

LINGUISTICS

UDC 811.134.2'35

PECULIARITIES OF THE “DATE-LINE” IN LETTERS OF BUSINESS FROM MEDIEVAL SPAIN

S.N. Bezus

North-Caucasus Institute, Branch, Department of Humanities, Historical and Mathematical Disciplines;
Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President
the Russian Federation (Pyatigorsk, Russia).
E-mail: luzazul@list.ru

Abstract. A letter of business is an official document with a clear structure and a specific set of requisites (each of them has a stable position in the text). The “date-line” is an obligatory requisite of a letter of business. It indicates the position of the document in time and space. The paper analyzes the peculiarities of date setting in letters of business from Medieval Spain: by Christian system of chronology, by Visigoth system of chronology or so-called Hispanic era and by Roman calendar. The author describes and systematizes the various models of the “date-line” in letters of business written in the ancient Castilian language (Romance) and in Latin; she offers her own version of the Hispanic era origin as well.

Keywords: a letter of business; Medieval Spain; date-line; system of chronology; Hispanic era; Roman calendar; the ancient Castilian language; Romance.

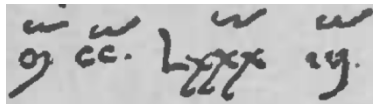
The time in belles-lettres can be stretched, compressed, interrupted; the events can be interchanged in any order. The text of a letter of business, on the contrary, always indicates the real historical moment (day of the week, date, month, year) when the letter was written, i.e. its temporal coordinates, and also deals with the real historical events and refers to real persons.

The “date-line” in letters of business (in Spanish “*Lugar y Fecha*” - “Place and Date”) is not only a temporal, but also a spatial marker that indicates the time of events and their place. It is an important component of a letter of business that represents a reference point (the starting moment) in the text creation.

Sometimes translators make mistakes in interpreting dates. One such error can be seen in the book ‘Napoleon’ by Yevgeny Tarle (a Soviet historian and academic at the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1874-1955) where the date of the first Vendemiaire of the IXth year is indicated as being the 20th of October 1800. This is wrong. On the 5th of October 1793 the National Convention decided to establish a new revolutionary calendar for France. The Christian system of chronology was removed. The National Convention ordered that years should be counted from when the monarchy was destroyed

and the republic proclaimed, i.e. the 22nd of September 1792. The poet Fabre d'Églantine invented new names for each of the twelve months. Thus, the first, Vendémiaire can be only in September, not before the 22nd and not later than 24th, i.e. on the 22nd or 23rd of September [1: 126, 154].

One can also encounter difficulties when decoding dates in letters of business from Medieval Spain. For example, a letter written by the abbot Pedro from the monastery of Onia is dated as “*Facta carta en el mes de Deziembre. Sub era millesima ducentesima octuagesima tertia*” [2: 389]. - “The letter was written (made) in December in 1283 of the era” (here and further the translation is mine. - S.B.). In the original text (picture 1) the year is expressed in Roman figures and clearly reads MCCLXXXIII (M = 1 000, C = 100, L = 50, X = 10).



Picture 1. Source: [2: 161]

However while decoding the letter we found it difficult to interpret. The author mentions Fernando III (“*El re don Fernando con su mugier la reina donna Juana regnant en Castiella et en Toledo, et en Leon, et en Galizia, et en Cordoua*” [Ibid: 389]. - “King Fernando and his wife, Queen Juana, governors of Castile, Toledo, Leone, Galicia and Cordoba...”). This **indirect temporal indicator** (king’s name) does not allow for the consideration of the numbers 1283 as a real year from the point of view of modern chronological system because King Fernando III died in 1252 AD and so was not on the throne in 1283.

It is necessary to explain that before the Christian system of chronology, known as *Anno Domini* (AD) or the “years of the incarnation”, a pagan system was used. This was the medieval chronological system, the so-called *Hispanic era* (in the document this is indicated by *Sub era*). It is also called the chronology of Visigoths. This chronological system was widely used in Europe from the Vth till the XVth century.

