Christoph Scheiner Encyclopedia Article

Christoph Scheiner

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1573-1650

German astronomer among the first to detect sunspots telescopically (1611) and the first to publish such observations (1612). Hoping to preserve the incorruptibility of the Aristotelian heavens, Scheiner interpreted the spots as small stars orbiting the Sun. Galileo disagreed, believing them contiguous with the Sun and thus providing evidence of solar axial-rotation. Scheiner correctly attributed the Sun's elliptical appearance near the horizon to refraction (1617) and localized the retina as the seat of vision (1619).