

## THE ROMAN FESTIVALS OF THE PERIOD OF THE REPUBLIC



W. Warde Fowler

# The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic

An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans

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#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE **ABBREVIATIONS. INTRODUCTION** I. The Roman Method of Reckoning the Year. II. Order of Months in the Year. III. The Divisions of the Month. IV. The Days. V. The Calendars still surviving. VI. The Calendar of the Republic and its Religious Festivals. Calendar. **MENSIS MARTIUS MENSIS APRILIS MENSIS MAIUS MENSIS IUNIUS MENSIS QUINTILIS MENSIS SEXTILIS MENSIS SEPTEMBER MENSIS OCTOBER MENSIS NOVEMBER MENSIS DECEMBER MENSIS IANUARIUS MENSIS FEBRUARIUS MENSIS MARTIUS.** Kal. Mart. (March 1) . NP. Non. Mart. (March 7) . F. vii Id. Mart. (March 9) . C.

PRID. ID. MART. (MARCH 14) . NP. Id. Mart. (March 15) . NP. XVI Kal. Apr. (March 17) . NP. Kal. xiv Apr. (March 19) . NP Caer. Vat. N. Maff. x Kal. Apr. (March 23) . NP. ix Kal. Apr. (March 24) . NP. **MENSIS APRILIS.** Kal. Apr. (April 1) . F. Prid. Non. Apr. (April 4) . C. XVII Kal. Mai. (April 15) . NP. iii Id. Apr. (April 11) . N. xiii Kal. Mai. (April 19) . NP. xi Kal. Mai. (Apr. 21) . NP. ix Kal. Mai . (Apr . 23) . FP (CAER .) NP (MAFF .) F (PRAEN .) VII Kal. Mai. (April 25) . NP. iv Kal. Mai. (apr. 28) . NP. v Non. Mai. (May 3) . C. Feriae Latinae. MENSIS MAIUS. Kal. Mai. (May 1.) F. VII. Id. Mai. (May 9) . N. <u>V. Id. Mai. (May 11) . N.</u> III. Id. Mai. (May 13) . N. Id. Mai. (May 15) . NP . xii Kal. lun. (May 21) . NP. x Kal. lun. (May 23) . NP. viii Kal. Iun. (May 25) . C. Kal. lun. (May 29) . C. **MENSIS IUNIUS.** 

Kal. lun. (June 1) . N. III. Non. Iun. (June 3) . C. Prid. Non. Iun. (June 4) . C. <u>Non. lun. (June 5) . N.</u> vi Id. Iun. (June 8) . N. vii Id. Iun. (June 7) . N. v Id. Iun. (June 9) . N. xvii Kal. Quinct. (June 15) . N. xvii Kal. Quinct. (June 15) . Q. St. D. F. <u>iii Id. Iun. (June 11) . N.</u> Id. Iun. (June 13) . NP. xii Kal. lun. (June 20) . C. viii Kal. Quinct. (June 24) . C. MENSIS QUINCTILIS. iii Non. Quinct. (July 5) . NP. Non. Quinct. (July 7) . N. viii Id. Quinct. (July 8) . N. Prid. Non. Quinct.-iii Id. Quinct. (July 6-13). xiv Kal. Sext. (July 19) . NP. xii Kal. Sext. (July 21) . NP. x Kal. Sext. (July 23) . NP. viii Kal. Sext. (July 25) . NP. MENSIS SEXTILIS. Non. Sext. (Aug. 5) . F. (NP. ant.) vi Id. Sext. (Aug. 9) . F. (allip.) NP. (amit. maff. etc.) Prid. Id. Sext. (Aug. 12) . C. Id. Sext. (Aug. 13) . NP. xvi Kal. Sept. (Aug. 17) . NP. xiv Kal. Sept. (Aug. 19) . FP. (MAFF. AMIT.) F.