To bring the years by Hispanic era (or just ERA) into accord with the modern chronological system one should subtract 38 years as the Hispanic era began in 38 BC. This must be kept in mind when decoding the date on which medieval documents were written. Thus, the letter by the abbot Pedro from Onia was written in 1245 AD.

Many researchers have attempted to explain why it is this period of time which separates the modern era from the Hispanic era. A. Vila, for example, believes that the Hispanic era began with the conquest of the peninsula by Emperor Augustus. According to Vila, the Pyrenees were conquered by

the Roman Empire 716 years after Rome was founded, i.e. in 38 BC [3]. In this connection the Soviet scientific Shishmarev writes that the Roman troops first appeared on the territory of the Iberian Peninsula in 218 BC; finally Spain was subdued by Rome in 17/19 AD [4: 45].

R. Chao Prieto [5], a specialist in the medieval kingdom of Leon, does not agree that the beginning of the Hispanic era is linked to Augustus because the dates do not coincide. Also, the Asturian-Cantabrian wars had not begun yet.

U. Topper also argues that the true reason for choosing 38 years BC as a starting point for the Hispanic era has not been determined until recently [6].

Thus, it must be noted that the problem of date decoding in the Hispanic era system has not been resolved yet. Nevertheless, we will offer our own version. There is a point of view that the word *era* (‘*aera*’ in Latin) is an abbreviation and that the initial letters come from the Latin phrase “*Ab exordio regni Augusti*”, which translates to “*From the beginning of the Augustus’ reign*” [1: 143]. It is known that Caesar Augustus (63 BC - 14 AD, born Gaius Octavius) became the Roman emperor in 27 BC. The title ‘**August**’, which means “*exalted by God*”, was given to him by the Senate. With regards to his personal life, 38 BC is an important date for Augustus as he married Livia Drusilla. We can assume that the Hispanic era is linked to this date because Livia Drusilla was not simply his third wife. She took an active part in state affairs, acting as an advisor and an assistant to Augustus. She is responsible for some of the most famous personalities of the period: she was the mother of Emperor Tiberius, the grandmother of Emperor Claudius and the great-grandmother of Emperors Caligula and Nero. Livia was even deified by Emperor Claudius. The history shows that commonly, the wives of great people stay in the shadows but concurrently have a great influence on their famous husbands. It is they who are the real creative or destructive power behind changes to the world.

In letters of business from the Middle Age, written in the Castilian Romance (ancient Spanish), the “date-line” consists of two standard components (as in modern business letters): **the geographic (spatial) component**, formed with **concrete** and / or **non-concrete elements**, and **the temporal (chronological)** one, generally formed with three parts usually in the following order: day, month and year of letter writing.

Since the reign of Castilian King Fernando III (1217-1252), who initiated the use of the national Castilian language in royal documentation, the date was introduced by the words *Fecha* (that means “done”) or *Dada* (“given”). The name of the town (spatial component) and the date (chronological component) follow after a general introduction such as:

Model 1: “*Fecha carta apud Toletum rege experimente XXVI die aprilis era MCCLXX sexta*” [7: 62]. - The letter of the Castilian King Fernando III. - “Written in Toledo (concrete element of the spatial component) on the 26th of April in the year 1276 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1238 AD)”.

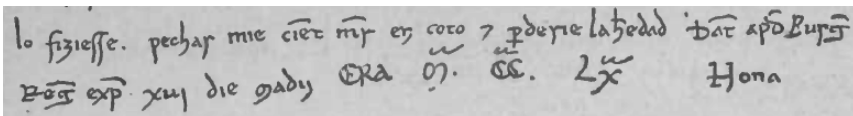
Model 2: *Dada en Maydrit, viernes ocho dias de noviembre era de mill e trezientos e siete annos* [7: 62]. - The letter of the Castilian King Alfonso X. - “Written in Madrid, on Friday on the 8 of November in the year 1307 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1269 AD)”.

