
Ms 296

ps Bede, *De signis caeli*


12th century (1200?)

text

ff. 85v-97r an abbreviated version of the ps-Bede, *De signis caeli* with additions and substitutions from the *Araus latinus*, the *Revised Aratus latinus* and a number of paragraphs taken from Isidore

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

fol. 85v Quidam tamen multa dicunt & aliter narasse celum diversis proferentes vocabulis ... sed a navigantibus observantur: Maria enim conturbat. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 179-80)

Habet enim helix arcturus maior in capite stellas obscuras .vii. In spatula, unam. Super pectus unam. In pede unam. In dorso unam. In tibia anteriore duas. Super caudam tres. Sunt omnis .xvi. (= abbreviated version of ps-Bede, cf. Maass 1898, p. 582)

fol. 97r Anticanis dicitur subtus geminos. bene parere. Habet stellas .iii. Quarum una splendidior est ceteris. & ideo anticanis vocatur eo quod contraria sit cani. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 594)

ff. 97v De stellis ergo quę vocantur planete ... eo quod tantam claritatem ostenderit. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 272-75)

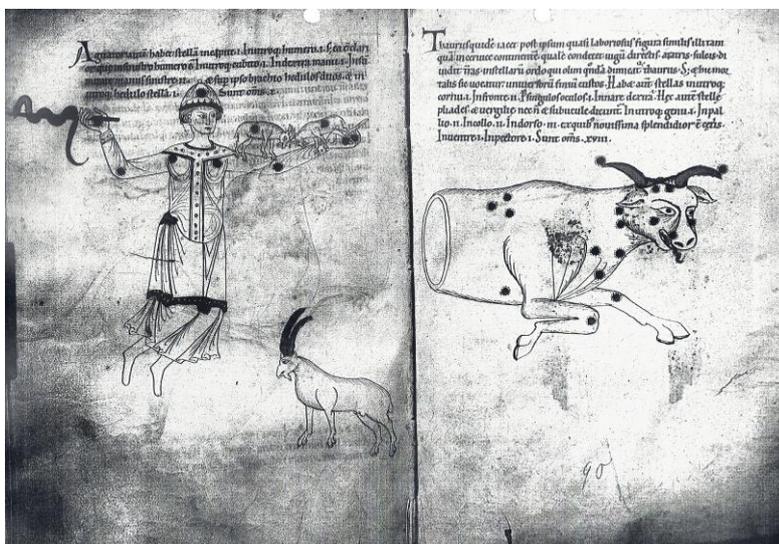
- ff. 98r-99v SIGNALEM autem circulum ita appellaverunt ... (ends imperfectly) tunc nequaquam
cēti nichil veniet (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 279-86)
- ff. 100r-101r lam cum videris parvulis cornibus esse lunam vespere lucentem ... & satis facit nos
ita esse. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 287 - 291)
- fol. 101v Sole autem ex utraque parte oreinte ... (ends imperfectly) advenientibus NUBIBUS.
(= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 291-92)
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illustrations

