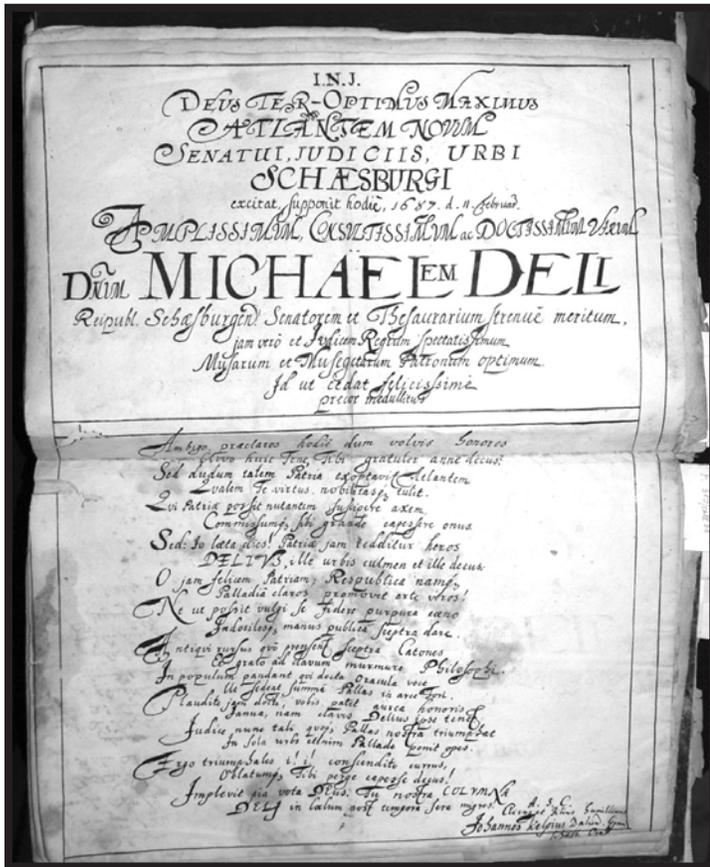


# HERMITS GLEN GAZETTE

Official Newsletter of The Kelpius Society • Volume 6, Number 1 • January 2010



## A Previously Unknown Work by Johannes Kelpius

by Kirby Don Richards, Ph.D.

For the first time in a century, a new work by Johannes Kelpius has been discovered. Mr. Richard Ackner, a direct descendent of Kelpius's brother Georg, made this exciting discovery at the Manuscript Department of the Library of the City of Sighişoara, Romania, listed in the catalogue as Manuscript 505. I have contacted the archive directly, confirmed this finding, and acquired a photograph of the manuscript.

The work is a poetic speech by Kelpius during his time of study at the high school in Schässburg (Sighişoara). In fact, Kelpius signs the speech as "orator," which suggests a certain official role at the school, at least for that day.

This document is important in many ways. First, it is further proof that Kelpius was born in Denndorf (Dalia/Daia). Second, it documents his whereabouts in 1687. And third, it contains an intriguing reference to the New Atlantis a possible allusion to a work by Francis Bacon.

The work is a "panegyric" a poetic speech in praise of a living human being. Kelpius praises Michael Delius, a local government official in Schässburg. Mr. Ackner points out that Delius was one of Kelpius's sponsors for university studies. By this time, Kelpius's father had passed away, and he started his university studies later in 1687. Mr. Ackner notes that the Delius family also became connected to the Kelpius family through marriage and real estate holdings.

On the next page is my transcription of the panegyric. I hope that a Latin scholar will take an interest in the work and consider developing a more accurate transcription and a translation.

## MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT

This year The Kelpius Society is reducing its annual membership dues from \$30 to \$15! By making participation more affordable, we hope to grow our numbers. Please renew your membership and encourage friends to join!

We do hope that you will consider contributing more than \$15. The Society has many exciting historical projects planned, and every dollar you give brings us closer to making these ideas a reality.

See page 7 for more information on dues and donations!

