

Chapter 3

Mercury rules Gemini and Mercury rules Virgo

Introduction

Having investigated the parts of the wall described by the two luminaries, this chapter considers the Salone fresco images connected with the ‘chapters’ of Mercury. Using the methodology described in the Introduction, it examines the top register of constellation images and evaluates the celestial cartography that is described by those fresco images. It then explores the middle and lower registers and evaluates the planetary qualities that are described by the fresco images as informed by the astrology of Ibn Ezra, and that of al-Qabīṣī. It then summarises the findings, both visually and textually.

In considering these qualities of Mercury defined by Ibn Ezra and al-Qabīṣī, one would anticipate seeing in the narrative of the images in the two ‘chapters’ centred on Mercury commonalties that apply to the planet and differences that are expressed in its rulerships of Gemini (the day sign) and Virgo (the night sign).



Figure 1. Aerial view of the Palazzo della Ragione from Google Earth showing the fresco scheme of the first floor Salone and its division into ‘chapters’ for the areas ruled by Mercury.

Mercury rules Gemini

A foldout of the images for this ‘chapter’ can be found on page 131.

Table 7: The 9 columns of the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’, South Wall, using Barzon numbering and collating image designations.			
Image	Barzon (1924)	Fantelli and Pellegrini (2000) C: constellation; Z: influence of zodiac sign; P: influence of planet; M: occupation of the month; NI: a figure they are unable to interpret; W: a winged figure; R: a religious scene.	Rigobello and Autizi (2008)
25A		? (NI)	Horse.
25B	Act of charity.	Act of charity.	Act of charity.
25C	Wind.	Wind(?) (W)	Angel.
26A		? (NI)	Wayfarer.
26B	The month of May		
26C	Peasant carrying a tree.	Festival of trees? (M)	Man with a tree.
27A		? (NI)	Dog.
27B	Mary Magdalene.	<i>Noli me tangere.</i>	<i>Noli me tangere.</i>
27C	Idleness.	Leisure? (Z)	Inspiring woman.
28A	Women’s work.	Women’s work. (P)	Woman who sews.
28B	Alchemist.	Alchemist. (P)	Alchemist.
28C	Beggar.	Beggar. (P)	Bent man with a stick.
29A	Women’s work.	Women’s work. (P)	Woman at work.
29B	Vision.	Vision.	Vision of God.
29C	Art of speech.	Rhetoric. (P)	Conversation.
30A		? (NI)	A man with a crossbow.
30B	The planet Mercury.		
30C	A seated woman.	Temperance. (Z)	Woman with closed fists - Temperance.
31A	<i>(In 1924 this image was damaged.)</i>	? (NI)	A man with a stick.
31B	Student.	Occultism (?) (P)	Occultism.
31C	Women’s work.	Women’s work. (P)	A woman who spins.
32A	Constellation of the Little Horse?	The Little Horse. (C)	The Little Horse.
32BC	The Apostle S. Bartholomew.	S. Bartholomew?	S. Bartholomew.
33A	Constellation of The Plough. <i>Plaustum.</i>	The Plough. (C) <i>Plaustum.</i>	The Plough. <i>Plaustum.</i>
33B	The zodiac sign of Gemini the Twins.		
33C	A woman resting.	? (NI)	A woman resting – Interiority.

The Top Register of Constellation Images for Mercury rules Gemini

The scholars of Table 7 described the images of the top register of the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ as follows: 25A ‘a horse’, 26A ‘a wayfarer’, 27A ‘a dog’, 28A, ‘a woman who sews’, 29A ‘a woman at work’, 30A ‘a man with a crossbow’, 31A ‘a man with a stick’, 32A ‘the constellation of the Little Horse’, and 33A ‘the constellation of The Plough’ (Foldout Fig.6). In considering which of these images besides 32A and 33A might also represent the constellations over Padua in this season, a possibility is the image 27A, The Dog, representing the constellation of Canis Major. Canis Major, however, and its most predominant alpha star Sirius, rises at around 9:00 am and sets with the sun at around 19:00 and hence the constellation is not visible in the sky at this time of year.

In the predawn sky for Padua at the Gemini Ingress (when the sun moves into the horoscopic sign of Gemini – see Glossary), however, four of the fresco images of the top register correlate with four constellations that *are* visible in the sky at this latitude: the constellations of Sagittarius The Archer (30A), Perseus the Warrior (31A), Pegasus and Equuleus The Little Horse (32A), and Ursa Major (33A).



Figure 2. Image 30A of a swarthy man with short dark hair and a beard holding a crossbow, suggesting this is the constellation Sagittarius the Archer, top register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

Image 30A (Fig.2) is depicted in the Salone as a swarthy man with short dark hair and a beard holding a crossbow, wearing a brown sack hat and dressed in a knee-length tunic. This might be thought to be the constellation Sagittarius. Whilst this may differ from the

recognised wild satyr constellation of Sagittarius, half man, half beast, said to have been derived from the Sumerian Enkidu created to destroy Gilgamesh,¹ the constellational emphasis was always on the bow and, through using his sharp eyesight, the destruction the archer could cause with it, allowing him to kill a man from afar, rather than through hand to hand combat with a sword. Aratus described the constellation Sagittarius The Archer simply as *Bow* and *Archer*.² In the sky Sagittarius The Archer is setting in the west, visible in the pre-dawn light (Figs.11 and 12).



Figure 3. Image 31A, top register, south wall, a swarthy man with a baton in his hand in readiness to take action, suggesting this is the constellation Perseus the Warrior, top register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

Image 31A (Fig.3) is of a swarthy man with a short moustache, wearing a yellow draped headdress and a red tunic and holding a baton in his right arm, painted above the arch of the window as if keeping watch on a battlement or bridge. The iconography of the image is in keeping with the constellation of Perseus, the young warrior, the champion, holding a weapon in readiness.³ The image next to it at 32A (Fig.4) is of two horses, corresponding with the two horses of Pegasus, and Equuleus the Little Horse, which lie near the constellation Perseus in the sky (Fig.9). Image 33A (Fig.5) is of a wagon covered with a red cloth with four large cartwheels. To the left can be seen the back two wheels of a second wagon. Scholars in Table 7 described this as 'Plaustrum', The Plough, also known as The Wain or Wagon, other names for the constellation Ursa Major. The constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor are clearly visible in the pre-dawn light at this Gemini Ingress.

¹ Gertrude and James Jobes, *Outer Space: Myths, Name Meanings, Calendars From the Emergence of History to the Present Day* (New York & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1964), pp.236-237.

² Aratus, *Phaenomena*, trans. Aaron Poochigian, Johns Hopkins New Translations from Antiquity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.13.

³ Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), p.329.



(Left) Figure 4. Image 32A, top register, south wall, showing two horses, suggesting this is the constellational pair of Pegasus, and Equuleus the Little Horse, top register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 5. Image 33A, showing two wagons, called by scholars 'Plaustrum', The Plough, also known as The Wain or Wagon, other names for the constellation Ursa Major, top register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

Although no other fresco images along this top register appear to be a part of this sky narrative, there are other possibilities for their meaning. The 'horse' at 25A (Fig.6), when compared with Pegasus and Equuleus, looks quite different and may instead be a depiction of a wild donkey, which Ibn Ezra chronicled under the rulership of Mercury.⁴ Placed in this position, it suggests the image plays a dual role by also being part of the Corpus Christi 'chapter' (chapter 8) immediately preceding this Mercury rules Gemini 'chapter'. If image 25A is completing the Corpus Christi 'chapter' then it may well represent the Feast of the Asses or Festum Asinorum,⁵ the name derived from the inclusion of Balaam and his Ass as part of the Processus Prophetarum, the procession of prophets who each testified to the birth of the Messiah. The Feast dates from the eleventh century, although it is said to have originated from a sermon written in the sixth century ascribed to Saint Augustine. The Festum Asinorum later detached from the Processus Prophetarum and became an independent trope, such as at Beauvais in the thirteenth century where, on 14 January, a young woman with a small child riding an ass formed the focus of the procession to St Stephen's church of the Feast of the Flight into Egypt. The Festum Asinorum gradually lost its identity but the Processus Prophetarum continued in the Corpus Christi cycle. More will be written of Corpus Christi in chapter 8.

⁴ Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom (Reshith Hochma)*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein (Reston: ARHAT Publications, 1998), p.102.

⁵ Timothy Joseph Crowley, 'Feast of Asses', in *Book Feast of Asses*, Series Feast of Asses (1913), 1. At [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_\(1913\)/Feast_of_Asses](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Feast_of_Asses) - accessed 8 April 2013.



Figure 6. Image at 25A of an ass, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, top register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. *Photo: D.Gunzburg.*



Figure 7. Image 25B, south wall, middle register, with one man seeking forgiveness from another, middle register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. *Photo: D.Gunzburg.*

The image beneath the ass at 25B (Fig.7), a bareheaded, barefoot, balding man in a grey tunic, on his knees pleading with a man wearing a similar grey tunic with a cape, and a chaperon on his head, suggests the kneeling man is seeking forgiveness. The image is positioned such that the standing man points towards the Corpus Christ ‘chapter’, visually proposing that forgiveness can be found through that pathway. If this is correct and these two images, 25A (Fig.6) and 25B (Fig.7), are in fact completing the previous chapter, then the angel at 25C (Fig.8) with both arms raised and facing the viewer’s right is what I suggest is a ‘chapter changing’ angel, signifying a change of image content.