- ff. 85v-97r pen drawings of 40 constellations groups with stars elaborately marked as large
dots with smaller dots surrounding; the text bends around the pictures, suggesting
that it was added afterwards
- fol. 97v depiction of five planets in roundels (Mercury with wings on his head)
- fol. 99v Sol and Luna set within a zodiac schema (ARIES and TAURUS both full and touch
horns; CANCER as a crayfish; LEO with ivy-left tail; VIRGO without wings holding 3-
panned SCALES in the adjoining compartment; SCORPIO without legs; AQUARIUS
holding a tube from which water is pouring from both sides)
- fol. 100r Luna in cart drawn by four bulls, with crescent on head and holding two torches (?),
set within a circular frame labelled 'luna maris'
- fol. 101v Sol riding four horses holding and orb with a cross on it, set within a circular frame
labelled 'aurora lucis'
- fol. 102r planetary diagrams
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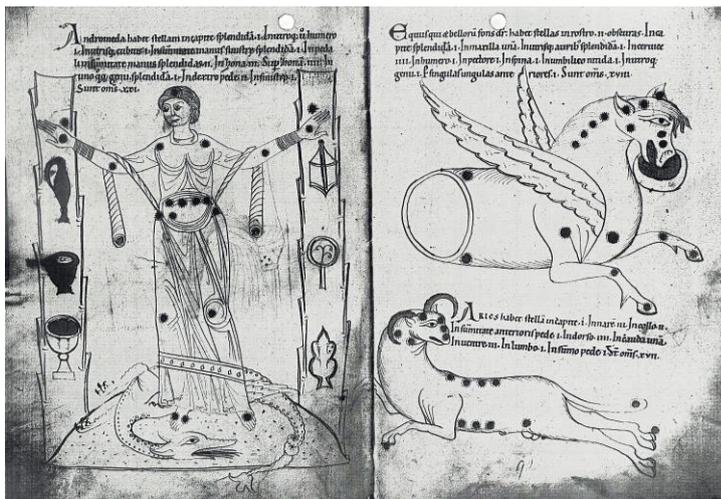
ff. 88v-89r



