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Rausing, Gad

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The days of the week and Dark Age politics

By Gad Rausing

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It is advocated that by the intermediary of returning soldiers and officials the Germani of the North adopted not only the concept of the seven-day week but also the names of the days of the week from the Romans of the late Empire. They renamed them by association to their own gods. The Romans themselves seem to have introduced the seven-day week during the reign of Augustus although the days of the week may not have been named until considerably later. The setting up of the state cult to Sol Invictus by Aurelian in 274 is considered of crucial importance. This may have been the time when the first day of the week was named after the chief god of the imperial house. In the Migration Period the political division of Europe is also mirrored in the terminology of the week days. A Gothic, a Frankish and a Northern vocabulary evolved. The Bajuvari and the Alamanni adopted Gothic terms, which were derived from Greek. The Franks borrowed those of their catholic Latin subjects and the Germani of Scandinavia and the North Sea coast translated the Latin terms into their own language.

Gad Rausing, Case Postale 22, CH-1820 Territet, Switzerland.

We do not know how our earliest ancestors counted time. Some way of determining the time of the year must have been necessary even before the emergence of politically organized societies made it so, with their demands for the various time-related services performed by the citizen. Agriculture became possible only when the farmers could define and determine the times of the various recurrent activities, even the earliest farmers must be able to determine the proper time for sowing. Dividing the year into lunar months did not help, these moving through the solar year. The week as such, the group of seven days, seems originally to have been a Babylonian concept, the number being decided by the sun, the moon and the five planets visible to the naked eye (Hermodsson, 1970), one which seems to have been adopted by the Romans in Augustus' times, although the days of the week may not have been named until considerably later.

During the first four centuries of our era, the material culture of the Scandinavians was so strongly influenced by that of the Romans that

the whole period has been named the "Roman Iron Age". Many finds testify to the close trade relations between the Roman Empire and Scandinavia in the former's heyday, and we may also be certain that many Scandinavians visited the Empire and served in the Empire's forces. Such contacts have left traces beyond the purely material ones. We can see the Roman influence in many fields, such as political organization, dress, arms and armour, language and religion as well as in the names of the week's days. These we all know, they have been familiar to us for centuries. Some of us may even recognize Tyr, Oden, Tor and Freja lurking behind these names, but rather few of us realize that these gods are really Roman ones masquerading as Norse.

In "De Bello Gallico" Caesar lists a number of Celtic gods, describing them by Roman names as "... Mercury ... Next to him they (the Celtic tribes of Gallia) reverence Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva." He also notes that "the customs of the Germani are different ... They recognize as gods ... the Sun, the Moon and

Fire ..." Almost certainly the Germani worshipped also other gods already in Caesar's day. A century later Tacitus tells us that

in their ancient songs, their only way of remembering or recording the past, (the Germani) celebrate an earth-born god, Tuisco, and his son Mannus ... To Mannus they assign three sons ... for whom are named the Ingaevones, the Herminones and the Is-taevones ... Hercules once visited them ... Mercury is the deity whom they chiefly worship and to whom they offer human sacrifices on certain days (here speaks a civilized Roman, one whose ancestors had not practiced human sacrifice for centuries but one who enjoyed seeing men killed in the arena), ... they placate Hercules and Mars with regular sacrifices ... Some of the Suevi also sacrifice to Isis ... Ertha or mother-Earth ... the deities (which) are described in Roman language as Castor and Polux ... the name being Alcis ... (Could this be a mistake for "Alces"?)

Do the twin axe-men from Stockhult and those from Grevensvænge as well as the figures on the bronze tubes from Fogdarp represent these divine twins? Quite evidently the Norse pantheon of the time housed also other gods, of whom we know little, among them the Sun and the Moon, mentioned by Caesar.

Later, Mercury was to be identified with Oden, although Tacitus does not refer to Oden as we know him but to his "predecessor", the old spear-god of the Bronze Age, probably that same Mercury of the Cimbri to whom the two inscriptions south of Miltenberg on the Rhine were dedicated sometime in early imperial times. Tacitus did not mean that the Celts and the Germani worshipped Roman Mercury, Hercules and Mars nor Egyptian Isis but gods of their own, gods whose functions more or less corresponded to those of the Romans, gods whom he could best describe to this readers by making them the "barbarian counterparts" of the latter.

