

From Sun-Day to the Lord's Day

Introduction

From Sun-Day to the Lord's Day — the title denotes the range of the anthology and points to the development through which this particular day has passed: initially designated as a day of the so-called planetary week of seven days, the Sun-Day — as the day is called in the legislation on Sunday rest of Emperor Constantine from the year 321 CE (on Constantine's Sunday laws, cf. the contribution of FRITZ MITTHOF in this volume) — later became the Christian Lord's Day. The personification of the day implied here is intentional. In the depictions of the planetary week as *parapegmata*, the planets are personified as busts with their attributes, the solar day as a woman with a halo. This planetary week was part of everyday astrology. Thus, for example, the text for Sunday in the *Calendar of Philocalus* (354 CE) recommends for this day:

Good for beginning journeys, for land and especially for ship voyages. Those born on this day are fit for life. Those who fall ill on this day will recover, a theft will be solved, stolen goods will be found again.¹

But also in the Greek *Didascalia of Jesus Christ*, the Lord's Day appears in person as a celestial woman who welcomes the soul of the one who has always preserved the Lord's Day of the week. Here, one can read:

8. Then Andrew says: 'Lord, show me the power of the seven days of the week, in the glory in which they stand before you.'
9. The Lord answered and said to Andrew, 'Just as a star differs from other stars in luminosity, so one day differs from other days in glory. First God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1. 1), and accordingly the holy Lord's

¹ 'Solis dies horaque eius cum erit nocturna sive diurna, viam navigium ingredi, navem in aquam deducere utile est. qui nascentur vitales erunt; qui recesserit inveniatur; qui decubuerit convalescet; furtum factum inveniatur'. The text (with further information on this calendar) can be read in Johannes Divjak and Wolfgang Wischmeyer, eds, *Das Kalenderhandbuch von 354: Der Chronograph des Filocalus, Band 1: Der Bildteil des Chronographen, Band 2: Der Textteil — Listen der Verwaltung* (Wien: Holzhausen, 2014), here in vol. 1, p. 112 and p. 126.

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Day was regarded as greater than all. For what reason is it called the Lord's Day otherwise? [...]

15. Blessed is he who keeps the days in faith; for as soon as he is cast from the perverse life and with the help of the angels proceeds to the veneration of the immaculate throne, the fourth and sixth days meet him as his soul enters heaven and say joyfully: 'Greetings, our friend, who labored greatly on the earth, praying to God with fasting and vigilance and preserving your entire house from any preoccupation with earthly things. Now be glad and rejoice in Paradise.'

16. And while they are speaking, the holy Lord's Day comes, together with eight brilliantly appareled angels, and he in their midst is adorned like the Daughter of Zion. He bears witness on behalf of the soul and greets it and says to the eight angels with him: 'Come, see a righteous soul that is without blemish, who fought well on the earth and abstained from any activity of the devil'. Then the angels and all the powers of heaven rejoice over it and greet the soul that has been truly converted. This is the reward for the one who has kept the holy Lord's Day and has fasted on Wednesday and Friday.²

This rather unknown text can be read as an apocalypse, thanks to the vision about the last days and the afterlife, but is similar in terms of genre to a dialogue gospel, as well, in which the twelve disciples are gathered around the risen Lord, asking questions and receiving answers. It was probably composed in the second half of the sixth century, perhaps in Egypt. The quoted vision about the heavenly woman Sunday is exceptional and without parallel from Late Antiquity. It can be explained by the author's wish to emphasize the central theme of his text, Sunday veneration, with a vision of the afterlife.

