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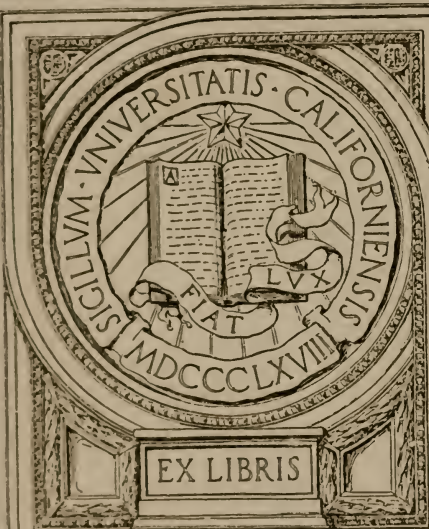
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[Continued on p. 3.]

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# CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS

BY

H. P. V. NUNN, M.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
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NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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TO THE  
ASSOCIATES

## PREFACE

NEARLY all the early Christian inscriptions that have come down to us are sepulchral. In many cases the originals exist, and may be seen in the cemeteries of Rome and of other ancient cities in Italy, Gaul, Africa, and Asia Minor: many are preserved in museums, especially in the Lateran Museum at Rome. Another source from which some of the most interesting of the inscriptions are derived is to be found in the *Syllogies*, or collections of inscriptions made by pilgrims to Italy in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, before the originals were destroyed. The most important of these collections are printed in the second volume of de Rossi's *Inscriptiones Christianae*. Few of the earliest inscriptions are dated, but an approximate date may be arrived at from various indications. The earliest inscriptions are very brief, often consisting only of the name of the deceased, with the words "in peace" or some such simple formula. A number of these may be seen *in situ* in the oldest galleries of the cemetery of Priscilla at Rome. Many are in Greek, some in Latin written in Greek characters. Greek was the official language of the Roman Church for about a hundred years after its foundation, as is shown by the language of the *Epistle of Clement* and of the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

As will be seen from this collection, all the epitaphs



of the Bishops of Rome were written in Greek until nearly the end of the third century, with the exception of that of Cornelius, who was probably a Roman of noble family. Latin first took shape as a vehicle for Christian thought in North Africa.

The interest of the inscriptions set up by private Christians lies in the fact that they give us the aspect of Christianity which appealed to the average man of the time.

On the main points of Christian doctrine their evidence is clear, and, when supplemented by a study of the mural paintings which still exist in the catacombs, they give us a very complete idea of the faith of the first four centuries. They breathe a spirit of hope and peace: there is nothing gloomy or morbid about them, and little trace has been left upon them by the trials through which the Church was passing.

Most of the inscriptions here given, with the exception of those of Damasus, are anterior to the Edict of Toleration of 312.

The illustrations are from photographs taken by the author in the Lateran Museum, through the kind permission of Professor Commandatore Marucchi.



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The Church Histories of Gwatkin and Foakes-Jackson. The latter has an appendix on the catacombs.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE - - - - -	iii
BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - - -	v
1-4. INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO THE APOSTLES -	9
5-15. VERY EARLY EPITAPHS - - -	11
16-23. EPITAPHS OF BISHOPS AND MARTYRS -	13
24-41. VARIOUS EPITAPHS - - -	15
42. EPITAPH OF PECTORIUS - - -	21
43. EPITAPH OF ADERCIUS, BISHOP OF HIEROPOLIS -	23
44. EPITAPH OF SEVERA - - -	27
45. EPITAPH OF ZOSIME - - -	29

### EPITAPHS OF DAMASUS

46. EPITAPH OF DAMASUS - - -	31
47. INSCRIPTION IN ST. LORENZO IN DAMASO -	31
48. INSCRIPTION FROM THE PLATONIA - -	32
49. EPITAPH ON SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS -	33
50. EPITAPH ON ST. FELICITAS - - -	35
51. EPITAPH ON SS. FELIX AND PHILIPPUS -	35
52. EPITAPH ON ST. HIPPOLYTUS - - -	36
53. EPITAPH ON ST. CORNELIUS PP. - - -	38
54. EPITAPH ON ST. SIXTUS PP. II. - - -	39
55. INSCRIPTION IN THE PAPAL CRYPT - - -	40

	PAGE
56. EPITAPH ON ST. LAURENCE - - -	41
57. EPITAPH ON ST. TARSACIUS - - -	42
58. EPITAPH ON SS. PETER AND MARCELLINUS - -	43
59. EPITAPH ON ST. MARCELLUS PP. I. - -	44
60. EPITAPH ON ST. EUSEBIUS PP. I. - -	45
61. EPITAPH ON ST. GREGORY THE GREAT - -	47

## ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRIST AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD - -	<i>facing page</i>	viii
An early Christian statue, in the Lateran Museum.		
THE GRAVESTONE OF ABERCIUS - - -	,, ,,	24
Found by Sir W. M. Ramsay in Hieropolis. In the Lateran Museum.		



CHRIST AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

facing p. viii



INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO THE APOSTLES.\*

*Inscription of Constantine from the Apse of the Ancient  
Basilica of St. Peter on the Vatican.*

1 QVOD DVCE TE MVNDVS SVRREXIT IN ASTRA TRIVM-  
PHANS

HANC CONSTANTINVS VICTOR TIBI CONDIDIT AVLAM.

*From the Sylloge of Einsiedeln.*

Because under thy leadership the world rose in triumph  
to the stars, Constantine, the victor, built this hall to thee.

*Inscription placed by Constantine and Helena on the  
Cross of Gold laid on the Sarcophagus of St. Peter.*

2 CONSTANTINVS AVG. ET HELENA AVG. HANC DOMVM  
REGALEM AVRO DECORANT QVAM SIMILI FVLGORE  
CORVSCANS AVLA CIRCVMDAT.

*Liber Pontificalis.*

Constantine Augustus and Helena Augusta decorate  
this royal house with gold which the hall surrounds shining  
with like brightness.

*Epitaph of St. Paul which still exists in the Place  
where he was buried.*

3 PAVLO APOSTOLO MART.

---

\* Edmondson, *Church in Rome*, pp. 258-272; Barnes, *St. Peter in Rome*, chaps. vi.-xiii.; illustration, p. 222. See also Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, chap. iii.



*Inscription of Honorius in the Basilica of St. Paul  
without the Walls.*

4 THEODOSIVS CEPIT PERFECIT HONORIVS AVLAM  
DOCTORIS MVNDI SACRATAM CORPORE PAVLI.

Theodosius began and Honorius finished the hall consecrated by the body of Paul, the teacher of the world.

EXAMPLES OF VERY EARLY EPITAPHS, MOSTLY  
FROM THE CEMETERY OF PRISCILLA  
(FIRST TO THIRD CENTURY).

5 MODESTINA A Ω.

6 ZOSIME PAX TECVM.

7 ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟC ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ.

8 SABINAE BEATAE.

9 AVRELI VARRO DVLCISSIME ET DESIDERATISSIME  
COIVX PAX TIBI BENEDICTE.

10 HIPERCHIVS HIC DORMIT.

11 DORMITIONI ISIDORAE.

12 STAFILI PAX TECVM IN DEO HAVE VALE.\*

13 FAVSTINA DVLGIS BIBAS IN DEO.

14 ΤΕΡΤΙ ΑΔΕΛΦΕ ΕΥΨΥΧΙ ΟΥΔΙC ΑΘΑΝΑΤΟC.

Tertius, my brother, be of good courage; no one is im-  
mortal.

---

\* Compare Catullus, ci. 10: "Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave  
atque vale;" also Vergil, *Æn.* xi. 97.

