



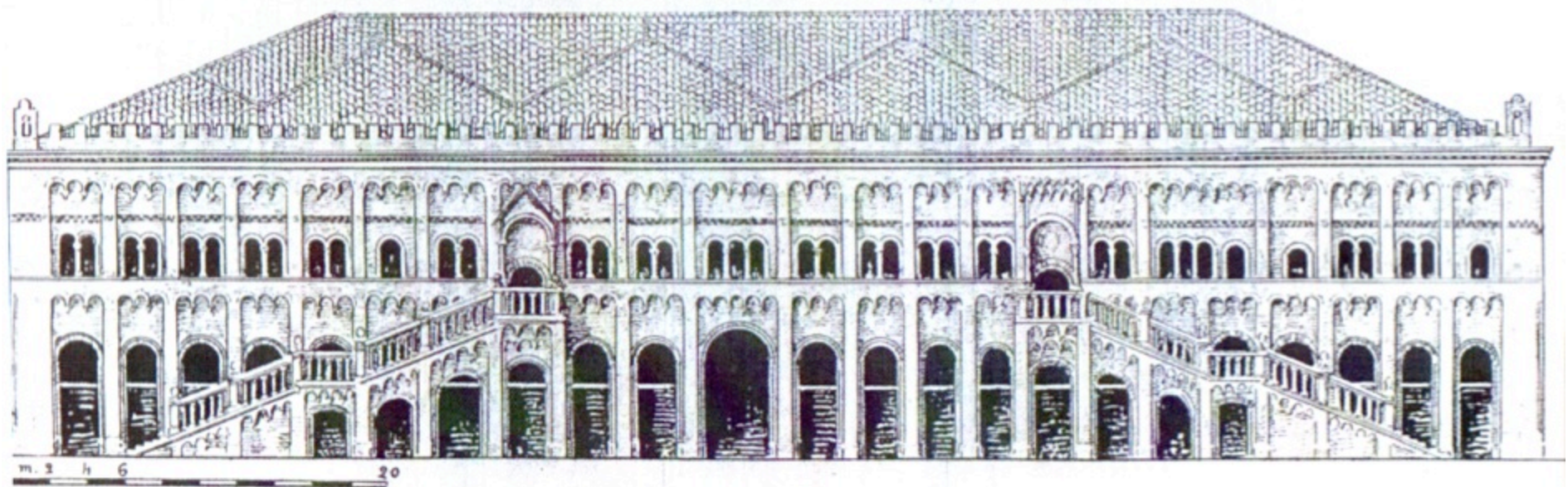
PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
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The Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture
School of Archaeology, History and Anthropology

The Reception of Islamic astrology in the images of the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy

Dr Darrelyn Gunzburg

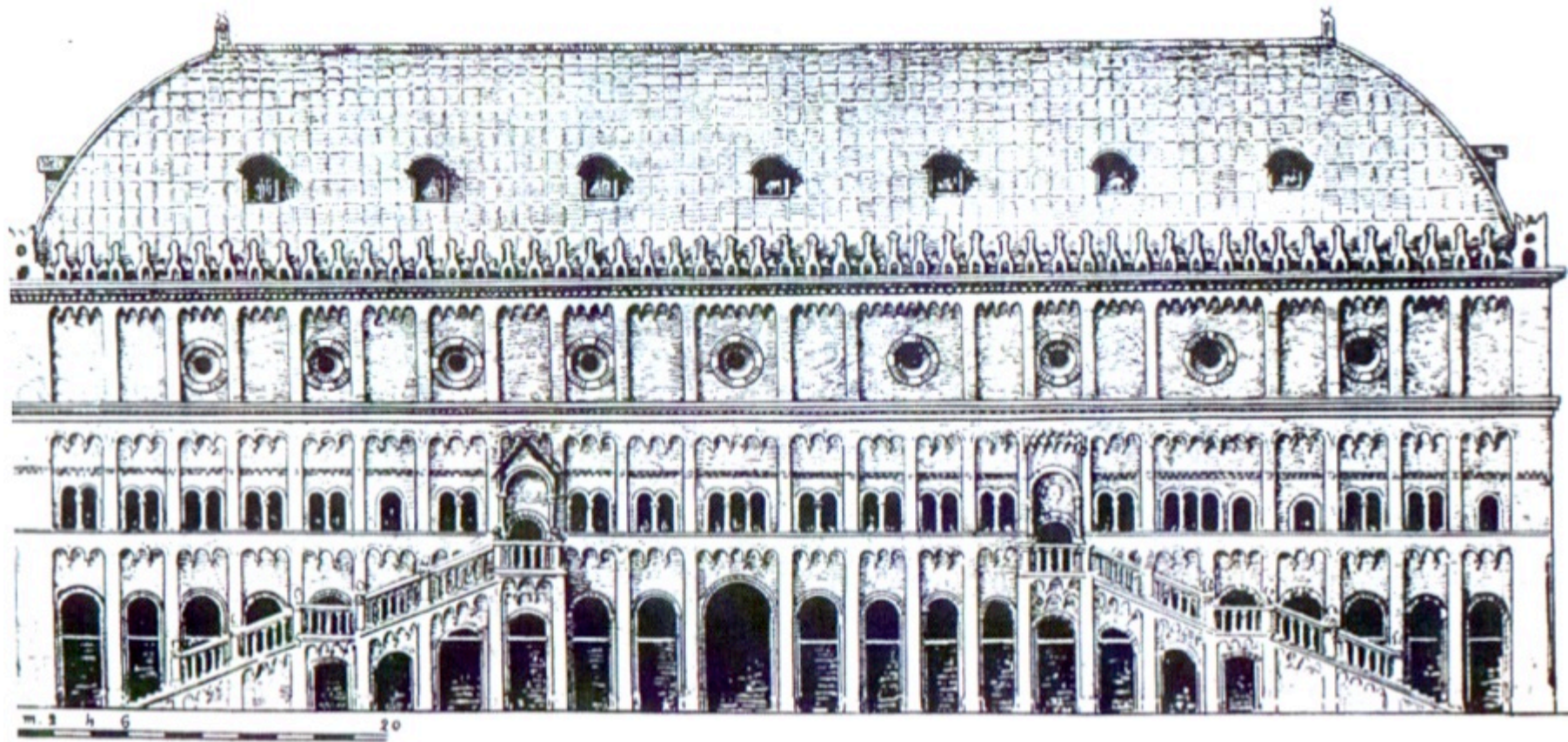




RICOSTRUZIONE IDEALE DEL PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE DAL 1219 AL 1305
FACCIATA SULLA PIAZZA DELLE FRUTTE

Il Palazzo della Ragione 1219-1305 according to Andrea Moschetti.