The Germanic god whom Cesar called Sol was probably the old Germanic sky god, Ull, and those gods whom Cesar equated with Moon and with Fire were respectively a moon goddess corresponding to Diana or Luna, and Tor, the god of lightning and of thunder, probably the one to whom men sacrificed axes already in neolithic times. Even though there were many local gods the main gods were the same all over the Germanic world, just as, some centuries earlier, the numerous Celtic tribes all

over Europe all had one group of gods in common, and just as all Greeks, from Sicily and Massilia to Bactria, worshipped Zeus, Athena and all the gods of the Olympus. Some of the early Germanic gods mentioned by Tacitus sank into oblivion, or at least we do not meet them in Viking Age tales, whereas others survived for a long time. Isis and the Twins disappeared without a trace, as did the Bull, whereas not only the Sun but also the Moon retained their power for several centuries after Tacitus time.

During the first four centuries of our era the influence of Roman material culture was strong enough in Scandinavia for the period to be called the "Roman Iron Age", even though no part of Scandinavia was ever occupied or settled by the Romans. It should be noted that rather few Roman objects of the types so common in south Scandinavia have been found in Germania Libera. It seems that, at the time, the Germanic nations in direct contact with the Romans on the Limes were hostile, whereas the Romans could maintain contacts with Germanic nations behind their enemies. The lack of Roman artefacts in the western parts of present-day Germany suggests that Germanic warriors from the nations living there did not enter the Roman service.

At the time of the Empire many Germani served Rome, mostly men from far beyond the limes. Many of those who survived their period of service returned to the "old country", there to be buried with their Roman weapons and decorations. Such returning soldiers and officials were well versed in Roman thought and traditions, probably influencing their countrymen to a certain extent. Most likely the Germani of Scandinavia and adjacent countries imported not only material but also immaterial goods from the Roman province, among these the concept of the seven-day week and the knowledge of the gods to whom the days of the Roman week were dedicated.

Who were these gods, whom do we find in our Christian diary?

French quite clearly retains the names of the Roman gods for whom the days were named, whereas the Germani evidently substituted their own gods for those of Rome in these

Latin		French	English	Swedish
Dies Domini	Sol	Dimanche	Sunday	Söndag
Dies Lunae	Luna	Lundi	Monday	Måndag
Dies Martis	Mars	Mardi	Tuesday	Tisdag
Dies Mercuri	Mercury	Mercredi	Wednesday	Onsdag
Dies Jovis	Jove	Jeudi	Thursday	Torsdag
Dies Veneris	Venus	Vendredi	Friday	Fredag
Dies Saturni	Saturn	Samedi	Saturday	Lördag

names. Rydbeck (Lars Rydbeck, pers. comm. 11/1 1995), suggests that naming the days for gods in the Roman pantheon may have been connected with the important part played by astrology at this time and later. Thus "dies Solis" and "dies Lunae" may have been inspired not by Sol Invictus and by divine Luna but by the sun and the moon as celestial bodies, just as the names of the other days of the week may have been inspired by the names of the planets rather than by those of the gods. But even if so, it seems likely that the Germani borrowed the concept of the week, and the names of its days, in late Imperial times.

It also seems that the names of the days of the week were borrowed before Christianity became the official religion in the Empire. Hermodsson (Lars Hermodsson, Pers. comm. 11/1 1995) means that the very fact that the names were translated, Norse gods lending their names, rather than adopted with their Roman names, the latter to be distorted over the centuries, proves the "week-day gods" to have been worshipped in the Empire at the time when the Germani began to count the time in weeks.

Sunday, Söndag, dies Domini

Sunday, "söndag", the first day of the week. In pre-Christian times the day was named for Sol, the name being changed when Christianity became the "state religion".

Man had long worshipped life-giving Sun, the earliest direct evidence for this in northern Europe being afforded by those megalithic monuments so planned that the sun could play an active part in the ceremonies performed. The spiral patterns so common in Bronze Age art seem to represent the sun in its divine aspect, but only Caesar's statement, quoted above,

makes it quite clear that Sun was one of the chief gods also of the Iron-Age Germani.

