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Ivory Lists: Consular diptychs, Christian appropriation and polemics of time in Late Antiquity

Kim Bowes

On 1 January, in the year 487, the citizens of Rome gathered at the Capitol, in front of the temple of Jupiter, to witness a ceremony which had marked the beginning of each Roman year for nearly a millennium: the naming of the year’s consuls. The consuls were the chief magistrates of the Roman state and the attainment of the consular office marked the pinnacle of a bureaucratic career. Two consuls were named each year and, by the late empire, they were appointed by the eastern and western emperors, respectively. In 487 the aristocrat Boethius assumed the consulship in the West, and acted as the impresario of the extravagant festivities which took place over the next three days. As part of those festivities, Boethius distributed to his senatorial peers gifts whose commission was legally restricted to consuls and which seemed to have symbolized the ancient function and power of the consular office. These gifts were the ivory consular diptychs.

Today the consular diptych of Boethius is displayed in the Museo Civico Cristiano in Brescia (plate 4). The clarity with which we can reconstruct the events of January 487, described above, is due in no small part to its survival and that of the more than forty other consular diptychs preserved in museums and church treasuries. This corpus of consular diptychs has been the subject of several major studies, of the objects themselves as well as of the consuls and ceremonies they depict. From this firmly dated sculptural group, art historians have succeeded in bringing a degree of order to the stylistic chaos of Late Antique sculpture. Historians have used the titles carved on the tops of the diptychs to understand the character and evolution of the Late Antique bureaucracy. Prosopographers have similarly mined the epigraphic material to trace aristocratic familial ties. In short, the modern uses of consular diptychs have been numerous and multifarious. But when we ask how Boethius and his fellow consuls made use of these same diptychs, we can supply only the simplest of answers. And if we ask what specifically a consular diptych contained, that is, what was the nature of the text it carried within its leaves, we must answer plainly that we do not know. For consular diptychs, like other kinds of diptychs, were a particularly fancy brand of writing tablet, with an inset surface, probably of wax, upon which the text of the diptych was written (see the example in plate 5). Not a single consular diptych preserves its wax text and thus, the most obvious functional element of the consular diptych has, until now, remained unknown.
Past students of consular diptychs have not neglected this question of function, although it has never been the object of serious study. Given the certainty that consuls distributed consular diptychs to their peers upon their elevation to the consulship, scholars have assumed that the diptychs contained an announcement...
banal, not to mention unsupported, assumption. The first answer is, of course, that because no diptych text survives, no definitive answer is possible. The more complex answer lies in the long and impressive historiography of consular diptychs, a historiography which can be traced back well into the eighteenth century.

Antonio Gori took the first, and perhaps most decisive step in that historiography when he gathered all consular diptychs together in his masterful catalogue of 1739, defining for the first time the consular diptychs as members of a eponymous corpus. Once the diptychs had been defined as a group, it remained for others to define that group's most salient, or as it turned out, most useful characteristics. Wilhelm Meyer found in the diptych corpus a veritable dictionary of ceremonial costume and attributes, which he then used to attribute several unnamed diptychs. Emile Molinier focused on the diachronic properties of the corpus, noting both the iconographic and stylistic evolution visible throughout the 150-year life span of the corpus. The potential for Morellian analysis on the firmly dated group was fully realized by Wolfgang Volbach in his 1916 catalogue, where diptychs became the most powerful tool in the effort to trace the origins of various Late Antique stylistic trends. Richard Delbrueck's masterful study of 1929, which remains the standard reference today, combined each of these methods to produce a volume that both serves as a near-complete catalogue of imperial and bureaucratic iconography, and traces the ebb and flow of Late Antique stylistic change.

Two trends emerge from this very brief historiographic survey that partially explain why a reconstruction of the diptychs' inner texts has never been seriously attempted. The first is that all studies of diptychs, with the exception of those by prosopographers, have focused on the diptychs' images, that is, on the diptych as art. Given that the diptychs were on one level intended for pictorial consumption, this emphasis on images is perfectly justifiable. However, it omits the simple fact that consular diptychs are diptychs, and that in the ancient world, the diptych was first and foremost used for writing. By focusing on the diptych as art, the previous studies have neglected to address the diptych as text medium. Even if one assumes that diptychs of ivory were for display only, we must still ask why the diptych form, a text form, was chosen for consular gifts.