xii Kal. Sept. (Aug. 21) . NP. <u>x Kal. Sept. (Aug. 23) . NP.</u> ix Kal. Sept. (Aug. 24) . Mundus Patet. viii Kal. Sept. (Aug. 25) . NP. vi Kal. Sept. (Aug. 27) . NP. **MENSIS SEPTEMBER. MENSIS OCTOBER.** Kal. Oct. (October 1) . N. 3 Non. Oct. (October 5) . C. Non. Oct. (October 7) . F. v Id. Oct. (October 11) . NP. iii Id. Oct. (October 13) . NP. Id. Oct. (Oct. 15) . NP. xiv Kal. Nov. (October 19) . NP. MENSIS NOVEMBER. Id. Nov. (Nov. 13) . NP. **MENSIS DECEMBER** Women's Sacrifice to the Bona Dea. Non. Dec. (Dec. 5) . F. iii Id. Dec. (Dec. 11) . NP. Prid. Id. Dec. (Dec. 12) . EN. Conso in Aventin[o]. (Amit.) xviii (Ante Caes. xvi) Kal. Ian. (Dec. 15) . NP. xvi (Ante Caes. xiv) Kal. Ian. (Dec. 17) . NP. xiv (Ante Caes. xii) Kal. Dec. (Dec. 19) . NP. xii (Ante Caes. x) . Kal. Ian. (Dec. 21) . NP. x (Ante Caes. VIII) Kal. Ian. (Dec . 23) . NP. **MENSIS IANUARIUS.** Kal. lan. (Jan. 1) . F.

iii Non. Ian.-Non. Ian. (Jan. 3-5) . C. v Id. Ian. (Jan. 9) . NP? iii Id. Ian. (Jan. 11) . NP. xviii Kal. Feb. (Jan. 15) . NP. Feriae Sementivae . Paganalia. VI Kal. Feb. (Jan. 27) . C. **MENSIS FEBRUARIUS** Kal. Feb. Junoni Sospitae. N. Id. Feb. Fauno [i]n insul[a]. C. I. L. vi. 2302. NP. Fornicalia: feriae conceptivae, ending Feb. 17. Id. Feb. (Feb. 13) . NP. XV. Kal. Mart. (Feb. 15) . NP. xiii Kal. Mart. (Feb. 17) . NP. vii Kal. Mart. (Feb. 23.) NP. vi Kal. Mart. (Feb. 24) . N. iii Kal. Mart. (Feb. 27). NP. CONCLUSION A. Denarius of P. Licinius Stolo (p. 42). B. DENARIUS OF L. CAESIUS (p. 101). **INDEX OF SUBJECTS INDEX OF LATIN WORDS INDEX OF LATIN AUTHORS QUOTED** INDEX OF GREEK AUTHORS QUOTED

#### PREFACE

Table of Contents

A word of explanation seems needed about the form this book has taken. Many years ago I became specially interested in the old Roman religion, chiefly, I think, through studying Plutarch's *Quaestiones Romanae*, at a time when bad eyesight was compelling me to abandon a project for an elaborate study of all Plutarch's works. The 'scrappy' character not only of the Quaestiones, but of all the material for the study of Roman ritual, suited weak eyes better than the continual reading of Greek text; but I soon found it necessary to discover a thread on which to hang these fragments in some regular order. This I naturally found in the Fasti as edited by Mommsen in the first volume of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum; and it gradually dawned on me that the only scientific way of treating the subject was to follow the calendar throughout the year, and to deal with each festival separately. I had advanced some way in this work, when Roscher's Lexicon of Greek and Roman Mythology began to appear in parts, and at once convinced me that I should have to do my work all over again in the increased light afforded by the indefatigable industry of the writers of the Roman articles. I therefore dropped my work for several years while the Lexicon was in progress, and should have waited still longer for its completion, had not Messrs. Macmillan invited me to contribute a volume on the Roman religion to their series of Handbooks of Archaeology and Antiquities.

Having once set out on the plan of following the Fasti, I could not well abandon it, and I still hold it to be the only sound one: especially if, as in this volume, the object is to exhibit the religious side of the native Roman character, without getting entangled to any serious extent in the *colluvies religionum* of the last age of the Republic and the earlier Empire. The book has thus taken the form of a commentary on the Fasti, covering in a compressed form almost all the public worship of the Roman state, and including incidentally here and there certain ceremonies which strictly speaking lay outside that public worship. Compression has been unavoidable; yet it has been impossible to avoid stating and often discussing the conflicting views of eminent scholars; and the result probably is that the book as a whole will not be found very interesting reading. But I hope that British and American students of Roman history and literature, and possibly also anthropologists and historians of religion, may find it useful as a book of reference, or may learn from it where to go for more elaborate investigations.

