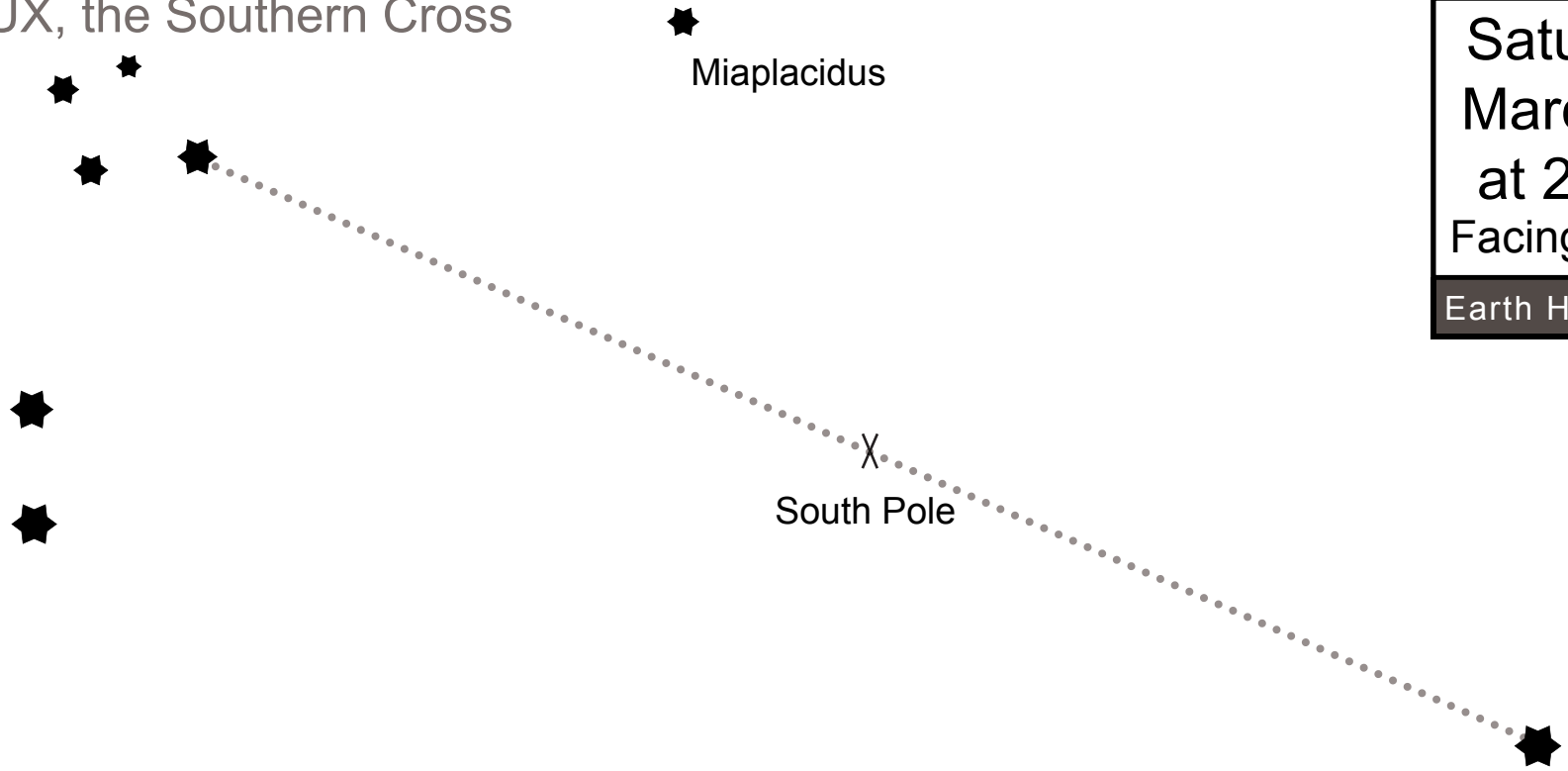


CRUX, the Southern Cross

The Pointers
to the Southern Cross



Saturday
March 28
at 21:00
Facing South
Earth Hour 2009

Spread your thumb and little finger as far apart as possible. Now hold out your hand at arm's length. Your fingertips are now a useful way to measure distance in the sky. From thumb-tip to the tip of your little finger is 20 degrees (sometimes written 20°).

The longest arm of Crux (the Southern Cross) is 6° long, while the short arm is a little more than 4°.

To find South, join the long arm of Crux to the bright star Achernar. Half-way is the south pole of the sky. Go straight down to the ground to find true south.

Question: How far is it from the tip of Crux to Achernar?

