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LECTORS IN THE LATIN WEST: THE EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE (C. 300–800)

CHRISTIAN LAES*

- I: Introduction to the Epigraphical Dossier
- II: The Epigraphical Dossier
- III: Notes on the Inscriptions

I: INTRODUCTION TO THE EPIGRAPHICAL DOSSIER

1. Introduction

This article for the first time brings together the available inscriptional evidence of lectors in Early Christianity, as found in Latin inscriptions from the West in Late Antiquity (c. 300–800). By presenting a full epigraphical dossier, I do not stick to a naive interpretation that “the sources speak for themselves”. On the contrary, the assembled evidence will be used to address fundamental questions. As such, it will be asked how the non-literary evidence fits with what we read in the Church Fathers. Differences in the role of *lectores* from one region in the West to another will be highlighted. Also, the factor of age will be important to explain the office in the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*. Finally, the inscriptions will enable us to study in greater detail social background and agency of lectors, by showing which sort of inscriptions were dedicated to whom in what particular circumstances.¹

* This publication took shape during a Visiting Professorship at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) by a grant of the Fonds National Suisse, program Scientific Exchange. I am very grateful

2. Reading aloud as a specialised skill

Literacy in the ancient world has become an intensively studied subject in the last decades. Though scholars disagree on many points such as (the possibility of) assessing degrees of literacy, the importance of the written word, or the social function of reading and writing, they largely agree that the Graeco-Roman world differed on significant points from other contemporary societies. This was not a society in which reading and writing were confined to a professional class of writers, who needed several years of specific training to acquire skills in complex letter systems. At the same time, being able to read a literary text at first sight was considered quite a skill.² The use of the *scriptura continua* meant that a considerable amount of practice was required to read and recite a text in a proper way.³

In such a context, the well-to-do had slaves at their disposal who were especially entrusted with the recitation of texts. Such servants were called ἀναγνώσται in Greek and *lectores* in Latin.⁴ As trained and educated slaves, they

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¹ The epigraphical study of office holders in the Early Church is still in its infancy. Buonopane (2017) has usefully assembled the evidence of neophytes. For deacons, see Felle (2010). Other studies have a local approach: Janssens (1981) (City of Rome) and Cuscito (1974) (East Adriatic region). Rüpke (2005) has systematically assembled evidence on priests from Rome up to the year 500. The indices of the most valuable *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire* (PCBE – see bibliography) do not include ecclesiastical functions, which means that the readers have to browse through thousands of pages when searching for a person holding a particular office.

² Petr. *Sat.* 75,2: *librum ab oculo legit* (about a young slave who also had basic skills in counting).

³ Harris (1989); Bowman and Woolf (1994); Johnson and Parker (2009); Thomas (2009); Werner (2009); Harris (2014); Ripat (2020) are all seminal works, which can serve as an introduction to the subject.

⁴ There are no separate studies on such slaves. The best accounts are Fondermann 2017a and Fondermann 2017b.

were part of the staff in wealthy households.⁵ Their recitations could be part of the entertainment during dinner.⁶ Modulation of the voice and mastery of body language were required skills for such readers⁷ – the main difference between *lectores* and *oratores* being that the latter were required to recite their text by heart, while the former read aloud from a parchment or papyrus.⁸ Masters listened to slave readers while their bodies were cared for during a massage,⁹ while they were awake at night,¹⁰ or simply when they had nothing better to do.¹¹ When a letter arrived, these slaves read it aloud.¹² Though most of them were males, a few inscriptions mention female slaves as *lectrices* or *anagnostriai*.¹³ The sources do not inform us about the ages of slave readers. In the context of training of slaves within households, in which literacy could obviously play a role, we may well imagine children or young people learning the art of reading and reciting. They could then soon become *lectores*. In the context of *nomenclatores*, heralds or announcers – a somewhat similar function which might have involved reading aloud – Pliny the Younger mentions an age of about fifteen, though no minors are attested as *nomenclatores* in the inscriptions.¹⁴

⁵ Nep. *Att.* 13,3 (*pueri litteratissimi, anagnostae optimi et plurimi librarii*); Cic. *Att.* 1,12,4 (*puer festivus anagnostes noster Sositheus decesserat*); Cic. *fam.* 5,9,2; Plut. *Alex.* 54; Plut. *Crass.* 2; Plin. *epist.* 3,5,12 and 8,1,2.

⁶ Nep. *Att.* 14,1; Plin. *epist.* 1,15,2 and 9,36,4.

⁷ See e.g. Habinek (1996) and Corbeill (2004) on training and mastery of the voice in ancient recitation and oratory.

⁸ Quacquarelli (1959, 389).

⁹ Plin. *epist.* 3,5,14

¹⁰ Suet. *Aug.* 78,2.

¹¹ Plin. *epist.* 3,1,8.

¹² Fondermann 2017b does not cite any ancient passage which explicitly attests this, but it is in general very likely that this was among the functions of *lectores*.

¹³ *CIL* VI 8786 and 33473 (*lectrices*); *CIL* VI 33830 and 34270 (?) (*anagnostria*). Here, Fondermann 2017a is rather inaccurate: he cites *CIL* VI 3978 (at col. 105) as an example of a *lectrix*, while it obviously mentions a *lector* in the household of Livia, and he cites the non-existent term *anagnostrices*. *AE* 1928,73 (Rome, first century CE) is apparently unknown to Fondermann. It mentions a *lectrix* freedwoman Petale Sulpicia, whose slave name had been Petale.

¹⁴ Wieber (2017) on training of slaves within households. Laes (2008, 255–256) on *nomenclatores*, with the quote from Plin. *epist.* 2,14,6: *nomenclatores mei – habent sane aetatem eorum qui nuper togas sumpserint*.

3. Reading aloud in early Christian liturgy

As Christianity is very much a religion of the book, the act of reading aloud to an audience became more important. While in a pagan context village offices were held by illiterate men, who took pride in the mere fact of being able to sign their name,¹⁵ we may imagine more Christians concentrating on the ability of reading out loud sacred texts. Reading surely was crucial in liturgy and liturgical performances. Initially, the Church followed the practice of the Jewish synagogue, in which those in charge of the services could invite whomever they wished to read the lessons.¹⁶ However, the choice must have been severely limited by the fact that only a minority of the members of the community would be capable of deciphering the *scriptura continua* in which scrolls were written.¹⁷ Therefore it has been proposed that the Book of Acts was delivered orally by a specialised lector, who followed Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions for recitation and delivery, rather than directly read by an audience. Shiell's study outlines the function of the lector in Graeco-Roman times as a filter through which a Christian audience too would receive a sacred text.¹⁸

The reading aloud of letters, instructions or words from the Prophets was part and parcel of Christian practice already from the times of the Apostles.¹⁹ Justin Martyr states that on Sundays all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the minister verbally instructs.²⁰ Christian prayers were typically said aloud by

¹⁵ See Youtie (1966) on the case of the village clerk Petaus who could hardly write his name, and certainly not with consistent correctness.

¹⁶ As suggested in Luke 4:16–17, where the child Jesus reads from Hebrew scripture.

¹⁷ Davies (1963, 10). This evolved when the Church moved further away from Judaism. Jewish education stressed more the importance of literacy, and presumably Jewish communities had relatively higher percentages of people with capabilities to read. See Laes (2010, 92–93).

¹⁸ Shiell (2004) describes the conventions for performers' gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections found in material from Greco-Roman literature and art that are mirrored in the book of Acts. He has surprisingly little to say, however, on the training and education of lectors.

¹⁹ Acts 15:30; Col. 4:16; 1 Tim. 4:13–16.

²⁰ Iust. Mart. 1 *Apol.* 67.

priests, whose prayers were given assent by the people with the word Amen.²¹ Tertullian suggests reading of the Law and the Prophets with the Gospels and the Apostolic Letters.²² The fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions mention reading of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel in liturgy.²³ In the Gallic church of Gregory of Tours, there was a reading from the Prophets, one from the Epistles, and one from the Gospels.²⁴ Earlier, Saint Augustine reveals very much the same sequence.²⁵

While Cyprian suggests that lectors read from the Gospels,²⁶ the Apostolic Constitutions mention only books from the Old Testament, the Acts and the Epistles of Paul. By then, reading the Gospels had become the task of the deacon or the presbyter.²⁷ The attribution to deacons or presbyters of reading aloud from the Gospels is mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, and is for the West also attested by Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine.²⁸

In reading, the lectors stood on a *pulpitum* or *tribunal*, also called *exedra* (a *lectorium* existed only in Medieval churches).²⁹

²¹ Quacquarelli (1959, 386–388) has aptly collected the references, and opposed this Christian usage to the pagan custom of praying by *murmure longo* (Ov. *Met.* 7.251). For Amen, see Iust. Mart. I *Apol.* 65.

²² Tert. *De praesr. haeret.* 36,5: *legem et prophetas cum evangelicis et apostolicis litteris miscet, et inde potat fidem* (about the Church).

²³ *Const. Apostol.* 2,39,6: μετὰ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ Νόμου καὶ τῶν Προφητῶν καὶ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. See also 8,5,11: μετὰ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ Νόμου καὶ τῶν Προφητῶν, τῶν τε Ἐπιστολῶν ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν Πράξεων καὶ τῶν Εὐαγγελίων.

²⁴ Greg. Tur. *Franc.* 4,16: *Positis clerici tribus libris super altarium, id est prophetiae, apostoli atque euangeliorum, oraverunt ad Dominum.*

²⁵ Aug. *Serm.* 165,1: *Apostolum audivimus, Psalmum audivimus, Evangelium audivimus; consonant omnes divinae lectiones; Serm.* 302,1: *Beati martyris Laurentii dies sollemnis hodiernus est. Huic sollemnitati sanctae Lectiones congruae sonuerunt. Audivimus et cantavimus, et evangelicam lectionem intentissime accepimus.*

²⁶ Cyp. *Epist.* 38,2 on the tasks of a lector: *post verba sublimia quae Christi martyrium prolocuta sunt, evangelium Christi legere; Epist.* 39,4: *legat praecepta et evangelium Domini.*

²⁷ *Const. Apostol.* 2,57.

²⁸ *Const. Apost.* 2,57,5–7: the *anagnostès* performs readings from the Old Testament and, after the singing of the Psalms, of the Acts and the Epistles by Paul; a presbyter or a deacon reads from the Gospels; Jer. *Epist.* 147,6,4 (deacon); Aug. *Serm.* 356,1 (deacon).

²⁹ Cyp. *Epist.* 38,2 (*ad pulpitum*); *Epist.* 39,4 (*super pulpitum id est super tribunal ecclesiae*); Aug. *Civ.*

Ambrosiaster refers to the pastoral functions of lectors, who nourish their audience with reading of the divine text.³⁰

4. Children and reading the liturgy aloud

Christian religion favoured very much the idea of ‘children of God’. As such, the young were involved in Christian education and liturgy from an early age.³¹ The Apostolic Constitutions mention children standing at the reading-desk, and a deacon standing by them to prevent them from being disorderly.³² Besides reading, also the chanting of hymns and psalms was entrusted to relatively young children.³³ Also here, modulation of the voice and good inflection were part and parcel of the education of lectors.³⁴ Irenaeus states that attending to the proper reading of a passage is absolutely crucial. Not exhibiting the intervals of breathing as they occur will not only cause incongruities. Also, when undertaking his task the reader may incur the danger of uttering blasphemy.³⁵ It has been suggested that the *schola cantorum* belonging to the Lateran palace,

Dei 22,8 (in *gradibus exedrae*). See Quacquarelli (1959, 398).

³⁰ Ambrosiaster *In Eph.* 4,11,12: *pastores possunt esse lectores, qui lectione saginent populum audientem.*

³¹ Lutterbach 2003 explores the idea of ‘children of God’ in the *longue durée*. See p. 113–117 on the tradition of the *mens pura* and the *vox clara* in the context of children as lectors. Wiedemann (1989, 176–208) links the practice with what he calls the demarginalization of children, who became integral part of liturgy in Christian practice.

³² *Const. Apostol.* 8,11.

³³ Quasten (1930, 119–132). Significant texts include *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* 2,22 (*Ei, qui in ecclesia psallit, virgines et pueri respondeant psallentes*) and *Peregrinatio Egeriae* 24,1 (*Nam singulis diebus ante pullorum cantum aperiuntur omnia ostia Anastasis et descendunt omnes monachos et parthene, ut hic dicunt, et non solum hii, sed et laici praeter, viri aut mulieres, qui tamen volunt maturius vigilare. Et ex ea hora usque in luce dicuntur ymni et psalmi respondentur, similiter et antiphonae: et cata singulos ymnos fit oratio*).

³⁴ *Aug. Conf.* 10,33,50: *modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem psalmi*; *Aug. Ioh.* 22,5 line 14: *<versus> qui praebeatur a lectore et respondeatur a populo*; *Aug. in Psalm.* 84,3 line 11: *legente lectore psalmum.*

³⁵ Irenaeus *Adv. haeres.* 3,7,2. See Davies (1963, 11–13). I agree with Davies that this passage should not be taken as a proof that lectors did anything else than reading, in the form of preaching or explaining Scripture.

a school founded by Pope Gregory the Great, was mainly a school for young cantors.³⁶ Undoubtedly, in such schools, the Holy Readings were learnt by heart. Pertinent to this is the case of the young Carthaginian confessor Aurelius (*Aureli ... adolescentis*). A former ally of Cyprian's enemy Lucianus, Aurelius was said "not to know letters", to be incapable of writing and distributing certificates of forgiveness. Only a few months later, Cyprian proudly announced that Aurelius had acted on Sunday as a reader in church. Rather than taking a 'crash course' in reading, it is more likely that Aurelius had recited the passages of the Sunday by heart.³⁷ A passage from the anonymous *Adversus Iudaeos* (fourth century) also alludes to any young child – or, for that matter, old woman, widow, or rustic – "without letters" being more versed in Scripture than a learned old man.³⁸ The possibility of "a lector who does not know letters" is thus not as improbable as it may seem at first sight.³⁹ Eusebius mentions a lector John who knew all Divine Scripture by heart. When he saw him standing up and repeating portions of the Scripture to the congregation, he supposed that he had been reading, till he drew near, and discovered that he was blind, and only using "the eyes of the mind".⁴⁰

³⁶ Josi 1930. Alikin (2010, 211–254) on singing and prayer in the gathering of the Early Church.

