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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Chapter One

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF MONUMENTAL SANCTUARIES IN LATIUM

This first chapter will explore the monumentalisation process of Latial sanctuaries in a religious context. The monumental sanctuaries were places of worship in the first place, and it is possible, or perhaps even likely, that religion played an important role in the structural changes which can be observed at these sanctuaries in the late republican period. They did not develop or function in a vacuum. Other, often more modest cult places, sometimes without any architectural features at all, existed alongside these more impressive architectural complexes and attracted the faithful. The monumental sanctuaries formed part of a sacred landscape: a complex network of cult places, each with specific characteristics and functions. In order to gain a better understanding of the monumentalisation process and the religious factors which could have influenced it, we must therefore try to reconstruct the sacred landscape of Latium, so that we can see how monumental sanctuaries were related to other sanctuaries, and what (religious) changes affected cult places in general. Interpreting similarities and differences between cult places, we can perhaps gain insights into the question why some sanctuaries were monumentalised while others were not. In order to assess in what way sanctuaries reacted to changes in their surroundings, we must have an idea about how they were organised; who were responsible for the sanctuary and on what factors did the continued existence of a sanctuary depend? Next, we need to look at what was probably the ‘core business’ of cult places, namely votive religion, and the ways in which the votive practices which took place inside sanctuaries are represented in the archaeological record. Traditional explanations for changes in votive practices will be discussed, before turning to the reconstruction of the sacred landscape based on the votive material recovered at Latial cult places. The spatial and chronological patterns that emerge will then be interpreted using existing and new models explaining religious change. The latter part of the chapter will focus on a question which is especially relevant to the goals of this study, namely in what way building practices and especially monumentalisation can be related to this changing sacred landscape. Can the architectural development of religious structures perhaps be interpreted as a reflection of developments in the functioning of religion in this period?

Cult places: organisation and religious function

To understand the religious context of the monumental sanctuaries of Latium, we first need to understand how cult places in general functioned. How were they organised, what was the nature of the rituals that were performed there, and how did these two aspects change over time? Information in the literary sources about the organisation and administration of cult
places is at best fragmentary and generally limited to the city of Rome. Turning to archaeological evidence, we find that it too has its disadvantages. We can often determine whether cult places were used during certain periods on the basis of votive material found at those sites, but this leaves open the question of who was using the cult place, which introduces a whole new range of questions, as we shall see. In addition, we can establish if and possibly when restructuring activities took place using stratigraphic excavations. Building inscriptions can sometimes tell us who were responsible for such building activities and sometimes we can establish somewhat firmer chronological ranges on the basis of epigraphic evidence. In the next sections, I will try to reconstruct the organisational structure of cult places in Latium and the religious activities taking place there, before turning to the spatial distribution of cult places.

The organisation of cult places

Regarding the origin of many cult places, the general idea is that they sprang up ‘spontaneously’ at locations where the presence of the divine was felt to be especially strong, such as caves, mountain tops, ancient forests and lakes. Such areas were singled out as holy and sometimes, but not always, marked by a permanent object such as an altar. Subsequently, there are two ways in which a sanctuary can continue to exist. On the one hand, it can remain in use as a ‘natural’ cult place, existing solely by the grace of people going there and making offerings. These cult places most likely ceased to exist as recognisable cult places the moment people stopped coming there to make offerings. Needless to say, the recovery of archaeological material which is recognizably religious in function is essential for the identification of such cult places.

On the other hand, cult places can become more or less ‘institutionalised’, either located within urban areas or with ties to nearby urban centres and administered by magistrates or priests. The sanctuaries may have had extra-religious responsibilities of their own, and became an essential part of the urban framework. In general, it is assumed that the fact that the vast majority of sanctuaries were administered by civic authorities means that sanctuaries had only limited autonomy. It has been pointed out that there were certain sanctuaries with a ‘federal’ character without ties to any single community, perhaps remaining outside the jurisdiction of cities, which would imply that sanctuaries could operate as separate, independent (legal) entities. In those cases where the sanctuary did fall within the jurisdiction of a nearby urban centre, the administration of the sanctuary was normally the responsibility of public urban magistrates, who kept track of the sanctuaries’ treasuries (arca) and were bound to use the funds contained therein for the benefit of the sanctuaries. Some sanctuaries at least must have had some personnel that resided on-site with the responsibility for the daily maintenance of the sanctuary. Several sanctuaries include structures that have been or can be interpreted as

53 In Latium, water especially seems to have been connected with divine beings and the presence of water seems to have been important for the location of (early) cult places (Love 1978, 148; Edlund-Berry 2006, esp. 173-179).
54 Edlund-Berry 1987, 35.
56 Carlsen 1994, 13 (on the sanctuary of Diana Tifatina in Campania); Zevi 1995 (on federal sanctuaries in Latium).
residences for a permanently present college of priests or other attendants, although Gabriela Bodei Giglioni claims that Italic sanctuaries did not have extensive crews of temple personnel, and it is archaeologically impossible to deduce permanent occupation simply from the existence of structures. It may have been true for most cult places, especially those of modest size, that personnel did not permanently reside on or near the premises, although in recent literature the significant size of temple personnel has been stressed, which must have included priests, archivists, visitors’ guides, gardeners, night-watchmen, slaves and craftsmen.

The fact that some sanctuaries were not directly tied to nearby urban centres and that most sanctuaries, perhaps in their own right, ‘employed’ people makes it difficult to fully appreciate the administrative status of cult places and the role civic magistrates played in the management of cult places. Sometimes cult places thrive even after the town they supposedly belonged to had declined in importance or vanished altogether. It is even possible that some of the administrative functions previously located in the town itself were relocated to the sanctuary in such cases, which thus developed into the actual central place of the community. In Latium, this phenomenon can perhaps be observed in the case of Gabii. When the sanctuary of Juno Gabina was monumentalised in the second century, the town itself had decreased greatly in size, and the remaining inhabited core of the settlement was centred on the sanctuary. This suggests that it was possible for sanctuaries to function more or less independently from urban centres. Indeed, the fact that sanctuaries in Italy could sometimes actually replace civic structures as (administrative) central places seems to suggest at least the possibility of some form of prior autonomy. Archaeological and literary evidence thus both support and partly contradict the traditional image of sanctuaries administered and monitored by towns and magistrates. We should therefore at least consider the possibility of a more heterogeneous system in which some sanctuaries enjoyed rather more autonomy than others.

Regardless of the question of administration and the (lack of) independence of sanctuaries, the sources inform us that many of them possessed ample material and monetary resources. Appian informs us that after the Battle of Filippi in 42 both Marc Anthony and Octavian turned to several Latial sanctuaries for loans because they needed money and land to pay their troops and reward their veterans, suggesting that at least some of these sanctuaries had these no doubt considerable sums of money at their disposal. Among the temples with the most abundant resources at the time mentioned by Appian are, probably, three monumental Latial sanctuaries, namely the temple of Lanuvium (arguably the sanctuary of Juno Sospita), Nemus (the sanctuary of Diana) and Tibur (probably the sanctuary of Hercules Victor). Considering the material evidence documenting the arca or other sacred funds, we often find references to the use of sacred resources by civic magistrates, which would support the idea of strong and indissoluble links between civic and religious administrative structures. Clearly,
sacred resources were meant to be spent for the benefit of the sanctuary, but management of the funds was in the hands of civic magistrates. There is relatively little evidence which we can use to reconstruct the way in which these resources accrued. Bodei Giglioni considers the absence of landed property a characteristic of Latial and Italic sanctuaries, although land could apparently be consecrated by the state to gods or priestly colleges. While essentially remaining part of the ager publicus, it is possible that at least some revenues from the exploitation of these lands ended up in the sacred treasuries. We have a famous example of such land consecrated to the gods: in 83 Sulla granted large territories to the sanctuary of Diana Tifatina (fanum Dianae Tifatinae) near Capua. Inscribed boundary stones have been found indicating the limits of the estate with the letters P(raedia) D(ianae) T(ifatinae). There is some additional epigraphical evidence supporting the idea of land ownership by Italic sanctuaries in their own right, although such evidence does not (yet) exist for Latium. The practice may indeed have been the exception rather than the rule in Italy. Richard Duncan-Jones, echoing Bodei Giglioni's opinion mentioned earlier, states that "ownership of land by temples was widespread in the Greek world, but rare outside the Greek parts of the empire". Conversely, Jesper Carlsen maintains that "temple estates may have been a more common feature than the evidence suggests, or has commonly been assumed". We can only hope for more material offering evidence documenting the existence and extent of such temple estates, and their importance in the economic and financial functions of sanctuaries.

A possibility is that some of the funds and objects collected at the sanctuary and contributing to the image of immense wealth attributed to certain sanctuaries derives from their function as places of storage for valuables: at least some of the objects stored at the sanctuary did not actually belong to it, but were given to it for safe-keeping. Such bank functions for sanctuaries are attested for different areas of the Mediterranean, including Italy. The monetary gain for Italic sanctuaries perhaps consisted of donations made by those using the sanctuary as a repository, since it is assumed that Italic sanctuaries did not lend money with interest. Furthermore, it is commonly accepted that many sanctuaries played a role in the economic infrastructure of Italy, primarily as locations for regional markets, and there is strong evidence that some sanctuaries may have had on-site facilities generating economic activities. Although evidence is less clear about this, it is also possible that sanctuaries were actively involved in trade or other economic activities. All of these activities may have been important as sources of income for certain sanctuaries, yet the majority of the funds flowing into the area of most must

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64 BODEI GIGLIONI 1977, 42-43.
65 BODEI GIGLIONI 1977, 39.
66 CARLSEN 1994, 10; KYIUM 2008, 162.
67 CARLSEN 1994, 10.
68 For the fourth and third centuries we know of at least two sanctuaries with estates in Campania, and one on Sicily (AMPOLO 1992, 25).
69 DUNCAN-JONES 1990, 123.
70 CARLSEN 1994, 13.
71 BROMBERG 1939; STAMBAUGH 1978, 585; DUNCAN-JONES 1994, 8-10.
72 BODEI GIGLIONI 1977, 57-58.
73 See MOREL 1989-1990 for an example at Teano (ancient Teanum Sidicinum), in the direct vicinity of Latium.
74 Active involvement in trade in the East has been suggested recently for the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste (CALIO 2003, 63-64), while the importance for transhumance activities of the sanctuary of Hercules Victor at Tibur has been stressed (BONETTO 1999).
have been the result of payment for the use of the sanctuary’s religious ‘infrastructure’: access to temple grounds, the making of offerings and the consultation of oracles. Furthermore, certain sums were paid for entering the priesthood of a certain cult. Thus, it appears that most Latial sanctuaries were dependent on the financial contributions of the visiting faithful.

It would seem that we are dealing with two more or less distinct categories of cult places. Those where the act of worship, in the form of votive offerings, actually constitutes the cult place, which I shall term ‘natural’ or ‘rural’ for lack of a more appropriate label, and those cult places which were more or less institutionalised, possibly with their own financial and administrative infrastructure but in general – or so it is assumed - administered from nearby towns and often incorporated into the official religious calendars. However, it is important to note that there is a considerable grey area between these two ‘standard’ types of sanctuary, and as I have stated earlier it is probably wiser to leave the question of organisation and dependence somewhat open when interpreting the sacred landscape.

The archaeology of cult

In a majority of cases, lacking architectural remains of a clearly religious nature, the identification of cult places depends on the identification of cult-related material remains, most importantly votive offerings. Although there is some discussion about the precise relationship between man and god in votive religion and what expectations are involved in the act of giving an object to a divinity, it is generally assumed that in the Roman world a votive gift was either offered as a token of gratitude for a divine favour or carried the expectation of a future counter-gift, implying a reciprocal character for the religious act of giving that might even have been contractual in nature. The standard formula used to describe this specific relationship between man and god, which covered the spectrum of private offerings up to official state sacrifices, is that of ‘do ut des’. Some have argued that the obligation of a counter-gift implied by this particular formula is too strong and that the reciprocative relationship between man and god was more voluntary, and necessarily more uncertain, in nature. It is also uncertain whether votive offerings in general are tokens of gratitude for favours already granted or requests for future help. A working definition of a votive offering is a durable offering to the gods which is a manifestation of personal religiosity and meant as an incentive for divine assistance in the future or gratitude for provided assistance in the (recent) past. Some gifts to the gods are relatively easy to recognise (such as figurines or miniature pottery), others derive their interpretation as votive offerings from the context in which they are found (‘regular’ pottery may be votive as well). ‘Basic’ religious activity thus involves the dedication of objects to the gods by people, actual votive material, or material that was used in ritual actions which can be recognised as such, which is not strictly ‘votive’ but is indicative of cult activity.

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75 Bodei Giglioni 1977; Bendlin 2000, 134.
76 Belayche 2007, 281. It is uncertain whether votive offerings are tokens of gratitude for requests already granted or requests for future help (Turea 2004, 360-361 on this problem for the category of anatomical terracottas. She seems to indicate a preference for the idea of post factum offerings).
78 Van Straten 1981, 65-77; Bergman 1987, esp. 37-38 (dealing with Greek votive offerings, but the observations made equally apply to the Italic world).
Material which can be ascribed to a religious context and can therefore be termed ‘votive’
can be traced back securely to the 8th century in Latium, although some material, such as that
recovered from the Laghetto del Monsignore at Campoverde, possibly dates as far back as the
10th or 9th century. The majority of this early material consists of pottery, almost exclusively
impasto, sometimes in combination with animal bones. Although the majority of these votive
assemblages contain miniature pottery, full-sized vessels interpreted as votives are also found
at several sites. Up to the Archaic period, pottery was to remain the most commonly found
material which can be interpreted as votive in nature. From the beginning of the sixth century
onward, the archaeologically attested votive repertoire seems to diversify somewhat, with the
appearance of anthropomorphic and animal figurines (mainly in cast bronze or sheet metal).
Pottery continues to form a substantial part of the votive repertoire, although from the late
sixth century onwards there is a detectable shift from miniatures towards full-sized vessels.
The fifth century has proven to be a problematic period with regard to votive material: the
knowledge about the archaeological material from this period, both ordinary pottery and
possible votive assemblages, has suffered from limited research and fragmentary publication,
making it harder to correctly identify material as votive. This stands in marked contrast with
the following period; in the fourth and third century, we witness an explosion of very visible
votive assemblages.

While (miniature) pottery continued to be an important, or even the most important, type
of votive offering, from the fourth century onwards, terracotta objects have been recovered
from religious contexts at a great number of sites and often in great quantities: terracotta
figurines, votive heads or half-heads and especially terracotta objects that take the form of
(parts of) the human body, such as feet, hands, eyes, limbs or heads, the so-called anatomical
terracottas. It is important to note that although they are extremely numerous, fictile ex votos
do not represent the only form of votive religion in this period, suggesting the persistence of
a strong traditional element in votive practices, such as the continued offering of (miniature)
pottery. Even in sanctuaries where a large number of terracotta objects have been found,
they do not represent the only type of offering, and votive deposits largely or exclusively
containing them are in fact quite rare. The custom of dedicating terracotta ex votos seems to
have started in the last quarter of the sixth century, with the fourth and third centuries as the
period in which this type of votive offering ‘comes of age’.

Fictile votive offerings reflect an important shift in the relationship between divinity and
dedican, since these objects on the whole tend to represent the latter rather than the former

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79 Low 1978, 142; Kleibrink 1997-1998. Since the vast majority of votive material dates from the eighth century onwards, the earlier material will not be considered here.
80 For miniature pottery, see Edlund-Berry 2004, 373. Full-sized pottery found in votive assemblages ranges from “imported Greek pottery to local coarse ware” (Edlund-Berry 2004, 377). However, full-sized pottery in votive assemblages seems to be the exception rather than the rule in Latium. See also Bouma 1996 I, 215-216.
81 See Comella 2004, with general bibliography.
82 Bouma 1996 I, 216. It is possible that this shift occurs earlier, but literature on the subject is extremely limited.
83 In general, see Comella 2004, 332-349 (for terracotta statuettes) and Turfa 2004 (for anatomical votives). Decouple 1964 offers a basic introduction of the phenomenon and its possible connection to clinical medicine. Fundamental archaeological publications on the subject are Feneili 1975 and Comella 1981.
84 Comella 1982-1983, 239.
85 Bouma 1996 I, 217 n. 12.
and thus seem to signal a certain ‘humanisation’ of votive practise. It reflects a specific religious and social attitude and the offering of such objects is probably meant to establish direct contact between the divinity living in the sanctuary and the devout, symbolically present through his votive as an emanation of his person and a manifestation of his pietas. A very interesting feature of the phenomenon is the almost complete absence of a discernable one-to-one relationship between the donated object and the individual characteristics of the divinity worshipped at a sanctuary. It is already very difficult to ascribe votives to any single divinity in earlier periods, since inscriptions specifying the divine recipient of the gift are relatively rare. Paradoxically, votive offerings are often the only indication of the nature of the divinity worshipped at cult places. An attempt to establish a relationship between votive material and the principal cult at a sanctuary becomes even more difficult if secondary divinities (dii accensi) are also worshipped in the same sanctuary. The presence of votives dedicated to different divinities in single votive deposits is attested at numerous sites in Etruria and Latium. In general, we must assume that votive offerings in Latium tell us more about the person offering the object or the divine favour requested than about the character of the divinity.

