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Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae

the Sceptre and Hand of Justice

Genitive: Sceptri et Manus Iustitiae
Abbreviation: SMI
Alternate names: “Sceptrum” (Allard, 1706); “Sceptrum Imperiale” (Thomas, 1730)
Location: The modern constellation Lacerta

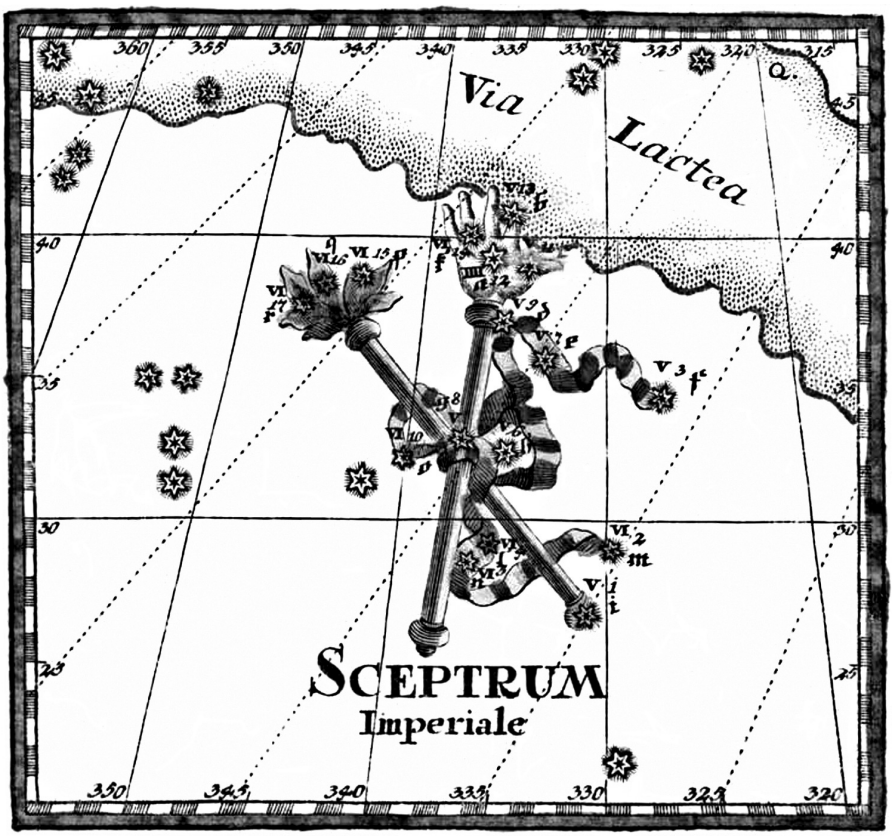

Figure 57: Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae (“Sceptrum Imperiale”) depicted in Corbinianus Thomas’ *Mercurii philosophici firmamentum firmianum* (1730).

Origin and History

Of the constellations described in this book Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae represents a case in which an existing figure was disfavored (and ultimately replaced by) another – Lacerta (the Lizard), which remains canonical to this day. It is, in a sense, the only victim of a *successful* rebranding campaign.

In 1679, Augustin Royer took a set of unformed stars of the fourth magnitude and fainter in the space between Andromeda, Pegasus, and Cepheus and introduced a constellation to honor of King Louis XIV of France on his chart *Cartes du Ciel Reduites en Quatre Tables ...* From these stars he formed the shapes of a crossed royal scepter and an outstretched hand at the end of a similar staff – the "Hand of Justice" – both tied together with a ribbon. Royer wrote[1]

> *Apart from stars marked in the catalogs of astronomers we observed 17 between the constellations Cepheus, Andromeda and Pegasus which are not [marked]; these stars are so situated such that no figure better suits them than the Royal Sceptre and the Hand of Justice.*

He offered a practical justification for this choice:

