

GENDER IN PTOLEMY'S *APOTELESMATICA*

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## ABSTRACT

The sexual polarity, belonging to a world-wide web of oppositions, concerns the heavenly bodies and regions themselves as well as their influence on entire peoples and individuals on earth. Ptolemy depends on Babylonian and Hellenistic astrology, Pythagorean numerology, Aristotelian ethics and Greek mythology. His detailed enumeration of all thinkable cases shows a rigorous schematism of both contents and syntax that considers all possible varieties of sexual comportment and deprivation.

**KEY WORDS:** CONDITIONAL CLAUSES, DAILY ROTATION OF THE EARTH, 'HOUSES', PLANETS, SCHEMATISM, SYNTAX, 'SYSTEMZWANG', TWINS AND TRIPLETS, WORLD WIDE WEB, ZODIACAL GEOGRAPHY, ZODIACAL SIGNS.

EL SEXO EN LOS *APOTELESMATICA* DE TOLOMEO

## RESUMEN

La polaridad sexual, que pertenece a una red universal de oposiciones, concierne tanto a los cuerpos y regiones del cielo como a su influencia sobre pueblos enteros e individuos sobre la tierra. Tolomeo depende de la astrología babilonia y helenística, de la numerología pitagórica, de la ética aristotélica y de la mitología griega. Su detallada enumeración de todos los casos imaginables muestra un riguroso esquematismo de ambos contenidos y una sintaxis que considera todas las variedades posibles del comportamiento y la depravación sexuales.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** ORACIONES CONDICIONALES, ROTACIÓN DIURNA DE LA TIERRA, 'CASAS', PLANETAS, ESQUEMATISMO, SINTAXIS, 'LÍMITES IMPUESTOS POR EL SISTEMA', RED UNIVERSAL, GEOGRAFÍA ZODIACAL, SIGNOS ZODIACALES.

Mythical thought penetrates the whole cosmos and, starting from the human body, it tries to transfer human conditions to the universe, especially to the heavenly bodies<sup>1</sup>. So astrology formally was one of the greatest attempts of a systematic-constructive world-view<sup>2</sup>. The philosopher Ernst Topitsch calls these acts of translation 'biomorph metaphor', to be distinguished from 'intentional', that is 'sociomorph' or 'technomorph' metaphor<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> E. CASSIRER, 1925, pp. 115-117. The human body was the starting point and not the inverse: W. HÜBNER, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> E. CASSIRER, 1922, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> E. TOPITSCH, 1972, p. 19 'biomorphe Metapher', to be distinguished from 'intentionale Metapher', either 'soziomorph' or 'technomorph'.

At the beginning of his zodiacal geography<sup>4</sup>, the distribution of the countries of the οἰκουμένη to the twelve zodiacal signs, Ptolemy establishes a worldwide web of correspondences, following the constraint of a rigid ‚geometric‘ schematism (fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>:

gender	male	female
luminary	sun	moon
daily rotation	rising	setting
day-night	day	night
proximity to the sun	morning	evening
geographical region	east	west
direction (related to the north)	right	left
numbers	odd	even

fig.1: The worldwide web of correspondances

The female nature belongs to the west, the region of the setting stars,<sup>6</sup> and accordingly to the evening, the night, the moon and the left side.

### 1. *Gender on the sky*

Looking to the sky let us consider the single parameters: the zodiacal signs, the planets and their so-called ‚houses‘ of the daily rotation.

#### a) Zodiacal signs

The twelve zodiacal signs were classified into two regular hexagons (fig. 2).

This distinction follows the Pythagorean lore: odd numbers are masculine, even numbers feminine (fig. 1)<sup>7</sup>, a parallel to the distinction between day and night<sup>8</sup>.

Beside these two hexagons astrologers constructed three regular squares that connect signs of different sex and four regular triangles (triplicities) connecting signs of

<sup>4</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,9-10, see also *apotel.* 3.7,2.

<sup>5</sup> In German ‚Systemzwang‘, an originally grammatical term, cf. W. HÜBNER, 2013, p. 296 with fig. 231.

<sup>6</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 1.19,2 διὰ ... τὸ τῶν δυσμῶν τεθηλυσμένον; 2.3,9 αἱ δὲ πρὸς ἑσπέραν τεθηλυσμένοι μᾶλλον εἰσίν; 3.15,11 συμβάλλονται δὲ καὶ οἱ ἀνατολικοὶ καὶ ἔφοι σχηματισμοὶ ... πρὸς τε τὸ ἐπανδρότερον καὶ εὐδιαβοητότερον, οἱ δὲ δυτικοὶ καὶ ἑσπέριοι πρὸς τε τὸ θηλυκώτερον καὶ τὸ κατασταλτικώτερον.

<sup>7</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 1.13, the earliest instance is Manil., II 150-154. For the ‚sexe géométrique‘ see A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 154-157; W. HÜBNER, 1982, p. 282 nr. 3.311.12 and p. 479-282; Id., 2013, pp. 133f.

<sup>8</sup> Manil., II 221f., see A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 155-157; W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 288-290 nr. 7.331.3 and p. 482.

equal sex (fig. 3)<sup>9</sup>:

