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Cambridge  
Fitzwilliam Museum

Ms 260

Hyginus, *De astronomia*

Ferrara or Mantua?

1470-80

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text

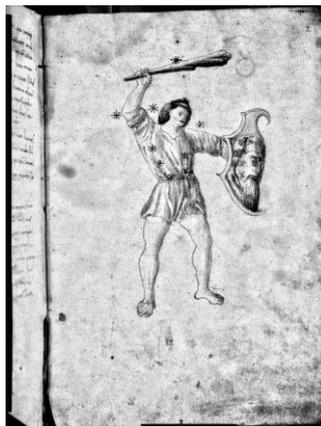
- ff. 1v-63r      Hyginus, *De astronomia*, Books III and II (illustrations to Book III)
- fol. 1v-33v      IGITUR incipiens a polo boreo protinus dicere: quo utraque arcton nixę vehuntur –  
Exoritur autem cum piscibus: sed est stellarum duodecim. (= Hyginus, *De  
astronomia*, III, 1 = III, 40; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 95-124)
- ff. 34v-35v      blank
- ff. 36r-63r      SEd quoniam ad ea quæ nobis de terræ positione dicenda fuerunt et speram totam  
– Nos autem de omnium corporum formatione dicere instituimus. Finis. (with a  
second 'Finis' in an inexpert hand). (= Hyginus, *De astronomia*, II, preface - 43; cf.  
Viré 1992, pp. 14 -94)
- fol. 63v      blank

