

Cortona

Libreria del Comune e dell'Accademia Etrusca

Ms 184 (265)

Hyginus, *Astronomica*

Italian

end 15th century

text

- ff. 3r-37v: Hyginus, *Astronomica*, Books I- IV (Book III illustrated)
- ff. 3r-4v Hlginus. M. fabio plurimam salutem. [E]t si studio grammaticę artis – et intium rerum demonstrabimus. (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, I, preface; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 1-4)
- ff. 4v-8v [M]Undus appellatur is qui constat ex sole & luna – in simili causa posse constitui suspicamur. (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, I, 1-9; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 5-13)
- ff. 8v-38r SED quoniam quae nobis de terre positione dicenda fuerunt – corporum deformationem dicere instituimus. (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, II, preface-43; cf. Viré 1992, p. 14-94)
- fol. 38r IGITUR INCIPIEMUS a polo boreo protinus dicere ... (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, III, 1; cf. Viré 1992, p. 95)
- fol. 55r ... cum piscibus stellarum omnino . xij. (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, III, 40; cf. Viré, 1992, p. 124)
- ff.55r-67v [Q]UAE AD FIGURATIOnem syderum pertinent ad hunc finem nobis erunt dicta. Reliqua protinus dicemus: quoniam initio spherę circuli quinque quomodo efficerentur – sol ab ęstivo circulo redit. Τελοσ (= Hyginus, *Astronomica*, III, 40 - IV, 9; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 124-36)
- ff. 68r-70v blank

ff. 71r-110v

Antesignanus qui fert signa – in graeco mari nomen invaserat Acro. (= *Glossarium* for the words in the preceding text, with entries for R and S missing and blank pages between each set of entries.)

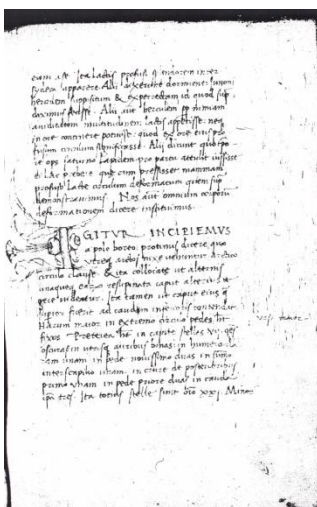
fol. 111

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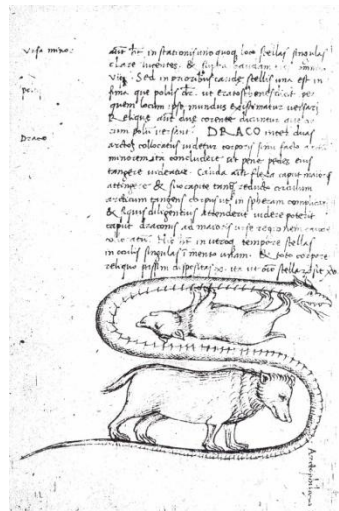
ff. 112r-205v

Exemplum in genere dubio – cum dicimus id quod tamen videmur. (= model letters, petitions and rhetorical exercises)

