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The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus

Owen Gingerich

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Part biography of a book, part scientific exploration, part bibliographic detective story, *The Book Nobody Read* recolors the history of cosmology and offers a new appreciation of the enduring power of an extraordinary book and its ideas. Prodded by Arthur Koestler's claim that when it was first published nobody read Copernicus's *De revolutionibus*—in which Copernicus first suggested that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the universe—renowned astro-historian Owen Gingerich embarked on a three-decade-long quest to see in person all 600 extant copies of the first and second editions of *De revolutionibus*, including those owned and annotated by Galileo and Kepler. Tracing the ownership of individual copies through the hands of saints, heretics, scalawags, and bibliomaniacs, Gingerich proves conclusively—four and a half centuries after its publication—that *De revolutionibus* was as inspirational as it was revolutionary.

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