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WHEN WAS OLD SAINT PETER'S CONSECRATED?

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Abstract

This article will argue that the consecration of Old St Peter's, Rome, begun by the emperor Constans (337-350), took place on Pentecost, Sunday 11 May 357, under his older brother, Constantius II (337-361).

Keywords

Old St Peter's – Constantine – Constans – Constantius II

Is it possible to determine when Old St Peter's in Rome was consecrated?¹ Richard Krautheimer has claimed that Christian churches built after the Constantinian revolution were normally consecrated on a Sunday, considered the most appropriate day.² José Ruysschaert, who defends the traditional view, largely based on the sixth-century *Liber Pontificalis*,³ that St Peter's was inaugurated by Constantine the Great (306-337),⁴ has suggested that it and the original St Paul's-outside-the-walls on the Ostian Way were both consecrated on Sunday 18 November 333.⁵ His argument chooses to overlook or reinterpret the evidence of the *Depositio Martyrum*, the oldest surviving list of Roman martyrs and their dates and places of deposition, contained in the Chronograph-Calendar of Furius Dionysius Filocalus and dating to 354. This records the depositions on 29 June of Peter at *Catacumbae*, some two miles south of Rome on the Appian Way, present site of San Sebastiano, and of Paul on the Ostian Way, site of St Paul's-outside-the-walls, apparently alluding to 258 as the date of origin of their joint feast.⁶ This led Engelbert Kirschbaum, one of the excavators of St Peter's in the 1940s, to claim that the basilica cannot therefore have been completed by 354.⁷ Louis Duchesne, who was clearly con-

¹ Richard Krautheimer (*CBCR* 5.90) distinguishes between dedication in strict legal terms, when land was ceded for building a church, and consecration, when the church was complete.

² *CBCR* 5.10, 86, citing the consecration of the Constantinian/Lateran basilica on Sunday 9 November 312 or 318 (see also below p. 7 on the Golden Church of Antioch). However, he does qualify that claim in Krautheimer 1989: 22 n. 134.

³ See Duchesne 1955: 1.176, 1-178, 11; Davis 2010: 18-19. On the *Liber* see McKitterick 2020.

⁴ Ruysschaert 1967/8: 171-190. He appeals to the entry under Sylvester (314-335) in the *Liber* (as well as to inscriptions, mosaics etc.).

⁵ Ruysschaert 1967/8: 187. However, Gem 2013: 63 n. 61 rejects this dating as a medieval invention.

⁶ Duchesne 1955: 1.11, 13-14: *iii kal. Iul. [29 June] Petri in Catacumbas et Pauli Ostense, Tusco et Basso cons.* [258]. On the Chronograph-Calendar see Salzman 1999; Burgess 2013.

⁷ Kirschbaum 1959: 154. See also Pietri 1976: 1.57.

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vinced that St Peter's had been begun by Constantine, had argued in his 1886 edition of the *Liber Pontificalis* that the entry was defective and needed to be emended in the light of the fuller version in the sixth-century *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.⁸ Krautheimer, doyen of early Christian architectural historians, who also accepted the traditional view of Constantine as founder and Duchesne's suggestion about the *Depositio* text,⁹ veered between various datings,¹⁰ but in the most recent article under his name has argued for St Peter's having been completed by 324.¹¹

However, Glen Bowersock has presented a persuasive case against the traditional view,¹² and I have sought to strengthen and confirm Bowersock's tentative assignation of the inauguration of the basilica to Constantine's youngest surviving son, Constans (337-350).¹³ I appeal in particular to the overlooked and misinterpreted anonymous – incomplete – inscription preserved in a collection recorded from Roman churches including St Peter's in the tenth-century Codex Parisinus 8071.¹⁴ It reads:

*Hic Petrus et Paulus mundi [duo] lumina praesunt / Quos coelum similes hos
habet aula pares. / Coeperat hanc praesul fundare[...] terra[m]. / Filius implevit
quod voluit genitor. / Quaeris quis Domino astriferum signavit [honorem?].*

Here Peter and Paul preside, [two] lights of the world. Those whom heaven [holds] similar, the hall holds equal. The chief priest began to establish this [...] terrain. The son fulfilled what his father wished. You ask who signified to the Lord the starry [honour?].

The last lines, which would have indicated who was responsible for the inscription and what it refers to, are missing. The omission may be deliberate. Although Ruyschaert cited it in his article,¹⁵ he did not realise its significance despite the fact that, as I have noted, in 1921 Orazio Marucchi had convincingly argued that it applied to the *Basilica Apostolorum* at *Catacumbae*, site of their joint feast.¹⁶

Further support for his hypothesis is supplied by the citation of the *duo lumina mundi* phrase by Gaudentius of Brescia around 400 in a sermon preached on a 29 June,¹⁷ and Arator in Rome in 544, in his *De actibus apostolorum*,¹⁸ of which he presented excerpts in St Peter's on 6 April, and read in full in S. Pietro in Vincoli in April and May.¹⁹ What

⁸ This reads: *iii kal. Iul. Romae natale apostolorum Petri et Pauli, Petri in Vaticano Pauli vero in Via Ostensi utrumque in Catacumbas Basso et Tusco consulib.* (see *AASS Novembris* 2,1,84,1-12; 2,2,343). See Duchesne 1955: 1.cv-cvi. He also appeals to the inscriptions and mosaics from St Peter's and the allusion (n. 1) in Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* 27,3,5-6 (ed. Seyfarth 1978: 2.35.14-21) to beggars at the Vatican in the time of Lampadius, who was praetorian prefect in 354, claiming the allusion might date earlier. On this see Liverani 2013: 21-23; Thacker 2013: 142.

⁹ *CBCR* 4.102-103.

¹⁰ See for example Krautheimer 1967: 117-140 (-337, resumed in 357, completed 360s); id. 1977 = *CBCR* 5.171-172, 273-274 (319-324); id. 1986: 54 (319-329); id. 1989 (-333).

¹¹ Carpiacci and Krautheimer 1995: 1-70; id. 1996: 1-84 (-324).

¹² Bowersock 2005: 5-15. For a critique based on the traditional view, see Liverani 2015: 485-504.