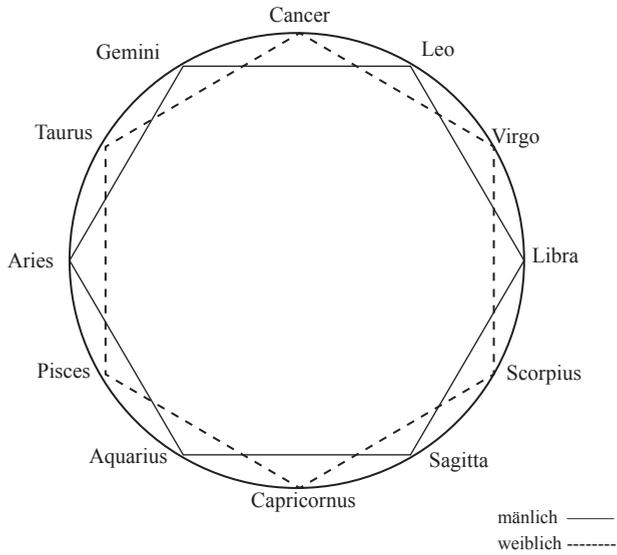


fig.2: Hexagonal gender

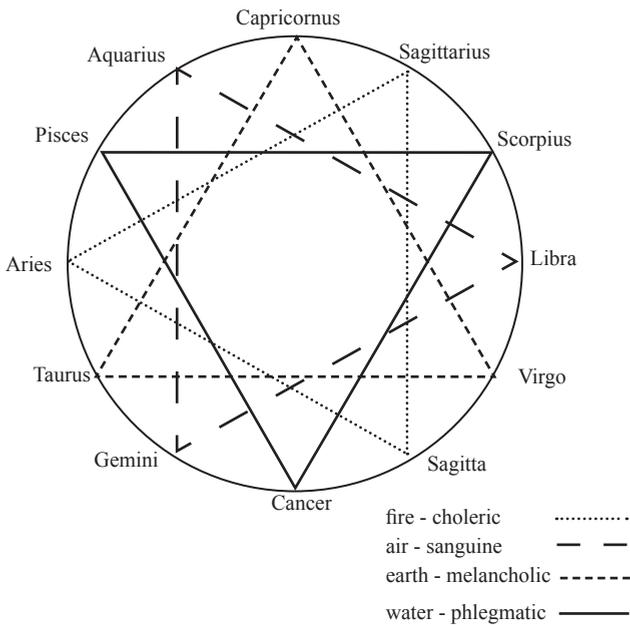


fig.3: The four regular triangles

<sup>9</sup> See A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 169-170.

As for gender there is no problem in the two opposite triplicities of the two upper elements, fire and air: The first triplicity (fire) is composed by the male beings Aries – Leo – Sagittarius, the opposite third triplicity (air) by the human-shaped signs Gemini – Libra – Aquarius. There remains only a little problem, since the soulless tool of the Balance must be combined with a holding person, the so-called *libripens*<sup>10</sup>.

There are more difficulties in the female hexagon, the signs of the two lower elements, earth and water. The second triplicity (earth) is composed by Taurus – Virgo – Capricornus. The Virgin is evidently female, but the Bull should be a male being. By sophisticated trickery astrologers invented some explications. Beside the fact that the Bull is located in an even position, this sign is the so-called night-house of Venus, it contains within its constellation the seven maidens, the Pleiades<sup>11</sup>, and it has been brought up to the sky only with its former part, the *πρωτομή*. So Ovid could utter a joke. One cannot distinguish the sex of *Taurus*, since his hinder parts are hidden<sup>12</sup>:

*vacca sit an taurus, non est cognoscere promptum:  
pars prior apparet, posteriora latent.*

The Capricorn is composed by a former part of a she-goat and a fish-tail: *desinit in piscem*, the latter is censured as female – as does the zodiacal Fish in the fourth and last triplicity (water): Cancer – Scorpius – Pisces.

#### b) The seven planets

The Babylonians had named the planets (I use the ancient terminology) after their gods, and the Greek replaced them by their own. Hesiodus had established in his *Theogony* a large screen of marriages and kinship. So the ground was prepared for astrological application. Ptolemy, in his chapter 1,6 *περὶ ἀρρενικῶν καὶ θηλυκῶν*, distributes to female nature moisture and humidity, represented by the moon and Venus, whereas the sun, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars are male, Mercury being ambiguous (*ἐπίκοιτος*)<sup>13</sup>. Shifting Mercury to the female group one obtains a system of perfect symmetry on both sides of the central – but nevertheless moving – sun (fig. 4)<sup>14</sup>:

<sup>10</sup> W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 130-135 nr. 3.12. Instances from the Middle Ages to modern times see W. HÜBNER, 2013, pp. 256f. with fig.205.

<sup>11</sup> Manil., V 140-156, see A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 182-192; W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 542f.; ID., 2010, II, pp. 79-89. But there is a contradiction, because the Bull rises in inverse direction: W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 101f. nr. 2.13, so the front should be at the end of the constellation.

<sup>12</sup> Ov., *fast.* 4,717f. The same idea in Eratosth., *catast.* 18 p. 122,9: Melanippe has been moved into the heaven as Equus (Pegasus) only with her first part, in order that her gender could not be recognized.

<sup>13</sup> Ptol., *apotel* 1.6.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. W. HÜBNER, 1998b, p. 328.

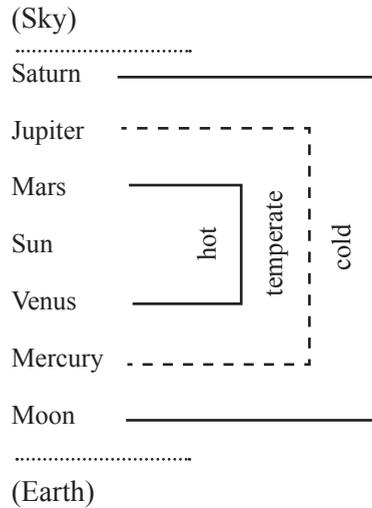


Fig. 4: The symmetry of the 'Chaldean' planetary system

There is no problem on the upper rank between the sun and the fixed stars: we find three generations of male gods: Saturn (grandfather) – Jupiter (father) – Mars (son); in modern times astronomers extrapolated the series until Uranus (the sky = greatgrandfather). On the lower and female rank however there is a difficulty: Between the female moon (Selene, Luna) and Venus we find Mercury, originally a male god, but also regarded as bisexual<sup>15</sup>, hence the designation of „hermaphrodite“. For the complete symmetry Mercury advanced from a hermaphrodite to a mere female planet.

Near the sun it is very hot, where the two genders attain the maximum of their power: Mars and Venus, belonging to the youngest generation, represent war and love. The mythical reason was the famous homeric story of Aphrodite's adultery with Ares. There is evidence that in Greece Aphrodite and Ares were worshipped in some places in the same sanctuary<sup>16</sup>.