The second tendency is for the consular diptych, perhaps even the Late Antique consularship itself, to be regarded as a formulaic display, as propaganda devoid of significant meaning or power. It has been suggested that since consular diptychs were produced in bulk, with little or no exertion of individual choice in iconography or portrait type, they represent repositories of stock iconographies, easily fed to the Late Antique viewer. Certain aspects of this scenario are undoubtedly true, and it is not the intention of this essay to ferret out originality of design or intent on the part of artisans or consuls. However, the acknowledgement of consular diptychs' 'shallow' pictorial origins seems to have been extended to the reconstitution of the diptych's interior texts. In other words, if the diptych itself is termed a formulaic display, its text is therefore assumed to have been similarly vacuous, a kind of ancient greeting card.

In the absence of any surviving diptych text, how are we to challenge this assumption? The first step is an examination of the kinds of roles diptychs in
general played in Roman culture. Diptychs, also called *pugillares*, *tabulae* or sometimes *codicilli*, were the clipboard or notebook of the ancient world.13 They were usually made of wood, but the more elegant among them were carved of ivory, and were used to write letters, jot down first drafts, or record business transactions.14 Some scholars have denied such functionality to ivory diptychs, claiming their valuable and supposedly friable material made them suitable only for display.15 However, a legal treatise of the third century by Ulpian tells us that ivory *cerati*, or waxed tablets, were to be legally treated as books.16 Thus, I think we can reasonably conclude that while ivory diptychs were probably not used to practise one’s multiplication tables, they could be used to hold texts of consequence.

Significantly, two other common uses of diptychs and other types of waxed tablets relate specifically to the office of the consul. Seneca tells us that law tables, the most important tools of the trade for all magistrates and, particularly for consuls, were kept on groups of waxed tablets called *codices.*17 A passage from Prudentius further suggests that by the fifth century, writing tablets, such as diptychs, were also used to hold lists of consuls. He notes that consuls, ‘mark with their names the record of the years, and in wax or bronze figure among the men of old.’18 The ‘record of the years’, refers to a list of consuls, while the descriptive ‘of wax or bronze’ indicates written lists, either monumental inscriptions with bronze lettering, or more significantly for us, lists kept on wax-filled writing tablets. One of the most common types of wax tablet was, of course, the portable diptych.

The consular lists to which Prudentius refers were a simple yet vitally important type of text, one which, as we shall see, was intimately linked to Late Antique ideals of the consular office. A consular list, or the *fasti consulares*, was a list recording the names of the consuls and the year they served.19 These lists could either be wholly complete, beginning with the first consul, Junius Brutus in 509 BC and ending with the current year’s consuls, or they could span a shorter period of time closer to the present.20 The earliest consular *fasti* were kept by the Pontifex Maximus, the keeper of the Roman calendar, and were posted in monumental inscriptions. Historians and chroniclers also maintained and produced consular *fasti*, and even less official redactions may have been produced by merchants for sale to the public.21 Since time was kept by consular years, people had frequent need for reference lists of the consuls to name the year of a transaction or event. Even schoolchildren were required to memorize lists of consuls.22 Thus, the consular list was not only a chronological system, but also a common type of text, and a useful one.

If the diptych form was used to hold consular lists, as Prudentius seems to suggest, could ivory consular diptychs also have contained such lists? The most provocative evidence comes from the *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* of Quodvultdeus, a fifth-century bishop of Carthage. He relates, ‘... from ivory *calculi*, the inscribed names of the proconsuls were publicly recited in the presence of the judge in the forum of Carthage ... This reading of the white [lists] was a celebration day.’23 Despite the awkwardness of its vocabulary and syntax, the ‘ivory calculi’ are usually interpreted as a reference to ivory writing tablets.24 The passage occurs in a section principally occupied with the revelation of sacred numerology in everyday activities, particularly board games, in which the term *calculi* refers to gaming pieces. Quodvultdeus’s extended and rather strained comparison between the *calculi* of board games and the *calculi* for recording the blessed, probably explains his awkward use of the term *calculi* in this passage. The reading of a written (*conscripta*) list of names, many of which referred to absent persons (*absentes*), would not have made use of *calculi* in the usual sense of small stones, but rather flat tablets. The term *calculi* is thus used both to refer to the reckoning, additive properties of the list, while continuing the leitmotif of *calculi* and judgement. Explained thus, the passage confirms that lists of proconsuls were written on ivory tablets, which were kept for commemorative purposes. Furthermore, it is also likely that this reading from the ivory tablets took place upon the expiration of the proconsul’s term and the ascension of the new proconsul, the same circumstances during which consular diptychs were distributed.25 While Quodvultdeus does not mention consular *calculi* specifically, he does indicate that lists of important bureaucrats were kept on ivory tablets and thus provides yet another indication that consular diptychs may have been inscribed with consular lists.

