

Durham
Cathedral Library

Hunter 100, 2

ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*

English (Durham)
1100-1135 (c. 1108)

An incomplete text of ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*, set within a large collection of medical, calendrical and computistical texts. The ps-Bedan texts appears within the second of four co-eval, separable sections, which also includes extracts from Helperic of Auxerre's *Computus*, extracts from Bede's *De temporibus* and works by Abbo of Fleury and Isidore. There are a set of finely-executed pen drawings of the constellations illustrating the text, as well as a set of zodiacal constellations accompanying the calendar. The current foliation has two sets of pagination (one in light brown ink (15th century?) and a modern one in pencil). This description follows the modern pagination.

text

- ff. 1v-7v Calender (Durham), see below for illustrations of zodiacal figures
- ff. 59r-60v Incipit Quēdam excerpta de mensibus Bedę: libro quem scripsit de temporibus, ANNUS SOLARIS HABET TRECENTOS DIES & SEXaginta .v.& . Lii ebdomadas ... in martio . & xii. in aprili. (= Bede, *De temporibus*)
- ff. 60v-61r de vertice mundi. Duo sunt extremi vertices mundi quos appellant polos ... ad ipsum usque decurrit accipiens. (= *Excerptum de astrologia Arati* , cf. Maass 1898, pp. 309-12)
- ff. 61v-64v ps-Bede, *De signis caeli*
- HELix arcturus maior habet in capite stellas obscuras viii ...
- fol. 61v ends with the last line of the section on Ursa maior: Sunt omnes sedecim (cf. Maass, 1898, p. 582 and dell'Era, 1979, p. 283).

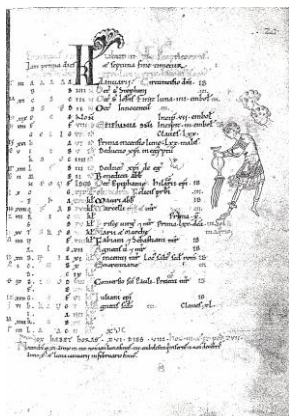
A new quire beings on the following folio (fol. 62r), but is obviously missing two outer pages (figuring around four chapters per side), so that the text for chapters 2-18 are missing (URSA MINOR to ANDROMEDA)

fol. 62r recommences with picture of ANDROMEDA and then: De equo Pegasoo. Equus qui et Pegasus dicitur habet stellas in rostro... (cf. Maass 1898, p. 587 and dell'Era 1979, p. 288)

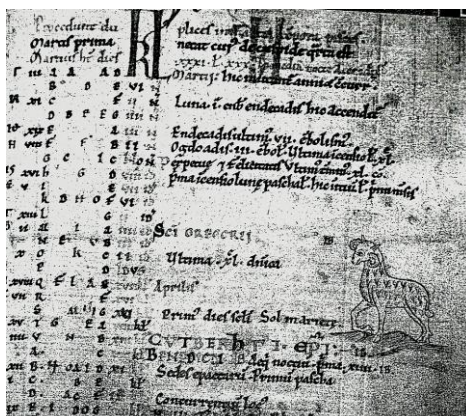
De anticano. Anticanis dicitur subter geminos bene parere. habet tellas .iii. quarum una splendidior est ceteris et ideo anticanis vocatur. eo quod contraria sit cani. (cf. Maass 1898, p. 594 and dell'Era 1979, p. 296)

fol. 64v De quinque stellis quę dicuntur planetę nec non & erratica — peragit cursum suum cccxlviii. diebus. (cf. dell'Era 1979, p. 296)

