

missing a picture

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

Tours
after 825

text

ff. 95r-99v *De ordine ac positione stellarum in signis* (excerpted from the Aachen Compilation of 809- 812 / *Libri computi*, a.k.a. the ‘Compilation of 810 in 7 books’)

ff. 94v- 95r EXCERPTUM DE ASTROLOGIA. Duos extremi vertices mundi quos appellant polos – quia ad ipsum usque decurrit accipiens. (=cf. Maass 1898, pp. 309-12)

note: There is a large circular hole cut into fol. 94, suggesting there was originally a planisphere on the otherwise blank verso of this folio.

fol. 95r DE ORDINE AC POSITIONE STELLARUM PER SIGNA. Est quidem hic ordo et positio syderum – eo quod ab ipso est ordine digesta descriptio proferatur. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 312)

Helice arcturus maior ha& stellas in capita vii. in singulis umeris singulas in armo una in pectore .i. in pede priore clara .i. in summa cauda clara i ... (cf. Maass 1898, p. 312 and St P. p. 240)

fol. 99v (ends imperfectly with Navis): ... quia non tota caelo sed a gubernaculo usque ad malum figuratur.

The manuscript also contains:

ff. 77r-93v an illustrated version of the *Revised Aratus latinus*; the pictures are fully described in that section

illustrations

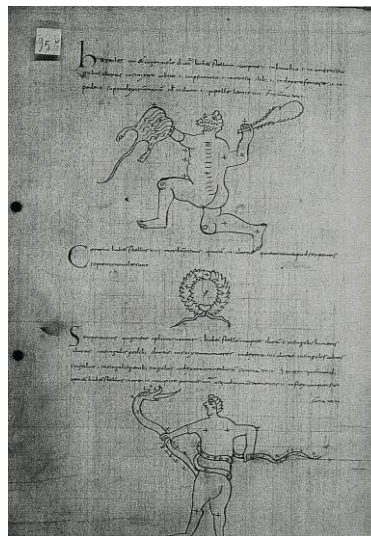
ff. 95r-99v 27 rough pen drawings of the constellations with stars marked; the text has been added after the illustrations were drawn so that it runs in paragraphs across the page and in most, but not all, cases skirts the figures

ff. 9r-v has been torn so that only a stub with text remains on it, indicating that the pictures of the constellations of AURIGA, TAURUS, CEPHEUS, CASSIOPEIA, ANDROMEDA and PEGASUS have been lost.

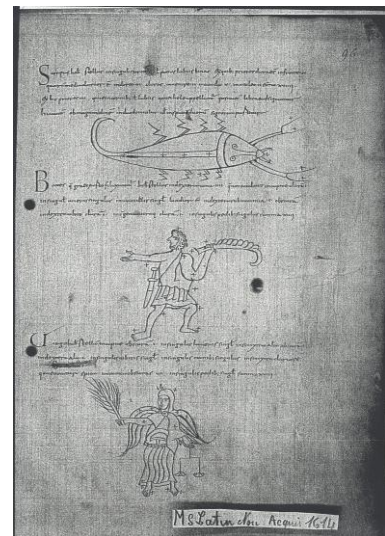
As the text ends incompletely with ARGO, the following constellations are also missing from the series: CETUS, ERIDANIS, PISCIS AUSTRINUS, ARA, CENTAURUS (AND LUPUS), HYDRA, CRATER, CORVUS and CANIS MINOR.



