

ROMAN ENGINEERING ON THE ROADS TO SANTIAGO

II – The roads of the Rioja¹

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Introduction

The present-day area of the Rioja has since antiquity been crucial to East-West communications in the North of the Iberian Peninsula. The road that communicated with *Aquitania* (Aquitaine) from *Asturica* (Astorga) via *Pompaelo* (Pamplona) led off the road to *Tarraco* (Tarragón) through *Caesaraugusta* (Saragossa) by a deviation at *Virovesca* (Briviesca). It gave this area a special strategic importance in that it was traversed by the East-West Roman highway for the whole of its present length.

Important Roman cities like *Libia* (Herramélluri-Leiva), *Tritium Magallum* (Tricio), *Vareia* (Varea), *Calagurris* (Calahorra) and *Graccurris* (Alfaro) flourished, doubtless with the help of this vital communication route.

The whole of the later history of the Rioja is closely linked with this spinal column, which has not ceased being used up to today: it performs its purpose still in the form of a motorway.

A large part of it served, as only it could, the stream of people and cultures created by the pilgrimage to St. James of Compostela. As a result of this combination of politics and history, of the means of communications, of royal interests, of religious foundations and various other factors, the pilgrim roads changed through the ages. The changes were more visible at the beginning, before the Way was established by the centres of religion and hospitality that were specially founded to attract and care for pilgrims.

There is no complete agreement among historians over the matter. There are sufficient works, which have not been bettered despite their age², that clarify much about the development of the

¹ Chapter I of this series, MORENO GALLO, I. 2002. *La vieja carretera castellanoleonesa* [The old highway through Castile and León], brings together a comparative analysis of the Road to Santiago and the Roman roads throughout the Community of Castile and León. It was published in:

- Revista Cimbra nº 346 (June 2002) by the Colegio de Ingenieros Técnicos de Obras Públicas [College of Public Works Technical Engineers].

- Publications of the Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses nº 73. 2002. Diputación de Palencia.

See also: http://www.traianvs.net/viasromanas/santiago01_en.htm

² I refer principally to the work by VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA, L.; LACARRA, J.M.; URÍA RÍU, J. 1949, *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela* [Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela].

Other lengthy publications exist that are not quite so useful for the present purpose, such as HUIDOBRO Y SERNA, L. 1950. *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago*. [Pilgrimages to Santiago] 3 volumes.

pilgrim routes to Santiago. I shall base this chapter on these. I shall attempt not to repeat what has already been established. I shall deal with aspects that have not yet been fully proven and with recent discoveries in the light of the methodology I wish to establish. Nor shall I deal at length with Roman roads that have been the subject of previous publications of mine³. On the other hand I shall look in depth at the stretches of roads that have attracted insufficient attention and which may in some way hold new interest.

The first roads to Santiago in the Rioja: a bit of history

As has been pointed out, it is known that from earliest times pilgrim ways have existed, created by politico-social circumstances, that assuredly ran more to the North than at present. According to some authors, Islamic cultural influence until the 9th century made it difficult and even dangerous to cross the Plateau of Castile⁴. Others are of the opinion that shifts in the road happened more out of rivalries between rulers: during the reign of Sancho Garcés III, called Mayor [the Greater] (1005-1035), when the way was shifted more to the South, the Navarre-Castile frontier with the Moors scarcely moved, and in any case all the attempts to prevent Almanzor's incursions were far from successful. It should be recalled that Almanzor ravaged León and Santiago, the very city of the apostle⁵, without difficulty.

In fact it is the *Chronica Silense* that holds the key – the decision by Sancho el Mayor (1005-1035) to take the Road to Santiago through Nájera. This secured the way through Pamplona, Nájera and Burgos.

It is more likely that its route had not yet been fixed. Certainly it did not yet go through Logroño, and it was even less likely through Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Belorado, since none of these cities was in existence at the time. From Nájera they would have followed the Roman road towards Cerezo de Riotirón and Briviesca, meeting up again with the Vía Aquitana⁶. The definitive route, better known today, was consolidated after 1076 in the reign of Alfonso VI. At that time bridges and hostelries were constructed, first by Santo Domingo de la Calzada [of the Road] and then by his disciple, San Juan de Ortega. In 1095 Logroño was repopulated with some Frankish elements⁷ by the king himself. Its bridge was constructed and new hostelries and sanctuaries were built on the road.

There are others that are shorter but well documented that shew that their author has closely examined and travelled the Way, such as those of PASSINI, J. 1993. *El Camino de Santiago: itinerario y núcleos de población* [The Way to Santiago: route and population centres], and 1988 *Aragón: los núcleos urbanos del Camino de Santiago* [Aragon: urban nuclei on the Way to Santiago].

³ MORENO GALLO, I. *Descripción de la vía de Italia a Hispania en Burgos y Palencia* [Description of the road from Italia to Hispania] (November, 1998). Junta de Castilla y León, Conserjería de Educación y Cultura.

1st edition 1999, in interactive format on CD-ROM in collaboration with the Junta de Castilla y León.

2nd edition July 2001, book published by the Diputación Provincial de Burgos and the Diputación Provincial de Palencia.

MORENO GALLO, I. *La red viaria antigua en la Rioja* [The ancient road network in the Rioja] (November, 1999), Gobierno de la Rioja, Conserjería de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes.

1st edition December 2001. Miliario Extravagante, Appendix 2, La red viaria antigua en la Rioja, [The ancient road network of the Rioja] part 1. *La vía de Italia a Hispania en la Rioja*. [The road from Italia to Hispania in the Rioja].

⁴ MARTÍNEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, pp.15 and 16. *El camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos*. [The road to Santiago in the province of Burgos].

⁵ LACARRA. 1949, vol. II, ch.I, pp.11 et seq., *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

⁶ LACARRA. 1949, vol. II, ch.I, pp.12 et 22, *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

⁷ LACARRA. 1949, vol. II, ch.I, p.21, *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

Various historians who have studied the subject differ about the siting of the early pilgrim routes, and many authors have advanced hypotheses about the routes that remain unproved and unlikely⁸. What has been strongly asserted by Lacarra remains: “*The fact remains that there is no firm evidence until the 11th century as to the routes that pilgrims might have taken*”⁹.

The first reference concerning the pilgrimages to Saint James which we have is that of the bishop of Puy, Gotescalco. In the year 950 he arrived from Aquitaine with a large retinue and stayed in the Riojan monastery of La Abelda¹⁰. It is to be supposed that he crossed the Pyrenees by one of the two passes (“*summo pyreneo*”) referred to in the Antonine Itinerary on the routes from Astorga to Aquitaine and from Saragossa to Benearm. However, nothing certain can be said about the remainder of the way this personage took.

In 959 Abbot Césareo from the Catalan monastery of Cecilia of Montserrat came to Compostela, and, some years later in the same century, there were precise references to other pilgrims from beyond the Pyrenees. Finally, in 997, Almanzor arrived in Santiago and destroyed the city¹¹.