15 Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΟΥΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΣ Κ̄  
ΠΑΡΑΛΑΒΗΣ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΖΟΗΝ Κ̄ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΟΝ  
ΟΙ ΔΟΞΑ ΕΝ Χ̄.

O Father of all, Thou who hast made them, do Thou receive Eirene, Zoe, and Marcellus ; Thine is the glory in Christ.

**EPITAPHS OF BISHOPS AND MARTYRS.\***

*Inscriptions of Bishops of Rome buried in the Papal  
Crypt in the Cemetery of Callixtus.*

**16 OYPBANOC**

Bishop from 224-231.

**17 ΠONTIANOC ΕΠΙCΚ ΜΡ**

Bishop from 231-236 ; died in exile in Sardinia.

**18 ANTEPΩC ΕΠΙ**

Bishop in 236 ; put to death same year.

**19 ΦABIANOC · ΕΠΙ ΜΡ**

Bishop from 236-250.

**20 ΛΟΥΚΙC**

Bishop from 253-255.

**21 ΕΥΤΥΧΙΑΝOC · ΕΠΙC**

Bishop from 275-283.

*From the Cemetery of St. Hermes. Now in the  
Church of the Propaganda.*

**22 DP. III IDVS SEPTEBR. YACINTHVS MARTYR.†**

---

\* Marucchi, *Inscriptions*, pp. 182, 192; Allard, *Pers.* III., 102 sqq.

† Allard, *Pers.* III., 102 sqq.

*Memorial Stone to the Celebrated Martyrs of Carthage,  
whose Story is told in the Acts of St. Perpetua.  
In the Museum at Carthage.*

**23** HIC SVNT MARTYRES SATVRVS SATVRNINVS REBOCATVS  
SECVNDVLVS FELICIT . PERPET . PAS . . MAIVLVS.


## VARIOUS EPITAPHS (THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES).

- 24 ΕΡΜΑΙΣΚΕ ΦΩC ΖΗC ΕΝ ΘΕΩ ΚΥΡΙΕΩ ΧΡΕΙCΤΩ  
ΑΝΝΩΡΟΥΜ Χ ΜΗCΩΡΟΥΜ ΣΕΠΤΕ.

LATERAN.

Ermaiscus, light, mayest thou live in God the Lord Christ ; (he lived) ten years seven months.

An illiterate inscription, partly Latin in Greek letters. The word ΦΩC probably refers to the fact that the child was baptized, φωτισθείς.

- 25 SOZON BENEDICTVS REDIDIT AN. NOBE BERV   
ISPIRVN IN PACE ET PET. PRO NOBIS.

GORDIANI.

Blessed Sozon gave back (his soul) aged nine years ; may the true Christ (receive) thy spirit in peace and pray for us.

- 26 CAR. KYRIAKO FIL. DVLCISSIMO VIBAS IN SPIRITO  
SAN . . .

CALLIXTUS.

To dear Cyriacus our most sweet son ; mayest thou live in the Holy Spirit.

- 27 TYCHE DVLCIS VIXIT ANNO VNO MENSIBVS X DIEB.  
XXV ACCEPIT VIII KAL . . . REDDIDIT DIE S.S.

PRISCILLA.

Sweet Tyche lived one year ten months twenty-five days, received (grace) on the eighth day before the Kalends, gave up her soul on the same day.

- 28 POSTVMIVS EVTENION FIDELIS QUI GRATIAM SANCTAM  
CONSECVTVS EST PRIDIE NATALI SVO.

BUONAROTTI, *Vitri Cimiteriali*.

Postumius Eutenion. a believer who gained holy grace the day before his birthday.

NATALIS means the day of birth to a better life, or the day of death.

- 29 GENTIANVS FIDELIS IN PACE QVI VIXIT ANNIS XXI  
MENS. VIII DIES XVI ET IN ORATIONIS TVIS ROGES  
PRO NOBIS QVIA SCIMVS TE IN ✕.

LATERAN.

Gentianus, a believer, in peace, who lived twenty-one years eight months sixteen days, and in thy prayers ask for us, because we know that thou art in Christ.

- 30 SOMNO AETERNALI. AVRELIVS GEMELLVS QVI VIXIT  
AN. . . . ET MES. VIII DIES XVIII MATER FILIO  
CARISSIMO BENEMERENTI FECIT IN PACE COMMANDO  
BASILLA INNOCENTIA GEMELLI.

LATERAN.

To eternal sleep. Aurelius Gemellus, who lived . . . years eight months eighteen days. His mother to her



most dear and well-deserving son made (this) in peace.  
I commend to Basilla the innocence of Gemellus.

- 31 RUTA OMNIBVS SVBDITA ET ATFABILIS BIBET IN  
NOMINE PETRI IN PACE ✕.

PRISCILLA.

Ruta, submissive and kind to all, shall live in the name  
of Peter. In the peace of Christ.

- 32 REFRIGERET TIBI DEVS ET CHRISTVS ET DOMINI  
NOSTRI ADEODATVS ET FELIX.

*A graffito in the cemetery of Commodilla.\**

May God and Christ and our lords Adeodatus and Felix  
grant thee refreshment.

- 33 EVSEBIVS INFANS PER AETATEM SENE PECCATO ACCE-  
DENS AD SANCTORVM LOCVM IN PACE QVIESCIT.

*Commodilla.\**

Eusebius, an infant going to the place of the saints,  
being without sin through his age rests in peace.

- 34 EVCHARIS EST MATER PIVS ET PATER EST MIHI . . .  
VOS PRECOR O FRATRES ORARE HVC QVANDO VENITIS  
ET PRECIBVS TOTIS PATREM NATVMQVE ROCATIS  
SIT VESTRAE MENTIS AGAPES CARAE MEMINISSE  
VT DEVS OMNIPOTENS AGAPEN IN SAECVLA SERVET.

PRISCILLA (*second century*).

My mother is Eucharis and my father is Pius.

I pray you, O brethren, to pray when you come here,

---

\* The cemetery of Commodilla is late in date, and the inscriptions  
mostly belong to the fourth century.

and to ask in your common prayers the Father and the Son. May it be in your minds to remember dear Agape that the omnipotent God may keep Agape safe for ever.

- 35 DVLCISSIMO ANTISTHENI CONIVGI SVO REFRIGERIVM.  
PRISCILLA.

To most sweet Antisthenes her husband refreshment.

- 36 PETE PRO PARENTES TVOS MATRONATA MATRONA  
QVE VIXIT AN. I D. LII.

LATERAN.

Pray for thy parents Matronata Matrona, who lived one year fifty-two days.

- 37 ATTICE DORMI IN PACE DE TVA INCOLVMITATE SECVRVS  
ET PRO NOSTRIS PECCATIS PETE SOLLICITVS.

Atticus, sleep in peace secure in thy safety, and pray anxiously for our sins.

This is probably rather late, as it was found near St. Sabina; but it repeats a phrase of Cyprian: "Magnus illic earorum numerus expectat: parentum, fratrum filiorum frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat de sua incolumitate secura et adhuc de nostra sollicita" (*De mortalitate ix.*).

- 38 MAPITIMA CEMNE ΓΑΥΚΕΡΟΝ ΦΑΟC ΟΥ ΚΑΤΗ-  
ΛΕΙΠΙΑC ΕCΧΕC ΓΑΡ ΜΕΤΑ ΣΟΥ—fish, anchor, fish.  
ΙΑΝΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΑΝΤΑ.

PRISCILLA (*second or third century*).

Maritima Semne, thou hast not left the sweet light, for thou hast with thee the Fish immortal through all things.

