

5 Epigraphy Nomenclature of the *Fasti Consulares*

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5.1 Introduction

In 1547 one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the Renaissance took place in the heart of the Roman Forum.¹ Between the Temple of the Dioscuri and the Church of Santa Maria Liberatrice, a group of scattered marble panels was unearthed, upon which were engraved the succession of Roman magistrates and triumphs from

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1 Degrassi 1947, 1-12; Henzen 1863, 415-25; McCuaig 1989, 141-59; Mayer 2010, 29; Stenhouse 2005, 103-12. See also the contemporary account in Ligorio 1553, 31^b: “*De l’arco dove erano scritti i magistrati et i triomphi*. Et da che altro crederem noi, che sia nato, se non da questo, che quasi ogn’un crede, che le iscrizioni de Magistrati nuovamente trovate, et poste in Campidoglio nel chiostro del palazzo de’ Conservatori, siano state cavate nel mezzo del Foro? il che è bugia espresissima, perché sono state trovate dirimpetto al Tempio di Faustina vicino all’angolo del Palatino in un luogo, dove facevan capo più strade si come mostravano le ruine stesse de gli edificij cavate, che quivi erano, guaste poi da i moderni: le quali erano d’un Iano (o vogliam dire Aeano) di quattro fronti, ne i confini di tre Regioni, ciò è del Foro Romano, del Palatino, et della Via sacra. La qual Via sacra divideva la quarta Regione del Tempio della pace dall’ottava, che era quella del Foro Romano, il che manifestissimamente si mostrava per la sua pianta e per le vie lastricate che vi passavano per mezzo d’esso Iano”.

the foundation of the city to the first century CE. The importance of this relic was immediately understood and triggered a profound interest among the erudite environments of the time. The humanist Gentile Delfini rearranged the panels according to their assumed original order; under Michelangelo's supervision they were put on display in the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Shortly thereafter, antiquarian scholars from all over Europe began working on the epigraph thoroughly in an attempt to decode its inscriptions, determine its authorship and dating, verify its reliability, and compare it with the other historical sources available at the time. In this vivid intellectual context, the finding acquired the denomination of *Fasti Capitolini* or more generally *Fasti Consulares*. This was not a passive choice. It reflected instead a cultural dynamic displaying how it was understood by the scholarly community, and what its reception would be given the growing sensitivity to artefacts from antiquity. However, two questions still remain unanswered: 1) Why was this list of names, ordered in yearly progression, given the label of *fasti*? 2) How did this word end up corresponding with its meaning in the vocabulary of the sixteenth century? In fact, the equation of this word and this object did not happen automatically, in that until then *fasti* was almost exclusively taken as a synonym of *calendarius*.²

Paul the Deacon's abridgment of Festus' *De verborum significatione* explains why this word was used in relation to calendars. This semantic shift was traced to a pre-republican age: to be precise, the days when kings held public speeches and performed sacrifices were labelled as *fasti* and recorded in books designated for this function. The *fasti* here mentioned were essentially almanacs, contributing to creating a full 'description of the year', i.e., establishing the fixed dates regulating moments of public life.³

2 The term *fasti* descends from the Latin *fas*, which signifies "that which is divinely sanctioned"; the opposite of the term *nefas*. Its origin is uncertain: it either derives from **fēs-/ *fas< *dh(e)h₁s* (as do *festus*, *feriae*, and *fanum*) or from **fā< *bheh₂* (as do *fari*, *fama*, *fabula*, and *fatum*). These two possibilities had already been established in antiquity, from the etymology given by Varr. *ling.* 6.29: "Dies fasti per quos praetoribus omnia verba sine piaculo licet dari", and the meaning attributed to the term by Verg. *Aen.* 1.205-6: "tendimus in Latium sedes ubi fata quietas | ostendunt: illic fas regna resurgere Troiae". However, we do not have any records (at least for the classical period) of the divergence between *fas*, intended as "law of the gods", and *ius*, intended as "law of humans", as established by Serv. *Georg.* 1.269: "fas et iura sinunt: i.e. divina humanaque iura permittunt, nam ad religionem fas, ad homines iura pertinent"; see Ernout-Meillet 1951, 217-19; Prescendi 2007; Rüpke 2007.

3 Fest. 311.1: "Quando rex comitiavit fas, in fastis notari solet, et hoc videtur significare, quando rex sacrificulus divinis rebus perfectis in comitium venit"; 78.4: "Fastorum libri appellantur, in quibus totius anni fit descriptio"; 83.6: "Fastis diebus iocunda dari licebat; nefastis quaedam non licebat dari".

Within the *corpus* of Latin literature, a vast array of occurrences of this word explicitly signifying ‘list of magistrates’ can be found.⁴ It is clear then that the term *fasti* passed from a context tied to the calculation of time (as in calendars) to history (as in the lists of magistrates). This subtle but essential turning point had already been discussed and resolved in 1859 by Theodor Mommsen, in his *Römische Chronologie bis auf Caesar*.⁵ In the chapter entitled *Die älteste Fastenredaction*, Mommsen affirmed that these lists (which he defined as *Eponymenliste*) were specifically related to the composition of calendars, in terms of both substance (“in der Sache”) and form (“in der Sprache”). In the first case, the consuls who gave the name to the year created a link between human chronology and divine time. In the second, the meaning of the word was expanded from one object to another (i.e., from the calendars to the lists of magistrates). This was a natural progression since, during that period, these lists of magistrates most likely appeared as an attachment or appendix to the calendars themselves (“ein Anhang des Kalenders war”), and so became two parts of the same whole.⁶ Therefore, in calendars and in magistrates’ lists, the ‘natural year’ and the ‘civil year’ coexisted and contributed to the development of the conception of time in the classical age.⁷