This emphasis on the person making the offering instead on the divinity receiving it is attested by various categories of votive material. A clear example of objects actually representing the dedicatee are the countless votive heads or half-heads: none of them can be securely interpreted as representing a divine being. The anatomical terracotta has been interpreted as the material demonstration of a certain preoccupation of worshippers with health and fertility (sanatio), and thus illustrates the fact that the desires and wishes of the dedicants are represented by the gifts themselves. However, concerns for health and fecundity are hardly new and existed before the appearance of the anatomical terracotta, attested by the anatomical votive offerings present in earlier contexts, found in Archaic Italic and Etruscan contexts and made of bronze. Above all, it is the massive scale on which these votive gifts are found from the fourth century onwards that is remarkable. Rather than as signs of a new concern altogether, anatomical terracottas should be seen as a new, and highly visible, way of expressing these concerns, another illustration of the ‘humanisation’ of cult practices. No category of votive objects better illustrates the problems of establishing specific features of cults at sanctuaries on the basis of votive material.

The anatomical terracottas are dedicated in a great number of sanctuaries that are dedicated to very diverse divinities, and are found in sanctuaries of divinities that, as far as we can determine on the basis of earlier votive material, do not have a traditional connection with these specific concerns. While this does not imply that the divinities are exclusively approached for health issues in the mid-republican period, a reasonable assumption is that for some basic human preoccupations the identity and characteristics of a divinity did not seem

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88 Pensabene 2005, 137.
89 Hackens 1963, 71.
90 Fenelli 1975, 213.
91 Comella 2005, 51, 55.
92 Glinister 2006, 33.
to matter much. It is a distinct possibility that such responsibilities were added to traditional concerns associated with the divinity. It thus seems that divine power in these (and perhaps other) matters was believed to be universal or, in other words, that “healing was regarded indiscriminately as being within divine power”. While there is some speculation that some cult places were specialised in the healing of specific parts of the human anatomy based on the predominance of a certain type of anatomical terracotta, there is little factual evidence for specialised healing sanctuaries apart from these purely statistical observations.

The absence of a direct and obvious relationship between the type of offering and the specific traditional responsibilities of the principal divinity of a sanctuary is perhaps also visible in the last category of votive offerings usually found together with votive heads and anatomicals, namely terracotta figurines. This category of offerings presents its own difficulties of interpretation. There is much discussion about the interpretation of the more ‘generic’ types of figurines, especially regarding the question of who they represent: the giver, either as a personalised ‘portrait’ or as an abstract standardised image, or the divinity? While current research clearly favours an interpretation of the majority of the figurines as representing the dedicant, wholly in line with the cultic developments illustrated by the votive heads and anatomical offerings, some of the figurines can clearly be identified as specific divinities by their attributes. The majority of figurines identified with certainty are depictions of and therefore probably offerings to the main divinity of the sanctuaries, yet there are also figurines that depict other gods not traditionally associated with the principal cult, so-called “visiting gods”. To whom were these figurines dedicated? It is known from the Greek as well as the Italic world that in many sanctuaries secondary divinities were worshipped. For the most part, these secondary divinities are connected in some way to the main divinity of the sanctuary, either by familial ties or legendary associations, but there are also cases in which such associations do not seem to exist at all or seem far-fetched. Figurines representing gods other than the principal cult and associated divinities have been interpreted as offerings to the principal divinity, which is the most common view, or as representations of particular stages in the human life, an interpretations for which some parallels in Greek votive contexts exist, although not necessarily in the form of figurines. However, the option least often encountered, although no less viable, is that these objects are not necessarily gifts to the principal divinity and that the gods represented by the figurines actually received worship, albeit incidental, in a sanctuary where they were not directly associated with the principal cult. Interesting in this respect is a single Caeretan votive deposit, studied and published by Quentin Maule and Henry Smith, which has yielded statuettes representing no fewer than 11 individual deities. In my opinion, Maule and Smith leave open the distinct possibility that some of the deities who were not part of the official cult were worshipped here in their own right. This would mean that a wider range of deities could be worshipped in any single sanctuary than is generally suggested.

95 Lowe 1978, 148. See also Funelli 1975, 213; Glinister 2006, 13.
96 Turfa 2004, 360.
97 See, for the Greek world, Alroth 1987; Alroth 1989-1990.
98 Pensabene 2005, 136. Pensabene retains the idea that they were dedicated to the principal deity of the sanctuary.
100 Maule/Smith 1959, esp. 106-107.
During the late republican period, fictile votive offerings as well as miniature pottery seem to disappear largely from sacred contexts, a fact which presents archaeologists with a serious problem of recognisability. In Jean-Paul Morel’s words, there is a detectable shift in the late republican period from ex-votos par destination, objects without practical use which were originally and uniquely conceived as religious offerings, to ex-votos par transformation, objects which only become religious offerings through some act of adaptation or transformation. Since the visible signs of the transformation inherent in this last category can be small, it can become difficult to distinguish between ordinary pottery and pottery used as religious offerings, or between ‘normal’ and religious uses of any other category of material. The changes in the nature of votive practices in the late republican period continue to be a debated issue without a clear consensus about the precise chronology of the process and its causes. Previous research claimed a continuity of the phenomenon into the first century AD, while current research strongly favours a cessation of the practice in the late republican period. Within the range of republican dates there is considerable variation, as well as disagreement about the fact if the change was gradual or abrupt. Some maintain that the phenomenon began to decline from the late second century onwards, while others claim that terracotta votive heads and anatomicals did not disappear until the first century, perhaps permitting us some chronological leeway and suggesting that the scale and development of the phenomenon was subject to regional variations. In general, securely dating the decline and disappearance of the phenomenon is made more difficult by the very nature of the production process of most of these votive offerings; being mass-produced using moulds, stylistic dating of the pieces does not give us a secure terminus post quem for the cessation of production, since we have no way of knowing when these moulds were no longer used. It is possible that fictile objects stylistically dated to the latest period were still offered as gifts to the gods: without stratigraphic evidence linking these objects to others more securely dated, we have no way of knowing for certain when the practice of producing these objects stopped, even though we may be able to establish that no new stylistic types were being produced.

Simultaneous with the decline of fictile votive offerings in the late republican period, an increasing number of inscribed dedications are found. In addition, in several late republican sanctuaries considerable quantities of coins, or thesauri which must have contained coins at one point, are found. However, without clear dedicatory inscriptions on the coins or thesauri it is impossible to tell if monetary gifts are actual votive offerings or payments for either entering the sanctuary or the use of services offered there. It is possible that coins found at sanctuaries were indeed offerings, of the ex-voto par transformation type, but without visible signs of the

101 Morel 1992, esp. 229-232, on the changes during the Late Republic.
102 Gentili 2005, 373
105 See Crawford 2003 for a general discussion of the phenomenon, including lists of archaeological contexts in which coins and/or thesauri have been attested.
106 For the problem of monetary finds and thesauri in particular, see Catali/Scheid 1994, esp. 63-65 and Crawford 2003. Mario Torelli speaks of a “sostanziale monetizzazione del regime delle offerte”, thereby suggesting that the majority of the coins found should indeed be interpreted as offerings (Torelli 2005, 355).
transformation it is impossible to establish this with certainty. It has been suggested that in the late republican period, instead of terracotta, votive offerings were increasingly made of other, perishable materials, such as wax. Such votive gifts would leave little or no material remains for archaeologists to discover. Although interesting, the suggestion lacks a secure evidential basis, archaeological or philological. In general, votive religion seems to change dramatically in the last century BC, becoming harder to recognise. The matter of decreased recognisability of votive offerings in the archaeological record is obviously an important factor in the process of reconstructing the sacred landscape using such material as the identifying feature, a problem which I shall duly consider below.

Religious change in the republican period

From the overview of the development of the material manifestations of votive religion presented above, it seems that at two important moments during the republican period a change seems to occur in the nature of votive material. The first is the appearance on a large scale of fictile votive offerings in the mid-republican period; the second is the disappearance of this type of offering and the perceived decline in religious activity during the late republican period. These changes undoubtedly influenced the way in which cult places functioned and may have been important for the monumentalisation process in the late republican period. Therefore, in the following pages these changes and traditional explanations given for these changes will be discussed.

Considering the intertwinement of religion and society, religious change is often explained by referring to changes in Roman society as a whole. Religious change has been seen as a reflection of contemporary societal changes, and physical manifestations of religion have therefore often been used as indicators of those changes. Votive practices and its development over time are no exception. In the following section, two influential models explaining religious change will be presented, the first connected to cultural change, interpreting votive material as a reflection of the process of ‘religious romanisation’, a term indicating that parts of Italy supposedly adopted, either voluntarily or coaxed, specifically Roman forms of worship, and the second model connected to changes in settlement patterns and subsistence levels in the late republican period. Both models seek explanations for religious change in societal developments, the difference being that one model emphasises ideological transformation, while the other focuses on socio-economic transformation.

Ideological explanations: ‘religious romanisation’

The factor perhaps mentioned most often when trying to interpret specific changes in the distribution and appearance of cult places and certain religious phenomena in the Roman world

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107 Fenelli 1992, 132-133.
Religion has been interpreted as both an instrument and an indicator of the expansion of Roman power across the Italian peninsula and the rest of the Mediterranean. The spread of the intrinsically Roman cult of the Capitoline triad and the associated temple structure of the Capitolium in both colonies and indigenous communities has been seen as a sign of integration, voluntary or forced, in the Roman state. In general, the foundation of colonies with temples dedicated to divinities belonging to the traditional Roman pantheon, in some cases ostensibly replacing or marginalising traditional indigenous divinities, has been interpreted as the setting up of “religious staging posts of Roman expansion”. Whether as a result of official Roman policy or not, the spread of Roman power across the Italian peninsula and the Mediterranean has often been interpreted as influencing local religious practice. However, these interpretations are often open to criticism on archaeological and ideological grounds, and more importantly, religious romanisation as a model fails to produce a satisfactory explanation for the changes in votive practices in the Late Republic with which we are concerned here.

As far as votive material is concerned, the appearance of the so-called Etrusco-Latial-Campanian type of votive deposit, with its characteristic predominance of fictile votive offerings, is linked by several scholars to the spread of Roman power in the Tyrrhenian coastal area, to be interpreted as a ‘guide fossil’ of Roman influence; the presence of such votive deposits in certain areas would be an indication of their ‘Roman-ness’ and a good example of ‘religious romanisation’. Mario Torelli even goes so far as calling anatomical terracottas “a striking sign of Roman superiority”. Recently objections have been raised against the idea that the spread of these votives coincided chronologically, geographically or ideologically with the extension of Roman political influence from the early fourth century onwards.

The first attestations of types of votive material that were to become two of the three characteristic features of Etrusco-Latial-Campanian votive deposits, terracotta votive heads and statuettes, have been dated to the late sixth or early fifth century, with only the third typifying object, the anatomical votive offering in terracotta, appearing in the fourth century. This means that only the anatomical terracotta can be dated to the period of intensive Roman expansion in peninsular Italy, although offerings in the form of (parts of) the human anatomy, albeit in bronze, are also attested in earlier votive contexts. Fictile votive offerings thus seem

108 Critiques, redefinitions of and substitutions for the concept of ‘romanisation’ have been appearing non-stop for the better part of a decade now. Some useful, interesting or important contributions, or a combination thereof, are WEBSTER/COOPER 1996; CURTI 2001; WEBSTER 2001; MATTINGLY 2002; BURGERS 2004 (in Dutch); STEK 2009. In this context, ‘romanisation’ is used to denote the various changes, interactions and reactions associated with the spread of Roman rule throughout the Italian peninsula.

109 BARTON (1982, 261) clearly states that “we cannot properly use the term Capitolium of pre-Roman temples in Italy”. This particular temple type is intrinsically connected to the Roman civic cult and should be seen as an architectural symbol of Roman-ness, perhaps even as the symbol. However, not every Roman temple with three cellae is necessarily a Capitolium, not even in colonial contexts.

110 DE CAZANO 2000, 74-75. For the religious aspects of early Roman colonisation, see TORELLI 1999, 14-42.


112 TORELLI 1999, 42.


114 COMELLA 2004, 336 (votive heads), 341 (statuettes).


to appear well before the active spread of Roman influence across Italy. More importantly, the phenomenon originates not in Rome, but in South-Etruria, more precisely Veii. In Rome itself, fictile votive offerings, especially votive heads, do not seem to appear before the last decades of the fourth century, demonstrating that this particular votive practice probably developed at a relatively late stage in the city compared to centres in Etruria, Latium and Campania.

This would mean that, following the logic of the model of religious romanisation, an Etruscan tradition of dedicating fictile votive offerings in sanctuaries was adopted by Rome, arguable after the conquest of Veii in the early fourth century, and subsequently spread to territories under Roman dominion.

The fact that Rome apparently did not play a role of importance in the genesis of these particular types of votive offerings of course does not preclude a subsequent leading role of the city and her colonies in their further spread across the peninsula. However, archaeological evidence seems to point towards an already relatively elevated level of diffusion of the phenomenon in the area between South-Etruria and Capua in the course of the sixth and fifth century, clearly before the time when Rome became a dominant presence in the area, thus clearly demonstrating that diffusion of fictile votive objects did not depend solely on Rome as an intermediary. Furthermore, the convergence of the spread of the Etrusco-Latial-Campanian type of votive deposit and the spread of Roman political and military influence across the peninsula is perhaps less close than has sometimes been argued: fictile votive offerings appear in regions which were not yet subject to Rome nor especially exposed to so-called ‘staging-posts’ of Roman expansion and cultural influence, such as colonies and roads, traditionally interpreted as important factors in the spread of Roman cultural models.

In addition, fictile votive objects, especially anatomical terracottas, are notoriously difficult to date accurately, which means that in most cases the archaeological evidence cannot be used to prove whether the appearance of fictile votive objects pre- or postdates colonial foundations in the area, further problematizing the use of distribution maps of fictile votive objects to illustrate the spread of Roman influence.

Perhaps even more important than the chronological and geographical objections to a presupposed leading role of Rome in the diffusion of the typical Etrusco-Latial-Campanian votive deposit is the question of the ideological connection between this type of votive deposit and the city of Rome. In order to use these types of votive offerings as reliable indicators of Roman influence, there obviously has to be something intrinsically Roman about them, especially when we recall Torelli’s statement about such votive offerings as striking signs of Roman superiority. When we consider anatomical votive offerings, there is nothing that is specifically Roman about them. The execution of the offerings in terracotta is not typically Roman, nor is the preoccupation with sanatio and fecundity they seem to represent.

118 Gentili 2005, 370.
119 Comella 2004, 336, writing about votive heads.
120 Gentili 2005, 372.
121 Gentili 2005, 372; Glinister 2006, 17-19. Contrae Söderling 2005, 363 (“As concerns the finds from Central Italy as a whole, the examples of non Roman contexts are comparatively few and should not disfavour the fact that such finds in most cases are found in Roman contexts”).
a specifically Roman one. Although anatomical votive offerings have been interpreted as an important part of Roman plebeian culture, in Rome itself relatively few votive deposits have been discovered that fit into the Etrusco-Latial-Campanian typology, since they seem to be missing certain typical elements. Significantly, the votive deposits that do adhere to the specific typology are mostly found outside the republican wall circuit. This is especially true for those deposits containing votive offerings with a salutary character. Thus, at Rome the types of votive offerings which in the rest of Italy would signify Roman influence are (intentionally?) marginalised in the suburban area of the city, again underlining the problems inherent in the Roman connotation of these votive offerings which is assumed in the model of religious romanisation.

Statuettes mostly represent the dedicant and not the divinity to which they were dedicated, thereby making it difficult to prove the presence of typical Roman cults in Italic areas using such objects. The only type of object which does seem to represent a culturally specific religious practice is the votive head. A clear distinction can be made between votive heads with or without velum. The earliest examples of votive heads in Etruria are almost exclusively without velum, and examples of heads with velum from Campania are also rare. From the end of the fourth century onwards, the velum becomes a standard attribute of the votive heads which have been recovered in Roman, Latial or colonial contexts, appearing in Etruscan and Falliscan contexts from the third and second centuries onwards. The distribution of the different types of votive head thus seems to follow the chronological and geographical characteristics traditionally attributed to the Etrusco-Latial-Campanian deposit in general. It has been argued that the two types reflect two different iconographies of the sacrificant, those without velum sacrificing aperto capite, according to Greek rites and attributable to the Etruscan cultural context, and those with velum sacrificing velato capite, according to ancient Roman tradition. Thus, the two types of heads would represent distinct ideological features of different religious cultures, perhaps making the votive head with velum a suitable emblem of romanitas. While the votive head as a votive category seems to eschew some of the problems inherent in anatomical votive offerings and statuettes, it is still not ideally suited as an indicator of Roman cultural influence whenever it is found in a votive context. The sacrifice aperto capite had also become a fixed feature of certain Roman cults, thereby making the distinction between the two types as representing Roman and non-Roman religious sensibilities problematic. It is a distinct possibility that the presence or absence of the velum indicates the nature of the god to whom the dedicant was offering the gift. John Scheid indicates that sacrificing with uncovered head was a feature of certain cults that were part of the official Roman pantheon, such as Hercules, Ceres and Saturn and in some cases even Juno and Jupiter. Does the

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124 Gentili 2005, 370. Contra: Söderlin 2005, 363, claiming that one third of all votive deposits comprises anatomical votive offerings, which would support the traditional interpretation of the objects as inherently Roman in his view. However, he does not address the dislocation of these deposits noted by Gentili.
125 Gentili 2005, 370.
127 Comella 2004, 337.
129 Scheid 1995, 22-23 (Hercules), 23-24 (Ceres), 24-25 (Saturn), 26-27 (Juno), 27-28 (Jupiter); Glinister 2009, 200 (adding Apollo and Honos but leaving out Jupiter and Juno).
presence of the velum indicate that it is a Roman making the sacrifice, or does it indicate that the specific divinity to which the sacrifice was made required the velum? While the latter option may indicate that the sacrifice was an ‘official’ Roman god or goddess, the former option does not preclude the possibility that the divinity was Roman. Scheid concludes that Graecus ritus was actually “a Roman ceremony which was slightly modified or completed in some part”. He then goes on to suggest that its origin and development is related to Roman expansion, but, as is often the case, was meant to illustrate in a religious sense the willingness of the Romans to incorporate foreigners into their state by granting them citizenship. Developments in the religious sphere in this case reflected developments in the political sphere.

