Sanctuary and society in central-southern Italy (3rd to 1st centuries BC) : a study into cult places and cultural change after the Roman conquest of Italy

Stek, T.D.

Citation for published version (APA):
Stek, T. D. (2008). Sanctuary and society in central-southern Italy (3rd to 1st centuries BC) : a study into cult places and cultural change after the Roman conquest of Italy

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
Chapter 1

Rome and Italy: Ideas on Cultural Change

It is under the heading of ‘romanisation’ that the cultural, socio-political and economic changes in Italy from, say the fourth century BC, are often discussed. This concept of romanisation, which was first developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, has in turn shaped modern ways of thinking about ancient Italy, and has also structured the interpretation of the historical and archaeological data. Clearly, this situation runs the risk of falling prey to circular reasoning. Romanisation has been discussed more than extensively in the last decades,¹ and only aspects that are directly relevant to the next chapters are briefly presented here.² Different traditions account for different research questions and approaches. The strong idealist and humanistic tradition in Italy has only recently found some common ground with the more theoretically oriented studies of the Anglo-Saxon world.³ Whereas New Archaeology, for instance, has had little impact on classical archaeology in Italy, post-processualism has been embraced more warmly, perhaps because – at least superficially – it fits better into the established Italian tradition emphasising ideological and culture specific aspects.⁴ Nonetheless, in the romanisation debate one of the most influential models had been adopted already earlier in both Anglo-Saxon and Italian studies: the so-called ‘ emulation model’ or ‘self-romanisation paradigm’. This theoretical explanation for the mechanism of romanisation has been developed in the latter decades of the 20th century, and has often remained implicit in studies on Italy.⁵ A rather precise conception of the cultural changes in Italy following the Roman conquest had already taken root long before: the idea of a gradual cultural and political unification of Italy under Roman guidance was established in the 19th century.⁶ The mechanism of self-romanisation can therefore be

¹ The bibliography on the debate in a provincial context is immense; see e.g. WOOLF 1996–97; DERKS 1998, 2–8; WEBSTER 2001, 210–217; MATTINGLY 2002 for overviews.
² Cf. the excellent, yet rhetorical, overview in MOURITSEN 1998, 59–86, esp. for the historiographical part; also discussed below.
³ Esp. contributions in KEAY and TERRENATO 2001; contributions in CONCEPT 2006.
⁴ Cf. D’AGOSTINO 1991; BARBARANERA 1998; TERRENATO 2005. Terrenato (p. 41) warns that “post-processualism became a convenient new label to stick on the same old idealist historicism”.
⁵ Most explicitly Torelli, cf. infra.
⁶ Cf. already in 1845 Adolf Kiene, speaking of the “Annäherung … in der gesamten Denk- und Anschauungsweise” of Italic people and Romans (KIENE 1845, 120); see MOURITSEN 1998, 59.
seen as the later theoretical underpinning of a pre-existing conception of the cultural changes in Italy in the Republican period. We will therefore turn first to this conception of cultural unification and Roman cultural dominance, before discussing the later theoretical explanation for it.

**Early Roman Cultural Dominance**

In particular, Theodor Mommsen in his *Römische Geschichte* postulated that an Italic-Roman cultural fusion began as early as the third century BC.\(^7\) This framework persisted, albeit modified, long into the 20th century. Explicit ideas on the how and why of the spread of cultural models were of minor relevance to this idealist tradition: cultural convergence was presumed rather than explained.\(^8\) Since Italy was conceptualised as a unified whole, ‘Romans’ and ‘Italic people’ were by a certain time held to be interchangeable. A change or transition from ‘Italic’ to ‘Roman’ is presupposed, but the process itself was hardly questioned. Something that goes into the direction of an explanation is the idea of decline or ‘crisis’ of the Italic peoples. In this view, the ‘crisis’ would have cleared the way for the adoption of a Roman identity.\(^9\) The culturally weakened Italic peoples would have forsaken their Italic identities and became Romans. In an often cited passage, Strabo (6.1.2–3) seems to tell as much on the Samnites and affiliated peoples for a later period:

“But the [Leucani], and the Brettii, and the Samnites themselves (the progenitors of these peoples) have so utterly deteriorated that it is difficult even to distinguish their several settlements; and the reason is that no common organisation longer endures in any one of the separate tribes; and their characteristic differences in language, armour, dress, and the like, have completely disappeared; and, besides, their settlements, severally and in detail, are wholly without repute … The Leucani are Samnite in race ... But now they are Romans.”\(^{10}\)