2 *Didaskalia Jesu Christi*: 8. τότε λέγει Ἀνδρέας· Κύριε, δείξον μοι τὴν δύναμιν τῶν ἑπτὰ ἡμερῶν τῆς ἑβδομάδος· ἐν ποίᾳ δόξῃ παριστήκεισάν σοι; 9. ἀπεκρίθη Κύριος καὶ εἶπεν τῷ Ἀνδρέᾳ· ὡσπερ ἀστὴρ ἀστέρων διαφέρει ἐν φωτὶ οὕτως καὶ ἡμέρα ἡμέρας διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ· πρῶτων ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν· καὶ, ὁμοίως, πάντων μειζωτέρα ἠῶρεθῆ ἡ ἁγία κυριακὴ· διὰ τὴν κυριακὴν ἐκάλεσεν λοιπῶν; [...]. 15. μακάριος ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν τῇ πίστει φυλάττων αὐτάς· ὅτι αὐτὸν μετὰ τὸ βληθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ σκολιοῦ βίου· καὶ ἀπελθῶν εἰς προσκύνῃσιν τοῦ ἀχράντου θρόνου· ὑπὸ ἀγγέλων· καὶ ἐν τῷ εἰσιέναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· ὑπαντοῦσιν αὐτὸν αἱ ἡμέραι τετράδῃ καὶ παρασκευῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς λέγουσαι· χαίρου φιλε ἡμῶν· ὁ καὶ πολλὰ κοπιάσας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· νηστείας καὶ ἀγρυπνίας δεῶμενος τῷ Θεῷ· καὶ δλον σου τὸν οἶκον κωλύων ἀπὸ πάσης σχολῆς τῶν γηϊνῶν· νῦν δὲ χαίρου καὶ εὐφραίνου ἐν παραδείσῳ 16. καὶ λαλούντων αὐτῶν, ἔρχεται καὶ ἡ ἁγία κυριακὴ μετὰ ὀκτῶ ἀγγέλων λαμπροφῶρων· καὶ αὐτὴ μέσον κεκοσμημένη ὡς θυγάτηρ Σιών· μαρτυροῦσα τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἀσπαζομένη καὶ λέγουσα τοῖς ὀκτῶ ἀγγέλοις τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ· δεῦτε ἴδετε ψυχὴν δικαίαν, ἥτις μῶλωπας οὐκ ἔχει, ἥτις καλῶς ἀγωνισαμένη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ ἐφύλαξεν ἑαυτὴν ἀπὸ πάσης ἐνεργίας τοῦ διαβόλου· τότε χαίρουσιν <ἐπ' > αὐτὴν οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ πάσαι αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν· τότε διασπαζόμενοι τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν καλῶς πολιτευσάμενην· τοῦτος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ μισθὸς τῶν τὴν ἁγίαν κυριακὴν φυλάξαντων· καὶ τὴν τετραδοπαρασκευὴν νηστευσάντων. The Greek text relies on a new critical edition of the text formerly edited by François Nau ('Une Didascalie de notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ [ou: Constitutions des saints apôtres]; *ROC*, 12 [1907], 230–54), prepared by Uta Heil and Jannis Grossmann according to Codex Parisinus gr. 929 (fifteenth century), fols 480–501 (Nau Sigle A) and Codex Parisinus gr. 390 (sixteenth century), fols 37^v–46^r (in preparation for print).

However, this text was written about 250 to 300 years after Constantine's law on Sunday rest from 321 CE. What prompted the anonymous author to emphasize the veneration of the day in such clear terms so many years later? Had not the issue been settled in the meantime? Thus, one conundrum and research question is the lack of reception of Constantine's law on Sunday rest, especially in Christian writings. Of course, Sunday is considered 1) a feast day among Christians for worship and 2) an important day in salvation history with Christian symbolism — Sunday is the day of resurrection of Christ (referenced in Christian epitaphs, cf. the contribution of BASEMA HAMARNEH), the first day of creation (already in Justin, *First Apology* 67 and in the *Didascalia* above), and the day of the new creation as the eighth day (already in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 15 [cf. the contribution of GÜNTER STEMBERGER on this text]; for Christian views on Sunday in the first centuries, see also the article by MICHAEL DURST). But the new concept of Constantine's legislation — Sunday as 3) a day of rest from work and 4) a new holiday that transforms everyday life into a seven-day weekly rhythm — shows little resonance. Only judicial holidays can actually be documented (see Testimonia 7 in the contribution of FRITZ MITTHOF and the recently excavated inscription with the Sunday law of *Codex Theodosianus* 2. 8. 18 in a church in Anaia, Turkey, presented here by UTA HEIL and FRITZ MITTHOF).

Establishing a veneration of Sunday seems to be pursued more by emperors than by the Church, for by the end of the fourth century more restrictions concerning Sunday activities and bans on pagan festivals appear in imperial law, as a continuation of Constantine's legislation (see the references in the contributions of FRITZ MITTHOF, pp. 36–44; MISCHA MEIER, p. 259; IAN WOOD, pp. 273f.; WOLFRAM KINZIG, pp. 322f.), but not in ecclesiastical canon law, Christian writers, or church councils. For example, John Chrysostom, the famous preacher in Antioch and bishop of Constantinople († 407 CE), very often complains about inattentive worshippers, but only demands that a few hours on Sunday, or a small part of a day, be set aside for Christian devotion and reflection on the sermon (cf. *De baptismo Christi* 1 [PG 49, col. 364]; *Homily 5 on Matthew* 1. 22–25 [PG 57, col. 55]). Actually, no text or sermon by a Christian author exists in which a complaint about poor attendance at church services or about leaving the church building before the end of the service is justified with the remark that the listeners now have time because of Constantine's law about resting on Sundays. Jerome († 430 CE), for example, in his interpretation of Galatians 4. 10–11, emphasizes that basically all days are equal ('omnes dies aequales esse'). Therefore, there is no day that is more festive than the other ('non quo celebrior sit dies illa'). Once, however, prudent men have set aside a day on which those Christians who cannot devote themselves to worship every day like the monks can gather and experience communion (*Commentarii in Galatas*, ed. by Giacomo Raspanti, II. 4 on Galatians 4. 10–11, CCSL 77A, pp. 118–19). Regular Sunday worship is thus based more on practical considerations than on any special reverence for this day of the week. In addition, the

prudent men here refer to the apostles or ecclesiastical authorities rather than an emperor; Constantine's Sunday law is not mentioned at all. In this context, SOFIE REMIJSEN's observation (in 'The Emperor Never Rests') that, according to the data, even the imperial legislature itself did not adhere to the court-free Sunday is also interesting. Legal texts are therefore not to be understood as a description of a social reality.

