

JANUARY

[63]

1. I have spoken sufficiently about the fact that the month of January was defined as the beginning of the priestly calendar by King Numa; in it, they would offer sacrifice to the [beings] above the moon, just as in February [they would offer sacrifice] to the [beings] below it.

And so, I must speak about Janus—who he is and what idea of him the ancients had. Now then, Labeo says¹ that he is called Janus Consivius, that is, "of the council / Senate" [*boulaios*]; Janus Cenulus and Cibullius, that is, "pertaining to feasting"—for the Romans called food *cibus*; Patricius, that is, "indigenous"; Clusivius, meaning "pertaining to journeys" [*hodiaios*]; Junonius, that is, "aerial"; Quirinus, meaning "champion / fighter in the front"; Patulcius and Clusius, that is, "of the door"; Curiatius, as "overseer of nobles"—for Curiatius and Horatius are names of [Roman] nobility. And some relate that he is double in form [64], at one time holding keys in his right hand like a door-keeper, at other times counting out 300 counters in his right hand and 65 in the other, just like [the number of days in] the year. From this,² he is also [said to be] quadruple in form, from the four "turns" [i.e., the solstices and equinoxes]—and a statue of him of this type is said to be preserved even now in the Forum of Nerva.³ But Longinus vehemently tries to interpret him as Aeonarius, as being the father of Aeon, or that [he got his name because] the Greeks called the year⁴ *enos*, as Callimachus in the first book of the *Aetia* writes:

Four-year-old [*tetraenon*] child of Damasus, Telestorides⁵...

Or [he was named] from the word *ia* [used sometimes] instead of *mia* ["one"], according to the Pythagoreans. Hence, Messala considers this [Janus] to be [the same as] Aeon.⁶ For indeed, the ancients celebrated a festival of Aeon on the fifth [day] of this month.⁷

2. They say that 12 officials were established by Numa—the ones called *Salii*, who sing hymns to Janus—in accordance with the number of the Italian months. And Varro, in the 14th book *On Divine* [65] *Matters*,⁸ says that among the Etruscans he is called "heaven" and "overseer of all actions" and Popano—on account of the fact that cakes [*popana*] are offered [to him] on

¹ Mastandrea, *Cornelio Labeone*, pp. 21-43, examines the parallels offered by Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 1.9) and, less copiously, by Servius (on *Aeneid* 7.607-10) and Arnobius (*Ad nationes* 3.29) to determine the content of Labeo's writing; he argues that John's debt to Labeo is quite extensive, well beyond what the single mention of his name might indicate. For John's discussion in the first two chapters, his analysis is indispensable. See also G. Capdeville, "Les épithètes cultuelles de Janus," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité* 85 (1973), pp. 395-436.

² I.e., from the idea that Janus is connected to the *year*.

³ According to Macrobius and Servius, this statue was brought to Rome from Falerii.

⁴ Gk. *eniautos*.

⁵ Fr. 33 Pfeiffer.

⁶ For Messala, cf. the citation in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9.14; also see Zuntz, *Aion: Gott des Römerreiches* (1989), pp. 33-36, who analyzes the historical value of these references to Messala (M. Valerius Messala Rufus, cos. 53 B.C.) in detail.

⁷ Probably a reference to the celebration of Aiôn's birth from Korê attested in Alexandria (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 52.22).

⁸ Fr. 201 Cardauns.

the Kalends. Fonteius, in his work *On Statues*, thinks he is actually overseer of time as a whole, and thus, his temple has 12 altars, in accordance with the number of the months. Gavius Bassus, in his work *On the Gods*, considers him to be the *daemon* appointed over the air, and that through him human prayers are conveyed up to the greater [gods]—thus, he is said to be double in form, from his gaze toward us and his gaze toward the gods.⁹ And in our Philadelphia¹⁰ even to this day, a trace of his antiquity is preserved: For on the day of the Kalends, Janus himself (supposedly) goes forth, all decked out, with a double-form face; and they call him Saturn, that is, Cronus. Indeed, Lutatius [says he is] the Sun, on account of his ruling over both gates, east as well as west.¹¹ And they say that he is likewise also the overseer of those who go forth to war, that by virtue of the one face he sends the army out, and by virtue of the other he calls it back. And Praetextatus the *hierophant*, who helped Sopater the initiatory [priest] and the Emperor Constantine at the founding¹² [66] of this fortunate city,¹³ thinks he is a certain *daemon* appointed over both Bears¹⁴ and that he conveys the more divine souls to the lunar chorus. Such [are the views] of the Roman *hierophants*; but another [writer] says that Janus was a *hero*, and was the first to set up sacred precincts and to present honors to the gods, and that he was memorialized in the temples for this reason.¹⁵ Indeed, Demophilus supposes that he was the first to build houses and gateways, and that January was named on the basis of the [word] *ianua*—that is, "door"—and also that he has a sister named Camasene. Ovid the Roman allegorically depicts Janus as being *chaos*.¹⁶

Dio the Roman¹⁷ says that Janus [was] a certain ancient *hero*, who, on account of the hospitality he gave Cronus, received the knowledge of the future and the past, and was represented with two faces for this reason by the Romans—and on this basis, the month was called January, and the beginning of the year takes place in this same month.

3. This month was formerly called Monias—from the "monad." And the first [day of the month] is the most highly revered festival of the Kalends, for the Romans. And the consul, riding on a white horse, himself clad in white, would lead the procession up to the Capitol—and this kind [67] of procession they traditionally called an *ovation*, from the sacrifice of sheep.¹⁸ The consul would offer his horse to Zeus [i.e., Jupiter]—for indeed, [he is] Helios himself, according to Pherecydes¹⁹—and then, from there taking up the consular garment, would go forward. This [was done] in honor of Zeus, as it were because the giants had struggled against

⁹ The word here translated "gaze" [*opsis*] can also mean "face." Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9.13, cites Gavius Bassus as calling Janus the "door-keeper of the higher and lower [gods]."

