

ROMAN ENGINEERING ON THE ROADS TO SANTIAGO:

I – The old highway through Castile and León

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(Translated with endnotes [see A] by **Brian R. Bishop** © 2005)**Introduction.**

Under the Roman Empire five of the cities that arose with a reference to Augustus in their title were all linked with Rome by a great West-East highway¹ across the middle of present-day León and Castile, round which the history of the North of Spain developed. They were: *Augusta Emerita* [Mérida], *Caesaraugusta* [Saragossa] (founded by Augustus himself), *Lucus Augusti* [Lugo], *Bracara Augusta* [Braga] and *Asturica Augusta* [Astorga], the last three as a result of local gold production.

Like all Roman roads, they were excellent highways, surveyed, planned and constructed by highly professional engineers², as their legacy proves. The routing, design and surfacing was suitable for both heavy-duty and light swift vehicles.

August himself, as is well documented, travelled along it more than once to command the campaign against the Cantabrians from *Segisamone* [Sasamón], starting from *Tarraco* [Tarragona]. Along this road the gold of *Gallaecia* was carried to Rome. Riches and provisions travelled to and from all parts of the known world. Barbarians trod it to conquer those still striving to maintain this feat of engineering.

¹ In this context see:

MORENO GALLO, I. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia a Hispania en Burgos y Palencia* (noviembre de 1998). [Description of the road from Italia to Hispania in the provinces of Burgos and Palencia](November 1998). Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura.

First edition 1999 in interactive format on CR-ROM in collaboration with the Assembly of Castile and León.

Second edition July 2001, book edited by the Diputación Provincial de Burgos and the Diputación Provincial de Palencia.

MORENO GALLO, I. *La Red Viaria Antigua en La Rioja* (noviembre de 1999) [The ancient road network in the Rioja] [November 1999]. Gobierno de La Rioja. Consejería de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes.

Primera edición diciembre de 2001. Miliario Extravagante. Anexo 2. La Red Viaria Antigua en La Rioja [The ancient road network in the Rioja], parte I. *La Vía de Italia a Hispania en La Rioja* [Part I The road from Italia to Hispania in the Rioja].

² MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Infraestructura Viaria Romana* [Roman road substructure]. Revista Obra Pública. Ingeniería e Historia. Colegio de Ingenieros de Caminos Canales y Puertos.

As it deteriorated for lack of upkeep, Moorish marauders destroyed the little kingdoms that had parcelled out the territory. Armies of León, Castile and Navarre fought one another in epic battles along its length³.

And, of course, it is the route of the pilgrimages to Santiago, a human stream that brought European culture to the Christian kingdoms of the North of the Peninsula. It formed that centuries-long umbilical cord between Spain and Europe.

Sources.

Our first mention of the highway is in the *Itinerarium Provinciarum Antonini Augusti* [Itinerary of the provinces of Antoninus Augustus]⁴ (henceforth "the Itinerary"). It is a third century document surviving in many Mediaeval manuscripts copies scattered throughout Europe.

It tells us the names of many of the Roman towns on the road network of Hispania with distances between them measure in *millia passuum*⁵. Other Classical sources and archaeology have located most of those towns.

Here in full are all the stretches of the Itinerary relating to the highway using the Saavedra⁶ edition (naming by Cuntz, numbering by Wesseling).

Road 1: from Milan to León.

Wess

387,	4	DE ITLIA IN HISPANIAS	
	5	A Mediolano Vapinco trans Alpes Cotias	
	6	mansionibus supra scriptis	m.p. CCLV
	7	inde in Galleciam ad Leug.	VII Ge
	8	Minam	m.p. DCCCCLXXV
	1	Alamonte	m.p. XVII
	2	Segustorone	m.p. XVI
	3	Alaunio	m.p. XXIII
	4	Apte Iulia	m.p. XXVIII
	5	Cavellione	m.p. XXII
	6	Arelate	m.p. XXX
	7	Nemausum	m.p. XVIII
	1	Ambrussum	m.p. XV
	2	Sextatione	m.p. XV
	3	Foro Domiti	m.p. XV
	4	Araura sive Cesserone	m.p. XVIII
	5	Beterras	m.p. XII

³ Across the wide plain of Valpierre, today in the Rioja, through which the road runs, and the embankments of which are perfectly preserved, there occurred the famous battles between the Castilians of Count Fernán González and the Navarrans of King Sancho Abarca in the tenth century, probably on account of the ease of access provided by the road for all kinds of troops and supplies. There is one stone (Valpierre) that recorded the event for centuries, as GOVANTES, A.C. reminds us in 1846 in his *Diccionario Geográfico-Histórico de España*, Section II, comprising the whole of the Rioja or the whole of the province of Logroño and some towns of the province of Burgos.

⁴ Antonini Itinerarium (originally early 3rd century, possibly sponsored by Anontonus Caracalla (A.D. 186-217), Wesseling edition 1735. There is also an edition by Parthey and Pindar, 1848.

ROLDÁN HERVÁS, J. M. 1975, p. 98. *Itineraria Hispana*.

⁵ The Roman mile or a thousand Roman paces, was approximately equivalent to 1500 metres or 1618 yards: there are no reliable equivalences of greater accuracy.

⁶ *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 to the Royal Academy of History on the occasion of the public reception of Eduardo Saavedra 28.12.1862] Madrid 1914.

	6 Narbone	m.p. XVI
	7 Salsulis	m.p. XXX
	1 Ad Stabulum	m.p. XLVIII
	2 Ad Pireneum	m.p. XVI
	3 Iuncaria	m.p. XVI
	4 Gerunda	m.p. XXVII
	5 Barcenone	m.p. LXVII
	6 Stabulo Novo	m.p. LI
391,	1 Tarracone	m.p. XXVIII
	2 Ilerda	m.p. LXII
	3 Tolous	m.p. XXXII
	4 Pertusa	m.p. XVIII
	5 Osca	m.p. XVIII
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
	5 Segesamone	m.p. XLVII
395,	1 Lacobriga	m.p. XXX
	2 Camala	m.p. XXIII
	3 Lance	m.p. XXVIII
	4 Ad Leg. VII Geminam	m.p. VIII

Road 32: from Astorga to Tarragona.

	Wess	
448,	2 Item ab Asturica Tarragone	m.p. CDLXXXII
	3	sic:
	4 Vallata	m.p. XVI
	5 Interamnio	m.p. XIII
449,	1 Palantia	m.p. XIII
	2 Viminacio	m.p. XXXI
	3 Lacobrigam	m.p. X
	4 Dessobriga	m.p. XV
	5 Segisamone	m.p. XV
	6 Deobrigula	m.p. XV
450,	1 Tritium	m.p. XXI
	2 Virovesca	m.p. XI
	3 Atiliana	m.p. XXX
	4 Barbariana	m.p. XXXII
	5 Graccurris	m.p. XXXII
451,	1 Bellisone	m.p. XXVIII
	2 Caesarea Augusta	m.p. XXXVI
	3 Gallicum	m.p. XV
	4 Bortinae	m.p. XVIII
	5 Oscam	m.p. XII
	6 Caum	m.p. XXVIII
452,	1 Mendiculeia	m.p. XVIII
	2 Ilerda	m.p. XXII

3	Ad Novas	m.p.	XVIII
4	Ad Septimum Decimum	m.p.	XIII
5	Tarracone	m.p.	XVII

Road 34: from Astorga to Bordeaux.