One line preceding these, Strabo states in similar fashion that the Campani had in the meantime become interchangeable with Romans. The coming of Rome thus was at the cost of local traditions, to the extent that these could not even be recognised anymore. This conception seems to underpin modern studies.\(^{11}\) Arthur Keaveney, for example, defines romanisation as “that process whereby the different peoples of Italy put off their own peculiar identities and assumed that of Rome”.\(^{12}\) Likewise, Edward Togo Salmon presents romanisation in his otherwise rather ‘pro-Samnite’ standard work on the Samnites straightforwardly in terms of an inescapable process.\(^{13}\)

---

10 Transl. Loeb.
11 E.g. Torelli and Lachenal 1992, xxvii.
12 Keaveney 1987, 21.
13 Salmon 1967, 316.
In this framework, empiric evidence is largely subsidiary to views on Roman supremacy. One popular view of Roman rule that resonates clearly with ideas on romanisation is the centre-periphery model: Rome would have formed the centre within a constellation of centripetal oriented communities.\textsuperscript{14} Especially Mario Torelli has worked out this model,\textsuperscript{15} putting forward an image of peninsular Italy which is made up of different cultural bands. These represent zones with different settlement patterns, accordingly presenting different cultural developments. These cultural zones are supposed to have interacted differently with Roman influence. Thus, the relative prosperity of the first zone, Oscan Campania, is explained as the consequence of a “profound social, economic and political interaction”,\textsuperscript{16} whereas the second zone, formed by the “peri-urban” territories, is characterised as “a peripheral and dependent area” oriented on colonies and other cities.\textsuperscript{17} The third zone is the Apennine area, inhabited by the ‘Sabellian’ or Samnite peoples.\textsuperscript{18} In this “world of non-cities”\textsuperscript{19} Rome would have had an “evidentissima funzione di guida” in the introduction of new architectonic forms and construction techniques.\textsuperscript{20} To sum up, Rome would have had a crucial role in the trend to urbanisation\textsuperscript{21} and cultural development in general: “the prevailing cultural models and the artistic production are those presented by the Roman world, sometimes directly by Rome and sometimes indirectly through the Latin and Roman colonies.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Two Objections: Historiographical Constructs and the Mechanism of Self-Romanisation}

There are at least two fundamental problems with the standard conception positing early Roman cultural dominance in the peninsula. First, this conception can be shown to rely heavily on idealist notions of the Roman empire. Second, the mechanism of cultural change which is generally presupposed has serious weaknesses. The first point has been elaborated especially by Mouritsen in his provocative book on ‘Italian unification’ in relation to the Social War.\textsuperscript{23} Analysing the ideological frameworks within which both ancient and modern authors constructed a positive view of the Social War, he exposes the conception of a linear development aimed at one goal: the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Amongst other conceptions there is e.g. the \textit{clientela} model, in which power relations between Rome and her Italic ‘allies’ are paralleled with patron-client relationships; see BADIAN 1958. For the centre-periphery model cf. CHAMPION 1989.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} E.g. Torelli 1982; TORELLI 1995.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} TORELLI 1995, 3-4; thus allowing for reciprocal influences, forming “the foundation of the \textit{koiné} Romano-Italic culture of the third and second centuries BC”.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} TORELLI 1995, 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} On ‘Sabellian’ and Samnites cf. DENCH 1995; see also my Chapter 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} TORELLI 1995, 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Torelli 1982, 243, writing on the first half of the second century BC.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} The emphasis on urbanisation as a result of romanisation is particularly strong in Italian scholarship. Cf. e.g. DESIDERI 1991, 583: “Oltre a questo i Romani hanno intensificato, e in quasi tutto l’Occidente e in Africa praticamente iniziato, quel processo di urbanizzazione…”
  \item \textsuperscript{22} TORELLI 1995, 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} MOURITSEN 1998; cf. also MOURITSEN 2006.
\end{itemize}
supremacy of Rome. In this teleological model Italy was subservient to Rome’s development.