³⁷ Cyprian *Epist.* 27,1 (*Aureli quoque adolescentis tormenta perpessi nomine libelli multi dati sunt eiusdem Luciani manu scripti, quod litteras ille non nosset*) and 38,2 (*Dominico legit ... nobis, id est auspiciatus est pacem dum dedicat lectionem*). See Clarke 1984.

³⁸ *Adv. Iud.* 10,2 (CCSL 4,278): *qui autem ab initio docti et periti et legis disciplinam scientes, nesciunt legere nec intellegunt spiritalia, et qui ex illis prudentibus cupiens videre venit, intellegit, rogat puerum parvulum aut anum aut uiduam aut rusticum dicens: '(...) enarra mihi Novum Testamentum, reconcilia me Domino: ecce trado me tibi discipulum, interpretare mihi legem, (...) dissere praecepta quae in Sion et in lege'. Sine litteris disserit scripturas eis et puer edocet senem et anus persuadet diserto*. See Clarke 1984, 104.

³⁹ Such is the case of Aurelius Ammonius, the Christian lector from the Egyptian village of Chysis in 304. Wipszycka 1983; Choat and Yuen-Collingridge 2009 dismiss this possibility: they either think of a Christian pretending to be unable to read in order not to take the oath with the pagan emperors, or about a church with no books. Clarke 1984 raises the possibility of illiteracy in the case of a lector.

⁴⁰ Euseb. *Martyr. Palaest.* 13. The text is only preserved in a Syriac version. Leclercq (1922, col. 2242–2243) cites a Latin translation.

5. *Lectores* as a definite order⁴¹

5.1. *The establishment of an order*

A first possible indication of the *lectores* being a defined order appears with Tertullian in a text that may be dated to the year 203.⁴² By the middle of the third century, at Carthage, readers were considered as “next to the clergy” (in the case of a certain Saturus), or as “added to our clergy” (Celerinus).⁴³ It is also stated by Cyprian that making somebody a reader implies that he might later on strive for higher degrees of clerical ordination.⁴⁴

For the City of Rome, a letter from 252–253 by Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch mentions “46 presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, 42 acolyths, 52 exorcists, readers, and janitors, and over 1,500 widows and persons in distress”.⁴⁵ In an obviously later tradition, the *Liber Pontificalis* already ascribes the establishment of an ecclesiastical *cursus honorum* to Pope Gaius (283–296).⁴⁶ Also, in a letter ascribed to Saint Jerome, the sequence *fossarii, ostiarii, lectores, subdiaconi, diaconi, presbyteri, episcopus* is mentioned, in which the office of lector is compared to twelve-year-old Jesus reading in the synagogue.⁴⁷

⁴¹ In the tradition of study of canonical law, rich studies present and debate all relevant texts. See Leclercq 1929 (with strong attention to the epigraphical evidence); Peterson 1934; Quacquarelli 1959; Lafontaine 1963 and Davies 1963. It is still worth tracing down Leclercq 1900–1902 for a full collection of the literary evidence. See also Ravolainen (2014, 63–79).

⁴² Tert. *De praescr. haeret.* 41: *Itaque alius hodie episcopus, cras alius; hodie diaconus qui cras lector; hodie presbyter qui cras laicus. Nam et laicis sacerdotalia munera iniungunt.*

⁴³ Cypr. *Epist.* 29.1: *lectorem Saturum et hypodiamonem Optatum confessorem, quos iam pridem communi consilio clero proximos feceram;* *Epist.* 39.1: *clero nostro non humana suffragatione sed divina dignatione coniunctum.* See Davies (1963: 11).

⁴⁴ Cypr. *Epist.* 38.2: *merebatur talis clericae ordinationis ulteriores gradus.*

⁴⁵ The text of Cornelius' *Epistula ad Fabium* is only preserved by Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 6,43.

⁴⁶ *Lib. Pont.* 29,2: *Hic constituit ut ordines omnes in ecclesia sic ascenderetur: si quis episcopus mereretur, ut esset ostiarius, lector, exorcista, sequens subdiaconus, diaconus, presbiter, et exinde episcopus ordinaretur.*

⁴⁷ [Jer.] *Epist.* 12,1–7. See *Epist.* 12,3 on lectors: *Denique Dominus noster legens in templo, formam lectoris assumpsit. Hi sunt ergo lectores qui cantant canticum Moysi et Agni (Apoc. 14:15). Horum numerus est angelorum: et nomen Angeli convenienter sacerdoti adaptatur, qui usque aequales tibi sunt per haec officia sanctitatis, sicut scriptum Legis (Malach. 2:1).*

Both for Rome and Africa, another function assigned to lectors is attested. Together with the priests, they were responsible for the distributions of the food in the form of small baskets (*sportulae*).⁴⁸ For Africa, Acts of Martyrs mention the lectors as those responsible for keeping the inventories of the divine texts of the community in their houses.⁴⁹

The Apostolic Constitutions include lectors in the series of clergy, stating that “we also command that the attendants, and the singers, and the readers, and the porters, be only once married. But if they entered into the clergy before they were married, we permit them to marry, if they have an inclination thereto, lest they sin, and incur punishment”.⁵⁰

By the fifth century, the lectorate became the normal way of entering the ministry. Proclus started as a reader at a very early age, and was promoted to the diaconate and the presbyterate later on, prior to consecration as bishop of Constantinople in 433.⁵¹ Other ecclesiastics also began their career as lectors: Saint Felix of Nola⁵², Eusebius of Vercelli⁵³, Emperor Julian⁵⁴ and his half-brother Galulus.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Cypr. *Epist.* 39,5: *Caeterum presbyterii honorem designasse nos illis iam sciatis, ut et sportulis idem cum presbyteris honorentur, et divisiones mensurnas aequatis quantitibus partiantur, sessuri nobiscum provectis et corroboratis annis suis.* From *Const. Apost.* 2,28 it appears that lectors, together with psalmist and porters, could profit themselves from a part of these sportulae (Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἀναγνώστης ἔστιν, λαμβανέτω καὶ αὐτὸς μοῖραν μίαν εἰς τιμὴν τῶν προφητῶν· ὡσαύτως καὶ ψαλτωδὸς καὶ πυλωρός).

⁴⁹ See Leclercq (1926, col. 1397–1405) for the example of the *Acta Munatii Felicis* from the city of Cirta, referring to events that happened on the 19th of May 304. See also Leclercq (1929, col. 2245) on the church community at Cirta, which had six *lectores* at its disposal, among whom there was one grammarian and one expert of Mosaic law. See Schiavo (2018, 214–218) for a full translation of these Acts, recorded by the curator Munatius Felix, who was a pagan himself.

⁵⁰ *Const. Apostol.* 6,17,6–10: Ὑπηρέτας δὲ καὶ ψαλτωδοὺς καὶ ἀναγνώστας καὶ πυλωροὺς καὶ αὐτοὺς μὲν μονογάμους εἶναι κελεύομεν· εἰ δὲ πρὸ γάμου εἰς κληρὸν παρέλθωσιν, ἐπιτρέπομεν αὐτοῖς γαμεῖν, εἴγε πρὸς τοῦτο πρόθεσιν ἔχουσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἀμαρτήσαντες κολάσεως τύχουσιν (transl. Irah Chase, Otto Krabbe). See also Ravolainen (2014, 112–115).

⁵¹ *Socr. Hist. Eccl.* 7,40–41.

⁵² Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 15,108–109 (*Primis lector servivit in annis./ Inde gradum cepit*).

⁵³ Jer. *De vir. illustr.* 96 (*Eusebius, natione Sardinus, et ex lectore urbis Romanae*).

⁵⁴ *Socr. Hist. Eccl.* 3,1 (reader in the church of Nicomedia at youthful age)

⁵⁵ *Soz. Hist. Eccl.* 5,2.

For fourth to sixth century Africa (345–525), we know of an ordination ceremony, in which the bishop presents the lector to the audience, recommends his way of life and his good faith, and then invites him to read aloud in the Mass.⁵⁶

5.2. *The role of children in this cursus honorum*

Gradually, the lectorate evolved into the minor order *par excellence* for children who were preparing for the priesthood – though it could also be a function for adults who were married and did not aspire to any higher order.⁵⁷ By the mid of the third century, the Christian Latin poet Commodianus warned *lectores* against the sin of pride. His admonition presumably refers to the strive for vain glory, which was often ascribed to young people.⁵⁸ I have already mentioned Aurelius, who was allowed to access the *pulpitum* (cf. supra notes 37–39) from the autumn of the year 250. Cyprian insists on his being young, most probably he was in his teenage years.⁵⁹ Both Ambrose and Augustine mention child lectors who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recite from a Psalm which was given to them by divine inspiration.⁶⁰ Sometimes, such children were congregated in schools, where they were taught the art of reading and reciting.⁶¹ The mention by Vic-

⁵⁶ *Conc. Afric. sec. trad. coll. Hispanae* (between 345 and 525) (CC SL 149,344): *Lector cum ordian-tur, faciat de illo verbum episcopus ad plebem indicans eius fidem ac vitam atque ingenium; post haec spectante plebe tradat ei codicem de quo lecturus est, dicens ad eum: "Accipe et esto verbi Dei relator, habiturus, si fideliter et utiliter impleveris officium, partem cum eis qui verbum Dei administraverunt."*

⁵⁷ Lafontaine (1963, 129) calls the lectorate "par excellence l'ordre de début de la probation". See Innocent. I *Epist.* 3 on children preparing for the priesthood or adults attending the lectorate immediately after their being baptised.

⁵⁸ Commodian. *Instruct.* 2,26: *Certamen fugire lites totidemque uitare, / Tumorem premere, nec unquam esse superbos*. On this advice to lectors, see Leclercq 1929, c. 2243, who relates it to the sins of youthfulness.

⁵⁹ *Cypr. Epist.* 38,2: *Aurelius frater noster inlustris adolescens (...) in annis adhuc novellus (...) minor in aetatis suae indole (...) merebatur talia clericae ordinationis ulteriores gradus et incrementa maiora, non de annis suis sed de meritis aestimandus. Sed interim placuit ut ab officio lectoris incipiat*.

⁶⁰ *Ambr. De excessu fratris* 1,61 (*per vocem lectoris parvuli Spiritus Sanctus expressit. Innocens manibus et mundo corde ...*); *Aug. serm.* 352,1 (*cordi... puerili*) – the wordings clearly point to childish innocence.

⁶¹ *Aug. De cons. evang.* 1,10,15 (about certain Christians who ascribed writings on sorcery to Saint Peter, Saint Paul or even to Jesus Christ): *In qua fallacissima audacia sic excaecati sunt, ut etiam a pueris, qui adhuc pueriliter in gradu lectorum Christianas litteras norunt, merito rideantur*.

tor Vitensis of a carnage of *lectores infantuli* at Carthage during the times of the Vandal occupation should be understood as a reference to such schools.⁶² Also in the fifth century, we read about Epiphanius of Pavia being a lector at age eight, and a reader *ab infantia* in Gaul.⁶³ Education of young lectors could also take the form of an older parish priest taking in a younger lector (who should not yet be married) in order to teach him the art of reciting properly and to prepare him for the priesthood as his successor. The custom seems to have been well established in sixth century Italy.⁶⁴

A minimum age of eighteen for lectors was imposed in Emperor Justinian's *Novellae*, but seems to have been connected with a certain limited sacramental role of child lectors in the Mass, as they were permitted to provide water for washing the priest's or bishop's hands. Justinian's measure does not seem to have been very successful.⁶⁵ A minimum age of 25 seems to have been imposed in the tradition of the African councils, but this concerns the active role of lectors in saluting the audience, presumably at the beginning or end of the Mass.⁶⁶ Coming of age seems to have been a crucial point for those who aspired to the priesthood after the lectorate. At this point, they were required to remain either celibate or to opt for chaste marriage, though remaining at the stage of lector, marrying, and raising a family was another option.⁶⁷ At least for the Latin West, an established

⁶² Vict. Vit. 3,34: *Univrsus clerus ecclesiae Carthaginiensis caede inediaque maceratus, fere quingenti vel amplius, inter quos quam plurimi erant lectores infantuli.*

⁶³ Ennod. *Vita Epiph.* 8 (*annorum ferme octo lectoris ecclesiastici suscipit officium*); Sidon. *Epist.* 4,25,4 (*lector hic primus, sic minister altaris idque ab infantia*).

⁶⁴ *Conc. Vas.* (anno 529) (ed. Mansi 8,726): *Hoc enim placuit, ut omnes presbyteri, qui sunt in parochiis constituti, secundum consuetudinem quam per totam Italiam salubriter teneri cognovimus, iuniores lectores, quantoscumque sine uxore habuerint, secum in domo, ubi ipsi habitare videntur, recipiant, et eos quomodo boni patres spiritualiter nutriendos, psalmos parare, divinis lectionibus insistere et in lege Domini erudire contendant, ut sibi dignos successores provideant et a Domino praemia aeterna recipiant.*

⁶⁵ *Nov. Iust.* 123,13: *Presbyterum autem minorem XXXV annorum fieri non permittimus, sed neque diaconum aut subdiaconum minorem XXV, neque lectorem minorem X et VIII annorum, diaconissam vero in sanctam ecclesiam non ordinari quae minor est annorum XL aut ad secundas venit nuptias.* See Wiedemann 1989, 186–187.