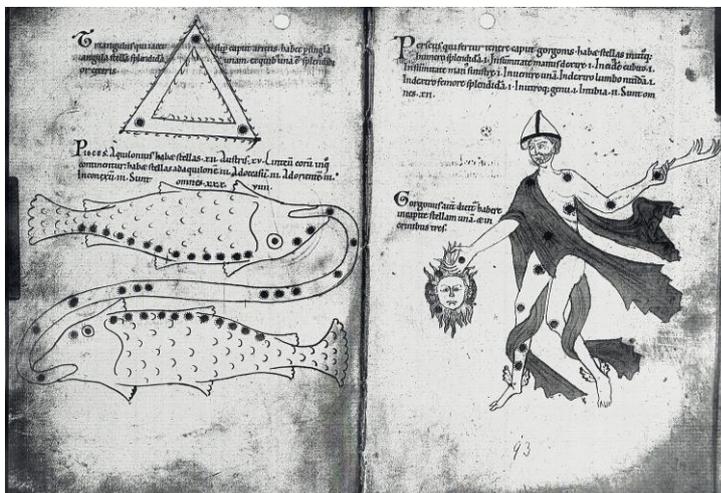
ff. 89v-90r



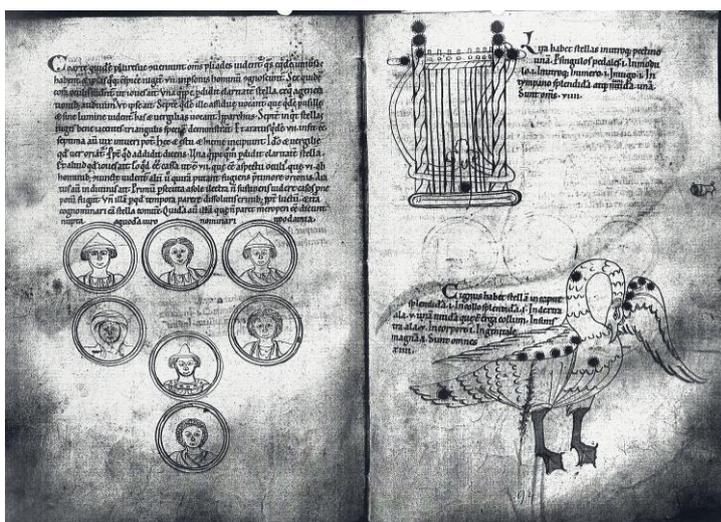
ff. 90v-91r



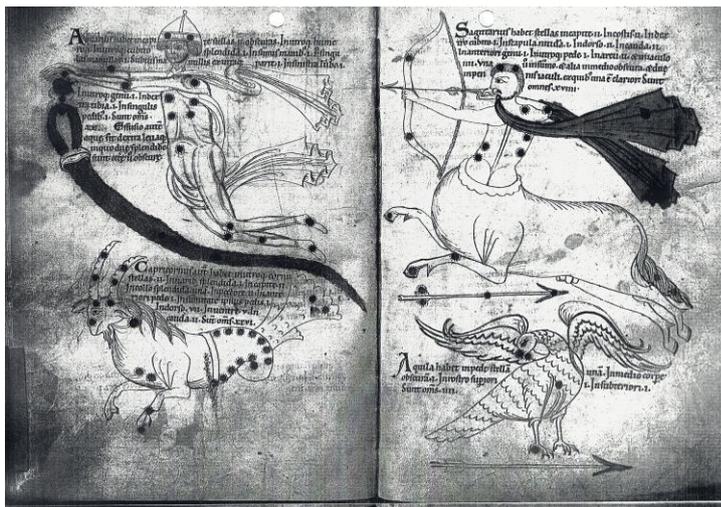
ff. 91v- 92r



ff. 92v-93r



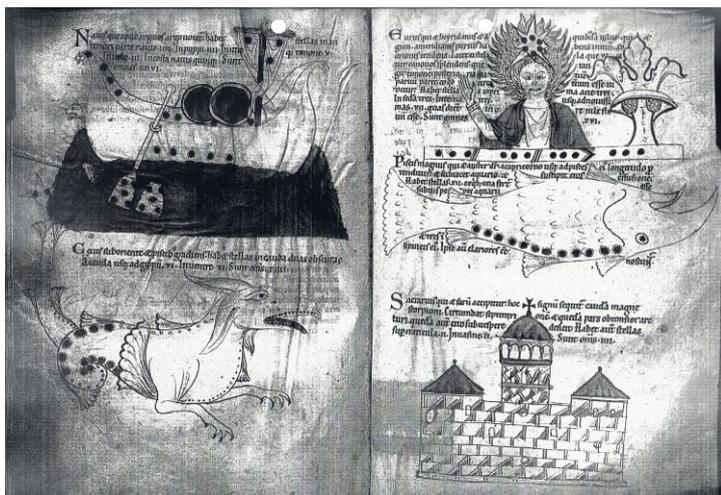
ff. 93v-94r



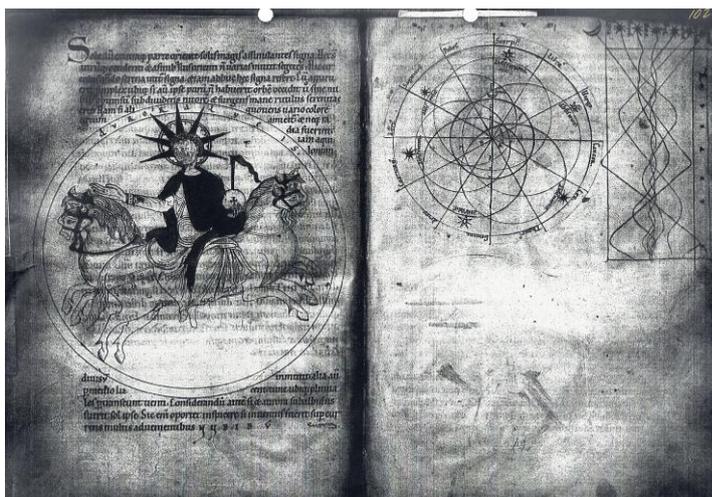
ff. 94v-95r



ff. 95v-96r



ff. 96v-96r bis



ff. 101v-102r

fol. 85v **URSA MAIOR** leaps to the left with its tongue out; it is slightly larger than the other bear and has a shorter tail; it has 7 stars in its head, 1 on the chest, 1 on the shoulder, 3 on the left front leg, 1 on the back and 3 on the rump, or 16 stars in all

URSA MINOR leaps to the left with its tongue out; it is smaller than the other bear and has a longer tail that sticks out; it has 4 stars on its shoulder and 3 in its tail, or 7 stars in all