> *It is also [made into] a constellation on this planisphere, since Astrology has always attributed the fortunes of countries to the Stars.*

In short, his shameless effort to elevate his King's interest to the heavens was no less than an act intended to secure the prosperity and security of France itself. However, in this Royer was considerably less successful than his contemporary, Gottfried Kirch; despite inventing two constellations intended to glorify the French monarchy, Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae and Lilium[2], he found no material reward based on the intercession of the King. In fact, it may well be that Kirch's introduction of the very similar Sceptrum Brandenburgicum was prompted in direct reaction to Royer's Sceptrum: if a French astronomer could invent a constellation to flatter the Sun King, what should prevent similar recognition of a German monarch? As luck would have it, neither constellation would survive to become part of our modern canon.

Royer's constellation only managed moderate traction among cartographers of the day, but the seeds of its undoing were sewn in 1687 when Hevelius revealed his own design for its stars. As Richard Hinckley Allen

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[1] "Outre les Estoilles marquées dans les Catalogues des Astronomes nous en avons observé 17. entre les constellations de Cephée, d'Andromede & de Pegase qui n'y sont point; ces Estoilles nouvelles se trouvent tellement scituées les unes à l'égard des autres qu'il n'y a point de figure qui leur convienne mieux que celle du Sceptre Royal de la main de Justice ; aussi l'on en a fait une constellation dans ce planisphere, comme l'Astrologie a attribué de tout temps la fortune des pays aux Astres."

[2] See Musca Borealis, Volume 1.

