

Florence

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale

Magliabecchiana XI. 141

Hyginus, *De astronomia*

accompanied by a collection of texts on geography, grammar and metrics

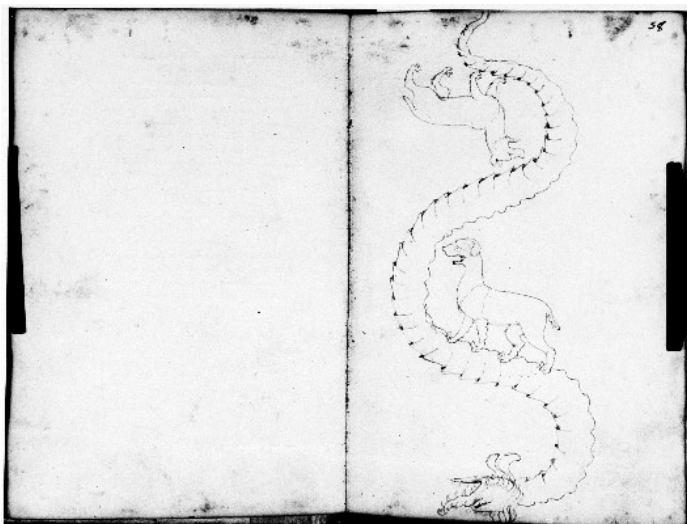
North Italian (Ferrara?), third-quarter 15th century

text

- ff. 1-67r Hyginus, *De astronomia*, Books I-IV (illustrations follow Book IV)
- ff. 1r-2v (in red) Higinus M. falio (*sic* = fabio) salutem. E(in sepia)T SI te studio
grammaticae artis – et initium rerum
demonstrabimus. (Hyginus, *De astronomia*, I, preface; cf. Viré 1992, p. 1-4)
- ff. 2v-5v (in red) M (in sepia)Undus appellatur is qui constat ex sole & luna – in simili
causa posse constitui
suspicamur. (Hyginus, *De astronomia*, I, 1-19; cf. Viré 1992, p. 5-13)
- ff. 5v-33v Sed quoniam quae nobis de terre positionem (*sic* = positione) dicenda fuerunt –
corporum
deformationem dicere instituimus. (Hyginus, *De astronomia*, II, preface-43; cf.
Viré 1992, pp. 14- 94)
- ff. 33v-43v Igitur incipiemus á polo boreo protinus dicere – dicta. Reliqua protinus dicemus.
(Hyginus, *De astronomia*, III, 1-40; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 95-124)
- ff. 43v-57r Quoniam initio sphere circuli quinque quomodo efficerentur – cum sol ab estivo
circulo redit. (Hyginus, *De astronomia*, IV, 1-9; cf. Viré 1992, pp. 125-36)

