

# Paving the Route of Hercules

## *The Via Augusta and the Via Iulia Augusta and the Appropriation of Roadbound Traditions in the Augustan Age*

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### 1 Introduction

Among the many developments of the Augustan age that led to what we now call the Principate, few were as impactful for increasing the coherence of the Roman Empire as the immense expansion of the road network. By profoundly reorganizing the *cura viarum* and simultaneously instituting the Roman postal service (*cursus publicus*), Augustus took a clear interest in the state of the roads and their potential to enhance communications all around the Empire.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, his name could be frequently read on the milestones that, in far greater quantities than before, emerged along the roads that were constructed, restored, upgraded or extended in the Italian Peninsula and the provinces alike.<sup>2</sup> In road toponymy, too, we find Augustus' name being applied to a few provincial stretches of road. In Asia Minor this was the *via Sebaste*, while the *via Iulia Augusta* and the *via Augusta* crossed southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula respectively. Whereas for Republican Italy, roads named after individuals are regularly attested, this is far less the case for provincial roads, which

1 For the *cura viarum*, see W. Eck, 'Augustus' administrative Reformen: Pragmatismus oder systematisches Planen?', *Acta Classica* 29 (1986), 105–120, 109–110; W. Eck, 'Cura viarum und cura operum publicorum als kollegiale Ämter im frühen Prinzipat', *Klio* 74 (1992), 237–245, esp. 243–244; A. Nünnerich-Asmus, 'Strassen, Brücken und Bögen als Zeichen römischen Herrschaftsanspruchs', in: W. Trillmich, T. Hauschild, M. Blech, and A. Nünnerich-Asmus, eds., *Denkmäler der Römerzeit* (Mainz 1993), 121–57, 128–130; M. Rathmann, *Untersuchungen zu den Reichsstraßen in den westlichen Provinzen des Imperium Romanum* (Mainz 2003), 56–58. For the *cursus publicus*, see Suet., *Aug.* 49.3; with P. Sillières, 'La vehiculatio (ou cursus publicus) et les militares viae. Le contrôle politique et administratif de l'empire par Auguste', *Studia Historica Historia Antiqua* 32 (2014), 123–141; A. Kolb, 'Mansiones and cursus publicus in the Roman Empire', in: P. Basso and E. Zanini, eds., *Statio amoena: sostare e vivere lungo le strade romane* (Oxford 2016), 3–8.

2 G. Alföldy, 'Augustus und die Inschriften. Tradition und Innovation. Die Geburt der imperialen Epigraphik', *Gymnasium* 98 (1991), 289–324, 299–302.

appear to have often remained unnamed.<sup>3</sup> This makes the *via Sebaste*, the *via Iulia Augusta* and the *via Augusta* quite exceptional. The atypical naming of the latter two of these provincial roads becomes all the more striking in the light of the fact that they happened to be on a route that in various traditions was associated with the tenth labour of Hercules, which saw the hero take the cattle of Geryon from Gades (modern Cádiz) to Argos.

This chapter delves into the correspondence between this mythical tradition and the named stretches of road in southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula, which was part of a process of monumentalizing these landscapes. It pays particular attention to the fact that this monumentalization and the Herculean myth both particularly focused on (expressing) control over the landscape. Because in name and image Augustus was an emphatic part of the Roman monumentalization, the *princeps* gained a Herculean aura almost by default. By means of examining this association, this chapter aims to demonstrate the importance of landscape-bound traditions in the ideological impact of road-building projects, a much underemphasized aspect of the study of Roman infrastructure. This focus offers us glimpses into how such traditions gave the emerging Augustan Principate ample opportunity to assert changing power relations at both a local and a supralocal level. It will be shown that this process involved a degree of negotiation, with local actors also having a share in shaping the discourse. Before the Augustan developments of these roads and their Herculean connotations are discussed respectively, let us first briefly address how in Roman thought roads were strongly associated with an idea of taming the landscape.<sup>4</sup>

3 Cf. Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 62. For a detailed discussion of road toponomy, see J. Sánchez Sánchez, L. Benítez de Lugo Enrich, J. Rodríguez Morales, and J.L. Fernández Montoro, 'Nomenclatura viaria antiqua. La Vía de los Vasos de Vicarello: una vía augusta de Hispania', *El Nuevo Miliario: boletín sobre vías romanas, historia de los caminos y otros temas de geografía histórica* 15 (2013), 3–21. Although they justly argue against the common use of neologisms in the scholarship of Roman roads, their argument against regarding the name '*via Augusta*' as a reference to Augustus is less convincing, all the more so because the *via Iulia Augusta* has been left out of the analysis. The same applies to R. Járrega Domínguez, 'La Vía Augusta no es un topónimo. Aproximación a la organización territorial del Este de Hispania en época de Augusto', *Quaderns de Prehistòria i Arqueologia de Castelló* 37 (2019), 143–168, although it does contain an *addendum* that shows an awareness of the southern Gallic road.

4 The term 'roadscape' is used in this chapter to signify "the portion of the landscape – material and ideological, experienced and imagined – made up by roads", as defined by J. Demenge, 'Development, regional politics and the unfolding of the "roadscape" in Ladakh, North India', *Journal of Infrastructure Development* 7, no. 1 (2015), 1–18, 2. The most significant monuments, roads, towns, and waters mentioned in this chapter are visualised in Figure 1.

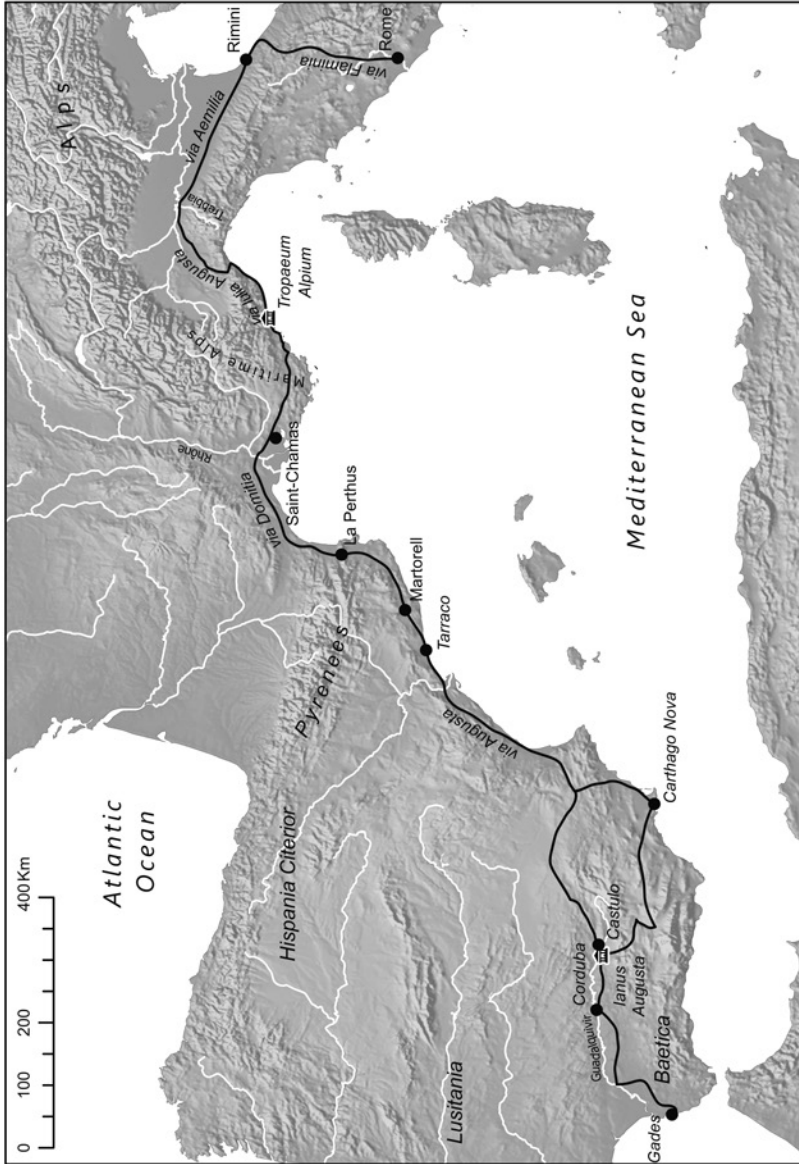


FIGURE 7.1 The roads that made up the route from Rome to Gades. Ancient names of monuments, towns, and roads are italicized, modern names are not  
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## 2 Roman Roads and Controlling the Landscape

