

CO-ORDINATION: TIME AND THE CALENDAR

In this chapter, I want to use a different method, and look not so much at how Roman religion filled the calendar as at how people at Rome 'lived' time as a social phenomenon, and then analyse the role played by religion in this area.

Sources

How can we say anything worthwhile about structures of action as internalized as perceptions of time?¹ Our most important point of entry here is the calendar, the shared chronological scheme of all actions in the year. 'Year' is important: only a handful of longer cycles were recognized at Rome. The most significant of these were the Republican *lustra*, (roughly) five-year periods, and the five-, ten- and twenty-year anniversaries of the emperors (p. 163). An even longer span is represented by the *Ludi saeculares*, the 'Hundred-year Games', first celebrated (probably) in 248 BC.² To return to the annual cycle: such a calendar can be conceptualized as the shared pragmatic knowledge of a society; we may think of calendars as invariably written documents, but in fact writing is not essential to their existence. Indeed, Rome's written calendar is historically quite exceptional (and a blessing for historians). No other ancient society in geographical Europe produced what the Republic produced: a written list of all the regular days in the year.³ That alone shows we need to be careful when dealing with written versions. The contents of such a calendar, just like its omissions, are a socio-historical precipitate, and not the product of such astronomical facts as that the earth turns on its axis once every twenty-four hours, or that the tropical year measures 365.242199 days.

In the early Principate, calendar-schedules (see pl. 19) were inscribed on large marble slabs and put on display in the public meeting-rooms of priestly colleges, *collegia* and rural towns. Several therefore survive, complete or in fragments. The most usual form, however, was probably the 'book-calendar', though we only have one example, from the fourth century AD, which was repeatedly copied into the Early Modern period.⁴

The twelve months structure the year. They in turn are structured by three recurrent dates: the Kalends at the beginning of the month, the Nones, the ninth day before the Ides (i.e. the 5th or 7th of every month), and the Ides (*eidus*) in the middle, corresponding to the 13th or 15th of our reckoning. Another recurrent element provides the basic ordering of the entire scheme: at the beginning of every entry occurs one of the letters from the recurrent sequence A-H. These are called nundinal letters and mark the eight (nameless) days of the Roman week. Like our weeks, this was a perpetual cycle that disregarded months and years, and was defined by the succession of market-days, *nundinae*, which were held every eight days (nine by Roman reckoning). The dates on which the *nundinae* fell were marked each year by a different letter, just as Sunday is marked in red in modern calendars, so that you could read off the year's market-days at a glance.

At the moment I do not want to discuss the letters that denote the legal character or status of each day, that is, C, N, F, also NP or EN. They are primarily designations to tell one whether lawsuits could be heard on that day, or *comitia* (assemblies of the people) held. They mark as it were the 'opening times' that applied to certain restricted areas of business- and (especially) political life, and tell us nothing about what was actually done.

The calendar's symbols were so complicated that even in antiquity they required exegesis. A version with annotations appeared around 170 BC, probably in the form of a fairly long heading (Rüpke 1995a: 331-68). Actual commentaries are only known from the Empire. In fact, one very early commentary does survive, unfortunately limited to the first six months of the year. This is Ovid's *Fasti* (actually: *Libri fastorum*), written in the late Augustan period at about the same time that the marble display-calendars became fashionable. It is in verse, but includes a treasure-trove of ritual details, and is at the same time one of our main sources for religious speculation at Rome (remember Varro's 'mythical' theology, p. 122).

The Year

The Republican *fasti* from Antium is the only surviving calendar from the time before Julius Caesar's reform, which came into force on 1 January 45 BC. Apart from marking the Kalends, Nones and Ides,

19. Fasti Amiterni.

This calendar, found at Amiternum in Sabine territory (now S. Vittorino, northwest of L'Aquila), dates from the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37). The entries in small letters indicate the large number of *feriae* (festive days) dedicated to the imperial house, and *ludi* (holidays associated with games), in the late-Augustan/early Julio-Claudian period. There were originally two marble slabs: the second one, which is shown here, features the months from July to December; breadthways it is complete, measuring 1.29m, in height it was at least 1.5m (cropped at the foot). – If we take a closer look, we see that the calendar shows the *feriae* to celebrate the inauguration of the Ara Pacis by Augustus on 4 July (the small writing at the top left), then comes the *Poplif(ugia)* in large capitals on 5 July. Right at the bottom of the same column, on the 19 and 21 of July, comes the *Lucar(ia)*, the 'grove-festival' (*lucus*=[sacred] grove). On the first of August, at the top of column ii, there is a reference to the *feriae* to celebrate the conquest of Alexandria (30 BC), though all that it actually says is: 'because Imp(erator) Caesar, son of Divus (Iulius, i.e. Julius Caesar), saved the state from a dreadful peril'.

Directly below that, you can see the entry for the holiday in honour of Caesar's victory over Pharnaces, King of the Crimea, at Zela on 2 August 47 BC, and on 9 the holiday in honour of his victory at Pharsalus in 48 BC (his opponent Pompey is not named). On the 17 is the *Port(unalia)*, the festival of the harbour-god Portunus; after a gap of one day, as usual, there follows the next traditional celebration, the *Vin(alia)*, a wine-festival, on the

19 of August. Moving on to column iii, we find a holiday on the Ides (*eidus*) of September in thanksgiving for the discovery of a conspiracy. The last imperial entry occurs in the middle of column iv on 12 October: the *Aug(ustalia)*, to celebrate the dedication of an altar of *Fortuna Redux*. This new festival is marked in capitals immediately between the traditional *Med(itrinalia)* and the *Font(inalia)*, respectively a wine-harvest and a sweet-water festival, ignoring the usual two-day interval. On the 19th falls the *Arm(ilustrum)*. In November, the games (*ludi*) begin after the Nones, ending up with racing in the Circus from 15th to 17th. At the bottom of the last column, finally, you can see some of the December holidays: the *Cons(ualia)* in honour of the god Consus (15th), the *Sat(urnalia)* (17th) and the *Opal(ia)* (19th), all of them probably festivals that once were associated with the storage of grain and the resulting accumulation of wealth. The original is in the Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo at L'Aquila.