4 Rüpke 2007, 361-5; Mommsen 1859, 208 fn. 394. See also Cic. *Att.* 4.8b. 2: “in codicillorum fastis futurorum consulum”; and *Att.* 5.12.5: “nos retinet quasi enumeratione fastorum”, Liv. 9.18: “paginas in annalium magistratumque fastis percurrere licet consulum dictatorumque”, Lucan. 5.396-7: “tantum caret ne nomine tempus | menstruus in fastos dispinguit saecula consul”, Suet. *Aug.* 10.3: “Augustum appellaretur et ita fastos referetur”, Tac. *ann.* 3.18.1: “ne nomen Pisonis fastis eximeretur”, Trebellius Pollio in *Hist. Aug.* 23.14.10: “scriptum invenimus in fastis: ‘Valeriano imperatore consule’” and many other writers of the *Historia Augusta*, Lact. *Div. In.* 6.4.21: “ii sunt qui ad gerendos magistratus omnem vitae suae operam curamque “convertunt, ut fastos signent et annis nomen inponant”, and Isid. *orig.* 6.8: “Fastorum libri sunt, in quibus reges vel consules scribuntur a fastibus dicti, i. potestatibus”. But the most relevant sources in this regard are represented by Auson. *Fast.* 1.1: “digessi fastos et nomina praepetis aevi” and Cassiod. *var.* 2.1: “dare fastis nomen [...] terrenam curiae claritatem, ut per annorum numerum decurrat gratia dignitatum et beneficiis principum sacretur memoria saeculorum”, who suggested some kind of connection among the word *fasti*, chronology and the lists of magistrates.

5 Mommsen 1859, 208-10; see also Matzat 1883; Holzapfel 1885; Soltau 1889.

6 Mommsen 1859, 208-9: “Ueber Abfassungszeit und Urheber der römischen Eponymenliste läßt sich natürlicher Weise höchstens vermuthen. In der Sache wie in der Sprache liegt es, dass sie die Schicksale des römischen Kalender getheilt hat. In der Sache: den wo, wie in der römischen Gemeinde, das einzelne Jahr nicht durch eine Ziffer, sondern durch Beamtennamen bezeichnet ward, war es eine praktische Nothwendigkeit dem Juristen und dem Geschäftsmann überhaupt neben dem Verzeichniss der Tage des Jahres in die Hände zu geben. In der Sprache: den der Name *fasti*, das haisst ursprünglich Spruch - oder Gerichtstage, bezeichnet bekanntlich nicht bloss den Kalender, sondern zugleich die Eponymenliste, welche etymologisch nicht gerechtfertigte Bedeutung nur dadurch entstanden sein kann, dass die letztere von Haus an sein Anhang des Kalenders war”.

7 Mazarino 1966, 2.2: 415 fn. 555.

Although this awareness was reached only in the nineteenth century, the debate on how these series of magistrates should be termed and what their relationship with the ancient calendar was had already taken place during the Renaissance. More significantly, the fact that in this period the word *fasti* was intended to mean the lists of consuls along with the calendar implies that Renaissance scholars had already somehow reached Mommsen's conclusions. The distinctive factor in this process lies in the re-discovery of the epigraph of the Roman Forum, which led early modern scholars to recognise what the literary sources already described, but that until then had no material counterpart. The purpose of this study is to reconstruct the phases that brought these lists to acquire the denomination of *fasti* as soon as in early modern times, and to discover what precisely contributed to the development of this cultural pathway.

5.2 *Fasti before the Fasti*

Before 1546, there were other catalogues of Roman magistrates circulating among humanists and erudite environments.⁸ Some of these catalogues actually derived from the same group of epigraphs as the *Fasti consulares*, as already determined during the fifteenth century (*ante* 1471) by Andrea Santacroce ("lapis de ruinis Capitolii habitus").⁹ Nevertheless, a precise and coherent denomination was still far from being reached.

The most credible *terminus ante quem* for the first identification of these lists is 1488, when Giulio Pomponio Leto and Angelo Poliziano entertained an epistolary correspondence in which they discussed this type of epigraph, it being a prominent finding at the time.¹⁰ In these letters, they refer to those ancient inscriptions also known as *Fasti Venusini*, composed by a Roman calendar (with only the months of May and June surviving) along with a list of consuls and censors dating back to the Social War of the first century BC. These two engraved marble panels were exhibited at Castel Capuano in Naples during the fifteenth century. The originals have unfortunately now been lost; only a transcription remains in an epigraphic book compiled by the humanist and artist Fra' Giovanni Giocondo, made after a journey in southern Italy. Several copies of this collection have been published, the best exemplar of which is stored at the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona (ms. CCLXX, 245).¹¹ Before reproducing the

⁸ De Rossi 1853, 4-7; Mommsen 1863, 293-6; Henzen 1863, 467-74.

⁹ Miglio 1991, 198.

¹⁰ Poliziano 1522, 26-30; De Rossi 1853, 16-22.

¹¹ De Rossi 1853, 13; Mommsen 1863, 300-2.

text of the *Fasti Venusini*, Giocondo noted their provenance and typology: “Apud eundem est haec pars Kalendarii, quae reperta fuit in agro Venusino”.¹² The caption *pars Kalendarii* underlines the fragmentary nature of the finding. However, the same entry also included the list of magistrates. This was preceded by a short gloss, reporting *TABELLA FACTA A BELLO MARSICO*.¹³ This means that this *tabella* was recognised as a different part (although still as a part) of the calendar itself.

During Giocondo’s stay in Rome, this manuscript passed into Pomponio Leto’s hands. As soon as Pomponio learned of the newly discovered *Fasti Venusini*, he transcribed the pages with their text and immediately informed Poliziano:¹⁴

A Venusia Apulorum allata sunt marmorea in tabula: obscuro loco ibi latebant fragmenta aliarum tabularum, ubi annus integer erat; [...] Mitto et quaedam monimenta rerum, eodem in loco reperta [...] Romae fere idem, sed multo ante, verum fine caret.

Pomponio talks about an archaeological excavation from which various epigraphic fragments emerged. Among those worthy of attention, he mentions a calendar (*annus*), and some historical documents (*monimenta rerum*), which resembled a similar fragment discovered in Rome years before (*Romae fere idem, sed multo ante*). Poliziano responded substantively:¹⁵

Sed et semestre calendarium mire fuit gratum et quam ais tabulam bello Marsico factam; quae si eadem est, quam Romae obiter legerim, vereor ex fide sit exscripta.