¹³ Logan 2011: 44-48; id. 2014: 105-106.

¹⁴ *ICUR* 2.1,248 no. 17; n. s. 1.3900; *ILCV* 1.1764. See Logan 2011: 40-42; id. 2014: 103-104.

¹⁵ Ruyschaert 1967/8: 175-176.

¹⁶ Marucchi 1921: 61-69. However, he interpreted the founder as Damasus (366-384).

¹⁷ *Sermo* 20 (*PL* 20,995,5-6). Note his reference to the *memoriae* of the holy apostles (997,1-2).

¹⁸ *De actibus apostolorum* 2.1218-1221 (ed. Bureau and Deproost 2017: 146-147). There may also be an echo (*vera mundi lumina*) in Pseudo-Ambrose, *Hymn* 14(8),8 (*PL* 16,1475,6). See on this and further echoes, McKitterick 2013a: 115-117.

¹⁹ *Praefatio* (*CSEL* 72: XXVII); Liverani 2013: 33; McKitterick 2013b: 115.

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is more, Arator echoes Damasus' allusion to them as "new stars (*sidera*)" in his epigram at *Catacumbae*, which itself echoes the Marucchi inscription.²⁰ Both clearly knew the *Basilica Apostolorum* and its inscription and were celebrating the joint cult.²¹ I think that the *praesul* (a term used of bishops in contemporary documents²²) who began work at the site would have to be Silvester.²³ Certainly he seems to have regarded the joint cult of Peter and Paul at *Catacumbae* very highly, his apparent excuse for failing to attend the Council of Arles in 314, as the letter to him of the bishops involved hints, being his need to preside at the great joint festival of 29 June.²⁴ This may have been particularly significant as marking, in all probability, the reappropriation and restoration of the *memoria* of the two apostles and return of the relics from concealment after the Great Persecution. Certainly the Marucchi inscription does hint at the presence of relics ("the hall holds equal"). The *genitor* I consider must be Constantine and the son Constans, as seems confirmed by the monogram on the entrance threshold.²⁵ The implication of the inscription is that this happened late in the careers of Silvester and Constantine.

Although Krautheimer and others have suggested that, since the *Basilica Apostolorum* is not contained in the list of basilicas founded by Constantine according to the *Liber*, and because of certain architectural features it appears to share with the mausoleum built by Maxentius (306-312) on the other side of the Appian Way, it might have been founded by the latter, who was friendly disposed to the Christians,²⁶ this argument has been decisively countered,²⁷ and, in any case, I consider the inscription coupled with the monogram quite conclusive.²⁸ I suggest that the omission from the *Liber* is explicable as reflecting ignorance of or misunderstanding over the origin of the *Basilica Apostolorum* and the influence of the later belief, largely based on the pseudepigraphical fifth-century *Actus Silvestri*,²⁹ that Constantine was responsible for St Peter's.³⁰ But if he began that basilica at *Catacumbae* late in his career for the joint cult of Peter and Paul, whose *memoria/martyrium* (and supposed or genuine relics) still existed when visited by the Egyptian monk Ammonius, companion of Athanasius, in 339-340,³¹ I would argue that

²⁰ See n. 76.

²¹ Note the support of Xystus III (432-440) for the cult, building the first Roman monastery at *Catacumbae* (Duchesne 1955: 1.234,18) and dedicating S. Pietro in Vincoli (*ecclesia apostolorum*) to Peter and Paul. Built with the help of Theodosius II (408-450) and Eudocia, as Xystus acknowledges (*CBCR* 3: 181, 229-230) it is omitted by the *Liber*, which tends to stress the primacy of Peter (see McKitterick 2013a: 118-119).

²² See for example *Collectio Avellana*, *Epist.* 13,6 (*CSEL* 35.1: 55,3); Leo, *Serm.* 3,4 (*PL* 54: 147A).

²³ See n. 88 for further possible support for this hypothesis, which would rule out the identification of the *praesul* with the *genitor*.

²⁴ Logan 2014: 99.

²⁵ See Ferrua 1961: 230; *CBCR* 4.135-136 and fig. 120; Nieddu 2009: 95-99; Logan 2014: 104 n. 108.

²⁶ *CBCR* 4.145; Brandenburg 1979: 80-82; Curran 2000: 99; Jastrzębowska 2002: 1151-1155; Nieddu 2009: 141-144.

²⁷ See Rasch 1984: 48 n. 425; Diefenbach 2007: 97-101; Nieddu 2009: 140-148; Brandenburg 2013: 65.

²⁸ This decisively rules out Brandenburg's attempt (2013: 70) to attribute it to S. Pietro in Vincoli (see also n. 21), as well as excluding Nieddu's attempt to date the building early in Constantine's reign (2009: 132-133, 144-145), as do the dates (340-359) of graves, mausolea etc. See *CBCR* 4.103, 144-145.

²⁹ Logan 2011: 52. On the *Actus* see Levison 1924: 159-247; Fuhrmann 1966: 63-178; Pohlkamp 1984: 357-400; Sessa 2017: 77-91.

³⁰ Constantine might thus have been the subject of the final missing lines of the Marucchi inscription, suppressed because of this belief.

³¹ See Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4,23,72-74 (*GCS* ed. Hansen 1995: 256.6-10).

