“Historical” Dates in Medieval Liturgical Calendars

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Introduction

First and foremost, medieval liturgical calendars record occasions of liturgical celebration, for example, Easter, the “birthday” of a saint into heaven, the birth of Jesus or of John Baptist. The actual dates of the events being celebrated is secondary or even entirely unknown; precise chronology usually is not a major concern. In addition, however, liturgical calendars might include other types of calendrical information; individual calendars vary widely in this regard.

Here I consider two types of “non-liturgical” calendar entries. Thus some medieval liturgical calendars included items that are primarily “historical” in character and that are not intended for liturgical commemoration or celebration. The use of quotation marks here is intended to indicate that these dates were understood in a historical sense; whether their information is accurate by modern historical standards is another question, not considered here. Such “historical” dates are found in some, though not all, medieval liturgical calendars.

A consideration of such dates may be of interest to those using medieval liturgical calendars. As the dates in question are mostly biblical in origin or inspiration, they also show a concern for biblical roots. Finally, they provide further evidence for the richness of the medieval imagination.
First I identify the “historical” dates included in a number of medieval liturgical calendars and indicate the relatively frequency of their inclusion. I also provide some information on the rationale on which at least some of these dates were chosen. Finally, I give evidence that such dates were still remembered in later Anglican tradition, even though they were never actually included in liturgical calendars.

Finally, and at a more practical level, I also briefly consider calendar entries that indicate the earliest and latest dates of Easter and related feast days.

**Documents Studied**

My study was based on a sizable collection of medieval liturgical calendars that were at hand and easily accessible. Of these, 62 included one or more “historical” dates; roughly another twenty did not do so. Short titles and full bibliographic data for these are presented, in alphabetical order, in the *Appendix*. Only short titles will be used in the text.

**“Historical” Dates**

The following “historical” dates have been identified in the medieval liturgical calendars studied. The resurrection of Christ and events associated with it are listed first; they are the most common. Other dates from early Christian history are given next, following by dates of events of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament; First Testament). One nonbiblical date (foundation of Rome) is included as well. I repeat that these are dates that were thought to be when the actual, historical events happened.

- March 27  Resurrection of Christ
- March 25  Crucifixion
- March 26  Christ’s Descent into Hell
- May 5    Ascension
- May 15   Pentecost
- January 9  The Lord returns from Egypt
- February 15  The Devil leaves Jesus
- March 25  The Death of James
March 18     First Day of the World
March 18-24 The Seven Days of Creation
March 23     Creation of Adam
March 16     Noah enters the Ark
March 16     The Flood
April 29     Noah leaves the Ark
March 25     Sacrifice of Isaac
April 14     The Three Youth
May 6        Death of Job
April 21     Foundation of Rome

It should be noted that three of these entries, The Three Youth, and the Death of the prophet Job, are uncommon, and in some cases by later hands than the main manuscript; it is not certain if there were indeed intended to be “historical” dates or were given for liturgical commemoration. They are given here to be on the cautious side. Likewise, the date of the Foundation of Rome is given in only one source.

The date for the Sacrifice of Isaac is the same as that of the crucifixion of Jesus, hence is assigned for theological reasons; this is also true of the Death of James, the brother of the Lord. Adam’s creation on March 23, and the creation of the world, March 19-24, are likewise associated with the Annunciation and the Crucifixion on March 25.

Rationale

After encountering the “historical dates” of the resurrection in a medieval liturgical calendar, Christine M Rose studied the origins of this dating and concluded that it went back to the important calendar work of Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century, as follows:


Rose states:

In the sixth century A.D. Dionysius Exiguus, a romanized Scythian monk, compiled
tables for calculating Easter, and from these calculations arose the system of dating the
current year from the birth of Christ (A.D.). A system of metonic cycles, Golden
Numbers, and Dominical Letters allowed Dionysius to calculate back in time to the birth
of Christ, which he set as his Year One. The point in time, however, which Dionysius
designated as 1 Anno Domini was approximately four years short of our present
reckoning of that year of Augustus 750 A.U.C. (Years of Rome), and thus any date which
he calculated was off by a few years. Nevertheless, the Dionysian Easter Table, with its
accompanying list of dates of important religious events, was adopted in England at the
Synod of Whitby in A.D. 604.