In the traditional view, endorsed by the ancient sources and followed by modern historians, the main reason for the allies to revolt in 91 BC was their supposed eagerness to become official Roman citizens.\(^{24}\) Though it had been acknowledged that other aims may have played a role,\(^{25}\) Mouritsen casts doubts on the Roman narrative in a comprehensive alternative framework, in which Italic peoples fought the Social War for sovereignty, rather than citizenship. Mouritsen traces the modern ‘making of’ the Romanocentric integrative model of Roman-Italic relations back to 19\(^{th}\) century German scholarship. Idealist and nationalist notions, suggested by the contemporaneous formation of the German nation, were projected onto the Roman Republic. This view was supported by the most detailed ancient account on the Social War, the version by Appianus, who presents it as a preparatory phase to the following *bellum civile*. Within the logic of this model, the cultural and political diversity of Italy formed an obstacle in the creation of a unified Italy. Moreover, it could cast doubts on the goals pursued by the Italic allies. Consequently, in order not to undermine the Romanocentric version of the Italian unification, the cultural unity of Italy before the Social War had to be emphasised. Cultural unity on the other hand did not seem self-evident at a time of political rivalry between Rome and the Italic peoples, in the period directly preceding the Social War. Paradoxically, therefore, the idea was put forward that this cultural romanisation must have predated the Hannibalic War.\(^{26}\) According to Mouritsen however, the actual cultural unification occurred only after the political one had been enforced by military power and bloodshed more than a century later: after the Social War.\(^{27}\)

Several objections can be made to Mouritsen’s alternative historical reconstruction, especially with regard to the undervaluation of the profits of the Roman citizenship\(^{28}\) and Roman influence in general.\(^{29}\) But his excellent analysis of the ‘idealist’ construction of an early ‘cultural convergence’ of Italy under Rome still stands.\(^{30}\)

\(^{24}\) The classic is BRUNT 1965.

\(^{25}\) E.g. BRUNT 1965, esp. 91; WALBANK 1972, 152; see discussion of various strands in the argumentation in MOURITSEN 1998.

\(^{26}\) MOURITSEN 1998, 59: “The idea of Italian romanisation was thus both derived from and used to explain the Social War. Therefore, as a historical fact implied by the political events, the existence of cultural romanisation was not itself dependent on evidential demonstration; the sources merely served as illustrations of this phenomenon. The main problem outstanding was how to date this unity – and here the theory of a mounting antagonism between Rome and her allies in the second century suggested that it predated the Hannibalic War.”

\(^{27}\) The periodisation of the major cultural change in the late Republic has also been proposed by various other authors, a.o. GABBA 1972; TORELLI 1983; TORELLI 1995, 14; TORELLI 1999, 89.

\(^{28}\) Cf. e.g. BRADLEY 2007, 302-306; VAN DOOREN 2008.

\(^{29}\) POBJOY 2000; BRADLEY 2002; ADAMS 2003, esp. 150-155 and 751-755 on linguistic aspects. Also Mouritsen’s conception of the “rapid ‘provincial’ process of romanisation” (p. 86) which he sees as “more or less spontaneous acculturation” (p. 74) which would have followed the Social War needs explanation, because here he seems to accept a direct relation between power and culture which he otherwise explicitly dismisses (e.g. p. 70).

\(^{30}\) Cf. also BRADLEY 2002.
The second objection is the mechanism of cultural change which is often presumed in the ‘unification’ model. This mechanism is the already mentioned concept of ‘self-romanisation’ or ‘autoromanizzazione’, developed for Italy most explicitly by Torelli.31 As said, to some extent this model can be seen as the later theoretical footing for the already existing idea of Roman cultural leadership, although emphasis is put on local initiatives and strategies. According to this concept, Italic peoples would have actively adopted Roman cultural models. Motives for doing so relate to a wish to gain profit from the new power balances (e.g. the joining in trade networks or the pursuit of a political career). Italic elites would also have sought the direct support of their Roman confederates. These aims are thus directed at Rome or the Roman empire at large. Alternatively, adopting the Roman way of life would have secured status within the local community; an ‘internal’ incentive. The most explicit study on self-romanisation positing an ‘internal’ logic is Martin Millett’s work on the romanisation of Britain.32 Native British elites would have actively adopted symbols of ‘Romanitas’ to reinforce their social position within local society. As a result of restrictions on the use and display of weapons imposed by the Roman rulers, the native social hierarchy would have been endangered. The weapons, important symbols of authority, were now replaced by power symbols from Rome. Material culture, new beliefs, language and attitudes passed down the social hierarchy through a process of emulation. In Millett’s words, “the motor for romanisation can be seen as internally driven, rather than externally imposed”.33 Local elites could maintain power and thereby identified their interests with those of Rome, enabling Rome again to keep control with minimal effort. Romanisation is understood as the outcome of internal social processes rather than a planned Roman ‘civilizing mission’.