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he cannot have been responsible for St Peter's (or St Paul's) during his reign.³² Certainly defenders of the traditional view who also believe that Constantine was responsible for the *Basilica Apostolorum* do not seem to have seriously considered the implications or offered a plausible account of the relationship between the three buildings. Why would Constantine have founded St Peter's and St Paul's at the traditional sites in the 320s when the relics were still at *Catacumbae*, site of the internationally renowned joint cult, and evidently remained there till at least 340? On the other hand, if Constantine did indeed begin building the *Basilica Apostolorum*, it was completed, as the inscription and threshold monogram suggest, by Constans. He, if Timothy Barnes' argument is justified, was in Rome in 340.³³ What so attracted Ammonius might well have been the imposing completed complex of shrine and basilica.³⁴ Surely, if the much grander St Peter's had existed, he would not have failed to mention and visit it?³⁵ But revealingly what he was evidently really interested in was the joint cult, not Peter on his own.³⁶

This brings me to considering the other evidence cited by defenders of the traditional Constantinian dating of St Peter's, particularly the inscriptions. These appeal first to the inscription on the gold cross mentioning Constantine and his mother, Helena, recorded in the *Liber*;³⁷ then to that on the triumphal arch with accompanying mosaic depicting Constantine presenting the church to Christ and Peter;³⁸ third, to that on the apse rim mentioning father and son, normally interpreted to refer to Constantine beginning and a son completing St Peter's;³⁹ and finally to the fragmentary inscription on the apse arch apparently alluding to a victory of Constantine.⁴⁰ However, I am very much attracted to Bowersock's suggestion that the first likely originated in Helena's basilica, Santa Croce

³² Logan 2011: 42; Barnes 2014: 88-89.

³³ See Barnes 1975: 325-333; id. 1993: 225; Destephen 2016. Although Moser (2019: 287) rejects his claim, Constans does seem to have been based in Milan at that time (see Barnes, *ibid.*). Whatever the truth, Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium* 7 (PG 25,604D) does refer to Constans' generous gifts to churches. Nevertheless, Constantine may have made provision for the endowments. See below.

³⁴ So also Brandenburg 2013: 71.

³⁵ Brandenburg's claim (2017: 52) that the omission of St Peter's is inconsequential is unconvincing, and he entirely ignores the evidence of the presence of Peter's relics at *Catacumbae* till after 354. If St Peter's had been completed, why the long delay in transferring the relics? Furthermore, as Richard Westall (2015: 208-210) has pointed out, Eusebius' reference (*Theoph.* 4,7) does not imply a basilica.

³⁶ Athanasius mentions visiting the joint cult site, *Ep. Fest.* 41.16 (ed. Camplani 2003: 534), although another tradition has "tombs."

³⁷ Duchesne 1955: 1.176,8; *ICUR* n. s. 2,4093: *Constantinus Augustus et Helena Augusta...hanc domum regalem simili fulgore coruscans aula circumdat*. See *CBCR* 5.172; Gem 2013: 38-39; Liverani 2015: 489-490.

³⁸ *ICUR* n. s. 2,4092: *Quod duce te mundus surrexit in astra triumphans / hanc Constantinus victor tibi condidit aulam*. See *CBCR* 5.171-172; Pietri 1976: 1.366-380; Liverani 2006: 90-91 n. 2b; id. 2007: 235-244; id. 2008: 155-172; Gem 2013: 39-40; Liverani 2015: 492-493; Brandenburg 2015: 19-20; id. 2017: 63-66 (denying however the ascription of the mosaic to Constantine).

³⁹ *ICUR* n. s. 2,4094: *Iustitiae sedes fidei domus aula pudoris / haec est quam cernis pietas quam possidet omnis, / quae patris et filii virtutibus inclyta gaudet / auctoremque suum genitoris laudibus aequat*. *CBCR* 5.172; Carpicci and Krautheimer 1995: 1-70; id. 1996: 1-84; Gem 2013: 40-41; Liverani 2015: 495-496; Brandenburg 2015: 18-19; id. 2017: 58-61.

⁴⁰ *ICUR* n. s. 2,4095: *Constantini...expiata...hostili incursione*. See *CBCR* 5.171, 206, who refers to a war with Licinius in 324. Gem 2013: 41-42, rejects that, suggesting that the genitive (*Constantini*) might imply a son of Constantine was the subject, perhaps Constans. Interestingly, Krautheimer (1987: 318) had referred it to a victory of Constans in 342. Liverani (2015: 494) finds Gem's suggestion improbable, but his argument is weakened by his confusion of Constantius with Constantine II. Brandenburg (2017: 62) refers it to a victory of Constantine over the Sarmatians in 322.

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in Gerusalemme, and, if so, it must be interpreted as irrelevant.⁴¹ As regards the third and fourth, I contend that the third is best interpreted as the building's dedication inscription referring to Constans as the founder of St Peter's,⁴² while the fourth is referring to Constantius' victory over the Sarmatians in 358.⁴³ Finally the second, as Bowersock argued, reflects the later belief of the *Liber*, based on the popular legend about Constantine and Silvester, that the former was responsible for St Peter's at the request of the latter.⁴⁴ Thus I have noted, in support of Bowersock's argument, the suggestion of Krautheimer and others of a Carolingian origin for that inscription.⁴⁵

Thus I consider that the *Depositio Martyrum* entry is perfectly correct and does not need emending. What it attests is the actual situation in 354.⁴⁶ I would like to suggest that Julius (337-352), faced with the considerable influence of the internationally renowned joint cult of Peter and Paul at *Catacumbae*, and very keen to get hold of the (supposed or genuine) relics of the two and set up pilgrim centres more under his control at the traditional sites on the Vatican and Ostian Way, had managed to persuade the youthful and pious Constans to build two new *memoriae* at those sites.⁴⁷ What is more, the two represent a new development: they are not U-shaped ambulatory cemeterial basilicas as apparently pioneered by Constantine,⁴⁸ but memorial basilicas enclosing the shrines, not originally intended for burials.⁴⁹ This means that supposed earlier sarcophagi in St Peter's were either already there when building commenced or were reused ones and cannot be relied on as evidence of a Constantinian origin of the basilica. As the *Depositio* hints, Julius seems to have managed to get St Paul's built, on the archaeological evidence a pretty small edifice, rather similar perhaps to the joint *memoria* at *Catacumbae*,⁵⁰ and the relics were evidently translated and the building consecrated, either by him himself or by his successor, Liberius (352-366), by 354.⁵¹

⁴¹ Logan 2021: 47-48.

⁴² Logan 2021: 49-55.

⁴³ Logan 2021: 49.

⁴⁴ Logan 2021: 58.

⁴⁵ Logan 2021: 48.

⁴⁶ In support of this, Burgess' argument (2013: 379, 382, 385) for dating the *Depositio Episcoporum* later (to 354) surely also applies to the *Depositio Martyrum*, as confirmed by Paul's relics still being at *Catacumbae* in 340 (Ammonius' visit).

