



## CHAPTER 5

### *ΑΡΧΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΥ*

#### BEGINNINGS IN CYCLIC PROCESSES DAY START AND MONTHLY PERIOD

*ξυνὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρασ ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας*  
Heraclitus, DK  
22B103

*τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ τοῦτο ἀπόλλυσθαι, ὅτι οὐ δύνανται*  
*τὴν ἀρχὴν τῷ τέλει προσάψαι.*  
Alcmaion, DK 24B2

Darkness as the absolute Principle and Beginning (*Ἀρχή*) of things, of all reality, and the dark origination of light, of radiant formosity: this cosmogonical insight is reflected and manifested in night's precedence over day, and the latter's birth in the former's mystic womb.

A periodic movement has a starting point; there is a beginning in a cyclical process despite the seeming equivalence of all positions on a circumference, and the apparently neutral, indifferent and therefore meaningless succession of its parts. One state is the seed out of which the entire cycle is evolved; one point involves the power to create the circle; one dynamic focus starts and effects the movement which forms and sustains the period. For it is the spermatic dynamism of the beginning which causes the development constituting the period. And furthermore, as Alcmaion clearly formulated, if the end-point of a process can be made to coincide with its start, then there is bound to occur a repetition of the evolution identically again and again: in that case the movement is cyclical: a period has been instituted in reality.

Such are, on the whole, and fundamentally, the cosmic processes. What appears linear in the World is partial, and always embedded in a larger periodicity. The general form of the necessary Cosmic Periodicity is given in the Grand Table of Evolutionary Cycles. The ultimate, metaphysical, foundation of cosmic periodicity is analysed in my *Value and Knowledge. The Philosophy of Economy in Classical Antiquity*, 2000; v. esp. Appendix C, pp. 557-62.

In the following essay, two periodicities will be studied with reference to their starting condition: the diurnal and lunar movements. Their interlocking will also be clarified.

It is a wonderful token of universal coherence and mutual adaptation of the parts to their totality (to the whole of which they are parts), that small details, seemingly «aseptic» and factual, acquire a lustre and radiance of meaning if looked in the proper way and taken in the proper perspective. Different people have started their civil, official day at different points of the full 24-hour astronomical day and night period. For Varro's account (in the book about days of his *Renum humanarum*) v. Aullus Gellius III, 2 - reproduced in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I, 3, 2-10 with additional examination of Virgil's usage (a high-appeal court by that time for all matters civil and religious) and further reflections *ibid.* §§11-16; v. also from the same source Censorinus *De Die Natali* 23, 3. - For an independent but concurrent account v. Ioannes Lydus, *De Mensibus* II, 2; where the variation in the report about the Babylonian conception is only apparent. The sense is not merely that the Babylonians (experts in matters astronomical as they were) rested content with accepting thoughtlessly the ordinary acceptance of day (for, as Pliny says II, 79, vulgus omne reckons the day a luce ad tenebras), however this may coincide with the «natural day» (i.e. the period of daylight). In fact, as Ioannes Lydus goes on to say, they had a higher reason for their disregard of the night, and that disregard meant in effect that they could only start the 24-hour period with the beginning of the real positive entity within it, according to their viewpoint, namely daylight. The Babylonians that Ioannes had in mind had taken, therefore, a further step towards Iranian Dualism. That «the Babylonian astronomers used the midnight epoch for lunar computations» (Bickerman, «Chronology of the Ancient World» p. 14, cf. O. Neugebauer, PAPHS 107 (1963), 529), can mean nothing

more than that for lunar-based observations and calculations night is the proper period; it is midday that is the true and inescapable astronomical epoch for very objective reasons: and this is also the astrological epoch, as Ioannes Lydus has already explicitly observed (ed. Wünsch p. 19.16 sqq.). Contra, however, Varro, apud Gellium *loc.cit.*

The aforementioned sources present us with the following situation: as Censorinus *loc. cit.* says, there are four possibilities to begin the full astronomical day (= common day+night): at sunrise, sunset, midday, midnight. The Babylonians favoured sunrise («ita hodieque computant Baleares et Norim bergensenses» notes Harduinus in his edition of Pliny). Egyptians, Jews (following the Egyptian practice perhaps), Athenians, Galatians (v. Caesar *De Bello Gallico* VI, 18), Germans (Tacitus, *Germania* 11) and Nomadic Libyans (Nicolaus Damascenus, *Περὶ ἔθων*, in Stobaeus *Florilegium* 44, 41 (p. 187.8-12 Meineke) considered sunset to be the limit of two consecutive full day periods; «hunc Atheniensium morem servant hodieque Austriaci, Poloni, Sinenses: maximeque Itali, unde nomen Horis Italicis» adds Harduinus interestingly. Umbrians and the astronomers preferred the claims of midday; «secuti sunt Arabes, et plerique astronomi: unde horae astronomicae appellatae» Harduinus remarks. While for Romans it was midnight for all civil and religious purposes (besides the already-mentioned authorities cf. Pliny, II, 79 and Plutarch *Aetia Romana* 84. Pliny, though, presents an anomaly to the converging views so far expounded in that he makes Romans, Egyptians and Hipparchus (sic) begin the full day at midnight. I believe that he refers to Egyptian astronomers or followers of Egyptian astronomy - there was a certain difference and jealousy between the atronomico-astrological circles of Chaldaeia and Egypt - as the addition of the famous Greek astronomer seems to indicate. With this easy and natural assumption he can be harmonized entirely to the rest of the evidence).

The reasons behind each of the four distinct possibilities are as follows:

(a) Midday is clearly the astronomical favourite: it is the point most easily, directly and precisely determinable, the passing of the sun through the meridian of the particular location; I do not believe that any people could regulate their civil and religious practices according

to a system that would make midday the beginning of the complete 24-hour period. And this is the point of Servius ad Aen. X 216: *Describit autem mediam noctem, et dicit finitum diem secundum Romanum ritum, qui a media nocte diem numerant; et noctem similiter a medio die.* The last clause attempts to put the entire division in a natural perspective, by keeping the natural meaning of the words (day and night) and extending it, so to speak, on both sides of their naturally recognizable midpoint as far as possible.

