

John Lydus, *De Mensibus* (Book 1)

[1]

1. Rightly, then, those who <composed accounts> of the mythical [matters] represented Cronus as doing away with his own children: they were hinting, I suppose, that time [*chronos*] is both father and destroyer of all those who are begotten by him. †*pharygos*.

2. The servants of Dionysus called their procession *thriambos*, from *thyrsi* and *iambi*¹—that is, "jibes"—as though [the word was] *thyrsiambos*. Or [the word came] from *throein* ["to cry aloud"], according to Plutarch.²

3. The Lydians (they say) discovered wine—and not only wine, but also the fig-tree.

4. The Romans decided to call wine "*mustum*"—that is to say, *mystês* ["initiate"]. The Sardinians were the first to use the term "mystery."

5. Sabinus was well-named, after his husbandry of the vine. For the name *Sabinus* signifies "sower" and "planter" of wine.³

6. Calabria [is called] Messapia, from Messapus.

7. Lucania [means] "very thicketed." For the Romans call a thicket a *lucus* [2] by way of negation—from the *lack* of light,⁴ as [we speak of] an "untimbered" forest.⁵

8. Evander first brought letters (the so-called Cadmeian [letters]) from Greece to Italy;⁶ there were not as many as there are now, for antiquity did not pass them down in that way. There were only six in addition to 10: invented later were *xi* and *zeta* and *psi*, for double [consonants], *theta* and *phi* and *chi* for aspirates, *eta* and *omega* for long [vowels].⁷ Of old there were five vowels, with *epsilon* filling the role of *eta*, and *omicron* that of *omega*, as is still the case even now among the Romans; their value changes only with respect to [length] of time. Later, Marcus Flavius, an Italian grammar-teacher, following the Greeks, added the remaining letters for the Romans.⁸ Time indeed tends to transform things.

¹ *Thriambos* is the Greek original term later incarnated in the Latin *triump(h)us*, "triumph." The *thyrsus* was the wand carried by worshippers of Dionysus; *iambi* ("iamb") would be the kind of poetry implied to have been part of the celebration.

² Plutarch, *Marcellus* 22, explains *ovation* rather than *triumph*; but an etymology from *throein* (and *iambizein*) is found in Cornutus, *De natura deorum* 30. The first explanation given is not otherwise fully attested, but *Thriambos* was an epithet of Dionysus.

³ I.e., combining the verb *sero* ('to sow') [perf. pass. ptc. *satum*] with *vinum* ('wine').

⁴ John is alluding to the Latin word for light, *lux* (gen. *lucis*), as the supposed origin of the word *lucus*. For the famously illogical explanation, cf. Servius on *Aen.* 1.22 (*lucus a non lucendo*).

⁵ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* 11.155.

⁶ Cf. Hyginus, *Fabulae* 277; Tacitus, *Annals* 11.14.3-4.

⁷ For 16 original letters, with eight added later, cf. also Pliny, *NH* 7.192.

⁸ Here, there seems to have been confusion with Spurius Carvilius Ruga, a grammar-teacher who introduced the letter G (Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 54 and 59), or with Gnaeus Flavius, the clerk of Appius Claudius Pulcher (Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, 3.261), or with the "Salvius" mentioned by Isidore of

9. The Phoenicians were the first lenders and usurers, and so they contrived letters and weights and, in a word, *profit*; hence the poets call them shop-keepers.

But let us go back to where we turned aside.

10. They refer to Geryon as "three-bodied," not because he actually had the use of that number of bodies, but because three islands which lie in the Ocean were allied to him.

11. [When] myth [relates] that Erylus,⁹ [a ruler] in Italy—whom Evander, the son of the prophetess Carmenta, seized and [thus] occupied his territory—[was] "three-souled" it is hinting at most [3] philosophical matters.¹⁰ For Socrates, in the *Phaedo*, teaches that the soul has three faculties: the mind is the charioteer, and the powers of the soul are the horses.¹¹ Thus too the Oracles decree that one must bridle the soul:

And it is necessary for one who is mortal, intellectual, to bridle the soul,
so that it may not fall into the ill-fated land, but instead be saved.¹²

For since the nature of the universe derives from opposing forces, there is a necessity to accommodate the opposing principles to the soul which has passed through everything. Indeed, its reasoning part comes from the *monad*—that is, mind; its spirited and appetitive parts from the *dyad*—that is, matter. Even so, the Oracle teaches that the entire soul is a divine triad; for it says:

