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978-0-521-81905-3 - Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568-774

Nicholas Everett

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## LITERACY IN LOMBARD ITALY, c. 568–774

Italy had long experienced literacy under Roman rule, but what happened to literacy in Italy under the rule of a barbarian people? This book examines the evidence for the use of literacy in Lombard Italy c. 568–774, a period usually considered as the darkest of the Dark Ages in Italy owing to the poor survival of written evidence and the reputation of the Lombards as the fiercest of barbarian hordes ever to invade Italy.

A careful examination of the evidence, however, reveals quite a different story. The Lombards developed the literate traditions of the Roman world to suit the requirements of an early medieval society in which the use of the written word remained an integral part of government and administration. This study considers the different types of evidence in turn – legislation, charters, inscriptions and manuscripts – and offers a re-examination of the nature of Lombard settlement in Italy and the question of their cultural identity. Far from constituting a Dark Age in the history of literacy, Lombard Italy possessed relatively sophisticated written culture prior to the so-called Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AA.SS.	<i>Acta sanctorum</i> , 3rd edn (Paris, 1863–)
AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
Atti # CISAM	<i>Atti del # congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo</i> (Spoleto, 1954–)
BHL	<i>Biblioteca hagiographica latina, antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> , 2 vols. (Brussels, 1898–1901; reprint 1914), and <i>Novum supplementum</i> , ed. Henricus Fros (Brussels, 1986), <i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i> 70
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis</i> (Turnhout, 1966–)
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum series latina</i> (Turnhout, 1952–)
CDL	<i>Codice diplomatico longobardo</i>
ChLA	<i>Chartae latinae antiquiores. Facsimile Edition of the Latin Charter prior to the Ninth Century I–</i> , ed. A. Bruckner and R. Marichal (Olten and Laussane, 1954–)
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CJ	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
CLA	<i>Codices Latini Antiquiores</i> , ed. E.A. Lowe (Oxford, 1935–71)
CTh	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
EME	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
EMI	C.J. Wickham, <i>Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society</i> (London and Basingstoke, 1981)
Gray	N. Gray, 'The palaeography of Latin inscriptions in the eighth and ninth centuries in Italy', <i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i> 16 (1948), 38–170
HL	Paul the Deacon, <i>Historia langobardorum</i>
HLCCGoth.	<i>Historia langobardorum codicis gothani</i>

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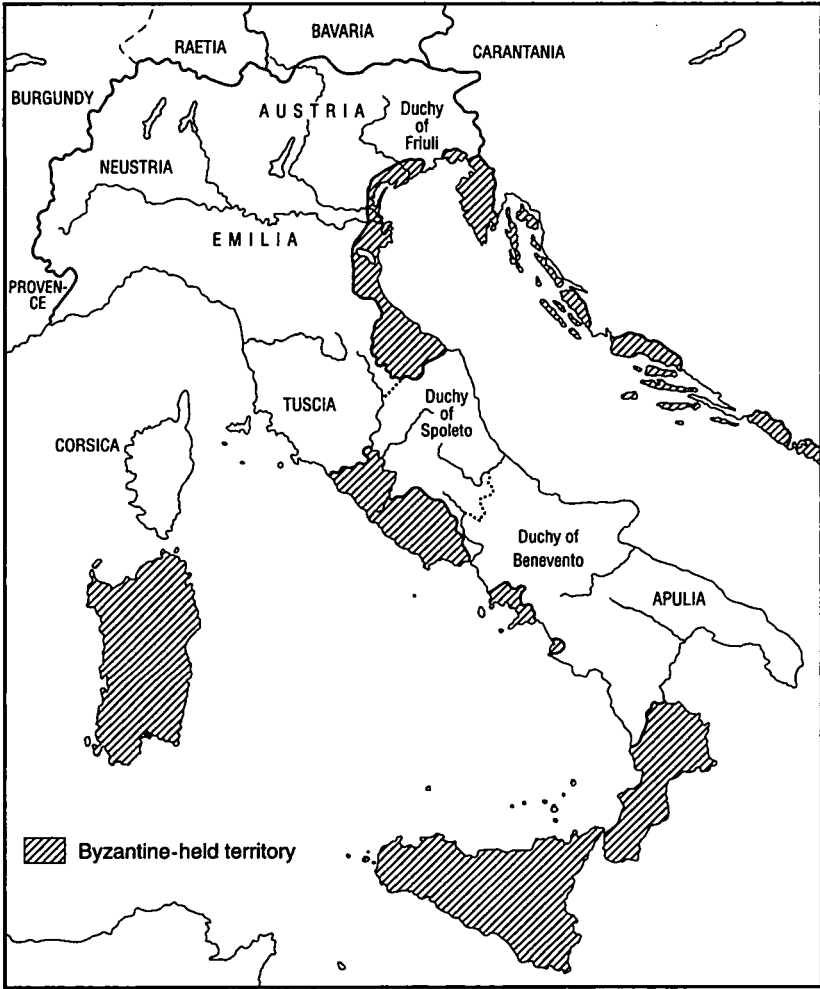
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HR	Paul the Deacon, <i>Historia romana</i>
LP	<i>Liber pontificalis</i> , ed. L. Duchesne and C. Vogel, 2nd edn (Paris, 1955)
Mansi	J.D. Mansi, <i>Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> (Florence and Venice, 1757–98)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA.	Auctores Antiquissimi
Cap.	Capitularia, Legum Sectio II, Capitularia regum francorum
Dip. Kar.	Diplomata Karolinorum
Ep.	Epistulae
Form.	Formulae
Leges	Leges in folio
Leges n.g.	Leges nationum germanicarum
Poetae	Poetae aevi Karolini
SRM	Scriptores rerum merovingicarum
SRL	Scriptores rerum langobardicarum et italicarum saec. VI–IX
SS.	Scriptores
NCMH	R. McKitterick (ed.), <i>New Cambridge Medieval History</i> , II, c. 700–c. 900 (Cambridge, 1995)
Panazza	G. Panazza, <i>Lapidi e sculture paleocristiane e pre-romaniche di Pavia, Arte del Primo Millennio Atti del II convegno per lo studio dell'arte dell'alto medioevo, tenuto presso l'Università di Pavia nel Settembre 1950</i> (Turin, 1953)
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus series latina</i> , ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844–)
PLRE 2	J.R. Martindale, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 2, A.D. 395–527 (Cambridge, 1980)
PLRE 3	J.R. Martindale, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3, A.D. 527–641 (Cambridge, 1993)
RB	<i>Regula Benedicti</i>
Settimane	<i>Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo</i> 1– (Spoleto, 1954–)
ThLL	<i>Thesaurus linguae latinae</i> (Berlin and Munich, 1900–)
Tjäder	<i>Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri italiens aus der Zeit 445–700</i> , 3 vols., ed. J.O Tjäder (Lund, 1954/55–1982)



Map 1 Cities, *castra* and ecclesiastical centres in early medieval Italy:  
 The Lombard period



Map 2 Lombard Italy, c. 740