⁴⁷ Logan 2011: 46. Because they were imperial foundations they are not included among the basilicas built by Julius listed in the so-called "Liberian Catalogue" included in the Chronograph-Calendar (*LP* 1.8,3-21). Constans did have a serious interest in church building in Rome, having completed the *Basilica Apostolorum* and having ultimate responsibility for several more basilicas (see Logan 2011: 53 n. 165).

⁴⁸ See for example Logan 2011: 35-37, 52-53. But see now Hellström (2016: 295) with the claim they were pioneered by Maxentius.

⁴⁹ For this insight see Brandenburg 2015: 29-30.

⁵⁰ Logan 2014: 105-106. Note Krautheimer's doubts about the entry in the *Liber* (*CBCR* 5.97). Curran (2000: 105-109) suggests that the earlier building was the original *memoria*, Paul's mausoleum, with an apse added later. But Gaius around 200 only mentions a *tropaion*. On the latest excavations of St Paul's (2002-2006) and likely dimensions of Constans' basilica, see Brandenburg 2011: 230-233; McKitterick 2013a; Camerlenghi 2018: 35.

⁵¹ I have suggested (2011: 49 n. 142) that the entry for 25 January in the *Hieronymian Martyrology* (*translatio [et conversio] Pauli*) refers to that translation. The event would seem to have taken place under Constantius rather than Constans. On the former's likely involvement see below. Note also his translation of relics linked to Paul (Timothy and Luke) to his Holy Apostles' church in Constantinople in 356 and 357; see Mango 1990 and below.

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However, St Peter's, evidently Julius' priority in his desire to promote the primacy of Peter,⁵² and clearly intended to accommodate very large numbers of pilgrims,⁵³ was planned on a much grander scale than St Paul's and involved massive earth-moving works.⁵⁴ If planned at the same time as St Paul's, and perhaps begun in the late 340s,⁵⁵ it clearly was not completed by 354, as Kirschbaum rightly claimed. However, there is evidence to suggest that the *memoria* at least, as the most likely first part to be constructed,⁵⁶ existed in 355.⁵⁷ Athanasius' remark that in that year Constantius' imperial chamberlain, the eunuch Eusebius, presented to the guardian of the *martyrium* gifts intended for but refused by Liberius,⁵⁸ must surely apply to the Vatican building, not the site at *Catacumbae*. The latter was rather further away and would not have needed a guardian, possibly an imperial appointment, implying both the incomplete character of the former and its significance.⁵⁹

I would contend that my argument offers the most plausible treatment of the full range of evidence, which points to Constantius II (337-361) and his contribution. He it was who must have completed St Peter's⁶⁰ and overseen the transfer of Peter's relics,⁶¹ just as it was he who was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the eastern endowments of both St Peter's and St Paul's.⁶² As regards the consecration, we know from Athanasius how keen Constantius was to attend the consecrations of new basilicas in which he had a significant interest.⁶³ Thus, Athanasius was impelled to excuse himself for holding Easter services

⁵² This seems implied by Ossius of Cordova's proposals in canon 3 of Sardica (*EOMIA* 1,2,3,452), by the letter of the Council to Julius (Thompson 2015: 106.13-108.6: *ad caput, id est ad Petri apostoli sedem*), and by the "Liberian Catalogue," which, contradicting Irenaeus, who has Peter and Paul found the Roman church with Linus as first bishop (*Adv. haer.* 3,3,2), has Peter as first bishop, with Paul only mentioned as sharing his martyrdom on 29 June (Duchesne 1955: 1.2,1-10).

⁵³ The novel transepts seem a deliberate consequence of this intention.

⁵⁴ However, Camerlenghi (2018: 35) suggests that the far smaller size of St Paul's was due to the will of the Senate and people of Rome, owners of the public land on which it was built.

⁵⁵ The decree of Constans of 349 to Limenius, both praetorian prefect and city prefect, forbidding removal of material from tombs unless allowed by the emperor and backdated to 333 (*Cod. Theodos.* 9,17,2), may allude first to Julius' prior request to demolish tombs at the two traditional sites, then to Constantine's completion of tomb demolition at *Catacumbae*.

⁵⁶ Thus, Pietri (1976: 1.63-64) has noted that the module size of the bricks in the apse is smaller and earlier than that in the main basilica. Brandenburg (2017: 24, 32) also argues for the transept's prior existence and for it as the *memoria*.

⁵⁷ It would no doubt have featured the dedication inscription on the apse rim.

⁵⁸ Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 35-37 (*PG* 25,733B-737A).

⁵⁹ This evidence undermines the argument of Westall (2015), dating the construction to 357-359, surely far too short a period for such a massive construction. See Moser 2019: 296 n. 88. On the guardian as an imperial appointment see Thacker 2013: 140-141, but Liberius' reprimand might suggest he was a papal official. The likelihood that Peter's relics had not yet been transferred would militate against a consecration of the *memoria*, unlike the situation at the rebuilt St Paul's, *pace* Brandenburg 2017: 49-50.

⁶⁰ So also Moser 2019: *ibid.* Note the hoard of his coins at the eastern end of the basilica, the last part to be completed. See Westall 2015: 222-223. Earlier coins of Constantine do not prove a Constantinian origin for the basilica. Moreover, Pietri (1976: 1.64) has noted that the building style in the north perimeter wall of the basilica reflects the practice of masons of Constantius' period. His involvement would help explain the action of his chamberlain.

⁶¹ See below.

⁶² Duchesne 1955: 1.177,6-178,11 (St Peter's); 178,13-15, 18-179,9 (St Paul's). Note that the D MS tradition adds *domnus Constantius Augustus* to Constantine as responsible for the latter, while the Tarsus estate is, for Davis (2010: xxxii), the only likely genuine endowment, the Pauline equivalent of the St Peter's Antioch endowments (*ibid.* xxxi). See further below re the endowments of both.

