

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) The most ancient dated epitaph :— 89.

(See Plate IV, 3.)

(In *Mus. Lateran.*; De Rossi, n. 1.)

[A]ug(ustas) Vespasiano III Consule.—Jan(uarias.)

“ ——— before the Calends (?) of August, in the third Consulship of Vespasian” (i. e. 71 A.D.) “ ——— before the Calends of January.”

This fragment has been received as a part of a Christian epitaph by Reggi, Marini, and De Rossi. It is the most ancient of all such that bear dates. The chief grounds on which it has been regarded as Christian are that the slab is of the same kind as those used to close the tomb in the Catacombs, and that it had adhering to it the mortar by which such slabs were fixed in their places. To these grounds De Rossi has made an important addition, by his reading IAN as *Januarias*, thus showing that the stone closed a *locus bisomus*, containing the bodies of one who had died—before the Calends [?] of August, and of another who had died—before the Calends of January.

In the year 71 Vespasian was Consul for the third time, with Cocceius Nerva as his colleague. On the 1st of March or April he resigned the office, and, on the 1st of July, L. Flavius Fimbria and Attilius Barbarus were made *consules suffecti*. The year then is marked here, as in other Christian epitaphs, not by the names of the *suffecti*, but by that of one of the *ordinarii*.

(b) Unexplained numerals :— 90.

N·XXX· SVRA ET SENECA · COSS·

(E *coemet. Lucinæ*; De Rossi, n. 2.)

N·XXX· Sura et Senecione Consulibus.

“ In the Consulship of Sura and Senecio,” i. e. 107 A. D.

. The numeral III is omitted after SVRA and II after SENECA. See De Rossi's note.

I have not attempted to translate “N·XXX·,” as their meaning is unknown. The interpretation that has been generally received is that they stand for *numero XXX*, indicating that martyrs were buried there in number thirty. This view has been taken by Visconti, Cavedoni, Raoul Rochette, and Wiseman. Roestel also assents, but regards the inscription as commemorative of a past age. De Rossi