Dionysius had calculated, using his Year One as a basis, that the Last Supper (Passover),
the Passion and Death of Christ, and the Resurrection had occurred on March 24, 25 and
27, respectively, in the year one A.D. After Whitby, these dates must have been
traditional in England and much of western Europe, through the Dionysian Easter Tables.
From this information on the influence of Dionysus Exiguus and from the evidence of
many medieval calendars it appears, then, that a tradition existed, from the sixth century,
of dates assigned for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Christian M Rose, “March 27 as Easter and the Medieval Liturgical Calendar” in
*Manuscripta* 30 (1986) 112-117

For additional information, Rose also refers to John J Bond, *Hand-Book of Rules and Tables For
Verifying Dates with the Christian Era*. London: Ell and Daldy 1969

A somewhat different understanding of this matter is presented by H.A. Wilson in his
notes for the calendar of St Willbrord. He adds information on some other “historical” dates as
well. The entire Note follows:

Of this entry the first and second portions are by the original hand; the third is a later
addition. It may be best to deal with the three parts separately.

The first is one of a group of entries in the Calendar which assign to particular days the
Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at
Pentecost. Liturgically, these events were commemorated in each year on days
determined by the application of the Paschal cycle, and the entries by which they were
ascribed to fixed dates are therefore historical rather than liturgical in character. They are
intended to mark the actual anniversaries of the events and the date assigned to the
Crucifixion is that on which the rest depend. Given that the Crucifixion took place on
March 25, it follows that the Resurrection would have been on March 27, and from that
date, by reckoning 40 days, the date of the first Pentecost is found to be May 15. The
scheme really extends further, for (on the hypothesis that our Lord’s life on earth, from
the Incarnation to the Passion, extended over a term of completed years) the anniversary
of his Crucifixion was held to be also the anniversary of his Conception, and that date
being thus fixed at March 25, the anniversary of his Nativity was placed on December 25,
and this determined the dates of the Circumcision, and of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. The Nativity of St John Baptist was placed on June 24 (viii Kal Iul.) six months before the Nativity of our Lord (vii Kal Ian).

The tradition that the Crucifixion took place on March 25 is connected with the tradition that the year of the Crucifixion was that of the consulship of “the two Gemini,” i.e., the year 29 A.D. Its existence in the time of St Willibrord is attested not only by this Calendar, but by the evidence of [certain MSS]. But the tradition was widely spread, and is of much earlier origin, going back, it would seem, certainly to the third, if not to the second century. The date is given in detail in the treatise Adversus Iudaem, ascribed, though not without doubt, to Tertullian; it is given by St Augustins: “mortuus est ergo Christus duobus Geminis consulibus octavo Kalendas aprilis” (De Civit. Dei XVIII, liv). It appears also at Rome in the Bucherian calendar of the fourth century; in the Rhone valley in the fifth century calendar of Pollenius Silvius; and in the East Epiphanius tells us that certain Quartodecimans commemorated the Passion always on March 25, because that dates was recorded in the Acts of Pilate, though he remarks also that in some copies of these Acts the day mentioned is March 18. March 25 is the date accepted as that of the Crucifixion by Hippolytus in his Fourth book on Daniel.