*From: Fabris, Giovanni. Cronache E Cronisti Padovani,
Cittadella Rebellato Editore, 1977, p.87.*



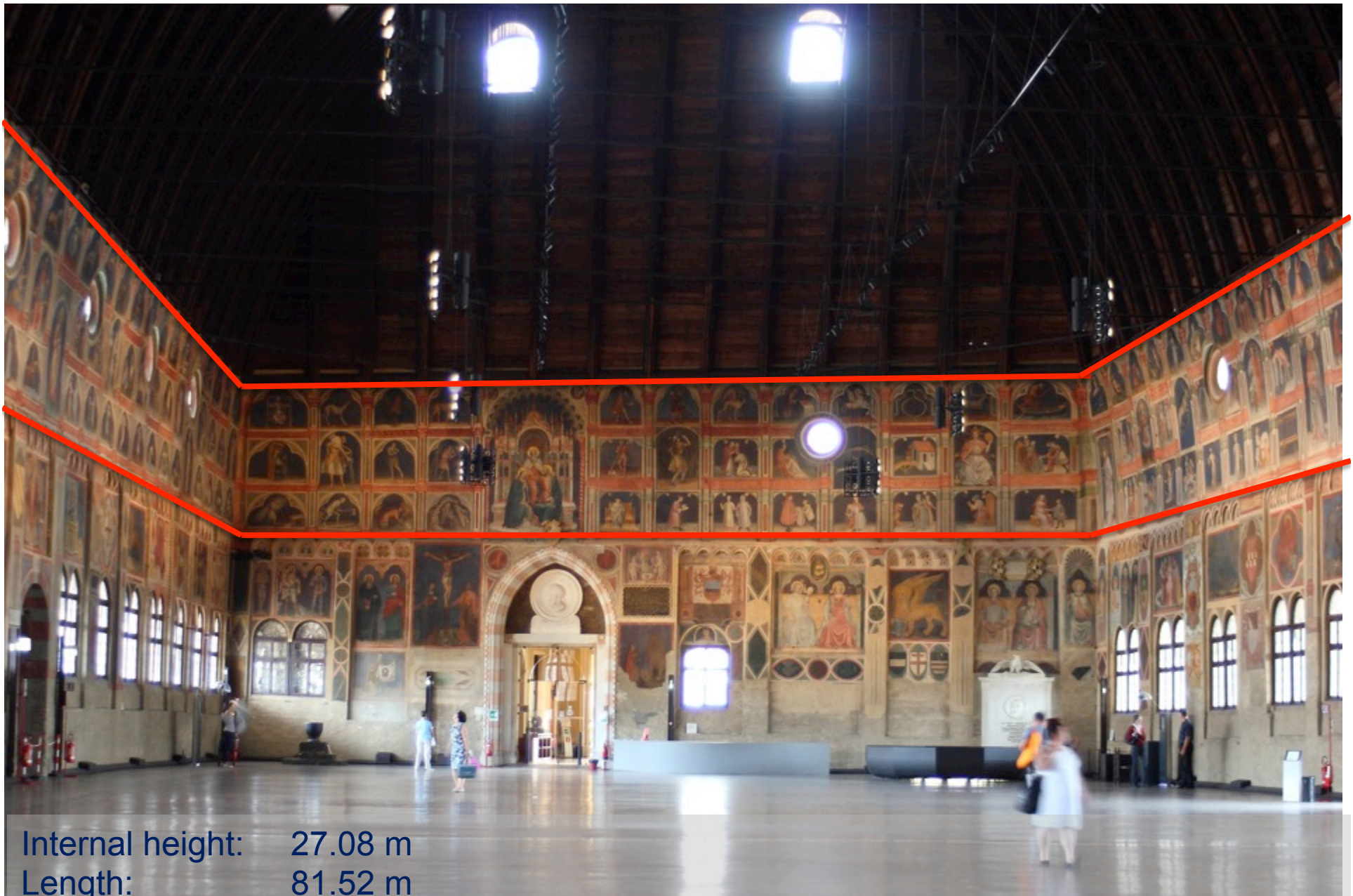
RICOSTRUZIONE IDEALE DEL PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE DAL 1304 AL 1318 c.
PAGGIATA SULLA PIAZZA DELLE FRUTTE

Il Palazzo della Ragione 1305 – c.1318, according to Andrea Moschetti

*From: Fabris, Giovanni. Cronache E Cronisti Padovani,
Cittadella Rebellato Editore, 1977, p.88.*



Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy, south façade.