¹⁰ Philadelphia (in Lydia) was John's home town.

¹¹ "East" and "west" also mean "rising" and "setting" [of the sun]. "Lutatius" would be Q. Lutatius Catulus (cos. 102 B.C.); fr. 13 Peter (HRR).

¹² Gk. *polismos*.

¹³ I.e., Constantinople. The story is problematic, in that the famous Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (d. 384) would have been quite young at the time of the foundation of Constantinople; for further discussion, see M. Kahlos, "Praetextatus — A Senatorial Life" (2002), Chapter 1.2, <http://www.maijastinakahlos.net/b/kirjoituksia/praetextatus/vettius-agorius-praetextatus-a-senatorial-life-chapter-12/>.

¹⁴ I.e., the constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

¹⁵ This tallies well with the report of the views of one "Xenon" in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9.3.

¹⁶ *Fasti* 1.103.

¹⁷ Cassius Dio fr. 6.7 (of book 1), p. 14 Boissevain.

¹⁸ In Latin, "sheep" are *oves*.

¹⁹ 7B9 Diels-Kranz; cf. also 3.10 *supra*.

him—meaning, the winter weather was defeated by the sun. But the mythologists call the winter "Briareus," a many-handed [being], on account of the fact that moisture streams forth in it in multiple ways; and at one time Briareus fights with Zeus (i.e., the sun), and then again becomes his ally, because the moist substance is allied with the warm.²⁰

4. So then, as the sun is now lengthening the day, the consul goes forth. The day is one of festival and cessation of hostilities; but the magistrates, for the sake of securing an omen, appear on the raised platform and assemble all the armies along with their standards. And in ancient times they would give each other dried figs, offering first fruits of sweet foods, as I imagine. And they would give laurel leaves, which they called *strêna*, in honor of a certain goddess [*daimôn*] of the same name, who is overseer of victories.²¹ The word *strêna*, in Greek, signifies the "good beginning"²² as regards military skill." For [they] do not give it by way of trifling or recreation, as the common people do. And they say that the famous Latinus—Telegonus' brother, Circe's son, and Aeneas' father-in-law—when he was founding the [68] "acropolis" of Rome before the coming of Aeneas, found a laurel tree [*daphnê*] by chance at the spot, and thus allowed it to remain there. For this reason, here too they designate the Palatium as "Daphne."²³ The ancients consecrated the laurel tree to Apollo, because the tree is full of fire, as Plutarch says, and Apollo is fire—for he is the sun. On this basis too, this tree is hateful to the *daimons*, and wherever there is a laurel, *daimons* go away; and it appears that people discovered the manifestation of prophecy while burning [laurel-leaves] in oracular practice. And the more ancient people dedicated the laurel to Ares—and others, after them, to Helios—for which reason they would crown those who were victorious over their enemies with laurel, just as conversely [they would crown] their saviors with oak, on account of the fact that the oak was what saved those in ancient times, before the discovery of grain; for the ancients would eat acorns in lieu of grain. Elpidianus in his [work] *On the Festivals* says that in the Sabine language, health is called *strêna*,²⁴ for the sake of which laurel leaves were bestowed upon the magistrates by the people on the first [day] of the month of January—for it produces health. For neither will a sacred illness or a troublesome *daemon* disturb a place in which there is laurel, [69] just as lightning [will] not [strike] where there is a fig-tree—but it is also able to dispel apparitions; thus too, those who desire to receive a divine manifestation [*epiphaneia*] in a dream partake of figs only. But since laurel leaves would be offered along with the figs, the custom prevailed even until the present day to put laurel leaves as well into containers of figs. And yet, the practice remained in a changed form, just because of prosperity: instead of figs, they distribute cakes, and instead of leaves, gold. And the Romans call the cakes [made] from honey *plakountes* ["flat-cakes"] because this sort of food arrived in Placentia first in Italy from the Greeks (or rather, from the Samians), and therefore it is called by this name, like Tarentine [cakes] from Tarentum,

²⁰ In mythology, Briareus is the name of one of the primordial "Hundred-Handers" (*Hekatoncheires*); for John's views here, cf. *scholium* on Hesiod, *Theog.* 712 [H. Flach, *Glossen und Scholien zur Hesiodischen Theogonie*, p. 199], glossing these figures as "the winds in winter" [τὰ ἐν χειμῶνι πνεύματα].

²¹ Symmachus (*Epist.* 10.35 / *Rel.* 15.1), who also makes the connection with the goddess' name, calls her *Strenua*; Varro (*Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, fr. 132 Cardauns), *Strenia*. For the custom and its origins, see M. Meslin, *La fête des Kalendes de Janvier* (1970), pp. 31-32, 39-44; D. Baudy, "Strenarum commercium," *Rheinisches Museum* 130 (1987), pp. 1-28.

²² Gk. *euarchismos*—with Baudy's interpretation, p. 25 n. 92.

²³ That is, in *Constantinople*, where the imperial palace (*palatium*, originally referring to the Palatine hill in Rome) was called "Daphne."

²⁴ Cf. Nonius Marcellus, 1: 24 Lindsay: *strena dicta est a strenuitate*.

and Canubic [cakes] from Canubus,²⁵ and Copta [cakes] from Coptus.²⁶ A certain Samian [named] Dion first made bread by mixing in honey and invented the so-called *sesame* in Samos—and hence, the place has a name akin to that of the fruit.²⁷

5. In Rome, the emperors²⁸ used to receive the magistrates with a kiss, in honor of freedom, after the tyrants had been driven out by Brutus, the consul of the Romans.