Quodvultdeus’s emphatic mention of ‘ivory’ lists and ‘white’ lists is also important. An imperial edict of 384 limited the use of ivory diptychs to consuls, while lesser offices were supposed to employ other materials.26 Why would ivory be specifically linked to the consular office? Again, the history of consular lists sheds some light on this prohibition. Cicero and Servius both relate that the first consular lists were written on whitened tablets, *‘in album*, or *‘tabula dealbata’.27 The Theodosian restriction on ivory for consuls may have been intended to evoke those earliest consular lists. While consular diptychs seem to have been highlighted in paint or gilding,28 their backgrounds and certainly their interiors were left white, continuing the traditional association of ‘white’ lists with the consul.

But a white colour was not the only link between the earlier, monumental consular lists and our later ivory diptychs. The majority of inscribed consular *fasti* were laid out in a two-columned list, which when read together contained the two consuls for each year. This two-columned format echoes the bi-partite layout of a diptych, *The Fasti Magistorum Vici* (plate 6) from around AD3 contained a list of censors, *city* magistrates and a full calendar, as well as a consular list running from 438 BC. The adverse side of this double-sided inscription contained the *fasti consulares* and was divided into three ‘panels’, composed of a rounded border and recessed writing face, with each panel containing two columns of names.29

Another indication that consular diptychs may have contained consular lists appears in Sidonius Apollinaris’s detailed letter to Namatus, in which he describes the consular assumption of Asterius in 499. ‘... As soon as the largesse had been distributed and the *fasti* had been presented, a shout went up from the whole Gallic assembly. ... 250 *Fasti* here has been interpreted as meaning merely ‘consular’;21 which has lead scholars to suppose that the ‘consular’ objects in question were consular diptychs.22 However, the term *fasti* usually pertains to judicial calendars, or more specifically, consular lists. More importantly, it is only in its chronological, enumerative sense that Sidonius employs the word in the remainder of his writings, and then most often to refer to consular lists.23 Thus, a re-evaluation of the meaning of this passage seems in order. Sidonius thus seems

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to suggest that consular lists were distributed as gifts. From the above-mentioned Theodosian Code edict, we can be fairly certain that consular diptychs were eponymous consular gifts and it thus requires only a small logical jump to suppose that consular lists and consular diptychs were actually one and the same.

Naturally, the question of whether a complete consular list could fit in a consular diptych arises. The answer is, probably not, as such a list would run to over one thousand names. However, as we have indicated, abbreviated consular lists existed and seem to have been quite common, because of the bulkiness of the full list and the more pressing need for the more current consular dates. Consular lists also need not have included the full names of the consuls, which could have been highly abbreviated. We must also not underestimate the amount of material a diptych could hold. Martial speaks of vast amounts of Virgil compressed into tiny editions. The Barberini diptych, not a true, single-piece diptych, but formed of five sections of ivory and measuring approx. 33 x 25 cm in total, held a list of over 350 names in six columns when re-used in an ecclesiastical context. The smallest of the consular diptychs measures approx. 29 x 13 cm per leaf, which, using the Barberini model and allowing for the reduced size of the waxed inset, could accommodate over 250 names and possibly many more.

One particular surviving consular list further connects such consular lists with the consular diptych. The so-called Codex-Calendar of 354 was created for the Roman aristocrat Valentinus. It contained a record of the festivals of Rome, followed by a consular list, an Easter cycle, and lists of the urban prefects of Rome, bishops of Rome and martyrs. The consular list is preceded by images of the two eponymous consuls of the year: Constantius II and Caesar Gallus (plates 7 and 8). As all scholars of the calendar have noted, the images are strikingly similar to the images on western consular diptychs. These two images are also the last images in the codex, while the consular list is the first of the purely textual pieces. Together, image and list link the first, illustrated half of the calendar (sections I–VII) with the second, purely textual section (sections VIII–XVI). Thus, the consular images and accompanying consular fasti bind images with enumerative chronologies. It is important to understand this link as a purposeful choice rather than simply as a logical assemblage, because other images in the calendar are not juxtaposed with their respective chronologies. Clearly, consular images and consular fasti had a shared history and were identified as a functioning unit by the codex’s compiler, again pointing to a connection between consular fasti and consular diptychs. Furthermore, like consular diptychs, the Codex-Calendar was a gift object, indicating that chronologies, chronological lists and calendars were acceptable objects of gift exchange among the aristocracy and therefore likely consular gifts.