it contains forty-eight 'main' entries (see pl. 19). All refer to religious events or festivals; in the Principate, the total increased greatly. Scholars have tried to treat these forty-eight as the Republican 'festival calendar'.⁵ We may think, however, that nearly fifty festivals besides the thirty-six Kalends, Nones and Ides, to say nothing of movable and private festivals, which are not listed in the *fasti*, are just too many. What is all this information for? This in turn raises the question of the function of the written calendar. The fact that the letters F, C, N and so on are always included suggests that its main purpose was to publicize the legal or politico-legal status of each day. This was of course an extremely sensitive matter for the political community. As between Rome and the other civilizations of ancient Europe, the codification of the calendar, and its subsequent reduction to a graphic format, represent a most impressive capacity for rationalization.

The effort to systematize the calendar could not however ignore religion. The religious status of some days had more or less serious implications for the legal and political activities that could be undertaken on them. For example, popular assemblies could not be held on days allocated to the gods, *feriae*, which actually make up most of the 'main' or 'capital-letter' entries that I mentioned. This has nothing to do with a desire to encourage popular participation in the festivals. It is simply a matter of ownership. For just as a *locus sacer* consecrated to a god is his physical property, so *feriae* are his temporal property (Rüpke 1995a: 492ff.). It is indicative of the intermediate status of the emperors that, aside from one or two advanced experiments in the transition period before the Augustan system was fully established, they were not the direct recipients of *feriae*; yet the days selected for the *feriae* voted by the Senate to commemorate imperial victories, or accessions, were expressly not assigned to any other god, either then or later (Dio 47.18.6; cf. Rüpke 1995a: 515ff.).

The groups affected by ritual activities were often very small. The *Robigalia* on 25 April, for example, involved one priest at an inconspicuous shrine; the *Tubilustrium* on 23 March and 23 May involved a single college of minor priests (the *Tubicines*) in a small room in the city-centre.⁶ The antiquarians suggest that there were just a handful of festivals that can be called popular.⁷ Although there was no official ritual, the Kalends of January were celebrated intensively all over the Empire (Meslin 1970; Rea 1988). The run of the Luperci on 15 February pre-supposes a fairly large number of spectators; in the same month, the *Feralia* (21st), and the *Quirinalia* before it (17th), are said to have been celebrated among families or in the *curiae*, the quarters of the old city. The *Matronalia* on 1 March was a day of

'misrule', when social hierarchies were inverted: in theory at any rate female slaves were waited on by their mistresses, though in fact all it probably amounted to was just some better food and extra time off. The *Liberalia* on 17 March, the festival of the god *Liber*, was marked by food-offerings set out in the streets (Varro, *LL* 6.14). Often, but by no means always, this was the date selected by families for the bestowal of the *toga libera* (or *pura*) at a boy's coming of age. In June, women were allowed to participate in bare-foot processions to the temple of Vesta (9th–15th),⁸ and to visit the temple of Mater Matuta (11th). But there is no evidence that either of these festivals, any more than the *Liberalia*, enjoyed a wide appeal. The next popular festivals seem to have been the *Poplifugia* on 5 July (*Quinctilis* until 44 BC), which was somehow linked to Romulus (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 2.56.5; cf. Varro, *LL* 6.18), the festival of Anna Perenna on 15th, which was a day of deep drinking and merry-making on the banks of the Tiber, and then the *Neptunalia*, the feast of Neptune, on 23rd, when people constructed temporary huts or tents for themselves in the open air. Bonfires were typical for the *Volkanalia* (festival of Volcanus) on 23 August (*Sextilis* until 27 BC). The only other important popular festival was the *Saturnalia*, the festival of Saturn in the second half of December that lasted for several days, and whose great popularity is frequently attested (Döpp 1993). Authors of dialogues liked to set their literary fictions against the backdrop of such festivals, which even in town offered an occasion for legitimate enjoyment of *otium*, that is, talking to one's friends, appreciation of the fine arts, or intellectual creativity. Cicero's *De natura deorum*, On the Nature of the Gods, for example, is set at the time of the movable *feriae Latinae* (1.15). Very occasionally the names of festivals are used to date private letters and so on, so that their dates can be fixed within a day or two.

So far I have said nothing about the grand games in April/May, July, September and November. Participation in these games, whether traditional or new (when emperors decreed victory games they were often in perpetuity), came to assume a central place in what it meant subjectively to be a Roman citizen. During the Principate, because of the abolition of elections, the crucial political arena came increasingly to be the political confrontation between the side of legal privilege, that is, the magistrates, who organized and largely financed the games, and the Senate, which had the best seats, and the side of the masses, the populace, who could applaud, keep silent, hiss or yell as they pleased. The élite was under considerable social pressure to attend such events, which often took place over several consecutive days, from the second

to the fifth and the seventh to the tenth hour (executions were performed during the mid-day break).⁹ If we imagine a Senator's appointments diary, such occasions must have taken up a large number of pages, even if we cannot put a precise figure on it. The festivals that I listed earlier became correspondingly less important; in all likelihood, only the *Saturnalia* and the Kalends of January (New Year's day) attracted comparable numbers of people.¹⁰

I have here ignored all festivals that were celebrated not at Rome but in the countryside of Latium. However much they may have contributed to sweetening life there, they had little connection with the everyday life of the city itself. The same distinction seems to be implied by the list of activities that were generally forbidden on festal days, irrespective of whether the individual took part or not.¹¹ Virtually all of these rules concern agricultural tasks, especially work that involved disturbing the soil, such as extensive digging or ploughing; it was permitted to carry trees to a new site, for example, but not to plant them. By contrast, apart from the prohibition of lawsuits and popular assemblies marked in the calendars by N (= *nefas*, forbidden), the activities that are prohibited in the city are confined to a sort of holy air-lock that moves along with the priests, the *flamines maiores*, the *rex sacrorum* and the *pontifices* as they proceed to their sacrifice: the heralds order the people to stop working as the religious specialists pass by (Plutarch, *QRom* 25, 270d), rather as in the old days men used to stop and lift their hats to passing funerals.