So we can see that there was no lack of roads and that it was likely that they were following the Roman trade routes. However, it would be rash to choose precisely which, if we take into account the dearth of information about these journeys and the inadequate identification of the roads that have been made to date¹².

Nonetheless I shall attempt, through this series of essays, to get somewhere near identifying some of the Roman roads that became parts of the pilgrim routes.

Dealing with the area of the Rioja, we shall here avoid the Roman routes that led the pilgrims towards Pamplona, basically the two that crossed the two main passes over the Pyrenees (“*summo pyreneo*”), roads nº 33 and 34 of the so-called *Itinerarium provinciarum Antonini Augusti* [Antonine Itinerary]¹³. Nor shall we speak of the pilgrim ways previous to those that ran through the Rioja, such as the *Vía Aquitana*, the way from Bayonne to Burgos, the way that ran along the coast and others.

We shall, however, point out the routes that, after Pamplona, led to the Rioja, as well as those that went as far as Burgos. As a consequence we shall go significantly beyond the boundary of the present-day Rioja; but this seems necessary to make the desired analysis with any degree of certainty.

The first period of the road from Pamplona to Nájera

Nájera was the capital of the kingdom of Navarre in the tenth century. This route between Nájera and Pamplona would doubtless have been the most important and the most used at the time.

⁸ HUIDOBRO Y SERNA, L. 1950. *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago*. [Pilgrimages to Santiago]

MARTÍNEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998. *El camino de Santiago*...op. cit.

UBIETO ARTETA, 1993, *Los caminos de Santiago en Aragón* [The roads to Santiago in Aragón].

⁹ LACARRA. 1949, vol. II, ch.I, pp.12 and 22, *Las peregrinaciones*... op. cit.

¹⁰ VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA. 1949 vol.I, ch.I, p.41 et seqq. *Las peregrinaciones*... op. cit.

¹¹ Idem

¹² This is not the first time that I have complained about this aspect, and I fear it will continue. Unfortunately almost the whole of the Roman road network remains untraced. On the other hand there are too many paved ways, which, despite their poor construction techniques, have been ascribed to Roman engineers. In this respect refer to:

MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Infraestructura viaria romana*. [Roman road infrastructure] Revista Obra Pública nº 56. Ingeniería e Historia. Colegio de Ingenieros de Caminos Canales y Puertos.

¹³ ROLDÁN HERVÁS, J.M. 1975, p.98 *Itineraria hispana*. [Spanish itineraries].

The rivers Arga and Ebro were among the most difficult obstacles to be crossed. The *Pons Regine* [Queen's Bridge] over the river Arga is attributed to the Reina Mayor [Greater Queen], wife of Sancho the Mayor (1005-1035). It was first documented as early as 1090¹⁴; but the actual date of construction is unknown, whilst Logroño was repopulated with Franks at the time its bridge was being built in 1095.

Before this date, Logroño, although it seems to have been in existence, lacked importance and standing. Although there is a mention in a tenth century document¹⁵, it did not start gaining significance until Alfonso VI incorporated the Rioja into the Kingdom of Castile and repopulated it¹⁶.

The most direct route between these two towns, which was used at this first stage, passes through Puente la Reina, Viana, Oyón, the mythical Mantible Bridge over the river Ebro, and Huércanos. I have already demonstrated previously¹⁷ that the route must have passed across the Mantible Bridge over the river Ebro. Despite present-day general opinion, this bridge has nothing Roman about it, for a number of reasons:

- No Roman road has been ascertained either before or after it.
- The existence of a Roman road passing through Varea, documented by Strabo¹⁸, is far more logical from all points of view. At this point the main road from Tarragona touches the Ebro, and the string of Roman remains around Viana¹⁹, across from Varea, supports this argument much better than a passage through El Cortijo.
- Arguments adduced by some researchers do not contain the smallest weight of evidence to prove that they are Roman²⁰; others have chosen to pussyfoot, and have avoided tackling the matter in works of a quality that rejects such an approach²¹.

¹⁴ LACARRA, 1949, vol.II, ch.I, p.23, *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

¹⁵ SERRANO PINEDA, I. 1930., p.24. *Cartulario de San Millán de la Cogolla*. Cartulary of San Millán de la Cogolla].

¹⁶ LACARRA. 1949, vol.II, ch.VII, p.150. *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

¹⁷ MORENO GALLO, I.1999. *La red viaria antigua en la Rioja...* op. cit.

¹⁸ STRABO (c.63B.C.-A.D.25) *Geography* III.4.12.

¹⁹ ESPINOSA RUIZ, U. 1995. pp.126-127. In *Historia de la ciudad de Logroño*. [History of the city of Logroño] vol.I.

²⁰ A halo of Romancism has circled for many years over the Mandible Bridge. This is reflected in learned references from the 19th century that deal with it:

RUIZ GALARRETA, J.M. 1959, pp.117-119. *La leyenda del Puente Mandible* [The legend of the Mandible Bridge].. Berceo, 50.

MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, G. 1951, pp.38-39 *Los caminos en la historia de España* [Roads in Spanish history] refers to it also, when he speaks of the admiration that there was in Mediaeval times for bridges like this, the stuff of many legends.

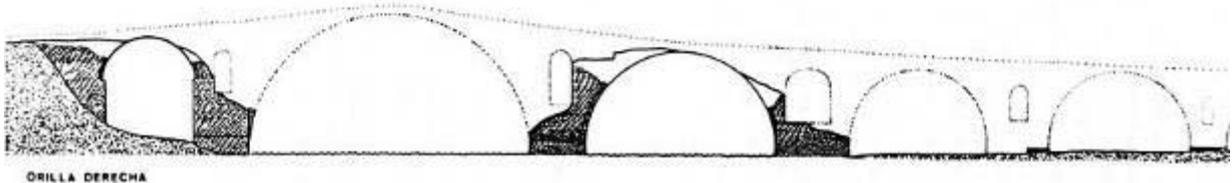
Others, as they assert its Roman origin, go on to compare this bridge with the great classics of the Roman world, such as those at Alcántara, Mérida, Alconetar, etc. MARTÍN BUENO, M.A. & MOYA VALGAÑÓN, J.G. 1972, p.176. *El Puente Mandible*. Estudios de Arqueología Alavesa, Vol. V. Vitoria 1972.

FERNÁNDEZ CASADO, C. 1980. *Historia del puente en España. Puentes romanos*. [History of bridges in Spain - Roman bridges]. In this lengthy work using decidedly inflated arguments, the author relies on the words of MARTÍN & MOYA and states that the bridge is Roman beyond doubt ("*indudablemente romano*").

On the other hand LIZ GUIRAL, J. 1985. p.50, *Puentes romanos del Convento Jurídico Caesaraugustano* [Roman bridges of the Juridical Convent of Saragossa], adopts purely geometric arguments, the merits of which are very much open to debate, and he also claims Roman origins for other bridges, for which construction in modern times has been established, such as that at Agoncillo on the river Leza at the end of the 18th century.