The task has often been an ungrateful one—one indeed of

Dipping buckets into empty wells

And growing old with drawing nothing up.

The more carefully I study any particular festival, the more (at least in many cases) I have been driven into doubt and difficulty both as to reported facts and their interpretation. Had the nature of the series permitted it, I should have wished to print the chief passages quoted from ancient authors in full, as was done by Mr. Farnell in his *Cults of the Greek States*, and so to present to the reader the actual material on which conclusions are rightly or wrongly based. I have only been able to do this where it was indispensable: but I have done my best to verify the correctness of the other references, and have printed in full the entries of the ancient calendars at the head of each section. Professor Gardner, the editor of the series, has helped me by contributing two valuable notes on coins, which will be found at the end of the volume: and I hope he may some day find time to turn his attention more closely to the bearing of numismatic evidence on Roman religious history.

It happens, by a curious coincidence, that I am writing this on the last day of the old Roman year; and the lines which Ovid has attached to that day may fitly express my relief on arriving at the end of a very laborious task: Venimus in portum, libro cum mense peracto,

Naviget hinc alia iam mihi linter aqua.

W. W. F.

Oxford: Feb. 28, 1899.

## **ABBREVIATIONS.**

Table of Contents

The following are the most important abbreviations which occur in the notes:

*C. I. L.* stands for *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Where the volume is not indicated the reference is invariably to the *second* edition of that part of vol. i which contains the *Fasti* (Berlin, 1893).

Marquardt or Marq. stands for the third volume of Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, second edition, edited by Wissowa (Berlin, 1885). It is the sixth volume of the complete *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* of Mommsen and Marquardt.

Preller, or Preller-Jordan, stands for the third edition of Preller's *Römische Mythologie* by H. Jordan (Berlin, 1881).

*Myth. Lex.* or *Lex.* stands for the *Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, edited by W. H. Roscher, which as yet has only been completed to the letter N.

Festus, or Paulus, stands for K. O. Müller's edition of the fragments of Festus, *De Significatione Verborum*, and the *Excerpta ex Festo* of Paulus Diaconus; quoted by the page.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Table of Contents

#### I. The Roman Method of Reckoning the Year.<sup>[1]</sup>

Table of Contents

There are three ways in which the course of the year may be calculated. It can be reckoned—

1. By the revolution of the moon round the earth, twelve of which = 354 days, or a ring (*annus*), sufficiently near to the solar year to be a practicable system with modifications.

2. By the revolution of the earth round the sun i. e. 365-1/4 days; a system which needs periodical adjustments, as the odd quarter (or, more strictly, 5 hours 48 minutes 48 seconds) cannot of course be counted in each year. In this purely solar year the months are only artificial divisions of time, and not reckoned according to the revolutions of the moon. This is our modern system.

3. By combining in a single system the solar and lunar years as described above. This has been done in various ways by different peoples, by adopting a cycle of years of varying length, in which the resultants of the two bases of calculation should be brought into harmony as nearly as possible. In other words, though the difference between a single solar year and a single lunar year is more than 11 days, it is possible, by taking a number of years together and reckoning them as lunar years, one or more of them being lengthened by an additional month, to make the whole period very nearly coincide with the same number of solar years. Thus the Athenians adopted for this purpose at different times groups or cycles of 8 and 19 years. In the Octaeteris or 8-year cycle there were 99 lunar months, 3 months of 30 days being added in 3 of the 8 years—a plan which falls short of accuracy by about 36 hours. Later on a cycle of 19 years was substituted for this, in which the discrepancy was greatly reduced. The Roman year in historical times was calculated on a system of this kind, though with such inaccuracy and carelessness as to lose all real relation to the revolutions both of earth and moon.