⁶⁶ *Conc. Afric. sec. trad. coll. Hispanae* (between 345 and 525) (CC SL 149,329): *Item placuit ut ante viginti quinque annos aetatis nec [diacones] ordinentur nec virgines consecrentur; et ut lectores populorum non saluent.*

⁶⁷ Lafontaine (1963, 129–133). Crucial texts include: *Conc. Hippo can.* 18: *Ut lectores usque ad an-*

order of child lectors as an institution lost its role after the Carolingian reforms, with increasing attention to the new order of *psalmistae* to chant the words of the liturgy. By then, the role of children in the liturgy became purely ancillary.⁶⁸

Apart from an occasional remark on young girls singing in nuns' monasteries, and one mention of a woman as lector in a sixth-century Arabic version of the Apostolic Canons⁶⁹, neither girls nor women seem to have accessed the role of lector.⁷⁰

6. The epigraphical dossier

In the list and commentary that follow, the inscriptions will be used as vignettes of daily life *par excellence*, to illustrate ages, social relationships and agency of *lectores* in the Latin West. Before embarking on various details and scenarios, a prospectus of the available material is needed.

6.1. Geographical and Chronological distribution

Geographical distribution is in accordance with what we know about the distribution of early Christian inscriptions.⁷¹ As the total number of inscriptions is 102, the numbers nearly equal percentages. Some places have preponderance, like Venice and Histria (Regio X) for Italy, with thirteen inscriptions – with Aquileia and surrounding places as important places for Christian archaeology. The

nos pubertatis legant; deinceps autem nisi uxores custodita pudicitia duxerint, continentiam professi fuerint, legere non sinantur (anno 393); Leo I Magnus *Const.* (PL 56,868): *Lectores, cum ad annos pubertatis pervenirent, cogantur aut uxores ducere, aut continentiam profiteri.* Also the *Const. Apost.* 6,17,6–10 points to the same options (cf. supra note 50).

⁶⁸ Wiedemann (1989, 187).

⁶⁹ Cf. supra note 33. The female lector appears in *Can. Apostol.* can. 52–53 (PO 8,635). See Quasten (1930, 120) on the latter fragment, which besides the lectorate also testifies to women in the order of the diaconate and the subdiaconate. Quasten (1930, 118–122) deals with the singing of women in early church.

⁷⁰ The prohibition was based on texts as *mulieres in ecclesia taceant* (1 Cor. 14:34) or *Const. Apost.* 3,6,1–2 (no teaching or preaching by women). See also Jer. *Virg. vel.* 9,1: *non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere, nec tingere, nec offerre, nec ullius virilis muneris, nedum sacerdotali officii sortem sibi vindicare* (against Montanism).

⁷¹ Handley (2003, 13).

same goes for the African provinces, where excavations at the *basilicae* of Ammaedara (six inscriptions) and Carthage (ten inscriptions) have yielded a substantial part of the epitaphs for lectors.

<u>Number</u>	
African provinces (74–96)	23
Balkan provinces (3–5)	3
Gaul and Germany (97–102)	6
Italy, without Rome (6–33)	28
Rome (34–73)	40
Spain (1–2)	2
TOT	102

Chronologically, the preponderance is on the fourth and fifth century. Roughly 35 % of the inscriptions (about 36) possibly stem from the later period between 500 and 700.

When breaking down the evidence, we notice an interesting difference. For Rome, about 70 % (roughly 28 inscriptions) date from before the year 500. The earliest case, possibly from the catacombs of Sant' Agnese in Rome, even is third century (64). For the African provinces, the percentage of cases before 500 is at best 35 % (about eight inscriptions). For the rest of Italy, one counts 39 % (at best eleven cases) of such inscriptions. This is also in accordance with the general chronological distribution of early Christian epigraphy: Rome has a somewhat earlier epigraphical peak than other provinces in Late Antiquity.⁷²

6.2. *The role of age*

Indication of age occurs on 48 stones.⁷³ As the inscriptions mention 103 lectors, age seems to have been a matter of considerable importance. The percentage of the indications of age (47 %) is in line with what we know from epigraphy of the Christian inscriptions in the City of Rome, in which the age of the deceased at

⁷² Harper (2015, 23–24); Goessens (2019, 229) – both focusing on the City of Rome. Handley (2003, 13) mentions a peak for Rome in the period 350–400 (with still high numbers in the fifth century), while Gallia and Hispania have their peak in the period 451–550.

⁷³ I have included **60** (*maior aetas*) and **101** (*puer*), since these terms have a clear connotation of an age category.

the time of death is even more frequently present than in the epitaphs of pagan Rome.⁷⁴

When resorting to ancient subdivisions of life span, the following scheme applies:

	<u>Number</u>
minores (under 25 y.):	24
media aetas (25–59):	16
senectus (60 years or older):	2
incerti ⁷⁵ :	6
TOT	48

Within the category of the *minores*, there is a fairly even distribution between children (under fifteen years of age) with a total of eleven instances, and the age span 15–24, with a total of thirteen cases.⁷⁶

Traditionally, the cases of child lectors have attracted most attention. Here, the African provinces are significantly well represented. While the percentage of inscriptions originating from this region amounts to 22 %, no less than 54 % of the inscriptions (six instances) for minors belong to the African provinces. In order to explain this preponderance, the excavations in Ammaedara (four cases) are to be taken into account.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the phenomenon of underage lectors is attested in almost all of the regions: in Spain, Italy, Rome and Gaul/Germany. None of these minors below age fifteen is mentioned with relatives, but at least the context of the inscriptions from Ammaedaera (**79**, **86**, **87**, and **88**) suggests that they were part of a school of lectors. Nor do the other cases of minors indicate that these children would have lived without their parents (cf. infra 6.3).

⁷⁴ Goessens (2019, 229). Laes (2007, 27) mentions 33 % of epitaphs with age indication for the non-Christian city of Rome.

⁷⁵ **22**, **26**, **32**, **67** and **93** (age was surely mentioned, but unknown due to the fragmentary state of the stone; **43** (between 20 and 49 years of age).

⁷⁶ Minors: 5 years (**24** and **79**); 6 years (**86** and **87**); 12 years (**94**); 13 years (**18**, **88** and **99**); 14 years (**2** and **96**); *puer* (**101**). Age span 15–24: 16 years (**72**); 17 years (**23**); 18 years (**15**); 19 years (**46** and **102**); 20 years (**20** and **52**); 21 years (**45**); 22 years (**84**); 24 years (**40**, **73** and **92**); 16–19 years (**48**).

⁷⁷ **79**, **86**, **87**, **88**, **94** and **96**, with **79**, **86**, **87** and **88** from Ammaedara.

As for those lectors between age 15 and 24, an age category to which in ancient thought and practice now and then offices and responsibilities were assigned⁷⁸, their being linked to a specific church or region is an outstanding feature (eight out of thirteen cases).⁷⁹ In all likelihood, ecclesiastical office holding is mentioned as the most important achievement in their relatively short life.

Remarkably, none of the lectors belonging to the *media aetas* is mentioned in connection with a wife or children⁸⁰ – the observation is somewhat nuanced by the fact that in the majority of the cases, no social relations whatsoever are mentioned on the inscriptions (cf. *infra* 6.3). Also, among the 54 inscriptions without any age indication, there must have been a considerable part of adult lectors, whose social relations are commemorated

Also the *senes* in the collection (**44** and **100**) are mentioned without any family relation, though 66-year-old Stephanus was the head of a school of *lectores* in Lyon (**100**). For both cases, we may imagine a long-life engagement in church, with the lectorate as the highest ecclesiastical office obtained.

6.3. Dedicators and dedicatees

In the large majority of cases, lectors are commemorated without any others mentioned – over 70 % of such single commemorations is an impressive number. The absence of commemorative relationship permits no inference that the deceased was single or lived on his own at the moment of death. It rather implies that the commemorators considered additional information irrelevant and not worth mentioning.⁸¹ The following table lists the commemorators.

	<u>Number</u>	
no others mentioned	74	
lector as dedicator (<i>ipse</i>)	14	
community	2	55 and 67
daughter	1	14
father	2	92 and 102

⁷⁸ Laes, Strubbe (2014, 164–183) on office holding; (2014, 184–196) on occupations.

⁷⁹ **20, 40, 45, 46, 48, 52, 72, and 92.**

⁸⁰ **1, 7, 13, 17, 19, 37, 41, 42, 43, 55** (this lector is explicitly mentioned as *virgo*), **58, 60, 63, 69, 78, and 81.**

⁸¹ Goessens (2019, 233–234).

friend (?)	1	4
burial in area reserved for a lector	1	51
lector mentioned as father and grandfather	1	62
mother	1	15
sister	1	47
together with wife	1	65
together with <i>fideles</i>	1	89
two women	1	72
wife	1	49

For the fourteen cases in which the lector appears as dedicator, the division is as follows:

alone (donating or fulfilling a vow)	3	28, 29 and 33
for son	2	21 and 46
for wife	1	54
with family (?)	1	39
with mother	1	9
with father (?) and family	1	14
with servants	1	11
with wife	2	30 and 65
with wife and children	1	10
with wife and daughters	1	8

6.4. Agency

A detailed inquiry into the text and context of the inscriptions in our collection reveals more about the life of lectors and the way they functioned in their communities.

First, churches of both Aquileia and of Thebesta reveal a number of names of lectors that appear on the mosaic floor in the west entrance of the basilica. When entering the church, people would almost have made physical contact with the commemorated readers, whose importance to and attachment with the church is thereby emphasised.⁸² The same counts for the inscriptions belonging to various *basilicae* in Ammaedara. Here, mainly young, lectors were

⁸² 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 29, 30, and 33 (Aquileia); n. 74, 77 and 84 (African provinces).

buried and commemorated inside the church: in the south wall or in the south west part (close to the entrance), in the portal, or in the cemetery belonging to the church.⁸³ Also in Florence, we find seventeen-year-old lector Fundanius Iovianus commemorated in the portal of the church (23)⁸⁴, and the possibly very young Pompeius Lupicinus in the necropolis of the same church (24). Close to this comes the inscription in a wall of a baptisterium in Carthage (93). In all, this is very tangible evidence of how lectors were viewed as essentially belonging to their church community. For Aquileia, Ammaedara and Thebesta, scholars have explained the higher numbers of attestations of lectors as indications of the presence of a school, while others have pointed to the same possibility for Florence and Lyon (see 22, 23 for the former; 100 for the latter).

Also some formulations in the inscriptions point to attachment to a community or a particular church. This is especially the case for those lectors who on their grave inscription are especially linked with a particular church: in Aeculanum (17), Lilybaeum (20), Sevilla (1), Sila (92) and in many *tituli* of Rome: an unnamed one (35), S. Caecilia (72), S. Eusebius (56), Fasciola (41, 45), S. Iohannes et Paulus (52), Palacine (67), S. Pudentiana (40, 63), S. Sabina (48) and Velabrum (51).⁸⁵ To these should be added the lectors who are mentioned as belonging to a certain *regio* or district: in Rome (46) and Carthage (81, 94). In Rome, Eugamius, called a *virgo*, is commemorated by a priest and a group of fathers and brothers (55). Another Roman epitaph also mentions *fratres*, possibly in the context of a religious community (67).

Some inscriptions link the lectorate with the innocence of childhood. This is most explicitly elaborated in the *carmen epigraphicum* in honour of Honoratus (34). It is also the case for lector Paulus, who died as an adult (60), or for the chastity of Tigradius, who is called a *puer* too (101).

Other inscriptions mention the lectorate as a step in the ecclesiastical career: one step before the order of psalmist (25), or before being an exorcist (54), though in these cases the functions of the two minor ordinations may have been combined. In the case of Honoratus of Vercelli, the lectorate is clearly the first step before the ordinations of deacon, priest and bishop (34). A lector with the

⁸³ 74 and 76 (south wall), 79 (south west); 87 (portal); 88 (cemetery). Though the origin is not indicated in the editions, 86 may also have belonged to the portal of a basilica in Haidra.

⁸⁴ Though in this case it is not sure whether the slab has always belonged to the portal of the church.

⁸⁵ See also the list in Pietri (1977, 635).

name Primigenius later became a bishop, though such is not explicitly said on the inscription in which he is called lector. The proximity of the stones in the cemetery of the Via Praenestina might have made things clear for the passers-by (62).

7. Conclusions

In the eyes of historians of other periods, the lack of archives is a striking feature of ancient history. While we have a whole set of literary evidence on lectors at our disposal – mostly brief, *ad hoc* remarks, but also more elaborate digressions on ecclesiastical legislation – there is no way of confronting this documentation with any solid archival material. However, the dispersed evidence of 102 inscriptions for lectors over a period of about 400 years confirms the picture of the literary sources. The office was often, though not exclusively, entrusted to younger persons, while adults and elderly men were also readers and proudly carried this title until the end of their lives. The often brief and lapidary formulations ensure that many lectors are commemorated on their own, though the archaeological context now and then informs us on broader environments such as a training school. Some inscriptions reveal a whole set of social relations: wives, parents and (grand)children, friends, or the wider religious community.

This article started with the promise of tracking down local variations in the way the office of lector was filled in different ecclesiastical traditions. Therefore, both the literary evidence and the epigraphical documentation were presented with due attention to chronological context and geographical distribution. However, despite the obvious impossibility of centrally imposing a common practice, all our different sources focus on very much the same issues. The lectorate was often, though not exclusively, a preparatory function that prepared for higher ordinations, and therefore younger lectors come into the picture. Functions and tasks seem to have been similar in the different regions of the Latin Christian West. The inscriptions indeed show in greater detail the social background and agency of lectors, but for this too no significant divergence appears from what we read in the literary sources.