²¹ AZCARATE GARAY-OLAUN, A.; PALACIOS MENDOZA, V. 1996. pp.333-334, *Puentes de Álava*. Gobierno Vasco [Basque Government]. This exhaustive work specifically on all the bridge of Álava, alludes to a forthcoming

- Excessive variations in the geometry, not only in respect of the structure itself, but in the workmanship of the remains that are still standing, manifest how that they differ greatly from Roman construction methods²².
- If we adopt a study method based on comparative analysis, not only of measurements, but especially of construction techniques, such as are adopted by the most serious present-day researchers into Roman fabric, we have to conclude that the similarity in structural design, in sizes and even more in the fabric and the materials employed in the bridge of Puente la Reina (? 1030) is remarkable.
- Both examples present a general irregularity in the ashlar, smaller in the upper parts of the bridge, a design using large-sized weight-reducing arches and with clear apertures between them, as well as general proportions common to both bridges that seem suspiciously alike.
- All this makes both bridges, part of the same road, as we shall see, not only of the same period, but also constructed by the same people.



Structural comparison of the bridge at Puente de la Reina, built around the year 1030 (above) and the reconstruction of the bridge at Mantible, following the drawing made by Bueno and Moya in 1972.

study specifically on this bridge, and thus avoids coming to a decision on whether it is Roman. The authors limit themselves to referring the reader to existing works on the subject.

²² It is necessary to mention here the research of the road engineer Manuel Durán, recorded in his unpublished thesis. Only a few conclusions have been advanced; but its publication reveals the necessity for the Roman bridges of *Hispania* to be systematically analysed and rationally catalogued.

DURÁN FUENTES, M. 2001, *La identificación de los puentes romanos en Hispania: una cuestión a desarrollar* [The identification of Roman bridges in *Hispania* - an on-going problem] Revista Obra Pública Ingeniería y Territorio no. 57. Monográfico Ingeniería e Historia III. Colegio de Ingenieros de Caminos Canales y Puertos, December 2001.

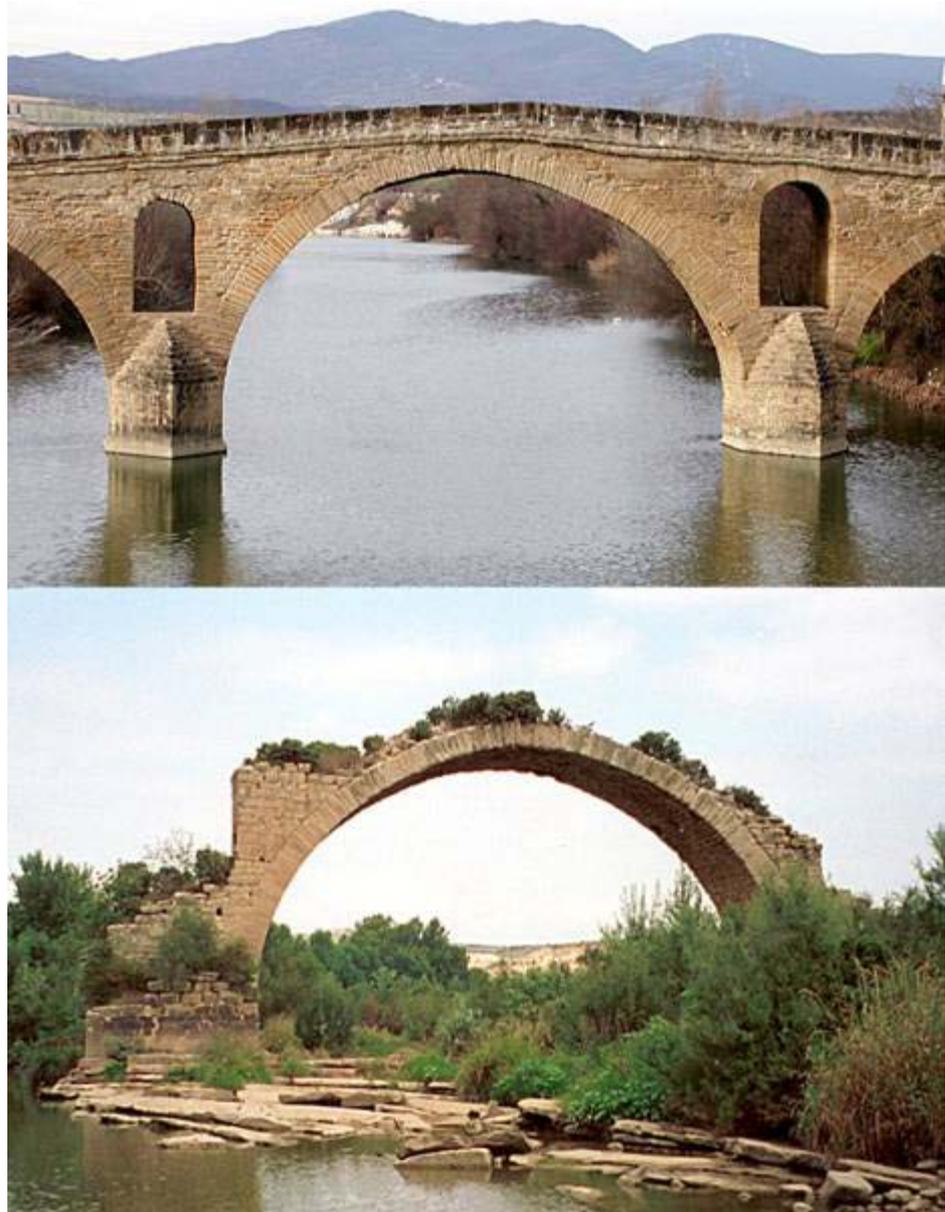
DURÁN FUENTES, M. 2002. *Análisis constructivo de los puentes romanos*. [Structural analysis of Roman bridges] Libro de Ponencias del Primer Congreso sobre las Obras Públicas Romanas [Reports of the First Congress on Roman Public Works]. Mérida, November 2002.



Detail of the bridge at Puente de la Reina on the left and that at Mantible. Note the size and irregularity of the bond, the width and proportions of the vaulting, the positions of the scaffolding slots, etc.



Structural and bond details of the bridge at Puente de la Reina (up) and the bridge at Mantible (down).



