

Scandinavian Days: Old or New

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It is unclear just when or how the familiar seven-day week with its named days arrived in Scandinavia. Certainly, it is clear that these elements would not have appeared in medieval Scandinavian culture had they not already been part of Imperial Roman culture. But there is a large gap between the fourth century AD, by which time the seven-day week had become well-established throughout the Western Roman Empire, and the thirteenth century AD, before which there is little firm evidence concerning Scandinavian day-names.

Not surprisingly, questions about the origins of the Scandinavian day-names have usually been the province of philologists. In a recent study concerning Latin loanwords in Germanic, D.H. Green stated that evidence from Old Norse “can safely be left out of account, since almost all of its loan-words from Latin reached it later or indirectly through England or Germany”.¹

Green was not speaking of the day-name issue specifically, but his words sum up the opinions of many scholars who, perhaps vexed by the limited amount of evidence, have suggested that the seven-day week and its day-names were relatively late imports to Scandinavia, perhaps borrowed from English or Low German usage during the late Viking Age or early-medieval period through trade contacts, as part of the conversion process, or both.

It is certainly true that the North Germanic languages show less Latin influence

¹ Green, *Germanic*, p. 201. Not a Scandinavianist, Green does not much discuss issues relating particularly to North Germanic.

than the West Germanic languages, and this is not surprising given that North Germanic developed in regions considerably farther from Roman territory than those where West Germanic was spoken. And it is not difficult to find loan words of classical origin that clearly passed through West Germanic languages on their way to Scandinavian. One such is Modern Icelandic *kokkur* (meaning “cook”), which has no known Old Icelandic antecedent, and is almost certainly a post-medieval loan from Early Modern Danish *kok*, itself from Low German, with an ultimate origin in Latin *cocus*.²

However, the dearth of pre-medieval written material from or concerning Scandinavia often makes it difficult to be confident about when words were borrowed from Latin into North Germanic, let alone what stops they might have made along the way. Before the split between North and West Germanic (perhaps in the 6th and 7th centuries AD), it is possible that loans from Latin could have entered the speech of Germanic groups who were in close contact with Roman culture and thence filtered onwards to the Scandinavian speech-area with relative speed and ease. Moreover, the inhabitants of southern Scandinavia themselves seem to have had considerable contact with Roman culture during the early centuries AD. Indeed, the period between roughly the last half-century BC and late 4th century AD is known within Danish archaeological terminology as the *Roman Iron Age* due to the preponderance of Roman trade goods that seem to have been pouring into southern Scandinavia at that time.³ According to archaeologist Morten

² The English word “cook”, from Old English *cōc*, seems to have been borrowed independently from a late, colloquial variant of the Latin word that had a lengthened stem vowel; Green, *Germanic*, p. 212; *ODEE*, p. 212 (s.v. ‘cook’); Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon, *Íslensk orðsifjabók*, 2nd edn (Reykjavík: Orðabók Háskólans, 1989), p. 489 (s.v. ‘kokkur’); Einar Haugen, *The Scandinavian Languages: An Introduction to Their History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 333-34.

³ John Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the Pre-Viking Period*, BAR, 124 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), p. 17; Ulla Lund Hansen, ‘Hovedproblemer i romersk og germansk jernalders kronologi i Skandinavia og på Kontinent’, in *FStS*, 1, 21-35; Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to 700 AD*, trans. by John Hines (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 6-14. See also *Roman Reflections in Scandinavia*, ed. by Eva Björklund (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1996), p. 69.

Axboe, the Roman Iron Age saw a “very wide-ranging and long-term cultural influence” on Scandinavia from Rome which “must have had its impact in a field which is difficult to investigate archaeologically: the conceptual and cognitive world of the Scandinavians”.⁴

Investigating such a world is difficult no matter what the means, though philology may offer avenues of approach that complement those found through archaeology. The following table showing some words—mostly connected with war and trade—that passed, through various routes, from Latin into various Germanic languages:⁵

Latin	Gothic	Old English	Old Norse
caupo	káupōn	cypa	kaupi
asellus/asinus	asilus	esol	asni
catillus/catinus	katilus	cetel	ketill
pondo	pund	pund	pund
vinum	wein	win	vín
saccus	sakkus	sacc/sæcc	sekk
sabanum	saban	saba	—
acetum	akeit	eced	—
lucerna	lukarn	—	Gutnish <i>lukarr</i>

The earliest and largest group of Germanic borrowings from Latin belongs to Gothic, but many of the same Latin words were borrowed (almost certainly separately) into West Germanic. The table above shows examples from Old English, but the same loans appear in Old High German, which suggests we could be seeing the recorded results of pre-literate borrowings into a relatively undifferentiated West Germanic dialect continuum. A slightly smaller subset of these words appears in Old Norse, but while it is likely that West Germanic borrowed directly from Latin, it is not always clear how (or when) North Germanic acquired these loans.

