Roman itineraries: A cultural approach.

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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'We might consequently begin to appreciate itineraries as material texts integral to the empire's visual culture.'[1]

Abstract.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine some selected examples of modified Roman itineraria using some of the ideas of transculturalism as a potential analytical framework to better understand them. In particular, to highlight the theme of 'cultural production as meaning-making' seen in some of these navigational aids.[2] *Looking at particular examples of Roman itineraria, it is possible to see that additional meaning has been added. But trying to understand where and how these innovations originated is challenging. A cultural study of Roman itineraria, across the broad expanse of time and space that constituted the Roman Empire, makes it far more difficult to identify any specific zones of interaction or who was influencing whom. And yet it does seem safe to conclude that some of these instances of modified or repurposed itineraries are the result of one or more syncretic processes. Joseph Maran's more fluid approach to transculturalism, thinking about culture and not cultures, may be a more suitable way to understand them.*[3] *In response to change and new influences the concept of the itinerary morphed into new forms, while still retaining some or all of its original intent to inform the traveller, or at least retain its recognisability as a travel aid. In some of the examples cited, the widespread familiarity with the basic itinerary form was a key to its successful adaptation.*

[1] Kimberly Cassibry (2021) *Destinations in Mind* (Oxford University Press), p. 17.

[2] Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (2021) 'Introduction' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p.xxv.

[3] Joseph Maran (2021) 'Not "cultures", but culture! The need for a transcultural perspective in archaeology' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p. 60.

Introduction.

This study will examine, and try to understand, selected instances of Roman *itineraria* which were modified in some way. Perhaps there is a strong human inclination to make something like the successful concept of the itinerary even better, to be useful in more ways than one. Or perhaps we have a strong urge to piggy-back on the success of an idea to get another message across to a large audience. There are a number of instances of Roman *itineraria* which seem to display these qualities, where the original concept has been 'improved' upon or where the idea has morphed into something else while also still retaining elements of its original function. The specific examples chosen to explore these ideas are those appearing on commemorative inscriptions such as the Vicarello Cups, and itineraries being used additionally as a framework for travel expenses, as in the case of Theophanes' travel records. An itinerary form used by the anonymous Bordeaux pilgrim as the basis for an early form of Christian writing, and the Pataran Monument of Roads which might have been more commemorative than navigationally helpful, make up the third and fourth examples which will be examined in this light. Selected on the basis that they are still recognisable as itineraries, some of the ideas of transculturalism will be used to highlight the 'cultural production as meaning-making' displayed by these examples.[4]

Examining some pre-Roman instances of these navigational aids, as well as looking in detail at the structure of a basic Roman itinerary will form a baseline for the comparison of these selected examples. This approach will make it easier to tease out how precisely these chosen examples of

[4] Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (2021) 'Introduction' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p.xxv.

itineraries have been modified. The potential value of a comparative approach, which is informed by a cultural framework, will then be illustrated by tracing how scholars to date, particularly of ancient cartography, have interpreted Roman itineraries. Looking at studies of itineraries in the historiography, there seems to be an opportunity to look at them in the round as cultural objects or concepts, which are subject to new influences and therefore to change. Two conclusions will be drawn from an examination of the selected Roman examples. First, the itinerary form can serve as a useful illustration of cultural production, and secondly, the prevalence of the basic Roman itinerary form was in some instances, such as the Vicarello Cups and the account of the Bordeaux Pilgrim, a key to its successful adaptation. In these instances, the observer could recognise the traditional form being presented to them but also understand that new information was being conveyed through its modification.

1. What are itineraries (and why are they interesting)?

The value of Roman itineraries in a broad cultural study.

The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* describes an itinerary as a ‘sequential list of settlements, way-marks, or posting-stations, often with distances between them’.[5] Lionel Casson has used the word ‘Handlists’ to describe itineraries or *itineraria*, indicating how they may have been used by the traveller in the Roman Empire.[6] Sometimes portable, they ‘detailed for a given route the stopping places along it and how far each was from the next’.[7] Examining one example of a Roman itinerary found inscribed on four silver cups, Kimberly Cassibry has described them as ‘Word Maps’.[8] Though this is an evocative description the term ‘word maps’, perhaps also runs the risk of confusing our modern-day ideas of what maps are with what, if anything, an educated Roman might have understood by the concept. As we will see in chapter 2, the prevalence of the Roman itinerary, as a predominantly text-based wayfinding system, although sometimes expressed schematically, has been interpreted, perhaps controversially, by some scholars of ancient cartography as an indication that topographic maps as we understand them today, were rare or absent. However, such a claim is perhaps not so hard to understand, when the lack of evidence for the everyday use of maps within the Roman Empire is considered. For instance, O.A.W. Dilke’s discussion of Claudius Ptolemy illustrates the uncertainty among scholars as to whether maps as we understand them were ever widespread within the Roman Empire. Dilke describes Ptolemy’s

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[5] Nicholas Purcell (2012) ‘Itineraries’ in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 753.
[6] Lionel Casson (1984) *Travel in the Ancient World* (The Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 186.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Kimberly Cassibry (2021), p. 46.

Geography and *Algamest* ‘as among the most influential works in cartographic history’.[9] And yet, this is primarily due to his theoretical contributions. Whether Ptolemy produced any actual maps is not clear though Dilke suggests that he, or perhaps a colleague, ‘probably did’.[10]

Widely used, judging by ‘the prominence of itinerary lists in the surviving literature’, Roman itineraries were ‘of great utility to the traveller’, ‘assisting in the selection of the best route’, as well as ‘pacing oneself once on the road’.[11] UNESCO has even used the word itinerary in its modern sense to describe a network of Roman roads in its list of candidates for proposed future world heritage sites.[12] The concept of an itinerary is therefore a very powerful one and still, it seems associated with Roman roads.

Some of the selected examples of Roman itineraries in this study can be dated specifically to the first and third centuries C.E. but others are undatable at present. Therefore, several significant Roman *itineraria* deriving from the first to the sixth centuries C.E. will be considered. The geography covered in these selections, and in the broader discussions of itineraries in this chapter, ranges across the empire. This raises an important question. Is the whole of the Roman empire’s existence, and its expanse, too large a framework to work with? Wendy Mayer, for example, thinking of only a portion of this period, has questioned whether thinking about ‘a particular label that has meaning at one place or time is equally valid across the full geographic and chronological

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[9] O.A.W. Dilke (1987) ‘Cartography in the Ancient World: A Conclusion’ in J.B. Harley & David Woodward (eds.) *The History of Cartography Vol. 1* (University of Chicago Press), p. 278.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Benet Salway (2012) ‘Putting the World in Order: Mapping in Roman texts’ in Richard J.A. Talbert (ed.) *Ancient Places: Maps and Their Place in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome* (University of Chicago Press), p. 193; Benet Salway (2001) ‘Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*’ in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 32.
[12] UNESCO (2007).

span of Late Antiquity'.[13] An investigation into various adaptations made to the itinerary in the Roman Empire may therefore seem too broad a canvas to reveal anything useful. But there are three advantages to examining itineraries, in this study, across such a broad stretch of space and time.

First, Roman itineraries worked within a cohesive space, albeit a large and culturally varied empire. Its heterogeneity, in fact, would be key to any cultural study, where agents from one sub-cultural group might influence another sub-culture. Roman itineraries can also be framed within the boundaries of empire for another important reason. Without good communications in the form of the Roman road system with its milestones acting as markers and the accompanying infrastructure that serviced travellers' needs, itineraries as used within the Empire would have been of limited value. Colin Adams has observed that 'travel and communication are dynamics which were central to the Roman Empire'.[14] Similarly, Ray Laurence has argued that the construction of roads was 'crucial to Roman hegemony'.[15] He has identified two key points contributing to the way Romans travelled and effectively controlled space. First, the 'speed of travel' brought about by the road system and secondly, 'the methodology of location based on the milestones.'[16] This information, distances, and useful stopping points along the route, could be expressed most effectively as an itinerary, enabling decisions to be made about how and when to travel. Laurence describes an example from the first century BCE of this kind of decision making. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero showed his detailed knowledge of route and journey time, so that he was 'able to anticipate his

[13] Wendy Meyer (2012) 'Approaching Late Antiquity' in Phillip Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Wiley-Blackwell), p. 10.
[14] Colin Adams (2001) 'Introduction' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p.1.
[15] Ray Laurence (1999) *The Roads of Roman Italy: Mobility and Cultural Change* (Routledge), p. 11.
[16] Ibid, p. 84.

arrival at places in the future.'[17] Perhaps he referred to a written itinerary in planning his travels. More generally, we can imagine élite landowners managing their disparate estates using itineraries to move from one to another as efficiently as possible, or at least getting their agents to do so. For example, Kristina Sessa notes that Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, a fourth-century senator and letter writer, 'spent considerable time inspecting his properties'.[18] Looking at the itinerary within the broad expanse of the Empire, bound together by its roads, therefore makes some sense. As a concept, the Roman itinerary relied on a good road system which in turn covered and facilitated control over a culturally heterogeneous area, with its potential for cultural exchange, over such a long period.