...having mixed the soulish spark with the two concords,
mind and divine will, in addition to which he placed a third,
holy Love, the august one who mounts and connects all things.¹³

12. There was in Italy a certain Circe, notable for her birth and remarkable for her beauty, who fell in love with Odysseus when he was wandering in Italy with Diomedes; after being united with him, she bore him Auson, who later took power over the entire territory, and from who[se name] the western [land] was called Ausonia.¹⁴ At any rate, this Circe boasted that she was the daughter of Helios on account of her exceedingly great beauty [4], and in honor of her own father, I suppose, she was the first in Italy to celebrate a chariot race,¹⁵ which indeed was

Seville (*Orig.* 1.4.10) as having introduced the letter K into the Latin alphabet. L. Pedroni, "Μάρκος Φλάβιος γραμματιστής Ἰταλός: Un commento a Lido, *De mens.* I, 8-9 W," *L'Antiquité Classique* 73 (2004), pp. 191-202, hypothesizes that M. Flavius, Carvilius, and Salvius may all be distorted reflections of the *same* reform (in the 3rd cen. B.C.), with the name as given by John possibly being attributable to confusion with the Marcus Flavius who assisted Julius Caesar in his calendrical reforms (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.14.2).

⁹ Spelled *Erulus* in some sources.

¹⁰ Vergil, *Aen.* 8.563-5, with Servius' commentary.

¹¹ *Phaedrus* (not *Phaedo*), 246ab, 253cd.

¹² *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 113 Des Places.

¹³ *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 44 Des Places.

¹⁴ For Auson, son of Odysseus and Circe, cf. Servius on *Aen.* 8.328.

¹⁵ Lit., "equestrian competition." See Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, p. 94, for the connection of Circe with the origins of chariot-racing. Treatments of the symbolism of chariot-races and hippodromes such as the one offered by

named *circus* after her. In Greece, Enyalios, the son of Poseidon, earlier conducted two-horse [chariot-races]; and Oenomaus later [conducted] four-horse [chariot-races]. This latter was king of the Pisaeans, and he put on the chariot race in the month of March, on the 24th, when the sun was at its height. He himself would wear leaf-green or leek-green, for the earth, while his opponent [would wear] blue, for the sea; and those [who lived] inland took joy in the green, while those [who lived] on the coast [took joy] in the blue. As a prize for this competition, for anyone who defeated him, Oenomaus put forward his own daughter Hippodameia—but whoever was defeated would be immediately killed. Now then, when Pelops was going to compete against Oenomaus on the basis of the agreements as specified, Hippodameia saw him, fell in love, and betrayed to him her father's tricks, whereby he used to win out over his competitors, and thus contrived for Pelops to win. And he, after winning, immediately did away with Oenomaus, married Hippodameia, and ruled over Greece for 38 years; and he called this [area] Peloponnesus, from his own [name].¹⁶ But now let my discourse return to the former subject.

The aforementioned Circe first began the practice of chariot races in Italy, and established there a *hippodrome*, of four *stades* in length, and one [*stade*] in width.¹⁷ Its middle part she made of wood, calling this [5] foundation "Euripus"—perhaps from the [Chalchidian] Euripus, and from its seven-times back-and-forth course, because indeed that [sea-passage] turns its movement to the opposite direction seven times a day.¹⁸

And also, there is a *pyramid* in the middle of the stadium; and the pyramid belongs to the Sun / Helios, since nearby, unshaded, [lies] that sort of altar.¹⁹ For while all the [other] light-bringing heavenly bodies produce shadow, that one alone is apart from this [i.e., shadow]. And at the ends of this Euripus, on both sides, altars were erected—three above the pyramid, [namely those] of Cronus, Zeus, and Ares; and three likewise below [it, namely those] of Aphrodite, Hermes and Selene.²⁰ [There are] two tripods, of Helios and Selene and a woman wearing a flat bowl on her head—[this] is the Earth, who is bearing the sea. And at the conclusion of the competitions, trumpets summon the victors to their prizes; and [there are] twelve starting-machines, in imitation of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The man who stands in the middle and holds the [starting-]signal [6] for the race is called a *mapparios*, from what happens regarding the business at that point: The consuls were permitted to feast beforehand in the theatre, and after their feast, to cast away the napkins [they used to wipe] their hands—in the Roman language, these are termed *mappa*, from which [comes] also [the term] *mandulia*—and the so-called *mapparios* picks these up and then immediately celebrates the games. And around the pyramid, which they now call the *obelos*, the competitors make no more than seven circuits (which [are called] *spatia*, that is, "stades," and *missus*, meaning "contests")—on account of the fact that a mile consists of seven stades, and that there are seven planetary circuits, which the Chaldaeans call *firmaments*, apart from that of the moon—because the "dung" of all material substance extends as far as that, according to the Oracle.²¹

John here below proliferated in the 6th century (cf. e.g. John Malalas 7.4-5), with some obscure antecedents cited, for example Charax of Pergamum. Cf. *De Mensibus* 4.30 and notes there.