Wess			
453,	4	DE HISPANIA IN AEQUITANIA	
	5	Ab Asturica Burdicalam	m.p. CCCXXI
	6	Vallata	m.p. XVI
	7	Interamnio	m.p. XIII
	8	Palantia	m.p. XIII
	9	Viminacio	m.p. XXXI
454,	1	Lacobricam	m.p. XV
		(Dessobriga) omitida	(m.p.) (XV)
	2	Segisamone	m.p. XV
	3	Teobrigula	m.p. XV
	4	Tritium	m.p. XXI
	5	Virovesca	m.p. XI
	6	Vindeleia	m.p. XII
	7	Deobriga	m.p. XIII
	8	Beleia	m.p. XV
	9	Suessatio	m.p. VII
455,	1	Tullonio	m.p. VII
	2	Alba	m.p. XII
	3	Aracaeli	m.p. XXI
	4	Alantone	m.p. XVI
	5	Pompelone	m.p. VIII
	6	Turissa	m.p. XXII
	7	Summo Pyreneo	m.p. XVIII
	8	Imo Pyreneo	m.p. V
	9	Carasa	m.p. XII
	10	Aquis Terebellicis	m.p. XXXVIII
456,	1	Mosconnum	m.p. XVI
	2	Segosa	m.p. XII
	3	Losa	m.p. XII
	4	Boios	m.p. VII
	5	Burdigalam	m.p. XVI

Road 18: from Braga to Astorga (Via Nova [New road]).

Wess.			
427,	4	Item alio itinere a Bracara Astu	
	5	rica	m.p. CCXV, sic:
	6	Salaniana	m.p. XXI
428,	1	Aquis Oreginis	m.p. XVIII
	2	Aquis Querquennis	m.p. XIII
	3	Géminis	m.p. XVI
	4	Salientibus	m.p. XVIII
	5	Praesidio	m.p. XVIII
	6	Nemetobrica	m.p. XIII
	7	Foro	m.p. XVIII

429,	1	Gemestario	m.p. XVIII
	2	Belgido	m.p. XIII
	3	Interaconio Flavio	m.p. XX
	4	Asturica	m.p. XXX

The only route described by roads 1 and 32 coincide also with road 34 from Briviesca. It connects the following settlements known to exist between Saragossa and the River Porma in León:

<u>Vía [Road]</u>	<u>Mansio [Inn]</u>	<u>Settlement</u>
1-28-32	Caesaraugusta	Zaragoza
28	Alauona	Alagón
28-32	Balsione	Junto a Mallén
1	Cascantum	Cascante
32	Graccurris	Junto a Alfaro
1	Calagurris	Calahorra
32	Barbariana	Junto a Agoncillo
1	Vareia	Varea
1	Tritio Magallum	Tricio
32	Atiliana	Azofra - Valpierre
1	Libia	Herramélluri - Leiva
1	Segasamunclio	Cerezo de Riotirón
1-32-34	Virovesca	Briviesca
32-34	Tritium	Alto de Rodilla
32-34	Deobrigula	Junto a Tardajos
1-32-34	Segisamone	Sasamón
32	Dessobriga	Melgar - Osorno
1-32-34	Lacobriga	Carrión de los Condes
32-34	Viminacio	Calzadilla de la Cueva
1	Camala	Sahagún
1	Lance	Porma - Villasabariego

From there it splits into two different roads, one ending in León:

<u>Vía [Road]</u>	<u>Mansio</u>	<u>Settlement</u>
1	Legio VII Gemina	León

and the other ending in Astorga:

<u>Vía [Road]</u>	<u>Mansio [Inn]</u>	<u>Settlement</u>
32-34	Palantia	(por La Milla del Páramo)
32-34	Interamnio	(entre Bernesga y Porma)
32-34	Vallata	(por Reliegos)
32-34	Asturica Augusta	Astorga

From Astorga the road separated towards Braga through Bergido [El Bierzo], the district of Valdeorras and La Limia:

<u>Vía [Road]</u>	<u>Mansio [Inn]</u>	<u>Settlement</u>
18-19-20	Interamnio Flavio	San Román-Bembibre

18-19-20	Bergido	Cacabelos
18	Gemestario	Portela de Aguiar
18	Foro(Gigurrorum)	O Barco

The Roman road was used for much of its length as the main route in later historical times. For example, between Briviesca and Burgos, the Roman road served also as the *Camino Real* [Royal road] from Burgos to Bilbao in the work of Villuga⁷ and it was the main route in all centuries until the construction of the present highway in the eighteenth century, present N-1, over an old road that still exists.

<u>ay de Burgos a Bilbao XXX leguas</u>	
a la venta de horonos	II
al monasterio d' rodilla	III
al castillo de peones	I y media
ala venta de pradanos	Media
a virbiesca	I
a grisallena	I
a siueda	I
a pancoruo	II
a santa gadea	III
a berguenda	I
a espejo	I
ala venta	I
a berberaña	II
a horduña	II
a luxando	II
a lodio	I
a miravalles	II
a rigoriaga	I
A bilbao	II

For its incomparable superior routing and metalling⁸ the road through Quintanapalla and Rubena that Villuga describes. This was doubtless the preferred route for wheeled traffic throughout the year between Burgos and the Monastery of Rodilla.

Unfortunately, running some distance to the Alto de Rodilla, with only one inn at Hurones (Horonos in Villuga's Itinerary) and another near the road in the Quintapanalla district, which keeps the name, it became abandoned. However, it was only in recent times that the whole road became a main thoroughfare, perhaps varying with the needs of the pilgrimages to Santiago.

At first the pilgrims followed the actual Roman road, but through the centuries, other centres of religious calling sought by the pilgrims caused the Way to Santiago to deviate from the Roman road.

Henceforth I shall attempt to avoid aspects of the Roman road already dealt with in my other published works.

⁷ It seems that no one had so far noticed the presence of this important road in Villuga guide, since no author had quoted it. VILLUGA, P.J. (1546), p.13 Repertorio de todos los caminos de Expaña [Repertory of all the roads of Spain]. Edition by Gonzalo Arias in Annex 3 of El miliario extravagante, April 2002.

⁸ See detail reflected in Moreno Gallo, I. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia*. ob. cit.

Arriving at Burgos

The *Via Aquitana* beyond doubt formed the first pilgrim route to Santiago. It was rendered safe along all its length when in 922 the armies of Castile and Navarre captured all of the Rioja back from Islam, and the dangers of Moorish incursions between Miranda and Burgos disappeared⁹.

The *Crónica Silense* [Silo chronicle] describes the most important event in the establishment of the Way to Santiago: Sancho el Mayor (1005-1035) decreed that the Way to Santiago should pass through Nájera. This consolidated the route Pamplona--Nájera--Burgos.

Probably at first its course was not fixed: it could have gone through Logroño; Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Belorado did not yet exist; from Nájera it could have followed the Roman road to Cerezo and Briviesca, connecting again with the *Via Aquitana*¹⁰.

The final course was fixed from 1076 under Alfonso VI. Bridges and inns were built, first by Santo Domingo de la Calzada and then by his disciple Juan de Ortega. In 1095 the king himself repopulated Logroño with Franks¹¹ Its bridge was built and new inns and sanctuaries were set up along the road.

The Roman road between Nájera and Cerezo de Riotirón runs through perfect gradients for wheeled traffic¹².

However, the equivalent Way to Santiago between Nájera and Belorado has poor gradients in uneven terrain, turned into a highway only after many centuries and much effort.

The same applies between *Segasamunclo* [Cerezo], *Virovesca* [Briviesca], *Tritium* [El Alto de Rodilla] and Burgos city through which the road passes¹³.

Between Cerezo and Briviesca important remains of the Roman road in the form of embankments, with excellent stone foundations, continue for miles on both sides of the River Bañuelos. One can still make out the layers of ballast. They run along the slope-line of the fields of Carraquinea, wandering from one side to another where the side ravines come down from the moor.

Between the Alto de Rodilla and Burgos are other remains of road substructure. They follow the embankments of the magnificent Roman highway with perfect gradients. Slopes seldom rise to 1% and run in straight lines all along the area.

⁹ MARTINEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, p. 15 y 16. *El camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos* [*The road to Santiago in the Province of Burgos*].

¹⁰ VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA, L; LACARRA, J. M.; URÍA RÍU, J. 1949. tomo II, Cap. I, pp. 12 y 22. *Las Peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela* [*Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela*].

