

## Klosterneuberg

## Stiftskirche

## Ms 685

ps Bede, *De signis caeli*

German (Klosterneuberg - now Austria)

12th century

This manuscript is part of the ps-Bede, *De signis caeli* II family, which includes Paris BN 5239, Paris BN 5543, Vat lat 643 and Zwettl 296.

It is a direct copy from Zwettl 296 though the artist has made a number of small changes to some of the individual representations of the constellations (such as removing the rocks from ANDROMEDA and deleting the second SCORPIO after OPHIUCHUS). This developments have led BLUME HAFFNER METZGER 2012 to suggest it is not a direct copy, but relies on a shared parent (a sister manuscript of Vat lat 643).

As noted, the Klosterneuberg manuscript also shares with Zwettl and its parent, Vat lat 643, 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.

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text

ff. 71r-83v 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, Vat lat 643 and Zwettl manuscripts, see the Commentary)

fol. 71r Quidam tamen multa dicunt et aliter narasse caelum 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 stellis 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, 582).

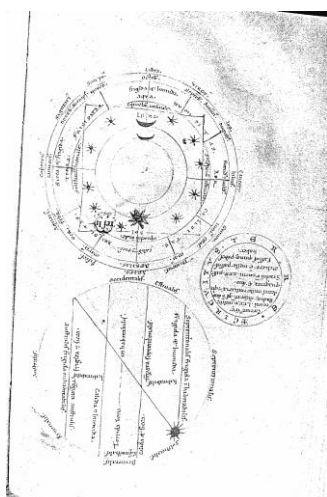
fol. 83v Anticanis dicitur subtus geminos parere bene. Habet stellis iii quarum una splendidior est ceteris et ideo anticanis vocatur eo quod contraria sit cani. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 594)

ff. 84r De stellis ergo quae vocantur planetae ... eo quod tantam claritatem astenderit. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 272-75)

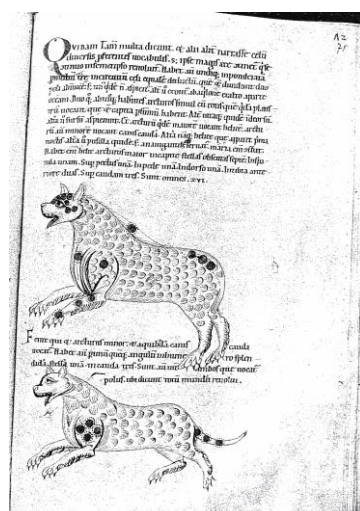
ff. 85v-86r Signalem autem circulum ita appellaverunt ... (ends imperfectly) tunc nequaquam caeti nihil veniet ... (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass 1898, pp. 279-86)

ff. 86v-88v Iam cum videris parvulis cornibus esse lunam vespere lucentem ... et satis facit nos ita esse. (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass, pp. 287 - 291)

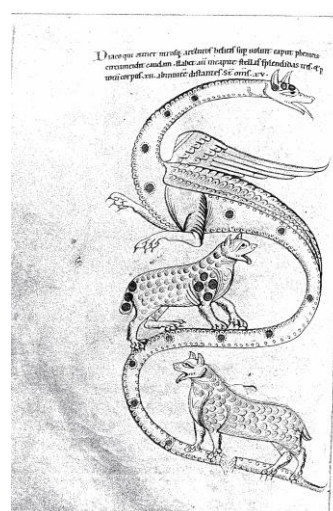
fol. 89r Sole autem ex utraque parte oriente ... (ends imperfectly) advenientibus nubibus... (= *Aratus latinus*, cf. Maass, pp. 291-92)



