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I N D E X

DATING IN THE LATIN INSCRIPTIONS OF MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ROME

Iiro Kajanto

The Latin inscriptions of medieval and Renaissance Rome have so far been little explored. There is no manual of medieval, not to speak of Renaissance epigraphy, no comprehensive lists of abbreviations,[1] very little preliminary work of the kind a classical epigraphist takes for granted.

We are somewhat better served with collections of inscriptions. V. Forcella's monumental Iscrizioni delle chiese ed altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri I-XIV, 1861-1884, is indispensable for any work in this field. This is no place to discuss its inaccuracies and deficiences, which are palpable to any one who has been using the volumes. Even so, the material is there, to be exploited with due caution.

In editing the inscriptions of the area sacra del Largo Argentina, a considerable number of which were from the medieval, Renaissance

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1 A. Cappelli, Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane[6], 1973, has a chapter on sigle ed abbreviature epigrafice, 429-516, but the material from medieval and later epigraphy is scanty; cf. further P. Lehmann, Sammlungen u. Erörterungen lateinischer Abkürzungen im Altertum und Mittelalter , Abh. Bayr. Ak. Wiss. Phil. Hist. Kl., N.F. III, 1929.

and Baroque periods, we noticed that the many interesting problems
of this epigraphy had been largely ignored. The most intriguing of
them is certainly the change from the medieval epitaphic style to an
imitation of the structure and expressions of ancient epitaphs observ-
able since the mid-fifteenth century.

With a view of helping to fill a gap here, I have been collect-
ing material for an all-round analysis of the Latin epitaphs of Rome
from the early medieval age down to a. 1527. In this year, the famous
sacco di Roma, the savage looting of Rome by the troops of Charles V,
marked the end of High Renaissance in Rome. This does not mean that
the epitaphic style suddenly changed. The Counter Reformation, the
chief agent in the reshaping of the cultural field, was still in its
initial phases. Nevertheless, in epigraphy a. 1527 can be taken as
the end of the period in which Latin epigraphy passed from the Middle
Ages to the Renaissance. It is thus a convenient terminus for a study
of this kind.

In the present paper, I shall discuss a restricted problem, the
recording of dates in epitaphs. Unlike many other problems suggested
by the later Latin epigraphy, this has the advantage of being clear
and well-defined.

In Christian epitaphs, differently from their pagan equivalents,
the date of the death or of the burial was very often recorded. In an-
tiquity, especially in Rome, it was the burial, *depositio*, that was
registered on funeral slabs. The date normally given was the day of
the month, the true *natalis* of the defunct for eternal life.[2] The con-

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2 Cf. F. Grossi Gondi, Trattato di epigrafia cristiana, 1920, 185ff.

sular year and/or *indictio* could be added, but was never indispens-

able.

Still in the Dark Ages, recording the day of *depositio* was usu-

al, to judge from the few Roman epitaphs that have survived to us,

a. 619;[3] a. 783;[4] a. 963;[5] a. 976;[6] in Papal epitaphs, Boniface IV

a. 615;[7] John XIII a. 972.[8]

In the epitaphs of medieval and Renaissance Rome, dating had

undergone considerable changes. First, the records of *depositio* were

all but unknown. In the material from Forcella, which begins at the

year 1000, I have found no more than three cases. Moreover, only one

of them was medieval, 11,10 a. 1299 (S. Maria Maggiore) *hic depositus*

fuit quonda(m) d(omi)n(u)s Gunsalvus ep(iscopu)s Albanen(sis) ann(o)

D(omi)ni MCCLXXXXVIIII . hoc op(us) fec(it) Io(hann)es mag(ist)ri

Cosme, civis Romanus. Even here, the significance of the expression

was different from that in the ancient epitaphs: Giovanni dei Cosma-

ti had sculptured a noble grave[9] to the bishop who some time before

had been as if stored away to await a proper sepulchre.

The other cases were plain imitation of ancient usages fashion-

able in Renaissance Rome, 2,26 a. 1462 (S. Maria Nuova) *depositus*

anno D(omini) MCCCCLXII III id(us) Ianuarii, and 4,179 a. 1468 (S.

