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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The late republican period is a time of significant changes, in a political, social, religious, and cultural sense. After the Second Punic War, Rome established herself as the hegemonous power in the Mediterranean region. This position was further strengthened by the many military campaigns in the eastern Mediterranean area, and in Italy, her influence was extended across the entire peninsula. The expansion of the empire around the Mediterranean offered new opportunities for Rome and her Italic allies and ensured that vast amounts of wealth, in the form of war booty and the proceeds of trade, flowed into Italy as a result. Inequalities between powerful elites and the urban and rural lower classes increased, while competition between individual members of the elite became fiercer and more disruptive to political stability than before. A decrease in the number of cult places is noticeable, and offerings which had traditionally been given to the gods largely disappeared, presumably supplanted by other, less distinctive forms of votive offerings. Greek architectural and decorative forms became increasingly prominent, causing new variations in and adaptations to familiar building types such as temples, while new building techniques such as opus caementicium made new feats of architectural daring possible.

During this particular period at least eight sanctuaries located in Latium underwent a phase of construction activities resulting in grand monumental complexes. These monuments seem to exemplify all the changes mentioned above. Their construction was made possible by the availability of vast resources and the new building techniques; their use as cult places was probably affected by the changes in votive religion and the declining number of sanctuaries in the vicinity; and their social and political significance should be seen in the light of the relationship of local communities with Rome and of the position of Rome and her allies in the Mediterranean world. Moreover, architectural styles and developments visible in the entire Mediterranean area are reflected in their design. The monumentalisation of sanctuaries in Latium can therefore be said to have been a child of its time.

The principal aim of this study was to analyse this group of sanctuaries and determine if the image that exists of them in modern scientific literature holds up to close scrutiny. In addition, an important goal was to further our knowledge of these cult places and the late republican monumentalisation process. The geographical and chronological limits of this process have given rise to a conception of these monuments as a closed group; the standard typology of Latial monumental sanctuaries that has been discussed several times in the course of this study. It demonstrates that by emphasising sameness over difference, a homogenous group of architectural complexes appears that can be used as a benchmark. In doing so, however, one glosses over the heterogeneity of the individual monuments all too easily. Is it valid to favour similarity over difference, and if so, what information is lost in the process? In
the course of this study, I have tried to strike a balance between the general and the specific, providing models in an attempt to explain broad phenomena affecting large areas, while remaining attentive to individual characteristic and peculiarities.

The title of this study, “triumphs of compromise”, refers to a characterisation by Pierre Gros of the fusion of the Romano-Italic temple architecture with Hellenistic elements at the end of the Republic as marking “le triomphe du compromis”. By this, Gros means that the new temple forms strike a middle ground between two different traditions. Although the word can have a negative connotation, suggesting that something other was aimed for but could not be reached, in its original meaning it designates a middle position, something intermediate between or blending qualities of two different things. It is this concept of being positioned in between which is especially relevant for our interpretation and understanding of Latial monumental sanctuaries. Throughout this study, it has been argued that the development of these monuments and the specific form they assumed can perhaps be reduced to a series of middle positions. The role assumed by monumental sanctuaries should be imagined as the result of the influences of religion and representation; of local and metropolitan perspectives; of individuals and collectives; of popular appeal and elite preoccupations; and of tradition and innovation.

**Between religion and representation**

What was the principal function of monumental sanctuaries? Were they exceptionally large places of worship, or were they monuments used for the self-representation of aristocrats? In all probability, they were both. We cannot deny the fact that although sacred architecture had always been used by elites for propagandistic purposes, the religious function underlying it was never marginalised by such political uses. In fact, it is precisely because of the fact that religion and politics were so closely interwoven in the Roman world that this political use was made possible; it was completely normal to use religious means to political ends. Sacred structures, while undoubtedly having religious functions, were especially important elements in the “symbolic economy” of communities, “demonstrating a city’s piety, power, and wealth to foreigners”.