#### c) The daily rotation

Hitherto we have studied the permanent nature of the heavenly bodies, zodiacal signs and planets. They become more or less male or female by a dynamic process

<sup>15</sup> W. HÜBNER, 1998b, p. 329 with n. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Hom., *Od.* 8,266-343, see W. BURKERT, 1960; W. HÜBNER, 1998c, p. 545; W. PÖTSCHER, 2001, pp. 20f.: in Thebai they were said to be married and to have children. Adultery is a rather frequent astrological prediction derived from the conjunction of Venus and Mars: Maneth., III(II) 239-333; IV 293-308 (in particular 305 μοιχοῖται); V(VI) 282f. See also Plotin., *Enn.* 2.3,6 μοιχείας ποιεῖν.

according to two other parameters<sup>17</sup>. First according to the position in relation to the sun: when they precede it in the morning, they become male, when they follow in the evening, female. The other reason is more important, their daily position in relation to the horizon (fig. 5):

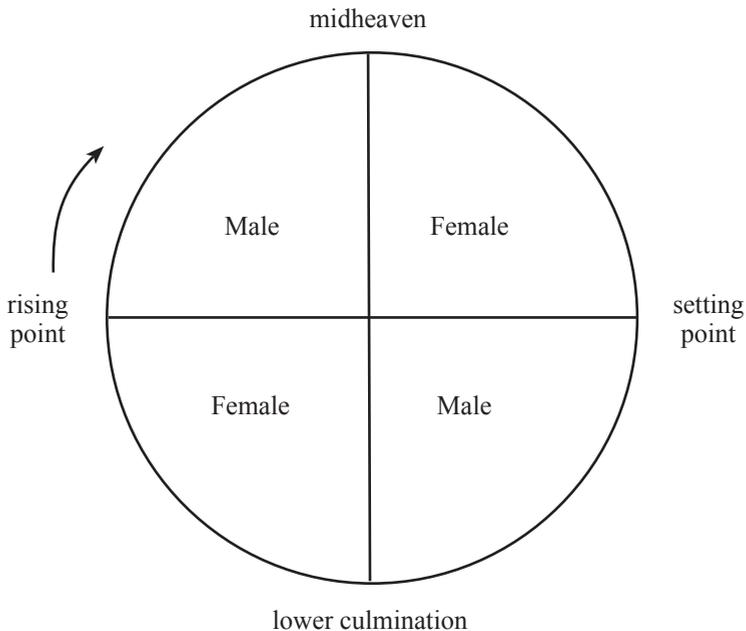


Fig.5: The four quarter of the daily rotation

In the quarter between the rising point (ᾠροσκοπος) and midheaven as well as in the opposite quarter between the setting point (δύσις) and the lower culmination the planets become male, in the other two quarters, that is in the quarter between midheaven and the setting point or between the lower culmination and the rising point they become female. In this way the gender alternate in a similar manner as for the zodiacal signs in the two hexagons (fig. 2).

## 2. Gender on earth, influenced by the stars

Let us now come down to the effects on earth caused by these three parameters. First we have to distinguish between universal ('catholic') and individual prognostication. The universal astrology is treated in book 2, the individual astrology in book 3 and 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 1.6,2.

## a) universal astrology

The long chapter 3 of book 2 deals with the astrological geography<sup>18</sup>. The four quarters of the οίκουμένη are distributed to the four triplicities (fig. 3), see the following diagram (fig. 6):

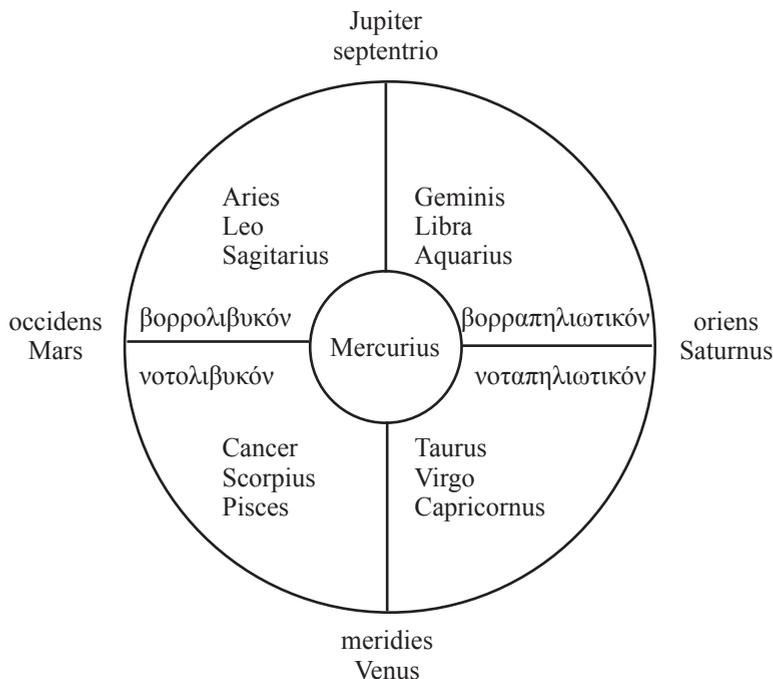


Fig. 6: The four quarters of the οίκουμένη, distributed to the four triplicities

The northwest (βορρολιβυκόν) is occupied by British, Gaul, German peoples and so on<sup>19</sup>. As in the sky (fig. 3), also on earth the first quarter is purely masculine and dominated by the first triplcity (Aries – Leo - Sagittarius). Their rulers (τριγωνοκράτορες) are Jupiter for the north and Mars for the west<sup>20</sup>. Because of the male gender of Jupiter and Mars these people are without passion for women and look down on the pleasures of love, but they are better satisfied with and more desir-

<sup>18</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3, cf. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 338-345.

<sup>19</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,12-21. I use the translation of F.E. ROBBINS, 1940, but maintaining my own numbering of the chapters (1998a).

<sup>20</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,3.

ous of association with men<sup>21</sup>: καταφρονητικοῖς τῶν ἀφροδισίων. πρὸς δὲ τὴν τῶν ἀρρένων συνουσίαν κατακορεστέροις.

But Ptolemy is more subtle, making a finer distinction between the frontside (ἐμπρόσθια) and the backside (ὀπίσθια) of the signs: their backside incline to the male (ἡρρενοῦσθαι), the ὀπίσθια to the female (τεθηλυῦσθαι)<sup>22</sup>. Some scholars distinguish between the first and the second part of the triplicity, but it is more likely that Ptolemy differentiates the peoples enumerated at the beginning, that are situated to the north and ruled more by Jupiter (from Britannia to the Bastarnae), from the peoples enumerated at the end, that are situated in the south and the west and ruled by Mars: Italy, Apulia, Sicily, Tuscany, and Celtic Spain.

