

RECUPERATION PROJECT  
FOR THE VIA AUGUSTA IN THE  
VALENCIA COMMUNITY

VIA   
AUGUSTA



GENERALITAT  
VALENCIANA

**RECUPERATION PROJECT FOR THE VIA AUGUSTA  
IN THE VALENCIA COMMUNITY**

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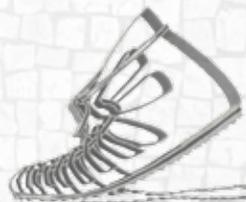
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Recuperation tasks



# ROMAN ROADWAYS AND THE VIA AUGUSTA



*The Via Appia, the queen of Roman roadways. Source: "All roads lead to Rome" by Victor W. Won Hagen. Editorial Labor S.A.*

THE STAGES OF THE VIA AUGUSTA ARE SET OUT IN THE ANTONINE ITINERARY AND INSCRIBED ON THE VICARELLO GOBLETS. THESE MENTION IT AS THE "ITINERARIUM A GADES ROMAN" OR "AB GADES USQUE ROMA ITINERARE" (GOBLETS I AND II RESPECTIVELY), AND INCLUDE THE STATIONS OF THE VALENCIA COMMUNITY.

The Roman civilisation was the first, right from the outset, to systematically plan the building of a communication network. Through the creation of a road system of more than 140,000 Kms. Rome was connected to almost all provinces of the empire as the epicentre and the cultural, political and commercial meeting point. This instrument of Romanisation/communication would, moreover, lead to military control, commercial and industrial development, the progress of its cities and what perhaps is more important, the existence itself of Rome as a state.

One of the main roadways built by the Romans in Spain is called the Via Augusta, due most probably to the extensive repairs and straightening work

## THE VICARELLO GOBLETS

The Vicarello Goblets, also known as the Vases Apollinaires, found in the hot springs of the *Aquae Apollinare*, are four silver goblets in the shape of milestones; on their surface is etched the itinerary from Rome to Cadiz and the cities and distances involved. It is believed that they were an offering to Apollo from a citizen of Cadiz who, on visiting Rome, sought health from the thermal waters near to Lake Bracciano and also guidance on his journey.



*Vicarello Goblet. Photo: Pierre Guérin*



Road network of Imperial Rome

that the Emperor Augustus carried out on it. Of an approximate length of 1,500 Km., it crosses the peninsula from the Pyrenees to Cadiz following the Mediterranean coastline.

In the beginning, most Roman roads were built on top of old Iberian roads already existing in the peninsula. Of them, the most important was the original Via Iberica (Via Heráclea), which, crossing the peninsula, linked the Pyrenees with the Pillars of Hercules (Cadiz).

The importance of this road network is such that even at the dawn of the 20th century it constituted our country's main axis of communication with the rest of Europe. Motorways, roads and railways basically follow its route and provide a strong element of economic and internal cohesion.

Furthermore, the founding of cities and towns such as Valentia (Valencia), Saguntum (Sagunto), Lucentum (Alicante), Saetabis (Xàtiva), Ilici (Elche)... cannot be fully understood without considering the existence of these roadways, which were the main reason why these cities sprung up in the first place. Once Rome's control over the Iberian Peninsula had been ensured, Romanisation strengthened