Some of the Gothic loanwords seem to have been borrowed onwards (possibly from a proto-Gothic stage) into Slavic and Baltic, which suggests that these words were in

⁴ Axboe, ‘Danish Kings’, p. 225.

⁵ Green, *Germanic*, pp. 171-74, 204-09, 224-27.

common use along the trade routes from the Roman world, up through Gothic-speaking territory, to the Baltic Sea and Scandinavia. Of particular interest in this context is the word *lukarr* (meaning “small fire”) which appears in Gutnish, the Swedish dialect spoken on Gotland. Aside from Gothic *lukarn*, this is almost the only known example of Latin *lucerna* (meaning “lamp”) loaned into Germanic.⁶ There are numerous examples that illustrate the borrowing of Latin *lucerna* into Celtic, and Rudolf Much thought *lukarr* had come to Gutnish through Celtic from the original Latin.⁷ However, Gotland's archaeology reveals that the island was an important destination for Roman goods during the Roman Iron Age. It may well be that both Gothic *lukarn* and Gutnish *lukarr* owe their existence to the eastern trade routes between the Baltic Sea and Roman Empire.⁸ Gutnish could have borrowed directly from Latin *lucerna*, or the loan could have come through Gothic.

Yet even though it seems possible that some loanwords from Latin could have entered North Germanic very early, we seldom have the means with which to pursue a closer dating. Nevertheless, there is at least one instance in which a clearer picture may be painted: the Old Norse term *eyrir*, a unit of measurement in common use during Scandinavia's Viking Age and medieval periods. The *eyrir* seems to have represented a weight slightly less than the Roman *uncia*, as shown in the following table.⁹

⁶ The only other contender is Middle High German *lucerne*, which existed as a late medieval loanword from Latin of limited currency.

⁷ R. Much (Review of Richard Loewe, *Die ethnische und sprachliche Gliederung der Germanen ...*), *Anzeiger in Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum [Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum (und deutsche Literatur)]* (1901), 113-26 (p. 114).

⁸ Green, *Germanic*, pp. 171-74, 204.

⁹ Peter Foote and David M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement: The Society and Culture of Early Medieval Scandinavia*, Great Civilizations Series, 2nd edn (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), pp. 197-98. There is disagreement over the values held by Roman weight-measures, and suggested weights for the *uncia* range from 26.88 to 27.288. See discussion in Philip Grierson and Melinda Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection: From Arcadius and Honorius to the Accession of Anastasius*, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1992), pp. 28-30.

Avoirdupois/Imperial ounce:	28.349 g
Roman <i>uncia</i> :	26.880 g to 27.288 g (approx.)
Viking/Medieval <i>eyrir</i> :	24.500 g to 26.800 g (approx.)
<i>Aureus</i> of Augustus (27 bc – ad 14):	7.900 g (approx.)
<i>Aureus</i> of Gallienus (ad 253 – 268):	1.100 g (approx.)
<i>Aureus</i> of Diocletian (ad 284 – 305):	5.450 g (approx.)
Late Roman <i>solidus</i> :	4.500 g (approx.)

Old Norse *eyrir* is recognized as descending from Latin *aureus*,¹⁰ the name of the early Empire’s standard gold coin, minted until Constantine’s introduction of the *solidus* in 307. After Constantine defeated his rival Licinus in 324, the *solidus* completely replaced the *aureus* as the standard Roman gold coin, though there were a few commemorative issues of a Diocletianic *aureus*.¹¹

Over the years, a number of scholars have striven mightily to explain the origins of the medieval Scandinavian weight system, focusing their efforts on relating Scandinavian metal finds to Roman measures and coin-weights. Yet surprisingly few have questioned why the Old Norse *eyrir* seems to have taken its weight-value from the *uncia*, while taking its name from the *aureus*, a coin which (at most) weighed less than 30% of an *uncia*.