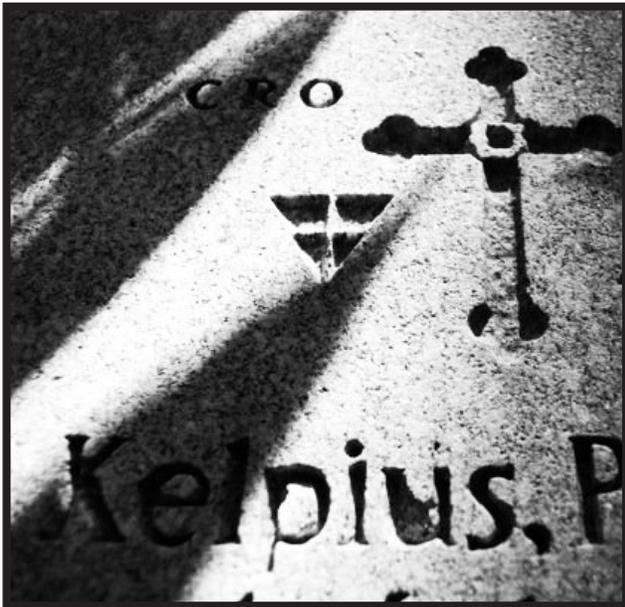
## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

As she announced in the previous issue, Lucy Carroll has stepped down from her post as newsletter editor. The Kelpius Society thanks Lucy for her excellent publications work on our behalf.

The newsletter is now edited by Jonathan Scott (lotus@earthlink.net) and Kate Duffy (kateduffy3000@gmail.com). We are greatly interested in your thoughts and feedback. What articles would you like to see? Do you have a Kelpius-related article or book review to contribute? Please let us know! We'd love to hear from you.

Also, a new Kelpius Society web site designed by Jacque Brough (jm.brough@verizon.net) is in development! Ultimately our web address will be:

**[www.kelpius.org](http://www.kelpius.org)**



## Latin Transcription of Kelpius Panegyric

I.N.J.  
DEUS TER-OPTIMUS MAXIMUS  
ATLANTEM NOVUM  
SENATUI, JUDICIIS, URBI  
SCHÆSBURGI  
Excitat, supponit hodiē, 1687.d.11.Februar.  
AMPLISSIMUM, CONSULTISSIMUM ac DOCTIS-  
SIMUM VIRUM  
DNUM MICHAELEM DELI

Reipubl. Schæsburgen. Senatorem et Thesaurarium  
strenuē meritum,  
jam vero et Iudicem Regium spectatissimum  
Musarum et Musegetarum Patronum optimum.  
Jd ut cedat Felicissime  
Precor medullitus

Ambigo praclaros hodie dum volvis honores  
C[la]vo huic Tene, Tibi gratuler anne decus?  
Sed dudum tatem Patria exoptavit Atlantem  
Qualem Te virtus nobilitatis tulit  
Qui Patria possit nutantem suscipere axem,  
Commissumis sibi grande capessere onus.  
Sed: jo hæta dies! Patria jam redditur heros  
DELIUS, ille urbis culmen et ille decus:  
O jam felicem Patriam; Respublica namis  
Palladia claros promovit arte viros!  
Ne ut posit vulgi se Fidere purpura cœno  
Jndocilesis manus publica sceptrā dare.  
Antiqui rursus quo present sceptrā Catones  
Ex grato ad clavum muxmure Philosophi.  
In populum pandant qui docta oracula voce  
Ut sedat summa Pallas in arce Fori.  
Plaudite jam docta, vobis patit aurea honoris  
Janua, nam clavis Delius ipse tenet.  
Judice nunc tali quois Pallas nostra triumphat  
Jn sola urbs etenim Pallade ponit opes.  
Ergo triumphales i! i! confundito currus,  
Oblatumis Tibi perge capesse decus!  
Jmplevit pia vota Deus. Tu nostra COLUMNA  
DELI in Cœlum post tempora sera migres!  
A.S.C.  
Johannes Kelpius Daliens[is], Gymn.  
Schaesb. Orat[or]

*Editor's note: uncertain renderings or missing letters have been placed in brackets.*