(b) Midnight's claim is based on practical convenience: it is the time of maximum rest, of almost total cessation of all human activity. Daytime being the time for work and action, the period of night after sunset can only be considered at most as the conclusion of the preceding day, while the time after midnight is naturally understood in connexion with the following day, as, so to speak, preparation for it. - Plutarch, *loc.cit.*, labours rather clumsily towards this evident explanation; what he mentions about Roman reluctance to do anything important after midday, does square with this understanding of the matter: it is better to act with the day waxing rather than waning (cf. the numerous parallels regarding lunations): if the full day begins at midnight, midday is its middle, its turning point. Like the winter solstice, midnight is the time when something (the year, the day respectively) begins anew; the new dawn (or spring) is approaching, even though a short-while ago we were receding, moving away from the preceding dawn (or spring). So the Roman beginning of the year with the month of Ianus just after the winter solstice (and when the days begin to increase) fits into the same pattern with the Roman beginning of the full day at midnight.

(c) There is a more profound reason behind taking sunset as the beginning of the day. That the roots of this adoption must be deeper is rendered manifest even by the sheer fact that this choice though apparently (and according to our modern conventions) the strangest of all is nonetheless the commonest among ancient peoples. Ioannes Lydus *loc. cit.* has put the matter very nicely and exactly: *Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ καὶ Ἑβραῖοι* (later he mentions the Athenians, too) *ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς ἑσπέρας τὴν ἐπιφοιτῶσαν συναριθμοῦντες ἡμέραν ἕως τῆς ἐπιούσης πάλιν ἑσπέρας, τὴν προλαβοῦσαν δηλονότι νύκτα μετὰ τῆς ἐπακολουθούσης ἡμέρας συννεοῦντες καὶ μίαν ἀμφοτέρας ὀνομάζοντες ἡμέραν, ἀρχόμενοι δὲ πρότερον ἀπὸ τῆς νυκτός, διὰ τὸ ἀρχεγονώ-*

τερον εἶναι τὸ σκότος τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ πρὸ τῆς τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς διακοσμήσεως ἔρεβος καὶ σκότος προϋποτίθεται τοὺς κοσμογράφους<sup>1</sup>, Νύκτα δὲ πάντων μητέρα ὀνομάζειν (for instance the Orphic hymn to Night (No. 3) begins thus:

*Νύκτα θεῶν γενέτειραν αἰείσομαι ἧδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.*

And cf. the Aristotelian reference to the theologians that start with Night their cosmogonical or cosmological structures). ὅθεν καὶ οἱ μυθικοὶ ἀπὸ Λητοῦς τεχθῆναι Ἄρτεμιν ποιοῦσι καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα, καὶ πρώτην (sc. τεχθῆναι) Ἄρτεμιν, οἶονεὶ ἀερότεμιν (= τέμνουσα τὸν ἀέρα, cutting the air as she travels through it) Σελήνην, μεθ' ἣν τὸν Ἥλιον (= Ἀπόλλωνα). Εἴη δ' ἂν Λητώ ἢ Νύξ· καὶ γὰρ λήθη κατ' αὐτὴν καὶ ὕπνος ἐπιγίνεται. (There is much more to the connexion Λητώ - λήθη - Νύξ than meets the cursory and unversed movement of the eye).

Caesar has in effect given the same explanation of the same Galatian custom (loc. cit.): Galli se omnes ab Dite patre prognatos praedicant, idque ab Druidibus proditum dicunt. ob eam causam spatia omnis temporis non numero dierum, sed noctium finiunt; dies natales et mensium et annorum initia sic observant, ut noctem dies subsequatur.

Conformably to what was said under (b) above, taking the beginning of the day at sunset tends to go together with locating the beginning of the year at the autumn equinox or at the summer solstice - points when the sun is beginning to wane in power and efficaciousness.

A point must be touched here, albeit only slightly. Our sources explicitly mention the Athenians among those people who considered sunset as the beginning of the full day, but are silent as to the other Greeks. Now in view of the religious foundations of this practice, it is unthinkable that the matter stood otherwise with the rest of Greece. (The awesome majesty of ἀρχαίη Νύξ (Aratus, 408), whom Zeus himself rears and fears, will be fully treated below). This is not to mention the evident appropriateness and natural adaptation of taking the night with the following day when counting full days of lunar months. (And, to give but one example, notice how the succession night-day, not day-night, is a matter of course in the scholiast's

explanation at Aratus, 740, : *αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν νύκτα καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν, ἥτις ἐστὶ τοῦ μηνός, ἐξῆς διδάσκει. μῆνα δὲ λέγομεν τὸν ἀπὸ συνόδου σελήνης καὶ ἡλίου χρόνον ἐπὶ σύνοδον, ὅς ἐστιν ἡμερῶν κθ' <καὶ ἡμίσεος>. ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων συνόδων ἡμέραν ἀκούει τὸν ἐκ τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας χρόνον*). But on the other hand we ought to bear in mind that the question of the starting point in the cyclical succession of nights and days, and indeed the very notion of a full 24-hour cycle, can only arise explicitly in a scientific-astronomical, a religious, or a civil context that requires or admits such precision: ordinary night and day have their immediately comprehended natural meaning, and for all common purposes of life this is sufficient. It may indeed be significant to measure time intervals in terms of «nights» (as the Galatians and Germans did), but to describe what takes place when the «dawn comes upon the earth» (as in Homer) means nothing more than to have a vivid image of the beginning of human (and divine) activity with the beginning of a new, natural, day. The evident thing is of course to start the day in the morning, end it in the evening; and vice versa for the Night. As Pliny said *vulgus omne reckons the day a luce ad tenebris*. And this is Ioannes Lydus' meaning when he informs us that *Ρωμαῖοι δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἴσα τοῖς Βαβυλωνίοις κατὰ τὸν φυσικὸν νόμον καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἡμέραν μόνην ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου μέχρι δυσμῶν ἡμέραν ὠρίζοντο* (loc. cit., ed. Wünsch p. 20.5 sqq.). The question when the full cycle begins does not arise in the ordinary course of events. When Pollux, giving the correct vocabulary for all temporal distinctions, comes to treat of things relating to day and night, he throughout uses the words in their natural sense (I, 64-72). If, however, the question is finally asked in a non-astronomical context, the answer has to be deduced from religious and civil customs and observances. And this was precisely what Varro did in the case of the Romans. Since the question does not have the immediate perceptual content that, say, the question about the beginning of the natural day or night has; and as the ancients, in stark contrast to the modern spirit, were adverse (some, like the Greeks, eminently so) to resolving real, even though not directly manifested on the sensible order, difficulties by conventional stipulations; the only appropriate and adequate approach was to analyse the nature of the phenomenon together with collecting and comparing all relevant practices that would have a bearing on the

determination of the question one way or another. That Athenians are singled out from among the Greeks as adhering to one particular way of starting the entire day-night cycle would then mean that such painstaking analysis (a specimen of which we have in the Varronian reasoning relating to the Romans) has been made by the erudite antiquarians - not that the rest of Greece has been implicitly following a different model. Not to mention the intrinsic overwhelming interest in Athens, and the possibility that other Greek cities were tending by the time of Varro and Pliny to follow the Roman model, especially in civil matters.