illustrations



fol. 2r



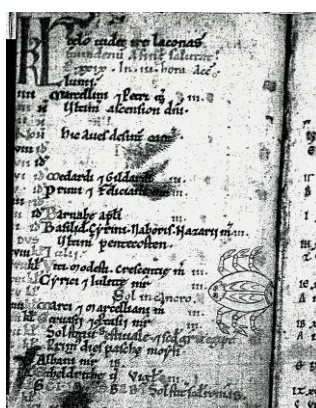
fol. 2v



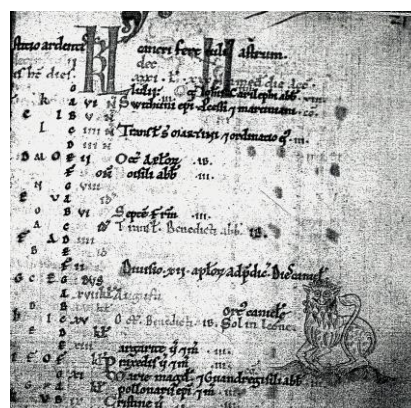
fol. 3r



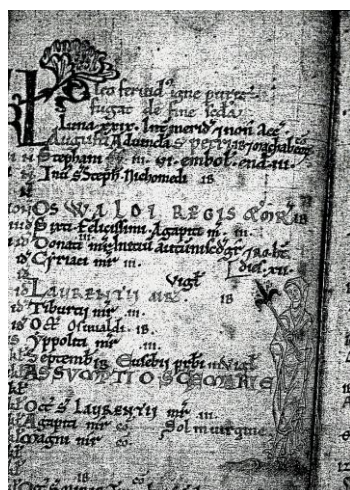
fol. 4r



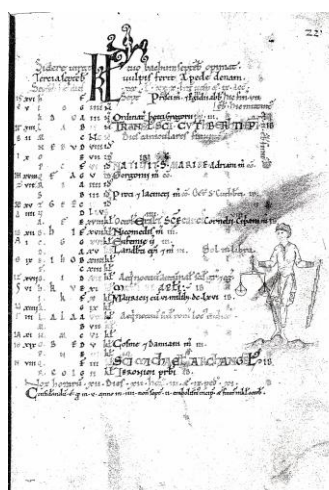
fol. 4v



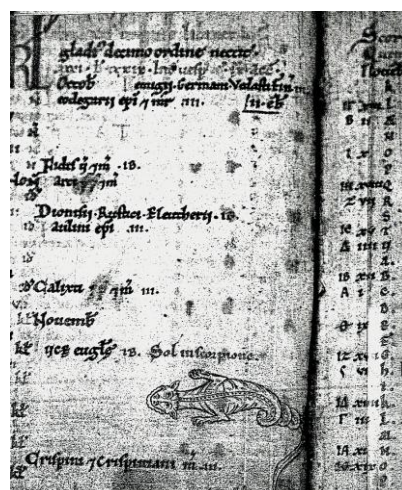
fol. 5r



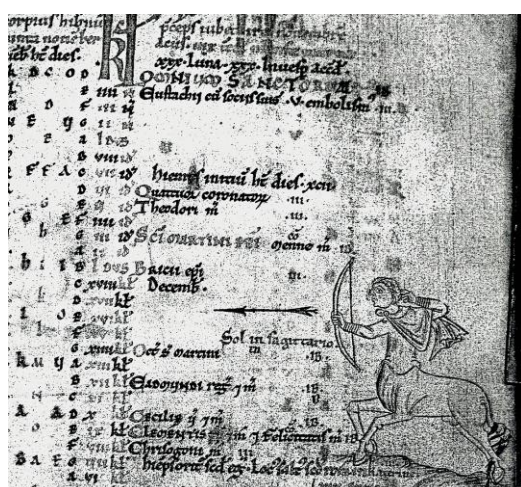
fol. 5v



fol. 6r



fol. 6v



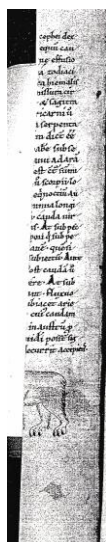
fol. 7r



fol. 7v

- ff. 1v-7v Calendar illustrated in the margins with zodiacal pictures drawn in sepia and red ink with green wash.
- fol. 2r **AQUARIUS** standing figure dressed in a highly-decorated tunic with short boots; leans to the left and pours water from a footed urn with both hands; there are also three trial heads drawn above (two to the right and one to the left)
- fol. 2v **PISCES** are two red fish swimming in opposite directions set within green water
- fol. 3r **ARIES** is a ram drawn in red walking to the left on green ground with curled horns, a short tail and lifting his right front leg
- fol. 3v **TAURUS** is a full bull, with short curved horns, standing to the left on a ground line with his tail hanging down
- fol. 4r **GEMINI** are two female figures who stand together very closely, facing towards the left; they are dressed in long mantles with their heads covered; the right Twin holds a palm frond in her left hand and the left Twin looks back at her
- fol. 4v **CANCER** is almond-shaped and faces to the left; there are V-shaped decorations along its shell with 3 legs either side; it has a clearly delineated face a slightly flattened bottom with a semi-circular band

- fol. 5r **LEO** crouching to the left on a ground-line; he faces the viewer and his tail is curled between his hind legs so that the tip is above his back
- fol. 5v **VIRGO** is a female figure standing to the left in a long mantle with her head covered; she holds a long stick with a green *fleur-de-lis* head in both her hands and it rests on her left shoulder; she slightly inclines her head