6. According to Iamblichus, the serpent is a holy [animal]. [70] For he speaks as follows.²⁹

The serpent is a divine animal, most spiritual of all reptiles, and fiery—for which reason also its speed is unsurpassable, on account of the spirit / breath [*pneuma*], with no feet or hands or any other external [body part] whereby the other animals move around. And it produces the forms of diverse shapes and makes twisting movements in its progress at whatever speed it chooses. And it is very long-lived, and not only grows young again by shedding its old age, but also naturally takes on a greater increase [in size]; and whenever it fulfills its allotted measure, it is consumed into itself. Therefore this animal has also been included in sacred rites and mysteries.

And it sees the most keenly of all [creatures], for which reason it has been named *drakôn*.³⁰

7. On this day, Trajan consecrated a temple to universal Fortune,³¹ decreeing in accordance with the sacred law that no one was to taste the sacrifice except the sacrificer.

Homer nowhere mentions the term Fortune [*Tychê*], but Hesiod [does].³²

Fate [*Heimarmenê*] means "strung together" [*eiromenê*], on account of the need for time and separation, for the sequence [*heirmos*] of the things that exist to be preserved.³³

The name of Fortune and Fate was brought forward in reference to the creation³⁴—as witness, Hermes in the so-called *Perfect Discourse*, who said the following:³⁵

²⁵ More usually, Canopic / Canopus.

²⁶ This last is attested in LSJ as κοπή ("chopped / pounded"—i.e., this word actually derives from the verb κόπτω).

²⁷ Herodotus 3.48 refers to ritual cakes made with sesame and honey in Samos, but otherwise the details of this sentence are not attested elsewhere.

²⁸ Gk. *autokratores*. Cf. *De mag.* 2.9, describing the emperor greeting a magistrate; I have translated "emperors" on the strength of this parallel, but John's wording does seem to imply the origin of this kind of greeting in Republican Rome.

²⁹ The following quotation is nearly completely attested also in Euseb., *PE* 1.10.46, who is citing Philo of Byblos. The attribution to Iamblichus may be the result of confusion; cf. Dubuisson-Schamp, 1: lxx-lxxi.

³⁰ Implying a connection with *derkomai* (aor. stem *drak-*), "to see."

³¹ Otherwise unattested, it seems—see Richardson, *New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, p. 155; Bennett, *Trajan: Optimus Princeps* (2003), p. 149, however, thinks that certain coins may depict this temple.

³² *Theogony* 360.

³³ For this explanation of the term "fate," cf. Cicero, *De divinatione* 2.55; Ps.-Plutarch, *Placita* 1.28: εἰρμὸν αἰτῶν. It derives ultimately from Chrysippus, according to Elter, *De gnomologiorum Graecorum historia*, 3: 118.

³⁴ Gk. *genesis*.

³⁵ Cf. *Asclepius* 19 and 39 (Nock-Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum* 2: 319, 350; Scott, *Hermetica* 1: 324, 362—both print John's text as a Greek parallel to the Latin text of *Asclepius*).

The so-called seven spheres have as [their] ruling principle³⁶ Fortune or Fate, which alters all things and [71] does not allow them to remain in the same state.

But Fate is indeed the fated actualization³⁷ [of events], or God himself, or the order that has been put into place, with Necessity, after it [i.e., after Fate], for all things heavenly and earthly.³⁸ And the one [i.e., Fate] conceives the very beginnings of things; the other [i.e., Necessity] actually compels the ends to happen. And these [two] are attended by order and law and nothing disordered.³⁹

Porphyry appears to be speaking about Fate quite in accordance with the teachings of Hermes when he speaks as follows:⁴⁰

The ancients connected Fate with the number seven, since it encompassed the "spinning" of the seven⁴¹—as many things as are "spun" with regard to the living creature⁴² and the activity outside of this [effectuated] by it [i.e., Fate], in its sovereignty over all.

And they ascribe Opportunity⁴³ to Fortune, because Opportunity in concrete affairs is also the "good aim"⁴⁴ of each [person] in relation to the given circumstances.⁴⁵ And Proclus, in the *Outline of Platonic Philosophy*, says the following with regard to the teachings about the soul:⁴⁶

Some have been allotted *solar daemons* as leaders, other *lunar [daemons]*; and others, others. People's successes proceed in proportion to the nature of their leaders. For through them as intermediaries, good things are distributed to us from the divine in accordance with merit.

³⁶ Gk. *archê*. (Scott emends this to *ousiarchê*, "beginning / principle of existence," in conformity with the extant Hermetic text.)

³⁷ Gk. *heimartê energeia*, that is, the process of bringing to pass fated events; the Latin text of the *Asclepius* here has the word *effectrix*, "producer / one who brings about."

³⁸ Cumont, p. 34 (followed by Nock-Festugière), found supplementary text at this point in a series of apparent excerpts from *De mens.* in cod. Angelicus 29 f. 268: "But Fate and Necessity were both set in order, having been brought into unity with each other."

³⁹ Cumont, pp. 34-35 (followed by Nock-Festugière), adds further material at this point from the same ms.: "For Fate sets down the beginnings of things like a seed, whereas Necessity follows, bringing to accomplishment <the things> of Fate; and third, Order, pursuing the activities of Necessity." A final sentence added by Cumont (but with no parallel in the Latin text of the *Asclepius*) is rejected by Nock-Festugière in their edition of the *Hermetica*—but could conceivably reflect *De mens.*: "And Nemesis holds sway [*nemetai*], watching over all things that come to be, and sends forth her active force through the universe."