This idea builds on the notion that these images direct the way the narrative is read through bodily direction and signified by gesture, as described in chapter 1. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin also observed how the narrative disposition of panels in civic commissions of chapels in the early trecento utilised a perpetual sense of movement via change of direction of figure groupings, a variety of separate scenes that nevertheless connected vertically as well as horizontally, and a variation of scale, all of which had the capacity to ‘enliven the long flat wall in an exhilarating manner.’⁶ If the Salone fresco scheme was using ‘chapter-changing’ angels in this same way, to guide movement, as discussed in chapter 1, then the angel at 25C (Fig.8) with both arms raised and facing the viewer’s right, signifies the opening of the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’.



Figure 8. The image of 25C of a 'chapter changing' angel with both arms raised and facing the viewer's right, lower register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. *Photo: D.Gunzburg.*

⁶ Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *The place of narrative: mural decoration in Italian churches, 431-1600* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.78.

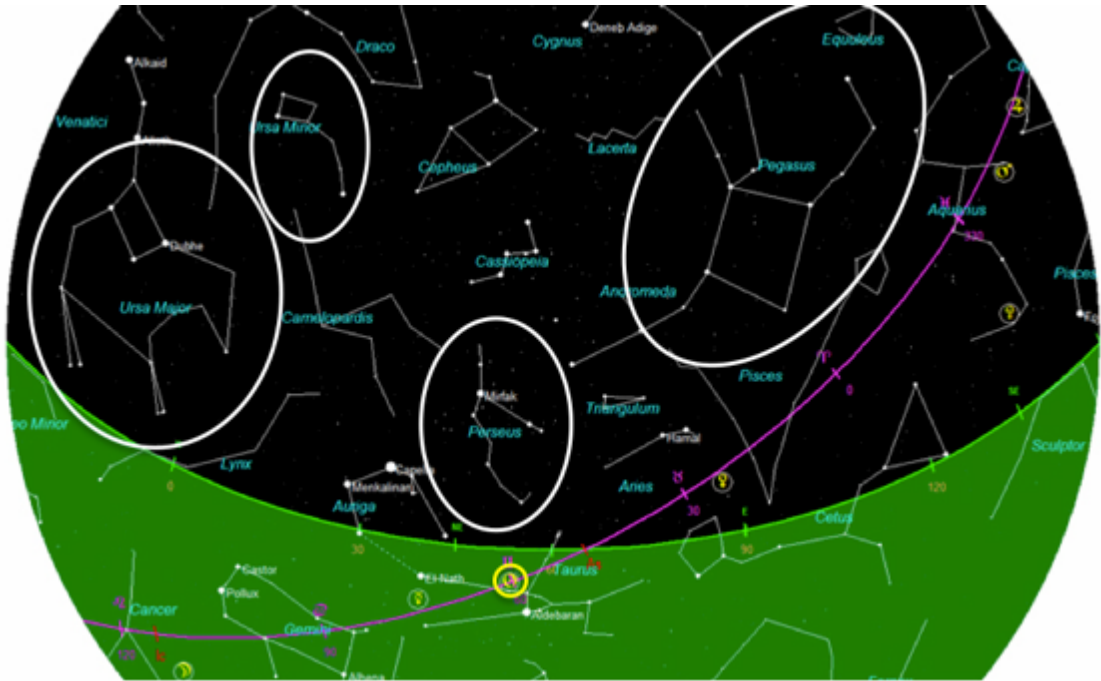


Figure 9. Sky map for pre-dawn Gemini Ingress May 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, showing the positions of the constellations relative to the sun, seen here circled in yellow below the horizon in the green area, about to rise in the east. From left, the circled constellations are: Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Perseus directly above the sun, and Pegasus with Equuleus.

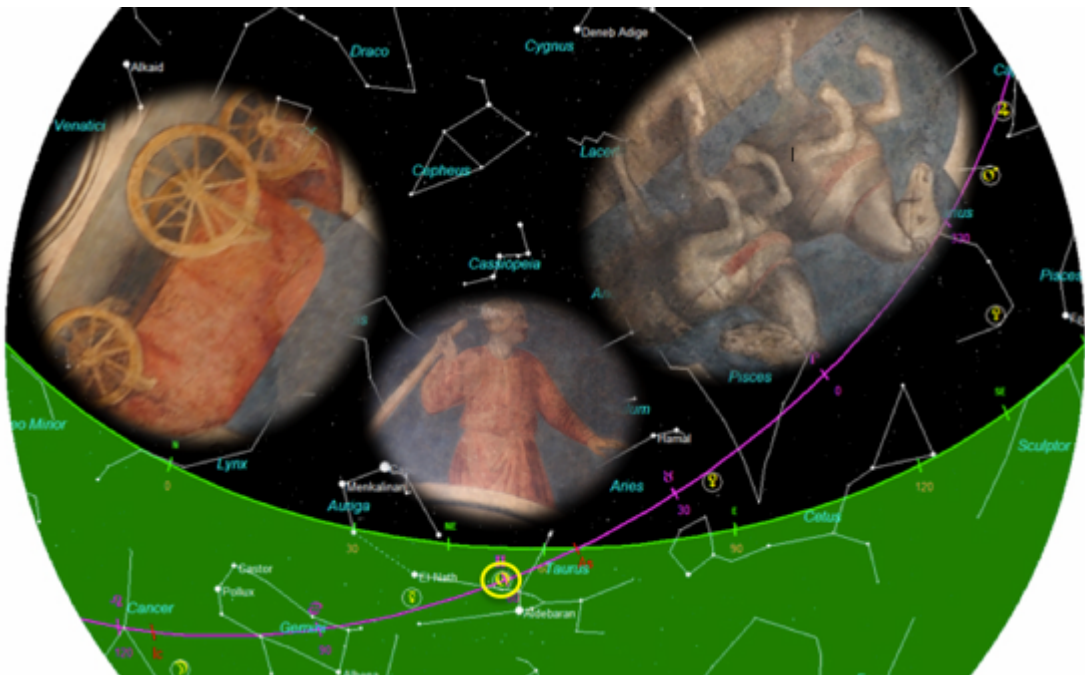


Figure 10. Sky map for pre-dawn Gemini Ingress May 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, looking east, showing the artist's impression of the sky and their correct orientation: image 33A(Ursa Major, Minor), image 31A (Perseus directly above the sun), and image 32A (Pegasus with Equuleus).

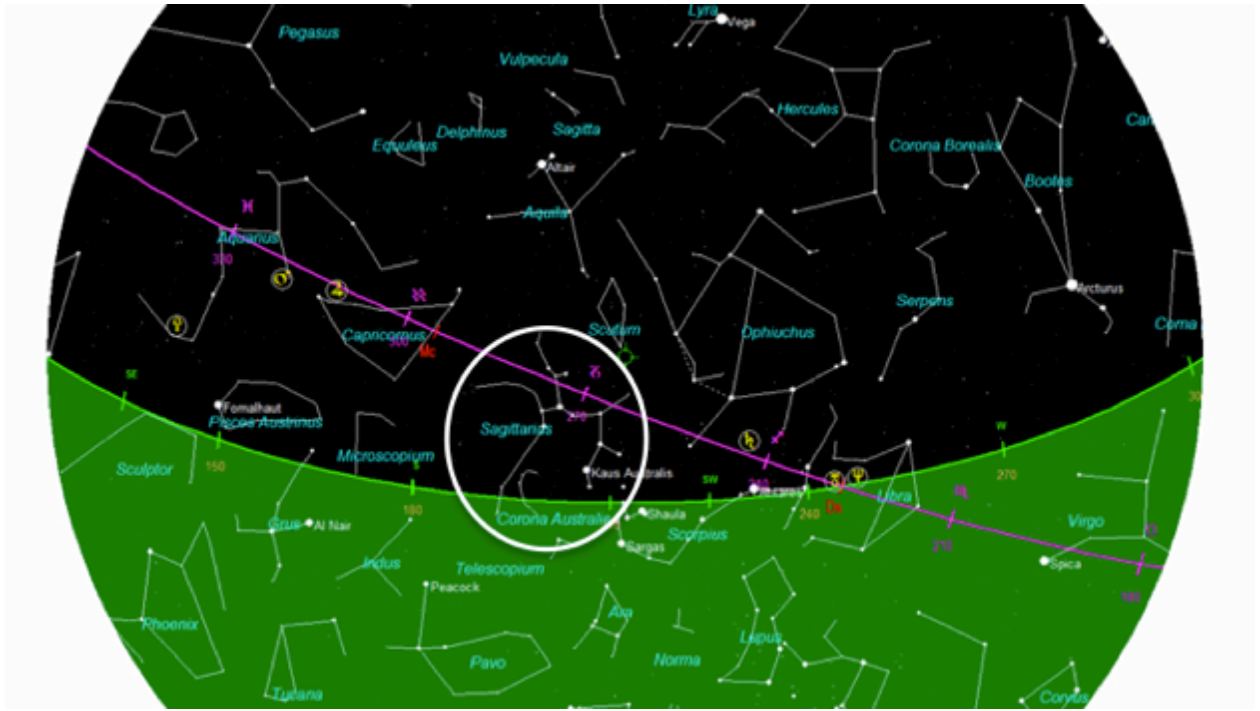


Figure 11. Sky map for pre-dawn Gemini Ingress May 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, showing the constellation Sagittarius the Archer setting in the west.