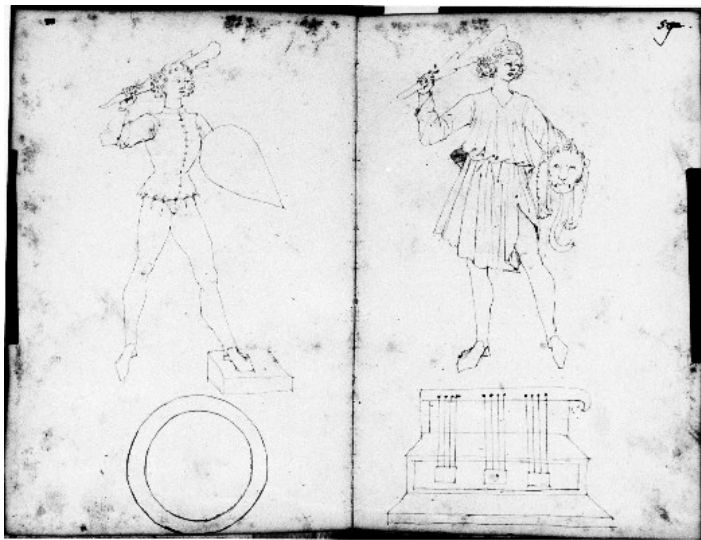
- fol. 57v blank
- ff. 58r-67v [illustrations - see below]
- ff. 68r-70v blank
- ff. 71r-90r
 Nicolaus Perottus, *De metris* (ed. Bologna 1471)
 NICHOLAI PEROTTI IN LIBRUM DE METRIS PROHEMIUM INCIPIT FELICITER.
 Nicholaus Perottus poeta laureatus Iacobo Scioppio Veronensi S.P. Nichil a te
 locundius nobis potuit – (fol. 71v) fidelissime amantissimeque vixerimus VALE.
 (the text continues on fol. 72r without caesura)
 Nicolai Perotti liber de metris feliciter ad Iacobum scoppum (*sic* = scoppum)
 Veronensem Incipit. Per est constitutio metrica sillabarum – (fol. 89v) maxime
 in usu errant. (in red) Epilogus. (in black) Haec sunt mi iacobe que – (fol. 90r)
 nec me laboris peniteat mei. Vale. (in red) Nicholai perotti liber de metris ad
 Iacobum veronensem finit feliciter.
- ff. 90r-100r
 Nicolaus Perottus, *De metris horatianus* (ed. Bologna 1471)
 (in red) Nicholai Perotti epistola de horatii flacci ac severum boetii metrorum
 diversitate ad Helium perottum fratrem. Nicholaus perottus Helio Perotto fratri
 salute plurimam dicit. (in red and black) Ex omnibus (in black) immortalis dei
 ergo me beneficiis – (fol. 100r) fructum intellexero. Vale. Finis.
- ff. 100v-104v blank
- ff. 105r-127v
 Phocas, *De nomine et verbo* (cf. H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, Leipzig 1868, V, pp.
 405-39).
 Ars mea multorum es quos secula prisca tulerunt – ut vigilanda viris. Ex his
 similis. FINIS.
- fol. 128r-128v blank
- ff. 129r-156r
 Priscian, *Periegesis* (cf. ed. K. MÜLLER, *Geographi Graeci minores*, Paris 1882, II,
 pp. 190-99 and ed. BAEHRENS 1879, I, pp. 275-312).
 [N]ature genitor que mundum continet omnem – Omnipotens pro quo genitor
 mihi praemia donet. Finis. Prisciani grammatici periegesis id est descriptio orbis
 et terrarum et maris secundum dionisium explicit.