- 39 ΣΕΠΤΙΜΟC ΠΡΑΙΤΕΞΤΑΤΟC ΚΑΙΚΙΛΙΑΝΟC Ο  
ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΞΙΩC ΒΙΩCΑC ΟΥ ΜΕΤΕ-  
ΝΟΑCΑ ΚΑΝ ΩΔΕ ΟΙ ΥΠΕΡΕΘΗCΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΧΑ-  
ΡΙCΤΩ ΤΩ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ ΟΟΥ ΠΑΡΕΔΩΚΕ ΤΗΝ  
ΨΥΧΗΝ ΘΕΩ ΤΡΙΑΝΤΑ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΕΤΩΝ ΕΞ ΜΗΝΩΝ.

CALLIXTUS.

Septimus Praetextatus Caecilianus, the slave of God, having lived worthily. I do not repent that I have served Thee thus, and I give thanks to Thy name. He gave up his soul to God aged thirty-three years and six months.

From the part of the cemetery of Callixtus where St. Cecilia is buried. Erected to a person connected with her family.

- 40 FLORENTIVS FILIO SVO APPRONIANO  
FECIT TITVLVM BENEMERENTI QVI VIXIT  
ANNVM ET MENSES NOVEM DIES QVINQVE  
QVI CVM SOLIDE AMATVS ESSET  
A MAIORE SVA ET VIDIT  
HVNC MORTI CONSTITVTVM ESSE PETIVIT  
DE ECCLESIA VT FIDELIS  
DE SAECVLO RECESSISSET.

LATERAN.

Florentius erected this monument to his well-deserving son Appronianus, who lived one year nine months and five days. Since he was dearly loved by his grandmother, and she saw that he was going to die, she asked of the Church that he should depart from the world a believer.

Interesting as bearing on infant baptism in the early Church.

- 41 LEVITAE CONIVNX PETRONIA FORMA PVDORIS  
HIC MEA DEPONENS SEDIBVS OSSA LOCO.  
PARCITE VOS LACRIMAS, DVLCES CVM CONIVGE NATI,  
VIVENTEMQVE DEO CREDITE FLERE NEFAS.

*Source unknown.*

I, Petronia, the wife of a deacon, of modest countenance, lay down my bones in this place. Cease from weeping, my husband and my sweet children, and believe that it is not right to mourn for one that lives in God.

EPITAPHIVM PECTORII IN AGNO AVGVSTODV-  
NENSI REPERTVM.

42 ΙΧΘΥΟC ΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΥ ΘΕΙΟΝ ΓΕΝΟC ΗΤΟΡΙ  
CEMNΩ  
ΧΡΗCΕ\* ΛΑΒΩ[Ν ΠΗΓΗ]Ν ΑΜΒΡΟΤΟΝ ΕΝ ΒΡΟ-  
ΤΕΟΙC.  
ΘΕCΠΕCΙΩΝ ΥΔΑΤ[Ω]Ν ΤΗΝ CΗΝ, ΦΙΛΕ, ΘΑΛΠΕΟ  
ΨΥΧ[ΗΝ]  
ΥΔΑCΙΝ ΑΕΝΑΟΙC ΠΛΟΥΤΟΔΟΤΟΥ CΟΦΙΝC.  
CΩΤΗΡΟC [Δ]ΑΓΙΩΝ ΜΕΛΙΗΔΕΑ ΛΑΜΒΑΝ[Ε  
ΒΡΩCΙΝ]  
ΕCΘΙΕ ΠΕΙΝ[ΑΩ]Ν ΙΧΘΥΝ ΕΧΩΝ ΠΑΛΑΜΑΙC.  
ΙΧΘΥΙ ΧΟ[ΡΤΑΖ'] ΑΡΑ ΔΙΔΑΙΩ, ΔΕCΠΟΤΑ CΩΤΕΡ.  
ΕΥ ΕΥΔΟΙ Μ[Η]ΤΗΡ, CΕ ΛΙΤΑΖΟΜΕ,† ΦΩC ΤΟ  
ΘΑΝΟΝΤΩΝ  
ΑCΧΑΝΔΙΕ [ΠΑ]ΤΕΡ, ΤΩΜΩΙ ΚΕ[ΧΑ]ΡΙCΜΕΝΕ  
ΘΥΜΩΙ,  
CΥΝ ΜΗ[ΤΡΙ ΓΛΥΚΕΡΗ ΚΑΙ ΑΔΕΛΦ]ΟΙCΙΝ  
ΕΜΟΙCΙΝ,  
Ι[ΧΘΥΟC ΕΙΡΗΝΗΙ CΟΥ] ΜΝΗCΕΟ ΠΕΚΤΟΡΙΟΙΟ.

Divine offspring of the heavenly Fish, preserve a reverent mind when thou drinkest of the immortal fountain that springs up among mortals. Let thy soul be comforted, friend, with the ever-flowing fountains of wealth-giving wisdom. Take the honey-sweet food of the Saviour of saints and eat it hungrily, holding the Fish in thy hands.

\* χρῆσαι.

† λιτάζομαι.

Feed me with the Fish, I pray thee, my Lord and Saviour; may my mother sleep in peace, I beseech thee, Light of the dead. Aschandius, my father, beloved of my heart, with my sweet mother and my brethren be mindful of thy Pectorius, abiding in the peace of the Fish.

Fragments of this inscription were found in the cemetery of St. Pierre l'Estrier, at Autun, in 1839. They are preserved in the museum of that town. The letters enclosed in square brackets are conjectural restorations. The inscription probably belongs to the third century. The application of the name "The Fish" to our Lord is very common in early Christian writings and inscriptions. The word ἰχθύς, which means "fish" in Greek, is formed of the initial letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς υἱὸς θεοῦ σωτήρ: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Saviour."

Notice that the initial letters of the first five lines of the epitaph make the word ἰχθύς.\*

---

\* See Marucchi, *Christian Inscriptions*, p. 125.

EPITAPHIVM ABERCII EPISCOPI HIEROPOLITANI.

43 ΕΚΛΕΚΤΗΣ ΠΟΛΕΩΣ Ο ΠΟΛΕΙΤΗΣ ΤΟΥΤ'  
 ΕΠΟΙΗΣΑ  
 ΖΩΝ ΙΝ' ΕΧΩ ΚΑΙΡΩΙ ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ ΕΝΘΑ ΘΕCΙΝ.  
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 ΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΓΝΟΥ,  
 ΟC ΒΟΣΚΕΙ ΠΡΟΒΑΤΩΝ ΑΓΕΛΑΣ ΟΡΕCΙΝ ΠΕ-  
 ΔΙΟΙC ΤΕ,  
 ΟΦΘΑΛΜΟΥC ΟC ΕΧΕΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥC, ΠΑΝΤΗ  
 ΚΑΘΟΡΩΝΤΑC.  
 ΟΥΤΟC ΓΑΡ Μ' ΕΔΙΔΑΞΕ ΤΑ ΖΩΗC ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ  
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 ΕΙC ΡΩΜΗΝ ΟC ΕΠΕΜΨΕΝ ΕΜΕΝ ΒΑCΙΛΕΙΑΝ  
 ΑΘΡΗCΑΙ,  
 ΚΑΙ ΒΑCΙΛΙCCΑΝ ΙΔΕΙΝ ΧΡΥCΟCΤΟΛΟΝ, ΧΡΥCΟ-  
 ΠΕΔΙΛΟΝ,  
 ΛΑΟΝ Δ' ΕΙΔΟΝ ΕΚΕΙ ΛΑΜΠΡΑΝ CΦΡΑΓΕΙΔ'  
 ΑΝΕΧΟΝΤΑ,  
 ΚΑΙ CΥΡΙΗC ΠΕΔΟΝ ΕΙΔΑ, ΚΑΙ ΑCΤΕΑ ΠΑΝΤΑ,  
 ΝΙCΙΒΙΝ  
 ΕΥΦΡΑΤΗΝ ΔΙΑΒΑC ΠΑΝΤΗ Δ' ΕCΧΟΝ CΥΝΟ-  
 ΜΙΛΟΥC.  
 ΠΑΥΛΟΝ ΕΓΩΝ ΕΠΟΜΗΝ. ΠΙCΤΙC ΠΑΝΤΗ ΔΕ  
 ΠΡΟCΗΓΕ  
 ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΕΘΗΚΕ ΤΡΟΦΗΝ ΠΑΝΤΗ, ΙΧΘΥΝ ΑΠΟ  
 ΠΗΓΗC,  
 ΠΑΝΜΕΓΕΘΗ, ΚΑΘΑΡΟΝ, ΟΝ ΕΔΡΑΞΑΤΟ ΠΑΡ-  
 ΘΕΝΟC ΑΓΝΗ,



ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟΝ ΕΠΕΔΩΚΕ ΦΙΛΟΙΣ ΕΘΘΕΙΝ ΔΙΑ  
 ΠΑΝΤΟΣ,  
 ΟΙΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΝ ΕΧΟΥΣΑ, ΚΕΡΑΣΜΑ ΔΙΔΟΥΣΑ  
 ΜΕΤ' ΑΡΤΟΥ.  
 ΤΑΥΤΑ ΠΑΡΕΣΤΩΣ ΕΙΠΟΝ ΑΒΕΡΚΙΟΣ ΩΔΕ  
 ΓΡΑΦΗΝΑΙ  
 ΕΒΔΟΜΗΚΟΣΤΟΝ ΕΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝ ΗΓΟΝ  
 ΑΛΗΘΩΣ.  
 ΤΑΥΘ' Ο ΝΟΩΝ ΕΥΞΑΙΤΟ ΥΠΕΡ ΑΒΕΡΚΙΟΥ ΠΑΣ  
 Ο ΣΥΝΩΙΔΟΣ.  
 ΟΥ ΜΕΝΤΟΙ ΤΥΜΒΩΙ ΤΙΣ ΕΜΩΙ ΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΤΙΝΑ  
 ΘΗΣΕΙ,  
 ΕΙ Δ' ΟΥΝ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΤΑΜΕΙΩΙ ΘΗΣΕΙ ΔΙΟΧΛΙΑΙΑ  
 ΧΡΥΣΑ,  
 ΚΑΙ ΧΡΗΣΤΗΙ ΠΑΤΡΙΔΙ ΙΕΡΟΠΟΛΕΙ ΧΙΛΙΑ  
 ΧΡΥΣΑ.

I, the citizen of a chosen city, erected this in my life-  
 time that I may have in time to come a place wherein to  
 lay my body. My name is Abercius, the disciple of the  
 Holy Shepherd, who feeds the flocks of His sheep on the  
 hills and plains, and who has great eyes that look into  
 every place. For He taught me the faithful letters of  
 life, and He sent me to Rome to behold a kingdom, and to  
 see a queen with golden raiment and golden sandals; and  
 I saw a people there having a splendid seal, and I saw the  
 plain of Syria and many cities, and Nisibis, and, having  
 crossed the Euphrates, everywhere I found companions.  
 I followed Paul, and Faith led me everywhere, and she  
 gave me food in every place—a Fish from the fountain, a  
 mighty Fish and pure, which a holy maiden took in her  
 hands, and this she gave to her friends to eat for ever,



THE GRAVE STONE OF ABERCIUS

facing p. 24



having goodly wine, and giving it mixed with water, together with bread.

These things I, Abercius, commanded thus to be written when I was on earth ; and truly I was seventy and two years old. Let him who understands this, and everyone who agrees therewith, pray for Abercius. Let not, however, anyone place another in my tomb ; and, if he does so, he shall pay two thousand gold pieces to the treasury of the Romans, and to my goodly fatherland Hieropolis a thousand gold pieces.

Abercius was Bishop of Hieropolis (not Hierapolis), in Phrygia, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

Something of his life is known from his *Acta*, which are found in the collection of Metaphrastes, a Byzantine writer of the ninth century. He was a great traveller, and visited Rome and the East, and he composed this inscription to be placed on his tomb in memory of his travels. It was preserved in his *Acta*, but its unusual character, and the fabulous nature of much of the *Acta*, led to its being rejected as spurious. In 1882 Sir W. Ramsay found in Phrygia a gravestone of a certain Alexander who died in A.D. 216, the inscription on which was obviously imitated from that of Abercius. During a later journey Ramsay found fragments of the actual tombstone of Abercius, which confirmed the accuracy of the copy of the inscription handed down by Metaphrastes. The stone is now in the Lateran Museum. It is the earliest inscription to a Christian Bishop which can be certainly dated. Its mystical language corresponds with the terms used by Tertullian and by Clement of Alexandria, and with the symbolical paintings in the catacombs of the second

century. As the inscription was carved on a column which stood in a public place, this language was probably used to disguise its Christian meaning. The date of the inscription is about 170. When compared with that from Autun (Inscription 42), it bears valuable evidence to the unity of the Christian faith both in the East and West, in the divinity of Christ, and in the doctrine of the Eucharist.\*

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\* Marucchi, *Inscriptions*, p. 126.

EPITAPHIVM SEVERAE VIRGINIS.

44 CVBICVLVM DVPLEX CVM ARCISOLIS ET LVMINARE,  
 IVSSV PP SVI MARCELLINI, DIACONVS ISTE  
 SEVERVS FECIT MANSIONEM IN PACE QUIETAM,  
 SIBI SVISQVE MEMOR, QVO MEMBRA DVLCIA SOMNO  
 PER LONGVM TEMPVS FACTORI ET IVDICI SERVET.  
 SEVERA DVLCIS PARENTIBVS ET FAMVLISQVE  
 REDDIDIT OCTAVO FEBRVARIAS VIRGO CALENDAS.  
 QVAM DOMINVS NASCI MIRA SAPIENTIA ET ARTE  
 IVSSERAT IN CARNEM ; QVOD CORPVS PACE QUIETVM  
 HIC EST SEPVLTVM DONEC RESVRGAT AB IPSO ;  
 QUIQVE ANIMAM RAPVIT SPIRITV SANCTO SVO,  
 CASTAM, PVDICAM ET INVIOLABILE(M) SEMPER,  
 QVAMQVE ITERVM DOMINVS SPIRITALI GLORIA REDDET.  
 QVAE VIXIT ANNOS VIII ET XI MENSES :  
 XV QVOQVE DIES : SIC EST TRANSLATA DE SAECVLO.

CALLIXTUS (*early fourth century*).

A double burial-chamber, with an altar tomb and a skylight, at the command of his Pope, Marcellinus, his Deacon, Severus, made, a quiet mansion in peace, mindful of himself and of his people, where he may preserve their dear limbs through a long time for their Maker and Judge in the sleep of death. Severa, dear to her parents and her servants, gave up her virgin soul on the 8th day before the Kalends of February, whom the Lord had bidden to be born into the flesh with wonderful wisdom and skill.

Her body is buried here at rest in peace until she rise again from this same spot.

He who took away her soul by His Holy Spirit, ever pure and modest and unsullied, He, the Lord, will give her back again with spiritual glory. She lived nine years and eleven months and fifteen days, and so she was translated from this life.\*

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\* Marucchi, *Inscriptions*, p. 207.



