

Vatican

CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

Biblioteca Apostolica

Vat lat 645

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

around Reims
830-60

text

- ff. 56r-65v *De ordine ac positione stellarum in signis* (in the Aachen Compilation of 809-812 / *Libri computi*, a.k.a. the 'Compilation of 810 in 7 books')
- fol. 56r Helice arcturus maior habet stellas in capite vii, in singulis humeris singulas, in armo i, in pectore i, in pede prioris claras duas, in summa cauda claram unam ... (cf. Maass 1898, p. 312)
- fol. 65v Anticanis habet stellas . iii.
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As part of the compilations, note there is:

- fol. 3r Ausonius, *Eclogarum liber: X, Monosticha de mensibus* (*Anthol. Lat.* 639)
- ff. 5r-11v Calendar
-

illustrations

- ff: 56r- 65v 42 drawings in pen and wash of the constellations without stars marked; the text runs more or less continuously around the pictures; has series of Roman numerals set into text near DRACO (fol. 56v) and CORONA BOREALIS (fol. 57r)
- fol. 66r schema of the winds encircling Adam on a central earth
- fol. 66v schema of the directions and harmonies of the spheres (see also Munich, clm 210, fol. 123r)

fol. 67v schema of the orbs of the planets with small head for the planets and a central 'Terra' as a Ceres/Ops figure

56r

Holice arenatorum habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Ceres arenatorum habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 56r

56v

Serpens quatuor capite habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Habes stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 56v

57r

Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 57r

57v

Serpens quatuor capite habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Scorpius habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 57v

58r

Dulcis quatuor capite habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Dulcis quatuor capite habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
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 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 58r

58v

Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
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 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
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fol. 58v

59r

Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 59r

59v

Taurus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Taurus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis

fol. 59v

60r

Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
 habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis



Coronatus habet stellam in capite sui. Insignis
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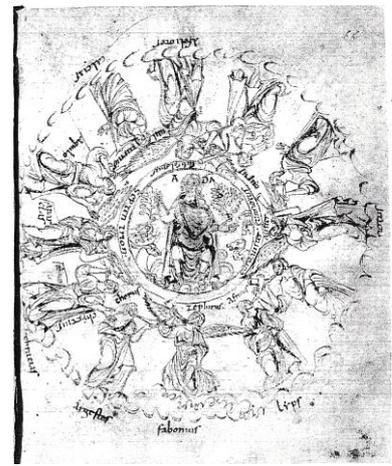
fol. 60r



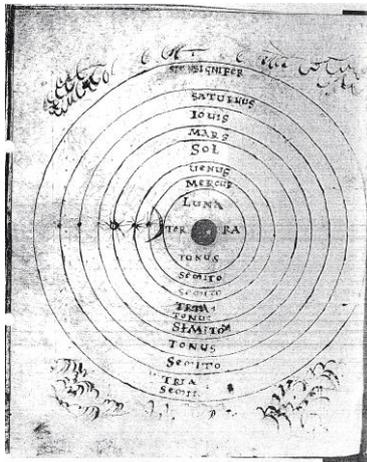
fol. 65r



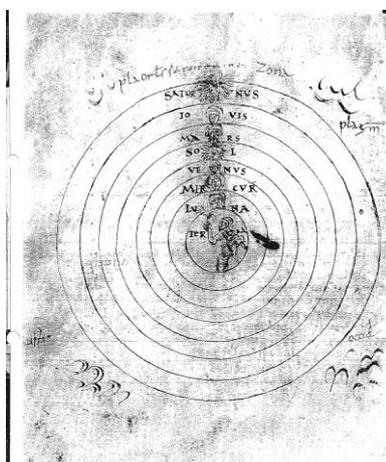
fol. 65v



fol. 66r



fol. 66v



fol. 68r

- fol. 56r **URSA MAIOR** faces to the right with a hump on her back; she is very hairy and her head is slightly lowered and she has visible claws (she is the same size as URSA MINOR)
- URSA MINOR** faces to the right with a hump on the back; it is very hairy and her head is slightly lowered and she has visible claws
- fol. 56v **DRACO** is placed vertically on the page and has four bends in its body; it faces to the right and has a comb on its head and a long beard
- Hercules** is bearded and nude and faces the viewer, kneeling slightly to the left on his left knee with his right knee leading; he has a club held upraised in his left hand and the lion's skin (with a face, 4 legs and a tail) over his left arm
- fol. 57r **CORONA BOREALIS** is a wreath set on its side so that the ribbons come out of the left side and gem at right side

OPHIUCHUS is a chubby, bearded, nude male figure seen from the rear; and he looks to the left; he has **SERPENS** wrapped twice around his middle and several times around man's left arm so that the contours are somewhat difficult to read; the Snake's small round head faces away from the man and streams of breath coming from it. It is wrapped.

