

John Lydus, *De Mensibus* (Book 2)

[18]

1. ... It seems necessary to speak about the months—whence and how each one of them received their appellation, and what religious observances the Romans practiced in each of them, at least as far as I have learned from the Roman histories.¹ In addition to this [I must speak] beforehand about the distinction of years, eras and times, and the first principle of days. This too might possibly serve as a kind of relish for many people's hearing.

2. The natural day is understood to be from the rising of the sun until its setting—but [it is] not so [understood] by everyone.² The Babylonians, indeed, understand it to be from the rising of the sun until the setting [19] itself; they make no mention at all of night, as though it comes about not as an actual entity but rather as a contingent consequence.

The Egyptians and Hebrews reckon the coming of the day from the beginning of evening, until the following evening, combining, that is, the foregoing night with the following day and calling both together one day. They begin from the night on account of the fact that the darkness is more primal than the light, and that the cosmographers set down Erebus and Darkness prior to the ordering of the universe,³ and call Night the Mother of all. For this reason too, the mythographers represent Artemis and Apollo as having been born from Leto—and Artemis first, that is, "air-cleaving" [*aerotemis*]⁴ Moon, after her the Sun. Leto would be Night; for indeed in it, forgetfulness [*lêthê*] and sleep occur.⁵

Now the Umbrians, on the other hand, an Italian people versed in astrology [20], take the day as beginning at noon and call [the time] until another noon one day—just as the astrologers [reckon] in their horoscopes.

The Athenians themselves also [reckon] from sunset to sunset, just like the Hebrews, whereas the Romans at first, exactly like the Babylonians, also defined the day, in accordance with the law of nature, only from the rising of the sun until its setting, making no account of the night—but later, ordained that the day be considered and designated [as being] from midnight, or the beginning of the seventh hour of [the night] until the middle of the following night.⁶

¹ This sentence correlates with the contents of Book 4, not Book 2.

² Varro (*Antiquitates rerum humanarum*, Book 16, fr. 2-3 Mirsch) similarly treated the different definitions of the day (cited by Aulus Gellius 3.2). Cf. also Pliny, *NH* 2.77. (Both these, however, disagree with John's characterization of Babylonian views; they say the Babylonians calculate the day from sunrise to sunrise. They also simply say the Romans calculate the day from midnight to midnight. But both bring in the Umbrians—significant presumably because they agreed with the practice of astrologers / astronomers, e.g. Ptolemy.) Cf. also Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, pp. 13-14: Contrary to John's account, the Egyptians reckoned the day from dawn.

³ Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 122.

⁴ Cf. Porphyry fr. 359 (line 58) Smith (quoted in Eus. *PE* 3.11.30).

⁵ Cf. Plutarch fr. 157 Sandbach (quoted in Eus., *PE* 3.1.4) and Porphyry (quoted in Eus., *PE* 3.13.12).

⁶ Here Cumont, "Lydus et Anastase le Sinaïte," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929-30), p. 32, supplemented the text with wording from Anastasius Sinaïta, *In Hexaemeron*, 1.9.9 [p. 34 Kuehn-Baggarly]: "as Cato and Labeo say"; furthermore, Cumont corrected "Cato" to "Capito." (For the identification of the parallel, cf. also Schöne, "Ein Fragment des Joh. Laurentius Lydus bei Anastasius Sinaïta," in Hirschfeld [ed.], *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfelds sechzigsten Geburtstag* [1903], pp. 327-9.) Accordingly, the passage appears as fr. 35 in Strzelecki's edition of Ateius Capito. Other parts of this section could also be supplemented by reference to Anastasius' text; for further comparison and discussion of the sources, see Mastandrea, *Cornelio Labeone*, pp. 66-73.

3. It turns out that all the rhythms derive from the movement of the planets. For indeed Cronus [i.e., Saturn] moves to the Dorian [rhythm], Zeus [i.e., Jupiter] to the Phrygian, Ares [i.e., Mars] to the Lydian, and the rest to the others, according to Pythagoras, with a view to the sounds of the vowels.⁷ The [star] of Hermes [i.e., Mercury], you see, effectuates the rhythm of *alpha*, Aphrodite [i.e., Venus] that of *epsilon*, Helios [i.e., the Sun] that of *eta*; and the [planet] of Cronus [i.e., Saturn], that of *iota*, the [star] of Ares [i.e., Mars] that of *omicron*, and Selene [i.e., the Moon] that of *upsilon*, and moreover the star of Zeus [i.e., Jupiter] that of *omega*.⁸ But the sound of the rhythms does not reach all the way to us on account of the distance.

