NOTES AND STUDIES

THE PAPAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

§ 1. *The 'dies natalis' or 'natalicia' of bishops.*

THE *dies natalis*, or anniversary of the ordination of the pope, was solemnly observed in the Roman Church at least from the beginning of the fifth century. Felix III held a council in 487 on March 13, apparently the day of his ordination four years earlier. His penultimate predecessor Hilarus, in his letter to the bishops of Tarraconensis *Postquam litteras*, speaks of their epistle to him having been read 'in conventu fratrum quos natalis mei festivitas congregarat'; and in his letter to Gallic bishops *Quamquam notitiam* he uses similar language 'praesidente fratrum numeroso concilio, et ex diversis provinciis ad diem natalis nostri in honorem beati Petri apostoli per Dei gratiam congregato'. Four sermons of St Leo the Great (those numbered from 2 to 5 in the Ballerini text) were delivered on the anniversary of his accession, 'hunc servitutis nostrae natalitium diem', when a great muster took place both of the faithful of Rome and of the bishops of the surrounding towns, 'de die provectionis nostrae quasi de proprio honore gaudere'. Leo's predecessor, Xystus III, writing to Cyril of Alexandria at the time of the union with John of Antioch, expresses the joy of the 'holy and venerable synod' 'quam natalis mihi dies favente Domino congregarat'. And the observance is taken back right to the beginning of the century by the evidence of Paulinus of Nola, who tells us that though still a presbyter he had by special favour been invited by pope Anastasius to the birthday gathering; 'ad natalem suum, quod consacerdotibus suis tantum deferre solet, invitare dignatus est'.

Bearing in mind the conservative character of the Roman Church in the matter of such customs, we should in any case have regarded it as probable that the date of each pope's ordination to the episcopate—the anniversary of which was thus solemnly observed in the fifth century—was carefully recorded from a much earlier period. But the evidence of St Augustine shews us that the custom of observing a bishop's 'birthday' by a gathering of his episcopal brethren was current also among the Donatists[1]: and any custom observed by Donatists and

[1] Aug. *Ep.* cviii 5 (ed. Goldbacher C.S.E.L. xxxiv, 616. 18) 'multi coepiscopi vestri, cum frequentissima numerositate Thamugadensis Optati natalicia celebrarent'. Note that the popes appear to prefer *natalis* to *natalicius*: was this because it was the phrase used of the imperial accession-day?

Catholics alike was presumably part of the common heritage derived by both from the times that preceded the schism.

§ 2. *Papal chronology in the fourth and fifth centuries: the length of the vacancy and the day of ordination.*

From the time of the conversion of the Empire there is in fact no difficulty in establishing a practically exact chronology throughout the papal series: at the one point where the figures admit of real doubt, in the case of the successive popes, Siricius, Anastasius, and Innocent, it is rather the years than the months and days which are uncertain. The 'Leonine list' of A.D. 447 and the *Liber Pontificalis*, and for the first half of the fourth century the 'Liberian list' of A.D. 354,[1] give us the years, months, and days of the duration of each pontificate: that groundwork can be filled in with various other historical *data* from different quarters: the results can be checked by the application of two tests, and it is these to which I wish to call special attention, (1) the brevity of the vacancy, and (2) the week-day of the ordination.

It will be convenient to start by presenting in tabular form the Roman succession from the time of the Peace of the Church under Constantine for the next two centuries.

	Vacancy before.	Consecrated.	Died.	Duration.
Silvester	21 d.	31 Jan. 314	31 Dec. 335	xxi. xi.
Marcus	18 d.	18 Jan. 336	7 Oct. 336	viii. xx.
Julius	4 months	6 Feb. 337	12 Apr. 352	xv. ii. vi.
Liberius	1 m. 5 d.	17 May 352	24 Sept. 366	xiiii. iiii. vii.
Damasus	7 d.	1 Oct. 366	11 Dec. 384	xviii. ii. x.
Siricius	4 d.?	15 Dec. 384?	26 Nov. 399?	xiiii. xi. xi.?
Anastasius	1 d.?	27 Nov. 399?	18 Dec. 401?	ii. xxi.?
Innocent	4 d.?	22 Dec. 401?	12 Mar. 417	xv. ii. xxi.
Zosimus	6 d.	18 Mar. 417	26 Dec. 418	i. viiii. viii.
Boniface	3 d.	29 Dec. 418	4 Sept. 422	iii. viii. vi.
Celestine	6 d.	10 Sept. 422	27 July 432	viiii. x. xvii.
Xystus III	4 d.	31 July 432	19 Aug. 440	viii. xviiii.
Leo	41 d.	29 Sept. 440	10 Nov. 461	xxi. i. xi.
Hilarus	9 d.	19 Nov. 461	29 Feb. 468	vi. iii. xi.
Simplicius	3 d.	3 Mar. 468	10 Mar. 483	xv. vii.
Felix III	3 d.	13 Mar. 483	28 Feb. 492	viii. xi. xvii.
Gelasius	2 d.	1 Mar. 492	20 Nov. 496	iiii. viiii. xviiii.
Anastasius II	4 d.	24 Nov. 496	18 Nov. 498	i. xi. xxiiii.
Symmachus	4 d.	22 Nov. 498	19 July 513	xiiii. vii. xxvii.
Hormisdas	2 d.	21 July 513	6 Aug. 522	viiii. xvi.