He approached the finding as if it comprised two pieces, a *calendarium* and a *tabula*, each having a different purpose – a different interpretation of the finding to the one given by Pomponio. In the first part, Poliziano used a more accurate word (*calendarium pro annus*); in the second, a less accurate one (*tabulam pro monimenta rerum*). As to whether this choice was provoked by the absence of a common technical term, it is difficult to say; however, one could infer that this lack of vocabulary encouraged scholars to be vague when applying a definition to the finding, so as to not compromise the understanding of its real nature. Furthermore, Poliziano, just like Pomponio, demonstrates a full grasp of the knowledge available at his time on the

¹² De Rossi 1853, 11-12.

¹³ De Rossi 1853, 25, 40-2.

¹⁴ Poliziano 1522, 26.

¹⁵ Poliziano 1522, 27.

subject, comparing the transcription he received with that which was obtained from the list previously found in Rome.

This Roman epigraph was also known elsewhere. For example, Ermolao Barbaro in his *Castigationes Pliniana*e of 1493 described it with the same words used by his fellow scholars Pomponio and Poliziano.¹⁶

In tabula antiquissima hodie ostenditur Romae his verbis
[...]
In eadem tabella nominantur et alii plerique

From these two occurrences, the diffusion of the lists of Roman magistrates emerges in the scholarly investigations of the Renaissance. Above all, the role of Pomponio Leto was crucial: he was responsible for circulating this information throughout the scholarly community. Just as he had done earlier with Poliziano, he passed the transcripts of these findings on to Barbaro (“indicavit hoc ante omnes mihi Pomponius Laetus”). In consideration of this, a hypothesis could be made that the words *tabula* and *tabella* reached Barbaro through Pomponio, originating denominations which echoed those formulated by Poliziano and Fra’ Giocondo respectively.

Pomponio’s impact on the question of these Roman epigraphs is also attested to in other sources. For example, in Francesco Albertini’s *De Roma prisca*, published in 1515, he was identified as one of the witnesses to their rediscovery.¹⁷ From this information, it is also possible to infer that Pomponio Leto was aware of the real function of the lists of magistrates, even if he did not call them *fasti*. In fact, in his *De magistratibus* of ca. 1474, he affirmed that the years in ancient Roman society were named after the consuls in charge.¹⁸

The two marble panels mentioned above were published for the first time in 1521 by Jacopo Mazocchi in an epigraphic collection entitled *Epigrammata antiquae Urbis*. Nonetheless, the terminology adopted here adheres to that which was in use among scholars of the period (*fragmentum in tabula marmorea*), with no further details added.¹⁹

At approximately the same time, many pieces of Roman calendars emerged from archaeological digs. A collection of these works, pub-

¹⁶ De Rossi 1853, 19; Barbaro 1493, VII 9, XIII 13.

¹⁷ Albertini 1515, 48^a: “Templum Castoris et Polluci in via Sacra in foro Romano sub palatio ubi nunc est tabernaculum Virginis ad ponticulum, in quo loco effossa fuere vestigia cum duabus tabulis marmoreis dedicatione ipsius teste Pomponio Laeto, qui eas vidisse affirmat”.

¹⁸ Leto 1515, [n.d.]: “ab eorum magistratu numerus annorum signabatur”.

¹⁹ Mazocchi 1521, 121^b-122^a: “Ibidem ante fores Sanctae Mariae in Publicolis statim a sinistris quodam pariete fragmentum in tabula marmorea ubi talem decretum”.

lished in 1509 by Jacopo Mazocchi, included the *Fasti Vallensi*, the *Fasti Iuliani* and the *Fasti Venusini* disseminated by Fra' Giocondo.²⁰ The latter featured only its calendar, without the succession of magistrates with which it had been originally associated. The reason for this editorial choice can be understood by examining the denomination of these lists given by Mazocchi in his *Epigrammata* of 1521. Here they were denoted with the generic *tabula marmorea*, implying that they were perceived as something unrelated to the calendar. Following the same interpretation, Aldo Manuzio placed only the calendar of the *Fasti Venusini* as a preface to his edition of Ovid's *Fasti* published in 1516, which he drew from an apograph of Fra' Giocondo's manuscript.²¹

What emerges is that both humanists and scholars of antiquity felt that calendars and lists of consuls belonged to different categories of epigraphic findings. The calendars had already been defined by the word *fasti* since Mazocchi's edition of 1509. This converged with the use of the term by Ovid, who arranged a calendar in verses in his poem entitled *Fasti*. Hence, Manuzio's choice to combine them with the fragment of the calendar from the *Fasti Venusini*. This happened despite Fra' Giocondo providing a manuscript witness that actually tied the two objects together, even if they were presented as sub-units of the same whole. Therefore, the division of this whole into two separate parts (calendar and lists) may be attributed to the very first reception of Fra' Giocondo's account by Pomponio Leto and Poliziano.

This distinction endured in the decades that followed and became even stronger. In his *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis* of 1534, Petrus Apianus once again published the consular list of the *Fasti Venusini*,²² referring to it simply as a fragment reporting the names of magistrates. A few years later, in 1541, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi issued his *De annis et mensibus*, explicitly establishing the equivalence between *fasti* and calendars.²³

20 Mazocchi 1509; Mommsen 1863, 293-412; Degrassi 1947, 27.

21 Manuzio 1516, 11^b: *XII Romanorum menses in veteribus monumentis Romae reperi*; and 15^a: *Menses quidam ex antiquorum fastis variis in locis reperi*.

22 Apianus 1534, 315: "Fragmentum superiorum magistratum in nonnullis bellis Romanis".

23 Giraldi 1541, 154: "Fasti sunt quibus praetori licet sine piaculo fari, quae tria verba modo dicebam, Do, dico, addico. Illud par est hoc loco admonere, et fastos etiam dici libros in quibus festa et profesta et nefasta continetur, qualia sunt hodie usitata voce calendaria vocamus, quomodo Ovidius fastos suos appellavit".

