

FLORENCE

Biblioteca nazionale centrale

Conv. Sopr. Cod. Angeli. VI. 1147

Constellation images

Florentine, second or third quarter 15th century

A series of pictures of the extra-zodiacal constellations arranged in a haphazard manner. The positioning of some of the constellations relative to each other suggests they were copied from a celestial map or globe.

text

The text contains mostly astrological notes and partial labels for the constellations and the stars. See notes below.

Illustrations

The illustrations depict 30 extra-zodiacal constellations. All the figures are finely-executed in pen. All the figures are seen from the rear - *i.e.*: 'globe-view' and resemble the figures of the constellations that appear in the hemispheres in Vienna ÖNB, cod. 5415, which are also presented with their backs to the viewer. The stars are indicated by small brown dots, with some being slightly larger (indicating the relative brightness of the stars). Many of the stars are accompanied by labels with their Latinised Arabic names and indications of the planetary gods who influence them. Some of these annotations are in the same hand as the illuminator, and some have been added by a later hand.

Also, there are a number of notes in Italian explaining how to find certain stars in one constellation by using the stars of another (*i.e.*: lying in a straight line, etc).

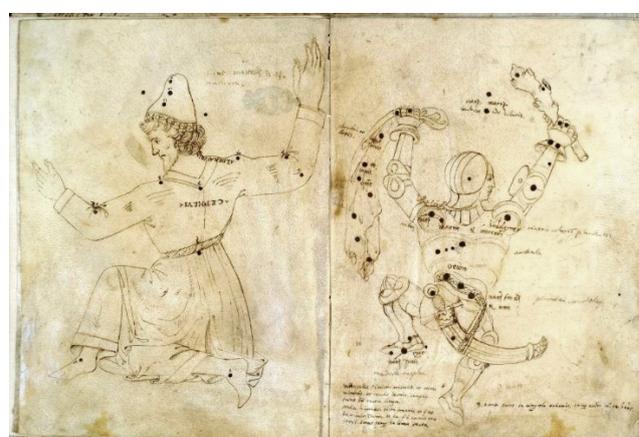
The northern and southern constellations are jumbled-together on single pages, but the relative placement of some of the constellations indicate an awareness of the relationship between one constellation and another (see notes below). Also, each figure has a small notation as to which direction is north relative to the orientation of the picture on the page.