[21]

4. The [followers] of Zoroaster and Hystaspes, the Chaldaeans and Egyptians, gathered together the days in a group of seven, from the number of the planets. And according to the Pythagoreans, the first day is to be called "one,"⁹ from the *monad*—not "first," from the group of seven, on account of its being alone and having nothing in common with the others. For "first" is what one calls that which is first with respect to those after it; but the *monad* is undivided, unchanging, self-moving, and remaining in the same state—it is above number. And so, one would not call it "first," but rather "one." For it does not change, either to even or to odd or to any other number. Rightly [then] it would display the power of Mind¹⁰—that which is noble and exceptional / odd,¹¹ equal and complete; it is light and straight and steadfast; male and skillful / on the right-hand. For Mind is (as the mystic word says) the "once beyond"¹² in substance [*ousiôdês*], remaining in its own substance [*ousia*] and united with itself, both standing and remaining.¹³ And the *monad* is attributed to Apollo, that is, to the one Helios, who is called Apollo¹⁴ on account of his being far off from [*apôthen*] the many [*pollôn*] [other things]. The Romans call him *Sol*, or "one alone."¹⁵

⁷ Cf. Pliny, *NH* 2.84. G. Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic* (1993), pp. 69-70, notes the similarity between John's assertion and Pliny's, whereby there is the suggestion that the planets are not simply associated with different notes, but with different modes or systems; the specific implications, however, are difficult to determine.

⁸ Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.14.7, quoting the Marcasian view that each of the seven heavens pronounces one of the seven Greek vowel sounds. For the general idea that the sounds of the planets are the (Greek) vowel sounds, see Nicomachus, *Excerpta* fr. 6 Jan. A scholiast ("Porphyry") on Dionysius Thrax similarly gives specific associations, but agreeing neither with John's order nor with standard planetary order. J. Godwin, *Mystery of the Seven Vowels* (1991), pp. 20-21, synthesizing the various statements, argues that the "standard" association was: alpha – Moon; epsilon – Mercury; eta – Venus; iota – Sun; omicron – Mars; upsilon – Jupiter; omega – Saturn.

⁹ Cf. Philo, *On the Creation of the World* 35.

¹⁰ For *monad* as mind (*nous*), cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, *Theology of Numbers* (tr. Waterfield), pp. 37, 39. The association with the sun also appears on p. 39, and much of this discussion is illuminated (but not always specifically paralleled) by the context.

¹¹ The same Greek word (*perissos*) can mean "extraordinary" and "odd [number]."

¹² This is reminiscent of the Chaldaean Oracles; Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, pp. 77-78 and n. 43, interpretively translates the phrase *hapax epekeina* as "the uniquely Transcendent" and "He Who is transcendentally One." The "mind" or "intellect" is the first emanation of the transcendent Father.

¹³ John is likely associating the term *monad* with the verb here, "remaining" [*menôn*], as he does explicitly below, 2.6.

¹⁴ Gk. *Apollôn*.

¹⁵ Alluding to the Lat. *solus*. In any case, bringing in the sun indicates that John is here thinking of the first day of the week as the *sun's* day (*dies solis*), our Sunday. In this, significantly, his presentation (implicitly) assumes a Christian week, whereas attested pagan versions of the "planetary week" typically begin with Saturday. (Cf. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past*, pp. 57-58.)

[22]

5. Helios is addressed by many designations:

Helios, Horus, Osiris, King, Zeus' Son, Apollo
dispenser of seasons and times, of winds and rains,
turning the reins of dawn and starry night.¹⁶

6. Pythagoras calls the *monad* Hyperionis on account of its being above all things in its very nature [*ousia*], just as the intelligible Helios, holding [its own] existence above [other] beings, has been called Hyperionidês.¹⁷ And Helios is attributed to the *monad* as being an *image* of that [*monad*], not itself being the *monad*, yet truly "untiring," for tiring [occurs] in composite beings. But the *monad* is simple and male, because indeed it is most fertile and the cause of those things that [come] after it. It is easy to understand in what way [this is true]. For if one reckons together the 24 elements (I mean the letters [of the alphabet]) as numbers, he will find [that they] all [come to] 3,999.¹⁸ To this, when the monad in 6,000 is added,¹⁹ if they are all reckoned up together, the numbers [come to] 9,999—after which nothing will be lacking apart from the *monad*. Hence, the *myriad* [10,000] displays the same figure as the *monad*, on the grounds that it is itself both the beginning and the limit of the incorporeal beings, of which the numbers are the patterns. Orpheus²⁰ [23] calls the number one *Aguieus*,²¹ that is, undivided; for none of the *parts* of the number pertain to it—not one-and-a-half, nor one-and-a-third—[it is] perfect because [it is] whole. The *monad* was given this name because of its remaining [*menein*] by itself; for when plurality is diminished by removal, [the monad], deprived of all number, remains alone [*monê*] undiminished. And the *monad* differs from *one* as an archetype differs from an image: the *monad* is the pattern, but *one* is an imitation of the *monad*. That the *monad* is contemplated in a *triad* can be understood from the hymns: Proclus, on the "once beyond," [writes] thus:

For the universe, seeing you, the *monad*, containing *three*, revered [you].²²

¹⁶ Oracle cited by Eus., *PE* 3.15.3 (not explicitly from Porphyry, but cf. Wolff, p. 127).

