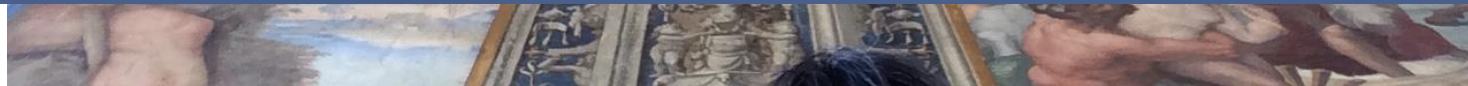


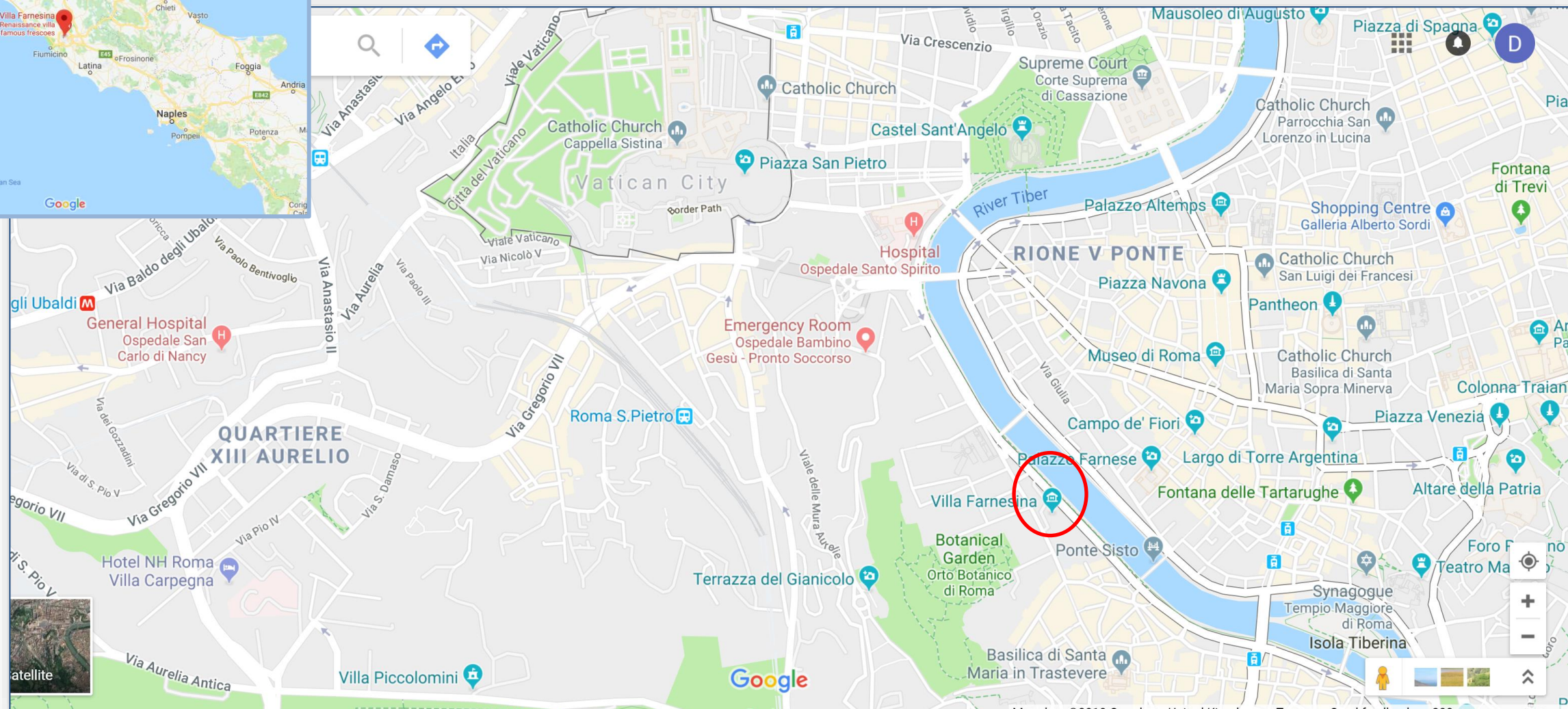


Case Study: An astronomical ceiling - Sala di Galatea



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Dr Darrelyn Gunzburg





**Sala di Galatea
in the Villa Chigi
(now Farnesina)
in Rome,
c.1511.**

The Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina in Rome,
commissioned c.1511 by Agostino Chigi.
Photo: D.Gunzburg



Sala di Galatea in the Villa Chigi (now Farnesina) in Rome, c.1511, looking south. Photo: D.Gunzburg.



Coin with Portrait of
Agostino Chigi.
Image: Wikimedia
Commons.

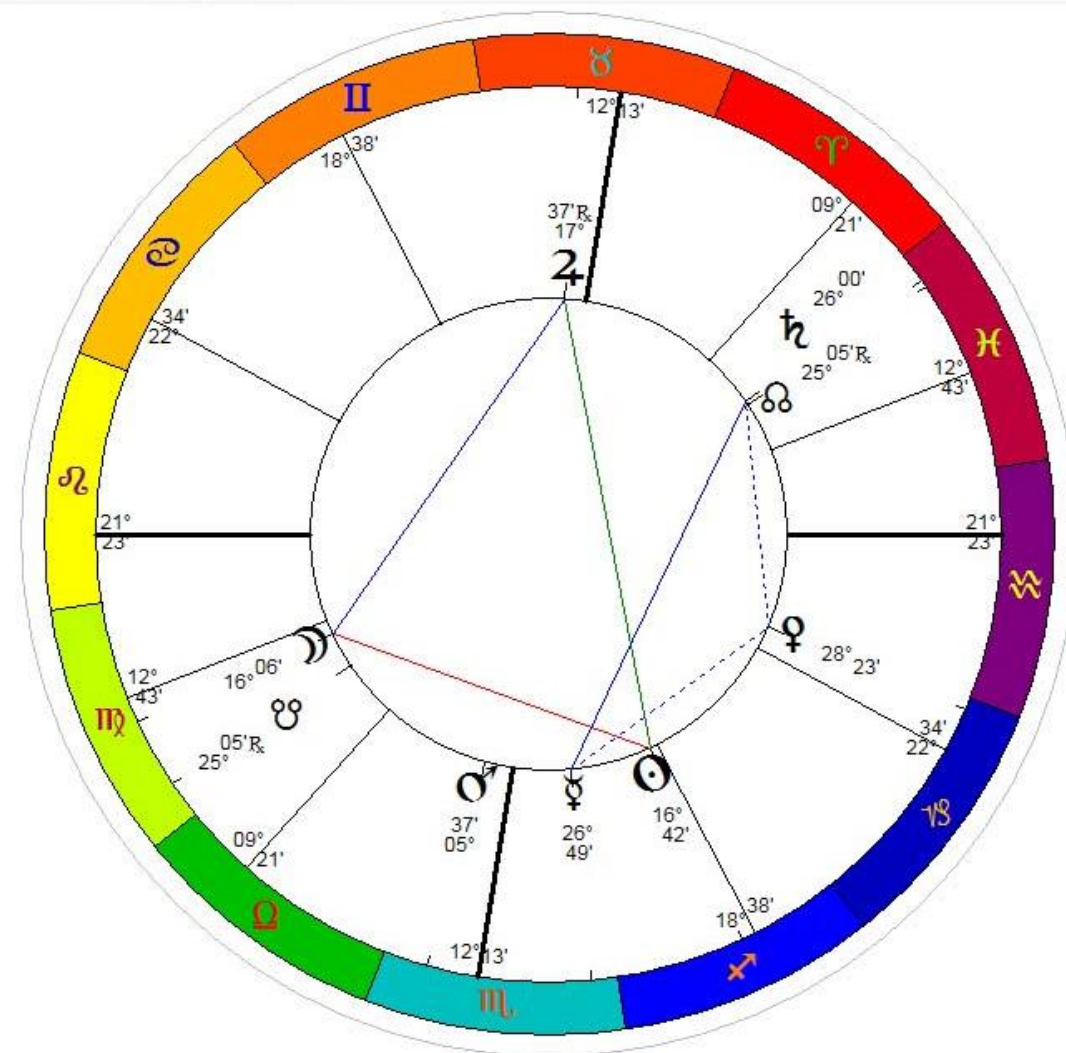
Agostino Chigi 29 Nov 1466 21:30 LMT -00:45:24 Siena, Italy 43°N19' 11"E21'