illustrations



flyleaf

fol. 1r



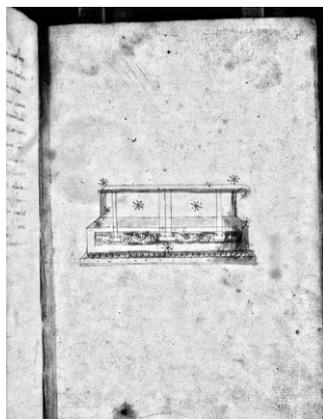
fol. 2r



fol. 3r



fol. 4r



fol. 5r



fol. 6r



fol. 7r



fol. 8r



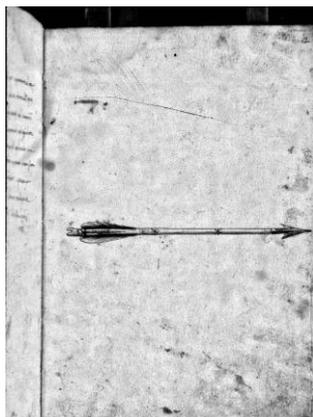
fol. 9r



fol. 10r



fol. 11r



fol. 12r



fol. 13r



fol. 14r



fol. 15r



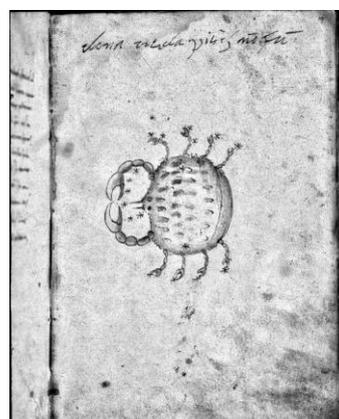
fol. 16r



fol. 17r



fol. 18r



fol. 19r



fol. 20r



fol. 21r



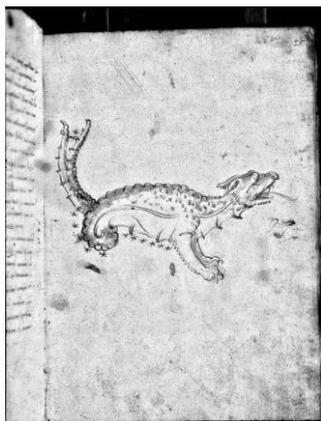
fol. 22r



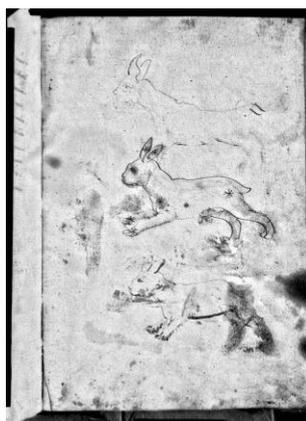
fol. 23r



fol. 24r



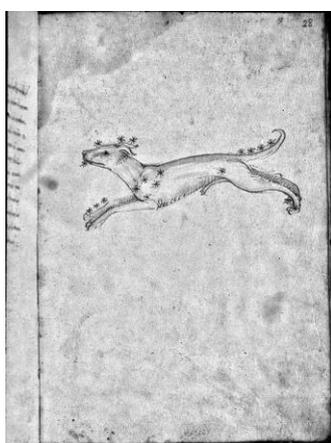
fol. 25r



fol. 26r



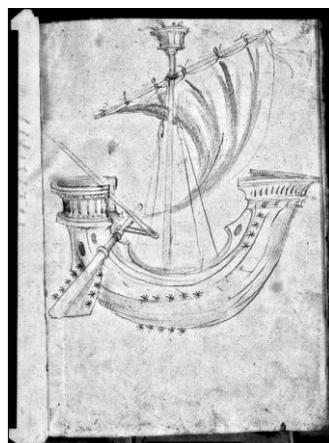
fol. 27r



fol. 28r



fol. 29r



fol. 30r



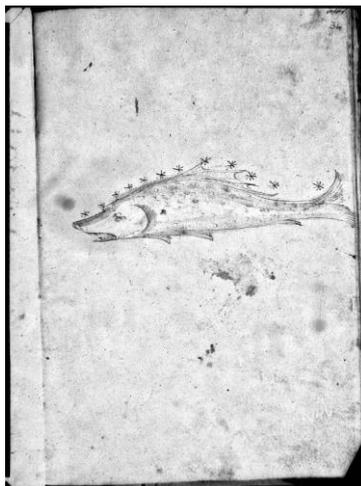
fol. 31r



fol. 32r



fol. 33r



fol. 34r

ff. 2r-34r

Coloured pen and wash drawings of 38 constellations with the stars marked with red star shapes. The illustrations are all full-page and there are contemporary

catchwords at the top of each illustrated page, some of which have been lost through later cutting-down. There are traces of underdrawing in pencil on almost all of the illustrations. DRACO, URSA MINOR, URSA MAIOR, CASSIOPEIA, VIRGO, LIBRA, PISCES and Eridanus are missing.

[note: the text on fol. 1v ends with the description of DRACO. The drawing of (presumably) *DRACO INTER ARCTOS* and the text for BOOTES is missing, with the pictures beginning with Bootes on the following recto. The manuscript is now rather tightly bound, but this loss seems to correspond to the loss between 7v and 8r. See CASSIOPEIA/ANDROMEDA below.]

- fol. 2r      **BOOTES** faces the viewer and stands to the right wearing a short, loose blue tunic that is tied at the waist with a brown rope. He holds a heavy brown club above his head with his right hand and has an elaborate shield with a human face on it in his left hand that is held out in front of him. He is barefoot and has a green hat on his head. There are traces of pencil underdrawing. He has 1 star in his club, 1 above each shoulder, 1 in his right elbow, 1 on each nipple, 1 on his right side, 1 on his belt, 1 on each foot, 1 in his right foot and 4 in the shield, or 14 stars in all.
- fol. 3r      **CORONA BOREALIS** is two sepia in concentric circles with 9 stars marked.
- fol. 4r      **HERCULES** faces the viewer and is dressed in a short, loose green tunic (with a blue reverse visible at the open neck) that is caught at the waist and pink tights. He is bearded and holds a tan club over his head with his right hand and has the tan lion's skin draped over his left arm (with the face and the front paws visible). He has 1 star in his head, 1 over each shoulder, 1 at his right elbow, 1 on his left elbow, 2 at his waist, 3 in his skirt, 1 in his right knee, 1 on his right shin and 2 on his right foot and 5 in the lion's skin, or 19 stars in all.
- fol. 5r      **LYRA** is tan and is shaped like a zither, with a curl at the right side and 3 sets of 3 strings. There are 8 red stars to which a smaller, black (later ?) star has been added on the right side of the back of the instrument.
- fol. 6r      **CYGNUS** is blue with grey feet and stands facing to the left with wings outspread. It has 2 stars in its head, 1 in its neck, 4 in its right wing and 5 in its left and 1 on its tail, or 13 stars in all.
- fol. 7r      **CEPHEUS** stands facing the viewer in a short pink tunic, which is belted at the waist and worn over a tight-fitting white shirt, with tan tights. His head is exposed,

showing his long tan hair, but no beard, and his hands are loosely extended to each side. He has red circles drawn around his ankles and there is pencil drawing visible under the figure. He has 2 stars in his head and 1 on each shoulder, 1 in each hand, 1 in his right elbow, 1 at his right side, 3 at his waist, 2 in his left thigh and 3 in each foot, or 19 stars in all.