¹⁶ Peloponnesos = "Island of Pelops."

¹⁷ That is, roughly 800 yards long, and 200 yards wide.

¹⁸ The Chalchidian Euripus is the narrow strait between Euboea and the mainland. For the movement of its waters, cf. 2.12.

¹⁹ I.e., the altar of Helios.

²⁰ Thus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars; Venus, Mercury, Moon.

²¹ Cf. *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 58 des Places (seven firmaments) and fr. 158 (the "dung" of material substance).

And they would conclude the competition with 24 prizes, on account of the way a pyramid works. A pyramid contains 12 angles—that is, four solid [angles], each made up of three [plane angles]. And still to this day, they bring to completion one day's time by dividing the number 12 in two.

In another way too, the pyramid is fitting for those who are competing; for it is thought to belong to Nemesis. At least, in imitation of Circe, Romulus too later on, when he founded Rome in the month of April, on the 20th,²² constructed such a hippodrome in it, similar in every respect. And he first made three chariots: a red one, belonging to Ares, or fire; a white one, belonging to Zeus, or *aer*; a green one, [7] belonging to Aphrodite, or earth. Later, the Gauls contended for equality of honor, and the blue one was added—because their cloaks were of this color—in honor of Cronus, or rather, Poseidon. Quite a long time afterwards, the Roman emperor Severus, marching out against Niger and arriving at Byzantium (the present Constantinople, queen of all cities), established immense baths there, on account of the delightful quality of the city. And finding that the adjacent area was dedicated to the Dioscuri, he built *this* hippodrome²³ and adorned it with stages and colonnades; he cut down a grove of trees which was in the ownership of a certain pair of brothers and brought it to the beautiful state which can be seen even now.

The Romans called two-horse chariots *bigae*, from which also [comes the term for the drivers,] *bigarii*.

13. Sailing from there, Aeneas, after very much wandering, landed at a city of Italy called Laurentia, which they say was once also called *Oppikê*,²⁴ from which [name] the Italians call speaking / acting like a barbarian *oppikizein* or (as most people [pronounce it]), *offikizein*.²⁵ Then, after becoming son-in-law to Latinus, who ruled that district, and ruling himself for three years, he left [i.e., died]. After the enjoyment of such hospitality, they called the native inhabitants of Italy *Latini*, and those who spoke Greek *Graeci*—from the [names of] Latinus (whom I just mentioned) and Graecus. [These were] brothers, as Hesiod in the *Catalogues* says:
[8]

Agrius and Latinus.²⁶

And the daughter of noble Deucalion, Pandora, in the house mingled with Father Zeus, the commander of all the gods, in love and then gave birth to Graecus, staunch in battle-joy.²⁷

14. Romulus founded Rome on the 11th day before the Kalends of May,²⁸ in the third [year] of the sixth [Olympiad]²⁹—or, as others [say], in the second [year] of the eighth

²² Usually the date given is the 21st. Cf. 1.14 below.

²³ I.e., the one currently existing in Constantinople. The story that Septimius Severus rebuilt Byzantium, including baths and hippodrome, appears to be a Byzantine fiction: See Barnes, *Constantine* (2013), p. 112.

²⁴ Aristotle fr. 609 Rose (cited by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.72) relates the arrival of some Achaeans to *Opikê* (= Latium) after the Trojan War.

²⁵ While the verb as John gives it seems not to be attested, NB use of Lat. *Opicus* to mean "clownish, ignorant," as evidenced by Cato (cited by Pliny 29.14) [L&S]—and the Medieval Latin verb *opizare* / *opicare* (Du Cange s.v.).

²⁶ *Theogony* 1013. These words do not mesh grammatically or metrically with the lines quoted next; in the transmitted text of the *Theogony* these two are the sons of Circe and Odysseus. For discussion of the Hesiodic citations here, see A. Casanova, "Un' aporia in Giovanni Lido (*De mens.* I, 13)," *Maia* 27 (1975), pp. 125-31.

