

Venice

Biblioteca Marciana

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Ms lat. XII. 194 (4128)

Basinio da Parma, *Astronomicon*

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North Italian

Third quarter 15th century

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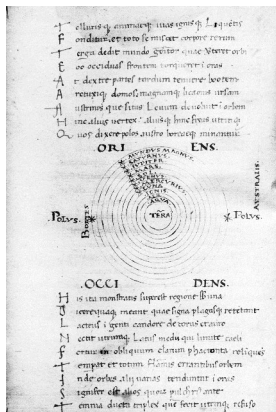
text

ff. 1r-29r      BASINIO da PARMA, *Astronomicon*, Books I and II (with Book I illustrated)

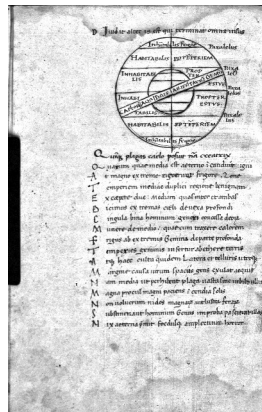
ff. 1r- 20r      (in red capitals) BASINII PARMENSIS  
ASTRONOMICON LIBER PRIMUS  
INCIPIT FOELICITER.  
(with opening E in gold set within white vine decoration)  
ETERIOS ORBIS SUBIECTAQUE TEMPLA DEORUM  
(in regular sepia script)  
Musa cane atque vias semper volventis olimpi –  
Orbe super magno miris qui sidera signis  
Nexa tenet cursu semper volventis olympi.

ff. 20v- 29r      (in red capitals) BASINII PARMENSIS LIBER SECUNDUS INCIPIT  
ASTRORUM  
(in sepia, with opening Q in gold against red and blue with  
white flourishes)  
QUinque vagas eciam: nec non pulcherrima mundi –  
Templa cano atque vias semper volventis olympi.  
finis amen  
(red capitals) BASINII PARMENSIS ASTRORUM  
LIBER EXPLICIT.

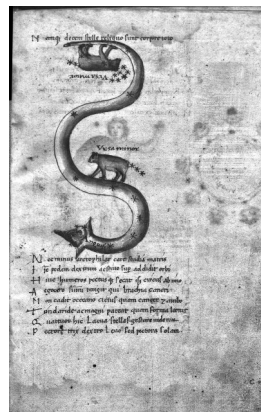
## illustrations



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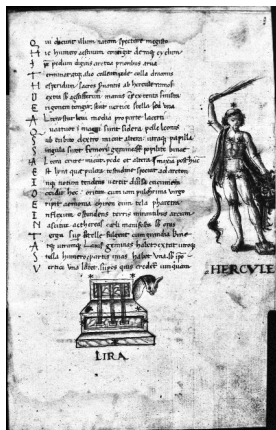
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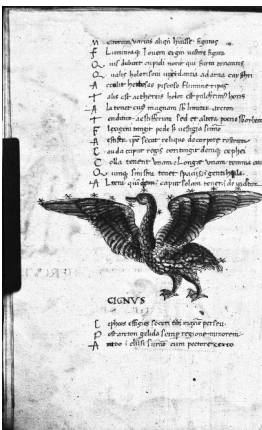
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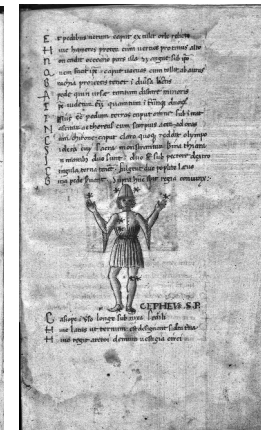
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fol. 6r