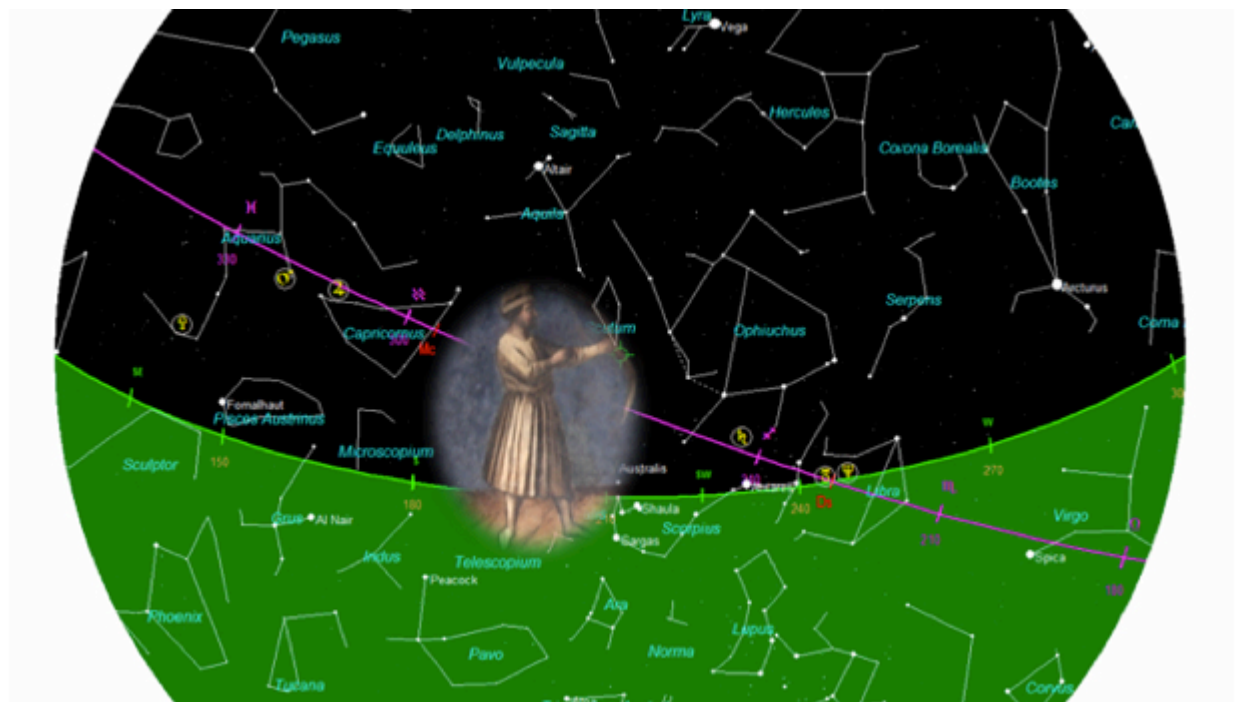


Figure 12. Sky map for pre-dawn Gemini Ingress May 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, looking east, showing the artist's impression of the sky and the correct orientation of the constellation of Sagittarius the Archer (30A).

The Middle and Lower Registers —

The Astrology Reflected in the Daily Lives of the Paduan Community for when Mercury was travelling through the zodiac sign of Gemini

Image 26B (Fig.13), a mounted rider carrying a branch with leaves in his right hand, whilst a second branch, attached to the right side of the saddle, is allowed to sweep along the ground, is the image for the Labour of the Month for May, the month of lushness and growth. Image 26C (Fig.14), a walking man carrying a sapling over his right shoulder, continues the narrative of verdure associated with planting at this time of the year.



(Left) Figure 13. Image 26B of a mounted rider carrying branches, symbolising the Month of May, middle register, south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 14. Image 26C of a walking man carrying a branch over his right shoulder, symbolising the labour of the month of May, lower register south wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

In this ‘chapter’, however, the pattern of month—zodiac sign—planet—saint is changed. Image 33B (Fig.15), the zodiac sign of the Twins of Gemini, is placed adjacent to and following image 32BC of the saint (Foldout Fig.6), thus in this area of the wall, the zodiac sign, rather than the saint, closes the ‘chapter’. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter 1, the planets are characterised by rays, yet in this ‘chapter’ the artist has given rays to the zodiac sign of The Twins of Gemini (Fig.15 and Foldout Fig.6). It is worth pursuing a suggestion as to why this might have occurred and to do so means considering the image designated by scholars in Table 7 as the planet Mercury in its rulership of

Gemini 30B (Fig.16). Barzon noted of image 30B that the rays were missing and the compartment illustrating the planet (Fig.16) was smaller than elsewhere in the scheme.⁷ Barzon was, however, looking for a representation of Mercury ‘as a warrior, armed with a helmet with a caduceus motif, and crossing the sky on a chariot pulled by two cocks.’⁸ Along with Fantelli and Pellegrini, and Rigobello and Autizi, he assumed that, since the scheme was astrologically underpinned, this image at 30B (Fig.16) of an older man with a moustache and a long brown beard wearing a brown coif on his head, and a brown cape over a red tunic must represent the planet Mercury, since the man was holding a compass and bending over a blank circular chart which, along with astrologer, is also indicative of the geographer and the geometer. If one assumes that the artist knew what he was doing, however, and was deliberately giving the rays to the zodiac sign whilst keeping the size of the image for Mercury the same as the other planets (see Foldout Fig.6 for a comparison of the size of the squares in which each image is depicted), then the obvious selection of image representing Mercury by size would be image 29B (Fig.17). Blume and Mariani Canova, both of whom, as noted in the Introduction, referred only broadly to the images of the top three registers of the Salone, also concluded that image 29B was a more likely image for the planet Mercury.⁹ Mariani Canova described this image at 29B (Fig.17) as Mercury ‘the Lord of Religious Speculation’ via ‘a monk in the act of praying’¹⁰ even though she gave no supporting evidence for her claim.

Scholars in Table 7 described image 29B (Fig.17), a balding man with curly brown hair and beard dressed in a grey cloak praying to a vision of a bearded man with a gold halo, as ‘vision’ or ‘vision of God’. Barzon assigned it to the group of religious images further back along the south wall, as did Rigobello and Autizi who connected it with the saint at 23BC.¹¹ Yet this image shows a man in communication with the divine, in the ‘chapter’ of the wall illuminating Mercury, the planet of communication.

⁷ Antonio Barzon, *Gli Affreschi del Salone in Padova* (Padova: Libreria Gregoriana, 1924), p.68.

⁸ Barzon, *Gli Affreschi del Salone in Padova*, p.68.

⁹ Dieter Blume, *Regenten des Himmels. Astrologische Bilder in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), p.76, footnote 38.

¹⁰ Giordana Mariani Canova, ‘Padua and the Stars: Medieval Painting and Illuminated Manuscripts’, in *ASP Conference Series (Proceedings of a conference held October 18-23, 2009 in Venezia, Italy)*, ed. Enrico Maria Corsini. Vol. 441 (San Francisco: Astronomical Society of the Pacific, 2011), 111-129, pp.124,126.

¹¹ M. Beatrice Rigobello and Francesco Autizi, *Palazzo della Ragione di Padova. Simbologie degli astri e rappresentazioni del governo* (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2008), p.182.



(Left) Figure 15. The Twins of Gemini at 33B, completing the Mercury rules Gemini 'chapter' along the south wall, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 16. Image at 30B of a man measuring a globe with a compass or dividers, designated by scholars in Table 7 as The Planet Mercury, middle register, south wall, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.



Figure 17. Image 29B, a man praying, south wall, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Ibn Ezra wrote of Mercury that, 'In his share are the soul of man and the power of intelligence.'¹² For medieval man, human intellect was a faculty of the soul,¹³ and Mercury, the planet that ruled the soul and the intellect, offered man divine reason. This was in keeping with Scholastic thought that had engaged the Latin West since the twelfth century and which sought to reconcile 'faith with reason' (*fides si poterit rationemque*

¹² ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.76,1. See also Gyula Klima, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, eds. *Medieval Philosophy*, Blackwell Readings in the History of Philosophy. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p.91.

coniunge).¹⁴ Thus I contend that this image at 29B is the image for the planet Mercury, placed in the correct register with the correct image size and that the image has no rays emanating from the man as this would elevate the human above the divine, above God, to whom this man prays. Whilst it is speculation, one can continue this line of thinking by suggesting that, since the artist felt he had to assign rays somewhere, then in this instance he assigned them to the zodiac sign, the Twins at 33B (Fig.15).

Scholars in Table 7 described image 27B (Fig.18), a woman in red prostrating herself in front of a nimbed and bearded man holding two extended fingers towards her in a benedictory gesture, as ‘Mary Magdalene’ and *Noli me tangere*. Although it may seem unclear as to why such an image might appear in this ‘chapter’, a reason can be found in the Arena Chapel where Giotto chose the *Noli me tangere* (Fig. 19) to illustrate that the Resurrection had taken place.¹⁵ If we allow that this image at 27B describes bodily transformation, then image 28B (Fig.20) of a man sitting in front of a stove or kiln, and which scholars in Table 7 described as ‘an alchemist’, takes on a different meaning.



Figure 18. Image 27B of a woman in red prostrating herself in front of a nimbed and bearded man holding two extended fingers towards her, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

¹⁴ Boethius, *Tractates, De Consolatione Philosophiae (The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy)*, ed. E.H. Warmington, trans. H.F. Stewart and E.K. Rand, 1968 ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Loeb Classical Library; reprint, 1968), p.36. Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 2001). John Haldane, ‘Editorial Introduction: Scholasticism - Old and New’, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 43, no. 173 (1993), 403-411, pp.403-406; George Makdisi, ‘Scholasticism and Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 2 (1989), 175-182.

¹⁵ Evelyn Sandberg Vavalà, ‘A Chapter in Fourteenth Century Iconography: Verona’, *The Art Bulletin* 11, no. 4 (1929), 376-412, p.405.



