

Eridanus Optics CC

June 2007

The King and the Charmer

Jupiter, the king of planets, currently dominates the Eastern sky during the early evening from the constellation 'Ophiuchus'.

Ophiuchus is the 'snake handler' (or charmer) and fits between the two parts that make up 'Serpens' (Serpens Caput (head) and Serpens Cauda (tail)). Although the Sun passes through Ophiuchus during December, it is not part of the Zodiac. Ophiuchus is situated next to Scorpio and Sagittarius and is also rich in deep sky objects due to its proximity to the Milky Way (See www.eridanusoptics.com/NL0605.pdf - Scorpio and www.eridanusoptics.com/NL0607.pdf - Sagittarius) and seven Messier objects can be found in this relatively unknown constellation.

The maps are valid for 19:00 on June 9, looking East.

Naked eye targets:

Use the map on page 3 to guide you to the various objects.

In 2007, Jupiter is best seen during June because it is in opposition on the 6th (i.e Jupiter is closest to Earth). The adventurous may try to see Callisto unaided from dark sites on June 10; June 18 and June 26. June 18 is the best prospect because New Moon is on June 15.

The bright stars that make up Ophiuchus should easily be visible unaided, even from light polluted skies:

- Rastalhague: Mag 2.0
- Sabik: Mag 2.4
- Han: Mag 2.5
- Yed Prior: Mag 2.7
- Cebalrai: Mag 2.8
- Marfik: Mag 3.8

Note: Jupiter moves through the sky (planet = wanderer) and you should not use it to orientate yourself. Rather use Antares, the heart of Scorpio.

An unusual target to look out for is Vesta. It will be at its brightest in 18 years and may reach Mag 5.4 during early June. Early June, Vesta will be in Ophiuchus, but moves into Scorpio on the 11th. See Map 2 for more detail.

Action to look out for further North is the June Lyrids meteor shower. This meteor shower peaks on June 16. The best time to observe is from 23:30 to 02:00. The conditions are favourable with New Moon on 15 June.

Binocular Targets:

Two objects were selected from the ASSA top 100 list of Deep Sky Objects. These are ASSA 71 and ASSA 73. These objects also appear on the more famous Messier Catalogue (M12 and M10) and the Bennett Catalogue (Ben 80 and Ben 83). Refer to the map on page 4 when interpreting the instructions.

To find M12 (Mag 8), start at Yed Prior and follow the instructions below:

- Locate Marfik to the North-East of Yed Prior (down)
- Next locate the cluster of stars to the East (further down towards the left) of Marfik.
- From the “double star”, extend a line through the single star right above it to the first bright star (HIP 81687).
- M12 is to the South East (down and right) of HIP 81687.

If you extend the line from HIP 81687 through M12 further to the South East, you'll find M10 (Mag 7.5). From Pretoria I could see both M10 and M12 as hazy patches with my 7x50 Apogee Inc AstroVue Binoculars.

You can also keep an eye open for Vesta and even trace its movement against background stars over a few evenings.

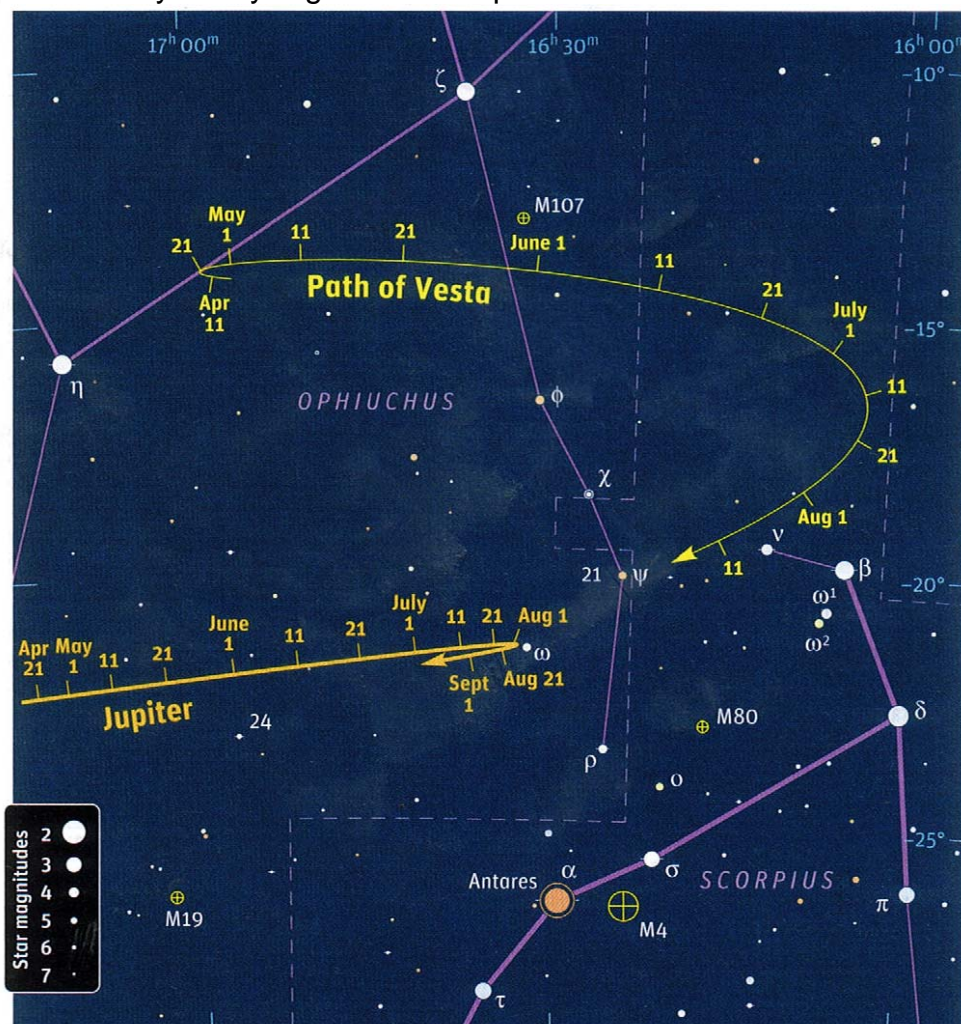
Telescope Targets:

