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Ms 422

ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*

French
early 9th century (800-830)

An early manuscript of the *De signis caeli* set alongside excerpts of texts from Isidore of Seville. It contains lively, but somewhat crude drawings that are close to those in **Rouen 26 (DSC III)**.

text

ff. 1r-22v Isidore of Seville, *De natura rerum*

ff. 22v -70v Omputus (from Isidore of Seville, *Ethymologiae*, Book III)

ff. 26v-30v ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*

fol. 26v Helix arcturus maior hab& autem in capite stellas obscuras septem. in spatula una super pectus una in pede una in dorso una ... (cf. Maass 1898, p. 582)

fol. 30v Anticanis dicitur subtus geminos bene parere hab& stellas tres quarum una splendidior est c&eris et ideo anticanis vocatur eo quod contraria sit cani. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 594)

ff. 71r-73r *Ritus benedictionis campanae*

ff. 7273r excerpts from Church Council acts

ff. 73v-91r Isidore of Seville, *Liber sententiarum*

ff. 9193v *Missa propria sacerdotis*



ff. 26v-30v Coloured illustrations of 38 constellation groupings that are set within the text; indentations have been provided at the beginning of each single-column paragraph for oversized initials and there are several images per page; the stars are marked with dots

fol. 26v **URSA MINOR** stands towards the right with its feet together and a short tail; is it the smaller bear and has long toenails; it has 7 stars in the head, 1 on the shoulder, 1 on the chest, 1 on the front foot, 1 on the back, two on the front leg and 3 on the tail, or 16 stars in all

DRACO is a slightly undulating snake that moves to the right and lifts its head at 90° angle to its body; it has round ears and its tongue sticking tongue; it has 3 stars in the head and 12 on the body, or 15 stars in all
(note: the chapter and picture of Draco appears between URSA MAIOR and URSA MINOR)

URSA MAIOR walks towards the right with its left front leg leading; it is a larger bear with a pronounced hump, a long tail and toenails; amongst the stars, it has 3 stars on each leg, 3 on the tail 1 on the hump and 1 on the face, or at least 17 stars

HERCULES faces towards the viewer and is nude; he lunges to the right with triangular cloak covering his left arm, which he extends in front of him; he holds a lumpy club in upraised in his right hand and his genitals are visible; he has 1 star in his head, 1 in each shoulder, 1 in his right hand, 1 in his left elbow, 4 in his right leg and 2 on his left leg and 1 in the club, or 12 stars in all

CORONA BOREALIS is a torque, marked by 9 stars

fol. 27r **OPHIUCHUS** walks to the right with his hips in profile, but his chest facing the viewer; he holds **SERPENS** horizontally at waist height and it wraps once around his waist; the Snake's head is to the right and it turns back towards the man and touches him with its nose; the end of the Snake's tail goes out horizontally; the man has 1 star on his head, 1 in each shoulder, 2 at his waist, 1 in his right thigh, 1 in his right shin, 1 in each knee, 1 in each foot, 3 on his right hand and 2 on his left - or 16 stars in all - and the and **SERPENS** appears to have only 4 stars on his body, though there may be two on the face

SCORPIO is depicted separately, facing to the right with muscular arms fore-arms that are brought together in front of its nose; there are three legs on either side and it has a long, flattened-oval body with a scalloped tail that ends in a curl; it has 2 or 3 stars in each claw, 9 (?) on the face, 5 on the body and 5 on the tail, or around 25 stars

BOÖTES is nude and faces the viewer; he bends his right knee so the leg is somewhat lifted and looks back over his left shoulder to the right; his right arm is raised and completely covered by a triangular cloak (similar to **HERCULES**) and he holds a knobby club raised vertically in his left hand; he has 1 star in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on his chest, 1 on his left elbow, 8 on his cape and 1 on each knee, or 16 stars in all

VIRGO stands facing the viewer, wearing a long dress with bands outlining the chest panels; she has large, upraised wings; both her arms are outstretched at shoulder height and she holds a plant/flail in her right hand; she has 2 stars on her head, 2 (?) on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 2 on each hand, 3 in each leg and 1 on each foot an 2 in each wing, or 24 stars in all

fol. 27v **GEMINI** are two soldiers facing the viewer and wearing short tunics with longer capes falling from their shoulders; they each hold a spear in the outer hands and their inner hands held down by their hips; The left Twin has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each knee, and 1 on each foot, or 5 stars in all; the right Twin has 1 star on his head, 1 on his left shoulder 3 at his waist, 1 on each knee and 1 on each

foot, or 7 stars in all

CANCER faces to the right and has a scalloped bottom, 2 muscular arms that reach out in front of his nose (from which there are four whiskers protruding) and three legs on either side of the almond-shaped shell; it has 10 star on its shell, 5 in the top legs and 3 on the bottom legs, or 18 stars in all

LEO walks to the right with his tongue out and front left paw raised; his tail flows straight behind his back and turns downwards; he has 3 stars on his head, 5 along his backbone, 1 on his left front foot and several (7?) in his mane, or at least 16 stars