Though the Roman conception of work was comparable to ours, no attempt was made to impose a general prohibition as with our bank- or national holidays. In the agricultural sector, it was left to the farmer's intelligence to decide whether to carry on with other tasks while observing the prohibitions. By contrast with Cato's all too canny list of things that may legitimately be done, Columella shows in his farming manual at the end of the first century AD that religious engagement may vary from person to person.¹² Personal predilection in such matters is thus far from being an exclusively modern phenomenon. Anyhow, the urban rules for *feriae* tended to work from analogy, which by Late Antiquity meant that more or less standardized rules were imposed on craftsmen, while the agricultural world was granted greater latitude.

One way of testing how strictly the calendar prescriptions were enforced is to look at private votives, which often give the precise date on which they were set up. They show a slight preference for imperial festivals (most of the inscriptions date from the Principate); the dates of traditional festivals were less attractive (Herz 1975). A similar

conclusion is suggested by the recorded dates of the meetings and celebrations of *collegia*, which are occasionally preserved in inscriptions recording their foundation or their statutes (*lex collegii*). The festivals of the patronal deity fall on the anniversaries of the consecration of the god's temple at Rome, but the great majority of other dates are either imperial or internal to the group, corresponding mainly to the birthdays of founders and benefactors.¹³

The conclusion must be that the list of *feriae* does not represent an original festival-calendar that was gradually, as Roman society became more and more secularized, observed only by religious specialists. The definition of *feriae* in the calendar was, rather, a means of honouring a god by legally allocating to him units of time as an alternative to the conveyance of material property.

These units of time were marked primarily by prescriptions and prohibitions. The graphic was secondary, even incidental. It was only in the Principate that it became an independent medium. The new *feriae*, that commemorated the birthdays, victories and so on of the members of the dynasty, were often consciously chosen so as to link them with existing commemorative days, such as those of temple-foundations (Herz 1978: 1147f.). A classic example is the birthday of Augustus, 23 September, which the Senate decreed was also to be celebrated on the consecration-dates of the temples of Apollo, Jupiter Stator, Mars, Neptune, Juno Regina and *Felicitas*. The Princeps celebrated in select company.

The Month

The practice among *collegia* of establishing a list of annually recurring dates for meetings is surely also a consequence of the Roman laws that controlled them, which limited official meetings to one a month, and allowed monthly contributions only up to a certain sum. Tertullian, at the turn of the third century AD, alleges, probably falsely, that Christian associations – in fact churches, with their Sunday services and alms-giving – conformed to these rules (*Apol.* 39.5). We have no information about the dates of such regular monthly meetings of any religious group, insofar as there were any in addition to the optional festivities (birthdays and so on) over the course of the year. We may however take it that they fell on one of the named days each month, the Kalends, Nones or Ides.

With respect to religion, these days involved purely routine rituals performed, at least in the historical period, more or less in private by

specialists. On the Kalends, the *regina sacrorum* (the wife of the *rex sacrorum*) sacrificed a sow or an ewe to Juno in the Regia; on the Ides, the *flamen Dialis*, the priest of Jupiter, sacrificed a white ewe-lamb to Jupiter in his temple, probably the one on the Capitol.¹⁴ At any rate before the widespread use of written calendars, the number of days until the Nones, either five or seven, was publicly announced (*kalatio*) on the Kalends by the *pontifex minor* in the Curia Calabra on the Capitol (Varro, *LL* 6.27). Originally this custom was made necessary by the use of an empirical lunar calendar prior to the end of the fifth century BC (Rüpke 2006g). On the Nones itself, as I have mentioned (p. 105), the *rex sacrorum* stood on the Arx and announced the remaining festivals of the current month. Such oral announcements must have continued until the Late Republic, thus incidentally granting *imperativae* (festivals or rituals announced short-term by a magistrate or authorized specialist) the same status as *feriae stativae*, which were fixed in the calendar. The only trace at Rome of the political significance of the Ides, known from Etruscan evidence, is the fact that the Senate met regularly on that day (Edlund-Berry 1992).

In the early history of Rome there was another fixed day in the month in addition to the Kalends, Nones and Ides, namely the Tubilustrium. This survives in the calendars as a festival on 23 March and 23 May. This is the ninth day after the Ides, and thus symmetrical to the Nones. According to Festus (p. 480.25–27 L.), an ewe-lamb was sacrificed in the *atrium sutorium* (location unknown) and the trumpets (*tubae*) sounded, possibly to strengthen the waning moon. In each case, on the following day (24th), the *rex sacrorum* offered sacrifice and the *pontifex maximus* presided over an assembly, the *comitia calata*, which in the historical period comprised just thirty lictors, the official servants of the old *curiae*.¹⁵

At the political level, there seem to have been no clear monthly rhythms until the Augustan period, when the Senate began to meet regularly on the Kalends and the Ides (*senatus legitimus*).¹⁶ This explicit regulation of the Senate's meetings under the Principate, which also appears in the calendars, represents a degree of domestication of that body, which, unlike the popular assemblies, had been quite unrestricted during the Republic (Bonnetfond-Coudry 1989). Even in the Republic, however, we can make out a certain concentration on the Kalends and the Ides, for example in Cicero's correspondence. This contributed significantly to the creation of a regular rhythm in the movements of the members of the Senate in and out of Rome (where the Senate generally met). Patterns in time are always in fact patterns in time and space. We need only think of the rush hour.