5.3 *Fasti* and Names

However, as previously stated, the word *fasti* signified, in the view of many ancient authors, a list of magistrates, transcending the sphere of calendar studies and entering that of historiography. At least one Renaissance publication appears to confirm the existence of this awareness: Alessandro Alessandri's *Dies geniales*, issued in 1522. In the section where he attempted to explain the function of ancient Roman pontiffs, he reported that these ministers were assigned to record and transmit the *res gestae* in books called *fasti* and *commentarii*, also known as *annales maximi*.²⁴

Although this reading does not offer a full definition of *fasti* as the succession of magistrates in a yearly progression, but only as a genre of historical writing (“custodiam rerum gestarum”), it opens up our understanding of their second nature to unforeseen interpretations. However, during the first half of the sixteenth century, this meaning was completely overlooked, neglected or misunderstood because Renaissance scholars could not connect this signifier (*fasti*) with an intelligible object. They could not picture what these *fasti* looked like.

The most glaring example of this situation is represented by Joannes Alexander Brassicanus (1500-1539). In his *Proverbia symmetrica*, which was published in 1529, he failed to explain Cicero's expression *ex fastis evellendis*.²⁵ Brassicanus realised that this idiom was related to the erasure of a magistrate's name from the public memory due to poor conduct while holding office, in particular the consulship. However, he appears to ignore the fact that these names had to be cancelled from somewhere concrete, as in a physical list. In fact, to explain this expression he did not recall the lists of magistrates – which would have been natural. Instead he cited a supposed parallel occurrence in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, where it was stated that the city of Athens ratified a decree which compelled the people to not record the names of two tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton.²⁶

²⁴ D'Alessandro 1522, 65^a: “Nam scribae pontificum, qui fastos et commentarios habebant, fidelem custodiam rerum gestarum, qui annales maximi dicebantur, quique illis ministris aderant, quod omnis aevi gesta mandabant literis, minores pontifices dicti sunt [...]. Ad quorum collegium etiam interpretandi iuris, et ans posset lege agi, quaeque competeret actio in iudicis, declarandi ius spectavit et pertinuit”. In order to make this passage more intelligible, Tiraqueau 1586, 152 refers to Macr. *Sat.* 3.2.17: “pontificibus enim permissa est potestas memoriam rerum gestarum in tabulas conferendi, et hos annales appellant et quidem maximos quasi a pontificibus maximis factos” and to Paul. *Fest.* 113.27: “Maximi annales appellabantur, non magnitudine, sed quod eos pontifex maximus confecisset”.

²⁵ Cic. *Sest.* 33.20.23: “Eidemque consules, si appellandi sunt consules quos nemo est quin non modo ex memoria sed etiam ex fastis evellendos putet”.

²⁶ Brassicanus 1529, 45-6.

Cicero pro Publio Sestio proverbio utitur, nimirum improbos et contaminatae vitae homines quos monstra verius et pecudes dixeris ex fastis esse evellendos: hoc est memoriam eorum esse penitus abolendam, et nullo unquam tempore mentionem eorum esse faciendam. Quemadmodum Athenienses publico decreto sanxerunt, ne unquam nomina fortissimorum juvenum Harmodii et Aristogitonis, qui libertatis recuperandae gratia Hippiam tyrannum interfecere adorsi erant ferris, indere liceret, auctore Gellio lib. 9 cap. 2.

The syntagma *nefas ducerent nomina* did the rest, creating an alleged relationship with Cicero's *ex fastis*. However, a comparison with Gellius's original can shed more light on the genesis of this gloss:²⁷

Maiores autem mei Athenienses nomina iuvenum fortissimorum Harmodii et Aristogitonis, qui libertatis recuperandae gratia Hippiam tyrannum interficere adorsi erant, ne unquam servis indere liceret, decreto publico sanxerunt, quoniam nefas ducerent nomina libertati patriae devota servili contagio pollui.

This passage talks about a city law which prohibited the people of Athens from giving the name of these two tyrannicides to their slaves. This was to prevent these names, which were consecrated to freedom, being polluted by the social status of those to whom they were assigned (“ne unquam servis indere liceret”). The purpose of this prohibition was to glorify the names, rather than remove them from the memory of the city for misconduct. It is therefore clear why Brassicanus excluded the word *servis* when he cited this passage: it would have contradicted the fact that this erasure was only intended for public figures who were seen in a negative light.²⁸

The word *fasti* still had a double meaning in the ancient literary idiom. However, the meaning of the word needed to be refined in order to generate a more substantial awareness of the nature of these ancient sources. Only new concrete evidence could overturn a situation that at the beginning of 1540s appeared impossible to subvert.

²⁷ Gell. 9.2.10.

²⁸ Renaissance scholars were perfectly aware of the real meaning of Gellius' passage; see e.g., Mosellanus 1557, 314: “Nomina fortium servis non danda”. The most extensive compilation of sources regarding this episode is put together in Meursius 1623, 87-99.

5.4 Shaping the *Fasti*

A drastic change occurred with the rediscovery of the missing part of the Roman panels listing the consular succession in 1546. This event represented an effective watershed-moment, not only in Renaissance epigraphy but also in the general development of a full antiquarian awareness. In fact, this discovery fostered methodological meditations which resulted in the growth of the entire discipline.²⁹

If the sixteenth century editions of this inscription are examined closely, a lack of uniformity in the titles is immediately evident. However, compared to the former generations of scholars, the precision of its definition has visibly increased. The denomination *tabula* or *fragmentum*, which focused the attention on the object, were replaced by new formulations attempting to better outline its form and content. The terms utilised to name this finding demonstrate the new attitude towards it: the first was *series*, the second *fasti*, the third *annales*.

