

Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers

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Grassi, Horatio

Flourished Italy, 1619

Horatio Grassi was an Italian Jesuit and mathematician. He is best known for the malignant pamphlet he wrote against Galileo Galilei's *Discorso delle comete*, published in 1619, where Galileo argued that comets are not sublunar fires because of their transparency and their small parallax. Grassi's pamphlet, entitled *Libra astronomica ac Philosophica*, was also published in 1619 under the name Lothario Sarsio Sigensano, an imperfect anagram of Horatio Grassi Saronensi. Galileo answered him with an even more virulent *Il saggiatore* in 1623.

Margherita Hack

Selected Reference

Drake, Stillman, and C. D. O'Malley (trans.) (1960). *The Controversy on the Comets of 1618*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press