

The Constellation Andromeda - From naked eye to the Hubble Space Telescope

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Abstract - The Constellation Andromeda (The Chained Maiden) is a large and bright constellation of the northern hemisphere, listed by Ptolemy as one of the 48 original constellations handed down from antiquity. Andromeda is nearly circumpolar, so it can be observed at most times of the year for observers in the northern hemisphere, but the best time to view is September to February.

Andromeda is a constellation named for the princess Andromeda. She was a daughter of King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia. Andromeda was chained to a cliff for the monster Cetus, as a punishment to her mother, but Perseus rescued her.

There is plenty to see in this fall constellation. The Constellation Andromeda contains many notable galaxies and other deep sky objects. The Great Andromeda Galaxy (M31) is one of the most distant objects visible to the naked eye. It is a beautiful spiral galaxy much like the Milky Way. In 1923, Edwin Hubble found the first Cepheid variable in the Andromeda galaxy and established the true nature of M31 as a galaxy.

Supernova 1885 has been recorded in the Andromeda Galaxy and it was the first to be detected outside the Milky Way.

Andromeda is associated with the Andromedids (Bielids) shower, which produced meteor storms in 1872 and 1885 when comet Biela broken up into two pieces.

It is also interesting that the brightest star in Andromeda, α Andromedae, called Alpheratz or Sirrah, makes up with α , β , and λ Pegasi an asterism called the Great Square of Pegasus.