

NEW EVIDENCE FOR THE DATING
OF THE CALENDAR
AT SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE
IN ROME*

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The Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome has been known since 1966 when, in the course of repairs on the foundations of the church, Vatican workmen uncovered an ancient Roman building and an illustrated calendar painted in fresco on its two facing walls. The painting is so deteriorated as to be almost invisible; but we can see that the days of each month are indicated on red vertical panels painted next to corresponding illustrations. Of the first semester there remain only fragments of the calendar, sufficient merely to testify to its arrangement; no figural representation or textual evidence can be read. Preserved in the second semester are the fragmentary texts of four months—October, November, December and July—and four illustrations—September, November, December and August—but all much deteriorated. The most complete illustration, September, shows a country scene in which workers harvest fruit on the grounds of a country villa where a sacrifice is being performed. On the basis of this illustration and the fragmentary remains of November, illustrated by men with a plough and with poles, we can imagine that the remaining months would have been similarly represented by seasonal activities.

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Filippo Magi excavated and published the remains in 1972.¹ On the basis of the inclusion of certain public holidays, identified with victories of the ruling house of Constantine, and of the similarities to the famous codex Calendar of A.D. 354, Magi dated the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar to the period between A.D. 299/332 and 354. The brickwork under the Calendar and the style of the illustrations, according to Magi's analysis, were consistent with his dating.² Nevertheless, the dating of the Calendar continues to puzzle scholars of many disciplines. Classicists would like a more firmly fixed chronology for the calendar cycle; art historians have been concerned with the style of the painted illustrations; and topographers with the settlement of the Esquiline Hill. It is my intention in this paper, therefore, to review the evidence for the dating of the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar and to combine that evidence with information not previously discussed in order to arrive at a more secure chronology for this controversial monument.

The significance of this Calendar and the difficulties in dating it cannot be overestimated. Although some forty-seven fragmentary *fasti* have survived in Italy, inscribed on stone or painted on walls, the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar is the only extant Roman calendar between the first century A.D. and the Calendar of 354.³ Before its discovery, our only evidence for this three-hundred-year period were two fragmentary *ferialia* (select lists of festivals) for military detachments, one in Egypt (A.D. 169–176?) and the other at Dura-Europus (A.D. 225).⁴ And since the Santa Maria Maggiore discovery, only one other very fragmentary inscription, also dating to this period, has been identified as a *feriale* in Bolsena, Italy.⁵ If Magi's dating is correct, the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar would provide a unique document for the history of Roman calendars and Roman religion.

¹ F. Magi, *Il Calendario dipinto sotto S. Maria Maggiore* = *MemPontAcc* XI.1 (Rome 1972) 1–103, hereafter cited as Magi. References are made by author's last name to the following frequently cited works: Degrassi = A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae*, XIII. *Fasti et Elogia*, Fasc. II. *Fasti Anni Numani et Iuliani* (Rome 1963); Mielsch = H. Mielsch, Review of Magi's publication in *Gnomon* 48 (1976) 499–504; Stern = H. Stern, "Le Calendrier de Sainte-Marie-Majeure," *REL* 51 (1973) 41–48.

² Magi 27–29 with note 25.

³ Degrassi 29–277. In addition to the forty-four *Fasti* which Degrassi included in his publication, two fragmentary *Fasti* from Italy have been published by S. Panciera, who dated both to the first century A.D.: "Due Nuovi Frammenti di Calendario Romano," *Archeologia Classica* 25–26 (1973–74 [1975]) 481–90.

⁴ The *Feriale Osloense*; edd. S. Eitrem and L. Amundsen, *Papyri Osloense* III.1, no. 77 (Oslo 1936) 45–55; the *Feriale Duranum*; R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, and W. F. Snyder, "The Feriale Duranum," *YCS* 7 (1940) 1–222, and R. Cavenaile, *Corpus Pap. Lat.* 324, *The Excavations at Dura Europus, Final Report* 1 (Wiesbaden 1959) 191 ff.

⁵ The *Feriale Rusticum Volsiniense*; P. Castrén, "Graffiti di Bolsena," *MEFR* 84 (1972) 623–38. H. Solin, "Ein 'Feriale Rusticum' in Volsinii?", *Arctos* 164 (1974) 164–65, has questioned the identification of this inscription as a *feriale*.