In our modern world of (digitized) maps, it is all too easy to overestimate the ancient perception of geography. As K. Brodersen set out in detail, the Romans hardly thought in terms of maps, instead relying on landmarks and routes to conceptualize larger tracts of territory.<sup>5</sup> In this perception, the empire was made up of peoples and natural boundaries such as mountain ridges and rivers, with networks of roads giving this empire a cohesive structure. The extent of empire was gauged in a quite literal sense by means of a meticulous measurement of the number of miles on certain stretches of roads. This was already common practice in the Republic. Polybius, for instance, related that in his time milestones marked the measured stretch between Narbo and the Rhône – the later *via Domitia*.<sup>6</sup> To be able to measure the landscape was an emphatic expression of control. Roads, then, did not only serve a practical purpose, but were also made into an instrument for conceptualizing empire. Roads were not the sole means to this end. For Gallia Cisalpina, for example, N. Purcell has demonstrated that road-building went hand-in-hand with centuriation as an assertion of Roman power.<sup>7</sup> Roman land, in that sense, was measured land.<sup>8</sup>

The Augustan age was a next step in this conception of ‘control through measurement’. In Rome this found public expression in the erection of the *milliarium aureum* – a point of reference for the roads of Italy – as well as in the setting up of the marble map of Agrippa in the *porticus Vipsania*.<sup>9</sup> As far as the Augustan conception of the western part of the Empire is concerned, it

5 K. Brodersen, *Terra Cognita: Studien zur römischen Raumerfassung* (Hildesheim/New York 1995). For a similar approach to the Roman sense of landscapes, see P. Janni, *La mappa e il periplo: cartografia antica e spazio odologico* (Rome 1984).

6 Polyb., 3.39.8. Also see N. Purcell, ‘The creation of provincial landscape. The Roman impact on Cisalpine Gaul’, in: T.F.C. Blagg and M. Millett, eds., *The Early Roman Empire in the West* (Oxford 1990), 7–29.

7 Purcell 1990, op. cit. (n. 6).

8 For a more elaborate discussion on this subject, see A. Kolb, ‘The Romans and the world’s measure’, in: S. Bianchetti, M.R. Cataudella, and H.-J. Gehrke, eds., *Brill’s companion to ancient geography* (Leiden/Boston 2016), 223–28. Also see the various contributions in the third part of M. Horster and N. Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire* (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019) (Leiden/Boston 2021).

9 *Milliarium aureum*: Plin., *NH* 3.66, Cass. Dio, 54.8.4; with Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 56–57; R.J.A. Talbert, ‘Roads not featured: a Roman failure to communicate?’, in: S.E. Alcock, J.P. Bodel, and R.J.A. Talbert, eds., *Highways, byways, and road systems in the pre-modern world* (Malden 2012), 235–54, 241. Map of Agrippa: Brodersen 1995, op. cit. (n. 5), 268–287; P. Arnaud, ‘Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa and his geographical work’, in: S. Bianchetti, M.R. Cataudella, and H.J. Gehrke, eds., *Brill’s companion to ancient geography: the inhabited world in Greek and Roman tradition* (Leiden/Boston 2016), 205–22.

is especially the *Res Gestae divi Augusti* that stands as a remarkable witness. As C. Nicolet has demonstrated, the document is both in its contents and its original placement at the Mausoleum – hence in alignment with the *Ara Pacis* – emphatically about pacifying the world.<sup>10</sup> Few parts are as revealing about what this pacification entailed as *Res Gestae* 26. In Augustus' own words:

I extended the territory of all those provinces of the Roman people which had neighbouring peoples who were not subject to our authority. I pacified the Gallic and Spanish provinces, and similarly Germany, where Ocean forms a boundary from Cádiz to the mouth of River Elbe. I brought the Alps under control from the region which is nearest to the Adriatic Sea as far as the Tyrrhenian Sea, but attacked no people unjustly. My fleet navigated through Ocean from the mouth of the Rhine to the region of the rising sun as far as the territory of the Cimbri; no Roman before this time has ever approached this area by either land or sea.<sup>11</sup>

The text is illustrative of how Romans made sense of geography, with the extent of empire being phrased in peoples and natural boundaries. The passage clearly shows that the pacification of (the western part of) the Mediterranean was as much about exploration as it was about conquest. It presents this part of the Augustan empire as having reached the edge of the world, with the Ocean as a clear marker of the world's end.<sup>12</sup>

The immense project that was the laying out of the road network in this area is notably absent from this passage, which fits the overall tendency of leaving out road-building in the *Res Gestae* – the restoration of the *via Flaminia* being the exception.<sup>13</sup> It is nevertheless remarkable that when considering (the monuments alongside) the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta*, we find an

10 C. Nicolet, *Space, geography, and politics in the early Roman empire* (Ann Arbor 1991), 15–27.

11 *RG* 26.1–4: 1. *Omnium provinc[iarum populi Romani,] quibus finitimae fuerunt gentes quae non p[ararent imperio nos]tro, fines auxi.* 2. *Gallias et Hispanias provincias, i[tem Germaniam, qua inclu]dit Oceanus a Gadibus ad ostium Albis flumin[is, pacavi.* 3. *Alpes a re]gione e aquae proxima est Hadriano mari [ad Tuscum pacari fec]i nulli genti bello per iniuriam inlato. 4. cla[ssis m]ea p[er Oceanum] ab ostio Rheni ad solis orientis regionem usque ad fi[nes Cimbroru]m navigavit, quo neque terra neque mari quisquam Romanus ante id tempus adit [...]. Text and translation (with minor changes) from A.E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: text, translation, and commentary* (Cambridge 2009), 90.*

12 Nicolet 1991, op. cit. (n. 10), 21–24. For the reflection of this rhetoric in contemporary literary accounts, see V. Fabrizi, 'Hannibal's march and Roman imperial space in Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, book 21', *Philologus* 159, no. 1 (2015), 118–155, 134–135.

13 *RG* 20.5. For the absence of road-building in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, also see Talbert 2012, op. cit. (n. 9), 243.

emphasis on the same landmarks as in *Res Gestae* 26, with the Ocean and Alps figuring prominently.<sup>14</sup> This correspondence alone suggests that, at the very least, the roads were the physical attestation of Roman control over these natural boundaries. We now turn to both roadscaapes to gauge the extent to which Augustan monumentalization of both roadscaapes gave expression to such ideas of territorial control. By discussing the *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta* respectively, we find that southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula witnessed an impressive systematization of expressing Roman dominance over the landscape during the Augustan age. This, in turn, provided a proper foundation upon which ideological frameworks of the new regime would be constructed, to which we will turn afterwards.

