

A Solar Eclipse Expedition to Turkey

Stefan Uttenthaler (ESO) on behalf of all the participants listed in the caption to Figure 3

On 29 March 2006, a total solar eclipse occurred over South America, Africa, Turkey, Russia and Kazakhstan. It was the first one close to central Europe after the eclipse of 11 August 1999, and was calculated to have a maximum duration of totality of 4min 7sec. A group of eleven persons from ESO, accompanied by three from MPE and several amateur astronomers from the Augsburg area (altogether 20 participants) travelled to the Antalya region of Turkey to observe the eclipse. The Turkish Riviera could be rated as a good, but not excellent observing site, with a probability of seeing the eclipse of 48 % for Antalya.

The weather on the eclipse day was very good with wind coming from the South, dissolving the clouds along the coast and building them up in the mountains inland. Our observing site was a remote hill located between Side and Antalya close to the coast. The exact GPS coordinates were determined by Christian Clemens to be 36° 52' 18".8 N 31° 13' 52".8 E. The duration of totality at this place was calculated using an on-line JavaScript¹ to be 3min 42sec. The eclipse took place in the early afternoon.

Our photographic and observing equipment was very diverse and aimed at capturing the prominences, the corona, the mysterious shadow bands as well as the surroundings. The event itself was very hectic for the photographers among us, and a simply breathtaking view for those who were just enjoying the spectacle. We celebrated the event with champagne. The fully successful photo campaigns certainly were another reason to celebrate (Figures 1 and 2). Figure 3 shows a group picture of the expedition crew. The happy faces show what an exciting event it was for all of us, and plans are already being made for trips to upcoming solar eclipses!

¹ Eclipse calculator: <http://www.chris.obyrne.com/Eclipses/new-calculator.html>

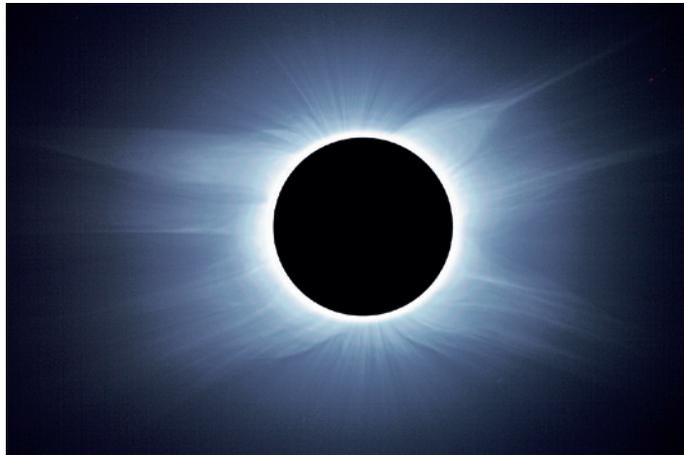


Figure 1: Image of the corona obtained by combining digital photos taken by Karl Thurner and by Thomas and Claudia Winterer.



Figure 2: The diamond ring effect, captured by Christian Clemens.



Figure 3: The ESO expedition crew. Back row (from left to right): Alexander Stefanescu, Christian Clemens, Arjan Bik, Stefan Uttenthaler, Christiane Leitner, Jürgen Keberle, Bruno Rino, Karl Thurner, Françoise Delplancke, Stefan Ströbele, Yuri Bialecki, Thomas Winterer. Front row: Thomas Eimüller, Jochen Sokar, Burkhard Wolff, Margrethe Wold, Barbara Sokar, Nataliya Prymak, Anna Beletskaya, Claudia Winterer. Sebastian Deiries observed the eclipse from a different site in Kemer, south-west of Antalya.