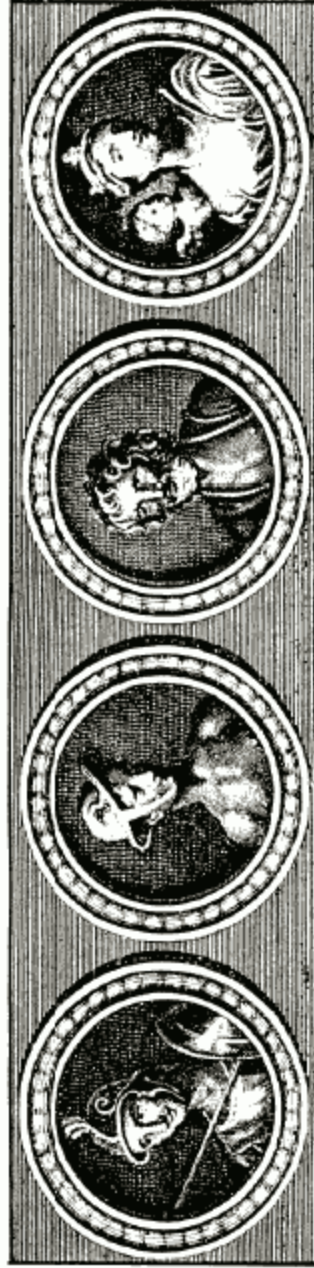




SATURN

SUN

MOON



MARS

MERCURY

JUPITER

VENUS

These portraits of the planetary gods of the astrological week were found in a series of seven medallions painted on a wall in Herculaneum, a Roman town destroyed with Pompeii by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A. D. The medallions appear in one continuous line and in the following order: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. (See *Le Pitture Antiche d'Ercolano*, Vol. 3, pp. 257-263.)

CHAPTER 7

The Planetary Week in the First Century A. D.

THE study of the pagan planetary week in the Roman Empire during the first century of the Christian Era is especially interesting because that is the period in which our Lord and His apostles lived and labored. We have conclusive proof that such a week was then in use among the Romans.

A Calendar Fragment From Puteoli

There has been preserved in the museum at Naples, Italy, a fragment of a stone calendar which is said to belong to the first century. It was found in the region of Puteoli, the Roman seaport at which the apostle Paul disembarked when he was taken in chains to be tried before Nero the first time.

Portions of three lines of the calendar inscription have been preserved upon the piece. In the first line there appears only the Latin word DIES (day). In the second there may be seen the numerals XVI, XVII, XVIII, and X (IX), which represent the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of the 30 days of the lunar month. In the third we have in their genitive form the planetary names (MERCU)RI (of Mercury), IOVIS (of Jupiter), and VENERIS (of Venus). These represent the last three days of the planetary week, and appear in their natural order as given above.¹

¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1863 ed., Vol. 10, part 1, p. 199, No. 1605; *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Band 2, col. 2575, art. "Hebdomas."

A Septizonium Before 10 A. D.

In his sketch of the life of the Roman emperor Titus, the biographer Suetonius Tranquillus, who wrote in Latin during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian (98-138 A. D.), mentions an interesting public building, to which he refers as "the Septizonium." He mentions it in the following statement about the birth of Titus:

"He was born on the third day before the Kalends of January [December 30], in the year memorable for the death of Gaius, in a mean house near the Septizonium and in a very small dark room besides."²

² Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars*, "Deified Titus," chap. 1, in Loeb Classical Library, *Suetonius*, Vol. 2, pp.321, 323.

Titus was born about 40 A. D., which means that the Septizonium mentioned by his biographer was built and in use *before* that date. The name of its builder and the date of its erection are not

known. It is not likely that it was built before the reign of Augustus Caesar (31 B. C. to 14 A. D.), who not only was much interested in astrology but also did considerable building to beautify the city of Rome. It cannot be the one built by the emperor Septimius Severus in 203 A. D., for that one was erected long after Suetonius wrote. The inscriptions make mention of a Septizonium at Lambaesis in Numidia, and state that there was another in a town in the Roman province of Africa. Commodianus,³ an ecclesiastical writer of the third century, denounced the Septizonium as an astrological institution. Thus it appears that edifices of this type were somewhat popular.

³ Commodianus, *In Favor of Christian Discipline*, chap. 7, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 204.