### 3 Monumentalizing the Iberian and Southern Gallic Landscape

#### 3.1 Via Augusta

Leading straight through much of what is part of modern Spain, the *via Augusta* has been much studied, especially through Spanish scholarship.<sup>15</sup> Because itineraries and the spatial distribution of milestones do not always correspond, the exact route of the *via Augusta* has been much debated. In recent scholarship it has been increasingly questioned whether we could actually speak of the *via Augusta* as a single route. R. Járrega Domínguez suggested in a recent contribution to rather speak of the *viae Augustae* as a network of roads.<sup>16</sup> The creation of this network is roughly contemporary to other changes to the Iberian landscape, the centres of which were thoroughly reshuffled through the foundation of colonies and the promotion of existing cities.<sup>17</sup> The roads connected these

14 See below, p. 121.

15 The bibliography is immense; some of the most recent contributions – in which much of the debate has been summarized – are Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3); C. Campedelli, ‘The impact of Roman roads and milestones on the landscape of the Iberian Peninsula’, in: M. Horster and N. Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019)* (Leiden/Boston 2021), 111–130, 115–122; M. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, M.Á. Lechuga Chica, M.I. Moreno Padilla, and J.P. Bellón Ruiz, ‘Microstratigraphic analysis of the main Roman road in Hispania: the Via Augusta where it passes through the Ianus Augustus (Mengíbar, Spain)’, *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 14, no. 8 (2022): 142–173.

16 Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), building upon J. Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia tarraconense* (Zaragoza 1992); P. Hermann, *Itinéraire des voies romaines. De l'antiquité au Moyen Âge* (Paris 2007), 72; Sánchez Sánchez et al. 2013, op. cit. (n. 3).

17 Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 156–161. On the roads as being part of a larger territorial reorganization of Hispania, see most recently S. España-Chamorro, ‘Engaging landscapes, connecting provinces: milestones and the construction of Hispania at the

centres with each other as well as with the Roman road network as a whole, and were integrated into the recently established postal service, thus receiving road stops at regular intervals.<sup>18</sup>

The roads into the interior branched off from a main artery that connected some of the major cities of Augustan Hispania. It passed through Tarraco, Carthago Nova, Castulo, Corduba and ended at Gades.<sup>19</sup> This stretch of the road is what has traditionally been called the *via Augusta*, and it received minute attention under Augustus. As recent excavations have shown, it consisted of *ex novo* sections as well as (re-)paved sections overlaying pre-existing paths.<sup>20</sup> The major natural boundaries along the road also received ample attention through the erection of monuments. Part of their function was to serve as territorial markers: the abovementioned Augustan territorial reorganization included the subdivision of Hispania into Hispania Ulterior Baetica, Hispania Ulterior Lusitania, and Hispania Citerior Tarraconensis.<sup>21</sup> Within this new territorial structure, the *via Augusta* stood as a connecting link between Tarraconensis and Baetica, with separate *capita viarum* often at major natural landmarks.

For the *via Augusta* in Hispania Citerior, the road's *caput viae* appears to have been the *Summus Pyrenaeus* at modern Le Perthus.<sup>22</sup> Here the *via Domitia* met the *via Augusta*. This made it a dividing point between Gaul and Hispania. This

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beginning of the Empire', in: Marietta Horster and Nikolas Hächler, eds., *The impact of the Roman Empire on landscapes. Proceedings of the fourteenth workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Mainz, June 12–15, 2019)* (Leiden/Boston 2021), 92–110. For an overview of the many cities either founded or named after Augustus in Hispania, see E.S. Ramage, 'Augustus' propaganda in Spain', *Klio* 80 (1998), 434–490. For centuriation as part of the territorial reorganization, see P. Sillières, *Les voies de communication de l'Hispanie méridionale* (Paris 1990), 817–818; J.M. Gurt and I. Rodà, 'El Pont del Diable. El monumento romano dentro de la política territorial augustea', *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 78 (2005), 147–165.

18 Suet., *Aug.* 49.3; with Sillières 2014, op. cit. (n. 1); Kolb 2016, op. cit. (n. 1).

19 For a recent reconstruction of its route – based on milestones and ancient itineraries – see Campedelli 2021, op. cit. (n. 15), 115–122.

20 J.P. Bellón Ruiz, M.Á. Lechuga Chica, M.I. Moreno Padilla, and M. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 'Ianus Augustus, Caput Viae (Mengíbar, Spain): an interprovincial monumental border in Roman Hispania', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 34, no. 1 (2021), 3–29, esp. 9–10. For a technical discussion of the *via Augusta* section at the *Ianus Augustus* – arguing against the common misconception that roads were as a rule stone-paved – see recently Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al. 2022, op. cit. (n. 15).

21 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 97–103.

22 P. Ulloa Chamorro, 'Nuevo miliario de la vía Augusta hallado en Castellón', *Quaderns de Prehistòria i Arqueologia de Castelló* 20 (1999), 209–220; C. Campedelli, 'Viae publicae als Mittel der Vermessung, Erfassung und Wahrnehmung von Räumen: das Beispiel der Provinz Hispania citerior Tarraconensis (CIL XVII/1, 1)', in: W. Eck, P. Funke, and M. Dohnicht, eds., *Öffentlichkeit – Monument – Text: XIV Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae 27.–31. Augusti MMXII: Akten* (Berlin/Boston 2014), 608–610, 608.

division became formalized in the Augustan age, but owed much to the activity of Pompey the Great.<sup>23</sup> Most conspicuous was the trophy Pompey had set up at Le Perthus, by means of which he made a strong case for Roman dominion over the Pyrenees.<sup>24</sup> According to Strabo, it was this trophy that marked ‘the boundary between Iberia and Celtica’.<sup>25</sup> With such a recent monumental expression of Roman power over the landscape already in place, there was little need for an Augustan replacement to emphasize this natural boundary. Still, Augustus’ campaigns in the Cantabrian Wars prompted another Roman trophy elsewhere in the Pyrenees – at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges – so that Augustus could boast of his own share in subduing this mountain ridge.<sup>26</sup>

Further south, the river Baetis (the modern Guadalquivir) formed the *caput viae* of the *via Augusta* in Baetica. Here, too, a monument was set up that emphasized this natural boundary: the *Ianus Augustus*.<sup>27</sup> This arch’s precise location along the river has long been a matter of debate, yet recent archaeological surveys at modern Mengíbar have unearthed its foundations, thus providing a conclusive answer.<sup>28</sup> The same survey has shown that this monument was an impressive territorial arch and part of a larger monumental structure. More emphatically so than in the Pyrenees, the monumentalized landscape around the *Ianus Augustus* became a focal point of Roman Hispania. In fact, just how important these landmarks were for the Baetican part of the *via Augusta* may be read from the milestones. From Augustus onwards these (in a number of variants) specified the route of the road as *a Baete et Iano Augusto ad Oceanum* (‘from the Baetis and *Ianus Augustus* to the Ocean’).<sup>29</sup> The formula neatly

23 F. Beltrán Lloris and F. Pina Polo, ‘Roma y los Pirineos: la formación de una frontera’, *Chiron. Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 24 (1994), 103–133.

24 G. Castellvi, J.M. Nolla, and I. Rodà, ‘La identificación de los trofeos de Pompeyo en el Pirineo’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 8 (1995), 5–18; L. Amela Valverde, ‘Los trofeos de Pompeyo’, *Habis. Filología clásica, historia antigua, arqueología clásica* 32 (2001), 185–202.

25 Str., 4.1.3: τὰ Πομπηίου τρόπαια ὄριον Ἰβηρίας ἀποφαίνουσι καὶ τῆς Κελτικῆς, cf. Plin., *NH* 3.4.

26 A.S. Esmonde Cleary, *Rome in the Pyrenees: Lugdunum and the Convenae from the first century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.* (London/New York 2008), 31–34.

27 *Ianus* here primarily signifies this monument as an arch – Domitianic inscriptions would later refer to the same structure as *arcus* (*CIL* II, 4721). There was nevertheless an associative connection with the eponymous god, whose traditional relation to waterways has been discussed by L.A. Holland, *Janus and the bridge* (Rome 1961), who also discusses the *Ianus Augustus* at pp. 294–295.