Pietro in Vincoli) *deposit(us) id(ibus) Oct(obris) an(no) salut(is)*

MCCCCLVIIII. Both have the defunct's name in the dative, the latter

records the dedicator and gives the age of the departed. All this,

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3 Silvagni, Monum. XII.2.
4 Ibid. XIV.6.
5 Ibid. XVI.3.
6 Ibid. XVI.4.
7 Montini 116 No. 67.
8 Ibid. 158 No. 234.
9 Cf. Forcella's description of the tomb.

as well as the total absence of distinctively medieval features,

such as *hic requiescit* at the beginning, the name of the defunct in

the nominative, *cuius anima requiescat in pace* at the end, argue im-

itation of the ancient epitaphic style. Moreover, the date was given

according to the classical system (*idus*). Even this suggests deliber-

ate imitation of ancient epigraphy (cf. p. 50). But whereas it was

normally the pagan epitaphs from which expressions were borrowed,

here the model had been taken from Christian epigraphy.

Instead of the day of *depositio*, it was the day of the death

that was registered. The ordinary verb used here was *obiit*. In antiq-

uity, the verb was chiefly found in the late Christian epitaphs of

Gallia.[10] In Rome, it was rare but not entirely unknown.[11] In the

Middle Ages, however, it rapidly became common. We find it in the

epitaph of Pope Adrian I a. 795;[12] in an epitaph a. 987,[13] and in

another a. 980-999.[14] During the following century, it was found in

seven epitaphs in Forcella.[15] Moreover, two epitaphs had *decessit*.[16]

The verb *obiit* was the usual expression throughout the medieval and

Renaissance periods. Many other words and phrases signifying 'dying'

were used. I shall discuss them in detail in my future work.

There is another and still more momentous change. In addition

to the day of the month, the medieval and Renaissance epitaphs al-

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10 ILCV III p. 561; cf. especially 2888-2906.
11 ILCV 2886-2887.
12 Montini 134 No. 96.
13 Silvagni, Monum. XVII.5.
14 Ibid. XVII.7.
15 4,144 a. 1010, 7,726 a. 1005, 727 a. 1012, 728 a. 1034, 729 a.
    1035, all from SS. Bonifacio e Alessio; 8,1 a. 1003, 2 a. 1013,
    Papal epitaphs.
16 6,2 a. 1044 and 10,566 a. 1040.

most always registered the year of the death, too. In antiquity, on-
ly a minority of Christian epitaphs recorded years. The innovation
may have been due to a complex of reasons. One of them was no doubt
the new Christian method of counting the years. In the Christian
epitaphs from the end of antiquity, consular years were still used,
though increasingly supplemented with or - later on - replaced by
the fifteen year periods of *indictio*.[17] The disappearance of the
consular institution explains the resorting to *indictiones*, worth-
less though they were for recording the exact time. The modern Chris-
tian era, the creation of the monk Dionysios Exiguus towards the mid-
sixth century, came slowly into use during the early Middle Ages.[18]
In the inscriptions from Rome, it was not found until the 10th cen-
tury, *anno D(omi)nice incarnationis - - DCCCCLXIII*;[19] *ann(o) Dom(ini)*
DCCCCLXXVII;[20] *ann(o) D(omi)nic(ae) incarnat(ionis) DCCCCLXXXI*.[21]

In epitaphs, the usual expression was *anno Domini*. However,
a great variety of other expressions were used, especially in the
Renaissance period. The Humanists seem to have vied with each other
in the production of choice phrases, e.g. 1,524 a. 1466 *an(no) reli-*
gionis Christianae; 1,601 a. 1512 *ann(o) a natali liberatoris nostri*;
1,1227 a. 1490 *anno a Christianis natalibus*; 1,1262 a. 1507 *anno*
theogoniae; 1,1270 a. 1512 *post salutem reparatam*; 2,680 a. 1503 *an-*
no post corporatum Christum; 2,694 a. 1514 *anno a salutifera nativi-*

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17 In Roman epitaphs, the first reliable cases of *indictio* are from
   a. 522, ICVR 266 and 4281.
18 Ginzel 178ff.
19 Silvagni, Monum. XVI.3.
20 Ibid. XVI.4.
21 Ibid. XVII.1.

tate; 3,287 a. 1524 *redentionis anno*; 3,805 a. 1503 *anno virbigene*

(=verbigenae); 3,1078 a. 1523 *an(no) a partu virg(inis)*, etc. Many

of the expressions embodied important Christological ideas, *salus*

reparata, theogonia, corporatus Christus, verbigena.

    Indictio was also of a considerable frequency in medieval epi-

graphy, corresponding to its popularity in medieval literature.[22] The

last cases are from the fifteenth century, 1,1579 a. 1412 (S. Maria

sopra Minerva) *qui obiit an(n)o D(omi)ni MCCCCXII m(ense) Ianuarii*

die XI indictione quinta. Other cases, 1,1580 a. 1414 (ibid.); 1,1109

a. 1448 (S. Maria ad Martyres); 2,932 a. 1464 (S. Marcello), which

is the latest example in Forcella.

