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NOTE

This contribution is part of a larger dialogue of three articles and one responding piece that form the current issue of JOLCEL. The other contributions are “From Adam to Tsar’ Kosmos: Cosmopolitanism in the Byzantine Tradition” by Helena Bodin (pp. 28–51) and “The Classics at World’s End. A VOC Secretary Reframes the Cape Khoi” by Tycho Maas (pp. 53–71). The response piece is “Thinking about Cosmopolitanism” by Theo D’haen (pp. 73–79).

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Cosmopolitanism and the Roman Empire. Political, Theological and Linguistic Responses—Three Case Studies (Cicero, Augustine, Valla)*

CHRISTOPH PIEPER

Leiden University

ABSTRACT

This article explores the tension between idealized cosmopolitan ideas, of a single citizenry for all people in the world, and imperial Roman nationalism between the late Roman Republic and the Italian Renaissance. In the form of three case studies (and without any claim that those are representative for the development) it focusses on three important thinkers whose work shows affinity with cosmopolitan discourse, but who at the same time also explicitly reflected on the political realities they were living in: Cicero, Augustine, and Lorenzo Valla. All three favour cosmopolitan ideals over political egoism, and all three reflect on whether and how the historical reign under which they are living can live up to the philosophical or theological ideals they advocate. Finally, all three authors do not only share similar discursive patterns, but also react to each other intertextually (links will be mentioned especially between Cicero and Augustine and between Augustine and Valla). Thus, while all three are distinct in their argument and use cosmopolitan concepts for hugely different aims, the comparison can share light both on the boundaries and the discursive power of the concept in Latin literature.

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1 Introduction

Modern theories of cosmopolitanism come in many jackets: they can focus on culture, language, economics, age or gender.¹ Yet one of the uniting features is that the world is conceptualized as truly shared among all humans—an idea that ultimately rests on the assumption that all men are equal and should have the same rights, as they share the earth as their common homeland. As Nick Stevenson formulates, "[t]he idea of cosmopolitanism joins together a notion of global citizenship as well as the capacity to live with the 'Other'. Cosmopolitan critique is suspicious of dogmatism."² As a consequence, imperialism can be defined as one of its most distinct opposites, as the latter is directed towards inequality and the dominion of a minority at the costs of suppressing or even enslaving a majority of the people. From this perspective the *imperium Romanum*, one of the most conspicuous Empires of the ancient world, seems a curious object of cosmopolitan studies.³ Rome had subdued the Mediterranean and large parts of the known world; it had forced the inhabitants of the conquered regions to serve Rome's armies, to pay taxes and to accept Roman state cults. It is simply impossible to deny that Rome controlled its Empire with force and military suppression; yet at the same time recent research has also shown that parts of its success was based on Rome's tolerance towards local habits, cults and languages. The process of Romanization is no longer interpreted as a purely top-down process, but as dynamic. Inhabitants of the provinces adopted a Roman identity and at the same time kept their local one—a process that has been labelled 'ancient globalization' and has been described as the result of a profoundly interconnected world.⁴ From such a perspective, few historians would deny that the *imperium Romanum* had cosmopolitan characteristics. To mention just four: a high mobility of people within the Empire; the co-existence within the capital city of Rome of people with diverse cultural and territorial backgrounds (the same holds true for the Roman army as a unifying factor of the Empire); international trade; and festival calendars that were synchronized all over the Mediterranean area.⁵ Nevertheless, one must not forget that such an ideal of harmonious globalization was not more than that: an ideal. Of course, Rome's elite culture regularly prided itself on being an inclusive society.⁶ But the same upper class actively fuelled the suppressive

¹ See Cebolla Sanahuja, "The Right of the Subject," 59.

² Stevenson, "Cosmopolitan Citizenship," 244.

³ See Cebolla Sanahuja, "The Right of the Subject," 59–61, esp. 59: "and so, in ancient times, colonization and subjection defined the limits of the universal community of men. The *kosmos* [sic] *polites*, the citizen or the right of the subject that extends beyond the boundaries of the city or state, is in most cases determined or defined in relation to a previous state of war."

⁴ See Pitts and Versluys (eds.), *Globalisation and the Roman World*. In their introduction the editors write (p. 7): "Within Roman archaeology and history, we argue there is an urgent need to transcend post-colonial approaches and a general concern with identity, and to engage more seriously with concepts of connectivity."

⁵ See, for example, Moatti, "Mobility and Identity," 130–52; on mobility see Tacoma, *Moving Romans*; on festivals, see van Nijf, "Political Games," 47–88.

⁶ Sallust famously captures this ideology at the beginning of his Roman excursus at *Conspiratio Catilinae* 6.2: "hi postquam in una moenia convenere, dispari genere, dissimili lingua, alii alio more viventes, incredibile memoratu est, quam facile coaluerint: ita brevi multitudo dispersa atque vaga concordia civitas

nature of Rome's imperial intentions, both by recurring to military achievements as a means of gaining esteem and political influence, and by exploiting the provinces for personal enrichment.⁷ Cosmopolitan ideas, which will be at the core of this article, could be seen as one element of this Roman idealization and self-fashioning, almost as a kind of ideological embellishment of a harsh imperialistic reality.⁸

My article builds on this tension between idealized cosmopolitan ideas and outspoken imperialism. I will introduce three case studies that deal with three different eras (late Republican Rome, Late Antiquity and the Italian Renaissance). The three authors, Cicero, Augustine and Lorenzo Valla, have been chosen because, as I will argue, all three engage with the intriguing and intrinsic ambiguity between cosmopolitanism and imperialism: they favour cosmopolitan ideals over (political) egoism and reflect on how the historical system of their times can live up to the philosophical or theological ideals they advocate. A further reason why I have combined the three authors in one article is that their texts show how cosmopolitan discourse has always been open to recontextualizations and adaptations to new conceptual frameworks. In this discursive process it is used more and more metaphorically in order to reflect on philosophical, theological and even linguistic matters. Cosmopolitanism thus can also be defined as a powerful tool for thinking, especially in debates that have a strong utopian element in them. In my three case studies I argue that the authors not only share similar discursive patterns, but also react to each other via marked intertextual links.

I start with Cicero, whose philosophical treatises seem to have imported Greek cosmopolitan ideas into Latin discourse. He makes use of cosmopolitan ideas as a means to develop his highly idealized alternative draft for Rome's political crisis in the 50s and 40s BCE. The second case study is dedicated to Augustine, a fervent imitator and at the same time critic of Cicero's philosophy. I contend that he also recurs to elements of cosmopolitan terminology in order to advocate *his* idealized counterpart to the political realities of the beginning of the fifth century CE: that is, citizenship in the reign of God. Augustine thereby applies Cicero's philosophical and political cosmopolitanism to theology. The third case study will be dedicated to Lorenzo Valla, who recurred to both Cicero and Augustine when drafting his utopia of a linguistic permanence of Roman cosmopolitanism: the Latin language in his view was the heir of the *imperium Romanum* in that it had to be the language of the whole world. While all three thinkers are distinct in

facta erat" ("After these two peoples, different in race, unlike in speech and living according to different customs, came together within the same walls, it is unbelievable to relate how easily they merged, so quickly did harmony change a heterogeneous and roving throng into a body of citizens." (Translation: J. C. Rolfe. *Loeb Classical Library* 116, Cambridge, MA: 2013).

⁷ The tension between cosmopolitan ideal and imperialistic reality in Roman literature has already been highlighted more than 100 years ago in a seminal study on Roman exemplarity by Litchfield, "National *exempla virtutis*," 11–13. In accordance with the world in which he lived (1914 was a time in which nationalism and patriotism were very powerful in many countries of the world), his interpretation of the moral hierarchies in Rome depicts cosmopolitanism as a threat to the highest value of patriotism; see *ibid.* 13: "Yet amid polemic and detraction, amid material corruption and disaster, for centuries the ancient cult of patriotism subsisted."

⁸ I owe this formulation to the insightful remark of an anonymous peer reviewer.

their argument and use cosmopolitan concepts in different discursive contexts (philosophy, theology and linguistics), they share at least one element: the rootage of their debates in Rome and its Empire, which offers them the historical and political foil for their argumentation. I hope that this comparative approach will shed light on the discursive power of the concept in the long history of Latin literature from Antiquity to the Renaissance, while not glossing over its boundaries that it reaches when being applied to these hugely diverse fields.

