

## Greek Misogynist Tradition in Andreas Capellanus's *De amore*<sup>1</sup>

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To Blanca Urriza

The title of this brief article quite clearly illustrates its aims and evident limitations. In principle, a search for a Greek basis of the misogynist content of Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* is likely to lead researchers to focus on analysis of the sources –Greek sources, of course. However, there is no doubt that Ovid, the most frequently quoted ancient author, in this case the structural source, above all his *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris* and *Heroides*, which is quite logical in light of the remarkable presence and influence of Ovid's works throughout that time. There was also a good knowledge of the works of Cicero, Virgil, Horace and Juvenal. However, other classical authors, even the Greeks –those who were known then-, were undoubtedly read in the schools, but the knowledge of their works was certainly superficial. Furthermore, given the scholastic method followed in *De amore*, it would be absurd not to consider the use of many quotations that appeared in the *Compendia* and in handbooks of religious instruction<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, with the help of this evident *captatio benevolentiae*, need I apologize for not being able to speak of any unquestionable “route of transmission”? Yes, although this qualification only refers to the “route of transmission” and not with the Greek basis upon which an entire *corpus* of misogynist theory is built. Indeed, the aim of this article is precisely to illustrate this. This is a truly significant theme, since too often reference is made to the Jewish and the Christian origin of Western misogyny, while the Greek inheritance, which is also remarkable and no less injurious, is systematically ignored<sup>4</sup>.

Something essential still remains to be decided, that is, to elucidate whether there is a sure path that, avoiding useless digressions, led us directly towards the nucleus or heart of all the prejudices against women, or whether I should begin instead by examining an extensive list of presumed aspects of femininity –in keeping with a centuries-old tradition- which, as will be pointed out later on, will remind us of the long list of slanders in that well-known iambus by Semonides in his famous iambus.

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g.: *Andrés el capellán. De amore. Tratado sobre el amor*. Trad. Inés Creixell Vidal-Quadras. Barcelona: El Festín de Esopo, 1985, p. 35. At any rate, with the regard to the need to go back to Plato in order to understand both the importance and significance of certain topics against women in *De amore*, it is worth remembering that P. G. Walsh (*Andreas Capellanus on Love*. London: Duckworth, 1982, pp. 20-21) points out that Andreas Capellanus knew the Athenian philosopher at least thanks to Apuleius's *De dogmate Platonis*, not to speak of the unquestionable legacy of Platonism in Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> With regard to the Christian misogynist content of *De amore* –above all in the third book when love is reproved-, the main source seems to be Gal 5,19 and remarkable works of Medieval misogynist literature such as *Adversus Jovinianum* and *Policratus* by John of Salisbury (cf. Inés Creixell, *op. cit.*, p. 37; P. G. Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 25; P. Delhaye. “Le dossier antimatrimonial de l'*Adversus Jovinianum* et son influence sur quelques écrits latins du XII siècle”. *Medieval Studies* (1951) 65 and following, and T. Neff. *La satire des femmes dans la poesie du Moyen Age*. Paris, 1900.

It is quite evident that one of the best ways to estimate the degree of animosity towards women in ethical or simply moralizing texts is to examine their valuation of celibacy or, in other words, the superior ethical nature which is attributed to clergymen. In this respect, the reference to the apostle Paul is inevitable, and the fact that he confirmed the ethical value of marriage and, at the same time, emphasized the benefits of celibacy is highly significant (*cf.* I Cor. 7: “But I wish all men were as I myself am. Nevertheless, each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, another in that way” (Θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ως καὶ ἐμαυτόν· ἀλλὰ ἔκαστος ἕδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὔτως. ὁ δὲ οὔτως –*The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1969). After citing this quotation, I might be reproached for making use of a premeditated analysis, but it is the text itself which in the end will confirm whether it admits such a reading. If so, certainly I ought to be forgiven by those who, understandably, would now counsel against such an option.

In any case, the sincerity of Andreas Capellanus in relation to the above mentioned valuation of celibacy is absolute. At the request of Gualterius –whose existence is very doubtful, so that he should be considered a literary device used to introduce his treatise as a didactic “weapon”-, Andreas defines love, speaks about its origin and effects, and describes the sort of person in whom it can appear as well as the different methods to achieve it. Nevertheless, Andreas also warns Gualterius that an accurate reading of the doctrine put forward in his treatise will convince him, sooner or later, that it is not worth pursuing bodily pleasures (*corporis voluptates*) -thus becoming deprived of God’s grace (*Dei gratia*)- because nobody ought to devote his days to pleasures of love (*neminem in amoris voluptatibus debere male suos expendere dies*). If he avoids this temptation, the heavenly King (*Rex colestis*) will compensate him, and he himself will be worthy of all sorts of success (*successus*), and, after death, will achieve glory and eternal life (*gloriam et vitam eternam*). If only Gualterius could forget, therefore, the vanities of the world (*mundi vanitates*) and celebrate a major and divine wedding (*nuptias maiores, nuptias divinas*) upon the arrival of the Husband (*sponsus*)! In short, this passage warns Gualterius to be on the alert, so that God does not find him sleeping in sin (*in peccatis*), since, as his response recalls, we do not know either the day or the hour (*nescimus diem neque horam*)<sup>5</sup>.

