

Those readers who have persisted this far might wonder whether all of this ground was worth covering. The priority of Benedictus Levita over Isidorus Mercator appears to be an arcane problem, even for committed students of early medieval legal history. In fact, the question matters greatly: No edition of the False Decretals will be possible without recognizing the essential priority of the False Capitularies, the *Capitula Angilramni* and the *Nonnullae sanctiones*. In many cases, Isidorus Mercator's sources can only be identified by following particular passages through multiple, increasingly redacted iterations. Insisting on the priority of the False Decretals creates the illusion that the decretals forger invented far more freely than he did. In fact, Isidorus Mercator worked so late that almost all of his programmatic statements had come to be fixed by formulae developed at earlier stages of the enterprise. Deviations from these formulae suggest the evolving goals of the forger, such that a critical edition of the False Capitularies is a prerequisite for a final critical edition of the False Decretals. Beyond these editorial issues loom the larger problems of Pseudo-Isidore's purpose and working methods. The forgeries before us are emphatically not a series of contemporaneous, parallel inventions. They are instead a hierarchically intertwined corpus. The False Capitularies deserve special attention as a compilation that in its earliest chapters perhaps predates all other Pseudo-Isidorian products, while in its final appendix coinciding with the work of Isidorus Mercator. The False Decretals, for their part, reflect the thought of our forgers at its most developed point. No other hypothesis of Pseudo-Isidore's textual development is tenable.

### Summaria

Zwei Jahrzehnte lang hat die Forschung die innere Chronologie der Pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen in Frage gestellt. Frühere Wissenschaftler folgten Paul Hinschius und gingen davon aus, die falschen Dekretalen des Isidorus Mercator hätten die falschen Kapitularien des Benedictus Levita als Zwischenquelle oder *fons formalis* herangezogen. Dann aber gewann in jüngerer Zeit Klaus Zechiel-Eckes viele Anhänger für seine Gegenthese, beide Sammlungen seien mindestens parallel zueinander entstanden, wenn nicht die Kapitularien sogar als

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appendix is ed. PERTZ, MGH LL 2, 2 p. 146–158; and in great part also by SCHMITZ, *Additio 4* (as n. 1).