The itinerary form also has one strong similarity with several types of material object used in previous cultural studies of this period. The relative simplicity in design of objects such as clay figurines and coins or tokens, makes them valuable subjects to track changes in their form. Modifications are relatively easily to discern, and to track. For instance, Serena Autiero discusses the form of a number of locally produced terracotta oil lamps from Ter in modern-day Maharashtra, India.[19] Autiero writes that 'Western influence is evident in the shape, iconography and execution of the terracotta lamps.'[20] For example, holes found in the handles of these lamps resemble 'the wick hole in Roman counterparts.'[21] Autiero concludes from this and other simple design modifications, that 'foreign visual elements were mingled, adapted and recontextualised.'[22] The region's trade with Roman traders therefore acted directly or indirectly as the catalyst. Similarly,

[17] Ibid, p. 85.
[18] Kristina Sessa (2018) *Daily Life in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press), p. 30.
[19] Serena Autiero (2019) 'Indo-Roman lamps from Ter: the long shadow of Rome or the light of transculturation?', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, Vol 28, No. 1, p. 661.
[20] Ibid, p. 662.
[21] Ibid, p. 664.
[22] Ibid, p. 667.

simple changes to the designs of terracotta *bullae* found in India were 'inspired by the design of Roman coins' from the early first century.[23] For instance, six examples of *bullae* 'are imitations of Tiberius denarii.'[24] In the same manner, the concept of the Roman itinerary in its most primitive form contains 'no geographical details or indications of compass direction'.[25] This makes them a useful baseline from which to identify any modifications or additions made to this concept. As well as illustrating how Roman itineraries were sometimes modified, this study will also seek to find a theoretical underpinning for these changes. Can some or all of these modified Roman itineraries, for instance, be convincingly placed within a transcultural framework, where identifiable influences within the Roman Empire resulted in changes to the forms of existing objects or ideas? Or do we have to be satisfied with acknowledging that at some unknown level there might have been a degree of syncretism taking place – a melding of influences that created a number of repurposed Roman itinerary forms? But before any changes in the form of an itinerary can be considered, its basic layout, which includes ideas about its possible origins, need to be explored to provide a baseline. What, for instance, were the common elements found in a workaday itinerary? And who might have used them? Identifying the basic elements will act as a reference point for comparison of some of the more exotic forms covered later in this study.

Possible origins and basic structure of an itinerary.

Lionel Casson describes an itinerary as a 'travel guide in its most primitive form', suggesting that Assyrian examples, were potential forerunners of the Roman version.[26] For instance, Betina Faist

[23] Emilia Smagur (2018), p. 1.
[24] Ibid, p. 4.
[25] Benet Salway (2001) 'Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p.27.
[26] Lionel Casson (1994) *Travel in the Ancient World* (The Johns Hopkins Press), p. 51.

mentions three Middle Assyrian (c. 1500-1000 BCE) examples, one listing a series of 'road-stations' or 'resting places' visited by a group of soldiers, another contained in a 'letter written by an Assyrian official', and finally, a listing included in 'a list of provisions for the royal court'.[27] But these provide only a limited idea of the basic structure of an itinerary. More promising is the 'Zamua Itinerary' of the Neo-Assyrian empire (c. 900-600 BCE) which 'includes the description of a 4-day trip through the Zagrus mountains indicating exact travel distances'.[28] Louis Levene has analysed the structure of the Zamua itinerary preserved on tablet K. 4675+.[29] The repeating structure of the Zamua itinerary, the barebones of any itinerary, can be interpreted using Levene's work as follows;

1. From location A to B.
2. The distance from A to B.
3. A summary of the longer journey stage (A to C, for instance).
4. The day.
5. The journey stage, given as a number.[30]

For such an idea to be broadly useful the itinerary was therefore broken into stages which both required an efficient network of roads, and also places for the traveller to stop along the way. Responding to their prevalence within the Roman world, Benet Salway writes, perhaps overstating the case a little, considering known Assyrian examples, that 'the land itinerary seems to be a

[27] Betina Faist (2006) 'Itineraries and Travellers in the Middle Assyrian Period', *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*, Vol. XV, p. 148.
[28] Karlheinz Kessler & Jan Burian (2006) 'Itinerare' in Hubert Cancik & Helmuth Schneider (eds.) *Brill's New Pauly*. Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e529050 (Accessed: 8.1.2024).
[29] Louis Levene (1989) 'K 4675+. The Zamua-Itinerary', *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 3, p. 80.
[30] Ibid.

primarily Roman phenomenon'.[31] Perhaps it would be more accurate to state that there are relatively large numbers of examples found from the Roman world, because like the Assyrian examples, the itinerary was an emergent property of a good imperial road system with ample stopping and changing points. But again, this is speculative. However, the paucity of evidence for itineraries as navigational aids from other pre-Roman civilisations, which would help in confirming whether itineraries are always associated with a sophisticated state road system, doesn't mean they did not exist. Steven Sidebotham, for instance, writing about the absence of navigational aids along the road system in the Egyptian Eastern Desert, does note that other areas in Egypt, nearer the Nile for instance, may have contained milestones from Ptolemaic or perhaps earlier periods.[32] Milestones may have meant some form of written itinerary was also available in this period. However, this is also highly speculative, as is any consideration of oral versions of an itinerary, which some scholars consider the likely precursor of any written form.

Nicholas Purcell, for instance, suggests that an oral tradition of transmission existed for the related maritime form of the itinerary, the *periplous*.[33] This makes sense, at one level, as information gleaned by sailors and merchants on their voyages and subsequently used by the authors of *periploi* such as *Periplus Maris Erythrae*, were likely to have been from an oral tradition. This idea is noted by Scott Hatcher, who also notes that parts of the written *periploi* would in turn have been incorporated into geographic volumes such as Ptolemy's *Geography*.[34] But without material

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[31] Benet Salway (2001) 'Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 26.
[32] Steven E. Sidebotham (2011) *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route* (University of California Press), p. 28.
[33] Nicholas Purcell (2012) 'periploi' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1108.
[34] Scott Hatcher (2013) 'The Birth of the Monsoon Winds: On the Existence and Understanding of Hippalus, and the 'Discovery' of Apogeus Trade Winds', *Journal of the Society for the History of Discoveries*, Vol. 45, No. 1, p. 24.

evidence or some way of interpreting it that points convincingly to oral forms of an itinerary being used initially we are left with just a likely possibility. However, considering oral forms of itineraries does raise another interesting question. Would they have been less detailed, basic journey instructions? Thinking how difficult it would be to memorise, even a basic and short itinerary, perhaps the reverse was more likely to be the case. Some form of narrative or interesting detail would help in remembering a travel route. But with written forms, itineraries, on stone where space is limited, could be reduced to their basics, as the need to remember them was less pressing. We enter a similar speculative realm when thinking about whether itineraries were reinvented a number of times or whether the idea was copied from earlier instances. Probably both occurred. It would also seem safe to assume that oral communication of itineraries or perhaps segments of them, would have continued to co-exist with their written counterparts. After all, it would have been just one step away from asking a friendly stranger the way, to confirm you were on the right route.

A Roman itinerary.

The form of a typical text-based Roman itinerary seems to have been essentially similar in structure to the Zamua Itinerary. For example, here is a section of the fourth-century Bordeaux Pilgrimage itinerary, taken from Aubrey Stewart's late-nineteenth-century translation, part of the route that took the traveller through modern-day Italy from Turin to Rinco;

	Miles
'City of Taurini (*Turin*)	VIII
Change at the tenth milestone	X
Halt at Quadratae	XII

Change at Ceste	XI
Halt at Regomagus (Rigomagus, *Rinco*)	VIII'[35]

As with the Zamua Itinerary, from approximately a millennium earlier, the Bordeaux Itinerary has locations and the distances between them, but in addition has stopping and changing places (for animal transport, food etc.) along with the Roman milestone references, a key point of reference for any Roman traveller. Like the Zamua Itinerary, at particular points, the Bordeaux account also contains summaries of longer journey distances such as 'Total from Arles to Milan 475 miles, 63 changes, 22 halting-places'.[36] Whether there were Assyrian equivalents of milestones seems unclear, so perhaps Salway's comment regarding the terrestrial itinerary being very much a Roman phenomenon might have some weight.

Discussing milestones' key role in navigation, Laurence, for instance, cites a letter of Pliny the Younger where the author refers to numbered milestones as part of the directions to reach his property in Laurentum.[37]

Variations on the basic form.

Roman itineraries have been broadly classified into two main categories. First, the purely text-based form of the 'annotated itinerary' or *Itineraria adnotata*, and secondly, the lists that also incorporated a graphic element, the 'illustrated itineraries' or *Itineraria picta*.[38] However, this

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[35] Aubrey Stewart (1887) *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem* (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society), p. 4.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ray Laurence (1999) *The Roads of Roman Italy: Mobility and Cultural Change* (Routledge), p. 83.
[38] Colin Adams (2001) 'Introduction' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 2.

grouping, though convenient in one way also runs the risk of hiding a lot of variety which might be important for any comparative consideration of itineraries. For instance, regarding the *Itineraria picta* category, can the fragment of the third-century Dura-Europos Shield, which depicts stopping points for a coastal route by the Black Sea be comfortably grouped with the Vicarello Cups? The former is a 'rough map' that shows 'staging points', and distances.[39] The latter are a group of ornately engraved silver cups. Each is a valuable example of the ways itineraries could be displayed but they might also have been produced for different reasons. Grouping them together only as illustrated itineraries could therefore be a missed opportunity.

Roman examples of itineraries survive in both epigraphic and papyrological form. Sometimes regarded as describing journeys that were solely terrestrial in nature, itineraries might also contain freshwater or maritime components. For instance, the *Itinerarium maritimum* of the Antonine Itinerary.[40] A.L.F. Rivet's discussion of this itinerary displays maritime routes from North Africa to both modern-day Italy and Spain.[41] Benet Salway has noted that even a predominantly land-based listing might also include river ferry crossings or legs of a journey along a freshwater course.[42] Rivet, describing the British section of the Antonine Itinerary, discusses various river names and river crossings. For instance, 'the ferry terminal at the west side of the Severn'.[43] These aquatic components of an itinerary, that require boats or even ships, Salway argues, may constrain the traveller far more than road-based travel, because they would have to rely on a third party for the choice of route and time. On the other hand, Salway omits to mention that some land-based

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[39] O.A.W. Dilke (1987) 'Itineraries and Geographical Maps in the Early and Late Roman Empires' in J.B. Harley & David Woodward (eds.) *The History of Cartography Vol. 1* (University of Chicago Press), p. 249.
[40] Ibid.
[41] A.L.F. Rivet (1970) 'The British Section of the Antonine Itinerary', *Britannia*, Vol. 1, p. 35.
[42] Benet Salway (2004) 'Sea and River Travel in Roman Itinerary Literature' in Richard Talbert & Kai Brodersen (eds.) *Space in the Roman World: Its perception and presentation* (Münster, Lit Verlag), p. 68.
[43] A.L.F. Rivet (1970), p. 58.

routes may also have had constraints, such as seasonal availability. For example, high altitude routes may have been impassable in winter. More recent, and ingenious work by Mark Wilson, opens up the possibility that scholars have perhaps underestimated topography in gauging the choices involved in ancient terrestrial travel. Wilson used three-dimensional modelling to examine the apostle Paul's travels in Galatia. Arguing that the emphasis has been focused too much on a two-dimensional understanding of travel in ancient history, Wilson uses new technologies to gauge the most likely routes Paul may have taken by giving greater emphasis to the topography of a given route, along with more traditional elements such as weather conditions.[44] Presumably these informed decisions as to the routes taken would have been incorporated into itineraries. Salway defines these listings, both land and water-based, by their function – 'as practical handbooks for the traveller planning a journey'.[45] This perhaps emphasises that itineraries were a product of a number of factors which together contributed to the best route available for a given time and place, and type of traveller. On balance, it would seem that although there may have been seasonal exceptions, any land-based elements of a journey, such as Cicero's documented travel plans would have been more amenable to the whims of the traveller with respect to time taken or choice of route within the Roman road system.