Indeed, if we turn to the consuls’ own perceptions and expectations of their office, we find that their self-definition is based on a chronological, familial relationship with past consuls, making the choice of consular lists as gifts a logical one. Consular panegyrics, written for the same festivities at which the consular diptychs were distributed, are our best source for traces of consular self-definition. Panegyrics were not simply acclamations of the consul or the conferring emperor, nor merely an opportunity for interaction between official and public, but also a characterization of the consulship itself, a ritual re-definition of the meaning of an office. Time and again, the consular panegyrics of the fourth and fifth centuries defined the consulship as a cursus of past consuls, a lineage of men tied to the present consul by the unbroken tie of the succession of the office. Claudius Mamertinus, consul of 362, bragged that, ‘Even the consulate of Lucius Brutus and Publius Valerius, who, after the expulsion the kings, were the first to govern the city with an annual authority, ought not, in my judgement, to be ranked above ours.’ The bond that linked Brutus to Mamertinus was a succession of years, each named by its consul, and it is this consanguinity with the year that was one of the most attractive aspects of the Late Antique consulship. Libanius defines the consulship as membership in a chronological system, extending back into the distant past and surviving into future generations:

For what could confer greater dignity than that the whole world should revolve around this title like the sun, and that the name bestowed by our
The bond between the consul and his predecessors, and the corresponding equation of consulship and time made by the consuls themselves, further indicate that the accompaniment to the consular diptych image was very likely the chronological, eponymous consular list.

The very period that saw the appearance of the consular diptych not coincidentally witnessed the explosion of consular lists and enumerative chronologies of all kinds. The so-called consular annal, an annotated consular list, appeared in the fourth century, and seems to have been perpetuated not by official record keepers, but by various individuals who used the backbone of consular lists to track both state and personal events. These lists were often illustrated as, for instance, the Alexandrian world chronicle. The Latin chronicles, such as those of Hydatius, Prosper of Aquitaine and the Gallic chronicle, were also based on consular annals or lists, and betray the same impetus and enumerative, rather than descriptive, aesthetic as the consular list.

This chronology mania is important for our discussion of consular diptychs and lists for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights the widespread popularity of the consular list in the fifth and sixth centuries. Secondly, it betrays a fascination, if not obsession, with the tracking of time and the need to find one's own place in the many different kinds of time – consular, Christian and universal. Gibbon once marvelled that aristocrats would vie for the Late Antique consulship, 'for the sole purpose of giving a date to the year and a festival to the people'. The Late Antique consulship may have retained its value precisely because it offered what was now a valuable commodity – the possibility of a permanent piece of and place in time. That union of time and rank was displayed to the public in the form of the diptych with its interior consular list.

The functional union of consular diptych with consular list considerably alters the hermeneutic lens through which we have viewed these objects. No longer can they be understood as simply a display image or propagandistic gift. The image of the consul was not only the image of a man, but also the image of a year and a group who defined the passage of time. This being the case, the later appropriation of these same diptychs by the Christian church, as well as the manufacture of certain, purely Christian diptychs, shows a considerable empathy with the functional/imaginative mechanics of their consular cousins, for Christian diptychs were also used to hold special lists of names.

The use of diptychs in the Christian church has a long and convoluted history, one which must be reviewed briefly here. Its general beginnings can be traced to the earliest Christian liturgies in a general prayer for the members of a community, the oratio communis. A specific, enumerative listing of living or dead members, however, does not seem to have evolved until the late third or fourth centuries. At the same time as the prayers for the living or dead were being separated and enlarged from the main liturgy, an enumeration of the saints, or communicantes, evolved from the prayer for the dead. While this name-reading
section of the mass came to be known as the 'reading of the diptychs', diptychs are not named as the accepted medium of such lists until the fifth century.\textsuperscript{55} The types of lists read from diptychs varied in the eastern and western parts of the empire. In the East, the names of the deceased were read from diptychs, but there is little evidence for lists of the living. In the West, the prayer for the dead appeared significantly later, probably in the seventh century. However, lists of persons who contributed bread and wine for the mass were included in the western liturgy from the late fourth century.\textsuperscript{56} The reading of the saints or \textit{communicantes} appeared in both liturgies and accompanied the prayers for the living and the dead.\textsuperscript{57}

The relationship between Christian liturgical diptychs and consular diptychs is most obviously manifested by the several consular diptychs that were later re-used by Christian churches. The Areobindus diptych in the cathedral of Lucca was inscribed in the late sixth or early seventh century with a list of over twenty saints, including seven of the apostles, plus popes, church fathers and northern Italian saints such as Fredianus, Torpes, Vitalis and Nabor.\textsuperscript{58} The diptych of Anastasius, the verso of which was formerly in the Berlin Antiquarium, contained a late sixth- or early seventh-century list preceded by a prayer to '... the most blessed apostles and all the martyrs'. The saints begin with the Virgin and apostles, followed by popes, fathers of the church and Gallic saints, such as Remi of Rheims and Medard of Noyons.\textsuperscript{59} The diptych of Boethius in Brescia was painted in the early seventh century with images of the resurrection of Lazarus, and of the church fathers Jerome, Augustine and Gregory (plate 9). Beneath the images was inscribed '\textit{quos deo offerimus}', and a partially erased list of names, including the above saints, plus Ss Philastre and possibly Gaudentius of Brescia and St Antholom of Milan.\textsuperscript{60}