Monsignor Duchesne (Origines du Culte Chretien, pp 262-263, ed. 1902) cites some evidence for the liturgical observance in Gaul, in the fifth and sixth centuries, of these fixed anniversaries of the Passion and the Resurrection, and the phraseology of Oen in the entry in his Martyrology for March 25 seems to contemplate something of this kind. But such observance would in any case be subordinate to that which was regulated by the Paschal cycle, and would tend to disappear. The introduction and general adoption in the West of the feast of the Annunciation also tended to eliminate from Church calendars the entry concerning the anniversary of the Crucifixion. The 27th of March is not infrequently noted in medieval calendars as Resurrectio Domini, sometimes with an indication of grading or a suggestion of a special office for the day. But even where this is the case (as in the Sarum breviary of 1531) it may be found that the office has not kept its place in the Breviary to which the calendar is prefixed.

St James, the brother of our Lord, was probably placed here in view of the fact that his martyrdom took place at the Passover, and therefore, it may have been argued, on the same day on which our Lord had been crucified.

The entry regarding the sacrifice of Isaac is one of the quasi-historical class, of which there are a few examples in the Calendar, all added by one or other of the later hands.

H.A. Wilson, The Calendar of St Willibrord. London: Harrison and Sons 1918, pp 24 ff

A fuller and more recent consideration of the subject is provided by the following work:

Georges Declercq, Anno Domini: The Origins of the Christian Era
He identifies the early third century writer Tertullian as an early source for 25 March as the date of the crucifixion of Jesus; he also refers to the “twin” consuls to fix the date of this event. He writes:

In his tract Against the Jews, [Tertullian] places the birth of Jesus in the forty-first regnal year of the emperor Augustus (5 BC) and dates the crucifixion with great precision on 25 March, at the time of Passover, on the first day of unleavened bread (14 Nisan), in the fifteenth year of emperor Tiberius (AD 28/29), during the consulate of Rubellius and Rufius Gemini (AD 29), when Jesus was about thirty years old. (p 12)

He considers the importance of 25 March again in a subsequent passage:

Nisan, the first month of the Jewish lunar calendar, during which according to the gospels the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus took place, also marked the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The early Christian tradition has apparently for that reason connected the death of Christ with 25 March, the spring equinox in the Roman or Julian calendar. The choice of this date is highly symbolic. Each year, from the vernal equinox onwards, days grow longer than nights. Translated into religious terms this represented a victory of light over darkness and of life over death, an interpretation which the early Christians shared with the worshippers of Cybele who celebrated the death and resurrection of her companion Attis at the same moment. The first attestations of this tradition are to be found early in the third century in the above-mentioned tract Against the Jews of Tertullian and in the Easter table of Hipplolytus of Rome. (p 17)

Declercq then notes that:

In the West, 25 March thenceforth became the conventional date of the crucifixion and is often marked as such in medieval calendars. (p 17)

He also notes the dating of the creation to 25 March as well:

The symbolism attached to the Julian date of the spring equinox was not limited to the Passion or Resurrection of Jesus. The Alexandrian monk Annianos, for instance, dated the creation of the world and the incarnation (or conception) of Christ on 25 March as well. The vernal equinox was associated with the creation as early as the third century, but opinions differed on the day of the week of the creation on which 25 March had to be placed: some preferred the first day (Sunday), when God separated light from darkness, others decided in favour of the fourth day (Wednesday), on which God created the so-called luminaries, i.e., the son, the moon and the starts. ...

The idea that Jesus was born (or conceived) and crucified on the same calendar day, and thus lived a perfect number of years, is first attested in the Easter table of Hipplolytus of
Later, it became more common to synchronize the Passion or Resurrection with the conception of Jesus. The identification of 25 March as the date of the incarnation i.e., the conception of Christ, became, however, only possible once 25 December, the winter solstice of the Julian calendar and the date of the pagan festival of the Unconquerable Sun, had been adopted as the birth day of Jesus. This happened in the course of the fourth century.... (P 22).

Declercq then considers the work of Dionysius Exiguus and others in some detail.

Relative Frequency

The “historical” dates identified above do not all occur in medieval liturgical calendars with equal frequency. The short titles of individual medieval liturgical calendars that include the “historical” dates given above are therefore listed below to provide information on the relative frequency with which each date is found in the sources studied.