¹¹ LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, Cap. I, p. 21. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

¹² MORENO GALLO, I. *La Red Viaria Antigua en La Rioja (noviembre de 1999)*. Gobierno de La Rioja. Consejería de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes.

Primera edición diciembre de 2001. Miliario Extravagante. Anexo 2. La Red Viaria Antigua en La Rioja, parte I. *La Vía de Italia a Hispania en La Rioja*.

¹³ MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia...* ob. cit.



Long embankments of the road from Italy to Spain at Cerezo de Riotirón (Burgos) .



Embankment of the roman road at las Mijaradas (Burgos).

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



Archaeological dig shewing the impressive foundation of the surface of the Roman road at Mijaradas-Hurones (Burgos).



Archaeological dig shewing the impressive foundation of the surface of the Roman road at Mijaradas-Hurones (Burgos).



The Roman road as it enters Burgos city, the houses of which can be seen in the background.

Nonetheless, between Belorado and Burgos, the Way to Santiago again crosses rough ground, unsuitable for roadbuilding and lacking the slightest trace of substructure, as can be seen in the unaltered sections.

From Burgos to Carrión. La Carrera Francesa / El Camino Francés [The French Road]

Between Burgos and Carrión, probably as a result of the repopulation policy in the Dark Ages, the Roman road between Burgos and Melgar ceased being a main route. At first it was not used for pilgrimage. Lacarra is of the opinion that the bridges of Santamaría¹⁴, and Malatos facilitated the crossing of the Arlanzón. This is based on the passage in the Cantar de Mio Cid epic where the Cid crosses the river and lands on the other side.

Poema de Mio Cid (anon.), ll.51-55:

*Partió de la puerta, por Burgos aguijaua
llegó a Santa María, luego descavalga;
fincó los inojos, de corazón rogava.
La oración fecha, luego cavalgava;
salió por la puerta e Arlançon passava.*

He left by the gate. He spurred through Burgos.
He arrived at Santa María. Then he dismounted.

¹⁴ LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo IX, p.199. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit

He knelt and prayed hard.
Having made his prayer, he then mounted.
He went out by the gate, and passed Arlanzón.

My opinion, however, is that there has been a bridge crossing the River Arlanzón opposite present-day Burgos since Roman times¹⁵.

Nonetheless in the eleventh century the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* [St. James' book] says only that the station after Burgos is Alterdalia, called *Oterdaios*¹⁶ in various Mediaeval documents¹⁷. As is normal it says nothing about the road this link takes.

Alfonso VI founded the Hospital del Emperador [Emperor hostelry] on the 22nd February, 1085, in the district of Eras¹⁸. That the Roman highway passed through the same place is witnessed by the allusion in a document of 961¹⁹.

The location of this hostelry on the present-day Calle del Emperador [Emperor Street], opposite the church of San Pedro de la Fuente [St. Peter of the Spring] seems to link it with the Roman road rather than any later roadworks.

Similarly the location of the Hospital de Dios Padre [Hostelry of God the Father] in Santa Agueda from 1123²⁰, leads us to suspect the continued use of the Roman road²¹ and not the latter along the Calle Fernán González and the arch of San Martín.

In the ancient Jewish quarter of Burgos, near the wall, there is the church of Nuestra Señora de la Vieja Rúa [Our Lady of the Old Road]. Coello traces its groundplan in his map of the city of Burgos of 1868, a sure recollection of its placing by the Roman road.

At Villalonquéjar there has ever been a bridge over the River Ubierna. This is witnessed by the old stone bridge still on today's road, a conservation effort of a crossing unused for centuries. The Roman road along the Camino de Villalón was always a sure passage for all sorts of goods and vehicles.

¹⁵ MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia...* ob. cit.

¹⁶ *Oterdaios* has been hit upon by some famous toponym author, of which there have been many. It could well have set out as Otero de Dios [God's hillock]. Ios in Mediaeval times, as in the war cry Iuslivil, "May God will it". It would thus have been called as the citadel of God, Latin *Deobrigula*.

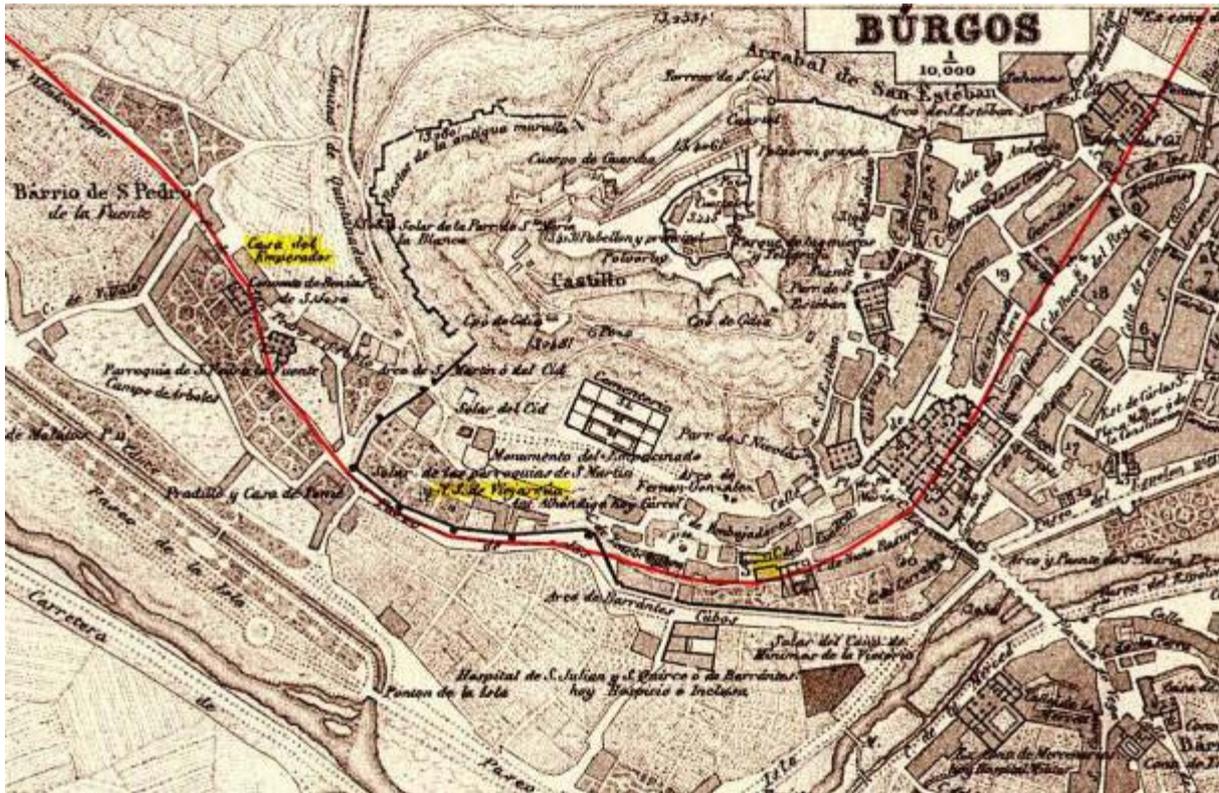
¹⁷ With reference to the donation of the hostelry of San Juan del Puente, two documents of 1182 can be quoted. SERRANO PINEDA, L. 1935, n°s 166 y 169. *El Obispado de Burgos y castilla primitiva*. 3vol.

¹⁸ MARTINEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, p. 173. *El Camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos...* ob. cit.

¹⁹ SERRANO PINEDA, L. 1910. *Fuentes para la Historia de Castilla. Becerro gótico de Cardena por el R.P. Don Luciano Serrano* [Sources for the History of Castile. Gothic cartulary of Cardena by the Reverend Father Luciano Serrano] 1910, p. 77 y 78. LXIV, 3 de febrero de 961 [3.2.961]. De Barrio de Eras: "...in barrio de Eras kasas cum sua ecclesia, et cum corte cum sua ayacentia, sie ortys, molinis, et sernas in Paramo, et duas sernas in Sancti Martyni, et una vinea iusta calzata...", en referencia a la calzada, a su paso por el actual barrio de San Pedro de la Fuente en Burgos. [On the Barrio de Eras: "in the Eras district, houses with their church, and with a court and with its appurtenances, that is gardens, mills and plots on the moorm, and two plots in St. Martin's, and a vineyard near the road". This refers to the roadway as it passes by the present district of San Pedro de la Fuente [St. Peter of the Spring]]

²⁰ MARTINEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, p. 176. *El Camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos...* ob. cit.