AGOSTINO CHIGI

Sienese Baptistery records:

‘Agostino son of Mariano Chigi was baptized on the thirtieth day of November 1466 and was born on the twenty-ninth day of said month at the hour 21 ½ and Giovanni Salvani was godfather.’

Rowland, Ingrid D. ‘The Birth Date of Agostino Chigi: Documentary Proof.’ *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 192-193.





Coin with Portrait of Agostino Chigi.
Image: Wikimedia Commons.

AGOSTINO CHIGI

From a family of merchants who became **bankers**.

At the age of 20 he founded his first company in Rome.

Fortune came from **alum mills** of Tolfa, near Rome, indispensable for the dyeing of fabrics. Became the owner of his own fleet anchored at Porto Ercole in Tuscany.

Assisted Julius II della Rovere to become **Pope**. Both shared a love of art, literature, theatre, and the ancient world.

1509 – Julius I accepted him into the papal *familia*.

Also deeply connected to the next pope, **Leo X** Medici.



Coin with Portrait of Agostino Chigi.
Image: Wikimedia Commons.

VILLA FARNESINA

May 1505 – entrusted planning of Villa to [Baldassare Peruzzi](#) (1481-1536).

First stone laid from an election: [22 April 1506](#), thought to mark the anniversary of the founding of Rome. [Such elections of buildings is a common theme of patrons.](#)

The property comprised the [Villa](#), the [stables](#), a [loggia](#) on the banks of the Tiber, and [beautiful gardens](#) which gave to the whole complex the appearance of a magnificent 'viridario' ('pleasure garden') comparable to celebrated residences of antiquity.

Sala de Galatea begun [1511](#). Originally a loggia.

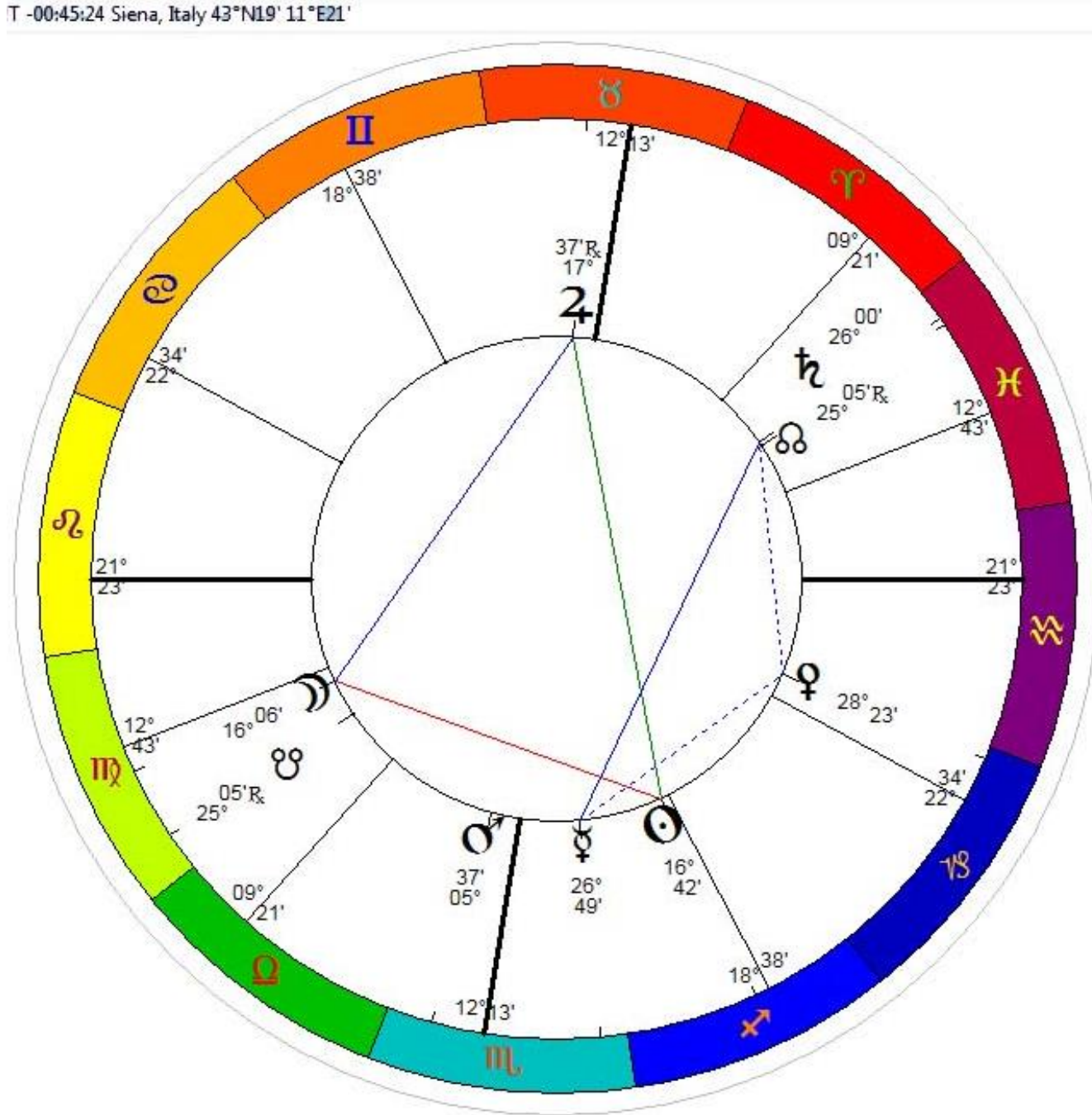
Sala di Galatea in the Villa Chigi (now Farnesina) in Rome, c.1511, ceiling.



Photos: D.Gunzburg.



Coin with Portrait of
Agostino Chigi.
Image: Wikimedia
Commons.





Sun (the
young Apollo)
in (front of)
Sagittarius

Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.



Venus in Capricorn

Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.



Saturn as The Reaper in Pisces (Aphrodite with Cupid)

Sala di Galatea in the Villa Chigi (now Farnesina) in Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo: D.Gunzburg.



Jupiter in
Taurus
(Europa and
the Bull)

Aries the Ram in
the background

Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.



Moon in Virgo (Diana and her Hunting Dog)

Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.



