



18th century illustration of the Orion constellation

THOMAS, Corbinianus.  
 Orion.

Frankfurt, 1730. Original colour. 125 x 135mm.

£240

A chart of the stars around Orion, not showing the constellations pictorially, merely showing the apparent magnitude of the stars, which include Betelgeuse, Rigel and Aldebaran (in Taurus). The plate was engraved by Johann Christoph Berndt for the celestial atlas 'Mercurii Philosophici Firmamentum Firmianum', named for Thomas's patron, Leopold Anton von Firmian, Archbishop of Salzburg. Corbinianus Thomas (1694-1767), a Benedictine monk, was Professor of Mathematics and Theology at the University of Salzburg. His star atlas was first published in 1730 at Frankfurt, with a second edition at Augsburg the following year. He used an odd system for nomenclature: Bayer Greek letter for the star, Roman numeral for the magnitude and Arabic numeral for the star catalogue reference.

KANAS: 7.7, 'beautiful illustrations'; WARNER, p.251.

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