As we have seen, diptychs could have found any one of a number of uses in the early medieval liturgy. However, each of these 'christianized' consular diptychs was cast into consistent, specific roles. Despite the popularity of the prayer for the living in the western liturgy, each of the re-used consular diptychs was used to hold a list of saints or the \textit{communicantes}, including local sainted bishops. These lists are strikingly similar to the consular diptych's original function as holder of consular lists, not simply in their shared, enumerative form, but in their function as definers of community.\textsuperscript{61} The list of consuls was included in the diptych displaying the image of the current consul precisely to unite that consul with his self-defining community of consuls past. Consuls defined the length and greatness of the Roman state and Roman community through a \textit{cursus bonorum}, a sequence of men, while saints and bishops, as the patrons and leaders of the Christian community, similarly defined Christian identity. Indeed, the inclusion of local saints on these diptychs serve to define the micro-community and its tie to the universal and eternal Christian community, for Ss Frediano of Lucca (c. 588), Remi of Rheims (c. 330), and Philastrius of Brescia (c. 390) were also local leaders, designates and embodiments of their community.\textsuperscript{62} In fact, by the fifth century, both Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola compared saints, as judges or societal emblems, and even newly converted Christians, to consuls, terming them 'consuls of Christ'.\textsuperscript{63} By appropriating consular diptychs for church use, the Christians thus replaced the Roman list of magistrates who not only marked Roman time,
betraying the shift towards new, non-linear notions of time which would pervade the medieval world.64 However, these lists were placed within a diptych whose cover bore the image, not simply of a man, but one whom every citizen would associate with a certain Roman year. That very juxtaposition of a list of Christian saints with a Roman consul introduced the notion of linear time into the timeless world of the holy and betrayed the continuing intertwining of chronological systems which persisted into the early Middle Ages.65

Just as the functional dialectic introduced by consular lists changes how we might understand consular diptychs reused in Christian contexts, it can similarly affect our reading of purely Christian diptychs. One diptych in particular, the so-called Carrand diptych in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, dated to the late fourth or early fifth century, seems to represent a hybrid of aristocratic self-aggrandizement and biblical exegesis, and for this reason, has proved somewhat resistant to modern iconographic analysis.66 Recent scholarship has produced persuasive interpretations using typologies found in Late Antique sermons.67 However, our new understanding of the function of consular diptychs indicates that the Carrand diptych programme derives specifically from the enumerative function of diptychs, and offers particular commentary on that function, as well as on the polemic of chronology and community membership.

The Carrand diptych leaves have now been separated and mounted on two separate panels (plate 10). One leaf depicts Adam reclining in Paradise, his hand raised in the gesture of speech which seems to be directed to the various animals who surround him. The second panel is arranged in three registers, the lower two of which have been identified as scenes from Paul’s exploits on Malta. Kathleen Shelton’s examination of the diptych’s hinge marks has shown that the original diptych was arranged so that when open, the Paul leaf would have been the diptych verso and the Adam leaf the recto.68 The principal, or ‘cover’ leaf of the closed diptych then, would have been the Adam leaf.

Both Shelton and Ellen Konowitz have utilized the several fourth- and fifth-century exegetical links between Adam and Paul to explain the juxtaposition of these two disparate scenes and the diptych as a whole as a statement on the power of reason and faith, respectively, over wild nature.69 The multiple references to this typology by John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Basil all make such an interpretation logical and plausible. However, as Shelton herself noted, many aspects of the diptych itself do not fall directly in line with the exegesis, particularly elements on the Paul leaf, and so it is to these that we shall turn first.

The upper register of this leaf depicts Paul seated on a complex carved chair, conversing with a younger man, while another man listens over Paul’s shoulder. The two lower registers depict Paul’s exploits on Malta (Acts 28.3–9), with the immunity from the sting of the viper in the second register conflated with the healing of the sick in the lowest register. As Shelton has rightly emphasized, it is not Paul, but rather the princeps insulae, Publius, who occupies the centre of the viper scene, and of the diptych in general.70 According to the scriptural text, Publius was not even present at the miracle of the viper. This textual disparity combined with the princeps’ unnaturally large hand raised in a gesture of witness, and his placement at the focal point of both centre and lower registers forces a re-evaluation of the meaning of the scene and the possible reasons for its selection.

