

Time's Greatest Conspiracy Theory: The "Continuous Weekly Cycle"

By eLaine Vornholt
Laura Lee Vornholt-Jones

Christians who worship on Sunday base this practice on the belief that Christ arose from the tomb on Sunday. Jews and Christians who worship on Saturday do so because it is the seventh day of the week. Both parties base their belief, and thus their practice, on an *assumption*. The assumption is that because the progression of days was not changed at the time the Julian calendar transitioned to the Gregorian, the modern week is identical to the Biblical week. Therefore, the "logical conclusion" is that Saturday is indeed the Bible Sabbath and Sunday is the day on which Christ arose from the grave. The facts of the Julian calendar itself, however, prove this assumption is false.

A well-known adage is that those who forget history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of history. Likewise, those who have never learned the facts of *calendar* history have built an entire belief structure on a faulty foundation: the assumption that weeks have cycled continuously and without interruption ever since Creation. It is of vital importance to *all*, regardless of their religion, to study the history of the Julian calendar. Assembling the missing puzzle pieces of historical fact reveals when a continuous weekly cycle of seven days became the standard measurement of time – and it was not at Creation.

Julian Calendar Established

The calendar of the Roman Republic was based on lunar phases. Pagan Roman priests, called *pontiffs*, were responsible for regulating the calendar. Because the *pontiffs* could also hold political office, it provided opportunity for abuse. Intercalating¹ an extra month could keep favored politicians in office longer, while not intercalating when necessary could shorten the terms of political opponents.

¹ Because intercalation was thought to be "unlucky," during the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.) the priests hesitated to make changes, thus throwing the calendar slightly off the seasons.

By the time of Julius Cæsar, months were completely out of alignment with the seasons. Julius Cæsar exercised his right² as *pontifex maximus*³ (high priest) and reformed what had become a cumbersome and inaccurate calendar.⁴

In the mid-1st century B.C. Julius Cæsar invited Sosigenes, an Alexandrian astronomer, to advise him about the reform of the calendar, and Sosigenes decided that the only practical step was to abandon the lunar calendar altogether. Months must be arranged on a seasonal basis, and a tropical (solar) year was used, as in the Egyptian calendar⁵

Notice that Sosigenes' big innovation was an abandonment of *lunar* calendation:

The great difficulty facing any [calendar] reformer was that there seemed to be no way of effecting a change that would still allow the months to remain in step with the phases of the Moon and the year with the seasons. *It was necessary to make a fundamental break with traditional reckoning* to devise an efficient seasonal calendar.⁶

To bring the new calendar into alignment with the seasons required adding an additional 90 days to the year. This was done in 45 B.C., creating a year of 445 days. "This year of 445 days is commonly called by chronologists the year of confusion; but by Macrobius, more fitly, the last year of confusion."⁷ The first puzzle piece in establishing the truth of the calendar, is to realize that the Julian week of 45 B.C., did not look like the Julian week when Pope Gregory XIII modified it, and thus *did not look like the modern Gregorian week of today*. This is the first assumption made by both Jews *and* Christians, regardless of the day on which they worship.⁸

The Julian calendar, like the calendar of the Republic before it, originally had an eight-day cycle.

² Julius Cæsar had been elected *pontifex maximus* in 63 B.C. (See James Evans, "Calendars and Time Reckoning," *The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 165.)

³ "Pontifex Maximus" is now a title reserved exclusively for the pope. This is appropriate as the Gregorian calendar now in use is both pagan and papal, being founded upon the pagan Julian calendar and modified by, and named after, a pope.

⁴ In order to declare an intercalation, the *pontifex maximus* had to be in Rome in February, the 12th month. Because Julius Cæsar was involved in various wars, there had been only one intercalation declared since he took office. In a letter to Atticus, dated February 13, 50 B.C., Cicero complained that he still did not know whether there was to be an intercalation later in the month.

⁵ "The Julian Calendar," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.

⁷ *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, William Smith LL.D., William Wayte, M.A., George E. Marindin, M.A., eds., (London: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., 1890), Vol. I, p. 344.