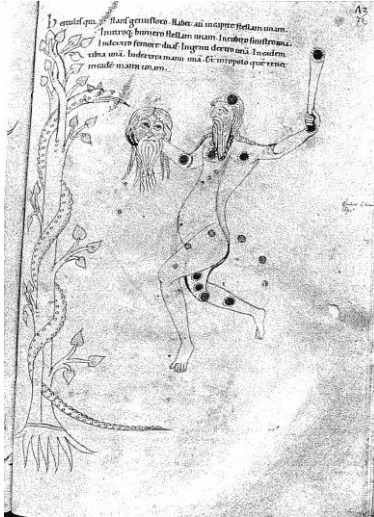
fol. 70v



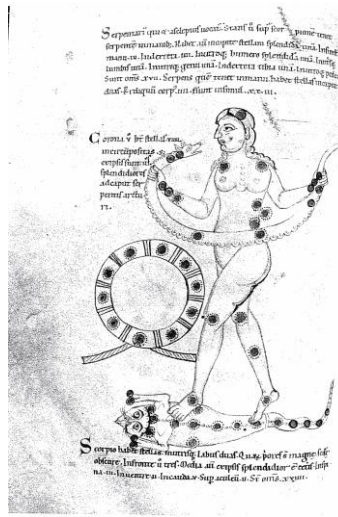
fol. 71r



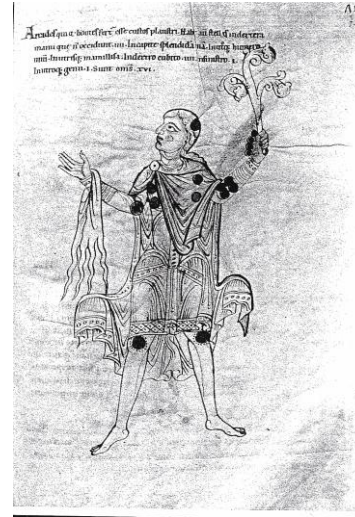
fol. 71v



fol. 72r



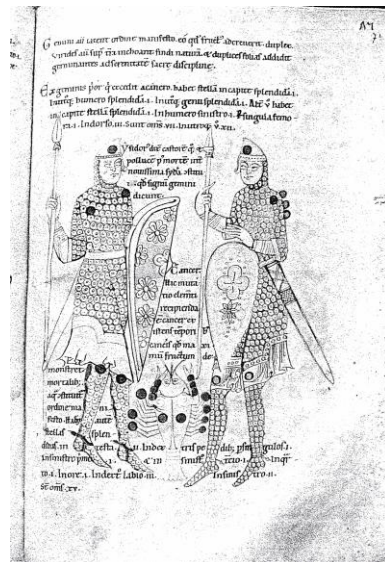
fol. 72v



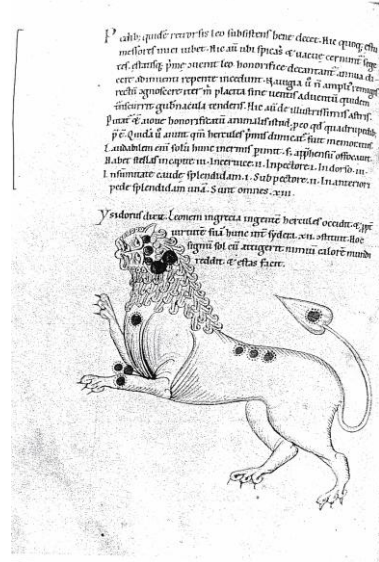
fol. 73r



fol. 73v



fol. 74r



fol. 74v

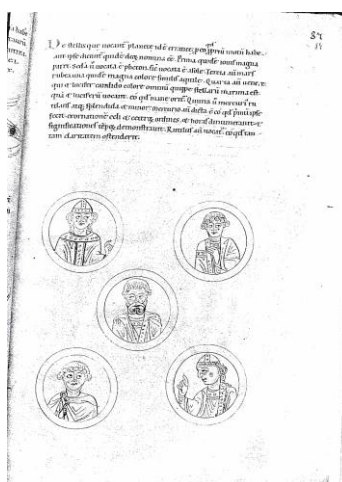












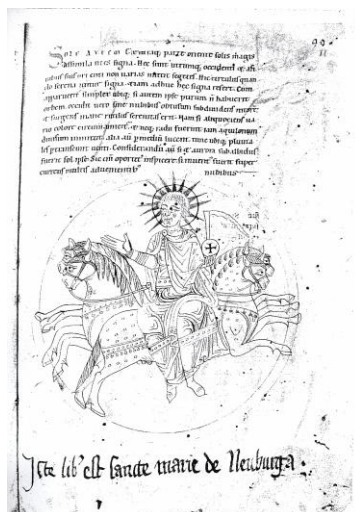
fol. 84r



fol. 86r



fol. 86v



fol. 89r

**illustrations**

fol. 70v diagram of the zones and months and zodiacal segments

ff. 71r-83v Pen drawings of 40 constellation groupings with stars elaborately marked as large dots with smaller dots surrounding; the text wraps around pictures, suggesting that it was added afterwards

fol. 71r URSA MAIOR leaps to the left with her front legs both raised; it is slightly larger than

the other bear and is covered with tufts of fur that look almost like scales; its mouth is open and it sticks out its tongue; and has a short 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 his front legs both raised; it is slightly smaller than the other bear and is covered with tufts of fur that look almost like scales; its mouth is open and it sticks out its tongue; and has a long thin tail; it has 4 stars on its shoulder and 3 in its tail, or 7 stars in all

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

fol. 71v **DRACO INTER ARCTOS** with **DRACO** depicted as a winged, two-legged dragon with a very long tail that has two bends in it; it faced to the right and has pointed ears and his tongue sticking out; it has 3 stars in his head and 5 in his body and at last 7 in his tail, or 15 stars in all

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

**URSA MAIOR**<sup>2</sup> and **URSA MINOR**<sup>2</sup> are placed with their backs towards the top of the page and are facing in opposite directions, into the body of **DRACO**. Judging from the stars in one of the Bears and the relative lengths of their tails, **URSA MINOR** is placed within the second bend and **URSA MAIOR** is in the third bend, standing on the tail. **URSA MINOR**<sup>2</sup> has 6 stars

fol. 72r **HERCULES** is presented in the Garden of Hesperides to the right of the Snake, which is wrapped around the tree; **HERCULES** is nude and stands slightly to the left facing towards the viewer; he has long curling hair and is bearded; he holds the severed head of a bearded male in his right hand in front of him (so that it rests upright in his hand) and holds a straight club with a bulbous tip upraised in his left hand above his head. The tree is tall and straight and the snake coils around it, with its tail running in a split at the lower trunk of the tree and then ending beneath the hero's feet; the Snake has dots along its body and a dog's face, with pointed ears and its tongue sticking out; **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. 72v **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; he walks to the left with his left leg