At the level of what has been called 'living interaction' (James 2003: 14), which is a little more precise than tired old 'daily life', the named days were very significant. It was customary in farms during the mid-Republic to place a garland on the hearth to mark them. In relation to financial transactions, the Kalends were the usual date for paying interest, and probably too for fixing loans. Discharge took place on the Ides (Horace, *Epod.* 2.69f.). Credit was thus granted legally for twelve and a half months.¹⁷ It was this custom of paying interest at the beginning of the month that led to the expression 'paying on the Greek Kalends', meaning never, since the Kalends was a purely Roman institution. Vulgar though it was, the emperor Augustus often used it, causing his biographer Suetonius to wrinkle his nose (*Aug.* 87.1). Rents on houses, or on complete flats in housing-blocks (*insulae*), a privileged form of accommodation in cities, were also paid on the Kalends, usually for a year or half-year in arrears. Such rental contracts often began on the Kalends of July.¹⁸ The day on which the tokens for the citizen grain-dole were distributed each month is unknown; at any rate Augustus failed in his attempt to limit it to three dates a year, possibly on the analogy of the three payments usual in the army (Suetonius, *Aug.* 40.2). Plautus tells us that in the mid-Republic the food allowance for slaves and their families was distributed on the Kalends (*Stichus* 60).

Sumptuary laws are another area where the named days were of use. The *lex Iulia de sumptu* of 18 BC imposed a limit on private banquets of 200 sesterces on normal days and 300 for those held on the Kalends, Nones, Ides and other festivals (Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 2.24.14). In the late first century AD, Martial suggests that ordinary men wore their best clothes, the toga, at best only on the Kalends and the Ides, which must have been the days when people took part in festivals (4.66.3, cf. Horace, *Odes* 4.11.13–20). It was obviously common to celebrate one's birthday on the Kalends of the month in which it fell rather than on the day itself.¹⁹ Consequently Martial can make fun of someone so mad on presents that he celebrates his birthday on eight Kalends a year, thus becoming prematurely old (8.64, cf. Lucas 1938). Such 'birthdays' might continue even after death: the testament of an anonymous citizen from northern Gaul stipulates that sacrifice shall be made to his *manes* on every Kalends from April to August and in October.²⁰

It is again worth taking a look at dated votive-inscriptions. *Prima facie* there seems to have been a preference in favour of the named days, but I have not checked to see whether this impression is statistically valid. However there certainly was a tendency to choose the named

days for significant religious events such as consecrating temples, which would of course be kept as its *dies natalis* in perpetuity. The date of the *Tubilustrium*, which I claim was once a regular named day between the Ides and the following Kalends, was also that of several old-established festivals: the *Feralia* in February, *Parilia* in April, *Neptunalia* in July, *Consualia* in August and *Divalia* in December. The idea of linking these festivals with the days when people anyway met together was evidently to ensure, even well into the early Republic, that they came to public notice.

To confirm all this, we may just take a brief look at two groups of texts from the second half of the first century BC, Cicero's correspondence and Horace's poetry. From Cicero's correspondence it is quite clear that he thinks in terms of Kalends and Ides: not merely are these two dates often those of Senate meetings, they also structure longer journeys, eating-habits, and, to lesser degree, the dates when he writes letters. The Nones, though of minor importance, do nevertheless play a certain role. Horace's poems create dozens of situations which are of course not 'scenes from daily life' but do thematize major and minor festivals, and the every-day situations arising from them. The first thing we notice is that there are almost no references to chronology; very few poems give dates at all, and where they do occur they seem to have no special significance. But if we check them, where possible, against the calendar, they turn out, surprisingly enough, to cluster on the Kalends, Nones and Ides. Events whose dates are given indirectly also tend to take place on these days: for example, 'Diana's day' is the Ides of August (*Odes* 2.12.20); the capture of Alexandria took place on the Kalends of August 30 BC (*Odes* 4.14.34–40). The *Neptunalia* on 23 July, which seem to be alluded to at *Odes* 3.13, to the spring Bandusia, fell, like the *Terminalia* (23 February: here the matter is admittedly more complicated), on what I have called a 'Tubilustrium-date'. The glaring exception is the Shabbat, the eve of which is the temporal setting of *Satire* 1.9. But the point of this reference to a completely different calendrical scheme is finally to get rid of the Ancient Mariner figure, the poem's main character, from whom the speaker is trying to escape.

This passage actually reads: *hodie tricesima sabbata*, today is the thirtieth (and what's more), the Shabbat (*Satire* 1.9.69).²¹ The 'thirtieth' (i.e. in our reckoning, 29th) must be the last day of a lunar cycle, a means of structuring time that I would classify as popular astrology, and that became increasingly important during the Principate, especially among Christians. The attribution of positive or negative value

to individual days is much older however: the *dies postridui*, the days immediately following the named days, were called *dies atri*, 'black days'. It was best to avoid taking a journey, or celebrating a marriage or any other important ritual, on these days. This belief may have originated as a means of protecting the public or collective character of the named days by prohibiting large-scale private preparations for the morrow. However that may be, the rules were effective, at any rate up to the end of the Republic. Among all the dates of temple-consecrations, not one falls on a *dies ater*. The *dies postridui* are mostly marked *dies fasti*, but never *dies comitiales*; that is, lawsuits might be heard on them, but *comitia*, assemblies, could not be summoned.