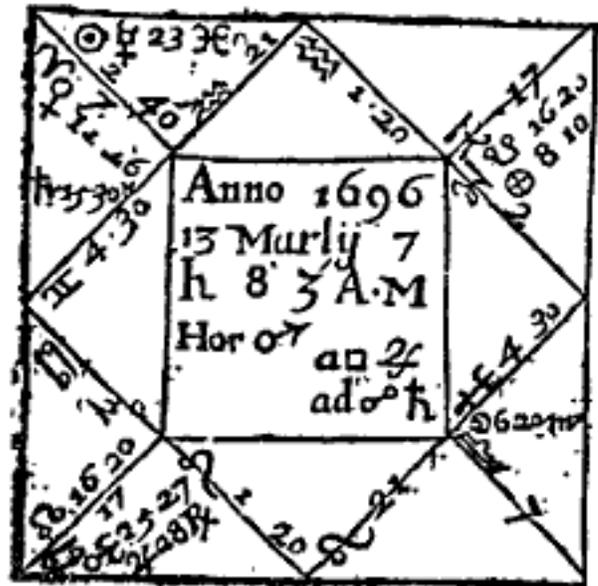
# Message from the President of The Kelpius Society

Dear Kelpius Society Members,

Greetings, and happy New Year! I'm happy to report that the Kelpius Society is vigorously engaged in an array of significant projects, within a context of dynamic organizational change and development. During 2009, we've slowly built membership and have begun networking with other organizations, and have launched interesting and important new projects to be continued in 2010.

With this edition, The Kelpius Society newsletter is being edited by a new team, consisting of Jonathan Scott and Kate Duffy. Jonathan is a longtime TKS member and author of *The Woman in the Wilderness*, a historical novel about the original Kelpius community. Kate is an editor and writer who joined TKS in 2009. Future newsletters will be linked to the Society's new web address, [www.kelpius.org](http://www.kelpius.org), though we'll continue to provide a print version to members and to local organizations and libraries, in keeping with past practice. TKS member Jacqueline Brough will oversee development and maintenance of the website and newsletter along with all related information and public relations functions as chair of the newly formed TKS Communications Committee.

Under the guidance of Professor David Orr at Temple University, Raymond Thompson has been researching the history of the Kelpius settlement and has initiated a series of test digs at the site of the former Lauriston Cottage in Fairmount Park. Raymond has been appointed consulting archaeologist to The Kelpius Society, and hopes to develop his work for us into a graduate school research project. TKS member Nick Bucci's extensive knowledge of Wissahickon area history and of early building technologies and practices have contributed significantly to the site research and development process. Nick and TKS member Don Sloan also did the heavy work of clearing fill from the Lauriston site and exposing the footprint of the cottage, which we believe was built over or adjacent to an earlier structure. New digs planned for 2010 will focus on determining whether the site can be more definitively linked to Kelpius and his followers.



On the research and publications side, Jonathan Scott's booklet on Johann Seelig, an influential and significant figure in the original Kelpius community, was published in December 2009. And founding TKS member and former president Dorothy Pinkett has completed her long anticipated work on Robert Clymer. Dorothy's booklet, edited by TKS Research and Publications Committee chair Lucy Carroll, will be published this month. Both publications will be available through the Kelpius Society, and at select sites in the Philadelphia region.

Meanwhile, I am developing an oral history project in the Roxborough area, to elicit local historical narratives about Kelpius and his followers, and explore how the site has been used and understood by area residents over the years.

I also want to mention that a Kelpius Bibliography is being prepared by Catherine Michael, who joined The Kelpius Society in 2009. Catherine is a research librarian at Ithaca College. She brings her professional skills as well as strong research interests and reading knowledge of German to her work. The bibliography will be posted on The Kelpius Society website; it is a work in progress that will be updated periodically. (Continued, page 4)

I'm also happy to report that The Kelpius Society Archive is being planned and developed by TKS member Carolyn La Belle. The Archive will be housed at the historic Physick House, located on S. 4th Street in Philadelphia, and will be open to researchers and interested individuals by appointment. Further information about the Archive will be made available in this newsletter as the work progresses.

Given all this exciting activity, we're looking forward to another productive year, marked by continued growth of membership, strong and growing relationships with other organizations within our sphere of interest, and new research and program initiatives that will explore the abiding significance of the Kelpius phenomenon on the American scene. Please continue to support this important work by recruiting friends and associates to join TKS, and becoming more actively involved in The Kelpius Society in 2010 and beyond.