(d) There remains a final plausible alternative - begin the whole cycle at the morning. Just as (c) implies an emphasis in the preeminence of night, so this possibility would involve dominance of the day. We have ultimately to do with the multiple struggle of light and darkness for metaphysical precedence. And so Ioannes Lydus, loc. cit.: the Babylonians did not take any notice of night *οἷα οὐ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς γινομένης*. The formulation is unmistakably Greek, but the idea, I shall say, implicates typically «Zoroastrian» attitudes. To take Night and her Realm as an insubstantial and, therefore, impotent appendage at most, or even sheer absence at worst, of the only true World of Day, does not only run against the basic and ineradicable instincts of mankind, it is further indicative of a certain false «spirituality» which besets the history of civilization in different degrees and ways at different ages and cultures, and whose paramount net result is to dessicate and render sterile the productive rivers of life in spirit and flesh, for individuals and for nations. This tendency to depreciate the awesome Darkness of the genuine Beginnings, to try to forget (by relegating to the level of a second-rate existence) what can only be encountered with the intensest, rejuvenating, sacred Terror, indeed with unspeakable Horror, by those who cannot perceive their true parentage - this temptation to cut away the omphalian lore of our total existence, is the major obstacle which has to be overcome, the counter-moment which must be subdued, in order for authentic and great high «culture» to flourish.

I called this hostile attitude towards the power of Night «typically Zoroastrian»; and it would be a superficial objection to claim that Zoroastrianism, far from disregarding that potency, conceived the

entire World as in eternal strife, with Light and Darkness embattled forever: the point is that what matters is the evaluative negativity towards Night, usually manifested in her, and her offspring, who are called «evil». To sever mentally the bond which insolubly binds Light and Darkness together; or to misconstrue the nature of their intimate relationship, their archetypal conjugation; both out of a false partisanship for superior en-light-ened order is unredeemed dualism; this is «typically Zoroastrian», in whatever form it may represent itself. Any such worldview suffers inexorably and incurably from an inherent incoherence: the other principle enjoys maximal existential positivity while it is condemned to absolute valuative negativity. Yet for the ancient mind, value is but the essential factuality of existence: ontological superiority is totally incompatible to a corresponding evaluative inferiority. The substantive and the valuative marks of reality coincide in the essence of things.

Self-contradictory or what, Zoroastrianism is a moment in our make-up that is set against what we know down to the roots of our existence is out- and in-there, hiding in thickets that our slender, partial light has fantasised - and as such it is bound with our very separateness, one-sidedness and metaphysical particularity. We have, thus, necessarily to contend with, and overcome it. And it is the degree of resolution achieved in this basic crux which provides the best index as to the true religious location of an individual or a culture in the spectrum from Zoroastrianism to (say) Orphism.

The morning of the year is the spring: and so in the Babylonian calendar the first month of the year Nisanu (the Jewish Nisan) fell on spring at about the vernal equinox (corresponding to the Athenian *Μουννχιών*).

We can now easily perceive the significance of the adoption of this or that possibility for the beginning of the full daily cycle. Midday has an astronomical point, and thus it is unlikely that it will be followed in any extra-scientific context. Midnight is advantageous or at least convenient from a practical point of view; it will appeal to people highly conventionalised in life and thought, or with ordinary, everyday utility uppermost in their mind. Sunrise is for the misguided children of Day. But Sunset marks out the true offspring of the Great World.

One word for some discrepancies in our sources as to what belongs to which people. The Plinian divergence has been already noticed and



resolved above. There is one more to be considered. Servius ad Aen. V 738 has: *Dies est plenus, qui habet horas viginti quatuor: nam et nox pars diei est. Dicimus autem diem a parte meliore unde et in usu est, ut sine commemoratione noctis, numerum dicamus dierum. Hic autem dies secundum Aegyptios inchoat ab occasu Solis; secundum Persas ab ortu Solis (an improvement upon the «Babylonians» of our other sources, but no real problem of course); secundum Umbros, Etruscos (sec. rusticos or sec. Umbros rusticos mss., but the old correction seems evident) et Athenienses a sexta hora diei; secundum Romanos a media nocte. Et hoc nunc secutus est etc.* Now the addition of Etruscos, I should think, puts the emphasis on people well versed in astrological lore, divination and other occult religious arts; but the «et Athenienses» cannot be right. Not only is the entire body of the rest of the evidence explicitly against it, but Servius in the next breath refers to Aulus Gellius: *Haec autem plene exsequuntur et Cicero in Auguralibus et Aulus Gellius in libris Noctium Atticarum III, 2.* And he goes on to give one of the Varronian reasons for settling midnight as the beginning of the full day for the Romans, agreeably to Aulus Gellius. As it is practically impossible that Cicero differed from Varro and Pliny in this matter (no trace of such a thing exists in the tradition; and when Macrobius makes the interlocutors of his Saturnalia come to this very question and has one of them repeat the entire chapter of Aulus Gellius with further additions, Servius, who is supposed to be present and speaks next, utters no word of disapproval or reserve) - we can safely transpose the offending words «et Athenienses» to their right place, after «Aegyptios».

Isidorus, *Orig.* V, 30 commits the same error as to the Athenians; he was probably misled by the faulty Servian mss.

I may add here that Copernicus, in his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (the new *Almagest*), III, 26 sub init., ascribes to Chaldees and the ancient Jews the custom of beginning the full day at sunrise; to Athenians, sunset; to Romans, midnight; and to Egyptians, noon. The Chaldees are the Babylonians of our other sources. Why he should ascribe to the ancient Jews (clearly in contrast to their practice later) the beginning of the *νυχθήμερον* at sunrise, I do not know, though one may surmise the existence of some (eastern) Jewish tradition according to which they would adopt for some time the Chaldean epoch during the time of their captivity. The Athenians are

correctly set, but the error as to the Egyptians can, I submit, be accounted for in the way I suggested for Pliny's similar contrary misascription: (Egyptian) astronomy may be meant. However this would involve a contradictory attribution to Egyptian astronomy than that utilised in the resolution of Pliny's anomalous statement. But without more facts, we cannot give a totally harmonising explanation of the two erroneous testimonies.