- fol. 6r **LIBRA** is a male youth in a tight, knee-length tunic with leggings, holding a knobbly walking stick in his right hand and the Scales in his left; he stands on a ground-line
- fol. 6v **SCORPIO** is a smiling dragon that is seen from the top and faces to the left with two front legs and a triple corkscrew tail which tapers to an end; he has a decorative stripe down his back
- fol. 7r **SAGITTARIUS** is a centaur with a red cape and wearing a shirt on his human half; he trots along a ground-line to the left, just having shot an arrow from the bow he holds in his left hand; he has bands around his wrists
- fol. 7v **CAPRICORN** facing to the left on a ground-line; it has two short, curved horns and a beard; it has a triple corkscrew tail that tapers to an end
- fol. 16v basket-work schema showing the intercalulation between zodiacal signs and months, and Isidorian quadri-partite schema (these are set with various computistical tables by Abbo of Fleury, Dionysus Exiguus and Bede)
- fol. 43r second section of the manuscript opens with an author portrait of a scribe set within the body of a dragon that makes a large 'C' (Cum fratribus adolescentoribus...) from Helperic's *Præphatio helperici compostistiae de arte calculatoria*.
- fol. 44r image of one man beating the bare buttocks of another accompanies beginning of Helperic, *PL*, 137, 21, with the verse: Afficitur plagis qui non vult discere gratis ('Wisdom that is not willingly sought/ With the rod must needs be taught' = transl. Mynors 1939, p. 50).



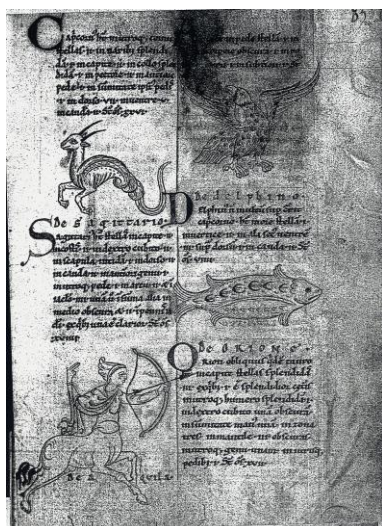
fol. 61v



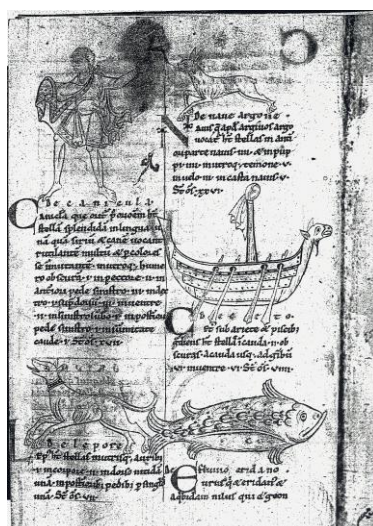
fol. 62r



fol. 62v



fol. 63r



fol. 63v



fol. 64r



fol. 64v

ff. 61v-64v Fine pen drawings of 27 constellations in sepia, black and green, set within large spaces between paragraphs of text which are set in two columns; there are several images per page and no stars are marked; the lay-out suggests that the text was written first, then the pictures were added and the titles to each section added after the illustrations

fol. 61v **URSA MAIOR** in sepia standing to the left with a large hump on her back; her mouth is open and she looks upwards