Rather than seeing the diffusion of specific etrusco-latial-campanian votive deposits as an expression of official Roman imperial religious policy, we should see it as a movement of people, bringing with them their individual religious beliefs. Spontaneous migratory movements associated with colonisation and the opening up of new areas of Italy for economic exploitation, attracting new settlers and traders, are as important as the official act of colonisation initiated by the state. While colonisation and the construction of roads undoubtedly encouraged the movement of people, religious exchange and diffusion already existed between different cultural milieux of Italy before this time, without the official sponsorship or propagation of the state and indicating a high degree of overlap and blurriness in relation to ritual practices of the peoples of Italy, especially in Central Italy. The Etrusco-Latial-Campanian votive deposits, thought to be related to Roman colonisation, were dispersed in areas that were already open to contact and exchange with those parts of Italy that were the source of the specific devotional practices the deposits represent: not just Rome, but the entire central Tyrrhenian coastal area, and they are not necessarily connected with official policy but with the movement of people and their beliefs.

From the remarks above, it should be clear that the use of specific Etrusco-Latial-Campanian votive objects as “fossili-guida”, indicating a Roman or Latin cultural presence, is highly problematic. However, even if we accept an important role for Rome and her colonies in the diffusion of the phenomenon, the disappearance of this type of votive deposit is difficult to explain within the same general framework. Keeping in mind the idea of fictile votive offerings as an essentially Roman or Roman-Latin form of worship, the disappearance of the typical deposits would either mean that Roman influence has ceased, or it would have to be interpreted as a sign of successful integration in the Roman state, supposedly making both the specifically ‘Roman’ votive material and the cult places in which they were offered superfluous. Since the start and end of the phenomenon are also observable in the direct vicinity of Rome, happily excluded from any suspicions of ‘romanisation’, I think this suggestion can be safely ruled out. Chronologically and ideologically, it is difficult, if not downright impossible, to connect the

130 Scheid 1995, 28. The same conclusions is reached by Fay Glinister (Glinister 2009, esp. 210-212).
132 Scheid 1995, 30: “[The religious category of the Graecus ritus] was used to stress the presence of foreigners and of the world inside Roman culture and the city of Rome, in order to legitimate Roman imperialism and the Roman civic model”.
133 Gentili 2005, 372.
134 Gentili 2005, 373.
135 Coarelli 2000, 200.
religious changes in Latium in the late republican period to changing aspects of Roman rule in the region, in the sense of an intensification or completion of cultural integration.\textsuperscript{136} If the initial diffusion of the phenomenon was indeed the result of the encounters and actions of people, perhaps its decline and disappearance should be sought in the same sphere.

\textit{Cult places and the changing human landscape}

A different model, which is perhaps complementary to the model of religious romanisation, seeks explanations for religious change not in cultural or ideological developments, but in changes in the socio-economic circumstances of the population. It has been suggested that the disappearance of typical votive material and the abandonment of Etruscan andItalic sanctuaries in the late republican period which has been related to the changes in votive practices, should be seen in relation to the displacement of the free rural population by large estate holders leading to an impoverished lower class falling below subsistence level moving to and living in the towns and the further impoverishment of those already living in the towns, since these cult places were important reference points for plebeian groups.\textsuperscript{137} The disappearance of these particular votive practices are thus said to be caused by a free rural population falling on (financial) hardship, no longer able to make votive offerings and migrating towards the urban centres.\textsuperscript{138} A first point of criticism, before evaluating the merit of this model in the light of the current state of knowledge of late republican economic circumstances and settlement patterns, is that in their interpretation of the phenomenon, Annamaria Comella and Patrizio Pensabene explicitly connect the abandoned cult places with the lower social strata of the population, thereby seemingly supporting the often repeated notion that terracotta votive offerings are basically the gifts of the poor. This connection between fictile votive offerings and the lower social classes has become something of a commonplace, but has never been convincingly argued.\textsuperscript{139} This interpretation also seems to imply that terracotta votives were the only offerings made in a sanctuary, thereby ignoring the possibility that gifts of those of higher social status were simply not preserved because they were made of more precious materials, subsequently smelted down or otherwise lost.\textsuperscript{140} The connection of terracotta offerings and the lower social classes is ultimately untestable, since specific epigraphic evidence is lacking, and in my opinion one should be wary of using fictile votives to prove the connection of sanctuaries as a whole with certain social groups. In order to test the validity of the statements about socio-economic development sketched in these models, it is necessary to take a close look at the demography of Italy during the Late Republic.

\textsuperscript{136} A connection between the end of the phenomenon of typical Etrusco-Latian-Campanian votive deposits and ‘romanisation’ is maintained by Maria Donatella Gentili, claiming that an intensification of unifying policies by Rome in this period contributed to the process (Gentili 2005, 373). However, this idea still assumes an inherent connection between ‘romanisation’ and these votive offerings, which can be contested.

\textsuperscript{137} Pensabene 1979, 221-222; Pensabene et al. 1980, 51; Comella 2004, 336; Pensabene 2005, 137.

\textsuperscript{138} Interestingly, both authors seem to suggest that the disappearance of votive material from sites constitutes abandonment of those sites as cult places, perhaps strengthening my own viewpoint that in these cases, absence of evidence does indeed constitute evidence of absence.

\textsuperscript{139} The connection has been called into question in some recent literature, for instance Glinister 2006, 27-28.

\textsuperscript{140} For the possibility of metal votive offerings similar in form to those in terracotta, see De Cavanova 1991, 205.
Any attempt to reconstruct the size of the population of Roman Italy and the rest of the empire in the Late Republic is based on less-than-hard evidence. The only official, reliable and quantifiable information at our disposal that covers a more or less complete population over a longer period of time are the census results from Roman Egypt recorded on papyri which date from the first three centuries AD. Similar evidence does not exist for peninsular Italy and quantitative estimates of the size of the population are entirely dependent on literary sources: Polybius’ mention of Roman and allied manpower in 225; the various census figures reported for the Republican period, primarily by Livy; and the census figures for 28 and 8 BC and 14 AD as stated in Augustus’ *Res Gestae*. Of these, Polybius’ account is highly problematic, especially as a source for population size estimates, and is probably best excluded from the discussion on the subject. Unfortunately, the reconstruction of population size based on the census figures has proved to be no less problematic. With a few exceptions, the figures reported by Livy and other sources for the third and second century onwards seem to exhibit a certain consistency and fall within a rather limited band. The real problems arise with the recorded republican census figures of the first century, which seem to soar compared to the figures of the preceding centuries. Although given the enfranchisement of the former allies after the Social War in 89 and of the Transpadana region in 49 we can certainly expect a major increase in the number of registered citizens, the jump from 910,000 individuals, the total recorded for 70/69, and the first Augustan census figure of 4,063,000 individuals in 28 is so startling that it cannot be explained by simply assuming that more than three million were enfranchised in this period. This leaves us with two options: we should either accept that recording practices were faulty prior to 28 resulting in massive under-registration, or conclude that the figures of the Augustan census are fundamentally different in character from the republican ones. The choice between one of the options above has lead to the formations of two opposing sides in the Roman population size debate: on the on hand proponents of a so-called ‘low’ count, on the other proponents of a ‘high’ count. Although the scholarly debate seems to centre mostly on the population size in the Augustan period, the implications of the positions taken by both sides in the debate have direct consequences for the reconstruction of the late republican population size.

The ‘low’ count scenario is the oldest and by far the most influential, dominating modern scholarship on the subject. Its most prominent exponents are Karl Julius Beloch and later Peter Brunt – hence the frequent reference to the Beloch-Brunt model or scenario as an alternative to ‘low’ count – who opted for the latter of the possible explanations for the first Augustan census figure presented above and advanced the idea that the Augustan census recorded all free-born citizens of the Roman state, in contrast to the republican practice of only recording male citizens aged 17 and over, although such a shift in recording practices has never been explicitly mentioned in the ancient sources. Proponents of the ‘high’ count scenario assume continuity in census practices and therefore interpret the Augustan figure of

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141 *Bagnall/Frier* 1994.
142 Polyb. 2.24; for the available Roman census figures and the corresponding sources, see *Brunt* 1971, 13-14.
143 The many problems of Polybius’ text are addressed in several articles by Walter Scheidel (*Scheidel* 2004, 3-4; *Scheidel* 2006, 209).
144 *Scheidel* 2008, 19-21, Fig. 1.
145 Beloch 1886; *Brunt* 1971, 113-120.
28 as representing only male citizens aged 17 and over. Taking into account the non-free population not included in the census, the part of the citizen body residing outside Italy and a certain percentage of under-registration, the ‘low’ count scenario hypothesises a population of Augustan Italy of roughly five to six million people. With the same considerations and applying a multiplier to the census figure of adult male citizens to arrive at the total population, the ‘high’ count scenario results in a population size of 12-14 million people, more than twice the figure of the alternative scenario. Needless to say, the choice between either model is not an arbitrary one, but has major consequences for the interpretation of the history and development of the Roman state in the late republican and early Imperial periods, especially regarding questions such as mobilisation and manpower (affecting the number of potential available recruits), economy (affecting the availability of labour in the countryside and the cities and the level of wealth and poverty), and socio-political relations (affecting the degree of urbanisation and thus the number of people available to vote and the relative numbers of elite and masses, slaves and freeborn). Since we do not have a time machine that enables us to travel back in time to 28 and actually see for ourselves if women and children did or did not turn up for registration, it is unlikely that agreement about the size of the Roman population will be reached based purely on the interpretation and extrapolation of the republican and Augustan census figures. Without new evidence explicitly specifying the nature of the Augustan census, all that remains are arguments *ex silentio*. When it comes to deciding on the significance of the census figures on strictly literary grounds, “the heart of the matter is that none of these claims is ultimately testable: they are a matter of taste”.

Of course, extra-literary objections have been raised to both models on various grounds. It is safe to say that the various logical assumptions resulting from both scenarios are ultimately largely dependent on which scenario is seen as more likely given the account of Roman history and development one is inclined to follow. It is therefore probabilistic in nature, and cannot at this point be scientifically tested for its validity. The fact remains that at present, the ‘low’ count scenario is preferable simply because it provides a coherent and viable empire-wide narrative, something which the ‘high’ count model has failed to do until now. Since the available data do not conclusively point towards either the ‘low’ or the ‘high’ count, it is at least conceivable that some middle ground exists.

An attempt is made for Italy in Morley 2001. However, the logical implications of Morley’s assumptions for the demography of the entire empire are certainly untenable (Scheidel 2004, 7-9).

Hi 2008. Saskia Hin ‘solves’ the inconsistency between republican and Augustan census figures by interpreting the former as representing adult male citizens *sui iuris* (legally competent), the latter as representing all citizens *sui iuris* (regardless of age or sex). However, while “the multiplier becomes much more flexible in this scenario”, the share of people *sui iuris* not being determined solely by demographic circumstances, Hin’s interpretation *still* implies an unrecorded shift in recording practices between the Republican and Augustan census figures, one of the main objections formulated against the ‘low’ count interpretation.

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146 Frank 1924; Lo Cascio 1994. Lo Cascio can be regarded as one of the staunchest and most prolific defenders of the ‘high’ count scenario.
147 Morley 2006, 318.
148 Scheidel 2008, 22 n. 9.
149 An attempt is made for Italy in Morley 2001. However, the logical implications of Morley’s assumptions for the demography of the entire empire are certainly untenable (Scheidel 2004, 7-9).
150 Hin 2008. Saskia Hin ‘solves’ the inconsistency between republican and Augustan census figures by interpreting the former as representing adult male citizens *sui iuris* (legally competent), the latter as representing all citizens *sui iuris* (regardless of age or sex). However, while “the multiplier becomes much more flexible in this scenario”, the share of people *sui iuris* not being determined solely by demographic circumstances, Hin’s interpretation *still* implies an unrecorded shift in recording practices between the Republican and Augustan census figures, one of the main objections formulated against the ‘low’ count interpretation.
the historical context of and test the validity of the models explaining religious change in Latium and Italy in the Late Republic, it is necessary to briefly discuss the implications of both scenarios for land occupation and use, and urbanisation. It is probable that the two scenarios will paint differing pictures of this landscape, simply because the ‘high’ count scenario has the exact same amount of land to divide among twice as many people: population density will probably provide the clearest contrast between the models and affect the scenarios of land occupation and use the most.

It is assumed in the socio-economic models of religious change that the settlement pattern changed drastically in the late republican period. People moved in large numbers to the towns from the countryside, leaving it deserted. Indeed, the dominant historical scenario assumes the free peasantry of Italy, already diminished in number by the burdens of military service and ravages of the Hannibalic War, to have been displaced from their land by large slave-run estates and to have continued to decline as a result. As already indicated above, the perceived decline of the free peasantry is important for the validity of the argument of Comella and Pensabene that economic hardship and displacement of the rural population was the main cause of religious change. The decline of feticile votive offerings and the related abandonment of rural cult places would in this case mirror the concentration of settlement in urban centres, with the countryside empty of people and cult. However, the chronology of the development of villas, as well as the scale of the slave mode of production, has been called into question. Nicola Terrenato believes that there is little evidence for the existence of slave-run estates on a truly large scale before the beginning of the first century. Regarding the scale of slave production, Willem Jongman has demonstrated that far fewer slaves were needed to work vineyards and olive groves than is normally assumed. Walter Scheidel presents a reversed view of the villa - rural displacement causality, suggesting that migration towards the cities opened up opportunities for larger-scale agricultural enterprise without “aggressive dispossession of smallholders”. The main problem with this ‘doctrine’ of the declining free peasantry thus seems to be a lack of factual evidence, making it one of the most hotly debated subjects of late republican history. Archaeological surveys have shown that the countryside was not nearly as deserted as has sometimes been claimed, thereby also challenging the notion of a massive decline in small-holdings in favour of elite villa-estates. Especially in the area around Rome, the so-called suburbium, where the villa phenomenon was arguably at its most advanced at an early stage, surveys document an increase rather than a decrease of the number of sites, including small-scale holdings, all through the late republican period to reach its highest value.

151 Morley 2001, 50. For a brief overview of the use of archaeological evidence in the debate on slave production and the free peasantry, see D. Ligt 2006, 597-599.
152 Terrenato 2001, 24. See also Morley 1996, esp. 90, for literary clues to the beginning of the development of extensive villa estates.
155 Important surveys in this respect in Central Italy have been the South Etruria Survey, the survey of the territory of Cosa and the Biferno Valley Survey. Most recently, the Tiber Valley Project has provided important data on the settlement pattern of the northern Roman suburbium, re-evaluating the results of the earlier South Etruria Survey. The Pontine Region Project has shown that in the region to the south of the Alban Hills, sizeable residential villa estates are relatively rare and are usually found in areas close to Roman colonies (Attema/De Haas 2005, 109-110).
in the first century AD. Nonetheless, it is likely that there was some regional variation and that certain areas did show signs of population decline, possibly as a result of the development of villa estates.

There is still the possibility that impoverishment of the peasantry without their immediate displacement by large estates was one of the causes of changes in votive practices, as Luuk de Ligt has convincingly argued that an increase of the rural population can be accompanied by or even lead to impoverishment. In the light of the explanations offered by Comella and Pensabene for religious change in the late republican period, de Ligt’s hypothesis may be interpreted as something of a middle ground: it would actually support a growing concentration on urban centres of that part of the rural population that was able to trade without actual displacement or migration, since economic opportunities for those farmers producing surplus must have been rather limited in the countryside; the majority of the people there would have been struggling to make a living, hardly an enticing economic prospect. This would mean that rural cult places were abandoned by a combination of the inability of the traditional clientele to make offerings there caused by displacement and impoverishment, as stipulated by the Comella-Pensabene model, and the conscious choice of those who were economically able to make offerings to no longer do so at certain cult places, possibly taking their religious business elsewhere, a new side of the argument to which we shall return later in this chapter. In any case, the economic fortunes of the rural inhabitants during the late republican period must also have been subject to regional variation, and the one-to-one relationship between impoverishment and the abandonment of cult places seems overly rigid to me.