Most of the scholars who express an opinion on the matter hold that the Septizonium was “The House of the Seven Planets.” In at least one instance the name is given as Septizodium. In his commentary on the statement of Suetonius, the remarks by G. W. Mooney on this point are very good. He says:

“Various views have been held on the original meaning of ‘septizonium.’ Some suggest that it was a structure consisting of seven colonnades rising in tiers, each narrower than the one supporting it, and semicircular in form; others think it rose in steps, or that it had seven circular walls of different heights and colors like Ecbatana in Media as described in Herod. i, 98. According to Dombart (Pauly-Wissowa, ii, A, 1578 sqq.) ‘septizonium’ corresponded to the

ἡ ἑπτὰ Ζώνος, which was used primarily in a spatial sense of the seven zones into which the heavens and also the earth were divided, and then in a temporal sense of the order of rotation of the seven planets which marked the seven days of the week; ‘Septizonium,’ as the name of a building, denoted an ornamental structure serving in the main as a great public calendar, displaying on its front (1) figures of the seven planets (Saturnus, Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercurius, Jupiter, Venus), (2) the 12 signs of the zodiac marking the months, (3) the numbers of the days in the month. There were holes to receive a peg (moved daily) opposite the various planets, signs of the zodiac, and numbers of the days, so that the day of the week, the day of the month, and the month of the year were visible at a glance; see illustrations of Dombart in the article cited. FTC regards ‘septizodium’ as a corruption of ‘septizonium,’ while Jordan-Huelsen (Topogr. Rom. i, 3, 100) favor the view of Maas (Die Tagesgotter 106 sqq.) that ‘Septizodium,’

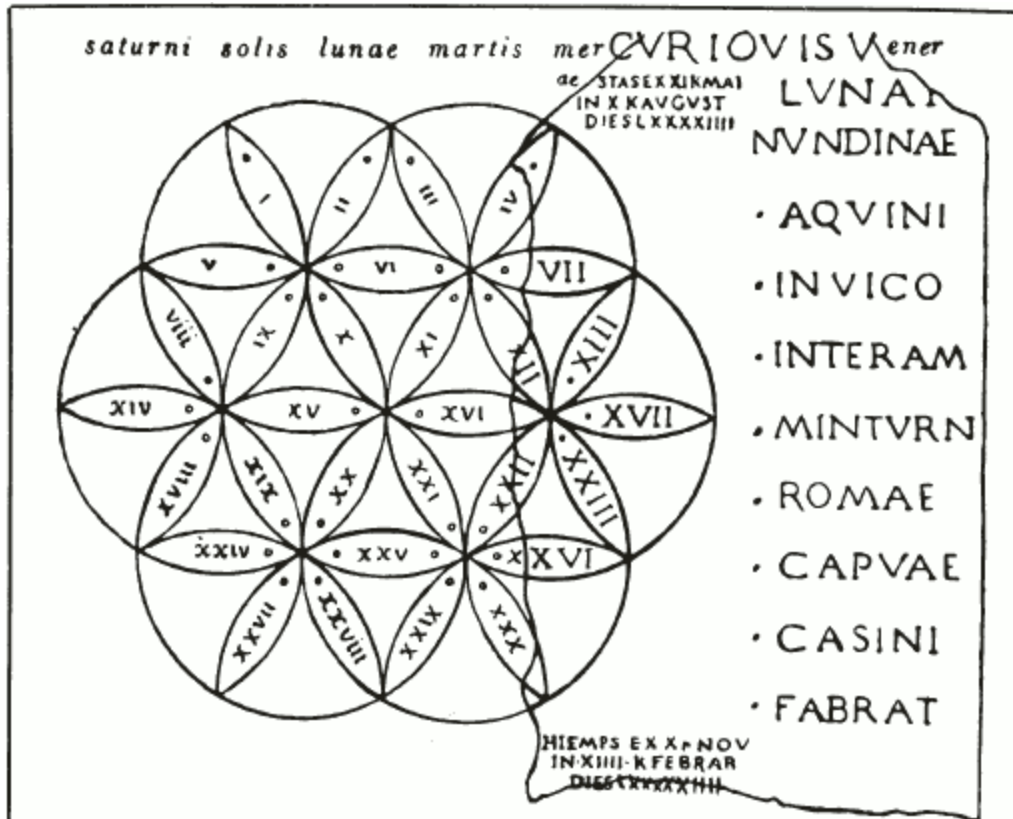
meaning ‘The House of the Seven Planets’ (ἑπτὰ Ζώδια) is the correct form, and that ‘Septizonium’ was the vulgar distortion of this.”⁴

Appolonius of Tyana

Apollonius of Tyana, in Cappadocia, was a contemporary of Christ and His apostles. He died in the reign of the Roman emperor Nerva (96-98 A. D.), having lived almost 100 years. This philosopher belonged to the school of the Neo-Pythagoreans, and delved into almost every system of magic, sorcery, and astrology in use in his day. He harbored a strong hatred for the Jews, and congratulated Titus upon his capture of Jerusalem. After his death, Apollonius was held up by the pagans as a greater teacher and miracle worker than Christ. C. Anthon says of

him: “The inhabitants of Tyana dedicated a temple to his name; the Ephesians erected a statue to him under the name of Hercules Alexicacus, for delivering them from the plague; Hadrian collected his letters; the emperor Severus honored him as already described [regarding him as divinely inspired]; Caracalla erected a temple to him; Aurelian, out of regard to his memory, refrained from sacking Tyana; lastly, Ammianus Marcellinus ranks him among the eminent men, who, like Socrates and Numa, were visited by a demon. All these prove nothing of the supernatural attributes of Apollonius, but they are decisive of the opinion entertained of him.”⁵

⁵C. Anthon, *A Classical Dictionary*, p. 165, art. “Apollonius.”