This statement presupposes a strong relationship between sanctuaries and urban centres, and a high degree of intertwine ment between religion and socio-political circumstances. In order to understand the process of monumentalisation, we need to understand relevant developments in these different, yet related, contexts.

With respect to the religious context, we can typify the Late Republic as a period of profound change (Chapter One). The material manifestations of (popular) religious sentiments in the form of votive offerings undergo a transformation. While in the previous period gifts to the gods could be easily recognised as such, in the last two centuries BC votive offerings become more difficult to identify. This change is accompanied by a decrease in the number of cult places and a spatial concentration on urban centres and important roads. It seems likely that the two phenomena are related, yet a direct causal relationship cannot be established.

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775 Gros 1996, 129.
776 Rüpke 2006, 218.
with certainty. While several explanations have been proposed for the late republican religious ‘crisis’, I have suggested that we might perhaps interpret it as a result of cost-benefit weighing behaviour by people resulting in fewer cult places concentrated at those locations with a high number of services on offer, primarily urban centres, and the roads connecting these centres. Religion would thus have to be regarded as one of those services instead of a special activity which should be placed outside the realm of instrumental rationality.

A religious market model which explains the survival or even flourishing of cult places as a result of popular appeal and level of attendance would seem to be able to explain building activity and monumentalisation as well. More people making dedications would mean an increase of revenues for the sanctuary, which could be invested in the beautification and expansion of cult places. However, we do not see a one-to-one relationship between the spatial and chronological developments on a practical religious level (the offering of votive material) and building activity at cult places, nor is there an objective way in which to compare popularity levels between individual cult places given the limitations of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of our material. We do see a concentration of building activity in those cult places in or near urban centres and along major traffic arteries, but this seems to have been the case for as long as sacred structures had existed, instead of a development specific to the late republican period. The organisation of cult places in general seems to have been important in this respect as well; while it is probably true that the sanctuaries’ revenues should be used for the benefit of the sanctuary itself, discretionary power of how to spend these resources probably resided with those in control of the sanctuary, most often civic magistrates. In addition, there is evidence that construction activities at sanctuaries were also financed by private funds of individuals or groups, and not solely out of the sacred coffers.

This introduces a different, and certainly no wholly religious factor in our consideration of building activity and monumentalisation: the desire for self-representation through the construction of sacred structures by members of the aristocracy. It is a well known fact that temple construction was an important element in aristocratic competition in Rome itself, and this idea of sacred structures as representations of socio-political relations can probably be extended to Latium as well. By building sanctuaries, the achievements of individuals and groups could be set in stone. They were testaments to their qualities as leaders; since some monuments were erected as monuments to celebrate military victories, they could be interpreted as permanent reminders of success, and at the very least demonstrated the ability to mobilise and concentrate resources in order to construct such magnificent buildings.

And yet, even in their capacity as giant stone advertisements for aristocrats, the religious element continued to play a very important role. It was precisely because of their function as places of worship that cult places were so eminently suitable as objects for elite propaganda. By advocating strong, or even individual ties, with the divine, the position of aristocrats could be strengthened; keeping the gods pleased was important for the well-being of society as a whole. While this is perhaps a rather abstract notion, we can observe the importance of religion in the monumentalisation of sanctuaries on a very concrete level in some architectural choices. Care was taken to include important religious features, such as oracles, in the monumental design, clearly demonstrating that the religious functionality of the complex was an important consideration. The fact that inscriptions and votive offerings attest the continuation of
religious activities after the monumentalisation of the sanctuary also clearly indicates that these building complexes were not just symbolic entities; they continued to be places of worship. The intertwining between religion on the one hand and politics and representation on the other hand is thus clearly demonstrated by the construction of sacred structures. The venerability of cult places increased the potential for aristocratic prestige, while elite patronage could in turn confer political significance on cult places and thus underline the importance of the cult and religion in general for the well-being of the community.