Figure 19. Giotto di Bondone (c.1267–1337) *Noli me tangere*, c.1305, fresco, Arena Chapel, Padua. Image: ARTStor.



Figure 20. Image 28B, a man sitting in front of a still or kiln, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Ibn Ezra wrote of Mercury that ‘In his share of the metals are live silver (mercury)’¹⁶ and this image at 28B (Fig.21) represents that quality of Mercury in its rulership of Gemini. Alchemists considered mercury to be the *prima materia* from which all metals were formed, based on the quality and quantity of sulphur contained within it.¹⁷ Alchemy was, however, considered to be more than just physics. Tara E. Nummedal observed that

¹⁶ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101, 102.

¹⁷ John Maxson Stillman, *The story of alchemy and early chemistry* (NY: Dover, 1960), pp.7-9.

Like medicine, alchemy has always been both an intellectual and a practical pursuit. On the one hand, it has a long textual tradition, emerging from the pens of scholars who aimed to understand the origins and behaviors of metals and other substances. Stretching from antiquity to the present, with a canon of medieval and early modern texts at its core, the alchemical corpus documents this sophisticated body of theory, elaborated in classical, Islamic, and Christian contexts. On the other hand, alchemy has equally deep roots in the world of the artisan—that is, of the distillers, miners, goldsmiths, and apothecaries whose knowledge of waters, metals, and minerals, as well as the equipment and processes necessary to work with them, constituted alchemy's practical foundation. In many ways, the scholar and the artisan occupied different social and intellectual worlds before the early modern period in Europe; in the work of the alchemist, however, these worlds had always been joined.¹⁸

Using this idea of how alchemy fuses and transforms materials and processes, earthly transformation is exemplified in the image of the man at the kiln at 28B (Fig.20), bodily transformation is exemplified in *Noli me tangere*, image 27B (Fig.18) which visually leads to image 29B (Fig.17) and which, one could suggest, depicts mental or intellectual transformation. Thus I am arguing for a sub-narrative of states of change along the centre register in this 'chapter'.



Figure 21. Image 31B of a seated man studying a roll of text, middle register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

¹⁸ Tara E. Nummedal, 'Words and Works in the History of Alchemy', *Isis* 102, no. 2 (2011), 330-337, pp.330-331.

Ibn Ezra's list of qualities for Mercury also included 'eloquence, accuracy of language, fast talk, ability to recite and rhyme, knowledge of hidden secrets and prophecy'¹⁹ and these qualities can be seen in image 30B (Fig.16) of the man with the compass, and image 31B (Fig.21) of a seated man studying a roll of text.



Figure 22. Image 29C of three men debating or negotiating, lower register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

The scholars in Table 7 described image 29C (Fig.22) of three men debating or negotiating, as '*Arte della Parole*, Rhetoric' and 'conversation'. The man seated on the wooden pew holds a fleur-de-lis tipped staff in his left hand and gestures with his right hand. The man in front of him gestures with his right palm up. The third man points to his eye with his right index finger. As one of the Trivium, Rhetoric would be in keeping with Mercury in its rulership of Gemini. Rhetoric or oratory, however, implies a single man holding forth and this image is of a discussion or argument. Thus Dialectic, or Logic, 'the universal instrument of reason' offering a method for resolving disagreements,²⁰ or as Ibn Ezra described, 'negotiation, verbal arguments without resorting to blows',²¹ is, I contend, a more appropriate description. The gesture of the man furthest from us suggests 'I have seen': if he is pointing to his eye, then this suggests internal vision; if he is pointing up to

¹⁹ Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein (Reston: ARHAT Publications, 1998), p.102.

²⁰ Plato, Gorgias, 448d, 449ab. Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John Cooper, M. (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 1997), pp.794-795. See also Klima, Allhoff, and Vaidya, eds., *Medieval Philosophy*, p.27.

²¹ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.102.

heaven, then he may be calling on God as a witness. Situated underneath the image of the planet Mercury at 29B (Fig.17) this gesture may also be read as pointing upwards and towards human intellect as a faculty of the soul.

To sum up so far, the sub-narrative of qualities in this Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ are depicted through images relating to faith and reason to produce transformation: bodily transformation (27B), material transformation (28B), intellectual transformation (29B), spatial transformation (30B), and the study of text (31B) that can then be transformed into practical judgment in the Salone, all of which can be seen literally visually on the lower level of this ‘chapter’ as being underpinned by reason and logic, Dialectic.

What I am suggesting is that, rather than being discrete packages of information expressing a single, simple concept, the images appear to reveal a rich tradition that sits beneath them when they are observed, focused upon, and thought about in juxtaposition with each other. I am suggesting that it is possible that the Palazzo della Ragione was not only a Palace of Reason and a Palace of Law but also a Memory Palace, a place that held memories in the medieval sense. This idea will be developed as the images are examined in each ‘chapter’.

Scholars in Table 7 described image 28A (Fig.23), a woman in a blue gown and a brown cap sewing a white chemise that rests on her knee, with a basket holding her scissors to her left on a wooden table, image 29A (Fig.23), a woman wearing a kirtle over a smock sitting on a stool fashioning a long white scarf with sets of parallel black lines, and image 31C (Fig.24) a woman wearing a white coif and a white gown holding a distaff in her left hand and a drop spindle in her right hand, as ‘women’s work.’ These may simply imply the ongoing work of domestic women. However, Ibn Ezra wrote of Mercury that, ‘Of clothing [he denotes] linen garments and all those which have embroidery in them’,²² hence these images may represent these qualities of Mercury.

²² ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.102.



Figure 23. The images at 28A of a woman sewing and 29A of a woman possibly knitting, top register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

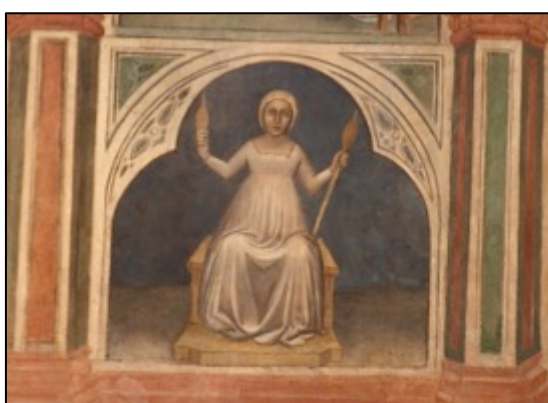


Figure 24. Image 31C of a woman holding a drop spindle and distaff, lower register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

The parallel of image 31C (Fig.24), the image of St Anne's maidservant spinning in *The Apparition to St Anne* panel (Fig.25) top register, south wall in the Arena Chapel, is striking. Don Denny associated the Arena Chapel image with the ancient Fate Clotho, spinning the thread of life as it is being created in the womb,²³ an image that was apt for the (then) childless St Anne. Image 31C is, however, placed along the lower register in the Salone fresco images and acts visually as the 'full stop' of this chapter. Ibn Ezra discussed the fate of the individual within the collective in the first four pages of his *The Book of Nativities and Revolutions*. He stated that one's fate began with the nation into which one was born and completed with one's personal fate, which involved the exercise of knowledge, wisdom and common sense.²⁴ Howard Strickman highlighted Ibn Ezra's belief, expressed as part of his commentary on Psalm 19, that 'men can avert the fate that

²³ Don Denny, 'Some Symbols in the Arena Chapel Frescoes', *The Art Bulletin* 55, no. 2 (1973), 205-212, p.207.

²⁴ Avraham Ben Meir ibn Ezra, *The Book of Nativities and Revolutions (Sefer Ha'Moladot)*, ed. Robert Hand, trans. Meira B. Epstein (Berkeley Springs: ARHAT, 2008), pp.1-4.

the stars have in store for them by studying the laws of astrology.²⁵ This image, which opens up areas for future research to which I shall return, sits comfortably in this Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ both for its surface meaning of spinning, as well as the deeper philosophical underpinnings of fate.



Figure 25. Giotto di Bondone (c.1267–1337) *The Apparition to Saint Anne*, (left) and detail of spinner (right) c.1305, fresco, Arena Chapel, Padua. Image: ARTstor.

The apostle at 32BC – St Matthew

The apostle at 32BC (Fig.26) has a balding head, full brown beard flecked with grey and a grey moustache. He wears a white belted tunic under a red mantle. Derbes and Sandona identify Matthew in the Arena chapel as the figure with a balding head, grey curly head and a grey curly beard, dressed in a rose tunic and mantle.²⁶ The mantle colour and facial characteristics of this image in the Salone fresco scheme are consistent with that of St Matthew in the Arena Chapel frescoes (Appendix 5). Furthermore in this image at 32BC the apostle carries an open book with a black binding in his left hand, with an item hanging from his belt. As the book, pen, and inkhorn were St Matthew’s attributes, I am suggesting that this item is an inkhorn, further substantiating this apostle as St Matthew.

²⁵ Norman H. Strickman, ‘Abraham ibn Ezra’s ‘Yesod Mora’’, *Hakirah, the Flatbush Journal of Jewish Law and Thought* 12(2011), 139-169, p.166.

²⁶ Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, *The Usurer’s Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), p.134.



Figure 26. Image 32BC depicting (*left*) the saint along the south wall completing the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ and (*right*) a close up detail of the implement in his left hand, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

Visual Summary of the themes emerging in these three registers of Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’

Whilst there is still uncertainty as to what some images may mean (26A, 27A, 27C, 28C, 30C and 33C), a visual summary of this Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ (Fig.27) shows the following themes emerging: the completion of the Corpus Christ ‘chapter’ (circled in pink); a ‘chapter-changing’ angel (circled in black); the image of the month and associated labour of the month (circled in blue); constellation images (circled in yellow); the zodiac sign of Gemini (circled in purple); the planet Mercury and its qualities, suggestive of states of change and transformation (circled in red); and the saint of the chapter (circled in green).