The word *series* occurred three times. Bartolomeo Marliani utilised it twice,³⁰ in 1549, the year of the first edition of this epigraph, and in 1555, when a reprint of the former was provided with a preface written by Francesco Robortello. The third occurrence was in Martin Smetius's epigraphic collection, which was printed posthumously in 1588 but dated back to *ante* 1551.³¹ These works published the text from the ancient inscription, without further additions, respecting the disposition and dimension of each piece, and also maintaining the lacunae within the texts. While Marliani reported only the letters, limiting his survey to the textual sphere, Smetius also reproduced the drawings from each stone on which the texts were engraved, for the purpose of providing a more complete context.

Fasti was the most common word recurring in the following years. Carlo Sigonio³² adopted it first in 1550, reiterating it in all his subsequent editions (in 1555, 1556 and 1559). The same pattern was followed by Onofrio Panvinio³³ in 1557 (in the pirated edition of the epigraph published by Jacopo Strada) and in 1558 (the official edition), and by Hubert Goltzius³⁴ in 1566. All these works reported the succession of magistrates in yearly progression based on the Roman inscription, completed (and amended) thanks to comparisons with liter-

²⁹ McCuaig 1989, 141-59; Ferrary 1996; Mayer 2010.

³⁰ Marliani 1549; 1555.

³¹ Smetius 1588.

³² Sigonio 1550; 1555a; 1556b; 1559.

³³ Strada 1557; Panvinio 1558b; Ferrary 1996, 57-9, 110.

³⁴ Goltzius 1566.

ary sources, narrative histories, and numismatic evidence. The word *annales* appeared only once, in 1560, featuring in the title of the last edition of the inscription conducted by Bartolomeo Marliani.³⁵ With this formulation, he outlined the complete series of Roman magistrates with a commentary placed in the lower part of the page.

If arranged in chronological order, however, these different denominations acquire further meaning, and could tell more about the history of the relic to which they were assigned.

1549	▶	<i>series</i>
1550	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1551	▶	<i>series</i>
1555	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1555	▶	<i>series</i>
1556	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1557	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1558	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1559	▶	<i>fasti</i>
1560	▶	<i>annales</i>
1566	▶	<i>fasti</i>

From this alternation of the terms it is evident that, in the years following the discovery of these Roman inscriptions, scholars were still attempting to understand what kind of object they were dealing with, and that its nomenclature was still far from being firmly established.

Given the above, it is possible to push the discussion even further by determining why these three terms entered into competition with each other.

The word *series* was probably a result of an observation on the part of scholars and expressed a factual denomination (the names on the relic were, in fact, a list or a catalogue). Very likely, it was sustained by parallel occurrences in the titles of other publications regarding chronology in circulation at the time – for example, the *Series et digestio temporum* published in 1548 by Heinrich Bullinger.³⁶

This relationship between the seriation of public figures (*series*) and the classification of time (*digestio temporum*) had been a common feature in historiography since antiquity, even if during the Renaissance it was renewed according to the historical sensitivity of Humanism. In 1498 Annius of Viterbo's *Antiquitates Variarum* described the nature of these sources in theoretical terms, stating that the succession in the yearly progression of individuals holding political offices was a fundamental tool in establishing a reliable chronology.

³⁵ Marliani 1560.

³⁶ Bullinger 1548.

The redaction of public and official documents contributed to calculating time and preserving the memory of historical facts.³⁷

Thus, the choice of *series* in the first studies on the Fasti Capitolini was probably made to connect a newly discovered ancient relic with an already renowned tradition. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that it also demonstrated how a deeper meditation on and comprehension of the finding itself – which put material evidence of an official and public list of Roman magistrates arranged in chronological order in the hands of Renaissance scholars – could modify its previous definition in scholarly terms.

The term *fasti*, on the other hand, followed a different path. The choice of this word implied a further semantic shift. In the preface of his 1550 edition, Carlo Sigonio affirmed that this new discovery helped solve contradictions and inconsistencies in narrative histories and filled in the gaps in Roman chronology.³⁸ This means that Sigonio did not have mere descriptive purposes for his study of the relics, as instead did Marliani (“a Bartholomeo Marliano descriptum”) and Smetius. He focused instead on its historiographic utility, wanting to supplement and improve the data on the chronology of magistrates (“magistratum ratio”) which until then had been uncertain, at best.

Very likely, Sigonio alluded to those series of Roman consuls based on information found in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and published throughout the first half of sixteenth century.³⁹ The first was *Annorum ab eiectis regibus digestio*, composed by Gregor Haloander, published as an appendix of the *Codex iuris civilis* edition of 1531; the second was Heinrich Glareanus’s *Chronologia sive temporum supputatio in omnem Romanam historia* attached to his commentaries to Livy; and the third was the posthumous *De consolibus Romanorum commentarius*, which was written by Johannes Cuspinianus in 1529, which only came to light in 1553.

Despite the novelty of his approach, Sigonio did not explain why he utilised *fasti* to define the epigraphic findings unearthed in the Roman Forum in any of his editions. However, considering his classical background, he could have easily linked this ancient finding of the

37 Annii 1498, 91: “Eam partem Graeci vocant Chronographiam id est temporum digestionem, cuius probandi duo principia sunt. Primum ut ostendamus tempora, quae afferunt, non discrepare a publica et probata fide [...] Alterum ut reges et viri digerantur, qui his temporibus floruerunt, et quorum memoriam teneant auctores vel loca, sive utrumque. Quod profecto nos facimus in hac secunda parte, quae est de temporibus, in qua primum extendimus viros et tempora ab Iano et origine Italia usque ad Othonem Caesarem. Inde retrocedendo, tempora et viros praescriptos per publicam fidem probamus”.

38 Sigonio 1550, I-III: “totam magistratum Romanorum descriptionem annuam labantem, et incostantem, eademque imperfectam apud omnes scriptores”.

39 Haloander 1530; Glareanus 1531; Cuspinianus 1553; McCuaig 1989, 141-9; Ferrary 1996, 116-17.

succession of Roman consuls to Cicero's syntagma *evellere ex fastis*, of which the epigraph represented concrete and tangible proof – especially because some names appeared to have been erased. There was widespread awareness of the ancient custom of erasing names from these lists in the mid-sixteenth century. For example, in a letter dated 5 June 1557, Antonio Agustín explained to Onofrio Panvinio that he could identify the effacement of the name of Marc Anthony on the epigraph, perfectly matching what Cicero referred to in *damantio memoriae*:⁴⁰

Il rader il nome di M. Antonio fu fatto a posta come nelli libri di fasti facevano, et Cicerone voleva persuader si facesse contra Gabinio et Pisone se M. Catone non avesse contradetto.