¹⁷ Both epithets mean "son / child of Hyperion" (and are thus in agreement with Hesiod's genealogy in *Theogony* 371-4); but the claim that this is Pythagoras' designation for the *monad* is not attested elsewhere.

¹⁸ I.e., all the Greek letters in the standard alphabet (not including digamma [6] and koppa [90]).

¹⁹ I.e., the *monad* (1) times 6,000. It is not clear why this should be added, but 9,999 is the highest number that can be expressed through the simple Greek numeral system; 10,000 would be represented by the letter *mu* (the first letter of *myriad* as well as the first letter of *monad*). For 10,000 as the "turning post" of numbers, see Philo, *De plant. Noe* 18.

²⁰ Fr. 309 Kern. Another version of this fragment appears in Anastasius Sinaita, *In Hexaemeron*, 1.12.3 [p. 46 Kuehn-Baggaly], with a different, probably corrupt, name for the monad: "Orpheus called the *monad Anea*, that is, 'without parts.'" Kuehn and Baggaly, however, in their translation correct the text to *Aguieus* as here (following Cumont). Cumont, p. 33, further points out that Anastasius' text includes elements from *De mensibus* 2.6 and 3.4; in his view, this necessitates an arrangement different from Bandy's in a properly reconstructed text of *De mensibus*.

²¹ The specific form John provides is actually *aguiea*, the accusative. *Aguieus* is known as an epithet of Apollo, from ἄγυια ("street"); but John appears to be connecting it to ἄγυιος, -ov ("limb-less") < γυῖον. Cf. "Plutarch" (in Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.10) [= Moderatus fr. 3 Mullach]: Pythagoras identified the *monad* with Apollo.

²² Fr. 2 Vogt.

So much for the [number] one, which (as I said) most designate "first," which in terms of perceptible [reality] they dedicated to Helios [i.e., the sun], the dispenser of all perceptible light, by virtue of which it warms and at the same time gently dries [physical] bodies—[it is] one of the planets according to the Greeks, even though Zoroaster would classify it *before* the fixed [stars].²³

7. The second day is clearly recorded by the natural [philosophers] as belonging to Selene [i.e., the moon],²⁴ which moistens and at the same time moderately warms [things]—that is to say, it is the overseer of matter. Hence it is also called Artemis,²⁵ from the even [*artios*], material number. [24] For the *even* is separated at the middle when differentiated from the *one*; only the *odd* [remains] undivided.²⁶ For the *masculine* number [is] a square, brilliance and light, subsisting from an equality of sides, while the *feminine* [number] has unequal sides, containing night and darkness on account of its inequality. With unequal sides, it has its shorter side shorter by one [unit], its longer [side longer] by one.²⁷ And so, the number *two* is not pure—first, because it is empty and not solid, and what is not full is not pure, but rather the beginning of unboundedness and inequality (unboundedness on account of matter; inequality on account of [shapes] with unequal sides), and thus the ancients understood the *dyad* as matter and difference, while the followers of Pherecydes called the *dyad* "daring";²⁸ and they call [it] "impulse" and "opinion," because truth and falsehood are [both] in opinion—for matter is readily impelled, and unstable, and very changeable, miserable and subject to toil, as it contains by nature division and separation—for the *axis*, passing through the middle of the heavens, first reveals the division into two and the separation from the one; [it is] the cause of all the movement of the perceptible [world], and [is] wholly divorced from the intelligible [realities]. Numa, discovering that these things were so, forbade the dual number in the festivals;²⁹ and furthermore, the Romans do not count [the day as] "before two" in the same way as they [count days] "before four" and "[before] three";³⁰ so too the Athenians formerly [25] would remove the second [day] from Boedromion, as Plutarch says in the *Symposium*.³¹

²³ That is, Zoroaster gave it a higher ontological status than any other celestial body (cf. Boyce et al., *History of Zoroastrianism*, 3: 539).

²⁴ Hence, *Monday* (and so for the rest).

²⁵ Cf. Plutarch in Stobaeus 2.10. For the association of the number two with the moon, see Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 47.

²⁶ I.e., an even number can always be divided evenly by two; an odd number cannot.

²⁷ Here "masculine" corresponds to the *monad*, "feminine" to the *dyad* (cf. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, p. 39); for the correspondence of monad (and odd numbers) with squares and of the dyad (and even numbers) with oblongs (i.e., unequal-sided rectangles), see Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 42-43, with Waterfield's n. 2, as well as Waterfield's note on the *gnomon*, pp. 120-21.

²⁸ 7B14 Diels-Kranz (labeled inauthentic).

²⁹ I.e., he did not allow festivals lasting two days, or festivals celebrated on two successive days? Or possibly, he avoided *even-numbered* days, most festivals in the Roman calendar being on odd-numbered days of the month. Cf. Scullard, *Festivals*, p. 62; Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 290. Elsewhere (3.10), John says that Numa honored the odd numbers, not the even numbers—but in the same chapter, he also asserts that *Italians* (rather than Numa) forbade the number two in festivals.

