

Speech delivered in the city of Douai by Charles Malapert, of the Society of Jesus, on the occasion of the opening of his Mathematics classes, in which some questions of great interest on the new phenomena of the Belgian telescope are discussed academically.

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But what mortal has believed until today that the shining brightness of the Sun was sprayed with spots? It is now six years ago that I met in Ingolstadt with Christoph Scheiner, a mathematician of our Society, who alerted me [to the fact] that one can see on the Sun certain blackish bodies, that he had been the first human to record, as far as I know. There I could see for the first time how a solar ray, after going through the two lenses of a tube, represented on a paper an image of the Sun inverted (as the laws of Optics postulate), and on that paper they were depicted as if those bodies that I have referred to were spots, and which lasted for about fourteen days from their rising [appearance] until their setting.

As I say, the movement and the position of these spots were reflected on the paper in such a way that the objects on the right appeared changed to the left, and those on top appeared below, something that you yourself can verify if you try to see in straight line the Sun through a tube in which you have previously incorporated a thick lens of a quite dark colour, so that the excessive radiance does not dazzle the sight. Whatever these bodies are finally, it is quite evident that they go around far above the Moon, that they remain under the Sun during the entire course of the day, and that they are observed throughout Europe at the same moment and under the same part of the Sun. This I can give assurance for as being true and proven through letters that I have received from distant Poland and from other places. Moreover, I am fully convinced that these spots go around in a circle close to the Sun, since they appear to be slower and more compact at the outer edges, and then grow in extent and move faster in the middle of the Sun.

But what course or path do they follow? Might they follow the movement of the Zodiac or some other known path of the heavens? Because some think that their trajectory corresponds with that of the Zodiac, as also does that "Apelles hiding behind the painting" ["Apelles latens post tabulam", pseudonym of Christoph Scheiner] on sunspots.

As for what I can deduce from the phenomena of many years, these bodies seem not to follow either the oblique circle of the ecliptic or any other beaten track in the heavens...