But there was a tradition that before this historical calendar came into use there had been another system, which the Romans connected with the name of Romulus. This year was supposed to have consisted of 10 months, of which 4—March, May, July, October—had 31 days, and the rest 30: in all 304. But this was neither a solar nor a lunar year; for a lunar year of 10 months = 295 days 7 hours 20 minutes, while a solar year = 365-1/4. Nor can it possibly be explained as an attempt to combine the two systems. Mommsen has therefore conjectured that it was an artificial year of 10 months, used in business transactions, and in periods of mourning, truces<sup>[2]</sup>, &c., to remedy the uncertainty of the primitive calculation of time; and that it never really was the basis of a state calendar. This view has of course been the subject of much criticism<sup>[3]</sup>. But no better solution has been found; the hypothesis that the year of 10 months was a real lunar year, to which an undivided period of time was added at each year's end, to make it correspond with the solar year and the seasons, has not much to recommend it or any analogy among other peoples. It was not, then, the so-called year of Romulus which was the basis of the earliest state-calendar, but another system which the Romans themselves usually ascribed to Numa. This was originally perhaps a lunar year; at any rate the number of days in it is very nearly that of a true lunar year (354 days 8 hours 48 minutes)<sup>[4]</sup>. It consisted of 12 months, of which March, May, July, October had 31 days, and the rest 29, except February, which had 28. All the months therefore had an odd number of days, except the one which was specially devoted to purification and the cult of the dead; according to an old superstition, probably adopted from the Greeks of Southern Italy<sup>[5]</sup>, that odd numbers were of good omen, even numbers of ill omen. This principle, as we shall see, holds good throughout the Roman calendar.

But this reckoning of the year, if it ever existed at all, could not have lasted long as it stood. As we know it in historical times, it has become modified by applying to it the principle of the solar year. The reason for this should be noted carefully. A lunar year, being about 11 days short of the solar year, would in a very short time become out of harmony with the seasons. Now if there is one thing certain about the Roman religious calendar, it is that many at least of its oldest festivals mark those operations of husbandry on which the population depended for its subsistence, and for the prosperous result of which divine agencies must be propitiated. These festivals, when fixed in the calendar, must of course occur at the right seasons, which could not be the case if the calendar were that of a purely lunar year. It was therefore necessary to work in the solar principle; and this was done<sup>[6]</sup> by a somewhat rude expedient, not unlike

that of the Athenian Octaeteris, and probably derived from it<sup>[7]</sup>. A cycle of 4 years was devised, of which the first had the 355 days of the lunar year, the second 355 + 22, the third 355 again, and the fourth 355 + 23. The extra periods of 22 and 23 days were inserted in February, not at the end, but after the 23rd (*Terminalia*)<sup>[8]</sup>. The total number of days in the cycle was 1465, or about 1 day too much in each year; and in course of time even this system got out of harmony with the seasons and had to be rectified from time to time by the Pontifices, who had charge of the calendar. Owing to ignorance on their part, misuse or neglect of intercalation had put the whole system out of gear before the last century of the Republic. All relation to sun and moon was lost; the calendar, as Mommsen says, 'went on its own way tolerably unconcerned about moon and sun.' When Caesar took the reform of the calendar in hand the discrepancy between it and the seasons was very serious; the former being in advance of the latter probably by some weeks. Caesar, aided by the mathematician Sosigenes, put an end to this confusion by extending the year 46 B.C. to 445 days, and starting afresh on Jan. 1, 45 B.C.<sup>[9]</sup>—a day henceforward to be that of the new year—with a cycle of 4 years of 365 days<sup>[10]</sup>; in the last of which a single day was added, after the *Terminalia*. This cycle produced a true solar year with a slight adjustment at short intervals; and after a few preliminary blunders on the part of the Pontifices, lasted without change until A.D. 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII set right a slight discrepancy by a fresh regulation. This regulation was only adopted in England in 1752, and is still rejected in Russia and by the Greek Church generally.

## II. Order of Months in the Year.

Table of Contents

That the Roman year originally began with March is certain<sup>[11]</sup>, not only from the evidence of the names of the months, which after June are reckoned as 5th (Quinctilis), 6th (Sextilis), and so on, but from the nature of the March festivals, as will be shown in treating of that month. In the character of the religious festivals there is a distinct break between February and March, and the operations both of nature and of man take a fresh turn at that point. Between the festivals of December and those of January there is no such break. No doubt January 1, just after the winter solstice, was even at an early time considered in some sense as a beginning; but it is going too far to assume, as some have done, that an ancient religious or priestly year began at that point<sup>[12]</sup>. It was not on January 1, but on March 1, that the sacred fire in the Aedes Vestae was renewed and fresh laurels fixed up on the Regia, the two buildings which were the central points of the oldest Roman religion<sup>[13]</sup>. March 1, which in later times at least was considered the birthday of the special protecting deity of the Romans, continued to be the Roman New Year's Day long after the official beginning of the year had been changed to January 1<sup>[14]</sup>. It was probably not till 153 B.C., when the consuls began to enter on office on January 1, that this official change took place; and the date was then adopted, not so much for religious reasons as because it was convenient, when the business of administration was increasing, to have the consuls in Rome for some time