[fol. 7v has the text to Cassiopeia. The picture of CASSIOPEIA and text to ANDROMEDA are missing and the pictures recommence with Andromeda on the next recto. The loss of this page seems to correspond to the loss of the page between 1v and 2r. See above.

- fol. 8r      **ANDROMEDA** faces the viewer and stands so that she leans slightly to the left. She is in a long, blue *peplos*-like gown and her arms are bare. Her blonde hair is exposed. She stands with her right arm down by her side and her left arm is held out horizontally. Pencil underdrawings are visible. She has 1 star in her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 in each hand, 4 along her waist, 3 in her lap, 1 on her right knee, 1 on her left shin and 2 on each foot, or 20 stars in all.
- fol. 9r      **PERSEUS** is seen from rear and lunging to the right. He wears a very short blue tunic caught at the waist with pink tights that are slightly baggy so his blue undergarments show. He holds a long straight blue and white sword in his right hand and holds the Medusa's head by its hair in his left hand. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 1 star on each shoulder, 2 on his left side above his belt and 1 on each hip, 1 in each hand, 3 along his left leg (thigh, knee and shin), 1 in his right thigh and 1 on his right foot, with 4 in the Medusa's head, or 17 stars in all.
- fol. 10r     **AURIGA** stands facing the viewer in a short blue tunic caught at the waist and apparently made from an animal's skin. His feet and head are bare. He holds a tan flail with 7 knotted thongs upraised in his right hand and two goat's heads in his left hand. There is a third goat's head coming from the top of his head. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 on his left wrist and 1 on his left hand, or 7 stars in all.
- fol. 11r     **OPHIUCHUS** is a nude female with long blonde hair. She faces the viewer and walks to the right, holding the green **SERPENS** so that it wraps once around her hips and turns to face her, sticking its red tongue out. She walks through stylised grass. Pencil underdrawing is visible. She has 1 star on her head, 1 in each shoulder, 2 at her waist, 4 in her right hand, 3 on her left hand, 1 on each knee, 1 on her right shin and 1 on each foot, or 17 stars in all. The Serpens has 5 stars in its head, and 6/ 3/ 4/ 4 or 17 in all along its body.

- fol. 12r      **SAGITTA** is tan with a blue tip points to the right and has 4 stars.
- fol. 13r      **AQUILA** is black and brown and stands to the right and has both his wings outstretched on either side. His beak is open and his red tongue is sticking out. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 1 star in his head, 2 in his right wing and 1 on his left wing, or 4 stars in all.
- fol. 14r      **DELPHINUS** is blue and placed up-side down, on his back, and with his head to the right. He has a pointed beak with sharp teeth and a waddle beneath his chin. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 4 stars on his head, 4 on his body and 2 on his tail, or 10 stars in all.
- fol. 15r      **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a white horse with green bat-wings. He faces to the right with his front legs stretched out in front of him and wears a bridle with a blue bit and pink reins. He has 1 star in each ear, 3 in his head, 4 on his neck, 3 on his wing, 1 in his chest, and 2 on each leg, or 17 stars in all.
- fol. 16r:      **ARIES** is grey and walks to left with his head turned back to the right. He is depicted *intra Triangulum* and bites the lower edge of the blue triangle. He raises his right forefoot. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 4 stars in his head, 4 in his chest, 3 in his rear haunch, 1 in his right forefoot, 1 in his right hind foot and 1 on his tail, or 14 stars in all. The **TRIANGULUM** has 3 stars.
- fol. 17r      **TAURUS** is depicted as half a tan bull facing to the left with his front legs stretched out in front of him. His body is cut off by a straight line. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 1 star in each horn, 3 in his head, 1 in each eye, 7 in a circlet in front of his nose, 4 on his chest, 1 on each knee and 1 on his right foot, or 21 stars in all.
- fol. 17v      **GEMINI** are presented as two Renaissance gentlemen, who stand facing each other. They are dressed in short tunics, which are belted and fall over a tight-sleeved garments, with tights (the left Twin in a blue garment over a blue shirt with tan tights and the right Twin in pink over tan with red tights). They both have blonde hair. They shake their right hands and the left Twin raises his left hand and points upwards with his index finger. The right Twin rests his left hand down by his side. The left Twin has 1 star in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 in each hand, 1 in his hem, 1 on his left thigh, 1 in his right heel and 2 in his left foot, or 10 stars in all. The right Twin has 1 star in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 in his right elbow, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot, or 8 stars in all.

