

# Pseudo-Isidore's Ennodius

By

ERIC KNIBBS

The False Decretals of Pseudo-Isidore know two great heroes. One is Athanasius, irascible patriarch of Alexandria and irreconcilable foe of Arianism. As a bishop persecuted for his orthodoxy and often driven from his see, Athanasius spoke to Pseudo-Isidore's anxiety over the unjust trial and exile of bishops in the Frankish kingdoms under Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald. No less than thirteen Pseudo-Isidorian forgeries pretend to document Athanasius's trials at the hands of Arians and his appeals to Rome for assistance<sup>1</sup>. Pseudo-Isidore knew the historical Athanasius from the *Historia Tripartita*, a compilation and translation of Greek histories that Cassiodorus commissioned from Epiphanius Scholasticus at the beginning of the sixth century. In 1998, Klaus Zechiel-Eckes discovered Pseudo-Isidore's cryptic notae in the margins of the most ancient manuscript of the *Historia Tripartita*, St. Petersburg, National Library, ms. F.v.I.11. This codex spent the Middle Ages at Corbie; legend holds that it was copied by scribes who

---

1) On Athanasius and his turbulent episcopate, see Athanasius Handbuch, ed. Peter GEMEINHARDT (2011), esp. p. 113–165. Pseudo-Isidore's Athanasian forgeries are Pseudo-Mark, JK †181; Pseudo-Julius I, JK †195 and †196; Pseudo-Liberius, JK †222; Pseudo-Felix II, JK †230 and †231, interleaved with three fictitious letters of Athanasius and the rest of the orthodox Egyptian episcopate, a statement of faith derived largely from the *Historia Tripartita*, and an invented letter from the heretical bishops Eusebius, Teognius, Theodorus and Berintus at Antioch, all in *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae*, ed. Paul HINSCHIUS (1863) p. 451–498. For the true history of Athanasius and the papacy during this period, with simultaneous references to Pseudo-Isidore's fictions, see Erich CASPAR, *Geschichte des Papsttums* 1 (1930) p. 137–195 and 585–92 (chapters 4 and 5).