I shall mention one secondary divergence (in interpretation, not in evidence) typifying the unreliability of modern scientific pseudo-scientific approaches to questions and issues pertaining to ancient World. Bickerman (*Chronology of the Ancient World*, 1980<sup>2</sup>) tells us at p. 14 that «where, as in Egypt, the calendar disregarded the moon, the official day began at dawn», without mention of the contrary, explicit testimony of the sources. And, as if this was not enough, when he comes to treat of the Egyptian year (pp. 40 sqq.), after distinguishing a popular lunar calendar («basic in everyday life and used for cult purposes» p. 41) from the civil *annus certus* but *vagus*, he innocently remarks: «The Egyptian lunar month began in the early morning (cf. R. A. Parker, *JNES* 1970, 217)». Whatever Parker may be saying, it is simply impossible that the lunar month should begin in the morning as a result of the calendars's disregard for the moon, which would entail indifference to the lunar month itself.

But apart from this logical incoherence in the scientist-scholar, there is a much more important point to pursue here. Determination to keep to the true lunar cycle as a basis for the month-system, definitely favours, if it does not necessitate, considering the night as the first part of a full solar day. To get a clearer picture of the entire matter, let us review first the physical facts of lunosolar conjunctions.

As a lunar month moves towards its end, the Moon (apparently) approaches the Sun more and more from the west. The waning Moon is therefore visible for briefer and briefer periods before sunrise, until the proximity to the more powerful luminary makes her invisible. She remains «combust» as long as it takes her to overrun the sun and remove herself to such a distance on the eastern side of him as to become again visible just after sunset. As she waxes, she stays more and more on the night sky till she reaches her maximal apparent distance from the Sun in plenilunium, when she extends her presence throughout the entire night. Then she begins to again approach the

Sun from his western side, she rises over the horizon later and later in the night; and when the cycle is completed she disappears «in» the Sun, and we lose sight of her at dawn.

All this is a direct result of Moon's own counterclockwise movement in relation to the astral daily clockwise movement on the one hand, and to the Sun (and the Sun's equally counterclockwise own movement) on the other. This latter relation determines also Moon's phases.

Now the entire lunar cycle has been the object of careful observation and accurate analysis from the oldest times in Greece as elsewhere. Man, once the need to order his life was felt, sought means of regulating himself and his actions. He had been initially rather aggressive towards Nature (including his own) and inattentive to her inherent, inviolable decrees. But as he gradually grew out of the hunter-mentality and was quickly (in his better phyletic stocks and, ultimately, in the best environment-spaces) more and more subdued by the «agricultural» spirit, he soon learnt that the easiest, most efficient and (in the long run) only viable way of effecting a stable and appropriate order was by full compliance to the forces of living Nature and strict observance of the patterns revealed in their operation. He must have noticed, then, that Nature's order was one-in-movement, in change; and so, we can safely declare, he made his first major discovery: that the World operates in Cycles, that its impregnable stability is built as an edifice of continuous change. (It is this primeval piercing awareness that, long afterwards, reappears, philosophically, with such blasting revelation, in Heracleitus). Even as a predator, a plunderer upon Nature's field of abundance, he must have noticed the usefulness, if not the significance, of observing the natural patterns of his victims and their environment. But it was one of the ancient Greeks' deepest insights, when they proclaimed the stock of truly human sustenance to be the cornerstone of truly civilised life: Corn, the fruits of Demeter, impose most acutely on man the importance and meaning of serving Nature, of being in absolute harmony with Her. The Cereal gifts also bring forcibly to his full awareness the cardinal role of cyclic change in his life.

So that when primitive Man looked around him eager to discover constants in the midst of an everchanging world and correlations between such constants it was not a merely intellectual curiosity that

impelled him to investigate Nature' s secrets. It was a matter of life and death, of Culture and Barbarity, of natural order as against both chaotic disarray and artificial schemes of sham organization. His entire self was «interested» (had an overwhelming interest) in the experience. The stake was the highest: so much truer he could not but be (through natural adaptation) to the nature of things.

Man (in his primitive and archaic stage) brought to the study of Nature indefatigable attentiveness, sharp discernment, an unerring eye for the essential. He brought powers of subtle, painstaking observation and of shrewd, meaningful, correlation, so that under the beneficent star of a harmonious, natural existence, he gradually extracted from an assenting Nature treasures of vast, accumulated experience securely deposited in abiding traditions that revealed her meaning by lightning of profound, penetrating insight laboriously forged into solid Wisdom. The ancient World at large, in its highest cultures, faithfully kept his happy spirit of glorious servitude and exquisite alertness to Nature and Nature's clues. It was the divine lot of the Greeks to bring that spirit into the choicest blooming and supremest fruition; for this, they required endowments and conditions which will be unravelled elsewhere.

The right qualities and the right attitude in the right place naturally brought the desired result. Man begun, with proper reverence, to comprehend the workings of Nature to the extent that he is fit to attain. To understand Nature properly, that is in her own terms, we should listen attentively to her intimations for the solution of the mystery of existence, to the suggestive murmurs that obscurely phrase the very questions that we ought to ask her - and desist from arbitrarily formulating our own eccentric problems, for whose solution we then impertinently turn to her oracle with our misplaced inquisitiveness. Herein lies a major difference between the Ancient and the Modern World - in so far as the latter declines the guidance of the former.

Nature forcibly presented to unprejudiced Man the ultimate form, as well as the particular content in each case, that the questioning of her in his fully committed and interested desire for true knowledge should assume: the World moves in cycles, cyclicity is the ultimate law of change in reality - up there in Heaven, and down here on Earth. Things and events, exist and take place within cycles. This being

indelibly impressed upon Man's Mind, the key to Nature's secrets was thereby also provided: through minute observation to discover more and more cyclical processes; by artful association to apprehend their diverse correspondences and points of contact; to thus gain insight into the streams of force and «influence» that permeate the World and weave its everchanging, everlasting fabric; to seek intelligently for deeper and more extensive patterns of change; finally to timidly investigate the question of the Ultimate Periodicity, of the first Living Law of the Universe.