fol. 19r **CANCER** is a round-bodied pink crab that faces to the left. He has two large segmented claws and 8 clawed and segmented legs. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 6 stars in front of his nose, 2 stars on his body, 6 stars in his upper legs and 4 stars in his lower legs, or 18 stars in all.

fol. 20r **LEO** is depicted as a playful tan lion that crouches to the right, with his pink tongue out and his tail raised. He has a full and luxurious mane. He has 5 stars along his neck, 3 on each foreleg, 1 on his left forepaw, 3 in his haunch, 1 on his right rear foot and 2 in his tail, or 18 stars in all.

[The text for Virgo appears on fol. 20v, but the pictures of **VIRGO** and **LIBRA** are missing. Some of the pages of this quire have been tipped in, so the correspondence with the missing **PISCES** picture is difficult to determine.]

fol. 21r **SCORPIO** is pink and tan and faces to the left and has two large segmented claws and 4 segmented and clawed legs on either side. His tail is segmented and ends in a sting. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 2 stars in each claw, 3 in his head, 5 in his body, 5 in his segmented tail and 2 stars on the sting, or 19 stars in all.

fol. 22r **SAGITTARIUS** is depicted as a centaur prancing to the right. He has wild brown hair and his human half is nude. His equine parts are pink. He holds the bow with his left hand and pulls the string with his right. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 2 stars on his head, 1 in his right elbow, 1 in his right hand, 3 in the bow, 1 on the tip of the arrow, 3 in his human belly, 1 on each fore knee, 1 on his left front hoof, and 1 on his tail, or 15 stars in all.

fol. 23r **CAPRICORN** is a hybrid of a realistic goat's forepart (with a rather hang-dog expression) and a fish's tail that ends in a blue curl. He faces to the left and has 1 star on his nose, 1 on his head, 1 in each hoof, 9 in his goat's body, 7 in his tail and 2 on the end of the tail, or 22 stars in all.

fol. 24r **AQUARIUS** is dressed in a blue doublet and pink hose with puffed sleeves and ribbons flying from his upper arms. He stands facing the viewer with his right arm held out to the side and his left arm holding the handle of an urn from which he pours blue water. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 2 stars on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on his right hand, 1 on his left elbow and 1 on his left hand, 1 on his right hip, 1 on each knee, 1 on his right shin and 1 on each foot with 16 stars in the water, or 30 stars in all.

[The image for **PISCES** and text for **CETUS** is missing. Some of the pages of this quire have been tipped in, so the correspondence with the **VIRGO** and **LIBRA** is difficult to determine.]

fol. 25r **CETUS** is depicted as a blue dragon with pink details. It has a dog-like face and scaly body and lion's paws for forefeet and a scaly tail with a curl. He faces to the right with an open pink mouth and his ears back. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 6 stars in his belly, 5 stars in his tail and 2 on the end of his tail, or 13 stars in all.

[Following the text for **ERIDANUS**, the picture of **ERIDANUS** and text for **LEPUS** is missing. Pages are tipped in this section of the manuscript, so it is difficult to determine correspondences.]

fol. 26r **LEPUS** runs to the left (There is a second, less competent picture of *Lepus* directly beneath the first and a third outline sketch of the same figure above the constellation.). Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 1 star in each ear, 1 on its chest, 1 on each fore paw and 1 on its haunch, or 6 stars in all.

fol. 27r **ORION** stands facing the viewer dressed in a short pink, belted tunic that has 3 buttons down the front and his shoulders are covered with a blue cape with a yellow reverse that falls to his knees. He is bearded and holds a short, sharp, blue sword upraised vertically in his right hand and he holds the thumb of his left hand in his belt. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his right elbow, 1 in his right hand, 3 in his sword, 3 in his belt, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot, or 17 stars in all.

fol. 28r **CANIS MAIOR** is a sleek, tan hound that bounds to the left. Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 1 star on its mouth (closed), 1 on its nose, 2 on its ears, 5 in its shoulder, 3 on its right front paw, 1 in its haunch, 1 on each hind foot and 4 in its tail, or 19 stars in all.

fol. 29r **CANIS MINOR** is a hound that is poised like a pointer with its right forepaw raised. It faces to the left and a pink tongue sticks out. Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 1 star in its head, 1 on its shoulder and 1 on its haunch, or 3 stars in all.

fol. 30r **ARGO** is a full ship with numerous pictorial details, such as a mast with a crow's nest, blue sails that billow in the wind, 2 pulleys running from the deck to the main mast, a pink steering oar, a raised and balustraded poop deck and a raised and

balustraded bow. Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 4 stars in the bow, 5 stars in the hull of the ship, 5 along the keel and 9 on the steering oar or 23 stars in all.