Internal height: 27.08 m

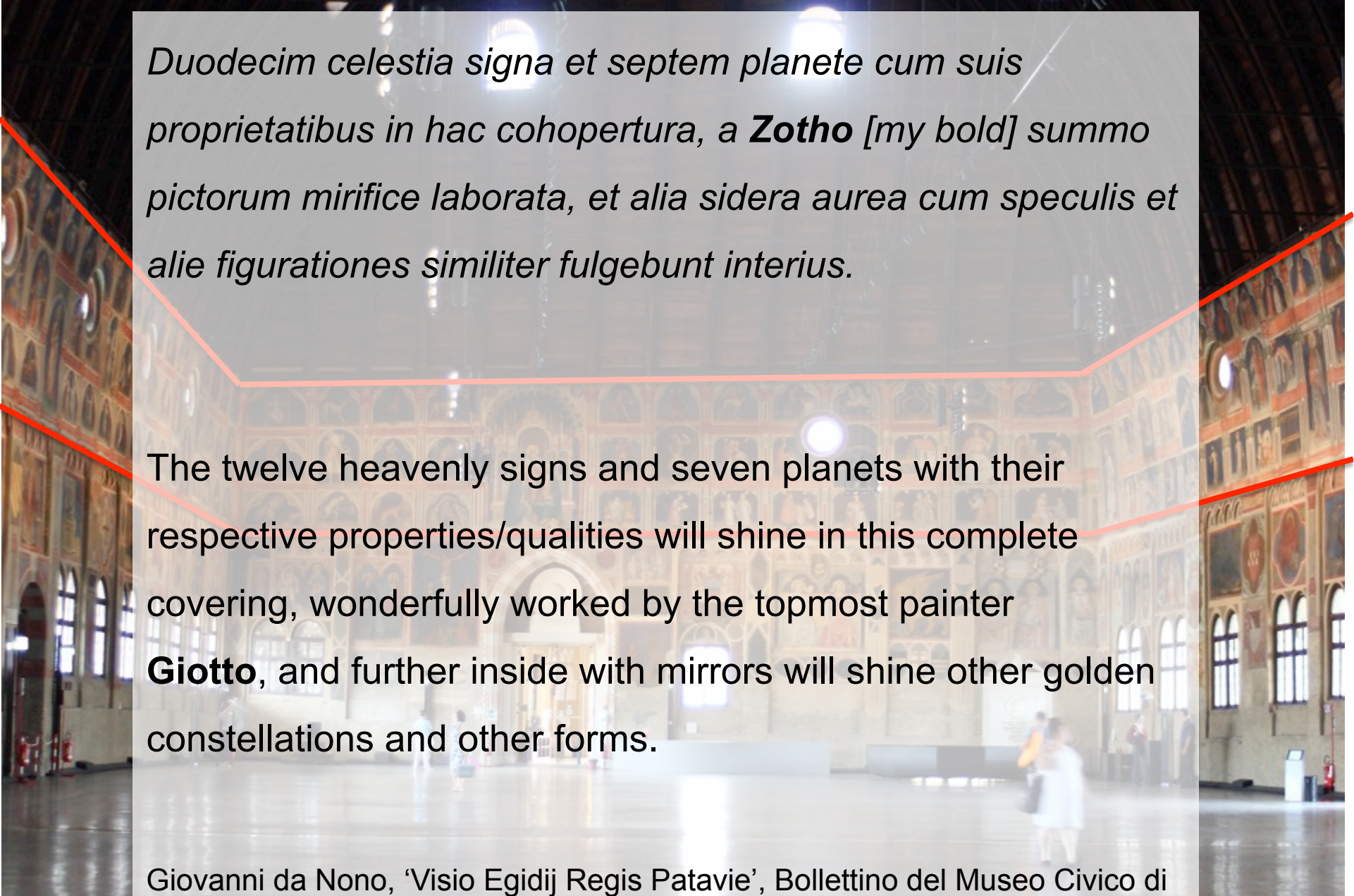
Length: 81.52 m

Width: 27.16 m

Height from top of fresco to the summit of the ceiling: 14.93 m







*Duodecim celestia signa et septem planete cum suis proprietatibus in hac cohopertura, a **Zotho** [my bold] summo pictorum mirifice laborata, et alia sidera aurea cum speculis et alie figurationes similiter fulgebunt interius.*

The twelve heavenly signs and seven planets with their respective properties/qualities will shine in this complete covering, wonderfully worked by the topmost painter **Giotto**, and further inside with mirrors will shine other golden constellations and other forms.

Giovanni da Nono, 'Visio Egidij Regis Patavie', Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova N.S. X-XI [XXVII - XXVIII] and XIII-XVII (1934-39).p.20

2 February 1420 ... Fire *ut prius erat* ('how it was before')

Nicolò Miretto (c.1375-c.1450) and Stefano da Ferrara (active fifteenth century) undertook the extensive repainting of the astrological scheme from 1425 to 1440.

Giovanni Michele Savonarola (1385-146) ... *Libellus* (1446)

17 August 1756 ... Hurricane

The fresco scheme was overpainted by Francesco Zannoni da Cittadella (1720–1792) in the period 27 July 1762- 27 September 1770.

1796 ... Napoleonic invasion.



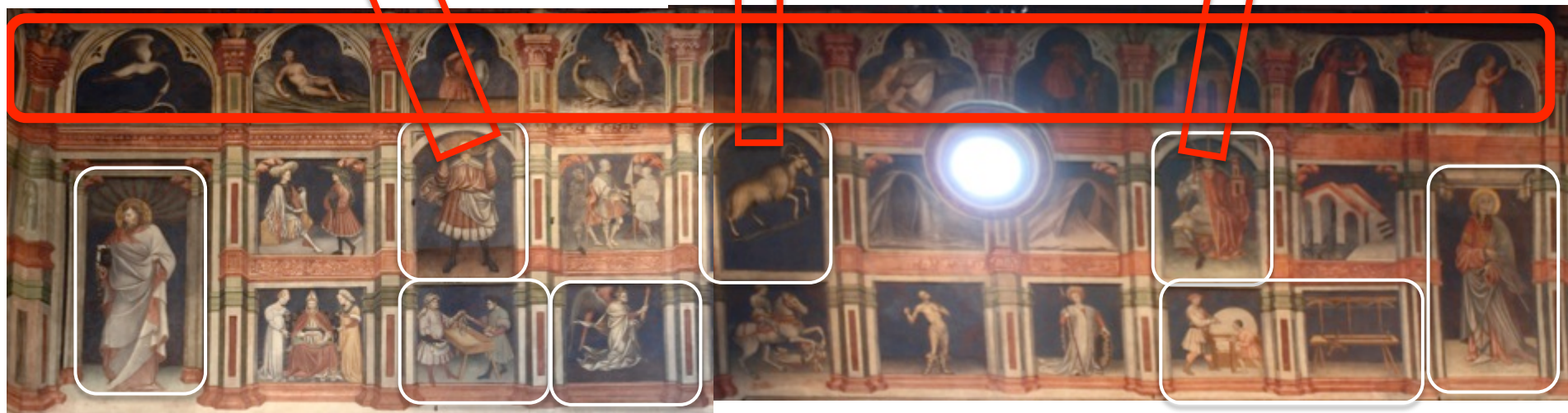
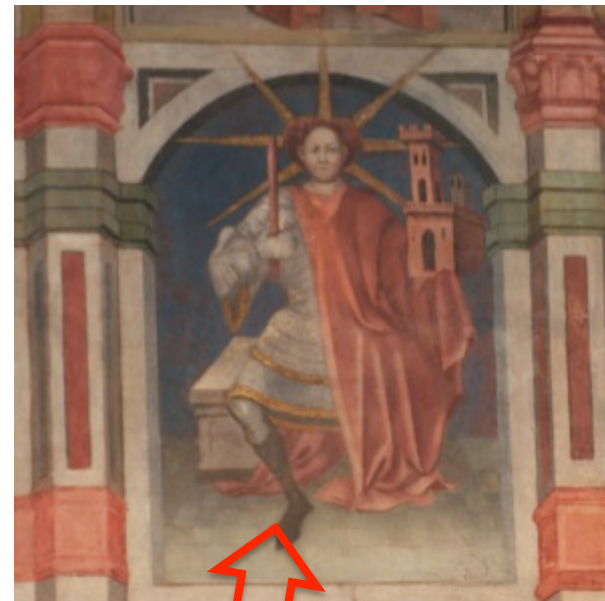
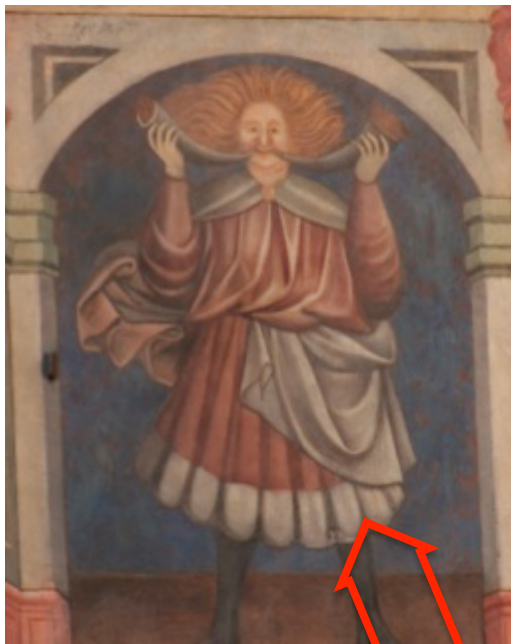
99. Late Gothic Master, detail of the frescos of the Salone; with the repaintings by Francesco Zannoni, 1762 and following. Padua, Palazzo della Ragione.