In the middle of the second century AD, Aulus Gellius reports an extension of this type of negative marking: 'the fourth day before the Kalends, Nones and Ides is avoided by many people on the grounds that it is equally ill-omened' (*Noct. Att.* 5.17.3). The inclusively-reckoned 'fourth day before' may be the day after the middle of a nundinal 'week', that originally determined the fourfold structure Nones – Ides [– Tubilustrium] – Kalends (see below). If so, this negative marking began very early.

Most of the *dies atri* can be found under the name *dies aegyptiaci* in the calendar of Polemius Silvius from the mid-fifth century AD (*InscrIt* XIII.2: 264–75). The old 'dark days' have now been promoted to become the exotic 'Egyptian days', for nothing is older than Egyptian religion. It is precisely this denotative vacancy that ensures the survival of concepts such as this, which operate only at the level of the written calendar, and open them up for new interpretation. As for practical significance, it is worth looking at how negative marking of particular days functions in other historical and contemporary cultures. In Japan, for example, printed calendars provide detailed information about ominous or unlucky days of different kinds. The fact that they are mass-produced attests to the widespread popular awareness of such days, and people's willingness to adjust the conduct of private business, weddings and so forth to astrological schemes. In Europe, on the other hand, very few undertakings are actually put off on this account. In professional life, or at school, the pressures under which people have to work leave them little scope for such considerations. Under these circumstances, it is retrospective interpretation that becomes important: the negative marking offers a simple explanation if something goes wrong. I cannot put off the test on Friday 13th, but I am likely to be very aware of, and made anxious by, the fact that it falls on such a day.²²

The Week

The division of the month into Nones, Ides, the residual Tobilustrium and Kalends points to an original or early pattern of three 'weeks' of eight days, which was the predecessor of the nundinal eight-day 'week' and only differed from the latter in that the weeks were not counted continuously. This sequence started afresh at the beginning of each month after the elapse of a variable number of days introduced to adjust the civil three-week 'month' to the lunar month. By contrast, from the middle Republic, as the sequence of letters A-H makes clear, the interval between one market-day (*nundinae*) and the next was always eight days. The simultaneous co-existence of both systems (the practical consequences of which are unclear) was the price that had to be paid for (1) the extraordinarily early introduction of a continuous cycle of 'weeks' that took no account of the months (the only other case is the Jewish *shabua*, introduced after the exile in Babylon) and (2) the effective imposition of an annual calendar aligned not to the cycles of the Moon but to the length of the solar year. As far as the solar year is concerned, though other nations knew the principle, the Romans were the only people of the entire Mediterranean basin to impose a working civil calendar based upon it.

Of the eight days of the nundinal week, only the *nundinae* themselves, the actual market-days, received any attention in ritual terms. On the analogy of the named days, a ram was sacrificed to Jupiter in the Regia by the *flaminica*, the wife of the *flamen Dialis* (Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.16.30).²³ As a market-day, the *nundinae* were naturally in the public eye; and equally naturally there were conflicts over whether they could be used politically. The lex Hortensia of 287 BC finally brought these to an end. The compromise was that regular *comitia* (assemblies) were not allowed, since the day was a *dies fastus*, not *comitialis*, but that *plebiscita*, resolutions of assemblies of the *plebs* duly conducted by the tribunes of the people, which were allowed to be held on such days, should have the force of laws regularly passed by the Senate and then the *Populus Romanus*, assembled in the *comitia tributa*. Though of great importance in the political history of the late Republic, this special position of the *concilium plebis* dwindled to unimportance already in the early Principate.²⁴

At least one source tells us that another feature of the named days was also transferred to the *nundinae*: on the analogy of the 'dark' days, the day following the *nundinae* was avoided when people were planning important activities. According to Suetonius, Augustus habitually

did so (*Aug.* 92.2), which tells us that even the élite was influenced by such ideas.

If we ask what ordinary people did on *nundinae*, the evidence suggests that school-children might have the day off, and adults see to their personal hygiene (for example, shaving; washing all over; cutting one's nails, beginning with the index finger). People might also arrange for a particularly elaborate meal, with a cook specially brought in; the lex Fannia, a sumptuary law of 161 BC, is supposed to have allowed a maximum of five guests instead of three on such days.²⁵ It should be said at once that, apart from Pliny's notice about nail-clipping, all these reports refer to the period of the Republic; later texts, down to Late Antiquity, mention only the day's current function as a market-day, which is typical of such recurrent days in many societies.²⁶ A possible explanation might be that the demands of Late Republican and imperial Rome rendered an eight-day market-rhythm completely obsolete. People then made their purchases daily at the city's markets, central and local (Robinson 1992: 131). The economy of the entire plain of Latium had by then been re-organized to serve the needs of the metropolis, as regards both consumption and production.

All this is, in wider historical terms, quite remarkable. The independent 'week'-cycle, though rational, failed to dominate the chronological pattern of every-day life. Indeed, as Roman society became more complex, it was the rational system that was most clearly abandoned when it came to the organization of private and public activities, while the 'soft' system of the named days survived.