These observations encourage us to take a second look and ask: how did the Sun-Day become the Lord's Day? What effect did Emperor Constantine's legislation actually have? What is the reason for the scanty reception? Interestingly, if one reflects on the dissemination process of Constantine's Sunday law and compares this to the 'Diffusion of Innovations' model by Everett M. Rogers (cf. also SOFIE REMIJSEN, 'Business as Usual', p. 144; and VOLKER DRECOLL, 'Not Every Sunday Is the Same', pp. 435f.), one recognizes the difficulties.³

As a sociologist and communication scientist, Rogers states that 'diffusion is a kind of social change by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are adopted or rejected, leading to a certain consequence, social change occurs.'⁴ Rogers analyses how innovations (agricultural, medical, technical, educational, and other) are propagated and under what conditions they are accepted or fail. This is described as an innovation-decision-process, consisting of the steps of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The standard model of a successful spread of innovation covers the path from the dissemination of innovation to its recognition to acceptance by 'adopters'. Accordingly, this process is also mirrored in five 'adopter' types: innovator, early adopter, early majority, late majority, and laggards. According to Rogers, a bell curve shows the degree of adoption of an innovation in a society, from a few pioneers to a swelling spread to a few latecomers. Rogers speaks of 'innovators' and 'adopters' as the first 'diffusers' of an innovation: they are persons of leadership, more exposed, more cosmopolitan, of higher social status, and well-connected — functioning as role models for others. In sum, the model enables developments to be captured or described independently of decadence or ascendancy models; moreover, non-straightforward acquisitions are also taken into account, as are rejections or negative effects.⁵

3 Everett N. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th edn (New York: Free Press, 2003); cf. also Everett Rogers and others, 'Diffusion of Innovations', in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. by Don Stacks and Michael Salwen, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 418–34. The term 'diffusion' is used in sociology and communication science, as well as in political science and economics, to describe the spread of innovations: How are new ideas or 'products' spread and adopted in a society? How do societies change?

4 Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, p. 6.

5 Cf. also the application of Rogers's 'Diffusion of Innovation' by John Kloppenborg as a useful paradigm for describing the process of Christian 'mission' and spread of Christianity in the Roman

Thus, to describe the spread and acceptance of Constantine's innovative Sunday law (another application of Rogers's Diffusion Model is available in VOLKER DRECOLL's contribution), one has to find and identify these early adopters and the early majority. But here there is a large lacuna. As stated above, no ecclesiastical laws on Sunday appear in the subsequent decades; there are hardly any stories about Sunday veneration: such texts appear much later much later, as in the quoted *Didascalía* or, for instance, in sixth-century Gaul (see the contributions of MISCHA MEIER and IAN WOOD).

Looking at the cultural history of Sunday within Rogers's parameters, it is noticeable that a big problem is the underlying innovative idea itself. The Sunday law of Constantine is more of a non-idea than an idea — it is more about what not to do than what to do. Constantine's day for the celebration of the venerable sun is religiously open and offers points of reference for Christians, pagans, and philosophical monotheists. It is therefore not a festival day of a specific group, or for a specific deity, but an 'anonymous' festival day. Obviously, Constantine did not take the Jewish Sabbath as a paradigm for his law, as he conceded exceptions which are not known in Jewish legal practice. In addition, in naming 'the day of the sun', Constantine refers to the planetary week, although he does not mention why the day is to be venerated. Nevertheless, this astrological system was not the basis for his new concept of Sunday because, here, a bad day meant refraining from important activities — but Constantine's Sunday is a good day meant for rest. Apparently, Constantine seems to refer to the idea of Roman *feriae*, the pagan holiday system, but it is a festival without content or festivity. If the one — until now unnoticed — passage in the chronicle of John Malalas⁶ can be exploited, then there may have been a forerunner to Constantine's Sunday exaltation: at one time, Emperor Commodus († 192 CE) had sponsored weekly chariot races in Rome on Sundays — exactly such a feature, however, is not documented about Constantine. We know of no specific processions or parades, no liturgical act, no *supplicatio*, also no games, no chariot races, no feasts — the law mandates only rest from work. It is a day on which administration rests, i.e., court activities are suspended. All other workers, craftsmen, tradesmen, etc., should also rest. But what should happen on this day in a positive sense? The law is more like a blank or vacuum — it is perhaps not surprising that the history of Sunday culture also has many blank pages. It requires additions or additional innovations related to the day to fill the lacuna and describe what to do.⁷

Empire: 'Recruitment to Elective Cults: Network Structure and Ecology', *New Testament Studies*, 66 (2020), 323–50.

