

The Principles behind the Unusual: Easter Date in Spain on 21 March 577 (summary)

The Spaniards, followed by some cities in Gaul, celebrated Easter on a rather unusual date in 577. As 21 March is too early for the feast by the standards of any known Paschal tables, it is easy to assume that the date was chosen because the spring equinox supposedly fell on the same date or that it was the result of using Arian reckoning. In reality the equinox was believed by the Spanish to fall on 25 March and there is no evidence whatsoever to support any theory of an Arian Easter. It is possible to reconstruct the principles behind the calculations from contemporary texts that were involved in calculating the date of the Paschal feast. They were believed to be according to the instructions of the synod in Nicea and thus Catholic in nature. Although no such Paschal tables have yet been found, it is probable that native Iberian *latercules* were constructed during the turbulent years of migrations in the fifth century and that the Easter date in 577 was taken from those tables.

Árpád Kovács, Master of Theology/Lutheran Priest
Department of History, University of Oulu, Finland
email: arpad.kovacs @ hailuoto.oulu.net