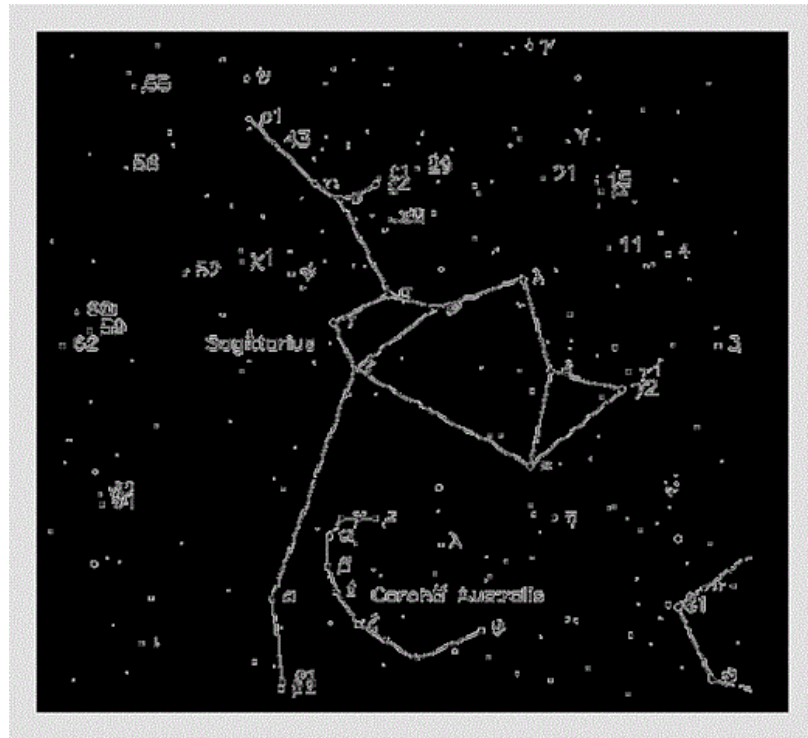


Figure 15.9.



Sagittarius with Bayer and Flamsteed names.

p. 363 15.6.4 Weather prediction

Many cultures study the sky to make weather predictions. This touches on cloud watching and knowing from which direction seasonal rains come, but includes observations of the atmosphere by focusing on celestial bodies. For example, in the rhyme 'red skies at night, sailor's delight, red skies at morning, sailor's warning', red skies at sunset or sunrise are marked by clouds but clouds to the west don't indicate a storm, whereas clouds to the east do, perhaps indicating a pattern of storms coming from the east. By observing the Sun at sunrise or sunset, people study its colour, looking for dust and clouds, the turbulence in the atmosphere, and haziness indicating a lot of moisture and/or dust. Each of these can indicate a change in weather. Rings around the Moon or Sun tend to be due to ice particles in the atmosphere or high clouds, and either can indicate freezing weather. If stars twinkle more, this indicates upper-atmosphere turbulence which may mark a storm front moving in. Dust in the atmosphere can change the colour of stars but also cool the atmosphere, indicating cooler weather. Weather is local, so rhymes and sayings about the weather are usually not transferable. It is important to document not only what people are observing about the sky, but what they use to predict weather changes.