leading and is facing towards the viewer; he holds **SERPENS** horizontally so that it passes in front of his chest in a smooth curve; the Snake's dog-like head faces the man; **OPHIUCHUS** has 1 star in his head, 1 in each shoulder, 3 in each hand, 3 on his back, 1 in each knee, 1 in his right shin and 1 in each foot; **SERPENS** has 2 stars in its head, 4 along its body.; so both parts have 23 stars in all

**SCORPIO** is placed beneath **OPHIUCHUS**'s feet; it has human eyes and a moustache, which has arm-like front claws, that end in two fingers; there are no legs; it has a band where its tail meets the body and the tail itself is long and tapering; it has 2 stars in each claw, 3 on his neck, and 12 on his body and tail, or 19 stars in all (note: unlike Zwettl, there is no second depiction of Scorpio in this manuscript).

fol. 73r **BOOTES** (Arcides) faces the viewer and is dressed in highly-decorated short tunic with a calf-length mantle over his shoulders that forms a V on his chest and flutters outwards along its hem; he holds both arms outstretched and slightly bent at the elbows; he looks upwards and to the left; there is a flayed bit of skin/cloth over his right wrist and he holds a plant in his upraised 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. 73v **VIRGO** stands facing the viewer, wearing a highly-decorated long dress with a long cape that runs to her knees and flutters outwards at the hem at her right hip; there is a decorated skull cap covering her hair and she has highly-decorated wings; she raises both arms so they are slightly bent at the elbows and holds an ear of sweet-corn (diaper-patterned with dots in each 'kernel') in her right hand and a pair of Scales in her left; she looks upwards and to the left; she has a circlet 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 18 stars in all.

fol. 74r **GEMINI** stand facing each other and are wearing a full suit of chain mail with pointed helmets; they hold their spears in their right hands and have shields in front of their bodies; both are wearing stirrups; the right Twin has a sword on his left hip and points to his face with his right hand; 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 on his shoulder, and 1 on each knee, or 7 stars in all.

