are recognised as manifestations of the recurring localisations that are interconnected, mutually promoted, and empowered by the globalisation process (Miksic and Yian 2017, 810). Therefore, they can no longer be perceived as cultural "containers" that need protection but as elements of the growing cultural repertoire and agents of the wider globalisation process (Pitts and Versluys 2015, 12).

The process of internationalisation of Roman localism, as analysed in the chapter, reminds us that the internationalisation of our own values and visions for the world is an inevitable and useful aspect of the intensified global trade and political exchanges, but it also has limited capacities. In that context, the "belief in the universality of Western culture", understood as a continuation of the "Greco-Roman" ancient Bollywood, will always be perceived as "false . . . immoral and . . . dangerous" (Huntington 1996, 310), by all representatives of the otherness that this model implies. Even the efforts to reinvigorate and reconceptualise the philosophical concept of cosmopolitanism, "aged" through the "Greek, Roman, and Enlightenment" traditions (Meskell 2009, 2), would fall short of meeting their goals every time they overlook the particularistic heritage embedded in our Western cosmopolitanism, and the cosmopolitan heritage embedded in different local traditions.

Finally, the process of creation of a cosmopolitan Rome in antiquity, its longevity, multiplications, and wide cultural impact, suggests that the only way to preserve any values, symbols, and heritage that we hold dear in the global "disjunctive flow" is to expose them and constantly reimagine them through the multiplicity of different aspirations, loyalties, and perspectives (Cohen 1992, 480–483; Appadurai 2001, 6).

In that context, I propose that the intensifying contemporary globalisation process and the numerous original contributions and perspectives of the non-Western researchers that have helped us dramatically alter our Eurocentric and classicised views of human history and society represent just the first step towards truly cosmopolitan research. The opening towards different non-Western perspectives, while trying to analyse them through the Western-born methodologies in the postmodern stage of development, might be styled as a glocalised model, or in our particular context, as "Polybius momentum in modern research". Yet, the real question is if this research, its methodology, analyses, and conclusions are appropriate for the interconnected multipolar world of the "Vespasian stage of globalisation and integration".

The arguments that I presented in favour of the idea of a protocosmopolitanism, whose elements might be impregnated in the most diverse societal, ideological, religious, or cultural systems around the globe, create an opportunity to answer

such dilemmas by envisioning a novel model of cosmopolitanism. Purified from the limitations of our own Western ontology, ideological and value-based particularities, and ownership, such metacosmopolitanism, rooted in and cogently expressed through the diverse yet shared traditions and aspirations of countless cultural entities of the intensively interrelated world, might result in a new understanding of both human history and our heritage. When reconceptualised in this manner, as dynamical and perspective-relative, this rooted cosmopolitanism will not struggle but instead benefit and dwell upon the growing interrelations or confrontations of the inconsistent perceptions, impressions, influences, ideas, and traditions facilitated by the globalisation process.

Notes

- 1 One must bear in mind the traditional political and religious tensions among different Near-Eastern leaders and countries with dominantly Muslim populations. In addition, some of the main ideological and political opponents of Erdogan and his policies are his former Islamising allies (see: *Guardian*, December 2013; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 2021).
- 2 The intensity of the Eurocentric bias and Saidian Orientalism embedded in this term is well illustrated by Barry Strauss, who underlines its “doubly problematic” character. Thus, while “one half of the term—‘istic’—suggests a mere derivative of the pure and original Hellenic”, or oriental hybridisation of the Western brilliance, the other half—“Hellen”—ignores the great majority of non-Greek and even non-European inputs in the global developments of this historical period. See: Strauss 1997, 165–166.
- 3 For the heritage of Hellenistic Egypt, see Versluys 2002, and for the “Persian” or “Phrygian heritage”, Strootman and Versluys 2017; Rives 2005, 223–244.
- 4 On the institutions and policies of Assyrians and Persians that were reaching towards the global knowledge and culture of the “four quarters of the world”, see Lavan et al. 2016.
- 5 Cato’s insistence to remove the philosophers from Rome in order that the youth might “return their ears to the laws and magistrates”, is a true reminiscence of Athenians’ accusations against Socrates’ cosmopolitanism. See: *Plut. Cato. Mai.* 22.5. On official decisions to expel philosophers and rhetoricians in the second and first century BC, see *Athen.* 12.547; *Suet.* 1. On prejudices against the doctors and the medical knowledge arriving to Rome from the cosmopolitan centres, see Astin 1978, 169–179.
- 6 At this point, Romans might have still been “outside of the wall” of the Greek-barbarian dichotomy and acquired the concept through the emancipatory efforts to cross such an ideological wall. See *Pliny*, *NH* 29.7.14.
- 7 As a newly emerging power, Romans were increasingly perceived and intentionally portrayed by competitors as “cruel barbarians”, greedy pirates and “motley rabble of refugees” that challenged the order of the world and its legitimate rulers, because of the “very low rank” of their ancestors (Erskine 2013, 243–245; Lerouge-Cohen 2017, 227; Ñaco del Hoyo and López Sánchez 2018, 1–14).
- 8 For the omnipresent conception that contesters of the power of the universal rulers, are “wrongdoers . . . against the divine world order he claims to protect”, see Strootman 2022, 386. Romans’ innovative model was trying to challenge/reform this centuries-old aspect of the “Near-eastern” imperial propaganda.
- 9 On the policies of “vassalisation” of successful military elites as imperial policy of the Persians and Macedonians, see Strootman 2022, 381–393, 2010, 140–157.
- 10 In the words of Strootman: “What Kleopatra had to offer Rome in return for a revived Macedonian empire . . . was exactly what Rome needed most to become the new master in the east: royalty.” See Strootman 2010, 140–157.

- 11 For the relation of the Julio-Claudians with their dynastic companions and “tyrannodiskaloi”, see Dio Cass., 59.24.1; Sullivan 1978; Potter 1994.
- 12 On the Roman ideological and literary tendencies to translate these universalistic imperial ideologies into personal *pothos* and “dream” of military leaders and emperors, also see Strootman 2022, 393.
- 13 According to the report of Ladislas Veteisus, ambassador of King Matthias Corvinus to Pope Sixtus IV (Babinger 1978, 494).

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