[1] For the fuller description of these three documents I must be content to refer to Lightfoot's excellent account of them, *S. Clement of Rome* i 246, 303, 311. I retain the name 'Leonine' for convenience' sake, but Mommsen is very likely right in preferring to call it by the non-committal name of 'the Index', on the ground that the original redaction may be as old as or older than the Liberian list (*Liber Pontificalis* [M.G.H., A.D. 1898] I xxix).

Of these twenty names the dates of those at the beginning are securely established from the contemporary notices in the Liberian list published in A. D. 354,[1] and the dates of those at the end are similarly guaranteed by contemporary notices in the *Liber Pontificalis*. The intermediate dates are less absolutely certain taken by themselves, but they are trustworthy enough as a whole. Anyhow the certain dates give us our first rule, that an ordination must be always on a Sunday, and the mass of dates from Damasus onwards our second rule, that the vacancy should be as brief as the observance of the first rule would permit, so that when possible the ordination of the new pope would take place on the Sunday following the death of his predecessor. In the case of the sixteen popes from Damasus to Hormisdas there are not more than two occasions on which we know for certain that the vacancy was longer: in the case of Hilarus the vacancy was one of nine days, in the case of his predecessor St Leo of about forty-one days.

Obviously this second rule was one that on occasions it might be impossible to observe: and fortunately we happen to know so much about St Leo that what in the persons of obscurer popes might have escaped our notice has been as a matter of fact recorded for us through two separate channels. Leo's own sermon, preached on the occasion of his consecration (*S. Leonis opera*, ed. Ballerini i col. 7), tells us that he had been absent on a long journey 'ut praesentem me crederet vestrae Sanctitatis affectio quem fecerat necessitas longae peregrinationis absentem'. And Prosper writes in his Chronicle under the year 440 (ed. Mommsen *Chronica Minora* M.G.H. i 478) 'Defuncto Xysto episcopo xl amplius diebus Romana ecclesia sine antestite fuit, mirabili pace atque patientia praesentiam diaconi Leonis expectans, quem tunc inter Aetium et Albinum amicitias redintegrantem Galliae detinebant . . . igitur Leo diaconus legatione publica accitus et gaudenti patriae praesentatus xliii Romanae ecclesiae episcopus ordinatur'. From this account it is clear that so long a vacancy was regarded as something quite exceptional: and how quickly election could follow on vacancy we learn from the singularly interesting tract known as the *Gesta inter Liberium et Felicem* (ed. Günther C.S.E.L. xxxv pp. 2 sqq.), which gives us the view of the party of Ursinus in the contested election after the death of Liberius. Liberius died on the 24th (or according to a less probable account the 23rd) of September 366. The 24th was a Sunday, and that section of the Roman Church which had clung to Liberius in his exile and had never recognized the intruder Felix lost no time in holding a meeting for the election of a new bishop in the

[1] The only mistake is in the ordination of Liberius, which should be XVI kal. Iun. instead of XI kal. Iun., a cypher having dropped out: Duchesne *L. P.* p. ccl, Lightfoot *S. Clement* i 299.

basilica of pope Julius.[1] Ursinus the deacon was elected, and apparently consecrated on the spot by Paul bishop of Tivoli. The other party had also met 'in Lucinis'[2]; their choice fell on Damasus, but presumably they had none of the suburbicarian bishops at hand, for it was not till the next Sunday, October 1, that Damasus was consecrated in the Lateran basilica. No doubt party rivalry would account for some haste on this occasion: but the evidence as a whole places it beyond doubt that after the middle of the fourth century the election was seldom postponed beyond the Sunday immediately succeeding a vacancy.

Why the four vacancies at the election of Liberius and his three immediate predecessors were so prolonged, it is difficult with our imperfect information to say. But whatever the reason, they represent the exception and not any earlier rule; for we shall see that—apart from suspension of the episcopate in the three great persecutions of Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian—the length of the few vacancies in the third century which we can fix with tolerable certainty rarely exceeded ten days.

§ 3. *Antiquity of the rule of Sunday ordination.*

The rule of Sunday ordination is absolute from Silvester onwards, and is so treated by all the scholars who have dealt with the chronology of the fourth and fifth century popes. With similar unanimity they all throw over the rule for the previous pontificates. It is my main object in this paper to ask whether there is any justification for the assumption that the Sunday rule was introduced at the ordination of Silvester, and was not an inherited and traditional rule from a much earlier period.

It must indeed seem rash to assert the existence of a factor in the computation of these dates which has been neglected by scholars so illustrious as Lipsius, Duchesne, Lightfoot, and Mommsen.[3] Yet the probabilities are enormous that the rule of Sunday ordination was no invention of the fourth century, but was observed during the whole of the preceding century, if not indeed from the very beginning of things.

1. As time went on, the calendar of the Church, and of each local church, became gradually fuller and more elaborate. The commemoration of saints and martyrs, as well as of events in our Lord's life, came to be observed on fixed days, and these greater feasts, red-letter days as we call them, are appropriate occasions for such solemn functions as

[1] i.e. Santa Maria in Trastevere.