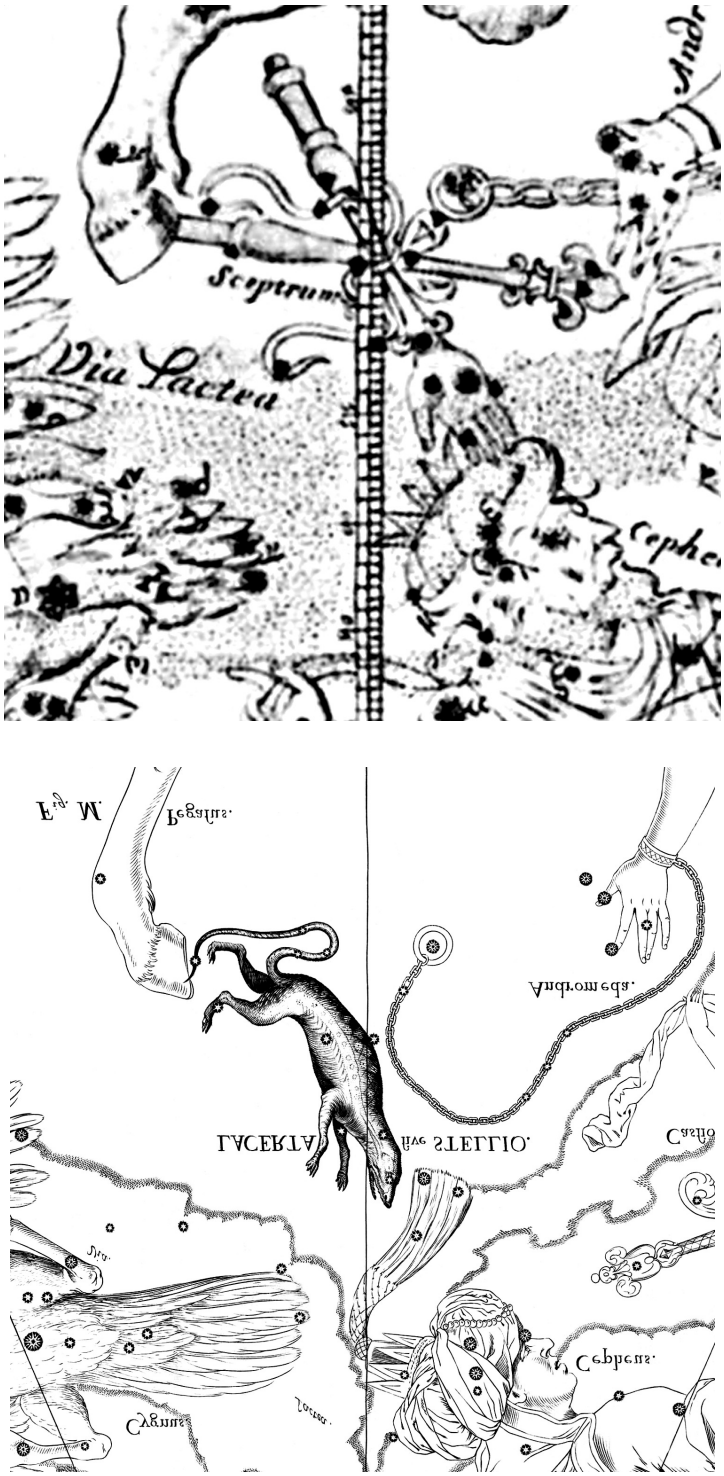

Figure 58: Top: Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae ("Sceptrum") shown on Augustin Royer's *Cartes du Ciel* (1679). Bottom: Hevelius' invention "Lacerta sive Stellio" ("Lacerta, or Stellio") as depicted on Figure M of *Prodromus Astronomiae* (1690). The lower figure has been cropped, rotated and mirrored to approximately match the Royer map.

(1899) put it, Hevelius was motivated to introduce an entirely different figure, Lacerta (the Lizard), for the same stars due to the unusual shape of the space he perceived them to occupy on the sky:

> *This inconspicuous constellation was formed by Hevelius from outlying stars between Cygnus and Andromeda, this special figure having been selected because there was not space for any of a different shape. But he drew 'a strange weasel-built creature with a curly tail,' heading the procession of his offerings to Urania illustrated in his Firmamentum Sobiescianum of 1687.*

Hevelius saw the picture very differently from Royer (Figure 58). To form Lacerta, he assigned parts of Royer's figure to the chain connected to Andromeda's wrist, Cepheus' headgear, and an errant outlying star in Cygnus. In both cases, Andromeda's chain terminated at o Andromedae, and both charts assign the stars ι, κ, λ, and ψ Andromedae to the maiden's right hand. To the west, Royer took the small arc of stars comprising 3, 7, and 8 Andromedae as the fleur-de-lis topping the scepter, while Hevelius incorporated them as links in the chain, as he also did the star now known as 15 Lacertae. Royer showed the latter star as part of a ribbon tying the sceptre and the Hand of Justice together; other stars in the ribbon include 11, 12, and 12 Lacertae and what appears to be ρ Cygni. Royer made 4 Lacertae and the triangle formed by α, β, and 9 Lacertae into the eponymous Hand, while Hevelius kept 4 Lacertae as the lizard's head and turned the triangle into a loose wrapping from Cepheus' turban. Even after Hevelius won the battle over the designation of these stars and Lacerta gained wide acceptance in the second half of the eighteenth century, nearby stars were still in dispute; a century after Hevelius, Johann Elert Bode tried to remake the stars around the end of Andromeda's chain into the new constellation Honores Frederici (see Volume 1).

After the publication of *Firmamentum Sobiescanum*, very few cartographers paid any attention to Royer's Sceptrum. A notable exception appears in Corbinianus Thomas' *Mercurii philosophici firmamentum firmianum ...* (1730), in which Thomas gives both a place of prominence to Royer's figure and its own unique name – Sceptrum Imperiale (Figure 57). Thomas described[3] the figure as instilling reverence in 'other' (non-French) astronomers:

> *An asterism dedicated to King Louis XIV of France on the occasion, a creation of particular and wonderful extent offered to the world, taking the form of a double scepter with the Hand of Justice, having sprung forth from the*

