

The Astronomer Ptolemy On Medical Astrology

Claudius Ptolemy was a famous pagan Egyptian astronomer, astrologer and geographer. Ptolemy lived in the 100's A.D. He taught that the Earth was the centre of the universe and that the Sun, the Moon, other planets and stars revolved around the Earth.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church accepted Ptolemy's theories about the Earth being the centre of the universe and all heavenly bodies revolving the Earth. Roman Catholic theologians came to teach these theories as though they were inspired by God. So when Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) challenged these theories, the Roman Catholic Church opposed Galileo very strongly.

The Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages and many Protestants in the 1500's made an even worse mistake about Ptolemy's teachings. This mistake involved their acceptance of Ptolemy's foolish, superstitious and wicked teachings about the usages of astrology by medical physicians.

Ptolemy on astrology and hurts, injuries and diseases

In Chapter 17 "The hurts, injuries and diseases of the body" in his writing "Tetrabiblos", Ptolemy wrote: "*For, among the chief parts of the human body, Saturn rules the right ear, the spleen, the bladder, the phlegm, and the bones; Jupiter governs the hand, the lungs, the arteries, and the seed; Mars, the left ear, the kidneys, the veins, and the privities; the Sun rules the eyes, the brain, the heart, the sinews or nerves, and all the right side; Venus, the nostrils, the liver, and the flesh; Mercury, the speech, the understanding, the bile, the tongue, and the fundament; and the Moon governs the palate, the throat, the stomach, the belly, the womb, and all the left parts.*

It generally happens that some casual hurt, or injurious affection of the body, is the utmost that takes effect when the malefics may be oriental, and that considerable diseases occur only when the malefics may be accidental.

For instance, blindness of one eye will ensue, when the Moon may be in the before-mentioned angles, either operating her conjunction, or being at the full: it will also happen should she be configured with the Sun in any other proportional aspect, and be at the same time connected with any one of the nebulous collections in the zodiac; such as the cloudy spot of Cancer, the Pleiades of Taurus, the arrow-head of Sagittarius, the sting of Scorpio, the parts about the mane of Leo, or the urn of Aquarius. Moreover, both eyes will be injured should the Moon be in an angle, and in her decrease, and Mars or Saturn, being matutine, ascend in succession to her; or, again, if the Sun be in an angle, and these planets pre-ascend before him, and be configured with both luminaries, whether the luminaries be in one and the same sign, or in opposition; provided also the said planets, although oriental of the Sun, be accidental of the Moon. Under these circumstances, therefore, Mars will cause blindness by a stroke or blow, or by the sword or by burning; and, if he be configured with Mercury, it will be effected.

Venus, if in one of the angles before-mentioned, and especially if she be in that of the west, and Saturn be in conjunction or in configuration with her, or be changing place with her, while Mars, at the same time, is in elevation above her, or in opposition to her, will produce impotence in the native, if a male; and, if a female, will render liable to abortion, or to produce children stillborn, or not capable of being extracted except in mangled parts. Such misfortunes especially happen under Cancer, Virgo, and

Capricorn; even though the Moon may be in ascendant, in conjunction with Mars. And if, under the same circumstances, Venus be also configured with Mercury, as well as Saturn, Mars again being in elevation above her, or in opposition to her, the native will be either an eunuch or hermaphrodite, or devoid of the natural channels and vents. And, when these positions occur, should the Sun also partake in the configuration, the luminaries and Venus being all masculinely constituted, the Moon in her decrease, and the malefics brought up in the degrees next successively ascending, the males will be born maimed or crippled, or injured in their private members (particularly under Aries, Leo, Scorpio, Capricorn, and Aquarius); and the females will remain childless and unprolific. And it also occasionally happens that the natives, under such a configuration, are likewise injured in the face or eyes.

If Saturn and Mercury, in conjunction with the Sun, be in the before-mentioned angles, the native will have some defect in the tongue, and stammer or speak with difficulty: especially if Mercury be occidental, and both he and Saturn configured with the Moon. Should Mars, however, be found together with them, he will for the most part remove the defect in the tongue, after the Moon shall have completed her approach to him.