2 Cicero's struggle with Stoic cosmopolitanism

Cicero might not seem an obvious candidate to begin a contribution about cosmopolitanism. As a politician he was attached to the city of Rome and not very keen on being absent from it for reasons other than periods of study in one of his villas. His notorious unwillingness to leave Rome for the provinces is best captured in the famous anecdote he himself has transmitted in his speech *Pro Plancio*. When returning from his quaestorship in the Sicilian city of Lilybaeum, Cicero imagined that Rome wouldn't talk about anything else than his excellent conduct of the office. But nothing was less true: he met a man who asked him what news he was bringing from Rome, and when he indignantly answered that he had returned from his service in the province, the passer-by first said: "O right, in Africa, wasn't it?" After Cicero's even more irritated answer that he had been in *Sicily*, another interlocutor reproached the first one by saying "But didn't you know that he had been in Syracuse?"⁹ In other words: not even the man who pretends to be reasonably well informed and to know that Cicero was in Sicily gets the exact city of his quaestorship right. The charmingly self-ironic anecdote is introduced with a sentence that seems to summarize Cicero's attitude towards cosmopolitanism quite nicely: "sed ita multa Romae geruntur ut vix ea quae fiunt in provinciis audiantur."¹⁰ In other words: most Romans do not have any interest in affairs that happen outside their own urban environment; therefore, an ambitious young politician should not leave the city for too long.

Yet the decisions that Cicero made in his life as a politician are a different matter to what he discusses in his philosophical writings. In these he regularly invokes the notion of the world as a shared fatherland of all human beings,¹¹ which he mostly borrowed from the Stoics. As far as we know, the first Greek to coin the term *κοσμοπολίτης* was the cynic Diogenes, but his cosmopolitanism was rather individualistic and dissociative, as Anna Busetto, based on the arguments

⁹ Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 65: "itaque hac spe decedebam ut mihi populum Romanum ultro omnia delaturum putarem. at ego cum casu diebus eis itineris faciendi causa decedens e provincia Puteolos forte venissem, cum plurimi et lautissimi in eis locis solent esse, concidi paene iudices, cum ex me quidam quaesisset quo die Roma exissem et num quidnam esset novi. cui cum respondissem me e provincia decedere: 'etiam me hercule,' inquit, 'ut opinor, ex Africa.' huic ego iam stomachans fastidiose: 'immo ex Sicilia,' inquam. tum quidam, quasi qui omnia sciret: 'quid? tu nescis,' inquit, 'hunc quaestorem Syracusis fuisse?'"

¹⁰ Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 63: "But in the bustle of life at Rome it is almost impossible to attend to what goes on in the provinces." (Translation: N.H. Watts, *Loeb Classical Library* 158, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1923).

¹¹ Cicero is also one of the few Roman authors whom one regularly finds in indexes of modern companions to cosmopolitan studies, as for example in Delanty, ed., *Routledge International Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*.

by John Moles, has shown.¹² It was the Stoics and above all Chrysippus who connected cosmopolitanism with the idea of a world citizenship based on a shared *ὁρθὸς λόγος* of all human beings.¹³ They thereby redefined the concept as a social obligation and the fundament for their idea that a wise man should not withhold from the duties imposed on him by his country. Cicero, for whom philosophy and politics formed a close unity throughout his life,¹⁴ was obviously attracted by this concept and regularly includes it in his philosophical dialogues.¹⁵

Malcolm Schofield has collected and discussed the most important passages of Cicero's philosophical works that deal with the Stoic notion of cosmopolitanism: *De re publica* 1.19, *De legibus* 1.23, *De finibus* 3.64, and *De natura deorum* 2.154. Based on the premise that gods and men are equally obliged to obey the natural law, all passages assert that the world is the homeland of gods and men alike (for example, *De legibus* 1.23: "ut iam universus <sit> hic mundus *una civitas communis* deorum atque hominum").¹⁶ This divine gift to all men implies the consequence that all human beings are equal (*De re publica* 1.19: "sed mundus hic totus, quod domicilium quamque *patriam* di nobis *communem* secum *dederunt*")¹⁷ and that they have an elevated status in the hierarchy of nature: everything within the world is created so that it serves for the human beings' usufruct (*De natura deorum* 2.154: "principio ipse mundus deorum hominumque causa factus est, quaeque in eo sunt, ea *parata ad fructum hominum* et inventa sunt").¹⁸ The common ground on which this shared *patria* of men and gods is built is their shared *ratio* (the Stoic *λόγος*), which enables them to live together under a legal system and according to commonly accepted laws (*ius* and *leges*): "est enim mundus quasi communis deorum atque hominum domus aut urbs utrorumque; *soli enim ratione utentes iure ac lege vivunt* (*De natura deorum* 2.154)."¹⁹ Of course we must bear in

¹² Busetto, "The Idea of Cosmopolitanism," 302–17; Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," 105–20.

¹³ See, for example, Chrysippus fr. 337 (in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, volume 3): "τὸν δὲ ἀρχηγέτην ἐκείνον οὐ μόνον πρῶτον ἄνθρωπον ἀλλὰ καὶ μόνον κοσμοπολίτην λέγοντες ἀψευστάτα ἐροῦμεν. ἦν γὰρ οἶκος αὐτῷ καὶ πόλις ὁ κόσμος" ("If we call this first founder not only the first man, but almost a cosmopolitan, then we will speak very true things. For his house and his state was the kosmos"). See Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, chapter 3, and Vogt, *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City*, especially chapter 2.

¹⁴ See, for example, Cicero, *De divinatione* 2.6–7 with Zarecki, *Cicero's Ideal Statesman*, esp. 136, and Butler, *The Hand of Cicero*, 110–11.

¹⁵ See Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism," 105–46. My summary is much indebted to his analysis.

¹⁶ "Hence we must now conceive of this whole universe as one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members." (Translation: C.W. Keyes, *Loeb Classical Library* 213, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1928). See Girardet, *Die Ordnung der Welt*, 135–38 and 145–50. Similarly, *De finibus* 3.64.

¹⁷ "But [it] is the whole universe, a home and a fatherland which the gods have given us the privilege of sharing with them." (Translation: C.W. Keyes, *Loeb Classical Library* 213, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1928).

¹⁸ "In the first place the world itself was created for the sake of gods and men, and the things that it contains were provided and contrived for the enjoyment of men." (Translation: H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library* 268, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1933). Like the *ThLL*, I understand *fructus* here in its legal technical meaning (*-usus fructus*), see *ThLL* s.v. I A.

¹⁹ "For the world is as it were the common dwelling-place of gods and men, or the city that belongs to both; for they alone have the use of reason and live by justice and by law." (Translation: H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library* 268, Cambridge, MA: Loeb 1933). Similarly, *De legibus* 1.23: "prima homini cum deo *rationis societas*. inter quos autem ratio, inter eosdem etiam recta ratio communis est: quae cum sit lex, *lege quoque consociati homines cum dis putandi sumus*" ("The first common possession of man and God is reason. But those who have reason in common must also have right reason in common. And since right reason is Law, we must believe that men have Law also in common with the gods." Translation: C.W. Keyes, *Loeb*

mind that the passages are uttered by different speakers in different dialogues; but as one of them is Cicero's own literary *persona* (*De legibus*) and the two others are politicians he deeply admired (Scipio Aemilianus in *De re publica* and Cato Uticensis, whose encomium Cicero had written almost contemporarily,²⁰ in *De finibus*), I do not see any reason why we should not interpret the passages as proof of a genuine interest of Cicero in the concept. Taken together, they express an idealistic view of men's social competence: if all humans are equal, share the same laws and consider themselves compatriots of the same universal state, nature will also compel all to behave altruistically rather than to follow their personal desires. In this view, human beings are first and foremost seen as political animals that care for the well-being of the community rather than for their personal advantage: "ex quo illud *natura consequi, ut communem utilitatem nostrae anteponamus. ut enim leges omnium salutem singulorum saluti anteponunt, sic vir bonus et sapiens et legibus parens et civilis officii non ignarus utilitati omnium plus quam unius alicuius aut suae consulit.*"²¹

There is another important aspect of Cicero's cosmopolitan theory that is worth mentioning here, for it concerns the relationship between a cosmopolitan and a Rome-centred view of the world.²² As Malcolm Schofield has put it, "[t]he cosmic city can be seen ... as a concept which mediates the transition from republicanism to natural law theory." As citizenship is no longer based on "physical proximity or mutual acquaintance,"²³ the concept is potentially very attractive for the world order that had gradually emerged since the fourth century BCE with the Empire of Alexander the Great, through which huge parts of the known world had become parts of one political entity under Greek dominion. When in the third and especially the second centuries BCE the Romans in turn conquered increasingly more regions of the Hellenistic world, they also inherited the fascination for the Stoic concept. Schofield argues that especially after the Italic wars, when the inhabitants of Italy had received Roman citizenship, the definition of citizens as persons who live within the same city walls was no longer valid and needed to be adapted to the universal needs of the Empire.²⁴

It is obvious that the idealized image does not correspond to the realities Cicero encountered in his life. On the one hand, the contradiction lies within his own character. As already mentioned, he often was not able to see the whole world as his fatherland, but wanted to stay in Rome at all costs. His depressed letters during his exile of 58/57 BCE are the most telling example for this and contrast

Classical Library 213, Cambridge, MA: Loeb 1928). See Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism," 109; Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Legibus*, 125 on *recta ratio* as "attribute of the gods and the Stoic sage." One might relate this to the famous definition of the *populus* in *De re publica* 1.39: *populus* is not every *coetus multitudinis*, but a *coetus iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus*.