(note: the text for **URSA MINOR** is abbreviated version of normal star catalogue)

fol. 86r **DRACO INTER ARCTOS** with **DRACO** depicted as a winged, two-legged dragon with three bends in his body; its head faces to the right and it has pointed ears and sticks out its tongue; **URSA MAIOR**² and **URSA MINOR**² are placed with their backs towards the top of the page and are facing in opposite directions (top to the right and bottom to the left), into the body of **DRACO**; judging from the stars in the uppermost Bear and the relative lengths of their tails, **URSA MINOR**² is placed within the second bend and **URSA MAIOR**² is in the third bend, standing on **DRACO**'s tail; **DRACO** has 3 stars in his head and 5 in his body and 7 in his tail, or 15 stars in all; **URSA MINOR**² has 6 stars; **URSA MAIOR**² has no stars marked

(note: the bleeding cut in **DRACO**'s tail beneath the feet of **URSA MAIOR**², which is repeated from the illustrations of the Klosterneuberg ms.)

fol. 86v **HERCULES** is nude and stands facing the viewer, slightly to the left, with his left leg leading; he has long hair and is bearded; he holds the severed head of a bearded male in his right hand in front of him and holds a straight club with a bulbous tip upraised in his left hand above his head; he is placed in the Garden of Hesperides to the right of the Snake that winds around the tree; the tree is tall and straight and the snake coils around it, with its tail beneath the hero's feet; **HERCULES** has 1 star in his head, 1 in each shoulder, 1 in his right elbow, 1 in his left hand and 1 in the club, 3 in his right thigh and 1 on his left shin, or 10 stars in all

fol. 87r **CORONA BOREALIS** is two nested circles cut into 10 segments with two pieces of rope (?) at the bottom. Each segment is marked with a star, or 10 stars in all

OPHIUCHUS is nude with long hair on his head, and he stands facing the viewer, walking to the left with his left leg leading; he holds **SERPENS** horizontally so that it passes in front of his neck, crosses back behind his shoulders and makes an 'X' in front of his chest; the Snake's head faces the man and it sticks out its tongue towards him; the Man has 1 star in his head, 1 in each shoulder, 3 in each hand, 2 on his back, 1 in each knee, 1 in his right shin and 1 in each foot; the Snake has 2 stars in its head, 4 along its body, or 18 stars in all

SCORPIO is placed beneath **OPHIUCHUS**'s feet, with his head to the left; it has a humanoid face with a moustache and it has arm-like front claws, but no legs, and a tapering tail; it has 2 stars in each claw, 3 on his neck, and 12 on his body and tail, or 19 stars in all

SCORPIO² is identical to the one above and has the same stars marked

fol. 87v **BOOTES** (Arcades) faces the viewer and is dressed in a short tunic, the hem of which forms a 'V' and a long mantle over his shoulders that forms a 'V' on his chest and falls straight downwards toward the bottom hem; he looks upwards and to the left; there is a flayed bit of skin/cloth over his right wrist (bearing an inscription?) and he holds a plant vertically in his raised left hand; he has 1 star on his head, 4 on his chest, 1 on his right elbow, 4 on his left elbow and 4 on his left hand, and 1 in each knee, or 16 stars in all

fol. 88r **VIRGO** stands facing the viewer in a highly-patterned long dress with a long cape that is draped over her left forearm and falls to her knees; she wears a large belt; she has a skull cap covering her hair and she has large, opened wings; she holds an ear of sweet-corn in her right hand and a pair of **SCALES** in her left (labelled: **LIBRA**); she has 1 star on her head, 1 in each shoulder, 1 in each elbow, 2 in each wing,

1 in each hand, 6 along her hem and 1 in each foot, or by 19 stars in all

fol. 88v **GEMINI** stand facing each other, wearing short tunics with short cloaks; they hold their spears vertically in their right hands and rest their inner hands on their hips; both are barefoot; the left Twin has 1 star in his head, 1 on his left shoulder, 1 on his right breast and 1 on each knee, or 5 stars in all; the right Twin has 1 star on his head, 4 of his shoulder, and 1 on each knee, or 7 stars in all