Already at the time of the republic Sol, the sun, was one of the most popular and prominent gods of Rome and even though some of his attributes were later assigned to Apollo, by the end of the second century the sun, Sol, the god who ruled in heaven, became the main god of the Severan emperors.

The culture of the Christian eastern part of the Empire always deeply influenced its western half. Titus Flavius Clemens, consul in 95 A.D., and his wife Domitilla were accused of "atheism" and it is rather likely that, as the 4th-century tradition has it, Domitilla was a Christian. Already the consul of the year 91, Acilius Glabrio, had been executed on this charge—but also on that of having fought as a gladiator. In 112 Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, asked the emperor what to do with the Christians in his province. Marcia, the concubine of Commodus (180–192) was a Christian (Chadwick, 1993), and Tertullian (160–220) could claim that "we are but of yesterday and we have filled all you have—cities, islands, forts, towns, assembly halls, even military camps, tribes, town councils, the palace, senate and forum. We have left you nothing but the temples." (Tertullian, *Apol.* 37. From Chadwick, 1993, p. 65.) Later in the third century the emperor Phillip (244–249) may have been a crypto-Christian. Towards the end of the 4th century Christianity had established itself as the majority religion in the eastern part of the Empire and become wide-spread in the western part (Brown, 1989, p. 104) and in the first half of the fifth century Christianity was imposed everywhere by mob violence from below.

In 274 Aurelian set up a state cult to Sol In-

victus, believing the Sun-god to have brought him victory in Syria. This may have been the time when the first day of the week was named for the chief god of the Imperial House.

Even though Christ and Mithras had ousted him from the first place in the hearts of men already in the third century, Sol remained one of the chief gods at least unto 363, the year in which Julian died. However, when Constantine accepted Christianity as a state religion in 312, after the battle of Pons Milvius, Christianity turned the crucial corner from heresy to orthodoxy. It is unlikely that the most important day of the week would have been named for Sol at any time after Aurelian's death, but quite impossible for it to be so named after 312.

It seems that returning Germanic soldiers brought the name of the first day of the week north, simply translating the name, *dies Solis*, assigning the day to the Germanic sun god. This must have happened while Sol was still supreme in the Roman pantheon, i.e. sometime between the years 274 and 312 A.D.

Later, those Germanic nations to whom the name implied a religious observance and whose citizens wanted to mark their new Christian religion, chose to change the name once again, the day of the sun becoming the Day of the Lord, *Dies Domini*, "dimanche" in modern French. But still, like old soldiers, the pagan gods did not die—to many contemporaries they appeared to have faded away, but in the stars at night these gods had found shapes, more suitable to their impassive eternity than in perishable statues wrought by mortals. Throughout the Middle Ages, the stars still hung above Christian Europe, disturbing reminders of the immortality of the gods, whose attributes still rested on the planets which ruled the behaviour of civilized men up till the end of the 17th century—and, perhaps, even today.

Monday, Måndag, dies Lunae

To the Romans this was the day of Diana, the huntress, who was also a moon goddess. Remarkably enough the Romans called the day simply "*dies lunae*", the day of the moon, rather than than "*dies Dianae*", as might have been expected.

Klavns Randsborg (Kivik, *Acta Arch.* 64, 1993,

p. 104 ff.) points to the iconographic evidence which suggests that, long before Caesar's days, the Germani of the Bronze Age worshipped the moon in its two aspects. If so, no memory of this survives in the sagas or in the preserved myths. Still, the fear of the moon is deeply imbedded, and even today many people fear being "moonstruck" or, to use the latin expression, becoming lunatics. When the Germani named the days of the week the moon was evidently still important enough a god to give its name to the *Dies Lunae* of the Romans, and the Moon remained powerful enough for the laws of Canute to forbid moon-worship (Branston, 1994, p. 51). Fortunately, in early Christian days the moon, as such, was no longer directly associated with the pagan goddess, Diana's day consequently remaining the day of the moon, becoming harmless monday, *Lundi*.

Tuesday, Tisdag, Dies Martis

The old Germanic name for the day was *Zistac*, old English *Tiwesdæg*, Tyr's day. In pagan Germania, Tyr was the God of War, the closest counterpart of Mars. Hermodsson (1970) points to the inscriptions from Housestead near Hadrian's wall, dedicated by the numerus *Hnaudifridi* to Mars *Thincsus*, whom we recognize in German "*Dienstag*".