Model 3: “...mando dar esta mi carta abierta et sellada con mio seello colgado dada en la ciutat de Castiella veynte et cinco dias de Febrero era de mill et tresientos et dies et nueue annos...” [2: 398]. - The letter of the Castilian King Alfonso X. - “I order you to hand over this open letter certified with my seal, written in the town of Castilia on the 25th of February in the year 1319 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1281 AD)...”.

The spatial component in the Model 3 consists of two clarifying elements. One is concrete, the name of the town, and another is non-concrete, the word *la ciutat* (“town”) which contains the spatial meaning. The day, month and year are parts of the direct chronological component. They are written in letters (not in figures). The year is accompanied by the noun *annos* that means “year”.

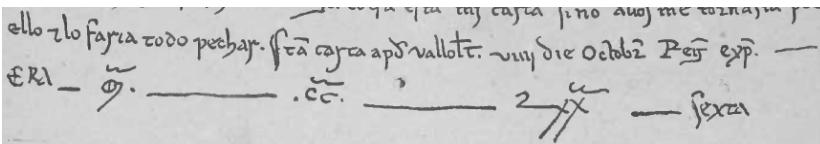
In the earlier letters, written in the mix of languages Latin and ancient Castilian (in the middle of the Fernando III’s governing) the Latin words “*Factum*” and “*Datum*” are used to indicate the date.

Model 4: “*Datum apud Burgum, Rege exprimente. Decimo tertio die Madii. Era millesima ducentesima sexagesima nona*” [Ibid: 385]. - The letter of the Castilian King Fernando III dated by 1231. - “[The letter is] written in Burgos, during the king’s governing, on the 13th of May in the year 1269 of the (Hispanic) era” (picture 2).



Picture 2. Source: [2: 152]

Model 5: “*Facta carta apud Valladolid, nono die Octobris, Rege exprimente. Era millesima ducentesima septuagesima sexta*” [Ibid: 386]. - The letter of the Castilian King Fernando III dated by 1238. - “The letter is written in Valladolid, on the 9th of October, during the king’s governing, in the year 1276 of the (Hispanic) era” (picture 3).



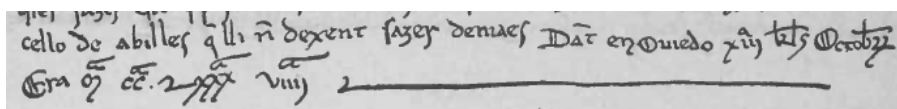
Picture 3. Source: [2: 153]

We can see in the fragments of the manuscripts (Model 4 - picture 2; Model 5 - picture 3) that the days are written in Roman figures (XIII and

VIII correspondingly) accompanied by the word *die* (“day”); months are written in letters (*madii* and *Octobr*); the years are written in a mixed manner: in figures and in letters (MCCLX *nona* and MCCLXX *sexta*).

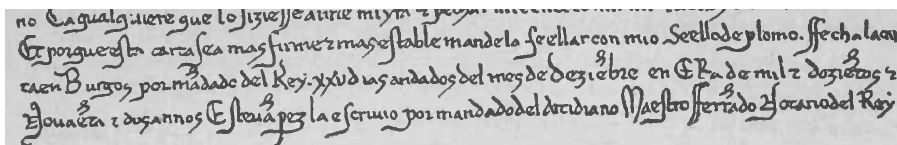
In letters of business from the Middle Age, written in the Castilian Romance, the year can be expressed both with Roman figures (Model 6 - picture 4) and with letters (Model 7 - picture 5). In case of figures there is no word *anno* (“year”), and vice versa the word *anno* is added when the year is expressed with letters.

Model 6: “*Data en Oviedo decima tertia kalendas Octobrium. Era millesima ducentesima octuagesima nona*” [2: 391]. - The letter of the Oviedo bishop of the 19th September of 1251. - “Written in Oviedo on the thirteenth kalendae of October. In the year 1289 of the (Hispanic) era”.