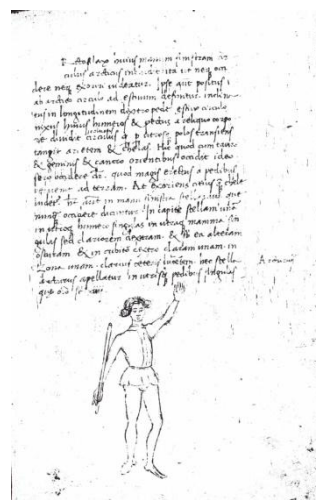
illustrations



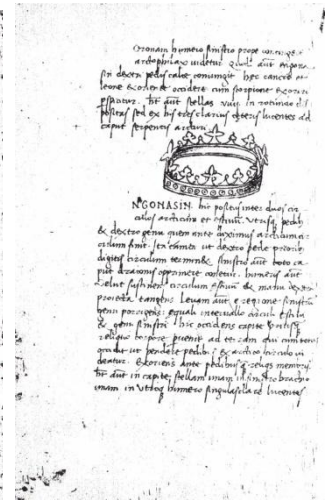
fol. 38r



fol. 38v



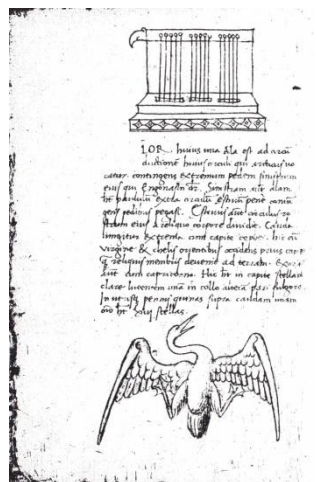
fol. 39r



fol. 39v



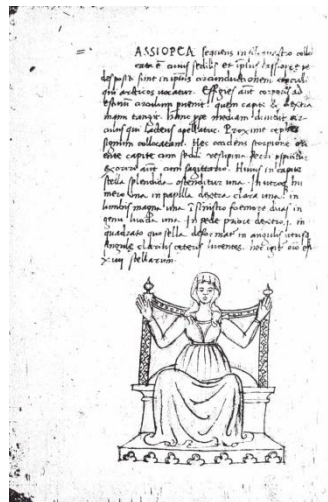
fol. 40r



fol. 40v



fol. 41r



fol. 41v

fol. 48r

fol. 48r

fol. 48v

fol. 48v

fol. 49r

fol. 49r

fol. 49v

fol. 49v

fol. 50r

fol. 50r

fol. 50v

fol. 50v

fol. 51r

fol. 51r

fol. 51v

fol. 51v

fol. 52r

fol. 52r

fol. 52v

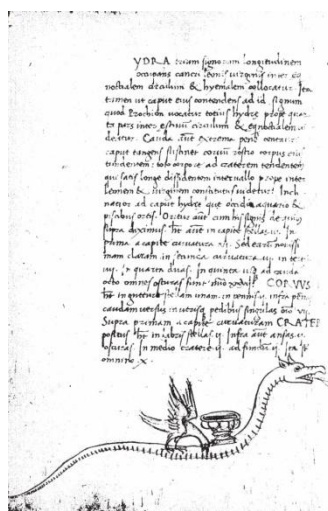
fol. 52v

fol. 53r

fol. 53r

fol. 53v

fol. 53v



ff. 38v- 55r Ink drawings of 45 constellations, with no stars marked. The illustrations are to Book III. PISCES and ERIDANUS are depicted twice. The initials beginning Book III has decorative flourishes around it.

fol. 38v **DRACO INTER ARCTOS** with **DRACO** as an S-shaped snake with a dragon's head that is towards the top of the page and points to the right. It has pointed ears, an open mouth, sharp teeth and a tongue with three tips. The Bears are back-to-back and face in opposite directions, facing into the body of the Snake. **URSA MINOR** stands within the second bend and **URSA MAIOR** within the third bend, standing on the end of **DRACO**'s tail, Both have short tails (with **URSA MAIOR**'S slightly longer), long noses and ruffs around their necks. **URSA MAIOR** is larger. On the right side is the label: **Arctophilax**.

fol. 39r **BOOTES** stands facing the viewer wearing a short, tight doublet and hose. He holds a straight stick vertically, along his right side in his right hand and holds his left hand held above his head with the palm facing the viewer.

fol. 39v **CORONA BOREALIS** is depicted as a crown with jewels around the head-band.

fol. 40r **HERCULES** kneels to the right, resting on his right knee with his left knee raised. He is dressed in a short loose tunic. He wears a lion's skin over his shoulder which is tied by the knotted lion's feet at his neck and his waist. He has a pointed beard and wild hair. His left arm is stretched out in front of him and he has a lion's head and neck (with a long tail) covering his right hand. In his right hand, he holds a knobby club vertically behind his head