before they left for their provinces at the opening of the war season in March.

No rational account can in my opinion be given of the Roman religious calendar of the Republic unless it be taken as beginning with March; and in this work I have therefore restored the old order of months. With the Julian calendar I am not concerned; though it is unfortunate that all the Roman calendars we possess, including the *Fasti* of Ovid, date from after the Julian era, and therefore present us with a distorted view of the true course of the old Roman worship.

Next after March came Aprilis, the month of opening or unfolding vegetation; then Maius, the month of growing, and Junius, that of ripening and perfecting. After this the names cease to be descriptive of the operations of nature; the six months that follow were called, as four of them still are, only by their positions relative to March, on which the whole system of the year thus turned as on a pivot.

The last two months of the twelve were January and February. They stand alone among the later months in bearing names instead of mere numbers, and this is sufficient to suggest their religious importance. That they were not mere appendages to a year of ten months is almost certain from the antique character of the rites and festivals which occur in them—Agonia, Carmentalia, Lupercalia, &c.; and it is safer to consider them as marking an ancient period of religious importance preparatory to the beginning of the year, and itself coinciding with the opening of the natural year after the winter solstice. This latter point seems to be indicated in the name Januarius, which, whether derived from janua, 'a gate,' or Janus, 'the god of entrances,' is appropriate to the first lengthening of the days, or the entrance of the sun on a new course; while February, the month of purifying or regenerative agencies (februa), was, like the Lent of the Christian calendar, the period in which the living were made ready for the civil and religious work of the coming year, and in which also the yearly duties to the dead were paid.

It is as well here to refer to a passage of Ovid (*Fasti*, ii. 47 foll.), itself probably based on a statement of Varro, which has led to a controversy about the relative position of these two months:

Sed tamen antiqui ne nescius ordinis erres, Primus, ut est, Iani mensis et ante fuit. Qui sequitur Ianum, veteris fuit ultimus anni, Tu quoque sacrorum, Termine, finis eras. Primus enim Iani mensis, quia ianua prima est; Qui sacer est imis manibus, imus erat. Postmodo creduntur spatio distantia longo Tempora bis quini continuasse viri.

This plainly means that from the time when March ceased to be the first month, the year always began with January and ended with February; in other words the order was January, March, April, and so on, ending with February; until the time of the Decemvirate, when February became the second month, and December the last, as at present, January still retaining its place. A little consideration of Ovid's lines will, however, suggest the conclusion that he, and his authority, whoever that may have been, were arguing aetiologically rather than on definite knowledge. January, they thought, must always have been the first month, because janua, 'a door,' is the first thing, the entrance, through which you pass into a new year as into a house or a temple. How, they would argue, could a month thus named have ever been the eleventh month? This once supposed impossible, it was necessary to infer that the place of January was the first, from the time of its introduction, and that it was followed by March, April, &c., February coming last of all, immediately after December; and finally that at the time of the Decemvirs, who are known to have made some alterations in the calendar, the positions of January and February were reversed, January remaining the first month, but February becoming the second.

#### **III.** The Divisions of the Month.

#### Table of Contents

The Romans, with their usual conservatism, preserved the shell of the lunar system of reckoning long after the reality had disappeared. The month was at all times divided by the real or imaginary phases of the moon, though a week of eight days was introduced at an early period, and though the month was no longer a lunar one.