Yet a re-examination of the evidence which bears upon the dating of the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar indicates that Magi's chronology is, at best, debatable.⁶ And independent study of the style of the calendar illustrations has only sharpened the controversy: Magi explained the Calendar fresco as a rare example of fourth-century Roman illusionistic landscape painting which nevertheless contained certain stylistic and antiquarian elements consistent with its fourth-century date.⁷ And the art historian, H. Stern, supported Magi's view; certain unique stylistic elements as, for example, the sort of perspective used in the September illustration, were explicable, according to Stern:

Je ne pense pas que ce soient des traits exceptionnels dans l'art du IV^e siècle. Ils appartiennent d'ailleurs à l'art du paysage romain depuis le début de notre ère au plus tard et ne font que s'accroître par la suite. Le nombre infime de peintures murales conservées explique les lacunes de nos connaissances.⁸

However, another art historian, H. Mielsch, has arrived at quite different conclusions:

Befremdlich wirkt vor allem der Impressionismus der Landschaftsszenen. Die feinen Farbabstufungen bei den Bäumen, ferner eine vergleichbare Luftperspektive und die Art, Gebäude in Vogelschau wiederzugeben, finden sich vor allem im Aureliergab am Viale Manzoni (Rome), also in spätseverischer Zeit. Es fehlen die changierenden Farben, die gerade für konstantinische Zeit typisch erscheinen.⁹

Consequently, Mielsch suggested a Severan date for the calendar illustrations. Clearly, any analysis of the style of the Calendar illustrations at Santa Maria Maggiore can do no more than suggest a possible chronology, while the resolution of the dating of this controversial fresco—on other than stylistic grounds—becomes all the more desirable.

Magi derives his 299/332 *terminus post quem* for the Calendar from two notations. He gets the 299 date from a reference to victories celebrated over the Marcomanni.¹⁰ But the text is so badly damaged that the reading is not certain.¹¹ And even if it is accepted, we would have to point out that such victories could have been celebrated as early as

⁶ Mielsch 499–504; and for an opposing view, see Stern 41–48.

⁷ Magi 38–39.

⁸ Stern 47.

⁹ Mielsch 500–501.

¹⁰ Magi 24.

¹¹ For July, Magi (24) reads (C) M XXIII(I), followed on the next line by . . . s. vict. . . Magi identified these notations with the *Vict(orias) Marcomannas* noted on 30 July in the Calendar of 354. The notation at Santa Maria Maggiore does not, however, record the name or the date of these victories, which makes their identification problematic.

A.D. 176.¹² Magi infers the 332 date from a reference to *Ludi Sarmatici*, which he would identify with Constantinian victories over the Sarmatians.¹³ But *Ludi Sarmatici* may also have been celebrated in the 2nd century, as Mielsch pointed out, or under Diocletian, as Barnes has shown.¹⁴ Magi's proposed 332 date has yet another weakness: a calendar of that late date would surely note the holidays celebrating Constantine's victories over Maxentius in 312, as the Calendar of 354 does on 28 October with the notation *Evictio tyranni*; and on 29 October with the celebration of Constantine's victorious entrance into the city, recorded as *Adventus Divi*; followed on 30 October by a day of *Ludi votivi*.¹⁵ Yet the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar does not include any reference to these important Constantinian events; nor does it remark another Constantinian victory, the *Ludi Iovi Liberatori*, which is, however, recorded in the Calendar of 354.¹⁶

These notations raise such disconcerting problems that Stern was prompted to state: "La mention des fêtes [in the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore] est étrangement arbitraire, du moins sur la foi des restes précaires."¹⁷ Stern, nevertheless, accepted Magi's proposed 332 date as the *terminus post quem* for the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore because of the notation for the *Ludi Sarmatici*, which are recorded at Santa Maria Maggiore only on 1 December; November was destroyed when the Calendar wall was damaged. In the Calendar of 354, the *Ludi Sarmatici* extend from 25 November to 1 December. Since this is a seven-day celebration, its length indicates a commemoration of a victory of the ruling Constantinian dynasty; hence, according to Stern, the *Ludi Sarmatici* noted at Santa Maria Maggiore on 1 December must refer to the Constantinian victories of A.D. 332.¹⁸ This reasoning is inconclusive: for Giovanni

¹² Degrassi 488; H. Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354. Étude sur son texte et ses illustrations* (Paris 1953) 81.

¹³ Magi 27–28 with note 25.

¹⁴ Mielsch 499–503; T. D. Barnes, "Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311," *Phoenix* 30 (1976) 174–93.

¹⁵ See Degrassi 527. We cannot attribute the omission of these notations to the damaged state of the wall: the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar records a festival of Isis on 28 October and leaves no space to include a second festival before continuing on the following line with a notation for 29 October. (See Magi 25.)

¹⁶ Degrassi 520; Stern (above, note 12) 90, has identified the *Ludi Iovi Liberatori* noted on October 13 with a Constantinian victory.

