

Ancient Witnesses on the New Moon

The following information shows that ancient peoples recognized the day that the conjunction happened in as the last day of the month rather than the first day of the month. (I believe when a month/moon had 30 days, the Hebrews kept both day 30 and day 1 as the New Moon festival. Day 30 was day 1 of the festival, day 1 was day 2 of the festival. See my paper on 1 Samuel 20 for more information.)

Plutarch on Solon (630 B.C. to 560 B.C.)

About Solon: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/553609/Solon>

Text: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/solon.html>

"Observing the irregularity of the months, and that the moon does not always rise and set with the sun, but often in the same day overtakes and gets before him, **he ordered the day should be named the Old and New, attributing that part of it which was before the conjunction to the old moon, and the rest to the new,** he being the first, it seems, that understood that verse of Homer: "**The end and the beginning of the month,**" and the following day he called the new moon. After the twentieth he did not count by addition, but, like the moon itself in its wane, by subtraction; thus up to the thirtieth."

My Note: Solon, in reading Homer's Odyssey (Book XIV) interpreted Homer's mentioning of "the end and the beginning of the month" as the day in which the conjunction took place. Solon called the following day, the day after this, new moon day.

Geminos (1st century B.C.): Introduction to Phenomena pages 186-188.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=HPBE3RbeceQC&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=geminos%27s+introduction+to+the+phenomena&source=bl&ots=WpTXIdyjiu&sig=Fb5uCSi4Mczll3JdIAG1BvD2rqQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=l4kMU9CQHcSHygH2vYDQCg&ved=0CEsQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=geminos's%20introduction%20to%20the%20phenomena&f=false>

"For when, **on the 30th day of the month**, the sun and the moon are in the same degree, the hemisphere that is illuminated is the one facing toward the sun and turned away from our sight... **And when the moon passes by the sun about the first of the month, then the moon is seen crescent shaped**, for a small part of the illuminated hemisphere is turned toward our sight... **For the moon appears crescent shaped at the earliest on the first of the month and at the latest on the third...** The entire monthly period is $29\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{33}$ days. It is the time from conjunction to conjunction, or from full moon to full moon. **A conjunction is the time at which the Sun and the Moon are at the same degree, which happens on the 30th of the month.**"

My Note: Geminus (Greek astronomer) calls the day in which the conjunction takes place the last day of the month (30th). He states the earliest that the moon appears crescent shaped is on the 1st day of the month. This is exactly Philo's point in Special Laws 2.140-141 where he talks about seeing the new moon with ones outward senses. There are times when as the 1st day of the month begins a waxing crescent is able to be seen (as long as the moon has been building for at least 17 hours prior to evening).

Varro "On Agriculture I.XXXVII (pg. 261)" 116 - 27 B.C.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12140/12140-8.txt> (search "new moon")

"The lunar periods also must be taken into account; these are roughly twofold, as the moon waxes from the new to the full and then wanes again toward the new, **until it reaches the intermenstruum, or time 'between two months,' on which day the moon is said to be 'last and first' ; hence, at Athens they call this day 'old and new,' while others call it 'thirtieth.'**

My Note: Varro (Roman farmer) calls the day in which the conjunction takes place the *intermenstruum* or the time IN BETWEEN two months. He called this day the "last and first." He says others call it "old and new" and still others call it "thirtieth." Varro is another example of an ancient person in the B.C. era that believed the day in which the conjunction happened was the last day of the month rather than the first day of the month.

Final Thoughts: I believe that the day in which the conjunction happens is never to be considered an ordinary work day. It always should fall on the 29th day of the month or the 30th. When it falls on the 29th day of the month it is kept as a Sabbath day, the last Sabbath day of the month. When it falls on the 30th day of the month (between the Sabbath and the *Chief Rebuilding Day [Rosh Chodesh]*) it is still kept as part of the "Day of the New Moon" or *Space of Time* (yowm) of the New Moon. On "short" months you have 2 holydays back-to-back at the end of the month. On "long" months you have 3 holydays back-to-back (3 "Sabbath" days; Acts 17:2). Once again, for more information, see my paper on 1 Samuel 20 or the paper by Solomon Gandz on the same subject.

I have shared the evidence I've just given in this paper because someone asked me if there were any other ancient peoples that believed as I do, i.e. that the day *after* conjunction is day 1 of the lunar month. I could probably find more, but I stopped looking after I found 3 different men that lived in the B.C era that believed as I do. I also believe Philo believed as I do, as did all the other Israelites who kept the feasts in Jerusalem during the time the 2nd Temple was still standing.

Shalom,

--*Matthew*

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