Everything becomes quite clear, then, at least in accordance with this simple scheme: our life must be devoted to God, that is to say, one must prefer his divine grace, eternal glory and eternal life to the world and its bodily pleasures. These -only when permissible, of course- have to do with marriage, although, even in this, there is a strict hierarchy, so that, when a man marries God, this divine wedding is unquestionably the best one a man could ever have. It is worth pointing out that, in this last case, the wife logically disappears in favour of the Husband, the divine Being who frees the man from sexual intercourse with a woman –a sin in the end. And, therefore, one should infer that that woman, who was nominally absent in the text we have just summarized, becomes now what truly impedes a desirable unity or marriage, so to speak: God-man.

I am aware that such an approach may sound strange and perhaps even cause scandalous, but this is not the first time that the subject is presented in this way. Indeed, there is a centuries-old tradition of texts which exhort the faithful to remain loyal to God-man unity. In another article devoted to the analysis of Philo of Alexandria’s *De opificio mundi* (chapters LIII-LXI), I pointed out that, according to this Platonizing thinker and allegorical interpreter who was contemporaneous with Christ, the true lost paradise was not that in which the first man and first woman enjoyed absolute happiness before the fall, but a different one in which there was a perfect God-man *mónosis* before the creation of the woman, thus avoiding any feminine distraction –i.e. the case of Adam-. Here is his thesis:

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. III, 117-131, following the edition by E. Trojel, *Andreae Capellani regii Francorum De amore libri Tres*, Copenhagen 1892, reed. München 1972. All the quotations correspond to it. Translations are only literal if marked by inverted commas.

“For so long as he was by himself (*εἰς*), as accorded with such solitude (*ώμοιοῦτο*), he went on growing like to the world and like God, and receiving in his soul the impressions made by the nature of each, not all of these, but as many as one of mortal composition can find room for. But when woman too had been made, beholding a figure like his own (*ἀδελφὸν εἶδος*) and a kindred form (*συγγενῆ μορφὴν*), he was gladdened by the sight (*ήσμένισε τῇ Θέα*), and approached and greeted her (*ήσπάζετο*). She, seeing no living thing more like herself than he, is filled with glee and shamefastly (*μετ’ αἰδοῦς*) returns his greeting. Love (*ἔρως*) supervenes, brings together and fits into one the divided halves, as it were, of a single living creature, and sets up in each of them a desire for fellowship with the other with a view to the production of their like (*πόθον... κοινωνίας εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὄμοίου γένεσιν*), this desire begat likewise bodily pleasure (*τὴν τῶν σωμάτων ἡδονὴν*), that pleasure which is the beginning of wrongs and violation of law (*ἀδικημάτων καὶ παρανομημάτων*), pleasure for the sake of which men bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss”<sup>6</sup>.

Of course, Andreas Capellanus’s *De amore* and Philo of Alexandria’s *De opifico mundi* are not comparable, and this is the reason why the former does not advice love while the latter reminds us of an idyllic past when there was not yet any woman to love yet. However, the temptation of searching for the “origin” seems to be inevitable, so that *De amore* also refers to those first moments during which the “original feebleness” could have been avoided if the serpent had not met the suitable victim.

Indeed, when Andreas Capellanus defends clergymen against the accusation of gluttony, he replies by affirming that it was first the woman and not the man (*primo mulier quam masculus*) who, because of her gluttony (*propter gulam*), succumbed to the desires of her stomach, thus disobeying God. However, the man would have never fallen if he had not been persuaded and impelled by the woman (*nisi forte primitus ab ipsa muliere fuisset nimia suasione compulsus et ipsa instigante deceptus*)<sup>7</sup>. It is completely useless for the feminine protagonist of the present passage of *De amore* to protest by recalling that all women are not responsible for the error of only one, leaving aside the point that Eve fell because of the Devil and not as the result of having wanted to satisfy an appetite which in fact did not yet exist. Indeed, here is the masculine reply: the reason why the woman was tempted before the man -in spite of being quite obvious that the Devil’s victory would have been far superior if he had succeeded in tempting the man- was that the Devil already foresaw that she would give way to gluttony more easily (*quia proniorem ad gulæ appetitus concedendum mulierem quam masculum providebat*)<sup>8</sup>. Needless to say, the feminine interlocutor hastens to reply remedies are sometimes even worse than the very diseases. Things were so, she assures, since “women, on account of their very nature, believe in everything more easily than men” (*quia mulieres omnia facilius credunt ex ipsa natura quam masculi*), they are naïve and believe all they are told (*innocentes, simplices et ideo credunt omnia verba*). Consequently, the Devil preferred to tempt her, since, if he had started tempting the man and had failed, he would have strengthened the woman’s spirit by means of the example of the man (*suum viri exemplo mulier animum confirmasset*)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> LIII (151-152), translated into English by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker. *Philo. De Opificio Mundi*. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. I, 497-500.