28 Bellón Ruiz et al. 2021, op. cit. (n. 20). Earlier studies on the *Ianus Augustus* include P. Sillières, ‘A propos d’un nouveau milliaire de la via Augusta, une via militaris en Bétique’, *Revue des études anciennes* 83 (1981), 255–271; M.G. Schmidt, ‘Ab Iano Augusto ad Oceanum: methodologische Überlegungen zur Erforschung der viae publicae in der Baetica’, in: I. Czeguhn, et al., eds., *Wasser – Wege – Wissen auf der iberischen Halbinsel: eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung im Verlauf der Geschichte* (Baden-Baden 2018), 35–53.

29 Augustan milestones: *CIL* II, 4701–4711.



illustrates how natural boundaries defined territorial space as well as the roads traversing it, and the latter part corresponds to the limit of Augustus' empire at Gades as drawn in *Res Gestae* 26. Whether a monument also marked the road's *terminus* in the way that the *Ianus Augustus* marked the Baetis is unknown, although *ad Oceanum* has sometimes been interpreted to refer to a statue of the Titan Oceanus, rather than to the ocean as a geographical boundary.<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, we may think of the Pillars of Hercules, which according to Strabo some thought to have been represented in bronze at the temple of Hercules at Gades, as a plausible Gaditan counterpart to Pompey's trophy and the *Ianus Augustus*.<sup>31</sup> Even without such a counterpart, however, the *Ianus Augustus* would have done the job of welcoming the traveller into the territory furthest west in the known world. For this part of the world at least, the monumentalized landscape showed Roman dominion as having no boundaries but natural ones.

Not just the extremities of the *via Augusta* in Baetica and Tarraconensis received monumental treatment to imprint messages of dominance into the landscape. On a smaller yet quite numerous scale, the milestones – whose numbers also increased in Hispania during the Augustan age – were also potent expressions of Roman power. First of all, they were an indication of control through measurement, as represented by distances from the *capita viarum* being measured in Roman miles. At the same time, the appearance of the emperor's formula on the same object indicated the emperor's (ultimate) responsibility for the road's construction and, by extension, for taming the lands it traversed.<sup>32</sup> As S. España-Chamorro has recently argued, such ideological considerations may even have been these milestones' main purpose, given that a certain clustering of milestones – as opposed to an even distribution – made a more practical use, such as facilitating coordination, improbable.<sup>33</sup>

Monumentalizing the Iberian roadscapes also happened on a larger scale, which is especially noticeable close to some of the many bridges that were constructed during the Augustan age.<sup>34</sup> The *Ianus Augustus* overlooked a

30 W. Kubitschek, 'Ianus Augustus', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Band S VI* (Stuttgart 1935), 119–26.123–124; Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 64. On the basis of the Vicarello Cups, it has also been suggested that there was a Gaditan counterpart to the *miliarium aureum*, but see convincingly M.G. Schmidt, 'A Gadibus Romam: myth and reality of an ancient route', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 54 (2011), 71–86, 77–79.

31 Str., 3.5.5.

32 On which also see Alföldy 1991, op. cit. (n. 2), 301.

33 España-Chamorro 2021, op. cit. (n. 17), 96–97. For this clustering of milestones as a possible indication of various degrees of agency in their erection, see Lostal Pros 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 17; Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 108. Cf. Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 151.

34 For a discussion of the bridges of Augustan Hispania, see Nünnerich-Asmus 1993, op. cit. (n. 1) 139–143. For the Corduba region in particular, see more recently I. Ostos-López,

bridge that crossed the Baetis. Quite similar in this respect is a bridge at modern Martorell, close to Barcelona. The bridge was in close vicinity to the *mansio* at *ad Fines*, and at its head stood a monumental arch.<sup>35</sup> Crossing Llobregat river, it may be compared to the Le Perthus trophy and the *Ianus Augustus*, in that it highlighted a natural boundary at a point that also had an administrative purpose (i.e. the *mansio*).<sup>36</sup> Since the locations of both the *Ianus Augustus* and the bridge at Martorell have been suggested as important junctions of the *via Augusta*, perhaps an additional function was to mark these points for coordination purposes.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the monumental structures mentioned up to this point could at times combine expressions of Roman imperial control over the reorganized landscape with more practical considerations.

### 3.2 Via Iulia Augusta

The picture sketched above may *mutatis mutandis* also be drawn for the *via Iulia Augusta*. Its exact route is harder to ascertain, yet it is generally believed to have led from the river Trebbia to the Rhône.<sup>38</sup> Much as with the *via Augusta* in Hispania, the *via Iulia Augusta* was part of a broader project of the Augustan age that turned the landscape around the Maritime Alps into a Roman (imperial) landscape by means of widespread monumentalization. Part of this were again the milestones, which allow us to date the construction of the road to 13/12 BCE.<sup>39</sup> As happened contemporarily in Hispania, paving (parts) of the road seems to have coincided with the erection of bridges.<sup>40</sup> Some of these

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<sup>1</sup> 'Puentes romanos: Los puentes romanos del término municipal de Córdoba', *Anahgramas* 1 (2014), 3–107.

35 Gurt and Rodà 2005, op. cit. (n. 17).

36 Gurt and Rodà 2005, op. cit. (n. 17), esp. 159–165.

37 Campedelli 2021, op. cit. (n. 15), 117, 120, 125. For Martorell/*ad Fines* as an important junction, also see Lostal Pros 1992, op. cit. (n. 16), 269; *contra* Járrega Domínguez 2019, op. cit. (n. 3), 153.

38 The only certain evidence for *via Iulia Augusta's caput viae* are Hadrianic milestones (*CIL* V, 8102–8103; *CIL* V, 8106) found at modern La Turbie that state Hadrian restored the *viam Iuliam aug(ustam) a flumine Trebia* ('from the river Trebbia'). The latter part corresponds to an Augustan milestone found along the restored *via Aemilia* (*CIL* XI, 8103), which specifies this road led from Rimini to the river Trebbia (*ab Arimino ad flumen Trebiam*). Perhaps this suggests that the newly constructed *via Iulia Augusta* already had the Trebbia as its starting point in the Augustan age. As for the road's route from La Turbie onwards, it is often suggested that it led all the way to the Rhône (where it met the *via Domitia*), based on the route of the Via Aurelia – as the road was called in the Antonine itinerary (*It. Ant.* 289.3). Definite proof for this is lacking, however.

39 *CIL* V, 8098; *CIL* V, 8100–101.

40 Some of these appear to have been made of wood only to be replaced by stone structures in the Hadrianic age, probably as part of the same renovation works as those mentioned in footnote 38. See for example F. Bulgarelli, 'Ponti romani della Val Quazzola e del Finalese lungo la via Iulia Augusta', in: L. Quilici and S. Quilici Gigli, eds., *Strade romane: ponti e viadotti* (Rome 1996), 231–250, 233 n. 12, for the still surviving bridges in the Ponci Valley.

bridges also appear to have been more monumental: if indeed the *via Iulia Augusta* ran all the way to the Rhône, the so-called Pont Flavien, a monumentalized bridge at modern Saint-Chamas with arches on either side, can be linked to the road.<sup>41</sup> The inscription of this bridge still survives and ascribes the construction of the bridge to a Gallic nobleman and *flamen Romae et Augusti*.<sup>42</sup> Such an ostentatious form of self-promotion – Augustus' name was notably lacking – shows that the creation of a 'Roman' landscape was very much a process in which various agents were involved.<sup>43</sup>

The same idea of the monumentalization of the Roman Empire under Augustus as a shared discourse rather than one-sided propaganda can be gleaned from the far more conspicuous *tropaeum Alpium* at La Turbie. This monument was dedicated by the senate and people of Rome in 7/6 BCE to the *princeps*, with a dedicatory formula that is typical to the monuments made in Augustus' honour.<sup>44</sup> In this specific instance, it celebrated Augustus' subjugation of the Alpine tribes, as clearly delineated in the inscription that has survived through Pliny the Elder:

To Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of the deified one, pontifex maximus, imperator for the fourteenth time, the seventeenth year of his tribunician power, the senate and people of Rome [dedicate this monument], because under his command and auspices all the Alpine tribes extending

41 A. Küpper-Böhm, *Die römischen Bogenmonumente der Gallia Narbonensis in ihrem urbanen Kontext* (Espelkamp 1996), 5–11.

