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HIP 96556

HIP 96556

A light for our story



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A story among the stars

Celestial Library edition



*Every light holds a story. These pages
follow its journey, from the heart of the
star to the sky we share.*

The sky, page by page

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HIP 96556

One light among many

Some nights begin when we stop hurrying. The day withdraws, our eyes learn the darkness and, little by little, the stars appear. Among them is HIP 96556. Until now it may have been another distant light; pausing to look is the beginning of giving it a place in our own story.

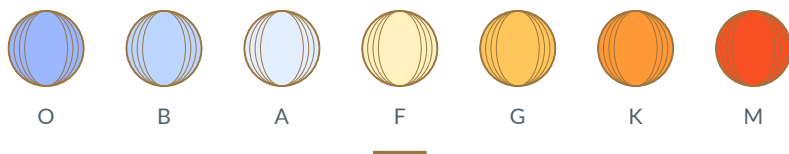
A dedication begins with that simple gesture: choosing something beautiful and wanting to share it. The star will continue on its way, beyond our calendars, while here below its light can accompany a date, a name or words we wish to keep. Immensity takes on an intimate measure: the measure of what matters to us.

The colour of its fire

The light of HIP 96556 has a character of its own. The F family occupies a delicate place between white and gold. Its brightness suggests a lamp still keeping the freshness of dawn. A temperature is hidden within that tint: nature writes information even into what we experience as beauty.

To the unaided eye, a stellar colour can be little more than a whisper. The atmosphere makes it tremble and our eyes receive it in their own way. Beyond that point we can imagine a living surface of hot matter: the visible beauty of processes working on a scale far greater than ours.

SEVEN FAMILIES OF LIGHT



Light keeps the colours of its origin.

The journey ending here

The light of HIP 96556 crosses approximately 104.7 light-years to reach us. The brightness we receive has therefore spent about 104.7 years on its way. Distance becomes time: looking at this star means meeting light that began travelling before this moment. When it set out, the Sun and its planets already shared a history billions of years old. On their scale, this journey is barely a breath.

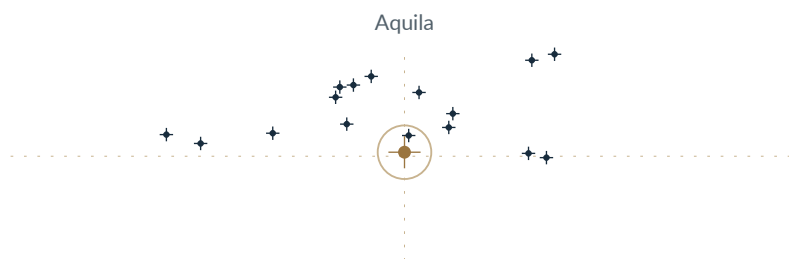
Its light has crossed the time of several generations. We can imagine hands writing letters, lit windows and voices that now live only in other voices. Through all that passing on, the brightness kept travelling; tonight it reaches us.



A landscape for imagination

HIP 96556 lies in the region of the Eagle. The Eagle lends night the idea of flight. To look at it is to imagine wings spread above everything we leave below, and a path continuing beyond the horizon.

Figures in the sky are a human way of approaching immensity. In our gaze they join lights that may lie at very different distances. Imagination stretches the thread; the stars provide the brightness. A single landscape can therefore keep old images while receiving a story that begins tonight.



Its light, among other lights of the constellation.

A place in the ancient chart

In the Northern Song, the scholar Su Song compiled *Shin Gishou Houyou*, a guide to the remarkable water-powered astronomical clock completed in 1092. Its pages included star charts, preserving a view of the heavens from a world of ingenious gears and measured time. The original book is lost, but later printed and copied versions carry those charts forward. In a modern reconstruction, astronomer Hisaaki Shinkai used the *Hipparcos* catalogue to identify their stars. One small point in the northern Yuki constellation is assigned to the object now known as HIP 96556, or 42 Aquilae. The paper places it seventh in that figure and lists its modern brightness and coordinates. These are present-day identifications of a charted point, not names written by Su Song; the distinction lets the old drawing and the modern sky meet without being confused.

We can imagine the word passing from hand to hand while the star remained beyond every page. Languages changed; the desire to remember a light endured. Tonight that long conversation reaches our gaze. A name, spoken softly, can gather the breadth of the sky into something intimate: a place to return, and a reason to tell someone else where to look.