[2] i.e. San Lorenzo in Lucina.

[3] Mommsen, however, definitely excludes from the scope of his work any verification of the papal chronology; 'ipse etsi vitas edere mihi proposui, chronologiam pontificum Romanorum nequaquam suscepi pertractandam' *Liber Pontificalis* (M.G.H., A.D. 1898) p. lviii.

consecration to the episcopate. In the present use of the Church of England, for instance, consecrations take place normally on a Saint's day, and only rarely either on a Sunday or on a week-day that does not coincide with a greater festival. But in the third century there were as yet no such thing as Church festivals apart from Sundays. They began to grow up in the fourth century; and it would have been far more likely that in that century episcopal consecrations should have abandoned Sunday for other feasts, rather than have abandoned other feasts for Sunday. And if it is suggested that these consecrations were held without any regard to festivals at all, but on any mere ordinary day, the suggestion overlooks the strongly liturgical character of the action. Nothing more severe could be said of a disputed consecration, than that the laying on of hands was conveyed 'in a hole and corner'. A proper consecration was effected in face of the united Church, bishops, clergy, and faithful being all present, and as part of the great act of common worship in the Eucharist, the service of the Lord's day. Any other occasion than a Sunday is for the early ages of the Church hardly conceivable. One must suppose that only an absolute impossibility of collecting the faithful in their solemn assembly would excuse any departure from this rule.

2. But in fact we are not left to conjecture in this matter. The earliest Manual of Church Order which we possess (apart from the *Didache*) is one which was composed in Greek somewhere about A. D. 225, but which except for some fragments embedded in the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* has come down to us only in translations. Of these translations the most important, though unfortunately not the most complete, is that contained in the Verona palimpsest edited by E. Hauler in 1900.[1] In its original form this MS was a *corpus* of 104 leaves, consisting of (*a*) foll. 1–86, a Latin version of the Didascalia, the third-century document underlying books i–vi of the *Apostolic Constitutions*; (*b*) foll. 87–103, a Latin version of a document or rather at least two documents, of which the more important includes the rites for Ordination, for the Eucharist (in connexion with the ordination of a bishop), and for Baptism. This Manual used sometimes to be cited as the 'Canons of the Egyptians', because it was first known in Sahidic and Ethiopic versions: but now that it is found

[1] It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this discovery has rendered quite obsolete nearly all that was written before 1900 about the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus*. These *Canons* are only Hippolytean in so far as they depend on and reproduce the Hippolytean 'Church Order', and of this latter the Latin version appears to be, as far as it goes, an extraordinarily faithful representation. What is independent in the *Canons* belongs more probably to the fourth century than to the third.

to be extant, and in a purer form, in Latin, such a title is obviously misleading. Dr Frere employs the label 'First Church Order', which has the merit of prejudging no questions of place or authorship. But the evidence is accumulating to the point of demonstration that the place of its composition was Rome, and that its author was Hippolytus: arguments for a Roman origin and arguments for a Hippolytean origin serve mutually to support and confirm one another.

Now this Hippolytean Church Order directs that the consecration of a bishop shall be held on a Sunday: 'Episcopus ordinetur, electus ab omni populo, quique cum nominatus fuerit et placuerit omnibus, conveniet populus una cum praesbyterio et his qui praesentes fuerint episcopi die dominica'. And this Latin version corresponds to the Greek of *Apost. Const.* (VIII iv 2), which we therefore see has here preserved the original phraseology of Hippolytus: *ἐπίσκοπον χειροτονεῖσθαι . . . ὑπὸ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐκλελεγμένον, οὗ ὀνομασθέντος καὶ [πᾶσιν] ἀρέσαντος συνελθὼν ὁ λαὸς ἅμα τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ τοῖς παροῦσιν ἐπισκόποις ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κυριακῇ* κτλ. In the pages that follow I shall therefore assume that in the Roman Church of the third century (and I do not doubt that a similar rule prevailed in other churches) episcopal ordinations necessarily took place on a Sunday.

§ 4. *From Pontianus to Fabian*, A.D. 230–250.

The bishops whose ordination dates are the special problem we are attempting to solve are those from Pontianus to Miltiades, in other words from A.D. 230 to A.D. 314. I begin by giving a list of them in order (*col.* 1); then their ordination-day wherever that is noted in the Liberian list (*col.* 2); next the day and month of their 'depositio' or burial in the catacombs, so far as those are contained in the calendar of commemorations called 'Depositio episcoporum' in the collection of 354,[1] adding the days of the two popes who fell victims to the persecutions respectively of Decius and Valerian, Fabian and Xystus, and of Anteros also specially mentioned in the Liberian catalogue (*col.* 3); and lastly the length of tenure according to the same catalogue (*col.* 4).[2]

1. *Name.*	2. *Ordination-day.*	3. *'Deposition'-day.*	4. *Duration-numbers.*
Pontianus			v. ii. vii.
Anteros	Nov. 21	Jan. 3	i. x.
Fabian		Jan. 20, A.D. 250	xiiii. i. x.

[1] The earliest recorded in this series is pope Lucius, the latest pope Julius; the period covered being just about a century, A.D. 254–352.