## EPITAPHIVM ZOSIMAE MARTYRIS.

45 "ACCIPERE ME," DIXIT, "DOMINE IN TVA LIMINA  
CHRISTE;"

EXAUDITA CITO FRUITVR MODO LVMINE CAELI  
ZOSIME SANCTA SOROR, MAGNO DEFVNCTA PERICLO.  
IAM VIDET ET SANCTOS SANCTI CERTAMINIS OMNES  
LAETATVRQVE VIDENS MIRANTES SISTERE CIRCVM,  
MIRANTVRQVE PATRES TANTA VIRTUTE PVELLAM,  
QVAM SVO DE NVMERO CVPIENTES ESSE VICISSIM  
CERTATIMQVE TENENT ATQVE AMPLECTVNTVR OVANTES.  
IAM VIDET ET SENTIT MAGNI SPECATACVLA REGNI  
ET BENE PRO MERITIS GAUDET SIBI PRAEMIA REDDI,  
TECVM, PAVLE, TENENS CALCATA MORTE CORONAM,  
NAM FIDE SERVATA CVRSVM CVM PACE PEREGIT.

*Found in fragments at Porto, and restored by de Rossi.*

"Receive me," she said, "into thy threshold, O Lord Christ." Straightway she was heard, and in an instant Zosime, our sainted sister, enjoyed the light of heaven, having passed through grievous peril. Already she sees all the holy ones that have been victorious in the holy war, and rejoices when she sees them stand wondering round her: the fathers wonder also at a maiden so valiant; they eagerly cling to her, and embrace her by turns in triumph, longing to have her among their number. Already she sees and grasps the sights of the glorious kingdom, and exults that rewards have been worthily granted to her in proportion to her merits. Now that she has trodden death under foot, she possesses the crown with thee, O Paul, for she finished her course with peace, having kept the faith.\*

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\* Inscription of a martyr in the persecution of Aurelian about 375 (Allard, *Pers.* III. 273).

## THE EPITAPHS OF DAMASUS.

Damasus was Bishop of Rome from 366-384. He is chiefly remarkable for the care he took to make the graves of the martyrs accessible, and for the inscriptions which he composed in their honour and had engraved in marble and placed near their tombs. His father was registrar of the Church of Rome, and subsequently a Deacon and a Bishop (see Inscription 47). In spite of the fact that he was the official guardian of the archives of the Church relating amongst other things to the acts of the martyrs, his son Damasus was often compelled to rely on tradition and hearsay evidence in compiling his poems in honour of the martyrs (see Inscription 58). This seems to have been due to the complete destruction of the records of the Roman Church during the persecution of Diocletian, and is important in relation to Church history, because it explains why we know so little of the Church in Rome before the time of Constantine, and why the existing acts of the martyrs are often so fabulous and unreliable. They were composed from tradition at a late date.

The epitaph of Damasus himself is given first, and then one that he set up in the church which he built on the site of the old registry of the Roman church where his father had lived—the church now called St. Lorenzo in Damaso. They are followed by a selection of the epitaphs of Damasus on the martyrs, generally in chronological order.

It should also be mentioned that Damasus induced Jerome, who was at one time his secretary, to undertake

the improved Latin translation of the Bible which we call the Vulgate.\*

*Epitaphium Damasi PP. 1.*

- 46 QVI GRADIENS PELAGI FLVCTVS COMPRESSIT AMAROS,  
VIVERE QVI PRAESTAT MORIENTIA SEMINA TERRAE,  
SOLVERE QVI POTVIT LAZARO SVA VINCVLA MORTIS,  
POST TENEBRAS FRATREM, POST TERTIA LVMINA SOLIS  
AD SVPEROS ITERVM MARTHAЕ DONARE SORORI,  
POST CINERES DAMASVM FACIET QVIA SVRGERE CREDO.

*From the Syllogies.*

He who stilled the raging waves of the sea by walking thereon, He who makes the dying seeds of the earth to live, He who could loose for Lazarus the chains of death, and give back again to the world above her brother to his sister Martha after three days and nights, He, I believe, will make me, Damasus, arise from my ashes.

This epitaph was composed by Damasus to be placed on his own tomb in a basilica that he built on the Via Ardeatina. It was a place of pilgrimage until the eighth century, when his body was removed to the church of St. Lorenzo in Damaso within the walls to protect it from the Lombards.

*Carmen Damasi in Ecclesia St. Laurentii in  
Damaso olim scriptum.*

- 47 HINC PATER EXCEPTOR, LECTOR, LEVITA, SACERDOS,  
CREVERAT HINC MERITIS QVONIAM MELIORIBVS ACTIS.  
HINC MIHI PROVECTO CHRISTVS, CVI SVMMA POTESTAS,  
SEDIS APOSTOLICAE VOLVIT CONCEDERE HONOREM.

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\* Marucchi, *Inscriptions*, chap. viii.

ARCHIVIS FATEOR VOLVI NOVA CONDERE TECTA,  
 ADDERE PRAETEREA DEXTRA LAEVAQVE COLVMNAS,  
 QVAE DAMASI TENEANT PROPRIVM PER SAECVLA  
 NOMEN.

*From Codex Palatinus.*

Hence my father advanced from keeper of the records to reader, and from reader to deacon and bishop, since he was advanced by his ever-increasing merits. When I was preferred hence, Christ, who possesses the supreme power, wished to grant me the honours of the Apostolic Throne.

I confess that I wished to build a new hall for the archives, and to add columns thereto on the right and on the left, which might keep the name of Damasus as their own throughout the ages.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Platoniam siue in cubiculo ubi corpora beati Petri et Pauli ad Catacumbas deposita aliquando erant.*

48 HIC HABITASSE PRIVS SANCTOS COGNOSCERE DEBES,  
 NOMINA QVISQVE PETRI PARITER PAVLIQVE REQVIRIS.  
 DISCIPVLOS ORIENS MISIT, QVOD SPONTE FATEMVIR;  
 SANGVINIS OB MERITVM—CHRISTVMQVE PER ASTRA  
 SECVTI,  
 AETERIOS PETIERE SINVS REGNAQVE PIORVM—  
 ROMA SVOS POTIVS MERUIT DEFENDERE CIVES.  
 HAEC DAMASVS VESTRAS REFERAT NOVA SIDERA  
 LAVDES.

*From the Syllogies.*

Here you must know the saints dwelt aforetime; their names, if you ask, were Peter and Paul. The East sent the disciples, as we gladly admit; on account of the merit of their blood—and having followed Christ through the

stars, they sought the ethereal havens and the realms of the just—Rome rather deserved to defend her citizens. Let Damasus thus recall your praises, ye new constellations.

This inscription was set up in the crypt behind the present Church of St. Sebastian, formerly called the Basilica of the Apostles, on the Appian Way, to which the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul were removed from their tombs on the Vatican and the Ostian Way in 258, to preserve them from desecration during the persecution of Valerian.

The allusion in the last line but one seems to refer to a story mentioned in the *Acta Petri et Pauli*, and referred to by Gregory the Great, that certain men came from the East and endeavoured to remove the bodies of the Apostles from Rome on the ground that they were citizens of the East. Damasus says that they had become citizens of Rome by their death in that city, and that Rome, therefore, deserved to retain their bodies.\*

*Epitaphium Damasi in Nereum et Achilleum,  
Martyres.*

49 MILITIAE NOMEN DEDERANT, SAEVVMQVE GEREbant  
OFFICIUM PARITER SPECTANTES IVSSA TYRANNI,  
PRAECEPTIS, PVLSANTE METV, SERVIRE PARATI.  
MIRA FIDES RERVVM ; SVBITO POSVERE FVROREM,  
CONVERSI FVGIVNT, DVCIS IMPIA CASTRA RELINQVNT,  
PROICIVNT CLYPEOS PHALERAS TELAQVE CRVENTA,  
CONFESSI GAUDENT CHRISTI PORTARE TRIUMPHOS.  
CREDITE PER DAMASVM POSSIT QVID GLORIA CHRISTI.