⁴⁰ Fr. 467 Smith; cf. Scott, *Hermetica*, 4: 230 n. 8.

⁴¹ Cf. Plato's image of the "spindle of Necessity" (*Rep.* 10.616c), which controls the revolution of the fixed stars and the seven other heavenly bodies (Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn).

⁴² I.e., the universe itself—cf. Plato, *Tim.* 30b-d.

⁴³ Gk. *kairos*.

⁴⁴ Gk. *eustochia*. That is, opportunity exists in relation to agents whose skills are prepared to deal with a given situation.

⁴⁵ For the association of the *heptad* with both *Tyche* and *kairos*, cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, *Theology of Arithmetic* (tr. Waterfield), pp. 90, 99.

⁴⁶ The closest parallel in Proclus' extant works is in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, 1: 110-111 Diehl. This "quotation," however, is more like an interpretive summary; see, however, 2.8 for another reference to this "Outline." Cf. also Dubuisson-Schamp, 1: lviii-lix, for further discussion and references.

As witness, Euripides' Peleus:

For apart from god, no mortal is fortunate.⁴⁷

Alas for mortals! How uneven are their fortunes!
For some do well, but for others <harsh>
disasters come along from god—[even] for the pious (?).⁴⁸

[72]

The Romans, thinking that there is nothing [worthy of note] other than good fortune among human beings, have considered that it and it alone [i.e., good fortune] rules over all, suitably naming it *Fortuna* on the basis of its *moving* [*phora*].⁴⁹ And it is clear that Plato in his inspired simplicity mentions the name of Fortune loosely—yet when discoursing on the gods he does not place it in the rank of the gods. But Aristotle and Theophrastus,⁵⁰ and those of their type, do not even think that it exists, asserting, "If there is virtue, there is no fortune; for what belongs to fortune is knocked up and down in human affairs—by riches and power and most especially injustice; but those who steer toward virtue and keep God in mind and stir up greater hopes for immaterial and blessed things despise the good things there [below]." For "nothing belonging to fortune is safe"⁵¹—as Euripides says in *Hypsipyle*.

Oh mortal madresses of men! In vain
they say that there is Fortune, but no gods;
for if there is Fortune, there is no need for god,
but if the gods are strong, then Fortune is nothing.⁵²

For "Fortune" signifies something random and insubstantial.

On account of their uneven movement, human affairs are naturally likened to a ladder [73]—for, as someone has said:

In one day it⁵³ has taken one down from on high, raised up another.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ *Peleus* fr. 617a.1 Kannicht (1025.1 Nauck) [= Stobaeus 1.1.17.1; AP 10.107(a)].

⁴⁸ *Scyrians* fr. 684.1-3 Kannicht / Nauck [= Stobaeus 4.41.16.1-3; AP 10.107(b)].

⁴⁹ John is identifying the Lat. syllable *for-* as equivalent to Gk. *phor-*. For this explanation, cf. *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. συμφορά.

⁵⁰ For discussion of this dubious fragment of Aristotle and / or Theophrastus (= fr. 490 Fortenbaugh), see W. W. Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus of Eresus Commentary Volume 6.1: Sources on Ethics* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 427-30. As Fortenbaugh points out, the quotation does not square with known Peripatetic views; however, Vitruvius gives a similar view attributed to Theophrastus (2nd section of the introduction to his book 6)—fr. 491 Fortenbaugh: the learned man can scoff at the reverses of fortune.

⁵¹ Fr. 765c Kannicht. Cf. fr. 942 Nauck.

⁵² *Phrixus B* fr. 820b.1-2, 4-5 Kannicht. For text and discussion, see also G.W. Bond, *Euripides: Hypsipyle* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 48, 136-7; for the attribution of the second quotation to *Phrixus B*, see Kannicht's *apparatus*.

⁵³ In the text of the fragment as edited by Kannicht and Nauck, "one day" (nom.) is the subject of the sentence.

⁵⁴ Euripides, *Ino* fr. 420.2f. Kannicht / Nauck.

Since none of our affairs is of a nature to remain the same, but rather, they change in manifold ways—or do private citizens not become magistrates, magistrates private citizens, rich men paupers, paupers very wealthy, the neglected honored, those without honor most famous?—inferior are those who strive for wealth beyond moderation, for "wealth is more a helper of wickedness than of nobility"—says Isocrates the orator.⁵⁵ And I think Plato had paid attention to this, when he said that no one comes to possess the greatest wealth without having previously suffered damage to his soul.⁵⁶

8. So then, on the first day of the Kalends, as I have said, the priests decreed solemnly in accordance with the Sibylline oracles, for the sake of health, that all must taste unmixed wine early in the morning, before any other sustenance, in order to ward off gout.

And you ought to know that on the day of the Kalends, the sun comes to be at its high point,⁵⁷ and Corona sets at dawn.⁵⁸

9. On the following [day], which is the fourth before the Nones [74] of January, they had leisure time on account of the sacred rites of the chariot-races. And before the procession to the chariot-race, in the presence of the high priests, they would offer sacrifices to the *daemons*, and in the streets they would distribute to the common people the [coins] they call *milliarenisia*, in honor of Scipio. For he first in the 109th Olympiad, on account of a dearth of gold, prepared and distributed to the soldiers the *milliarenisia*, when Hannibal was threatening [Roman] affairs. For the opportune gift is called "profit," and the *milliarenisia* were so called from the *militia*,⁵⁹ that is, the military campaign / service. But Dardanus says in his [work] *On Weights* that the *miliarense* in former times came to 1000 obols, and it was called this on the basis of this "thousand" number of obols.⁶⁰

10. After this, [there were] *vota publica*, that is, "public prayers." And the consuls also would perform sacred rites on behalf of the state and the people of Rome; and all the magistrates would swear to maintain justice for the subjects.⁶¹ And they would do this as it were out of

⁵⁵ Isoc., *Or.* 1 [*Ad Demon.*], §6: πλοῦτος δὲ κακίας μᾶλλον ἢ καλοκαγαθίας ὑπηρέτης ἐστίν.