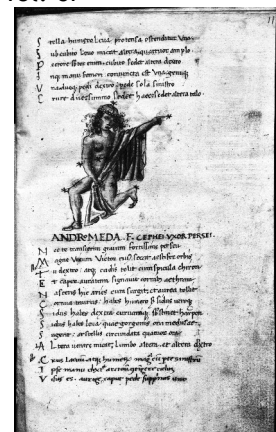
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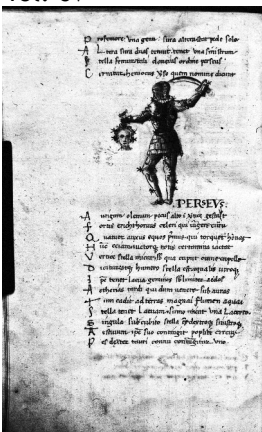
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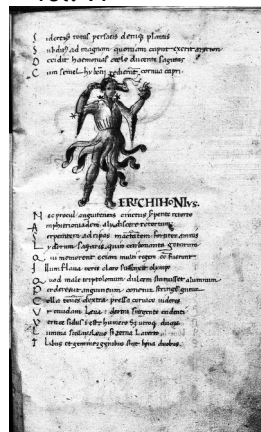
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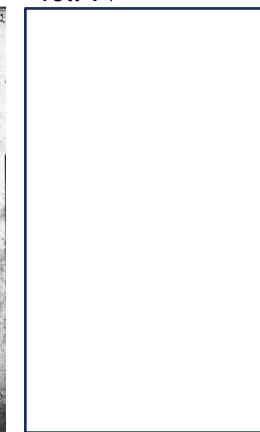
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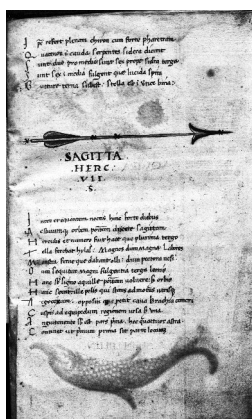
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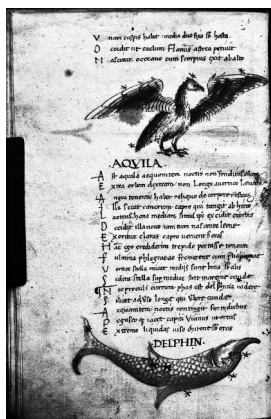
fol. 9r