In all, the most important contribution of the epigraphical evidence is the glimpse of professional pride that lectors reveal by proudly mentioning them-

selves, their office, and sometimes their activities on a stone. This is not to say that in everyday life there were no lectors who were held in less esteem. Rather, it is safe to assume that at least some lectors who chose to advertise themselves in inscriptions were respected members of the Christian community. The epigraphical evidence teaches us how lectors represented themselves and how, in the context of Christian commemorative practices, they became signifiers of their own professional identity.⁸⁶

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⁸⁶ Felle (2010, 505–507) and Buonopane (2017, 26–28) for very much the same conclusions in their epigraphical studies of, respectively, deacons and *neofyti*.

II: LECTORES IN CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS

n.	References	Provenance	Name	Age
1.	<i>AE</i> 2005, 89; <i>HEp</i> 2005, 336	Baetica, Sevilla Hispalis	Cyprianus	± 40
2.	<i>IHC</i> 314 (p. 2, 133); <i>ILCV</i> 1283; <i>ICERV</i> 97; <i>CIPTP</i> 42	Lusitania, Myrtilis	Tiberius	± 14 y. 5 m.
3.	<i>CIL</i> III 9591 (p. 2140); III 13148; <i>ILCV</i> 1282; <i>Salona</i> IV, 2, 501	Dalmatia, Salona	(?)vinianus	?
4.	<i>CLEOr</i> 14; <i>SEG</i> IL728; <i>AE</i> 1999,147; <i>AE</i> 2005, 1342	Macedonia, Louloudia	Eufrosynus	--
5.	<i>ILJug</i> II 702; <i>Salona</i> IV, 1, 238	Dalmatia, Salona	Anastasius	--
6.	<i>AE</i> 2011, 413	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Vicetia	Iohannes	--
7.	<i>AE</i> 2013, 649	Sardinia, Carales	Venustus	48
8.	<i>CIL</i> V 1583; <i>Inscr. Aqu.</i> III 3332; <i>ILCV</i> 1884; <i>EMC</i> p. 223-224; Zettler p. 195-196	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Aquileia	Amara	--
9.	<i>CIL</i> V 1589; <i>Inscr. Aqu.</i> III 3342; <i>ICLV</i> 1870; <i>EMC</i> p. 241; Zettler p. 202	ditto	Iohannis	--
10.	<i>CIL</i> V 1599; <i>Inscr. Aqu.</i> III 3348; <i>ILCV</i> 1871; <i>EMC</i> p. 234; Zettler p. 199	ditto	Murgio	--
11.	<i>CIL</i> V 1605; <i>Inscr. Aqu.</i> III 3335; <i>ILCV</i> 1885 (add.); <i>EMC</i> p. 254	ditto	Secolaris (?)	--
12.	<i>CIL</i> V 1611; <i>Inscr. Aqu.</i> III 3357; <i>ILCV</i> 1886; <i>EMC</i> p. 241; Zettler p. 202	ditto	Victorinus	--
13.	<i>CIL</i> V 4118 and 4119; <i>ILCV</i> 1278	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Cremona	Stephanus	± 35
14.	<i>CIL</i> V 4846 (p. 1080); <i>InscrIt</i> X, 5, 723; <i>ILCV</i> 1038	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Brixia	Flavius Macrinus	--
15.	<i>CIL</i> V 4847; <i>InscrIt</i> X, 5, 724; <i>ILCV</i> 1279 (add.)	ditto	Attius Proculus	18 y. 8 m. 7 d.
16.	<i>CIL</i> V 5710; <i>ILCV</i> 1279a	Transpadana (Regio XI), Agrate Brianza	Albinus	--
17.	<i>CIL</i> IX 1377; <i>ILCV</i> 1276; <i>ICI</i> VIII 45; <i>VetChr.</i> 2005, 296; <i>AE</i> 2005, 424; 2006, 319; <i>Suplt</i> XXIX, p. 150	Apulia et Calabria (Regio II), Aeclanum	Caelius Laurentius	± 49

Dedicators	Date	Text
--	544	Cyprianus lec/tor ec(c)lesi(a)e His/palensi famu/lus Χρι(sti) vixit / annos plus mi/nus XL recessit / in pace d(ie) XII kal(endas) / Februarias era / DLXXXII.
--	566	Tyberius licto/r famulus dei vi(xi)/t annos plus min/us XIII mens(es) quinq/ ue{m} requieuit in pace / domini die XIII Kalenda/s Iunias (a)era DCIII.
--	351–500	[---]NC sepulchra P[?]AV[...] / [...]vinianus lecto[r.../ [...]VIT[.]T[...]
friend (?)	5 s.	ἐνθάδε σῆμα / λέλαχεν Εὐφρόσυνος / ὁ αἰόδιμος ἀναγνώσ(της) / σταθμὸς στοργῆς / τῆς ἐν φίλοις / ἀκράδαντος // Eufrosynus / simplex verusque / fidelis amicus / scribturae lector / sanctae reverentia / pollens / hic requiem nactus / cunctorum laude / nitescit / haecque tibi sincera / Iohannes munera / solvit.
--	471–530	D(epositio?) Anastasi lector(i)s s(ub) d[ie ---].
--	6 s.	I(n) n(o)m(ine) d(omi)ni / hic r(e)q(uiescit) in / pace Io/hannis / lector.
--	?	B(ona)e m(emoriae) / Benustus lector / qui bixit annis XLVIII / requiebit in pace / X Kal(endas) Aug(ustas).
ipse, with wife and daughters	579	Amara l[ector ?] / et Anto[nina] / cum f[iliis suis] / Haelia [et Melli]/ta vo[tum] / solve(ru)nt.
ipse, with mother	579	Iohannis / lect(or) cum / matre sua / Agnetā / f(ecit) p(edes) XXV.
ipse, with wife and children	579	Murgio / lector / et Bona / cum filiis / suis feceru[nt pedes X].
ipse, with servants (?)	?	Seco[laris(?) or -nius (?)] / lectu[r et ...aman]/uens[is]/ [domes]tigi sa(n)c[tae] / Eu[fimiae v[irginis?]] / [vo]/tum so[lverunt].
ipse, with father (?) and family	579	Victorinus / lect(or) fil(ius?) cum / Antonino et / suis vo[tum] solvit.
--	19 Dec. 587	Hic requiescit in pace b(ona)e m(emoriae) / Stephanus v(i)r lictur, qui vi/xit in hoc secul(o) ann(is) pl(us) m(inus) / XXXV depositus sub die / pridie idus Decembris et / iterum p(ost) c(onsulatum) Paulini Iun(ioris) / v(iri) c(larissimi) indict(ione) prima.
Daughter. Lector is mentioned together with his brother-in-law and his wife.	4 s.	Fl(avio) Latino episcopo / an(nos) III m(enses) VII pr[ae]s(b)yt(ero) / an(nos) XV exorc(istae) an(nos) XII / et Latinillae et Fla(vio) / Macrino lectori / Fl(avia) Paulina neptis/ b(ene) m(emorentibus) m(emoriam) p(osuit).
mother	4 s.	Attio Proculo / lectori filio dulcis/simo qui vixit an(nos) XVIII / m(enses) VIII d(ies) VII Fabia Secun(da) contra votum me/nsa(m) posuit / b(ene) m(ementi).
--	5–6 s.	Hic requies/cet in pace / Alb(i)nus lec(tor).
--	8 May 494	Hic requiescit in somno / pacis Caelius Laurentius / lector sanctae aeclesiae / Aeclanensis qui vixit / annos pl(us) m(inus) XLVIII depositio / eius die VIII Idus Maias Flaviis / Asterio et Praesidio vv(iris) cc(larissimis) con(sulibus).

n.	References	Provenance	Name	Age
18.	<i>CIL</i> X 1193; <i>ILCV</i> 03869; <i>IPAvell</i> 16; <i>AE</i> 1998, 356	Latium et Campania (Regio I), Nola	[---]nus	± 13
19.	<i>CIL</i> X 1359; <i>ILCV</i> 1274a	Latium et Campania (Regio I), Nola	[---]anpenus	± 30
20.	<i>CIL</i> X 7252; <i>ILC</i> 275	Sicilia, Lilybaeum	?	20
21.	<i>CIL</i> X 7551; <i>ILCV</i> 1275 and 3399; <i>SRD</i> 39; <i>ICS</i> NOR 3	Sardinia, Nora	Rogatus	--
22.	<i>CIL</i> XI 550; <i>ILCV</i> 1277a	Aemilia (Regio VIII), Ariminum	Const[antius?]	?
23.	<i>CIL</i> XI 1704; <i>ILCV</i> 1277	Etruria (Regio VII), Florentia	Fundanius Iovianus	17
24.	<i>CIL</i> XI 1709; <i>ICLV</i> 1277a	ditto	Pompeius Lupicinus	5 y. (?) 5 d. (?)
25.	<i>Cornus</i> 75; <i>SRD</i> 1078; <i>ICS</i> CRN 8	Sardinia, Gurulis Nova	?	?
26.	<i>ICI</i> VIII 24	Apulia et Calabria (Regio II), Beneventum	Maturus	? y. 8 m. 5 d.
27.	<i>ILSard</i> I 84; <i>SRD</i> 546; <i>ICS</i> CAR 120	Sardinia, Carales	?	?
28.	<i>InscrAqu</i> III 3371; <i>EMC</i> p. 249; Zettler p. 205; <i>AE</i> 1975, 416 n.	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Aquileia	Lautus	--
29.	<i>InscrIt</i> X, 2, 70; <i>EMC</i> p. 315; Zettler p. 227; <i>AE</i> 2002, 513	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Parentium	?	--
30.	<i>InscrIt</i> X, 2, 185; <i>EMC</i> p. 333; Zettler p. 231	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Parentium	Heraclius (?)	--
31.	<i>NSA</i> 1957.307	Etruria (Regio VII), Florentia	?	?
32.	<i>Suplt</i> XX 280; <i>ICI</i> XIII 39; <i>AE</i> 1973, 219; 1977, 228; 1981; 265; 2003, 545; 2008, 419	Apulia et Calabria (Regio II), Venusia	?	?
33.	Zettler p. 233	Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Cantianum	?	--
34.	<i>CLE</i> 787; <i>ICUR</i> IX 24831; <i>ILCV</i> 967; <i>AE</i> 2007, 127	Roma	Honoratus	--
35.	<i>ICUR</i> I 249	ditto	?	?
36.	<i>ICUR</i> I 284	ditto	Timotheus	--
37.	<i>ICUR</i> I 521	ditto	?	50
38.	<i>ICUR</i> I 1037	ditto		

Dedicators	Date	Text
--	558	Hic r[e]quiescit in pace / [---]nus lictor, qui vixit / [an]nos pl(us) m(inus) XIII d(e)p(ositus) III k(a)l(endas) Sep/[te]mbris XVII p(ost) c(onsulatum) Basili. / [---]per? iu]dioum vos coniu(r)o ut ni qui sepultura mea violet.
--	556	[---]anpeni (?) lectoris in p[ace ---] / [qui vi]xit annos pl(us) m(inu)s XXX d(e)p(o)s(itus) III[---] / [Augu]stas XV p(ost) [c(onsulatum)] Basili [v(iri) c(larissimi)] / [---]idi[---] dec+[---]
?	4–6 s.	----- / [le]cto[r] hu/ius ecc(lesia)e qu(i) / vixit annos XX / depositus VI I/dus Februar/[i]as ind(ictione) XI.
ipse, for his deceased infant son	4–5 s.	Bono et in(n)ocenti is/pirito Respecti qui vi/xit an(num) I me(nses) IIII Rogatus / lector filio piissimo / fecit in ((Christo)) Hi(e)s(u).
--	5–6 s.	Hic requie[scit in] / [p]ace Const[antius(?)] / [l]ector qui [vixit in] / [saec]ulo ann[os] / [---]CC et di[es] ---
--	4–5 s.	B(onae) m(emoriae) / [hic] iacet Fundaniu[s] / [I]ovianus lec/[to]r qui vixit an/nis XVII mens(ibus) VIII d(iebus) XX / dep(ositus) in pace prid(ie) nona/s Ianuar(ias).
--	5–6 s.	B(onae) m(emoriae) / hic requiescit / Pompeius Lupici/nus lector qui / vixit annos / [---?] V d(ies) n(umero?) V.
--	?	[---]tus lec[tor] -----
--	4–6 s. (?)	----- qui [---]a / [---] lector psalmista / [---] Maturus consi/[lium(?)] dei(?) semp[er] servans qui / [vix(it) ann(os) ---] m(enses) VIII d(ies) V dep(ositus) / [-----]
--	5–6 s.	----- / [---]AIM+[---] / [---]+EDV+[---] / [---]o lect[or?] ---.
ipse, fulfilling a vow	579	Lautus / lector / votum / solvit.
ipse, donating	400–450	[De donis] D(e)i et / [s(a)nc(t)e ecclesie (?)] / lect(or) [f(e)c(it)] p(e)d(es) XC.
ipse, donating with his wife	6 s.	Eracli(us)? / tec(tor) cum / con(iu)g(e) sua/ Lau[rentia ---].
--	401–550	----- / [---]CTAN[---] / [---]le]cto[r][---] / [---]+[---] / -----
--	453–524	[Hic requi]escit in pace D(e)i famulus(?) / [---]s lec(tor) qui timore Chr(ist) i reli/[quit vit]am saecularem soci/[atus servi]tio aec(c)lesiae(!) migra/[vit ad d(omi)n(u)m] vixit annis / [---] mensis(!) V dies V de/[positus] est die tertiu(!) Idus / [---]mb(res) Opilione cons(s)ule(!).
ipse, donating	450–499	Domn[---] / lect[or] / fec(it) [-----]
--	6 s.	(...) parvulus utque loqui coepisti dulcisa verba / mox scripturarum lictor pius indole factus / ut tua lingua magis legem qua verba sonaret / dilectat a d(omi)no tua dicta infancia simplex / nullis arte dolis sceda fugata malignis / of(f)icio tali iusto puroque legendi / adque item simpex adulescens mente fuisti / maturusque animo ferventi aetatem modestus / remotus prudens mitis gravis integer aequus / haec tibi lectori innocuo fuit aurea vita / (...)
--	5–6 s.	----- / lec[tor] / t(i)t(uli) / [-----]
--	350–399	[---] Timo]theus lector d(e)p(ositus) XVI ka]l(endas) iun(ias) d[or]mit in pa]lce].
--	380–500	----- / qui viset annus c[in]/q<u>aginta (l)ector depo/situs in pace XV ka]l(endas) martia[s] ---].
		[---?] lictor [---?]