An important feature of the Late Republic often recounted by various scholars, and one that would seem to strengthen the claims of Comella and Pensabene, is increased urbanisation. Rome probably took the lion’s share of urban population increase during the last centuries of the Republic, with estimates of the city’s freeborn population rising from 150,000 in 200 to 600,000 in 50. The increase of the population size of the Urbs must be seen in the light of migratory movements on a larger scale, since according to Walter Scheidel “in the last two centuries BC…one to one and a quarter million [people] moved from the Italian countryside to Rome and over 400 other cities”, while a comparable number of people were resettled in colonies or on viritane allotments. This implies a massive - if gradual - demographic shift from the countryside to Rome and the other towns of Latium and Italy. Although the urbanisation rate in late republican Italy is yet another point of debate between ‘low’ and ‘high’ counters, strictly speaking neither option contests the claim of increased urban concentration in the late republican period: both ‘high’ and ‘low’ count scenarios suggest a growth in urban

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156 CARAFA 2004, 55.
157 For instance, Graeme Barker notes a 40 % decline in the number of sites in the late republican period (BARKER 1995, 224) and Robert Witcher observes a decline in the inland areas of Etruria in the same period (WITCHER 2006, 99-106). However, Witcher also notices an increase in the number of sites in the coastal area and the suburbium of Rome, thereby illustrating regional differences.
161 SCHEIDEL 2004, 19.
populations without a necessary decrease in rural populations. The only difference is that supporters of the ‘high’ count scenario use the urban population growth as an argument for a larger population size for Italy overall. Supporters of the ‘high’ count scenario have claimed that the urbanisation rate resulting from the ‘low’ count is implausibly or even impossibly high, suggesting that it necessarily implies the desertion of the countryside which archaeological evidence contests, while Scheidel maintains that the high late republican urbanisation rate of the ‘low’ count scenario could have been possible without contraction in the countryside.

Since most of the towns of Latium were so-called ‘agro-towns’, they depended on the surrounding countryside for their immediate food-supply. Growth of these agro-towns therefore implies a growing or intensifying dependence on the countryside, which at the same time constrained expansion to certain margins, thereby perhaps explaining the limited size of Latial towns. While the city of Rome could rely on grain imports from the provinces overseas to feed the city’s populace and was thus able to maintain a large population without a necessarily growing dependence on the surrounding countryside, most other towns of Latium and Italy lacked this possibility and seem to have been of rather limited size, with most estimates ranging from 1.500-2.000 inhabitants for an average town. Other models have been suggested with slightly more differentiated population estimates, with some towns falling in the category of 500-3.000 inhabitants while several others fall within a range of 3.000-10.000 inhabitants. However, all such estimates are highly speculative, in general deduced from indirect evidence. We should see these towns and the surrounding agricultural catchment area as parts of the same interdependent system, albeit systems with a well-defined economic, political and administrative core. The migratory movements, voluntary or state-sponsored, of roughly two and a half million people during the last centuries of the Republic must have had a profound effect on these urban-rural systems, probably resulting in an increased importance of urban centres and closer economic links with the surrounding countryside. Effectively, this development entailed a strengthening of the position of Rome and the towns, since voluntary migration caused an increase in population numbers in existing urban centres and thereby in the demand and supply of goods and services there, adding to the already strong ‘pull’ factor of towns, while state-sponsored migration either had the same effect in the cases when colonies or virittane allotments were added to existing settlements, or created completely new urban centres in certain areas when colonies were founded ex novo. In this sense, mass migration during the Late Republic can be seen as indicative of the position of urban centres as well as strengthening this position. We must keep in mind however, that the strong position of urban centres and townward migration in the late republican period does not automatically lead to an abandoned countryside and its cult places.

Confronting the findings on demography and settlement patterns so far with the explanations for late republican religious change suggested by Comella and Pensabene, we

\[ \text{\footnotesize 162 LO CASCIO 1994, 38-39; MORLEY 2001, 50.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 163 SCHEIDEL 2004, 18-19.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 164 GABBA 1972, 77-78, 111; LO CASCIO 1994, 39.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 165 GABBA 1972, 78; LO CASCIO 1994, 39.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 166 JONGMAN 2002, 29; SCHEIDEL 2004, 15.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 167 WITCHER 2005, 128, Table 2.} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize 168 DUNCAN-JONES 1982, 259-277.} \]
must conclude that it is in the first place the traditional interpretation of late republican socio-economic change that supports their suggestions. Firmly connecting the practice of offering fictile votive objects with the lower social classes - a connection never actually substantiated by firm evidence - it is their economic hardship and migration towards towns (two closely related developments) that explains the disappearance of this typical class-related votive practice and the abandonment of sanctuaries. However, the interpretation of the broad social developments assumed to be affecting these groups in the late republican period is ambiguous, as we have seen, especially with regard to chronology and scale. Evidence for large-scale decline of the free peasantry resulting in impoverishment and townward migration is hardly conclusive, and the subject is still a hotly debated one among ancient historians and archaeologists. However, since several late republican societal developments, such as increased urbanisation, do seem to support the scenario sketched by Comella and Pensabene, it is important to chart the changes in distribution of cult places in the late republican period to see if the patterns that emerge can substantiate their claims.

The landscape of devotion

In order to gauge the usefulness or validity of any model of religious change or decline and to assess its possible influences on the process of monumentalisation, it is necessary to attempt a reconstruction of the sacred landscape. Only by studying the spatial and chronological characteristics of that landscape can we hope to detect patterns which may favour one model over the other, or perhaps neither. Establishing the number of cult places and their distribution over the landscape, it is possible to say something about the relationships between cult places remarked upon earlier in this chapter.

Traditionally, the study of cult places, especially in their architecturally enhanced form, has always relied rather heavily on philological analysis. The incomplete nature of the physical evidence, most importantly in Rome, has lead to the regular use of ancient texts to fill in missing information. However, with increasing emphasis being placed on archaeological data as valuable sources of information in their own right, such as field surveys for the reconstruction of settlement patterns and the ancient economy, it is important to develop similar approaches for the study of material religious remains. An exclusively archaeological approach certainly has its drawbacks. For the study of cult places specifically, these are: (1) the impossibility of complete site recovery because of later construction activities on the site and limited research of the countryside; (2) the fact that the minority of information available to us is from undisturbed contexts; (3) the poor publication of excavation results; (4) the loss after recovery of excavated material precluding its restudying; (5) the problem of the identification of a sacred objects or a sacred place as such. Even if these limitations imply that we may not be able to reconstruct the entire religious topography of Latium using

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169 For instance on dedication dates: Coarelli 1976, 21-22. Coarelli states that for the period 218-167 the precise date of construction or restoration for 22 of the 28 temples in total is known exclusively from Livy's text (books 21-45). For the period 167-68, this figure is even more dramatic: 21 out of 22. Moreover, for the existence of many temples, primarily in Rome itself, we have only textual evidence.

only archaeological evidence, a purely archaeological approach also has benefits. One distinct advantage of using material evidence without automatically supplementing it with literary sources is its relative lack of ambiguity and cultural bias, partly outweighing the problems and limitations of such an approach.\footnote{Furthermore, some recent studies have indicated that the use of literary sources for the reconstruction of the sacred landscape also has its problematic sides. See Dubourdieu 2003 for example, on the limited usefulness of Cicero's De Signis for information on cult places on Sicily.}

There has been a general lack of large-scale analysis of the spatial distribution of cult places and its implications, presumably because of a lack of published material and perhaps because of the limitations outlined above. Research has tended to be either highly localised or primarily concerned with traditional, formal - mostly stylistic - aspects of sanctuaries.\footnote{Examples of the latter are too numerous to list. An example for the late republican period is Coarelli 1987. Recent examples of the former are Bruckner 2003 (Setia), Mezzazappa 2003 (Sora), Jaa 2004 (Antium) and Livi 2006 (Minturnae), all of which deal with the religious topography of individual towns and their associated territories. An exception to the rule is Rezzello 1980, dealing with a considerably larger area. Classic examples of integrative studies which deal with cult places and their spatial context are Alcock/Osborne 1994 for Greece, and Edlund-Berry 1987 for Etruria and Magna Graecia.} The publication of such series as the Corpus delle stipi votive in Italia should make it easier to compile information for wider regions, making the assessment of the spatial aspects of religious change for a large part of peninsular Italy possible. We are fortunate that for Latium, a more or less all-encompassing catalogue of cult places exists, compiled by Jelle Bouma, on the basis of which it is possible to make a tentative reconstruction of the development of cult places in the region for the period up to the establishment of the Augustan principate.\footnote{Bouma 1996 Iii.} On the basis of the data contained in this catalogue we can establish the number of cult places in Latium over the course of eight centuries, as far as votive material is concerned, and six centuries for religious structures.\footnote{Although a chronological sequence in centuries may seem forced, using the chronologies of the different artefacts would result in a confusing sequence. Besides, most of the objects used for dating purposes can be dated to whole centuries and in some cases even more accurately (for instance, numismatic evidence) while still belonging to the same votive context. Therefore, a century by century approach seems wisest if not completely unproblematic.} Since the changes in religion observed above are in the first place visible in the first category, I shall first offer a reconstruction of the sacred landscape using recovered votive material, assessing the outcome in the light of theories of religious change outlined above and offering an alternative, or perhaps complementary, model that explains certain characteristics of this transformative process.

**Methodological considerations**

Two methodological choices made here need explaining: first, the nature of the data used and the way in which they are presented, and second the distinction between cult places identified on the basis of recovered votive material and those identified on the basis of building remains.\footnote{The categories of material remains included in the terms votive material and building remains as used here are specified below.} Regarding the data used, I have ‘corrected’ some of the information provided by Bouma, excluding from the present inquiry any ambiguous information, such as single finds and material mentioned in older texts but without clear indications of the nature of the
material or its context. The find of a single example of votive material does not per definition constitute a functioning cult place, and mentioned but lost and largely badly recorded and unstudied material has been left out because of the fact that it is ultimately unreliable evidence which cannot be restudied. The inclusion or rejection of single find material in this chapter is based on the consideration of the wider context when known, including the potential votive character of associated pottery. The chronological ranges given by Bouma, both in running text and diagrams, have for the most part been adopted here. These chronological data were in turn adopted by Bouma from the various reports and publications on the individual cult sites. Ultimately then, these are the chronologies attributed to the material by individual excavators or researchers. There are bound to be chronological differences which cannot be resolved. Unfortunately, at this point, all I can do is signal the problem and use the data as prudently as possible.

I have chosen full centuries as the units of chronological measurement. This may seem rather crude, and yet it is the only possible way in which to compare sites with each other without reverting to complicated diagrams of date ranges of all material categories. Unfortunately, we are dealing with different material categories which are all related to votive religion, each with dating possibilities and difficulties. In order to compare sites recognised on the basis of material evidence in a clear and direct way, we need to choose the chronological interval which covers the largest number of categories. Unfortunately, in general this will be the least exact interval. I am aware of the problems this choice entails, giving rather wide chronological intervals which may not reflect the reality of the material evidence at some sites, yet I am convinced that this is the only possible way in which we can compare large numbers of sites without resorting to overly complicated methods.

The data are presented in two sets of bar graphs for each of the categories, one set giving the total number of identified individual sites, to which I will refer as cult places, the other set giving the aggregates per territorial ‘unit’, grouping all cult places within specific (urban) territories, being referred to as cult areas. The aggregate graphs thus show areas with evidence for at least one cult place in every given period: the number of areas in which cult activity, regardless of its intensity, has been attested. For instance, if a certain site yields 10 cult places in a specific period, this will be counted as one in the aggregate graphs. This is meant as a ‘correction’ on the totals given, to avoid overrepresentation of sites with a disproportionately large number of cult sites, such as Rome, and in a sense giving us a more ‘balanced’ view of the Latial religious topography. The division made in the graphs between ‘urban’ and ‘extra-urban’ is a rather strict one. A cult-place located outside the urban centre is here classified as extra-urban and since the extent of the urban centre is usually (though not exclusively) established by reference to walls it becomes a question of intra or extra moenia. However, it is possible to - visually - distinguish extra-urban from suburban by using distribution maps. Not

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176 On the problem of single finds, see BOUMA 1996 I, 28 (especially note 157). Bouma relates the problem to the fact that “pottery…is generally not considered an ex voto, i.e. a votive offering proper, indicative of a religious context” (2006 I, 29), thereby suggesting that pottery finds which may very well belong to a religious context are not recognised as such.

177 For this process of aggregation, I have followed the attribution of cult places to specific territories as found in BOUMA 1996 III. I am fully aware that many may disagree with the attribution of certain sites to the territory of this or that urban centre. However, Bouma’s claims on the whole seem reasonable to me.
only are these maps instrumental in showing us the spatial distribution of the cult places in the Latial landscape, an additional useful feature is their limited geographical discrimination. Places that are very close to one another appear on these maps as a single dot. Thus, every dot on these maps may in fact represent several cult places, especially within urban centres, and represent cult places as a single dot which in the graphs appear separately as urban and extra-urban. If the extra-urban cult place is sufficiently close to the urban centre and is thus rather suburban than truly extra-urban or ‘rural’ in nature it will be represented with the same dot as the actual urban cult places (*intra moenia*). Conversely, cult places that are grouped in the aggregate bar graphs because they are in the same territorial unit may very well appear as separate dots on the distribution maps because there is a sufficiently large distance between them. To clarify: if a town ‘X’ has, in a given century, three cult places located within the city walls, one cult place placed just outside the walls (i.e. suburban) and two cult place located at some distance from the urban centre, these would show up as six cult places, of which three urban and three extra-urban in figure 2, as two cult areas, one urban and one extra-urban in figure 3, and as one urban ‘dot’ (comprising the three urban and one suburban cult place) and two extra-urban ‘dots’ on distribution maps, figures 4-6. The same rationale applies to sites with building remains, which will be considered later on. These maps therefore function as an additional filter, and actually show us a situation more or less in between the two types of bar graphs. These different types of data visualisation should give us a relatively clear and comprehensive image of developments and characteristics of the Latial sacred landscape at various points in time.

The distinction between the categories of votive material and building remains creates two separate sets of data, each indicating a subtly different aspect of the development and distribution of cult places in the region. A clear indication that the two phenomena should possibly, or even necessarily, be interpreted as separate phenomena is given by the many sanctuaries that continue to function as a cult place after the permanent structures such as temples associated with the sanctuary have ceased to exist. Cult places functioned before religious architecture developed and so-called ‘natural’ cult places continued to exist alongside cult places with permanent structures. The two phenomena, votive material and sacred structures, are obviously closely related, yet are not necessarily co-dependent. The fact that religious architecture can in some ways be considered a secondary or complimentary development related to the sphere of religion in my opinion argues for a separate treatment of these two phenomena.

Votive material can be used as an indicator of ‘basic’ (and private) religious activity, with the caveat addressed in an earlier section of this chapter. When datable cult-related material is found which can be connected to specific areas, we can be fairly certain that this area was actually used as a cult place during a certain period of time, with the basic chronology of use being given by the chronology of the finds. However, recognition of an archaeological context as ‘sacred’ or ‘votive’ remains problematic; depending on the interpretation of the data, one man’s primary votive deposit may be another’s dump stratum. For our present purposes, the specific interpretation of deposits of cult-related material as either primary votive deposits or dump strata does not matter that much. Assuming votive objects did not lie around for a century before being dedicated, the presence of such material indicates religious activity in
the general area in the period indicated by the chronological range of the material. The only problem is that certain material not easily or immediately recognisable as votive or cult-related may be overlooked and thereby important chronological data missed. A further problem is that certain material which is clearly religious or cult-related in nature cannot be easily assigned to either the sphere of individuals coming to sacrifice at the sanctuary, which would be the category of material indicated by the word votive, or the sphere of more public or communal rituals, which could have resulted in deposited material but cannot properly be called votive. Thus, when constructing an image of the development of cult places in Latium, votive material will be used to show us the places that people actually visited to give offerings, or in this case at least those places that are archaeologically recognisable. In the following sections, we will consider only those cult places which have yielded evidence of votive material, while building remains will be considered in a later section.

### Presentation of the data

The first table and two sets of bar graphs representing cult places in Latium identified on the basis of votive material give us a general idea about the quantitative development of cult places in the region (tab. 1, figs. 2, 3). What emerges from the figures is a steady rise in the number of cult places up to the fifth century, when the number of cult places identified drops significantly as a result of a very low number of new sites and the discontinuity of about half of the sixth century cult places.¹⁷⁸ Considering this fifth century ‘crisis’, the apparent ubiquity of cult places in the following centuries is all the more remarkable. The vast majority of the sites existing in the fifth century continue into the next and there is an extraordinary number of new sites including a considerable number - about one sixth of the number of new sites - of ‘revived’ sites, reoccupied after having been abandoned in the preceding century.¹⁷⁹ This

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century (BC)</th>
<th>8th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>6th</th>
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<th>3rd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cult places (tot.) (new)</td>
<td>15 (15)</td>
<td>39 (25)</td>
<td>65 (31)</td>
<td>42 (6)</td>
<td>126 (89)</td>
<td>149 (31)</td>
<td>82 (1)</td>
<td>44 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>22 (12)</td>
<td>38 (17)</td>
<td>26 (4)</td>
<td>71 (46)</td>
<td>83 (14)</td>
<td>58 (1)</td>
<td>34 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban cult places (tot.) (new)</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
<td>16 (12)</td>
<td>31 (16)</td>
<td>20 (3)</td>
<td>48 (30)</td>
<td>62 (14)</td>
<td>35 (0)</td>
<td>21 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>10 (2)</td>
<td>25 (16)</td>
<td>30 (5)</td>
<td>21 (0)</td>
<td>14 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-urban cult places (tot.) (new)</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>23 (14)</td>
<td>34 (15)</td>
<td>21 (3)</td>
<td>77 (60)</td>
<td>85 (16)</td>
<td>45 (1)</td>
<td>23 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-urban cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
<td>17 (10)</td>
<td>26 (10)</td>
<td>17 (2)</td>
<td>46 (30)</td>
<td>53 (9)</td>
<td>37 (1)</td>
<td>20 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Number of cult places in Latium identified based on votive material, total (tot.) and aggregate (agg.).

