

Daniel Berger, Sabine Panzram, Lorenzo Livorsi, Rocco Selvaggi (Hg.), Iberia Pontificia. Vol. VII: Hispania Romana et Visigothica, Göttingen (V&R) 2022, XX–114 S. (Regesta Pontificum Romanorum), ISBN 978-3-525-35229-8, EUR 60,00.

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This volume belongs to a series which goes back to Paul Kehr, who initiated it over a century ago. The volume in question is a joint work by the scholars whose names are listed above. Like the series which it continues, it is a product of the spirit of teamwork which is one of the great strengths of German medieval scholarship, especially since the teamwork is funded on a scale unimaginable in the Anglophone academic world. The series in question is one of several dedicated to medieval papal history. Its volumes are recognizable by a Latin geographical name followed by »Pontificia« – »Italia Pontificia«, »Gallia Pontificia«, and as here »Iberia Pontificia«. Kehr's plan for this series was to organize it by recipients, which encouraged the exploration of individual archives containing papal documents. This certainly suited Kehr's own temperament: he is reputed to have said that he collected papal bulls as a stamp collector does stamps. He could work through episcopal archives and get his collaborators and successors to do the same. It was a way of coping with the unexpectedly enormous volume of documentation generated by the early medieval papacy. However, organization by episcopal (or other) recipient was inappropriate for the current volume, since it deals with a very early period of history for which archives as such did not survive. The »reception end« principle is retained in that its remit is confined to the Iberian Peninsula, but within that framework it is organized by date. The main calendar goes up to the 680s (688 is the latest date but it is a forgery), but there is a supplement in the form of an appendix, by Waldemar Könighaus, covering the period from 772–804. Why is this separated from the main calendar? Possibly because the Arab conquest of the peninsula in 711 was the start of a caesura in communication. It would be good to have had this clearly spelled out.

The calendar or register itself is in Latin, probably a good idea given the amateurish inadequacy of many contemporary Anglophone medieval historians when it comes to modern languages. (A calendar in English would have been worse: it would encourage the illusion that they do not need to learn them.) The brief introduction is in both Latin and German. It follows an interesting short piece in German and Spanish by Klaus Herbers, a Paul Kehr of our time, doyen of early medieval research on papal letters, setting the book in context of the Kehr tradition.



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The chronological structure also includes forgeries, inserted in the sequence according to the date alleged in the document rather than the date of actual composition, which we would not know precisely anyway. The combination of genuine and forged evidence gives the volume a heterogeneous character. Since the »Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals« come within the volume's remit, the number of forgeries is significant. The volume also includes communications between the papacy and the peninsula which do not survive verbatim. These are prefixed by an asterisk, and the source reference begins with »Laud.«, for »Laudat«. The references to communications that we no longer possess also include communications that never happened, the »Laud.« equivalent of forgeries. There might have been a case for segregating the genuine from the false in the volume, but the current arrangement might be a good basis for a study of the medieval image of Spain's early Christian history. The forgers of Pseudo-Isidore presented a picture of Spanish papal relations which was then spread far and wide, since the false decretals were much copied. The volume would make it easy to trace this history, by looking for the asterisks that mark forgeries, checking the source apparatus to see if »Ps.-Isidore« (probably a team) was behind a given forged letter. Again, no. †16 (p. 20–21), purportedly from the early 4th century, is interesting for the history of 9th-century knighthood. A reference work like this can serve multiple purposes.

From the genuine documents the editors pick out a few salient themes: Church discipline, heresy; ecclesiastical politics (relations with Carthage and Constantinople); location of metropolitan jurisdiction; amicable exchanges and the privilege of the pallium; and the falling off of correspondence even before the Arab conquest of Christian Spain. The volume illustrates the history of early medieval papal delegation, the intensive communication under Gregory I, and late 7th-century doubts about the competence of Roman theologians (though not about the dignity of the apostolic see).

Thus, an obvious way to use the volume is as a guide to Iberian papal relations. This theme is now well served by scholarship. Shortly before the volume under review was completed, Alberto Ferreiro brought out his interpretative study of the same topic and period, »Epistolae Plenae. The Correspondence of the Bishops of Hispania with the Bishops of Rome (Third through Seventh Centuries« (2020). The timing was fortunate: references to Ferreiro are included in »Iberia Pontificia, Vol. VII«.

The lists of sources at the end of each entry may need to be used with care. My eye was caught by no. 46 (p. 37), for which »Coll. Dionysiana« is listed as a source. I did not remember this from the original »Dionysiana« and indeed the latter is not listed as a source in the corresponding entry in »Jaffé 3«, »Regesta Pontificum Romanorum I« (2016), nos. 1139 and 1140 (p. 199). It is the same with no. 38 (p. 33–34). Again »Coll. Dionysiana« is given as a source but again it is not in the original »Dionysiana«: see »Jaffé 3«, »Regesta Pontificum Romanorum I« (2016), no. 919 (p. 164). There



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may be other cases. If »Coll. Dionysiana« is meant to refer to any of the collections in the Dionysiana tradition this should have been spelled out – and with no. 46 (p. 37) the »Coll. Dionysio-Hadriana« is given as well, which suggests that »Dionysiana« alone refers only to the original version. Such mistakes inevitably creep into reference works, but users may need »Jaffé 3« at hand to check the sources.

They may also need »Jaffé 3« or a similar key to the code to find explanations of the symbols used. These symbols (not to mention »laud.«) are so familiar to the project workers that they do not think to say what they stand for. An obvious place would have been the list of abbreviations. If the editors think these abbreviations are general knowledge, they are certainly mistaken, and I'd recommend that further »[...] Pontificia« volumes rectify this. I doubt if these conventions are known to more than one in a thousand professional medievalists, incredible though that may seem to scholars immersed in the Kehr tradition. For an explanation of them see »Jaffé 3«, »Regesta Pontificum Romanorum I«, p. XI (as noted above, an asterisk beside an entry means that the letter is lost, a cross that it is spurious, and a question mark that its authenticity is in doubt). Did the editors think that every user of their book would have a copy of »Jaffé 3« at hand?

At the end of the volume there are indices of incipits, of places, of persons, and abbreviations (excluding symbols), and a concordance with »Jaffé 3« and the preceding version of »Jaffé«. For those who know how to use it, this will be a valuable work of reference, as well as an addition to a great tradition of German *Papsturkundenforschung*.



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