[2] I have of set purpose omitted the consulships, which the Liberian catalogue also supplies for the ordination and death of each pope, because they are admitted not to have been added earlier than A.D. 336 (Lightfoot, p. 301), and because I believe that they are largely incorrect.

	1. *Name.*	2. *Ordination-day.*	3. '*Deposition*'-*day.*	4. *Duration-numbers.*		
		[Persecution of Decius : interval.]				
	Cornelius			ii.	iii.	x.
5]	Lucius		March 5	iii.	viii.	x.
	Stephen		August 2	iiii.	ii.	xxi.
	Xystus II		August 6, A. D. 258	ii.	xi.	vi.
		[Persecution of Valerian : interval : ends July 21.]				
	Dionysius	July 22	Dec. 27	viii.	ii.	iiii.
	Felix		Dec. 30	v.	xi.	xxv.
10]	Eutychianus		Dec. 8	viii.	xi.	iii.
	Gaius	Dec. 17	April 22	xii.	iiii.	vii.
	Marcellinus	June 30	Jan. 15[1]	viii.	iii.	xxv.
		[Persecution of Diocletian : interval.]		vii.	vi.	xxv.
	Marcellus			i.	vii.	xx.
	Eusebius	April 18	Sept. 26		iiii.	xvi.
15]	Miltiades	July 2	Jan. 10 [A.D. 314]	iii.	vi.	viii.

1–3. Our fixed date for the early part of the period with which we are now dealing is the martyrdom of pope Fabian on Jan. 20 = a. d. XIII kal. Feb. (L wrongly gives a. d. XII[2]), A. D. 250, at the beginning of the persecution of Decius. L allots him a duration-number of XIIII. I. X, which would take us back to Dec. 10, A. D. 235. But his predecessor died early in January, and therefore the month must be omitted (it was always so tempting to copyists to invent some number, or to repeat a neighbouring number, wherever a place was empty: ann. XIIII d. X became so easily ann. XIIII m. I d. X), and the accession-date brought forward to Jan. 10, A. D. 236. That day is a Sunday, and is therefore the correct date. The vacancy had lasted for exactly a week.

Anteros, the previous pope, died on a. d. III non. Jan. = Jan. 3, the year being fixed, as we have just seen, by reckoning back from St Fabian's martyrdom, to A. D. 236. All our authorities (L, the Leonine list, Eusebius both in *H. E.* and in *Chron.*) agree in assigning one month to Anteros, though while L gives the days as X, *L. P.* (with the Leonine list[3]?) has XII. But L also records Anteros's ordination day, XI kal.

[1] This date is given to Marcellinus in the *Depositio*, and I have adhered to its evidence in the text. But the names of Marcellinus and his successor are perpetually confused, and in fact in the later calendars we find that it is Marcellus who is commemorated Jan. 15 or 16, while Marcellinus is on or near April 25.

[2] I cite the Liberian chronographer of A. D. 354 as L, and the *Liber Pontificalis* as *L. P.*

[3] Lightfoot gives XVIII as the Leonine number, Mommsen (*Liber Pontificalis* p. xxxiv), more correctly I think, XII. [The caution should be given that Mommsen gives the chronology of the Leonine list twice, pp. xxxiii sqq. and xliii sqq. : the first form is that of the list as originally drawn up, the second that of the list as the author of *L. P.* knew and used it. For my purpose it is of course the first one that chiefly matters.]

Dec. = Nov. 21; the interval between Nov. 21 and Jan. 3 is forty-three days. This is the furthest point to which researches on the lines hitherto laid down could carry the matter. Our Sunday test supplies just what was lacking before, a means of controlling the results tentatively reached on the evidence of one or other of our documents. We find in fact that Nov. 21, 235, fell on Saturday, and the true ordination-day was therefore Sunday, Nov. 22 = a. d. x kal. Dec., and the duration of office one month and eleven or twelve days.

Anteros's predecessor was Pontianus, the starting-point of our list, who had been exiled to Sardinia and there resigned his office, 'discinctus est', on a. d. IIII kal. Oct. = 28th September. But *L. P.* has the notice 'defunctus est III (IIII) kal. Nov.', and it can hardly be doubted that this notice is fundamentally only a repetition of the notice in L, *discinctus* being (wrongly) interpreted as equivalent to *defunctus*, so that our authorities give us really two alternative dates, of which we are at liberty to choose that which the rest of the evidence makes most suitable. Now the shifting of the end of Pontianus's term from Sept. 28 to Oct. 29 or 30 has the double advantage, first, that it reduces the vacancy from eight weeks to between three and four (we must allow in any case for a longer vacancy than usual as the news had to be brought to Rome, and resignation was probably an unprecedented occurrence in the history of the Roman See); and, secondly, that the new date satisfies what the old date does not, the Sunday test. For when we reckon back the duration-number according to L,[1] v. II. VII, as Lightfoot does, from Sept. 28, A. D. 235, we arrive at July 21, A. D. 230, and that fell on Wednesday: whereas if our *terminus a quo* is moved on a month to Oct. 29, A. D. 235, the *terminus ad quem* becomes Aug. 22, A. D. 230, and the day is Sunday. This then was, we may conclude, the date of Pontianus's entry on office; the date of his 'discincture', a. d. IIII kal. Nov., has been correctly preserved in *L. P.*, while it has been pushed back a month too early in L by the substitution of Oct. for Nov.—an easy blunder when the date was in fact in October.