³⁰ I.e., In counting days before Kalends, Nones, or Ides—e.g. "three days before the Kalends" in Latin is *a(nte) d(iem) III [= tertium] Kalendas*; the abbreviated version of such dates especially looks like it should be translated "before three days." For "the day before the Kalends," the form is *pridie Kalendas*—as John says, this is different.

³¹ *Convivial Questions* 9.6 (741b).

8. The third day they dedicated to the Fiery one³² (this would be Ares, among the Greeks); that is, to the *aerial* and fertile fire, which sets ablaze the nature of the perceptible universe and does not allow it to lie inert—it dries and at the same time heats [things] in a rushing manner. They say that Ares is the child of Hera—that is, the transparent and fine fire [comes] from the airy [matter].³³ Hence, the mythographers join Aphrodite sometimes with Hephaestus, the earthly fire, sometimes with Ares, the aerial [fire]; for through these [two] the perceptible universe is given life, as has been said. And the power of the *triad* is the greatest, even in terms of perception—for upon generated things its number has bestowed coming-to-be, growth, and nourishment. And it was not said without a point that "All things have been divided into three,"³⁴ since even the heavenly bodies themselves are three: the aetherial, the starry, and the stony.³⁵ And the *triad* is the beginning of odd numbers, for which reason three is also called a "special number"—since it does not admit division or distinction. The *triad* begins *all* the numbers,³⁶ being the beginning of all the odd [numbers], which fill [26] and are never deficient. And according to Orpheus,³⁷ three principles of coming-to-be first sprouted up: Night and Earth and Heaven; and there are three kinds of gods which are *in* [the world of] coming-to-be: the heavenly, the earthly, and that which is between these. And there are also three supreme [faculties] of the soul: the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive.³⁸ And Aristotle teaches that there are also three forms [*eidê*] of mind: the material [mind], the [mind] according to habit, and the [mind] outside.³⁹ From these there are also three kinds [*ideai*]: nature, learning, and practice.⁴⁰ And of music itself, which moves all things, according to Theophrastus there are three parts: pain, pleasure, and inspiration.⁴¹ And still further, there are also three bodily movements: impulse, custom, and increase.⁴² There are also three constituents of spheres: center, diameter, and circumference. There are also three movements of the stars: direct motion, retrograde motion, and apex.⁴³ There are three differentiations of bodies: some are material, others aerial, and others fiery—as the Chaldaean teaches.⁴⁴ There are also three movements of

³² *Pyroëis*.

³³ Cf. 4.21.

³⁴ *Iliad* 15.189.

³⁵ I.e., objects in the sky fall into these three categories with regard to their substance.

³⁶ For three as the first "real" number, see Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 50, 51; Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, p. 41.

³⁷ Fr. 310 Kern; cf. also fr. 28a.

³⁸ Cf. 1.11. For the tri-partite soul, see Plato, *Republic* 4 (435ff.), etc.

³⁹ This is a development from Aristotle, *On the Soul* 3.4-5 (429a-430a); for a closely parallel distinction, see John Philoponus, citing Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his commentary on Aristotle's *On the Soul*, p. 518 (Hayduck): the first refers to the minds of children; the second, to those of mature adults; the third, to perfect (i.e., divine) mind, that "steers the universe."

⁴⁰ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, 5.18, where Aristotle is quoted regarding what things are *necessary* for education.

⁴¹ See apparatus to Theophrastus fr. 719A Fortenbaugh; John's statement closely parallels a passage in Plutarch, *Quaestiones convivales* 1.5.2 (623a).

⁴² Based on standard Aristotelian definitions of types of "movement"—*phora* ("impulse / motion"), *alloiôsis* ("alteration"), and *auxêsis / phthisis* ("growth" / "decrease")—it appears likely that the word *nomos* ("custom / law") here is corrupt. Cf. Roether *ad loc.*; Bandy, strangely, translates *nomos* as "alteration," without emending the text.

⁴³ The point and meaning of the third kind here (Gk. *akrônychia*) is obscure: the word can mean the summit (as of a mountain), hence possibly a reference to the high point of the planet's movement; but the similar *akronychia*, possibly a source of confusion or even the obscured original, means "nightfall," hence possibly a reference to the rising of a planet at nightfall—the related adjective *akronyktos* is used clearly with that sense. It is tempting, however, to imagine that what John is attempting to identify here is the *stationary stage* [elsewhere *stêrignmos*] between a planet's forward and retrograde motions, for which cf. 4.37. Bandy's text at this point has a misprint [ἄκρονυλία], but his translation ("stationariness") is in keeping with this last suggestion.