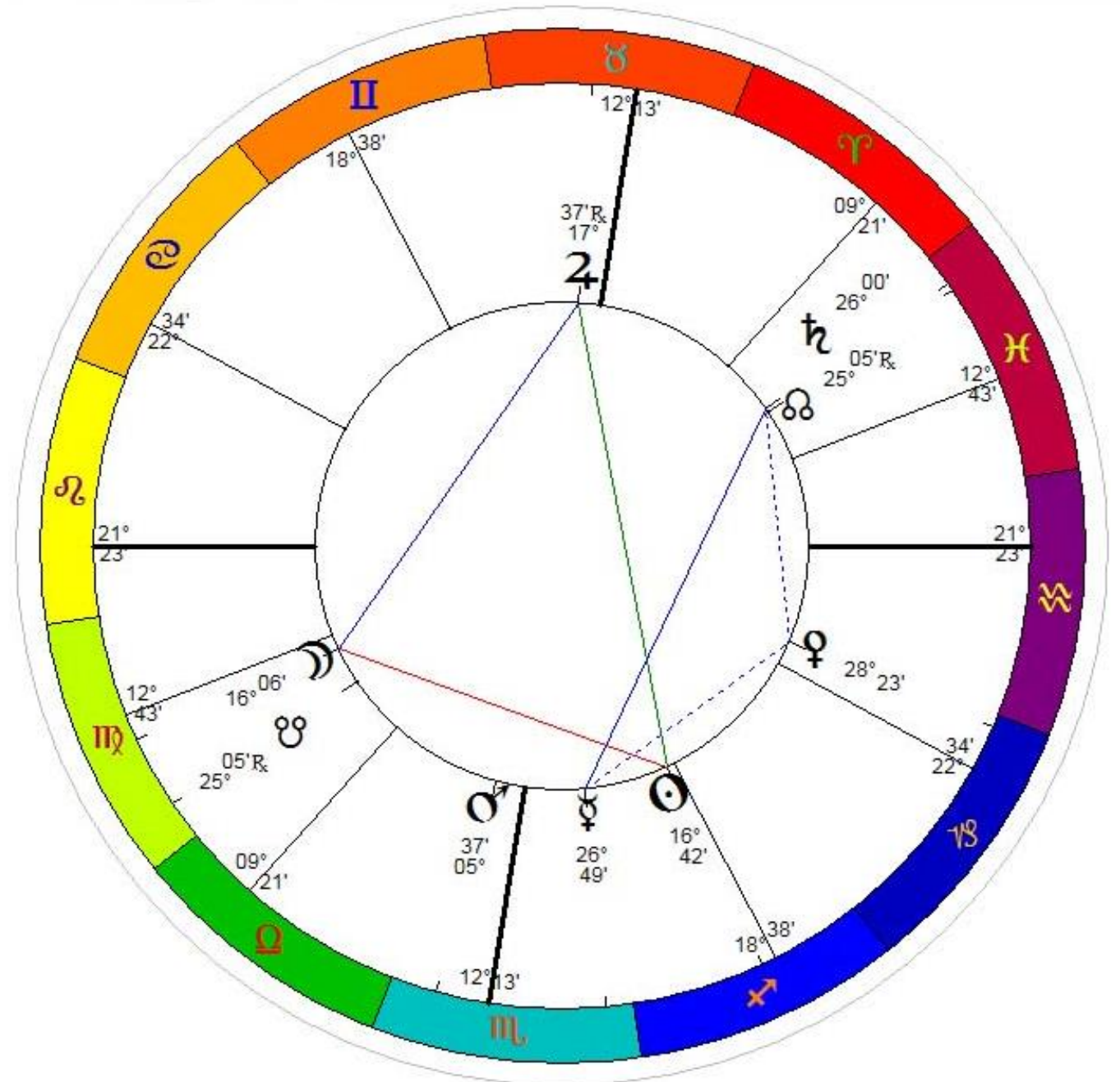
Mars in Libra

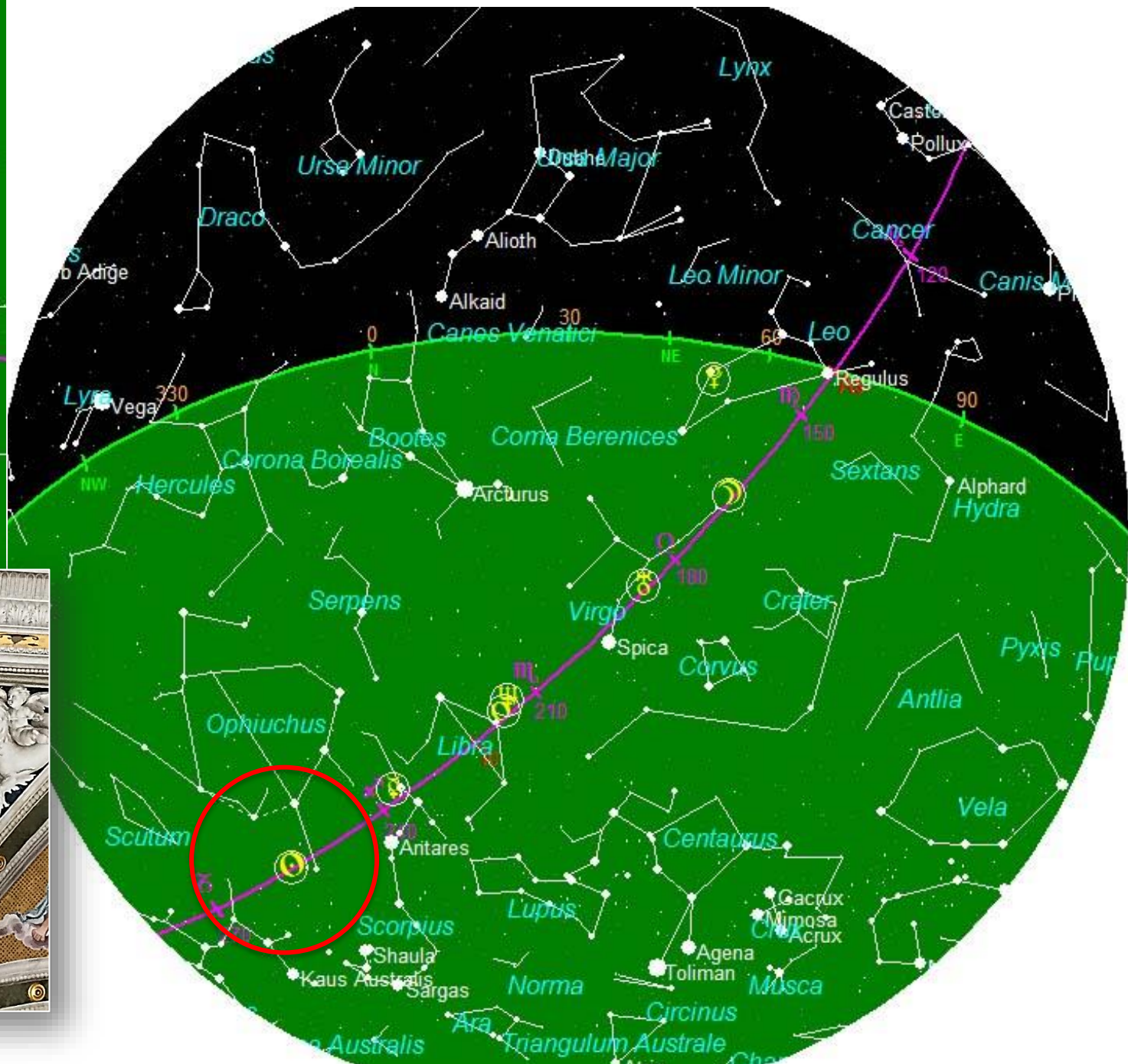
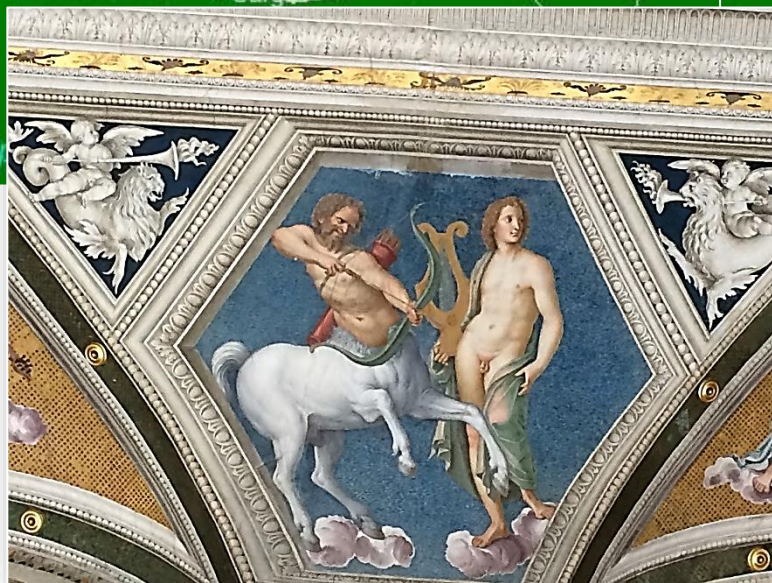
Mercury in
Scorpio