§ 5. *From the death of Fabian to the death of Xystus, A. D. 250–258.*

4–7. The next group of popes cover with four names a period of only eight years, between the dates of the two well-known martyrdoms, that of Fabian under Decius, Jan. 20, 250, and that of Xystus II under Valerian, Aug. 6, 258. The period being largely one of persecution, our enquiry into the succession-dates is hampered by having to allow

[1] It must be admitted that these numbers for Pontianus in L differ seriously from those of the Leonine list (VII. X. XXII) and the Leonine list again from *L. P.* (VIIII. V. II): no two of the three authorities agree either in the years or the months or the days of this pontificate. The *accession* of Pontianus is therefore less certain than that of the succeeding popes.

for the special likelihood of vacancies of unknown but abnormal length intervening between the different pontificates. On the other hand we have 'deposition' dates, giving us month and day of the death or burial of two of the three popes between Fabian and Xystus, namely Lucius on a. d. III non. Mart. = March 5, and Stephen on a. d. IIII non. Aug. = Aug. 2: and we have also the correspondence of St Cyprian which, as it happens, covers exactly the period with which we are now dealing, A. D. 250–258.

After Fabian's death it is certain that the Roman See remained vacant for some considerable time. From L we learn that the Roman presbyter Moses died in prison after an incarceration of eleven months eleven days. We do not know the exact starting-point of this reckoning; but as the execution of Fabian appears to have been the first overt signal of the persecution, Moses can hardly have been imprisoned before it, i. e. before Jan. 20, 250, so that his death takes us to the end of the year, and it seems to be implied in L that Cornelius was not consecrated in Moses's lifetime. The same result emerges even more clearly from St Cyprian's letters: the vacancy in the Roman See was not filled till the early spring of A. D. 251.[1] How are the seven years and a half between that date and August 258 to be distributed among the four popes Cornelius, Lucius, Stephen, and Xystus?

The figures in L are respectively (1) II. III. X, (2) III. VIII. X, (3) IIII. II. XXI, (4) II. XI. VI, or a total of over thirteen years; it is clear therefore that the years at least require drastic alteration. The Leonine list is practically the same for Cornelius and Lucius, but its figures (and those of *L. P.*) are wholly different for Stephen and Xystus: the years however are no better, save that Xystus is reduced from II to I. Eusebius comes so far to our assistance that for Lucius the years drop out entirely in both *H. E.* 'not eight months' and *Chron.* 'eight months': while for Xystus the term is in *H. E.* 'eleven years', and the same figure probably stood in the *Chronicle*, since the Armenian version gives it, though no notice of Xystus appears at all in Jerome.[2] But eleven is the figure for the months of Xystus in L (X in the Leonine list and *L. P.*), and as in the case of Eutychian (see p. 13 n. 1 *infra*), where the converse has happened and the years are changed into months, the conclusion is forced upon us that Eusebius had before him a list in which the distinction between months and years was imperfectly and incorrectly made.

Eusebius's evidence then suggests that the years should be entirely dropped for Lucius and Xystus: we save thereby five years. Further he gives to Stephen only two years in *H. E.*, only three in *Chron.*, while

[1] See my *Studies in Early Church History* p. 118.

[2] I have little doubt that Jerome omitted the notice because he saw what havoc it made in the papal chronology.

the VI for the same pope in the Leonine list and *L. P.* can have been easily corrupted out of III, but not so easily out of IIII: the evidence of our other witnesses thus encourages a third reduction in the swollen figures of the Liberian list, by which its IIII years for Stephen are changed into III. Let us see how these revised year-figures work out.

Cornelius (unchanged) II. III. X: Lucius m. VIII. X: Stephen III. II. XXI: Xystus m. XI. VI: total seven years, one month, seventeen days. We are on the right track, and we can at once go on to say that, if Xystus ruled for less than a year, Stephen's *depositio* on August 2 must belong to A.D. 257, and consequently Lucius's *depositio* on March 5 to A.D. 254. If the duration-numbers for months and days of the three later popes are correct, their respective consecrations should fall about June 25, A.D. 253, May 12, A.D. 254, Aug. 31, A.D. 257; while if the numbers are correct also for Cornelius, his consecration, reckoned back from June of 253, cannot fall later than the first half of March, A.D. 251.

These results are entirely satisfactory and consistent with the *data*, but they are so far only in the rough. They must be verified by the Sunday test. If we know the date of death (year, as well as month and day), and the duration of the pontificate, we know also the date of ordination: if that is found to fall on a Sunday, the different elements in the case confirm one another.

Assuming that Lucius died on March 5, 254, after a term of eight months ten days, his consecration should have fallen on June 25, A.D. 253. That day was a Saturday, and the consecration must belong to the following day, Sunday June 26. We might bring the figures into harmony by substituting a. d. II non. Mart. (March 6) for a. d. III non. Mart. (March 5) as the date of the *depositio*. But it ought not to be overlooked that L gives the number of days in the case of four successive popes, from Anteros to Lucius inclusive, as X, and one cannot help suspecting that some of these are consciously or unconsciously assimilated to the rest. If the cypher X for the days of Lucius is wrong, we cannot fix his accession within narrower limits than by saying that he must have been ordained to the episcopate on Sunday, July 3, 293, or on one of the Sundays of the preceding month. But the Leonine list has X also; so that it remains on the whole probable that Sunday, June 26, is correct.