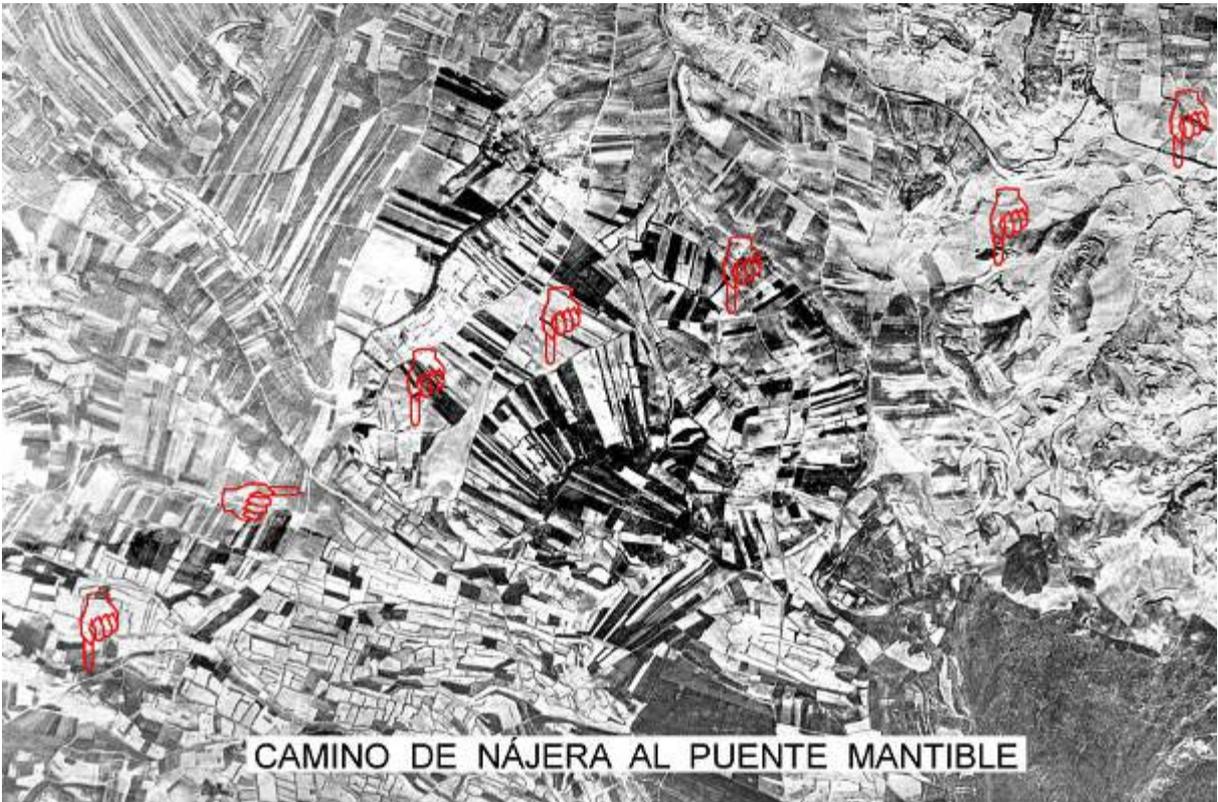
Structural and bond details of the bridge at Puente de la Reina (up) and the bridge at Mantible (down).

In fact, between the Mantible Bridge and Nájera, it has been possible to recognize an ancient road through Buicio and Huércanos. Its remains show no noticeable alteration between Fuenmayor and Buicio. It also remains in much of the jurisdiction of Cenicero, where it is called Camino Mayor [Main Road] after crossing the ravine at La Galiana. The name of this locality is frequent in the Middle Ages and reveals the presence of a road on its way towards Gaul. This road, which has nothing Roman about it, was the same. It then coincides with the main road from Huércanos to Cenicero. One can follow it exactly in the aerial photograph, although today it is broken and lost along several stretches²³.

²³ Servicio Geográfico del Ejército [Army Geographic Service] Aerial flights in 1956 and 1957.



The Camino Mayor [Main Road], in the jurisdiction of Cenicero, between the Mantible Bridge and Nájera.



The Camino Mayor [Main Road] between the Mantible Bridge and Nájera.

One cannot look on this road as a Roman route between Tricio and the Ebro, because the characteristics of the lengths that remain do not allow one to reach such a clear conclusion. Nothing about the layout, infrastructure or surface validate it as a Roman road. The slope of the

rise between Buicio and Fuenmayor, despite a certain cut into the rock, is too steep for wheeled vehicles. Doubtless *Tritium* would never have used this road, as it had the magnificent paved roadway that linked it with the Ebro crossing at *Vareia*, where there was, moreover, a river embarkation point²⁴.

On the other side of the river Ebro, the roads between Assa and Oyón display similar features. The old road of Las Muñecas and that of La Serna are now asphalted over; but they have never combined the features of a Roman layout. It is the same with the so-called Camino de Laguarda at Oyón, which, moreover, lacks any kind of infrastructure.

Nevertheless, sufficient traces of an ancient road exist between Pamplona and the river Ebro with paving that is not Roman in nature, although it is consistent in itself. There are other sites separated from one another, such as the paved road from Cirauqui and those found between Viana and Oyón.



View of the kerb of the road at Cirauqui (Navarre).

²⁴ STRABO. III.4.12.



Kerb on the road from Viana to Oyón.

Although they are not Roman, they clearly show a unity in the approach to their construction throughout their length, and that they are certainly of the same period. In all cases there is a narrow kerb on both sides, with irregular-sized stones roughly squared, and paving of irregular sizes in the middle.

This road differs in layout from that which was later adopted for the pilgrim ways, probably after the early ruin of the Mantible Bridge and the construction of the bridge at Logroño, over the stretch between Viana and Nájera. As one would expect, the first of these was straighter and shorter than the latter.

The regularity of the passage of pilgrims along this stretch has not been studied as yet, because its existence and likely use for this purpose is unknown. At all events, it could have been constructed only at the early stages of the pilgrimages to St. James and over a short period, something less than half a century, as a result of which it could leave little trace.

This appears to be indicated by the Fuero de Miranda [Statute of Miranda]²⁵, which in 1099 decreed that there should be no bridge or landing stage between those of Logroño and Miranda, clear proof that the bridge of Logroño, rebuilt in 1095, was already in existence and that the Mantible Bridge was in ruins.

The first period of the road from Nájera to Burgos

²⁵ CANTERA BURGOS, F. 1945, p.56 *Fuero de Miranda de Ebro* [Statute of Miranda de Ebro].

Between Nájera and Burgos the road followed in the first period was doubtless the Roman road from *Italia* to *Hispania*. Its use for trade would have declined only in later centuries, during which the pilgrim way became established through Santo Domingo and Belorado, as we shall see. The identification of the Rioja stretch of this Roman road, as that of the stretch to Burgos was confirmed in my previously quoted writings. I shall therefore not dwell on this aspect longer than a brief description.

We shall outline the stretch as far as Burgos where the Roman road and the Way to Santiago meet again.

This stretch of road, as detailed in the Itinerary²⁶, coincides in its entirety with the road from *Italia* to *Hispania*, marked by the number 1 in the Saavedra²⁷ edition, as well as that described from Astorga to Tarragona, number 32, as follows:

Wess.

387,	4 DE ITLIA IN HISPANIAS	
	5 A Mediolano Vapinco trans Alpes Cottias	
	6 mansionibus supra scriptis	m.p. CCLV
	7 inde in Galleciam ad Leug. VII Ge	
	8 minam	m.p. DCCCCLXXV
---	- -----	-----
392,	1 Caesaraugusta	m.p. XLVI
	2 Cascanto	m.p. L
393,	1 Calagorra	m.p. XXVIII
	2 Vereia	m.p. XXVIII
394,	1 Tritio	m.p. XVIII
	2 Libia	m.p. XVIII
	3 Segasamunclo	m.p. VII
	4 Verovesca	m.p. XI
---	- -----	-----

Wess.