Examination of the possible origins and basic structure of an itinerary along with how they may have been used and by whom, therefore provides some useful reference points for considering more intricate forms. But texts that are similar in structure to land itineraries are also useful in this respect, especially those that may also have been subsequently modified.

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[44] Mark Wilson (2018) 'Paul's Journeys in 3D: The Apostle as Ideal Ancient Traveller', *Journal of Early Christian History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 32.
[45] Salway (2004) p. 45.

Periploi and periegesis: written forms that may be allied to the itinerary.

Nicholas Purcell writes that that *periploi* 'were the standard basis of ancient descriptive geography' and the idea behind them was the 'ancestor of the terrestrial equivalent, the itineraries'.[46] Considering the ancient Assyrian examples already touched on, the latter comment seems problematic. For instance, do the surviving Assyrian examples have a better claim to being closer to an original form? Or perhaps the idea arose more than once? Again, Purcell's further claim that *periploi* were originally oral in form seems to add to the uncertainty over the concept being any ancestor to land-based itinerary form. Even the original function of the *periploi* has been questioned.

P. Kaplan characterises the accepted wisdom of *periploi* being 'documents recording a sailing route' and consisting of a list of 'cities and other stopping places'.[47] They have been for the most part thought of as navigational aids 'providing practical information to sailors'.[48] But Kaplan questions this idea by noting that the earliest examples (approximately the fourth century BCE) contained a paucity of data useful to sailors. Instead, Kaplan suggests they were more akin to laying claim to the 'exploration and control of distant lands'.[49] But later examples, such as the first-century

[46] Nicholas Purcell (2012) 'periploi' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1108.
[47] P. Kaplan (2008) 'The function of the early periploi', *The Classical Bulletin*, Vol. 84, 2, p. 27.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, p. 41.

Periplus Maris Erythrae, and the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* of late antiquity, a *periplous* of the Mediterranean Sea, do seem to fall into the category of navigational aids for mariners, bearing strong similarities to terrestrial itineraries. A translation by Brady Kiesling and Leif Isaksen in 2014 of the latter, illustrates the still spare navigational nature of this *periplous* with its mention of look-out points, availability of water (differentiating brackish from fresh), harbours and roadsteads.[50] For example,

> 'From Kardamis to Menelaos 100 stades; it is a habour, it has brackish water in the sand.
> From Menelaos to Katanei ? stades; Upon coming near you will see the white beach…
> From Kataneis to Kyrthanion 150 stades; sail 8 stades away since there are high shoals;'[51]

The short excerpt gives an indication of the similarity in structure of the *periplous* to a Roman predominantly terrestrial itinerary. Distances are measured, this time in Greek stades and locations to and from for a given leg of the journey are listed. But the *periplous* is different enough from a land itinerary, in its absence of milestone markers, and short-term stopping places (other than the regular landing spots) to be thought of as a different type of text. However, they are extremely valuable in a study of Roman land itineraries as some of them also exhibit additions and modifications.

Like the terrestrial itineraries examined in this study, some of the *periploi* show some interesting additions to their basic structure. For example, the detailed trading information found in the

[50] B. Kiesling & L. Isaksen (2014) *Anonymous Stadiasmus of the Great Sea*. Available at https://topostext.org/work.php?work_id=217 (Accessed: 15.2.2024).
[51] Ibid.

anonymous *Periplous Maris Erythraei*, and the departure from the basic *periplous* style found in parts of Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini*. Lionel Casson characterises the former *periplous* as 'a guide for merchants' with 'information, invaluable for people doing business in a foreign land'.[52] Containing much additional information about geography and peoples, 'the prime purpose of the Periplus was to describe two major lines of trade'.[53] Namely, from ports in the Red Sea to either the coast of Africa or to India. The author of the *Periplous Maris Erythraei*, for instance, provides the usual navigational guidance. For example, for the extreme high and low tides to be found around the port of Barygaza (modern-day Bharuch in Gujarat) along the West Indian coast which might be 'dangerous for those who are inexperienced'.[54] But the account also provides lots of additional information. For instance, there is a description of the peoples to be found in the hinterland of Barygaza along with a list of luxury goods such as precious stones (onyx and possibly agates).[55] Much additional trading information and descriptions of peoples and local topography has been added to the periplous structure. Arrian of Nicomedia's second-century CE account of a *periplous* around the Black Sea is also extensively modified from the basic concept. Aidan Liddle considers 'its structure and composition are rather odd', a good part of the account being an effort in literary self-styling.[56] The large-scale textual modifications of both *periploi* will act as useful comparisons to some of the repurposed land itineraries that will be considered in the final section of this study. But there is another text, that shares some of the elements of these modified navigational aids.

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[52] Lionel Casson (1989) *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Princeton, Princeton University Press), p. 8.
[53] Ibid, p. 15.
[54] Ibid, p. 79.
[55] Ibid, p. 81.
[56] Aidan Liddle (2012) *Arrian Periplus Ponti Euxini* (Bristol Classical Press), p. 26.

Maria Pretzler writes that in the second-century CE *Periegesis Hellados*, 'Pausanias is discovering, describing and defining Greece and Greek culture for his readers'.[57] Pretzler notes that in order to convince readers that they're accompanying the author on his journey, the account in ten books 'is arranged as an itinerary'.[58] Similarly, thinking about possible influences on the author, William Hutton suggests that *periploi* may have been important.[59] Pretzler concurs, stating that 'the *periplous* stood at the beginning of this long tradition of describing landscapes in a linear fashion'.[60] Although possibly a little too far removed from the basic terrestrial itinerary form, it is another useful comparison to bear in mind when considering how textual forms may have been modified. The *Periegesis Hellados* may also have relied on the existence of itineraries for its production. Pretzler states that the opportunity for writing his account rested on the fact that Pausanias could expect a degree of relative quality and safety on the road system of the second century CE, such that the author 'expected to find single-track roads fit for a carriage with two draught animals'.[61] Perhaps it is not too much of a stretch of the imagination, to think of Pausanias planning his journeys with the aid of a number of text-based itineraries.

Now that the basic form of an itinerary has been explored, it is important to consider how they have been interpreted in the literature. Jaś Elsner describes the predominantly terrestrial sections of the Antonine Itinerary as 'almost entirely a set of lists with places and miles' and, perhaps rather mischievously categorises them as 'very dry'.[62] As such, it might seem surprising that itineraries have attracted so much attention, for example, from scholars of ancient geography. However,

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[57] Maria Pretzler (2007) *Pausanias: Travel Writing in Ancient Greece* (Duckworth), p. 2.
[58] Ibid, p. 32.
[59] William Hutton (2005) *Describing Greece* (Cambridge University Press), p. 264.
[60] Pretzler (2007), p. 67.
[61] Ibid, p. 35.
[62] Jaś Elsner (2000) 'The *Itinerarium Burdigalense*: Politics and Salvation in the Geography of Constantine's Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 90, p. 186.

itineraries have played a key part in looking at 'how the Romans viewed the world in which they lived and how they travelled in it'.[63] Similarly, Salway has observed that a key reason for studying Roman itineraries is that they provide clues as to '…the varying ways in which space was perceived and described by the compilers and users of itineraries.'[64] The itinerary also illustrates 'how mobile a culture the Roman Empire was, or had a potential to be'.[65] The next chapter will consider how scholars have interpreted Roman itineraries, concluding that it may also be useful to consider them collectively as cultural objects.

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[63] Colin Adams (2001) 'Introduction' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 1.
[64] Benet Salway (2007) 'The perception and description of space in Roman itineraries' in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike* (Philipp von Zabern: Mainz, 2007), p. 181.
[65] Ibid, p. 5.

2. How Roman itineraries have been interpreted (and why a cultural study may add to this picture).

This chapter will examine how itineraries have been interpreted in the historiography, suggesting that a fresh perspective – looking at them collectively as cultural objects – may also contribute to understanding their significance in the Roman world. For example, scholars of ancient cartography, have asked what the basic itinerary form might tell us about everyday attitudes to navigation. For instance, what does employing a text-based aid in getting around tell us about the ways that people might have viewed the spaces around them? Additionally, this line of investigation might also provide clues to new meaning making exhibited by modified forms of the itinerary.

The apparent prevalence of surviving Roman itineraries when compared with the dearth of other navigational aids such as accurate maps, has been used to attempt to understand whether to-scale maps were ever commonly used as navigational aids within the Roman Empire. If not, it would lead to the conclusion that everyday navigation within the Roman Empire was primarily linear and text-based. However, this conclusion has been complicated by what the few surviving objects, interpreted as Roman maps, were actually for. Like itineraries in their modified form, maps might also have had multiple uses.

The Roman itinerary has also played a central part in the debate surrounding the origins, as well as the potential uses, of the Peutinger Table. A map of sorts, though more schematic than topographic, the medieval copy of what is assumed to have been a Roman original has attracted a great deal of attention. Itineraries have also been used to gauge the level of urban development

within different regions of the Roman Empire. Differences in the density of stations along travel routes have been taken to reflect variations in urban development. In what follows in this chapter, these interesting studies will be critically examined. There still seems much to learn, which perhaps highlights the value of a more comparative and cultural approach to Roman itineraries. Particularly those that have been modified.

Roman itineraries and spatial mindsets.

