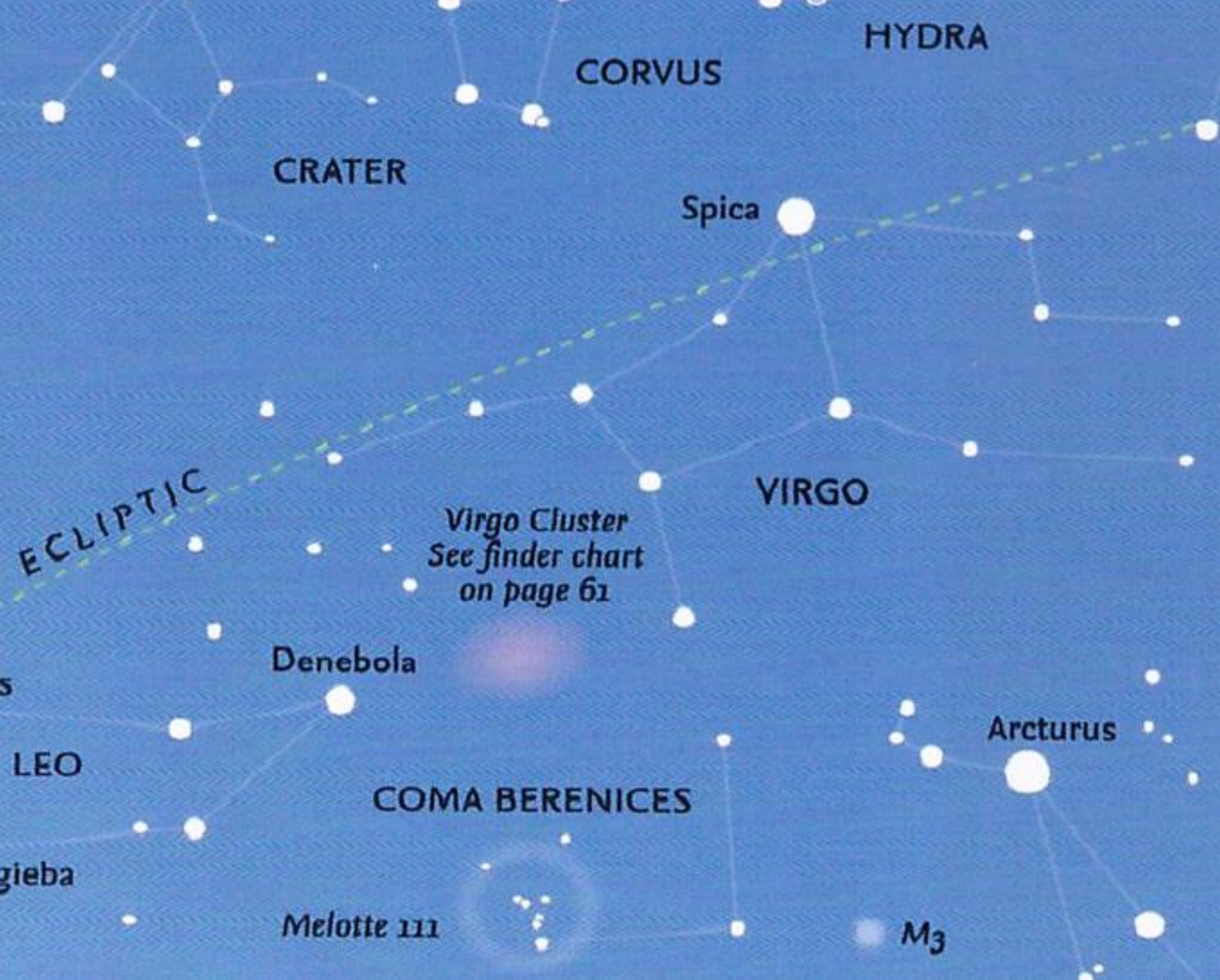


Introduction to the night skies of June 2025, with a brief discussion of the constellation Virgo.





