
Vat lat 643

ps- Bede, *De signis caeli*

German
11th century

text

ff. 82v-95r abbreviated version of the Ps- Bede, *De signis caeli* with additions and substitutions from the *Aratus latinus*, the *Revised Aratus latinus* and with a number of paragraphs taken from Isidore

(note: for the textual anomalies in the star catalogues found in the Vat lat 643, Zwettl and Klosterneuberg manuscripts)

ff.80v-82r (folio 81 is missing)
[]omina signorum qs calditur astriger orbis
Ordina__ ut posto metrica distingues lege
Arcturus minor et maior draco complecta ips__ ...

Armatus grandi stat & obvius Hercules anguis ...

Tunque vicem reddes wadem qu__ cumque recendens

Utraque restant q __ vultur sie re__grat. **** CHECK = My transcription not the same as Saxl's and the mss is not listed in Pellegrin.**

fol. 82v Quidam tamen multa dicunt & alii aliter narasse celum diversis proferentes vocabulis...sed a navigantibus observantur. Maria enim conturbat. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 179-80)

Hab& autem helix arcturus maior. In capite stellas obscuras vii. In spatula unam Superpectus unam In pede unam In dorso una In tibia anteriore duas. Super caudam tres. Sunt omnis xvi. (abbreviated version of ps-Bede, cf. Maass 1898, p. 582)

- fol. 95r Anticanis dicitur subtus geminos. bene parere. Hab& stellas .iii. Quas una splendidior est ceteris. & ideo anticanis vocatur eo quod contraria sit cani. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 594)
- fol. 95v: De stellis ergo quae vocantur planete ... eo quod tantam claritatem ostenderit.
(= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 272-75)
- ff. 96r-97v SIGNALEM autem circulum ita appellaverunt ... (ends imperfectly) tunc nequaquam ceti nihil veniet (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 279-86)
- ff. 99r-99v lam cum videris parvulis cornibus esse lunam vesperem lucentem ... et satis facit nos ita esse. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 287 - 291)
- f. 99v Sole autem ex utraque parte oreinte ... (ends imperfectly) multis ad venientibus nubibus. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 291-92)

illustrations

- ff. 82v-100r Large grey-brown pen and wash drawings, with hints of yellow, red and black; the texts bend around illustrations suggesting that it was added later; the stars are elaborately marked and seem to be graded according to the descriptions in the text; those that are 'splendida' are marked as large red circles with smaller red-brown dots surrounding them and 4 or 5 brown dots in their centres; those that are 'obscura' have a large brown circle painted over the red circle and those that are normal stars lack any interior markings
- fol. 95v 5 planets-busts in roundels (Mercury with wings on his head)
- fol. 98r Sol and Luna set within a zodiac rota (Aries with head back, Taurus full and head turned back, Gemini as warriors with spears in outer hands and inner hands raised; wingless Virgo holding 3-panned Libra in the following compartment; Aquarius nude with water pouring out both sides of tube)
- fol. 98v Luna drawn by 4 bulls holding a palm-like torch in her left hand and a caduceus (?) in her right, set within a circular frame labelled 'luna maris'
- fol. 100r Sol seated on 4 horses faced in opposite directions (no cart) with orb, set within a circular frame labelled 'aurora lucis'

