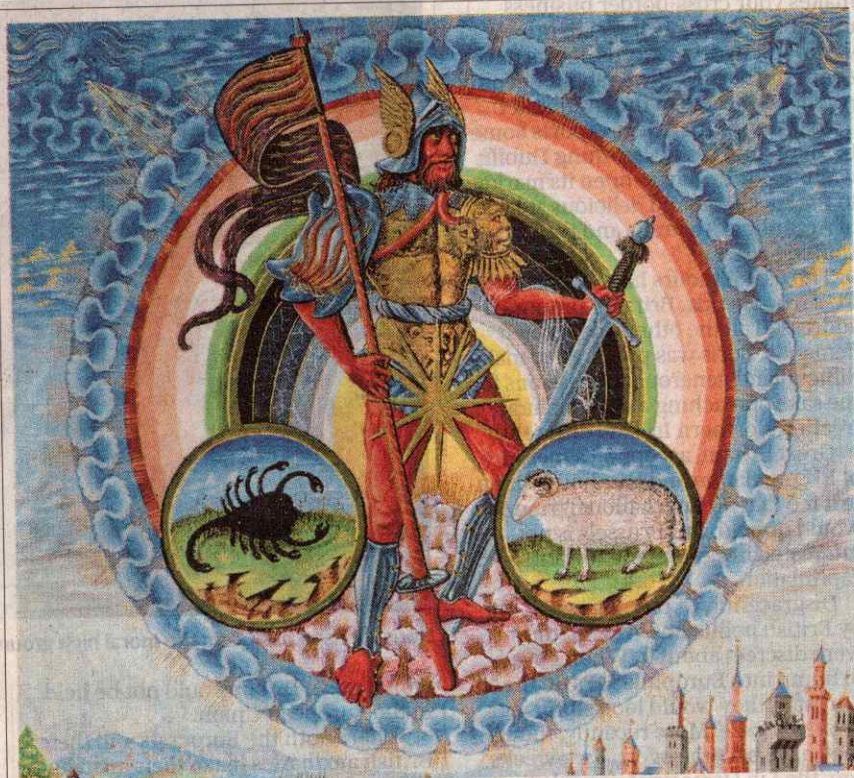




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## Letters to the Editor

Sunday 6 October 2019 *The Sunday Telegraph*



Mars depicted in *De Sphaera*, an astrological book by Christoforo de Predis (1440-86)

### Mankind must keep searching for life on Mars

**SIR** - Your report, "We'll find life on Mars... but are we ready for it?" (September 29), reopens an age-old question as to why we do science.

Our duty as scientists and natural philosophers is to explore the world around us dispassionately, with the object of unravelling its secrets. If the facts that emerge from our studies are deemed unpalatable to the world, should these be stifled or withheld? The Nasa chief's dilemma is unresolvable: the world is never ready for new discoveries, particularly those that challenge our long-accustomed view of ourselves.

However, we need to know whether there is life on Mars, and

indeed elsewhere in the universe. Such knowledge, to varying degrees of certainty, has been around for a few decades, but it has too often been stifled or ignored. Every scrap of relevant evidence from biology and astronomy has been converging on the grand hypothesis of life as a cosmic phenomenon - the idea that Fred Hoyle and I, along with many others, have expounded and developed since the early 1980s. The evidence is all around us and the time for disclosure is now - come what may.

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