Further, should the malefics be in angles, and the luminaries, either together or in opposition, be brought up to them; or, if the malefics be brought up to the luminaries, especially when the Moon may be in her nodes, or in her bend, or in obnoxious signs, such as Aries, Taurus, Cancer, Scorpio, and Capricorn, the body will then be afflicted with excrescences, distortions, lameless or paralysis.

If the malefics be in conjunction with the luminaries, the calamity will take effect from the very moment of birth: but should they be in the mid-heaven, in elevation above the luminaries, or in opposition to each other, it will then arise out of some great and dangerous accidents, such as a fall from some height or precipice, an attack of robbers, or of quadrupeds...

The minor bodily disorders mostly occur on the Moon's being posited in a tropical or equinoctial sign; and, if in that of the vernal equinox, these disorders usually arise from the white leprosy; and in that of the summer tropic, from tetters; in that of the autumnal equinox, from leprosy; and in that of the winter tropic, from the eruption of pimples, and similar inconveniences...

Considerable diseases, however, take effect when the malefics may be configured in the same situation as those before prescribed, yet differing in one respect; that is to say, being accidental of the Sun and oriental of the Moon. In such cases, Saturn will generally produce cold of the bowels, excessive phlegm, rheumatism, emaciation, sickliness, jaundice, dysentery, cough, obstruction, colic, or scurvy; and, in women, besides these diseases, he produces complaints of the womb. Mars will cause expectoration of blood, atrabilarious attacks, pulmonary complaints, sores, and diseases in the private parts (which will be rendered still more painful by surgical burning or incision), such as fistula, haemorrhoids, or knots in the fundament, and also inflamed and putrifying ulcers. In women, to these calamities, he adds abortion, excision of the foetus or its mortification...

If in familiarity with Mars, he, (Mercury) will tend to produce greater dryness, and will increase ulcers, abscesses, loss of hair, scarified sores, erysipelas, tetters, blackness of bile, insanity, epilepsy, and similar disorders... Thus Cancer, Capricorn, and Pisces, and, in short, all signs ascribed to terrestrial animals and fishes, appropriately cause diseases of putridity, tetters, excoriation, scrofula, fistula, leprosy, and the like; while Sagittarius and Gemini produce disease by falling fits and epilepsy. And if the planets happen to be posited in the latter degrees of the signs containing them, the extremities of the body will then be chiefly affected by the disease or hurt; which will arise from humours or accidents, producing leprosy, gout, or other infirmities, in the hands and feet...

Should the benefics, however, hold principal situations, and be in elevation above the obnoxious malefics, the disease or hurt will then be moderate, and have neither deformity nor disgrace attached to it; and it will sometimes be altogether prevented and set aside, if the benefics be oriental. Jupiter, for instance, by means of human aid, such as wealth or rank can command, will conceal and soothe hurts and diseases; and, if Mercury be joined with him, the assistance will be further improved by the addition of skilful physicians and good medicine. Venus, likewise, through the mediation of deities and oracles,

will cause hurts to appear in a manner neither ungraceful nor unbecoming, and will ameliorate diseases by medicines granted by the gods.¹

Ptolemy on astrology and the human mind

In his Chapter 18 “The Quality of the Mind” in Book 3 of his “Tetrabiblos”, Ptolemy wrote: “Bicorporeal signs render the mind variable, versatile, not easy to be understood, volatile, and unsteady; inclined to duplicity, amorous, wily, fond of music, careless, full of expedients, and regretful.

Fixed signs make the mind just, uncompromising, constant, firm of purpose, prudent, patient, industrious, strict, chaste, mindful of injuries, steady in pursuing its object, contentious, desirous of honour, seditious, avaricious, and pertinacious.

Oriental positions, and those in the ascendant, especially if made by planets in their proper faces, make men liberal, frank, self-confident, brave, ingenious, unreserved, yet acute. Oriental stations, and positions on the mid-heaven, or culminations, make men reflective, constant, of good memory, firm, prudent, magnanimous, successful in pursuing their desires, inflexible, powerful in intellect, strict, not easily imposed upon, judicious, active, hostile to crime, and skilful in science.

