Rewriting landscape: incorporating sacred landscapes into cultural traditions

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Abstract

This paper deals with the different models of landscape found in prehistoric and historic periods in north-west Iberia. This study particularly focuses on the form of the sacred landscape in Galicia and its transformation over time. Each successive phase incorporates beliefs and traditions from the past and interprets them in the present. That process can be described as 'rewriting' landscape.

Keywords

Galicia; landscape; ritual; tradition; monuments.

Description, form, deconstruction, meaning (background)

This study aims to reconstruct the sequence of archaeological landscapes which occurred in an area of Galicia (north-west Spain) between the fourth millennium BC and the Middle Ages. Our concern is not only to offer a diachronic synthesis, but to show that, at any given moment, one of the basic principles in the organization of the social landscape would have been the constitution of a certain type of sacred space. This would not have excluded other factors, even of a practical nature, but should be understood as the significance of the area within a symbolic code.

Like any other human product, landscape objectifies an intention, meaning and rationality. These result in specific formal elements which should reflect in some way the contours of that rationality. We therefore propose developing a *description* of the landscape which also *deconstructs* it and allows the *formal elements and relations* which comprise it to be isolated. This project aims to carry out a structural analysis of the signifier (Foucault 1976: 13), and uses as its most suitable instruments the redefinition of the notions of *description*, *deconstruction* and *formal analysis*. The methodological process which will be followed was developed in Santos et al. (1997).

The form of space (data)

The area chosen for our study is a region in the centre of the province of Pontevedra, to the west of Galicia (Fig. 1). This is an area of approximately 130km² including the districts of Campo Lameiro and Cotobade.

The concentration of archaeological investigations in the area was due to the large amount of high quality rock art which is concentrated here. Almost all of the publications

Figure 1 Location of the study within Galicia. The pipeline between Coruña and Vigo is also shown.

on Galician rock art are related in one way or another to these carvings: García Alén and Peña Santos (1980), A. Álvarez (1979) and Peña Santos et al. (1993). More recently, this area was studied by Bradley, Criado and Fábregas (1994a, 1994b, 1995), who considered the siting of the petroglyphs from the perspective of landscape archaeology (see also Bradley 1997).

In 1993 this area was crossed by an oil pipeline, and formed the focus for a campaign of rescue archaeology conducted by the authors (Fig. 1). This project meant carrying out a complete series of investigations ranging from a surface survey in order to provide information about the archaeological impact of the work (Méndez et al. 1995) to the control and evaluation of construction. This allowed the area to be studied in detail. The subsoil was examined throughout the section of the pipeline. Investigations resulting from this project include the archaeological evaluation of Neolithic and Bronze Age domestic sites uncovered by the excavation work (Criado et al. 1996), the study of material culture (Cobas and Prieto, forthcoming), the study of barrow distribution (Villoch 1995), and the identification of cultivation structures related to hillforts (Criado and Parceró, 1996). These data were complemented by a broader study of the distribution and location of rock art (carried out in 1996 by M. Santos); by a further analysis of Iron Age settlement (carried out in 1996 by C. Parceró), and by a study of the geography of the area and its rural history.

Physical geography

The study area is located in the west of Galicia, some distance inland from the coast and at the edge of the high ground of the interior (Fig. 1). The landscape is generally abrupt, with steep slopes and few flat areas (Fig. 2).

The most important feature in the area is undoubtedly the River Lerez, which crosses the region to enter the Pontevedra estuary. It occupies a deep cutting and can be crossed in only a few places. Thus it forms a clear natural barrier. Today it marks the boundary between the parishes and districts of Campo Lameiro and Cotobade, except at *Fentáns*, where the parish of San Xurxo de Sacos extends to an area to the north of the river (Fig. 3).

If we draw an ideal north–south transect across the area, we may isolate the following relief Units (Fig. 4):

Unit 1: *steep slopes* above the River Lérez and, to a lesser degree, some of its tributaries. These slopes are less abrupt at traditional crossing points, such as the *area of Fentáns*. The steep slopes and light soils mean this unit is generally covered by trees.

Unit 2: *low and open valleys*. They are most frequent to the north of the Lérez in the parishes of Fragas, Campo and Muimenta, in the district of Campo Lameiro. Today this area is used for intensive agriculture. There are also small isolated areas to the south of the Lérez with the same characteristics.