n.	References	Provenance	Name	Age
39.	<i>ICUR</i> I 1118	ditto	?	?
40.	<i>ICUR</i> I 3200	ditto	Leopardus	24
41.	<i>ICUR</i> II 4815; <i>ILCV</i> 1269; <i>ICaRoma</i> 130; Carletti I 58	ditto	Cinnamius Opas	46 y. 7 m. 9 d.
42.	<i>ICUR</i> II 5176; <i>ILCV</i> 1264	ditto	Ulpus	25-29 y. 23 d.
43.	<i>ICUR</i> II 6098; <i>AE</i> 1905, 96	ditto	?	20-49
44.	<i>ICUR</i> III 8143; <i>ILCV</i> 1268	ditto	Iulius Innocentius	73
45.	<i>ICUR</i> III 8165; <i>ILCV</i> 1269	ditto	Pascentius	21
46.	<i>ICUR</i> III 8719; <i>ILCV</i> 1266; <i>ICVaticano</i> p. 223	ditto	Equitius Heraclius	19 y. 7 m. 20 d.
47.	<i>ICUR</i> IV 10238a; <i>ILCV</i> 1274a	ditto	Vitalis	?
48.	<i>ICUR</i> IV 11746c; <i>ILCV</i> 1274	ditto	Domnio	16-19
49.	<i>ICUR</i> IV 11798 (p. 535); <i>ILCV</i> 2159	ditto	Alexius	--
50.	<i>ICUR</i> IV 12013b	ditto	Simplicius	--
51.	<i>ICUR</i> IV 12426; <i>ILCV</i> 1271; <i>ICVaticano</i> p. 232; <i>AE</i> 1997, 166	ditto	Augustus	--
52.	<i>ICUR</i> V 13289, 2; <i>ILCV</i> 1139; <i>ICaRoma</i> 132 and 134; Carletti I 114; <i>AE</i> 2009, 145	ditto	Maximinus	20 y. 8 m.
53.	<i>ICUR</i> V 14816f	ditto	?	?
54.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 15721	ditto	Proficius	--
55.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 16173	ditto	Eugamius	38 y. 2 m. 33 d.
56.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 16380; <i>ILCV</i> 1274	ditto	Olympius	--
57.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 16391	ditto	Paulus	--
58.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 16649a	ditto	?	26
59.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 16649b	ditto	?	?

Dedicators	Date	Text
ipse (?) family inscription	351–399	[---] lector [---] / [---]o Megalo coniu[gi ---] / [---] Valeria in pace q[uae] vixit / [a(nnis)] X m(ensibus) II d(iebus) XXI dep[ositus] ---
--	384	Mirae innocentiae adq(ue) eximiae / bonitatis hic requiescit Leopardus / lector de Pudentiana qui vixit / ann(is) XXIII def(unctus) VIII kal(endas) dec(embres) / Ricomede et Clearco cons(ulibus).
--	377	Cinnamius Opas lector tituli Fasciol(a)e amicus pauperum / qui vixit ann(os) XLVI mens(es) VII d(ies) VIII deposit(us) in pace X Kal(endas) Mart(ias) / Gratiano IIII et Merobaude cons(sulibus).
--	?	Ulpius lector quiesc[it in] / [p]ace qui vixit ann(XXV[---] et) / d(ies) XXIII defunctus [est] / d(ie) XVI Kal(endas) April(es) dep(ositus) XIII K(al)endas ---].
--	5 s.	[--- qu]iescet [---] / [---]us lec[tor ---] / [---] ann[os] XX [---] / [---] deposit[us] XI k(al)endas ---].
--	362	Iulius Innocentius lect[or] / eccl[esi]e sancte c[on]s[ol]atorice / vic[er]it ann(is) LXXIII d(e)p[ositus] XIII k(alendas) iun(ias) / Mame[rtino] et Nevita cons(ulibus).
--	398	[Hic quies]cit Pascentius lector de Fasci[ola] / [qui vixit] an[no]s XXI depositus in pace / [---] cons(ule) d(omino) n(ostro) Honorio I[IIII].
ipse (?), buried together with his son	338	Eq(uitius?) Heraclius / qui fuit in saeculum / an(nos) XVIII m(enses) VII d(ies) XX / lector r(egionis) sec(undae) fecerunt tibi / et filio suo benemerenti in p(ace) / decedit VII idus feb(ruarias) / Urso e<t> Polemio / cons(ulibus).
sister	4 s.	Sanct<i>ssimo Vit[ali ---] / lectori [---] / fec[er]it sopop (!) in p[ro]p[ri]a.
--	?	Lector de Savi[nae] / [Dom]nio qui vixit / [an]nis XVI[---].
wife	451–499	Dilectissimo marito anime dulcissime Alexio lectori / de Fullonices, qui vixit mecum ann(is) VX / iunctus mihi ann(or)um XVI / virgo ad virgine(m) cuius numquam amaritudinem h(a)bu[er]at. / Cesque in pace cum sanctis cum quos mereris / dep(ositus) VIII kal(endas) ianu(arias).
--	390–425	[Locus Si]mplici / lectoris.
girl 12 y. buried in his place	462 or 482	Locus Aucusti / lectoris de Bela/bru / dep(osita) Surica XVI kal(endas) aug(ustas) / que vixit annos / p(lus) m(inus) XII cons(ulatu) / Seberini.
--	567	hic requiescit M[aximi]nus lector tituli sanctorum / Iohannis et Pauli m[artyrum] dulcis amicus omnium letus / e[t] semper cum omnes [vicinis?] suos qui vixit annus XX et m(enses) octo / depositus in pace [VI idus] aprilis ante pridie pascae imperante / domno nostro Iustino p(er)p(etuo) [v]ict(ore) an[no] secun[do] anima tua in luce / [iterum] eodem consulem / et in pace aeternam et oret pr[o] no[]bis ani[ma] tua].
--	?	[---] lector [---]
ipse, for his wife	326–375	Proficius lect(or) et exorc(ista) / Istercoriae coiugi b(ene) m(erenti) / se vivo fec(it) cum q(ua) v(ixit) a(nnos) VI d(ies) XXVI.
religious community	?	Eugamio l[ectori] virgini in p[ro]p[ri]a / qui vixit annis [XXX]VIII me(nse)s II dies XXIII / cu[m] titulum? presb[ite]r Generosus una c[um] patri[bus] et frat[ribus] posui[t] / [de]positus XIII k(al)endas aprilis.
--	4 s.	Olympio / lectoris de / d(ominico) Eusebi / locus est.
--	?	Depos[itu]s Pauli l[ectoris] / d(epositu) V id(us) oct[obris].
--	4 s.	I[---]io I lectori / [---] an[no]s XXVI m(ensibus) / [---] id[us] aug(ustas).
--	350–399	[---] / [---] II mesis X dieb(us) [---] / [---]simo lecto[ri].

n.	References	Provenance	Name	Age
60.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 17106	ditto	Paulus	maior aetas
61.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 17224a	ditto	?	?
62.	<i>ICUR</i> VI 17293; <i>ICaRoma</i> 131; Carletti I 123	ditto	Primigenius, Navigius	--
63.	<i>ICUR</i> VII 19994; <i>ILCV</i> 1272	ditto	Hilarius	± 30
64.	<i>ICUR</i> VIII 21026; <i>ILCV</i> 1265a	ditto	Favor	--
65.	<i>ICUR</i> VIII 22390; <i>ILCV</i> 1265b	ditto	Claudius Atticianus	--
66.	<i>ILCV</i> 972; <i>ICUR</i> 9.24832. Carletti 1.61	ditto	Siricius	--
67.	<i>ICUR</i> IX 24861; <i>ILCV</i> 1267	ditto	?	?
68.	<i>ICUR</i> IX 25810	ditto	?	?
69.	<i>ICUR</i> X 26679; <i>ILCV</i> 1274a	ditto	Rufinus	± 31
70.	<i>ICUR</i> X 26863; <i>ILCV</i> 1272	ditto	?	?
71.	<i>ILCV</i> 970; Damaso p. 112	ditto	?	--
72.	<i>ILCV</i> 1273 ; <i>ICUR</i> II p. 309.	ditto	Gemmulus	± 16 y. 6 m.
73.	<i>RAC</i> 1980, 252; <i>AE</i> 1981, 116	ditto	Victor	24 y. 11 m. 9 d.
74.	<i>AE</i> 1946, 26b; <i>Haidra</i> 1, 74	Africa Proconsularis, Ammaedara	Donatus	--
75.	<i>AE</i> 1946, 59a	Africa Proconsularis, Theveste	Donatus	--
76.	<i>AE</i> 1975, 929; <i>Haidra</i> I 203	Africa Proconsularis, Ammaedara	Teophilus (?)	--
77.	<i>AE</i> 1995, 1738	Africa Proconsularis, Theveste	?	--
78.	<i>CIL</i> VIII 55 (p. 2313); <i>ILCV</i> 1284; <i>ILTun</i> 104	Africa Proconsularis, Thysdrus	Iulius Sabinus	± 56 y ? m.

Dedicators	Date	Text
--	390–425	Hic sanctum corpus lectoris Pauli quiescit / caelo tamen animam cum iustis credo receptam. / Integer ut infans maior sic creverat aetas / mundus ab omni labe [tamen] fide purior esset. / Nobis a proavis procerum de stirpe creatus / ducere qui nihilum voluit mundi huius honores.
--	?	[---] et [---] / [---] lecto[r---] / [---].
mentioned as father and grandfather	390–425	Primicenia filia Pri/miceni lectoris et Asel/les pronep(tis) v(iri) s(ancti) Cresimi epis/copi nep(tis) v(iri) s(ancti) Navigi lectoris / vicsit annos II et <d>ies XXX / decessit XIII kal(endas) nob(embres).
--	528	Hic requiescit in pace Hilarius lictor (i)t(uli) Pudeniis / qui vixit ann(os) pl(us) m(inus) XXX d(e)p(ositus) VII idus iul(ias) p(ost) c(onsulatum) Maborti v(iri) c(larissimi).
--	3 s.	Favor Favor lector.
together with wife	300–350	Claudius Atticia/nus lector / et Claudia / Felicissima / coixus.
--	399	Liberium lector mox et levita secutus / post Damasum clarus totos quos vixit in annos / fonte sacro magnus meruit sedere sacerdos / cunctus ut populus pacem tunc soli clamaret. / Hic pius hic iustus felicia tempora fecit / defensor magnus multos ut nobiles ausus / regi subtraheret ecclesiae aula defendens / miserioris largus meruit per saecula nomen / ter quinos populum qui rexit in annos amore / nunc requiem sentit caelestia regna potitus.
two brothers, one lector	348	Depositus est Petrus VIII idus / [mar]tias qui vixit annis XVIII / dep(ositus) in pace Philippo et Salia / co(n)ss(ulibus) duo fratres / I[---] antius I lector de Pallacine qui vixit / [annis --- d]ep(ositus) XII kal(endas) sept(embres).
--	390–424	[---] / lect[or ---] / p[---]
--	402	[Hi]c requiescet Rufinus lector / qui vixit ann(os) p(lus) m(inus) XXXI / [dep]ositus in pace III idus sept / [Ar]cadio et Honorio augg(ustis) V cons(ulibus).
--	5 s.	[--- beneme]renti in p[ace ---] / [--- lec]tori titul[i ---] / [---deposi]t(us) VI id[us ---].
--	366–384	Hinc pater exceptor lector levita sacerdos / creverat hinc meritis quoniam melioribus actis / hinc mihi provecto Christus cui summa potestas / sedis apostolicae voluit concedere honorem / archivis fateor volui nova condere tecta / addere praeterea dextra laevaue columnas / quae Damasi teneant proprium per saecula nomen.
two women	5–6 s.	[L]ocum quem emit Redempta h(onesta) f(emina) / [cum B]onifatia hic requiescit in pace / Gemmulus lictor tt(ituli)) s(an)c(ta)e martyris Caeciliae qui vixit annos plus minus XVI m(enses) VI de/positus est in pace pridie K(a)l(endas) Octobris / per indictione prima feliciter / et si quis (e) um praesumpserit inde / de locum istum et ossa ipsorum inde / iactaverint habeant parte cum Iuda.
--	350–399	Victor lector qui (v)ixit / ann(os) XXIII m(enses) XI d(ies) VIII / in pace X(Christi).
--	?	Donatus lector depositus / est in pace sub die XIV / Kalendas Maias indict[us] / one octaba mense Aprile/s.
--	?	Dona/tus / lec/tor / in /pace.
--	6–7 s.	Locus Teauf(?)il(?)[i](!) [.]OB[...] / lectori(?).
--	?	----- / l[ec]/t[or] / i[n] / pa[ce].
--	4–6 s.	Iulius / Sabinus / lec[t]or vi/xit in pace / ann(os) LVI / p(lus) m(inus) me(nses!) / h(ic) s(itus) e(st).