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- fol. 82v **URSA MAIOR** runs to the left with its front legs raised and is slightly larger and has a short tail; it has an indication of a hump on its back, a short tail and a red tongue sticking out of its mouth; it has 7 stars in its head, 1 on its back, 1 on the chest, 1 on the shoulder, 2 in the left front leg, 1 on the left front foot and 3 on the rump, or 16 stars in all
- URSA MINOR** run to the left with its front legs raised; it has a long tail that is held horizontally; it has a hump and a tongue sticking out of its mouth; it has 4 stars in the shoulder and 3 on the tail, or 7 stars in all
- fol. 83r **DRACO INTER ARCTOS**, with **Draco** depicted as a grey, bearded snake with ‘star breath’ coming from its open mouth; its head is towards the top of the page and there are three curves in his body; the bears are placed back-to-back facing inwards (the upper one with long tail (**URSA MINOR**²) faces to the right and bottom one with short tail (**URSA MAIOR**²), faces to the left); they are roughly the same size; both bears have their red tongues out and their eyes and humps are highlighted with red; there are 7 stars marked in the upper bear as on **URSA MINOR** above; **DRACO** has 3 stars in his head and 12 in his body or 15 stars in all; **URSA MAIOR** has no stars
- fol. 83v **HERCULES** faces away from the viewer and is nude; he kneels to the left in Garden of Hesperides with his left leg leading; he is bearded and has the ‘lion-skin’ draped over his extended left arm, but it actually has a human face on it that resembles the a severed Medusa’s head with grey hair; he holds his club raised behind his head in his right hand; in front of him (to the left) there is a snake twined around a tree trunk that has a beaky mouth and a beard and breathes red ‘breath’ down on the head of Hercules; The left foot of the hero treads on the tail of snake; Hercules has 1 star in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his left elbow, 1 in his right hand and 1 on the club, possibly 1 on his left hip, 3 on his left thigh and 1 on his left shin, or 10 stars in all
- fol. 84r **CORONA BOREALIS** is a pair of nested circles that has been divided into ten sections; there are ribbons at the bottom and 9 stars are placed in the segments
- OPHIUCHUS** is standing facing away from the viewer and to the left; he is nude and has the **SERPENS** wrapped around his torso and crossing under his left armpit; the Snake faces him, is bearded and has red ‘star-breath’; its tail droops from Ophiuchus’s right hand; the man stands on **SCORPIO**, which has an elongated shield-shaped body with a flat forehead; two long claws reaching forward and five small curled legs on each side; the tail is smooth and ends in a hook ; the man has 1 star in his head, 1 on

each shoulder, (2 at his back = Serpens), 3 on his left hand, 4 in his right, 1 in each knee, 1 on his left shin and 1 on each foot or 17 stars in all; the Snake has 2 in the head and 6 on his body; or 6 stars; together, the grouping 21 stars in all; SCORPIO is marked by 19 stars

SCORPIO² has an elongated shield-shaped body with a flat forehead; two long claws reaching forward and five small curled legs on each side; the tail is smooth and ends in a hook; the only difference between the two is that SCORPIO² does not have any decoration on its shell; it has stars in the same locations as above: 2 in each claw, 3 in the face, 5 on the body, 5 on the tail and 2 at the end of the tail, or 19 stars in all

fol. 84v **BOOTES** (Arcades) is slightly ambiguous in his stance, but it seems, from the position of his hands and the lump on the side of his body, which must be a breast, that he is seen from back; he turns his head to the left; he wears a knee-length belted tunic with yellow bands at the hem, waist and side; this appears to be worn over a tight-fitting shirt, since there are sleeve marks (?) at each wrist; he has flayed skin highlighted with red hair markings over his outstretched left forearm and he holds a plant in his outstretched right arm behind his head (assuming seen from back); he has 1 star on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 2 on his back, 1 on his left elbow, 4 on his right elbow and right hand, and 1 in each knee, or 16 stars in all

fol. 85r **Virgo** faces the viewer and is depicted as if 'flying' to the left, she has large wings that cross in front of her upper arms; she holds an ear of corn in her upraised right hand and **SCALES** (labelled: LIBRA) in her left hand; she is dressed in a layered tunic with the outer garments having a blue hem at her knees and decorative banding under the breast and in a V-shape around the neck; her headband is red, her wings are grey and the pans of the scales are yellow; she has 1 star in her head, 2 in each wing, 1 on each shoulder, 1 in each elbow, 1 in her right hand and 2 on her left hand, 5 on her hem and 1 in each foot, or 19 stars in all (the 6 yellow dots on her belt are not stars)

fol. 85v **GEMINI** are soldiers dressed in short tunics decorated with yellow and blue details, with calf-length mantles that are pinned by a circular pin on their right shoulders so that their right arms are uncovered; they hold spears vertically in their outer arms and their inner hands are resting on their hips; the left Twin has 1 star in his head, 1 on each shoulder, and 1 on each knee, or 5 stars in all; the right Twin has 1 star on his head, 1 on his left shoulder, 1 along his cape, and 1 on each thigh, or 7 stars in all

CANCER has a round body and is placed between the feet of GEMINI, with its face towards the top of the page; there are three vertical lines on the body; it has 2 big claws facing forward and four legs on each side; it has 3 stars in each claw, 2 in its body and