100. Late Gothic Master, detail of the frescos of the Salone; after the removal of the repaintings by Francesco Zannoni. Padua, Palazzo della Ragione.

1950s ... Alessandro Prosdocimi, director of the Museo Civico, instigated the restoration of some of the frescoes on the east and west walls and half of the southern wall.

Nearly all of Zannoni's eighteenth-century overpaintings were removed and only when no other paint layer beneath them could be detected were Zannoni's left in place.



South wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy.

Photos: D. Gunzburg



Gunzburg, Darrelyn. 'Giotto's Sky: The fresco paintings of the first floor Salone of the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy.' *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 7, no. 4 (2013): 407-433.



Pietro d'Abano, c.1257-1316,
exterior Salone, south façade, Padua, Italy.

Photo: D. Gunzburg.

In his will d'Abano described himself as '*artis medicine philosophie et astrologie professor*' (Master professor of medicine, philosophy and astrology).



Graziella Federici Vescovini, drawing on the work of Bruno Nardi, concluded that d'Abano should be recognized as an advocate of

the independence of secular medical, philosophical, and astronomical thinking from theological interference

and argued that d'Abano combined

Aristotelian philosophy and other doctrinal, medical and astronomical traditions

derived from Byzantine and Islamic scholars,

separated it [astrology] from demonic magic, and reinstated it between astronomy and mathematics whence certain philosophers and theologians had removed it.

Graziella Federici Vescovini, 'Peter of Abano and Astrology', in *Astrology, Science and Society: Historical Essays*, ed. Patrick Curry (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1987), 19-39, p.38.



Abraham Ibn Ezra

(born 1089–1092, died after 1160)

The Beginning of Wisdom (Reshith Hochma) (1148), a basic textbook of astrology and considered to be 'the zenith of Ibn Ezra's astrological work'

The Book of Reasons (Sefer Ha'Te'Amim) a commentary and additional material for *The Beginning of Wisdom*

The Book of Nativities and Revolutions (Sefer Ha'Moladot)

al-Qabīṣī' (Alcabitius) (d. 967)

The Introduction to Astrology

Abū Ma'shar (787–886)

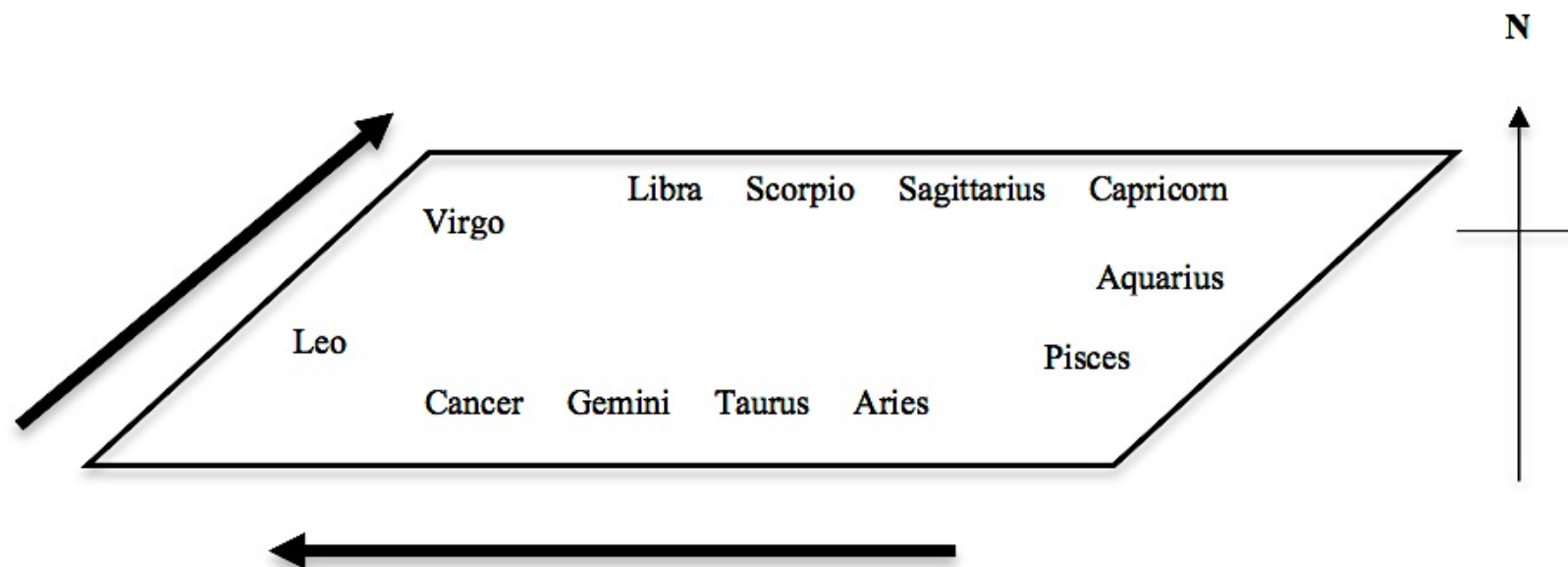
Liber introductorii maioris ad scientiam iudiciorum astrorum.