Resurrection (March 27)
Abbotsbury - Resurrectio domini
Abingdon - Resurrexio Christi prima
Antissiodorensis - Hierosolymis Resurrectio Domini nostri Jesu Christi
Ashridge - Resurectio domini
Athelstan - Surrexit Dominus
Benfeld - Resurrectio domini
Bruges - Resurrectio domini
Bury St EDMunds - Resurrectio Christi
Canterbury A - Resurrectio domini prima
Canterbury B - Resurrectio Christi
Canterbury C - Resurrectio Christi
Canterbury D - Resurrectio domini
Chertsey - Resurreccio domini
Chester - Resurrectio domini
Croyland B - Resurreccio domini nostri Iheus Christi
Croyland B - Resurreccio domini nostri Ihesu Christi
Deeping - Resurrectio domini nostri Ihesu Christi
Dunster - Resurrexio domini
Durham - Resurrectio Christi
Ely - Resureccio Christi
Evesham A - Resurrexio Domini
Evesham B - Resurrectio domini prima
Exeter A - Resurrectio domini
Exeter B - Resurrectio Domini (Christi) prima
Floriacense - Resurrectio Domini nostri Jesu Christi
Glastonbury - Resurrectio Domini
Gloucester - Resurrectio Christi
Koln - Resurrectio Domini (nostri Jesu Christi)
Lautenbach - Resurrectio domini
Ludlow - La Resurreciton de n’re Seignur
Malmesbury - Resurrectio domini
Mantuanum - Resurrectio domini
North Country - Resurreccio domini
Oberehnheim - Resurrectio Domini
Old English Martyrology - Resurrection Day
Peterborough - Resurrectio Christi prima
Robert of Jumieges - Resurrectio Dni
Rochester- Resurrectio Domini
Rufach - Resurrectio domini
St Albans - Resurrectio Christi
St Willibrord - Resurrectio domini
St Wulfstan - Resurrectio Dni
Sarum A - Resurrectio domini principale duplex festum
Sarum B - Resurrection of Our Lord
Sherborne - Resurrection domini prima
Stabulense - Resurrectio Domini
Strassburg - Resurrectio Domini
Titus – Resurrectio Xpi
Verdinense - Resurrectio domini
Wells - Resurrectio domini
West Country A - Resurrectio domini nostri Ihesu Christi
West Country B - Resurreccio domini nostri Ihesu Christi
Westminster - Resurrectio domini
Winchester A - Resurrectio Christi
Winchester B - Resurrectio Christi
Winchester C - Resurrexctio domini
Worcester A - Resurrectio domini prima
Worcester B - Resurrectio Christi
York - Resurrectio Domini

Crucifixion (March 25)

Antissiodorensis - Annuntiatio sanctae ac perpetuae virginis Mariae, et in Hierosolymis
    crucixio Domini nostri Jesus Christi
Bede’s Martyrology - Dominus Crucifixus est. Annuntiatio dominica
Canterbury C - Crucifixus Christi
Canterbury D - Crucifixio domini
Evesham B - Crucifixus Christi
Koln - Dominus Iesus Christus crucifixus / Annunciatio s Mariae
Old English Martyrology - Annunciation Day. Crucifixion
St Neot - Annunciatio Christi et Crucifixio eius
Stabulense - Adununtiatio, conceptio et passio Domini
St Willibrord - Dominus crucifixus est
Verdinense - Annunciatio S. Mariae. Passio domini
West Country A - Crucifixio domini
York - Annunciatio Beatae Mariae . . . Hae die Christus passus est

Christ’s Burial / Descent into Hell (March 26)
Old English Martyrology - Christ’s Descent into Hell
Sherborne - Dominus sepulchro

