

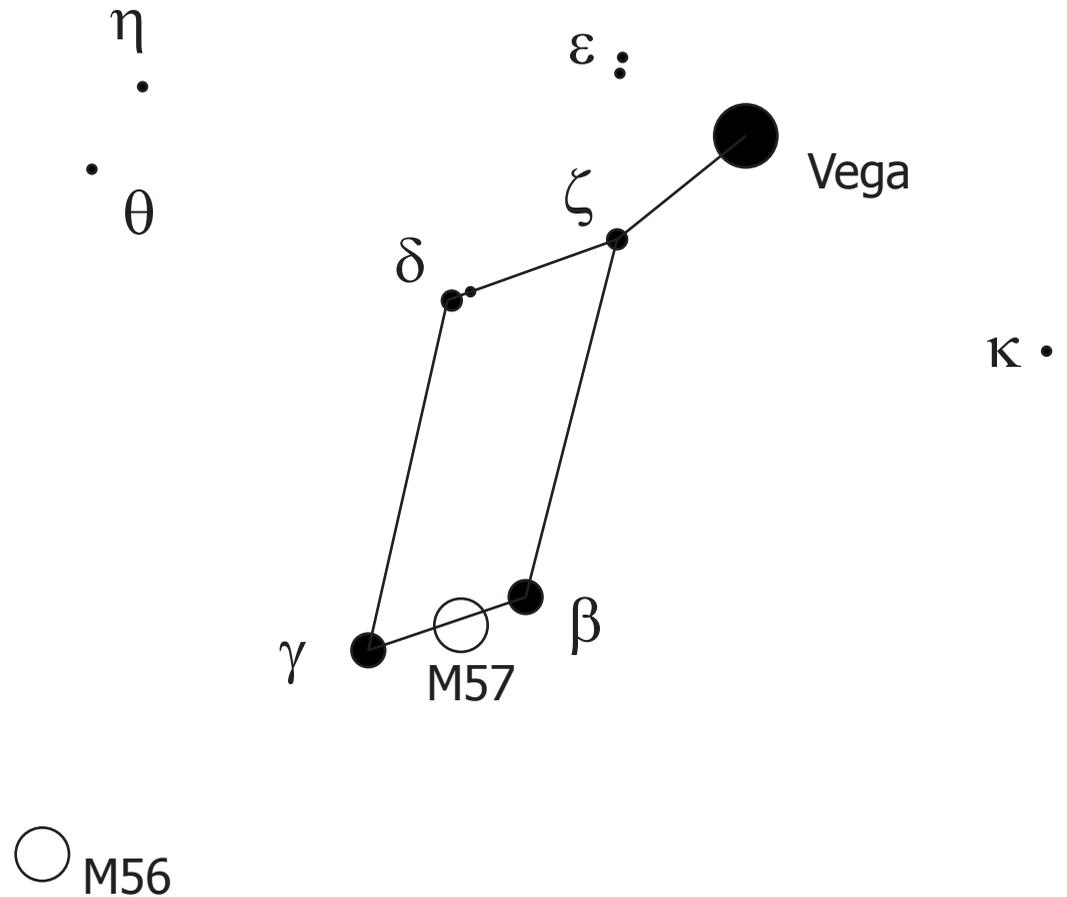


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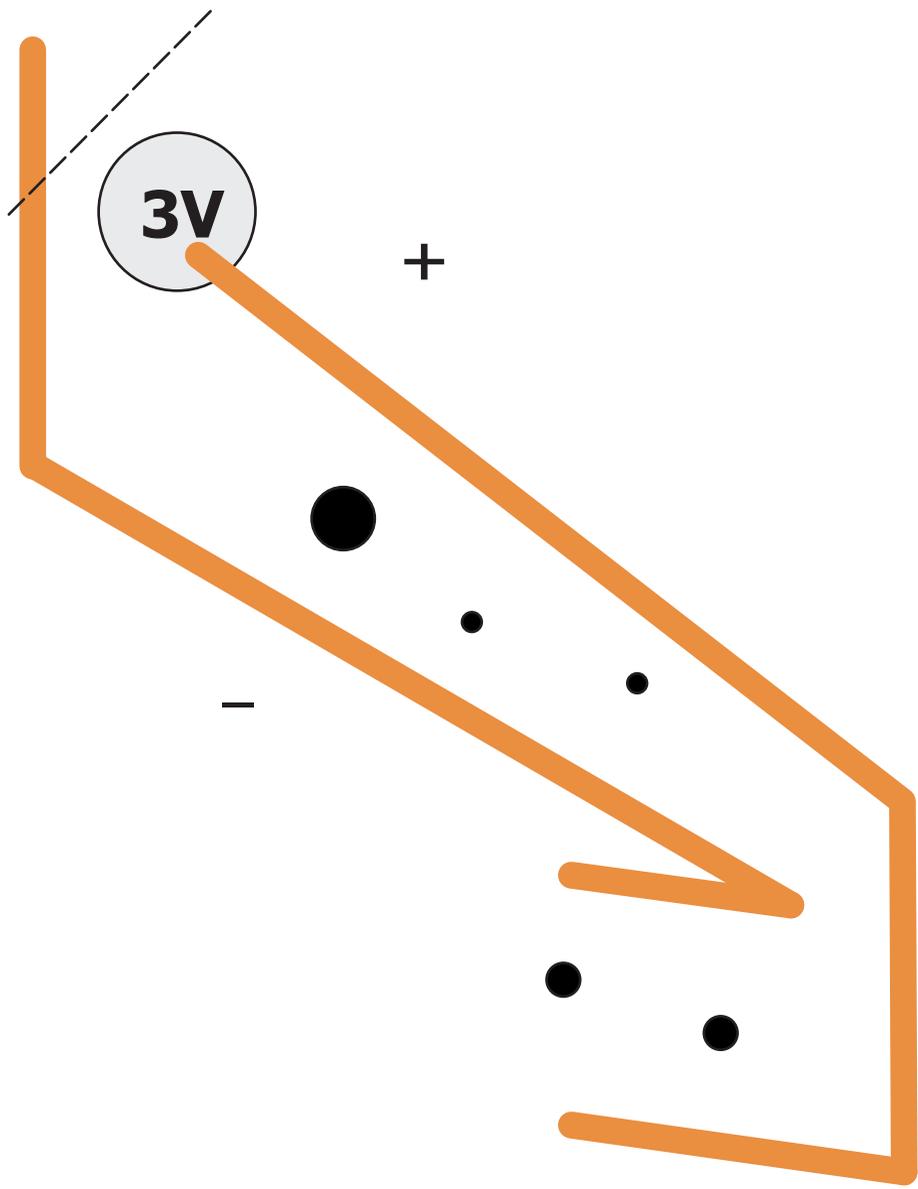


"Let's light up the constellations" by M.Sandri (INAF) - English version by G.Giobbi

Lira



National Institute for Astrophysics (INAF)



Lira is a constellation which can easily be observed in the Northern Hemisphere and in most of the Southern Hemisphere. Lira is not so large, but it can be easily located thanks to its main star, **Vega**, which is one of the brightest stars in the sky, and belongs to the **Summer Triangle**. Vega, over and above being the brightest star of the Lira constellation, will be the new North star in about 12000 years. In the month of April, Lira is the starting point of the *Lyrid* meteor shower. They date back to the Thatcher comet (a long-period comet, about 412 years).

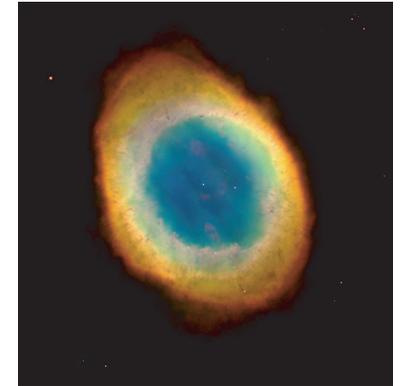
The most important objects in the sky



Credits: NASA/STScI/WikiSky

M56 is a very loosely concentrated globular cluster, placed at a distance of about 32.900 light-years, with a diametre of 85 light-years.

M57, also known as *Ring Nebula*, is one of the most widely known planetary nebulae, thanks to its brightness and its very regular shape. Its age is estimated to be between 6000 and 8000 years. It can be observed even with a small telescope.



Credits: NASA/STScI/AURA

Planetary Systems

Lira contains several known planetary systems; the richest one (before Kepler's discoveries) within this constellation is **HD 177830**, which contains two planets. **WASP-3** is a yellow dwarf, which owns a hot Jupiter-like planet. The Kepler Space Telescope, which observes the stars of this constellation (and those of Cygnus), has discovered, through the transit method, several planetary systems. The richest ones are **Kepler-20**, **Kepler-33** and **Kepler-80**, stars with 5 confirmed planets in tow.