Furthermore, Sigonio had a profound knowledge of Livy's historical work, which he published in 1555 with a commentary appearing in 1556.⁴¹ This ancient author led him to establish another parallel with those books that recorded Roman magistrates referred to in the *Ab urbe condita* (9.18: "paginas in annalium magistratumque fastis percurrere licet consulum dictatorumque").

At this point, the semantic range of the word *fasti* again covered both the series of political officers and the calendar. For this reason, in the second edition of Sigonio's *Fasti consulares*, published in 1555, an appendix entitled *Kalendarium vetus Romanum e marmore descripto* was attached.⁴² This additional section featured a Roman calendar transmitted by the epigraph known as *Fasti Maffeiani*, and was edited by Paolo Manuzio, son of Aldo the Elder. In his preface, Paolo claims he was the first to establish a link between the list of Roman magistrates and the calendar, affirming the originality of his

40 Carbonell 1991, 141; the reference is to Cic. *Sext.* 32-3. It is not by chance that after the rediscovery of the *Fasti Capitolini*, this passage was understood in a different light, see e.g., Manuzio 1579, 19: "*Ex fastis*] libris, in quibus consulum nomina scribebantur, ad Atticum lib. IV". The reference is to Cic. *Att.* 4.8a. 2.10: "si vero id est, quod nescio an sit, ut non minus longas iam in codicillorum fastis futurorum consulum paginulas habeant quam factorum, quid illo miserius nisi res publica, in qua ne speratur quidem melius quicquam?". See also Mayer 1997, 264. Antonio Agustín himself seems to have kept memory of this epistolary exchange when arranging the definition of *Fasti* in his commentary on Festus; see Agustín 1559: "*Fastorum*] Festi enim dies festi sunt. Hoc falsum est, sunt enim fasti dies, quibus dari licet praetori iudicia verba. Varro, Ovidius, Macrobius ab his diebus Fastorum libri appellantur, quibus eos dies cognoscimus, et translaticiae fastos consulum appellamus, quibus consules singulorum annorum continentur".

41 Sigonio 1555a; 1556a.

42 Sigonio 1555b.

choice.⁴³ In his opinion, this combination generated a clearer understanding of the institutional mechanisms of ancient Rome. Furthermore, Paolo declares that he followed the example of his father Aldo. The only ancient Roman calendar published by Aldo was the one attached to his 1516 edition of Ovid's *Fasti*, those same *Fasti Venusini* which he could find in an apograph of Fra' Giocondo's first transcription. As seen before, the link between the calendar and Ovid's *Fasti* was natural, considering their thematic proximity. In this work, Aldo published only the calendar of the *Fasti Venusini*, excluding the series of magistrates. Therefore, it can be assumed that Paolo saw Giocondo's manuscript as transmitting the calendar and the lists of magistrates as one single item. It appears that he wanted to replicate this pattern by combining the analogous parts (calendar plus list) in his own publication, where more complete and better-preserved pieces feature (*Fasti Maffeiani* and *Fasti Capitolini*).

In his edition of 1558, Onofrio Panvinio explained for the first time the tie between the ancient calendars and the lists of magistrates in the word *fasti*, justifying Sigonio's denomination. Panvinio felt that a full lexicographic analysis of the word was required in order to clarify its meaning and uses in ancient Roman times. The purpose of the first chapter of his commentary was to achieve this.⁴⁴ His dissertation focused on the different names given by scholars to this genre (the seriation of magistrates) in the previous decades, referring to several appellations, which included *chronologia*, *series*, *syllabus*, *elenchus*, *annales* and *fasti*, in order to refute those which had been used inappropriately.⁴⁵ Panvinio rejected *chronologia* be-

43 Sigonio 1555b, *lect.*: "Factum est a me sane libenter, ut, com edendi essent Romani fasti, e lapidibus capitolinis descripti, adiungere ad eos calendarium, ex quo ratio dierum, pro ea, quae olim Romae fuit, consuetudine, tota patet, atque in hanc me voluntatem, vel cupiditatem potius, primum ea, quam et mea sponte, et patris exemplo semper spectavi, publica literarum utilitas, deinde etiam Caroli Sigonii, viri optimi, et ab omni prorsus iniqui animi labe puri, singularis doctrina deduxit. Putavi enim, id quod res est, futurum, ut ad calendarium ex fastorum societate commendationis tantum accederet, quantum ad ipsos fastos e Sigonii studio ingenioque esse adinctum, qui diligenter additamentua ipsius, et in ea commentarium, qui propediem edetur, plenissimum legerit, facile cognoscet".

44 Panvinio 1558b, 113-18: *Cur hi libri Fastorum nomine appellati sunt, et quid inter Historiam, Annales, Diarium et Fastos intersit.*

45 Panvinio 1558b, 113: "Maximam inter eruditos viros, hoc tempore tabularum Capitolinarum quarum exemplo hoc opus edendi, vera germanaque inscriptio in Urbe controversiam excitavit. Alii enim erant, qui chronologiam, alii qui seriem, vel syllabum, sive elenchum, alii qui annales, alii denique qui fastos appellandos existimarent. Quibus omnibus tamquam supervacaneis omissis, hunc qui mihi verior visus est, et huic labori convenientior, indicem accepi, fastosque nuncupavi. Chronologiae enim vel chronici vocabulum, perinde ac nimis amplum, et plura quam quae hic explicantur complectens, reieci; etenim omnis annorum et magistratum omnium, sive regnorum series, quae Romanam, vel Graecam, vel Barbaram historiam contineat, chronologia vel chronicum dici potest. Fasti vero, ut infra aperiam, praeter cetera quae significant, ii

cause it was too vague and undetermined, as well as *annales*, because in his opinion it could not consist of a mere list of names, but needed a commentary or a supportive text, according to Cicero's *De oratore*. He accepted the terms *series*, *elenchus* and *syllabus*, in that they could be intended as simple lists of magistrates, without further implications.