¹⁷ Stern 46. Although he accepts Magi's *terminus post quem*, Stern does quite correctly argue that if we use Magi's proposed chronology, the *terminus ante quem* should be pushed back to the year A.D. 432/33 when the construction of the basilica of Pope Sixtus III would have effectively destroyed the Roman building which had housed the Calendar.

¹⁸ Stern 41–48. Stern (above, note 12) 78–87 has demonstrated that only those imperial holidays which commemorate victories of the Constantinian dynasty extend for five days of *ludi* preceding one day of circus races in the Calendar of 354. In the years since Stern's publication of *Le Calendrier de 354*, no evidence has come to light to contradict his earlier conclusions.

Forni has pointed out that another member of Constantine's family, namely his father, may have also celebrated victories over the Sarmatians.¹⁹ These *Ludi Sarmatici* may have been instituted as early as 297. Furthermore, the notations for November have not survived at Santa Maria Maggiore, so that any argument for a fourth-century date based on the length of the celebrations in the Calendar of 354 remains conjectural.

Recently, Mielsch was prompted by considerations of style to raise the possibility of identifying the *Ludi Sarmatici* with yet another event, the second-century victories of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.²⁰ Our sources indicate that these second-century *Ludi Sarmatici* were celebrated in Rome with the appropriate games and festivities and with a triumphal procession which would have been commemorated annually. Unfortunately, our sources are not in agreement on the precise date of this second-century triumph: it was celebrated either on 27 November in conjunction with the entrance of Marcus Aurelius into Rome and with Commodus' proclamation as *Imperator*; or on some day in the period between 27 November and 10 December in conjunction with the dedication of a triumphal arch; or on 23 December when Commodus alone (?), and/or perhaps for a second time, may have celebrated a triumph.²¹ Hence the problem with Mielsch's proposal is that these second-century victories have not been securely attested for the beginning of December where the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar records them.

Without further evidence, Magi's fourth-century date could be questioned, but not refuted. And Mielsch was forced to continue to wonder why the illustrations from Santa Maria Maggiore fit a second-century context rather than a fourth-century one.²² But there is more evidence. Hitherto, the greatest difficulty in accepting Mielsch's tentative hypothesis was the lack of any second-century notation for the Sarmatian victories on 1 December, where it is indicated in the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar. This problem can now be overcome: the second-century *feriale Osloense* from Egypt records an unnamed public celebration of the Roman imperial cult at the end of November and beginning of December. The notations for November are too fragmentary to read, but the text for December records the date (Ē = 1 Dec.) and an imperial festival, ὑπερ

¹⁹ Magi 27–29 with note 25.

²⁰ Mielsch 499–503.

²¹ The problem arises primarily from the confusion created by the *SHA Comm.* 2.4 and 12.4. For discussion of the issues involved and the sources, see Mielsch 501; *RE* II.2302 s.v. *Antonius* (Rhoden) which first noted the dated inscription from the triumphal arch (*CIL* VI.1014). For the significance of *imperator*, see M. Hammond, *The Antonine Monarchy* (Rome 1959) 20 with note 37, and 25 ff. See also A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius* (Boston 1966) 269–70.

²² Mielsch 499–503; and again, H. Mielsch, "Sur Spätromischen Malerei des 4 Jahrhunderts," *MDAI(R)* 85 (1978) 151–207; and specifically 203–04.

ἐπιβάσεως.²³ Eitrem and Amundsen, the editors of this military papyrus, noted that ἐπιβάσις has two possible interpretations in the language of the imperial ruler cult; an ἐπιβάσις is either the commemoration of the landing or first arrival of the emperor into a city, or it may indicate the accession to the throne. Since Eitrem and Amundsen knew of no emperor who had acceded to the throne on 1 December, they preferred to translate ἐπιβάσις as the arrival of the emperor, whose name is missing from the text.

The circumstances surrounding the second-century Sarmatian victories fit the description of an imperial ἐπιβάσις; for Marcus Aurelius had entered Rome to celebrate his victories over the Sarmatians on 27 November, A.D. 176, and on this occasion his son, Commodus, was proclaimed *imperator*.²⁴ Because no other event associated with the imperial ruler cult has been commemorated on 1 December in our sources, the unnamed celebration in the second-century *feriale* from Egypt can be quite securely identified with the *Ludi Sarmatici* that extend into December.²⁵ First celebrated in Rome in 176, these victories would provide a firm *terminus post quem* for the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar.