The Roman road network in Hispania according to K. Miller



Route of the Via Augusta as shown on the Vicarello Gables



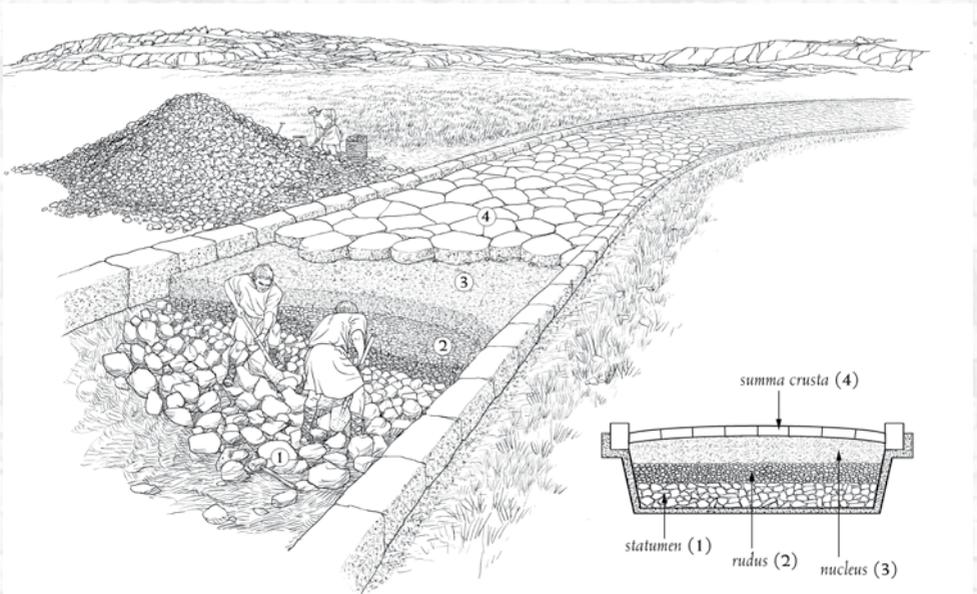
THE IMPORTANCE  
THE ROMANS  
PLACED ON THESE  
ROADWAYS WAS SO  
GREAT THAT MANY  
OF THEM WERE BUILT  
AND REPAIRED ON  
PRIVATE INITIATIVE.  
THE LAST WILL AND  
TESTAMENT OF ONE  
CITIZEN WRITTEN  
IN 30 A.D. STATES: "I  
LEAVE THIS SUM TO  
THE COMMON FUND  
FOR REPAIRING THE  
VIA AUGUSTA WHICH  
PASSES THROUGH  
OUR COLONY".

along these routes, a great number of Roman settlements springing up along their paths.

Much more than just an enormous human feat of engineering or a two thousand-year-old historical-cultural asset, the Via Augusta constitutes a legacy in which different cultures, religions, civilisations, trade, history, landscapes, know-how, and age-old vestiges come together.... Past and present, it is, moreover, essential for understanding the history of Europe.

### THE STRUCTURE OF ROMAN ROADWAYS

Having chosen the route where the roadway would pass, surveyors would measure and plot it. The building work would then take place, sometimes employing Roman Legionaries. A trench was dug that varied according to the width that it was to have (between 1.10 m and 7.30 m).



Building a roadway. Interreg Project III



The ditch was then filled with what would constitute the foundations, i.e. rough stones and rubble held together by earth and fine gravel. On this foundation was laid another layer of finer stone and finally another one of gravel that served as the final support for the thick slabs that formed the paving.

Some of the main characteristics of these roadways are as follows:

- They were mainly designed for animal-drawn wheeled traffic and so they always sought the gentler slopes, never exceeding 10%.
- Sections can be found with long and straight alignments, when the orography permitted.
- For greater durability of the roadways, areas were sought that were less subject to erosion.
- In areas of little slope (<1%), earthworks were raised to facilitate drainage and to protect the foundation work (0.6 to 1.5 m).
- The width of the transversal section allowed two carriages to pass each other.

Different types of roadways are known: earth roadways, gravel roadways and paved roadways.

- On inter-urban roads the top layer was composed of fine grain materials with a preference for natural gravel (today known as crushed aggregate) when available.
- On urban roads the surface was usually covered by slabs or fitted stones.

Today numerous sections still exist which are known by the names of Camino Romano, Via Romana, Colada Romana, Calzada de los Romanos, etc. Many of these were still in use as roads in modern times and, in fact, held on to their names until the building of local roads in the 19th century.



*These pictures show two types of Roman roadways. Above – inter-urban- is from the section between Pobra Tornesa and Cabanes. Photo: Guillermo Morote; Below – urban- is from the section of the Via Appia Antica in Rome.*

*Photo: José Manuel Despiau*



Photo: Guillermo Morote.