6 John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. by John Thurn, XII. 3, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 35, p. 216,28–30: Commodus set aside a sum to fund the chariot races 'on the day of the Sun, that is, on the Lord's Day' (ἠσαύτως ἀφορίσας καὶ εἰς λόγον ἵπποδρομίου ἀμέμπτως, ἐπιτελουμένου κατὰ τὴν Ἥλιον ἡμέραν, τούτέστι κατὰ κυριακὴν).

7 Therefore, the estimation of Martin Wallraff may be too optimistic, in 'Konstantins "Sonne" und ihre christlichen Kontexte', in *Konstantin der Große zwischen Sol und Christus*, ed. by Kay Ehling and Gregor Weber (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), p. 48: It 'konnten

FRITZ MITTHOF's assessment in this volume — he analyses the Constantinian legislation anew and assigns it to the power struggle between Licinius and Constantine as a religious-political measure — also fits in with this: he states that, actually, rest from work hardly seems to have been adopted. In later laws, 'rest' is only repeated in relation to the courts and administration, as well as taxes, but not for the general inhabitants of the cities or for other activities. Obviously, this rest from work every seven days did not seem to have been feasible, which was another obstacle to the diffusion of this day.

Furthermore, it must be taken into account that the increasing distance of Christians from Judaism, which in the course of the fourth century also manifested itself in hatred and aggression against Jewish institutions and Jewish customs, also became relevant. This also includes the Jewish Sabbath, which was criticized and rejected by the majority of Christians. Therefore, Christians were also critical of the idea of a rest from work, which was certainly an obstacle to the wide acceptance of Constantine's idea. The contribution by GÜNTER STEMBERGER analyses the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Origen, and Aphrahat to demonstrate how Christian authors reinterpreted the Sabbath as spiritual or eternal rest and interpreted Sunday as a day that surpasses the Sabbath. MARIE-ANGE RAKOTONIAINA also describes the Christian reinterpretation of the Sabbath rest as an end-time rest or inner rest of the heart, independent of a specific day of the week, as can be read in Augustine. Thus, the Sabbath was either rejected as obsolete or interpreted in a figurative way.

Therefore, although both days, the Sabbath and Sunday, go hand in hand in the same rhythm of time, a transfer of the Jewish Sabbath rest to the Christian Sunday is not recognizable before the sixth century. Even the text which is repeatedly invoked for this phenomenon, a passage from Eusebius of Caesarea's *Commentary on Psalms*, namely on the Sabbath-Psalm 91LXX (PG 30, cols 1165–73; cf. also the new preliminary critical edition online with Cordula Bandt responsible for Psalms 51–100 in the 'Patristic Text Archive' [PTA] by Annette von Stockhausen: <https://pta.bbaw.de/pta/>), cannot bear the burden of proof (cf., however, differently, DURST, p. 379). It is obvious that Eusebius here transfers his *spiritual* interpretation of the Sabbath as a day of solemn worship to Sunday. Eusebius begins with the statement that all righteous and God-beloved people before Moses did not know the (literal) Sabbath (Τὰς τῶν Σαββάτων ἡμέρας οἱ πρὸ Μωσέως δίκαιοι καὶ θεοφιλεῖς ἄνδρες οὐτ' ἤδεσαν οὔτε ἐφύλαττον). By contrast, those of the circumcised group who believe that by observing the Sabbath they are doing something admirable (ὡς μέγα τι κατορθοῦντες τὰ Σάββατα φυλάττειν ἡγοῦνται), do not fulfil the true meaning of the law.

sicher sehr viele und sehr unterschiedliche Menschen im Reich einen positiven Bezug zu dieser Maßnahme aufbauen. Man kann annehmen, dass sie in diesem Sinne integrativ wirkte — und wohl auch so gemeint war'. According to him, this law was an example of 'kluge Religionspolitik', especially because everybody likes a day off every seven days — however, probably not those people who need the daily income.

Sabbath means rest (cf. Genesis 2. 2f.), but, as Psalms 94. 10f. LXX states, impious men will never enter God's eternal rest. Therefore, the Sabbath and rest must be interpreted according to their true meaning, and it was precisely this Sabbath rest that those before Moses nevertheless observed. For God's rest means dwelling within the spiritual and otherworldly realm (πρὸς τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ ὑπερκοσμοῖς διαγωγῆς [...] πρὸς τοῖς ἀσωμάτοις καὶ ὑπερκοσμοῖς [...] πρὸς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πρὸς τῇ τῶν θείων καὶ νοητῶν σχολῇ τε καὶ θεωρίᾳ). But for Christians, it is possible now to fulfil the Sabbath according to the spiritual law (τὰ τῷ σαββάτῳ πράττειν [...] κατὰ τὸν πνευματικὸν νόμον ἐπιτελοῦμεν) and to sing hymns in a spiritual way (πνευματικαῖς). Therefore, resting — ἀργεῖν — does not mean doing nothing, but instead keeping distance from worldly affairs, and σχολάζειν means devoting oneself to works pleasing to God. This exegesis is part of Eusebius's Christian anti-Jewish interpretation of the whole Psalter, which can also be seen in his new headings for each Psalm, the so-called *Periochai* (where Psalm 89 is entitled 'Expulsion of the Jews', Psalm 90 'Victory of Christ', and Psalm 91 'On the rest that is pleasing to God'⁸). It is therefore problematic to consider this text as the trigger for a transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday. Moreover, no reception of his interpretation in later commentaries on the Psalms is discernible.