- fol. 40v **LYRA** is a two-stepped, zither-like instrument with a curl at the left side. It has 3 sets of 5 strings.
- CYGNUS** is placed in a splayed position with its exposed belly facing the viewer. Its wings are outstretched and it has a very long, pointed beak like a heron and an S-shaped neck. Its head faces to the right.
- fol. 41r **CEPHEUS** faces the viewer and kneels to the left, resting on his left knee. He is depicted as a king, wearing a crown on his head. He is dressed in a long robe with a knotted belt at the waist and fur trim around the neck and the left sleeve. He holds his arms out to either side, bent at the elbow, so that they form a 'W'.
- fol. 41v **CASSIOPEIA** sits in a high-backed throne that has a concave top and decorative work around its frame. The bottom of the throne is carved with small niches. She sits facing the viewer her arms held out to either side, but with the elbows bent so that they form a 'W'. She is dressed in a long dress with a V-shaped neckline and wears a short wimple over her hair.
- fol. 42r **ANDROMEDA** stands between two poles with trefoil tops, with her arms stretched out straight on either side, and her wrists are tied to the poles. She is nude to waist, and has a fold of fabric around her hips. There are protrusions from either side of the fold at her waist, which may be the sleeves. Her long hair is exposed.
- fol. 43r **PERSEUS** faces the viewer and walks to the left. He is dressed in a suit of armour, with the chain mail of his sleeves and skirt clearly drawn. His short hair is tied by a fillet, the ends of which blow in the wind. He holds a sickle upraised in his right hand so that the curve of the blade frames his head. In his left hand, he holds the snaky hair of the Medusa's head. Blood pours from the Medusa's neck.
- fol. 43v **AURIGA** ([H]eniochus) stands facing the viewer and is dressed in a short tunic that is gathered at the waist and has a full, pleated skirt. He holds a 3-thong flail in his upraised right hand. He cradles one goat in the crook of his left elbow and another goat's head (looking more like a cow) peeks out from behind his left shoulder.

- fol. 44r **OPHIUCHUS** faces the viewer, walks to the right and is dressed in a short tunic that is gathered at the waist and has a full, pleated skirt. He is bearded and holds a horizontal **SERPENS** behind his body. The bearded head of the snake faces away from the man and towards the right.
- fol. 44v **SAGITTA** is an arrow that points to the right.
- AQUILA** stands to the right with its head in profile and its wings outstretched to either side.
- fol. 45r **DELPHINUS** is a hefty fish with a beaky nose and an open mouth with pointed teeth. It swims to the left.
- fol. 45v **PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse that flies to the left and has a bridle and reins. Its body ends in a series of wavy lines and its front legs are stretched in front of it.
- TRIANGULUM** is faintly drawn and appears to have a star in each angle.
- fol. 46r **ARIES** prances to the right, but looks backwards over its shoulder to the left. It has lyre-shaped horns and a long tail. Both its forelegs are bent.
- fol. 46v **TAURUS** is half a bull that faces to the left, but turns its head so that it faces towards the viewer. Both its legs are curled under and it has lyre-shaped horns. Its end is truncated with a circle.
- fol. 47r **GEMINI** are two nude youths (babies?) who stands facing each other with their arms extended to either side. Their inner arms cross and they have no attributes.
- fol. 47v **CANCER** is a round-bodied crab that faces to the left. It has two large claws and 3 legs on either side, with a crescent along its bottom.
- LEO** walks to the right, with its left forepaw raised and its tails held high, and shaped like an inverted 'S'. It has a very thick mane.
- fol. 48r **VIRGO** stands facing the viewer, dressed in a long dress with long sleeves. The dress is belted at the waist and has laces up the chest. She is winged and has a halo around her head. She raises her right arm and it is bent at the elbow. She

holds her left arm straight out to the side and holds 3 long-stemmed plants that look like thistles.

