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Pope Celestine III (1191–1198)

Diplomat and Pastor

Edited by

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Preface

Pope Celestine III suffered a double misfortune in the timing of his pontificate. His registers, along with those of all of the twelfth-century popes, are lost, but he was succeeded by Innocent III, whose registers survive. Innocent also had an anonymous biographer, who did not much like Celestine, and his lead has been followed by generations of historians. We, like almost everybody else, came to know of Celestine through studying Innocent. Like almost everybody else, we imbibed the poor opinion of Celestine traceable to the *Gesta Innocentii III*. A chance discussion a decade ago sowed the seeds for this collection, as we each realized that a reappraisal of Celestine III was long overdue. The theme matured through a series of seminars held at the Leeds International Medieval Congress and further discussion both public and private. Our thanks are due to Frances Andrews, Susan Boynton, Louise Bourdua and Brenda Bolton. Aleta Doran has been kind enough to provide the maps, in spite of her sacrifices to the popes over the years. A particular debt is owed to Anne Duggan for guiding us through unfamiliar publishing territory and for sharpening wits with her deep knowledge. John Smedley of Ashgate has been a model of encouragement and patience. It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Michael Goodich as this volume neared completion. Michael's scholarship and friendship will be remembered and treasured by those who knew him, while his humour will be irreplaceable. We sincerely thank Marion Goodich for allowing us to publish Michael's chapter in this volume, which we have dedicated to Michael's memory. He, like others, was surprised to find how comprehensively Celestine III has been ignored and overlooked. It is our hope that this volume will provide a long-overdue reappraisal of this most interesting of popes, whose life spanned the whole of the twelfth century, that most interesting of periods in the history of the papacy.

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Chester and Saint Louis
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JD, DS.