²¹ Has the Roman road ran along the streets of Santágueda and Emperador, v. MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia...* ob. cit.



The Roman road as it passes through Burgos city, illustrated in the plan by Coello of 1868.



General view of Roman road as it crosses Villalonquéjar (Burgos) and the River Ubierna in the foreground.

In contrast, the *Camino Francés* [French Road] on the left bank as it runs through the area of Villabilla lacks substructure and was no more than a useless mud track in wet weather.

However, the ascent of the height of *Deobrigula* (now gone) to go from present-day Tardajos was also unavailing.



La vía romana ascendiendo al castro de Deobrigula en Tardajos (Burgos).

One can deduce from the foundation of hostelries such as San Lázaro [St. Lazarus] near the bridges of Malatos (1165) and of El Rey [the King] (1195), of Juan Mathé near Villalba (1229)²² or of San Juan del Puente (1182)²³, that pilgrims followed the left bank of the river from the twelfth century.

From Tardajos the French Road or the Way to Santiago has always been bad, with no kind of substructure, just a few stones lined up in isolated attempts to defeat the mud²⁴.

Instead pilgrims sought refuge in the towns, poor but towns²⁵, and the hostelries set up for them. Lacarra²⁶ tells of the hostelry of Torres, between Rabé and Hornillos, that of San Lázaro in Hornillos, and that of San Boal or Baudillo between Hornillos and Hontanás.

²² MARTINEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, pp. 171 y ss. *El Camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos...* ob. cit.

²³ LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo X, p. 201. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

²⁴ Martínez shews us a stone or two in the moorland in the district of Castellana de Castro. MARTINEZ DÍEZ, G. 1998, p. 222. *El Camino de Santiago en la provincia de Burgos...* ob. cit.

²⁵ What Domenico Laffi Bolognese says in his *Viaggio in Ponente a San Giacomo di Galatia e Finisterre per Francia e Spagna*: “Hontanás is a little town where there are only shepherds in shacks surrounded by a large palisade to protect against wolves. Around them the find a dying French pilgrim. They have to lie on the ground, because they have no other bed, and on the morning after they are warned that they may not return to their journey until the shepherds have set out with their dogs.”

²⁶ LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo X, p. 202. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

A mile out of Castrojeriz there was the monastery-cum-hostelry of San Antón [St. Anthony] founded by Alfonso VII in 1146. The next refuge was Castrojeriz, the *Castrum Sigerici*, fortified in the ninth century, scene of battles and sieges by troops from Moorish Cordova in 882.

Count Nuño Pérez raised another hostelry next to the bridge of Itero in the twelfth century. There were two hostelries in Frómista, that of Santiago [St. James] and that of the Palmeros [Palmer].

For 14th century English literary references to Palmers, and for the atmosphere of pilgrimages, see Chaucer's Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, ll.12-13:

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages, and palmeres for to seken straunge strondes.

Then people like to go on pilgrimages, and palmers to look for foreign shores.

See also the Prologue to Langland's *Piers Plowman*, ll.46-47:

Pilgrymes and palmers plighted hem togidere To seke seynt Iames and seyntes in Rome.

Pilgrims and palmers made agreement together to seek Saint James and the saints in Rome.

In Villalcázar de Sirga, the count of Ossorno had his hostelry next to the church as well as the palace-home of Villasirga or Casa Hospital de Santiago [St. James' Hostel-House]. In Arconada, no longer on Way to Santiago, the Count of Carrión, Don Gómez, had a monastery and hospital built for the poor and the pilgrims dedicated to Saints Facundo, Primitivo and Cristóbal [Christopher]. This is a Way to Santiago before the present one.

There are the remains of the Mediaeval Sanctuary of San Cristóbal [St. Christopher]²⁷, whom pilgrims to Santiago held in much devotion in the district of Carrión de los Condes, some 500 yards to the South of the Roman road and half-way between Arconada and Carrión.

Thus the good attention received by pilgrims along the Way to Santiago as we know it today indicates that the whole length of the Roman road ran through unpopulated country.

Between Tardajos and Sasamón (14 miles) there was no habitation of importance. Las Quintanillas is unimportant even today, and the name of Villanueva [New-town] de Argaño speaks for itself.

From Sasamón to Melgar (10 miles) there is not a single town along the Roman road. There are a few some distance from it. This is very different from the towns-on-the-road typical of important roads such as Puente la Reina, Pancorbo, Castrojeriz, etc.

But the worst is yet to come. Between Melgar, the last refuge place, and Carrión de los Condes there are twenty miles of Roman road without a town on it.

Nonetheless, between those two townships the whole Roman road from *Italia* to *Hispania* is called *Camino Francés* or *Carrera Francesa* [French Road]²⁸, the usual name for the Way to Santiago. It is possible that this is a previously unknown Way to Santiago, although we should not discount the possibility that the name comes from a very old popular tradition, and that its origin lies in the ancient *Via Aquitana* [Aquitaine Road] which in its day was the route to Gaul²⁹.

There are parts of the Roman road that may point to the Way to Santiago having passed that way. This is the case at Alto de Santiagón on the *Carrera Francesa* in the municipal district of Villadiezma, a high point with visibility over the area. The place name [Santiagón=Santiago's stone] may well refer to a milestone on what was the Way to Santiago³⁰.

²⁷ Archaeological Inventory of the Assembly of Castile and León, province of Palencia.

²⁸ INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO NACIONAL-CENTRO NACIONAL DE INFORMACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA. 1:50,000 map, Sheet no., 198, 1st edition, 1922.

²⁹ I referred to this possibility in: MORENO GALLO, I. 2001. *Descripción de la Vía de Italia...* ob. cit.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

The very recent recognition of the road as the *Via Romana* from *Italia* to *Hispania* or the *Via Aquitana*³¹ seems sufficient cause for nothing to be known about its connections with the Pilgrim's Way, since it has never been studied as such by historians of any age.



Embankment of the Carrera Francesa at La Carrancha in the district of Villadiezma (Palencia).

From Carrión to Astorga. The Pilgrim's Highway and the Royal Road

The view of the Way to Santiago between Carrión and Astorga is very different from hitherto. So far the pilgrim road has coincided with the road known as Roman from *Italia* to *Hispania* as far as León and another similar further on.

As far as Sahagún there was no alternative.

The geology of all the central area of this region, with no stone at all conditions any roadmaking³². This means that, in the vast desolate plain of Tierra de Campos, with clay soil impossible to cross in wet periods, this refuge was the substructure of the Roman road in the first instance.

Between Carrión and Calzadilla, ancient maps call the Roman road "Calzada de los Peregrinos" [Pilgrims' Highway]³³, and throughout the area it is known as "La Calzada". It is an embankment ten miles long, 18" high and 150,000 tons of natural ballast that has been carted and placed

³¹ *Ibidem.*

³² Besides personal inspection, the following has been consulted: *Estudio previo de terrenos. Itinerario León-Burgos, tramo León-Carrión de los Condes*. Dirección General de Carreteras, Área de tecnología, Servicio de Geotécnica, Ministerio de Obras Públicas, 1988 [Preliminary ground study, Itinerary León-Burgos, section León-Carrión de los Condes. Directorate, General of Roads, Technology Directorate, Geotechnology Section, Ministry of Public Works].

³³ INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO NACIONAL-CENTRO NACIONAL DE INFORMACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA. Mapa 1:50.000. Hoja nº 197, 1ª edición de 1922.

there. Twenty centuries of continual use tell the quality of this road bed, without significant additions or repairs. Even for horses the surface in this area seems the best.