Between popular and elite

The building or expanding of sanctuaries is foremost an elite activity, especially in the case of architectural complexes of the magnitude of the monumental sanctuaries of Latium. We have more than enough epigraphic evidence to show that these sanctuaries were built by aristocrats, either local or Roman nobles. The simple fact is that most of these projects cost a great deal of money, and especially in the late republican period wealth was concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite. The rise of permanent (stone) structures at cult places can therefore be primarily connected to the elites responsible for their construction. However, this does not mean that other social groups were irrelevant in the planning and construction of the building complexes. The very fact that monumental sanctuaries were designed with perception and the view from a distance in mind, and placed at locations that attracted a lot of people underlines the dual nature of the monuments; on the one hand these characteristics stress their representational qualities, on the other hand they demonstrate the necessity of the presence of people to view them. It would have made little sense to invest in the monumentalisation of sanctuaries if no one was around to appreciate the effort.

Monumental sanctuaries brought people together: in sanctuaries people worshipped together and dedicated votive offerings (albeit of different intrinsic value) to the gods. Sanctuaries could represent and shape communities, at the same time transcending social boundaries in the act of collective worship and affirming hierarchical power relations in society. By being presented with building inscriptions, for example, people were faced with the fact that the building in which they found themselves at that moment was built by their social superiors, the ruling elite that occupied positions of power in their society and was thus able to build and expand sacred structures. People were confronted with the divinities to which these monuments directly alluded, with the people who had built the monuments, and with the circumstances which had made the construction possible; the sanctuary was a microcosm of historic reality and existing social relationships.

These two sides of the sanctuary, the popular and the elite, are also represented in the sanctuary’s architecture and decoration. At least some part of every sanctuary probably had functions that were not strictly tied to representation, but to the popular use of these places. Areas with a commercial function predominate. Commercial activities at sanctuaries could be related to its religious functions, but could also be profane in character. Examples of religious commerce include the sale of votive objects within the sanctuary. Often, secondary structures of the sanctuary such as porticoes have been interpreted in this light, especially when separate spaces, such as *tabernae*, were included. It was also possible that commercial activities were
concentrated on an entirely different level of the sanctuary, such as the terrazza dei fornici a semicolonne at Praeneste and the area along the via tecta at Tibur. It is interesting to note that in general, the representational qualities of these areas are less noticeable; they are either located in different, slightly marginal sections of the sanctuary, or were hidden from view by colonnades, preserving a unified appearance from the central parts of the sanctuary. Thus, while the sanctuary could cater to the needs of the different social strata of its public, it seems that an active attempt at differentiation was made in the design of the monumental complex.

It also seems that less attention was lavished on such non-representational areas with respect to decoration. Ornamentation was another important aspect of the sanctuary in which the popular and the elite meet and separate. In some respects, ornamentation affected everyone entering and experiencing the sanctuary, since it was an integral part of the sanctuary’s appearance. On a basic level, ornamentation in the form of architectural decoration, wall painting and sculptures enhanced the monumentality of the complex, on the one hand by adding to a sense of richness and variety and on the other by enhancing certain architectural features or enhancing spatial perception. Ascending the social ladder and the associated cultural experience and education, one could have interpreted the increasingly subtle references made in the decorative choices of the sanctuary. Specific and intricate historical or mythical allusions would have been understood by just a small part of those viewing images in the sanctuary, while relatively simple binary oppositions used in the visual imagery, representing a relatively simple semiotic scheme, would have had been more widely understood. Depending on their social background, visitors of the sanctuary would have experienced the sanctuary on different levels.

This idea of a sliding scale in the perception of the monument and its meanings is probably also true for the architectural form itself. On a basic level the sheer size and monumentality of the sanctuaries would have impressed the casual onlooker. The more sophisticated viewer would have been able to link the sanctuary to the wider phenomenon of monumentalisation and noted similarities and differences between the building complexes, in Latium and at Rome, and would probably have been acquainted with the members of the nobility responsible for their construction. In addition, some people would have been aware of the monumental building complexes in the Greek-Hellenistic East, allowing them to place the Latial sanctuaries not only in their proper Romano-Italic context but in a wider Mediterranean context.

