

2010

John of Cermenate

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Recommended Citation

Martina Saltamacchia, "John of Cermenate", in *Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, Graeme Dunphy, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

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John of Cermentate

John of Cermentate ca 1280-1344. Town chronicler and notary. Author of Historia Iohannis de Cermentate notarii Mediolanensis in Latin prose, completed ca. 1322.

Presumably he was born in Milan. In 1313 John of Cermentate, as Milan's *syndicus* (court of justice representative), took part at a meeting with the imperial vicar of Lombardy. Surely he joined the Visconti faction and sided with the Ghibellines, as evidenced in his chronicle, where Matteo Visconti's deeds are openly celebrated. His account is divided into 68 chapters and covers the events in Milan during the years 1307-1314. John of Cermentate was eyewitness to the matters he recounted; his contemporaries regarded his chronicle as the most reliable source for the period. The first four chapters narrate the history of the Po valley from the time of Tubal, Noah's son. Then, in the fifth chapter, the narration of more contemporary events begins with the Longobards and then Henry VII's arrival in Italy. For his use of Livy, Sallust, Virgil, and Horace as literary and stylistic sources, John of Cermentate is considered to be a forerunner of humanistic scholarship. The chronicle survives in two partial MSS (Milan, Biblioteca Braidense, AD XII, 32 and AD XIV, 55) dating from the 17th c.

Text: L. MURATORI, *Anecdota*, II, 1698. L. MURATORI, *Rerum Ital. Script.*, IX, 1726. L. A. FERRAI. *Fonti per la storia d'Italia, Scrittori del sec. XIV*, II, 1889. Lit: G. SOLDI RONDININI, "Cermentate, Giovanni," DBI 23, 1979.

1. 13th century, 2. Italian, 3. Italy (North), 4. town chronicles, 5. prose.