fol. i r



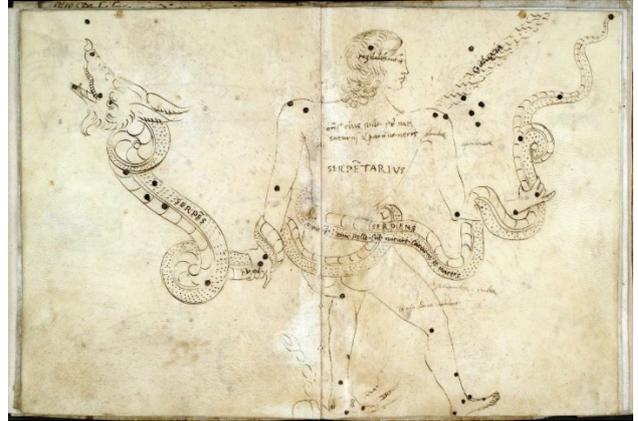
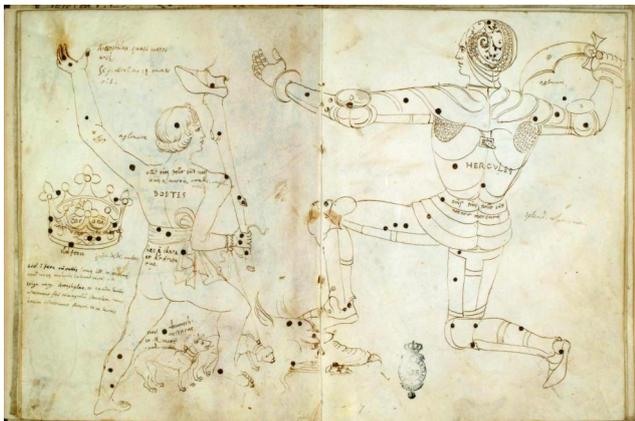
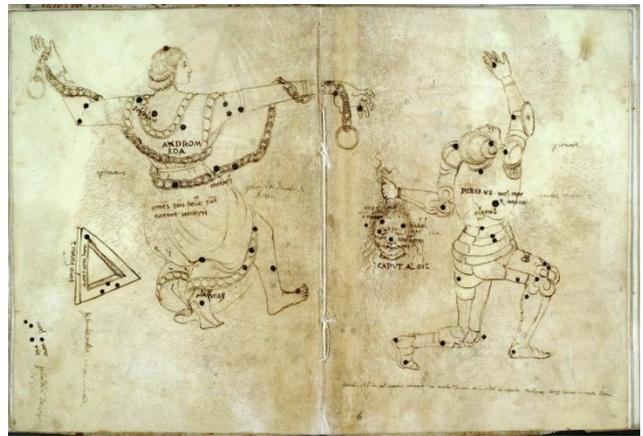
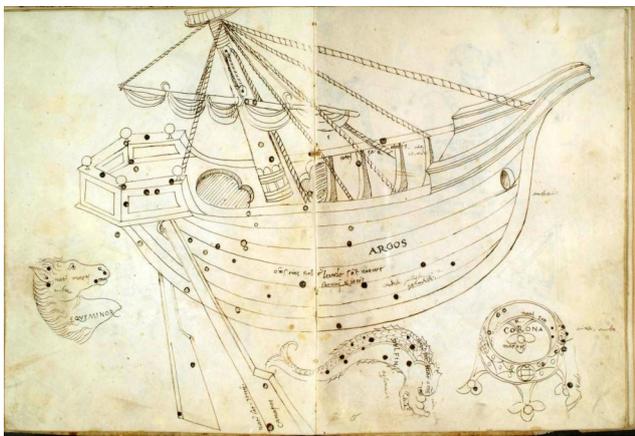
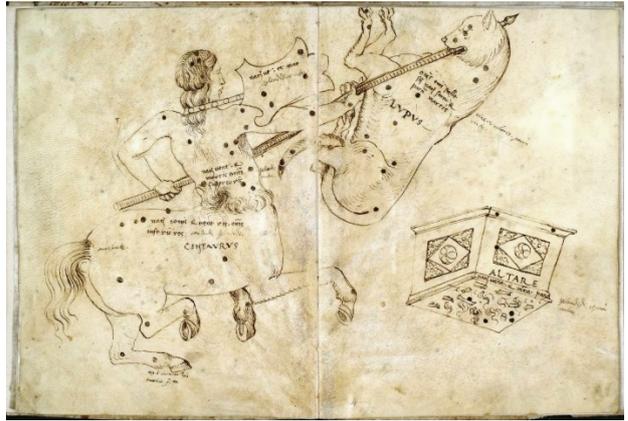
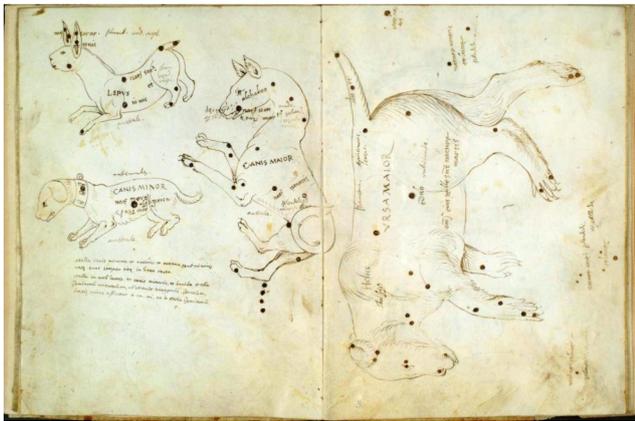
fol. 1r