illustrations



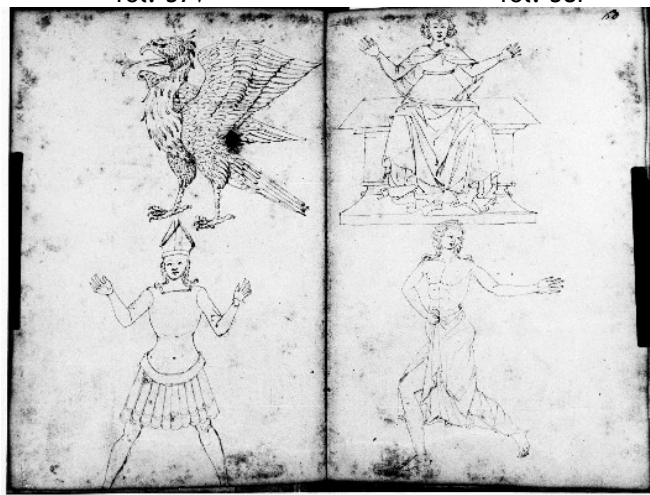
fol. 57v

fol. 58r



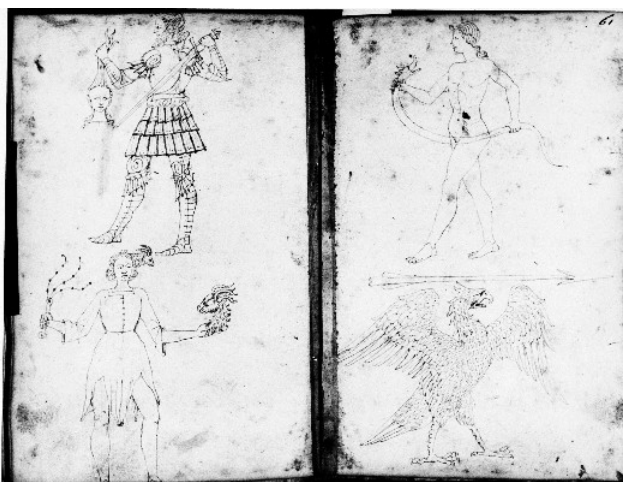
fol. 58v

fol. 59r



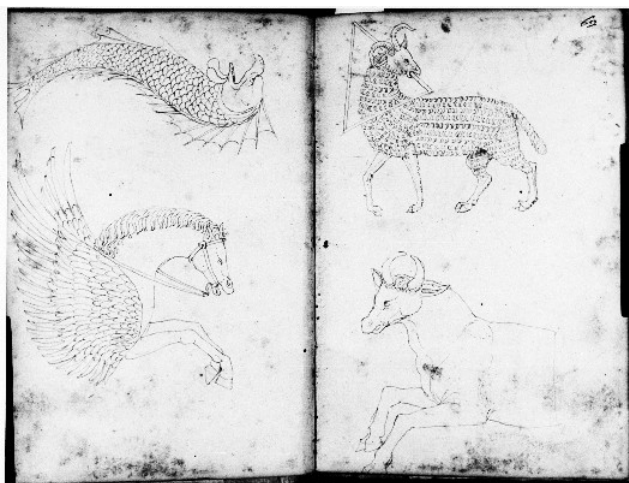
fol.59v

fol. 60r



fol. 60v

fol. 61r



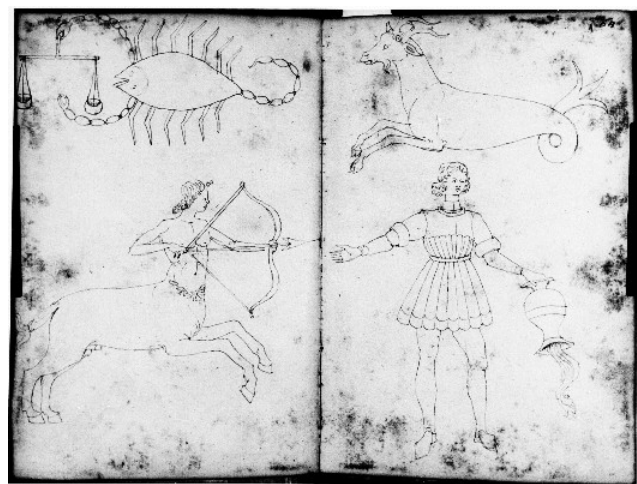
fol. 61v

fol. 62r



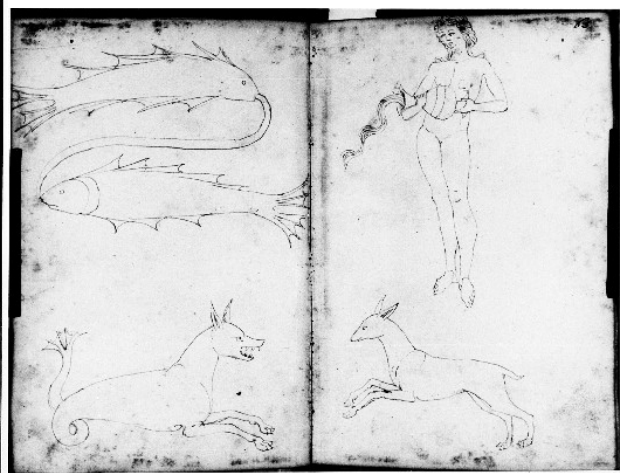
fol. 62v

fol. 63r



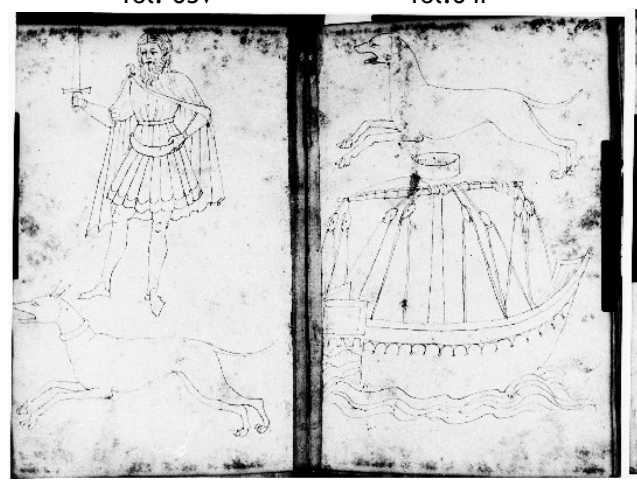
fol. 63v

fol. 64r



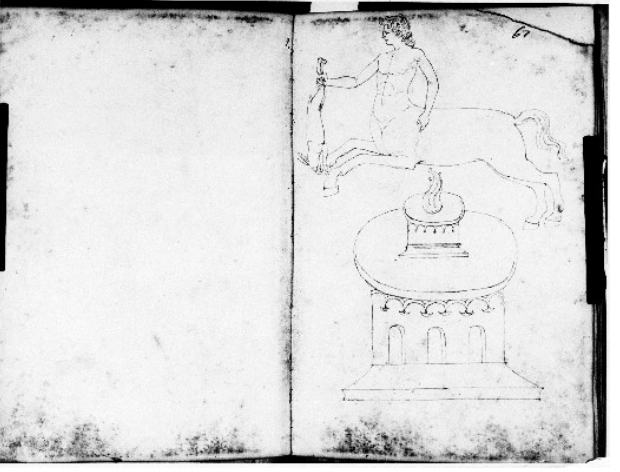
fol. 64v

fol. 65r



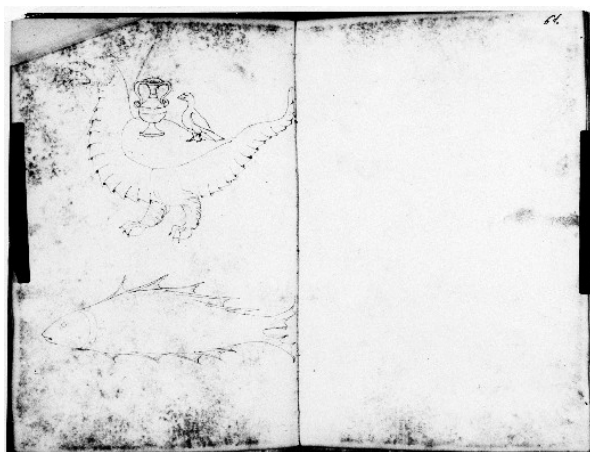
fol. 65v

fol. 66r



fol. 66v

fol. 67r



fol. 67v

fol. 68r



fol. 58r

ff.58r-67v

Drawings of 46 constellations in pale sepia ink that are set on top of scored 'underdrawings'. The illustrations are without text and follow the end of Book IV. The stars are not marked.

fol. 58r

DRACO INTER ARCTOS with **DRACO** depicted as a dragon-headed snake with 3 big bends in his body and 1 smaller bend at the end of his tail and his head placed towards the bottom of the page. His head faces to the left and has a pointed snout, a wattle, sharp teeth and pointed ears. The Bears are set back-to-back and face into the curves.