As Shelton has suggested, the patron of the diptych was probably a member of the aristocracy and emphasized the figure of Publius to suggest that he, too, was a witness to the faith.71 The top register of this same leaf has resisted any specific textual referent, as no episodes of Paul’s teaching appear in the Malta adventures, and the other incidents of the apostle’s teaching are too numerous and the scene too generic, to indicate a specific event.72 If we assume, however, that the patron of the diptych has selected imagery not solely or even principally with the goal of creating a
narrative or exegetical statement, but rather to draw a network of ties between the
apostle and himself as official, we need not look for any textual referent. Paul is
specifically shown seated in a carved chair, the bottom of which is taken from the
sella curulis of consul, while the top is more thronelike. The obvious parallels
with judicial furniture, combined with the added prop of scroll and standing
listeners evoke a generic image of Paul as teacher–judge. The patron has again
emphasized aspects of Paul's identity that relate to his own official identity.
But what meaning, aside from simple self-aggrandizement, can we take from
this sophisticated mesh of New Testament events and Late Antique bureaucratic
official, Publius, who witnessed a scriptural event and additionally wished to
show that he, like Paul, was a learned and fair judge. In the same way that the
in a community of great men, the Carrand diptych patron used the same
witness and just magistrate. Analogous cases of such constructed ancestry existed
lives and included a fictitious relative as a witness or secondary figure in the
consul Asterius Turcii seems to have sponsored the hagiographies and cults of
official named Asterius, who plays an active role in each martyr's life. Like
the patron of the Carrand diptych and like the Late Antique consul, created a
lineage for himself based not simply on name, but on shared occupation. Both
Asterius and the Carrand diptych patron shared the consular mode of self-
definition by association with past officials, one who shared their official and
aristocratic status and whose shared lineage inserted them into a new, Christian
curses of history.

The Adam leaf on the other hand, offers explicit visual commentary on
diptychs' enumerative functions. The scene depicts Adam among the beasts in
paradise. This moment occurs in two places in the Genesis narrative, first in
Genesis 1:28–30, when God confers the right of dominion over the beasts of land,
sea and air. The second occurrence matches the iconography of the diptych more
specifically and occurs in Genesis 2:19–20. This later passage describes Adam
naming the animals and describes the process of naming itself, the many kinds of
paradisiacal rivers (Genesis 2:10–14). The Carrand diptych shows Adam in the
text have been rather uncomfortably crammed in at the bottom of the diptych.
Clearly, it is the specific incident of naming which is referenced here not, as some
scholars have emphasized, the act of domination.

Naming was, of course, the function of consular and Christian liturgical diptychs. Thus, the naming scene, which would have occupied the
principal, front leaf of the diptych, is a direct, scriptural commentary on the
function of diptychs themselves. While we do not know if this particular diptych
served as a bureaucratic gift, as Shelton has suggested, or as a liturgical object, we
now know that both kinds of diptychs probably bore lists of names. Naming, as
we have seen in our analysis of Christian liturgical diptychs, was also an
affirmation of orthodoxy, of membership in a community. The patron further
emphasized his own membership in this community on the right leaf through his
creation of a biblical 'family' in Publius and Paul. These New Testament judges
form a pictorial counterpart to the official community of consuls found inside
consular diptychs. Thus, those named on the diptych's interior and the donor
alluded to without have now become part of a biblical history, their names joined
with the first giving of names in Paradise.

The consulsip of Boethius, with which we began this essay, opened on the
first day of the New Year. The festivities that accompanied his accession were a
unified celebration of new consulship and new year, a cycle which defined the
passage of time as specifically Roman time. The consulsip, especially in Late
Antiquity, was also defined by notions of time, and by the continuity of time marked
by the sanctity of an office. The textual, visual and historical evidence which suggests that consular diptychs contained consular lists is persuasive
precisely because of this oft-ignored, essential aspect of the consulsip. The
Carrand diptych exemplifies the persistent association of the diptych form, both
consular and Christian, with such enumerative, chronological functions, but it
also foreshadows the death of that same consular cycle. Like the consular
diptychs, re-inscribed with the names of the Christian saints, the Carrand patron's
adoption of Publius and Paul as Christian ancestors witnessed the birth of a new,
Christian chronology, one which would replace the 1,000-year-old system of civic
judges with which the Romans marked their time and their history.