In studies on Italy, with traditionally more emphasis placed on institutional structures, this mechanism would not only account for cultural but also for politico-institutional change. In the view of Emilio Gabba “the assimilation of the behaviour of the Italic elites to Roman norms, which had forged ahead at ever greater speed over the previous century, had gone beyond language and culture to affect the political systems and magistracies of the allied cities”, and indeed speaks of the “assimilation of the political structures of the allies to those of Rome”.34 The fundamental assumption in the self-romanisation concept is that Roman models were sought after – even if no direct political rule had been established yet. Even political structures would have been ‘affected’ by Roman influence, but without Roman force.

---

31 Torelli 1995; Torelli 1999, but cf. also, more implicitly, e.g. contributions in Zanker 1976 and Coarelli and La Regina 1984.
32 Millett 1990a; Millett 1990b.
33 Millett 1990b, 38.
34 Gabba 1994b, 109, writing on the period on the eve of the Social War. Similarly, on Bantia, Torelli 1995, 137-138 speaks of “a process of spontaneous Romanization, already under way in the full second century BC” and “a Romanization which assumes the form of an economic as well as an institutional homologation”. Cf. the discussion on the lex Osca Bantina, possibly predating the Social War; Crawford 1996, 271-292.
It is exactly against the self-romanisation paradigm that from the 1990s on much criticism has been uttered, at least in the debate in the Anglo-Saxon world – and thus against Millett’s 1990 work. First, the model places crucial emphasis on elites, whereas the rest of the population is not regarded, or is assumed to have followed suit.35 The ‘trickle-down effect’ leaves no room for the possibility that some groups may react differently to similar circumstances than others do.36 Diversity in responses to Roman dominion is an important possibility also for entire communities: it does not necessarily follow that the new order was always accepted and was possibly even resisted. Indeed, ‘self-romanisation’ still seems to operate within a ‘directional’ framework of thought;37 it offers an alternative explanation for how romanisation worked, but still seems to take its occurrence per se for granted. In many postcolonial studies emphasis has been put on resistance, often in reaction to the earlier colonial situation and sometimes merely inversing the old colonial discourse.38 At least in academia, the militant variant of this approach has not found much support in Italy.39 The notion of plurality and diversity in response is, however, certainly important.

A second point of critique at the self-romanisation model is its use of a naïve conception of ‘Roman material culture’, which is not dissimilar from the culture-historical model it seeks to replace. It is assumed that local elites adopted Roman goods to consolidate their position within local society. These goods were, according to Millett, seen as “symbols of Romanitas”, and, for this reason, mediated power to the owner.40 But were cultural elements present and produced all over the Roman empire perceived as ‘Roman’ by their beholders? Perhaps they were just part of convenient newly available materials and structures. Meaning is given to artefacts and models; they do not carry an intrinsic ‘Romanness’ in them. Therefore, the adoption of ‘Roman’ elements in itself does not prove a desire to be (seen as) ‘Roman’.41 Especially in Anglo-Saxon theoretically driven studies, a whole spectrum of different conceptions of the adoption of material culture and cultural models has been explored, ranging from ‘silent’ or ‘symbolic’ resistance to ‘hybridisation’, ‘creolisation’, ‘métissage’, and so on.42 The possible conflictual aspect of these processes has been pointed out: what appears to be a submissive attitude of the ‘subjugated’, may in fact reflect “a complex mix of fear and desire, resistance and adaptation”.43 Of course, the main problem with these comparative conceptualisations is anachronism.

35 FREEMAN 1993.
36 Cf. HINGLEY 1996.
38 Most notably, BENABOU 1976; PIPPIDI 1976; cf. MATTINGLY 1997a; for general critique of resistance as a model, see BROWN 1996.
39 In contrast to popular culture, e.g. in Molise, where Samnite resistance against Rome is often exalted. Cf. in some respects SALMON 1967, in which romanisation was, however, always clearly the end stage.
40 On the misapplication of the term Romanitas, first attested in Tert. Pall. 4.1.1., see DENCH 2005, 31 with n. 84.
42 See MATTINGLY 2002.
43 WEBSTER 1996-97, 327.
Ch. 1. Rome and Italy

Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, one may ask if it is legitimate to discern a similar ‘discourse’ between ‘Romans’ and ‘natives’ on the one hand and a slave driver and his slaves on the other, or (early) modern colonial powers in Africa and the East and the local population. Crucially, in many of these conceptualisations more or less separate cultures before colonial contact are presupposed, which in the case of the highly interconnected Mediterranean world is absolutely untenable. A third, more sophisticated point is the emphasis on ideology in a constructive, rather than oppositional sense. Partly as a reaction to processualist archaeology, especially in the Anglo-Saxon debate from the 1990s on, several studies have explored the importance of ideological frameworks. Studies have concentrated on the local (‘native’) embedding of new cultural forms, and have tried to explain regional diversity in this respect. For example, local communities could sometimes use new material culture to similar ends within the societal structures of old, through a process of ‘cultural bricolage’, or even form new communities as a consequence of a changed socio-political order. Cognitive aspects and ideologies are thus of utmost importance for the way in which people experience and order the (material) world, and thus in the way newly available elements or ideas are adopted. The ‘construction’ of communities needs thus not entail a choice for ‘Roman’ or for ‘native’, but this does not mean that Rome was insignificant in the process. It has convincingly been argued that a common reaction of communities to threat entails enhancing its symbolic ‘boundaries’. Historians and social anthropologists alike have demonstrated this process of symbolic enhancement, in which sometimes ‘ancestral’ traditions are evoked or invented, but also ‘new’ elements are used to model the own distinctiveness and pride. Often, religious or ritual institutions, such as festivals, processions and sacred meetings play an important role in this process. Arguably sanctuaries, the

---

44 WEBSTER 1996-97, 330: “there is a point beyond which the ‘fact’ of colonialism cannot be deconstructed, but within which the discourses of colonialism maybe subject to comparative analysis.”
45 E.g. FINCHAM 2002, drawing on SCOTT 1990.
46 Cf. DENCH 2005, 10: “to counter images of Roman cosmopolitanism and ‘do-it-yourself’ ‘Romanization’ with images of domination and discrimination, creating a nightmare world, is still to place modern dreams too much at the centre.”
47 Or at least their theoretical footings borrowed from the social sciences.
48 See HORDEN and PURCELL 2000. In this sense, the term “mediterranization” (YNTEMA 2006, 126) would be more appropriate; cf. CURTI, DENCH and PATTERSON 1996, 188 for other ‘–isations’ as different perspectives on cultural change than ‘romanisation’. Cf. however infra on the undeniable importance of Roman agency in these processes.
49 E.g. METZLER, MILLET, ROYMANS and SLOFSTRA 1995. N. Roymans, for example, holds “different regimes of ideas and values” (most notably “high social esteem for military virtues and animal husbandry”) responsible for macro-regional diversity in romanisation processes in the Lower Rhine populations: ROYMANS 1995; ROYMANS 1996, 8 (quote). On ritual and religion: DERKS 1998.
51 E.g. VAN DOMMELEN 1998; VAN DOMMELEN 2001; VAN DOMMELEN and TERRENATO 2007.
material part of some of these activities, are therefore suitable locales for investigation into processes of enhancement, or formulation, of communities.54

A last important point concerns the rehabilitation of the impact of Roman strategies, and the dismissal of the conception of ‘Rome’ as a constant factor: changing Roman attitudes will have had major implications for local and regional developments.55 The re-emphasising of Roman agency is in part a reaction to the native-oriented postcolonial approaches with a tendency to neglect Roman impact. In Italy, the importance of Roman strategies and intervention has almost never been doubted: the literary sources list colonisation, forced migration, and even genocide. Roman impact on itself has therefore hardly been underestimated in studies on the romanisation of Italy, but at the same time there has been a tendency to understand this impact as a rather constant factor, and especially to retroject it to earlier periods for which evidence is scarce or non-existent. It is important to acknowledge that Roman impact and strategies will have varied considerably over time. Quite apart still from the discussion on material culture and its limits, one should ask to what extent ‘Rome’ itself was a solid and continuous entity, and changes in self-perceptions over time and place should be taken into account.56 Recently the suggestion to speak of the ‘romanisation of Rome’ when considering the Republican period has been raised,57 and perhaps this offers some clues for the variegated character of the ‘romanisation’ of other parts of Italy too.

**Conclusion: Deconstruction and New Perspectives**

To sum up, the objections against the view which posits early cultural convergence under Roman guidance are quite serious. Also, the later developed conception of the mechanism of cultural change – self-romanisation – which accommodated this view well has proved to be problematic. The common ground in both the cultural convergence and self-romanisation concept is readily discerned: its origin in an ‘idealistic’ notion which presupposes Roman superiority, and consequently the superiority of Roman cultural models. Indeed, in the discourse on the romanisation of Italy generally less attention has been paid to material culture, and more to ideological, political and institutional issues. Somewhat paradoxically, empiric research has traditionally occupied an important place; but the interpretation of material culture has often been subservient to idealist conceptions.58 In romanisation studies this becomes apparent by the emphasis on political and ideological aspects, often distilled from (later) literary accounts, whereas the cultural consequences are often seen as mere illustrations or ‘proofs’ of these phenomena. The role of early and mid-Republican colonisation is a good example; little hard proof is fitted into (mostly literary) models

