Ways to Urban Landscape Archaeology

fig 1. Remains of the Via Tiburtina at Settecamini squeezed in between modern dwellings, the busy new road, and an increasing number of new building projects. Photo: H.Bjur.

THIS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH project started already in 2003 during informal meetings at the Swedish Institute in Rome discussing landscapes in general and the transformations of the Roman urban landscape in particular. Our views on the matter originated in disciplines with different perspectives. Barbro Santillo Frizell, professor in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, had long experience of landscape archaeology in Greece and Italy, and especially of how space and artefacts were interrelated by the movement of herds of domesticated animals

(transhumance) over large geographical areas in a long term perspective. Hans Bjur on the other hand, professor in Urban Design and Planning, had since a decade devoted himself to contemporary development tendencies in the peripheries of major cities, the heterogeneous, super-modern urban landscapes. We thought that these different points of views combined with the common interest in landscape could be interesting to explore in a project. When we started, one specific goal was that the result should lead to identification of central issues within a new

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multi-disciplinary subject, which tentatively was called *urban landscape archaeology*. The idea was, on the one hand, to indicate the interface between archaeology and urban design and planning, and on the other to stress the urban landscape as object of both archaeological and urban research. This approach led both of us to unexplored fields, where questions and answers were not at all self-evident. In traditional landscape archaeology, artefacts are related to structures primarily of their own time period and context; while in our concept of urban landscape archaeology, artefacts of all time periods should be related to the present landscape. One could say that the great difference seemed to be lying in the relative position of the spaces and artefacts in relation to time. The time depth in connection with the present lends relevance and distinction to the subject. As our fields of study are concerned with man's relations to the environment (in the wide sense), with spatial dimensions and long time perspectives, we gradually found the mutual points of departure and the focus of this research project: Space, Movement and Artefacts in the Urban Landscape. As a case study we chose Via Tiburtina.

Why Via Tiburtina? The old road, which connects the commercial centres of Rome, Forum Romanum and Forum Boarium (as we see it) with Tivoli (ancient Tibur), represents a long history of complex relations between centre and periphery, and the urban spaces and the landscape surrounding the thoroughfare have a long history leading all the way up to the present urban development plans. In previous studies we had both, from different points of views, identified the Via Tiburtina as a field of interest.

Having Rome and an already working interdisciplinary research milieu at the Swedish Institute as the basis for our research project was a great advantage. Rome's several thousands years of urbanism illustrate in a unique way the basic research problem, viz. the complex relations between old and new and the transformation of the surrounding landscapes by movement, urbanization and amalgamation with artefacts during millennia. Moreover, in Rome the contemporary problem of sustainable urban development has an interesting complexity and is given an advanced treatment in recent planning practice as well. Rome's development has also for a long time been subject to an extensive research in several academic disciplines and from many different aspects. There thus existed an unusually rich empirical material to develop, elaborate and synthezise.

The leading idea was to tackle Rome as a palimpsest.* We have adopted the concept, on the one hand in order to read the hidden layers per se and to discuss their contexts, and on the other hand to reflect upon their meaning in sequential urban layers. We wanted to look upon the urbanism as being composed of different more or less distinct layers originated in different times of development or decline. Our main concern was whether and how these built survivals from varying time and space interact. When applying the concept of palimpsest on the context of urbanism, we look upon it as if all texts are present and readable simultaneously so to speak. A kind of double exposure of settlements, spaces of movement, city plans and architecture is what we were driving at, an anachronistic simultaneousness in the urban space. However, our focus was not just on the appearance of the physical construct of the urban landscape, but also on the intangible underlying spatial systems of space, movement and artefacts.