The two certain points in a lunar month are the first appearance of the crescent<sup>[15]</sup> and the full moon; between these is the point when the moon reaches the first quarter, which is a less certain one. Owing to this uncertainty of the reckoning of the first days of the month there were no festivals in the calendars on the days before the first quarter (Nones), with a single exception of the obscure *Poplifugia* on July 5. The day of the new moon was called Kalendae, as Varro tells us, 'quod his diebus calantur eius mensis nonae a pontificibus, quintanae an septimanae sint futurae, in Capitolio in curia Calabra sic: Dies te quinque calo, luno Covella. Septem dies te calo luno Covella'<sup>[16]</sup>. All the Kalends were sacred to Juno, whose connexion with the moon is certain though not easy to explain.

With the Nones, which were sacred to no deity, all uncertainty ceased. The Ides, or day of the full moon, was always the eighth after the first quarter. This day was sacred to Jupiter; a fact which is now generally explained as a recognition of the continuous light of the two great heavenly bodies during the whole twenty-four hours<sup>[17]</sup>. On the Nones the *Rex sacrorum* (and therefore before him the king himself) announced the dates of the festivals for the month.

There was another internal division of the month, with which we are not here specially concerned, that of the Roman week or nundinal period of eight days, which is indicated in all the calendars by the letters A to H. The *nundinae* were market days, on which the rustic population came into Rome; whether they were also feast days (*feriae*) was a disputed question even in antiquity.

#### IV. The Days.

Table of Contents

Every day in the Roman calendar has a certain mark attached to it, viz. the letters F, C, N, NP, EN, Q.R.C.F., Q.St.D.F., or FP. All of these have a religious significance, positive or negative.

F, i. e. *fas* or *fastus*, means that on the day so marked civil and especially judicial business might be transacted without fear of divine displeasure<sup>[18]</sup>. Correctness in the

time as well as place of all human actions was in the mind of the early Roman of the most vital importance; and the floating traditional ideas which governed his life before the formation of the State were systematized and kept secret by kings and priests, as a part, so to speak, of the science of government. Not till B.C. 304 was the calendar published, with its permissive and prohibitive regulations<sup>[19]</sup>.

C (*comitialis*) means that the day so marked was one on which the *comitia* might meet<sup>[20]</sup>, and on which also legal business might be transacted, as on the days marked F, if there were no other hindrance. The total number of days thus available for secular business, i.e. days marked F and C, was in the Julian calendar 239 out of 365.

N, i. e. *nefastus*, meant that the day so marked was *religiosus, vitiosus,* or *ater*; as Gellius has it<sup>[21]</sup>, 'tristi omine et infames impeditique, in quibus et res divinas facere et rem quampiam novam exordiri temperandum est.' Some of these days received the mark in historical times for a special reason, e. g. a disaster to the State; among these were the *postriduani* or days following the Kalends, Nones and Ides, because two terrible defeats had occurred on such days<sup>[22]</sup>. But most of them (in all they are 57) were probably so marked as being devoted to lustrations, or worship of the dead or of the powers of the earth, and therefore unsuitable for worldly business. One long series of such dies nefasti occurs Feb. 1-14, the time of purification; another, April 5-22, in the month occupied by the rites of deities of growing vegetation; a third, June 5-14, when the rites of the Vestals preparatory to harvest were taking place; and a fourth, July

1-9, for reasons which are unfortunately by no means clear to us.

NP was not a mark in the pre-Julian calendars, for it was apparently unknown to Varro and Ovid. Verrius Flaccus seems to have distinguished it from N, but his explanation is mutilated, even as it survives in Festus<sup>[23]</sup>. No one has yet determined for certain the origin of the sign, and discussion of the various conjectures would be here superfluous<sup>[24]</sup>. It appears to distinguish, in the Julian calendars, those days on which fell the festivals of deities who were not of an earthly and therefore doubtful character from those marked N. Thus in the series of *dies nefasti* in February and April the Ides in each case have the mark NP as being sacred to Jupiter.

EN. We have a mutilated note in the calendar of Praeneste which indicates what this abbreviation meant, viz. *endotercisus = intercisus*, i. e. 'cut into parts'<sup>[25]</sup>. In morning and evening, as Varro tells us, the day was *nefastus*, but in the middle, between the slaying of the victim and the placing of the entrails upon the altar, it was *fastus*. But why eight days in the calendar were thus marked we do not know, and have no data for conjecturing. All the eight were days coming before some festival, or before the Ides. Of the eight two occur in January and two in February, the others in March, August, October and December. But on such facts no conjectures can be built.