448,	2 Item ab Asturica Tarracone	m.p. CCCCLXXXII
	3	sic:
---	- -----	-----
450,	6 Deobrigula	m.p. XV
	1 Tritium	m.p. XXI
	2 Virovesca	m.p. XI

²⁶ ROLDÁN HERVÁS, J.M. 1975, pp.38-45 and pp. 96-98. *Itineraria Hispana*.

²⁷ *Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de la Historia en la recepción pública de Don Eduardo Saavedra el día 28 de diciembre de 1862*, [Lectures given before the Royal Academy of History on the public receptio of Mr. Eduardo Saavedra, 28th December 1862]. Madrid 1914.

	3 Atiliana	m.p. XXX
	4 Barbariana	m.p. XXXII
	5 Graccurreis	m.p. XXXII
451,	1 Bellisone	m.p. XXVIII
	2 Caesarea Augusta	m.p. XXXVI
---	- -----	-----

The only road that these two journeys describe connects the following known remains between Saragossa and Burgos:

<u>Road</u>	<u>Mansio</u>	<u>Location of remains</u>
1, 28 y 32	Caesaraugusta	Zaragoza
28	Alauona	Alagón
28 y 32	Balsione	Junto a Mallén
1	Cascantum	Cascante
32	Graccurreis	Junto a Alfaro
1	Calagurris	Calahorra
32	Barbariana	Junto a Agoncillo
1	Vareia	Varea
1	Tritio	Tricio
32	Atiliana	Yacimiento en Azofra - Valpierre
1	Libia	Herramélluri - Leiva
1	Segasamunclo	Junto a Cerezo de Riotirón
1, 32 y 34	Virovesca	Briviesca
32 y 34	Tritium	Alto de Rodilla
32 y 34	Deobrigula	Junto a Tardajos

The first traces of this stretch of the Roman road from Nájera can be found already as it passes through Hormilla, where an original culvert still remains, and where the first embankments are evident.

Between Hormilla, as it passes over the hill of Valpierre, where *Atiliana*²⁸ used to be, as far as San Torcuato traces of infrastructure continue, with raised embankments, such as can be seen in many Roman roads in so many places. This road has always been held to be Roman, and as such it is reflected in maps. This has not prevented its conversion into a modern agricultural road in the district of Azofra.

²⁸ On the various sitings of Atiliana throughout history and as finally suggested, see MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *La vía romana de Italia a Hispania en la Rioja...* op. cit.



Raised embankment of the Roman road from Italia to Hispania in the plains of Valpierre.

The famous battles of Valpierre between the Castilian forces of Count Fernán González and the Navarran forces of King Sancho Abarca were fought in the tenth century on the vast plains where it still largely remains²⁹. The location probably resulted from the ease of access for all kinds of troops and supplies. A single stone at Valpierre has provided a record of this event over the centuries³⁰.

The road has changed more between San Torcuato and the river Oja. It has even been asphalted over recently. As far as Herramélluri-Leiva, where *Libia* used to be, it is now a major highway, although it was perfectly preserved along its whole length until a few years ago.

There still remain stretches that have not changed between the river Reláchigo and the river Encemero and the two superb Roman bridges preserved at Cerezo de Río Tirón, one of which served as a crossing for the road and the other as access to *Segasamuncló*.

Along the whole of this length the Roman road runs through contour lines with perfect conditions for carts.

The features of the slopes and their suitability for wheeled traffic are first rate. This is in contrast to the equivalent Way to Santiago between Nájera and Belorado, where the contours are very

²⁹ It was very evident in the time of Govantes. This historiam mentions the road in various annexes to his work. Moreover he asserts that it was in a magnificent state of preservation: GOVANTES, A.C., 1846, pp. 68, 142, 205. *Diccionario geográfico-histórico de España* [Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Spain]. Section II. *Comprende toda la Rioja o toda la provincia de Logroño y algunos pueblos de la de Burgos* [comprising the whole of the Rioja and the whole of the province of Logroño and some towns of the province of Burgos]

In the same way, Francisco Coello draws the Roman road on his map as running through this plain: COELLO, F. *Mapa de la provincia de Logroño de 1851* [Map of the province of Logroño in 1851].

³⁰ GOVANTES, A.C. 1846, p.204, *Diccionario geográfico-histórico...* op. cit.

bad. It goes through very uneven terrain, which has been turned into a roadway with great effort only through the course of centuries.

Similar circumstances apply on the stretch between Cerezo (*Segasamunclo*), Briviesca (*Virovesca*), the hill of Rodilla (*Tritium*) and the city of Burgos, through which the road passes³¹.

Between Cerezo and Burgos we find highly important traces of road in the form of embankments on good foundations of stonework that go on for miles. They are fully described in previous publications.

At the same time, between Belorado and Burgos, the Way to St. James as occurred in its previous length, runs through uneven terrain, unsuitable for roadmaking and lacking the least trace of infrastructure, as can be seen in the unaltered lengths.

The passage of pilgrims along the Roman road between Nájera and Briviesca seems to be proved by clear evidence. It is known that there was a hostelry in Hormilla and a Templar fort³². Between Leiva and Tormantos, still in the territory of the Rioja, we find the hermitage of Nuestra Señora la Peregrina [Our Lady the Pilgrim – The Virgin Pilgrim] right next to the Way, a dedication that undoubtedly links the place to pilgrimages.



Embankment of the road from Italia to Hispania at Leiva. In the background the hermitage of Nuestra Señora la Peregrina. Behind it the bastion of Libia.

In Cerezo there are various pieces of evidence of the passage of the Way to St. James. The existence of the hostelry of Sanjurjo at Cerezo³³, is located in the same street as the church of St.

³¹ MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia...* op. cit.

³² GOVANTES, A.C., 1846, p.142, *Diccionario geográfico-histórico...* op. cit.

³³ PÉREZ AVELLANEDA, M. 1983, p. 135 *Cerezo de Riotirón, Autrigón, romano y medieval* [Roman and Mediaeval Cerezo de Riotirón and Autrigón].

Nicholas, the *strata maiore* mentioned in a document of 913³⁴, possibly the Roman road on its way through Cerezo.

In the Parish Museum of Cerezo is preserved a pilgrim's scallop-shell, with the typical pair of perforations in its upper part. It comes from the ruins of the apse of the church of Nuestra Señora de la Llana³⁵ [Our Lady of the Plain], a pilgrim's offering kept in the church since time immemorial.

At Briviesca long ago there existed a church dedicated to St. James beside the road to Belorado³⁶. There was also a hostelry called "de los Peregrinos" [of the Pilgrims] or "de Santa María la Mayor"³⁷ [of St. Mary the Greater], located outside the walls in the direction of Burgos. But this was already catering also for the needs of pilgrims arriving by the *Vía Aquitana*.