Ascension (May 5)
Antissiodorensis - Ascensio domini ad coelos
Athalstan – Dominus coelos conscendit ad altos
Canterbury A - Ascensio domini ad caelos
Canterbury D - Ascensio dominica
Chester - Ascensio domini ad celos
Durham - Ascensio domini in celum
Evesham A - Prima ascensio domini ad celos
Exeter A - Ascensio domini
Exeter B - Ascensio D’ni in Coelum
Glastonbury - Ascensio domini
Koln - Ascensio Domini (in coelum)
Lautenbach - Ascensio Domini
North Country - Ascensio domini ad celos
Oberehnheim - Ascensio domini
Old English Martyrology - The Ascension of Christ
Rufach - Ascensio domini
St Willibrord - ascensio domini
St Wulfstan - Prima ascensio Dni ad celos
Sherborne - Ascensio domini ad celos
Titus – Prima Ascensio D’ne ad Celos
Wessex - i. Ascensio
West Country A - Ascentio domini ad celos
West Country B - Ascensio domini nostri Ihesu Christi
Winchester A - Prima ascensio domini ad celos
Winchester B - Prima ascensio domini ad celos
Winchester C - Prima ascensio domini ad celos
Worcester B - Primum ascensio domini

Pentecost (May 15)
Abingdon - Descendit spiritus sanctus super apostolos
Athelstan – Inluxit sanctis en gratia prima
Bede’s Martyology - Primum a Pentecosten
Bury St Edmunds - Primum pentecosten
Canterbury A - Primum pentecosten
Canterbury B - Primum pentecosten
Canterbury C - Primus aduentus spiritus sancti super discipulos
Canterbury D - Aduentus spiritus sancti super discipulos
Chester - Descendit spiritus sanctus super apostolos
Durham - Primum pentecosten
Evesham A - Primum pentecosten
Exeter A - Primum pentecosten
Glastonbury - Primum pentecosten
Muchelney - Spiritus sanctus super apostolos venit
North Country - Primum Pentecosten
Oberehnheim - Adventus Spiritus sancti
Old English Martyrology - The Day of Pentecost
Robert of Jumieges - Primum pentecosten
Rufach - Adventus spiritus sancti
St Willibrord - Primum Pentecosten
St Wulfstan - Primum Pentecosten
Sherborne - Primum pentecosten
Titus – Prima pentecosten
Wessex - .i. Pentecosten
West Country A - Primum Pentecosten
West Country B - Primum pentecosten
Winchester A - Prima pentecostes
Winchester B - Prima pentecostes
Winchester C - Prima pentecosten
Worcester A - Primum pentecosten
Worcester B - Primum pentecosten

The Lord Returns from Egypt (January 11)
Antissiodorensis - Relatio Jesu ex Aegypto
Bede’s Martyology - Eductio Jesu ex Aegypto
Canterbury D - Eductio domini de egypto (Jan 11)
Durham - Deductio Christi de egypto (Jan 11)
Koln - Eductio Domini (Christi) de (ex) Aegypto
Robert of Jumieges - Eductio dni de aegypto
St Willibrord - Eductio domini de aegypto
Stabulense - Eductio Domini de Aegypto
Verdinense - Eductio domini de Aegypto

The Devil Leaves Jesus (February 15)
Chester - Diabolus recessit a domino
Durham - Diabolus a domino recessit
Evesham A - Diabolus a Domino Recessit
Exeter A - Diabolus recessit a Domino
Koln - Diabolus recessit a Domino
Robert of Jumieges - Diabolus a domino recessit
St Willibrord - Retrorsum diabulus recessit a domino
St Wulfstan - Diabolus a dno recessit

The Death of James (March 25)
St Willibrord - Sancti iacobi fratris domini
Stabulense - Passio Jacobi fratris domini