Figure 27. Visual summary of the emergent themes of the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ of the Salone fresco images. *Image:* D.Gunzburg.

Mercury rules Virgo

A foldout of the images for this ‘chapter’ can be found on page 153.

Table 8: The 9 columns of the Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’, south and west Walls, using Barzon numbering and collating image designations.			
Image	Barzon (1924)	Fantelli and Pellegrini (2000) C: constellation; Z: influence of zodiac sign; P: influence of planet; M: occupation of the month; NI: a figure they are unable to interpret; W: a winged figure; R: a religious scene.	Rigobello and Autizi (2008)
51A	Constellation of Canis Major <i>Canicola</i> ‘The Dog Days’.	Constellation of Canis Major <i>Canicola</i> ‘The Dog Days’. (C)	Constellation of Canis Major <i>Canicola</i> ‘The Dog Days’.
51B	Reading.	Reading. (P)	Man who reads.
51C	Writing.	Writing. (P)	Scribe – Writing.
52A	Constellation of Sirius.	Sirius. (C)	Sirius.
52B	Players.	Game. (P)	Upholsterers.
52C	Arsmetrica?	Arithmetic? (P)	Accountant Mathematics.
53A	Constellation of the ploughing Bulls.	The ploughing Bulls. (C)	The ploughing Bulls.
53B	The Month of August.	August.	August.
53C	Occupation of the Month	Grape harvest. (M)	Grape harvest.
54A	Winged figure.	(W)	Winged figure.
54B	Geometry.	Geometry. (P)	A man with a compass at his feet – Geometry.
54C	Winged angel, a symbol of Mercury, the protecting god of the Liberal Arts.	(W)	Angel.
55A	Juggler.	Juggler – Astuteness. (P)	Juggler – Astuteness.
55B	The sign of Virgo.		
55C	Banker.	Banker. (P)	Banker.
56A	Female cymbal player.	Song. (P)	A woman who sings. Song.
56B	Painting.	Painting. (P)	Painter’s workshop –Painting.
56C	Grammar.	Grammar. (P)	Scholar who teaches – Grammar.
57A	Winged figure.	(W)?	Winged figure.
57B	Merchant.	Merchant. (P)	Merchant.
57C	Dialectic.	Dialectic. (P)	Orator – Dialectic.
58A	Women’s work.	Women’s work. (P)	Woman who spins.
58B	The planet Mercury.		
58C	Philosophy.	Philosophy. (P)	Sage in a chair –Philosophy.
59A	Women’s work.	Women’s work. (P)	Woman who sews.
59BC	The apostle St James the Younger?	St James the Younger.	St James.

The Top Register of Constellation Images for Mercury rules Virgo

The scholars of Table 8 described the images of the top register of the Mercury rules Virgo 'chapter' as follows: 51A (Fig.34) 'Constellation of Canis Major *Canicola* 'The Dog Days'; 52A (Fig.35) 'Sirius'; and 53A (Fig.36) 'Constellation of the ploughing Bulls'. Image 51A (Fig.34), although damaged along the top, shows the lower half of a seated dog. Image 52A (Fig.35) depicts a large grey, seated dog.



(Left) Figure 28. Image 51A of a small, seated dog, west wall, upper register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 29. Image 52A of a large, seated dog, upper register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

As noted earlier, when the sun ingressed into Gemini, the constellation Canis Major and its alpha star, Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, rose around 9:00 am (in daylight) and set with the sun at around 19:00 and hence the constellation was not visible in the sky. In this 'chapter' the sun has moved forward seasonally by three months along the ecliptic, so visually what is seen in the sky will have changed. At this time of the year the sun rises after the constellation Canis Major has risen and so Canis Major is now visible in the early hours and predawn sky. At some point after its period of being 'invisible' the constellation Canis Major and Sirius become visible, rising ahead of the sun at the time of year when the northern hemisphere around the Mediterranean experiences the hottest, most sultry days of summer. The specific term for this reappearance of a star after a period of being invisible, as noted in chapter 2, is 'heliacal rising'. Sirius is then known as the helical rising star. The fact that Sirius, also known as the 'Dog Star' returned to visibility as the heliacal rising at the time of year when it was the hottest lead this time to

become known as the ‘Dog Days’ a term used by the Greeks and the Romans. Aristotle referred to them thus:

We do not ascribe to chance or mere coincidence the frequency of rain in winter, but frequent rain in summer we do; nor heat in the dog-days, but only if we have it in winter.²⁷

For Padua c.1309 the ‘Dog Days’ occurred from early July to mid-August, so whilst scholars in Table 8 described 51A as the ‘Constellation of Canis Major *Canicola* “The Dog Days”’ and 52A as ‘Sirius’, they are actually referring to the same constellation. Visually in the sky at the Virgo Ingress (when the sun moves into the horoscopic sign of Virgo) the constellations of Canis Minor, the Little Dog (51A) and Canis Major, the Big Dog (52A) can be seen above the horizon southeast of the sun in the predawn light (Figs.31 and 32).



Figure 30. Image 53A of Auriga the Charioteer, upper register, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo*: D. Gunzburg.

Scholars in Table 8 referred to image 53A (Fig.30), a man who walks with two bulls, as ‘The constellation of the Ploughing Bulls’, yet no such constellation in the sky exists. Instead visible in the predawn sky at the Virgo Ingress and directly above Sirius and almost at culmination along the ecliptic (the highest point it can reach) is the constellation of Taurus the Bull. Next to Taurus and north of the ecliptic is the constellation of Auriga

²⁷ Aristotle, *Physics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, vol. 1, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation*, Bollingen Series L X X I.2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 199a. 1-3.

the Charioteer. One could argue therefore that this image at 53A is a symplegma or conflation of two constellations close to each other in the sky,²⁸ in this case joined by a common star, for the star designating the tip of the horn of the Bull, the star El Nath, also designates the right foot of Auriga the Charioteer.²⁹ A more sturdy suggestion may derive from an alternative name for the constellation contained within Auriga and which consists of Capella, the Goat (the brightest star in Auriga) and her suckling Kids, which was called 'The Ploughman with his Oxen'.³⁰ According to Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) Capella 'is a star that ploughmen know, for when it rises they look out for their oxen'.³¹ For both possibilities this set of three images in the top register of the Salone fresco scheme is clearly visible in the pre-dawn light in Padua 1309 (Figs. 31 and 32).

²⁸ Willy Hartner, 'The Earliest History of the Constellations in the near East and the Motif of the Lion-Bull Combat', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24, no. 1/2 (1965), 1-16, p.1.

²⁹ Claudius Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Almagest*, trans. G. J. Toomer (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), p.353.

³⁰ Allen, *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning*, p.85.

³¹ Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. James Steven Stallybrass, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), pp.1509-1510.

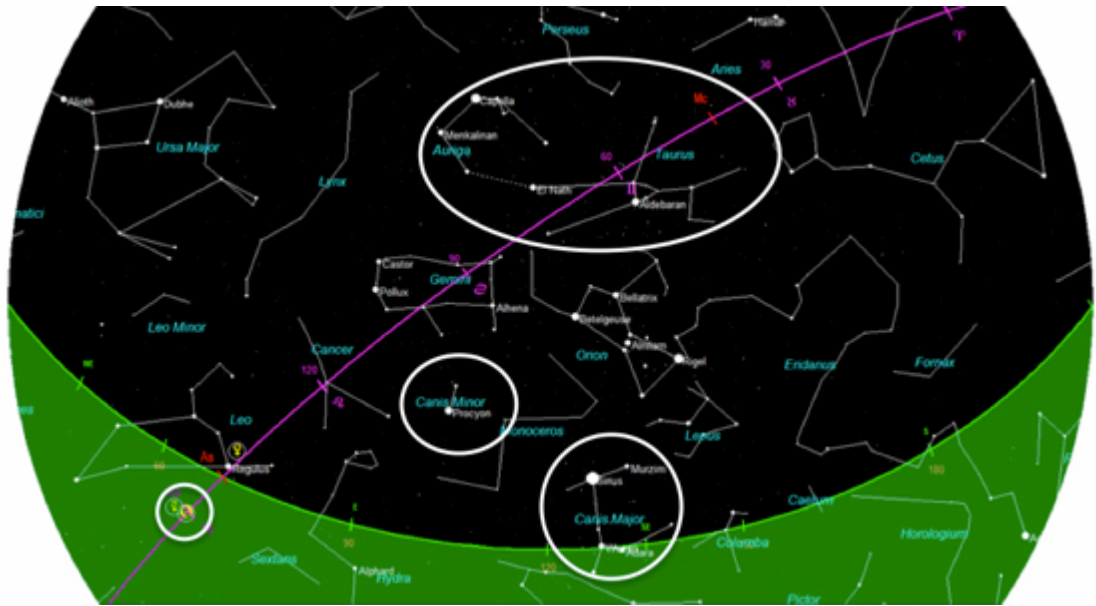


Figure 31. Sky map for pre-dawn Virgo Ingress August 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, showing the positions of the constellations relative to the sun, seen here circled below the horizon on the left in the green area, about to rise in the east. From lowest to highest, the circled constellations are: Canis Major, Canis Minor, and the symplegma of Auriga the Charioteer and Taurus, the Great Bull of Heaven.