42 *CIL* XII, 647.

43 A similar case of local self-promotion is provided by the roughly coeval construction of a road and an arch under king Cottius in modern Susa, for which see H. Cornwell, 'The king who would be prefect: authority and identity in the Cottian Alps', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 105 (2015), 41–72; K. Iannantuono, 'La monumentalizzazione del potere nelle Alpi Cozie all'indomani della conquista romana. Una "descrizione densa" dell'arco di Susa', *Segusium* 58 (2020), 11–48.

44 On this honorific language, see A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Roman arches and Greek honours: the language of power at Rome', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 216 (1990), 143–81, who in the context of Roman triumphal arches recognized the Greek origins of this language and thought of it as a means of coming to terms with the realities of the Principate. It is uncertain whether the 7/6 BCE date that derives from the inscription refers to the Senate's decision or to the monument's dedication or inauguration, on which see S. Binninger, 'Le "Tropaeum Alpium" et l'Héraclès Monoikos: mémoire et célébration de la victoire dans la propagande augustéenne à la Turbie', in: M. Navarro Caballero and J.-M. Roddaz, eds., *La transmission de l'idéologie impériale dans les provinces de l'Occident romain: actes du 128ème colloque CTHS, Bastia, 15–16 avril 2003* (Bordeaux 2006), 179–203, 184–185.

from the Upper [= Adriatic] Sea to the Lower [= Tyrrhenian] Sea were brought under the rule of the Roman people.<sup>45</sup>

In the remainder of the inscription, the conquered tribes are each listed respectively. Whereas the *via Iulia Augusta* symbolized bringing order to the natural landscape, lists such as these were a powerful expression of the ordering of the peoples who inhabited this landscape.<sup>46</sup> The taming of the Alps and its peoples we have seen before in *Res Gestae* 26, and the language that indicated the extent of this conquest – from the Adriatic Sea to the Tyrrhenian Sea – was quite similar, phrasing it as overcoming natural barriers.<sup>47</sup>

For the Alpine trophy, the connection between the mountains and the sea was as much expressed by words as it was by the monument's location. In fact, it gave a physical manifestation of the inscription's western extremity of the Alpine conquest by overlooking the coasts of Liguria and southern Gaul at a point where the Maritime Alps reached the Mediterranean. This symbolic location of the trophy was further pronounced by its placement on a platform at one of the highest points of the *via Iulia Augusta*.<sup>48</sup> Similar to the discussed monumental structures on the Iberian Peninsula was the significance of the *tropaeum Alpium* as more than a monument that stressed the honour and glory of Augustus and the Roman Empire. As a clear landmark in southern Gaul, it seems to have served as marking the southeastern boundary of the newly established prefecture of Alpes Maritimae.<sup>49</sup> In addition, as attested by the chorographic testimony of Pliny and by the mention of *Alpe Summa* in the Antonine Itinerary, it appears to have been a point of recognition for travellers taking the *via Iulia Augusta*.<sup>50</sup> For the *tropaeum Alpium* at least, then, we find that its ostentatious

45 CIL V, 7818: *Imperatori Caesari divi filio Augusto / pont(ifici) max(imo) imp(eratori) XIII trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVII / senatus populusque Romanus / quod eius ductu auspiciisque gentes Alpinae omnes quae a mari supero ad inferum pertinebant sub imperium p(opuli) R(omani) sunt redactae [...]*; with Plin., *NH* 3,136–137; J. Formigé, 'La dédicace du Trophée des Alpes (La Turbie)', *Gallia. Archéologie de la France antique* 13, no. 1 (1955), 101–02; S. Carey, *Pliny's catalogue of culture: art and empire in the Natural History* (Oxford 2003), 47.

46 Carey 2003, op. cit. (n. 45), 43–61.

47 *RG* 26.

48 For the significance and emphasis of the *tropaeum Alpium*'s location, see J. Formigé, *Le Trophée des Alpes (La Turbie)* (Paris 1949), 43; H. Cornwell, 'Routes of resistance to integration: Alpine reactions to Roman power', in R. Varga and V. Rusu-Bolindel, eds., *Official power and local elites in the Roman provinces* (London/New York 2016), 52–76, 57–58; cf. Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44), 186–188.

49 S. Morabito, 'Entre Narbonnaise et Italie: le territoire de la province des Alpes Maritimae pendant l'Antiquité romaine (I<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.-C.–V<sup>e</sup> s. apr. J.-C.)', *Gallia. Archéologie de la France antique* 67, no. 2 (2010), 99–124, 104.

50 *It. Ant.* 296.3.

visibility effected the same combination of ideological and practical considerations as for the monuments found along the *via Augusta*. This made the strength and control of the Roman Empire a constant message for anyone moving into these monuments' vicinity.

### 3.3 *The Route of Augustus?*

The above-listed survey has shown how at roughly the same time the road-scapes of the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta* were treated in a similar fashion. Long stretches of road meant to connect key points in their respective landscapes, while monuments of various sizes and functions were erected along these roads, typically in the vicinity of natural landmarks. In a world practically devoid of maps, the monuments marking (the often overlapping) natural and administrative borders gave travellers of these roads clear points of recognition. Consequently, many of the mentioned monuments – or at least their locations – feature alongside key towns on ancient itineraries, also because these kind of places served as road-stops.

Dotting southern Gaul and Hispania with monumental landmarks was the ultimate expression of control. Roads and bridges gave a sense of regulation to the landscapes characterized by rugged mountains and wild rivers, an achievement that was underlined by the trophies, arches, and milestones which were built alongside these symbols of order. In word and image, this taming of the landscape (and its peoples) was phrased as the result of Roman power. More specifically, the inscriptions found on most of the milestones and roadside monuments made abundantly clear that this power was embodied by the man on top of the social pyramid, Augustus.

Augustus was also associated – albeit not in their toponymy – with the stretches of roads that connected the *via Iulia Augusta* and *via Augusta* with each other and with Rome. In Gallia Narbonensis the *via Domitia* connected the *via Augusta* and (probably) the *via Iulia Augusta* – as it stretched from the Pyrenees to the Rhône. From the river Trebbia one could, moreover, reach Rome by travelling the *via Aemilia* and *via Flaminia* respectively. Each of these roads witnessed restorations works under Augustus. For the *via Aemilia* and *via Domitia*, milestones subsequently recorded this feat, thus binding the *princeps'* name to these roads.<sup>51</sup> More emphatically remembered was Augustus' restoration of the *via Flaminia*, which was recorded in our literary evidence, celebrated through the Arch of Augustus in Rimini, and reminisced in Augustus' *Res*

51 *Via Domitia*: e.g. *CIL* XVII.2, 291. *Via Aemilia*: *CIL* XI, 8103. Like the milestones at La Turbie, the Augustan milestones along the *via Domitia* take the distance to Rome instead of the distance to the nearest *caput viae* as their Republican precedents had done, for which see Rathmann 2003, op. cit. (n. 1), 64. The 'Arc du Rhône' in Arles, which Küpper-Böhm (1996, op. cit. (n. 41), 14–24) dates to the Augustan period, may be regarded as a more monumental means by which Augustus was related to the *via Domitia*.

*Gestae*.<sup>52</sup> Taking everything together, then, what we have is a connected series of named and measured road stretches from Rome all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, with each of these stretches associated with the name of Augustus in one way or another. This route was not without significance, as in the opposite direction it was the route that in a century-old mythical tradition had been associated with Hercules. And in this myth, too, territorial control played a remarkable role.