URSA MINOR is set within the second bend and **URSA MAIOR** within the third bend. Both look more like small dogs (cf: the illustrations of **CANIS MAIOR** and **CANIS MINOR** on ff. 65v-66r, suggesting that Canis Maior is the model for Ursa Maior and Canis Minor is the model for Ursa Minor). Both have short tails and their mouths are open.

n.b.: the scoring for Ursa maior shows that the animal passed through several iterations, one of which was reversed so that its head was to the right and its legs towards the top of the page.

fol. 59v

BOOTES faces the viewer and is standing to the right wearing a short jerkin and tights. The jerkin has buttons down the front and the laces for his leggings are visible. He raises a club behind his head with his right hand and has a teardrop-shaped shield in his left hand that is held out in front of him so that it covers his whole left arm. He rests his left foot on a box.

CORONA BOREALIS consists of two concentric circles.

fol. 59r **HERCULES** faces the viewer and is dressed in a very loose tunic that is caught at the waist. He holds a knobbly club over his head with his right hand and holds a lion's body draped over his left arm (with its face, two forelegs and tail visible).

LYRA is shaped like a two-stepped zither with a curl at the right side with 3 sets of 4 strings.

fol. 59v **CYGNUS** is depicted as an eagle and stands facing to the left with its wings outspread and a tri-partite tongue sticking out.