*From the Syllogies.*

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\* See Edmondson, *Church in Rome*, Appendix E.

They had given their names for military service, and together fulfilled their cruel office, paying heed to the commands of the tyrant, ready to obey his orders at the prompting of fear. Strange, but true, is the tale; suddenly they laid aside their fury, they turn and fly, they abandon the impious camp of their leader, they throw away their shields, their decorations, and their blood-stained weapons, and, having witnessed a good confession, they rejoice to carry the trophies of Christ. Believe on the word of Damasus what the glory of Christ can bring to pass.

The only trustworthy tradition that has come down to us about these martyrs is contained in this epitaph. They seem to have been members of the Prætorian Guard under Nero, and to have carried out his cruel orders against the Christians. They were suddenly converted, probably, as was often the case, by the fortitude of their victims. Their *Acts*, which are late in date, relate that they were chamberlains of Flavia Domitilla, the Christian niece of Vespasian. They followed her to exile in Pontia, and were put to death with her in Terracina, perhaps under Trajan. Their bodies were brought to Rome and buried in the cemetery of Domitilla, where a church was built over their tomb after the time of Constantine. De Rossi discovered the ruins of this church in 1873, together with a bas-relief on a column, representing the execution of Achilles by decapitation, and also fragments of this inscription.\* For the name Nereus, compare Rom. xvi. 15.

\* See Allard, *Hist. Pers.* I. 176-181.



*Epitaphium Damasi in Felicitatem Martyrem.*

- 50 DISCITE QUID MERITI PRAESTET PRO REGE FERIRI :  
FEMINA NON TIMUIT GLADIUM, CVM NATIS OBIVIT,  
CONFESSA CHRISTVM MERVIT PER SAECVLA NOMEN.

*From the Syllogis of Verdun.*

Learn what merit to be smitten for a king affords : a woman feared not the sword, she perished with her sons ; having confessed Christ, she deserved a name throughout all ages.\*

Epitaph of Felicitas, who was put to death with her seven sons, probably in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Felicem et Philippum Martyres.*

- 51 QVI NATVM PASSVMQVE DEVVM REPETISSE PATERNAS  
SEDES ATQVE ITERVM VENTVRVM EX AETHERE CREDIT,  
IVDICET VT VIVOS REDIENS PARITERQVE SEPVLTO  
MARTYRIBVS SANCTIS PATEAT QVOD REGIA CAELI  
RESPICIT INTERIOR SEQVITVR SI PRAEMIA CHRISTI.  
CVLTORES DOMINI FELIX PARITERQVE PHILIPPVS  
HINC VIRTUTE PARES, CONTEMPTO PRINCIPE MVNDI,  
AETERNAM PETIERE DOMVM REGNAQVE PIORVM.  
SANGVINE QVOD PROPRIO CHRISTI MERVERE CORONAS  
HIS DAMASVS SVPPLEX VOLVIT SVA REDDERE VOTA.

*From the Syllogies.*

He who believes that God was born and suffered and sought again His Father's throne, and that He will come again from the skies, that, on His return, He may judge the living and also the dead, sees, if he follows the rewards

\* Allard, *Hist. Pers.* I. 361 sqq.

of Christ, that the inner court of heaven\* lies open to the holy martyrs.

Felix and Philippus, the worshippers of the Lord, equal in valour, sought hence their eternal home and the kingdom of the righteous, despising the prince of the world. Because they merited the crowns of Christ with their own blood, Damasus, a suppliant, wished to render them his vows in these lines.

Epitaph of the second and third sons of Felicitas, who were buried in the cemetery of Priscilla, Via Salaria, where the Basilica of St. Sylvester was afterwards built.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Hippolytum Martyrem.*

- 52 HIPPOLYTUS FERTVR, PREMIERENT CVM IVSSA TYRANNI,  
 PRESBYTER IN SCISMA SEMPER MANSISSE NOVATI.  
 TEMPORE QVO GLADIVS SECVIT PIA VISCERA MATRIS,  
 DEVOTVS CHRISTO PETERET CVM REGNA PIQVVM,  
 QVAESISSET POPVLVS VBINAM PROCEDERE POSSET,  
 CATHOLICAM DIXISSE FIDEM SEQVERENTVR VT OMNES.  
 SIC NOSTER MERVIT CONFESSVS MARTYR VT ESSET.  
 HAEC AVDITA REFERT DAMASVS: PROBAT OMNIA  
 CHRISTVS.

*Sylloge Corbeiensis.*

Hippolytus is said, while the commands of the tyrant pressed hard upon us, to have ever remained as a presbyter in the schism of Novatus. At the time when the sword severed the holy bowels of our mother, when, devoted to Christ, he was seeking the kingdoms of the just, and

\* Or possibly "sees inwardly . . . that the court of heaven."



when the people had asked him where they could proceed, he is said to have replied that all should follow the Catholic faith. Thus, having made his confession, he deserved to be our martyr. Damasus reports these things that he has heard ; Christ proves all things.

This is probably the epitaph of the celebrated Hippolytus whose writings against heretics have come down to us. He was buried in a splendid shrine on the Via Tiburtina, which is described in Prudentius, *Peri Stephanon*, XI. Nothing better illustrates the confusion and obscurity which enveloped the history of the Roman Church owing to the destruction of records in the persecution of Diocletian than the fact that Damasus had to depend on uncertain oral tradition in writing the epitaph of this celebrated person. He was certainly a schismatic, and in open conflict with the Bishops of Rome, especially with Zephyrinus and Callixtus. Some think that he was the first anti-Pope. Damasus records that he was reconciled to the Church just before his death, and therefore deserves to be treated as a martyr. When or how he was put to death is not known.

Prudentius saw a picture in his tomb representing him being torn to pieces by wild horses. This story may have been suggested by the story of Hippolytus, the son of Theseus. Allard accepts it as true, and places his death in the persecution of Valerian. Duchesne thinks that he died in exile in the reign of Maximus Thrax, and that Damasus made a mistake in calling his heresy Novatianism. It was a similar kind of rigorism to that of Tertullian.\*

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\* Allard, *Pers.* III. 350-391 ; Duchesne, *Church History*, 226-233.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Cornelium PP.*

- 53 ASPICE, DESCENSU EXTRUCTO, TENEBRISQUE FUGATIS,  
 CORNELI MONUMENTA VIDES TVMVLVMQVE SACRATVM.  
 HOC OPVS AEGROTI DAMASI PRAESTANTIA FECIT  
 ESSET VT ACCESSVS MELIOR, POPVLISQVE PARATVM  
 AVXILIVM SANCTI, ET, VALEAS SI FVNDERE PVRO  
 CORDE PRECES, DAMASVS MELIOR CONSVRGERE POSSET,  
 QVEM NON LVCIS AMOR TENVIT MAGE CVRA LABORIS.

*Restored by de Rossi from fragments of the  
 original inscription.*

Behold, now that a way of descent has been made and the darkness put to flight, you see the monument of Cornelius and his consecrated mound.

The power of Damasus in his sickness has completed this work that there might be a better mode of access, and that the help of the saint might be prepared for the people, and that, if you prevail to pour forth prayers from a pure heart, Damasus may rise up stronger, though it is not love of the light that possesses him, but rather care for his work.

Epitaph of Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, 251-253; a friend of Cyprian. Exiled to Civita Vecchia by Gallus, where he died. He was regarded as a martyr. It was the discovery of a fragment of his gravestone that led de Rossi to discover the catacomb of Callixtus and the Papal crypt in 1849-1852.

The inscription on the actual grave is—

CORNELIVS MARTYR

EP.