Stephen's date of consecration can similarly be fixed (reckoning back III. II. XXI from Aug. 2, A.D. 257) to May 12, A.D. 254. But that day was a Friday: and if Lucius died on March 5, we know of no historically attested ground for so long a vacancy as nearly ten weeks. One way of harmonization would be to substitute IIII for II as the figure for the months, and to push back Stephen's consecration to Sunday, March 12, A.D. 254, leaving exactly a week for the vacancy. The true figures for

Stephen would then be III. IIII. XXI, instead of the IIII. II. XXI of L. But the Leonine list gave only v days: and an alternative date would therefore be Sunday May 28, A. D. 254, with the figures III. II. V.

Stephen died on August 2, A. D. 257; the ordination of his successor Xystus calculated back by the term number of L (omitting its false years), eleven months six days, from his martyrdom on Aug. 6, A. D. 258, brings us to Aug. 31, A. D. 257, and the vacancy would be about four weeks. Sunday fell on Aug. 30, which we may accept as the most probable day. But the months and days of the Leonine list and *L. P.* are X. XXIII (or XXVI): and the figures X. XXIII, calculated back from Aug. 6, 258, bring us to Sept. 13, 257, which is a Sunday. We shall be prudent if we do not attempt to define further than that Xystus was consecrated on some Sunday in August or September, A. D. 257.

§ 6. *From the death of Xystus to the death of Gaius, A. D. 258–295 or 296.*

8–11. Four popes, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, and Gaius, fall wholly within the period of peace that intervened between the close of the persecution of Valerian and the outbreak of the persecution of Diocletian. To the first of these, Dionysius, L gives, what it has so far done for no pope except Anteros, day and month of both ordination (July 22) and death (Dec. 26), with the figures VIII. II. IIII for the duration of his pontificate. The date given for his death differs by one day from the date assigned to him in the list of 'depositions', Dec. 27: either the burial did not take place till the day after death, or one of the two dates is wrong, the confusion between VII kal. Jan. and VI kal. Jan. being an easy one. But the figure for the months, II, does not square with the interval from July to December: and once more the Leonine list comes to our assistance, with the correct duration-number VIII. V. IIII. No corruption of cyphers is easier than that from V to II (VI to III &c.) or *vice versa*.

So far so good. But we have not yet settled from what year we are to reckon the commencement of Dionysius's pontificate. Persecution caused an interval after the death of his predecessor in August 258: but apart from the consulships—which throughout this enquiry are excluded from consideration—L gives us no information of the length of the interval during which 'presbyteri praefuerunt', and so does not shew whether Dionysius was consecrated in the July of 259 or 260 or any succeeding year—though naturally we shall prefer to assume as brief a vacancy as possible.

Here is a plain case for the application of our Sunday test: and July 22 in A. D. 259 was not Sunday, but Friday. The Roman date, a. d. XI kal. Aug., might be confused with a. d. XII, or conceivably with

a. d. x: but the Sunday was on a. d. viiii, a figure too remote from xi for any likelihood of confusion. And since the duration-number and the day of death as fixed above combine so well with a. d. xi kal. Aug. as to exclude any large alteration of month and day, the alternative that forces itself on us is to alter the year. We cannot alter it backwards, for in July, A. D. 258, Xystus was still pope. But we can move it forwards, and in fact July 22 was a Sunday in A. D. 260, and the duration-numbers of L, as corrected for the months by the Leonine list, viii. v. iiii, will run from July 22, A. D. 260 to Dec. 26, A. D. 268. Lightfoot arrives at the same result as far as the date of death is concerned, but as he accepts the *datum* of the consulships (as in almost every other case) and so fixes the accession-year to A. D. 259, he has to alter the cypher for the years in the duration-number given by both Liberian and Leonine lists from viii to viiii,[1] with the result that the consecration falls on a Friday. Our result preserves the year-number of the two lists, and at the same time gives a Sunday consecration. It is a striking instance of the worthlessness of the dating by consulships.

9. The next pope was Felix, to whom L allots v. xi. xxv. In the *depositio* his burial is marked on a. d. iii kal. Jan. = Dec. 30. Reckoning back from this *terminus ad quem*, the *terminus a quo* of the duration-number will fall in the first week of January, and with that agrees the evidence as to the death of Dionysius in the last week of December. The months of Felix are therefore certain enough, m. xi of L being established as correct against the m. i of the Leonine list, and m. iii of *L. P.* The days are xxv in all three authorities, which would fix the consecration-day to Jan. 5. As Dionysius died at the end of 268 we have to ask which was the first Sunday in January 269, and we find it was Jan. 3. This then is to be assumed as the starting-point for Felix's tenure, and his death should therefore fall on Dec. 28. The cypher in the *depositio* may be an error for a. d. iiii kal. Jan.: or the burial may have fallen (exceptionally) two days after death.