⁴⁴ Cf. Lewy, p. 138 n. 270.

each figure: width, depth, and length. There are also three circles bounding the Zodiac latitudes: the summer tropic, the winter tropic, and the [celestial] equator.⁴⁵ There are also three supra-terrestrial cardinal points: east, west, and mid-heaven. [27] And one might say many things about the *triad* in perceptible [reality]; and the entire universe is said to subsist on the basis of three powers: arithmetic, geometric, and harmonic—for the intelligible [order] is higher than the present [material] order. For we know that the *triad* set in motion the procession of the divine [beings] and effectuated their eternal standing in the same form, as Ocellus the Pythagorean says in the following words: "The *triad* first put together beginning, middle, and end."⁴⁶ For the odd and limiting equality is creative, in accordance with the nature of a square⁴⁷—for the divine is marked by these three [qualities]: the desired, the sufficient, and the perfect.⁴⁸ Still further, Socrates in the *Phaedrus*,⁴⁹ but also in the *Republic*,⁵⁰ teaches that the intelligible places (for itself) a certain third nature in the divine; for its highest [part is] being, its middle [part is] life, and its final [part is] mind. But perhaps someone will say, "What commonality [is there] between perceptible things and the intelligible *triad*?" Well then, one should know that Timaeus teaches [that there are] three *triads*, and Proclus is a witness, when he alleges in his *Outline of Plato's Philosophy* that the summit of the intelligibles, being an intelligible *triad*, is also a *monad*⁵¹—for it is able to be in fact a *henad*, having in itself the cause and being of all potentials [28], as Parmenides says.⁵² For all the intelligible things are encompassed within the *triad*, and every divine number has come forth in this arrangement, as the Chaldaean himself says in the Oracles:

For all things have been sown in the bosom of this *triad*.⁵³

And again:

For from this *triad* the father blended all spirit.⁵⁴

For this reason the Pythagoreans posit the *triad* in numbers, the right triangle in figures, as the basic element of the coming-to-be of all things. So then, there is one measure, according to which the incorporeal and intelligible world subsists—and a second measure, according to which the perceptible heavens solidified, receiving as their lot a fifth and more divine substance [which

⁴⁵ By contrast, Ps.-Iamblichus (tr. Waterfield, p. 52) uses the *ecliptic* in his parallel list.

⁴⁶ 48A8 Diels-Kranz; the philosopher's name is given as Ocellus [*Okellos* / *Ôkellos*] in two mss., *Kekilios* in another; hence, Mullach attributes this fragment to "Caecilius" (*Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, vol. 2, p. 53).

⁴⁷ The sequence of odd numbers is associated with successively larger squares; cf. §7 above. The use of the term "equality" seems to be due to the equal length of the sides of a square.

⁴⁸ This is based on Plato, *Philebus* 20d; cf. Proclus, *Platonic Theology* 3.22 (3: 79 Saffrey-Westerink).

⁴⁹ *Phaedr.* 246a.

⁵⁰ *Rep.* 511a.

⁵¹ This "Outline" is not directly attested outside John Lydus, but elsewhere a work entitled *Prolegomena* is attested; see Saffrey-Westerink, 1: lviii (including n. 3). For the thought here, cf. Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, 3.24, 27 (3: 84-86, 93 Saffrey-Westerink)—expounding Plato's *Parmenides*; the first *triad* (the "existent one") includes "one," "existence," and the "relation" between them. Cf. also Dubuisson-Schamp, 1: lvii.

⁵² Cf. Plato, *Parmenides* 145a, cited by Wuensch: the "existent one" is a whole and thus contains "beginning, middle, and end"; in the previous sections, Parmenides has shown that it entails the unfolding of all number as well.

⁵³ *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 28 Des Places.

⁵⁴ *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 29 Des Places.

is] unmoveable and unchangeable—and a third, according to which sublunar things were fashioned, receiving their coming-to-be and destruction from the four powers.

9. The fourth day they dedicated to the Gleaming One,⁵⁵ one of the planets which is designated thus by the Egyptians; on an equal basis it sometimes moistens, sometimes dries, being infused with *pneuma* by its quick movement around the Sun.⁵⁶ The Greeks consider this to be Hermes' [planet]. So then, those who philosophize dedicated the *tetrad* to him as the overseer of [29] mixed souls.⁵⁷ For the supports of the soul are four: mind, knowledge, opinion, and perception. For as Pythagoras says, "The soul of a human being is a right-angled quadrilateral." But Archytas explains the definition of the soul not as a quadrilateral, but as a circle. "Therefore soul [is] that which moves itself; and necessity the first mover⁵⁸—but this is a circle or a sphere."⁵⁹ Now, this is true in the case of the intelligible [reality], but no less in the case of the perceptible [reality] as well is it possible to comprehend it in the generation of living creatures. For first comes the sowing of the seed, second the distribution into kinds, third growth, and fourth coming to maturity. But further, there are four "turnings" of the sun, in accordance with which existing things are preserved: the two equinoxes, and the summer and winter solstices. There are also four fundamental phases (like roots or first principles) of the moon itself: conjunction,⁶⁰ full moon, and the two [intervening] half-moons. Each phase alters the [moon's] activity: From conjunction to the half-moon it moistens; from then until full moon it heats; from then until the second half-moon it dries; and from then until [30] conjunction it cools. Hence, I believe, those who spend their time in farming sow and plant with security around the conjunctions and the full moons, since then [they are planting] when the *aer* is moister and has been moved toward the generation of other things. But around the half-moons they chop down wood for use and gather the crops for storage, since [then] the season is drier.