7 in the legs, or 15 stars in all

- fol. 86r **LEO** rears to the left with his front paws raised; he has his tongue out and carries his tail so that it curves over his back; he has 3 stars on his head, 2 on his neck, 1 on his chest, 2 in front of his chest, 1 on his left front paw, 3 on his back and 1 on his tail, or 13 stars in all
- fol. 86v **AURIGA** faces towards the viewer and kneels (or flies? re: VIRGO's posture?) to the right; he wears a long thigh-length tunic with red and yellow details; over long bell-bottom trousers; there is a conical cap with a button on his head; he has two small, short-horned and bearded goats facing each other on his outstretched left arm and snake-like flail attached to a stick held behind him in his right hand; there is a very long-horned, bearded Goat in front of him, facing towards the left; he has 1 star on his hat, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 on his right hand, 2 on his left hand and 1 in each small goat, or 10 stars in all (the ones in his belt are yellow and are not stars)
- fol. 87r **Taurus** is depicted as half a bull facing to the right; his right knee bent under his body and his left leg extended in front; he has an X on his forehead and a frilly decoration (musculature?) at his neck; he has 1 star above each horn, 5 on his face, 2 on his neck, 3 on his chest, 1 on each knee, 1 on his belly and 3 on his back, or 8 stars in all
- fol. 87v **CEPHEUS** stands facing the viewer with his with arms outstretched at shoulder height and his palms open and turned upwards; he wears a knee-length with a long mantle held by an elaborate clasp at his chest; he has elaborately woven shoes and crossed garters; he has a bishop-like mitre on his head which has tassels that float outwards; He has 3 stars on his hat, 1 on each shoulder, 2 at his chest, 9 down his side, 1 on his right hand, 2 on his left knee and 4 on his right foot, or 22 stars in all (the dots at the end of his hat tassels are yellow and are not stars)
- fol. 88r **CASSIOPEIA** is seated with her arms outstretched at shoulder height and her palms open and facing upwards; she sits in a in a round-topped, cushioned chair that has an arcade of windows in its base; she has a Phrygian cap on her head.; her long gown has decorative stripes running vertical from neck to hem and at the waist; there are different decorated band at the hems of her loose sleeves and multiple bangles on each arm; she has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on her breast, 1 on her right elbow, 1 in each hand, 1 on her belly, 3 o her left thigh and 2 on the top of the throne, or 13 stars in all

- fol. 88v **ANDROMEDA** stands facing the viewer with her arms outstretched at shoulder height so that they rest on pollarded tree trunks (?) that are covered with six different toilet articles; she has short hair (held by a head-band) and wears a long, slim-line belted tunic with sleeves/ropes (?) that come from the belt at her waist and are slung over her arms at the elbow; she is barefoot and has two bracelets on each forearm; she has a dragon curled around her feet; she has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 on her right hand, 2 on her left hand, 7 at her waist, 1 on each knee, 1 on her left foot and 2 on her right foot, or 20 stars in all
- fol. 89r **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse facing to the right eating out of bowl; he has a double-beard, pointed teeth and his cut-off is an oval; his front feet are extended in front of him; he has 1 star in each ear, 4 on his face, 4 on his neck, 1 on his chest, 1 in each front knee and 1 on each front hoof, 1 on his shoulder, 1 on his belly and 1 on his back, or 18 stars in all
- ARIES** leaps to the left with all four feet lifted from the ground; he looks back over his shoulder to the right; he has curly horns, a smooth belt around tummy and a long tail; he has 4 stars on his face, 2 on his neck, 3 on his belly, 4 on his back, 1 on his left front hoof, 1 on his left hind hoof, 1 in his groin and 1 on his tail, or 17 stars in all
- fol. 90r **TRIANGULUS** is two nested equilateral triangles with little hairy markings along the inner and outer borders; it has 3 stars (one in each corner)
- PISCES** are beaked and swim in opposite directions (top to the right and bottom to the left), and are placed back-to-back; there is an S-shaped stream that joins the fish at their mouths; the top fish has 15 stars, the cord has 12 stars and the bottom fish has 12 stars
- fol. 90v **PERSEUS** runs to left and is nude, except for a yellow and red mitre-like hat with a small tail at the back and a red and yellow cloak that hangs from his right shoulder and crosses his body so that it flows behind him; he has wings on his heels; he holds Medusa's head in his right hand in front of him and has an odd, hand-shaped *harpe* in his left hand outstretched behind him; he has 1 star on each shoulder, 1 on his chest, 1 on his belly, 1 on his left elbow, 1 on each hand, 1 on his right thigh, 1 on each knee and 2 on his right shin, or 12 stars in his body and 4 in the Medusa's head, making 16 stars in all
- fol. 90v The **PLEIADES** are represented as seven bust portraits of women, placed in circular frames and wearing various headdresses; one of them looks like an Inuit