⁶³ On this see Henck 2001: 280.

in the new basilica in Alexandria before it had been consecrated.⁶⁴ Constantius, of course, attended the consecration, on Sunday 6 January 341 (Epiphany), of the Great or Golden Church in Antioch, a building begun by his father and completed by himself.⁶⁵ He would surely have made every effort to attend the completion and consecration of the even grander and more significant memorial basilica of St Peter in Rome. His solitary visit to the city in 357 (28 April to 29 May)⁶⁶ would have been the only occasion for it.⁶⁷ Indeed the consecration of St Peter's could be seen as one of the main reasons for his visit. Mark Humphries, in his discussion of imperial *adventus* to Rome in the period from Constantine to Gregory the Great,⁶⁸ has sketched the usual pattern of such visits, which included the erection of commemorative monuments, the renovation of existing buildings, and the construction of new ones.⁶⁹ The completion and consecration of St Peter's would fit this pattern very well. As regards the date, Pentecost (Sunday 11 May) would seem the most likely, matching his Antioch Epiphany consecration.⁷⁰ The incomplete and variegated nature of elements of the main hall, noted in detail by Brandenburg,⁷¹ is best explained by the short time-scale involved and this tight deadline, coupled with the evident lack of available material from grand public buildings such as pagan temples after 346.⁷²

Intriguingly, during his visit, Constantius also had the Altar of Victory in the senate house, symbol of the support of Rome's pagan gods, removed.⁷³ Pagan commentators on the visit such as Ammianus would have ignored this event as well as Constantius' countermove, signalling his allegiance to the God and chief apostle and martyr of the Roman Christians.⁷⁴ Embarrassed Nicene Christian writers such as Athanasius would have been equally silent since, with Liberius in exile, his replacement, Felix (355-365), candidate of the "Arian" emperor (and therefore shunned),⁷⁵ would have conducted the

⁶⁴ Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 14-18 (PG 25,612-619); Barnes 1993: 113-114.

⁶⁵ See Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 3,50,2 (GCS Euseb. 1.1: 105.2-9); Athan. *De syn.* 25,1 (PG 26,725A); Socr. *Hist. eccl.* 2,8,2 (GCS NF 1.97,9-13); Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 3,5,1-3 (GCS NF 4.105,15-106,8). The date is given by the Arian historiographer Philostorgius (GCS NF 22.212,19-22). On the details see Eltester 1937: 254-256; Downey 1961: 358-359; Henck 2001: 295-297; Kleinbauer 2006: 126-128).

⁶⁶ Barnes 1993: 222; Moser 2019: 287-296.

⁶⁷ Liverani (2007: 91) suggests that John Chrysostom's allusions in two sermons (*Ep. sec. ad Cor. hom.* 26,5 (PG 61,582); *C. Iud. et Gent.* 9 (PG 48,825)) to imperial visits to the tombs of Peter and Paul most likely refer to this visit.

⁶⁸ Humphries 2007: 21-58. See also Papadopoulos 2021: 72-86.

⁶⁹ Humphries 2007: 29-31. On Constantius' *adventus* and related monuments see 32, 36.

⁷⁰ 11 May was also the feast day of St Mocius of Byzantium, chosen, no doubt deliberately, by Constantine in 330 as foundation date of Constantinople (*Chron. Pasch.* 529), consecrated to the God of the martyrs. See Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 3,48,1 (Cameron and Hall 1999: 297).

⁷¹ Brandenburg 2017: 68-90. Contrast the building techniques and materials of Constantine's Lateran basilica (CBCR 5.71-85), not showing any signs of haste, incompleteness or very variegated materials in its construction.

⁷² Brandenburg 2015: 23-24.

⁷³ Westall 2015: 240-241.

⁷⁴ See on this Moser 2019: 295.

⁷⁵ See Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 75,3 (PG 25,784CD); Barnes 1993: 118; Duchesne 1955: 1.cxx-cxxii; and the Liberius entry (207,5), which speaks of "the Arian emperor." While Kelly (2005: 31-32) considers that the *LP* entry (211) is almost entirely fictitious, Curran (2000: 129-137) is more positive. Constantius' remark to the high-born Roman women pleading for Liberius' return (Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2,17,2-3; GCS NF 5.136,21-137,5) about them already having a bishop, would suggest his prior support.

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consecration service.⁷⁶ However, Ambrose is an unexpected exception. For all his fierce theological opposition to Constantius and his coterie of “Arian” bishops, the bishop of Milan praised Constantius for removing the Altar,⁷⁷ praise which would surely also include his countermove, promoting the joint cult (consecration and endowment of both St Peter’s and St Paul’s) of which Ambrose was also an enthusiastic supporter.⁷⁸

What is more, there are two pieces of evidence which would seem to offer support for this hypothesis regarding Constantius and St Peter’s. First, there is the evidence, cited by Liverani, that suggests he visited both St Peter’s and St Paul’s during his Roman sojourn. Second, there is the evidence of one of the endowments, significantly the first listed, that of a certain Censorius Datianus, whom Barnes has identified,⁷⁹ consisting of a house of his in Antioch (the *domus Datiani*: LP 1,177,8). Datianus was a Christian, who, Westall suggests, thanks to his activity in support of Constantius in the West in the 350s, was rewarded in 358 with the position of *consul prior*, despite his humble origin.⁸⁰ He was very likely present in St Peter’s with Constantius at the consecration and had been sufficiently impressed and keen to please Constantius to make his donation, a most appropriate one, given Peter’s link with Antioch.⁸¹ Indeed, Moser suggests he might have been a quaestor at Constantius’ court in Milan from 355 to spring 356, and have participated in the planning of the completion of St Peter’s.⁸² Constantius would most likely have planned in advance both the gifts of liturgical vessels and furnishings he would present to the basilica, as well as property endowments to fund its activities. Certainly Theodoret attests his gifts of liturgical vessels and furnishings to his Antioch church in 341,⁸³ while the *Chronicon Paschale* refers to his gifts of gold and silver treasures to St Sophia in Constantinople in 360,⁸⁴ and Hilary of Poitiers, writing in around 360,⁸⁵ in referring to Constantius’ gifts to churches of gold vessels and furnishings and of

⁷⁶ Could the Roman Christians’ refusal to enter any church Felix was in (Theodoret. *ibid.* 2,17,4; 137,8-10) have included this service? On the other hand, Damasus, who had gone into exile with Liberius but then returned (Coll. Avell. *Ep.* 1,2-3; CSEL 35: 1,1,11-2,12), as a deacon was most likely present at this consecration. Certainly he hints at the translation of Peter’s relics in his famous epigram at *Catacumbae* (Ferrua 1942: 139-144; Trout 2015: 121-122): *Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes / Nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris. / Discipulos Oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur, / Sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti, / Aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum. / Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives. / Haec Damasus vestras referat, nova sidera, laudes.*

⁷⁷ *Epist.* 73(18),32 (CSEL 82: 3,51,6-9). See Westall 2015: 240-241.