So much regarding perceptible and intelligible things. As regards its principles in terms of number, the fourth number is a quadrilateral. For it alone is naturally produced equally with equal power and equal parts, by addition and multiplication: addition—from two plus two; multiplication—from two times two; thus it demonstrates a certain very beautiful form of harmony, which does not happen with any of the other numbers; and hence it is called *apotelesmatic*.⁶¹ For if the numbers from the *monad* to the *tetrad* are arranged together in order, they produce [*apotelousin*] the *decad*.

10. The fifth [day] they dedicated to the Radiant One,⁶² the most temperate of all planets. The Greeks theologically call it Zeus, producer of life. Hence they claim, in mythical terms, that he was born on Crete, in which they say nothing mortal is generated—rather, not even a wolf or

⁵⁵ *Stilbôn*; i.e., Mercury.

⁵⁶ Cf. Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 1.4; Robbins (LCL) translates the phrase, "inspired...by the speed of his motion in the neighbourhood of the sun itself." (Mercury's angular distance from the sun is never greater than 28°.

⁵⁷ Cumont, p. 34, notes the similarity of this discussion of the *tetrad* to the discussions of Anastasius of Sinai (*In Hexaemeron* 4.3.1 and 7a.8.1-2 [pp. 98, 230 Kuehn-Baggarly]).

⁵⁸ Or, "it is necessary [that this be] the first mover."

⁵⁹ 47B9.10 Diels-Kranz (inauthentic).

⁶⁰ I.e., the new moon, when the sun and moon are in conjunction.

⁶¹ "Productive"—a term with astrological overtones of *influence* ("producing" effects).

⁶² *Phaëthôn*—i.e., Jupiter.

owl is [to be] found, as Antigonus says.⁶³ And it is called Heavenly in accordance with the circle-borne substance [31] in the *pentad*—from this [substance], they say, the heavens were produced, according to Aristotle.⁶⁴ For the *pentad*, taking up the *tetrad* which contains the principle of matter in a certain way underlying the things which are generated from it, both increased it and brought it forth to the eternal revolution that [comes] from its increase⁶⁵—for the *pentad* is a boundary-point of the *decad* and, as it were, an image of their shared perfection.⁶⁶ And [there are] five which wander, apart from the sun and moon; and five circles in [the] sphere, and five zones.⁶⁷ Zeus is called the maker of perception⁶⁸ by the philosophers; and it was reasonable for the *pentad* to have been dedicated to him by nature—for the *pentad* is related to perception, which is divided into five [senses]: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. And for this reason Pythagoras says that the number five is dedicated to Heimarmene,⁶⁹ because (it is said) Heimarmene rules perceptible things—thus, the Oracle says that the souls which are being restored are going beyond Heimarmene:

For the *theurges* do not fall under the herd fixed by fate.⁷⁰

11. They dedicate the sixth [day] to the Light-Bringer,⁷¹ which heats and at the same times moistens in a generative manner. And this would be [32] the [star] of Aphrodite, also called *Hesperus*, as it pleases the Greeks. One might call the nature of the entire perceptible [realm] Aphrodite—that is, first-born matter, which the Oracles also call Asteria and Urania.⁷² For the number six is most reproductive, as [being] even-odd,⁷³ partaking in both *active* substance (in accordance with the odd) and *material* [substance] (in accordance with the even). Hence, the ancients called it "marriage" [*gamos*] and "harmony." For it alone of the [numbers] from the *monad* is perfect in its own parts, being filled out from the same [numbers]: *half* [of it] being the *triad*, a *third* the *dyad*, and a *sixth* the *monad*. To speak simply, it is naturally both male and female, just as Aphrodite herself has the nature of the male and that of the female and therefore is called *male-female* [*arrenothêlys*] by the theologians.⁷⁴

And another says:⁷⁵ The number six is generative of soul, being made into a plane figure out of a *hexad* in the sphere of the universe,⁷⁶ and also it moderates opposites. It brings [them]

⁶³ *Collection of Amazing Histories* 10.2. Recent scholarship has leaned more and more to the idea that the extant collection is a Byzantine-period compilation, but its general authenticity is still defended (e.g.) by M. Leigh, *From Polypragmon to Curiosus* (2013), p. 188.

⁶⁴ *De caelo* 1.3 (269-70).

⁶⁵ For the number five as the principle of "vegetative increase," see Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 72-3, with Waterfield's n. 18.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 66.

