

Joanna Komorowska 
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw

***In Lampadem mundani splendoris acceditur: Astrological Component of Martianus Capella’s De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii I*¹**

ABSTRACT: The article proposes the reading of Capella’s *NMPH* I 14–15 and the relevant encounter of Mercury and Apollo against the background of contemporary astrological doctrine. The carefully outlined astrological semantics of the seven rivers and of the subsequent rising of Apollo/the Sun provide an additional insight into the complex and multilayered nature of Mercury’s travels as portrayed by Martianus, but also furnish an important indication of the overall importance of the astrological component in the work.

KEYWORDS: Martianus Capella, astrology, cosmology

Depicting events leading to the eponymous wedding of Mercury and Philology, Book One of Martianus’s *grande oeuvre* features a striking description of a meeting between Phoebus and the Cyllenian, accompanied by Virtus. Seen within the narrative arc, the meeting furthers the primary agenda of the work, since Apollo (due to his oracular abilities) is able to reveal the name of the fated bride; still, the way in which the

¹ The article results from research conducted under terms of NPRH grant 22H 20 0212 88 (*Martianus Capella De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*). Quotations follow the text given in the most recent Budé edition when possible, the older edition of J. Willis where the more recent remains unavailable.

encounter is portrayed remains – in true Martianus fashion² – highly allegoric: the younger god and his companion, Virtue, strive to locate the elder, wiser (not to mention more powerful) deity while facing several adversities and overcoming various highly symbolic obstacles along the way. In keeping with the general character of the work (though most prominently its introductory books 1–2), the two divine brothers are portrayed both as personified divinities (i.e. in the mould of Homeric gods) and as their planetary or celestial namesakes (with their respective peculiarities). The resulting ambiguity may sometimes confuse an unwary reader, as the divinity effectively assumes the physical or semantic idiosyncrasies of the respective planet. Consequently, the book is riddled with allusions to both astronomy (astrology³) and alchemy⁴ – it is however these first (or rather one precise example of such a reference) that constitute the primary focus of this brief study. What I aim at is, first, furthering our understanding of Martianus’s erudition and artistry as manifested in his exploitation of astrological doctrines in the said portrayal, and, second, the illustration of the manner in which astrological imagery can be said to pervade the ancient literary text not immediately associated with the science itself.

Certainly, the most prominent references to the astrological and alchemical doctrines appear in the description of Mercury’s travels: on their way to meet Apollo, the Cyllenian and Virtue observe the confluence of several celestial rivers and the related changes in human fortunes (this accounts for the astrological component) and, subsequently, witness Apollo carefully mixing the content of different jars (the alchemical). Clearly, it is the first (the image of the confluence in *NMPH* c. 14–15) that is paramount importance for the present purpose: seven streams descend from heaven, fashioned in a form of the vortex,⁵ each endowed with its own, distinct character and colour whirl around,

² For general introduction to Martianus’s work cf. for example Grebe 1999: 20–50; Navarro Antolín 2016: xxi–xlii; for the overview of the first volume Chevalier 2019: i–xlix.

³ For the intrinsic connection between the two cf. Ptolemaeus *Tetrabiblos* I, *proem*; for the detailed historical study see Hübner 1989.

⁴ For the alchemical component cf. Chevalier 2019: 93–95, n. 273–283.

⁵ For the idea of cosmic vortex and its importance in early religion see most recently Bonnechere and Cursaru 2020, Gregory 2007.

human lives carried around by these differing currents, subject to the apparent whims of the external forces.⁶ Interestingly, the pair has to cross these streams in order to reach Phoebus, a travel symbolically anticipating the sequence of Philologia's own ascension in Book Two. Namely, where Virtue and Mercury have to cross (*transeundos esse*) the seven currents in order to reach Apollo, Philologia will move in a distinctly upward direction, passing through seven individual heavenly spheres, and hence literally ascending the upper heavens.⁷

Let us briefly consider the images associated with individual planets / deities (strikingly, Martianus's depiction, for all its stylistic variation, appears to display considerable consistency in emphasising very particular qualities of each stream-planet⁸). It is worth mentioning that throughout the analysed text, the names of the planets themselves are never mentioned (hence the parentheses) – indeed, the duty to recognise the astrological arrangement is essentially left to the reader, which in turn manifests the level of skill and erudition that Martianus expects of the one attempting to decipher the work.