The table with the curious circles depicts a fragment of a Roman calendar in stone, discovered by Fulvius Ursinus. (The actual fragment is outlined by the irregular rectangle.) At the top are shown portions of the titles of the days of Mercury and Venus, and the whole of that of Jupiter. The names of the cities where the markets were held are listed, Rome being among them. The circles list (in lines from left to right) the 30 days of the lunar month. Holes in the stone served for a peg to mark the days.

SĀTVR·	SŌLIS	LŪNĀE	MĀRTIS·
RŌMAE	CAPVAE	CALATIAE·	BENEV

This is a stone fragment of a calendar showing the planetary names of the days of Saturn, Sun, Moon, and Mars. The titles of the last three days are broken off. Below appear the names of the cities where the markets were held. (See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1893 ed., Vol. 1, part 1, p. 218; 1863 ed., Vol. 10, p. 199; *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità Comunicate alla Real Accademia dei Lincei*, Rome, 1891, p. 238.)

About the middle of the first century, Apollonius, accompanied by Damis, a native of Nineveh, made a tour of the Orient as far as India to study other systems of magic. His biographer, Philostratus, who wrote in Greek before 245 A. D., says that Apollonius visited “the magi, who live in Babylon and Susa,” and that “he had interviews with the wizards of Babylonia.” From there he went on, and spent about four months in India, where he visited with Iarchas, the “oldest of the sages” there. “And Damis says that Iarchas gave seven rings to Apollonius named after the seven stars, and that Appolonius wore each of these in turn on the day of the week which bore its name.”⁶

⁶ See Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, book 1, chaps. 18, 2; book 2, chap. 40; book 3, chap. 41, in Loeb Classical Library, *Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Vol. 1, pp. 49, 7, 225, 321, 323.

If this statement is true, it indicates that the planetary week was widely known in the first century after the birth of Christ.

Some modern scholars are inclined to believe that Philostratus’ story of the life of Apollonius was wholly fictitious, but this is not the general opinion of the learned. It is apparent, however, that in his zeal to set forth Apollonius as the prince of philosophers, his biographer did freely exaggerate. The work was written not long before 217 A. D. It is said to have been read by Origen.

Hierocles, a persecutor and a literary adversary of the Christians, was first a governor of Bithynia, and later prefect over Egypt, near the beginning of the fourth century. One of many things he did to oppose Christianity was to set forth Apollonius of Tyana as a teacher and wonder worker far superior to Jesus Christ. Eusebius of Caesarea took up his pen in defense of the Christian religion, and in his treatise against Hierocles he said this about Apollonius of Tyana:

“How could he have disclaimed any wish to imitate them [the Oriental sages] when he accepted the seven rings named after the stars, and held it needful to wear these all through the rest of his life upon the days severally named after them, and that although, as you say yourself, they had a secret power in them?”⁷

⁷ Eusebius, *Treatise Against the Life of Apollonius of Tyana Written by Philostratus, and Occasioned by the Parallel Drawn by Hierocles Between Him and Christ*, chap. 22, in Loeb Classical Library, *Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Vol. 2, pp. 539, 541.

From a Contemporary of the Apostle Paul

Petronius, the Roman satirist and voluptuary, who was once proconsul in Bithynia, and later consul there, was for some time an intimate associate of the Roman emperor Nero. Later seeing himself fallen into disfavor and doomed to destruction by his imperial master, he slit his veins and bled to death about 66 A. D. Thus he died about the time that Nero had the apostle Paul beheaded.

One of the notable works composed by Petronius was a novel entitled *The Banquet of Trimalchio*, in which he pictures the luxury of the wealthy class of his time. This Trimalchio is represented as being a rich freedman who lived in southern Italy, probably at Puteoli or Cumae. In his description of the dining room, the writer said:

“Two calendars were fixed on either doorpost, one having this entry, if I remember right: ‘Our master C. is out to supper on December the 30th and 31st,’ the other being painted with the Moon in her course, and the likenesses of the seven stars. Lucky and unlucky days were marked too with distinctive knobs.”^s

^s Petronius, *Satyricon*, chap. 30, in Loeb Classical Library, *Petronius*, p. 45.

This passage has been cited by many writers to show that the planetary week was in use in Roman calendars of the first century. The description of the calendar, as given by Petronius, agrees in the minutest details with the facts as revealed by archaeology. The course of the Moon through the lunar month of thirty days was indicated from day to day by the knob (*bullā*) or stud fastened on a peg. By the side of each number of the days of the month there was a hole into which the peg could be inserted. The seven days of the planetary week, from that of Saturn to that of Venus, were represented by likenesses (*imagines*) or images of these astrological deities. In stone calendars only their names appear, as a rule, but upon the household calendar tablets their images or pictures were painted. By the side of each planetary figure or name of the day there was a hole into which the peg with the knob could be inserted. This peg, which was often of brass, was moved from hole to hole each day, just as now we daily turn over a new leaf of our desk calendars in order to keep up to date with the weekly cycle. The astrological nature of the calendar scheme is seen by the reference to lucky and unlucky days. By a distinctive knob, lucky and unlucky days were indicated, so that serious matters might be undertaken at a favorable time, and unlucky times avoided.