The opposite quarter of southeast (νοταπηλιώτης) has a feminine character<sup>23</sup>, for it belongs to the second triplicity (Taurus – Virgo – Capricornus) and it concerns Greater Asia, India, Persia, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria and so on. The second triplicity is ruled by Venus and Saturn, in particular when they dwell in oriental position. These peoples worship the genital organs. Ptolemy argues<sup>24</sup>: “because of the combination of the aforesaid stars, which is by nature generative.” That is a clear reference to mythology: The genitals of Kronos (Saturn) had been cut off and thrown down into the sea, and from this Aphrodite was born, “born from foam”. So these peoples are inclined to the pleasures of love (καταφερεῖς πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια), and “they carry out their relation with women openly and not in secret, because of the planet’s oriental position.”<sup>25</sup> We may notice that the noun ἀφροδίσια is derived from Aphrodite herself<sup>26</sup>, and it is this goddess-planet that causes effeminate behavior<sup>27</sup>: τρυφεροὶ καὶ τεθηλυσμένοι διὰ τὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης.

The third quarter in the northeast (βορραπηλιωτικόν) is another male one<sup>28</sup>. It belongs to the ideal third triplicity, that of the air, which is composed of the human-shaped signs Gemini – Libra – Aquarius. It grants a rare harmonious sexual intercourse

<sup>21</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,14.

<sup>22</sup> This distinction does not figure in the general introduction, but we have some knowledge of it in Antiochus, see the apparatus of testimonies (1998a): Ant. *CCAG* VII (1908) pp. 113,15-16 ~ VIII 4 (1921) p. 195,2, cf. VIII 3 (1912) p. 109,16.

<sup>23</sup> Ptol., *apotel.*, 2.3,22-32.

<sup>24</sup> Ptol., *apotel.*, 2.3,24 διὰ τὸν τῶν προκειμένων ἀστέρων σχηματισμὸν σπερματικὸν ὄντα φύσει.

<sup>25</sup> Ptol., *apotel.*, 2.3,25.

<sup>26</sup> On the „Person-Bereichdenken“ see W. Pötscher (1959).

<sup>27</sup> Ptol., *apotel.*, 2.3,26.

<sup>28</sup> Ptol., *apotel.*, 2.3,33-41.

caused by a conjunction of Mars and Venus in the east (expressed by the ambiguous term συναρμογή: junction and conjunction) according to the aforesaid homeric story of the union of Ares and Aphrodite. But Ptolemy strengthens their interrelation by two further astrological parameters that he had explained in the first book<sup>29</sup>, adding: “Mars is exalted in Capricorn, a sign of Venus’ triangle [the second], and Venus in Pisces, a sign of Mars’ triangle [the fourth one].” So there will be perfect harmony<sup>30</sup>: “their women display entire goodwill to their husbands: they are affectionous, home-keepers, diligent, helpful, and in every respect laborious and obedient.”

The last quarter, located in the southwest (νοτολιβυκόν)<sup>31</sup> is another female one: It rules Libya including Numidia, Carthage, Africa and so on. It belongs to the fourth tri-plexity (Cancer – Scorpius – Pisces), associated with water, and ruled by Mars and Venus in evening position. Accordingly it causes a government shared between man and wife, and often brother and sister married, as we know from Egypt<sup>32</sup>. Ptolemy continues<sup>33</sup>: “They are extremely ardent (θερμοί) and disposed to commerce with women, so that even their marriages are brought about by violent abduction, and frequently the kings enjoy the *ius primae noctis* with the brides, and among some of them the women are common to all of the men.” And he continues even more<sup>34</sup>: “They are polygamous and polyandrous and lecherous, marrying even their own sisters, and the men are potent in begetting, the women in conceiving as their land is fertile.” The last association of fertile women and earth once more calls to mind Egypt and the Nile. And the author concludes with a bad position of the evil planets aspecting Venus in the evening position<sup>35</sup>: “Furthermore, many of the males are unsound and effeminate of soul, and some even hold in contempt the organs of generation.” Looking to the self-mutilation of the Gallois, the companions of the *Magna mater*, Ptolemy attains to the culmination of sexual perversity.

<sup>29</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 1.19-20. On the exaltations (ὕψώματα) see A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 192-199.

<sup>30</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,39 διὰ τοῦτο τὰς γυναῖκας συνέβη πᾶσαν εὐνοίαν πρὸς τοῖς ἄνδρας ἐνδείκνυσθαι, φιλοστόργους τε οὔσας καὶ οἰκουροὺς καὶ ἐργατικὰς καὶ ὑπηρετικὰς καὶ ὄλως πονικὰς καὶ ὑποταγε-μένας.

<sup>31</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2,3.42-50.

<sup>32</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.3,43 ὑπὸ ἄνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός, δυεῖν ὁμομητρίων ἀδελφῶν βασιλεύεσθαι.

<sup>33</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2,3,43 θερμοὶ τέ εἰσι σφόδρα καὶ καταφερεῖς πρὸς τὰς γυναικῶν συνουσίας, ὡς καὶ τοὺς γάμους δι’ ἄρπαγῶν γίνεσθαι καὶ πολλαχῆ ταῖς γαμουμέναις τοὺς βασιλέας πρώτους συνέρ-χεσθαι. παρ’ ἐνόιος δὲ καὶ κοινὰς εἶναι τὰς γυναῖκας πάντων.

<sup>34</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2,3,48 πολυγύνοιαι δὲ καὶ πολυάνδροι καὶ καταφερεῖς καὶ ταῖς δελφαῖς συναρμοζό-μενοι καὶ πολύσποροι οἱ ἄνδρες, εὐσύλληπτοι δὲ αἱ γυναῖκες, κολούθως τῷ τῆς χώρας γονίμῳ.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄρρένων σαθροὶ καὶ τεθλησμένοι ταῖς ψυχαῖς, ἔνιοι καὶ τῶν γεννητικῶν μορίων καταφρονούντες.

## b) Individual pronostication

The individual part of astrology (τὸ γενεθλιαλογικόν μέρος) fills the second part of the *Tetrabiblos*, books 3 and 4.