**Between individual and collective**

One of the characteristics of monumental sanctuaries sometimes used to separate them from temple construction at Rome was the fact that Latial sanctuaries were communal projects in contrast to the temples at Rome erected by individuals. However, both assertions are not entirely correct. At Rome, each individual temple contributed to a monumental townscape of temples and monuments which could be interpreted as a statement of collective achievement and a general point of reference for ambitious nobles. Of the Latial monumental sanctuaries, only those at Praeneste and Tibur are demonstrably communal in that there is evidence that a collective of civic magistrates constructed these sanctuaries on the decree of the local senate. Yet even in these two cases, it was possible for nobles to ‘use’ the sanctuary individually,
for instance by referring to it on coins, and communal sanctuaries can become symbols expressing or referring to certain values which subsequently reflected on individuals in some way connected to it. It is even possible that sanctuaries which had been communal were in some ways appropriated by individuals, which surely was the case at Lanuvium where older parts of the sanctuary were supplemented with additional structures which was probably the work of one man and a sculptural group which directly referred to him and his achievements, thereby effectively hijacking the sanctuary’s representational potential for personal ends.

One can never define a sanctuary as entirely communal or entirely individual in character. The sanctuary of Gabii, while built by a single individual, undoubtedly served the community of which it was a part in various ways. Sanctuaries, as central places, had a wider appeal and especially monumental sanctuaries, as conspicuous markers in the landscape, may have been associated with different social groups than just those responsible for the construction. Conversely, sanctuaries built on the decree of local senates by magistrates serving the community could be used by individuals. The very fact that sanctuaries built by groups or communities could be used by individuals must have had important consequences for the perception of the monument, since these rarely represented completely homogenous groups with common interests; each group was composed of individuals with different perspectives and goals. This means that in each case, emphasis was probably placed on those aspects of the sanctuary that were particularly relevant to the individual using the image of the sanctuary.

In the religious use of the sanctuary, a similar phenomenon can probably be observed. While sanctuaries were potent symbols and arenas of communal religious sentiments, it is probably that at some level, individual concerns and the need for self-promotion also manifested themselves. Votive offerings, while in a sense standardised and grounded in a collective religious sensibility, convey clear messages about personal preoccupations for which divine assistance was sought. Differences in quality, size and the chosen material would furthermore have demonstrated differences in social status, introducing individual differentiation into an otherwise collective undertaking. Thus, the religious functions of the monumental sanctuaries can also be said to have oscillated between the individual and collective. A clear dividing line cannot be established, and our interpretation of sanctuaries should be adjusted accordingly. People moulded the sanctuary into whatever specific form they wanted it to assume, by those actively using it for their personal ambitions and by those perceiving the sanctuary, which may have lead to diverging experiences of the same monument.

**Between local and metropolitan**

Traditionally, by stressing the collective aspect of monumental sanctuaries, they have been primarily interpreted as a local phenomenon. Especially the scale of the building complexes, which would not be encountered in Rome itself, implied a concerted effort by local nobles with interests that differed from Roman nobles. By constructing impressive building complexes, communities and their elites asserted their local identity and competed within a regional hierarchy, which excluded Rome. However, as we have seen not every sanctuary was as collective as sometimes has been thought, and even communal sanctuaries could be used for individuals’ ends. In addition, there are examples in Rome itself of more extensive sacred structures, such
as the Porticus Metelli and the so-called Tabularium, far exceeding the scale and impact of single temples, which implies that scale is not a particularly distinctive feature. Moreover, the specific characteristics of the Latial monumental sanctuaries seem to link them firmly to Rome, which would argue against a separation between the Urbs itself and the area around it (Chapter Two). While it is certainly so that commonality does not necessarily imply communality, the ties seem to be numerous and significant enough to interpret building activity at Rome and in the rest of Latium as parts of the same overarching system. Architectural characteristics of Greek-Hellenistic inspiration, the divinities to which the sanctuaries were dedicated, the geographical location of the sanctuaries and the identity of the patrons responsible for construction all seem to point towards some degree of commonality and communality.