We shall have ample occasion to pursue this line of thought through its concreter manifestations in philosophy and religion and art and life; for from the point of view of a truly spiritual «typology» Heraclitus and Empedocles, Orphism and Mysteries, tragedy and criminology, are intimately related. It shall also be abundantly clarified how this attitude had in ancient Greece to come to terms with another, equally powerful, moment in the unique constitution of the Hellenic Spirit - the potent ingredient that gave Homer and his Olympian Gods, Plato and the Theory of Ideas, Greek Sculpture and Greek Epos. I shall supply here one sole but striking example of how illuminating this outlook can be.

Plato, in the Republic, constructs the ideal state according to his analysis of human nature. But then he is faced with a major difficulty: for he knows that even were this perfect arrangement (designed to bring out the perfection of human life and achievement) to be materialized amidst a new stock of man, found in the right place and raised consonantly to the requirements of that very system - even in this case the perfection could not sustain itself perpetually, but would be transformed by degrees into a picture of upheaval, disorder and ugliness. Plato desired an answer to this apparent thorn in the entrails of his over-arching view. He entrusts the revealed solution, with his customary sublimely insolent and most earnest irony, to the Muses (545d sq.): *χαλεπὸν μὲν κινηθῆναι πόλιν οὕτω συστάσαν· ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ γενομένῳ παντὶ φθορά ἐστίν, οὐδ' ἡ τοιαύτη σύστασις τὸν ἅπαντα μενεῖ χρόνον, ἀλλὰ λυθήσεται. λύσις δὲ ἤδε· οὐ μόνον φυτοῖς ἐγγείοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἐπιγείοις ζώοις φθὸρὰ καὶ ἀφορία ψυχῆς τε καὶ σωμάτων γίνονται ὅταν περιτροπαὶ ἐκάστοις κύκλων περιφορὰς συνάπτωσι, βραχυβίοις μὲν βραχυπόρους, ἐναντίοις δὲ ἐναντίας. γένους δὲ ὑμετέρου εὐγονίας τε καὶ ἀφορίας, καίπερ ὄντες*

σοφοί, οὓς ἡγεμόνας πόλεως ἐπαιδεύσασθε, οὐδὲν μᾶλλον λογισμῶ μετ' αἰσθήσεως τεύξονται, ἀλλὰ πάρειςιν αὐτοὺς καὶ γεννήσουσι παῖδας ποτε οὐ δέον. ἔστι δὲ θείῳ μὲν γεννητῷ περίοδος ἣν ἀριθμὸς περιλαμβάνει τέλειος, ἀνθρωπείῳ δὲ ἐν ᾧ πρώτῳ etc. going on to give the puzzling, enigmatic description of «man's periodic number».

As Proclus, in his commentary on this passage makes amply clear (e.g. p. 150.14 sqq. ed. Pitra, in his *Spicilegio Solesmensi*, 1888), Plato's meaning is this: the best society will dissolve by reason of a fact and as a result of an error. The fact is the absolute, but hidden, periodicity of the World and of everything in it: man should procreate in as regular a fashion and manner as corn is sown. The difference lies in the difficulty of determining the span and terms of human periodicity. The error is humanly impossible to be avoided even by the wisest of philosopher-rulers: failure, namely, to correlate human activity exactly with its inherent periodic pattern. Incorrect generation will sooner or later creep into the perfect society, defective offspring will emerge, and this will lead (by steps that can be precisely analysed, v. Proclus *ibid.*, p. 149 sq. e.g.) to the destruction of the supreme polity. Intensive care has, therefore, to be taken of human procreation from an absolutely eugenic point of view; in order for this to be achieved so far as humanly possible, minute attention must be paid to the periodic patterns of human existence and development, both embryonic and independent of its matrix, as well as to their correlations with other natural cycles. The significance of this insight has been felt by the Greeks from the very beginning; and has put to task the genius of even archaic wisdom as can be clearly seen in the attempts to discern the true periods and objective stages of human life; and to determine in precise detail the patterns of pregnancy and foetal life. The complex system of factors and influences to be taken into account in a truly «scientific» (in the ancient meaning of the word) theory of Eugony, as emerges in conformity with the ancient resoluteness not to disregard any element of nature's intricately interweaved web, is well illustrated by Proclus' extensive commentary on the Platonic passage mentioned above (cf. in particular pp. 172-7 ed. Pitra). The idea, throughout, is of a «Works and Days» relating to Man's procreation, to the sowing and harvesting of human life. And from the same root stems the emphasis on astrology that is unaccountable for the modern man.

Proofs and examples for this natural ancient sensitivity to nature's unambiguous, if implicit, teachings can be multiplied ad infinitum regarding the general point, and abundantly provided in support of the particular point at hand.

But for the time being let us contain ourselves within our immediate subject. Visible things, and states change in what is fundamentally an orderly fashion. Where this is non-apparent, the ancient mind believes that pattern and order is still equally real, but hidden and complex. Where order, though evident, declares herself with puzzling irregularity in particular cases, it is the cosmic constituents - countless, wonderful interconnexions within the universal unity of the World - which diversify each kind's identical order. Natural change, therefore, is not merely an accidental and mechanical succession of differing situations or conditions, but the necessary e-volution of a substantial identity, the organic un-folding of an essential unity, the gradual process of differentiation of an integral from its implicit to the explicit state. Natural change is always a development towards full realisation of the inherent, but potential perfection. That the process is always affected, often disrupted, not rarely obstructed, and even sometimes perverted, is due ultimately to Nature's unbounded richness and spontaneous, transcendent unity: the former feature will safeguard an inimitable multiplicity of types and individuals; the latter will keep their respective developments in perpetual interaction, competition and antagonism.

All developments according to organic, in-written laws, we further perceive, are repeatable. Some are in fact exactly circular; i.e. their last point is itself the start of a new identical process. Such are the movements and conditions of the celestial bodies; and the natural changes in the sublunary world directly associated with them. Others, although equally periodic in the necessary succession of evolving stages according to determinable laws and measures, are yet, perceivably, not cyclical; like the lives of animals. But even these processes are seen to contain at least the principle and power of their own repetition; as with procreation in the example given. We shall observe how this (already too much for modern man) is inadequate periodicity for the ancient mind which tried to overcome it both in philosophy and religion in the search for the absolute Cyclicity of Nature's workings, in themselves and in their products. For the moment it will suffice to

employ the word «cyclical» with the appropriate meaning in each case, even while anticipating the ultimate cancellation of any apparent differences in signification.