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Notes
1 For instance, E. Kitzinger, Byzantine Art in the
Making, Cambridge, MA, 1977, pp. 46–9; J. Kellwitz, Österreichische Fläktt der
theodosianischen Zeit, Studien zur Spanischen
2 For instance, R. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S.
Schwarz and K. Worp, Consuls of the Later
Roman Empire, Atlanta, 1987; A. Cameron and
D. Schauer, 'The Last Consul: Basilius and his
Diptych', Journal of Roman Studies, vol. 72,
1982, pp. 126–45; A. Cameron, 'Consular
diptychs in their social context: new eastern
evidence', Journal of Roman Archaeology,
3 For instance, the many references to the corpus
by A. Jones, J. Martin and J. Morris,
Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire,
4 See Symm., Epist. 2.81; 5.36; and 7.76.
5 For instance, R. Delbrück, Die
Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler,
Berlin and Leipzig, 1929, p. 7, as well as
specialized studies for example, K. Stolto, 'Roman Aristocrats, Pagan Commission: The
Carrand Diptych', Jahrbuch für Antike und
above-cited works is an explicit ancient reference
cited for this assertion. R. Bagnall, et al., (op. cit.
[note 2], p. 87, n. 10), note that there is no basis for
the theory that diptychs served as invitations.
6 Thesaurus veterrum diptychorum consularium et
ecclesiasticum tum eiusdem auctoris cum
aliorum lucubracionibus illustratus ac in tres
tomes divisus, Florence, 1759.
7 'Zwei antike Ellenbeindrucke der k. Staats-
Bibliothek in München', Abhandlungen der
CONSULAR DIPTYCHS, CHRISTIAN APPROPRIATION AND POLEMICS OF TIME

Philosophisch-Philologischen Classe der königlich bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 15, no. 1, 1879, pp. 1-84.


10 Delbrueck, op. cit. (note 5), passim.


13 H. Gruven ("Heidnische Dipytten", Mittelalterliche des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung, vol. 27, 1913, p. 201), claimed that the term "diptych/dipylon" was first used to designate official, gift diptychs, and to distinguish these from "private" diptychs. For the falsity of this claim and the plurality of terms used to designate consular and other diptychs, see the etymology in Steinmüller, op. cit. (note 11).


15 Steinmüller, op. cit. (note 11), col. 1141.

16 Dig., 302, 52. prael. "omnia volumina, sive in charta sive in membra sint sive in quavis aliqua materia vel eis aequatur vel aequatur materiae vel eis invenitur." As Roberts and Skeat note (op. cit. [note 11], p. 31), ivory tablets are here described as a subset of other, more narrative book types. For possible fourth-century changes to Ulpius, see F. Wietacker, Textuften klassischer Juristen, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, vol. 3, no. 45, 1960, chap. 4.

17 Sen. De brv. vit. 13,4. "quia plurium tabularum contextus caudis spuriis antiquus


19 See the question of colour on Late Antique and Byzantine ivory has become a controversial one. C. Conklin, "The lettering of the Polycheiron on Byzantine Ivoories", Princeton, 1995, pp. 16-7 and 43), claims that consular diptychs, and indeed most Late Antique and Byzantine ivories, have rendered invisible carefully rendered text, and that the traces of paint found on ivories need not be original. See also A. De B. Gravina (ed.), Inscrizioni Illyriche. Volume I: Ferrara, Catanzaro, I voli di Eraclea. I Consoli Censorsi e Tribunale, Rome, 1947, pp. 279-90 and pl. LXXXVI-IXXIX. The Fasti Magni in the calendar actually contains two consular lines per year, although the two columns per panel format is still maintained. Epit. 8,4.5, in 13th century manuscripts, is ab omni Galliae... Tr. W. B. Anderson, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge and London, 1955.


This is assuming that the lists began with the consularship of Julius Caesar or the Passion of Christ. i.e., most of the so-called Consularia Italiana, see Cronica Monronia, op. cit. (note 20), p. 15-148, in which case the list is much longer.


14. 186. See also 14.184 and 188.

For a reproduction of the list, see F. Cabrol, "Diptyques", Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, vol. 4, Paris, 1911, pp. 1559-1560.

Assuming a minimum 27 × 11cm writing surface, permitting 126 names per leaf. If two names were written below each letter, one per page, this space would be reduced to the left-most column, about 400 names would fit on one of the larger consular diptychs. See Landi, in 1969, 89.


The recognition of the Calendar's reconstructed sequence is given in Salzman, op. cit. (note 39), p. 121.

41 The consular lists are preserved in Vienna, Bern and Brussels copies of the Calendar (Vienna, Ms., nos. 271-2, 272; Brussels, Ms., nos. 108, fol. 5-13; Bruxelles, Ms., 7542-7454, Ms. 159v-191v). The consular illustrations are preserved in the Bibliothèque Apostolica Vaticana copies of the Calendar (Barb. Lat. 2154, fol. 13 and 14).


For instance, the image of the tych of Rome is separated from the Chronicle of the City of Rome by 14 sections. See Salzman, op. cit. (note 39), p. 52.