When the Franks accepted Christianity in the fifth century, that religion seems to have been strong enough in Gallia for the pagan names of the week-days no longer to be controversial, so just as the long-Christian people of the land had not found it necessary to replace Luna, Mars, Mercury, Jove, Venus and Saturn, only replacing Sol's name with that of the Lord, even militant Frankish Christian converts could do the same.

Wednesday, Onsdag

This was the *Dies Mercurii* of the Romans. Originally Mercury was the protector of the grain stores and, as such, also the god of trade and of merchants, but by the time of the late Empire, Mercury was a fully developed chthonic god, one who conveyed dead men's souls to the nether world, one whose obvious counterpart in the Norse pantheon was Oden, the god of the dead. In the late sagas also Oden appears

in a double guise, as the god of war and of war-leaders, but also as a god of deceit, a god of merchants and of tradesmen, an artful perjurer who sends his faithful to their death as David sent Uriah the Hittite.

Men still remembered Mercury's having been, or being, the protector of the corn stores. Did Tacitus have this aspect of Mercury in mind when searching for a Roman equivalent of a Germanic god? If so, the latter must be not only a god of death and of deceit but also a god of the harvest—and evidently Oden was also a god of the harvest since, as such, he could demand human sacrifice when the harvest failed. This is attested by the Ynglingasaga's tale of king Domalde's fate several centuries after Tacitus' time, when that Swedish king was sacrificed by his people after a series of bad harvests.

The Ynglinga Saga, which tells of events in the 3rd century, describes Oden as human enough, a priest who is also extremely successful both as a general and as a politician, one who identified himself with the Wodanaz of the early Germani and took his name. Already three hundred years later, the Anglo-Saxon sources describe Oden as the God of the Dead and also the god of wisdom. Only in the very latest sources, in the Icelandic sagas, do we meet him as "all-Father" some ten generations after Christianity's definite victory in the island. In the prosaic Edda Snorre states that Oden was "all-Father", but the prosaic Edda also states that "all-Father" was the oldest god, that he had existed since the beginning of time, that he had created Heaven, Earth and Man, that he was omnipotent. This earliest "all-Father" was not Oden but Tyr, old Germanic Tiwaz.

When was "historical Oden" first identified with Mercury, the harvest god who was also the god of the dead? Already Tacitus tells us (*Annales* 13, 57) that in the year 58 A.D., when the Hermunduri and the Chatti met in battle, both sides had promised their enemies to Mars and to Mercury (Branston 1984, 102). This is a close parallel to Orosius' description of Caepio's and Mallus' defeat at the hands of the Cimbri and the Theutoni in 105 B.C. Some 200 years before the time of "historical" Oden, the

man who was to be deified under that name, we meet a Germanic god, whom the Romans compared with Mercury and another, whom they compared with Mars, evidently Wodanaz and Tiwaz, Oden and Tyr.

Thursday, Torsdag, dies Jovis

Jove was a god of many aspects, among them being the god of thunder. Tor was his obvious counterpart among the Germani, Thursday, Donnerstag and Torsdag being names speaking for themselves.

Tor was an ancient thunder-god, popular in Scandinavia but worshipped also on the Continent, where we meet him in an inscription on a fibula from Nordendorf in Bavaria, in the Saxon baptismal oath and in placenames all over Germany. Already in Neolithic times axes were sometimes deposited in the foundations of buildings and in running water. In both cases the god to whom these sacrifices were offered was probably the Thunderer. Later he was worshipped as Tor, the god of combat. Tor was the only one of the ancient gods who managed to hold his own against the Asa gods and later, in the 10th and 11th centuries, Tor and his followers, rather than Oden, led the resistance against Christ, until political conditions in Norway suddenly turned him into a warrior saint, Olaf.

Friday, Fredag, dies Veneris

Venus, the goddess of love, for whom the day was named in Rome, found her Norse counterpart in Freja, the goddess of love and fertility. Hermodsson (1970) suggests that the Friday was named for Frigg, Oden's staid wife, rather than for Fröja, but the latter is the only possible candidate being, like Venus, the goddess of love. The choice of Freja indicates that the name was adopted only after Nerthus had given rise to Njord, Frö and Freja, i.e. at a time later than that of Tacitus.