An interdisciplinary discourse thus initiated this project, and developing this approach has ever since been an essential goal. The means to achieve this integration process have first of all been regular seminaries,

* The original meaning of the word palimpsest is used for a text written on parchment which has been reused one or more times after the original writing has been scraped or rubbed away. The parchment therefore contains several layers of text which are more or less visible. Within the field of landscape studies the concept has been used to describe situations which contain layers with sites and artefacts from several different periods, so called palimpsest landscapes. For a theoretical development of the concept of palimpsest, see G. Bailey "Time perspectives, palimpsests and the archaeology of time." Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 26 (2007) 198-223.

colloquia, excursions and workshops linked to the project's objects of study: Rome and the Via Tiburtina. The recurring planned meetings – where ideas, theories, and discourses founded in the scientific field of urbanism have encountered those of archaeology, where contemporary interpretations of urban landscapes were united to historical perspectives, and where present-day social planning was brought into a dialogue with the humanities and social sciences – have constituted the basic organizational form to achieve the scientific aim. When synthesizing our research by this publication a fairly wide range of academic fields is represented in the research process: archaeology and ancient history, architecture and art history, urban design and planning, landscape architecture, integrated conservation and cultural heritage management. In order to bring about a real integration of subjects we therefore decided to complement the anthology's individual texts with "joint papers", where researchers in different scientific areas were jointly responsible for the choice of theme and the paper. This interdisciplinary working method is thus reflected in the outline of this publication. Wherever two or more authors are given this indicates our efforts to develop the interdisciplinary approach further. The outline in three chapters partly follows the project's main aspects: Movement, Space and Artefacts and the practical potential of our research: Managing Cultural Heritage.

In the opening paper, "That's the way it is", **Hans Bjur** makes an introduction to Via Tiburtina and its related urban environments, and to its meaning in the development of the urbanism of Rome. The primary purpose has been to analyse and describe what is happening now. In which context do we find this research project?

The first part is framing Via Tiburtina geographically, as a space of movement related to various resources in the Rome region and connections between the Apennines and The Mediterranean Sea. The second concerns the movement system of which Via Tiburtina makes a part, and the activities and nodes, which generates movement on the road. The next two parts deals with the (re)organization of space and contemporary planning, and thus in the main with future. The perspective is necessarily widened and includes Rome's development strategies as a whole. The concluding part gives an account of the present models for integrating artefacts and cultural heritage into urban design and sustainable development. The author emphasizes two conditions in Rome's contemporary heritage management, which lends relevance to the aims and possible outcomes of this research project: firstly, the great importance attached to the dialogue between architecture, urban design and archaeology, and secondly, the stress laid on interdisciplinary approaches as means of attaining nuanced and qualitative overall solutions.

Movement is fundamental to the function and development of every city. It gives life to the urbanism, and without roads, streets and markets no cities could exist. Movement economy, that is the total of moments in a city, propels its economic activities. The Italian word *traffico* has a double significance: traffic and business. However, it is not the roads themselves that bring together the different parts of the city to form a unity (one city), but the people making use of these spaces of movement. Thus, research into roads is not a technical issue in the first place. They can be studied as social, economic and political projects, and the research that is to highlight the interaction between urban development, movement, and human activity will necessarily be multi-disciplinary.

The first chapter contains four contributions which each one throws light

upon movement as a decisive factor in historic and contemporary social construction processes. The first study brings us back to the very origin of the road when Via Tiburtina constituted the artery in a spatial organization of the landscape, which stretched from the Apennine mountains to the plains of Rome. In her contribution "Changing pastures", **Barbro Santillo Frizell** discusses the layout of the Via Tiburtina from a long-term economic perspective, exploring the pastoral use of the landscape in an organized system of animal breeding called transhumance. It required a geographical setting of complementary character including mountains and plains. Although we can only define this phenomenon from the historical period, archaeology indicates that this organization started already in the Bronze Age, thus suggesting that the origins of Via Tiburtina lies in this remote time depth. This organization strived to optimize the economic outcome of the livestock in catching natural resources by the movement of herds of domesticated animals over distant geographical areas in a seasonally based rhythm. The transhumance created an urban net-work of nodes and places and inter-regional spaces which crossed geographical and tribal boundaries. From the earliest times onwards, the basic needs and conditions of the transhumance, such as access to pasture, supply of water, fords where to cross the river, production and markets, generated the movements on Via Tiburtina which in turn determined the spatial lay-out of the road. These choices, mainly based on economic requirements, have greatly influenced socio-political development and ideological attitudes, reflected in visible structures like markets and sanctuaries, city gates and roads, which in the end came to serve also other purposes.