⁵⁶ Also cited at *De Mens.* 4.100.

⁵⁷ Similarly Lehoux, *Astronomy, Weather and Calendars in the Ancient World* (2007), p. 389: "the sun is higher." This, however, seems to be the opposite of the truth; north of the Tropic of Cancer, the sun moves highest in the sky at the *summer* solstice.

⁵⁸ This is the first of numerous notes John includes giving details regarding the rising and setting of stars and constellations, as well as meteorological predictions / observations, all tied to particular days. The technical term for such a list is *parapegma*, and Lehoux, pp. 387-392, includes extracts of this general type from *De mensibus* (with English translation) in his treatment and extensive collection of *parapegmata* in the ancient world.

⁵⁹ The Latin word means "military service / campaign."

⁶⁰ Cf. J.-P. Callu, "Les origines du 'miliarense': Le témoignage de Dardanius," *Revue Numismatique* 6 (1980), pp. 120-30; H. L. Adelson, "A Note on the Miliarense from Constantine to Heraclius," *Museum Notes* 7 (1957), pp. 124-35. Callu treats "Dardanius" as the correct spelling, cites Epiphanius' explanation which is parallel to John's *first* explanation, and mentions a third one: *milliarense* = 1/1000 of a pound of gold. (Note that Wuensch has corrected John's text on the basis of Priscian.)

⁶¹ For the ritual surrounding the entry into office of the new consuls, see F. Pina Polo, *The Consul at Rome* (2011), pp. 17-20. This would include taking the auspices, as John intimates later in this section. The system of correspondence he further delineates, however, whereby the day of the week on which the Kalends fell was significant for the fortunes of the year, is not attested early (one popular later source, sometimes known as the *Revelatio Esdrae*, appears in the corpus of Bede's writings, PL 90: 951); but generally on private divination at this

necessity, because frequently the magistrates behaving illegally or being caught in a bribe were put in prison by the tribunes. And the common people would jeer at the magistrates without fear—not [only] in words, but also in gestures that strove to be amusing. They would do this in honor of *freedom*, and the magistrates would allow it, yielding to custom as though to law. And [75] the consuls would report to the emperors the bird-omens, through which it was known of what sort the year would be. You see, the natural [philosophers] attribute the first day of the week to Helios [the Sun], the second to Selene [the Moon], the third to Ares, the fourth to Hermes, the fifth to Zeus, the sixth to Aphrodite, and the seventh to Cronus. Accordingly, if it happened that the festival of the Kalends, that is, the first [day] of January, coincided with the day of Helios, they anticipated wars, conflicts of the magistrates and disagreements between the subjects on account of them, and also plentiful dry crops and strange rumors / prophecies. If [the Kalends fell on the day] of Selene, [they anticipated] not those sorts of things, but deaths of babies, dearth of provisions, and a cold spring; and they thought that the fruit-trees would grow bountifully. If [the Kalends fell on the day] of Ares, [they anticipated] conflagrations and diseases, but abundance of wine and olive-oil and pulses, and civil discord. But when [the Kalends fell on the day] of Hermes, deaths of infants and diseases involving abnormal flow from the stomach; and destruction for women in the mid-point of life, and abominable famine in general. And when the festival of the Kalends occurs on the day of Zeus, it was granted to expect everything good, but stormy and rainy times, such that not even the rivers were satisfied with their beds. And on the sixth, which is considered to be Aphrodite's, they anticipated tumult of magistrates, increase of the crops, and [76] wars harmful to public business, deaths of people and especially the youth. On the seventh, they saw omens of winter at all events—for indeed, Cronus [is] cold—and great prosperity—because he has been understood to be guardian of the crops; and also diseases and dangers and winds in the summer⁶² and hailstorm around Cancer⁶³ and an unexpected omen for affairs.

11. They say that the *phoenix*,⁶⁴ at intervals of 500 years, comes down to a certain place in upper India, prepares for himself a heap of cinnamon and leaves of spikenard and fennel, and he mounts the heap. Once this is ignited by a certain quick-acting *daemon*, the phoenix himself is consumed by the fire; but not long afterward, a very similar worm grows up out of him, and after its wings have grown it immediately flies off toward the sun. This is done on the altar in Heliopolis, according to Apollonius.⁶⁵ After that, some of the most well-regarded men in Egypt gather together and [the new phoenix] rises up on high and, with an escort of the assembled men, goes off from whence he came.

time, see Meslin, pp. 73-75. As for the "jeering" and amusing "gestures" John mentions, it seems likely that this was a part of the carnivalesque masquerading and Saturnalia-like inversion of roles attested for this time of year in the late Empire (see further Harris, *Sacred Folly* [2011], pp. 16-17; and cf. Meslin, pp. 79-85).

⁶² Gk. *theros*.

⁶³ I.e., during the mid-summer.

⁶⁴ For an exhaustive account of the ancient traditions regarding the phoenix, see Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix* (1972).

⁶⁵ Philostratus recounts a discussion of Apollonius of Tyana on the phoenix (*Life of Apollonius* 3.49); this does not correlate with what John says here, however, and so Van den Broek, pp. 147-8, concludes that John is not relying on Philostratus here, but is unsure whether the source was in fact attributed to Apollonius of Tyana (p. 224).