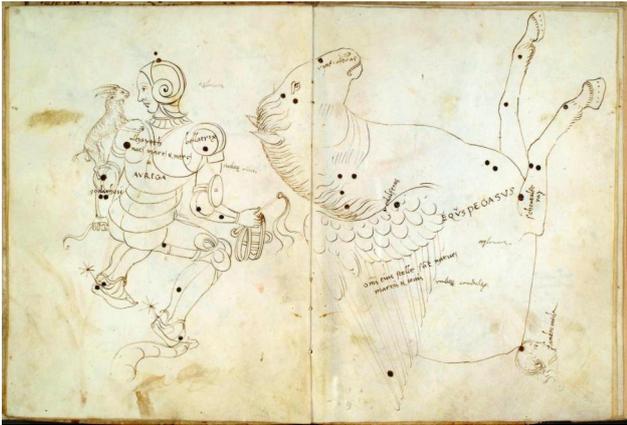


fol. 2r

fol. i v

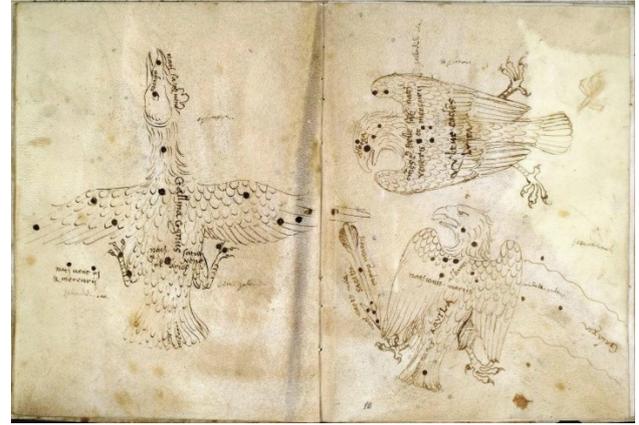
fol. 1v





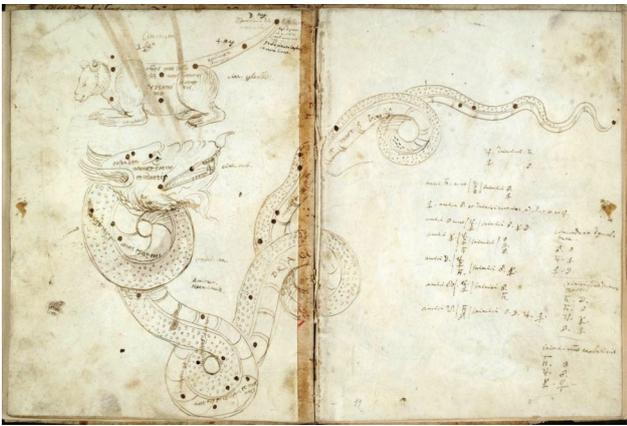
fol. 8v

fol. 9r



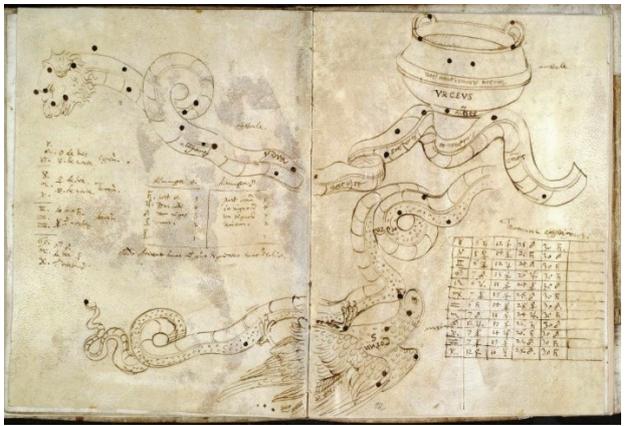
fol. 9v

fol. 10r



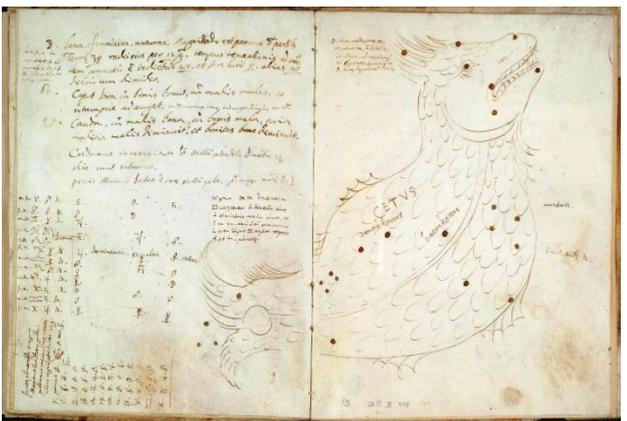
fol. 10v

fol. 11r



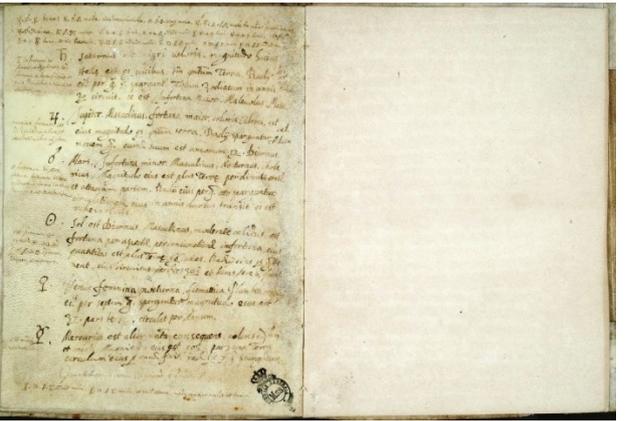
fol. 11v

fol. 12r



fol. 12v

fol. 13r



fol. 13v

fol. i r-v

The folio is a fragment of a 15th-century liturgical manuscript with text and music notation. On the outer edges of the verso, there are some

astrological notes concerning the planetary positions in a later (16th-century) hand.

- fol. 1r CASSIOPEIA (labelled: CASSIEPIA) is seen from the back. She is seated facing to the left, on a high-backed, throne-like wooden chair. Her right hand rests on the high back of the chair. She is dressed in a loose gown, which is belted and has a decorative, V-shaped neck band. She wears a crown. In her left hand, she holds a palm frond. In front of her, there is an astrological chart and copious astrological notes. The stars have been emphasised in black ink and are numbered. There are also some notations concerning the planetary rulers of those born 'under' a constellation, presumably taken from the original model.
- fol. 1v CEPHEUS (labelled: CEPHEUS) faces away from the viewer and kneels towards the left. He is bearded and wears a loose robe, tied at the waist and a conical hat. Both his arms are raised and bent at the elbows. The stars have been emphasised and numbered in black ink. On his shoulder, one star is labelled ALDERAIMIN. A later hand has added a note concerning the number of stars in the figure.
- fol. 2r ORION (labelled: Orion) faces away from the viewer. He is dressed in armour and lefts his left leg. Both his arms are raised above his head, with the right one holding a club and the left one a piece of cloth. he has a long, curved sword on his belt.
- fol. 2v LEPUS (labelled: LEPUS) leaps to the left, with its ears held vertically.
- CANIS MINOR (labelled CANIS MINOR) is a small, snub-nosed dog with floppy ears that crouches towards the left. It wears a thick collar with a ring.