[3] "*Asterismus* Ludovico XIV. Regi Galliarum ex occasione, dum eximiæ magnitudinis mirique artificii *Globus* eidem offerretur, dedicatus, *duplicis sceptri* cum *manu Justitiæ* formam obtinet, inde enatam, quod stellæ, quibus constat, diurna sphæræ circumvolutione *Zenith Parisiense* perstringant; unde cùm stellæ verticales aliàs astrologis loco, quibus imminent, ominosæ habeantur, hi gloriosa huic regno præsagia intulêre." (p. 186)

sphere of the heavens turning daily about the Paris zenith; whence these stars situated directly overhead may have been considered threatening and menaced other astronomers, a presentiment of this glorious kingdom has been put forth.

On the other hand, Thomas had good reason for lending credence to the notion of constellations invented for the purpose of charming a prospective royal patron: in the same set of charts, he introduced his own equivalent constellation, Corona Firmiana (Chapter 5).

Other than in Thomas' charts there seem to be only two appearances of Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae on widely-circulated maps in the first few decades of the eighteenth century: Vincenzo Coronelli showed it as "Scettro" on Plate 17 of *Epitome cosmografica* . . . (1693), while Carel Allard copied it down to the detail from Royer in *Hemisphaerium meridionale et septentrionale planisphaerii coelestis* (1706) with the label "Sceptrum." By and large, however, cartographers initially ignored *both* Royer and Hevelius, electing to leave the stars in question unformed (e.g., Pardies 2nd ed., 1693; de La Hire 1702; de Broen 1709).

Over a span of about 70 years, the tide of cartographic opinion in the matter of the faint stars between Andromeda and Pegasus ebbed from Royer and flowed toward Hevelius. In 1729, John Flamsteed sided with Hevelius and showed these stars as Lacerta in the first edition of his *Atlas Coelestis*; the influence of his catalog and charts helped tip the balance in favor of the acceptance of all of Hevelius' inventions as canonical. By midcentury, Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae rapidly fell out of favor; for example, Christian Doppelmayr shows the stars as "Lacerta Stellio" on Plate XVIII of *Atlas Coelestis* (1742). Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae was certainly extinct before 1750. At the end of the 19th century, Richard Hinckley Allen mentioned Royer's constellation in his discussion of Sceptrum Brandenburgicum, calling the former figure "forgotten":

There was, in the sky, still another Sceptre held by the Hand of Justice introduced by Royer in 1679 in honor of King Louis XIV, in the place of Lacerta; but this also has been forgotten.

Iconography

Louis XIV of France

Louis Dieudonné ('God-given') was born on 5 September 1638 in the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye to Louis XIII (1601−1643) and Anne of Austria (1601−1666). His reign, which at 72 years and 110 days lasted longer than any monarch of any major power in European history, was particularly remarkable given that he was not expected to survive birth. Anne endured four

stillbirths between 1619 and 1631, so when Louis was born he was regarded as a miracle sent from God.

Figure 59: Portrait of Louis XIV (*c.* 1670), engraved by Nicolas Pitau (1632−1671) after a painting by Claude Lefèbvre (1632−1675).

He became king at a young age after his father's untimely death at Paris on 14 May 1643 from what are thought to be complications from intestinal tuberculosis. With the end in sight, Louis XIII worried of the consequences of what he perceived to be Anne's inability to manage political affairs. This presented a serious problem to the dying king, for tradition dictated that she would become the sole regent to their four-year-old son. Shortly before his death Louis XIII decreed that the regency should pass to a council of ministers rather than Anne; however, in deference to custom he appointed her the head of the council. While retaining some control, she would not rule on her own. Anne's political scheming led to the rise of influence of the Italian Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602−1661) who effectively functioned as the successor of Louis XIII's minister Cardinal Richelieu. On Louis XIII's death, Anne appealed to the Parlement de Paris to annul her husband's will in order to abolish his regency council. She was successful and became the

sole Regent of France. However, understanding she could not handle the reins of government alone, she entrusted Cardinal Mazarin with a great deal of power.