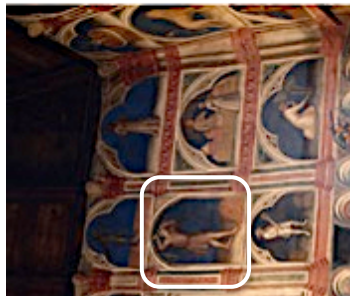
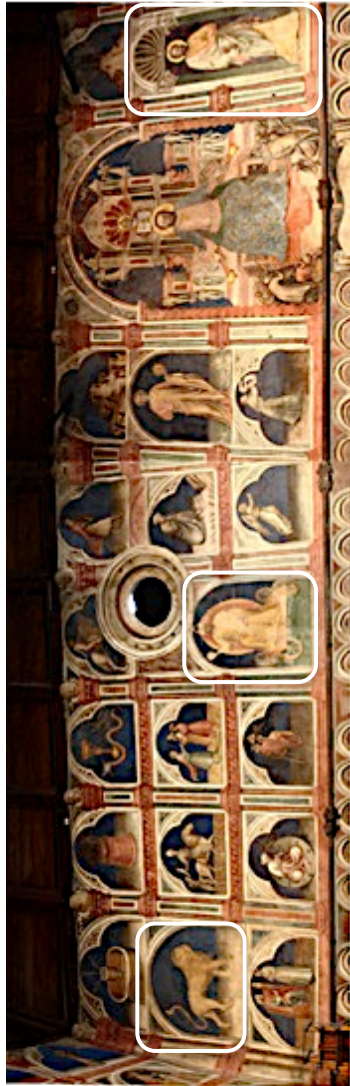
Dorotheus of Sidon (c.75 CE),

Ptolemy (90–168 CE)

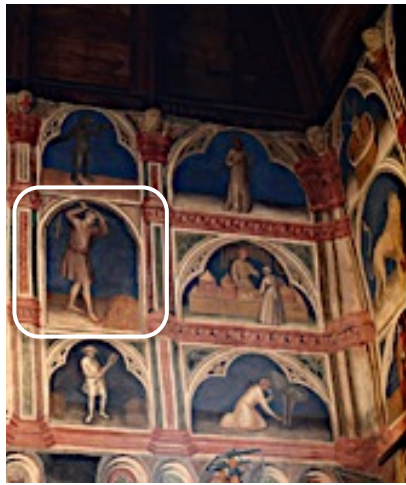
Those who attempt to make predictions following general lines, as do the Arabs, Firmicus, Pontanus and others in more recent times, proceed in a way similar to the man who, wanting to build a house, arranges in order all the beams in one place, all the planks in another, in yet another all the limestone, in another, all the sand, in another the stones, in another the iron braces, and in another the tiles. This man thinks he has done well, having observed the right ordering. He has however, done nothing in order to build a house. Not unlike him, are those who say: Saturn in such and such a place signifies such and such a thing, Jupiter, something else. For this is useless and does not help prediction. Rather, it is necessary, for each thing, to know the principle of conjunction and the time, mode, order and place. It is necessary, in short, to know how to join together the individual significations.

Giuseppe Bezza, 'Representation of the Skies and the Astrological Chart', in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014), 59-86, p.80.









Ibn Ezra described the nature of the Sun as 'hot and dry because he gives heat and dryness'.[1]

Of Leo, the sign through which the sun travels along the ecliptic at this time of the year when it is summer, Ibn Ezra wrote:

Its nature is burning and destructive heat. Its beginning is a little warm, its middle is very destructive and producing sickness, and its end produces winds.[2]

Al-Qabīṣī wrote of the Sun that,

Of illnesses, those that are hot and dry and visible (external) on bodies.[3]

1. Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Book of Reasons, Se'fer Ha'Te'Amim*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein, vol. Project Hindsight Hebrew Track Volume 1 (Berkely Springs: The Golden Hind Press, 1994), p.38.

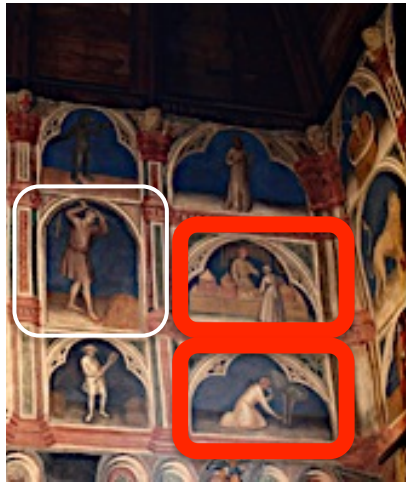
2. Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein (Reston: ARHAT Publications, 1998), p.41.

3. Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, and Michio Yano, eds. *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction to Astrology*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts. London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2004, pp.72-73.

Roger French considered that,

Central to both medicine and astrology were the doctrines of growth and decrease – the physician's job being, in Abū Ma'shar's view, to supply deficiencies, remove excesses, block external influences and preserve a tempered state. This intervention was not merely corrective but preventative. For example, the prognosticating doctor knew that when the summer came there would be fevers; as Abū Ma'shar notes, 'he therefore let blood and used the cupping-glass to try to prevent putrefaction and apostemes which were among the cause of fevers'.[4]

4. Roger French, 'Foretelling the Future: Arabic Astrology and English Medicine in the Late Twelfth Century', *Isis* 87, no. 3 (1996), 453-480, p.456.