                          Designating the day

    The Roman system of naming the days by *kalendae, nonae* and *idus,*

was still in common use in the late Christian inscriptions of antiq-

uity. There is, however, sporadic evidence of the modern system of

counting the days of the month from one onwards. The first dated case

is as early as a. 345, ILCV 4422 (Tarracina, extant, cf. CIL X 6420

add. p. 1015) *Licineia Tertullinia - - d(e)p(osita) die VI m(e)nsi*

Iunii cons(ulatu) Amanti et |Albini| . Provided there is no confusion

in the text - cf. at any rate the unusual form of the word *mensis*[23] —

the epitaph must be accepted as genuine. However unique, the example

suggests that the new method was known in the fourth century.

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22 For *indictio* in medieval literature, see Ginzel 148ff.
23 According to Diehl, ILCV III p. 552, this is a genitive. It is,
   however, more probably an ablative. The form *mensi* is rare but
   not unknown, three cases in Thes.1.Lat. VIII 746,22.

The next securely dated cases are from the early 6th century,

ILCV 1147A (Nola) a. 517 *req(uievit) in pace die XVIII Ianuari*; 3188a

(Capua) a. 517 *depositus duodecimus Decembris*. There is a little ear-

lier case in 46,25 (Lugudunum) a. 506, but it is from a verse epitaph,

iamque bis octona Septembrem luce movebat - - annus. But these, as

well as a few other inscriptions, remain of little consequence among

the great mass of classical dates.

There is one group of epitaphs which were consistently dated

according to the modern system. They were from the Gallia of the

Merovingian period, especially from Belgica.[24] The expression was

throughout of a similar type, e.g. ILCV 2845A *cum fecerit Octob(ris)*

dies VII.[25] Most of the epitaphs are datable to the 7th and 8th cen-

turies. The dating system was similar to that in the official docu-

ments of the Merovingian court.[26] In Charles the Great's time, how-

ever, the classical system was reinstated.[27]

In the literary documents of Middle Ages, the use of one or

the other system seems to have varied from one kind of writing to

another. The classical dating was most consistently adhered to in

official documents, especially in Papal bullas.[28] As far as I know,

epigraphical evidence has not been considered in discussing the de-

velopment of the dating system. In any case, inscriptions are valu-

able in revealing the semi-official dating methods of the period.

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24 Cf. N. Gauthier, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule
   I, 1975, 147 ll. 4-5, p. 383.
25 Other cases, ILCV III p. 310.
26 Ginzel 117.
27 Blatt 367.
28 Ginzel 115-116; Blatt 362. In the Magnum Bullarium Romanum I, 1727,
   classical dating prevailed during the period discussed in this pa-
   per. Only towards the turn of the sixteenth century, modern dates
   began to appear at less frequent intervals. Even then they, were
   in a minority.

In Roman inscriptions, the modern dating came slowly into use.

In the poorly documented period a. 600-1000, the classical system

still predominated. There were a few modern dates, a. 619 *depositus*

die quinta decima m(ensis) Aucusti, but characteristically, the same

epitaph also has a classical date, *et filius eius - - depositus idus*

Octo(b)ris.[29] There are four other inscriptions with modern dates.[30]

In a martyrology probably dating to a. 757-767, the system was

throughout modern, *mense Ianuario die III, mense Febr(uario) die*

XI, etc.[31] In Papal epitaphs, the first modern dating is from a.

984.[32] On the other hand, there are ten inscriptions, three of them

from Papal graves, with classical dates.[33]

The material from Forcella, a. 1000-1527, is tabulated below.

I have divided it into fifty-year periods:

DESIGNATION OF THE DAY OF THE MONTH IN ROMAN EPITAPHS a. 1000-1527

	classical dating	modern dating	total
1000-1050	6	5	11
1051-1100	1	6	7
1101-1150	2	1	3
1151-1200	1	–	1
1201-1250	5	3	8
1251-1300	8 = 35,0%	15 = 65,0%	23
1301-1350	3 = 4,8%	59 = 95,2%	62
1351-1400	2 = 2,9%	67 = 97,1%	69
1401-1450	6 = 5,2%	109 = 94,8%	115
1451-1500	114 = 29,8%	268 = 70,2%	382
1501-1527	129 = 40,2%	192 = 59,8%	321
TOTAL	277	725	1002

29 Silvagni, Monum. XII.2.
30 Ibid. XIV.4. a. 783; XVII.2. a. 984; XVII.4. a. 984; XVII.7. a.
   980-999.
31 Ibid. XXXVII.1-2; cf. Silvagni's comment, p. 5.
32 John XIV, Montini 162 No. 137.
33 Silvagni, Monum. XIV.3. a. 755; XIV.6. a. 783; XVI.3. a. 963;
   XVI.4. a. 977; XVII.1. a. 981; XVII.5. a. 987; XVII.6. a. 994;
   Montini 116 No. 67 a. 615; 134 No. 96 a. 795; 158 No. 134 a. 972.

