

don the continuity/change dichotomy blinds us to more nuanced insights about past intercultural entanglements.

I cannot comment directly on the impact that this intervention will have on the Romanization debate, but I believe it will add a fresh perspective for those of us conducting research on other colonial contexts. Over the past two decades, archaeologists studying European and American colonialism have worked to balance the insights of postcolonial understandings of identity with the blatantly essentialist frameworks in which many contemporary indigenous communities must operate. Given the cross-fertilization captured here, it is interesting to see how Ghisleni has taken these ideas and applied them to a conceptually similar but historically and politically distinct case study. I will look forward to seeing how the suggestions developed in this article cycle back.

Miguel John Versluys

Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, Van Steenis Building, Einsteinweg 2, 2333 CC Leiden, The Netherlands (m.j.versluys@arch.leidenuniv.nl). 16 V 17

The idea that continuity is a historical product was firmly put on the intellectual agenda by Marshall Sahlins in *Islands of History* (1985). Lara Ghisleni's article reminds us of the important insight that continuity and change are dialectical, that continuity is therefore always emergent, and that we should study (social) change in terms of what she calls "ongoing, long-term processes of rearticulation." The application of this research agenda to questions of Romanization is useful, not only because it gets this debate going again in a fruitful manner (Van Dommelen 2014; Versluys 2014a, 2014b; Woolf 2014), but also because Roman history and archaeology should interact more with anthropology on this particular aspect; it is very welcome to see Romanization being discussed in these pages. Following Greg Woolf's landmark *Becoming Roman* (1998), research has focused more on deconstructing the "Roman" from his title than on achieving a better understanding of "becoming." Therefore, much remains to be done—but a lot has been done already as well. "As so often in Mediterranean history, the problem is not in finding continuities, but in assessing which ones are significant—and why," Horden and Purcell conclude in their long-term (ecological) history of the Mediterranean (Horden and Purcell 2000:411). This is very much about putting "ongoing, long-term processes of rearticulation" at the center of understanding continuities and change, as has been the case in recent discussions about processes of inventing and neglecting traditions in the Roman world as a form of becoming Roman (Boschung, Busch, and Versluys 2015).

I quote from *The Corrupting Sea* (Horden and Purcell 2000) on purpose to draw in that book's long-term perspective, because it enables us to see an important point that Ghisleni, I think, underplays: the period in Eurasian history that we call Roman is, in many aspects, all about transformation. One

could argue that, in fact, every historical period is—but in terms of heightened cultural interconnectedness and all kinds of radical social, religious, and cultural changes, the Roman period certainly involves transformation to a maximum pre-modern extent (Witcher 2017). Therefore, focusing on change in the context of Empire is a useful point of departure for understanding Romanization, simply because we do recognize an immense amount of dramatic transformation—and because Rome is only partly responsible for all the emergent possibilities and their (unintended) consequences, I think that understanding these as taking place within the single cultural container of a global world effectively moves us beyond the essentializing categories of Roman and native (Versluys 2014a, 2014b). But the remaining challenge, as Ghisleni rightly underlines, is then still to understand "how continuities and changes are constituted in contingent contexts of possibilities." The central characteristic of these contexts of possibilities, as the Dorset case study also shows, is a broadening of range, a widening of repertoire. The constitution of both persistence and change takes many different forms, but both take place in a globalizing context in which more options become available and repositioning is unavoidable (Pitts and Versluys 2015). As always, "glocalization" is one of the outcomes of this expanded geography, and this is also the case in the Roman era. I was therefore surprised to not see the concept of globalization, now widely used within anthropology and archaeology for interpreting continuity, change, and identity (Hodos et al. 2017), used or discussed by Ghisleni.

The new might present itself as the shock of the new and, as such, put dialectics of change and continuity at work, but, as Ghisleni rightly warns us, this is not necessarily so. I found her conclusion on the mortaria illuminating in this respect. Being new is only one of many more affordances of a mortarium—and the one scholars tend to focus on in their search for continuity or change. However, changes in food preparation implied by these new vessels apparently did not take place, as residue analysis documented dietary continuity—as such, the mortaria constitute continuity and change simultaneously. Ghisleni does not discuss the important question of whether the new style or design of the mortaria and the changes they brought to the "visual ecology" (Wells 2012) of Britain in the Roman period play any role. This is unfortunate, as Chris Gosden has convincingly argued for the importance of such affordances of objects and even groups of objects—what he calls the inter-artefactual domain—for understanding continuity, change, and identity in Roman Britain (Gosden 2006), and John Robb has now even presented aesthetic style as a (middle range) theory of material culture in general terms (Robb 2015).