Jerusalem Fell on the Day of Saturn

It was in 66 A. D. that the Jews of Palestine revolted against the government of Rome, and Nero, the emperor, sent his general, Vespasian, to put down the rebellion. The armies of Vespasian, led to ultimate victory by his son Titus, captured the city of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The Roman author Sextus Julius Frontinus, who wrote in Latin about the time that the apostle John penned the book of the Revelation (near the close of the first century), referred to the conquest of Jerusalem by the armies of Vespasian, saying:

“The divine Augustus Vespasian attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, on which it is forbidden for them to do any thing serious, and prevailed.”^o

^o Frontinus, *The Stratagems*, book 2, chap. 1, Sec. 17, in Loeb Classical Library, *Frontinus*, p. 98, author’s translation.

Dio Cassius says this in his account of this war between the Romans and the Jews:

“Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most. From that time forth it was ordered that the Jews who continued to observe their ancestral customs should pay an annual tribute of two denarii to Jupiter Capitolinus.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, book 6.5, chap. 7, in Loeb Classical Library, *Dio's Roman History*, Vol. 8, p. 271.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, does not record what day of the week it was that Jerusalem fell, but he does give in detail the date. His statement reads thus:

“And thus was Jerusalem taken, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, on the eighth day of the month of Gorpheus [Elul].”¹¹

¹¹ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, book 6, chap. 10, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, pp. 832, 833.

The date of the fall of Jerusalem, according to several authorities,¹² was Saturday, September 8, 70 A. D.

¹² See *The New International Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 22, p. 309, art. “Titus.”

Treasures From Pompeii and Herculaneum

On August 24, 79 A. D., just nine years after the fall of Jerusalem, Mount Vesuvius, located about seven miles southeast of Naples, Italy, suddenly erupted and buried three towns under a heavy rain of lava and ashes. These towns were Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. In this calamity perished Drusilla,¹³ the wife of Felix, the governor who trembled as he heard the apostle Paul reason at the bar of the court in Caesarea. The son of Felix and Drusilla lost his life also in this catastrophe.

¹³ Acts 24:24, 25; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 20, chap. 7, sec. 2, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, p. 594.

The burial of those ancient towns under a blanket of volcanic ash has been the means of preserving for our day much information about the Roman ways of living in the first century, knowledge which otherwise might have perished under the ravages of time and man's barbarities. Pompeii and Herculaneum have been among the most fruitful sources of data about the planetary week in Roman times.

“Days of the Gods”

In Herculaneum, for example, there was found inscribed in Greek upon a wall a list which was entitled “Days of the Gods,” in capital letters. Underneath this title there appears in the same language, and in capital letters also, the names of the seven planetary deities in the genitive form and in the exact order of the days in the astrological week, as follows: *Kronou* (of Saturn),

Heliou (of Sun), *Selenes* (of Moon), *Areos* (of Mars), *Hermou* (of Mercury), *Dios* (of Jupiter), and *Aphrodeites* (of Venus). The letter *r* of *Hermes*, and the letters *Aphro* of *Aphrodite*, were damaged so as to be illegible, but all the rest of the inscription was so plainly visible as to leave no room for doubt about the spelling of the words.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Bullettino dell' Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* (1881), p. 30; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1863 ed., Vol. 4, Supplement, part 2, p. 582, No. 5202.

Another inscription, found in Pompeii and written in Latin, contains a list of the planetary gods in the order of the days of the pagan week, as follows: *Saturni* (of Saturn), *Solis* (of the Sun), *Lunae* (of the Moon), *Martis* (of Mars), the name of Mercury is missing, *Iovis* (of Jupiter), and *Veneris* (of Venus). These names were inscribed in capital letters, but no title is given to the list as in the preceding case.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Atti della Real Accademia dei Lincei* (Anno ccxcviii), 1901, Serie V, Classe d Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, Vol. 9, part 1, p. 330; *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1863 ed., Vol. 4, Supplement, part 2, p. 712, No. 6779.