Before a. 1251, the material is too scanty to justify reliable conclusions. On the whole, however, classical and modern dating seem to have been of an equal frequency, fifteen examples of each. Their chronological distribution is uneven in that modern dating was especially common a. 1051-1100. But this may equally well be due to statistical chance.

As the Middle Ages advanced, modern dating increased in frequency, and the classical type all but disappeared. From the whole 14th century, there are only five cases of classical dating vs. 126 of the modern type. Moreover, both classical datings from the period 1351-1400 were found in inscriptions where this type was even otherwise common or explicable. One was in a Papal bulla, 8,31 a. 1372 (S. Giovanni in Laterano), the other on the epitaph of Pope Urban VI a. 1389, 6,32 (S. Pietro in Vaticano). In Papal bullas, classical dating was normal throughout the medieval and Renaissance periods (cf. p. 47). The dating system used at the *curia* may have affected the Papal epitaphs, too.

The fourteenth century was the most unclassical period in the history of Latin epigraphy in Rome. Gothic script had replaced the lettering inherited from antiquity, and classical reminiscences and imitations were even otherwise scarce. All this was no doubt at least in part due to the fact that the Papal court was residing at Avignon for the better part of the century, a. 1309-1377. Even after the Babylonian Captivity, the Great Schism reduced the importance of the *curia* until Pope Martin V re-established Rome as the headquarters of Papal government. In this period, Rome was thus deprived of the repository of the age's classical learning represented by the clerks

of the *curia*.

Classical dating began to reappear in the fifteenth century.
The reappearance was part of the imitation of classical epigraphy,
a consequence of the Humanistic turning to and study of, things an-
cient. This will be evident from a review of the six cases from the
first half of the fifteenth century. One of them, however, seems to
bear a wrong date, 1,1181 (S. Maria del Popolo). The epitaph was com-
posed in imitation of classical models, the defunct's name being in
the dative, followed by a *laudatio funebris*. The inscription has not
survived. Forcella read it in a historian of the church "che però
falsamente lesse 1320, errore reso manifesto dal concetto dell'iscri-
zione." Forcella corrected the date to 1420. But in all likelihood,
even this is too early. Imitation of classical epitaphs is not at-
tested in Rome before the 1430s.[34] It is more credible that the num-
bers 3 and 5 had been confused in Forcella's source. A nearer guess
for the date would thus be 1520. This is one instance of the inade-
quate and often incompetent treatment of epigraphical problems which
a modern epigraphist does not fail to notice in Forcella (cf. p. 41).

The other epitaphs bearing classical datings are from a. 1432,
5,4 (S. Agostino); a. 1443, 11,40 (S. Maria Maggiore); a. 1447, 3,
1035 (S. Maria dell'Anima); a. 1488, 1,507 (S. Maria in Aracoeli);
a. 1449, 1,1186 (S. Maria del Popolo). Four of them are from the last
decade of the period, none is very early. Most of the epitaphs in
which the dates were found were clear imitations of classical epi-
taphs. Only 3,1035 and 1,1186 were more medieval than Renaissance

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34 The first imitations found by me are 2,23 a. 1430 (S. Maria Nuova);
   1,1583 a. 1431 (S. Maria sopra Minerva); 12,573 a. 1431 (S. Lorenzo
   fuori le Mura), all of them read by Forcella.

in that neither records a dedicator or epithets. But the former is
fragmentary. Too much should not be made of its apparent medievality.

In the table below, the material is classified according to
the form of the month name, the genitive of a noun (*Ianuarii*), an
abbreviation (*Ian.*) or an adjective written out (*Kalendas Ianuarias*).
In ancient epigraphy, abbreviations were the standard form, the un-
derlying word being an adjective. The construction with a genitive
is thus unclassical. I have divided the material into three chrono-
logical groups, the first representing the early Middle Ages, the
second the Gothic age of Rome, and the last the Renaissance.