However, the core of his discussion depended on how the word *fasti*, which, coming from the semantic field of calendars, later passed in an historical context. Relying on the definition given by Varro of the syntagma *dies fasti* (the propitious days within the calendar), Panvinio established that *fasti* extended its meaning to the entire calendar through a metonymical process. In fact, the calendar itself offered an exact connotation to each day of the year, specifying its particular value and purpose.⁴⁶ From this, Panvinio identified the semantic shift of the word and from this shift drew its definition as a list of magistrates ordered in yearly progression. In fact, just as calendars noted the function of each day of the year, the lists of magistrates acquired the function of an ideal calendar of history, because the consuls named each year in their yearly progression:⁴⁷

Fasti enim dicti sunt etiam hi libri, in quibus nomina magistratum continebantur, qui singulis annis fuere, et praesertim consulum. Nam sicut in superioris generis Fastis, unicuique diei sua solemnia, sive ludi, sive feriae, vel fasti, nefasti, comitialesque dies assignabantur, sic in his, singulis quibusque annis sui adscribebantur magistratus, sive Consules, vel Censores, aut Dictatores fuerint.

quoque libri appellantur, quibus praecipue populi Romani magistratum nomina comprehenduntur. Quidem idem etiam de seriei, elenchi et syllabi nominibus iudicandum est. Annalium autem appellationem tanquam minus huic operi cinvenientem improbaui, quod annales non nuda magistratum nomina ut fasti, sed et res ab ipsis in singulis annos gestas, breviterque descriptas, complectentur; idemque ferme sint cum historia, ut libro de Oratore docet Cicero: erat (inquit) historia nihil aliud nisi annalium confectio [Cic. *de orat.* 2.52]. Quibus verbis manifeste constat nuda magistratum nomina nulla ratione annales dici posse, ut quidam existimarunt".

46 Panvinio 1558b, 114: "Postea collectionem eorum dierum, quibus fari ac non fari liceret Fastos appellatam constat, appellatione ducta ab eo quod contentum est, id quod continet; additque his fuere dies comitiales et festi, solemnia deorum sacra, ludique et feriae in eorundem honorem constitutae, aliquot victoriae, resque insignes, item atri aliquot vitiosique dies. Quae omnia uno corpore clausa fasti appellati sunt, quae nos modo calendaria vocamus. [...] Horum fastorum exempla aliquot, lapides tabulis incisa adhuc Romae supersunt, quorum unum extat in aedibus viri optimi antiquitatisque studiosissimi Achillis Maffei accuratissime elegantissimesque marmoreis tabulis sculptum. Fastorum eiusmodi, quos nos calendaria appellamus".

47 Panvinio 1558b, 115.

To defend his position, Panvinio referred to a plethora of occurrences found in ancient literary sources.⁴⁸ However, although the textual evidence was solid and convincing, it was not enough. Its reliability could be proven only by cross-referencing it with material findings. And this was possible only after the discovery of the *Fasti Capitolini* in 1546. The fundamental role of this relic was underlined by Panvinio. And even more, this finding could also help identify other analogous works circulating at the time, but not yet acknowledged as such. This includes the *Fasti Venusini*, previously published by Mazocchi and Apianus.⁴⁹

Beside this general picture buttressed by an array of examples, Panvinio's discussion appears to be directed against a specific group of scholars who did rejected the word *fasti* as suitable for describing the list of consuls transmitted in the Roman epigraph. His critique appears to prefigure what Bartolomeo Marliani did a few years later in his last edition of this work published in 1560, which was actually entitled *Annales*. Marliani attempted to overturn the theses expressed by Panvinio, stating that the *annales* combined with *consulum* was more appropriate given the real nature of the ancient findings, especially since it found its literary counterpart in Livy. In fact, Marliani connected a passage of this ancient historian, in which *annalibus priscis* are mentioned, to the series of magistrates rediscovered in 1546 in the Roman Forum; thus the names of the consuls listed in yearly progression should be termed *annales* because this word better represented the source from which the annalistic histories drew information themselves.⁵⁰

Marliani then attempted to contest the dichotomy *fasti / annales*, accusing his opponents of having misunderstood the passage of Cicero's *Pro Sestio*, in which the practice of the erasure from the pub-

48 Panvinio 1558b, 116: "Quod si quis nec his contentus esset, ab eo quaererem, quoniam demum indice nuda magistratuum nomina apud veteres insignita fuerint? Quae quidem non nisi fastorum nomine appellata fuisse crediderim. Sexcenta enim praeterea auctorum loca citari possent, in quibus Fastorum consularium mentio est".

49 Panvinio 1558b, 115: "perinde ac sunt ij qui in tabulis Capitolinis incisi fuerunt, et ii qui ex hortulis Colotianis in aream domus Gentilis Delphinii transportati sunt, item ij Fasti municipales, qui a Petro Appiano referentur"

50 Marliani 1560, *Lect.*: "Romanorum magistratum hanc seriem nonnulli Fastos, alii Annales Consulum appellant: qua ratione sane non video. Nam cum singuli magistratus suos haberent annales, aut fastos, aut commentarios, in quibus quicquid gerebatur tam foris, quam in Urbe monumenti mandabant, non ego haec nuda nomina annales, aut fastos appellarim. At ne longo verborum ambitu tituloum exprimere cogar, Annalium vocabulo nunc utar, idque duabus literis A. C., hoc est Annales Consulum, significabo. Cur autem potius hoc, quam fastorum nomine appellaverim, ratio est, proprius ad argumentum rei accedit, praesertim cum addiderim Consulum, quasi singulorum annorum consulum narratio sit, quorum nomina in Annalibus scripta ostendit Livius quarto, his verbis: Idque momenti est, Consules illo anno fuisse, qui neque in analibus priscis, neque in libri magistratuum inveniuntur [Liv. 4.7.10]".