fol. 91r **LYRA** has a rectangular frame with two straight uprights and two curved scrolls that run behind the uprights; there are six strings stretched between the cross-bar and the base and the base has a *fleur-de-lys* decoration; there are 9 stars

Cygnus stands facing to the right; it has its right foot raised off the ground and is biting its chest (with teeth); its wings are outstretched to either side; it has 1 star in its head, 1 on the neck, 5 on each wing 1 on the chest and 1 on the tail, or 14 stars in all

fol. 91v **AQUARIUS** 'flies' to the left (see VIRGO and AURIGA); his chest is bare and he has a waistband and anklets, which are the only visible manifestations of trousers (?); or, these are jewellery and he is nude; he wears mitre-like hat and has a cloak, attached to his left shoulder that streams out behind him; the depiction of his urn and stream are odd: it seems as though there is water pouring from his hands into a hour-glass shaped vessel and the water then pours out of this in two streamlets into a crescent shape from which a single stream emerges and then flows to the right, under the legs and feet of ERIDANUS; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on his shoulder, 1 in each elbow, 1 on his hands, 4 on his chest, 1 on his belly, 1 on each knee, 1 on his right shin and 1 on each foot, with 2 in the urn and 2 in the water, or 20 stars in all

CAPRICORN faces to the left and has slightly wavy, long horns, a full mane, a beard and a furry band where his two halves meet; his legs are extended in front of him and his tail has a single corkscrew, with numerous finds and a trefoil tip; he has 2 stars in each horn, 3 on the head, 1 on the neck, 2 on the chest, 2 on its left front hoof, 5 on the belly, 7 on the back and 2 at the end of the tail, or 26 stars in all

fol. 92r **SAGITTARIUS** is a bearded centaur who gallops to the left with his front legs lifted from the ground; his human half is nude and has an animal-skin cape flowing out from his left shoulder behind him.; he has a red and yellow band at his human waist and a yellow band at his horse-waist; he holds the bow with left hand in front of him and pulls the string with his (hidden) right hand; is bearded and has short curly hair; he has 2 stars in his head, 1 on his shoulder, 1 on his right elbow, 4 at his waist, 2 in the bow, 1 on his left front knee, 1 in each front hoof and 2 on his tail, or 15 stars in all; he strides over **SAGITTA**, which is pointing to the right; the Arrow has 4 stars

AQUILA stands on **SAGITTA**² with its wings outstretched to either side and it looks back over shoulder towards its right wing; it has 4 stars; the **SAGITTA**² has its tip pointing to the right, but there are no stars marked

fol. 92v **DELPHINUS** is a classical dolphin swimming to the left with an all-in-one horn, beak

and pointed beard; its tail ends in an acanthus-shape and it is marked by 9 stars

ORION is shown lunging to the left; he seems to be facing the viewer (holding the sword in his right hand) and is wearing a knee-length tunic; anklets and shoes; He has a long cloak pinned on his right shoulder that covers the length of his outstretched left arm; his left hand catches the cloth and it then falls vertically; he holds a long sword horizontally behind his body and has an empty scabbard attached to the belt at his waist; he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 3 on his cloak, 1 on his left hand, 3 on his belt, 1 on each knee and 1 on each foot, or 17 stars in all

fol. 93r **CANIS MAIOR** (Canicula) runs to the left with all four feet lifted from the ground; he has a halo with red and yellow rays of light coming from his head; his black (silver?) tongue is sticking out; he has short pointed ears and a long, thin tail that is upraised; he has 1 star on his tongue, 2 on his shoulder, 2 on his chest, 2 on his front paws, 3 on his back, 2 on his belly, 3 on his haunch, 1 on his left hind foot and 4 on his tail, or 20 stars in all