The question of a *terminus ante quem* can now be broached and the means of approach is again provided by the text of the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar. A careful comparison of notations reveals significant differences between the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar and the Calendar of 354. For example, Magi identified the notation *Agon* for 10 December in the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore as the Roman festival of the *Agonalia*, but he did not remark that the Calendar of 354 does not record this holiday.²⁶ And Magi did not discuss the notation for *lud(i)* on 11 October at Santa Maria Maggiore: although the Calendar of 354 does not include *ludi* on this day, the first-century *Fasti Amiternini* and the *Fasti Antiaties Ministrorum Domus Augustae* (A.D. 23–27) record an extended celebration of *Ludi Augustales* from the third to the twelfth of October.²⁷ Given the consistency of calendar notation that

²³ S. Eitrem and L. Amundsen, the editors of the *Feriale Osloense* (above, note 4) 45–55, have reconstructed Column I, lines 9–10 (= the end of November) as: θυσία ἐπιτελεῖται (?) . . . For Column II, line 11, E (= 1 Dec.), the editors note that ὑπὲρ ἐπιβάσεως is preferable to ἐμβάσεως (p. 48).

²⁴ See note 21 (above).

²⁵ This is the conclusion drawn from the recent study by P. Herz, *Untersuchungen zum Festkalender der römischen Kaiserzeit nach datierten Weih- und Ehreninschriften* (Diss., University at Mainz 1975) 302–03.

²⁶ Magi 27. Although the *Agonalia* is recorded on 11 December in extant first-century *fasti*, its notation at Santa Maria Maggiore on 10 December may be attributed to its association with the agricultural cycle and/or the festival of the *Septimontium*, noted at Santa Maria Maggiore on 11 December. See Degraffi 535–36.

²⁷ Magi 25. The first-century *Fasti Amiternini* preserve the notation for *Ludi (Augustales)* on 11 October; and although the text of the *Fasti Antiaties Ministrorum Domus*

scholars have always assumed, such differences may provide us with a firm *terminus ante quem*.

There is one notation in the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar that is replaced in the Calendar of 354 by a holiday which was apparently instituted in the third century: for 19 October, the Santa Maria Maggiore Calendar records the letter "A," written in a rustic capital. Magi reported this information in his publication of the Calendar.²⁸ Stern has identified the "A" as the first letter of the word *Armilustrium*, the name of the Roman festival recorded on 19 October in our extant first-century A.D. Roman *fasti*.²⁹ The *Armilustrium*, described by Varro and Festus, included a ritual lustration of weapons by the *Salii*, the priests of Mars.³⁰ The place where these rites were performed was itself called the *Armilustrium*.³¹ Although there is evidence in the Regionary Catalogues of Rome for the existence of this area and for the survival of the college of the *Salii* in the fourth century, the festival of the *Armilustrium* is not included in the Calendar of 354.³² In its place, on 19 October, and continuing through the 22nd, the Calendar records *Ludi Solis*, games devoted to Sol, or more precisely, to *Deus Sol Invictus*.³³

The *Ludi Solis* have been understood as one component of the program of religious reforms which the Emperor Aurelian instituted in 274 in

Augustae has been damaged, it does preserve the notations for *Ludi Augustales* from 5–9 October, and circus games for 12 October. On this basis, we can presume that the latter *fasti* would have also included a notation for *Ludi Augustales* on 10 and 11 October. Unfortunately, as Degraasi (p. 516) observed, we do not know at what point the *Ludi Augustales* were cut back to the one-day celebration which appears in the Calendar of 354 on 12 October as *Augustales C(ircenses)*.

²⁸ Magi 25 and Tav. IV; X.2. I noted the "A" at Santa Maria Maggiore upon my first visit to the excavation in November 1977.

²⁹ Stern 44; Degraasi 523–24. Unfortunately, the text for this part of October has not survived in the *Feriale Duranum*. The editors of the *Feriale Duranum* do note, however, that space was available for the inclusion of the *Armilustrium*; Fink, Hoey, and Snyder (above, note 4) 163.

³⁰ Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* 5.153 and 6.22; Festus, *Epit.* 17L.

³¹ Platner-Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1929) s.v. *Armilustrium*; and Crous, "Florentiner Waffenpfeiler und Armilustrium," *MDAI(R)* 48 (1933) 1–119.

³² The fourth-century Regionary Catalogues were well edited by R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti, *Codice Topografico della Città di Roma* = Fonti per la Storia d'Italia 81 (Rome 1940) 63–258. Since the *Salii* were part of the state cult, their survival into the fourth century at Rome is not surprising: see K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (Munich 1960) 405; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich 1912) 144; and 555 ff. Noteworthy is *CIL* X.1.5061 (=Dessau, *ILS* 1217) for a man from Atina (Latium) who was both *pontifex dei Solis* and *salius Palatinus* in A.D. 315. It is interesting that although the *Salii* had traditionally performed to honor Mars on March 23rd, there is evidence for the rites of the *Salii* being performed in association with the cult of Attis and the Magna Mater in the fourth century. See Julian, *Orat.* 5.168c.

