

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives (ASDLU): Early Middle Ages documents
(Italy)

Ref N° 2010-11

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

Historical intrinsic value

Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives (ASDLu) are among the biggest and most ancient archives in the world. Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) in the first book of *ANTIQUITATES ITALICAE MEDII AEVII* defines the archives *amplissimum tabularium venerandae antiquitatis cui parem in Italia difficile invenias* and Paolo F. Kehr, in the third book of *REGESTA PONTIFICUM ROMANORUM*, remembers it as *Adhuc locupletissimum et bene conservatum, inter Italiae archiva ecclesiastica et numero et antiquitate chartarum prefulget*.

Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives boast an inestimable heritage made of five parchment codices that preserve 13.000 parchments dating back to the 685 A.D: among these parchments 1800 documents are earlier than the 1000 A.D. and almost all the documents are original, while more than 150 are original Longobard papers.

The list of rarities includes over 150 miniated manuscripts of the Early Middle Ages, including the miscellaneous code number 490, which is known by scholars all over the world.

A really unique case among the diocesan archives and among Italian and European civil archives.

Different denominations

Lucca's Archdiocese's documentary heritage is well-known and named **LUCCA'S HISTORICAL DIOCESAN ARCHIVES**, and it is identified with the acronym ASDLu. It is sometimes traditionally named **LUCCA'S HISTORICAL ARCHBISHOP ARCHIVES**, and it is identified with the acronym ASALu, with reference to Lucca's Archdiocese, which has got the ownership of the archives.

Main motivations

The Early medieval section of Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives are a documentary core to be preserved and promoted to the world for its value in terms of:

- **Particular historical value**. The archives contain original documents able to support the reconstruction of the political, religious, economic, cultural history of a territory and a community placed in a strategic point in the heart

of Europe, along the Francigena Way that connected Canterbury to Rome and that has been run along during the centuries by thousands of pilgrims;

- **General historical value.** The greatest part of the documentation, originally Early medieval, has public provenance and has been emanated by universal political and religious authorities (emperors, sovereigns, kings, overlord, Popes, bishops). The documents are rich in information concerning the Longobard reign, the Carolingian Empire, the government of a lot of pontiffs, the Napoleonic Empire, and they are able to supply the European and world history and to provide important integrations for the memory and for the global knowledge of humanity;
- **Multidisciplinary potentiality.** The different nature of the documentary typologies, the contents of the documents, the several documentary attestations for a period which is not rich in sources, make the Archives a primary source to support the study and research in different fields:
 - 1) the political, religious, economic, agrarian and commercial history of Early Medieval Europe, for the large amount of public and private acts (imperial and papal privileges and provisions, agrarian and commercial contracts, sales, loans and donations);
 - 2) the palaeography, for the high number of ancient writings evidenced in the original version into the documents and codices;
 - 3) the Diplomatics, for a group of public and private acts, in the original version, in a continuous sequence from the Early Middle Ages to the Modern Age;
 - 4) the codicology, for the collection of ancient codices, handwritten and miniated from the VIII century;
 - 5) the art history, in particular the scholars of miniature and icons.

Importance and advantages of preservation

The Early Medieval documentary heritage of Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives represents an *unicum* in the ecclesiastical and civil archives. Its uniqueness is due to:

- **the documentary extent**, more than 1.800 parchments, about 150 miniated codices for four centuries of history, from the VIII to the XI century;
- **the antiquity of its heritage**, the oldest document dates back to the year 685, while the handwritten code dates back to the years which go from 787-796 till 816;
- **a very large chronological covering**, for the Early Middle Ages;
- **the universal value of the heritage**, which represents the basis (acknowledged through the centuries by a lot of scholars internationally renown) of important subjects, such as paleography, diplomatics, sigillography, codicology, the story of miniature, Europe and Italy's ecclesiastical, political, economical story from the Early Middle Ages.

By preserving this heritage the world will have the possibility of exploiting a very rich source, that is necessary to go on with researches into important fields, and to reconstruct the story of a territory and of a society, in its different aspects for a long period with important implications under the international point of view.

Records for nomination

The heritage of Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives, which has been selected for the Memory of the World Register, is made of the whole ancient documentary section of parchments and by the whole ancient handwritten book section, which cover a chronological arch which goes from **685 A.D.** till **1000 A.D.**

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (Person or organisation)

Lucca's Archdiocese, in the person of **S. E. Benvenuto Castellani**, *Lucca's Archbishop*

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Legal representative of the Lucca's Archdiocese that is the owner and the conservator of the Historical Diocesan Archives.

2.3 Contact persons

Don Marcello Brunini (in italian)
Dott.ssa Angelina Fuggi (in french)
Dott. Saverio Piali (in english)

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

Don Marcello Brunini

Company secretary ASDLu
45, Via Arcivescovato
55100 – LUCCA (LU)
Tel. +39 0583-430954
Fax +39 0583-430930
Email: brunini.marcello@tiscali.it

Dott.ssa Angelina Fuggi

Hyperborea s.r.l.
Archivist, Responsible for Reading Room
45, Via Arcivescovato
55100 – LUCCA (LU)
Tel. +39 0583-430954
Cell. +39 3319202188
Fax +39 0583-430930
Email: archivio@diocesilucca.it, angelina.fuggi@hyperborea.com

Dott. Saverio Pialli

Hyperborea s.r.l.
Chief Communications Officer
25/6, via Giuntini
56023 Navacchio, Cascina (PI)
Tel. +39 050-754241
Cell. +39 3454715786
Fax +39 050-754240
Email: s.pialli@hyperborea.com

3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives (ASDLu)

45, Via Arcivescovato
55100 – LUCCA (LU)
Tel. +39 0583-430954
Fax +39 0583-430930
Email: archivio@diocesilucca.it

3.2 Description

[Section not online]

JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

3.3 Is authenticity established?

YES.