⁸ This assumption is not shared by scholars. Jews admit that the rabbinical calendar now used is not the calendar of Moses, and Christian scholars acknowledge that the Biblical calendar operated differently. Some also admit that when the seventh-day Sabbath is calculated on the Biblical calendar it will not routinely coincide with Saturday.

The Roman eight-day week was known as *internundinum tempus* or “the period between ninth-day affairs.” (This term must be understood within the context of the ancient Roman mathematical practice of inclusive counting, whereby the first day of a cycle would also be counted as the last day of the preceding cycle.⁹) The “ninth-day affair” around which this week revolved was the *nundinae*, a periodic market day that was held regularly every eight days.¹⁰

Early Julian calendars were not constructed in grids as are modern calendars, but the dates were listed in columns, with the days of the week designated by the letters A through H.¹¹ For example, January started with day “A” and would proceed through the eight days of the week, with the last day of the month being day “E.” Unlike the Hebrew calendar, the Roman calendar had a continuous weekly cycle. Because January ended on day “E”, February began on day “F”. Likewise, February ending on day “A” started March off on day “B”:

A k ¹² Jan	F k Feb	B k Mar
B	G	C
C	H	D
D	A	E
E, etc.	B, etc.	F, etc.

Following is a reconstruction¹³ of the *Fasti Antiates*, the only known pre-Julian calendar still in existence¹⁴ dating from the 60s B.C. found at the site of Nero’s villa in Antium.

⁹ J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 59; P. Huvelin, *Essai Historique sur le Droit des Marcheés et des Foires* (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1897), p. 87; Ovid, *Fasti* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 6; Alan E. Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology* (Munich: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1972), p. 154.

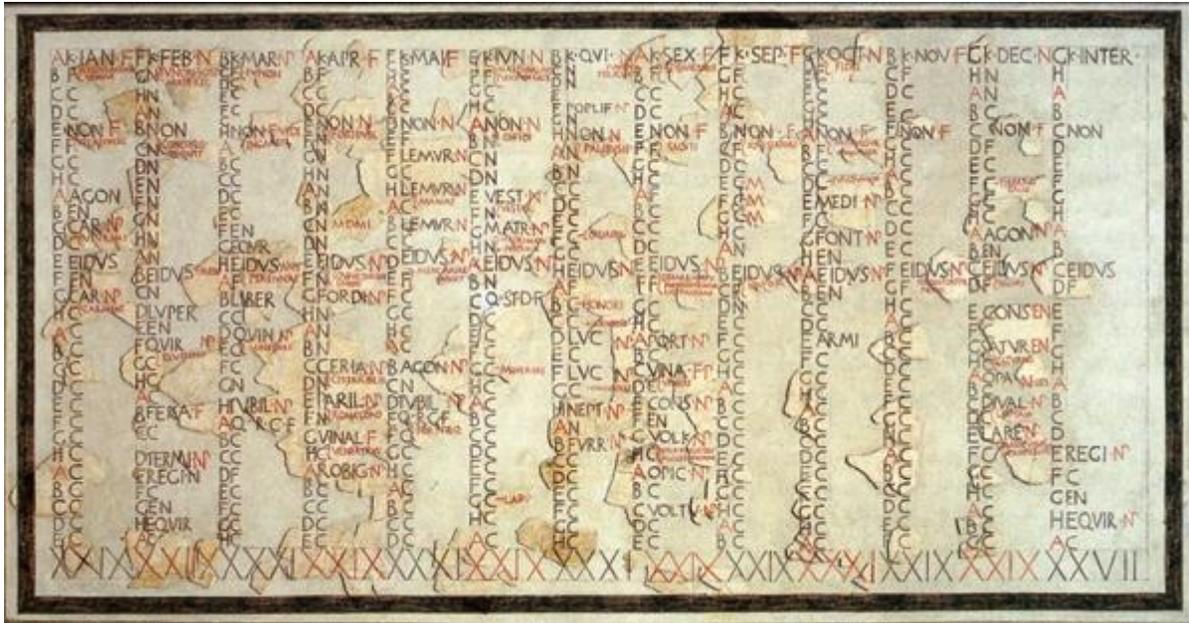
¹⁰ Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 45.

