

Gromatici

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The *gromatici*, named for the surveying instrument the *groma*, were instructors and (usually) practitioners of land survey. They wrote from the Flavian period onward; the earliest surviving manuscript probably dates from the sixth century CE. Some works are illustrated. Epigraphic and archaeological evidence supports these sources and confirms the land surveyor's role as planner and administrator, as well as expert witness.

The identity of most *gromatici* is uncertain but, despite the reservations of Campbell (2000: xxvii–xxviii), it is widely accepted that the author FRONTINUS was, in fact, the technical writer and one-time governor of Britain. Both Frontinus and BALBUS demonstrate the management role of the surveyor, the former insisting that “even the smallest piece of land should be under the control of the surveyor,” and the latter pointing to the crucial role he played in the conquest of DACIA. The function of military surveyors as planners and cartographers is also made clear from inscriptions on coordinate markers of the southern Tunisian survey.

Other *gromatici* are: Hyginus (I and II), Siculus Flaccus, and Agennius Urbicus.

For this last author, probably writing in the fourth century CE, land surveying was a well-established profession that he linked to geography (*geometrica*) and mathematics (*geometria*). Mathematical relationships also appear in reality between Roman roads and land surveys, suggesting that the surveyors were deliberately putting them in harmony.

The *corpus* also contains some minor works and, in the *libri coloniarum*, details of centuriation in part of Italy of the lands of *coloniae* and other towns.

SEE ALSO: *Ager publicus*; Agrarian laws; Centuriation; Colonies, Roman and Latin (republican); Colonies, Roman Empire (east); Colonies, Roman Empire (west); Land and landholding, Rome; Maps, Greece and Rome.

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