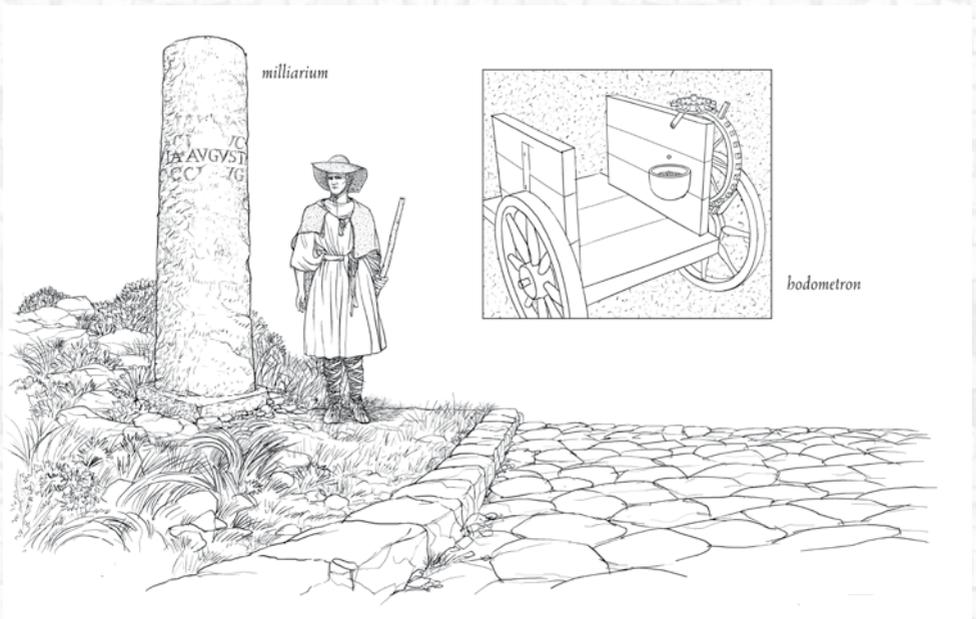
## MILESTONES AND MANSIONS

To mark the distances of the road, the Romans placed milestones at the sides of the roadway, showing the distance from one to another, the *miliapassuum*, i.e. a Roman mile which is equivalent to an approximate distance of 1,481 m. This characteristic stone sign also carried the name of the roadway, the distance from the beginning of the roadway and the name of the emperor on it.



Drawing of an inn during Roman times.

Apart from milestones, what most interested travellers were places to stay and clean up after long days of travel from one place to another. The types of inn or shelter that the traveller could find were varied, Mansions being official establishments which required evidence of official safe-conduct in order to enter. Other establishments were the *Mutations* (staging posts), *Tabernae* or *Cauponae*, the latter of dubious reputation.



Walker on a Roman roadway next to a milestone. Interreg Project III.



# THE VIA AUGUSTA IN THE VALENCIA COMMUNITY

The **Vía Augusta** crosses the provinces of Castellón and Valencia for 280 kilometres from the river Sénia (border with Tarragona) to Font de la Figuera (continuing on to Albacete). From Font de Figuera a branch of 170 Kms has been identified in the province of Alicante which, descending through the valley of the river Vinalopó, continues on to the city of Cartagena (Karthagine Spartaria), passing through Elda (Ad Elo) Castillo del río/Aspe (Aspis) and Elche (Ilici). This vertebral axis crossing the Community from North to South over 450 Kms is complemented by the Via Dianium, of 180 Kms. in length, that connects the coastal towns from Albalat de la Ribera to Alicante. In all, Roman civilisation left its mark along 630 Kms.

On its way it passes through 107 municipal districts joining up a total of 65 towns: 47 on the Via Augusta –in its passage through Castellón, Valencia and Alicante- and 18 on the Via Dianium –in the provinces of Valencia and Alicante-.