¹⁷⁸ Patrizio Pensabene notes the scarcity of fifth century votive material at Rome, and in Latium and the Falliscan area (Pensabene 1982, 90). However, he does not offer an explanation, historical or methodological, for the phenomenon.

¹⁷⁹ Since this phenomenon of revival is mostly limited to the fourth century, I have chosen not to represent this as a separate bar in the graphs.
Fig. 2. Number of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of votive material. Total number of cult places (top), urban cult places (middle), extra-urban cult places (bottom).
Fig. 3. Aggregate number of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of votive material. Total number of cult places (top), urban cult places (middle), extra-urban cult places (bottom).
rise in the number of cult places continues in the third century, albeit with a less dramatic increase than from the fifth to the fourth century. The third century represents the absolute peak in both total and aggregate numbers of sacred places. Few sites are lost from the fourth to the third century and there are a considerable number of new sites. The fourth and third centuries thus present a veritable explosion of archaeologically identifiable cult places, both urban and extra-urban; the Latial landscape seems to be filled with cult.

There is a dramatic change in the second century. The number of cult places, both total and aggregate, falls well below the level of the fourth century. Particularly striking is the extremely low number of new cult places, the total number of cult places being determined almost exclusively by the continuity of cult places from earlier periods. Contrary to the ‘crisis’ of the fifth century, which was only a temporary dip in the number of cult places followed by the religiously thriving mid-republican period, the decline of the second century continues into the first century. There is still an almost complete lack of new cult places, the only new cult place recorded for this period being a ‘revival’. Aggregation hardly has a softening effect on the decline visible in the total numbers. In total, more than 70% of the sites recorded on the basis of votive material for the third century can no longer be identified in the first, while for aggregate numbers this figure is 60%. The importance of using aggregate data here becomes clear; decline could have been caused by the disappearance of a very limited number of cult areas, each with many cult places. If, for instance, Rome would have been destroyed, we would see a drop in the total number of cult places without a significant effect on aggregate cult areas. The fact that the aggregate data also indicate a decline can be seen as a sign that we are dealing with broader developments.

On the basis of the different ratios resulting from the figures of table 1 some interesting aspects of the different categories of cult places can be established (tab. 2). An interesting observation to start with is that from the eighth to the fifth century, the disparity between the number of extra-urban and urban sites becomes smaller. In the eighth century, extra-urban sites outnumber urban ones by two to one, while in the fifth century there are about the same number of sites of either category. This development is repeated from the fourth to the first century. After aggregation, the ratio of urban to extra-urban is more constant, generally in the range of two extra-urban areas for every urban one, with noticeable exceptions in the

<table>
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<th>Century (BC)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban : extra-urban (tot.)</td>
<td>0,50</td>
<td>0,70</td>
<td>0,91</td>
<td>0,95</td>
<td>0,62</td>
<td>0,73</td>
<td>0,78</td>
<td>0,91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban : extra-urban (agg.)</td>
<td>0,43</td>
<td>0,29</td>
<td>0,46</td>
<td>0,59</td>
<td>0,54</td>
<td>0,57</td>
<td>0,57</td>
<td>0,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate : total (both)</td>
<td>0,67</td>
<td>0,56</td>
<td>0,58</td>
<td>0,64</td>
<td>0,56</td>
<td>0,56</td>
<td>0,71</td>
<td>0,77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate : total (urban)</td>
<td>0,60</td>
<td>0,31</td>
<td>0,39</td>
<td>0,50</td>
<td>0,52</td>
<td>0,48</td>
<td>0,60</td>
<td>0,67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate : total (extra-urban)</td>
<td>0,70</td>
<td>0,74</td>
<td>0,76</td>
<td>0,81</td>
<td>0,60</td>
<td>0,62</td>
<td>0,82</td>
<td>0,87</td>
</tr>
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*Table 2. Ratios on the basis of table 1, total (tot.) and aggregate (agg).*
seventh and first centuries. During these two ‘cycles’ then, the total number of cult sites in urban areas increases faster than in extra-urban areas, since the ratio would have remained constant otherwise. In addition, since the aggregated ratios remain more or less the same, it can be concluded that within urban centres multiple cult places can be identified while in the associated territories of those centres, multiple cult places are becoming a less common phenomenon. If the increase of the number of urban cult places was simply caused by more urban areas having identifiable cult places, the aggregate ratio of urban to extra-urban would have risen as well. Since this does not happen, we must conclude that the number of cult places increases within a limited number of urban areas. In other words, the phenomenon of multiple cult places within the same area is a typically urban one. Even in the first century, when the ratio of aggregate to total reaches the highest value in the entire period considered here, on average there is still one and a half cult place in every urban area. We may therefore say that apart from a decline in the number of cult places overall in the Late Republic, there seems to be a concentration of cult activity in the urban centres.

To see how these observations can be translated to the spatial plane, we must turn to the distribution maps provided for the last three centuries BC (figs. 4–6). The third century has

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180 The fact that in the seventh century, there are more than three times as many extra-urban aggregate cult areas as urban ones can be attributed to the fact that nine of the 16 non-aggregated cult places are situated in Rome; the result is an extreme effect of aggregation on urban cult places for this period.
been chosen as the chronological starting point of the distribution maps, since the number of cult places is highest in this century (thus representing the maximum distribution of cult places), and since it is primarily the late republican period in which we are interested. We can indeed observe a heavily dotted landscape in the third century (fig. 4), with many cult places, urban and extra-urban, scattered across the landscape, with a concentration around Rome and the Alban Hills but without a clear pattern in the rest of the region. We can also observe that the extra-urban cult places clearly outnumber the urban ones. In line with the statistical observations above, a lot of dots disappear in the second century and the numerical disparity between urban and extra-urban cult places seems to diminish (fig. 5). The decline in the number of cult places is not concentrated in any particular area, although the seemingly least affected area is that of the Liri river valley to the north of the via Latina. A very clear image emerges from the distribution map of the first century (fig. 6). Urban cult areas (comprising urban and sub-urban cult places) actually outnumber extra-urban cult areas in this period and at least for the western half of Latium there is a clear pattern.\footnote{I would like to emphasize that the number of dots on the distribution maps for either category do not necessarily correspond to the numbers in table 1. As already indicated above, cult places located just outside the city walls appear as urban cult places on the distribution maps while being counted as extra-urban in table 1 and its associated bar graphs. As such, black dots on the map may actually signify either fully urban or suburban cult places. In any case, a very close association with the urban centre is supposed for both.} Active extra-urban cult places
in this area seem to be largely confined to the area around Rome, concentrated along the important traffic arteries of the via Appia, the via Latina and the via Prenestina. Extra-urban cult places not associated with the road network are rare in western Latium and only seem to exist in the Middle Liri valley. The distribution maps therefore seem to confirm the image presented earlier: the Late Republic as a period of numerical decrease and an increasing urban concentration of cult places.

Analysis and evaluation

Of course, the interpretation of the data above rests on the assumption that the figures represent actual, real changes in the number of cult places. The first objection one might raise against such an assumption is methodological in nature, namely the heterogeneity of the data used, a problem perhaps facing all integrative studies. The data provided by Bouma are derived from the publications of countless excavations, surveys and fortuitous finds, each

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182 An example is the recent comparative study by Robert Witcher of different regions of Etruria (Witcher 2006). Based on the results of more than thirty surveys, Witcher encounters the same general problem, namely whether the patterns he has detected are genuine or if they reflect changes in the intensity of coverage (Witcher 2006, 106-111). Witcher maintains that in spite of this methodological complication the general patterns observed remain valid, albeit possibly with slightly different relative values.
with probably widely differing methodologies and research aims affecting the final results. In addition, the suburbium of Rome is traditionally one of the better covered areas as far as archaeological research is concerned, and is therefore perhaps over-represented. However, there are other areas in Latium that have been relatively well studied, such as the Liri river valley, where a similar general phenomenon is visible. This suggests that at least in broad terms, the data provided by Bouma can be compared in the way done here and the general conclusions drawn from them stand as they are.

Another important, related question we need to ask ourselves is if in this case the absence of evidence (the lack of recovered votive material) indeed constitutes evidence of absence (cessation of cult activities previously indicated by this votive material). I have already mentioned that our knowledge of fifth century material culture is perhaps not ideal, raising the possibility that we somehow fail to identify cult places because we do not know what the material indicators for cult activity in this period are. I will refrain from presenting a full analysis of the 5th century ‘crisis’ here, since we are dealing with a period in which the historical situation and, perhaps more importantly, the cultural and ethnic boundaries in the area are far from clear-cut and the significance of the chronological differences observed in the data is unclear. Perhaps the observed dip in sites identified on the basis of votive material can be connected to the attested presence of Volscians in the Pontine plain in the late sixth century, bringing with them different votive practices which as of yet are not easily recognisable to archaeologists, explaining the fact that sites identified in the sixth century can no longer be traced in the fifth while ‘reappearing’ in the fourth century. In any case, the subject is too vast to analyse in detail in the context of this study.

For the late republican period, we might be dealing with a similar problem. As mentioned above, there seems to be an important change in the nature of votive material at some point during this period. Categories of clearly recognisable votive gifts, such as fittile objects (anatomical terracottas, terracotta votive heads, and terracotta figurines) and miniature pottery, largely disappear from the material record. Are we then dealing with the simple fact that because votive material can no longer be recognised as such in the first century, cult activity only seems to disappear from the countryside? I would like to argue that this is too simple an explanation for at least the late republican period.

There are certainly some sites with material interpreted as being votive in nature dating to the first century, mainly pottery and coins, thereby suggesting that there are possibilities of recovering material manifestations of votive practices in that century. These include the sites appearing as functioning cult sites in the fourth or third centuries, which are arguably the sites being made visible by the recognisable fittile votive objects (fig. 7). For instance, we can observe that more than half of the sites still existing in the first century consist of sites appearing as cult places in the archaeological record in the fourth or third century.

Secondly, there are several sites with a continuity of several centuries, with a ‘sudden’ cessation of activity in the first century, which is clearly visible in the graph showing us the number of abandoned cult places with a proportional breakdown into the centuries in which

183 For the definition and implications of the concept of a Roman suburbium, see Champlin 1982; Marazzi 2001 (concentrating on Imperial and later periods); Mayer 2005; Witcher 2005.
184 See Gnaed 2002, 140-143, for a discussion of the Volscian presence in Latium.
cult activity at the site started (fig. 8). About a third of the sites no longer existing in the second century, and a quarter of the sites no longer existing in the first are sites that have a long history of cult activity, dating to the period before the appearance of fictile votive offerings. The fact that archaeologically recognisable cult material has been found at those sites which did not exclusively consist of fictile offerings underlines the fact that it is not just those objects that define a cult place. If cult activity did continue in the late republican period at those sites with long cultic histories, or any cult site for that matter, I would expect some small visible sign of it, not even necessarily votive in nature, such as ‘normal’ pottery or coins. I find it hard to believe that people frequented cult places in the first century, arguably performing invisible
rituals, without leaving any trace of their presence. To me, in these cases at least, the absence of material evidence indeed signals the abandonment of the site as a functioning cult place.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of abandonment and (urban) concentration of cult places is not restricted to this problematic first century. We must keep in mind that at least some of the sites labelled as ‘lost’ in the second century were actually abandoned during the third, and those of the first century during the second. This follows from the fact that cult places cannot be labelled as lost in a century if they have yielded material dated to that century. If, for instance, at a particular site early third century material has been found, it will be labelled as ‘continuous’ in the third century, but as ‘lost’ in the second, while it was perhaps already

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**Fig. 8. Total number of abandoned cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of votive material per century, subdivided into the periods of earliest evidence for cult activity.**
abandoned in the period after the early third century. The *terminus post quem* provided by the material is thus somewhat crude, but given the heterogeneity of the votive material and the dating possibilities of each of them already remarked upon, centuries are the only unit of chronological measurement which allows for the comparison of all material categories. It therefore appears that cult places disappear in the third and second centuries, a period in which I think many will agree votive material is still recognisable as such. This would mean that the idea that first century sites are under-represented because of archaeologists’ failure to recognise them as cult places would only have limited implications for the data presented here, namely a possibly higher number of ‘continuous’ and ‘new’ sites (including ‘revivals’), perhaps tempering the image of continuous decline.

I do not contest the fact that the nature of votive religion changes in the last two centuries BC, but I do contest the implication that this change prevents us from making any relevant observations on the basis of the material we have at our disposal. We have to accept that a more profound knowledge of the different forms of votive religion and shifts in the dating of material associated with it could cause shifts in the graphs and distribution maps presented here.\footnote{For instance, it is difficult to date anatomical terracottas in anything other than centuries (Glinister 2006, 20).} It remains to be seen if such shifts would be so significant as to fundamentally change the observations made in this chapter. For the moment, I am inclined to assume that the picture painted here is essentially correct, at least in broad outlines, and we should therefore explore the observed peculiarities of the late republican period further.

The prolonged nature of the late republican ‘crisis’, in some ways even deteriorating in the first century, seems to point rather to a steady development than any ‘shock’ occurrences resulting in temporary disruption of cult activity.\footnote{Which is not to say that such ‘shock’ occurrences did not account for the disappearance of individual cult places or entire urban areas, such as the destruction of Fregellae by the Romans after its insurrection in 125 and the mass suicide and subsequent immolation of Norba in 81. However, these instances account for just a small portion of the total number of cult places and fail to explain the developments observed in the long run.} Single historical events cannot fully account for the image emerging from the analysis of the data, which in my opinion is too consistent both chronologically and geographically. While the Hannibalic War could possibly explain the abandonment of sites, residential and religious, in the late third century, a similar explanation is implausible for the second century. The sites labelled ‘lost’ for the first century were actually abandoned during the second, surely one of the most prosperous periods of the Republic without major military campaigns on Italian soil, thereby practically eliminating armed conflict as a possible cause of abandonment. Although the republican period is certainly characterised by its share of military struggles, both external and internal, much of the Late Republic was also relatively stable and tranquil. Virtually all military operations of the second century took place outside the Italian peninsula. With peace and stability restored and vast amounts of wealth flowing into the peninsula, we would actually expect a revival of sites abandoned during the third century, possibly in response to the Punic invasion, yet we do not see anything of the sort. Instead, we continue to observe a decline in the number of cult places and spatial concentration, without an apparent military reason. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the developments of cult place distribution can be explained solely by the effects of military interventions. A model should therefore be sought that is compatible with the
available evidence and able to explain the demise of cult places in Latium in the Late Republic as the result of long-term developments.

Taking the model proposed by Comella and Pensabene into consideration, we also run into some problems. They seem to place the abandonment of cult places firmly in the first century, while the data presented here suggests an earlier date for the start of this process, namely at some point during the third century. The fact that these early abandoned cult places do not experience a revival in the second century perhaps means that this actually is the start of an ongoing process affecting cult places. This process leads to concentration of cult places in or near urban centres and alongside major traffic arteries. While this process of concentration seems to support the model proposed by Comella and Pensabene, I still question their exclusive connection of these abandoned cult places with the lower social classes. I think that it is possible to construct a different model explaining this concentration of religion, partly incorporating the notions put forward by Comella and Pensabene but more general in character, which shows that the specific changes in the Latial sacred landscape are the result of a number of parallel developments ‘colliding’ in the republican period. The model does not seek to solve the problem of the disappearance of the typical Etrusco-Latial-Campanian votive deposits as such, although it offers some clues about the religious mentality underlying changes in votive practice. It is primarily aimed at explaining the changes in the number and the spatial distribution of cult places without presupposing a displacement of the free rural population, a restriction of the phenomenon to the late second and first century, or an exclusive connection of abandoned cult places to lower social strata.

**A different approach to the sacred landscape**

Evaluating the analysis of the Latial sacred landscape presented above, we must conclude that based on these figures, it is possible to question some of the models explaining religious change presented earlier in this chapter. It can be argued that the phenomenon starts earlier than is assumed in these models and has geographical characteristics that cannot be easily explained by the aforementioned models. I do think the presented data provide sufficient grounds for a different model, based on economic theory. Using economic theory to describe and explain religious phenomena may seem unorthodox, but I am convinced that there are considerable gains to be made by employing it in the study of religion. Furthermore, this model is able to explain the decline and spatial concentration of Latial cult places in the late republican period more satisfactorily and on a more theoretical level than the models of displacement and impoverishment. A connection between the functioning of cult places and on-site economic activities has been suggested in existing literature on cult places, and the analogy of a religious economy is a concept that has been introduced into the modern study of religion and individual religious activity. Rodney Starke and Roger Finke have formulated a definition of the concept, stating that “a religious economy consists of all of the religious activity going on in any society: a “market” of current and potential adherents, a set of one or

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more organizations seeking to attract or maintain adherents, and the religious culture offered by the organization(s).\textsuperscript{188} For classical times, and in particular the situation in late republican Italy, Andreas Bendlin has stated in a similar manner that a ‘market of small religio-economic entities’ came into being in the late republican period, as a result of religious and non-religious developments.\textsuperscript{189} The idea of a religious market model requires us to accept that people displayed a rational attitude with respect to religious choices. Since this may go against intuitive associations with the sphere of religion, I will start by exploring the combination of religion and rationality in the Romano-Italic world, to see if this assumption which is made explicit in the model can pass muster. Next, the principles of the market model based on Central Place Theory will be presented, followed by a discussion of the implication of the model for our view of (late) republican cult places and votive religion.

