

Austrian monographs on comets and minor planets

Dear friends,

in the last decades the serious interest in observing comets and minor planets among Austrian amateur astronomers increased remarkably. Up to 2000, a permanent exhibition of results in the entrance hall of the Vienna Planetarium encouraged serious amateur work. Observation reports in the Austrian monthly magazine “Der Sternbote” (table of contents: <http://members.ping.at/astbuero>) and seminars, organized by the **AUSTRIAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY**, promoted serious observations - astrophysical and astrometrical ones as well. Some amateurs were very successful and continued observing through so many years, that our society decided to preserve their results by monographs.

One of the longterm observers is *Michael Jäger*, who started to observe in 1982 all comets within his reach. Apparent total magnitudes, coma dimensions and densities, forms and lengths of tails were documented. He used binoculars or mainly a 20cm Celestron Schmidt Camera and extracted the data from photographs. His monograph **KOMETENBEOBACHTUNGEN 1982 TO 1995** describes 157 comets in this span of time. He has continued his work together with *Gerald Rhemann*, using similar instruments and now powerful CCD equipment. A highlight of his work was the discovery of comet 1998 U3 Jäger. The minor planet (78391) was named Michaeljäger, recognizing his merits in the field of cometary research. He is a Province Director of the large daily newspaper “Kurier”.

In contrast to these astrophysical observations, *Erich Meyer* focussed on astrometric work on minor planets, preferably faint ones. Together with his friend *Erwin Obermair* he erected an observatory in Davidschlag, Upper Austria, IAU Code 540. They started in 1979 with a 30cm Newton and later used a 30cm Lichtenknecker Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope. Measurement on the films was done with a micrometrical device, but after furnishing with CCD in 1993, they used the powerful software “Astrometrica” (www.astrometrica.at) from *Herbert Raab*. This instrument was replaced by a 60cm Deltagraph in 1999 with the fine design of *Rudolf Pressberger's* “Österreichische Präzisions-Montierung”. Now

they extended and multiplied their work to the limiting magnitude 23. Up to 2003, they discovered 30 minor planets and were honoured by naming the minor planets (31184) Raab, (7940) Erichmeyer and (9236) Obermair. Besides, they received award medals from our Austrian President *Thomas Klestil* in 1996.

In his monograph **KLEINPLANETENBEOBACHTUNGEN 1979 TO 2003** *Erich Meyer* describes his methods and results and lists 5771(!) exact positions of minor planets, also to be found in the publications of the Minor Planet Center, Cambridge. He works as an expert at Chemserv Industrie Service GmbH, Linz.

A number of copies of both monographs are available free of charge at the information desk. Additional orders please direct to: Astronomisches Büro, Hasenwartgasse 32, 1230 Vienna, Austria, astbuero@astronomisches-buero-wien.or.at/

Hermann Mucke, Astronomical Bureau, Vienna.