AURIGA stands facing the viewer, wearing a long , tight robe with tight sleeves and the triangular indications of over-sleeves or a short cape at his shoulders; his arms are extended to either side and his head slightly inclined to the right; he two small animals facing each other on his outstretched left arm and a flail held in outstretched right arm; he has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 at the waist, 1 on his right elbow, 1 on the right hand, 2 on the goats and 2 on the left hand, or 10 stars in all

TAURUS is half a bull, facing to the right with his right foreleg tucked under him and his left front leg extended; his short horns curl outwards and he appears to have a ring around his belly anterior to the cut-off; he has 1 star in each horn, 6 on his face, 2 on his neck, 2 on his shoulder, 1 on each front knee, 1 on his belly and 3 along his back, or 18 stars in all

fol. 28r **CEPHEUS** is a young, beardless man who faces the viewer; he wears a in short tunic with his hands outstretched to the sides at shoulder height and palms upwards; he has no other attributes; he has several stars, including 2 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his right hand, 2 on his right knee, 3 on his left foot and many stars on his tunic

CASSIOPEIA is seated on a square, high-backed throne with a cushion and her hands outstretched and shoulder height; her short hair in uncovered; she has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on her chest, 1 on her lap, 1 on her right elbow and 1 on each hand, 2 or 3 on he left knee and at least 2 on the throne, or at least 12 stars

ANDROMEDA is totally nude (except for a band at her waist?); she stands facing the viewer with her arms outstretched to either side at shoulder height; she has large breasts and two lumpy columns on either side; she has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 6 at her waist, 1 on each knee, 2 on her right foot and 3 on her left and 1 star in each hand, or 19 stars in all

PEGASUS is depicted as three-quarters of a winged horse facing to the right with his legs stretched out in front of him; he has a band around his waist anterior to the cut-off; he has a number or stars, including at least 6 on his face, 1 on his chest, 6 along his neck, 1 on each front knee, 1 on each front hoof and 1 on his back, or at least 18 stars

fol. 28v **ARIES** skips to the right with his front feet raises; he is looking forward to the right and has a long, fleecy tail and a band around middle; he has around 3 stars on his nose; 1 on his head, 2 on his neck, 1 on each front hoof, 4 along his back, 1 on his flank and 1

on each rear hoof, or 15 stars in all

PISCES swim in opposite directions (top to the left and bottom to the right) with their backs uppermost; they are connected at their mouths by a line; the top fish has 12 stars, the cord has 12 stars and the bottom fish has 15 stars, or marked by 39 stars in all (there is a later, awkward copy of the upper fish and part of the cord in left margin of page).

PERSEUS lunges to right with his left knee bent and his right leg straight; he is facing towards the viewer and is nude except for a long cloak that falls in parallel folds between his legs; he holds the Medusa head's in his left hand, which is outstretched in front of him and he holds a straight sword above his head in his right hand; he has 1 star on each shoulder, 3 on his torso, 1 on his right thigh and 1 in each knee, 2 on his right shin, 1 in his right elbow, 1 in his right hand, 1 in his left hand, and 4 on the Medusa's head, or 17 stars in all (the 'star' on the left thigh has a cross through it, either indicating it is a bright star - unlikely - or that it is a mistake, since PERSEUS should have 16 stars according to the text)

LYRA as a triangular fan-shaped object set on three small steps; there are nine strings that are attached to circlets along the top margin of the instrument; there are 8 stars, one of which is not just a dot, but is a 5-pointed star and one of the circlets at the top is coloured-in, also suggesting that it is a star - or 9 stars in all

CYGNUS stands to the right with his head raised as if he were looking upwards to the right; his wings are outstretched to either side; he has 1 star in the head, 1 on the body, 1 in the tail and 5 or 6 on the left wing and 6 on the right wing, or 14 or 15 stars in all

fol. 29r **AQUARIUS** stands facing the viewer and slightly to the right; he is dressed in a calf-length tunic, that is tied at the waist by a rope; he holds the urn upside-down in both his hands in front of him and water pours down from it; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 in each shoulder, 2 on his right arm, 3 on his waist, 1 on each thigh, 1 on his right shin, 1 on each foot and 2 in the urn and 2 in the water, or 18 stars in all

CAPRICORN faces to the right with his front legs stretched forward and the left one higher and slightly bent; he has gently curved horns, a beard and a double corkscrew tail; he has 2 stars in each horn, 2 on his forehead, 1 on his nose, 2 (?) on his neck, 2 on his chest, 2 on his left front foot, 1 on his right elbow, 6 along his back and 3 or 4 along his belly and 2 at the end of his tail, or 23-plus stars in all

SAGITTARIUS is a centaur walking to right; he does not have a cloak and he holds the bow in left hand, which he extends in front of his body and he pulls the the string with his right hand, which is located in front of his chest; his tail is long and flows downwards; he has 2 stars in his head, 1 in his left shoulder, 1 on his right elbow, 1 on his right hand, 3 on the bow and 2 on the arrow, 4 on the horse's torso, 1 on his left front hoof, 1 on his left hind hoof and 2 on his tail, or at least 18 stars in all