Both may be seen *in situ*.\*

\* Marucelli, *Catacombe Romane*, 197; Allard, *Persecutions* III. 329 sqq.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Sixtum PP. II.*

- 54 TEMPORE QVO GLADIUS SECVIT PIA VISCERA MATRIS  
 HIC POSITVS RECTOR CAELESTIA IVSSA DOCEBAM;  
 ADVENIVNT SVBITO RAPIVNT QVI FORTE SEDENTEM.  
 MILITIBVS MISSIS POPVLI TVNC COLLA DEDERE;  
 MOX VBI COGNOVIT SENIOR QVIS TOLLERE VELLE  
 PALMAM, SEQVE SVVMQVE CAPVT PRIOR OBIVLIT IPSE,  
 IMPATIENS FERITAS POSSET NE LAEDERE QVEMQVAM.  
 OSTENDIT CHRISTVS, REDDIT QVI PRAEMIA VITAE,  
 PASTORIS MERITVM, NVMERVM GREGIS IPSE TVETVR.

*Complete in Cod. Palatinus (a few fragments extant).*

At the time when the sword severed the holy bowels of our mother, I, the ruler, was seated here teaching the Divine laws: those come suddenly who are to seize me on my throne. Then the people gave their necks to the soldiers who were sent; but when the elder knew who wished to bear away the palm, he offered himself and his life of his own accord first of all, lest their impatient frenzy should injure anyone. Christ, who awards the prizes of life, shows the merit of the Shepherd; He Himself keeps the number of the flock.

Epitaph of Sixtus II., Bishop of Rome, 257-258. He was captured while preaching to the people in the cemetery of Pretextatus, which was situated in private property on the other side of the Appian Way from that of Callixtus, and he was put to death in accordance with the second edict of Valerian, which condemned all Christian clergy without trial. He was afterwards buried with four deacons, who were executed with him, in the Papal crypt

in the catacomb of Callixtus. This inscription and the next one were placed in the crypt by Damasus.\*

*Epitaphium Damasi in crypta ubi Episcopi Romani  
pausant in Callisto.*

55 HIC CONGESTA IACET, QVAERIS SI, TVRBA PIORVM,  
CORPORA SANCTORVM RETINENT VENERANDA SEPVLCRA,  
SVBLIMES ANIMAS RAPVIT SIBI REGIA CAELI ;  
HIC COMITES XYSTI, PORTANT QVI EX HOSTE TROPAEA ;  
HIC NVMERVS PROCERVVM, SERVAT QVI ALTARIA  
CHRISTI ;  
HIC POSITVS, LONGA VIXIT QVI IN PACE SACERDOS ;  
HIC CONFESSORES SANCTI, QVOS GRAECIA MISIT ;  
HIC IVVENES PVERIQ, SENES, CASTIQVE NEPOTES,  
QVIS MAGE VIRGINEVM PLACVIT RETINERE PVDOREM.  
HIC FATEOR DAMASVS VOLVI MEA CONDERE MEMBRA  
SED CINERES TIMVI SANCTOS VEXARE PIORVM.

*Extant in the Papal crypt.*

Here, should you ask, lies a vast company of the righteous gathered together ; the venerable tombs preserve the bodies of the saints, but the kingdom of heaven has caught to itself their glorious souls.

Here are the companions of Xystus, who bear away the trophies from the enemy ; here many of the leaders who serve the altars of Christ ; here is laid the bishop who lived in the long peace ; here the holy confessors whom Greece sent ; here young men and boys, old men and their chaste grandsons, who preferred rather to keep intact

\* Allard, *Pers.* III. 80-92 ; Cyprian, *Epist.* 80.

their virgin modesty. Here I, Damasus, wished, I confess it, to lay my limbs, but I feared to vex the holy ashes of the righteous.

Inscription from the Papal crypt, where nearly all the Bishops of Rome who lived in the third century were buried. The companions of Xystus are the deacons referred to above (Inscription 54). The priest who lived in the long peace is Melchiades, Bishop of Rome when the edict of Milan was published, which made Christianity a lawful religion. He is buried in another crypt close to the Papal crypt.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Laurentium Martyrem.*

56 VERBERA CARNIFICIS, FLAMMAS, TORMENTA, CATENAS  
VINCERE LAVRENTI SOLA FIDES POTVIT.

HAEC DAMASVS CVMVLAT SVPPLEX ALTARIA DONIS  
MARTYRIS EGREGIVM SVSPICIENS MERITVM.

The faith of Laurence alone could vanquish the butcher's stripes, flames, torments, and chains.

Damasus, a suppliant, piles these altars with gifts, having regard to the exceeding merit of the martyr.

Epitaph of Laurence, Archdeacon of Rome under Sixtus II. He was put to death three days after his Bishop by being roasted on a gridiron, and was buried in the cemetery of St Cyriaca, where the church of St. Lorenzo fuori le mura now stands.\*

\* Allard, *Pers.* III. 93-98.

*Epitaphium Damasi in Tarsacium Martyrem.*

- 57 PAR MERITVM, QVICVMQVE LEGIS, COGNOSCE DVORVM,  
 QVIS DAMASVS RECTOR TITVLOS POST PRAEMIA REDDIT.  
 IVDICVS POPVLVS STEPHANVM MELIORA MONENTEM  
 PERCVLERAT SAXIS, TVLERAT QVI EX HOSTE TROPAEVVM:  
 MARTYRIVM PRIMVS RAPVIT LEVITA FIDELIS.  
 TARSICIVM SANCTVM CHRISTI SACRAMENTA GERENTEM,  
 CVM MALE SANA MANVS PETERET VVLGARE PROFANIS,  
 IPSE ANIMAM POTIVS VOLVIT DIMITTERE CAESVS,  
 PRODERE QVAM CANIBVS RABIDIS CAELESTIA MEMBRA.

*From Cod. Palatinus.*

Whosoever thou art that readest, recognize the equal merit of these two to whom Damasus the ruler sets up memorials after they have attained their reward.

The people of the Jews had smitten down Stephen with stones while he was calling them to higher things, Stephen who had borne away the trophy from the enemy: the faithful Levite first snatched the crown of martyrdom.

When a frenzied hand sought to do dishonour to holy Tarsacius, as he was carrying the Sacrament of Christ, he preferred to be slain and to lose his life, rather than to betray the Divine limbs to mad dogs.

Epitaph of Tarsachius, an acolyte, who was killed in the persecution of Valerian while carrying the sacramental elements to the cemetery of Callixtus, then confiscated and guarded by the police. He was buried with the Bishop, St. Zephyrinus, in a chapel erected above the Papal crypt.\*

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\* Allard, *Persecutions* III. 76.



*Epitaphium Damasi in Petrum et Marcellinum  
Martyres.*

- 58 MARCELLINE, TVOS, PARITER PETRE, NOSSE TRIUMPHOS  
PERCVSSOR RETVLIT DAMASO MIHI CVM PVER ESSEM.  
HAEC SIBI CARNIFICEM RABIDVM MANDATA DEDISSE  
SENTIBVS IN MEDIIS VESTRA VT TVNC COLLA SECARET,  
NE TVMVLVM VESTRVM QVISQVAM COGNOSCERE POSSET;  
VOS ALACRES VESTRIS MANIBVS MVNDASSE SEPVLCHRA.  
CANDIDVLO OCCVLTE POSTQVAM IACVISTIS IN ANTRO,  
POSTEA COMMONITAM VESTRA PIETATE LVCILLAM  
HIC PLACVISSE MAGIS SANCTISSIMA CONDERE MEMBRA.