The sulphurous lakes outside Tivoli, Aquae Albulae, were an important natural resource along the Via Tiburtina. The author shows how the lakes have determined the layout of the road in accordance to their relevance in the economy of animal breeding and later in history as a spa. The place is an important feature in the cultural history of the territory, deserving more attention from antiquarian authorities. Unfortunately the lakes of Aquae Albulae are today a sadly neglected heritage on the road, facing the risk of extinction.

By a quick removal in space we are brought back to the city life of ancient Rome. In his study "Navigating the Urban Via Tiburtina" **Simon Malmberg** discusses how the ancient Romans navigated their urban environment, with special reference to the urban stretch of the Via Tiburtina. The author uses the analytical tools of path, district, landmark, edge and node promoted by the architect and urban planner Kevin Lynch. In applying the theories of Lynch on the Via Tiburtina, he uses archaeological and literary sources and a third-century marble plan of Rome. To get a better understanding of what it must have been like to travel the city, some colouring and life to the cityscape is added, as this in itself probably was an important ingredient in knowing your way round the town: the flow of people, and the sights and sounds of the thoroughfares seems to have been an important directional tool in the city maze.

Since the Romans generally lacked maps, the main means by which the inhabitant navigated the urban environment were probably small landmarks, while the traveller may have used a strong directional quality combined with asking his way round. To navigate Rome must have been a chaotic experience. However, most people probably did not have to move long distances, but stayed in their own neighbourhood for most of their lives. Long-distance travellers did not

probably see much of the city; they moved along the main thoroughfares, stayed in inns near the city gates, and perhaps visited a few of the major wonders of Rome.

In his study, "Movement between Rome and the sanctuary of S. Lorenzo", **Olof Brandt** investigates how movement, such as it is reflected in physical structures along the urban part of Via Tiburtina, has been influenced by the presence of one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in Rome: the grave of St. Laurence, who was buried outside the city walls 258 AD. The theoretical starting point is the presumption that movement creates structures, and not vice versa. Walls, roads, gates and buildings are created around a movement, in order to make it possible. Structures remain as imprints of a movement when it has ceased to be, constituting sources for knowledge about it.

Certain structures prove to be particularly eloquent. The staircases built by emperor Constantine, for access to the revered grave and another in order to get back up, implies that movement to the grave was so extensive that traffic needed to be directed one way. At the same time a large basilica that functioned as a covered burial ground was erected in the vicinity. Funerals and recurring commemorative memorial rites for the deceased thus generated movements caused by the grave of the saint, which cannot be described as pilgrimages in a strict sense.

Porticoes erected from the city gate to the church of S. Lorenzo, at the latest in the 6th century, reflect an extensive circulation of people, but these might have depended equally much on commercial functions as on movement motivated by religion. Mediaeval pilgrimage seems to have used other routes, which in contemporary texts were described without references to built structures. These texts indicate an individual pilgrimage, and in other words a rather limited movement. The

authors' conclusion is that the "pilgrimage" concept requires a more nuanced definition because there were several different religiously motivated movements to the grave. They left different kinds of traces – or indeed none at all – all cannot be defined as "pilgrimages". The starting point that movement is a primary phenomenon, which is reflected in physical structures, has proved highly fruitful as a method for research about the past.

Kristina Hellerström's contribution, "Ways of experience" moves the reader two thousand years ahead, right into the turmoil of todays's Via Tiburtina. The study is aiming at a tentative reading of the vivid urban landscape along the road. One could say that she uses the perspective of individual spatial cognition. The author, who is an architect and professional planner, suggests an extensive reading as a first phase of strategy of renewal and re-design of contemporary urban peripheries. The intention is to influence the way we look at and experience these built environments. The focus of the study lies with the parameters of movement, speed and velocity, that is, the perception of landscapes in motion. By support of a number of theories and methods of analysis developed for the "reading" of urban landscapes, visible properties along Via Tiburtina are investigated and presented in a documentation of images and an organization of impressions. Intangible aspects of the urban structure like nodes, borders and key spaces are identified in order to examine how they support reading and orientation. The author also puts forward some ideas on intervention and re-design, where she suggests an approach which takes existing built structures as points of departure for increasing the urban quality and meaning of these districts.