All Best Wishes,

Thomas Carroll, Ph.D.  
President  
The Kelpius Society

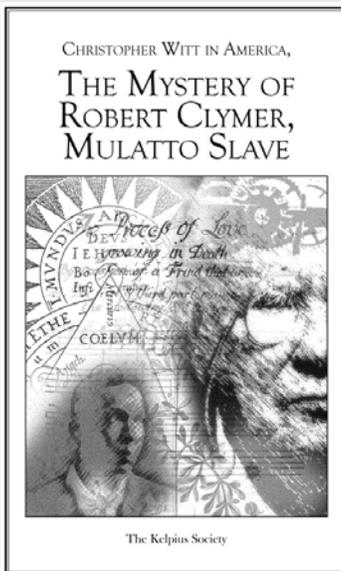
## TAKE A HIKE WITH NICK!

The Hermits Glen of the Wissahickon is filled with mysterious and fascinating sights: the legendary Kelpius Cave, the Hermitage Mansion, Lauriston Cottage site, Lover's Leap and more!

Nick Bucci, a highly knowledgeable Kelpius Society member, is kindly offering guided tours of the Hermits Glen. If you've always wanted to learn more about this area of the Wissahickon, or if you'd like to see how the early stages of our archaeology work are progressing, now is your chance!

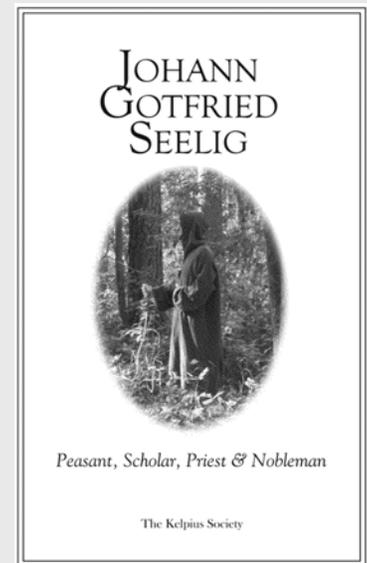
**Please contact Nick at (484) 213-4802 to arrange a tour.**

## TWO EXTRAORDINARY NEW PUBLICATIONS



*Johann Gotfried Seelig: Peasant, Scholar, Priest and Nobleman*, edited by Jonathan Scott, includes the entire range of extant material about Kelpius's most trusted friend, from Seelig's own correspondence and hymn writing to an extraordinary report about his influence in twentieth century occult circles.

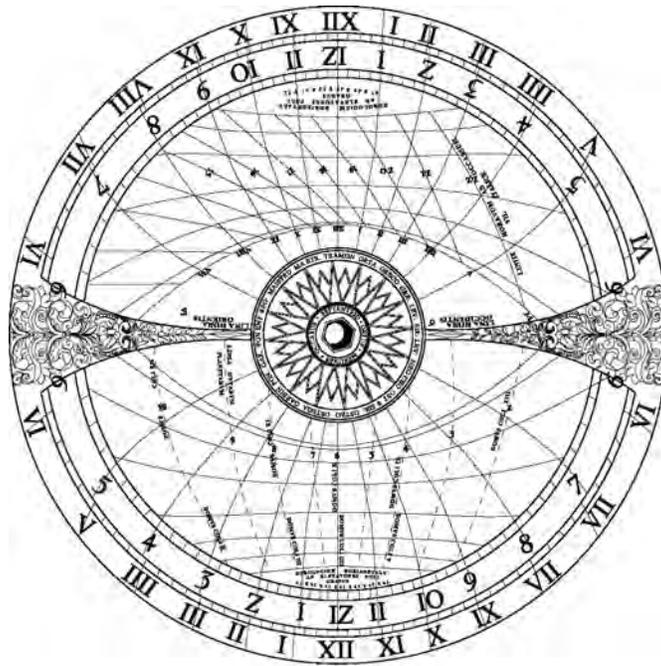
*Christopher Witt in America: The Mystery of Robert Clymer, Mulatto Slave* by Dorothy Pinkett shares the story of Dr. Witt--physician, botanist, alchemist, musician, craftsman and Kelpius community member--as well as the story of Robert Clymer, Witt's slave and highly skilled close companion. Clymer, an important African-American in early Philadelphia, gained freedom & property only to vanish from the historical record.



