TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference
www.trac.org.uk

Paper Information:

Title: Roman Roads: Phenomenological Perspectives on Roads in the Landscape
Author: Robert Witcher
Pages: 60–70

DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC1997_60_70
Publication Date: 16 April 1998

Volume Information:

Forcey, C., Hawthorne, J., and Witcher, R. (eds) 1998. *TRAC 97: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Nottingham 1997.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Copyright and Hardcopy Editions:

The following paper was originally published in print format by Oxbow Books for TRAC. Hard copy editions of this volume may still be available, and can be purchased direct from Oxbow at http://www.oxbowbooks.com.

TRAC has now made this paper available as Open Access through an agreement with the publisher. Copyright remains with TRAC and the individual author(s), and all use or quotation of this paper and/or its contents must be acknowledged. This paper was released in digital Open Access format in April 2013.

Roman Roads: phenomenological perspectives on roads in the landscape

by Robert Witcher

It's perfectly simple; all you have to do is to go out of that door and try to stop the Romans.
(On stopping the construction of the Newbury bypass, Merrick 1996:76).

Introduction

During the 1990s, Green politics and direct action have radically changed our attitude towards roads – once symbolic of the Thatcher car economy, they are now more commonly associated with tree-protestors and environmental destruction. The universal vision of freedom once promised by the road is increasingly conceived of as our enslavement by the car, and a short-sighted assault upon the environment – in other words, roads have become the focus of a fundamental conflict of beliefs. This modern analogy is a useful reminder of some of the less immediately tangible aspects of roads. They are not simply physical structures enabling movement to a destination. They also embody issues of ideology, power and identity, and are intimately involved with our social constructions of the world.

Recently such issues have been considered in research on prehistoric landscapes, including several examples of phenomenological approaches, which stress how humans experience and understand the world. This paper intends to explore some aspects raised in these phenomenologies with reference to the Roman period. The aim is to consider roads and their role in the conquest and domination of the Empire by considering them as part of an imperial dialogue articulated explicitly in terms of time, space and place. In particular, the concept of path as spatial narrative is considered as a model to examine the conquest and domination of the Empire.

Earlier approaches

Whilst the study of landscapes has become less functionalist and more interpretative over the last fifteen years, the approach to roads has remained based on three empirical perspectives – technological achievement, military and strategic considerations, and economic and commercial benefits (e.g. contrast Bender 1993; Mattingly 1997 with Campbell 1996; Chevallier 1976; Quilici and Quilici Gigli 1992; Taylor 1979). In other words, different standards of interpretation have been applied to roads, and the landscapes of which they form a part. The latter are something to be read like a text; polysemic and subjective. Conversely, roads are functional and unambiguous.

The approaches to roads outlined above can be criticised on two key issues. First, they conceive of roads as straightforward products of material needs. This makes an artificial division between the function of these roads and the ideologies they embody. The historical geographer Alan Baker has referred to such divisions as "grounded in a weak conceptualization of culture which separate[s] off economy from consciousness, action from ideology" (1992:8). The practical and everyday should not be conceived of as the opposite of the ideological – the two are synonymous. The second criticism leads on from the first. Our own world-view conceptualizes space as a neutral backdrop, universal and atemporal. This underlies the above

approaches, which conceive of roads as patterned entities articulated within the context of strictly Cartesian space. As archaeologists, we recognize these roads as a tangible set of traces in an unproblematic and given space.

These two criticisms have led to a denial of the active nature of these roads, and more importantly, led to a separation of structures of power from the landscape. For example, Frederiksen and Ward Perkins describe the Via Amerina in South Etruria as a "very direct and practical reminder of the energy and resources of the conquering Roman people" (1957:187). This conceives of the road as being constructed through an empty or neutral backdrop – the road is a symptom of Roman imperialism. A humanized perspective aims to identify power as sedimented within spaces, places and landscapes, and as such these roads should not be seen as a consequence of domination. On the contrary, roads actually help to constitute that power. Landscape does more than simply reflect society, its inequalities and development; rather the relationship is a dialectic. As such, landscapes do not mirror society, they also help to create and perpetuate social relations.