Speed	Colour	Nature	[Planet]
Slow, halting, spread out (<i>dif-fusioris ac prolixi ambitus ... pigris-que cursibus haesitabat</i>)	Cloudy grey (<i>nebulosum</i>)	Freezing, cold (<i>liventis aquae volumine ... algidis cursibus</i>)	[Saturn (as the coldest and slowest of planets)]

⁶ The resulting notion of human condition bears considerable similarity to that depicted in Firmicus Maternus' *Mathesis* I 7 or Manilius' *Astronomica* IV 1–121.

⁷ The additional connecting element is provided by the presence of the Muses – located each on her proper sphere in Book One, they will actually escort Philologia during her ascension in Book Two (c. 117 sq.)

⁸ Unfortunately, while astrological literature is known to differentiate between five planets and two luminaries (*luminaria*), it is quite frequent to refer to all seven celestial bodies circulating below the fixed sphere as *errantes* or *planetai*. Thus, in any discussion of ancient astrology we are effectively left with a system of seven *planetai* and number of fixed stars.

Calm (<i>quietus motu</i>)	Shining white, silvery (<i>lactis instar, candida, argenteis undis</i>)	Calm and temperate (<i>mitis omnia</i>)	[Jupiter (as a beneficial and favourable planet ⁹)]
Fast and violent, contorted (<i>festinataque rapiditate praecipites cursus celeritate</i> etc.)	Reddish, fiery (<i>nimio rubroque igne rutilantes</i>)	Loud, sulphury, unruly (<i>anhela sulphureus praecipites cursus torquebat</i>)	[Mars, the iconically fiery planet]
Measured and balanced	Golden, twinkling with fire (<i>auratus, fulgidus, flammis coruscantibus rutilans</i>)	Balancing those around (<i>quantum pensabat moderatio, temperabat</i>)	[Sun]
Slow, yet measured (<i>lenis</i>)	Amber, golden hued (<i>electro purior</i>)	Sweet smelling, sweet, pleasantly bubbling (<i>dulcissimus gurges, odor et halatus, canori modulatus</i>)	[Venus]
Fast, often interrupted (<i>nimia celeritate festinus ac plerumque consistens relabensque</i>)	Colour undetectable because of vicinity of others	Variable	[Mercury]
Erring and effervescent (<i>flexuosisque anfractibus errabundus spumabat</i>)	Colour undetectable because of vicinity of others	Variable	[Moon]

⁹ It is useful to remember that in classical astrology Jupiter and Venus are regarded as essentially beneficial (indeed the influence of Jupiter can effectively nullify many ominous *schemata* within the horoscope, a point repeatedly confirmed throughout Firmicus Maternus' *Mathesis* IV), while Mars and Saturn are generally considered unfavourable and noxious.

The sprawling orbits and extended periods of outer planets are mirrored in the slow, almost sluggish (particularly in the case of Saturn) flow of the respective currents, meanwhile Saturn's intrinsic cold and Jupiter's temperate nature are projected onto the character of the corresponding waters. Similarly, the reddish stream corresponding to Mars appears to borrow its nature from the warlike qualities of the planet: twisting and turbulent, it reflects the contortions of the observable course of Mars, much faster than those of Jupiter or Saturn, and hence far more notable for its rapid changes of direction and velocity.