Ibn Ezra wrote of the Sun that

of human nature it has knowledge and
intelligence

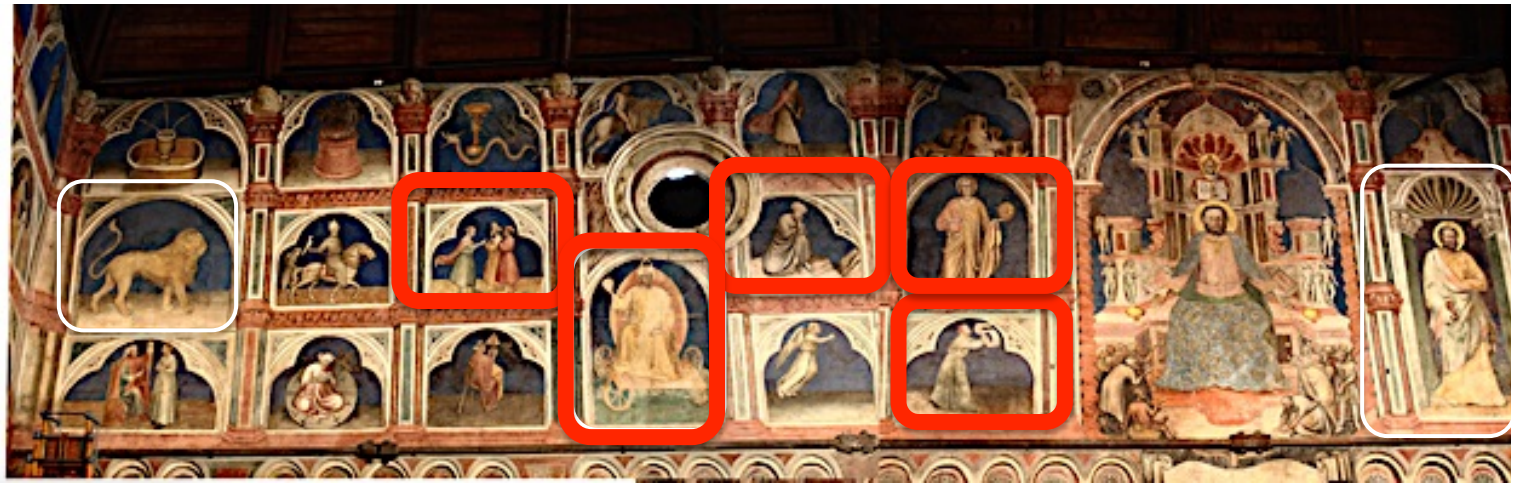
as well as ruling

constitutions and laws[1]

and al-Qabīṣī wrote of the Sun that

if Jupiter mixes with it, it indicates decisions
concerning religious issues, and judgments
between people and concerning injustices.[2]

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1. Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom (Reshith Hochma)*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein (Reston: ARHAT Publications, 1998), p.99.
 2. Burnett, Yamamoto, and Yano, eds., *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction*, p. 78.

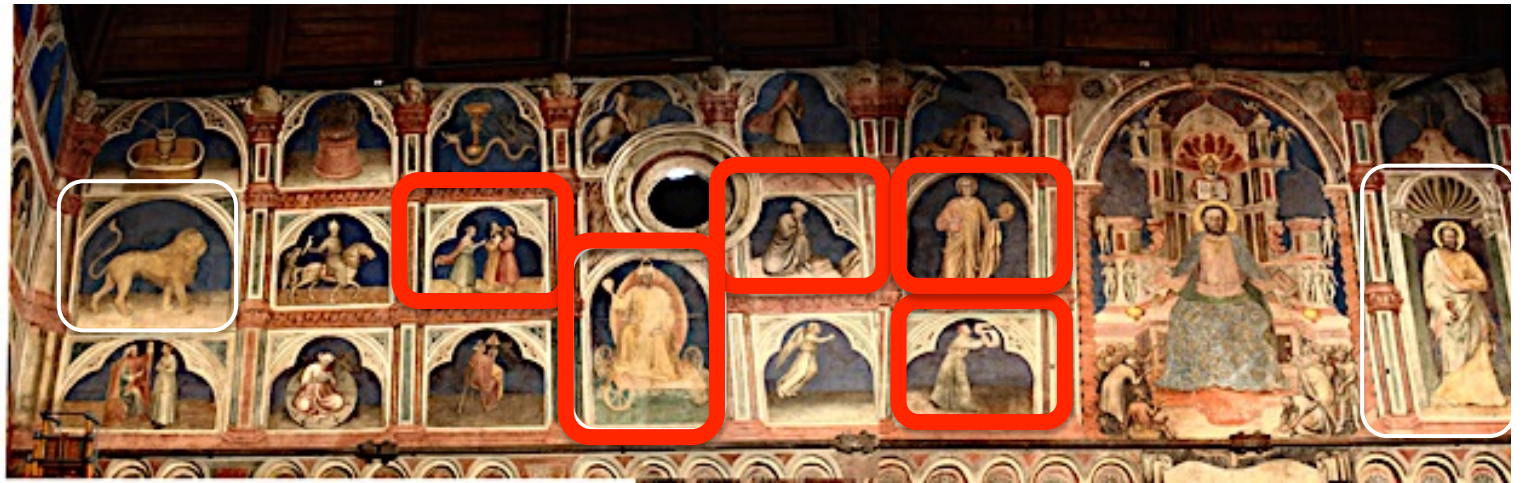


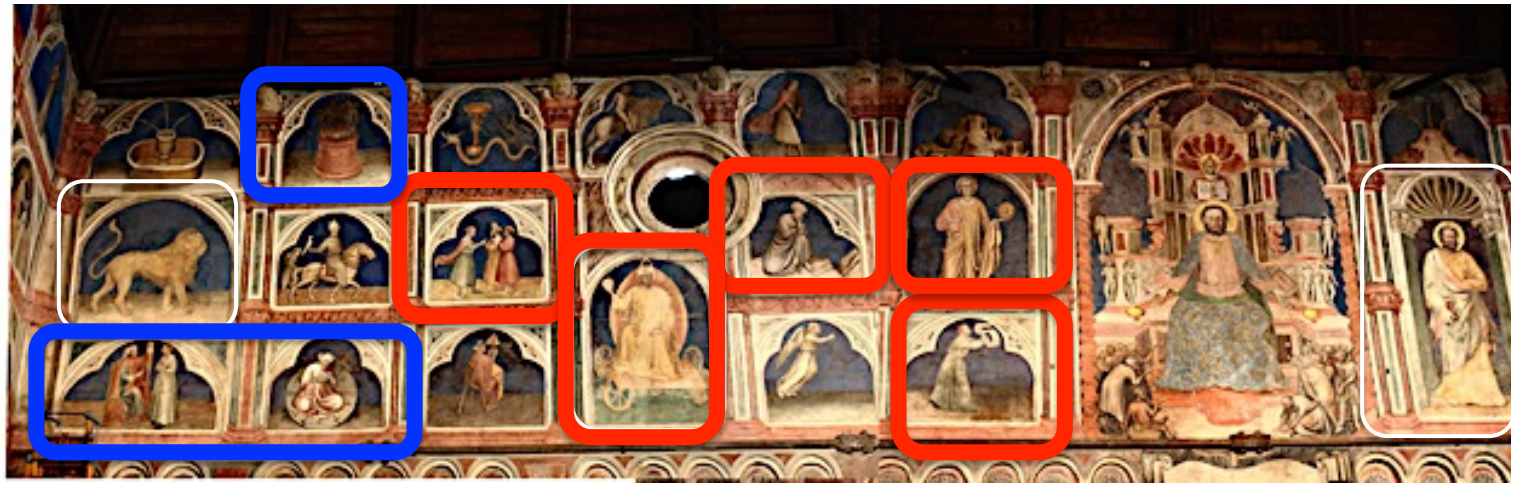
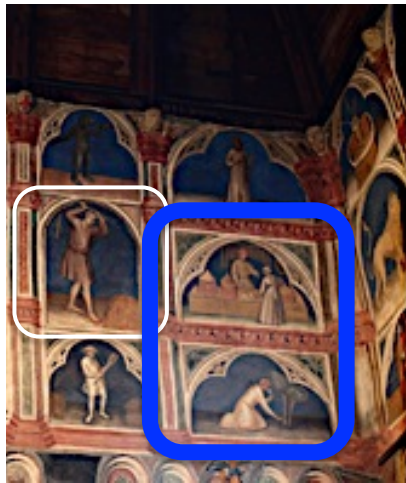