The year of death raises a more serious difficulty. The Leonine list and *L. P.* both give iiii as the cypher for the years in the duration-number of Felix; and though the preservation of the true month-number in L alone gives some presumptive weight to its year-number v, yet the total v of Eusebius (*H. E.* and *Chron.*) agrees much more nearly with iiii. xi than with v. xi. It is possible therefore that we ought to date the death of Felix rather in Dec. 273 with Leonine list and *L. P.* than in Dec. 274 with L. We must see which works out best for the succeeding popes.

[1] Lightfoot appeals, in part support of this change, to the number viiii given as the years of Dionysius in Eusebius (*H. E.* vii 30, and *Chron.* Ann. Abr. 2282). But the round number viiii is practically as near to viii. v as to viiii. v.

10. Eutychianus's duration-number is VIII. XI. III in L, which alone merits to be taken into account on this occasion, since both Leonine list and *L. P.* have I. I. I, figures obviously inserted to fill up a hiatus.[1] In the *depositio* his day is a. d. VI id. Dec. = Dec. 8, while L gives his death as a. d. VII id. Dec. = Dec. 7. Reckoning back XI. III for the months and days we arrive at Jan. 4 for his ordination, if the day of death of L be accepted as correct, the 'deposition' having followed on the next day. In Jan. 274 the first Sunday of the year fell on Jan. 4, in Jan. 275 on Jan. 3: in either case this would be the first Sunday after Dec. 28–30, the limits of possible days for the death of Felix. Eutychianus's figures are therefore more favourable to the term Jan. 4, 274—Dec. 7, 282, but they cannot be said to exclude the alternative term Jan. 3, 275—Dec. 7, 283.

11. In the case of Gaius our documents, especially L, supply more *data*. His duration-number is XII. IIII. VII in L, XI. IIII. XII in Leonine list and *L. P.*, the two sets of numbers being obviously not independent: the XV years of Eusebius (both *H. E.* and *Chron.*) is more likely to be a corruption of XII than of XI, and so far supports the year-number of L against the other two. The accession-day is given in L as XVI kal. Jan., Dec. 17 (we have seen that his predecessor's death fell not earlier than Dec. 6), and the day of death as X kal. Mai., April 22, which coincides with the *depositio*. Clearly the four months on which our authorities are agreed are correct, and the seven days of L are nearer the mark than the twelve of the others: even seven is, if our other *data* are correct, slightly too high, though it is probably open to us to count not from (Dec.) 17 to (April) 22, but from XVI kal. (Jan.) to X kal. (Mai.). Here is just a case where the Sunday test comes to our help. The possible years being 282 and 283, Dec. 17 fell in the former year on Sunday, in the latter on Monday. In the former case the accession-day, a. d. XVI kal. Jan., is correct, but we must alter the days in the duration-number from VII to VI. In the latter case the days in the duration-number, VII, are right, but the accession-day must be changed from a. d. XVI to a. d. XVII kal. Jan., Dec. 16. Either change is a very simple one. In either case the vacancy is one of about ten days.

Once more, we have more difficulty with the years than with the months and days. The two years open for the death of Eutychianus, and therefore for the accession of his successor, are 282, 283: twelve years and four months will take us to either April 295 or April 296, the much less probable alternative for Gaius's tenure of eleven years and four months to either April 294 or April 295. As a matter of fact the

[1] By exception the frescoes in the Basilica of St Paul come to the assistance of L, with VIII. X. III. And the 'eight months' of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius-Jerome is presumably a corruption (in its ultimate source) from 'eight years'.

least probable of these three years for the death of Gaius is ruled out, as we shall see in a moment, by what we know of the chronology of his successor Marcellinus: so that we can confidently reduce the extent of the doubt to the two years 282, 283 for Gaius's accession, and the two years 295, 296 for his death.

§ 7. *The popes of the great persecution,* A. D. *295 or 296 to 314.*

12. With Marcellinus we approach the era of the great persecution, for he was in office as Eusebius expressly tells us (*H. E.* vii 32) when it broke out, and the stories of his lapse that loom so large in the Donatist controversy and find their echo in the *Liber Pontificalis* all bring him into direct relations with it. His *terminus ad quem* falls accordingly after at least the first of the persecuting edicts, that of Feb. 303: and as his duration-number is eight years and something over (VIII. III. XXV in L, VIII. IIII. XVI in *L. P.*: the Leonine list omits him altogether), and his accession-day according to L is June 30, it follows that, if these *data* can be trusted, he cannot have been consecrated earlier than A. D. 295.

As between the two years left open for his accession, 295 and 296, the day given in L, 30 June, favours the former year, since it fell on Sunday in that year, on Tuesday in 296. But it must not be overlooked that a very slight change, prid. kal. Iun. for prid. kal. Iul., would give us Sunday, May 31, 296, and this change has also the advantage of reducing the length of the vacancy between the death of Gaius on April 22 and the accession of Marcellinus from ten weeks to less than six. Accordingly two alternatives are open for the consecration of Marcellinus, Sunday, June 30, 295, and Sunday, May 31, 296.

From these two alternative accession-days—the only two that on the *data* before us seem at all possible—the duration-numbers in L, VIII. III. XXV, would bring us to 25 October, 303, and 25 September, 304, respectively; while if we prefer to experiment with the figures of *L. P.*, VIII. IIII. XVI, we arrive at either 16 November, 303, or 16 October, 304. No one of these four possibilities is however reconcileable with the date of the *depositio* on Jan. 15, and we seem as far from a satisfactory synthesis as ever.