<sup>8</sup> I, 502.

<sup>9</sup> I, 502.

We can read this in the *Malleus maleficarum*, which, having been approved by Pope Innocent VIII and published for the first time in 1486, was responsible for the death of so many women accused of witchcraft by the authorities –either secular or religious, either Catholic or Protestant:

“Although the Devil tempted Eve, she seduced Adam. The sin of Eve would have not caused the death of our souls and bodies, if afterwards it had not passed to Adam, who was tempted by Eve and not by the Devil. She is, then, bitterer than death”<sup>10</sup>.

And, for his part, Luther:

“Since Satan observes that Adam is more excellent, he does not dare to attack him... I also believe that, if he had approached to Adam first, Adam would have won”<sup>11</sup>.

Saint Paul writes as well:

“Adam was not fooled but the woman, who, having been seduced, became guilty of transgression”<sup>12</sup>.

Tertullian has not any doubt:

“You –Eve- violated that forbidden tree; you deserted first the divine law; you persuaded the one whom Satan did not dare to attack. You destroyed very easily the man, God’s image. Because of you the very Son of God had to die”<sup>13</sup>.

And finally Saint Agustín and Saint Thomas’s thesis: the sin committed by Adam is the result of his sense of comradeship and not of his wickedness:

“He was incapable of living separated from his only companion, the woman, although that would mean to be associated with her in sin<sup>14</sup>. Adam sinned as a result of a friendly good will which makes that sometimes men prefer offending God to gaining an enemy among his friends”<sup>15</sup>.

Everything would have been different –we must conclude- if the singularity of the man had been absolute. Or, in other words, given that the Creator did not understand that for the man it was truly better to remain alone, it is really a pity that the woman was not at least more intelligent.

Nonetheless, I should not insist on what the texts already say, but, as already stated, on their probable unconscious Greek temper. Needless to say, we may think that the list of accusations we have just read is based only on the words of the *Book of Genesis*. But it is quite reasonable to think that Western men willingly accepted certain prejudices against women because, before Christianity expanded throughout the Mediterranean world, Greek thought, in its mythical

<sup>10</sup> Edited by Heinrich Kramer and James Spranger. London: Pushkin Press, 1951, quoted by Phillips, p.95.

<sup>11</sup> *Lectures on Genesis*, chapters. 1-V in J. Pelikan. *Luther's works vol 1* (St. Louis, 1958), p. 151, quoted by Phillips, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> *Timotheus 2:14*.

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian. *De cultu foeminarum*. Patrology I, 1303.

<sup>14</sup> *Civitas Dei XIV, II*.

<sup>15</sup> *Summa Theologica II, CLXIII-4.*

aspects and in the logical aspect that modelled it intellectually, had “fertilized” the land with generosity.

The Greeks also imagined a golden age during which men inhabited the earth free from any misfortune or ill<sup>16</sup>. Hesiod tells in *Works and Days* that men “lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils... the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint”<sup>17</sup>. We are now in a Greek realm and, as a consequence, it would be absurd to look for any sort of allusion to a spiritual perfection in a Biblical sense, but that joyful age depicted in *Works ad Days* also ended because of a woman: Pandora. She symbolizes an idyllic earth which gave everything (*pan-do*) and, at the same time, she is the first woman and the origin of human misfortunes, since, having been gifted by all the Olympian gods (*pan-do*), became the bait Epimetheus would swallow, paying no attention to his brother Prometheus’s warnings<sup>18</sup>. Pandora does symbolize the end of an age which was also depicted by Plato by means of the myth of Chronos’s happy age in his *Statesman*. Then, a) men “came to life again out of the earth”; b) they did not reproduce, as they do now, as we would expect it in an age when there were neither women nor children, and c) “everybody had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture”<sup>19</sup>. These texts seem to indicate, then, that the man,

<sup>16</sup> Hesiod. *Works and Days* 90-92: “For ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sicknesses which bring the Fates upon them” (Ποὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ’ ἀνθρώπων / νόσφιν ἄτεο τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτεο χαλεποῖο πόνοιο / νούσων τ’ ἀργαλέων, αἵ τ’ ἀνδράσι κῆρας ἔδωκαν -translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Loeb Classical Library. William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954).

<sup>17</sup> 116-118: “... they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint” (... ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα / τοῖσιν ἔην· καρπὸν δ’ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτῃ πολλῶν τε καὶ ἄφθονον... -*idem*).