The enticing nature of the sweet smelling, amber-coloured stream associated with Venus brings to mind the ambiguous influence of the respective deity associated after all, with bodily pleasures and delights of an often carnal nature. This close link with the sensual remains necessarily troubling particularly when set against the predominantly intellectual pursuits advocated in the work or, indeed, against the very search for Apollo (the iconic oracular god, betrothed to the young Mantike, c. 6). After all, it was Venus, the goddess, that brought down young Psyche, the latter's downfall influenced by carefully encouraged predilection for somatic (and thus also carnal) pleasures in c. 7.¹⁰

Then, there is the very impossibility of properly describing the colour of Mercury's river – this, one may argue reflects the intrinsically changeable and fluid nature of *koinos aster*, the planet belonging to either planetary sect (*hairesis*) depending on its position. Finally, the mention of *spumare* in the last description appears to allude not only to the known link between lunar phases and the terrestrial waters (most prominently, tides), but also to the folk (and literary) notion of *spuma lunaris*, the potentially harmful excretion associated with the Moon.¹¹

¹⁰ To quote: *et unguentis oblitam floribusque redimitam halatu pasci fouerique docuerat et melle permulserat et auro et monilibus inhiare membraque uinciri honorationis celsae affectatione persuaserat. Tunc crepitacula tintinnitusque, quis infanti somnum duceret, adhibebat quiescenti. Praeterea ne ullum tempus sine illecebris oblectamentisque decurreret, pruritui subscalpentem circa ima corporis apposuerat uoluptatem.*

¹¹ On this, cf. e.g. Lucan *BC VI* 506 ([Luna] *despumet in herbas*), Valerius Flaccus 6.447 (*Atracio lunam spumare veneno*) or Statius *Theb. II* 284 (*hanc spumis lunariibus unguis*), on Moon in ancient magic see most recently ní Mheallaigh 2020: 8–48.

The descriptions provided by Martianus are both on point as far as the astrological dogmas are concerned and in agreement with the gist of the more detailed as well as more factual portrayals of the gods (and respective planetary spheres) in later part of the work (*De nuptiis* II). The astrological background of the description, however, is clearly highlighted by open references to human fortunes (indeed, human lives) being carried by the currents. Subject to the changing dynamics of celestial rivers the fortunes experience appropriate – seemingly capricious – changes (c. 15):

Hi igitur cursus discoloris amnes praedictas rerum nationumque Fortunas immensis primo sinibus ambiebant. Tunc diversa undarum violensque rapiditas singulas quasque improvisa vi per declivis alvei praecipitates lapsus rapidis turbiniibus pertrahebat, ita ut alius easdem plerumque alteri transfunderet fluvio, et quam ille exercitam longa collisione vexarat, alter aut ripae redderet aut amne mersaret etc.

In fact, the description of this ungovernable, highly arbitrary force governing both individual and communal fates reflects the notions of planetary influences as depicted in Firmicus Maternus' *Mathesis* I or – at a much earlier date – Manilius' *Astronomica* IV (IV. 1–120). At the same moment, however, one may think of the widespread doctrine of *chronocratores*, planets ruling different periods of human life.¹²

Further, the depiction of the seven differing currents hints at the contents of both Book Two (ascent of Philologia) and Seven (Astronomia): the vortex reflects the actual sequence of the planetary orbits in the *ordo Chaldaicus*,¹³ while also hinting at certain idiosyncrasies of both Mercury and the Moon; further, it may be argued that the orderly flow of description so manifest with respect to the outer planets (Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars) is broken in the passage concerning Venus, the confusion further increasing when speaking of the last two (Mercury

¹² The *chronocratores* effectively dominate the different period of a life, following in set succession decided by their original position with respect to the luminaries. On this, cf. Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* II 26, for an illustration of the theory cf. *Mathesis* III 1 (the *thema mundi*).

¹³ For its importance in Neoplatonic descriptions cf. Flamant 1977: 561 sq.

and the Moon) – in this way, the flow of the narrative appears to effectively mirror the decreasing orderliness of the universe, while also accounting for the difference in the orbital movement of the outer and that of the internal planets (a point carefully described in *De nuptiis* VIII 879sq).

Still, some aspects appear of particular interest in the present context due above all to their iterative character: first, many of the terms employed in the present description of the Sun return in the image of Apollo as the rising Sun in *De nuptiis* 30, thus highlighting the conscious nature of Martianus's descriptive choices. Then, the portrayal of circle of Venus appears not only to reflect the character of the capricious and contrary goddess of *De nuptiis* c. 7 or later parts of the work: in the earlier chapter the author has already insisted on misfortunes of Psyche having followed on her reliance on sensory pleasures – the passage devoted to the planet Venus promptly has everyone desirous of enjoying the many beauties and pleasures of the current: its sweetness, the its pleasant sound, its caressing nature. Indeed:

Gustum autem haustumque quamplures ex eodem dulcissimo gurgite sitiiebant. Nec deerant qui eadem foueri abluique lympa ac se in illam iacere cupiebant (15).