Religion and the concept of rationality

The first question that needs to be answered is: can an element of rationality, or rational choice, be recognised in religious behaviour? The central assumption inherent in the idea of a religious market is that people display a certain degree of rationality in religious matters. The specific form of rationality in this case can be called a means-ends or instrumental rationality, which dictates that every action reflects the most favourable cost/benefit ratio for the agent involved.\textsuperscript{190} In the form of rational choice theory, this concept of rationality has been introduced, not without criticism, in the study of modern religions and individual religious behaviour.\textsuperscript{191} While many criticisms aimed at rational choice theory may have some justification in the study of modern religious behaviour, I think especially the question of whether instrumental rationality can be reconciled with an idea of personal belief is less pressing for the Romano-Italic situation. In fact, in some fundamental respects it seems to be very different from modern religious experience; while modern religion embraces the idea of faith and belief, this is much harder to demonstrate for Romano-Italic religion, at least with respect to some fundamental aspects we associate with religion.\textsuperscript{192} Romano-Italic religion did not offer solace against physical or mental pain, religion as an institution did not concern itself with the afterlife, and it did not concern itself with the mental wellbeing of the citizenry; in other words, belief probably did not affect life choices all that much.\textsuperscript{193} Christian faith is based on the immediate belief, without reservation, in a corpus of revealed doctrines, in the entire word, in the letter of the word, and in the articles progressively elaborated by ecclesiastic authorities.\textsuperscript{194} This sort of belief did not exist in classical antiquity, as far as we can tell. While the relationship with the gods required a form of belief, it was belief in the effectiveness of ritual and the expectation of the fulfilment of vows by both dedicants and gods if the ritual requirements had been met; gods and men

\textsuperscript{188} Stark/Finke 2000, 193.
\textsuperscript{189} Bendlin 2000, 134.
\textsuperscript{190} Iannacoone 1995a, 77; Iannacoone 1995b, 285.
\textsuperscript{191} For general introductions of the theory, and evaluations of its validity and usefulness, see Young 1997; Bruce 1999; Stark 1999.
\textsuperscript{192} North 1989, 598; Linder/Scheid 1993.
\textsuperscript{193} North 1989, 599; Linder/Scheid 1993, 52.
\textsuperscript{194} Linder/Scheid 1993, 55.
negotiated, like merchants, about the way in which the sacrifice would be performed and the appropriate favour that would be granted in response to the sacrifice.\footnote{195}

Greek and Roman votive religion on the whole clearly indicates the expectation of a counter-gift from the gods.\footnote{196} This means that the criticism of rational choice theory that a quid pro quo exchange with a god or gods is not always involved in religious action is not immediately backed up by the material evidence of votive religion.\footnote{197} The very fact that votive religion in the Roman world contains the expectation of a counter-gift from the deity, a very obvious form of benefit however one looks at it, would seem to argue against the idea of religion for religion’s sake implied by “value-rationality”.\footnote{198} And although it is certainly possible that votive religion contained a sense of responsibility to others, another form of rationally motivated behaviour,\footnote{199} we can see that at least in the case of elites, this principle seems to have played a decidedly minor role in religious sentiments, if any role at all.\footnote{200} Of course, votive religion is somewhat different, but nonetheless stems from the same overarching religious system.\footnote{201} It therefore seems that if we are to adopt a form of rationality to explain religious behaviour, the choice for instrumental rationality can certainly be defended in a Romano-Italic context. In general, “we should accept that the Romans’ religious experience was profoundly different from our own and that it is impossible to postulate what elements it should or should not have contained”.\footnote{202} Therefore, an attempt to interpret religious behaviour from a different perspective than the traditional one would seem to be justified. The application of principles of instrumental rationality to the study of votive practices should at least be explored, to see if it offers new and valuable insights; given the incomplete state of our knowledge concerning private religious behaviour during this period, it is as valid an approach as any.

The idea of instrumental rationality and market principles affecting the functioning and distribution of cult places in Latium will be fleshed out in the following section by embedding it in economic anthropological theory about the development and functioning of retail markets and its relationship to rational human behaviour; it is also based on the concept of instrumental rationality and is therefore fully compatible with the idea of a religious market.

The sacred landscape and Central Place Theory

Having decided on the market analogy as an interesting option with which to approach developments of votive religion and the associated sacred landscape, one of the most obvious theoretical starting points would be Central Place Theory (CPT), originally intended by its author, Walter Christaller, as a theory explaining the size, number and distribution of towns.\footnote{203} Research carried out since has demonstrated that the theory actually fails to predict the development

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Linder}/\textit{Scheid} 1993, 54.
\item \textit{Burkert} 1987, 47.
\item \textit{Jerolmack}/\textit{Porpora} 2004, 143-146.
\item \textit{Spickard} 1998, 104; \textit{Jerolmack}/\textit{Porpora} 2004, 140-141.
\item \textit{Noddings} 1988, 219; \textit{Spickard} 1998, 104-105.
\item \textit{Liebeschuetz} 1979, 29-39.
\item \textit{North} 1989, 607: “public and private religion…should not be separated in conception but seen as a single system, operating with the same set of religious possibilities”.
\item \textit{North} 1989, 606.
\item \textit{Christaller} 1933 (\textit{Christaller} 1966: English translation).
\end{itemize}
of settlements, its use being limited to the development of service or market centres and systems, which still suits our present purpose.\textsuperscript{204} To keep the terminology neutral, specific reference to towns or market places will be avoided in the explanation of notions derived from CPT, instead substituting the more neutral ‘central place’, while keeping in mind that this label may indicate either of these concepts, or indeed other entities such as cult places. Given the specific characteristics of Latium as an urbanised region in the republican period, I think CPT is an appropriate theoretical framework with which to tackle the problem of number and distribution of cult places, since it can conceptually encapsulate both urban centres and cult places as constituent parts of a network of central places and the services on offer there.\textsuperscript{205} From the theoretical framework provided by Christaller, a number of general principles can be distilled which in my opinion are especially pertinent with regard to the development of the Latial sacred landscape during the middle and late republican period. These five principles will be given here first in their most general form, followed by a discussion of their relevance for the situation in Latium:

(1) \textit{The definition of range}.\textsuperscript{206}
The range of a good is the farthest distance the dispersed population is willing to go in order to obtain a good offered at a place. The same good has a different range at every central place, and its range is not the same in all directions from the same central place. It is mainly determined by: (i) the size and importance of the central place and the distribution of population; (ii) the price-willingness of the purchaser; (iii) the subjective economic distance; and (iv) the type, quantity, and the price of the good at the central place. If the distance is too great, the population will not buy the good because it becomes too expensive for them; or they will buy it at another central place from which they can obtain it more cheaply.

(2) \textit{The extent of complimentary regions}.\textsuperscript{207}
Lower and upper limits determine the smallest area and the largest complementary region of a central place in regard to a certain central good. The lower limit denotes a range of x kilometres around the central place with enough participants to support a service, the upper limit a range of x kilometres around the central place beyond which people will no longer travel to the central place to obtain the central good. If the lower limit of the range is very low, then there is the probability that the central good will also be offered at other central places in the region.

(3) \textit{The effects of infrastructural change}.\textsuperscript{208}
Better traffic conditions mean a reduction in the economic distance. An intensification of the demand for and offering of goods is generally to be expected when a new transportation line

\textsuperscript{204} On the limitations of CPT, see SMITH 1974, 170-171.
\textsuperscript{205} Furthermore, CPT has been used successfully in archaeology, for instance explaining patterns of urbanisation (BEKKER-NIELSEN 1989) or questions of supply and demand in the countryside (DE LIGT 1991, esp. 42-58).
\textsuperscript{206} CHRISTALLER 1966, 22, 53-54.
\textsuperscript{207} CHRISTALLER 1966, 55, 60, 67.
\textsuperscript{208} CHRISTALLER 1966, 47-49.
is created. Furthermore, with cheaper and quicker transportation, more types of goods, which formerly were offered only dispersedly or locally, will be centrally offered in all regions.

(4) Central places and consumption:
The central place of a higher order directly draws consumers away from the central place of a lower order. This is caused to a great extent by the inherent wish of people to limit the number of trips needed to obtain central goods (i.e. limit the subjective economic distance). The central place which offers the greater advantages in respect to its range widens its complementary region at the expense of the other central place.

(5) Competition and viability:
If two central places lie so close together that their lower limits overlap, they must attract inhabitants from distances greater than the lower limit in order to balance the shortage. If this distance exceeds the upper limit, the good cannot be offered there. A shift to the better or cheaper central place might occur, with the possible result that the central place which loses out in the competition can no longer exist.

These notions can also be applied to the sphere of religion. The various aspects of the religious system as it functioned during the later stages of the Republic, although perhaps also before, are here interpreted as being analogous to that of an economic market system, following the definition of Stark and Finke. First of all, religion itself is understood as having a specific range; Christaller himself gave “spiritual offerings” as an example of a central service, but I think we will have to be a bit more specific than that. In this context the actual functioning of religion, made visible through the dedication of votive offerings constitutes this particular service. Our starting point for Latium is thus votive religion as the central good on offer in central places, which are in this case the cult places and towns of Latium. While many of the elements of the first principle, which I shall term the ‘range principle’, are self-explanatory, I think the concepts of price-willingness and the actual price of religion as a central service need some additional comments. The price-willingness of a consumer is the part of income that someone is willing to spend on a particular service, determined by the price of the good itself and the transportation costs of obtaining it. For religion, this price is formed by any actual monetary costs incurred in making a dedication somewhere (admission fees for certain sanctuaries, the costs of the actual votive object) as well as the money value of labour wages foregone in order to make the dedication (the compensation for ‘lost time’). In addition, the costs of transportation including possible lodging should be taken into account. The ‘range principle’ in religious terms thus becomes a question of how far people are willing to travel in

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209 Christaller 1966, 43, 57. This is a variation on Christaller’s assumption mentioned earlier in the text (1966, 40) that “a central place, at which a certain cost-good of a certain quality is offered more cheaply than at neighbouring central places, increases its selling area at the expense of the areas of the neighbouring central places.”

210 Christaller 1966, 55.


212 If the cult places are located within urban centres, the urban centre or town is the actual central place and the cult places located within it can be conceptualised as establishments offering a specific central service or good. CPT does not allow such notions as central places embedded in other central places.
order to perform certain ritual actions or make a dedication to a particular deity at a sanctuary and how much time this would take.

The idea of range is further specified in the second principle, specifying the complimentary region of goods and services. This is the region between lower and upper limits of the range, with the former specifying the minimal number of clients and the latter the maximum. The area within the upper limit of the range thus contains all possible clients for a particular service at a central place. If we combine this principle with our data on the number of cult places, one might conclude that the complimentary region of the entities offering religious services expands during the Late Republic, following from the simple observation that there are fewer entities offering the service with an equal or larger population functioning as possible customers, although it is possible that at least part of this population could no longer afford to 'consume' religious services. The third principle, the 'infrastructure principle', is directly related to an important feature of the Latial landscape in the middle and late republican period, namely the development of the (consular) road network throughout the region, resulting in a reduction in the temporal distance between places, and therefore also in the economic distance.213 As a rule, people were able to travel faster and more comfortably because of the construction of these paved roads. Although conclusive evidence to link the two phenomena is not available, it might be possible to suggest that the 'boom' in cult places visible in the fourth and third centuries is partly the result of road construction, as suggested by the first part of the infrastructure principle predicting an intensification of demand. However, it is the second part of the principle, the resulting central offering of goods, in which we find the seeds for the eventual demise of a number of cult places. The stimulation of central offering of goods must be interpreted as the offering of those goods in central places actually connected by this road network, in this case by definition the towns of Latium.214 Since the good in question here, religion, is already being offered in most or all of these central places, the development of the road network will result in an intensification of demand in and towards these places, with market areas or complimentary regions becoming larger.215 We must also remember that this affects not just the central good 'religion', but other central goods as well, the importance of which will become clear soon enough.

The infrastructure principle directly affects the fourth principle, the 'principle of attraction'. Central places which have more on offer are more attractive for potential consumers since it allows them to combine activities within the same trip, thereby minimising special travel costs.216 The principle on infrastructure predicts that a direct effect of the development of the Roman road network is the increase of central offering of goods, thereby increasing the attractiveness of these higher-order central places even more to consumers inclined to make multi-purpose trips. This aspect of the attraction of central places offering diverse goods and services, combined with the first three principles, results in the last principle, the viability principle. Smaller central places may lose clients to other, higher-order places and ultimately cease to exist as a result of competition. This is also true for religion; people who would

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216 Christaller 1966, 42-43.
have gone to a different ‘religious firm’ in other circumstances might now go to the one in the higher-order central place or on the way to the higher-order place, thereby increasing the complimentary regions of those sanctuaries, a tendency that was probably stimulated by the fact that rational, risk-averse actors in private religion “tend not to form exclusive attachments to a single religious firm”.217 The CPT-model predicts that people are unwilling to travel to lower-order places, bypassing it in preference to a more distant centre which is usually larger and offers a wider range of service and products, thereby creating the opportunity to satisfy multiple needs with a single trip.218 It is above all the functional complexity of these larger centres enabling multi-purpose shopping which makes them more attractive than smaller centres, since the range of products and services is more restricted, thus necessitating further trips to satisfy all consumer needs; the centre which is closest in actual distance may not be the most attractive option in a functional sense. This would imply that those sanctuaries which have important extra-religious functions, for instance on the economic or administrative plane, have a distinct advantage over those who do not have such functions; although probably still of a lower order than actual towns, these multi-functional cult places can be seen as a higher-level central place in their own right, and people may not be willing to travel to a lower-order place if religion is the only need which can be satisfied there.

The market model proposed here can be summarised as follows: votive religion, making dedications to the gods at cult places, can be seen as a central service offered in central places, either towns or ‘independent’ cult places. People make rational decisions with regard to their religious choices, with competition between cult places as a direct result. These rational decisions can perhaps be reduced to the concept of marginal utility, an economic law that is probably a “social universal”.219 The law states that extra utility is gained by increased consumption of a specific good or service by an economically rational agent. However, since this increased consumption will invariably be at the expense of another good or service within the constraints of a limited income, choices will be made by the agent to maximize utility. In itself, this fact would not necessarily lead to the demise of cult places. If each cult place receives a sufficient number of worshippers to continue to exist, competition would not have an observable impact on the number and distribution of cult places. However, several developments in the republican period ‘activated’ and fed into this competitive process, in the first place the growing (economic) concentration on urban centres and the development of the road network, both strengthening the position of towns as central places. Offering a multitude of goods and services, the towns of Latium had an attraction most cult places did not have. Conducting a range of businesses in town, many people would most likely have also fulfilled their religious needs there. Cult places located in towns or close to the roads connecting the towns drew away these ‘religious customers’ from sanctuaries located in less advantageous areas. This resulted in the abandonment of countryside sanctuaries, which may in turn have further strengthened the ‘competitive edge’ of the sanctuaries which did achieve integration into the urban network of Latium, attaining an even larger ‘market share’ than before. We can

218 SMITH 1974, 172; KING 1984, 78.
observe concentration of religious activity at some cult places resulting in the abandonment of others as parts of a self-feeding process.\footnote{220}

Implications of the model for our view of cult places and votive religion

Considering the fact that most Latial sanctuaries were dependent on either monetary contributions by or the simple presence of worshippers for their continued existence, it becomes clear how far-reaching the consequences for most sanctuaries were of a decline of the number of visitors. The possible results are perhaps visible in the complete disappearance from the archaeological record of a large number of 'natural' cult places. The effect on and reaction by more institutionalised or diverse cult places is perhaps more difficult to establish. Given their extra-religious functions, many of these institutionalised cult places could be said to have been central places of an order at least higher than those cult places with an exclusive focus on religion, giving them a distinct advantage and offering them the opportunity to remain ‘in business’ or even thrive. Of course, the market model implies certain characteristics of cult places and ritual behaviour that may go against our intuition. Indeed, some may say it takes the cult out of cult places by introducing a rational element into religious proceedings. This is emphatically not the case. The market model provides plenty of opportunity for true individual religiosity, but posits that this religiosity was not necessarily tied to a fixed location.

The market model envisages cult places as ‘general’ religious entities, cultic supermarkets if you will, where people could satisfy their religious needs. It seems to me that the highly standardised votive material of the mid republican period, as well as its focus on the dedicant instead of the divinity, enables us to interpret cult places in this way. We find these objects in a large number of sanctuaries, dedicated to diverse divinities, but the general underlying sentiments are roughly the same. These observations about the nature of votive religion in the cult places of Latium would seem to justify our viewing it as a religious product or service. It did not matter in which sanctuary the gods were approached for specific services since these services were more or less the same everywhere. This may seem an unjustly simplistic interpretation of religious behaviour, but I think it has never been argued that certain gods could only be contacted in certain places. Of course, the presence of the divine was more strongly felt at certain places than others, and one specific deity may have inhabited that particular place, but the consultation of or dedication to other gods is not made impossible by that fact.

It is important to note that the market model does not state that the identity of the principal divinity of a sanctuary did not matter at all. For many rituals, however, the identity of the main divinity undoubtedly mattered greatly and had religious significance. However, this need not have been the case for day-to-day votive practices in that sanctuary. The fact that several cult places were not the exclusive abode of any single deity in the Late Republic,\footnote{220 Thus the criticism of rational choice theory that “from the rational choice assumption alone we can derive neither explanations of actual religious phenomena nor predictions about the future state of the religious world” (Chaves 1995, 99), is simply not true in this case, since the market model does offer explanations about actual religious phenomena, namely the developments visible in votive religion and the effects on cult places, and is derived directly from the rational choice assumption of weighing costs and benefits without combining it with “substantive assumptions about the world” (Chaves 1995, 101).}
in addition to their generalised function in the spheres of health and fecundity, suggests that cult places could, up to a certain point, be seen as ‘brokers’ between the mortal world and the divine, without a specification of exactly which members of those divine world were to be contacted there. In a sense one could speak of different religious layers and should think of a distinction between, or rather coexistence of, a principal cult with associated – perhaps archaeologically untraceable - rituals and a votive practice of which the main divinity could be a possible but not an exclusive recipient. Although a problematic dichotomy in itself, one could use the terms ‘public’ or ‘official’ versus ‘private’ for these religious layers, for lack of a better characterisation.