¹¹ Zerubavel, *op.cit.*, 158; Balsdon, *op.cit.*, p. 60; Francis H. Colson, *The Week*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 4; W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1969), p. 8; P. Huvelin, *op.cit.*, p. 88; Alan E. Samuel, *op.cit.*, pp. 153-154; Ovid, *op.cit.*; Hutton Webster, *Rest Days*, (New York: MacMillan) p. 123; W. E. van Wijk, *Le Nombre d’Or* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1935), pp. 24-25.

¹² *Kalendæ*: the first day of the month.

¹³ *Palazzo Massimo Alle Terme*, Adriano La Regina, ed., 1998.

¹⁴ For additional information, see *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* by A. K. Michels (Princeton, 1967).



Fasti Antiatenses – reconstruction of the only known pre-Julian calendar in existence.

This calendar was painted on plaster with the letter A painted red to indicate the start of the week. The months are arranged in 13 columns. January, on the left, begins on day “A” and ends on day “E”. At the bottom of each column are large Roman numerals showing the number of days in that month. The far right hand column is the 13th, intercalary month. Additional letters appear beside the week-day letters. These indicated what sort of business could or could not be conducted on that day.

All examples of Julian *fasti*, or calendars, date from the time of Augustus¹⁵ (63 B.C. – 14 A.D.) to Tiberius (42 B.C. – 37 A.D.) If the assumption is correct that Saturday is the Bible Sabbath because the weekly cycle was not interrupted at the calendar change from Julian to Gregorian, than this should be easily proven from the early Julian calendars still in existence. An example of a Julian *fasti* is preserved on these stone fragments and provides the second, confirming piece of the puzzle in establishing the truth of calendar history. The eight-day week is clearly discernible on them verifying that the eight-day week was still in use by the Romans during and immediately following the life of Christ.

¹⁵ Augustus Cæsar, first Roman Emperor, is mentioned in the Bible. His levy of a tax led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem just in time for the birth of Christ. (See Luke 2:1.) Because of the Roman method of counting inclusively, leap years were intercalated every three years initially. To reconcile the additional time, Augustus decreed that no years were to be intercalated from 8 B.C. to 8 A.D. The eighth month was renamed August in his honor.



It is important to remember that the Biblical week as an individual unit of time defined in Genesis 1, consisted of only seven days: six working days followed by a Sabbath rest on the *last* day of the week. The eight-day cycle of the Julian calendar *was in use at the time of Christ*. However, the Israelites would not have kept the seventh-day Sabbath on the *eight-day* weekly cycle of the Julian calendar. This would have been idolatry to them. Even when the Julian week shortened to seven days,¹⁶ it still did not conform to the weekly cycle of the Biblical week nor did it resemble the modern week in use today.

Seven-day Planetary week

The decline of the eight-day Roman week was caused by two factors: A) the expansion of the Roman Empire¹⁷ which exposed the Romans to other religions and led, in turn, to B) the rise of the cult of Mithras.¹⁸ The role Mithraism played in restructuring the Julian week is significant for it was a strong competitor of early Christianity.¹⁹

It seems as if some spiritual genius having control over the pagan world had so ordered things that the heathen planetary week should be introduced just at the

¹⁶ *Fasti* fragments exist which show both the seven-day *and* an eight-day week. See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Theodor Mommsen, ed., 1863 ed., Vol. 1, part 2, p. 302.

¹⁷ Zerubavel, *op.cit.*, p. 46; Huvelin, *op.cit.*, pp. 97-98.

¹⁸ R. L. Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, (New York: TEACH Services, Inc., 2003), p. 157.