⁷⁸ See Logan 2014: 108-109. This seems much more plausible than Westall’s weak appeal to momentary theological forgetfulness (2015: 241).

⁷⁹ Barnes 2014: 86. See also *PLRE* 243-244.

⁸⁰ Westall 2015: 230-232.

⁸¹ The argument of Liverani (2015: 491-492) for this when Datianus was young and active in Constantine’s court is weak. Why would Datianus have been able or keen to make such a gift then? Thus for Davis (2010: xxix) this cannot belong earlier than the last years of Constantius. That Constantius used an earlier donation by Datianus is possible, but my scenario is perhaps more likely, given the Antioch link. Indeed Brandenburg’s appeal (2017: 11-12) to Libanius’ evidence about Datianus’s munificent building policy in Antioch (*ep.* 114) and their correspondence from 355 till 364 actually undermines his relating the gift to Constantine. On their correspondence, see De Simoni 2017.

⁸² Moser 2019: 296. Note Libanius’ letters to Datianus in Milan (*epp.* 409, 441, 451 and 490) and his description of Datianus as “the Nestor (i.e. counsellor)” of Constantius (*ep.* 114,7) and his “teacher” (*ep.* 1184,9).

⁸³ *Hist. eccl.* 3,12,4 (189,11).

⁸⁴ 544-545.

⁸⁵ *In Constant.* 10 (SC 334: 186,11-188,6). For the date see Flower 2016: 27-30.

property endowments, may very well be alluding to his recent gifts to and endowments of both St Peter's and St Paul's.⁸⁶

But what of the evidence of the *Liber Pontificalis*, which has Constantine responsible for the gifts to and endowments of both?⁸⁷ I would like to suggest that what he gifted were the endowments, or some of them, not for St Peter's but for his actual Petrine and Pauline foundation, the *Basilica Apostolorum*,⁸⁸ hence their eastern character and their links to Peter and Paul.⁸⁹ But when Constantius transferred the relics of Peter from it to the site on the Vatican, he would surely also have transferred some of his father's endowments, no doubt adding endowments and gifts of his own as Hilary seems to attest.⁹⁰ It would seem likely that, if he, rather than Constans, had indeed transferred Paul's relics to the new *memoria* completed by him by 354, he would already have done something similar, hiving off some of his father's endowments gifted to the *Basilica Apostolorum* and adding some of his own as well as gifts and furnishings as again Hilary seems to attest. It is unlikely that Constantius would have attempted to transfer gifts and furnishings from the latter basilica, most likely provided by Constans, who had completed it, as the Marucchi inscription and threshold inscription seem to indicate.⁹¹

There is some evidence in the account in the *Liber* to support this hypothesis. First, as noted above, there is the entry in the D MS tradition which refers to the emperor Constantine "and the lord emperor Constantius" building St Paul's,⁹² coupled with the implausible claims about a similar (bronze rather than copper) tomb casing and identical gold cross and the vagueness of the entry about the gifts and furnishings as "the same as at St Peter's," as if the author, unlike the situation with all the other basilicas in the *Liber* account, had no precise information regarding Constantine and St Paul's.⁹³ What is more, while the list of endowments assigned to St Peter's includes properties gifted to Constantine by various individuals,⁹⁴ none such occur in the St Paul's list. The former, I submit, would have been among those donated by him to the *Basilica Apostolorum* and

⁸⁶ He may have passed through Rome on his return from exile. However, Hilary may be alluding to St Sophia in Constantinople, although the *Chronicon* entry makes no mention of endowments.

⁸⁷ Duchesne 1955: 1.176,6-179,9.

⁸⁸ Thus the phrase "at the request/suggestion of bishop Silvester" about both basilicas in the MS tradition (*LP* 1,176,1 app. E (and Cononian epitome, 78,12-13), 178,12) may well hint at the truth, since the Marucchi inscription refers to the *praesul* (Silvester) beginning the foundation and I have noted his likely interest in the joint cult. Further evidence of this is suggested by the fact that the E tradition, which McKitterick (2020: 179) thinks is possibly Roman and the original one, has Constantine constructing a basilica at Ostia dedicated to Peter and Paul at Silvester's suggestion (*LP* 1,183,18-19 app.). No doubt his request for the hallowed Roman site would have come first and its endowment have been rather greater than the 1632 *solidi* of the former (184,8-15, 19-22).

⁸⁹ Thus the first endowment listed for St Paul's is related to Tarsus, as that at St Peter's was to Antioch. However, as noted above, some may be attributable to Constantius.

⁹⁰ He may well have also taken the opportunity to transfer Constantine and Helena's cross from Santa Croce to the shrine in St Peter's.

⁹¹ He would also seem to have endowed and furnished the two largest (and latest?) imperial circiform basilicas, S. Lorenzo and S. Agnese. See Logan 2011: 38, 43-44; Hellström 2016: 294, 297.

⁹² See n. 62. But the Constantine named cannot have been Constantine II as suggested by Camerlenghi (2018: 38), who died in 340, when, as I have argued, the relics of Paul were still at *Catacumbae*. Moreover, Constans, not he, was in charge of Italy and responsible, I have argued, for both basilicas.

⁹³ McKitterick (2013a: 121) suggests the author deliberately omitted them. But if so, why include the more valuable endowments (see below)?

⁹⁴ *LP* 1,177,20, 178,3, 7.