²⁰ On Cicero's *Cato*, see Kierdorf, "Ciceros Cato," 167–84.

²¹ Cicero, *De finibus* 3.64: "... from which it is a natural consequence that we should prefer the common advantage to our own. For just as the laws set the safety of all above the safety of individuals, so a good, wise and law-abiding man, conscious of his duty to the state, studies the advantage of all more than that of himself or of any single individual." (Translation: H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library* 40, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1914).

²² See Márquez, "Between *urbs* and *orbis*," 181–211.

²³ Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, 103.

²⁴ Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism," 110–11.

starkly with the philosophical ideal. This becomes obvious in a passage from the *Tusculanae Disputationes*, where he recommends embracing the Pacuvian verse that “patria est, ubicumque est bene” and praises the second-century politician (and Epicurean!) Titus Albucius for having borne his exile in an exemplary manner—he used the time to continue his philosophical studies in Athens—with utmost tranquillity: “itaque ad omnem rationem Teucris vox accommodari potest: ‘Patria est, ubicumque est bene’ [Pacuvius, *Teucer*]. Socrates quidem cum rogaretur, civitatem se esse diceret, ‘mundanum’ inquit [see Plutarch, *De exilio* = *Moralia* 600]; totius enim mundi se incolam et civem arbitrabatur. Quid? T. Albucius nonne *animo aequis* Athenis exul philosophabatur?”²⁵ During his own exile Cicero did nothing similar. His unphilosophical behaviour was a reason for countless attacks on his stableness (*constantia*) ever since antiquity—one has only to think of Cassius Dio’s treatment in which a philosopher called Philiscus consoles Cicero and encourages him to stop “weeping like a woman” (38.18.1),²⁶ or of Petrarch’s famous letter addressed to Cicero in Book 24 of his *Epistulae familiares*.²⁷

The second and more substantial reason for the discrepancy between philosophical ideal and reality is the time in which Cicero was living. It is well known that all the philosophical treatises mentioned above were composed in periods of his life when he was excluded from active politics (in the late 50s after his return from exile during the first triumvirate, and in 45/44 under Caesar’s dictatorship) and fell victim to the egoistic behaviour of the major political players of the time. Cosmopolitanism therefore might have seemed attractive to Cicero not because he cared so much for all people in the whole world, but because he could present it as a political alternative in which the idea of unanimity and equality would also be embraced by the political agents in Rome.²⁸ His reflections are nurtured by the

²⁵ Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.108: “And so Teucer’s saying can be fitted to every condition: ‘One’s country is wherever one does well.’ Socrates, for instance, on being asked to what country he claimed to belong, said, ‘To the world’; for he regarded himself as a native and citizen of the whole world. What of T. Albucius? Did he not study philosophy at Athens with complete tranquillity in exile?” (Translation: J.E. King, *Loeb Classical Library* 141, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1927). See Woolf, *Cicero*, 246 (on the problematic lack of political engagement during exile).

²⁶ See Gowing, “Greek Advice,” 359–72, and Jansen, “Cicero, toon karakter!” 161–66. Similarly, Plutarch criticizes Cicero’s behaviour in exile as unworthy for a man of his erudition, who considered himself to be a philosopher, see Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 32.4–5: “πολλῶν δὲ φοιτῶντων ἀνδρῶν ὑπ’ εὐνοίας καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων διαμιλλωμένων πρὸς αὐτὰς ταῖς πρεσβείαις, ὅμως ἀθυμῶν καὶ περίλυπος διῆγε τὰ πολλά, πρὸς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, ὥσπερ οἱ δυσέρωτες, ἀφορῶν, καὶ τῷ φρονήματι μικρὸς ἄγαν καὶ ταπεινὸς ὑπὸ τῆς συμφορᾶς γεγονώς καὶ συνεσταλμένος, ὥς οὐκ ἂν τις ἄνδρα παιδεῖα συμβιβαικότα τοσαύτη προσεδόκησε. καίτοι πολλάκις αὐτὸς ἤξεν τοὺς φίλους μὴ ῥήτορα καλεῖν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ φιλόσοφον” (“But although many people visited him out of goodwill, and the Greek cities vied with one another in sending him deputations, still, he passed his time for the most part in dejection and great grief, looking off towards Italy like a disconsolate lover, while in his spirit he became very petty and mean by reason of his misfortune, and was more humbled than one would have expected in a man who had enjoyed so lofty a discipline as his. And yet he often asked his friends not to call him an orator, but a philosopher.” Translation: B. Perrin, *Loeb Classical Library* 99, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1919).

²⁷ On this famous letter, see recently McLaughlin, “Petrarch and Cicero,” 26–30 (with further literature); an intriguing interpretation is offered by Enenkel, “Heilige Cicero, help mij!,” 19–27.

²⁸ See Girardet, *Die Ordnung der Welt*, 137 on the “Wechselwirkung von theologischer Spekulation und politischer Situation” (with regard to Cicero, *De legibus* 1.23), and Schofield, “Cosmopolitanism,” *passim*. Similarly, see Stevenson, “Reverberations of Empire,” 184–85, and, ground-breaking, Griffin, “*Iure plectimur*,” 85–111. See the overview by Eckstein, “Conceptualizing,” 568–89.

increasingly disruptive competition among mighty generals like Pompey and Caesar for whom warfare was only a means to increase their own influence (and who in their overambitious emulation did not even shrink back from forcing Rome into a civil war). Cicero therefore constructs a dichotomy between a still reasonably good past, in which the Romans were patrons, but not rulers of the world ("illud patrocinium orbis terrae verius quam imperium poterat nominari"),²⁹ and the harsh present, in which the Romans degenerated so much that they have almost lost their *res publica*, if one defines it as a state based on shared values, laws and rationality ("itaque parietes modo urbis stant et manent, iique ipsi iam extrema scelera metuentes, *rem vero publicam penitus amisimus*").³⁰

This quotation again shows how closely Cicero connects the Roman city-state (the nucleus of Rome's existence) and its dominion over the world (the cosmopolitan view of Rome's role in the world): "the corruption of imperial rule abroad inevitably undermines the *res publica* at home."³¹ The same can also be deduced from the passage in *De finibus* quoted above.³² The explanation of Cato, the main representative of Stoic thought in this dialogue, starts with an idealistic assumption that everyone is part of the same world that unites gods and men: "unumquemque nostrum eius mundi esse partem." But obviously even Cicero's spokesman Cato was not able to feel the interests of all inhabitants of distant lands in a similar way. The next argumentative step therefore returns to the term *res publica*: a *proditor patriae* must be punished, whereas someone who dies for the *res publica* deserves praise, "because it is fitting that the fatherland is dearer to us than our own life" ("quod deceat cariorem nobis esse patriam quam nosmet ipsos"). The terminology will automatically invite Roman readers to think of Cicero's engagement for his own state, the *res publica Romana*. This neatly fits the argument of Book 1 of *De legibus*, where the global Stoic citizenship and the acceptance of the same natural laws for everyone had led men to form the first *local*

²⁹ Cicero, *De officiis* 2.27: "... our government could be called more accurately a protectorate of the world than a dominion." (Translation: W. Miller, *Loeb Classical Library* 30, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1913).

³⁰ Cicero, *De officiis* 2.29: "And so in Rome only the walls of her houses remain standing—and even they wait now in fear of the most unspeakable crimes—but our republic we have lost for ever." (Translation: W. Miller, *Loeb Classical Library* 30, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1913). See Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis*, 407 on the discourse of moral decline that led to the loss of the Republic in Roman theory.

³¹ Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism," 135; the *De officiis*-passage being referred to on p. 29.