The threshold of another chapter

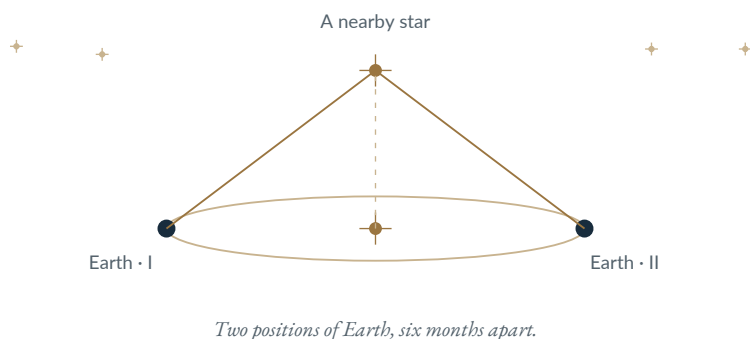
A subgiant stands within a transition in its stellar history. The balance that supported a long stage begins to change, and the star responds within both its interior and envelope. We can imagine it on a threshold: still keeping something of what it was, already learning another way to shine.

To approach HIP 96556, we can let that scale widen our imagination. A stellar age is unlike a birthday: it speaks of changing matter, of energy finding a way out, of a balance sustained and transformed. Tonight's light is one page of that time, and we happen to be here to receive it.

Measuring with two glances

To begin measuring a stellar distance, Earth offers us a movement. We observe from one side of its orbit and look again about six months later from the other. A nearby star seems to shift slightly against more distant ones. That small change of perspective is called parallax.

We can feel the principle by looking at a finger with one eye and then the other. What fits between two glances at home requires our planet's journey in the sky. There is something beautiful in that patience: to learn how far a light is from us, we first learned to look from somewhere else.



Nothing stands still

Although it seems still, HIP 96556 belongs to a moving sky. Stars travel through the galaxy and our own home moves with the Sun. The distances are so great that many of these changes need years of observation to become visible. The serenity we see is really keeping a journey.

We can imagine every night as a meeting between travellers. We arrive with one more day of memories; the star arrives with its light and its path. The meeting seems to repeat, yet it is never quite the same. Perhaps that is why looking again can be such a simple way to celebrate shared time.

The night of finding it

We can begin with something simple: looking into a starry sky and letting our eyes grow used to darkness. The dedication page lets us choose a place and time to find where to look. Recognising the constellation first turns a distant map into a familiar landscape.

If a telescope joins the evening, a wide field is a gentle beginning. As a reference, a 114 mm Newtonian with a 500 mm focal length gives 20× with a 25 mm eyepiece. The star remains a point of light; the instrument gathers more of its brightness. The best memory may be the moment we leave the eyepiece and say: there it is.

Somewhere to return

We can close this booklet and let HIP 96556 become a small light in an enormous night again. Something, though, will have changed. We now know part of its journey, a shade of its colour and a way to find it. What seemed far away has a place in our memory.

There will be clear nights and others when clouds keep the sky. Not every night will allow observing, but each can bring back the memory of this gesture. Sometimes a name is enough to return to a date, a voice, a few shared words. And when the light appears again, we will have one more reason to pause and look.

The traces of this story

ESA Hipparcos / VizieR

https://vizier.cds.unistra.fr/viz-bin/VizieR-5?-source=I/239/hip_main&HIP=96556

NASA · Our Sun

<https://science.nasa.gov/sun/facts/>

IAU · Constellations and their names

<https://iauarchive.eso.org/public/themes/constellations/>

Celestron · Choosing eyepieces

<https://www.celestron.com/blogs/knowledgebase/how-to-determine-which-eyepieces-to-use-with-your-telescope>

Original ISDORA prose and illustrations. Images are artistic evocations or diagrams, not to scale. Distances are approximate. Constellation figures include contemporary literary readings.

To keep discovering

NASA · The lives of stars

<https://science.nasa.gov/universe/stars/>

NASA · What is a light-year?

<https://science.nasa.gov/exoplanets/what-is-a-light-year/>

ESA · Measuring stellar distances by parallax

https://www.esa.int/ESA_Multimedia/Images/2013/06/Measuring_stellar_distances_by_parallax

Shinkai (2025), Statistical Comparison of Constellation Maps (3):

Constellations in Shin Gishou Houyou, Osaka Institute of Technology

Memoirs 70(2), 41–72, doi:10.15046/0002000227

https://www.oit.ac.jp/labs/is/system/shinkai/Papers/20251119_GishouHouyou.pdf



May there always be a night
to look again.



HIP 96556

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A STORY OF LIGHT