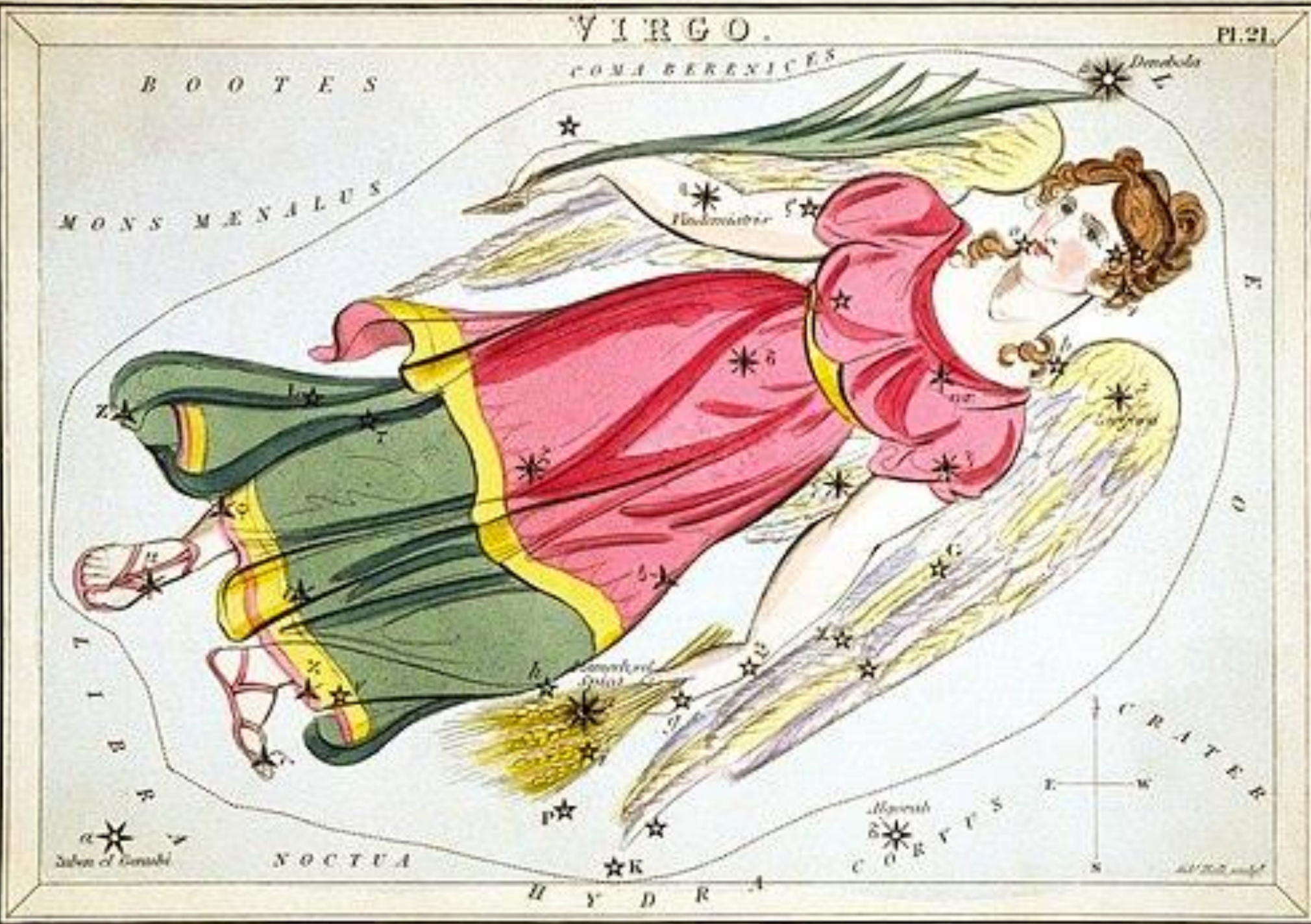




Virgo is one of the constellations of the zodiac. Its name is Latin for maiden. Between Leo to the west and Libra to the east, it is the second-largest constellation in the sky (after Hydra) and the largest constellation in the zodiac.

