

The names of the days of the week in the Southern-Estonian Võro and Seto

The names of the days of the week in European languages show a high rate of diversity due to different kinds of cultural and linguistic influence and borrowings. Besides the systems based on astrology and mythology, ordinal numbers, and spatial relations, we also find some mixed systems.

In my work, I compare the names of the days in the closely related southern Estonian varieties Võro and Seto, as well as in northern Estonian. Areal influences of the Baltic region played a role in the emergence of the names of the days in these varieties. These varieties possibly borrowed from Latvian, Estonian or Russian. The other smaller Finnic languages of the Baltic region are similar in this respect.

Apart from the special name for Saturday, the names of the days both in Võro and Seto correspond to those found in northern Estonian. Despite their different religions (the Võros being Lutherans and the Setos being Orthodox), the names of the days are the same in the two varieties. The names of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are based on ordinal numbers, the name of Friday is of astrological-mythological origin, and the name of Sunday has religious roots. Only the neighboring Livonian language has the same name for Saturday as Võro and Seto.

The last chapter of the Seto translation of the Gospel of Matthew discusses the sacred names of Saturday, which emerged in Seto due to influence from northern Estonian. Because of the lack of Bible translations, this is missing from Võro. As an effect of Russian orthodox culture, the last Friday of July, the day of Saint Paraskeva, bears the name *päätnitsapäiv* in Seto. This name is based on an ordinal number, cf. Russian *пятница* (< *пять* ‘five’).

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