³² Cicero, *De finibus* 3.64: [Cato:] "mundum autem censent regi numine deorum eumque esse quasi communem urbem et civitatem hominum et deorum, et unumquemque nostrum eius mundi esse partem; ex quo illud natura consequi ut communem utilitatem nostrae anteponamus. ut enim leges omnium salutem singulorum saluti anteponunt, sic vir bonus et sapiens et legibus parens et civilis officii non ignarus utilitati omnium plus quam unius alicuius aut suae consulit. nec magis est vituperandus proditor patriae quam communis utilitatis aut salutis desertor propter suam utilitatem aut salutem. ex quo fit ut laudandus is sit qui mortem oppetat pro re publica, quod deceat cariorem nobis esse patriam quam nosmet ipsos." ("Again, they hold that the universe is governed by divine will; it is a city or state of which both men and gods are members, and each one of us is a part of this universe; from which it is a natural consequence that we should prefer the common advantage to our own. For just as the laws set the safety of all above the safety of individuals, so a good, wise and law-abiding man, conscious of his duty to the state, studies the advantage of all more than that of himself or of any single individual. The traitor to his country does not deserve greater reprobation than the man who betrays the common advantage or security for the sake of his own advantage or security. This explains why praise is owed to one who dies for the commonwealth, because it becomes us to love our country more than ourselves." Translation: H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library* 40, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1914).

citizenries. This shows Cicero's Roman interpretation of the Stoic concept: Rome and its Empire appear as a kind of factual representation of the cosmic city, yet as one that threatens to lose its moral roots; therefore the cosmopolitan ideal is invoked as a corrective of contemporary misbehaviour.³³ This concentration on Rome as the centre of a cosmopolitan Empire partly mitigates the contradiction between the cosmopolitan ideas uttered in Cicero's dialogues and his fixation on the city of Rome in his political career.

3 Augustine's city of God as a cosmopolitan state?

The tension between a supranational, all-encompassing *civitas mundi* and the Roman Empire, which we have seen in Cicero, continued to interest authors of later periods—especially the relation of the abstract concept of a cosmic city and the Roman Empire as its concrete representation was negotiated. As Johannes van Oort has shown, imperial Stoic thinkers often stressed the dichotomy between the earthly and the cosmic city.³⁴ Epictetus for example, in a synthesis of Stoic and Platonic ideas, interprets the earthly *polis* as a shadowy image of the cosmic one;³⁵ when Seneca in *De otio* speaks about the two *res publicae*, the *civitas mundi* is defined as *res vere publica*.³⁶ But even if many authors construct a strong opposition between the two *civitates*, they thereby subscribe to the idea that the only *visible* transnational political entity of their time is Rome. As in Cicero, Rome's name is associated with an (albeit imperfect, non-philosophical) version of cosmopolitan citizenry. Aelius Aristides expresses this very concisely in his praise of Rome (*Encomium Romae* 63 = *Orationes* 14.214 Dindorf). According to him, τὸ Ῥωμαῖον is no name of a concrete state, but the name of a sort (γένος) that is common to all (“καὶ τὸ Ῥωμαῖον εἶναι ἐποικήσατε οὐ πόλεως, ἀλλὰ γένους ὄνομα κοινοῦ τινος”). According to Daniel Richter, Aristides reflects Rome's status as a *polis* composed of many *poleis*, a “post-local” entity transforming a concrete imperialistic Roman presence in the provinces into a kind of a-political Roman-ness.³⁷

³³ See Schofield, “Cosmopolitanism,” 124: “What really interests him is still the *civitas* and *res publica* of *On the Commonwealth*, with Rome and its laws and historic customs taken as the paradigm of the best constitution”; see also Girardet, *Die Ordnung der Welt*, 148–50 on Cicero's wish for a newly constituted Roman Empire based on the legislation he proposes (which Girardet calls the *codex Ciceronianus*).

³⁴ See van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 250.

³⁵ Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.5.26: “τί γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος; μέρος πόλεως, πρώτης μὲν τῆς ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ τῆς ὡς ἑγγιστα λεγομένης, ἢ τί ἐστι μικρὸν τῆς ὅλης μίμημα.” (“For what is a man? A part of a state; first of that state which is made up of gods and men, and then of that which is said to be very close to the other, the state that is a small copy of the universal state.” Translation: W.A. Oldfather, *Loeb Classical Library* 131, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1925).

³⁶ See Seneca, *De otio* = *Dialogi* 8.4.1: “duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et vere publicam qua di atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum sed terminos civitatis nostrae cum sole metimur, alteram cui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi.” (“Let us grasp the idea that there are two commonwealths—the one, a vast and truly common state, which embraces alike gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner of earth nor to that, but measure the bounds of our citizenship by the path of the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth.” Translation: J.W. Basore, *Loeb Classical Library* 254, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1932); see Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, 93.

³⁷ Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 4.

In the following, I will briefly discuss Augustine's *De civitate dei*, in which ethico-political cosmopolitanism is redefined within a religious discourse. The starting point, however, is still the political entity of Rome's Empire. When Augustine wrote his *De civitate dei*, Rome's cultural and political identity was very much at stake. Already since the fourth century, the rise of Christianity had questioned the cultural canon of the Roman elite in a radical way (suffice to think of the famous debates about whether it was acceptable for a Christian to read pagan authors like Vergil or Seneca). In this debate, Augustine was one of the most influential Christian authorities to defend the adaptation of classical culture. Cicero was especially dear to him. It is well established that Cicero's writings profoundly influenced him in almost all phases of his life and that he very regularly referred to or quoted this late-Republican model.³⁸ This veneration was not restricted to Cicero's rhetorical abilities, but also encompasses his philosophical acumen—the role of the *Hortensius* as a first step towards Christianity in the *Confessiones* is perhaps the most famous example. Especially for Platonic and Stoic concepts, Cicero seems to have been Augustine's "most important intermediary."³⁹ This is especially true for his *De civitate dei*, in which quotations from Cicero's philosophical oeuvre abound and where Cicero is "unus e numero doctissimorum hominum idemque eloquentissimus omnium."⁴⁰

At the same time, Augustine's treatise questions the political legitimization of the eternal *imperium Romanum*.⁴¹ Written as a reaction to the Gothic sack of Rome of 410 CE and the resulting "ideological uncertainty" among the Romans, Augustine has to defend the Christian god from accusations that he has proven to be a less powerful protector of the city and the Empire than the pagan gods had been before.⁴² Gerard O'Daly has linked Augustine's work, composed in a moment of political crisis, to Cicero's philosophical works (and especially his *De re publica*), which were written in similarly unstable periods.⁴³ For both authors, the Stoic ideal of a cosmic city based on moral perfection functioned as a corrective of the present political turmoil, which lay bare the imperfections of the present political realities. But while for Cicero the Roman *res publica* in principle resembled the cosmopolitan ideal in that it was based on the same idea of equality of men, for Augustine the Roman state was profoundly imperfect in its foundation. For him, it therefore was no representative, but only a contrasting foil for his conception of an ideal cosmic state.⁴⁴

Of course, Augustine was not the first Christian author to reply to the Stoic concept of cosmopolitanism in this way. Already in the later second and earlier

³⁸ See the classical study by Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*, especially volume 2. See also the recent overview of Taylor, "Augustine's Reception of Cicero," 17–34. According to him Cicero "functions as a kind of metaphysical anchor" for Augustine's thoughts, at 25.

³⁹ Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 242.

⁴⁰ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 22.6: "one of a number of very learned men and himself the most eloquent of all men" (Translation: W.M. Green, *Loeb Classical Library* 417, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1972).

⁴¹ See Baier, "Cicero und Augustinus," 121–40.

⁴² See the concise overview in O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 27–33 (quotation on p. 28).

⁴³ See O'Daly, "Thinking through History," 49.