These booklets will be distributed by The Kelpius Society. Further details on pricing will be available soon; for now, please contact Dorothy at [dpinkett@hotmail.com](mailto:dpinkett@hotmail.com) or Jonathan at [lotus@earthlink.net](mailto:lotus@earthlink.net) for more information.

# Mysteries of the Horologium Achaz Hydrographicum

Part One of Two • by Jonathan Scott



The American Philosophical Society has little or nothing to do with philosophy. It was founded centuries ago before science was called science and was called “natural philosophy.” It is, therefore, really the American Scientific Society and holds many treasures of historical achievements in science and American invention.

On the second floor, in a glass door cabinet near a window, are two brass and gold-plated bowls, one 12 inches in diameter and the other  $5 \frac{3}{4}$ ” in diameter. They were once connected by a piece that has been lost forever. The larger bowl sat concavely on top, the smaller convexly. Mounted on the rim of the larger bowl is a  $3 \frac{3}{4}$ ” figure of a Moor or Arab man with a turban holding a staff.

The curators call it the Schissler dial – Christopher Schissler being the name of craftsman whose foundry fashioned it in Germany in 1578, and “dial” referring to its use as a sundial. However, it calls itself by a much more colorful name, the **Horologium Achaz Hydrographicum**. But what does that mean? Let’s take it apart, word by word.

*(Continued, page 6)*

The words are, of course, Latin. **Horologium** suggests it is a device for time-keeping, a sundial.

**Achaz** was the 11th king of Judah. In 771 BC he had a sundial fashioned for himself. It is the first one is mentioned in Western literature. The son and heir of Achaz was named Hezekiah. According to the 38th chapter of the biblical book of Isaiah, as King Hezekiah lay sick and dying, he prayed that he might be spared. So God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell the king he would give him an extra 15 years to live, and just to prove it, he would turn back time. So indeed it came to pass, and Hezekiah was astonished when he looked out of his window on the sundial, which bore the name of his father, and saw the shadow marking the time move backwards by 10 degrees which is forty minutes. So the Dial of Achaz was the instrument of an astounding miracle that occurred 1,200 years before the instrument that bears its name was made.

The word **Hydrographicum** suggests “writing by water” or “writing in water.” On the bottom or concave side of the smaller of the two bowls are two charts that pertain to the latitude of the user of the sundial, two sketches and the following inscription in Latin:

*This semicircular shell explains the miracle of the 38th chapter of Isaiah. For if you fill the basin full with water, the shadow of the sun is borne backward by ten degrees. Moreover, it indicates any common hour of the*

*day whatever, together with that of the planets which they call hours.*

And it delivers what it says. In the 1970s a group of scientists took the device from its home in the cabinet in the American Philosophical Society, put it out on the lawn of Independence Mall, set it up as a sundial, and filled the bowl with water. They witnessed the shadow marking the time go backward by 10 degrees: exactly the forty minutes of the miracle of Isaiah.

So the instrument is, in a sense, a **time machine**.

We all know how it works. It is due to the law of refraction—the principle that explains why a stick looks bent when it’s halfway under water in a clear pool. Only there’s something interesting about this: the first time the law of refraction was delineated in western scientific literature was by Willebrord Snellius in the 1620s, over forty years after the creation of the **Horologium Achaz Hydrographicum**.

Was Christopher Schissler, the craftsman, a physicist who was ahead of his time, a man who simply intuitively grasped the laws of nature, or did he have access to a body of knowledge that his contemporaries didn’t? This is only one of the questions we’re faced with.

*Learn more about the Horologium Achaz Hydrographicum—and its possible connections to the Kelpius community—in the next issue of the Hermits Glen Gazette!*

*Image of the Schissler disk courtesy the American Philosophical Society.*

## Memberships & Donations

*Help Keep Kelpius History Alive!*

The Kelpius Society is on the move and needs your support to study and restore the Wissahickon settlement site! We hope that you will join us for the first time or renew your membership for another year (January - December 2010).