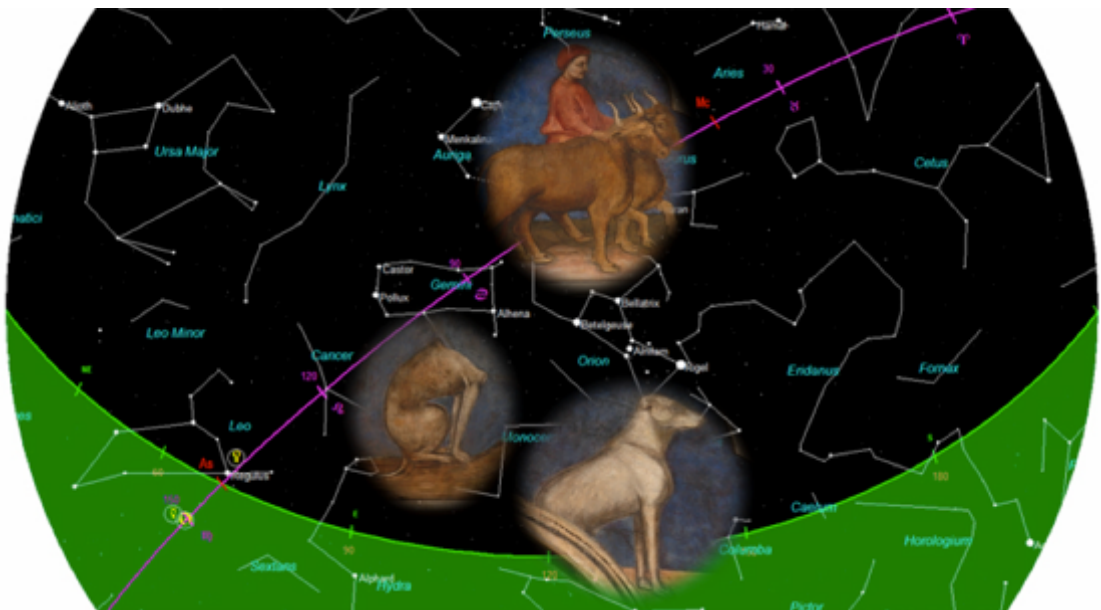


Figure 32. Sky map for pre-dawn Virgo Ingress August 1309 OS, Padua, Italy, looking east, showing the artist's impression of the sky and their correct orientation: 51A (Canis Minor), 52A (Canis Major), and 53A ('The Ploughman with his Oxen').

The Middle and Lower Registers —

The Astrology Reflected in the Daily Lives of the Paduan Community for when Mercury was travelling through the zodiac sign of Gemini

Image 53B (Fig.33), a man picking grapes whilst his servant holds a basket, is the image for the Labour of the Month for August. Barzon, and Fantelli and Pellegrini both asserted that this image of the grape harvest had been reversed with that of September, since August was traditionally dedicated to the collection of fruit.³² Yet the figure beneath image 53B also depicts a man cutting grapes from the vine with a billhook (Fig.34), thus I contend that, rather than being an error, these images were placed here with intent.



Figure 33. Image 53B of a man picking grapes whilst his servant holds a basket, symbolising the Month of August, middle register, west wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.



Figure 34. Image 53C of a man cutting grapes from a vine, lower register, west wall, Salone Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

³² Barzon, *Gli Affreschi del Salone in Padova*, p.110; Pier Luigi Fantelli and Franca Pellegrini, eds. *Il Palazzo della Ragione in Padova*. Verona: Cierre Edizioni, 2000, p.40.



(Left) Figure 35. Image 56C, north wall, of an older teacher with a young disciple, suggesting Grammar, lower register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 36. Image 57C, north wall, of an older man speaking from behind a parapet wall, suggesting Rhetoric, lower register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Having proposed that image 29C (Fig.22) in the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ represents Dialectic, it is feasible to look for the rest of the Trivium in this Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’. Scholars in Table 8 described image 56C (Fig.35) as Grammar, traditionally depicted as an older teacher, often female, with a young disciple, and indeed this is how image 56C is being depicted: a young boy, whose dress indicates he is from a wealthy family, pores over a document on the table in front of a seated man. Scholars in Table 8 described image 57C (Fig.36), a man speaking from behind a parapet wall who raises his right index finger as if making a point, as Dialectic. This single figure orating, rather than in discussion, however, better suggests Rhetoric, than Dialectic.

I contend that this ‘chapter’ also contains portrayals of the Quadrivium, namely the images at 54B, 54C, 55C, 56A and 58B. Scholars in Table 8 described image 54B (Fig.37), a man taking measurements, as Geometry and I agree with this description, predicated on the fact that the man holds a sighting instrument and on the ground in front of him is a compass, while behind him is a setsquare. Ibn Ezra wrote of Mercury that it ruled mathematicians and geometers³³ and al-Qabīṣī wrote of Mercury that it ruled ‘activities which arise in mathematics like business, calculations, geometry,’ and if Saturn mixes with it, ‘calculation for surveying lands and estates.’³⁴

³³ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101.

³⁴ Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, and Michio Yano, eds. *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitus). The Introduction to Astrology*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts. London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino Aragno Editore, 2004, p.100.



Figure 37. Image 54B, west wall, of a man taking measurements, suggesting Geometry, middle register, west wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*



Figure 38. Image 54C, west wall, of an angel holding a measuring rod and compass, suggesting Geometry, lower register, west wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*

Scholars in Table 8 described image 54C (Fig.38) as a ‘winged angel, a symbol of Mercury, the protecting god of the Liberal Arts’ (Barzon), a ‘winged figure’ (Fantelli and Pellegrini) and ‘an angel’ (Rigobello and Autizi). The angel, a young boy with wings and short wavy red hair, and dressed in a red and green particoloured gown, holds a compass in his left hand and a measuring rod in his right hand. The two images vertically contiguous (Figs.37 and 38) suggest Geometry in its earthly (54B) and divine (54C) expressions.

Scholars in Table 8 described image 55C (Fig.39), a man wearing a green chaperon and a red gown, seated on a wooden chest in front of a wooden table on which rests an open wooden box, a rolled up leather belt, and a weight, as ‘a banker’. The man holds a set of scales in his left hand and steadies the right pan with his right hand. As no coins are apparent on the table, however, I suggest that rather than banking, this image depicts the measurement of mass using weights for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, thus exemplifying Arithmetic.



Figure 39. Image 55C, west wall, of a man holding a set of scales with weights on the table in front of him, suggesting Arithmetic, lower register, west wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*

Connected with this image at 55C may be image 57B (Fig.40), described by scholars in Table 8 as ‘a merchant’. This image is of a man with black hair, wearing a white sack hat and green tunic, seated at a wooden desk holding a pair of scales in his left hand and balancing the right pan with his right hand as he weighs gold coins. On the desk in front of him is a flat plate with a funnel at one end, into which the money may have been placed prior to being weighed, along with piles of gold coins. The scales in this image are much smaller than in 55C (Fig.39), suggesting purpose-built scales for the coins on the desk. If this is a merchant, then he is a specialist merchant such as a moneychanger. Ibn Ezra wrote that Mercury ruled ‘the merchant’, and ‘all coins’³⁵ and al-Qabīṣī wrote of Mercury that, when mixed with the Sun, it had ‘mastery of the exchequers of kings, and treasuries’.³⁶ Thus I contend that the image fulfils a dual function in this ‘chapter’, that of accounting via measuring and weighing (Arithmetic), as well as that of merchant,

³⁵ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101.

³⁶ Burnett, Yamamoto, and Yano, eds., *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction*, p.79.

moneychanger, and commerce.



Figure 40. Image 57B of a man weighing gold coins, middle register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo*: D. Gunzburg.

Scholars in Table 8 described image 56A (Fig.41) as ‘a female cymbal player’ ‘song’ and ‘a woman who sings’. The woman is dressed in a red cloak over a grey gown. She has loose flowing blonde hair and plays a tabor, a medieval drum. If this pattern of seeking the Quadrivium on the walls of this Mercury in Virgo ‘chapter’ is correct, then this is the only image in this ‘chapter’ that depicts Music, even though it is situated along the top register of constellations.



Figure 41. Image 56A of a woman playing a tambourine, top register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo*: D. Gunzburg.

In seeking the image for the final subject of the Quadrivium, I contend that image 58B (Fig. 42), the planet Mercury in its rulership of Virgo, a man with rays emanating from his body, seated at an ornate pew and desk in front of an armillary sphere, plays a dual function of also exemplifying Astrology.



Figure 42. Image 58B of a man engaged with an armillary sphere, suggests this is both Astrology of the quadrivium, as well as the planet Mercury in its rulership of Virgo, middle register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*



(Left) Figure 43. Image 58C, north wall, of a man sitting behind a desk reading, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*



(Right) Figure 44. Image 56B, north wall, of a man seated at an easel painting whilst his apprentice grinds pigment, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. *Photo: D. Gunzburg.*

Scholars in Table 8 described image 58C (Fig.43) of a man wearing a red chaperone and a green tunic, seated behind a desk, resting his chin on his right hand as he reads, underneath a trefoil arch on which the name 'Giotto' is written, as 'Philosophy'. Since the

Trivium and the Quadrivium were considered the preparatory work required for the study of philosophy, it makes sense to look for an image of Philosophy within this part of the scheme. This raises the question, however, of whether Giotto would have attached his name to an image like this in this way, in effect signing it, and if so, why he might have wanted such an image to depict 'Philosophy'.