- CANIS MAIOR (labelled: CANIS MAIOR) is a larger dog, placed 'vertically' with its hind quarters towards the bottom of the page, as if rearing up. It has a long snout and pointed ears. Its tail is curled around its hindquarters, which cross over onto fol. 3r.

- fol. 3r URSA MAIOR (labelled: URSA MAIOR) is a large bear that walks to the left. It holds its tail out straight and its front paws are slightly raised.
- ff. 3v - 4r CENTAURUS (labelled: CENTAURUS) leaps to the right, his human half is nude and there is a hairy band between the two parts. He has long hair and wears a shaped shield around his neck. He holds a lance in both his hands. The end of the lance impales LUPUS (labelled: LUPUS), which is depicted as a wolf biting the end of the lance, with its tail between its legs.
- fol. 4r ARA (labelled: ALTARE) is a highly decorated, block-shaped altar. It is placed upside-down on the page with small bits of stick (?) and flames coming from its top.
- fol. 4v EQUUS MINOR (labelled EQUUS MINOR) is the neck and head of a horse, facing to the right.
- ff. 4v-5r NAVIS (labelled: ARGOS) is a full ship, facing to the right. It has a furled sail on its main mast, many ropes and pulleys, a crow's nest, with 2 steering oars and a raised poop deck at the rear.
- DELPHINUS (labelled DELFIN) is a stylised fish with a dragon's head and spiny dorsal fin. It has pointed teeth and faces to the right.
- CORONA MERIDIONALIS (labelled: CORONA) is a marchesate crown with raised fleurettes and jewels, seen from underneath the headband. There is a horse's hoof covering the extreme right of the Crown, indicating the forefoot of Sagittarius.
- fol. 5v TRIANGULUM (labelled: triangulus) is a slightly acute triangle.
- ff. 5v-6r ANDROMEDA (labelled ANDROMEDA) is a female figure in a loose robe belted at the waist, with decorative bands at the neck, armholes and hem. She has tight-fitting long sleeves visible under the robe. She walks

away from the viewer, slightly to the right. Her arms are outstretched, and they are wrapped in chain links with large rings at each end. The chain also encircles her waist.