Among the various established correlations between Nature's cyclical processes, some are particularly valuable on the ground of the most sacred utility: they can promote Man's interests without infringing on his happy subservience and utter dependence on Nature. If two cycles, one constitutively crucial for our lives but more hidden from our eyes, the other though not less immediately material to our existence, yet more external to us, but also more settled and observable in its regularity - if two such cycles can be meaningfully correlated, then we can use the second to «measure» the first. For by bringing two cycles in relation to each other, we establish the existence of a common measure for both, we compare, so to speak, their respective rates of movement; so that from the observable rhythm of change in the one we can deduce unobservable incipient changes in the other. We can thus know the «right time» for things - we can accurately foresee and intelligently foreplan.

If we consider man in a natural but stable stage of his existence, orderly civilized and archaic, we shall find him in the midst of agricultural surroundings, developing a georgic culture of farming soil and tending animals. This is man's condition of maximal harmony with nature and of optimal contentment with himself. He has now overgrown two more primitive moments of his existence: predatory hunting and nomadic pasturage. Experienced cultivation of earth and successful management of cattle (in a non-artificial context) presuppose exemplary attentiveness to the voice of nature and demand indefatigable care in translating her precepts into seasonable action. Man learns that he can only live peacefully in the bosom of the Universal Mother, by complying to her nature and abandoning himself to her motherly instincts. For as the All-Mother is Universal, she strictly upholds absolute Justice: Man, in kind and as an individual, shall receive exactly what he merits: more would be transgression on the other children's rights; less is, paradoxically, impossible.

Man's continuous observation and observance of Nature promotes his integration within the cosmic unity which she weaves. Profound experiences are also reserved for him if he succeeds in finding his



proper place, according to his own nature, in the World. He learns to labour, and indeed to co-labour with Nature; he learns to labour for and in generation; he learns the value of bringing forth as distinct from being predator, in obtaining his sustenance or in manufacture. He finally learns the supreme agricultural truth: that in order to give birth, absolute, unrestricted and unlimited naturalness is required, together with order and discipline not imposed from without but called for from within. The reins apt to control the spontaneous play of the invincible cosmic forces in order to render them productive, must themselves be forged out of the natural powers which they will direct. Herein lies the emergence of *θεσμοί*.

But of this more, and deeper, later. Enough has been said to provide the necessary perspective for the present point, which is that husbandry and its world impresses upon man those correlations between celestial movements, the general conditions of the basic elements in our environment, the agricultural year and patterns in the animate life, which provide his physical sustenance and cultural formation. Three cycles easily emerge, by reason of their manifest observability and precise regularity, as the measures of all change and as registers of its rhythm, i.e. as indices of time. They are the diurnal cycle, the year and the month. The alternation of day and night is not only the most immediately observable and striking pattern of change in Nature; it is also the first unit of change for Man himself: it is associated with the most markededly evident transmutation in man's condition, namely sleep. Our organism naturally requires the cessation of all conscious activities once at least within that period, and for a considerable part of it. This cycle is easily linked to the daily movement of the Sun and the entire Sky, whence an exact measurement of its rate of movement, of its inherent rhythm, can be gained.

The second most evident pattern of change is that of the rotation of seasons constituting the unit of the year. It is immaterial how many and how distinguishable the seasons are for this or that people: the seasonal changes in the environment, and their orderly repetition is an unmissable phenomenon of the first order of magnitude. Its role and effect in the life of plants and animals must also have been felt and noticed from the beginning. But it is its unique and paramount importance for agriculture which must have occasioned and prompted

its detailed observation and its correlation with the yearly (apparent) movement of the Sun through the Sky.

The subtle but immense influence of the lunar cycle must have been more difficult to discern; but once perceived, it was strikingly impressed and avidiously studied. Extant works like the Hesiodic Days clearly bespeak its wide importance in an archaic agricultural society. Together with its mighty and extensive effects on terrestrial life, the lunar cycle possessed the advantage of high and relatively accurate observability. The succession of the Moon-phases is the most impressive phenomenon of the nocturnal sky. And despite the circumstance that there is an inherent, objective difficulty in determining by observation the end of one moon-cycle and the beginning of the next - yet the facts are such that errors of this sort become manifest pretty soon, in a way that cumulative experience can easily enough calculate accurately the length of the cycle and devise accordingly adequate means of settling the question of its starting and finishing point. It is thus that the natural Month emerged as a measure of time very early in the history of mankind, and that its use is practically universal among all ancient peoples and civilizations. And this is not to mention the awesome and tenebrous Majesty of the Nocturnal Queen of the many faces, which causes even Plinius the naturalist to wax poetic in describing her (*Naturalis Hist.* II, 6), beginning thus: *sed omnium admirationem vincit novissimum sidus, terrisque familiarissimum, et in tenebrarum remedium ab naturam repertum, Lunae. Multiformi haec ambage torsit ingenia contemplantium, et proximum ignorari maxime sidus indignantium;* etc.; *Luna regit menses* (Ovid, *Fasti* III, 883). By way of example, we shall give an account of the Greek lunar month.

When a star comes near enough to the Sun (in terms of apparent location), it becomes invisible, «combusted» by the superlative splendour of the Fiery Celestial Body. The same happens to the Moon. When the apparent position in the Sky of these two bodies is approximately the same, we have their *σύνοδος* or *συνοδική συζυγία*, *coitus* in Latin (of Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* II, 10: *Solisque defectum (ἡλιακὴν ἔκλειψιν) non nisi novissima primave fieri Luna, quod vocant coitum*). During this coition she is invisible for a period of time, which, from the astronomical point of view (setting aside, that is, meteorological and geographical circumstances and conditions)

