





S1 - 10. PARIS, ASTRONOMERS AND LAND SURVEYORS

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The Observatory of Paris is the oldest observatory in the world still in operation. It was created in 1667 on the instigation of the young King Louis XIV and his minister Colbert.
The Sun King hired the best scholars of his time so that the monarchy would benefit from their knowledge - this marked the beginning of modern astronomy. The astronomers of the Paris Observatory would make marked progress in the areas of cartography and navigation and the monarch hoped to make new conquests on earth thanks to this greater knowledge of the heavens,.
Serge Brunier takes us to visit this historic observatory and introduces us to the age of measurements - measuring time with increasing precision, but also measuring the Earth and the solar system. We'll be reviewing nearly four centuries of astronomical discoveries, such as calculating the circumference of the Earth, the division of Saturn's rings, the discovery of Neptune, or surveying the celestial sphere...a census of stars that is being continued by the Gaia satellite. And we'll "meet" famous astronomers such as Huygens, Cassini, Leverrier... Today, satellites and other space probes who continue to explore our solar system are named after these illustrious scientists.
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