Picture 4. Source: [2: 165]

Model 7: “*Fecha la carta en Burgos, por mandado del Rey, veinticinco dias andados del mes de Deziembre en Era de mil et dozientos et nouenta et dos annos*” [Ibid: 391]. - The letter of the Castilian King Alfonso X dated by 1254. - “The letter is written in Bourgos, by order of the king, on the 25th of December in the year 1292 of the (Hispanic) era”.



Picture 5. Source: [2: 166]

In the Model 7 we can see the past participle *andados* (≈ passed) with the date XXV and the noun *dias* (“days”). It is necessary to note that the participle *andados* with the day is a quite frequent element in the full date by Hispanic era system.

In some letters, besides three main elements of the date (day, month, year), there is a day of the week. So we note the extension of the chronological component (in Model 2 as well):

Model 8: “*In era de mill e trescentos vinte e seis años, Martes vinte e oito dias dabil*” [Ibid: 399]. - “In the year 1326 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1288 AD), on Tuesday on the 28th of April”.

There is no spatial component in the last model. But there is an additional indicator in the text: **indirect nominator** of the historical time - *Feyta a carta en tempo del rey don Sancho* (“The letter is written in the times of

the King Don Sancho”), then there is a place of the reading (not writing!) of the letter: “*Esleyto en Lugo, don Fernando Perez*” - “[The letter] is read in Lugo (the town in the north of Spain)...”.

The date in the Model 2 (royal letter) appears in the end of the letter, in the Model 8 (private letter of business) - in the beginning of the document. It is impossible to determine any regularity in the date position. We can only state its initial or final position in the document. In some letters the date-line is situated formally in the central part of the text because of the long list of witnesses’ signatures.

As we have shown above the chronological elements in the “date-line” of the letter of business from the Middle Age are arranged as following: date, month, year. Nevertheless there are other orders. Thus, in the Model 9 there are no numerical markers of the day; instead the author mentions the name of the saint linked with this day. The order of the elements is the following: year, day, month. Compare:

Model 9: “*Fecha la carta en el era de mill doscientos setenta et nueve, el dia de Sant Ysidro, en el mes de Abril*” [2: 388]. - The letter of Mr. Lopez de Torres. - “The letter is made in the year 1279 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1241 AD), on Saint Isidro’s day, in April”. It is possible that the letter was written on the 4th of April when Saint Isidro was born.

Let’s examine the other Model:

Model 10: “*Esto fue fecho en Bizuezes en el mes de Iulio, el dia de Sancti Jacobi, delant estos testes: Iohan Ferrandez, Alfonso Roiz de Loma, don Gil de Andino, Juan Martinez de Andino, Pedro Diaz, Simon de Cornejo, Garci Roiz de Camego, Pedro Martinez Çoceda. Facta carta era milesima ducentesima octuagesima quarta. Anno domini millesimo ducentesimo quadragesimo sexton*” [Ibid: 388]. - “This letter was written in the town of Bizuezes in July on Saint Jacobe’s day in the presence of the following witnesses... (names). The year is 1284 of the (Hispanic) era and so 1246 AD”.

Saint Jacobe’s day is on the 25th of July. Here there are two years indicated in one letter, one from the Hispanic era system and another from the Christian system of chronological. The order of the chronological elements is the following: month, day, year (table). The names of saints can be found only in civil and ecclesiastical documents and never in official royal letters.

**Possible order of the basic chronological elements in the “date-line”
of the letters of business from medieval Spain**

Position	1	2	3
	day	month	year
	year	day	month
	month	day	year

Sometimes the day is omitted completely, and instead of the exact day the author indicates the number of the week:

Model 11: “*Esto fue fecho la primera setmana de abril en la era de M e CC e LX e IX*” [8. № 0827]. - “This [letter] was written in the first week of April in the year 1269 of the (Hispanic) era”.

In the next model there is no year of writing:

Model 12: “*Dada en Segouia, diez e siete días de agosto*” [9: 258]. - “Written in Segovia on the 17th of August”.