“It Was the Day of the Sun”

On the plastered wall of another building in Pompeii there was found the following Latin inscription, which appears to be broken and incomplete and in two lines as follows:

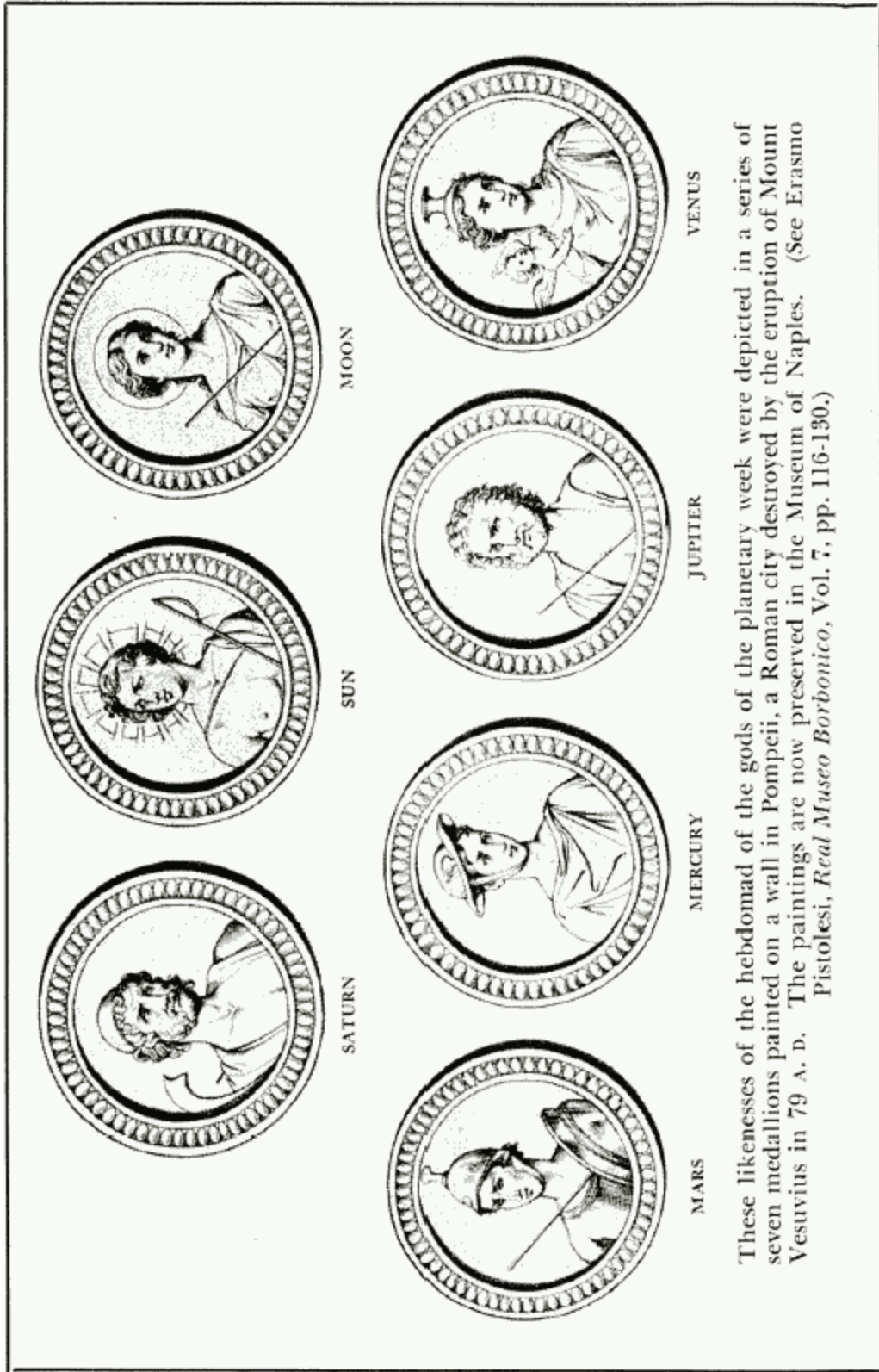
IX K(al)
lunias
inperator
dies fuit Solis

The writing appears to be that of a person with little education, which shows that the custom of calling the days by their planetary names was a matter of common usage before 79 A. D. The first line appears to mean this: “the 9th day before the Kalends of June [May 24], the emperor.” The second line is unmistakably clear, and reads: “It was the day of the Sun.”¹⁶

¹⁶ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1863 ed.; Vol. 4, Supplement, part 2, p. 717, No. 6338.

In another Latin inscription from Pompeii the day of Saturn is believed to be indicated by the word *Saturni* (of Saturn) which appears on a fragment of stone, but evidence for this is not conclusive.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 713, No. 6802.



These likenesses of the hebdomad of the gods of the planetary week were depicted in a series of seven medallions painted on a wall in Pompeii, a Roman city destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A. D. The paintings are now preserved in the Museum of Naples. (See Erasmo Pistoletti, *Real Museo Borbonico*, Vol. 7, pp. 116-130.)

“The Day of the Moon”

Another Latin inscription from the same place, written in capital letters, mentions “the day of the Moon.” The fragment plainly appears to be part of a well-dated record, but there is not enough of it preserved to make out the exact date.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83, No. 1306.

A Pompeiian Painting of the Planetary Gods

Furthermore, there have been preserved for us at least two sets of Roman pictures depicting the seven planetary gods of the days of the pagan week in their calendar order. They were painted before the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A. D.