CANCER is set between their feet and is crayfish-shaped with its nose pointing toward the top of the page; it has two larger front claws with large pincers and has four bent legs on either side; there are 3 stars on each claw, 3 stars in the left legs and 4 on the right and two bright stars (Asselli) on its back, or 15 stars in all

fol. 89r **LEO** leaps to left with his front paws in the air; his head is twisted so that it is seen from the top and he has a finely-detailed mane; his long thin tails curls in an S-shape above his back and ends in an ivy-leaf shape; he has 3 stars on his brow, 2 large stars on his neck, 1 on his chest, 3 on his left front leg, 3 on his back and 1 on his tail or 13 stars in all

fol. 89v **AURIGA** stands facing the viewer to the right in a long, tight-fitting tunic with a looser tunic beneath it that falls to his ankles; his legs are slightly bent so that he appears to float; he wears a skull cap and has two small goats head-butting each other on his outstretched left arm; he holds a straight stick out horizontally in his right hand, with a snake-like flail wound around it; Capra appears as a long-horned Goat standing to the right, facing the man; **AURIGA** has 1 star on his head, 1 on each nipple, 1 on each elbow and 1 on his right hand and 2 on his left hand; there is one star on each small goat, making 10 stars in all

fol. 90r **TAURUS** is depicted as half a bull, facing to the right with his right knee bent under and left leg extended in front of him; the cut-off is an oval and the bull has short, outwards-curving horns and sticks out its tongue; he has 1 star in each horn, 5 stars in his face, 2 on his neck, 3 on his chest, 1 in each fore-knee, 3 on his back and 1 on his belly, or 18 stars in all

fol. 90v **CEPHEUS** stands with his arms outstretched to the sides so the elbows are slightly bent and the palms are open and pointing upwards; he wears a short tunic, the belly of which seems to spill over a belt at his waist; he has a knee-length cloak and wears a rounded cap which has tassels at the bottom; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his right hand, 3 at his waist, 7 down his right side, 2 on his left knee and 4 on his left foot, or 21 stars in all

fol. 91r **CASSIOPEIA** is seated with outstretched hands with the elbows slightly bent and the palms open and facing upwards; she sits on a cushioned throne with six niches at its base; the throne is set within a columned niche; she wears a loose gown decorated with a band at the neck and one running down the front; she has a pointed cap on her head, with short hair (as such, she resembles a male figure more than a female on in this instance); she has 1 star on her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on her chest, 1 on her lap, 3 in her left knee, 1 on her left elbow, 1 in each hand and 2 on the arched back of her throne, or 13 stars in all

fol. 91v **ANDROMEDA** stands facing the viewer with her arms outstretched at shoulder height and the opened palms facing downwards; she looks slightly to the left and is dressed in a long, tight-fitting dress with decorated bands across the legs; her long hair is exposed; her hands rest on tree stumps that are covered with toilet articles (six); she has bits of rope coming from her waist and running to her elbow, where the ends then falls vertically; there is a dragon with small wings and two small feet curled at her feet; she has 1 star in her head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on each elbow, 1 on each hand, 7 at her waist, 1 on each knee and 1 on the left foot and 2 on the right foot, and 2 on the tree stumps, or 21 stars in all

fol. 92r **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse, facing to the right with its forelegs extended in front; its wings are extended backwards and it is shown with its mouth open and eating out of bowl; it has 1 star on each ear, 4 on the head, 4 on the neck, 1 on the chest, 1 on the shoulder, 1 on each front knee and 1 on each front hoof, and 2 at the cut-off, or 18 stars in all

ARIES leaps to left with all four legs lifted from the ground; it looks backwards to the right and has outward curling horns, male genitalia and a long tail that flies out behind it; it has 4 stars on its head, 2 on the neck, 4 on the back, 3 on the belly, 1 on the left front hoof, 1 on the groin, 1 on the right hind hoof and 1 on the tail, or 17 stars in all

fol. 92v **TRIANGULUS** is two nested equilateral triangles with hook-shaped marks along the inner and outer borders; it is marked by a star in each corner, or by 3 stars

