

RIMINI

Casa di Risparmio Foundation

[no shelfmark]

Basinio da Parma, *Astronomicon*

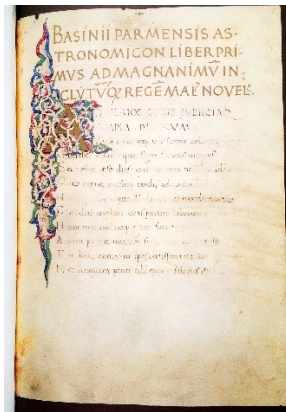
Italian (Rimini or Cesena)

1455-65

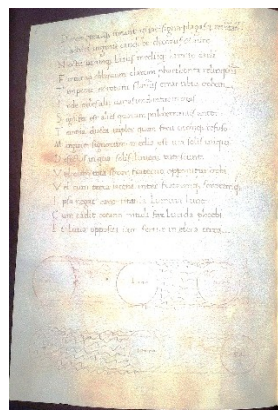
text

pp. 1-78	Basinio da Parma, <i>Astronomicon</i> , Books I and II (with Book I illustrated)
p. 1	(in gilt capitals) BASINII PARMENSIS ASTRONOMICON LIBER PRIMUS AD MAGNANIMUM INCLYTUMQUE REGEM MALATESTAM NOVELLUM. inc. (in smaller capitals) AETHERIOS ORBIS SUBIECTAQUE TEMPLA DEORUM —
p. 50	Nexa tenent cursu semper volventis Olympi.
p. 50	(in gilt capital letters) BASINII PARMENSIS ASTRONOMICON LIBER SECUNDUS INCIPIT. I inc. (in smaller capital letters) QUINQUE VAGAS ETIAM NEC NON PULCHERRIMA MUNDI —
p. 78	Templa cano atque vias semper volventis olympi. FINIS.