FORM OF THE NAME OF THE MONTH IN THE ROMAN EPITAPHS a. 1000-1527

	classical dating			modern dating		
	gen.	abbrev.	adj.	gen.	abbrev.	adj.
1000-1300	14	9	–	20	5	7
1301-1450	8	1	–	196	22	3
1451-1527	98	125	19	336	136	2
TOTAL	120	135	19	552	163	12

The tabulation reveals significant facts. In classical dating,
the unclassical form, the genitive of a noun, was found in a minori-
ty of the cases precisely in the period 1450-1527 when classical epi-
taphs were eagerly studied and imitated. Conversely, in modern dating
the unclassical construction predominated, even in the Renaissance
period.

Though the abbreviation was no doubt often chosen because of
its classical associations, this is not always certain. In the Goth-
ic period 1300-1450, when the imitation of classical models had
reached the low-water mark, abbreviations were still found in a num-

ber of cases.

The dates in which the name of the month had an adjectival
form were closest to the classical originals. Here we may notice
an intriguing difference in the chronological distribution between
modern and classical dating. In the former group, there were 10
adjectives before a. 1450, only two later ones, whereas all 19 ad-
jectives in classical dating were from the epigraphy of the Renais-
sance. This may require an explanation.

A few of the cases in the modern group are disputable, espe-
cially those in which only the final -s of the month name is lacking
and which were not read by Forcella. Thus 1,1632 a. 1494 (S. Maria
sopra Minerva) *mense Septe(m)bri die II*, from the sixteenth century
manuscript of Anonymo Spagnuolo, may be an incorrect copy of *Septe(m)-*
bris. The same may hold good for 6,1092 a. 1277 (S. Maria in Tras-
pontina) *mense Novembri die V*, and 6,1163 a. 1100 (S. Spirito in Sas-
sia) *m(ense) Decebri X*, both obtained from the same manuscript, as
well as 13,1307 a. 1313 (S. Francesco a Ripa) *mense Septembri die XX*,
from a sixteenth century manuscript. In these cases the choice bet-
ween a genuine adjective or an incorrect transcript must remain un-
decided. Moreover, 3,1 a. 1330 (S. Luigi de´Francesi) *meseiis Magio*
die primo, though seen by Forcella, is too Vulgar to be of any sig-
nificance here. *Magio* is of course an Italian word.

In the remaining cases, the adjective seems incontestable.
Two of them were from verse inscriptions, 8,4 a. 1072 (Laterano)
ánnus in Augustô currébat m(énse) perhústo, and 8,8 a. 1217 (ibid.)
mensís dum Mártius íret / ímpius íntranté septéna lúce per órbem

These and all save one[35] of the other cases are early.[36]

The substantive of the month name was found as early as Colu-mella.[37] In classical literature and epigraphy the noun was, how-ever, extremely rare. Still in the Dark Ages, the adjectival form was common even though the date might be modern. Thus in the martyrology mentioned on p. 48, the adjective was consistently used, *mense Ia-nuario die III; mense Augusto die VIII*, etc.; cf. especially *mense Septimbrio die X*: the adjective is quoted only once in Forcellini from a *rescriptum* of Hadrian.

The tabulation of the material shows that by the early medie-val age, a. 1000-1300, the genitive had become the ordinary form, 34 genitives vs. 14 abbreviations and 7 adjectives. The adjectives should accordingly be considered occasional survivals of the older construction. There was unlikely any imitation of ancient usages here.

It is different with the adjectival forms of the period 1451-1527. There can be little doubt that they were genuine imitations of ancient models. Except for two cases, discussed or quoted above (p. 52 and fn. 35), they were a peculiarity of classical dates, e.g. 1,536 a. 1475 (S. Maria in Aracoeli) *XIII k(a)l(endas) Septembres;* 1,588 a. 1507 (ibid.) *III nonas Februarias;* 1,605 a. 1515 (ibid.) *calendis Martiis;* 1,1631 a. 1494 (S. Maria sopra Minerva) *p(ri)die*

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35 3,809 a. 1504 (S. Maria in Camposanto) *die ultimo Augusto*, a mis-take for *Augusti?*
36 13,785 a. 1073 (S. Maria in Campitelli) *mense Iulio die VIII;* 8,5 a. 1099 (Laterano) *m(ensis) Iuniu(s) d(ies) V;* 4,262 a. 1200 (S. Pietro in Carcere) *mense Martio XIX;* 13,787 a. 1332 (Campitelli) *mense Maio die III.*
37 J. Svennung, Untersuchungen zu Palladius und zur Lat. Fach- und Volkssprache, 1935, 247-250.

idus Martias.