One set of these, in the form of medallions, was found by excavators in Pompeii in 1760, on the wall of a room and by good fortune completely intact. This set¹⁹ is preserved in the museum at Naples. In their original setting, the gods of the days of the pagan week appear in the following order: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. Saturn appears as an old man with a cap on his head and a scythe in his right arm. The Sun is depicted as a youth with a halo of light about his head, and carries a whip in his hand. (Other monuments represent him as driving a chariot, “the chariot of the Sun,” pulled by four steeds which symbolize the four seasons of the year.) The Moon is shown as a beautiful young woman with a lunar halo about her head, holding in her hand the scepter by which she was supposed to reign as queen of heaven. Mars comes next, as the god of war, with his helmet, shield, and lance. Mercury is youthful in appearance. He was often imagined to be the messenger of the gods, as is indicated by the wings on his hat. Jupiter, who was believed to be a fatherly person, carries a scepter denoting kingly power. Venus, the goddess of love, is youthful, too, and upon her right shoulder she carries little Cupid.

¹⁹ Erasmo Pistolesi, *Real Museo Borbonico*, Vol. 7, pp. 116-130; Domenico Monaco, *A Complete Handbook to the Naples Museum*, 8th ed., p. 14, Nos. 9519-9521; *Encyclopedia Universal Illustrada*, Vol. 18, p. 781, art. “Dia.”

Paintings From Herculaneum

The other set of paintings, which were also in the form of medallions, were discovered in Herculaneum, on the walls of a house. In these the deities of the planetary week also appear in the usual order, beginning with Saturn and ending with Venus. They are described thus:

“The middle band, which is all complete, contains seven circles, in which are depicted the seven planets according to the order of the days of the week. The first is Saturn with a sickle of the color of iron, with a yellow cap on his head, and wearing a garment of the same hue. The second is Apollo, or the Sun, with a radiant nimbus, wearing a red mantle, and carrying a rod or whip. The third is Diana, or the Moon, with a halo about her head, wearing a white dress, and carrying a scepter. The fourth is Mars with a breastplate of the color of iron, bearing a shield, and wearing a helmet with a crest, and with the buffer, all in the color of brass, and with the lance. The fifth is Mercury with the winged hat, which is made fast to his chin by a strap. The sixth is Jupiter wearing a dark red garment. The last is Venus in a bluish white gown, wearing a necklace and a flowered crown of gold, and with a winged Cupid.”²⁰

²⁰ *Le Pitture Antiche d'Ercolano*, Vol. 3, pp. 257-263. See also H. Roux, Ainé, and M. L. Barré, *Herculenum et Pompéi*, Vol. 5, pp. 106-109; J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 12, p. 104, art. "Sunday."

A Dated Inscription From Pompeii

Another interesting archaeological find that throws light on the subject of our study is also from the ruins of Pompeii. It is a Latin inscription crudely scratched into the stucco of a pillar of a house. It was first published by A. Mau in the following form:

NEROXE CAESARE AUGUSTO
COSSO LENTULO COSSI FIL COS
VIII IDUS FEBRARIAS
DIES SOLIS LUXA XJIJS NUN CUMIS V NUN POMPEIS

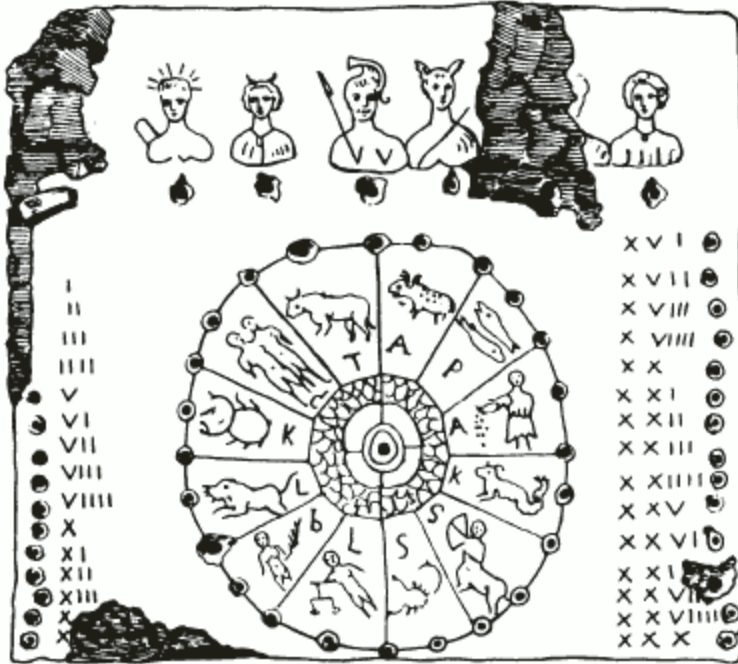
The first three of the four lines of the inscription have lent themselves easily to an interpretation of their meaning. Here are the words as read by experts: "Nerone Caesare Augusto—Cosso Lentulo Cossi Fil. Cos.—VIII Idus Febr(u)arias."²¹ The thought is as follows: "In the consulate of Augustus Caesar Nero and Cossus Lentulus the son of Cossus, and on the 8th day before the Ides of February." All authorities agree that the date given is February 6, 60 A. D., which fell on Wednesday.