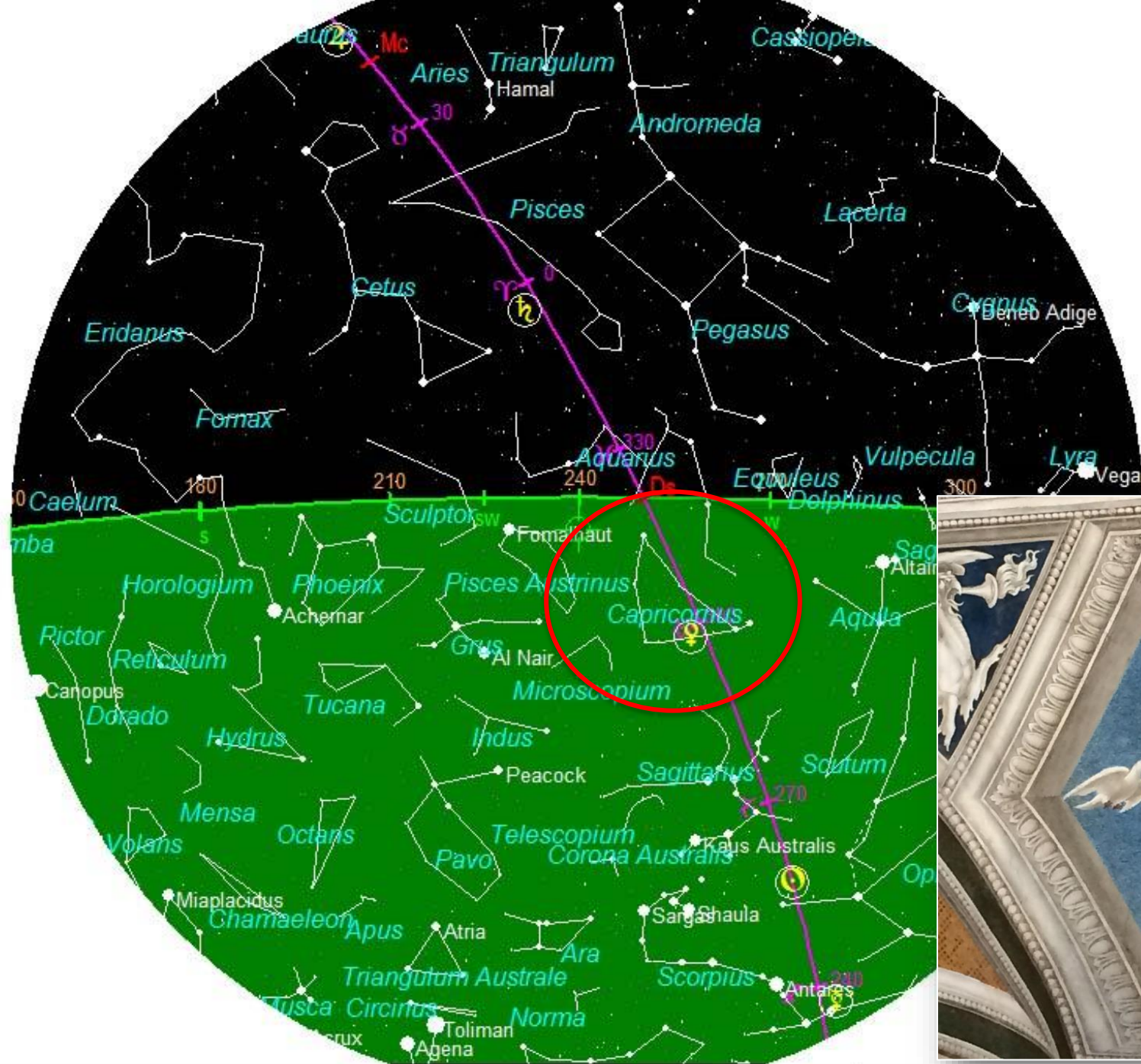
Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.