ROADWAY	PROVINCE	ROUTE		Nº of URBAN NUCLEI CROSSED	LENGTH (KM)	TOTAL (KM)
		ORIGIN	DESTINATION			
VÍA AUGUSTA	CASTELLÓN	Traiguera	Almenara	11, outstanding among them being San Mateo and Nules	124	450
	VALENCIA	Benavites	La Font de la Figuera	24, outstanding among them for their importance being Sagunto, Valencia, Xátiva and Moixent	156	
ALICANTE BRANCH	ALICANTE	Villena	Pilar de la Horadada	12, outstanding among them being Villena, Alicante and Elche	170	
VÍA DIANIUM	VAL & ALIC	Albalat de la Ribera (VAL)	Alicante	15, outstanding among them being Oliva, Denia, Altea, Benidorm, Villajoyosa and Alicante	180	180
<b>TOTAL ACTIVITY</b>						<b>630</b>

## THE ROMAN ARCH OF CABANES



The Roman arch of Cabanes: the most important element of the Via Augusta in its passage through the Valencia Community. This is a monument of a private nature built probably in the 2nd century. Apart from the visible remains, there are also a good number of stone blocks and fragments of the cornice.

MILESTONES,  
REMAINS OF  
ORIGINAL ROMAN  
ROAD PAVING,  
ARCHEOLOGICAL  
SITES, ARCHITECTURE,  
TOPONYMY,  
REMAINS OF  
MANSIONS,  
BRIDGES, VILLAS...  
ALL CONSTITUTE  
THE HERITAGE  
REMAINING  
FROM THE PASSAGE  
OF ROMAN  
CIVILISATION  
THROUGH THE  
VALENCIA  
COMMUNITY

## ROMAN IMPRINTS

The passage of Roman culture on its way through Valencian lands can be observed in the remains of the roadway itself, which in some cases maintains its signposting with original milestones, the remains of mansions, bridges, villas, architecture, toponymy... Roman remains found on the route are:

**Milestones.** 16 milestones are known of in the province of Castellón, some now missing and others in their original setting or in museums or Town Halls.

**Archaeological sites,** of which, for each province, we should mention the following:

- **Province of Castellón:** Santa Uvaldesca and Roman villa of Boverot (Sant Mateu); Mansion of Ildum (Vilanova d'Alcolea); Roman villa of Pla de l'Arc (La Vall d'Alba); Roman villa of Aiguamolls (Vilafamés); Roman villa of "El Palau" (Burriana); Roman villa of Benicató (Nules); Roman villa of L'Alqueria (Moncofa); Roman villa of L'Alter (Xilxes); Roman villa of (La Llosa); Punt del Cid and Estany d'Almenara (Almenara).

- **Province of Valencia:** Remains of house on C/ Valencia in Sagunt; remains of the Roman circus and Mausoleum in Sagunt; remains of the Roman town of Valentia (L'Almoina); Alteret in Albalat de la Ribera; Ninfeo in calle Saries of Xàtiva; Ad Statuas in Moixent.

- **Province of Alicante:** Roman port of Lucentum; salting works of El Verger, Calp, Xàbia; Ilici-L'Alcudia-Elx; Roman villa of L'Albir in L'Alfàs del Pi; Alonae. La Vila Joiosa and archaeological sites in Dénia.

**Remains of paving:** In Castellón, the exact route of the Roman roadway between Sant Joan del Pas and Pobla Tornesa is still intact. In the province of Valencia the urban roadway has also been identified in the la Plaza Moreria de Sagunt and, in the province of Alicante, the Roman Bridge in Gata de Gorgos is particularly worthy of mention.



## A MEETINGS ROAD

In addition, the path taken by this roadway will allow the walker to understand the reasons why it was chosen by great civilisations. Founded by the Iberians, the Romans were not the only ones to make use of it: before them were the Greeks, Phoenicians, and Carthaginians; and after them the Christians and Moslems. All were attracted, perhaps, by the possibilities of communication that this place, its fertile lands, its proximity to the sea and its climate offered. After conquering and controlling the territory they then began to settle there, the more important cities and towns gradually being established along its path. Every culture, each civilisation, made its contribution, its imprint, its own tastes, its customs, its legacy in squares, museums, theatres, streets, districts, castles, palaces, churches, convents, fountains, bell towers, paintings... all of which provides the route with its exceptional historical and cultural interest. The Via Augusta project in the Valencia Community seeks to do much more than the merely recuperate a Roman roadway; it seeks to provide a setting off point for enjoying each and every one of its treasures (environmental, archaeological, historical, cultural, gastronomic...) which, today can be found along its route.