n.	References	Provenance	Name	Age
79.	<i>CIL VIII 453</i> (p. 926); <i>VIII 11524</i> ; <i>ILCV 1285</i> ; <i>Haidra I 404</i> ; <i>ILTun 429</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Ammaedara	Vitalis	5
80.	<i>CIL VIII 13422</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Carthago	Deusededit	--
81.	<i>CIL VIII 13423</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286</i>	ditto	Mena	38
82.	<i>CIL VIII 13424</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286</i>	ditto	?	?
83.	<i>CIL VIII 13425</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286</i>	ditto	?	?
84.	<i>CIL VIII 23045</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286a</i> ; <i>ILTun 221</i> ; <i>AE 2007, 1696</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Uppenna	Quintus	22 y. 1 m. 17 d.
85.	<i>CIL VIII 25055</i> ; <i>ILCV 1286</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Carthago	?	?
86.	<i>AE 1946, 26a</i> ; <i>Haidra I 63</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Ammaedara	Iohannes	6 y. 8 d.
87.	<i>AE 1946, 26c</i> ; <i>Haidra I 108</i> ; <i>CICBardo 41</i>	ditto	Castalinus	6 y. 4 m.
88.	<i>AE 2009, 1701</i> ; <i>Haidra III, C, 4</i>	ditto	Redentus	13 y. 5 m. 14 d.
89.	<i>IFCCarth I 94</i> ; <i>ILTun 1147</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Carthago	Volitanus	--
90.	<i>IFCCarth I 241</i> ; <i>ILTun 1147</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Carthago	Quintus	?
91.	<i>ILAlg II 3, 8283</i>	Numidia, Cuicul	Pacentius	--
92.	<i>ILAlg II 3, 10324</i>	Numidia, Sila	Georgius	24
93.	<i>ILTun 1121</i> ; <i>IFCCarth 3.402</i>	Africa Proconsularis, Carthago	Bonifatius	?
94.	<i>ILTun 1122</i> ; <i>IFCCarth 3.609</i> ; <i>AE 1993, 62</i>	ditto	Cresconius	12 y. 9 m.
95.	<i>ILTun 1701</i>	ditto	Iulianus Venerius (?)	?
96.	Cintas-Duval 1958, p. 170	Africa Proconsularis, Clipea	Passibus	14
97.	<i>AE 1975, 588</i> ; <i>CAG 7, p. 179</i>	Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum	?	?
98.	<i>CIL XII 1156</i> ; <i>AE 1973, 328</i>	Gallia Narbonensis, Apta Iulia	--	--
99.	<i>CIL XII 2701</i> ; <i>ILCV 1280</i> ; <i>CAG VII, p. 436</i>	Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum	Severus	13
100.	<i>CIL XIII 2385</i> ; <i>ILCV 1287</i> ; <i>CAG LXIX 2, p. 670</i>	Lugdunensis, Lugdunum	Stefanus	66
101.	<i>CIL XIII 2799</i> ; <i>ILCV 1281</i> (add); <i>CLE 2197</i> ; <i>CAG LXXI 1, p. 175</i>	Lugdunensis, Augustodunum	Tigridius	(puer)
102.	<i>CIL XIII 7636</i> ; <i>ILCV 1282</i> ; <i>Binsfeld 2, p. 59</i> ; <i>Terrien 2007, p 92.</i>	Germania Superior, Confluentes	Leopardus	19

Dedicators	Date	Text
--	?	Vitalis / lector / in pace / vixit / annis V / depositus / s(ub) d(i)e III No/nas Ma/ias ind(ictione) pri/ma.
--	4–6 s.	Deusedit / lector / [in] pa[ce].
--	4 s.	Mena lect(or) reg(ione) qu[arta(?) or inta (?)] / fidelis in pace vixit / annos XXXVIII d(e)p(ositus) Id(us) / [--- i]nd(ictione) prima.
--	4 s.	----- fid[elis ---] / [---]us lec[tor -----]
--	4 s.	-----]us l[ector-----]
--	6 s.	Quint/us lec/tor vix/it anno/s XXII e/t mense(m) / unu(m) dies XVII.
--	4 s.	-----]tor lec[tor-----]
--	?	Iohannes lector / quiebit in pace vixit / annis sex dies VIII / d(e)p(o)s(i)t(u)s su(b) d(ie) Idus Iulias
--	?	Castalinu/s lector qui/ebit in pace / vixit annis / sex menses IIII / d(e)p(o)s(itus) (e)st su(b)d(ie) prizie Ka/l(endas) Ianuarias ind(ictione) III.
--	5–7 s.	Redentus / lector requi/ebit in pace / bixit annis(!) / XIII menses / V dies XIII de/positus est / sub d(ie) Idus Iu/lias ind(ictione) XV.
together with two <i>fideles</i>	?	Pascasius f[idelis ---] / Volitanus l[ector ---] / Felicitas f[idelis ---] // depositus(?) ---]II Kal(endas) April(es) / [---] d(e)p(ositus) VII Id(us) Nob(embres).
--	?	KIII fac[---] / Eulalius [---] // Quintu[s lect]/or(?) in pac[e ---].
--	6 s.	I(n) n(omin)e d(omi)ni ame(n) Pacentius (?) lector in D(e)o bibat.
father	6–7 s.	Hic locum Georgi / miseri lectori(s) filius / Tiberi et Capri(a)e (e)gl(e)s(iae) / quiebit in pace d(ie) VIII / K(a)l(en)d(as) A(u)gustas in(dictione) X vix(it) / ann(os) XXIIII.
--	4–6 s.	Benen[atus? in] / pace vixit [annos ---] / d(e)p(ositus?) II Id(us) {II} No[vembres Bo]/mifatiu(s) lecto[r ---] / [---] in pace.
--	?	Cresconius lector r(e)gion(is) prim(a)e / in pace vixit ann(o)s XI mens(es) [(novem) / d(e)p(ositu)s (decem et novem) K(a)l(endas) Ianuarias ind(ic)t(ione) (decem et novem).
--	?	----- Iulia[nus?] / Venerius / [---] llc[tor(?) i]n pace.
--	5 s. (?)	Passibus / lector in pace / vixit ann(os) XIII / r(e)q(ui)escit XI k(a)l(endas) Oct(o)b(res).
--	?	----- l]ector / [--- m]emor[ia -----]
--	6–7 s.	Hic requiescit bon(a)e memori(a)e Lector obiit in Chr(ist)o / fuit defunctus XIII K(alendas) Ian(uarias).
--	6 s.	In hoc tomolo / requiescet bon/(a)e (me)moriae Severus / lector ennocens / qui vixit in pace an/nis tredecem(m) obiit d(ecimo) Kal(endas) Decemb/res.
--	23 Nov 552	In hoc loco requiescit / famolus D(e)i Stefanus primicirius / sc(h)olae lectorum serviens c(c)l(esiae) / Lug(u)duninsi vixit annos LXVI / obiit VIII K(a)l(endas) Decembris duodecies p(ost) c(onsulatum) / Iustini indictione XV.
--	5–6 s.	[Hic i]acet Tigridius cas/tus puer et l]ector(?) ieix (!) / (s)impirqui (!) beatus qui / per saeculum sini sai/cuii (!) colpacioni / transivii (!) s(ub) [d(ie)] XI pai(endas) (!) / Mart(ias) in pace pprocessii (!).
father	6–7 s.	Hic requiescet(!) Leupa/dus lector amatus / gratus in fede prova/tus(!) qui vixit annus(!) / XVIII cui pater Leuninus / [-----]

III: NOTES ON THE INSCRIPTIONS

In order to let the evidence speak for itself as much as possible, I have chosen to offer full quotations of all the inscriptions, except for **34**. Every text is quoted after careful consideration of all editions mentioned. In more than one case, I have been able to offer readings that are more accurate than what is offered in the – admittedly essential and invaluable – online databases. In general, I have refrained from ‘correcting’ the Latin of the inscriptions with indications such as <B =V>*enustus*, and just offered the reading of the inscriptions, in this case *Benustus*. Needless to say, the commentary provides the place for explanations and clarifications wherever needed.

I have consistently used the abbreviations as they are found in the *Manfred Clauss Epigraphik Datenbank*. Books or articles that are mentioned only once in the commentary are quoted in full at that place in the paper. For other works, I refer to the bibliography at the end of the article for full references.

I have mainly followed the geographical distribution of the *CIL*, which has resulted in the following classification (for the sake of convenience, the South of Italy has been put together with the inscriptions from the North of Italy):

1–2	Spain and Portugal
3–5	Balkan provinces
6–33	Italy, Rome excepted
34–73	Rome
74–96	African provinces
97–102	Gaul and the Germanic provinces

The listing of the inscriptions within the different regions enables the reader to track down a reference in a quick and easy way. The starting points are *CIL* and *ICUR*. When an inscription does not exist in either of these, the reader first has to look for *AE*, and then for other editions, in alphabetical order. This classification also means that most of the inscriptions from the same location (e.g. a particular church or archaeological site) have been put together. In rare exceptions, the commentary will sufficiently make clear which inscriptions belong together.

Any other classification would involve unnecessary complications: the dating of the inscriptions is often unsure, the majority of the cases do not mention the age of the lector, and the typology of the monuments is often too uncertain to classify them in a way that makes consulting easy.

Needless to say, any selection involves some choices. I have included some cases in which the presence of a lector is somewhat doubtful (**8**, **57**, **83**, and **97**); in the commentary, I explain the reason for such choice.

Commentary

1. The grave plate for this lector was in the main choir of basilica I. A tilde occurs above the word *lector* (see 3).
2. This marble plaque from Mertola is now in the Museo Etnografico in Lisbonne. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2259–2260) who strongly stresses the young age of the lector (as opposed to the legislation of Emperor Justinian) and offers literary parallels for young lectors in his commentary on this particular inscription.
3. Fragments of a side of a limestone sarcophagus. The present reading is based on a careful study of the fragment and photo as they appear in the Salona edition from 2010. It differs from the overly reconstructed readings in the *CIL* volumes. The editors note that the tilde on the word *lector* might have been a way to mark the importance of the function. Tentatively, one might understand the beginning as: *In hunc sepulcrum pausat / [...] vinianus lecto[r...]*
4. This is the only bilingual inscription in the collection, coming from a bilingual province as Macedonia. Note that the Latin text is not a translation of the Greek. Though the Latin and the Greek state different things, both emphasise that Eufrosynus was a good and trustworthy friend to have (the rather rare word ἀκράδαντος means “unshaken”).
5. Cover of a sarcophagus, which has later been reused for a medieval grave.
6. From the basilica of Saint Felix and Fortunatus in Vicenza, on a limestone plate.
7. Marble plate of unknown origin, now in a private collection in Cagliari.
8. The presence of a lector on this inscription is far from sure. This inscription is on the mosaic floor of the Dom Sant’ Eufemia in Grado near Aquileia, which was built onto an older church, starting from 568, after the inhabitants of Aquileia fled from the Langobard invasion. The church was dedicated in 579. Zettler (2001, 95) notes that about 80 inscriptions are preserved on the mosaic pavement, most of which have never been edited properly. The pavement was constructed between 571/2 and 586/7. This fragmentary inscription on the mosaic floor has been interpreted time and again as referring to a lector who made a vow together with his family and paid for a part of the mosaic floor. Though the picture of the pavement is available, previous editors have proposed various and erroneous readings. Zettler (2001, 195–196) comes the closest to what is actually on the photograph. The male name Amara is very rare. Kajanto (1965, 106) mentions it as from a Celtic area, and thus probably Celtic. There may indeed be support for the reading of Amara as a local name. In fact, a mosaic inscription found in the old basilica of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Grado, which has been excavated under the Dom Sant’ Eufemia and which is dated to the fifth or sixth century, reads *Amara et Valentina/nus feceru/nt pedes XXVI* (*EMC* p. 205; Zettler 2001, 208; *AE* 1975, 419d). The name Amara may thus testify of “une implantation locale assez durable” (*EMC* p. 224). However, other readings are possible. One could interpret the sixth letter as a trace of the leg of the letter N. The *cognomen* Amaran(h)us is very well attested. See Solin (2003, 1152–1154), with other possibilities as Amaranthis, Amaranthianus or Amaranthio. *PCBE* II, 100 reads the name as Amara.

9. Together with his mother Agneta, the lector Iohannis paid for 25 feet of the mosaic floor of the Dom Sant' Eufemia in Grado. *PCBE* II, 1057.

10. From the same mosaic pavement in Grado. The name Murgio is probably similar to Dalmatian names as Murcius or Murcuius, and may reveal Illyrian origin. See *EMC* p. 224 and Kajanto (1965, 245) on the Roman name Murcus. *PCBE* II, 1525 (Murgio).

11. The restorations to this inscription from Grado are by Diehl in the *ILCV*. The editors of *EMC* judge them as rather probable, though on other inscriptions from the mosaic floor, *actuarius* is attested as a term for a secretary, rather than *amanuensis*. *Domestigi* might be a variant for *domestici*. The proposed reading confirms a lector in the state of a rather important administrator, in this case to the church of Saint Eufemia. *PCBE* II, 2007–2008 (Seco[laris?]).

12. From the same mosaic pavement in Grado. Zettler (2001, 202) is far too pessimistic about the “problematische Überlieferung”. On the second line the words *fil(ius) cum* appear clearly on the photograph. *EMC* p. 241 mentions the possibility of reading *fil(io) cum Antonino*, in which case Victorinus would mention his son Antoninus. Though this reading can certainly not be excluded, the inversion in the word order would be somewhat unusual. *PCBE* II, 2294 sees Victorinus as the son and Antoninus as the father (*PCBE* II, 156).

13. This epitaph was found under the present-day cathedral of Cremona. On the change of the vocalism, which caused *lector* to become *lictur*, see A. Zamboni 1965–1966, “Contributo allo studio del latino epigrafico della X Regio augustea (Venetia et Histria). Introduzione. Fonetica (Vocalismo)”, *AIV* 124: 484–485 and A. Zamboni 1967–1968, “Contributo allo studio del latino epigrafico della X Regio augustea (Venetia et Histria). Fonetica (Vocali in iato e consonantismo)”, *AIV* 126: 84. For the precise dating, see G. Pontiroli 1986, “Antica epigrafa inedita nei magazzini di archeologia del Museo Civico di Cremona”, *Epigraphica* 48: 239. *PCBE* II, 2123. See also Leclercq (1929, col. 2257).

