Peter of Eboli

fl. 1194–1221. Southern Italy. Latin didactic poet, chronicler and monk in the service of Emperor Henry VI. His most important work is Liber ad honorem Augusti (Book in honour of the Emperor), a poem in 3 books subdivided into 52 partculae (little parts). The Liber was composed between the end of 1194, when Henry VI took possession of the southern Italian territories, defeating Tancredi count of Lecce, and Henry’s death in 1197. The first two books describe the war for the succession to the Sicilian throne after the death of Wilhelm II, while the third, the ad honorem Augusti proper, is the mystical celebration of Henry VI, showing the influence of a cultural and literary tradition influenced by → Gottfried of Viterbo. The work presents a non-uniform structure, with a marked change in register between books two and three. This change of tone is anticipated near the end of the second book in the description of the birth of Frederick II and his presagia, where the mythicizing process of the last Swabian Emperor begins. The sole manuscript is the magnificently illuminated Berne, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 120 II [Fig. 36]. Peter probably also wrote a lost mira Federici gesta (Frederick’s wonderful undertakings).

Bibliography

Fulvio Delle Donne