²⁷ Hes. fr. 5 Merkelbach-West (= fr. 2 LCL). John is the sole witness for these lines.

[Olympiad]³⁰—but the hour of the city [was] the second, before the third,³¹ as Tarrutius the astrologer established—with Jupiter in Pisces, Saturn and Venus and Mars and Mercury in Scorpio, the sun in Taurus and the moon in Libra—<or, as others [say],> with the sun in Taurus, the moon in Virgo, Saturn in Libra, Jupiter in Leo, Mars in Libra, Venus in Taurus, and Mercury in Aries.³²

Romulus made March the beginning of the year, in honor of Ares. For from him [i.e., Ares] he [i.e., Romulus] was born, as the story goes... only ten months.³³

15. The *decad* is a "full" number—hence they also call it "all-perfect," as it encompasses all the forms of the other numbers and reasons and proportions and concords. For the *decad* is a *gnomon* in the existing things, marking everything out and delimiting individually what is unbounded in each; it gathers and brings together and completes everything—all that the intelligible world and the sublunar [world] contain.³⁴ For thus Parmenides teaches us:³⁵ First of all [are] the intelligible things; second, those in [9] numbers; third, the things that hold together; fourth, the things that bring to completion; fifth, those that divide; sixth, those that vivify; seventh, those that create; eighth, those that assimilate; ninth, those that dissolve; tenth, the mundane things. Rightly, therefore, Philolaus called it the *decad*, as being "receptive [*dektikê*] of the unbounded";³⁶ and Orpheus [called it] "key-bearing" [*kladouchos*]:³⁷ from it, like some sort of *branches* [*kladoi*], the numbers grow.³⁸

²⁸ 21 April.

²⁹ 754/3 B.C.—so Varro dated the foundation of Rome (his date is usually given as 21 April 753).

³⁰ 747/6 B.C.—Fabius Pictor's date was 748/7.

³¹ I.e., between the second and third hours—that is, between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.

³² For Tar(r)utius (a 1st-cen. BC friend of Varro) and his calculations, cf. Plutarch, *Romulus* 12; Solinus 1.18. The latter in particular relates the positions of the heavenly bodies exactly as in John's *first* report here; and in fact, the two divergent reports are actually two different manuscript versions that Wuensch combined, adding the supplement "<or, as others [say]>." Full discussion of these traditions can be found in A. T. Grafton and N. M. Swerdlow, "The Horoscope of the Foundation of Rome," *Classical Philology* 81 (1986), pp. 148-53; "Technical Chronology and Astrological History in Varro, Censorinus and Others," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985), pp. 454-65.

³³ This is a lacunose reference to the common supposition that the Roman year originally had only 10 months.

³⁴ For the characterization of the *decad*, cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, *Theology of Arithmetic* (tr. Waterfield), pp. 109ff. The word *gnomon* in the present context, based on the parallelism with this passage, seems to indicate a ruler or square (used by God according to Ps.-Iamblichus to join material things properly together). Cf. also Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.6.76, calling the number 10 *perfectissimus*.

³⁵ Cf. Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, p. 969 Cousin [tr. Morrow and Dillon (Princeton, 1987), pp. 316-17)]—on *Parmenides* 134e; the list is not precisely, but it seems likely that John is depending on a similar commentary tradition. Dubuisson-Schamp, 1: lxii, suggest parallels primarily in Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, and refer to Saffrey-Westerink, 6: xxx-xxxiii, for further discussion and suggestions.

³⁶ 44A13 (appendix) Diels-Kranz = fr. 20b Huffman (*Philolaus of Croton*, pp. 352-3), who emends to *dechad* to make the connection clearer. Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 112-14, includes a long quotation of Philolaus, but the closest parallel is in the subsequent quotation from Anatolius (p. 114): "it is the limit of the infinitude of numbers." Numerous other sources connect the *decad* with the verb *dechomai*, but normally to assert that it "embraces" *all numbers*.

³⁷ Or, "branch-bearing." Ps.-Iamblichus (p. 111 in Waterfield's translation) calls the *decad* (and also the *tetrad*) κλειδοῦχος; cf. also Orphic *Hymn* 2.5. John Lydus' κλειδοῦχος is based on a misunderstanding (LSJ). For influence of Proclus in the references to Philolaus and Orpheus, see Dubuisson-Schamp, 1: lxii-lxiii; Saffrey-Westerink, 6: xxxii.