The road, in general, is recognized to be a fundamental tool of empires of all periods and past discussion of the Roman Empire has emphasized this relationship. However, its significance within the active creation of the Empire remains latent. For example, the importance of roads in the maintenance of personal prestige through self-advertisement on milestones has long been recognized (Potter 1987:134). Interestingly, Wiseman claims that the dearth of consular road-building in Italy during the first century BC is not due to a lack of desire to build roads, but rather that the Senate was unwilling to allow any individual to gain the prestige associated with their construction (1970:150). Both hint that roads are not purely functional; however in neither case is there consideration of *why* the construction of roads should be so prestigious, nor the implications of this for power relationships.

It is perhaps ancient historians, more aware of people and personalities than the structures and processes which have formed the basis of archaeological research, who have offered the most interesting interpretations. For example, Purcell has examined the developments in Roman conceptions of space and roads in relation to the conquest and domination of Cisalpine Gaul (1990). He refers to the significance of the clash of spatial ideologies in imperial dialogues, observing the "...the instrumentation of...policies...which entail the subordination of the natives as the conquerors organize the landscape in accordance with *their* geographical preconceptions" (1990:21; my emphasis). By stressing the close relationship of the physical landscape with religion and ideology – for example, he notes the similarity in the terminology used to describe the divisions of the heavens and the centuriated earth – Purcell demonstrates Roman imperialism to be not simply economic or strategic, but also fundamentally to do with the display of power over landscape (1990:15, 23). Chapman, Shiel and Batovic briefly refer to the roads and centuriation of Dalmatia in the context of "arenas of social power" (1996:290–1), whilst Greene hints at the potential of "non-rational human perceptions" of roads through the use of analogy (1995:137–8).

Abstract versus Humanized Space

Recognition of the historical particularity of our abstract view of space, within the wider archaeological discipline, has led to the investigation of approaches which assume space to be socially produced and socially producing; a medium, not a container. Notable among these archaeologists has been Tilley whose *Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994) is drawn upon in this paper. Phenomenology has formed a central part of the re-examination of how we interpret the past. There is no single 'school' of phenomenology, nor any clearly defined body of teaching

(Audi 1995:578). Rather it is a broad movement which aims to "turn from things to their meanings, ...from the realm of the objectified meaning as found in the sciences to the realm of meaning as immediately experienced in the 'life-world'" (Audi 1995:579). What follows is not a formal phenomenological experiment, but some initial thoughts based upon Tilley's summary of existing applications.

Central to all these approaches is the notion of space as a social product (cf. Lefebvre 1991). The traditional approaches outlined above are at odds with this. Whilst abstract space is universal, constant and divorced from time, humanized or social space is subjective and relative to a subject. In other words, space can never be understood apart from the human subject which both structures it, and is itself structured by it. This perspective allows us to consider space as intimately involved with paths, places and time, and implicated in social constructs such as power and identity. Therefore roads are not built through an empty abstract and neutral space, they are built through spaces produced by people.

In particular, the concepts of place and path are of significance to this consideration of roads. Let us look firstly at the concept of place. In contrast to the dots of the distribution map, Tilley states that "...places are always far more than points or locations, because they have distinctive meanings and values for persons. Personal and cultural identity is bound up with place..." (1994:15). This relationship is extended through the sharing of common experiences, symbols and meanings, to the point whereby place and identity can be considered as synonymous. However, places cannot exist in spatio-temporal isolation – Tilley goes on to argue that "the importance and significance of a place can only be appreciated as part of movement from, and to it, in relation to others..." (1994:31). This necessitates movement through the landscape, and such action is fossilised in the concept of the pathway or road. By physically and symbolically linking places together, paths order places and the ways in which they are encountered as part of everyday social praxis. These routes through the landscape therefore become pivotal to the construction of place and identity. The path can be conceived of as a list of places structured in a particular order, a concept which finds expression in the ancient period through the Itineraries (Janni 1984).