²¹ A. Mau, in *Bullettino dell'Imperiale Instituto Archeologico Germanico* (Sezione Romana), Vol. 8, pp. 30, 31, 19; *Mittheilungen des Kaiserlich deutschen archaeologischen Instituts* (Roemische Abtheilung), Band 8, pp. 30, 31 97; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1893 ed., Vol. 1, part 1, p. 342; 1863 ed., Vol. 4, uppleinent, part 2, p. 515, No. 4182.

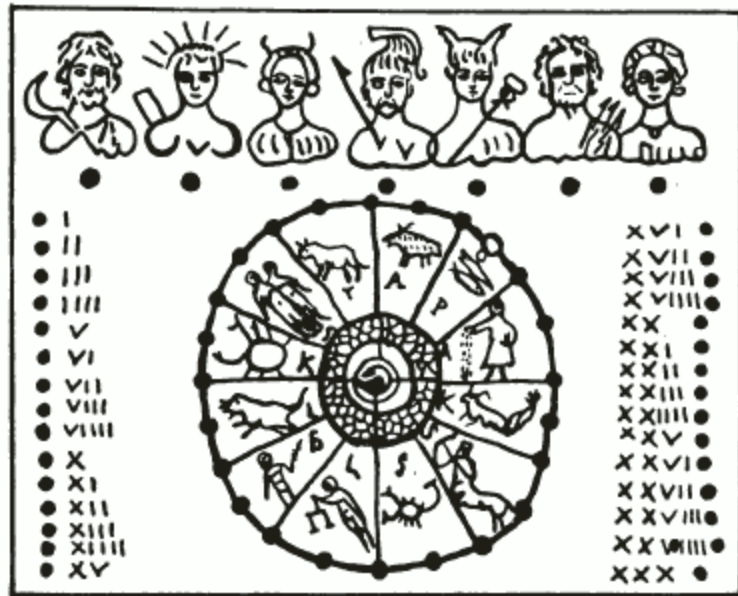
The last line has not yet been satisfactorily explained, although several learned men have attempted to do so. The words *dies Solis* clearly mean "the day of the Sun" of the planetary week. *Luna* is "moon" or "lunar month." *Nun*, which appears twice in the inscription, is the abbreviation for *nundina* (market day), and the words *Cumis* and *Pompeii* are the names of the towns where the markets were held.

The only difficulty lies in the numeral *XIIS*, which is intended to denote the day of the lunar month. In his first report of the find, Mau states that what resembles an *S* in this part of the inscription is not a true *S*. Later he examined the inscription again, and reported that the rains had worn away some of the coloring matter so that it was more visible than before. He was convinced that it was not an *S*. However, there was indication of a lesion in the material and the exact form of the original letter could not be ascertained with certainty. He and others made conjectures about it, but these did not satisfy their minds. Therefore, because the exact number of the day of the lunar month in this inscription cannot be ascertained under the present circumstances, it is impossible to tell which Sunday early in 60 A. D. is the one to which reference is made.

However, the inscription does clearly show that in the first century the planetary weekdays were in use for the purpose of recording dates. Because the date of this inscription is 60 A. D., it is evident that this practice of dating was in vogue before the death of the apostle Paul.



Here is shown the stick calendar found in the baths of Titus, the Roman emperor. It includes the planetary week. (See G. A. Guattani, *Memorie Enciclopediche sulle Antichità e Belle Arti di Roma*, Vol. 6, pp. 160-162.)



This restoration of the calendar shows the arrangement more clearly.

In the Baths of Titus

The baths built by the emperor Titus (79—81 A. D.) were among the most renowned of Roman history. The ruins have long stood as a memorial to his name. He was the Roman general who captured Jerusalem in 70 A. D., after one of the most difficult sieges recorded in military annals. Theo. Mommsen, the celebrated authority on Roman manners and customs, gives the following description of an extraordinary calendar found in the ruins of the baths of Titus:

“On the walls of the Roman baths of Titus has been found the astronomical public calendar which envisions this [the use of the planetary week] more thoroughly (Guattani, *Memorie Enciclopediche sulle Antichita e Belle Arti di Roma*, Vol. 6 (1816), Roma, 1817, p. 160ff.; *Le Antiche Camere Esquiline dethe Comunemente delle Terme di Tito dis. ed ill. da Ant. de Romanis*, Roma 1822, fol., p. 12, 21, 59). In a square frame there appears in the upper row the seven planets, one beside the other: Saturn (damaged), Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter (damaged), Venus. Beneath them are the twelve signs of the zodiac in a circle, beginning with the characters *Aries* (Ram), *Taurus* (Bull), *Gemini* (Twins), *Cancer* (Crab), *Leo* (Lion), *Virgo* (Virgin), *Libra* (Balance), *Scorpius* (Scorpion), *Sagittarius* (Archer), *Capricornus* (Goat), *Aquarius* (Watercarrier), *Pisces* (Fish). Beside these there appear to the right the days I to XV; and to the left, the days XVI to XXX. Beside each week day, monthly constellation, and day of the month, is a hole, in which a small knob was found. By the transposition of these knobs, the months, the days of the month, and days of the week were indicated.”²²

²² Theo. Mommsen, “Über den Chronographen vom Jahre 354,” in *Abhandlungen der Philologisch-Historischen Classe der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Band 1, p. 569; E. Schürer, “Die siebentägige Woche im Gebrauche der Christlichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte,” in *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1905.