From a Christian perspective, Sunday is certainly a feast day; hence the prohibitions of fasting and kneeling during worship are also enacted for this day (see WOLFRAM KINZIG, pp. 329–33). The interpretation of the day as a day of resurrection is also evident in death dates, which are given often on Sunday (cf. the contribution on the interesting Christian inscriptions from Zoar by BASEMA HAMARNEH, pp. 217–21; cf. also ANDREAS MÜLLER, p. 245 on preparations for dying on a Sunday). However, the day of the week does not influence the otherwise usual day-dating practice, which is given according to traditionally Roman or other regional customs. The addition of the day of the week occurs only in exceptional cases. Even in the late chronistic work from seventh-century Constantinople, the *Chronicon Paschale*, a dating with date and day of the week is only occasionally given. If it nevertheless sometimes occurs, then it is to heighten the drama of a dense narrative or for chronistic calculation. One example is a calculation verified by the days of the week — this method is comparable to the system of epacts for the calculation of Easter dates: for the year 609, the author wants to prove that in the meantime 272 years have passed since the death of Constantine. To achieve this, he demonstrates that one has to add a quarter to the assumed time span of 272 years, because of the leap years, and divide the sum then by seven. The remaining figure is the number of weekdays to be added: Constantine's death was on 22 May 337, a Whitsunday.

8 Cf. Cordula Bandt, Eusebius, 'Periochae', in *Die Prologtexte zu den Psalmen von Origenes und Eusebius*, ed. by Cordula Bandt and others, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 183 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 122–41, here p. 134.

Therefore, 1 April 337 was a Friday. Using the formula, four days are to be added to arrive at the conclusion that 1 April 609 was indeed a Tuesday.

A question beyond this is whether the rhythm of the court holidays and of administration and tax collection led to a certain new rhythm of social life in general. This topic is part of a discernible widening research interest in time and in phenomena of ‘structuring of time’, a useful complement to previous searches for ‘spatiality’. Actually, the functioning of a society is essentially based on agreeing upon a structuring of common time (e.g., time to work, to celebrate and sacrifice, to learn and study, to buy and sell, to assemble, to litigate in court, to pay debts or taxes, to travel) in order to coordinate and synchronize supra-individual activities. Structured time, as social time, is a temporal pattern that unites a society. The structured time of a society therefore also creates identity: everyone follows a common rhythm, experiences sacrificial rituals, processions, games, theatre performances, or weekly markets, even if not everyone actually participates in all activities. The present volume cannot, of course, pursue all these questions — we focus on one day, Sunday, and the weekly rhythm, as already mentioned.

The slow disappearance of the pagan holidays, as well as the growing dominance of the Judeo-Christian week, however, is a diffuse process, about which the sources of the fourth and fifth centuries provide little information. Statistical data from this period are certainly not available. As a substitute for social data, SOFIE REMIJSEN devotes her exciting study (‘Business as Usual’) to papyri material. She tries to trace a weekly structure with the help of dated Greek Egyptian papyri and shows that it only becomes tangible gradually and only later in the sixth century, not as yet in the fourth and fifth centuries. Her conclusion is that there was hardly any less visible activity at the weekend; however, it was more devoted to the private sphere.

In the ecclesiastical sphere, however, the high esteem in which Sunday is held as a feast day is shown by the custom of ordaining bishops on this day of the week. This is already documented in the third century, namely within the *Traditio apostolica* 2.⁹ Interestingly, in the fifth century, Pope Leo († 461 CE) demanded that even presbyters and deacons be ordained only on Sundays, even though this had apparently not yet become common in other regions. He wanted a custom that perhaps had emerged in Rome to be enforced in Illyricum (ep. 6 [PL 54, col. 620]), Egypt (ep. 9 [PL 54, cols 624–25]), and Gaul (ep. 10 [PL 54, col. 634]), and thus also to establish the alignment of these regions with Rome. Leo lists the blessings of Sunday, in which the clergy also participate when their ordinations occur on this feast day.

9 *Traditio apostolica*, ed. by Berndhard Botte, Sources chrétiennes, 11 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984), 2, p. 40: ‘Episcopus ordinetur electus ab omni populo, qui cum nominatus fuerit et placuerit omnibus, conuenient populum una cum praesbyterio et his qui praesentes fuerint episcopi, die dominica.’

