

Monza

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**Ms F.9/176 (246)**

*De ordine ac positione stellarum in signis* (from the Aachen Compilation of 809-812 / *Libri computi*)

Niederrhein (Lobbes?)  
c. 850

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**text**

ff. 61r- 69v     *De ordine ac positione stellarum in signis* (from the Aachen Compilation of 809-812 / *Libri computi*, a.k.a. the 'Compilation of 810 in 7 books')

fol. 61r             Est quidem hic ordo et positio siderum – eo quo ab ipso est ordine digesta  
description (cf. Maass 1898, p. 312)

fol. 61v             Herice (later corrected to Helice) arcturus maior habet stellas in capite vii, in  
singulis humeris singulas, in armo i, in pectore i, in pede prio priori claras ii, in  
summa cauda claram unam... (cf. Maass 1898 p. 312 and St P, p. 240)

**note:** on fol. 61v only, the space on either side of the illustrations of ursa maior  
and minor has been filled with verse:

Ad boree partes arcti vestuntur et anguis

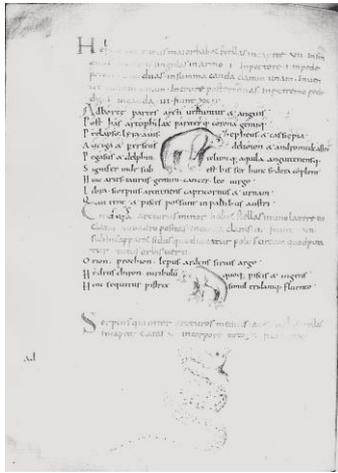
Post has artophilax pariter que corona genumque...

Hinc sequitur pistris simul eridanique fluento.

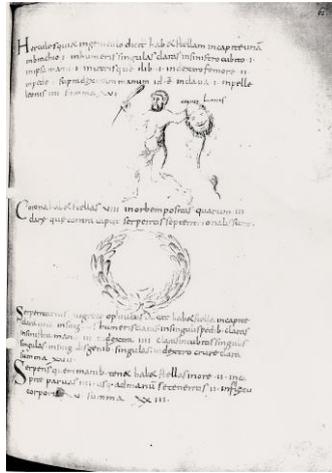
= Ausonius (=Anthologia Latina, ed. Riese, 1906, I, pp. 154-55 (no. 679); see Austin 29).

fol. 69v             Anticanis habet stellas III.