14. In this inscription of considerable historic importance, one finds the name of the third bishop of Brescia. In fact, Flavius Latinus succeeded Viator and was the predecessor of bishop Apollonius. His ecclesiastical *cursus honorum* is mentioned. He served twelve years as an exorcist (the highest of the minor ordinations; for another mention of an exorcist and lector, see 54), then fifteen years as a *presbyter*, followed by three years and seven months as a bishop. *InscrIt* suggests that Latinilla was the sister of the bishop, in which case Flavia Paulina, daughter to Latinilla and Flavius Macrinus, was the bishop's niece (*neptis*). If one would understand *neptis* as granddaughter, it would mean that the bishop was married (Flavius Macrinus was probably his son) – a rather unlikely case. The inscription is now lost and only known from a manuscript. *PCBE* II, 1348. See also Leclercq (1929, col. 2246).

15. Epitaph from the church of San Feliciano. As *InscrIt* indicates, *mensa* refers to a funerary table to receive the votive offerings. In epitaphs from Roman Africa *mensa* often means the tomb itself. *PCBE* II, 1848 and Leclercq (1929, col. 2258).

16. *PCBE* II, 82 reads *Alb<i>nus* rather than *Alb<a>nus*.

17. The text of this inscription has been reconstructed by putting together six pieces of a marble slab found in the ‘crypts’ *Le Grotte* in present day Mirabella Eclano (Avellino). The inscription is now preserved in a private collection. See *PCBE* II, 1237 and Leclercq (1929, col. 2259). Leclercq rightfully remarks that a number of churches in Late Antiquity gave themselves the title *sancta*.

18. This stone is now lost. Note the several spelling errors, particularly iu]dioum for iudicium. Though the inscription has pertained to Lauro (Avellino) before 1757 and to Mugnano (Avellino) at the monastery of S. Pietro a Cesarano afterwards, its ancient provenance is Nola, in present day Naples. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2257) and H. Solin 2013. “Le iscrizioni paleocristiane di Avellino”, in S. Accomando (ed.), *San Modestino e l’Abellinum cristiana*, Avellino, 215–236, 227 and 236.

19. This epitaph belonged to the Complesso Basilicale di S. Felice, in present day Naples, but is now lost. *PCBE* II, 2385. See also Leclercq (1929, col. 2257).

20. From the monastery of San Pietro (now Complesso Monumentale) at Marsala. The stone now seems to be lost. The formula huius ecclesiae makes the reading lector certain. Leclercq (1929, col. 2257).

21. Marble slab, found in Cagliari, presumably in the church of Sant’Efsio. Now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of the same town. See *PCBE* II, 1897.

22. Marble fragment from an unspecified provenance in Rimini. The stone is now lost. See *PCBE* II, 479 and Leclercq (1929, col. 2259).

23–24. Both inscriptions belong to the church of Santa Felicità in present day Florence. The former can still be read in the portal of the church, while the latter belongs to the necropolis. We possibly are confronted with two young lectors from the same school. Together with Vitalis (79), Pompeius Lupicinus would be the youngest lector in our records, though there is a chance that part of the left side of the slab has broken off, so that the numeral V needs to be completed by another numeral. In fact, *CIL* XI 1709 consists of ten broken pieces of marble which were reassembled. See *PCBE* II, 1148 (Iovianus) and *PCBE* II, 1340 (Lipicinus). Leclercq (1929, col. 2258) emphasises the lector’s young age. On Fundanius, Leclercq (1929, col. 2259).

25. The presence of a Christian monogram confirms that this fragmentary inscription indeed refers to a Christian lector.

26. This is the only Latin epigraphical attestation of the word *psalmista*.

27. Marble slab from Cagliari, near the San Saturnino church. The stone is now kept at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Cagliari.

28. This mosaic floor belonged to an annex building of the basilica of Sant’ Eufemia. This building had been constructed by the bishop Helios. The archaeological context of this inscription is quite revealing. In the centre of the floor, a large inscription in the form of a medallion mentions bishop Helios, who reveals himself as the builder of the church (Zettler 2001, 204). Around this central medallion are five smaller medallions mentioning those who contributed to the costs by an *ex voto*. Next to the lector Lautus are

mentioned, on separate medallions, the deacon Laurentius (Zettler 2001, 205), the *notarii* Petrus, Dominicus, and Iustinus (Zettler 2001, 205). Below it are other medallions: a votum by a *notarius* called Irenaius (Zettler 2001, 204), a *cubicularius* (?) called Firminus (?) together with his family (*cum suis*), a man named Honoratus (?) *cum suis* (Zettler 2001, 204), and a certain Probus (Zettler 2001, 205). On the lector Lautus, see *PCBE* II, 1267 and Leclercq (1929, col. 2258).

29–30. Both inscriptions are on mosaic floors. The former was found in the basilica of Sant' Eufemia, the latter in a street, ulica M. Laginje. The inscription for Eraclius reads *tector* (“plasterer”), a plausible possibility in the context of a church building. Some editors consider it a writing error for *lector*, because numerous names of lectors are attested on mosaic floors. *PCBE* II, 658 reads *lector*; see also *PCBE* II, 1234 for Eraclius' wife Laurentia.

31. Marble slab from the necropolis of the Santa Felicita church in Florence. The stone is now lost.

32. It is difficult to find out where this stone slab originally belonged, since it was found in a private house in the city of Venosa.

33. On a mosaic floor of the San Cazian di Isonzo church near Aquileia. Again, the mosaic is placed at the west side, near the entrance of the aula of the church. The name of the lector might have been Domnius or Domnicus.

34. Only the first ten lines have been given in the table from this long sixth-century *carmen epigraphicum*, found on the Via Salaria on a pope's grave. The author of the poem is probably Flavianus de Vercelli. The subject of the poem is bishop Honoratus of Vercelli, who was exiled together with bishop Eusebius of Vercelli in the context of the struggle between Athanasius of Alexandria and Emperor Constantius II in the mid-fourth century. This *carmen* fits with the tradition of exilic poetry on epigraphic documents. See M. Vallejo Girvés 2007, “Exilios y exiliados a partir de la epigrafía: un caso peculiar de movilidad geográfica”, in M. Mayer i Olivé – G. Baratta – A. Guzmán Almagro (eds.), *XII Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae*, Barcelona, 1477–1482. For the present subject, it is revealing that being a lector is closely connected to Honoratus' early childhood and later also to his adolescence. Deacon, levite, and priest are mentioned as following steps in the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*. Note that *diaconus* and *levita* are synonyms: the repetition is for metrical reasons.

35. Small fragment of a marble slab, found in the crypt of the San Clemente church.

36. Marble slab, found in a wall of the monastery of San Cosimato in Trastevere. See Pietri (1977, 149).

37. This *titulus sepulcralis* from the *Santa Maria Maggiore* is now lost.

38. Since the origin of this fragment is unknown, it remains uncertain whether this is a Christian inscription or a pagan one for a lictor. See Silvagni in *ICUR*, quoting de Rossi, who writes: *suspikor detritas litteras fuisse et legendum 'l<e>ctor'; ceterum lictorum tituli haud rari sunt, et fragmentum fortasse est ethnicae inscriptionis.*

39. Marble slab in the Santa Saba church. Pietri (1977, 143) suggests that Megalus was the name of this lector.
40. The stone is now lost and of unknown provenance in Rome, but it links lector Leopardus with the Santa Pudenziana church. See Pietri (1977, 468, 635 and 720) and Leclercq (1929, col. 2252).
41. This slab was found below the floor of the San Paolo fuori le Mura, and is now at the Musei Vaticani, Lapidario Cristiano ex Lateranense. Fasciola was established as a place of worship during the pontificate of Pope Damasus (364–384). See Leclercq (1929, col. 2252). The *titulus Fasciolae* was the church inside the walls of the martyrs Nereus and Achilles in the catacombs of Domitilla. See Pietri (1977, 92, 466, 635, 649 and 720). On Christian euergetism and support to the poor, quite often mentioned on epitaphs of benefactors, see Janssens (1981, 191–193).
42. Marble slab in the basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2256).
43. Marble slab belonging to the Cemetery of Commodilla.
44. Also this marble plate was found inside the walls of the martyr's tombs of Nereus and Achilles in the catacombs of Domitilla. What has remained consists of two fragments that do not fit together, but surely belonged to the same plate. Pietri (1977, 149) attributes an incorrect age to Julius “mort dans le lectorat à 83 ans, mais on ne sait pas s'il a été marié”. Leclercq (1929, col. 2250–2251) points to the remarkable date of 362, during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate. In this year, the emperor had given freedom to the Nicean bishops who had been exiled by Emperor Constans. The mention of *Ecclesia Sancta Catholica* might thus have been used in a triumphalistic way. In *ICUR IX 24435*, the wording *exorcista de katolika* possibly points to the ‘orthodoxy’ of the deceased, at the moment Church was facing schisms.
45. Marble plate, with same provenance as 41 and 44. See Pietri (1977, 719 and 835), who considers Pascentius as a Christian name, testifying to a vocation for the lectorate at a young age (also Kajanto 1965, 358 on the Christian origin of the name). See also Leclercq (1929, col. 2252).
46. This marble plaque was integrated into the portico of the Santa Maria in Trastevere church, but originally belonged to the catacombs of San Callisto, where it was the back side of a sarcophagus. It is now kept in the Musei Vaticani, Lapidario Cristiano ex Lateranense. The text of this inscription is flawed. One possibility is that Heraclius has this gravestone set up for himself (*sibi*) and for his son who predeceased him. In this case, the verb ought to be *fecit*. On the other hand, *fecerunt* suggests that other family members set this up for the deceased father and son. But in that case, the nominative *Heraclius* does not make sense. Heraclius was apparently a lector of the second region. See Pietri (1977, 119, 149 and 655 “il s’agit (...) du domicile”). According to the *Liber Pontificalis* 4,2 Christian Rome was divided into seven regions. However, the ‘regions’ could also be the fourteen Augustan regions, which survived in the City of Rome of the Early Middle Ages, see Spera (2014). See Leclercq (1929, col. 2251) who understands that the parents had set this up for their deceased son Heraclius (“les noms des parents manquent”).

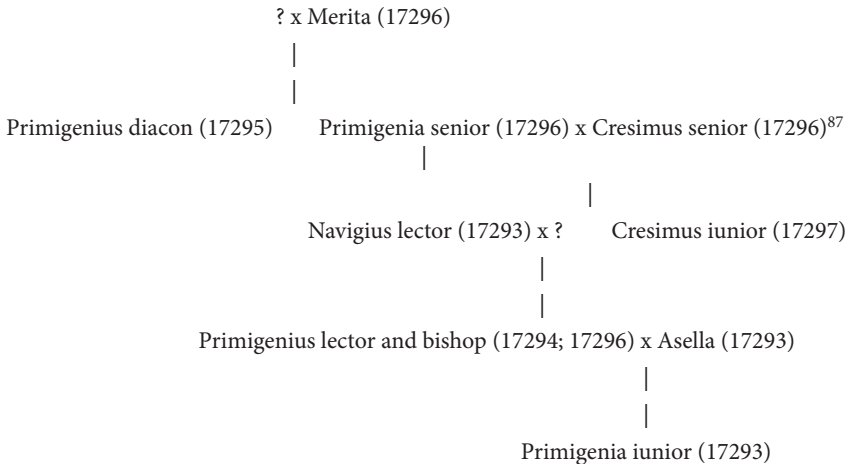
47. The text has the letter R represented by P, mistakenly confused with the Greek *rho*. Pietri (1977, 149).
48. This inscription is scratched on plaster (almost as a graffito) and stems from an anonymous cemetery on the Via Appia, near the cemetery of Callisto. It records the *titulus Sabinae*, the modern church of Santa Sabina, where young Domnio was a lector. See Marucchi (1912, 212) and Leclercq (1929, col. 2256), who locates the inscription at the cemetery of Balbina on the Via Appia. See also Pietri (1977, 635, 709 and 719) who considers Domnio as a Christian name (cf. Kajanto 1965, 362).
49. This marble inscription from the same cemetery refers to a house church which was probably located near or in a laundry (*fullonica*). See Marucchi (1912, 213) and Leclercq (1929, col. 2256), pointing to medieval texts mentioning a *fullonica* near the Via Merulana. See also Pietri (1977, 635 and 720). The inscription is exceptional because it refers to both the betrothal and marriage of a Christian couple, in which the wording *virgo ad virginem* is a marker of Christianity. See Laes (2013, 113 and 115).
50. This inscription is simply scratched on plaster, and comes from the same cemetery as 48 and 49. The name *Simplicius* is mainly used by Christians, see Pietri (1977, 143 and 149) and Kajanto (1965, 253).
51. This marble slab was found on the Via Appia and is now at the Musei Vaticani, *Lapidario Cristiano ex Lateranense*. This lector belonged to the church of the Velabrum, the modern San Giorgio in Velabro. See Marucchi (1912, 213), Leclercq (1929, col. 2253–2255) and Pietri (1977, 635).
52. A reused stone: the other part of this marble slab includes a grave inscription from the year 341.
53. Fragment of a marble slab from the cemetery of Praetextatus at the Via Appia.
54. For another mention of an exorcist, though not combined with the function of lector, see 14. See Pietri (1977, 139, 149, 635, 695 and 720) who mentions Proficius as a predominantly Christian name (cf. Kajanto 1965, 286).
55. In the cemetery of Saints Petrus and Marcellinus. A *presbyter*, together with fathers and brothers, commemorated the 38-year-old lector Eugamius. This mention of *patres* and *fratres* as well as the noun *virgo* strongly suggests that Eugamius lead a consecrated life somehow bound by religious vows. See Laes (2013, 112).
56. This *titulus sepulchralis* of sandstone also pertains to the cemetery of Saints Petrus and Marcellinus. Lector Olympius belonged to the *titulus Eusebii*, nowadays Sant' Eusebio. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2256) and Pietri (1977, 635).
57. Fragment of a marble slab, same provenance as 55. The restitution *l[ectoris]* is obviously unsure, but suggested because of the context and the location, and because of the name Paulus (see 60).
58. Same provenance as 55. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2256), suggesting that also this lector would have belonged to the Sant' Eusebio (see 56).