I shall again refer to the witness of experts used to a mode of transport unknown today, which follows (refer to the Spanish text for the original wording of these reports).

In 1640 Capitanes de Estado Mayor [Staff Captains] Rafael Assin and Fernando Monet in their Itinerario Militar [Military itinerary] from Logroño to Astorga (Servicio Geográfico del Ejército [Military Geographical Service]) describe this stretch of road between Carrión and Calzadilla. They both admire the state of preservation of the surface, and also describe to the best of their ability the make-up of the embankment formed from natural ballast.

"The ex-priory of San Torcuato in the district of Carrión, called of Benivivere, lies on the right. From here the road begins to follow a Roman road, the excellent condition of which provokes admiration. The smallest stones of which it is constructed have been packed together so tightly with the mortar that binds them, converting adhesion into cohesion, that it constitutes one compact rock mass. Its line is very straight, as all such roadways were, its width some 20 ft., and, whilst the size dimension permits the passing of two approaching carriages, this can be checked by the that fact and by the high elevation of the crown and camber of the surface³⁴. The landscape that it crosses is a vast perfectly even moorland plain that extends in all directions, offering an excellent exercise field for cavalry. In Summer the foothold is more suitable than the Roman roadway; but in Winter, when the continual rains soften the soil, and especially in the event of a freeze, it is essential to travel along the road."

In 1874 Engineer Cipriano Martínez³⁵ traversed, identified and described the whole of the Roman roadway between Astorga, León, Sahagún and Carrión. The length between Calzadilla and Carrión is selected as among the best preserved that was visible at that time.

In 1945 López Soler³⁶ stated:

"We followed the so-called Pilgrims' Highway ... constructed on an embankment raised above the surrounding land and paved with pebbles and small round stones."

In 1949 Lacarra³⁷ clearly wrote:

"... from Carrión as far as Sahagún pilgrims followed a perfectly preserved roadway that used to pass through Calzadilla de la Cueva, Santa María de las Tiendas, Ledigos, Terradillos, Moratinos, San Nicolás del Real Camino to Sahagún." (To a Spanish-speaker, these place names echo references to the road and saints to whom foundations were dedicated along it, e.g. *Calzadilla* [wee roadway], *Tiendas* [tents, shops], *Real Camino* [Royal Road]. Also the references to Carrión and the counts thereof [cowards who married and maltreated the daughters of the Cid] evoke recollections of the epic and subsequent traditional ballads, called romances, about the Cid).

Despite this, in 1998 during my official survey, which was published, I personally warned the cultural land services of the Castile and León Assembly that bulldozers and road rollers were causing serious damage to the original road structure. They replied that the archaeological survey team of the Castile and León Assembly, after specific research, had found no Roman roadworks in the area. Institutional development of the Way to meet increasing pilgrim demand in latter years began to create serious damage on what remained of the Roman road.

³⁴ Probably more through erosion than by design.

³⁵ MARTÍNEZ GONZÁLEZ, C. 1874. Manuscrito inédito. *Memoria Explicativa de varias calzadas romanas en León*. (Real Academia de la Historia).

³⁶ LÓPEZ SOLER, J. 1943, p. 403. Catálogo monumental de la provincia de Palencia II.

³⁷ LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo X, p. 217. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.



The Pilgrims' Highway between Carrión and Calzadilla de la Cueva in the air-photo of 1957.



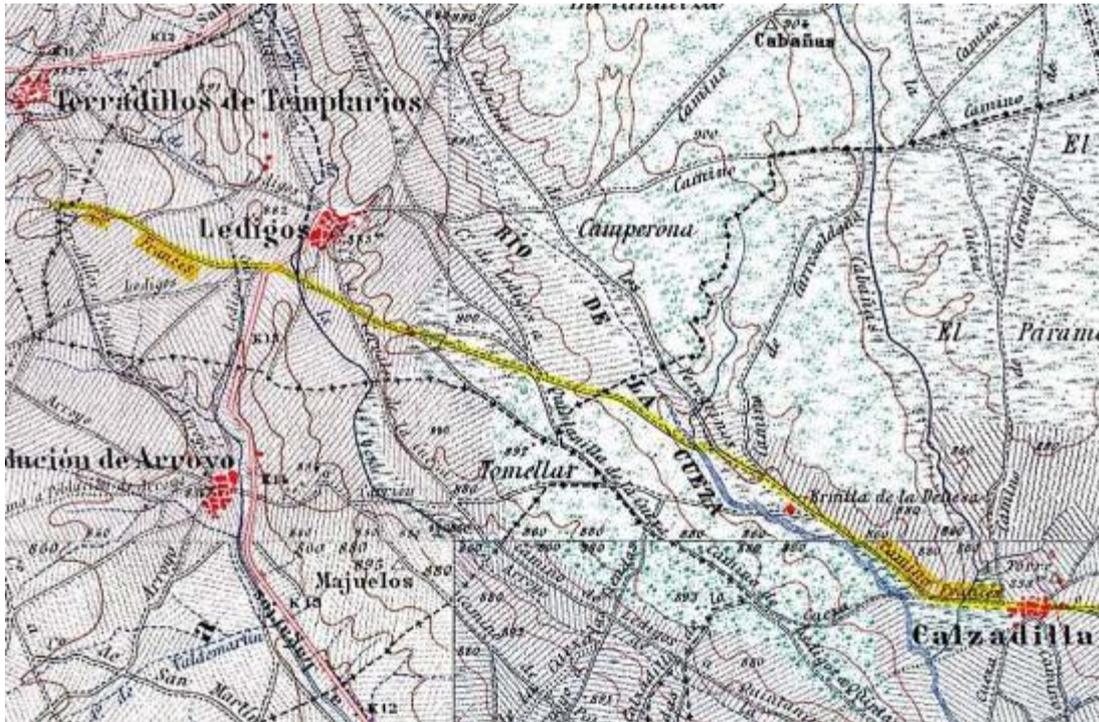
The Pilgrims' Highway between Carrión and Calzadilla de la Cueva before and after its conversion to a high density road in 1998.



The Pilgrims' Highway between Carrión and Calzadilla de la Cueva before and after its conversion to a high density road in 1998.

The stretch from Calzadilla la Cueva to Sahagún only twenty years before had fallen victim to the Servicios to Construcción Parcelaria [Land Allocation Services] of the Ministry of Agriculture. Moreover the maps used for the allocations shewed clearly names such as *Camino Francés* or *Calzada de los Peregrinos*; but the road was finally converted into arable farmland.

It is strange that, between 1999 and 2000, a road was built alongside the main road, on specially requisitioned land, to complement the wholesale renewal of the Way to Santiago in the region of Castile and León. Thereby the possibility of recovering the Roman road for pilgrim recreational use was lost, possibly forever.



The Camino Francés or Carrera Francesa, between Calzadilla and Ledigos (Palencia), in the old topographic map of IGN.

The well-known hostelry of Santa María de las Tiendas, known in French guides and itineraries as the abbey of the *Grand Cavalier* [Grand Knight]³⁸ is the little that is left, albeit in ruins, that pilgrims could see on passing through this area.



Ruins of the hostelry of Santa María de las Tiendas, ancient pilgrims' Abbey of the Gran Cavalier.

³⁸ Probably because it was run by a high-ranking Knight of the Order of Santiago, as a responsibility of the hostelry from 1190. LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo X, p. 218 y capítulo I, p. 25. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

On reaching Sahagún, the route of the Roman road can be traced only from the information of Cipriano Martínez. Contrary to supposition, the Mediaeval bridge over the Cauce [River-course] of Valderaduey, next to the little church of the Virgen del Puente [Virgin of the Bridge], does not relate to the course of the Roman road. Cipriano could still see remains of the embankment downstream from this point, near to the modern main road³⁹. Nonetheless other authors, unaware of Cipriano's text, declared that that the road went over the Mediaeval bridge with its hermitage⁴⁰.