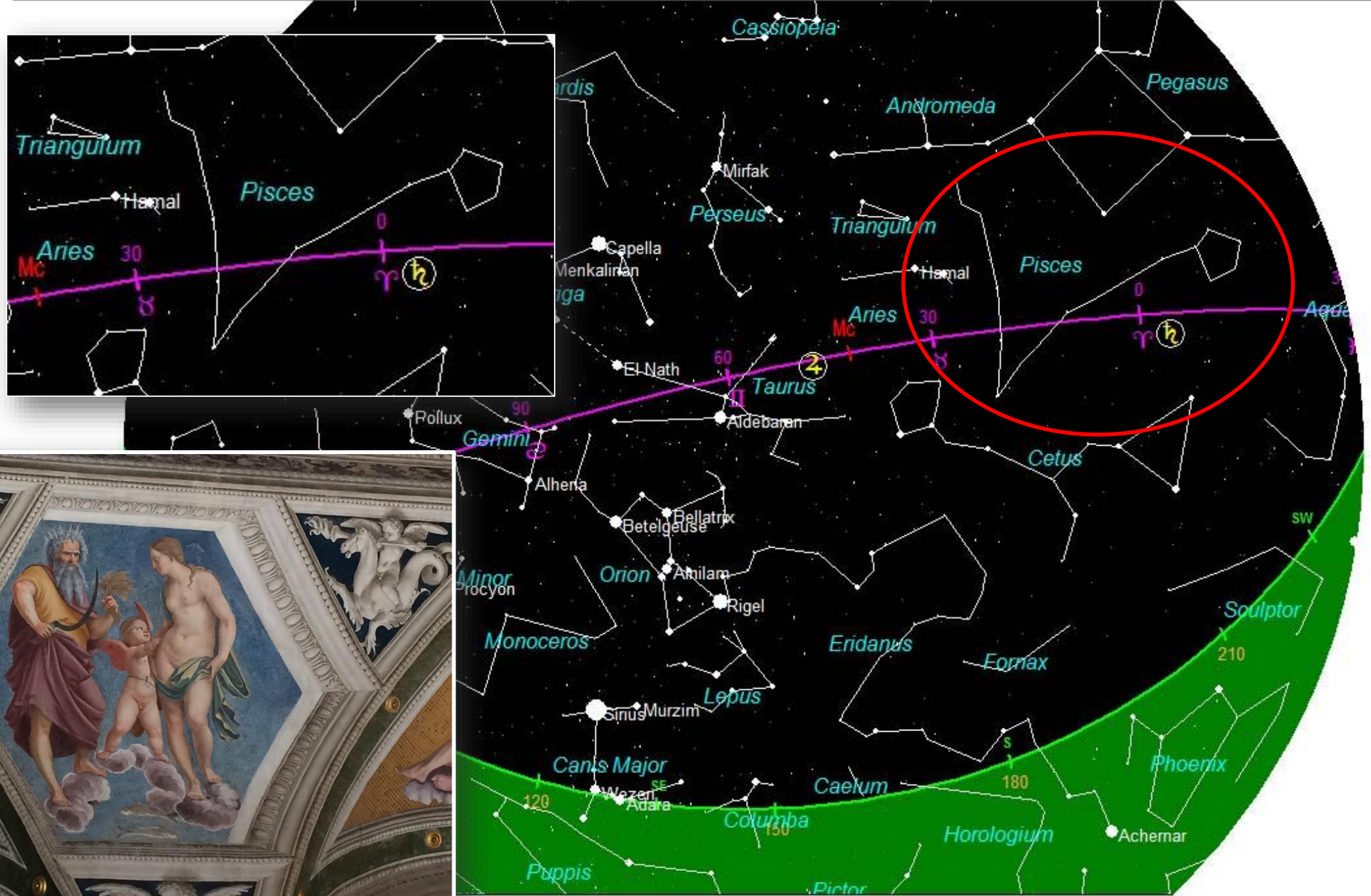


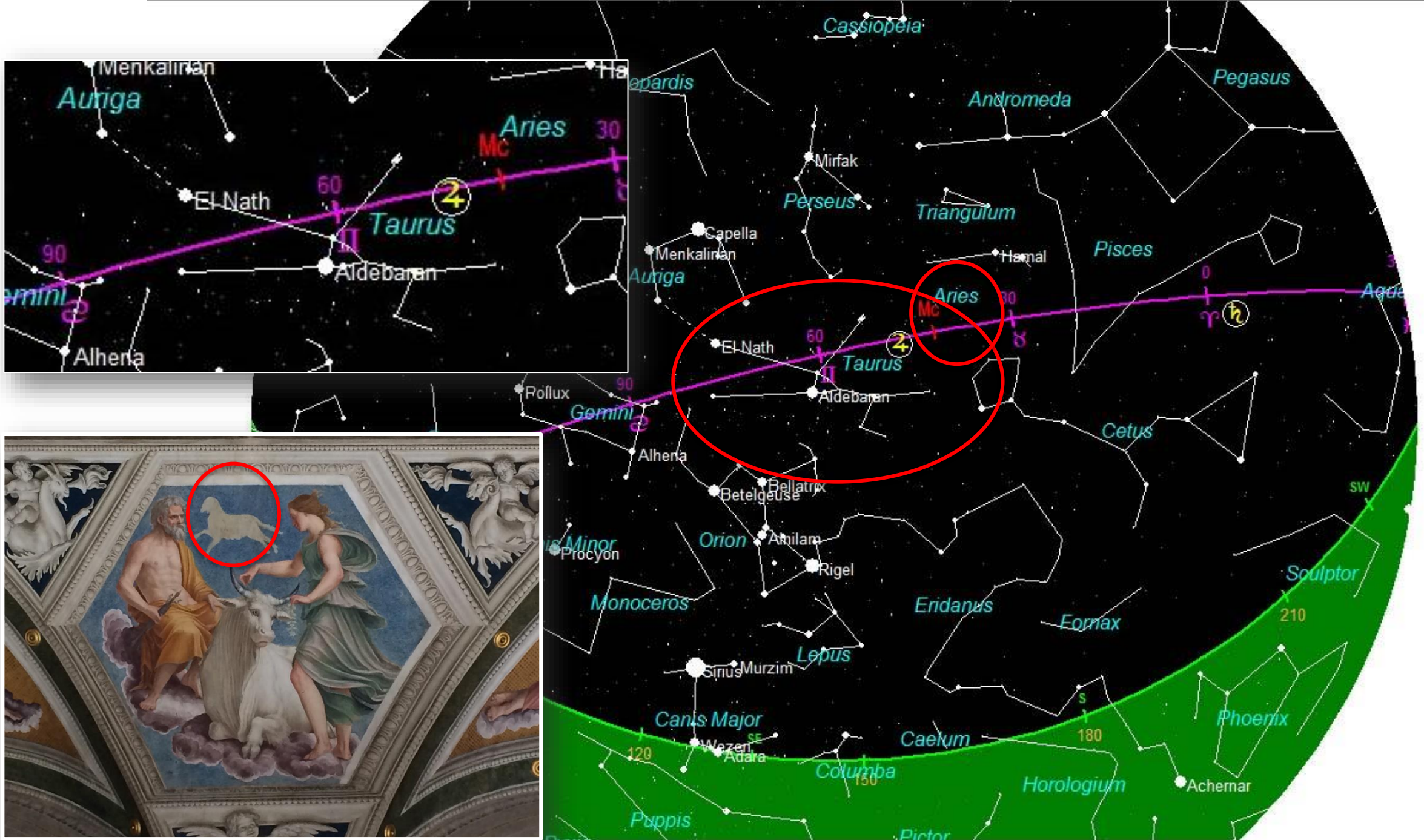
Coin with Portrait of
Agostino Chigi.
Image: Wikimedia
Commons.