## α) Triplets

In book 3 there is a curious chapter on the birth of twins or triplets<sup>36</sup>. The following diagram once more shows a rigid symmetry of the four possibilities of the gender of triplets ruled by different planets (fig. 7):

gender	planets			further elements
three males	Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Anaktores
three females	Venus	moon	Mercury	Charites
two males - one female	Saturn	Jupiter	Venus	Dioskuroi
two females - one male	Venus	moon	Mars	Demeter - Kore

Fig. 7: Planetary gender of triplets

Three males are given by the three male planets beyond the sun (fig. 4), three females by the three female planets below. Two males and one female by Saturn, Jupiter and Venus, two females and one male by Venus, moon and Mars. As for the delicate Mercury, Ptolemy is more subtle<sup>37</sup>: “Venus and the moon together with Mercury feminized”, because this ambiguous planet needs some further condition for making him a female one. As for the triplets of different sex, the two planets of the opposite sex that intrude into the uniform triplets, are once again just the youthful neighbors of the sun, Mars and Venus.

The further conditions are singular in Ptolemy. The Ἀνάκτορες (‘rulers’) may be a combination (conjunction?) of the three exterior male planets themselves<sup>38</sup>, Χάριτες that of the three female planets themselves, but on the other hand Teukros, an astrologer who worked at the latest in the first century B.C., mentions for the sector Cancer 18°-20° a constellation (παρανατέλλον) named Χάριτες<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.8,3 περί διδυμογόνων, cf. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, p. 398, n. 2 “curieux passage”; F. BOLL, 1903, p. 272, n. 1: “in dem etwas mysteriösen Kapitel.” See W. HÜBNER, 1998(b), pp. 329-331.

<sup>37</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.8,3 Ἀφροδίτη σελήνη μεθ’ Ἑρμοῦ τεθλησμένον.

<sup>38</sup> See W. HÜBNER, 2010, II 2 on Manil. 5,5f. *ignes / Saturni Iovis et Martis*.

<sup>39</sup> F. BOLL, 1903, p. 272f., now edited along with the medieval Latin translation by W. HÜBNER, 1995, I 4,8, pp. 114f., with commentary II 34.

Διοσκοῦροι are perhaps the combination of Saturn, Jupiter and Venus with regard to the triplet of their mother Leda: two males (Kastor and Pollux) and Helena, Δήμητηρ καὶ Κόρη could mean the combination of Venus, moon and Mars. One can only guess what could be the male god. Hephaestio, the compiler of Ptolemy in the fifth century introduces Pluto here<sup>40</sup>, some manuscripts add Dionysos<sup>41</sup>. Nobody hitherto has taken into consideration Triptolemus<sup>42</sup>, whose name contains the notion of 'three'. Despite this final blank one admires once more the extreme rigorism of the mythological construction.

### β) Sexual influences on the soul

But triplets are rare. The last chapters of book 3 deal with more common life, the last but one chapter<sup>43</sup> with the psychical disposition of the soul: *περὶ ποιότητος ψυχῆς*. The second part of this chapter evolves a wide panorama of possibilities, deriving almost all predictions from the planets. Saturn and Mars, the two malefic ones, in evil position give adulterers<sup>44</sup>, Saturn and Venus in favourable positions haters of women and individuals who are faithful in marriage<sup>45</sup>, while in evil positions loose, and lascivious people, doers of base acts, indiscriminating and unclean in sexual relations, impure, deceivers of women and particularly of their own kin, adulterers, lawless in sexual relations, both active and passive, both natural and unnatural<sup>46</sup>. The equilibrated ('jovial') Jupiter together with Venus, the other beneficent planet, in favourable position, makes moderate and decorous in matters of love<sup>47</sup>, but in unfavourable position effeminate, womanly in spirit, evil in relationship with wom-

<sup>40</sup> Heph., III 7.16 where should be corrected Πλούτωνα.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Codex Norimbergensis, used by CAMERARIUS, 1535 and A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, p. 398. So does S. FERABOLI, 1985, p. 426 "Demetra, Core e Libero [i.e. *Liber*]" against her own edition (p. 208,25) Δήμητρος καὶ Κόρης.

<sup>42</sup> There is a congenial combination in G. PASQUALI (1906 on H. v. POTT), 79, who compares the famous relief from Eleusis (Demeter, Kore, Triptolemos) and the marmor-group from Sparta (Dioscuroi, Helena), p. 80 "E così si ottiene un'altra **παρεδρία** un po' diversa da quella Eleusina; là, madre, figlia e **πάρεδρος**; qui alla divinità femminile sono congiunti due **πάρεδροι** maschili." He could have referred to Ptolemy.

<sup>43</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14, cf. A. Bouché-Leclercq (1899), 433f.

<sup>44</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,15 νοθευτάς.

<sup>45</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,16 μισογυναίους ... αὐστηροὺς πρὸς συνουσίας, ... αἰδήμονας.

<sup>46</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,17 ἀσελγεῖς, αἰσχροποιούς, ἀδιαφόρους καὶ ἀκαθάρτους πρὸς τὰς συνουσίας, ἀνάγνους, ἐπιβουλευτικούς θηλυκῶν προσώπων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκειοτάτων ..., διαθέντας καὶ διαθεμένους οὐ μόνον πρὸς τὰ κατὰ φύσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν.

<sup>47</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,24 ἐπαφροδίτους ἐν τῷ σεμνῷ, ... συμμέτρους καὶ εὐσχίμονας πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια.

en, erotic, lascivious, lecherous, adulterous, womanly minded<sup>48</sup>. Mars and Venus in good positions produces of course ἐρωτικούς<sup>49</sup>, in evil positions leering (with the pretty epithet ῥιψοφθάλμους: ‘casting the eyes about’), lascivious and so on<sup>50</sup>. Venus alone in unfavorable positions makes once more ἐρωτικούς, effeminate, womanish<sup>51</sup>, and together with Mercury in favourable position in affairs of love restrained in their relations with women, but more passionate for boys<sup>52</sup>. In evil positions they produce adulterers, corruptors of women and children<sup>53</sup>. One remarks an evident pleasure to describe exuberantly all possibilities of these scabrous phenomena.

γ) Sexual depravations and perversities

The last chapter of book 3 on diseases of the soul (περὶ παθῶν ψυχικῶν)<sup>54</sup> is divided into two equal parts: The first six paragraphs deal with epilepsia and mania, which depend on Mercury and the moon, modified by the unfavourable planets (either Mars or Saturn). The second half<sup>55</sup> gives a complete catalogue of sexual depravation. After having divided the soul into two parts, the active and the passive portion (ποιητικόν and παθητικόν), the author follows the famous Aristotelian notion of balance (μεσότης) between excesses and deficiencies (ὑπερβολή and ἔλλειψις)<sup>56</sup>. Instead of Mercury and the moon (as before) now the effects depend on the two luminaries, sun and moon, modified, instead of (as before) by the malevolent planets (Mars and Saturn), here again by the young erotic couple of Mars and Venus.