fol. 9v



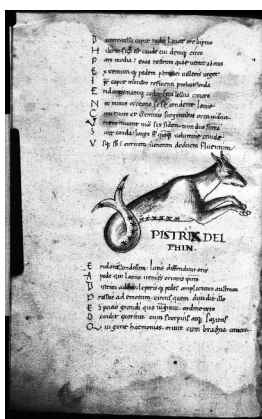
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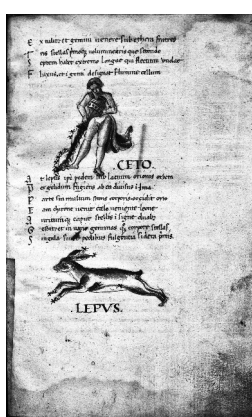
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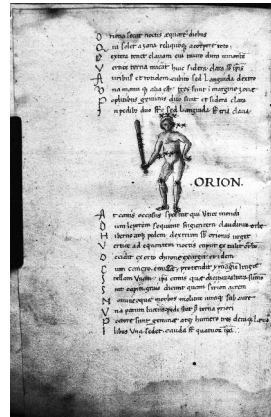
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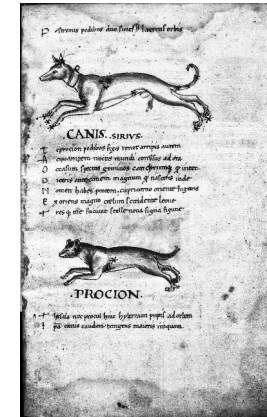
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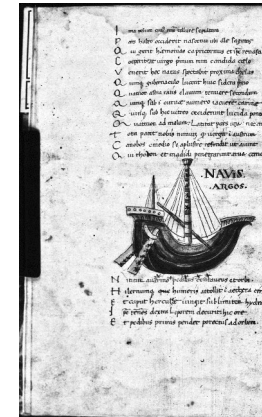
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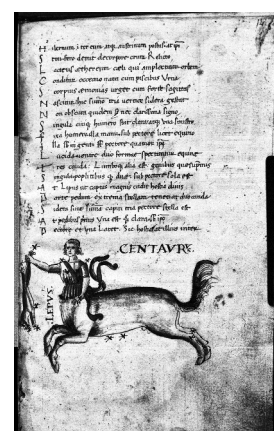
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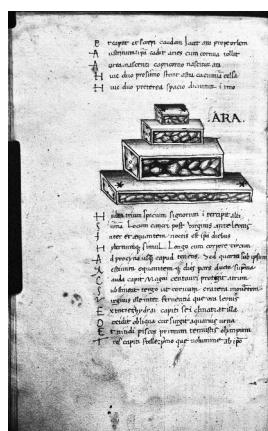
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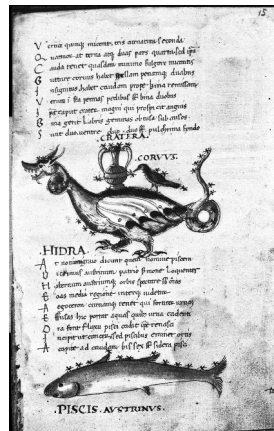
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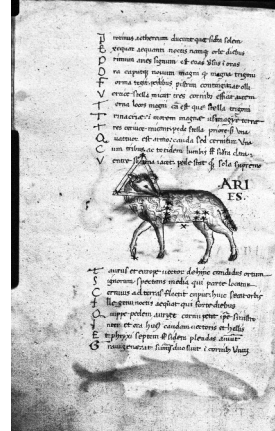
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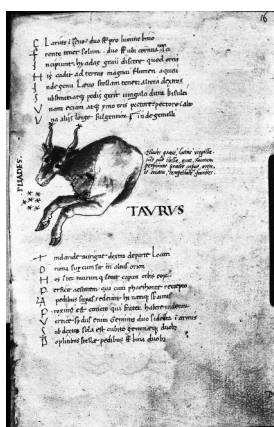
fol. 14v



