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William Gell
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The Topography of Rome and Its Vicinity

The antiquary Sir William Gell (1777–1836) was most famous for his two books on the archaeological discoveries at Pompeii (also reissued in this series) but his interest in the topography of classical sites resulted in several other publications, including this two-volume work, first published in 1834. The work was intended to accompany a map (available to download at <http://www.cambridge.org/9781108042109>) of the territory of ancient Rome, for which the field research and surveying activities were carried out in 1822. It provides alphabetical entries (from Abbatone to Zagarolo) on all the sites in Rome and its environs, with their modern names and populations, and their significance in ancient history and literature. Volume 2 also contains essays on the history and languages of ancient Italy, and supplements to various entries, where new discoveries had been made during the course of the work's preparation.

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VOLUME 1

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THE
TOPOGRAPHY
OF
ROME AND ITS VICINITY.

BY
SIR WILLIAM GELL, M.A. F.R.S. F.S.A.
AUTHOR OF "THE ITINERARY OF GREECE,"
"TOPOGRAPHY OF TROY," "POMPEII," &c.

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LONDON :

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P R E F A C E.

THE impossibility of procuring information from existing maps or books, respecting those places which existed contemporaneously with early Rome, or previous to its foundation, was the first inducement to examine the country ; a map of the Roman territory, under the kings, being all that was at first intended. The expedition of the second Tarquin to Suessa Pometia would, however, have caused so extensive an addition to the south, while the state of Veii would have cut off the Map so closely on the north, that this first idea was abandoned ; especially as the great number of triangles, which had been measured to the tops of the mountains surrounding

the plains, had already fixed many points beyond the limits of early Rome. During the construction of the Map, numberless expeditions were made to the summits of these mountains; and in every excursion, each eminence, rivulet, and bridge, were carefully noted, and every object of antiquity or topography examined; so that whatever is seen upon the Map, is the result of actual observation. Where the details were not investigated, the Map has been left blank.

The triangulation was constructed by means of a small sextant, made by Berge, the successor of Ramsden. The base, of more than eight miles, which Boscovich and Le Maire had measured from the tomb of Cæcilia Metella to a column near Frattocchie, served for the scale.

Soon after the Map had been completed, Signore Calandrelli, and others employed by the Pontifical Government, having measured another base, and employed larger and more perfect instruments, published in numbers a few of the results of their observations. These were found to agree very satisfactorily with the details of

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our Map, with the exception of the position of Fiumicino, which has since been changed in consequence of their observations.

In addition to the Map, a short account of the places contained in it has been added, and a portion of their history, particularly of the earlier periods. The greater number of these places, however, are not so much as named in later times; for Rome had at a very early period absorbed almost the whole population of the Campagna, and the sites of its cities became in most instances, patrician villas. In consequence of this extinction of so many towns doubts have been started with regard to their existence; yet the policy adopted by the Romans, of transporting to Rome the inhabitants of conquered places, for the aggrandizement of the city, ought to be admitted as sufficient to account for their disappearance.

It is exceedingly probable that some trifling mistakes in the spelling of modern Italian names may sometimes occur in the course of this work; but the great difficulty of procuring information on the spot, in a depopulated country, may be

urged as an excuse for defects which no one but a native Italian could have well avoided. If it is hoped that such blemishes, where they occur, may be compensated by the fidelity with which the localities have been detailed.

Certain vignettes and plans have been added to the descriptions, where the particular interest either of celebrated or of very obscure places seemed to require them. The vignettes consist generally of representations of portions of the walls of towns; and, in default of other proofs, these walls may be safely considered as evidences that ancient cities occupied the spots on which they are found.

If the work be not exempt from error, and if the confirmations of history which it attempts, should, in certain instances, be faulty or inadequate, it at least contains much interesting topographic matter not to be found elsewhere.

The Map was undertaken in the year 1822, and the observations contained in the volumes now published were continued from that time to the present day. It was the intention of the learned Professor Nibby to have written some

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notices illustrative of it ; but his numerous avocations have prevented the execution of that intention.

* * * The Remarks on the HISTORY and LANGUAGES of ANCIENT ITALY, referred to in this work, will be found at the end of the *Second Volume*.