- fol. 48v **SCORPIO** is a scorpion that faces to the right. It has 2 large claws, 3 legs on either side, and a segmented tail that ends in a sting.
- fol. 49r **SAGITTARIUS** is a centaur that trots to the right. His human half is clothed in a tunic with long sleeves and he has a ribbon around his head with its ends fluttering behind him. He holds the bow in his left hand and pulls the string with his right.
- fol. 49v **CAPRICORN** is a very hairy goat on his front half and seems to be sitting on his curled tail to the right. The tail ends in a fork. He is bearded and has S-shaped horns.
- fol. 50r **AQUARIUS** is a male youth who stands facing the viewer, turned slightly to the left. He wears a tight tunic with long sleeves and leggings and shoes. He holds his arms to either side, with the elbows bent, so they form a 'W'. He holds the long neck of an upturned bottle in his right hand, from which water pours.
- fol. 50v **PISCES** are depicted twice. One shows the two fish swimming in opposite directions with both backs facing upwards and their mouths connected by a cord. **PISCES**² shows them placed at a 90° angle (one upwards, one to the right) and joined by a cord at their tails. The cord has a kink in it. There is a label: **PISTRIX**, which actually belongs to the next constellation, **CETUS**.
- fol. 51r **CETUS** is a large fish with a dog's nose. It faces to the left.
- fol. 51v: **ERIDANUS** as a ribbon-like piece of stream with two large bends.
- LEPUS** runs to the right.
- fol. 52r **ORION** walks to the right, with his head in profile, and is dressed in a full suit of armour with the chain mail of this shirt visible. He reaches out his left hand in front of him to touch a curved, ribbon-like stream of **ERIDANUS**². He holds a knobby club in his right hand behind his head. He also has a straight sword hanging on his left hip, behind his body.
- fol. 52v **CANIS MAIOR** is a greyhound that leaps to the right. He has a long, curled tail

and pointed ears and his tongue sticks out.

- fol. 53r **CANIS MINOR** stands facing to the right with its ears back and a curled tail.
- fol. 53v **ARGO** is depicted as half a ship, cut off at the left side. It has a mast in the middle of the deck and a sail that blows upwards (towards the sky). It has 3 sets of rigging, 2 steering oars at the right end and an anchor that seems to be hung from the main mast.
- fol. 54r **CENTAURUS** is a centaur that stands to the left with its right foreleg raised. Its human half is a young man, dressed in a tunic with long sleeves. He rests his left hand on his waist and holds **LUPUS** (a rabbit) by its hind feet so that its body rises upwards from his right hand.
- Ara** is a two-stepped altar with a flame on top and a star of David inscribed on the front.
- fol. 54v **HYDRA** is a dragon-headed snake that faces to the right and has its head raised.
- CRATER** is a lobed dish and **CORVUS** stands near the Snake's middle, facing towards the front and pecking.
- fol. 55r **PISCIS AUSTRINUS** is a large fish that faces to the right.

notes

This manuscript is the only one to which I have been refused access, so all notations are according to an old black and white microfilm.

The book seems to have been rebound post-McGurk, losing one of its early folii, so that the page numbering is no longer correct. As the pages have not been renumbered, the above page notations are based on the old numbering system, where the rectos are numbered every five pages.

On fol. 1r in a modern hand: 'Tractatus de Astris Sequitur Vocabularium Latinum Et Exempla scribendi literas Latinas' and 'Libreria comunale de Cortona codice cartaceo no. 265'.

Some of the pictures, especially **PISCES**² and the images of **ERIDANUS** have an astronomically correct orientation, which points to the influence of an illustrated Ptolemaic catalogue. Whether or not this should be attributed to 'Arabic' influences is not self-evident. In the 15th century, the

Ptolemaic catalogue was well-known and the influence of the Eastern elements that it acquired during the transmission of the text to the Latin West were fairly well incorporated into Western science.

bibliography

MANCINI 1884, p. 89, no. 265.

McGURK IV 1966, pp. 19-20.

end 15th century, humanistic cursive, paper 205 ff; belonged to San Francesco da Cortona (teste stamp at bottom of fol. 3r).

VIRE1981, p. 165.

15th c, prov. unknown; ff. 3-67; Bks I-IV.