Like the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I profiled in Chapter 13, young Louis came of age in the wake of the Thirty Years' War (1618−1648), among the most destructive periods of European history. Cardinal Mazarin negotiated an end to the conflict with the Peace of Westphalia, bringing with it full Dutch independence from Spain, increased autonomy among the German Princes-Elector, and a Swedish presence in the Imperial Diet. Mazarin, acting as the de facto prime minister of France, also successfully obtained certain concessions from Habsburg-ruled Austria including the Habsburg lands and claims in Alsace and recognition of France's sovereignty over the bishoprics of Verdun, Metz and Toul. In the wake of the Peace, some minor German states beseeched the French crown for protection against Habsburg ambitions in the region, and in 1658 France helped form the League of the Rhine. The political union of German princes along the Rhine river served to weaken the influence of the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III.

While Mazarin's efforts were good for the Crown, it was less so for the judges and nobles of the Parlement de Paris who saw their traditional powers eroded at the expense of an increasingly centralized and autocratic royal government. The nobles launched a large but poorly-planned revolt that later became known as the Fronde and lasted from 1648 until 1653; at one point it saw Louis and Anne held under house arrest in the royal palace in Paris. The *Frondeurs* claimed they acted on behalf of the King against Mazarin and Anne in her capacity as Regent of France, but as Louis came of age they were deprived of their stated justification for the revolt. Eventually Mazarin got the upper hand and set France on its course for the remainder of Louis's reign. While ultimately unsuccessful, the Fronde was an early precursor to the French Revolution over a century later.

Louis was declared of age to rule in 1654 and began his personal rule over France in 1661 at age 23 upon the death of Mazarin. To the surprise of his court, he asserted his power to govern in the absence of a chief minister, saying to his assembled ministers and secretaries of his government[4]:

> *Up to this moment I have been pleased to entrust the government of my affairs to the late Cardinal. It is now time that I govern them myself. You will assist me with your counsels when I ask for them. I request and order you to seal no orders except by my command . . . I order you not to sign anything, not even a passport . . . without my command; to render account to me personally each day and to favor no one.*

Despite having dispensed with a dominant bureaucrats like Richelieu and

[4]Quoted in Wolf (1968), p. 133.

Mazarin, Louis proved an able domestic leader. He stepped into the lawlessness of the period during and immediately after the Fronde and offered peace and stability to a country used to the stresses of long-running foreign wars. He initiated a series of reforms to the royal administration and central economy that chipped away at the relative independence of the feudal aristocracy, and in 1667 consolidated historically irregular legal procedures across France into a single code, the Grande Ordonnance de Procédure Civile, which became popularly known as the 'Code Louis.'

Louis married his cousin Maria Theresa (1638−1683), eldest daughter of Phillip IV of Spain (1605−1665) in 1660, one result of the previous year's Treaty of the Pyrenees that formally ended a long-running military conflict between France and Spain tied to the Thirty Years' War. Louis contracted to pay a dowry of 500,000 écus for Maria Theresa's hand in marriage provided that she would renounce all claims by her or her descendants to any Spanish territory in perpetuity. The dowry was never paid, leading Charles II of Spain to conclude that France had abrogated that condition of the treaty. On his death Charles left his empire to Philip, Duke of Anjou (1683−1746), the grandson of Louis and Maria Theresa, who later ruled as King Philip V of Spain.

