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## Comets III

(Pictures are available on request)

### *The Comet of 1680-81*

1. ANON. *Betrachtung und Bedencken Uber den Im Monath Decemb. des verwichenen, und im Januario dieses 1681. Jahrs, erschienenen recht entsetzlichen Cometen, Darinnen dessen Ursprung, Erscheinung, Figur, Farbe, Schweif, Höhe, Grösse sein sondebahrer Lauf, Würckung und Bedeutung, unvorgreiflich zu ferneren Nachdenken, wohlmeinend zu buszfertigen Andencken auf Begehren vorgestellt worden.* One fine folding engraved plate & one large astronomical woodcut illus. in the text. 19 [i.e. 31] pp. Small 4to, modern wrappers. N.p.: 1681. \$3000.00

First edition of this rare and highly detailed anonymous observation of the famous comet of 1680-81. Apart from its brightness, this comet is notable as the first to be observed using a telescope (by Gottfried Kirch in Coburg). Other well-known observers included Robert Hooke, Flamsteed, Newton, and John Evelyn.

The author of this work clearly had a scientific background; he provides very detailed descriptions of the appearance of the comet, its path, and significance. The fine folding plate depicts the comet's path through the constellations.

Fine copy and scarce.

• Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 369-73.

### *He Couldn't Wait*

2. [MENTZER, Balthasar]. *Kurtze Beschreibung Dess Erschröcklichen Cometen so im Monat Decembr. dess 1680. Jahrs erschienen, Auff vielfältiges Begehren auffgesetzt... von M.B.M.P.M.P.* Finely engraved vignette on title (inner portion of image slightly obscured by the wrapper). [4] leaves. Small 4to, modern wrappers. Frankfurt: 1680. \$3000.00

First edition of one of the earliest publications on the famous comet of 1680-81. Apart from its brightness, this comet is notable as the first to be observed using a telescope (by Gottfried Kirch in Coburg).

Mentzer (1651-1727), was professor of mathematics at the University of Giessen and later, because of his religious convictions, was obliged to move to Hamburg where he taught at the

city's gymnasium. The comet was first observed on 14 November 1680 by Kirch; it became quite bright and prominent by the end of that month. Clearly, Mentzer rushed his brief report of the sensational comet into print.

Very good copy. Small blank portion of title and third leaf removed.

• Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 369-73. Poggendorff, II, col. 121.

### *With Plates Depicting the Comet's Path*

3. VIRLING, Georg Samuel. *Der wackere Stab des Herren...vorgestellet durch den Am 18. (28.) Decembr. dieses zu End laufenden 1680. Jahres, mit viel größerem, als erstmals; daher desto mehr erschrecklichem Schwantz oder Schweiff, hervorstrahlenden Cometen.* Two folding engraved plates. [26] leaves. Small 4to, modern wrappers (some browning due to the quality of the paper). Erfurt: B. Hempel, 1681. \$3250.00

First edition of an uncommon book containing observations of the famous comet of 1680-81. Apart from its brightness, this comet is notable as the first to be observed using a telescope (by Gottfried Kirch in Coburg).

Virling was from Eisenach and very probably a cleric. He clearly was well-educated as this is an extremely scientific account of the comet, its path, and appearance, along with its meaning. The plates depicts the comet's path through the constellations.

Apart from the browning, a fine copy.

• Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 369-73. James Howard Robinson, *The Great Comet of 1680. A Study in the History of Rationalism* (1916), pp. 33-36.

### *Rare, Detailed Observation of the 1680-81 Comet*

4. VOIGT, Johann Heinrich. *Cometa Matutinus & Vespertinus, Der, Anfangs in den Früestunden der Sonnen vorgehend, Und, hernach in den Abendstunden der Sonnen nachgehend, Erschienene, Und der Gottlosen Welt zum Schrecken, am Himmel strahlende Comet-oder Schwantz-Stern, Anno 1680. und 1681.* One fine folding engraved plate. [16] leaves. Small 4to, modern wrappers (minor browning). Hamburg: G. Rebenlein, [1681]. \$3500.00

First edition of this scarce observation of the famous comet of 1680-81. Apart from its brightness, this comet is notable as the first to be observed using a telescope (by Gottfried Kirch in Coburg).

Voigt (1613-91) was a mathematician, astronomer, and writer of calendars. He studied mathematics at Erfurt and taught at Stade, near Hamburg. He observed the comets of 1664, 1665, and 1677. In this work, he provides a very detailed description of the appearance of the comet, its path, and significance. The fine folding plate depicts the comet's path through the constellations.

Fine copy and scarce.

• Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 369-73.