The Early medieval section of the Archives preserves the original documentation, which was produced during four centuries of history (685 A.D. – 1000 A.D.) by the political and religious authorities and by clergymen and laymen from Lucca's territory, and which has always been preserved in the archiepiscopal Palace inside its two historical settings.

The whole heritage of Lucca's historical Diocesan Archives was recognized by the Italian State as a heritage of “**remarkable historical interest**”, with measure of notification of the 7th December 2007, n. p. 5767 released by the **Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities** – Archival Superintendence of Tuscany – Florence (Attachment B).

The economic value is absolutely inestimable.

3.4 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

YES.

The Early medieval section preserves documents of irreplaceable, particular and universal historical value. The documents and manuscripts preserve unique information for the political, economic, religious, and cultural history of Italy and of Lombard and Carolingian Europe. The information preserved in these papers deal also with important characters of the political and religious Early medieval life: to mention some of them,

among the sovereigns, Charlemagne (770), Otto I (962), Otto II (981, 982, 996), Otto III (998).

3.5 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style (f) social, spiritual and community significance satisfied?

(a) Time

The Early medieval documentary heritage of Lucca's Historical Diocesan Archives covers a chronological arch which goes from **685 A.D.** to **1000 A.D.**

(b) Place

The places' documentation deals in particular with Lucca and its province, Tuscany, north-centre Italy and west-centre Europe.

(c) People

The involved personalities are the Popes and the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, the bishops of the towns, and laymen.

(d) Subject and theme

It deals with the useful sources for the reconstruction and study of the political, religious, cultural, economic history of Lucca's community, of its relationships with the universal powers, the Papacy and the Empire, of the changes and the historical evolution of a community and of its territory, closely related to the historical evolution of Italy and Europe throughout four centuries.

(e) Form and style

The Early medieval documentary heritage of the Archives is an essential source to explain the changes of the document form and of the modalities of registration in the most important medieval and modern chancelleries: imperial, pontifical, and Episcopal ones, but also to show the changes in writing, writing uses, throughout various centuries and in different geographic areas. The same heritage allows to follow the changes concerning the techniques of preparation of parchments, the preparation of miniatures, with the use of colours, and of gold.

(f) Social, spiritual and community significance

The documentary heritage of the Archives derives from the activity of clergymen and laymen who rule the community of Lucca during the Early Middle Ages. In these papers there is the memory of a whole social group, its history, its culture, its spiritual life. The Archives documents are necessary sources to reconstruct:

- aspects of the demographic, social, anthropological history of a community;
- the expression of a religious fervour (since Christianity rooted in Lucca's primitive community during the IV century, until its consolidation through the presence and power of Lucca's bishops), the edification of a lot of churches for Christian rites, the birth and development of an aggregating cult, the one for the Holy Face, the town's patron. This cult is acknowledged all over the world, and even nowadays it gathers together people who live in

Lucca or abroad. A crowd of faithful from all over the world has been arriving to Lucca since the Middle Ages, through the Francigena way, to venerate the icon of the Holy Face inside the cathedral, to assist at the celebrations during the Cross' Exaltation day. It is a great religious, social and cultural phenomenon;

- the artistic expression of a territory and of a community, acknowledged by the sources which reconstruct the history of the religious buildings, jewels of Lucca's architecture, the works of Lucca's goldsmiths, through the sacred furniture of the urban churches, Lucca's silk factory, through the magnificence of the fabric of religious vestments, which are world-widely renowned;
- the trace left by important bishops in the history of the Church, starting from the bishop Massimo, who subscribed the Acts of the Sardica Council in 343-344, the holy bishop Frediano, who stayed in Lucca's seating before 593, the Lombard Talesperiano, Walprando, and Peredeo, who rule the Diocese in the VIII century, Giovanni I and Iacopo I until Isalfredo, who rule the Diocese between the IX and X centuries.

3.6 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

YES.

(a) Rarity

The Archives are a rare example of an unabridged and well preserved documentary core, which demonstrates the secular activities of an important and powerful institution, the Church of Lucca, that spiritually rules a territory and a community in an important and large Italian region, involving hundreds of places and personalities in its history for thirteen centuries.

(b) Integrity

There are some alterations and damages because of the antiquity of the documents and because of the wear after the consultation and management of the material throughout the centuries; however the most documents are in good condition and they can be consulted by researchers and by the staff even in their original version. A programme has been started since some years: it deals with the restoration of the most damaged documents and with the digital reproduction of the documentation and of the most precious, ancient and more consulted manuscripts. A first group of 500 parchments can already be consulted in a digital format, with the code n. 490, the most ancient and sought after code.

(c) Threats

The heritage does not risk disappearing.

The majority of the documentary core is assessed and placed in wooden wardrobes, in 2 rooms, at the second floor of Lucca's Archiepiscopal Palace.

These places do not have any problems of static nature, they are endowed with security systems for the protection of the staff and for the custody of the documentation. They

are not particularly sensible to sudden changes in temperature and in damp and they are suitable for a long-term preservation.

Since 2007 the Archdiocese has started a modernization plan for the security systems, for the procedures, and for the necessary equipments to guarantee a long preservation of the documentation; it is in particular directed towards the places and the documentary cores, which are placed at the third floor of the palace.

The vigilance and the custody of the materials is carried out by a qualified and trained staff to guarantee a correct and appropriate treatment of the ancient and modern documents.