

catacomb of SS. Peter and Marcellinus, the real origin of which, however, is not known. They were classed with the five martyrs of Pannonia in a purely external relationship.”

The bodies of the martyrs are kept in four ancient sarcophagi in the crypt of Santi Marcellino e Pietro. According to a lapid dated 1123, the head of one of the four martyrs is buried in Santa Maria in Cosmedin.

CONFUSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Problems arise with determining the historicity of these martyrs because one group contains five names instead of four. Alban Butler believed that the four names of Group One, which the *Roman Martyrology* and the *Breviary* say were revealed as those of the Four Crowned Martyrs, were borrowed from the martyrology of the diocese of Albano Laziale, which kept their feast on August 8, not November 8. These “borrowed” four martyrs were not buried in Rome, but in the catacomb of Albano; their feast was celebrated on August 7 or August 8, the date under which it is cited in the Roman Calendar of Feasts of 354. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* wrote that “these martyrs of Albano have no connection with the Roman martyrs”.

The double tradition may have arisen because a second *passio* had to be written. It was written to account for the fact that there were five saints in Group 2 rather than four. Thus, the story concerning Group 1 was simply invented, and the story describes the death of four martyrs, who were soldiers from Rome rather than Pannonian stonemasons. The Bollandist Hippolyte Delehaye calls this invented tradition “l’opprobre de l’hagiographie” (the disgrace of hagiography).

Delehaye, after extensive research, determined that there was actually only one group of martyrs—the stonemasons of Group 2—whose relics were taken to Rome. One scholar has written that “the latest research tends to agree” with Delehaye’s conclusion.

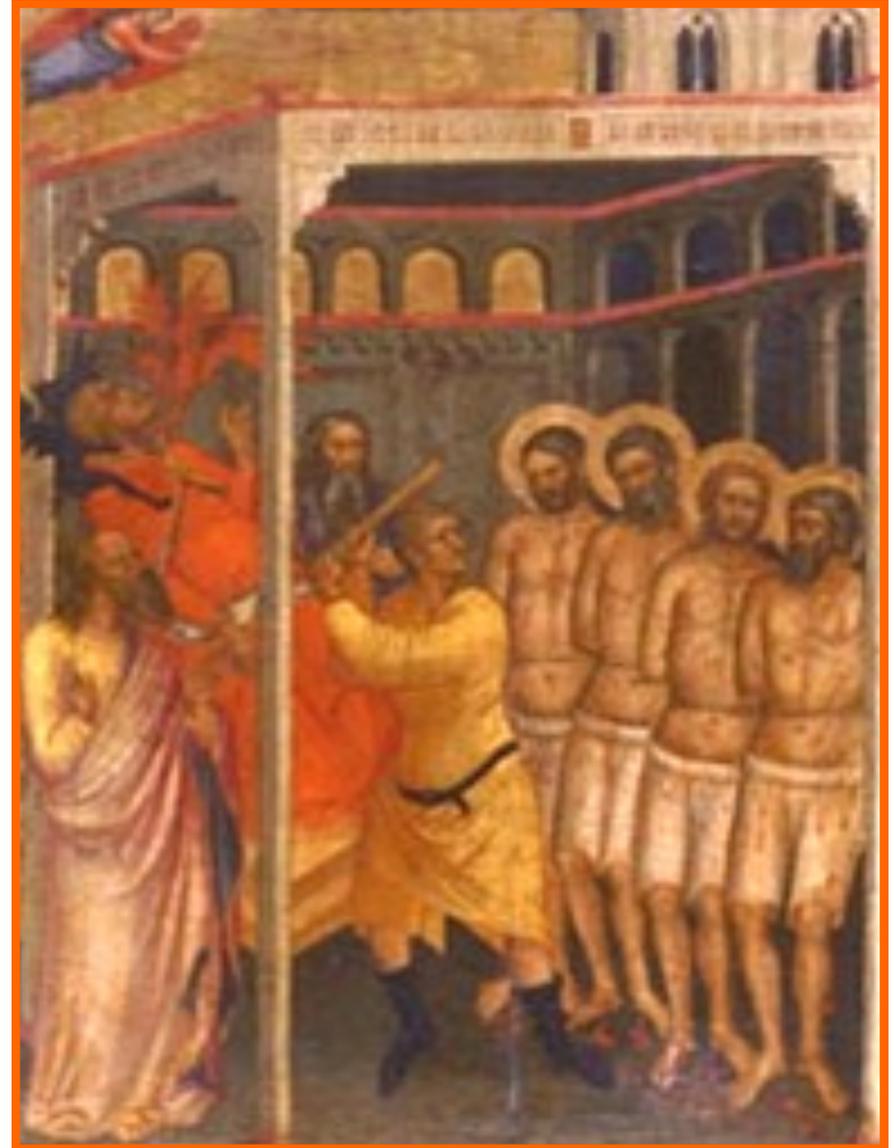
In the fourth and fifth centuries a basilica was erected and dedicated in honor of these martyrs on the Caelian Hill, probably in the general area where tradition located their execution. This became one of the titular churches of Rome, and was restored several times.