The market model proposed here for Latium also incorporates certain ideas about the presence of people and associated cult activity, but one of its attractive features is that a declining presence of smallholders in the Latial countryside is not a necessary assumption in the model. At first glance, it may seem that such people are disregarded completely, but they are actually accounted for in a slightly different way. The only fundamental assumption in the model is that people as a rule group their activities to avoid extra and unneeded expenditure of time or money. The major change in the Late Republic is not the displacement of the peasantry towards towns on a massive scale, but an increasing economic and perhaps administrative concentration on those towns. Although this may seem just a minor adjustment of the model proposed by Comella and Pensabene, the market model proposed here actually gives a motivation for choices being made in people’s ritual behaviour which is not class-specific, and at the same time accounts for certain characteristics of the development of the sacred landscape which the displacement model did not do, or at least not in a satisfactory manner.

The market model gives a better explanation for the observed chronology of the phenomenon, which starts in the third century and is therefore not strictly connected to the disappearance of fictile votive objects, while at the same time giving an explanation for the concentration of cult places in or near urban centres and alongside roads. It incorporates more aspects of changes in the late republican landscape, such as the development of the road network, while not beholden to the doctrine of the declining free peasantry. The attractive feature of the market model is that it allows people to live everywhere; it just predicts certain constraints on the choices being made in people’s ritual behaviour, connecting these choices to others concerns in people’s lives.

An emphasis on rational, pragmatic elements in individual ritual behaviour may also provide us with certain insights into the change in votive practices. A more pragmatic approach to this problem brings us close to the reason given for this phenomenon by Jean-Paul Morel, who states that the ex votos specifically produced as such, the ex votos par destination, had become so highly standardised that the devout perhaps felt that it did not accurately represent them in their contact with the gods. The standardisation of votive material which had fed

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221 The private character of (anatomical) votive offerings has been stressed by others (Van Straten 1981, 65; Glinister 2006, 29).

222 Since Latium was a region with a dense urban network, a higher intensity of contact of peasants with the urban market is suggested. For a general discussion of this and other aspects of the urban-rural relationship, see De Ligt 1991, esp. 45-48. According to Luuk de Ligt, “in regions where urban density is high, the marketing pattern will approach a ‘central place system’ (De Ligt 1991, 48).

223 Morel 1992, esp. 229-231.
the competitive struggle between cult places outlined above had perhaps reached its limits, and people turned to other gifts. On the one hand, it is possible that since these gifts had become so highly standardised, it was felt that it no longer mattered what was given to the gods, and that a ‘transformed’ common object served a votive purpose just as well as a specially produced object. This would mean that ex votos _par transformation_ are the next logical step in the process of standardisation. On the other hand, it is possible that people felt that gifts that were specifically marked by them better represented them as an individual in their contact with the divine world.\footnote{The increased standardisation of certain votive objects, such as terracotta votive heads (\textit{Comella} 2004, 336) and terracotta statuettes (\textit{Comella} 2004, 341), indeed seems to have been a particular development of the late republican period.} In this case, ex votos _par transformation_ are a reaction against standardisation; offerings became poorer but at the same time more personalised, although these signs of personalisation, the transformative action that makes the object truly sacred, are often so small and unobtrusive that archaeologists have a hard time identifying them as sacred. This shift from ex votos _par destination_ to ex votos _par transformation_ in my opinion could be seen as another sign of religious pragmatism, of choices being made on a practical level while still intimately tied to an awareness of the sacred.

**A second sacred landscape: religious structures**

In the previous section, I have tried to construct a model to describe changes in the Latial sacred landscape using Central Place Theory, in the hope that this would shed light on some of the developments visible in this sacred landscape. As it turns out, several developments, such as numerical decline and urban concentration of sites which have yielded evidence of votive material, can be accounted for with this model. In the following pages, I will reconstruct the Latial sacred landscape using a different indicator, namely building remains. As I have stated earlier in this chapter, this category perhaps represents a different dimension of the religious system and it should therefore be considered separately. After this ‘built’ sacred landscape has been reconstructed and developments in this landscape have been analysed, the results can be compared to those for the ‘votive’ sacred landscape.

**Methodological considerations**

We can determine the number of cult places with the remains of permanent structures from the sixth century onwards. Alessandro Guidi has argued that the remains of huts, found underneath the foundations of later religious structures at Rome, Satricum, Ardea and Velletri can in fact be identified as ‘sacred huts”, proving the existence of pre-Archaic, more or less permanent cult buildings.\footnote{\textit{Guidi} 2000, 236. Recently, remains of a hut in which a girl was buried have been excavated underneath the Archaic foundations of the temple of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium, adding another ‘temple hut’ to the list (\textit{Attenni} 2008, 137).} However, there is no consensus about the religious nature of these huts, and the sole fact that a temple is later built at the same location does not constitute proof of the ‘sacred hut’ hypothesis.\footnote{For a critical evaluation of the existence of the ‘sacred hut’ of Satricum, see \textit{Bouma} 1996 I, 94-101.} The material evidence under consideration here consists...
of actual structural remains such as temple podiums and parts of the elevation which can often, although not always, be dated on the basis of stylistic or technical criteria. Stylistically, the form of mouldings and cornices, as well as column capitals, and sometimes decoration in the form of stucco or wall painting can be used to determine the construction date of a building. Sometimes, even the style of the ground plan itself has been used to establish a basic chronology for certain buildings. Technical details can also be used to establish chronological ranges, such as the type of stone used, and for late republican structures the type of facing of opus caementicium. In addition we can reconstruct the existence of sacred structures on the basis of associated material such as architectural terracotta decoration, for which stylistic typologies exist spanning virtually this entire period, and epigraphic evidence, which in this case has been used if it formed an integral part of the sacred structure or if the information from the inscription could be unambiguously seen as evidence for the existence of a sacred structure. Sometimes, if a secure date cannot be attributed to a construction phase, associated votive material is used to date the structural remains, but given the complex relationship between religious structures and votive material, I think such dating methods should be approached critically, especially when clear stratigraphic information is absent.

I should point out that dated material evidence is somewhat problematic as an indicator of continuity and abandonment of religious structures. From the remains, we can only reconstruct alterations or restorations to the building, which are sure signs of continuing existence, yet we can never be sure if a lack of such activities indicates actual abandonment. A tendency exists to argue that if a cult-related structure is built in a certain century and votive material continues in the next century though no clear indications of restorations or restructuring is documented for the building, its continued existence can be supposed. As indicated above, the use of evidence not strictly related to the architectural form of the structure cannot be accepted as valid, unless found in a clear stratigraphic relationship, which is rare. It is possible that buildings continued to exist without us being able to deduce it archaeologically. Especially in the late republican period, when cult buildings were increasingly built entirely in stone, repairs could have become less frequent, since the material was far more durable than that used in earlier periods. The 'life expectancy' of a cult building after its construction could therefore have been substantially higher. However, for argument's sake, in the following analysis the continued lack of structural activities at a site with building remains, in the form of either maintenance or alterations, will be interpreted as abandonment. Thus, in this section 'continuous' indicates sites for which we have material evidence of continued existence, 'lost' indicates sites for which there is no evidence indicating such continued existence. Effectively, this means that these results present a 'worst case scenario', indicating a minimum for the number of functioning sacred buildings. However, the majority of cult buildings interpreted here as having been abandoned do not show any signs of subsequent repairs or other building activities. This indicates, in my

227 Starting with Andren 1939 hundreds of publications have dealt with the systematic study of architectural decoration and roof systems, either dealing with single structures or regional typologies.

228 As a rule, epigraphic evidence associated with religious structures are inscriptions either documenting the initial dedication of the structure, the finishing of certain parts of the structure, or restoration thereof. On the methodological problems of connecting inscriptions to the visible archaeological remains, see Fagan 1996. Although mainly writing about the (late) imperial period, his general observations are also valid for republican times.
view, that they were indeed abandoned at some point, although possibly somewhat later than
indicated here. The use of graphs in the following section is comparable to the procedure for
sites identified on the basis of votive material, so the methodological considerations about
aggregation and the visual presentation of the data for that category of material evidence also
apply to the following.

**Presentation of the data**

From the sixth century onwards, we see a gradual increase of the total number of cult places,
a trend continuing well into the second century (tab. 3; figs. 9, 10). There is no dip in the fifth
century, the ‘crisis’ century as far as votive material is concerned, although the effects of the
historical circumstances possibly affecting sites with votive material are perhaps visible in the
fourth century: 13 cult places with structural remains in the fifth century no longer exist in the
fourth, or at least do not have datable building remains in this period. What is perhaps more
significant is that only three of the 13 ‘lost’ structures reappear in the third century, indicating
that the abandoned structures were not rebuilt. Enough cult places continued to exist into
the fourth century to ensure, in combination with the number of new cult places, an overall
rise in the number of cult places. The aggregate number of constructed cult places reveals a
considerable flattening of the upward curve in this period. Only in third century do we see an
increase in both total and aggregate numbers, continuing into the second century.

Although there are a substantial number of lost cult places in the second century already, it
is only after this century that there is a notable decrease in the total number of cult places. The
number of cult places continuing to exist falls and the increase of the second century is due
entirely to the large number of new cult places. The decrease of the first century is caused by
a large number of lost cult places – almost twice the number of the preceding century - and a
small number of new cult places. A striking fact is that virtually all discontinuous cult places are
older cult places, for the most part dating to the fourth century or earlier. Of the 15 cult places
that are newly constructed in the second century, 12 continue to exist in the following century,
thus representing about a third of the total number of cult places existing in the first century.
A relative majority of both new and lost cult places in the second and first century is extra-

<table>
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<th>Century (BC)</th>
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<th>4th</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>1st</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cult places (tot.) (new)</td>
<td>21 (21)</td>
<td>32 (15)</td>
<td>38 (18)</td>
<td>47 (11)</td>
<td>52 (17)</td>
<td>37 (4)</td>
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<td>Cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>13 (13)</td>
<td>20 (8)</td>
<td>21 (10)</td>
<td>25 (5)</td>
<td>33 (13)</td>
<td>24 (4)</td>
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<td>14 (14)</td>
<td>20 (8)</td>
<td>25 (10)</td>
<td>33 (8)</td>
<td>34 (8)</td>
<td>25 (1)</td>
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<td>Urban cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>6 (6)</td>
<td>10 (4)</td>
<td>11 (3)</td>
<td>13 (2)</td>
<td>16 (5)</td>
<td>12 (1)</td>
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<td>Extra-urban cult places (tot.) (new)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
<td>13 (7)</td>
<td>13 (8)</td>
<td>14 (3)</td>
<td>17 (9)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-urban cult places (agg.) (new)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
<td>10 (4)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
<td>17 (7)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
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Table 3. Number of cult places in Latium identified based on building remains, total (tot.) and aggregate (agg.).
Fig. 9. Number of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of building remains. Total number of cult places (top), urban cult places (middle), extra-urban cult places (bottom).
Fig. 10. Aggregate number of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of building remains. Total number of cult places (top), urban cult places (middle), extra-urban cult places (bottom).
urban; about half of the extra-urban cult places of the second century are new compared to a quarter for urban cult places. In the first century, half the number of extra-urban cult places of the second century is lost, again compared to a quarter of the urban sites. Aggregation lessens this disparity somewhat, but not by much. New aggregate extra-urban cult areas in the second century still comprise half of the total number, compared to a third for urban sites. Aggregation makes no difference in the case of lost cult places. Half of the extra-urban areas of the second century are abandoned in the first century, opposed to a quarter for urban areas. This suggests a somewhat higher ‘volatility’ for extra-urban cult places: overall it is in this category that we find the highest proportions of new and lost cult places.

Considering the different ratios (tab. 4), a far more consistent picture emerges for the sites with building remains than for those with votive material. The ratio of urban to extra-urban sites for the total number of cult places indicates that there are about twice as many urban cult places as extra-urban ones in general. Only in the fifth century does this figure drop slightly, indicating that the proportion of extra-urban sites in these centuries is slightly higher, although urban sites are still in the majority. Aggregation results in figures close to one for all six centuries, meaning that there is roughly the same number of aggregate areas with urban cult places as extra-urban ones. As noted above this indicates that multiple cult sites within the same area is a decidedly urban phenomenon during the entire period considered, which is confirmed by the separate aggregation figures for urban and extra-urban cult places.

The aggregation effect on extra-urban cult places is almost non-existent. For three out of six centuries it makes no difference at all, and for the remaining three the effect is only small, with a ratio between three-quarters and one. This means that there are very few delimited extra-urban areas – in all probability to be identified with urban territories - with more than one cult place in each century. Conversely, the aggregation effect on urban cult places is very strong. It reduces the number of cult places by more than half. In truth, a large part of this effect is to be attributed to the urban area of Rome. For instance, the city provides 12 out of 52 total cult places in the second century and 10 out of 37 in the first, which furthermore suggests that the influence of Rome on aggregation figures actually grows larger in these centuries. However, even considering this caveat, religious building activity seems to be concentrated in the urban centres of Latium, with non-aggregated figures for urban contexts twice as high as those

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Century (BC)</th>
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<th>2nd</th>
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<td>Urban : extra-urban (tot.)</td>
<td>2,00</td>
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<td>1,92</td>
<td>2,36</td>
<td>2,00</td>
<td>2,08</td>
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<td>Urban : extra-urban (agg.)</td>
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<td>1,10</td>
<td>1,08</td>
<td>0,94</td>
<td>1,00</td>
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<td>Aggregate : total (both)</td>
<td>0,62</td>
<td>0,63</td>
<td>0,55</td>
<td>0,53</td>
<td>0,63</td>
<td>0,65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggregate : total (urban)</td>
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<td>0,50</td>
<td>0,44</td>
<td>0,39</td>
<td>0,47</td>
<td>0,48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggregate : total (extra-urban)</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>0,77</td>
<td>0,77</td>
<td>0,86</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Ratios on the basis of table 3, total (tot.) and aggregate (agg.).
for extra-urban contexts during each century, suggesting the existence of multiple religious buildings in each town of Latium.

The spatial representation of the data does not show the same dramatic shifts observed in the distribution patterns of sites with votive material (figs. 11-13). There is a rather dispersed pattern for the third century (fig. 11), with urban cult areas outnumbering the extra-urban ones, again suggesting that at least some of the sites labelled as extra-urban using the *intra* or *extra moenia* criterion are actually suburban ones, something which does not become apparent from the bar graphs. The map representing the second century is not much different, with a slightly though not significantly larger number of sites, due to an increase in urban or suburban sites (fig. 12). The first century has the lowest number of sites, although again not by a very wide margin (fig. 13). There thus does not seem to be a dramatic ‘disappearance’ of cult places with building remains. There is a slight but not very marked shift in spatial concentration, with more religious structures being built along major traffic arteries and in or around urban centres, but most of the sites with building remains were already located in the same general positions in the third century, and probably before. On the whole the built sacred landscape seems to be rather stable.

Fig. 11. Distribution of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of building remains (third century BC).
Analysis and evaluation

The analysis of the sacred landscape of Latium reconstructed on the basis of building remains must of course stand or fall with our ability to ascertain if a lack of datable remains associated with (re)construction activities in a certain century for already existing structures constitutes abandonment of the site. While this will probably remain an unsolvable problem, I have indicated earlier that it is unlikely that buildings can remain standing for centuries without some form of restoration. Given the fact that revivals, buildings displaying signs of building activity after a period in which we have no indications for such activities, are quite rarely attested, I think it is safe to assume that most of the buildings labelled as ‘lost’ were indeed abandoned at a certain point not too far removed from the period indicated in the graphs. At the very least, the lack of building activities at already existing sites indicates a reluctance to invest further in monumental forms, leaving the structures ‘as is’.

The Late Republic is obviously a period in which many cult places were lost or abandoned, as far as building remains are concerned, but it is perhaps more appropriate to typify this as a period of reorganisation of the religious topography instead of downright decline, with only the first century actually displaying signs of stagnation. We see a considerable number of new cult places in each century all the way up to the first century. Although a considerable number of sacred structures are lost during the last two centuries BC, the total number of
sites does not fall by much, nor is there a significant change in the overall areas in which these structures are found. This reorganisation affects extra-urban sites most, having only limited impact on urban sites. If we look at the development of the built sacred landscape, it is actually the second century which can be typified as a temporary peak in building activity, with the number of cult places in the first century reverting to a more ‘normal’ level, comparable to the centuries before, especially if we consider aggregate cult areas (fig. 10). Considering the breakdown per century of existing cult places (fig. 14), the picture is again very balanced. The number of new cult places seems to be roughly similar in each century, with the exception of the third and first centuries, in which the number of new cult places is considerably lower than in the other centuries. We also witness a gradual decline in the number of cult places that are newly built each century; as time goes by, more and more structures are being abandoned. A curious case is the structures dating to the sixth century, which experience a revival in the third century after two centuries of increasing abandonment. While this could possibly be proof of the durability of temple structures, demonstrating that these temples continued to exist between the sixth and third century without visible signs of repair, it is equally possible that in the third century new cult places are built on the site of more ancient shrines. However, this seems to be the exception rather than the rule, and based on this breakdown we might carefully suggest that abandonment of religious structures was perhaps a ‘normal’ occurrence, with older shrines loosing relevance in changing historical circumstances.