It is perhaps worth noticing that Martianus's description of the current follows the more traditional associations of Venus with seductive sensual pleasures or sensory beauty (thus corresponding to the tone of *De nuptiis* c. 7) rather than the more intellectual character of the planet's influence suggested in Firmicus *Mathesis* III 1, where the planet Venus is associated with the development of theoretical inquiries into the nature of the universe.¹⁴ In fact, the description of *De nuptiis* 15 appears to agree with the character of the planet as described in more

¹⁴ Cf. *Mathesis* III 1.13: *hoc tempus, quo mores hominum sermo doctus excoluit et quo homines singularum disciplinarum naturali scientia formati sunt, Veneris esse uoluerunt, ut laeti et salutaris numinis maiestate prouecti, errantes actus prouidentiae magisterio gubernarent.*

detailed outlines of astrological analysis furnished in genethliological books of Ptolemy or Hephaestio Thebanus.¹⁵

The focal point of this inquiry is a passage often taken to constitute a *mise en temps* of the events portrayed in the work¹⁶: in *NMPh* c. 30, Martianus refers to both Mercury and Apollo being visible in the sign of Gemini:

Atque ita metamorphosi supera pulchriores per Geminos proprietate quadam signi familiaris inuecti Augusto refulsere caelo.

The *metamorphosis supera* refers to the immediately preceding transformation of the god Apollo who upon entering the celestial orbit (or emerging above the horizon) is immediately transformed from the oracular-poetic *vates* into the resplendent solar divinity (*De nuptiis* 29: *interea iam tractus aerios iam Phoebus exierat*).¹⁷ The transformation marks his departure from the realm of *meteora* and ascension into the heavenly firmament, in keeping with the idea that his presence is first sought on earth; furthermore, it also allows the god to assume his position as *moderator* (or, in keeping with the prominent presence of the Muses, *modulator*) *mundi*. The notion is well attested in the literature of period, and reflects the Sun's particular position within the cosmological pattern – separating the upper and the lower planets, the Sun acts as the manifest regulator of the universe, its movement carefully measuring seasons.¹⁸

¹⁵ Indeed, Venus would frequently be associated everything that concerns *cura corporis* (for this cf. most prominently Ptolemy *Tetrabiblos* IV 4–5, cf. also Hephaestio *Apotelesm.* II pas.).

¹⁶ Thus e.g. Shanzer 1986: 119, Cristante 2011: 164, Fontanella 1977: 306, Chevalier 2019: 108, n. 383.

¹⁷ For identification of Apollo and the Sun see also Macrobius *Saturnalia* I 17.3:

¹⁸ An important testimony of Sun's privileged position is found in *Orac. Chald.* 58 (τὸ ἡλιακὸν πῦρ) ... κραδίης τόπω ἐστήριξεν ...), but compare also Proclus *In Platonis de re publica* II, 220.11–221.8: ἀλλὰ τῶν παρὰ Χαλδαίοις θεουργῶν ἀκούσας, ὡς ἄρα ὁ θεὸς ἐμεσεμβόλησεν τὸν ἥλιον ἐν τοῖς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἀνεκρέμασεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὰς ἕξ ἄλλας ζώνας, καὶ τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν, ὅτι τὸ ἡλιακὸν πῦρ κραδίης τόπω ἐστήριξεν, καὶ δεδουκῶς μὴ πη κατὰ τὸν Ἴβυκον παρὰ θεοῖς ἀμπλακῶν τιμὰν πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ἀμείψωμαι, τοῦτο δὴ τὸ καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ Σωκράτους [*Phaedr.* 242d] ῥηθέν, ἔπομαι μὲν τοῖς ἐκ τῶν θεῶν πεφασμένοις, λέγω δὲ ὅτι τῇ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀστρονομίᾳ περὶ τούτων

Further, as the Sun, Apollo is able to enjoy all the benefits of the (Neo)Platonic associations connected to the star, source of all light and illumination.