Virgo





Virgo as depicted in Urania's Mirror, a set of constellation cards published in London c.1825

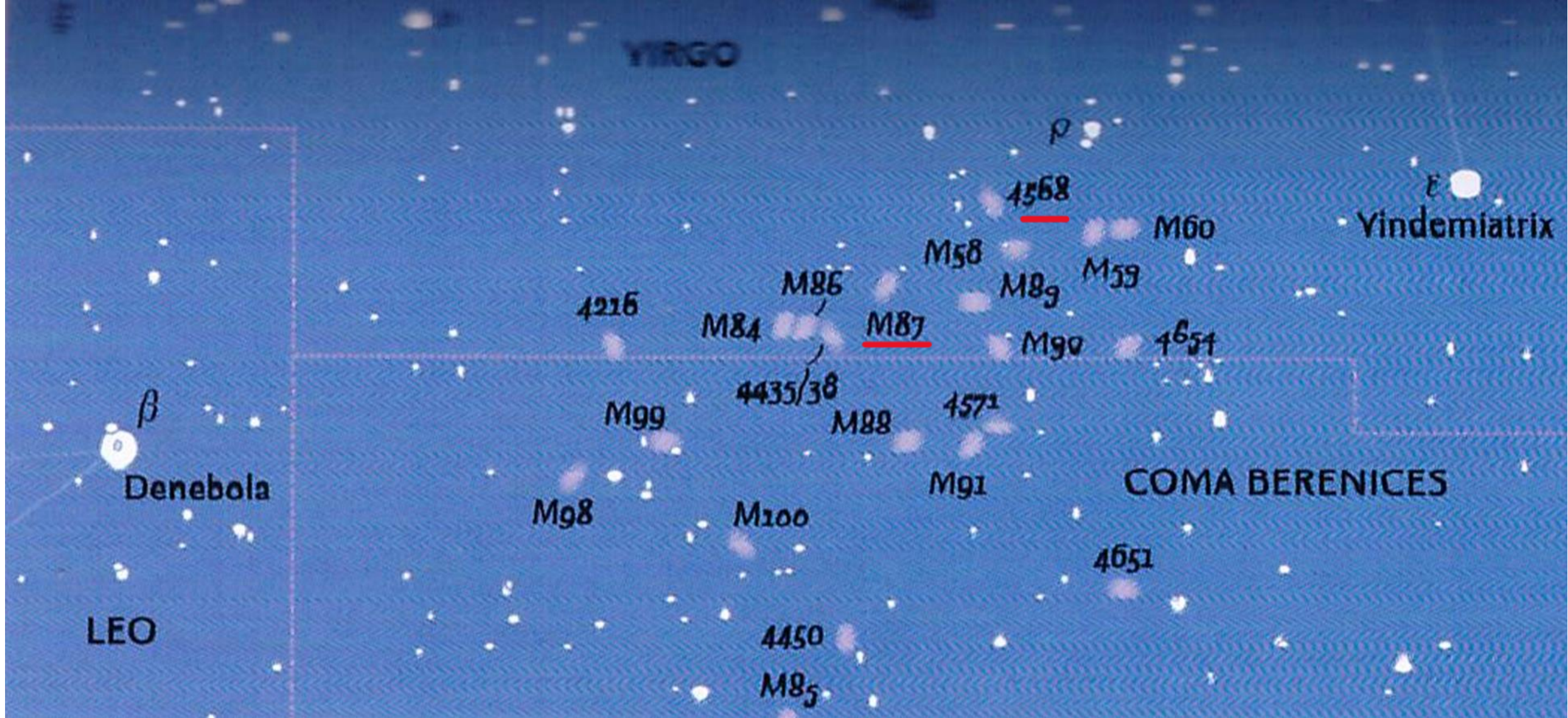



Chart showing some of the brightest clusters in the Virgo cluster. Virgo contains the nearest large cluster of galaxies, of which the Milky Way forms part. The Virgo Cluster contains about 2000 galaxies, the brightest of which are visible through amateur telescopes.