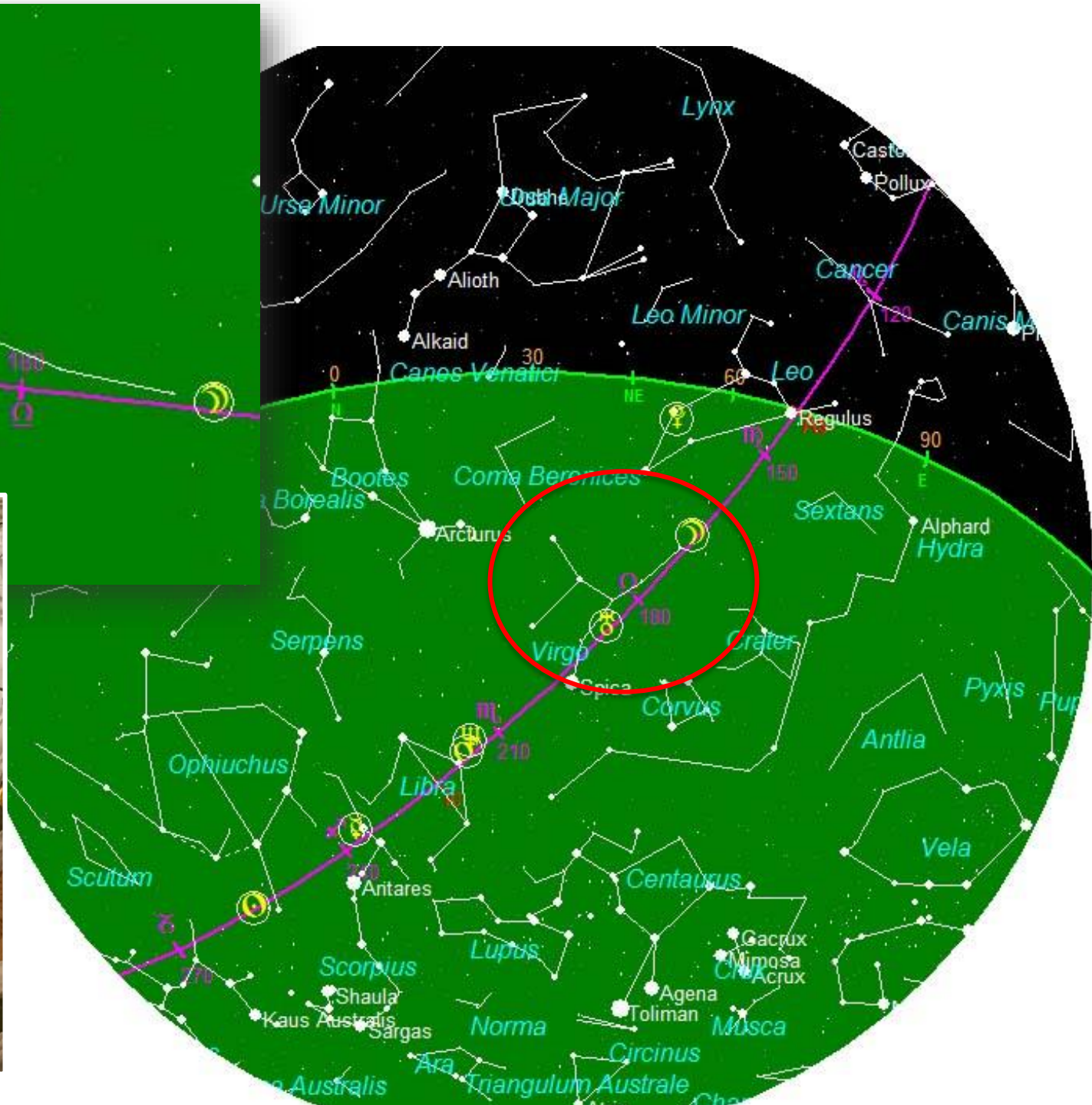








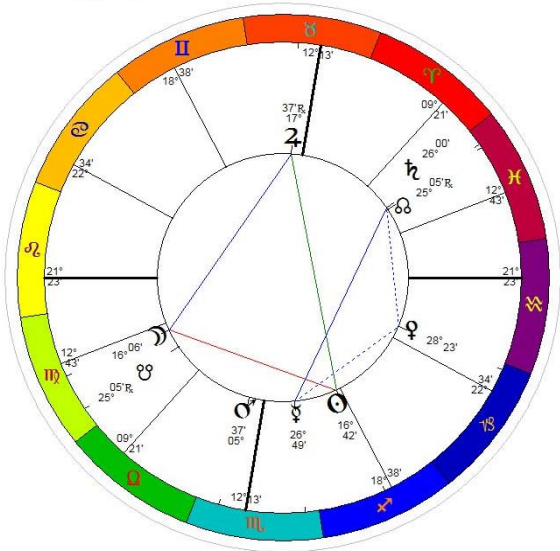






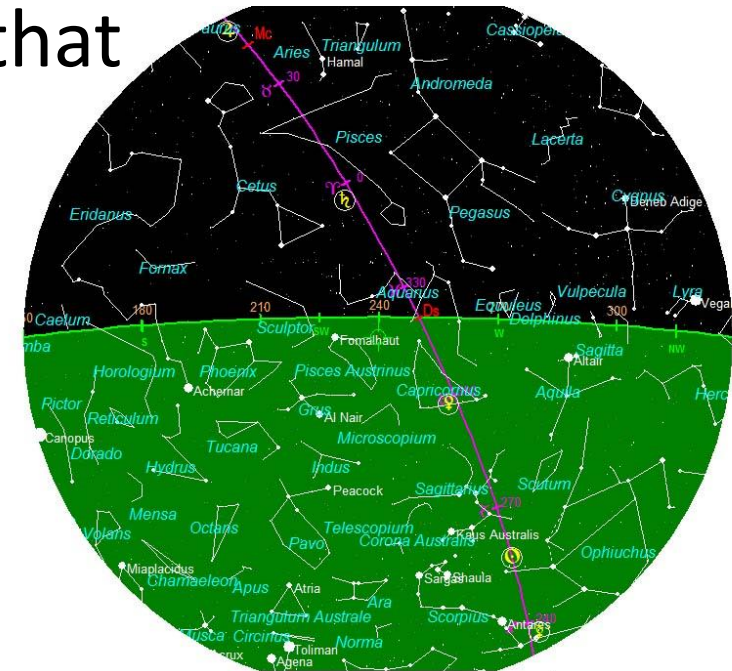
So is this a chart with an error
or is it a sky map?

T -00:45:24 Siena, Italy 43°N19' 11"E21'