Once more, a perfect symmetry of syntaxis and contents as well has been constructed, and it is worth while to follow the endless conditional clauses. Ptolemy

<sup>48</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,25 θηλυψύχους, ... γυναικοθύμους, ... καταγυναίους, ἐρωτικούς, ... γυναικονοήμονας.

<sup>49</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,29 ἐρωτικούς ... ἀπολαυστρικούς.

<sup>50</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,30 ῥιψοφθάλμους, λάγνους, καταφερεῖς, ... μοιχικούς, ... ὑπονοθευτάς οἰκείων τε καὶ ἄλλοτρίων, ὄξεις ἅμα καὶ προσκορεῖς πρὸς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας, διαφθορεῖς γυναικῶν καὶ παρθένων ..., διατιθημένους καὶ ἀσελγαίνοντας.

<sup>51</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,33 ἐρωτικούς, τεθελυσμένους, γυναικώδεις.

<sup>52</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,34 τῶν δὲ ἀφροδισίων πρὸς μὲν τὰ γυναικεῖα φυλακτικούς, πρὸς δὲ τὰ παιδικὰ μᾶλλον κεκινημένοι.

<sup>53</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.14,35 νοθευτάς, γυναικῶν διαφθορέας καὶ παίδων.

<sup>54</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15, cf. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 434-436.

<sup>55</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,7-12.

<sup>56</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,7 τὰς ... τοῦ ἄρρενος καὶ θήλεως ὑπερβολὰς καὶ ἔλλειψεις. In general see 3.15,2 ἐπειδὴ περ ἤδη τις ἂν εἰκότως εἶποι πάθη καὶ τὰ ἄκρα τῶν ἡθῶν καὶ ἤτοι ἐλλείποντα ἢ καὶ πλεονάζοντα τῆς μεσότητος.

argues<sup>57</sup>: “If the luminaries are unattended in masculine signs, males exceed in the natural (κατὰ φύσιν) and females in the unnatural quality (παρὰ φύσιν), so as merely to increase the virility and activity of the soul.” And he continues<sup>58</sup>: “But if likewise Mars or Venus as well ... is made masculine (ἡρρενωμένοι), the males become addicted to natural sexual intercourse (κατὰ φύσιν), and are adulterous, insatiate, and ready on every occasion for base and lawless acts of sexual passion, while the females are lustful for unnatural congresses (παρὰ φύσιν), cast inviting glances of the eye (ῥιψόφθαλμοι), and are what we call τριβάδες, for they deal with females that perform the functions of males.”

But this is not quite enough, he makes a further distinction in the case of Venus and Mars<sup>59</sup>: “If Venus alone is constituted in a masculine manner (ἡρρενωμένος), they do these things secretly and not openly. But if Mars likewise is so constituted, without reserve, so that sometimes they even designate the woman with whom they are on such terms as their lawful ‘wives’ (ὥσπερ γυναῖκας).”

The opposite effect comes about, when the luminaries are situated unattended in feminine zodiacal signs<sup>60</sup>: “The females exceed in the natural (κατὰ φύσιν), and the males in the unnatural practice (παρὰ φύσιν), with the result that their souls become soft and effeminate (πρὸς τὸ εὐθρυπτον καὶ τεθελυσμένον).”

Once more the couple of Venus and Mars causes further modification: “If Venus too is made feminine (τεθελυσμένος), the women became depraved, adulterous, and lustful, with the result that they may be dealt with in the natural manner (κατὰ φύσιν) on any occasion and by anyone soever, and so that they refuse absolutely no sexual contact, though it be base and unlawful.”

<sup>57</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,8 εἰ μὲν μόνα τὰ φῶτα ἐν ἀρσενικοῖς ἢ ζῳδίοις, οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες ὑπερβάλλουσι τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν πρὸς τὸ ἔπανδρον ἀπλῶς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ δραστηκώτερον.

<sup>58</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 2.15,8f. ... εἰ μὲν δὲ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεως ἢ καὶ ὁ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἦτο ὀπότερος ἢ καὶ ἀμφοτέρω ὄσιν ἡρρενωμένοι, οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες πρὸς τὰς κατὰ φύσιν συνουσίας γίνονται καταφερεῖς καὶ μοιχικοὶ καὶ ἀκόρεστοι καὶ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ πρόχειροι πρὸς τε τὰ αἰσχρὰ καὶ τὰ παράνομα τῶν ἀφροδισίων· αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες πρὸς τὰς παρὰ φύσιν ὀμιλίας λάγνα καὶ ῥιψόφθαλμοι καὶ αἱ καλούμεναι τριβάδες· διατιθέασιν γὰρ θηλείας ἀνδρῶν ἔργα ἐπιτελοῦσας. Robbins reads the last sentence as follows: διατιθέασιν δὲ θηλείας ἀνδρῶν ἔργα ἐπιτελοῦσαι, and he translates: “for they deal with females and perform the functions of males”.

<sup>59</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,9 κἂν μὲν μόνος ὁ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἡρρενωμένος ἦ, λάθρα καὶ οὐκ ἀναφανδόν· εἰ μὲν δὲ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεως, ἄντικρυς, ὥστε ἐνίοτε καὶ νομίμως ὥσπερ γυναῖκας τὰς διατιθεμένας ἀναδεικνύειν.

<sup>60</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,10 τὸ δ' ἐναντίον τῶν φώτων κατὰ τὸν ἐκκείμενον σχηματισμὸν ἐν θηλυκοῖς ζῳδίοις ὑπαρχόντων μόνον, αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ὑπερβάλλουσι τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν πρὸς τὸ εὐθρυπτον καὶ τεθελυσμένον τῆς ψυχῆς.

And once again we read about the other sex, the male gender: “The men, on the contrary, become effeminate and unsound with respect to unnatural congresses (παρὰ φύσιν) and the functions of women, and are dealt with as pathics, though privately and secretly.”

So the influence of Venus may be still rather propitious, but her influence is strengthened once again by Mars, when he dwells in feminine places (τεθηλυσμένος)<sup>61</sup>: “Their shamelessness is outright and frank, and they perform the aforesaid acts of either kind, assuming the guise of common bawds who submit to general abuse and to every baseness until they are stamped with the reproach and insult that attend such usages.”