Fig. 13. Distribution of cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of building remains (first century BC).
The fourth century remains a puzzling period. Most of the fifth century structures have been dated stylistically by their terracotta architectural decoration, which leaves a considerable margin for chronological error. However, current *communis opinio* places most of these structures in the first half of the fifth century, therefore leaving the possibility open that they were constructed early in the century and were abandoned subsequently. The exact date in that century may thus shift with changing interpretations of terracotta typologies and corresponding chronological reappraisals. The proposal of Roman-Volscian belligerence as an explanation for the disappearance of the cult places in the fifth century (for to be labelled as ‘lost’ in the fourth century, the building must have been abandoned at some point in the previous century),

Fig. 14. Total number of existing cult places in Latium, identified on the basis of building remains per century, subdivided into the periods of earliest evidence for cult activity.
is perhaps more sound for building remains than for sites with votive material, at least in a chronological sense. Since not all of these towns were captured in the beginning of the fifth century and some changed hands between Romans and Volscians several times during the long conflict, the date of the temples that were built in the fifth century and subsequently lost need not all be early fifth century. Furthermore, if we look at the breakdown per century of abandoned sites (fig. 15), we notice that the majority of sites that were abandoned during the fourth century originate in the sixth century, which could easily have been destroyed in the beginning of the fifth century without dating difficulties.
So, comparing the observations for sites with religious structures to those who have yielded votive material, we can perhaps conclude that building remains are somewhat easier to interpret, presenting less vexing difficulties apart from the problem of dating the abandonment of structures. The development over time of the built sacred landscape does not exhibit the clear pattern detectable for sites with votive material and does not have overall signs of outright decline, but rather fluctuation. However, it is clear that the ‘built’ sacred landscape also undergoes changes in the late republican period, with a higher degree of new and abandoned cult places in the last centuries BC, although the issue of when these buildings were abandoned is especially relevant to these late republican structures built entirely of stone and therefore perhaps not in need of frequent repairs. The analysis of the built sacred landscape thus indicates that there are indeed some significant differences, as far as we can tell using archaeological sources alone, in the development between the two sacred landscapes, which supports the decision to consider them separately. However, there are also some similarities in general trends between the two sacred landscapes, which indicates that for all their differences, both belong to an overarching religious system which was probably affected by a similar process. In the next section, the relationship between votive material and religious structures will be considered somewhat further, with special attention for the grand monumentalisation of certain sanctuaries in Latium in the late republican period.

Monumentalisation and votive practices

Interpreting religious structures as a phenomenon that is different from votive religion yet in some ways related to it, one could argue that building activity and especially monumentalisation can be seen as indicators of success in the religious market. The extension of several late republican sanctuaries in Latium could have been the result of competitive success; the massive scale of building activity should, in that case, be seen as a phenomenon which singles out the sanctuaries that continued to attract worshippers or even witnessed an increase in attendance because of their advantageous location. A logical assumption is that some of the income generated by the sanctuary was spent on lavish building projects, with more income meaning bigger sanctuaries. Reversing the cause and effect direction between architecture and popularity, one could even argue that perhaps building activity did not result from continuity or even an increase of frequentation, but was actually a method for certain sanctuaries to become more visible and thereby attract more worshippers: (monumental) architecture as a means to lure the customer, an advertisement in stone by the creation of a religious complex that is literally too large to ignore. Whether viewed as a result of the competitive struggle between cult places or as a way of influencing it, it does not seem too difficult to connect the two phenomena. The idea is perhaps supported by the location of sanctuaries with building remains in the last two centuries of the Republic, which all seem to follow the general dictates of the religious market, being located along major traffic arteries or in or nearby urban centres.

The traditional approach to the construction or beautification of public structures has been to view this as an act of munificence; (local) aristocrats spending parts of their considerable resources for the public good in return for prestige and possible political gain. This notion and the possibility of building activity made possible or even fuelled by the competition between
cult places as presented above are actually perfectly compatible. In both cases, the presence of people in the sanctuary is of vital importance; for the existence of the sanctuary because of the income they generate and the continuity of religious practices they ensure, for the aristocrat because building projects intended to enhance his prestige need to be seen and appreciated. It does not make sense for the elite to focus their euergetistic attention on sanctuaries that are not or infrequently visited, since the return in symbolic profits would be minimal; visual display needs observing eyes. They will preferably select a cult place that is situated advantageously, to ensure a steady stream of visitors. Since these are precisely the factors that determine the success, or perhaps we should say popularity, of a cult place in the market model presented here, it seems likely that the two phenomena coincide.

Votive material in Latial monumental sanctuaries

In order to determine if a connection existed between the popularity of a cult place, measured by the number, and perhaps quality, of votive offerings recovered on the site and the monumentalisation of these sanctuaries in the late republican period, it is necessary to give an overview of the votive material that has been found at the monumental sanctuaries of Latium. What development do we see over time, and especially in the period immediately before the monumentalisation phase?

At the sanctuary at Fregellae large amounts of votive material were found, consisting of typical mid- and late republican ex votos such as anatomical terracottas, statuettes of animals and humans including swaddled babies, small terracotta cippi, donary bases, a loom weight and a horse’s hoof in terracotta, as well as common and black-glazed pottery.229 The material can be dated between the late fourth and the early second century.230 It is therefore possible that the cult place was not used as such until the foundation of the colony in the late fourth century.

The sanctuary of Juno Gabina has also yielded votive material in abundance.231 The earliest material found at the site cannot be interpreted as evidence for the existence of a cult place, but should probably be related to a domestic or settlement context.232 Only in the late sixth century a shift towards a ritual context becomes evident from the material.233 Part of the material was found scattered throughout the sanctuary, and part was found in three deposits, one of which, the so-called ‘favissa I’, belonged to a more or less independent cult area probably dedicated to Fortuna, while the other two deposits contain votive material which can be related to the sanctuary as a whole. Fifth century material is relatively poorly represented, but in the fourth century the sanctuary experiences a phase of revitalisation, corresponding to large quantities of pottery, common and black-glazed, as well as votive terracottas including statuettes and

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229 Colasanti 1906, 85-89; Sydow 1976, 349; Rizzello 1980, 140-151. For the material recovered during the systematic excavation of the site, see Coarelli 1986, 75-82 (black-glazed pottery), 83-88 (common pottery and amphorae), 89-144 (terracotta votives and other finds).


232 Almagro Gorbea 1982, 603-604.

233 Almagro Gorbea 1982, 604-605.
anatomical votives and objects such as oil lamps. According to the excavators, the period from the middle of the third to the middle of the second century signals another dip in the level of activity at the sanctuary, which is particularly evident from the reduced number of black-glazed pottery found dating to this period.

The sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis also seems to have enjoyed a long existence as a cult place prior to the late republican monumentalisation. At a great number of locations in and around the late republican sanctuary, votive material has been found, either as scattered material or in actual deposits. The earliest material, consisting of miniature pottery and some bronze objects, dates to the late eighth or early seventh century. The initial phase of the cult continued into the sixth century, while fifth century material seems to be completely absent. From the fourth century onwards, votive material is amply attested, mostly consisting of large quantities of terracotta objects, both anatomical votives and statuettes, with pottery, mostly black-glazed, present in lesser numbers.

At the sanctuary of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium, especially the mid- and late republican period are well represented as far as votive material is concerned. Some material, including some miniature pottery, has been found which suggests cult activities in the late Iron Age, but it is not particularly numerous. As in other sanctuaries, the fifth century is not well-represented at Lanuvium, while the evidence becomes more abundant again for the following period. Large amounts of pottery of various types were found, and many terracotta votives, statuettes as well as anatomical votives. In addition, many artefacts in other materials were found, manufactured in metal, bone, ivory, glass and crystal. The votive material seems to continue without notable interruptions from the fourth century into the imperial period.

At the sanctuary of Hercules Victor at Tibur, no votive material whatsoever has been found which predates the late republican monumental phase. Nearby, on the banks of the Aniene River in the so-called Acquoria district, a large votive deposit has been discovered with material ranging from the archaic period to the second century. Although this deposit is located at the foot of the monumental sanctuary, the existence of a direct relationship between the two is unlikely. We thus have a sanctuary which was monumentalised in the late republican period for which we cannot establish archaeologically if it was a particularly ‘popular’ cult place in the period preceding monumentalisation. The sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia also poses problems. There is a votive inscription dated to the third century which mentions the goddess, but Sandra Gatti has recently expressed her doubts about whether this inscription should be connected to the sanctuary. Votive bases and votive statues were set up in the sanctuary after its monumentalisation, but as of yet there is hardly any evidence attesting ‘popular’

234 Almagro Gorbea 1982, 609-610. For the most important categories, see Pérez Ballester 2003 (black-glaze); Almagro Gorbea 1982, 263-300 (votive terracottas); Almagro Gorbea 1982, 505-524 (oil lamps). The other types of pottery, not all of them necessarily votive, are also discussed in Almagro Gorbea 1982.
235 Almagro Gorbea 1982, 610. The excavators relate this dip to the Second Punic War and its aftermath.
236 Bouma 1996 III, 60-64.
239 Antonielli 1927; Bouma 1996 III, 100-102.
240 Gatti 1995, 103-106. According to Gatti, the inscription is an integral part of material which can be attributed to a different sanctuary.
religiosity at the sanctuary in the period prior to monumentalisation. The same holds true for the sanctuaries at Tusculum and Terracina. While the latter has at least yielded a votive deposit containing the famous ‘crepundia’, miniature objects in lead, which can be dated to the first century, the sanctuary of Tusculum has not yielded any material evidence which can be related to its cultic functions. This means that of the eight sanctuaries being considered in this study, it is impossible for at least these last four to relate the late republican building phase to patterns in the deposition of votive material in the periods prior to the monumental phase. Of the other four, the excavators have argued for a decrease in votive activity in the period prior to monumentalisation for the sanctuary of Gabii, which means that the rise in popularity either directly predates monumentalisation, or can perhaps be considered a result of it, at best. The only sanctuaries which document a continuity of votive practices all through the mid- and late republican period up to, and in some cases also after, the phase of monumentalisation are Fregellae, Nemi and Lanuvium. While there is no dip discernible in the amount of votive material during this period in these sanctuaries, neither can a large increase be observed in the period just before the sanctuary was monumentalised. This makes it extremely difficult to view monumentalisation as a direct result of an increase in popularity of the sanctuary.

The problem of inter-site comparison

The problem of relating votive to building activity at the monumental sanctuaries of Latium can also be observed elsewhere. While the idea of a symbiosis between the operation of market principles and building activity at cult places is an attractive one, it is rather more difficult to find factual support for it. If the observations made above were to be correct, one would expect it to be supported by the yields of votive materials on the various sites with monumental remains. The number of sanctuaries with building remains dated to the second and/or first century where no evidence whatsoever of votive material was found is limited: one fifth of the total number of sites. Interestingly, the majority of these sites (about 80%) are new constructions of the second century, meaning that sanctuaries are constructed that do not have any prior religious history in the form of either votive material or building remains. And although the relatively low percentage of sites without any evidence of votive material seems to support the idea of a strong link between the presence of votive material and building activity at a site, in both centuries, second and first, about half of the total number of sites only produced evidence of votive material dating to the period before the second century, i.e. before the main construction or monumentalisation phase. The fact that a considerable number of late republican sanctuaries with building remains did not yield any votive material from either that or previous periods, combined with the fact that an additional group of sanctuaries did not yield any votive material dating to the period during or after construction or monumentalisation activities, would seem to undermine the connection between popularity

241 Some have argued that reports by Emmanuel Fernique from the late 19th-century document votive material related to the sanctuary of Fortuna (Fernique 1878; Fernique 1880). Some modern scholars accept a connection between the deposit described by Ferbique and the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia (De Laet/Desittere 1969, 17) while others have expressed doubts (Bouma 1996 III, 69 n. 703).
and building activity, or at the very least the possibility of ‘proving’ such a connection. The problem that was signalled for the individual monumental sanctuaries thus seems to affect the sacred landscape as a whole.

In addition to the problem of the simple absence of votive material, in the cases where votive material was recovered at sites with building remains dating to the late republican period, inter-site comparisons are problematic. Still reasoning from the assumption that building and monumentalisation could have been related to the religious market of the Late Republic, one would expect to see an effect not dissimilar to the modern phenomenon of large supermarkets pushing small local grocery stores out of business. This would seem to be a fitting analogy, since this particular form of competition is also related to the advantages of a greater variety of choice in comparison to the smaller local stores which offsets the potential greater distance the consumer has to travel to reach the supermarket, which is exactly what we seem to be observing in the Latial sacred landscape according to the CPT-model; vicinity is apparently not the most important consideration when considering which (religious) establishment to frequent. However, for the analogy to be effective and to prove that building activity and competition are related we would have to notice an increase or concentration of votive material at those sites with building remains. Here, the problem of change in votive religion during the Late Republic is especially relevant. For how does one compare a statuette or an anatomical terracotta to a coin or a small marble altar? There is no objective exchange rate, no objective norm to which other votive objects can be compared, and certain types of votive offerings may have been more susceptible to extraction in antiquity for their intrinsic value (such as coins and metal objects), making them more vulnerable to under-representation. To this problem of the subjective worth of votive objects should be added the problem of the differences in methodologies and research aims in the different excavations or surveys which have unearthed cult places. Many of these research projects may not have recorded all the material found, or perhaps did not fully excavate a site but only a portion. While general trends in use and frequentation may be gauged from such research, it would be methodologically unsound to quantitatively compare the results of different sites. Thus, inter-site comparison made in the hope of proving a connection between building activity and an increase in offerings seems to be impossible in general.

Conclusion: devotion and display

The Late Republic was a period of profound change in the sacred landscape. The very nature of votive religion seems to be changing, and is accompanied by a numerical decrease and spatial concentration of cult places. Some have suggested that the former change was the cause of the latter one. I would be more inclined to reverse the direction of this causal relationship, and interpret urban concentration of cult activity as a catalyst for religious change, although this can only be tentatively suggested and not (yet?) proven here, or at the very least consider the two phenomena manifestations of the same rational religious mentality. The central notions of

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243 Bouma also noted the curious discrepancy between the absence of votive material and the presence of sacred structures (Bouma 1996 I, 217 n. 9).
Central Place Theory related to the concept of instrumental rationality can be used to explain the declining number of cult places as well as their concentration in and around urban centres and alongside roads a result of competition and selection. The very existence of a degree of uniformity in religious practice created an inherent competition between cult places, resulting in a religious ‘survival of the fittest’ in which those sanctuaries that were most successfully integrated into the developing urban socio-economic infrastructure continued to exist and even flourished while others were abandoned. The essential keys to success for any cult place in the late republican period were an advantageous location and the number and importance of the services on offer, in order to ensure a steady stream of visiting worshippers.

The market model can be used to open up new, fresh approaches to traditional research subjects, providing a different angle to familiar themes. Some may perhaps complain that the rational approach to religion taken in this chapter seems to take the cult out of cult places, but this is not my intention. It just forces us to consider religion and the way in which it functions in a different, perhaps counter-intuitive way, to reconsider our preconceptions about such matters and test their validity and usefulness. One of the main attractions of the model in this respect is its non-exclusive nature. It is compatible with many established ideas about the way in which cult places are used by individuals and society as a whole. It just adds a new conceptual layer which may illuminate aspects that were perhaps under-represented or difficult to explain before, and thus has a predominantly descriptive function: a tool to understand the changes in the Latial religious landscape and the possible factors contributing to these changes. It remains to be seen if the model can be applied more universally, and if it can eventually be used in a prescriptive manner.

I hope to have shown that the changing sacred landscape of Latium in the late republican period demonstrates that the presence of people alone is perhaps not enough to guarantee cult activity in a certain area. The fact that people weigh the costs and benefits of their - religious and non-religious - actions, and especially possible combinations of those actions, has a large impact on the distribution of cult places in Latium. In the absence of religious distinctiveness, the non-religious functionality of cult places may not just constitute an added value, but an essential key to success or even existence. The sacred landscape reconstructed on the basis of votive material thus undergoes some far-reaching and period-specific changes in the Late Republic, while the same cannot be said of the built sacred landscape.

Virtually all known monumental sanctuaries are located either within or nearby urban centres or along important traffic arteries. In other words: the built sacred landscape, including those structures monumentalised in the late republican period, seems to follow the same general rules in the late republican period as the sacred landscape based on votive material. The choice of sites selected for rebuilding or monumentalisation obviously took into account the importance of an advantageous location for the success of any sanctuary. We can observe a spatial pattern that is comparable to the concentration of sites identified on the basis of votive material. However, the main difference is that for the construction of religious structures these ‘rules’ had probably been observed from the moment of their genesis in the sixth century onwards, while the concentration in these locations of those cult places primarily determined by ritual or votive practices instead of building activity was a new development. Visibility and recognisability of the sanctuary in the landscape had always been important, a fact which
points, in my opinion, to a representational function of religious structures in addition to their function as places of worship. Since it has become apparent that a direct relationship between building activity and the religious fortunes of sanctuaries is impossible to prove, it is perhaps time to explore this other side of cult places: sanctuaries as showcases for the elite.