Second period of the road from Pamplona to Nájera

Once the passage through Logroño was secured in 1095, the passage over the river Ebro approached closely the road existing in Roman times in Varea. It therefore seems logical that the Roman road between Varea and Nájera should be used again: the starting point near to the outlet of the river Iregua makes it quite accessible from Logroño. Also in its immediate area there passes the very long line of the road called Calleja Vieja [Old Street].



Foundation of boulders on the road from Italia to Hispania on arrival at Navarrete. Road from Lardero to Navarrete.

³⁴ SERRANO, L. 1910, pp.328 et seqq. Doc.322. *Fuentes para la historia de Castilla*. [Sources for the history of Castile] Father Luciano Serrano.

³⁵ PERÉZ AVELLANEDA, M. 1983, p.137. *Cerezo de Rio Tiron* ... op. cit.

³⁶ ARGAIZ, 1669, p.318, *Población eclesiástica en España* [Population of the Church in Spain].

³⁷ LACARRA. 1949, vol.I, ch.XIX, p.456 *Las peregrinaciones*... op. cit.

From here, through Navarrete and Tricio, the Roman road provoked the admiration of scholars who were able to see it in the eighteenth century³⁸. Superb remains³⁹ could be seen until they were destroyed not long ago, with no misgivings, at the hands of short-sighted, ignorant administrators⁴⁰.

This Roman road and the more modern road that runs through Grajera, still used today by pilgrims, run parallel and very close together, starting from Navarrete.

The conditions of the Roman road, as regards layout and even more as regards surface, as well as visibility, as it follows a high and well-drained line are perfect.

The superb remains that can be seen along the whole length of this section make it inexcusable that pilgrims do not use it today⁴¹.

³⁸ PRESTAMERO, I. 1796, p.280. In the work by González de Echavarri: Alaveses Ilustres [Famous people of Álava]: *Biografía de Lorenzo de Prestamero* [Biography of Lorenzo de Prestamero]. *Textos*. Real Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País [Royal Basque Society of Friends of the Country]:

"a line has been preserved, made of gravel that had to be specially brought from a distance, because there is none of the same type in the whole of the rest of that region. As soon as one climbs the height, one can see the road unkept for a long stretch, which turns from the South to the North to go round some valleys that can be seen. The bed of this road is of chalk stone, covered with gravel, and continues under Cerezo, Quintanilleja, Tormantos, Leiva, Herramélluri, Villalobar, San Torcuato, Valpierre, Hormilla, Nájera, Navarrete, Logroño, Varea, Calahorra, Alfaro, Saragossa. Throughout this long length, besides the unbroken traces of its route, one can find many whole lengths of the Roman road. I have seen these, especially in the parts near Villalobar, San Torcuato, Valpierre, Calahorra, Logroño and Alfaro where there are some lengths that look as though they had just been laid."

³⁹ This length is clearly identified and established in this part for the first time in MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *La red viaria antigua en la Rioja...* op. cit.

⁴⁰ <http://www.traianvs.net/viasromanas/tricio.htm>

⁴¹ Basic details can be seen:

MUNTIÓN HERNÁEZ, C. and MORENO GALLO, I. November 2002, *Nosotros proponemos...* [We suggest ...] Piedra de Rayo. Revista riojana de cultura popular [Riojan review of popular culture].

And the detailed description of this stretch to be seen in MORENO GALLO, I. 2002, p.7 *El miliario extravagante* [The eccentric mile-stone].n° 81.



Detail of the thickness of the road surface in a side-section caused by the terracing of adjacent property. Roman road from Italia to Hispania between the hill of San Antón and Alesón.y Alesón.



Foundation of round stones in a side-section caused by the terracing of adjacent property. Road from Italia to Hispania between the hill of San Antón and Alesón.

Pilgrims today meet up again with the Roman road at the bridge of river Najerilla in Nájera. Nonetheless pilgrims no longer go through Tricio, although their passage also along this section of the Roman road is well documented, as is also the existence of a pilgrim's hostelry in Tricio

<http://www.traianvs.net/>

itself⁴². The actual presence of the hermitage of Santa María de los Arcos [St. Mary of the Arches] at the foot of the road must have attracted many devotions along this section of Roman road.



Perfectly preserved embankment with remains of upper kerb on the road from Italia to Hispania in Tricio. In the background, Alesón.



Remains of the surface on the embankment of the Roman road as it enters Tricio. In the background, Tricio.

⁴² SAENZ RIPA, E. 1994. *La atención al peregrino* [Care for pilgrims]. Actas de las V Semanas de Estudios Medievales de Nájera [Papers of the Five Weeks of Mediaeval Studies of Nájera]. Instituto de Estudios Riojanos [Institute of Riojan Studies].

Second period of road from Nájera to Burgos

From here on one can make use of the road which was established as a consequence of the political interests of Kings Sancho el Mayor at first and Alfonso VI afterwards, and also as a consequence of the work in the building of hostelries undertaken by Saints Domingo and his disciple Juan, in their caring for the pilgrims who were later attracted by the sanctuaries consecrated in honour of the benefactors of the road itself.

This road is certainly very badly laid with no type of surfacing, as one can see even today where it has not been altered.

For its spiritual objectives and its normal traffic by foot or at most by horse, together with the absence of goods traffic for trade purposes on the part of this migratory flow, any road would do, provided it covered the requirements for religion or accommodation.

As we have shewn, the final consolidation of this road came about as a result of the efforts to set up towns, especially by the Franks, in the twelfth century, together with a goodly number of sanctuaries and hostelries⁴³.

Already in 1047 Count Gómez de Carrión founded a monastery and a pilgrims' hostelry in Arconada. García of Nájera founded a pilgrim hostelry in the monastery of Irache and a superb lodging complex in Nájera (1052). But the big push in Castile and León came at the hand of Alfonso VI. He suppressed the tolls at Puerto de Valcárcel (1072) and founded the hostelry of Cebrero. In Burgos, the capital city, he founded that of San Juan (St. John) and the Emperador [Emperor] (1085), among others.

In 1076 the saintly hermit Domingo set himself up on the banks of the river Oja to attract the attention of the pilgrims. He founded a hostelry and built a bridge over the river Oja. It is said that he also rebuilt the ancient Roman crossing over the river Najerilla at Nájera.

Bishop Osmundo of Astorga built the Pont Ferrada [Iron Bridge] which gave rise to the city. In 1096 Bishop Pedro de León founded a hostelry in León and in Carrión. Count Gómez Díaz founded another next to the monastery of San Zoilo.

Alfonso repopulated Sahagún with Franks (1085), Villafranca del Bierzo and perhaps Villafranca de Montes de Oca. Finally he repopulated Logroño (1095) at the same time as he rebuilt the bridge.

In Navarre and Aragon, Sancho Ramírez supported the lodgings at Jaca (1084) and Pamplona (1087). He raised for pilgrims the toll at Somport, which already included the large lodging house of Santa Cristina. He also exempted them from tolls at Roncesvalles, where several establishments catered for pilgrims. In 1090 he created, with the help of the Franks, the township of Estella.