By considering the dynamic of Roman imperialism within this context, the building of a road becomes more than a simple act of physically reconstructing the landscape. Roads embody new and potentially conflicting perspectives of space and therefore become the focus of ideological conflict.

Case Studies

A key point when considering roads within social landscapes must concern the issue of who used them and how. Concomitant with this is the sense of beginning, end and trajectory. The focus has traditionally been on their use by the military and the *cursus publicus*. However, it seems likely that the majority of people would not have travelled long distances on these roads on a regular basis – few would have conceived of them as entities from end to end. For local populations, experience of these roads was limited to those stretches which physically and psychologically infringed upon them. Such an approach should draw us away from the privileged perspective of the distribution map, and towards the role of these roads within everyday life, both physical and esoteric.

To illustrate some of the above points, three case studies will be presented. The first two will be familiar to many, representing examples of obviously planned landscapes. The last example explores how far we can apply these issues within (apparently) less deliberately manipulated landscapes.

Falerii Novi, South Etruria

In 241BC, historical sources inform us that the Faliscans were subjugated by Rome. The archaeology reveals three contemporary spatial changes. First, Ward Perkins' South Etruria survey has noted a sharp decline in settlement numbers. This is in contrast to the evidence from nearby areas (Potter 1979:101). Second, a new centre named Falerii Novi was founded 5 km west of the pre-existing settlement of Falerii Veteres. Thirdly, the Via Amerina was extended from the Latin colony of Nepi eight kilometres to the south, to link up with the new settlement.

The alignment of town and road suggests that they are related – forming part of a deliberately imposed landscape (Frederiksen and Ward-Perkins 1957:162). The memories associated with the old centre are denied, whilst offering a single link to the past through continuity in name. Here is an example of the pro-active use of space and place as part of an act of imperialism – it is an acknowledgement of the importance of space and place in the organisation of society and identity. By recognising this relationship, the alternative centre is not purely economic or military, or a simple shift in physical location, but also profoundly ideological. This is reinforced through the Via Amerina which served to physically and symbolically attach the new town to Rome, and to enforce its new centrality, at the expense of Falerii Veteres (Potter 1979:93).

Above, we considered roads as a series of places experienced in a structured way, integral to power and identity. The physical rearrangement of these places, their inclusion or exclusion, is therefore likely to have implications which go beyond simply spatial. By re-ordering the encounter between people and place, these roads challenge the pre-existing constructions of landscape and identity. In South Etruria, Potter has distinguished local service roads from long-distance military roads largely in terms of their inclusion or exclusion of pre-existing places (Potter 1979:101–5). That the construction of these roads had certain military or economic objectives is not to be doubted, but there are ideological aspects as well. The exclusion of settlement from the course of a major road might be considered as an attempt to challenge power and identity and to break foci of resistance. Exclusion may economically cripple a settlement, but the loss of centrality and prestige could be equally devastating. A further point to note is that the simple presence on a road did not guarantee success, economic or otherwise. For example, Valesio in the Salento Peninsula shrank from a *circa* 70 hectare town to a *circa* 2 hectare *vicus* during the Roman period (Yntema 1993:62, 66). Many factors conditioned the success or otherwise of a settlement – economic benefit brought or denied by the road network is only one of series of reasons; this paper suggests that some of these factors may have been highly esoteric.

In their description of the Via Amerina, Frederiksen and Ward-Perkins emphasised the marked contrast in the nature of its construction, north and south of Nepi (1957:90). To the south, the road follows the contours of the landscape, rationalising the line of a pre-existing route (Frederiksen and Ward-Perkins 1957:90). North of Nepi, the road, built some 150 years later, is very different. Not only does it now cut across contours with an impressive straightness, it comprises a wider carriageway and a large masonry bridge. This led to Frederiksen and Ward-Perkins to note that "instead of conforming to the landscape, the road is imposed upon it" (1957:90). However, the meaning of this contrast is not developed, least of all in terms of power or ideology. It cannot simply be dismissed as the result of technological advances during the period between construction of the two sections. There was a conscious decision to build a very different type of road.