12. When a sky-omen appeared among the Romans, military campaigning did not proceed and assemblies were not held, even if a hindrance consisting of a few drops of rain lightly grazed them.

13. In the manner in which the magnet-stone changes the position of iron in the direction it moves, on account of the likeness of its naturally similar properties in accordance with the incorporeal principle, [77] in the same manner lifeless things can be changed or moved⁶⁶ in obedience to similar living things.⁶⁷ The fact that iron is similar to the magnet-stone in respect to a certain property is easy to understand—for iron extracted from it [i.e., from magnetite] changes the position of iron extracted from some other substance no less, unless it is anointed with the juice of onions, as the natural [philosophers] think.⁶⁸ And likewise, when smeared with goat's blood, the magnet takes on its attractive property.

14. The production of pepper, according to the ancients and Ctesias of Cnidus, is as follows:⁶⁹ There is a nation by the Azumê, named *Bessadae*,⁷⁰ who are endowed with small and very feeble bodies, large and unshaven heads with plain hair even beyond that of the Indians. They live in underground caves, and even know how to climb the crags on account of their familiarity with the locale. These people gather the pepper, culling it from little miniature trees that grow next to the bushes. And Maximus says:⁷¹ "It is a plant in India, first of all thornless, and cared for like a vine that climbs a tree or up a pole; and it bears its fruit in clusters like a terebinth, and has ivy-like, longish leaves. Once planted, it begins to bear fruit at three years; [78] and it dies at eight years. When harvested it becomes dark without being roasted, but simply by being placed out in the sun; and thus, it happens that the [pepper] dried in the shade remains white."

15. The high priests among the Romans were called *pontifices*, just as in Athens long ago all the exegetes and high priests of the ancestral rites—the administrators of them as a whole—were named "Gephyraei," on account of the fact that they conducted rites for the Palladium on the bridge [*gephyra*] over the Spercheius river. For the Romans call a bridge *pontem*,⁷² and the

⁶⁶ Here "changed or moved" represents the single Gk. word *metapheromena*.

⁶⁷ Cf. Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants* 9.18 (comparing the effect of certain plants to that of magnets).

⁶⁸ With reference to garlic rather than onions, cf. Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* 641c5; *Geoponica* 15.1.28—the latter also with the idea about goat's blood. Pliny allegedly supports this, but no such passage appears to exist. Benjamin, *The Intellectual Rise in Electricity* (1895), p. 143 n. 4, reports the interpretations that the source of the notion was a corruption in Pliny's text at *NH* 20.1.2 [*ferrum ad se trahente magnete lapide et alio rursus abigente a sese*]: the word *alio* was mistakenly written *allio* ("garlic"). Pliny does, however, assert that goat's blood can be used to break *diamonds*—and diamonds, he says, have the effect of cancelling the power of a magnet (*NH* 37.15.61). For the ideas of sympathy and antipathy behind these supposed "facts," see D. Lehoux, *What Did the Romans Know?* (2012), pp. 136-40.

⁶⁹ Ctesias F63 (Jacoby); a translation appears in A. Nichols, *Ctesias: On India* (London, 2011), p. 86, but Nichols is dubious about whether the fragment is authentic.

⁷⁰ A people east of the Ganges; cf. Ptolemy, *Geography* 7.2.15. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* 65 identifies a people known as the *Sêsatai* [so Casson; *Besatae* in Schoff] as being connected with the collection of the exotic plant *malabathron*. Schoff, *The Periplus*, p. 279, cites a passage from Pseudo-Callisthenes (3.8) with a number of details parallel to John's account. Cf. also Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, pp. 188-89.

⁷¹ Cf. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 3.4. A "Maximus" is an attested source for Philostratus, but the report in the *Life* is not particularly similar to this one.

⁷² The Greek *pontên* seems to reflect an attempt at an accusative form, for which *pontem* would be correct. The nominative form of the word in Latin is *pons*.

wooden [planks] making up the bridge *pontilia*. Hence also, I suppose, they were called "action-operators" [*praxiergiai*]—that is, "accomplishers" [*telestai*].⁷³ For that is what the word *pontifex* signifies, from [the idea of one] "powerful in deeds."⁷⁴

16. On the 18th day before the Kalends of February, Varro says there occurs a conflict of the winds. Democritus says that the southwest wind arises, along with rain-storms.

17. The philosophers say that the Dioscuri are the hemisphere below the earth and the one above the earth. And in myth they die alternately, as [each] moves under the *antipodes* in turn.⁷⁵ The [school] of Epimenides⁷⁶ related that the Dioscuri were male and female, calling the one *Aiôn*, as a "monad," the other *Physis*, as a "dyad."⁷⁷ For from the *monad* and the *dyad* the whole of life-producing and soul-producing [79] number sprang up.⁷⁸

And you should know that on this day, the Kids [i.e., *Haedi*] set, and a change⁷⁹ occurs, according to Philip.

18. On the 15th day before the Kalends of February, Democritus says that the Dolphin sets, and a change occurs for the most part.

On the 13th day before the Kalends of February, Euctemon says that the Crab [i.e., *Cancer*] sets, while Callinicus says that the Water-Pourer [i.e., *Aquarius*] rises—Hipparchus calls him Deucalion...in the wooded glens and torrential streams of the mountains.

On the 12th day before the Kalends of February, Eudoxus says that Aquarius rises.

On the 11th day before the Kalends of February, Caesar says that the sun comes to be in Aquarius;⁸⁰ Eudoxus [says] that it rises, and indicates rain-showers.