¹⁹ Many of the most important elements of Christianity have a counterpart in Mithraism. Christianity has been called a plagiarized version of Mithraism. Those seeking to discredit Christianity often point to the similarities between the two religions.

right time for the most popular Sun cult of all ages to come along and exalt the day of the Sun as a day above and more sacred than all the rest. Surely this was not accidental.²⁰

Under these two factors, the Julian week began a centuries-long evolutionary process that ended in the week as it is known today. The *original* seven-day planetary week is the third and final piece of the puzzle proving that Saturday is not the Bible Sabbath, nor Sunday the first day of the Biblical week. This transformation took several hundred years. Franz Cumont, widely considered to be a great authority on Mithraism, links the acceptance of the seven-day week by Europeans to the popularity of Mithraism in pagan Rome:

It is not to be doubted that the diffusion of the Iranian [Persian] mysteries has had a considerable part in the general adoption, by the pagans, of the week with the Sunday as a holy day. The names which we employ, unawares, for the other six days, came into use at the same time that Mithraism won its followers in the provinces in the West, and one is not rash in establishing a relation of coincidence between its triumph and that concomitant phenomenon.²¹

In *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, Cumont further emphasizes the pagan origins and recent adoption of a seven-day week with its holy day being Sunday:

The pre-eminence assigned to the *dies Solis* [day of the Sun] also certainly contributed to the general recognition of Sunday as a holiday. This is connected with a more important fact, namely, the adoption of the week by all the European nations.²²

The immense significance of this for Christians is found in the fact that Sunday cannot be the day on which Christ arose from the dead, because *Sunday did not exist in the Julian calendar of Christ's day*. Nor can Saturday be the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath because the pagan planetary week originally *began* on Saturday.

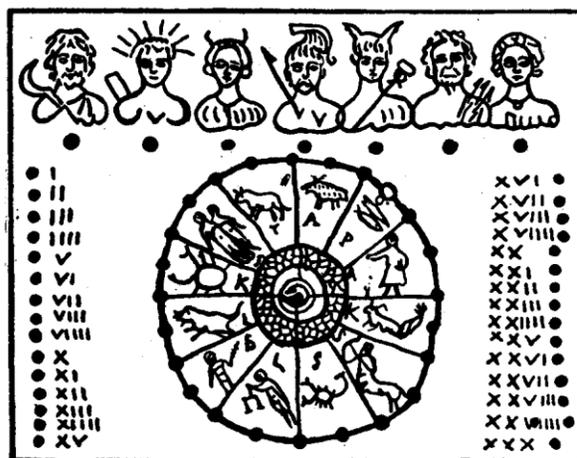
The following drawing of a stick calendar found at the Baths of Titus (constructed A.D. 79 – 81) provides further proof that neither the Biblical Sabbath nor the day of Christ's resurrection can ever be found using the Julian calendar. The center circle contains the 12 signs of the zodiac, corresponding to the 12 months of the year. The Roman numerals in the left and right columns indicate the days of the month. Across the top of the stick calendar appear the seven planetary gods of the pagan Romans.

²⁰ Odom, *op.cit.*

²¹ Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments Figures Relatifs aux Mysteres de Mithra*, (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1899), Vol. I, p. 112.

²² (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 163.

Saturday, (or *dies Saturni* – the day of Saturn) was the very *first* day of the week, not the seventh. As the god of agriculture, he can be seen in this preeminent position of importance, holding his symbol, a sickle. Next, on the second day of the pagan planetary week, is seen the sun god with rays of light emanating from his head. Sunday was originally the *second* day of the planetary week and was known as *dies Solis*. The third day of the week was *dies Lunæ* (day of the Moon – Monday). The moon goddess is shown wearing the horned crescent moon as a diadem on her head. The rest of the gods follow in order: *dies Martis* (day of Mars); *dies Mercurii* (day of Mercury); *dies Jovis* (day of Jupiter); and *dies Veneris* (day of Venus), the seventh day of the week.²³



Roman Stick Calendar

When the use of the Julian calendar with its recently adopted pagan planetary week spread into northern Europe, the names of the days *dies Martis* through *dies Veneris* were replaced by Teutonic gods.²⁴ Mars' Day became Tiw's Day (Tuesday); Mercury's Day became Woden's Day (Wednesday); Jupiter's Day became Thor's Day (Thursday); and Venus' Day became Friga's Day (Friday).²⁵ The influence of the pagan astrological day-names is still seen today. Latin-based languages, such as Spanish, retain astrological names for Monday through Friday, with the Christian influence being seen in their words for Sunday (*Domingo*, or Lord's day) and Saturday (*Sabado*, or Sabbath.)

