Triumphs of compromise: an analysis of the monumentalisation of sanctuaries in Latium in the late republican period (second and first centuries BC)
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I must have been 12 or 13 years old when I received a present from my father, a book called ‘Atlas of the Roman World’, written by Tim Cornell and John Matthews. Spread across pages 56 and 57, a drawing caught my eye of a wondrous building complex. I was fascinated by its architecture and most of all its size. I could not believe buildings with those dimensions existed at this relatively early stage of Roman history. I knew about the Colosseum, but this was something altogether different. The image was forever etched in my mind: the great sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina, ancient Praeneste. Little did I know that this experience would form the basis for my MA-thesis and subsequently my dissertation. A book has now been finished, a long period has ended. As so many other PhD-students, I have spent the past couple of years in a complex emotional state, characterised by a mixture of joy, amazement, ambition, regret and frustration. But perhaps most of all, there is the sense of gratitude.

At the top of the list of credits must be placed my promotor, Marijke Gnade, and co-promotor, Eric Moorman. Both have been indispensable during the past years, as thoughtful and critical readers of the many pages I handed in to them, but most of all as kind and warm people who encouraged and supported me along the way. In many ways, I regard them as my archaeological ‘parents’. Marijke’s patience and her ability to question assumptions without making it despiriting, have been essential in bringing this dissertation to a successful close. After every meeting, I closed her office door with the feeling that the text and my arguments had been improved upon. What more could one wish for in a supervisor? She is also one of the most natural teachers I have ever encountered, and I suspect my own style is at least in part a homage act to her. Another extremely tough act to follow is Eric, who is, I believe, one of the last true homines universales left on the planet. The breadth of his knowledge and the willingness and enthusiasm with which he shares it are inspiring. I would like to thank Vladimir Stissi for his guidance during the initial phase of my research.

The Royal Dutch Institute at Rome (KNIR) has been my home away from home these last few years. By frequently granting me scholarships, they have enabled me to spend time in some amazing libraries and work in one of the most inspiring cities in the world, and moreover gave me the opportunity to present my work to an international academic audience. I would like to thank two people of the scientific staff in particular, namely Nathalie de Haan, who witnessed the conception, birth and first steps of my scientific baby, and Gert-Jan Burgers, who guided it through its, at times troubled, youth. Of the non-scientific staff, I could thank each and everyone for making each visit such a pleasurable experience and for always making me feel
welcome and at home, but I thank them all in thanking Fernando Maggi, ruler of the second floor and unofficial weather forecaster *extraordinaire*.

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Thankfully, there is the ‘outside world’, an essential reality check when engrossed in the world of monumental architecture. I really have the most wonderful family. I thank my parents, Dick and Anita, for their love and support, and above all for encouraging me to explore my many and diffuse interests as a child. The Romans come in a long line of different interests, and while they may not have been the first, they have been the most lasting. My loving sister Daniella had to put up with all of this, and has grown in her supporting role admirably. I hope I can compensate for annoying the hell out of her by acting like a pedantic little boy in the future by being a good uncle to her child, who will be born at roughly the same time as my dissertation. I am lucky to have some fantastic friends, who have support me even though they did not always know exactly what it was I was working on. They can take comfort in the fact that at times, neither did I. They have provided me with many opportunities to momentarily forget about approaching deadlines, problems of interpretation and other trappings of an academic life. The whole process would have been a lot less fun without them.

And then there are my two *paranimfen*, Jeltsje Stobbe and Laurens Ubbink. These are perhaps the two people who have been the most important for me during the writing of this dissertation, continuously rooting for me when my enthusiasm was at a low point, and rejoicing with me when things fell into place. Jeltsje’s many pep talks and messages always arrived at exactly the right time. I have enjoyed our many talks about how ridiculous the little microcosm called science can be. I hope I can return the favour now that she is following the same Via Crucis
Academicae. Laurens has been a pillar of strength and support. I think it has been crucial for the completion of this dissertation to have had a loving and supportive fan base of one, especially when staring at a cursor on a blank screen for days on end. Of course, Laurens is much more than just a fan base. I cannot begin to thank him for the countless hours filled with food, wine, music and above all the supreme pleasure of his company during the past few years.

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