In the long run perhaps, the real importance of the *nundinae* lay in preparing the ground for a different week-system, namely the seven-day planetary week. It was in this form, with its astrological colouring, that the Jewish *shabua* (week), and the Christian week that grew out of it, were absorbed into the Roman system of time-reckoning (cf. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.39 §282). Now the planetary week is an astrological system of pronounced simplicity, which takes account of just seven classes of events, the individual days. It was this selectivity, together with the sheer distinctiveness of the planetary gods (Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Sun) and its congruence with contemporary theology and cosmology, that underlay the popularity of the system at Rome once it became known there in the second half of the first century BC.²⁷ Two calendars from central Italy, the *Fasti Sabini* and *Nolani*, both dating from the early or mid-Augustan period, already add a column for the letters of a seven-day, i.e. non-nundinal, week that ignores the months (*InscrIt* XIII.2: nos. 5 and 37; pls. VIIIA and LXXIII). Weekly calendars with holes for marking the

days with a pin or peg (*parapegmata*) were mass-produced (e.g. *CIL* VI 32505, cf. Eriksson 1956). By AD 321, the planetary week had become so wide-spread that the emperor Constantine declared that it should become the official system of time-reckoning (*Cod. Just.* 3.12.2). Although its internal logic was quite different, the Jewish Shabbat provided a model for prohibition or avoidance of specific activities on its equivalent in the planetary week, the day of Saturn. At Rome, however, it was not widely followed. We can take it that, for the majority of the population, the point I made about the *dies atri* held good: people were aware of, took note of, particular days, but were only prepared to allow such considerations to influence their choice of action in exceptional cases, when the matter was particularly risky.

The use of the week as a device for structuring time had little wider effect. In the early Principate, the Shabbat only slowly assumed the status of a day set aside among Jews for communal religious purposes rather than for domestic worship and for rituals conducted by specialists (MacKay 1994). In the Diaspora, even such observance was often difficult (Bohak 2002). The Christians followed their lead, though few took heed of the practice of these Jewish splinter-groups. But it may be that it was precisely the unusually intense weekly rhythm of Christian worship and congregational life, prepared for as it was by the existence of the planetary week, and just about manageable for the ordinary adherent, that helped make Christianity so attractive and its organization so resistant.²⁸

General Remarks

Study of the temporal rhythms of Roman society once the city became a world-metropolis enables us to re-affirm several basic features of Roman religion, such as its tight links to political institutions, the special role of the élite, the broad range of options open to the individual. The calendar set out the temporal framework within which certain legal and political actions might be performed. In the context of religion, it offered an overview of the activities of different specialists, selected on the basis of two criteria: (1) the technical character of the day (F, N, C etc.); (2) the foundation-dates of temples and festivals that were to be publicly commemorated, sometimes with the addition of relevant historical annotation. As such, it is best understood, at any rate from the period of the Late Republic, as a representative expression of élite competition and of a 'state-religion' understood, as I have

repeatedly argued, as the religion of that élite rather than as the religious expression of the loyalty of the entire population.

Although it possessed some highly specialized institutions with their own temporal reference-points, Roman society was broadly speaking fissiparous, especially with regard to economic life, so that, except in relation to financial transactions, there was no need to develop generalized calendrical schemes. The system developed by the élite, with all its intricacies, was thus far in excess of the daily needs of society. The demand for still finer differentiation, when it came, was satisfied by the planetary week backed by astrological expertise, an invention whose significance for the religious history of Europe can be traced far beyond Antiquity (Stuckrad 2003).

- mas 1990; North 1995; rather briefly: Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, other speculative: Torelli 1984. The political history can be found in t 1978; Galsterer 1976; Hantos 1983; Bleicken 1988.
- 25 Wissowa 1912: 164 with n.6; also 520; Lavinium: Castagnoli 1979; also Turcan 1983.
- 26 For the debate since Magdelain 1976, see Bendlin 2000b; on the Mundus at Rome, cf. *LTUR* 3: 288f. (F. Coarelli).
- 27 For the ritual, see Cato, *Origines*=*FRH* 3 F18a (Serv. *Aen.* 5.755); Varro, *LL* 5.143; Festus p. 514, 22–7 L; cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 4.819–36; Plutarch, *Rom.* 11.1–5. When the emperor Commodus planned to refound Rome as ‘Commodiana’ in AD 192, he issued an *aureus* showing himself as Hercules cutting the *sulcus primigenius* round the imaginary city: Cassius Dio 72 (73).15.2; *HA Commod.* 8.9; *RIC* 3, Commodus p. 394 no. 247.
- 28 On *domi* and *militiae* see Rüpke 1990: 29.
- 29 Syme 1975–6 [1978]; Rüpke 1990: 35; Ramage 1991.
- 30 Pliny, *Ep.* 10.50 (Trajan); see Gaius, *Inst.* 2, 7a: *Quod in provinciis non ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, proprie sacrum non est, tamen pro sacro habetur*, ‘though a thing consecrated in the provinces otherwise than under the authority of the Roman people is not strictly *sacrum*, it is nevertheless considered as such’ (tr. de Zulueta). However, as the Babatha archive from the province of Arabia has revealed, the Roman rules applying to landed property were in fact swiftly applied in the provinces through the medium of the governor’s provincial edicts.
- 31 Varro, *LL* 6.53; Festus p. 146, 12–17 L; see Rüpke 1990: 32; 37.
- 32 Cf. Cipriano 1983; Linderski 1986: 2272; Rüpke 1990: 36f.
- 33 The *lituus* frequently appears on coins, particularly in the late Republic and early Principate, and occasionally on temple-friezes, denoting membership of the college of Augurs, or more vaguely the augural science: Hölscher 2004–6: 5, 394–6 (H. Schaubert).
- 34 Varro, *LL* 7.7–9 with Norden 1995: 3–106; cf. Frontinus, *<De limitibus>* p. 10.20–11.5 Thulin=WLS p. 8.23–9.
- 35 The most complete surviving augural monument is the *templum terrestre* at Bantia (AE 1967:105; cf. Torelli 2004–6: 4, 345 no.3; Linderski 1986: 2282–5), which was used for observing the flight of birds. Although I have likened the *templum minor* to a tent, it was not covered, simply fenced off (Festus says *tabulis et linteis*, ‘with boards and awnings’); rather confusingly, however, the auspiciant did have a regular tent (*tabernaculum*) where he could wait around, or sleep, when not actually observing.
- 36 A different point of view in Fridh 1990; Torelli et al. 2004–6: 4, 313–15 (M. Menichetti).
- 37 Cf. Coarelli 1983b; for the case at Pompeii, see Zanker 1998: 147–52.