Information on this can be found in the book Cuaderno de Viaje. La Vía Augusta a su paso por la Comunidad Valenciana, coordinated by Guillermo Morote and published by the Generalitat Valenciana.



*Ruinas del foro de Sagunt.  
Foto: Guillermo Morote.*



*Milestone that is still in its original setting in the section of the Via Augusta between Pobla de Tornesa and Cabanes. Photo: Guillermo Morote.*

## PROTECTED AREAS

The Via Augusta, all along its route through the provinces of the Valencia Community, crosses or borders the following protected areas: L'Albufera, La Serra de Corbera, La Marjal de la Safor, Fondó d'Elx-Crevillent, La Sierra de Escolana, El Montgó, Montañas de la Marina, Parque Natural Serra Gelada, Río Millars, Río Serpis and its surroundings, the former route of the Alcoi / Gandia railway.

Outstanding, furthermore, is the connection between the Via Augusta and the Network of Footpaths of the Valencia Community, linking up 8 long distance footpaths, 8 short ones and 2 local tracks.

## A LONG-TERM PROJECT



Camí dels Romans. Photo: Guillermo Morote

THIS IS A PROJECT ABOUT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TOWNS, THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND GOODS, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS CIVILISATIONS. IT IS A PROJECT ABOUT AND FOR TRAVELLERS, PASSERS-BY, US

**B**y means of the Via Augusta Recuperation Project, the Regional Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport of the Public Works Department, is seeking to recuperate, revalue and make this road suitable for the use and enjoyment of the public, who will be able to go along it on foot (a gentle stroll, jogging, rambling route, etc), by bicycle or on horseback.

The objective is to provide a peaceful and sustainable route through our countryside by providing the necessary support facilities, such as hostels, information centres, rest areas, that will restore the vitality and importance that this roadway had in its own day.



The **aims** set can be summarised as follows:

- To regenerate its role as a link between settlements and an axis for the transmitting and exchange of trade, culture, information and religion.
- To join similar activities begun by other countries and regions of the Mediterranean.
- To provide a long continuous route through the countryside of the Valencia Community, of an eco-tourist and cultural nature, of free and healthy transit, for use by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.
- To lay out a dynamic axis of complementary and compatible activities, attractive for service facilities (hostels, rest areas and information...) and recreation (bike/horse hire, shops and craft workshops, local product shops...).

To do so, two fundamental aspects have had to be taken into consideration:

- The monumental perspective that the Via Romana presents as a monument destined to be known, protected and appreciated.
- The identification of the Via Romana as an ancient route with the possibility for people today to use once again the same route as their ancestors.

The original **stages** in which the Via Romana is divided in the Valencia Community (nine) have been restructured into 29 stations. To do so aspects such as areas of specific interest in each stage (natural, leisure, monumental...), the environmental and climatic conditions of the route and the degree of difficulty have been taken into consideration.

## EUROPEAN SETTING

The initiative to recuperate the route of the Via Augusta in its passage through the Valencia Community is neither an isolated or improvised idea, but forms part of a global programme of interventions for which fifteen regions of Europe from four different countries (France, Spain, Italy and Greece) created, in 1998, a joint collaboration network with the common aim of safeguarding and raising awareness of this ancient heritage. This network of collaborators, information and exchanges has allowed us to support the existing pilot projects, to mobilize the regions around this heritage and to build up a base of common ideas.

The commitment of the Valencia Regional Government to recuperating this historic roadway is stated in the "Declaration of support concerning the roads to Rome in the process of building Europe" signed by the Right Honourable President Francisco Camps Ortiz. Also declaring their support for this agreement are representatives of the European Council, the European Commission, UNESCO, the Vatican, the Member States and different regions of Europe.

