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Merula, Giorgio
[Georgius Merlani]

1431–94. Italy. Born in Alessandria, Merula studied Latin literature with Francesco → Filelfo, with whom he later had a harsh dispute (*Epistolae duae adversus Franciscum Philelphum*, Two epistles against Francesco Filelfo, 1480). He taught rhetoric at Venice, Pavia and Milan and searched for Greek manuscripts at Bobbio Abbey. He is known for his *editio princeps* of Plautus (1472) and for his account of the Siege of Scutari (now Üsküdar) by the Turks (*Bellum scodrense*, Battle of Scutari, 1474).

Merula's major work is the prose Latin chronicle of the Visconti dukes of Milan, *Antiquitates vicecomitum* (Past deeds of the viscounts), which Ludovico Sforza (1452–1508, duke from 1494) commissioned to him in 1483, allowing him to use the family archives. Rather than a family history, the humanist wrote a town chronicle in 10 books based on annals, gravestone inscriptions, acts and decrees. His work runs from the foundation of Milan until the battle of Parabiago and Azzone Visconti's death in 1339. When Merula died the work was finished by his pupil Tristano Calco. The text is transmitted by a 138-leaves long parchment folio manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Trotti 78). Merula introduced the work with a letter to Ludovico Sforza, whereas the *editio princeps* (Guillaume Le Signerre, Milan ca 1500) includes also a preface by its editor Alessandro Minuziano: a copy survives in Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, AM.XIII.21.

Bibliography

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