

Roads, Roman and post-Roman Late Antiquity inherited an extensive network of public roads designed and maintained, largely at local expense, in the interests not of private or commercial travellers but of the state. The public roads, punctuated by milestones, underpinned the state transport and communication system, the *Cursus Publicus*. Although compilations of routes rather than catalogues of public roads, the Antonine Itinerary, from the Tetrarchic Period, and the diagram on the later Peutinger Map give an impression of the comprehensiveness of the network.

The last major new projects were the militarily significant *Strata Diocletiana* on the desert fringe in Syria and the *Via Herculia* in central southern Italy, both undertaken by the Tetrarchy. The foundation of Constantinople took advantage of a key nodal point where European and Asian routes converged. The *Bordeaux Pilgrim* provides a detailed itinerary across the Alps and northern Italy along the *Via Militaris* in the north Balkans to the new capital, on to the Holy Land by the Pilgrims' Road, and back by way of the *Via Egnatia* and up Italy through Rome to Milan. Inscriptions record repair and upgrading at state expense in Baetica and *Germania Secunda* under Valentinian I (*CIL* II, 4733; XVII/2, 565), with the last such investment known from the Western Empire being replacement of the milestones along the *Via Aurelia* in *Gallia Viennensis* in 435 (*ILS* 806).

Roman law codes give an insight into the mechanisms for the maintenance of the transport system (*CTh* VIII, 5 = *CJ* XII, 50) and its physical infrastructure (*CTh* XV, 3), and reiteration of some regulations by the Burgundians (*Lex Romana Burgundionum*, 17, 1) and Visigoths (*Breviarium of Alaric*, 8, 2) shows that the system did not entirely vanish with the Roman state. In Ostrogothic Italy, a nineteen-mile stretch of the *Via Appia* through the Pontine marshes was renovated by Theoderic *c.* 510 (*ILS* 827; Cassiodorus. *Variae*, 2, 32–3). In the East, repairs to the coast road in *Cilicia Prima* by a Roman military commander are recorded in 519 (*AE* 1973, 542) and, after the Byzantine invasion of Italy, inscribed verses

celebrated bridge repair on the Via Salaria north of Rome by the general Narses in 565 (*ILS* 832).

R. Chevallier, *Roman Roads* (1976).

P. Basso, 'La vita tardoantica delle strade romane', in R. Frei-Stolba, ed., *Siedlung und Verkehr im römischen Reich* (2004), 283–315.

R. J. Buck, 'The Via Herculia', *PBSR* 39 (1971), 66–87.