G. A. Guattani describes the calendar in detail, saying: “It was formed by a quadrangle 13½ inches high by 16½ inches wide, in which were engraved in the upper part of the plaster the heads of the seven gods which give the names to the days of the week. Commencing from the left of the calendar are seen standing Saturn, the Sun (or Apollo), the Moon (or Diana), Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus, although it was found that all of Saturn had perished and a large portion of Jupiter was broken. By and beneath each god is seen a small hole.

“On the extreme left and beneath Saturn is seen a column of Roman numbers, from I to XV; and another column, from XVI to XXX, occupies an equal place on the right beneath Venus. There is also seen a hole by each of the numbers.

“Between the columns of numbers and beneath the other gods is seen depicted a circle containing another smaller, concentric circle, which form a zone around a third circle of about one third the diameter of the larger one. This zone is divided into 12 equal parts, although not exactly; and each section encloses one of the 12 signs of the zodiac, which are engraved and barbarously designed. In the two highest sections are *Aries* and *Taurus*, which are followed by *Gemini* and the others in a circle, going from the right to the left of the spectator in accordance with Oriental usage. Under each sign is marked the initial letter of its proper name. Not only is the sketching of the letters seen to be different from that of the niche, but also by the sign of *Virgo* is seen a small *b* instead of a *V*, for to say *birgo*, and for *Cancer* and *Capricorn* we have a *K* for the initial letter instead of a *C*. This variety shows a little Graecizing, an example of which

is not seen in any other word of the niche, which also must be considered as of a later date than the calendar, and was made by the trite Romans after they had freed themselves from the pedattism of the Greeks.

“In the periphery of the larger circle of the zone are seen not only twelve holes similar to each other, that is, one in each division of the signs, but also that another divides in two the space of each sign. A fragment of bone that was found in the middle hole of the sign of Gemini certainly shows that each day of the week was indicated by a peg passed from one hole to another under the gods, and that by the same operation made with the 30 numbers the day of the month was indicated (a hole placed outside of the line and between the numbers XXIX and XXX received the peg for the last day in the case of the months having 31 days). A similar transfer of the bone from one hole to another of the circle [of the zodiac] in the retrograde order [from right to left], made on the day when the peg was put in the first hole of each column of the numbers, showed the month by means of the [zodiacal] signs of Sun, whether the Sun was at the beginning or in the middle of the sign.”²³

²³ G. A. Guattani, *Memorie Enciclopediche sulle Antichità e Belle Arti di Roma*, Vol. 6, pp. 160-162

Several writers have referred to this early type of Roman “stick calendar” (so called because of the use of the knobbed pegs or pins inserted in the holes to indicate the months and the days). With the exception of the twelve signs of the zodiac representing the months of the year in this calendar from the baths of Titus, its layout agrees in many details with the calendar described by Petronius in his work, *The Banquet of Trimalchio*.

“On the Day of Saturn”

In reference to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., mention has already been made of the statement of the Roman author Sextus Julius Frontinus. He was born about 40 A. D., about the time of the birth of the emperor Titus, and died about 103 A. D. Thus he belonged to the age of the apostles of Christ. In 70 A. D. he was praetor of the city of Rome, and later became governor of Britain. He was appointed superintendent of the aqueducts at Rome in 97 A. D. Being a very practical man, he wrote, in Latin, on many worth-while subjects. In his work on military strategy he mentions that the armies of Vespasian prevailed over the rebellious Jews in the war of 66-70 A. D., saying:

“The divine Augustus Vespasian attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, on which it is forbidden for them to do anything serious, and prevailed.”²⁴

²⁴ Frontinus, *The Stratagems*, book 2, chap. 1, sec. 17, in Loeb Classical Library, *Frontinus*, p. 98, author’s translation.

Frontinus wrote about 97 A. D., and the fact that he designated one of the seven days by the name of Saturn reveals that his readers were already familiar with the use of the planetary week.

Observations

The calendar fragment from Puteoli, the Septizonium near which Titus was born, the seven rings given to Apollonius of Tyana, the statement by Petronius, the statements of Frontinus and Josephus about the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., the numerous paintings and inscriptions found in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and the calendar found in the baths of Titus, clearly show that the planetary week was a well-known astrological institution among the Romans when Christ and the apostles lived.