Philological analysis of Old Norse *eyrir* (and its plural form *aurar*) indicates that the borrowing from Latin *aureus* must have taken place before such phenomena as syncopation and *i*-umlaut occurred in North Germanic—that is, probably before the 6th or 7th centuries AD.¹² Moreover, regular production of Roman *aurei* ceased in the early 4th

¹⁰ ANEW, p. 108 (s.v. ‘eyrir’).

¹¹ R.A.G. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire*, The Library of Numismatics (London: Routledge, 1990), 149-69, 239-40.

¹² The path from Latin *aureus* to Old Norse nom. sing. *eyrir* must have been something like *aureus* > (N)Gmc **aurjaz/*aurjar* (sing.) > ON *eyrir*, while the development of Old Norse nom.pl *aurar* must have been like *aureus* > (N)Gmc **aurōz/*aurōk* (pl.) > ON *aurar*. Cognates of *eyrir* in other European languages (such as OE *ora/yre* and Finnish *äyri*) are the result of borrowing from ON forms; *OED*, ? , ??? (s.v. ‘ora’).

¹³ *ODEE*, p. 844 (s.v. ‘soldier’).

¹⁴ Green, *Germanic*, p. 236. For discussion on the origins of the seven-day week and Sabbath, see Martin P. Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning: A Study in the Origins and First Development of the Art of Counting Time Among the Primitive and Early Culture Peoples*, Skrifter utgivna av Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund, 1 (Lund: Gleerup, 1920), 329-36.

¹⁵ Green, *Germanic*, pp. 236-46.

¹⁶ Green, *Germanic*, p. 246.

¹⁷ Green, *Germanic*, pp. 253, 359-60.

century, and even if the coins and name remained in circulation for some time to come, it was the name of the coin that replaced the *aureus*, the *solidus*, that endured in other European contexts. The word *solidus* survives in Romance coin names like the French *sou* and Italian *soldo*; another descendant of *solidus* is found in the word ‘soldier’, coming through Old French from Medieval Latin *solidarius* (meaning ‘one in military service who is paid in *solidi*’).¹³ In the face of such evidence, it seems most likely that the word *aureus* was borrowed into Scandinavia’s Germanic dialects before the *solidus* achieved its position of dominance—that is, during southern Scandinavia’s Roman Iron Age, before the end of the fourth century AD. Presumably, through use of the actual coin as a unit of weight, the loanword came to be understood as a weight-unit term. At some later point this term was reassigned to a weight closer to the *uncia*’s, resulting in the Viking-Age and medieval Scandinavian *eyrir*.

It should also be noted that there is no evidence that Latin *aureus* was borrowed directly into non-Scandinavian Germanic dialects. Old English *yre* and *ora* are themselves borrowed from Old Norse *eyrir* and *aurar*, respectively. This suggests that Germanic dialects in Scandinavia could have differed from Germanic dialects elsewhere even before the more dramatic grammatical and phonological shifts which separated North and West Germanic in the 6th and 7th centuries AD. Therefore, it seems worth considering whether the seven-day week and the names of its days, already well established in the Western Roman Empire before the 6th and 7th centuries AD, could have taken a path analogous to those which Gutnish *lukarr* may have taken and that Old Norse *eyrir* almost certainly did.

The seven-day week first appears to history amongst the fifth-century BC Hebrews, and from them its usage spread to other Mediterranean peoples.¹⁴ The Hebrew days were designated numerically (except for the Sabbath and the preceding day), and this custom was largely duplicated by Greek-speaking Jews

and Christians. In contrast, the early Roman calendrical system had a *nundinum* of eight days, but Augustus' imperial mandate replaced it with the seven-day week, known by the term *hebdomas*, an explicit borrowing from Greek. The popularity of Chaldean astrology in the early Roman Empire resulted in the Roman days being named after the gods associated with the then-known seven planets: *dies Saturni*, *dies Solis*, *dies Lunae*, *dies Martis*, *dies Mercurii*, *dies Iouis*, *dies Veneres*. The custom of naming the days for the planets in this way had been known, but not popular, among Greek-speaking populations, and few hints of non-Christian deities are found in the languages of eastern European regions which had been under the sway of the Greek-speaking Byzantine church. In western Europe, however, the Roman Church found itself in a largely losing battle to expunge the astrological day-names from common use, these having become popular well before Christianity had been widely established.¹⁵