Messier 104 : The lenticular galaxy Sombrero Galaxy



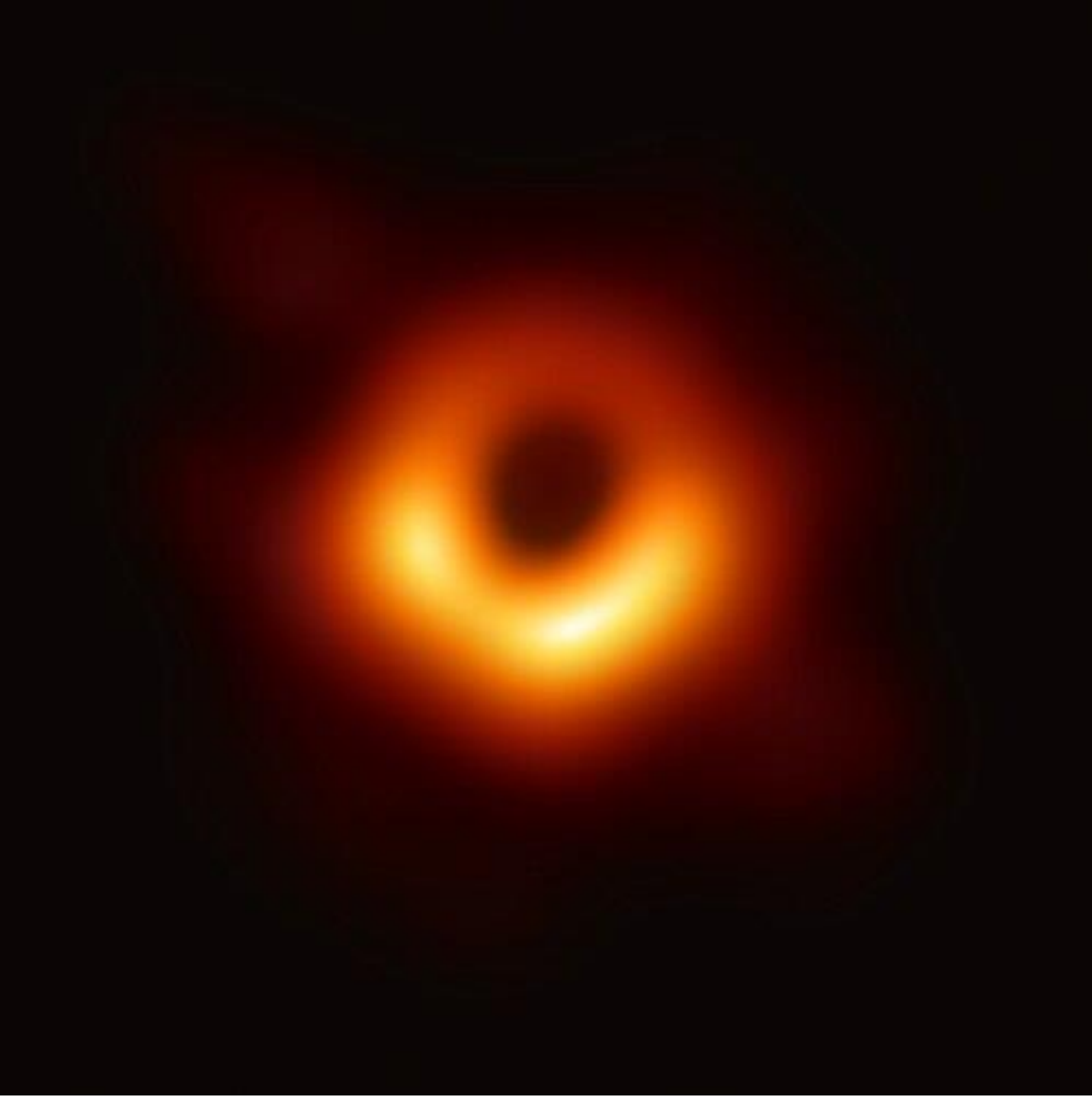
Messier 104 is famous for its resemblance to a sombrero hat, earning its nickname the "Sombrero Galaxy". This remarkable spiral galaxy is almost directly edge-on from our perspective on Earth, highlighting its bright central bulge and dense dust rings. This was a late addition to the Messier catalog, actually discovered by French astronomer Pierre Méchain in 1781.