Yepes drew attention to the importance of Sahagún on the course of the Roman road reflected in the names the towns had had before the final name that commemorates one of its patrons, San Facundo. In his seventeenth century work he recalls that Charlemagne, in memory of his victory on the banks of the Cea, raised a religious community called Estratense, later also called Calzatense⁴¹.

Wonderful traces of the Roman road can be seen unaltered even today along the whole stretch between Calzadilla de los Hermanillos and Reliegos.

I have recently travelled and explored all this stretch. I am pleased to note its extraordinary state of preservation. Its characteristics were identical to those previously described, a continuous raised embankment of natural ballast.

In places where the embankment has been abandoned for wheeled traffic, the lichens on the round surface boulders betray centuries of weathering.

These, so far as I know, are probably the best preserved Roman road remains in Spain.



The Pilgrims' Highway intact between Calzadilla de los Hermanillos and Reliegos (León).

³⁹ In fact Cipriano Martínez, whose manuscript was discovered by the researcher and engineer Ernest Loewinsohn in the Real Academia de la Historia [Royal Academy of History], had the advantage of seeing the ground practically intact. With the clinical eye of an engineer, he could identify the old roadway perfectly over the section that has disappeared through this and other areas.

⁴⁰ RODRÍGUEZ, J. 1970, pp. 424 y ss. *Las vías militares romanas en la actual provincia de León*. Legio VII Gemina. Cátedra de San Isidro. Instituto Leonés de Estudios Romano-visigodos.

⁴¹ YEPES. Crónica general de la Orden de San Benito. III, fol. 172.



The Pilgrims' Highway intact between Calzadilla de los Hermanillos and Reliegos (León).

Further on the road has again been rebuilt or completely destroyed. It is quite certain that, between Calzadilla del Coto and Mansilla de la Mulas, many pilgrims travelled along the old Royal Road that goes through Bercianos, El Burgo Ranero and Reliegos and also the old Roman road since long ago and also today.

Again the lack of settlements on the Roman road would have weighed greatly on the pilgrims' decision, despite its excellent conditions as compared with the Royal Road, which was improved to meet the already established pilgrim traffic.



The Pilgrims' Highway intact between Calzadilla de los Hermanillos and Reliegos (León).

The Itinerary of Francesco Piccardi (1472), *Il viaggio al Santo Sepolcro ed a S. Jacopo in Galizia*, descritto en ottava rima [The journey to the Holy Sepulchre and to Saint James in Galicia, described in ottava rima], tells how from Mansilla he went to Marne to get to León. Lacarra rejects the account, asserting that the place is too far from the road⁴².

However, we now know that the river Porma was crossed here, at Marne, by the Roman road, and, after this crossing, today bridgeless and with a somewhat altered river course, it split in the direction of León by the Road from Italy (no.1) and to Astorga by the road from Asturica to Tarraco (no.32).

In fact the older of the roads, the Roman, went to León through Marne and Valdesogos, and reached the River Torío by Puente Castro⁴³.

Meanwhile road no. 32 of the Itinerary, from Astorga, from Tarragona, used to go to Villaturiel, passing near the town and to its South at an exact right-angle as far as the crossing of the River Bernesga near Villa de Soto. It changes direction in another right-angle that goes near Villar and Grulleros, to the North of both towns, until it gets near Onzonilla to the South of the town.

⁴² LACARRA. 1949, tomo II, capítulo XI, pp. 238 y 239. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

⁴³ And we again know this thanks to Cipriano Martínez's manuscript, as already reflected by Ernest Loewinsohn in *El moliario extravagante*, no. 71, p.11, et seqq.



Alignment of Quinea's Way between the river Porma and the river Bernesga. Ortofoto of 1949 of the Department of Agriculture.

Everywhere between Villaturiel, Villa de Soto and Onzonilla, where traces had been lost already in the time of Cipriano Martínez, it was called Senda de [path of] Quinea, and so it appears in his manuscript, a very frequent placename on this type of road.

The well-known Spanish author Ramón Menéndez Pidal talks of the Senda de Quinea. With what authority is not known, since he neither describes the road nor seems to know of the Cipriano Martínez manuscript⁴⁴.

Right between the River Porma and Bernesga, by reason of its importance and of the distances in the Itinerario, there must lie the *mansio* [Roman inn] *Interamnio* [literally, between the river].

From near Onzanilla it went to Antimio de Arriba by the road linking both towns, where I have been still able to find traces of the earth works that Cipriano saw.



Embankment's ruins of natural balast. Roman road between Astorga and Zaragoza in Onzonilla (León).

It continues along the present-day road leaving Chozas de Abajo to the North. It then leaves it, and, as it goes through Villar de Mazarife, it lines up with the so-called *Calzada de los Peregrinos* [Pilgrims' Highway] in a straight line for some six miles across the plain of this Leonese moorland.

To the South La Milla del Páramo [the Moorland Mile] it breaks and then lines up again in a perfect straight East to West line for a further four miles until it reaches the River Órbigo, where it meets up with the road from León.

⁴⁴ MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, G. 1951, p. 38. Los caminos en la historia de España [Roads in the history of Spain]. He mentions in few words the name of Senda de la Quinea and the road from Astorga to Carrión, together with the highway from Quinea to that of Osma to Talamanca.



The Pilgrims' Highway in Villavente (León), intercepted for the railroad.



The Pilgrims' Highway in Villavente (León).

In fact, between León and Astorga, the Roman road that does not follow the Itinerary was described by Cipriano Martínez and has recently been explored by the engineer Ernest Loewinson⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ This work is available to the public only on the Internet on the following site: <http://www.traianvs.net/>

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

This road coincides with the Way to Santiago in parts not altered by the Mediaeval deviations at Trobajo, Hospital de Órbigo and the Crucero de [crossing of] San Justo de la Vega.

The River Órbigo and the Astorga to Tarragona road (nos. 32 and 34) used to cross it. It converged with the latter at a crossing now without a bridge to the South of Hospital de Órbigo.

One of the alternatives of the pilgrim road, still passable, ran down from La Virgen del Camino by the Camino Real de las Vacas [Royal road of the cows] as far as Villar de Mazarife to rejoin the spectacular line of the Pilgrim Highway.

Both pilgrim roads now joined follow the modern N-120 highway after crossing the River Órbigo.

Before reaching San Justo de la Vega, near Astorga, the Roman road used to describe a wide curve towards the South with a slope even gentler than the present highway. In the Middle Ages this stretch was intercepted by the Way, which with a steep slope passes through el Crucero at the top of San Justo.

After crossing the River Tuerto, the highway follows the straight line from León to Astorga. In the sixteenth century the pilgrim way was the Royal Way described by Villuga between Santiago and San Juan Pie de Puerto.