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transferred by Constantius to St Peter's. Finally there is the fact that the endowments for the much smaller *memoria* are more valuable than those of the much grander one on the Vatican.⁹⁵ Although Nicola Camerlenghi has advanced the plausible argument that the *Liber* editors based the figure on the endowments for the later grand basilica of the 380s,⁹⁶ it might nevertheless be the case that Constantius, because of his keen support of the joint cult – attested by his *Traditio Legis* apse mosaic in St Peter's⁹⁷ – was attempting to compensate for the considerable difference in size between the two basilicas (which, as I have argued, was caused by Julius, not Constantine or Silvester) by providing more generous endowments for St Paul's, while at the same time making his own gifts of vessels and furnishings appropriate to each.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the fact that his earlier endowments were more valuable than his later ones for St Peter's looks a little odd. In the end the St Peter's list of both gifts and endowments, attributed to Constantine largely because of the *Actus* legend, survived while the St Paul's list of gifts and furnishings would have been made redundant by the construction of the new basilica.⁹⁹ This hypothesis is very compatible with Raymond Davis's suggestion that the Silvester list was compiled near the end of the reign of Constantius and summarized the imperial munificence not just of Constantine but of the Constantinian family,¹⁰⁰ hence the essential trustworthiness of most of its information.¹⁰¹

My argument has assumed that it was Constantius, rather than Julius or Liberius, who was responsible for the transfer of the relics of both apostles. Now Cyril Mango, in tracing the history of the translation of saints' relics, has drawn attention to the revulsion of Romans at tomb violations and the law condemning this, as well as to Constantius' edict of 357, issued at Milan, fining anyone who damaged a tomb or laid hands on buried bodies.¹⁰² But he notes Constantius' translation of the relics of Timothy in 356 and Andrew and Luke in 357 to his new Holy Apostles' church in Constantinople, and resolves the violation of custom and law involved by appeal to this unique event.¹⁰³ However, I would venture to suggest that Constantius had initiated the translation process already in Rome prior to 354 with the transfer of Paul's relics,¹⁰⁴ to be followed in 357

⁹⁵ The endowments for St Peter's, 3708 *solidi*, and for St Paul's, 4070 *solidi*. McKitterick (2013a: 121-122) has overlooked the 800 *solidi* from the Tarsus island.

⁹⁶ Camerlenghi 2018: 38. See Davis (2010: xxxii) for a similar suggestion.

⁹⁷ See Logan 2021: 62-67.

⁹⁸ Thus the gifts for upkeep (spices, oil, balsam, papyrus, linen etc.) are much less varied and far fewer than those for St Peter's (see McKitterick 2013a: 121-122).

⁹⁹ However, the lists of gifts for upkeep and endowments would have survived, if later enhanced.

¹⁰⁰ Davis 2010: xxix-xxx. Might Liberius, after his exile, with his involvement in S. Agnese (Duchesne 1955: 1.207,10-11), SS Peter and Paul and the Constantinian basilica (ibid. 208,2-3), have been responsible? The creation of the "Liberian Catalogue" of the popes might reflect a similar impulse. Such a hypothesis might also explain the prominence of the Datianus endowment since he died in 365. The process may have begun with Julius' decree about clerics in the church office (*scrinium sanctum*) recording all documents, deeds, donations, wills etc. (Duchesne 1955: 1.205,5-8). Liverani's suggestion (2019: 169-217) that it was based on an official *libellus* either from the imperial chancery or from a copy in the papal writing office is very pertinent here.

¹⁰¹ Thus even Montinaro (2015: 221, 224), who argues that the bulk of the donations listed occurred much later, allows that *LP* 1,177,6-14 on Constantine's donations to St Peter's could represent an authentic kernel.

¹⁰² *Cod. Theod.* 9,17,4; Mango 1990: 51. On the likeliest date (15 January 357) see Barnes 1991: 258. *Cod. Theod.* 9,17,3 appears to be the summary of it posted at Rome.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 53.

¹⁰⁴ This might have taken place on 25 January 354 (see n. 51). The "forty years" of the entries on S. Sebastiano in the seventh-century *Notitia ecclesiarum urbis Romae* (CCSL 175: 308.99-101) and *De locis sanctis martyrum quae sunt foris civitatis Romae* (ibid. 317.64-66), may thus very well refer to the period

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by Peter's. Only then, when St Peter's was completed and his relics translated, would a consecration have been in order. Both translations, of course, must have been originally planned by Constans, with his evident interest in the joint cult and basilica at *Catacumbae*, but they were ultimately carried out by his older brother, who, as noted, clearly shared that interest. And that interest in the joint cult, the earliest and most significant martyr cult in Rome, as I have argued,¹⁰⁵ which *pace* Mango seems to have initiated the translation of saints' relics, would clearly justify these translations, all evidently related to Peter and Paul, as Paulinus of Nola noted in his comment on the Constantinople translations.¹⁰⁶ He saw the latter as vying with and counterbalancing the Roman joint cult, the celebration of which in Constantinople on 29 June I have argued was introduced by Constantius himself.¹⁰⁷

However it might be better to understand the Constantinople translations as secondary complements to those in Rome, in line with Constantius' concern, expressed clearly in his Roman visit, as Moser has argued, to emphasize the superiority of the latter.¹⁰⁸ In support of this suggestion we could cite the fact that Jerome, in his extension of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, records Constantius as translating Andrew and Luke after his Roman visit.¹⁰⁹ Thus we could understand his controversial initiative as beginning in Rome with Paul, prince of the apostles, then deliberately echoed in Constantinople with his disciple Timothy, followed by the other prince, Peter, at Pentecost 357 in Rome, again echoed finally in Constantinople by Andrew and Luke, companions of one or the other. Constantius' Milan edict could be seen as intended to discourage other lesser mortals from attempting the same kind of thing. Not surprisingly, however, the *Liber*, which labels him as heretical,¹¹⁰ makes no mention either of his Roman building work, gifts and endowments, having attributed everything to Constantine,¹¹¹ or of Liberius' likely consecration of St Paul's or Felix's of St Peter's, while Damasus' famous epigram at *Catacumbae* merely alludes to the translations.¹¹²

The *Liber* entry for Cornelius (251-253),¹¹³ which tellingly has the translation first of the remains of Paul then of Peter from *Catacumbae* to the traditional sites, may very well represent an attempted orthodox version set 100 years before, simultaneously seeking to explain Damasus' epigram, and preserving the original deposition date of 29 June for

between Silvester's presence at the festival in 314, hinted at by the Council of Arles' bishops (see above), and this translation.

