

understanding and does not assume any sort of pontifical posture.

--Victor I, 2nd century. Victor died in 198 and we can say without hesitation that he thought of himself as positionally superior to the other bishops of the church. His attitude on the Easter date indicates such...he was ready to excommunicate all who did not agree but Irenaeus persuaded him to take a more reasonable approach. However, no matter what his pretension were, there is no evidence the rest of the church saw him in that light.

Zephyrinus (d. 217) and Callistus (d. 222) were martyr bishops who were accused of Monarchianism by Hippolytus. There is no indication that he felt a subservience was necessary toward the bishop of Rome in any way..in fact he denounced him in the strongest of terms.

Fabian (d. ca. 250) was a very capable bishop who gained many favors for the church in the political arena (remember that Christianity was still illegal in his day) and was known as a competent leader. He was martyred quickly by Decius Trajan but due to his reputation there arose some centuries later a book compiling the "Decretals of Fabian" and these included many claims for Roman superiority. These were determined to be forgeries early in the scholastic period..by church scholars(!) and have no standing in the religious community as authoritative documents today.

Melchiades (d. 314) received the favor of the emperor and apparently the gift of the Lateran palace. He aided in securing the condemnation of the Donatists and the "Donation of Constantine" a cleverly forged document that gave Rome and the western world to the Bishop of Rome, was reputedly given in his day. (The falsity of this document was demonstrated in the 15th century by the Papal secretary, Laurentius Valla, a judgment confirmed by the scholastic Pico Della Mirandola, etc.) But the traditional prestige of this remained a dominant factor for a very long time.

Liberius, (d. 366) fell under the wrath of foes of the Nicene Creed who forced him, under great pain, to sign a statement against it. He was subsequently dragged to Constantinople and treated shamefully. He sought to negate the forced confession but could not really extricate himself. He was a brave man and his courage and survival tended to reinforced the idea that the Roman bishopric could not be destroyed by