AQUILA stands facing to the the right with his wings outstretched to either side; he stands on **SAGITTA**, the point of which is towards the right; AQUILA has 2 stars in his head, 1 in his body and 1 on his left foot, or 4 stars in all

DELPHINUS is a poorly-realised classical dolphin that swims to the right; it has a very prominent eye, a curly snout/tongue and a long elaborately split, Pharaoh-like 'beard' (note: this feature also appears in the Rouen manuscript); it has 1 or more stars in its mouth, 3 in the beard, 2 along the back, 1 on the bottom fin and 2 at the end of the tail or, at least 9 stars

fol. 29v: **ORION** stands facing towards the viewer and is turned to the right with his left leg bent; he wears a short tunic with cloak over his left arm and hand; the band that should be his scabbard strap flows from his right shoulder, across his chest and then in front of his body, where it meets the bottom end of the cloak held in his left hand; he holds a large 'feather-duster' aloft in his right hand; he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 3 at his waist, 1 on each knee, 4 on the drape covering his left hand and 1 in his right elbow and 1 in his right hand, or 16 stars in all

CANIS MAIOR (Canicula) leaps to right with a halo and rays coming from head; both front paws are raised and he has a long, slim tail held downwards; he has 1 star in his mouth, 10 on his body, 3 on his left front paw and 1 on his left front paw, 1 on his right hind paw and 1 on the tip of his tail, or 18 stars in all

LEPUS is aardvark-like with a very long snout, trotting to right with large upright ears; he has with 7 stars.

ARGO (NAVIS) is depicted as half a boat with a vertical mast bearing a pennant with numerous streamers on the right side; it has a curved stern with a detached trefoil on the left; there is a small building on the deck, with two windows and a triangular roof, two steering oars and the hull is cross-hatched; there are 4 stars on the pennant, 5 on the hull, 3 on the trefoil and 1 (?) on the circlet, 3 on the deck and 5 in each or, 26 stars in all

fol. 30r **CETUS** faces to the right with a pointed and curled snout and a prominent eye; he sticks out his tongue; he has cross-hatched flippers and a treble corkscrew tail, which ends in a distorted palmette; he has 6 stars on his back, 6 on his belly and 2 at the end of the tail or 14 stars in all

ERIDANUS is a wild-haired male figure shown from the neck upwards; he is set above/behind a series of rectangular blocks. He has 1 large star on his forehead and 9 stars in the blocks (the 'stream' ?) or 10 stars in all

PISCIS AUSTRINUS is a long fish with a scaly body swimming to right, with 12 stars

ARA is a set of nested squares, set on 2 steps with a triangular top; it has 4 stars

fol. 30v **CENTAURUS** walks to the right with **BESTIA / LUPUS** (an animal) lying on his outstretched arm; he holds a spear over his shoulder from which a rabbit hangs by its feet; there is some confusion in the drawing of the shoulder area; he has 4 stars in his head, 2 on his shoulder (with crosses through them) 2 at his waist, 3 on his horse's chest, 2 on the belly, 1 on each front knee, and 1 on the left front hoof, 1 on the haunch, 1 in each hind knee, 3 in the tail and several on **LUPUS**, or at least 23 stars

HYDRA is snake sliding to the right with a beard and pointed ears; he marked by 3 stars.

CRATER is placed on HYDRA's back and looks like a chalice; it has with 3 stars

CORVUS faces towards the head of the snake and is pecking at his tail it has 4 stars

CANIS MINOR (Anticanis) runs to the right with his forefeet raised; he sticks out his tongue and has pointed ears and a beak-like mouth; he has 3 stars

fol. 53r Sol and Luna as bust-portraits with a sundial ('horologium viator')

notes

This manuscript is part of the **De signis caeli III** family, along with Rouen 26.

According to dell'Era this text is *De signis caeli*, ff 26v-30v (omitting chaps 41; and puts 2 after 3, that is, the positions of URSA MINOR and DRACO are interchanged).

bibliography

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CONTRENI 1978, pp. 31, 46ff and 73 (appendix nr. 105).

MARTINET 1980, p. 11.

MUNK OLSEN 1982, I, p. 336.

BORST 1974, p. 117, 144 and 228ff.

OBRIST 2001, pp. 3ff.

BLUME 2006 (Körper), 228ff.

BLUME 2009, pp. 543-4.

BLUME HAFFNER METZGER 2012, p. 78 and pp. 274-79.

p. 78: says has a common model with Rouen 26, which suggests that there may have been more illustrated versions of this text (with stars marked) circulating alongside the Aachen *Libri computi*.

pp. 274-79: 292x 191; Carolingian miniscule; stars marked; pen and wash drawings; belongs to a group of manuscripts connected to northern France and Corbie, such as **Paris BN 12957** and **Dresden 183** re attachment to Isidore of Seville texts; bare, standardised details of constellation figures; amber reddish and grey-blue colour washes; same illustrations and text as **Rouen 26** (differences in figure of Andromeda suggest common model, rather than direct copies of each other)