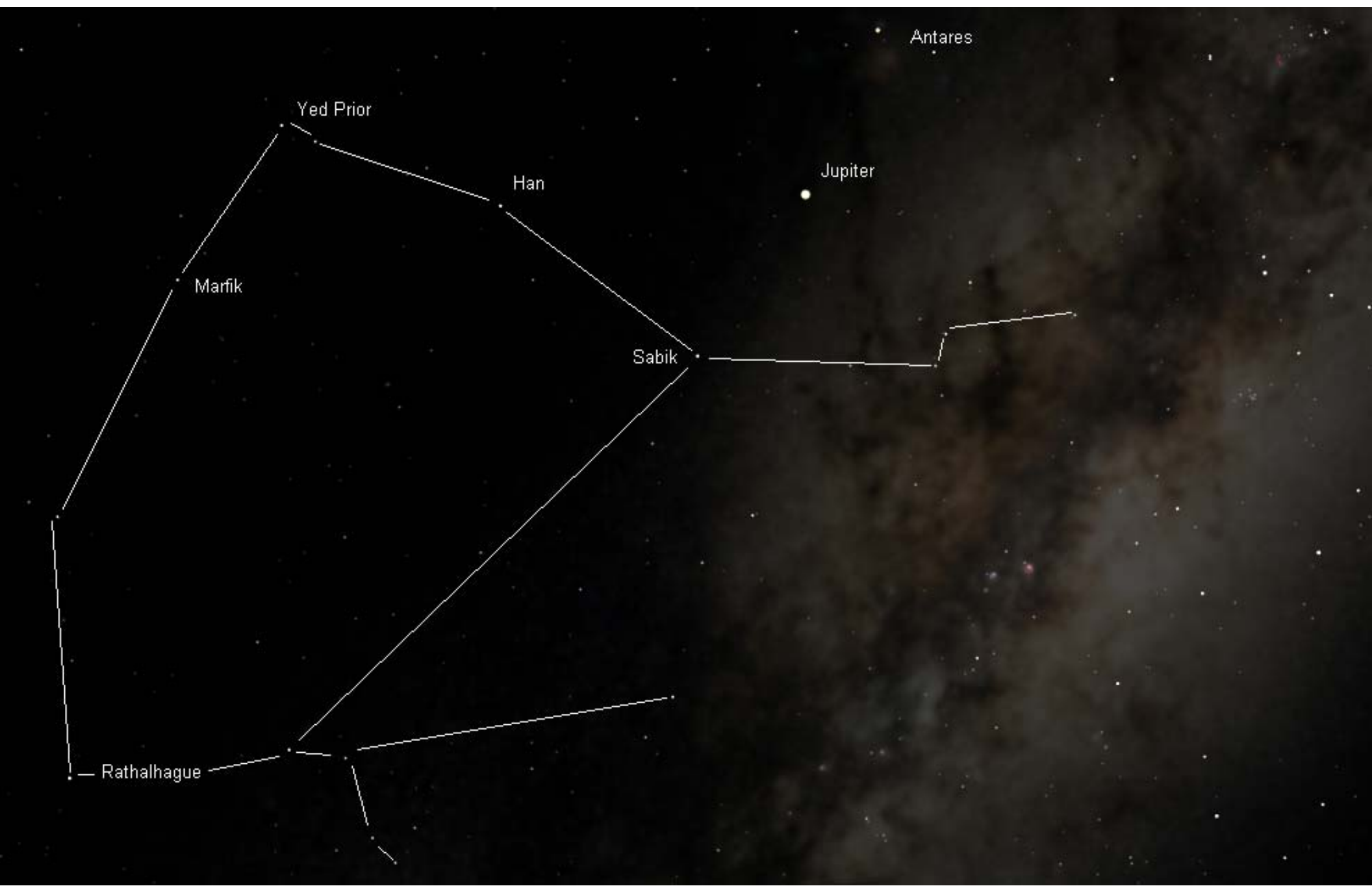
Both M10 and M12 are fine objects for telescopes. I could see a lot of structure and detail with my 6” Dobsonian.