The geometry of Roman roads has long attracted functionalist explanation. In his

indispensable guide to the roads of Roman Britain, Margary states "the real purpose of the straight alignments was merely for convenience in the setting out of the course of the road..." (1973:18). Others interpret this geometry as economic efficiency, even though challenging the physical environment often makes construction more, not less, expensive (Purcell 1990:24). That the use of straight sections simplified the surveying of roads is not in dispute. But the very need to survey in the first place can be read as a expression of the ideology of *imperium*, rationalised within the practical advice of volumes such as the *Corpus Agrimensores Romanorum* (the colonial surveys of Ireland, India and Egypt represent more recent parallels).

By simplistically equating geometric roads with military practicalities, and more sinuous routes with local service roads, the classification of the Via Amerina is left ambiguous (N.B. the disparity in Potter 1979:104 versus 105). Therefore, instead of attempting to classify function according to geometry, we should conceive of this contrast as a statement of power. The decision to extend the road in a new style may have had practical expedience, but it also has ideological aspects. It is part of an imperial subjugation of both Nature and society – it denies the past, whilst physically inscribing a new authority upon the landscape as part of a new present and Roman future.

Purcell considers the essence of Roman imperialism as not simply the physical conquest of the landscape, but also its symbolic conquest (Purcell 1990:8, 23). However, the longevity of the Empire demands we also account for the maintenance of control as well as its initial achievement. In other words, can we conceive of roads as forming part of the negotiation of power which underwrites Roman hegemony? The social disruption and ideological conflict that such roads instigate is resolved through negotiation, and it is this mediation of power and ideology which is fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of Roman hegemony. This too can be considered in terms of some other aspects of Tilley's research. He suggests that "...the more people who have shared in the purpose of a path the more important it becomes" (1994:31). This is a potentially significant point in terms of the use of Roman roads as instruments of domination, although the statement must be clarified. Sharing in the purpose of a path should not be read as either acceptance or even awareness of the underlying ideologies and power structures they embody. To do so would be to claim that a path (as an item of material culture) has a single meaning or interpretation – that being the one assigned by the road's builder – and further that this meaning is both unchanging and accessible by all. This is obviously not the case. The meaning of material culture is far from fixed and such an approach allows no room for alternative readings or acts of resistance (see below).

The use of a path need not represent simple acceptance of its authority or underlying ideology, but rather participation in it. In other words, although use of a path might serve to legitimate and enhance its presence and associated ideology, the act of walking might subsume a host of motivations and perspectives. Much as driving on a motorway today can be rationalised as a simple functional act, it simultaneously serves to endorse both the concept of the car and the motorway within our culture, regardless of whether we as individuals consider this to be the case. Hence, the use of a Roman road by anyone, from the military to subjugated populations, comes to represent a participation in that road's social and ideological nature regardless of the real or rationalised reasons for their use of it. Herein, we might argue, lies much of the effectiveness of Roman domination. Immense, yet in many ways subtle, control could be exerted over populations by controlling their movement. A farmer using a road because it represents a quicker route to a local market participates in that road's ideology – and hence permits the authorities power – regardless of political, social or ethnic affiliations.

Further, the greater the use of pathways through the landscape, the greater the sedimented meaning they achieve. This does not only involve physically walking along roads. For example,

note the numerous tombs and cemeteries along roads throughout the Empire. If we blur the distinction of practical and ideological, then these tombs are not just the result of laws against the burial within urban areas. They serve to give depth and meaning to these roads, both legitimating and being legitimated themselves. Moving along these roads now becomes part of an act of ancestral remembrance – the reconstruction of spaces associated with these roads necessarily involves the reconstruction of temporalities.

The greater the legitimacy and meaning a road attains, the greater the difficulty in moving through the landscape via alternative routes. The definition of such sanctioned and unsanctioned ways to move through the landscape, and the repetition of actions, are clearly implicated in exercise of Roman power. For example, where pre-existing tracks are formalised into Roman roads, it is important to note their distinction from their predecessors. Rationalisation of curves into a series of straight sections, milestones and paving help to re-define them as Roman phenomena. Both their physical form and their meaning are revised. Rome is then in a position, through the subversion of their continued use as part of everyday social praxis, to exercise immense power over local populations. Hence, the continuity identified in many aspects of pre-existing life can be seen as central to the exercise of power and the establishment of hegemony.