*(excerpted from: //en.wikipedia.org)

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FOUR CROWNED HOLY MARTYRS

FEAST DAY: NOVEMBER 8TH



FOUR CROWNED MARTYRS

***The designation four Crowned Martyrs or four Holy Crowned Ones (in Latin, *Sancti Quatuor Coronati*)** actually refers to 9 separate martyrs, divided into two groups:

1. Severus (or Secundius), Severian (us), Carpophorus (Carpoforus), Victorinus (Victorius, Vittorinus)
2. Claudius, Castorius, Symphorian (Simpronian), Nicostratus, and Simplicius

According to the Golden Legend, the name of the members of the first group were not known at the time of their death “but were learned through the Lord’s revelation after many years had passed.” They were called the “Four Crowned Martyrs” because their names were unknown (“crown” referring to the crown of martyrdom).

FIRST GROUP

Severus (or Secundius), Severian (us), Carpophorus, Victorinus were martyred at Rome or Castra Albana, according to Christian tradition.

According to the *Passion of St. Sebastian*, the four saints were soldiers (specifically *cornicularii*, or clerks in charge of all the regiment’s records and paperwork) who refused to sacrifice to Aesculapius, and therefore were killed by order of emperor Diocletian (284-305), two years after the death of the five sculptors. The bodies of the martyrs were buried in the cemetery of Santi Marcellino e Pietro, on the fourth mile of via Labicana, by Pope Miltiades and St. Sebastian (whose skull is preserved in the church).

SECOND GROUP

The second group, according to Christian tradition, were sculptors from Sirmium who were killed in Pannonia. They

refused to fashion a pagan statue for the emperor Diocletian or to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods. The emperor ordered them to be placed alive in lead coffins and thrown into the sea, about 287. Simplicius was killed with them. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “the Acts of these martyrs, written by a revenue officer named Porphyrius probably in the fourth century, relates of the five sculptors that, although they raised no objections to executing such profane images as Victoria, Cupid, and the Chariot of the Sun, they refused to make a statue of Aesculapius for a heathen temple. For this they were condemned to death as Christians. They were put into leaden caskets and drowned in the River Save. This happened towards the end of 305.

JOINT VENERATION

When the names of the first group were learned, it was decreed that they should be commemorated with the second group. The bodies of the First Group were interred by St. Sebastian and Pope Melchiades (Miltiades) at the third milestone on the via Labicana, in a sandpit where rested the remains of other executed Christians. According to tradition, since the names of the four martyred soldiers could not be authentically established, Pope Meldhiades commanded that, since the date of their deaths (November 8) was the same as that of the second group, their anniversary should be celebrated on that day.

It is unclear where the names of the second group actually come from. The tradition states that Melchiades asked that the saints be commemorated as Claudius, Nicostratus, Simpronian, and Castorius. These same names actually are identical to names shared by converts of Polycarp the priest, in the legend of St. Sebastian.

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “this report has no historic foundation. It is merely a tentative explanation of the name *Quatuor Coronati*, a name given to a group of really authenticated martyrs who were buried and venerated in the