While consecrations tended to take place on Sundays, the situation was apparently different with church synods. THOMAS GRAUMANN shows that it was customary to begin synods on Monday, just as other ecclesiastical court proceedings were preferably held on Monday, not Sunday — in order to keep Sunday free of judicial disputes as mandated in Constantine's Sunday law. Nevertheless, solemn declarations could by all means take place on Sunday, and synodic decisions could also be anticipated through communion celebrated in church services, of course also on Sundays.

This can be confirmed by the observation that some dated synodal decisions fell on a Friday or Saturday, which could well presuppose a synod beginning on a Monday (19 June 325, Nicaea — Saturday; 17 July 335, Jerusalem — Saturday; 22 May 359, Sirmium — Saturday; 31 December 359, Constantinople — Friday; 15 or 22 May 381, Constantinople — Saturday; 9 July 381, Constantinople — Friday; 3 September 381, Aquileia — Friday; 18 February or 20 April 484, Carthage — Saturday or Friday; 15 July 517, Epao — Friday; 1 November 592, Saragossa — Saturday). The dates of the large synod with the Donatists in Carthage are Thursday/Saturday/Thursday (1, 3, and 8 June 411). The debate with the Pelagians in Carthage occurred on 1 May 418, a Wednesday. Therefore, in general, Sunday was not considered a proper day for synodal activities. There are of course exceptions: the Declaration of Nike is dated 10 October 359 (Sunday); the Merovingian Council of Orléans on 10 July 511 was on a Sunday, as were Arles (1 August 314), Agde (10 September 506), and Angers (4 October 453), as well as the important Third Council of Toledo (8 May 589; 24 April 589). Of course, it could simply be that the solemn final declaration took place in a worship setting on a Sunday. Or, could these Merovingian and Visigothic examples suggest that conventions were changing in post-Roman ecclesial cultures?

The precondition for these observations is, of course, that the transmitted dates are correct. In sum, however, there are few dated council documents. Of course, this may also be due to the fact that, according to the self-understanding of the Church fathers, dogmatic and ecclesiastical decisions do not represent innovations to be dated, but rather correspond in essence to apostolic intentions. Athanasius of Alexandria once polemicized against the so-called 'dated confession' of Sirmium,¹⁰ as if the true faith had only been invented on 22 May 359.

Within a different field, however, the importance of Sunday becomes apparent to an extent that is otherwise impossible to grasp — this is, in monasticism. But here, too, a disparate picture emerges. On Sundays there is certainly some work done — the monks of the monasteries of Pachomius are even reported to have regularly washed their robes on the Nile on Sunday.¹¹ In addition, in the *lauras* and in cenobite life in Palestine, one can recognize a weekly rhythm

¹⁰ *De synodis Arimini et Seleucia in Isauri*, ed. Hans-Georg Opitz, 3,2, Athanasius Werke, 2, p. 232.

¹¹ *Regula (latina): Praecepta*, ed. Amand Boon, 67–70, Pachomiana Latina, Bibliothèque de la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 7, pp. 33–34.

of everyday life, for example, with meetings and weekly services on Saturday and Sunday, followed by five fasting days in *hesychia* and in seclusion. This is presented by ANDREAS MÜLLER in his sound article on ‘Sunday in Palestine Monasticism.’ Therefore, monasticism as a withdrawal from social life and family connections also included temporal aspects. The common rhythm of life in the cities with calendrical celebrations, the birthdays of emperors and other processions, etc., was, after all, abandoned. This opened up a free zone to redesign the temporal routines: a new everyday calendar according to Christian and ascetic convictions is emerging here. This is less clear in the non-monastic sphere.

ANDREAS MÜLLER also points out that it is probably quite conceivable that new weekly markets have sprung up here. However, the sources do not report this explicitly, but they do mention visitors and pilgrims who consulted the monks on the weekends, and the baskets woven during the week or other handicrafts may have been sold or handed out to pilgrims. This economic aspect of the weekly rhythm is thus difficult to grasp outside of monasticism. It is quite conceivable that Sunday attracted the previous *nundinae* to itself. However, apart from one inscription from Croatia, Pannonia, at the time of Constantine, there are no sources that shed light on this.¹²

A new development began in the sixth century, as noted above. Indications of this are the *Didascalia* already cited, further apocryphal texts such as the *Letter from Heaven*, but above all texts from the Gallic region. These include, on the one hand, the republished texts of imperial legislation in the law books *Lex Romana Burgundionum*, *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, and *Edictum Theoderici* from the very beginning of the sixth century (see IAN WOOD, pp. 273f., and WOLFRAM KINZIG, pp. 322–26); furthermore, the increasingly strict Sunday laws in ecclesiastical canons; and, finally, hagiographic texts containing punitive miracle narratives on forbidden Sunday work, together with subsequent healings. These texts have attracted attention before and are also a major focus in this volume (see the contributions by MISCHA MEIER, IAN WOOD, WOLFRAM KINZIG, and ELS ROSE).