Unit 3: *lateral escarpments*: They are generally abrupt slopes that enclose nearly all the study area. This is where tracts of '*monte*' (a Galician word) are found. These are areas of extensive land use, including shifting agriculture, pasture and fodder production.

Figure 2 Digital elevation model of the study area, showing the main rivers and the division between Sectors A and B.

Figure 3 The names and boundaries of the parishes (thin line) and archiprestazgos (thick lines).

Figure 4 A topographical section of the study area.

Figure 5 Relief sectors according to the local topography.

Unit 4: *flat lands at the head of fluvial valleys* which retain moisture and often form *brañas* (peat bogs) used for pasture in the dry season at the end of summer. These areas are quite common, but small in size and are found only in the higher part of the *montes* which enclose the area to the north and south.

Unit 5: summits of the hilly areas which close the perimeter of the study area. These are rocky, with very light soils and are given over to extensive land-use (*monte* and free-grazing animals).

In addition, three fundamental topographical sectors may be defined in the Middle and Upper Lerez Valley (Fig. 5).

Sector A: forms the central part of the study area. It is characterized by open areas, with intensive land use and a large proportion of Unit 2 terrain. The slopes are generally moderate, despite the presence in their upper sections of terrain belonging to Units 3 or 5. This sector includes the most important points where the river can be crossed.

Sector B: The eastern part represents the start of the Upper Lerez Valley. This is an area of particularly abrupt relief, with gorges along the course of the river. The predominant units are types 1 and 3. Away from the river the slopes rise continuously to the watershed, with only small open areas where agricultural settlement takes place.

Sector C: This has similar characteristics to Sector B, although on the ground it is less defined. Half way up the hillsides, the slopes are gentler and permanent settlement and land use are possible. This 'terrace' provides an easy route for people and animals crossing the local terrain.

Between Sectors A and B there is a zone which we may consider as Sector D. This is a small ridge ascending almost from the river itself and rising as far as the escarpments which enclose this zone to the east. Type 1 and type 4 terrains are of particular importance in this sector, and there are several well watered basins on the higher ground. The area is not defined for topographic reasons, nor is it a homogenous sector like the others: its geographical singularity is due to the historical and cultural factors which we will now consider.

The traditional present: recent history

There is considerable evidence for the importance of Sector D. This zone coincides with the *area of Fentáns*, which we previously referred to as one of the principal crossing points of the River Lérez. This zone is also unusual because the boundary between local councils and parishes imposed by the river is broken. Although this area is physically linked to the municipality of Campo Lameiro, it belongs to the parish of San Xurxo de Sacos, in the municipality of Cotobade.

Analysis of the distribution of parishes reveals other features. Figure 3 shows a radial layout of the different parishes in relation to Fentáns itself: a strange positioning which is not repeated in the surrounding area. It could be thought that this layout of parishes is more or less modern in origin; but it has certainly existed for 200 years. Parish boundaries were rarely changed in Galicia and this arrangement may be much older.

As well as marking the division between parishes and municipalities, three different *arciprestazgos* (ecclesiastical territorial units formed by several parishes) converge in this area: those of Montes, Moraña and Cotobade (Fig. 3). This situation may be traced back nearly 400 years (Hoyo 1950). The unusual location of Fentáns is underlined by the fact that the parishes of Morillas and Montes belong to the *arciprestazgo* of Montes, while the rest of Campo Lameiro's parishes belong to that of Moraña.

Thus the area of Fentáns may have possessed a special significance during medieval and early modern times. Historical and archaeological analysis allows us to consider when this first developed.

The archaeological past

Medieval settlement: We have two types of data which allow us to evaluate the distribution of medieval settlement. Firstly, documentary sources reveal the distribution of inhabited places in recent years (Fig. 6). This evidence may be extrapolated to the past. Secondly, purely archaeological investigations reveal the existence of medieval remains which are always found close to traditional villages. This enables us to see that from the Middle Ages the population has concentrated in Sectors A and C, with fewer inhabitants in B and none in D. Settlement is preferentially located in Unit 2 terrain, or in the border between these areas and Unit 3.

Roman sites: These sites are found in productive lower-lying areas (Unit 2). It is possible that the *XIX Bracara-Asturica Roman road* passed through this region. Some authors have suggested that it was in fact closer to the coast (see a synthesis in Peña 1990–1), but in fact some kind of route was well documented in medieval times (Fig. 7).

Figure 6 The distribution of traditional settlement in 1867.