While many of the divinities to which the monumental sanctuaries were dedicated can be considered local or even poliadic divinities, official cults of these same gods or equivalents existed at Rome. Sometimes these cults had been introduced only shortly before the monumentalisation of the divinity’s sanctuary in Latium, sometimes by natives of the Latial towns. These cults thus can hardly be seen as a feature by which local connotations can be clearly distinguished from metropolitan ones. Geographically, the monumental sanctuaries are also closely tied to Rome. The majority is located in the area known as the Suburbium, belonging to the extended hinterland of Rome and described by various ancient authors as a zone between city and non-city. The proximity to the Urbs and the intensity of the ties of this area to it certainly necessitates the consideration of Rome when explaining the monumentalisation process, rather than leaving it out altogether. This is strengthened by the fact that Roman nobles were directly involved in the construction of several of these sanctuaries. Those sanctuaries that were not built by Roman nobles were erected by local nobles, some of whom had vested political interests in the capital. In general, contacts between these communities and Rome were intense, even if not all domi nobles strove for a political career at Rome. These three factors, religious, geographical and socio-political, all seem to suggest a positioning of monumental sanctuaries in force field between local and metropolitan, without completely belonging to either of them.

This in-between position may be explained by the fact that Roman and local nobles were part of the same social system. Whichever way one looks at it, the communities of Latium were continually confronted with Rome; while in some areas they retained a certain degree of autonomy, in many ways they were dependent on the policies set out by the Roman authorities. Rome was the dominant political power in Italy and the Mediterranean, which means that relations with other communities were by definition asymmetric. We can describe the dynamics of the relations of social actors in different positions of power by using the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu. He specifies that actors operating in the same social field occupy dominant and dominated positions, and that participation in this field is accompanied by a specific set of stakes and rules, invariably dictated, albeit implicitly, by those in dominant positions. The positions in the field are determined by the forms and quantities of capital each actor possesses. We can distinguish three types of capital: economic, social, and cultural capital. Especially this last form of capital is significant in the context of this study, since it means that knowledge of a culture and its specific codes can be valuable in obtaining positions of power. If one displays traits that are deemed desirable by those in power, it will benefit political advancement; knowledge of cultural codes can be interpreted as signals which are
used to exclude people with the ‘wrong’ kind of capital from certain status groups, and to include others which are seen as displaying desirable behaviour. Cultural capital can thus be interpreted as a result of and a stake in a social game. In this game, both Roman and Italic nobles could join, provided they submitted to its rules.

The construction of public buildings, including temples, can be interpreted as part of this power game. By building temples, aristocrats could celebrate victory and success, adding to their status and setting examples for others to follow. Temples represented the success of the Roman state and the men in power who had contributed to this success. Temples could become calling cards for aristocrats and their families, clearly showing that they had what it took to play a leading role in the Roman state. It is a distinct possibility that building activities outside Rome can also be interpreted in this light. Several sanctuaries were built by Roman aristocrats, and in the case of Lanuvium it is likely that military success and political advancement were prime concerns in the monumentalisation of the sanctuary. By building monumental sanctuaries dedicated to gods whose cults were also celebrated at Rome, and which could be said to be the result of the success of Roman imperialism in which the domi nobiles shared even if overt militaristic references are often absent, local aristocrats perhaps attempted to show that they too possessed characteristics which could benefit the Roman state and which would hopefully help them in attaining positions of power at the capital where the decisions affecting Rome and her allies were being made. This need not have been a universal desire, and positions of power in local or regional hierarchies may also have been at stake in the monumentalisation process. However, it is important to note that both attitudes can be explained within a single model, avoiding a strict dichotomy between local and metropolitan interests of individuals and groups. By interpreting the monumentalisation of sanctuaries in a Bourdieuan framework of social relations with associated cultural signals, we can effectively bridge the local-metropolitan dichotomy and research and explain the phenomenon as something in which both aspects are represented.