[Missing illustrations of **URSA MINOR** to **CASSIOPEIA**]

fol. 62r **ANDROMEDA**, drawn in red ink with short black hair, is completely nude with starry markings on her nipples, but is neither obviously female nor male as the genitalia are hidden; her arms are outstretched to either side and she has no attributes
PEGASUS, drawn in black with red wings, is three-quarters of a winged horse that faces to the right; he is cut at mid-flank by decorated red and sepia semi-circle (like a 'D'); his mouth is open in front of his upraised left wing (proto-biting ?); his right front leg is stretched forward and his left one is bent

ARIES, drawn in red, stands to the left with his right forefoot raised; he looks back and up over his shoulder to the right; he has small curled horns and a long tail

TRIANGULUS is a triangle decorated in red and green

PISCES swim in opposite directions, with both backs uppermost; they are connected by a wide band (rope-like) that is decorated with dots and forms knots around their tails; the upper fish is black, the cord is green and the lower fish is red

fol. 62v **PERSEUS** is nude and drawn in red, save his black cloak and scalloped, green Phrygian cap; he rushes to the left with the Medusa's head (in red with black hair and with closed eyes) in his right hand held in front of him; he holds a short green and black knife (double *harpe*?) held behind him in his left hand

LYRA is an oval instrument decorated in black, green and red with curves and box designs and with at least six strings that splay outwards from the bridge to the pegs

CYGNUS, drawn in red, faces to the right as if starting to fly, with its wings outstretched top either side and a long, undulating neck

AQUARIUS is dressed in a short red tunic with short black cloak and green leggings and black boots; his body faces towards the right, but he is twisted so that he is looking left

over shoulder to the left; he holds the footed green urn upside-down with both hands in front of him (this figure is close to the one in the calendar on fol. 2r)

fol. 63r **CAPRICORN**, drawn in black with red decorations down his body, faces to the left with long straight red horns, a purple beard, green ears and a long, triple corkscrew tail that is tapered at the ends and flicks upwards; both legs are bent and held in front

SAGITTARIUS is a centaur leaping to right; he wears the same kind of scalloped (black) Phrygian cap as **PERSEUS** does and a green cape over his shoulders, which wraps around his right arm; his human torso is covered with a black shirt and his equine body is red with a black tail; he points with the index and middle fingers of his up raised right hand to own head; he holds a green bow with a red string a red arrow in left hand; his legs are splayed, but the left front leg is slightly bent

AQUILA has a black body with green and red wings and a red beak and red talons; he stands to the right but is looking over his right shoulder upwards to the left, with both wings raised

DELPHINUS is a fat fish swimming to the right; he is in red with green scales on his upper half

fol. 63v **ORION** stands facing the viewer, slightly to the left wearing a short green tunic with short black cloak, which covers his extended right arm and hand completely; he has no shoes or stockings; his left hand is raised, but obscured by damage coming from the capital 'A' on the recto, but it appears that it was originally empty

CANIS MAIOR, in red, runs to the left lifting his head slightly; he wears a thick black collar and sticks out his red tongue; he has short pointed ears and a long, thin, curled tail

LEPUS, in red, runs to the left; it has short straight ears; very long legs and bends its right front leg

ARGO (NAVIS), drawn in black, is depicted as a full ship sailing to the right with a red, bearded griffin's head at bow; it has four, red oars along the side and a knotted red cloth on the green main mast; the planking of the ship is highly detailed, with nails showing

CETUS is large black fish with a red face and red and green scales; it has a pronounced lower lip and swims to the right