Figure 7 The Iron Age, Roman and early medieval elements referred to in the text: hillforts, native Roman inscriptions, Roman roads and the hermitage of San Xusto.

There are also two *rock inscriptions*, whose reading is not clear as we have not found parallels for them (Fig. 8). Their similarities in style and location with other rock inscriptions from the north-west (Rodríguez Colmenero 1993) suggest that they date from the

Figure 8 The native Roman inscriptions in the study area.

Roman period. They are obviously not ‘classic’ or ‘official’ Latin inscriptions, but instead the work of local people *imitating* a practice from a different culture to their own.

Iron Age hillforts: The concentration of *castros* (hillforts) is quite noteworthy (Fig. 7). They are found in Unit 2-type terrain, or on the border between these and Unit 3; they do not exist in Units 1 and 3 and are rarely found in Units 4 and 5. They are concentrated in Sector A, and on similar terrain found in Sector C. However, Sectors B and D are completely lacking in hillforts.

Bronze Age rock art: Petroglyphs are found in the four sectors we have defined. Their distribution according to Units is more restricted (Fig. 10): they appear both on hillsides (Unit 3) and more frequently in the flat, humid areas (Unit 4) which contain 80 per cent of the carvings. They also appear on the summits of watersheds (Unit 5), but are totally absent in Units 1 and 2. Their absence in Unit 2 could be due to more recent agriculture, although the fact that no exceptions have been found leads us to consider that they never existed there. The rock carvings are generally connected to wetlands used for grazing, and to lines of transit and movement, particularly the most significant points such as the area around Fentáns.

Figure 9 The distribution of Bronze Age settlements and the main groups of petroglyphs.

Figure 10 Neolithic burial mounds in the group at As Rozas.

Bronze Age and Neolithic sites: Occupation sites of these periods are difficult to discover, but a number were revealed in the construction of the pipeline (Fig. 1) which crossed the entire study area. The majority of these belong to the second millennium BC, but some may be slightly older. Although their distribution (Fig. 9) is conditioned by the course of

Figure 11 The distribution of possible Iron Age rock carvings at Fentáns, together with similar motifs in Iron Age and native Roman contexts at Castro Mendes hillfort and on tombstones from Vigo.

the pipeline, they are found in Sectors A, B and C, but not in Sector D, despite intensive investigations. They are always connected to Unit 4 type terrains, and closely associated with catchment basins and transit areas. The absence of these sites in Sector D is noteworthy, as this possesses both characteristics.

Megalithic barrows: The only known barrows are found at the edge of the study area, always in terrain belonging to Units 4 and 5. As seen in Figure 10, they are found on the watersheds which limit the study area. The distribution of barrows is generally associated with lines of movement and basins with *brañas*. Again, their absence in Sector D is noteworthy as this is the same type of terrain in which barrows are normally found.

The deconstruction of space (analysis)

Here we will observe the relationships between different types of sites, and between sites and geographical units/sectors.

A significant relationship is observed between *barrows*, open *domestic Bronze Age sites* and *petroglyphs* with simple motifs, mainly cup-marks. These elements usually appear visually close and connected, as is apparent in one of the best-known sites, *As Rozas*, to the north-west of the study area (Villoch 1995). This association is reinforced by their coincidence with peat bogs and Unit 4-type terrain. They are found in transit areas and suitable locations for movement through the landscape.

A second relationship is between *Iron Age hillforts*, the *medieval settlements* and *traditional hamlets*. This is a very characteristic association, related to Unit 2 type terrain, where the valley sides are suited to traditional types of land-use: shifting agriculture, fodder production, intensive agriculture, grazing land and forest (Criado 1991: 250; Parcero 1995: 134). The significance of these units for traditional settlement is shown in the fact that each of them is generally defined by parish boundaries (the fundamental territorial unit in Galician populations). Complex petroglyphs are also found, with natural motifs (animals, weapons and human figures) and elaborate combinations of circles and cup-marks. Their pattern of distribution is different from any other part of the archaeological record and, particularly, from the simplest rock carvings.

Thus the determining element in the location of the settlements at different times is the Unit, and not the geographical Sector. The only exception to this is Sector D, which, unlike the others, has a noticeable density of petroglyphs of all types and the only native-Roman inscriptions known in the area. These inscriptions have the letters D I V I carved on prominent rocks high up on a natural boundary (Fig. 8). This could mean that these were intended boundary markers, whose text is an abbreviation of DIVI(sio) (divide, frontier). More probably it refers to *dii* (the Gods) to whom the place belonged.