³⁸ Cumont, "Lydus et Anastase le Sinaïte," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929-30), p. 34, compares this passage of John with Anastasius of Sinai (*In Hexaemeron* 4.3.1 and 7a.8.1-2 [pp. 98, 230 Kuehn-Baggary]).

16. From Cronus until the founding of Rome, the year continued to be observed in accordance with the cycle of the moon—but under Romulus, as I said earlier, it was defined as a 10-month [period], with some months receiving more than 30 days, others fewer [than 30]. For they did not yet understand the extent of [a year's] time [as] based on the movement of the sun.³⁹

17. Numa Pompilius, in whose time Pythagoras lived, determined that the year be reckoned in terms of 12 months, according to Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, who says that the arrangements of everything are encompassed by the *dodecad*; for over the whole universe, God made use of this number in "painting" it, as Plato says.⁴⁰ For this figure is characteristic of the form of the universe: indeed, it is *circular*—since the nature [10] of the *dodecad* too is amazing, both for other reasons and because it is constructed from the most elemental and most ancient of the forms that are received in existent things, as the mathematicians say: a right triangle.⁴¹ For the sides of this [shape], being [formed] from three and four and five, complete the number *twelve*—the pattern of the life-bringing circle. And when the most generative *hexad*, which is the beginning of perfection, being composed out of its own parts,⁴² is doubled... And Numa set in order the twelve-month year in proportion to the full completion of the courses of Helios and Selene. And under Romulus, the month now called March was the first month, but under Numa, January and February were added. Numa decreed that the Romans celebrate the beginning of the year when the sun is in the middle of Capricorn and is increasing the length of the day, turning back toward us from its southerly turning-point, adding half an hour to the day. And not only did he give the year its form in this way, but he also first minted coinage, such that even now, from his name, the *obol* is called *nummus*—that is, *Numa's*.⁴³ But yet he also set up the house of the kings, which is called *Palatium*, in accordance with the priestly laws.

18. Hadrian was from the *familia*, or clan, of the Aelii—from which he decided to add the name *Aelius* [11] to [the names of] his subjects⁴⁴—and from which also Jerusalem [is called] *Aelia*, for in fact he himself built it after it had been sacked.

19. Theonikê used to be named *Hypatê*.⁴⁵

20. It was always characteristic of the high priests to cover their heads, or bind them with a fillet.⁴⁶ And this is clear, from the fact that even until to this day the fillet of the high priest in

³⁹ For the lunar character of the earliest Roman months, see Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, pp. 24-32; Hannah, *Greek and Roman Calendars*, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Phaedr.* 247a; *Tim.* 55c—the latter passage describing God's use of the "fifth figure" [i.e., the *dodecahedron*] in "painting" the universe.

⁴¹ The words, "The nature of the ... right triangle," are a near-*verbatim* quote from Philo, *On the Special Laws* 2.177; Philo, however, is primarily commenting on the number 50, not 12. Still, as he points out in the subsequent discussion, the sum of the sides of a right triangle (3 + 4 + 5) comes to 12. (And the sum of the *squares* of the sides comes to 50.)

⁴² I.e., $1 + 2 + 3 = 1 \times 2 \times 3$. "Part" here signifies "factor" (LSJ: "submultiple").

⁴³ *Suda* s.v. *Assaria* also (citing Suetonius) claims that Numa named coins (*noummia*) after himself.

⁴⁴ This seems to be a confusion with the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, after which there was widespread adoption of *Aurelius* based on the emperor Caracalla's name (and perhaps also confusion with the name-change associated with Roman adoption, by which Hadrian did bestow his own name Aelius on two prospective heirs at different times).

⁴⁵ A scholiast on Thucydides 1.61 reports Hypatê (in addition to Thucydides' *Thermê* and also *Êmathia*) as a previous name of *Thessalonikê*—to which *Theonikê* should thus probably be emended. Otherwise, the name and the name-change are of unknown significance.

our time⁴⁷ is circled around his shoulders—the one that (as I said) once used to be placed upon the head; and so, even now it is called a †*kaikaphorion*.⁴⁸

21. Numa established the form of the royal attire, in honor of Helios and Aphrodite, from purple and scarlet—and *Blatta* too (from which we speak of *blattia*)⁴⁹ is a name of Aphrodite among the Phoenicians, as Phlegon says in his work *On Festivals*.⁵⁰ For we find that Aphrodite is given close to 300 names—and the names are found in Labeo.⁵¹ [He] called the garment itself a *trabea*,⁵² which Agathocles of Sicily is said to have invented first. And the word *trabea* is used, meaning "thrice-dyed"; for it is finished by the use of three colors, purple, scarlet and dark blue [12]—[from a plant] which is called by many *loulakion*, that is, *Ares*'.

