



325 West End Avenue, New York City, New York, 10023-8145
Tel: 646 827-0724 Fax: 212 994-9603
E-mail: jonathan@jonathanahill.com and yoshi@jonathanahill.com

Comets I



The Comet of 1577 Observed

1. DASYPIDIUS, Konrad. *Von Cometen, und ihrer würckung*. Fine woodcut vignette on title with an illus. of the comet of Nov. 1577 passing through the sky with coordinates & three woodcut illus. in the text. 18 leaves. Small 4to, modern boards. Strasbourg: N. Wyriot, 1578. \$8500.00

First edition (a Latin edition was published at the same time) of this very rare work on the celebrated comet of 1577; this comet was the focal point of astronomical thought in the

last quarter of the 16th century and its influence cannot be overestimated. It was the first comet for which its location outside the earth's atmosphere was conclusively proven. "The works published on this comet form a turning point in the history of astronomy because precise observations were used to demonstrate that the Aristotelian views on comets, which had remained dominant for nearly two millennia, were incorrect."—Yeomans, *Comets*, p. 33.

"In considering the importance of Dasypodius' book on the comet of 1577, his prominent position in the community and his consequent influence must be kept in mind...Dasypodius first dealt with the material, the form, and the power of comets...The second chapter, on the nature, properties and effects of comets, begins by saying that astronomers should observe a comet with astronomical instruments and note its position in longitude and latitude...

"Dasypodius' conception of what astronomers should observe was largely correct...he furnished some data useful to astronomers."—Hellman, *The Comet of 1577: Its Place in the History of Astronomy*, pp. 240-43—(& see the many references to him and this book throughout Hellman's work).

Dasypodius (ca. 1530-1600), studied in Strasbourg at the famous academy of Johannes Sturm and became professor there in 1558. At that time in Strasbourg, under the influence of Sturm, mathematics was studied far more extensively than in many of the universities. Dasypodius felt that the mathematics of his time was far below the Greek level; all his works reflect his deep knowledge of Greek mathematics and astronomy.

Fine copy.

• D.S.B., III, p. 585. Hellman, *The Comet of 1577: Its Place in the History of Astronomy*, no. 33a (no copy located) in the bibliography. Zinner 2816.

Shakespeare's Comet?

2. [NOEL, "ascribed author"]. *Advertissement sur la Comete apparue du costé d'Occident, depuis le 14. Iuillet iusques au 6. d'Aoust, en l'annee 1596*. Woodcut of the comet on title. 7, [1] pp. 12mo, modern cloth. Lyon: G. de Jullie, [1596]. \$5000.00

First edition of this rare account of the 1596 comet; WorldCat locates only one copy, at Harvard. This comet was observed both in Asia and Europe. Tycho Brahe observed the comet on a number of occasions, beginning on 24 July and continuing until 6 August. Other notable scientists who studied the comet include Helisaeus Roeslin, Georg Henisch, and Simon Marius.

It has been suggested this comet might have been in Shakespeare's memory as he composed *Julius Caesar* around 1599 (Calpurnia warns her husband not to venture outdoors after her dream of seeing comets in the night). Shakespeare also makes references to comets in *Henry IV* and *King John* and could have been referring to this comet. See David H. Levy, *The Starlight Night: The Sky in the Writings of Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Hopkins*.

Fine copy. Bookplate of Mr. J. Renard. The Harvard cataloguing ascribes the authorship of this work to "Noel."

• Baudrier, I, 224. Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 329-30.

"The First Telescopic Observation of a Comet"

3. CYSAT, Johann Baptist. *Mathemata Astronomica de Loco, Motu, Magnitudine, et Causis Cometae qui sub finem Anni 1618. et Initium Anni 1619. in Coelo fulsit; Ex assiduis legitimisque variorum Phaenomenorum observationibus derioata...* Numerous woodcut illus. & diagrams in the text (many full-page, several cropped at outer or lower margin). 4 p.l., 80 (i.e. 84), [3] pp.

Small 4to, modern red morocco (minor browning). Ingolstadt: ex Typographeo Ederiano, apud E. Angermariam, Viduam, 1619. \$15,000.00

First edition of an extremely rare and important book; it “contains the first telescopic observation of a comet, showing at the same time that its orbit was parabolic, not circular. It also first mentions the Jesuit astronomer’s discovery of the Orion nebula, and of two of Saturn’s Satellites.”—Sotheran, *First Supp.*, 2200.

Cysat (ca. 1586-1657), was a student of Christoph Scheiner and it was he who observed the sunspots, in 1612, which occasioned the great controversy between Scheiner and Galileo. “In 1618 Cysat became professor of mathematics at Ingolstadt, where he made the observations on the comet of 1618-1619 for which he is mainly known...The observations cover the interval from 1 December 1618 to 22 January 1619, and form the most nearly continuous series of observations on this much argued-about comet. He also measured the dimensions of the head and tail and studied the appearance of the comet telescopically.”—*D.S.B.*, III, p. 528.

Good copy. One woodcut a little defective at outer margin.

♣ Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 338-41. Lalande, p. 174. Yeomans, *Comets*, pp. 63, 162, & 418. Zinner 4702.