The position described in c. 30 certainly agrees with the description of spring provided in c. 27, hence confirming the time-related character of the mention.¹⁹ Still, some other considerations may be at play here. First, according to the doctrine of planetary domiciles²⁰, Gemini is a sign ruled by Mercury – hence, the planet not only rises above the horizon, but also rises in its actual domicile, a favourable position for any celestial body.²¹ In addition, the third decan of Gemini (i.e. 21–30 grades of the sign) is effectively ruled by the Sun²²: this makes the sign a particularly favourable location for the appearance of both the Cyl- lenian and the Clarian god in their respective planetary guise.

Then, one may consider the intrinsic ambiguity of Gemini. As noted by Macrobius in his *Saturnalia*, the sign appears to stand at the crossroads of life and death, participating – by the very nature of its mythological origin, in both immortality and mortality. Even more

ὁ Πλάτων συμφέρεται· καὶ γὰρ Ἀριστοτέλης τοῦτον οἶεται τὸν τρόπον, ἐπόμενος τοῖς περὶ Κάλλιππον ἀστρονόμοις. Εἰ δὲ διὴ κρατοῖη τὸν μὲν ἥλιον ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τάττειν τῶν ἑπτὰ, καθάπερ οἱ θεουργικοὶ λόγοι καὶ θεοὶ φασιν, τὸν δὲ Ἑρμῆν ὑπὲρ σελήνην, σκόπει τὴν τάξιν, ὅπως ἐστὶ προσήκουσα τοῖς τῆς γενέσεως ὄλης προστάταις. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὡς καὶ τῶν ὀρατῶν πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ τὰς δημιουργικὰς δυνάμεις διὰ τῶν τοῦ φωτὸς ἀκτίνων ἀπομμιούμενος ὑπὸ πάντων δορυφορεῖται τῶν κοσμοκρατόρων, γενν[ῶν τε καὶ] ζῶῃς πληρῶν νοποὶ δραστηρίους ποιήσεις ἐπιδεικνύμενοι κατὰ πάντα τὸν τῆς γενέσεως κύκλον, ὁ μὲν συγκρίνων ὁ μέγιστος Κρόνος, ὁ δὲ διακρίνων ὁ μέγιστος Ἄρης, ὁ δὲ συγκεραννὺς τὰς ἀμφοτέρων δυνάμεις καὶ κινήσεις· διὸ καὶ σύμμετρος ἢ τοῦ Διὸς ποιήσεις τοῖς θνητοῖς, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἄκρων ὑπερβολαὶ δι' αὐτὴν τὴν μονοειδῆ ποιήσιν ἀσύμμετροι τοῖς συνθέτοις εἰσιν, ἀπάσης μὲν τῆς γενέσεως διὰ συγκρίσεών τινων καὶ διακρίσεων ἐπιτελουμένης, τῶν δὲ συνθέτων ἀμφοτέρων τούτων μεμετρημένως δεομένων.

¹⁹ To quote: *Tum uero conspiceres totius mundi gaudia conuenire. Nam et Tellus floribus luminata, quippe ueris deum conspexerat subuolare Mercurium, et Apolline conspicato aera temperies sudis tractibus renidebat.*

²⁰ Cf. e.g. Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* II 2.

²¹ Additionally, one may note, Gemini is the masculine domicile of the planet – on this cf. Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* II 2.5. On the issue of domicile, cf. Bouché-Lec- lercq 1899: 183–192.

²² Cf. Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* II 6.4.

importantly, this very ambiguity approximates the sign's nature to that of the unceasingly setting and rising Sun (*Sat.* I 21.22):

Gemini autem, qui alternis mortibus vivere creduntur, quid aliud nisi solem unum eundemque significant, modo descendentem in ima mundi, modo mundi in summam altitudinem ascendentem.