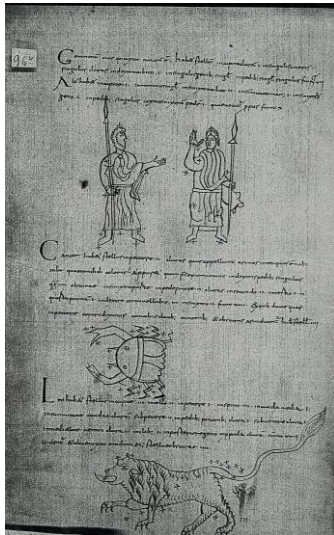
fol. 95r



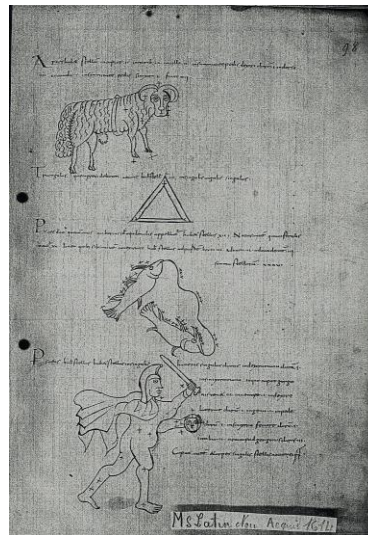
fol. 95v



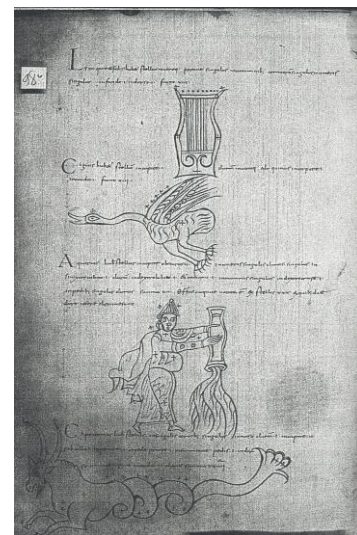
fol. 96r



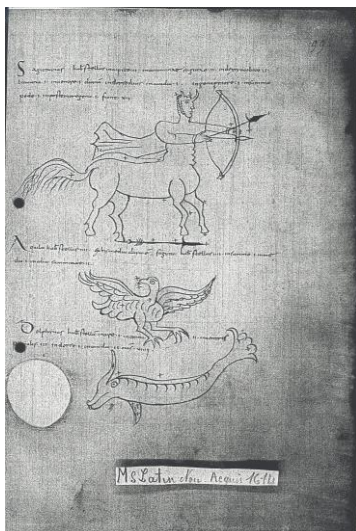
fol. 96v



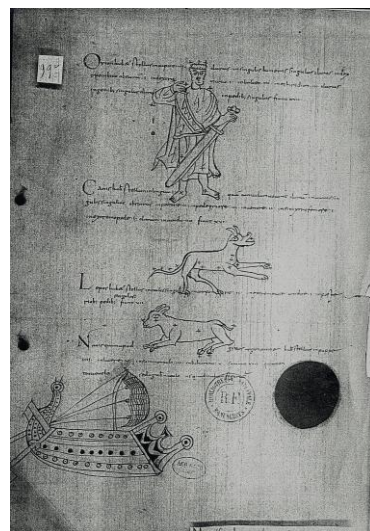
fol. 98r



fol. 98v



fol. 99r



fol. 99v

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- fol. 95r **URSA MAIOR** is a large bear that faces to the right and has pointed ears and a pointed snout with fur marked by S-shapes; it has prominent toenails; there is 1 star in the head, and 4 in the chest (5 stars in all)
 - URSA MINOR** is smaller and faces to the left; it is hairy (marks with S-shapes) and has large toenails; it has 6 stars in the face, 2 in the neck, 1 on the shoulder, 5 on the front legs, 4 on the tail and 2 on the hind legs (20 stars in all)
 - DRACO** is a snake that is set vertically on the page and faces to the right; it has five bends in its body and is breathing fire; it has a beard and curved horns; it has 3 stars on its head and 10 on its body (13 stars in all)

fol. 95v: **HERCULES** is nude and bearded; he faces away from the viewer and kneels on his right knee to the left (buttocks and ribs visible); he holds the lion-skin (with visible back paws and tail) in front of him so that it covers his left arm up to the forearm; he holds a club behind his head in his right hand; he has 4 stars on his torso, 3 in his right arm, 2 on his right leg and 4 in the lion skin (13 stars in all)

CORONA BOREALIS is a wreath with ribbons at the bottom and circle at the top; it has 8 stars