56 Cf. DENCH 2005.
of later fabrication (cf. the discussion on the religious aspects of Latin colonies treated in Chapter 2 and their urban organisation in Chapter 7). A remark made by Torelli concerning this evidential situation is revealing; he states that romanisation would often only be “detectable in its terminal stages, when productive, cultural, and political integration appears to be complete”.\(^{59}\) Apparently, the early stages exist only in the idea.

Another clear example is the way ‘hellenisation’ has been fitted into the idealist model of Roman cultural supremacy. In the course of the 20\(^{th}\) century, the conception of Rome as the centre of cultural influence, radiating new ‘Roman’ cultural forms proved to be untenable, and it became clear that rather ‘Hellenistic’ culture accounted for most of the change. Within the idealist framework, an attractive alternative could thus rise: the image of Rome as propagator of Hellenistic culture.\(^{60}\) Since evidence for this guiding role is scarce (cf. e.g. Chapter 3), here material evidence is subservient to an aprioristic model of Roman superiority.\(^{61}\)

What may be concluded is that the image of an already culturally homogeneous or strongly ‘romanising’ Italy in the third and second centuries BC, so strongly attacked by Mouritsen, can indeed be questioned since part of the basis of this conception proves to be weak. However, it is important to emphasise that these objections do not necessarily prove to the contrary: that Rome was only of minor importance in cultural respects in this period. But the above discussion at least has shown that such a role is not self-evident. This is in itself an important conclusion, as will be seen throughout this study. Furthermore, the conception of specific cultural elements as signalling ‘Romanness’ is not self-evident, as post-processual archaeologists have shown. Neither is the existence of a coherent, culturally distinctive and identifiable ‘Roman’ Rome from the early Republic to the imperial period. However, even if this ‘Rome’ was perhaps more varied, capricious and contradictory than often is supposed in regional studies, and was clearly in an important transformation process itself, the impact of this same Rome was fundamental, even solely measured by its military and political actions. In any case, we cannot afford to underestimate it. This means that the processes following the Roman conquest should not necessarily be conceptualised merely in neutral or positive terms; such as, indeed, ‘self-romanisation’, but also more recent conceptions as ‘negotiation’ or ‘becoming Roman’.\(^{62}\)

This discussion leaves us therefore with a big question mark regarding the cultural developments in the third and especially the second centuries BC. Cultural

---

\(^{59}\) Torelli 1999, 89.

\(^{60}\) Mouritsen 1998, 59-86; esp. 82-83. In the words of Salmon 1982, 100: “Hellenistic sculpture, painting and architectural details, Hellenistic writing and modes of thought came to be quickly noted and eclectically imitated at Rome, and Rome’s hegemony ensured their rapid transmission into other parts of Italy.”

\(^{61}\) Cf. similar observations by Gallini 1973, on hellenisation and ‘romanità’.

\(^{62}\) Cf. Curti 2001, 24 on the political correctness of recent conceptions of romanisation as ‘negotiation’ or ‘debate’, “sanitizing our perception of the Roman empire”, cf. also Cecconi 2006; Dench 2005, 32: “Despite modern nervousness about Romano-centric perspectives, it is hard to deny that sometimes empire was experienced or exercised as, primarily, power and domination ...”
convergence cannot be taken for granted, but neither should Rome be eliminated from these developments by overstating a laissez-faire policy. In sum, fundamental changes, yet no obvious cultural compass: a recipe for a dynamic interplay, including clashes, of various groups and currents. Therefore, this question mark should rather be seen as a challenge, than as a non liquet. The above discussion indicates some clear outlines for possible approaches. Especially the ideological construction and reformulation of communities in Italy after the conquest seems a promising avenue; these – fortunately – can have a material dimension. The crux is therefore to identify the locations where these ideological discourses are expressed, and to contextualise them as fully as possible. As has been seen, ‘religion’, in the communal sense, and sanctuaries as their material focus, seem such appropriate locations. In Chapter 3 this conception will indeed be proposed for Samnite sanctuaries in the second to early first centuries BC. Importantly, this approach accounts for ‘Roman’ communities as well – as will be argued in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. But first the idea of ‘religious romanisation’ will be discussed in the following chapter.