### *No Copy in North America*

5. ZIMMERMANN, Johann Jacob. *Cometo-Scopia oder Himmel-gemäßer Bericht, mit möglichstem Fleiß darstellende, beedes die nach der Trigonometria Sphaerica, astronomische Calculation, als auch Astro-Theologische Außdeutung deß mittem im Novembri 1680.sten Jahrs entstandenenen, und biß in den Anfang Februarij 1681. erschienenenen großen Wunder-Sterns und*

*Cometens. Nächst einem außführlichen Catalogo aller Cometen, so innerhalb 2160. Jahren gesehen worden und allhier nach möglichst erkundigten Umständen und erfolgten Effectis und Würckungen eingezeichnet seynd.* Two fine folding engraved plates. [9] leaves; 20 pp., one leaf of "Nota." Two parts in one vol. Small 4to, modern wrappers. Stuttgart: J.G. Zubrodt, [1681 (the date is given in an anagram)]. \$4950.00

First edition of this scarce observation of the famous comet of 1680-81; according to WorldCat, we find no copy in North America. Apart from its brightness, this comet is notable as the first to be observed using a telescope (by Gottfried Kirch in Coburg).

Zimmermann (1642-93), mathematician, astronomer, millenarian, and theologian, studied theology at the University of Tübingen and became a Lutheran minister at Bietigheim in Baden. A follower of Jakob Böhme, Zimmermann's millenarian views caused him to be removed from his ministry. He attracted like-minded dissenters and in 1693 a group of about 40 people, led by Zimmermann, left Hamburg for Pennsylvania. Zimmermann died en route, in Rotterdam. The remainder of the group established a religious community near the Wissahickon Creek.

Zimmermann, in his varied life, was a professor of mathematics at Heidelberg. He wrote several notable and influential books on comets and was an active observer of the 1680-81 comet (noted by Kronk, see below, on p. 372). Newton mentioned Zimmerman in the first edition of the *Principia* as an observer of this comet.

The first plate depicts the comet's path. The early chapters deal with the comet's movements through the heavens, and this is followed by a series of careful computations as to its exact positions at different moments in its progress.

Fine copy and scarce.

• Kronk, *Cometography*, I, pp. 369-73. Poggendorff, II, col. 1411.

### *Maupertuis Responds to the Marquise du Châtelet*

6. [MAUPERTUIS, Pierre Louis Moreau de]. *Lettre sur la Comète.* Engraved frontis. & woodcut device on title. 5 p.l. (incl. frontis.), 111 pp. 12mo, cont. mottled calf (joints repaired & a bit worn), spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece. [Paris]: 1742. \$1950.00

First edition. The book was written in response to the Marquise du Châtelet's request to further her studies in the sciences and Newtonian philosophy.

Maupertuis "devoted most of the book to a clear summary of the current state of knowledge about comets, including an overview of the dynamics of the Newtonian solar system and Halley's heroic calculations of cometary orbits. It evolved into a set piece on the analytical power of Newtonian cosmology. Along the way, the extremely elliptical orbits of comets undermined any cosmology built on swirling vortices carrying planets around the sun... Maupertuis's choice of style and genre for his discussion of comets once again enabled him to make a splash on the literary science."—Terrall, *The Man Who Flattened the Earth. Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment*, pp. 193-95.

Very good copy.

### *The End of the World*

7. LALANDE, Joseph-Jérôme Lefrançais de. *Réflexions sur les Comètes qui peuvent*

*approcher de la Terre*. One engraved plate & one woodcut head-piece vignette. 40 pp. 8vo, attractive modern marbled boards, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Paris: Gibert, 1773. \$1750.00

First edition of this famous book which caused a panic in Paris before it was published. Lalande "caused another stir in 1773, when he discussed the possibility of a collision between the earth and a comet. His work on the perturbation of comets by the planets indicated that the orbit of a comet might be altered enough to make a collision with the earth possible. He realized that the likelihood of such a collision was extremely slight, but he failed to emphasize this point in summarizing his paper before the Academy. The result was a panic in Paris based on the rumor that Lalande had predicted the imminent destruction of the earth. Even prompt publication of the entire paper [this book] did not completely reassure the public."—*D.S.B.*, VII, p. 581.

Fine copy.

• Lalande, pp. 536-37. Yeomans, *Comets*, pp. 166-67.

### *Scarce Work on Halley's Comet*

8. LE DOULCET, Philippe Gustave, Comte de Pontécoulant. *A History of Halley's Comet; with an Account of its Return in 1835, and a Chart, showing its Situation in the Heavens*. Translated from the French... by Colonel Charles Gold. Folding lithographed frontis. (a little foxed). [iii]-xi (lacking half-title), 44 pp. 12mo, modern semi-stiff wrappers. London: J.W. Parker, 1835. \$950.00

First edition in English of this quite uncommon work on Halley's comet which returned, as predicted, in 1835. Le Doulcet (1795-1874), the French celestial mechanic, using the methods of Poisson and Lagrange, "considered the perturbative effects of Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus on comet Halley during the interval 1682 to 1835 and the Earth's perturbative effects near the comet's 1759 perihelion passage. His predictions for the 1835 perihelion passage times were, successively, November 7.5, November 13.1, November 10.8, and finally November 12.9."—Yeomans, *Comets*, p. 256.

The folding lithographed frontispiece depicts the projected path of the comet.

Fine copy.