

"KANT, IMMANUEL.

Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft. - [ONE OF NO MORE THAN A HANDFUL COPIES ON SPECIAL PAPER, GIVEN BY KANT TO HIS CLOSE FRIEND HASSE]

Reference: 58186

Königsberg, Friedrich Nicolovius, 1793. 8vo. In the original bluish cardboardbinding, with handwritten title to spine. Binding very neatly restored at spine and extremities. Previous owner's inscriptions to front free end-paper and title-page as well as pasted-down front end-paper. One leaf with a tiny closed tear to blank outer margin and some leaves with a single hole to the blank outer margin. Light pencil-underlinings and -markings to a few leaves. Internally clean and fresh. Printed on very heavy paper (about three times the thickness of the normal paper) and with wide margins. XX, (2), 296, (2, -errata) pp. Housed in a beautiful marbled half calf box in pastiche-style, with splendidly gilt spine and gilt morrocco title-label.

Comment: Extremely rare presentation-copy inscribed by the recipient, a close friend of Kant, Johann Gottfried Hasse, to whom Kant gave the present copy. The copy is one of no more than perhaps five copies printed on special paper of the first edition of Kant's *"Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason"*, the seminal work in which he develops his religion of reason and most fully accounts for his philosophy of religion. This magnificent copy is completely unique. Not only is one of only four or five presentation-copies printed on special paper - perhaps less - that Kant himself requested from the printer, to be given to a handful of recipients" we also know to whom it was given, namely his close friend and professor of religion Johann Gottfreind Hasse. And Hasse has not only put his ownership signature in the book, he has also noted that it was given to him by Kant in the year of publication (*"Donum auctoris 1793"*). We have not been able to find information anywhere about the presentation-copies of *"Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft"* specifically. There is nothing in the Kant-correspondence about that at all, and no letters to/from the publisher about them have been preserved. But we know that Kant commissioned four or five copies of *"Critik der Urtheilskraft"* on special paper and four copies of *"Critik der reinen Vernunft"*. The present copy is clearly on special paper as well (about three times the size of copies on normal paper), so even though it is not mentioned anywhere, it is fair to assume that Kant also ordered about a handful copies of *"Religion..."* to be printed on special paper as well. However, this number might be smaller. As opposed to the other two books that we know he commissioned these copies of, the publication of *"Religion..."* was caught up in a controversy over censorship, and Kant was given a reprimand in the name of the Prussian emperor, Friedrich Wilhelm II. Kant was forced to pledge not to publish on matters of religion. Furthermore, copies of the *"Religion..."* on special paper seem not to have appeared anywhere, as opposed to the very few copies of the two other works that have surfaced" so all in all, there is absolutely no reason to think that he should have commissioned more than four or five copies of this book either. The inscription to the front free end-paper is in Hasse's hand and reads *"(Donum auctoris 1793.)/ J.G. Hasse"*. The name of Hasse has been crossed out by the later owner, who has written his name underneath *"N. Grosch...(?)/ stud. Theol./ Som[er]. Semest[er]. [18]05"* and on the title-page. The Königsberg professor J.G. Hasse (1759-1806) was a close friend of Kant and a frequent guest at his dinner table. He was a then famous German evangelist theologian and orientalist. After having graduated from the University of Jena in 1784, he became assistant professor at the faculty of philosophy there. Due to his very respected publications within science of religion, he became professor of oriental languages and later professor of theology, which is the position he possessed, when Kant gave him the present copy of his own main work on religion. A few years later, in 1801, he took over Kant's position at the academic Senate, after Kant retired from academic life. And in the last years of Kant's life, Hasse grew even closer to him. He was a frequent guest in his home and a close friend. Hasse was

furthermore one of the first to publish a biography of Kant. This biography became particularly famous, because it was written by someone in the inner circle of friends. There is no doubt that Kant had tremendous respect for the renowned professor of religion, to whom he gave one of the only four or five copies printed on special paper of his own definitive work on religion. This is presumably the best presentation- or association-copy of a Kant-book that one can hope to come across. Warda: 141.

Year 1793

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