#### 4 Conquering the West: Hercules the Civilizing Wanderer

The myth of Hercules' tenth labor was already centuries old by the Augustan age, and long recognized across practically the entire Mediterranean. It was rooted in Greek tradition, having been part of Hesiod's *Theogonia* and at the core of Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* in the sixth century BCE.<sup>53</sup> Although various versions are known, the core narrative had the wandering hero defeat the monster Geryon in Erytheia in order to collect this monster's cattle, which he subsequently brought back to Argos. Already in early Greek literary traditions, Erytheia was located in what is now Spain, and some authors identified it with the Phoenician colony of Gadir (which would become Roman Gades).<sup>54</sup> The identification of legendary places with actual places did not just occur for the sake of making sense of mythical geography, but belonged to attempts on the part of the (western) Greek literary tradition to legitimize their claims over the western Mediterranean.<sup>55</sup> Particularly in this political use of the myth, the theme of conquering and subsequently controlling landscapes came to fruition.

It was commonplace to ascribe to Hercules – or his Greek equivalent Herakles – a civilizing mission as he completed his labours. Accordingly, greater focus in the narrative of Hercules' tenth labour came to be on his return

52 Literary sources: Suet., *Aug.* 30, Cass. Dio, 53.22.1. *Res Gestae*: RG 20.5; with Cooley 2009, op. cit. (n. 11), 195–196. Arch at Rimini: R. Laurence, *The roads of Roman Italy: mobility and cultural change* (London 1999), 42–45. It has been suggested on the basis of Cass. Dio, 53.22.2 that at the start of the *via Flaminia* – at the Milvian bridge in Rome – there was another arch honouring Augustus for the same feat: H. Kähler, 'Triumphbogen', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Band VII A,I* (Stuttgart 1939), 373–493, 381, 411; S. De Maria, *Gli archi onorari di Roma e dell'Italia romana* (Rome 1988), 260–262 no. 48, 269 no. 58.

53 On the early history of Hercules' tenth labour, see L. Pearson, *The Greek historians of the West: Timaeus and his predecessors* (Atlanta 1987), 59–60; F. Budelmann, *Greek lyric: a selection* (Cambridge 2018), 154; P.J. Finglass, 'Labor X: The cattle of Geryon and the return from Tartessus', in D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 135–148, 135–141.

54 Apollod., *Bibl.* 2.5.10, Plin., *NH* 4.120.

55 R.C. Knapp, 'La *via Heraclea* en el Occidente. Mito, arqueología, propaganda, historia', *Emerita* 54 (1986), 103–122, 103–106; Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 141–145.

to Argos, with various authors adding details to this journey by showing the wandering hero both taming the landscape and subduing its various peoples along the way. Early accounts had focused on Hercules' presence in Magna Graecia and especially Sicily, where his activity reflected Greek concerns with Phoenician spheres of interest.<sup>56</sup> His domain expanded westward as knowledge of the lands of Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula increased. Especially noteworthy for our purposes is Diodorus' euhemeristic take on the journey of Hercules, which among other regions led him through Gaul and the Alps.<sup>57</sup> As he marched at the head of an army with the cattle of Geryon, he brought order to these lands by various means. In Gaul, Hercules ended the 'lawlessness' (παράνομία) and 'murder of strangers' (ξενοκτονία), while also founding the city of Alesia.<sup>58</sup> The Alps were also subjected to Hercules's will, as he made them surmountable by a road.<sup>59</sup> Especially with regard to the inclusion of Alesia into this account, it is not hard to see it as a reflection of the Gallic campaigns of Diodorus' contemporary Julius Caesar that culminated in this city's siege.<sup>60</sup>

Diodorus' narrative is illustrative of how military activity could be framed as a repetition of Hercules' journey. One of the earliest examples of such framing is Hannibal's march over the Alps, which at least in later tradition was presented as an emulation of Hercules, who had in Melqart a Carthaginian equivalent.<sup>61</sup> For the Romans, too, Hercules' return with Geryon's cattle was of particular significance, not in the least because the origins of Rome were related to the hero's encounter with Cacus at the site of the future city.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, as the interest of the Romans in the western Mediterranean grew, so did the inclination of projecting Hercules' journey onto their own activities, probably in part

56 Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 141–144.

57 Diod. Sic., 4.17.1–4.25.1.

58 Diod. Sic., 4.19.1.

59 Diod. Sic., 4.19.4.

60 Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 112; J.-C. Carrière, 'Héraclès de la Méditerranée à l'Océan: mythe, conquête et acculturation', in: M. Clavel-Lévêque and R. Plana Mallart, eds., *Cité et territoire: colloque européen (Béziers 14–16 octobre 1994)* (Paris 1995), 67–87, 68, 70–71; Finglass 2021, op. cit. (n. 53), 144.

61 D. Briquel, 'Hannibal sur les pas d'Héraklès: le voyage mythologique et son utilisation dans l'histoire', in: H. Duchêne, ed., *Voyageurs et antiquité classique* (Dijon 2003), 51–60; D. Briquel, 'L'utilisation de la figure d'Héraklès par Hannibal: remarques sur les fragments de Silènos de Kaléaktè', in: J.-M. André, ed., *Hispanité et romanité* (Madrid 2004), 29–37; R. Miles, 'Hannibal and propaganda', in: B. Dexter Hoyos, ed., *A Companion to the Punic Wars* (Malden 2011), 260–279, 264–268. Whether Hannibal's march was already phrased in Herculean terms in its own time has been questioned by B.D. Hoyos, *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at war* (Oxford 2015), 102.

62 See most recently C. Siwicki, 'The Roman cult of Hercules', in D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 489–506, 490–491.

to justify Roman interference.<sup>63</sup> In their campaigns in Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula, Roman generals would be cast – and regularly cast themselves – as the successors or embodiments of the hero, and Diodorus' Hercules as an allusion to Caesarian activity was not the first of these. Hercules was commonly evoked by generals of the Republic.<sup>64</sup> Upon his successful campaigns against the Gauls, Quintus Fabius Maximus Aemilianus, for example, erected a trophy as well as altars to Mars and Hercules, the latter being the proclaimed ancestor of the Fabii.<sup>65</sup> More geared towards the Herculean feats in the west themselves were the associations with Hercules that followed Pompey's successes – as was likewise reminisced locally, by the trophy at Le Perthus.<sup>66</sup>

As a precursor of Augustan activity, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus' impact on the landscape of southern Gaul is especially worth noting. Much like Fabius Maximus and Pompey, Domitius seems to have provided the area with an expression of the glory of Rome by erecting a trophy at the Rhône.<sup>67</sup> In this case, however, the message was further strengthened by the coeval construction of the road that went by his name, the *via Domitia*.<sup>68</sup> The connection between Domitius and Hercules is rather one by association. In fact, ancient accounts such as that of Diodorus have regularly ascribed road-building activities to Hercules as he marched back with Geryon's cattle.<sup>69</sup> It has therefore been variously held in modern scholarship that the entire route that led from Gades to Rome should be understood as a Road of Hercules.<sup>70</sup> In such an interpretation, the *via Domitia* could be said to be the paved actualization of a mythical route, making it a forceful expression of Roman power.

There are, however, a number of problems with this supposed route of Hercules, especially when understood as a pre-imperial phenomenon. Our key evidence for an ancient perception of the route from Gades to Rome as a single connected route are the Vicarello Cups, which present an itinerary with the

63 C. Jourdain-Annequin, *Héraclès aux portes du soir: mythe et histoire* (Paris 1989), 629–640.

64 For an enumeration, see L.H. Lenaghan, 'Hercules-Melqart on a coin of Faustus Sulla', *Museum Notes* (*American Numismatic Society*) 11 (1964), 131–149, 138.

65 Str., 4.1.11.

66 Plin., *NH* 26.95; with Knapp 1986, *op. cit.* (n. 55), 120; Carrière 1995, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 77; Amela Valverde 2001, *op. cit.* (n. 24), 197. For Pompey's association with Hercules, also see B. Rawson, 'Pompey and Hercules', *Antichthon* 4 (1970), 30–37.