- fol. 64r **ERIDANUS** is male nude seated facing the viewer with his legs splayed; he has a black cloak that falls over his left shoulder and left knee; he is gesturing with his right hand across his body and holds a green water-pouring urn upside-down in his left hand; the stream flows away from him towards the right
- PISCIS AUSTRINUS** is a flat red fish with a smiling green face and green fins seen from top
- ARA** is multi-storied lighthouse with layers alternating in red and green, with numerous windows and a black flame coming from the top
- fol. 64v **CENTAURUS** runs to the right with short black hair and no clothes on his human half; He holds **BESTIA / LUPUS** (a black animal with its legs pointing upwards) on his outstretched left arm, which is held in front of him; He twists his right arm behind his back and carries a green banner with a red top and black pennant in the crook of his right arm so it rises behind his right shoulder; the equine part is black
- HYDRA** is depicted as a green snake with red breath coming from his mouth and moving to the left; it has dots running down its body; it has only the black
- CORVUS** is black and stands on the tip of **HYDRA**'s tail, facing forwards and not pecking [there is no **CRATER**]
- CANIS MINOR**, in red, runs to the left, and wears a large studded black collar and has purple ears
- fol. 64v bust-portraits of five planet-gods (Apollo (?) with a crested helmet in the centre and Mercury with red wings on his head and a caduceus)
- fol. 66r schema of the paths of the planets (within Abbo of Fleury's, *Sententia de ratione sphaerae*)
- fol. 67r diagram of eclipses
- fol. 70v later drawing (15th century?) crowned female figure in pale brown ink, who points to the text (within Isidore's *Ethymologia* (as it accompanies the text on astronomy, it may be a personification of 'Astronomia'))
- fol. 119r-120r numerous medical drawings, including one of two surgeons trepanning a bald man

notes

The manuscript is lacking texts and pictures for URSA MINOR to CASSIOPEIA. Moreover, many of the pictures are rather idiosyncratic. The largest number of similarities can be seen between this manuscript and the *De signis caeli I* family, but the divergences are too great to see it as anything but peripheral to that group. For example, ANDROMEDA has no rocks, the PISCES are connected by their tails, NAVIS is shown as a complete boat, etc.

bibliography

RUD 1825, pp. 396-398.

lists contents and id's as 11th century; 'with the most delicate pen, and many of them in a manner elegantly conceived'; Hunter mss purchased in 1756 from Dr. Hunter

BUBNOV 1899, p. 301.

SINGER 1920, p. 4.

NEW PALAEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY 1922, plate 125.

HUGHES 1925, p. 32.

MILLAR 1926, pl. 125.

SINGER 1928, p. 137.

HENNEL 1934.

VAN DE VYVER 1935, pp. 140-49.

MYNORS 1939, pp. 49-50.

collection of short pieces dealing with medicine, computus and astronomy; valuable notes made by JP Gilson in 1922, now housed as Hunter Ms 100A; ff. 85-101v originally was at the head of the volume, principally medical texts; 1-42 calendar made for use at Durham with texts and tables in connection with it, drawn partly from work of Abbo of Fleury Robert de Lodinga (Bishop of Hereford 1079-95) and Dionysius Exiguus; ff 27v-42 has tables of the Great Cycle with notes of historical events including death of William of St Carilef in 1095 and

William Rufus in 1100; from this Gilson deduces that the volume was written before death of Henry I in 1135 and before that of Ranulf Flambard in 1128; 121 ff in 15th-century foliation, in several very expert hands; 'a masterpiece of calligraphy on a small scale, with some admirable drawings'

from certain political events in the calendar section, can deduce was compiled between 1100 and 1128 (between the deaths of William Rufus and Ranulf of Flambard, one of the bishops); see *New Pal Soc* II, pl. 25.

BYVANCK 1949, no. 104.

WORMALD 1952, p. 57.

SAXL-MEIER 1953, III, pp.441-447, esp. p. 445.

says 1100-1135: English (Durham, parchment 121 ff with paper folii at each end; 16.9 x 12.4 cm

GREENSLADE 1958-65, pp. 347-69.

KER 1957, p. 24.

LEVISON 1961, pp. 447-505.

BONSER 1963, p. 303.

Mac KINNEY 1965, p. 120.

RICKERT 1965 (2nd edn), p. 63.

