

## Re: An astronomer's view of mechanics

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- *From:* Quadibloc <[jsavard@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:jsavard@xxxxxxxxxx)>
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oriel36 wrote:

When I said I was tired it only was due to poor sentence structure and spelling errors, there is nothing whatsoever beyond that .

I am aware that German, rather than English, is your first language. And, thus, occasionally there will be an un-idiomatic choice of words, such as "contrapuntal opposite" when, I presume, you meant the absolute opposite – as far from the other as the nadir is from the zenith. That, idiomatically in English, is the "diametric opposite".

I have wondered if it is a language issue that has led you to see something in Flamsteed and Newton that contradicts Galileo and Copernicus; as I have often noted, it appears from the general viewpoint that Newton only affirmed Copernicus and Kepler – adding what Kepler sought, but failed to obtain, an explanation of the observed celestial motions as a consequence of underlying physical laws. Which was exactly what was needed for the unchallenged triumph of Copernicanism. And the mechanical laws of Newton rest upon, and do not at all contradict, the discoveries of Galileo.

I might also note in this connection that in my childhood, the first book about astronomy that I read, which led me to an interest in these matters, was translated from the German – it was the history of astronomy "And There was Light" by Rudolf Thiel.

Of course, I somewhat disagree with his strong words for Ptolemy's use of the equant! That was a very good approximation to Kepler's Laws for low eccentricity, and it is unreasonable to expect better from the ancients. Or, once they have found an accurate correspondence from simple circular elements, to reject it merely because of the off-center point. Thus, denouncing it as a "wretched capitulation" seemed hyperbolic.

John Savard

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