Does the relative prevalence of itineraries, mean that the Romans' worldview was primarily hodological? That is, a viewpoint not necessarily based on the shortest route, derived from a topographic outlook, but where 'paths and vectors are defined psychologically' so that the chosen route might take the traveller via desirable stopping places perhaps offering the best supplies or entertainment, according to their annotated itinerary.[66] Brodersen, for instance, picks up on the itinerary's topological content – concerned with points or nodes and links or connections, rather than geographic distance or direction. He notes that the itinerary, particularly in its possible graphic forms such as the Peutinger Table, 'is a very successful way of organising and presenting geographical knowledge'.[67] But it is not what we would understand as a to-scale map, reflecting the best topographic knowledge of the time. Instead, Brodersen compares the itinerary, in its various forms, as more akin to the modern-day underground map, which shows points or stations along the way and how the underground route connects them together. This information enables the traveller to navigate successfully without the need for a detailed knowledge of the geography up above. A situation made manifest (before satellite navigation at least) by bewildered travellers

[66] Oxford Reference. Available at https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095940143 (Accessed: 10.12.23).
[67] Kai Brodersen (2001) 'The presentation of geographical knowledge for travel and transport in the Roman World' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 18.

milling around above ground when an underground system is suddenly closed down. The tube travellers' mindset could be said to be primarily topological rather than topographic with respect to space and navigation. The possibility that itineraries were used instead of to-scale maps, or texts derived from maps, would suggest that for every day navigation they were probably more useful. A good Roman road system meant it was far more useful to know how far the next stopping point was and where you would be able to lodge for the night. Any topographic elements might be said to have been decided by Roman surveyors when building or adapting an existing road network.

Maps as statements versus itineraries as navigational aids.

Kai Brodersen has queried whether there is in fact any evidence at all for the use of scale maps by the Romans, noting that, in contrast, 'there is ample evidence for the use of itineraries'.[68] However, Salway, though acknowledging that 'the prominence of itinerary lists in the surviving literature' might be an indicator that 'the Roman's perception of the world was primarily linear', also suggests there is room for a 'spectrum' of Roman geographical worldviews.[69] This seems a safer interpretation. Richard Talbert, for instance, supports the multiplicity of viewpoints, to a degree, by noting the existence of a 'few surviving maps' but also suggesting that they were probably not intended primarily to help travellers but had more to do with emphasising the 'Roman rule of the larger part of the inhabited world'.[70]

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[68] Kai Brodersen (2001) 'The presentation of geographical knowledge for travel and transport in the Roman World' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 12.
[69] Benet Salway (2012) 'Putting the World in Order: Mapping in Roman Texts' in Richard J.A. Talbert (ed.) *Ancient Perspectives: Maps and Their Place in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome* (University of Chicago Press), p. 193.
[70] Richard J.A. Talbert (2017) 'Communicating Through Maps: The Roman Case' in Richard J.A. Talbert & Fred S. Naiden (eds.) *Mercury's Wings: Exploring Modes of Communication in the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press), p. 341.

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, ‘lifelong friend and supporter of Augustus’, ‘commissioned a now-lost world-map’.[71] ‘Large in size and scope’, ‘it remained on permanent display to the public in the Porticus Vipsania at Rome’.[72] Talbert interprets Agrippa’s world-map as being both informative as well as promoting the ‘conscious sense of empire’.[73] He interprets another ‘large Roman display-map’, the *Forma Urbis* or ‘Rome’s Marble Plan’ in a similar way.[74] The *Forma Urbis* was ‘engraved on 151 slabs of marble’ and was on display ‘after A.D. 203’.[75] Though a highly detailed depiction of the urban fabric of Rome, the map’s placement high above any potential viewers, would seem to make all this information of little value. But Talbert maintains that its primary function was again, ‘above all to fire Roman pride’.[76] The accuracy of the detail mattered less than the fact that it could be done and that it showed a great city to both its inhabitants and to visitors. However, it was neither portable nor was the information in either of these examples of display maps, accessible to travellers. And yet, David Reynolds notes that the information displayed in the surviving ten per cent or so of the *Forma Urbis* is fairly accurate when compared with archaeological evidence.[77] This seems to be a situation where everyone is partly correct but are missing a key part of the puzzle. It seems likely that both ‘maps’ were not primary documents. They were derived from working, and importantly, editable forms containing this geographical

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[71] Geoffrey Richardson *et al* (2012) ‘Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa’ in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.1554; Richard J.A. Talbert (2017) ‘Communicating Through Maps: The Roman Case’, p. 345.
[72] Richard J.A. Talbert (2017) ‘Communicating Through Maps: The Roman Case’, p. 345.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid, p. 346.
[75] Janet DeLaine (2012) ‘Forma Urbis’ in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 585.
[76] Richard J.A. Talbert (2017), p. 348.
[77] David Reynolds (1996) *Forma Urbis Romae: The Severen Marble Plan and the Urban Form of Ancient Rome*. PhD thesis. University of Michigan, p. 106.

information. Consideration of another type of document describing Rome's urban structure in the fourth century, known collectively as the Regionary Catalogues, seems to add weight to this idea.

The *Notitia Urbis Romae* and the *Curiosum Urbis Romae Regionum XIV* are inventories of the buildings of the city of Rome. They have been approximately dated to the mid-fourth century, and like the *Formis Urbae* seem at first sight to be impracticable. In Reynolds's words both types of record are inaccessible and immutable.[78] Both were also primarily for show. Reynolds suggests that the primary documents were stored elsewhere, in an accessible and updateable form, probably papyrus.[79] In the case of the *Forma Urbis*, the primary documents from which the Severan map was derived, may have been accessible in the same space. Reynolds reports traces in the surviving parts of the building of book niches. It doesn't seem unlikely that inquirers might have been both awed by the wall map while also obtaining the answer to their queries as a copy or excerpt of the papyrus primary documents. Whether this information would be textual or in graphic form, or both, is impossible to answer and perhaps stretching the speculation too far.

From the available evidence, it would therefore seem that itineraries were a common form of navigational aid, especially away from major cities. Maps seem to have played an important role but not as primary navigational aids, at least not outside major conurbations. Itineraries may have been the primary, and most immediate source of information for Roman travellers within the Empire, outside of major cities like Rome, and later Constantinople (with its *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*). However, the Peutinger Table seems to further complicate matters. Though it has been interpreted as another example of a large display map promoting imperial

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[78] David Reynolds (1997) 'The Lost Architecture of Rome', *Expedition*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 16.
[79] Ibid.

power rather than being of much practical value, it has also been suggested that as with the *Forma Urbis*, the information displayed was originally drawn from another source. This time from various itineraries.

The Peutinger Table.

Salway maintains that the Peutinger Table, like the Antonine Itinerary – a text-based itinerary spanning much of the empire - has a 'variegated nature', which 'reflects the fact they were based on the compilation of itinerary data from publicly displayed lists of stages and distances'.[80] However, great care needs to be exercised in interpreting the Peutinger Table, for as Richard Talbert observes, the object 'is shorn of context', as 'it only survives in the form of a single medieval copy' which is incomplete, 'missing the original map's left handed end'.[81] The difficulties in interpreting the *Peutinger Table*, can be compared with similar problems in trying to understand another important document of Late Antiquity, the *Notitia Dignitatum* or 'List of Offices'. Both lack context, being copies of copies. Both objects may have had an ideological component (making claims for something long gone or never real, with respect to imperial might). Both are probably compilations of other documents. Both are attempts at describing the broad expanse of empire and its control (real or imagined), in Late Antiquity.[82]

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[80] Benet Salway (2001) 'Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 58.

[81] Richard Talbert (2012) 'Urbs Roma to Orbis Romanus: Roman mapping on the grand scale' in Richard Talbert (ed.) *Ancient Perspectives: Maps and Their Place in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome* (University of Chicago Press), p. 177.

[82] R.S.O. Tomlin '*Notitia Dignitatum*' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1021; Michael Kukikowski (2000) 'The "Notitia Dignitatum" as a Historical Source', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 3rd Qtr., p. 358.

The Peutinger Table or map (though perhaps this word should be avoided in this context), currently held by the Vienna National Library, displays 'the world known to the Romans', and is an odd shape, thus not to scale, fitting on to 'eleven pieces of parchment, each about 60 cm long'.[83] It has been described by Nicholas Purcell as 'the most important document of ancient cartography'.[84] As such, it might be thought that the object can provide some useful insights into what the Roman traveller used to plan their journeys. Was it an itinerary form or a topographically derived document? Once stuck together with gum, but now separated into its surviving parts, the artefact was an impressive '670 cm-long-strip or roll'.[85] In colour, the object is a copy, that Talbert suggests, was made in the early thirteenth century. John Matthews writes that the Peutinger Table was 'probably that drawn in 1265 by a monk of Colmar, from whose pen we have a brief note of his work'.[86] A key point to bear in mind is that the thirteenth-century document is believed to be a copy, 'whether directly or through additional intermediate versions' of an original object that 'seems to belong to the fourth century'.[87] It emphasises land over sea, with the city of Rome at its centre. Talbert speculates that the original must have been commissioned by 'an emperor or close associate' and is 'likely to date before Constantine' as 'the few Christian notations' were manifestly added later'.[88] One of the striking features of the Peutinger Table is that it is highly schematic. Emphasis is given to 'land routes that fan out from Rome everywhere across the empire' and would seem to support Salway's idea that much of the information displayed derived from pre-existing itineraries.[89] But Talbert suggests that its overriding purpose was again, for display.

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[83] Ibid, p. 179.
[84] Nicholas Purcell (2012) 'Peutinger Table' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1118.
[85] Ibid.
[86] John Matthews (2006) *The Journey of Theophanes: Travel, Business and Daily Life in the Roman East* (Yale University Press), p. 71.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid, p. 183.
[89] Ibid, p. 181.