CEPHEUS stands facing the viewer wearing a short tunic that has long sleeves, a fitted bodice, a large belt at the hips and a pleated skirt. He has something like a bishop's mitre on his head. He stands with his legs placed wide apart and holds his arms out to either side with his elbows bent so that they form a 'W'.

fol. 60r **CASSIOPEIA** sits on a low-backed, boxy throne with a step for her to rest her feet on. She is dressed in a long robe with a mantle over her shoulders, which falls into her lap before ending with copious folds at her feet. Her hair is uncovered. She holds her hands out to either side with her elbows bent so that they form a 'W'.

ANDROMEDA faces the viewer and prances to the left. She is nude to the waist and wears a long skirt, which she holds with her right hand at her waist. Her left arm is held out horizontally behind her. Her hair is exposed.

fol. 60v **PERSEUS** faces away from the viewer and to the left, but his feet are somewhat awkwardly placed so the perspective does not quite work. He is bearded and wears a suit of armour, but without a helmet on his head. He holds the Medusa's head by its very long hair in his left hand in front of him and holds a long straight sword in his upraised right hand so that the handle is by his shoulder, but the blade descends so that it runs across his back, with the tip ending at the base of Medusa's neck.

AURIGA stands facing the viewer in a short garment that is tied at the waist and ends in long pointed strips of fabric around his knees. His feet are cut off by the bottom of the page and his head is bare. He holds a flail with 3 beaded thongs upraised in his right hand and has two goat's heads in his left hand. There is a third goat's head coming from the left side of his head, which faces the other goats' heads.

- fol. 61r **OPHIUCHUS** is nude male with long hair that walks to the left, facing the viewer. He holds the **SERPENS** so that it passes (transparently) in front of his hips and turns to face him, sticking its tongue out. Its head is to the left.
- SAGITTA** points to the right.
AQUILA stands to the right and has both his wings outstretched on either side. His beak is open.
- fol. 61v **DELPHINUS** is placed up-side down, on his back, and with his head to the right. He has a curved beak with sharp teeth and a waddle beneath his chin and fins like a crest running down his back.
- PEGASUS** is depicted as half a winged horse. He sticks his feet out in front of him, faces to the right and wears a bridle with reins.
- FOL. 62R **ARIES** walks to the left with his head turned back to the right. He is depicted *intra Triangulum* and bites the right leg of the triangle. He slightly raises his right forefoot and has a long tail.
- TAURUS** is depicted as half a bull facing to the left. His body is cut off by a single line.
- fol. 62v The depiction of the **GEMINI** has been added by a different/later hand and is a very crude drawing not related to the current series. It shows two nude men embracing and the left Twin holds a straight sword in his right hand.
- CANCER** is a round-bodied crab that faces to the left. He has two large claws held in a circle and 4 legs on either side. There is an additional crescent shape on his bottom.
- fol. 63r **LEO** walks to the right, while turning his head to face the viewer. He has an impressive mane, and his tail is raised. There are some stars added by a later hand in black ink (5 stars in his head, 1 in chest, 3 on his haunch and 1 on his tail, or 10 stars in all). The one on his chest and the tip of his tail (representing α and β Leo) are larger and more open than the rest, indicating that they are brighter than the rest.
- VIRGO** is winged and stands facing the viewer. She wears a full-skirted robe that

is belted at the waist and has short puffy sleeves. She holds a sheaf of wheat upraised in her right hand and holds her left hand in front of her with its palm open.

fol. 63v **SCORPIO** faces to the left and has two large claws and 7 legs on either side. His tail is segmented and ends in a sting. He holds the Scales in his right claw.

SAGITTARIUS is depicted as a centaur prancing to the right. His human half is nude and the meeting between his two halves is covered with fur. He holds the bow with his left hand and pulls the string with his right.

fol. 64r **CAPRICORN** faces to the left and has two slightly curved deer horns and a beard. He has a twist in his tail and the tail ends in 3 fins.

AQUARIUS is dressed in short Renaissance tunic, which is belted at the waist and has a pleated skirt and bands around the sleeves. He stands facing the viewer with his both arms held out to the sides. His right hand is empty. In his left hand, he holds the foot of a banded urn from which he pours water.

fol. 64v **PISCES** swim in opposite directions and have both their backs facing upwards. Their mouths are connected by a cord.