Saturday, Lördag, dies Saturni

Most handbooks have it that "lördag" means "löghardag", the day of the weekly washing, perhaps the washing of laundry rather than that of the body. This may be the correct interpretation, but it seems rather peculiar to intro-

duce such a mundane term among the divine names.

In Rome, Saturday was named for Saturn, that god with the dual personality who was a ruler of the Golden Age, the son of Uranos. He gave man agriculture, but he was also a dark god, one who devoured his own children and who castrated his own father, being banished for this by Zeus. But Saturn seems also to have been a god of fire, candles being traditionally burned on his feast-days, the Saturnalia. Was there any Norse god resembling Saturn, one who could give his name to Saturn's day? Yes, perhaps.

Jan Ekermann (Dir. Jan Ekermann, Norden-gatan 11, 603 64 Norrköping, pers. comm. 2/4 1994) suggests that Loke did so, that most remarkable and most mysterious of the Norse gods, the evil god, the personification of fire in its destructive aspect.

Loke seems to have been a double personality. Voluspa claims that Oden and Höner gave Ask and Embla spirit and soul, Oden's brother Lodur giving them blood and a healthy complexion. Already Branston identified this Lodur with Loke. Even though he was a half-breed giant, being the son of Fahrbaute (the lightning) and Laufey, Loke always appears among the gods, having become Oden's foster-brother at the beginning of time (Lokasenna). This would make Loke/Lopt/Lodur the appropriate counterpart of Saturn and the likely choice when it came to pick a name for the "day of Saturn". If so, the present Norse name "lördag" was not derived from "löghardagher", "the day of washing", but from "Lodur-dagher", the "day of Lodur" or of Loke, this name gradually deteriorating into Laughur-dagher, perhaps in Christian times and deliberately, in order to obliterate the memory of the evil god.

The twilight of the gods

How long did the names of the week's days retain their pagan character, how long were the gods remembered, when were the gods forgotten?

Many of the "old" Germanic gods had been forgotten by late pagan times or were, at least, no longer mentioned in those sources from the period which have happened to survive. Thus

Tuisco, Mannus, Ingvaz, Hermanaz and Istanz had been forgotten, but by Viking times, if not earlier Nerthus had become Njord with his son Frö and his daughter Freja, the Thunderer had become Tor, Wodanaz had merged with a nameless immigrant to become Oden, Sun had become Ullr. Some of the pagan gods survived for a long time, not only in the names of the seven days but also in the hearts of men, as living gods with power over life and death.

Among them, Tyr was to prove remarkably longlived. On July 15th, 1099 Robert of Normandy and his men stormed the walls of Jerusalem to the age-old battle-cry "Tyr help us", almost two hundred years after his grandfather's grandfather's grandfather, Gånge-Rolf, had been baptized, to become Rollo, first duke of Normandy (Bengtsson, 1937).

Occasionally also Oden and Tor took part in the affairs of men. The Norwegian Borglunda Saga tells how, more than another hundred years later, a short time before Christmas 1208, an old man visited a blacksmith to have his horse shod, claiming to be Oden on his way to Sweden where "four nights later king Sverker and king Erik fought at Lena". And even later, in the high Middle Ages, the men of Havick, in Roxboroughshire, Scotland, called on Tyr and on Oden, their battle-cry being "Teer ye-bus, ye Teer ye Oden" (Tyr help us, thou Tyr, thou Oden!). (Philippson, 1929, 161 and 117, Anm. 1.)

Even though Christianity required its adherents to forswear all the pagan gods, these found it easy to adapt themselves to the new times. Oden may have been, and probably was, a newcomer in Scandinavia, one who had been introduced sometime in the second or early third century A.D. He had taken over some of the duties of the old Spear-God, the god of the dead, he had assumed some of Tyr's functions. Having finally been dethroned, he became the master of the Wild Hunt, as such to terrify the people of the northern forests until quite recently.

The female aspect of Nerthus, to whom men were sacrificed, became Freja and later merged with Mary.