# STAGES IN THE VALENCIA COMMUNITY

## VIA AUGUSTA

NORTH TO SOUTH STAGE	SECTION	DISTANCE APPROX. KM.	STATION
1	Río Sènia - Traiguera	18	Font de la Salut
2	Traiguera - La Salzadella	25	Mas d'En Rieres
3	La Salzadella - Les Coves de Vinromà	17	Ildum / Els Hostalots
4	Les Coves de Vinromà - Cabanes	12	Cabanes
5	Cabanes _ Borriol	17	Borriol
6	Borriol - Nules	25	Nules
7	Nules - Sagunt	25	Cabeçolet
8	Sagunt - Valencia	27	Valencia
9	Valencia - Albalat de la Ribera	32	Albalat de la Ribera
10	Albalat de la Ribera - Xàtiva	28	Xàtiva
11	Xàtiva - Montesa	14	Montesa
12	Montesa - Moixent	13	Moixent
13	Moixent - La Font de la Figuera	16	La Font de la Figuera
14	La Font de la Figuera - Villena	25	Villena
15	Villena - Monóvar	27	Monóvar
16	Monóvar - Elx	26	Ilici
17	Elche - Rojales	22	Rojales
18	Rojales - San Miguel de las Salinas	16	San Miguel de las Salinas

## VIA DIANIUM

NORTH TO SOUTH STAGE	SECTION	DISTANCE APPROX. KM.	STATION
1	Albalat de la Ribera – Tavernes de la Valldigna	25	La Valldigna
2	Tavernes de la Valldigna - Gandia	14	Gandia
3	Gandia – El Verger	22	El Verger
4	El Verger – Xàbia	24	Xàbia
5	Xàbia – Calp	21	Calp
6	Calp – Alfàs del Pi	18	Alfàs del Pi
7	Alfàs del Pi – La Vilajoiosa	16	La Vilajoiosa
8	La Vilajoiosa - El Campello	23	El Campello
9	El Campello - Alicante	20	Alicante
10	Alicante - Elx	23	Ilici



# MASTER PLAN

The Regional Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport has drawn up a Master Plan that includes the structure, planning and management of the aims set for this project. The work undertaken to date has been based mainly on the identification of the Roman roadway in the Valencia Community. To do so, the setting-off point was provided by the historical-archaeological studies available (especially the work of Guillermo Morote and Ferran Arasa).

The study carried out has made it clear how, over the centuries, this roadway has suffered transformations and neglect due to the creation of new infrastructures suited to new means of transport. This has resulted in cases of destruction, invasion, burial or modifications to some sections. Recuperation, as explained later, will involve the most appropriate solution for each situation, always giving priority to the continuity of the route.

From there, the main steps that the Master Plan puts forward begin with the archaeological verification of the roadway in order to then undertake its recuperation in accordance with the five pre-established situations. Each stage will be provided with the necessary installations, signposting and information. The project will end with an awareness-raising stage. Conservation of the roadway and raising awareness of it will be the responsibility of the Regional Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport.

The main source of finance for recuperating the Via Augusta will come from a 1% charge on budgets for public works contracts of the Regional Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport.



*Excavation of the Via Augusta in 1979 in La Jana (Castellón). Photo: Guillermo Morote*



*Via Augusta uncovered in the area of les Ventes in Moixent (Valencia). Photo: David López*

