

hypothesis, only implicitly directed against the source relationships studied here, is the suggestion that Pseudo-Isidore first constructed a prior and otherwise lost „Materialsammlung“ with the resources of his library. This hypothetical collection was then used to build the False Decretals, the False Capitularies and the Capitula Angilramni all around the same time⁸⁷. Positing a master repository – a third source – is indeed the only way to pry Isidorus Mercator loose from the False Capitularies and the other excerpt collections. The more this repository is made to explain, however, the sooner it collapses into irrelevance. To survive the foregoing analysis, which has proceeded by example and could be extended across many more pages, the features of this phantom florilegium must be aligned with the False Capitularies and its companions in very precise ways. Thus the purpose of positing a hypothetical compilation at the expense of our extant repositories becomes very unclear, and – in the absence of any explanation as to why this master collection and the surviving collections of Pseudo-Isidorian capitula cannot be identified with one another – even unjustified. The third-source hypothesis emerges as nothing more than a premise that has been implicit throughout this paper, namely that Isidorus Mercator must have worked from internal drafts of his own excerpt collections, rather than from the versions he later circulated; and that these drafts must have provided him, at points, with a slightly better or a slightly different text⁸⁸. The only parallel process visited upon the Pseudo-Isidorian forgeries, in other words, is whatever final redactions were made to prepare them for circulation. In substance, the forgeries are anything but parallel. The False Capitularies and its companions reflect an earlier and primary stage, and the False Decretals a later and secondary stage, of the forgery enterprise.

The Pseudo-Isidorian corpus has a fictional chronology and a chronology in fact, and this has confused scholarship for centuries. The False Decretals masquerade as an ancient legal collection, but they were

87) HARDER, Pseudoisidor und das Papsttum (as n. 17) p. 217–218.

88) In the same way, few have doubted that the interpolated Hispana represents a fundamental source of the decretals and the capitulary forger, while the only extant copy, namely Vat. lat. 1341, is contemporary with our earliest manuscripts of the False Decretals and does not itself represent the actual Hispana manuscript that our forgers used. The *Nonnullae sanctiones* are another case: Everybody today accepts that they are prior to the False Decretals, but they also survive only as an appendix in False Decretals manuscripts. The priority, strictly speaking, lies with earlier form that Isidorus Mercator used before he appended the *Nonnullae sanctiones* to his magnum opus.