Globalization is nothing new nor a phenomenon exclusively tied up with (European) expansion or modernity. Globalization has its history. Historicizing globalization makes us understand how and when our planet became systematically connected and how connectivity works as a process. Studying historical trajectories of globalization can thus improve our understanding of the complexities of our 21st century world. My lecture will sketch a (deep) historical perspective on globalization and focus on the Roman Empire in particular. The Romans had to make sense of the impact of the ever-widening Eurasian networks they became part of - and developed some innovative coping practices as a result. Commodities will play an important role in that story.

Miguel John Versluys’ research explores the cultural dynamics of the Hellenistic-Roman world (roughly 200 BC – AD 200) from the point of view of Eurasia and has two distinct focus points: the interconnection of cultures and their various identities (“globalization”), and the interdependence of objects and people (“Material Culture Studies”). He currently heads the NWO-funded project Innovating objects. The impact of global connections and the formation of the Roman Empire (ca. 200-30 BC). He is co-editor of Globalisation and the Roman world. World history, connectivity and material culture (Cambridge 2015) and of the Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalisation (London 2017).