

FOREWORD

Strasbourg Observatory is quite an interesting place for historians: several changes of nationality, high-profile scientists having been based there, big projects born (Hipparcos) or installed in its walls (CDS), and so on.

Most of the documents circulating on the history of the observatory and on related matters have however been so far poorly referenced, if at all. Occasionally some elements are definitely wrong, such as even the founder's name in a recently printed leaflet. As it can be expected, such errors are unfortunately carried over in all kinds of publications copying each other. This made necessary the compilation of a volume such as this one, offering fully-documented historical facts and references on the first decades of the Observatory history – until roughly the directorship of Lacroute.

The book starts with an introductory chapter by the Editor, followed by two contributions, by Wolfschmidt and by Duerbeck respectively, dealing extensively with the German periods and reviewing people and instrumentation, while another paper by Duerbeck is more specifically devoted to World War II times. The subsequent chapter by Débarbat describes the development of astronomical instrumentation at Strasbourg Observatory during the French period between World Wars.

Next, three contributions are devoted to specific astronomers: by Duerbeck on Wislicenus, by Duerbeck & Seitter on Wirtz, and by Bacchus on Muller.

Switching to big projects, two chapters by Heck and Jung deal with the genesis and the first years of the Stellar Data Center (CDS) installed at Strasbourg Observatory, while Kovalevsky recalls that the Hipparcos Spacecraft was born there.

Then Seggewiss reminds the links of the Observatory with the *Astronomische Gesellschaft*, starting with the inauguration of the place. Follow a discussion by Bodenmuller & Heck of the visibility of the Observatory in the regional press around the beginning of the 20th century and two notes by Heck on respectively the Coronelli globe of the Observatory and Danjon & Rougier's first spectroscopic studies of the green flash from Strasbourg.

Several appendices conclude the book: lists of Observatory Council members (Heck & Bruneau), of CDS Council members (Bruneau & Heck) and of Observatory scientific personnel (Traut, Heck & Duerbeck), as well as of the institutional publications (Vonflie & Heck) until Year 2000.

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