Humanistic imitation of classical dating was most evident in the cases in which the Imperial names of months, *Iulius* and *Augustus*, had been replaced by their republican equivalents, *Quintilis* and *Sextilis*. The former had been renamed a. 44 B.C. in honour of Caesar, the latter a. 8 B.C.[38] All the examples are from the very latest period, 6,1645 a. 1484 (Vaticano, epitaph of Sixtus IV) *obiit idib(us) Sextil(ibus) hora ab occasu quinta;* 2,461 a. 1500 (S. Ivo de'Brittoni) *quinto nonas Quintiles;* 6,113 a. 1501 (Vaticano) *obiit XVII kal(endas) Quintilis;* 1,1695 a. 1516 (S. Maria sopra Minerva) *esse desiit no(nis) Sextilib(us);* 3,1275 a. 1526 (S. Antonio de'Portoghesi) *interiit XII cal(endas) Sextil(es).* The Humanists' occasional use of these forms was due to imitation of the classical models in the strictest sense. Classical was only that which had been hallowed by Cicero's writings. Cicero naturally did not know the Imperial month names.

There are no examples of the complete classical formula *a(nte) d(iem),* which had become obsolete by the beginning of the Empire.[39] 3,288 a. 1525 (SS. Trinità de'Monti) certainly has *obiit ante XXI Septemb(ris).* But as *kalendae* is not recorded, this unlikely belongs to the classical type. Moreover, the inscription such as it has survived is a modern copy of the original.[40] In making the copy, there may have been some inaccuracy.

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38 Censorinus 22,16; W. Kubitschek, Grundriss der antiken Zeitrechnung, 1928, 142.
39 H. Salonius, Zur römischen Datierung, 1922, 19ff.; for the disuse of the expression in medieval documents, Ginzel 116.
40 Forcella: "Questa memoria − − a lettere moderne ci presenta una copia dell'antica."

On the other hand, *pridie*, used throughout the pagan and Christian epigraphy of antiquity, gives 17 examples, 1,559 a. 1490 (Aracoeli) *prid(ie) k(a)l(endas) Ianuar()*; 1,1257 a. 1503 (S. Maria del Popolo) *pridie nonas Septembris*; 1,1631 a. 1494 (s. Maria sopra Minerva) *p(ri)die idus Martias*; 2,681 a. 1505 (SS. XII Apostoli) *pridie idus Augusti*, etc. The Roman day names were abbreviated in all but the three cases quoted above. 13,1287 a. 1527 (S. Maria del Popolo) records *pridie nonis Maii*. Given the lateness of the epitaph, this is hardly interpretable as a Vulgar confusion between the accusative and the ablative. Unless there has been a contamination between two constructions, *pridie* and *nonis Maii*, the case must be considered an imperfect transcript of a correct original. Forcella read the inscription in an old manuscript.

Peculiarities in dating

In a number of cases, in addition to the normal date, the Latin name of the day of the week was also given. Except for Sunday, all the days were represented, *dies Lunae* four cases,[41] *dies Martis* four cases,[42] *dies Mercurii* once,[43] *dies Iovis* once,[44] *dies Veneris*

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41 1,1109 a. 1448 (S. Maria ad Martyres); 3,496 a. 1465 (S. Giacomo de'Spagnuoli); 2,273 a. 1482 (S. Gregorio); 1,618 a. 1526 (S. Maria in Aracoeli): of the imitation type.
42 4,7 a. 1347 (SS. Silvestro e Martino); 13,1266 a. 1478 (S. Maria del Popolo); 1,1218 a. 1483 (ibid.); 2,693 a. 1514 (SS. XII Apostoli).
43 13,1265 a. 1475 (S. Maria del Popolo).
44 10,571 a. 1526 (S. Agata alla Suburra).

four[45] and *dies Sabbati* three cases.[46] With one exception (see fn.

41), the epitaphs were medieval or, though later, of the medieval

type.

The day names derived from pagan mythology were a stumbling-

block to the ancient Church.[47] These names suggested astrological

ideas of a god as the Lord of a day or of an hour of a day. This was

an additonal reason for the Fathers to frown on them. Instead they

recommended, and used themselves, the word *feria*, obtained from the

plural word *feriae*, 'festival'.[48] But the planetary week was too

deeply rooted in the popular use to be eradicated by ecclesiastical

disapproval. The Church had finally to acknowledge defeat and to ac-

cept the pagan names of the days.