Regarding Giotto's signature, three works inscribed with Giotto's name survive: *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, made for the church of San Francesco in Pisa and now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris and signed OPUS IOCTI FLORENTINI; a polyptych, *The Virgin and Child with Saints Peter and Paul and Archangels Gabriel and Michael*, now in the Pinacoteca in Bologna signed OPUS MAGISTRI IOCTI DE FLORENTIA; and a polyptych of *The Coronation of the Virgin* in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence signed OPUS MAGISTRI IOCTI.³⁷ No documents exist for the commissioning of these three works. Indeed no contracts naming the artist and stipulating that the products were to be in his own hand have been found for any extant work by Giotto,³⁸ and in John White's opinion at least, there is still controversy over the name that is attached to these three signed works.³⁹ White maintained that the works 'were in need of the protection of a signature to prove their provenance' since in the works for which Giotto himself was responsible 'his brushwork was its own endorsement'.⁴⁰ Other scholars, such as Julian Gardner, did not share White's conclusions.⁴¹ Boccaccio (1313–1375), a contemporary of Giotto, noted from personal contact that Giotto did not wish to be called Master,⁴² which may account for the fact that, in Boccaccio's personal notebook, the *Zibaldone Magliabechiano*, in a long list of great men he described Giotto as *Gioctu*

³⁷ Erling Skaug, 'Contributions to Giotto's Workshop', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 15, no. 2 (1971), 141-160, p.142.

³⁸ Charles Harrison, 'Giotto and the rise of Painting', in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400, Volume I: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Diana Norman, 2 vols. Vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 1995), 73-96, p.76.

³⁹ White argued that these works were created largely by Giotto's workshop, citing the weak brushwork of *The Stigmatization*, when compared with Giotto's unsigned *Ognissanti Madonna*, painted for the altar of the church of the Ognissanti in Florence and now in the Uffizi, Florence; the stiff pose of St Francis in *The Stigmatization* when compared with the 'lively torsion and iconographic originality' of St Francis in the fresco over the entrance to Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence; the overall qualitatively inferior work of *The Virgin and Child*; and the un-Giotto like qualities of 'colouristic delicacy and structural softness' of *The Coronation of the Virgin*. John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, Pelican History of Art (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p.340.

⁴⁰ White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, p.341.

⁴¹ Julian Gardner, 'The Louvre Stigmatization and the Problem of the Narrative Altarpiece', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 45, no. 3 (1982), 217-247, p.231.

⁴² Creighton E. Gilbert, *Poets Seeing Artists' Work: Instances in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. XLII, *Saggi Di 'Lettere Italiane'* (Firenze: Leo S.Olschki Editore, 1991), p.64.

florentinus pictor illustris without any qualifying adjective *magister*.⁴³ Erling Skaug observed that ‘the title *magister* in the middle ages, apart from its use as an academic and scholastic title, is the title most commonly used to denote the head of a workshop’.⁴⁴ Although Giotto had established himself as a celebrated master painter and workshop leader from the early 1300s, it was the architect in the first three quarters of the fourteenth century who was known as *magister*. Painters such as Andrea di Cione, known as Orcagna, (1308–1368) and Giotto were identified as *dipintore* and *pictor* and sometimes *egregium pictorem* and were only endowed with the title *magister* once they became affiliated with architecture.⁴⁵ For Giotto, this occurred from 8 December 1328 onwards, when king Robert of Anjou invited him to Naples and, in documents accounting for payments to him by the king, Giotto was named *Magistro Jocto de Florentia pictori*.⁴⁶ Whilst the exact date of Giotto’s return to Florence is not known, he was acknowledged as *magister* in a Florentine document dated 12 April 1334 in connection with the construction of the Duomo and the walls and fortifications around the city. He was named in a document dated 8 July 1334 with regard to the building of the Campanile, and a document recording his death on 8 January 1336 as *maestro*.⁴⁷ The contemporary chronicler Giovanni Villani (1280–134) referred to him at his death as *maestro Giotto nostro cittadino*.⁴⁸ Given this evidence around Giotto’s nomenclature, it is unlikely that the Paduan inscription of ‘Giotto’ at 58C (Fig.43) is a signature as such but rather was added to the image when the repainting occurred after the fire of 1420.

Nevertheless it still raises the question of why the name would have been painted on this image, and why Giotto would be portrayed as a philosopher, rather than as a painter with an apprentice who grinds pigment, as is depicted in 56B (Fig.44). A suggested answer to the second question may be found in considering the theoretical treatises on the visual arts that arose in the early Quattrocento. In 1435 Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), wrote of the principles to be followed by a painter based on the rhetorical and theoretical world of antique poetry, that,

⁴³ Gilbert, *Poets Seeing Artists’ Work*, p.52.

⁴⁴ Skaug, ‘Contributions to Giotto’s Workshop’, p.142.

⁴⁵ Skaug, ‘Contributions to Giotto’s Workshop’, pp.143,144,146.

⁴⁶ Skaug, ‘Contributions to Giotto’s Workshop’, p.144.

⁴⁷ Skaug, ‘Contributions to Giotto’s Workshop’, p.144.

⁴⁸ Giuseppe E. Sansone and Giulio C. Cura, eds. *Giovanni Villani*. Rome, 2002, p.796. From such evidence Skaug dates *The Virgin and Child with Saints Peter and Paul and Archangels Gabriel and Michael*, in Bologna and *The Coronation of the Virgin* in Santa Croce to being created between 12 April 1334 and 8 January 1336. Skaug, ‘Contributions to Giotto’s Workshop’, p.146.

The aim of the painter is to obtain praise, favour and good-will for his work much more than riches. The painter will achieve this if his painting holds and charms the eyes and minds of spectators. We explained how this may be done when talking above about composition and the reception of light. But in order that he may attain all these things, I would have the painter first of all be a good man, versed in the liberal arts.⁴⁹

And further,

I therefore advise the studious painter to make himself familiar with poets and orators and other men of letters, for he will not only obtain excellent ornaments from such learned minds, but he will also be assisted in those very inventions which in painting may gain him the greatest praise.⁵⁰

The idea of the classically-educated humanist artist, the learned painter, was also voiced by Alberti's contemporary, Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455) in his three treatises on art history and theory from antiquity to his time, *I Commentarii*, completed c.1447. In this work Ghiberti used the term *pictor doctus* when extolling the skills and talents of Sienese painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c.1290–1348), praising him as 'learned in theory'.⁵¹ Katherine Allen observed that Latin writers employed the word *doctus* as the established epithet of poets and that *doctus poeta* was defined as the erudite scholar trained to understand or to write poetry of high quality, a term used particularly with regard to Latin poet Catullus (84–54 BCE).⁵² Thus Ghiberti's use of the term *pictor doctus* may have been his way of elevating art and 'artists who practised a manual trade – arte'⁵³ from being practitioners of a mechanical art to those trained in the liberal arts. In the early 1320s a Dante commentator wrote explicitly 'Do not be surprised, reader, if Dante gives

⁴⁹ Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Penguin Books, 1991 [1435]), p.87.

⁵⁰ Alberti, *On Painting*, p.89.

⁵¹ Lorenzo Ghiberti, *I Commentarii*, ed. Ottavio Morisani (Naples: Ricciardi, 1947), pp.37-38; Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, and Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420-1500* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), p.35.

⁵² Katharine Allen, 'Doctus Catullus', *Classical Philology* 10, no. 2 (1915), 222-223, pp.222-223.

⁵³ Diana Norman, 'City, contado and beyond: artistic practice', in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400, Volume I: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Diana Norman, 2 vols. Vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 1995), 29-48, p.29.

honour and fame to these rude mechanicals (*artefici meccanichi*)'.⁵⁴ If this is correct, then image 58C (Fig.43) suggests the *pictor doctus*, the artist elevated above mechanics to the status of the learned. This image may have survived the fire of 1420 and been restored or it may have been reproduced in the repainting after the fire. Giotto may have included an image of himself with his name written above it as a 'pictorial metonymy' of the *pictor doctus*. The image may also have been repainted with Giotto's name above it to anchor into memory that the scheme originated under Giotto's hand and mind.

Image 56B (Fig.44), however, fits the qualities of 'artisans of etching and painting'⁵⁵ that Ibn Ezra ascribed to Mercury. These qualities also apply to image 52C (Fig.45) of a man wearing a brown coif on his head and dressed in a red tunic under a long yellow cape, black pointed shoes with an inset-V above the arch, and seated on a pink stone bench drawing on an upright sheet of parchment supported on his knees. Scholars in Table 8 described this image as 'Arithmetic'. I have argued for image 57B (Fig.40) to represent the role of 'Arithmetic'.



Figure 45. Image 52C of a seated man drawing, lower register, west wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

⁵⁴ Andrea Lancia and Alessandro Torri, eds. *L'Ottimo commento della Divina Commedia: testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante citato dagli Accademici della Crusca*. Pisa: Presso Niccoló Capurro, 1829, p.186.

⁵⁵ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101.



(Left) Figure 46. Image 51B of a man reading, middle register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.



(Right) Figure 47. Image 51C of a man reading at a desk, lower register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Two further images express the qualities of education: image 51B (Fig.46), a man wearing a red chaperone, dressed in a voluminous black tunic and seated in the alcove of a crenelated wall, reading; and 51C (Fig.47), a man wearing a red acorn hat, a green undertunic and red tabard and brown shoes, seated at a desk focused on an open book. These images may also represent the *ars dictaminis* or *dictamen*, the art of composing letters and formal documents, which as A.B.Cobban observed, ‘was a specialized offshoot of law and rhetoric which developed as a thriving, lucrative competitor to traditional classic learning’⁵⁶ and was firmly established in the universities of Italy and provincial France in the thirteenth century. The rise of the study of applied subjects like law, medicine and *dictamen* were considered, as Cobban argued, ‘the natural enemies of literary humanism since they propelled the emergent universities towards integration in community professional life and away from a stilled contemplation of the finite inheritance of classical antiquity.’⁵⁷ Hyde, on the other hand, perceived the *ars dictaminis* as an important tool in the skilled lawyer’s toolkit as it depended upon ‘a highly stylized form of rhythmic prose used in the drawing up of letters and legal documents’⁵⁸ and therefore allowed the skilled lawyer to detect a corrupt text via its spoken cadence. It was the notaries who became practised in the *dictamen* and these images at 51B (Fig.46) and

⁵⁶ A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: their development and organization* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1975), p.18.