In the second chapter are grouped five contributions discussing urban space and related artefacts. "The Suburb as Centre" is the somewhat paradoxical denomination

of a study carried out by **Hans Bjur and Simon Malmberg**. It concerns the urban periphery of Rome in the period 200 to 500 AD. Their thesis is that the periphery in this period obtained a new meaning and gradually began to surpass the centre in importance, and that this displacement of activity-nodes and movement created decisive prerequisites of the polycentric structure which was to dominate the urban development of Rome up to the nineteenth century. The main focus is on areas and situations contextually related to the course of Via Tiburtina through Rome within, and somewhat beyond the Aurelian Wall. This periphery showed a never before seen expansion, with a planned and monumental suburbanisation. The reuse of urban space reshaped the city, both the urban landscape and the everyday movements of the inhabitants. The fora in the city centre started to be abandoned, in favour of a different, possibly mixed public and private use of space in the periphery, and at the same time Christian churches began to play a role as new nodes in a transformed urban and urban/rural context.

The authors interpret the meaning of this transformation as a "monumentalisation of the periphery", an interesting but problematic concept which is being discussed. They point out that monumentalisation always seems to have been crucial to attain an *inurbamento*, which means to make an area city-like or creating an urban atmosphere, to give it a certain level of urbanity. Monument, monumentality and monumentalisation are thus both essential and problematic concepts in research on urban planning, history and archaeology. In this study it is used as an explorative tool in order to identify and analyse both physical and mental changes of meaning in the relations between centre and periphery. The authors thus claim that the classical Roman city became more and more

disintegrated and developed into a lower-density settlement. Interestingly, one could note similarities between these structural changes and those dominating major European cities during the 20th century.

The Via Tiburtina space has through the course of history developed into a complex mix-use pattern of settlements, industrial activities and business. **Håkan Hökerberg's** contribution "From Agro Romano to an industrial zone" is an investigation of the rise of the industrial parts of the landscape along Via Tiburtina, mainly in the first half of the 20th century. When Rome became capital of the united Italy, the dominating reluctant attitude towards big scale industrialization influenced the character of the industrialization along Via Tiburtina: workshops and small factories became the predominant structures. The author indicates that the industrial activity in the area was modest up to World War 2, mostly dairies and garden centres related to the dominating agricultural activity, when the decision to locate Rome's second industrial zone at Via Tiburtina, together with expropriations and financial subsidies, stimulated industrial development in the 1950s. The primary reasons for locating the second industrial zone in this area were favourable topographic conditions, and access to water from the nearby Aniene river, which was an essential resource for some of the most important new industries. People, whose old homes in the centre were demolished by the fascist government, moved out to new built settlements and made an accessible working class. Communications along Via Tiburtina were developed and new connecting roads were built for the workers commuting.

Morphologically, several types of industrial structures at Via Tiburtina are distinguished, like small workshops at the backyards of new high-rise buildings, and small-scale industrial activities, which are

separated from the residential areas, often having the character of barracks and sheds, but also the more recent mono-functional industrial landscape located closer to Rome's ring road. Several huge industrial complexes are abandoned today, waiting for new functions or demolition. As the industrial development at Via Tiburtina is a fairly recent phenomenon, these buildings have not got "historified", being classified as industrial heritage (like in Ostiense). The result is an accelerating decay.

In the study "Visible and invisible along the Via Tiburtina", **Börje Magnusson** sorts out the patchwork of built areas that now covers what was once a part of the Roman countryside, the Agro Romano. The author has reviewed the historical process, which led up to its present state, and distinguished three main phases of development. Up to the beginning of the 20th century, the area was divided into large estates with a very small resident population. After 1900, laws addressed the backwardness of the Agro Romano, and measures to improve conditions resulted in an agricultural reform. After World War II this second structure gradually gave way to urbanization.

Traces of the old estates, a number of old farmhouses, some incorporating Medieval towers and Roman walls can still be detected. The study shows that many invisible factors have determined the development and what we see, for example estate borders, which have influenced the form of later settlements. The agricultural reform resulted in new units and, more importantly, a network of roads that has determined the present settlement pattern. After World War II a number of housing projects and industrial zones along Via Tiburtina were promoted by the commune, still urbanization was largely a "spontaneous" process and left to private initiative. Legal and illegal initiatives, combined with a lack

of efficient public planning have resulted in a piecemeal development. These processes have interestingly produced very characteristic results, giving each area a specific identity. There are many telling visual markers, and a detailed investigation into the individual circumstances will tell the full story.