fol. 6r PERSEUS (labelled PERSEUS) is dressed in armour and faces away from the viewer. He kneels slightly to the right and holds a decapitated female head (labelled: CAPUT ALGOL) by its hair in his trailing left hand, while he reaches upwards with his right hand.

fol. 6v CORONA BOREALIS (labelled: CORONA), is a marchesate crown with raised fleurettes and jewels.

BOOTES (labelled: BOETES) faces away from the viewer, walking slightly to the right. He is nude, save a sash tied around his waist. He raises his left hand above his head and holds a club vertically in his right hand. There are two small dogs with collars at his feet, and leashes for the two dogs run from Bootes's right wrist to the rings on their collars. (the CANES VENATICI). There is a foot at the top of the club (indicating the foot of HERCULES).

ff. 6v-7r HERCULES (labelled HERCULES) faces away from the viewer and is kneeling to the left. He is dressed in armour and extends his left arm in front of him. In his right hand, he holds a scimitar behind his head. Beneath his left foot, there is the partial head of a dragon (indicating DRACO).

ff. 7v-8r OPHIUCHUS (labelled: SERPENTARIUS) faces away from the viewer, slightly to the right. He is nude. His arms are slightly extended, with his elbows bent. The SERPENS (labelled: SERPENS) has a dragon's head and faces to the left. It has numerous curls as it wraps itself around the left wrist, waist and right arm of Ophiuchus. The left foot of Ophiuchus rests on the partially-visible back of SCORPIO. Above the right shoulder of Ophiuchus, there are a series of wavy lines, labelled: GALAXIA.

- fol. 8v AURIGA (labelled: AURIGA) faces away from the viewer, slightly to the right, with his head turned back towards the left. He is dressed in armour and his knees are bent. In his right hand, he holds a halter and a flail, In his left hand he holds the ends of the reins. A goat (Capella) is perched in his left shoulder. Beneath his right foot, there is the segmented horn, which indicates the horn of TAURUS.
- ff. 8v-9r PEGASUS (labelled: EQUUS PEGASUS) is placed sideways on the page, with its head towards the top. It is half a winged horse and its front legs are stretched out in front. At the bottom of his cut off (on the belly), there is a small female head libelled 'andromeda', which indicates the shared star between the two.
- fol. 9v CYGNUS (labelled: Gallina Cygnus) is a rooster set in a heraldic position with its wings outstretched and its feet tucked in. its wing slightly extends to fol. 10r.
- fol. 10r LYRA (labelled: Vultur cadens, LYRA) is a heraldic eagle with its feet spread and its wings tucked in and its head turned to the left side.
- AQUILA (labelled: AQUILA) is depicted as a standing eagle with its head turned toward the left. On the left of the bird there is SAGITTA (labelled: SAGItta), with its tip facing towards the bottom of the page. To the right of the bird, there are wavy lines labelled: [Ga]laxia.
- fol. 10v URSA MINOR (labelled: Ursa minor on the body and Cinosura above the back of the bear) is a small bear with a very long, straight tail, that crouches to the left.
- ff. 10v-11r DRACO (labelled: DRACO) is a very large snake with a dragon's head, it has for curls in its long body and faces to the right. There are numerous notations concerning planets to the right of Draco.
- ff. 11v-12r: HYDRA, CRATER and CORVUS are depicted as a single group, though it has been cut in half to fit on to the bi-folio. HYDRA (labelled: ydre) is a long

snake with a lion's head and three curls in its body. CRATER (labelled: URCEUS) is a round-bellied metallic pot with two handles. CORVUS (labelled: Corvus) is a bird that faces towards the head of Draco and pecks at its tail. To the left, there are notes concerning planetary rulers of the signs and to the right, on planetary rulers for the 4 quarters of each sign (the so-called 'Egyptian terms'). .