Butterfly Galaxies

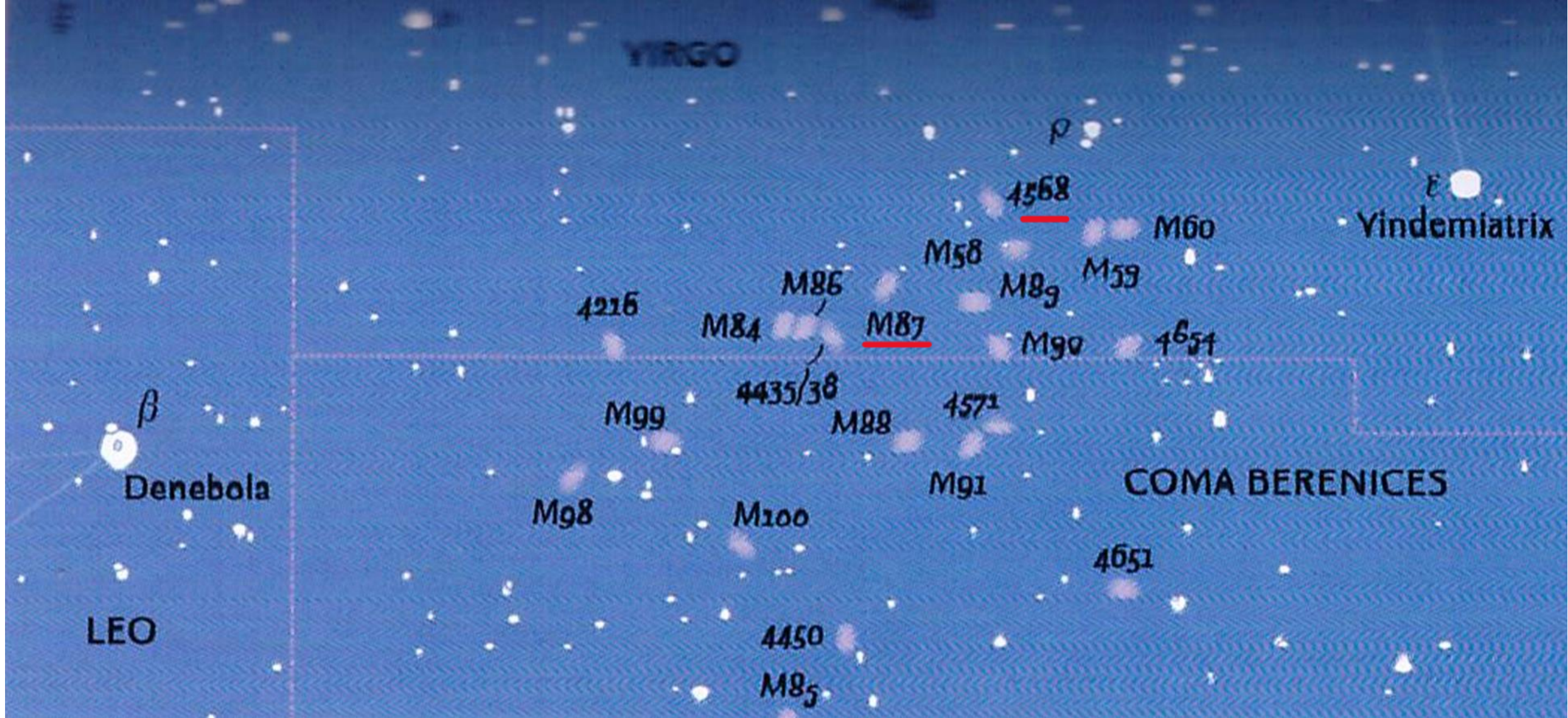
NGC 4567 and NGC 4568

The Butterfly Galaxies is a two-for-one special: two galaxies in one target! These spiral galaxies are slowly colliding with each other, originally discovered by William Herschel in 1784.





The shadow of the central black hole in the galaxy **Messier 87** in Virgo, obtained by the Event Horizon Telescope collaboration. This is the first direct image of a black hole.



SPICA

CONSTELLATION VIRGO



To some of Botswana's indigenous people, it is known as Magakgala. When rising, Spica told the people it was time to harvest their maize. The association is interesting especially given that Virgo is classically seen as a goddess of the harvest and is depicted with an ear of corn (maize) in her hand.

Spica is the brightest object in the constellation of Virgo and one of the 20 brightest stars in the night sky. It is a hot blue star that is 14 times larger and 12 000 times more luminous than our sun. It is located 250 ± 10 light-years from the Sun. It is a spectroscopic binary star and rotating ellipsoidal variable; a system whose two stars are so close together they are egg-shaped rather than spherical and can only be separated by their spectra. The primary is a blue giant and a variable star of the Beta Cephei type.





Earth

12,756 km



SUN

1.392.000 km



SIRIUS



VEGA

3.829.000 km



REGULUS

5.779.000 km



SPICA

9.640.000 km



POLLUX

11.140.000 km



Night Skies of Botswana

Stephen O'Meara

Includes local star lore

Collins

ROYAL
OBSERVATORY
GREENWICH

2025 GUIDE to the NIGHT SKY

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Radmila Topalovic, Storm Dunlop and Wil Tirion



A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO
EXPLORING THE SKIES ABOVE AUSTRALIA,
NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH AFRICA