PISCES are beaked fish, swimming in opposite directions (top to the right and bottom to the left); they are placed back-to-back with their mouths joined by a stream; the top fish has 15 stars, the cord has 12 stars and the bottom fish has 12 stars, or 39 stars in all

- fol. 93r **PERSEUS** faces the viewer and walks to the left with his trailing left leg slightly raised; he is nude save a very long and elaborate mantle that hangs from his right shoulder and crosses his body so that it flows behind him, also parts of his scarf wraps around both of his bare legs; he has a conical hat on his head and wings on his heels; he holds the Medusa's head by its hair in his right hand in front of his body and he holds an odd, hand-shaped *harpe* that looks more like a palm frond in his left hand, outstretched behind him; he has 1 star in each shoulder, 1 on his chest, 1 on his left elbow and 1 in his left hand, 1 in his right hand, 1 on his belly, 1 on his right thigh, 1 on each knee, 2 on his right shin and 4 in the Medusa's head, or 16 stars in all
- fol. 93v The **PLEIADES** are depicted as seven busts set within in circular frames, each with a different headdress
- fol. 94r **LYRA** is depicted as a square frame with two spirally-decorated uprights and curved supports on each side; there are around 10 strings running between the bottom frame and the upper crossbar; there are 9 stars
- CYGNUS** stands with both feet on the ground to the right and is biting its chest with a pointed beak; its left wing is slightly raised and its other one is held back by its body; it has 1 star on its head, 1 on the neck, 1 on the chest, 5 in the left wing, 5 in the right wing and 1 on the tail, or 14 stars in all
- fol. 94v **AQUARIUS** is depicted as a youthful male (Ganymede) and is nude, kneeling to left, with a scarf wrapped around his upper body, right thigh and through his legs; he wears a conical hat and rests both his palms on an upturned urn that pours water into a stream that flows beneath his legs; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on his shoulder and 4 on his chest, 1 on each elbow, 1 on his belly, 1 on each knee, 1 on his right shin, 1 on each foot, 1 on his left hand and 2 in the urn and 2 in the stream, or 20 stars in all
- CAPRICORN** faces to the right with his front legs extended forward; he has lumpy, slightly curved horns and a beard; he has a band at his waist his tail has a single curl in it; the end section of the tail is scaled and ends in a lobed fan-shape; he has 2 stars on each horn, 2 on the head, 1 on the nose, 1 on the mane, 2 on the chest, 2 on the left leg, 5 on his belly, 7 on the top of his tail and 2 on the end of the tail, or 26 stars in all
- fol. 95r **SAGITTARIUS** is a centaur that rears to left with both forelegs off the ground; he has a long scarf flowing out behind him; he holds the bow in his outstretched left

arm and pulls the string with his right (which is hidden behind his head); he has a scalloped band at his human waist (above which his buttocks appear to be visible, indicating that he is seen from the back) and short hair on his human head; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on his shoulder, 1 on his right elbow, 4 on his chest, 1 on his left front leg, 1 on each front hoof, 2 on his tail and 2 in the bow, or 15 stars in all

SAGITTA is placed below his forefeet, with its tip pointing to the right and is marked by 4 stars

AQUILA stands facing to the right, with its head turned backwards and biting his upraised right wing; it has 1 star in his beak, 1 on his wing, 1 on his chest and 1 on his feet, or 4 stars in all

SAGITTA² is placed under **AQUILA**'s feet, with its tip towards the right; it has no stars

fol. 95v **DELPHINUS** faces to the left and is depicted as a classical dolphin with a bottle-nose and the horn and the gills forming a single piece; it has 1 star on the mouth, 2 on the head, 3 below the chin, 1 on the back and 2 on the tail, or 9 stars in all