⁵⁷ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, p.18.

⁵⁸ J.K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 1966), pp.294-295.

51C (Fig.47) may represent that study.

Returning to the idea of seeking an image to represent Philosophy, since Philosophy formed the culmination of the study of the Trivium and the Quadrivium,⁵⁹ Giotto and his advisers as originators of the fresco scheme may have considered giving greater prominence and size to the image. If so, then I suggest that image 55B (Fig.48), the representation of the zodiac sign Virgo, a woman with shoulder length blonde hair wearing a cream gown and holding two branches in her right hand, may serve a dual function by also representing Philosophy. Virgo has always been seen as a goddess of the harvest holding a palm branch in her right hand and an ear of wheat in her left hand,⁶⁰ bringing abundance, fruitfulness, and fertility; thus is she represented as the zodiac sign of Virgo in this ‘chapter’. Philosophy, conceived as a Lady, was exemplified in text by Boethius and Dante,⁶¹ and in image in such works as the *Septem artes liberales* from the ‘Hortus deliciarum’ (c.1180) by Herrad von Landsberg (c.1130–1195). It is speculation to consider that this image at 55B may also represent Lady Philosophy but one that is grounded in her image tradition.



Figure 48. Image 55B, west wall, of a woman holding two sheaves of wheat and the stalk or branch of a planet, suggesting both the zodiac sign of Virgo and (possibly) Lady Philosophy, middle register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

⁵⁹ John David North, ‘The Quadrivium’, in *Medieval Science, Technology And Medicine: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Thomas F. Glick, Steven John Livesey, and Faith Wallis (London: Routledge, 2005), 337-359, p.337. Titus Burckhardt, ‘The Seven Liberal Arts and the West Door of Chartres Cathedral’, *Studies in Comparative Religion* 3, no. 3 (1969), 1-4, p.2.

⁶⁰ Allen, *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning*, p.460.

⁶¹ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Richard H. Green (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002). Angelo Gualtieri, ‘Lady Philosophy in Boethius and Dante’, *Comparative Literature* 23, no. 2 (1971), 141-150, p.144.



Figure 49. Image 52B, north wall, of two men in a cloth merchant's workshop measuring cloth. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

Scholars in Table 8 described image 52B (Fig.46), two men standing behind a wooden bench with a folded piece of red material and assessing a length of red cloth, as 'players', 'a game', and 'upholsterers'. Rigobello and Autizi suggested this image depicted an upholsterer who alerts a curious customer to the quality of the fabric and that the rod on the wooden bench may be a *brazzolaro*, a wooden rod to measure the fabrics.⁶² The fact that the two men are dressed in similar fashion suggests merchants working together, rather than a merchant and his client. Given that Ibn Ezra listed Mercury as ruling 'marketplaces, [and]... all workshops'⁶³ and al-Qabīṣī listed Mercury as ruling 'activities which arise in mathematics like business, calculation...'⁶⁴ then I suggest this represents a cloth merchant's workshop and another expression of arithmetic used in practical measurement — length and breadth.

Scholars in Table 8 described image 58A (Fig.50) as 'women's work' and 'woman who spins' and image 59A (Fig.51) as 'woman who sews'. Images of spinning and sewing occur in both 'chapters' ruled by Mercury and Ibn Ezra listed linen garments as coming under the rulership of Mercury and those whose 'hand is trained in all skills'.⁶⁵ Women achieved dominance and high visibility in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries in industries such as the making of silk and linen cloths.⁶⁶ In 1287 the Paduan commune in

⁶² Rigobello and Autizi, *Palazzo della Ragione di Padova*, p.193.

⁶³ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.101.

⁶⁴ Burnett, Yamamoto, and Yano, eds., *al-Qabīṣī (Alcabitius). The Introduction*, p.79.

⁶⁵ ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, p.102.

⁶⁶ David Herlihy, *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), p.91.

their MS *Statuti Carraresi*, f.47r, recognised thirty-six guilds, including linen workers (linarolli). In 1420 the list of guilds in the Paduan statutes (*Codice Riformato* f.31r), apart from the omission of saddlers and salt merchants, was the same.⁶⁷

Thus I suggest that the dark-skinned woman in image 58A (Fig.50), with a distaff in her left hand and drop spindle in her right, is spinning flax and the woman in image 59A (Fig.51) may be sewing a garment of linen. It is tempting to explore further the fact that both these women appear to be darker skinned than those in the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ but that is for future research.



(Left) Figure 50. Image 58A of a black-skinned woman spinning, top register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

(Right) Figure 51. Image 59A of a woman sewing, top register, north wall, Salone, Palazzo della Ragione. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

The apostle at 59BC – St Thomas

The apostle at image 59BC (Fig.52) is depicted as a young man with short brown hair and wearing a yellow mantle over a white tunic embroidered with gold around the neck and holding a book covered with green binding. Around his waist he wears a belt or a girdle. Amongst the Salone apostles there are only two with a visible belt. The first was St Matthew, examined earlier in the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter. This apostle I contend is St Thomas whose visible girdle is one of St Thomas’ attributes. Although one might reason that St Thomas received the girdle from the Virgin, rather than wore it, Émile Mâle recorded how the only saints whose attributes were invariable throughout the Middle Ages were those of St Peter, St Paul, St Andrew and St Bartholomew, and some

⁶⁷ Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, p.311.

apostles' attributes were never fixed as their lives and legends were less clear-cut.⁶⁸ The mantle and tunic are consistent with that of the young beardless apostle with curling red-brown hair in the Arena Chapel frescoes (Appendix 5).



Figure 52. Image 59BC of the saint along the north wall completing the Mercury rules Virgo 'chapter', (left) and detail of the girdle around his waist (right), Salone, Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

⁶⁸ Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Dora Nussey (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2000), p.310.

Visual Summary of the themes emerging in these three registers of Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’

Whilst there is still uncertainty as to what some images may mean (the images at 54A, 55A, and 57A), a visual summary of this ‘chapter (Fig.53) shows the following themes emerging: the image of the Month and the Labour of the Month (circled in blue); constellation images (circled in yellow); the zodiac sign of Virgo (circled in purple); the planet Mercury associated with the Trivium and Quadrivium (circled in red); and the qualities of Mercury (circled in green).

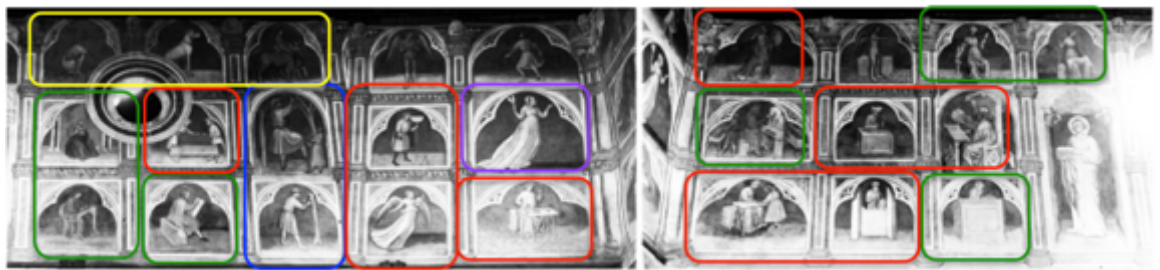


Figure 53. Visual summary of the emergent themes of the Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’ of the Salone fresco images. *Image: D.Gunzburg.*

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on an examination of the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ and the Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’ of the Salone fresco images. It examined the top register of constellation images and evaluated the celestial cartography that was described by those fresco images. In so doing, it found a fit for the images in the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ in the sky map for pre-dawn for the Gemini Ingress, and for the images in the Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’ in the sky map for pre-dawn for the Virgo Ingress.

The themes represented in the middle and lower registers for the Mercury rules Gemini ‘chapter’ were those promoting human intellect as a faculty of the soul. This was exemplified with images that expressed knowledge of how to transmute metals into other forms and how to transmute the written word into the application of justice. One aspect of the Trivium, Dialectic, emerged as an attribute of Mercury in its rulership of Gemini. Another theme predicated on the final image of the ‘chapter’ was the woman spinning,

promoting the idea of fate and its deeper underpinnings of personal responsibility through exercising knowledge, wisdom and common sense, attributes and qualities of the intellect that would appropriately serve judges in the Salone.

The themes represented in the middle and lower registers for the Mercury rules Virgo ‘chapter’ were those of the training of the mind, firstly, with images that depicted the balance of the Trivium — Grammar and Rhetoric — and the Quadrivium — Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, and Astrology, thus connecting the qualities of Mercury and its rulership of the intellect with the subjects thought necessary to prepare one for the study of philosophy. In this regard I suggested the image of the zodiac sign Virgo might be playing a dual role as Lady Philosophy. This ‘chapter’ also promoted the idea of the *pictor doctus*, the artist elevated above mechanics to the status of the learned, as well as the *dictamen*, the art of composing letters and formal documents and which, according to Hyde, was an important tool for a skilled lawyer to possess. Another theme was that of merchants in connection with measurement. There was also the continuing theme of women sewing and spinning silk and linen.

The next chapter examines the Venus rules Taurus ‘chapter’ and the Venus rules Libra ‘chapter’ of the Salone fresco images.

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