**CANCER** is set between the feet of the **GEMINI**; it is crayfish-shaped with its nose pointing toward the top of the page and with 2 large claws in front and 4 legs on each side; it has 3 stars on each claw, 3 stars in the left legs and 4 on the right and 2 stars (Asselli) on its back, or 15 stars in all

- fol. 74v **LEO** leaps to left with paws in the air and an ivy-leaf shape at the end of his tail; he turns his head so that it is full-face and his mane is highly curled; 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. 75r **AURIGA** stands raised on his tip-toes to the right; he wears a banded knee-length tunic, with highly-patterned leggings and is wearing a skull cap; he has two small goats head-butting each other on his outstretched left arm and he holds a snake-like flail attached to a stick behind him in his right hand; Capra appears as a long-horned and bearded Goat standing to the right, facing the man; the Charioteer has 1 star on his head, 1 on each nipple, 1 on each elbow and 1 on each hand and there there is one star on each small goat, making 9 stars in all
- fol. 75v **TAURUS** is depicted as half a bull, facing to the right with his right knee bent and his left leg extended in front. Of him; he has short curve horns and cloven feet; he has a series of concentric ovals marking his cut-off; there is 1 star in each horn, 2 stars on his brow, 2 beneath his eyes and 1 open circlet beneath his right eye; 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. 76r **CEPHEUS** stands facing the viewer with his arms outstretched and bent at the elbows with his open palms facing the viewer; he wears a highly-decorated, short tunic with bands at the neck, running down the front and at the hips; he has a knee-length cloak that flutters out by his right knee; his stockings are highly-patterned and he has tight ankle boots; he wears a rounded skull-cap which has L-shaped 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 thigh and 4 on his left foot, or 21 stars in all
- fol. 76v **CASSIOPEIA** is seated facing frontally with outstretched arms that are bent at the elbows; she sits on a backless, cushioned throne with numerous niches, and both she and her chair are set within a columned niche; she wears a highly-decorated gown with banding at the neck, running down the front at her knees and along the lower hem of her dress; she has a pointed cap on her head, with long hair flowing down her shoulders; 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 in each hand and two on the arched back of her throne, or 13 stars in all
- fol. 77r **ANDROMEDA** stands facing the viewer and looking slightly to the left; she is dressed in a long, tight-fitting dress with decorated bands running diagonally across the legs; her

long hair is exposed and curls down her shoulders; her arms are outstretched and bent at the elbows; her hands are held palms downward; there is a dragon with small wings and two small front legs curled at her feet (its head touching its tail); 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, or 19 stars in all (note: the illuminator has deleted the rocks and toilet articles found in the Zwettl manuscript)

fol. 77v **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse, facing to the right; its front legs are extended and its wings are opened backwards; he is cut off at the waist with a circle and he is depicted eating from a decorated bowl that hovers beneath his open mouth; he 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 4 legs lifted from the ground and his right front hoof pointing upwards; it looks backwards to the right and has curly horns, male genitalia and a long tail; 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. 78r **TRIANGULUS** is 2 nested equilateral triangles, marked by 3 stars - one in each corner