Only royal persons could take such epistolary carelessness. The signature of the above mentioned document reads: “*Yo, el rey, enbío mucho saludar a uos, el dean e cabildo de la eglefia de Seuilla...*” [Ibid]. - “I, the King, send a warm greeting to you, the dean of the monastery and the head of the church in Sevilla”. The author doesn’t mention the king’s name as well, but we know the king’s father: “...*el rey don Iohán, mi padre e mi senor...*” - “...the king Don Iohan, my father and my lord...”.

It is known that the king Iohan was the father of Enrique III. That is why we can determine approximately the year of the letter writing: 1391-1406, i.e. the period of Enrique III governing. Another indirect temporal marker is the name of the king’s secretary Iohan Martinez: “*Yo, Iohán Martínez, chanciller del rey, la fiz escriuir...*” - “I, Iohan Martinez, the king’s secretary, have written this [letter]”. In other documents we can read that it is this man who worked as a secretary under Enrique III.

One more feature can be noted in letters of business from medieval Spain dated by Hispanic era system. In all letters written in Latin, and in some letters written in Castilian, the date is given by Roman calendar (Model 6 as well). Decoding the date therefore requires another approach. In the Roman calendar there were three specific points within each month: ‘**kalendae**’, ‘**nonae**’ and ‘**idus**’. The first days of the months are called ‘kalendae’. The fifth day in January, February, April, June, August, September, November and December and the seventh day in March, May, July and October are called ‘nonae.’ The thirteenth days of the months (when ‘nonae’ fall on the fifth days) or the fifteenth days of the months (when ‘nonae’ fall on the seventh days) are called ‘idus’.

Today the usual way to count days is forwards (1, 2, 3, 4, 5... 31). The Romans counted days backwards from ‘kalendae,’ ‘nonae’ and ‘idus’. It should be remembered that the starting date itself is always included in the counting of days. For example,

Model 13: “*Facta carta era millesima ducentesima undecima. Die sexto decimo Kalendas Aprilis*” [2: 381] is interpreted as the following: “Written in the year 1211 of the (Hispanic) era. The sixteenth day of the April kalendae”. To bring this date into accord with the modern calendar it is necessary to count backwards from the 1st of April (the April ‘kalendae’) by sixteen days, including the 1st of April (1, 31, 30, 29, 28, 27...). The date will therefore be the 17th of March. We must also subtract 38 from the Hispanic era year. Therefore, the letter was written on the 17th of March in 1173 AD.

Model 14: “*Facta carta sub era millesima ducentesima sexagesima prima et quot idus Aprilis*” [2: 383]. - “The letter was written in the year 1261 of the (Hispanic) era, on the April idus”. In April ‘nonae’ fall on the 5th of April, therefore ‘idus’ fall on the 13th of April. Thus, the date is to be interpreted as the 13th of April, 1223 AD.

Model 15: “*Facta carta ista quinto idus Nouembris. Anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo vigesimo tertio*” [Ibid: 384]. - “The letter was written on the fifth day of the November idus in 1223 AD”. In November ‘idus’ fall on the 13th as well because in November ‘nonae’ fall on the 5th of November. If we count five days back from the 13th, including the 13th (13, 12, 11...), we calculate it as the 9th of November. The year *Anno Domini* refers to the Christian chronological system.

Model 16: “*Feita carta de doazun in Era milesima ducentesima seisagesima sexta et quot nonas Junii*” [Ibid: 384]. - “The letter was written on the June nonas in the year 1266 of the (Hispanic) era”. In June ‘nonas’ fall on the 5th of June; the year 1266 of the (Hispanic) era corresponds to 1228 AD.