Maria Theresa gave birth to six children but only one, Louis, *le Grand Dauphin* (1661−1711), survived to reach adulthood; the younger Louis was outlived by his father and never ruled France. While Louis XIV seemed genuinely affectionate toward his wife, particularly in the early years of their marriage, he was never faithful to Maria Theresa. He had at least thirteen children with various mistresses, and despite the fact that Louis believed, in his words[5], that "no issue should come of such species," he arranged suitable marriages for most of them with members of cadet branches of the House of Bourbon. After Maria Theresa's death on 30 July 1683, Louis took up with Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon (1635−1719) and is thought to have married her in secret at Versailles in late 1683. d'Aubigné's status as a commoner meant their marriage was morganatic and she was therefore not openly acknowledged as Louis's wife nor was she styled Queen. Still, the marriage was an open secret in the higher echelons of French society and lasted until the King's death.

The enduring historical reputation Louis built for himself has much to do with a personality cult he carefully grew and tended. Moving the seat of royal power out of Paris to Versailles and building its massive palace complex attracted the nobility away from the big city and enabled more control over the French aristocracy. However, the nobles' access to the king was

[5]Quoted in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Jean-Franois Fitou, *Saint-Simon and the court of Louis XIV*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2001), p. 106.

carefully orchestrated, with most allocated only very small apartments in the palace sufficient for costume changes and the odd illicit affair or two; most aristocrats had to pay to keep other quarters in the nearby village of Versailles where they actually slept at night. By suppressing the influence of the nobility, the absolute monarchy became further entrenched in French society. Louis's last target was the clergy, which retained considerable power. In November 1681 he convened an assembly of Catholic leaders that eventually adopted the Declaration of the clergy of France (1682), affirming the divine right of French kings to rule without interference by the Church up to and including the Pope himself.

Meanwhile, the King pursued a policy of intolerance toward French Protestants, whose continued existence evoked bad memories of the disgraces of his royal predecessors. In October 1685 he revoked the Edict of Nantes, signed by "Good" King Henry IV in 1598, that granted substantial civil and religious rights to Calvinist Protestants known as Huguenots in France. The Edict was seen as a defeat for the Catholic monarchy, even though its adoption was a strategic move intended to end the French Wars of Religion (1562−98) that resulted in the deaths of as many as four million people. Louis subscribed to the prevailing European principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ("whose kingdom, his religion") that held that a king's subjects should obediently follow the precepts of his religion. The result of Louis's policy change has been compared to the Alhambra Decree of 1492 that resulted in the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, a boiling-over of religious tensions that was eventually reversed and resulted in an ensuing period of tolerance but had lasting economic and social repercussions.

Louis died of gangrene at Versailles on 1 September 1715, mere days before his 77th birthday; it was a drawn out and painful death to which the King yielded gently. However, his sense of self-importance remained intact to the very end; several eyewitnesses later recalled his near-final words were "Je m'en vais, mais l'État demeurera toujours." ("I depart, but the State abides.") His remains were interred in the Basilica of Saint-Denis outside Paris, where they remained for nearly a a century before being exhumed and destroyed during the Revolution.

The King outlived most of his immediate legitimate family, including the Dauphin, his eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Duke's eldest son. That left as heir presumptive the Duke's youngest son, then five years old, who would succeed his great-grandfather as Louis XV (1710−1774). The King's nephew, Philip II, Duke of Orléans, was in line to become regent for the child as the most closely related, surviving legitimate relative. Seeing in Orléans a political aspirant akin to his own mother, Louis followed his father's example and established a regency council including his own illegit-

imate son Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, Duke of Maine.

Louis XIV's greatest legacy may be his command of military and policy victories in western Europe and the emergence of a de facto French empire ruling over distant lands. By the end of his reign France considerably expanded its colonial holdings in Asia, Africa and the Americas including the enlargement of New France through its principal territory which discoverer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643−1687), named "Louisiane" in honor of his monarch.

Louis retains a largely favorable view among historians who credit him with advancing France's position as a leading world power. Chief among his accomplishments was orchestrating a French takeover of the Spanish throne in the person of Philip V whose accession in 1700 ultimately resulted in the War of Spanish Succession and ended French ambitions of political hegemony over Europe. However, the outcome considerably defanged the Spanish monarchy and ended historical efforts on its part to interfere in domestic politics in France. Along with expanding France's boundaries to create more defensible frontiers, Louis's policies strengthened the nation and and set the stage for the eventual emergence of the modern French state.