**PISCES** are beaked fish, swimming in opposite directions (top to the right and bottom to the left), placed back-to-back with their mouths joined by a fat cord; they each have very large eyes and multiple fins and clearly visible scales; the top fish has 15 stars, the cord has 12 stars and the bottom fish has 12 stars, or 39 stars in all

fol. 78v: **PERSEUS** faces the viewer and walks to the left; he is bearded with shoulder-length hair and 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 also has a conical hat on his head and wings on his heels; he holds the Medusa's head in his right hand in front of his body; there are 4 snakes coming from her chin; he also holds an oddly formed *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, 1 on his right thigh, 1 on his right foot and 4 in the Medusa's head, or 16 stars in all



fol. 79r The **PLEIADES** are depicted as seven bust-portraits set within in circular frames, each with a different headdress

fol. 79v **LYRA** has a square frame with two decorated uprights and curved, ribbed supports on each side; there are around 18 strings running between dots on the upper and lower crossbars and a *fleur-de-lys* near the bottom; there are 6 stars on the top of each upright; 2 at the tops of the curved ribs and one at the bottom of the instrument, or 9 stars in all

**CYGNUS** stands facing in profile to the right with both feet on the ground; it bites its chest with a pointed beak; its left wing is slightly raises in front of its chest and its other one is held back and close to 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. 80r **AQUARIUS** is depicted as a youthful nude male, he faces to towards the viewer and kneels slightly to the left; he wears a conical hat on his head and has a long scarf that wraps around his upper body, his right thigh and t between his legs, ending behind his buttocks; he rests both his palms on an upturned urn that pours water into a banded stream that flows beneath his legs; he has 2 stars on his head, 1 on his shoulder and 2 on his chest, 2 at his waist, 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 straight lumpy horns, a long and luxurious mane and straight beard; he has a band at his waist and a scaly and curled fishtail that has one corkscrew in it; his front legs are extended in front of him; 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. 80v **SAGITTARIUS** is a centaur that rears up on its hind legs to left with long scarf flowing from his shoulders and out behind him; he holds the bow in his left arm and pulls the string with his right arm, which is partially hidden behind his body; he has a scalloped band at his human waist, short hair and is not bearded; his horse's part is covered with dots; 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 hoof, 2 on his tail, or 15 stars in all

**SAGITTA** is placed below the front legs and equine torso of **SAGITTARIUS**; its tip points to the right and marked by 1 circlet at its tip and 3 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

**SAGITTA**<sup>2</sup> appears under the feet of **AQUILA** with its tip towards the right; there are no stars marked

fol. 81r **DELPHINUS** is a decorated version of a classical dolphin; it faces to the left and has a bottle-nose and small curled horn on its head and another curl around his gills; 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 towards the viewer and stand to left; he wears a knee-length tunic that is gathered at the waist and a cloak that is clasped on his left shoulder and falls over his extended right arm, which he holds horizontally out in front of him; he points to the left (in front of him) with his right hand; he holds a long sword above his head in his left hand and has an empty scabbard at waist; he has 3 stars in his head, 1 on each shoulder, 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. 81v **CANIS MAIOR** leaps to the left with halo with rays around its head and its tongue sticking out.; it has a set of 6 dugs on its belly (perhaps adapted from the 'furry' belly in the Zwettl manuscript); it has a long slim tail and long pointed ears that are held flat against its head; it has 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 front feet raised; it has long curved ears and a long tail; 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. 82r **ARGO (Navis)** is depicted as a full tureen-shaped boat set in the water; there are two oars attached by locks to the edge of the hull, two shields inside the boat and a sail hanging from and twisted around the main mast; there is also a small dog's head on the top of the mast; 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 a bird's head featuring a pointy beak, sharp teeth and a protruding tongue; it has claws on its forearms and wings placed at mid-body, behind

the 'elbows; there seems to be one floppy ear and one that erupts from his head, like a horn; it has a single corkscrew tail with fins along its length and the tip ends in a trefoil tail; 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. 82v **Eridanus** (Eurus/ heyridanus) is depicted as a bust portrait of a wild-haired male figure dressed in a toga and set above two parallel lines marked with diagonal stripes; he raises his right hand and presents an open palm and has a star-shaped object on his head that is decorated with 6 circlets (stars?); there are 15 stars in his 'stream'