59. Fragment of a marble slab, Same provenance as 55

60. In this funerary epigram, again with provenance as 55, it is stated that the lector Paulus was already an adult (*maior aetas*), but had kept the innocence and integrity of a child (*infans*). This moral integrity also appears from the fact that, though of high class family, he never wanted to pursue a wordly career (*mundi huius honores*). On the theme of modesty and innocence in Christian poetic inscriptions, see Laes (2011, 322–323). On the Christian name Paulus, see Pietri (1977, 149 and 719) and Kajanto (1965, 286).

61. Fragment of a marble slab, Same provenance as 55.

62. Thanks to five inscriptions found in a cemetery on the Via Praenestina, we are able to reconstruct the genealogical tree of a family of Cypriot origin which made an ecclesiastical career in Rome (the numbers in brackets below indicate the *ICUR VI* references for the person mentioned).



Primigenia died at age two. She was a daughter of Primigenius, a lector who would later become a bishop, and Asella. Her grandfather Navigius also was a lector. As a title, *sanctus* predominantly combines with names of bishops or martyrs, but it could also be used for priests or monks still alive, as the process of canonisation was not known before the thirteenth century. In fact, it could be used to denote that a person (or a place) was venerable, see Delahaye (1909). The same counts for her great-grandfather Cresimus, who had been a lector and a bishop at the same church. See also Pietri (1977, 635 and 720).

⁸⁷ Mentioned as lector and bishop in two Greek inscriptions, respectively *ICUR VI* 17296 (Χρήσιμος ἀναγνώστης) and *ICUR VI* 17297 (Χρήσιμος υἱὸς Χρησίμου ἐπισκόπου Κύπριος), where Cresimus iunior is mentioned in the nominative.

63. A marble slab from the catacombs of Saint Hippolytus. This lector belonged to the *titulus Pudentis*, nowadays Santa Pudenziana. Note the mistaken spellings: *lictor* instead of *lector*, and *Pudeniis* for *Pudentis*, with the capital *T* confused with the capital *I*. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2255).

64. This is a possibly the earliest mention of a Christian lector. The inscription was found *in situ* in the cemetery of Sant' Agnesa on the Via Nomentana. See Marucchi (1912, 214). This rather long plaque (1.81 m. length and 0.50 m. height) covered a *loculus* containing two bodies: the skeletal remains of two adults in perfect state of conservation have been found. This also explains the repetition of the name Favor, since both deceased adults would have had the same name. For the latter Favor, the sculptor has inserted the letter *v* in suprascript, as from the second century CE on the name was rather pronounced as *Faor*. The depiction of an anchor in combination with the archaeological context makes sure that this is a Christian inscription. Pietri (1977, 149) mentions Favor as an “humble” *cognomen* (cf. Kajanto 1965, 285). See Leclercq (1929, col. 2246), who even dates the inscription to the second century (“certinement au II^e siècle”), referring to Calpetanus Favor, an owner of a factory producing wine casks (*doliaria*), who lived and worked in Rome during the first half of the second century.

65. This *titulus* belonged to the Coemeterium Maius (also known as the Cimiterio Maggiore or Catacomba Maggiore) at the via Nomentana. It is now kept at the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino. Leclercq (1929, col. 2246) suggests a date in the late second century (“presque aussi ancienne” – referring to 64). Pietri (1977, 149) cautiously suggests a third century date, pointing to other examples of the Christian use of the name Atticianus (cf. Kajanto 1965, 203).

66. This Damasian poem mentions the life and career of pope Siricius (384–399) and is located in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nova. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2249). On the pagan origin of the name Siricius, see Pietri (1977, 153, 468–470 and 719) and Kajanto (1965, 346).

67. This *titulus sepulcralis* belongs to the catacombs of Priscilla. The church of Pallacine is the modern church of San Marco. See Marucchi (1912, 214) and Leclercq (1929, col. 2251–2252). It is not clear whether *fratres* here refers to biological brothers. They may also have belonged to a religious community (see 55).

68. Marble plate from the cemetery of Priscilla.

69. Marble plate belonging to the Coemeterium Bassillae ad Sanctum Hermetem, at the Via Salaria Vetus. See Pietri (1977, 635 and 720).

70. This marble *titulus sepulcralis* belongs to the same Coemeterium. The reading *lectori* is likely, since the word *tituli* suggests affiliation to a church. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2256).

71. “His father, advancing from here – notary, reader, deacon priest – has henceforth grown in merit through exceptional acts. To me, brought from here, Christ, whose power is greatest, wished to grant the honor of the apostolic see. For the archives, I confess, I wished to build a new building, to add as well columns to the left and right, so that they

perceive the proper name of Damasus through the ages”. See D. Trout 2015. *Damasus of Rome: The Epigraphic Poetry*, Oxford, 187–189. This poem pertains to the San Lorenzo in Damaso church, the only intra-mural church built by Pope Damasus. It honours Damasus’ father, who had pursued a career from notary to priest. This fourth-century church was destroyed in the fifteenth century, and excavations during 1988–1993 have greatly improved our understanding of the building. The Damasian poetic inscription is only known by manuscript tradition. See Leclercq (1929, col. 2249). Scalia has proposed a different reading: not *archibis*, but *arcib(us) his*: “in these arches”. See G. Scalia 1977. “Gli ‘archiva’ di papa Damaso e le biblioteche di papa Ilaro”, *StudMed* 18: 39–63.

72. Marble slab from the church of Santa Cecilia. The name Gemmulus is unique. See Rüpke (1995, 1021). Since no kinship relation is indicated, Redempta and Bonifatia were in all likelihood two women benefactors who dedicated this inscription to Gemmulus, a young lector of the church of S. Cecilia.

73. Marble slab from the catacombs of San Callisto (see 46 and 48).

74. The epitaph was found in one of the chapels in the south wall of the main church. This Basilica I is also called the Basilica of the Martyrs or the Basilica of Candidus. Haidra points to the date of 18 April: the sculptor no doubt wanted to indicate that *die XIV Kalendas Maias* was in the month of April.

75. The inscription is on the mosaic pavement of the Christian basilica of Thebesta.

76. This epitaph was found on the south wall of the Basilica I. The letters have almost faded away and are most difficult to read. The name might be Theophilus. *Haidra* I 203 dates this inscription to a later, i.e. Byzantine, phase of the church, as are other inscriptions with the formula *locus*.

77. On a mosaic from the necropolis, mainly pagan, near the basilica.

78. This inscription is now lost. Leclercq (1929, col. 2261–2262) observes that the formula *hic situs est* is less frequent in Christian epitaphs than in their pagan counterparts. *PCBE* I 1020.

79. This inscription was also found at the entrance of the Basilica I, at the south-west wall. *I. Haidra* I 404 notes how the very young age of the lector struck the first *CIL* editors, who suggested a mistake by the sculptor. Vitalis is the youngest lector in our records, together with 32 from Florence. Leclercq (1929, col. 2263) and *PCBE* I 1219–1220.

80–83. These fragments originate from the graveyard of the Christian basilica Damous el-Karita.

80. A broken tablet. Leclercq (1929, col. 2263) and *PCBE* I 274.

81. The indication of a fourth or fifth region probably indicates that the Carthaginian church was divided in different districts, as was the church in Rome (see 46 for Rome, and 94 for another example for Carthage). The Greek name Mena is well attested in the City of Rome. See Solin (2003, 403–404). Leclercq (1929, col. 2263).

82. Fragment of a marble tablet. Leclercq (1929, col. 2263).

83. The restitution to *l[ector]* is of course unsure, but based on the archaeological context.

84. This inscription is on a mosaic floor and is dated before the Vandal invasion of Africa in 439. *PCBE* I 944.

85. This stone also belonged to the graveyard of the Christian basilica *Damus el Karita* (see **80–83**).

86. Stone slab in the main church of *Haidra*.

87. This inscription was originally located in the portal of the main church of *Haidra*, but is now partly in the *Bardo* museum, while the lower part still is *in situ*. The reading of the last part is much debated. While Duval and Prévot in *Haidra* I 108 believe that young *Castalinus* died on the 31st of December, Feraudi in *EDH* reads *su(b) d(ie) PR[---]/IS(?) Iun(ias?) V[---](?)*. The name seems unique. For the city of Rome, Solin (2003, 702 and 1455) mentions the names *Castalianus* and *Castalius*.

88. This inscription belongs to the cemetery of basilica VII of *Haidra*. *AE* 2007, 1701 notes that this is the “cinquième attestation d’un jeune garçon comme lecteur”. In fact, it is the fourth one, since the age of *Donatus* (74) is not attested. *PCBE* I 957 mentions *Redentus* as a vulgarism for the name *Redemptus* (cf. *Haidra* I 204 for a subdiaconus *Redentus* in the basilica H of *Ammaedara*, who died at age 21).

89. This stone consists of two broken parts, which in all likelihood fit together, though this would mean that for the three deceased only two dates of burial are mentioned.

90. These two pieces of the stone probably belong together, which means that the lector *Quintus* would be mentioned together with another person.

91. A graffito on the interior wall of the baptisterium in *Djemila* mentions a lector. Following the edition of *ILAlg* online databases such as the Manfred Claus *Datenbank* and *Trismegistos* still propose the name *Pallasius*, which is attested nowhere else. Originally, in *CRAI* 1922, 404 the proposed reading was *Pacsatius*, also unattested. Févier and Marrou have proposed *Pacentius*, and the name appears as such in *PCBE* I 808. This name too seems to be a hapax.

92. *ILAlg* indicates that this inscription, dated to the end of the sixth or even the seventh century, belongs to the latest testimonies of Latin epigraphy in *Numidia*. The word *(e)gl(e)s(iae)* ought to be after the term *lector(i)s*. The letter cutter presumably made a mistake, because of the visual similarity of the mother’s name *Capri(a)e*, and fixed his error by adding the term after the name of *Capria*.

93. Epitaph and mosaic in the church of *Bir el Knissia* at *Carthage*. *PCBE* I 162.

94. See **81** on the *Carthaginian* church divided into different regions.

95. This stone is now lost : the combination of the writing *llc[tor]* and the phrasing *i]n pace* makes it reasonable to assume that *Iulianus* was a lector.

96. The excavations of the late ancient church in present day *Kelibia* have revealed a big mosaic floor, in which 55 names are recorded: four priests, two deacons, and one lector for the part of the clerics, and 48 lay persons. *Cintas-Duval* (1958, 174) offer an overview

of the constellation of the floor. All clerics were buried in the apse of the church. Surprisingly, part of these inscriptions has never been mentioned in *AE*, and the present inscription for lector Passibus does not turn up in any online database of Latin inscriptions, though *PCBE* I 830 mentions Passibus. To my knowledge, only Yassin (2005, 456) pays attention to this inscription. The name Passibus appears in *ICUR* III 9064. For Roman Africa, Passivus occurs in Theveste (*ILAlg* I 3450), also in a Christian epitaph.

97. A very fragmentary marble plate, belonging to a Christian epitaph from the necropolis of Saint Pierre in present-day Alba-la-Romaine. The editors indicate that mentions of Christian lectors go back to the beginning of the fourth century in Gallia Narbonensis. To this, one should add that there are not many epigraphical attestations (the editors were obviously inspired by **99**). The restoration *lector* is far from sure.

98. According to Marrou (see *AE* 1973, 328), Lector, formerly the title of a profession, became a proper name in this inscription from the Merovingian period, belonging to a local parish church Saint-Pantaléon in the vicinity of Apt. However, this would be the only instance of the name Lector. Kajanto (1965, 361) cites *Lectrix* as a cognomen, but this is also a rather doubtful example (*CIL* VI 8786: *C]renaei(?) Liviae / Drusi cubic(ularii) ser(vi) / colit ossa eius Cnide / lectrix coniunx eius* – here *lectrix* could very well have been the function of the slave Cnide, partner of Crenaeus (?), who was a slave in the household of Livia). It is just as possible that the name of the deceased lector is omitted in this inscription.

99. This is an epitaph from the archaeological site of Saint-Saturnin de Viviers (Ardèche). The lector Severus died on the 22nd of November. Leclercq (1929, col. 2260). *PCBE* IV 1757.

100. Epitaph from Sain-Irénée in Lyon. Stefanus was the head of a school of *lectores*. *CIL* notes that a school of *lectores* is attested for Lyon in Carolingian times. Quite surprisingly, Leclercq (1929, col. 2261–2262) offers a long digression on earlier mistaken readings of this text, but says nothing on schools of lectors. *PCBE* IV 1829.

101. This stone from Autun is now lost, and only known from transcriptions from the 18th century. The sculptor has frequently mixed up letters, mainly the *I* and the *T*. In lines 1–2 one should read: *felix semperque beatus* and in lines 3–4 *sine saeculi culpacione*. The word *culpacio* obviously points to a late date. Though no age is mentioned, both the term *puer* and the reference to innocence make clear that the deceased lector was still a child. He died on the 22nd of February. Leclercq (1929, col. 2260–2261) and *PCBE* IV 1890.

102. According to *CIL* the inscription is located at the Mittelrhein-Museum in Koblenz, but the stone seems to be lost. Leclercq (1929, col. 2260). *PCBE* IV 1165 restores the name as Leopa[r]dus, as well as the father's name to Leuni[a]nus, but mistakenly states that the father was a lector too.

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