OPHIUCHUS is nude and stands facing away from the viewer with his head turned to the left; the **SERPENS** is wrapped twice around his torso with its head on the left side and facing back towards the man; it has a birdlike head and a very large tongue, which it sticks out; the man has 1 star in his face, 4 on his torso and 4 on his legs and the Snake has 2 on his tongue (?) 5 in his head and 36 stars in his body

fol.96r **SCORPIO** is an earwig-like creature with front claws like two-tined forks that he holds on in front of him on the right side; his round eyes and nose are clearly marked and he has a stripe running down the length of his body; there are 4 legs on each side that are shaped like stylized lightning bolts; he has a tapered tail that ends in a curl; he is marked 4 stars in his claws, 3 on his nose, 4 on his body and 1 on his leg (12 stars in all)

BOOTES stands lunging to the right (with his right leg bent) and with his back towards the viewer; he is bearded and wears a short pleated skirt; he holds his left arm outstretched to one side with his open palm held upwards; in his right hand, he holds a curved knobby plant or staff in a horizontal position; he wears a sword at waist on a string that hangs from his right shoulder; he has 1 star on his head, 3 in his right arm, 3 in his left hand, 1 on his left elbow, and 5 in his legs (13 stars)

VIRGO stands facing the viewer and is dressed in a long gown with a checked belt and a short cape held by a round clasp at her neck; she is winged and holds plant (palm frond?) in her upraised right hand; she holds the scales down by her side in her left.; hand; she has a peculiar flame, quiff or triangular diadem (?) on the top of her head; she has 2 stars in her head, 4 on the ribs of her wings, 1 in each elbow and 2 in each foot (marked by 12 stars)

fol. 96v **GEMINI** stand facing the viewer and are slightly separated; they are dressed in long tunics, caught at the waist by a belt and have long cloaks that are clasped at the neck; the left Twin is bearded and the other not; and both hold spears in their outer hands, gesturing to each other with their inner hands (the left Twin holds his hand out and the right Twin raises his in salutation); the left Twin has 1 star in his head, 2 in his chest, 1 in each hand, 4 in his feet; the right Twin has 1 star on his head, 3 on his right arm, 1 on his left arm, 2 on his skirt and 2 on his feet (marked by 18 stars)

CANCER faces to the left and has a round face and a scalloped bottom; his two front claws are held in front of him and he has two long straight teeth protruding from the front of his shell; there are three lightning-bolt legs on either side; there are 5 stars in the claws, 2 on the points coming from his head, 4 in the top legs and 5 on the bottom legs (16 stars)

Leo walks to left with his right paw raised; his shaggy mane has triangular tufts of hair and his belly and the back of his hind legs are scalloped; his very long tail is held upraised behind him; his tongue sticks out; he has 3 stars in his head, 5 on the body, 4 on the front legs, 9 on the rump and 1 on the tail (22 stars)

ff. 97r-97v this folio has been torn so that only a stub with text remains, indicating that the pictures of the constellations of **AURIGA**, **TAURUS**, **CEPHEUS**, **CASSIOPEIA**, **ANDROMEDA** and **PEGASUS** have been lost

fol. 98r **Aries** stands to right, but turns his head to face the viewer; he has simple curled horns, a long tail and a band around his middle; he has 3 stars in his face, 4 in the neck, 2 in the front feet, 3 on the rump and 1 on the tail (13 stars)

TRIANGULUS is two nested equilateral triangles, marked 3 stars, 1 at each angle

PISCES are placed at right angles to each other, with the lower one's tail in the middle of the upper one's body; both backs face upwards and both noses are set to the right; they are connected by a wavy string at their mouths; the top fish has 12 stars, the cord has 9 stars and the bottom fish has 15 stars (36 stars)

PERSEUS is nude and walks in profile to the right, with his back to the viewer; he wears a cloak that flows out behind him and has a crested helmet on his head; he holds a small roundel containing a female head in front of him in his left hand; he holds a sword above and in front of him in his right hand; there are 2 stars in his right arm, 6 in his left hand, 2 in his waist and 5 in his legs (15 stars)

fol. 98v **LYRA** is a tall lyre with 9 strings and is marked by 5 stars

CYGNUS flies to left in profile with its neck outstretched and its wings and feet trailing behind the body; it has 1 bright star in the head, 5 in each wing and 1 on the body (12 stars)