The Peutinger Table was most likely, at some point exhibited. The thirteenth-century copy shows evidence of being displayed as 'several of the nail holes remain visible'.[90] But was this the original intention? Whether the hypothesised original was also used in this manner, surely rests on the unmentioned assumption that original and copy were the same size, and that the copy was not itself compiled from more than one source. The original(s) is thought not to have been for military purposes, as Talbert notes that 'Unmistakably missing… are all military installations.'[91] Again, the assumption not mentioned by Talbert, is that the copy is complete. Why couldn't any long obsolete military detail have been left out of a copy? Both these assumptions, seem to underline the dangers of speculating too much about a copy, derived perhaps from a number of generations of copies. Assumptions made about the extant map rely on the copyist not making any editorial decisions of their own in either size or content. Though possible, it cannot be verified beyond doubt.

However, where Talbert does seem to be more convincing is the part played by itineraries in the Peutinger Table from the thirteenth-century. The road networks that are displayed may have been derived from Roman itinerary data. But Talbert suggests that they were not there to provide practical information to the viewer. In the copy, (and possibly the original), the road systems displayed, though possibly derived from practical itineraries, were actually present 'more for the cumulative effect of detail'.[92] The function of the Peutinger Table, perhaps like Agrippa's map and the *Forma Urbis* was, according to Talbert, primarily one of impressing the viewer with size and detail. However, if these 'display maps' were primarily meant to dazzle with detail, why did

[90] Richard Talbert (2012), p. 179.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid, p. 182.

they have to bear much resemblance to reality? At least with respect to the lower levels of detail. Wouldn't there have been a temptation to just fabricate the information at higher levels of detail, as long as the effect was still the same? Because they could and it was part of the show seems an unsatisfactory answer. But it does lead on to a related question. How was access to geographical information in either map or itinerary form controlled?

Nicholas Purcell describes the Antonine itinerary as 'The best-preserved written version' of an itinerary.[93] Surviving in 'over twenty copies', Salway similarly describes the Antonine itinerary as 'the most extensive and well-known' example of a Roman itinerary.[94] Purcell notes that this itinerary was 'a probably military document of the late 3rd century A.D.'[95] Knowledge of the local routes would be valuable to any commander in the field, especially in a form, like an itinerary, which would allow for quick access to this information. Salway quotes the fourth-century author, Vegetius' *De Re Militari* where the writer emphasises how valuable itineraries in written form could be for military operations.[96] As well as being convenient, was access to such information controlled to maintain a military or political advantage? Claire Sotinel raises a similar query with respect to the routes of messengers within the Roman Empire, and the potential control of information. Sotinel pays attention to the 'vectors of information' used by members of the Christian church and imperial representatives within the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, suggesting that there was an increasingly strong motivation 'which required couriers to pass

[93] Nicholas Purcell (2012) 'Itineraries' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 753.
[94] Benet Salway (2001) 'Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 22.
[95] Purcell (2012), p. 753.
[96] Salway (2001), p. 31.

through the headquarters of political authorities'.[97] Access to travel information and its possible restriction, some of which might have been in itinerary form, has also been discussed with respect to the *cursus publicus*, described, perhaps rather inaccurately, as the Roman postal system.

The cursus publicus.

Anne Kolbe writes that the cursus publicus 'was a peculiarly Roman government institution which has been widely misunderstood'. [98] Rather than a postal system, it was 'rather an infrastructure for use by state officials'.[99] To facilitate this road system, by late antiquity, 'rest and relay stations were established along the major highways of the empire'.[100] These points, *mansio* and *mutatio* respectively, form a key part of what E.W. Black describes as 'Roman road-books' or itineraries.[101] Black cites, for example, the Bordeaux Itinerary 'where each name in the list is glossed by *civitas* [a legally recognised community], *mansio* or *mutatio*'.[102] The detail to be found in the basic Roman itinerary therefore contained additional information regarding travel facilities, some of which were run as part of the *cursus publicus*. Presumably all travellers could use these facilities if they paid. Only those on government business would be partly or wholly subsidised. Salway even suggests that 'our manuscript itineraries may ultimately derive from documents issued by the administration of the *cursus publicus*'.[103] It would certainly make sense for two reasons. First, for a given official journey the best route was taken. There were no fixed routes. Planning involving written

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[97] Claire Sotinel (2004) 'How Were Bishops Informed?' in Linda Ellis & Frank L. Kidner (eds.) *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd.), p. 70; p. 68.
[98] Anne Kolb (2001) 'Transport and Communication in the Roman State: The *cursus publicus*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 95.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid, p. 97.
[101] E.W. Black (1995) *Cursus Publicus: The infrastructure of government in Roman Britain* (British Archaeological Reports), p. 12.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Salway (2001), p. 36.

itineraries may have been useful. In addition, an itinerary offers a useful framework for keeping account of government expense. Alas, though highly plausible, there is no evidence, as yet, to support this idea. Information from Roman itineraries has also been used more recently, again in a possibly contentious way, to try to ascertain the degree of urban development in different regions of the Roman Empire.

Itineraries as measures of urban development.

Examining the development of the 'Roman geographical model' across different regions of the empire, Ray Laurence has looked at the Antonine itinerary, along with Ptolemy's *Geography*, to determine whether any differences can be seen between different areas.[104] Looking at Roman Britain and comparing it with the Italian region, Laurence suggests that the relatively shorter distances between settlements in Britain can be accounted for by the lower quality of roads. Better quality of Italian roads meant key stopping points along a route or itinerary could be spaced further apart. However, Florin-Gheorghe Fodorean has questioned whether such inferences can be made from such a source. As Salway notes, when describing the Antonine itinerary, it is a 'compilation of itinerary data', and therefore will originate from various sources. Fodorean uses this point to question whether such relatively subtle differences can really be drawn from such variable data.[105] He observes that 'The Antonine itinerary was compiled from several sources' and therefore the distances recorded will vary in terms of accuracy and how they were recorded.[106] Like the Peutinger Table, where inferences about the original have been made from a copy at least twice

[104] Ray Laurence (2001) 'The Creation of Geography: An interpretation of Roman Britain' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 67.
[105] Florin-Gheorghe Fodorean (2015) 'Distances along Roman roads in the Antonine Itinerary: From Britannia to Asia. A short comparison' in *DACIA N.S.* tome LIX, p. 311.
[106] Ibid, p. 316.

removed, attempts at drawing conclusions about the relative degrees of urban development from Antonine itinerary distance data, seems very difficult. In addition, the questions that have been posed using itineraries as the source material, seem rather small. For example, at no point it seems was a supposed lack of uptake for to-scale maps versus itineraries considered in a broader societal way. It wasn't that maps were either inferior to or better than itineraries. Like the QUWERTY keyboard example, it might have been easier for a community to just stick with one form. Even if it wasn't, to our eyes, the optimal solution.[107] Perhaps there is another, broader way to look at Roman itineraries, as cultural objects. Applying a comparative framework to some examples of itineraries, examining them as cultural artefacts, may provide some additional insights.

[107] Cornelius Schubert (2017) 'Innovation Minus Modernity? Revisiting Some Relations of Technical and Social Change' in Philipp W. Stockhammer & Joseph Maran (eds.) *Appropriating Innovations* (Oxbow Books), p. 6.

3. Treating Roman itineraries as cultural objects while using a comparative approach.

Roman itineraries as (trans) cultural objects?

Transculturalism treats culture, or cultures, as being in a constant state of flux. For a transculturalist, 'a "culture" is constituted by the processes of interaction, circulation and reconfiguration'.[108] Axel Michaels notes that transcultural theory applies equally to concepts as well as to material objects, people, and ritual.[109] 'Diplomats, missionaries, travellers, seafarers, traders, interpreters' have also been identified by Michaels as some of the key agents in the transfer of ideas.[110] Examining the literature in the previous chapter, it is clear that the Roman itinerary is considered to be a key concept, and it was most likely used by many of the people that Michaels identifies as catalysts in transcultural processes. Surviving examples of itineraries appear in a number of modified forms, where their original function as 'simple lists of stations along a route giving their names and the distances between them', is still recognisable.[111] For instance, as early Christian pilgrimage narratives, as commemorative cups, as a framework for a traveller's expense accounts, as well as epigraphic lists of destinations that probably served primarily as promoters of empire. All of these examples retain the original idea of the itinerary. But they have also been adapted. Its original function or meaning has been modified to accommodate these additional uses. Might these examples therefore be thought as part of a process which seems to have some similarities to transculturation?

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[108] Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (2021) 'Introduction' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p. xxiii.
[109] Axel Michaels (2021) 'Cultural Hybridity and Transculturality' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p. 4.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Kai Brodersen (2001) 'The presentation of geographical knowledge for travel and transport in the Roman World' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 13.

Matthew Cobb, writing about material transculturality, notes that it is a process that 'takes it as a given that culture is permeable, transitory and open to disruptive influences'.[112] Objects that are traded between different societies can 'become adopted, adapted and re-interpreted in a different context'.[113] The engine of such change is 'the creative agency of the individuals and groups involved'.[114] Such a process has often been framed using a region of contact between two cultures, where exposure and response can take place. Such a model provides a powerful way to understand how responses to contact through trade, for example, can be seen in the changed form of certain objects. For example, convincing material evidence for this process has come from examining clay *bullae* as well as terracotta figurines, that seem to have been remodelled as a result of influences arising from the Roman Indian Ocean trade. Imported Roman coins and Egyptian terracotta figurines to the Indian continent during the Roman imperial period seem to have acted as catalysts or 'agents', as Serena Autiero describes them, resulting in the production of locally created equivalent objects. Studies by Autiero and Emila Smagur on the transcultural effects of imported clay figurines and coins respectively, provide compelling evidence for the processes involved in transculturalism.[115]

Looking at transculturalism as it has been reflected in the production of modified materials might seem to be relatively safe ground. But even here the agent of change, the stimulus for changing

[112] Matthew Cobb (2021) 'Mediterranean goods in an Indian Ocean context: The use of transcultural theory for the study of the ancient Indian Ocean world' in Serena Autiero & Matthew Cobb (eds.) *Globalization and Transculturality from Antiquity to the Pre-Modern World* (Routledge), p. 167.
[113] Ibid, p. 165.
[114] Ibid, p. 166.
[115] Serena Autiero (2015) 'Terracotta Figurines from Egypt as Agents of Cultural Globalisation in the Indian Ocean' in M. Pinarello, J. Yoo, J. Lundock & Carl Walsh (eds.) *Current Research in Egyptology 2014* (Oxbow Books); Emilia Smagur (2018) 'From coin to bulla; a cultural response to the influx of Roman denarii to India' *Numismatic Digest* Vol. 42, 10.

the appearance of existing indigenous objects, might not be as straightforward as it first seems. For example, Pia Brancacccio makes a strong case for the stone moulds used in *bullae* production, rather than Roman coins or modified bullae themselves being the agents of change with respect to the Roman Indian Ocean trade.[116] Brancaccio describes one mould which has 'multiple designs, both Indic and foreign'.[117] These moulds were small and portable, and easily created to satisfy new demands. One important point when considering how these studies may apply to itineraries is to note that both original and exotic forms were present on this mould. The idea of the *bullae* was well established and widespread, before external influences led to their modification. And to complicate the picture further, this was not a total replacement of the native form. The surviving mould seems to suggest that the forms co-existed, at least for a while.