Between tradition and innovation

The middle position between tradition and innovation comes, at least in an architectural sense, closest to Gros’ *triomphe du compromis*. It has been demonstrated in Chapter Three that the prime characteristic which binds this group of sanctuaries together, aside from the scale of the building complexes, is the attention given to the perception of the sanctuaries. The complexes were situated and designed with an a distant view in mind; only in approaching the sanctuary could the full complex be grasped. While the choice for impressive and highly visible sites for temples is not a new development, the amount of effort and the means used to achieve a true scenographical effect are a new development that can be placed firmly in the late republican period, and in this sense constitutes an innovative element in sanctuary architecture. Never before had an attempt been made in Italy to construct building complexes comprising temples and secondary structures which formed a more or less organic whole. By making use of and altering the natural landscape, these sanctuaries were visually composed. In this respect, the Latial sanctuaries can be placed in a wider development in the Greek-Hellenistic area displaying similar tastes. The preference for axial symmetry, visible in some but not all Latial
sanctuaries, can also be observed in several building complexes in the eastern Mediterranean. However, rather than drawing direct lines of influence from the East to Italy, we can interpret these similarities as examples of contemporaneous developments demonstrating the close contacts between the two areas, especially in the period after the Roman conquest.

In the choice of the form of the temple building, we see similar developments as in Rome, with several temple buildings forming true hybrid forms between Greek and Etrusco-Italic styles. Of the eight temples, only the temple at Lanuvium is a truly traditional temple, while the circular, domed aedes at Praeneste is a completely novel creation. The other temples all display elements of traditional temple architecture combined with new elements, either stylistic or structural. The innovative architectural aspects need not always be Greek-Hellenistic in origin; the development of the transverse cella, for instance, seems to be an Italic development that does not have direct parallels in the Greek world. The choice of materials and building techniques, for the temple as well as the other structures constituting the sanctuary, is also a curious mixture of old and new, often used simultaneously. The use of polygonal walling and opus quadratum was continued throughout the late republican period, while opus caementicium was increasingly used for substructures and elevations. The use of travertine and marble for facings and mouldings also increased, while traditional materials such as tufa and lapis gabinus remained as popular building materials, for structural and decorative purposes. This clearly demonstrates that we cannot simply see technical and stylistic characteristics as stages in a linear development, but rather as options which remained open to builders throughout the period, and as such the use of such options should be seen as manifestations of deliberate choices, made for aesthetic or symbolic reasons.

These architectural and stylistic developments can probably be related to socio-political developments, and novel ways in which buildings were used in the late republican period. The most important changes were undoubtedly brought about by Roman expansion and its effects on the way the republican political system functioned. From the mid-republican period onwards, a system rooted in practice had been developed in which aristocrats strove for power, competing with their peers. The system was designed to prevent excessive concentration of power in the hands of individuals for long periods of time, striking a balance between the power of the collective and the delegation of this power in the hands of supreme magistrates. At the same time, this system of service in office allowed individuals to accumulate power and prestige within certain limits without disrupting the continuity of the Roman state. However, since it was rooted in practice and in general was not codified, it was also vulnerable to disruption of the status quo, and this is exactly what happened during the Late Republic.

The emphasis on the welfare of the state, which had always been a fundamental aspect of the political game, increasingly shifted to individual accumulation of wealth and power without regard for the implications for the state and power balances. The more prominent position of individuals is illustrated by an increase in the scale of building projects in Rome itself, such as the Porticus Metelli and the structures of the Tabularium; apparently, the need to adhere to unwritten rules and operate within certain limited parameters was less keenly felt. Outside of Rome, the activities of individuals at the sanctuaries of Gabii and Lanuvium may be understood in the same light, although here the restrictions imposed by the balancing act in Rome itself would have been less stringent in any case. The prominence of the individual
aristocrat is perhaps also visible in the sculptural displays at certain sanctuaries; in the first century, we see portrait statues appearing in the sanctuaries of Tibur and Lanuvium which clearly demonstrate a desire for self-promotion, and in the latter case possibly claiming the sanctuary’s divinity as a personal protectress.