depends on the minimal distance between these luminaries sufficient to enable the weaker one to become apparent. This distance, expressed in degrees, varies depending on the heavenly body considered in phase with the Sun. For the Moon it was reckoned at  $14^\circ$  (Plinius Nat. Hist. II, 11: Inter quatuor decim autem partes Solis [= cum distat a sole gradibus tantum quatuordecim] semper occultam esse) or  $15^\circ$  (Paulus Alexandrinus, *Elementa Apotelesmatica*, 16 - a chapter to which we shall refer more extensively in a moment). Given that the mean daily movement of the Moon is  $13^\circ 10^i 34^{ii} 58^{iii} 33^{iv} 30^v 30^{vi}$  (Ptolemy *Almagest* IV, 3; we should always use Ptolemy's figures and results as incorporated into the culminating achievement of ancient astronomy and a marvel of accuracy), that is roughly  $13^\circ 11'$ ; and the mean daily movement of the Sun is  $0^\circ 59^i 8^{ii} 17^{iii} 13^{iv} 12^v 31^{vi}$ , say  $0^\circ 59'$ ; and since both luminaries move in the same anti-clockwise (West to East) direction in their yearly movements; it follows that the mean daily relative movement of the Moon vis-à-vis the Sun is approximately  $13^\circ 11' - 0^\circ 59' = 12^\circ 12'$ . So that the Moon, starting from a distance of  $14^\circ$  to  $15^\circ$  from the Sun and moving towards Him, will overtake Him and become visible on his other side covering a distance of  $28^\circ$  to  $30^\circ$  considering the Sun unmoved, which distance will be transversed in  $28^\circ$  to  $30^\circ / 12^\circ 12'$  days, roughly between 2d8h and 2d12h depending on which figure we select for the minimal distance regarding Moon visibility. During this interval of time the Moon is invisible. In fact this represents the lowest possible figure; for quite apart from any meteorological and geographical reasons, it can easily be shown, that depending on which exact time in the full day the synodic syzygy or conjunction occurs, the period of lunar obfuscation can last from under 2 1/2 days to 4 1/2 days. And we have considered only mean daily movements in the calculation. Cf. Geminus' general rule for Greece, in his *Elem. Astr.* IX, 14. When Plinius (*Hist. Nat.* II, 6) speaks of the Moon thus: Deinde morata in coitu Solis biduo, he must refer to her rough minimal disappearance.

Autocleides in his *Ἐξηγητικά* (a work on the Athenian sacred antiquities) sets down as a rule that with the eclipsing of the light of the major luminaries one should be watchful and avoid important business for three days (Plutarch *Nicias* XXIII = Fr. 6 in Tresp, *Die Fragmente der griechischer Kultschriftsteller*): ἄλλως τε καὶ τῶν περὶ ἡλιον καὶ σελήνην ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐποιῶντο (sc. οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι κατὰ

τὰ πάτρια) φυλακῆν, ὡς Αὐτοκλείδης διέγραψε ἐν τοῖς Ἐξηγητικοῖς. True τῶν περὶ ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην is in abstracto general, but the context fixes the sense effectively to what is in any case the only available and relevant manifest phenomenon respecting them - namely changes in their luminosity. In fact, I believe the reference can be narrowed down to the monthly eclipse of the lunar light because of the synodic syzygy of the Sun with the Moon. Plutarch is relating how on the night that the Athenians were to leave their camp by Syracuse and get out, as long as there was still time, from an impossible predicament and a rapidly deteriorating situation, an eclipse of the Moon occurred. The religious and noble Nicias was alarmed. Terrified he cancelled the operation, thus effectively extinguishing the last possibility of a safe retreat for the Athenians. Plutarch seizes the opportunity to indulge in his favourite expostulation against what he calls «superstition» - mentioning in the course of that tirade important facts about its hold over classical Athens. The diminution in the intensity of the sunlight at the end of every lunar month (which constitutes a regular minor solar eclipse - and all solar eclipses are of the self-same nature and occur necessarily at conjunctions just as lunar eclipses occur in plenilunia) was understood, says Plutarch, to be due to the interposition of the Moon, which, being herself totally eclipsed by the radiant power of the chief celestial luminary in conjunction with her, detracts somehow from his splendour: τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἡλίου τὴν περὶ τὰς τριακάδας ἐπισκότησιν ἀμωσγέπως ἤδη συνεφρόνουσιν καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ γενομένην ὑπὸ τῆς σελήνης. And he goes on: αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν σελήνην ᾧτινι (sc. heavenly body) συντυχάνουσα καὶ πῶς αἰφνίδιον ἐκ πανσελήνου τὸ φῶς ἀπόλλυσι καὶ χροᾶς ἴησι παντοδαπὰς, οὐ ῥάδιον ἦν καταλαβεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀλλόκοτον ἡγοῦντο καὶ πρὸ συμφορῶν τινῶν μεγάλων ἐκ θεοῦ γινόμενον σημεῖον. These are the two situations contrasted by Plutarch. And when he comes back to the point he remarks: ἐπεὶ τὸ σημεῖον (the said eclipse of the Moon), ὡς φησι Φιλόχορος, φεύγουσιν οὐκ ἦν πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάνυ χρηστόν· ἐπικρύψεως γὰρ αἱ σὺν φόβῳ πράξεις δέονται, τὸ δὲ φῶς πολέμιόν ἐστιν αὐταῖς (here we see the manner and mode of operation of ancient sign - interpretation and the non-mechanical nature of its discipline); ἄλλως τε καὶ τῶν περὶ ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην etc. That is: the eclipse of the Moon, which in fact is not due to the conjunction of the Moon with an unknown being but to the shadow

of Earth (an explanation barely known and certainly unacceptable to people at the time) was, if properly interpreted, a good omen; and at any rate, the period of caution enjoined in the other, well-understood case of the monthly solar eclipse was three days. Why then did Nicias decide to wait for a new moon, and not at most effect a postponement similar to the precautionary suspension of the contrasted case? ὁ δὲ Νικίας ἄλλην ἔπεισε σελήνης ἀναμένειν περίοδον, ὥσπερ οὐκ εὐθὺς θεασάμενος αὐτὴν ἀποκαθαρθεῖσαν (i.e. returned to normal), ὅτε τὸν σκιερὸν τόπον καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀντιφραττόμενον παρήλθε. We conclude then that those three days cover the Moon's monthly coition with the Sun.

With such a considerable period of invisibility, the first problem for a lunar calendar, is when to begin the month. No doubt, the natural solution is: when you first see the new Moon. And equally without a doubt, this was the course adopted initially. For instance, compare these two reports sent respectively to Ashurbanipal (668-626 BC) and Esarhaddon (681-668 BC): «On the 29th we made an observation. On account of the appearance of clouds we did not see the moon». «On the thirtieth I saw the moon; it was in a high position (i.e. high in the sky when observed just after sunset) for the thirtieth day. The King should wait for the report from the city of Ashur, and then may determine the first day of the month» (v. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, pp. 18-19 and references in p. 97).