⁴⁴ This idea of two opposing states (a good and a bad one) was less based on Stoic thought, but influenced by Manichean and Jewish sources, as van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, has shown at length.

third centuries CE we find references. Tertullian in his *Apologeticus* writes that Christians recognize only one state (*res publica*) for all people, namely the world, and thereby renounce all earthly glory and all ardent engagement in the worldly politics as the ordinary states, alien to Christians (“at enim nobis ab omni gloriae et dignitatis ardore frigentibus nulla est necessitas coetus nec ulla magis res aliena quam publica. unam omnium rem publicam agnoscimus, mundum”).⁴⁵ Similarly, Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata* explicitly refers to the Stoics when asserting that heaven is a proper city, whereas places on earth are not because a real city must be morally good (“λέγουσι γὰρ καὶ οἱ Στωϊκοὶ τὸν μὲν οὐρανὸν κυρίως πόλιν, τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ γῆς ἐνταῦθα οὐκέτι πόλεις· ἔγεσθαι μὲν γάρ, οὐκ εἶναι δέ· σπουδαῖον γὰρ ἡ πόλις καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἀσπεῖόν τι σύστημα καὶ πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων ὑπὸ νόμου διοικούμενον”).⁴⁶

We find a similar dichotomy in Augustine’s *De civitate dei* as well. The adapted cosmopolitan approach to the *civitas terrena* becomes evident when Augustine explicitly refutes Cicero’s famous definition of a *res publica* as the *res populi* (“est igitur, inquit Africanus, res publica res populi, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus”).⁴⁷ He turns the definition against Cicero and against the political realities of his time by declaring that the Roman state never was a state because it never belonged to the people (“numquam fuit Romana res publica quia numquam fuit res populi”).⁴⁸ The reason for this is the lack of *iustitia*, which Cicero (with the formulation *iuris consensus*) had defined as the *conditio sine qua non* for any citizenry. As, however, most inhabitants of the Empire have never agreed to live under Roman jurisdiction, the Roman state cannot be considered legal.⁴⁹ Augustine hereby substitutes Cicero’s *ius* (or more precisely: the public consent about the law) with *iustitia*: instead of Cicero’s legal and political terminology, which defines the relationship of men among each other, he

⁴⁵ Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 38.3: “We, however, whom all the flames of glory and dignity leave cold, have no need to combine; nothing is more foreign to us than the State. One state we know, of which all are citizens—the universe” (my translation).

⁴⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 4.26: “The Stoics say that the universe is in the proper sense a city, but that those here on earth are not—they are called cities, but are not really. For a city or a people is something morally good, an organization or group of men administered by law which exhibits refinement.” (Translation: Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, 61).

⁴⁷ Cicero, *De re publica* 1.39: “Well, then, a commonwealth is the property of a people. But a people is not any collection of human beings brought together in any sort of way, but an assemblage of people in large numbers associated in an agreement with respect to justice and a partnership for the common good.” (Translation: C.W. Keyes, *Loeb Classical Library* 213, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1928).

⁴⁸ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 19.21: “There never was a Roman state, for there never was a people’s estate.” (Translation: W.C. Greene, *Loeb Classical Library* 416, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1960). See Adams, *The Populus of Augustine and Jerome*, 17–22. Smolak, “*Res publica res populi Dei*,” 109–39, comments on p. 113: “Die Definition Ciceros wird also grundsätzlich für zulässig erachtet—allein ihre Anwendung auf die *res publica Romana* für nicht zutreffend.” Similarly Taylor, “Augustine’s Reception of Cicero,” 26. It is noteworthy that Augustine does not mention Cicero’s critical stance on his own time in *De officiis* 2.29, in which the loss of Rome’s moral compass has almost led to a loss of the state, see above (with n. 30).

⁴⁹ On this famous passage in Augustine, see, for example, Treloar, “Cicero and Augustine,” 571–77; Smolak, “*Res publica res populi Dei*,” *passim*; and Baier, “Cicero und Augustinus,” 137–38.

speaks about justice between God and men.⁵⁰ Still, the consequences of Augustine's provocative claim for his contemporary readers are considerable: he undermines the political legitimacy of half a millennium of Rome's imperial reign in the Mediterranean world, yet he does so with a terminology that Roman readers knew from classical political theory. This ambiguity has led to diverse interpretations of Augustine's take on the earthly Empire. According to Ada Neschke, *De civitate dei* is meant to undermine the belief of Rome that it is an imitation (*mimēsis*) of a philosophical ideal.⁵¹ Gerard O'Daly argues in the opposite direction and stresses that Augustine "gives an account of how Christians may, and why they must, be good citizens of the Empire, by defining the limited but significant area where the aims and interests of the two cities, in their historical form, coincide."⁵²

My contribution will not attempt to solve this riddle. Instead, I will briefly turn to how Augustine describes the earthly and celestial cities. Johannes van Oort has argued that Augustine's choice to label God's reign as a *civitas* suggests that he is not referring to a single political state, but rather to the equivalent of the Greek *πόλις*, that is, a community based on "its own politics, legal standards, ethics, economics and, last but not least, its own religion."⁵³ In other words, it is very close to Cicero's legal definition of his ideal cosmic city, and by consequence also resembles his ideal (Roman) *res publica*. This means that in contrasting God's rightful *civitas* with the unrightful earthly *civitas*, Augustine, following earlier Christian thinkers, has not only created one cosmic city as the Stoics did, but two: one deficient and earthly (the Empire of Rome which dominates the world through injustice and force) and one perfect and heavenly.⁵⁴ Both are cosmopolitan in that they are transnational, all-encompassing entities. What is more: both are places where Christians live.⁵⁵ God's city is their final destination, whereas worldly citizenship is temporary, but still common to all, as a passage from *De opere monachorum* testifies, where Augustine explains that it does not matter to which monastery one gives one's alms and charities, because "for all Christians there is one *res publica*" (*"omnium enim christianorum una res publica est"*).⁵⁶

Admittedly, *De opere monachorum* is quite another text than *De civitate dei*, but also in the latter we find similar references. In Book 5, Augustine declares that Christians can live well and without harming their souls under whatever

⁵⁰ See Neschke, "La cité n'est pas à nous," 236–37; Smolak, "*Res publica res populi Dei*," 115–20. Smolak also mentions (p. 120) that Augustine inherited the redefinition of *iustitia* as transcendent Christian justice from Lactantius.

⁵¹ Neschke, "La cité n'est pas à nous," 240: "Par conséquent, et à différence du platonisme politique, jamais la cité terrestre, même en tant que cité temporelle, peut être une *μίμησις* de la cité céleste ou spirituelle".

⁵² O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 209.

⁵³ Van Oort, "*Civitas dei—terrena civitas*," 161.

⁵⁴ Or even three, if we consider the (imperfect) church in Augustine's time as another earthly entity spanning the whole world. See O'Daly, "Thinking through History," 57: "The church is not presented in Augustine as the equivalent of a political society. Yet it shares some of the undesirable characteristics of secular institutions."

⁵⁵ See Taylor, "Augustine's Reception of Cicero," 28: "These cities are 'interwoven' and 'mingled' in everyday life, and we participate in each according to that love that motivates us—we dwell in the earthly city as we act on our self-love, and we participate in the Holy City when we are moved by our love for God."

⁵⁶ Augustine, *De opere monachorum* 33.

earthly dominion, as long as the rulers don't force them to do injustice ("quantum enim pertinet ad hanc uitam mortalium, quae paucis diebus ducitur et finitur, quid interest sub cuius imperio uiuat homo moriturus, si illi qui imperant ad impia et iniqua non cogant?").⁵⁷ For the time being, the earthly reign in which the Christians live is the Roman one, the second all-encompassing cosmopolitan empire in the history of mankind.⁵⁸ This means that the *terrena civitas* in Augustine's time is equivalent to the *res publica Romana*: when reflecting on Romulus and his murder of Remus, he introduces the section with the sentence "the first founder of the earthly state ('*terrenae civitatis conditor*') thus was a fratricide."⁵⁹ Whereas Augustine has refuted Cicero with Cicero's own definition when denying the existence of the Roman Empire as a legal entity, in other passages Cicero's shifting from *civitas mundi* to (Roman) state (which we have seen in the *De finibus*-passage) is taken up by Augustine. In order to be able to do so, he proposes a weaker, non-ethical definition: a state is a "coetus multitudinis rationalis rerum quas diligit concordia communione sociatus."⁶⁰ According to James O'Donnell, the sentence reveals Augustine's attitude towards Cicero as follows: "Cicero and his tradition are not rejected, refuted, denied—they are, in the best sense, transcended."⁶¹ However, Kurt Smolak has argued—convincingly in my view—that the pragmatic and at first seemingly neutral definition has negative associations: first, the lacuna of any legal element in the definition makes the state

⁵⁷ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 5.17: "As far as this mortal life is concerned, which is passed and ended in a few days, what difference does it make for a man who is soon to die, under what ruler he lives, if only the rulers do not force him to commit unholy and unjust deeds?" (Translation: W.M. Green, *Loeb Classical Library* 412, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1963).