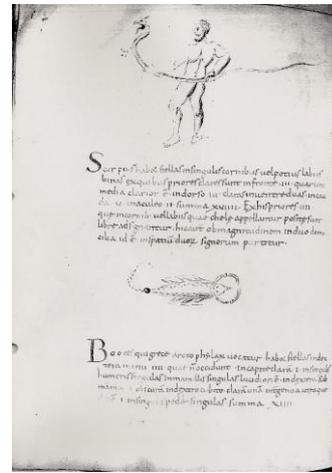
illustrations



fol. 61v



fol. 62r



fol. 62v



fol. 63r



fol. 63v



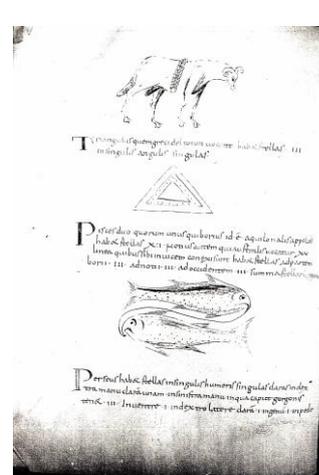
fol. 64r



fol. 64v



fol. 65r



fol. 65v



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- ff. 61v-69v 41 coloured drawings of the constellations set into the spaces between paragraphs of text that run across the page; there are no stars marked
- fol. 71r diagram showing the orbs of the planets with small busts portraits inserted
- fol. 61v **URSA MAIOR** faces to the right on profile with a hump on his front shoulders  
**URSA MINOR** is slightly smaller and faces to the left and has a small hump  
**DRACO** is a long spotted snake, set vertically and facing to the right, with 4 bends in his body; he has a cock's comb and long beard
- fol. 62r **HERCULES** is nude and walks to left with both legs slightly bent; he has a beard; he holds the lion-skin (with a smiling face and tail) in his left hand behind him and bearded; he holds a thin, straight upraised in his right hand in front of his face  
**CORONA BOREALIS** is a leafy wreath with an oval at the top and a bow and ribbons at the bottom
- fol. 62v **OPHIUCHUS** is nude and stands to the left with his back facing the viewer; he is bearded and has short hair; he holds **SERPENS** horizontally behind his hips (not wrapped around him) with the snake's head raised and facing away from the man; it has a pointed comb and long beard.  
**SCORPIO** is earwig-shaped and faces to the right; its curved claws have a circlet at the elbow and are held in front of its face in a circle; there are 3 bent legs on either side and the tail is segmented
- fol. 63r **BOOTES** leans to left using his long curved stick as a crutch (held in right hand with the curved part resting on the earth and the end resting under his right armpit); he is bearded and wears a long *tunica exomis* that exposes his right shoulder and the hem of which ends in tatters; he raises his right arm the palm of the hand is held open; his feet are bare  
**VIRGO** stands facing the viewer and slightly to the right; she is dressed in a long robe with a wreath in her hair; her wings are opened; she holds a palm frond in left hand and raises her right hand in front of her body, with the index finger pointing upwards
- fol. 63v **GEMINI** stand facing the viewer on an undulating ground-line; they are both nude (with genitals visible) and each has a calf-length cloak pinned at his right shoulder; the right Twin holds a spear vertically in his right hand and his left hand, which is raised, is covered with his cloak; the left Twin points to himself with his right hand and holds a fold of his cloak in his left hand; they look in opposite directions; alongside the Gemini, there is a later, crude drawing of a leafy decoration

**CANCER** has an almond-shaped shell and faces to the right with his larger pincer-claws held in front of his pointed nose; there is a vertical stripe down the length of his body and a band of circles at his rump; he has three bent legs on each side; to the right of Cancer are the **ASELLI**, who stand facing each other, flanking a square altar or manger

- fol. 64r **LEO** leaps to the left, his mouth is open, his tail is raised and he has prominent claws on his feet and a thick mane; to the left of Leo, there is a sketchy and incomplete drawing of Aquila
- fol. 64v **TAURUS** is depicted as a full bull lying on a lumpy rock with his head to the left; his right foreleg is tucked under him and he extends his left front leg in front of him; he has short curved horns and his tail loops back over his hind flank
- CEPHEUS** stands facing the viewer and is dressed in a short tunic that is caught at the hips and has with loose sleeves; he has legging tied at the knees on his legs and a soft (Phrygian) cap on his head; he raises oversized hands above his head with the palms open and fingers extended; he carries a scabbard on a string that runs from his right should to his left hip
- CASSIOPEIA** is seated on a boxy, stepped seat with a high, flat back; she has short hair and/or has a wreath covering her hair; she is dressed in a long shapeless robe with loose sleeves and she holds her oversized hands raised above shoulder height
- fol. 65r **ANDROMEDA** is dressed in long robe slim dress that is caught just beneath her breasts; she looks slightly to the right; her arms are exposed and she is chained by her wrists to two large, triangular piles of rocks.
- PEGASUS** is half a horse that faces to the right, with his forelegs stretched out in front of him; his ears are pricked forward and his wings cover his shoulders and rise vertically; he is cut roundly just after his belly
- fol. 65v **ARIES** stands to the right with his head bowed and with leafy belt around his middle; he has shirt curled horns, very large genitals and a long fleecy tail
- DELTOTON (TRIANGULUS)** is three nested triangles with dots in the middle band.
- PISCES** are beaked fish moving in opposite directions (top to the right and bottom to the left) with both backs on top; they are connected by a line that runs from beak to beak
- fol. 66r **PERSEUS** is nude and rushes to right, with his front facing the viewer; he wears a Phrygian cap on head and holds a bearded head in front of him by its hair in his left hand; he holds a long-bladed sword behind him in right hand
- LYRA** is a lyre set on a pedestal base with slightly flared side arm; it has with five strings and clearly marked pegs
- CYGNUS** stands with its belly towards the viewer and its wings are outstretched to either side; he bends his long curved neck in a C-shape to the right
- fol. 66v **AQUARIUS** faces the viewer and is nude except for cloak, which covers his left

shoulder and billows out to the side; his hip juts out to the right; he holds his right arm extended to the side and holds a handle-less urn upside-down; a stream pours vertically from its mouth into a vulva-like shape on the ground

**CAPRICORN** faces left and has long straight horns, a beard and a prominent nose and upper lip; both his forelegs are slightly bent and extend in front of him; he has a double corkscrew tail that ends in an acanthus-shape

fol. 67r **SAGITTARIUS** is a satyr with a wing-shaped tail standing nearly in profile to the right; he has short curly hair and holds bow extended in his left hand, pulling the arrow back with his right hand; to the right of the figure, there is a small head similar to the satyr's, except that it has a beard