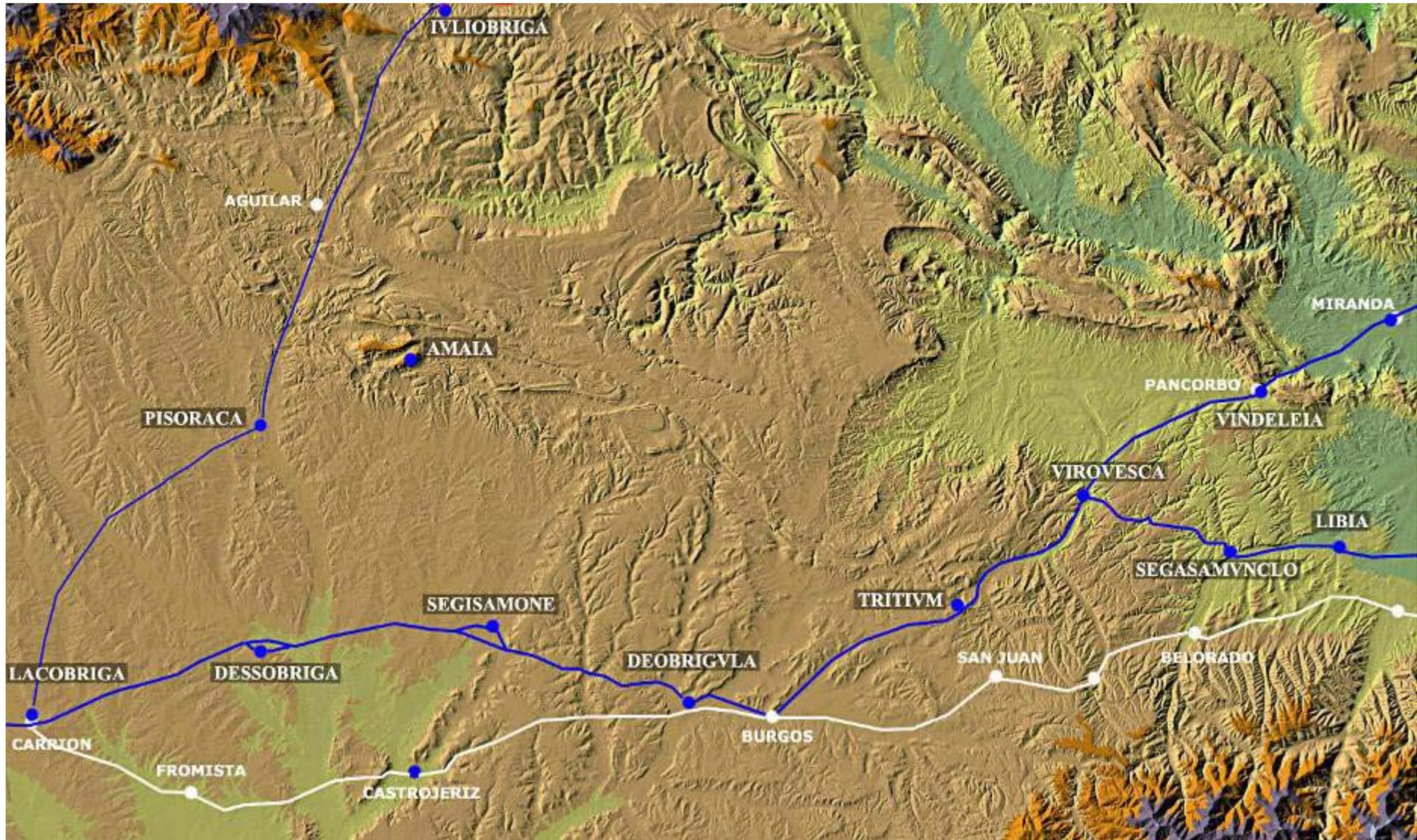
Leaving Astorga:

As it leaves Astorga, the Roman road deviates from the Way to Santiago and takes one of the heights in the North with a much lower average level and more suitable for vehicular use.

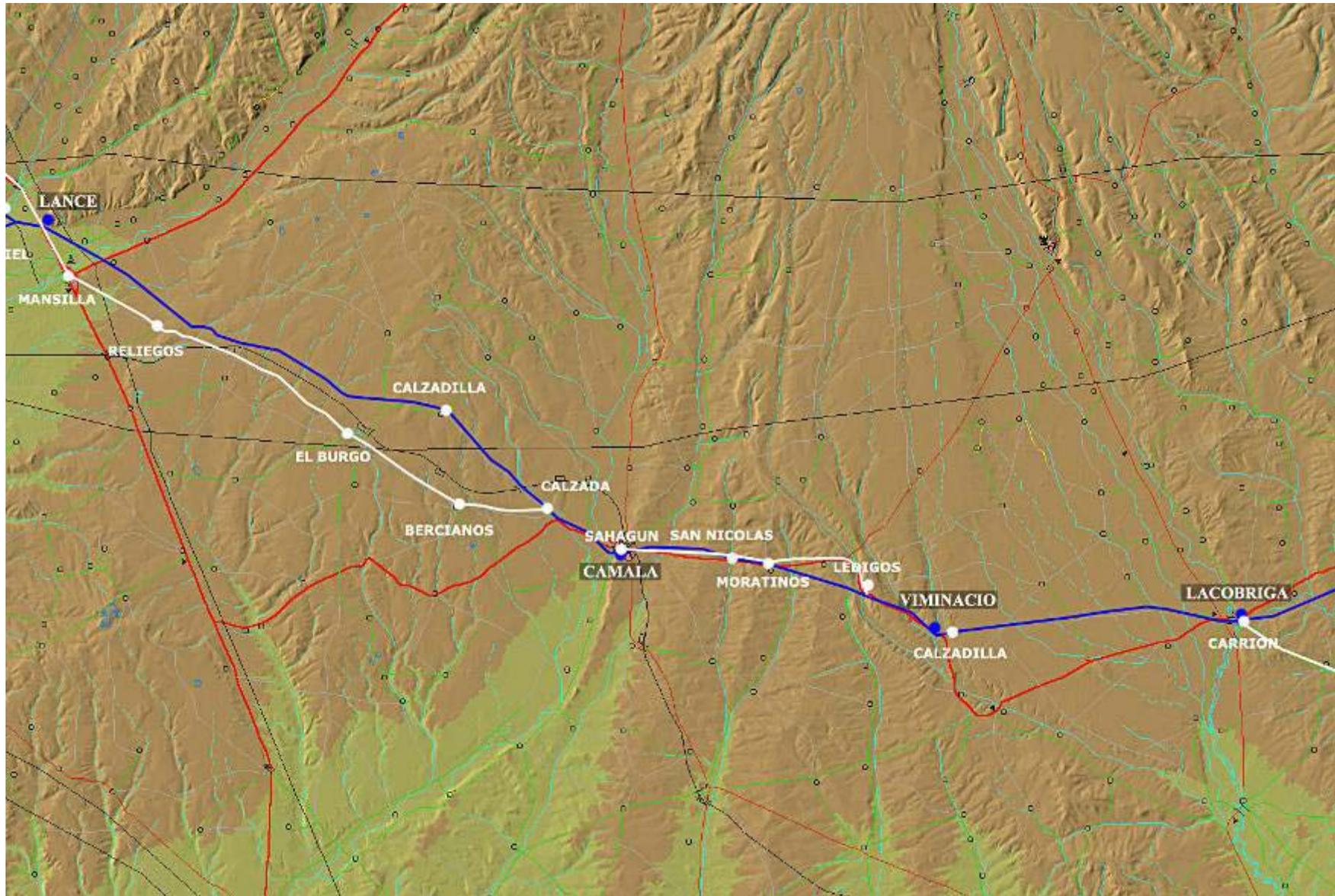
We have found a milestone left over from the Roman road in the fountain of the town of Montealegre, removed from its original location.