- fol. 57v **SCORPIO** is almond-shaped and faces to the right with two large claws nearly meeting in front of its nose; there are two round eyes, a round mouth and dots along its spine; there are three fat legs on either side; its tail is segmented
- fol. 58r **BOOTES** stands facing the viewer, dressed in a short toga and mantle that exposes his the centre of his chest, but both shoulders are covered; he leans on his upside-down curved staff to the left (the staff supporting his right side like a crutch and is decorated with dots); his left arm is upraised and its palm open
- VIRGO** stands facing the viewer and is dressed in a long toga with long mantle; her hair is exposed; she raises her right hand to shoulder height; pointing upwards with the index finger; the left hand is resting by the her side
- fol. 58v **GEMINI** stand facing the viewer and are nude with their genitals visible; they have ankle-length cloaks held by a circular pin on their right shoulders; the left Twin holds a lyre in his left hand to which he points with his right hand the right Twin has a spear held vertically in his right hand and his left hand is covered by his cloak; each looks away from the other
- CANCER** has a segmented oval body facing to the right; it has two large, flipper-like claws in front of the face and four legs on either side; its eyes and smiling mouth are marked and there are dots down its spine; in front of **CANCER** (to the right), are the Asses (**ASELLI**) standing facing each other across a square manger
- fol. 59r **LEO** rushes to the left with his head lowered; he has a heavy mane, his mouth is open and his tufted tail is held out horizontally
- AURIGA** is standing in a *biga* with the slats of the standing surface clearly delineated and the two wheels visible; he drives to the right; the two horses prance forward and have their mouths open; the man holds a stick flail with one thong in his upraised right hand above his head; he holds the reins with his left hand; he is dressed in a short tunic, with a bare head and the tunic has a 'X' of cloth that criss-crosses his chest; there is only one goat behind cart, facing it
- fol. 59v **TAURUS** is depicted as a full bull lying down to the left with its right knee tucked under the front of his body and the left leg extended in front; its tail is curled over his back
- CEPHEUS** stands facing the viewer, dressed in a very short tunic that seems to be hiked up on his thighs; he wears a turban of sorts on his head, which seems to have a decoration on the front; his arms outstretched to the sides and slightly bent at the elbows; he wears with empty scabbard at his left side that is hung from a string slung over his right shoulder; he has elaborate sandals on his feet
- fol. 60r **CASSIOPEIA** is seated facing the viewer on square boxy throne with two uprights at the back with her arms outstretched at shoulder height and the palms are opened towards

the viewer; she wears a long gown and her head appears to be uncovered or she is wearing a close-fitting cap over her hair

ANDROMEDA faces the viewer and is dressed in long tunic with a belt; the upper part of the robe is loose and she has tight sleeves underneath; she wears a turban of sorts on her head (it comes together in a kind of point which may be a remembering of the diadem-shape she often wears) her arms are raised to shoulder height and her hands tied with rope to metal circles tamped into the top of two piles of rocks

fol. 60v **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse facing to the left with his legs stretched in front of him; the wings come from his lower shoulder and he is cut off in a curved line just past his belly

ARIES stands to the right with curled horns and long clumped tail; he wears a studded band around his middle and his testicles are prominent

fol. 61r **TRIANGULUS** is a series of three nested triangles the bases of which are slightly longer than the sides

PISCES are swimming in opposite directions (top right and bottom left), with both backs on top, they are tied by a line at the mouth

fol. 61v **PERSEUS** faces towards the viewer and is nude except for a turban-like headdress; he rushes to the right with his left leg leading and both knees bent; he holds his *harpe* horizontally in his right hand behind his buttocks and the Medusa's head is held by its hair at waist-height in his left hand in front of him

LYRA is a U-shaped lyre with outward-curving 'horns' at either side; it has a four-stepped base and eight strings held by pegs at the top

fol. 62r **CYGNUS** stands to the left with its head held forward; its wings are closed; it is placed next to an elaborate heart design (*stemma*?)