Next, he put in place the city's guardian; we now call him *under-ruler* [*hyparchos*]⁵³ or, as some [say], *city-ruler* [*poliarchos*] or *city-justice* [*astydikês*]—formerly they called him *praetor urbanus*, and it is evident that he also presided over the Roman Senate.⁵⁴ And this is apparent from his foot-wear, on which a little moon was stamped, in the form of the letter *sigma*,⁵⁵ by which the Romans indicate the number 100. (This is their so-called "little kappa.") Thus, it is clear that at first it⁵⁶ [consisted of] 100 men of noble birth. For that is the number Romulus selected.

22. In war, the generals would bear symbols of Zeus and Helios and Selene, of Hermes and Ares. [The symbol] of Zeus [was] an eagle; that of Helios, a lion; that of Selene, a cow; that of Ares, a wolf; and that of Hermes, a serpent—for indeed, one might call the standard [made] with a serpent a *herald's staff*.⁵⁷

23. *Privilegia* are certain laws applying to a private person, as opposed to general [laws].

24. The "staff-bearers"⁵⁸ [are called] *dekanoi*⁵⁹ according to the Romans.

⁴⁶ Cf. the apparent cross-reference to this passage in *De magistratibus* 2.4.

⁴⁷ Gk. *kath' hêmâs*; alternatively, perhaps, "among us."

⁴⁸ Wuensch tentatively suggests *kephalêphorion* in his apparatus; Bandy emends to *maphorion*.

⁴⁹ Lat. *blattia* means 'purple' (orig. 'blood-clot'); for the latter, the normal Latin spelling would be *blattea*—meaning, "purple-colored [garments]."

⁵⁰ This is not attested for Phlegon elsewhere, but Eusebius (*PE* 1.10.35) cites *Philo* (of Byblus) as mentioning the goddess named *Baal* (equated to Dione); perhaps not that passage in particular, but certainly a feminine form of *Baal* is assumed by John's report.

⁵¹ Cf. Mastandrea, *Cornelio Labeone*, pp. 46-47.

⁵² Gk. *τραβαία* (elsewhere *τραβέα*).

⁵³ A Greek equivalent for Lat. *praefectus* (*prefect*).

⁵⁴ John is conflating the *praefectus urbi* with the *praetor urbanus*; still, according to Roman tradition the prefect of the city was originally installed as a substitute for the king during the latter's absence (see, e.g., Tacitus, *Annals* 6.11).

⁵⁵ I.e., the "lunate" sigma, which looks like the letter "C." For this patrician ornament, cf. Juvenal, *Satires* 7.191-2; Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 76; Isidore of Seville, *Origines* 19.34.4.

⁵⁶ Wuensch suggests (logically) that "Senate" needs to be supplied to supplement a lacuna in the text.

⁵⁷ *kêryk(e)ion* [= *caduceus*, Hermes' staff].

⁵⁸ In Greek, this often means *lictors*.

⁵⁹ In Byzantine times, *dekanos* was a term for an low-level imperial official (originally a lower military officer), often serving as a messenger (*Cod. Just.* 12.26). As the previous note implies, John seems to be equating the *dekanos* with the *lictor*. Cf. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* s.v. *dekanos* (1: 601).

25. *Acce<de>* means "approach!"

26. Diocletian was the first after Domitian to be called Lord and King of the Romans, and he adorned his head and feet with [precious] stones instead of laurel, as Eutropius says.⁶⁰ [13]

27. Under Diocletian the whole Roman army consisted of 389,704; the naval force anchored at the important positions, both on rivers and on the sea, was 45,562. In proportion to this number Constantine the Great disposed the army in the eastern [part] of the realm, such that so many thousands of troops again were added to the Roman state.⁶¹

28. [What is called] a "baked brick" [*optê plinthos*] among the Greeks is called *laterculus* by the Romans. There was a "public brick-work"⁶² which had the names of the senators and those of the armies written on it, and the "brick" was inscribed as a sort of linear figure on a wall, in the shape of a square. Some too name it a *titulus*,⁶³ not knowing that *titulus* properly is used of the written ascription of ranks, *not* indeed of the square figure. The names of the other armies were inscribed on a (wooden) tablet; and among the Romans, the flat, thick plank [14] is called a *matricium*. For the ancients used pieces of wood and bark and lime-wood for writing. And it is indeed a lime-wood tablet on which they used to write the formula of manumission. From this, the book [is called] a *codex*. But it is properly the block of wood that is called *codex*; and the book, *liber*. And the book is properly the *liber*. These things they also call *matricium*—and the wood-workers, *matricarii*. Hence, even to this day, the so-called *scriba*⁶⁴ of the praetor is brought before the consuls.