We may however profitably look on to the end of the persecution period, in order to see whether it may not be possible to find some *terminus ad quem* from which we may work backwards towards Marcellinus. And in fact the chronology of the last pope on our list, Miltiades, can be established with practical certainty. The interval between the outbreak of the persecution and the consecration of Miltiades has to cover what remained of the papacy of Marcellinus, the

papacies of Marcellus and Eusebius, and any 'cessations' of the episcopate which the persecution may have brought about.

15. From the death of Miltiades and accession of Silvester in Jan. 314 the Liberian list assumes the character of a contemporary record, and all the *data*, duration-numbers, accession-day, deposition-day, consulships, Sundays, are absolutely consistent with one another. Silvester's ordination on Sunday, January 31, 314, followed at an interval of just three weeks the *depositio* of Miltiades on a. d. IIII id. Jan. = Jan. 10, 314. The duration-numbers of Miltiades are III. VI. VIII in L, IIII years (months and days having dropped out) in the Leonine list, IIII also in Jerome's *Chronicle*. L being therefore our only precise guide, we start from its figures, and reckoning back from January 10, 314, we arrive at July 2, 310. Now a. d. VI non. Jul., = July 2, is actually the accession-day given in L: and in 310 it did fall on a Sunday. Of the correctness of this date there can therefore be no reasonable doubt; and if L gives the consulships of 311 as those of the accession, so much the worse for the consulships. Once more we have reason to repeat the caution inculcated in this paper, that the consulships of the Liberian list ought to be, if not entirely neglected, at least only used as a quite subsidiary argument. The Sunday test, the duration-number in L, the year-number in Jerome and the Leonine list, all combine against them.[1]

There remains over, then, a period of not more than some seven years—reckoning back from July 2, 310—within which room has to be found for the close of Marcellinus's term, the 'cessatio episcopatus', and the tenures of Marcellus and Eusebius.

On another occasion I hope I may be able to attack the problem of the chronology of Roman Church affairs during these seven years A. D. 303–310. But the problem is not an easy one. We are extraordinarily ill informed about the effects of the persecution upon the internal economy of the Church; we have only to compare the data with those available for the decade of the Decian and Valerian persecutions, A. D. 250–260, in order to be at once conscious of the difference. It is certain that the attitude towards the Church of the emperors who happened to be successively masters of the city must have affected the history of the Roman episcopate: the chronology in particular of the ecclesiastical policy of Maxentius is a necessary preliminary. Mommsen (*Liber Pontificalis* p. lv) has started this enquiry on right lines, and he is right also, I think, in giving more credit than other scholars have sometimes given to the traditions of the

[1] It should be mentioned that Lightfoot, though he follows Duchesne in the dating 311–314, expresses a good deal of hesitation (*S. Clement* i 285, 298). Mommsen assumes the year 311 without discussion, *Lib. Pontif.* p. liv.

fall of Marcellinus, of the disciplinary attitude of Marcellus and Eusebius, and of the exile of the latter. But his own solution of the difficulties does not seem to me to be altogether happy.

Meanwhile I append a table embodying the results at which we have so far arrived.

Name.	*Ordination-day.*	*Duration.*	*End of term.*	*Vacancy.*
Pontianus	Sunday 22 Aug. 230?	[v. ii. vii.]	29 Oct. 235	24 d.
Anteros	,, 22 Nov. 235	i. xi (xii).	3 Jan. 236	7 d.
Fabian	,, 10 Jan. 236	xiiii. x.	20 Jan. 250	
	[Persecution of Decius : interval of rather over a year.]			
Cornelius	Sunday {6 / 13} Mar. 251?	ii. iii. x.	{16 / 23} June 251?	{10 d. / 3 d.}
5] Lucius	,, 26 June 253	viii. x.	5 Mar. 254	7 d.
Stephen	,, 12 Mar. 254?	iii. iiii. xxi.	2 Aug. 257	{7 to / 28 d.}
Xystus	a Sunday in Aug. 257	xi. ?	6 Aug. 258	
	[Persecution of Valerian : interval of nearly two years.]			
Dionysius	Sunday 22 July 260	viii. v. iiii.	26 Dec. 268	8 d.
Felix	,, 3 Jan. 269	{iiii. / v.} xi. xxv.	{28 / 29} Dec. {273 / 274}	about 6 d.
10] Eutychianus	,, {4 Jan. 274 / or / 3 Jan. 275}	viii. xi. iii.	7 Dec. {282 / or / 283}	{9 or / 10 d.}
Gaius	,, {17 Dec. 282 / or / 16 Dec. 283}	xii (xi). iiii. vi. / vii.	22 Apr. {295 / or / 296}	{69 or / 36 d.}
Marcellinus	,, {30 June 295 / or / 31 May 296}	viii. vi. ? / vii. vi. ?	[15 Jan. 304?]	
	[Persecution of Diocletian : interval of ?]			
Marcellus	?	i. vii. xx.	?	
Eusebius	?	iiii. ?	?	
15] Miltiades	Sunday 2 July 310	iii. vi. viii.	10 Jan. 314	

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