

RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

PATTERN TO PROCESS:
METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE FORMATION AND
INTERPRETATION OF SPATIAL PATTERNS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
LANDSCAPES

Proefschrift

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Nederlandse Samenvatting

What a useful thing a pocket-map is! I remarked.
That's another thing we've learned from *your* Nation, said Mein Herr, map-making. But we've carried it much further than *you*. What do you consider the *largest* map that would be really useful?
'About six inches to the mile'.
Only *six inches!* exclaimed Mein Herr. We very soon got to six *yards* to the mile. Then we tried a *hundred* yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of *a mile to the mile!*
Have you used it much? I enquired.
It has never been spread out, yet, said Mein Herr: the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.

- Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*

PREFACE

The volume now before you represents most of my research of the past seven years. It has grown out of two successive research projects and the papers and articles I have written for them since 1994. From 1994 to 1997 I was a Leverhulme research fellow based at the University of Birmingham Field Archaeology Unit (Birmingham, UK) working with Dr Roger White, Simon Buteux, and Dr Vince Gaffney on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project, and from 1997 until the present I have been part of the Regional Pathways to Complexity project at the Groningen Institute of Archaeology, directed by Dr Gert-Jan Burgers and Prof Peter Attema. Parts of this thesis make use of original and compiled data generated in the course of these two projects, and you will therefore find a mixture of work carried out in Britain and Italy being discussed.

The Wroxeter Hinterland and Regional Pathways to Complexity projects are not only very similar in the kinds of questions they confront, they also operate within a similar geographical scale (the 'region') and theoretical context ('landscape archaeology'). They both intend to investigate spatial patterns in the compiled regional archaeological data, and to explain these patterns – and deviations thereof – in terms of underlying historical processes. The title of this thesis, *Pattern to Process*, encapsulates this. The investigation does not start with a *tabula rasa*, however: we bring along our baggage of pre-existing models and interpretations of the past, hoping either to confirm or refute. In the manner in which we go about this task, the uneasy position of the field of Archaeology, split between the Humanities and the Sciences since the New Archaeology of the 1960's, becomes apparent. Archaeological remains can be studied as a means to support and enrich the culture-historical paradigm, or they can be studied as 'archaeological landscapes': on their own merits and with an appropriate methodology. Hence my subtitle: methodological investigations into the formation and interpretation of spatial patterns in archaeological landscapes.

Since much of my work has already been, or will be, published with co-authors as articles in journals and conference proceedings, I decided to submit this thesis 'in articles' (as the expression goes) rather than re-use the material in a single-author monograph. I have tried to organise the material in a logical fashion and have provided introductory and concluding chapters which I hope will help you, reader, find your way. One health warning is in order: if you intend to read this volume from cover to cover, you will inevitably encounter repetition and even contradiction among the chapters that follow. My advice to you is therefore to regard this volume as a buffet rather than a formal dinner.

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This thesis, and the research on which it is based, could not have happened without the support and encouragement of colleagues both here and in England. I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues at the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, for their hospitality and for helping me and my family cope with life in a strange country. In particular, Vince Gaffney for inviting me to become part of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project team and then arranging for the team to meet the Queen at Buckingham Palace; Roger White for sharing Wroxeter, Shrewsbury, and central Shropshire with me; and Simon Buteux and Sally Exon for helping out under all circumstances. At the Shropshire County Council, Penny Ward was most helpful with proving access to the county records.

Whilst much of the Herculean work of the Wroxeter Hinterland project team has by now reached print in technical papers, journal articles and volumes, and the occasional book, the final synthetic volume is still in preparation. I have very been fortunate in that my employers at the Groningen

Institute of Archaeology have agreed to allow me to finish some of my own contributions to this work. I would like to thank my colleagues in the RPC project for the help, discussions and the shared fieldwork. In particular, I am grateful to Peter Atterna who invited me to apply for one of the research openings in his then brand new project, has been my mentor for the past four years in a very agreeable hands-off style, and is now my promotor; to Marianne Kleibrink and Douwe Yntema whose research at Satricum, Francavilla Marittima, and the Brindisino provided the ultimate *raison d'être* for the RPC project; to Marianne again for convening a series of stimulating staff meetings where current research issues were discussed; and to Gert-Jan Burgers for making me think again about field methods, terminology, and the functional interpretation of ceramic surface scatters. Peter, Gert-Jan and Marianne also commented on draft versions of this thesis, and I am grateful for their helpful comments. Nick Ryan encouraged my interest in using 'executive toys' to improve fieldwork procedures, programmed and tested soft- and hardware during our fieldwork, and together with me described this work in a paper and article. Hendrik Feiken, then an M.A. student at the GIA, provided welcome help in preparing, executing and publishing methodological studies related to our fieldwork on the Pontine coast.

Other archaeologists elsewhere have also helped me in various ways. Most directly, I should thank Bert Voorrips, Susan Loving, and Hans Kamermans for allowing (and indeed encouraging) me to use the ceramic data collected during the Agro Pontino Survey - Bert even supplied me with a digital copy of the complete finds database. Kenneth Kvamme provided helpful leads and insightful comments especially on the GIS studies presented in this thesis; besides him, I should also thank the subscribers to the GISARCH discussion list for their comments and interest. A special mention and thank you should go to Jan Hartmann, a kind teacher who gave me the opportunity to pursue my interest in computer applications and methodology as an M.A. student at the then Institute for Pre- and Protohistory 'Albert Egges van Giffen' of the University of Amsterdam. He put me on the trail which I have been following now for almost 15 years.

Finally, an apology rather than a thank you is due to my wife Monica, who has had to cope with my absences and more than her fair share of the household, especially over the last year or so of work on this thesis.

Groningen, 1st May 2002