The act of naming can also be used to harness places within social discourses (Tilley 1994:18). Some Roman roads, such as the Via Amerina, take the name of their destination. This served to define these end places as Roman concepts, and harness them into a physical and symbolic relationship with Rome, compressing the distance between them (Purcell 1990:12). In discussing the nature of roads, Tilley states "Paths are...fundamentally to do with establishing and maintaining social linkages and relations between individuals, groups and political units" (1994:30). The *Ager Falicus* offers a good example of this within the context of an imperial dialogue.

Po Valley, Italy

The well-known landscape of the Po Valley is briefly examined here to demonstrate a contrast to the *Ager Falicus*. At a very generalized level, control and domination of the area north of the Po (i.e. Transpadane Gaul), appears to have been achieved through the appropriation of pre-existing social hierarchies (Chevallier 1983; Purcell 1990). However, the archaeology of the area south of the Po (i.e. Cisalpine Gaul) bears witness to a very different means of control. Here, continued resistance led to the destruction of pre-existing social and political structures amongst such tribes as the Boii and the Senones. In other words, the traditional methods of domination were lost, leaving no means of control other than spatial. This represents a contrast to the *Ager Faliscus*. Whereas the Faliscans were controlled largely through the use of existing social mechanisms (e.g. the manipulation of identities, continuities in aspects of landscape), the unsettled populations of Cisalpine Gaul were controlled not by who they were, but by where they were. Such a territorial approach to the control of populations has been discussed by Sack (1986) in relation to the control of native American populations.

The dialogue which can be seen to characterize Roman domination of the *Ager Falicus* was absent. As such, we do not find a new negotiated order. Instead, we find the wholesale replacement of one social and physical landscape, with another. It is also a landscape based upon a very different conception of space. Here, the road is taken to its logical conclusion, and projected from one into two dimensions, in the form of centuriation. Rome had used this method of land division before, but the Po Valley demonstrates its use on a new, almost methodical, scale. Vast areas were appropriated not as social or political entities, but as empty space. This represents its commodification – it was not perceived as a social space, but as a commodity to

be parcelled up and exploited.

This has an economic aspect, often associated with the intensification of agriculture. But it has less utilitarian implications too – Purcell has referred to centuriation as "political", embodying issues of power (1990:16). This geometry is an ideological attempt to achieve hegemony through the total conquest of both human and physical environment (Baker 1992:6). It obliterates pre-existing concepts of space and time, and imposes Roman order and authority (Baker 1992:4).

Again naming is used to legitimate and tie these roads into the historical discourse of Rome. Here, many take the name of the individuals who instigated their construction. For example, the Via Aemilia takes the name of M. Aemilius Lepidus emphasising the 'Roman-ness' of the road and the landscape it shapes, and making this even more explicit and personal. Such naming is supplemented through milestones. Although the majority date to the post-Gracchan period, and in particular the Imperial period, examples are known from the late fourth century BC (Potter 1987:143). In their most elaborate form, they serve to establish and maintain alternative temporalities derived from the core (Purcell 1990:7). The past becomes a Roman past – by implication, the present and future become Roman as well. As with the monuments to dead erected along these roads, milestones reconstruct temporalities.

Colchester, Essex

The final case study is Colchester in south-east England. Again the experience of roads as part of conquest and domination is again different. A legionary fortress was established on the site of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) *oppidum* of *Camulodunum*. Within a few years, the area was demilitarized and a colony founded. Both, fortress and colony were incorporated into an extensive road system. On the whole, though by no means entirely, this appears to have rationalized the pre-existing trackways, which served the LPRIA *oppidum*. For example, to the west the so-called Stane Street is likely to represent a straightening of an Iron Age route between the *oppida* of *Camulodunum* and *Verulamium*. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the Po Valley and might be interpreted as evidence of a different approach to conquest and domination.