⁶⁷ Cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 66-67. The "five circles" intended are the (celestial) equator, the tropics, and the arctic and antarctic circles; the "five which wander" are the planets.

⁶⁸ I.e., the perceptible world?

⁶⁹ I.e., fate. Cf. Horapollon, *Hieroglyphica* 1.13—the figure of the star symbolizes a "mundane god," or fate, or the number five.

⁷⁰ *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 153 Des Places.

⁷¹ *Phôsphoros*; i.e., Venus.

⁷² Cf. *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 216 Des Places; cf. 3.8.

⁷³ I.e., even but equal to two odd numbers (3 + 3) (LSJ).

⁷⁴ Cf. the doubtful Hermetic fragment in 4.64.

⁷⁵ This formula apparently introduces a quotation (not otherwise attested), in keeping with which Bandy formats accordingly; however, it is not clear where that quotation ends.

⁷⁶ This is obscure, but may be connected to the formation of soul within the spherical living creature that is the universe, out of *six* elements (indivisible existence, divisible existence; indivisible sameness, divisible sameness;

into agreement and friendship, and then, producing health in bodies, concord in the lyre and music, and virtue in the soul; in the city, prosperity; in all, providence.

Hence Orpheus says this about the *hexad*:

[33]

Be gracious, glorious number, father of the blessed ones, father of men.⁷⁷

12. The seventh day is addressed by the Egyptians and Chaldaeans as the Shining One,⁷⁸ the loftiest star of all so designated by them, which cools in the highest degree and dries immediately⁷⁹—but the Greeks customarily call it *Cronus* in terms of theology, in terms of etymology "satiated mind," as being full and bursting with years, meaning "Long-Aged" [*Makraiôn*], as has been said. Now then, the Pythagoreans dedicate the seventh [day] to the ruler of the universe⁸⁰—that is, the One—as witnessed by Orpheus, who says the following:

Seventh [day], which the king who shoots from afar, Apollo, loved.⁸¹

I have said before that Apollo is mystically called "the One" on account of its being far away from most things—that is, alone.⁸² Rightly, therefore, did Philolaus call the number seven "without a mother";⁸³ for by nature it alone neither begets nor is begotten—and what neither begets nor is begotten is *unmoved*. For begetting [occurs] in movement: the one, so that it may beget; the other, so that it may be begotten. And such indeed is God, as the Tarentine orator [34] himself [believes]—he speaks as follows: "For God is the leader and ruler of all things, being always one, steadfast, unmoved, himself like himself [only]." But the astrologers, tending toward the more mythical [account], address the seventh day [as belonging] to Cronus, as the father of the visible gods.⁸⁴ For because the star of Cronus is said by them to be *higher* than all the wandering [stars], they dedicated the seventh day, I imagine, to him as the highest of all things.

Well then, the *hebdomad*⁸⁵ is comprised of *one* and *two* and *four*, containing two most harmonious ratios, the *triple* and the *quadruple*. And it also encompasses divisions that subsist

indivisible difference, divisible difference) in Plato, *Tim.* 53a; cf. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, pp. 60-66. Alternatively, it may relate to the fact that in Plato's schema (*Tim.* 54b-d), the equilateral triangle, the fundamental building block of most elements, is composed of *six* right triangles (cf. Cornford, p. 216); see also Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 80.

⁷⁷ Fr. 312 Kern.

⁷⁸ *Phainôn*; i.e., Saturn.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 1.4.3.

⁸⁰ For discussion of John's characterization of the number seven and its relationship with other similar passages of Greek arithmology, see Robbins, "The Tradition of Greek Arithmology," *Classical Philology* 16 (1921), pp. 100-102. Especially noteworthy are parallels with Philo, *De opificio mundi* 99ff. [33ff.].

⁸¹ Fr. 276 Kern.

⁸² Cf. 2.4.

⁸³ 44B20 Diels-Kranz (doubtful)—continuing down to the next explicit quotation (the "Tarentine orator"). See Diels-Kranz also for the parallel references in Philo (*De opificio mundi* 100) and Anatolius (*On the Decad*, p. 35 Heiberg). But note Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton* (1993), pp. 334-9 (fr. 20), for further discussion; *inter alia*, he argues that the ms. reading *Onêtor* rather than *rhêtor* ("orator") should be preserved, and hence the second quotation here is from an obscure but attested writer credited with a work "On Arithmetical Proportion," not from Philolaus; in his view, Philo's quotation, which names Philolaus explicitly, is confused in its ascription.

⁸⁴ "Visible" gods = the gods of celestial bodies.