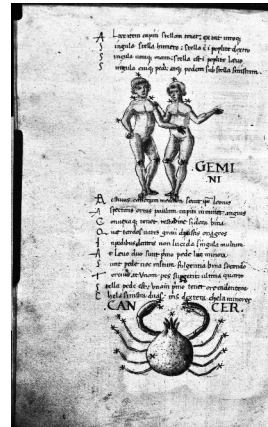
fol. 15r



fol. 15v



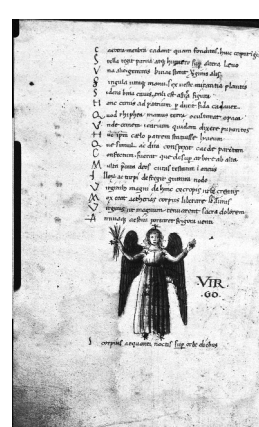
fol. 16r



fol. 16v

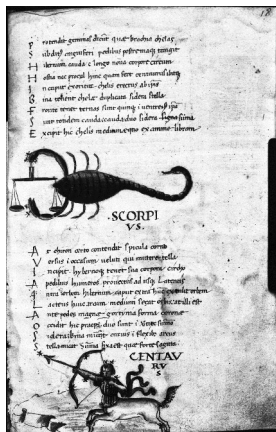


fol. 17r

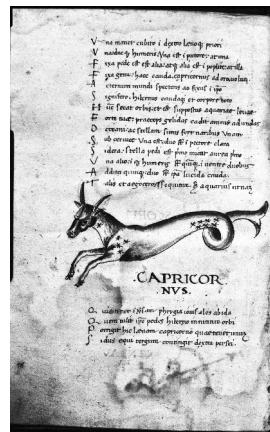


fol. 17v

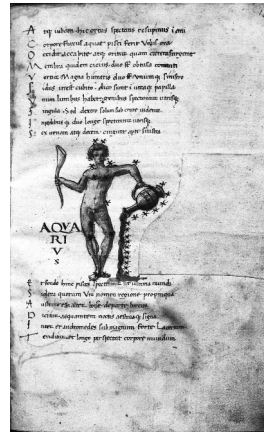




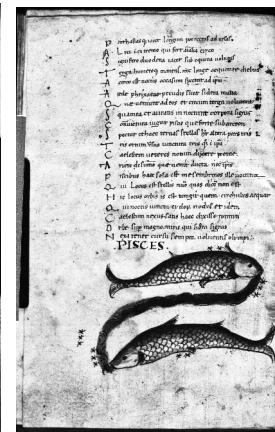
fol. 18r



fol. 18v



fol. 19r



fol. 19v

fol. 1r  
Elaborate gilt opening initial set within white vine decoration against blue, red, green and grey. Below at bottom centre, a coat of arms set within a white acanthus wreath: sinister, a white tower against a blue to green background; dexter, alternating red and gold diagonal stripes.

fol. 2v  
Diagram of the order of the spheres with **MUNDUS MAGNUS** in the outer circle, through to **LUNA**, and the 4 elements, with **TERRA** in the middle. On the outermost circle there is, to the right, a star labelled: **POLUS**; to the left a star labelled: **BOETES** Above the diagram is: **ORIENS**; to the right: **AUSTRALIS**; below: **OCCIDENS**; and to the right: **POLUS**.

fol. 3v  
Diagram of the climes with the ecliptic cutting across it at an angle.

ff. 5r-19v  
Pen drawings with colour wash of 45 constellations with stars indicated with red stars. All the constellations are labelled in red.

fol. 5r  
**DRACO INTER ARCTOS** with **Draco** (labelled: **Anguis**) depicted as a tan snake with a dragon's head. Its head is at the bottom of the picture, with its jaw facing the viewer (so the top of his head is hidden from view) with the body curling upwards with 3 bends. **Ursa Minor** (labelled: **URSA MINOR**) stands in the second curve and **Ursa Maior** (labelled: **URSA MAIOR**) stand in the last curve at the end of the tail. The bears are back-to back, facing inwards and both are tan and about the same size. **Draco** has 5 stars in the head and 10 in the body, or 15 stars in all. **Ursa Minor** has 3 stars in the tail and 1 in each foot, or 7 stars in all. **Ursa Maior** has 9 stars in the head, 1 in the shoulder, 3 in the back feet and 2 on the tail, or 15 stars in all.

- fol. 5v      **BOOTES** (labelled: ARTOFILAX) is nude and stands slightly to the right facing the viewer. He holds a blue and white oval shield in left hand so that it covers his left shoulder and all of his arm. His right hand is raised in salutation. He has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on the chest and 2 at his right side, 1 on the right elbow, 4 on the shield and 1 on each foot, or 14 stars in all. Underdrawings are visible, especially as his right hand was twisted at an angle and has been simplified in the final drawing. A later hand has added:  
*Arctophilax est stella tempestuosa quae se Bootes dicitur latine, bubuscus, eo que more bubusci plastrum sequatur*
- CORONA BOREALIS** (labelled: CRESSA CORONA) is depicted as a tan ring with alternating red and blue floreate blossoms along the outside rim. The 8 stars are placed between the blossoms (with the ninth cut off at the edge of the page).
- fol. 6r      **HERCULES** (labelled HERCULES) is nude and stands facing the viewer. He holds the tan lion's skin (face visible) near his left knee with his left hand and the rest of the skin is draped behind his back and over his right shoulder so that the hind feet and tail hang along his right side. He holds a bunch of tan rushes raised above his head with his right hand. He rests his left foot on a small tan box. He has 1 star above his head, 1 on each nipple, 1 on each elbow, 1 on his left hip, 1 on each thigh, 2 on his right knee, 1 on his left foot and 4 in the lion skin, or 15 stars in all.
- LYRA** (labelled: LIRA) is a boxy, stepped instrument decorated as if in gray marble with 3 sets of 4 golden strings. At the right of the instrument, there is an animal's head emerging with long ears and an almost human face. The instrument has 7 stars, with 1 on the body of the instrument having been smudged (erased?).
- fol. 6v      **CYGNUS** (labelled: CIGNUS) faces to the left and has its wings outstretched. Its body is tan and blue and it has a yellow beak. It has 1 star on the head, 2 in the neck, 5 on each wing and 1 on the tail, or 14 stars in all.
- fol. 7r      **CEPHEUS** (labelled: CEPHEUS. S.P.) stands facing the viewer, dressed in a short, pleated, rose tunic, with scalloped tear-drop sleeves that end at his elbows with yellow interiors and wearing a blue conical hat on his head. He has his right foot slightly pointing outwards and grey leggings. He has 2 stars in his head, 1 on each hand, 2 on the right chest, 3 at the waist, 2 on the left knee and 1 on each foot, or 13 stars in all.