The shift in the balance of power was accompanied by a discussion about the relevant qualities of leadership, or in the terms of Bourdieu, the forms of capital an individual needed to possess to assume a dominant position and be admitted into the ruling elite. After a period of broad agreement of what was an effective mark of distinction and a demonstration of a suitability to rule, the influx of wealth as a result of Roman expansion and new forms of culture and learning flowing into Rome from the Greek-Hellenistic East raised the question if knowledge of and the ability to manipulate these new styles and media could also count as a valuable asset in political competition. The consensus about the basic requirements of admission into the circle of power was thus slowly weakened during the late republican period.

This state of flux in the republican political system, itself poised between the tradition of a balanced power-sharing on one side and the increasing prominence of powerful individuals and new forms display and knowledge on the other, possibly offered new opportunities to those who were systematically disadvantaged by the traditional practice of selection and advancement. Since group consensus weakened, it was now possible for individuals who would previously not have been considered for positions of power to penetrate the ranks of the Roman nobility with greater ease than before, or at the very least it is possible to expect that this opportunity was felt by some even if it did not result in actual success. We can indeed see a particular concentration of political involvement of local nobles at Rome in the last decades of the second and the first decades of the first century, which I have tried to relate to the socio-political changes of the late republican period. It was this sense of opportunity, magnificently illustrated by the rapid political advancement of domi nobilis and homo novus Marius, led to the use of local sanctuaries as signs of their fitness to be included in the charmed inner circle of power.

These sanctuaries, as we have seen, constituted a bridge between local communities and Rome itself, symbolising the bond between the two. While the use of temples as exempla, constructed by worthy predecessors whose qualities and achievements served as a model for others to follow, was well-established, the individual use of communal sanctuaries would have constituted a novel variation on this theme in the competitive system. However, the break-down of consensus might have made this use of sanctuaries acceptable as a mark of distinction and worthiness in political competition. While located outside of Rome and not necessarily alluding to achievements of individual aristocrats, they nevertheless constituted powerful cultural statements, celebrating the success and opportunities of Roman imperialism, and showing a preference for and knowledge of Greek-Hellenistic culture which, as we have seen, was fast becoming a sign of distinction itself.

The paradox of this situation is that while the system was changing, conservative individuals continued to occupy positions of power who would not accept the validity of such signals. In this sense, traditional values were still upheld that could function as barriers to outsiders claiming the positions of insiders. Moreover, we can ask the question if the innovations, the
changes to the system, did not cause it to cease functioning as it had before; the system had always relied on consensus, which was increasingly abandoned. Instead of service in office, powerful individuals progressively took control and disregarded common political practices which had been obeyed for centuries. Perhaps the domini nobili were building sanctuaries that were to be used in a game which was changing beyond recognition and in which building activities no longer had the function of exempla which they had before. Thus, tradition and innovation could case the misinterpretation of the signals some local aristocrats were trying to send, and it is even possible that they not only were deemed correct signals, but that they were no longer regarded as signals at all. The new power game required new rules and new stakes.

**Conclusion**

As far as the monumentalisation of Latial sanctuaries in the late republican period is concerned, one size does not fit all. Of course, the monumental sanctuaries of Latium can be understood as a product of a specific period in time in a specific area; the phenomenon itself has a limited chronological and geographical range, which suggests that the monumentalisation process itself can probably be explained by referring to key developments of this specific period and area. In addition, on some level there is a strong sense of commonality between the sanctuaries; the way in which they are placed in the landscape and are built to attract the eye seems to be a feature underlying all monumental sanctuaries. There is thus something that undeniably binds these monuments together as representatives of a consistent process. However, it is just as clear that each of these sanctuaries should be examined on its own merits, and that it is not enough to simply consider them as ‘variations on a common theme’ if these variations are then systematically neglected in favour of the common. The study of monumental sanctuaries ultimately boils down to a double compromise: the modern compromise scholars have to make in their interpretations due to the limits imposed by the availability of evidence and the ancient compromise that produces the monumental sanctuary and which the specific form of that sanctuary ultimately reflects. Unfortunately, rather than leading to a careful examination of the evidence that is available and weighing the general developments against individual idiosyncrasies, the latter have been largely neglected.