⁸⁵ John uses both *hebdomad* and *heptad* with reference to the number seven.

in pairs, in a certain manner: For it is first divided into the *monad* and the *hexad*, then into the *pentad* and the *dyad*, and finally into the *triad* and the *tetrad*; and the proportion between these numbers is most musical. Its nature extends even as far as the entirety of visible substance—the heavens and the earth; they do say, in fact, the heavens are girded round with seven circles, whose names are as follows: the arctic, the antarctic, the summer [tropic], the winter [tropic], the equinox [i.e., the equator], the zodiac [i.e., the ecliptic], and furthermore, the galaxy [i.e., the Milky Way]. For this sort of number is divine. Hence, the [elements] of our souls are divided into seven by the hegemonic reason: the five [35] senses, the vocal organ, and above all the generative [faculty]. And this whole [universe] too is contemplated in seven [aspects]: in body, in distance, in form, in magnitude, in color, in movement, and in rest. Beyond these, there is nothing else that happens to things that are seen. For prior to perceptible things, solids are conceived of; prior to solids, planes; prior to planes, surfaces; prior to surfaces, lines; prior to lines, points; and prior to points, numbers, which indeed apply to corporeal reality. And there are also seven changes of sounds: acute, grave, circumflex, sounding-together,⁸⁶ unspirated—and long and short.⁸⁷ Hence also seven-month fetuses are able to be born complete, as Hippocrates says.⁸⁸ For the soul-giving power of the number brings forth the seven-month-olds in completeness, because the circuit of spherical perfection is encompassed by a perfect and cosmic number—the soul-controlling⁸⁹ and soul-generating one.⁹⁰ Indeed, Timaeus put the soul together out of seven numbers.⁹¹ And all [possible] movements are seven: up and down, left, right, forward, backward, and circular. Of letters, the vowels are seven, because, as it seems, they are sounded in and of themselves, and when put together with the others [36] they produce articulate sounds. They supply what is lacking in the semi-vowels, and render their pronunciation complete; they change and transform the nature of the consonants, so that the unspeakable becomes spoken. And why do I speak at length, when not even the nature of waters has been left outside the power of the *heptad*? At least, Dionysius says in his *Foundations* that the Chalcidian Euripus shifts around seven times a day and stands still only once a week.⁹² And on the basis of mentally-perceived *Aiôn*⁹³ itself it is possible to understand the *artemones*:⁹⁴ For

⁸⁶ Gk. *sumphthongos*. This seems to be corrupt, however; in this context, what is missing is "aspirated"—accordingly, and specifically comparing Philo, *De opificio mundi* 121 (δασὸν φθόγγον), Staehle emends to δασύφθογγος (*Die Zahlenmystik bei Philon von Alexandria*, fr. 67b). Bandy prints σύμφωνος and translates "consonantal."

⁸⁷ For this and a number of the following tidbits, cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 87.

⁸⁸ Hippocrates, *Eight Months' Child* 1-2. The *eight-month* fetus, by contrast, was generally supposed to be less viable.

⁸⁹ Gk. *psychokratêtikos*. Bandy translates "soul-retentive."

⁹⁰ The number six is "soul-generating," as in the previous section (cf. also Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 83-4); seven is described as "soul-controlling" in 3.9; the "circuit of spherical perfection" may possibly be intended to symbolize a single month. For the statement as a whole, cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, pp. 93-4, where the "spherical cube" of 6 (i.e., 216) is brought into relation with 210 (i.e., 5 x 6 x 7) in the discussion of the completeness of the seven-month (210 = 7 x 30) fetus. Additionally, the sum of the first two cubes (8 + 27 = 35), multiplied by 6, yields 210 (cf. also Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.6.15-16).

⁹¹ Plato, *Timaeus* 35b.

⁹² Dionysius of Chalcis, fr. 8 (FGH 4: 395); for Dionysius as a geographer and his fragments, cf. D. Dueck, "Lost Geography: The Geographical Fragments of Daë's of Coloniae, Democles of Phygela and Dionysius of Chalcis," *Scripta Israelica* 31 (2012), pp. 40-48. Cf. 1.12 for the shifting waters. John's assertion about its standing still "only once a week" (κατὰ μόνας τὰς ἑβδομάδας) is difficult to interpret; Bandy translates, "only at periods of seven days," Dueck (p. 42), "only every several weeks." The Greek word *hebdomas* indeed frequently refers to a week (i.e., a seven-day period), but may be used for other sets of seven.

⁹³ "Life-time" / "time" / "age" (i.e., *aeon*)—but also viewed as a divine entity.

they are "brought together"⁹⁵ first of all from *hours*, then *days*, then *weeks*; next *months*, then *years*, and after that *appointed times*, and further, *aeons*, with reference to the archetypal form of the intelligible and Father-begotten *Aiôn*.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Meaning obscure; attested elsewhere as meaning "fore-sails" and "pulleys" (LSJ)—in Latin, also for the ships that have this sort of sail. The word is derived from the verb ἀρτάω ("hang / depend"), hence this is presumably describing the mechanically connected workings (of time). Bandy translates "spans of time."

⁹⁵ I.e., "comprehended" or "composed"?

⁹⁶ The language here recalls the Chaldaean oracles; cf. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 99.