<sup>18</sup> Hesiodus. *Erga*, 79-82: “... and the Herald of the gods put speech in her. And he called this woman Pandora, because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift, a plague to men who eat bread” (... ἐν δ’ ἄρα φωνὴν / θῆκε θεῶν κῆρυξ, ὀνόμηνε δὲ τήνδε γυναικά / Πλανδώρην, ὅτι πάντες Ὄλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντες / δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ’ ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῆσιν -translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Loeb Classical Library. William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954) and *Theogony*, 585-590: “But when he had made the beautiful evil to be the price for the blessing, he brought her out, delighting in the finery which the bright-eyed daughter of a mighty father had given her, to the place where the other gods and men were. And wonder took hold of the deathless gods and mortal men when they saw that which was sheer guile, not to be withstood by men. For from her is the race of women and female kind...” (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δῆ τεῦξε καλὸν κακόν ἀντ’ ἀγαθοῖο, / ἐξάγαγ’ ἔνθα περ ἄλλοι ἔσαν θεοὶ ἡδ’ ἀνθρώποι, κόσμῳ ἀγαλλομένην γλαυκώπιδος Θεομοπάτης· / θαῦμα δ’ ἔχ’ ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητούς τ’ ἀνθρώπους, / ὡς εἰδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν. ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἔστι γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων... -*idem*); *Erga*, 57-58: “I will give them as the price an evil thing in which they may all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction” (τοῖς δ’ ἐγὼ ἀντὶ πυρὸς δῶσω κακόν, ὡς κεν ἀπαντες / τέρπονται κατὰ θυμὸν ἔον κακὸν ἀμφαγαπῶντες-*idem*). See: Carles Miralles. “Hesíodo sobre los orígenes del hombre y el sentido de *Trabajos y días*” (Hesiod about the origins of the man and the meaning of *Works and Days*) *BIEH IX* (1975) 3-36.

<sup>19</sup> 271e-272a: ... οὐκ ἦσαν οὐδὲ κτήσεις γυναικῶν καὶ παῖδων· ἐκ γῆς γὰρ ἀνεβιώσκοντο πάντες, οὐδὲν μεμνημένοι τῶν πρόσθεν... καρποὺς δὲ ἀφθόνους εἶχον ἀπὸ τε δένδρων καὶ πολλῆς ὄλης ἄλλης, οὐχ ύπὸ γεωργίας φυομένους, ἀλλ’ αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδούσης τῆς γῆς (... nor did men possess wives or children; for they all came to life again out of the earth, with no recollection of their former lives... they had fruits in plenty from the trees and other plants, which the earth furnished them of its own accord, without help from agriculture’ –translated by Harold N. Fowler. *Plato. The Statesman*. Loeb

once accompanied by an ill-fated being like the woman, became degraded irreversibly and deprived of everything he had had.

At any rate, the treatise that *De amore* solemnly affirmed was that the woman gave way to temptation easily as a consequence of her naïve nature. And, if we want to see to what extent the Greeks did not trust in women's intelligence, the thesis of Greek pederasts regarding women are quite revealing. The clergymen in *De amore* are not pederasts, of course, but some curious coincidences can be found in their attempts to lay the rational foundations of the advantages of the masculine solitude.

Let us think for instance of Plato's *Symposium*, specifically Pausanias's speech. According to him, there is no Aphrodite without Eros but, since there are two of her, Heavenly and Popular, there must be a need for two loves. Foolish men worship the former and, therefore, love women as well as boys and, besides, they love their bodies more than their souls. They even make the most foolish choice, since they merely look to fulfil their desire. However, those who worship the latter, "betake them to the male, in fondness for what has the robuster nature and a larger share of mind" (*τὸ ἐρωμονέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον*)<sup>20</sup>. If the laws of anachronism were not so rigid, we could think that the Devil of the *Book of Genesis* was perfectly familiar with Pausanias's theories, which would lead the wicked serpent to aim to seduce only that human being with a feeble νοῦς. On the other hand, there is no need of any sort of anachronism in the case of Philo of Alexandria, since he undoubtedly received a centuries-old misogynist tradition which was also Greek. Let us not ignore either the true Platonic features of his thought when he wrote:

"Having set up these standards in the soul, He watched, as a judge might, to see to which it would tend. And when He saw it inclining to wickedness, and making light of holiness and godly fear, out of which comes the winning of immortal life, He cast it forth, as we might expect, and drove it from pleasure, giving the soul which committed offences that defy the healer's skill, no hope of a subsequent return (*ἐλπίδα τῆς εἰσαῦθις ἐπανόδου*), inasmuch as the reason given for their deception was in a high degree blameworthy. This we must not leave unexplained. It is said that in olden times the venomous earthborn crawling thing (*τὸ ιοβόλον καὶ γηγενὲς ἐρπετὸν ὄφις*) could send forth a man's voice, and that one day it approached the wife (*γυναικὶ*) of the first man (*ἀνδρὸς*) and upbraided her for her irresoluteness and excessive scrupulosity in delaying and hesitating to pluck a fruit most beauteous to behold and most luscious to taste, and most useful into the bargain, since by its jeans she would have power to recognize things good and evil. It is said that she, without looking into the suggestion, prompted by a mind devoid of steadfastness and firm foundation (*ἀπὸ γνώμης ἀβεβαίου καὶ ἀνιδούτου*

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Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962.

