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Measurements, Maps, and Other Source Material in Biondo's **Italia Illustrata**: The Example of Latium

Abstract

In his chorographic work *Italia Illustrata*, Flavio Biondo wishes to generate in his readers' minds a more or less complete image of Italy. The present paper aims at elucidating how he does that. Surprisingly, Biondo makes only sporadic use of maps. The line of thought which he expects his readers to envisage, is, in the end, an imagined itinerary: the reader is invited to follow strings of locations along the coasts, rivers, streets etc., without resorting to maps, sketches or other pictorial devices. Ubiquitous measurement data helps in qualifying and enhancing the underlying mental map or script. In this sense, *Italia Illustrata* must be considered a typical work of 'common sense geography' which was the master model for geographical and chorographical descriptions in Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Early modern time.

Keywords:

Common sense geography; maps; measurements; Pliny; Strabo.

Kurt Guckelsberger

Two Great Maps of Italy – A Comparison.

Abstract

Two large maps, contemporary with Flavio Biondo's *Italia Illustrata*, create a rather comprehensive image of Italy. In this paper, I show that the Cotton Roll XIII.44 of the British Library is put together from two maps of different scale: one for Italy north of Rome and a smaller scale for southern Italy. It displays more than 1200 toponyms and six-thousand kilometres of rivers. The second map, MS.1816 of the University of Strasbourg, is almost identical to the northern part in content. Devoid of political boundaries, there is no orography and an unusual flat hierarchy of icons. Despite large differences in appearance, they share a common data base. Both derive probably from a lost master chart. Despite necessary overlap, Biondo's regional inventories differ substantially. He may have seen these maps but he did not rely on them.

Keywords:

Common sense geography; maps; measurements; Biondo.

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