

# OBSERVATIONS OF COMETS,

FROM B.C. 611 TO A.D. 1640.

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# OBSERVATIONS OF COMETS,

FROM B.C. 611 TO A.D. 1640.

EXTRACTED FROM THE CHINESE ANNALS.

TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS,

AND

## *An Appendix,*

COMPRISING THE

TABLES NECESSARY FOR REDUCING CHINESE TIME TO EUROPEAN RECKONING;  
AND A CHINESE CELESTIAL ATLAS.

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ETC. ETC.

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TO  
WILLIAM LASSELL, ESQ. F.R.S.  
PRESIDENT,  
AND TO THE FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY,  
THIS WORK  
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

## ERRATA AND CORRIGENDA.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

- Page x, line 25, *for There read These.*  
xi, „ 31, *for central one read central ones.*  
„ „ 32, *after 'Monthly Notices' insert of the Royal Astronomical Society.*  
xiii, lines 20, 41, 43, *for B.C. 613 read B.C. 611.*  
xix, line 32, *for Idler read Ideler.*  
xx, „ 22, *for after read above.*  
xxviii, „ 7, *for and  $\alpha$  Andromedæ read and stars near.*  
xxix, last line, *for computation read compilation.*  
xxx, line 3, *for Zeitrechnung read Zeitrechnung.*

### OBSERVATIONS.

- 6, lines 21 and 24, *after B.C. 110 add June.*  
33, line 5 from bottom, *for January 6 read January 16.*  
66, „ 28, *for Seu read Seuh.*  
67, „ 30, *for 3rd year read 5th year.*

### TABLES.

- 105, line 1, *for Tung Hang read Tung Han.*  
112, lines 5 and 6, *for 袖 read 祐.*

In the twenty-four divisions of the Chinese year in Table H, the asterisks referred to in p. xxiii, line 1, of the Introductory Remarks were accidentally omitted. They should be placed before every second line commencing with Ta Han, Jan. 21, and ending with Tung Che, Dec. 22.

## P R E F A C E.

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A FEW years since, when Sig. Schiaparelli announced his discovery of the probable connexion between the orbits of certain Comets and those of the periodical Meteors, the well-known Astronomer, Mr. J. R. Hind, took up the subject, and in the course of his investigation found, among the comets recorded in M. E. Biot's '*Catalogue des Comètes observées en Chine depuis l'an 1230 jusqu'à l'an 1640 de notre ère,*' &c., which forms a supplement to the '*Connaissance des Temps*' for 1846, one, whose orbit appeared to answer the required conditions. It is that of October 25, 1366, and is No. 295 of the succeeding Catalogue. But the path of that comet, as given by Biot, was apparently so extraordinary, that he was induced to conclude that some error had occurred, either in the original text or in the translation. Thus the comet is described as having appeared near one of the stars in Ursa Major, whence it passed in a south-easterly direction through several of the stellar divisions, until, on October 29, it was in a certain place in Aquarius; but on October 30 it was again in Ursa Major, in the same place as at first: whence it once more pursued a similar south-easterly course to the same place in Aquarius and disappeared.

Mr. Hind consequently applied to me, to know whether this discrepancy could be accounted for by reference to the original text in the Supplement to the '*Encyclopædia*' of Ma Twan Lin. Upon carefully examining this, I found that there were really *two* distinct accounts of the course of this comet; the one giving its path through the stellar divisions, and the other describing the asterisms near or through which it passed in that course; and, reading the account according to this version, the whole became perfectly consistent, and Mr. Hind was enabled to bring his investigation to a satisfactory close.

This led to an examination of Biot's Catalogue, and I quickly found, that although very accurate in its details, it was by no means so complete as