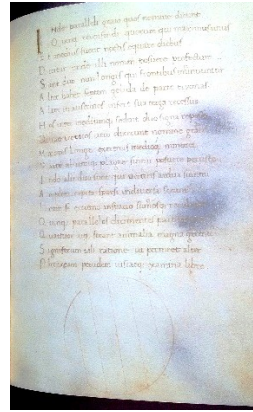
illustrations



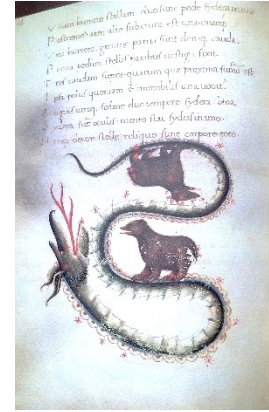
p. 1



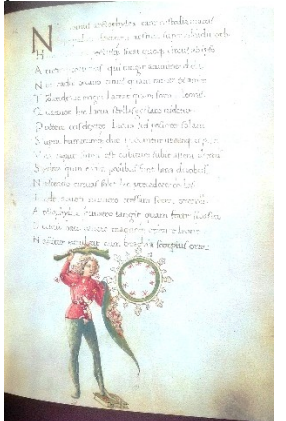
p. 6



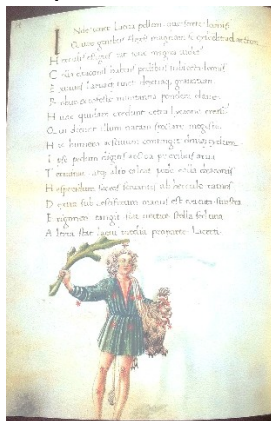
p. 9



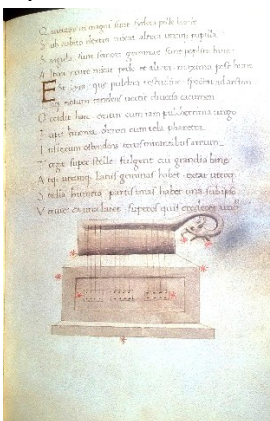
p. 12



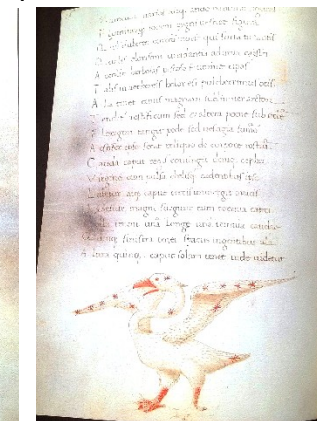
p. 13



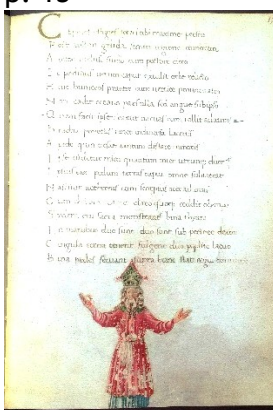
p. 14



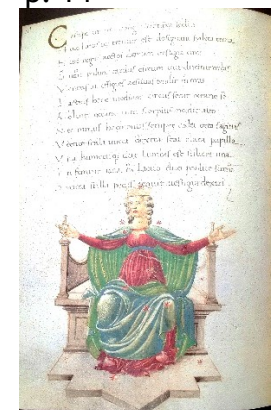
p. 15



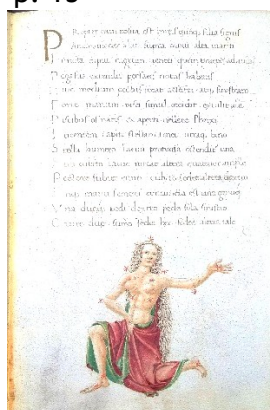
p. 16



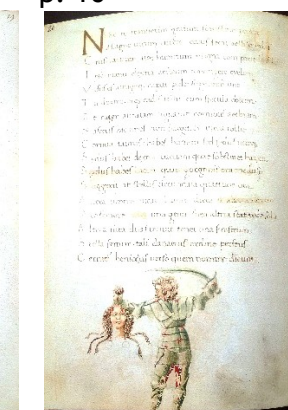
p. 17



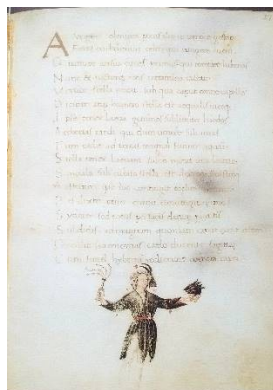
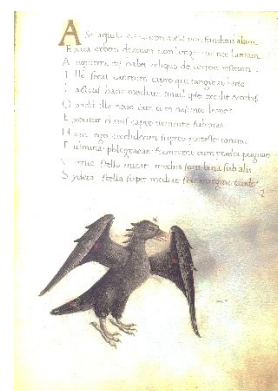
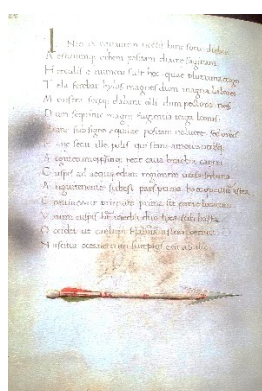
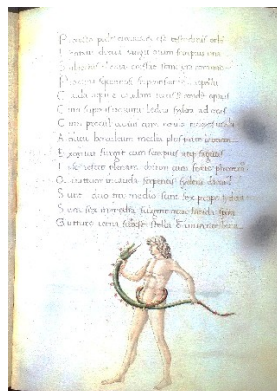
p. 18