³³ Degraasi 523–24.

order to unite Roman pagan cults under the banner of *Deus Sol Invictus*.³⁴ Aurelian had coins struck that proclaimed Sol the official deity of the Roman Empire; they read *Sol Dominus Imperii Romani*.³⁵ He founded a new temple and a new college of pontifices devoted to Sol.³⁶ He also instituted the first *Agon Solis*, an especially splendid series of games and contests in honor of Sol. Since the *Agon Solis* was first held in Rome in 274, or early in 275, it is thought to have been originally celebrated in conjunction with Aurelian's dedication of the new temple of Sol in Rome (274/275) and possibly with his triumph in Rome in 274.³⁷ But whatever the circumstances of its original celebration—and these circumstances are not at all clear—our sources indicate that the *Agon Solis* continued to be celebrated once every four years throughout the fourth century.³⁸

The quadrennial celebration of the *Agon Solis* is noteworthy because it explains why this holiday is not recorded in any extant Roman *fasti*; since Roman calendars could be used for more than one year (unlike their modern counterparts), they recorded only annual events. Consequently, *agones* which were only celebrated at periodic intervals, such as the *Agon Solis* or the *Agon Capitolinus*, were systematically not recorded by the Roman calendars, such as the Calendar of 354.³⁹ These calendar traditions, coupled with the evidence for the *Armilustrum* provided by our first-century *Fasti*, rule out any possibility that the "A" recorded at Santa

³⁴ G. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden 1972) 144; L. Homo, *Essai sur le règne de l'Empereur Aurelien* (Paris 1904) 122–26; 186 with note 7.

³⁵ *Sol Dominus Imperii Romani*, with a bust of Aurelian on the reverse: H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire* VI (Paris 1880–92²) 177, no. 15; 178, nos. 16, 17 et al.; Mattingly-Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage* V.1 301, nos. 319–22. See also Wissowa (above, note 32) 367.

³⁶ For Aurelian's temple see the *Notitia Urbis*, edd. R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti (above, note 32) 111; 172. The temple and college of Pontifices devoted to Sol are also mentioned by the *SHA Aurel.* 35.3; by Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 9.15; and in the *Chronica Urbis Romae* edd. R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti (above, note 32) 278.26–279.1. For *Pontifices Solis*, see Wissowa (above, note 32) 367.

³⁷ *Chronica Urbis Romae* edd. R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti (above, note 32) 279.4: *Agonem Solis instituit* (Aurelian); and *Chronica St. Hieronymi* ed. Helm 223: *Aurelianus templum Soli aedificat et Romam firmioribus muris vallat; Primus agon Solis ab Aureliano institutus* (4th regnal year, A.D. 275). But MS A records these events in the 3rd regnal year, A.D. 274. The question of the absolute date of the *Agon Solis*, as of numerous events in Aurelian's reign, is complicated because we do not know whether Aurelian began his regnal years in November 269 or May 270. If the *Agon Solis* were held in 275, it would have been early in the year since recently discovered papyri indicate that Aurelian was murdered in March 275. See J. Lafaurie, "Communication sur la chronologie impériale de 249–286," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1965) 153; *PLRE* I s.v. *Aurelianus*. For discussion of the *Agon Solis* in conjunction with the temple dedication and/or triumph of Aurelian, see note 45 (below).

³⁸ Julian, *Orat.* 4.155b.

³⁹ For the *Agon Capitolinus*, see Wissowa (above, note 32) 465.

Maria Maggiore on 19 October could be read as the *Agon Solis* and not the well attested festival of the *Armilustrum*.

The establishment of games to Sol on 19 October, the traditional date for the *Armilustrum*, would have been very much in keeping with Aurelian's religious policies.⁴⁰ It would have allowed the new *Deus Sol Invictus* to be linked to the old Roman *Sol* of the Circus Maximus, but would also have effectively related the worship of this new god to the traditions of the Roman *Salii*, the priests of Mars, and to the festival of the *Armilustrum*, celebrated on this day.⁴¹ That this was an easy transition to make is indicated, for example, by a passage in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius where Praetextatus, a prominent fourth-century pagan, explains the chants of the *Salii* in terms of Roman worship of Jupiter, now also identified with Sol.⁴²