Q.R.C.F. (*Quando Rex Comitiavit Fas*) will be explained under March 24; the only other day on which it occurs is May 24. Q.St.D.F. (*Quando stercus delatum fas*) only occurs on June 15, and will there be fully dealt with. FP occurs thrice, but only in three calendars. Feb. 21 (*Feralia*) is thus marked in Caer.<sup>[26]</sup>, but is F in Maff. April 23 (*Vinalia*) is FP in Caer. but NP in Maff. and F in Praen. Aug. 19 (*Vinalia rustica*) is FP in Maff. and Amit, F in Antiat. and Allif., NP in Vall. Mommsen explains FP as *fastus principio*, i. e. the early part of the day was *fastus*, and suggests that in the case of the *Feralia*, as the rites of the dead were performed at night, there was no reason why the earlier part of the day should be *nefastus*. But in the case of the two Vinalia we can hardly even guess at the meaning of the mark, and it does not seem to have been known to the Romans themselves.

### V. The Calendars still surviving.

#### Table of Contents

The basis of our knowledge of the old Roman religious year is to be found in the fragments of calendars which still survive. None of these indeed is older than the Julian era; and all but one are mere fragments. But from the fragments and the one almost perfect calendar we can infer the character of the earlier calendar with tolerable certainty.

The calendar, as the Romans generally believed, was first published by Cnaeus Flavius, curule aedile, in 304 B.C., who placed the *fasti* conspicuously in the Forum, in order that every one might know on what days legal business might be transacted<sup>[27]</sup>; in other words, a calendar was published with the marks of the days and the indications of the festivals. After this we hear nothing until 189 B.C., when a consul, M. Fulvius Nobilior, adorned his temple of Hercules and the Muses with a calendar which contained explanations or notes as well as dates<sup>[28]</sup>. These are the only indications we have of the way in which the pre-Julian calendar was made known to the people.

But the rectification of the calendar by Julius, and the changes then introduced, brought about a multiplication of copies of the original one issued under the dictator's edict<sup>[29]</sup>. Not only in Rome, but in the municipalities round about her, where the ancient religious usage of each city had since the enfranchisement of Italy been superseded, officially at least, by that of Rome, both public and private copies were made and set up either on stone, or painted on the walls or ceiling of a building.

Of such calendars we have in all fragments of some thirty, and one which is all but complete. Fourteen of these fragments were found in or near Rome, eleven in municipalities such as Praeneste, Caere, Amiternum, and others as far away as Allifae and Venusia; four are of uncertain origin<sup>[30]</sup>; and one is a curious fragment from Cisalpine Gaul<sup>[31]</sup>. Most of them are still extant on stone, but for a few we have to depend on written copies of an original now lost<sup>[32]</sup>. No day in the Roman year is without its annotation in one or more of these; the year is almost complete, as I have said, in the Fasti Maffeiani; and several others contain three or four months nearly perfect<sup>[33]</sup>. Two, though in a fragmentary condition, are of special interest. One of these, that of the ancient brotherhood of the Fratres Arvales, discovered in 1867 and following years in the grove of the brethren near Rome, contains some valuable additional notes in the fragments which survive of the months from August to November. The other, that of Praeneste, containing January, March, April and parts of February and December, is still more valuable from the comments it contains, most of which we can believe with confidence to have come from the hand of the great Augustan scholar Verrius Flaccus. We are told by Suetonius that Verrius put up a calendar in the forum at Praeneste<sup>[34]</sup>, drawn up by his own hand; and the date<sup>[35]</sup> and matter of these fragments found at Praeneste agree with what we know of the life and writings of Verrius. It is unlucky that recent attempts to find additional fragments should have been entirely without result; for the whole annotated calendar, if we possessed it, would probably throw light on many dark corners of our subject.

To these fragments of Julian calendars, all drawn up between B.C. 31 and A.D. 46, there remain to be added two in MSS.: (i) that of Philocalus, A.D. 354, (ii) that of Polemius Silvius, A.D. 448; neither of which are of much value for our present purpose, though they will be occasionally referred to. Lastly, we have two farmer's almanacs on cubes of bronze, which omit the individual days, but are of use as showing the course of agricultural operations under the later Empire<sup>[36]</sup>.