Precedent and accidental positions make men unsteady, irreverent, imbecile, impatient of labour, easily impressed, humble, doubting, wavering, boastful, and cowardly, slothful, lazy, and hard to rouse. Occidental stations, and positions on the lower heaven (as well as Mercury and Venus, when making vespertine descension by day, and rising in the night), will render the mind ingenious and sagacious, but not capable of great recollection, nor very industrious yet inquisitive in occult matters, such as magic and sacred mysteries; also studious of mechanics, and mechanical instruments: addicted to the observation of meteors, to philosophy, to augury by means of birds, and to the judgment of dreams...

Conciliated with Venus, and being again in glory, Saturn makes men averse to women, and renders them fond of governing, prone to solitude, highly reserved, regardless of rank, indifferent to beauty, envious, austere, unsociable, singular in opinion, addicted to divination and to religious services and mysteries; solicitous of the priesthood, fanatical, and subservient to religion; solemn, reverential, sedate, studious of wisdom, faithful in friendship, continent, reflective, circumspect, and scrupulous in regard to female virtue: but, if he be thus conciliated, and not posited in glory, he makes men licentious and libidinous, practisers of lewdness, careless, and impure in sexual intercourse; obscene, treacherous to women, especially to those of their own families; wanton, quarrelsome, sordid, hating elegance.”²

Ptolemy on astrology and diseases of the mind

In his Chapter 19 “The Diseases of the Mind”, Ptolemy wrote: “When the Sun, instead of Mercury, may be with the Moon, and if Mars, together with Venus, be then in familiarity with them, in that case, provided the luminaries only be found in masculine signs, men will excel in their nature, or in other words, will possess in full plentitude the properties becoming their sex; while the properties of women, who are thus constituted more masculinely and more actively, will deviate from the usual limits of nature. But, if both Mars and Venus, or if only one of them, be likewise masculinely situated, men will be freely and promptly inclined to natural intercourse and connexion; and women will be, in like manner, licentious and intemperate in intercourse beyond nature. Their desires will be practiced in privacy, and not openly, should only Venus be situated masculinely; but shamelessly and publicly, if Mars also masculinely placed, together with Venus.

¹ Ptolemy, “Tetrabiblos”, Book 3, Chapter 17.

² Ibid, Book 3, Chapter 18.

*But, if the luminaries only be in feminine signs, women will then possess their natural functions in greater plentitude, and men will deviate from the limits of nature towards effeminacy and wantonness. And, if Venus be femininely posited, women will be lustful and licentious, and men wanton and soft; seeking connexion contrary to nature; yet in privacy and not openly: but, if Mars be posited femininely, they will then put their desires in practice shamelessly and publicly.”*³

Ptolemy on astrology and different kinds of death

In his Chapter 9 “The Kind of Death”, Ptolemy wrote the following: “*Thus, for example, if the dominion of death be vested in Saturn, he will produce death by means of lingering diseases; cough, rheumatism, flux, ague, disorder of the spleen, dropsy, colic, and complaints in the womb; and, in short, by all such diseases as proceed from the super-abundance of cold.*

Jupiter effects death by quinsy, inflammation of the lungs, apoplexy, spasm, pains in the head, morbid performance of the heart, and by all diseases arising from the superabundance of air, and from immoderate and impure respiration.

Mars causes death by constant fevers, semitertians, sudden and spontaneous wounds, diseases of the kidneys, expectoration of blood, and haemorrhages of various kinds; by miscarriage, or abortion, and by childbirth, by erysipelas, and, in short, by such diseases as proceed from abundant and immediate heat.

Venus produces death by disorders of the stomach, and of the liver, by scurvy and dysentery: also by consumption or wasting away, and by fistula and poison, and by all diseases incident on the superabundance or poverty of moisture, and its corruption.