This definitive way of St. James is what is described for us by the Pilgrims' Guide of the *Codex Caestinus* of the twelfth century, of which book V forms the *Guide* of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* [St. James' book], attributed to Aymerich Picaud, chancellor to Pope Calixtus⁴⁴.

It is of interest here to look at the Spanish section of this itinerary and its relationship with the Camino Real [Royal Road], described by Villuga four centuries afterwards, between Santiago and San Juan de Pie de Puerto:

⁴³ LACARRA 1949 vol.II, ch.I, pp.19 et seqq. *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit

⁴⁴ VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA. 1949. Vol. I, pp.201 et seqq. *Las peregrinaciones...* op. cit.

<u><i>Liber Sancti Jacobi (¿1120?)</i></u>		<u><i>Villuga Itinerary (1546)</i></u>	<u><i>Present-day</i></u>
<i>Pampilona</i>		<i>Pamplona</i>	Pamplona
		<i>La Austia de Remiega</i>	
<i>Pons Regine</i>	<i>Arga et Runa f.</i>	<i>La Puente la Reina</i>	Puente la Reina
<i>Lorca</i>	<i>Rivus Salatus</i>		Lorca
		<i>Aldea</i>	
<i>Stella</i>	<i>Aega fl.</i>	<i>Estella</i>	Estella
<i>Arcus</i>		<i>Los Arcos</i>	Los Arcos
<i>Hospicium</i>			
<i>Turres</i>	<i>Flumen laetiferum</i>		Torres de Sansol
<i>Covas</i>	<i>Flumen laetiferum</i>		despoblado
		<i>Viana</i>	Viana
<i>Grugnus</i>	<i>Ebra fl.</i>	<i>Logroño</i>	Logroño
<i>Villa Rubea</i>			despoblado
		<i>Nauarrete</i>	Navarrete
<i>Nagera</i>		<i>Nájera</i>	Nájera
		<i>Zafra</i>	Azofra
<i>Sanctus Dominicus</i>		<i>Santo Domingo de la Calzada</i>	Santo Domingo
		<i>Grañón</i>	Grañón
<i>Radicellas</i>		<i>Redecilla</i>	Redecilla
		<i>Villa Miesta</i>	Villambista
<i>Belforatus</i>		<i>Villorado</i>	Belorado
		<i>Todos Santos</i>	Tosantos
<i>Francavilla</i>		<i>Villafranca de Montes de Oca</i>	Villafranca Montes de Oca
<i>Nemus Oque</i>			Montes de Oca
		<i>Valdehuentes</i>	Valbuena
<i>Altaporca</i>			Atapuerca
		<i>San Dueldo</i>	Zalduendo
		<i>Ibeas</i>	Ibeas
		<i>Carbadel</i>	
		<i>Nuestra Señora la Blanca</i>	
<i>Burgas</i>		<i>Burgos</i>	Burgos
<i>etc.</i>		<i>etc.</i>	

One can see that, with the exceptions of some of the stations in one or other itinerary, both cover the same route.

Once the route between Nájera and Burgos was established, through the road of Santo Domingo and Belorado, the Roman road was quickly abandoned for pilgrimage and probably for the scarce trade along it in the Middle Ages.

The basic reason seems doubtless to have been that, as the increase in population along the corridor of the St. James' Way was increasing, at the same time the population on the Roman road was diminishing.

This can still be observed, even today. Between Hormilla, near Nájera, and Tormantos, near Cerezo, the Roman road runs through unpopulated country and traverses no town. This proves that there was little or no transit on this road, because no townships grew up alongside it.

Even the nearby towns did not expand to the road or acquire prosperity from it. This can be seen in the townships nearest to this stretch of road.

The village of San Torcuato is mentioned in 1175 with the name of Villaporquera. In 1541 it had 44 inhabitants and still kept this name. In 1846 it had grown to 52 inhabitants⁴⁵.

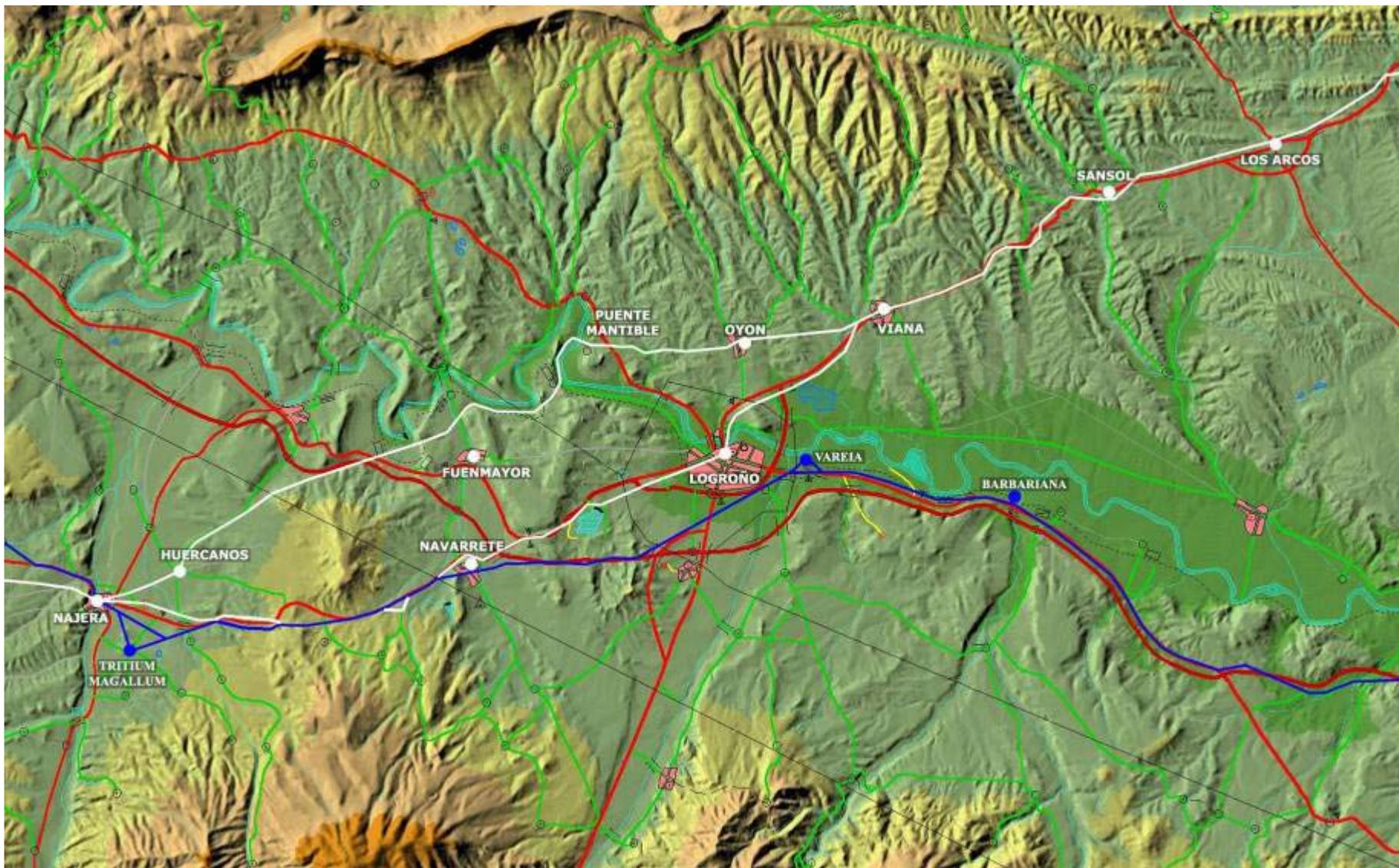
Villalobar, on evidence from 1120, although it had the advantage of the passage over the river Oja, at the point where it had previously been a Roman road, in 1571 had 29 inhabitants and in 1830 it had 50⁴⁶.

