Beccadelli, Antonio
[Panormita]

1394–1471. Italy (Palermo and Naples). Poet and diplomat. Author of two Latin works of royal history. Panormita studied in Florence, Padua and Bologna, and taught in Pavia. In Rome he met Poggio → Bracciolini and Lorenzo → Valla. He received the poet’s crown in 1432. In 1434 he entered the service of Alfonso the Magnanimous (Alfonso V of Aragon and IV of Catalonia, 1416–58) and went with him to Naples, where he participated in the great cultural development of that city, founding the academy Porticus Antoniana, later known as the Pontaniana.

Completed in 1455, De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis Aragonum (Sayings and facts of Alfonso, King of Aragon) recounts episodes of Alfonso’s life with the aim of creating an ideal profile of the king with reference to the most important moral virtues. To this end it collects anecdotes, sententiae and deeds attributed to Alfonso. Inspired, according to Panormita, by Xenophon’s Memorablia, the work had widespread diffusion in the countries of the Crown of Aragon, including Sicily and Naples. It was published for the first time in Pisa by Felino Sandeo (1485). The book was translated into Catalan by Jordi de Centelles (1481) as Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 1715) and into Castilian as Libro de los dichos y hechos del rey Don Alfonso, originally by Juan de Molina (printed in Valencia, 1527) and later by Antonio Rodriguez Dávalos (Antwerp, 1554) and Fortuno García de Ercilla (unpublished).

A more ideological and formal commitment is shown in the Liber rerum gestarum Ferdinandi regis (Book of the undertakings of King Ferdinand), probably completed in 1469, that describes the life of the young Ferrante, from 1438 to the death of his Father Alfonso, to demonstrate the legitimacy of his succession to the throne. In the prologue, Panormita creates a “canon” of historical classics: the most important are Livy, Caesar and Sallust; then there are → Tacitus, Curtius Rufus and → Suetonius; lastly there are → Orosius, → Eutropius and Lampridius. The sole manuscript of the Liber rerum gestarum (Bitonto, Biblioteca Comunale, ms. 2) is damaged in the final section. Panormita’s Neapolitan works, like those of Bartolomeo → Facio, are directed towards the creation of a propagandistic and apologetic historiography, in a polemic with Valla.

Bibliography


Fulvio Delle Donne
David Garrido Valls