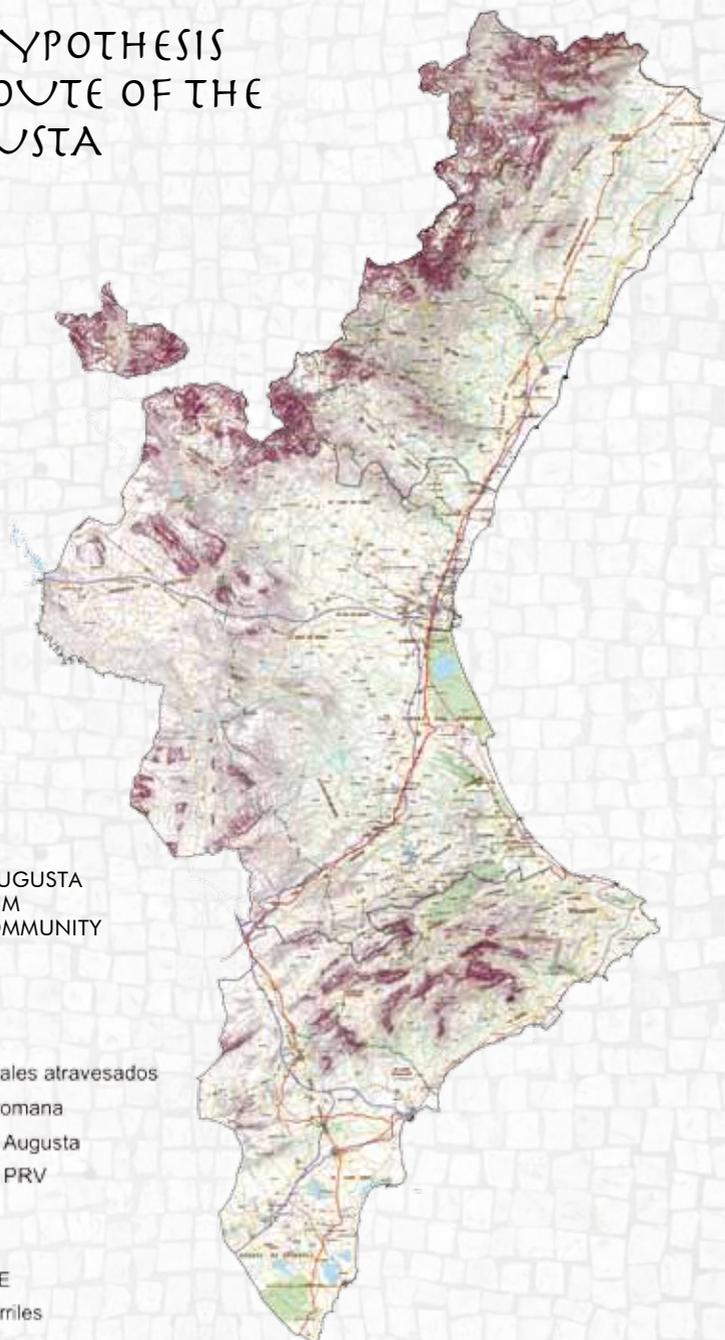


*Excavation in the "Partida dels Bufadors" area (Vilafamés). Photo: Ferran Arasa*

# INITIAL HYPOTHESIS ON THE ROUTE OF THE VIA AUGUSTA

## ROUTE OF THE VIA AUGUSTA & OF THE VIA DIANIUM IN THE VALENCIA COMMUNITY

-  Via Dianium
-  Via Augusta
-  Espacios Naturales atravesados por la calzada romana
-  Estaciones Via Augusta
-  Sendas GRV y PRV
-  Vías Pecuarias
-  Carreteras
-  Trazado del AVE
-  Red de Ferrocarriles





## RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

The Master Plan proposes the following consecutive stages specifically for recuperating the roadway.

### Stage I. Archaeological verification of the route of the roadway.

Explorations and archaeological samples will be undertaken on sections of the routes in order to check the correct location of the roadway.

### Stage II. Recuperation of the roadway and signposting.

From the results of stage I, the section to be treated and the type of action required will be determined in order to draw up a project contract and so undertake the work. The intervention will depend on the state of use and conservation. According to the work already undertaken three states will arise:

- State of abandon,
- State in use but compatible with recuperation (path, bridleway, track...)
- State in use but incompatible with recuperation– used by motor traffic (road, dual-carriageway, motorway ...).

From here, five situations have been defined on which the later building projects will be based.