67 Carrière 1995, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 77.

68 The road's name is one of the few names of roads outside Italy that have been recorded by our literary sources: Cic., *Font.* 8.18.

69 Other accounts include Str., 4.1.7, Ps.-Arist., *Mirab.* 85, Amm. Marc., 15.10.9.

70 See e.g. N.J. DeWitt, 'Rome and the "Road of Hercules"', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 72 (1941), 59–69; Knapp 1986, *op. cit.* (n. 55).





FIGURE 7.2 The Vicarello Cups. Visible here are some of the road-stops in Hispania, including Hispalis (modern Sevilla) and Corduba (modern Córdoba)

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major settlements and stations a traveller would find along the way (Figure 2).<sup>71</sup> These goblets are dated to the imperial period, however, and may perhaps even be dated to Late Antiquity.<sup>72</sup> For the pre-imperial connected route there is neither archaeological evidence nor are there mythical allusions.<sup>73</sup> As a matter of fact, the literary evidence only mentions Herculean road-building activity in the southern part of Gaul. Moreover, the sections of road predating the Roman ones in the Iberian Peninsula and southern Gaul may often have been called *via Herculea/Heraklea* in modern discussions, yet no ancient evidence suggests it was known by that name in antiquity.<sup>74</sup> To put it briefly, there may have been a vague conception of a mythical *route* of Hercules that the hero provided with *sections* of roads as he tamed the landscape, yet one could hardly speak of a connected *via Herculea*.<sup>75</sup>

71 For a discussion, see Schmidt 2011, op. cit. (n. 30).

72 Schmidt 2011, op. cit. (n. 30). Another Late Antique source attesting to the idea of a connected route between Gades and Rome is a riddle of Metrodorus, *Anth. Pal.* 16.121.

73 Cf. Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), esp. 116.

74 Cf. Sánchez Sánchez et al. 2013, op. cit. (n. 3), 16.

75 See similarly G. Barraol, *Les peuples préromains du Sud-Est de la Gaule: Étude de géographie historique* (Paris 1969), 62–64, 102; Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 116; M. Salomon, 'De la *via Heraclea* à la *via Domitia*', *Archéologie en Languedoc* 20, no. 2 (1996), 99–108, 100.

In spite of this lack of clear route or road of Hercules, it is undeniable that the hero's march through Iberian and Gallic lands had left a legacy into which the Romans could place themselves. As suggested by the example of Hannibal, the Romans were not alone in this respect. The fact that Hercules was recognized throughout the western Mediterranean in various guises had made sure the hero had already been bound to the landscape well before the Romans came. The abovementioned temple at Gades was but one of more such places related to the syncretic figure of Hercules-Herakles-Melqart. Another example we find for the *via Augusta* in Silius Italicus, who thought that Saguntum was founded by Hercules.<sup>76</sup> The associations were not just part of the area near the *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta*, as along the *via Domitia* Nemausus (modern Nîmes) claimed similar origins.<sup>77</sup> Origin myths such as these were endemic at the closing decades of the first century BCE and the opening decade of the next, and appear to have been a common strategy on behalf of local elites to forge connections with Rome.<sup>78</sup> The Herculean myth, in brief, appears to have been part of a discourse from which both Romans and local elites could borrow elements so as to propagate and legitimize their self-interests. This multivalence would prove useful in the Augustan Empire, providing an ideological framework for the territorial reorganization discussed above.

## 5 An Augustan Route in a Herculean Landscape

To recapitulate briefly, taming the landscape and pacifying its peoples was a central theme in both the Augustan road-building activities in southern Gaul and Hispania and the way Hercules was mythically associated with these areas. What is more, under Augustus the route from Rome to Gades was systematized into a connected series of roads, the monumentalization of which properly embedded the emperor's name into the roadscapes – with some of the roads even receiving this name in exceptional fashion. As such, it seems almost inescapable to associate Augustus' pacification of these landscapes to Herculean precedent.

When regarding such an association in the light of imperial ideology, such an association between the *princeps* and Hercules may seem somewhat odd, as the hero is a rather marginal figure in the ideological expressions which are

76 Sil., *Pun.* 1.171–287; but see Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 109–110.

77 Knapp 1986, op. cit. (n. 55), 112; Carrière 1995, op. cit. (n. 60), 74.

78 Also see, for example, N. Roymans, 'Hercules and the construction of a Batavian identity in the context of the Roman empire', in: N. Roymans and T. Derks, eds., *Ethnic constructs in antiquity. The role of power and tradition* (Amsterdam 2009), 219–38.

generally seen as steered from the centre. On coins struck for Augustus, for example, Hercules hardly appears and his temples do not appear among those the *princeps* is said to have restored in his *Res Gestae*.<sup>79</sup> This general lack of Hercules in Augustan ideology has sometimes been linked to Mark Antony's claims to be of Herculean descent.<sup>80</sup> This may well have been among the reasons for Augustus picking Apollo as his patron. In some monuments we may even recognize the enmity between Octavian and Antony as being equaled to Apollo and Hercules' rivalry.<sup>81</sup>

In spite of the tendency to equate Hercules with Antony, Hercules is not entirely absent from sources with a certain intimacy to the imperial court of Augustus. It is notable that the few times that the wandering hero *does* appear in association with Augustus, it is precisely in the context of the enterprises of the two in the western Mediterranean. In a most explicit form, we find the association in one of Horace's *Odes* upon Augustus' return to Rome from the Cantabrian Wars in 24 BCE:

*Herculis ritu modo dictus, o plebs,  
morte venalem petiisse laurum  
Caesar Hispana repetit penatis  
victor ab ora.*

In the manner of Hercules, o plebs, Caesar, said recently to have sought the crown at the expense of his own life, returns as a victor from the shores of Hispania to his household gods.<sup>82</sup>

79 Only a single coin type of Augustus showed Hercules, struck in the context of the Parthian settlement: *RIC* i<sup>2</sup> Augustus 314. For the restoration of temples, see *RG* 19.

80 O. Hekster, 'The constraints of tradition: depictions of Hercules in Augustus' reign', in: L. Ruscu, C. Ciogradi, R. Ardevan, C. Roman, and C. Gazdac, eds., *Orbis antiquus: studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis* (Cluj-Napoca 2004), 235–241; O. Hekster, 'Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's "Counter-Propaganda"', *BABesch* 79 (2004), 159–166; M.P. Loar, 'Hercules, Caesar, and the Roman emperors', in: D. Ogden, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles* (New York 2021), 507–521; E.M. Moormann and C. Stocks, 'Identifying demigods: Augustus, Domitian, and Hercules', in: R. Marks and M. Mogetta, eds., *Domitian's Rome and the Augustan legacy* (Ann Arbor 2021), 79–101. For a discussion of Antony's association with Hercules, see U. Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', in: C. Schubert and K. Brodersen, eds., *Rom und der Griechische Osten. Festschrift für Hatto H. Schmitt, zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 1995), 103–112.

81 D.E.E. Kleiner, 'Semblance and storytelling in Augustan Rome', in: K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2005), 197–233, 220–221.

82 Hor., *Od.* 3.14.1–4. Date and translation – with minor changes – from Loar 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 510.

The comparison between Hercules and Augustus – reinforced by their names at the start of the first and the third line – goes beyond the mere fact that both returned victorious from the Iberian Peninsula. Rather, Augustus returned *Herculis ritu*, hence implying that this victory came with the taming of the landscapes from whence he just returned.