- fol. 31r **CENTAURUS** is a centaur that leaps to the left and prominent breasts seem to suggest it is female. The normal attribute of a flying cloak has been transformed into part of her hair, which she wears like a ponytail and it flutters out behind his head (the hair on the figure's head is blonde and the ponytail is done in tan ink, but the fact that these were conceived as a single feature is supported by the underdrawing here). Her human half is nude and she holds **LUPUS** (a rabbit) upside-down by its heels in her right hand. She holds her left hand by his side. Pencil underdrawing is visible. He has 3 stars in her head, 1 on each shoulder, 3 in her breast, 3 in her belly, 1 on her left elbow and 1 on her left hand, 2 in the right foreleg and 1 in the left foreleg, 2 in each hind leg and 3 on the tail, or 23 stars in all. **LUPUS** has 2 stars in its tail, 1 on the hind feet, 1 in its chest, and 4 on its head, or 8 stars in all.
- fol. 32r **ARA** is a hexagonal altar shaped somewhat like a baptismal font with red flames coming from the top. It is coloured blue and pink to resemble marble. Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 4 stars.
- fol. 33r **HYDRA** is depicted as a two-legged dragon with a dog's face, bat wings, and webbed feet, facing to the left. Its back is grey, and its middle and face tan and belly pink. The wings are tan with pink dots.
- CRATER** is a lobed blue cup resting on his back and **CORVUS** stands on his haunches facing forward. Pencil underdrawing is visible. **HYDRA** has 3 stars in his head, 6 in his neck, 3 on his back and 8 on his tail, or 20 stars in all. **CRATER** has 8 stars and **CORVUS** has 1 star on the chest, 4 in the body, 2 on the tail and 1 on each foot, or 9 stars in all.
- fol. 34r **PISCIS AUSTRINUS** is a sharp-nosed, dog-faced blue fish with a pink mouth and gills that swims to the left. Pencil underdrawing is visible. It has 12 stars along its back.

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### notes

One of the Renaissance Hyginus mss that place Book III before Book II (Milan N. 690, Milan T. 47; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam 260 and Oxford, Can misc 46).

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**bibliography**

SAXL- MEIER III 1953 1, pp. 439-40.

1470-80, N Italian, paper with two watermarks that locate it to Ferrara or Mantua 1473-80; 21.8 x 14.6 cm; was bought from the Rosenthal Collection in Munich in 1901 (Cat. 27). Rebound recently and has (a) ii + (b) i+ 63 + (c) 1 + ii+ (d) ii. On (a)iiiv, has Fitzwilliam *ex libris* and 'Hygini Poeticon astronomicon' in modern ink hand and 'XV 2554:76' and other jottings in pencil and a ripped off library tag; fol. i(b)r has a ref to 'LA ILL<sup>ma</sup> . S. Leonora de Gonzaga mia pare' ( fol. 1r) and below has 'questo Libro vale F 3<sup>2</sup> di me Giuseppe Scotti'. And a monogram with 'MILIAbella' written beside it. On end leaf (c)1 has 'Leonora de Gon'; and 'Mauricius Aymi' and (c)iiir has '960' scratched out and (c)iiiv has the 'l' of 'Illustrissima' similar to that found on the opening pages. (c)iiir has in modern hand 63ff +2 Dec 16.08 H.A.C and a previous note from Rodenthal' Auct G..d 1013/M O. Non 19.11.90' Each book is written by a different hand. The first book is written in very dark sepia loose humanist cursive with first initials of each section in alternating red and blue capitals. The first word of each paragraph is capitalised. The second book demonstrates a tighter script, written more vertically and in a lighter script. There are still alternating red and blue capitals and the first words of each section are still capitalised. Has been rebound in April 1992 and there is a pasted in notice regarding the previous cover which was very thin dyed alum tawd skin with compass work covering it

Vire, 1981, p. 165.

15th century, Italy; ff. 1-33 and 36-63; Bk II, Bk III to chap 40.

Vire, 1992,

consulted 8.4.05