

of the commencement of the sacred year, with that of the true tropical year, and then they would discover that their great period must have been 1508 sacred years, and not 1461.* Now, we assuredly do not find any traces of this period of 1508 years in antiquity.

In general, we may defend ourselves with the idea, that, if the Egyptians had possessed so long a series of observations, and of accurate observations too, their disciple Eudoxus, who studied among them for thirteen years, would, on his return, have brought into Greece a system of astronomy more perfect, and maps of the heavens less erroneous, and more coherent in their different parts. † How should it happen that the precession of the equinoxes was not known to the Greeks, but through the works of Hipparchus, if it had been marked in the registers of the Egyptians, and inscribed in characters so manifest upon the ceilings of their temples? And how comes it that Ptolemy, who wrote in Egypt, should not

* See Laplace, *Systeme du Monde*, 3d edition, p. 17; and the *Annuaire* of 1818.

† See on the Inaccuracy of the Determinations of the Sphere of Eudoxus, M. Delambre, in the first volume of his *History of the Astronomy of the Ancients*, p. 120. et seq.