Among these petroglyphs there is a quite peculiar group, formed by crosses set out in circles. These may date from the Iron Age, unlike the main group of rock carvings which are of Bronze Age origin. This hypothesis is supported by several factors (Fig. 11): they are typologically very different from the other carvings in the area; the carvings themselves are very different, being sharper, narrower, and apparently executed with a metal implement. Their distribution hardly overlaps with the 'classic' Bronze Age motifs for, unlike these, they are found on the edge of inclined rocks; and all of them are concentrated on

Figure 12 The Neolithic and Bronze Age routes leading through the study area.

the hillside where the native Roman inscriptions are found. However, the most compelling argument is the presence of the same motif on native Roman funerary stelae in Galicia.

No other archaeological remains appear in the area, although, it was a suitable area for Bronze Age settlements, barrows and even traditional hamlets which are found only at its limits. It is, therefore, an area which was not inhabited before the Bronze Age, and one which occupied a marginal position after that period.

To the south, on the other side of the river, there is another important concentration of petroglyphs which form the group known as *Lombo da Costa*, with complex motifs and naturalistic elements. Nearby is the *Ermita* (hermitage) of San Xusto, dedicated to two early Christian Spanish martyrs (Justo and Pastor), whose cult may be traced to the first centuries of Christianity in the Iberian peninsula. By the eleventh century, these martyrs had already been forgotten, but this was evidently a sacred place from early medieval times, difficult of access and away from the traditional areas of human activity. This is reflected in oral tradition: 'Oak wood of San Xusto, you are so difficult to reach, that were it not for your saints, none would go there' (Fuentes 1976: 262).

Taken together, these observations suggest that we are dealing with the sacralization of a place which had symbolic prestige in native-Roman times, during the period of the hill-fort culture or even before. This pattern is common in Galicia, and may be evidenced by the construction of hermitages on top of hillforts. However, this process has never been studied systematically and in detail. An additional element is the pattern of movement in different periods. In our study area, the most important is the route which crosses the Lárez near Fentáns and goes northwards into Sector D.

The meaning of space (results)

The previous data allow us to *deconstruct* the models of social and symbolic landscapes as they apply to the study area over time. As we shall see, these results are consistent with research on prehistoric landscapes elsewhere in Galicia (Criado et al. 1991; Criado 1997). The data allow us to compare the *models of occupation and land-use* and, simultaneously, offer us an insight into a new element of landscape archaeology: the study of *prehistoric sacred geography*.

Occupation of the land

A series of models may be constructed, describing settlement from Neolithic times until the present. The first of these, Neolithic settlement, is defined by the presence of barrows as essential elements, generally accompanied by simple petroglyphs (cup-marks or simple circles). Settlement is concentrated in the higher terrain (Units 4 and 5) which has a predominance of open vegetation and light, well-drained soils, and is focused around small basins with *brañas*. This area is suitable for a subsistence strategy based on shifting agriculture as well as the exploitation of wild resources. However, the lowlands and valleys were uninhabited, possibly due to dense tree cover at that time. The element of articulation of this landscape is *movement*, structured by the lines of barrows which extend across the watersheds.

The archaeological record from the Bronze Age includes domestic sites found in Unit 4 terrain (in high positions near flat, open areas with wet basins in their centre), and petroglyphs that appear in areas with more pronounced slopes, in between the escarpments and these particular areas of settlement. The pattern of movement across the landscape is still a basic issue, but there are important differences compared to Neolithic times (Fig. 12). Instead of running parallel to the river, the lines now spread out radially from it, with the crossing points of the River Lérez having a particular significance. They provided a vital link between the uplands, where the settlements are concentrated (in areas suitable for shifting cultivation and around peat bogs which acted as pasture; Méndez 1994), and the lowlands, with dense woodland providing wild resources. These routeways were marked by important concentrations of petroglyphs (Fig. 9). The most important group of carvings is found around the area of Fentáns and occupies most of Sector D. Although there are a large number of wetlands in the area, there are no associated settlements.