Later, Ptolemy, when Aristarchus the *grammatikos* advised him to welcome the Romans' patronage, befriended Rome by [being the] first [to] send a papyrus roll. [Rome] was equally treated with honor by Attalus of Pergamum, with Crates the *grammatikos* taking the lead in [this] enthusiasm in order to compete with Aristarchus his professional rival. He scraped off sheepskins to a delicate state, you see, and sent to the Romans what they call *membrana*. As a memorial of the one who sent them, the Romans still to this day call [such] *membrana* "Pergamene."⁶⁵

29. You should note that for the Romans, a basket [*kanoun*] is [called], in the case of sacred rites, *satura*, in the case of feasting, *epularia*—which the many, out of ignorance, call *apalaria*. The Romans customarily call feasts *epulae*. [15]

30. It seemed good [to them] to have the Council gather no longer in the marketplace, but in the palace⁶⁶—and the Romans customarily called such a council *conventus*, meaning, a "coming-together." And for the many people taking counsel, silence [*sigê*] was required; from

⁶⁰ *Breviarium* 9.26.

⁶¹ For a (quite sympathetic) detailed discussion of this and other figures for the size of the later Roman imperial army, see W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army 284-1081* (Stanford, 1995), 44ff.

⁶² I.e., *laterculus* / *laterculum* in the sense of a "list" or "table." Cf. *Cod. Just.* 1.27.1; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 6.17.4.

⁶³ I.e., *titulus*.

⁶⁴ I.e., a secretary or clerk. For this post, cf. *De magistratibus* 2.30.

⁶⁵ For this story (including a translation of this passage and other accounts), see R. R. Johnson, "Ancient and Medieval Accounts of the 'Invention' of Parchment," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 3 (1970), pp. 115-122.

⁶⁶ Gk. *Palation*; this would be the imperial palace in the newly founded Constantinople.

this enthusiasm for silence, which in their ancestral language they call *silentium*, they decided to name them *silentiarii*. And once more or less all [views] had been shared, the considered thought of the so-called *magister* prevailed.⁶⁷ And a certain group numbering 50 men would obey him—these were called *frumentarii* and *curiosi*, that is, the "grain-buyers" and the "inquisitive." The "grain-buyers" would care for the abundance [of the grain-supply] of those in the palace, while the "inquisitive" were in charge of the Public Post.

31. *Clavularius* [means] "pertaining to a vehicle" [i.e., a chariot]—for they call the steering mechanism a *clavus*.⁶⁸

32. *Velox* [means] "swift"—and he is also called *veredaricus* even to this day.⁶⁹ And the Italians see fit to call yoked horses *veredi*⁷⁰ ... that is, to pull the vehicle. Hence, they also indicate aspirates when writing the word *rhaeda*, derived from the adverb "quickly" [*rhâidiôs*].⁷¹

33. *Antiquarii* [are] those [called] "fine writers"⁷² by the Greeks.

34. But this Numa, when Italy was being troubled by barbarian [16] disturbances, arranged for it to be called Great Greece [i.e., *Magna Graecia*] and for the most famous philosophers to come forth—I mean Empedocles the natural [philosopher] and many other pre-Aristotelian [philosophers].

35. Under Numa, and before him, the priests of old times would have their hair cut with bronze scissors, but not with iron [scissors]. For iron, according to the Pythagoreans, is dedicated to *matter*: It too is dark and therefore nearly without form, wrought with much toil and useful for much, but not impassive.

36. After Augustus, among the contingents of the palace, there was found a college of 60 patricians by whom the "Zeus-fallen" weapons were kept; and furthermore also 30 others, by whom the Sibylline Oracles were kept.⁷³

[The following "fragments" (4.37-40) are passages from *De magistratibus*, i.e., cross-references by John himself to his own work, indicating some of the contents of *De mensibus*.]

37.⁷⁴ As everyone knows, the eventual magistrates of the Roman state were formerly *priests*—as Tyrrenus had migrated to the West from Lydia⁷⁵ [and] taught the rituals of the Lydians to those called Etruscans at that time (and [these] were a Sicilian people)—who ended up being renamed *Thouskoi* [i.e., Tuscans], from their "sacrifice-watching" [*thyoskopia*]. I am

⁶⁷ For the *magister (officiorum)* as official in charge in the palace, cf. *De magistratibus* 3.40-41.