The old Thunderer, Tor of the Viking Age, led the resistance against White Christ, but fi-

nally also Tor had to surrender. Olof Tryggvason's Saga tells of Olof once meeting Tor on the high seas. Tor claimed that "the men of this island called on me for help until you, oh king, killed all my friends. Does this not call for revenge?" He then threw himself into the sea, "never to be seen again". Olof went on to meet his fate at Svolder, where he fell in battle in the summer of the year 1000 A.D. (Branston 1984, 116).

But still Tor had the last laugh. A god and most of his functions may be as old as the hills but still be able to change his name and to adopt new functions. Tor assumed the name and shape of another of his opponents, Olof Haraldsson, sainted king of Norway, who fell at Stiklastad on July 29th, 1030. In this guise he became the patron saint of Norway.

Even though the sagas never mention her, also the old snake-goddess of the Bronze Age survived for a long time. In 1350 Birgitta complained of the Swedes sacrificing to snakes (Klemming 1861, 198), and the superstitious horror of our rather harmless snakes prevalent in our days is probably the result of centuries of Christian indoctrination. (Is the corresponding abhorrence of spiders the result of a similar, deliberate, campaign against Loke?) Perhaps the snake goddess still yields some power? At least we were taught until quite recently that a gun which had been used to kill a crow or a magpie, Oden's sacred birds, will never again hit anything—unless a snake, the goddess' sacred animal, is shot out of its barrel!

Germani, Celts, Byzantines and Goths

The Germani met not only Romans but also men of other nations from whom they could, and did, borrow ideas and concepts. Can we be quite certain that the Germani adopted their names for the days of the week from Latin rather than from some other language, from some other people with whom they maintained close contacts? The Celts, the Goths and the Byzantines spring to mind as possible intermediaries.

First the *Celts*. Unfortunately we know next to nothing about the languages and dialects spoken by the Celts on the Continent. In pre-Christian times the Celts of Britain and Ireland

reckoned time in one-, three-, five-, ten- or 15-day periods, the seven-day week being unknown until introduced with Christianity. The names given to the days of the Christian week in early Irish are generally assumed to have been the same as those still surviving in modern Irish dialects, Roman names for the days of the week adopted in the 5th century. In Scottish Gaelic, they are

Di Domhnaich	Lord's day (latin <i>dominici</i>)
Di Luain	Moon-day
Di Mairt	Mars' day
Di ciadain	First-fast-day
Diardaoin	Between-fast-day
Di h-Aoine	Fast-day (Latin <i>ieiunium</i>)
Di Sathairne	Saturn's day

The names for Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday were evidently borrowed from provincial Latin with the Christian concept of the seven-day week, whereas the names for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are local ones, conditioned by the demands of the new religion. We do not know whether the Celts on the Continent used the same names but, if so, it seems unlikely that their Germanic neighbours borrowed from them.

However, Daibhi O Croinin (1993), suggests that the ancient Irish were familiar with several different systems. The Oxford Manuscript MS17, which contains works by Abbo of Fleury, Byrhtferth of Ramsey and Beda Venerabilis, contains a marginal note (fol., 71 v) on the weekdays *secundum Hebreos*, *secundum antiquos gentiles*, *secundum Siluestrum papam*, *secundum Anglos* and *secundum Scottos*.

The "Hebrew days" are listed in much the same way in many mediaeval manuscripts. The second list is that of the Roman names of the 3rd or 4th centuries. The list of the names according to Sylvester was derived from the apocryphal *Acta Sylvestri*, from about 500 A.D., according to which Sylvester, pope A.D., 314–335, urged Christians to abandon the pagan names of the days of the week in favour of such more in keeping with the new religion. It is not known whether these names were ever adopted anywhere or whether they remained but a pious thought.

The list according to the Anglo-Saxons reflects the use in England in late Saxon times.