**AQUILA** stands facing to the left, with his head turned over his left shoulder to the right; his left wing is fully extended, but his right wing is held close to his body; he stands on **SAGITTA**, which points to the left

**DELPHINUS** is a schematic classical dolphin that swims to the right; it has a thin curved horn on its forehead, a round eye and a birdlike beak; its tail ends in an bushy fan

fol. 67v **ORION** stands facing the viewer and lunging to the right; he is dressed in a short tunic and tight leggings; he has a mantle that is clasped near the right side of his neck and falls down his right side, while draping over his right hand and the end of his sword; he rests his left (covered) hand on the end of his scabbard that is slung on his left hip, hanging from a strap that hangs from his right shoulder and crosses his chest; the end of the scabbard is visible between his knees; he raises his left hand and points to his face with his index finger

**CANIS MAIOR** leaps to the right; it is a long-nosed dog, with pointed ears held back and its tongue lolls out the side of its mouth; it has a long slim tail and wears a simple collar

fol. 68r **LEPUS** bounds to the right with its front legs tucked under it; its ears are flattened against its head

**ARGO (NAVIS)** is full ship facing to the right; it has a three-pronged bow, with two steering oars and the horizontally striped sail is draped over the mast; a pennant flies from the top of the mast and the stern ends in a stylised *aplaston*; there are diagonal lines on the hull of the ship which probably represent oars

**CETUS** is stylised classical sea monster, swimming to the left with a large soft mouth and tufted ears; its front flippers are also feathered; it has a triple corkscrewed body and a bushy fanned tail

fol. 68v **ERIDANUS** is a classical river god, reclining on his right elbow on an upturned urn that pours forth water in which he sits; he is nude to the waist and his legs are covered by a drape, though his bare feet are visible; he holds a thin reed in his left hand near his hips and the tip of the reed extends over his left shoulder

**PISCIS AUSTRINUS (MAGONS)** is a large fish swimming to the left with a protruding bobble-mouth; the gills are visible

**ARA** is a square altar with a shaped bottom; there are flames coming from the top surface

fol. 69r **CENTAURUS** steps to the right with his left foreleg bent and extending forward; he faces the viewer; in his extended left hand, he holds a rabbit by its heels and he holds a long, double-ended spear in his right hand near his chest (note the delicate curl of the fingers of his right hand)

**HYDRA** is a long snake travelling to the right with two humps in his body

**CRATER** is a footed urn with two curled handles and is set on the first hump of Hydra

**CORVUS** is a black crow is set on the second hump and faces towards Hydra's tail

fol. 69v **CORVUS**<sup>2</sup> is depicted individually as a black crow facing to the left, with its wings folded in

**CRATER**<sup>2</sup> is a highly-decorated footed urn with two curled handles that take the form of small snakes

**CANIS MINOR** leaps to the right; it has a long nose and pointed ears, which it holds back; its tongue sticks out and it has a studded collar and a long, thin tail

### notes

According to BORST (1995<sup>2</sup>), this manuscript is a copy of the *Libri computi* (ff. 7r-92v), also known as the 'Compilation in 7 Books', and was originally created between 809-812 in Aachen. This copy represents the second and better edition of the Aachen compilation. It is one of the most used school books of the early Middle Ages, containing extracts from Pliny, Isidore, Martianus Capella, the works of Alcuin. As this one also lists Anglo-Saxon saints in the *rota sanctorum*, and has extensive and frequent quotations from Bede and annals possibly from Lobbes, it is probably a northern creation and is very close to Madrid 3307.

The pictorial cycle in this manuscript has many, but not all, of the defining characteristics of the cycle *De ordine* I. This cycle is also encountered in Berlin lat 130, Madrid 3307 and Vat lat 645.

### bibliography

Van de VYVER 1935, pp. 142-443.

NEUSS 1940, pp. 37-64.

*STORIA DI MILANO*, 1954, III, plates between pp. 674-75, 704-05.

NEUSS 1941, pp. 13-40.

McGURK IV, p. xiii, 52-61; ff 61v-69v.

*De ordine ac positione stellarum in signis*, coloured and very close to Madrid 3307

KING 1969, p. 48.

BOSCHEN 1972, p. 17.

McGURK 1981, p. 321.

BORST 1995<sup>2</sup>, p. 163, note 98.

HAFFNER 1997, p. 175.

says 'De ordine ac positione.

KOEHLER 1960, III, p. 121.