<sup>20</sup> *Symposium* 181b-c: 'Now the Love that belongs to the Popular Aphrodite is in very truth popular and does his work at haphazard: this is the Love we see in the meaner sort of men; who, in the first place, love women as well as boys; secondly, where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul; and thirdly, they choose the most witless people they can find, since they look merely to the accomplishment and care not if the manner be noble or no. Hence they find themselves doing everything at haphazard, good or its opposite, without distinction: for this love proceeds from the goddess who is far the younger of the two, and who in her origin partakes of both female and male. But the other Love springs from the Heavenly goddess who, firstly, partakes not of the female but only of the male; and secondly, is the elder, untinged with wantonness: wherefore those who are inspired by this Love betake them to the male, in fondness for what has the robuster nature and a larger share of mind' -translated by Lamb, W. R. M. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.

(συναινέσασαν), gave her consent and ate of the fruit, and gave some of it to her husband; this instantly brought them out of a state of simplicity (*ἀπλότητος*) and innocence (*ἀκακίας*) into one of wickedness (*πανουργίαν*)”<sup>21</sup>.

And this is not all, because a bit later, in Plato’s *Symposium* too, Aristophanes tells the myth of the three ancient genres –better known as the myth of the androgynous-, which provides us with more information about certain pure men. Indeed, according to him, the finest boys come from a double masculine being, so that “they have the most manly nature (*ἀνδρειότατοι*), these alone prove in a public career to be men (*μόνοι ἀποβαίνουσιν εἰς τὰ πολιτικὰ ἀνδρεῖς οἱ τοιοῦτοι*), and when they come to man’s estate they are boy-lovers (*παιδεραστοῦσι*), and have no natural interest in wiving and getting children, but only do these things under stress of custom (*νόμος*); they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days (*ἄγαμοι*)”<sup>22</sup>. Free of any sort of sensuality, they only cultivate –now according to Diotima- their intellect and reproduce in a different way, thus not leaving behind them a biological offspring but disciples of their virtue<sup>23</sup>.

Consequently, there are traditions which are very ancient, very Greek –and Western, thus:

- 1) Men are stronger and more intelligent than women.
- 2) Women are not strong and, besides, they are less intelligent than men –or they are not intelligent at all.
- 3) Those who are superior should intend not to become degraded in the company of those who are inferior, i.e., women.
- 4) As a result of being more intelligent than women, only men are suitable for any task involving reflection or leadership.
- 5) The best men, that is, those who are manly *par excellence*, leave behind them an intellectual offspring, while the androgynous ones devote themselves to procreate biologically.

In short: we need only leave aside everything related strictly to the pederasty among the Greeks, and the enigma regarding a certain conception of celibacy as well as that other enigma concerning the exclusion of women from ruling tasks become unveiled.

Bearing in mind the coincidences between Andreas Capellanus and Philo of Alexandria, it is quite understandable that *De amore* hastens to condemn any human activity which is alien to the

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<sup>21</sup> LV (155-156).

<sup>22</sup> *Symposium* 191e-192b: ‘Men who are sections of the male pursue the masculine, and so long as their boyhood lasts they show themselves to be slices of the male by making friends with men and delighting to lie with them and to be clasped in men’s embraces; these are the finest boys and striplings, for they have the most manly nature. Some say they are shameless creatures, but falsely: for their behaviour is due not to shamelessness but to daring, manliness, and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like. Sure evidence of this is the fact that on reaching maturity these alone prove in a public career to be men. So when they come to man’s state they are boy-lovers, and have no natural interest in wiving and getting children, but only do these things under stress of custom; they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days’ -translated by Lamb, W. R. M. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.

<sup>23</sup> *Symposium* 208e-209: ‘Now those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women, and are amorous on this wise: by getting children they acquire an immortality, a memorial, and a state of bliss, which in their imagining they for all succeeding time procure. But pregnancy of soul –for there are persons, she declared, who in their souls still more than in their bodies conceive things which are proper for soul to conceive and bring forth’ -translated by Lamb, W. R. M. *Loeb Classical Library*. London: William Heinemann Ltd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.