Can Roman itineraries that seem to have additional functionality, when compared with the basic itinerary form, be treated in a similar way? Can itineraries be usefully put into a transcultural framework? The lack of a clearly defined region of contact used so effectively in the material examples of transculturalism that have been discussed would suggest that this model is inappropriate for thinking about Roman itineraries. And if the agents in material transculturalism are sometimes not obvious, how can we think about non-material examples like ideas? Perhaps a more relaxed framework might act as a way of demonstrating how ideas may have been taken up in the production of itineraries with additional functions and meanings.

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[116] Pia Brancaccio (2014) 'Looking to the West: Stone Molds and Foreign Visual Models in Satavahana Material Culture (First – Second Century CE)', *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 64., No. 1, p. 34.
[117] Ibid.

A more fluid model for transculturation has been championed by Joseph Maran who argues for 'The need to move from "cultures" to "culture".[118] Maran argues for 'a dynamic model that focuses on the 'performative' side of culture', suggesting that we need to keep in mind that 'it is continually negotiated'.[119] Maran's approach may therefore be useful in terms of examining any possible transcultural features of Roman itineraries in that it seems to get away from a Venn diagram approach of two different cultures intersecting at a geographical overlap. The whole of the Roman empire might therefore be envisaged as the place where culture is constantly 'in a state of becoming'.[120] Where, for instance, Roman itineraries might be adapted a number of times. In what follows, I would like to combine the two approaches, retaining the powerful tracking of change and modification of material objects used in the contact zone model but bearing in mind that the itinerary examples had the potential range of the whole empire. Key examples of modified Roman itineraries will be explored and compared. A discussion of the related genre of *periploi* will also help to underline how amenable the basic itinerary form was to new meaning-making. Four instances of Roman itineraries will be examined in this way. First, the itinerary featured in the travel writings of Theophanes. Secondly, the inscriptions to be found on the monument of Patara, followed by the itineraries found on the Vicarello Cups. Finally, the itinerary that forms the framework for the account of the Bordeaux Pilgrimage will be examined.

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[118] Joseph Maran 'Not "cultures", but culture! The need for a transcultural perspective in archaeology' in Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Penagiotopoulos & Susan Richter (eds.) *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (Routledge), p. 60.
[119] Ibid; Ibid, p. 61.
[120] Ibid, p. 61.

Theophanes' accounts.

Theophanes was 'a late Roman public figure, a *scholasticus* or practicing lawyer', based in Hermopolis in Egypt.[121] His travels to 'Syrian Antioch and back', in around 320 C.E., were recorded on papyri and make up part of what is now known as the Theophanes Archive.[122] Purchased by A.S. Hunt while in Egypt in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the account of Theophanes' journey is structured as an itinerary. Malcolm Choat and John Matthews note the presence of itineraries among the letters, memoranda and financial accounts.[123] B.R. Rees writes that 'the itinerary which Theophanes had drawn up and survives in part', is complete enough to plot the route of his journey.[124] 'Over fifteen hundred lines of close documentation' pertain to this 'episode in Theophanes' life' and have provided a wealth of material for historians in the field of social history.[125] For instance, Peter Parsons, refers to the archive, noting, perhaps unsurprisingly, that Theophanes and his colleagues were a cut above the rest of his travelling party, eating '"pure bread", while their slaves ate "ordinary loaf"'.[126] But it is in other details, how the itinerary has been used and modified that are of interest in this comparative enquiry.

John Matthews describes the Theophanes' outward journey to Antioch, recorded on papyrus (P.Ryl. 627) and his translation, as 'a formal itinerary with mileages'.[127] It comprises 'twenty-five numbered stages', with 'each stage representing an overnight stay, with mileages (in Roman miles

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[121] John Matthews (2006) *The Journey of Theophanes: Travel, Business and Daily Life in the Roman East* (Yale University Press), p. 8.
[122] Ibid, p. 2.
[123] Malcolm Choat (2006) 'The public and private worlds of Theophanes of Hermopolis Magna', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, p. 44; John Matthews (2006), p. 9.
[124] B.R. Rees (1968) 'Theophanes of Hermopolis Magna', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 51, Issue 1, p. 165; p. 169.
[125] John Matthews (2006), p. 2.
[126] Peter Parsons (2007) *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish* (Orion Books Ltd.), p. 108.
[127] John Matthews (2006), p. 47; p. 56.

which are slightly less than a modern mile) recorded.[128] For example, part of Theophanes' journey along the eastern Mediterranean coast illustrates the format of stage, locations and mileages, as well as direction of travel.

'20	From Biblos to Tripolis,	m. 36
21	From Tripolis to Arcae,	m. 16
22	From Arcae to Antarados,	m. 30'[129]

Discussing Theophanes' return journey (P. Ryl. 638), which is more elaborate, Matthews observes that 'his financial transactions are embedded in his onward progress from place to place'.[130] Theophanes or more accurately, his 'secretary', was using the itinerary form as a framework to record day-to-day expenses.[131] For instance, 'at Kata Hyd[data]' which is approximately fourteen Roman miles from Antioch, Theophanes' amanuensis breaks down the total expenditure for the day, itemising the costs of 'win[e]', 'd[inner]' and a 'ba[th]'.[132] The itinerary was serving as both a record of the route, and as a daily expense account. The itinerary form was also modified in other ways. For instance, as a reminder of Roman imperial control.

Lycian itineraries.

The remains of what is now called the *stadiasmus provinciae Lyciae*, also known as the 'Pataran Monument of Roads', was discovered in the early 1990's in southern Turkey in the ancient city of

[128] Ibid, p. 56; p. 50.
[129] Ibid, p. 59.
[130] John Matthews (2006), p. 125.
[131] Ibid, p. 49.
[132] John Matthews (2006), p. 132.

Patara. According to Christopher Jones, the purpose of this monument 'should be regarded primarily as a glorification of the emperor'.[133] On one side, the tall, square monument 'bears a dedication to the emperor Claudius', and has been dated to 45 C.E., possibly commemorating the 'absorption' of Lycia, of which Patara was a key port, as part of a Roman province. However, others have emphasised the monument's function as a collection of itineraries.[134]

Salway, for instance, has dubbed it an example of what he describes as a *tabellarium*, 'publicly displayed lists of stages and distances'.[135] While one side bears the dedication, the sides flanking the commemoration displays, 'a list of roads' which was, according to Salway, 'the province's road network'.[136] It takes the form of 'three consecutive itineraries' with Patara as the hub.[137] Salway speculates that it was one of many such examples of itineraries in stone that existed alongside milestones in the Roman road system. He goes further by suggesting that they were the source for the manuscript itineraries, such as the Antonine. However, this does not take into account why, compared with milestones, so few examples of actual *tabellaria* have been found. If they were common enough for the compilation of itineraries, why do they not appear more often in the material evidence? It also seems just as likely that itineraries acted as a source for *tabellaria*. Other scholars have also raised the additional important point that there is no evidence that all of these roads described on the Patara monument were actually built.[138] Perhaps, to a degree it was more a statement of intent. Whether the Lycian itineraries were of practical value, does therefore

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[133] Christopher P. Jones (2001) 'The Claudian Monument at Patara', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 137 (2001), p. 168.
[134] ADKAM (2016) *The Pataran Monument of the Roads*. Available at http://adkam.akdeniz.edu.tr/sp-en-text (Accessed 17.12.23).
[135] Benet Salway (2001) Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*' in Colin Adams & Ray Laurence (eds.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (Routledge), p. 58.
[136] ADKAM (2016); Salway (2001), p. 58.
[137] Salway (2001), p. 58.
[138] ADKAM (2016).

seem less than conclusive. An incomplete road system may have misled rather than informed the traveller. More convincing perhaps, is the idea that the monument combines the form of the itinerary, likely to have been a familiar form to display information, to publicly promote imperial power in the region. In this vein, Salway suggests, echoing Richard Talbert's arguments with respect to possible examples of Roman maps intended primarily for display, that the 'list of places on the monument was intended to impress by its extensiveness'.[139] Itineraries could also appear on a much smaller scale but still conveying new messages in addition to their route-finding function.

The Vicarello cups.

Discussing the topological nature of the Roman itinerary form, as opposed to what we might understand as to-scale maps, Kai Brodersen, compared them with a more recent equivalent, the London Underground map developed by Harry Beck in the 1930's. This comparison is also apposite in a cultural examination of itineraries. Just as a repurposed itinerary form relied on the readers' familiarity with the original structure, so the underground map has given rise to a number of variations that rely on the viewer's knowledge of the original. For example, the 'Dartmoor Overground Map' and 'The Great British Music Map', to name but two.[140] Both of these examples retain the design of the classic London underground map, in choice of colour and layout but display new location-related information. The four objects collectively known as the Vicarello Cups also

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[139] Benet Salway (2012) 'Putting the World in Order: Mapping in Roman Texts' in Richard J.A. Talbert (ed.) *Ancient Perspectives: Maps and their place in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome* (University of Chicago Press), p. 208.