Germanic use of pagan Roman day-naming conventions may have arisen through trade contacts with Latin-speakers. The conduction of mercantile business on any scale is scarcely imaginable without the ability for the concerned parties to fix dates. In any event, according to D.H. Green, it seems likely that the seven-day week had been adopted by Germanic-speakers by the fourth century AD, if in different ways in different areas.¹⁶ Green identifies two regions with broadly differing borrowing practices: a region in south-eastern Germany which adopted day-names that avoid references to pagan gods, and a region in north-western Germany which adopted day-names that did reference pagan gods.¹⁷

As noted earlier, it is often assumed that Old Norse borrowed its day-names long after the 4th century from either Old English, Low German, or both. However, three of the seven Scandinavian day-names could just as easily be the results of early loan-

translations from Latin: these are *týsdagr*, *óðinsdagr*, and *þórsdagr*. If these were borrowed late from West Germanic, they would reveal a kind of *interpretatio Scandinavica* in that they would have required the accurate recasting in North Germanic of names belonging to West Germanic gods, despite the phonological changes that separated North and West Germanic by the Viking Age. Moreover, there is little evidence that the names of West Germanic gods had much currency outside of day-names by the Viking Age, when West Germanic speakers had been largely Christianized.

Several other Scandinavian day-names have oddities that merit special attention. Consider first Old Norse *sunnudagr*. If the same kind of *interpretatio Scandinavica* that could turn *wodnesdæg* into *óðinsdagr* were applied to Old English *sunnandæg* or OSax *sunnondag*, then the expected result might have been an Old Norse ***sólsdagr*. A word *sunna* meaning ‘sun’ is found very rarely in ON, appearing in a late-tenth-century poem by Þórarinn Þórólfsson and in a poem by Björn hítðœlakappi (c. 1019), but is best known from *Alvíssmál*: ‘Sól heitir með mǫnnum, enn sunna með goðom’.¹⁸ The Old Norse *sunna* could well be a borrowing from WG—*sunna* never appears outside of Icelandic contexts, excepting that the day-name *sunnudagr* is paralleled in the mainland Scandinavian languages—but it must be admitted that *sunna* could be a genuine survival in Old Norse from Proto-Germanic **sunnōn*, perhaps paralleling the case of Gothic where *sunnō* existed alongside *sauil* as a word for “sun”. If the *sun*-word [NwG **sunnō(n)*] had been common in early Scandinavian dialects, it might have remained fossilized in the day-name *sunnudagr* (perhaps encouraged by similar West Germanic forms) well after the *sol*-word eventually gained the supremacy as a word for “sun”. Such a possibility would be

¹⁸ *Alvíssmál*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 124–29 (p. 126, v. 16); Þórarinn svarti Þórólfsson máhliðingr, *Máhliðingavísur*, in *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 105–09 (p. 109, v. 17); Björn Arngeirsson hítðœlakappi, in *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 279 (v. 10); Lennart Moberg, “The Languages of *Alvíssmál*,” *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 18 (1973), 299–323 (pp. 303–04).

strengthened were there any Scandinavian place-names betraying use of **sunnō(n)*, but there are no clear examples of such, and it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the origins of *sunnudagr*.

A similar problem arises with *mánadagr*. The term *máni* does indeed mean “moon” in Old Icelandic, though this usage is known only from poetic contexts; the normal Old Icelandic word for “moon” is *tungl*. However, Icelandic does not seem to follow the normal Scandinavian practice in this instance, as the other Scandinavian languages show descendants of *máni* as their normal words for moon. Moreover, even Icelandic preserves the word *mánaðr* for “month”, a term closely related to the word for “moon” as it is in most Indo-European languages. Thus, it seems likely that the Icelandic term *tungl* for moon is a relatively late innovation, and *mánadagr* could be the descendant of an early Scandinavian loan translation from Latin as easily as it could be a late loan translation from West Germanic.