9 CO-ORDINATION

- 1 One might start with the important anthropological discussions of Bourdieu 1977 and Gell 1992.
- 2 See Beard, North, Price 1998: 1,71f.; 201–6; Cancik 1996a; Haase and Rüpke 2001.
- 3 For a survey of Greek and Roman calendars, see Hannah 2005. The first-

- century BC Gaulish calendar found at Coligny (départ. Ain-Rhône Alpes), though based on lunar cycles, is clearly adapted from a Roman model (Duval and Prinot 1986). On the Egyptian calendar, highly sophisticated in other ways, see A. S. de Bomhard 1999.
- 4 Overview of all versions so far known in Rüpke 1995: 43–164; the Latin texts in *InscrIt* XIII.2: 237–62.
- 5 So Wissowa 1912: 2f., following Mommsen; likewise Michels 1967 and (basically) Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 6.
- 6 *InscrIt* XIII.2 (appendix) gives the sources in chronological order day by day; the main festivals are listed by Scullard 1981. On the *Tubicines*, see Festus p.482.27–9 L; Varro, *LL* 5.117.
- 7 On the religious festivals during the early Principate, see Benoist 1999.
- 8 Ovid dates the procession to the Vestalia (9 June), but the *Fasti Filocali* enters ‘Vesta aperitur’ on 7th; a period of N-days begins already on 5.
- 9 Laurence 1994: 124f. provides an overview.
- 10 Details in Bernstein 1998; instrumentalization: Flaig 1995b, cf. Toner 1995: 52; for Late Antiquity and Constantinople see Cameron 1976; Brown 1978: 81–6.
- 11 De Robertis 1963; Rüpke 1995a: 501–12.
- 12 Cato, *De agr.* 2.4; Columella, *RR* 2.21, see also Servius, *Georg.* 1.268–72; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.16.9–12.
- 13 E.g. *CIL* X 444=ILS 3546; 10234=ILS 7213; XIV 2112=AE 1983: 181.
- 14 Kalends: Ovid, *Fasti* 1.55; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.15.19; Ides: Festus p.372, 8–12 L; Ovid, *Fasti* 1.56. Ovid notes that the Nones had no tutelary deity.
- 15 Varro, *LL* 6.31; Paulus, *Excerpt. Festi* p. 311.1–3 L with Rüpke 1995a: 214–21.
- 16 Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 35.3 with Rüpke 1995a: 434f.
- 17 Interest rates varied widely from region to region (Gaius, ap. *Digest.* 13.4.3). A conservative rate was 4–5%, 6% was common; a rate of 1% per month (=12% p.a.) was often expected in areas with strong commerce. Cicero even mentions a man in Cilicia who hoped to make 4% per month (= 48% p.a.) (*Att.* 5.21.12). Such high rates were still common in the fourth century AD (Duncan-Jones 1982: 33 n.3; 132–6).
- 18 Such apartments (*cenacula*) were often sub-let by the tenant. By far the greater part of the population however had no such privilege, and was forced to pay daily, or very short-term, rent for tiny rooms in *deversoria* or *cauponiae* (Frier 1977, 1980). For a realistic account of the urban poor, see Whittaker 1993.
- 19 E.g. Horace, *Odes* 3.8.1; Martial 9.52; 10.24; 29.3; 87.
- 20 *CIL* XIII 5708, II.16f. =ILS 8379=FIRA 3 no. 49.
- 21 The most plausible explanation is that the speaker is trying to urge his interlocutor to get off home because tomorrow is the Shabbat, which at any rate in later Jewish usage meant that it would begin already this evening. Although almost nothing is known of Jewish practices relating to the Shabbat at this period, the obvious inference is that the coincidence of the end of the (lunar) month and a Shabbat would have been considered particularly holy.
- 22 On ominous days in antiquity, see Grafton and Swerdlow 1988; Rüpke 1995a: 563–92; cf. Swerdlow 1999.
- 23 This ritual might be understood as a synthesis of the sacrifice to Juno on the Kalends, conducted in the Regia by the *regina sacrorum*, and that to Jupiter on the Ides, conducted, probably on the Capitol, by the *flamen Dialis* (see p. 194).

- 24 See Rüpke 1995a: 274–83; compare Hölkeskamp 1988. Because of the rule that legislation had to be published at least three *nundinae* before being resolved, these days acquired considerable importance in late-Republican politics (Lintott 1968).
- 25 No school, shaving: Varro, *Menipp.* 279; 186 Astbury; washing: Seneca, *Ep. mor.* 86.12 ('in the old days'); nail-trimming: Pliny, *HN* 28.28; extra cook: Plautus, *Aulularia* 324f. with Festus p.176, 27–32 L.; on the Lex Fannia: Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 6. 274c; Pliny *HN* 10.139; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 2.24.4.
- 26 Mommsen in *CIL* I², p. 218 reproduces a curious schematic device for correlating the dates of the *nundinae* in a number of cities in Latium with one another and with the days of the planetary week.
- 27 On astrology in the imperial period, see Barton 1994; Stuckrad 2000; Beck 2007.
- 28 Cf. Stern 2001 on the Jewish emphasis on the 'deviant' lunar calendar against the Roman (and earlier Jewish) solar calendar.