The first compromise is probably an important factor in the establishment of the standard typology of Latial monumental sanctuaries. The apparent lack of clear evidence indicating substantial differences between sanctuaries has lead to the idea of uniformity. Observed similarities on one level are progressively and uncritically extrapolated by projecting similarities on all levels. This tendency seems to demonstrate that faced with the limits of the material we study, we must content ourselves with generalities. A standard sanctuary type is distilled based on apparent similarities between several individual monuments of a group first defined on the basis of other aspects. The standard type is then used to supplement missing information about other building complexes deemed to be part of this perceived group. I hope to have shown that whatever these sanctuaries have in common in the way of function, use, placement and genesis, on an architectural level they cannot be regarded as a homogenous group with interchangeable structural characteristics.
The second compromise is, in this sense, the one that has been neglected by research that stresses the uniformity of sanctuaries. This difference can be explained by the fact that we are dealing with human undertakings. These sanctuaries were built by people, who invested valuable resources in order to construct them and presumably wanted to convey something about themselves or their community by doing so. Studying architecture, and especially monumental architecture, one can all too easily forget that these are social constructs; buildings play an important role in society, and express desires and interests of groups and individuals. These desires and interests may be broadly similar in some respects, just like the monuments they build, yet differ in other important respects. As a result of the first compromise, we do not have every piece of information which would allow us to relate with certainty the varying and divergent attitudes of the people involved in the monumentalisation process to the end result, the monumental sanctuary we study. What we can do, and what I have tried to do in the course of this study, is suggest ways to look at objects which can incorporate both the general and the specific using the information we do have. We can single out some general developments which must have affected the process, directly or indirectly, but there will always be sanctuaries which do not seem to ‘fit the bill’; the proposed models, for instance, fit the available evidence of certain sanctuaries better than others. This does not directly invalidate the models which do fit other sanctuaries, but it does alert us to the fact that there may be subtle, or even not so subtle differences underlying a perceived similarity, which should not be ignored.

This second level of compromise can perhaps be envisioned best as a multi-dimensional matrix encompassing all binary pairs mentioned above, on which these sanctuaries can be placed according to the available evidence. If we understand compromise as a middle position, between two extremes of judgement or opinion, the term ‘triumphs of compromise’ to describe the late republican monumental sanctuaries of Latium could not be more apt. Not only are they constructs caught between Italic tradition and Hellenistic innovation in an architectural sense, they also occupy a middle position with regard to their catchment area, which includes both the metropolitan political world of Rome and the local communities to which they belonged; their primary function, which is neither exclusively religious or purely representative; and their social relevance, since both aristocrats and people of lower social strata make use of and identify with these sanctuaries, and do so individually and as groups.

However, no single sanctuary occupied the exact same position as another in this matrix of seemingly opposed binary pairs; the apparent general characteristics are superficial and cannot be directly translated to a standardisation on all levels; homogeneity on some levels can, and often is, accompanied by heterogeneity on other levels. This is also the case for the late republican monumental sanctuaries of Latium. Although occupying a position between two extremes, there is no sanctuary that achieved a perfect middle position; they are all shifted somewhat in one direction or the other, and because of these shifts they acquired their specific shape and function. The fact that these monuments have continued to stimulate the imagination from the medieval period up to the present day merits their label as triumphs, at the very least in an architectural sense. They deserve to be continuously studied, instead of merely fossilised as a standard type that I hope to have shown to be anything but standard.