lic records for those political figures who did not fulfil the duties of their office honestly was determined: “non modo ex memoria, sed etiam ex fastis, evellendos”. He stated that the opposition *ex memoria / ex fastis* must have carried an actual significance, implying that such erasure took place in two different type of documents: while *ex memoria* concerned the lists of magistrates, *ex fastis* referred to the narrative histories reporting the facts and the acts of the magistrates in charge. The reason for this distinction relied on the etymology of *fasti* as transmitted by Varro – from *fando*, that is, speaking – which implied (in Marliani’s opinion) that they consisted of something more extensive than a synthetic sequence of names.⁵¹

Given these facts, Marliani opted for the term *annales* to provide to Panvinio’s *fasti* an alternative sense of belonging to a specific category of historical writing. However, Marliani appears less adamant in the pursuit of his position than his rival; he preferred to leave final judgement to the reader, given the uncertainty of the meaning of both the terms in antiquity. He therefore includes a third possibility: returning to either *series* or *catalogus*, because these two words reflected a neutral aspect of the relic (the fact that it was a list), rather than going into detail on the peculiarities of the genre.⁵² As we have seen before, *series* recalled his first title for the edition of 1549; *catalogus* instead was a brand new solution, because it evoked the appendix usually enclosed at the end of the Renaissance editions of the *Codex iuris civilis*. This bore a list of consuls and was aimed at better understanding Roman history and the subdivision of historical periods.⁵³

51 Marliani 1560, *Lect.*: “Potitumque varie in annalibus cognomen consulis se invenire. Quibus exemplis (ut alia plurima omittam) cum loquatur de consolibus, cur non dixit aliquando in fastis? Ut quidam appellandos esse putant, ad idque probandum citant inter alia hoc Cic. exemplum: iidemque consules, si appellandi sunt consules quos nemo est quin non modo ex memoria sed etiam ex fastis evellendos putet [Cic. *Sext.* 33.20.23]. Quod videtur reciprocum. Nam ubi dicit ex memoria, innuit illorum nomen ex serie consulum esse tollendum, et ex memoriis abradendum, item ex fastis ut cum nomine rerum gestarum pereat memoria. Praeterea cum fasti a fando sint dicti, nullam prorsus cum nominibus consulum affinitatem habere videntur, cum titulus ea potissimum ratione operibus praeponi debeat, ut indicet, quid in illis contineatur. Ideo annales consulum, potius quam, ut diximus, fastos appellandos esse censemus”.

52 Marliani 1560, *Lect.*: “Ideo hos magistras, seriem aut graeco vocabulo catalogum, forsitan rectius vocaremus. Sed haec lectoris iudicio relinquimus”.

53 *Codex* 1535: *Catalogus consulum, tum ad discernenda Constitutionum tempora perutile, tum ad totius Romanae historiae cognitionem maxime necessarium*.

5.5 Conclusions

From this survey on the different occurrences of the word *fasti* in early modern times in epigraphic and philological publications, some general conclusions can be drawn affecting both the history of the classical tradition and the perception of antiquity during the Renaissance. Together with a renewed interest towards ancient findings and antiquity in general, a specific vocabulary was developed to identify, define, and circumscribe those findings, consolidating the bond between denomination and the acquisition of knowledge. This was a language of unremitting progress gathered from many literary sources, which was applied to and sometimes manipulated to coincide with the newly discovered relics.

In fact, if the term *fasti* could easily be understood to mean calendar (because of its etymology), it was much harder to explain its historical context, and to clarify why calendars and lists of magistrates were combined. For this reason, after Fra' Giocondo had depicted them together, the two parts of the same unit were irreparably separated in the first half of the sixteenth century, under the influence of Pomponio Leto and Angelo Poliziano. The cases of Aldo Manuzio, Francesco Albertini, Jacopo Mazocchi and Peter Apianus demonstrate this fracture.

Only a compelling event, such as the unearthing of the epigraph in the Roman Forum, could change the *status quo*. This discovery forced scholars to rethink the entire question and to develop a systematic reappraisal of the lists of magistrates, which were known in scholarly environments but were never properly investigated.

The nomenclature adopted after 1546 delineates this cultural pattern well. Marliani, Sigonio, and Panvinio raised a hermeneutical debate illuminating the interactions between the ancient texts and the archaeological findings. Their different choices (*series*, *fasti*, *annales*), and their attempts to explain them in relation to both the *corpus* of literary sources and the material findings, reflect the evolution of scholarly sensitivity towards the classical tradition. The fact that after this date the word *fasti* was generally acknowledged to mean a 'list of magistrates' directly correlates the growth of knowledge to an increase in material evidence.

The Renaissance scholars of the second half of the sixteenth century reached full awareness of the affinity between calendars (*fasti*) and the successions of magistrates (*fasti*) and were perfectly aware that the word had shifted from one semantic sphere to another. The combination of the *Fasti Capitoloni* and the *Fasti Maffeiani* made by Paolo Manuzio in Sigonio's second edition (1555) was the turning-point in shaping this new dimension.

The question as to which genre the lists of magistrates belonged to was a fundamental phase in the process of their denomination. Since

the very beginning, scholars perceived they had a link (of sorts) with the transmission of history. The words of Annius of Viterbo actually placed these seriations in a precise theoretical frame, i.e. a reliable chronology. In this light, Dionysus of Halicarnassus' *De praecipuis linguae Graecae auctoribus elogia*, edited by Robert Estienne and published in 1556, helps to provide further clarification on how the name and nature of these lists were conceived by scholars. Specifically, in the appendix written by the Polish humanist Stanislaw Ilowski, entitled *De historica facultate*, he infers that the actions of mankind create a parameter which contributes to establishing historical order between natural and civil time:⁵⁴

Historiam ratione temporum distinguendam esse, et civilis et naturalis ratio docet. [...] ut actiones hominum, quae motus expertes sunt, tempore notentur atque describantur.

⁵⁴ Ilowski 1556, 36.

