

Abstract: Papal chancery products as sources for the history of universities: the example of Rome

Papal letters have been and still are left aside in research on medieval universities as allegedly unimportant, and therefore they have rarely been edited. Their interpretation is far from easy. This is shown here by the example of twenty sources known by 2013 for the history of the Roman universities. It is indispensable to find the authentic version of these products of the papal chancery in the registers, always considering which register series contains the primary version at which time, and what its function was. The placing in the registers can indicate the function of the specific letters. Chancery marks provide information for this as well as for dating. Analysing the contents requires some knowledge of Canon Law. Positive statements of facts have to be considered with care, as they were provided by the petitioners and represent the results intended by them, which they still had to enforce themselves. This applies even to university foundation privileges.

Keywords: Papal privileges; papal registers; foundation charters; supplications; universities; Rome; Canon Law

Schlagworte: Papsturkunden; Papstregister; Gründungsurkunden; Suppliken; Universitäten; Rom; Kanonisches Recht