

# **GALILEO'S CRIME**

## **CHORUS 3: A HOUSEHOLD NAME**



Galileo was not the first to claim that our earth revolves around the sun. Seventy years earlier, Polish astronomer Copernicus had made a case for heliocentrism, but was unable to prove his ideas. Galileo did not even invent the telescope, though he improved it so dramatically that it could be used to gaze skyward—a crucial weapon in his campaign.

What did he find in the Heavens? Mountains on the moon! Spots on the Sun! Comets that came and went. Phases of Venus—like the Moon—caused by its orbit of the Sun. And four moons around Jupiter, proving that everything did not, in fact, orbit the Earth. In short, the Heavens were not truly different from our own world. Both were constantly in motion, changeable, and imperfect.

Writing in the language of the People—Italian, not Latin—Galileo reached a broad audience with his revolutionary ideas. European explorers had opened vast new regions of the globe by 1611, and change was in the air. With his impressive powers of persuasion, his charisma and charm, this lowly lecturer and mathematician had the courage to challenge timeworn doctrines of an all-powerful Church. And so by 1616, throughout all of Europe, “Galileo” had become a household name.