AQUARIUS stands facing the viewer and is nude save cloak pinned at his right shoulder and which completely envelopes his left arm; his head is covered by a turban or a close-fitting cap; he leans slightly to the right and holds an upside-down handle-less urn by its base in his outstretched right hand; it pours water downwards; he turns his head to look at the urn

fol. 62v **CAPRICORN** faces to the left with his arms stretched in front of him; he has short, curved horns and a beard and a double corkscrew tail that ends in a fork

SAGITTARIUS is depicted as a satyr and faces towards the viewer turning to the right; he is bearded and wears a turban/ close fitting cap; he has very hairy legs and a long (horse's?) tail, he holds the bow in his left hand, pulling the string with his right

AQUILA stands with his wings outspread to either side, facing to the left; it stands on **SAGITTA**, the tip of which points to the left

fol. 63r **DELPHINUS** swims to the right with a curved horn on its head and a prominent eye, an acanthus tail, a large belly fin and scales

ORION stands facing the viewer, wearing a short tunic with calf-length cloak that covers his left shoulder, arm and hand which is held slightly in front of him; he is without attributes (this gesture is reminiscent of figures in which his left hand is shown resting on top of a sword in a scabbard and more or less behind the body); he points to himself with his right hand; there is a second right leg sketched to the right of the figure

fol. 63v **CANIS MAIOR** bounds to right with long, curved ears held back against its head and a long, fat tail

LEPUS bounds to right with long ears held back against its head

ARGO (NAVIS) is depicted as a full ship with a tri-pronged bow the points of which end in circles; at the curves stern, there are two steering oars and the stern post has a drape fluttering from it; there is a tented sail draped over the main mast and a pennant streaming from the top of the mast

fol. 64r **CETUS** is classical sea monster with feathery flippers and ears and pronounced lips; it swims to the left and has an elaborately curled tail (2 corkscrews and a curl) that ends in a fan; above **CETUS**, there is a peculiar (later?) interlaced design that resembles a pretzel or a braided loaf

ERIDANUS is depicted as a bearded river god with long hair, a beard and with a with bare chest; a drape covers his lower body; he is resting with his left arm on an urn from which water pours to the right and he seems to sit in the water; he rests a reed over his left shoulder

fol. 64v **PISCIS AUSTRINUS** is large fish with snub snout and an open, downwards -turned mouth that swims to the left

ARA is a square, stepped altar with flames coming from the top surface

fol. 65r **CENTAURUS** walks to right with his left foreleg bent and raised in front of him; he holds a dead hare (**LUPUS**) by its heels in his left hand in front of him and he holds a long pole with both ends having palmate finials in his right hand

HYDRA is a knobbly snake that moves to the right with two bends and sticks out its tongue

CRATER is a footed with vase placed on the first hump

CORVUS faces backwards, towards the Snake's tail, standing on his second hump

fol. 65v: **CORVUS**² stands to the left

CRATER² has handles and decorative banding

CANIS MINOR rushes to right with its mouth open; it has small pointed ears and hairy hind legs

notes

According to Borst (1995²) this manuscript is a *Libri computi* (ff. 1r-92v), which is also known as the Compilation in 7 books originally created between 809-812 in Aachen.

The pictorial cycle in this manuscript has many of the defining characteristics of the cycle *De ordine I*. This cycle is also encountered in Berlin lat 130, Madrid 3307, Monza and, to a lesser extent, in Vienna Ms 12600.

bibliography

COD. VAT. LAT. 1902, I, pp. 496-500.

SAXL 1915, I, pp. 71-7: says 9th century, lists contents and notes closeness to Vat Rag lat 309 and Munich 210.

SANFORD 1924, p. 208, n. 4.

JONES 1937, p. 434.

NEUSS 1940, pp. 37-64.

NEUSS 1941, pp. 13-40.

LAISTNER and **KING** 1943, pp. 144,151 and 155.

FINCH 1965, pp. 110-17.

KING 1969, p. 51.

MANCINELLI 1969, p. 133 and figs. 7 and 12.

BOSCHEN 1972, pp. 16-18.

McGURK 1981, p. 321.

LeBOURDELLÈS 1985, p. 100.

PELLERIN 1991, III, 1, pp. 44- 47: says that is parchment, 19th century, 103 ff (+ 51 bis) 190 x 157 mm with 56-76v somewhat larger; figure in pen sometimes highlighted with green or red; ff 1-2v table of contents that has been mutilated; French origin (acc to Bischoff from Reims); numerous hands are evident, but a certain consistency in ff .49-53v and 93-103; seems to have come from the Abby of Saint-Quentin en Vermandois (Aisne) according to the brief annals added in the margins on 28v-34 in the 10th c; on the top of fol. 5 and 58 there are the name of two correctors or readers: 'Wolpertu[m]' and

'Grimbertus' from the 10th or 11th c; was acquired by the Vatican under Sixtus IV (d. 1484) and is listed in inventory from 1475 and 1481

BORST 1995 ², p. 163, note 96.

HAFFNER 1997, p. 175: says 'De ordine ac positione.'

contacts

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