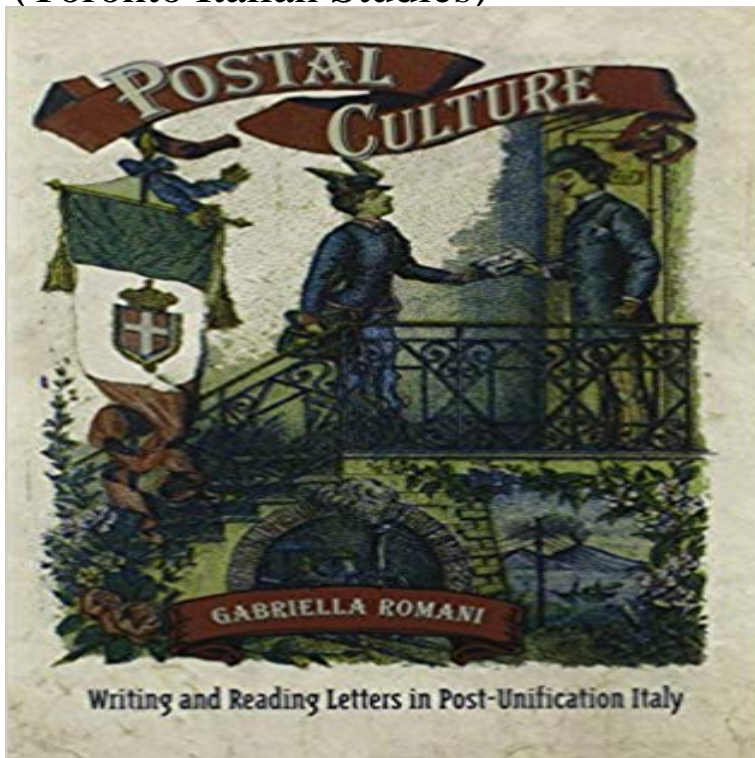


Postal Culture: Writing and Reading Letters in Post-Unification Italy (Toronto Italian Studies)



The nationalization of the postal service in Italy transformed post-unification letter writing as a cultural medium. Both a harbinger of progress and an expanded, more efficient means of circulating information, the national postal service served as a bridge between the private world of personal communication and the public arena of information exchange and production of public opinion. As a growing number of people read and wrote letters, they became part of a larger community that regarded the letter not only as an important channel in the process of information exchange, but also as a necessary instrument in the education and modernization of the nation. In *Postal Culture*, Gabriella Romani examines the role of the letter in Italian literature, cultural production, communication, and politics. She argues that the reading and writing of letters, along with epistolary fiction, epistolary manuals, and correspondence published in newspapers, fostered a sense of community and national identity and thus became a force for social change.

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