⁶⁸ This note and the next pertain to the transport resources used by the Public Post; cf. *CTh* 8.5.62.

⁶⁹ The Lat. term would be *veredarius* ('courier').

⁷⁰ Cf. *De magistratibus* 3.61 (with cross-reference to this passage).

⁷¹ That is, the Lat. word *raeda* ('carriage / wagon') was now frequently written *rhaeda*. John justifies this by an attempted etymology from the Greek.

⁷² I.e., copyists.

⁷³ The *Salii* kept the "Zeus-fallen" *ancilia*—but of these, there were 24; and the Sibylline Books were kept and consulted by the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, who amounted to 15.

⁷⁴ *De mag.*, proem.

⁷⁵ Cf. Herodotus 1.94.5-7.

aware that I have mentioned these at some length in the first [book] of the work I wrote *On the Months*. For King Numa, taking the insignia of the magistrates from the Tuscans, introduced them into his political system—just as [he introduced] invincibility in arms⁷⁶ from the Gauls. Attesting to these things are Capito and [17] Fonteius,⁷⁷ and likewise also the most learned Varro—all Romans—after whom the more recent⁷⁸ Sallustius the historian teaches [again] in the first [book of his] history.⁷⁹

38.⁸⁰ [Romulus...] establishing the Rhamnidae and Titii and Luceres.⁸¹ But the reasons for these names I have provided for you in the material I composed *On the Months*, as I have said.

39.⁸² [The praetorian prefect's belt had] a certain *tongue-piece* or *strap-insert*, also fashioned of gold and made in the shape of a bunch of grapes—for the reason I have provided in the composition *On the Months*.

40.⁸³ For in ancient times and also now, in the armed military contingents, the foremost of the so-called "life-rulers" [*biarchoi*]⁸⁴ bears a rod interwoven with a branch fashioned of silver, for the sake of honoring Dionysus who was once honored—as I have reported sufficiently in my [work] *On the Months*.

41. The Roman horsemen [are called] *vexillationes*, and *vexilla* [means] hanging cloths fashioned out of purple and gold in a square shape. Hanging these on long spears, as they march alongside the kings⁸⁵ in a circle, they cover them entirely. And [these] would be the so-called *flammula*.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ Carney: "weapons that were difficult to fight against"; Bandy: "hard-to-fight-against weapons."

⁷⁷ S. Weinstock, "C. Fonteius Capito and the 'Libri Tagetici,'" *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950), pp. 44-49, argues that John's various mentions of "Fonteius" or "Capito" or both together (twice: the present passage and *De ostentis* 3) are garbled references to a single man, C. Fonteius Capito—a *pontifex* and contemporary of Varro. F. Graf (*Brill's New Pauly*, 5: 491) denies the possibility of equating the two, thus maintaining the view that "Capito" here is the jurist C. Ateius Capito (d. A.D. 22), "Fonteius" an otherwise unknown writer, only cited in the works of John Lydus. In accordance with this view, the present passage appears as fr. 29 in Strzelecki's edition of Ateius Capito. On the basis of the citation of Varro, Mirsch includes the passage as the 4th fragment of Book 6 in his edition of Varro's *Antiquitates rerum humanarum* (1882).

⁷⁸ Lit. "this." Bandy translates, "the celebrated."

⁷⁹ Cf. Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 51.37: *insignia magistratuum ab Tuscis pleraque sumpserunt*. (In the same passage, Sallust asserts that the Romans adopted weapons from the *Samnites*.)

⁸⁰ *De mag.* 1.9.

⁸¹ Cavalry contingents; in Latin usually *Ramnenses*, *Titienses*, and *Luceres*. Cf. Livy 1.13.8; Varro, *De lingua Latina* 5.55. (The first part of this is actually the end of John's citation of "the Roman Paternus," for whom cf. *De mag.* 1.47, and Vegetius, *Epitome* 1.8.)

⁸² *De mag.* 2.13.

⁸³ *De mag.* 2.19.

⁸⁴ I.e., those in charge of overseeing *life-sustaining* provisions; LSJ suggest the translation "commissary-general."

⁸⁵ Since John is presumably referring to the cavalry of the Roman empire here, "kings" should be understood to mean "emperors."

⁸⁶ This is a term for a small cavalry standard.