Many have considered Old Norse *frjádagr* to be a loan from a form such as Old English *frigedæg*, this latter itself formed through the equation of a West Germanic goddess, Frig, with the Roman Venus.¹⁹ Yet *frjádagr* could also represent the contraction of an ON *friggjardagr* in which the Scandinavian goddess Frigg replaced West Germanic Frig. But as both ON *Frigg* and West Germanic *Frig* stem from a common Germanic root **frijjō*, a Scandinavian *friggjardagr* could also be the descendant of an early loan translation from Latin. Such an early *friggjardagr* form may be suggested by a fifteenth-century Norwegian phrase *a fraighiadaghen*.²⁰ An *interpretatio Scandinavica* of the kind discussed previously might have been expected to produce *freyjudagr* (substituting the goddess

¹⁹Green, *Germanic*, p. 248.

²⁰*Diplomatarium Norvegicum: Oldbreve til kundskab om Norges indre og ydre forhold, sprog, slægter, sæder, lovgivning og rettergang i middelalderen*, ed. by Chr. C.A Lange and others (Christiana: Malling, 1849-), IX, ed. by C.R. Unger and H.J. Huitfeldt (1876), p. 294 (#311).

Freyja), a form found in *Breta sögur* to translate Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “Saxon” word *Fridei*;²¹ perhaps the similarity of Scandinavian Frigg to West Germanic Frig inhibited such a practice. Alternatively, it may be that Freyja was a relatively late arrival to the Scandinavian pantheon, and that she had not existed when the day-name was borrowed by early Germanic-speaking Scandinavians. Thus, it again is difficult to be sure how a name like *frjádagr* arrived in Old Norse.

Most inexplicable among the Old Norse day-names is *laugardagr*. This can really only mean something like ‘bath’s day’, especially considering the synonymous term *þváttdagr*,²² despite the heroic efforts of some scholars to demonstrate otherwise.²³ Perhaps the name owes its origin partially to confusion over how to adopt the Latin term *dies Saturni*. This term’s connection to the pagan god Saturn would probably have been clear to classically-educated Anglo-Saxon clergymen, but probably meant little to the perhaps less well-read Germanic tribesmen of earlier centuries, as they were apparently unable to find an appropriate Germanic deity-name that they could attach to it.²⁴ The Germanic dialects of north-western Germany certainly made no such attempt, adopting *dies Saturni* directly in forms such as Old English *sæternesdæg* and Middle Low German *satersdach*. This strategy does not seem to have appealed to Scandinavians, whether they were contemplating the borrowing of a nonsensical late West Germanic form or an incomprehensible Latin term. Instead, they settled on *laugardagr*, a name of their own

²¹ Geoffrey presented Hengist describing how the *Fridei* was named after a goddess *Frea*. The *Breta sögur* composer named (in the accusative) *Frig* and *Freyiv*, but only provided the (accusative) day-name *Freyiv dag*; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. by Neil Wright and Julia C. Crick, 5 vols (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984-91), 1, *Bern*, *Burgerbibliothek*, MS. 568, ed. by Neil Wright (1984), 65; 11, *The First Variant Version: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Neil Wright (1988), 88; *Bretasögur*, in *Hauksbók: Udgiven efter de Arnarnaganaanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4°, samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter af Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab*, ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1892-96), p. 269.

²² Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon, p. 548 (s.v. ‘laug’).

²³ See references in *ANEW*, p. ??? (s.v. ‘laugardagr’).

devising. That this creation was not more explicitly Christian suggests it may have taken place before the conversion of Scandinavia, or at least without strong clerical influence, though *sunnudagr*, *mánadagr*, and *laugardagr* all survived efforts to purge references to heathen gods from the Icelandic day-names (an institution commonly attributed to Jón Ögmundarson, bishop of Hólar 1106-21).²⁵

Whenever they coined the term *laugardagr*, it is unclear why Scandinavians chose the apparent meaning ‘bath day’. One possibility that does not seem to have been mooted previously is that the name reflects customs concerning the lustration of idols or other religious objects. Tacitus speaks of the lustration of Nerthus’s chariot, but there is no indication that weekly lustration ever played a role in pre-Christian Germanic customs. On the other hand, given the mystery surrounding pre-Christian Germanic beliefs and rituals, as well as the term *laugardagr*, this idea may not be less plausible than enthusiastic suggestions that the term reflects a Scandinavian interest in hygiene.

