

Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno C, Gennaio-Aprile 2016, Fascicolo I

Abstracts

FABIO CARMINATI - ANDREA MARIANI, *Isola Comacina e Isola Comense. Una storica con-fusione di identità*

The Insula Comacina reported in the Historia Langobardorum by Paulus Diaconus is usually recognized as being the Island in the Como Lake. This identification dates up to the eighteenth century, and it is universally accepted a priori, despite of the lack of critical analysis. By analogy, is usually accepted the equivalence of the adjectives cumanus and comacinus, notwithstanding that such parity is implausible in Latin grammar. Many clues suggest a different interpretation.

We considered documentary sources from ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, and literature prior to the eighteenth century. From our research we could deduce the existence not only of an Insula Comacina, but also of a Lacus Comacinus, as well as a land Comacina and a folk Comacinus. These four entities revolve around the hydrographical basin of the Como Lake, but far from the Island and far from its inland.

The Lacus Comacinus is not synonym with Como Lake but only represents a portion of it, and this portion is different from the one where the Island lies. Accurately, it involves its sole eastern branch. The Insula Comacina, in the history of Lombards, is to be interpreted as a part of a land delimited by two confluent rivers, as others insulae which appear in middle-age sources. Such particular definition for the word insula dates up to Polybius, but it is not registered in modern lexica and dictionaries.

Not far from the modern city of Lecco, by the eastern branch of Como Lake, we have identified an area which shows the characteristics of the insulae polybianae. In this area, the presence of lombard families is reported and well-established in sources of eighth century. Consequently, a new hypothesis regarding the actual location of Insula Comacina can be proposed.

Keywords:

*Insula Comacina
Lake Como
Lombards*