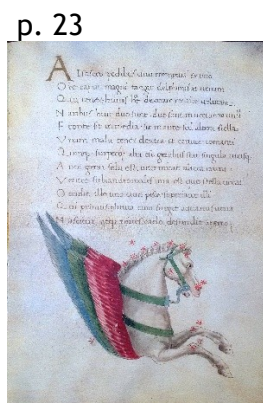
p. 19



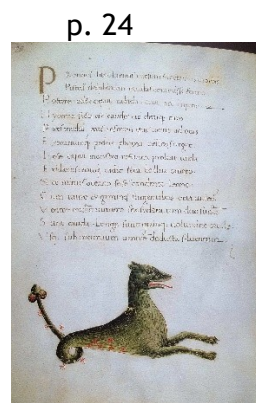
p. 20



p. 21



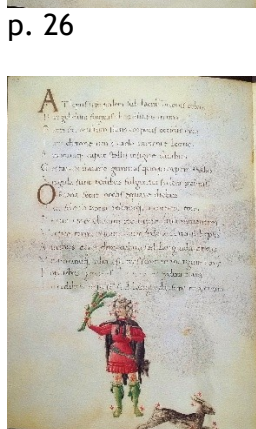
p. 23



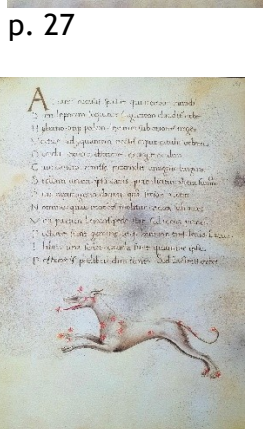
p. 24



p. 25



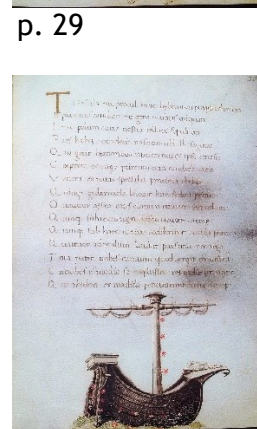
p. 26



p. 27



p. 28



p. 29



p. 30



p. 31



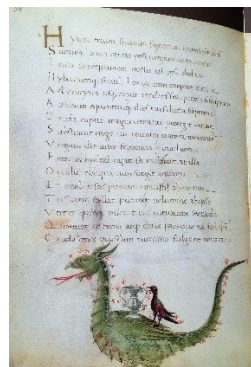
p. 32



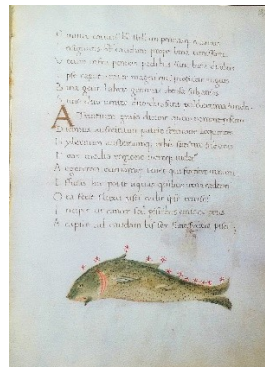
p. 33



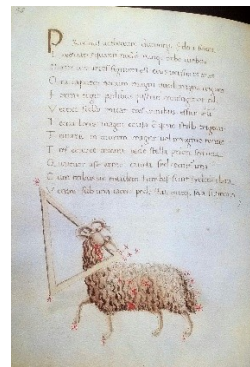
p. 35



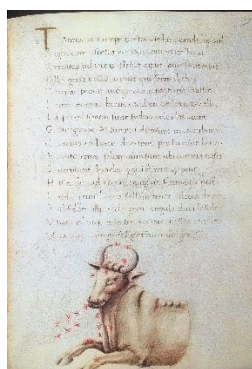
p. 36



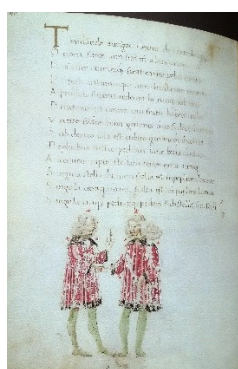
p. 37



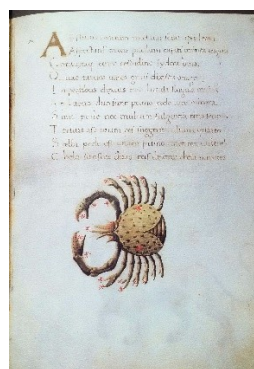
p. 38



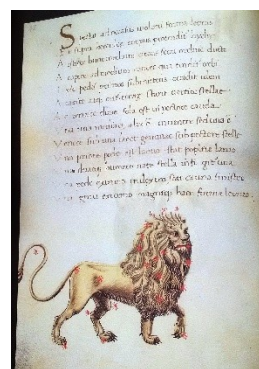
p. 39



p. 40



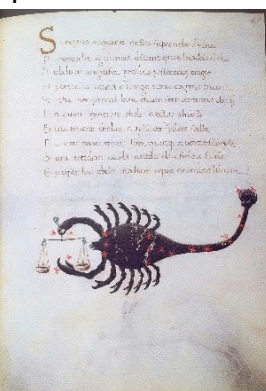
p. 41



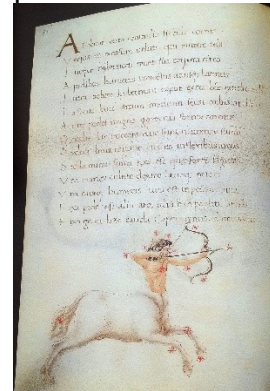
p. 42



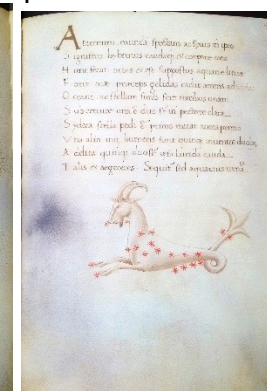
p. 44



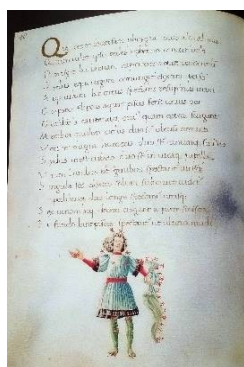
p. 45



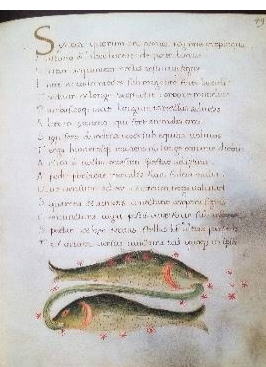
p. 46



p. 47



p. 48



p. 49

- p. 7 An incomplete diagram (which was probably intended to depict the celestial circles)
- p. 9 Diagram of the climes with the diagonal band of the zodiac.
- pp. 12-49 Illustrations of 36 highly-coloured constellation groupings. The stars are marked in red ink. There are no labels. The human figures are dressed in mid-15th-century clothing.
