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Origin of the Modern 7-Day Week

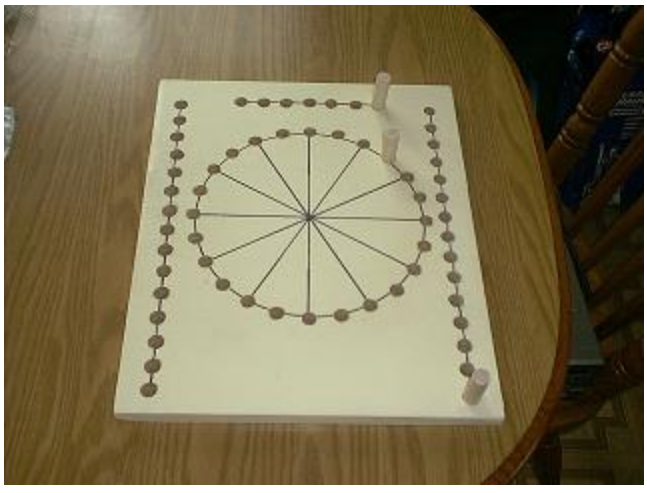
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Introduction

A pictorial calendar used in and prior to the time of Titus (A.D. 79-81) depicts both the signs of the zodiac as well as 7 of the planetary gods (Attilio Degrassi, Inscriptions Italiae, 1963, XIII, pp. 308-309, plate 56).

Some historic artifacts additionally indicate that an arrangement of holes (or sticks, or pegs) would have been used to augment charting the circle of the zodiac and the 7 planetary domains. It is here significant that early zodiac calendars commonly contained two vertically positioned columns that contained 30 numbered holes.



It is clear that time cycles were sometimes tracked by the moving of a peg relative to a specific sequence of fixed markers or holes. (Updating of the location of a peg would have been required on a daily basis).

In exploring more of how the ancients would have used such a calendar, a knob or a stick can be moved in correspondence with the top row comprised of 7 holes. Another knob or stick can be moved in correspondence with the two columns consisting of 30 numbered holes. Yet a third knob can be moved around the center circle of holes to track the circle of the zodiac.

From the 30 numbered holes shown on certain among the early used zodiac-calendars, it seems clear that a 30-day cycle might have once been reckoned in association with 12 divisions in each annual cycle.

Of significance here is that the cited row of 7 holes that appears on some historic artifacts does almost surely indicate that a planetary cycle of 7 days was simultaneously being time tracked--as is further shown below.

> *A somewhat similiar interpretation concerning a track of 12 signs of the zodiac and 7 planetary dominions appears to have been held among the early Hebrews. Knowledge of the 12 signs and 7 divisions can especially be recognized from the content of 1st-century texts published by Flavius Josephus. Writings attributed to this respective author have description of the lighting (each night) of 7 lamps by the Temple priesthood. These respective lamps were noted by Josephus to have been held in place by a lampstand that "spread itself into as many branches as there are planets, including the Sun among them. It terminated in 7 heads, in one row, all standing parallel to one another; and these branches carried 7 lamps, one by one, in imitation of the number of the planets." (For more information, refer '**Antiquities of the Jews**', Book 3:6,7). Josephus furthermore stated that Moses "secretly intimated the Decani, or 70 divisions of the planets; and as to the 7 lamps upon the lampstands, they referred to the course of the planets, of which that is the number... And for the 12 stones [worn by the priest], whether we understand by them the months, or whether we understand the like number of the signs of that circle which the Greeks call the Zodiac, we shall not be mistaken in their meaning." (ibid, 7,7). "Now, the 7 lamps signified the 7 planets; for so many there were springing out of the lampstand. Now, the 12 loaves that were upon the table signified the circle of the zodiac and the year... " (refer to '**Wars of the Jews**', Book 5:5,5).*

The Roman Adoption of the Planetary Week

Though knowledge of 7 planetary divisions appears to have been held among Middle Easten astronomers prior to the 1st century, the practice of counting the 7 planetary days by Romans probably didn't begin to catch-on until about the turn of the 2nd century. In example, the usage of the planetary week among the Romans was attested to by Dio Cassius (c. 200-220 CE) who wrote: "The dedication of the days to the seven stars which are called planets was established by Egyptians, and it spread also to all

men not so very long ago... [This dedication now] prevails everywhere..." (Dio Cassius, Historia 37,18).

Of significance here is that more primal Babylonian and Egyptian priests appear to have reckoned a running cycle of 7 hours in association with 7 planetary gods. The god that ruled the first hour of each new day was consequently honored throughout that respective day. (The god that ruled the first hour of each new night was consequently honored throughout that respective night).

Through this peculiar interpretation of a running cycle of 7 hours, it can be recognized that after 168 hours (or after 7 days) the continuous track of 7 hours would have cycled 24 times. Thus, the once reckoned count of 7 hours can be recognized to have revolved or to have returned into the same alignment with the 24-hour day in a week cycle of 7 days.

The hourly sequence or order by which Romans believed the 7 planetary gods in turn ruled was: 1. Saturn; 2. Jupiter; 3. Mars; 4. Sun; 5. Venus; 6. Mercury; and 7. Moon. Those hours dominated by the god Saturn and the god Mars were considered to be time spans that were not beneficial for engaging in enterprise. Conversely, those hours influenced by the god Jupiter and the god Venus were deemed to promote fortune. (The hours dominated by the Sun, Mercury, and Moon were interpreted as not especially lucky or unlucky).

Thus, by way of example, commencing with the epoch of dawn on Saturn's day, the 1st hour of the cited 7 hour cycle would inherently have rotated into correspondence with the 1st hour of the day cycle. Consequently, the 1st hour (positioned at dawn) as well as the 8th hour on Saturn's day were hours that were not believed to be fortune. The 3rd hour and the 10th hour on Saturn's day (dominated by Mars) were likewise interpreted as unbeneficial. For more information concerning beneficial and unbeneficial hours of the cited 7-hour cycle, refer to:

Chronography of 354 AD

The order of days by which Romans honored the 7 planetary gods began with Saturn's day (the 1st day) and continued with Sun's day (2nd day), Moon's day (3rd day), Mar's day (4th day), Mercury's day (5th day), Jupiter's day (6th day) and Venus' day (7th day). This early interpretation of a 7-hour cycle revolving throughout an ordered 7-day sequence appears to represent the origin of the modern week (a cycle of 7 days). In fact, modern Saturday does almost surely correspond with the rotation of Saturn's day (as it would have been tracked during the 4th century). From this premise it would be a true axiom to state the day sequence that rotates through Sunday, Monday, Tuesday,

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the modern week is equivalent to the 7-day rotation of Sun's day, Moon's day, Mar's day, Mercury's day, Jupiter's day; and Venus' day as counted by the Romans.

For more information about the several time cycles referenced in Bible texts, refer to the following publications:

A Count of 360 Days

The Jubilee Time Cycle

Chronology of Jubilees

Significance of 70 Years?

The Day-of-the-Sun

Ancient Astronomy

Noah's Flood Calendar

Portals or Annual Gates

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