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(Pau de Soto)

NETWORK ANALYSIS TO UNDERSTAND THE ROMAN COMMERCE. CONNECTIVITY AND TRANSPORT COSTS OF THE ROMAN NETWORKS (PAU DE SOTO)

In recent times, several methodological approaches have been used to analyse the Roman transport. Some of them had very traditional archaeological backgrounds (ancient sources, pottery distribution). However, this project is based on the analysis of Roman infrastructures to understand the transport costs and the commercial routes and processes. This is an indispensable way to know the benefits and shortcomings of the transportation system created in Roman times. It is well known that the Roman Empire built the first big transport network in Western Europe and also in parts of Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa. This overwhelming task included not only the construction of roads with their correspondent bridges, but also the building of river ports and maritime harbours. Such a huge effort aimed to create an integrated economy covering all the Roman provinces on the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. In the last few years, we have attempted to reconstruct the Roman transport conditions by modelling travel costs and times with the help of GIS and Network Analysis applications. The main geographical focus of this project was the NE of Hispania. It was necessary devote a significant effort to the gathering, documentation, analysis and digitisation of Roman communications with high precision. With the aim of using these methodology in a much broader geographic frame, the entire Iberian Peninsula, Italy and Britain were analysed with less detailed transport networks . It allows us to discover very interesting patterns. The results of such applications provide us with new information to understand the distribution of commodities, product competition and problems of stagnation in ancient economies such as that of Ancient Rome.