- fol. 7v **CASSIOPEIA** (labelled: CASIOPES. CONIUNX. REGIA. PERSEI) is seated in a high-backed golden throne with feather-palms on the two back supports and finial on the front arm supports. She wears a golden crown and is dressed in a long pink robe, and has a blue mantle that falls open around her lap, revealing a yellow reverse. She holds her hands to the sides in a W-shape. She has 1 star in the head, 3 in the chair (1 on one of the finials and 2 at the base), 1 on each shoulder, 1 in the right breast, 1 on the left hip, 1 in the lap, 1 on the right foot and 2 on the right knee, or 12 stars in all. Traces of underdrawing of the right hand and right side of the throne.
- fol. 8r **ANDROMEDA** (labelled: ANDROMEDA . F. CEPHEI. UXOR PERSEI) kneels to the left and slightly turns, so that she points with her left hand, backwards to the right. She has loose blonde hair, held by a beaded fillet and there is a rose drape over her extended left arm that she pulls over her body to cover her pudenda. She has 1 star on the head, 1 on each shoulder, 4 on the chest, 1 on each elbow, 1 on each hand, 1 on the right knee, 2 on the left hip and 2 in each foot, or 18 stars in all. Note that the position of the left hand in the final image is different from the underdrawing.
- fol. 8v **PERSEUS** (labelled: PERSEUS) is facing away from the viewer towards the left, wearing gold and light blue Renaissance armour and helmet, with a blonde-haired head in his left hand and a light blue scimitar held above his head in his raised right hand. He has 1 star in the right hand, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on the waist, 1 on each buttock, 1 on the left knee, 1 on the left shin, 2 on the right shin, 1 on the left foot, 1 in each hand and 4 in the Medusa's head, or 17 stars in all.
- fol. 9r **Auriga** (labelled: ERICHIHONIUS) stands facing the viewer and sways slightly to the right. He wears a pink tunic with long, flapping tendrils along the lower hem that show green reverses. His teardrop sleeves are scalloped and also show green reverses. He is holding a stick with 3 thongs in his upraised right hand so that it is horizontal behind his head (**note:** the end of the stick may have been a misunderstanding of the figure of Capra that sometimes peeks out behind the Charioteer's shoulder) and has 2 seated goats on his extended left forearm. He has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 on each hand and 1 on the right foot, or 8 stars in all.
- fol. 9v **OPHIUCHUS** (labelled: TRIPTOLOMUS) is nude and stands facing the viewer with both his hands down by his sides and holding the green **SERPENS** at his hips. The Serpens has a dragon's face and faces towards the man, with its body crossed

once below the man's hips. Ophiuchus has 1 star in his head, 2 in each shoulder, 2 at the waist, 1 on each knee, 1 on the right shin and 1 on each foot and 3 on the left forearm or 15 stars in all. Serpens has 5 stars in the head and 18 in the body, or 23 stars in all. Underdrawing for Serpens is visible.

fol. 10r **SAGITTA** (labelled: SAGITTA HERCULIS) points to the right. It has 4 stars. The feathers on the end of the arrow were further back in the underdrawing.

fol. 10v **AQUILA** (labelled: AQUILA) stands to the right with both wings upraised. It has 1 star in the head, 1 in the tail and 1 in each wing, or 4 stars in all.