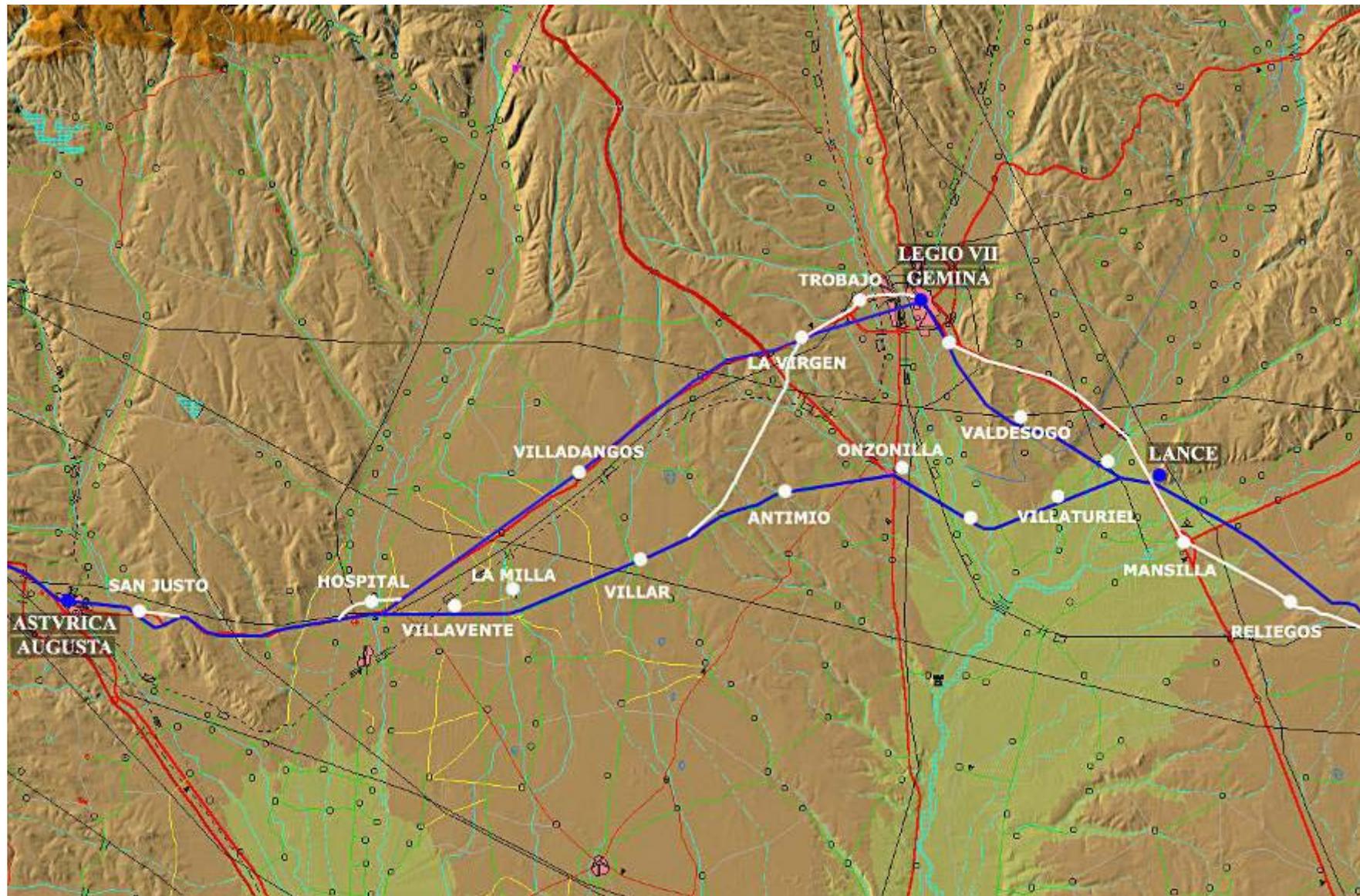
Milestone in Montealegre (León).



The Roman road from Italia to Hispania (blue) and the Way to Santiago in Castile and León (white): section 1



The Roman road from Italia to Hispania (blue) and the Way to Santiago in Castile and León (white): section 2



The Roman road from Italia to Hispania (blue) and the Way to Santiago in Castile and León (white): section 3

Comparative table of the Castile-León section of the Guía de Peregrinos [Pilgrims' guide] of the Codex Caestinus, twelfth century manuscript of which Book V forms the Liber Sancti Jacobi [Book of St. James] attributed to Aymerich Picard, chancellor to Pope Calixtus II (pope 1119-1124)⁴⁹ and the Itinerary of the Camino Real [Royal Road Itinerary] described by Villuga four centuries later, between Santiago and San Juan de Pie de Puerto.

<u>Liber Sancti Jacobi (¿ 1120 ?)</u>		<u>Repertorio de Villuga (1546)</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<i>Sanctus Dominicus</i>		<i>santo domingo de la calçada</i>	Santo Domingo
<i>Radicellas</i>		<i>grañón</i>	Grañón
		<i>redesilla</i>	Redecilla
<i>Belforatus</i>		<i>villa miesta</i>	Villambista
		<i>villorado</i>	Belorado
<i>Francavilla</i>		<i>todossantos</i>	Tosantos
<i>Nemus Oque</i>		<i>villa Franca de montes doca</i>	Villafranca Montes de Oca
			Montes de Oca
<i>Ataporca</i>		<i>val de huentes</i>	Valbuena
			Atapuerca
		<i>san dueldo</i>	Zalduendo
		<i>ybeas</i>	Ibeas
		<i>carbadel</i>	
		<i>nuestra señora la blanca</i>	
<i>Burgas</i>		<i>Burgos</i>	Burgos
<i>Alterdalia</i>		<i>tardajos</i>	Tardajos
		<i>rabé</i>	Rabé
<i>Furnellos</i>		<i>hornillos</i>	Hornillos
		<i>hontanás</i>	Hontanás
<i>Castra Sorecia</i>		<i>castrogeriz</i>	Castrogeriz
<i>Pons Fiterie</i>	<i>Pisorga fl.</i>	<i>la puente</i>	Puente Fitero
<i>Frumesta</i>		<i>flomesta</i>	Fromista
		<i>villa martín</i>	Villarmentero
<i>Karrionus</i>	<i>Karriona fl.</i>	<i>carrión</i>	Carrión
		<i>calçadilla</i>	Calzadilla
		<i>las tiendas</i>	Santa M ^a de las Tiendas
		<i>ledigos</i>	Ledigos
		<i>moratinos</i>	Moratinos
		<i>san nicolás</i>	San Nicolás
<i>Sanctus Facundus</i>	<i>Ceya fl.</i>	<i>sahagún</i>	Sahagún
		<i>albrechianos</i>	Bercianos
		<i>burgo</i>	El Burgo Ranero
		<i>reliejos</i>	Reliegos
<i>Manxilla</i>	<i>Aisela fl.</i>	<i>mansilla</i>	Mansilla
	<i>Porma fl.</i>	<i>villarent</i>	Puente Villarente
<i>Legio</i>	<i>Turio et Bernesga fl.</i>	<i>león</i>	León
<i>Castrum Judeorum</i>			¿Puente Castro?
		<i>trabajo</i>	Trobajo
		<i>nra señora del camino</i>	La Virgen del Camino
		<i>val verde</i>	Valverde del Camino
		<i>san miguel del camino</i>	San Miguel del Camino
		<i>villa danços</i>	Villadangos del Páramo
<i>Orbega</i>		<i>la puente dorbigo</i>	Hospital de Orbigo

⁴⁹ VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA. 1949 Tomo I pp. 201 y ss. *Las Peregrinaciones...* ob. cit.

<i>Osturga</i>	<i>la calçada</i>	despoblado
	<i>sante juste</i>	San Justo
	<i>estorga</i>	Astorga
	<i>palacios d' valduerno</i>	Palacios de Valduerna
	<i>espital del ganso</i>	Hospital del Ganso
<i>Raphanellus</i>	<i>rauanal</i>	Rabanal
<i>Portus Montis Yraci</i>	<i>fuen ceuadom</i>	Puerto de Foncebadón
	<i>la venta</i>	
	<i>azebo</i>	Acebo
	<i>riego</i>	Riego de Ambrós
<i>Siccamolina</i>	<i>miolina seca</i>	Molinaseca
<i>Pons Ferratus</i>	<i>ponferrada</i>	Ponferrada
<i>Carcavellus</i>	<i>cacauelos</i>	Cacabelos
	<i>campo de naraya</i>	Camponaraya
<i>Villafranca de Bucca Vallis Carceris</i>	<i>villa franca</i>	Villafranca del Bierzo
	<i>ribera de valcazar hasta la vega</i>	Vega de Valcarce
<i>Castrum Sarracenicum</i>		Castro Sarracín
<i>Villaus</i>		
<i>Portus montis Februari</i>	<i>cebreyro</i>	Puerto de Piedrafita
<i>Hospitale in cacumine ejusdem montis</i>	<i>espital</i>	Hospital de Cebrero
<i>Linar de Rege</i>		Linares
	<i>fuenfría</i>	Fonfría
<i>Triacastella</i>	<i>tria castela</i>	Triacastela
<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>	