At the end of the XIVth century the Hispanic era, used to set dates in business correspondence, disappears and is replaced by the Christian system of chronology. In this period is introduced an additional, **theological**, component in letters of business (from the Greek ‘**theos**’ which translates into «God»). This is the name of the Lord (*Noso Senior, Senior, nuestro Saluador, Jesu Christo, anno ab incarnatione Domini, era de encarnacon, nascimientto, anno Domini*). Nevertheless it is not an obligatory component. Compare:

1) The “date-line” with theological component:

Model 17: “...tres dias de Junio, **era de encarnacon de Noso Senior Jesu Christo** de mill é tresientos é oytenta é quatro anos” [Ibid: 410]. - “On the 3rd of June, in the year 1384 of the era of our Lord Jesus Christ incarnation”. In the manuscript we can clearly see that the year is written in letters [Ibid: 199].

In the Model 18 the “date-line” has an expanded chronological component (+ day of the week), but without spatial component (-), + theological component:

Model 18: “*Jueues tres dias de Abril, año del nacimiento nuestro Saluador Jhesu Christo* de mill é tresientos é ochenta é ocho años...” [Ibid: 411]. - “Thursday, the 3rd of April, in the year 1388 from our Lord Jesus Christ’s birth ...”:

In the following models (№ 19, 20) we can see the full date (i.e. spatial component + 4 elements of chronological component + additional theological component):

Model 19: “...*fecha en el dicho monesterio de Santo Toribio sabado diez y seis dias del mes de Abril anno del nacimiento de nuestro señor Jhesu Christo* de mill é quatrocientos é vn años [Ibid: 419]. - “...written in the mentioned Saint Toribio’s monastery, on Saturday, on the 16th of April, in the year 1401 from our Lord Jesus Christ’s birth”. The spatial

component in the Model 19 represents a type of toponim, i.e. the name of the town object - “Saint Toribio’s monastery”. The chronological component is expressed both in figures (day) and in letters (day of the week, month, year).

Model 20: “...*fecha en la mi casa fuerte de la mi villa de Ceruera á dies é siete dias del mes de Abril anno del Nacimiento del Nuestro Sennor Ihesu Christo de mill é quatrocientos é cincuenta é cinco annos*” [2: 433]. - “...written in my house of my village Çeruera on the 17th of April, in the year 1455 from our Lord Jesus Christ’s birth”. The spatial component in the Model 20 is double: “my house” (**non-concrete spatial indicator** with a deictic element - *la mi casa*) and “village Çeruera” (**concrete spatial indicator** with a deictic element - *la mi villa*).

Model 21: “*Fecha veynte é cinco dias de Abril anno Domini de mill é tresientos é ochenta é nueue annos*” [Ibid: 414]. - “Written on the 25th of April in 1389 AD”. In the Model 21 the year refers to the “Jesus Christ’s era”, but the Lord’s name is not mentioned.

2) The “date-line” without theological component:

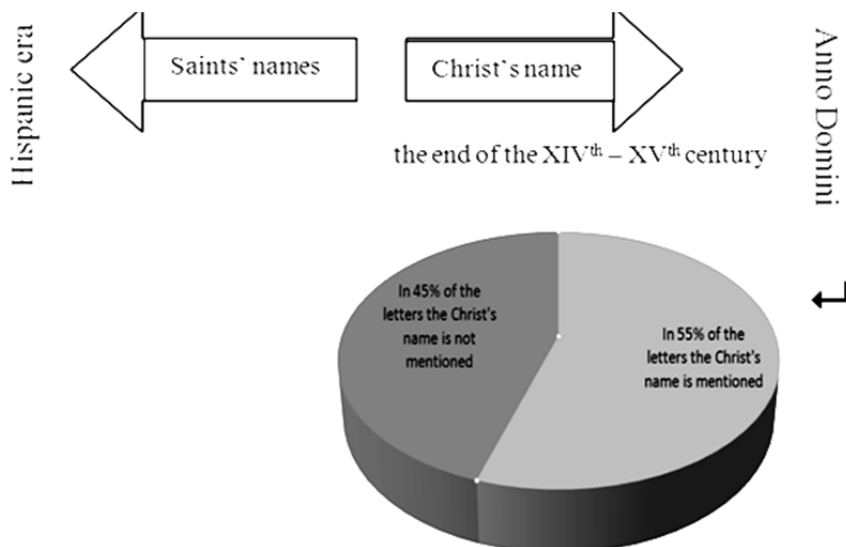
Model 22: “*Fecha quatro dias de Febrero del ano de mill é tresientos ochenta é siete años*” [Ibid: 411]. - “Written on the 4th of February in 1387” (simple year indicating).