[140] Visit Dartmoor *Dartmoor Overground Map*. Available at https://visitdartmoor.co.uk/product/dartmoor-overground-map-2 (Accessed: 18.12.23); ETSY Great British Music Map. Available at https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/504434087/great-british-music-map-poster?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=underground+map&ref=sr_gallery-1-16&sts=1&organic_search_click=1 (Accessed: 18.12.23).

seem to play on a familiarity of both Roman milestones and itineraries. In that vein, Kimberly Cassibry describes the cups as 'creative replicas of utilitarian documents.'[141]

Made of silver, each of the four cylindrical cups 'is unique in size and weight'.[142] They range in height from 15.5 cm. to 9.8 cm. while their diameters range from 8cm. to 6cm. While the three largest have roughly similar proportions and design details at top and bottom, the smallest seems to be an 'outlier'.[143] It does not have an approximate 2:1 ratio of height to diameter, being shorter and broader. It also lacks the splayed rim or base of the three slender-looking cups. But all four have been interpreted as evoking the shape of a typical Roman milestone. The cups are engraved with an itinerary of a route from Gades (modern-day Cádiz) to Rome. Manfred Schmidt observes that 'It is amazing how precisely the script has been engraved on these silver goblets', underlining their importance to those who commissioned these objects.[144] Latin engravings on 'the four cups show significant variations in spelling and grammar', that Cassibry suggests were commonly found in itineraries.[145] Some of these variations reflect local usage, others are abbreviations of words but some are genuine errors.[146] Whether some of the latter are transcription errors from written itineraries seems impossible to prove. The design is ornate, with the stations arranged in four columns on the cups, the text blocks surrounded by designs featuring 'finely engraved pillars with Corinthian capitals'.[147] The cups were discovered in 1852, along with other materials such as coins, in an ancient spring site once dedicated to Apollo. Located in modern-day Vicarello

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[141] Kimberly Cassibry (2021) *Destinations in Mind* (Oxford University Press), p. 17.
[142] Ibid, p. 32.
[143] Ibid, p. 27.
[144] Manfred Schmidt (2011) '*A Gadibus Romam*: Myth and Reality of an Ancient Route', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Vol. 54, p. 73.
[145] Kimberly Cassibry (2021), p. 21.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Manfred Schmidt (2011), p. 73.

(approximately 55 kilometres from Rome), the ancient site was ‘accessible from Rome’ but did not itself feature on the inscribed itineraries.[148]

Dating of the cups has not been established convincingly with a range of dates given from the first to the fourth centuries C.E. Whether all four objects were found in the same stratum at Vicarello also remains uncertain, so they may vary in date. Their original purpose is also a mystery. Were they originally produced as votive offerings to Apollo to celebrate the successful completion of the journey described in the itinerary? Or were they a memento of such a journey of around 2,700 kilometres, which Cassibry estimates might take from one to three months to complete, only later being used as an offering at the spring? If this was the case, however, it might be expected that the cups would show more wear and tear from the intervening period. However, what does seem clear is that the four objects in displaying the itinerary form, relied on its familiarity to be effective in conveying a message either of achievement of the journey and/or in thanking the gods for its successful completion. As Cassibry notes, ‘In the process, a text that was intended to be useful in one context – the road – became meaningful in another’.[149] A similar approach in intent if not in form, was adopted by the anonymous author of the Bordeaux Pilgrimage. In this instance, the basic itinerary style abruptly changes to a more descriptive style, as the account begins to treat the Holy Land.

[148] Kimberly Cassibry (2021), p. 34.
[149] Ibid, p. 45.

The itinerary of the Bordeaux Pilgrim.

The itinerary (*Itinerarium Burdigalense*) 'is an account of a journey to the Holy Land made by an anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux in A.D. 333'.[150] Jaś Elsner has examined the stylistic make-up of the itinerary, emphasising the text's importance as being 'at the beginning of a great tradition of Christian sacred travel'.[151] Rather than analysing the source for what information it might provide about travel and travellers in Late Antiquity, Elsner concentrates on the author's repurposing of 'traditional forms'.[152] The text traces a journey in itinerary format from Bordeaux to Milan, via Jerusalem and Rome, initially measuring distances in leagues ('The Gallic league was equal to 1.5 Roman miles'), and later in Roman miles.[153] It records, as expected, the points to 'change horses', and the places to spend the night.[154] For example, between Bordeaux and Arles the itinerary records '30 changes' and '11 halting places'.[155] An 1887 translation by Aubrey Stewart, for instance, records an early change made at modern-day Castres and at Sirio, before encountering the city of Cossio - what we would expect from an itinerary.[156] But there is a marked change in format approximately halfway into the text.

Elsner observes that there is key change in style in the itinerary when 'describing the Holy Land'.[157] Akin to a *Wizard of Oz* technicolor moment, the author leaves behind the bare-bones itinerary form and instead 'breaks into a different mode of discourse'.[158] The writer becomes

[150] Jaś Elsner (2000) 'The Itinerarium Burdigalense: Politics and Salvation in the Geography of Constantine's Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 90, p. 182.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Aubrey Stewart (1887) *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem* (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society), p. 1.
[154] Jaś Elsner (2000), p. 183.
[155] The Wayback Machine (2018) Available at https://web.archive.org/web/20170208122825/http://www.christusrex.org:80/ (Accessed 18.12.2023).
[156] Aubrey Stewart (1887), p. 1.
[157] Jaś Elsner (2000), p. 183.
[158] Ibid.

'much more descriptive' and 'keen to map territory onto scriptural events'.[159] For example, by the time the pilgrim reaches Jerusalem they are in full-descriptive mode, pointing out 'two large pools' that the author attributes to Solomon.[160] Other instances in this more discursive section of the itinerary include 'the little hill of Golgotha' and the location of Pontius Pilate's house.[161]

Places that the traveller should be alert to while in Jerusalem and other Holy Land locations continue for a number of pages, the exact quantity depending on the translation. But the difference in style is marked. The writer seems to be using the barebones form of an itinerary, both at the beginning and end of their account, not only as a practical way-finder but also to emphasise the richness and importance to a would-be pilgrim, of the Holy Land. Crossing the 'Frontier of Europe and Rhodope', the itinerary returns stylistically to its terse beginnings itemising only changes, cities and mileages.[162] Elsner classifies the text as 'a characteristic example of the *itinerarium* genre of Greek and Latin writing' with data taken from milestones.[163] But 'its Christian emphasis', particularly at so early a point of Christianity being officially recognised by the emperor Constantine, points to the text being a key repurposing of the itinerary concept. Elsner also points out that the style of the Holy Land portion of the itinerary mimics that found on imperial monuments praising both the emperor and the extent of empire, much like the monument of Patara. The account of the pilgrimage of Egeria, produced most likely at the end of the fourth century or perhaps the beginning of the fifth, may act as a useful comparison, as well as perhaps providing a caveat with respect to categorisation.

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[159] Ibid.
[160] Aubrey Stewart (1887), p. 19.
[161] Ibid, p. 23.
[162] Aubrey Stewart (1887), p. 28.
[163] Ibid, p. 184.

The Itinerarium Egeriae.

Giselle Bader writes that at the time of Egeria's account, probably half a century or so after the journey recorded by the Bordeaux pilgrim, 'a routinisation of pilgrimage had not yet occurred'.[164] The incomplete manuscript of Egeria's account of a visit to the Holy Land was discovered in 1884 at Arezzo in Italy.[165] Probably written in the early 380's, the *Itinerarium Egeriae* takes the form of a letter home to her 'sisters', possibly fellow nuns who may have resided in the north of Spain.[166] It is therefore superficially dissimilar to the Bordeaux pilgrim's narrative structure. It is not cast in the spare way of an itinerary listing. Andrew Palmer describes Egeria's writing, in contrast to the Bordeaux Pilgrim's account, as 'alive and personal'.[167] But both accounts bear a strong similarity in their shared emphasis on visiting sites mentioned in scriptures. This might seem an obvious observation to make but it goes deeper than simply ticking off sights seen. Bader writes that both accounts mark a point where the 'genre of travel literature transitioned into pilgrimage'.[168] Similarly, Blake Leyerle observes that both texts are 'centred on the match between scriptural and geographical testimony'.[169] The key property displayed in both texts is the belief that the pilgrim could experience holiness through being in the landscape and visiting sites mentioned in scripture. Presumably the readers of these accounts might, to a degree, gain this experience vicariously. Both texts are therefore more than a simple record of travels made. Alison

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[164] Giselle Bader (2020) 'Sacred Space in Egeria's Fourth-Century Pilgrimage Account', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, p. 91.
[165] E.D. Hunt (2012) '*Itinerarium Egeriae*' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 752.
[166] Henry Chadwick (2001) 'Pilgrims' in *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford University Press), p. 684
[167] Andrew Palmer (1994) 'Egeria the Voyager' in Zweder von Martels (ed.) *Travel Fact and Fiction* (Brill), p. 47.
[168] Ibid, p. 4.
[169] Blake Leyerle (1996) 'Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. LXIV, 1.