Clearly, there is still little that can be said with confidence about the Scandinavian day-names. It might be possible to associate their arrival in Scandinavia more firmly with late borrowings from West Germanic if it were clear that the seven-day week had itself been a late, Christian introduction to Scandinavia. Yet if we accept Ari Þorgilsson’s twelfth-century description of the Icelandic calendar’s establishment, it is clear that tenth-century, pre-conversion Icelanders already reckoned in *vikur* (“weeks”) of seven days.²⁶ Some scholars have suggested an earlier five-day week, the *fimt*,²⁷ was a feature of earlier Scandinavian time-reckoning, but this is the purest speculation. Tacitus spoke of Germanic

²⁴ Green, *Germanic*, p. 244.

²⁵ Kirsten Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland: An Anthropological Analysis of Structure and Change* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 25.

²⁶ *Íslendingabók*, pp. 9-11. See discussion in Hastrup, pp. 24-26.

time-reckoning in terms of nights and phases of the moon,²⁸ but reckoning in weeks probably came to Germanic speakers in continental Europe at the same time that they acquired the planetary day-names (that is, long after Tacitus’ time).

The word “week” has cognates in all branches of Germanic, though its Gothic form *wikō* is used only once, to translate Greek *τάξις* (“order, sequence”). It is sometimes suggested that the Germanic word was borrowed from Latin *vicis* (with the sense “succession”),²⁹ but this seems strained. Latin *vicis* did not mean ‘seven-day week’, a semantic niche filled by the Greek-derived term *hebdomas* and the later ecclesiastical Latin *septimana*, neither of which appear to have produced Germanic descendants. In contrast, the Romance languages do use terms for ‘week’ derived from *septimana*, such as French *semaine*. Germanic ‘week’, however, goes back to a form **wikōn*, fossilised in Finnish as *wijkko* (‘week’), and (barring the Gothic cognate) its descendants always refer primarily to the seven-day week.³⁰ The Finnish borrowing could suggest that the Germanic **wikōn* already meant ‘week’ quite early.

To a certain extent, arguments for late adoption of the seven-day week and planetary day-names in Scandinavia seem to rest on 19th-century Romantic notions that Scandinavia represented a *Germania Germanissima*, a ‘Germanic time-capsule’ where classical and Christian notions did not penetrate until the end of the Viking Age. But archaeological evidence has shown that the

²⁷ Cleasby-Vigfusson, p. 153 (s.v. ‘fimt’); Valtýr Guðmundsson, *Island i Fristatstiden*, Folkelæsning, 338 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1924), 88.

²⁸ *Germania*, p. 9 (Chapter II). Lunar periods also seem to have been known in Sámi time-reckoning. See discussion in Nilsson, *Primitive*, pp. 13, 154, 294-95, 301-09.

²⁹ F. Kluge, *Deutsche Sprachgeschichte, Werden und Wachsen unserer Muttersprach von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920), p. 187.

³⁰ Germanic **wikōn* and Latin *vicis* do descend from a common root, **wik-*, with meanings of ‘bend, turn, change’, represented in ModHG *Wechsel* and ON *víkja*.

Scandinavians were anything but unaware of the Roman world and indeed were merrily importing its tangible cultural artefacts in impressive quantities, which suggests we should consider whether they might not have imported some of its less tangible artefacts also. Lack of concrete evidence must preclude any definite statements, but there is no good reason why use of the seven-day week and planetary day-names could not have become familiar in Scandinavia around the fourth century AD, at roughly the same time that it has been suggested these features were adopted by the rest of the Germanic-speaking world—which is to say that the seven-day week and planetary day-names could have been adopted generally by speakers of Northwest Germanic, including those in Scandinavia, around the fourth century AD, if in slightly different ways at slightly different times in slightly different places. The apparent similarities between the North and West Germanic day-names might in some cases simply reveal their archaic nature, though contacts between Scandinavian and West Germanic peoples might also have encouraged the Scandinavian day-names to remain close to West Germanic forms—or original, more clearly Scandinavian, forms may have been remodeled after their West Germanic counterparts. It might be that alongside the pagan and non-pagan day-naming strategies that Green identified in north-western and south-eastern Germany, there was an additional and slightly different Scandinavian day-naming strategy that produced *laugardagr* in contrast to forms like *sæterdag*.

Though it may never be possible to prove exactly when and how the seven-day week and planetary day-names arrived in Scandinavia, or how they may have changed

after their first arrival, investigating a topic of this kind by drawing on evidence from different disciplines does suggest fresh avenues of approach for the study of early Scandinavian culture and its relationships within a wider world.