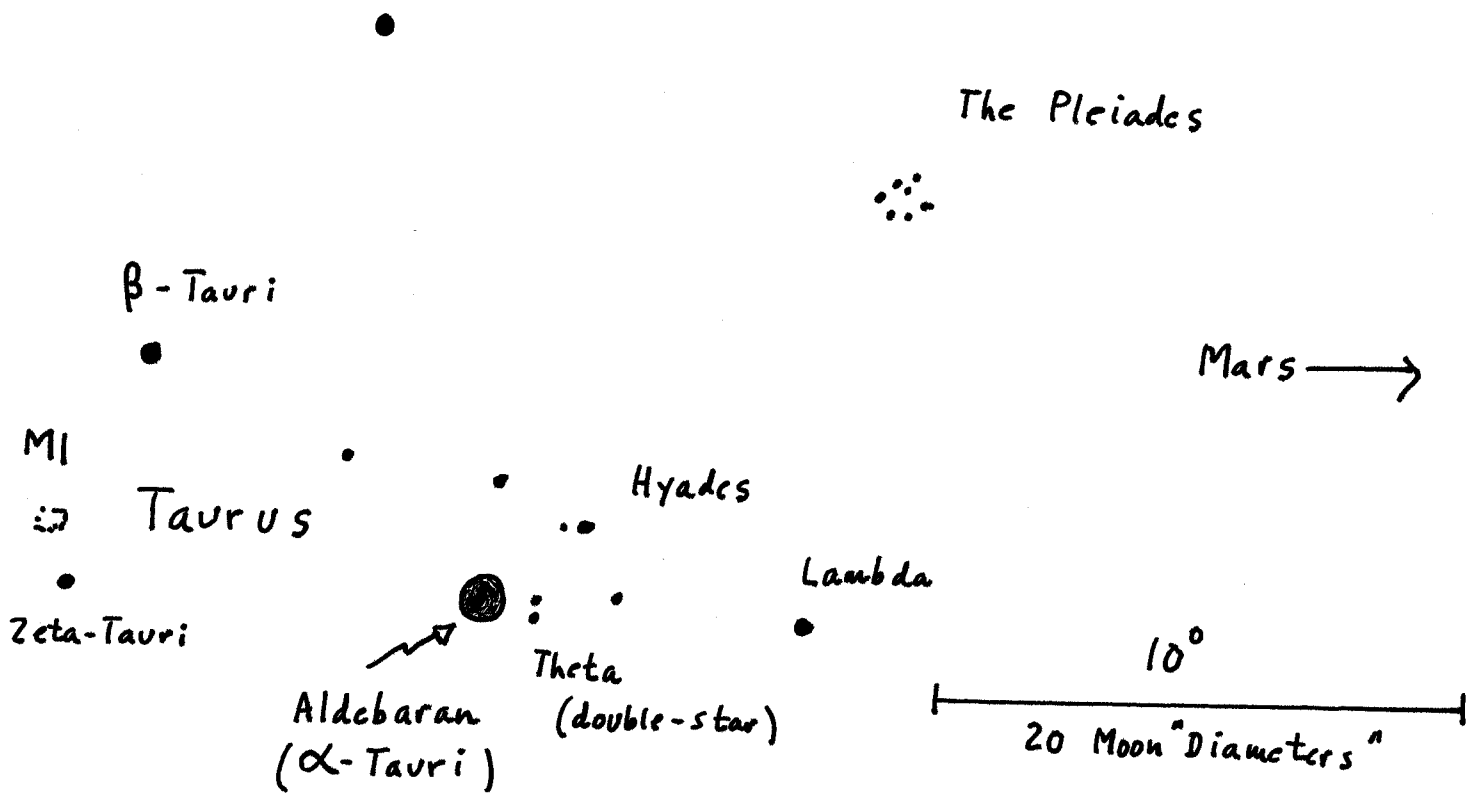


Mars has now passed its closest opposition point until 2018, but continues to be a conspicuous, reddish sight, high in the South East in the night.



The V-shaped Hyades cluster represents the face of the Bull, with the red, giant star, Aldebaran, glinting like its bloodshot eye (mag. 0.8).

Aldebaran is a foreground object, lying 20 pc. (65 l.y.) away, the true members of the cluster about 46 pc. distant, moving together through space.

The double-star, theta, has white and yellow components, easily resolved using binoculars. Binoculars will also reveal many more stars in the Pleiades (the so-called "Seven Sisters") than are visible to the naked eye. Photographs show the brightest members to be surrounded by a bluish haze, as they illuminate the left-over material from their formation about 10^8 years ago. The Pleiades lie at a distance of about 135 pc.

Just to the North of Zeta is the Crab Nebula. This is the remnant of a supernova that was sighted in 1054. It was bright enough to be viewed in daylight for 23 days and at night for a further 20 months. It lies 1900 pc away. ($m = 8$).