In the Iron Age, fortified settlements (*castros* or hillforts) are the most significant element in the shaping of the landscape. At first these occupied high points, close to watersheds, such as the early *Castro de Penalba* (Álvarez 1986) which is actually found close to a settlement with Beaker pottery. However, there was a displacement of the population towards valley areas, probably in the Second Iron Age. Production strategies became more intensive, woodland was cleared and heavier and more fertile soils were exploited. A more stable landscape developed, based on fixed or central points and with specific, well-defined territories. This would also be related to the appearance of permanent settlement and agriculture with permanent fields (Criado 1989 and 1991; Méndez 1994). The appearance of rock *inscriptions* may be understood in this context. They are located in Sector D, in the dividing line between two different relief units, visible from the valley

zone, but in the border between inhabited and uninhabited areas. This indicates their character both as territorial markers and as objects giving a symbolic value to a space that was different from the area of occupation and situated at its limit.

The early Middle Age represented the definitive occupation of the lowlands. Occupation was centred on the valley, developing a model of appropriation of the environment begun in the Iron Age. The progressive abandonment of the uplands for settlement and intensive land-use is closely related to the constitution of a *full peasant economy*. This type of upland terrain would still form part of the productive system as areas of extensive land-use, and some of these would be converted into sacred places, whether *ex novo* or through the conversion to Christianity of previously occupied or ritualized places. This could be the case of the hermitage of San Xusto, situated far from the local population's day-to-day activities.

Let us summarize these changes in the landscape over time. The rupture between the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age meant a change from a monumental landscape to a ritual landscape based on petroglyphs and a domestic landscape defined by settlements. An important change is also revealed in the patterns of movement, from one running parallel to the River Lérez and based on making the uplands accessible, to a *radial pattern* where crossing points are established on the river and routes of communication between the valleys and the highlands.

A second rupture appears in the transition to the Iron Age in the eighth century BC, becoming more intensive at the beginning of the second Iron Age in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Differences appear at all levels: in the type and situation of settlements, in the imposition of human presence in the environment, in the occupation of the lowlands (which now became occupied areas instead of merely points of passage), and in the formalization of territorial limits. As we have indicated, in this period the foundations were established for what would become the traditional rural system. This process was consolidated in medieval times with open settlements, the final conquest of the valleys, the Christianization of nature (often in relation to pre-existing symbolic structures), and as the formalization of lines of movement and jurisdictional limits between different communities.

The articulation of territory and the construction of a sacred landscape

We have seen that the area of Fentáns (referred to as Sector D) is different from the others not only for topographical reasons, but for historical ones as well. From the Bronze Age, the area was host to a number of striking features: the most important group of petroglyphs of this period, a specific group of carved rocks possibly dating from the Iron Age, native-Roman inscriptions, roads and crossing points over the River Lérez, and the early Christian hermitage of San Xusto and Pastor. In every period, this area is remote from concentrations of settlement. It is also located on a major route and at an important border.

Bearing these features in mind, we can propose that we are dealing with a *sacred space built in the Bronze Age and maintained after that time*. We will now revisit the available evidence with the intention of trying to decode its symbolic meanings.

Before the Bronze Age, it appears that the area did not have any special characteristics;

no archaeological remains appear. The axes of movement run parallel to the River Lérez implying that the area of Fentáns is a marginal zone.

From the Bronze Age onwards, Sector D was integrated into the social space, revealed by the presence of an important group of petroglyphs. It could be that this concentration of carvings follows a widespread convention (see Bradley et al. 1994a) and that their presence is related to the control of pasture and the paths leading between different parts of the ancient landscape. However, the concentration of carvings in the Fentáns area shows notable differences when compared to other groups in the area. For example:

- it has a considerably higher density of petroglyphs than the rest of the area (90 rocks with carvings have been identified in an area of 2 km²);
- these have a greater variety of motifs;
- it includes rare motifs, such as weapons;
- it contains some of the most complex and elaborate examples of Galician rock art;
- it faces the only important concentration of carvings on the southern shore of the River Lérez (Lombo da Costa): an area which has a very similar pattern of settlement (Fig. 9);
- no other area of settlement may be reached from it, nor is there any evidence of associated settlements.

To evaluate this extraordinary concentration of carvings we need to observe its location within the landscape. The concentration of *Fentáns*, together with that of *Lombo da Costa*, coincides with an important crossing point of the River Lérez, as well as a major route-way from north to south. The petroglyphs of Fentáns are situated on this line, marking an itinerary which stretches almost 3km, beginning and ending with complex petroglyphs including representations of weapons. Where the topography changes, complex rock carvings are found.

Sector D also represents the eastern limit of the petroglyphs in the area (apart from isolated carvings), as well as marking the natural division between two geographical areas. It is located on the horizon as seen from the river itself.