*From the Syllogies.*

When I was a boy your executioner made known to me thy triumphs, O Marcellinus, and thine also, O Peter. The mad butcher gave him this commandment—that he should sever your necks in the midst of the thickets, in order that no one should be able to recognize your grave, and he told how you prepared your sepulchre with eager hands. Afterwards you lay hid in a white cave, and then Lucilla was caused to know by your goodness that it pleased you rather to lay your sacred limbs here.

Epitaph of Peter, a priest, and Marcellinus, an exorcist, who were put to death in 304 in the persecution of Diocletian. It was placed in the cemetery called after them on the Via Labicana. Their names are still mentioned in the Canon of the Mass. This inscription is interesting as showing the care taken by the Roman Government during the later persecutions to prevent honour being done to the bodies of the martyrs. Even the stories of their deaths were suppressed: Damasus had to go to the executioner for details. It also illustrates

the interest that Damasus took in the martyrs from an early age.\*

*Epitaphium Damasi in Marcellum PP.*

- 59 VERIDICVS RECTOR LAPSOS QVIA CRIMINA FLERE  
PRAEDIXIT, MISERIS FVIT OMNIBVS HOSTIS AMARVS :  
HINC FVROR, HINC ODIVM SEQVITVR, DISCORDIA,  
LITES,  
SEDITION, CAEDES, SOLVVTVR FOEDERA PACIS :  
CRIMEN OB ALTERIVS, CHRISTVM QVI IN PACE NEGAVIT,  
FINIBVS EXPVLVS PATRIAE EST FERITATE TYRANNI.  
HAEC BREVITER DAMASVS VOLVIT COMPERTA REFERRE  
MARCELLI VT POPVLVS MERITVM COGNOSCERE POSSET.

*From the Syllogies.*

The truth-telling ruler, because he bade the lapsed weep for their crimes, became a bitter enemy to all these unhappy men ; hence followed rage and hate, and discord and strife, sedition and slaughter ; the bonds of peace are loosed. On account of the crimes of another, who denied Christ in time of peace, he was driven from the borders of his fatherland by the savagery of the tyrant.

Damasus wishes briefly to tell these things which he had found out, that the people might know the merit of Marcellus.

Epitaph of Marcellus, Bishop of Rome, who was elected in 308, after the long vacancy of the Roman See caused by the persecution of Diocletian. He established twenty-five parishes in Rome, and opened a new cemetery near the cemetery of Priscilla, where he is buried. His firm handling of those who had denied the faith during the

\* Allard, *Pers.* IV. 381-383.



persecution led to a revolt against his authority, and he was banished by Maxentius, and died in exile.\*

*Epitaphium Damasi in Eusebium PP.*

D			F
A	60	DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT	V
M		HERACLIVS VETVIT LAPROS PECCATA DOLERE,	R
A		EVSEBIVS MISEROS DOCVIT SVA CRIMINA FLERE;	I
S		SCINDITVR IN PARTES POPVLVS, GLISCENTE	V
I		FVRORE,	S
P		SEDTIO, CAEDES, BELLVM, DISCORDIA, LITES.	D
A		EXTEMPLO PARITER PVLSI FERITATE TYRANNI,	I
P		INTEGRA CVM RECTOR SERVARET FOEDERA PACIS,	O
A		PERTVLIT EXILIVM DOMINO SVB IVDICE LAETVS,	N
E		LITORE TRINACRIO MVNDVM VITAMQVE RELIQVIT.	Y
C		EVSEBIO EPISCOPO ET MARTYRI.	S
V			I
L			V
T			S
O			

*A Copy extant in Callixtus.*

O		Damasus the Bishop erected this.	F
R		Heraclius forbade the lapsed to mourn for their	I
A		sins; Eusebius taught the unhappy men to weep	L
T		for their crimes; the people is divided into parties	O
Q		as the madness grew—sedition, slaughter, war, dis-	C
V		cord, strife. Suddenly both were driven out by the	A
E		cruelty of the tyrant, and since the ruler had kept	L
A		the bonds of peace inviolate, he gladly endured exile	V
M		under the judgment of the Lord, and left the world	S
A		and his life on the Trinacrian shore.	C
T		To Eusebius Bishop and Martyr.	R
O			I
R		Along the sides: Furius Dionysius Filocalus wrote	P
		this, the admirer and lover of Pope Damasus.	S
			I
			T

\* Marucchi, *Catacombs*, 514; Allard, *Pers.* V. 131-134.

Eusebius was elected Bishop of Rome after the banishment of Marcellus, and dealt as firmly as he had done with the lapsed. Heraclius was the leader of the party opposed to him, who wished the lapsed to be readmitted to the Church on easy terms. Maxentius banished both of them, and Eusebius died in exile in Sicily. He was buried in a special crypt in the cemetery of Callixtus, where an early copy of this inscription may still be seen. These last two inscriptions make known to us a chapter in Church history which is otherwise unrecorded.

The inscription of Eusebius also gives us the name of a secretary of Damasus, Furius Dionysius Filocalus, who invented the beautiful characters in which the inscriptions of Damasus are written.\*

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\* Marucchi, *Catacombs*, 182 ; Allard, *Pers.* V. 135.

## THE EPITAPH OF POPE GREGORY THE GREAT.

*Epitaphium Gregorii PP. I.*

61 SVSCIBE, TERRA, TVO CORPVS DE CORPORE SVMP TVM,  
 REDDERE QVOD VALEAS VIVIFICANTE DEO.  
 SPIRITVS ASTRA PETIT, LETI NIL IVRA NOCEBVNT,  
 CVI VITAE ALTERIVS MORS MAGIS IPSA VIA EST.  
 PONTIFICIS SVMMI HOC CLAVDVNTVR MEMBRA SEPVL-  
 CHRO,  
 QVI INNVMERIS SEMPER VIVIT VBIQVE BONIS.  
 ESVRIEM DAPIBVS SVPERAVIT, FRIGORA VESTE,  
 ATQVE ANIMAS MONITIS TEXIT AB HOSTE SACRIS.  
 IMPLEBAT ACTV, QVIDQVID SERMONE DOCEBAT,  
 ESSET VT EXEMPLVM, MYSTICA VERBA LOQVENS.  
 AD CHRISTVM ANGLOS CONVERTIT PIETATE MAGISTRA,  
 ADQVIRENS FIDEI AGMINA GENTE NOVA.  
 HIC LABOR, HOC STVDIVM, HAEC TIBI CVRA, HOC  
 PASTOR AGEBAS,  
 VT DOMINO OFFERES PLVRIMA LVCRA GREGIS.  
 HISQVE DEI CONSVL FACTVS LAETARE TRIVMPHIS :  
 NAM MERCEDEM OPERVM IAM SINE FINE TENES.

*Preserved by Bede. Fragments of the original inscription  
 still exist in St. Peter's at Rome.*

Receive, O earth, a body taken from thy body, that thou mayest have power to give it back again when God quickeneth it. The spirit seeks the stars, the laws of death shall not harm it, for death itself is to it the way to another life. The limbs of the Chief Pontiff are enclosed

in this tomb, who ever lives in every place by his uncounted deeds of love. He conquered hunger by his feasts, cold by his raiment, and he shielded souls from the enemy by his holy counsels. He practised in his life whatever he taught in his speech, that he might be an example when he spoke mystic words. At the bidding of his kindly nature he converted the Angles to Christ, increasing the ranks of faith by a new race. This was thy labour, this thine aim, this all thy care as shepherd, that thou mightest offer to the Lord the greatest gain from the flock. Consul of God, thou wast made to rejoice in these triumphs ; for now, without end, thou hast the reward of thy work.

The connection between Gregory the Great and England seems to warrant the inclusion of this inscription.

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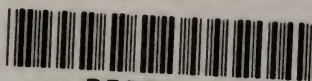
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