Please note that annual membership is now only \$15, a significant reduction. Basic membership will bring you:

- \* Notices of publications and CDs
- \* Invitations to meetings and events
- \* Newsletters

**We urge you to consider making a further donation to support the Society's planned programs**, ranging from an oral history project to site archaeology. This gift will be allocated to the project of your choice!

To contribute, please mail in the form below. **Thank you for supporting The Kelpius Society!**

*The Kelpius Society is a nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

## MAGISTER KELPIUS BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

*by Catherine H. Michael*

As a contribution to the Kelpius Society I plan to create a bibliography to inspire and assist future scholarship. Currently I have been collecting references of all types: key works about Kelpius, works written by Kelpius, writings that influenced Kelpius, etc. In preparing the bibliography I've acquired many of the major works about him and am working from citations by scholars to date. Additionally, I have collected texts that, although not mentioning Kelpius directly, are in related to his life and traditions.

As a librarian, I am able to search scholarly databases as well as mining the web. My vision is to categorize the cites into groupings: Folklore, History, Literature, Music, Religion, and Science. I also plan to annotate them from a personal perspective including questions to pose to future scholars. This work may be most effective if posted to the Kelpius website; a Creative Commons license can be applied. Once completed to the Society's satisfaction, I will disseminate the bibliography through listservs, blogs, and websites.

My collection of citations is now visible here: <http://www.zotero.org/groups/kelpius> If you are interested in contributing to this, or know if citations that should be included, please contact me at [cmich103@gmail.com](mailto:cmich103@gmail.com).

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## THE KELPIUS SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:** (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BASIC MEMBERSHIP (REDUCED!): \$15**

### ADDITIONAL DONATIONS

Research & Publications: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Archaeology & Development: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Programs: \_\_\_\_\_

Wissahickon Oral History Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Kelpius Archives: \_\_\_\_\_

General Fund: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your check payable to **The Kelpius Society** and mail it with the completed form to:*

**The Kelpius Society | P.O. Box 15775 | Philadelphia, PA 19103**

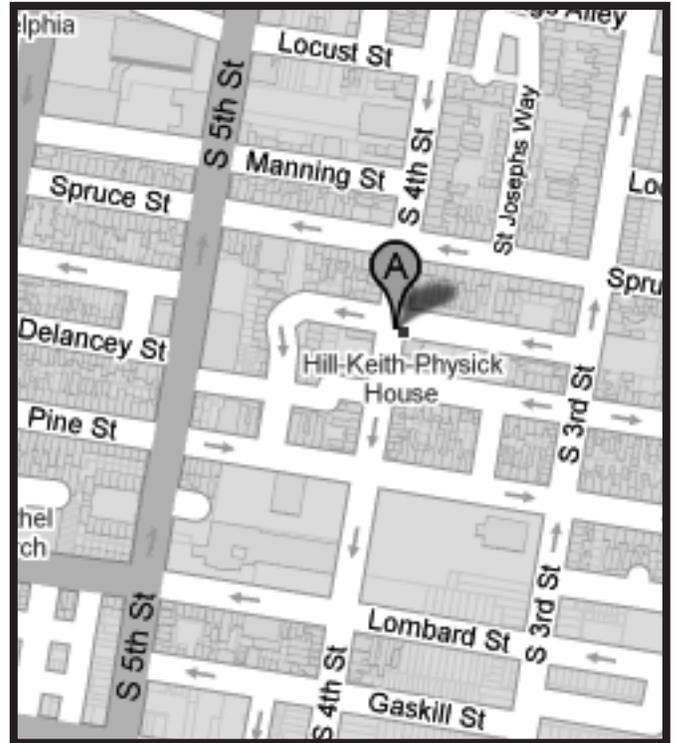
# NEXT MEETING OF THE KELPIUS SOCIETY

Saturday January 16, 10:00am  
321 South Fourth Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Join us at the historic Physick House to learn more about The Kelpius Society, discuss current and upcoming projects, and get involved!

All are welcome! We look forward to seeing you.

*“Many more things I could write, but how is it possible to describe the inexpressible with pen and ink!”* - JOHANNES KELPIUS IN LETTER TO MARY ELIZABETH GERBER, OCT. 8, 1704



**The Kelpius Society of Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 15775  
Philadelphia, PA 19103