ture. Hence it was, that Sirius, under the name of Sothis, played a prominent part in all their mythology, and their religious rites. Supposing then that the recurrence of the heliacal rising of Sirius and the tropical year were of the same duration, and believing that they had at length discovered that this duration was three hundred and sixty-five days and a quarter, they imagined a period, after which the tropical year, the ancient year, the year of three hundred and sixty-five days only, would revert to the same day; a period which, according to these incorrect data, was necessarily 1461 sacred years, and 1460 of those perfected years, to which they gave the name of the years of Sirius.

They took as the point of departure of this period, which they called the sothaic or great year, a civil year; the first day of which was, or had been also that of the soliacal rising of Sirius; and we learn from the positive testimony of Censorinus, that one of these great years terminated in the year 138 before Christ.(1). Consequently it began 1322 years before Christ, and that which preceded it, 2782 years previously. In fact, from calculations of M. Ideler, we learn that Sirius rose heliacally on the 20th July, in the Julian year 139, a day which corresponds to the first of Thot, or the first day of the sacred Egyptian year.(2)

But not only the sun's position, with relation to the stars of the ecliptic or the sidereal year, is not the same as the tropical year, because of the preci-

(1) All this system is developed by Censorius, de Die Natali, cap. xviii. and xxi.

(2) Ideler. Hist. Researches on the Astronomical Observations of the Ancients. Halma's translation at the end of his Canon of Ptolemæus, p. 32. et seq.