Andrea Bonaiuti, *The Triumph of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1366-68, fresco, east wall, Spanish Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.



Andrea Bonaiuti, *The Triumph of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1366-68, fresco, east wall, Spanish Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.





Ibn Ezra wrote of Mars that it ruled

all men of war and those who command it [1].

He described Mars as being

harmful and destructive

and that it ruled

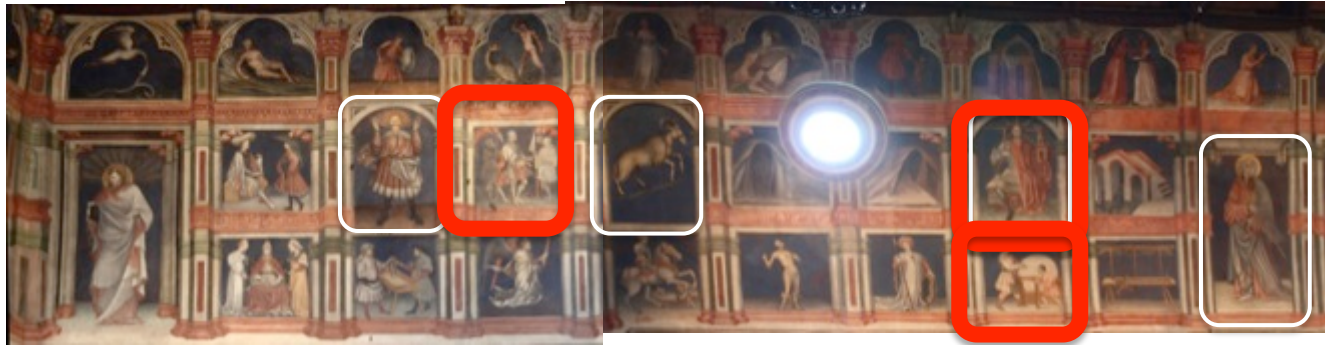
bloodshed, killing, war, fighting

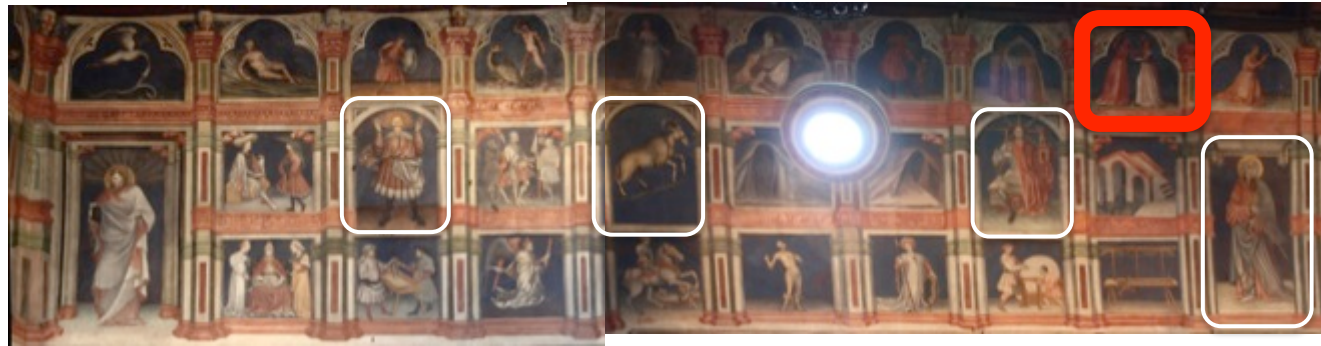
and

the iron which destroys [2].

1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.96.

2. 1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.97.





Ibn Ezra wrote of the professions of Mars that it ruled

ironsmiths, blacksmiths, makers of lances and
swords, bloodletters. [1]

al-Qabīṣī wrote that

of professions it has every profession involving
fire, or what was done with fire, such as beating
with hammers and pressing out swords. [2]

1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.97.

2. Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, and Michio Yano, eds. *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction to Astrology*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts. London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2004, p.69.







Mars rules Aries and Mars rules Scorpio. Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua.
Photo: D.Gunzburg



45.407246° N 11.875412° E 89 ft

Palazzo della Ragione Padua Italy



Jupiter rules Sagittarius and Jupiter rules Pisces. Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. *Photo: D.Gunzburg*



Ibn Ezra noted of Saturn:

In his share of the human nature is the contemplation, little talk, astuteness, isolation from people, ...deep thought..., fear, worry, ...

and al-Qabīṣī wrote of Saturn:

Of the complexions of the bodies it indicates melancholy It indicates profundity of thought and much silence...

1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.92.