**DELPHINUS** (labelled: DELPHIN) is an upside-down blue fish with a long, pointed nose, facing towards the right. It has 4 stars on the head, 1 on the back, 2 on the body and 2 on the tail, or 9 stars in all.

fol. 11r **PEGASUS** (labelled: EQUUS PEGASEUS) is presented as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a winged horse, cut-off right below the hind knees. A later hand has added small hooves in black ink to the drawing to reconstitute it as a full horse. It flies to the right, has both front feet raised and turns its head to look at the viewer. Its body is tan and wings are blue, light yellow and deeper yellow. It has 5 stars on the head, 5 along the mane, 1 in the left wing, 2 on the left front knee and 1 on the right front knee, 1 on the belly and 1 on the left hind thigh, or 16 stars in all.

fol. 11v **CETUS** (labelled: PISTRISX DELPHIN) is a tan,  $\frac{1}{2}$  dog and  $\frac{1}{2}$  sea-creature with a curled fish's tail. It faces to the right. It has 6 stars on the belly, 5 on the tail and 2 at the end of the tail or 14 stars in all.

fol. 12r **ERIDANUS** (labelled: CETO) is nude, stands facing the viewer and holds a decorated blue urn diagonally at hip-height with both his hands. The stream flows out to the left and the figure has a spit of lavender drapery that is worn over his right shoulder and the flows out behind him to the right. There are 13 stars in the stream.

**LEPUS** (labelled: LEPUS) leaps to the left. It has 1 star in each ear, 1 on each foot and 2 on the belly, or 6 stars in all.

fol. 12v **ORION** (labelled: ORION) is nude stands facing the viewer, slightly to the left *dehanchement*, with his left hand resting on his hip and holding a long, green baseball bat-like club vertically in his right hand. He has 3 stars on his head, 3 to

the right of his face, 3 on the club, 1 on the right elbow, 1 on the right hand, 3 on the waist, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot, or 18 stars in all.

fol. 13r **CANIS MAIOR** (labelled: CANIS. SIRIUS.) is a sleek, tan hound with a pointed nose leaping to the left. It has a wide collar with a ring on it. It has 1 star on each ear, 2 on the chest, 3 on the back, 3 in front of the front feet, 1 on the groin, 1 on each hind foot and 4 on the tail, or 17 stars in all.

**CANIS MINOR** (labelled: PROCION) is a smaller, brown hound with a short nose and round ears leaping to the left. It has 1 star on the head, 1 on the chest and 1 on the hind feet, or 3 stars in all.

fol. 13v **NAVIS** (labelled: NAVIS . ARGOS) is a full ship with a raised poop deck and a galleried bow, sailing to the right, with a central mast with rigging and a cross beam that does not seem quite connected to the main mast. It has 4 stars on the mast, 5 on the keel, 5 below the keel and 5 on each oar, or 19 stars in all.

fol. 14r **CENTAURUS** (labelled: CENTAURUS) rushes to the left with his human half wearing a pleated green jerkin. He has a red sash running diagonally across his chest, which seems to end in 3 flapping red and yellow tendrils. He holds his left hand down by his side and holds **Lupus** (labelled: LEPUS and depicted as a rabbit) by its heels in his extended right hand. He has 1 star on each shoulder, 4 on his human chest, 1 on the equine chest, 1 in his left hand, 1 on each front knee, 2 on the belly, 1 on each hind knee and 3 in the tail, or 17 stars in all. **Lupus** has 3 stars on its face, 1 on the front legs, 1 on the chest, 2 on its tail and 1 on its hind foot or 8 stars in all.

fol. 14v **ARA** (labelled: ARA) is 4 rectangular boxes, place one on top of each other and decorated as if in marble, with alternating orange, red, yellow and lavender faces. There are 2 stars on the top box and 2 on the bottom box, or 4 stars in all.