All of these factors allow us to consider the area of Fentáns as a *ritual place* in the Bronze Age, constructed through the incorporation of monumental petroglyphs into a wild space which was significant due to its position between different zones. It represented the threshold between them, and was respected and made sacred. After the Bronze Age, these characteristics were maintained throughout history.

In the Iron Age, the area of Fentáns maintained its distinctiveness. The distribution of hillforts accentuated the division between the land to the west and an almost empty area to the east. Sector D forms the first and most conspicuous horizon seen from all the hillforts in the region. Here the native-Roman inscriptions are found, and a group of rock carvings which apparently belong to the Iron Age. They mark the route leading to the hilltop where the inscriptions are situated. Directly opposite this zone, the hermitage of San Xusto and Pastor is located in another area which may have been important in the pre-Roman period.

Sector D and the symbols found in it may even occupy a boundary between different social communities. These data may provide archaeological evidence for the presence of supralocal social groups whose existence in the Iron Age societies of Galicia and

continuity during the Roman period was defined by ancient historians (Brañas 1995; Pena 1991–3). This frontier area, coinciding with a prominent local landmark, owes its special symbolic importance to its ancient remains.

With the rise of *Christianity*, the meaning of this area changed. It continued to be a special place. In the Middle Ages, the limits of parishes emphasized this area's position as a boundary. Thus the limits of the parish of San Xurxo de Sacos extend across the River Lárez into the hills where the rock carvings and inscriptions are found. The distribution of the other parishes reflect the specific nature of this place, for they are laid out radially around Sector D. The significance of this boundary is reinforced by its coincidence with the limit of the *arziprestazgos*.

More than anything, the area of Fentáns is the outstanding geographical formation in this region. Since the Bronze Age it has become a privileged area, providing both a route linking different geographical regions, and a boundary between them. The continued use of the zone would have generated a tradition whose fundamental value was derived from its historical importance, combined with its outstanding natural features. This tradition appears to have taken shape as a *mythical geography* and continued as such during different historical periods, each of which appropriated and reinterpreted its predecessor, in this way *re-writing tradition*.

We have to change our understanding of how monumental remains were incorporated into cultural traditions and, specifically, their conversion into Christian monuments. This phenomenon is not just another example of reusing previously existing monuments, for it involved changing their meaning. These cases have traditionally been interpreted as examples of a cultural split between the *new and old order*, but, seen from the perspective provided by this study, these would have to be considered as examples of the *maintenance* throughout time of the sacred characteristics of a particular place. This process incorporated previous beliefs and traditions within a new socio-ideological order. We need to consider *permanence*, as well as discontinuity. The Christianization of archaeological spaces would amount to much more than negating the preceding cultural system. It would not be limited to its 'pedagogical' value (a resource to convert local people). It is instead an example of the construction of a new social and ideological order based on the appropriation of the past.

Like every human reality, the landscape refers to a wide plurality of significant codes and, as such, may be interpreted using all of them. Our research has been concerned with the sacred dimension of the landscape but it does not deny the possibility that the landscape may have supported other functions at the same time. This study contributes to the methodology for *identifying* and *studying* sacred spaces through archaeology.

We may also see how the process of *inventing a tradition incorporates the use of previously existing sacred spaces: rewriting tradition is also rewriting landscape*. Maintaining similar forms of landscape throughout time provides the medium for *writing landscape*. It enables us, as archaeologists, to evaluate the temporality of that landscape.

We have described the kinds of landscape which have appeared in a particular area through nearly 5,000 years. We have observed how social and economic space is configured in each of these moments, and how political territory is articulated within it. We have

also seen that this articulation is constructed upon a sacred space, and what its continuity and change may signify throughout time. But now we must draw to a close: we must stop *making sense*. The *hermeneutic circle* (which is really a spiral), could continue for as long as we wanted. But we should end at the point precisely where the patterns may be deduced from themselves. We must allow for a certain *something* to be perceived, which will always remain beyond the possibilities of our interpretation.

Acknowledgements

This work is part of the research carried out in the Landscape Archaeology Research Unit of Santiago University. V. Villoch, P. Prieto, I. Cobas, M. Martínez and F. Méndez have been related to it in different ways. Dr A. Colmenero, a specialist in Roman monumental epigraphy at our University, has provided us with the readings of the Latin inscriptions and Dr F. López Alsina has given us advice about the significance of the early Christian martyrs, Xusto and Pastor. The drawings were designed by Anxo Rodríguez.

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