voūç or intelligence. Indeed, there are many passages where it is said that whoever chooses the pleasures of the superior part (*partis eminentioris solatia*) is preferable (*preferendum*) to another who chooses those of the inferior. Everything related to this last sort of pleasure does not separate human beings from animals (*a brutis in nullo sumus animalibus segregati*). Furthermore, the pleasures of the superior part (*superioris partis solatia*) were attributed to the human race (*propria humanae sunt attributa*) and denied to animals. Ergo, whoever chooses the inferior part is not worthy of love (*ab amore repellatur indignus*) and must be rejected as if he were a dog, while whoever chooses the superior part must be accepted because of having obeyed Nature (*naturae*). Furthermore, it is impossible to feel satiated by superior pleasures, while those of the inferior part certainly satiate us<sup>24</sup>. In any case, it is quite clear that a “spiritual gluttony”, as a real possibility and danger, has not even been considered. However, a few lines later, the text adds that superior causes are generally preferred to inferior ones (*superiores causas inferioribus esse parlatas nemini sapientium licet ulterius dubitare*): heaven to earth (*coelum terrae*), paradise to hell (*paradisus inferno*), angels to human beings (*hominibus angeli*); even the superior part of a human being, that is his head, is considered worthier (*dignior*), since the human race was created in the image of God<sup>25</sup>. To sum up: if we had not seen that, according to this text, the woman is more naïve than the man and shows less resistance to temptation, we should not dare to arrive at radical conclusions, but now it is inevitable: heaven must be preferred to earth, paradise to hell, angels to men and “men to women”.

Now, we could ask whether marriage, thanks to which mankind continues to fulfil God’s order (‘Be fruitful and multiply!’), will avoid condemnation. But the answer appears once again in the chapter dedicated to the reproof of love, that is to say: all misfortunes are a consequence of love (*ex amore mala cuncta sequantur*), because carnal pleasure (*delectatio carnis*) does not belong to the category of the good; on the contrary, it is a shameful crime (*damnabile crimen*) which, even in marriage, is tolerated as a venial sin (*quae etiam in coniugatos ipsis vix cum veniali culpa toleratur*)<sup>26</sup>. Or, in other words, it would be impossible not to notice the “advantages” of celibacy and, at the same time, the disadvantages of certain insane metaphysics which have survived for centuries always speaking of the “inconveniences of marriage”.

Whoever is called to be a ruler and wise, why should he want to become a slave? The best thing to do is to cultivate both our intellect and spirit and, given that love, except the divine love owing to which we marry God, has other objectives, it is worth reproving it. Wisdom (*sapientia*) stops belonging to every wise man who falls in love. The man, even when he is full of wisdom (*sapientiae plenus*), when permitting to be drawn towards Venus’s works (*ad Veneris opera*), will not be able to withstand the assaults of lust (*motus luxuriae*)<sup>27</sup>. Becoming sensual rather than spiritual, earthly rather than heavenly, subdued rather than ruler, the man becomes weaker and less powerful in fight (*homines efficiuntur in bello minus potentes*), since Venus makes human bodies feebler (*ex amore et Veneris opere corpora debilitantur humana*)<sup>28</sup>. But, above all, the man who has become a slave of Venus betrays the man-man unity, that almost sacred bond of friendship which springs up among human beings who share the same nature and rank. Or talking advantage of the image created by Andreas Capellanus: the man who has been wounded by the arrows of love (*amoris iacula*) firmly believes that nothing is more important than to please the woman he loves (*coamanti placere*), while he badly compensates his friend –another man- (*male compensat amicum*) to the extent of forgetting and abandoning him (*neglectum vel amissum*). In short: every man in love is miserable (*miser*), because he rejects both the help and friendship of others and compensates this fact by loving only a woman (*in unius mulieris amore*

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<sup>24</sup> I, 536-537.

<sup>25</sup> I, 547-9.

<sup>26</sup> III, 33.

<sup>27</sup> III, 62.

<sup>28</sup> III, 57.

*compensat); it seems quite logical, therefore, that his friends abandon and avoid him in their turn<sup>29</sup>.* Andreas Capellanus's words are almost cruel, but one must take into account that whoever interchanges friendship for flesh lives only for himself (*sibi tantum vivere*), while, according to Cicero<sup>30</sup>, if someone got only a friend, he should consider him to be the most precious treasure, since there is nothing in this world to be compared with a friend<sup>31</sup>.

We read this thought in the treatise *De amicitia* but it also appears, of course, in Plato's *Symposium* where Phaedrus, when mentioning the advantages of pederasty, affirms (178e): "I for my part am at a loss to say what greater blessing a man can have in earliest youth than an honourable lover, or a lover than an honourable favourite" (οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγ' ἔχω εἰπεῖν ὅτι μεῖζόν ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν εὐθὺς νέων ὄντι ἡ ἐραστὴς χρηστὸς καὶ ἐραστὴ παιδικά), and he adds that the mutual control favours an irreproachable behaviour based in its turn upon mutual defence<sup>32</sup>. The fact of using again a text dealing with pederasty is not the result of any personal caprice but it is a consequence of the need to refer to the theoretical corpus which best shows the "masculinization" of Western Ethics. Nevertheless, in order to illustrate this phenomenon, I have always preferred to present those reflections in Plutarch's *Eroticus* which are as Platonic as those by Plato himself. Indeed, Protagoras, who is in favour of pederasty and against marriage, maintains:

'If, however, such a passion (πάθος) must also be called Love, let it at least be qualified as an effeminate and bastard love (θῆλιν καὶ νόθον), that takes its exercise in the women's quarters as bastards do in the Cynosarges... there is only one genuine Love, the love of boys (παιδικός). It is not 'flashing with desire', as Anacreon says of the love of maidens, or 'drenched with unguents, shining bright'. No, its aspects is simple and unspoiled (λιτὸν... καὶ ἀθρυπτόν). You will see it in schools of philosophy (ἐν σχολαῖς φιλοσόφοις), or perhaps in the gymnasia and palaestrae (γυμνάσια καὶ παλαίστρας), searching for young men whom it cheers on with a clear and noble cry to the pursuit of virtue when they are found worthy of its attention. But that other lax and housebound love (ύγρὸν... καὶ οἰκουρὸν), that spends its time in the bosoms and beds of women (ἐν κόλποις... καὶ κλινιδίοις), ever pursuing a soft life (τὰ μαλθακὰ), enervated amid pleasure devoid of manliness and friendship and inspiration (ήδοναῖς ἀνάνδροις καὶ ἀφίλοις καὶ ἀνενθουσιάστοις), it should be proscribed, as in fact Solon did proscribe it. He forbade slaves to make love to boys or to have a rubdown, but he did not restrict their intercourse with women. For friendship (φιλία) is a beautiful and courteous relationship (καλὸν καὶ ἀστεῖον), but mere pleasure (ήδονὴ) is base and unworthy of a free man (κοινὸν καὶ ἀνελεύθερον). For this reason also it is not gentlemanly or urbane to make love to slave boys: such a love is mere copulation (συνουσία), like the love of women (ότῶν γυναικῶν)' -translated into English by W. C. Helmbold. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Let us pay attention, then, to this last idea: in order to become free, men must continue to be friends with those who are not soft; they must not become feebler as a result of enjoying

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<sup>29</sup> III, 18.

<sup>30</sup> *De amicitia* 22.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. III, 9-12.

<sup>32</sup> *Symposium* 178e-179: 'So that if we could contrive to have a city or an army composed of lovers and their favourites, they could not be better citizens of their country than by thus refraining from all that is base in a mutual rivalry for honour; and such men as these, when fighting side by side, one might almost consider able to make even a little band victorious over all the world' –*idem*.

pleasures which are not virile; they must avoid desire and practise virtue; they must be strong, honest, etcetera; in short, they should never become effeminate. Needless to say, in *De amore* Andreas Capellanes does not certainly advices Gualterius to become a pederast –I beg readers’ pardon for this unnecessary remark- but, quite paradoxically, he unconsciously passes on to him a great deal of pederasts’ ideology.

So far, the brief analysis I bore in mind. The reader must have detected undoubtedly the significant lack of any reference to all those adjectives which are traditionally attributed to women, thus seeming to be their exclusive patrimony. It is a deliberate lack, of course. In my opinion it is quite useless thinking of Semonides –the iambic poet of Samos who lived, at least partially, in the VIIth century before Christ- and mentioning that long list of feminine inconveniences. It would be a difficult task and, afterwards, we should read again Andreas Capellanus’s *De amore* in order to confirm that women are, “thanks” also to a centuries-old tradition which has shaped Western sensibility: incapable of keeping a secret (*praeterea nulla novit mulier aliquid occultare secretum*), talkative (*est omnis femina perlinguosa*), lier (*mendax etiam femina quaelibet reperitur*), superb (*superbia quoque mulierem consuevit maculare sexum*), hypocritical (*mulieres omnes cuncta quae dicunt in cordis scimus duplicitate narrare*), disobedient (*inobedientiae quoque vitio mulier quaelibet inquinatur*), inconstant (*inconstants etiam mulier regulariter invenitur*), slave of their stomach (*ventris etiam mulier in tanto manet obsequio quia nulli rei mulier erubesceret assentire, si fuerit de splendido cibo secura*), slanderous (*mulierem esse maledicam*)<sup>33</sup>, etcetera. We could also refer to Euripides and his Hippolytus, to Aristophanes<sup>34</sup>... But the causes of Western misogyny go beyond this catalogue and, on the other hand, it was necessary to look for them in all those texts which theorize about the supposed different origin and nature of men and women. I apologize, then, for all the omissions that only the shortness of my contribution can justify: Aristotle’s biological theories which attribute the form or active principle and the heat to the man, while matter, passiveness and coolness are attributed to the woman; the influence of the Greek Thought on the Fathers of the Church; the influence of Saint Agustin and Saint Thomas; the great responsibility of Plotinus and Neoplatonism in general for the search of a certain ideal of purity, etc. All these points would demand certainly specific approaches. However, with regard to misogyny, the monograph by the German theologian Uta Ranke Heinemann, *Eunuchi für das Himmelreich, Katholische Kirche und Sexualität*, 1990, is extremely revealing.