Apart from the mortaria, roundhouses constitute another telling example of the importance of the approach advocated by Ghisleni, because roundhouses do not always turn out to be "round" houses. Again, scholars have focused on this particular characteristic and subsequently understood it as change, while it might well concern continuity in terms of identity and practice. In other parts of Roman archaeology, scholars have long been aware of these shifting meanings of similar forms and have

introduced the notion of “cultural biography” to chart their meanings throughout time. Similar to the roundhouse, a Greek statue in a Roman context did not necessarily function as a “Greek” statue; moreover, the meaning of the affordance we call Greek changed through time (Versluys 2015). For this reason, I have argued that we should stop characterizing things in terms of what (we think) they represent (roundhouse, Greek statue) and instead investigate what they do on the basis of which kind of affordances (Versluys 2014a, 2014b). A recent volume entitled *Materialising Roman Histories* now eloquently illustrates this approach (Van Oyen and Pitts 2017).

I conclude with a final remark on the notion of Roman colonialization used in this article. It is useful and important to regard Roman imperialism from a comparative perspective, as Ghisleni does. However, it should be noted that her comparative framework is largely taken from the study of a very particular form of conquest and colonization: that of the Americas. There are certainly important parallels to be found here, but let us not forget that Roman imperialism and European imperialism functioned in markedly different ways in many respects (Dietler 2005; Gosden 2004).

Reply

Let me begin by thanking the respondents for their generous and thought-provoking comments. There is much rich material here. In order to address some of the themes most effectively, I have grouped my response under three headings—comparative colonialism and transformation, time and historical process, and identity and material.

Comparative Colonialism and Transformation

One major theme of the comments focuses on the connection between the Roman imperial context and broader anthropological and archaeological conversations, including the implications of a comparative perspective for understanding how continuity and transformation unfold in distinct historical circumstances. Several respondents remark on the parallels between studies of transformation in Roman and other past and present colonial entanglements, despite wide-ranging historical and disciplinary contexts. Cipolla notes that the modernist assumptions underpinning the prehistory/history divide (Oland, Hart, and Frink 2012) and acculturation models of continuity and change also undergird the Late Iron Age/Early Roman periodization. Panich’s discussion of indigenous groups in North America wrestles with the ramifications of a political and legal framework that dictates one kind of relationship between the past, continuity, and identity across such divides, foregrounding how archaeological claims about continuity or change are “not neutral” but “carry consequences for the communities whose past they purport to represent” (Stahl 2012:159–160).

While different historical and political forces shape studies of Roman and more recent European and American colonialism, affordances for identity, agency, or political claims have been constrained across such varying circumstances by what Panich calls the “stubborn idea that continuity and change are two mutually exclusive trajectories initiated at the moment of contact.”

Despite the parallels, Versluys adds the caveat that Roman imperial processes may have operated quite differently in some respects from the cases of European and American colonialism referred to in the article and comments. While I acknowledge Versluys’ caution concerning potentially misplaced analogies, I contend that my argument does not hinge on Roman imperialism operating in the same way as more modern cases. The point is not to institute a standard process of how continuity and change unfold in relation to imperialism or how their social significance is constituted. Rather, the goal is to explore the conceptually similar ways in which concepts of continuity and change have been deployed across such cases, to articulate a more dialectical approach, and to engage with the possibilities that a dialectical approach opens up in contextually specific situations, where continuity and change might take on different meanings, manifest materially in distinct ways, or have varying consequences for stakeholders. Panich’s discussion creates space for ideas “cycling back,” even if the cases referred to operate under different terms.

In taking up this theoretical orientation, my intention is not to “underplay” Roman imperialism as a context for transformation. As Versluys recognizes, I am arguing that we must critically interrogate what we mean by transformation, including how transformation is related to identity. Transformation after the conquest should not automatically be aligned to the Roman dimension. I highlight the interactive relationship between change and continuity because, as Stahl (2012:159) argues, in the narrative of world prehistory, “the absence of change has often seemed to require no explanation.” A paradigm of continuity as a default whose trajectory is already known extracts change as a transition to an exogenous other, an aspect of acculturation approaches that I am arguing against.

Versluys notes the absence of globalization in the framework presented. The multidirectional flows that theories of globalization engage with certainly articulate with a concept of continuity as a “continuously transforming narrative” (Hingley) at multiple scales. In particular, I note Versluys’ appeal to the “widening of repertoire” evident in the Dorset case. However, given the variability of concepts of globalization, I decided not to negotiate the application of globalization theories in this article in order to focus more specifically on the theoretical underpinnings of the change/continuity dichotomy.

Time and Historical Process

The centrality of concepts of time to challenging unidirectional and exclusionary colonial histories is especially prominent in the comments by Lightfoot, Gardner, and Panich. Lightfoot