The ultimate success of Aurelian's religious policies is well attested in our fourth-century sources;⁴³ and the widespread popularity of the cult of *Deus Sol Invictus* in this period is reflected by the unusually large number of circus races devoted to Sol on 22 October in the Calendar of 354.⁴⁴ This large number has, incidentally, suggested the identification of 22 October with the anniversary of the *Agon Solis* held every fourth year, as well as with the anniversary of the religious reforms instituted by Aurelian.⁴⁵ Although the consistent omission of notations for *agones* from the Roman *fasti* allows us to make the identification of the anniversary of

⁴⁰ For a discussion of Aurelian's religious policies as a combination of "new and Eastern" elements of Sol-worship which were carefully "Romanized" in form and expression, see Halsberghe (above, note 34) 140 ff.; RAC I.1004–10 s.v. *Aurelianus* (Gross).

⁴¹ Q. Schofield, "Sol in the Circus Maximus," *Latomus* 102 (1969) 640–50, had arrived at this same conclusion: "Far from indicating a change of thought on the part of the Romans, we believe this later festival (*Ludi Solis*) shows how immediately the *Armilustrum* and the *Salii* were connected with Sun-worship" (p. 644). This association is lent further support by the work of Crous (above, note 31) 37–40; 68–71. Crous noted that the *Armilustrum* and its procession, the *ambitus lustris* of the *Salii*, were confused with the *pompa* in the Circus Maximus (which had associations with the Roman Sol). See also *Thes. Ling. Lat.* s.v. *pompa*; *ambitus*. Varro (*De Ling. Lat.* 5.153) has also commented on this confusion.

⁴² Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.15.14.

⁴³ Halsberghe (above, note 34) 162–75; Wissowa (above, note 32) 368; and H. P. L'Orange, "Sol Invictus Imperator," *Symbolae Osloenses* 14 (1935) 95 ff.

⁴⁴ Degraffi 523–24; 36 *missus* are recorded for 22 October in the Calendar of 354.

⁴⁵ Homo (above, note 34) 186 with note 7; and more recently Halsberghe (above, note 34) 144. Wissowa (above, note 32) 367 with note 4 has suggested that the *Agon Solis* (274?) be linked with the dedication of the temple of Sol (274?), which he identified with the festival *Natalis Invicti*, recorded on 25 December in the Calendar of 354. But Wissowa's argument supposes that *Natalis* means "dedication day" (of the temple of Sol Invictus), whereas the Calendar of 354 uses *Natalis* as a generic term for any sort of anniversary or celebration. (Cf. *Natalis chartis* on 25 January [Degraffi 402].) Although Wissowa has suggested a possible association of the *Agon Solis* with the dedication of the temple of Sol, our sources do not prove this hypothetical identification. See *SHA Aurel.* 39.2 and 39.6; Zosimus 1.61; and Aurel. Vict. *De Caes.* 35.7.

the *Agon Solis* only a tentative one, the association of the *Ludi Solis* in October with the religious reforms of Aurelian would support this date.

The replacement of the "A" by *Ludi Solis* provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore, for the *Armilustrium* indicated there disappeared c. 274 to be replaced by celebrations in honor of *Deus Sol Invictus*. The evidence is circumstantial, but there is one other notation in the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore which similarly points to a third-century *terminus ante quem*. On 2 December, the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore records a *Quaest(orum) Sor(titio)*. This is the first notice in a Roman calendar of the lottery which allocated various spheres of activity (*provinciae*) to the quaestors; the lottery was held after the quaestors were elected by popular vote but three days before the candidates entered office, by a decree of the senate.⁴⁶ This system and the lottery of quaestors is well attested under the Republic and even in the early years of the Empire.⁴⁷ But the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore provides the first and only evidence for the continuation of a lottery for quaestors after the first century and—if Magi's dating is accepted—into the fourth century.

A fourth-century lottery for quaestors is possible, but it is indeed surprising; there is no mention of any lottery in the process of magisterial selection as it is fully described in the Theodosian Code. The Code indicates instead a combined process of imperial recommendation and senatorial nomination which resulted in the formal designation (*designatio*) of candidates for the quaestorship.⁴⁸

The fifth-century calendar of Polemius Silvius verifies this system by recording the designation of quaestors at Rome on 23 January.⁴⁹ Furthermore, as De Martino and Chastagnol have observed, the Theodosian Code reflects the reorganization of the office of quaestor under Constantine (312–320) and its transformation into a *munus*.⁵⁰ In effect, the quaestorship had become a sophisticated form of taxation which compelled wealthy aristocrats to begin their careers by giving sumptuous games, while the less affluent candidates apparently gave games with the support of the public treasury. And although the notoriously untrustworthy *Historia Augusta* attributes the origin of this system of quaestorships to the Emperor Alexander Severus (*SHA* Alex. Sev. 43.3), we can only be

⁴⁶ Magi 26; T. Mommsen, *Römische Staatsrecht* II.1 (Leipzig 1877³) 523 ff.; Degrassi 534–35; *RE* XXIV.801–27 s.v. *quaestor* (Wesener).