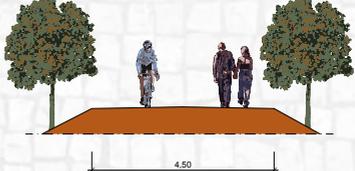
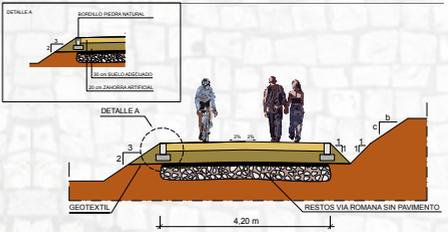
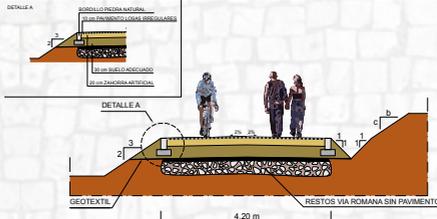
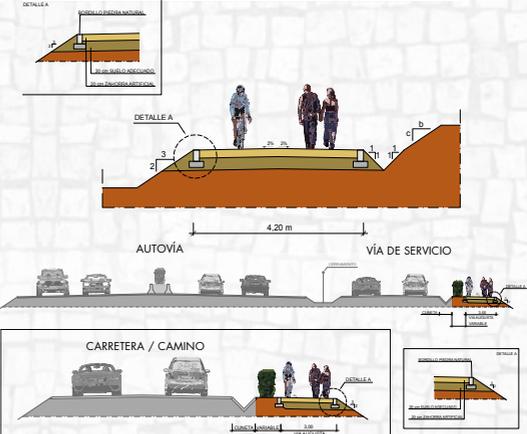
## SIGNPOSTING OF THE ROADWAY

So that users may find their way and move along the Via with the greatest of ease and safety, the corresponding signposting will be installed along the way. This has been divided into two groups. On the one hand, the group of signs established by the General Traffic Regulations that will be applicable to this roadway at corresponding connections with other roads and infrastructures. On the other hand, specific and uniform signposting will be installed so that the walker, horse rider or cyclist can travel along this roadway at ease. In this group, the placing of two main elements is worthy of particular mention:

- Information, indication and explanatory panels, etc. These will be positioned along the route with information on each stage about information centres, towns, installations, distances...
- Milestones: every Roman mile (1,481 m) will be signalled along the route with a reproduction milestone.

SPECIFIC SIGNPOSTING WILL DIFFERENTIATE THE VIA AUGUSTA AND PROVIDE INFORMATION OF INTEREST AT EACH STAGE

# Recuperation Project for the Via Augusta in the Valencia community

WORK SOLUTION	SECTION TYPE	SCHEME
A	Conservation of rock sections: The tasks of clearing and removing undergrowth will be undertaken.	
B	Roadway in use but compatible with recovery: preparation of the currently used roadway (whether road, path, bridleway, etc.) by repairing potholes or by raising the roadway, depending on each case.	
C	Remains of the Via Augusta without current transitory use: the remains of the original roadway will be protected and conserved by incorporating a geotextile layer to separate the original remains from the in-fill used during the repair process. The road foundations will be laid on top of the geotextile, consisting of a 20 cm layer of crushed aggregate on at least 30cms of ballast.	
D	Remains of slabbed sections of the Via Augusta with no current use: the roadway will be completed with a section of slab-paved surface.	
E	Total reconstruction of the roadway: Reconstruction of the roadway along the identified path or construction of a new roadway next to the road or dual-carriageway of 3m in width and with foundations consisting of 20 cms of crushed aggregate on a minimum of 30cms of ballast.	



### Stage III. Installing facilities.

Execution of the buildings linked to the use and enjoyment of the roadway and for assisting users by providing shelter, information, rest, leisure, food, etc.

These will be positioned conveniently in the areas foreseen as stations.



### Stage IV. Promotion.

This includes the design and execution of the museumization, interpretation and diffusion of the cultural, historical and natural values of the Roman road. It includes the following actions:

- The design, manufacturing and mounting of three information modules to be installed in each service area of the AP-7 motorway.
- Printing of leaflets explaining the characteristics of each stage, of its route, its difficulty, duration, items of interest, etc.
- Stands with engravings showing activities on the roadway and explaining their historical significance.
- Guided tours for groups.
- Coordination of activities with other regions of Spain and Europe for its common development.

THE MAIN SOURCE OF FINANCING FOR RECUPERATING THE VIA AUGUSTA WILL COME FROM A 1% CHARGE ON THE BUDGETS FOR PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS OF THE REGIONAL MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURES AND TRANSPORT

### Stage V. Conservation

From the moment that the Via Augusta is recuperated and put into service, the Regional Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, through the Public Works Department, will be responsible for the conservation and maintenance of the roadway, as well as the management of the exploitation of the facilities and installations located along the way.



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