Whereas the Via Aemilia or Fosse Way were largely the product of military campaigns, backing up redesign of the landscape with force where necessary, the adoption of pre-existing routes was part of a far more subtle exercise of power. It will be argued that a superficial continuity in the course of a road disguises the relationships of power that are always associated with them. However unconsciously, this offered Rome considerable control over local populations.

As discussed above, the meanings and significance of these routes are both multiple and dynamic, being constantly redefined from a multitude of perspectives. The comparatively rapid physical changes to these roads – their rationalization at the hands of surveyors, the construction of new 'Roman' settlements, the erection of 'Roman-style' tombs along their courses (e.g. at Colchester, the tomb of centurion M. Favonius Facilis c.AD43–48; RIB 200) – led to just such redefinition. To local populations, these roads may have achieved new and ambiguous statuses, neither pre-Conquest, nor Roman, but a combination of the two. To an agent of the Conquest, these acts served to draw these routes into Rome's sphere of influence, making them less alien and more amenable to Roman authority.

Arguably, the majority of such redefinition was subconscious on the part of the Roman authorities – the placing of tombs formed part of an everyday life; the straightening of routes was part of a wider military ethic. Yet from the perspective of colonists and the Roman

authorities the effect was to redefine these routes as theirs, as legitimate areas of concern, as Roman. Such an added level of meaning, and its attendant ideology, is significant in terms of the continued use of these routes by local populations. As discussed above, the use of these roads helps to legitimize and perpetuate the ideology behind them. If the underlying ideology is re-defined by a dominant group, in this case backed up by military force, the continued use of these routes can be seen against a new structural power relationship. From Rome's perspective, these people were now using Roman roads and this effectively represented acquiescence to Roman authority. By successfully disguising Roman domination through an apparent continuity in the physical route itself and its essentially natural and/or traditional way of moving across the landscape, Rome gained immense control over everyday movement.

The appropriation of places, the control of movement and the conflict of different concepts of space can also be explored in terms of the system of dykes around the *oppidum*. Re-examination of the construction sequence suggests that two of the dykes should now be considered post-Conquest in date; Hawkes and Crummy have proposed that these dykes were part of a Roman 're-fortification' of the *oppidum* combined with existing LPRIA dykes for defensive purposes (1995:55–61). The re-use and enhancement of pre-existing settlement defences is known from a number of other sites in Britain, most notably at Hod Hill (Richmond 1968). However, rather than consider this phenomenon in terms of practical expedience (Hawkes and Crummy 1995:59), it might be suggested that the decision to perpetuate existing boundaries, and to instigate new ones can be seen as both a maintenance and as a subversion of pre-existing conceptions of space and place.

Given the general importance attached to boundaries during the Iron Age (cf. papers in Gwilt and Haselgrove 1997), the endurance of such landscape features is of some significance. The continuity of such meaningful landscape features, and in particular points of access through them, must have been consequential for survival or otherwise of notions of place and identity. Some support for this is derived from an inscription of the second century AD (ILS 2740) which implies that the distinction between *oppidum* (as defined by the dykes) and *colonia* (as defined by the town walls) continued long after the Conquest. Hence, not only did landscape features persist after AD43, so did some notion of place.

Beyond the perpetuation or destruction of pre-existing dykes, it appears that the Roman army also constructed its own. Although the dating and construction sequences are still tentative, the army apparently adopted similar construction methods, though in contrast to the LPRIA examples, they appear to be straighter and cut across the topography, rather than conforming to it (Hawkes and Crummy 1995, 162). The re-use of dykes for the definition and protection of a Roman military area can therefore be seen as a subversion of LPRIA spaces, taking pre-existing landscape features and literally reversing their functions and meanings. Symbolic of the Trinovantian *oppidum* and its opposition to Rome, we find a complete inversion, as the dykes now define a Roman stronghold, and the Britons are now the outsiders, the 'Other'. As with the adoption and rationalization of pre-existing routes, the construction of new defences, which clearly mimic LPRIA structures, represents an allusion to pre-existing notions of space, perhaps evoking similarly ambiguous notions of the meaning for local populations.