The built environment which can be experienced along Via Tiburtina thus represent many layers and a quite complex cultural heritage to manage. In his study, "Where have all the ruins gone?", **Allan Klynne** presents a brief overview of the mutual process of archaeological discoveries and urban expansion along Via Tiburtina from the 1870's to the present day. It thus serves as a case study for the ongoing discussions on cultural heritage management and the unrestrained development of Italian cities, in order to understand how the present situation came about. His contribution starts with a brief outline of the economic impact of road transports and the settlement patterns in the area during the Roman period, where problems connected with the interpretation of the archaeological record also are related for. Then follows a survey of the work done by the archaeological commission of Rome for a period of more than one hundred years, against the backdrop of shifting urban development plans, legal enactments and discussion on how archaeology ought to be conducted on Italian soil.

The shifting ideas regarding intervention and conservation are discussed against the political and economical changes that occurred during the 20th century, thus showing what kind of challenges the archaeological excavations, surveys and cartographic studies had to face. In the final section, current trends of cooperation between different parties involved in the transformation of the urban landscape are discussed. The integration of the cultural assets into the contemporary

structures of the suburban landscape is today recognized as a potential tool for reaching social-economic goals of a wider scope. Yet, the good intentions are threatened to come to an halt, since the cultural heritage laws, the archaeological boards and the political-economical forces continue to block each other. There is hope for the future, however, since the key-players recognize a need for change in order to move away from the present "lose-lose" situation. In the wider context of suburban city planning, the past has the potential to play an important role when creating a sustainable future.

So far we have mainly been concerned with how the *artefacts* of this urban landscape have grown up, being mixed with ancient layers, and thus becoming (or not) objects of interest of cultural heritage management. The last paper in this chapter concerns the characteristics of what is in-between: *space*. In their study, "Discovering Space as Cultural Heritage – hidden properties of the urban palimpsest", **Mir Azimzadeh and Hans Bjur** deals with the underlying properties of the urban environment. Their thesis is that the present urban pattern, and the continuous evolution of urban space, movement and artefacts, is dependant on immanent spatial systems, which to a large extent determine movement and urban use. This approach to the configuration of urban public space triggers off a fundamental question: can, and should, urban space be considered a cultural heritage? If so, how can we reveal the hidden properties of the spatial systems? And how could they be communicated in order to integrate space as a cultural heritage into contemporary planning and social construction processes? In order to contribute to the reading and deeper understanding of the Via Tiburtina space the authors have put the Space Syntax theory into practice. The aim has been to understand and explain the interplay between the historically

generated urban layers and the transmission of the cultural heritage, and explore the continuation of the past in present urban life through the mediation of space, using the concept of palimpsest as a mental tool. Spatial relations and movement are two fundamental properties in the authors theoretical points of departure. There is a direct relation between the configuration of the urban grid and movement in cities, and as movement has been, and presumably will be the key feature of Via Tiburtina, they have found it adequate to introduce the concept of "movement economy", which directs our interest to the relationship (interface) between movements in the entire city in its parts, in this and study the Via Tiburtina space.

The last chapter Managing Cultural Heritage deals with questions on public awareness raising, out-reach and heritage management discussing the practical implications of our research. The first paper discusses cultural management issues which need to be integrated into planning activities at different scales and levels. In her study, "A landscape in transformation", **Katri Lisitzin** reflects on how the changing Via Tiburtina space can be interpreted, denoted and managed adequately, and some innovative measures for an integrated management of the historical and environmental structures are discussed. A question is being risen: Can the Via Tiburtina space be considered a landscape? And in that case, in which context? As it, in terms of research, planning and decision-making, either evidently belongs to the historic centre or the rural landscape, in many ways this sort of terrain vague seems to be non-existing. The author puts forward the all-encompassing notion of landscape and the spaces of movement as mediators in planning and development processes with potential to bridge contrapositions between cities and their territories.

*f*ig 2. Ponte Mammolo, a messy unconnected urban space in between, marked by movement. In this complex metropolitan node in spe on the Via Tiburtina, all layers in the urban landscape interact: the river basin of Aniene, the ancient bridge Ponte Mammolo, just behind the 19th century bridge to the right, the underground bridge from the 80s, industries from the early 20th century, small remaining allotments, modern settlements... Photo: H.Bjur.