First Day of the World (March 18)
Canterbury A - Primus dies seculi
Canterbury B - Primus dies seculi
Canterbury C - Primus dies seculi
Canterbury D - Primus dies seculi
Chester - Prima dies seculi
Durham - Primus dies seculi
Croyland A - Primus dies seculi
Ely - Primus dies seculi
Evesham A - Primus dies seculi
Exeter A - Primus dies seculi
Koln - Prima dies sacelli
Robert of Jumieges - Prima dies sceli
St Wulfstan - pm dies sceli
Sherborne - Primus dies seculi
Titus – Primus die s’cli
Winchester A - Primus dies seculi
Winchester B - Primus dies seculi
Worcester B - .I. Dies saeculi

The Seven Days of Creation (March 18-24)

Old English Martyrology -
First day of the Creation
Second day of the Creation
Third day of the Creation
Fourth day of the Creation
Fifth day of the Creation
Sixth Day of the Creation
Seventh Day of the Creation
Creation of Adam (March 23)
  Bede’s Martyrology - Adam plasmatus est
  Bury St Edmunds - Adam creatus est
  Canterbury C - Adam creatus est
  Canterbury D - Adam creatus est
  Chester - Adam plasmatus est
  Croyland A - Adam creatus est
  Durham - Adam creatus est
  Evesham A - Adam creatus est
  Evesham B - Homo creatus
  Exeter B - Adam creatus est
  Malmesbury - Psalmacio Ade
  North Country - Adam creatus est
  Robert of Jumieges - Adam creatus est
  Sarum A - Hic adam creatur
  Sarum B - Creation of Adam
  St Wulfstan - Adam creatus est
  Sherborne - Adam creatus est
  Titus – Adam creatus est
  West Country A - Adam creatus est
  Winchester A - Adam creatus est
  Winchester B - Adam creatus est
  Worcester B - Adam creatus est

Noah Enters the Ark (March 16)
  Sarum A - Introitus noe in arcam
  Sarum B - Entry of Noah into the Ark

The Flood (April 12)
  West Country A - Diluuium factus est

Noah Leaves the Ark (April 29)
  Canterbury A - Egressio Noe de arca
  Exeter A - Egressio Noe de arca
  Glastonbury - Egressio Noe de arca
  Koln - Egressio Noae de arca (April 27 and 28)
  St Willibrord - Egresio noe de arca
  Sarum A - Egressus noe de arca
  Sarum B - Departure of Noah from the Ark
  West Country B - Egressio Noe de arca

Sacrifice of Isaac (March 25)
St Willibrord - Immolatio Isaac

Three Youth
   Antissiodorensis - Trium puerorum Ananiae, Azariae, Miseaelis (December 16)
   St Willibrord - Sedrac misac abdinago (April 14)

Death of the prophet Job (May 6)
   Antissiodorensis - Obitus Job prophetae

Foundation of Rome (April 21)
   Exeter B – Roma conditur

   It has been stated above that these calendar entries refer to “historical” dates that are distinct from dates of liturgical celebrations. In a few cases, however, the calendar entries are given some indication of liturgical rank. The following entries are significant in this respect:

   Bruges - Resurrectio domini duplex
   Mulnechy - Resurrectio domini - cum processione
   Sarum B - Resurrectio domini principalis duplex festum
   York - Resurrectio domini - duplex festum principalis

   While one could imagine a procession on this day, these liturgical books did not include collects, readings or other liturgical texts. – So exactly what these designations meant in practice is unclear.

Later Memories

   Although Anglican liturgical calendars never include “historical” dates such as have been considered here, the memory of “historical” events associated with March 25 and 27 lasted for some time after the reformation. Thus the New Calendar 1561 includes a section on golden numbers, epacts and other data used in determining the date of Easter; it concludes with the following paragraph:

   Note, that the Golden number and Dominicall letter doeth change euery yeere the first day of Januarie, and the Epact the first day of March for euer. Note also, that the yeere of our Lorde beginneth the xxv. day of March, the same day supposed to be the first day vpon which the worlde was created, and the day when Christ was conceived in the wombe of the virgin Marie.

   In addition, the same source includes a 1578 supplemental calendar (thought to be of Puritan
origin) which has the following entry for March 27: “As vpon this day, was the resurrection of Christ” (p 446).