The Sceptre and Hand of Justice in French royal regalia

Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae refers directly to the regalia of the French royal family extending at least as far back in time as the Frankish kings of the early Middle Ages. By the eleventh century, the Crown, Scepter and *Main de Justice* (Hand of Justice) were items among the standard regalia of all French kings and are frequently seen in royal seals of the era.

The Hand is an otherwise ordinary scepter which has an ivory finial carved to resemble a human hand with the index and middle fingers extended as in the gesture of a religious blessing. Among the crown jewels that survived the French Revolution, the Main de Justice contains a medieval finial but is attached to a scepter that was probably made for the coronation of Napoleon I on 2 December 1804.

Napoleon included the royal symbols in his arms particularly in reference to their supposed origin among the regalia of Charlemagne, the first king of something resembling a united France. The later French Emperor, crowned almost a thousand years after the old, was ever-mindful of history and sought to be as close to it as possible. On becoming emperor Napoleon thought it fit to visit his famous predecessor, and he arrived at the site of Charlemagne's tomb in Aachen Cathedral on 2 October 1804. Marie Jeanne Pierrette Avrillon (1774−1853), a chambermaid to the Empress Joséphine, recalled[6] the scene years later in her memoir:

[6]Related in "Mémoires de mademoiselle Avrillion, premire femme de chambre de

Figure 60: A 10 sol coin minted at Paris and issued by Louis XIV in 1703. Obverse: Louis in profile facing right; inscription LVD[OVICUS] XIIII D[EI] G[RATIA] FR[ANCIÆ] ET NAV[ARRÆ] REX ("Louis XIV, by the Grace of God, King of France and of Navarre"). Reverse: Crossed Sceptre and Hand of Justice surmounted by a crown and surrounded by three fleurs-de-lis; inscription DOMINE SALVVM FAC REGEM ("O Lord, save our King").

> *Of all the fetes and ceremonies held for the Emperor in Aix-la-Chapelle*[7]*, there was one which was really exceptional for the grandeur of the memories it evoked. There was a superb procession in which were solemnly carried the insignia used at the crowning and anointing of Charlemagne and also . . . relics such as his skull and the bone of one of his arms; we saw his crown, his sword, his sceptre, his hand of justice, his imperial globe and his gold spurs: all objects that were greatly venerated by the inhabitants of Aix-la-Chapelle and which had only been exhibited so as to celebrate of the presence of the Emperor.*

While the scepter signified royal power and the ability to grant mercy, the Main de Justice stood for the monarch's entrusted power to secure his kingdom through divine authority. Folklore has it that each element of the Hand was invested with particular symbolism: the thumb for the King, the index finger for reason, the middle finger for charity, and the ring and pinky fingers for the Catholic faith The extended thumb, index and ring fingers were also held as a group of three representing the Trinity. During coronations, the Main de Justice was presented to the King who held it in his left hand while bearing the Sceptre in his right hand; afterward, both were entrusted to the Royal Treasury in Saint-Denis.

In Augustin Royer's time, the Sceptre and Main de Justice were unmistakable emblems of the French royal family and their inclusion on star charts was an unsubtle suggestion both of French kings' power on earth as well as

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l'impératrice Joséphine," *Mercure de France* (1986), p. 67.

[7]The French name for the German city of Aachen.

their favored status by the ruler of the heavens. While Royer's invention outlived Louis XIV, it became unfashionable within the lifetime of his successor and was firmly extinct before the Revolution that swept aside the *Ancien Régime* and Bourbon rule.