10 RELIGION IN THE METROPOLIS

- 1 The most important account of the development of the late Republican legislation is Linderski 1968 (with the earlier literature cited there).
- 2 On *collegia* in general, see still Liebenam 1890; Ausbüttel 1982: 16ff.; Royden 1988: 3–12; Patterson 1994; terminology: Royden 1988: 2f. In Asia Minor, specifically religious associations appear long before professional *synodoi*, which developed only after the advent of Roman rule: van Nijf 1997: 7f.
- 3 See the various essays in Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996; Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Schäfer 2002; Harland 2003: 25–53; Bendlin 2005; also Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 272f.
- 4 See White 1990: 26ff.; note also the discussion over the *collegium* of Sergia Paullina (*CIL* VI 9148 = *ILS* 7333; 9149; 10260–62; 10263 = *ILS* 7334; 10264 = *ILS* 7335); Sordi and Cavigliolo 1971; Sordi 1979; refuted by Bonfioli and Panciera 1971/2; cf. Lampe 1989: 313; White 1990: 46f.
- 5 The total can be calculated from the fact that there were 60 *decuriae*, and c. 22 members in each *decuria* (*CIL* VI 33856; 1060 = 33858 = *ILS* 7225); cf. Royden 1988: 127.
- 6 Individuals were officially only permitted to be members of one *collegium legitimum* (*Digest.* 47.22.1.2). The Ostian evidence suggests that this was broadly conformed to, except by prominent persons (Meiggs 1973: 321f.).
- 7 Meiggs 1973: 311–36; Van Straten 1993; for the figures, see Ausbüttel 1982: 35–7.
- 8 Heyob 1975; Mora 1990: 2, 1–29; Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 296–300.
- 9 Cf. Ausbüttel 1982; briefly, Meiggs 1973: 312; Bollmann 1998: 28f.
- 10 Garnsey and Saller 1987: 114f., 120f., 200; Jongman 1988: 203–77; Schulze-Oben 1989: 169–226.
- 11 Cf. Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 4.62.4; Livy 6.37.12; 42.2; cf. 10.8.1–4. The full title *sacris faciundis*, 'responsible for the rites which need to be performed', makes clear that these priests were responsible for more than the Sibylline books.

- 12 The title *Dendrophori*, Tree-carriers, must be related to the name of the ritual on 22 March, which was *arbor intrat*: the Tree enters.
- 13 See Salamito 1987, by contrast with the exclusively religious interpretation offered by Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 273; 308.
- 14 The importance of rich patrons for furnishing the *schola* is stressed by Meiggs 1983: 324–7; White 1990: 53–8; Bollmann 1998: 29–32; for post-Constantinian church-building, see Pietri 1978.
- 15 Cotter 1996 with de Ligt 2000.
- 16 3 *asses* are the equivalent of *HS* $\frac{3}{4}$. On these occasions, the ordinary members received no monetary *sportulae* (which ought to have amounted to 2 *den.* = *HS* 8), thus saving the fund around *HS* 280 each time. Everyone received the same amount of bread. It may seem odd to distribute such an article, but bread was a luxury; the great majority of the population subsisted on a kind of porridge (Jongman 2002: 31). The bread-ration on these occasions amounted to the entire daily wage of a labourer at Rome: Duncan-Jones 1982: 54.
- 17 6 *sextarii* = 1 *congius* = roughly 6 pints. The implied price of a *sextarius* of wine is *HS* 1.27–1.84.
- 18 Salvia Marcellina is not expected to drink wine.
- 19 On the financial aspects of this inscription, see Duncan-Jones 1982: 364f. The total cost of the *sportulae* was at least *HS* 1,436, implying an annual income of *HS* 2,500 at 5%, or *HS* 3,000 at 6% interest.
- 20 Misenum: *AE* 1993: 472f. = 1996: 424a–b = 2000: 344a–c, with the important discussion by D'Arms 2000.
- 21 On the *Augustales*, see Duthoy 1976; Jongman 1988, 203–77; Schulze-Oben 1989, 301–51; Abramenko 1993. Gregori 1999 is an important study of the institution at Brescia.
- 22 One of the most interesting inscriptions to specify ethical demands is the by-laws of a late-Hellenistic association at Philadelphia in Lydia (*Syll.* 985), discussed by Barton and Horsley 1981.
- 23 Cf. Seneca, *Ep. mor.* 108.17–22; among (neo-) Pythagoreans, Diogenes Laertius, *Phil.* 8.19. On the Stoic-Cynic debate on marriage/celebrity, see Deming 2004: 47–103.
- 24 E.g. Philo, *Inebr.* 20–26; *Leg. ad Gaium* 3.155–59; cf. Kloppenborg 1996; Mason 1996; Harland 2003: 206–10; Dunn 2007.
- 25 Stark 1996; the criticisms by Bruce 1999 (cf. Rüpke 2006e) affect only the issue of rational choice, not the empirical observations.
- 26 Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 279; Steuernagel 1999: 167; Steuernagel 2004: 251–57. On the Isiac monuments and Egyptian monuments at Rome: Rouillet 1972; on the Iseum Campense: Lembke 1994, summarized by Beard, North, Price 1998: 1, 264f. (Rome); also Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000: 175–85. Mithras: Bakker 1994: 111–17; Claus 2000: 42f.
- 27 See Bollmann 1998 with comprehensive material for Italy; also Harland 2003: 61–86. On the intermediate possibilities, see White 1990.
- 28 On caves and 'caves', see Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Rüpke 2000.
- 29 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000: 185–218, cf. White 1990: 126 and 137; Bricault 2001: map XXIII; on Pompeii, see also Tran tam Tinh 1964; Hoffmann 1993 (Pompeii); *Herculaneum and Stabiae*: Tran tam Tinh 1971.
- 30 See Steuernagel 2001, 2004: 186f.
- 31 Cf. Liebenam 1890: 191–95; Royden 1988: 12–14 (over-estimating the rarity of *centuriae*, which however occur almost exclusively in Gallia Cisalpina).