Nomina dierum secundum Hebreos	Nomina dierum secundum antiquos gentiles	Nomina dierum secundum Siluestrum papam	Nomina dierum secundos Anglos	Nomina dierum secundos Scottos
Prima sabbati	Dies solis	Prima feria	Sunnandaeg	Dies scrol
Secunda sabbati	Dies lunae	Secunda feria	Monendaeg	Diu luna
Tercia sabbati	Dies martis	Tercia feria	Tifesdaeg	Diu mart
Quarta sabbati	Dies mercurii	Quarta feria	fodnosdaeg	Diu iath
Quinta sabbati	Dies iouis	Quinta feria	funresdaeg	Diu ethamon
Sexta sabbati	Dies ueneris	Sexta feria	Frigedaeg	Diu triach
Septima sabbati	Dies saturni	Sabbatum	Saeterdaeg	Diu satur

Four of the lists thus contain correct historical forms, whereas the list "according to the Scottos", i.e. according to the Irish, give us names which are quite different from the "standard" ones of later times. Of these, "dies scrol" seems to be the Latin "dies" together with "scrol", a word written "srol" in "Cormac's Glossary" of 1134, which means "Sun". "Dies Scrol" is thus mongrel Latin-Irish version of Latin "Dies Solis". On the other hand, the "diu" of the other days is good Old Irish. The words for Monday, Tuesday and Saturday are clearly borrowed from Latin, whereas "iath", "ethamon" and "triach" seem to be unique to Irish.

Neither these oldest Irish names nor those of the High Middle Ages seem to have influenced the Germani when they chose their names for the days of the week.

Then what about the *Byzantine Greeks*? In pre-Christian times the Greeks did not count the days in units of seven, the concept "week" being unknown until introduced with Christianity. According to the early Christian work "Didachä" (very early 2nd century A.D.) the names of the days were

Sunday	"kiriaki imera" or, simply, "kiriaki", the Lord's day
Monday	deuteri, second day
Tuesday	triti, third day
Wednesday	tetarti, fourth day
Thursday	pempti, fifth day
Friday	paraskeni, day of preparation
Saturday	sabbato

Quite evidently these names did not inspire those used by the Scandinavians, and we may assume that the Scandinavians did not borrow their method of counting the time from the East-Roman Empire.

Remain the *Goths*, those tribes from northern Europe who founded a kingdom on the northern shore of the Black Sea in the end of the second century, and who were to overrun Italy, France and Spain in the 5th century. Unfortunately very little is known about their language, mainly from the translation of the Bible into Gothic.

It seems that they adopted the week as a unit of measurement while still living in present-day Ukraine, i.e. before 375, even though the word "wiko" meant "sequence" or "regularity" rather than "7-day period" (Hermodsson, 1970).

The Goths borrowed the names for the days of the week from the Greek. Even though the only name known for certain is that for Friday, we may draw certain conclusions from old Bajuvarian-Alamannic and from Old High German forms. To judge from Old Bavarian and Old High German, Gothic Tuesday was probably called "Areindags", which we recognize in Bavarian Ertag and in Old High German Erin-tag. Quite evidently this is Greek "Areos heme-ra", the Day of Ares, the war god. In old Bawarian Thursday was "Pfinztag", ultimately from Greek "pempti imera", fifth day, probably borrowed by way of Gothic. Friday was "Paraskai-we" in Gothic, derived from Greek "paraskeni", day of preparation. In Old High German this day was called "Pherintag", borrowed either from Gothic or directly from Greek.

The Gothic names for the days of the week were thus borrowed from the Greek, not translated, which suggests that they were borrowed at a time when their meaning was no longer alive, when it was no longer necessary to find a Gothic correspondent to the Greek gods, i.e. when Ares was no longer a "living god" in that

society from which the name of the day was borrowed, in the Byzantine army or administration. This would mean that the Goths borrowed the concept of a seven-day week when they accepted Christianity, complete with the names of the days, sometime in the 4th or 5th centuries, much too late for the Gothic names to be adopted by the Scandinavians.

The Gothic names being adopted by the Alamanni and by the Bajuvari confirm the sagas' statements concerning the political relationships between these nations and the Goths in the 5th century. The very fact that the Bajuvari and the Alamanni adopted the (ostro?-)gothic terms, which were derived from the Greek, whereas the Franks borrowed those of their catholic Latin subjects and the Germani of Scandinavia and of the North-Sea coast translated the latin terms into their own language, illustrates the political division of Migration-Period Europe into three great groups, the Gothic, the Frankish and the Northern ones.