Coming to the classical peoples, we have for the Romans an excellent survey of the original customs by Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I, 15, 9 sqq.: priscis ergo temporibus, antequam fasti a Cn. Flavio scriba invitis patribus in omnium notitiam proderentur, pontifici minori haec provincia delegabatur ut novae lunae primum observaret aspectum, visamque regi sacrificulo nuntiaret. Itaque sacrificio a rege et minore pontifice celebrato idem pontifex calata, idest rocata, in Capitolium plebe iuxta curiam Calabram, quae casae Romuli proxima est, quot numero dies a kalendis ad nonas superessent pronuntiabat et quintanas quidem dicto quinqies verbo καλῶ, septimanas repetito septies praedicabat. verbum autem καλῶ Graecum est, id est voco, et hunc diem, qui ex his diebus qui calarentur primus esset, placuit kalendas vocan. Cf. Servius on *Aeneas* VII, 654; Nonnius I, 90. For the derivation of Kalendae (and Calabriae, as Macrobius goes on to observe, cf. Servius loc. cit.) from καλῶ, cf. Varro *Lingua Lat.* VI, 27

(= V. P. 59 ed. Bipontina): Primi dies mensium moninati kalendae ab eo, quod heis diebus calantur ejus mensis Nonae a pontificibus, quintanae an septimanae sint futurae, in Capitolio, in curia Calabra, sic dictae: quinquies «kalo Juno Novella»; cepties «kalo Juno Novella». Quinque and septem changed to quinquies and septies because they were not part of the formula but signify the number of times that the formula was respectively repeated. This preserves the very antique habit of repetition in ritual invocations, as is testified by Macrobius *supra*, although he omits the reference to Juno Novella, which is the new Moon: Kalendae were sacred to Juno. This leaves us with the aspectual identification of Juno and Moon, evidence for the which can be abundantly supplied and will be analysed in another part of this work. Although in this passage, taken in itself, we could write Jana (= Diana) Novella with Popma or Jana Covella (taking the Covella from the oldest editions, as in the modern vulgate; which could mean «curved», «hollow», referring to the Sky - «quod covum veteres Caelum vocabant... ergo Juno Covella, ἡ οὐρανία as Scaliger in his note ad loc. suggests; or «curved», «horned», referring to the Moon itself «corniculata, quia veteres cavum dicebant covum» as Popma would have, note ad loc.). But these remarks just converge on an initial aspectual identification: Diana - Jana Juno. So clearly Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, I, XXXXVII, 3: Numquam rure audisti & octavo Ianam lunam et crescentem et contra senescentem etc. This way of speaking was a rural custom, therefore of assured antiquity and religious authority. For the association of Juno with the Kalendes is abundantly and certainly testified. For a very apposite testimony full of important circumstances v. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, 15, 18 sqq.: ut autem Idus omnes Iovi, ita omnes kalendas Junoni tributas et Varronis et pontificalis adfirmat auctoritas. Quod etiam Laurentes (we move towards original Latinity; cf. Virgil, *Aen.* XII, 134 sqq.

At Juno e summo, qui nunc Albanus habetur,  
 (Tum neque nomen erat, nec honos, aut gloria monti)  
 Prospiciens tumulo campum abspectabat, et ambas  
 Laurentum Troumque acies, urbemque Latini.

Cf. XII, 240 etc.: Laurentes , eminent among Latini, attempt to withstand the inroad of the Trojan newcomers) patriis religionibus

servant, qui et cognomen deae ex caerimoniis addiderunt, Kalendarem Junonem vocantes, sed et omnibus kalendis a mense Martio ad Decembrem (another mark of the highest antiquity: the 10-month original Latin year starting with March is considered) huic deae kalendarum die supplicat. Romae quoque (coming now to Roman *πάτρια* in particular) kalendis omnibus, praeter quod pontifex minor in curia Calabra rem divinam Iunoni facit (this takes place when he, having observed the new moon, announces ceremoniously together with the rex sacrorum the approaching Nonas, as was described in the previously quoted Macrobian passage), etiam regina sacrorum, i.e. regis uxor (the wife of the rex sacrorum involved in the preceding ceremony), porcam vel agnam in regia Iunoni immolat, a qua etiam Ianum Iunonium cognominatum diximus, quod illi deo omnis ingressus, huic deae cuncti kalendarum dies videntur adscripti. And then Macrobius, in company with many other authorities, comes to the natural aspectual identification mentioned above: cum enim initia mensium maiores nostri ab exortu lunae servaverint (i.e. they employed natural lunation as months), iure Iunoni addixerunt kalendas, Lunam ac Iunonem eandem putantes. We may end this detailed and factual Macrobian account of the association between Juno and the Kalends, with the peremptory Ovidian ascription of the tutelage of those days to the Goddess (*Fasti* I, 55):

Vindicat Ausonias Junonis (or Junonia, more elegantly, with  
Heinsius) cura Kalendas.

In what context Flavius, a mere scribe, promulgated as a curule aedile the fasti to the people, as well as the procedures of the jus civile, both held in the custody of the pontifs (civile jus, repositum in penetralibus pontificum, evulgavit, fastosque etc. Livius IX, 46, 5), can be seen in its clear lines in Livius IX, 46; where another significant confrontation of Flavius with the pontifs is reported. That was indeed a transaction «invitis patribus»! And although the repugnant turn which he gave, conformable to the already existing impetus originated and promoted by App. Claudius (to whom he was sometime secretary), in the political affairs of Rome by actually furthering the interests and power of the lowest and meanest parts of the populace (particularly by distributing them among all the several tribes) was

checked in the censorship of Quintus Fabius Maximus who (ibid. §14) *omnem forensem turbam excretam in quatuor tribus coniecit, urbanasque eas appellavit* (cf. also Valerius Maximus, II, 2, 9); nonetheless the effect of Flavius' publishing the calendar and the processes of the *ius civile* could not be undone.

## NOTE

1. E.g. Hesiod and Orphism and Genesis to mention but three; v. esp. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 123-125:

Ἐκ Χάεος δ' Ἐρεβός τε μελαινά τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο·  
 Νυκτὸς δ' αὐτ' Αἰθήρ τε καὶ ἡμέρη ἐξεγένοντο,  
 οὓς τέκε κυσαμένη Ἐρέβει φιλότῃτι μιγεῖσα.

And Genesis I, 1-4: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου· καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός: Γεννηθήτω φῶς· καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς. καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν· καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σκότους. καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ἡμέραν καὶ τὸ σκότος ἐκάλεσεν νύκτα· καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωὶ ἡμέρα μία. The last phrase being as an explicit injunction to begin the full day from the evening as one might wish to find!