The significance of these features for movement across the landscape appears to have been profound; their long-term influence upon the road network is clearly visible. For example, Road 7, leading south-west from the colony, has to perform a series of abrupt course changes to avoid and pass through dykes of both LPRIA and Roman date (Hawkes and Crummy 1995:figure 2.32). Road 2 makes a sharp turn to pass through an entrance in Gryme's Dyke and further north along the same dyke, the main road running east out of the colony (Road 1) forks into three after

passing through a single entrance (Hawkes and Crummy 1995: figure. 2.32). In each example, movement is focussed upon specific locations, imbuing them with significance as points of transition; points of transition that had various histories, associated with both the defence of the *oppidum* and the later Roman occupation.

From Domination to Resistance

The focus of this paper has been the role of roads in the domination of the Empire. Central to this has been the way in which such roads were part of a process which manipulated identity and modified power relationships. As such, this discussion would not be complete without some consideration of resistance, though it is, of course, the nature of resistance that it is harder to recognise (Miller *et al.* 1989). The most obvious example of resistance in relation to roads is the Boudiccan revolt. This was apparently played out within the context of the Roman road network, appropriating and subverting its efforts to link vulnerable Roman settlements, such as Colchester, by using the roads against them (Jones and Mattingly 1990:map 4:9; Webster 1993). As we have discussed above, there is little doubt that Rome considered these roads and landscapes to be Roman; how the 'making Roman' of these routes was perceived by local populations is less clear. However, by using Roman roads to move through a Roman landscape, to Roman places, the rebels were issuing a devastating ideological message to the Roman authorities. Pre-existing conceptions of space and place were shown to have retained their energy despite attempts to harness and subvert them. Although other factors are clearly implicated, we can argue that a conflict of spatial ideologies and associated identities was fundamental to this explosion of violence, and seemingly incapable of solution through negotiation.

As yet, it is difficult to identify other more everyday acts of resistance in the face of Roman road construction. However, we should not be led into taking a simplistic utilitarian perspective. Just because roads offered more convenient and sanctioned movement through the landscape, does not imply that alternatives were not used. Power is derived from knowledge of the landscape, and many may have eschewed these new roads in favour of traditional routes. Such acts may be read as resistance to an assault upon identities.

Conclusion

The relevance of our own concepts of time and space to the past should not be left unquestioned. By emphasizing and problematizing their construction and experience, this paper has attempted to address the less tangible aspects of conquest. It has not been the intention to deny that roads had profound military, economic and technological significance. However, by considering their construction and use within humanized, not abstract space, it has been possible to explore the perceptual and ideological implications for both Roman society and those societies Rome conquered.

In this paper, roads have been isolated for particular scrutiny. In reality, they formed part of a far wider system of spatial and non-spatial policies towards conquest and domination. This is not to claim that there was a coherent policy behind the Empire; the term 'Rome' disguises a disparate series of groups operating both collectively and individually to different ends. Much of the diversity found around the Empire is therefore not the result of policy, but of dialogue. Roads demonstrate this admirably. They are far from a uniform phenomenon, universally and arbitrarily imposed. Their uses and implications were highly diverse, spatially and socially.

For most these roads were experienced on a very parochial level, and this questions the monopoly of the core's perspective over its subjects. The approach taken here allows a more

sustained consideration of the ideological aspects of these roads from a multitude of perspectives. This is important, for it is the conflict and negotiation of these contrasting perspectives, which forms the basis of Roman imperialism itself. Hence, just as the building of new motorways today has become the focus of a wider debate concerning differing world-views, so Roman roads can be seen to be implicated in far more than simply permitting the movement of legions and pottery. Roads are both time and space, people and place, domination and resistance.

School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Phil Balcombe, Colin Forcey, Mark Gillings and David Mattingly for reading earlier drafts and offering valuable comments. Useful suggestions were also offered by delegates at TRAC'97 and by my anonymous referee. This paper stems from research undertaken as part of a NERC-funded studentship.