In the Christian epitaphs of antiquity, the pagan day names

were common, much commoner than in the funerary inscriptions of the

pagans.[49] But contrary to what has been argued, this was hardly due

to any particularly strong hold of astrology over the Christian

plebs.[50] If the influence of the stars had been alluded to, the day

and hour of the birth, not that of the death, still less that of *de-*

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45 1,434 a. 1312 (S. Maria in Aracoeli); 4,265 a. 1315 (S. Nicola in
   Carcere); 10,355 a. 1456 (S. Martinello); 3,1045 a. 1465 (S. Maria
   dell'Anima).
46 2,1336 a. 1300 (S. Maria in Aquiro); 5,26 a. 1468 (S. Agostino);
   3,826 a. 1516 (S. Maria in Camposanto).
47 Cf. E. Schürer, Die siebentägige Woche im Gebrauche der christ-
   lichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte, Zeitschr. für d. neutest.
   Wiss. 6(1905)1,66; A Ferrua, Dal giorno di Dio al giorno degli
   dei, Civiltà Catt. 1934, II, 128-143.
48 For the difficulties in explaining the derivation, see Ferrua, op.
   cit. 134f.
49 In ILCV, ICVR I[1] and I-VI, I have counted ca. 120 epitaphs in which
   the day of the week was mentioned.
50 Schürer, op. cit. (fn. 47) 44ff.

positio, should have been registered on the funeral slab. The in-
scriptions which clearly suggest astrological ideas were few.[51]

The frequency of the names of the days in Christian epitaphs
was due to two facts. Firstly, the seven-day week had been inherited
by the Christians from the Jews, who had long used it independent of
any astrological ideas. The week was consequently an important idea
for the Christians. Secondly, and more decisevely, the Christians
had more occasions than had the pagans to record the names of the
days on their epitaphs because of their practice of registering the
defunct's *depositio* (see p. 42).

Medieval epigraphy was to a considerable degree an inheritor
of the traditions of ancient Christian epigraphy in its latest phase.
The general structure of epitaphs as well as a number of stock ex-
pressions, such as *hic requiescit,* were common already in the 5th
and 6th centuries. It may have been the same with the recording of
the weekdays. If people wanted to date as exactly as possible the
event fateful for the defunct, in addition to the usual date, they

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51 Only five Roman epitaphs out of a totality of 120 record the day
   of the birth, ILCV 4402B (coem. Agnetis) *Pontice nata [- -] die Be-*
   neris; ICVR 11757 a. 359 *nat] us XI Kal(endas) Iulias die Beneris;*
   13324 a. 366 *nata est puella [- -] bana die Martis;* 10044 *natus idi-*
   bus Mart [iis] die Solis. The most important of the epitaphs is
   15587 a. 364, *puer natus - - ora noctis III IN VXIT VIII idus Madias*
   die Saturnis luna vigesima signo Apiorno (= Capricorno) nomine
   Simplcius, which suggests devotion to astrological lore. Even so,
   the interpretation of the text is a little uncertain for the word(s)
   printed in the capitals are plainly corrupt. For a full commenta-
   ry, see De Rossi, ICVR I¹ 172. Moreover, two epitaphs record the
   coincidence of the day of birth with the day of *depositio,* ICVR
   479 a. 350 and 368, *natus est - - die Saturnis depositus in hac do-*
   mo aeterna - - die Saturnis, and 15634 *depositus V idus Iulias*
   die Iovis quo et natus est. There is unlikely any astrological
   significance here.

recorded even the day of the week. In some cases, still more detail-
ed dating could be used (e.g. 10,571, see below). There was little

difference here between ancient and medieval epitaphs. On the other

hand, in the epitaphs from the Renaissance period which imitated

classical epigraphy, the names of the weekdays were almost unknown

probably because they were almost unknown even in ancient pagan epi-

graphy.

In my material, there are three cases of the word *feria*, un-
successfully advocated by the ancient Church and of some frequency

in medieval literature.[52] However, only one of the inscriptions is

funerary, 3,539 a. 1504 (S. Giacomo de'Spagnuoli) *feria VI hora III*

i(n) passione D(omi)ni obiit.[53] This is a very solemn and a very

Christian expression. The departed had died on the very same day

and at the very same hour that Our Lord was crucified. A pagan name,

especially *die Veneris*, was probably felt unbecoming here. For the

record of the hour, see below p. 58.