Happy hunting!

Andrie

Map of Vesta from June 2007 edition of Sky&Telescope. Other Maps produced by Starry Night – Orion Special Edition.





Antares

Yed Prior

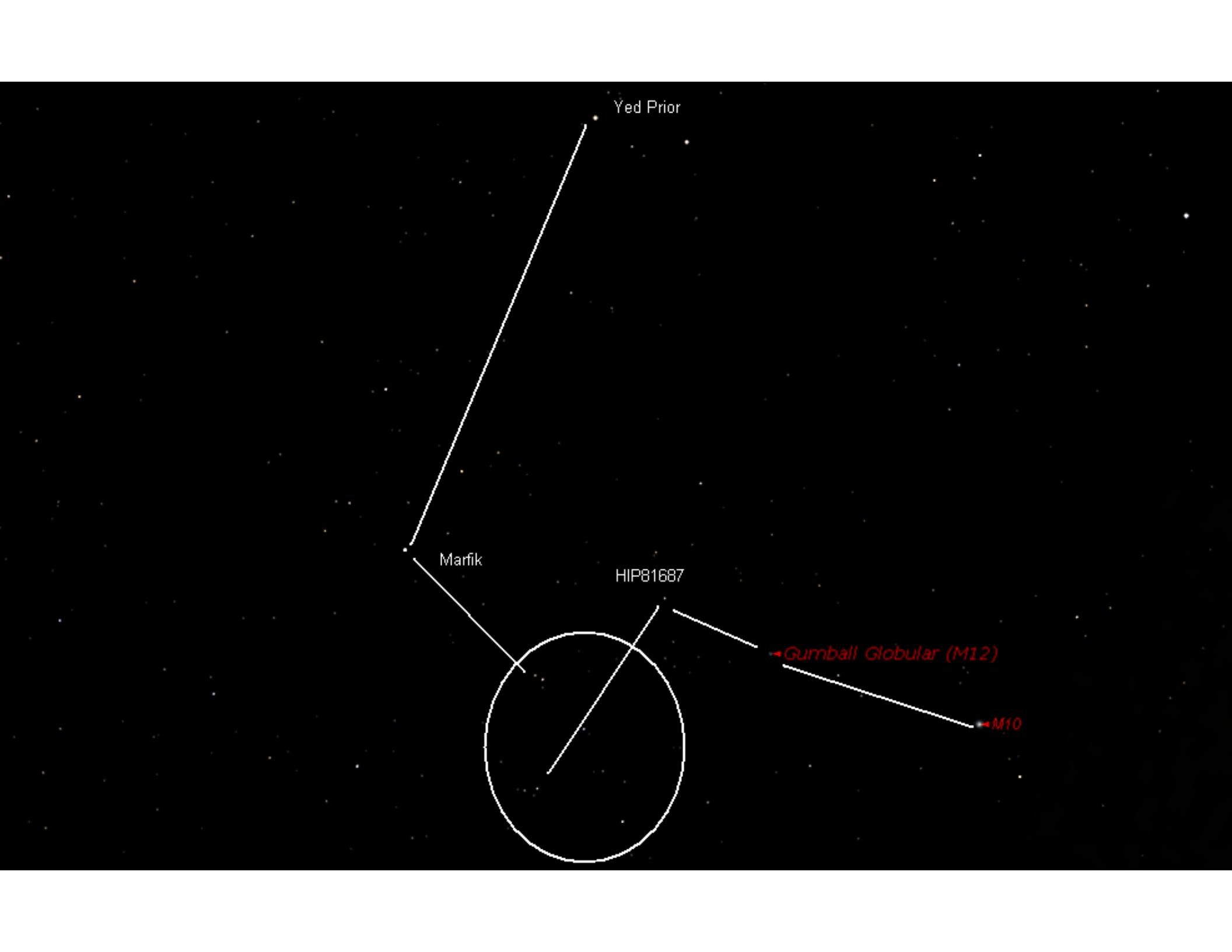
Han

Jupiter

Marfik

Sabik

Rathalhague



Yed Prior

Marfik

HIP81687

◀ Gumball Globular (M12)

▶ M10