All these calendars, some of which had been printed wholly or in part long ago, while a few have only been discovered of late, have been brought together for the first time in the first volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, edited by Mommsen with all his incomparable skill and learning, and furnished with ample elucidations and commentaries. And we now have the benefit of a second edition of this by the same editor, to whose labours in this as in every other department of Roman history it is almost impossible to express our debt in adequate words. All references to the calendars in the following pages will be made to this second edition.

A word remains to be said about the *Fasti* of Ovid<sup>[37]</sup>, which is a poetical and often fanciful commentary on the calendar of the first half of the Julian year, i.e. January to June inclusive; each month being contained in one book. Ovid tells us himself<sup>[38]</sup> that he completed the year in twelve books; but the last six were probably never published, for they are never quoted by later writers. The first six were written but not published before the poet's exile, and taken in hand again after the death of Augustus, but only the first book had been revised when the work was cut short by Ovid's death.

Ovid's work merits all praise as a literary performance, for the neatness and felicity of its versification and diction; but as a source of knowledge it is too much of a medley to be used without careful criticism. There is, however, a great deal in it that helps us to understand the views about the gods and their worship, not only of the scholars who pleased themselves and Augustus by investigating these subjects, but also of the common people both in Rome and in the country. But the value varies greatly throughout the work. Where the poet describes some bit of ritual which he has himself seen, or tells some Italian story he has himself heard, he is invaluable; but as a substitute for the work of Varro on which he drew, he only increases our thirst for the original. No great scholar himself, he aimed at producing a popular account of the results of the work of scholars, picking and choosing here and there as suited his purpose, and not troubling himself to write with scientific accuracy. Moreover, he probably made free use of Alexandrine poets, and especially of Callimachus, whose *Aetia* is in some degree his model for the whole poem; and thus it is that the work contains a large proportion of Greek myth, which is often hard to distinguish from the fragments of genuine Italian legend which are here and there imbedded in it. Still, when all is said, a student of the Roman religion should be grateful to Ovid; and when after the month of June we lose him as a companion, we may well feel that the subject not only loses with him what little literary interest it can boast of, but becomes for the most part a mere investigation of fossil rites, from which all life and meaning have departed for ever.

# VI. The Calendar of the Republic and its Religious Festivals.

#### Table of Contents

All the calendars still surviving belong, as we saw, to the early Empire, and represent the Fasti as revised by Julius. But what we have to do with is the calendar of the Republic. Can it be recovered from those we still possess? Fortunately this is quite an easy task, as Mommsen himself has pointed out<sup>[39]</sup>; we can reconstruct for certain the so-called calendar of Numa as it existed throughout the Republican era. The following considerations must be borne in mind:

1. It is certain that Caesar and his advisers would alter the familiar calendar as little as possible, acting in the spirit of persistent conservatism from which no true Roman was ever free. They added 10 days to the old normal year of 355 days, i. e. two at the end of January, August, and December, and one at the end of April, June, September, and November; but they retained the names of the months, and their division by Kalends, Nones, and Ides, and also the signs of the days, and the names of all festivals throughout the year. Later on further additions were made, chiefly in the way of glorification of the Emperors and their families; but the skeleton remained as it had been under the Republic.

2. It is almost certain that the Republican calendar itself had never been changed from its first publication down to the time of Caesar. There is no historical record of any alteration, either by the introduction of new festivals or in any other way. The origin of no festival is recorded in the history of the Republic, except the second Carmentalia, the Saturnalia, and the Cerealia<sup>[40]</sup>; and in these three cases we can be morally certain that the record, if such it can be called, is erroneous.

3. If Julius and his successors altered only by slight additions, and if the calendar which they had to work on was of great antiquity and unchanged during the Republic, how, in the next place, are we to distinguish the skeleton of that ancient calendar from the Julian and post-Julian additions? Nothing is easier; in Mommsen's words, it is not a matter of calculation; a glance at the Fasti is sufficient. In all these it will be seen that the numbers, names, and signs of the days were cut or painted in *large* capital letters; while ludi, sacrifices, and all additional notes and comments appear in *small* capital letters. It cannot be *demonstrated*