CETUS has dog-like face, body and fore-legs. He has pointed ears and sharp, inward-curving teeth. His tapering body has a curl and ends in a webbed fin. He faces to the right with an open mouth.

fol. 65r **ERIDANUS** is depicted as a nude youth who faces the viewer, but turns slightly to the left. He holds the banded urn out horizontally in front of him to the left, holding its base with his left hand and its neck with his right.

LEPUS looks slightly like a dog and runs to the left.

fol. 65v **ORION** stands facing the viewer. He is dressed in a Renaissance tunic, with a belt at his waist, a wide, pleated skirt and another belt around his hips. His shoulders are covered with a cape that falls to his knees. He is bearded and holds a short, sharp sword upraised vertically in his right hand and he holds the thumb of his left hand in his belt.

CANIS MAIOR is a sleek hound with a pointed nose that bounds to the left with

his mouth open and wearing a collar.

fol. 66r **CANIS MINOR** is a hound with a more rounded snout that leaps to the left with its mouth open.

ARGO is a full ship with numerous pictorial details, such as a mast with a crow's nest and an unfurled sail, 4 sets of riggings with pulleys, and a raised and decorated poop deck. It sails to the left through water.

fol. 66v blank

fol. 67r **CENTAURUS** is a centaur that leaps to the left. His human half is nude and he holds **LUPUS** (a rabbit) upside-down by its heels in his right hand. He holds his left hand down by his side.

ARA is depicted as a 2-level cylindrical altar with flames coming from the top.

fol. 67v **HYDRA** is depicted as a two-legged dragon, with wings held close to his body, and clawed feet, facing to the left. He has a pointed nose and sharp teeth and long, pointed ears. His mouth is open and he breathes flames.

CRATER is a tall vase with 2 handles resting on Hydra's back and **CORVUS** stands on his haunches facing forward.

PISCIS AUSTRINUS is a fish that swims to the left.

notes

214 x 1145; 156ff; paper. The text is presented in a single column in humanistic cursive and has been written by several different hands. The manuscript includes Hyginus, *De astronomia* (4 books), Nicolaus Petrotti, *De metris* and *De metris horatianus*, Phocas, *De nomine et verbo*, Priscian, *Periegesis*. This is the same content as appears in Florence, Laurenziana 89, sup 43 (ff. 72v-91v).

The ms has a Strozzi provenance: see fol. II*r (old endpaper) 'N 839 Higinus Poeticon et Astronomicon; Nicolaus Perottus de Metris; Priscianus Orbis descriptio; D. Luigi del Senre Carlo di Tommaso Strozzi 1679'.

There is also a bookplate with the provenance entry: 'Provenienza Strozzi 4° no. 839'.

BLUME/HAFFNER/METZGER 2016, II, 2, p. 586 suggest that the combination of texts indicates that this volume was prepared as a teaching aid or within the context of a schoolroom. The style of the clear and confident drawings recall northern Italian Hyginus illustrations, and are closely related to the Hyginus manuscript from Ferrara, Oxford, Can Class 179. which can be dated to c. 1460-70. The Florence ms may be slightly later. They observe that the transformation of CYGNUS into an eagle with a forked tongue may be an allusion to a heraldic emblem.

ELLY DEKKER (private communication) notes that the stars in Leo do not conform to the description of Hyginus, who places 3 stars in the head, 2 on the neck, 1 in the chest, 2 below the chest, 3 on the back, 1 in the middle of the belly, 1 in the haunch, 1 in the middle of the tail, 1 at the tip of the tail, 1 in the right forefoot, 1 in the hind knee, 1 in the hind foot, or 19 stars in all.

bibliography

GALANTE 1907, pp. 141f.

KRISTELLER 1963, p. 125.

McGURK IV 1966, pp. 35-36.

second half 15th century; several scribes; paper ii + 156 ff; 214 x 145; from the Strozzi collection (no 839); on fol. ii r: 'Di Luigi del Senatore Carlo di Tommaso Strossi'

note: McGurk is unreliable re: inscriptions and ff. references for this manuscript.

VIRÉ 1981, p. 166.

15th century, provenance unknown; ff. 1-67, Books I-IV

BLUME/HAFFNER/METZGER 2016, II, 2, pp. 91, 585-88 (no. 76) and figs. 684-91.

consulted 21.6.04 and 21.12.23