Taking into consideration that the population of medieval Spain was very religious, we would suppose that the Models of the “date-line” with Lord’s full name are more frequent than those with concise theological component *Anno Domini*. However, having counted the samples of letters of business in our disposal, from 1384 (the first letter without Hispanic era system) till 1504 (the end of the Catholic Queen Isabella’s governing), we have got approximately equal proportions: in 55% of the letters the Christ’s name is mentioned, in 45% it is not mentioned. We often found the theological component in the letters of the end of the XIVth century - the first half of the XVth century. Starting from the second half of the XVth century, the Christ’s name in the “date-line” is used seldom. At the beginning of the XVIth century the “date-line” in letters of business loses the theological component and gets almost modern form: the combination of spatial component and chronological component. Compare:

Model 23: “*De Segouia a quarto días de Setiembre de quinientos y tres annos*” [10: 136] - “Segovia, 4th of September, 1503”.

The theological component in the letters dated by the Hispanic era system is manifested only in the names of the Saints’ days (scheme 1).

Model 24: “*ERA M. cc. Lij. fuit facta carta ista in die sancti bartholomej in mense augusti*” [8. № 0230]. - “This letter was written in the year 1252 of the Hispanic era (= 1214 AD) on Saint Bartholomew’s day in August”. → Saint Bartholomew’s day is on the 24th of August.



Scheme 1. Verbalization of the theological component in the “date-line” of the letters of business from medieval Spain

Model 25: “*Facta carta in mense decembris, in festo sancte Lucie, era M CC LXXX VII*” [8. № 0157]. - “The letter is written in December, on Saint Lucie’s day, in the year 1287 of the (Hispanic) era (= 1249 AD)”. → Saint Lucie’s day is on the 13th of December.

There are some letters dated back to the XIIIth century that contain double year: by Christian system of chronology (with theological component) and by Hispanic era system (without theological component). For example:

Model 26: “*Fecha es esta carta in el mes de deziembre, IIII días per andar, año ab incarnatione Domini Jesu Cristi MCCXXXVI, era MCCLXXIII, regnando el rey don Ferrando con su madre la reina doña Berenguela in Burgos*” [Ibid. № 0162]. - “This letter was written in December four days before its ending in the year 1236 of the era of our Lord Jesus Christ incarnation, in the year 1274 of the (Hispanic) era, during the King Fernando’s governing with his mother Queen Berenguela in Burgos”.

Model 27: “*Facta carta meinse decembri in Crastino Sancte Lucie. Anno ab incarnatione Domini M^o CC^o XXX^o VI^o. Sub era M^a CC^a L^a XX^a III^o*” [Ibid. № 0417]. - “The letter was written in December one day before Saint Lucie’s day in 1236 AD. In the year 1274 of the (Hispanic) era”.

Saint Lucie’s day is on the 13th of December. Latin word *Crastinus* - “tomorrow’s” - is **the relative (indirect) temporal indicator**. It is more logical to date the letter on the 12th of December.

The next model (28) contains double year and curious day: the author doesn’t indicate the concrete festive day but some days later after the saint’s day:

Model 28: “*Facta carta in quinto die post festum Sancti Martini, anno dominice incarnationis MCCXXXVIII, era MCCLXXVP*” [8. № 0681]. - “The letter was written on the fifth day after the Saint Martin’s day in 1238 AD, in the year 1276 of the (Hispanic) era”. → Saint Martin’s day is celebrated on the 11th of November. Thus, the letter is dated on the 16th of November (i.e. 11 + 5 = 16).