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Veckodagarna som spegel av politiska förhållanden under folkvandringstiden

Varje dag ger oss redan med sitt blotta namn direkt kontakt med den hedniska forntiden. Detta gäller inte bara nutidssvensken, utan också danskar och normän, tyskar, engelsmän, fransmän och många flera. Däremot är detta inte fallet för islänningar och slaviskspråkiga, vilka genom kyrkans diktat fått en avindividualiserad tideräkning med en så prosaisk namngivning av veckodagarna att namnet blott markerar dagens nummer inom veckan i förhållande till »Herrens dag», söndagen.

Veckodagarnas namn är fascinerande och in-

bjuder till spekulationer om hur gammalt namnskicket kan vara här i Norden, inom det anglosaxiska, respektive det latinska språkområdet. I ovanstående artikel har Gad Rausing sökt att bena upp begreppen och kommer fram till att germanerna under sen kejsartid som ett kulturlån kom att ta till sig både sjudagarsveckan och veckodagarnas namn. Hans teori är att det var hemvändande legosoldater som förmedlade lånet.

I det inledande avsnittet slår förf. fast att den materiella kulturen i Skandinavien under de

första fyra århundradena av vår tideräkning så till den grad influerades av romarna att arkeologerna valt att kalla hela tidsavsnittet för Romersk järnålder. Kontakterna med Imperiet var emellertid inte bara materiella, också på det andliga planet tillgodogjorde sig nordborna åtskilligt inom de mest skiftande sektorer, så uppenbarligen också då det gällde namngivningen av veckans dagar. Det är nämligen ytterst romerska gudanamn som döljer sig bakom den fernissa som givit veckodagarna deras till gudarna Tyr, Oden, Tor och Freja närmast associerande namn.

Gör man upp en enkel tabell finner man att de romerska gudanamnen röjer sig i de franska namnen på veckodagarna medan germanerna ersatt dem med egna gudanamn. Av allt att döma måste namnöversättningen ha skett i en tid då veckodagsgudarna ännu dyrkades i Imperiet, dvs. innan kristendomen blev statsreligion.

Argumentationen förs vidare under genomgång av veckodag för veckodag, här i kort sammanfattning:

Söndagens namn förs tillbaka till år 274 då kejsar Aurelianus till åminnelse av en seger i Syrien införde kulten av Den Obesegrade Solen (Sol Invictus) eftersom han ansåg sig ha solguden att tacka för segern. Det är logiskt att förmoda att veckans första dag då gavs namn efter kejsarhusets favoritgud. För germanerna, som enligt Caesar också hade en solgud var namngivningen lätt att acceptera, liksom också att den påföljande dagen skulle vara månens dag, hos romarna associerad med mångudin-

nan Diana. Tisdag, Dies Martis, sammanställs med krigsguden Tyr, onsdag med Wodan, eller Oden, som i mycket hade egenskaper gemensamma med romarnas Mercurius. Torsdagen, var hos romarna helgad åt åskguden Jupiter, analogin med åskguden Donar (Tor) var inte långsökt. Fredagen har namn efter kärleksgudinnan Freja som hade samma funktion som Venus, namngiverskan till romarnas fredag, »dies Veneris». Lördagens namn, som oftast uppfattats som »löghardag», dvs. veckotvättens dag är Rausing mera benägen att uppfatta som härlett ur ett »Lodur-dagher», dvs. Lokes dag och associerar Loke med Saturnus.

Efter att ha ägnat ett avsnitt åt länge kvardröjande reminiscenser av nordisk hedendom ställer Rausing frågan om det kan finnas alternativa förklaringar till varifrån germanerna övetagit veckodagarnas namn. Kan förmedlandet ha skett från kelter, goter eller bysantinare? Svaret blir komplext. Det förefaller som om goterna övertagit sjudagarsveckan och dess grekiska dagsnamn som begrepp från grekerna tillsammans med kristendomen på 300- eller 400-talet och sedan förmedlat detta till allemanner och bajuvarer medan frankerna övertog dessa från sina latinska undersåtar. Germanerna i Skandinavien och längs Nordsjökusten översatte däremot de latinska termerna till sitt eget språk. Detta illustrerar påtagligt den politiska klyvning som härskade i folkvandringstidens Europa mellan goter, franker och nordgermaner.

Jan Peder Lamm

