

Press Release

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Simon Marius immortalised in the heavens

Asteroid named after the German astronomer

One of the principal goals of the Simon Marius Anniversary in 2014 has been achieved. The committee of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) responsible for the naming of minor planets, comets and natural satellites has announced that the asteroid “1980 SM” will in future be known as “(7984) Marius”. The minor planet in the so-called main belt between Mars and Jupiter was first observed at the Klet’ Observatory (Hvězdárna Klet’) on 29th September 1980.

The Minor Planet Center (MPC) announced the decision of the Committee for Small-Body Nomenclature of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) at the end of March, whereby the asteroid discovered by the Czech astronomer Zdeňka Vávrová will be named after the Ansbach Court Astronomer, Simon Marius (1573–1624). The celestial body has an orbit of 4.27 years and is a distance of 2.63 AU from the Sun. Its average speed is 7.57 km/s.

The recognition by the International Astronomical Union is a great honour for the Bavarian astronomer, whose magnum opus “Mundus Iovialis” was published four centuries ago. In this work he describes the discovery of the four largest Jupiter moons, which Galileo Galilei and he observed for the first time in January 1610. Galileo, having published first, accused Marius of plagiarism, a charge that was only shown to be unfounded at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Various other events as part of the Simon Marius Anniversary in 2014 also recognise his achievements. The Nürnberger Astronomische Gesellschaft has set up the 24-language Marius Portal, <http://www.simon-marius.net>, which brings together all the electronic sources on Marius as well as the secondary literature, to make them available to the international research community and all other interested parties. After this first milestone the naming of the asteroid is the second one.

For media

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Press area: <http://www.simon-marius.net/index.php?lang=en&menu=13>