44 H. Stern noted the consanguinity of diptych and luxury calendar as gift item and agrees that consular fasi were given by consuls upon their ascension to office. (Stern, Le calendrier de 354, op. cit. (note 39), pp. 302-303, 305).

Unfortunately, the evidence he adduces in support of this claim is based on improper translations (Auston, Epist. 12, 8, 11, Sironius, Epist. 13, 8, 3), and a consular image in Aragon which shows a ball with a bearded face, but which is in fact a selle currus (see G. Skerk, The Calendar and Painting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconier in Aragon, Stockholm, 1974).


For the absence of official commissions, see Kaufmann, op. cit. (note 31), p. 314.

A more complete bibliography can be found in S. Muhlbauer, The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius and the Gallic Historian of the 5th Century, 1999.


60 Muhlberger, op. cit. (note 48), passim.


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include the possible pagan practice of listing cult donors (see E. Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity*, ed. F. Grant, New York, 1957, p. 305; Graveen, op. cit. [note 13], pp. 215–20), which has been rejected by many (Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1020; Steinmüller, op. cit. [note 11], col. 1139; Delbrueck, op. cit. [note 5], p. 10), and biblical practice (see Ezek. 37:15–19; Exod. 32:23, Rev. 21:17).

53 See V.I. Kennedy, *The Saints of the Canon of the Mass*, Studi di Antichità Cristiana, vol. 14, Vatican, 1938, pp. 9–27; Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1053–3, dates the ‘reading of the diphyts’ earlier, but does not distinguish the appearance of a general prayer for the living or dead from the appearance of actual name-reading.

54 Kennedy, op. cit. [note 53], pp. 7–8. The Roman *communicantes*, with which we are particularly concerned here, seems to have taken its canonical form in the late sixth century under Gregory the Great, but existed in more primitive forms prior to this. For satins as special members of the community of the deceased, see P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, Chicago, 1981, pp. 70–2.


56 Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1058–60; Steinmüller, op. cit. [note 11], col. 1144–6.

57 See Kennedy, op. cit. [note 53], pp. 13–15.

58 Petri, Pauli, Andree; e(a), Lucas, Thomy, Matthaei, Johannis, Johannis, Scolastici [sic], 1, 1, Cornelli, Cipriani, 1, Felicia, Pancratii, Alexandri, Ambrosii, Vitalis, Tor [posteris], Prosecti [Proctori], Nannorii (Nabnori, Torne (Cosm), Gaiani (Damiani), Frigiani. See P. Guidi, ‘Le liste intérieure des diphytes de la liturgie de Jacques à l’époque Lombard’, *Rivue Benedictina*, vol. 24, 1907, p. 119; Kennedy, op. cit. [note 53], p. 65, and Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1086.

59 The Berlin half of the diphyt was lost in the war. ‘Offer(ente) ... oer ... p. p. plebescia catholica quam eis Evi asignare dign(erat) ... Facientes commendationem beate(m)rum apostolorum et martyrum omnium (inque) sanctorum (Sanctae) Mariae virginis, Petri, Pauli, Andrae, Io, Ioannis, Thomae, Philippi, Ba (tholomaei), Matthaei, Simonis, Thaddaei, Iacobii, S(n)eposi, Clementis, Alexanderis, 1, Cornelli, Ciprianis, Sylvesteri, Ambrosii, 1, Gregori(fii), Germani(sani), Remedi(i), Medardi, 1, T, ... Mar, ... Laurentii, Pancratii, Marcellini, Petri, Ioannis, Pauli, Sebastiani, Gervasi, Piscari(ud), Quintini, 1, 1, Innocenti, Georgii, Fisiodi, plus sixtum unknown names. See Kennedy, op. cit. [note 53], p. 66; Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1087.


61 Quodvultdeus’s mention of the reading of processional names in an exegesis alluding to the recording of the Christian Elect, suggests that the bishop himself recognized this consanguinity. See note 33 above.

62 The many documented debates over a given bishop or holy man’s right to inclusion in the diphyts further indicate that diphyts were a site of recognition of orthodoxy and of community membership. Cabrol, op. cit. [note 37], col. 1054 and 1057.


64 For the particular inter-penetration of past and present involving Christian martyrs, see Brown, op. cit. [note 34], p. 81.


67 Konowitcz, op. cit. [note 66], passim.; Shelton, op. cit. [note 5], passim.; Maguire, op. cit. [note 66], pp. 363–73.

68 Shelton, op. cit. [note 5], p. 170, n. 7.

69 Ibid., p. 988.

70 Shelton, op. cit. [note 5], p. 177.

71 Ibid., p. 180.

72 For a synopsis of the attempts to find textual references to the scene, see ibid., p. 171.