EVANS 1969, pl. 62.

WEITZMANN 1970, p. 158.

Cites **Vat grec 1291**, a Greek Ptolemy written between 813-20 with miniatures close to a Hellenistic source (cites Boll and Weitzmann, *Byz Buchmalerei*, p. 1 and Bethe) is nude with only a chlamys fluttering from his back (has head turned back, and arms are stretched forward); the same type appears in **Durham Hunter 100**, but here is a youth with shoes, trousers and in a tunic with long sleeves, wearing an embroidered chlamys 'Anglo Saxon fashion of the period. Since clothes can be added or subtracted at any time without affecting the posture of the picture, cannot be used to determine relation to the archetype); antiquated fashions only show intermediate models, not archetypes.

p. 160: once an error has crept in, it is likely to be repeated in each following copy and only in rare cases is it corrected again; helpful means for identifying recensions; in some cases, the mistake might have been avoided if the illuminator had bothered to read the text; 'However, we have good reason to assume that quite often the painter confined himself strictly to the pictorial task of repeating a miniature after the model without consulting the text anew, particularly in cases where scribe and painter were two different persons and the latter was concerned only with filling in the spaces which the scribe had provided for him'. Possibilities for error increase greatly when the picture has become divorced from its original text. See Andromeda in **Durham 100** is completely nude (vs. the Leiden *Aratea* model, where she wears a mantle thrown around her hips and legs); body is indistinct and resembles a male, particularly in the short hair, which suggests that the illuminator may have mistaken the sex; Also, the rock and bonds have been omitted; and these errors reveal that the painter has no knowledge of the mythological meaning of the constellation; notes also that the short text that accompanies the picture has no mention of the myth, so even if the illuminator did read it, it wouldn't help (i.e.: migrated text)

BOASE 1971 (2nd edn), pp. 27 ff.

McGURK 1974, pp. 1-5.

KAUFFMANN 1975, pp. 67-68, no. 27.

author portrait of Heperic (fol. 43r); Durham provenance supported by saints in the calendar and marginal annotations to deaths of Bishop Carilef (d. 1096) and William 2 (d. 1100), but Bish Ranulf Flambard not recorded; early 12th-century style characterised by 'nervous outlines of Anglo-Saxon art'; say illustrations are 'derivative of original Aratus illustrations rather than of the Cicero recension' (?);

KER 1977, p. 504.

KAUFFMANN 1984, p. 105.

SNIEZYNSKA-STOLOT 1994, p. 65.

SNIEZYNSKA-STOLOT 1997, p. 91.

dell' **ERA** 1979, p. 271: 12th century (1100-1135)

BORST 1995², p. 237, n. 70: Durham, around 1108

BORST 1998, pp. xxv, 149 and 497 (no. g. 10).
mis-identified as being at Durham University.

BLUME HAFFNER METZGER 2012, pp. 137-8 and 240-46.

pp. 137-38: end of 12th century from France or Italy; Hyginus sections largely without the mythological sections; says images are of the *Libri computi*-type and no references to other Hyginus illustrations; interest in astronomy attested to by presence of small red dots; and notes that Ursa Minor stars have been corrected ('according to personal experience of the scribe'); like Ademar of Chabennes, adapts existing series of images to a more detailed text;.

pp. 240-46: provides complete contents of this astronomical/Medical manuscript; dates 11-00-1120; also has short section on music (ff. 41v-42r); associates with the grand encyclopaedic works of the period; says some iconographic overlap with **Oxford Digby 83**; zodiac illustration in calendar much freer

Notes by J.P. GILSON in Warburg file: 'text of this generally agrees with the prose that accompanies Cicero's *Aratea* in Harley 2506 (ff. 36-44v) and the *scholia* to Germanicus in Bern 88 (given by Bishop Werner in 1002-29? to S Mary's Strasbourg) as printed in Breysig, *Germ Caes Arat*, Berlin 1867, p. 233; but this includes sections on Pegasus and the planets that are missing in Bern and Harley mss'

Also see: notes from A PIPER in mss in August 2006 (soon to be online).

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