- p. 12 **DRACO INTER ARCTOS** with **Draco** depicted as a snake with pointed ears, its red tongue sticking out and a body with three bends. Its head towards the bottom of the page. The Bears are placed back-to-back, facing into the body of the dragon, with **URSA MINOR** in the topmost bend and **URSA MAIOR** in the second bend. Draco has 5 stars on the head and 10 on the body, or 15 stars in all. Ursa Minor has 9 stars in the head, 1 on the neck, 2 on the tail and 3 on the feet, or 15 stars in all. Ursa Maior has a star in each foot and 2 stars on the tail, or 6 stars in all.
- p. 13 **BOOTES** is dressed in a short red jerkin with blue-green leggings. He stands to the right and raises a green club in his right hand and his left arm is covered by a shield which is decorated with a lion's head. His left foot rests on a book (!). He has 1 star on the club, 1 on each shoulder, 4 in the chest, 1 on the right elbow, 4 on the shield and 1 on each foot, or 14 stars in all.
- CORONA BOREALIS** is a circle with floral designs around the outside. It has 9 stars.
- p. 14 **HERCULES** stands facing the viewer and wears a loose-fitting, belted and short-skirted blue tunic with a red reverse at the neck. The lion's skin is draped over his left shoulder and he holds the head in his left hand. He raises a green club above his head with his right hand. His feet have been cut off the bottom of the page. He has 1 star on his head, 2 on the chest, 1 on each elbow, 1 on each hip, 1 on each knee, 1 on the right shin and 4 in the lion's pelt.
- p. 15 **LYRA** is a stepped zither-like instrument with 3 sets of 4 strings and a bird's head and neck coming out of the right side. It has 8 stars.

