



GRADUATE SCHOOL AT KIEL UNIVERSITY

human development in landscapes

BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM

Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 4:15 p.m.

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONNECTIONS AND THE FORMATION  
OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE (200–30 BC)

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The remarkable development of Rome from a small village on the Tiber to a global Empire remains hotly debated. Many scholars still see imperialism as the main driving force and so far all histories of Rome are histories of Empire that take Italy as point of departure. In my lecture I would like to prudently explore a different interpretation of the formation of the Roman Empire, taking my cue from Globalisation-thinking as it was recently explored in the *CUP* volume *Globalisation and the Roman world. World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, amongst other contributions.

The period of ca. 200-30 BC forms a decisive stage in the interconnection of the different (Western-, Mid- and Eastern-) Eurasian spheres and from around 200 BC onwards we witness an unprecedented intensification of connectivity all across Eurasia. It is my hypothesis that processes of (growing) interdependency between these regions are key to the emergence of the Roman Empire. I will suggest to understand the formation of the Roman Empire as part of this new wave of connectivity; seeing Roman imperialism as being only one factor to account for it. Many historical developments can be seen as the (often) unintended consequences of increasing interconnection and interdependency. Societies that benefited most were those that were able to transform themselves – knowingly or not– and ride the wave of change. Especially during the formative, late-Republican/Hellenistic phase of ca. 200-30 BC, Romans were struggling immensely with the impact of the ever-widening world they became part of. The interaction with and incorporation of "the foreign" now necessarily became one of the key components of Romanisation. All this had major consequences: Romans conquered the world but simultaneously their society and culture became like that world.

Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204