⁵⁸ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 18.2: "sed inter plurima regna terrarum, in quae terrenae utilitatis vel cupiditatis est divisa societas—quam civitatem mundi huius universali vocabulo nuncupamus—duo regna cernimus longe ceteris provenisse clariora, Assyriorum primum, deinde Romanorum, ut temporibus, ita locis inter se ordinata atque distincta. nam quo modo illud prius, hoc posterius: eo modo illud in Oriente, hoc in Occidente surrexit; denique in illius fine huius initium confestim fuit. regna cetera ceterosque reges velut adpendices istorum dixerim." ("But among the numerous kingdoms of the world, into which the society motivated by worldly advantage or satisfaction, which we call by the general name the 'city of this world', has been divided, we note that two powers have gained far greater fame than the rest, first that of the Assyrians, and later that of the Romans, as neatly arranged and well spaced from each other in time as in place. For just as the one arose earlier and the other later, so also the one arose in the east and the other in the west, and, to conclude, the beginning of the one followed immediately upon the end of the other. All other kingdoms and kings I should describe as appendages of these empires." Translation: E.M. Sanford and W.M. Green, *Loeb Classical Library* 415, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1965).

⁵⁹ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 15.5.

⁶⁰ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 19.24: "A people is a large gathering of rational beings united in fellowship by their agreement about the objects of their love." (Translation: W.C. Greene, *Loeb Classical Library* 416, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1960). On the replacement of *consensus iuris* with *concoria communio* and possible (almost ironic) implications see Kempshall, "De re publica in Medieval and Renaissance Political Thought," 99–135, here 102–3; on p. 105, he summarizes Augustine's definition as "nothing other than a multitude of humans tied together by some bond of association" (with reference to Augustine, *De civitate dei* 15.8). *Contra*, Taylor, "Augustine's Reception of Cicero," 30, believes that Augustine with this formulation tries to connect his concept of the earthly *civitas* closely with Cicero's in *De re publica*, in that both need a skilled and moral statesman in order "to discipline and bend his fellow citizens toward divine truth."

⁶¹ O'Donnell, "Augustine—Cicero redivivus," 110. According to O'Donnell, Augustine is in constant dialogue with Cicero in "thinking about communities of people as communities, taking questions of polity and politics back to fundamentals." On p. 111, he even tentatively compares the structural imitation of Cicero in *De civitate dei* with Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.

susceptible to arbitrariness; second, it connects it to two empires of the Old Testament, Egypt and Assyria, which always acted as unlawful opponents of Israel.⁶² Taking these elements into account, one could say that Augustine defines the *imperium Romanum* as part of God's creation and as a necessary step in the history of human salvation—necessary, but highly imperfect.⁶³ Its imperfection lies not only in the lack of justice, but also in the lack of a true feeling of unity among its inhabitants. In chapter 19.7 Augustine alludes to Cicero's idea (expressed at *Fin.* 3.62–64) of a plural identity of men who are part of familiar and urban societies as well as of the common citizenship of the world. Accordingly, Augustine speaks of three steps of human societies ("gradus societatis humanae"): *domus*, *urbs* and *orbis*. The larger the entity becomes, the more dangers arise, which arguably threaten even Augustine's 'weaker' definition of a state as a gathering of people united by common interests:

post civitatem vel urbem sequitur orbis terrae, in quo tertium gradum ponunt societatis humanae, incipientes a domo atque inde ad urbem, deinde ad orbem progrediendo venientes; qui utique, sicut aquarum congeries, quanto maior est, tanto periculis plenior. in quo primum linguarum diversitas hominem alienat ab homine. ... quando enim quae sentiunt inter se communicare non possunt propter solam diversitatem linguae, nihil prodest ad consociandos homines tanta similitudo naturae, ita ut libentius homo sit cum cane suo quam cum homine alieno. at enim opera data est, ut imperiosa civitas non solum iugum, verum etiam linguam suam domitis gentibus per pacem societatis inponeret, per quam non deesset, immo et abundaret etiam interpretum copia. verum est; sed hoc quam multis et quam grandibus bellis, quanta strage hominum, quanta effusione humani sanguinis comparatum est?⁶⁴

The Roman state as the present representative of the *civitas terrena* suffers from the lack of unity among its citizens: as they do not speak the same native language and therefore do not understand each other, they do not feel close to each other (the sneer that they prefer to live with their own dogs rather than with people from other regions undermines another core element of the definitions offered so far, that is, a state as based on shared rationality that only human beings possess). Only a huge effort of suppression and violence can force the subdued to accept

⁶² See Smolak, "*Res publica res populi Dei*," 125–27; on Rome as the *Babylonia secunda*, see also van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 119.

⁶³ See Neschke, "La cité n'est pas à nous," 243: "[S]ur le registre théorique ou catéchisant, il affirme que la cité temporelle occupe une place déterminée et tout-à-fait instrumentale dans l'ordre de ce monde ... Dans le registre apologétique et polémique, Augustin souligne qu'il faut rejeter la prétention de la cité païenne existante, Rome, de procurer le salut à ses habitants."

⁶⁴ Augustine, *De civitate dei* 19.7: "After the state or city comes the world, to which they assign the third level of human society; they begin with the household, then progressively arrive at the city, and then at the world. And this, like a confluence of waters, is the fuller of dangers as it is the larger. In the first place, the diversity of languages separates one man from another. ... For where they cannot communicate their views to one another, merely because they speak different languages, so little good does it do them to be alike by endowment of nature, so far as social unity is concerned, that a man would rather have his dog for company than a foreigner. But the imperial city has taken pains to impose on conquered peoples, as a bond of peace, not only her yoke but her language, so that there has been far from a lack, but rather a superfluity, of interpreters. True; but at what a cost has this unity been achieved, all those great wars, all that human slaughter and bloodshed!" (Translation: W.C. Greene, *Loeb Classical Library* 416, Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1960). Note how this passage obliterates Sallust's vision of Rome's uniting capacity (see n. 6 above)

the shared Roman language as a minimal base of civic union. By contrast, God's *civitas caelestis* will generously provide this union in that all inhabitants share the same (Christian) faith, and as a consequence the same ethical beliefs.

We have seen that Augustine, apart from using Cicero explicitly as a source and framework for his historical and political reflections,⁶⁵ also inherited Cicero's *interpretatio Romana* of the Stoic concept of the cosmopolitan state. But he goes one decisive step further: he defines two common and all-encompassing states. The *imperium Romanum* is the earthly *civitas mundi*, but it is a defective and even illegal state. It therefore does not invite associations with ethical cosmopolitanism, but with submission under an imperialistic power. God's state, on the other hand, is perfectly just and therefore highly ethical. Ethical goodness is an aspect that is discussed in modern sociological approaches of cosmocitizenship.⁶⁶ But is the *civitas dei* therefore cosmopolitan in our modern sense? In some ways it is: it admits people from all kinds of ethnicities, regions and social strata. But if one sees cosmopolitanism as a project for recognizing multiple identities, including religious ones, it hardly qualifies for cosmopolitanism, as Christian faith is the passport one needs to become a true citizen.

4 Lorenzo Valla's 'res publica Romanae linguae'

For this last part, I make a huge step forwards in time, from the fifth to the fifteenth century. Lorenzo Valla's preface to the *Elegantia linguae latine*, his major work on Latin grammar and style, revives the connection between Roman imperialistic discourse and ideas of cosmopolitanism by moving it from an ethico-political or religious to a linguistic level.⁶⁷ The text was written around 1441 when the author was in service of King Alfonso of Naples;⁶⁸ it was also the time when the papal curia took the first steps to restore the physical city of Rome to its ancient glory (the so-called *restauratio Urbis* which would continue for the rest of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries). In Valla's time, however, the ancient monuments were mostly still in a disastrous state. The need to preserve the ancient heritage was urgently felt; and the renewed interest in the physical city of Rome also made it an important theme in the literature of the time.⁶⁹ It is important to realize this background to appreciate Valla's treatise fully. As well, he is interested in preserving Rome's ancient Empire, yet he transposed the debate onto a non-material level. Valla starts from the assessment that the Empire of antiquity has obviously been destroyed as a political entity; yet, so he claims, its heritage is not completely gone, for it lives on through the Latin language, which is still one of the most important media for transnational communication. But, as the physical remains of ancient Rome are in danger of disappearing completely and have to be rescued, so also the language of ancient Rome needs the united effort of the

⁶⁵ On Augustine's Ciceronian method, see O'Daly, "Thinking through History".

⁶⁶ See, for example, Vernon, "Cosmocitizens?" 317: "[S]hould the cosmopolitan be a good citizen?"

⁶⁷ Part 4 of my article develops aspects of my earlier interpretation of Valla's focus on Rome in "Laurentius Valla, Romanus, orator," 152–67.

⁶⁸ See Regoliosi, *Nel cantiere del Valla*, 60–61.

⁶⁹ On this aspect, see the forthcoming study by de Beer, *The Renaissance Battle for Rome*.

humanists in order to survive. Valla invites all educated men to contribute to its 'defence', which for him means the purification of the language from all non-classical medievalisms.