This very quality makes the Gemini a near ideal position of the solar god in the story so directly concerned with *hierogamia*, transformation and ascension to the divine: effectively, Martianus appears to have his Apollo emerge in the very sign that manifest his own transcendence (where seen against the physical cosmos), while at the same time highlighting the very moment of rebirth (dawn). Additionally, a point also stressed by Macrobius (*Comm. in somnium* I 6.51), Gemini appears to play host to the Sun for a period slightly longer than in the case of other signs (32 days in total).

Second, the planets' appearance in Gemini carries an additional dimension, as indicated by the immediately preceding text: namely *De nuptiis* 26 appears to suggest that Mercury actually precedes the Sun, which in turn puts him in a privileged position of *matutinus*²³:

Petaso autem ac talaribus concitatis coepit praeire Mercurius

While in terms of the narrative arc Martianus achieves the result of portraying the younger god's eagerness as the brothers begin their travel to the palace of Jupiter, the image appears to correspond to the position of Mercury immediately following the planets emergence from the *exustio* (position within the rays of the Sun). Indeed, having previously symbolically followed in Phoebus' wake as he traced the footsteps of his elder brother,²⁴ the Cyllenian god is now portrayed as running in front of the Sun – the conversation corresponds to their actual meeting,

²³ For the position, cf. Denningmann 2005: 36–48. Cf also Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* II 8.4 (*Cum Sole ceterae stellae in matutino ortu constitutae gaudent; tunc numen Solis optima radiatione protegitur; quotienscumque stellarum matutino ortu fuerit ornatus*).

²⁴ Cf. *De nuptiis* c. 8–14.

as the two brothers sit together (actual conjunction). In addition, the ‘forward’ position further empowers the planet, which, while acting as a Sun’s forerunner, would now be close to its *ortus matutinus*, the extremely favourable moment when a planet emerges from solar glare (leaving the *hypaugeia*, i.e. *ustio*) while simultaneously heralding the actual dawn of daylight.

Third, there is the matter of the actual description of the two celestial bodies as they appear above the horizon: while the splendour of the Sun suddenly illuminates the world (*clarus emicuit*), Mercury is promptly described as *sidus vibrabile*. Clearly, the light emitted by the two differs, with Mercury’s shine being far from the constant glare of his eminent companion, the stress laid instead on the slight changeability and interactivity of the always shimmering planet.

In addition, Mercury, together with the Muses, located as they are on different planetary orbits, appears to form the solar cortege: effectively, the dawn is preceded (indeed, heralded) by the appearance of Mercury and accompanied by the Muses as they ascend their appropriate spheres.²⁵ Certainly, this particular cortege is not strictly astrological, as the rising of Phoebus (at least in planetary terms) is heralded by Mercury alone – still, the presence of the Muses, as well as their careful ascension to the celestial spheres may be taken as a reference to the influential astrological notion of the Sun rising ‘surrounded’ or flanked by the planets, a phenomenon frequently linked to the ‘royal’ nature of the resulting *genitura*.²⁶

Finally, in addition to the purely astrological importance of the sign of Gemini as Mercury’s actual domicile, one has to consider yet another possibility: when in Gemini, the planets are positioned within the northern celestial hemisphere (above the equator): in fact, when in the sign the Sun is slowly ascending, nearing its northernmost point of the ecliptic, i.e. the summer solstice and the tropic of Cancer. According to Macrobius’ *Commentary* I 12. 1–5 this position of the sign marks it as a *porta solis*, solar gates, connecting the upper and lower levels of

²⁵ Once again, it is useful to think of the ancient concept of planets as servants or guards of the Sun, cf. Denningmann 2005: 107–164. As she duly notes, the concept of planetary *doryphoria* plays particular part in the writings of Proclus.