Galileo’s First Reply in his Controversy with the Jesuits over the Comets of 1618

4. [GALILEI, Galileo]. *Discorso delle Comete di Mario Guiducci fatto da lui nell’Accademia Fiorentina nel suo medesimo consolato*. Woodcut device of the Medicean stars on title & two woodcut diagrams in the text. 2 p.l., 54 pp., one blank leaf. Small 4to, late 19th-cent. green diced morocco, arms of the House of Visconti in gilt within a richly decorated border, spine richly gilt, a.e.g. Florence: P. Cecconcelli, 1619. \$40,000.00

First edition and a very fine copy. Although published under the name of his pupil and assistant Mario Guiducci (1585-1646), the present book is actually the work of Galileo (the autograph manuscript survives). It is a concealed reply to the attack of the Jesuit Orazio Grassi’s *De Tribus Cometis*, published earlier in the same year, and marks the beginning of Galileo’s long controversy with Scheiner and the other Jesuit astronomers over the comet of 1618. The dispute continued for several years and resulted in Galileo’s scientific manifesto *Il Saggiatore* (1623) which contains his most important ideas on the philosophy of scientific investigation.

In addition to a description of the comets of 1618, Galileo discusses the satellites of Jupiter, the uses of the telescope, fixed stars not visible to the naked eye, etc.

♣ Carli & Favaro 80. Cinti 63.

The Famous Comets of 1618-19

5. [GRICK, Friedrich]. *Kometoprostasiekdiketes [in Greek] Oder Cometenbutzer, Das ist: Eine glaubwürdige Copey Articulierter und rechtmassiger Klag, dess guten, unschuldigen Cometen, welcher im abgeflossenen nächst verwichenen 1618. Jarh erschienen...durch...Johanne Procopio übergeben*. 8 unnumbered leaves. Small 4to, attractive modern marbled boards, red morocco lettering piece on spine. [Prague]: P. Zoanetti, 1619. \$3500.00

First edition of this very scarce work on the famous comets of 1618-19 which attracted so much attention from the leading astronomers of the time, including Galileo and Scheiner.

The author, who uses the pseudonym Johannes Procopius, states that he opposes those who profess to interpret comets as portents. Rather, Grick provides careful scientific descriptions of the comet, with accounts of its nature, origins, appearance, size, and path. There are numerous references to Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Copernicus, etc. and the author displays a good understanding of Kepler's astronomical discoveries.

Fine copy. Grick also wrote a defense of the Rosicrucians in 1617.

• Houzeau & Lancaster 5673. Lalande, p. 177. Zinner 4777.

The Second Observation of Halley's Comet

6. KEPLER, Johannes. *De Cometis Libelli Tres. I. Astronomicus...II. Physicus...III. Astrologicus*. Two folding woodcut plates, three folding printed tables (plus two in duplicate), & several woodcuts in the text. 4 p.l., 138 pp., one blank leaf. 4to, antique 18th-century style calf-backed boards. Augsburg: Typis A. Apergeri, sumptibus S. Mylii, 1619-[20].

\$35,000.00

First edition, and a very good copy of a rare book; it contains the second observation of Halley's comet. In this work, Kepler "discussed in detail the bright comets of 1607 and 1618. Reflecting on the ephemeral nature of comets, he proposed a strictly rectilinear trajectory, which of course appeared more complex because of the earth's motion. Some decades later Edmond Halley made extensive use of the observations recorded in this book when he showed the seventy-six year periodicity of the comet of 1607. The brief second section of Kepler's trilogy concerned the 'physiology of comets': they fill the ether as fish fill the sea but are dissipated by the sun's light, forming the tail that points away from the sun. The final section treated the significations of the comets."—*D.S.B.*, VII, p. 302.

Nice large copy with some uncut leaves and without the usual heavy browning. Stamp of the "K[öniglich] K[aiserliche] Universitätsbibliothek," Vienna, to several leaves, including versos of most tables and with the Library's duplicate or release stamp superimposed. One diagram with an old repair.

• Caspar 60. Cinti 65. Zinner 4739.

The Comet of 1618 Described by a Famous Hellenist

7. SCHMIDT (or SCHMIED), Erasmus. *Prodromus Conjunctionis Magnae, anno 1623. futurae. Das ist, Kurtzes und Einfeltiges, doch in Gottes Wort und der Astrologischen Kunst gegründets Bedencken von dem grossen Cometstern, der in abgewichenem 1618. Jahre, im Novembri sich erst recht sehen lassen...* 18 leaves. Small 4to, attractive modern marbled boards, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Wittenberg: C. Heyden, 1619.

\$4500.00

First edition of this rare book which is considered by *A.D.B.* to be the author's most important scientific work; it is a careful record of the third of the three bright comets of 1618-19. Schmidt (1570-1637), was "one of the last of the scholars of Germany who taught the language and literature of Greece in the spirit of Melanchthon. [Schmidt] was professor, first of Greek, and next of Mathematics, at Wittenberg. His principal work was an edition of Pindar, with a Latin translation and a careful commentary (1616)."—*Sandys*, II, p. 272.

Fine copy.

• *A.D.B.*, Vol. 32, pp. 27-28. Zinner 4785.