- p. 16 **CYGNUS** is a swan that faces to the left with its wings outstretched. It has 1 star in the head, 1 in the neck, 5 in each wing and 1 on the tail, or 13 stars in all.
- p. 17 **CEPHEUS** is facing towards the viewer. He is dressed in a red robe over a blue tunic. He raises his hands to each side so that his elbows are bent. He is bearded and wears a mitre on his head. He has 2 stars in the head, 1 in each hand, 2 on his right breast, 3 at the waist, 2 on the left knee. His feet have been cut off at the bottom of the page.
- p. 18 **CASSIOPEIA** is seated in sculpted wooden throne with her arms held out to the side in a 'W' shape. She wears a crown and a red dress and a blue and green mantle. She has 1 star on the head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on the right breast, 1 on the waist, 1 on the right thigh, 2 on the left leg, 1 on the left foot and 2 in base of the throne, or 11 stars in all.
- p. 19 **ANDROMEDA** kneels to the left and is nude except for a red and green robe that is draped around her waist and which she clutches with her right hand. She extends her left arm behind her. She has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 4 in the chest, 1 on each elbow, 1 on each hand, 1 on her right hand, 1 on the left knee and 2 on the right foot and 2 on the left foot.
- p. 20 **PERSEUS** faces away from the viewer and is dressed in Renaissance armour. He raises a scimitar in his right hand above his head and holds the Medusa's head by its hair in his left hand. He has 1 star on each hand, 1 on each shoulder and 4 on his lower back. His feet are cut off at the bottom of the page. There are 4 stars in Medusa's head.
- p. 21 **AURIGA** faces the viewer and wears a black tunic with tattered edges. He holds a 3-thonged in his raised right hand and holds two goat's heads in his raised left hand. There is also a small goat's head peering out from behind his left shoulder. He has 1 star in the head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow and 2 in the left arm. His feet are cut off at the bottom of the page.
- p. 23 **OPHIUCHUS** is nude and stands slightly to the left. He holds the **SERPENS** horizontally so that it circles once around his waist, with the Snake's head to the left, facing the man. He has no stars, but the Snake has 24 stars.
- p. 24 **SAGITTA** points to the right and has 4 stars.

- p. 25 **AQUILA** faces to the right and has its wings outstretched to each side. It has 1 star in the head, 1 on each wing and 1 on the tail or 4 stars in all.
- p. 26 **DELPHINUS** is shaped like a dolphin. It is placed on its back, with the nose to the right. It has 4 stars on the head, 2 on the body, 1 above the dorsal fin and 3 on the tail, or 10 stars in all.
- p. 27 **PEGASUS** is depicted as 1/2 of a white horse, cut-off just behind his multi-coloured wings. He faces to the right, with his front legs extended and wears a bridle. It has 4 stars in the head, 7 in the neck, 1 below the wing and 2 in each knee.
- p. 28 **CETUS** is a green monster with a dog's front parts and a curling snake's tail with a trefoil end. He has 6 stars in the belly and 7 in the tail, or 13 stars in all.
- p. 29 **ERIDANUS** is nude and faces slightly to the left. He holds an urn, with his left hand on the base and his right hand on the neck, so that it pours water to the left. He has two conical trees growing from his shoulders (!). There are at least 11 stars in the water.
- p. 30 **LEPUS** runs to the right. It has 1 star in each ear, 1 in the chest, 1 on the tail and 1 in each front foot, or 6 stars in all.
- ORION** is dressed in a short red, belted robe, with puffed sleeves. He has a bear-skin as a mantle. He holds his left hand in front of his chest and raises a green club in his right hand. is nude and stands slightly to the left. He has 6 stars on his head, 4 on the club, 1 on his right elbow, 3 at his waist, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot.
- p. 31 **CANIS MAIOR** is a sleek greyhound that leaps to the left. It has 1 star in the head, 2 on the cheek 1 on the tip of the tongue, 5 on the shoulder, 3 on the front feet, 1 on the belly, 4 on the tail and 1 on each hind foot.
- p. 32 **CANIS MINOR** is a small, short-nosed piebald dog that leaps to the left, with its tongue out. It has 3 stars.