Instead of or - though more rarely - in addition to the desig-
nation of the day of the month, a few epitaphs were dated by Chris-

tian festivals. These cases were not particularly numerous, and were

almost without exception medieval, *obiit die Iovis penultima Maii in*

festo corporis Chr(ist)i 10,571 a. 1526 (S. Agata alla Suburra); *in*

festo omnium sa(n)ctorum 1,447 a. 1328 (S. Maria in Aracoeli); *in vi-*

gilia assu(m)ptionis Mariae 3,845 a. 1527 (S. Maria in Camposanto);

festo lactentum propter Cristum morientum 2,1041 a. 1370 (S. Maria

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52 Ginzel 102.
53 The other cases are from official inscriptions, 7,591 a. 1248 (S.
   Sabina) *feria III quarte ebdomade in (Quadragesima)*; 7,592 a. 1263
   (ibid.) *i(n) tertia feria edomade s(an)c(t)e*.

in Trastevere); *die sancto Leonardi* 11,36 a. 1428 (S. Maria Maggiore),

etc.[54] This type of dating was of considerable popularity in medieval

literary documents north of the Alps.[55] In Italy it was never of a

comparable frequency. The paucity of the epigraphical cases from Rome

accords with this.

Finally, there are a few epitaphs which register even the hour

of the death. Similar cases were found in ancient epigraphy, both

pagan and Christian.[56] Between the ancient and the later *hora* there

is, however, an important difference. In Italy, a 24-hour day of *ho-*

rae aequales had been in use since the late thirteenth century, the

counting of the hours starting at sunset.[57] In antiquity, hours

were *inaequales*, each 1/12 of the day or night.

In three epitaphs, the modern Italian system is beyond doubt,

1,1596 a. 1466 (S. Maria sopra Minerva) *qui obiit - - die quarto men-*

sis Septemb(ris) hora XVI; 2,668 a. 1483 (SS. XII Apostoli) *XV ka-*

l(endas) Octob() hor(a) XIII obiit; 2,693 a. 1514 (ibid.) *requievit*

die Martis XVIII Iulii hor(a) XVII. Considering that the counting

of *horae* started at sunset, the following case also belongs here,

5,838 a. 1524 (S. Onofrio) *obiit die ultima Iulii ora quarta noctis*.

Even so, the addition of *noctis*, which is of course superfluous, is

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54 Other cases, 2,1495 a. 1286 (S. Prassede) *in die o(m)ni(um)*
   s(an)c(t)o(rum); 2,1335 a. 1297 (S. Maria in Aquiro) *vig(i)lia*
   S(ancti) Luc(ae); 11,16 a. 1323 (S. Maria Maggiore) *in festo*
   S(an)c(t)i Luce; 4,5 a. 1309 (SS. Silvestro e Martino) *in vigi-*
   lia apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi; 1,441 a. 1314 (S. Maria in
   Aracoeli) *in crastina Beati Francisci*; 1,1107 a. 1414 (S. Maria
   ad Martyres) *i(n) die Lucie*; cf. 3,539, quoted above.
55 Ginzel 117-120.
56 Cf. CIL VI 7.5 p. 2798 and ILCV III p. 315.
57 Ginzel 93-95.

suggestive of classical time-reckoning.

In two epitaphs, imitation of classical usage is still more palpable. One of them, 3,539, has been quoted on p. 58. There is here a reminiscence of the famous passage in Ev. Marc. 15,25, *erat autem hora tertia: et crucifixerunt eum*, which makes it very probable that the *hora tertia* in the epitaph corresponded to the *hora tertia* of the Romans.

The other case is of considerable interest because it is found in the epitaph of Pope Sixtus IV. The inscription has been quoted on p. 54. The Humanistically educated person who wrote the epitaph affected classical turns of expression not only in *Sextilibus* but even in *ab occasu*. Clearly this was meant to evoke the ancients' method of counting the hours of the night from sunset to sunrise. But the artificiality of the imitation of things ancient when they ran counter to contemporary practice is apparent from the fact that *hora ab occasu quinta* in reality coincided with *hora quinta* in the modern system. The whole expression was thus mere decoration.

ABBREVIATIONS

Forcella (see p. 41) is here quoted by giving only the number of the volume, 11,10, etc. Other abbreviations:

Blatt = F. Blatt, Antike Züge im Mittellatein, in Mittellateinische Philologie, 1975, 359-371.

Ginzel = Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie III, 1914, by F.K. Ginzel.

ICVR I[1] = Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae saeculo septimo antiquiores I, edited by De Rossi, 1857-1861.

ICVR I-VI = Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo
      antiquiores, Nova series, 1922-.

ILCV = Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae veteres I-III, edited by
      E. Diehl, 1925-1931.

Montini = Le tombe dei papi, by Renzo U. Montini, 1957.

Silvagni, Monum. = Monumenta epigraphica Christiana saeculo XIII
            antiquiora, edita curante Angelo Silvagni, I, 1943.