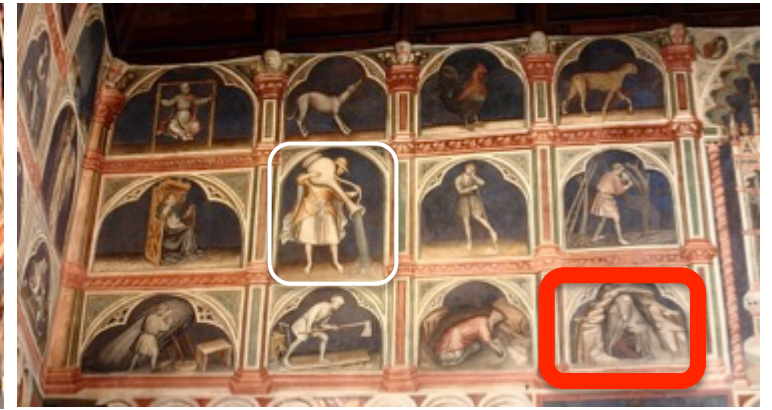
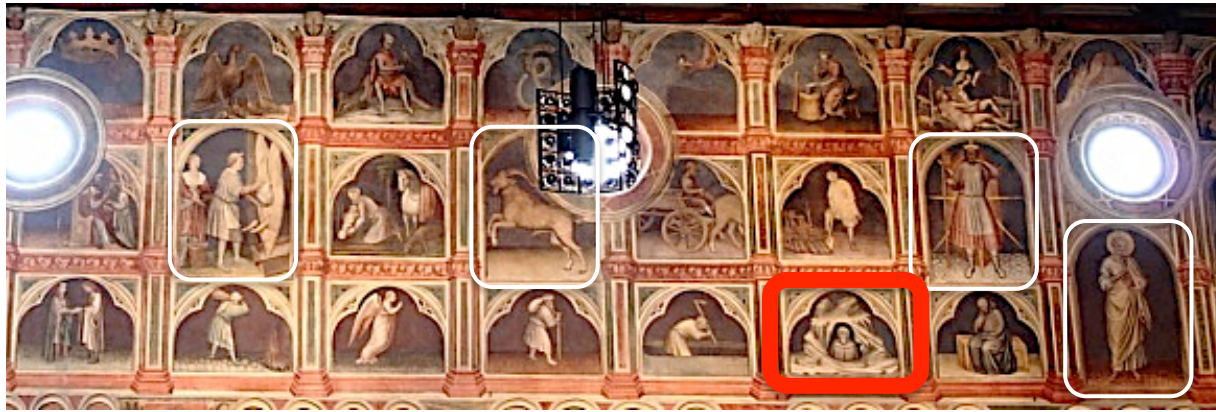
2. Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, and Michio Yano, eds. *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction to Astrology*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts. London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2004, p.63.



Ibn Ezra wrote of Saturn that

In his share [of places] of the earth are the caves, and wells, and pits, and prisons, and every dark and uninhabited place, and the cemeteries and distant bad roads where danger lurks.[1]

1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.91.



Ibn Ezra wrote that Saturn ruled tanners [1], and al-Qabīṣī wrote of Saturn:

‘Of jobs it indicates leather-working. If it is on its own in its indication, without being mixed with any of the planets, then it indicates leather-working for shoemaking.’[2]

1. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.91. In *The Book of Reasons*, the book that followed *The Beginning of Wisdom*, Ibn Ezra elaborated on the fact that Saturn produced a great deal of moisture expressed through water and the seas, and thus ruled tanners because they worked with water to produce parchment.
2. Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Book of Reasons (Sefer Ha'Te'Amim)*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein, vol. Project Hindsight Hebrew Track Volume 1 (Berkeley Springs: The Golden Hind Press, 1994), p.42. Burnett, Yamamoto, and Yano, eds., *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction*, p.63.



Ibn Ezra further wrote of Saturn that

His occupation is every work
that is exhausting and of little
reward, and all inferior work,
such as quarrying stones.

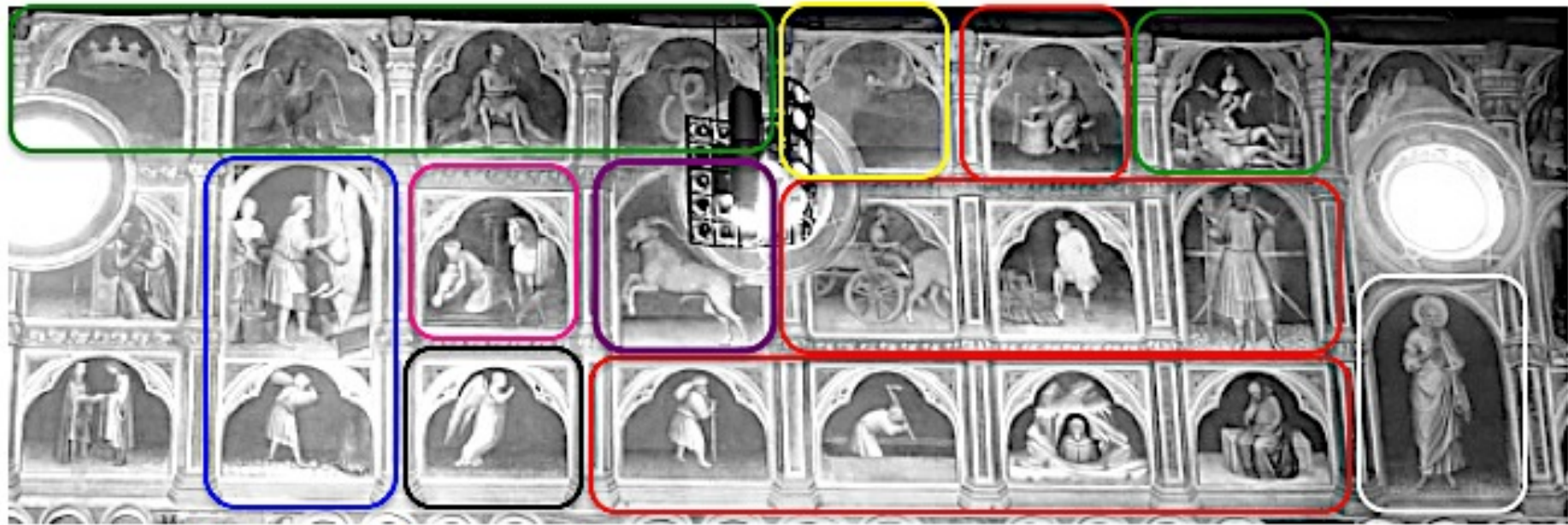


Ibn Ezra wrote that Saturn signified
'captains or sailors' [1] as well as 'all filthy
work'. [2]

1. ibn Ezra, *The Book of Reasons, Se'fer Ha'Te'Amim*, p.42.

2. ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.92.







In conclusion...