A brief glance at an earlier text illustrates the difference: Eucherius of Lyon, who died in 450 CE, is well known for his version of the famous *Passio Acaunensium Martyrum*. There, in chapter 17¹³, he presents a miracle story related to Sunday veneration, as well, but of a completely different character. Eucherius relates that there was a non-Christian worker at the church of the martyrs of the Theban Legion in Acaune. All other workers had left the building site to attend a church service when the martyred saints suddenly appeared in person: the pagan worker was hurriedly led away and his body stretched out for punishment

12 This is the inscription for the public bath or spa at the springs of Aquae Iasae from 314/316 CE: CIL 4121 (CIL 3,2, 523 Mommsen) / HD064415; 59x172 cm.

13 *Passio Acaunensium Martyrum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 3, p. 22.

or torture. Here, the punishment of the pagan worker may have been for two reasons: either because he did not join the others in going to church or because he worked in a church as a heathen — but not because he did some work on Sunday. After experiencing divine might, he was convinced to become a member of the Church. Therefore, in this miracle story, it is not a Christian who is punished for working on Sunday, but rather a pagan who experiences a terrifying divine ecstasy.

However, at the beginning of the sixth century, there emerged a special regional phenomenon of telling such punitive miracle stories against Sunday work (firstly discernible in the *vita* of Genovefa of Paris; cf. the contribution of IAN WOOD, p. 281) — stories which are taken up later especially by Gregory of Tours, who finds in them means to promote his Saint Martin of Tours. And they are also included by Venantius Fortunatus in his *vita* of Germanus of Paris to demonstrate his healing competence.

The punishment miracles related to Sunday rest all have a common scheme: someone is working on Sunday. The context is rural labour or housework, and both men and women are involved. Then, an accident with serious injury occurs, and the injury corresponds to the preceding deed, giving the punishment a symbolic significance. But the story does not end there. The one affected searches for help either from a living saint or at a saint's grave, sometimes immediately, sometimes even some years later. In addition, the story as a whole is a public event: it presents a kind of public penance, even sometimes concluding with some admonishing words by the one affected. Usually, a bishop or another cleric is absent, and the interpretation of the misdeed is given by the affected layman himself or laywomen herself.

What was the reason for this new phenomenon of punishment miracles related to Sunday? How are these stories to be interpreted? Do they hint at a society in decline in those centuries? Are they part of a pre-Christian pagan heritage, pagan magical thinking, or even pre-animistic thinking intruding into Christianity? Are they the outcome of widespread magical thinking that distinguished between holy and unholy times which must not be violated? MISCHA MEIER rightly criticizes (pp. 254–57) these or similar theories of decline. They mostly stem from outdated literature which does not correspond to the state of research on the so-called 'Völkerwanderung' (migration of peoples) that has been achieved in the meantime, and, moreover, nothing at all has been handed down about 'Germanic taboo thinking'. Or are these stories part of a revival of the Old Testament in the early Middle Ages, where one can find comparable punishment stories? Are the punishment miracles to be read as a mirror of the violence in society? Or are these simply some additional examples which define a saint as a patron who demands obedience in return for imparting a blessing? Or are these stories just part of implementing the jurisdiction of the bishops? Are these stories told to force city dwellers and labourers to stop working in the fields and to go to church on Sunday?

Obviously, these texts are expressing a new regional phenomenon of piety, as is also mentioned in canon 31 of the Synod of Orléans (538 CE):

Because the opinion is spreading among the people (*Quia persuasum est populis*) that they are not allowed to cover a distance by horse or ox or with a wheelbarrow, nor to prepare any food, nor to do anything to ornament the house or the person on the Lord's Day, which are well-known things belonging more to Jewish than Christian observance, we decree that which was allowed on the Lord's Day in former times is still allowed (cf. in this volume p. 26of.).

If we take up Rogers's 'Diffusion of Innovation' model once again, a tangible set of people appears for the first time in these texts, which can be defined as early majority and late majority. Indeed, the narratives and laws mirror the observation that the Sunday issue reached the broader population, enabling it to become the subject of ecclesiastical and political dispute.

WOLFRAM KINZIG strongly emphasizes the ecclesiastical intention of disciplining Christians. Therefore, bishops increasingly punish deviant behaviour in this period of the Early Middle Ages. MISCHA MEIER, on the other hand, recognizes above all that a conflict between the Church and the kingdoms is being fought out here, for there are provisions on Sunday rest in both the ecclesiastical canons and the royal laws and edicts, although both sides insist on having sovereignty over punishment. IAN WOOD, however, emphasizes the aspect that church attendance is urged here and that the Sunday rest in laws and penal miracle narratives are part of the liturgization of Christian society at that time. As a supplement, ELS ROSE points out an important aspect that otherwise threatens to be lost in this debate: Sunday legislation also contains the idea of freedom — freedom from humiliating, servile work, freedom from the fasting requirement, freedom to attend church, hence also the granting of release to slaves on this day, as well as provisions for prisoner welfare. Sunday worship is a festive communal experience, an anticipation of the heavenly reign of God, to which all are invited without social barriers.