Horace's ode predated the territorial reorganization to which these lands were to be subjected, but Augustus is already presented as being on equal footing with Hercules. It may thence come as no surprise that the *princeps* would soon come to outshine the hero. This we see, for example, in Anchises' prophecy in Vergil, in which Augustus' wanderlust is said to exceed that of Hercules and Bacchus.<sup>83</sup> At the end of Augustus' life, in the eulogy put in the mouth of Tiberius by Cassius Dio, another comparison between the *princeps* and Hercules was made that favoured the former.<sup>84</sup> Whereas Hercules reluctantly tamed beasts upon being ordered to do so, Augustus, in his successor's words, voluntarily pacified the world of men. Whether these were Tiberius' actual words or not, their timing could not be more fitting, as it would have anticipated the *princeps'* deification. After all, outshining the son of a god, whose deeds earned him his apotheosis, certainly gave that other *divi filius* the proper credentials to be posthumously rewarded in similar fashion.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, if any associations between Hercules and Antony still echoed by this time, a secondary effect of Tiberius' words would have been to harness the decisive triumph of Apollo-Augustus.

If we now look for associations between Augustus and Hercules along the Herculean route, we find that here, too, these are essentially about the emperor *surpassing* the hero. In quite a visualized sense, we see this in *tropaeum Alpium* (Figure 3). Towering high above the bay of Monaco, the trophy looked out over the ancient cult place of Herakles Monoikos.<sup>86</sup> This cult, the *via Iulia Augusta*, and the trophy are brought in an implicit relation by Ammianus Marcellinus, as he discusses Hercules' presumed road-building in the Alps.<sup>87</sup> As we saw in the example of Diodorus, the connection between Hercules and the Alps was already made well before the fourth century. Indeed, with Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy we have two further authors of the first century BCE

83 Verg., *Aen.* 6.791–803; with Moormann and Stocks 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 95.

84 Cass. Dio, 56.36.4–5.

85 On the prospect of apotheosis as a motivation to associate Augustus with Hercules, see most recently Loar 2021, op. cit. (n. 80), 508–513.

86 For a detailed discussion of the association between the *tropaeum Alpium* and the cult of Herakles Monoikos, see Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44).

87 Amm. Marc., 15.10.9.



FIGURE 7.3 The *tropaeum Alpium* at modern La Turbie  
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to reflect on Hercules' Alpine exploits.<sup>88</sup> Dated before the Alpine campaigns of Augustus, these authors are nevertheless an attestation of an increased Roman interest in this region.<sup>89</sup> Associating the Alps' subjugation with no one less than Hercules gave their eventual conquest divine proportions. In this sense, the *tropaeum Alpium* gains even more symbolic significance. That Hercules is outdone rather than equalled follows from the trophy's location: its place high above a famous cult place quite literally placed Augustus above Hercules, bringing even more fame to the former's Alpine conquest.

A similar sense of rivalling Hercules we get from the end of the *via Augusta* at Gades. It may be recalled for this city that it was associated with the story of Hercules and Geryon and that it was also regarded as the end of the world. Accordingly, in some of the accounts of the Geryon myth, Hercules is described as having erected his famous Pillars to mark reaching the edge of the world.<sup>90</sup> As we have seen in Strabo's suggestion above, Gades may have held a symbolic

88 Dion. Hal., 1.41–42, Liv., 21.21–38. Whereas Dionysius' account is on Hercules himself, Livy's Hercules instead appears in the context of Hannibal's march through the Alps, on which see Fabrizi 2015 op. cit. (n. 12).

89 Jourdain-Annequin 1989 op. cit. (n. 63), 636–639; Binninger 2006, op. cit. (n. 44), 194.

90 Apollod., *Bibl.* 2.5.10, Diod. Sic., 4.18.2–4.

representation of these Pillars in its famous *Herculeum*.<sup>91</sup> To have the *via Augusta* reach this end of the world – with the milestones even including it in the formula *a Baete et Iano Augusto ad Oceanum* – was a feat that had Hercules written all over it. But Augustus' empire did not just extend to one edge of the known world; his *Res Gestae* also tells us that in the north it reached the mouth of the Elbe.<sup>92</sup> From Tacitus we learn of the rumours that Hercules placed a counterpart to the Gaditan Pillars here.<sup>93</sup> Coined in the context of the Germanic campaigns of Drusus, it may well be suggested that the rumours were at least fuelled by Augustan propagation of the Empire's extent. As Drusus supposedly set up trophies at the end of the Elbe, one may see a northern parallel of the Herculean associations of the Alpine trophy.<sup>94</sup>

That certain parts along the route from Gades to Rome somehow related Augustus to Hercules' tenth labour may by now be clear, but what then of the route from Gades to Rome as a whole? For this we should recall the systematisation of this route under Augustus. Even if in the sailing season sea travel would still have been the preferred mode of reaching the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula for most travellers, this systematization allowed one to travel from Rome to Gades over land, using a direct route with settlements and road stations at set intervals. It therefore hardly comes as a surprise that our key evidence for Hercules' route from Gades to Rome as a single route, the *Vicarello Cups*, showed it in the form of itineraries based on the system of settlements and *mansiones* as systematized under Augustus. The Herculean journey had been full of episodes that saw the hero bring order to the lands he crossed by subduing peoples, overcoming natural obstacles, and founding cities. Augustus' campaigns and his subsequent reorganization of the Iberian and Gallic territories did pretty much the same, as was duly recorded by the various monuments that filled these lands. His road-system, contrastingly, went one step further by ordering the landscape it traversed into a coherent Roman landscape. For the first time in history, the route of Hercules had become an actual *via*, where possible named after the one who had been responsible. One could hardly think of a better way of outdoing Hercules than by paving the route with which he was associated. This, exactly, was done in the name of Augustus. Nevertheless, the route would never lose its Herculean associations,

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91 Str., 3.5.5.

92 *RG* 26.

93 Tac., *Germ.* 34.

94 For these trophies, see Flor., 4.12.23, Cass. Dio, 55.1.3.

most notably witnessed in the ninth-century chronicles of Al-Razi, in which the *via Augusta* is referred to as the ‘road built by Hercules.’<sup>95</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

The *via Augusta* and *via Iulia Augusta* were part of the Augustan monumentalization of southern Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula in an ideologically charged project of conceptualizing the Roman Empire. As the Vicarello Cups neatly show, this route became thoroughly systematized and thought of in terms of miles and road-stops. Paved, measured, and monumentalized, the *via Augusta* and the *via Iulia Augusta* properly turned the landscapes they traversed into a Roman environment. An important part of this project overlaid an already existing framework through which a similar sense of taming the landscape has been understood before, in that it overlapped with the mythical route of Hercules. Consequently, together with the restoration of roads of greater antiquity, these roads and their monuments actualized a route that had since long belonged to the realm of mythology. By integrating such expressions of Roman power in a Herculean tradition, moreover, these roads gave a ‘larger than life’ dimension to the man on top of the recently instituted monarchical hierarchy. The relative lack of attention to Hercules in ‘central’ ideology as well as the involvement of a variety of local actors in the establishment of the road network and its adjacent monuments show that the construction of empire and associated ideologies were much more than top-down processes and expressions of power steered from the centre. Rather, the loose association between Hercules and Augustus appears to have been a way to come to terms to the changing environment, in a political as much as in a cultural sense. In this respect, the wandering hero – recognized in various guises throughout the ancient Mediterranean – formed the glue that further strengthened the cohesive force of Rome’s roads.

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95 These chronicles have survived through a Castilian translation from the fifteenth century called *Crónica del moro Rasis*, the citation being this author’s English translation of a fragment from Chapter 33 of this manuscript (= D. Catalan and M. Soledad de Andres, eds., *Crónica del moro Rasis: versión del Ajbar muluk al-Andalus de Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Musà al-Razì, 889–955: romanizada para el rey don Dionís de Portugal hacia 1300 por Mahomad, Alarife, y Gil Pérez, clérigo de don Perianes Porcel* (Madrid 1975), 98). See A. Christys, ‘Did all roads lead to Córdoba under the Umayyads?’, in: M.J. Kelly and M. Burrows, eds., *Urban Interactions* (New York 2020), 109–146, 129, for this chapter being a reference to the *via Augusta*.

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