In modern times the text has gained the iconic status of a manifesto of humanist learning; it is often seen as the most explicit definition of a *res publica litteraria*, a republic of letters that is open to anyone who subscribes to the ideals of humanistic education, no matter what nationality (s)he has. From this idealistic standpoint that still sees humanism as a mostly intellectual movement, the *res publica litteraria* would classify very nicely for a cosmopolitan 'state', an intellectual world citizenship based on shared cultural values, in this case the love for the language and culture of Antiquity.⁷⁰ More recently, however, interpreters have rooted Valla's claim in the national Italian or even local Roman discourse of his time (Valla was a native Roman) and have thus questioned the idealism of the text. According to such an interpretation, Valla's linguistic programme is connected to the debate on which city could claim to be the true heir of ancient Rome: contemporary Rome itself (especially because of the papal Curia), or a city like Florence, which had been a driving force of humanist learning in the early fifteenth century.⁷¹ Valla's close association of the Roman language with the Roman Empire (which in Antiquity always had its heart in the city of Rome) could become useful as one argument in favour of Rome as the intellectual centre of the humanist movement.

The preface to the first book in particular is quoted regularly for the famous claim that the *imperium Romanum* can be vindicated solely through the excellence of the Latin language. The preface is built on a huge comparison of the Roman Empire and its language.⁷² Valla contrasts the loss of Rome's political hegemony in the world with the triumph of its language, which constitutes the basis for what could be called a cosmopolitan state of the intellect in that it encompasses in principle the whole known world. In contrast to Augustine, who had highlighted the Eastern empires as predecessors of the Roman imperium, Valla marks the difference between them: only the Roman Empire has also spread its language all over the world⁷³ and thereby turned language into a constituting aspect of imperialism. As long as the inhabitants of other countries still speak Latin, the nucleus of the Roman Empire has not ceased to exist—its language is explicitly called a ruler of the world: "nostra est Italia, nostra Gallia, nostra Hispania, Germania, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Illyricum multaeque aliae nationes. *Ibi namque Romanum imperium est ubicumque Romana lingua dominatur.*"⁷⁴ The quotation exemplifies that for Valla Empire and language are two sides of the same coin, and

⁷⁰ See, for example, La Penna, "La tradizione classica nella cultura italiana," 1319–72; Hanna-Barbara Gerl, *Rhetorik als Philosophie*, especially 248.

⁷¹ Gaeta, "Sull'idea di Roma," 181; Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists*, 69–81.

⁷² See Valla, *De elegantia linguae latinae proemium primum* 19: "Ac, ne pluribus agam, de comparatione imperii sermonisque romani hoc satis est dixisse" ("But in order not to make my argument too lengthy, I have spoken enough about the comparison of the Roman Empire and language"). All translations from Valla's preface are my own. The Latin text is taken from Regoliosi, *Nel cantiere del Valla*, 120–25.

⁷³ See Johnson, "The Linguistic Imperialism," 33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 23: "Italy belongs to us, as does France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, the Balkan (Dalmatia and Illyricum), and many other nations. For the Roman Empire exists wherever the Roman language rules."

indeed he constantly switches between both.⁷⁵ It is worth noting that as a Roman patriot⁷⁶ he markedly labels Latin as the *lingua Romana*; he defends this choice by asserting that the more common alternative term, *lingua Latina*, is ultimately related to the city of Rome as well (“[lingua Romana] que eadem Latina a Latio ubi Roma est”).⁷⁷ Generally, we recognize a method that Augustine and Cicero had applied as well, namely to connect an apolitical, all-encompassing ideal closely with the political entity of the boundless *imperium Romanum*.⁷⁸

More specifically, Valla looks back to Augustine when he uses the Roman Empire both as a metaphor (or rather analogy)⁷⁹ for the global proliferation of his alleged linguistic empire and as a negative foil that helps him *ex negativo* to aggrandize the authority of the Latin language. The political Empire is proven to have been defective (as also Augustine had presented it) and therefore has ended, whereas the idealized alternative (the *civitas dei* in Augustine, the *lingua Romana* in Valla) is perfect and therefore non-terminated. Another parallel between the two authors is the stress on the amount of bloodshed and suppression that was needed to enable and control political unity, whereas the alternative is based on love and concord instead: “neque enim armis aut cruore aut bellis dominatum adeptus est, sed beneficiis amore concordia.”⁸⁰ Valla’s encomium of the exceptionality of Latin goes so far that he recurs to words that link his linguistic discourse to a quasi-religious sphere: “magnum igitur latini sermonis sacramentum est! magnum profecto numen! qui apud peregrinos, apud barbaros, apud hostes sancta et religiose per tot secula custoditur ut non tam dolendum nobis Romanis quam gaudendum sit atque ipso etiam orbe exaudiente gloriandum.”⁸¹ While the holy

⁷⁵ See De Caprio, “La rinascita della cultura di Roma,” 170.

⁷⁶ On Valla’s patriotism, see Fisher, “The Project of Humanism,” 303.

⁷⁷ Valla, *De elegantia lingue latine proemium primum* 4: “... the Roman language, which is the same as the Latin, called ‘Latin’ from Latium where Rome is situated.” See Nauta, *In Defense of Common Sense*, 278: “For the Roman Valla, it was in Rome that Latin had developed and from whence it had spread.” See also di Napoli, *Lorenzo Valla*, 328: “la romanitas è per lui [that is, Valla, CP] una plena humanitas, quasi paradigmatica di fronte alla barbarie della non romanità.”

⁷⁸ The *apparatus fontium* by Regoliosi, *Nel cantiere del Valla*, does not mention Augustine for the preface, but links it mostly to Ciceronian and Quintilian concepts of the greatness of the Latin language, but see Fisher, “The Project of Humanism,” 316–17 on Christian (Pauline) associations of his imperial metaphor (without reference to Augustine, though).

⁷⁹ Fisher, “The Project of Humanism,” 303 doubts that one should call this a metaphor because Latin was used for actual colonization in the past; but Valla’s focus is less on actual colonization than on the *essence* of the political vs. the linguistic Empire; see also Johnson, “The Linguistic Imperialism,” 32–38, for the complexity of Valla’s metaphor (which according to Johnson is meant to contrast the transcendent Rome of the Latin language and the political Empire).

⁸⁰ Valla, *De elegantia lingue latine proemium primum* 15: “And the dominion has not been achieved by weapons, blood, or war, but by benefactions, love, and concord.” See the *concors concordia* in Augustine, *De civitate dei* 19.24 (quoted above) and the reference to blood and war in 19.7: “sed hoc quam multis et quam grandibus bellis, quanta strage hominum, quanta effusione humani sanguinis comparatum est?” (quoted in its context above).

⁸¹ Valla, *De elegantia lingue latine proemium primum* 21: “Great is the mystery of the Latin language! Great indeed is its divinity! It has been protected by foreigners, barbarians and enemies for so many centuries that we Romans must not bemoan but rejoice and be proud while the whole world itself is listening.” Regoliosi, *Nel cantiere del Valla*, ad loc., refers to Paul, *Letter to the Ephesians* 5:32 and *First Letter to Timothy* 3:16; for *magnum numen* one can also think of Cicero, *Philippics* 3.32: “magna vis est, magnum

language might refer back to Augustine, too, it is of course also rooted in the humanistic presence, in which Rome is closely connected to the papal Curia (see below).

The assertion that even barbarians (etymologically those who speak a foreign language) and political enemies (those who fight against Rome's dominion) embrace the holiness of the Latin language, is a truly cosmopolitan claim. The inclusive character of his praise is enforced at the end of the quote, where Valla calls the whole *orbis terrarum* as witness for his claim ("ipso etiam orbe exaudiente"). Love of Latin is the tie that unites all inhabitants of the globe. Yet, as in the preface, there is also ambiguity in this quote. The self-presentation as 'we Romans' ("nobis Romanis") thwarts the inclusive rhetoric and roots the claim of the dominion of Latin in traditional imperial discourse: 'we' (the ingroup) bring 'our' benefits to 'them' (the 'others') and 'we' can be proud of this 'civilizing' act. Moreover, the described unity of all men in the world is only an ideal, and Valla is honest enough to acknowledge that the ingroup of the 'linguistic Romans' stands against an outgroup of linguistic opponents. These are people who do not share Valla's love and engagement for Latin. His rhetorical weapon against those opponents is radical: they are excluded from the group of rational people and are stigmatized as new barbarians.