Some problems concerning prevalent planning models are discussed. The first one is homogeneity as an implicit model to urban design and urban cultural management, which is obstructing adequate planning measures for milieus in the urban periphery; the author therefore suggests that it should be substituted by a more inclusive model, based on heterogeneity. The second one is timing, a key factor in urban development. As stakeholders are manifold, and national, regional and municipal planning mechanisms are working with different speeds in the urban landscape, planning tends to be left behind the rapid social and economical transformations. In this study, the potential of a planning tool (PRUSST) which aims at aiming at mediating between plans and projects, has therefore been explored. The third one concerns what maybe could be regarded as an opposite

tendency, how cultural and natural heritage management may have a role supporting eco-cultural systems and simply slowing down the mainstreamed development.

In the article "Heritage on the road: a dead end or a way out", three authors, **Kristina Hellerström, Allan Klynne and Håkan Hökerberg** have contributed to a discussion seeking to pin point diverging and converging opinions on problems and potentials connected to different cultural heritage practices. The narrative structure is in shape of a dialogue, where the perspectives of an architect, an antiquarian in built environment and an archaeologist are applied to some locations at Via Tiburtina. Among the questions asked is: Could the preservation of areas and artefacts give ulterior value to a modern periphery often lacking anchorage? The authors have chosen three specific

areas to discuss. The purpose is not to judge between "good" or "bad" decisions made by colleagues, but to discuss if there are certain approaches which can be described as more successful than others, and if so, why? The main focus is the present (and future) uses of the habitat, only occasionally taking other meanings of the landscape, e.g. scenery, nature, environment.

The authors conclude that in a world where the pressure for change is a dominant factor, development and excavations will continue to produce "left over" in form of cultural heritage. As more such heritage is produced, new uses have to be invented. A traditional strategy of closing in the past in order to keep it stable tends to create conflict, however, leading to disintegration and alienation. By separating ancient remains from the dynamics of the present, they become empty of meaning, frequently also abandoned, thus creating a vicious circle. The authors suggest a more active integration of the past in the present configuration: places need to be defined as targets not only skin deep, but relevant to the citizens and potential tools for suburban renewal. In this process, the orchestrating of sites and monitoring on local level seems a crucial component. The built environment needs to be infused with meaning in order to provide an attractive atmosphere for the living and achieving a better understanding and reading of the palimpsest city. A closer coordination and cooperation between archaeologists, architects and urban planners therefore seems crucial for the future.

How this infusion with meaning could be done in a practical case is discussed in the last study. In their joint contribution "Displaying Via Tecta", **Barbro Santillo Frizell** and **Jonathan Westin** are raising issues regarding out-reach and public awareness, proposing an exhibition at the sanctuary of

Hercules Victor at Tivoli. Their study has a double aim: the main purpose is to propose ways to interpret the activities in the sanctuary by creating illustrations and reconstructions, inviting the visitors to an open discussion based on a pedagogic approach to images. By contextualizing Via Tecta the authors want to bring Tivoli into a larger spatial context of movement along the Via Tiburtina, and also in a global perspective of a cultural history. The cultural landscape of pastures, meadows, fords and springs is also a mental landscape of stories, myths, ideologies and mentalities which represents a common "European" history, unifying the northern and southern countries' earliest forms of civilised life. Finding approaches for a sustainable development of this type of landscape is a matter of high interest in European heritage management of today.

The authors also discuss issues of how to visualize and communicate the past and inviting the public to participate in the academic discourse. In archaeology images are traditionally not deployed until the final stages of research in order to show already fully researched items, or, as in cases of more theoretical studies, scarcely used at all. These images illustrate texts, having the purpose of bridging the distance between scholar and society, between the museums and its visitors. Traditionally, the image thus has a role as an intermediary rather than a means of two-way communication, and it is often given function of a popular science synopsis rather than as a way of broadening the audience of a scientific thesis. In this study though, the focus lies on the image as a catalyst for individual interpretations, and the authors are discussing how to move the image's centre of gravity from presenter to communicator, depriving it of its usual role as final truth and instead making it a tool in the research process.