fol. 15r **HYDRA** (labelled: HIDRA) is a 2-legged, green and grey dragon with folded wings that faces to the left. He has a curl in his tail and a curl in his neck. **Crater** (labelled: CRATERA) is a 2-handled blue vase with gold decorations (and handles shaped like dolphins) . It is perched on Hydra's wing and **Corvus** (labelled: CORVUS) faces forward and is also perched on the wing. Hydra has 3 stars on the head, 5 on the knotted neck, 3 in the chest, and 10 on the tail, or 21 stars in all. Crater has 4 stars on the rim, 1 in each handle and 2 along the base, or 8 stars in



all. Corvus has 2 stars on the back, 1 on the neck, 2 on the tail and 1 on each foot, or 7 stars in all.

**PISCIS AUSTRINUS** (labelled: PISCIS.AUSTRINUS) is blue and swims to the left. It has 12 stars along its back.

fol. 15v **ARIES** (labelled: ARIES) is blue and walks to the left with its right front leg raised. Its head is turned backwards to the right and it wears an equilateral **TRIANGULUM** around its head. Aries has 4 stars in the head, 4 in the body, 1 on the right front hoof, 4 behind the left shoulder, 4 on the groin and 1 on the belly and 4 on the tail, or 18 stars in all. Triangulum has 1 star in each corner, or 3 stars in all. The underdrawing suggests that the horns were originally much larger and pointed outwards.

fol. 16r **TAURUS** (labelled: TAURUS) is tan and is depicted as  $\frac{1}{2}$  a bull facing to the left with his feet pointing forwards. There is 2 star in each horn, 1 in each eye, 1 on the forehead, 7 in front of its nose (labelled: PLIADES), 3 in the chest, 1 on the shoulder, 1 in each front knee and 1 in the right front foot, or 21 stars in all. Note later annotations: *Pliades graeci latini virgillae sunt autem stellae quae Taurum perficiunt praeter caput, ortu et occasu tempestatem facientes.*

fol. 16v **GEMINI** (labelled: GEMINI) are two nude youths standing facing the viewer with the left Twin raising his left hand so it crosses in front of the right Twin and holding his right hand on his hip. The right Twin rests his right hand on the other Twin's shoulder and raises his left hand with the palm facing upwards. The left Twin has 1 star in the head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on the right elbow, 1 on the left hand, 1 on each knee, and 1 on each foot, or 9 stars in all. The right Twin has 1 star on the head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on the left hand, 1 on each knee and 1 on the right foot and 2 on the left foot, or 9 stars in all.

**CANCER** (labelled: CANCER) is shaped like a spider crab with a circular body, two large front claws and 4 long legs on either side. It faces towards the top of the page. It has 2 stars on the left claw and 3 in the right claw, 1 star on the nose, 2 stars on the shell, 6 on its left legs and 4 on the right legs, or 18 stars in all.

fol. 17r **LEO** (labelled: LEO) stands to the right with his right paw and tail raised. He has 5 stars along the back of his head, 2 on the back, 3 on the chest, 2 on the right front leg, 2 on the belly, 3 on the tail, 1 on each hind knee and 1 on each foot, or 21 stars in all.