“Earliest Easter”

As indicated above, the “historical” ascension and pentecost on May 5 and 15, respectively, are sometimes referred to as prima ascensio and primum pentecosten – referring to the historical “first” or original events.

This language can be a source of confusion, however, because “first” can also be used to mean “the earliest date of”. Thus a number of medieval liturgical calendars contain the entry primum pascha on March 23. This does not mean the “historical Easter, the actual resurrection of Christ, which is noted on March 27. Instead, primum pascha here refers to the earliest possible date of Easter, as it is traditionally defined: the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox (which is defined as March 21). Such entries are listed below.

Earliest Date of Easter (March 22 / 23)
- Abingdon - Primum pascha
- Canterbury C - Primum pascha
- Canterbury D - Primum pascha
- Chertsey - Primum pascha
- Chester - Primum pasche
- Croyland A - Primum pascha
- Durham - Primum pascha
- Evesham B - Primum pascha
- Gloucester - Primum pascha
- Malmesbury - Primum Pascha
- Sarum A - Primum pascha
- St Neot - Primum pascha
- Sherborne - Primum pascha
- Titus – Primum pascha
- Vitellius – Primum pascha
- Winchester B - Primum pascha
- Worcester B - Primum pasca

If primum pascha (earliest Easter) is on April 23, then earliest ascension and pentecost should fall on April 30 and May 10, respectively. (In some cases the words primus dies ascensio and dies i. pentecosten are used.) Such entries are indeed found in the following liturgical calendars:

Abingdon; Canterbury C; Canterbury D; Chester; Durham;

Finally, it may be noted that the latest date of Easter (ultimum pascha) is also noted in some
liturgical calendars on April 24:

Evesham A; Exeter A; Glastonbury; Sherborne; Wessex; West Country A; Winchester A; Winchester B

Discussion

The data presented here of the listing of “historical” dates in a number of medieval liturgical calendars raise more questions than they answer.

It is not surprising that the central events of Christ’s death, resurrection, ascension and pentecost are included more frequently than other events of his life and ministry. In view of the great emphasis that Christ’s death had in medieval piety, however, it is noteworthy that it is the resurrection that is listed most often. The creation of the world and of Adam receive considerable attention as well, as do dates associated with the flood. Why there should be so much variation among calendars with respect to which “historical” dates are included, is unclear. Why do some calendars include no such dates, while others include many?

What meaning did the practice of remembering “historical” dates have for medieval folks - whether monastics, clergy or laity? To what extent were such dates actually known to communities at large? After all, not everybody saw or needed to see liturgical calendars. How were these dates considered and valued in relation to the actual liturgical celebration of the same mysteries in the course of the liturgical year? What factors were important in choosing such dates: imagination, awareness of ancient tradition, biblical knowledge and piety, historical knowledge, interest in calendrical matters? It is hard to tell.
Appendix: Sources

Short titles of the individual liturgical calendars studied are given here, together with full bibliographic information.

Abbotsbury

Abingdon

Antissiodorensis

Ashridge

Athelstan

Benfeld

Bede’s Martyrology
   Also:

Bruges

Bury St Edmunds

Canterbury A

Canterbury B

Canterbury C

Canterbury D

Chertsey

Chester

Croyland A

Croyland B

Deeping

Dunster

Durham

Ely

Evesham A

Evesham B

Exeter A

Exeter B

Floriacense

Glastonbury

Gloucester

Koln
“Der Kolner Festkalender”.

Lautenbach

Lincoln
Christopher Wordsworth, “I. A Kalendar or Director of Lincoln Use; and II. Kalendarium e Consuedudinario Monasterii de Burgo Sancti Petri”, *Archaeologia* 51 (1888) 1-40.

Ludlow
Malmesbury

Mantuanum

Mulchelnsy

North Country

Oberehnheim

Old English Martyrology

Rochester

Robert of Jumieges
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