⁷³ The latter term is quite usual in Greek as a technical term for priests or officials who conducted initiatory rites.

⁷⁴ The derivation of the first element from *pons* ("bridge") is espoused by Varro, *On the Latin Language* 5.15.83, who also reports the opinion of Q. Scaevola that it comes from *posse* ("to be able"), which is in view for the latter part of John's note. Both accounts agree that the second element is based on the verb *facere* ("to do"). For these theories cf. also Plutarch, *Numa* 9.

⁷⁵ For this interpretation of the Dioscuri cf. Philo, *De decalogo* 56; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 9.37.

⁷⁶ 3B26 Diels-Kranz (inauthentic); fr. 18 Fowler (*Early Greek Mythography*, 1: 100; and cf. also commentary, 2: 424-5).

⁷⁷ At 2.7, John similarly associates male with the *monad* and female with the *dyad*. For the identification of the *dyad* as *physis* ("nature"), cf. Ps.-Iamblichus, p. 46. There are potential Chaldaean echoes in identifying *Aiôn* and *monad* (cf. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, pp. 99-100); also note the tradition that explains *aiôn* as being derived from *aeiôn* ("always existing")—e.g., Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, 3: 15 Diehl.

⁷⁸ Of course, ultimately the *monad* and the *dyad* are the source of number generally, but in 2.11, John specifically calls 6 the "soul-producing" number. Within the Platonic tradition, however, the view was advanced that soul *is* to be identified with number in some sense (Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 360; cf. Witt, *Albinus*, p. 20: soul is "self-moving number" according to Xenocrates; and Taylor, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, p. 112: "[Xenocrates] maintained that what Timaeus is really describing under the name of the 'making of the world's soul' is primarily the logical derivation of the series of natural integers").

⁷⁹ Gk. *tropê* (also in the next section). For this translation, see Lehoux, p. 390; but more frequently in the *parapegmata*, the term for a "change" is *episêmasia*—on which, note especially Lehoux, "Impersonal and Intransitive ΕΠΙΣΗΜΑΙΝΕΙ," *Classical Philology* 99 (2004), pp. 78-85. Bandy supplies "of winds."

On the 10th day before the Kalends of February, Democritus says that the south-west wind blows.

19. Fabius the senator was condemned by the Senate, because he was shown to have acquired silver beyond the amount determined by law.⁸¹ For it was not allowed for anyone to possess more than one's rank [permitted], nor indeed for just anyone to wear silk clothing, even if they were merchants; this had been given as a special privilege to the patricians alone.⁸² [80]

20. They called Domitian "master," not "king," on account of his tyrannical quality.⁸³

21. Some of the natural [philosophers] think that Hera is water, Zeus fire—and fruits are produced by a mingling of moisture <and heat>.⁸⁴ But they theologize that she is also Selene, in that she has been appointed over moist nature; and they say that Ares was born from her, that is to say, the aerial and active fire [is produced] by compressions of the clouds.⁸⁵ And the natural [philosophers] assign to the sacred rites of Hera the bird [called] the peacock, that is, the starry aer or the heavens.⁸⁶

22. The circle of Cincius⁸⁷ make Athena out to be divine and incorruptible spirit [*pneuma*]. Hence Euripides also calls her Athana,⁸⁸ on account of her deathlessness [*athanaton*]. And [they say] that she came forth from the head of Zeus, as if from the heavens; for the heavens

⁸⁰ There is controversy over whether "Caesar" in this parapegmatic context refers to Julius Caesar or to Germanicus, who translated Aratus' *Phaenomena* into Latin. See Lehoux, p. 492.

⁸¹ There seems to be some confusion in transmission here. In the first, most famous case, P. Cornelius Rufus was expelled from the Senate by the censor Fabricius in 275 B.C. for owning 10 lbs. or more of silver tableware (Livy, *periocha* 14; Plutarch, *Sulla* 1)—on which case see Zanda, *Fighting Hydra-Like Luxury* (2011), pp. 43-44. A *senatusconsultum* attested for 161 B.C. banned the use of more than 100 lbs. of silver tableware (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 2.24.2). See also D. P. Miles, *Forbidden Pleasures: Sumptuary Laws and the Idea of Moral Decline in Rome*, diss. University College London 1987 [<http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1141131/1/DX189489.pdf>], especially pp. 96, 228.

⁸² The wearing of silk by men was banned under Tiberius (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.33.1; Cassius Dio 57.15.1), but only in the later empire was silk controlled and regulated as part of imperial dress—and in the reign of Justinian specifically, according to Procopius, silk worm eggs were smuggled to Byzantium from China to allow for domestic production (*History of the Wars* 8.17). For further details, see H. B. Feltham, "Justinian and the International Silk Trade," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 194 (2009) [http://sino-platonic.org/complete/spp194_justinian_silk.pdf]; A. M. Muthesius, "Silk, Power and Diplomacy in Byzantium," *Textile Society of America Proceedings* 1992, pp. 99-110 [<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1579&context=tsaconf>]; R. S. Lopez, "Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire," *Speculum* 20 (1945), pp. 1-42 [http://rbedrosian.com/Byz/Byz_Trade_Silk_Industry.pdf].

⁸³ Cf. Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.

⁸⁴ Zeus is frequently equated with fire / *aether*, but Hera is most often associated with *aer*, not water. Something seems to have been garbled in transmission. For the general thought, however, cf Eusebius, *PE* 3.3.1 (quoting Diodorus 1.11.5), where the combination of Osiris [= fire and wind] and Isis [= earth and water] generates all things. ⁸⁵ For the characterization of Ares, see 2.8, where the association of Hera with *aer* comes more explicitly to the fore. Compare also 4.34. Here Ares, as aerial fire, is being equated with *lightning*.