- p. 33 **ARGO** is a full ship that sails to the right. It has a large main mast with a crow's nest and a furling sail, a raised poop deck and two steering oars. There are 4 stars in the mast, 5 in the hull, 3 visible stars below the keel and at least 4 in each steering oar. The bottom of the ship has been cut off at the bottom of the page.
- p. 35 **CENTAURUS** is depicted as a centaur leaping to the left, with the human half nude. He holds **LUPUS** (a rabbit) in his outstretched right hand and holds his left hand down by his side. He has 3 stars on the head, 2 stars on the left shoulder, 5 in the chest, 1 in the right elbow, 1 on the right hand, 1 on the equine chest, 1 on each front knee, 1 on the equine body, 2 on the belly, and 3 in the tail. **Lupus** has 3 stars in the head, 1 on the front feet, 1 on the tail and 2 on the hind feet.
- ARA** is a 2-stepped cylindrical altar with flames set on a square pediment. It has 4 stars.
- p. 36 **HYDRA** is a two-legged green dragon that stands on two legs and sticks its tongue out. It has a 2-handled **CRATER** on its back with a **CORVUS** facing forward standing behind it. Hydra has at least 20 stars; Crater has 7 and Corvus has 5 stars.
- p. 37 **PISCIS AUSTRINUS** is a large green fish, swimming to the left with 12 stars along its back.
- p. 38 **ARIES** walks to the left, but turns its head back to face the right. Its head is 'intra triangulum'. It has 3 stars on the neck, 1 on each forefoot, 5 in the belly, 1 on the right hind foot and 4 on the tail. **TRIANGULUM** has 3 stars.
- p. 39 **TAURUS** is depicted as $\frac{1}{2}$ a bull, facing to the left with its front legs out in front of the body. It has 2 stars in each horn, 1 in each eye, 1 on the forehead, 7 in front of the nose, 4 on the chest, 1 on each front knee, and 1 on the right front foot. Its front right hoof is cut off by the bottom of the page.
- p. 40 **GEMINI** are depicted as two youths, dressed in short pink tunics with dark green trim. Each has long blonde hair. They face each other and shake right hands, while the Left Twin points upwards. The stars seem evenly distributed between them, with 1 star on each Twin's head, 2 on each of the

Twin's shoulders, 1 in their handshake and 1 on the Right Twin's right elbow, or a combined total of 8 stars.

- p. 41 **CANCER** is a round-bodied tan crab facing to the left with 2 big claws and 6 smaller segmented legs on either side. It has 3 stars in the right claw, 2 in the left, 2 on the shell, 6 on the bottom legs and 4 on the top legs, or 15 stars in all.
- p. 42 **LEO** walks to the right, with his left front leg raised. He raises his tail. He has a number of stars, including 13 in his mane, 1 on the haunch, 1 on the belly, 1 on the rump, 1 on the tail 1 in the left hind knee, 1 on each hind foot and 1 on the left front foot. The tip of the tail is cut off by the side of the page.
- p. 44 **VIRGO** stands facing the viewer and is winged. She is dressed in a long pink robe with a long green mantle and her hair is covered by a white veil. She holds both her hands raised and holds flowers in her right hand. She has 1 star in her head, 1 on each wing, 1 on each wing, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each hand, 6 on her dress and 1 on each foot.
- p. 45 **SCORPIO** faces to the left and has 2 large claws and 6 smaller, segmented legs and a long, smooth tail that ends in a ball. He holds the Scales in his right claw in front of his face. He has 2 stars in each claw, 3 stars on the face, 5 on the body, 6 in the tail and 2 stars on the sting. The Scales do not have stars.
- p. 46 **SAGITTARIUS** is a centaur that leaps to the right. He holds the bow in his left hand and pulls the string with his right. He has 4 stars in the head, 1 on each elbow, 1 on the human chest, 2 on the left leg, 1 on the right foot, 1 in the tail and 3 on the bow and arrow.
- p. 47 **CAPRICORN** is completely white and faces to the left, with a long tail with a curl and a trefoil end. It has a beard and short curved horns. He has 1 star on the nose, 1 on the neck, 2 on the shoulders, 5 on the chest, 1 on each front foot, 7 on the tail and 2 at the tip of the tail.
- p. 48 **AQUARIUS** is dressed in a short tunic with a pink belt, neck piece and undersleeves and green tights. He stands facing the viewer with his right hand raised. He holds the neck of a water-pouring urn with this left hand.