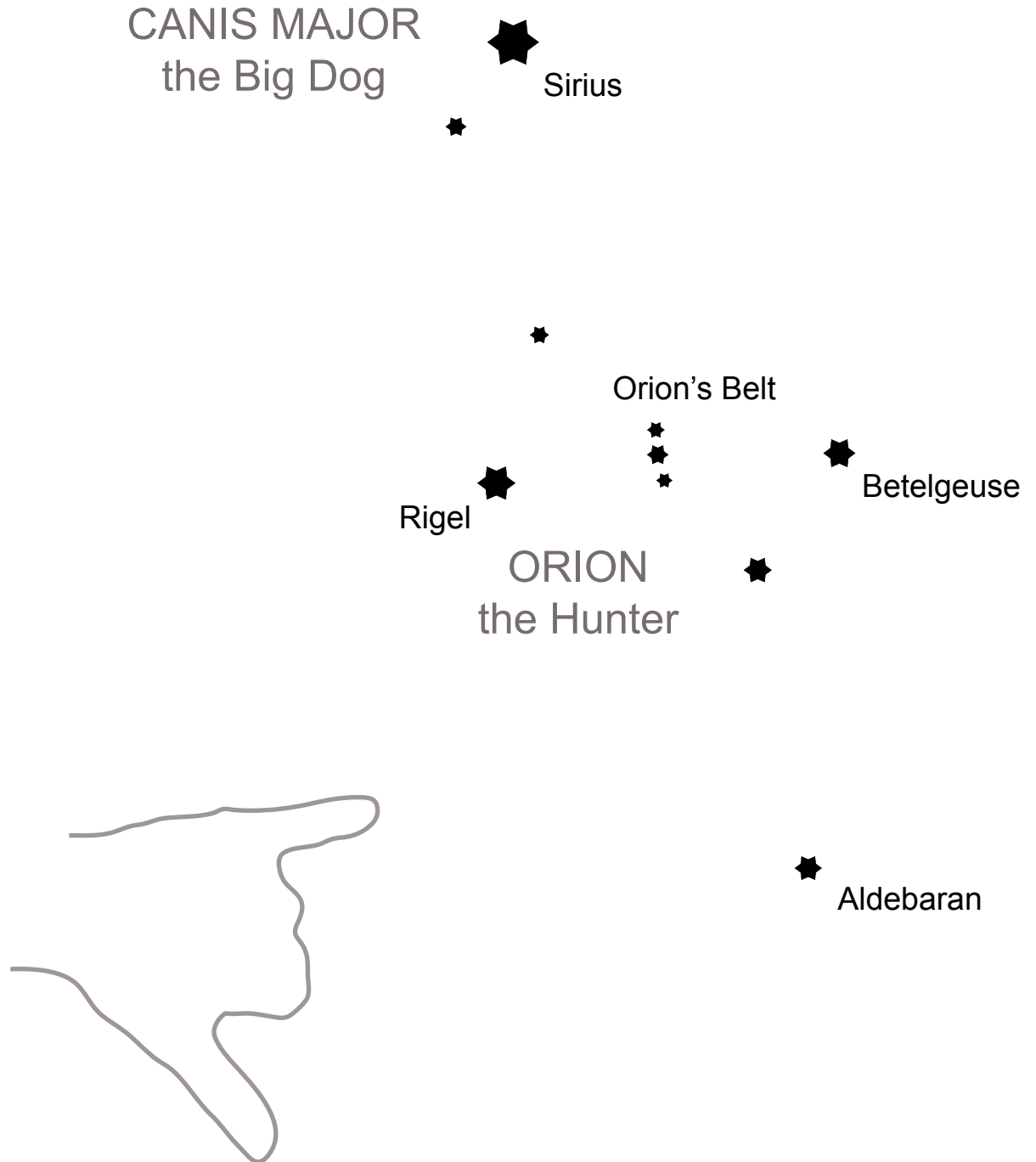
Answer: Almost sixty degrees, or just about three hand-stretches.



SOUTH (left of where the Sun sets, or right of where the Sun rises)



Saturday
March 28
at 21:00
Facing West
Earth Hour 2009



Question: How far apart is Sirius (the brightest star in the night sky) from Rigel?

Answer: Almost twenty-four degrees.

WEST (the direction in which the Sun sets)

Saturday
March 28
at 21:00
Facing North
Earth Hour 2009

★ Procyon

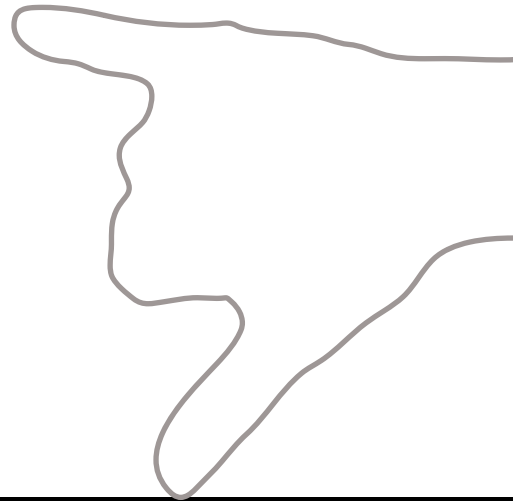
LEO
the Lion

★ Regulus

★ Saturn

GEMINI
the Twins

★ Pollux
★ Castor



Question: How far apart are the star Regulus and the planet Saturn tonight?

Answer: seventeen degrees.



Saturday
March 28
at 21:00
Facing East
Earth Hour 2009

LEO
the Lion
★
Saturn

CORVUS
the Crow
★
★
★

VIRGO
the Virgin
★
Spica

Question: How far the bright star Spica in Virgo, from the planet Saturn, tonight?
Answer: About thirty-seven degrees.

EAST (the direction in which the Sun rises)
↑