The consequence is that Valla, who had previously stressed that the spreading of Latin was an act of benefaction and love, now turns to military metaphors. The grammatical restoration he aspires to is presented as a war against barbarism, and Valla sees himself as its military leader: he compares himself to Camillus who had driven the Gauls out of Rome in 390 BCE.⁸² Where does this leave cosmopolitan ideas? Again things are ambiguous. On the one hand, membership of the ingroup of Valla's reform, or (put differently) citizenship of the *res publica litteraria*, is explicitly not confined to national boundaries. In order to stress this, Valla redefines the word 'Quirites', Roman citizens, in a radical way: "quousque tandem, Quirites, (litteratos appello et Romane lingue cultores, qui et veri et soli Quirites sunt, ceteri enim potius inquilini) quousque, inquam, Quirites urbem nostram, non dico domicilium imperii, sed parentem litterarum, a Gallis captam esse patiemini, id est latinitatem a barbaria oppressam?"⁸³ On the other hand, the passage is dense with historical symbolism—as mentioned above, in the rest of the preface Valla elaborates the idea of fighting against the Gauls in order to protect Rome—and plays with the dichotomy of supra-nationality versus Rome-centeredness. All people from the whole world are invited, yet those who accept the invitation will become the new *Roman* citizens in that they defend the Roman language, the

numen unum et idem sentientis senatus," where it refers to unanimity between opponents, as well (in this case the senators during the civic struggle after Caesar's death).

⁸² Valla, *De elegantia linguae latinae proemium primum* 39–41: "Camillus vobis, Camillus imitandus est ... equidem, quod ad me attinet, hunc imitabor, hoc mihi proponam exemplum." ("Camillus—you must imitate Camillus ... As far as I am concerned, I will imitate him and chose him as my example.")

⁸³ Valla, *De elegantia linguae latinae proemium primum* 23: "How long, citizens (for this is how I call the intellectuals and conservators of the Roman language who are the true and only Quirites, the others being immigrants), how long, citizens, will you tolerate that our city, I do not say the dwelling of the empire, but the parent of learnedness, is captured by the Gauls, that is, Latinity suppressed by barbarism?"

symbol of Rome's everlasting *imperium*. Cosmopolitanism means Romanization at a very basic level.

But which Rome and which empire is Valla referring to? Is he dreaming of turning the tide and does he believe that his linguistic reform can ultimately resurrect a kind of political Roman Empire again?⁸⁴ Or is he merely speaking as a humanist and grammarian whose interest is in language, not in politics? At the end, an answer depends on how strongly the Roman metaphor will resonate in any reader's mind and, as a consequence, how strongly it will define the actual city of Rome as the necessary centre of European humanism.⁸⁵ Valla always keeps both interpretations alive: a national Roman and a transnational cosmopolitan community, as the following quotation once more demonstrates: "confido propediem linguam romanam vere plus quam urbem, et cum ea disciplinas omnes, iri restitutum. Quare pro mea in patriam pietate, immo adeo in omnes homines, et pro rei magnitudine cunctos facundie studiosos ex superiore loco libet adhortari."⁸⁶ Valla connects his linguistic program with the beginning of *restauratio Urbis* under the popes Eugene IV and Nicolas V, yet at the same time relativizes the physical renewal of Rome by asserting that his linguistic reform is more valuable (*plus quam*). He is driven by love for Rome (his *patria*), but even more for all men (that is, all inhabitants of the world, the compatriots of the newly formed *res publica litteraria*). The dreamt-of papal (religious and political) Empire and the references to defending the Roman state are both real, in that they are situated in Valla's historical context, and metaphorical at the same time, in that they stress the urgency and extent of his cultural, cosmopolitan endeavour.

The ambiguity with which Valla refers to the *imperium Romanum* has repercussions on whether we could label his humanist Republic of letters a cosmopolitan state. Similar in certain ways to Augustine's *civitas dei*, his *imperium linguae* is cosmopolitan because it disrespects physical borders and is open to all. Yet similarly to Cicero's cosmopolitan city, it is oriented towards the actual city of Rome.⁸⁷ Moreover, even if it is interpreted idealistically as a manifesto for a *res*

⁸⁴ Fisher, "The Project of Humanism," 305–6 partly suggests this, when he speaks of the ideal and factual (present) Empire, and p. 309 on humanism as "colonial enterprise"; on pp. 314–15, however, he proposes a more philosophical interpretation (the political metaphor stands for "the capacity to receive the fullness of the primary truths"), and on pp. 316–17 a Christian one (see above n. 74). As his is a "poetic" reading of the metaphors ("the rhetorical surfaces") of the text, he advocates semantic ambiguity (see p. 322).

⁸⁵ On the (also emotional) intensity of the manifold imagery of Rome in Valla's preface ("Rome as empire, Rome as fallen and yet somehow persisting commonwealth, and this new and spiritual Rome as a republic to be restored and defended"), see Johnson, "The Linguistic Imperialism," 36–37.

⁸⁶ Valla, *De elegantia linguae latinae proemium primum*, 33–34: "I am confident that very soon the Roman language will be restored more than the city, and with it all other sciences. Therefore according to my duty and respect towards my fatherland, nay rather towards all people, and according to the greatness of the matter I am disposed to encourage all experts of eloquence from the highest range."

⁸⁷ The Roman connection of Valla's linguistic reforms will become stronger with the years. In 1455, when in the meantime he had moved to Rome, Valla delivered a speech for the opening of the Academic Year of Rome's *studium Urbis*: Valla, *Oratio in principio studii die XVIII Octobris MCCCCCLV*, in Valla, *Orazione per l'inaugurazione*, 192–216. In this speech he recurred to many of the arguments he had voiced in the preface of the *Elegantia*. The most obvious innovation, however, is the role of the papal Curia that guarantees the persistence of the ancient Roman traditions (§34). See Bianca, "La curia," 97–113, on the Curia as *domicilium sapientiae*, and Pieper, *Elegos redolere*, 223–26 for a more detailed discussion of Valla's *Orazione* as opposed to the *Elegantia*.

publica litteraria, the preface invokes a state which is not fully cosmopolitan in that not everyone can be member of it (see the clear distinction between *cives* and *inquilini* in the passage quoted above)—learnedness and the belief in the holiness of the Roman/Latin language is the passport one needs to show, as Christian faith had been for Augustine.

5 Conclusion

The three case studies of this article have shown the diversity of cosmopolitan discourse in Latin literature. Starting from Cicero's reception and Roman interpretation of Greek Stoic ideas of a world citizenship, they move towards Christian philosophy and theology in Augustine and towards cultural imperialism in Valla. Only in Cicero's case is the link to Stoic thought made explicit, whereas the two other authors react in a looser way to the philosophical discourse. Nonetheless, they all pose an important question: what is the relation between the philosophical/theological/linguistic ideal and the historical realities? More concretely, the question that has interested me is: what is the role of the Roman Empire within the three case studies, a political entity that once had conquered large parts of the then known world? Two answers that unite the three cases emerge: first, the Roman Empire is used as a representative and/or contrastive foil of an idealized cosmopolitan world. Second, all three authors doubt that the Roman Empire may truly be classified as a cosmopolitan state. Cicero and Augustine question its legal or moral fundament, whereas Valla sees the ancient Empire already as a past entity that has proven to be vulnerable, and which has finally been conquered and destroyed. Whether the papal Curia will be able to fill the gap, is very much a question that kept Valla, and with him many humanists of his generation, busy.

The question remains, then, whether the *ideal* alternatives offered by Cicero, Augustine and Valla can at least be classified as a cosmopolitan state. An answer depends on which criteria for cosmopolitanism we apply. From an ancient perspective, they all would, as they are based on justice, equality of men and voluntary submission under a dominion. From a modern perspective, however, they are all deficient in that they entail dichotomies of in- and outgroups and define a legal, theologian or linguistic *Leitkultur* that all citizens of the community have to embrace. As in modern theoretical approaches the ability and willingness to live with the 'Other' and a critical attitude towards dogmatism are defined as crucial elements of cosmopolitanism,⁸⁸ most Latin texts dealing with it will not entirely fulfil these criteria. Rather, they can sensitize us to the vicinity of cosmopolitan and imperial discourses. The ancient and humanistic texts show that cosmopolitan ideas often arise in times of strong imperialistic claims; they serve as alternatives to a seemingly uncontested world order of dominion, submission and egoism. Alternatives are not automatically perfect, perhaps not even better than the concepts they criticize—but they always open up discursive fields and trigger new reflection about the status quo. In this sense, the history of Latin

⁸⁸ See Stevenson, "Cosmopolitan Citizenship" (quoted above with n. 2).

cosmopolitanism has much to offer for modern readers to make sense of the world in which we live.

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