According to Rabanus Maurus (A.D. 776-856), archbishop of Mainz, Germany, Pope Sylvester I attempted to rename the days of the planetary week to correspond with the names of the Biblical week: First Day (first feria), Second Day (second feria), etc.²⁶ Bede, the "Venerable", (A.D. 672-

²³ "Astrology, paganized astronomy, assigned each of the 24 hours of the day to a planetary god after the order of their supposed positions above the earth . . . Hence, if Saturn should have the lordship of the first hour of the day, it would be called the day of Saturn . . . Because the last hour of Saturn's day is assigned to Mars, the first hour of the following day would belong to the Sun, the next planetary god in the order. This makes the Sun the lord of that day, so that it is called 'the day of the Sun' (Sunday)" R. L. Odom, *How Did Sunday Get Its Name?* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1972), pp. 10 & 11. See Appendix H for an illustration of the planetary gods shown in order.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵ J. Bosworth and T. N. Toller, "Frig-dæg," *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 1898, p. 337; Odom, *How Did Sunday Get Its Name?* *op.cit.*; see also "Friday" in *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd edition, (New York: New World Dictionaries/Simon and Schuster, 1983).

²⁶ See Rabanus Maurus, *De Clericorum Institutione*, Book 2, ch. 46, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiæ Latinæ Cursus Completus* (Paris, 1844-1855).

735), renowned English monk and scholar, also reported Sylvester's attempts to change the pagan names of the days of the week. In *De Temporibus*, he stated: "But the holy Sylvester ordered them to be called feriae, calling the first day the 'Lord's [day]'; imitating the Hebrews, who named [them] the first of the week, the second of the week, and so on the others."²⁷ The astrological names, however, were too deeply ingrained. While the official terminology of the Roman Catholic Church remains Lord's Day, Second Day, Third Day, etc., most countries clung in whole or in part to planetary names for the days.

The astrological influence is obviously even more pronounced around the fringes of the Roman Empire, where Christianity arrived only much later. English, Dutch, Breton, Welsh, and Cornish, which are the only European languages to have preserved to this day the original planetary names of all the seven days of the week, are all spoken in areas that were free of any Christian influence during the first centuries of our era, when the astrological week was spreading throughout the Empire.²⁸

"The ecclesiastical style of naming the week days was adopted by no nation except the Portuguese who alone use the terms *Segunda Feria* etc."²⁹

The fact that both the Julian calendar and the pagan planetary week have been accepted for use by Christians reveals an amalgamation of Christianity with paganism of which the apostle Paul warned when he wrote:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth³⁰ will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned³¹ who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.³²

²⁷ See Bede, *Patrologiæ Latinæ*, Vol. 90, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Zerubavel, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

²⁹ "Feria," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, see Vol. 6 p. 43.

³⁰ "Letteth": #2722 – to hold down, possess or to take possession of; "This word means 'to hold firmly' . . . of unrighteous men who restrain the spread of truth by their unrighteousness" (*The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary*, Thomas Nelson Publ. 2001.) This is an appropriate word to communicate what was done by the amalgamation of paganism with Christianity.

³¹ (#2929): To divide or separate; to make a distinction between or pass sentence upon. "To pronounce judgment" (*ibid.*)

³² II Thessalonians 2:7-11

The pagan planetary week, like the Julian calendar that adopted it, is irreparably pagan. Historical facts reveal that neither the Biblical Sabbath nor the Biblical First Day can be found using the modern calendar. If it is important to worship on a specific day, than it is also important to know which calendar to use and when the change in calendation occurred.



© The Trustees of the British Museum

This small silver statuette shows the Gallo-Roman goddess, Tutela. The goddess is shown holding a *patera* (libation dish) and positioned between her wings are seven planetary gods: Saturn, as the most important god ruling the first day of the week, is first. On the second day of the week appears Sol (sun god), followed by Luna (moon goddess), Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus. In her left hand she holds a double cornucopia with busts of Diana and Apollo; the two heads on her wings, just above her crown, are Castor and Pollux (Kastor and Polydeukes). The statuette, discovered in south-eastern France in 1764, is on display at the British Museum.