In sum, this new significance of Sunday worship in the Merovingian Empire is difficult to explain and a complex phenomenon. Certainly, the new editions of imperial legislation regarding Sunday contributed to it. The phenomenon of conversion must also be taken into account — some Franks who converted to Christianity apparently wanted to be particularly pious Christians and promoted Sunday veneration. This also explains why the incipient competition between royal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction was fought out in this very field and why neither side wanted to admit defeat in this area.

In addition, some specific texts were disseminated, which perhaps provoked further discussions. These include not only the widespread punitive miracles, but also the *Letter from Heaven*, and, for example, a Latin translation of the *Book of Jubilees*, where in a retelling of the Pentateuch the importance of the Sabbath is emphasized and demanded with the threat of death penalties (see the digital

presentation of the fifth-century palimpsest manuscript with the *Book of Jubilees*: <https://jubilees.stmarytx.edu/>). Another topic that stimulated a reevaluation of Sunday was a special debate about the date of Easter: in Gaul, Easter was at times celebrated on a fixed date, 25 March, which provoked discussion regarding why to choose Sunday instead. This can be seen, for example, in the pseudepigraphic Acts of the Synod of Caesarea or *Epistula Theophili*, another pseudepigraphal apocryphal text dedicated to the theme of 'Sunday' and Easter, and the so-called *Tractatus Athanasii*.¹⁴

The last group of contributions points to a theme that has not yet been in the foreground: the liturgy. WOLFRAM KINZIG concentrates on disciplinary aspects of worship in his contribution (fasting, kneeling, frequency of worship, abstinence, leaving the service before receiving the Eucharist, the position of women). Liturgical questions in the narrower sense are dealt with by HARALD BUCHINGER, VOLKER DRECOLL, and RICHARD CORRADINI. BUCHINGER demonstrates that the celebration of the Eucharist represents the most original Sunday service; however, it is admittedly not until later that it is equipped with specifically selected readings or chants. It was in Jerusalem where a specific *proprium* of the Sunday celebration was developed in the fourth century, namely through the Liturgy of the Hours. Following on from this, DRECOLL searches for Sunday profiles in the early surviving liturgical manuals: when and in what form did one distinguish different Sundays during the ecclesiastical year? Interestingly, the early liturgical handbooks show a diffusion (in the sense of Everett Rogers, see above) of Trinitarian and Christological themes, condensed into short liturgical prayers, with which Sundays are differentiated.

RICHARD CORRADINI goes a step further into the Carolingian period and presents the high symbolic and theological significance of the chronological calculations, the Easter dates, the fasting periods, as well as the entire world history. The chronological knowledge of the world was collected in corresponding handbooks at that time, such as by Walahfrid Strabo. Every number, every date, every period of time is of significance, including Lent, which varies in length from the Sunday Septuagesima onwards. Here we can see the Christianization of time in its most complete form.

The many manuscripts he cites also demonstrate, of course, that the transformation of the Sun-Day to the Lord's Day is actually not an antithesis — astrological aspects always run along with the day and are to be interpreted as part of world knowledge rather than according to our modern juxtaposition of astrology and Christianity or astrology and science. Everything in the world is seen as under God's providence, and the observance as well as calculation of correct time is part of the Church's expert knowledge, as are all computistics.

¹⁴ Cf. August Strobel, *Texte zur Geschichte des frühchristlichen Osterkalenders*, LQF, 64 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), pp. 80–95 and 107–15. A new critical edition of the pseudepigraphic acts of Caesarea is in preparation by Uta Heil and Christoph Scheerer.

Sunday as a special day in the rhythm of the seven-day week is a significant legacy of antiquity; after all, the week has run without error from antiquity to the present. Sunday was able to acquire such significance as part of the Christianization of society since Late Antiquity, as a special phenomenon of the socialization of time, and as a structural feature of the homogenization of the calendar. Certainly, not all questions have been settled with the contributions to this volume. Some things remain unclear due to the incomplete sources. The poorly documented economic aspect of the market system has already been pointed out. The thermal baths also seem to have been open on Sundays — but there are no clear sources on this. MISCHA MAIER emphasizes in his article that Sunday became an important topic especially in the Latin West and is thus an indication of the halves of the empire that were developing apart. That is certainly correct. But perhaps some more sources from the Greek sphere still need to be surveyed, in order to shed light, for example, on the context of the *Didascalia* quoted at the beginning. In addition, the *Letter from Heaven* has also been handed down in Greek, and there are other pseudepigraphic texts that can shed light on Sunday. But that should be the subject of another volume.