²⁶ Cf. Firmicus Maternus *Mathesis* VII 22.

the cosmos. These gates are of immense importance in the Neoplatonic physics: through them, souls move between the lower and upper planes of the world (and existence).²⁷ Given that Cancer stands at the highest point of the ecliptic, this is the descent point for the souls destined for embodiment; yet, at the same point it is literally the uppermost point of the ecliptic, the point of the ecliptic furthest removed from southern *imperium Ditis*;²⁸ it is also the actual exaltation (*hypsoma*) of the Sun, the point effectively enhancing and highlighting solar power. Thus, Martianus has his Phoebus rising above the horizon (the actual dawn), but also going upward on the ecliptic on its way toward the literal high point of its course (but also, simultaneously, of its might). Thus, by appearing in the Gemini, the two planetary divinities, i.e. Phoebus and Mercury, appear to be perfectly positioned for their ascent toward the lofty palace of Jupiter.

To summarise: while considerable damage suffered by Book Eight of the work (*Astronomia*) necessarily limits our ability to fully appreciate the scope of Martianus's astrological knowledge, the very images present within Book One appear to highlight his familiarity with important tenets of the lore. It is this familiarity, further enhanced by Capella's dependence on Neoplatonic philosophy and contemporary exegetical works, which influences his skilful portrayal of planetary vortex in c. 14 and the vivid description of the Sun rising in Gemini. Significantly, in having his planetary gods ascend the outer spheres, Martianus also portrays the dawn: as the beginning of ascent coincides with first emergence of daylight – thus, the Sun, often likened by Plato and his followers to the illuminating power of intellect (i.e. the cognitive intellect), illuminates and transcends the mortal world while ascending toward a higher, paternal i.e. creating power (Jupiter as the creating intellect, understood as inferior to Saturn as the contemplative one).

²⁷ *Comm. in somnium* I 12.2: *per has portas animae de caelo in terras meare et de terris in caelum remeare creduntur. Ideo hominum una, altera deorum vocatur: hominum Cancer, quia per hunc descensus in inferior est, Capricornus deorum quia per illum animae in propriae immortalitatis sedem et in deorum numerum revertuntur.*

²⁸ *Comm. in somnium* I 12.3: *Hinc et Pythagoras putat a lacteo circulo deorsum incipere Ditis imperium...*

References

- Bonnechere P., Cursaru G., 2020, 'Ἀρχή and δῖνος: Vortices as Cosmogonic Powers and Cosmic Regulators. Study Case: The Whirling Lightning Bolt of Zeus', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 21–22/2, pp. 449–478, <https://doi.org/10.1515/arege-2020-0023>.
- Bouché-Leclercq A., 1899, *L'Astrologie grecque*, Paris.
- Chevalier J.-F., 2019, *Martianus Capella, Les noces de Philologie et de Mercure*, vol. 1, Paris.
- Cristante L., 2011, *Martiani Capellae, De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, vol. 1, liber 1–2, L. Cristante (ed.), Hildesheim.
- Denningmann S., 2005, *Die astrologische Lehre der Doryphorie. Eine soziomorphe Metapher in der antiken Planetenastrologie*, Stuttgart, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110930184>.
- Flamant J., 1977, *Macrobe et le Néo-platonisme latin à la fin de IV^e siècle*, Leiden.
- Fontanella V., 1977, 'Mercurio alla ricerca di Apollo-Sole. La teoria geocentrica di Eraclide Pontico nel De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii di Marziano Capella', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 135, pp. 305–322.
- Grebe S., 1999, *Martianus Capella – De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii. Darstellung der Sieben Freien Künste und ihrer Beziehungen zueinander*, Stuttgart, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110944501>.
- Gregory A.D., 2007, 'The Creation and Destruction of the World', [in:] *A Companion to Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome*, G.L. Irby (ed.), Hoboken, pp. 13–28, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118373057.ch1>.
- Hübner W., 1989, *Die Begriffe "Astrologie" und "Astronomie" in der Antike. Wortgeschichte und Wissenschaftssystematik. Mit einer Hypothese zum Terminus "Quadrivium"*, Stuttgart.
- Navarro Antolín F., 2016, *Marciano Mineo Félix Capella. Las nupcias de Filología y Mercurio*, vol. 1, libros 1–2, Madrid.
- ní Mheallaigh K., 2020, *The Moon in Greek and Roman Imagination: Myth, Literature, Science, and Philosophy*, Cambridge, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108685726>.
- Shanzer D., 1986, *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, book 1, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London.