*Lastly, Mercury causes death to proceed from fury, madness, melancholy, epilepsy, falling fits, coughs, and obstructions, and by such diseases as arise from superabundant or disproportionate dryness.”*⁴

Ptolemy on astrology and childbirth

Ptolemy wrote the following foolishness about the supposed effects of the Sun, Moon and planets on childbirth: “*To speak briefly, if the planets, which grant progeny, be so posited as described, and placed singly, the gift of progeny will be single only; but should they be in bicorporeal or in feminine signs, they will grant double offsprings: so likewise if they should be in prolific or seminal signs, such as Pisces, Cancer, and Scorpio, they will grant twins, or even more. And provided they should also be masculinely constituted, as well by configuration with the Sun, as by being in masculine signs, they will grant male children; but otherwise, if femininely constituted, female.*

But, although the said planets, even if beneath the malefics in elevation, or, even if found in barren places, or in signs such as those of Leo and Virgo, will still grant children; yet such children, thus indicated, will neither be healthy, nor continue in life...

*If, however, planets of each condition should be configured with, and have prerogative in prolific signs, there will then ensue a loss of either all the children, or only few, or else the major part of them.”*⁵

³ Ibid, Book 3, Chapter 19.

⁴ Ibid, Book 4, Chapter 9.

⁵ Ibid, Book 5, Chapter 6.

Ptolemy on astrology and human sex desires

In his “Tetrabiblos”, Ptolemy wrote the following Satan-inspired astrological superstition and nonsense about human sexual desires: *“The passions, liable to operate in males, are to be considered by observation of Mars: for should he be separated from Venus and Saturn, but yet, at the same time, be supported by the testimony of Jupiter, he will make men pure and decorous in sexual intercourse, and incline them to natural usages only...But should Saturn be absent, and Mars be with Venus alone, or even although Jupiter also be with her, men will become highly licentious, and attempt to gratify their desires in every mode...”*

In the case of females, Venus requires attention: for, if she be configured with Jupiter, or with Mercury, she will cause women to be temperate and pure in sexual intercourse; still, however, when she may be thus connected with Mercury, if Saturn be not present also, she will cause them to be easily excited to desire; although they will control their desires, and avoid reproach. But, should Venus be conjoined or configured with Mars alone, she will render women licentious and lustful; and if, to both these planets, when thus conjoined or configured, Jupiter also present himself, Mars being at the same time under the rays of the Sun, women will then mingle in intercourse with servants, and persons meaner than themselves, or with aliens, or vagabonds: but, should it happen that Venus may be under the rays of the Sun, they will then connect themselves with their superiors or masters. And, further, should the planets be in feminine places, or configured femininely, they will be content with their passive faculties only.

*Saturn, in being conciliated with such positions as those now described, tends to produce greater obscenity...”*⁶

Ptolemy on astrology and marriage

In his Chapter 5 “Marriage”, Ptolemy wrote about the supposed effects of the Sun, the Moon and the planets on marriage: *“With regard to men, it is to be observed in what manner the Moon may be disposed; for, in the first place, if she be found in the oriental quadrants, she will cause men either to marry early in life, or, after having over-passed their prime, to marry young women; ‘but, should she be situated in either of the accidental quadrants, men will then marry either late in life, or to women advanced with age’: and if she be found under the Sun’s beams, and configured with Saturn, she then entirely denies marriage...”*

Whenever both nativities, viz. that of the husband and that of the wife, may exhibit the luminaries configured together in concord, that is to say, either in trine or in sextile to each other, the cohabitation will most usually be lasting; especially if the said concord exist by means of interchange; but its duration will be also much more securely established, provided the Moon in the husband’s nativity should correspond or agree with the Sun in the wife’s nativity. If, however, the relative positions of the luminaries be in signs inconjunct, or in opposition, or in quartile, the cohabitation will be speedily dissolved upon slight causes, and the total separation of the parties will ensue...”

*Should Venus be found in a sign mutually common and familiar, such as Capricorn, or Pisces, she will effect marriages between brothers and sisters and kindred by blood: and, provided she be also in the presence of the Moon, when the native may be male, she will cause him to connect himself with two sisters, or other near relatives; but, if the native be a female, a similar contract on her part, with two brothers or near relatives, will be indicated, when Venus may be also with Jupiter.”*⁷

⁶ Ibid, Book 4, Chapter 5.

⁷ Ibid, Book 4, Chapter 5.