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MIRA PRIOR TO FABRICIUS

In HO PENG YOKE's list of ancient observations [1], No. (577) contains the information that a "guest star" in the constellation Thien-Tshang was discovered in Korea in 1592, November 28 (Gregorian calendar). This star "diminished only" 1594, February 20. (From the accurate date one can suppose that diminishing means disappearing). Very probably the "guest star" was Mira = α Ceti, for the following reasons: a) Mira is about 10^0 distant from the star ξ Ceti, which belongs to Thien-Tshang. b) The hitherto first observations of Mira were those of D. FABRICIUS, who discovered the star 1596, August 13 and notes the disappearance in October. According to GUTHNICK [2], the corresponding maximum lies around July 1. If one counts backwards with a mean period (which is possible for such short a time), one gets a maximum four periods before FABRICIUS in the November of 1592 and a time of disappearance after the following maximum in January of 1594. The minimum was presumably not perceived, because it has occurred between heliacal setting and rising of Mira. In view of the semiregular behavior of Mira, the agreement seems to be convincing.

Heidelberg, Astronomisches Rechen-Institut
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[1] Ho Peng Yoke, *Vistas in Astronomy*, Vol. 5 (1962), 127.

[2] P. Guthnick, *Nova Acta Leopoldina Bd. LXXIX*, Nr. 2, Halle 1901.