The stream is green. He has at least 2 stars on the head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each nipple, 1 on the right hand, 1 on the belt, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot. There are 16 stars on the water.

- p. 49 **PISCES** are two green fish, swimming in opposite directions with both their backs upwards, connected at the mouths by a stream. There are 5 stars on the top fish, 5 on the stream, 4 on the bottom fish and 4 to the left of the grouping.

notes

This is the only surviving manuscript with a dedication to Malatesta Novello, Lord of Cesena (1429-66) and Sigismondo Malatesta's brother. Its fine decoration suggests that it was intended for Novello's personal library. If this is the case, then the *terminus ante quem* could be 1457, the date of Basinio's death. Some scholars believe this is a copy of the original dedication manuscript and date it to the mid-1460s (Novello died in 1465). CHISENA 2016 argues that the textual similarities to the Cambridge autograph ms suggest that it was carried out during Basinio's lifetime, during the second drafting phase, but also notes that, without additional consultation, the matter cannot presently be resolved.

The style of the illuminations suggests mid-15th-century fashion popular in Cesena. The 1992 Sotheby's sale catalogue suggested the illuminator Giovanni di Bartolo Bettini da Fano. MARIANA CANOVA 1994 believes that the execution of the figures was influenced by the so-called 'Master of De Civitate Dei' (Cesena, Bibl. Malatestiana, Ms D.IX.1), which was commissioned by Novello Malatesta for the Malatestiana library.

In the 1992 auction catalogue entry, Sotheby's referred to the ms as 'almost the earliest extant text' of the *Astronomicon*. The Cassa di Risparmio in Rimini bought the manuscript and published a facsimile edition in 1994. The manuscript itself appears to be currently inaccessible to scholars (see CHISENA 2016).

bibliography

LEASE/CAMPANA 1951.

PÄCHT/ALEXANDER 1970, no. 830.

SOTHEBY'S, Western Manuscripts and Miniatures, 23rd June 1992, n. 72, pp. 80-85.

base attribution on similarity to Oxford ms (Cn. Class lat 81) and adopt Pächt and Alexander's attribution of that ms to the present one, suggesting the illuminator Giovanni di Bartolo Bettini da Fano.

FRIOLI 1975.

Basinii Parmensis Poetae 1994.

MARIANA CANOVA 1994, pp. 181-250.

attributes the miniatures to for an attribution to the 'Maestro del De Civitate Dei' (Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cod. D. IX.1, a. 1450, who has been a leading illuminator in Cesena since the early 1450s and whose style shows the same mixture of Pisanello on the one hand and expressiveness taken over from Venice or Bologna on the other.

LUCCHI, Ten years of research in Malatestiana, in *Libreria Domini. The manuscripts of the Malatestiana Library: texts and decorations*, edited by F. Lollini e P. Lucchi, Bologna 1995, pp. 9-20.

LOLLINI 1996, p. 95.

MARIANI CANOVA, in *Biblioteca Classense Ravenna*, a cura di A. Dillon Bussi e C. Giuliani, Firenze 1996, pp. 132-133.

F. LOLLINI 2001, pp. 310-311.

LOLLINI *Gusto malatestiano: il decoro librario*, in *Malatesta Novello magnifico signore. Arte e cultura di un principe del Rinascimento*, a cura di P. G. Pasini, San Giorgio di Piano 2002, pp. 59-65.

CHISENA 2016, pp. 67-70.

BLUME/HAFFNER/METZGER 2016, II, 2, pp. 97-99, 657-60, plates 93-96 and figs. 833-44. written in humanistic rotunda; certainly the most magnificent of the 14 surviving copies with the most generous layout; the diagrams, however are not quite correct and there are no labels to the figures; note the unusual iconographic features of the trees sprouting from the shoulders of Eridanus and that Bootes is standing on a book; they believe that the change to Renaissance dress in the figures indicates the personal preferences of Novello, 'which was perhaps possible only after Basinio's death'. Therefore, they posit a date of between 1457 and 1465.

consulted 10.6.05; updated 11.6.05 and July 2023