Kuznets for instance, writes that both the journey and the destination have great religious significance for the pilgrim of many religions across time. Of the journey, Kuznets notes that the traveller may view it, as a 'transformative process'.[170] The destination can also be equally meaningful, where through interacting with holy sites and relics, the pilgrim 'might encounter and come closer to god'.[171]

Bracketing both accounts as indications of a nascent Christian pilgrimage narrative form therefore seems compelling but Mary Campbell strikes a cautionary note by observing that 'There are too few remaining accounts of pilgrimage in Late Antiquity' to draw any firm conclusions about an emerging narrative form at this point.[172] But one intriguing observation made by Christina Corsi, when comparing both texts deserves mention as a possible indicator of a burgeoning new infrastructure for Christian travellers that was in place, in part at least, by the time of Egeria's travels. Corsi notes that in contrast to the details of everyday stopping places found in the Bordeaux pilgrim's account, Egeria and her party seem to favour lodgings in Christian establishments.[173] Henry Chadwick suggests there were many pilgrims by the late fourth century who 'brought money to the places visited', so much so, that 'the church of Jerusalem's resources became a target for envious sniping'.[174] The *Itinerarium Egeriae* when compared with the itinerary account by the Bordeaux pilgrim therefore adds extra context to what seem to have been the early days of organised Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Both accounts share a

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[170] Alison Kuznets (2021) 'Religious and Spiritual Travel' in M. Niblett and K. Beuret (eds), *Why Travel? Understanding our Need to Move and How it Shapes our Lives* (Bristol University Press), p. 125.
[171] Ibid, p. 126.
[172] Mary B. Campbell (1991) *The Writers and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600* (Cornell University Press), p. 22.
[173] Christina Corsi (2017) *Topographical issues in the Itinerarium Egeriae: An essay on the modalities of travel in the fourth century A.D.* Available at https://hospitam.hypotheses.org/1153 (Accessed: 15.4.2024).
[174] Henry Chadwick (2001) 'Pilgrims', p. 686.

fascination with relics and buildings mentioned in scripture, possibly indicative of deriving some form of holiness through visiting or maybe just reading about these locales. Additionally, a greater emphasis on stopping places along the journey associated with churches, for example, in the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, may hold clues to the development of the new type of infrastructure in the Holy Land to serve the needs of pilgrims. The Bordeaux Pilgrim's account therefore seems to be a key itinerary text in understanding a number of facets of life in late antiquity. Additional comparisons with examples from the genre of the *periplous* may shed further light on the significance of the Bordeaux Pilgrim's itinerary. The more discursive approach of the text's middle section, for example, is similar to the writing style found in *periploi* such as the *Periplous Maris Erythraei*, which 'offered a peg on which to hang more information than the purely navigational'.[175] The abrupt stylistic changes seen in the three sections of the Bordeaux text are also similar to those found in Arrian's periplous of the Black Sea.

Arrian's Periplus Ponti Euxini.

Philip Stadter observes that, as in the case of the Bordeaux Pilgrim's itinerary text, Arrian's *periplous* is not just a simple example of the form. It is not just a 'coastal guide or mariner's aid', but 'is remarkably different from other specimens known to us.'[176] Aidan Liddle concurs, writing that Arrian's *periplous* of the Black Sea illustrates how a standard idea or form 'could be adapted by a literary craftsman'.[177] Like the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, it is epistolary in nature, written probably in the 130's.[178] Like the Bordeaux Pilgrim's account, Arrian's *periplous* of the Black Sea coast is

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[175] Nicholas Purcell (2012) 'periploi' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1108.
[176] Philip A. Stadter (1980) *Arrian of Nicomedia* (University of North Carolina Press), p. 32; p. 33.
[177] Aidan Liddle (2012) *Arrian Periplus Ponti Euxini* (Bristol Classical Press), p. 35.
[178] Tim Rood (2011) 'Black Sea Variations: Arrian's "Periplus"', *Cambridge Classical Journal*, Vol. 57, p. 137.

written in three parts. But these similarities to the much later pilgrim accounts are superficial. What does count in this discussion, is that all three texts are examples of the adaption of a standard Roman travel format, be it a *periplous* or an itinerary. In the case of Arrian, governor of Cappadocia from the early 130's, and friend of the emperor Hadrian, the intended recipient of the text, the author has adapted the basic periplous form.[179] In the first part of Arrian's *periplus*, the author writes of his own experiences travelling along one part of the coast between Trapezus to Sebastopolis. It is was most likely a trip to gather intelligence for the emperor. But as Stadter notes, the detailed reports sent back regularly as dispatches would also have served this function.[180] This text was intended for both the emperor and a broader audience, as its heavily stylised form indicates. Rood notes 'Arrian's self-construction' in the first part of the *Periplu*s text, which contains references to the *Anabasis* by Xenophon.[181] The latter text includes an account of Xenophon's rescue of the survivors of an army of Greeks in 400 B.C.E., as they traversed the Black Sea coast.[182] In comparison, the additional routes along the Black Sea coast found in the other two sections of the *Periplus* text, which Arrian apparently did not follow in person, are less stylised, and described by Rood, as rather 'impersonal' narratives.[183] Perhaps more akin to a 'barebones' *periplous* form.

The importance of Arrian's *Periplus* to the discussion of the adaptation of the itinerary format, particularly the Bordeaux pilgrim's account, is that it serves as an additional example of a modified but still recognisable travel record. The approach of the writer of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, as

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[179] Philip A. Stadter (1980), p. 34.
[180] Philip A. Stadter (1980), p. 35.
[181] Tim Rood (2011), p. 138.
[182] C.J. Tuplin (2012) 'Xenophon' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds.) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 1580.
[183] Tim Rood (2011), p. 137.

in the case of the Vicarello Cups, relies on the reader's familiarity with the form of the itinerary before the impact made by subverting the style can be recognised and appreciated. In the example of the Vicarello Cups, the familiar itinerary has been transferred to a new form and an additional function as either votive offering or souvenir, or both. The text of the Bordeaux Pilgrimage serves an additional function by a change in the written style of the original itinerary form, thereby emphasising the importance to the author, and presumably reader, of experiencing the Holy Land in order to become more holy. This characteristic is also shared by the *Itinerarium Egeriae*.

4. Modified Roman itineraries: true transcultural objects or examples of unidentified syncretism?

Four examples of the Roman itinerary have been shown to either incorporate additional functions, as travel expense aids, in the case of the examples from the Theophanes Archive, or as reminders of imperial power in the form of the monument of Patara. Can these instances be viewed as convincing products of transculturalism? If concepts can be modified in a similar way to material objects, the answer might be a tentative yes. But perhaps the modifications made in the repurposing of some of the chosen examples are too close to the original concept to be entirely convincing. Even the case of the Vicarello Cups, a material object more in keeping with transcultural studies in the imperial Roman period, cannot entirely convince. It does show perhaps a more radical repurposing of the itinerary form, but what culture or sub-culture was influencing these changes? More compelling perhaps is the text of the Bordeaux Pilgrimage. Here, a burgeoning religious culture in the form of Christianity, newly recognised by the Roman emperor Constantine, seems to have influenced the production of a new form of narrative. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the anonymous author set the starting point of their itinerary in fourth-century Bordeaux, 'with its renewed prosperity' and importance as a regional centre of classical culture during this period.[184] Bordeaux, for example, was the home to Ausonius, who 'has become emblematic of the rise of Gallic aristocrats in the Roman Empire during the fourth century'.[185]

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[184] Raymond Van Dam (1996) 'Ausonius of Bordeaux: Genesis of a Gallic Aristocracy by Hagith Sivan', *Speculum*, Vol. 71, No. 1, p. 214.
[185] Ibid.

Familiar to a literate élite who used itineraries or who had come across their use in glorifying the expanse of the Roman empire, the anonymous author employed these themes to produce something new. An author from one growing but dispersed sub-culture within the Roman Empire was repurposing a familiar form, the itinerary, in a way that seems to have some strong similarities to a transcultural process. However, these suggestions must remain highly speculative.

What can be said, from an examination of some examples of Roman itineraries, is that if seen in the round, using a comparative and cultural approach, they can be seen to have been highly adaptable. Unlike instances of material transculturalism we simply do not have enough evidence to lay out a satisfying lineage of cultural transmission. We are perhaps left wanting more by having to fall back on Maran's more fluid approach to transculturalism. It may be closer to reality – some form of syncretism- but it is extremely difficult to nail down convincingly. But using the comparative approach is still a valid one with regard to Roman itineraries.

Employing a comparative framework to examine itineraries while taking into account related forms such as *periploi*, and understanding how they have also been modified, has provided some interesting insights. The four examples of hybrid itineraries examined seem to indicate that some form of syncretism was going on. Of the four examples, this idea of new influences coming to bear on an existing concept or application to change it in some way is perhaps most strongly displayed in the Bordeaux Pilgrimage text. Though the chosen examples are random

survivors of a given form of itinerary, can we say anything about what type of person may have been creating these forms? Maran observes that a long-held view was that transmission of new ideas was via high status individuals.[186] Others might then emulate these élites. But it now seems more likely that the converse is true. People in power would most likely be conservative and more resistant to change than for example, those individuals who were less high-status. The latter would perhaps be more interested in adoption and adaption of new ideas. Could the forerunner of Theophane's accounts have been produced by an up-and-coming amanuensis perhaps? Or was an imaginative silversmith responsible for the original idea of transferring itinerary and milestone imagery to cup form? Possible but highly speculative. Perhaps on a less stratospheric note, it might be said, that much like the *bullae* discussed with respect to transculturalism, an ingredient to the success of these modified forms seems to have been the intended audience's recognition of the basic itinerary form which in turn was a reflection of its original usefulness.

Cornelius Schubert has emphasised that in the area of innovation studies we shouldn't be thinking in terms of one breakthrough or idea which is then subsequently passively diffused.[187] The innovation may continue, especially if the concept being diffused is a general and powerful one. Schubert cites the admittedly modern example of the uptake of the automobile in the United States, which initially was an urban phenomenon. It was only with the Model T Ford that farmers, for example, became interested. And they did not take it up passively. Some

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[186] Joseph Maran & Philipp Stockhammer (2017) 'Introduction' in Philipp Stockhammer & Joseph Maran (eds.) *Appropriating Innovations* (Oxbow Books), p. 2.
[187] Cornelius Schubert (2017) 'Innovation Minus Modernity? Revisiting Some Relations of Technical and Social Change' in Philipp W. Stockhammer & Joseph Maran (eds.) *Appropriating Innovations* (Oxbow Books), p. 9.

repurposed the vehicle using it as a convenient static motor for powering washing machines. Others, revamped the automobile to act more like a wagon, taking out seats to provide more room for carrying large items. What we perhaps think of as an iconic example of a useful idea, had been diffused through the population but had also been continuously adapted during the adoption process.

It seems possible that the idea of the itinerary in the ancient world, a powerful way to describe journeys, both literal and virtual, was taken up by a wider number of people while also being continuously tinkered with. Whether the periplous came first, or the terrestrial version of the itinerary is perhaps less important than emphasising the way a basic idea has been modified and adapted for new uses. Perhaps the Vicarello Cups, Theophanes' accounting practices, the Pataran monument, and the account of the Bordeaux pilgrim can be seen in the same light. They can be seen as randomly surviving points in a diffusion process, no doubt a complicated and involved one, where an idea has been repeatedly adopted, while new meaning has also been added. **15,527.**

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