**PISCIS AUSTRINUS** (magnus) is a beaky upside-down fish with 12 stars marked along his spine

**ARA** is a highly-detailed multi-story castle with three towers, numerous windows and 4 stars marked

fol. 83r **CENTAURUS** is a bearded centaur, rearing to right with his forefeet raised; he holds a dog) by its heels in his outstretched left hand in front of him and a bucket rests over that elbow; He also holds a dead rabbit by heels in his right hand as well as a long straight sword the point of which is upwards; the meeting between his human and equine halves is marked by a scalloped band and his tail is flipped upwards; 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 fore-knee, 1 in each front hoof, 2 on the horse's back, 2 on each hind leg and 3 on the tail, and 11 in the dog (Bestia) or 33 stars in all

**ARA<sup>2</sup>** is depicted as as a two-storied triangular (conical ?) structure with numerous small arched windows and with flames coming from the top set beneath the raised front hooves of **CENTAURUS**; it is marked by 4 stars.

fol. 83v **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 and has 3 stars

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

**CANIS MINOR** (anticanis) runs to the right with his forefeet raised; he has a slightly snubbed nose and long flat ears held towards its head; he wears a studded collar and



sticks out his tongue, with 3 stars marked on its body.

- fol. 84r Depictions of 5 planet in roundels (Mercury has lost the wings from his head)
- fol. 86r Sol and Luna within zodiac roundel:  
**ARIES** full and rearing on his hind legs, facing to the left, but the head is turned back to the right  
**TAURUS** full and rearing on its hind legs; legs to the right and turns its head to face Aries  
**GEMINI** as one person in a toga and another in medieval tunic holding their inner hands and pointing to each other with the outer hands  
**CANCER** as a crayfish  
**LEO** faces to the right and raises his right front paw; with ivy-leaf tail  
**VIRGO** without wings and holding a *fleur-de-lys* in her upraised right hand  
**VIRGO** holds the **SCALES** with her left hand in the adjoining compartment  
**SCORPIO** as a tadpole with huge lips and forearms, but without legs  
**SAGITTARIUS** as a centaur rearing on his hind legs and facing the right  
**CAPRICORN** faces to the left and a single corkscrew and a tail tip that rises  
**AQUARIUS** is nude, walks to the right and holds a tube from which water is pouring from both sides  
**PISCES** both faced upwards, swimming in opposite directions and connected by a line at their mouths
- fol. 86v Luna in cart drawn by two bulls with crescent on head and holding two torches, set within a circular frame labelled 'luna maris'
- fol. 88r Sol with orb and scythe (?) sitting on 4 horses holding an orb with a cross

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**notes**

This manuscript is part of the **ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*** II family, which includes Paris BN 5239, Paris BN 5543, Vat lat 643 and Zwettl 296.

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BLUME HAFFNER METZGER 2012, pp. 140-42 and 262-65.

pp. 140-42: one of three Austrian manuscripts to show the exemplary and on-going manner of scientific enquiry in the 12th century monasteries; astronomically the illustrations are 'reasonably accurate'; says based on a Carolingian compendium of Bede's computistical writings written in the 9th century in Auxerre; with 12th century German glosses (Milking 412); copied three time in the 12th century (mediated by French influences and with certain similarities to the 10th-century Fleury-based cycles) and adds enhanced *De signis caeli*; the large format recalls the manuscripts of St Benoit-sur-Loire; the Sol/Luna combination comes from *Revised Aratus latinus* tradition; the stars are included an differentiated according to magnitude; intended to relate to the night sky (even if evidence is taken only from the text and not from observation)

this catalogue reached Austria in the 12th century; but no more recent material has been added to the text; **Vatican 643** is the 'weakest' artistically and differs in a number of details; **Klosterneuberg** and **Zwettl** are not directly dependent on each other (despite similarities); Klosterneuberg perhaps by Salzburg artist with monumentality to the figures and dress of figures is detailed and updated

pp. 262-64: Klosterneuberg, second half 12th century; constellation images are included in a redaction of the star-catalogue of *De signis caeli*; 310 x 212; early Gothic miniscule with red-tendrill initials; derived from a sister manuscript of **Vat lat 643**; notes coloration; not a direct copy of Zwettl; associated with Salzburg style;