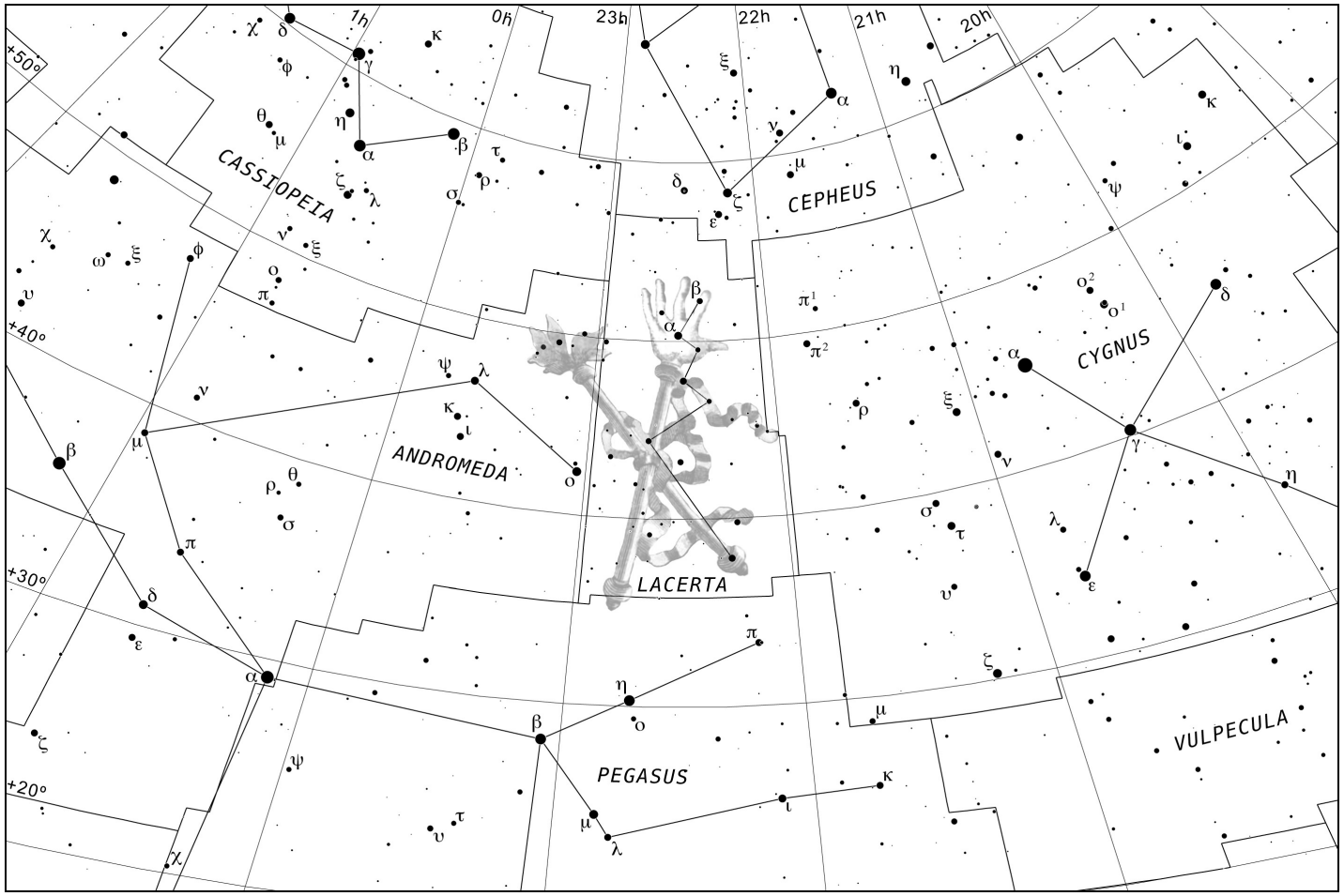

Figure 61: The figure of Sceptrum et Manus Iustitiae drawn by Gottfried Kirch in *Acta Eruditorum* (1688) overlaid on a modern chart.