- fol. 17v **VIRGO** (labelled: VIRGO) is dressed in a long pleated yellow gown, that is gathered under the breast. She has long dark blue as holds her arms to the side in a W-shape. She has a bunch of tan grassy plants in her right hand. Her blonde hair is exposed. She has 1 star on her head, 1 on each wing, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each hand, 6 on her skirt and 1 on each foot, or 15 stars in all.
- fol. 18r **SCORPIO** (labelled: SCORPIUS) faces to the left. It has two large claws and 3 legs on each side with a segmented tail that ends in a sting. It holds the Scales in its right claw. There are 2 stars in each claw, 3 on the head, 5 in the body, 5 in the tail and 2 at the end of the tail, or 19 stars in all. There are no stars in the Scales.
- SAGITTARIUS** (labelled: CENTAURUS) leaps to the right. His human half wears a short rose doublet, which has three flapping rose and yellow tendrils streaming out to the right, behind the figure. He holds a bow with his right hand, pulling the string with his left. There are 2 stars on the head, 1 on each shoulder 1 on the chest, 1 on each elbow, 1 on the left hand 2 on the bow, 1 on the tip of the arrow, 2 on the right front leg, 1 on the left hind leg and 1 on the tail, or 15 stars in all.
- fol. 18v **Capricorn** (labelled: CAPRICORNUS) faces to the left and has short, bull-like horns, a deer-like face and a single curl in the tail. It has 1 star on the nose, 1 on the neck, 5 on the shoulder, 1 on each front foot, 2 on the chest, 7 on the tail and 2 at the end of the tail, or 20 stars in all. The underdrawing for the horns showed the originally curved inwards.
- fol. 19r **AQUARIUS** (labelled: AQUARIUS) is nude and faces the viewer. H holds a a yellow object that looks like a horn or slim, empty cornucopia vertically in his right hand and holds the pouring pink and yellow urn by its single handle in his right hand. There are 2 stars on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on his chest, 1 on his left elbow, 1 at his left hip, 1 on his right thigh, 1 on each knee, and 1 on each foot, or 13 stars in all. There are 16 stars in the stream.
- fol. 19v **PISCES** (labelled: PISCES) are tan and swim in opposite directions, with both back upwards and with their mouths connected by a stream. There are 3 stars on the top fish, 9 in the stream and 3 on the bottom fish, or 15 stars in all.

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## notes

paper; i + 29 + 1; 220 x 148;

fol 1r - first initial of poem ('E') is gilt and set within white-vine decoration; text in clear sepia humanist script, at bottom of first folio a teardrop shaped coat of arms: sinister tower on blue background/ dexter alternating red and gold stripes set at a diagonal; 29 ff; 21.8 x 15, scored and blocked.

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## bibliography

AFFÒ-PEZZANA 1789, II, p. 223.

AFFÒ 1794, p. 35.

KRISTELLER 1963-1989, III, 243;

SOLDATI 1906, p. 84.

cart, XV c; mutilated towards end; pen drawings with light colouring

MCGURK 1966, IV, p. 85.

2/2 XV c; humanistic cursive; pen drawings with coloured wash and star indicated from ff. 5r-19v;

inc (1r): Basinii Parmensis astronomicon liber primus incipit foeliciter. Eterios orbis subiectaque templa deorum

expl (29r): Templa cano atque vias semper volventis olympi finis amen. Basinii Parmensis astrorum liber explicit.

ZORZANELLO, *Catalogo dei codici latini della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia non compresi nel catalogo di G. Valentinelli*, Trezzano sul Naviglio 1981, vol. II, pp. 358-359.

FRIOLI 2006, pp. 260 e 266.

ARMSTRONG 1991, p. 215.

*Pegasus und die Kunst* [exh. cat.] 1993, fig 2.

MARIANI CANOVA 1994, p. 207.

ŚNIEŻYŃSKA-STOLOT 1994, p. 67.

CHISENA 2016, pp. 72-74.

Notes that watermark is close to Briquet 6278 (Venice 1478); suggests figures are depicted in an 'old-fashioned' classical manner (i.e. nude figures); both the scribe and the illustrator have slavishly followed the model of Parma, Pala, 1008

From the collection of Abbot Giacomo Morelli, librarian of the Marciana from 1797-1819.

BLUME, HAFFNER/METZGER 2016 II, 2, pp. 100, 666-69 and figs. 856-62.

Constructed as a single volume; the coat of arms is later than the rest of the ms; there are corrections and some retracings in a later hand in darker ink; some underdrawings evident - and these differ from the final image; clear connection to Parma 1008 and Oxford 646, but some differences suggest that it might be another example of a ms copied from the now-lost exemplar.

‘A specific feature of the Venetian cycle is the depiction of Hercules as a standing figure with a plinth, which was probably transferred from the depiction of a boat in northern Italian Hyginus illustrations’ (?)

consulted 10.6.05