LEPUS runs to left; it has long ears held erect and multiple toes on its paws; it has 7 stars

fol. 93v **ARGO (Navis)** is depicted as half a ship with small dog at the waterline beneath the stern; its right end finishes with a vertical mast (with a *fleur-de-lys* top) from which a large, limp flag hangs; there are two round shields on the deck and two oars between the shield and the curved stern (steering? Rowing?); the stern ends with a circlet and *aphlaston* that is shaped like a *fleur-de-lys*; there are 3 stars on the flag, 7 on the hull, 5 on the keel, and 5 in each oar, or 25 stars in all

CETUS faces to the right.; it has a pointed beak and sharp teeth and sticks out a long tongue; there are claws on its front paws; there are two long, drooping pointed ears and a hairy horn that rises from the back of its head; it has wings placed at mid-body and a tail with a single corkscrew that ends in a trefoil tail; it has 12 stars on the main part of its tail and 2 at the end of the tail, or 14 stars in all

fol. 94r **ERIDANUS** (Eurus /herridanus) is a bust portrait of a wild-haired youth set behind/ on top of a rectangle with dots and lines along its length; he has a star-shaped object on his head and his right hand is raised in salutation; there is a plant to the right side; there are 6 stars set within the star on his forehead and 12 gold ones on the parapet, or 18 stars in all

PISCIS AUSTRINUS is beaky fish, swimming to the right and is placed upside-down; it

has visible gills and a small whorl on its cheek; it has 12 stars running along its back

ARA is a square structure with vertical stripes and with a triangle shape on top, from which a trefoil comes out of apex of triangle; it has no stars

fol. 94v **CENTAURUS** walks to right, with its front forelegs crossed; his human half is nude, though he seems to have a cap on his head; there is a band at human waist and at his horse-waist; he holds **BESTIA/LUPUS** (a long-tailed dog) by its heels in his outstretched right hand, which also has a bucket/bag hanging over the forearm; in the hand of his outstretched following arm (the left one?) he holds a long sword behind his head and a dead rabbit by its; there is also has something like flames coming out of left hand, which is probably a misunderstood cloak-remnant; **BESTIA/LUPUS** is held over the flame of **ARA**² that is similar to the presentation of **ARA** on the previous page, but has flames coming out of the top; **CENTAURUS** has 3 stars in its head, 1 on each shoulder, 3 on his side, 1 in his left elbow, 1 in each hand (the one in the left hand is very faint), 3 on his equine back, 1 on each foreleg, 1 on each front hoof, 2 on each hind leg and 3 in the tail or 25 stars in all; **BESTIA/LUPUS** has 9 stars and **ARA** has 4 stars

fol. 95r **HYDRA** is a bearded snake that slides to the left, with its head raised; it has a pointed beak and two odd protrusions from its body and its tail dips down at the end; there are 3 stars

CRATER is a bucket placed on the middle of **HYDRA** and it has 3 stars

CORVUS stands near **HYDRA**'s tail and is facing forward, pecking at the Snake's tail; it has 4 stars

CANIS MINOR (anticanis) runs to right with his forelegs raised; its tongue is sticking out and it has small ears a long slim tail and a thin collar around its neck; there are 3 stars in the torso

notes

The text begins with a fragment of Anonymous II (see Maass 1898, pp. 179-80) on the top of fol. 82v, but the rest of the texts for the constellations are from ps-Bede (McGurk says *Compilation 810* tradition)

This manuscript is part of the **De signis caeli II** family, which includes Klosterneuberg 685, Paris BN

5239, Paris BN 5543 and Zwettl 296.

It is the parent manuscript of Zwettl 296 which is, in turn, the parent of Klosterneuberg 685. All three share a number of textual insertions that are not part of the *De signis caeli* catalogue. As a result, these three manuscripts also have the unusual addition of the depiction of the Pleiades, which has been taken from the *Revised Aratus latinus* pictorial tradition.

A number of the iconographic idiosyncrasies in the **De signis caeli II** group can also be found accompanying certain versions of the Germanicus text, such as Aberystwyth 735 C, and the Hyginus text in Leiden oct. 15.

bibliography

VATTASO and CAVALIERI 1902- (repr. 1988), I, p. 493 ff.

SAXL I 1915, pp. 70-71.

McGURK IV 1967, p. xvii.

HAFFNER 1997, p. 175: says 12th century.

McGURK 1981, p. 198, n. 19.