We’d like to draw attention that during the analyzed period, Roman figures were used to express the day and the year. The Arabic figures have only been used fully since the end of the XVIIth century [2: 105].

The role of the objective (concrete) element in the spatial component (i.e. *where* the letter was written) was played by the geographical names of towns, villages, settlements and names of the town objects; the role of the relative (non-concrete) element was played by the nouns with the “place” meaning: *ciutat, cibdad* “town”, *conuiento, monasterio* “monastery”, *casa* «house», *lugar* “place”, *villa* “village”, sometimes accompanied by the indicative components: *cerca de...* “near”, *dicho lugar* “the abovementioned place”, *dicho monasterio* “the abovementioned monastery”, *las casas de...* “the houses (of Mr...)”, *la mi...* “my (*casa, villa*) house, village”.

Thus, to decode the date in letters of business from Medieval Spain it is necessary to keep in mind three chronological systems: the Roman calendar (when reading days and months), the Visigoth chronological system or so-called Hispanic era (when reading the year) and the Christian chronological system (in general). Medieval documents in ancient Spanish (Romance) contain different models of “date-line” (that consists of one (the time of letter writing) or four components (plus introductory components, the place of letter writing, the theological indicators)). Schematically the full “date-line” can be represented as the following:

a) general introductory components (*Fecha, Dada, Sub era*) +

b) spatial component (elements: concrete / non-concrete) +

c) chronological component:

- *direct temporal indicators* (four basic element):

day of the week + **day** (numerical expression / the name of a saint) +

month + **year** (by Hispanic era system / by Christian chronological system) +

- *indirect temporal indicators* +

d) theological component (starting from the end of the XIVth century).

The kernel (the obligatory part, invariant) of the “date-line” in letters of business from Medieval Spain is the chronological component expressed at least by one temporal indicator: **the year** of the document writing.

References

1. VADCHENKO, N.L. (1996). *Encyclopedia. Test your knowledge*. Donetsk: Stalker, 1, 448 p.

2. MUÑOZ Y RIVERO, J., 1889. *Manual de paleografía diplomática española de los siglos XII al XVII*. Madrid: LIBRERÍA DE LA SRA. VIUDA DE HERNANDO Y COMPAÑÍA. 500 p. URL: <http://ru.calameo.com/read/0001070443cb1783f23bc>
3. VILA, A., 1999. *Cálculo de las fechas en los manuscritos medievales de la Península Ibérica*. URL: http://www.phistoria.net/reportajes-de-historia/Calculo-de-las-fechas_42.html
4. SHISHMAREV, V. (1941). *Essays on the history of languages in Spain*. Moscow: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 338 p.
5. Chao Prieto, R. *La era hispánica. Un ejemplo de mala datación en el libro "EL señorío y marquesado de VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO"*. URL: <http://corazonleon.blogspot.com/2008/08/la-era-hispnica-un-ejemplo-de-mala.html>
6. TOPPER, W. (2006). Medieval system of chronology in Spain, known as ERA. *Electronic Journal of Art & Fact*, 2. URL: <http://artifact.org.ru/sravnenie-versiy/topper-u-srednevekovaya-sistema-letoschisleniya-v-ispanii-izvestnaya-kak-era.html>
7. GALENDE DÍAZ, J.C. *Diplomática real medieval castellano-leonesa: cartas abiertas*, pp. 51-69. URL: <http://www.ucm.es/centros/cont/descargas/documento11725.pdf>
8. *Corpus de documentos españoles anteriores a 1700*. URL: <http://demos.bitext.com/codea>
9. OSTOS SALCEDO, P. and SANZ FUENTES, M.J. *Corona de Castilla. Documentación real. Tipología (1250-1400)*, pp. 239-260. URL: <http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/3829.pdf>
10. FRANCO SILVA, A. *Epistolario de los Reyes Católicos y de Carlos V a los condes de Oropesa*, pp. 115-172. URL: <http://www.google.es/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=alfonso franco silva epistolario&source=web&cd>