Bibliography

Audi, R. 1995. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, A.R.H. 1992. Introduction: on ideology and landscape. In A.R.H. Baker and G. Biger (eds.) *Ideal and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the meanings of some places in the past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1–14.

Bender, B. 1993. Introduction: Landscape–Meaning and Action. In B. Bender (ed.) Landscape. Politics *and* Perspectives. Providence/Oxford: Berg, pp.1–18.

Campbell, B. 1996. Shaping the Rural Environment: Surveyors in Ancient Rome. *Journal of Roman Studies*, 86:74–99.

Chapman, J., Shiel, R. and Batovic, S. 1996. *The Changing Face of Dalmatia. Archaeological and Ecological Studies in a Mediterranean Landscape*. Leicester: Leicester University Press/Society of Antiquaries of London.

Chevallier, R. 1976. *Roman Roads*. London: Batsford.

Chevallier, R. 1983. *La Romanisation du Po*. Rome: École Françaises de Rome.

Frederiksen, M.W. and Ward Perkins, J.B. 1957. The Ancient Road Systems of the Central and Northern Ager Faliscus (Notes on Southern Etruria, 2). *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 25:67–204.

Greene, K. 1995. Explaining Roman land transport–methodology, theory, and the use of analogy. In G. Raepsaet and C. Rommelare (eds.) *Brancards et transport attelé entre Seine et Rhin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Age. Aspects archéologiques, économiques et techniques*. Bruxelles: Universite de Bruxelles, pp.127–147.

Gwilt, A. and Haselgrove, C. (eds.) 1997. *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies. New Approaches to the British Iron Age*. Oxford: Oxbow Monograph 71.

Hawkes, C.F.C. and Crummy, P. 1995. *Camulodunum 2. The Iron Age Dykes*. Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust.

ILS = Dessau, H. (ed.) 1892–1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. Berlin: Weidmann.

Janni, P. 1984. *La Mappa e il periplo: Cartografia antica e spazio odologico*. Rome: Bretschneider.

Jones, G.B.D. and Mattingly, D. 1990. *An Atlas of Roman Britain*. Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. (trans. D. Nicholson-Smith). Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell

Margary, I.D. 1973. *Roman Roads in Britain*. (Third edition.) London: John Baker.

Mattingly, D.J. 1997. Introduction. Dialogues of power and experience in the Roman Empire. In D.J. Mattingly (ed.) *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism. Power, discourse and discrepant experience in the Roman* Empire. Portsmouth, Rhode Island: Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 23, pp.7–24.

Merrick 1996 *Battle for the Trees*. Leeds: Godhaven Ink.

Miller, D., Rowlands, M. and Tilley, C. 1989. *Domination and Resistance*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Potter, T.W. 1979. *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria*. London: Paul Elek.

Potter, T.W. 1987. *Roman Italy*. London: British Museum.

Purcell, N. 1990. The Creation of Provincial Landscape: the Roman impact on Cisalpine Gaul. In T. Blagg. and M. Millett (eds.) *The Early Roman Empire in the West*. Oxford: Oxbow, pp.7–29.

Quilici, L. and Quilici Gigli, S. 1992. (eds.) *Tecnica Stradale Romana*. Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche e dell'Istituto di Archeologia dell'Università di Bologna.

RIB = Collingwood, W.G. and Wright, R.P. 1965. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richmond, I.A. 1968. *Hod Hill 2. Excavations carried out between 1951 and 1958*. London: British Museum.

Sack, R.D. 1986. *Human Territoriality: its theory and history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, C. 1979. *Roads and Tracks of Britain*. London: Orion.

Tilley, C. 1994. *A Phenomenology of Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments*. Oxford: Berg.

Webster, G. 1993. *Boudica. British Revolt against Rome, AD 60*. (Revised edition.) London: Batsford.

Wiseman, T.P. 1970. Roman Republican Road-Building, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 38:122–152.

Yntema, D. 1993. The Settlement of Valesio, Southern Italy. Final Report on the Field Survey. *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*, 68:49–70.