Therefore, in order to put an end to my reflections, I have thought that it would be truly illustrative to read a contemporaneous ethical text, because the so called “weight of tradition” can usually –and precisely- be detected in this realm. In this case, almost inevitably, I have chosen *The New Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Needless to say, the ordination of women continues to be refused, and the truth is that any sort of debate seems literally impossible. Let us see it in the Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mysteri. Section Two: The Seven Sacraments of the Church. Chapter Three: The Sacrament of the Service of Communion. Article 6: The Sacrament of Holy Orders. VI. Who can receive this sacrament:

1577. Only a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination. The Lord Jesus chose men (*viri*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ’s return. The Church recognizes herself to be

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. III, 74-102.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. P. Gilabert. *Op. cit.*, 67-68.

bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible<sup>35</sup>.

I beg your pardon but I dare to suggest that, given that the *Gospels* do not mention any feminine mental or spiritual inferiority –the Gospels are obviously good news and not an unforgivable nonsense-, very probably all the reasons traditionally adduced against the ordination of women must be the result of the circumstances of the moment, so that the Catholic Church -in my humble opinion, of course- should not recognize herself to be “bound” but “free” to go forward in accordance with the spirit of our age. Even better, given that the Catholic Church has felt authorised throughout the centuries to build a misogynist tradition which by no means can be accepted according to the Gospels, maybe the very Jesus –and I am conscious that my statement seems to be a *boutade*, but it is not- would really thank such a revolutionary decision.

Secondly, bearing in mind the content of *De amore*, another theme of the *Catechism* to which one should pay attention is marriage, which is approached in Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Section Two: The Seven Sacraments of the Church. Chapter Three: The Sacraments at the Service of Communion. Article 7: The Sacrament of Matrimony. I. Marriage in God’s Plan. **Marriage in the regime of sin**):

**1606** Every man experiences evil around him and within himself. This experience makes itself felt in the relationships between man and woman. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome according to the circumstances of cultures, eras, and individuals, but it does seem to have a universal character.

**1607** According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the *nature* of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from sin. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations (*Cf. Gen. 3:12*); their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust (*Cf. Gen. 2:22; 3:16*); and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work (*Cf. Gen. 1:28;3:16-19*).

**1608** Nevertheless, the order of creation persists, though seriously disturbed. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them (*Cf. Gen. 3:21*). Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them "in the beginning".

Well then, here are some questions:

1. Why, when approaching the “sacred ordination”, does not appear another headline saying **“The Sacred Ordination under the regime of sin”?**
2. Cannot the consecrated man, as a man, experience evil around him and within himself?
3. Is the consecrated man, like any other human being, not threatened by his infidelity to God?
4. If the sin is the true “key”, will its consequence not be the break of communion God-man rather than the break of communion man-woman?

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<sup>35</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition* (<http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p2s2c3a7.htm#I>). All the quotations will correspond to this edition.

5. Cannot the relationship with God of the consecrated man -who is also a sinner- become highly “concupiscent”, that is to say, tainted by the sensuality of the arrogance regarding God and human beings like any other man or woman?
6. Does the consecrated man not cure the wounds of his sins with the help of the divine grace, like any other human being?

Consequently, why so many cautions and specifications in the case of marriage? Does the Catholic Church still believe in the so called “inconveniences of marriage”?

One further remark. We read in Part Three: Life in Christ (Section Two: The Ten Commandments. Chapter One: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Article 6: The Sixth Commandment. III. The Love of Husband and Wife):

**2362 “The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honourable”.**

Nevertheless, if the intimate union of the spouses must be logically sexual and, as a consequence, “chaste” in this case can only mean “guided by both mental and spiritual rectitude”, ought this rectitude not to be demanded from all persons, married or consecrated, and in all fields? Why so many cautions, then, in the case of marriage? Does the Catholic Church still believe in the so called “inconveniences of marriage”?

And, finally, let us read what The New Catechism says about consecrated celibacy: Part Three: Life in Christ (Section Two: The Ten Commandments. Chapter One: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Article 6: The Sixth Commandment. II. The Vocation of Chastity. The Various Forms of Chastity):

**2349** People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single (CDF, *Persona humana* 11). Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence.

Ergo:

1. If it is a “remarkable manner”, it must be in opposition to that which is not remarkable at all or less remarkable.
2. If it is a remarkable way which enables them to give themselves to God “alone”, it must be in opposition to that which implies a “distraction” regarding a true and only “objective”.
3. If it is a remarkable way which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an “undivided heart”, it must be in opposition to that which breaks the heart and in some sense betrays the above mentioned *nuptias divinas*.

Unfortunately, eight centuries after Andreas Capellanus and twenty after Philo of Alexandria, certain unfounded beliefs are still maintained by a part of the Catholic Church –a minority, I hope-, which mistakes the consecrated celibacy for the duty to divide the hearts of men in love and turn marriage into a risky step towards the “servitude of sin”.