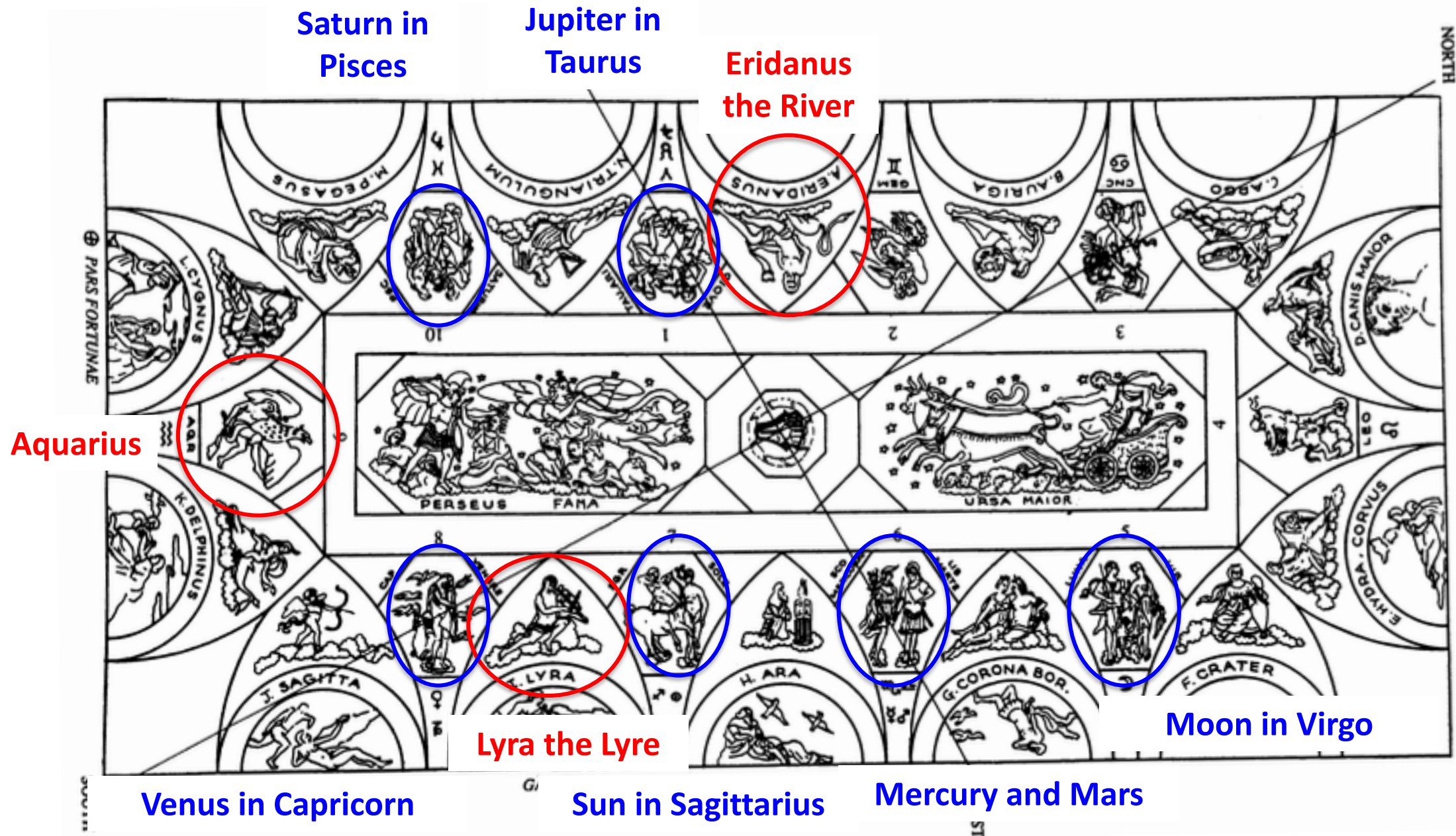


Is the painter painting a calculated horoscope?

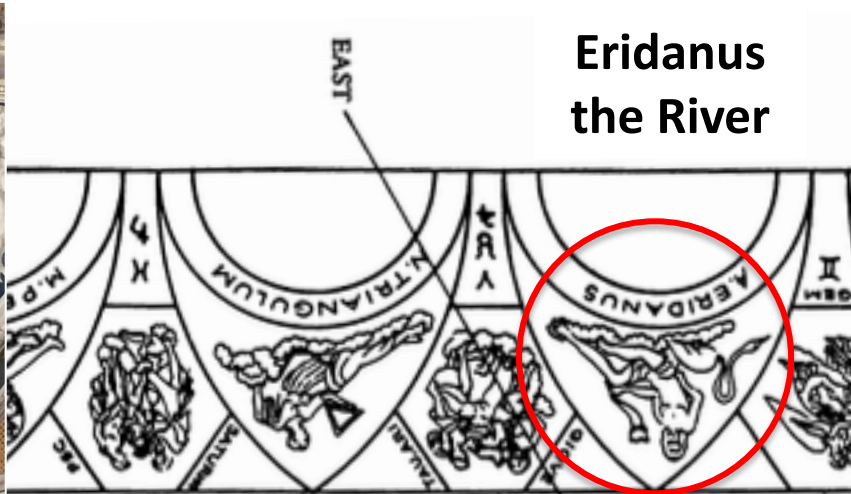
Or a depiction of the heavens that
can be seen visually with the
planets moving through the
constellations?







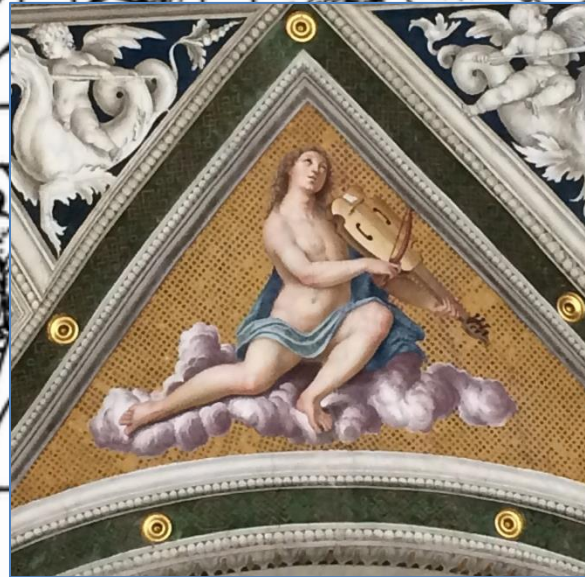
Lippincott, Kristen. 'Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered: The Sala Di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala Del Mappamondo at Caprarola' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 185-207.