⁴⁷ *RE* XIII.2.1451–1503 s.v. *losung* (Ehrenberg); for the Empire, see Tac. *Agric.* 6 and *Ann.* 1.15; *Vell. Pat.* 2.111.4.

⁴⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 6.4; and especially 6.4.1; 6.4.8; 6.4.9; see also F. De Martino, *Storia della Costituzione Romana* V (Naples 1967) 324–26.

⁴⁹ Degrassi 402: *Quaestores Romae designantur*.

⁵⁰ De Martino (above, note 48) 324–26; A. Chastagnol, "Zosime II,38, et l'Histoire Auguste," *Antiquitas* 4.3 (1966) 64. See *Cod. Theod.* 6.4.1.

certain of its fourth-century reality: the Calendar of 354 records the *Initium muneris* on 2 December, followed by notations for the publicly funded games (*munus arca*) on 4–6 December and for the privately funded games (*munus kandida*) on 8 December.⁵¹

Given this information about the fourth-century quaestorship and the process of selection, there is no reason to suppose that a *sortitio* would have continued to have any practical function at a time when candidates were no longer elected to office but recommended by the emperor and approved by the senate: by analogy, we can point to the practice in the early Empire of imperial designation of quaestors—*candidati principis*—who were approved by the senate and held the office of quaestor but were held exempt from any lottery.⁵² Furthermore, whereas our fourth-century sources do record the imperial designation (*designatio*) of candidates and the necessity of determining their taxable income in order to determine their duties, there is no mention of any allocation of offices as described by the notation for *Quaest(orum) Sor(titio)* at Santa Maria Maggiore.

The only other plausible explanation for the notation at Santa Maria Maggiore is to read the calendar as an example of antiquarian survival. But this explanation contradicts not only the evidence provided by the contemporary calendar notations (e.g., *Ludi Sarmatici*), but also confounds the evidence supplied by the Theodosian Code: the term *subsortiti* (substitution by lot in the case of a deceased candidate for office) has to be explained because *utamur veterum verbis*.⁵³ The Code thus implies that the term *sortitio* was also no longer in use in the fourth century. And the previously cited passage from Ulpian supports this interpretation: Ulpian notes that some quaestors, but not all, used to be appointed by lot (*sortiebantur*), and this does imply that the practice of sortition for quaestorships had in fact disappeared by his own lifetime.⁵⁴ It is indeed interesting that this passage from Ulpian coincides with evidence supplied by the untrustworthy *Historia Augusta* for the date of the transformation of the system of appointments for quaestors.⁵⁵ If our interpretation is correct, and the *Quaestorum Sortitio* was no longer current in Ulpian's

⁵¹ Degrassi 533–34; Chastagnol (above, note 50) 64.

⁵² Ulpian, *Dig.* 1.13.2: *Ex quaestoribus quidam solebant provincias sortiri ex senatus consulto, quod factum Decimo Druso et Porcina Consulibus. Sane non omnes quaestores provincias sortiebantur, verum excepti candidati principis.*

⁵³ *Cod. Theod.* 6.4.8: *Praetores designentur senatus consulto legitime celebrato . . . si qui forte medio tempore humana sorte decesserint, alii in eorum locum, qui eandem dignitatem, ut utamur veterum verbis, subsortiti fuerant, subrogentur* (dated: A.D. 356). See also *RE* IV,A,1.505 s.v. *subsortitio* (Kübler).

⁵⁴ Ulpian, *Dig.* 1.13.2 (above, note 52).

⁵⁵ *SHA Alex. Sev.* 43.3: for discussion of this passage as a fourth-century anachronism, see S. Roda, "Osservazioni sulla 'Editio Quaestoria' a Roma nell'età imperiale," *Studi Romani* 24 (1976) 145–61.

lifetime, we may further delimit the suggested *terminus ante quem* for the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore to the first quarter of the third century.⁵⁶