- ff. 12v-13r CETUS (labelled: CETUS) is a fat-bellied sea monster/fish that faces to the right. It has a spiked comb on its head and lots of teeth. Fol. 12v is covered with astrological notations.
- fol. 13v Some notes about the planets in a contemporary hand, and later notes concerning the qualities of the planets.

notes

22,7 x 16,8 cm, 14 folia; fol. i*r has a later inscription with the title: *Trattato dei Pianeti*
The manuscript was previously in Florentine convent of Sta Maria degli Angeli, which was suppressed by Napoleon in 1809.

The integral vellum cover also has a number of numerical calculations, suggesting the ms was a working resource for a practicing astronomer/astrologer.

bibliography

McGURK 1966, p. 33 and pl. IVd.

LIPPINCOTT 1985, p. 70

ŚNIEŻYNSKA-STOLOT 1994, p. 65.

DEKKER 2013, pp. 401 and 408.

p. 401: notes that four of the figures on the globe attributed to Hans Dorn (Krakow, Jagiellonian University Museum, no. 4039-37/V) are dressed in amour like the Angeli mss; she stresses that the figures in the Angeli ms must have been drawn from a globe due to the east-west orientation of the figures and the fact that all the human figures are seen from the rear (i.e. 'globe view'). She also notes that two of the figures in the San Lorenzo Sacristy are also dressed in armour and suggests that this may have been a stylistic trait common to the middle years of the 15th century, predating the more classical depictions in the later Nuremberg maps.

p. 408: notes that the appearance of the *Canes venatici* alongside Bootes reflect an attempt by early scholars to make sense of a difficult phrase in Gerard of Cremona's Ptolemaic catalogue (BOO 8 = μ Boo), citing DEKKER 2010 ('Caspar Vogel' in *Imago mundi*), p. 173.

BLUME/HAFFNER/METZGER 2016, II, 1, p. 81, 534-37 and figs. 568-79.

consulted 2004 and December 2023.

The ms has been digitised at: <https://archive.org/details/conventi-soppressi-a.-vi.-1147>



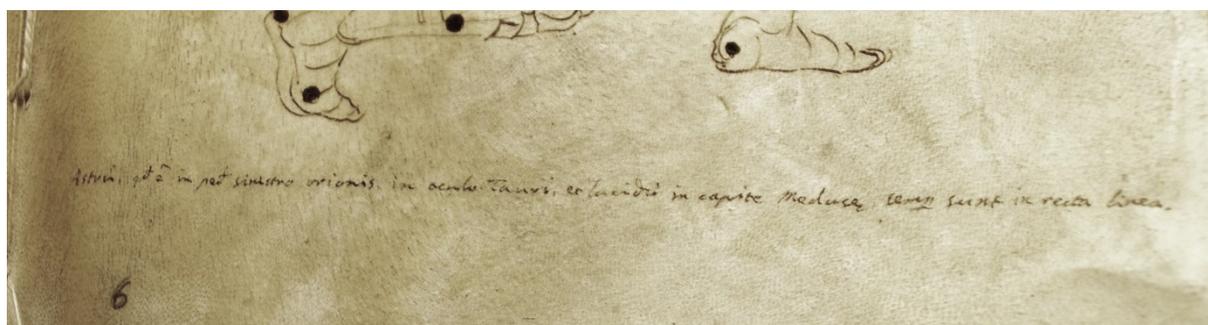
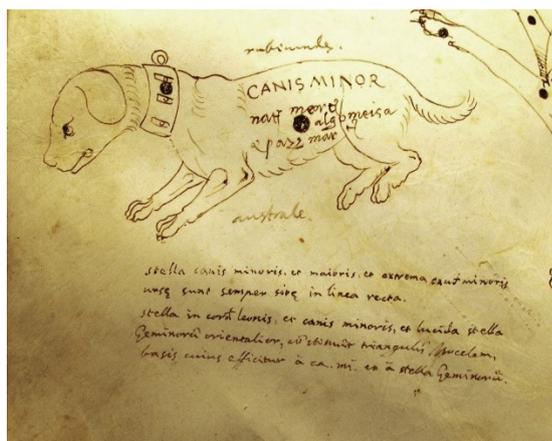
vellum pocket with notes



inner front cover



inner back cover



typical annotations regarding way-finding between stars