**Eridanus
the River**



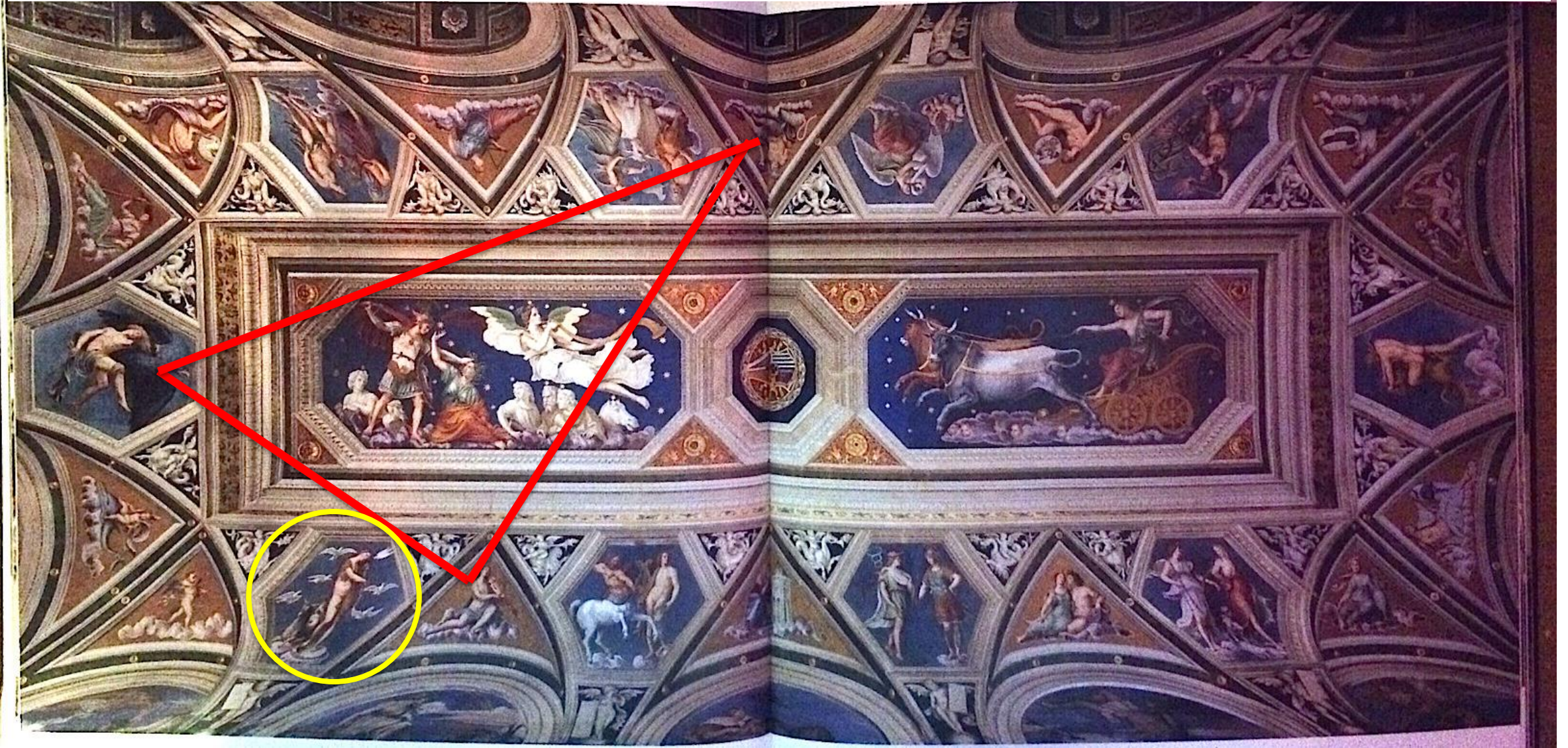
Aquarius

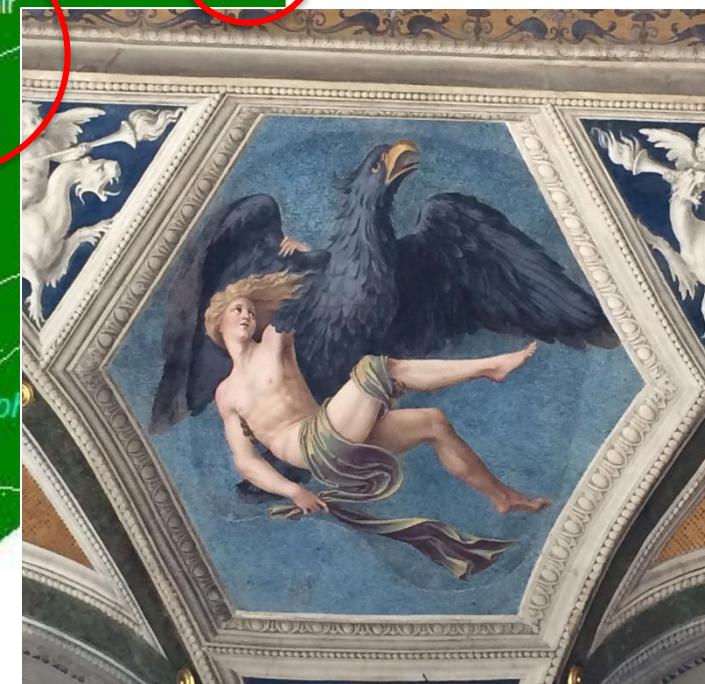
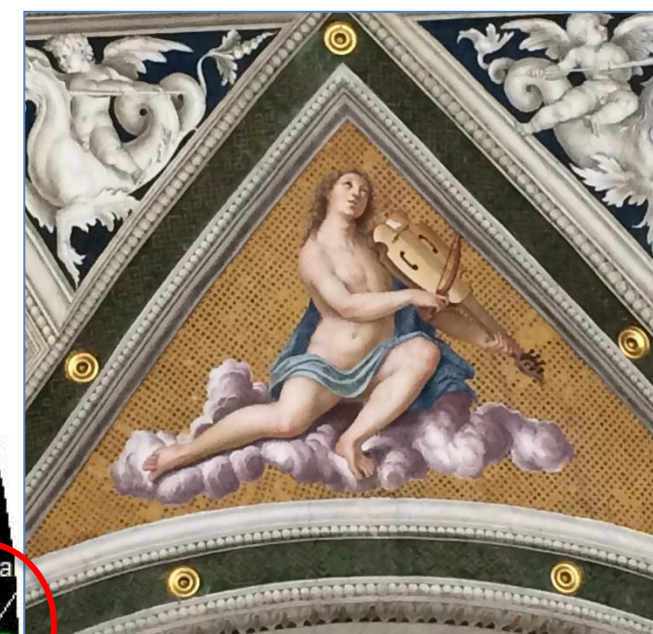


Lyra the Lyre

Lippincott, Kristen. 'Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered: The Sala Di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala Del Mappamondo at Caprarola' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 185-207.

The 'Summer Triangle' – Deneb Adige, the tail of Cygnus the Swan, Altair in Aquila the Eagle, and Vega in Lyra, the Lyre – near Venus in Capricorn. The 'Summer Triangle' is the signature star formation of summer but can be seen in autumn in November, December and January in the Western part of the sky until mid-to-late evening.





Ursa Major / The Wain

A wain is a horse- or oxen-drawn, load-carrying vehicle, used for agricultural purposes rather than transporting people. It is also an archaic term for a chariot.



Sala di Galatea in the Villa Chigi (now Farnesina) in Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo: D.Gunzburg.



Zenith stars:

Perseus holding
the head of the
Medusa

Cetus the sea
Monster

Andromeda and
Pegasus

Sala di Galatea in the Villa
Chigi (now Farnesina) in
Rome, c.1511, ceiling. Photo:
D.Gunzburg.

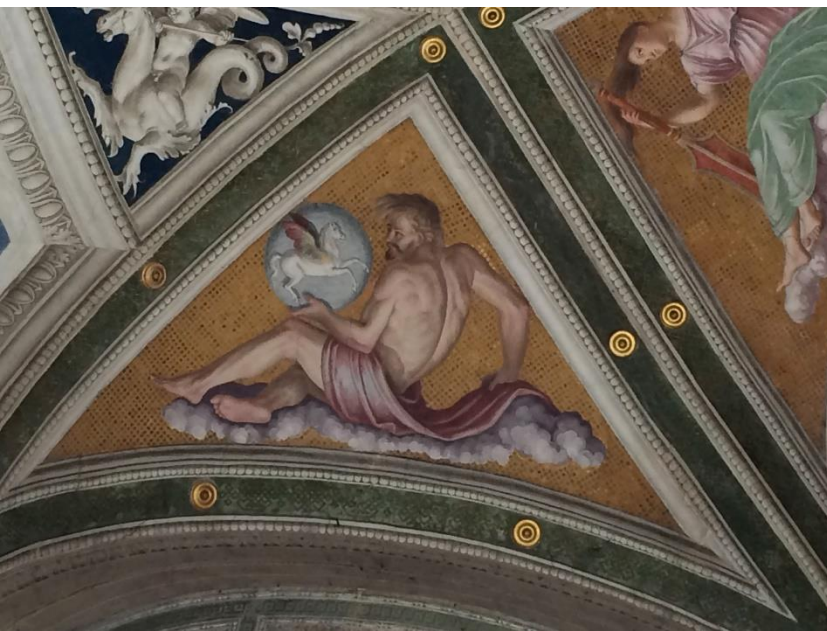




Ara the Altar



Canis Major



Pegasus



Triangulum



Auriga the Charioteer





My argument:

In creating this frescoed ceiling Agostino Chigi was placing himself, as a banker, in balance with the heavens in accordance with the medieval cosmos - the Aristotelian interconnected sympathetic cosmos based on a **dependency on order**.



REFERENCES

Lippincott, Kristen. 'Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered: The Sala Di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala Del Mappamondo at Caprarola ' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 185-207.

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Quinlan-McGrath, Mary. 'The Astrological Vault of the Villa Farnesina Agostino Chigi's Rising Sign.' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 91-105.

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