ORION faces the viewer and stands to the left with his knees slightly bent; he wears a knee-length tunic with cloak over his outstretched right arm that is held horizontally out in front of him; the fingers of the hand point forward; he holds a long sword horizontally behind him in his left hand and has an empty scabbard at waist; he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 1 on his chest, 3 on his right elbow, 1 on his left elbow, 1 on his left hand, 3 at his waist, 1 in each knee and 1 on each foot, or 17 stars in all

fol. 96r **CANIS MAIOR** runs to the left with halo with rays around its head and its tongue sticking out; its nose is wrinkled as if snarling and the tail is long and thin; it has a 'furry' belly and 1 star in the mouth, 2 on the chest, 2 on the shoulder, 1 on each front foot, 3 on the back, 2 on the belly, 3 on the haunch, 1 on the left hind foot and 4 on the tail, or 20 stars in all

LEPUS leaps to the left with its forelegs raised; it has long ears that point upwards; it has 1 star in each ear, 2 on the chest, 1 on the back and 1 on each hind foot, or 7 stars in all

fol. 96v **ARGO (Navis)** is depicted as a full ship set in the water; there are small animal heads on both stern and bow and also a small dog's head on the top of the mast; on

deck, there are two shields and there is a rowing (?) oar on each side of the hull; there is a mast at the right side from which a sail hangs; it has 3 stars on the mast, 8 on the deck, 5 on the keel and 5 on each oar, or 26 stars in all

CETUS faces to the right with pointy beak and sharp teeth and its tongue sticking out; there are long claws on its forearms and its wings placed at mid-body; the tail has a single curl and ends in a trefoil; it has 6 stars on its belly and 6 along its back, with 2 at the end of the tail, or 14 stars in all

fol. 96r bis: **ERIDANUS** (Eurus/ heyridanus) is depicted as a bust set above a long rectangle marked with diagonal and chevron-shaped stripes; he has wild hair and raises his right hand in salutation; he is dressed in a tunic and mantle and has a star-shaped object on his head; he has a plant set within an urn (?) at the right side of the rectangle; there are 12 stars in his 'stream' and 6 smaller stars set within the large one on his head

PISCIS AUSTRINUS is a beaky, upside-down fish with 12 stars marked

ARA is a multi-story, rusticated castle with three towers, numerous windows and 4 stars marked.

fol. 96v bis **CENTAURUS** is a bearded centaur, leaping to right with his forefeet raised and crossed at the ankles; he holds a dog (**BESTIA/LUPUS**) by its heels in his left hand, which is outstretched in front of him; a bucket rests over the left elbow; he also holds a long sword, a dead rabbit by its heels and some sort of flayed skin in his right hand; his tail is flipped upwards; he has the same 'buttocks' marking as **SAGITTARIUS**, but in this case, he is certainly facing the viewer (from the indication of his hands) and the line of his backbone); he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 3 on the chest, 1 on the right elbow, 1 at the join, 1 in each front leg, 1 in each front hoof, 2 on the horse's back, 2 on each hind leg and 3 on the tail, or with 23 stars in all.

ARA² stands in front of the Centaur near his front feet; it is drawn as a two-storied triangular (conical ?) structure with flames coming from the top; **CENTAURUS** suspends **BESTIA** over its flames; that Altar is marked by 4 stars

fol. 97r **HYDRA** is a snake with a dog's face and a scalloped belly, moving to the left with 3 stars on it

CRATER is placed in the middle of **HYDRA**'s body and looks like a bucket; it has 3

stars

CORVUS pecks at the end of the Snake's tail and faces forward; it has 4 stars.

CANIS MINOR (anticanis) runs to the right, with its ears back, its mouth open and its tongue sticking out; it wears a studded collar and has a long thin tail; it has 3 stars marked on its body

notes

This manuscript is part of the **De signis caeli II** family, which includes Klosterneuberg 685, Paris BN 5239, Paris BN 5543 and Vat lat 643.

It has been copied from Vat lat 643 and is the parent of Klosterneuberg 685. All three manuscripts share 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.

bibliography

BYVANCK 1949, pp. 228-29.

McGURK 1981 p. 215, n. 24.

HAFFNER 1997, p. 176: says 1200.