The discrepancies between the calendar notations at Santa Maria Maggiore and those of the Calendar of 354 have provided strong circumstantial evidence, and it is consistent with an independent analysis of the brickwork which M. Steinby pursued at the time of Magi's excavations.⁵⁷ Analysis of the brickwork was complicated by periodic rebuilding of the structure and by the limited nature of the excavations. The only brick stamp which was found *in situ*, in a pilaster of the portico (Room IX), dates to A.D. 123; it provides a *terminus post quem*, but little else since, as Magi remarked, the portico shows signs of rebuilding with reused material.⁵⁸ Study of the Calendar wall revealed two levels of construction; the first level, dated to the Augustan age by both Magi and Steinby, stops directly below the Calendar fresco and thereby provides an absolute *terminus post quem* for the Calendar.⁵⁹ But it is the second level, upon which the Calendar was painted, that is of critical importance. It is interesting that Magi published a description of this brickwork which coincided with Steinby's analysis in all respects but one: Steinby dated the brickwork to the third century, while Magi dated the same brickwork to the first half of the fourth century.⁶⁰

Steinby's proposed date for the brickwork behind the Calendar is related to her dating of other walls and structures adjacent to the porticoed cortile; and Magi's published descriptions of these structures again coincide with Steinby's analysis except for the dating. Thus, for example, Steinby dates the walls of a room adjacent to the porticoed cortile (Room 8, Walls G, H and I in Magi, Tav. LX) to the first half of the third century, while Magi dates these same walls to the first half of the fourth century.⁶¹ Yet, the second/third century date proposed by Mielsch for the mosaics found *in situ* in this room would support Steinby's earlier date

⁵⁶ Due to papyri we can be certain of Ulpian's death in A.D. 223: *OCD* s.v. *Ulpianus* (1), *Domitius*.

⁵⁷ Professor Steinby, Director of the Institutum Romanum Findlandiae at Rome, has most generously allowed me to utilize her notes on the brickwork at S. Maria Maggiore for this article. Although these notes are now some ten years old, Professor Steinby has written to me: "I could not add very much even after a re-examination of the bricks and the walls; I think my dating from ten years ago would remain substantially the same."

⁵⁸ Magi 9-12 and 19-20. A brick stamp was also found in a drain in a room off the cortile (Drain B, Vano VIII in Magi) and dated to the Domitianic/Trajanic period by Magi (p. 17) and by Steinby.

⁵⁹ Magi 20-21 with note 23; the analysis found in note 23 coincides with Steinby's description.

⁶⁰ Magi 20-21 with note 24; Magi's technical description of this critical brickwork (note 24) coincides with Steinby's description except for the actual dating.

⁶¹ Magi 17-19 with note 20.

for the walls.⁶² Furthermore, Steinby dates the remains of two long walls (Room 5, Wall B; Room 7, in Magi, Tav. LX) which jut out into the center of the cortile to the late third, possibly early fourth century. Since these walls disrupt the integrity of the Calendar design (painted on opposite walls of the porticoed cortile), their construction suggests a date after the Calendar fresco had been destroyed. (These walls are, perhaps, contemporaneous with the painting over the Calendar, the remains of which are still visible.) These later phases of construction, according to Steinby's dating, would then have importance as a *terminus ante quem* for the Calendar fresco. But Magi dates these structures to the beginning of the fourth century; his date would make these walls contemporary with the Calendar, and results in a rather problematic floor plan for the building.⁶³ Thus, Steinby's interpretation of the archaeological data, made independently years ago, is not at all inconsistent with a careful analysis of the Calendar holidays.

To summarize, there is no evidence to preclude dating the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore to the period A.D. 176–224/275. And there remain numerous difficulties in accepting Magi's proposed fourth-century dating: the Constantinian festivals in October which we should expect to find in a Calendar of this late date were not recorded; and the festival of the *Ludi Solis*, apparently instituted by Aurelian, was similarly not included; yet the Santa Maria Maggiore calendar did note the *Armilustrium*, a festival recorded only in first-century A.D. *fasti*; and it also recorded a constitutional process, the *Quaestorum Sortitio*, which could only have had a meaningful function in the Republic and the early Empire and which is not mentioned in any fourth-century source; while the notations for victories over the Sarmatians and the Marcomanni could refer to victories celebrated in the second century as well as in the fourth. Finally, analysis of the structural remains at Santa Maria Maggiore led Steinby to posit a third-century date for the calendar wall. Since both the internal evidence and archaeological remains confirm a late second/early third-century date, and analysis of the style of the illustrations by Mielsch had hitherto suggested this dating, we are led to conclude that the calendar fresco at Santa Maria Maggiore can be securely dated to the period A.D. 176–224/275.

⁶² Mielsch 501. Magi 53–54 remarks that comparable mosaics date to the second century, but proposes the survival of this type of mosaic into the fourth century.

⁶³ Magi 14–16 (Vano V); 16–17 (Vano VII) for the technical description of the construction of these walls. See also Tav. XXXIII (Vano VII); and Tav. LIX for Magi's reconstruction of the porticoed cortile.