Finally Ptolemy introduces the three male true planets in the traditional descending order<sup>62</sup>: first Saturn, the other evil planet (beside Mars), responsible already in the former chapter for all kinds of depravation and degeneration<sup>63</sup>: “If Saturn is present together with them, his influence joins with each of the foregoing to produce more licentiousness, impurity, and disgrace, while Jupiter aids in the direction of greater decorum, restraint, and modesty, and Mercury tends to increase notoriety, instability of the emotions, versatility, and foresight.” This is the very end of the long and difficult third book of the *Apotelesmatika*.

Book 4 returns to everyday life and contains another long chapter on marriage and other forms of sexual intercourse (περὶ συναρμογῶν)<sup>64</sup> Here again the author passes through all thinkable combinations of parameters in a ‘geometric’ symmetry. The first eight paragraphs deal with legal marriages, the quality and character of the partners<sup>65</sup>. A men looking for a wife must observe her moon, a wife looking for a man his sun, paying attention, if they dwell in the east or in the west<sup>66</sup>. The five true

<sup>61</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,11 ἄντικρυς καὶ μετὰ παρρησίας ἀναισχυντοῦσι τὰ προκείμενα, καθ’ ἑκάτερον εἶδος ἀποτελοῦντες τὸ πορνικὸν καὶ πολύκοινον καὶ πολύμογον καὶ πάναισχρον σχῆμα, περιβαλλόμενοι μέχρι τῆς κατὰ τὴν λοιδορίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς χρήσεως ὕβριν σημειώσεως.

<sup>62</sup> Hereon see W. HÜBNER, 2002.

<sup>63</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,12 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ μὲν τοῦ Κρόνου συμπροσγενόμενος ἐπὶ τὸ ἀσελγέστερον καὶ ἀκαθαρότερον ἢ καὶ ἐπονειδιστότερον ἑκάστῳ τῶν ἐκκειμένων πέφυκε συνεργεῖν, ὁ δὲ τοῦ Διὸς πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημονέστερον καὶ φυλακτικώτερον καὶ αἰδημονέστερον, ὁ δὲ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς τε τὸ περιβοητότερον καὶ τὸ τῶν παθῶν εὐκινήτοτερον καὶ πολυτροπώτερον καὶ εὐπροσκοπώτερον.

<sup>64</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5, cf. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 447-451.

<sup>65</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5,1-8.

<sup>66</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5,1 ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀφορᾶν δεῖ τὴν σελήνην αὐτῶν, πῶς διάκειται. §4 ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν ἀφορᾶν δεῖ τὸν ἥλιον αὐτῶν κτλ. We find similar oppositions in Firm., *math.* 2.19,23 *sane patrem et in viri et in mulieris genitura Sol ostendit, matrem Luna, uxorem Venus, Mars maritum*; cf. 6.32,32 *generaliter uxorem Venus, maritum Mars semper ostendit*.

planets and the nature of some zodiacal signs determine the quality of their partners, or the permanence of the marriage, or the prospect of having one or several weddings.

#### δ) Modifying zodiacal signs

The second and longer portion of the chapter<sup>67</sup> deals with other, mostly illegitimate sexual relationships, that depend on Venus, Mars and Saturn, whose influence is modified by some zodiacal signs that increase the extreme differentiation (τὸ ποικίλον)<sup>68</sup>. Let me pick up only the sexual aberrations by marriages of kin, that once again are ranged along in a rigid symmetry, starting once more from Venus and Saturn dwelling in their common signs, Capricorn and Balance (ἐπίκοινα)<sup>69</sup>. On the one hand the influence of the moon causes males to marry their daughters or their mother's sisters, or their stepmothers, or causes females to wed their sons, brothers' sons, or their daughters' husbands. On the other hand the influence of the sun causes males to marry their daughters, daughters' sisters, or their sons' wives, or causes females to wed their fathers, fathers' brothers, or stepfathers<sup>70</sup>.

Further aberrations are influenced by feminine places or by special degrees of the ecliptic hinting to ἀσέλγεια<sup>71</sup>: the former and hinder parts of Aries, the Hyades, the pitcher of Aquarius, the hinder parts of Leo, and the face of Capricorn<sup>72</sup>. It's true that Ptolemy deals in general with the planets. In the third book, speaking of sexual intercourse, he relates only once<sup>73</sup> to the feminine signs in general (fig. 2). It is only in the fourth book that he introduces particular degrees of the zodiac. On the contrary, in the *Astronomica* of the didactic poet Manilius, written under the reign of Augustus, the zodiacal signs prevail, whereas the planets have only a subsidiary function.

<sup>67</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5,9-20.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ptol., *apotel.* 4.4,9 on the ἄπειρον of possibilities: πρὸς τὸ ποικίλον τῶν πράξεων.

<sup>69</sup> It should be the signs of their houses (and for Saturn in addition his exaltation in Libra 21°), see A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, 1899, pp. 182-192.

<sup>70</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5,12 ἡ σελήνη συμπροσγενομένη ποιεῖ τοὺς μὲν ἄρρενας μητράσιν ἢ μητέρων ἀδελφαῖς ἢ μητρυαῖς συνέρχεσθαι, τὰς δὲ θηλείας υἱοῖς ἢ υἱοῖς ἀδελφῶν ἢ θυγατέρων ἀνδράσιν ἢ υἱοῖς δὲ δυτικῶν μάλιστα ὄντων τῶν ἀστέρων τοὺς μὲν ἄρρενας θυγατράσιν ἢ θυγατέρων ἀδελφαῖς ἢ γυναιξίν υἱῶν, τὰς δὲ θηλείας πατράσιν ἢ πατέρων ἀδελφαῖς ἢ πατροῖς.

<sup>71</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 4.5,13 ποιούσι καὶ οὕτως καταφερεῖς καὶ πρὸς τὸ διαθεῖναι τε καὶ διατεθῆναι πάντα τρόπον προχείρους, ἐπ' ἐνίῳν δὲ μορφώσεων καὶ ἀσελγείας, ὡς ἐπὶ τε τῶν ἐμπροσθίων καὶ ὀπισθίων τοῦ Κριοῦ καὶ τῆς Ὑάδος καὶ τῆς Καλπίδος καὶ τῶν ὀπισθίων τοῦ Λέοντος καὶ τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ Αἰγόκερω.