⁸⁶ That is, the "eyes" on the peacock's tail represent the stars; and the *aer* here demonstrates the association with Hera, albeit in a slightly jarring way, as the *aer* is the lower air, usually contrasted with the *aether* (upper air).

⁸⁷ For the fragments of this (1st-cen. B.C.) author, see Funaioli (ed.), *Grammaticae Romanae fragmenta* 1: 371-82; however, Funaioli does not include the current reference, or John's reference at 4.86, in his edition. Cincius was one of the sources of Cornelius Labeo (see Mastandrea, pp. 60-61; Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome*, p. 250); but John may have had more direct knowledge of Cincius, as argued by C. R. Phillips, "Approaching Roman Religion," in Rüpke (ed.), *Companion to Roman Religion* (2011), pp. 16-17.

⁸⁸ E.g., *Trojan Women* 24, 52.

are the "head" of the whole world, according to those who call the whole world "Zeus." And they call her Tritogeneia and Tritonis—not because of her birth from Triton as the poets say, but because the operations of the soul are *three*-fold.

And the Chaldaeans⁸⁹ too [81] say that the soul is simple and intelligent and rational; as it comes forth from the intelligible [realm] to the perceptible world, it takes on the spirited [faculty] from the aether—for indeed, the aether is empyrean [i.e., fiery]—and the appetitive [faculty] from the lunar sphere⁹⁰—for indeed, the moon is of a moist nature; hence too (they say) the magical procedures concerning love are practiced and directed toward the moon, that is, Aphrodite.

Others [say] that Athena is the aer⁹¹—and [they call] her Tritogeneia because the aer is altered by three transformations, that is, into spring, summer, and winter; "grey-eyed" because the appearance of the aer is greyish. And [they say] that Perseus is the sun, the Gorgon the day, from its swiftness, that is to say that the sun, coming out on its course through the aer, cuts off the days, receiving the sickle—meaning "sharpness"—from Athena—that is, Providence. And for this reason it is customary for a Gorgon to be carved on clocks, indicating the day. Hygieia [= Health] is the power that controls the contrary qualities in accordance with the preservation principle.⁹²

23. Trajan was called Ulpus, in conformity with his father's name, but the Romans thought it good to call him Crinitus,⁹³ or "Goodly-Locks" on account of his enthusiasm for the hair on his head. In his body he was short, but in other ways noble in the manner of his training with weapons and his exercise of the body. He did not belong to a noble family; for he was formerly a tribune—that is, a (tribal) military commander.⁹⁴ Becoming aware that Nerva was a lover...[82]...of the suburban [estate] belonging to him—for in their properties they were near neighbors to each other—he immediately wrote up a gift-bequest regarding the suburban [estate] and thus gave it to Nerva. But he, in amazement, took Trajan as a son by adoption; and thus *he* obtained a pathway to the throne, since Nerva was rather quickly dying. And perceiving that he was being slandered for drunkenness, he kept away from wine-drinking completely. Trajan founded a city in Asia, Adramyttium, named after Adramyttus the brother of Croesus.⁹⁵ But in ancient times its name was Thebes under [Mt.] Plakos [*Hypoplakioi Thebai*].⁹⁶

24. "'What is your great number of sacrifices to me?' says the Lord; 'I am full of the whole-offerings of rams, and I do not want the fat of lambs and the blood bulls and goats—even if you come to appear before me. For who sought these things from your hands? You shall

⁸⁹ This is not included in Des Places' edition of the *Chaldaean Oracles*; cf. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 182 n. 26, who argues that this is Neoplatonic interpretation of Chaldaean material, on account of the implied tripartite soul.

⁹⁰ Gk. *seira* (lit., "cord / rope").

⁹¹ Attested in Homeric scholia (e.g., on *Odyssey* 1.327, 364); cf. also scholia on Lycophron, for this and interpretations of Perseus and the Gorgon (Σ 17 Scheer).

⁹² That is, health depends on a state of equilibrium or balance.

⁹³ Attested first in Eutropius, *Breviarium* 8.2. This supposed cognomen of Trajan was the basis for the invention of a related adoptive father of Aurelian in the *HA* (*Life of Aurelian* 10-15); see Syme, *Emperors and Biography*, p. 100-101; den Hengst, "The Biographies of the Roman Emperors," in *Emperors and Historiography* (2010), p. 97-8.

⁹⁴ Gk. φύλαρχος. John is confusing the *tribune of the plebs* (for which office one had to be a plebeian) and *military tribune* (of which there were six to a legion).

⁹⁵ Presumably John means Trajan re-founded it, since it did exist in the Classical period (Herodotus 7.42; cf. Strabo 13.1.51 [606-7]). This foundation is, however, unattested, although Trajan did found a Trajanopolis on the border between Lydia and Phrygia (Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, 1: 595; 2: 1452).

⁹⁶ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* 6.396-7 (etc.). Eustathius agrees with the identification of these two sites.

not continue to trample my courtyard. If you bring fine flour, it is in vain; incense is an abomination to me. I cannot tolerate your new-moons and sabbaths and great convocation day. Fasting and leisure, and your new moons and your festivals, my soul hates. You have become a surfeit⁹⁷ for me."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ I.e., you have made me full—or, I have had enough of you.

⁹⁸ Is. 1.11-14. This Biblical quotation is a strikingly odd inclusion in John's text, which rarely adverts to the existence of Christianity or Biblical tradition. It is difficult to resist the idea that the passage was originally a marginal comment by a pious scribe reacting to the details of pagan religion described by John, and thus does not really belong in the text.