AQUARIUS walks to right in profile; he wears a long robe and cloak and has a significant pot belly; he has a triangular hat with a bobble on top and holds a handle-less urn upside-down with both his hands in front of him at shoulder height; water pours out vertically; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on his arms, 3 on his belly 1 on his right leg and 1 on his right foot (11 stars)

CAPRICORN swims to the left with his forelegs held bent in front of him; he has long curved horns and a beard and a triple corkscrew tail, that ends in three central lobes and a curled tendril; he has 2 bright stars on the tips of his horns, 6 on his front half and 12 on his tail with 2 stars on the tip of tail (marked by 22 stars)

fol. 99r **SAGITTARIUS** is a horned and bearded centaur standing to the right right with a long cloak flowing out behind him; he holds the bow in his left hand pulls the string with his right; he has horns on his head and bands on his wrists; he stands on **SAGITTA** with its tip pointing to the right; he has 2 stars in his head, 3 on the bow, 1 on his horse's back, 1 on his equine belly, 3 on his front legs and 1 on his tail. (marked by 11 stars); **SAGITTA** has 4 stars

AQUILA stands facing the viewer, positioned lightly to the right, though his head turns back over his right shoulder; the wings are outstretched and both legs are positioned in front of the bird; there are 2 stars in the face, 1 in the neck and 1 on the body (4 stars)

DELPHINUS is a long, tubular fish with a horn on its head, a prominent eye and a large belly fin; it is swimming to left and is marked by 9 stars

fol. 99v

ORION stands facing the viewer; he wears a calf-length tunic and long cloak; he points to himself with his right hand; his left hand rests on handle of a long sword in a scabbard that is worn at his waist; there seems to be a wide band running from his right shoulder to his left hip; he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his right elbow, 1 at his waist and 1 in each knee and 1 on each foot. (marked by 11 stars)

CANIS MAIOR has a curled snout and curved pointed ears; it leaps to the right and has a long tail; he has 1 star in the mouth, 5 in the chest, 2 or 3 in the front feet, 2 in the groin, 2 or 3 in the back feet and 4 in the tail (marked by at least 16 stars)

LEPUS is leaping or lying down to left, has short rounded ears and appears to have has cloven feet; it is marked by 7 stars.

ARGO (NAVIS) has a three-pronged bow (decorated with two circlets and one triangle at the right) the hull and stern are heavily decorated with dots; there is a parachute-like sail billowing from the stern across the deck; there are two steering oars and a rudimentary *aphlaston* (circlet with three lines radiating from it) on its stern. The hull is highly decorated with dots and circlets, but no stars are indicated.

notes

According to BORST (1995²), the illustrated star catalogue *De ordine* in this manuscript is an excerpt from the *Libri computi*, also known as the compilation in 7 books originally created between 809-812 in Aachen.

Noting that the manuscript also contains an illustrated star catalogue from the *Revised Aratus latinus*, it should not be too surprising to discover that pictorial cycle described here is stylistically close those found accompanying the *Revised Aratus latinus*. In addition to the fact that one cycle has stars marked and the other does not, the two cycles differ iconographically in a number of ways. For example, the relative presentations of the **BEARS**, **DRACO** and **HERCULES** adhere to the iconography of the different texts, with no iconographical overlap.

It is worth noting that the iconography of a number of constellations found in the pictorial cycle of the *Revised Aratus latinus* also appear in a number of *De ordine* star catalogue: for instance, **TAURUS** as a whole animal, **AURIGA** with chariot, **ARIES** not looking backwards, the relative

position of **PISCES** and the depiction of **ARGO**.

The cycle of illustrations in the *De ordine* star catalogue in this manuscript has the characteristics of the cycle we call **De ordine III**. Features of group are also seen in St Petersburg Q.v. IX no. 2, although there are stylistic and iconographic differences. For example, in the latter manuscript, one finds **VIRGO** without wings, **CANCER** as crawfish and **ARIES** looking backwards.

bibliography

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McGURK 1981, p. 319-21.

LE BOURDELLÈS 1985, p. 76.

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says *recensio interpolata* and 'De ordine ac positione'.

CAIAZZO 2000 pp. 113-50.

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