<sup>72</sup> See in general W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 214-217 nr. 4.3.

<sup>73</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 3.15,10 ἐν θηλυκοῖς ζῳδίοις, quoted above in n. 60.

The Virgin, for instance, is *casta*,<sup>74</sup> but also barren<sup>75</sup>. In book 5, single degrees are modified by the extrazodiacal constellations (*παρανατέλλοντα*)<sup>76</sup>.

The data of Ptolemy regarding the licentious signs (*ἀσελγεῖς*) sometimes agree with Manilius or other sources, but not exclusively. First Ptolemy mentions the Ram, the leading zodiacal sign, and especially its former and hinder parts. This is confirmed by Manilius: Together with Aries 20° rise the two Bucks (*Haedi*), and their natives “spend their youth in fickle loves”<sup>77</sup>.

The next constellation in Ptolemy, the Ὑάς, is situated in the front of the Bull<sup>78</sup>, the leader of the feminine hexagon (fig. 2). Manilius concludes the passage on its natives with the point<sup>79</sup>: “and in their faces dwells the boy-god Cupido”. The extremely female character of the Bull is strengthened by the fact that he is the “night-house” of Venus<sup>80</sup>, and furthermore by the Pleiades, the seven girl-goddesses, situated exactly in his front, and according to Manilius they appear with Taurus 6°, at the beginning of the sign<sup>81</sup>. The natives of Taurus together with the Pleiades prefer beauty and embellishment, even feminine appearance (*femineae vestes*), and they will also make public their love<sup>82</sup>:

*semper amare parum est: cupient et amare videri.*

To give their love is never enough: they will also want their love to be seen.

The following pitcher of Aquarius (*καλπίς*), however, is not at all pertinent here. As a human-shaped sign the water-pourer belongs to the well-balanced

<sup>74</sup> Manil., IV 200-202; IV 546 and W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 562f.; IV 763 with respect to Rhodes, cf. W. HÜBNER, 1982, 217 nr. 4.333.2.

<sup>75</sup> Manil., II 234-243, the distributions are variegated, see W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 156-164 nr. 3.321 and p. 499-508.

<sup>76</sup> See W. HÜBNER, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Manil., V 111 *vario ducunt in amore iuventam*, I quote the translation of GEORGE PATRICK GOOLD, 1977. Hereon W. HÜBNER, 1982, p. 535; ID., 2010, II 64f. The Bucks belong to the Charioteer (Auriga), that precedes, according to Manilius (V 67-101), together with Aries 15°.

<sup>78</sup> By a clumsy error Manil., V 118-127 pretends that the Hyades rise after the Bucks together with Aries 27°, see W. HÜBNER, 2010, II 67-71. For the etymology *Hyades* – ὕς ibid. 70 on Manil., V 125 *immundos ... greges*, and W. GUNDEL, 1913, cols. 2616,8-2617,47.

<sup>79</sup> Manil., IV 151 *habitatque puer sub fronte Cupido*, see W. HÜBNER, 1982, p. 540.

<sup>80</sup> Ptol., *apotel.* 1.18,8, see above n. 11.

<sup>81</sup> Manil., V 140-156. Parts of the zodia themselves are often situated at the beginning of the ὀδοκατημόριον: W. HÜBNER, 2010, I, p. 30 and II, p. 80 ad l.

<sup>82</sup> Manil., V 156.

third triplicity of air (fig. 3). So he is mentioned only scarcely in erotic context – on the contrary, he is estimated to be καθάριος and chaste<sup>83</sup>, even though identified with Ganymed<sup>84</sup>.

Aquarius is opposite to the Lion. This sign concerns erotic context only in late antiquity<sup>85</sup>. The last item, however, the face (πρόσωπον) of Capricorn, is a traditional zodiacal degree of ἀσέλγεια since Manilius<sup>86</sup>: “The fist part of the sign is a slave of Venus, and with guilt involved” - *Veneri mixto cum crimine servit / pars prior*. So Ptolemy adds to the evil effects of Venus and Saturn the secondary influence exerted by the zodiacal signs, that enhance the maximum of erotic deprivation.

### Conclusion

The sexual polarity of male and female is integrated into a worldwide web of oppositions by mythical thought. As for the zodiacal signs astrologers derive their gender not only from their fanciful shapes of human or bestial figures along with the correspondent mythical tales, but also from the Pythagorean arithmetics of even and odd numbers. The planetary gods are inherited from Babylonian astrology, replaced and enriched by the exuberant Greek mythology. So Babylonian astrology, Pythagorean arithmology and Greek mythology work together. In Ptolemy's *Apotelesmatica* multiple paramaters work together: planets, zodiacal signs and daily rotation. One admires the rigid geometrical symmetry of both syntax and contents. Transmitted by the Romans the bipartite system came down to the Middle Ages and to modern times. The two symbols of Mars and Venus (♂ and ♀), the hyper-erotic couple on both sides of the central hot sun (fig. 4), continue to be used for the two opposite sexes even nowadays.

<sup>83</sup> Anon. (ex Rhetorio?) *CCAG* I (1898), p. 166,6, cf. Anon. S ed. W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 384,50 καθάρων, *ibid.*, 417 nr. 4.333.2 and p. 603 on Manil., IV 571 (on the natives of Aquarius) *sanc-tumque ... castumque probumque*.

<sup>84</sup> F. BOLL – W. GUNDEL, 1937, cols. 925 and 976f.; W. HÜBNER, 1998(b), pp. 336-338.

<sup>85</sup> Iulianus of Laodikeia (about 500 AD) *CCAG* IV (1903), p. 152,8; Anon. (ex Rhetorio?)

<sup>86</sup> Manil., IV 257b/a, see W. HÜBNER, 1982, p. 591. Cf. Anon. anni 379 *CCAG* V 1 (1904), p. 206,19 τοῦ προσώπου ἦτοι ῥύγχους τοῦ Αἰγόκερω; Anon. *de gradibus fixis* II 10,6, ed. W. HÜBNER, 1995, I, p. 145 (Capricornus 6°) *os Capricorni ... facit fornicatores et fornicatrices tupia facientes*, and commentary II 132. Without indication of the face Dorotheus arabus, II 7,5 “which abound in lust”; Antiochos, *CCAG* VII (1908), p. 116,7 (cf. p. 113,3 on the first place); Val., I 2.57, see again W. HÜBNER, 1982, pp. 214-217 nr. 4.31.

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