¹⁰⁵ Logan 2014 *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ *Carmen* 19,317-342 (*CSEL* 30: 129-130); Mango 1990: 53, noting Paulinus' "perhaps deliberate" attribution of this translation to Constantine.

¹⁰⁷ Logan 2021: 64-65.

¹⁰⁸ Moser 2019: 298-303.

¹⁰⁹ Eusebius-Jerome, *Chron.* for 357 (GCS 70: 240,26-241,2). The 3 March date given in *Chron. Pasch.* (542,14-18) is either wrong or supports the argument of Woods 1991: 186-192, in favour of a later date. Jerome's evidence seems more plausible, but whatever the truth, Constantius' translations of the relics of Peter and Paul seem to underlie those of Timothy, Luke and Andrew, as Paulinus hints.

¹¹⁰ *LP* 1.208,1, 211,1-2.

¹¹¹ But see above n. 62. As noted earlier, Camerlenghi (2018: 38), while arguing for the contribution of Constantius, wrongly identifies Constantine as Constantine II.

¹¹² See n. 74.

¹¹³ *LP* 1.150,6-10.

Peter's translation.¹¹⁴ If it thus attests the presence of relics at *Catacumbae*, it nevertheless plainly contradicts the key evidence of Ammonius' visit to the joint *memoria* around 340 and the *Depositio Martyrum* of 354 alluding to the deposition of Peter (and implicitly Paul) at *Catacumbae* on 29 June 258, as well as the *utrumque in Catacumbas* of the Hieronymian Martyrology.¹¹⁵ Moreover, in his epigram for visiting pilgrims expecting to find the relics of the two, Damasus is undoubtedly recalling Constantius' recent translations, which he very likely witnessed,¹¹⁶ not supposed ones of over a century before.

In any case, St Peter's would certainly seem to have been completed not long after 357 when Liberius returned from exile,¹¹⁷ in that (a) the *Liber Pontificalis* has him occupying St Peter's and St Paul's and the Constantinian basilica for seven years;¹¹⁸ (b) his dedication of Ambrose's sister Marcellina to virginity at a Christmas festival in St Peter's most likely occurred in that period,¹¹⁹ and (c) burials within the basilica were clearly taking place by 359 or 360 when Junius Bassus' sarcophagus was placed within the apse very near the shrine,¹²⁰ now furnished with relics. Indeed, this may very well have initiated the custom of burials in the basilica, including reused older sarcophagi. Finally, it must have been at that time too that I would claim that Constantius decorated the arch of the apse, the most appropriate religious location, with the inscription *Constantii ... expiata ... hostili incursione* celebrating his victory in 358 over the impious marauding Sarmatians, related by Ammianus,¹²¹ who actually uses the term *incursare*.¹²²

Abbreviations

For abbreviations of titles of modern journals and monograph series and biblical, classical and patristic literature *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA 2014) was consulted. Some frequently occurring abbreviations are listed separately here:

¹¹⁴ Note that the entry (ibid. 8-10) precisely reproduces details in the opening entry on St Peter (ibid. 118,17-19: temple of Apollo, Nero's palace, 29 June etc.) while having to contradict it over where Peter was originally buried. Duchesne (ibid. 154 n. 7) notes its "forced entry" into the text.

¹¹⁵ See also Duchesne 1955: 1.cv-cvi. McKitterick's acceptance of the genuineness of the entry (2013b: 108-110) overlooks this evidence.

¹¹⁶ See n. 76. Marianne Sághy (2015: 54) suggests he might be reacting to the recent translations of Andrew and Timothy. Certainly he defends Rome's right to and continuing possession of the relics.

¹¹⁷ For the date (2 August) see Barnes 1993: 130, 138 n. 21.

¹¹⁸ Duchesne 1955: 1.208,2-3. Curran (2000: 133-134) notes Felix's strength in the south-west of the city (basilica on the Via Aurelia and estate on the Via Portuensis), which Liberius' possession of St Peter's and St Paul's would counter. No doubt he celebrated the June 29 festival in both from 358 on.

¹¹⁹ See Ambrose, *De Virg.* 3,1,1 (*PL* 16,231B). Westall 2015: 217-218, ruling out 353, argues for 365, but he overlooks Liberius' possession of St Peter's. Such a ceremony would only be plausible after the 357 consecration, another reason to exclude an earlier date. Christmas Day 357 would certainly be a possible and attractive date, particularly given the first mention of that festival in the Chronograph-Calendar of 354. Ambrose and Marcellina's family would have been in Rome around then, and in 357 Marcellina would have been in her late 20s and Ambrose in his late teens (note the *adolevisset* of Paulinus, *Vit. Amb.* 4 (*PL* 14,30B-C)).

¹²⁰ See Elsner 2003: 82-86; Westall 2015: 219-220.

¹²¹ See Westall 2015: 227. Note Constantius' pious invocation of the deity (17,13,28: 1,131,3-4).

¹²² 17,12,1: *Sarmatas...incursare* (ibid. 122,15-17; cf. 16,10,20: ibid. 86,5). He very likely knew Constantius' inscription from his sojourn in Rome from around 384 to the early 390s. See Matthews 1985: II 33. Note also the coin of Constantius described by Grimaldi (Brandenburg 2017: 15-16) celebrating that victory.

- CBCR* Krautheimer, R. 1967, 1970, 1974. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, vols. 3-5, Rome, Vatican City.
- EOMIA* Turner, C. E. 1899-1939. *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima. Canonum et Conciliorum Graecorum interpretationes Latinae*, Oxford.
- ICUR* Rossi, G. B. de 1857-1861. *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*, Rome.
- ILCV* Diehl, E., *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, Berlin 1924.
- PLRE* Jones, A. H. M., Martindale, J. R., Morris, J. (eds), *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, London 1971.

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