So the Roman road runs for sixteen and a half miles (26.5 kilometres) without going through any habitation.

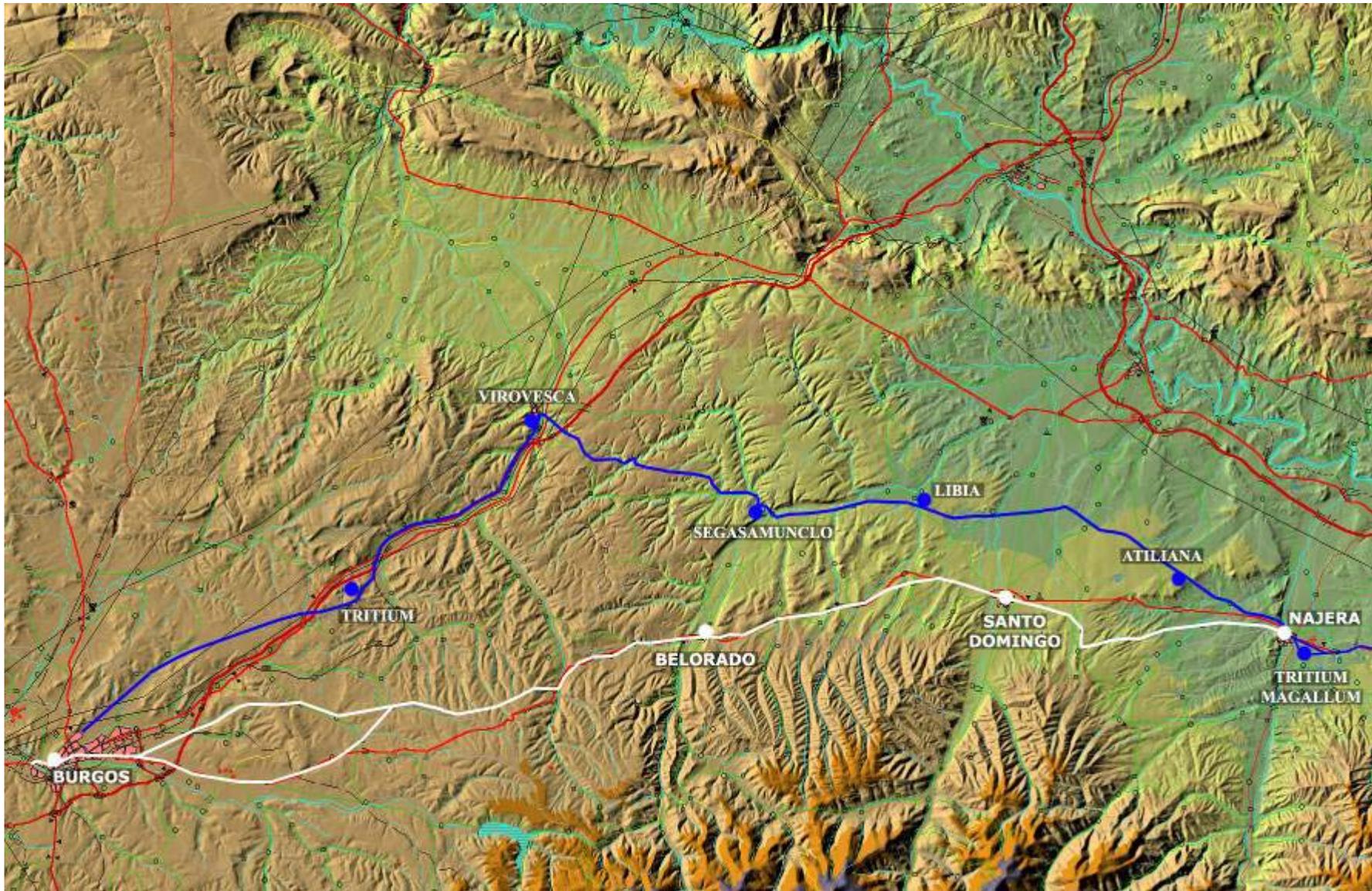
In contrast, in 1546, as Villuga describes for us in several itineraries, the Camino Real [Royal Road] ran through Santo Domingo and Belorado under the protection of townships, some of them already important. Of most importance was the one he called from Santiago in Galicia to San Juan de Pie de Puerto.

⁴⁵ GOVANTES, A.C. 1846, p.180. *Diccionario geográfico-histórico*. op. cit.

⁴⁶ Idem, p.210.



Map 1. Roads to Santiago (in white) and Roman road (in blue) from Logroño to Nájera.



Map 2. Roads to Santiago (in white) and Roman road (in blue) from Nájera to Burgos.

Conclusion

The importance for culture and tourism of the Way to Santiago throughout its whole length is a fact beyond any doubt. It is moreover an investment for the future and a source of income for the localities through which it passes.

Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Roman road, a scene of the most infantile ignorance and negligence.

Despite the importance for culture and heritage of the whole length of the Roman road that has been described in this Community of the Rioja, its future in fact gives little grounds for hope. In latter years there have been irreversible changes and assaults that are unbecoming to a modern, culturally advanced Community.

The string of destruction on the Roman road has no end. In 1999 several miles of the Roman road throughout the district of Azofra, specifically named “Camino de los Romanos” [Roman Way], were converted into a modern local road, despite the wealth of archaeological data available at the time, previously unimaginably supportive.

On successive occasions many other stretches were covered and altered, until in January 2003 the best traces of the Roman road in the whole of the Rioja, the superbly preserved embankments of Tricio, were destroyed.

This trend must be reversed. This is an urgent task that is the responsibility of the officials of the Community Heritage, correcting past mistakes, so that future generations may know what the first road in this part of the world was like.

Let us hope that the incentive of cultural tourism, as an alternative to religious pilgrimages, will be the most successful means of bringing it back into use, to begin a new age of conservation and to gain respect for what remains of this historical and cultural heritage of the Rioja of the highest order.



Works to convert the Roman road going from Italia to Hispania into the present-day (1999) local road in the district of Azofra. In the background Hormilla and the “Camino de los Romanos” unchanged.



Above: the embankment of the Roman road at Tricio (the Rioja) before destruction.
Below: the infrastructure of the Roman road destroyed by bulldozer releveling and the extent of modern paving, January 2003, on the same spot as above.

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